

Darfur crisis

Testimonies from Eastern Chad

The following accounts from Chadian internally displaced persons represent a selection of the testimonies gathered by Amnesty International in Eastern Chad in June 2006.

“People were in the village when the Janjawid arrived at 10am. They were more than 300 and they were divided in three columns which were heading in different directions. They were ululating and shouting ‘We came to kill the black slaves.’ They came in the houses and ran after those who were trying to flee. I was running away next to the imam who was very old. He was shot four times in the back and in the leg. They then burnt the village. Only 10 out of 100 houses remained intact. The villagers fled to the village of Muruske.”

A resident of Bir Kedouas village

“When the Janjawid arrived, I took my daughter in my arms and ran away but I was shot in the leg and had to slow down. That is when my daughter Husna was shot.”

The father of a three-year-old girl who was killed in Bir Kedouas

“The village was attacked over three consecutive days on 5, 6 and 7 of February 2006. In the first attack which took place at the cattle camp, five persons were killed: Abaker Suleiman, Hassan Ahmat, Dehie Ibrahim, Abaker Mahamat and Hassan Abdulaye. The two following attacks took place in the village itself. When they attacked, they shouted at the Dajo, “Get out of your house, you slaves, this is not your land.” The villagers fled immediately to Koloy and, after Koloy was attacked, they fled again on 30 March. Koloy was attacked three times between 30 March and 5 April.”

The chief of the village of Torora

“On 3 March 2006, at about 5am, the Janjawid attacked the cattle camp [one kilometre from the village centre]. After the previous looting we decided to store our cattle together between the three villages: N’Djamena, Modaina, and Moukchacha. When other neighbouring villagers heard the fighting they came running to the cattle camp. But the Janjawid had set up ambushes between the camp and the villages. Many of us were killed and we had to let

the cattle go and return to our villages. When we came back though, we heard shooting now near the villages we had come running from. While we were gone the Janjawid had encircled our villages and when we tried to get back in they shot at us. Inside the villages they killed all the men they could. Over the next days they came back over and over again, each time taking more things till we had nothing worth taking anymore. ”

The leader of Modaina village

“After we fled N’Djamena we settled with what we had left under trees on the outskirts of Koloy. When we went to the nearby wadi [Wadi Kadjo, a seasonal water course] the Janjawid found us [and] attacked us, killing three, and stealing the few cattle we had with us. This kept happening every day until the end. In the end, after nearly 10 days of this, the Janjawid came right to where we were staying inside Koloy and took all the small things we had left: bed sheets, beds, cooking pots and more. That was all we could take – we decided then we had to leave for Goz Beida. Those who still had donkeys rode them, those who didn’t went by foot. It took the slowest of us four days to make it to Goz Beida.”

A resident of Koloy village

“On 12 April 2006 at 7.30am, a group of the Chadian rebels, [referring to the FUCD] led by Dr Hassan al Jinedi [a leading member of the FUCD] attacked the Tissi garrison... After several hours of fighting, the government forces withdrew from Tissi. The rebels occupied the town during the day and left. At 2pm, the Janjawid came to loot the barracks and took arms, ammunition, blankets and everything else they could take. During the night, the armed opposition group reoccupied the barracks and left the following morning. Some villagers decided to leave Tissi for Bolong [an area comprising five villages]. After the armed opposition group left and the government forces withdrew, the Janjawid came back several times to loot houses, shops and cattle camps. They did the same in the surrounding villages: in Birnahal on 17 April, in Harraza on 18 April, in Maguila on 27 April, in Eid al-Ghanam on 18 April, in Gozamimi, in Amsisi. Eleven days after the big attack on Tissi, the Chadian soldiers came back and stayed for 10 days. From there they launched attacks against three Sudanese villages [perceived as sympathetic to the FUCD]: Abarjaradil, Gantur and Garai. They exchanged fire with the Janjawid, killed three of them and detained 20 others (among them were Chadian Salamat [Chadians Arabs associated with the Janjawid in Sudan but

now also to a great extent inside Chad]. *Just before the presidential elections, the army left again and the Janjawid came back to loot the neighbouring villages again. The village of Maguila was attacked and 17 people were killed there.*”

A local official from Tissi

“I was in my village when it was attacked. It was around 2.30pm. There was a thick smoke coming from our gardens, where we used to grow sugar cane, mango trees, bananas and vegetables, 10 minutes walk from our village. We took our spears, arrows and buckets. When we arrived we saw the Janjawid who were standing watching the fire. People from other villages who had come to help us were also trapped. We used our arrows and spears against the Janjawid but there was not much we could do. The fighting lasted three hours; many of us were killed. The Janjawid were running after those who were trying to flee. Djimeze is a village of 153 households. After the attack, the villagers fled to Dog Dore.”

The chief of the village of Djimeze

“One Sunday after the attack on Djawara, some girls from our village went to gather firewood in the wadi and came across some Janjawid. One of them managed to escape to warn us. When we, parents and other villagers arrived in the wadi, the Janjawid shot at us. The four girls were raped. Here girls have a duty to get married – there are hardly any single people – but none would marry these girls now that this has happened. The four girls are 13, 10, 12 and 9 respectively.”

A resident of Djawara

“Our village was attacked twice on 12 April 2006. It was a Wednesday; they came in the morning then came back around 3pm. I was there. The Janjawid were supported by the Mimi and the Wadai; these are our neighbours, and they have been living with us for a long time.”

The chief of Agogo village

“The first attack on the village happened on 20 September 2005 at about 7am. They came back the same morning at 10am. During the attack, many people

were killed. The Janjawid were many, maybe 50, in military uniforms. They were supported by the Arabs of the [neighbouring] cattle camp. The night before the attack, the Janjawid spent the night with them at the cattle camp...The Janjawid got information from children...They asked them questions about cattle owners. When children refused to answer their questions, they were beaten up and had hot mud put on their head.”

A woman from Koloy

“On the day of the attack on Djawara I went to the sub-prefecture [administrative unit] of Daguessa with a military commander from the area. I left an hour before the attack and took three hours to get to the sub-prefecture. I asked the sub-prefect for help. He answered that he had not received any orders from the high military command. I said that he had to do it and that he did not have to wait for an order.”

A resident of Tiero village

“My village was attacked on 3 March 2006 by the Janjawid it was about 7am. They attacked the village from three different places and took 500 cattle after killing people, including Abdelkerim Issaq, 65, imam of the mosque. The Janjawid were wearing green camouflage military uniforms [a different colour from those worn by the Chadian army]... They took our cattle and food stocks. We could not bury all our dead and went two days later to the village of Koloy. Two weeks after we arrived there, this village was attacked. Some people were killed in the mosque. From Koloy we went to Goz Beida...We stayed not far from the warehouse of World Food Programme, and the sultan found this place in Gouroukoun for us. After all this we have come here and no one gives us anything. We can see the refugee camp just over there [there is a camp for Darfuri refugees only a few kilometres away]. We are running from the Janjawid just like them, why do they get help and we do not? We are told it is because they come from another country-but we are Chadians, in our own country, and no one helps us? We also came here with nothing, and we also cannot return home because we will be attacked again. How are we supposed to survive?”

A villager from Moukchacha

“The Janjawid came on Saturday at 4 pm, to my village Barungo [5.5km north of Harraza]. They had already stolen most of our cattle from us in past raids.

This time they took what was remaining: the sheep and goats. We did not resist and only one person was killed. The same day the Janjawid kept moving north and raided the villages of Hidjer and Eid al-Ghanam too. On Sunday some of us decided it was too much; it was time to leave. By Thursday most of the people in the villages had left, either to here [Daguessa] or to Sudan."

A villager from Barungo, near Harraza

"All the faithful were kneeling down for prayer at 6h30 on 1 December 2005, when the Janjawid entered by the two doors of the mosque. There were more than 50 of them and as soon as they had got into the building, they started firing at people. There was a stampede and people ran in every direction. Four people were killed right in front of me and three others were wounded. My younger brother, Mahamat Adam, was hit right in front of me. The bullet went through his eye and came out through his throat. He was also shot in the back. The Janjawid ululated and called us slaves. At one point, I heard them say, "the slaves have left, let us sack the village." Around 18h00/19h00, we set off for Koloy [two hours walk from Djedida]. We buried our dead at Hadjarbeid. We stayed at Koloy for one month but soon left because we were afraid of being attacked."

A villager from Djedida, Koloy canton

"The Janjawid attacked the village of Harraza for the first time in October 2002. They came back in February 2005 and then again in September of the same year. The first time, about 20 of them arrived at around 6h00. They killed three people who were keeping an eye on their herds in the cattle enclosures: Haroun Bakhit, 35 years-old, the father of six children; Mahamat Yahya, 40 years-old, the father of eight children; and Ibrahim Hassan, 25 years-old, the father of two children...They took away the horses and the other animals. After the third attack, the villagers sought refuge in the neighbouring village of Koloy but they were forced to find somewhere else after the Janjawid attacked again. The Janjawid were armed and wore turbans. At the time of these attacks, the Chad army was stationed at Ade and Modaina but they got here too late. The village of Harraza is surrounded by cattle camps, and the area is occupied by both Dajos and Arab herders. However, during these attacks, only the Dajos are victims of theft and atrocities. The Arabs speak the same language as the Janjawid...The Janjawid first attacked the cattle camps and then they turned on the village. We noticed that the Mimis and the Wadaï cooperated against the Dajos. The Masalit, the Mimis and the Wadaï were made welcome after the famine of 1984/85 but the Dajos are

native to this region and the land was distributed to their ancestors by the Sultan. The land was offered to the new arrivals by the village chief with the agreement of the canton chief.”

The chief of the village of Harraza

“In this country with its diverse population, if you give guns to one group you’re pitting brother against brother and that’s volatile and it’s not good. And who is it that’s done that? The Sudanese government has done that.”

The Sultan of Dar Sila

“We didn’t come here for fun. We came because we saw real blood running like water in our village. It was dreadful...They’ve killed all our men and left us helpless. The men used to feed us but now there’s no one to help us at all. They used knives to cut the men’s throats and guns to shoot down defenceless people. Now we can’t even find food to eat in our own country...They say they take care of refugees but it seems they don’t understand that we’re refugees in our own country. We can’t relax in our own country. They’ve asked us to move and they want to split us up and send us to five different places...Imagine all these children with no proper education – no schools, nothing. We’ve asked them for food and they can’t give us any. So how can they provide us with schools?”

A displaced woman in Goz Beïda

“If a man goes out to farm, they get shot. And when a woman goes out they get mugged and raped. About two, three, four, five women have been raped recently. We can’t do anything to stop it in case they kill us.”

The chief of the village of Djimenez

“They killed my two sons, my husband and my brother. They took everything I had and then they shot me. They took everything I have.”

A displaced woman who lost a leg

“We heard gunshots. We ran to see what was happening and found our fathers and brothers dead. They had taken our cattle. We gathered together and went after them. It was 5.30 in the morning. After they killed 4 or 5 of us we couldn’t

afford to fight any more because they have heavy weapons and we only have traditional ones. That's why we pulled back... To be honest, I used to think that the Janjawid were greedy because they used to come and steal our cattle. But to reach the point where they're killing such large numbers of people is beyond our comprehension. It goes beyond us. If it's something clear it's easy for us to understand. But this thing is happening in another country – we heard about it but suddenly now it's come to our country. It could be a political thing but we don't know.”

A displaced villager

“We will not move until they provide us with security, food, water, schools and even hospitals. We'll stay in Goz Beida for our own safety.”

A villager from Modaina