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## Darfur Moves Yet Deeper into the Shadow of Lies

This brief extends my account of May 20, 2012 in an effort to highlight the continuing dangers of expediency and mendacity in characterizing the security and humanitarian crises in Darfur. The United Nations and African Union continue with a cynical policy of “see no evil, hear no evil...report no evil”; such a policy is aided not only my news-media focus on other Sudan-related issues and world events, but by the acquiescence of the U.S., the EU, and other international actors of consequence. This policy represents institutional corruption of the first order: by distorting and grossly understating Darfur's suffering and the continuing potential for violent, large-scale human destruction, the UN and its African Union partner (in UNAMID) are actually working to exacerbate the security and humanitarian crises and to diminish the chances for a just peace.

**This brief has two sections:** the first provides an overview of the key assessments by UN and AU officials about realities on the ground in Darfur, going back to August 2009; the second section gives a comprehensive digest of news from Darfur as reported by Radio Dabanga over the past two months. Radio Dabanga now has an extraordinarily wide network of contacts and sources throughout Darfur and in the Darfuri diaspora, and yet its depiction of Darfur is vastly different from that of the UN and AU. So great are the disparities between these two sections—in tenor, in general claims and conclusions, and in the level of detail—that it seems pointless to bring them in direct point-by-point confrontation. In the end, the reader must choose between these two very different accounts, for they simply cannot be made to comport with one another.

If, as I will argue in my conclusion, the accounts we receive from Radio Dabanga are generally accurate, then we must ask hard questions about the motives of the UN and AU in speaking as they have over the past three years. The UN and AU both, for example, now celebrate figures for returns of displaced persons that are highly questionable; moreover, they do so without acknowledging that during the time of UNAMID's tenure (January 1, 2008 to the present) approximately one million civilians have been newly displaced. Security is described as “normal,” and major fighting—it has been claimed at various times by various senior figures representing UNAMID—is at an end. But the road today between the two major cities of Darfur—Nyala and el-Fasher—is closed, and other roads are either closed or too dangerous to be used, even with a UNAMID escort. Much fighting has been reported between the Khartoum regime and rebel groups, including very recently. There is an unending epidemic of rape targeting non-Arab/African women and girls. Humanitarian workers in the field are increasingly few in number and there are almost no expatriate workers. Aerial bombardment continues at an intense level, and direct attacks on camps and camp residents by regime-allied militia groups are increasing at an alarming rate, even in areas where UNAMID nominally has a presence.

But current UNAMID Special Joint Representative Ibrahim Gambari has no time for such issues. UNAMID neither investigates nor reports on the vast majority of eyewitness accounts by civilians. The Darfur that Gambari purports to represent to the international community does not reflect reports coming from Radio Dabanga, whose specific claims about violence—sometimes attributed to named eyewitnesses, with highly specific details, including precise locations—have never been challenged meaningfully by UNAMID...never.

But the UN and AU deserve their say: herewith a series of particularly important comments, arranged chronologically and also including comments by humanitarian workers in Darfur assessing Scott Gration's account of the region in his Senate testimony of July 2009.

[ It should be noted, if only in passing, that the UN, UNAMID, and the U.S. have been fulsome in their celebration of the "Doha [Qatar] Document for Peace in Darfur" (DDPD), as have the EU and other international actors of consequence. That the DDPD (July 2011) has been overwhelmingly rejected by Darfuris—representatives of civil society, camp leaders, rebel groups, and political figures throughout the diaspora—seems to make no difference, at least for diplomatic purposes. For the U.S., which seems content to flog this dead horse of an "agreement" indefinitely, support for the DDPD reflects a decision made almost two years ago—to "de-emphasize" Darfur, indeed to "de-couple" it from the basic elements of U.S. Sudan policy. The Darfuri reaction to the DDPD is a subject to which I will return soon. For a current account, see Radio Dabanga here. The futile nature of the "implementation plan" is reported by *Sudan Tribune* here. ]

### **SECTION 1: The View of Darfur from the UN and African Union (UNAMID) (all emphases added)**

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon first appointed as Joint Special Representative to UNAMID the bombastic and incompetent Rodolphe Adada of Congo. Although achieving virtually nothing in strengthening UNAMID as a force on the ground, Adada did set the tone for UNAMID's claims about its achievements, declaring at the end of his brief tenure: "'I have achieved results in Darfur. [ ] There is no more fighting proper on the ground.' 'Right now there is no high-intensity conflict in Darfur. Call it what you will but this is what is happening in Darfur—a lot of banditry, carjacking, attacks on houses.'"
- Ban next appointed as UNAMID Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria. Gambari from the beginning cultivated an exceedingly cozy relationship with the men in Khartoum, and responded "enthusiastically" to the regime's proposed "New Strategy for Darfur," a blue-print for forcing out humanitarian organizations in the name of "development" and compelling the return of displaced persons. He was joined in his enthusiasm by U.S. special envoy for Sudan Scott Gration and Thabo Mbeki, representing AU diplomatic efforts on behalf of Darfur.
- In summer 2009, U.S. special envoy Gration repeatedly told Darfuris that peace would be achieved "by the end of the year" (2009). His foolish optimism, based on ignorance more than malice, proved a cruel hoax. But it had deadly implications, as it led Gration to an unreasonable view of the possibility of returns by displaced persons. A highly alarmed and only partially tactful humanitarian working group ("Inter-Agency Management Group," IAMG) prepared notes that were reported by the *Washington Post* in August 2009:

*"Given the message sent by Scott Gration to the Humanitarian Community and the beneficiaries, i.e., peace will prevail in Darfur by the end of the year, and returns have to happen, the IAMG felt it has to take a common position."*

*"The Special Envoy emphasized his desire to see IDPs returning to their home as early as possible. Beyond the fact that this is linked to a success of the political process, the IAMG, whilst recognizing the possibility to returns as an ultimate goal and supporting it, want to emphasize that specific impediments need to be addressed before it is made possible. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that a large part of the IDPs might opt for staying in their new settlements over a return to their place of origin. [ ] The incapacitation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and [the] UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in South Darfur is utterly limiting the capacity to deal with population movements and potential returns."*

Gration conspicuously failed to understand that this "incapacitation" was deliberately engineered by Khartoum. Just as consequentially, Gration—even while pushing for early returns—failed to understand the obstacles to returns and the lack of capacity to ensure that any such returns would indeed be voluntary and secure—problems that persist three years later.

- In August 2010 Gambari led negotiations with Khartoum over six leaders from Kalma Camp (outside Nyala) who had sought UNAMID protection. This was an extremely difficult and tense situation, one that required a principled stand for the integrity of UNAMID's civilian protection mandate; instead, Gambari capitulated before Khartoum's key demand to have a military presence in the camps, violating critical international humanitarian norms. We know this because in an exclusive interview, *Sudan Tribune* spoke with the six people (five men and one woman), and their account reveals all too clearly the expediency of Gambari:

"In an exclusive interview with Sudan Tribune Wednesday [August 11, 2010], the five sheiks and a woman said the Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari met [them in the] presence of a government delegation led by state minister for humanitarian affairs Mutrif Sideeg. According to the IDP representatives in the troubled camp, *Gambari asked them to accept the presence of joint patrols formed by the Sudanese government and the hybrid peacekeeping mission. 'If you refuse to accept this deal I will have no choice but to hand you over to the Sudanese authorities.'* Gambari told them according to the six representatives who are still in the UNAMID policing center inside the camp." (August 12, 2010)

- In early January 2011, former UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Georg Charpentier, declares: "UN humanitarian *agencies are not confronted by pressure or interference* from the Government of Sudan." [Georg Charpentier, in a written statement to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting] (January 7, 2011).

This assessment found no support within the nongovernmental organizations on the ground in Darfur or indeed in the UN itself (the UNICEF country director publicly contradicted Charpentier).

- Charpentier declared further (January 20, 2011): "We are seeing a 'trend of *decreasing overall violent incidents in Darfur.*'"

- In contrast, Human Rights Watch reported (January 2011):

"The UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) was unable to access most of the areas affected by violence, despite its mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence."

Does Charpentier really mean to claim that while UNAMID was denied access to most of the affected areas affected by violence in Darfur, the UN and other humanitarian organizations "are not confronted by pressure or interference from the Government of Sudan"? Or is he simply dismissing the findings of this authoritative human rights report by the organization that has done most to chronicle violence in Darfur?

More specifically, Human Rights Watch reported:

"Sudanese government and rebel attacks on civilians in Darfur have dramatically increased in recent weeks without signs of abating, Human Rights Watch said today.... ' While the international community remains focused on South Sudan, the situation in Darfur has sharply deteriorated,' said Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch." (January 28, 2011)

- Shortly after Charpentier's January assessment, UNAMID itself reported an incident that should have had some bearing on any assessment of security on the ground. On January 26, 2011 a large group of Sudan Armed Forces troops in vehicles approached the IDP camp near Shangil Tobaya:

"The Sudanese army detained four displaced people at the camp, said UNAMID. ' *The SAF commander at the scene ... then threatened to burn down the makeshift camp and UNAMID team site, if the peacekeepers continued to interfere.*'" (Reuters/Khartoum)

Despite the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) negotiated between UNAMID and Khartoum in February 2008—guaranteeing UNAMID freedom of movement and backed by UN Chapter 7 authority—Khartoum regularly and widely denies, impedes, or limits UNAMID's freedom of movement, actions that even Gambari admits, but which are all too clearly beyond his power to control. This continues to the present. The language of UN Security Council Resolution 1769 has become utterly meaningless; the "decisions" within the resolution are the embodiment of UN impotence:

"[The UN Security Council, under Chapter 7 authority of the UN Charter], *decides* that UNAMID is authorised to take the action necessary, in the areas of deployment of its forces and as it deems within its capabilities in order to:  
(i) protect its personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its own personnel and humanitarian workers."

- The African Union evidently found the accounts by Gambari and Charpentier persuasive, noting in a document on Sudan that emerged following an Addis meeting of February 2, 2011, "the personal and unwavering commitment of President Al Bashir to sustaining peace between northern and southern Sudan and *do all he can for the early resolution of the crisis in Darfur.*"

At this point al-Bashir had been indicted by the International Criminal Court for genocide and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

- In picking and choosing among statistics he clearly does not understand, Gambari asserted on September 16, 2011: "Although 2.7 million people 'were displaced at the height of the conflict,' [Gambari] said, 'the estimate now is 1.7 million. Frankly, that is a huge change.'" Gambari also claims to have witnessed groups of refugees returning from Chad to Darfur" (see below, Section 2, part III).

This highly disingenuous statistical reckoning has been discussed at length in a previous publication. Most significantly, Gambari's figure takes no obvious account of the approximately 1 million civilians newly displaced since UNAMID took up its mandate on January 1, 2008. Nor does he include the figure for refugees in Chad (more than 260,000 according to the UN High Commission for Refugees), or the hundreds of thousands of IDPs who are not in camps. UNAMID's own estimate for the displaced in the Jebel Marra region alone—where humanitarian access has long been denied—is 400,000 (August 2011).

- Also in September 2011, Gambari claimed that, "as a result of a drop in 'acts of aggression between the government and armed groups many residents are returning to Darfur.' According to him there have been *70 percent fewer confrontations between the two sides from January to July* in the restive western region of Sudan and one million people appear to have left camps for the displaced." (Radio Netherlands International, September 14, 2011)

But in the same interview, Gambari puts his claim in significantly different and more tendentious fashion:

"Our figures have shown that the *number of armed attacks in all three Darfur states has fallen by as much as 70 percent over the past three years*, which has resulted in more displaced people returning to their homes."

These figures of "70 percent" appear to represent very different kinds of violence, over very different periods of time (years as opposed to months). Moreover, it should be noted that Gambari's "70 percent fewer confrontations" is based entirely on data gathered by UNAMID,

whose forces are highly restricted in their movements, especially in conflict zones; the figure has very little if any statistical significance. But there would seem to be a deliberate ambiguity, even disingenuousness in the claim that "armed attacks [have] fallen by as much as 70 percent *over the past three years*"—essentially the tenure of UNAMID, which took up its Security Council mandate on January 1, 2008. What is meant by the category "armed attacks" is quite unclear. Is it the same as the 70 percent reduction in the number of "confrontations between the two [military] sides"? Does it include "armed attacks" such as that which occurred on September 2, 2010 in Tabarat, North Darfur?

In this "armed attack" Arab militia forces allied with Khartoum assaulted unarmed civilians in Tabarat, shooting dozens of men and boys at point-blank range—and preventing UNAMID (located nearby) from responding to the pleas that the survivors be rescued. For a week UNAMID was prevented from inspecting the site of the atrocity, by which time it had been sufficiently sanitized. As is clear from an unofficial report by former members of the UN Panel of Experts on Darfur, the UN deliberately omitted September 2010 from the time period to be investigated by the Panel that took over in October 2010.

We might also wonder how Gambari calculates or includes the number of aerial "attacks" on civilians that have occurred during the tenure of UNAMID. If we believe Radio Dabanga and other sources on the ground, the number is well over 400. In fact, UNAMID makes no effort to chronicle or systematically record aerial attacks on civilians and humanitarians. Investigations are shamefully few.

- In his press statement of September 14, 2011, Gambari declares that "UNAMID has significantly stabilised the situation in Darfur."

- The UN News Center (April 12, 2012) reports on Gambari's conclusion following a brief "assessment mission" to Darfur:

"Darfur: security and humanitarian situation improve"

The head of the joint United Nations-African Union mission in the western Sudanese region of Darfur (UNAMID) on Saturday reported a decrease in clashes and ethnic conflict, as well as a decline in criminal activities against civilians, including banditry, and fewer attacks on humanitarian convoys in the area. [ ]The humanitarian situation has also been relatively stable over the past six months, he said, *highlighting an increase in the number of internally displaced persons returning voluntarily to their villages of origin, particularly in West Darfur.*

See Section 2, part III (below) for the strikingly different account offered by Radio Dabanga, directly contradicting every one of Gambari's claims on the basis of detailed reports.

- In an interview with Radio Dabanga (May 20, 2012), the spokesman for UNAMID, Christopher Cycmanick, "described the security situation in Darfur as 'relatively calm.'"

- Bending to demands by Khartoum and the tacitly accepting the conspicuous failure of UNAMID, Hevre Lasdous—head of UN peacekeeping operations—announced on June 24, 2012 that UNAMID will be reduced substantially over the next 18 months (UNAMID is the world's largest and most expensive peacekeeping operation). Lasdous, who has proved exceptionally weak in his position, offers as explanation little more than a statement that the reduction "would be implemented 'during the next 18 months *to reflect the reality on the ground* and to streamline the overlapping functions between military, police and mission support components.'" The only phrase of significance here is the claim that a decision to *reduce* the size of UNAMID reflects an assessment of "*the reality on the ground.*"

This in brief is the UN and African Union assessment of security on the ground in Darfur; and since security and humanitarian access are inextricably linked, this is also an indirect

assessment of humanitarian conditions. Provision of relief aid is critically dependent upon adequate security if it is to reach the more than 2 million people who remain displaced from their homes—in host communities and families, in rural areas such as Jebel Marra, and in camps where conditions are seriously deteriorating.

*So, what do we learn about human security in Darfur if we look elsewhere?*

## **SECTION 2: What the people on the ground in Darfur say to Radio Dabanga**

It should be noted first that Khartoum has done all it can to ensure that there is no news reporting from Darfur that it does not control, that there are no human rights reporters, and that every humanitarian nongovernmental organization understands full well that any reporting—even on basic humanitarian conditions—will result in its expulsion and perhaps that of others. Most recently the regime denied access to the UN expert on human rights in Sudan:

"The newly appointed UN expert on human rights in Sudan said on Thursday (June 14, 2012) that Khartoum prevented him from visiting Darfur during a five-day trip to Sudan, despite his request to do so. Mashood Adebayo Baderin, at a press briefing in the Sudanese capital at the end of his first visit since being appointed in March, said he was unable to go to the war-torn region because the authorities failed to grant him a travel permit." (Agence France-Presse [Khartoum], 14 June 2012)

Such denial raises an obvious question: if things have improved as much as the UN and UNAMID and even the *New York Times* claim, then why isn't the regime eager to have these improvements seen by credible observers with freedom of movement? In fact, all evidence available from non-UN sources supports the conclusions of Human Rights Watch noted above, including the magisterially authoritative report issued by former members of the UN Panel of Experts on Darfur, which found *inter alia* that violence against Zaghawa tribal people is so great as to be considered "ethnic cleansing." The report also established Khartoum's use of non-Arab or African tribal militias in their military assault on the Zaghawa, including the Tunjur, Birgid, and Berti tribal groups.

The leaked report, which deeply offended both Russia and China with its frank account of their massive violations of the Darfur arms embargo UNAMID is charged to enforce, was first reported by *Africa Confidential* on April 13, 2012; **AC** summarized its assessment of the report by noting that "the Darfur crisis, far from winding down as Khartoum and some press reports suggest, is worsening, with new incidents of ethnic cleansing, arms deliveries and aerial bombing." The report had been submitted to the UN in January 2012.

But for the texture and details of violence day-in and day-out—and the consequences of violence and insecurity for humanitarian aid—Radio Dabanga continues to be an unrivaled source of news. So let's consider the primary claims of UNAMID in the context of the most current reporting by Radio Dabanga: how well does Radio Dabanga reporting comport with claims such as these? ---

- "'There is no more fighting proper on the ground.' 'Right now there is no high-intensity conflict in Darfur. Call it what you will but this is what is happening in Darfur—a lot of banditry, carjacking, attacks on houses.'"
- "UN humanitarian agencies are not confronted by pressure or interference from the Government of Sudan."
- "We are seeing a 'trend of decreasing overall violent incidents in Darfur.'"

- "Our figures have shown that the number of armed attacks in all three Darfur states has fallen by as much as 70 percent over the past three years, which has resulted in more displaced people returning to their homes."
- "...the security situation in Darfur is 'relatively calm,'" May 2012
- "Darfur: security and humanitarian situation improve," April 2012

Just how calm, how stabilized, how much less violent is Darfur? And what are the conditions for the return of displaced people? The following compendium of reports reveals that the situation in Darfur is far from stabilized; Radio Dabanga continues to record numerous accounts of aerial violence, rape, land appropriation, UNAMID's ineffectiveness, insecurity on travel routes, and the disruptive effects of random violence on civilian populations.

## **I. AERIAL BOMBARDMENT (all reports from Radio Dabanga unless otherwise noted)**

In addition to the more than 400 previously confirmed aerial assaults on civilians since UNAMID took up its mandate (January 1, 2008 – June 5, 2012), Radio Dabanga reports:

### **• Government bombings kill 4 and injure 15 in South Jebel Marra area**

Four (4) were killed and fifteen (15) injured during an aerial attack by the Sudanese Air Forces in Central Darfur. Antonov airplanes bombed towns in the South Jebel Marra area including Saboon El Fagur, Guldo and Bor Basi. Sources told Radio Dabanga the bombings killed Suleiman Abaker Ahmed and his three children. He and his children named Miriam, aged 3, Magbula, aged 5 and Al Nazir, aged 7, were killed while walking in a field close to Guldo. One of Ahmed's camel's was also killed during the attack. A witness told Radio Dabanga thirteen (13) students were injured when an Antonov airplane dropped a number of bombs near the all-boy secondary school close to Saboon El Fagur. (Zalingei [West Darfur] July 15, 2012)

### **• Bombardments in East Jebel Marra area, fear effects of toxic material**

Sudanese Air Forces carried out bombardments in Kanjara and Kashni, 25 km north of Tabit in East Jebel Marra, on Sunday, a witness who fled the scene told Radio Dabanga. The bombardments were carried out by one Antonov and one MIG aircraft. (East Jebel Marra, July 8, 2012)

### **• Bombardment in Jebel Marra**

The Sudanese Air Force carried out a 48-hour bombardment in the region of east Jebel Marra, which ended on Monday evening. Mustafa Tembore, the spokesman of the Sudanese Liberation Movement-Abdel Wahid (SLM-AW), told Radio Dabanga the air strikes targeted the areas of Serboa, Dabanara and Dubois Al Umda, forcing the villagers to flee." (July 3, 2012)

### **• Residents East Jebel Marra flee after seven days of consecutive bombing**

The Sudanese Air Force (SAF) bombed the area of East Jebel Marra, including the towns of Abu Hamra, Dabaneira in the South Darfur state. Radio Dabanga reports based on eyewitnesses that the SAF have **dropped five to ten bombs per day for seven consecutive days now**. A large number of cattle perished as a result of the airstrikes, including seventy sheep and seventeen camels. He also stated that the inhabitants of these areas are increasingly fleeing their homes and traveling to Al Malam in hope of more safety. (Zalingei [West Darfur], July 1, 2012)

### **• Citizens in West Darfur fear leaving homes due to heavy bombing**

Heavy bombing by the Sudanese Air Force in the Malam area prevented citizens from leaving their homes eyewitnesses told Radio Dabanga. They said that the Sudanese Air Force bombed the towns of Malam Menawashi, Abu Hamra, Girdeed and Dabba-Nayra in East Jabal Marra in Darfur. Eyewitnesses from Malam told Radio Dabanga they heard explosions and saw smoke in the North and West of the Malam area. A lot of farmers, traders and herders did not leave their

homes out of fear for their own safety and that of their cattle. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], June 28, 2012)

• **Sudanese Air Force bombing in Darfur lasts for hours**

The Sudanese Air Forces have bombed East Jebel Marra on Sunday morning, as various sources have reported to Radio Dabanga. Antonov planes attacked the areas of Sabi, Mashruh Abuzaid and Kira in the East Jebel Marra area in North Darfur. Ahmed Yacoub, the spokesperson of the SLA-Justice (Katbino) told Radio Dabanga that airstrikes started at 10 AM Sunday morning and continued until the afternoon. The bombing forced citizens to flee into the valleys and mountains. Some headed towards the Zam Zam camp near El Fasher. (el-Fasher [North Darfur], June 25, 2012)

• **Woman killed in air strikes in North Darfur**

A woman was killed in air strikes in an area 30 km west of Numeira village in North Darfur. Witnesses said Fatima Ali Muhammed died as the Sudanese air force dropped bombs near a group of herders. The strikes also wiped out several sheep and cattle. Witnesses said residents were angry at the government launching strikes in a civilian area and condemned the action as murder. They said they hold defence minister Abdul Rahim Muhammed Hussein as responsible and appealed to human rights lawyers to prosecute those responsible and take them to court. (Numeira [North Darfur], June 11, 2012)

The UNAMID website and press releases contain *not one* mention of any of these incidents, either as reported or confirmed. Rather, the UNAMID site offers up a collection of "Khartoum-friendly" stories purporting to be "news" about Darfur. They are little more than crude propaganda for the views of Ibrahim Gambari and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations; they should be an embarrassment to anyone in the UN capable of shame.

## II. RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Here again, the UNAMID website and press releases contain *not one mention of any of these assaults*. I do not recall any UNAMID confirmation of a sexual assault.

• **Gunmen rape 8 women in West Darfur**

A group of gunmen raped eight displaced women in West Darfur. Three of them were minors. The women had left the IDP camp Arminkol to work in the fields west of the camp on Monday. They were attacked by a group of armed men on horses and camels, a relative of one of the victims told Radio Dabanga. The men abducted the women after threatening them at gunpoint and took them to one of the surrounding mountains. This is where they were raped and held for 24 hours. They were released the next day. A relative told Radio Dabanga the police had been informed and stated that this is a recurring problem; groups of armed gunmen rape, beat or loot displaced people who leave the camp to gather food, water or firewood. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], July 17, 2012)

• **Horsemen kill man and rape three women in North Darfur**

Armed gunmen killed a man and raped three women from a camp for displaced people in North Darfur. The victim Mohammed Ismael Isa was shot dead on Sunday in Kabkabiya locality of North Darfur. A relative of the dead man told Radio Dabanga that eight displaced people from Birgi in Kabkabiya were moving toward a field in the area of Tabakena at 5:00 in the evening when they were attacked by ten gunmen on horse- and camelback. The group of five men three women were fired on by the gunmen leaving Issa dead and leading to the rape of three women. The source said they informed the police in Kabkabiya but they failed to take action. (Kabkabiya [North Darfur], July 9, 2012)

• **Three women raped close to IDP camp Kindibe, West Darfur**

Three women were attacked by four armed men on Saturday morning in the valley Ardeba in the locality of Sirba, West Darfur, a witness told Radio Dabanga. The women, from the IDP camp of



Kindibe, were attacked and kidnapped by a group of armed men on horse and camelback who then raped them. They were released in the evening. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], July 1, 2012)

• **Two displaced women raped by armed militiamen outside Kassab camp**

Two displaced women from Kassab camp, near Kutum in North Darfur, were raped on Wednesday by gunmen belonging to a militia. Eyewitnesses from the camp told Radio Dabanga that three IDP women came out of the camp on Wednesday to fetch firewood. They were then attacked by militia members who stopped the women and assaulted them. The women were beaten up by the militiamen who used sticks and shovels. Two of the women, aging 16 and 25, were raped. The third woman, who was older, had a gaping wound on her head resulting from a blow by a shovel. The eyewitnesses continued to tell that the attackers fled the scene in an unknown direction. The people in the camp reported the incident to the police but the police failed to take action according to the witness. **A female activist in the camp complained about repeated incidents of rape** and attacks by gunmen and **accused UNAMID** for not moving quickly enough to investigate the incident. This is not the first incident of rape in the camp. **In May several reports of rape by militiamen were filed by women in the camp which were not followed up by the police nor UNAMID.** (June 22, 2012)

• **Three militants rape woman in El Geneina**

Three pro-government militants raped a woman near Abu Sur camp for displaced people in El Geneina. Witnesses said the woman went to buy vegetables from market outside of the camp when three militants approached. They said the woman refused to go along with their demands and was severely beaten and then raped by the three gunmen. They left her out in the open and fled. The witnesses said the woman is in a serious condition in a hospital in El Geneina. **The incident was reported to the local police and the UN/African Union Mission in Darfur.** (el-Geneina [West Darfur] May 29, 2012)

Often rape is part of a broader violent assault:

• **Attack on Hamidya Camp, West Darfur**

The government paramilitary Border Guards **arrested nineteen (19), raped three (3) women and injured four (4) during an attack on a camp for displaced people in Central [formerly West] Darfur on Monday.** The camp coordinator told Radio Dabanga the paramilitary group released ten (10) of the captives the following day but **threatened to kill the remaining nine (9) hostages.** In a telephone call to the camp coordinator the group threatened to attack the camp for a second time if a ransom of 900 million Sudanese pounds is not paid within 24 hours. (Zalingei [West Darfur], July 11, 2012)

### III. LAND SEIZURES, ATTACKS ON FARMERS BY MILITIA GROUPS

Yet again there have been *no* UNAMID reports on any of these attacks and the ongoing seizure of farms by Arab groups—from Darfur, but also Chad, Niger, and Mali. And yet these seizures have been reported by various sources, including human rights groups, for many years. The violence confronting those in IDP camps if they try to return to their homes and lands is perhaps the single greatest obstacle to peace in Darfur; UNAMID has proved hopelessly incapable in reversing the trend of Arab land appropriation and attacks on those attempting to return. The problem is particularly acute in West Darfur, which borders eastern Chad, but occurs throughout Darfur:

• **Armed men seize farms in West Darfur**

A group of pro-government armed men assaulted a number of farmers in West Darfur. After insulting and beating them, they burned down their farms. The men driving a land cruiser attacked the farmers on Tuesday evening in Jimmaizat Babiker and Hajer Bager, west of For Baranga. A farmer told Radio Dabanga that the militants expelled them from their lands and threatened to kill him if they returned. The farmer said *the armed men warned the farmers the*

area is meant for grazing and not for agriculture according to our source. (el-Geneina [West Darfur] July 13, 2012)

• **New settlers in West Darfur chase displaced people from their lands**

Displaced people returning to their farmlands in West [ ] Darfur were chased from their lands by the new settlers. Sheikh Daoud Arbab Ibrahim Younis, head of the high committee for IDPs of the West Darfur state, told Radio Dabanga this issue is especially prevalent in the villages of Hashaba, Kuka, East Kuka, Krobbe and Ajabun. *Some of these areas are completely occupied* such as Affen Dibbi, Nurei, Tankoa and Takuda and many other areas surrounding El Geneina and For Baranga. *Arab settlers, coming from Chad and Niger, moved to these lands after the outbreak of the war in Darfur in 2003* Sheikh Daoud told Radio Dabanga. IDPs often temporarily return to their lands for agriculture during the rainy season only to be threatened or forced to pay a sum of 100 Sudanese Pounds by the new settlers. Sheikh Daoud raised this issue during the Darfur conference in El Fasher. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], July 15, 2012)

• **Farmers expelled from their land**

In another incident in the Sirba locality [West Darfur] a group of farmers underwent severe beating by a group of armed men, a witness told Radio Dabanga. The farmers were expelled from their land in Agri Taiman and Wadi Ardeba. The armed group threatened them with death upon return. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], July 1, 2012)

• **Government forces confiscate farmland surrounding Sharif oilfield**

Government forces confiscated the lands belonging to farmers close to a military base in East [formerly South] Darfur. The soldiers claim the eviction is necessary in order for them to safeguard the Sharif Petroleum oilfield. The confiscated lands surround a military base, located 15 km outside of the town Adila. A farmer told Radio Dabanga no kind of financial compensation had been offered in exchange for their eviction. (ed-Daein [South Darfur], July 15, 2012)

• **Armed militias seize farms in Kreinik, West Darfur**

IDPs returning to their lands in Kreinik, 36 km east of Geneina, found that their properties had been seized by armed militias. A sheik of one of the IDP camps told Radio Dabanga, IDPs returning to cultivate their lands during the rainy season in West Darfur were stopped by militias. In addition the IDPs lack the necessary materials to build shelter from the rain the Sheikh said. He had informed the local authorities about the situation, but they failed to act. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], July 8, 2012)

• **Armed group shoots man, expels farmers from land**

An armed group of 30 members traveling on horses shot a man and tried to expel farmers from their land near Gereida in South Darfur. Witnesses said the men entered a village and shot Muhannad Yacob from Al Safa while he was tending to his farm. They said Yacob was taken to hospital in Gereida for treatment. They added that militias try to take over farmlands belonging to displaced people as many are still living in the camps, forgoing the right to their land. (Gereida [South Darfur], June 14, 2012)

• **New settlers in Darfur chase returnees from their farming lands**

Displaced Darfuris in camp Kendeby of West Darfur have been chased from their farming lands in the area of Sirba, north of the capital El Geneina. They told Radio Dabanga that *several returning IDP's have been threatened with weapons while they were trying to sow their seeds*. They say that settlers instead of the returnees from the area have taken the fertile agricultural lands in the localities of Miraya, Agi Ra, Kurk and Dumta. Displaced Darfuris in camp Kendeby of West Darfur have been chased from their farming lands in the area of Sirba, north of the capital El Geneina. According to a community leader, the settlers had beaten five women who went out of camp Kendeby for farming in Dumta areas last Thursday. The settlers confiscated their seeds after beating them with a whip. The men warned them not to come back again. The community leader appealed to the authorities in West Darfur and human rights organizations or the international community to intervene. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], June 17, 2012)

- **Residents flee after militants burn down village**

Residents that fled Dali near Kabkabiya have said their village was completely burned down by militias. Witnesses told Radio Dabanga that dozens of residents fled towards Kabkabiya yesterday evening after gunmen attacked killing one resident and wounding several others. They said gunmen traveled on camels, horses and in cars opening fire before setting the village alight. They added that the incident came a day after two people were killed in an exchange of gunfire with militants at a village near Dali. (Dali [North Darfur], June 5, 2012)

- **IDPs flee back to camps after new settlers open fire**

Hundreds of displaced people have fled back to Neem camp in East Darfur [formerly part of South Darfur] after new settlers on their original lands attacked them, when they returned with state authorities as part of the programme of voluntary return.

Witnesses said on Wednesday the old Neem camp residents were taken with authorities including the state governor to resettle on the land they were originally displaced from. On arrival they said militants started shooting heavily into the air and threatening to kill the returnees if they did not leave the area, even though senior government officials were present. (El Daein [South Darfur], 18 May 2012)

- Finally, in contrast to Gambari's claim that he "witnessed groups of refugees returning from Chad to Darfur," Radio Dabanga has repeatedly reported Darfuri denials of such returns. Over and over again, Darfuris offer the same account of these "returnees":

"A refugee [from] eastern Chad said he was surprised at the statements and wondered whether Gambari had become 'the UNAMID mouthpiece for the ruling National Congress Party.' He said when the government and UNAMID refer to the return of refugees, they are actually talking about the new settlers, who have arrived from countries such as Niger and Mali, along with Chadian war refugees in Sudan, who have resettled in displaced Darfuri residents' land. He said the reasons they had to flee their lands remain the same, as their villages are still insecure and patrolled by pro-government militias." (June 5, 2012)

#### **IV. UNAMID UNABLE TO SECURE ROADS IN DARFUR**

Throughout Darfur travel has become *increasingly* dangerous—for civilians, for relief workers, even for UNAMID itself. The growing lack of access, which the UN and UNAMID refuse to acknowledge honestly, is in large measure due directly to road insecurity. A seasoned relief worker, writing directly from North Darfur, noted a year ago the following measures of security for aid workers (email received July 28, 2011):

- Number of roads cleared for UN travel without armed escort = **0**
- Number of locations outside el-Fasher where international UN staff can stay without armed protection = **0**
- Number of international staff spending the night in deep field positions = **5 or 6**
- Number of locations where international staff spend the night in the deep field = **4**

Khartoum also sometimes orders the closing of roads, even major roads such as the key artery between el-Fasher and Nyala; this can result in the use of alternate, but much more dangerous routes. On yet other occasions, Khartoum permits—and UNAMID cannot halt—massive extortion schemes confronting those using the roads.

- **Militia sets up ambush between Kutum and Kabkabiya**

A pro-government militia set up an ambush on the main road leading from Kutum to Kabkabiya in North Darfur. They have looted commercial vehicles passing through for a week now. As a result commodity and fuel prices in Kabkabiya have [sky-] rocketed. (el-Fasher [North Darfur], July 19, 2012)

- **Over 500 toll houses between Nyala and Kabkabiya**

Travelers moving from Nyala to Kabkabiya via Kass-Niertete in North Darfur, are confronted with up to 500 toll houses on their way. *A merchant, who often takes this road, tells radio Dabanga that government militias and border police randomly set up these booths in order to extract fees from passing vehicles.* A stop at a toll booth costs between the 80 and 150 pounds per vehicle. In total, trip from Nyala to Kabkabiya costs between the two and four thousand pounds. In addition he tells that passengers receive death threats, beatings and that in case of non-payment the tires of their vehicles get shot. The trader reported the abuses to local and state authorities but was ignored. (al-Fasher [North Darfur], June 28, 2012)

- **Transport between El Fasher and Nyala in North Darfur forbidden for 25 consecutive days**

Government authorities have forbidden the movement of all vehicles between El Fasher and Nyala in North Darfur for twenty-five consecutive days. This has resulted in a lack of medicine, fuel and acute shortages of drinking water in the IDP camp of Shangil Tobaya. A leader of the IDP camp tells Radio Dabanga that grain mills grinded to a halt due to the lack of fuel. Residents are forced to use rocks to grind grains. The lack of medicine has resulted in residents taking refuge in traditional medicine. He tells how the IDPs of camp Shangil Tobaya are forced to stand in long lines for millet and maize. It takes them five days to get to El Fasher for medical treatment and to purchase food. (Nyala [South Darfur], June 26, 2012)

- **Attack on convoy leaves one dead North Darfur**

A civilian convoy consisting of five vehicles was attacked on Wednesday in the Sharia locality, leaving one dead and eight injured, a witness told Radio Dabanga. The five vehicles were traveling from Nyala to El Fasher in North Darfur when they were ambushed by a group of armed men. The wounded have been transferred to Nyala hospital for treatment. *The main road between El Fasher and Nyala has remained closed for over a month now, this has prompted travelers to search for alternative routes.* (el-Fasher [North Darfur], July 5, 2012)

- **Attacks on road passengers in North Darfur**

Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah was shot dead by a group of armed gunmen on Sunday in Khazan Jadid, North Darfur. A relative of the victim told Radio Dabanga that Abdullah was traveling from Nyala to El Fasher when a group of armed men stopped the bus. He described how the armed men forced the passengers to exit the bus, after which they were beaten and robbed of their personal belongings. They then shot Abdullah and injured an unknown number of passengers. (el-Fasher [North Darfur], July 5, 2012)

- **In a similar incident a group of armed men**, sympathetic to the government in Khartoum, intercepted a commercial vehicle in north Kabkabiya, North Darfur. A passenger informed Radio Dabanga that the robbers held the driver at gunpoint and forced the passengers to disembark. They then beat the passengers and robbed them of their personal belongings. The armed men fled to an unknown destination. (el-Fasher [North Darfur], July 2, 2012)

- **Five men in army uniform loot car near Garsila**

Five men wearing Sudanese army uniforms looted a car traveling from Um Duhun near Garsila in Central [formerly West] Darfur. Witnesses said the five men watched as the car dropped off its passengers, and then moved in to steal their money and mobile phones. They said the attack happened around three km from Garsila. (Garsila [West Darfur], June 14, 2012)

## **V. COMPROMISED TRAVEL SECURITY AFFECTS HUMANITARIAN AID**

There is a direct link between an inability to travel securely and the rapidly declining humanitarian conditions reported in camps by Radio Dabanga, especially away from the major hubs of el-Fasher and Nyala; again the problems are worst in the more remote region of West Darfur:

- **Abu Suruj camp: no food aid for six months**

Residents of Abu Suruj camp for internally displaced people said they have not received food aid for more than six months. Witnesses said the camps north of El Geneina are reaching a desperate situation and called for the World Food Programme to immediately intervene and deliver food aid to people in need of urgent assistance. They said the disruption of the planting season has also contributed creating a situation nearing famine, reminiscent of the Darfur famine of 1983. They call for the WFP coordinator to visit the areas to witness it for themselves. (el-Geneina [West Darfur], May 28, 2012)

- **Mornay camp food rations reduced by half**

Mornay camp [West Darfur] residents have complained that the World Food Programme have reduced food rations by half. A camp leader told Radio Dabanga that the rations were reduced without any explanation from the WFP. He appealed to the WFP to resume full rations and remember the difficulties facing displaced people in buying food from the market, amid food shortages and high prices. (Mornay camp [West Darfur], May 29, 2012)

- **Camp Mornei plagued by malaria and malnutrition**

Residents of camp Mornei in Central [formerly West] Darfur suffer from poor health conditions as diseases like malaria and malnutrition spread rapidly. Especially children, elderly and pregnant women suffer from the diseases. Residents told Radio Dabanga there is no doctor working in the camp and that the hospital in Mornei is not functioning well. One of the elders from camp Mornei said the hospital does not have a general practitioner and there is a lack of beds in the hospital. The farsha of Mornei said another problem is a lack of medicines in the hospitals. (Mornei [West Darfur], June 1, 2012)

- **Six months with no aid for South Darfur camps**

Residents of Mershing, Manaoshi and Duma camps for displaced people in South Darfur have received not humanitarian aid or support for over six months. Camp leaders told Radio Dabanga that around 60 percent of camp residents are suffering with continuous hunger, since food rations were stopped forcing some to go for days without having a meal. One leader said they have been complaining for months about the situation with no help coming from the international community, or any serious moves to save displaced people in the South Darfur camps. He said the camp residents have unanimously decided that if they do not get a response from the World Food Programme or the government's humanitarian aid commission within the next few days they will be forced to leave the camps and move the population to another place where they can access food and avoid starvation. (South Darfur, June 5, 2012)

A virtually complete embargo on humanitarian aid has been imposed throughout the populous **Jebel Marra region in the center of Darfur**. The results are inevitable, despite the fertile nature of the land here:

- **Residents of E. Jebel Marra suffer from deteriorating humanitarian situation**

The security and humanitarian situation in the East Jebel Marra area is deteriorating. Thousands of residents are without health care. Those seeking medical treatment are forced to take a seven-day donkey ride to El Fasher. A local administrator and activist described the situation as catastrophic, during an interview with Radio Dabanga. He claims the continuous bombardments since 2003 have destroyed all water sources, forcing citizens to drink water from the craters left by the air strikes. It has been reported that the water is infected by toxic materials that pours out of the bombs. (East Jebel Marra, July 17, 2012)

- **Starvation in three camps of South Darfur after pull out aid organizations**

Children have died due to malnutrition after aid organizations pulled out of three camps, 40 kilometers outside the South Darfur capital of Nyala. Community leaders have urged aid organizations to resume health and food support in the displaced camps of Mershing, Manaoshi and Duma in South Darfur. Community leaders gave Radio Dabanga an emotional account of what happened. In the past week tens of children and several elderly people died of to

malnutrition. The community leader says that starvation is the result of the aid organizations stopped providing food rations to IDPs for more than eight months. He added that since circumstances are increasingly challenging an insufficient number of health centers near the IDP camps. (Nyala [South Darfur], June 22, 2012)

• **Several camps Darfur do not receive food aid for four months**

Several camps in North Darfur have not received food aid for several months. The [tens of] thousands of internally displaced people of Zam Zam-camp in North Darfur and the camps of Jeddah and El Jebelayn close to the town of Garsila in Central [formerly West] Darfur, said the World Food Program does not enter the camps anymore to support the families most in need. Several camps in North Darfur have not received food aid for several months. (June 23, 2012)

• **Six children die from measles in Seraf Umra camps**

Six children have died from measles in over past week in Jebel, Dankoj and El Naseem camps in Seraf Umra in North Darfur. Witnesses from the camps told Radio Dabanga that the medical reports in Seraf Umra hospital indicated the cause of death as measles. They expressed deep concern at the quick spread of diseases in the camp *due to the lack of health care* and appealed to local authorities and organisations to immediately intervene to provide desperately needed assistance. (Seraf Umra [North Darfur], June 6, 2012)

• **Neem camp: no food aid for a year**

In an interview with Radio Dabanga Sheikh Said AbuBabr said the conditions are catastrophic noting that the camp residents were forced out of their homes as their villages were attacked. He said they had told the World Food Programme and the Humanitarian Aid Commission but neither have moved to take any action. He appealed to the both bodies to act immediately to save these people from hunger before the situation deteriorates further. The Sheikh also said a water crisis is increasing the suffering of camp residents, along with a deterioration in health services after the government suspended Sudan Aid, a body running the health centres across Neem camp. (Neem Camp, East [formerly South] Darfur, June 8, 2012)

• **Jebel Marra residents stranded with no aid access**

The coordinator of internally displaced person camps in North Darfur, Ahmed Atim, said the situation of civilians in Jebel Marra is becoming desperate. He said civilians are stranded with no access from humanitarian organisations including the World Food Programme. The coordinator appealed to the WFP to provide aid and relief to those affected north, west, east and south of Jebel Marra. (Jebel Marra, May 27, 2012)

## VI. "CHAOS BY DESIGN"

Finally, there is the random violence that leaves Darfuris deeply dispirited and fearful. It does much to explain the reluctance of people to return to their homes and lands. Here again, the consequences for humanitarian relief are highly significant and do much to explain the deficiencies within the IDP camps. UN OCHA itself notes in its May 21, 2012 weekly report that, "criminal acts targeting humanitarian staff in Darfur on the rise."

• **Pro-government paramilitary group kill hostage from Hamadiya camp**

The dead body of Mustafa Mohamed Issa was found after he was kidnapped last week by a pro-government paramilitary group. His decomposing body was found in Wadi Boro Segel, 1.5 km east of the IDP camp Hamadiya on Tuesday. This is the latest in a series of confrontations between IDPs from the Hamdiya camp and the government Border Guards in Central [formerly West] Darfur. (Zalingei [West Darfur], July 17, 2012)

• **Unrest at Hamadiya camp continues with 9 separate incidents of looting reported**

Tensions between displaced people from the Hamadiya camp [West Darfur] and Border Guards rise amidst nine separate incidents of looting were reported and one kidnapping. Mustafa Mohamed Isa was kidnapped on Thursday while heading to the forest to gather firewood and

food. [ ] The camp coordinator told Radio Dabanga "Abu Manga [the leader of the Border Guards] and his troops are still surrounding the camp. *They attack all IDPs who leave the camp. The displaced people are very afraid.*" (Zalingei [West Darfur], July 13, 2012)

• **Man shot for not handing over possessions**

Gunmen opened fire on a displaced man, Muhammed Ibrahim Abdullah in Kassab camp, Kutum, in North Darfur on Monday evening. A witness said that four gunmen attacked Muhammed as he was filling cans with water from a nearby pump. The men demanded he hand over his possessions, but the man told them he was not carrying anything. The gunmen searched him but when they did not find anything and shot him in the hand. (Kassab camp, near Kutum [North Darfur], June 12, 2012)

• **Killing and looting in North and South Darfur**

Four separate incidents of killing and looting by armed gunmen in North and South Darfur were reported to Radio Dabanga, indicating a deteriorating security situation in Darfur. (Nyala [South Darfur], al-Fasher [North Darfur], July 12, 2012)

And as if to highlight the impotence of UNAMID, the above incident in Nyala is reported in revealing terms by Radio Dabanga: "Four gunmen killed a police sergeant in Nyala. *Sergeant Osman Hassan Abdullah was shot dead by one of the men while guarding a UNAMID compound housing pilots on Tuesday [July 10, 2012] a witness told Radio Dabanga.*

• **Displaced man shot dead by pro-government militia**

A displaced man was shot dead by pro government militia and his body dumped in Dummah camp near Nyala in South Darfur. *Witnesses told Radio Dabanga gunmen are frequently attacking displaced people as they leave the camps, raping women with impunity despite camp residents repeatedly reporting the incidents to the police.* (Dumma camp [South Darfur], May 30, 2012)

• **Pro-government militia raids goldmine in Central Darfur**

A pro-government militia opened fire on gold miners in Central Darfur, causing them to flee. Mohammed Toro was wounded on his right thigh during the incident. Witnesses told Radio Dabanga a militia composed of six armed men approached the mine on a Land Cruiser on Sunday evening in the Hashaba locality in Zalingei. They opened fire and looted the property of the mineworkers, which included 23 thousand pounds and several gold detectors. (Zalingei [West Darfur], July 16, 2012)

And on too many occasions it is Khartoum's regular armed forces that attack with impunity, and certainly without fear of UNAMID:

• **Army Sudan raiding markets in North Darfur**

The Sudanese Army, led by Colonel Ammar, and pro-government militias raided the Garwid Barsham-market on Sunday. Witnesses told Radio Dabanga that they entered the market in the Dar El Salaam area in North Darfur with seven (7) Land Cruisers and started looting the place. (el-Fasher [North Darfur], June 26, 2012)

• **Five men in army uniform loot car near Garsila**

Five men wearing Sudanese army uniforms looted a car traveling from Um Duhun near Garsila in Central [formerly West] Darfur. Witnesses said the five men watched as the car dropped off its passengers, and then moved in to steal their money and mobile phones. They said the attack happened around three km from Garsila. (Garsila [West Darfur], June 14, 2012)

**CONCLUSION:**

In the face of all this, the UN and UNAMID leader Gambari insist that the "security and humanitarian situations have improved" in Darfur (UN News Center, April 12, 2012). We are

obliged, then, to make a choice: the UN/UNAMID account simply does not comport—at all—with the numerous detailed, wide-ranging reports of Radio Dabanga; these reports are neither addressed nor disputed in UNAMID's communications except with what is implicit denial: the "security and humanitarian situations are improving in Darfur."

I believe this is a transparently untenable claim, and that a larger conclusion here is inescapable: in order to legitimize withdrawal of a failed peace support operation, the UN and the UNAMID leadership are prepared to lie baldly about the real situation in Darfur. In order to disguise the scale of that failure—the almost complete inability to provide security for civilians and humanitarians (its key mandate under UN Security Council Resolution 1769)—the UN and UNAMID are willing to ignore and deny acute human suffering and destruction. The evident assumption is that Khartoum has done a sufficiently effective job of sealing Darfur off from journalists, human rights observers, and humanitarians who might be tempted to speak out. And there is the further assumption that few read Radio Dabanga's reports, and even fewer take them seriously. But in fact I have yet to communicate with an independent expert on Darfur who does not believe that Radio Dabanga is doing an excellent job of reporting.

I believe on the basis of all available reports from all sources, now covering many years, that Radio Dabanga is presenting an accurate picture of Darfur's realities, and that the UN and UNAMID are lying about what can be known—and that they are likely right in their assumption that they need not fear contradiction based on reports by Darfuris themselves.

Could the UN, representing the international community, disgrace itself more completely?