

Darfur (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes, on behalf of the PSE Group . - (PT) I visited Darfur in September 2004 as part of a delegation from Parliament, and saw the extent of the tragedy, as Mrs Hall said earlier. Afterwards, here in Parliament and in the EU, we supported the role that the African Union has sought to play in resolving the conflict. This has been dragging on for three years now, has caused over 200 000 deaths and has made 2 million displaced persons or refugees.

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has gone as far as it can and the talks in Abuja are not making progress. The conflict has worsened and is spreading to neighbouring Chad. Jan Egeland was prevented from visiting Darfur - yet another snub by the Sudanese regime against the UN, not to mention the terrible war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by its forces, including the Janjaweed militia. The provocative threats by Khartoum to turn Darfur into a cemetery for UN troops should not intimidate.

The international community must not abdicate its responsibility to protect. Consequently, it must send, without delay, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, a tough, well-equipped stabilising force, in so doing preparing the groundwork for a suitable-sized UN peace-keeping operation, both with a significant European contribution.

All Members of the United Nations Security Council must assume their responsibilities, including countries such as China that have protected the corrupt, criminal dictatorial regime in Khartoum. Furthermore, there will only be a lasting solution to the conflict if there is an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the crimes of Darfur. Accordingly, it is crucial to support the investigations of the International Criminal Court and to step up sanctions against Khartoum, strictly implementing the arms embargo and declaring an embargo on oil exports.