

Thursday, 25 October 2007 - Strasbourg

Sudan: Killing of African Union peace-keeping soldiers

Ana Maria Gomes, on behalf of the PSE Group . - Madam President, the appalling attack by rebel forces in Haskanita against the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) was followed by a series of other revenge attacks by Government forces against all villages supposed to shelter rebels with tremendous civilian casualties.

We must realise that this suits the genocidal strategy of the Bashir clique in Khartoum to divide and destroy the Darfur communities and the rebel groups in order to make peace negotiations, such as the ones that are supposed to start this weekend in Libya, go nowhere.

That appalling attack and the violence which followed also demonstrate the fundamental limitations of an all-African force in Darfur such as AMIS. It is, therefore, crucial that the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which is to be deployed by early January, will actually be duly equipped in full force and capacity to operate by then.

In this context, it is very disturbing that the Chairman of the African Union Commission, Mr Konaré, has been insisting on an all-African force, even rejecting the integration of units offered by Uruguay, Thailand and Norway into UNAMID, in contradiction with the UN Security Council decision and, in this way, echoing the manoeuvres of the clique in Khartoum.

It is also disturbing that the European Union, the US and other rich countries have been failing to provide the speedy and full support that they should give to the deployment of that mission, namely by not providing it with a financial airlift and other logistical and military capacities that it needs to operate. Even the Chad mission is very much delayed, and that was supposed to be 'urgent'.

Finally, Mr Bashir is going to be given a red carpet welcome in Lisbon: it is not only Mr Mugabe. I hope that the European Union authorities, the Commission and the Presidency and the Member States will not fail to take that opportunity to actually confront him with this tremendous responsibility that, one day, will bring him to The Hague.