



EMPTY PROMISES ON DARFUR

SOUTH AFRICA FACT SHEET

South Africa has Africa's largest economy. It wields significant influence on the continent.

Throughout 2007, South Africa provided troops and military hardware to the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS). Under AMIS, South Africa had as many as 648 troops and 125 police deployed in Darfur.¹

When the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) took over from AMIS on 1 January 2008, South Africa had 726 UNAMID peacekeepers, including 580 troops, 129 police, and 17 military observers.

PLEDGES BY SOUTH AFRICA

In early November 2007, South Africa's then President Mbeki stated that the South African government was considering whether it could provide helicopters and ground transport equipment or additional troops to UNAMID.² Former President Mbeki then also added that South Africa had to study its own capacities first, in the light of its existing commitments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi.

In October 2007, the Secretary General mentioned in his report to the Security Council on the deployment of UNAMID that South Africa, among other troop contributors, would work to bring its units to United Nations standard strength of 800 troops per battalion.

The UN subsequently asked South Africa to consider contributing 800 troops as well as air and ground transport equipment. On 20 November 2007, South Africa reportedly expressed that it was considering the request and is generally committed to answering UNAMID's needs.³

CURRENT STATUS

According to UN reports, South Africa had deployed 626 troops, 158 police, and 13 military observers to Darfur by the end of December 2008.⁴

Despite a troop rotation in May 2008, the South African battalion is still below the UN standard strength of 800 per infantry battalion.

South Africa has not provided UNAMID with any helicopters or ground transport equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- South Africa has the military capacity to play a larger role in supporting UNAMID and should deploy further troops according to UNAMID's remaining needs.
- South Africa should bring its troop deployment to the United Nations standard strength for infantry battalions.
- South Africa should pledge and provide helicopters and other essential equipment to UNAMID to enable it to fulfil its protection mandate.
- South Africa should use its international influence to ensure that UNAMID is provided with all the necessary air and ground transport equipment, as well as other essential human, material and financial resources that it requires.

¹ Justice Crime Prevention & Security Cluster: Media Briefing : 1st Cycle Of 2007: Pretoria, South African Police Service, 10 May, 2007, http://www.saps.gov.za/_dynamicModules/internetSite/newsBuild.asp?myURL=756

Republic of South Africa. Department of Defence. "Department of Defence Annual Report 2006/2007" 17 August 2007, <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=72589>

² South African Department of Foreign Affairs, Remarks by President Thabo Mbeki, 7 November 2007, www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbekibashir1108.htm

³ South African Government Information, Notes following media briefing by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, 20 November 2007, <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2007/07112712151003.htm>

⁴ UN mission's summary detailed by country, Monthly Report 31 December 2008, South Africa, http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2008/dec08_3.pdf