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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

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Our Reference: 35855

The Lord Hannay
Chair
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Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 11 September about UN peacekeeping in Darfur. I share your concern about the issue of peacekeeping in Darfur.

Underlining the commitment made at last year's UN World Summit on our collective responsibility to protect, UN Security Council Resolution 1706 set out the terms of the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission to Darfur. We are now working urgently with our partners to persuade the Sudanese government to accept the proposed force.

However, this is just one of the Security Council's responses under the responsibility to protect spectrum. The Council's referral of Darfur to the ICC should act as a deterrent, holding to account those most responsible for the crimes in Darfur. We have also worked through the Security Council to apply targeted sanctions.

The UK Government is continuing to make it absolutely clear to the Government of Sudan and to the rebel movements that they must all take urgent steps to improve the situation. We are urging the signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) to abide by its provisions, and the non-signatories to sign up to the agreement. The UK Special Representative met the rebel groups in Darfur in August to discuss their concerns and how best to address them.

We welcome the decision of the African Union (AU), taken on 20 September in New York, to extend the mandate of AMIS in Darfur until the end of the year. It is important for the UN to provide material and logistic support as soon as possible, and for the Arab League to make good its pledge of financial assistance.

However, both the AU and the UN Security Council have renewed their calls for a UN peacekeeping mission to take over in the longer term. The UN are best equipped to monitor the situation in Darfur.

We are reaching a critical juncture, and we have called for the widest international coalition possible to deliver a clear message to those fighting in Darfur, including the Sudanese Government. The Prime Minister has written to EU leaders, and the Foreign Secretary, the FCC Minister for Europe and I raised Darfur at the recent United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings this week. In particular, we will pressed the Chinese Foreign Minister, the Arab League and AU Foreign Ministers to use their influence over the Sudanese Government to accept a UN peacekeeping force.

*fvw
David*

David Triesman
The Lord Triesman of Tottenham