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Sudan: New photographs show further breach of UN arms embargo on Darfur

Amnesty International today released new photographs showing that the Sudanese government is continuing to deploy offensive military equipment in Darfur despite the UN arms embargo and peace agreements.

"The Sudanese government is still deploying weapons into Darfur in breathtaking defiance of the UN arms embargo and Darfur peace agreements. Once again Amnesty International calls on the UN Security Council to act decisively to ensure the embargo is effectively enforced, including by the placement of UN observers at all ports of entry in Sudan and Darfur," said Brian Wood, Amnesty International's Arms Control Research Manager.

The photographs, sent to Amnesty International and the International Peace Information Service in Antwerp by eyewitnesses in Darfur, reinforce evidence provided in Amnesty International's May 2007 report "Sudan: Arms continuing to fuel serious human rights violations in Darfur". Taken in July at El Geneina airport in Darfur, the new photographs show:

- Containers being offloaded by Sudanese army soldiers from an Antonov aircraft onto military trucks at the military apron of El Geneina airport. The Russian-supplied Antonov 12 freighter aircraft with registration number ST-ASA is listed as operated by Azza Transport, itself under investigation by the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan arms embargo for arms transfers into Darfur (**photograph 1**).
- A Russian-supplied Mi-17 military helicopter (registration number 534) belonging to the Sudanese Air Force at El Geneina (**photograph 2**). Russia signed a deal to supply at least 15 such helicopters for delivery in 2005 and 2006.
- A Russian-supplied Mi-24 attack helicopter with registration number 928 redeployed to El Geneina airport from Nyala, Darfur (**photograph 3**). Russia supplied 12 such attack helicopters to Sudan in 2005.

Aerial attacks by the Government of Sudan on civilians in Darfur continue, with the UN reporting air attacks in North Darfur at the end of June. Thousands of displaced villagers have fled the Jebel Moon/Sirba area in West Darfur after renewed attacks on areas under control of armed opposition groups by government of Sudan forces supported by Janjawid. Local people said that helicopters brought in arms to the government and Janjawid forces. In South Darfur a Sudanese government Antonov aircraft carried out bombing raids following a 2 August attack by the opposition Justice and Equality Movement on the town of Adila, targeting villages and water points. Since then there have been a number of Sudanese government Antonov bombing raids on Ta'alba, near the town of Adila, and on 13 August the villages of Habib Suleiman and Fataha were bombed. An Antonov capable of such raids was reportedly transferred from Russia to Sudan in September 2006.

Amnesty International is also concerned at reports of armed Sudanese border patrol guards at El Geneina using militarized Land Rover 4x4 vehicles in civilian settlements. This presents a serious threat to civilians because the Sudanese government has incorporated large numbers of Janjawid militia into the border guard, as well as the Popular Defence Force (PDF) and Reserve Police, without ensuring that those responsible for serious human rights violations are excluded.

The proliferation of small arms and militarized vehicles in Darfur has led to an increase in armed attacks on aid convoys and other devastating attacks against civilians. The Government of Sudan has consistently failed to stop such attacks by ethnic groups using Government of Sudan arms and vehicles. On 31 July, in the latest of a series of attacks, the northern Rizeigat group - many dressed in the uniforms of the Border Intelligence - mounted an attack on the Tarjem group which left at least 68 people dead. Using scores of militarized vehicles, and armed with rocket propelled grenades and machine guns, the northern Rizeigat shot indiscriminately as they entered Gawaya village, where hundreds were gathered to mourn those killed in an attack four days before. Both the northern Rizeigat and the Tarjem groups identify themselves as Arabs and have been members of the Janjawid and of various Sudanese government backed paramilitary forces such as the Popular Defence Force (PDF).

On 31 July 2007, the UN Security Council agreed through resolution 1769 to send a newly strengthened African Union-United Nations hybrid force to Darfur but the resolution fails to provide peacekeepers with the mandate to disarm or demobilize government-backed Janjawid militia and the Darfur armed opposition groups.

"If weapons continue to flow into Darfur and peacekeepers are not given the power to disarm and demobilize all armed opposition groups and Janjawid militia, the ability of the new peacekeeping force to protect civilians will be severely impeded," said Erwin van der Borght, Director of Amnesty International's Africa Program

"For a peacekeeping operation in Darfur to have any chance of success, the UN Security Council must ensure that the arms embargo on Darfur is fully and effectively enforced and that peacekeepers are mandated to disarm or demobilize government-backed Janjawid militia and Darfuri armed opposition groups," said Erwin van der Borght

Notes to editors

UN arms embargo: On 29 March 2005, the UN Security Council, in Resolution 1591, imposed a comprehensive arms embargo on all parties to the conflict in Darfur, including the Government of Sudan. This expanded the 30 July 2004 UN arms embargo imposed through Resolution 1556 on all non-governmental groups, including the Janjawid militia, operating in the states of North Darfur, South Darfur and West Darfur. In accordance with paragraph 7 of Resolution 1591 (2005), any deployment of military equipment and supplies into the Darfur region may only be made if previously approved by the UN Sanctions Committee on Sudan. The UN Panel of Experts monitoring the arms embargo on Darfur has repeatedly said that such deployments constitute a violation of resolution 1591 (2005) and as far as Amnesty International knows, no such permission has been granted by the UN Sanctions Committee on Sudan.

Darfur peace agreements: The UN Security Council also demanded that the Government of Sudan and two armed opposition groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, respect 8 April N'djamena Ceasefire Agreement and the 9 November 2004 Abuja Humanitarian and Security Protocols which amongst other things require the Government of Sudan to disarm and demobilize the Janjawid militia, downsize and restrict the movement of the Popular Defence Forces and "*refrain from supplying or acquiring arms and ammunition.*"

Azza Transport: On 24 February 2007 an Antonov-12 (ST-AQE) operated by Azza Transport, although belonging to United Arabian Airlines, had crash-landed at El Geneina airport while carrying arms and military personnel (122mm two artillery howitzers and 40 to 50 olive drab wooden boxes suspected to contain arms and ammunition). On 29 May 2007, Azza Transport was added to the economic sanctions list of the US Office of Foreign Assets Control for "constituting a threat to peace and stability in Darfur, and to have directly or indirectly supplied, sold, or transferred arms or any related *materiel* to belligerents in Darfur."

Enclosed:

(Photo 1) AN-12 (ST-ASA) unloading goods at the military apron of El Geneina airport.

(Photo 2) Mi-7 military transport helicopter (registration number 534) El Geneina.

(Photo 3) Mi-24 attack helicopter (registration number 928), El Geneina

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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