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HOW TO GET THE UN/AU HYBRID FORCE DEPLOYED TO DARFUR

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Now that the United Nations Security Council has authorized a UN/AU hybrid peacekeeping force for Darfur, problem solved, right?

Not by a long shot. Serious obstacles threaten to derail the rapid deployment of this protection force, called UNAMID.¹ The brutal and deplorable September 29 attack on African Union peacekeepers is a stark reminder of the threats that UNAMID—an important component of the overall solution—faces in Darfur.² This attack, and the continued fracturing of Darfur’s rebel groups, also severely diminishes the prospects for success at peace talks set to begin in Libya later this month. Nonetheless, assertive diplomacy, cooperation and coordination from international donors, and the judicious use of targeted pressures can overcome the obstacles, get the force on the ground, and set the stage for the only thing that can bring an end to Darfur’s long nightmare—a viable peace process.

The UN, in consultation with the AU, is moving quickly to amass and deploy UNAMID’s 26,000 military personnel and civilian police, attain sophisticated military hardware, and assemble facilities and infrastructure in the harsh, isolated terrain of Darfur. Yet UNAMID faces immediate impediments:

- **Roadblocks thrown up by the Government of Sudan.** Taken separately, each one of the roadblocks may seem insignificant. Taken collectively, the words and deeds of the Sudanese government clearly demonstrate a policy of deliberate and stealthy obstruction.
- **Insufficient support from the most important donors, such as the United States.** As unmistakably demonstrated by the criminal attack against AU peacekeepers, UNAMID is deploying to a war-zone and must have sufficient intelligence-gathering capabilities, mobility, and firepower to

defend itself and to protect civilians and humanitarian workers. The great irony is that after all the sound and fury aimed at Darfur from the major donors, it turns out there are plenty of non-donor countries offering troops but not enough equipment and logistical support from countries such as the U.S. and its European allies.

- **Uneven UN-AU collaboration.** Disagreements over the composition of the force and the unequal capacities of the two organizations have created friction and threaten to delay the deployment of UNAMID, and possibly complicate its subsequent operation.

Having gained Khartoum’s consent on the deployment of UNAMID, international attention has shifted back to peace talks between Darfur’s many rebel factions and the Sudanese government that are scheduled to begin in Libya on October 27. Concerned nations rightly realized that while peacekeepers can help protect civilians and potentially improve stability in the short-term, only a fair, workable, and inclusive peace agreement can ultimately end the crisis and allow millions of displaced people to return to their homes and rebuild their lives.

The difficulties that are compromising UNAMID’s prospects remind us that progress on peacekeeping and on the political process for a durable settlement must occur in parallel, and must both receive continuous international attention. Take the spotlight off either, and Khartoum works in the shadows to undermine previous pressure and sabotage previous progress. That has been the case with UNAMID since the adoption of Resolution 1769. To prevent UNAMID from failing even before it really exists, the international community must accompany the push for a peace agreement with more support for, and closer monitoring

1 See also Gayle Smith, “Peacekeeping for Protection and Peace in Darfur: Requirements for the Success of the U.N./A.U. Hybrid Mission,” ENOUGH Strategy Briefing #4, June 27, 2007.

2 At the time of this writing, there was no confirmation about which group (or groups) was responsible for the September 29 attack on the AU group site at Haskanita.

of, its deployment, including targeted sanctions against persons or parties intentionally impeding the operation.

1. Khartoum's Roadblocks

As should have been expected, Khartoum is systematically impeding UNAMID's deployment at every turn.³ To date, regime officials have taken the following actions:

- refused to lease all necessary land to the UN and provide access to scarce water resources, deterring construction of necessary new bases and expansion of those the AU forces are already using;
- denied the UN full and uninhibited use of airports in Darfur and limited night flight access, impeding the rapid deployment of troops and equipment;
- refused permission to the UN to upgrade runways, ensuring that large cargo planes carrying critical heavy equipment are unable to land;
- delayed approval of visa requests by UN personnel; and
- stated ever more insistently that non-African forces are not needed in Darfur.

A full-court diplomatic press is needed to force the Sudanese government remove these obstacles. The Security Council, particularly the five permanent members and the three African members, should highlight Khartoum's dilatory tactics and set a clear deadline for the Government of Sudan's acquiescence. If the government fails to meet that deadline, the Security Council should move to mandatory sanctions against the regime officials most responsible.

Movement earlier this year by the U.S. and the United Kingdom to introduce a draft resolution in the Council imposing such targeted sanctions was halted by Khartoum's purported unconditional agreement to the deployment of UN/AU peacekeepers to Darfur, and its promises to facilitate that deployment. However, continued flagrant transgressions by the Government of Sudan, coupled with serious diplomatic pressure, could be enough to compel China, Russia, and others to support (or at least not oppose) a new round of targeted sanctions—including asset freezes and travel bans—that would be lifted when all parties to the conflict are demonstrably cooperating fully with the deployment of UNAMID.⁴

Diplomacy must be given a reasonable time to succeed, but the international community must also maintain the threat of even further targeted sanctions as leverage to compel the government and the rebels to agree to a ceasefire and participate in peace talks. If that is to be achieved, it is critical that the UN Secretariat assertively record and publicly report to the Council on major violations by any party. Resolution 1769 requires monthly reporting to the Security Council on progress on implementation. Secretary-General Ban must make use of that vehicle to oblige member states to exercise their leverage with the Sudanese government.

2. Donor Letdowns

The UN has had little difficulty in finding countries willing to contribute troops to UNAMID. It has been less successful, however, in obtaining the logistical support and military equipment to deploy a force with the capacity to protect themselves and Darfur's civilians from an array of armed groups spread across nearly 200,000 square miles of challenging, nearly trackless terrain.

³ ENOUGH interviews with UN and U.S. government sources. September 2007.

⁴ The Council has already imposed sanctions on four individuals, and it can designate additional targets on the basis of reports by its Panel of Experts, as well as information from eminent persons, experts, and member-states. The Panel of Experts' reports identify individuals and companies responsible for committing human rights violations, breaking the Darfur arms embargo, violating the Security Council's ban on offensive military overflights, or impeding the peace process.

The United Nations does not have equipment stockpiled for peacekeeping missions—including the sophisticated hardware needed in such a logistically challenging mission—and relies on its member states for contributions. Moreover, there is a clear division of labor in these kinds of missions. The countries that contribute troops usually cannot afford to provide equipment, logistics, and money; those contributions come from major donors, such as the U.S., European powers, Japan, and others. However, these donors' track record in Darfur is already abysmal. The inexcusable September 29 attack on the AU demonstrates just how, despite international promises of support, poorly equipped their forces are and highlights the need for immediate equipment contributions to UNAMID.

As a leading member of the UN Security Council and a vocal supporter of the Hybrid force, the U.S. should bolster the mission *now* by doing the following:

- **Working through NATO to support UNAMID.** The current capacity gaps are clear, and NATO should quickly develop a package to help fill them. The new French government's affirmative commitment to ending the Darfur conflict may ease the internal NATO debate on support for UNAMID.
- **Pressing other nations to contribute essential hardware to UNAMID.** Darfur is an international crisis. The United States and NATO should not be responsible for meeting all of UNAMID's needs. Other countries have the needed capabilities to contribute and they should also do so.
- **Providing equipment, provisions, and airlift to UNAMID units.** The UN has received commitments from several African nations for roughly 3,000 troops to deploy quickly and help establish security in Darfur while preparations are being made for the deployment of the full UNAMID force. However, most of these troops lack the equipment and resources to deploy in a self-sustaining fashion. The U.S. should work with members of NATO and the EU, as well as other states with advanced military capabilities, to equip, supply, and airlift these forces to Darfur.
- **Funding the U.S. share of the UNAMID mission.** The sheer size and expense of the UNAMID mission was unforeseen in the President's Fiscal Year 2008 budget, meaning that the United States is short an estimated \$725 million for its share of UNAMID for the fiscal year starting on October 1. The Administration and Congress must work together urgently to remedy this critical funding gap.

CALLING ON DONORS TO SUPPORT UNAMID

The head of UN peacekeeping, **Jean-Marie Guehenno**, has insistently expressed concern over lack of commitments to UNAMID of high-level engineering units, tactical transport, trucks, and helicopters, as well as difficulties in recruiting the roughly 6,000-strong police force. Guehenno is particularly critical of European countries that have pushed hard for UNAMID but have done little practically to support it.⁵

Canadian Senator **Roméo Dallaire**, who commanded the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda in 1994, recently addressed these donor letdowns in an open letter to General Martin Agwai, UNAMID's force commander. "You should bring great pressure," Dallaire writes, "working with senior UN and AU leadership, to pressure more resource-rich [UN] member states to provide the specialized capacities you need."⁶

5 "UN peacekeeping chief tells French daily European support lacking for Darfur mission," Associated Press, September 19, 2007.

6 Romeo Dallaire, "A daunting mandate," The Guardian, September 17, 2007, available at http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/romeo_dallaire/2007/09/a_daunting_mandate.html.

3. Hybrid Hiccups

The African Union's continued equivocation over the deployment of non-African forces to Darfur and cooperation gaps between the AU and UN threaten to severely impede full deployment of UNAMID. The Security Council has agreed that UNAMID will have an "African character," but AU Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare has since insisted on an all-African force, going so far as to reject units from Uruguay, Thailand, and Norway, all of which have significant peacekeeping experience and capacity.

Chairman Konare's resistance has undermined the cooperation needed between the UN and the AU to establish UN command and control of peacekeepers in Darfur by the end of 2007. His position is also troubling given that he first enunciated it in Khartoum after meeting with President Omer al-Bashir in August, and is being ever more sharply matched by Sudanese government statements also rejecting non-African peacekeepers.

Many African countries have served admirably in UN peacekeeping missions, past and present, and several African countries, including Nigeria, Rwanda, and Ethiopia have volunteered forces for UNAMID. However, the appalling attack on September 29 demonstrates the fundamental limitations of an all-African force in an environment like Darfur. African forces often lack basic equipment and requisite training for peacekeeping operations and, equally important, the logistical capacity to deploy quickly to remote regions. By contrast, traditional UN troop contributors such as India, Pakistan, and Malaysia can more quickly deploy large numbers of trained and equipped troops.

At the planning and operations levels, the resources at the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations dwarf and threaten to overwhelm the AU secretariat's nascent peacekeeping unit. The Security Council, in particular the five permanent members and the three African members, should

work assiduously behind the scenes to cement agreement from Chairman Konare on the participation of non-African forces and affirmation of the UN's command and control role. Left to fester, these critical issues could undermine the mission's effectiveness down the road.

4. A Sense of Urgency Needed

As if we needed any reminders, the recent violent escalation in Darfur and the direct full-scale assault on AU peacekeepers demonstrate the urgent need for a robust UNAMID. Shortly after President al-Bashir agreed to an immediate cessation of hostilities during a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, aerial bombings and attacks resumed. In the last month alone, a surge of rebel attacks and clashes with government militia have been reported in Hashkanita, North Darfur, Adilla, South Darfur, and Wad Banda in Kordofan.

Humanitarian workers also continue to come under attack—gunmen recently shot and critically wounded three workers from the American NGO World Vision—and access to vulnerable populations is decreasing. Even in some displaced persons camps, malnutrition rates have reached 30 percent—twice the emergency threshold. The world's largest humanitarian response—upon which more than 4 million Darfurians now depend—is under serious threat.

A swift and fully supported deployment is critical to providing protection for vulnerable civilians, bolstering the peace process and showing Khartoum that it cannot give the international community the run around—yet again with impunity. With the Security Council's deadline for the UN to assume command and control of peacekeeping operations in Darfur on December 31, international attention must focus now on securing land, water, and Khartoum's full commitment to the speedy deployment of the force. Darfur's civilians have waited far too long for adequate protection. Further delays will only deepen their frustration and leave them

unprotected at a time when the threats are multiplying at the local level in Darfur.

Delays and internal squabbles fit perfectly into the plans of the Sudanese regime—the architect of a genocidal counter-insurgency strategy which in part aims at dividing and destroying the communities that might support the rebels in Darfur. If the U.N. force is not deployed quickly and a peace deal is not reached as soon as possible, those re-

sponsible in Khartoum may succeed with impunity. And the failure to muster an adequate response will fall on the shoulders of the international community and key member states that could and should have done more. Resources are critical to success, but the missing link remains shoring up the requisite political will and long-term dedication to afford Darfurians a real chance at building a lasting peace.



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ENOUGH is a project founded by the International Crisis Group and the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. With an initial focus on the crises in Darfur, eastern Congo, and northern Uganda, ENOUGH's strategy papers and briefings provide sharp field analysis and targeted policy recommendations based on a "3P" crisis response strategy: promoting durable peace, providing civilian protection, and punishing perpetrators of atrocities. ENOUGH works with concerned citizens, advocates, and policy makers to prevent, mitigate, and resolve these crises. To learn more about ENOUGH and what you can do to help, go to www.enoughproject.org.



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