



The Genocide in Darfur – Briefing Paper

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Background

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, located just south of Egypt on the eastern edge of the Sahara desert. The country's major economic resource is oil. But, as in other developing countries with oil, this resource is not being developed for the benefit of the Sudanese people. As much as 70 percent of Sudan's oil export revenues are used to finance the country's military.¹

Darfur, an area about the size of France, lies in western Sudan and borders Libya, Chad and the Central African Republic. It has only the most basic infrastructure and development. The approximately 6 million inhabitants of Darfur are among the poorest in Africa. They exist largely on either subsistence farming or nomadic herding. Even in good times, the Darfuri people face a very harsh and difficult life; these are not good times in Darfur.

The current crisis in Darfur began in 2003. After decades of neglect, drought, oppression and small-scale conflicts in Darfur, two rebel groups – the Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) – mounted an insurgency against the central government. These groups represent agrarian farmers who are mostly 'non-Arab black African' Muslims from a number of different tribes. President al-Bashir's response was brutal. In seeking to defeat the rebel movements, the Government of Sudan increased arms and support to local tribal and other militias, which have come to be known as the *Janjaweed*.² Their members are composed mostly of 'Arab black African' Muslims³ who herd cattle, camels, and other livestock. They have wiped out entire villages, destroyed food and water supplies, and systematically murdered, tortured, and raped hundreds of thousands of Darfuris. In previous internal conflicts (in the south, center, and east of the country), the Sudanese government also

¹ Jeffrey Gettleman, "Far Away from Darfur's Agony, Khartoum is Booming," *New York Times*, 23 October 2006.

² Janjaweed loosely translates to "devil on horseback."

³ It is important to understand that all Darfuris are Muslim and black. The distinction between "African" and "Arab" is primarily descriptive of lifestyle, and is common local parlance in Darfur: the "Arabs," who are roughly 35% of the population, are nomadic herders; the "Africans," roughly 65% of the population, are sedentary farmers. Traditionally, the two groups coexisted and had arrangements for passage of nomads through farm land areas. These arrangements started failing under the pressure of desertification and population growth, but were managed through traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. When the Sudanese government launched its genocide in 2003, it instrumentalized the underlying tensions over land use by arming certain "Arab" clans and inciting them to attack "African" villages, with the promise of control of the diminishing land and water resources.

employed the tactic of using proxy militias to attack the civilian populations that have been thought to support insurgencies. These attacks often occur with the direct support of the Government of Sudan's armed forces, or at the very least with tacit approval from it.

Few have been spared violence, murder, rape and torture. As one illustration of how Khartoum has waged its war, the Sudanese military paints many of its attack aircraft white – the same color as U.N. humanitarian aircraft – a violation of international humanitarian law. When a plane approaches, villagers do not know whether it is on a mission to help them, or to bomb them. Often, it has been the latter.

This scorched earth campaign by the Sudanese government against Darfuri civilians has, through direct violence, disease and starvation, already claimed as many as 400,000 lives. It has spilled over into neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic. In all, about 2.3 million Darfuris have fled their homes and communities and now reside in a network of internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Darfur, with over 200,000 more living in refugee camps in Chad. These refugees and IDPs are almost entirely dependent on the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations for their basic needs – food, water, shelter, and health care.

Approximately 1 million more Darfuris still live in their villages, under the constant threat of bombings, raids, murder, rape and torture. Until the arrival of the long-awaited United Nations peacekeeping force, authorized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1769, actually takes place, the safety of these civilians depends on the presence of the underfunded and undermanned African Union peacekeeping force. Known as AMIS, the force, in Darfur since October 2004, numbers just 7,400 troops and personnel. AMIS lacks a civilian protection mandate as well as adequate means to stop the violence. Its sole mandate is to monitor and report ceasefire violations and it has done little more, due to its limited mandate but also because of its anemic capacity.

In the summer of 2007, outbreaks of violence between some of the Arab tribes that worked together as part of the *Janjaweed* began to occur more frequently. This latest mutation is indicative of the ever-changing dynamic of this crisis. The United Nations recently reported that tribal and factional fighting is now killing more people than the clashes between the government or government-backed militias and rebel forces.

Another new dynamic, reported by various news sources, is the tens of thousands of non-Darfuris arriving in Darfur in recent months, with many ending up on lands belonging to displaced Darfuris. Different news outlets have reported slightly varied information about Arab groups from neighboring countries, like Niger and Chad, resettling in Darfur. Many news reports cite the same rumors and unconfirmed reports of third-party nationals being given Sudanese identity documents, as well as other evidence of a planned scheme to permanently settle Arabs from outside the Sudan on the lands of displaced Darfuris. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that as many as 30,000 people have left Chad for Darfur in a steady flow since early 2007.

Current Humanitarian Situation

The government continues its military operations directly and through its proxy militias. Those who have visited the camps in Darfur and Chad, including some from the Save Darfur Coalition, have reported on the dire conditions their inhabitants endure. It is remarkable they have survived for this long, in the face of such overwhelming hardship, and with so little progress toward resolving the underlying cause of their dislocation and insecurity. Only the herculean efforts of the U.N. and non-governmental humanitarian relief agencies have made this possible. 13,000 aid workers in approximately 100 refugee camps in Darfur and Chad work under very difficult security and logistical conditions and are constantly harassed by Sudanese government obstruction and red tape.

Humanitarian workers and operations are increasingly being targeted by both government and fragmenting rebel movement elements. Vehicles are being hijacked and robbed; aid workers are assaulted and intimidated while carrying out their work and offices are broken into and looted.

In 2007 alone, according to the U.N., over 240,000 additional people have been displaced as they continue to flee the ongoing violence. Both the U.N. and non-governmental humanitarian agencies have warned that their ability to sustain operations is at risk in the face of government harassment and worsening security problems. Any interruption in the flow of humanitarian aid could spark deaths on a scale even worse than that seen to date: U.N. officials say that the death rate in Darfur could rise as high as 100,000 people per month if the fragile humanitarian life-support system collapses.⁴

U.S. and International Diplomatic Efforts

U.S. Actions

The human suffering in Darfur continues despite the fact that the United States Congress, President Bush, and two U.S. Secretaries of State, have all labeled the conflict in Darfur genocide – the first time in U.S. history that a conflict has been labeled as such while it was ongoing.

On April 18, 2007, President Bush stated that he was tired of Sudan's obfuscation and evasion as it pursued its genocide; he demanded prompt action by President Omar al-Bashir to end the genocide and cooperate with international demands that he admit U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur and cease obstructing humanitarian aid. The President warned that the U.S. would impose unilateral, targeted economic sanctions on the Sudanese regime⁵ and work for the same globally in the U.N. Security Council. On May 29, 2007, President Bush announced the implementation of said sanctions against Sudan.⁶

⁴ UN Daily News, 14 September 2006, Issue DH/4732. United Nations News Service. Available online at <http://www.un.org/news/dh/pdf/english/2006/14092006.pdf>

⁵ The "Plan B" sanctions, as they are commonly referred to, target 31 companies owned, controlled or affiliated with the Sudanese government. They also sanction Ahmad Muhammad Harun, Sudan's state minister for humanitarian affairs, and Khalil Ibrahim of the Justice and Equality (JEM) rebel movement.

⁶ The United States has had trade and investment sanctions in place against Sudan since 1997, when it was harboring Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders.

While the U.S. is a major funder for both A.U. peacekeeping and humanitarian aid efforts in Darfur, the actual costs related to Darfur have often outpaced U.S. budget projections due to the changing nature and scope of the crisis, creating dangerous gaps in funding and the need for frequent emergency measures to address the shortfalls. Within the President's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08), there is a projected \$186 million shortfall for Darfur peacekeeping, and a \$6 billion shortfall for America's core humanitarian assistance. If these gaps are not addressed, the impact on international peacekeeping and aid efforts could negatively affect millions of Darfuris. Congress took initial steps to fill these gaps, but it is certain that more money will be required in the upcoming FY08 supplemental funding bill to fully rectify this shortfall.

Over the last few years, a number of states and universities divested their financial holdings from companies doing harmful business with the Sudanese regime. Unfortunately, there is an effort underway to overturn some of these state divestment laws. Congress is considering a resolution, H.R. 180, that would safeguard states' rights to divest. H.R. 180 would also bar U.S. contracts with these same companies, ensuring that federal tax dollars do not end up in Khartoum. H.R. 180 passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 418 – 1 on July 31, 2007 and now awaits action in the Senate.

Multilateral Actions

International diplomacy has also failed the people of Darfur. For four years, an endless parade of envoys and officials from the United States, many other countries and the U.N. have visited Khartoum with messages to President al-Bashir. The diplomacy has been sporadic, uncoordinated and incoherent. Promises and threats have gone unfulfilled. Khartoum has become adept at playing one envoy and peace initiative off against another – all in keeping with its overarching strategy to deny, delay, and defy a weak-willed and disunited international community as it pursues its genocide relentlessly in Darfur. To limit world awareness of that genocide, al-Bashir severely restricts access to Darfur by diplomats, humanitarian workers, and journalists – anyone who might tell the world community what is going on there. However, information from those who do visit and from aid workers and U.N. and A.U. personnel on the ground has provided broad evidence of ongoing government attacks.

Among the key multilateral diplomatic initiatives that have sought to end to the conflict:

- **Darfur Peace Agreement:** On May 5, 2006, under strong pressure from the A.U., the U.S. and others in the international community, the Sudanese government and one rebel faction (SLA/M-MM) signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in Abuja, Nigeria. However, other rebel groups found the DPA inadequate in addressing Darfuri grievances and refused to sign. The violence in Darfur has not subsided since the signing of the DPA. In August 2006, Sudanese government forces launched a major offensive in northern Darfur. That attack was quickly bogged down in the face of successful rebel counterattacks, achieving little other than renewed hostilities. While it quickly became clear that a military victory for Khartoum is impossible, the attempt to achieve victory made progress towards a peaceful solution nearly impossible. The U.N. and A.U. are currently working together to try to revitalize a political process to bring all parties back

to the table to work on a revised and improved DPA. This effort is being hampered by rebel disunity and by government obstruction. The Sudanese air force repeatedly bombed locations where rebels were to meet under U.N./A.U. auspices to unify their positions in order to negotiate properly.

- **U.N. Security Council Resolution 1706:** The United Nations has passed 16 resolutions on Darfur. One of the most important was Resolution 1706 of August 31, 2006 that authorized a robust U.N. peacekeeping force of 22,500 troops for Darfur with a mandate to protect its civilian population. Due to Sudanese stonewalling and a failure of U.N. member states to enforce their will, less than 200 U.N. advisors actually deployed.
- **U.N. Human Rights Council:** A high-level mission of the United Nations Human Rights Council, led by Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams, issued a report on March 7, 2007 which stated: “The situation [in Darfur] is characterized by gross and systemic violations of human rights and grave breaches of international humanitarian law. The principal pattern is one of a violent counterinsurgency campaign waged by the Government of Sudan in concert with *Janjaweed* militia, targeting mostly civilians.” Sudan sought to have the report rejected by the Council because the mission had not visited Darfur – which was true, but only because Sudan refused to issue visas to the mission members. That effort to quash the report failed. A new high-level delegation was appointed to follow up with a visit to Sudan and report back to the Council’s next session this summer.
- **U.N. Security Council Resolution 1769:** The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1769 unanimously on July 31, 2007. It determined that the situation in Darfur constitutes a threat to peace, and authorized the deployment of a United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. UNAMID will be the largest United Nations multilateral peacekeeping force ever deployed, with a total presence of more than 31,000 troops, police, and civilian personnel. When deployed, UNAMID will have the authority to “take the necessary action” to: (1) support early and effective implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, prevent disruption of its implementation and armed attacks, and most importantly to protect civilians, without prejudice to the responsibility of the government of Sudan, and (2) protect its personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, and to ensure security and freedom of movement of its own personnel and humanitarian workers. Full deployment of the force is not expected until mid-2008. It is estimated that UNAMID will cost roughly \$2.5 billion a year, in addition to start-up costs. U.N. member states will fund the mission through the U.N. assessment scale. The United States will contribute 27.1% of the total costs. If the U.N. fails to successfully deploy a peacekeeping force in Darfur, it will be the second time in that institution’s history that U.N. troops have not deployed after being authorized to do so by the Security Council. The first such instance was the failure to deploy troops in Darfur as mandated by Resolution 1706.

What Needs to Be Done to End This Genocide

The Save Darfur Coalition calls for emphasis of the following objectives toward which the United States, the U.N., and the international community must focus their efforts in order to end

this crisis. They must apply strong pressure to accompany more intensive and coherent diplomacy with Khartoum:

- **Ceasefire:** There needs to be a ceasefire respected by all parties to the conflict. There have been cease-fires agreed to in the past, notably in the 2006 DPA and again when New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson visited Khartoum in January 2007, but all parties violated them. The international community must back the U.N. and A.U. envoys as they work for an internal political negotiating process, including a viable ceasefire respected by all actors.
- **Effective and Credible Peacekeeping Force to Protect Civilians:** The full U.N./A.U. hybrid peacekeeping force established by Resolution 1769 needs to be deployed urgently to protect the civilian population. The first benchmark of UNSCR 1769 has already been missed; U.N. member states were supposed to finalize their contributions to UNAMID and the U.N. Secretary-General and the Chairman of the A.U. commission were expected to agree on the final composition of the military component of UNAMID no later than August 30, 2007.
- **A renewed Darfur peace process:** In order to achieve a permanent end to the genocide in Darfur, the effort to find a political solution must be renewed. A peace agreement must create the following three conditions: (1) a secure environment that allows displaced persons to return to their homes—if they chose to do so; (2) a sustainable political agreement embraced by all armed groups – as well as non-combatant groups representative of large portions of Darfuri society – which deals with the root causes of the conflict; (3) a cessation and reversal of resettlement efforts underway by the Government of Sudan; and (4) accountability for all those who committed or can be shown to have had command responsibility⁷ over violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. A renewed and inclusive peace process must begin immediately, must include all the necessary stakeholders, and must ensure a voice for the people of Darfur themselves. While said efforts should be led by the U.N. and A.U. envoys, the United States and other key international actors must reinforce their work by sustained engagement and pressure on the Government and rebel groups.

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What Needs to Be Done to Achieve Those Key Goals

The Save Darfur Coalition insistently calls for various measures to pressure Khartoum to end the genocide, something it has made clear it will not do in response to diplomacy alone. Such steps should include:

- **World leaders must make peace in Darfur a top priority:** It has been over two years since President Bush declared the situation in Darfur genocide, and yet it continues. The President and his administration have made little progress; the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. The performance of nearly all other world leaders, with few

⁷ Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, Art. 87(3). This provision is applicable to domestic armed conflicts as well, such as the one in Darfur.

exceptions, has been even worse. The situation in Darfur demands more than tough rhetoric. The President must take a leadership role in maintaining a coalition of key international actors to force Khartoum to end the killing. Arab and African leaders must also take on a proactive role in mediating an end to this crisis that has brewed in their midst for nearly half a decade now. In the immediate term, all U.N. member states must participate, whether financially, logistically, or through troop or equipment contributions to a swift and effective deployment of the hybrid force authorized by UNSCR 1769.

- **China must use its leverage on Khartoum:** China has a great deal of influence on Sudan given its status as Sudan's top trading partner, its strong military ties to Sudan and its protective role in the U.N. Security Council. Although China did not exercise its veto, as it had vowed to do early on, and voted for Resolution 1769, it did significantly weaken the final text of the resolution. China's vote in favor of 1769 came only after it managed to remove language calling for sanctions if Sudan fails to cooperate. Additionally, the hybrid force's mandate to "seize and dispose" of weapons found in Darfur in contravention of the arms embargo (UNSCR 1556/2004) was diluted in the final text, allowing the force to merely "monitor" them. China has displayed increased unease and engagement regarding Darfur, but more must be done. China is deeply image-conscious, especially with regard to the growing possibility that the 2008 Olympic Games will be marred by Darfur-related activities. Chinese oil investments in Sudan, which benefit the regime but not the people and help fund government military operations in Darfur, are also susceptible to pressure through the growing global divestment movement. All this leverage needs to be consistently applied to China, which is in a unique position to influence Khartoum's calculations.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Humanitarian aid in Darfur must be sustained while efforts are made to protect civilians and broker an agreement for a lasting end to the conflict. This means continued funding of aid programs and an international push to end Sudan's obstruction of aid efforts. The Government of Sudan is also guilty of innumerable violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, which have hampered the effective delivery of aid. Such actions must be brought to an end immediately. Given repeated U.N. and NGO warnings of the fragility of their efforts, the international community must prepare a contingency plan for a collapse of current aid programs.

About the Save Darfur Coalition

The Save Darfur Coalition raises public awareness about the ongoing genocide in Darfur and mobilizes a unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of people throughout the Darfur region. It is an alliance of more than 180 faith-based, advocacy and humanitarian organizations. The coalition's member organizations represent 130 million people of all ages, races, religions and political affiliations united together to help the people of Darfur. For more information on the coalition, please visit www.SaveDarfur.org. To obtain footage from the Darfur border region, coalition events, various interviews, and more, please visit the Save Darfur Coalition media gallery at <http://media.savedarfur.org>. All footage may be previewed in non-broadcast quality and may be purchased in broadcast quality by filling out the purchase request form provided on the site.