

Concerned that the world is not moving fast enough to deal with the appalling situation in Sudan's Darfur region, with reports of killing, rape and burning still flowing in, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today summoned Security Council members to a meeting to press for a beefed up international force on the ground.

Among options discussed were strengthening the African Union (AU) monitoring force, at present numbering 1,900 troops out of an original target of up to 4,000, and setting up a possible UN force, to end the Darfur conflict..

was glad to hear from Council members that they hope to have a new resolution in the course of this week, which will include agreement on a mechanism for holding individuals accountable for these dreadful crimes. That is good. We must send a clear message that the world is not going to tolerate them, he added

Noting that everyone agreed that a stronger international presence on the ground is crucial, Mr. Annan said clearly everyone's first preference is for the AU to stay in the lead, but for the rest of us to give it more effective help, while keeping other options open. Where the AU troops are, things are better for the population, but there are far too few of them, he added.

He also welcomed pressure from the public and media for stronger and faster decisions on this issue. We here are getting thousands of letters from people urging stronger action. I am sure national governments are getting them too, he said.

will hold a meeting next week with some of the leading NGOs (non-governmental organizations), to discuss with them the best ways of canalising this pressure so that it results in effective action by governments

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=13560&Cr=Sudan&Cr1=#>