

Foreign Voices



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The UN/AU-Hybrid Mission in Darfur: Challenges of Implementation

Since the outbreak of fighting in 2003, international attention has been drawn to the conflict in Darfur. UN Security Council Resolution 1769 of 31 July 2007 established the joint United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The full deployment of UNAMID has so far been delayed because of obstructions by the Sudanese government and lacking international contributions. The main reasons for scepticism concerning UNAMID's success are the challenges in command and control that might originate from a mission being authorised and commanded by an international organisation while being carried out by a regional body, and the force's lack of capabilities. It is questionable, therefore, whether the international presence in Darfur will be able to fulfil its mandate to protect civilians. Henri Boshoff, a Military Analyst for the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa, was a speaker at the Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2008 on "Shared Responsibility to Protect? Global and Regional Approaches to Peacekeeping in Africa" that took place on 4-5 April 2008.

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**"Without the deployment of foreign troops and
adequate capabilities, the mission will not succeed"**



The international community and the people of Darfur were very happy when the United Nations Security Council on 31 July 2007 approved Resolution 1769 authorising the deployment of 26,000 soldiers and police to Darfur as part of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Mis-

sion to Darfur (UNAMID). The aim of the resolution, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, is to

“support early and effective implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, prevent the disruption of its implementation and armed attacks, and protect civilians, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Sudan” (paragraph 15.a.ii).

The United Nations in the same mandate also authorised the deployment of up to 19,555 military personnel, including 360 military observers and liaison officers, a civilian component including 3,772 policemen and 19 formed police units (140 policemen in each unit). The mandate also put emphasis on the availability of a “Heavy Support Package”, comprising enablers such as helicopters, aircraft, Special Forces and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) to ensure that the mission has got the capability to execute its mandate.

Since July 2007, the international debate focuses on UNAMID’s mandate and its capability to execute the mission. Various remarks were made by the Government of Sudan as to Resolution 1769 e.g. by General Rahamah, the officer in charge of international relations at the Sudanese Defense Ministry. He maintained that the military personnel in the UN/AU hybrid operation does not have the right to protect civilians. He further said that this force has the right to act under Chapter VII only in the case of self-defence. This was but one of the remarks by the Government of Sudan. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in an interview on 5 December 2007 with Associated Press editors that he was “deeply concerned and disappointed by this foot-dragging of the Sudanese government” in reaching a final agreement that could make sure that the force can be deployed in Darfur in January 2008. He said he was also concerned about the lack of support from European countries and well-equipped developing countries.

China and Sudan made sure that the UN mandate was crucially limited

The mandate as approved by the United Nations Security Council on 31 July 2007 is key to the successful implementation of the UN/AU-Hybrid Mission in Darfur. The most important paragraph, the centre of gravity of the mandate is paragraph 15.a.ii that aims at preventing the disruption of armed attacks and protecting civilians. It was difficult to get the approval of all permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council. China, in particular, played a major role influencing the drafting of the mandate, supporting Khartoum’s insistence that the mandate of the deploying hybrid force be crucially limited. Sudan made sure that any peace-keeping force will not be allowed to disarm those combatants using weapons introduced into the Darfur theatre in violation of previous UN Security Council resolutions, even if these combatants are threatening to attack civilians. Here we should recall that UN Security Council Resolution 1706 of 31 August 2006 explicitly authorized that the proposed force be able

“to seize or collect, as appropriate, arms or related materials whose presence in Darfur is in violation of the Agreements and the measures imposed by paragraphs 7 and 8 of Resolution 1556, and to dispose of such arms and related material as appropriate” (paragraph 12.a).

A year has passed since the United Nations Security Council has passed Resolution 1769 and only one third of the troops are deployed. UNAMID is expecting the mission to be in place in January 2009. So far, however, the United Nations have added only a few hundred additional troops of the 19,555 authorized to deploy. Material such as transport and attack helicopters also has not yet arrived at the mission.

The AU has a history of not being able to provide forces

One of the major challenges to the mission is the make-up of the “hybrid” UN/AU force, particularly the insistence by both Khartoum and the African Union that there are more than enough contributions from African nations and that contributions from non-African nations (such as Thailand, Uruguay, and Norway) are unnecessary. The AU, however, has a history of not being able to provide forces for AU missions, e.g. in Burundi and Somalia. Moreover, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, earlier pointed to the fact that the force still needs specialized helicopter, transport and logistical units. African countries (with the exception of a few countries) do not have these capabilities. Roméo Dal-

laire, UN Force Commander in Rwanda during the genocide, has also been explicit about this challenge:

"It is beyond dispute that African states themselves simply cannot provide nearly 20,000 qualified troops (nor enough police). UNAMID needs attack helicopters, engineers, big cargo lorries, communications and other capabilities that African states also cannot provide."

Who is in charge?

Another challenge is the issue of command and control. The precise chain of command and control for the UNAMID force has been consistently finessed at the UN, mainly to avoid a confrontation with the African Union, which insists that it must head the chain of command for the hybrid force. UN Resolution 1769 however states that there will be a unity of command and control in accordance with basic principles of peacekeeping, which means a single chain of command and control structure that will be provided by the United Nations. The question could thus be asked who is in charge? Where does the authority of the UNAMID Force Commander, General Martin Luther Agwai, end? And where does the authority of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) begin? Does General Agwai report to Addis Ababa or New York? To whom does he turn for support in his decision-making? These questions have not been answered yet.

It is clear, however, that the underlying challenge to the hybrid force is the sovereignty of the Sudanese state. The UN and the international community must find a way around this obstacle. The attack on UNAMID peacekeepers on 8 July 2008 in which seven peacekeepers were killed and 22 wounded again emphasises that without the deployment of foreign troops and adequate capabilities the mission will not succeed.

Imprint

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