



Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development
Office of International Justice and Peace

Background on the Sudan
February 2008

Turning now to Africa, I should like first of all to reiterate my deep anguish, on observing that hope seems almost vanquished by the menacing sequence of hunger and death that is unfolding in Darfur. With all my heart I pray that the joint operation of the United Nations and the African Union, whose mission has just begun, will bring aid and comfort to the suffering populations.

--Pope Benedict XVI, January 2008

BACKGROUND

Although the United States and the international community have intervened in Sudan in many ways, the horrific situation has reached a crucial moment that demands an immediate, forceful and holistic response from the U.S. and the international community. The numerous obstacles placed in the way of the UN/African Union Peacekeeping force cast serious doubt on the Government of Sudan's (GoS) intentions. Jean Marie Guehenno, the UN Undersecretary for Peacekeeping, has said that they threaten the eventual success of the 26,000 man force. The walk out by Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) members of the National Unity Government in October 2007 in protest against the lack of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) threatens a return to a North-South war.

In Darfur around 250,000 people have died, 2 million are displaced, over 230,000 are refugees in Chad, and hundreds of thousands go hungry every day. The situation on the ground has grown increasingly untenable for humanitarian efforts. The continued violence points to a collective failure on the part of the international community to stem the catastrophe. The situation between the North and the South is equally urgent and potentially explosive. After more than two decades of civil war, the government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005. This agreement provides for a transformation of the government and lays the groundwork for addressing future crises. Despite some progress, implementation of the CPA has not progressed well, resulting in the SPLM withdrawing from the National Unity Government in October-November in protest. The SPLM has said that they will not return to war over the slow pace of progress, but many observers do not rule this out.

Crisis in Darfur: On July 31, 2007 the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1769 which calls for a UN/AU (UNAMID) peacekeeping force of 20,000 UN troops to complement the 6,000 AU troops already in Darfur. The force opened its headquarters in El-Fashir and the first contingent of Chinese engineers has arrived. Despite this progress, the ongoing UN/AU mission reports large-scale attacks on civilians, including rape and the burning of villages, as thousands more join the two million people who have already fled their homes. The AU troops themselves came under the worst attack to date in September. This attack and the AU's inability to defend itself exhibit how under-equipped the AU forces are. UN-sponsored negotiations between the government and Darfur rebels began in late October in Sirte, Libya, but the main rebel groups did not attend. Talks have been complicated by continued splintering of rebel groups. Although the government in Khartoum continues to reject allegations of links with the Arab militias known as *janjaweed*, undeniable military action by the government has contributed to the violence. Continued fighting among the various warring parties and scorched-earth tactics of the militia groups mean that prospects are bleak for reaching a ceasefire without a focused and concerted international effort.

The Darfur Peace Agreement signed in May 2006 between Khartoum and one of the three main rebel groups has failed to halt the violence. UNMID troop deployment began in 2008 and numbers now stand above 9,000, but success depends on robust military and transport equipment that will protect UNMID troops and give them the ability to carry out their Chapter VII mandate to stop the fighting and to protect the civilian population. Over a dozen humanitarian aid workers have been killed since June 2006. Access to displaced persons and other vulnerable groups in West Darfur is increasingly imperiled due to fighting.

In May 2007 the U.S. initiated targeted sanctions against 31 Sudanese companies that prevent them from conducting business in the U.S. The sanctions also targeted three Sudanese individuals (two government officials and one Darfur rebel) for fomenting violence and human rights abuses. The International Criminal Court issued indictments against Ahmad Haron, the Sudanese Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, and Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman (Ali Kushayb), a militia leader, for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The North/South Peace Agreement: The CPA provides for a six-year interim period during which the people of the South will create a functioning government, healthcare and educational institutions, a regional army and police, and viable economic institutions. After this interim period, the people of the South will have the right to decide whether to remain part of Sudan or to declare independence. Other provisions of the peace agreement include a wealth-sharing mechanism for equitable distribution of petroleum revenues, representation in the national government and the parliament, and guarantees of civil and religious liberties. The Shari'a Islamic penal code will apply only in the North so concerns remain over what protections will be provided to non-Muslims living in the North. The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has been monitoring compliance with the peace agreement.

Despite some progress towards implementing the CPA, the GoS has not moved on the most contentious elements of the agreement. Northern troops have not been withdrawn from Southern Sudan. The GoS has rejected what is supposed to be a final binding ruling by the Abyei Boundary Commission. No population census has been planned despite a January 2008 deadline. Preparations for elections, the establishment of the rule of law and democracy structures remain outstanding. Finally, there is a continuing lack of transparency in oil sector management. Another concern is that the deepening disaster in Darfur is destabilizing Chad and spilling over into the Central African Republic, provoking the movement of thousands of refugees into Southern Chad and Cameroon. Darfur rebels have attacked oil facilities in the Kordofan region. This risks further destabilization of Southern Sudan.

USCCB POSITION

Sudan remains an urgent priority for USCCB with ongoing advocacy work in solidarity with the people of Sudan. USCCB continues to work closely with the Catholic Church in Sudan. Our Conference has repeatedly visited Sudan, including Darfur, while playing an active role in the U.S. policy debate. In 2006 USCCB supported the successful passage of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act and funding for peacekeeping operations in Darfur.

ACTION REQUESTED

On Darfur

1. Ask the U.S. to pressure both the GoS and the rebels to establish a ceasefire and to search for a just and durable peace, while urging both Sudan and Chad to refrain from supporting each other's rebel movements.
2. Urge the U.S. to use its voice in the UN Security Council to pressure the GoS to allow unencumbered deployment of the 20,000 new UN troops who will reinforce the existing 6,000 African Union forces.
3. Ask the U.S. to work with its international partners to provide all the military and transport equipment that the UN/AU forces require to fulfill their Chapter VII Mandate to protect civilians, stop the fighting, monitor an eventual ceasefire and assist international humanitarian relief organizations.

On the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

1. Encourage the U.S. Administration to intensify its efforts to hold the signatories to the peace agreement accountable and to honor its promise to provide substantial financial and political support for reconstruction.
2. Urge the UN Security Council to continue its support for the peacekeeping mission. The U.S. should provide adequate funding and logistical support so that peace and security might be achieved.
3. Encourage the U.S. Government to work with its international partners to pressure all Sudanese signatories to the CPA to implement all provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of January 2005.

RESOURCES: See USCCB statements, letters and alerts on Sudan at this website:

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/callafrica/sudan.shtml>. For further information: *Stephen Hilbert*, Office of International Justice and Peace, USCCB, 202-541-3149 (phone), 541-3339 (fax), <mailto:shilbert@usccb.org>