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Sudan Agrees to U.N. Peacekeepers to Complement African Union Force

By [LYDIA POLGREEN](#)

DAKAR, Senegal, Aug. 1 — [Sudan](#)'s foreign minister told reporters Wednesday that the government supported the deployment of a [United Nations](#) peacekeeping force for [Darfur](#), as authorized by the Security Council, while a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Europe volunteered to send troops to join it.

Nigeria, which already makes up the bulk of the 7,000-member [African Union](#) force in Darfur, pledged a fourth battalion of troops, and Senegal also said it would consider sending more troops if the soldiers had adequate means to protect themselves. Senegal had threatened to withdraw from the African Union peacekeeping force after five Senegalese soldiers were killed in an ambush earlier this year.

France, Indonesia, Denmark, Sweden and Norway also indicated that they were considering sending troops to bolster the force, which is expected to begin deploying late this year. At full strength, with about 20,000 soldiers and 6,000 civilian police officers, it will be the world's largest peacekeeping operation, costing \$2 billion in the first year.

The 7,000 troops in place will be absorbed into the new force, which will be a joint operation between the African Union and the United Nations, led by an African general but largely run by the United Nations.

Aid groups and human rights activists praised the Security Council resolution approved Tuesday that authorized the force, but cautioned that it must be put into effect swiftly.

"Given the Sudanese government's past record of obstructing such deployments, we urge the government to facilitate the rapid deployment of the new force," Irene Khan, secretary general of [Amnesty International](#), said in a statement. "The people of Darfur have been offered too many words and too many resolutions. Now is the time for effective action."

At least 200,000 people have died in Darfur since the conflict began four years ago, when a rebel group made up of non-Arab tribes took up arms to seek greater wealth and power sharing for the long-neglected region. The Sudanese government responded by arming local Arab militias that unleashed a tide of violence that the Bush administration and many others have called genocide, though the Sudanese government disputes that description of the conflict. About 2.5 million people have been pushed from their homes and the chaos has spread into neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic, two of the poorest and most chaotic nations.

With an agreement on a peacekeeping force, diplomats turned their attention to talks scheduled to begin Friday in Arusha, Tanzania, aimed at persuading the various rebel groups fighting in Darfur to unite and move toward a peace deal with the Sudanese government.

A letter sent this week to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan urged that the Sudanese government release Suleiman Jamous, the humanitarian coordinator for the Sudan Liberation Army, one of the main rebel groups, and allow him to receive medical attention.

Mr. Jamous, one of the few rebel figures who commands broad support across the splintered movement, has been held in government custody for more than a year, and diplomats say that if he were released he could help build consensus among the rebel groups.

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