

**Addis Ababa, November 8, 2012 (WIC)** – The acting head of the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, known by the acronym UNAMID, has called on the Government of Sudan to “swiftly” proceed with its investigation into violence which reportedly affected the village of Sigili.

“I urge the Government of Sudan to swiftly conduct its planned investigation into Sigili incident and bring the perpetrators to justice,” said UNAMID’s Acting Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator a.i., Aichatou Mindaoudou.

UNAMID had received reports some days ago of an alleged attack on civilians that resulted in fatalities, an abduction of a civilian and widespread population displacement in Sigili, located in the Shawa area, about 40 kilometres southeast of El Fasher, the capital city of the west Sudanese state of North Darfur. The attack reportedly took place on Friday.

Yesterday, UNAMID deployed a civilian-military team to Sigili, as well as Abu Delek – another area reportedly affected by violence – to verify the reports. The team found Sigili village completely deserted, with apparent signs of an abrupt departure. It also noticed several signs of destruction of housing and property, killed animals, and burnt houses, in addition to ammunition found in different sites across the village. The team was unable to go to Abu Delek.

“On the way to Abu Delek area, located approximately 60 kilometres southeast of El Fasher, the verification team was stopped by members of the Popular Defense Forces, who insisted on searching the nine-vehicle convoy,” UNAMID noted in a news release, referring to an irregular militia allied to the Sudanese army. “After lengthy discussion, the team decided to postpone the mission to Abu Delek and returned to El Fasher.

According UN News, the mission to Abu Delek was the second attempt to access the area. On 25 October, UNAMID dispatched a patrol to verify reports of alleged clashes between Government forces and armed groups. As it approached Abu Delek, the patrol came under heavy gunfire from an unidentified armed group.

Ms. Mindaoudou reiterated her call to all communities across Darfur to exercise restraint, and to put an end to inter-communal violence that has caused deep suffering and unacceptable loss of lives, according to UNAMID.

In addition, she stressed that the peacekeeping operation will continue to work, in “an impartial and independent manner, with all Darfur stakeholders to help reduce tensions, foster reconciliation and promote an inclusive peace process.”

Established in July 2007, UNAMID has the protection of civilians as its core mandate. In addition, the Mission is tasked with facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and assisting with an inclusive peace process in Darfur, among other responsibilities.