

SUDAN

130,000 refugees on the Chad border

I have lost everything now; I have nothing but the fingers of my two hands.

(Refugee in Chad)

As long as the safety of my family is not guaranteed, I don't wish to return to home.

(Refugee in Chad)

There are currently at least 130,000 Sudanese refugees living on the Chad border. Most are in refugee camps but an estimated 40,000 are scattered along a 600 km stretch of the border zone. Eastern Chad is a remote part of the country with little infrastructure. Many refugees have been there for over a year, driven out by the *Janjawid* militia and the Sudanese armed forces in what appears to be a policy of forcible displacement. The *Janjawid* and Sudanese army systematically attacked villages of ethnic groups whose members had founded the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), two armed groups that took up arms against the government in the first months of 2003.

Many refugees have arrived in Chad traumatised by the events they witnessed. As well as often having lost relatives and neighbours killed by the *Janjawid* they have lost their villages, their possessions and their livelihoods. Many women were raped in Darfur by the *Janjawid* and are suffering the after effects of their experiences, such as sexually-transmitted diseases, pregnancy, psychological trauma and social stigmatisation. They are now living in very precarious conditions. The shelters they are able to build from fabrics or from sticks are poor protection against the extreme weather conditions in the region where it is very hot in the day and often very cold at night. The arrival of the rainy season (from May to August) will further exacerbate the humanitarian situation in the region, rendering it even more inaccessible to international humanitarian agencies. The rains will increase the incidence of water-borne diseases such as malaria. This, added to the high malnutrition rates, is likely to lead to a

sharp increase in death rates, especially among vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

The international community has been slow to respond to the crisis in the region and humanitarian agencies have not responded early enough to events despite warnings from organisations such as Amnesty International.

In November 2003, Amnesty International sent a field mission to the Chad border and noted that relief was distributed by UNHCR only to the most vulnerable refugees in the most accessible areas. Many suffered from hunger and thirst. Amnesty International delegates saw how refugees had to dig deep holes in the sand to find water, which was muddy. Many refugees arrived in Chad only with the clothes they had fled with. In May 2004 Amnesty International sent another field mission to the refugee camps in Chad to look into the issue of violence against women. Delegates found that despite the high incidence of violence against women in Darfur, which led to serious after effects, no specific needs assessment for women were carried out and no specific medical provisions were in place. Given the fact that women form the majority of refugees and have many dependents this need becomes all the more urgent. The large influx of refugees into these isolated areas has created a sanitation problem as large numbers of people live close together with no toilet facilities or place to wash. There is poor medical infrastructure in the border areas of Chad, even with the setting up of centres and facilities by the aid organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). The flow of refugees continued, even after the 8 April ceasefire as people left Darfur because of attacks on their villages by the *Janjawid* and government forces.

Refugees along the border are still not safe from attack. They have been targeted by the *Janjawid* and bombed by the government of Sudan air force. As a result the UNHCR has established a number of camps further away

from the border area. The UNHCR has opened eight camps that they say are currently occupied by 90,000 people. However an estimated 40,000 people are still living in difficult conditions outside the camps, with food stocks running out and the rainy season imminent. Added to this they are at risk of further attacks by the *Janjawid* and the Sudanese armed forces.

An estimated 1.2 million people who have been internally displaced in Darfur by the conflict are facing even greater risks. Their danger is compounded by the fact that the very people who have caused their predicament, the *Janjawid*, harass them inside the internally displaced people's camps and attack them outside. The measures taken by the Sudanese government to ensure that people in the internally displaced camps are provided with protection and humanitarian assistance are inadequate. One Sudanese who reached Khartoum after three months in Mokjar camp said: "*It is not a camp but a prison*".

WRITE TO THE CHAD GOVERNMENT CALLING ON IT:

- To ensure that all refugee camps and settlements are located in safe areas away from the border where there is no risk of further attacks from the *Janjawid* militia or the Sudan armed forces;
- to ensure that those refugees who are still at the border and not yet in refugee camps receive adequate protection from attacks by the *Janjawid* militia and the Sudan armed forces and that the civilian and humanitarian nature of the camps and settlements for refugees is upheld;
- to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance including emergency relief and ensure it is provided to all Sudanese refugees in Chad;

- to ensure that adequate facilities are provided to ensure women are not marginalised inside the refugee camps, such as women refugee officers and women doctors to provide advice, and ensure equitable food distribution, and ensure women doctors are available to provide medical care for women who have suffered violence inside Sudan.

ACT NOW!

► Please send your appeals to:

- Général Idriss DEBY
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 74 N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad
Fax: 235 51 45 01/ 52 44 73
- Monsieur Moussa Faki MAHAMAT
Premier Ministre, Chef du gouvernement
Présidence de la République
N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad
- Monsieur Djimtibaye Lapia Neldjita
Ministre de l'Intérieur, de la Sécurité et
de la Décentralisation
Ministère de l'Intérieur
N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad
Fax : 235 52 58 85 or via Ministry of Foreign
Affairs 235 51 91 22
- Monsieur Nagoum YAMASSOUM
Ministre des Affaires étrangères
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
Et de l'Intégration Africaine
N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad
Fax : 235 51 91 22

► Please raise Amnesty International's concerns with your own government ◀

More information on the human rights situation in Darfur can be obtained on Amnesty International's website:

<http://www.amnesty.org/sudan>

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EXTERNAL

