

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

SUPPORT A PERMANENT UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE

Support an effective, rapid-deploying UN peacekeeping force to intervene in humanitarian crises; Co-sponsor H.Res.213, calling for a United Nations Emergency Peacekeeping Service

Current Co-Sponsors: Conyers, Payne, Blumenauer, Frank, Eddie Bernice Johnson, McNulty, Sutton, Capps, Kucinich, McGovern, Towns, Jackson-Lee, Jefferson, Moran, Olver, Carnahan, Michaud, Honda, Kilpatrick, Berman, Delahunt, Sestak

Dear Colleague,

Please join us in calling for a permanent United Nations “quick-reaction” peacekeeping force to speed deployment of humanitarian and security assistance to embattled regions and peoples.

The United Nations Security Council unanimously authorized the deployment of a hybrid U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force (UNAMID) on July 31, 2007. The new force is authorized to perform a variety of tasks, including to support “early and effective implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, prevent the disruption of its implementation and armed attacks, and protect civilians.” We congratulate the Bush administration and U.N. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for earning this hard-fought diplomatic victory.

Recently, the United States Air Force airlifted 800 peacekeepers to Sudan, among the first UNAMID troops to be deployed. Still, U.N. officials concede that UNAMID will not be prepared to fully deploy for many months. In fact, recent reports predict that UNAMID will not be fully operational until well after its December 31, 2007 deadline.

Delays in implementation of a UN peacekeeping force have already had disastrous results for the people of Sudan. Since 2003, an estimated 400,000 Darfurian civilians have been killed, and another 2.5 million driven from their homes. African Union Peacekeepers have served nobly, but have been unable to adequately supply and protect their own forces, let alone police an area nearly the size of France.

Sadly, delays in the peacekeeping mission to Darfur are not the exception – they are the norm. The United Nations currently lacks the capacity to rapidly deploy peacekeepers to respond to deadly emergencies. The United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS), envisioned as an approximately 15,000-member group of military, civilian police, judicial, and humanitarian relief professionals, could fill this gap by deploying to conflict zones within 48 hours of Security Council authorization.