



Kingdom of Belgium

Speech by H.E. Ms Karen Van Vlierberge, Ambassador, Deputy  
Permanent Representative

to the Security Council briefing on UNAMID (United Nations–African  
Union Mission in Darfur)

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Mr President,

Belgium would like to thank the Assistant-Secretary General, Bintou Keita, for her speech.

Belgium welcomes the joint visit of ASGs Bintou Keita, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and Mourad Wahba in February.

There are clear signs of progress in Darfur and Belgium reaffirms its support for the transition from the maintenance to the consolidation of peace and for development in Darfur. But complacency would be inappropriate. A cautious approach to a carefully supported withdrawal is required. In general terms, the introduction of the rule of law and a fundamental respect for human rights are key elements in the future of Darfur. The protection of the civilian population and the improvement of the humanitarian situation, as well as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and the reform of the security sector are all essential for a long-term solution to the crisis.

Although a certain improvement in the security condition in Darfur is encouraging, Belgium remains concerned by the situation in the Jebel Marra region in particular, in view of the armed incidents between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid Faction (SLA/AW). There are also ongoing human rights abuses, including sexual violence, which primarily affect women and children and take place in a context of impunity.

Belgium welcomes the signature in Berlin last December of the pre-negotiation agreement between the Sudanese Government and two Darfur-based movements. However, we regret the delay in launching negotiations between the parties. The non-inclusive nature of the national dialogue and the non-operational nature of the various bodies responsible for implementing the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur are also a cause for concern.

Mr President,

The situation in Darfur must be interpreted in a Sudanese context, from which it cannot be isolated. Belgium would like to express its concern regarding the current situation in Sudan, which is marked by protests and a violent response from the authorities. On 22 February, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir declared a one-year state of emergency throughout the country and dissolved the government at both the federal and provincial levels. While the country is experiencing a difficult situation, Belgium calls for restraint in the use of force by the security services and the immediate release of the demonstrators being held arbitrarily. The authorities must fully respect the right to peaceful demonstration, protect civilians and guarantee the strictly proportionate use of force. There is a risk that the current tensions will have a negative impact on the commitment to dialogue of the parties to the conflict in Darfur.

Thank you.