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NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS ■ In August 2009, Rodolphe Adada, the Joint AU-UN Special Representative and head of the mission, urged all signatories of the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement to support the ongoing peace process via a round-table discussion. US special envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, travelled to Sudan in the beginning of September to assess the current environment for the implementation of future US policy concerning Sudan. There were efforts to renew the peace process which will entail a united rebel faction. For JEM to participate in the second round of Doha peace talks, the Government of Sudan (GoS) has to live up to certain clauses in the 2006 Goodwill Agreement.

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY ■ After an arrest warrant for President Al Bashir was announced by the International Criminal Court (ICC) last March, sixteen non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were expelled from Sudan for allegedly collaborating with ICC investigations. Remaining NGOs, local communities and the government have attempted to fill the gap left by their absence. Since the ICC's ruling, aid workers have faced growing hostility. Violence also persists as low-level clashes between government forces, bandits and insurgents continue in Darfur.

DARFUR AND CANADIAN POLITICALS ■ The Darfur issue has not been at the forefront of Canadian politics in the 2009 summer months. Most noteworthy was a May meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. Led by the International Crisis Group, the committee convened to review "key elements of Canada's foreign policy". Concerns were raised regarding the weak links between UN missions in Sudan and local political developments, and the ICC indictment and ensuing NGO expulsion from Darfur. Liberal MP Kirsty Duncan reintroduced the issue of genocide pertaining to the Darfur conflict in the House of Commons.

FRIENDS OF UNAMID ■ The Friends of UNAMID are a group co-chaired by the United States and Canada, whose purpose is to support the deployment of the joint African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). In this issue of the Digest, an overview of the history and responsibilities of this group are introduced



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NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS // BY CHELSEA SAUVÉ

In August 2009 the Joint AU-UN Special Representative and head of the mission, Rodolphe Adada, urged all signatories of the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement to support the ongoing peace process via a round-table discussion. He called upon those involved in the conflict, including the GoS, to recognize that progress must be made via a forum of peaceful negotiation.

US special envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, travelled to Sudan in the beginning of September to assess the current situation. His travels coincide with the implementation of future US policy concerning Sudan; specifically the region of Darfur. Mr. Gration explained that the emerging US policy is one which will continue to attempt to seize the proxy war between Chad and Sudan, with the help of the Egyptian and Libyan coalition. In addition, the strategy will address the necessity for the deployment and full support of UNAMID troops in order to protect the Darfuri people. The US strategy in Darfur therefore calls for a functioning and stable Sudanese government, which will either include a government of Southern Sudan, in light of the present North-South tensions which also threaten the situation in Darfur, or to coexist peacefully with an independent Southern Sudan. While Mr. Gration as well as others call upon the international community to facilitate and foster peace within Darfur, while simultaneously calling on all nations to uphold the accountability of all parties for their actions, he recognizes that ultimately "the Government of Sudan, the Darfuri armed movements, the Government of Southern Sudan, and other Sudanese stakeholders [must] bear the final responsibility for bringing peace and stability to Sudan". Either strategy Mr. Gration proposes relies upon a united rebel voice within the region.

As of August 2009, efforts have been made to re-ignite the peace process in Sudan, through efforts to unite the rebel forces. The Arab League announced that the African and Arab foreign ministers will meet on September 24 to discuss the progression of the peace process. This meeting coincides with the initiative taken by both Egypt and Libya in their efforts to create a united rebel movement. Sudanese President, Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, publicly urged all Darfur rebel groups to join the Doha peace talks in his address at the Islamic celebration of Eid- Al Fatir.

The Doha Peace Talks, facilitated by Qatari leadership, first took place in February 2009. This discussion ultimately led to the establishment of an agreement between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). JEM ended negotiations in March 2009 with the GoS following the government authorised expulsion of aid groups from the Darfur region. On September 14, the Qatari state minister for foreign affairs, Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud, met with Ahmed Tugod Lisan, Secretary for Negotiations and Peace affairs, and official spokesperson Ahmed Hussein Adam, in efforts to discuss the latest developments and the recommencement of the peace process. JEM have stated that they will only take part in the second round of Doha peace discussions if the Sudanese government upholds and implements the Goodwill Agreement of 2006. This calls for the release of all JEM fighters who were arrested in Khartoum in May 2008, and for the GoS to take responsibility for improving the overall humanitarian situation in Darfur.

On March 4, 2009, the ICC announced an arrest warrant against Sudanese president, Omar Hassan Al Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity. President Al Bashir responded by expelling thirteen foreign NGOs from Sudan and by dissolving three local organisations. Mr. Bashir has accused these groups of collaborating with ICC investigations and has threatened to expel all international aid workers over the next year. Al Bashir is attempting to “Sudanize” aid, but Internally Displaced Persons have been rejecting these attempts.

Al Bashir’s decision threatens to worsen the humanitarian situation in Sudan, as an estimated 4.7 million people depend on the aid provided by NGOs. According to several UN agencies, the expulsion of NGOs “will have devastating implications for the citizens of Darfur”. Inadequate security, medical services and food distribution could lead to malnutrition and spread of disease in refugee camps. The remaining NGOs are working with the Sudanese government, and local communities to cover the immediate needs of the population that were created by the expulsions.

Aid workers say that they have been facing growing hostility since the announcement of the arrest warrant against Al Bashir. Foreign aid workers and peacekeepers have been targeted by a series of incidents including kidnapping, theft, sexual assault, murder, and unsubstantiated arrests. The UN condemned the attacks and urged the GoS to investigate and bring its perpetrators to justice. The chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, also condemned the attacks and emphasized the need to put an end to insecurity in the region. He also appealed to the United Nations Mission in Sudan to provide humanitarian assistance to people affected by the attacks. Jonathan Whittall, head of Médecins Sans Frontières in Southern Sudan, suggested that recent tribal clashes differ from the traditional ‘cattle rustling’. Women and children are being targeted while they were traditionally spared, and more people are being killed than wounded.

Low-level clashes between the Sudanese government, bandits and insurgents have persisted in Sudan. On September 14, insurgents opened fire on a police convoy, close to Dogi in south Darfur, killing three policemen. In retaliation, Sudanese police and soldiers attacked three rebel camps taking 34 prisoners. On September 20, UNAMID said that clashes between government forces and the Sudan Liberation Movement had recommenced in Korma, North Darfur. The Sudan Liberation Army told Reuters that the government army and militias attacked their positions by air and ground but the Sudanese army has not commented on this matter.

While a number of commendable commitments have been made in the past by the Canadian government to maintain peace and stability in southern Sudan, the situation in Darfur has been a comparatively quiet issue in Canadian politics over the past summer. A number of prominent foreign policy issues have preoccupied the Canadian Parliament, notably the instability in Sri Lanka and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and free trade negotiations with Peru and Colombia; all of which also involve major human rights concerns.

Liberal MP Glen Pearson asked the Hon. Bev Oda, the Minister of International Cooperation, to provide details concerning the government's monitoring of Darfur mass-migration and efforts to assist those refugees displaced by the conflict. The Minister explained that the Canadian International Development Agency monitors conflict migration from its Head of Aid in Khartoum, supported by a field network of NGOs, the UN, and recipients of aid. CIDA officers also travel to Darfur to compile their own assessments.

Liberal MP Kirsty Duncan also attempted to define 'genocide', requested a summary of the government's decision making process when confronted with genocide, and questioned the government's "legal and ethical responsibilities to intervene and protect as a signatory to the 1951 Convention [on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide]." Ms. Duncan brought forth the issue of genocide when discussing Darfur, which as of late has been a term avoided by the Conservative government.

In the House of Commons, a number of MPs presented petitions calling for a more active response to the conflict in Darfur. Among them were the Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh, the Hon. Bernard Patry and the Hon. Shawn Murphy. One petition presented by Mr. Paul Dewar of Ottawa Centre called for the "targeted divestment from Sudan conditional upon the Sudanese government's cessation of the atrocities in Darfur." The petition also urged the creation of a special envoy, and more active engagement with UN diplomacy.

The most interesting development occurred outside Parliament during the May 28 Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. Convened to review "key elements of Canada's foreign policy" and led by the International Crisis Group, the Committee raised concerns regarding the weak links between UN missions in Sudan and local political developments, and the ICC indictment and the ensuing NGO expulsion from Darfur. The Hon. Glen Pearson also noted the forced movement of Darfuris to the northern part of the region by SPLA soldiers in preparation for the upcoming census. Mr. Pearson expressed concern that those migrants are not being provided with sufficient food, water, and shelter.

When asked what area UNAMID is in most need of aid, Ms. Fabienne Hara of the ICG replied that the "priority must be political investment, meaning that we must demand that the international response to the crisis in Sudan be strategic." Without a holistic political strategy covering the entirety of Sudan, no stable and lasting peace will ever be realistic. The provision of helicopters and a more active engagement with China were also stressed by the Committee.

FRIENDS OF UNAMID // BY SARAH KATZ-LAVIGNE

In March 2008, the first meeting of the ``Friends of UNAMID`` took place in New York City. One of the group's primary goals is to support a joint African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), and to coordinate donor support for the mission. UNAMID has faced persistent difficulties in its deployment. The ad hoc nature of contributions to the mission has not led to success in Darfur, and has highlighted the need for a coordinating body of nations with the moral authority to work with donor countries to complete the group's objectives.

The United States and Canada co-chair the group, which also includes several United Nations member states with interest in UNAMID, and UN staff from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Participating countries include Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Tanzania and the United Kingdom. The European Union is also a member. The announcement of the group's creation was first made by the United States' special envoy to Sudan, Richard Williamson. In addition to its coordinating role, the Friends of UNAMID are expected to provide equipment and training for UNAMID troop-contributing countries.

In a recent development, a joint statement entitled "Building a Better UNAMID" was released in July 2009 by a group of 22 NGOs, including Amnesty International USA and the International Commission of Jurists (Kenya). The statement declared that the Friends of UNAMID "must give or help procure the necessary equipment and resources to ensure that troops pledged by African Troop Contributing Countries can deploy rapidly and self-sustain in the field." Similarly, the report also urged the group, in tandem with the DPKO, to obtain the equipment needed to adequately support Ethiopia's "final multi-role logistics unit."

Please see next month's Darfur Digest for an update on what the Friends of UNAMID is doing now to fulfil its intended role.

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