

Re: UNAMID Military Supplies and Deployment Status

Date: 10/22/2011

From: Jasmine Gujral

As the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) nears three years of in-field operations, shortfalls in troops, critical transport and aviation assets continue to hamper the Mission's abilities to fully discharge its mandate. Influxes of troops and military supplies to the region remain intermittent, and despite moderate gains in percentage deployment towards full strength, there remains a sizeable gap between the Mission's needs and its available resources.

Deployment

As at 21 January 2010, the strength of UNAMID military personnel stood at 15,553, representing 79 per cent of the authorized strength of 19,555.¹ That number includes 14,948 troops, 346 staff officers, 64 liaison officers and 195 military observers.²

The number of police personnel had increased to 4,625, which represents 71 per cent of the authorized strength.³ This includes 2,818 police advisers and 1,807 formed police personnel. A total of 13 of the 19 formed police units have deployed.⁴

Of the 12 military units and the 6 formed police units yet to be deployed, five military units (the Ethiopian multirole logistics unit, the Nigerian sector reconnaissance company, the Nigerian sector reserve company, the second Senegalese battalion and the Thai battalion) and five formed police units have been pledged but have not yet deployed to Darfur.⁵ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support are working closely with troop- and police-contributing countries to expedite deployment.⁶

Country-specific reasons for these delays have not been released.⁷ Challenges in the deployment process more generally, however were expounded upon by the Secretary-

¹ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 3

² United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 3

³ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 5

⁴ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 5

⁵ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 6

⁶ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 6

⁷ A 2007 joint report by 35 NGOs listed five reasons for low deployment: 1) Failure to approve the list of UNAMID troop contributions; 2) The government of Sudan had objected to troop units from Nepal, Thailand, and Nordic countries; 3) The government of Sudan has failed to provide land for bases; 4) The government of Sudan has inserted unacceptable provisions into the Status of Forces Agreement and; 5) The government of Sudan has refused to grant permission for UNAMID forces to fly at night, and continues to impose curfews on peacekeepers in certain areas. However, this information is now three years old; many of these are no longer issues and have not been included in the Mission's quarterly filings to the Security Council. Given that the Mission is nearing full deployment and that co-operation with the Government under the tripartite mechanism is improving, the findings of this report are included here solely for the purposes of completion and should be treated as background information only. The report is available at:
<http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/documents/reports/unamid-deployment-on-the-brink.pdf>

General at great length in his report to the Security Council dated 12 December, 2008.⁸ These are included below to serve as a point of reference to assess the progress made and the challenges that remain. The report identified four critical action items towards achieving higher deployment rates:

1. **Improve the movement of contingent-owned equipment into Darfur:** Airport infrastructure and aircraft handling capacity, as well as the possibility of deteriorating runway conditions limit the number of daily flights in Darfur.⁹ While the capacity for road convoy movement of contingent-owned equipment is increasing, difficult road conditions within Darfur pose particular challenges for the transportation of heavy equipment.¹⁰
2. **Enhance engineering capability:** a memorandum of understanding between UNAMID and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has allowed the Mission to increase its engineering capacity and construct community police centres and other UNAMID camps and infrastructure as required.¹¹ UNAMID has also engaged the local market, receiving and evaluating bids from Sudanese vendors operating in Darfur.¹²
3. **Improve cooperation with the Government:** there continue to be instances where Khartoum-based decisions to support UNAMID work are not implemented locally. This relates especially to freedom of movement for UNAMID personnel and customs clearances to allow equipment into the Sudan.¹³ The latest report to the Security Council document 21 instances of restrictions on the movement of UNAMID personnel, including several instances of physical threats and theft or confiscation of UNAMID equipment.¹⁴ In 2009, delays by the Government of the Sudan in granting both customs clearances and permission for United Nations-contracted vessels to disembark in Port Sudan slowed the movement of critical equipment into Darfur and resulted in more than \$1 million in demurrage charges to the United Nations.¹⁵ While there has been marked improvement in the processing of visas for UNAMID personnel, 161 applications were still outstanding by January 22, 2010.¹⁶
4. **Work with troop- and police-contributing countries to ensure timely preparations for deployment:** the preparation of troops and police units for deployment imposes a significant burden on contributing countries. A wide range of equipment must be procured; personnel must be trained on this equipment; systems and materials for maintaining this equipment in Darfur must be put in place; and provisions must be

⁸ United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 12

⁹ United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 10

¹⁰ United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 10

¹¹ United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 11

¹² United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 11

¹³ United Nations Security Council, July 13, 2009, para. 43;

United Nations Security Council, July 13, 2009, para. 31

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 68

¹⁵ United Nations Security Council, July 13, 2009, para. 31

¹⁶ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 9

made for these units to sustain themselves in an extremely difficult environment.¹⁷ This is a complex and time-consuming process that is further complicated by the insecurity and political uncertainty in Darfur.¹⁸

It is important to acknowledge, however, that the situation is beginning to change and there has been considerable improvement in the quality of the Government's cooperation with the Mission.¹⁹ The tripartite mechanism (Government of the Sudan, the African Union, the secretariat of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support and UNAMID) has become an extremely valuable framework to expedite deployment and address related challenges effectively.²⁰ The parties agree that, as UNAMID reaches near full deployment, the focus should shift from deployment towards the effective employment of troops and police, in particular with regard to the Mission's freedom of movement and measures to enhance security for UN personnel and reduce criminality.²¹

The number of civilian personnel stood at 4,045, representing 73 per cent of the approved strength of 5,546.²² This includes 1,117 international staff, 2,522 national staff and 406 United Nations Volunteers.²³ The Mission continues to face difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff, owing to the harsh living conditions and unpredictable security situation in Darfur.²⁴ UNAMID personnel remain visible and frequent targets - two UNAMID international staff members were abducted last year and held captive for 107 days before being released on December 13, 2009.²⁵ A staff member of International Committee of the Red Cross who was abducted near El Geneina on 22 October 2009 remains in captivity, while two staff members of an international non-governmental organization based in Birao, Central African Republic, are also being held hostage in Darfur.²⁶ Since January 2008, 184 potential candidates have declined offers of appointment.²⁷

Military

Supplies

On February 16, 2010, Ethiopia provided the Mission with its first five tactical helicopters, MI-35Ps, alongside 15 pilots and crew members.²⁸ Transport-combat Mi-35 type helicopters can be used for a number of military objectives, including destroying enemy's armored vehicles, fire support for ground troops, troopers landing, evacuation of casualties, as well as for

¹⁷ United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 13

¹⁸ United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 13

¹⁹ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 10

²⁰ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 10

²¹ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 10

²² United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 7

²³ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 7

²⁴ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 7;
United Nations Security Council, December 12, 2008, para. 3

²⁵ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 32

²⁶ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 32

²⁷ United Nations Security Council, January 29, 2010, para. 7

²⁸ Reuters Africa, 16 February 2010

transporting cargoes in the cargo cabin and on an external sling.²⁹ UNAMID's force commander Patrick Nyamvumba had told Reuters in December he urgently needed helicopters to reinforce and evacuate troops caught in the middle of clashes that still erupt in Darfur, seven years into the conflict.³⁰ Their arrival will enable swift and effective response to developing emergencies on the ground and broader monitoring of the security situation in Darfur, especially in many areas that had previously been inaccessible.³¹

However, given Darfur's large area, roughly the size of France, force spokesman Nouredine Mezni stressed that more is needed. "We still need more, at least 18 in total. Up to now we have had zero tactical helicopters ... Imagine managing without this mobility in such a huge area."³² His comments are echoed by UNAMID's Force Commander, Lt Gen Patrick Nyamvumba, who said the Mission still requires 18 utility helicopters to provide the air mobility and operational flexibility it needs.³³

Cumulatively, the Mission still requires two medium transport units, a level II hospital, an aerial reconnaissance unit, and 18 medium utility helicopters.³⁴ Lack of these supplies has limited monitoring and verification activities, hindering quick reaction capability and curtailing the Mission's logistical and medical services.³⁵

Further with regards to supplies, the self-sustainment capability of the units that have already been deployed is also of concern. As is standard practice for peacekeeping operations, troop-contributing countries are responsible for providing the equipment for the units they deploy, including armoured personnel carriers³⁶ A wide range of contingent-owned equipment still needs to be procured by a number of these countries. In addition, personnel need to be adequately trained and prepared prior to deployment and capacity, systems and materials for maintaining contingent-owned equipment in Darfur must be put in place and remain fully operational for units to sustain themselves.³⁷ In this regard, the state of maintenance of contingent-owned armoured personnel carriers is of particular concern and needs to be improved to provide robust mission force mobility.³⁸

The four Nigerian battalions, the Gambian headquarters company, the Kenyan military police unit and the South African battalion have a shortfall of requisite major equipment ranging between 61 and 100 per cent and are not self-sustained in the majority of the required categories.³⁹ Rwanda has deployed a major portion of its main equipment

²⁹ Rostvertol, March 2, 2010

³⁰ Reuters Africa, 16 February, 2010

³¹ UNAMID, 25 February, 2010

³² Reuters Africa, 16 February, 2010

³³ UNAMID, 25 February, 2010

³⁴ Confirmed via email to author by UNAMID Public Information Officer Christopher Cycmanick, February 23, 2010; Also, United Nations Security Council, 2009, para. 43

³⁵ United Nations Security Council, 2009, para. 43

³⁶ United Nations Security Council, July 13, 2009, para. 32

³⁷ United Nations Security Council, February 10, 2009, para. 10

³⁸ United Nations Security Council, February 10, 2009, para. 10

³⁹ United Nations Security Council, 2010, para. 8

requirements, although an average shortfall of up to 20 per cent persists. Senegal deployed the required additional contingent-owned equipment, and has met the requirements for both major equipment and self-sustainment materials.⁴⁰

In addition, the unacceptably low standard of medical facilities provided by a great number of troop and police-contributing countries is of great concern to the Mission.⁴¹ Out of 32 medical units/cells, only 7 are of UN standards.⁴² UNAMID is currently conducting a full review of these conditions to ensure that all facilities are brought up to UN standards as a matter of urgency.⁴³

Conclusion

The Mission's physical presence on the ground is a dangerous and complicated undertaking that places numerous peacekeepers and international staff in harm's way on a daily basis. Under such circumstances, the Mission's ability to protect civilians and maintain peace flows from its capacity to achieve self-sufficiency, to navigate the difficult Sudanese terrain and to attain a measure of operational mobility commensurate with the fragmented and sporadic nature of violent conflict on the ground. Personnel, training and equipment are, as a practical matter, critical to achieving these goals. Contributing countries thus far have answered the call generously. However, peace in Darfur is a truly formidable challenge and the call to commit resources and support UNAMID's unified forces remains, as yet, open.

⁴⁰ United Nations Security Council, 2010, para. 8

⁴¹ United Nations Security Council 2009, para. 44

⁴² United Nations Security Council 2009, para. 44

⁴³ United Nations Security Council 2009, para. 44

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