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Sudan: Rape as a weapon of war in Darfur

"Some 15 women and girls were raped in different huts in the village. The Janjawid broke the limbs of some women and girls to prevent them from escaping. The Janjawid remained in the village for six to seven days."

"Five to six men would rape us, one after the other, for hours during six days, every night. My husband could not forgive me after this, he disowned me."

Quotes from Sudanese refugees interviewed by Amnesty International

Girls as young as eight are being raped in Darfur, Sudan, and used as sex slaves. The mass rapes ongoing in Darfur are war crimes and crimes against humanity but the international community is doing very little to stop it, Amnesty International said, launching the report *Rape as a weapon of war*.

Despite the regional and international focus on Darfur and promises by the Sudanese government to disarm the *Janjawid* militia there is still no protection for women and girls.

The report, based on hundreds of testimonies, reveals how women and girls are being raped, abducted and forced into sexual slavery by the *Janjawid*. In almost all attacks on villages recorded by Amnesty International, the government's army were either directly involved or direct witnesses.

"The suffering and abuse endured by these women goes far beyond the actual rape. Rape has a devastating and ongoing impact on the health of women and girls and survivors now face a lifetime of stigma and marginalisation from their own families and communities," said Amnesty International.

This creates far reaching economic and social consequences which make them vulnerable to further human rights abuses. Displacement has also made women and girls more vulnerable and has led to an increase in the number of early marriages as parents attempt to use marriage as a means of protecting their daughters.

"Women and girls are being attacked, not only to dehumanize the women themselves but also to humiliate, punish, control, inflict fear and displace women and to persecute the community to which they belong," said the organization.

Women in Darfur who have undergone female genital mutilation are at an even greater risk of injury and face higher risks of infection by HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases.

"The international community needs to take the issue of rape far more seriously and strenuously. Trained medical professionals must be sent immediately to care for survivors," said Amnesty International.

Amnesty International is also calling for:

All parties to the conflict to stop and publicly condemn the use of rape as a weapon of war and to put adequate mechanisms in place to ensure the protection of civilians.

The *Janjawid* militia to be disarmed and disbanded and placed in a position where they may no longer attack the civilian population.

An international Commission of Inquiry to be established immediately to examine evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law including rape, as well as allegations of genocide.

The perpetrators of attacks on civilians, including sexual violence against women, to be brought to justice in trials that meet international standards of fairness. The safety of victims and witnesses must be protected.

Background

The report *Sudan, Darfur: Rape as a weapon of war, Sexual violence and its consequences* is based on interviews with Sudanese refugees made by Amnesty International during May 2004 in refugee camps in Chad.

Amnesty International's global campaign to Stop Violence Against Women is working to end this and other hidden human rights scandal.

For more information and news related to the campaign visit: <http://news.amnesty.org/mav/actforwomen>

Public Document

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