

Testimony of Richard S. Williamson
The President's Special Envoy to Sudan
before the
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
April 23, 2008

Thank you, Chairman Biden and Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to be here with you today to discuss how the United States is addressing the tragic situation in Darfur and working to support the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The suffering and misery of the Darfur people has gone on too long. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating. Since the horrific atrocities committed in 2003 and 2004, civilian lives continue to be taken, displaced, or shattered by rape, beatings, malnutrition, and disease. Since 2003, an estimated 200,000 people have died in Darfur as a result of this brutal conflict and some 2.5 million people have been displaced. Countless women have been raped and children have been injured. The number of killed and displaced persons continues to grow and reflects an atmosphere of continuing violence.

Civilians who have been forced from their homes and live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps are not safe from violence. Women who venture out to gather wood without escorts are molested, robbed, and raped, while men are abducted and tortured or murdered. Armed men have been known to enter these camps to either attack or harass the IDPs.

A December 10, 2006 Save Darfur Coalition Press Release from their Advocates Rally in the Nations Capital Against Rape and Sexual Violence in Darfur recounted the horrific experience of a survivor of the violence in Darfur, only one of too many lives that have been destroyed by this tragedy. She recalled, "Janjaweed militia and Government soldiers attacked a primary school for girls, raping the pupils Because I told people what happened, the authorities arrested me. They said, 'we will show you

what rape is.’ They beat me severely. At night, three men raped me. The following day the same thing, different men. Torture and rape, every day, torture and rape.”

In recent months, the security situation on the ground has become increasingly chaotic. Civilians are caught in the crossfire of rebel groups, armed militia, tribal groups, and government forces. Villages are desolated, livelihoods destroyed, and people are either killed or forced from their homes.

Attacks in West Darfur this past February displaced more than 50,000 people, including an outpouring of more than 13,000 who have crossed into eastern Chad, and caused over 200 casualties. According to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), nearly 80,000 Darfuris have been displaced since January 2008. This lack of security in Darfur fuels the humanitarian crisis by impeding humanitarian operations in Darfur. The priority of the U.S. Government is to ensure the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to the more than 2.4 million internally displaced persons and more than 200,000 Darfurian refugees and displaced host populations in eastern Chad.

After renewed clashes over recent months in areas north of El Geneina, West Darfur, between rebels and the Sudanese Army, there was limited humanitarian access to the area. Beginning in mid-December 2007, the northern corridor (an area north of El Geneina that stretches north to Kulbus) was a “no-go” for the UN and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, humanitarian supplies were not dispatched to the north until late February of this year. Access to this area was completely restricted as a result of government-imposed restrictions on the movement of people, goods, and services after the area fell into the hands of the Chadian-government supported Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). OCHA estimated that a total of 160,000 civilians were affected by this blockade. In addition, on February 20, the Government of National Unity (GNU) Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) cancelled flights in West Darfur for one week, significantly limiting NGO access and ability to respond to humanitarian needs. Flights resumed by March, and although the situation has improved since that time and some IDPs have begun to return home, maintaining the delivery of humanitarian assistance remains an urgent concern. Indeed, accessibility to humanitarian resources

remains a concern due to government and rebel military activity and outright banditry. This means there is ongoing malnutrition, disease, and deaths.

Despite dangerous conditions, approximately 13,000 humanitarian workers and embassy staff are doing a remarkable and heroic job. Darfur is currently the largest humanitarian relief operation in the world, and the United States remains the single largest donor. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 and FY 2007, the U.S. Government contributed over \$1.3 billion to support emergency humanitarian activities in Sudan, including more than \$920 million for Darfur. Since 2005, the United States has provided more than \$4 billion in humanitarian, peacekeeping, and reconstruction assistance to Sudan. To date, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been able to work at 90% capacity to distribute food aid to the people of Darfur. However, since the beginning of the year, 60 WFP-contracted trucks have been hijacked in Darfur and 39 trucks and 26 drivers remain missing, and the WFP has stated it will have to cut its food distribution by 50% for May because of an alarming rise in banditry. The people of Darfur will not experience long-term progress until there is security on the ground in Darfur.

The conflict that has created all of this humanitarian suffering has mutated from the Sudanese government's counter-insurgency campaign against new active rebel groups in Darfur in 2003 which targeted innocent Darfurians with unconscionable savagery to a situation that is complicated by shifting alliances, growing ambitions, tribal conflicts, and regional meddling. The Government of Sudan, the Arab militias, and rebel leaders all have blood on their hands. Make no mistake; this "genocide in slow motion" continues, casualties mount, and more must be done to alleviate the terrible humanitarian suffering and bring sustainable stability and peace to this region brutalized and stained with the blood of innocent people.

Khartoum's policy in Darfur has been the same tactic they used in the South: to "divide and destroy." By manipulating tribal divisions, creating militias from Arab tribes, forcing people from their homes, and separating them from their tribal leaders, the government has created a lawless environment in Darfur that it can no longer control.

Renewed clashes between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Chadian-backed Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in West Darfur resulted in a major military campaign by the Government of Sudan. The Sudanese military attacks involved aerial

bombardments by helicopter gunships and fixed wing aircraft, accompanied by ground offensives by SAF and militias, the “devils on horseback.” Human rights officers from UNAMID, the UN/African Union (AU) Mission in Darfur, underscored that these actions failed to distinguish between civilian and military objects and noted that the scale of destruction of civilian property suggests the damage was deliberate. A Reuters story quoted a resident of Abu Surug in West Darfur, saying, “The helicopters hit us four times and around 20 bombs were dropped. I am outside the city and can see it burning. They (the attackers) are still inside.” There were also credible accounts of rape committed by armed uniformed men during and after an attack in Sirba.

The government-supported Janjaweed militias that are responsible for most of the attacks on civilians have been neither disarmed nor controlled, as outlined in the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). A report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) describes an attack on January 24 in which witnesses described their attackers as “Arabs” in military uniforms, riding on camels, horses, and a number of camouflaged military vehicles. The attackers entered the town and started torching houses and shops and shooting deliberately at people. This style of fighting mirrors the gruesome attacks by the SAF in 2003 and 2004, indicating fighting may be reverting back to the 2003/2004 style of engagement. The *Washington Post* reported on February 15 a story of a woman who “had no breast milk to feed her five-month-old baby after she spent a week under a tree with no food following the attack. ‘The Janjaweed came and took everything, our food, our furniture,’ said the 35-year-old mother, who did not know where any of her other six children or her husband was.” As this ongoing conflict mutates, Arab militias not only support SAF attacks on civilians in Darfur, but also shift alliances, join the rebels or attack SAF forces in retaliation for not being paid. Their services are available to the highest bidder.

Government forces and Janjaweed are not the only parties to the conflict in Darfur inciting violence. In December 2007, JEM forces launched an attack on the local police station and SAF forces in Silea, a town north of El Geneina. These attacks prompted harsh counterattacks by SAF forces and started the ongoing fighting in West Darfur in early 2008 that led to exacerbated humanitarian suffering and increased the areas that were inaccessible to humanitarian workers.

Because rebel leaders have growing ambitions about wealth and power sharing, many of the rebel groups have fragmented due to internal disagreements. The situation on the ground in Darfur is no longer simply a war between the GOS and rebel groups. Violent clashes between signatories and non-signatories of the DPA, inter-ethnic clashes, banditry and general lawlessness proves this is not a simple war. It is not only the Government of Sudan that is culpable in the ongoing bloodshed in Darfur. Some rebels have taken on the role of warlords and even criminals and are responsible for attacks on civilians. Armed men attack convoys carrying humanitarian assistance to Darfur, stealing vehicles and kidnapping drivers. NGO compounds are being looted, and local humanitarian staff are being intimidated.

Quite simply, there is no shortage of bad actors in Sudan: in the Government of Sudan, among the rebels, and within the militia. I have seen with my own eyes the tragic consequences of the massive violence in Darfur. When I traveled there in February, I visited the Al Salam Camp for internally displaced persons and met some of the innocent victims of this “genocide in slow motion.” I met one beautiful, 10-year old girl whose father was killed in an attack on her village three years ago. Her mother and sister rode on a donkey for 19 days before arriving at an IDP camp. This young girl told me she loved Sharea, the village she left behind. Her days were happy there. She misses her village, but she does not know if she will ever return home because “now it is too dangerous.”

For this young child and thousands of others, there is little hope. And one thing seems certain. If we continue on our current path, the numbers will continue to rise. Despite our empathy for the innocent victims, our condemnation of the aggressors, our punitive sanctions, and our substantial humanitarian offering, this great tragedy will go on unabated. Our actions must give meaning to our words—we must work to create stability and security for the people of Darfur.

The deployment of UNAMID peacekeepers would be a significant step in the right direction to help change facts on the ground in Darfur. But unfortunately, since the transition from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to the AU/UN peacekeeping operation, UNAMID, there has been little change on the ground.

Without a doubt, it is a difficult and complex endeavor to coordinate and deploy a hybrid peacekeeping mission in a country with a strong and often uncooperative central government. The Government of Sudan has been characteristically obstructionist, especially with regard to the composition of UNAMID. Earlier this year, engineering units from Norway and Sweden were rejected by the Government of Sudan, even though they would have provided vital resources in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID and helped to quickly create the necessary infrastructure for new troops. Without the Nordic engineering company, the only engineering unit that has arrived in Darfur is the advance party from China. These 140 engineers are less than one-third of the overall engineering assets necessary for the mission—and the slow deployment of engineers has made it more difficult for UNAMID to receive the troops necessary to complete their mission.

Unfortunately, many of the obstacles presented by Sudan have been difficult to pinpoint, and the lack of a “smoking gun” has made it difficult to use the UN Security Council to address these problems. For example, access to land is a critical issue in Darfur. UNAMID cannot be successful without adequate camp structures, and the Government of Sudan has delayed the mission’s expansion by limiting access to land. One of the largest UNAMID headquarters, in Nyala, experienced delays in construction due to prolonged negotiations with the Government of Sudan, which ultimately yielded land that was significantly lacking in water resources.

The delays in UNAMID’s deployment are also due in part to a lack of troop contributor resources. There has been an insufficient pledging of specialized units that provide critical force multipliers vital to the mission. We have been engaged in an intense high-level diplomatic campaign to lobby on behalf of the United Nations and help to generate and deploy tactical and utility helicopters as well as other critical mission requirements. This diplomatic campaign is starting to bear fruit: Ethiopia has recently offered helicopters to the mission. Our efforts have also included high-level coordination and outreach to multiple NATO and non-NATO countries, including China. The United States has worked closely with the UN to identify those countries most likely to contribute helicopters to this operation. Senior U.S. officials, including the President and Secretary of State, have urged their international counterparts to provide the required support. In addition to helicopters, it is important to note that UNAMID also will require

additional military transport and logistical units—these so-called “enabling” units are vital to the creation of the proper infrastructure and support of a larger peacekeeping mission. These units will help move materials and personnel to begin the construction of storage, maintenance, and fuel storage facilities as well as improving security on existing compounds.

In the face of these obstacles, unfortunately, the United Nations has demonstrated far too little creativity or flexibility in addressing the slow pace of UNAMID’s deployment. In early March, I met with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno to discuss my concerns and explore ways to give more urgency to UNAMID deployment. The United States is focused on practical steps that we and partner countries can take to assist with deployment. The United States and Canada have organized a standing committee of partner countries—the Friends of UNAMID—which meets on a weekly basis in New York to review the status of UNAMID deployment and address problems as they develop.

The United States has already contributed significant funding for the AMIS and UNAMID in addition to funding 25 percent of these missions through assessed peacekeeping dues to the United Nations. Since 2004, the United States has contributed over \$450 million to construct and maintain 34 base camps in Darfur for AMIS peacekeepers. And during the President’s trip to Africa in February he announced the U.S. commitment of more than \$100 million to assist African nations willing to step forward for the cause of peace in Darfur. These funds are being used to provide training and equipment—ranging from personal troop kits to Armored Personnel Carriers—for Ethiopia, Rwanda, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Malawi, and Tanzania. The training provided by the United States through the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program includes courses on peacekeeping with an emphasis on issues such as human rights. The contribution of the United States to UNAMID has encouraged an additional \$59 million worth of support from countries such as Canada, the UK, the Netherlands, and France. Through the Friends of UNAMID group, we are closely coordinating these efforts.

Together with the United Nations, the Friends of UNAMID group has worked to speed deployment by addressing problems such as the UN practice of placing technical requirements on Troop Contributing Countries that—in some cases—they are unable to achieve. The application of these practices would have prevented African troops from deploying to Darfur. I am pleased to report that the Friends group and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) have devised a solution that will allow troops to deploy as quickly as possible with appropriate training and equipment. Technical experts will continue to work to ensure that deployment is not impeded by bureaucratic practices

The conflict in Darfur must be resolved through a political dialogue, and the United States continues to urge the parties to the conflict to commit to negotiated political settlement. The United States supports the UN/AU-led peace process, and we have called for the appointment of a single Chief negotiator to provide leadership and vision to the Joint Mediation Support Team for a successful pathway to peace. The conflict in Darfur cannot be resolved by a peacekeeping mission alone. But thus far, Sudanese civilians have not received the protection promised to them by the United Nations Security Council. We have an obligation to alleviate their suffering, and increasing UNAMID's size and capabilities is a step in the right direction—toward peace and stability. When I returned from my travels to Sudan in March, I urged UNAMID to focus its efforts on the deployment of an additional 3,600 African troops by June 1—the scheduled spring deployment of Egyptian and Ethiopian troops and a rotation of former AMIS battalions. The arrival of new troops will enable UNAMID to achieve greater stability on the ground by this summer, and the United States is working with great dedication to make this objective a reality. The United Nations continues to work with Ethiopia and Egypt to schedule their deployment. Although those deployment dates have been delayed, the United States is coordinating with African Troop Contributing Countries, such as Rwanda and Senegal, to train and equip peacekeepers for rapid deployment to Darfur. The United States has already delivered equipment for Ethiopian troops and is pressing forward to provide training and equipment for Rwanda and Senegal in the first phase of our assistance. We have urged the United Nations to deploy the Ethiopian troops and rotate new Rwandan soldiers by June, when they will be prepared for deployment. We

are working to ensure that relief arrives quickly, but ultimately the responsibility lies with the United Nations, Troop Contributing Countries and donors to meet their deployment targets and deliver on our shared commitments to the people of Darfur.

In addition to on-the-ground measures to relieve the suffering of the people of Darfur, I am focusing on steps the United States and international partners can take to make progress in achieving peace and stability in Darfur and throughout Sudan. Last week, I held discussions with various parties on these issues in response to an overture from Khartoum. At the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in February, Government of Sudan Foreign Minister Deng Alor had raised with Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer and me a decision by President Al-Bashir to explore the possibility of Sudan and the United States moving toward a path of constructive engagement. In February, Minister Deng Alor came to Washington to deliver to Secretary of State Rice a proposal for improving relations between the United States and Sudan.

I traveled to Sudan in late February to meet with officials from the Government of Sudan. During the course of our meetings, I provided the Government of Sudan with a response to their overture, a preliminary outline of specific, verifiable steps to be taken by the Government of Sudan to increase humanitarian relief to the people of Sudan, ensure the rapid deployment of UNAMID in order to achieve security and stability on the ground, and further the implementation of the CPA.

During last week's meetings, officials from the Government of Sudan and the United States discussed the Sudanese response to this preliminary proposal for a work plan. We addressed matters ranging from multiple re-entry visas for staff of nongovernmental organizations to passage of UNAMID equipment through the Port of Sudan. Some may wonder why the Administration is choosing to accept the Government of Sudan's overture and attempting engagement with the Government of Sudan and rebel leaders now, when we have witnessed years of suffering, broken promises, and a trail of terror and tears. I believe that we cannot take any options off the table at this point. Let me be clear: There are many bad actors with whom I have engaged, and I do not forget that for a minute. But as with the CPA, their engagement may prove critical for progress to be achieved. The cost of human suffering is simply too high for us to let the Government of Sudan run out the clock. Instead of standing by and wringing our hands

as more lives are destroyed by violence and displacement, we must seriously consider the full range of actionable options before us, from further sanctions to muscular actions and everything in between. This is why I have responded to rebel leaders and to the Government of Sudan, regardless of their violent history—to determine whether down this road there exists a path to a sustainable peace in Darfur. Finally, let me be clear. We will not rely on promises of future actions. Concrete, verifiable, significant progress must be achieved on the ground before we can contemplate improved relations.

While the tragedy in Darfur demands our greatest focus and energy, we remain attentive to the CPA, which ended decades of civil war between north and south and provides the framework through which peace can be achieved and sustained for all Sudan. In the three years since its signing, we have seen great changes in Sudan. Formerly warring parties have joined together in a Government of National Unity. There is no more war in the south, and there is no more famine. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) established a Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) in Juba, as well as ten state governments throughout the south. \$3.5 billion in oil revenues have been transferred from Khartoum to the GOSS. Roads are being built. Southerners are returning to help rebuild their homeland. With the support of the U.S. Government, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is being transformed from a rebel force into a professional military body. In FY08 the USG will provide over \$40 million dollars to increase the SPLA's command and control infrastructure, advise its senior officers as they produce a Defense White Paper, and provide training to build institutional and strategic capacity. These efforts are intended to act as a security guarantee to prevent either party of the CPA from abrogating the agreement, as well as transform the SPLA into a smaller, disciplined, and defensively-oriented organization.

On my recent trip to Juba, I met with GOSS President Salva Kiir to hear his views and concerns about the CPA. Implementation of the CPA faces many challenges. Last week's initial decision by the GOSS to unilaterally delay their portion of the census, an important milestone in the CPA, was cause for dismay, though I welcome the decision of the National Congress Party (NCP) and SPLM to work together to reach a compromise to follow through on the census, delayed by only a week. The issue of border demarcation in the oil-rich Abyei region remains a sensitive issue, and Abyei could spark renewed

hostilities. Therefore it is urgent that the CPA parties find a solution to the Abyei border issue. At the same time, the parties' recent decision to allow the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to monitor Abyei for two weeks demonstrates their interest in avoiding new violence. The continuing lack of full transparency in the oil sector also is a concern, as is the failure of the parties to withdraw their military forces from the North/South border in accordance with the timeline stipulated in the CPA. The parties themselves bear the ultimate responsibility to resolve these difficult issues, but U.S. encouragement and engagement concerning implementation of other CPA commitments will remain crucial for progress to be made in Sudan. And here I want to acknowledge the continuing and heroic work of US Embassy Khartoum and Consulate Juba staff, including the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other agencies, in making this happen.

I stress the importance of the CPA not only because of the need to prevent a resurgence of war with southern Sudan. If the CPA unravels, the tragic north-south civil war could reignite and our opportunities for peace in Sudan would disappear. Beyond that, it is helpful to consider Darfur from the wider perspective of the problems facing Sudan overall. We see through census efforts in Darfur that the citizens of that region are skeptical of the relevance of the CPA to their own political struggle. This reminds us that the importance of the CPA must be underscored across Sudan, not only in the South. Moreover, although this is an oversimplification of the matters, the conflict between North and South and that in Darfur both stem, at least in part, from problems in the central government's treatment of marginalized sections of Sudan. The CPA addressed the problem of marginalization of the south. We should be working to similarly address the marginalization of Darfur. Moreover, if rebels in Darfur see the Government of Sudan implementing a peace agreement, they might believe that a similar path might be achieved to secure peace in Darfur. Similarly, our continuing pressure on the parties to implement the CPA shows the international community's continuing support for the agreements it encouraged, facilitated, and guaranteed.

And the relationship operates in the opposite direction as well: continued violence in Darfur threatens implementation of the CPA. Without peace in Darfur, it will be extremely difficult to pull off the 2009 nation-wide elections called for in the CPA.

Today, we are witnessing the impact of insecurity in Darfur on preparations for the census, another milestone under the framework of the CPA. We must not let the tragedy in Darfur displace the attention we must also give to the crucial matter of peace in the rest of the country, and we must not address one crisis without informing our perspective with the lessons of the other. They are not separate issues; instead, they go hand-in-hand.

The U.S. Government is committed and is acting to end the suffering of the people of Darfur. We are committed to doing this by providing humanitarian assistance, by creating security and stability on the ground, and by pushing for implementation of the CPA. Only with sustained focus and creativity will we end this tragedy that has already gone on far too long.

The innocent people of Sudan have suffered too much, and too many continue to suffer. It is unconscionable. We must be forward-leaning in pursuit of any and every avenue to alleviate human suffering, bring sustainable stability on the ground, and move to real peace. In that the American people, the President, and Congress are in agreement.

Again, thank you for allowing me to be here today and participate in this hearing on an issue about which we all care so much.