

DARFUR QUARTERLY UPDATE
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The August, 2008 Darfur report contains still important and relevant information. We have attached that report below. There have been a few developments in the recent months, listed below. On the whole, however, the situation in Darfur remains precarious, with civilians and aid workers under attack at the same levels as reported in the August 2008 Darfur Update.

New Developments:

Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo's request for an arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar al Bashir has created a flurry of activity in Sudan. Despite early promises to unleash a wave of retaliatory violence against Darfur, and threats to expel UNAMID en masse, Bashir has embarked upon a comprehensive public relations campaign aimed at achieving an "Article 16 Deferral" of his prosecution – a UN Security Council resolution authorizing a deferral of his prosecution based on it being a threat to regional peace and stability.

Bashir has allowed an additional deployment of Egyptian troops to join the UNAMID peacekeeping force, bringing the total number of peacekeepers in Darfur up to 12,163¹ – still well below the 26,000 authorized by Security Council Resolution 1769 passed July 31, 2007. Bashir's latest moves include holding a high-profile Darfur peace conference -- which his opponents called a farce and boycotted en masse². Despite his declaration of an "unconditional and unilateral ceasefire"³ (which rebel group the Justice and Equality Movement has called a "PR exercise"⁴), recent reports of fighting in North Darfur have surfaced. Bashir's government claims his army's scuffles with "bandits" do not violate the ceasefire, while rebel groups accuse his government of attacking rebel-held areas in an attempt to unseat them.

¹ Agence France Presse, "A Year of Failure in Darfur," December 8, 2008.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iD753P7HeNCHlqmOWtAd_6dwc2qw

² Voice of America, "Sudan Launches Darfur Peace Initiative," October 17, 2008. www.voanews.com.

³ Reuters, "Sudan's Bashir Declares Darfur Ceasefire," November 12, 2008, www.reuters.com.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, Chief Prosecutor Ocampo has issued requests for arrest warrants against three unnamed rebel chiefs, accusing them of attacks against African Union peacekeepers.⁵ As Bashir attempts to appear conciliatory in the eyes of the international community, the nation of Qatar is planning to spearhead a renewed effort at peace talks, widely lauded by both the UN and the US. Rebel groups, however, as yet have not agreed to attend, with the major Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) faction run by Abdel Wahid al Nur promising to boycott until the Janjaweed militias are disarmed and Sudan can promise security to all civilians in Darfur.⁶

⁵ UN News Service, "Sudan: International Court Seeks More Information On Arrest Warrants for Darfur Rebels" December 10, 2008. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200812100826.html>

⁶ Reuters, Andrew Heavens. "Darfur rebel leader resists peace talk pressure" December 2, 2008. <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnJOE4B10GG.html>

DARFUR QUARTERLY UPDATE SEPTEMBER 8, 2008

The conflict in Darfur, Sudan, which has pitted non-Arab rebel groups against the Arab-dominated government, has now been raging for five years. In these years, 2.5 million people have been displaced from their homes and 300,000 have died.¹ Just this year alone, over 300,000 Darfuris have been forced from their homes.

On Monday, August 25, 2008, the government of Sudan assaulted a huge camp for displaced people near the regional capital of Nyala. The camp, known as Kalma, is a sprawling collection of shacks and mud huts. One of the oldest, largest and most volatile camps in Darfur, it is home to approximately 90,000 displaced people. Hussein Abu Sharati, a spokesman for the camp, said dozens of heavily armed vehicles operated by Sudanese security forces surrounded the camp at dawn and opened fire. As reported by workers with Doctors Without Borders, dozens of people were killed and more than 100 were injured in the government assault.² The Sudanese police released a statement saying that the operation had been carried out to seize weapons stored at the camp. It contended that Darfur rebel groups were planning to use the weapons to carry out assassinations.³

The government has carried out raids on Kalma before, claiming that rebel groups use it as a base for recruiting members and storing weapons. In the past year, local officials have pushed to close Kalma and relocate its residents, some of whom are vocal supporters of the rebel groups fighting in Darfur. Government officials have also frequently obstructed access to the camp for aid groups, accusing them of helping the rebellion.⁴

The United Nations issued a statement saying that it was “gravely concerned” about reports of attacks on civilians in the camp. However, aid officials and displaced people expressed dismay that nearby peacekeeping troops, part of the joint United Nations-African

¹Lydia Polgreen, with contributions from Izzadine Abdul Rasoul, “Dozens Are Killed in Raid on Darfur Camp,” *New York Times*, August 26, 2008, page A-9.

²*Ibid.* Polgreen.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

Union mission, did not intervene.⁵ Residents of the camp called the peacekeepers to inform them that the camp was under fire but had received no response. United Nations (U.N.) officials said a patrol went to the camp later in the day to investigate, but did not arrive until late in the afternoon.⁶

The On-Going Problems for Aid Workers and the Peace-Keepers

According to U.N. officials, there are four complex, interlocking issues in Darfur specifically and Sudan generally:

- ***The multiple sources of violence.*** There is the now-familiar war in Darfur between mostly black rebels and their tribes on one side and, on the other, Arab-led *janjaweed* militias with ties to the government, who have become infamous for slaughtering civilians. There is also a blood feud between Sudan's government and Chad across the border, where many Darfur rebels have taken shelter. Last, there is the fight for secession by Christian rebels in southern Sudan, which was appeared resolved, though somewhat tenuously, by a peace agreement in 2005, now shows signs of re-igniting.⁷
- ***The intransigence of Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir.*** In a myriad of ways, President al-Bashir's government creates obstacles for U.N. peacekeepers and humanitarian groups trying to help the civilians caught up in the fighting.
- ***The hybrid composition of the peacekeeping force.*** Designed to strengthen the African Union ("A.U.") soldiers with numbers and equipment, the combined UN-AU forces still suffer from anemic numbers and a lack of key equipment like helicopters, despite appeals for them from U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. A force of 26,000 peacekeepers was authorized, but fewer than 11,500 are on the ground.⁸

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Neil Farquhar, "Why Darfur Still Bleeds," *New York Times*, July 13, 2008; www.nytimes.com.

⁸N. Farquhar, "Why Darfur Still Bleeds," *New York Times*, www.nytimes.com. The combined A.U. - U.N. force in Darfur is not the only U.N. peacekeeping force in Sudan. A second force, with more than 10,000 peacekeepers (and an annual budget of nearly \$1 billion) watches over the smoldering peace in the south. And a completely different European peacekeeping force has been established in Chad. (N. Farquhar, "Why Darfur Still Bleeds.")

- ***The logistical nightmare.*** Equipment for the troops must be hauled across a land roughly one-third the size of the continental United States, with no good roads.⁹

The fact that the peacekeepers find it hard to protect themselves, much less the people of Darfur, came into sharp relief in early July 2008 when well-armed militiamen ambushed a U.N. patrol, killing seven and wounding twenty-two.¹⁰

Many see the resolution of these problems as needing sustained attention and coordinated efforts in the various conflicts in and involving Sudan. Many in the U.N. and the main advocacy groups put blame for the slow progress in Darfur on the Security Council's member governments, especially powers like China, the United States and France, for a lack of sustained attention and coordination.¹¹ China, for example, has started speaking out publicly about the need for progress on peace talks, but it has avoided using its oil investments as leverage. The United States has invested millions in training peacekeeping troops, is in a diplomatic dialogue with Sudan, and has imposed unilateral penalties against Sudan's oil sales. Ironically, according to some advocacy groups, rather than result in isolating Sudan, the sum of such independent moves by the United States has created an impression among many non-Americans that the United States is simply pressuring another Muslim nation!¹² Meanwhile, European countries have been offended by Sudan's refusal to allow peacekeepers from Sweden and Norway.¹³

Jan Eliasson, the U.N.'s mediator in Darfur, says that things will not improve until all of the countries with leverage in Sudan coordinate their efforts to put pressure on Sudan's government, its allied militia groups and the rebels. John Prendergast of the Enough Project concurs, citing past concerted efforts that obtained peace agreements between other warring factions in Sudan. Now, he says, the Security Council's members must develop a unified strategy for all three conflict areas (Darfur, the South, and Chad). "It can't be Darfur this week and the south next week when something burns down," he said. "The diplomatic failure is at the level of countries with influence."¹⁴

The Food Crisis – in the Midst of Abundance – in Sudan

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

Even as it receives a billion pounds of free food from international donors, Sudan is growing and selling vast quantities of its own crops to other countries, capitalizing on high global food prices at a time when millions of people in Darfur barely have enough to eat. In an ambitious plan for Sudanese self-sufficiency, giant mechanized farms have been created where beans, wheat, sorghum, melons, peanuts, pumpkins, and eggplant are grown.¹⁵ Sudan has long had the capacity to be the bread-basket of Africa and the Middle East. Sudan has approximately 208 million acres of arable land, with less than a quarter being cultivated. At certain places, especially along the Nile River, the country is as green and lush as Florida. It has the three elements critical to agriculture: land, labor and water.¹⁶ (The Nile and its tributaries flow more than 2,000 miles across Sudan, bringing the silt-rich water directly to the fields. The British colonial government was the first to capitalize on this, building a dam in 1925 on the Blue Nile, one of the two main sources of the Nile River, and a network of canals. Today, that project, called the Gezira Scheme, has thousands of miles of canals irrigating nearly 2.5 million acres of farms. The genius is that it is all done by gravity, which means water flows from the dam through capillaries of canals to seedlings in the field, all without using any other energy source.¹⁷ The Gezira Scheme, like much of Sudanese agribusiness, is government-run.¹⁸)

Economically, the Sudanese government is attempting to strengthen its economy and diversify from oil.¹⁹ “Sanctions are never far from our mind,” said Al-Amin Dafa Allah, chairman of the Sudanese National Assembly’s agricultural committee. “We’re trying to minimize our reliance on the outside.”²⁰

Politically, the Sudanese government is creating ties with Arab countries across the Red Sea.²¹ For example, the Sudanese government currently has contracts with Jordan, which has a large farm in northern Sudan which grows wheat, beans, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, oranges and bananas, and with Saudi Arabia, which has a huge, new \$200 million project to grow wheat, also in the north of Sudan. Some of the wheat will stay in Sudan; some will be shipped to Saudi

¹⁵Jeffrey Gettleman, “Darfur Withers as Sudan Sells Food,” *New York Times*, August 10, 2008, on page A1.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*

Arabia.²² The Sudanese government has invested \$5 billion into new agribusiness projects, many of them to produce food for export.²³

Notwithstanding this bonanza of food, many people are starving in Sudan, especially in the Darfur region. (African countries that rely on donated food usually cannot produce sufficient food on their own for their population. Somalia, Ethiopia, Niger and Zimbabwe are all recent examples of how war, natural disasters, or gross mismanagement can cut deep into food production, pushing millions of people to the brink of starvation.)²⁴ Last year, the United States, as part of its response to the emergency in Darfur, shipped approximately 283,000 tons of sorghum – at high cost – to Sudan. According to the U.N., this amount is about the same amount that Sudan exported. This year, Sudanese companies, including many linked to the government in Khartoum, are scheduled to ship twice that amount out of the country, even as the United Nations is being forced to cut rations to Darfur.²⁵ According to the U.N., the last time the Sudanese government gave the World Food Program food for Darfur was in 2006. It was 22,000 tons of Sudanese-grown sorghum. It was a fraction of what the people needed, and some of the grain was rancid and infested with weevils.²⁶

Eric Reeves, a professor at Smith College and an outspoken activist who has written frequently on the Darfur crisis, has called this anomaly “one of the least reported and most scandalous features of the Khartoum regime’s domestic policies.” It was emblematic, he said, of the Sudanese government’s strategy to manipulate “national wealth and power to further enrich itself and its cronies, while the marginalized regions of the country suffer from terrible poverty.”²⁷

International Criminal Court Charges Against al-Bashir – The Reactions in Sudan and Responses Internationally

On July 14, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requested a warrant for the arrest of Omar Hassan al-Bashir, president of Sudan, on charges of genocide, war crimes, and

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

crimes against humanity committed in the conflict-riddled region of Darfur.²⁸ The request immediately caused a stir at the United Nations, with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and some countries voicing concerns that prosecuting Mr. Bashir could endanger peacekeepers and more broadly hamper efforts to achieve peace in the region through diplomacy.²⁹

Mr. Bashir rejected the charges, arguing that efforts to prosecute him were an assault on Sudanese sovereignty.³⁰ Indeed, many of the political leaders in Sudan urged that the International Criminal Court not go forward. Many foresaw a number of nightmare scenarios, such as a fall of the government, instability which might invite al Qaeda back into Sudan, or an emboldening of rebel groups to try to topple the government. The various concerns about the stability of Sudan forced political elites in Sudan and unlikely partners to side with Mr. Bashir.³¹ “The situation in Sudan now is so pregnant with trouble,” said Sadiq al-Mahdi, Sudan’s last elected leader, who was overthrown by Mr. Bashir in 1989 and has remained a bitter opponent ever since. Until now. After the warrant was announced, Mr. Mahdi threw the support of the party he leads, one of Sudan’s biggest, behind Mr. Bashir.³²

One growing concern is that without Mr. Bashir, a peace treaty signed in 2005 between Sudan’s central government and southern rebels could fall apart. The treaty, which he fought hard-liners in his own party to approve, is widely seen as the glue that is holding this unwieldy and deeply divided country together. It calls for elections next year and outlines ways to share wealth and power. “These are frail and critical moments in our history,” said James Morgan, a spokesman for the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, the rebel group that signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ending the north-south war. Mr. Bashir, he said, should be given “ample time to implement these agreements.”³³

Ironically, Darfur, too, seemed to be a reason for delaying an indictment of Mr. Bashir. Mr. Bashir toured Darfur in late July. Though he had no proposals for jump-starting a peace process amongst the rebels and with the government, a panel led by Mr. Mahdi and other

²⁸Elissa Gootman, “U.N. Debates Court Efforts to Prosecute Sudan Chief,” *New York Times*, July 26, 2008, www.nytimes.com.

²⁹*Ibid.*; and see Neil Farquhar, “Pursuit of Sudan’s Leader Incites Debate,” *New York Times*, July 12, 2008, www.nytimes.com.

³⁰L. Polgreen, “Dozens Are Killed in Raid on Darfur Camp,” *New York Times*, August 26, 2008, page A-9.

³¹Lydia Polgreen and Neil Farquhar, “Sudan Rallies Behind Leader Reviled Abroad,” *New York Times*, July 28, 2008, www.nytimes.com.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*

political leaders has been charged with finding a way to defuse the crisis.³⁴ The government recently sent an official to Qatar to ask the government there, which helped negotiate a settlement to Lebanon's most recent crisis, to contribute \$500 million for the compensation of Darfur's victims.³⁵ The government and its new allies are hoping that if they can provide evidence of progress in Darfur and persuade the international community that an arrest warrant would create more problems than it would solve, the Security Council will act to hold back the criminal court.³⁶

The United States and Europe argued that the judicial process should be allowed to work independently from the United Nations.³⁷ China was outspoken in its opposition, concerned that the prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant would jeopardize efforts to negotiate peace, to strengthen peacekeeping operations, and to supply the humanitarian needs of the civilian population. "If we want to achieve peace there we have to have cooperation from all the political parties in Sudan."³⁸ Concerns about the fallout were focused on two levels — any immediate, short-term attempt by the Sudanese government or others to direct their anger to U.N. staff members in the country, and the longer-term consequences for negotiating a peace with the country's fractious rebel movements.³⁹

In late July, the African Union urged the U.N. Security Council to postpone a possible indictment of Mr. Bashir by the International Criminal Court. The request, at the end of a meeting of the African Union's Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, followed a similar appeal by China and the Arab League. The Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, said the Security Council should seriously consider the African Union's request.⁴⁰

As of August 29, 2008, there was still no decision by the U.N. or the International Criminal Court as to whether the court would proceed. The Sudanese government has warned of "serious consequences for U.N. staff and infrastructure" if the International Criminal Court charges against Mr. Bashir go forward. The threatened consequences were not defined.⁴¹

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷N. Farquhar, "Pursuit of Sudan's Leader Incites Debate," *New York Times*, July 12, 2008, www.nytimes.com.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Reuters, "World Briefing/Africa," July 22, 2008, www.nytimes.com.

⁴¹Daniel B. Schneider, "World Briefing/Warning by Sudan on Charges," August 19, 2008, www.nytimes.com.

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