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## **British Warn Sudan of New Sanctions**

By The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Britain's minister for Africa accused Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir of seeking a military solution in conflict-wracked Darfur and warned that he will likely face new sanctions unless he keeps agreements to promote peace.

Foreign Office minister Lord David Triesman on Wednesday said al-Bashir faces a critical test in early spring which will demonstrate whether he is committed to ending the four-year conflict that has killed more than 200,000 people and forced 2.5 million to flee from their homes.

He said continuing attacks by some rebel groups in Darfur and the bad behavior of countries backing them did not excuse al-Bashir's government from observing a cease-fire and implementing a three-phase U.N. package it agreed to in November to help end the escalating violence in the vast western region.

"But the government of Sudan ... has not observed the cease-fire, has committed military forces to try to achieve military solutions, has not disarmed any of the (pro-government) janjaweed (militia), and has not really engaged in a political process as contrasted with a military process," Triesman said.

The result, he said, is that conditions on the ground are getting worse and worse, humanitarian organizations are finding it more difficult to get aid "to destitute, starving, dying people" and there is nothing the 7,000-strong African Union force on the ground can do.

The U.N. package is supposed to culminate in the third phase with the deployment of a 22,000-strong AU-U.N. "hybrid" force. But al-Bashir said last month that U.N. troops were not required in Darfur because the African Union force on the ground could maintain order.

Triesman said the first phase—a "light support" package adding some equipment, military officers and U.N. police to the AU operation—was almost complete.

Britain wants the African Union to quickly finalize the "heavy support" package, which Triesman said would include 3,000 to 4,000 troops and additional equipment.

"The heavy assistance has to be in early this spring," Triesman said. "What was being talked about was late March—so that was the agreement."

Al-Bashir will "either stick to that agreement or he'll break it, and that's a very fundamental test," he said. "Breaking it is a very, very clear message and has clear consequences."

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