



## OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

Ref.: TIGO IOR 63/2006.049

AI Index: IOR 63/007/2006 (Public)

15 September 2006

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you in advance of the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting on 18 September in New York, when you are expected to take important decisions on the future of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), which will have a crucial impact on the people of Darfur.

I strongly urge you to ensure that the AU Peace and Security Council reiterates its commitment to the protection of human rights in Darfur by maintaining and strengthening AMIS forces in the region until the UN peacekeeping force is deployed.

As you know, the situation for civilians, especially for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Darfur is dire. In West Darfur almost the whole area is controlled by Janjawid and the civilians cannot leave IDP camps without risking their lives. Amnesty International, on a recent mission to Chad, spoke to scores of refugees from Darfur who described killings, rapes and other forms of torture committed by Janjawid forces outside the IDP camps. In North and South Darfur the population has been vulnerable to attacks and displacement after attack by Janjawid and armed groups. Since August the situation has worsened. The Sudanese Armed Forces are undertaking military operations in areas of North Darfur controlled by the National Redemption Front. There have been frequent reports of bombing of civilian areas, including in Hassan village near Kulkul, in Kulkul itself and in Umm Sider. The population is fleeing these attacks.

Amnesty International has consistently called for the effective protection of civilians in Darfur. The organization has campaigned strongly to enhance the mandate and increase the means of AMIS. In addition, in light of the difficulties facing AMIS in ensuring effective protection of civilians, we supported the African Union Peace and Security Council's decision on the transition to a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the continued rejection by the government of Sudan of the establishment of a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur established by the UN Security Council in its resolution 1706 (2006). The African Union Peace and Security Council has a crucial

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

Tel: Int. Code: 44 (20) 7413 5500. UK Code: 020 7413 5500. Fax: Int. Code: 44 (20) 7956 1157. UK Code: 020 7056 1157

E-Mail: [amnestyis@amnesty.org](mailto:amnestyis@amnesty.org)

Web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

role to play in persuading the Sudanese government to consent to the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Darfur under UNMIS, which already has 10,000 peacekeepers in the South Sudan and marginal areas of North Sudan.

I urge you again to continue the AU's commitment to provide security for the people of Darfur by maintaining and strengthening AMIS. A peacekeeping gap in Darfur would have catastrophic consequences for civilians and must not be allowed to happen.

Yours sincerely,

Irene Khan  
Secretary General