NO POWER TO PROTECT

THE AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SUDAN

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is dedicated to the people of Darfur, who are in danger of being “forgotten,” as well as to the African Union soldiers who are risking their lives for them. We would like to acknowledge all of the assistance and access provided to us in our assessment by both the African Union Mission in Sudan and a variety of humanitarian agencies. We would also like to thank our colleagues at Refugees International for their input and comments.

Cover Photo:
A mother and her children arrive at Zam Zam camp in North Darfur after fleeing an attack on their village.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Over one year ago, the U.S. government declared that the killing in Darfur was genocide. Proclaiming the slogan “African solutions to African problems,” the United States, NATO member states, and members of the United Nations Security Council turned the responsibility for resolving the Darfur crisis over to the African Union (AU). The AU deployed the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to monitor the ceasefire agreed earlier in 2004, as well as to “assist in the process of confidence building” and to “contribute to a secure environment.”

The AU deployment, however, while bringing a modicum of additional security in certain locations, has not created a stable environment for the people of Darfur. Based on information obtained while traveling with AMIS in Darfur and through extensive interviews, this report argues that AMIS' ability to protect civilians is in jeopardy. In the short term the U.S. must do all it can to support AMIS, and in the long term, the UN must take over the situation in Darfur.

With the recent upsurge in violence over the past two months, AMIS' shortcomings have come into full focus. AMIS does not have the ability or the resources to carry out its job of monitoring a ceasefire that is widely and regularly violated by all sides in an escalating two and a half year conflict. AMIS is hobbled by a weak mandate, too few weapons, and fewer than 5,000 armed troops to cover an area the size of Texas. Donor governments have failed to provide AMIS adequate support, while the Government of Sudan places innumerable obstacles in its path. Its Civilian Police (CivPol) are still not fully deployed to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the civilian population is unsure about AMIS’ role.

The recent deterioration in the security situation has been marked by attacks on humanitarian convoys, including one in West Darfur where aid workers were stripped and beaten; Janjaweed attacks on villages in North Darfur displacing close to 7,000 people, killing ten, and wounding three members of an AMIS patrol; an attack on Aru Sharow IDP camp, which killed 29; the kidnapping of nearly 40 AMIS forces in West Darfur by a rebel splinter group; and the murder of four AMIS Nigerian forces in South Darfur as they tried to intervene in an attack reportedly by the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) on a civilian contractor.

These attacks represent a deliberate show of strength in the context of the peace negotiations in Abuja and the testing of AMIS by the armed factions to see if AMIS is a force to be ignored or respected. As AMIS continues to be found ineffective due to resource, training and mandate constraints, their deterrence factor will decline. They will be increasingly targeted, as will civilians under their protection. For better or for worse, Darfur civilians have only AMIS to protect them right now; this is a choice that has been made by the entire international community. Civilians will continue to be vulnerable for the foreseeable future as peace talks are not progressing as smoothly as hoped. There is in fact increasing concern about the viability of the peace talks and the independence of the AU given the fact that the AU presidency will be passed to the Government of Sudan as of January 2006. The Justice and Equality Movement and SLA have threatened to pull out of the Abuja negotiations if this takes place.

If the U.S. is serious about preventing more civilian casualties in Darfur, it and its NATO allies, in partnership with the AU, need to move quickly to strengthen AMIS’ mandate, provide more troops, greatly increase logistical and organizational assistance to AMIS, and bring pressure to bear on the Government of Sudan to disarm the Janjaweed and allow AMIS to perform its job unhindered. When the US says, “There are obviously things the Government of Sudan wants that they’re not going to get if they continue to do this,” it needs to follow up these words with action.¹
For over a year, RI and other human rights and humanitarian agencies have been calling for increased support, greater presence and a wider mandate for AMIS. Unlike prior interventions in the Balkans, the U.S. has shown little interest in sending its own or NATO troops in response to a human rights emergency that it has declared to constitute genocide. Therefore, if AMIS is its solution of choice, the U.S. has an enormous responsibility to make sure that AMIS is a success. At a minimum, the Administration must lobby strongly for Congress to appropriate the US$50 million pledged by the U.S. last May to support AMIS; as of this writing Congress removed these funds from the FY2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. As for the AU, if the AU is eager to assert itself as the organization to handle African crises, it must be willing to insist upon greater authority to protect citizens, despite resistance from the Government of Sudan.

Earlier in the year, AMIS had been able to provide some security and deterrence. Displaced persons were congregating near AMIS bases, the UN World Food Program started parking its vehicles at AMIS sites, AMIS escorted humanitarian convoys, and helped victims of attacks get to hospitals. The round the clock presence of civilian police in some IDP camps has provided a greater sense of security to a population that is distrustful of the Sudanese police. AMIS forces have helped to restore order and provide security during the very difficult IDP re-registration process. But rising violence shows what can happen when there aren’t enough troops on the ground, and when these troops are hamstrung by a weak mandate and logistical and organizational constraints.

With increased assistance, AMIS will be able to provide short-term security but it still does not have enough experience or the structure to handle the tasks of a long-term multidimensional integrated mission (such as disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating all fighting forces, securing areas of return, and coordinating humanitarian agencies and actions) in Darfur. The AU has played a critical role in ensuring security over the past year, and should be commended for stepping into a breach where Western powers have had little appetite to go. The AU has increased its expertise as a regional player capable of responding to crises, which bodes well for its future. Refugees International believes, however, that in the future the crisis in Darfur will need to be handled by a UN peace enforcement mission, which can build on AU forces and logistical capability already on the ground.

As a senior official at the AU told RI, “In the long-run, the United Nations will have to take over after a peace agreement, with 20-25,000 [soldiers]. But the AU is not talking about it yet.” “Blue-hatting” a mission (a phrase derived from the blue helmets worn by UN peacekeepers) has worked in the past in such places as Burundi and Liberia, where the AU or Economic Community Of West African States, after providing initial stability, handed over a mission to the UN. Given the delicate politics surrounding a potential UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) takeover of AMIS, Security Council member countries are currently in discussion about the best way to proceed with such a transition. Nevertheless, considering that UN missions in general, and UNMIS in particular, are slow to start up and under-resourced, it is still critical that AMIS is supported and strengthened in order to provide security immediately and build a solid base for the future.

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

- The AMIS mandate be strengthened. With its current mandate, AMIS is unable to protect civilians pro-actively.
- AMIS expand its deployment to fulfill its mandate effectively. With a strengthened mandate, AMIS will need even more troops. AMIS also needs to receive more training to be able to respond effectively to the challenges of their mission.
• Donor countries support AMIS by providing it with more weaponry, communications equipment, and vehicles, as well as advice on organizing itself more effectively. If AMIS’ mandate is strengthened, it will have even greater requirements.

• The AMIS Civilian Police deploy and assert their presence in as many IDP camps and villages as possible.

• AMIS improve coordination and information sharing with humanitarian agencies and make greater outreach efforts to displaced persons. For AMIS to be successful, it must gain the trust and respect of the population it is there to serve --- the people of Darfur.

• AMIS plan better for short-term contingencies, and the AU work with the UN and the rest of the international community on the best way to transition the mission in Darfur from AMIS to the UN in the longer term.
DARFUR IN JEOPARDY

For generations, Darfur has been the site of low-level conflict between Arab nomadic herders and mostly non-Arab sedentary farmers, which has involved livestock theft and occasional violence. Traditional inter-tribal justice systems maintained the balance between the desire for retribution and the need for coexistence. This system allowed for the settlement of such issues without full-scale war.

In 2003, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) launched attacks on what it perceived as oppressive discrimination and marginalization by the Arab regime in Khartoum against the non-Arab tribes, such as the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa, of Darfur. In its most notable military action, the SLA seized the airport in El Fasher, destroying a number of Sudanese aircraft. In Khartoum, the Sudanese government, focused on its long-standing struggle in South Sudan, decided to combat the SLA (and other rebel groups such as the Justice and Equality Movement, or JEM) through what one UN official has described as “counterinsurgency on the cheap” by ethnically cleansing or exterminating the tribes that made up the potential rebel support base. Potentially lucrative oil reserves in South Darfur added to the desire of Khartoum to ensure government control of the region.

The Government of Sudan armed, trained and equipped Arab militias to fight as their proxy force in the region. These nomad militias, with government support, swept across Darfur from late 2003 into 2005 in a campaign of pervasive and extreme violence at levels previously not seen in Darfur. These militias became known as the “Janjaweed,” a term previously used for anyone that was a thief or criminal. Over two years of the conflict, as many as 400,000 Darfurians have been killed and over two million have been displaced as either refugees in Chad or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps across Darfur.

Lacking sufficient political will to intervene more directly, the international community decided to delegate responsibility for Darfur to the African Union, an “African solution to an African problem.” As South Africa’s President Thabo Mbeki later explained, “We have not asked for anybody outside of the African continent to deploy troops in Darfur. It’s an African responsibility, and we can do it.” The newly established African Union was given the responsibility for overseeing the peace negotiations and for deploying an intervention force on the ground.

On April 8, 2004 the Government, SLA and JEM signed a ceasefire agreement and a month later a Ceasefire Commission (CFC) was established to monitor the ceasefire. The primary role of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) has been to monitor, but specifically not to enforce, the ceasefire agreement. In terms of civilian protection, AMIS has limited authority in providing security for humanitarian relief and to “protect civilians whom it encounters under imminent threat and in the immediate vicinity, within resources and capability.” Ultimate responsibility for security still rests with the Government of Sudan. For its part, the West agreed to train, support and finance AMIS, and enable its deployment throughout Darfur.

The massive death and destruction that characterized the first two years of the crisis in Darfur abated somewhat during the first half of 2005. This can partly be explained by the fact that there were few villages left to destroy. In addition, the international presence in the form of AMIS and the humanitarian agencies has helped to deter attacks on civilians in the IDP camps and major urban centers. However, August
through October of 2005 saw a re-escalation of the conflict, with AMIS becoming a prominent target of violence itself. Possibly in response to the current round of Abuja peace negotiations, all of the armed parties have increased their attacks on civilians, humanitarian agencies, and AMIS to show their respective strength and capacity for disruption.

- Humanitarian convoys have been a prime target of attack by armed “bandits,” suspected of being affiliated with unidentified warring parties. One of the more prominent attacks took place on September 1, 2005 on the road between Kongo Harasa and Masteri to the south of Geneina, West Darfur’s capital. The “bandits” forced staff from Tearfund and International Aid Services from their seven vehicles, robbed, stripped and beat them and threatened to kill them if the aid workers ever returned to that region.

- On September 18, 2005 the Janjaweed attacked Hafara and several other small villages in the mountains southwest of Tharbit. Reportedly, at least ten civilians were killed in the attack which precipitated the abandonment of the villages in the region. Approximately 7,000 displaced persons fled to Zam Zam IDP Camp south of North Darfur’s capital of El Fasher, as well as to camps in the Tawila area west of El Fasher.

- On September 19, 2005 Janjaweed attacked an AMIS CFC patrol that was investigating the previous day’s attacks in the Hafara area. Two Rwandans of the protection force and the JEM representative to the monitoring team were all shot—none fatally—before the patrol could withdraw to Shangil Tobayi.

- According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, due to rising insecurity and despite an AMIS camp in close proximity, on September 25, 2005 three NGOs evacuated their staff from Shangil Tobayi, North Darfur, reportedly leaving the town without an international humanitarian presence. A week earlier Refugees International (RI) had witnessed the site director for one of the NGOs sending three of her staff home to Europe.

- The Government of Sudan police, which had begun patrolling in response to recent attacks on convoys south of Geneina, was ambushed by Janjaweed. The police counterattacked, killing four Janjaweed and capturing two, whom they imprisoned in Geneina. A few days later, on September 21, 2005 the Janjaweed came into Geneina, shut down the marketplace, freed their imprisoned fighters and hunted the two Government police they deemed responsible for the four dead militiamen. The Janjaweed occupied Geneina for about four days until, in tense confrontation with government forces, they agreed to leave the town. Since then, non-essential UN personnel have been put on notice for evacuation.

- On September 29, 2005 250-300 Janjaweed reportedly killed 29 civilians at Aru Sharow IDP camp in West Darfur, provoking around 4,000 displaced persons to flee into the desert.

- The first AMIS forces were killed in a reported SLA ambush on October 8, 2005. Three Nigerian soldiers and two AMIS support civilian contractors were killed, with three more AMIS troops wounded, near Kourabishi in South Darfur. Later, bodies of two other Nigerian troops killed in the same attack were found, bringing the death toll to six.

- The next day, on October 9, 2005 a JEM splinter group kidnapped an entire AMIS patrol of 18, including the American monitor-team advisor, in Nana near Tine, West Darfur. A rescue mission of 20 AMIS troops was also captured. Thirty-six were released within days, and the last two were freed following a firefight with the captors. Mohamed Saleh, the leader of the abductors, told Reuters that, “The AU have
Rwandan Protection Force soldiers who patrol in North Darfur as part of the African Union Mission in Sudan.

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become part of the conflict. We want the AU to leave and we have warned them not to travel to our areas.”

As part of its ongoing monitoring of the situation in Darfur, Refugees International traveled to the region in September 2005 to assess the effectiveness of AMIS in providing protection for civilians displaced by the continuing conflict in Darfur. This report explores some of the key issues now facing AMIS, while providing specific recommendations of ways in which AMIS can be improved.

RI started its mission in Addis Ababa, where the AU is headquartered, meeting with the AU Darfur Intervention Task Force. RI then traveled to Khartoum where the team met with AMIS, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Finally, RI went to El Fasher, capital of North Darfur, and Force Headquarters for AMIS and to Geneina, capital of West Darfur. In both North and West Darfur RI took part in various AMIS activities such as investigation patrols, confidence-building patrols, and humanitarian convoys, met with UN agencies, NGOs, Sudanese police, and talked with Darfurians in IDP camps and villages. AMIS patrols took RI outside El Fasher to Zam Zam and Shangil Tobayi, and from Geneina north to Abu Sorog. Despite the fact that many roads and areas had been declared “no-go” areas by humanitarian agencies, RI had relatively good access as the team traveled with AMIS itself.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen Mandate

AMIS’ mandate must be strengthened. With its current mandate, AMIS is unable to proactively protect civilians.

The current mandate establishes a mission that is essentially there to monitor and verify the ceasefire between the Government of Sudan and rebel groups in Darfur. In addition, the mission is there to “contribute to a secure environment” and “protect civilians whom it encounters under imminent threat and in the immediate vicinity, within resources and capability, it being understood that the protection of the civilian population is the responsibility of the Government of Sudan.” It is this part of the mandate that has caused frustration for AMIS, displaced civilians, and the humanitarian community.

A strict interpretation of this mandate does not allow AMIS to protect civilians from imminent attack unless the AMIS troops are present at that very moment. Even when AMIS knows an attack is coming, it is unable to react. For example, during the attacks on villages in North Darfur on September 18, 2005, AMIS was limited by its mandate to simply investigating afterwards and was not able to intervene. Flexible interpretation of the mandate in some cases has resulted in a more proactive attitude, but this seems to be the exception, rather than the rule. A Rwandan officer at one of the sites told Refugees International (RI) that displaced persons ask him, “Why are you not defending us?” He said, “I believe we have to defend those in IDP camps.” Another Rwandan officer told RI: “We had genocide in our country, we are in Darfur to stop it from happening again. How can we do this if we can’t protect civilians?”

Some AU officials in Khartoum have argued that it is politically impossible for them to expand the mandate, given the active resistance on the part of the Sudanese government. Yet one African official commented that it was time to stop “handling the Government of Sudan with kid-gloves.” U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, in a recent Congressional hearing, declared that the U.S. has “made clear that we would welcome an additional expansion of the mandate if they so choose.” Nonetheless, the U.S. has done little to push for a stronger mandate, often citing eventual UN takeover of the mission as a reason not to push further on the mandate now.

There are also serious problems with the ceasefire investigation mechanisms. Some AMIS Military Observers expressed frustration with the inclusion of Government of Sudan, SLA, and JEM representatives on the investigation teams (a member of the Chadian mediation delegation, as well as U.S. and EU representatives are also on the teams). While one of the reasons representatives are included is to allow the AMIS investigative teams access and security in various areas, it appears that in many cases these representatives do more harm than good. Because the representatives live on the AMIS bases, and take part in briefings, they are privy to all AMIS information, movements, and intelligence. AMIS officers told RI that often the representatives would call ahead of an investigation to warn their counterparts of AMIS’ arrival. An advisor told RI: “They don’t need them live on base, it could be done in another way, through developing relationships in the field.”

Representatives are also able to control where and when an investigation patrol goes. RI witnessed the cancellation of a patrol in West Darfur because the JEM representative refused to visit an area where an alleged JEM attack had occurred. AMIS Military Observers told RI that during investigations, witnesses at times seemed threatened by the presence of the representatives of the groups.

“We had genocide in our country. We are in Darfur to stop it from happening again. How can we do this if we can’t protect civilians?”
A Military Observer for the African Union Mission in Sudan with recently displaced people at Zum Zam camp in North Darfur.

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that had committed the attacks. AMIS investigation teams also expressed unease at their dependence on local Sudanese interpreters, and realized that the interpreters themselves were rarely impartial.

Finally, the armed factions no longer respect the ceasefire agreement, and AMIS has no power to enforce it. In a recent press statement, AMIS Head of Mission Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe stated, “I am of the view that the mechanism in place, while it could have worked if the parties to the conflict in Darfur were acting in good faith and if they were genuinely committed to their undertakings in the various agreements they have signed. However, in the light of our experience in the past fourteen months we must conclude that there is neither good faith nor commitment on the part of any of the parties. I also believe that there is a clear need to review the rules of procedure and of especially the JC (Joint Commission).”

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

- The U.S., other members of NATO, the Security Council, and AU put pressure on the Government of Sudan to permit AMIS to have a stronger mandate. A strengthened mandate would authorize AMIS Forces to take any and all means necessary for the protection of themselves, of unarmed civilians, and of humanitarian personnel, in line with a Chapter VII-type mandate. Language in the mandate would also ensure AMIS unrestricted ability to transport into Darfur any and all equipment necessary, including weapons and military hardware, to fulfill this mission without restraint by the Government.

- The AMIS donor group (including, amongst others, the U.S., EU, UK, Canada, Norway) commit considerably more resources to AMIS (as outlined more specifically below) so that AMIS would be able to fulfill a more robust and strengthened mandate.

- The AU reconfigure the ceasefire investigation mechanism. Considering the bad faith of warring-faction representatives, the AU should explore the possibility of limiting the involvement of outside representatives in investigations, and examine extra enforcement mechanisms. One potential model is the Civilian Monitoring Team system that was used in South Sudan.

*Increase Number of Troops*

AMIS needs more troops on the ground to effectively fulfill their mandate. With a strengthened mandate, they will need even more troops. AMIS also needs to receive more training to be able to respond effectively to the challenges of their mission.

Given the size of Darfur, and the enormity of the tasks mandated to AMIS, AMIS is seriously understaffed. In addition to monitoring and verifying the ceasefire, AMIS is expected to provide security for civilians, build their confidence, assist humanitarian agencies (such as in providing escorts for their convoys and sharing information), provide deterrence against the various fighting factions, and collect information and intelligence. All of these tasks are taxing AMIS’ human resources. AMIS doesn’t have enough troops to sufficiently protect itself, let alone protect displaced civilians or humanitarian organizations.

According to planning from earlier this year, AMIS was to get to a mandated level of a little over 7,700 personnel (Phase IIe) by September 2005, with a decision on increasing personnel to 12,500 (Phase III) to be made that same month. Because of a series of delays, including problems with
accommodations and fuel, AMIS still has not reached its 7,700 target, which is to include 6,171 soldiers (protection forces and Military Observers) and 1,586 unarmed Civilian Police. The majority of the protection forces are from Nigeria and Rwanda. Gambia, Senegal, and South Africa, have also contributed troops, with Kenya contributing a few dozen Military Police. No other member country of the African Union has sent combat troops to Darfur, although 25 countries have contributed Military Observers. Fifteen countries have contributed Civilian Police. As of October 21, AMIS had deployed 4,890 protection forces, 686 Military Observers, and 1,176 Civilian Police. According to AMIS, around 120 of these Civilian Police are women; less than 1% of the protection forces and Military Observers are women, which is similar to the percentage normally found on a UN mission. AMIS Military Observers and protection forces are deployed evenly across eight Sectors; the Civilian Police are concentrated around IDP camps. According to AU officials, discussion about Phase III won’t start until after a joint donor/UN/AU assessment mission, scheduled to take place by the end of 2005.

Darfur is roughly the size of Texas. No one would ever suggest 5,000 police officers could maintain security in Texas. Yet AMIS currently has less than 5,000 armed troops to provide security in the middle of an ongoing armed civil war. There are only a few AMIS Group and Team Sites per Sector, and only a couple of patrols are able to go out per day from each Site. These patrols of Military Observers are accompanied by about twelve armed members of the protection force; they have been no match, even in self-defense, for the rebel and other forces that are currently challenging them. When Refugees International (RI) asked AMIS why there were so few patrols, and why they would only go out for a few hours a day at most, RI was told that the Military Observers were needed at the base because they have to fulfill Staff Officer roles, such as logistics, communications, administration, and operations. AMIS has also had to figure out how to respond to the growing number of demands for convoy escorts; one Sector Commander told RI that if AMIS didn’t consolidate the escort requests, they risked using all their resources solely on accompanying convoys.

AMIS has had other problems with staffing. While RI was in North Darfur, all of AMIS’ local interpreters were on strike because their salaries had been cut in half following a restructuring of salaries and per diems for all AMIS personnel. When RI asked AMIS how they were handling the lack of interpreters, RI was told that the Military Observer teams were relying on Libyan, Egyptian, and other Arabic-speaking Military Observers to translate. Privately, some AMIS officers expressed concerns about using translators from these countries, given the sensitivities of the population towards “Arabs.” RI witnessed a CFC investigation at Zam Zam IDP camp where AMIS Military Observers were using a Libyan Army officer to translate during interviews with villagers who had fled attacks by the Janjaweed. The RI team had brought its own Sudanese translator from South Sudan; eventually, AMIS asked if they could use him to conduct further interviews. At another Civilian Police station, there was no interpreter; translating was done by the Egyptian Civilian Police. In addition, AMIS has made no specific effort to recruit non-Arab translators in Darfur, which likely hinders their ability to communicate, let alone build trust, with many of the displaced. More female interpreters are also needed, for interviewing women about sensitive issues such as rape. Unfortunately, qualified interpreters, male and female, are in short supply; humanitarian agencies are struggling as well to fill interpreter positions.

There has been a lot of criticism regarding the skill level and professionalism of the AMIS officers. After much negotiation on the part of the West and the AU, Western partners have been assisting AMIS in staff and organizational capacity building activities with the long-term hope that the AU will
eventually be able to conduct peace operations throughout Africa. As one U.S. official told RI: “The AU is needed now, and in the future in Africa. There are things beyond Darfur.”

One of AMIS’ biggest weaknesses in terms of skills is in its Command, Control and Communications and Intelligence (or “C3I”) functions. Sources in Darfur told RI that AMIS suffers from language and cultural barriers between officers from various countries, confusion in procedures, limited future planning, and ineffective communications systems. Much of this stems from lack of peacekeeping experience. Many Military Observers do not have basic investigatory skills. Some Military Observers that RI witnessed in action asked very basic, non-probing questions. They appeared to take answers at face value, and did not make a full attempt to seek a broad spectrum of perspectives. There appeared to be no systematic planning for investigations or a list of questions that needed answering. On one patrol, some villagers said there were newly
displaced persons congregating outside of town because of recent attacks. A dispute started between two Military Observers because one member of the team thought it would be important to go and confirm that they were there, while the team leader said there wasn’t enough time. Even when AMIS does collect valuable information, RI was told by AMIS officers and advisors that there is a lack of suitably trained personnel capable of analyzing this information for intelligence value, which hinders any given commanders’ ability to react.

NATO is currently training AMIS officers in command and staff functions at Force Headquarters in El Fasher. According to NATO officials, AMIS’ capacity in these areas is growing, albeit slowly. In August 2005, NATO supervised and assisted in a Map Exercise, which consisted of role-playing involving humanitarian groups and AMIS. The simulations included scenarios of cholera and mass casualties. Participants RI interviewed reported that AMIS and their civilian counterparts became much more effective at inter-organizational collaboration as a result of the exercise. NATO is also seconding officers to accompany AMIS officers in their day-to-day roles as mentors. At times some NATO officers have said they have had to go beyond being mentors, filling operational gaps. The Government of Sudan has made it difficult for NATO advisors to work with AMIS by delaying visa requests into Sudan. One advisor RI met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia had been waiting for several months for his visa to enter Sudan.

The Civilian Police are also receiving their own separate additional training from the European Union. In each Sector there will be an EU Civilian Police advisor team assisting the AMIS Civilian Police. Additionally, nine mobile training teams of EU Civilian Police will be sent to Darfur. Over six months, these teams will move from one AMIS Civilian Police site to another, conducting basic policing, management, capacity building and “train the trainer” courses. The hope is that after Darfur, the AMIS Civilian Police, upon returning home, will be able to help build the capacity of their colleagues.

There is also a real need for training of AMIS personnel, both male and female, on gender-based violence (GBV) awareness and gender sensitivity. One female Military Observer told RI that, “All Sudanese women are liars; they say they are raped when they are just pushed.” Considering that rape continues to be so widespread in Darfur, training on how to interview survivors of GBV must be made a priority. Additionally, the numbers of female Civilian Police, Military Observers, and interpreters within AMIS are very small. To address some of the skills gaps, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Fund for Population Activities, UNICEF, the UNMIS Human Rights Unit and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are collaborating to implement an extensive training program for all AMIS personnel starting at the end of this year. This program, funded through the United Nations Trust Fund for Security, by the Japanese government, is being managed by UNDP and will focus on human rights, gender-based violence awareness, child protection, and confidence-building mechanisms, among other things.

With the recent spotlight on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, RI urges the AU to do all it can to preemptively address this problem. In 2004, a Sudanese government official expressed concerns to RI about the introduction of peacekeepers into their country and accused them of bringing HIV/AIDS and encouraging prostitution. Now, with the death of two AMIS troops of AIDS in Darfur, the Government has once again raised the specter of AMIS infecting the Sudanese population with HIV/AIDS. While, to date, there have been no known cases of abuse or sexual misconduct on the part of AMIS, it is also unclear if there are procedures in place to report sexual exploitation and abuse. AMIS commanders assured RI that the AU Code of Conduct...
was in place. Given the realities of Darfur and the mission—the troops have a curfew, vehicles are few, alcohol is illegal, and there are limited social areas in the towns—contact between AMIS personnel and the local population outside of the professional realm has been limited. However, the AU must show zero tolerance for any infringements or abuse. With additional troops, team sites, and permanent Civilian Police stations in the camps and villages, it is important that the AU is vigilant regarding these matters.

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

- The African Union immediately expand AMIS to Phase III force levels of 12,500 personnel. This is all the more critical in view of a potentially strengthened mandate. Countries like South Africa, who have made commitments of troops, need to ensure that these troops are deployed to AMIS. Recognizing the many commitments some African countries have already made to current UN missions, the AU, international partners, and the UN must work together to ensure that all countries that could be contributing troops to AMIS are doing so.

- The donor countries do everything necessary to expedite this expansion (including assistance with accommodation and flights). With more troops, AMIS will be able to increase patrols and establish remote sites, which will require more assistance from donors.

- The AU hire additional interpreters (especially female) for each CFC Military Observers team as well as for the protection forces and Civilian Police. Interpreters should speak Arabic and local languages such as Fur.

- The AU encourage troop-contributing countries to recruit female officers and police for AMIS.

- Civilian Police set up a unit to deal specifically with cases of rape and other kinds of sexual assault and abuse.

- NATO, the EU, the UN agencies and any other institutions providing training ensure that there is a comprehensive monitoring component to ensure that skills learned are being applied. With troop rotation, there will be continually evolving training needs.

- NATO advisers train Military Observers in investigation and reporting techniques.

- The AU ensure that all personnel are aware of its Code of Conduct and follow the example of the UN by establishing Conduct Discipline Units.

- Following the example of the UN, the AU establish a dedicated Gender Unit to raise awareness of gender within the mission.

- AMIS establish a reporting mechanism for any cases of abuse and publicizes this to the local population and the humanitarian community.

- AMIS work closely with the humanitarian Protection Working Groups to ensure that any potential cases of abuse are reported to AMIS and dealt with.

**Improve Mission Weaponry and Equipment**

Donor countries must support AMIS by providing it with more weaponry, communications equipment, and vehicles, as well as advice on organizing itself more effectively. If AMIS’ mandate is strengthened, it will have even greater requirements.

No force, UN, NATO or otherwise, would find it easy working given the AU’s current constraints. This is especially the case taking into account how poorly equipped AMIS is with regards to firepower, vehicles and communications equipment in comparison to the other armed factions of Darfur. Inter-
National donor partners are not providing AMIS with the kind of equipment they need. African Union troops are armed primarily with three weapons: pistols for the protection force officers, AK-47 assault rifles for the bulk of the protection forces, and one Rocket Propelled Grenade launcher (RPG-7) for about every ten soldiers. As one Rwandan protection force soldier told RI, “We couldn’t defend ourselves with the equipment we currently have.” To unarmed civilians, AMIS may look intimidating as they ride around in the back of Toyota pick-up trucks, with AK-47 rifles and RPGs, but to well-armed forces like those of the Government of Sudan, Janjaweed, SLA and JEM, they represent little more than a nuisance. This lack of firepower explains how the 18-soldier AMIS patrol and its 20-man rescue force were kidnapped by a JEM splinter faction in West Darfur.

While the Government of Sudan is the most thoroughly armed contingent in Darfur, the Janjaweed has also been well-supplied by the Government with heavy weaponry. The rebel factions have also reportedly received their own heavy weapons, including artillery, according to one AMIS officer, officially and unofficially from Libya, Chad and Eritrea. Virtually every fighter in all these forces has either an AK-47 or an RPG-7 just like AMIS. However the armed forces in Darfur have many more such weapons as well as far more troops to use them.

Nevertheless, even if the AMIS force is not overwhelmingly out-gunned in raw numbers, they are out-gunned in the destructive power and range of the weapons of the various armed rebel groups. A common truck-mounted weapon among the warring forces in Darfur are the PKM (also referred to as PKB) 7.62mm machine guns. The PKM can not only easily fire over one full kilometer (three times as far as an AK-47), but at 500 meters can penetrate an armored vehicle. Also commonly seen among Government
The Government forces (and the other groups to a lesser extent) have weapons with much greater capabilities than the small arms carried by AMIS.
of the Government of Sudan. In June 2005, Canada loaned 105 Grizzly Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) to the AU; they first went to Dakar, Senegal so that AMIS troops could be trained on them. The Grizzlies would provide solid protection from even 12.7mm bullets for the five soldiers that can fit inside of them. They also come with their own 12.7mm machine gun on top and thus would be a huge boost to the AMIS combat capacities. However, the Government has been standing in the way of the Grizzlies’ delivery. Only in October 2005 has it agreed to allow 35 of these APCs to enter the country. An international advisor to the AU speculated to RI that the armor would dramatically improve AMIS assertiveness and effectiveness if and when it arrived: “…although AMIS has been tentative until this point, I think [the AU] is just waiting to get these APCs and will be more forceful when they do.”

An AMIS official in Khartoum told RI that the Government’s excuse for holding up the equipment is that, “The APCs could be captured by the rebels and used against the GoS.” Clearly, one of AMIS’s only hopes for not being captured in the future is if they can defend themselves with APCs and heavy weapons. The AU doesn’t need tanks —although tanks would be useful—but they definitely need a vehicle that will protect them at least from regular Kalashnikov rifle bullets. Moreover, they need the ability to respond to attacks with overwhelming firepower. Otherwise, none of the other armed groups will ever be deterred from attacking civilians or AMIS.

On September 19, 2005 when the Janjaweed attacked the AMIS CFC patrol sent to Hafara, all the protection force could do was return fire to cover their withdrawal. Faced with only twelve Rwandan soldiers, armed with only AK-47s and RPG-7s, the approximately 300 Janjaweed in the area would have massacred the AMIS force if the Rwandans had tried to stay and fight. A source in Nyala told RI that the first AMIS forces killed in Darfur, as part of the October 8 ambush, were killed by Sudanese Government or allied forces, and not by the SLA as had been originally reported. The AMIS troops encountered civilian contractors under attack near Kourabishi and came to their aid. When the attackers broke contact and withdrew, the Nigerians pursued the attackers (pushing the limits of the mandate and Rules of Engagement) but then were ambushed by a much superior force. If AMIS were supplied with the weapons, air support and force numbers they needed, AMIS’ deterrence factor would increase making such attacks on AMIS much less likely and AMIS’ capacity to defend itself and protect civilians would be greatly improved.

The complete lack of defenses at all AMIS bases in Darfur is also an issue. Currently the bases are demarcated by chain-link fences and have a few guards on variable levels of readiness at the entrance. A proactive AMIS force dedicated to bringing stability to Darfur requires fortified positions from which they can safely operate.

The equipment and capacity shortfalls go beyond weapons and armor. The AMIS’ communications and communications monitoring equipment, which are crucial to an effective, modern fighting force, are insufficient. While many of the AMIS vehicles have VHF and HF radios, none of the radios is encrypted for security. Thus any movements or actions by AMIS are easily monitored and tracked by belligerent parties. When RI was driving with a patrol, there were no radios allowing one vehicle to communicate to another. In addition, the more remote bases lack VSAT email systems to facilitate efficient reporting and command and control on a round-the-clock basis. Some lower-level headquarters are forced to read reports out over the radio or hand-write reports and have them driven to their senior-level command each day.

While the AMIS radios are easily monitored by outside forces, AMIS itself has no com-
munications intelligence collection capacities. There are no soldiers dedicated to trying to listen in on Government, Janjaweed and rebel unsecured radio communications let alone use any kind of “signals intelligence” equipment. In fact, AMIS has virtually no intelligence collection or analysis capacity whatsoever. While the belligerent parties have informers built into the CFC mechanisms, AMIS has neither the spare troops nor the expertise (including only a few Arabic speakers) to build an effective military intelligence collection system. They entirely lack the most basic intelligence gear such as good maps. Commanders and operational and intelligence staff officers on the ground need to be able to examine maps of their areas of operations to be effective. Currently AMIS has practically no military maps, let alone a versatile computer-based mapping software package. AMIS has been able to take advantage of the maps produced by the UN Humanitarian Information Center. These maps, however, are necessarily geared towards the needs of humanitarian agencies and planners, not military forces.

On the organizational and logistical front, AMIS has a lot of catching up to do. The first AMIS forces were deployed as quickly as possible to Darfur, without adequately establishing the logistics training to support them. The situation has been somewhat rectified through the establishment of a Joint Logistics Operation Center (JLOC). However, AMIS has yet to fill many of the JLOC permanent staff positions with African military officers. Thus while the JLOC has facilitated a smoother system, it is clearly not as institutionalized as it needs to be.

In terms of financial planning, AMIS still lacks a comprehensive budgeting system, a point of contention between the AU and the donor countries. The AU keeps pressing for cash promises, with oversight, from the donors so they can conduct budgeting and planning based on known available resources. One high ranking AU official lamented, “The AU is not controlling the resources, so [we] can’t control the horizon.” However, donors have countered that the AU needs to bring them a budget so the donors know what they are paying for. AU officials told RI that they would prefer more donations in cash, rather than in-kind, in order to give them more control over outcomes and contingency situations. All US donations to AMIS to date have been in-kind, which US officials say the AU prefers, as it frees the AU from having to deal with contracting details. The US also benefits from its in-kind contributions, most of which gets funneled back to American contractors.

Donors say that the AU doesn’t have the mechanisms in place to handle finances effectively; in fact, at the end of September, 2005 RI witnessed AMIS officials struggling to make sure that funds for salaries made it from Addis Ababa to Darfur in time. Also, until the recent establishment of the donor liaison working group in Addis Ababa, the AU often went to multiple donors with the same equipment request, causing frustration amongst the donors. The UN has started to assist the AU in handling contracts; initially the AU was unable to get competitive contracts because of the short-term nature of the mission planning. The UN has stepped in to allow the AU to purchase fuel through UN contracts.

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

- International donors provide the armor and firepower AMIS needs to fulfill its current and potentially future mandate. The AMIS troops need not only the Canadian APCs, but also personal body armor and heavy weapons such as heavy machine-guns, mortars, rockets and combat air support in the form of helicopters and/or airplanes.

- The U.S. Congress honor its pledge of US$50 million to support AMIS, promised at the donor’s conference last May, to
cover equipment, logistics, accommodation and other deployment needs. The House of Representatives has already cut these funds out of the FY2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

- The U.S. and the EU pressure the Government of Sudan to permit immediate and restriction-free deployment of equipment.

- The UN Security Council establish a “no-fly zone” over Darfur, and NATO and other forces assist AMIS in enforcement.

- AMIS fortify bases with watchtowers and other protective mechanisms which are essential to protecting the AMIS force.

- Donor countries ensure that AMIS bases are equipped with VSAT communications system for email.

- The U.S. provide AMIS with basic mapping software, along with satellite-generated topographic maps.

- The AU, the donor working group, and the UN establish together a long-term budget which should ensure designated funding for every predictable aspect of the mission through September 2006. Included in the budget should be a funding source of cash for contingency spending, with oversight from a donor ombudsman to allay fears that giving un-earmarked cash could encourage corruption. In addition, more mechanisms should be put in place to assist the AU with its finances, and in securing competitive contracts.

Accelerate Civilian Police Deployment and Presence

The AMIS Civilian Police must deploy and assert their presence in as many IDP camps and villages as possible.

A more recent development in AMIS has been the increased deployment of unarmed Civilian Police in Darfur, who are authorized to monitor and mentor the Sudanese police.

This is the AU’s first Civilian Police mission. Considering the huge gulf of mistrust between the Sudanese police and the local population—women have reported being harassed and raped by Government of Sudan police officers in the past—the AMIS Civilian Police has an enormous task in front of them. Given their small numbers, AMIS plans to concentrate the Civilian Police in 70 locations around Darfur. Civilian Police stations will be set up in 45 camps and 25 villages, co-located with the Sudanese police.

These stations, ideally, will allow Civilian Police to be present around the clock, to provide security through presence, to monitor and accompany Government police on patrols, to build confidence among the displaced and local populations, and to ensure that investigations by Government police are carried out. This is particularly crucial for survivors of rape. While the Government of Sudan has changed the law that requires women to have a police report in order to seek medical treatment for rape, many of the local doctors and health clinics still refuse to treat women without a police report. Refugees International (RI) was even told of a local staff member of an international NGO that reported an incident to the Government police out of fear of the old law.

As of October 2005, only 18 of the 70 stations have been built because of delays on the part of the Norwegian-contracted Unitteam company. While humanitarian agencies understood that the Civilian Police would be providing a constant presence in the camps, they are apparently only doing 12-hour shifts in some places. Humanitarian agencies also expressed concern about the fact that the Civilian Police teams rotate out of the locations every 10 days or so; they hoped that there would be better continuity so that the displaced and NGOs could develop a relationship of trust with particular police personnel. There have been some difficulties as well between Civilian Police and the NGOs regarding the set-up of an effective rape referral system, with both sides accus-
A displaced family who have lived in Abu Shouk camp in North Darfur for two years.

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ing the others of betraying confidentiality of survivors. The Civilian Police does not have a unit exclusively dedicated to investigating and dealing with rape and sexual abuse at the headquarters level, and as mentioned earlier, there are few female Civilian Police.

From interviews with displaced persons and humanitarian agencies, RI learned that there are high hopes regarding what the Civilian Police can do to provide security for the displaced. There hasn’t yet been a broad public awareness campaign to the people of Darfur on the eventual role of the Civilian Police; AMIS officials said they were waiting until everything was set up before embarking on any sensitization work. Displaced persons interviewed by RI do not seem to understand yet that the Civilian Police are there primarily to ensure that the Government of Sudan follows up on investigations and that the Civilian Police cannot actively investigate and make arrests on their own. Others say that the Civilian Police are not engaging with them: “They just drive by and don’t talk to us.” In some locations, Civilian Police are accompanying women as firewood patrol escorts outside the IDP camps, but this has not been happening systematically. At times, there appears to be a lack of communication between the Civilian Police and the displaced; in one case, displaced men resisted having Civilian Police accompany women outside the camps. Elsewhere, there is very little firewood to collect and women have gotten into the habit of buying it.

Expectations need to be realistic as to what Civilian Police can do considering its limited size and resources. Even where it is present in camps around the clock, the teams RI saw consisted of only four or five unarmed officers with one vehicle. The police suffer as well from the same poor communications systems as the rest of AMIS. At the time of the RI mission there was still no communications link between police stations and headquarters. Because the Civilian Police are unarmed (they are protected by either AMIS forces or the Government police) and live on the AMIS bases, their radius of action is dependent on that of AMIS and the Government of Sudan.

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

• AMIS move as quickly as possible to ensure 24-hour presence of Civilian Police in IDP camps, and should consider rotating their teams less often.

• AMIS Civilian Police take on as proactive a role as possible, patrolling frequently, asserting their presence, and encouraging dialogue with the displaced.

• AMIS Civilian Police conduct a wide-ranging public information campaign to educate the people of Darfur as to the role of Civilian Police, and to encourage trust and communication. This should be done not just with the leaders, but with women’s groups and children as well. Humanitarian agencies must be included in such a campaign, particularly as they are the ones with the best relations with displaced persons, and have a crucial role to play in expressing the needs of displaced persons to the Civilian Police.

• Uniteam, the company hired to build the Civilian Police stations, complete building as soon as possible.

• The AU make efforts to recruit more Civilian Police in general, and more female Civilian Police in particular, as Civilian Police are destined to be the link between the displaced and AMIS.

• AMIS should set up a Special Unit to deal specifically with victims of rape, dedicating highly trained Civilian Police officers to be part of this unit.

• Civilian Police work closely with humanitarian agencies providing services to rape survivors to finalize a referral system in order to ensure confidentiality and unity of purpose.
**Enhance Outreach with Humanitarian Agencies and Displaced Persons**

AMIS must improve coordination and information sharing with humanitarian agencies and make greater outreach efforts to displaced persons. For AMIS to be successful, it must gain the trust and respect of the population it is there to serve — the people of Darfur.

A priority for the Refugees International (RI) assessment mission to Darfur was to examine how AMIS is perceived by the local population and to what extent they understand the role of AMIS. RI met with displaced persons and villagers, while with AMIS personnel and separately, RI found that there was confusion amongst the local people about the role of the African Union in Darfur, and what AMIS can actually do.

AMIS has not conducted any large-scale coordinated information campaign about their mission. On several occasions, when RI asked AMIS if they had a brochure describing their mission, officers handed RI a printed copy in English and Arabic of the “Declarations of Principles” signed this past July with photos of the signatories. RI saw no posters and no other printed documentation. A once a week radio show in Arabic was being started in North Darfur, but it is unclear if radio is the best way to reach this population. Adding to the lack of information and contact, it appeared that AMIS officers tended to concentrate their discussions and relationship-building with those in power — that is the sheikhs of the villages and camps — as opposed to reaching out farther to the broader community.

Displaced persons told RI that they couldn’t tell the difference between AMIS and the rest of the humanitarian community: “They all have the same white vehicles.” At other times displaced persons said they couldn’t tell the difference between an AU soldier and any other soldier in uniform. One woman did say, “I know who the AU soldiers are because they are the soldiers that don’t shoot at us.” In this context, Ambassador Kingibe’s recent assertions that Government troops were operating in white vehicles that mimicked those of AMIS become even more worrisome. Most of the displaced told RI that AMIS was there to protect them, but as AMIS increasingly has come under attack, civilians risking losing faith in AMIS capabilities. As for their understanding of the Civilian Police role, the displaced believed that AMIS Civilian Police would be able to actively police and investigate crimes taking place in the camps.

In both North Darfur and West Darfur, the working relationship between the humanitarian community and AMIS seems to be improving, although there doesn’t appear to be Darfur-wide agreement on a system of coordination. AMIS forces are divided into eight sectors, the boundaries of which do not correspond with the political boundaries of North, South, and West Darfur. At times this has been problematic for coordination with humanitarian agencies which are organized along the Darfur state lines. (The Civilian Police, on the other hand, have decided to align their sectors with the political boundaries.)

The humanitarian community also wishes to keep a certain amount of space between itself and AMIS; for example in North Darfur, at the request of several members, AMIS is not invited to the Protection Working Group but is instead briefed on the outcomes after the meeting. In West Darfur, the AMIS Civilian Police have been asked to be part of the Returns Working Group, but only at every other meeting. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has taken the lead in coordinating communications with AMIS, but each UN agency and NGO has also developed individual relationships with AMIS. AMIS representatives have agreed that they rely heavily on NGOs for information, and see the important role that NGOs and the UN play in bringing not just assistance to those affected by the conflict, but also security.

One woman did say, “I know who the AU soldiers are because they are the soldiers that don’t shoot at us.”
The humanitarian community in general is hesitant to be too closely associated with AMIS, which is a military force, in keeping with the principle of impartiality. For example, one NGO told RI that they were afraid that if they were escorted by AMIS, and AMIS got into a battle with an armed group, their NGO would be associated with this attack. This has become especially true with the growing attacks on the AMIS patrols. However, as humanitarian convoys also increasingly become a target of attacks, with staff being beaten and taken hostage and goods stolen, some NGOs and UN agencies have asked AMIS to provide them with security. RI took part in an AMIS convoy escorting NGOs from El Fasher in North Darfur to Nyala in South Darfur. RI spoke with an international staff member of one of the NGOs being escorted that day. He said that normally his organization did not want to use AMIS escorts, but the national staff had refused to travel without AMIS protection.

Others continue to decline envoy escorts, in order to maintain the separation between humanitarian assistance and military presence and force. Some NGOs have suggested that AMIS could do road sweeping patrols, whereby the AMIS force would drive about 500 meters ahead of the NGO convoys.

AMIS has argued that this type of system doesn’t allow them to be fully responsible for the NGOs under their protection. There is also a difference of opinion between AMIS and members of the humanitarian community as to whether AMIS protection forces should be allowed in the camps. One NGO staff member told RI that while they had a good relationship with the AMIS team near a camp at which they were working, they repeatedly had to ask them not to come into the camp with their armed troops, as the armed men scared the camp residents.

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

- AMIS urgently launch a public information campaign which would include confidence-building activities with displaced persons and civilians living in the villages. A simple brochure in Arabic (and English for the international community) explaining the mandate of AMIS and explaining ways the local population can get in touch with AMIS would be an important first step. As RI has seen in other peacekeeping missions, when the local population has expectations out of step with the reality on the ground, they can become frustrated and turn on the mission soldiers.
AMIS and the humanitarian community organize more open channels of communication regarding the security situation, overall plans, and concerns. As much as possible, the humanitarian agencies should harmonize and institutionalize their relations with AMIS across sectors; currently, coordination is ad hoc, and dependent upon personalities.

AMIS recruit more female Military Observers, Civilian Police and interpreters in order to communicate with a broader segment of the Darfur population.

Plan for Short-term Contingencies and Long-Term Transition to UN Mission

AMIS needs to plan better for short-term contingencies, and the AU needs to work with the UN and the rest of the international community on the best way to transition the mission in Darfur from AMIS to the UN in the longer-term.

When Refugees International (RI) first arrived in Khartoum in the beginning of September 2005, officials there from donor countries and some UN agencies appeared optimistic about the trajectory for Darfur. From this perspective, AMIS’ future role appeared to be limited, as peace, through the Abuja negotiations, seemed to be imminent. Discussions with people in Darfur, and recent events, tell a much different story.

First, there are serious questions as to whether a negotiated settlement in Abuja will actually translate into peace in Darfur. New splinter groups are demanding a seat at the negotiating table, and it appears that some armed groups are acting independently from any higher authority within their faction. There is also increasing concern about the viability of the peace talks and the independence of the AU given the fact that the AU presidency will be held by the Government of Sudan as of January 2006. The JEM and SLA have threatened to pull out of the Abuja negotiations if this takes place. The displacement caused by the conflict has also raised its own sets of issues, as traditional migration routes have been disturbed, and some abandoned villages have been taken over by nomadic groups.

Second, predictions made by humanitarian agencies and donors in Khartoum of major permanent returns by the first quarter of 2006, before the next planting season, are unrealistic. The overwhelming consensus of people on the ground in Darfur is that permanent internally displaced and refugee returns in significant numbers is unlikely for the next 10 to 12 months. A source at the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) said she couldn’t imagine returns happening before 2007 at the earliest. While RI was in Darfur the team saw continued displacement by people fleeing attacks and threats to IDP camps. Sudanese government efforts to induce returns of internally displaced persons and refugees to their home villages have also created distrust among the displaced of overt efforts to promote returns.

Third, with the growing number of attacks on AMIS over the past few months, it appears that AMIS is being tested by the armed factions to see if it is a force to be ignored or respected. As AMIS is tested and found ineffective due to resource, training and mandate constraints, their deterrence factor will decline and they will more often become targets, as will civilians under their protection. A major, easy target will be the AMIS bases themselves as these are administrative compounds with virtually no security systems. Unless this situation is remedied, the violence will thus likely grow in Darfur with more and more civilian and AMIS casualties.

Finally, as the call and need for AMIS to become larger and more forceful grows—particularly in the areas of disarmament—so will the outside pressure for UNMIS to assume control of the operation in Darfur. AMIS will continue to face serious challenges regarding their ability to execute command.
and control over such a large force, and will also eventually run into capacity problems as troops need to get rotated in and out. As one international official noted, “The AU can be the arms and legs of the mission, but it’s not able to be the head.”

Initially, AMIS deployed to Darfur with minimal planning and preparation. Because this was the very first AU mission of this size and scope, the AMIS officers have had little experience with drafting plans on such a scale. Since then, NATO, the EU and the U.S. have engaged in extensive training and support to the AU staff on planning current and future operations. Nevertheless, the African Union is doing very little planning or preparing for any number of very realistic complex long-term contingencies. The list of short and mid-term challenges AMIS will likely confront and for which they have not begun preparing includes:

- Escalation of violence directed against AMIS forces, something that seems already to have begun, but to which AMIS has seemed at a loss to respond adequately.
- Identification of the resources to rapidly expand to Phase III levels of 12,500 personnel.
- Expansion of AMIS’ mandate to include bearing robust force to protect civilians and itself.
- Eventual returns of internally displaced persons and refugees within a one-to-two year time-frame. This is not to suggest conditions are currently amenable at all to returns. Nevertheless, it is an eventuality for which AMIS needs to begin planning and preparation.

It would be unfair to blame the African Union exclusively for planning shortcomings. It is very likely that the United Nations will be either supporting or taking over the mission in Darfur at some point in the next year, which RI believes is the necessary next step. Security Council members are currently in discussion about the best way to “transition” AMIS to a UN mission. Previously there had been hope that the resolution of the Abuja talks could serve as a benchmark of AU success, and a natural point for a hand-over. However, with faltering negotiations and increased attacks on the ground, a peace agreement looks less and less likely in the short term. Security Council members, the UN, and other AMIS donor countries are concerned about the repercussions of the perception of a failed AMIS mission on the development of the African Union as a whole.

For a UN “blue-hatting” of AMIS to move forward, several political, logistical, and economic hurdles need to be overcome. Publicly, the AU is not yet considering a hand-over of its mission; it too is worried about appearing to fail, and also must be prudent in the face of the Government of Sudan. There are also power struggles within the AU, particularly between Nigeria and South Africa. South Africa has not yet sent its pledged personnel to AMIS, which has been interpreted by some as a snub to AMIS. Sudan would also have to be persuaded or pressured into accepting a UN mission in Darfur, particularly as its interests are safeguarded by China on the Security Council.

In addition, UNMIS has been having its own problems getting off the ground; when RI was in Sudan, only 20% of UNMIS’ personnel had been identified and deployed. The UNMIS mandate is to be reviewed in March 2006, a logical time to reconsider its role in Darfur. However, given the difficulties UNMIS is currently facing, the UN is unwilling to jeopardize the success of UNMIS in the south by overstretching into Darfur, pushing a likely hand-over to later in the year. Funding will also be an issue. The

Security Council members, the UN, and other AMIS donor countries are concerned about the repercussions of the perception of a failed AMIS mission on the development of the African Union as a whole.
U.S. seems more content to provide in-kind contributions to AMIS (via payment to US-based contractors) rather than in meeting its obligations for general contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.

Refugees International therefore recommends that:

- The African Union immediately mobilize a planning cell, with Western support elements, to begin medium and long-term planning for the crucially important future contingencies listed above. Such a planning cell requires at minimum a handful of officers.

- AMIS and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations collaborate to jointly plan for the above listed contingency operations. Regardless if the troops are wearing blue or green hats, the bulk of a Darfur mission will continue to consist of forces from Nigeria, Rwanda, and other African countries.

- DPKO, in conjunction with AU and Security Council members, continue planning for assumption of responsibilities in Darfur, specifically in regards to a transfer of authority.

- The U.S. plan for an increase in peacekeeping budgets for FY2006 to take into consideration the needs of Darfur.
CONCLUSION

AMIS has come a long way since it was established over a year ago. The AU should be commended for stepping into a breach where Western powers have had little appetite to go. With assistance from the U.S., EU, NATO and others, the AU has managed to pull together a mission that has provided a level of security and deterrence.

The situation in Darfur is deteriorating, with no political resolution in sight. For better or for worse, Darfur civilians have only AMIS to protect them right now; this is a choice that has been made by the entire international community. Therefore, NATO member states and member states of the UN Security Council, particularly the United States, which has identified the crisis in Darfur as genocide, have the responsibility to ensure that AMIS is as strong and capable as it needs to be. This includes providing enough funds for all equipment, logistics, accommodation, deployment, and capacity-building needs. It includes exerting pressure on the AU member countries and the Government of Sudan to strengthen AMIS’ mandate, as well as on the Government to free up equipment that has already been donated and to move towards disarming the Janjaweed. For their part, if AU member countries want the AU to be a major force in peacebuilding on the African continent in the future, they need to commit to AMIS by contributing more troops.

Nevertheless, all of these measures are relatively short-term ones. AMIS has been able to deploy troops when no one else has been interested. This has undoubtedly assisted in the stabilization of Darfur. In the long-term, Darfur requires a wider integrated peacekeeping mission, under the auspices of the United Nations; as has been the case in the past, this can be best achieved by building on the base that AMIS, and its Western partners, have already established.
NOTES

1 US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, October 12, 2005.

2 White House Press Conference, "President and South African President Mbeki Discuss Bilateral Relations," June 1, 2005.


5 Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Hearing on International Response to the Darfur Crisis, September 28, 2005.


7 African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), Briefing Note on the Renewal of the Mandate of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), October 21, 2005.


9 AMIS, October 1, 2005.

"AMIS, October 1, 2005."