

## Open Letter to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Sudan

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect 11 June 2010

— We write to you to express our profound concern about the risk of mass atrocities occurring in Sudan. The country stands today at a precipice with escalating atrocities and a potential return to all out war a real possibility. Tensions are increasing throughout the country and the South Sudan referendum is only seven months away, creating a potentially explosive situation. As signatories to the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, you have a **responsibility to protect** the people of Sudan from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.(...)

(...) It is imperative that the Council develops a clear, country-wide strategy for averting and halting mass atrocities in the run up to the January 2011 referendum. If past mistakes are to be avoided, the international response must not be piecemeal and selective, privileging one region over another, or assuming that small indications of improvement in one area justify a shift in attention and efforts towards another. The Council must instead adopt a coordinated strategy to dissuade and deter potential perpetrators throughout Sudan from committing atrocities and ensure that measures are in place to respond swiftly should preventive efforts fail and atrocities occur.(...)

(...) On June 14th you will be meeting with Joint UN-AU Chief Mediator for Darfur, Djibril Bassole, the head of the AU Panel on Darfur, Thabo Mbeki, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan and Head of Mission for UNMIS Haile Menkerios, and Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur, Ibrahim Gambari. These envoys are one of the many prevention and protection tools that you have at your disposal to use as part of your strategy for saving lives and upholding your responsibility to protect.(...)

(...) Member states have a responsibility to protect the people of Sudan from what are preventable crimes. At this time, there is no clear common position amongst Council members or a coordinated strategy for using available measures and levers to prevent atrocities throughout the country. We urge Council members to use the opportunity of the June 14th meeting to send a clear message that collectively the Council will not be bystanders to a return of widespread atrocities and that all members will work with the envoys and the UN to uphold the responsibility to protect. Both the Council's credibility and millions of lives are at stake. (...)

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