

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

I. Executive Summary

Canadian Politics and Darfur: With the prorogation of parliament until January 26, there have been no new developments on Canadian politics and Darfur this month. This month's section will therefore take the opportunity to examine the past year's key developments in Canadian politics regarding the crisis in Darfur.

Security in Darfur: The situation in Darfur remained unstable in December despite renewed efforts at peace negotiations. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations warned that violence has not decreased since the deployment of the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force one year ago. The camps for internally displaced persons continued to be a source of violence and tension in the region and there have been reports of the use of child soldiers by almost all groups involved in fighting. Clashes occurred throughout the region, with police officers being killed and the reported assassination of a rebel group leader. Sexual slavery and forced labour was the focus of a report released this month that said thousands of people were affected.

Negotiations and Engagement in Darfur: More UNAMID troop contributions were deployed to the Darfur region by Gambia, Ethiopia and Uganda. Ban Ki-Moon asserted that a mission should be deployed in Chad to deal with the overflow of the conflict from the Darfur region. Susan Rice was appointed as the UN Ambassador for the United States and is expected to bring positive change to the Darfur issue. Chief ICC Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo continues to push for the indictment of President al-Bashir on charges of war crimes and genocide. The peace process is once again put on hold with the SLM's rejection of Qatar as a mediator.

The Humanitarian Situation in Darfur: As 2008 ended, refugees were killed and injured in several IDP camps, while six aid workers were abducted and beaten. Sudanese officials are interfering with non-governmental organizations who they accuse of spying for the ICC, according to several UN reports. An activist group also launched accusations at Khartoum for abducting Darfur civilians during raids and forcing them into sex work for soldiers. Significant amounts of money were donated to fund humanitarian work in Darfur through charities and the European Commission.

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

II. Policy Recommendations

1. Build on Canada's recent commitments to Darfur by appointing a Special Envoy to the region. A Special Envoy could strengthen Canadian policymaking on Darfur in three key ways: 1) providing the world with a public face for Canada's efforts on Darfur, 2) providing a presence on the ground in Sudan, and 3) coordinating an integrated “all of Sudan” approach to Canadian peacebuilding. Specifically, a Special Envoy could play a key role in assisting efforts of the Darfuri rebel groups to form a unified and coherent bargaining position, a critical success factor for renewed negotiations.
2. The Canadian government should pursue targeted divestment from Sudan conditioned on the Sudanese government's cessation of atrocities in Darfur and active engagement in the peace process.
3. Canada’s mission to the UN should engage more actively in multilateral diplomacy at the UN to bring renewed prominence to the Darfur issue internationally and rally greater international support for conflict resolution efforts.

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III. Canadian Politics and Darfur

The Darfur crisis received considerable attention within the Department of Foreign Affairs and the House of Commons at the beginning of 2008. However, Darfur gradually became sidelined as an issue with the federal election and subsequent prorogation of parliament until the new year.

Over the course of 2008, three different members of parliament held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. Maxime Bernier was replaced with David Emerson, who was then succeeded by Lawrence Cannon after the November federal election. Each spoke out about the Darfur crisis. In the first few months of 2008, Canada pledged more money for Darfur. Maxime Bernier announced that Canada would contribute \$10.3 million over three years towards projects aimed at building peacekeeping capacity in Africa, including the UN and African Union hybrid mission

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

in Darfur.¹ During his visit to Sudan in March, Bernier also announced a Canadian investment of up to \$275 million in Sudan during 2008-09 in the three areas of security, diplomacy and aid, including \$40 million for equipment and training for African troops with the hybrid force.² David Emerson and Lawrence Cannon largely condemned attacks in Darfur in their roles as Minister of Foreign Affairs.³

In 2008, Canada's response to the crisis in Darfur was debated on a few occasions in the House of Commons by members from all political parties. Several petitions asking for Canada to take a more active role in the resolution of the crisis were also presented to the House by members on behalf of their constituencies. The issue of divestment also received more attention in Canadian politics throughout 2008. On February 5, Liberal MP Ken Dryden initiated the debate on Motion No. 410, calling for the Government of Canada to divest from the governments of Sudan and Iran. Dryden argued that divestment is necessary to convey that there are "consequences for denying fundamental rights and freedoms, consequences for killing hundreds of thousands of people, for crimes against humanity and for the incitement to genocide." Dryden asserted that the Canadian government should not be funding the Sudanese regime either directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, in April, Liberal MP Irwin Cotler introduced a new piece of legislation titled the Sudan Accountability Act, intended to ensure that the Canadian government divests from Sudan because of its involvement in the genocide in Darfur. The act also requires that Canada work with the international community to devise solutions to the crisis and that government contractors avoid doing any business with Sudan.⁴ However, neither of these pieces of proposed legislation had been passed by the end of the year.

Although a few MPs spoke out about the crisis in Darfur during their campaigns, Darfur was not a prominent election issue. Furthermore, there was no mention of Darfur in the Speech from the Throne of the newly re-elected Conservative government in November.⁵ Considering the overall neglect of the Darfur crisis in Canadian politics in recent months, only time will tell whether the issue will regain salience once parliament resumes on January 26, 2009.

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

IV. Security in Darfur

Alain LeRoy, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations stated that although there has been progress in the region, it has been extremely slow. LeRoy also stated that 100,000 people were displaced over the last six months and highlighted that the situation in Darfur camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) continues to be very serious and heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance.⁶

Groups of young men, also known as the “shabab”, are becoming part of a pro-rebel force in many IDP camps. They are opposed to the local sheiks who they believe are supportive of the government and not the actual people of Darfur. The situation is so volatile between the shabab and the sheiks that the United Nations (UN) now gives sheiks 24 hours notice before a gathering outside the camp so that the sheiks can seek approval from shabab leaders.⁷ The power of the shababs has been noted by many outsiders who worry that a unified militant group will organize through the shababs, similar to groups that have emerged among Palestinian and Afghan refugees. Last year, protests led by a shabab group were reported to help move 10,000 people from the Kalma IDP camp.⁸ It was noted that rebel groups involved in peace negotiations also have to pay careful attention to the shababs, as they are vehemently opposed to any compromise with the government.⁹

After the death of Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) chief commander Sideeg Abdel-Karim, it was reported that another SLM commander was establishing a new movement called ‘Popular Front for Democracy and Development’ (PFDD).¹⁰ An advisor of Abdel-Karim said the circumstances surrounding his death were mysterious and an investigation is underway. He alleged that Abdel-Karim was assassinated by another SLM leader, faction chief Ahmed Abdel-Shafi. The SLM has since adopted a resolution that suspended Abdel-Shafi from their membership, which Abdel-Shafi called nonsense because of the qualifications of the people who dismissed him.¹¹

The United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) reported that unidentified gunmen killed the traditional leader of camp Hassa Hassa in West Darfur. The UNAMID patrol dispatched to the camp reported that despite the death, the camp was relatively calm.¹² Violence was also reported at camp Hassa Hassa in South Darfur this month, after two Janjaweed militiamen fought with IDPs. One of the militiamen was severely beaten and later died, while the other suffered minor injuries and was later arrested by the Sudanese police. The

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

next day, armed men set fire to a water pump and generators for the Hissa Hissa camp. UNAMID was dispatched again to calm tensions between camp residents and the militiamen.¹³ A humanitarian convoy was stopped a day later by two men armed with a hand grenade and assault rifles on its way to the Kalma IDP camp. The aid workers were beat up and had money stolen during the incident.¹⁴

Between 70 and 150 people were reportedly killed in fighting between the Fallata and Habaniya tribes in South Darfur. Six police officers were killed while trying to stop the fighting. The reports said that the fighting was retaliatory from an attack earlier in the month by members of the Habaniya tribe that killed 20 people.¹⁵ Two police officers were also reportedly killed in fighting in a market in Abyei. There were conflicting reports on the reason for the violence; tensions were high following the clashes which included police firing to disperse the crowd and SAF forces returning the fire.¹⁶

V. Negotiations and Engagement in Darfur

Further UNAMID troop commitments came from Gambia this month in the form of 350 soldiers and paramilitary personnel trained by British troops prior to deployment.¹⁷ In addition, 60 Ugandan police officers were deployed this month after the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre administered similar training through the Pan-African Police Capacity Building program.¹⁸ On December 18, 107 Ethiopian troops arrived in Darfur, with 419 troops still expected to deploy by the new year.¹⁹ While these commitments are positive, much more is needed for UNAMID to be effective in the Darfur crisis.

In addition to troop commitments in Darfur, Ban Ki-Moon advised on December 12, that beginning in March, 4,900 troops should be deployed in the eastern part of Chad to deal with the refugees and conflict overflow from the Darfur region. The mission would be replacing the EU mission already present in the region, which is meant to exit in March.²⁰ There are an estimated 500,000 Darfur refugees in eastern Chad as well as an unknown number of militiamen who have followed the refugees across the border.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, chief prosecutor of the ICC urged the UNSC not to comply with the African Union and Arab League appeals to suspend prosecution of the President of Sudan of the ICC charges against him of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.²¹ Article 16

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

of the ICC charter allows the UNSC to suspend prosecution for 12 months.²² No such ruling has been made by the UNSC. Moreno-Ocampo is determined to keep it that way and to convict President al-Bashir; which would make him the first Arab leader to be indicted by the ICC for such charges.

The selection of Susan Rice to represent the United States at the United Nations by Barack Obama is significant for the Darfur crisis as well as the many other pertinent African issues lacking adequate international attention. As a top diplomat in the Clinton administration in the early 1990s she dealt with many issues including the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. Her experience in 1994 and following have caused her to adopt a “hands-on” and militaristic view of intervention in such instances as genocide. For this reason, her appointment to the UN is expected to bring much change in the way the United States and the UN are addressing Darfur.²³

Qatar has attempted to mediate the Darfur peace negotiations but has been rejected by a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). The SLM requires a “non-biased” mediator. They rejected Qatar as a biased and unjust mediator and accused the Qataris of denying the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur and of blocking resolutions against Sudan when they were a member of the UNSC. The SLM then declared eleven conditions, which must be fulfilled for the group to participate in peace negotiations. Ahmed Abdel-Shafi, the leader of the SLM declared that it is up to the GoS to comply with said requests to foster a positive peace process.²⁴ Despite the rebel group’s rejection, the African-Arab ministerial committee is to meet in Doha January 4 to discuss negotiations between GoS and rebel groups and peace in Darfur.²⁵

VI. The Humanitarian Situation in Darfur

The Sudanese government faced new criticisms this month from an organization that represents more than 50 Africa-based and Africa-focused NGOs. The Darfur Consortium published a report citing new evidence that shows Sudanese soldiers and militias abducted people during the Darfur conflict to be used as labourers or sex slaves. The researchers interviewed 100 people who were abducted, mostly from 2003 to 2006, although it’s estimated that thousands of abductions have taken place.²⁶ An anonymous Sudanese politician was quoted in the report as saying that women and children “were transported by plane to Khartoum at night and divided up among soldiers as domestic workers and, in some cases, wives.” Young men were also abducted in order to carry out agricultural work.²⁷ The Sudanese government called the

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

allegations “naïve” and instead blamed rebel groups for abductions.²⁸ However the report states the Government needs to punish those responsible and not a single conviction has taken place.²⁹

The Sudanese government is cracking down on anyone they suspect is gathering data for the International Criminal Court (ICC). A Sudanese man has been accused of trying to overthrow the state by passing on documents relating to a Darfur war crimes suspect in exchange for money. The case is currently in court and if the man is convicted he could face death by hanging.³⁰ Aid groups have also been targeted by Khartoum. In South Darfur, Sudanese officials are harassing humanitarian aid groups and have forced staff to hand over confidential emails and files. In some cases, the files contained personal information about women who made allegations of rape or had received counseling. UN officials are worried this could lead to retaliation or intimidation against the victims. UN officers said that Sudanese officials suspect some NGOs of supplying evidence to the ICC on Sudan’s President Omar al-Bashir. Since July, when the ICC declared it was seeking an arrest warrant for Bashir on war crimes, the campaign of intimidation against international NGOs has increased. Aid workers accused of spying have been kicked out, denied travel permits, and stopped for questioning. Furthermore, deliveries of fuel to IDP camps have lessened and there have been forced closures of rape recovery and sexual health programmes.³¹

The United Nations has remained vocal on human rights issues, in particular related to NGOs and civilians. During his week-long trip to Sudan, the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes said he spoke to South Darfur’s governor about the reports of harassment of NGOs. The governor assured him he would investigate the complaints.³² The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also released a report on Sudan’s detention laws, compiled by UN human rights officers stationed throughout the country (except Darfur). The report states that the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) use arbitrary arrest and detention against political dissidents and can arrest and hold someone for three days without informing a judge or prosecutor. The Director of the NISS has the power to extend the detention to 60 days without the consent of government authorities. The authors of the report did not have access to unofficial places of detention, and so the report does not give a complete picture, but cases involving torture and death threats prior to a detainees’ release were apparent in the investigation.³³

Just as December is a time of giving in most countries, aid organizations received several boosts this month. The celebrity charity Not On Our Watch donated \$500,000 to Oxfam America

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

for victims in eastern Chad.³⁴ Founded by actors like Don Cheadle and George Clooney, the Hollywood charity also gave \$260,000 to the International Rescue Committee for health services in North Darfur.³⁵ The Humanitarian Air Service will be able to continue flying for December to serve the aid community, thanks to a €2.7 million contribution from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office.³⁶

Throughout the three Darfur states, there was a united effort to put on events from November 25 to December 10 to celebrate 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. The message was to reinforce that violence against women is a human rights issue, while progress is occurring.³⁷ In North Darfur a state bill to end Female Genital Mutilation was recently passed, while youth dramas are being conducted in IDP camps to address issues like early or forced marriages, domestic violence and sexual violence.³⁸ At the same time, continued support is needed. The World Food Programme appealed for \$851 million to meet hunger needs in Sudan for 2009, the costliest of all its operations.³⁹ Then the United Nations Refugee Agency called for \$103 million for Sudan next year, with an increase partly due to an expansion of programmes in Darfur and projects to help displaced persons in Chad.⁴⁰

The humanitarian situation in Darfur remains one of the worst in the world, with one of the main victims being children. There are as many as 6,000 child soldiers in Darfur, some as young as 11-years-old, according to the head of UNICEF in Sudan. Ted Chaiban said this number reflects children in rebel movements, in government-backed militia and some that fight alongside the Sudanese army. Unicef has been negotiating to have these children released, with the first group set to be freed next year from the Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Minni Minnawi, who signed a peace deal with the government. The conflict in Darfur has lasted almost six years, with Chaiban estimating that nearly 700,000 children had grown up knowing nothing but war.⁴¹

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

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Stand is a national advocacy organization that aims to make stopping genocide a cornerstone of Canada's foreign policy. Stand makes it easy for Canadians to act against genocide by providing simple and effective ways for people to take action. Learn how you can start making a difference for Darfur by visiting www.standcanada.org

STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

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STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

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26

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31

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STAND

Darfur Digest January 2009

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