AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE

Sudan: Extension of AU peacekeeping mission only first step

Published

Reacting to today's news that the Sudanese government has agreed to an extension of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Sudan, Amnesty International said that today's development is a first step towards the protection of civilians in Darfur but must be followed by the deployment of UN peacekeepers.

"The people of Darfur need UN peacekeepers now," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International. "Sudanese government agreement to an extension of AMIS' mandate is not a major concession. It is the absolute minimum of what is required to protect the people of Darfur and must be replaced, as soon as possible, with a strong UN peacekeeping force."

The African Union Peace and Security Council today issued a statement expressing the organization's intention to renew the mandate of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) until 31 December 2006. It also reiterated its support for a transition to a UN peacekeeping force.

"The Sudanese government has been playing political games for far too long – games that have cost the lives of women, men and children in Darfur," said Irene Khan. "The international community cannot accept a compromise when it comes to human rights. The rights of civilians in Darfur cannot be bargained away in the interest of political expediency."

"The extension of AMIS' mandate in no way absolves the international community of maintaining pressure on Sudan to accept UN peacekeepers."

For further information regarding Amnesty International's work on Darfur, please see:
http://web.amnesty.org/pages/sdn-index-eng

Public Document
****

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

For latest human rights news view http://news.amnesty.org