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## DARFUR QUARTERLY UPDATE DECEMBER 17, 2007

### United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)

On July 31, 2007 the United Nations Security Council unanimously authorized Resolution 1769, establishing a United Nations-African Union hybrid peacekeeping operation for Darfur (UNAMID). The proposed 26,000-member joint peacekeeping force was expected to be in place by early 2008.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed strength of UNAMID has been compromised in part by the inability or refusal of nations to provide the minimally required two dozen transport and tactical helicopters to the force.<sup>2</sup> However, the chief concern for the timely implementation of Resolution 1769 is constant obstructionism by Khartoum. Khartoum has thwarted the mission by refusing to grant landing rights for heavy transport aircraft and to allow the night flights required for both civilian protection and medical needs,<sup>3</sup> and by withholding permission for critical mobility and resupply capacity for the helicopters.<sup>4, 5</sup> "Without the mobility and transportation, it will be extremely difficult for us to deploy our forces," U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has said. "And even if they are deployed, without effective additional mobility capacity, we will not be able to protect the civilians and even our own soldiers."<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the logistical roadblocks, Khartoum has consistently rejected the UN/AU proposed roster of troop-providing countries, insisting that all troops be African in nature. For example, Khartoum has resisted critical contributions from Thailand, Nepal and Nordic countries.<sup>8</sup>

Given the anticipated delays in implementing Resolution 1769 and putting its safeguards in place, the U.N. Under-Secretary for Peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, warned the United Nations Security Council in late November that the failure of the UN/AU peacekeeping operation stands to be a "tragic failure for the people of Darfur."<sup>9</sup>

### Fighting Among Arab Tribes Increasing the Chaos in Darfur

In the past several months, two heavily armed Arab tribes that worked together as part of the Janjaweed militias, the Terjem and the Mahria, began fighting each other over the spoils of their attacks on the African tribes-people in southern Darfur. The Arab tribes are raiding each other's villages, according to aid workers and the fighters themselves, and are scattering Arab tribesmen into the same kinds of displacement camps that currently house their original victims.<sup>10</sup> United Nations officials say the militias may be jockeying for power and trying to seize turf before the long-awaited hybrid force of United Nations and African Union peacekeepers begins to arrive, which had been expected for December 2007 and January 2008.<sup>11</sup> Several independent observers in Sudan have said that the government was not driving this phase of the conflict.<sup>12</sup>

This new Arab-versus-Arab dimension of the violence in Darfur is a sign of the evolving complexity of the crisis. What started out four years ago in western Sudan as a rebellion and brutal counterinsurgency has broadened into a fluid, chaotic, confusing free-for-all with dozens of armed groups, a spike in banditry, and chronic attacks on aid workers.<sup>13</sup> "The fragmentation of armed groups is among our major concerns," said Maurizio Giuliano, a spokesman for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Sudan. "This is making the situation even more complex,

<sup>1</sup>"U.N. Concerned Over Darfur Force," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>Warren Hoge, "Lack of Donated Copters Harms Darfur Effort, U.N. Leader Says," *The New York Times*, December 7, 2007.

<sup>5</sup>Warren Hoge, "U.N. Official Criticizes Sudan for Resisting Peace Force in Darfur," *The New York Times*, November 28, 2007.

<sup>6</sup>Warren Hoge, "Lack of Donated Copters Harms Darfur Effort, U.N. Leader Says," *The New York Times*, December 7, 2007. Similarly, plans by the European Union to send almost 4,000 European troops to Chad and the Central African Republic to help refugees fleeing Darfur could also be delayed unless more transport planes and helicopters are found. ("U.N. Concerned Over Darfur Force," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2007.)

<sup>8</sup>"U.N. Concerned Over Darfur Force," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2007.

<sup>9</sup>Warren Hoge, "U.N. Official Criticizes Sudan for Resisting Peace Force in Darfur," *The New York Times*, November 28, 2007.

<sup>10</sup>Jeffrey Gettleman, "Chaos in Darfur Rises as Arabs Fight with Arabs," *The New York Times*, September 3, 2007.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

and more difficult for civilians as well as for humanitarians trying to help them.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Peace Process**

According to the International Crisis Group, which closely monitors Sudan, the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement is a failure, too limited in scope and signatories.<sup>15</sup> The ruling party in Khartoum, the National Congress Party (NCP), is pursuing destructive policies in Darfur, while at the same time resisting key provisions in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the North-South war, thus triggering a crisis in that process. The NCP is more concerned about ensuring its own survival in the 2009 elections than in ending the conflict in Darfur or maintaining a peace with the South. The NCP wants Darfur in chaos to limit the room for an opposition to emerge. To add to the insecurity, Khartoum has been resettling key allies on cleared land in Darfur and has been defying Security Council resolutions by integrating its Janjaweed irregulars into official security structures instead of disarming them.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, AU and UN officials have worked steadily to build support for peace negotiations between fractious rebel groups and the Sudanese government, though their efforts may come to naught. Peace talks took place in late October/early November 2007 in Sirte, Libya. However, the talks were widely boycotted by all the larger, significant rebel groups, leaving only small splinter groups to begin negotiations with the government of Sudan. (The Sudanese government arrived at the peace talks with a full delegation in an attempt to win public relations points.) Civil society groups, including women’s groups, were conspicuously absent from the negotiations, given the criticism that the rebels no longer represent the needs of the citizens of Darfur.

Talks rescheduled for December will need major restructuring if they are to succeed. Activist groups are calling on the mediation team and international actors, including the United States, to reorient the negotiations to include all stakeholders and help the negotiators meet the needs of the civilians of Darfur. Core issues that have driven the conflict, among them land tenure and use, including grazing rights, and the role and reform of local government and administrative structures, were not addressed in the Darfur Peace Agreement but were left to the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation process that was supposed to have followed the negotiations. These issues need to be on the agenda of the new negotiations if an eventual agreement is to gain the wide support the Darfur Peace Agreement has lacked.<sup>17</sup>

### **Conflict with Southern Sudan – The Tenuous Comprehensive Peace Agreement**

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement ostensibly ended the 22-year Second Sudanese Civil War between the current Khartoum regime and Southern Sudanese rebel forces. Despite being hailed as a model peace agreement, Sudanese President Omar al Bashir and his National Congress Party (NCP) have consistently undermined its terms. Recently, Southern Sudanese officials withdrew from the central unity government established by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, in protest of NCP’s obstruction of the agreement, citing several missed implementation deadlines. Chief among concerns is delay by Bashir to underwrite a national census, data from which would create a baseline for national elections. This concern is heightened by the surfacing of several reports accusing Bashir of allowing Arabs from other African countries to settle permanently on formerly African/non-Arab land in Darfur.<sup>18</sup> Such settlement would have serious implications for the demographics of Sudan and could influence the elections called for under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, elections that the NCP fears would force its own removal from power.

The perennial question in Sudan is whether the relatively small group of Arabs who live along the northern reaches of the Nile and have historically ruled this country will share power and wealth among one of Africa’s most diverse populations. Political exclusion was the issue that drove the southern rebels to fight, and it was the same issue that fueled the rebellion to the west, in Darfur, which has blown up into one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.<sup>19</sup>

Both the north and south say they want to avoid another costly war, and leaders from the two sides acknowledge that they need each other the south has most of the country’s oil and the north has most of the infrastructure. But the two sides are deadlocked over the toughest issues the treaty was supposed to solve: how to draw the north-south border, how to reform a very militarized government (the standard children’s school uniform in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital, is camouflage fatigues), and how to split Sudan’s booming oil profits.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> See “Darfur’s New Security Reality,” Africa Report N° 134, International Crisis Group, November 26, 2007 .

<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey Gettleman, “Cracks in the Peace in Oil-Rich Sudan as Old Tensions Fester,” *The New York Times*, September 22, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*