

29 March 2007

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Lord Hannay of Chiswick
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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Miliband'.

Thank you for your letter of 13 March about Darfur. As you are aware, I share your concern about the situation in Darfur and its implications for the wider region.

The UN's Human Rights Council report on Darfur of 12 March confirmed what we already knew about the grave human rights situation in Darfur, and we are very disappointed that the Government of Sudan did not allow the Human Rights Council mission into Sudan. We, and EU partners, are pressing the Council to take forward the recommendations in the report.

As for the AU-UN peacekeeping force in Darfur, we have been pressing the Government of Sudan to make good on its promises to co-operate with the international community, made at the AU's Abuja summit in November last year. But unfortunately President Bashir has failed to endorse the Heavy Support Package as agreed between the AU and UN.

You will be aware that on 27 February the UN Security Council was briefed on the Secretary General's recommendations for deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in Chad, following a second technical assessment mission to the country. The UK will continue to work with the UN and other member states to determine if and how the deployment of a peacekeeping force could best improve security in the region.

We call on both Chad and Sudan to stop supporting each other's rebels and fulfil their obligations under the Tripoli agreement.

But this is not enough. Sudan's failure to co-operate with the international community is completely unacceptable. It is equally unacceptable that there still is no ceasefire in Darfur, and it is time for the international community to take tougher measures.



The UK is working to extend the existing UN arms embargo to the whole of Sudan and to target individuals responsible for atrocities, by listing them on the UN sanctions list. We are pushing for action on both these issues in the UN Security Council.

Following the Foreign Secretary's lobbying, the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting on 5 March agreed strong conclusions on Sudan, supporting the need for further action from the UN Security Council. If the Government of Sudan and rebel groups still fail to co-operate, tougher measures may be necessary. A No Fly Zone is one of a number of possibilities.

We welcome the ICC Prosecutor's recommendation of 27 February for the Judges to consider issuing summonses for two individuals as a result of investigations into the situation in Darfur. The ICC will continue to have our full support for its activities, and must also have the full and unconditional co-operation of the GoS. We have made this clear to the authorities in Khartoum. The ICC would not have been investigating situation in Darfur had the Security Council not decided to ask it to do so two years ago. The UK was instrumental in pushing for that to happen.

As you rightly point out, sustainable peace and security will only be achieved through a political process involving all parties to the conflict in Darfur. The UN high level meeting in Addis Ababa in November agreed on a renewed political process for Darfur under AU and UN auspices. This includes bringing the non-signatories into the Darfur Peace Agreement.

The individuals appointed by the African Union and the United Nations to lead this process (Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmad Salim) visited Darfur for a second time on 22 March. We have made clear our continued commitment to supporting the AU and UN, including through our Ambassador-at-Large for the Peace Process, Christopher Prentice.

*Evw
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David Triesman
The Lord Triesman of Tottenham