

11/25/2014

Dear Gary Quinlan, Australia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations,
President of the United Nations Security Council, November 2014
United Nations
New York, NY

- c. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for the UN Office
for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General of the UN
Department of Peacekeeping Operations United
Nations

Dear Ambassador Quinlan,

As Darfuris in the diaspora, we have watched with great sorrow and growing anger the plight of our people in this ravaged region of Sudan. Darfur at one time commanded considerable attention in the United Nations, but no longer. The international community in general has drifted into an acceptance that somehow the UN/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is an adequate means of protecting millions of vulnerable civilians. It is clearly not, and the recent mass sexual assault on women and girls in Tabit, North Darfur, makes this all too clear.

But the disgraceful "investigation" by UNAMID of events in Tabit should be the occasion for our remembering that this is, in fact, a UN-authorized mission; it has UN Chapter 7 authority; it is deployed with a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) negotiated by the UN and African Union (February 2008), even as the agreement is now simply a travesty, violated at will by the Khartoum regime. It is not, however, simply the failing of UNAMID and the African Union that must be reckoned with. It is the Security Council, the Secretariat, and UN Department of Peacekeeping Affairs (UN DPKO) that must accept responsibility for a failing mission; and it is UN DPKO that must do most to explain what it will do in light of this failure.

It is in this context that we demand that the following questions be addressed forthrightly and expeditiously:

[1] UNAMID, even if augmented and re-directed along the lines recently suggested by Secretary Ban Ki-moon, cannot provide adequate security for the people of Darfur. We demand that plans be made immediately for an UN force that can adequately take on the "responsibility to protect" civilians at risk, per the September 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document (§38, §39).

[2] We demand that the Security Council and UN DPKO confront the Khartoum regime over its countless flagrant violations of the SOFA.

[3] We demand that UN DPKO undertake a full review of UNAMID's performance to date. The context here should be the fact that more than 2 million Darfuris have been newly displaced since UNAMID took up its mandate in January 2008; we would remind you of how closely violence and displacement have correlated over the past decade of conflict. Moreover, insecurity has increased

steadily for more than two years—this on top of the insecurity that prevailed so widely in earlier years.

[4] We demand that UN DPKO, in consultation with the Security Council and the Secretariat, formulate plans to provide adequate protection to the civilian population of Darfur. This must include contingency plans for a very rapid acceleration of what is already unacceptable insecurity for civilians and humanitarians.

[5] We demand in particular that UN DPKO ensure that UNAMID is prepared to provide adequate protection to the people of Tabit, especially girls and women, from retaliation by Khartoum for having had the misfortune of making clear to the world just how brutal this regime is.

[6] We further demand that UN DPKO instruct UNAMID to provide all necessary protection to humanitarian efforts to reach Tabit. Many residents have been badly traumatized and injured.

[7] We also demand accountability from those who are responsible for the failures that led to the brutal crimes at Tabit, and so many others over so many years. Accountability must extend to the leadership of UNAMID and the African Union Peace and Security Council, as well as to the UN DPKO. As part of this assigning of responsibility, there must be a full and competent investigation, authorized by the Security Council of how this atrocity crime was essentially white-washed by all parties, most notably UNAMID. But we must emphasize as well that we are deeply troubled by the silence of UN DPKO.

[8] We demand that UNAMID be guided by the "rules of engagement" for UNAMID in Darfur that have been previously negotiated. UN DPKO must ensure that these "rules of engagement" are widely understood and dictate the actions taken by UNAMID personnel.

[9] We demand that UN DPKO assess the possibility that insecurity is now so great that there will be an exodus of international NGOs providing critical relief aid to Darfuris. Many INGOs have expressed their deep concern for the safety of their workers in Darfur, more than 95 percent of whom are Sudanese nationals. The safety of these workers must not be discounted because they are African and Khartoum permits no news coverage of Darfur and no human rights reporting presence. Would relief workers similarly threatened in other parts of the world be regarded in the same light as Sudanese relief workers?

[10] We demand that UN DPKO communicate with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in order to ascertain when a continued humanitarian presence by the UN might become impossible for security reasons.

[11] We demand that UN DPKO assess the implications for future UN peacekeeping missions if UNAMID is allowed to continue to fail so conspicuously. The events at Tabit and the performance of UNAMID investigators bring this question into high relief.

[12] Most generally, we demand that UN DPKO speak forthrightly about its understanding of the limitations and weaknesses of present peacekeeping in Darfur and the provision of civilian security. We remain troubled by the comments of the Under-Secretary General for DPKO when in spring 2012 he declared that security "conditions on the ground" had improved sufficiently that UNAMID

could begin to draw down its forces (a figure of 4,000 personnel was promulgated at the time). This ghastly error in judgment was never acknowledged, even as by July of 2012 we saw a tremendous upsurge in violence, especially in North Darfur. How can we trust statements from UN DPKO when egregious errors are not acknowledged?

[13] We demand that the United Nations collectively develop an effective response to the gross deficiencies of UNAMID in protecting civilians and humanitarians. UN DPKO in particular must develop benchmarks for assessing UNAMID's performance and formulate emergency contingency plans in the event of a massive and precipitous withdrawal of humanitarian personnel. These are matters of the deepest concern to us; to date, there are far too few answers from UN about why the Darfur genocide continues more than a decade after it began. We demand clear evidence that the people of Darfur will not be further abandoned.

Sincerely,

Darfur People's Association of New York

Darfur People's Association of Maryland

Fur Cultural Revival

Darfur People's Association of Houston

Darfur People's Association of Dallas

Darfur People's Association of Illinois

Darfur Human Rights - USA

Massalit Sons' Association - USA

Darfur Rehabilitation Project

Sudanese Revolutionary Front

Sudanese Opposition Forces- USA

Broad National Front

Justice & Equality Movement - Sudan

Sudan Liberation Movement - MM

Sudan Liberation Movement - Wahid

SPLM-N

Umma Party

Girifna

Sudanese Marginalized Forum - USA

Sudanese National Democratic Forum - California

National Sudanese Alliance - Philadelphia

Peace & Democracy Center - New Jersey

Democratic Alliance, USA

Federal Democratic Alliance

Sudanese Front for Change

Kush Liberation Movement

Democratic Unionist Party

Activists without Borders

Sudanese Congress Party

Darfur People's Association of Boston

Darfur People's Association of Indiana

Darfur People's Association of Utah

Darfur People's Association of Nebraska

Darfur People's Association of Seattle

Darfur Son's Union of Greater Washington DC

Darfur People's Association of Iowa

Darfur People's Association of Arizona

Darfur Women Action Group

Darfur Association of the United States

Darfur Self-reliance Organization - San Francisco, California