

USUN PRESS RELEASE # 209(08)

July 31 , 2008

http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov/press_releases/20080731_209.html

AS DELIVERED

Office of Press and Public Diplomacy
United States Mission to the United Nations
140 East 45th Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

Explanation of vote by Ambassador Alejandro Wolff, U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative, on the renewal of the UNAMID mandate, in the Security Council chamber, July 31, 2008

Mr. President, the United States welcomes and strongly supports the extension of UNAMID's mandate. Today's decision demonstrates the Security Council's sustained support for the UNAMID peacekeeping operation and for its mission to protect the vulnerable civilians of Darfur. The United States abstained in the vote because language added to the resolution would send the wrong signal to Sudanese President Bashir and undermine efforts to bring him and others to justice.

This Council cannot ignore the terrible crimes that have occurred throughout the conflict in Darfur, and the massive human suffering that the world has witnessed.

The Council addressed this tragic situation when it adopted resolution 1593 in March 2005, and the United States at that time noted the importance that we have attached, and that we continue to attach, to this Council's role in connection with ICC investigations and prosecutions.

As is well-known, the United States abstained on that resolution in light of our concerns about the ICC. But as we said when resolution 1593 was adopted, "We strongly support bringing to justice those responsible for the crimes and atrocities that have occurred in Darfur and ending the climate of impunity there. Violators of international humanitarian law and human rights law must be held accountable." Having said this, I would like to make four points concerning our continued strong support for UNAMID.

First, the United States is increasingly concerned about the situation on the ground and will remain vigilant to the situation in Darfur. We are prepared to take additional measures as necessary to ensure that UNAMID deploys rapidly and completely, and is empowered to fulfill its mandate.

Second, we deeply regret that one year after the adoption of Resolution 1769 that UNAMID has barely begun to complete its vital mission. Deployment now stands at just

over 9,000 troops and police, not even half of authorized levels. UNAMID's slow deployment is seriously interfering with its ability to protect itself and to fulfill its mandate in Darfur. The Security Council has sought to end the suffering of the people of Darfur but we have fallen far short of our responsibility to protect them.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General, the troop contributors, and the donors who are assisting them. But we must do better and we must do more. The lives of UN peacekeepers and of millions of innocent civilians depend on it. We urge all parties to redouble their efforts to ensure UNAMID's prompt and complete and effective deployment.

The United States is cooperating wholeheartedly in this endeavor through our work to train and equip peacekeepers to UNAMID's standards. We will continue to seek new avenues to provide concrete assistance to UNAMID's full and rapid deployment.

We urge the UN to redouble its effort to construct suitable infrastructure for rapid UNAMID expansion as well as its efforts to ship contingent owned equipment to Darfur as quickly as possible. We urge the UN to consider all options at its disposal to improve performance on these key points, whose slow progress continue to hinder UNAMID deployment and operations.

Third, we call on the Government of Sudan to make every effort to facilitate UNAMID's deployment. We demand that the Government of Sudan accept all troop contributions, without reservations and in the order in which UNAMID commanders deem it feasible to deploy them.

We demand that the Government of Sudan comply fully with all UN Security Council Resolutions, with the terms of the Status of Forces Agreement, and with all agreements pertaining to UNAMID.

The Government of Sudan must ensure UNAMID's free and secure movement in fulfillment of its mandate. All attacks on UNAMID personnel are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We must hold the Government of Sudan responsible for the safety and security of UNAMID and its personnel.

Fourth, the United States will continue to keep a constant eye on the peace process, and take all measures necessary to support it. We urge all of the parties to the conflict in Darfur to reach a lasting settlement. UNAMID must fulfill its mission in tandem with a viable peace process, if there is to be an end to the terrible suffering in Darfur.

Thank you Mr. President.