

**Killing UN Peacekeepers: A Ruthless Proclivity of Khartoum's SAF, Militia Proxies**  
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The recent (May 4, 2013) deaths of two UN peacekeepers in Abyei have a chilling familiarity, though to this point there has been no firm establishment of responsibility. Familiar also are the formulaic declarations of outrage coming from various quarters when UN peacekeepers are killed in greater Sudan. There are three large peacekeeping missions there—operating at tremendous expense, and limiting peacekeeping capacity throughout the world. Two of these peacekeeping missions have experienced serious losses because of actions on the part of the Khartoum regime's Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and its militia and paramilitary proxies, typically armed and directed by the SAF and the security apparatus in Khartoum, especially Military intelligence (MI).

The SAF has not been especially discreet in making its contempt for UN peacekeepers known. On August 2, 2011 SAF officers, with brutal callousness, denied medical evacuation to three mortally wounded Ethiopian peacekeepers in Abyei (see below). And in Darfur the threats against the UN/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) have been constant and extremely serious. Reuters reports, for example, on one such instance from January 2011:

"UNAMID spokesman Kemal Saiki confirmed the bombing was by 'the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) air force.' Later on Wednesday [January 26, 2011], a group of 200 Sudanese government soldiers in 40 vehicles arrived at UNAMID's camp in the nearby settlement of Shangil Tobay [North Darfur], UNAMID said. '(The soldiers) surrounded the team site's exit as well as the adjacent makeshift camp, where thousands of civilians recently displaced by the December 2010 clashes have settled,' read the statement. The Sudanese army detained four displaced people at the camp, said UNAMID. 'The SAF commander at the scene ... **then threatened to burn down the makeshift camp and UNAMID team site, if the peacekeepers continued to interfere.**'" (Reuters [Khartoum], January 27, 2011)

By "interference," of course, Khartoum and its SAF meant UNAMID's fulfilling the mandate of its mission, authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 1769 (July 2007).

**What we know**

The present account offers a brief history of those incidents in which Khartoum's responsibility for the killing of UN peacekeepers has been well established.

**[ The three UN peacekeeping missions in greater Sudan are:**

- UNAMID (UN/African Union Mission in Darfur), established in July 2007 by Security Council Resolution 1769; it was formed initially from its virtually impotent predecessor force, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS);
- UNMISS (the UN Mission in South Sudan), successor to the woefully infective UNMIS (UN Mission in Sudan); UNMISS was authorized in July 2011 by [UN Security Council Resolution 1996](#);
- UNISFA (the UN Interim Security Force in Abyei), deployed to Abyei following military seizure of the regime by Khartoum in May 2011; it comprises an Ethiopian armed brigade, and was [authorized in June 2011 by UN Security Council Res. 1990](#) ]

**• Deaths of UNISFA peacekeepers May 4, 2013—Abyei:**

The details of the recent killing of two Ethiopian peacekeepers in Abyei, along with Paramount Chief of the Dinka Ngok, Kuol Deng Kuol, are not fully clear (an **Appendix** provides relevant excerpts from newswire reports and other accounts). But the details as rendered by various parties strongly suggest that some leaders of the Arab Misseriya militia forces, likely at Khartoum's suggestion or encouragement, deliberately provoked an armed confrontation that resulted in the killings. Certainly the killing of

Paramount Chief Kuol creates an immediate political crisis in South Sudan and has the effect of making immensely more difficult any peaceful resolution of the ongoing Abyei crisis. This has been Khartoum's goal since the Abyei self-determination was aborted—a decision announced by senior presidential advisor Nafie Ali Nafie, now headed to the U.S. (see <http://www.sudanreeves.org/?p=3904>).

Khartoum seized Abyei militarily in May 2011; this followed the regime's conspicuous and [well-documented military build-up](#) in the areas abutting Abyei—as well as inside the region—over the preceding months. Although UNISFA deployed subsequently—an Ethiopian armed brigade—it has been unable to secure the region sufficiently for the indigenous Dinka Ngok to return. Virtually the entire population—some 110,000 civilians—had fled to various locations in South Sudan following Khartoum's May 2011 military seizure. That military action created a *de facto* annexation of Abyei, and Khartoum has regularly declared that "Abyei has always been part of the north," thus defying the terms of the Abyei Protocol of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005). Moreover, the June 2011 UN/AU-brokered agreement between Juba and Khartoum on an interim administration of Abyei has provided yet another example of contemptuous renegeing by the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party (NIF/NCP) regime.

The military seizure of Abyei was accomplished using both regular SAF forces and Misseriya militia allies. The latter remain and serve as a highly threatening military presence, deterring the vast majority of Dinka Ngok from returning, certainly to areas north of Abyei town (which is in the south of Abyei and very close to the Warrap state in South Sudan). The Misseriya have been heavily armed and some of its political leaders have been seduced by Khartoum's propaganda or money—or both. What is clear is that some Misseriya leaders do not want a resolution of the Abyei crisis on the terms formally proposed by African Union diplomats, terms fully endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council. There could be no more effective way of short-circuiting further negotiations than killing Kuol Deng Kuol.

Beyond the death of a good man critical to any settlement of the Abyei crisis, there have been many recent instances of killings, village burnings, and lootings in Abyei. In responding to the death of Kuol Deng Kuol, Foreign Affairs minister Nhial Deng declared:

"The killing of [the] chief was not just an incident. It was preceded by reports of regular killings in the area. The list of those who have been killed has been filed and the United Nations has the details and we believe the killing of the chief will not be taken lightly nor [do] we expect the international community to consider [Kuol's death] a normal thing or usual business ... We hold the government of Sudan responsible because those who killed the chief are under the control of the government of Sudan. They are no stranger to Sudan,' he added."

The weakness of the UN in responding to such incidents, implicating the Khartoum regime, has for many years been contemptible. Despite the strong words from Nhial Deng, little is likely to change—and when it suits its purposes, the Khartoum regime will again kill or allow for the deaths of UN peacekeepers.

#### • **Refusal to allow the medevac of critically wounded UNISFA peacekeepers, August 2, 2011—Abyei:**

An incident of August 2, 2011 is revealing of Khartoum's contempt for the lives of UN peacekeepers. On that date the SAF refused to allow for the urgent medical evacuation (medevac) of three mortally wounded UNISFA peacekeepers in Abyei (their vehicle had run over a mine). Despite repeated attempts to secure permission from the SAF in Kadugli (South Kordofan) for helicopter evacuation, the UN was rebuffed on each occasion until it had become too late. One of the mortally wounded soldiers would have likely survived if he had reached Kadugli in timely fashion. Alain Le Roy, then head of UN peacekeeping, [declared bluntly that](#), "We didn't get the clearance for the Medevac helicopter to take off immediately. They [Khartoum's SAF] prevented us to take off by threatening to shoot at the helicopter."

***"They [Khartoum's SAF] prevented us to take off by threatening to shoot at the helicopter."*** This extraordinary refusal should have been the occasion for consequential outrage; it was not, even as there could hardly be a more revealing moment in the recent history of peacekeeping in greater Sudan.

• **Attack on heavily armed UNAMID convoy, October 17, 2012—traveling to Hashaba, North Darfur (scene of major atrocity crimes involving SAF and militia forces):**

The village of Hashaba North and its environs (approximately 55 kilometers northeast of Kutum in North Darfur) was attacked from September 26 through October 2, 2012 by what were repeatedly described—by eyewitnesses—as Arab militia forces and SAF aerial military assets. Very high civilian casualties figures were soon reported by Radio Dabanga ("between 250 and 300 people," October 4, 2012), along with *repeated* descriptions of the attackers on the ground as belonging to "pro-government militias." Many thousands of civilians were newly displaced at the time, and total displacement in North Darfur alone since August is now well over 100,000 civilians.

Even more disturbing and significant, however, was a subsequent attack on the follow-up investigation, an unusually robust UNAMID investigative patrol comprising 16 vehicles in all. On October 17, 2012 a very heavily armed militia group—which had carefully anticipated the route of the UNAMID convoy traveling to North Hashaba from Kutum—fired from high ground down upon the vulnerable UNAMID forces. UNAMID returned fire, but faced very intimidating weaponry and was at an overwhelming tactical disadvantage; with the killing of one UNAMID soldier and the wounding of three others (one critically), the force retreated back to Kutum. The South African soldier killed was the 43rd to die in UNAMID.

The character of the weapons used in the attack on UNAMID forces was reported in revealing and unusually detailed fashion (Agence France-Presse [Khartoum], [October 22, 2012](#)):

"[The attackers] **used arsenals of high-calibre weapons that were never used before,**' UNAMID spokeswoman Aicha Elbasri said in a written reply to AFP questions. 'This includes mortars, medium machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47 rifles, and anti-tank guns.'"

Edmond Mulet, deputy head of UN peacekeeping operations, later declared in an [October 24 briefing](#) of the UN Security Council that the attacking force used "**heavy machine guns,**" a fearsomely destructive weapon when fired with the advantage of significantly higher ground position.

This was no ordinary militia assault: it was immediately clear that the UNAMID convoy was attacked, on the basis of advance intelligence, in order to prevent the investigation of atrocity crimes reported from Hashaba. Indeed, although the UN merely hinted at this reality, I am aware of no analyst not connected with the UN or UNAMID who has disputed this conclusion or offered a plausible alternative explanation. UNAMID declared that it would proceed with a subsequent mission to investigate the crimes at Hashaba; in the event, however, this did not occur within a reasonable time-frame. As on countless previous occasions, after Khartoum's proxies finish sanitizing the site there was little left in the way of evidence from the attacks of late September/early October.

Further, this attack on the UN must be seen in light of the regime's repeated, utterly false claims about human security in Darfur, *viz.* that there is no major fighting in Darfur and that civilians are secure and able to return safely to their homes and lands. In the words of Deputy Governor of North Darfur, al-Fateh Abdel Aziz Abdel Nabi, uttered on the day the UNAMID force was attacked:

"[T]here is very good improvement in the security situation' compared with its peak in 2004, he said, with incidents limited to Kutum and Mellit. 'And they are isolated and they are under control.'" (Agence France-Presse [el-Fasher], October 17, 2012)

We may reasonably infer that the assault on UN Security Council-authorized peacekeepers was designed in part to ensure that this perverse narrative was preserved as much as possible, at least with respect to civilian massacres and other atrocity crimes.

Indeed, the evidence was so clear in this attack on civilians in Hashaba, and in the subsequent assault on UNAMID, that only one issue remains undetermined: what was the nature of command responsibility for the specific atrocities in Hashaba on this particular occasion? How far up the Military Intelligence (MI) chain-of-command did foreknowledge of the attack on Hashaba go? (MI long ago took the lead in organizing "security" for Darfur.) This has not been determined and is highly unlikely to be. But the more

important question is how far up the MI chain-of-command did foreknowledge of the assault on UN peacekeepers go? Again, we can't be sure, but given evidence of growing powers for the military and security elements within the NIF/NCP regime, it is highly unlikely that such an action would have been undertaken without at least tacit prior approval from someone senior in the Army or Military Intelligence/ Khartoum.

The alternative is to believe that a field officer for MI with foreknowledge of the attack felt it to be insufficiently important to report back to Khartoum. For certainly some MI officers in North Darfur were involved in or at least knew of the attack, especially given the nature of the weaponry. Again, a UNAMID spokesperson has spoken of "**arsenals of high-calibre weapons that were never used before,**" and deputy head of UN peacekeeping operations Edmond Mulet reported specifically on the attackers use of "**heavy machine guns.**" This kind of weaponry simply could not have gone unnoticed, and yet the UN is characteristically diffident in drawing the most obvious of conclusions.

Further, **Radio Dabanga reported in late September that the governor of North Darfur had been warned of the impending militia attack** on Hashaba by a local official from the town itself, Abdella Rifa:

"Rifa blamed the **Janjaweed** militias for carrying out the 'barbaric attack' [on Hashaba] and held the government responsible for the incidents. [ ] Rifa said that the leader of the **Janjaweed** militia that carried out the attack is called Al-Nur. He also said that the group moved to attack from their base in **Damrat Al-Quba. According to Rifa, they knew beforehand that the militia was going to attack and they informed the authorities including the governor of the state, Mohammed Osman Kibir, 'but they did nothing.'**" (Radio Dabanga, September 28, 2012)

[ For a highly detailed account of the locations and purposes of bases such as that at **Damrat al-Quba**, see *Sudan Tribune* ([October 1, 2012](#)): "Darfur war crimes, changes in demographic composition, and ethnic displacement," by Hamid Eltgani Ali of the American University in Cairo.]

In short, the UN—by refusing to do more than plead with Khartoum to investigate crimes committed by the regime's own proxies forces—remains complicit in an appalling silence despite clear evidence that Khartoum is responsible for a brutal attack on a major UN peacekeeping convoy.

#### • **Attack on UNAMID, October 2, 2012—near el-Geneina, West Darfur:**

On October 2, 2012, **four UNAMID soldiers were killed and eight injured in** West Darfur, approximately a mile from their main base in (regime-controlled) el-Geneina, capital of West Darfur—and very close to a Khartoum-allied militia checkpoint. Although the evidence is only circumstantial, it points clearly to SAF or allied militia forces.

Reuters reported ([October 2, 2012](#)) a UNAMID statement that the force "came under fire from all sides"; it is unlikely that a rebel force could have deployed in this way so close to el-Geneina and a Khartoum-allied militia checkpoint.

Subsequently [we heard from the UN](#):

"In a statement to the press, Council President Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala said the Council members called on the Sudanese Government to **swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.**"

And from the U.S. State Department:

"The State Department said on Thursday [October 4] it was 'appalled' by an attack that killed four Nigerian peacekeepers and wounded eight others earlier this week in Sudan's western Darfur region. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said the United States condemns the ambush on UNAMID personnel that occurred on October 2, and **called for an**

***investigation into the attack and for those responsible for the violence to be held accountable."***

The European Union completed the familiar refrain with its own entirely predictable statement (October 4, 2012):

"[EU High Representative Catherine Ashton] deplores the attack on UNAMID peacekeepers that left four Nigerian peacekeepers dead and eight others injured in an ambush in El Geneina, West Darfur. She strongly ***condemns the attack and calls on the Government of Sudan to work closely with UNAMID to bring the perpetrators to justice.***"

Almost as if to emphasize the impotence of this condemnation and demand, Ashton also spoke vaguely about "reports of a violent incident in Hashaba," the very "incident" that would lead to a UNAMID investigating force, and the brutal assault upon that force by Khartoum-allied (and likely -armed) militia forces:

"The High Representative is also ***deeply alarmed at reports of a violent incident in Hashaba in North Darfur***, which appears to have cost the lives of large numbers of civilians, including through aerial bombardment. She calls for UNAMID to be allowed immediate access to the area and urges all Parties to end the cycle of violence in Darfur and to pursue a comprehensive and inclusive peace settlement."

Only diplomats are trained to such euphemistic usage: "incident" for "large-scale atrocity crimes," the reality that was already clear by the date Ashton spoke (see, for example, <http://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/more-2000-people-fled-hashaba-attacks> and [Radio Dabanga, September 28, 2012](#)). And the effect of these unctuous condemnations and "demands" for accountability? Agence France-Presse reported (October 22, 2012) comments by various officials on investigations of previous attacks on UNAMID:

"The dead South African is the 43rd peacekeeper from UNAMID to be killed in hostile action, ***but UN sources have said they were unaware of anybody previously being brought to justice for the attacks.***"

**• Attack on UNAMID, January 7, 2008—near Tine, West Darfur/North Darfur border, across the border from eastern Chad:**

At approximately 10pm on January 7, 2008 Khartoum's regular Sudan Armed Forces attacked, deliberately and with premeditation, a UNAMID convoy. The convoy, comprising more than 20 cargo trucks and armored personnel carriers (APCs), came under heavy, sustained fire near Tine, just inside North Darfur near the border with West Darfur and eastern Chad. One truck was destroyed, an APC was damaged, and a driver was critically wounded with numerous bullet wounds. The SAF assault on the convoy lasted 10-12 minutes, during which time UNAMID military personnel did not return fire. The motive for the attack, certainly ordered by senior SAF military commanders, was to inhibit the movement of UNAMID ground and air forces during night hours. In other words, the attack was meant to serve warning that UNAMID would be restricted in the same ways that the impotent African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) was restricted from the time of its initial deployment in 2004.

Evidence that the SAF attack was deliberate and premeditated was overwhelming, a conclusion shared by the head of UN peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and many others within the UN, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in particular. In his January 9, 2008 briefing of the UN Security Council, Guéhenno offered a number of compelling details, details amplified in confidential interviews conducted with UN officials by this writer. The most basic facts of the attack and its circumstances made unambiguously clear that Khartoum lied at every step of the way in its account of events, including initially denying that its forces were in any way involved in the attack on the UNAMID convoy:

[1] The transport trucks and APCs were painted in UN white, with clear UN markings on the vehicles. Even at night it is impossible to mistake UN white for the camouflage green used by rebels, who do not travel with either the configuration or the makeup of the UNAMID convoy. Rebel groups typically move using 4x4 Landcruisers and pick-up trucks, and at high speed. The UNAMID convoy, with heavy transport

vehicles and APCs, was moving very slowly to allow the APCs to pick their way in the dark. There was simply no ambiguity as to the identity of the convoy vehicles.

**[2]** Critically, UNAMID had carefully notified all relevant SAF commanders, including the general at the base near Tine where the attack occurred (the convoy was on its way from Umm Baru to Tine). Redundant notification of the SAF by the UN was designed to forestall precisely any misunderstanding about the nature, location, and timing of this convoy mission, one of UNAMID's very first.

**[3]** The convoy did not return fire during the entire 10-12 minute assault by SAF forces, an extraordinary and quite revealing act of restraint given the length of time the firing continued. Moreover, the commanding SAF officer who accepted responsibility for the attack (responsibility initially denied by senior officials in Khartoum and the regime's ambassador to the UN) had the rank of general: in other words, he was no junior or inexperienced officer, and would not have ordered the attack on his own authority—nor would he have countenanced such an attack by young or frightened officers. Senior SAF military officials ordered the attack, even if the specifics of duration and degree of firepower were left discretionary (both automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades were used).

In the absence of a seized cable or other intercepted communication, there could of course have been no definitive proof that Khartoum ordered what had all the hallmarks of a deliberate and premeditated attack. But the likelihood that this was an independent military action, given the political and diplomatic stakes, is vanishingly small. This was certainly the conclusion of Jean-Marie Guéhenno and other informed officials at the UN in New York. UN career officers understood full well that Khartoum had engaged in a relentless war of obstruction in opposing effective deployment of UNAMID, and equally well understood that this convoy attack was part of the regime's larger campaign.

Khartoum's goals in ordering the attack can be readily discerned by noting issues that at the time remained outstanding in the deployment of UNAMID:

**[1]** The regime refused to grant night flight rights to UNAMID except for medevac purposes. But as UN and African Union peacekeeping officials continually emphasized, the mandate to protect civilians and humanitarians did not and could not be allowed to end at sunset. Khartoum was able to impose curfews, flight restrictions, onerous aircraft re-certification requirements, and a host of other crippling measures on AMIS. These extended to the brazen commandeering of AMIS aviation fuel supplies for use by Khartoum's helicopter gunships in attacks on civilians. The attack on the convoy near Tine was a way of signaling that UNAMID would face the clear prospect of attack, harassment, and obstruction if it persisted in traveling at night.

**[2]** The regime had refused at the time to grant landing rights to heavy transport aircraft, the sort that can move large quantities of logistical supplies, as well as heavy vehicles. Initially Khartoum insisted that the runways at el-Fasher and Nyala—the two key destinations—could not handle such heavy aircraft. This was patently false. Subsequently the regime insisted that aircraft could not land at night because of a lack of lights—an easily remedied engineering problem.

**[3]** Khartoum also refused to allow for the deployment of helicopters—or the construction of critically necessary maintenance hangars—until UNAMID completed an upgrading of the runways at el-Fasher and Nyala. Although there were no helicopters to deploy, and none in prospect—a disgraceful betrayal of Darfur by militarily capable UN member states—there was no way that they would be allowed to deploy under the circumstances that obtained at the time. Of the importance of helicopters in Darfur, particularly in the face of attacks by combatants, Undersecretary Guéhenno declared at the time in his Security Council briefing:

"If we had had helicopters capable of flying at night and quickly reinforcing a convoy under attack, of course we would have been in a position to deter, probably the attack [near Tine] would never have occurred,' Guéhenno said." (Agence France-Presse [UN/New York], January 9, 2008)

**[4]** Most generally, Khartoum at the time had still refused to enter into a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the UN and African Union. This was the agreement designed to govern the mutual

understanding between Khartoum and the UN/African Union about the mandate, actions, and prerogatives of UNAMID. (The SOFA was not signed until February 2008—over half a year after UNAMID received UN Security Council authorization.) Well-placed UN officials indicated at the time that the issues holding up conclusion of a SOFA were various and continually changing: Khartoum would relent in one area, only to raise a new issue in another area. There was a continuous and debilitating changing of the terms of negotiations; the continual switching, shuffling, and disingenuousness on the part of the regime was clearly designed to forestall completion of the SOFA for as long as possible.

As a result, issues such as night flights, night movement of resources and personnel, land rights for bases (an acute problem in West Darfur), adequate access at Port Sudan—all remained unresolved at the time UNAMID officially took up its mandate (January 1, 2008). Khartoum also demanded that it be notified of all UNAMID movements and actions beforehand, and that UNAMID accept Khartoum's right to suspend all communications within UNAMID while the regime is conducting military operations. These conditions were completely unacceptable to the UN. The overall effect was to create a crisis outlined in the direst possible terms by then-Under-secretary Guéhenno:

"The top United Nations peacekeeping official today [January 9, 2008] warned the Security Council that the new, critically under-manned and under-equipped mission in Sudan's strife-torn Darfur region faced 'probably the greatest risk' to a UN operation in more than a decade. [ ] 'Today we have the convergence of three factors which put UNAMID at great risk, probably the greatest risk since the 1990s,' he said after briefing the Council, citing the ongoing war in Darfur, the lack of a clear signal from the parties that they want a robust mission, and the mission's own 'tragic' lack of essential resources. Under-manned UN missions in the 1990s were unable to prevent the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the massacre of Bosnian Moslems in Srebrenica in 1995." [ ]

"Five months after the adoption of Resolution 1769 (setting up UNAMID), we do not yet have guarantee or agreements from the Government [of Sudan] on the basic technical issues,' [Guéhenno said]. 'And finally, the mission itself will not have the personnel or assets in place to implement its mandate for many months even in the best case scenario,' he added, noting that no offers for essential transportation and aviation assets had been made, including 24 helicopters."

"When you combine those factors you see that you have the possibility of failure unless the political situation is rectified, unless the war situation is ended and a strategic choice is made by all the parties that it is not by military action that peace will be brought to Darfur but by negotiation, and **unless there is a decisive reinforcement of the mission**,' he told journalists after the Council session." (UN News Center [UN/New York], January 9, 2008)

It is difficult to imagine a fuller or clearer indication of Khartoum's attitude toward the deploying peacekeepers of UNAMID—or the fatal nature of the weaknesses of characterizing the mission—than by examining the history of the attack on Tine.

• **Janjaweed attack on UNAMID, July 8, 2008—Umm Hakibah, North Darfur:**

On July 8, 2008, at approximately 2:45pm local time, heavily armed *Janjaweed* militia attacked a UNAMID joint police and military patrol in an area approximately 100 kilometers southeast of el-Fasher, near the village of Umm Hakibah (North Darfur). In a firefight that lasted approximately three hours, **seven UNAMID troops and police were killed and twenty-two were injured, seven of these critically**. Ten vehicles were destroyed or taken during the attack. Although there was initial uncertainty about the identity of the attacking force, this uncertainty was quickly eliminated in the course of an urgent investigation. In addition to various published reports, UN Undersecretary for Peacekeeping Guéhenno again offered a compelling July 11, 2008 briefing to the Security Council (in closed session), making a number of telling observations that point unambiguously to *Janjaweed* forces as those responsible:

[1] Guéhenno told the Security Council that the attack on UN-authorized peacekeepers "took place in an area under Sudanese government control and that some of the assailants were dressed in clothing similar to Sudanese army uniforms. He also said the ambush was 'pre-meditated and well-organized' and

was intended to inflict casualties rather than to steal equipment or vehicles" (Voice of America [UN/New York], July 11, 2008). The peacekeepers attacked reported seeing approximately 200 fighters, many on horses—a signature feature of the *Janjaweed*.

[2] Agence France-Presse reports: "Guéhenno was quoted as saying that the ambush was designed 'to inflict casualties' and was carried out with 'equipment usually not used by (rebel) militias'" (UN/New York, July 11, 2008). Separately and confidentially, a UN official went further in confirming to this writer that some of the arms used, including large-caliber recoilless rifles, have never been seen in the arsenals of the rebel groups. This official said that Guéhenno, who is retiring, had rarely been so explicit in assigning responsibility for attacks in Darfur.

[3] Agence France-Presse reported from Khartoum on the views of UN and African Union officials on the ground in Darfur: "Officials in the African Union and UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur, known as UNAMID, said on Wednesday [July 9, 2008] that suspected *Janjaweed* militia, who have fought [together] with the state [i.e., Government of Sudan], were behind the attack that killed seven peacekeepers" (July 10, 2008).

[4] The motive for the attack was not been established, but an assessment of who benefitted from an attack of this scale and intensity could leave no doubt as to responsibility. The rebels knew full well that such an attack would make insecurity in Darfur all the greater; and UNAMID—predictably—pulled back significantly from patrolling and investigating operations. Some deployments of additional forces were put on hold because of the attack (Australia, for example, announced at the time that it was suspending deployment of nine much-needed military specialists).

#### • Darfur rebel attack on UNAMID, September 2007—Haskanita, North Darfur

Some have made facile comparison of the July and January 2008 Khartoum-directed attacks on UNAMID to the attack in September 2007 on the African Union mission base in Haskanita (the mission was then known as the African Union Mission in Sudan, or AMIS). The motive for the earlier rebel attack appeared at the time to be the taking of weapons and supplies from an AU force that had long been perceived by the rebels as siding with Khartoum, particularly in excluding from ceasefire meetings the rebels groups not party to the ill-conceived Abuja peace agreement (May 2006). Indeed, in the case of Haskanita the attacking rebels—not one of the major factions, but probably an *ad hoc* collaboration of breakaway elements—may have mistakenly believed that the AU post was passing on bombing coordinates for rebel positions to Khartoum's regular military forces.

But however irresponsible the rebels have been—and they have a fearsome list of offenses and abuses to answer for—all the larger factions urgently wanted a larger UN security presence, to protect both civilians and humanitarians. Rebel leader Abdel Wahid el-Nur, who had an enormous following in the camps for displaced persons, made such a security presence his condition for participating in any renewed peace talks. The Sudan Liberation Movement/Unity—with forces closest to the location attacked—was also the most responsible of the rebel factions, and certainly realized that the attack was a disaster for the people of Darfur. For the rebels knew full well that it would make insecurity in the region all the greater.

#### The killing will continue

Altogether approximately 50 United Nations peacekeepers have been killed in greater Sudan over the past five years, and a great many more seriously wounded. This is in large measure because of international refusal to support the missions, especially UNAMID, with sufficient transport aircraft, adequate surveillance and communications capacity, and—most significantly—pressure on Khartoum to allow unfettered access and freedom of movement to UNAMID forces—guaranteed by the [February 2008 Status of Forces Agreement](#) (SOFA).

Given the lack of consequences for its murderous ways with UN peacekeepers, Khartoum's regular and militia forces will almost certainly kill more peacekeepers. Most—as long been the case—will occur in circumstances that do not permit full determination responsibility without much greater investigative determination. Yet we have seen enough incidents in which responsibility is fully established to make



reasonable inferences about a number of the cases in which UNAMID has offered—at least publicly—only a confession of ignorance about the perpetrators of these war crimes.

Calls for "accountability" coming from the U.S., the EU, the AU, and the UN have proved continually worthless—indeed, they are worse than worthless: for every time that the men of National Islamic Front/ National Congress Party regime hear such "demands," they look back on the long history of previous "demands" that they have ignored...and simply smile complacently.

#### **APPENDIX: Reports on the killing of UN peacekeepers and Paramount Chief of the Dinka Ngok in Abyei on May 4, 2013:**

##### **The event—details report from Agence France-Presse:**

"The United Nations said the 'attack by a Misseriya assailant on a UNISFA convoy' also seriously wounded two of its peacekeepers." ***[One of the two wounded soldiers later died from his wounds—ER]***

"Despite negotiations, 'a clash happened when a UNISFA soldier shot one of the Misseriya who was readying his weapon,' said the Misseriya chief who asked to remain anonymous. During the resulting clash, the Dinka leader's car was hit by an explosion and he and his driver were killed."...

"Negotiations continued 'for a long time' until a Misseriya youth, shouting and armed with a weapon, climbed onto the roof of [the Paramount Chief's] car, the resident said, declining to be named." (Agence France-Presse [Khartoum], May 5, 2013)

Given the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in place for UNISFA, there should have been no negotiation over the passage of either a UNISFA convoy or an important political interlocutor in the Abyei crisis. That "negotiations" were prolonged is highly suspicious. And that the car carrying Kuol Deng Kuol was hit by an explosion suggests it had been particularly targeted by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG).

##### **On the timing of the killings:**

On May 4, 2013 *Sudan Tribune* reported the UN decision allowing...

"UN personnel to access the contested oil-producing region of Abyei, using any travel means available. Nhial Deng Nhial, the country's Foreign Affairs minister, said the move was in line with last year's Status of Force Agreement (SOFA), signed by both Sudan and South Sudan, allowing UN to access Abyei without placing conditions. UN personnel, as part of the SOFA, are allowed to travel to the disputed region, either for immediate assessment, or to conduct and respond to daily needs of the humanitarian related activities in the region. But the world body insists it has often been difficult for its personnel to obtain visa approval, mainly from the Sudanese Foreign Affairs ministry, despite the agreement, which the two countries signed."

This was the same day that UNISFA peacekeepers were killed.

The killings also occurred the same day as a meeting held between members of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC), a development that some Misseriya leaders have been encouraged by Khartoum to see as threatening.

##### **Evidence of responsibility:**

Reuters reports (Khartoum, May 5, 2013):

"Kuwal Deng Mayok [Kuol Deng Kuol], the top Dinka leader in Abyei, was killed by members of the Misseriya, another Dinka leader told Reuters, asking not to be named. 'The Misseriya targeted him after he had held a meeting in Abyei town with Misseriya leaders,' he said. 'The Misseriya opened fire on his convoy and killed him and another person.'" [Reuters is extremely unlikely to use a witness they have not vetted—ER) "A Misseriya official, Saddiq Babu Nimr, confirmed the death of Mayok but blamed it on a shooting incident with Ethiopian UN peacekeepers, which administer Abyei."

That the attack occurred after Kuol held a lengthy meeting with Misseriya leaders in Abyei town strongly suggests that forces within the Misseriya opposed to such meetings ensured that they would not occur again. This comports fully with Khartoum's determination to keep the Abyei crisis festering, a means of distracting or commandeering international diplomatic attention. Diplomacy—whether involving the AU (Thabo Mbeki in particular), the UN, or Western actors—has been singularly ineffective in resolving the Abyei crisis (see <http://www.sudanreeves.org/?p=2312>). This is in large part a legacy of the terrible decision by the Obama administration in fall 2010 to pressure Juba to make further "compromises" on Abyei—beyond those already reflected in the Abyei Protocol of the CPA (2005) and the ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (July 2009).

*Sudan Tribune* (May 7, 2013) reports on the reaction of the Government of South Sudan:

"The killing of [the] chief was not just an incident. **It was preceded by reports of regular killings in the area. The list of those who have been killed has been filed and the United Nations** has the details and we believe the killing of the chief will not be taken lightly nor [do] we expect the international community to consider [Kuol's death] a normal thing or usual business ... We hold the government of Sudan responsible because those who killed the chief are under the control of the government of Sudan. They are no stranger to Sudan,' he added."

And just what will the UN do with these "details"? The most cynical skepticism is fully warranted.

#### **Motives for the killings:**

Kon Manyieth, a former head of physical infrastructure in the Abyei Area Administration, described a meeting with Government of South Sudan cabinet member Deng Alor Kuol:

"Our meeting with cabinet affairs minister Deng Alor Kuol was fruitful. We briefed him about general situation of the area, particularly about the massive settlement plan of members of the Misseriya who are getting direct support from the government of Sudan to the area. The other matter and the main reason of the visit is the continued killing and raiding of cattle and burning of villages in the area by the government of Sudan backed militia group,' Kon told journalists Thursday [May 2, 2013]." (*Sudan Tribune*, May 3, 2013)

The timing of this dispatch is well worth noting, with its report of a "massive settlement plan of members of the Misseriya who are getting direct support from the government of Sudan to the area. The other matter and the main reason of the visit is the **continued killing and raiding of cattle and burning of villages in the area by the government of Sudan backed militia group....**"

**May 3:** the day before Kuol Deng Kuol Deng was killed following negotiations over precisely such attacks, *inter alia*.

In scrambling for Misseriya political support, in sustaining controversy over the fate of Abyei and uncertainty concerning the delineation and demarcation of the North/South border, Khartoum is more than willing to let the Misseriya militias have their way, not only in Abyei but elsewhere. For the border regions are rich in arable land and pasturage, and this—not oil—is what matters most to the vast majority of people who live there.

#### **Consequences:**

*Sudan Tribune* reports (May 7, 2013):

"South Sudan on Monday lodged a strongly worded complaint to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) over the killing of Abyei tribal leader Kuol Deng Kuol, warning that until the perpetrators are identified and brought to justice, it is no longer 'business as usual.' South Sudan's minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, Nhial Deng Nhial, said his country takes the death of the paramount chief of the Dinka Ngok 'more seriously' and will not tolerate the case being taken lightly by the international community. 'We have started with clear procedures, legal steps. We have now officially filed and deposited our complaint about this brutal act which violates not only the international law but also humanitarian law. Chief Kuol Deng Kuol was not in combat; he was not carrying a gun, not in possession of any weapon. He was purely [an] unarmed civilian killed in the hands of the United Nations. His security and safety was in the hands of the United Nations,' Nhial said, while addressing thousands of mourners who turned out for Kuol's burial on Monday in Abyei town."

All this Khartoum well knew.