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CHAD:

STRENGTHEN UN MISSION FOR LASTING SECURITY

Despite the presence of a European Union military force in eastern Chad, rebel movements, inter-communal violence, cross border attacks and banditry are rampant. Civilians and humanitarian staff are routinely attacked and ongoing insecurity is hampering the delivery of humanitarian aid. To increase stability in Chad, the United Nations Security Council must strengthen the UN policing mission (MINURCAT), increase efforts for justice sector reform and give the civilian head of the UN mission the ability to engage in political efforts towards stabilization and reconciliation.

The Security Threat

Insecurity in Chad is the product of a variety of domestic and regional crises that have displaced some 185,000 Chadians inside the country, and brought almost 250,000 Sudanese refugees into eastern Chad from neighboring Darfur. Chad has been the site of a protracted civil war in which a number of often fragmented rebel movements continue to launch attacks on towns throughout the east. The rebels receive support and protection from the Government of Sudan, just as Sudanese rebels -- particularly the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) -- receive support from the Government of Chad. Chadian rebels have established bases inside Darfur and launch attacks from inside Sudanese territory, including the nearly successful February 2008 attack on the Chadian capital of N'Djamena. Likewise, the JEM use the Zaghawa-dominated Bahai region (including the Oure Cassoni refugee camp) as a safe area in which to regroup and launch attacks into Sudan, such as the unprecedented May 2008 attack on Khartoum.

Chad's rebels, however, do not represent the most immediate threat to civilians, as they are relatively well trained and disciplined. Traditionally these groups have been careful to respect international humanitarian law and generally do not attack refugee camps or sites for internally displaced people.

The greatest threat to civilians and humanitarian operations is banditry. Bandit groups, which sometimes involve local authorities, the Chadian military, and moonlighting police or gendarmerie, act with

Policy Recommendations

The United Nations Security Council should:

- ❑ Build on the existing MINURCAT mandate to include the deployment of a military component with capabilities similar to those of EUFOR, as well as UN police with both the mandate and resources to conduct patrols and investigations outside of the refugee camps IDP sites in conjunction with Chadian law enforcement.
- ❑ Authorize the mandate and resources for a broadened approach to justice sector reform with a focus on strengthening police, gendarmerie, the judicial sector, and key governance structures, as well as reinforcing local, traditional justice systems.
- ❑ Give the SRSG the staff and explicit mandate to engage in political efforts at internal stabilization and reconciliation, as well as the normalization of relations between Chad and Sudan.

almost complete impunity in the eastern part of the country. This is particularly true for members of the Zaghawa ethnic group, who enjoy de facto immunity from the law.

These bandits are responsible for chronic car-jackings (specifically the theft of 4x4s belonging to humanitarian actors) and the violent looting of humanitarian workers and local civilians throughout the east. The threat becomes particularly acute in the wake of a rebel attack, when bandits capitalize on the chaos and the absence of local authorities.

The “malfaiteurs” are often well known to the authorities, but the lack of a functioning justice sector creates a security vacuum. This is further complicated by the fact that traditional forms of justice and authority have been weakened by years of conflict, ethnic tensions, and the community breakdown that has recently resulted from internal displacement.

The Peacekeeping Response

In September 2007 the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of MINURCAT to eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic to ensure security within the refugee camps. The resolution also authorized the European Union to deploy a military force (EUFOR) to provide area security and force protection for the lightly armed UN police. Unfortunately neither the mandate nor the configuration of the peacekeeping forces adequately addresses the generalized threat of banditry and impunity.

MINURCAT is a force of 300 UN police, mandated to train and mentor 850 Chadian gendarmes who will be charged with providing protection to refugees, internally displaced people, and humanitarian actors in the refugee camps throughout eastern Chad. Conspicuously absent from the mandate is a political role for the UN mission, which prevents MINURCAT leadership from intervening to resolve the root causes of the insecurity. The Special Representative of the Secretary General, the civilian head of MINURCAT, has made some effort to involve himself in the national and regional peacebuilding discussions, but without a clear and unequivocal mandate to do so, his efforts will continue to be marginal.

MINURCAT is still in the very early stages of its deployment and is largely invisible. While the senior management and a small number of staff are deployed to the field, the bulk of the mission, consisting of the UN-trained Chadian gendarmerie and the UN police mentors, has yet to deploy. Therefore, it is very hard to judge what sort of impact this force will have.

EUFOR, on the other hand, has been operational since March 15th and is omnipresent in the areas in which it has been deployed. It is a modern force, configured and

equipped to confront a military threat. However, while the EUFOR troops can respond to incidents of criminality that happen in their presence, they can not conduct investigations or pursue arrests.

EUFOR troops have worked hard to adapt existing resources to the realities they confront. Frequent and increasingly far reaching patrols of major humanitarian routes and vulnerable areas have had some deterrent effect on bandits. Furthermore, the presence of EUFOR soldiers seems to have set an example, resulting in more professional behavior from the Chadian national army and gendarmerie.

EUFOR may not be ideally suited to address the generalized insecurity, but it has proved useful in particular instances, such as the recent rebel attack on the town of Goz Beida, when it deterred looters, monitored rebel activities, and evacuated 250 humanitarian staff. Nevertheless, it will be withdrawn in March 2009, leaving a potential gap that will have to be filled by some other means.

An effective strategy to address conflict resolution in Chad will have to go well beyond the narrow camp protection mandate MINURCAT currently has. Years of displacement have broken down the local traditional justice systems, and the government emphasis on military defense has left its structures for law and order in a state of total decay. MINURCAT must be given the mandate and resources to improve law and order in order to resolve the banditry and the prevailing sense of impunity that is the primary threat to civilians and humanitarian actors throughout the east.

Politically, MINURCAT must have the means and mandate to engage constructively at a national and regional level in order to encourage governance and human rights reforms, and to support processes aimed at regional reconciliation. Specifically, the Special Representative and his staff should be given the mandate and resources to work closely with UN and AU officials in Sudan and CAR, the government of Chad, and other countries in the region to encourage a normalization of relations between the two countries and to act as an honest broker to bring Chad, Chadian rebels groups, and international actors to the table to resolve the root causes of Chad's internal conflicts.

Finally, a military element with capabilities similar to those of the current EUFOR deployment will still be necessary for force protection and emergency response, and any UN follow-on force should be designed with the ability to respond quickly to severe security threats in remote areas.

Erin Weir and Mpako Foaleng assessed the security conditions in eastern Chad in June 2008.