



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

Background on Sudan February 2009

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

In Darfur almost 300,000 people have died, 2.7 million are displaced, over 230,000 are refugees in Chad, and hundreds of thousands go hungry every day. Conditions on the ground have grown increasingly impossible for humanitarian efforts. The situation persists because the international community has been unable to end the Government of Sudan's (GoS) intransigence while the Darfur militias are hopelessly fractured and divided.

Despite ongoing international efforts, the horrific situation continues to remain critical and demands an immediate, strong and comprehensive response from the U.S. and the international community. The numerous obstacles placed in the way of the UN/African Union Peacekeeping force (UNAMID) to Darfur cast serious doubt on the GoS' intentions. Jean Marie Guehenno, UN Under Secretary for Peacekeeping, has said that they threaten the eventual success of the UNAMID force.

The situation between the North and the South is also 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. Implementation of the overall agreement has not progressed well, especially the requirement to agree on a border in the oil-rich area of Abyei. A number of clashes have occurred between the Misseriya's Popular Defense Forces, armed by the Khartoum government, and the Ngok Dinka supported by the SPLM. In Eastern Sudan a 2006 peace agreement between the GoS and two nomadic groups is showing signs of breaking down.

Crisis in Darfur: In 2007 the UN Security Council approved a resolution which calls for a UN/AU (UNAMID) peacekeeping force of 20,000 UN troops to complement the 6,000 African Union (AU) troops already in Darfur. The force has reached 9,000, but the Khartoum government continues to raise numerous obstacles to the arrival of UNAMID reinforcements. Sudan has blocked the military and transport equipment that will help protect the UNAMID troops and give them the ability to carry out their UN 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 difficult.

UNAMID 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 government in Khartoum denies links with the Arab militias known as the *janjaweed*, but undeniable military action by the GoS itself has contributed to the violence. Continued fighting by the various warring parties, particularly the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and scorched-earth tactics of the militia groups make reaching a ceasefire without a focused and concerted international effort very unlikely.

Despite three peace agreements signed between Sudan and Chad, in early February 2008 Chadian rebels, backed by Khartoum, marched from Sudan across Chad and attacked the capital Ndjamena, killing hundreds. In response, in May, JEM rebels attacked Khartoum and were repulsed, but Sudan cut diplomatic ties with Chad. Fighting

continues in South Darfur to this day. The violence has also spread to the neighboring Central African Republic and has displaced tens of thousands of people.

Since May 2007 the U.S. has maintained targeted sanctions against 160 Sudanese companies that prevent them from conducting business in the U.S. The sanctions also targeted seven Sudanese individuals for fomenting violence and human rights abuses. The International Criminal Court issued indictments against two top leaders, the Sudanese Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and a militia leader, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. More recently, the ICC has prepared indictments against President Al-Bashir himself, but has not issued them yet.

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, but concerns remain over what protections will be provided to non-Muslims living in the North. The UN Mission in Southern Sudan (UNMIS) has been monitoring compliance with the peace agreement.

The CPA is threatened by slow implementation and an overall lack of trust. The government in Khartoum has not moved on the most contentious elements of the agreement. Northern troops have withdrawn from most areas of Southern Sudan, but the Joint Operational Units are not set up, or are ineffective. The Khartoum government has rejected what is supposed to be a final binding ruling by the Abyei Boundary Commission and clashes continue between tribal people armed by either the government or by the opposing Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) over control of this oil-rich region. Although the population census began after a long delay, the results are not public and there is a lack of progress on preparations for elections and the establishment of the rule of law and democratic structures. Although about \$3 billion of oil revenue was transferred to the SPLM, there remains a lack of transparency in oil sector management.

USCCB POSITION

Sudan remains an urgent priority for USCCB. Our Bishops' Conference continues to work closely with the Catholic Church in Sudan. USCCB leaders have repeatedly visited Sudan, including Darfur, and play an active role in the U.S. policy debate. Earlier, USCCB supported the successful passage of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act and funding for peacekeeping operations in Darfur.

ACTION REQUESTED

On Darfur

1. Urge the U.S. to pressure both the GoS and the rebels to establish an effective ceasefire and to bring about 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 presence in the UN Security Council to pressure the GoS to allow unencumbered deployment of the 20,000 new UNAMID forces who will reinforce the existing 6,000 African Union forces.
3. Ask the U.S. to work with its international partners to provide the military with the equipment and transport that the UN/AU forces require to fulfill their UN 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 appoint its envoy to Sudan with a robust staff, 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 U.S. to act in the UN Security Council to continue 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: visit <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/callafrica/sudan.shtml> or contact *Stephen Hilbert*, Office of International Justice and Peace, USCCB, 202-541-3149 (phone), 541-3339 (fax), shilbert@usccb.org.

3211 Fourth St., NE. Washington, DC 20017. Tel: (202)541-3160 Fax: (202)541-3339