

EMPTY PROMISES ON DARFUR

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FAILS TO DELIVER



Conflict continues to rage in Darfur, Sudan. More than 300,000 people have died so far as a direct or indirect result of the conflict, according to UN estimates. More than 2.4 million people have been displaced. Between 270,000 and 300,000 more people were forced from their homes during 2008 and are living in camps for the internally displaced in various parts of the state.

Women and children continue to be failed by the international community. The fighting between the Sudanese armed forces, their allied militia and the disparate armed opposition groups continues to blight the lives of civilians, especially women and girls.

“I met Mastoura [name changed] in April 2008,” Amnesty International was told by a humanitarian aid

Women carrying bundles of firewood in Kalma camp for the internally displaced

worker in Darfur. “She came to see me with her friend. It would appear her friend was there to give her support, to encourage her to talk about her ordeal. Mastoura avoided any eye contact. She spoke Masalit, and her friend translated for her. What Mastoura told me was harrowing, yet not unusual. She



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spoke of the day when two men on horseback 'beat her'. Like most women I met in Darfur, Mastoura would use those words to explain that the men had in fact raped her."

Mastoura lives in a camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) in El Geneina in west Darfur. In March 2008, together with several other women intent on gathering firewood for their families, she headed out beyond the camp into what they call Al khala, the wilderness. On their daily journey to gather firewood, two men on horseback appeared. As they were out in the wilderness, they had nowhere to run to, and nobody to protect them. The UN and African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) had pledged to provide firewood patrols, but was doing so only sporadically, and in some instances not at all. Women have been left to fetch firewood on their own and at their peril.

"When Mastoura came to see me, she had been keeping her ordeal secret for more than a month. She came to see me at the centre outside the camp, as she feared that she might be carrying the child of one of these two men. After a few minutes, Mastoura pulled out of a plastic bag a torn yellow *thowb*, the colourful fabric Sudanese women wear. The *thowb* was the only proof she had of what she had endured. She had kept it, waiting. Only a torn dress to witness for all she did not say."

"When I went with Mastoura to the local health clinic tests revealed that she was pregnant. That was the only time I saw Mastoura cry."

"I saw Mastoura for many days that followed. She did not want my legal advice for she feared, and she was right, that her yellow torn dress would not be enough to bring her justice. Mastoura just wanted her pregnancy undone. And that was only one of the things I could not offer her".

"Mastoura told me that her husband disappeared in 2006. He went on a trip to Khartoum. She had not heard of him since."

There are many women who have suffered what Mastoura went through in Darfur. The attacks continue unchecked to this day, as the men that rape, pillage and harm women and girls do so with impunity.

UNAMID was deployed in January 2008, but so far the situation of civilians, including women and children living in Darfur, has not significantly improved. Attacks still occur, despite the presence of the UNAMID forces.

There are an unknown number of children, like Mastoura's child, who have been born as a result of rape and who are now living in IDP camps all over Darfur. Camp residents call them the Janjaweed children.

UNAMID patrols, including firewood patrols, have resumed in some parts of Darfur. However, the protection UNAMID offers to those living in IDP camps in Darfur is extremely limited. Communities living in rural and remote areas are most at risk. For example, attacks by the army, supported by the Janjaweed militia, on the villages of Sirba and Selea in



UN peacekeepers in Darfur: too few and poorly equipped

the northern corridor of west Darfur in February 2008 led to rapes, killings of civilians, widespread destruction of property and further forced displacement.

There have been numerous attacks against civilians in Darfur by all parties to the conflict. The failure of UNAMID to protect civilians from these attacks illustrates how critically under-equipped and under-resourced the peacekeeping force is.

In December 2008, Khalil, an internally displaced person living



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UNAMID: SLOW TO DEPLOY AND UNDER-RESOURCED

The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1769 on 31 July 2007, in which it undertook to deploy a peacekeeping force to Darfur, to be known as the African Union-United Nations hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). The hybrid force was created to replace the African Union Mission in Sudan, to safeguard peace in the war-ravaged state of Darfur. Rodolphe Adada, Joint Special Representative of UNAMID, however said: “we are here to keep a peace that doesn’t exist”.

The deployment of the UNAMID began in January 2008. By the end of the year, the force was little more than half the required capacity and still lacked vital military equipment. UNAMID was meant to have a capacity of 31,042 personnel including 25,987 uniformed personnel and the necessary equipment, such as heavy ground transport and attack helicopters, to enable it to fulfil its protection mandate. As of 31 October 2008, the force’s strength was 11,415 uniformed personnel supported by 2,360 civilians. In late 2008, the UN Secretary-General’s spokesman announced that UNAMID had reached 63 per cent of its authorized military strength with a total of 12,374 deployed military personnel.

Amnesty International has analysed the pledges and contributions made by a number of key states to UNAMID, based on information available in the public domain, including UN and media reports. Specific information on pledges and contributions was also requested from governments, but was often not forthcoming.

in Hasa Hisa IDP camp in west Darfur, told Amnesty International:

“They promised us they would start the firewood patrols and protect our women when they go out to fetch firewood. One day later, the patrols stopped. No equipment they say. Every day our women are raped, we are killed, we are tortured. They [the government] throw our people in prison... Our camp has been surrounded by the Janjaweed since yesterday morning. Five people have been injured so far; the Janjaweed are now targetting civilians in our camp. UNAMID came to intervene but left soon after. UNAMID cannot reach Hasa Hisa and initiate proper patrols. They only come to report.

They put up a tent outside the camp and when the Janjaweed came, they removed it.

“We ask the international community to look our way; to see how we are left with the Janjaweed and the government to attack us as they please. We are left on our own.”

The people of Darfur continue to be betrayed by the international community. A year since the start of UNAMID’s deployment, the peacekeeping force has still not been provided with sufficient troops and military hardware.

Despite numerous pledges of troops, military hardware, finance and other

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assistance, UNAMID remains severely under-resourced and unable to provide civilians with effective protection. The supportive rhetoric from large sections of the international community has not resulted in UNAMID being given ground and air transport equipment, especially the helicopters and other resources that it sorely requires to discharge its mandate. Countries which could provide UNAMID with military hardware such as helicopters have so far failed to do so.

Many of the African countries that pledged to provide troops to UNAMID have only partially deployed. Delays in the deployment are further undermining the force and reducing its ability to carry out its mandate on the ground and reach out to the most vulnerable communities.

Countries that ought to provide leadership over the crisis in Darfur

have not used their influence over the government of Sudan and the armed opposition groups to halt attacks against civilians. They have also failed to ensure that UNAMID is adequately resourced.

Amnesty International calls on the international community – in particular the USA, China, India, Russia, Japan, Australia, Egypt, South Africa and European Union (EU) countries including the UK, France and Germany – to use their influence and ensure that UNAMID is immediately provided with all the military equipment it requires, especially helicopters. These are not the only countries that can provide helicopters or ground transport equipment to UNAMID. There are numerous other countries that can.

The Friends of UNAMID group was created in February 2008 to provide training and equipment for

countries contributing troops to UNAMID. Co-chaired by the USA and Canada, the group includes the EU, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Tanzania, and the UK. The best that the Friends of UNAMID group has achieved is to put pressure on the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to expedite deployment. However, most members of the group have provided little in terms of additional funding, personnel or resources for UNAMID beyond the training of troops from African contributing countries. Although it is the role of DPKO to deploy peacekeeping troops, increased support from the Friends of UNAMID is essential to expediting full deployment in Darfur.

The international community must provide UNAMID with all the troops and military equipment that it needs now, especially helicopters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

YEARS OF EMPTY PROMISES MUST END. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST ACT NOW.

Amnesty International's recommendations to the international community:

■ Countries that pledged troops and other essential personnel to UNAMID should ensure that these are adequately trained and are promptly deployed to Darfur.

■ The USA, China, India, Russia, Japan, Australia, Egypt, South Africa and EU countries including the UK, France and Germany, among others, must use their influence to ensure that the UNAMID peacekeeping force is provided with the ground and air transport equipment and troops that it requires to fulfil its mandate to protect civilians in Darfur.

■ Members of the Friends of UNAMID group must provide timely training, funding and equipment to African troop-contributing countries to facilitate the troops' immediate deployment to Darfur.

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