



## **A Chance to Change Course in Darfur: Next Steps for the U.S. Presidency of the UN Security Council**

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For more than four years, the genocide in Darfur has demanded greater international action, and today, the violence continues unabated. On the first day of May 2007, the U.S. will begin its month-long presidency of the United Nations (UN) Security Council. It must use this position to guarantee the deployment of a robust peacekeeping mission to Darfur, already authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 1706.

Protection for the people of Darfur must be an immediate and urgent priority of the U.S. and the international community. Global pressure has been building for the deployment of a peacekeeping force that can end the violence, provide security for humanitarian operations, create conditions conducive to peace negotiations, and eventually facilitate the voluntary return of displaced people. The deployment of an international peacekeeping force – with sufficient resources, troop levels and a mandate to protect – is essential to provide security and to stabilize the situation on the ground.

As the crisis in Darfur escalates, some 450,000 people have been killed and over 2.5 million displaced due to a government-sponsored campaign of extermination. While on September 9, 2004, the Bush Administration acknowledged that the violence in Darfur constitutes genocide, it has yet to implement an effective strategy to end the violence. Furthermore, when diplomatic efforts to protect vulnerable civilians have been met by stonewalling from the government of Sudan, the reaction from the U.S. and international community has been stagnation and delays.

Next month, the U.S. will have yet another major opportunity to provide leadership to the international community and to demonstrate its commitment to protecting the people of Darfur. As president of the Security Council, the U.S. will be granted the authority to decide the agenda through May. Africa Action emphasizes that, in this role, the U.S. must elevate Darfur as a major international priority and take the necessary action now to ensure protection.

### **The U.S. Must Now:**

**Rally international support for a peacekeeping force.** The U.S. must gather international support to exert greater diplomatic pressure on Khartoum and to create a united coalition pushing for protection for the people of Darfur. In its relationships with key countries at the Security Council and around the world, the U.S. must engage constructively with its partners to augment global action against genocide.

**Counter the blocks at the UN Security Council.** China has been identified as a major obstacle at the Security Council, generally opposing penalizing measures such as sanctions and having abstained from support of Resolution 1706. Recently, the Chinese government has come under increasing pressure for its diplomatic backing of the Sudanese government. The U.S. must make

China's connections with Sudan a factor in the extensive U.S.-China economic and diplomatic relations, asserting the primacy of protection for Darfur.

Russia must also be included in a comprehensive international strategy to create widespread pressure on the Sudanese government. The U.S. must make clear to Russia and China that economic interests, such as oil and arms deals in Sudan, cannot overshadow rampant human rights violations and genocide.

**Use its leverage with Sudan.** The U.S. must use its leverage with the Sudanese government to counter the obstacles to the deployment of a protection force. The U.S. has a long history of engagement with Khartoum, particularly in light of the "war on terror", and it should use these connections to push for greater action on Darfur. The U.S. must also re-prioritize the vulnerable civilians in Darfur over its counter-terrorism efforts and ensure that Darfuri lives are not sacrificed in order to secure intelligence from Sudan.

**Create credible pressure and incentives.** The threatened possibility of new sanctions, recently announced by President Bush must serve to assert serious pressure. Sanctions must create a concrete deadline for action and thus an end to the continued stalling of Khartoum and the international community. The U.S. must not allow the government of Sudan to dictate the pace and terms of the international response to genocide.

**Push Sudan to follow through on its promises.** In November 2006, the international community negotiated a so-called compromise with the government of Sudan, acceding to Khartoum's refusal to allow a UN peacekeeping force to deploy pursuant to Resolution 1706. The "hybrid" compromise would incorporate elements from both the African Union (AU) and the UN, and be made up of more than 20,000 personnel. Major elements of this compromise, such as command-and-control and the composition of the force, must still be addressed to ensure that implementation of the hybrid force embodies the protection measures in Resolution 1706. While Khartoum has delayed action on this compromise for months, it must now be held to account and such a deployment must take place.

Sudan recently announced it would accept the second phase of a "hybrid" AU-UN peacekeeping force, numbering 3,000 UN personnel. This step came months after the original negotiations in November and after prolonged stalling. The U.S. must emphasize that such postponement only protracts the ongoing violence in Darfur and that the next steps to provide protection must be expedited.

### **The U.S. must use this opportunity to act to protect the people of Darfur.**

Africa Action underscores that it is time to value persistence over patience, and action over apathy. The people of Darfur have endured increasing attacks, escalating insecurity and collapsing humanitarian access, while the U.S. and international community postpone action. In its upcoming key role at the UN Security Council, the U.S. once again is in a position to create the prospect for peace, security and the deployment of the much-needed multinational peacekeeping operation.

