

22 June 2018

To United Nations Security Council Members

Re: Proposed reduction to the UNAMID mandate in Darfur

Dear Ambassadors,

We, the undersigned Sudanese, scholars, human rights organizations and leading activists, write to you to express our concerns with the upcoming proposal regarding the status of UNAMID. In light of frequent and recent devastating incidents of violence, please do not allow the vote taking place on June 28 to significantly decrease the mandate and scope of the mission's work and to accelerate plans for UNAMID withdrawal from Darfur. We urge you to recognize the vital importance of UNAMID's presence in Darfur and consider the catastrophic impacts that further reductions in peacekeeping forces would have on civilian protection and peacebuilding. The current proposal follows a joint UN/AU visit to the region in April which lacked the adequate size and duration to reach such a conclusion as attacks on villages and IDP camps continue.¹

We draw your attention specifically to the systematic attacks by pro-government militias on civilian populations in Darfur. The many tragic attacks of the last several months are clear evidence of the need for UNAMID protection of Darfuri civilians. We urge members of the UN Security Council to **vote against** the proposal to accelerate UNAMID withdrawal from Darfur. Instead, we seek your support for renewed UNAMID peacekeeping forces and the reconsideration of more effective roles for UNAMID in Darfur.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, stated before the UN Security Council on June 11, "the peacekeeping mission should be directed to the area where it is needed, namely at the site of continued conflict in Jebel Marra."² While attacks on civilians continue in Jebel Marra, the need for UNAMID's presence there doesn't cancel the needs in the rest of Darfur. Several camps in South, West and Central Darfur states continue to be attacked by pro government militias. The Sudan Tribune reported an attack on June 4 in which an armed group killed eight and wounded seven in the Higair Tunu village of

¹ UN, "Note to correspondents on joint UN/AU visit to Sudan, Central African Republic and Ethiopia," 8 April 2018. Available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2018-04-08/note-correspondents-joint-unau-visit-sudan-central-african>

² UN News, "With realities shifting in Darfur, operations on the ground 'must change', urges UN official," 11 June 2018. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/06/1011942>

South Darfur.³ This attack was the fifth of its kind in the first week of June alone, following reports of the targeting of displaced persons in camps around South Darfur.⁴ Most recently, on June 10, Sudanese government forces reportedly targeted two villages in northern East Jebel Marra in South Darfur with missile attacks which led to the villages being burnt to the ground.⁵

Just months before, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies found that there were at least 23 civilians killed, tens seriously injured, and 12 villages burnt to the ground in the month of March.⁶ These recent attacks reveal a larger, systematic continuation of violence and abuse by Sudanese government sponsored Rapid Support Forces and other armed groups.⁷ The pattern of attacks indicate the need to strengthen UNAMID protection of civilians and displaced persons in Darfur.

UNAMID itself reported deep concern about attacks on three IDP camps in Central Darfur between May 21 and 23 of this year. These attacks emphasize the importance of UNAMID forces being present and diligent within such vulnerable communities.⁸ The UNAMID press release places the responsibility of protection primarily on the Government of Sudan. However, without a strong and effective UNAMID force, it is wrong to expect that Darfuri civilians can safely rely on their government for protection since that government continues to commit grave human rights violations against its people, including attacks on civilians and gender-based violence.

We concur with the Communiqué of the 773rd meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council on its field mission to Darfur which states, “The area of operation for UNAMID should be retained as the whole geographic Darfur given the fact that the Mission retains the responsibility to protect civilians under threat in the entire region of Darfur”⁹

If UNAMID truly intends to uphold its mandate to protect, the UNSC must take stronger actions in response to the violence perpetrated and supported by the Government of Sudan in Darfur. Protection of IDPs and civilians must remain a priority. We urge members of the UNSC

³ Sudan Tribune, “Unknown gunmen kill 8 people in South Darfur,” 5 June 2018. Available at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article65577>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Dabanga, “Darfur rebels: Govt. forces shell villages in East Jebel Marra,” 10 June 2018. Available at <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/darfur-rebels-govt-forces-shell-villages-in-east-jebel-marra>

⁶ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, “Attacks by Sudanese Government Forces on Civilians in Jebel Marra in South Darfur,” 18 April 2018. Available at

<http://www.acjps.org/attacks-by-sudanese-government-forces-on-civilians-in-jebel-marra-in-south-darfur/>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UNAMID Press Release, 24 May 2018. Available at

<https://unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-deeply-concerned-about-recent-attacks-idp-camps-central-darfur>

⁹ African Union Peace and Security Council Communiqué, 11 June 2018. Available at

https://unamid.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/psc.778.com_renewal.unamid.mandate.11.06.2018.pdf

to **vote against** any further reduction of the UNAMID mission and instead consider a restructuring of existing resources to better meet the peacekeeping mandate and protect civilians.

Sincerely,

Abdel-Monim Elgak, Researcher, Ireland

Act for Sudan, Eric Cohen, Co-Founder, USA

Ahmed H. Adam, Research Associate, School of Law, SOAS University of London, UK

Aicha Elbasri, Former Spokesperson for UNAMID

Al-Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment (KACE), Albaqir al-Affif Mukhtar (PhD),
Director, Kampala, Uganda

Anwar Elhaj, Executive Director, Sudan Democracy First Group, Sudan

Brooklyn for Peace, Charlotte Phillips, M.D., Chairperson, Brooklyn, NY, USA

Coalition Against Global Genocide, Formerly Colorado Coalition for Genocide and Awareness &
Action, Roz Duman, Founder and Executive Director, Linda Farb, Vice-Chair, Colorado, USA

Collectif Urgence Darfour, Dr. Jacky Mamou, President, France

Damanga Coalition for Freedom and Democracy, Mohamed A. Yahya, Executive Director,
Washington, DC, USA

Darfur Action Group of South Carolina, Richard Sribnick, M.D., Chairman, Columbia, SC, USA

Darfur and Beyond, Cory Williams, Co-Founder, Phoenix, AZ, USA

Darfur Bar Association, Abdelrahman Gasim, External Relations Secretary, Uganda

Darfur Call, Ahmed M. Mohamedain, Director Human Rights and Advocacy, The Netherlands

Darfur Interfaith Network, Martha Boshnick, Co-Chair, Washington, DC, USA

Darfur Women Action Group, Niemat Ahmadi, Founder and President, Washington, DC, USA

Diane Koosed, Co-Founder, Never Again Coalition, Ashland, WI, USA

Dr. Ahmed Abbas Abusham, Sudan Front for Change, UK

Dr. Amgad Fareid Eltayeb, Researcher and Political Activist, Sudan

Dr. Hassan Abuzaid, UK

Dr. Samuel Totten, Scholar of Genocide Studies, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA

Enough Project, Omer Ismail, Senior Policy Advisor, Washington, DC, USA

Eric Reeves, Senior Fellow, Harvard University's François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and
Human Rights, Cambridge, MA, USA

Face Past for Future Foundation, Drar Adam Drar, Secretary General, Kampala, Uganda

Fur Solidarity USA, Abdalhamid Ali, President, Richmond, VA, USA

Genocide Watch, Dr. Gregory H. Stanton, Founding Chairman, McLean, VA, USA

Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, The Baroness Caroline Cox, Founder and CEO, UK

International Refugee Rights Initiative, Andie Lambe, Executive Director, Kampala, Uganda

Investors Against Genocide, Susan Morgan, Co-Founder, San Francisco, CA, USA

Jewish World Watch, Susan Freudenheim, Executive Director, USA

Jews Against Genocide, Sharon Silber, Co-Director, New York, NY, USA

John H. Weiss, Associate Professor of History, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA

Joining Our Voices, Slater Armstrong, Founder and Director, Baton Rouge, LA, USA

Klaas van Dijken, Journalist, Lighthouse Reports, The Netherlands
Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur, William Rosenfeld, Director, Boston, MA, USA
Mike Brand, Managing Director, African Peace Network, Washington, DC, USA
Mohamed Farouk Salman, Vice President, Sudanese National Alliance Party, Spokesperson, Sudan Call Parties Inside Sudan, Khartoum, Sudan
Mohamed Y. Khalifa, Instructor, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA
Mutaal Girshab, Director, The Regional Center for Training and Development of Civil Society, Sudan
Never Again Coalition, Lauren Fortgang, Director, Portland, OR, USA
NY Coalition for Sudan, Eileen Weiss, Co-Founder, New York, NY, USA
Our Humanity in the Balance, Terry Nickelson, Executive Director, Deming, NM, USA
Paul Slovic, Professor and Genocide Scholar, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, USA
Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition, David Rosenberg, Coordinator, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
Quscondy Abdulshafi, Human Rights Activist, Sudan
Rebecca Tinsley, Founder, Waging Peace, London, UK
Rev. Heidi McGinness, International Human Rights Activist, USA
Rights for Peace Foundation, Osman Habila, Director, Kansas City, MO, USA
San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition, Mohamed Suleiman, President, San Francisco, CA, USA
Skills for Nuba Mountains, Lazim Suleiman Elbasha, Executive Director, Kauda, South Kordofan, Sudan
Stop Genocide Now, Katie-Jay Scott, Program Coordinator, USA
Sudan Consortium
Sudan Unlimited, Esther Sprague, Founder and Director, USA
SUDO (UK), Sudan/UK
The MagkaSama Project, Max Dana, Founder, France
Use Your Voice to Stop Genocide RI, Sandra Hammel, Director, Portsmouth, RI, USA
Wadah Tabir, General Coordinator, Arab Coalition for Sudan, Egypt
Waging Peace, Maddy Crowther, Co-Executive Director, London, UK

For correspondence with the signatories, please contact Lauren Fortgang at
info@neveragaincoalition.org