

Sudan Government and rebels seek peace agreement for Darfur

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, February 11, 2009

[Afrol News](#) 10 February 2009

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

Sudanese government officials and rebels have resumed talks in Qatar towards ending an armed conflict that erupted in 2003 and finding a lasting peace in the country. However, rebels have expressed skepticism on government commitment to the talks after deciding to go to negotiations table with Justice and Equality Movement abandoning other rebel groups.

Reports from Qatar said rebel representatives have already announced a boycott of the negotiations, saying the reunion will be one of the main groups excluding Darfur groups.

The rebel group Movement for the Liberation of Sudan, announced on Monday that the intention to boycott the talks was an agreement between the rebel groups to seek a different route in resolving the Darfur crisis.

The rebel groups took up arms in Darfur in February 2003, and until now have failed to sign a peace deal that includes the government and all rebel groups.

Meanwhile, the joint mission of UN peacekeeping and the African Union in Darfur (UNAMID) reported an investigation into an incident in which one of its helicopters was shot by unknown assailants.

The aircraft, which distributed food in El Fasher, was damaged but landed without serious problems and no casualties were reported, according to UNAMID.

The mission has also reported that clashes continue to cause massive displacement of the recent conflict in Muhajariya in southern Darfur.

On a visit to the area to assess the situation after clashes between government forces of Sudan and rebel group that seized Muhajariya town, the UN humanitarian agencies noted serious shortages of food, medicine and water.

The agencies expressed concern about the situation, saying some 89,000 people in Muhajariya and adjacent areas still have not received food rations.

The United Nations says about 300,000 people have been killed in Darfur since ethnic minority rebels took up arms against the Arab-dominated Khartoum government in 2003, complaining of discrimination.

Sudan says 10,000 people have died, and denies charges that its soldiers and allied Janjaweed militiamen have committed war crimes and genocide in Darfur.

Government

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