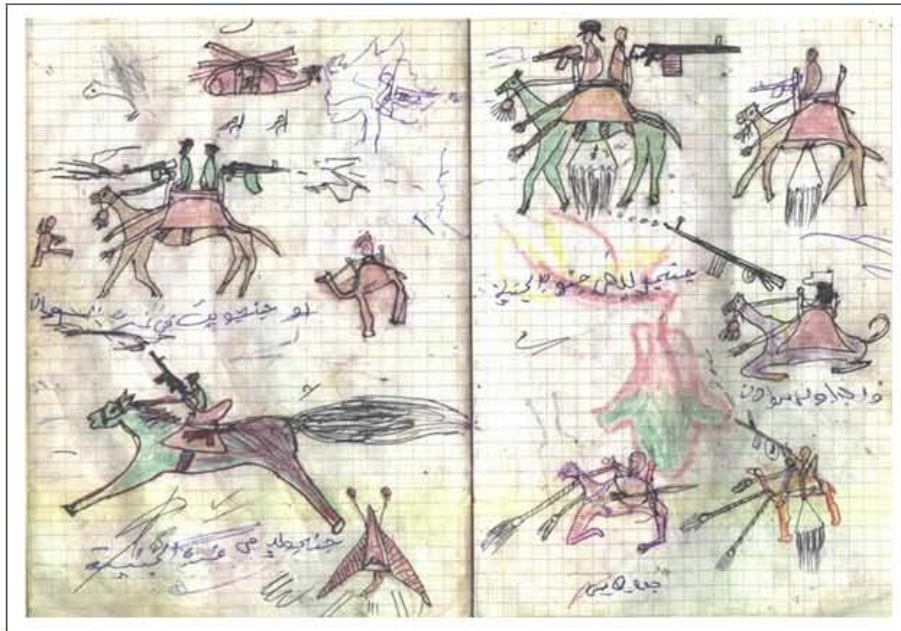


Parliamentary Briefing: Darfur - the genocide continues



"I see Janjaweed coming - quickly, on horses and camels, with Kalashnikovs - shooting and yelling, 'kill the slaves, kill the blacks.' They killed many of the men with the animals. I saw people falling on the ground and bleeding. They chased after children. Some of us were taken, some we didn't see again. All our animals were taken: camels, cows, sheep, and goats. Then the planes came and bombed the village."

Drawing and quote by Abd al-Rahman*, aged 13

Prepared by Becky Tinsley,
for Waging Peace - June, 2005

* The artist's name has been changed. Image courtesy of Human Rights Watch

Parliamentary Briefing: Darfur - The Genocide Continues

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1 - BRIEFING SUMMARY

The purpose of this briefing is to provide Parliamentarians with up-to-date information on the situation in Darfur, and the ongoing diplomatic manoeuvres on the part of the European Union, the United Nations Security Council and the British Government, all of whom continue to fail the people of Darfur.

We deliberately choose to describe Darfur as a failure of British policy because we believe the Foreign Office's record amounts to appeasement of the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum.

At a time when Britain trumpets its concern for Africa on the world stage, its record of appeasing the Khartoum junta has been shameful. It calls into question its sincerity and credibility.

The failure of British foreign policy has been to believe that Khartoum will stick to any of its commitments, including those made personally to Tony Blair in October 2004. Seasoned Sudan-watchers long ago concluded that the generals in Khartoum were vastly more skilled at out-witting our diplomats than we have given them credit for.

So long as Britain takes Khartoum at its word, and so long as we do not apply genuine pressure, our words will have as much affect on the Sudanese junta as they did on Slobodan Milosevic ten years ago in the former Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office has sought to make the architects of the genocide their partners in the search for peace. The tactic has failed before, in Bosnia, and it will fail again in Sudan.

In the words of Lord Alton, a staunch defender of Darfur and a visitor to the refugee camps there,

"The Janjaweed and the government of Sudan have manipulated the international community, which has been guilty of prevarication and feeble posturing."

1.1 - Immediate Action Needed

In concert with other groups in Britain and the USA, Waging Peace calls on our elected representatives to demand the following steps be taken immediately:

1. A U.N. Chapter 7 mandate enabling international peacekeepers, preferably led by adequately supported and funded African Union troops, to protect civilians and disarm aggressors.
2. Enforcement of a no-fly zone over Darfur.
3. Enforcement of sanctions against, and a freeze on assets of, the architects of the genocide in Darfur.
4. An end to the impunity with which the Sudanese armed forces, the Janjaweed and the rebels behave, entailing U.N. action to arrest perpetrators now, and to hand them over to The Hague International Criminal Court.
5. Acceptance by Khartoum of a comprehensive peace agreement for all of Sudan including a democratic and federal structure of government, freedom of speech, and the protection of human rights.

We urge you to please write to, table questions and motions, and to put pressure on the relevant officials in the British government, the European Union and the British Ambassador to the United Nations. Please find appropriate names and addresses at the end of this briefing.

2 - DARFUR: “A little short of hell on earth”

Every day another 500 people die in Darfur, the remote western region of Sudan. It is estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 black Africans have died in the last two years as a direct consequence of the policies of the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum.

Civilians continue to be killed in aerial attacks by the Sudanese armed forces, or at the hands of the junta’s proxies, the Arab Janjaweed militias. More than three thousand villages have been destroyed (90% of the black African villages in Darfur), and the United Nations predicts that by the end of the year, three million people will have been forced to flee to refugee camps near the border with Chad. 197,000 Sudanese people have sought refuge in Chad.

In May Oxfam warned that those displaced or ‘ethnically cleansed’ face starvation because lack of security means they have been unable to return to their villages and plant crops. Seasonal rains will soon make vast areas inaccessible to the international humanitarian effort or the African Union monitors.

Also, in May the U.N.’s Darfur Humanitarian Profile report warned that, “humanitarian workers in Darfur, particularly NGOs, are being subjected to a constant stream of harassment, threats and attacks”, putting into question the sustainability of international efforts to keep two million displaced people from starving. The arrest of Paul Foreman, the Medecins Sans Frontieres director, and another MSF employee, in Darfur on May 29th is just the latest example. Foreman’s “crime” was to write a paper documenting the extent of how the Sudanese police and army use rape as a weapon against the black African women in Darfur.

Speaking at the end of May, Kofi Annan warned that the estimated 10,000 mainly Sudanese humanitarian workers in Darfur face constant interference from Sudanese local authorities and police, as well as attacks by rebel groups. He described Darfur as “little short of hell on earth”.

2.1 - Sudan Kills its Own Citizens with Impunity

Attacks on civilians by the Sudanese armed forces continue unabated, despite denials by the junta in Khartoum and, curiously, by some Western governments, including Britain and America. AU monitors witness regular attacks, a sample of which are below:

- **May 3rd, Sudanese armed officers from Gebel Haboub raped two little girls and beat a six year old boy near Nyala.**
- **May 11th, aerial attacks using MI-24 helicopter gunships.**
- **May 13th, Sudan government troops attacked Khazan Jadid village, between Nyala and El Fasher, killing six people.**
- **May 19th, a girl was beaten and raped by men from the Popular Police Forces in Nyala Valley.**

More information on these and other attacks are available on the website of the London-based Sudan Organisation Against Torture (contact details at the end of this briefing).

The attacks follow an established pattern, reported and confirmed dozens of times by Western observers: Sudanese government Antonov planes and MI-24 helicopters attack villages; then the Arab Janjaweed militias sweep in on horse and camel-back, or in Land Cruisers with mounted machine guns. They kill civilians, throw children onto fires, rape the surviving women and brand them as ‘slaves’, burn their homes, poison their wells and steal their cattle. Former US marine Brian Steidle, serving with the AU, has 10,000 photographs to substantiate these claims. Some of them can be viewed on the Waging Peace website.

In addition, reports from the Sudanese Organisation Against Torture and the Darfur Centre for Human Rights in London carefully catalogue a steady stream of violations: the Sudanese police and armed forces continually arrest, harass, beat, torture and imprison Darfur's community leaders and, in the tradition of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, they persecute anyone literate.

For example, Dr Mudawi Ibrahim Adam and colleagues were arrested on May 8th, hours before Dr Adam was due to travel to Ireland to receive the Front Line Human Rights Defender Award from President McAleese. Dr Adam, who has been systematically harassed by the authorities for years, faced the death penalty. Following prompt interventions in the European Parliament by Glenys Kinnock and in Britain by Lord Alton, amongst others, Dr Adam and his colleagues were released.

Another regular feature of intimidation by the Sudanese armed forces is the forcible relocation of the inhabitants of refugee camps at no notice, destroying their makeshift shelters, beating and often killing civilians. In May alone 17 people were injured and four killed by Government forces in separate incidents at Kalma Camp near Nyala and at Zamzam camp near El Fasher, according to the London-based Darfur Centre for Human Rights.

There is evidence from the International Crisis Group that the government of Sudan is incorporating Janjaweed into formal security structures such as the Popular Defence Force, the Border Intelligence Guard, the Popular Police and the Nomadic Police. Musa Hilala, the head of the Janjaweed, gave a speech in Kebkabyia on May 3rd, boasting that no one could touch him. His Janjaweed militias still roam with impunity. The best known are El-Khafif (The Light), El Sariya (The Fast) and El-Muriya (The Fearful).

Previously Musa Hilala told Human Rights Watch that he had been promoted from colonel in the Popular Defence Force to Brigadier General in the General Security Services. He stated that the government of Sudan directed all military operations and activities of the Janjaweed militia forces he had recruited. The militias are led by top army commanders, he told HRW, and they get their orders from Khartoum.

2.2 - The Scale of the Disaster in Darfur

In the autumn of 2004 the governments of the USA, Canada and Germany determined that genocide was occurring in Darfur. Most recently a study by Tufts University has estimated that 400,000 people have died in the Darfur in the last two years.

Genocide is defined in Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide as having two elements:

- 1) the mental element, meaning the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group"
- 2) the physical element, meaning a) killing members of a group; b) causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

In a deliberate and concerted effort to clear Darfur of its black African population, 90% of villages have been destroyed. Recently the Janjaweed militias have returned to areas previously razed and burnt and have once more destroyed them, in an effort to remind their former inhabitants that it is not safe to return home and resume their subsistence agriculture and cattle-rearing.

In interviews with humanitarian organisations and journalists, including the author, women in Darfur have given strikingly similar accounts of their treatment at the hands of their Janjaweed attackers.

“They raped me and called me “slave” and “nigger”.

“They branded me when they raped me and told me they wanted to dilute my black blood.”

“The Arabs said they hate the black and want them out of Sudan for good.”

The raping and beating of women continues on a daily basis in Darfur, at the hands of the militias who wait outside the refugee camps, and at the hands of the Sudanese police and armed forces, who have recruited thousands of Janjaweed militia members.

Both the London-based Sudanese Organisation Against Torture and the Darfur Centre for Human Rights and Development produce disturbing weekly accounts of villages that have been invaded, people who have been killed, citizens who are missing, and human rights activists and community leaders who have been arrested and detained.

2.3 - The Number of Dead

Studies by Northwestern University and most recently, by the Coalition for International Justice, commissioned by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), indicate 396,000 have died in Darfur in the last two years as a consequence of the violence there. The House of Commons International Development Committee report in April suggested a figure nearer 300,000. The report went out of its way to berate British ministers for continuing to use the figure of 70,000 dead long after it had been discredited.

2.4 - The Media Vacuum

Darfur does not often feature in television news reports because so few journalists are present and so few news editors believe Darfur merits coverage. Nicholas Kristof, the New York Times reporter who has sent graphic and disturbing reports from Darfur, confirms, “Sudan banned most reporters from the area”. He admits to gaining entry to the area illegally or smuggling himself in with visiting diplomats or humanitarian workers.

The editor of a well-respected British nightly news programme professed a lack of interest in events in Darfur because “nothing new is happening there”. The foreign editor of a Sunday broad sheet newspaper explained that having been briefed by the then Africa minister Chris Mullin, he believed the comparatively tiny rebel groups in Darfur were responsible for more deaths than the Sudanese armed forces and the Janjaweed militias. The editor concerned unquestioningly accepted the minister’s moral equivalency and has been reluctant to print reports of atrocities or the continuing violence in Darfur, believing all sides to be “as bad as each other”.

In news terms, there may well be nothing ‘new’ or exciting in Darfur because it is, as veterans of the Rwandan genocide put it, “Rwanda in slow motion”. Notwithstanding the judgement of the media, 500 people continue to die each day in Darfur.

Waging Peace is grateful to a handful of Parliamentarians (John Bercow MP, Lord Howell of Guildford, Baroness Cox of Queensbury, Lord Alton of Liverpool and Glenys Kinnock MEP) for continually raising Darfur and therefore trying to keep it on the media agenda.

3 - THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO-DATE

As the International Crisis Group puts it, “The international community is failing to protect civilians itself or influence the Sudanese government to do so”.

Throughout this catastrophe, the United Nations Security Council, of which Britain is an active and influential member, has prevaricated, reluctant to confront Khartoum. It has taken more than six months to deploy a mere 2,400 African Union monitors in a region the size of France or Texas. Although the monitors have no mandate to protect civilians, the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice has confirmed their presence deters attacks by the Janjaweed and other rebel groups. “When there are monitors in the region, the violence subsides,” she said in May.

The UN estimates 12,000 troops will be needed in Darfur, but military experts believe between 30,000 and 44,000 are necessary to secure the entire region. It will be at least a year before African Union monitor numbers rise to 7,700.

At the end of May, at a meeting in Addis Ababa, the international community patted itself on the back for pledging \$200m in support for the under-funded and under-manned African Union mission. After a request for help from the African Union president, Alpha Oumar Konare, EU and NATO countries offered the use of their heavy lifting aircraft.

Human Rights Watch expresses doubts about the EU-NATO plan because the proposed expanded force would not be in place until next spring. HRW points out that, “gross human rights violations are continuing” and that the government of Sudan has taken “no serious steps to rein in or prosecute the forces involved” despite UN resolutions. HRW confirmed that Sudan’s armed forces and their Janjaweed proxies are “consolidating” their programme of ethnic cleansing by revisiting previous destroyed villages and burning them again to send a message to their inhabitants not to return. There are also increasing reports from West Darfur that Janjaweed militia are being absorbed into the army and being treated as government of Sudan soldiers.

In May the government of Canada, the most generous donor, also offered to send 100 troops to assist the African Union. When Khartoum rejected the offer, the international community accepted the junta’s judgement without comment.

Sudan-watchers are puzzled by the reluctance of the UN, the African Union, Britain, the USA and others to challenge the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum, despite clear evidence that Sudan continually violates the terms of UN Security Council resolution 1556, passed on July 30th 2004. Sanctions have not been enforced, and reports from the African Union monitors and humanitarian workers in the area indicate the no-fly zone over Darfur is non-existent.

Although the African Union’s monitors daily collect and catalogue examples of government of Sudan cease-fire violations, attacks on civilians and ethnic cleansing, the AU is shy in publicising its findings, in contrast to its approach to its previous mission in southern Sudan. This pattern of capitulation amounts to a series of triumphs for Sudan’s generals and diplomats, and provide further proof of the feebleness of international institutions.

3.1 - The War On Terror

On April 29th the Los Angeles Times carried a detailed examination of the increasingly sensitive relationship between Khartoum and Washington. Its author, Ken Silverstein, wrote,

“The Bush administration has forged a close intelligence partnership with the Islamic regime that once welcomed Osama bin Laden...the Sudanese government has been providing access to terrorism suspects and sharing intelligence data with the US.”

The Los Angeles Times reports that in April an executive jet was sent to Khartoum to collect Major General Salah Abdallah Gosh, the chief of Sudan’s intelligence service, for a visit to Washington. Gosh is believed to be one of the chief architects of the slaughter and ethnic cleansing in Darfur, and to be among the 51 names on the ICC’s list of war criminals.

Consequently the White House ‘killed’ the recently passed Darfur Accountability Act which would have imposed sanctions against Khartoum in addition to a no-fly zone over Darfur. The act, sponsored by Senators Sam Brownback and Jon Corzine, received unanimous support in both houses of Congress. However, House Republican leaders deleted the measure from the final supplemental appropriations bill at the end of April.

Having determined that genocide was happening in Darfur, President Bush has not mentioned Darfur since January 10th, and then in passing and without condemning events or the Sudanese government. Nor will the administration raise Darfur with the Sudanese regime. Evidently the cooperation of the Mukhabarat, Sudan’s CIA, has won Khartoum special status of the sort enjoyed by Uzbekistan’s rulers.

At the end of May, eighty human rights and religious groups wrote to President Bush, urging him to propose a new United Nations Security Council resolution authorising the African Union to use force to protect civilians in Darfur. The group, including the National Council of Churches and the American Jewish World Service, also called on the administration to mobilise a “robust international force to support the AU mission”. White House officials cite the likely difficulties of rallying international support behind new UN resolutions. Activists contrast the administration’s current reluctance to act with its support for unilateral action against Iraq.

On May 27th the Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick, described the government of Sudan as “working hard” for a political solution in Darfur. He stated that levels of violence were significantly reduced, without apparently understanding that after two years of ethnic cleansing only ten per cent of the region’s black African villages remain intact. Khartoum has achieved its objective while the world looked the other way.

Zoellick also stated that “humanitarian aid was starting to get in”. Sudan-watchers are puzzled by this comment, since humanitarian workers have been present in Darfur in large numbers for the last ten months. Those concerned with human rights violations in Darfur have been at pains to congratulate the international community for sending food aid. They remain worried about the continuing lack of security which stops internally displaced people from returning to their homes and resuming farming.

It might therefore be helpful to see Mr Zoellick’s comments in the light of America’s broader political objectives in the region when he says of the Khartoum junta, “I believe that the government is working hard towards trying to find a political solution.”

Although there is far greater public knowledge about events in Darfur in the US, it seems the coalition of faith groups and African American activists may have run into a brick wall in their campaign to persuade the Bush administration to get tough with Khartoum. Far from being penalised for having sponsored jihadist terrorism for so many years, the Sudanese government is cleverly exploiting its former relationship with Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda to win over favour from Washington.

Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times believes the displaced millions in Darfur “need food and shelter, and President Bush has been good about providing that. But above all they need the international community to shame Sudan for killing and raping people on the basis of their tribe. Each time Sudan has

been subject to strong moral pressure it has backed off somewhat --but lately attention has subsided, and Mr Bush even killed the Senate-passed Darfur Accountability Act, which would have condemned the genocide.”

3.2 - Denying the Link between Khartoum and the Janjaweed

In Parliamentary answers and briefings to journalists, British ministers and officials have sought to downplay the link between the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed militias. This directly contradicts the findings of various government and non-governmental groups investigating the crisis in Darfur. As early as February 2004 Human Rights Watch had in its possession numerous official government of Sudan documents linking ministers and officials in Khartoum with Janjaweed activity. As mentioned above, the leader of the Janjaweed, Musa Hilala, has given interviews explaining clearly that he is part of the Sudanese armed forces and that Janjaweed militias are led by army officers who take their orders from Khartoum.

A year ago the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights report concluded that “the Janjaweed have operated with total impunity and in close coordination with the forces of the government of Sudan.”

Antonio Cassese who led the UN commission to Darfur in late 2004, has stated that he has collected nine boxes of statements from military officers, prisoners and witnesses, and of photographs proving the link between Khartoum and its proxies. He confirmed that the government of Sudan “openly uses militia gangs, gives them weapons and salaries and tells them to kill and burn and it backs them up with planes and helicopters.”

Colonel Anthony Mwandobi, the Zambian commander of the African Union mission in the Zalingei area of Darfur told the BBC that, “Janjaweed fighters wore military uniforms, which they said had been given to them by the Sudanese army. The Janjaweed also say they have been trained by the army.”

3.3 - Mixed Messages from the International Community

In April Jack Straw, the British Foreign Secretary, admitted that genocide was occurring in Darfur. This followed months in which Straw’s Junior Minister for Africa, Chris Mullin, deliberately downplayed the extent of the death rate in Darfur. Mullin went out of his way to lay equal blame on the rebel groups in Darfur and the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed proxies, without offering any evidence for his assertions. As mentioned above, the International Development Committee reporting in April took the unusual step of reprimanding Mullin and the DFID minister Hilary Benn for downplaying the scale of the disaster in Darfur.

Mullin has since been replaced by Lord Triesman who is understood to have a greater sensitivity to the consequences of appeasement due to his considerable knowledge of British foreign policy towards Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

The efforts of the Foreign Office have been focused on ensuring the elusive North-South Sudan peace deal becomes a reality. Officials in Khartoum have admitted to this author that they believed Darfur to be an annoying sideshow, and a diversion from what they perceived to be the more consequential efforts to stop the twenty-year-long civil war in the oil-rich south of the country.

As the International Crisis Group observes,

“The Comprehensive Peace Agreement must not be allowed to become an excuse for not pressing toward a settlement in Darfur. On the contrary, failure to resolve the Darfur crisis is all too likely eventually to undermine the CPA. It would be a grave mistake not to apply real pressure on Khartoum now.”

A vast United Nations programme to rebuild southern Sudan is taking shape, involving the deployment of 10,000 blue-helmeted peacekeepers, and a massive aid and reconstruction effort. In April the international community met in Oslo to pledge more than \$4 billion in aid and debt relief to Sudan, with no strings attached. In other words, the west has rewarded Sudan’s ongoing aggression in Darfur with a \$4 billion aid package.

Not surprisingly Khartoum has concluded that the west is not serious in its concerns about the genocide in Darfur. As the veteran Sudan expert, Professor Eric Reeves of Smith College explains, in many years of negotiations with the international community, the Sudanese have concluded they can continue to kill their own civilians with impunity while making promises they have no intention of keeping.

3.4 - The International Community’s Business Interests

On July 30th 2004 the UN Security Council called upon the Sudanese government to disarm the Janjaweed and to bring its leaders to justice. At every subsequent UN Security Council session no action has been taken to enforce this resolution. In fact, according to experienced and informed observers such as Human Rights Watch, members of the Security Council have been at pains to dilute the language of Resolution 1556. The reluctance to enforce 1556 may not be unconnected to the commercial interests of China, Britain, Russia and France in Sudan.

In May the government of Belarus applied to the UN Sanctions Committee, asking for permission to sell arms to Sudan. It is expected that they will be given the go-ahead, joining Russia, the Ukraine and the Chinese in regularly supplying Khartoum with military equipment and ammunition. China continues to source half of its growing oil needs from Africa, much of it from Sudan.

French giant TotalFinaElf has vast concessions in southern Sudan’s oil fields. British oil companies such as White Nile Oil Exploration are also forming ties and signing contracts in southern Sudan. It is estimated that sixty British firms are doing business in Sudan, and many others see great potential for reconstruction work. As money floods into southern Sudan, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are on record as saying they are keen to revoke Sudan’s previous pariah status.

At the height of the killing in Darfur, in April 2004, the then British ambassador William Patey, in a London-cleared speech, boasted that British trade with Sudan was up 25%, and he looked forward to continuing being great friends with Sudan.

The only permanent member of the UN Security Council not to have significant business interests in Sudan is the United States. The US has previously had strict sanctions against Sudan on the basis that Khartoum sponsored terrorism and gave a home to Osama bin Laden for five years. American state employee pension funds (such as Calpers, the California State pension fund) have been disinvesting in companies with Sudanese interests to protest against events in Darfur. (see www.DivestSudan.org) However, recent developments have dramatically changed Washington’s view of Khartoum.

3.5 - The International Criminal Court

The view increasingly expressed in diplomatic circles in Geneva, New York and London is that international action or intervention in Darfur is unnecessary in the wake of the U.N. Security Council's historic agreement to initiate International Criminal Court (ICC) proceedings against war criminals in Sudan. It is likely to take two years before the first indictments are handed down to the 51 names on the ICC's list.

In other words, the international community has chosen to allow the genocide to continue unchecked in Darfur, content that one day some of those responsible may face justice in The Hague. Marlise Simons in the New York Times quoted UN diplomats as saying, "it would allow the Security Council to postpone direct intervention and nonetheless appear to be taking action."

There are even suggestions among UN personnel that intervention or peacekeeping missions may never again be necessary, so long as those committing genocide can be threatened with eventual trial under the auspices of the ICC. Students of history might be prompted to ask what kind of an allied response this would have amounted to in the face of the Third Reich in 1939, or against Saddam Hussein after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

3.6 - Europe

The European Parliament is to be commended for passing resolutions critical of the Sudanese regime and its behaviour in Darfur. MEPs such as Glenys Kinnock have visited Darfur and continue to champion the rights of Sudanese human rights activists arrested and threatened with death in Khartoum.

On May 15th the European Parliament voted to bypass the government of Sudan with an aid package worth E450m until there is significant progress made on Darfur. The money will go directly to humanitarian organisations instead.

However, since many of the main beneficiaries of Sudan's oil wealth and reconstruction are likely to be European firms, it is unlikely any punitive measures will be taken by the European Commission against Khartoum.

3.7 - An International Peacekeeping Force

At the end of May a distinguish group of former foreign ministers including Madelaine Albright, Robin Cook, Lloyd Axworthy and Lamberto Dini, called for an international peacekeeping force from NATO countries to be deployed in Darfur immediately. The British Foreign Office has condemned proposals to send non-African soldiers to Darfur as representing "an invitation to every jihadist in the region to go there," in the words of the former Africa minister Chris Mullin.

For what it is worth, when this author interviewed survivors of the ethnic cleansing in camps in western Darfur, there was great enthusiasm for the presence of troops from NATO countries. Representatives of the Sudanese diaspora in London are also unequivocal in their support for the stationing of North American and European troops in Darfur because they can be relied upon to "get the job done quickly so they can go home again". Leaders of the Sudanese community in Britain suggest it is one of Khartoum's tactics to convince the west that its soldiers will be attacked by the people whom they are there to protect.

4 - THE IMMEDIATE OUTLOOK

The situation in Darfur is deteriorating due to a number of unfortunate developments:

- As mentioned above, the International Crisis Group and others believe Janjaweed fighters are being absorbed into the Sudanese armed forces and police in Darfur, threatening the security of refugees.
- Oxfam warns that due to lack of security in Darfur, displaced people have not been able to plant crops and thus face starvation.
- Oxfam also warns that the onset of the rainy season disrupts the delivery of aid, and the ability of the African Union monitors to patrol an area the size of France that has only a handful of paved roads.
- United Nations 'sit rep' monitors warn that new armed groups are appearing, attacking humanitarian convoys and harassing aid workers in an increasingly chaotic environment.
- African Union monitors report that cease-fire agreements have been repeatedly broken by all sides.
- Previously destroyed villages are being burnt a second time to discourage the return of displaced people.
- Neither the agreed sanctions nor the no-fly zone have been enforced, as is evident from reports from African Union monitors and other humanitarian groups.
- There is no plan to repatriate displaced people, and no security to enable ethnically cleansed people to return home. The Sudanese government has succeeded in forcing the Fur people and other black African tribes from their homes, particularly in the fertile Jebel Marra.

On May 2nd Oxfam issued a report predicting mass starvation when the rainy season begins, making large parts of Darfur unreachable. For two years the black African population has been unable to plant crops because they have been ethnically cleansed from their villages. The Janjaweed have stolen their cattle, leaving 3.5 million people dependent on food aid programmes in refugee camps. **Jan Egeland, the UN's Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, predicts 10,000 will die every month if insecurity forces humanitarian organisations to suspend operations.**

Equally worrying is the recent build up of militias in west and south Darfur. UN representatives report trenches being dug and daily clashes between militias and villagers. Both rebel groups and the government-backed and funded Janjaweed militia are acutely conscious that the west appears to have lost interest in events in Darfur, presenting them with opportunities to continue perpetrating atrocities on unarmed civilians. It is against this background that the Sudanese armed forces launch regular aerial attacks on villages, secure in the knowledge that they will be unchallenged by the international community or the African Union monitors witnessing their activities.

4.1 - Asylum Seekers from Sudan

Waging Peace, and other groups concerned to end the genocide in Darfur, are receiving an increasing number of approaches from Sudanese refugees in Britain who face deportation back to Sudan.

Typical is the case of Musa Saadeldin, a Sudanese doctor who fled Darfur where he had been detained and tortured by Sudanese security police. He was singled out for punishment because he provided medical treatment to civilians wounded by Sudanese armed forces and Janjaweed attacks.

Dr Saadeldin has been refused asylum in Britain. Home Office officials insist he must return to Sudan, claiming he can live in Khartoum, and thus avoid those who are threatening him in Darfur. Inconveniently for the Sudanese doctor, the very government whose officials and soldiers have issued threats against him is based in Khartoum. The British Foreign Office accepts that black Africans in Darfur are the victims of war crimes. However the Home Office refuses to recognise that the government threatening individuals in Darfur is the same government based in Khartoum.

Peter Verney, advisor to the House of Commons International Development Committee, believes that if Dr Saadeldin had been a white humanitarian aid worker in Darfur, he would be regarded as a hero for saving so many lives.

“Dozens of Darfur refugees in the UK are being told it’s safe for them to return to Khartoum, as if Darfur were just a local tribal affair. It’s not, it’s part of a countrywide problem created by the Sudanese dictatorship. By refusing asylum to people like this doctor, we’re sending a message to the regime that they can carry on with the slaughter.”

4.2 - Action to Take

In concert with other groups in the UK and beyond, Waging Peace urges you to please write to, table questions and motions, and to put pressure on the relevant officials in the British government, the European Union and the British Ambassador to the United Nations, to demand that the following steps be taken immediately:

1. **The establishment of a U.N. Chapter 7 mandate enabling international peacekeepers, preferably led by adequately supported and funded African Union troops, to protect civilians and disarm aggressors.**
2. **The enforcement of a no-fly zone over Darfur.**
3. **The enforcement of sanctions against, and a freeze on assets of, the architects of the genocide in Darfur.**
4. **An end to the impunity with which the Sudanese armed forces, the Janjaweed and the rebels behave, entailing U.N. action to arrest perpetrators now, and to hand them over to The Hague International Criminal Court.**
5. **Acceptance by Khartoum of a comprehensive peace agreement for all of Sudan including a democratic and federal structure of government, freedom of speech, and the protection of human rights.**

In particular, we urge all Members of the British Parliament to signing **EDM 212: Situation in Darfur**. Please use the relevant addresses listed below, to direct your correspondences.

The Rt. Hon Tony Blair MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1A

Lord Triesman
Minister for Africa
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

The Rt. Hon Jack Straw MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Sir Emyr Jones Parry
British Ambassador to the United Nations
One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
885 Second Avenue (between 47th & 48th Streets)
New York, NY 10017

Please also write to the Sudanese Ambassador, and the President of Sudan, calling upon their government to immediately cease its support for the Janjaweed militias in Darfur; to disarm the militia and bring those guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice; to cease attacking civilians in Darfur and to abide by the terms of UN Security Council resolution 1556.

His Excellency Dr Hasan Abdin
Sudanese Ambassador to the United Kingdom
3 Cleveland Row
St. James’s Park
London, SW1A 1DD

His Excellency Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir
President of the Republic of Sudan
Presidential Palace, POBox 281
Khartoum, Sudan

4.3 - Useful Sources of Information on Darfur:

The following websites provide useful information on the Darfur crisis:

- **Africa Action** - US-based organisation working for political, economic and social justice in Africa
www.africaaction.org
- **The Darfur Centre for Human Rights and Development** - monitoring the situation in Darfur and to provide much needed infrastructure in refugee camps in Darfur.
www.dcfhr.org
- **Darfur Genocide** – Both information resources and practical ways to take action
www.darfurgenocide.org
- **Divest Sudan** – organisation running a divestment campaign that targets the European and Asian multinational corporations that provide critical economic, commercial, and financial support to Khartoum.
www.DivestSudan.org
- **Human Rights Watch** - HRW are engaged in political lobbying over human rights abuses in Darfur
www.hrw.org
- **Jubilee Campaign** - fighting persecution of religious minorities
www.jubileecampaign.co.uk
- **Protect Darfur** - UK-based lobbying group behind the May 2005 Darfur Rally to the Sudanese Embassy, and co-ordinated by the Aegis Trust
www.protectdarfur.org
- **Save Darfur** – US-based campaign group behind the 'Hotel Darfur' campaign, with Don Cheadle
www.savedarfur.org
- **SOAT** - human rights organisation working to provide assistance to Sudanese survivors of torture
www.soatsudan.org
- **Sudan Campaign** - US group raising awareness and campaigning against the genocide
www.sudancampaign.com
- **Sudan Emancipation & Network** - organisation empowering people in Sudan to stand for human rights, political & religious freedom, and sustainable development
www.sepnet.org
- **Sudan Tribune** - Updates on the peace process, and in depth analysis of Sudanese issues
www.sudantribune.com
- **Waging Peace** – Campaigning pressure group working on peace and democracy issues with a particular focus on British policy in conflict-affected areas.
www.wagingpeace.info