

**For Immediate Release**

## **UN: Security Council Should End Sudan's Obstruction**

*Act to Enhance Protection for Civilians in Darfur*

(Montreal, December 19, 2007) – The new hybrid peacekeeping force for Darfur is being set up to fail, a group of 35 international and 15 Canadian nongovernmental organizations warned in a report released today. Sudanese obstruction and the lack of critical support from participating states means that the UN/AU Hybrid Mission for Darfur (UNAMID) will be barely one-third of its promised size on December 31, when it officially assumes authority. Most of that force will consist of the existing beleaguered AU mission.

The 13-page report, “UNAMID Deployment on the Brink: The Road to Security in Darfur Blocked by Government Obstructions,” sets out five ways in which the government of Sudan is actively obstructing deployment of the force. Khartoum has delayed allocation of land and resources for bases, and refused to formally agree to the list of proposed troop contributions. It has instead rejected “non-African” troops from Nepal, Thailand and Scandinavia – critical units for which there are currently no alternatives. Sudan is also attempting to hamstring the force once it is deployed by inserting completely unacceptable conditions into the “status of forces agreement,” including the right to suspend UNAMID’s communications network in the case of government “security operations.” It is also refusing to provide authorization for night flights.

“Sudan is saying ‘yes’ and then doing everything in its power to obstruct and undermine the hybrid force,” said Steve Crawshaw, UN advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. “The Security Council has responded to this defiance with hand-wringing but nothing more. What will it take to make the Security Council act on Darfur?”

The 50 organizations called for the UN Security Council, whose members have been briefed repeatedly on these issues, to take action now. The council should set out exactly what the Sudanese government needs to do to facilitate the force, and if it fails to comply within 30 days, it should impose targeted sanctions on Sudanese officials, including President Omar El-Bashir.

The groups also called on UN member states to provide urgently needed helicopters and transport units for the hybrid force, which the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations has sought in vain for some five months.

“Sudan’s efforts to obstruct the UNAMID deployment should not be tolerated,” said Tara Tavender of Save Darfur Canada, a national advocacy coalition. “Of course, the

international community is unreasonably stalling on committing the few but essential helicopters UNAMID desperately needs, and that is unacceptable too. Even countries like Canada who do not have the helicopters themselves should be actively soliciting commitments from potential donor states – and we’re not. This is a matter of utmost urgency. The lives of many Darfuris depend on increased commitments from the international community.”

In the five months that the Sudanese government has pursued its calculated campaign of obstruction against the hybrid force and the international community ignored calls for critical support, rapes, killings and massive displacement of civilians continued in Darfur. Humanitarian operations are under threat, with five humanitarian workers shot and wounded since July, and at least 34 others temporarily abducted or physically or sexually assaulted.

“Until the Security Council is prepared to exert real pressure, Sudan will continue to manipulate the situation to ensure there is no effective force on the ground in Darfur,” said Moataz El Fegiery, programs director at the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. “As long as Khartoum is free to do what it wants, the people of Darfur will continue to suffer.”

**To view the Human Rights Watch and NGO coalition report “UNAMID Deployment on the Brink: The Road to Security in Darfur Blocked by Government Obstructions,” please visit:**

<http://sdcanada.org/index.html>

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