

Beat: News

Gunmen kill 2 UN peacekeepers in Sudans Darfur

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USPA News - Two peacekeepers were killed Sunday when unidentified gunmen attacked a United Nations (UN) convoy in Sudan's troubled Darfur region, the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) said, raising the number of blue helmets killed in Darfur so far this year to 16. The attack happened on Sunday morning when unidentified assailants opened fire at a UNAMID convoy near Greida, a town approximately 100 kilometers (62 miles) southeast of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. One assailant was killed and another injured when peacekeepers returned fire.

Martin Nesirky, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, confirmed a Jordanian and a Senegalese peacekeeper were killed in the attack. Jordan's Public Security Directorate identified the casualty as Major Talal Rjub, but other details about the circumstances of the incident were not immediately available. Ban said he was "appalled" to learn of yet another attack against a UNAMID convoy in Darfur. "The Secretary-General condemns in the strongest terms this cowardly attack on UNAMID peacekeepers and expects the Government of Sudan to swiftly bring to justice those responsible for this and previous attacks on UNAMID," Nesirky said. Sunday's attack came just over a month after an unidentified group of armed people attacked a UNAMID convoy near Kabkabiya, located approximately 140 kilometers (87 miles) west of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state. A peacekeeper from Rwanda who was shot during the attack later succumbed to his injuries. About 19,150 troops, military observers and police officers and nearly 4,500 civilians currently serve with UNAMID, which assumed peacekeeping duties from an earlier African Union mission at the start of 2008. A total of 59 UNAMID blue helmets have so far been killed in the line of duty while serving in Darfur, including 16 deaths this year alone. The UNAMID force is tasked with protecting civilians, promoting an inclusive peace process and help ensuring the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance across Darfur, an arid region on Sudan's western flank. Fighting and large-scale displacement has convulsed the region since 2003 when rebels took up arms against the Government, whose military forces responded with the support of allied militiamen.

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