

The Humanitarian Crisis in South Kordofan and Blue Nile

Next Steps for Policy Makers

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For nearly a year and a half, the Sudanese government has denied international humanitarian aid organizations access to civilian populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, particularly civilians trapped in areas under the control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, or SPLM-N. The effects of Khartoum's aid blockade have been devastating. Hundreds of thousands have fled to refugee camps in South Sudan and Ethiopia, while nearly 700,000 remain internally displaced and severely affected by violent conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Of that number, nearly 400,000 are suspected to be in areas under the control of the SPLM-N, effectively cut off from access to international humanitarian assistance.¹

Despite numerous attempts by the international community to negotiate with the government of Sudan a plan to deliver humanitarian aid to the two states, Khartoum remains steadfast in its refusal to grant humanitarian access to SPLM-N-controlled areas.² To help alleviate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese civilians in the two states, the following steps should immediately be taken:

- The A.U. Peace and Security Council and the U.N. Security Council should each demand that the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N cooperate with the U.N., African Union, and League of Arab States—collectively known as the “Tripartite Partners”—in negotiating unfettered international humanitarian access into the two states.³ Both the A.U. Peace and Security Council and the U.N. Security Council should identify measures that they will take against any party undermining or otherwise frustrating the negotiations on a humanitarian access agreement. Negotiated access will yield the most effective aid delivery strategy and should be coupled with a cessation of hostilities agreement signed by both the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N.
- Given the government of Sudan's failure to comply with the terms of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2046, the U.N. Security Council should adopt a resolution, under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter and in accordance with the responsibility to protect

doctrine, or R2P, that enacts measures against those Sudanese government officials responsible for the continued denial of humanitarian aid to South Kordofan and Blue Nile and calls on U.N. member States to take all measures necessary to deliver aid should the government of Sudan continue to ignore its obligations under the Tripartite MOU.⁴ There is precedent for this latter action from the Council's response to the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.⁵

- The A.U., with support from the U.N. and the greater international community, should facilitate the immediate initiation of direct political negotiations between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N based on the June 28, 2011 agreement concerning the conflict in the two states. These negotiations should be designed to yield, in the short term, a cessation of hostilities agreement that may then create suitable conditions on the ground for the widespread delivery of humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced populations. In the long term, these negotiations should produce a ceasefire agreement and a broad and inclusive political process to address the underlying issues of social, political, and economic marginalization fueling conflict within Sudan. Until these issues are addressed holistically, the potential for further violent unrest and suffering in Sudan is great.

Endnotes

- 1 A recent rapid food security and nutrition assessment carried out in South Kordofan indicates that food security situation in that state has dramatically deteriorated, with 81.5 percent of households surviving on one meal a day, compared to only 9.5 percent one year ago and 0 percent two years ago. See "[Rapid Food Security and Nutrition Assessment](http://www.enoughproject.org/starvation-warfare)," Enough Project, available at: <http://www.enoughproject.org/starvation-warfare>.
- 2 Jenn Christian and Nenad Marinkovic, "A Tripartite Proposal to Deliver Aid in Sudan: International Solution or Yet Another Discarded Idea?" Enough Project, available at: <http://enoughproject.org/blogs/tripartite-proposal-deliver-aid-sudaninternationalsolution-or-yet-another-discarded-idea>.
- 3 The MOU provides for the development and implementation of an action plan related to the delivery of humanitarian aid throughout the two states. Jenn Christian, "Have the Tripartite Partners Secured Humanitarian Relief for South Kordofan and Blue Nile?" Enough Project, available at: <http://enoughproject.org/publications/have-tripartite-partners-secured-humanitarian-relief-southkordofan-and-blue-nile>.
- 4 Jenn Christian, "Shifting the Burden: The Responsibility to Protect Doctrine and the Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan," Enough Project, available at: <http://enoughproject.org/publications/shifting-burden-responsibility-protect-doctrine-and-humanitarian-crisis-sudan>.
- 5 Jenn Christian, "Holding Sudan Accountable: A Draft U.N. Security Council Resolution," Enough Project, available at: http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Enough%20Draft%20UNSC%20Resolution_Humanitarian%20Assistance_Sept%202012_FINAL%5B2%5D.pdf.