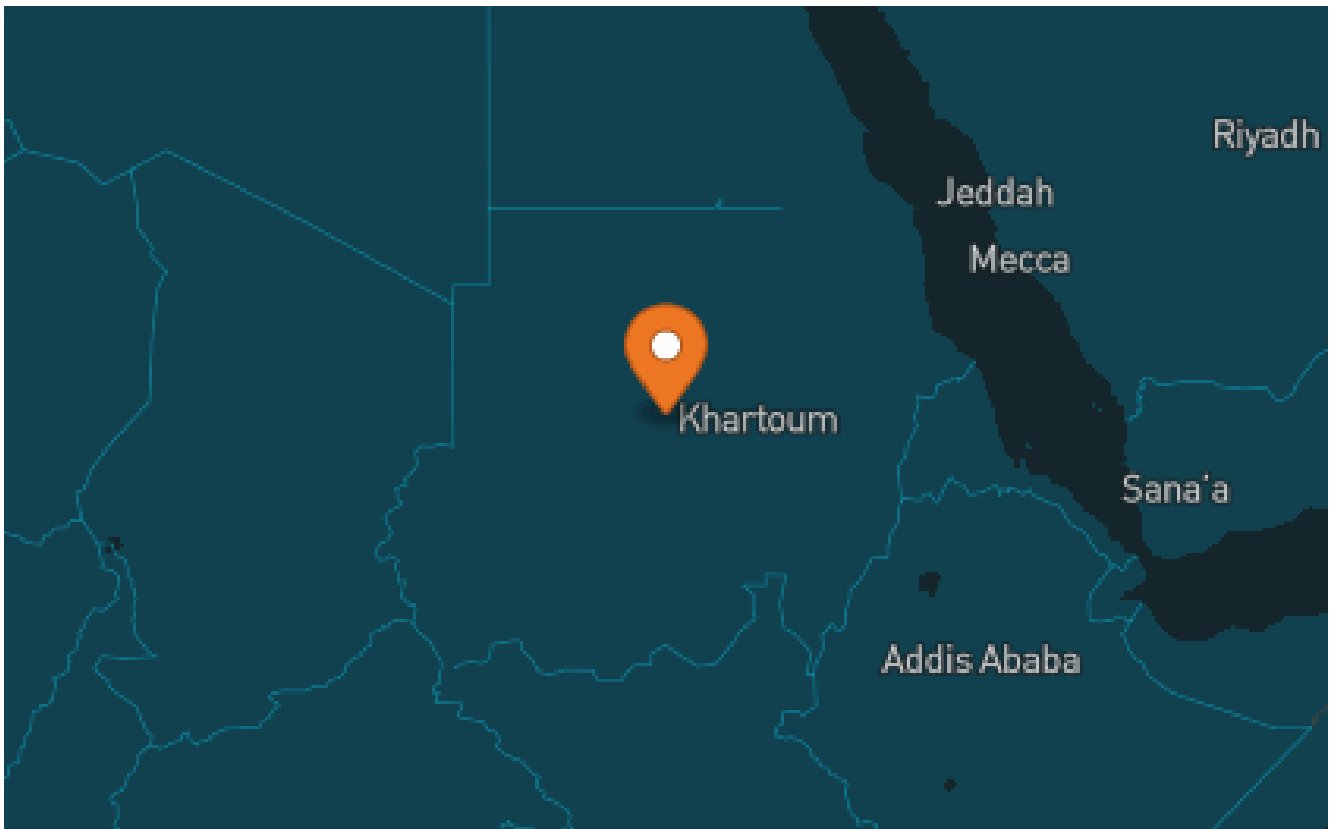


**BRIEFING** 28 / AFRICA 06 JULY 2005 ⌚ 4 MINUTES

## The AU's Mission in Darfur: Bridging the Gaps

*The international community is failing in its responsibility to protect the inhabitants of Darfur, many of whom are still dying or face indefinite displacement from their homes. New thinking and bold action are urgently needed.*



### I. Overview

The international community is failing in its responsibility to protect the inhabitants of Darfur, many of whom are still dying or face indefinite displacement from their homes. New thinking and bold action are urgently needed. The consensus to support a rough doubling of the African Union (AU) force to 7,731 troops by the end of September 2005 under the existing mandate is an inadequate response to the crisis. The mandate must be strengthened to prioritise civilian protection, and a force level of at

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While the UN and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have taken the lead in responding to growing humanitarian needs and authorising accountability measures against those responsible for atrocities, the AU has the lead for reaching a political solution to the conflict and monitoring the humanitarian and ceasefire agreements. The AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) has had a positive impact on security in some areas by often going beyond the strict terms of its mandate -- but its ability to protect civilians and humanitarian operations is hamstrung by limited capacity, insufficient resources and political constraints.

The assumption that the Sudanese government will fulfil its responsibilities and continued reliance on its cooperation as a pre-requisite for action against the militias with which it is allied are egregious self-deceptions. Khartoum's interest in seeking a lasting solution to the conflict is disingenuous, and it has systematically flouted numerous commitments to rein in its proxy militias -- collectively known as the Janjaweed. It has consistently opted for cosmetic efforts aimed at appeasing international pressure, minimised the political dimensions of the conflict, and inflamed ethnic divisions to achieve military objectives.

Equally flawed is the concept that the atrocities are African-only problems that require African-only solutions. The well-documented abuses that continue to occur demand broader and more robust international efforts aimed at enhancing the AU's ability to lead. In view of the Sudanese government's abdication of its sovereign duty and to the extent that the AU cannot adequately protect Sudan's civilians, the broader international community has a responsibility to do so.

Civilian protection needs to become the primary objective. Crisis Group recommends the following immediate steps, building on AU efforts, to deploy a multinational military force with sufficient size, operational capacity and mandate:

- *agree on a stronger mandate.* The AU must strengthen AMIS's mandate to enable and encourage it to undertake all necessary measures, including offensive action, against any attacks or threats to civilians and humanitarian operations, whether from militias operating with the government or from the rebels. Without a stronger mandate, the ability of AMIS -- or any other international force -- to provide protection will remain extremely limited, regardless of its size;
- *recognise that many more troops are needed.* 12,000-15,000 should, in Crisis Group's estimate, be on the ground *now* to protect villages against further attack or destruction, displaced persons (IDPs) against forced repatriation and intimidation, and women from systematic rape outside the camps, as well as to provide security for humanitarian operations and neutralise the government-supported militias that prey on civilians:

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their homes. Crisis Group believes even the latter number is at the low end of what is required first to provide stability in a still lethal situation, that these troops need to be appropriately equipped, trained and of a quality to undertake a dangerous civilian protection mission and that the AU should consequently approve and commence an immediate increase in AMIS to 12,000-plus highly ready personnel, to be in-country within 60 days. The need for civilian police is especially urgent;

- *provide strong, immediate international support.* To meet these objectives, the UN, EU and NATO must offer the AU additional help in force preparation, deployment, sustainment, intelligence, command and control, communications and tactical (day and night) mobility, including the deployment of their own assets and personnel to meet capability gaps as needed;
- *develop a Bridging Force Option.* If the AU cannot meet these objectives -- numbers and quality of troops, and time -- NATO should work closely with the AU to deploy its own bridging force and bring the total force up to 12,000 to 15,000 within 60 days and maintain it at that level until the AU can perform the mission entirely with its own personnel. The AU should agree that until such time, its units would come under command and control of the NATO mission. The UN Security Council should authorise the mission with a civilian protection mandate but if it does not, the AU and NATO would need to assume the responsibility and agree on an appropriate mandate. If the Sudanese government does not accept such a mission, NATO and the AU would need to prepare a much larger one to operate in a non-permissive environment; and
- *enforce the Security Council ban on offensive military flights.* The AU and NATO should agree on enforcement measures to be applied if Khartoum violates the prohibition in UN Security Council Resolution 1591.

**Nairobi/Brussels, 6 July 2005**

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