

## **The question of sending extra troops to end UNAMID**

Darfur is an area of Sudan that in the past 15 years has gone through a brutal power struggle. It has taken its toll on the people, million of whom have been displaced both within the region and in neighbouring countries. UNAMID is a peacekeeping task force that has been situated in the area for a decade and have been working to bring humanitarian aid to the people in need and help maintain the fragile peace in Darfur, however with the war coming to an end, the question of whether to withdraw from the region has arisen.

### **Definitions of key terms**

*UNAMID* - African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur

*AMIS* - African Union Mission in Sudan

*Janjaweed* - Arab militia supported by the Sudanese Government and condemned by the International Criminal Court

*Armed Militia* - Forces, whether or not associated with or affiliated with any Party, and includes any armed group engaging in or which has engaged in hostile activity.

### **Contextual information**

Darfur is an area in the West of Sudan that lies mainly on the border with Chad, although it also has borders with Libya and Central African Republic. The region is divided into five federal states: North, South, East, West and Central Darfur. In 2003 it had a population of six million in around 100 different tribes, some of which were nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes from Arab descent, and some were black African farming tribes. Following the Sudanese military coup in 1989, General Omar Al-Bashir came to power, and began to promote the favouring of Arab tribes over the black African farmers, causing tensions in the area to rise. Weapons supplied to the region

by the government fuelled conflicts, such as attacks on farming communities of Africans by nomadic tribes and enslavement of black Africans.

In response to this, in 2003 rebel groups SLA and JEM launched attacks on the Sudanese government to protest its disregard for the Darfur region and the non-Arab population. This caused the government to create its own Arab militia group to fight against the rebels called the Janjaweed/Jingawit/Janjawid, who terrorised civilians and prevented international aid bringing food and medical supplies. The Janjaweed, backed up by Sudanese forces, have destroyed over 400 villages and farms using military air support along with the slash and burn method. Over 2.7 million people have been displaced in the crisis and are living in camps across the region and in neighbouring Chad.

In 2003 the UN Security Council got involved, and along with the African Union attempted to find a solution for the problem. A ceasefire was agreed between the Sudanese government and the SLA and JEM, which came into effect in April 2004, however a subgroup of the JEM did not attend the peace talks, and so Janjaweed and rebel attacks continued, prompting the African Union to deploy troops to the region to monitor the ceasefire. Another peace agreement, the Darfur Peace Agreement was created to include agreements on state power-sharing, demilitarisation of Janjaweed, a referendum on the future status of Darfur and increase flow of humanitarian aid. It was signed in April 2006 by the government and a branch of the SLA, but was rejected by the JEM and a different branch of the SLA. representatives from Nigeria, Libya, the USA, the UK, Canada, Norway, the Netherlands and the AU, EU, and UN were witnesses. However, in the summer of that year fighting resumed with 11,000 extra peacekeepers called in. a resolution in August to send another force of 17,300 into the region was approved by the Security Council but heavily opposed by the Sudanese government resulted in another attack on civilians in Darfur.

In 2007 UNAMID was formed as a joint operation between the African Union and the United Nations. It aimed to bring stability to Darfur while peace talks went on and it was unanimously approved by the Security Council, so it took over from AMIS on 31st December 2007. Its aims were outlined to be to protect civilians, facilitate the delivery of aid, mediate between the government and the rebel groups and support the mediation of community conflict. Attacks on both sides continued, but by August 2009 the head of UNAMID declared the war in Darfur over. There was still "Banditry, localised issues, people trying to resolve issues over water and land at a local level. But real war as such, I think we are over". Peace talks have continued over the past years, and the Sudanese government has asked for UNAMID to be withdrawn from Darfur, but the Security Council has been advised to review the mandate of UNAMID annually. UNAMID remains in Darfur to protect the 2.6 million internally displaced people in camps from the ongoing violence, despite the worst of the war being over.

Last year in July, the Security Council adopted a resolution (2429) which decided that the mission should be drawn to a close and the cap on troops reduced to 4,050 personnel.

### **Major countries and organisations involved**

*Sudan*

*Chad* - shares a large part of its border with Darfur and has housed some refugees. A Chadian town near the border was destroyed by Janjaweed

*USA* - in September 2004 US Secretary of State Colin Powell described the killings in Darfur as genocide

*Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)* - a rebel movement against the Sudanese government following the attacks on black African farmers

*Justice and Equality movement (JEM)* - a rebel movement against the Sudanese government following the attacks on black African farmers

*African Union (AU)* - called in in 2004 to keep peace between the sides

*France and Britain* - both announced in 2007 that they were in favour of additional peacekeepers for the region from both the UN and the AU, and would push for an immediate cease-fire.

### **Timeline of events**

*1916* - Darfur becomes integrated into the state of Sudan following British colonisation

*1956* - Sudan gains independence from Britain and Darfur remains part of the country

*1983-4* - A famine in Darfur in which almost 100,000 people died

*1989* - The country comes under the control of General Omar Al-Bashir through a military coup, who promoted Arab nationalism and the favouring of Arabs over black Africans in land disputes especially.

*2003* - Civil war breaks out

*2004* - Cease-fire between the rebel groups and the Janjaweed, followed by a presence of African Union troops

*May 2006* - Darfur Peace Agreement

*November 2006* - High-level consultations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

*July 2007* - United Nations security council authorised a joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission

*November 2007* - The rebel groups unite and agree to negotiate with the government under the name SLMA

*December 2007* - UNAMID formally takes over from AMIS

*2008* - Troop deployment begins

*2010-June 2011* - Mediation process takes place in Doha, Qatar to produce a new peace framework document

### **Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

*Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA)* - Signed in Doha, Qatar in 2011 between the Sudanese Government and the Liberation and Justice Movement

*Resolution 2429 (2018)* - Security Council renews Darfur mission mandate, while also calling for reduction in troop strength

*Resolution 1769* - This resolution created an African Union/UN hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID)

### **Possible solutions**

Although the worst of the war is over, challenges still remain for the people of Darfur. UNAMID has to operate in a hostile environment with tough terrain and continuous threat from conflict. It is severely underbudgetted, and faces insufficient transport, equipment and resources to provide protection to the people and help construct a region where peace can truly thrive. Restoration of the community is vital, as aspects of life from the judicial system to the farming land have been destroyed in the conflict. Darfur relies on humanitarian aid to get clean water and sufficient food, and it will be many years before the community gets rebuilt so the region can start to progress.

### **Bibliography**

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