THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA: THE DARFUR EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of the UN in peacekeeping operations in Africa with particular reference to the Darfur crisis in Western Region of Sudan. This is so because Sudan is rich in mineral resources. In specific terms the study will look at the various actors and causes of the Darfur crisis, the UN peacekeeping operations and its contributions in Darfur. The qualitative method is adopted and the use of secondary data will be employed for data generation and analysis as well. The study reveals the different groups involved in the Darfur conflict. The paper further proved that the competition over the scarce primary resources in Darfur-arable land and water triggered armed conflict between the Arabs and black Africans. The two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) accused the Sudan government of discriminating along ethnic lines against the black Africans, resisted the north dominated west, took arms and attacked the government of Sudan forces. Khartoum responded by launching attacks against civilian populations as this was followed by attacks through the GoS sponsored militias known as the “Janjaweed”. The militias committed serious abuses including; excessive killing of civilians, destruction of houses and farmlands and, severe torture of the Darfuris. The study will also assess the impact, challenges and how lasting peace could be restored to the conflict in Darfur as well as protecting the internal displaced persons (IDPs).

Keywords: Actors, Conflict, Darfur, Peacekeeping, United Nations

INTRODUCTION

The literature on contemporary wars in Africa treats them as complex of hybrid wars; civil wars, interstate wars and cross-border insurgenacies. The conflict in Darfur has lasted for more than a decade, but the quest for sustainable peace is still not guaranteed. Sudan was one of the first African nations to achieve independent after World War II in 1956. But the country had deteriorated into a war-torn land with diminishing agricultural resources and increasing poverty in spite of its oil riches between the Arab-dominated North and the Christian and Animists South.

The West region of Darfur is the heart land of North Africa that is geopolitically and economically important to Khartoum. Its agricultural produce and oil revenue account for a large amount of Sudanese domestic income. The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) claimed that the Omar Al-Bashir Government of Sudan discriminates
against the Non-Arab in Darfur (Dagne, 2004). The conflict pits the three African ethnic groups, the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit against nomadic Arab ethnic groups. Historically, the people of Darfur have long been discriminated along ethnic lines. In recent years, the National Islamic Front (NIF) regime in Sudan’s capital of Khartoum has refused to control the increasing violence. The competition between Arabs and black Africans over the scarce primary resources in Darfur-arable land and water triggered armed conflict between the two groups.

However, the Darfur conflict has assumed an international dimension since 2003 when the two rebel groups emerged to challenge the National Islamic Front (NIF) government in Darfur. The SLA and JEM forces scaled up their attacks on Sudanese police and military target, while the government responded with a counter-insurgency operation employing the militias known as the “Janjaweed”. In the light of the above, between 200,000 and 400,000 people were killed and about 2.5 million persons were displaced (Barber, 2009). This situation was regarded as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis or “genocide” by the United Nations and the United States respectively.

Consequently, the primary actors in the armed conflict are the government, rebels and militia groups. The use of violence in addressing problems was apparently seen from the economic and social structure of the country, ideologies, the quest for power at various levels, and the struggle for natural resources. In a situation where human security was threatened by response of government, rebels and militias who were directly involved in the different level of conflict (Wassara, 2010). The government’s use of the militia against the civilian population of Darfur brought the feelings of political, social and economic marginalization that are felt throughout the country.

It is worthy to note that several rebel groups were directly or indirectly involved in the conflict in Sudan, the Mutineers, Ayanya, Eastern Front, and Sudan People Liberation Army fighting against the government of Sudan. This is an indication that the number of Sudanese rebel groups is increasing, leading the World to describe the conflict as “North-South Conflict”. For example, Wassara attest that there are also rebel groups in areas such as Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile and in Eastern Sudan.

The conflicts which claimed more lives require attention from international community. The Darfur crisis demands decisive actions to stop the violence and punish perpetrators and those involved in the crime. With the escalation of violence which remain unabated and the deteriorating human security situation, the United Nations decided to deployed peacekeepers with a view to resolving the crises.

In attempt to end the conflicts, the UN mandated sixty nine peace missions through the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to provide security, monitor activities and create the enabling environment for stability and peaceful transformation of societies emerging from conflict. According to Franke & Warnecke ( 2009) the UN has made useful contributions to peacekeeping operations and some of the countries the UN has supported include: Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Haiti, Kosovo, Somalia, Sudan, DRC, Angola, Sierra-Leone, Mozambique, Haiti, Elsavador, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Tajikistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovinia, Iraq, Cyprus, Lebanon and a host of others.

**OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to critically look at the role of the United Nations in Peacekeeping operations in Africa with particular reference to Darfur western region of Sudan. In fact, the paper will examine the actors, causes of the Darfur crisis, the United Nations contributions, its
impacts, and challenges, and how lasting peace could be brought to the conflict in Darfur.

Specifically, this study in general will contribute to knowledge and to the existing literature in Darfur and other peacekeeping operations. Again, it will be useful to the United Nations peacekeeping policy formulation and implementation. Also, the study will however be of relevance to researchers, policy makers, academia, international organization, states and regional bodies who are interested in a peaceful solution to the Darfur crisis.

In order to achieve the aforementioned aim of the study on the role of the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Darfur, its important to consider the activities phenomenon which has bearing on the subject matter. The method used is the secondary data that is qualitative and explanatory in nature. This method is adopted because it has a unique way of collecting data for easy interpretation and understanding.

THE DARFUR CONFLICT

Darfur region occupy one fifth of the area of Sudan approximately 250,000 square kilometer with about 1.7 million population. Darfur is larger than Egypt and it is like the size of France. Geographically, it’s made up of Plateau, 2,000-3,000 feet above sea-level. It borders Libya to the North-West, Chad to the West and the Central African Republic to the South West, (www.sudanwatch.com).

The name Darfur means the homeland (dar) of the Fur. There are three major ethnic groups that have occupied Darfur since the time of Darfur sultanate in the 1950s. The “black”, including the non-Arab sedentary farmers such as the Fur, Massaleit the millet cultivating ethnic group, and the Zaghawa who are camel nomads dominate northern Darfur while others are, the Tunjur, Dajo and other. Thus as observed by Quach (2004), Darfur had always been independent, enjoying autonomy from the Central Government until Sudan Government got independence in 1956. Most of the Darfurians educated elites are descendants of the Fur ethnic group. Although, the black Africans and Arabs were deeply divided during and after the British occupation, Darfuran identity has not historically been clearly asserted in the region. In the competition for land and resources intermingling and intermarriage have made the Darfuris identity interchangeable between the Fur farmers and the Arab nomads.

This identity clashes was promoted and fuelled by Khartoum’s ‘Islamization’ during the fight over natural resources in the 1980s deadly drought. When the National Congress Party (NCP) came to power in 1989, it attempted to obtain greater control of the Western Sudan using the same “divide-and-rule” strategy it did in the South over the West to exert control over its people and resource-rich territory (Quach, 2004).

The insurgency began in 2003 when the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched attacks against the GoS as part of it campaign to fight against the political and economic marginalization in Darfur. The GoS responded with brutal counter-insurgency against the people of Darfur through the Janjaweed militias. The violence was as a result of the conflict over natural resources when the nomadic Arab ethnic group encroached into the farming communities of Darfur for water and grazing which triggered armed conflict between the Arabs and non-Arab groups. Reeves (2005) hold that the people have long been neglected and marginalized in all spheres which necessitated the violence in Darfur.

However, scholars are of the opinion that the militias were not just armed as a counter-insurgency measure against the Dafuris but rather, the rebellion against the Khartoum government emerged as a response to the patterns of militia atrocities that was already
widespread. The government sponsored militias committed a reign of terror, looting of villages, burning of crops, harassment and brutal murder of the Darfuris. In fact, many died, villages destroyed and millions of civilians fled to neighboring Chad and Central Africa republic where they were accommodated in temporary camps as refugees. The worsening situation call for urgent attention as individuals, international organizations and government agencies supported and sent relief materials to the people in Darfur.

**ORIGIN OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

The inability of the League of Nation to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War was the major reason for the formation of the United Nations. The vast destruction, shocking death toll and terrifying new weapons of the World War II sparked renewed efforts to ensure world peace and security through the establishment of a responsive and efficient international organization (Magstadt, 2006).

The founders of the UN were specifically interested in addressing the fundamental flaws which rendered the League of Nation ineffective and ineffectual. A major effort was made to ensure that no potential member state was excluded from the organization. According to Magstadt, the shortcomings of the League of Nations, its limited membership, absence of great powers such as the United States meant that the league’s mandate was Universal in theory but circumscribed in practice.

The earliest concrete plan for the formation of a new organization began under the aegis of the US State Department in 1939. The name ‘the United Nations’ was coined by president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941 to describe countries fighting against the axis. It was first in January 1942, when 26 states joined in the declaration as the UN pledged them to continue their joint efforts and not to make peace separately (Schraeder, 2004).

It was in October 30, 1943 that the need for an international organization to replace the League of Nation first started officially in the Moscow declaration used by China, Great Britain, the US and USSR. At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in August and October 1944, the four aforementioned states drafted specific proposals for a Charter for the new organization in June 26, 1945 the UN charter was signed in San Francisco and subsequently ratified by the required number of states in October 24, 1945.

**AFRICA UNION/UNITED NATIONS OPERATIONS IN DARFUR**

Significantly, we cannot talk about the United Nations without making references to the Africa Union (AU). The UN peacekeeping forces operated with the AU peacekeepers, they worked as a joint effort in collaboration with the UN peacekeeping operations until UNAMID was established in 2007 to finding a lasting peace to the conflict in Darfur.

The AU Mission is a peacekeeping force that operated primarily in Darfur. It was established in 2004 with the aim of peacekeeping operations related to the Darfur conflict. The deployed troop was to help in humanitarian aid, protect civilians, and monitor the humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement that involves the GoS, SLA and the JEM (ICG, 2005).

In 2004 when the AU was deployed to end the Darfur conflict, since then it has remained a leading player. According to Luqman & Omede (2012), at first, the AU provided the needed supports before international community waded into the crisis. The AU had clearly shown it commitment by establishing the political negotiations in Addis Ababa and Abuja. However, it has
also helped in putting up the ceasefire commission and ceasefire monitoring force in Sudan, Darfur.

Consequently, the AU peacekeepers were able to protect a small portion of the population in Darfur. Its presence made little contributions in stabilizing the situation and provided the needed political breathing space for the AU led negotiation between both parties in the conflict (Williams, 2006). This organization as it is, remain incompetent, ineffective and lack the capability to improve the security situation as it get worse throughout the entire region (Human Right Watch, 2006).

The AMIS an external military force in Sudan collaborated with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), as the UN/AU played a complementary role. The UNAMIS mandate include; to support and coordinate within its capabilities in its areas of deployment, the voluntary return of refugee IDPs and humanitarians assistance, to contribute towards international efforts, to protect and promote human rights in Sudan, to participate in the Abuja peace talk and to support the deployment and management of the AU in Sudan.

However, with 6,171 military personnel and 1,560 civilian police to strengthen the AMIS forces. Despite these, the security situation continued unabated as there were attacks as civilians and peacekeepers were killed by rebel forces while soldier’s salaries were unpaid for several months. Again, as the situation becomes worsening, parties to the conflict did not in any way cease to violate the provisions of various agreements entered into (Saka, 2006). AMIS was later criticized for failing in its operations as the violence continues to impede humanitarian assistance and delivery because of other problems that include; inadequate funding, lack of personnel, inadequate logistics amongst others.

As the violence intensified in Darfur the UN Security Council agreed in a resolution deployed a joint UN/AU Hybrid forces with 20,000 troops to incorporate the present 7,000 AU force already in Darfur. In addition, it deployed 6,000 personnel under the UN charter to empower it military forces to protect civilians and aid workers (Talbort, 2007). The UN also deployed 10,000 peacekeepers to monitor the peace deal between Governments of Southern Sudan rebels that ended the 21 years civil war. Since then, more than 100 MPS and peers have signed a parliamentary statement calling on the United Nations to authorize a joint peacekeeping operation that will foster peace and stability in the region.

Similarly, the UN Security Council decided to merge AMIS into UNAMID for effective peacekeeping operations in Darfur. Since it merger, UNAMID swung into action and took control of the peacekeeping operations in Darfur. As a joint AU/UN hybrid force, it has the protection of civilians as its core mandate, as well as contributing to security, humanitarian assistance, monitoring and verifying the implementation of agreements, assisting an inclusively political process, contributing to the promotion of human rights and rule of law while monitoring and reporting on the situation along the borders of Chad and Central African Republic (CAR).

The UNAMID composition consists of 19,555 military personnel, including 360 military observers and liaison officers, and about 6,432 police personnel. It also comprises of 26,000 uniformed troops with 5,000 civilian support personnel. Also, as noted by (UNAMID), it has about 3,772 police personnel and 19 police units that is made up of 140 personnel each. In 2011, UNAMID forces were 22,882 uniformed personnel which include; 17,723 troops, 239 military observers, 4920 police. The mission components in Darfur are 1,130 international civilians, with 2,902 local civilian staff and about 481 United Nations Volunteer.

Under Resolution 1769, UNAMID was mandated to:

- Contribute to the restoration of security for humanitarian assistance and facilitate full human access;
• Contribute to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat of physical violence and prevent attacks against civilians;
• Monitor and verify the implementation of various ceasefire agreements signed since 2004;
• Assist with the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreements (DPA) and any subsequent agreements;
• Assist the physical process to ensure its inclusiveness and support the African Union–United Nations joint mediation efforts;
• Contribute to secure environment for economic reconstruction and development, as well as the sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes;
• Assist in the promotion of human rights and the rule of law in Darfur; and,
• Monitor and report on the security situation at Sudan’s border with Chad and the Central African Republic.

The Abuja Peace Agreement

The Abuja Peace agreement was signed in 2006 by the GoS and the Sudan liberation Movement (SLM) led by Mini Menawi with the intention to end the conflict and restore peace in Darfur.

The Abuja Peace Agreement is aimed at addressing the long standing marginalization of the Darfuris and to chart a path for lasting peace. It also required a democratic process to be laid down for the people of Darfur and for them to choose their leader, and determine its status as a region. In 2010 a referendum was held for Darfur to decide whether to be a unitary form of government amongst others (www.Wikipedia.org).

During the peace agreement, both parties could not come to terms as the AU mediation panel was unable to accept the proposal relating to the resolution of the root cause of the conflict which if adhered to, would have brought significant step toward a peaceful and lasting political solution in Darfur. On the other hand, the SLA rejected the peace agreements because the GoS failed to address the genuine issues in the country and the economic disparity between Darfur region and Sudan.

The Doha Agreement

The Doha Agreement which is also known as “the Darfur Peace Agreement” was signed in 2011 between the GoS and the rebel groups. This agreement was to establish a compensation (fund) for victims of the Darfur conflict and also established a new Darfur Regional Authority to oversee the region until a referendum to determine its permanent status within the Republic of Sudan (www.Wikipedia, 2011).

The agreement also made provision for power sharing at the national level. The movements also nominated two state governors in the Darfur region. The Doha agreement is yet to be reached as the GoS refuse to accept the proposal of the rebels while the JEM refused to sign any deal, open talks with rebel groups on ceasefire, negotiate the situation of its combatants, participate in the political institutions in the country in order to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur.

In the period before the Abuja and Doha agreement between 2002 to 2004 six agreements were signed between the government and the various factions which include; the protocol of Machakos, these agreement centered on the rights of self-determination for the people of South Sudan, and the state and religion. Others are security arrangements, wealth-sharing and power
sharing (Birikorang, 2009 pg3-4). The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was a blend of all the six agreements signed in January 2005 eventually paved way for the establishment of UN mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to oversee it implementation. The civil war was however concluded in Sudan with the signing of the CPA, yet violence still persists which constitutes a major threat to international peace, stability and security in the region as, “a stable Sudan would have required a peaceful Darfur”.

IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE UN IN DARFUR

The sole purpose of the UN is to promote international peace and security. Since its inception the UN has contributed and made impact in terms of security to conflict prone areas. The UN has involved in peacekeeping operations to end conflicts and foster reconciliation by conducting successful peacekeeping operations in several countries. It also made remarkable contributions to fragile new states and helped open path to development as major peace building remain.

The Darfur conflict did not only have major impact on the Darfuris but also to other countries around the region especially in Chad where about 200,000 refugees flee. Again, in Eritrea and Ethiopia as the UN/AU mission relocated several persons in Western Darfur as a result of the security situation to areas where peace and security can be guaranteed for IDPs and aid workers in its territory.

The United Nations/Africa Union Hybrid Missions in Darfur (UNAMID) made significant impact and contributions in Darfur with its robust military personnel. In 2004, the UN deployed 54,200 troops, 6,000 police force and over 11,000 international civilians in its peace operations. In 2006 a total number of 70,000 military and police force were deployed while in 2007 the UN authorized the deployment of 26,000 peacekeepers to stop the violence in Darfur (Gowan, 2008). UNAMID has facilitated and made easy delivery of relief materials (aid) to parts of Darfur that have long been inaccessible in collaboration with other agencies in the North, South and Western Darfur. Beside this, it has facilitated the protection of civilians by enhancing the relationship with governments and armed movements.

Consequently, the United Nations/Africa Union Peacekeeping Mission (UNAMID) collaborated with the GoS, major donors and non-governmental agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO to launch an International Water Conference at the state capital (Khartoum) in June 2011 for suitable peace in the region. This is to meet the $1billion, six years of 65 inter-related water projects that will ease the water problems in Darfur. The impact of these agencies through the UN support is felt in Darfur which will enhance and contribute to peace building and, environmental sustainability. UNICEF intends to contribute $23 million annually in Darfur. Also the GoS proposed $216 million while the Arab league has express her interest in contributing a total sum of $100 million for six years with support from IDB, ADB as well as its representative from Turkey, Japan, United Kingdom and the US respectively (www.Unamid-Unmission.Org). The Darfur International Water Conferences for sustainable peace is geared toward providing sufficient, equitable, and proper management of water resources in tackling the major factor threatening the lives of the people living in Darfur.

CHALLENGES OF THE UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN DARFUR

Today, UNAMID is the World largest and first ever joint mission deployed by the UN with contributions from other countries. The UN has faced an uphill task in its peacekeeping
operations as Darfur conflict poses great challenges to both the AU and UN as the latter is the custodian of international peace and security. UNAMID has robustly done well in the area of peacekeeping, but some of the challenges include:

First peacekeepers are too few to carry out its operations as this necessitated most countries who promised to deploy their troops feel reluctant because of the dangerous situation in Darfur. Many peacekeepers were held hostage and killed by rebels while no fewer than 90 military vehicles were hijacked at gun point. However, more than 50 AU soldiers lost their lives while 12 persons were killed as a result of the attack by rebels in Darfur (Birikorang, 2009).

Second peacekeepers in the region sent to monitor ceasefire are most times the target as they were often attacked by warring factions to the extent that more than 20 rebel groups who had different interest, goals and demand killed UNAMID peacekeepers. Again, the hybrid forces do not have enough confident as well as the GoS who lacked commitment these has hampered the process of peace in Darfur.

Third the peacekeepers were under-resourced in terms of equipment and logistics. These inadequacies made the mission more vulnerable to rebel attacks. Besides, peacekeepers were not adequately equipped with enough utilities which are crucial to such mission are not on ground most especially helicopters. In a situation where vehicles had to travel dangerous routes making them prone to attacks from militia groups. This prevented UNAMID peacekeepers to perform and to protect civilians creating conditions that will not allow the successful delivery of humanitarian aid to the internally displaced persons (idps) in the war affected areas (Birikorang, 2009; Saka & Omede, 2012).

Fourth there is the problem of fractionalization of rebel into different faction. The splintering of rebel is not in the spirit of peace as this has undermined the enforcement of ceasefire and peace effort. Saka and Omede (2012) are of the view that it has caused mistrust among parties in the conflict, resulting to constant breaches of ceasefire agreement and increasing attacks between them and against civilians. For Example, the splintering of the rebels that followed in the wake of the 2006 Darfur peace agreement in Abuja has made the realization of lasting peace in Darfur to become elusive.

Finally UNAMID was faced with several criticisms for its inability to provide adequate funding and structural support in Darfur. Besides the $1 billion contribution by the European Union, US, Canada and Japan in support for the AU budget and camps operated by the AU force in Darfur. According to Onoja (2008), holds that the Mission still requires more funds as the AU peacekeepers have to buy their own paint to turn the green AU berets into UN blue berets. In fact, scholars like Boutrous Boutrous-Ghali and Van der Lijn (2009) observed that lack of political will has also undermined the success of UN operations in Darfur. For example, lack of political will was one of the challenges confronting the UN as this was one of the reasons why the UN was found wanting in its peacekeeping operations in Rwanda.

THE UN ROLE IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS AFRICA

African continent is rich in terms of human and natural resources. Africa holds a strategic place in the world. It contains many minerals that are necessary for industrial growth. The continent sits in the middle of the three of the world’s most important trade routes; the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea (Harden, 1990). Its fifty four (54) states represent over one fourth of all votes within the United Nation’s system.

Historically, the United Nations predates the majority of African States. It was essentially to prevent the reoccurrence of another World War. It was not clear however if the United Nations
was established with Africa in mind given that most African states were still under colonial enclaves yet, it was through the UN charter’s universal declaration of human rights and the right to self-determination of peoples that African colonial territories drew their aspiration for independence and the struggles that eventually culminated in the independence of most African States. With their emergence as independent political entities, they were invited to join the UN in a bid to promote international peace and security along with other African States.

Many African States were inducted into global politics only few months after their independence when the UN urge them to contribute and deploy a contingent of their national troops to the democratic republic of Congo for peacekeeping under her auspices. This request provided the first unmistakable indication that Africa was already fully accepted as credible members of the world community. It also confirmed the fact that African States were manifestly destined to play important roles in world affairs for being faithful to the ideals of the UN. Nigeria’s major General J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi eventually became the overall commanding officer of the UN forces in the Congo. Since then, Africa has continued to make useful contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. The involvement of African States in UN peacekeeping missions has enabled the conduct of free and fair elections in several of these post-conflict countries. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has commended Nigeria’s efforts and commitment to its peacekeeping operations in countries affected by conflicts. According to a report, Nigeria occupies one of the first five positions as the largest Contributing Troop (Country) after Ethiopia (This day Newspaper). See Figure 1 at the appendix. Nigeria ranked among the first five top twenty contributors of Uniformed Personnel to UN Peacekeeping Operations.

Besides peacekeeping, Africa has also participated effectively in many UN sponsored programmes through its agencies like the WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO, etc. The impacts of these agencies are felt in most part of the world. Africa has produced two Secretaries-General of the UN in Boutrous-Boutrous Ghali of Egypt and Kofi Annan of Ghana both of whom have left enduring imprints on the fabric of the organization. Other eminent Africans have also served in other agencies of the UN in various capacities i.e. Adebayo Adedjei and K.Y. Amoako were under Secretariat-General of the UN’s Economic Commission (ECA) Teslim Elias served as president of the ICJ. Major General Joe Garba was the President of the 44th Session of the General Assembly. Ibrahim Gambari also served as Special Representative and Head of the UN/AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur (www.Un.org). Most importantly, the UN has continued to play a major role and as well make useful contributions to peacekeeping operations in Africa. However, some of the Africa countries include: Namibia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, DRC, Angola, Sierra-Leone, Mozambique, Burundi, New Guinea, Cote d’ Ivoire, Darfur and a host of others. In the light of this achievements in peacekeeping operations, Africa has made up to 50,000 of the 65,000 of the peacekeeping force deployed worldwide (Pan, 2005).

THE UN AND PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA

It is germane to know that there are institutions at the regional, continental and international level that are dedicated to bringing peace in Africa. The question is the nexus between the UN and these organizations should be structured to possibly maintain peace and security.

The relationship between the UN, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) has in recent times received significant attention due to the incessant conflict resolution on the continent. De coning (2010) is of the opinion that AU and
the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) like ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC at the regional level has increased the capacity to manage peace situation. This is so because the AU has intervened in several crises states in Africa and has deployed its first three operations in AMIB-Burundi, AMIS in Darfur and AMISOM in Somalia. Apparently, the UN has also worked together with the AU and ECOWAS in the area of peacekeeping, peace building and also in the maintenance of peace, security and stability in various peacekeeping operations in Africa as this will be explored.

**Regional Peacekeeping (ECOWAS)**

The approach to addressing conflict in Sub-Regional West Africa was born out of the fact that without peace there can be no meaningful integration and development. With the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975 with the mandates of improving regional integration in West Africa such as in the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra-Leone gave the organization more relevance in political matter rather than economic issues (Ajayi, 2008).

ECOWAS regional mechanism for conflict resolution has provided regional support in crises prone areas for member states with ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG) as a regional interventional force. ECOMOG a sub-regional peacekeeping force was in control during Liberia civil war with Nigeria playing the role of a big “Brother” within Africa this justified her intervention in the conflict. During the 90s, Nigeria peacekeepers were in Sierra-Leone and Guinea-Bissau demonstrating her importance, commitment and support in peacekeeping operations in West Africa sub-region (Adebayo, 2003).

Consequently, ECOMOG troops were deployed to Uganda as well as Tanzania during crises period. ECOMOG also intervened to reverse the military coup in Sierra-Leone that gave way to the UN peacekeeping operation (UNAMIL). Also in the takeover of the military that resulted in a second ouster of President Joao Bernado Vieira of Guinea Bissau and Cote d’Ivoire which was later replaced with (UNOCI) a UN peacekeeping force, see (www.bm/v.gv.at).

Significantly, in its contribution ECOMOG ambushed the rebel forces in Liberia and forced them to accept negotiation that led to a cease-fire, the civil war which lasted for 15 years left many people killed and several thousand displaced. The involvement of ECOMOG was also to prevent the overthrow of Samuel Doe and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor (Agbu et al, 2006). This led to the removal of Charles Taylor from Liberia who was faced with war crime charges and later granted political asylum in Nigeria. Again, in the case of Cote d’Ivoire when a decision were made by over ten ECOWAS Heads of States appealed to Gbagbo to yield power to Quattara without delay while condemning the attempt to go against the will of the people warn that sanction will be placed on him if he refuses to quit.

**Continental Efforts (AU)**

The African Union (AU) was formed in 2002 from the vestige of the organization of African Unity (OAU) which was founded in 1963 on the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference. It aim is to protect the security of the continent rather than the sovereignty of individual states. It plays an important role in peacekeeping operations. Recently, the AU deployed peacekeepers to Somalia and Darfur, the latter in joint peacekeeping operations with the UN which marked AU first attempt to address its own security challenges.

The AU was thus a stabilizing mission after which the UN deploys peacekeepers to take
charge over post-conflict peace building. For example, in 2003 and 2004 the AU deployed AMIB in Burundi which was taken over by the UN (ONUB) and repeatedly in Liberia where ECOWAS deployed ECOMIL followed by UN operations. In the words of De coning (2010), similar occurrence also took place in 2005 and 2007 respectively when AU deployed AMIS which was later handed over to a Joint military force (UNAMID) in Darfur.

The deployment of AU military observer groups in Rwanda was eventually taken over by the UN and its peace intervention in Ethiopia/Eritrea, Burundi and Somalia. Ajayi (2008) posit that interventional effort by the UN peacekeepers indicates a successful operation while the failure of the UN in some parts of Africa such as; Somalia and Rwanda emphasises the need for a stronger response to conflict in Africa in the future.

During 2005 the UN Security Council issued a resolution of 1631 “which recognizes some priority areas for collaboration between the UN and other regional organizations”. As a matter of fact, this took place when the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the AU engaged in a training programme aimed at civilians, both military and police personnel that provided the needed support towards realization of African standby force (ASF) and to enhances the AU plan for managing its peace support programmes (Cilliers, 2008).

**International Efforts (UN)**

Its worthy of note that the UN has intervened in peacekeeping operations in Africa for decades this has helped countries torn by conflict to achieve security, peace and stability. The problems encountered reflect the difficulties of peacekeeping itself. That is “the peace to be kept between disputing states and these states will provisionally and internationally agreed on some basis for living in peace, which external force are called to police “(Clapham, 1999).

In the first four decades, only one peacekeeping operation was carried out by the UN. This operation is “Congo” between 1960-1964 while in the 1990s, more than seventeen peacekeeping operations was carried out making peacekeeping in Africa a success including countries like Namibia and Mozambique to mention but a few (Walterdorn, 2003).

At the continental level, the continent of Africa was unable to achieve the desired result for peacekeeping operations by the United Nations. According to the Journal of International Peacekeeping Editorial (2009), as George Bush senior ushered in his new World Order when the Somalia crisis erupted and the challenges faced by the UN which made her experienced it first failure in Somalia then, later in Rwanda.

As soon as the colonial order ended, problems confronted the new African States such as; Angola, Libya, Chad, Liberia, Sudan (Darfur) Uganda, Somalia, Rwanda, Tunisia and a host of others. These made the UN to endorse peacekeeping and peace building in order to maintain peace and stability and, to integrate those involved in the conflict as it has made remarkable contributions in no small measure in the aforementioned countries (www.relief.web.int). See **Table I and II at appendix**, the list of the United Nations peacekeeping operations/peace building operations in Africa.

**THE UN EFFORTS TOWARDS ACHIEVING PEACE IN DARFUR**

The United Nations and its officials have described a dire situation in Darfur where for a long time little or no rainfall (drought) led to the violence which resulted in the deaths of many in Darfur and about 1.8 internal displaced persons (IDPs). In achieving peace in Darfur, an Act on peace
and accountability was passed in 2006 as pressure was on UN and ICC to prosecute the Sudanese President for violating international law, crimes committed against humanity which the UN and the US described as “genocide” that was targeted at the Darfuris. The International Criminal Court (ICC) codified specific economic and legal sanction against the Sudanese government Omar Al-Bashir who masterminded the killings in Darfur (www.wikipedia, 2011).

Most importantly, the Special Representative and Head of UN/AU Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur Ibrahim Gambari recall that UNAMID have increased its patrol and worked together with UN country team and actors to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian services to vulnerable communities. According to him, the rebel groups in Darfur as a matter of fact should continue to engage in hold-out with the GoS and agree to the cessation of conflict. Recalling that if the recent signing of the Draft on Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) by the GoS and rebel forces is put in place it will be a step geared toward sustainable peace and stability in Darfur (www.un.org).

CONCLUSION

This paper has made attempt to examine the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping operations in Africa with particular reference to Darfur crisis of western region of Sudan. Efforts were made to look at the impact and contributions of the UN both at the regional, continental and international level. The paper also assesses the challenges confronting the UN operation in Darfur. More so, an attempt was made by the UN toward achieving peace in the troubled region. This is so because a peaceful Darfur will bring about peace and security. It argues that in spite of the UN presence in Darfur the conflict still persists.

Consequently, these explain the face of the genocidal perpetrators. However, the duty to prosecute doctrine requires that it is necessary to confront and prosecute such perpetrators regardless of who they are. This is to instill the sanctity of international law and to prevent future crimes against humanity. The importance of resolving conflict is therefore a crucial step in the International Community and attempts to stop genocide, and to foster international law. The essence of peace keeping by the United Nations is to ensure peace, security and stability and, to protect civilians under the principle of responsibility to protect (R2p).

REFERENCES


Appendix i.

Figure 1.

Source: UNDPI (2011:3)

Appendix ii.

Table 1: List of UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chad/Libya</td>
<td>UNASOG</td>
<td>United Nations Aouzou Group Observer Mission in Chad/Libya</td>
<td>May 1994-June 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>UNOCI</td>
<td>United Nations Operation in Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>April 2004-Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR/Chad</td>
<td>MINUSCA</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad</td>
<td>September 2007-Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>UNAMIS</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Sudan</td>
<td>March 2005-Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darfur</td>
<td>UNAMID</td>
<td>African Union/United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur</td>
<td>July 2007-Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UN Department of Public Information (DPI) 2008.
Table II. List of current peace building operations in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>UNPOS</td>
<td>United Nations Political Office in Somalia</td>
<td>Since 15 April 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>UNOGBIS</td>
<td>United Nations Peace Building Support office in Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>Since 3 March 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>BONUCA</td>
<td>United Nations Peace building Office in the Central African Republic</td>
<td>Since 15 February 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>UNOWA</td>
<td>Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General in West Africa</td>
<td>Since 29 November 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra-Leone</td>
<td>UNOSIL</td>
<td>United Nations integrated office in Sierra-Leone</td>
<td>Since 1 January, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>BINUB</td>
<td>United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi</td>
<td>Since 1 January 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UN Department of Public Information (DPI) 2008.