



## SIX MONTHS SINCE 1769

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### **An Overview of Conflict in Sudan and the International Failure to Protect August 2007 – January 2008**

Since 2003, the United Nations have passed nineteen Resolutions on Darfur, including [Security Council Resolution 1706](#), the only instance in history of a UN peacekeeping mission that was authorized and failed to deploy. On July 31, 2007, Security Council Resolution 1769 again authorized a multinational UN-led peacekeeping force for Darfur – the “hybrid” African Union/United Nations operation termed UNAMID. UNAMID officially assumed control of peacekeeping operations in Darfur on December 31, 2007, however, its deployment is well behind the timetable laid out by the Security Council. Force Commander General Martin Agwai and UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno have continued to warn that unless 2008 sees a substantial change in international action, UNAMID risks succumbing to Khartoum’s obstructionism and facing a similar aborted fate as its predecessor mission authorized by Resolution 1706 .

UN blue helmets now mark the several thousand peacekeepers stationed in Darfur, but over the past six months the humanitarian situation there has gotten substantially worse than in early 2007. Levels of malnutrition have reached UN-defined emergency levels for the first time since 2004, the Sudanese government has pursued out a brutal campaign to dismantle some of the region’s largest internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, and there international aid workers have been forced to dramatically scale back operations.

Since Resolution 1769 was passed, the security situation in Darfur has deteriorated. Peacekeepers wearing the green uniforms of the African Union were attacked and killed by Darfuri rebels. In another incident, peacekeepers driving in clearly marked UN vehicles were attacked with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenade fire by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). Ordinary Darfuris have been assaulted and murdered by Janjaweed militia, bombarded by Khartoum’s helicopter gunships, shot to death by government soldiers, and brutalized by rebels and opportunistic criminals within the camps where they reside.

Since July 31, UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon visited Darfur and President Bush appointed a new U.S. special envoy for Sudan. Both these leaders and many others in the international community have made sweeping statements about the urgency of deploying the hybrid UNAMID force. Expectations in IDP camps about the promise of stability UN troops bring have risen only to be continually disappointed by the glacial pace of the mission’s deployment.

In the broader context of the whole country of Sudan, the six months since UNAMID was authorized have seen a series of critical political challenges. The Comprehensive Peace

Agreement (CPA) that ended the 20-year civil war between North and South Sudan almost collapsed during this period, with South Sudanese ministers temporarily withdrawing from their seats in government. While Sudan's power-sharing Government of National Unity (GNU) appears shored up for the moment, the dominant National Congress Party (NCP) in the Khartoum regime continues to refuse to honor its commitments to implement essential measures of the CPA.

The following report offers a month-by-month account of the status of UN Security Council Resolution 1769 since its passage on July 31 2007 and the failure of the international community to protect the people of Darfur. In keeping with Africa Action's emphasis on understanding and responding to the genocide in Darfur within the [broader context of Sudan's multiple conflicts](#), this timeline also includes critical events in Sudan outside of the western province of Darfur

### **August**

UN member states missed the August 31 deadline for pledges of troop contributions to UNAMID, and throughout the month, the humanitarian situation in Darfur deteriorated. Attacks on international aid workers grew more frequent, restricting the ability of humanitarian operations to access the most malnourished and economically marginalized communities. Fighting between rebel factions and government forces that began in June continued in West Darfur, particularly around the Jebel Moon/Sirba areas. Several villages were bombed by Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) aircraft. Representatives of displaced persons in Kalma camp in South Darfur reported that police and SAF officers responded to news of internal strife and rebel activity in Kalma camp by surrounding the settlement and opening fire on it.

This repression in Darfur paralleled Khartoum's actions in the North of Sudan brought to international attention by the August 27 statement of Miloon Kothari, the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing Rights. Kothari voiced his extreme concern regarding "numerous reports of violations of civil and political rights" against communities affected by the Merowe and Kajbar dam projects in North Sudan. These violations included "shooting of unarmed demonstrators, arbitrary arrests of activists, and repressive measures against the press when journalists have attempted to cover the events."

### **September**

Early in the month, UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki moon visited Sudan in an attempt to jump-start peace negotiations and convince government officials to facilitate the deployment of the peacekeeping mission authorized by Resolution 1769. Days after the Secretary-General completed his visit, 25 civilians were killed in a South Darfur attack by SAF that included aerial and ground-based bombardment. At the end of September, rebel forces attacked African Union peacekeepers based in the South Darfur town of Haskanita killing seven and injuring eight others. On September 18, UN member states transmitted their initial pledges of troop contributions, nearly a month later than the original deadline written into Resolution 1769.

## **October**

In response to the rebel attacks on AU peacekeepers at the end of September, government soldiers and allied militia razed the town of Haskanita, previously home to around 7,000 people. 30 civilians were brutally killed by Janjaweed militia and SAF in the nearby South Darfur town of Muhagiriya, historically a stronghold for rebel groups.

Government forces and allied militias continued the campaign begun in the summer to evict displaced civilians from the camps near Nyala in South Darfur, with violent assaults and killings in Kalma camp and Otash camp, home to 60,000 and 90,000 people, respectively. As attacks and robbery attempts against humanitarian aid workers continued, international relief agencies were forced to further scale down their operations. Foreign employees of oil companies joined the list of targets of violence in Sudan this month, when five engineers (including an Iraqi and an Egyptian) were seized as hostages by the JEM rebel group during a JEM assault on the Defra oil field in the Kordofan region to the west of Darfur.

On October 2, UN member states transmitted their final lists of pledged troop contributions to the government of Sudan. According to Resolution 1769, October was the deadline for UNAMID to be deployed in at least an initial operational capacity, yet no new troops or equipment were dispatched until the October 31 symbolic opening of a minimally staffed UNAMID base in Al Fasher, North Darfur. At the end of October, Darfuri rebels met with Sudanese government officials in Sirte, Libya to negotiate a peace settlement, but the absence of several of the most important rebel factions meant that the talks broke down with no substantive progress. Any good intentions on Khartoum's part indicated by the widely publicized unilateral ceasefire the government announced when the talks began on October 27 were belied by SAF helicopter bombing attacks on rebels and civilians in West Darfur on October 28.

On October 11, the SPLM/A announced its withdrawal from Sudan's Government of National Unity (GNU). The GNU was the result of the power-sharing agreement with Omer Al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP) that had prevailed since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) took effect in 2005 and ended decades of North-South civil war. SPLM/A chief and President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir explained that SPLM/A ministers had withdrawn from the GNU to protest the NCP regime's failure to honor its commitments laid out in the CPA. This decision triggered an escalation in military activity by both SAF and SPLA troops around the North-South border and led to widespread fears among observers and the Sudanese public that the 2005 peace treaty was close to collapse.

## **November**

Political negotiations between the government of Sudan and select rebel factions failed to progress in November, and fighting between rebels and SAF continued sporadically despite the Sirte talks. Hostilities escalated between Chadian rebels operating near the Sudanese border on the western edge of Darfur and Chad's military, and the governments of Sudan and Chad began to trade accusations of interference in one another's internal affairs through support for rebels in each nation. On November 26, Chinese military engineers and a Bangladeshi police unit arrived in Nyala, Darfur. These personnel were

authorized under the UN support package for the existing African Union peacekeeping mission, and their arrival was intended to facilitate subsequent deployments of UNAMID peacekeepers. The Egyptian and Iraqi engineers kidnapped by rebels from the Defra oil field were released, along with three Sudanese oil workers seized in the same raid. Sudanese government forces continued their targeted assaults on IDP camps in South Darfur, forcibly evicting residents of Otash camp near Nyala to undisclosed locations and increasing violent harassment of humanitarian organizations working in and around this area.

## **December**

Throughout the month, fighting between rebels and government forces escalated around el Geneina in West Darfur, and tensions along the Chad-Darfur border continued to heighten as Chadian forces bombed targets within Sudanese territory. Meanwhile, the political crisis between the SPLM/A and the NCP cooled off, as South Sudanese leaders announced that SPLM/A delegates would rejoin the Government of National Unity on December 21. December 31 was the deadline for the hybrid UNAMID force to officially take over for the existing under-resourced African Union peacekeeping mission known as AMIS, and peacekeepers honored this change in mandates by swapping their green African Union helmets for blue United Nations headgear and raising both AU and UN flags.

Despite this symbolic change, by the end of December, UNAMID was far from the state of readiness that Resolution 1769 stipulated it should have reached by that date. It was not until December 13 that Khartoum agreed to begin negotiations with UN officials about a Status of Forces Agreement that would explicitly define the day-to-day legal terms under which UNAMID personnel may operate and clarify command and control ambiguities for the AU/UN hybrid force. Khartoum has yet to sign this agreement. UN diplomatic pressure in December convinced the government of Sudan to permit UNAMID to engage in medical evacuation flights at night, but Khartoum still refused to allow night flights for any other purposes – an essential component of any peace operation, and one of many basic operational issues that the NCP regime has successfully obstructed since July 31.

On December 31, President Bush signed into law the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act, a bill that would allow American states, local governments, mutual funds and pension funds to divest from Sudanese businesses.

## **January**

On January 7, [Richard Williamson](#) was sworn in as the new U.S. special envoy for Sudan, replacing Andrew Natsios, who resigned for personal reasons at the end of December. Williamson's appointment was accompanied by a series of aggressively worded statements by President Bush pledging the U.S. commitment to protect the people of Darfur and address Sudan's multiple conflicts through a comprehensive strategy of concerted diplomatic pressure.

The same day Williamson was sworn in, Sudanese Armed Forces attacked a UNAMID supply convoy traveling between Umm Baru and Tine in West Darfur, destroying a cargo truck, damaging an armored personnel carrier and critically wounding a driver. UN investigations revealed without a doubt that the attack was premeditated and deliberate, and Sudanese officials eventually admitted planning the assault. On January 11, the UN Security Council issued a statement condemning the attack, but Chinese pressure weakened the language to place the blame on simply “elements” of the Sudanese military, a vague characterization that Khartoum publicly interpreted as not constituting a direct criticism of the Sudanese government as a whole. On January 9, frustrated with the Sudanese government’s refusal to accept their personnel contributions to UNAMID, Sweden and Norway withdrew their pledges to add troops to the hybrid force. Sudan also reiterated its rejection of pledged Nepalese peacekeepers, although the government of Nepal maintained its position of willingness to deploy these forces whenever Khartoum accepted them.

Reconciliatory efforts within Sudan’s Government of National Unity continued, as the January 9 deadline of withdrawal of SAF personnel from South Sudan and SPLA troops from the North Sudanese regions of Blue Nile and the Kordofan was successfully met. At the end of the month, the SPLM/A and NCP announced that they had agreed to a common negotiating position vis-à-vis Darfuri rebel groups. This contrasts with the political negotiations of October 2007 during which SPLM/A leaders held separate forums in Juba, South Sudan for rebel groups to consult in a distinct process from the official talks taking place in Libya between rebels and the NCP.

## **A MISSION ON THE EDGE OF COLLAPSE**

“Today we have the convergence of three factors which put UNAMID at great risk, probably the greatest risk [to any peacekeeping operation] since the 1990s,” said UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno on January 9, in response to the Sudanese military attack on the UNAMID convoy two days earlier. According to Guéhenno, ongoing fighting in Darfur, the reticence of the Sudanese government to accept the mission, and the “tragic” absence of resources with which UNAMID has been equipped to operate all have left the operation close to collapse.

Khartoum continues to refuse troops from countries outside of the African continent, and to resist granting adequate land and water access rights to UNAMID or night flying rights. Khartoum insists on the right to shut down UNAMID communications during military operations and requests that UNAMID notify the Sudanese government in advance of all its military movements. Khartoum stands in the way of landing rights for heavy transport aircraft at key cities and delays off-loading of equipment in Port Sudan. In addition, the regime has confiscated communications equipment destined for UNAMID use in Darfur.

As of January 28, 2007, only around 1,400 of the allocated 6,000 police officers for UNAMID are in Darfur, and only 7,000 troops out of the total 20,000 have been

deployed. While this is attributable to Khartoum's blatant obstructionism, responsibility for the absence of pledges to contribute even a single helicopter to the fleet of at least 24 operational tactical and transport helicopters that UNAMID requires rests solely with the international community. One impediment to the willingness of European countries to contribute helicopters is the ambiguity that remains surrounding the command and control arrangements for the hybrid AU/UN force. The Status of Forces Agreement that UN officials are pushing for Khartoum to sign on to could help resolve this hesitance by making explicitly clear that the UN is responsible for UNAMID's ultimate command and control and laying out operating procedures in line with UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations norms.

Around 300,000 people were newly displaced from Darfur in 2007, according to UN estimates, and the risk that the humanitarian aid organizations upon which 4.2 million people rely to survive will withdraw increases daily. On January 28, amid fresh reports of government-allied militia killing civilians in West Darfur, UN Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno stated bluntly, "I think it will take the better part of 2008 to deploy the full force." This process can only be expedited by concerted, forceful diplomacy by the U.S. and the international community, and the willingness of wealthy nations to contribute the resources UNAMID needs.