



**Jewish World Watch
UPDATE ON DARFUR
Prepared for JWW by Honey Kessler Amado
March 7, 2006 – 7 Adar 5766**

Darfur is located in the central portion of the Sahara desert. One of the ways to understand the conflict between the Arab and African Darfurians is to understand the conflict as a land grab. The northern, mostly Arab, Darfurians are nomads who are seeking arable land for their flocks. The victims are without question mostly farmers. One of the reasons for the purposeful effort to remove the people from their villages and small areas of cultivation is that cultivation establishes land ownership. Thus, by destroying crops, as the *Janjaweed* (armed, mercenary militia) do, they destroy proof of land-ownership. With the inability to establish land ownership, the refugees in the internally displaced persons camps (“IDP camps”) have nothing to return to in their home-villages.¹

There are approximately 180 refugee camps in Darfur, which is slightly larger than California.² The humanitarian aid organizations are able to reach only approximately 85 of the camps.³ The humanitarian aid to the internally displaced persons camps in Darfur and the displaced persons camps in Chad is the most expensive per capita aid in the world, due to the logistical problems in getting aid to the refugees.

The refugee camps are unhealthy for several reasons. There is disease, which easily

¹International Rescue Committee briefing, Gerald Martone, Director of Humanitarian Affairs, February 23, 2006.

²Some sources have defined Darfur as approximately the size of France or Texas. Darfur (493,180 sq. kilometers) is more closely the size of California (410,000 sq. kilometers). Sudan, at 2,505,813 sq kilometers, is approximately 25% of the size of the continental United States. (Source: Wikipedia; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>.)

³International Rescue Committee (IRC) briefing, February 23, 2006.

spreads from one physically weak refugee to another. There is little water; little sanitation, and inadequate access to health care. Therefore, there is a constant concern about avoid epidemics within any one camp.⁴ In addition to disease, the people must forage for food. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the refugees' diet is from wild food: wild plants and wild animals. Due to the concentrated number of refugees, there is an increasing scarcity of food. In addition, if the girls or women leave the camps to forage for food, they are subject to attack by the roving *Janjaweed*. Most of the attacks by the *Janjaweed* now take place near the outsides of the refugee camps as the most desirable villages have been destroyed. (As a result of this particular vulnerability, some aid groups, such as the International Rescue Committee, are seeking alternative food sources and alternative cooking sources which will not rely on fire, which, in turn, needs the small wood and sticks found outside the camps.)⁵

The situation in Darfur has been called a "genocide in slow motion." Seventy-five percent (75%) of the people in the refugee camps are children under the age of 5 years old. They are dying from water-borne diseases, which cause virulent diarrhea which dehydrates and ultimately kills the child. In addition, girls and women of reproductive age have a significantly increased chance of dying. It is said that "a woman who is pregnant has one foot in the grave."⁶ A girl in Darfur has a 1/100 chance of graduating from *primary* school and a 1/9 change of dying in pregnancy or child-birth. Thus, a young woman in Darfur has a greater chance of dying in child-birth than in graduating from primary school!⁷

In addition to the poor health of the children, the environment for the children in the IDP (internally displaced persons) camps is bleak. There is no structure to their days or their lives. There are few safe places for them and few activities to enrich or soften their lives.⁸

The *Janjaweed*

The *Janjaweed* are now better armed than the regular Sudanese soldiers. Through their confiscation of the assets of the various villages they have destroyed, they now have the

⁴IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

⁵IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

⁶IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

economic means to purchase their own arms. The *Janjaweed* are beginning to fractionalize around individual war-lords.⁹

The Widening Conflict

The *Janjaweed*, historically operating only in Sudan, have now entered Chad, stealing cattle, burning crops and killing anyone who resists. The lawlessness has driven at least 20,000 Chadians from their homes, making them refugees in their own country.¹⁰ Hundreds of thousands more people in this area, along with 200,000 Sudanese who fled here for safety, find themselves caught up in a growing conflict between Chad and Sudan, which have a long history of violence and meddling in each other's affairs.¹¹ Meanwhile, the Chadian rebels have found sanctuary in Sudan. (Polgreen, *New York Times*, p. A-8.)

Economic Interests

Sudan has oil, copper, and uranium. At least 6% of China's oil comes from the Sudan¹², and Russia sells arms to Sudan.¹³ Indeed, China is fast becoming one of Africa's biggest investors, donors, and political allies.¹⁴ Chinese investment in Africa has

⁹IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

¹⁰Lydia Polgreen, "20,000 in Chad Are Uprooted by Attacks," *The New York Times*, page A-1, February 28, 2006.

¹¹*Ibid.* In Chad, the trouble began in December 2005 when rebel groups attacked three strategic towns on the border of Chad and Sudan. The Chadian Army repelled the rebels, but it withdrew its troops from garrisons along the border to fortify one particular town, Adré. The withdrawal left a security vacuum, which was immediately filled by the *Janjaweed* from Darfur. Dozens of villages have emptied; some have been burned. (Polgreen, *New York Times*, p. A-8.)

¹²*The Economist*, Dec. 1, 2005, www.Economist.com reported this figure as 4.5% of China's needs coming from China. Whether 4.5% or 6%, China's economic interests in the status quo is apparent.

¹³IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

¹⁴ China is helping to build the continent's biggest dam, in Ethiopia. It has launched Nigeria's first satellite into orbit. It has lent Angola \$2 billion in exchange for oil. It is farming shrimp
March 7, 2006 / 7 Adar 5766

mushroomed from \$10 billion in 2000 to \$18 billion in 2003, and now China is Africa's third-largest trading partner, behind the U.S. and Britain.¹⁵

China "is filling the void left by the West," said Bruce Imboela, a development studies professor at the University of Zambia. In particular, he said, China has provided investment and development aid in regions and countries where the West has been reluctant to make deals. But China's willingness to deal with rogue regimes, to overlook corruption and to push ahead with projects regardless of safety and environmental concerns risks lives and undermines African institutions and Western efforts to promote good governance, analysts say. For example, China has sent tanks, helicopters and fighter aircraft to Sudan's government.¹⁶ "China offers an alternative source of support, even for some of the United States' closest allies, when they chafe under Western pressure for economic or political reform," the U.S.-based Council on Foreign Relations said in a report released in December 2005. In some cases, "China's aid and investments are attractive to Africans precisely because they come with no conditionality related to governance, fiscal probity, or the other concerns of Western donors."¹⁷

The African Union

Although the African Union is often referred to as a "peace-keeping" force, in reality it has been a "monitoring force." The troops are armed to protect the international monitors and some of the camps, but they specifically are not empowered to protect civilians.¹⁸ Nonetheless, although they have not been as effective as possible, they have assisted aid workers in creating a safe corridor in parts of Darfur. Where they are present, attacks on aid

in Mozambique, installing phone systems in Kenya, building roads in Zambia and securing rights to Africa's timber, oil and mineral resources. (Laurie Goering, "China's Investment and Growing Clout in Africa Cause Concern," *ChicagoTribune.com*, February 19, 2006.)

¹⁵Laurie Goering, "China's Investment and Growing Clout in Africa Cause Concern," *ChicagoTribune.com*, February 19, 2006.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Brian Steidle, KPFK interview, March 3, 2006.

workers and the camps have been reduced.¹⁹

The African Union (AU) forces have lacked manpower and resources and the Sudanese government has not cooperated with their mission.²⁰ Indeed, in January 2006, the African Union acknowledged that its more than 7,000-man force in Darfur was incapable of stopping the Khartoum government from its continued brutalization of the civilian population.²¹ The AU command confronted Khartoum with documentation of its use of air power against the civilian population last autumn, with photographs of an attack committed by its air force on the Abu Shoek refugee camp.²² In addition, the AU said that it would support being relieved by a larger, stronger United Nations force.

The United Nations Report and Action on Sudan

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a detailed report on January 27, 2006, portraying the dismal human rights conditions in Darfur and other parts of Sudan and calling on the Khartoum government to take measures to end a prevailing culture of impunity.²³ The report stated that from September to November 2005, Khartoum government forces, working with militia who were often described by witnesses as Janjaweed, carried out at least eight organized armed attacks on over a dozen camps or villages occupied by internally displaced persons (IDPs). The report rejected Sudan's rationale that it was responding to rebel activities, stating that in most cases civilians were "deliberately targeted."²⁴ It notes that State-sponsored offensives fan the flames of violence by irregular groups. "The increase in large attacks on civilians by Government forces

¹⁹IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

²⁰Reuters, www.AlertNet.org, "U.S.: Push for Strong United Nations Force in Darfur," 31 Jan 2006.

²¹Kurt Bassuener, "A No-Flight Zone is Key," *International Herald Tribune*, February 1, 2006; www.iht.com. (Kurt Bassuener is a senior associate at the Democratization Policy Council, a trans-Atlantic initiative for accountability in democracy promotion.)

²²*Ibid.*

²³United Nations News Service, 27 Jan 2006, "Sudan: Concerned at Rising Violence in Darfur, Annan Calls on Parties to Halt Attacks", at www.ReliefWeb.int.

²⁴*Ibid.*

likely encouraged the militia to execute other abuses with impunity.” The 42-page report, which bases its findings mostly on direct investigations and information collected from victims, witnesses, and government authorities, calls on the Khartoum government to cease its attacks on civilians in Darfur, disarm militias there, and install an effective law enforcement system.²⁵

On February 3, 2006, the United Nations Security Council announced a plan to send United Nations troops to help takeover for the overworked and under-equipped African Union-led mission. However, it could be a year before a UN mission fully deploys. And it is unclear what type of mandate or troop strength the Security Council will authorize.

NATO

The NATO support which is often discussed would largely consist of logistical support, which is an important need. The support would be air and ground transportation for goods and aid workers.²⁶

The ability to protect civilians will remain crippled until an international protection force has complete air superiority over Darfur, denying flight to the Sudanese air force. Such a no-flight operation would also have the ability to provide close air support to ground forces.²⁷

A no-flight zone would also deter further attacks on civilians and would assist the AU protection forces and humanitarian aid organizations. (Some say that control over Darfur's skies can be established quickly from France's air bases in Chad, which are already equipped for operations by tactical fighters. There is also a wealth of tactical air power available from NATO air forces. A former U.S. Air Force chief of staff, General Merrill McPeak, told *The Washington Post* in 2005 that the assets needed to conduct such a mission are a mere 12 to 18 fighter aircraft, four AWACS/AEW control aircraft, and some additional support planes and personnel.²⁸)

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶IRC briefing, February 23, 2006.

²⁷Bassuener, “A No-Flight Zone is Key,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 1, 2006.

²⁸*Ibid.*

United States Government Efforts

- The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act

The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act (H.R. 3127 in the House, S. 1462 in the Senate) passed in the United States Senate on November 18, 2005. It is now pending in the House of Representatives.

In summary, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act provides, as follows²⁹:

- Urges the African Union to rapidly expand the size and mandate of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and offers the President authority to provide assistance to reinforce the deployment and operations of such an expanded mission, while also directing the US to urge for NATO reinforcement of the African Union mission (upon the request of the AU). It also calls on the international community to consider taking additional measures should the expanded AU mission fail to stop genocide in Darfur.
- Calls for the suspension of Sudan's membership from the United Nations General Assembly.
- Calls for the appointment of a Special Envoy for Sudan and northern Uganda, and fully supports the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan.
- Authorizes the blocking of assets and restriction of travel on any individual who the President has determined is responsible for acts of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity in the Darfur region.
- Denies entry at US ports to cargo ships and oil tankers engaged in the oil industry in Sudan.
- Calls for a new UN Security Resolution which supports the expansion of the AU Mission; imposes sanctions against the Government of Sudan; extends the military arms embargo to cover the entire Government of Sudan, amongst other things.
- Prohibits U.S. assistance to countries which violate the military and arms embargo imposed pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolutions (with a waiver).
- Requires reports to Congress to include the various sanctions imposed, and requires information on the deployment of an expanded AU mission in Darfur,

²⁹See www.SaveDarfur.org .

the status of NATO's plans and assistance to support African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), and the performance of AMIS.

- Biden-Brownback Resolution

On March 2, 2006, the Senate passed a Resolution co-sponsored by Senators Joe Biden (D-DE) and Sam Brownback (R-KS) urging the White House to take swift and decisive action to stop the genocide in Darfur. The Resolution urges President Bush to advocate sending NATO troops to support the African Union forces and for NATO to enforce a no-fly zone in Darfur. It also calls upon the UN Security Council to approve a peace-enforcement mission that is well trained, well equipped, with adequate troop strength. (The Biden-Brownback resolution was also cosponsored by Senators Richard Lugar (R-IN), Chris Dodd (D-CT), Russ Feingold (D-WI), and Barack Obama (D-IL). It passed the Senate with unanimous support.)

- Supplemental Aid Package

On February 16, 2006, President Bush submitted an emergency supplemental funding request to Congress for \$514 million for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid programs for Sudan. Of this sum, \$389 million is intended for Darfur: \$150 million is designated for humanitarian aid, such as assisting with infrastructure needs; \$140 million is designated for food, and \$99 million is designated for non-food items, such as tents.³⁰

Updated by Honey Kessler Amado

³⁰Brian Steidle, KPFK interview, March 3, 2006.