

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Briefing on UNAMID to the United Nations Security Council

By

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Mr. President

1. I am honoured to once again have this opportunity to update this august body on the situation in Darfur and issues surrounding UNAMID's mandate implementation. It is particularly important that we review progress made so far following phase I of the reconfiguration, and, also especially in light of the forthcoming strategic review of the Mission in April of this year.

Mr. President

2. The Secretary General's report on UNAMID (S/2018/154) covers the period 16 December 2017 to 15 February 2018 during which UNAMID started Phase two of its reconfiguration.

3. Under Phase II, the Jebel Marra Task Force is being operationalized. To this end, the Mission has, since January 2018, embarked on the redeployment of Military and Police personnel as well as civilian staff to strengthen the Jebel Marra Task Force's operations. In addition, the construction of the Golo Temporary Operating Base is underway. However, we continue to face challenges in accessing Golo through Kabkabiya and one of our engineering contingents is providing assistance in improving the condition of the road. The Mission Force is currently organized in two sectors, namely the Jebel Marra Task Force with headquarters in Zalingie, and the State Stabilization Assistance Force to cover areas outside the Jebel Marra Task Force's area of operation.

4. Further, the Phase II reconfiguration also entails a further reduction in the number of Military personnel from 11,395 to 8,735, Police from 2,888 to 2,500, and civilian staff from 2,918 to 2,760 which represents an additional 158 retrenchments in the number of civilian staff. The deployment of formed police

units to team sites from which the Military has withdrawn, or rotated, started at the beginning of this month and we expect that the formed police units will be fully operational in the Saraf Umra, Korma, El Sireaf and Masteri team sites by 30 March.

Mr. President,

5. It is too early to make a realistic assessment of the impact on the overall security and protection of civilian situation in areas from which UNAMID withdrew under Phase I of the Mission's reconfiguration plan. There are some administrative restrictions regarding access imposed by the Government, nevertheless, the Mission continues to engage with the Government to overcome these challenges and to do everything within its mandate to access and monitor the situation in those areas. We are in the process of finalizing an assessment on the impact caused by the closure of the various team sites to enable us to determine the potential and actual impact of our disengagement in those areas.

6. In some areas of Darfur, intra and inter-communal clashes persist albeit at a relatively reduced scale. We have also experienced instability in some traditionally restive IDP camps such as Kalma, Hassa Hissa and Hamadiya. These clashes are mainly fueled by traditional and longstanding unresolved socio-economic and political issues that have been the root causes of Darfur's conflict landscape over the years. UNAMID has been intervening in a constructive way within the framework of the Mission's Protection of Civilians' Strategy.

Mr. President,

[Mediation]

7. The stalemate in the Darfur peace process persists despite our numerous efforts, in support of President Mbeki, to persuade the parties to the conflict to

sign cessation of hostilities agreements and commence direct negotiations. The framework for the negotiations continues to be the main issue of contention. I maintain contact with the Darfur armed movements and the most recent meeting was on 1 March 2018, in Addis Ababa. We continue to urge them to accede to negotiations on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. I therefore call upon your respective countries to use your bilateral channels, to exhort the parties to the Darfur conflict to sign cessation of hostilities agreements and resume negotiations, including to use leverage with Abdul Wahid, to prevail upon him to acknowledge the futility of war and to join the peace process. That would be the only way the people of Darfur, and indeed the international community, could have any realistic hope for the achievement of durable peace in Darfur.

Mr. President,

[The general situation]

8. The situation in Darfur is not the same as it was in 2003. Except for the sporadic clashes between Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid in the Jebel Marra area, there is general absence of war in Darfur. I believe that the adjustment of UNAMID's mandate and posture over the years, from Security Council Resolution 2363, was a clear recognition of this evolving reality. Then, the fundamental question is: what do we do with these conditions of relative peace and stability in Darfur? Over the past several months I have visited various parts of Darfur to get firsthand information on what the people of Darfur say and want. In a nutshell, they say there is relative peace and stability; they commend UNAMID for contributing to this state of affairs; and they acknowledge the positive impact of the civilian weapons collection exercise initiated by the Government. There have, nevertheless, been some complaints from members of the IDP communities relating to their perceived lack of fairness of the civilian weapons collection exercise. The foregoing notwithstanding, the IDPs do want to return to their areas of origin, but under conducive conditions,

and most importantly, they want resources for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

[IDPs]

9. Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2363, in collaboration with the UN Country Team, the Mission continues to give priority to activities geared toward supporting the stabilization of the situation through economic, social and political initiatives and assistance designed to consolidate the prevailing relative peace and stability. Consultations with stakeholders are being undertaken on the conceptual framework and policy for implementing the stabilization mandate in Darfur. Despite the relative stability, concerns persist, nonetheless that due to insecurity and land occupation issues, many IDPs are not able to return to their areas of origin. In this context, we have been engaging with stakeholders, including the Government of Sudan, in search of durable solutions to the IDPs' problems.

Mr. President,

10. A significant amount of resources is, without question, required for post-conflict reconstruction and development of Darfur. I therefore appeal to all of you to play your part, either through bi-lateral commitments of resources by your respective countries, or through much needed advocacy for early recovery and development in Darfur. As the Mission engages in a stabilization phase, we are duty bound to do it in a manner that consolidates, not compromises, the gains that our presence has achieved over the years. Such actions should include the injection of resources by the international community in order to assist with socio-economic development, and the establishment as well as consolidation of state authority throughout Darfur. In the same vein, I would urge this esteemed

Council to ensure that adequate resources are mobilized and that they are commensurate with the pace of UNAMID's drawdown of its personnel to drive continued stability.

12. In conclusion, Mr. President, on behalf of UNAMID, let me express our gratitude to this esteemed Council for the important support and, especially as we embark on this critical stage of UNAMID's engagement in Darfur, we will need it more than ever before.

I thank you, Mr. President.