

## Box 2.5 Darfur

The joint UN-AU Hybrid Mission to Darfur (UNAMID) has an authorized strength of 26,000 uniformed personnel, including 19,555 military, 3,772 police, and 19 formed police units of 140 officers. UNAMID was mandated in July 2007 to help provide security for the provision of humanitarian assistance and protect civilian populations under imminent threat of physical violence, as well as to monitor compliance with ceasefire agreements, report on the security situation along the borders with Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR), and assist with the implementation of the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

After a delayed deployment process that began in 2008, UNAMID neared full strength during 2010. Further, the mission also received several force-enabling helicopters from Ethiopia that increased its long-range capabilities. Despite these additional resources, the conflict in Darfur flared dramatically. In the face of ongoing violence and obstruction by both the government's Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the various Darfur rebel groups, UNAMID was able to contribute only marginally to the dire security and humanitarian situations there. The ongoing conflict had major implications for the already-suffering civilian population in Darfur, as violence yielded massive

displacements and persistent obstruction severely hampered humanitarian aid activities in camps for the displaced.

Beyond the conflict between SAF and rebel groups, the trend of attacks, ambushes, kidnappings, carjackings, and violent robberies aimed at UNAMID military and civilian staff, and humanitarian aid workers in Darfur continued throughout 2010. Multiple UNAMID troops were killed in clashes throughout the year, taking the total UNAMID contingents lost in service to over 30 since 2008. This situation persisted throughout the year and was not confined to any one part of the operational area.

The grim security and humanitarian situation face by UNAMID and other actors was perpetuated by the lack of a credible peace agreement between the Darfur rebel groups and the Khartoum government. Despite efforts to convene the AU/UN-and-Qatar-mediated negotiations in Doha, the talks remained seized for the better part of the year, with the largest Darfur rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), abstaining from May until December. Nevertheless, as talks on a potential cease-fire resumed in the final weeks of 2010, clashes were ongoing in Darfur.

Further complicating matters in Darfur during 2010, and throughout Sudan

more generally, was the International Criminal Court's (ICC) indictment for genocide in Darfur of Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir. This followed the ICC's arrest warrant for al-Bashir for alleged war crimes perpetrated in Darfur issued in 2009. The ICC indictment and arrest warrant had a divisive impact, as al-Bashir continued to travel Rome Statute signatories throughout the year despite the calls for arrest by many Western countries. Meanwhile, the government continued to crack down on dissenting political parties, shutting down radio stations in Darfur during the year and severely curtailing civil liberties in the region.

Clearly, 2010 was a difficult year for UNAMID and international partners in Darfur, and 2011 looks to be equally as challenging. The referendum in the South will undoubtedly impact the situation in Darfur and could serve to sharpen the already hostile attitudes of both the rebel groups and Khartoum government. At the close of the year, this situation was cause for serious concern, especially as UNAMID continued to struggle to execute its mandated goals and the future of the mission remained uncertain in the event of heightened intransigence from the Khartoum government.