

# Media Alert

darfur australia network



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## **Peacekeepers welcome but number too few to keep the peace**

The Darfur Australia Network welcomes the announcement of 3,000 UN police and military personnel being sent to Darfur with cautious optimism. This move towards the implementation of a hybrid peacekeeping force is a positive step on the road to peace and stability in Darfur.

However, the size of the UN's peacekeeping force is too small to end the horrors occurring in Darfur. Abdelhadi Matar, President of the Darfur Community Association of Australia and DAN spokesperson reminds us that the horrors of the Darfur conflict have been allowed to continue because of the Sudanese Government's blatant disregard for the human rights of its Darfuri citizens: "The Sudanese government has also gone back on its word to accept UN peacekeepers several times since violence started in 2003"; therefore any optimism must be qualified.

It is clear the African Union troops are overwhelmed by the scale of violence occurring in the region. Tales of murder, mutilation, rape and torture still continue despite their presence.

In an area the size of France, 10,000 (the existing 7,000 AU force and the additional 3,000 UN peacekeepers) is inadequate to ensure the population is protected from violence. DAN spokesperson Stephanie Cousins says; "This is the tip, now we need the iceberg. The international community has a responsibility to protect the people of Darfur. Our obligations are still not fulfilled."

While this UN deployment is a good start, DAN urges the international community to continue in its efforts until the 22,000 strong peacekeeping force, agreed upon by the UN security council, have been deployed. DAN further urges the Australian Government to support the increased peacekeeping force with funds, technical and logistical assistance and troop contributions.

### **Darfur Australia Network (DAN)**

The Darfur Australia Network is an association of refugees from Darfur and concerned Australians. We aim to raise awareness about the suffering and continuing injustice in Darfur and advocate for increased Australian and international pressure to stop the genocide in Darfur.

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