

REPORT OF THE CEASEFIRE COMMISSION ON THE SITUATION IN DARFUR CONFLICT AT THE JOINT COMMISSION EMERGENCY MEETING IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the last meeting on the 25 November 2004, Darfur region has continued to witness occasional ceasefire violation by the parties and state of insecurity by the Armed militia. The main cause of these violations centered on issues associated with looting of livestock, creation of road blocks, movement and build up of troops and the resolve of all the parties including the Armed militias to adopt a retaliatory posture to any action taken by the other. These developments have left the region with serious insecurity implications in the last two weeks.

2. All efforts made by the CFC to mediate and resolve these problems yielded minimal results as some of those concerned were unprepared to listen to the CFC either because they had decided to resolve the problem through military action or that they had prepared themselves for a tit for tat response.

SECURITY SITUATION

3. The security situation in the region remained uneasy calm. Occasional fighting, abductions, looting, ambushing,

blocking of roads and military build up has created a serious security situation in the last two weeks. Some members of the International Community have started leaving the region because of the speed and intensity of build up of forces by the Government and the reciprocal build up by SLA and JEM in Labado and Mahajiriya, which are seen by many as the main battle ground.

4. The SLA attack on Save the Children (UK) has frightened other NGOs to the extent that they have decided to suspend all aid to the needy. All attempts to persuade some SLA Commanders through their Representative in the Ceasefire Commission to stop all activities that are capable of causing insecurity in Darfur have so far failed. Some of the combatants have continued with their habit of snatching vehicles.

5. The quantity of arms and ammunition brought into Darfur to meet the present build up of troops in the region is astronomical that the issue is no longer whether there will be fighting or not but when will the fighting start.

EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS

29 NOVEMBER 2004

6. The Armed militia supported by the GOS attacked Adwah on 29 November 2004. The GOS air assets were

employed during the attack. Investigation revealed that Adwah was attacked by approximately 500 Armed militia to recover alleged stolen camels/livestock. Two corpses were found and 23 wounded civilians were evacuated to Nyala by MILOBs. No camels were found in the village but looted items including trucks were recovered from the village. In the process of moving into Adwah for investigation, Lt Col Tchtacho, a Chadian MILOB was shot on the right shoulder from the village. The officer sustained minor injuries. The Commander of the GOS military command located 2km from the village denied any involvement but claimed to be test firing their newly acquired 12.7mm machine gun. The Vice Chairman and CFC members visited Duma and Adwah on 4 December 2004 while the Force Commander and members of CFC visited same area on 7 December 2004 all in an effort to reduce tension in the area.

7. The SLA on 29 November 2004 reported to the CFC the arrest of one Armed militia who was part of a group terrorizing civilians in the area of Thabit. SLA handed over the man to CFC at Thabit for further investigation. The alleged Armed militia was handed over to the Attorney General in El-Fashir on 01 December 2004 for further investigation and trial.

02 DECEMBER 2004

8. On 2 December 2004 Sector 4 in Kabkabiyah informed HQ CFC of an impending attack on Kabkabiyah market and CFC Camp should the Sector intervene on the planned attack on the market. The Sector did not however take any chances as it immediately fortified the camp in readiness for any such attempt. Some NGO's moved into CFC Camp for protection while members of CFC led by the Vice Chairman visited the Western Area Commander during which he was informed of the development in Kabkabiyah. The team flew to Kabkabiyah where it met with leaders of the Armed militia and discussed security issues in the town. The Arab leaders were duly informed of the readiness of AMIS to protect the civilians if attacked and also the resolve of AMIS to defend itself if attacked. The Arab leaders and CFC members were however able to resolve the security issues amicably. Kabkabiyah is the only Sector with full complement of its Protection Force in the Mission. On 11 December 2004, about 500 women marched to Sector 4 Headquarters in Kabkabiyah to demonstrate their support for AMIS for the continuous peace being enjoyed in Kabkabiyah. This is the second time they have demonstrated their support for the AU.

5 DECEMBER 2004

9. On 5 December 2004, 5 local staff of Save the Children (UK) were attacked on Kas-Nyala road. Investigation revealed that some Armed militias were responsible for the attack. Two women were allegedly raped by the attackers. One out of the injured men was rescued and moved to Nyala by MILOBs.

10. Also on 5 December 2004, the GoS began massive build up of forces and logistics in Darfur. At 0820hrs on 5 December 2004, 2 x Cargo aircrafts, offloaded boxes of ammo in Nyala airport while build up of forces in South Nyala continued. The GoS troops in the area of Adwah eventually withdrew to Nyala on this date in 7 trucks and 8 military land cruisers.

7 DECEMBER 2004

11. On the midnight of 7/8 December 2004, a convoy of GoS troops in over 40 vehicles departed El-Fashir for Nyala as part of the build up of forces in Southern Darfur. The GoS Representative in the Ceasefire Commission was confronted on this development but he could not provide answers. At about 0100hrs on 8 December 2004, Commander Western Area Command sent a letter to my residence, informing me of a military operation to clear the roads blocked by the SLA which was to begin that morning. This was difficult for me to

understand because the information was the same day the operation began. I quickly contacted General Al-Dabi the Deputy Representative of the President on Darfur and he looked surprised and explained he was unaware of any such operation. He made frantic effort to reach Khartoum and when he eventually did, he was promised an action would be taken to stop the operation. However, Khartoum did not reverse or rescind the directive probably due to the pressure from the various civilian administration in Darfur who have continuously complained of increase in the price of commodities as a result of insecurity on the roads.

08 DECEMBER 2004

12. As a follow up to the build up of forces and the letter sent by the Western Area Command, GoS attacked Marlla on 8 December 2004 while over 1000 troops were concentrated at Sani Afendo. SLA forces tactically withdrew from Marlla having assessed its capacity to face the formidable force before it. The GoS attacked Marlla, probably not knowing that SLA had withdrawn. In the attack, air assets were used. The attack left 6 dead and 15 wounded. On the 9 December 2004, GoS troops at Sani Afendo were moved out leaving only a company commanded by a captain.

10 DECEMBER 2004

13. On 10 December 2004, a police convoy consisting of 80 policemen was reported to have been attacked at Umm check point. Preliminary investigation confirms the attack was by the SLA. During the attack, 3 policemen were killed and others wounded. Two of their vehicles were taken by the attackers. The painful aspect of this attack was that it occurred the same day an agreement was reached between the AU Special Representative and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to call off GoS military action. This particular attack on the police forced the Western Area Commander to proceed with the military action on Ishma.

11 DECEMBER 2004

14. On 11 December 2004, GoS attacked the village of Ishma and built a defensive position in the village. MILOBs from Sector 2 visited the troops in the village and had discussion with the Commander, Brig Gen Ahmed Alhaj Mohammed, who clearly stated that his task was to clear Nyala-Khartoum road and that he would pursue that task unless otherwise ordered by the same authority that gave him the order. While developing his defensive position in Ishma, the Janjaweed/Armed militias moved ahead of the force in the morning of 12 December 2004 and began looting and burning of villages including Hashaba,

Um Zaifa and concentrating their loots at Konkono village in the presence of some GoS soldiers. Members of the Ceasefire Commission led by myself visited Ishma on 12 December 2004 and had discussion with the GoS Commander. We requested him to drive few kilometers ahead of his location to see what is happening in the villages. A total of 8 villages were completely looted and burnt down all in an attempt to clear the roads.

12 DECEMBER 2004

15. On the evening of 12 December 2004, Sector 2 received a report that vehicles of Save the Children (UK) were ambushed in an area North of Nyala-El-Fashir road. An investigation and rescue team was immediately dispatched to carry out investigation at Jurof area. The report indicated that 2 people were killed, one other injured and 3 members missing. The wounded was airlifted to Nyala. SLA was involved in the attack as 2 Land Rovers belonging to Save the Children (UK) were recovered from SLA camp in Jurof. The SLA leadership would do a great favour to the ongoing peace process by investigating the activities of its Commander previously in Adwah but now in Jurof. His negative influence on his men is neither in the interest of the SLA as a movement nor in the interest of the peace process. His Command is involved in many vehicle snatching.

13 DECEMBER 2004

16. On 13 December 2004, Commander Western Area Command sent a letter to the CFC restating the resolve of Government to open and secure roads between the different cities as well as providing security to the citizens in their cities and villages. He also emphasized that the aim of the exercise was to achieve security and stability of Darfur. He further requested the CFC to notify the SLA to vacate within four days the 41 camps occupied by the movement after the Agreement of 8 April 2004. The CFC replied the letter and I have been told that members of the Joint Commission are privy to this reply.

14-16 DECEMBER 2004

17. The Commander of the Road Clearing Operation which halted his troops and took up a defensive position in Ishma on 11 December 2004 continued to remain in that position up to 14 December 2004. Military activities on the ground on 15 December indicated that the force was poised for a withdrawal operation, but on 16 December it was confirmed that the Brigade size force instead resumed its advance and is now deployed 8km West of Labado. An estimated 200 militia is deployed alongside the force. From a military point of view, this indicates an offensive, which if launched would be prejudicial to the peace process.

GENERAL COMMENT

17. The general situation in Darfur is not pleasing due to insecurity caused by the unilateral decision of the Government to open up the roads which obviously is affecting the innocent civilians. I will be quick to add that the activities of the SLA combatants which caused serious insecurity on the roads were provocative and necessitated GoS present reaction. The GoS must see itself as a Government and should play that role in the ongoing peace process irrespective of the degree of provocation by combatants of other parties. It has to exercise great restraint and avoid unilateral military actions that could ground the entire peace process. Military solution should be avoided by all parties.

RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF WAR (POW)

18. On 25 November 2004, it was agreed at the Joint Commission Meeting that exchange of POW between the parties should be completed within 2 weeks. The list of POW have been compiled and forwarded to the International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent (ICRC) for further action. The ICRC Coordinator in El-Fashir had a discussion with Representatives of the parties in CFC explaining to them the modalities for the ICRC to get involved in the exchange of POW. We were informed that a team was in Abuja to brief the parties.

STATUS OF DEPLOYMENT

19. As at date, the mission has a total of 834 personnel comprising 214 MILOBs, 594 Protection Force members, 11 Ceasefire Commission Members, 9 International Support Staff and 6 Civilian Policemen. The break down is as follows:

a. MILOBs

(1)	Algeria	-	03
(2)	Congo	-	10
(3)	Senegal	-	07
(4)	Nigeria	-	10
(5)	Mozambique	-	05
(6)	Egypt	-	33
(7)	Gambia	-	20
(8)	Ghana	-	24
(9)	South Africa	-	10
(10)	Namibia	-	03
(11)	Gabon	-	10
(12)	Kenya	-	05
(13)	Zambia	-	01
(14)	EU	-	10
(15)	USA	-	07
(16)	Chad	-	18
(17)	GOS	-	12

(18)	SLA	-	12
(19)	JEM	-	12
b.	<u>Civ Pol</u>	-	06
c.	International Staff/CFC Members	-	20
d.	<u>Protection Force</u>		
(1)	Nigeria	-	202
(2)	Rwanda	-	392

20. The situation at the sectors is as follows:

- a. HQ AMIS - 62 MILOBs - 52 Protectors.
- b. Sector 1 - 28 “ - 158 “
- c. Sector 2 - 27 “ - 38 “
- d. Sector 3 - 27 “ - 102 “
- e. Sector 4 - 25 “ - 196 “
- f. Sector 5 - 24 “ - 42 Protectors
- g. MILOBs Group Site Abeche - 18 MILOBs

Sector 7-Zalinge will be operational next on the arrival of the Gambian Contingent on the 21 December 2004.

CONCLUSION

21. The situation on the ground is not only pathetic for the poor and innocent villagers who have been forced into IDP Camps and at the same time made homeless with the

burning of their villages by the Armed militias. This situation which came at the time when effort is on to peacefully resolve the conflict, is not a healthy sign. One thing that must be said today is that the situation in Darfur has become more dangerous with the build up of forces in the last two weeks. The tendency is that these soldiers would likely not be ready to accept the slightest provocation by the movement. The present situation in Darfur is therefore that of a timed bomb that could explode any moment. Emphasis should be on the implementation of the signed protocols and not military action. Government should exercise maximum restraint and call off its military actions while SLA leadership should direct its Commanders to stop creating insecurity on the roads.

RECOMMENDATION

22. It is recommended that:

- a. The GoS should be persuaded to withdraw the additional troops in Darfur to reduce tension.
- b. The SLA leadership should direct their Field commanders to immediately stop seizure of vehicles, blocking of roads, stealing of livestock and attacks on GoS infrastructure including police stations to give peace a chance.

- c. All parties should stop all attacks in the interest of peace.
- d. Each party to nominate a senior official who will be the focal point for the implementation of Humanitarian and Security protocols.
- e. The Movements should submit their locations to CFC as agreed at the last meeting.

FO OKONKWO

Major General

Force Commander

December 2004

El-Fashir, Sudan