

# **Assessing the UN and Humanitarian Crises in Darfur**

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This paper will try to study this topic through two major aspects:

First, the humanitarian aspect;

Second: the security aspect. The two aspects are interrelated.

This paper believes that, in spite of the mistakes committed by the government of Sudan, other parties do share the escalation of the crisis. The international community, international organizations and the rebel movements bear a great portion of the continuity of the crisis and, hence, the sufferings of the Darfurians.

## **First, the humanitarian aspect:**

It is generally noted that the international community, namely the UN, was engaged relatively late in the crisis of Darfur, west Sudan. Only after two years of debate on the one side, and escalation of war in the region, on the other, that the USA and the UN started to pay attention to the conflict and consequent misery of the Darfurians.

The conflict broke out in mid 2003, but only by mid 2004 that the UN has started to issue resolutions – not making action. Perceptions of the situation in Darfur vary among Council members. Several members express concern at the humanitarian and security crisis in Darfur, the attacks on civilians and the violations of the arms embargo. Among these members, the P3 and other Western countries in particular are highly critical of Sudan for human rights abuses, lack of compliance with the

arms embargo and aerial bombardments. China and Russia, on the other hand, tend to have a more sympathetic view of Sudan. They believe that international actors should forgive Sudan's external debt so that it can more effectively address under-development in Darfur, which they argue is exacerbating the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

However, China couldn't go further in supporting the Government of Sudan at the expense of its (vital economic) relations with the United States. It architected a compromise that the Sudan was to accept an "African keeping force mission" with technical and financial support from the UN (no western troops were to be involved in the mission). The would-be keeping force in Darfur was called as "hybrid forces". But it is, in the last analysis, a foreign force – against the initial wishes of the government of Sudan which refused any foreign intervention of any kind. It might be a mid-way solution made by China to soften the blow to the government of Sudan, and as a matter of face-saving conduct, the Sudan government agreed to the "hybrid" forces to come in. It was called The "UNAMID" - which means the United Nations Mission in Darfur! The UNAMID was given the mandate by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on October 20, 2004 in conformity with the ceasefire agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and the Darfuri rebel movements in April 200. The AU entitled the mission to monitor the ceasefire agreement as well as to protect civilians.<sup>2</sup>

However, the UNAMID was not able to control the security situation because "the signatories did not abide by the ceasefire agreement and the rebel movements, in particular, began to attack the mission. The mission managed to provide security to part of the civilians to some extent".<sup>3</sup> With poor resources, lack of adequate training and expertise to deal with such difficult environment (vast area with no asphalt roads) the mission failed to provide effective protection to civilians in conformity with the international law of human rights and the international humanitarian law.

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The UN Security Council Report on Darfur, May 2015 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See the minutes of the: PSC/PR/Comm. XVII, (the document of Councils meeting no. 17, October 2004.)

<sup>3</sup> Al-Sadiq Al-Faqih, "the expected socio-economic and political impacts of the Hybrid Operation" (a paper presented to a seminar on the deployment of Hybrid forces and SOFA Agreement: negative and positive aspects'), Khartoum: Society Studies Centre, Societal Studies Journal, No. 1, June 2008, p.

Consequently, the people of Darfur have been paying the price. The following tables portray part of the sufferings:

**The total number of villages damaged in Darfur since 2003** ☒

<b>data</b>	<b>The number</b> (of units affected)
Villages totally damaged	600
Mostly damaged	800
Partly damaged	1600
<b>The total</b>	<b>3000</b>

Source: Humanitarian Aid Commission, Sudan, September 2007

With about tens of thousands killed in the war, the following table shows the general subsequent situation in the region:

**The situation in Darfur (2003 – 2007):**

Population of Darfur (2007)	6.750.000
The affected and IDPs	2.100.000
The number of affected in their villages	1.450.000
Number of camps	21
Number of affected at their areas	38 groups
Number of refugees	200.0000

- Source: Humanitarian Aid Commission, Sudan, September 2007.

With regard the partners in humanitarian aid, the number increased from 23 organizations in 2003 to 258 in 2007. And the number of the staff increased from 9000 in 2003 to 15,000 in 2007, about 2100 is foreigners (from outside Sudan) with 3000 vehicles and more than 4000 means of communications.<sup>4</sup>

Also all institutions in the field of education, health besides water resources are damaged or partly affected. The following table reveals the damage to the water sources which are very vital to the people there:

<b>The State</b>	<b>The number of water sources damaged</b>
West Darfur	244

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<sup>4</sup> Abdo Mukhtr Musa, Darfur from Crisis of State to Super Power Clashes, (in Arabic) , Doha (Qatar): Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies; and, Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc ([www.neelwafurat.com](http://www.neelwafurat.com)), 2009, pp. 160 – 161.

North Darfur	418
South Darfur	207
Total	869

According to the Sudan's Commission for Humanitarian Aid about 356 health centres had been either totally or partially damaged along with 476 schools.<sup>5</sup>

In March 2013, I visited Abu Shoak camp for the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) – some four kilometers to the north of Al-Fashir, the capital of North Darfur state and was once the capital of the region of Darfur prior to the federation of 1993 (which divided the region into 3 states and further into 5 states in conformity with Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, DDPD, in 2011).

"The war has, paradoxically, positive aspects for us because it has shown us that the internally displaced people found out that they were living in the Stone Age", said Sa'adiyya Yagob Muhammad, the secretary of

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<sup>5</sup> Abdo M. Musa, *ibid.*, p. 162.

women and children of the camp's administrative committee. Sa'adiyya, from Zaghawa tribe, told me that those people were not aware of the state, or government. They had no access to education or adequate health services. "They live in misery and darkness of ignorance". She explained that the Darfurian women of the area that she came from (Kutum locality, to the north of north Darfur state) have been leading a very hard life. "Woman walks everyday for long distances to bring water for drinking and wood for cooking. Then cooks, cultivates, and looks after the herds as well as the family", she added.<sup>6</sup>

Between 2004 and 2006 the World Food Program (WFP) used to provide the IDPs with 585 gram per day with a bill that included: wheat or Dura + beans + beans green + cooking oil + salt + sugar. It is notable that this package or allotment does not suit the food habits of the Darfurian who is accustomed to meat, vegetables and milk. So, he resorts to the market to change them at a price (he pays a difference). This food aid also does not suffice for the normal or average consumption of the people.

Nonetheless, the WFP reduced the bill from 585 grams to less than 120 gram per day. The situation was worsened after 2012 when the government of Khartoum decided the Sudanization of the voluntary work and asked the foreign NGOs to leave the country, leaving the Darfurians with only with poor and not-experienced national NGOs.

Accordingly, services in education, health and water were (and are being) provided for the IDPs in Abu Shoak. There are 18 primary schools (10 for females and 8 for males) with 16,687 students (8,351 males and 8,056 males), along with 393 teachers and 246 classrooms. There are 17

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<sup>6</sup> An interview conducted by the writer in *Abu Shoak* camp for the IDPs, North Darfur state, March 3, 2013.

kindergartens, 9 secondary schools (9 are public and 3 private) with 37 Khalwas (traditional religious schools, and 83 mosques.<sup>7</sup>

In the field of health there are (3) medical centers which are subordinated to the state ministry of health (after the Sudanization of the voluntary work in 2009. "The Sudanese (national) voluntary organizations used to provide free medical services for the IDPs in the camp. In serious cases patients are referred to the major hospitals in the capital of the state (Al-Fashir) in coordination with the state ministry of health."<sup>8</sup> Some may see the withdrawal of the foreign NGOs as disastrous to the needy in Darfur. However, others link it with political and security reasons – for example violating the sovereignty of the country: "This Sudanization is right 100%."<sup>9</sup> Oxfam, for instance, was implementing sanitation projects, and UNICEF is active in the field of water services where there are 45 water units (wells, reservoirs, pumps and distribution stations).

## **Second: security situation:**

According to WFP till 2008 about 200000 civilians were killed in Darfur war. About 80% of them died of diseases and hunger, whereas 20% died of violence. This is dubbed by the United States as 'genocide'. However, the Government of Sudan (GoS) said that these figures were exaggerated and the number of deaths did not exceed 10000. The GoS also accused the international community of abusing the IDPs by using the issue in political propaganda to serve specific agendas instead of providing the needed assistances, and that the rebel movements had also contributed to the aggravation of the internally displaced and the refugees' situation by political polarization and manipulating them as a pressure papers on the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

government. Consequently, any camp has been divided into various centres or circles where each one is controlled by a rebel movement.

Despite all efforts that have been so far exerted by the UNAMID, the security situation in Darfur is still worrying. Darfur remains mired in a security and humanitarian crisis, marked by high levels of inter-communal violence, continued fighting between government and rebel forces, and increasing displacement. However, the Sudan Government's alleges that security is prevalent in Darfur and asked the UNAMID to draft a strategy of exit.

There were 2.5 million internally displaced people in Darfur as of 19 April 2015, as many as 121,000 of them have been displaced in 2015.<sup>10</sup>

When I was talking to some of IDPs at Abu Shoak camp, a UNAMID patrol arrived. An officer in blue helmet talked to one of the to a (Sudanese) policeman for few minutes and left back to their fortified garrison. The Secretary of Women and Child Affair at the camp commented by saying: "They are just protecting themselves".<sup>11</sup>

The people of the camp "like to go to their home areas. But we cannot organize a voluntary repatriation program because it is not safe there yet. It is risky because the rebel movements are still active in Darfur". Affirmed Ibrahim Al-Khaleel Shaik al-Deen, the director of Abu Shoak camp. This is besides lack of basic services there. According to him the majority of camp's residents like to be integrated into the local

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<sup>10</sup> According to The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

<sup>11</sup> Sa'adiyya Yagob, talking to the writer at Abu Shoak camp, March 4, 2013.

community here (Al-Fasher and its outskirts). Throughout the last decade only 10,000 returned to their home areas.<sup>12</sup>

About 70% of the IDPs in the camp are women and children. The rebel movements always targeted the young. So their families managed to hide them and send them away.

Moreover, the camp, like many other IDPs camps in Darfur, is not safe from the presence of some rebel elements that hide there with their weapons. This is why the government decided to inspect some camps to look for rebels who penetrated in. Of course the families and tribes that the insurgents belong to, provide for them a safe shelter. In some cases where the government went into camps searching for weapons, clashes took place leaving some victims among the IDPs. Furthermore, some relief agencies bring weapons to the rebellions. As far as these foreign organizations are active in Darfur, the problem wouldn't be solved soon."<sup>13</sup>

The security situation in Darfur "has been worsened by the fact that the government is very weak". This fact has also been reiterated by some government officials who repeated recognize that in their statements pledging to 'restore the prestige of the state'. This denotes that the other components in Darfur have become stronger, namely the rebel movements, the militarized tribes and other militias. "Killings, abducting and looting became rampant here. A person, a government official, or a banker, is abducted in the day light either from his office or home. Curfew is still in effect in major towns such as Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state.

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Ibrahim Al-Khaleel, op. cit. <sup>12</sup>

Abdul-Rahman Al-Tijani Ali Dinar, the Head of the Workers Trade Union of North Darfur state, <sup>13</sup>  
talking to the writer at Al-Fashir, March 4, 2013.

The government of Sudan (GoS) has exacerbated the security problem in Darfur by creating its own militias – the *Janjaweed* to fight insurgents.<sup>14</sup> But the matter is complicated by the fact that those *Janjaweed* belong to Arab Ethnicities. That the government is no longer neutral, and by doing so, it has politicized the ethnicities. Adding to this is the fact that the deterioration of security in the region forced many tribes to arm themselves. It was easy to get weapons from neighboring countries such as Chad where intersection between tribes across the borders made that an easy handling. A polarization has taken place on ethno-political bases leading for further militarization of the Darfuri components. This has complicated the scene and made it difficult for the UNAMID to manage vis-à-vis limited personnel for too big region. The UNAMID is trapped in the fighting between the rebel movements and the government, on one hand, and among inter-tribal bloody conflict on the other.

The only hope we can envisage as realistic is the implementation of the DDPD. However, so far the implementation is being hindered by the many factors on the ground. The tension between the government of Sudan and the non-signatory movements fueled by the impact of the population by the Rapid Support Forces military operation, caused severe displacements in 2014 and 2015, and "we are now standing at a 2.5 million IDPs in the Darfuri camps. Security was at its lowest in early 2015...It still remains to be seen if the DDPD will provide us with the right avenue for progress on the political front, without which any gains on the development areas will be just a temporary alleviation on the ongoing plight of the Darfuris."<sup>15</sup>

It is regrettable that hopes attached on the DDPD are retreating. The DDPD has been endorsed by the international community as an appropriate framework for mediation of the conflict in Darfur. However, the UNAMID's Acting representative has not lost hope yet: "With all its inherent limitation, especially in its political provisions, the DDPD still remains our main point of entry and development platform."<sup>16</sup> On 7

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*Janjaweed* is an Arabic word used here as a term denoting that a man riding a horse, with a gun and fights like a jinn (i.e. Satan).<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Abiodun Bashua, the Acting AU-UN Joint Special Representative, interviewed *by Human Rights*<sup>15</sup>

*First*, a quarterly published by UNAMID Human Rights Section, Vol. 1, Issue 3, September 2015.

Mr. Abiodun Bashua, *Ibid.*<sup>16</sup>

September 2015 at the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Board of Directors meeting in Doha, the State of Qatar announced completion of 3 out of 5 model villages; will fund the construction of 10 more model villages and 300 wells, as well as fund \$50 million projects for nomadic populations. DRA announced the completion of 315 projects and informed of the Government of Sudan allocation of SDG1.2 billion for development projects for the year 2015 EU has fulfilled its 27.5 million Euro pledge, Turkey, UK, Germany contributed significantly as well.<sup>17</sup> This is besides the establishment of Darfur Development Bank is to be completed soon.

However, despite these on-going efforts being made by the UNAMID, and development projects being implemented under the DDPD, it becomes a shocking fact that the situation in Darfur still remains challenging – both with regards to security as well as humanitarian needs. An assessment of food and health situation in Darfur, conducted in 2011 came out with disappointing results.

The Comprehensive Food Security Assessment was conducted in October and November 2011 by the State Ministries of Agriculture in the three Darfur states, and the State Ministry of Health in North Darfur with support from WFP Sudan. The survey covered almost all localities in North, South and West Darfur, distributed across eight different livelihood zones. The main objectives of the assessment were to provide a reliable and detailed assessment of the food security and vulnerability situation of the Darfur population; to assess some of the causes and risk factors for food insecurity and vulnerability and; to identify pockets of vulnerability where assistance and targeting may be required in the future. The results of the survey are intended to assist WFP and the Government of Sudan in determining the best interventions, improve geographic and social targeting and to help policymakers in exploring options for establishing a food security based safety net programme. The assessment covered 37 out of 38 planned localities in the three Darfur states.<sup>18</sup>

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Ibid. <sup>17</sup>

<sup>18</sup> A Comprehensive Food Security Assessment was conducted in October and November 2011 by the State Ministries of Agriculture in the three Darfur states, and the State Ministry of Health in North Darfur with support from WFP Sudan.

. When using the projected population figures for 2011, an estimated population of 529,000 people in North Darfur, 484,000 people in South Darfur and 322,000 people in West Darfur are food insecure. Furthermore, an estimated population of 782,000 people is vulnerable to food insecurity in North Darfur, compared to approximately one million people in South Darfur and 504,000 people in West Darfur.<sup>19</sup>

These numbers represent the overall situation in Darfur. However, it is important to note that more than 2 million IDPs are living in camps across the three Darfur states. For years, these IDPs have been supported based on their community status and not necessarily their vulnerability status. The high number of IDPs in camps in Darfur significantly contributes to the total number of beneficiaries in Darfur who are being supported by WFP and other humanitarian organizations. In West Darfur, 30 percent of the IDPs are food insecure compared to 23 percent in North Darfur and 17 percent in South Darfur. In all three states, the food security status for IDPs is similar to that of residents, meaning that the food assistance provided to IDPs likely has a stabilizing effect on their food security situation. Other IDPs live in villages but face continuous threats from the ongoing conflict that adversely affect their ability to produce agricultural goods, access income generating activities and access food to meet their consumption requirements. As a result, they are heavily reliant on food aid as a main source of food. Also in terms of malnutrition, the survey found out that nearly 7.700 children aged between 6- 9 months in Darfur suffer from acute malnutrition.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

So, if the DDPD is only hope amongst persistent insecure situation, and if the non-signatory movements are still active in their military operations, it remains a major responsibility for the international community to exert more pressure on these rebel movements to join the DDPD.

### **The UNAMID at work:**

The People of Darfur believe that the UNAMID, although has provided some help, but in terms of security "they are protecting themselves". They seem to left without teeth. From the beginning the USA did not respond promptly to the crisis. It might, partly, be heavily engaged in many crises such as Iraq, Afghanistan, war against the Qa'eda and terrorism..

A decade ago, Darfur, a distant expanse of territory in western Sudan, became a household name in the United States and posed a stark moral question for American policymakers, generals and diplomats: should Washington risk American lives to try to prevent genocide in a remote backwater that had no obvious strategic value to the United States?<sup>21</sup>

The answer, in part, was a clumsily named peacekeeping mission, the African Union/United Nations hybrid operation in Darfur, or UNAMID, that the United States helped create in 2006 to offer peace and security to the more than 2.7 million people driven from their homes in a government-sponsored scorched earth campaign. Then-President George W. Bush's top Africa diplomat, Jendayi Frazer, hailed the deployment of this "large, robust peacekeeping force for Darfur" as a triumph of American diplomacy. The United States, she vowed, would be "watching

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<sup>21</sup> Colum Lynch, "The Mission That Was Set Up to Fail", Foreign Policy, April 8, 2014. See: [Colum.Lynch@columlynch](mailto:Colum.Lynch@columlynch)

closely” to ensure the government of Sudan extended “nothing less than full cooperation.”<sup>22</sup>

That never happened. "The United States and its allies flatly ruled out the idea of sending Western military forces to Darfur, leaving the mission in the hands of under-equipped, badly-trained, and vastly outgunned African peacekeepers."<sup>23</sup> Khartoum never cooperated with the mission and in many cases directly threatened the peacekeepers. Washington, London, and other major powers, meanwhile, focused most of their diplomatic firepower on South Sudan’s independence drive and largely abandoned efforts to enforce the raft of U.N. sanctions they had devised to compel Sudan to stop abusing civilians in Darfur. “The United States stepped back from Darfur.”<sup>24</sup> “The sanctions started to fade from everyone’s attention.”<sup>25</sup>

The UNAMID, who started effectively in Sudan in 2007 according to the UN resolution No. 1769 to sponsor the implementation of the peace agreements signed by the two sides and monitor human rights violations, suffered a lot in Darfur. Until October 2014, it has lost about 137 soldiers, 43 policemen and 18 civil servants. Now there are 200000 Sudanese refugees in Chad and 355000 internally displaced persons, about third of them the UNAMID cannot reach them to provide assistance for security reasons.

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Colum Lynch, *Ibid.* <sup>22</sup>

*Ibid.* <sup>23</sup>

Enrico Carisch, a former chief of the U.N. sanctions panel for Darfur <sup>24</sup>

*Ibid.* <sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, there are **positive** aspects on the UNAMID:

- The UNAMID takes preventive measures to mitigate the impact on the civilians resulting from the interventions sporadically made by the Sudanese authorities in some camps as "security search operations". It also reduces tension there. In accordance with its protection of civilians' mandate, and always demands that these selective searches – if necessary – should be conducted in coordination with the camp leaders and the Mission and that should be carried out respecting human rights and observing international humanitarian law.
- The UNAMID also mediates between tribes to ease the tension that might develop into violent conflicts. In June 2015, for instance, the Mission facilitated the travel of a government of Sudan delegation, comprised of ministers and high-ranking officials, to Abu Karika, East Darfur state to meet the two conflicting tribes – *Rezeigat* and *Ma'alia*.
- The first priority of the Mission's mandate – protection of Civilians – has been translated through a UN-System Darfur wide integrated Coordination of the PoC Strategy developed by the Humanitarian and Protection colleagues. In coordination with Civil Affairs, UNAMID Military, Police, all substantive Sections and UNCT. .. This is consequently promoting the other basic economic, social, and other rights.<sup>26</sup>
- The UNAMID is doing all in its power and with limited resources to provide protection to civilians in Darfur, facilitate the humanitarian aid operation, and help provide an environment in which peace can take root. The mission carries out some 160 patrols daily.
- UNAMID's work is complemented by joint efforts on the political front. Until mid-2008, the Joint Mediation Support Team was led by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Darfur, Jan Eliasson, and the AU (former) Special Envoy for Darfur, Salim Ahmed Salim.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Abiodun Bashua, Op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> On 30 June, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping appointed Djibril Yipene Bassole, the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, as the new joint AU-UN Chief Mediator for Darfur. As of 8 June 2011, Mr. Bassole returned to Burkina Faso, and Ibrahim Gambari, Joint Special Representative (JSR) of UNAMID, became the Joint Chief Mediator ad interim. UNAMID

The budget of the UNAMID is US\$1.5 billion for the fiscal year 2012 – 2013. The general impression of the Sudanese public opinion is that the mission spends more on administrative affairs than on the people of Darfur.

The UNAMID officials admit that the mission is not without challenges and difficulties. "The mission is confronted with numerous logistical and security constraints as it must operate in unforgiving terrain and in a complex and often hostile political environment. The mission also faces shortfalls in critical transport, equipment, infrastructure and aviation assets."<sup>28</sup>

The failure of the UNAMID could be seen as relative. The UN and other effective players – such as the USA – came late and with only weak political and financial support for the UNAMID. Hence, the suffering of the people of Darfur is multi-faceted: first, they are suffering from lack of proper protection as well as lack of adequate humanitarian assistance from international organizations, on the one hand, and from lack of strong and neutral central government intervention, on the other. Second, the Darfurians are also suffering from the continuous clash between the government and rebel movements and that the UNAMID is unable to protect them, the UNAMID is itself a victim. Third, the people of Darfur are also suffering from the violent and bloody tribal conflicts in which the government as well as the rebel movements intervened impartially – bringing about more ethno-political polarization and, hence, further escalation of the war and complication of the crisis.

## **Conclusion**

An interplay of many factors – notably the failure of the UN to put an end to the war in Darfur and so the suffering of the people in the region, a

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Deputy JSR (Political), Aichatou Mindaoudou, succeeded Mr. Gambari as Joint Chief Mediator a. i. on 1 July 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Peacekeeping Information Management Unit, 28.8.2015.

"Darfurian identity" is being molded. "*Darfurianism*" is ignited by the political behavior of the governing elite, along with accruing cultural superiority practiced against the Darfurians in the capital and elsewhere in Sudan. The inferiority complex on the part of the Darfurians has been growing over time and cemented by the "Islamic" government of Omer al-Beshir who also represents an ethnicity – among few in the North – which are always accused by the elites of the marginalized areas (or regions) as monopolizing wealth and power in Sudan since independence in 1956.

It seems that a 'shock' is needed to reformulate a common Sudanese identity and rebuild a new national identity.

So, the government of Sudan is partly responsible for the perpetuation of the crisis, as do the rebel movements. However, the international community does share the responsibility too. The UN nations and AU – as jointly represented by the UNAMID – were too late and slow. This has given ample time for the crisis to grow and become more complicated. So the NUAMID has come too late with limited resources. It was too small mission for too big 'mission'.

**This leads to certain questions:**

Why doesn't the United Nations put enough money and send more troops to Darfur and pay more attention to the humanitarian tragedy of the Darfurians? Why doesn't the international community put more pressure on the non-signatory rebel movements to join the Doha Document of

Peace in Darfur taking into account that the government of Sudan has given more concessions for the rebels' claims?

This leads to general questions with the regard to the UN principles and goals: On what philosophy some states use the (wrong) right of veto to rule out a bill that, if passed, will serve justice and peace in any part of the globe?

It is unfair that only five states influence the world's destiny by enjoying unfair "veto right".

I hereby call upon this conference to reconsider the structure and functioning of the United Nations.