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The Darfur Crisis in Sudan: Challenge to International Peacekeeping Missions

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Abstract: The Darfur Crisis in Sudan has continue to pose a great challenge to International Peacekeeping mission and humanitarian intervention in politics of other states since 1983 when the most recent Sudanese civil war broke out, the Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) has made series of attempts to ensure peace and put an end to reckless killings and wanton destruction of properties in the country. She had gone to the extent of stationing a peacekeeping force in the Sudan to maintain peace of recent, the U.N. had offered military assistance to the A.U. peacekeeping mission in the Sudan.The role of International Organisation at maintaining peace in the Sudan with its attendant difficulties form the tenets of discussion in this study.

Key words: Darfur crisis, peacekeeping missions, challenge to international

INTRODUCTION

Darfur may serve as a test case for Africa's political commitment to peacekeeping and peace enforcement as enshrined in the provisions of the recently established Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union. In response to a massive humanitarian disaster as a result of the conflict between the Sudanese government and the rebel movements, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and actions by the Janjaweed militia. However, the continental body (AU) has pledged a peacekeeping force to be sent to Darfur for a one-year period.

The announcement indicates as clear departure from the dogmatic commitment of the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the notion of non-interference. The African Union (AU) in April 2003 increased the protection force from 390 to over 3,000 troops and civilian police. There are currently over 2000 Rwandan and Nigerian troops in Darfur deployed to help protect the AU ceasefire monitors currently on the ground. The additional troops aim to transform the AU ceasefire monitoring team into a fully-fledged and robust peacekeeping force (Paul and Britt, 2001).

At the same time, the regional response to the situation in Darfur has been positive. The East African Community (EAC) agreed to send a combined peacekeeping force to foster peace once an agreement is signed. The EAC is a regional grouping bringing together Kenay, Uganda and Tanzania. Rwanda and Burundi have also applied for membership. These fresh developments have serious implications for the future peace and security architecture in Africa. Individual defence forces of independent countries are now starting to speak with one voice. Defence leaders are now starting to make statements that view regional security threats as a common challenge.

As would be expected, the central government of the Sudan feels threatened by these latest developments in East Africa. All along, the Sudanese authorities have insisted that the situation in Darfur does not warrant the deployment of an AU peacekeeping force. Their view is that the security of the region is an internal responsibility. That stated position is, however, coming under increasing pressure, given that the robust East African position is bolstered by a string of tough United Nations (UN) statements, including one from the Security Council and others from the United States Congress and the United Kingdom government-all calling for the Sudanese government to disarm the militias who are accused of causing the carnage in Darfur. Clearly, the concern for human rights is now superseding the preoccupation with state sovereignty (Abdul Kareem, 1988).

Given the tragic state of affairs in Darfur, this surely is an encouraging sign. Leaders can no longer invoke the notion of sovereignty to escape scrutiny of gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Had the former OAU adopted this strategic approach to international relations, a lot of suffering could have been avoided. The tragedy in Darfur is a case in point in that because Africa and the world were not at the time united in their approach to the conflict, the violations of human rights and other abuses in the Darfur region over many years went largely unchallenged and unreported in the world media.

That is now starting to change and the world seems to be taking a stand. This concern may be attributed to two factors-a fear of not repeating the mistake of inaction during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the active role of the regional and international media in focusing attention on the conflict. In that spirit, the UN presented a 30-day deadline to the Sudanese government on 30th July 2004 in which to address the humanitarian situation and improve security in the region. Since February 2003, it is estimated that about 70,000 people have died, 1.45 million have been displaced and 200,000 people have fled to Chad. Despite the resolution to impose economic and travel sanctions on Khartoum should the provisions of the resolution not be met, there has been little action on the ultimatum. Africans are waiting to see how the Security Council will respond, given that all the latest UN reports point to a lack of progress in finding a solution to the conflict.

Parallel to the military response to Darfur are the peace talks taking place in Abuja in Nigeria which are hosted by Nigerian President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in his capacity as Chairman of the African Union. The talks have been marked by a series of 'stops and starts' since they began in August 2004 and no agreement has been reached between the Sudanese government, the SLA and JEM.

At this point, it would be advisable for the UN and the rest of the international community to follow the lead of the East African leaders by treating the conflict in Darfur as posing a serious national security problem to the immediate region. It would be a mistake to view the crisis as an isolated case. At the same time, the events in Darfur should not be viewed in isolation from the wider conflict context of the Sudan and in addressing the former; attention should not be diverted from the peace talks and developments under the auspices of the Intergovenmental Authority on Development (IGAD). If the international company responds to Darfur on this basis, a solution might well be possible, no matter how unsettling for the regime in Khartoum.

Stephen Bunker said that about 10,000 people died monthly between October 2003 and March 2004. but a British Independent Observer put the estimate at 380,000 deaths within the 18 months believing that about 15,000 people died monthly in spite of the humanitarian aids recently stopped up.

At the moment about 500,000 recognized refugees are scattered in such countries as Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. According to another reports, while some have returned home following pleas, many are still scared of the uncertainty of the situation in the country. International Mirror in the United Kingdom report said some malnourished children were recently found roaming the border between Sudan and Chad while making attempts to cross, having lost parents and uncles to the Janfaweed attacks on their villages. Some of their mothers were allegedly raped by the marauding militias and killed afterwards. There is also outbreak of bacterial meningitis with 340 cases in 3 areas of Sudan (UN Commnission on Situational Report in Sudan, 2004).

Before the latest revelation of the actual situation in Sudan, the Commission had earlier accused Khartoum (that is the government of Sudan) of culpability in the killings in Darfur. UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan published the report of the UN Commission on Sudan which was set up by the UN Security Council to investigate continuing mass atrocities in western Sudan. The five-member Commission included three African nationals-Mohammed Fayek from Egypt, Theresa Strioggner Scott from Ghana and Dumisa Ntsebewza from South Africa. Others were Hina Jilani, a notable Pakistani lawyer and Antonio Cassese, an Italian law professor and former President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda who headed the Commission (UN Commission on Satuational Report, 2004).

According to the Commission report, the Sudanese government sponsored militias that committed such crimes against humanity as "indiscriminate attacks against civilians, torture, forced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement." While the report exonerated the government of Sudan of genocide, it remarked that some individuals, including government officials "committed acts with genocide intent" (Article 4b of the Constitution Treaty of Afriean Union).

Before the UN findings, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights had noted that the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed appendage were responsible for "war crimes and crimes against humanity and massive human rights violations" in Darfur (UNHCR Roport, 2005).

The International Commission, there fore, recommended that the Security Council should "immediately, refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court pursuant to Article 13(b) of the IC statue".

When Khartoum denied the alleged sponsorship, the Security Council demanded that it should disarm the Janjaweed and arrest groups attacking villages. Indeed, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, on several occasions blamed the Sudanese government for failing to carry out the demand.

Observers argue that while the peace treaty cannot discourage the incessant attacks on villages in Darfur by

the Janjaweed, both UN and AU should consider other options besides increasing the strength and assignment of the peacekeeping forces in Sudan. Article 4(h) of the constitutive treaty of African Union requires the AU to intervene in any African country "where genocide, war crime or crimes against humanity are obvious (UNHCR Report, 2005).

Meanwhile, the Holy See has described the situation in Darfur as a disgrace to humanity. It called for a mechanism that can protect internally displaced persons.

The Nunciature Counsellor at the Holy See Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations at Geneva, Monsignor Fortunatus Nwachukwu made this observation on 10th March 2005 during the thirty-second meeting of the Standing Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which began 8thMarch 2003.

'The refuge situation in Africa remains a deep scar on the human family everywhere", the Vatican Information Service spokesman, Nwachukwu was quoted as saying. "As international community, we should develop a reliable system which effectively protects those staying in their own country, but displaced from their homes. The precarious and tragic condition of these millions of persons forcibly uprooted from their villages and their lands calls for concrete and prompt decisions to alleviate their suffering and to protect their rights", he noted.

However, UN emergency relief officials noted that the number of deaths might have recently decreased due to increased humanitarian aid and improved access to the vast region.

An American lawmaker, Senator Jon Corzine, was quoted as saying that before long the world might be watching a sequel to the film *'Hotel Rwanda'* to be called *'Hotel Darfur'* and asking again why the world failed to stop the genocide. Agency report said UN officials expressed the view that the number of displaced persons could rise to three or four million.

Nancy Soderberg, a former adviser in Clinton administration and author of *The Superpower Myth,* says Darfur like Rwanda demonstrated that nations are not prepared to intervene beyond their spheres of perceived influence. Darfur, she says, exposes the hollowness of the 'never again' mantra. Reports said security in Darfur is worsening, in spite of efforts of nearly 2,000 African Union monitors largely sent by Rwanda.

Au and un in sudan: On 25 May 2004, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) authorized the deployment of an observer mission to Sudan. This authorization follows the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the government of Sudan, the Sudan pLiberation Movement/Army and the Justice and Equality Movement. The mandate of the mission is to ensure that the agreement is implemented; to assess requirements for mine clearance; and to receive, verify and adjudicate complaints related to ceasefire goals. The Mission will initially consist of 120 members and a possible protection force of 270 military observers for a period of 12 months. The mission will be receiving 2 million Euro from the European Union for a period of 12 months.

Further, in response to the worsening security situation in the western region of Darfur, the AU has decided to send an armed protection force to the area to allow refugees to return home and to protect AU observers monitoring the ceasefire. The AU force is expected to consist of 300 troops which include 120 soldiers from Nigeria and 120 from Rwanda, Tanzania and Botswana also sent 60 additional peacekeepers each.

The United Nations in Sudan: The UN presence in Sudan has, thus far, been in the form of The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) which comprises of all the UN agencies in Sudan. UNCT is charged with general oversight of planning, implementation and review of UN programmes. The Office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator leads UNCT and has the responsibility to provide agreed services and guide the systems of the UN.

The objective of the UN in Sudan is to provide humanitarian assistance. The framework is derived from the Millennium Development Goals and includes the following objectives: To promote respect, protection and advancement of human rights; to promote good governance through strengthening conflict management mechanisms; to save lives and reduce suffering and deprivation; to help consolidate peace; and to encourage sustainable solutions.

The framework for delivery humanitarian assistance to the South is Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). This is a tripartite agreement between government of Sudan, the Sudan's People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the UN to enable humanitarian access. In the south the OLS provides an operating umbrella for 6 UN agencies and 45 NGOs.

Funding for UN involvement in Sudan comes from various countries. For the period 2003 to 2004 the budget stood at US$383,404,353 (Table 1).

The prospects for peace have necessitated a new approach by the UNCT. This approach is spelled out in the Quick-Start/Peace Impact Programme (QS-PIP). The programme aims to have an integrated approach that will

Table 1: Funding allocate

Donor	Donation (US$)	Total (%)
United States	189,674,851	49.5
United Kingdom	35,549,799	9.3
EC	33,131,081	8.6
Netherlands	17,329,599	4.5
Japan	16,368,351	4.3
Norway	10,877,906	2.8
Italy	9,980,382	2.3
Germany	8,830,382	2.3
France	6,217,195	1.6
Switzerland	5,976,792	1.6
Denmark	5,738,371	1.5
Sweden	5,124,270	1.3
Canada	4,769,828	1.2
Finland	2,364,404	0.6
Ireland	2,283,854	0.6
Other donors	29,186,922	7.6
Grand total	383,404,353	100

realize the 'peace dividend' for people of The programme seeks to provide an immediate transitional recovery contribution to accompany the signature of a peace agreement in the form of targeted quick start/peace impact interventions. It is expected to form the core quick-sstart component of the UN Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for the Sudan Assistance Programme ("ASAP 2004"). The ASAP seeks to outline a shared vision for humanitarian and transitional assistance, including quick start and capacity building priorities, for the coming year directed toward long-term Millennium Development Goals.

The UNCT is faced with multiple challenges. The Sudan peace process is known for its broken peace accords and unfulfilled promises. This presents a challenge to UNCT to, firstly, instill in the parties the need to maintain the momentum of peace and, secondly, the UNCT's ability to carry out its task. The question of access to and safety of personnel will remain even during the transitional stage. Return of refugees and resettlement of IDPs also presents challenges as resources may be over extended. Given the magnitude of the challenges in Sudan there is the further challenge of adequate funding and proper coordination.

The UN has, however, made further moves to enhance its response to and presence in Sudan. The UN Security Council welcome, in resolution 1547 (2004), the proposal by the Secretary-General on 7 June to establish the UN advance team as a prepare for introduction of peace support operations. The Security Council has also declared its readiness to support the implementation of Comprehensive Peace Agreement once signed and have asked the Secretary general to take necessary preparatory steps.

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