

Annex 27

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Sudan: UN Clash Over Beijing Bullets Claim

13 APRIL 2012

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ANALYSIS

A seismic diplomatic row is rumbling at United Nations headquarters in New York over the circulation of a damning report by former UN experts pointing to the supply of Chinese-made ammunition to the Sudan government for use against civilians in Darfur.

The row exposes fresh divisions on Sudan at the UN Security Council and disarray in Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's office. It may also unpick Beijing's careful diplomacy as it seeks to realign its relations between Sudan and South Sudan.

The report, which is circulating clandestinely at UN headquarters, was written by three of the original members of the UN's Panel of Experts, which monitors violations of the UN arms embargo in Darfur. It argues that the Darfur crisis, far from winding down as Khartoum and some press reports suggest, is worsening, with new incidents of ethnic cleansing, arms deliveries and aerial bombing.

Africa Confidential has obtained two separate reports on Darfur (available to download at the end of this article), one commissioned by Ban's Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, which is highly conservative in its findings, and a more forthright, detailed unofficial version by the three specialists who resigned from Pascoe's appointed Panel on Darfur in 2011.

Weapons experts Mike Lewis (Britain) and Claudio Gramizzi (Italy), and Darfur and Chad specialist Jérôme Tubiana (France) resigned, Africa Confidential has learned, after Pascoe's department declined to take seriously their complaints about the standards of competence and neutrality on the Panel. The trio have now sent their own report - with lengthy annexes - to the Security Council. This unofficial report details Sudan army ammunition found in Darfur that appeared to be Chinese-made. Some may have been made in the Sudan Technical Centre, a Sudanese military company in Khartoum. The findings upset China, which says the report is not an official document and should not be given a hearing. Diplomats from the United States and Britain are nonetheless backing the report in private.

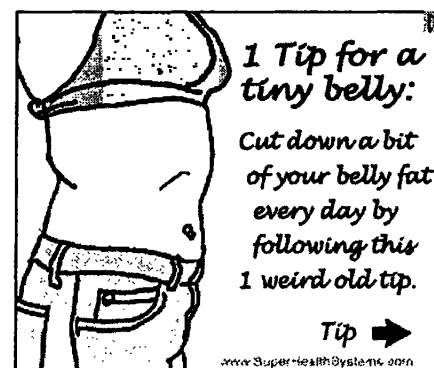
Targeting Zaghawa

The report also documents the role of the government's officials and Popular Defence Force militia in recruiting non-Arab militia for a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Zaghawa tribe. The leader of one wing of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, Minni Arkou Minnawi, is Zaghawa. He angered Khartoum by recently withdrawing from the Darfur Peace Agreement, which he had signed in Nigeria in 2006. Deploying non-Arab militia is a new tactic for Khartoum, which has long used Arab Janjaweed to kill. The report says that up to 70,000 civilians have fled their homes in Darfur since recent attacks in 2011, the highest number since the conflict peaked in 2003-06.

It also describes in detail the presence in Darfur of suspect Antonov aircraft from Ukraine. The former Experts obtained photographic evidence of at least one such aircraft parked next to aerial bombs. At least two such aircraft have been serviced in Ukraine and have flown through European airspace in 2009 and 2010. Lewis, Tubiana and Gramizzi also reported aerial bombing of civilians in the Zaghawa strongholds of Shangal Tobay in early 2011; the use of an Armenian-registered Ilyushin to ship cargo between Khartoum and Darfur for the army; and also five Sukhoi ground attack fighters, which the Belarus government confirmed were part of a consignment of 25 bought in 2008-10. A Sudan People's Liberation Movement official told AC this suggested Khartoum had long planned to attack South Sudan.

These revelations come as the main Darfur insurgent groups consolidate their military and political cooperation with the SPLM/Army-North in the Sudan Revolutionary Front. This new alliance poses problems for UN policy-makers in New York who have to coordinate a global Sudan strategy through two separate peacekeeping operations, the AU-dominated UN-African Union hybrid Mission in Darfur and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Neither addresses the growing crisis in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states and the Nuba

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Mountains. Khartoum banned UNMISS's predecessor, the UN Mission in Sudan, after South Sudan's independence last July.

In stark contrast, the official UN report was submitted to the UNSC in February by a new Panel appointed by Pascoe and led by Debi Prasad Dash of India. It has just four paragraphs on attacks against civilians in Darfur and was unable to confirm Khartoum's role in targeting the Zaghawa. It also contains little on current arms embargo violations. Although it sometimes criticises Khartoum piecemeal, it lacks analysis of political or military policy. It often appears to take Khartoum's assurances at face value, for example, that the Iranian-made unmanned aerial vehicle, which rebels shot down in Darfur in 2008 and which the UN examined, was there to monitor locusts (AC Vol 49 No 18, The drones club & AC Vol 53 No 6, Opposition turns up the heat). Russia has blocked its publication at the UNSC because it mentions Khartoum's use of Russian incendiary bombs in Darfur in 2009.

The new panellists are Issa Maraut, a French diplomat once based in Khartoum; Brian Johnson-Thomas, a British arms expert; Mohammed Moufid, a retired Moroccan aviation official; and Rania el Rajji, a Lebanese human rights consultant, formerly with Amnesty International.

• Final Report of the UNSC Panel of Experts on the Sudan January 2012 *Adobe PDF document (28.2 MB)*

• Report of former members of the UNSC Panel of Experts on the Sudan January 2012 *Adobe PDF document (48.4 MB)*

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