This research focused on the international response to the conflict in Darfur in the period between February 2003 and March 2005, while concentrating on the gap between (early) warnings and (early) actions. The conflict had not ended by March 2005 and the international community has remained involved, albeit to varying degrees. This chapter shortly sketches out the main measures taken by third parties to the conflict as well as the security situation in Darfur since 2005.

10.1 2005–2007: Getting UN Peacekeepers in Darfur

The international actions in the rest of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 were focused on securing a peace agreement, which was considered a prerequisite for the transition from an AU to a UN peacekeeping force. One of the major reasons behind the policy of making AMIS a UN mission was the donor fatigue of Western countries, who were the major financial sponsors of the AU force, coupled with concerns about AMIS’ limited effectiveness (Section 7.8.4). The US was especially determined to have a UN force as quickly as possible. This hurriedness stemmed from the US government’s aim to appease the vocal “Save Darfur” grassroots movement, which called for stronger US involvement. Similar protests took place in other Western states, as Photo 1 on the next page illustrates as well.

The fifth round of negotiations resulted in the signing of the “Declaration of principles for the resolution of the Sudanese conflict in Darfur” on 5 July 2005 by the Sudanese government and the two original rebel groups, the SLM/A and JEM.

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According to Flint, this was the “high point” of international diplomatic endeavours to achieve a peace agreement, not least because it is still the only time that these two rebel movements committed themselves to the same agreement.4 While in 2004 the first rounds of negotiations were led by the AU and the Chadian government together, since the seventh round, which started in November 2005, the AU had become the sole mediator. This was the result of the worsening relations between Chad and Sudan, who accused each other of backing rebel groups in each other’s countries (the Chadian government started to actively support the JEM, while the Sudanese government backed Chadian rebels against Déby).5 The mediation was led by AU Special Envoy Salim. The UN only played an observer role, to the discontent of Pronk.6 The seventh round lasted almost six months