



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



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SUDAN/DARFUR

The Council will meet by the end of the week to adopt a resolution extending the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The current mandate expires on 24 March.

The draft resolution presented by the US includes:

- a rollover of UNMIS for six months, without any changes to the mandate; and
- a re-endorsement of the Council's decision in February regarding Darfur and a 30-day deadline for Secretariat contingency planning for the transition from the AU force (AMIS) to a UN force.

The inclusion of Darfur in the US draft will take many Council members by surprise. To some extent, it reflects a widely held concern about the need to maintain momentum with the transition and avoid delays. It is also no doubt seen as an important signal to Khartoum.

There is a perceived risk in that, since the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) decided on 10 March to extend the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) until 30 September, this could give space for the transition to be delayed or derailed.

But, at time of writing, it was unclear whether the US will be successful in getting consensus on the inclusion of all of these elements relating to Darfur in the draft. And there will be concerns about the practicality of a very short deadline for preparation of the contingency plan.

Because of the 24 March deadline for expiry of the UNMIS mandate, the room for manoeuvre is limited. One option may be a short technical rollover for further negotiation. Another option may be to limit the references to Darfur to reiteration of what the Council agreed in February.

The issue is all the more complicated because Council members are also negotiating in parallel a Presidential Statement dealing with Darfur. It would welcome the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC)'s 10 March decision and address the transition issues in more detail. The idea behind the separate statement – to be adopted at a later date – had been to avoid the need to negotiate the complex – and probably controversial – details of the transition in the context of the UNMIS rollover resolution.

Some Council members – China, Russia and Qatar – are likely to want some language that recognises the need for Sudan's consent and this is likely to take some time to resolve. Khartoum has

already shifted its position to some extent and now suggests that a transition would be acceptable after a peace agreement is reached in Abuja. Other Council members are likely to want to leave open the possibility of a UN operation proceeding even if a peace agreement is not reached.

The 10 March PSC decision extending AMIS has been positively interpreted by the Secretariat and Council members as an acceptance of the transition, despite the persistence of the expression “in principle”. Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jan Pronk indicated that the signal from the PSC was that the final decision should be made by the Security Council.

Some Council members consider that proposals for an operational NATO role in Darfur are unhelpful and have strengthened Sudan’s opposition. The dynamics inside the AU suggest that, if this were included in the concept for the transition, it would result in a hardening of the Sudanese position. The AU dynamics also suggest increasing frustration with the degree of pressure for the transition, the unresponsiveness of the Council surrounding the AU’s role in the future and the overall uncertainties.

The AMIS’ six-month extension was perceived as an elegant compromise by the AU leadership, in that it steps around the immediate Sudanese objections and in the meantime provides the Secretariat with the time, which in any event it needed, to prepare the transition and to allow some room for negotiations with Khartoum. With the adoption of the UNMIS rollover – also expected until the end of September – both AMIS and UNMIS will be on coincidental timelines for review.

The PSC decision still maintains that the transition should be carried out within the framework of a partnership between the UN and the AU. The decision adds further clarification to the AU expectations in this regard. In particular, it states that the transition should maintain:

- (i) the “African character of the mission”, especially its composition and leadership, as much as possible; and
- (ii) the AU’s leadership in the Darfur peace process, including the Abuja talks and the Darfur-Darfur dialogue.

The African Council members can be expected to seek to include these elements in future Council decisions, perhaps even in the upcoming Presidential Statement.

For a more detailed discussion of those issues, see our January and February 2006 forecasts.

The Council is also expected to adopt a rollover of the mandate of the Panel of Experts and to renew the sanctions regime. Despite some support in the Council for strengthening the arms embargo, no new provisions are expected.