



OFFICE OF THE UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN CO-ORDINATOR
FOR THE SUDAN

Note to Mr. Egeland and Mr. Prendergast

Political and Security Update on Darfur, Sudan

1. The security situation in Greater Darfur continues to worsen. Access to both rebel and Government-held areas remains denied and/or constrained by travel permit restrictions and by militia activity in all three states, West, South and North Darfur. An estimated 670,000 people have been newly displaced, 70,000 fled into Chad, and one million others are directly affected by the war. Our Office receives daily reports of human right violations throughout the region.

2. On 10 December, in response to serious concerns over the growing insecurity in West Darfur, I authorized the temporary relocation of UN staff from Geneina to Nyala in Southern Darfur. International NGOs had withdrawn 24-48 hours previously. The Sudanese Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs sent me a letter strongly objecting to this move. The UN is currently conducting a security assessment in this area, to decide whether and when to return staff to Geneina. Preliminary reports indicate that recent clashes south of Geneina have caused some 600 households from surrounding villages to move into town in the past day or two.

3. Provision of relief aid remains limited to urban areas. Despite repeated requests by the UN and the international community (including by Ambassador Vraalsen in his past two missions), Sudanese authorities routinely deny humanitarian access to areas controlled by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A). On 17 December, the GoS first granted and later denied access to trucks transporting relief aid supplies to rebel areas in North and South Darfur, forcing them to return fully loaded to the cities of Kutum and Nyala.

5. On 3 September, the Government of Chad brokered a ceasefire agreement between the Government of the Sudan (GoS) and the SLM in the town of Abeche. The parties extended the ceasefire for another month in November, and announced their intention to formalize this agreement in a third round of talks in mid-December. Regrettably, the N'djamena negotiations broke down on 16 December.

6. The Sudanese press attributed this deadlock to "unacceptable rebel demands for self-determination, a separate armed force and a percentage in oil revenues." Local newspapers also reported that Chad President Idris Debbi had abandoned sponsorship of the talks, openly blamed the SLM for sabotaging the negotiations, "deported" the SLM delegation in a private airplane, and closed Chad border with Sudan, in an attempt to cut the rebels off from military and logistical supplies.

7. The SLM offered a different interpretation. In an official document addressed to the UN, they reported that the talks collapsed due to the GoS' refusal to adopt Protocols on relief and protection of civilians; to accept international observers' presence in N'djamena; and to disarm its militias. They proposed that the Abeche talks be coordinated with those of IGAD, and requested the presence of international observers such as the US, EU, Islamic Conference, League of Arab States, African Union and neighbouring countries – in addition to Chad. They also called upon the UN to form an international committee to investigate human right violations, and requested the creation of a mechanism for the protection of civilians as well as

the establishment of internationally monitored humanitarian corridors. Lastly, they called for an internationally monitored ceasefire.

8. I am informed by diplomatic missions here of their growing view that the international community should press for an **all-inclusive, internationally monitored ceasefire** in Darfur.

Mukesh Kapila
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