



## Australian Government Briefing

### 'Utilising Australia's Security Council Presidency towards a peaceful resolution in Darfur'.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Sudan's Darfur region remains plagued by government sponsored ethno-religious violence characterised by accusations of genocide, millions of internally displaced persons, systemic violence and perpetuated starvation. The crisis has produced detrimental regional and international ramifications and attracted international condemnation, yet durable peace remains elusive.

The crisis emerged in 2003, when non-Arab militias in Darfur attacked Arab government installations over accusations of discrimination and marginalisation. The Khartoum based Arab Muslim government responded with the sponsorship of nomadic Arab militias, particularly the 'Janjaweed', encouraging attacks in the Darfur region, specifically targeting non-Arab Muslim and Christians whom the government holds in contempt.<sup>1</sup> A humanitarian crisis ensued with over 2 million Darfuri's displaced, representing approximately one third of the region's population. The United Nations (UN) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) have documented a system of continued forced starvation, systemic violence, sexual violence, rape as a weapon of war, decimation of villages and accusations of genocide.<sup>2 3</sup> UN estimates put the number of Darfuri's killed since 2003 at over 400,000 whilst the number of displaced Sudanese people approaches 2 million in 2014.<sup>4</sup> The crisis shows little signs of abating; displaced persons in the first 6 months of 2013 totalled 300,000 as efforts at ethnic cleansing and scorched earth tactics continued rampantly in an effort to undermine support for non- Arab rebel groups.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Darfur: Crisis Continues", Carin Zissis, Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 4 2006  
<http://www.cfr.org/sudan/darfur-crisis-continues/p10600#p> Last accessed February 5 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> "Darfur: ICC charges Sudanese President with genocide" *UN News Centre*, last modified July 12 2010  
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/html/story.asp?NewsID=35293&Cr=international+criminal+court&Cr1=#.UvGNwWKSxe8> Last accessed February 5 2014.

<sup>4</sup> "Genocide in Darfur" *United Human Rights Council*, <http://www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide-in-sudan.htm> Last accessed February 5 2014.

<sup>5</sup> "Darfur Conflict" *Thomas Reuters Foundation*, last modified 13 June 2013  
<http://www.trust.org/spotlight/Darfur-conflict/> Last accessed February 5 2014.

The international community's response has been vocally outspoken in condemnation, yet lacking in meaningful action towards a lasting remedy. The ICC's two warrants for the arrest for incumbent president Omar al- Bashir, the first on 2 war crimes and 5 crimes against humanity, the second on 3 counts of genocide, have amounted to little. A combination of regional non-cooperation and international intransigence ensures Bashir remains at large.<sup>6</sup> 2007's UN/African Union (AU) Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) represented a multilateral effort at stemming the humanitarian crisis and establishing a peace, yet substantial progress remains plagued by a deficit in manpower, equipment and mandate, complicated further by the Khartoum governments disregard of the crisis, curtailment of regional bodies, particularly the Arab League, and non-observance of members of the UN Security Council (UNSC).<sup>7 8</sup>

Australia contribution towards a peaceful resolution has been described slow, hesitant, and inadequate, echoing much of the inaction and grief fatigue embodied by the international community.<sup>9</sup> As of February 2013, Australian contributions to Sudan and surrounding states amounted to \$AU82 million, yet offers of military personnel and hardware remain staggeringly frugal, committing just 8 personnel to the UNAMID operation.<sup>10</sup> Such a deficit of support contrasts starkly with both Australia's binding signature of the UN Convention on Genocide and Australia support of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, the latter promoting a responsibility to intervene when a government permits or commits atrocities such as those occurring in Darfur throughout the past decade.<sup>11</sup>

As of February 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, Khartoum has ordered the suspension of the Red Cross in the country, continuing a trend by the central government in removing foreign humanitarian NGO's from Darfur, a move criticised as being "the final phase of genocide".<sup>12</sup> Australia's Security Council Presidency offers a unique opportunity and mechanism to speak loudly on this crisis in pursuit of a peaceful resolution which remains strongly in Australia's national interest.

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<sup>6</sup> "Case: Omar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir" *American NGO Coalition for the ICC*, <http://www.amicc.org/icc/albashir> Last accessed January 5 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Tinsely "The failure of Unamid", *The Guardian*, 2 January 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/jan/01/darfur> Last accessed 5 February 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Mathew Cordell "Reasons for UNAMID's failure" *United Nations News & Commentary* <http://www.undispatch.com/reasons-for-unamids-failure> Last access 6 February 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Lau, "Australia, UN Security and the Crisis in Darfur" last modified July 30 2013, *Right Now: Human rights in* <http://rightnow.org.au/writing-cat/article/australia-in-the-un-security-council-and-the-crisis-in-darfur/> last accessed 6 February 2014.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> "The Responsibility to Protect" Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide" <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml> last accessed 3 March 2014.

<sup>12</sup> "Sudan: Suspension Red Cross' Final Phase of the Genocide" *All Africa*, 4 February 2014, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201402050120.html> last accessed 4 March 2014.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATIONS

**A)** Appeal to the humanitarian sentiments best encapsulated by the R2P Principle to which Australia is a key proponent. Australia's documented history in supporting the R2P principle, from conception to implementation in Libya in 2011, can provide Australia the opportunity to act as an 'honest broker' in this situation.<sup>13</sup> This position underscores an impartiality with an apolitical focus on the cessation of conflict in Darfur. A corollary on this can be calling for increased regional cooperation for the arrest of President Bashir, reiterating both arrest warrants issued by the ICC. Potential obstacles; as the crisis enters its second decade, the effects of grief fatigue from the international community and overall disillusionment of capacity or will of ICC and UN threaten to undermine their stature and capabilities in finding a realistic solution. Credibility of the R2P Doctrine's has suffered in recent years after Libya intervention, coupled with practical hindrances such as a P5 veto, would likely leave a UNSC avenue neutered.<sup>14</sup>

**B)** Increase aid and material contributions to the UNAMID efforts. Australia contribution insofar remain negligible and there exists much room for improvement in Australia's contributions.

Documented evidence of armed attacks on UNANMID personnel represent sound justification for increased Australian funding, more meaningful contribution and an expanded mandate of UNAMID staff.<sup>15</sup> Possible obstacles: Decrease in the number of international humanitarian personal in Darfur has intensified; between 2009 and 2013 the numbers have decreased from 17,000 to just 6,850.<sup>16</sup> This downward trend must be overcome if the UNAMID forces are to contribute a meaningful difference in the region; difficulties in arriving at a peace process rigid enough to ensure adherence of participants, yet flexible enough to satisfy often conflicting demands of parties.

**C)** Use UNSC presidency to stress economic and political advantages for regional and peripheral states following a cessation of hostilities in Darfur. 2013 alone saw 460,000 displaced in Sudan's Darfur, exerting enormous economic, political and social pressure

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<sup>13</sup> "Australia's involvement in the Libyan Crisis and the Security Council Resolution 1973", Henrietta Zeffert, Right Now: Human Rights in Australia, last modified March 25, 2011, <http://rightnow.org.au/writing-cat/feature/australia%E2%80%99s-involvement-in-the-libyan-crisis-and-security-council-resolution-1973-navigating-the-gray-area-between-legitimacy-and-legality/> last accessed 3 March 2014.

<sup>14</sup> "Darfur: The International Community's Failure to Protect", Nick Grono, *International Crisis Group: Working to prevent conflict worldwide*, last modified October 2006, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/ar/Regions%20Countries/Africa/Horn%20of%20Africa/Sudan/op-eds/darfur-the-international-communitys-failure-to-protect.aspx> last accessed 3 March 2014.

<sup>15</sup> "France and US condemn attacks against UNAMID forces in Darfur" *Sudan Tribune*, 16 October 2013, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article48450> Last accessed 3 March 2014.

<sup>16</sup> UN OCHA Sudan, *Darfur: In 2009 some 17.700 aid workers worked for int. orgs. By end of 2013 number was 6850, despite increased displacement* (Twitter post), [https://twitter.com/UNOCHA\\_Sudan/status/43906622191777920](https://twitter.com/UNOCHA_Sudan/status/43906622191777920), last accessed 3 March 2014.

on neighbouring countries of whom most are ill-equipped to process such a burden.<sup>17</sup> Framing a humanitarian crisis that highlights immediate political and economic costs for regional and peripheral countries, could transform a distant humanitarian crisis into a high priority issues, where the negative economic and political ramifications are proximate and pressing enough to enact robust and rapid policies towards stability in Darfur. Possible obstacles: the ubiquitous problems incurred via vast displacement of people are not confined to Darfur. The ongoing Syrian crisis maintain a strong monopoly of the world's attention, and effects far more populated areas in the middle east, which may overshadow maximum efforts that could undertake in Darfur.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Australia's approaching presidential incumbency with the U.N Security Council offers the federal government a loud and legitimate voice with which to foreground its interests and ambitions. Realizing a quick and durable solution to the on-going Darfur crisis is both agreeable and contingent Australian interests. Option A and C frame the crisis differently, highlighting different concerns, wether humanitarian, economic or political. Whilst both offer persuasive arguments, each lack a tangible solution with a clear road map towards peace in Darfur. Option B represents a navigable, multilateral roadmap towards the peace process. Building upon UNAMID history in Sudan, Australia can commit aid, hardware, and experienced peace-keepers and expert's pursuant peace in the region. Options A and C can be used effectively to persuade other nations of the following Options B, where humanitarian sentiments coalesce with political and economic concerns.

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<sup>17</sup> "UN: 460,000 Sudanese displaced in Darfur this year" *Al Jazeera*, 14 November 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/11/un-displaced-violence-darfur-20131114132610566629.html>, last accessed 4 March 2014.