



Federica Mogherini,  
European External Action Service  
1046 Brussels  
Belgium

February 6th 2015, Brussels

Dear HR/VP Federica Mogherini,

We are writing to you with grave concern with regards to an incident of mass rape, committed by the Sudanese Army in Darfur in October-November 2014. The UN and African Union Peace Keeping Force stationed in the region, UNAMID, failed to report on the incident, or take appropriate action. These failures add to a persistent lapse in UNAMID's functioning, which must be addressed, and likewise, the community in must be provided with the necessary UN support. These concerns have been brought to us by civil society actors and constituents who are themselves Sudanese refugees.

On the night between Friday the 31st of October, and the 1st of November 2014, 650 Sudanese soldiers attacked the village of Tabit in Darfur, and systematically raped 200 women and girls, 80 of whom were minors. UNAMID investigators, stationed only 30 miles away, arrived three days later and interviewed witnesses, who in turn confirmed that the events took place. However, after communications with the Sudanese military intelligence, UNAMID reported that it "found no evidence nor received any information regarding the allegations."

UNAMID has a well-established track-record of failures to report on human rights abuses committed by the Sudanese military and its affiliated militias. A UN Review Team found, on October 29th, that UNAMID had "lapses in reporting standards" and "a tendency not to report fully on incidents involving attacks on civilians." This lack of reporting in turn emboldens the Sudanese Army and its militias in their campaign against non-Arab civilians in the region - a campaign of war crimes that has involved systematic rape for more than a decade. You can read more about the events in Tabit in greater detail in the briefing by Waging Peace, which is attached to this letter.

The elimination of violence against women, including the elimination of the use of rape as a weapon of war, is key priority on the international and European agenda. As you know, the European Parliament has recently affirmed its commitment against rape in war by awarding the Sakharov Prize to Dr. Denis Mukwege for his work to treat thousands of rape victims in the Congo.

In a resolution on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan (2014/2922(RSP), adopted in November 2014, the European Parliament expressed strong condemnation of war crimes and sexual violence in the conflict. The Parliament has asserted the need for international involvement to end the conflict in Darfur numerous times in the past, including the responsibility to protect the population there from war crimes and genocide.

We ask you, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to call on the UN Secretary General to take the following action with regard to UNAMID and the events in Tabit:

- a) Require the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations to conduct a full investigation into the actions of UNAMID in Tabit, and in Northern Darfur generally, where it has failed repeatedly to investigate alleged war crimes.
- b) Appoint a panel of external and independent experts to review the performance of UNAMID since it was established in Sudan in January 2008.
- c) Require the UN Department of Peace Keeping to provide immediate, appropriate and adequate protection to the people of Tabit, especially women and girls, in case of retaliation by the Sudanese military and proxies, following widespread reports of the abuses there.
- d) Require the UN Department for Peace Keeping to audit the effectiveness of UNAMID in fulfilling its mandate, given that a further two million people in Darfur have become internally displaced since UNAMID began its mandate in 2008.
- e) Provide immediate humanitarian aid and appropriate medical aid and counselling to the people of Tabit, especially women and girls, following the events of 31st October.

As the European Union seeks to be a "human rights defender", a global leader on women's rights and humanitarian crises, it is only appropriate that you act in your capacity to influence UN action. We ask you to reassure us that you will take the steps outlined above, and we look forward early to your response,

Kind regards,

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