

11 August 2014

Dear UN Security Council Ambassador,

The increased violence and insecurity in Darfur are on par with levels witnessed at the height of the conflict a decade ago. While the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) remains the best hope on the ground for preventing attacks on civilians until a comprehensive peace is achieved, to date the mission has demonstrably failed to fulfill its mandate to protect civilians from violence.

While the new Strategic Direction for the Mission endorsed by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2148 on 3 April 2014 seeks to improve UNAMID's focus, it still fails to address the growing protection threats the people of Darfur experience. They cannot afford for the international community to wait six months until the next review of the mission in February 2015 to make changes; instead we urge you to use this month's mandate renewal process to ensure the mission has the focus, resources, capacity, and will to deliver and report on its core mandate to protect civilians.

Accordingly the UNSC should:

- 1) **Ensure UNAMID takes a more proactive approach towards Protection of Civilians (PoC).** The mission should re-deploy forces to areas where protection threats are highest, improve the effectiveness and reach of patrols, and avoid co-location with the Government of Sudan (GoS).
- 2) **Strengthen investment in human rights and civil affairs functions of the mission.** More capacity to address human rights concerns must include public reporting of violations by all parties.
- 3) **Remove the responsibility to promote the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) from UNAMID's mandate.** Elsewhere in the region, peacekeeping missions are involved with – but not responsible for – peace efforts, as in the case of the IGAD-led process in South Sudan and the ICGLR-led process for the DRC. Having UNAMID focus on core PoC tasks will allow the mission to prioritize unmet protection needs and better demonstrate the impartiality, and therefore the credibility, of the mission. It will also prevent the Government of Sudan from using pressure on UNAMID as a bargaining tactic for concessions on the peace process and vice versa.
- 4) **Explore a new comprehensive peace process for all of Sudan.** The international community must recognise that the DDPD has failed and, particularly given changed dynamics including the formation of the Sudan Revolutionary Front linking Darfuri rebel groups with other Sudanese groups, only serves to delay the start of an inclusive, national peace process. Darfur and other regional conflicts could become tracks within this process, but the international community must not continue to support it to the extent to which it lacks a national framework.
- 5) **Focus UNAMID's efforts on creating a safe environment for independent humanitarian action.** Mission personnel often misinterpret the mission's mandate to facilitate the delivery of

humanitarian assistance as a responsibility to undertake humanitarian access negotiations. The expertise and greater perceived impartiality of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) make it better suited to conduct this function, and indeed it has consistently proven far more effective than UNAMID in securing humanitarian access.

- 6) **Require UNAMID to include specific reporting on progress made towards building trust with communities - particularly around Gender-Based Violence - and on its Protection of Civilians strategy.** The mission must make a stronger attempt to rebuild its reputation as an impartial actor vis-à-vis all parties to the conflict, including by making public the results of the welcome review of investigations of the mission announced by the Secretary General on 2 July 2014. UNAMID should also ensure the GoS adheres to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).
  
- 7) **Undertake a joint high-level field mission with the African Union (AU) to better acquaint itself with the situation in Darfur.** The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) communiqué of 9 July 2014 demonstrates the importance of hearing the perspectives of those directly affected by the conflict in Darfur and their perceptions of the mission intended to protect them.

These reforms, when fully implemented on the ground, will send a clear, strong signal to mission, to the Government of Sudan, and most importantly to the people of Darfur, that the international community will not abide the growing violence, displacement, and political deadlock in Darfur.

Many thanks for your attention to these issues.

