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## **AU Calls on United Nations to Fund Darfur Mission**

By Opheera McDoom for Reuters

ADDIS ABABA — The United Nations should take over full financing of a struggling African Union peacekeeping operation in Sudan's violent Darfur region, where security is deteriorating, the AU's top diplomat said on Friday.

Alpha Oumar Konare's report to African foreign ministers meeting in Addis Ababa blamed the renewed insecurity on the re-emergence of pro-government militia known as Janjaweed plus a lack of commitment to a truce by all parties to the conflict.

"It is crucial that the issue of funding (of the AU mission) by the United Nations through assessed contributions be pursued expeditiously," the report said.

It added agreement had been reached that U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon should recommend to the General Assembly that "the United Nations provide full financing to the mission."

The 7,500-some AU soldiers and police in Darfur have failed to stem the violence, which experts estimate has killed 200,000 people and forced 2.5 million to flee their homes during the four-year conflict.

It costs \$40 million a month for the AU operation. AU diplomats say that any U.N. mission would cost three times the amount of the AU operation.

Konare blamed weak logistics and a lack of cash for the AU mission's failings. Experts say at least 20,000 troops are needed in Darfur, an arid region the size of France.

Arab League representative Samir Hosni said his group had transferred \$15 million to the AU and hoped for more funds. But he said it was up to the United Nations to take over.

Ban will meet Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir during a summit of African leaders in Addis Ababa on Monday and Tuesday, Sudan's Foreign Minister Lam Akol said.

Akol said there would be no further discussions on U.N. troops in Darfur, because he said agreement that the U.N. would support the mission was clear.

The United Nations says a support package and joint force was agreed in November, but Khartoum has since rejected a substantial U.N. peacekeeping presence on the ground.

Konare said the details of the U.N. support package had been finalized and included "substantial air assets," as well as significant military and logistical help. It would be presented to Sudan for discussion, he added.

The Arab League's Hosni said no agreement was made in November to deploy thousands of U.N. peacekeeping troops, just that the majority of troops should be African.

"The other forces should be a few units from the United Nations working in the chain of command, logistical and communications and this should be hundreds, no more than 1,000-2,000," he said.

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