



House of Commons
International Development
Committee

**Darfur: The killing
continues: Government
Response to the
Committee's Second
Report of Session 2005–06**

Second Special Report of Session 2005–06

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International Development Committee

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Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the International Development Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 1223; the Committee's email address is indcom@parliament.uk

Second Special Report

On 26 January 2006 the International Development Committee published its Second Report of Session 2005–06, *Darfur: The killing continues*, HC 657. On 17 March 2006 we received the Government’s response to the Report. It is reproduced as an Appendix to this Special Report.

In the Government Response, the Select Committee’s conclusions and recommendations are in bold text. The Government’s response is in plain text.

Appendix: Government response

[Paragraph 4] ‘...The Secretary of State pointed to the increasing number of people being fed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and to a decline in one type of violence, “attacks on people in their homes and the ending of aerial bombardment”. It is clear to us, however, that the reason for the decline in the type of attacks seen in 2004 is that the *de facto* ethnic cleansing has succeeded and people have fled their homes for the protection of the camps.’

Large areas of Darfur have been depopulated as a result of the violence since 2003. Large-scale attacks have reduced in number since the beginning of 2004 but incidents are still taking place resulting in major displacement and re-displacement. The attacks on Mershing and Shearia in late January 2006 were a notable example, forcing 70,000 people to flee the areas. Recent instability and violence along the Chad border has also resulted in a new influx of 10,000 Chadian refugees into Darfur. Many areas remain highly vulnerable. Darfurians living close to the border are now seeking greater protection — on both sides of the border — and are moving into formal camp environments. Limited access to large areas due to insecurity limits the ability of humanitarian agencies to accurately assess the situation of vulnerable populations. Overall, the security situation has deteriorated.

[Paragraph 5] “To concentrate only on the WFP and WHO statistics is to miss the wider point. The figure which counts is the 1.8 million people who remain in camps and who, as Hilary Benn told us, “are not going to move until they think it is safe to do so”... The increase in the number of people dependent on humanitarian assistance is all the more worrying since the ability of aid agencies to deliver assistance — and not only in West Darfur — has been seriously affected by the increase in banditry and violence’

The Government remains very concerned by the deterioration of the security situation over the past months and the consequent impact on the humanitarian response, given the vulnerability of the population. In his last report to the Security Council, the Secretary General stated that humanitarian access had fallen to 70% — the lowest level since April 2004. The situation in West Darfur is of particular concern, where the UN has raised its security level to "phase 4", in which only life saving humanitarian operations can take place,

due to rising instability and Chad-Sudan tensions. UNHCR announced in early March 2006 that their appeal for operations in Darfur has been revised downwards from \$33m to \$18.5m. This reflects an adjustment to their operations in light of the deteriorating security environment, and the subsequent restrictions placed on humanitarian agencies in January 2006 to reduce the number of staff present in volatile areas of Darfur. The continuing insecurity in Darfur will limit the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide humanitarian assistance.

Nonetheless, humanitarian agencies are making great efforts to maintain assistance to populations throughout Darfur. For example, the World Food Programme is continuing to provide food aid in West Darfur through the private sector, the local staff of agencies and local food distribution committees.

[Paragraph 9] ‘Simply making the GoS meet the commitments it has undertaken would be a first in Sudan for the international community. The UK Government was right to tell the GoS “in no uncertain terms”, as Lord Triesman said he had done, that it had to fulfil its commitments, but the GoS has not done so. The UK Government should propose to the UN Security Council that it should apply credible sanctions until the GoS has complied.

It is clear that all parties in Darfur are failing to meet their obligations. The Government will continue to press them to do so and is using all measures at its disposal. We want to see full use made of the sanctions regime established under UN Security Council Resolution 1591, which the UK argued for strongly. We have circulated to members of the UN’s Sudan Sanctions Committee a list of individuals whom we believe should be the target of such sanctions. The Panel of Experts established under UN Security Council Resolution 1591 has presented its report and recommendations — which we support — to the Sanctions Committee. The Panel proposed a list of individuals against whom it believed sanctions should be applied; we are pressing the Sanctions Committee to consider this list. We are also pressing for the UN to impose an arms embargo on the whole of Sudan, extending the existing embargo which applies only to Darfur.

[Paragraph 10] ‘...The Committee is concerned that existing funding for the AU mission will be exhausted by early 2006, thus preventing the AU from fulfilling its mandate and leaving civilians ever more vulnerable to attack. We support statements by Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the UK Permanent Representative to the UN, who urged stronger world support, including greater EU funding for the AU force.’

The UK is a key supporter of AMIS, both in terms of our own contribution (£52m bilaterally in addition to our share of the €162 million contribution the European Commission has made) and in our efforts to engage other donors. We are concerned that there is still a significant shortfall in the AU’s budget. We are urging EU and G8 partners and other UN Security Council members to help fund the mission.

[Paragraph 11] ‘The overriding priority for the international community must be to end the bloodshed. Given the capacity and funding issues being experienced by AMIS, the Committee believes that the UN should mobilize additional resources for the AU Mission’s work and reinforce its role with a UN mandate. This would allow for the AU Mission to be blue-helmeted, make greater resources available and thus speed up deployment. This needs to happen immediately’

The Government welcomes the African Union's (AU) decision at the 10 March Peace and Security Council (PSC) to reaffirm its support in principle for a handover of AMIS to the UN, and to extend AMIS' mandate to 30 September. We are pressing the UN to work towards this date as a deadline for the handover; and are pressing the Sudanese Government to accept this. We have also provided a planner from the UK Ministry of Defence to support the UN in planning for transition.

In the meantime, we will continue to encourage the UN and AMIS to coordinate their work. We will also continue to provide financial, technical and logistical support to both AMIS and the AU-led mediation of the Abuja peace talks on Darfur. We urge the international community to do the same. It is vital that AMIS continues to protect the people of Darfur.

[Paragraph 14] ‘...It strikes us that the [Abuja] talks are bedevilled by a lack of urgency and that, though capacity building by donors is helpful, what is really needed is to persuade those African countries which have been providing assistance to the rebels to now put pressure on them to make progress. The Deputy Head of the Joint FCO/DFID Sudan Unit described the Libyans as on side though not actively so. We urge the UK Government to do more to persuade the relevant African countries, and in particular Libya, to bring pressure to bear on the Darfur rebels to take the Abuja negotiations seriously. The criticism of the rebels’ behaviour at the negotiations does not detract from the primary responsibility which the GoS bears for failing to protect its own citizens. This is not a conflict between protagonists of equal strength; the government-backed militias continue to attack civilians, including those in IDP camps.’

We agree there is an important role for African countries in addressing the problems of Darfur, and we are continuing to encourage and press key African states and their leaders to engage positively with the International Community's efforts there. Alan Goulty, the United Kingdom's special representative for Darfur, recently visited Tripoli, Cairo and Asmara for talks with the Libyan, Egyptian and Eritrean Governments. We hope that he will be able to visit N’djamena shortly. We will continue to bring pressure on other African countries to play a constructive role in addressing the problems in Darfur. We welcome the decision of the AU Peace and Security Commission on 10 March to establish a Committee of Heads of State and Government, including Presidents Obasanjo, Mbeki and Sassou-Nguesso and Chairperson Konare, to engage the Sudanese authorities and others on how to expedite the peace process in Darfur.

[Paragraph 15] ‘On the Government of Sudan side, there has been a question mark over whether the delegation representing the GoS at Abuja also represents the SPLM and reflects the composition and position of the new Government of National Unity. The difficulty has been that the ruling National Congress Party and the SPLM have not been able to agree on a common negotiating position. As a consequence, the rebels have found themselves being asked to negotiate with the same party that has been responsible for engineering the ethnic cleansing in Darfur. Since our evidence session, DFID has told us of progress made by the GNU in formulating a joint strategy for Darfur and that the SPLM will be part of the current round of talks at Abuja. Nevertheless, pressure needs to be maintained to ensure the National Congress Party adjusts to the new reality — that it is now part of the Government of National Unity and needs to develop a joint position with its new partner, not only on Darfur but also on eastern Sudan where a similar emergency is developing.’

We are maintaining pressure on the parties to work as a unified Government, but building such coordination and trust does take time. On Abuja, the National Congress Party and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) seem to be engaging well with each other. We welcome the constructive participation of the SPLM as part of the Government's delegation there, and in particular the recent joint negotiating position presented by them. We will continue to work with all sides to ensure a just and fair peace for the people of Darfur.

We also continue to press the SPLM to take an active role in any talks on the East, though it is currently unclear when these will start.

[Paragraph 16] ‘...Mr Baldo called for the establishment of a similar [to that established for Naivasha] troika for the Abuja process, expanded to include the EU and France. We endorse this suggestion. We were pleased to see DFID respond that it is working closely with its partners, but note that when HMG refers to “maximising the pressure on the parties”, no mention is made of how this is being done. The history of lack of sanctions for non-compliance by the GoS does not inspire our confidence.’

Both in capitals, and at the talks in Abuja, we continue to work closely with international partners, including the EU, the US, Canada, Norway and the Netherlands, to maintain and increase pressure on the Parties to the Abuja talks to reach an early agreement. Last year as EU Presidency, the UK delivered tough messages through the EU-Sudan Troika meeting in Khartoum.

On 14 February this year, the Foreign Secretary visited the Abuja talks and delivered tough messages to the delegates there. In co-ordination with other International Partners, the new Special Representative for the talks, Rod Pullen (former Ambassador to Harare) has continued to pass these tough messages to the Parties.

The Security Council, through resolution 1591, has created a mechanism to impose sanctions on those who are impeding the peace process in Darfur. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee, who are currently discussing the issue, to impose such sanctions. We are clear that there can be no impunity for those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan.

We also sponsored Resolution 1593 which referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. Both Resolutions constitute serious measures which will take time to work through. We are also committed to using all available measures, including political engagement through high level Ministerial contacts, our high-level representation at the Abuja talks and our Embassy in Khartoum.

[Paragraph 19] ‘Hilary Benn pointed out that political will and legal base were one thing, but having the capacity to intervene was what really counted. At present there was not “sufficient of the right capacity to make a difference” and “that is why we have to ensure that we do build that over time, including supporting, in this case, Africa’s efforts to provide some of that capacity”. But the dispossessed of Darfur cannot wait that long. One option would be to call on those who have the capacity, but Lord Triesman thought a NATO intervention might be seen as an act of war and resisted strongly by the GoS. What does remain is the possibility of NATO and the EU helping to provide the tools for the job. This means: force preparation, deployment, sustainment, intelligence, command and control, communications and tactical (day and night) mobility. The AU made many of these points to us during our visit back in February — including the suggestion of intelligence communication equipment. What has been on offer since has been limited to the Canadian armoured personnel carriers, some of which, at the time of our evidence session, were still waiting on the quayside at Dakar. If the UK Government and the international community are determined on an African solution to an African problem then they have an obligation to give practical help to make the AU Mission work. This is an area where political will is paramount. Until there is a change of heart, despite the endorsement of the concept at the 2005 Millennium Review Summit, the Responsibility to Protect will remain just an aspiration’

[Paragraph 21] ‘...We favour African solutions to African problems, but at present, despite the best efforts of the African Union, the AU Mission in Sudan is not providing adequate protection for people in Darfur. The Responsibility to Protect, agreed at the UN Millennium Review Summit, should be a responsibility which falls on all UN members, not just on neighbouring states. Given the expiry of the AU’s mandate at the end of March, we are convinced of the urgency of the need to put resources in place, whether through the AU or the UN, to ensure effective protection for people in Darfur. This needs to happen immediately. We request that the UK Government, in its response to this report, sets out the actions which it has taken to put this into effect.’

[See also response to paragraph 11, above]

The UK participated in the AU joint assessment mission to Darfur in December last year. This produced a range of recommendations on ways to enhance AMIS operations in the short term. Together with the AU and other partners, we are now looking at the most appropriate ways to take these forward; this includes the further £20 million of support to AMIS announced by Hilary Benn on February 20th during his visit to Darfur. In the longer term we are looking at the transition of the AU mission to a UN peace support operation.

The Government hopes that the collective commitment to the 'Responsibility to Protect' will in future mean that all nations will be on the lookout for early warning signs of crises and will be galvanised to respond proactively. What is happening in Darfur is that we are creating the capacity for regional organisations — in this case the AU — to fulfill their responsibilities to protect. However, we still need to see countries in the region play a more constructive role in getting parties to secure a peace agreement in Darfur.

The UK is strongly supportive of the development of a comprehensive peace and security strategy and technical capacity within the AU. We used our G8 and EU Presidencies to marshal international support behind the African agenda. We are taking forward work with G8/EU and African partners to:

- Build strategic level management capacity at the AU
- Support development of standby brigades (with emphasis on west and east Africa) capable of standalone observer mission
- Establish an arrangement for transport and logistics, taking into account existing capacity
- Maximise efficiency of the network of regional peacekeeping training centres (Koulikouro and Kofi Annan in West Africa, Karen in East Africa)
- Provide more accessible and flexible funding for African PSO
- Address the need for effective civilian policing components in PSO
- Ensure better co-ordination between donors and the AU and regional organisation

Department for International Development

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