

## UNSC extends mandate for Darfur panel on arms embargo and sanctions

Friday 15 February 2013

February 14, 2013 (WASHINGTON) - The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Thursday have renewed an initial one-year mandate for the panel of experts set up to oversee the arms embargo in Darfur and sanctions against those impeding peace in the region.

The panel, which is currently chaired by Argentinean Maria Cristina Perceval, was established on 29 March 2005 to monitor the arms embargo on the Janjaweed militias and "the parties to the N'djamena Ceasefire Agreement and any other belligerents".

The committee has also been monitoring the implementation of individual and travel sanctions, including notorious militia leader Musa Hilal and the former commander of the western military region, General Mohamed Gaffar Elhassan.

The UNSC on Thursday endorsed resolution 2091 (2013) under the Chapter of the UN Charter, extending the panel's mandate for the period ending 31 December 2013.

The 15-member body also expressed concern that some technical assistance to Sudan could be used for military purposes and constitutes a violation of the arms embargo decided in 2004, with all states urged to be mindful of the risks.

In its report to the UNSC, the panel raised the issue of Ghassan Schbley, a US national and member of the panel, who was prevented from entering Sudan on 4 December 2012 by the security service because of his activities when he was a member of another UN panel on Somalia/Eritrea sanctions.

The report, which covers the panel's activities from 1 January to 31 December 2012, also blamed Khartoum for not implementing travel and financial sanctions. It also reported on the "continued violations of the arms embargo, international humanitarian law and human rights perpetrated in Darfur".

However, in its resolution, drafted by the US delegation, the UNSC expressed its support for the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and urged political talks to end the 10-year conflict.

"Expressing concern about the political and military links between non-signatory armed groups in Darfur and groups outside Darfur, and demanding that any form of direct or indirect external support for such groups ceases, and condemning any actions by any armed group aimed at forced overthrow of the government of Sudan", the resolution further stated.

The UNSC also requested the panel assess progress towards removing impediments to the political process, as well as threats to stability in Darfur and the region,

The panel was asked to provide monthly updates to the council about violations of international humanitarian or human rights law or other atrocities committed, including sexual and gender-based violence and grave violations and abuses against children.

It has also been asked to provide the Sanctions Committee with information on the individuals and entities that meet the criteria for listing.

The Sudanese ambassador to the United Nations, Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman, underlined in his speech before the council that his government continues to cooperate with the Sanctions Committee and the expert panel since its creation in 2005.

However, he said Sudan could refuse to cooperate with any member of the panel if he is involved in any activities that constituted a threat to national security, suggesting that in such a case, the UN should replace him.

He further denied that Sudan uses technical assistance for military purposes, describing the statement as a "fallacious" claim, saying Sudan used its air capacities only "for peaceful and civilian purposes".

The report by the panel of experts is usually confidential, with some believing it should be released for the sake of transparency, while others argue against its publication, saying it often contains inaccuracies.

Normally only a letter from the head of the panel to the UNSC summarising its activities is annually published.