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## U.N. Secretary General to Meet Sudanese Leader

By [WARREN HOGE](#)

[UNITED NATIONS](#), Aug. 28 — Secretary General [Ban Ki-moon](#) announced Tuesday that he would travel to Sudan, Chad and Libya next week to press for an end to fresh violence in [Darfur](#) and for speedy deployment there of a joint [African Union](#)-United Nations peacekeeping force.

“I want to go and see for myself the very difficult circumstances under which our forces will operate,” he said in a news conference at United Nations headquarters. “I also want to know, firsthand, the plight of those they seek to help.”

He said he had expressed “deep concern” to the Sudanese authorities over reports of new attacks in the region and promised to make it part of his conversations with the Sudanese president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

“I am deeply concerned about the recent escalation in violence in Darfur that has caused the death of hundreds of people in the last few weeks alone,” he said. “I appeal to the government of Sudan and to all the parties to refrain from military action,” he said, and to choose “the path of peace and political dialogue.”

The joint force, 20,000 soldiers and 6,000 civilian police officers, will be the world’s largest peacekeeping operation and cost more than \$2 billion a year. United Nations officials hope to begin deployment in October and complete it by the beginning of 2008.

The Security Council approved the joint force on July 31 after the government in Khartoum relented in its persistent and lengthy objections to the presence of the United Nations in Sudan, which Mr. Bashir had characterized as recolonization.

United Nations officials say that they have received enough pledges from African countries for infantry soldiers, which Sudan insists on, but that they still lack commitments from wealthier nations for engineering and communications specialists and attack helicopters.

At least 200,000 people have died in Darfur since rebel groups took up arms four years ago to fight for greater autonomy and government-armed Arab militias retaliated with a scorched-earth campaign.

An estimated 2.5 million people have been forced from their land in Darfur, with 230,000 of them fleeing to Chad, where more than 170,000 Chadians have also been displaced, according to Mr. Ban.

On Monday, the Security Council gave preliminary support to a force of 3,000 [European Union](#) soldiers, 300 United Nations-backed civilian officers and 1,150 Chadian officers to protect refugees in eastern Chad and the northeastern region of the Central African Republic.

The plan, advanced by Mr. Ban on Aug. 16, is to be formalized at a Sept. 17 meeting of the Council of Ministers of the European Union and endorsed at the same time in a Security Council resolution.

The United Nations already has a peacekeeping force in the south of Sudan, patrolling a cease-fire that ended a 20-year conflict unrelated to Darfur, and Mr. Ban will be going to Juba, where that force is headquartered.

A second stop will take him to El Fasher, where the Darfur force will be based and where he will visit camps for displaced people.

In Ndjamena, the Chadian capital, he will see Idriss Déby, the country's president, but will not have time to go to border refugee camps, the United Nations said.

Mr. Ban will also visit Tripoli, Libya, to meet with Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#), whom Mr. Ban called an "important regional player" in the Darfur crisis and credited with helping stage critical meetings and bringing rebel groups into negotiations.

In addition to the recent rise in violence, Sudan has reinforced doubts about its pledge to cooperate with the United Nations by abruptly expelling three Western officials from the country in the past week.

Paul Barker, the country director for the aid agency CARE, was told Saturday to leave within 72 hours, and given no reason. Nuala Lawlor, the Canadian chargé d'affaires, and Kent Degerfelt, the [European Commission](#) envoy, were declared unwelcome for having had unacceptable contacts with opposition leaders. In Mr. Degerfelt's case, the government reversed itself and permitted him to remain after obtaining an apology from the commission.

Mr. Ban said he was committed to protecting aid workers and would insist on it when he saw Mr. Bashir in Khartoum.

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