


## **Current Security Conditions in Darfur: An Overview, April 7, 2005**

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Disturbing trends suggest further attenuation of humanitarian relief

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All signs are that physical security for humanitarian operations in Darfur continues to deteriorate at a very serious rate. The current reality and future risks of armed attacks on workers (both national and expatriate), humanitarian convoys, and humanitarian resources are reflected in a wide range of published and confidential reports. The latter have come to this writer in very considerable number from sources within the community of aid organizations, the UN, Darfuris in exile, refugee and human rights organizations, as well as other intelligence sources.

Together, these reports suggest that in the run-up to the rainy season (May/June through September) overall humanitarian capacity has begun to decline, transport of food is badly compromised, the pre-positioning of food (especially in West Darfur) is far behind schedule, disease is starting to bite more deeply within a badly weakened population, and water-supply issues have become critical. This occurs even as the conflict-affected population continues to rise, and certainly now exceeds 3 million if we include the refugee population in Chad (which has also begun to show signs of growing severe malnutrition, according to the UN High Commission for Refugees). Food inflation in the region ensures that ever-greater numbers of people cannot obtain food at market prices and thus become dependent on humanitarian food assistance.

Populations arriving from rural areas are typically entering camps for the displaced with more advanced malnutrition, indicating that people are waiting until food reserves are entirely depleted before seeking assistance. A recent UN report (March 27, 2005) notes "a rapid deterioration of local coping mechanisms among the local population," an extremely ominous sign among these highly resilient people. The many hundreds of thousands of civilians still caught in rural areas to which there is no humanitarian access clearly represent a population in very deep distress, and among whom catastrophic mortality rates must be assumed (i.e., at least 3 deaths/day/10,000 of affected population).

Military violence on the part of Khartoum's regular and Janjaweed militia forces continues to be reported in a wide range of locations, and violent civilian deaths continue to be a significant part of overall mortality. A very substantial military build-up by Khartoum in West Darfur continues to be confirmed by multiple sources, including Darfuris with contacts on the ground. There are also multiple reports of an offensive underway in the area east of Jebel Marra, where a number of Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) garrisons are located. Fighting on the ground continues to be reported daily, as does Khartoum's ongoing arming and supplying of the Janjaweed. There is not a shred of evidence that the UN Security Council referral of violations of international law to the International Criminal Court (ICC) has had any effect on the behavior of members of the Khartoum regime, its military, or the Janjaweed.

### **THE EFFECTS OF AN ICC REFERRAL ON KHARTOUM'S THINKING**

On the contrary, one nongovernmental organization (NGO) that has had an especially important reporting presence in Darfur indicates confidentially that it received explicit threats from the Janjaweed and Khartoum officials in February 2005 to the effect that if there were an ICC referral from the UN, "there would be an explosion of violence against NGO and UN workers"; "Musa Hilal [the most notorious of the Janjaweed commanders] will join Osama bin Laden; the Janjaweed will become a branch of al-Qaeda---

these were the types of threats we heard.”

A Darfuri in exile, with exceptionally good contacts on the ground in Darfur, also reports that in the wake of the UN’s referral of Darfur war crimes to the ICC, there is a “feeling among the NGO and humanitarian aid community that the Janjaweed would escalate their attacks on foreigners.” This source also refers to Khartoum’s opening of “camps for training foreign Janjaweed and Arab mujahadeen from other countries to fight [foreigners]. These people may now target the foreign [humanitarian aid] community in Darfur.”

This is hardly surprising if we survey the overwhelming climate of impunity that has prevailed in Darfur, even as the UN Commission of Inquiry was concluding its investigation. As the distinguished Refugees International reports in an early March 2005 assessment (“Sudan: A Climate of Impunity in Darfur”):

“Humanitarian workers say that as long as government officials believe that they are immune from punishment for these actions, the violence will go on. ‘We need to attack impunity. Sudan has to be held accountable,’ says one worker in Darfur. The UN’s International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur concluded that government, militia and rebel forces are guilty of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It recommended that 51 people be referred to the International Criminal Court. Yet, government officials and tribal leaders continue to call the violence a series of tribal disputes rather than military, militia and rebel actions that target civilians.”

“Remarkably, the Khartoum government demonstrated its sense of impunity during the work of the UN commission. The panel’s January 25, 2005 report says: ‘The Commission is particularly alarmed that attacks on villages, killings of civilians, rape, pillaging and forced displacement have continued.’ Some of the most horrific attacks by armed men on horseback or camel---called Janjaweed---and other paramilitary operating with government direction or acquiescence \*\*\*took place in December and January as the commission was finishing its inquiry into the crimes against humanity in Darfur\*\*\* [emphasis added].” (Refugees International, “Sudan: A Climate of Impunity in Darfur,” March 2, 2005)

In its March 2005 report, Refugees International also quotes Khartoum’s foreign minister, Mustafa Osman Ismail, clearly threatening international aid workers at the time---and in ways that are entirely consistent with the belligerent tones that presently accompany attacks on the Security Council recommendation of an ICC referral:

“Sudanese officials greet the ICC recommendation [by the UN Commission of Inquiry] with a combination of annoyance and arrogance. Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail recently threatened the 800 to 1,000 international humanitarian workers in Darfur by warning that referrals to a criminal court could lead to ‘a direct threat to the foreign presence... Darfur may become another Iraq in terms of arrests and abductions.’ A [paramilitary Popular Defense Force] official told Refugees International that ‘if the wanted on the list are penalized, it will not solve the problem. It will start war again.’ His colleague added, ‘There will be an explosion.’” (Refugees International, “Sudan: A Climate of Impunity in Darfur,” March 2, 2005)

We should hardly be surprised, then, at the current tenor of response from Khartoum officials, from regime-organized demonstrations, and in statements from various state-sanctioned religious and political figures:

“President Omar al-Beshir solemnly swore ‘thrice in the name of Almighty Allah that I shall never hand any Sudanese national to a foreign court.’ And Information Minister Abdel Basit Sabdarat said the government would launch ‘an extensive diplomatic campaign’ to explain its defiance of the world body.” (Agence France-Presse, April 4, 2005)

The claim of national sovereignty on the part of the National Islamic Front has been all too predictable, and now is made repeatedly:

"Sudan slammed a UN Security Council resolution to bring individuals suspected of war crimes in Darfur before an international court as a 'violation' of national sovereignty. 'The council of ministers has reached a conclusion that the resolution is contradicting justice and objectivity and violating national sovereignty,' Information Minister Abdel Basit Sabdarat said after a cabinet meeting chaired by President Omar al-Beshir." (Agence France-Presse, April 3, 2005)

Those beholden to or dependent upon the regime are easily made party to this bombastic invocation of "national sovereignty":

"No Sudanese national will be handed over for trial outside Sudan,' Fatahi Khaleel, the president of the pro-government Lawyers Union. 'We will resist it by all means.'" (Associated Press, April 2, 2005)

"We will not allow any arrest or trial of a Sudanese official, unless they will arrest the 30 million Sudanese people and try them,' Abdul Galeel Nazeer Karori, a leading Islamist and member of Sudan's ruling National Congress party, said on state-run TV. 'This is a direct intervention in the affairs of the country, it is meant to ban the government from carrying out its mission.'" (Associated Press, April 1, 2005 [dateline: Khartoum] "Ruling party, religious leaders say UN decision targets Islam")

These sentiments find their counterpart in other statements coming from the National Islamic Front apparatus and Janjaweed leaders, including Musa Hilal, the most powerful and notoriously brutal of the Arab militia commanders, and the regional figure most conspicuously working with the Khartoum regime (he is also certainly under indictment at the ICC):

"This resolution first of all we reject it,' [Musa] Hilal said, leader of the largest Arab tribe in the region. 'The situation is not one of the people of Darfur [anymore]---it has become one of a principle of foreign encroachment on the sovereignty of Sudan,' he said." (Reuters, April 5, 2005)

There is little difference between the claim of Hilal and the official position of Khartoum at the UN:

"Sudan's Ambassador [to the UN] Elfatih Erwa noted his country's deep opposition to the referral to the ICC, describing it as 'a tool to exercise the culture of superiority and impose the culture of superiority.'" (Associated Press, April 1, 2005)

And a BBC dispatch of today suggests the extremes to which the Khartoum regime will go to ensure that there is no possible domestic constituency for an ICC referral:

"Sudan's main opposition party says it has been banned from political activities after police stormed its headquarters in the city of Omdurman. Dozens of Umma party members were arrested by armed police on Wednesday, party officials said. They said the party was targeted because its leader, former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, backed sending Sudanese war crimes suspects to [the International Criminal Court]." (BBC, April 7, 2005)

The UN Integrated Regional Information Networks also reports that, "the Umma Party is being targeted for their public support of the ICC resolution,' a Sudanese official, who declined to be named, told IRIN on Thursday." (UN IRIN, April 7, 2005)

Just as predictable as these domestic sentiments are the statements from Egypt and Libya, which are clearly meant to encourage Khartoum to hold out against cooperating with the ICC:

"Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has condemned a UN vote to refer Sudanese accused of war crimes in Darfur to the International Criminal Court as a blatant violation of Sudan's independence. 'The Sudanese laws are the only ones that apply on Sudanese citizens in Sudan. Sudanese courts are the only ones entitled to try people inside Sudan,' said Gaddafi, in a statement reported by state news agency Jana late

on Saturday. [The UN referral to the ICC] is an affront to all Sudanese and a blatant violation of Sudan's independence.'" (Reuters [Tripoli], April 3, 2005)

Egypt has been only slightly more oblique in rejecting ICC jurisdiction, but no less effective in convincing Khartoum that it will not face a united international community when it comes to extraditing such figures as First Vice President Ali Osman Taha, Director of Intelligence Saleh 'Gosh,' and Interior Minister Abdel Ramin Mohamed Hussein, all certainly on the list of 51 indicted war criminals that has been passed on by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to chief ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo at The Hague. PANA reports from Khartoum:

"Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Abu al-Ghait has expressed dismay at last week's UN Security Council resolution, which demanded that war crime suspects in Sudan's troubled region of Darfur should be tried by the International Criminal Court, Khartoum dailies affirmed Tuesday. 'The international community should avoid measures or resolutions that could have the opposite effect of what was intended,' the Egyptian minister was quoted as cautioning." (PANA, April 5, 2005)

Reuters reports from Cairo ("Sudan Darfur Trials Can Evade Hague Court---Egypt"):

"Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said on Wednesday Sudanese war crimes suspects need not go to the International Criminal Court because Sudan's judiciary could try the accused at home. The UN Security Council for the first time last week referred suspects accused of carrying out war crimes in Darfur to the ICC in The Hague. Egypt has spoken against the 'internationalisation' of the Darfur conflict. 'The International Criminal Court...issues accusations, but if the internal judiciary in the country concerned plays its role then it negates the need for the criminal court,' Aboul Gheit said after meeting his Sudanese counterpart in Cairo." (Reuters [Cairo], April 6, 2005)

None of these statements---from Khartoum, Tripoli, or Cairo---change in the slightest the justice and appropriateness of a UN referral to the ICC; violations of international law that have occurred in Darfur, including genocide and massive crimes against humanity, are certainly best adjudicated in this important international legal forum. And such referral may well serve in the future as a forceful deterrent to other state and non-state actors (though the failure of the ICC to secure extradition of Khartoum's genocidaires may have the opposite effect).

#### THE REALITIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF TODAY

But none of this can be allowed to obscure or diminish the urgency with which present security conditions in Darfur must be assessed, an assessment as urgent today as it was a year ago. As the BBC reports today, "In his annual address [to the UN Human Rights Commission] last year [April 7, 2004], [Kofi] Annan warned that the conflict in Sudan's province of Darfur bore worrying similarities to the Rwandan genocide" (BBC April 7, 2005). Nothing has changed; a year later, the awful similarities between ethnically-targeted human destruction in Rwanda and Darfur remain all too conspicuous; there is only the disgraceful dishonesty and sanctimony that would have us believe new moral resolve has been found.

For example, UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw recently "accused other members of the UN Security Council of turning a blind eye to the atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan," implying that Britain's role has been to keep a clear focus on Darfur (The Scotsman, April 6, 2005). This implicit claim is thoroughly belied, however, by a new Parliamentary report ("Darfur, Sudan: The Responsibility to Protect," March 30, 2005, pages 35-39), which makes clear the ways in which the UK (along with the US and Norway) muted its criticism of genocide in Darfur in order to secure a north/south peace agreement.

Nor does Mr. Straw address honestly the patent inadequacy of the AU force in Darfur, or its inability to undertake "the responsibility to protect" vulnerable civilians and humanitarian workers. Under the current desperate circumstances, this is simply inexcusable: either there is honesty about what is required to

protect civilians and humanitarian operations in Darfur, or talk about "turning a blind eye to Darfur" is viciously ironic, simply another chapter in the disingenuousness with which the West has expediently chosen to accept the presence of a small African Union cease-fire monitoring mission as an adequate means for halting massive genocidal destruction.

Like his American counterpart, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Straw remains content with rhetorical gestures rather than meaningful support for the robust international humanitarian intervention that is clearly dictated by the conspicuous realities of insecurity throughout Darfur. For her part, Secretary Rice recently declared:

"The international community has to act on Darfur. It has to act with great speed. It is a humanitarian crisis. It is a moral crisis, and it is a crisis that is extraordinary in its scope and in its potential for even greater damage to those populations." (Voice of America, April 1, 2005)

But it was this same Secretary Rice who gave evasive answers in response to pointed questions from the Washington Post about humanitarian intervention.

WASHINGTON POST: "How many peacekeepers do you think it would take to stop the genocide in Darfur?"

"SECRETARY RICE: I can't give a number." (Washington Post, March 25, 2005)

The Washington Post questioner persisted, asking about a reported AU effort to increase its force to 6,000 by August 2005: "But hence my question. I mean, if you go to six thousand would that be enough?"

Rice refused to offer a direct answer, only the vaguest of generalizations:

"SECRETARY RICE: Well, [the AU] is a monitoring mechanism that has a chance of making a big difference as even a small monitoring mechanism has made."

Yet again the Washington Post questioner persisted, asking about the consequences of continuing insecurity for humanitarian operations, only to be met again with the refusal to provide a meaningful answer:

"WASHINGTON POST: [Jan Egeland, UN Humanitarian Coordinator] said in December to the Financial Times that if the deterioration of humanitarian access continued, he could imagine 100,000 people dying a month, which would put the number at about six times the death toll in 2004. Does that sound like a plausible---"

"SECRETARY RICE: I just can't judge." (Washington Post, March 25, 2005)

These are hardly the responses of someone who truly believes that:

"The international community has to act on Darfur. It has to act with great speed. It is a humanitarian crisis. It is a moral crisis, and it is a crisis that is extraordinary in its scope and in its potential for even greater damage to those populations."

The stench of hypocrisy is in the air.

#### SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

The nexus between humanitarian aid delivery and insecurity is best highlighted by looking at recent

reports on food deliveries in Darfur. In a lengthy release of April 1, 2005, the UN's World Food Program (WFP) reports:

"Shootings, attacks on drivers and thefts of WFP-contracted trucks carrying critically needed food aid are part of a rapidly deteriorating security situation in the Darfur region of western Sudan. The incidents are seriously threatening the ability of the UN World Food Program to assist millions of people---at a time when needs are increasing daily. 'The security situation is so bad that many drivers are now refusing to move through sections of the road corridors to the three Darfur states,' said Ramiro Lopes da Silva, WFP Sudan Country Director."

"A driver of a WFP-contracted truck was shot dead in a raid in January. Drivers have been taken hostage, and two are still missing. This month alone, a driver was shot and wounded, another had his hands broken, and others were severely beaten. A total of 13 WFP-contracted trucks are still missing after a string of raids; eight of these are known to be held by the Sudan Liberation Army. 'These attacks are completely unconscionable. They create a climate of fear that together with truck seizures pose a real threat to our ability to deliver food to the Darfurs,' said Lopes da Silva."

"The drivers of WFP-contracted trucks are vital to achieving such targets. While accustomed to a certain degree of risk in the region, they nevertheless halted a 37-truck convoy in Ed Daien last week, because it was just too dangerous to leave."

"Banditry is part of growing insecurity across Darfur that has seen attacks on humanitarian teams from WFP partner organisations. The Danish Refugee Council has temporarily withdrawn from the Jebel Marra region after two of its aid workers were abducted from a vehicle on 20 March [2005]. The two were released, but the vehicle is still missing. In West Darfur, areas to the north of the capital of El-Geneina remain 'no go' for UN agencies." (UN World Food Program, April 1, 2005)

Notable as well are the recent UN Sudan "sit reps" (situation reports), all of which reflect both deteriorating humanitarian conditions---especially in the prevalence of disease---and insecurity that prevents camp populations from returning to their former villages (or the burned-out remains of their villages), or even foraging for firewood and animal fodder. Sample excerpts provide a relentlessly consistent picture of the humanitarian situation: the camps for the displaced have become in effect huge, overcrowded prisons; morale is declining according to many reports; and health conditions are deteriorating badly:

"North Darfur: UNICEF conducted a visit to Abu Shouk camp on 21 March [2005] to monitor water tanking and hand pump operations. Key findings were: inadequate tap stands in some blocks; five platforms for the bladders were damaged; slow water discharge into tanks; long queues at water points and non-functioning of several hand pumps."

"Vector control campaigns have been interrupted in all IDP [Internally Displaced Persons] locations due to lack of pesticides. As a result, fly infestation at all the camps continues to worsen. To date, UNICEF has been unable to procure the spraying chemicals as there is only one supplier in El Fasher [North Darfur]."

"South Darfur: Agencies remain concerned that the targeted measles [a highly contagious and potentially deadly disease among children in IDP camps] vaccination campaign carried out by [the Khartoum Ministry of Health]/EPI in the past week (reaching only 500 children in Battery camp) will not prevent the continuation of the outbreak, as Battery camp is very near other IDP gatherings and the host community in Kass [town]."

"The population outside the camp shares much of the same city infrastructure, including water, schools, and the market and, as such, the possibility of spreading the virus is high. The humanitarian community

continues to push for a mass campaign to cover the entire population of Kass as well as the major IDP gatherings in South Darfur before the rainy season. WHO has recommended a mass campaign both as a means of preventing further outbreaks, and for covering those who were excluded from last year's blanket campaign due to violence." (UN Sudan "sit rep," March 29, 2005)

"On 30 March [2005], members of the North Darfur protection working group met with AMIS representatives to review the progress made by AMIS [AU Mission in Sudan] on patrolling the routes used by women collecting firewood and fodder around the Abu Shouk and Zam Zam IDP camps. Lack of sufficient personnel to conduct regular patrols is cited as a major constraint to AMIS."

"South Darfur: A recently concluded INGO protection assessment reveals that sexual violence and assaults on IDPs continue unabated in Kass town and surrounding areas. IDPs report an increase in harassment activities."

"Two fires in the IDP areas of Kass town on the night of 26-27 March [2005] destroyed some 300 huts according to a NGO assessment of the damages. Reportedly, the fires were the result of arson and two other fires were put out before spreading. IDPs in Kass suspect that the fires were part of a scheme to push IDPs to accept moving to a new site which has so far been rejected by the IDPs mainly due to security reasons." (UN Sudan "sit rep," March 31, 2005)

"North Darfur: The inter-agency assessment to the Dar Zaghawa area arrived safely on 23 March [2005] in El Fasher... The preliminary findings suggest a rapid deterioration of local coping mechanisms among the local population, exacerbated by war and the longstanding neglect of the area.... The findings are identical for IDP and resident populations in the area." (UN Sudan "sit rep," March 27, 2005)

Reports from Darfuris in exile, with contacts on the ground in Darfur, confirm the purpose of arson in the camp near Kass, i.e., Khartoum's continuing policy of forced expulsion of displaced persons. These reports also confirm the general decline in morale among those displaced persons now enduring extremely grim existences in camps that become more permanent without becoming more livable. Again and again, these reports reveal the central role of insecurity in defining humanitarian conditions, humanitarian operations, and humanitarian capacity.

Even within the environs of the camps themselves, insecurity remains pervasive, as men and boys from African tribal groups continue to be arrested, tortured, and executed; and women from the African tribal groups---as Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) recently reported---face extreme sexual violence:

"Women told MSF that they were beaten with sticks, whips or axes before, during or after the act of rape. Some of the raped women were visibly pregnant, as much as five to eight months, at the time of the assault.

The majority of survivors of rape and sexual violence tell MSF that the attacks occurred when women left the relative safety of villages and displaced camps to carry out activities indispensable of the survival of the families, such as searching for firewood or water."

"81% of the 500 rape survivors treated by MSF reported being assaulted by militia or military who used their weapons to force the assault. In Darfur, as in other conflicts, rape has been a regular and deliberate tool of war. It is used to destabilize and threaten a part of the civilian population, often a particular group. Rather than receiving appropriate medical and psychosocial care, women and child survivors of rape and sexual violence in Darfur often face rejection and stigma. In some cases, victims of rape have even been imprisoned while the perpetrators of the crime go unpunished, adding to an appalling pattern of neglect and abuse. (MSF, "Rape And Sexual Violence Ongoing in Darfur, March 78, 2005; at <http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=87E5F426-8A66-407E-B6E33C9E577F54CF>).

Human Rights Watch has also recently addressed the issue of insecurity in Darfur, and specifically Khartoum's continuing intimidation of humanitarian workers ("Darfur: Aid Workers Under Threat," April 5, 2005):

"The Sudanese government has sought to intimidate humanitarian relief agencies in Darfur by arbitrarily arresting or detaining at least 20 aid workers since December, Human Rights Watch said today. In several incidents, the rebel movements in Darfur have also detained or attacked aid workers. Human Rights Watch called on all parties to the conflict in Darfur to ensure the safety of humanitarian aid workers and facilitate their access to Sudanese civilians in need of assistance. 'The Sudanese authorities are using the same strong-arm tactics against Darfur aid workers that they have used against human rights defenders,' said Peter Takirambudde, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. 'Donor governments should condemn Khartoum's attempts to intimidate aid workers and others assisting civilians in Sudan.'"

The incidents Human Rights Watch points to involve "arbitrary arrest and detention" by "Sudanese security officials and representatives of military intelligence."

Why do we not hear more of these and other outrages against humanitarian operations by Khartoum?

"Few of the humanitarian organizations involved have publicized the arrests and detentions due to fear of further reprisals by the Sudanese government against their staff, activities and the displaced persons they assist. 'The government's arrests and threatened charges are a grossly disproportionate reaction to the so-called offenses,' Takirambudde said. 'These incidents represent nothing less than a campaign to harass and threaten aid agencies to keep them in line.'" (Human Rights Watch, "Darfur: Aid Workers Under Threat," April 5, 2005)

This campaign against humanitarian organizations receives continuous propagandistic support in Khartoum's state-controlled press, as represented here in a recent dispatch from Sudan Vision Newspaper [Khartoum], via the UN Daily Press Review for Sudan (March 27, 2005):

"Sudan Vision has learned that one of the foreign organizations used to send althuria [Thuraya satellite phones] for communications scratch cards to the Darfur rebels. The said organization was also seen photographing some governmental locations where photograph is prohibited, sending these photographs to the rebels."

"[Sudan Vision] also learned that the organization announced that rebels abducted three of its employees; a move it intended to use as a smoke screen after it felt that its plans were unfolded. Observers also believe that the organization's announcement came as a cover of the presence of the three with rebels doing certain tasks. It is worth mentioning that this same organization used to provide rebels with fuel. It was caught doing that in January and it officially apologized to the authorities concerned for that act."

Though clearly these are preposterous charges---and of course if they had any merit the (notably) unnamed organization would have been expelled from Sudan---they reveal a pattern of domestic incitement that has already had a pervasive effect on the way in which humanitarian organizations are treated by various of Khartoum's military, intelligence, and political officials.

#### THE GENOCIDAL STATUS QUO

Despite recent comments from Jan Pronk (the Secretary-General's special representative for Sudan), Jan Pronk (UN humanitarian coordinator), and the African Union about increasing the present vastly inadequate AU force in Darfur, there is no evidence of a willingness by the international community to consider the serious inadequacies of even this proposed larger force (ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 AU personnel)---or to assess realistically the ability of the AU to move substantially and rapidly beyond its



present force of an inadequately equipped 2,200 personnel (which has required half a year to deploy and is still well short of its original target figure of 3,500 to 4,000 personnel). Nor is there frank international acknowledgement that the AU has been politically unable to secure from Khartoum a meaningful mandate for civilian protection in Darfur. In turn, this military and political weakness ensures that the AU has been unable to provide effective diplomatic auspices or a credible peace-negotiating forum. There is still no date set for a resumption of peace talks.

Relentlessly, amidst international disingenuousness, expediency, indifference, and callous self-interest, security deteriorates in Darfur. Whatever hopes for meaningful humanitarian intervention that may have flickered over the past weeks have been extinguished. The UN has passed its resolutions; Western leaders have either expended their rhetorical energies or simply remained silent.

For lack of humanitarian intervention, so especially conspicuous on the 11th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, human destruction in Darfur continues to grow---inexorably, unforgivably.

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