

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Chad: Government must accept UN forces to protect civilians in East**

Amnesty International today called on the Chadian government to reverse its refusal to accept a United Nations force into its eastern region bordering Sudan, after at least 25 unarmed civilians were killed on 30 March.

The killings took place in the villages of Tiero and Marena, in the Dar Sila region. The attackers set fire to homes in the two villages shooting at men, women and children.

According to the Chadian government, the attackers were Janjawid militia who crossed into Chad from Sudan and were acting together with Chadian Arabs militia. Local self-defence militia apparently managed to repel the attack, but only after the death of at least 25 civilians.

According to local sources, Chadian military personnel stationed at Kou Kou, a village about 50 km away from Tiero and Marena, only intervened a day after the attacks.

"The Chadian government is clearly failing in its duty to protect its civilians affected by conflict in eastern Chad," said Tawanda Hondora, a Deputy Director in the Africa programme of Amnesty International. "This situation is particularly concerning given that the Chadian government is refusing to allow the United Nations to deploy a force capable of protecting civilians from militia attack."

The UN Security Council called for a 'multi-dimensional presence' to be deployed to eastern Chad in August 2006, but the Chadian government, after initially signalling that it would accept such a force, has recently said that it will only accept a police, and not a military, deployment.

"Chad must immediately permit the deployment of a United Nations force which is adequately resourced and possessing a robust mandate to protect civilians affected by the on-going conflict," said Hondora.

"It is particularly worrying that cross-border attacks into Chad by Janjawid militia persist. The deliberate targeting, killing, rape and forced displacement of entire communities is reprehensible."

"The security situation in eastern Chad is still dire. We have seen none of the changes that would make us feel confident that there is durable change in eastern Chad, such as: the dismantling of militias; disarmament; cessation of hostilities between the government and armed opposition groups; justice for perpetrators of violence; and a resolution of the crisis in Darfur, which is intimately connected to what is happening in eastern Chad," said Hondora.

"Obviously, a long-term resolution to the crisis in Chad will only be possible when there is a complete cessation of hostilities between the government and armed opposition groups and when the crisis in Darfur is resolved, but civilians in Chad cannot wait for this to happen--the international community must take action to protect people in eastern Chad and the Chadian government must ensure this happens," he added.

**Background**

It is estimated that the conflict in eastern Chad, involving attacks against civilians by Janjawid militia supported by their local Chadian Arab allies has resulted in the internal displacement of over 120,000 people. Thousands more have been killed, and rape and mass forced displacement are used as weapons of war.

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