Beat: Politics

Rwandan peacekeeper shot dead in attack on UN convoy

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USPA News - A Rwandan peacekeeper died Sunday after being shot during an attack by unidentified gunmen on a United Nations (UN) convoy in Sudan`s troubled Darfur region, the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) said on Monday. The attack happened on Sunday when 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.

It was on its way to the town of Saraf Umra, said UNAMID spokeswoman Guiomar Pau. "One soldier from Rwanda, who was shot during the assault, succumbed to his injuries later in the Mission`s hospital in Kabkabiya," Pau said. She said one of the UNAMID vehicles was also hijacked during Sunday`s attack, which follows a series of similar attacks on peacekeepers in recent months. UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas strongly condemned the attack and extended his "heartfelt condolences" to the family of the peacekeeper. "This was clearly a crime against humanity by desperate individuals. I once more call on the Government of Sudan to act decisively and quickly in bringing the perpetrators to justice," he said. The UN Security Council, which is composed of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and ten non-permanent members, also condemned Sunday`s attack. "[The members] called on the Government of Sudan to swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice," a press statement said, calling on all parties in Darfur to cooperate with UNAMID. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was "deeply disturbed" to learn of another attack against a UNAMID convoy in Darfur. "The Secretary-General condemns in the strongest terms this attack on UNAMID and expects the Government of Sudan to take swift action to bring the perpetrators of this and previous attacks on UNAMID to justice," said UN spokesman Martin Nesirky. Sunday`s attack came just over a month after unidentified gunmen ambushed a UNAMID Formed Police Unit that was escorting a water convoy from the town of El Geneina to the nearby regional headquarters in West Darfur, killing three Senegalese peacekeepers and injuring another. A vehicle that was hijacked was later recovered. 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 57 UNAMID blue helmets have so far been killed in the line of duty while serving in Darfur, including 14 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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