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Sudan: Strengthen the African Union Force During Transition to UN Peacekeepers

As the United Nations plans for the replacement of the African Union Mission in Darfur, Sudan (AMIS) by UN peacekeepers, lack of resources may prevent the African Union forces from maintaining and improving their capacities.

Even if the Security Council passes the resolution authorizing the UN Mission in Sudan to expand to Darfur as early as this March, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) estimates that it will take at least six to nine months for the transfer from AMIS to the UN to be completed. Many inside DPKO set the hand-over date as late as January 1, 2007. While a UN mission should be better able to provide protection for civilians through a more robust presence and a stronger mandate, in the interim period AMIS is the only protection available to internally displaced people living in camps throughout Darfur. Donors must take steps not only to support AMIS but also to improve its capacity to provide protection to civilians.

Therefore, in order to increase AMIS' capacity for civilian protection over the next year, Refugees International recommends that:

- **Donor countries, particularly the United States, continue to fund AMIS to the level necessary for improvement.**

With AMIS completely dependent upon external funding, the United States, as one of the primary donors, has the responsibility to ensure that AMIS is fully funded for the next year. AMIS will be running out of funding at the end of March. The U.S. has been slow in approving additional funding as attempts last year to include funding for AMIS in various appropriations bills failed. The FY06 supplemental budget request, which the Bush Administration released earlier this month, asks for \$123 million for AMIS, \$30 million of which will go towards repaying previous borrowing from other accounts. AMIS' operating budget is \$465 million per year, but this supports its current capacity, which leaves its troops outgunned by the perpetrators of human rights abuses in Darfur. Given the likelihood of AMIS continuing to be

present in Darfur until the end of 2006 and the clear need for AMIS to be strengthened, Congressional appropriators need to increase this amount by at least \$100 million. If the transition moves along faster than expected, any unused funds could be used to assist with this process, and then be transferred to the UN mission in Darfur.

- **Donor countries continue to provide AMIS with training and advisory staff.**

In order to improve the capacity of AMIS forces, donor countries need to continue to provide advisors and training opportunities. For example, the UN held a Map Exercise in 2005 that was considered very useful by the AMIS officers, and NATO carried out peace support operations training last September. This training needs to be continued. In addition, it is imperative that the United Nations Development Program's multi-sectoral training (including human rights and protection) through the UN Trust Fund be fully implemented. This training curriculum will help bridge some of the gaps between the AU and the humanitarian agencies. As the UN mission is likely to consist of many of the same troops that currently make up AMIS, the training will continue to benefit the people of Darfur in succeeding years.

- **AMIS increase its forces.**

AMIS should also find ways to increase force numbers even further than the authorized 7,700 in order to carry out enhanced patrolling and to reinforce the West Darfur sectors next to the volatile Chad border. The latter task would require troops trained and capable of responding rapidly. South Africa is a possible source for these troops. As the UN mission in Burundi draws down, more African Union troops from South Africa, Mozambique, and Kenya will become available.

❑ **Humanitarian agencies and AMIS improve coordination.**

Coordination between humanitarian agencies and AMIS has been ad hoc and inconsistent across Darfur. In some locations, AMIS representatives are invited to participate in humanitarian agencies' protection working groups, in others they are excluded for "confidentiality and security reasons." This has led to frustration on both sides. Humanitarian agencies complain that AMIS sends inappropriate people to essential meetings and AMIS complains that since they have very few civilian human rights monitors, they are unable to attend all meetings. In order for protection initiatives such as firewood patrols to be successful, humanitarian agencies and AMIS must work together closely. While recognizing that some humanitarian agencies are reluctant to engage with AMIS to maintain a separation between humanitarian action and the military, the lines of communication need to be more transparent and routine. New NGO staff would benefit from briefings on the AMIS hierarchy and operating procedures, and vice versa.

❑ **AMIS Force Commander instruct all Sector Commanders to implement security measures such as 24/7 camp patrols and firewood patrols on a consistent basis.**

After months of inaction and lack of coordination, AMIS has finally been able to organize effective firewood patrols in insecure areas such as Kalma camp in South Darfur. These patrols, wherein AMIS Civilian Police and protection forces, alongside the government of Sudan police, circulate in areas outside the camp where women are gathering firewood and grass, have been very warmly received by the women of Darfur. AMIS has also begun patrolling at Kalma camp 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These protection measures need to be implemented in as many camps as possible; they will only become a priority for the AMIS Sector Commanders if the AMIS Force Commander instructs them explicitly to do so. Donors must also ensure that AMIS is equipped with sufficient vehicles, radios, and translators to undertake the increased patrolling.

❑ **AMIS increase staffing of human rights observers and female translators.**

Civilian staff within AMIS play an invaluable role in coordinating activities and information sharing between AMIS and the humanitarian community. Unfortunately, the AMIS civilian component is seriously understaffed. For example, it has only one civilian Human Rights Officer responsible for the whole of South Darfur. The Human Rights Officer is responsible for documenting all violations of the ceasefire as well as

coordinating with her counterparts at UNMIS and with other humanitarian agencies. While other members of AMIS try to support her work by attending meetings with humanitarian agencies, the lack of consistency makes it very difficult for AMIS to interact effectively with the humanitarian community.

AMIS also suffers from a lack of female translators, which greatly hinders its effectiveness. While AMIS should be commended for recruiting female Civilian Police (at last count about a quarter of the AMIS Civilian Police were female, a much higher percentage than in UN peacekeeping missions), the added benefit of having female police has been lost because of the lack of female translators. With only one female translator for all of the Nyala camps in South Darfur, the female Civilian Police are forced to use male translators when speaking with women on patrol or when the women come with complaints. In general, a lack of translators (as well as cars, radios, and other communication equipment) greatly hampers AMIS' capacity to assist civilians. AMIS' procedures for recruiting and hiring translators are extremely bureaucratic, requiring interviewing and training in Khartoum and El Fasher, trips that many Sudanese women who might consider applying to work as translators may be reluctant or unable to do. The process should be streamlined to allow AMIS to hire more female translators within the sectors immediately.

❑ **The AU ensure that all personnel are aware of the Code of Conduct, and that a reporting mechanism for any cases of sexual abuse and exploitation is established and publicized.**

The African Union forces in Sudan do not have a consistent mechanism to receive complaints regarding sexual exploitation and abuse by its troops. It is critical that the AU learn the lessons from the experiences of the United Nations in this regard. In December 2005 Refugees International heard rumors of troops using prostitutes while in Darfur. Individual Sector Commanders seemed to understand that sexual exploitation and abuse needed to be taken seriously and had allowed some of their troops to attend training sessions that were held by UNFPA. The AU needs to take the possibility of its troops being guilty of sexual abuse and exploitation seriously, and put procedures in place to deal with this as soon as possible. DPKO should also assist by sending materials and a consultant to the AU planning unit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Advocates Sally Chin and Sarah Martin visited Darfur in December 2005.