

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Media Briefing

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### Sudan: Continuing human rights violations

The situation remains insecure for the 1.86 million displaced people in Darfur who have not been able to return home. In Darfur civilians are still targeted by militias supported or condoned by the government. Notwithstanding all the pressure, the government of Sudan has still not stopped carrying out serious and sometimes flagrant human rights violations in many parts of the country.

#### **Continuing attacks and targeting of civilians in Darfur:**

On 7 April militias carried out what African Union (AU) mission and the UN in a joint statement described as a "senseless and premeditated attack" on **Khor Abeche, South Darfur**, "burning everything in their paths and leaving in their wake total destruction". The joint AU/UN statement says that the danger of an attack was known before, the AU force wanted to station themselves in the area to protect the population but were prevented from acting by "what can only be inferred as deliberate official procrastination over the allocation of land for the troops' accommodation". They called for the arrest of the known leader of the raid -- who had said often before that this was what he was going to do, but the government did nothing to prevent him or protect the people.

Displaced people in Darfur continue to travel from one place to another in search of security; over the past week according to the UN more than 200 who fled Khor Abeche came to Galab Camp while other displaced people fled from the insecurity in Kass town in South Darfur to Kalma Camp near Nyala.

The government continues to arrest and torture those -- mainly from Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa groups -- whom they suspect of supporting the rebels. When charged, they are tried in the Specialised Criminal Courts in trials that fall short of international standards.

Sexual violence continues in Darfur, such as the targeting of women who leave the camp to fetch fire wood and water. In a recent report, Médecins Sans Frontières said they had treated almost 500 women who were raped between October 2004 and February 2005 and reported the arrest of women who fell pregnant as a result of rape who were subsequently charged with *Zina* (unlawful sexual intercourse, which is a punishable offence under the Sudan Penal Code).

The Darfur authorities have harassed the staff of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who appear to make criticism of the government including investigating cases of rape. Several arrests have been reported.

**Continuing impunity** - Government reports of Janjawid brought to justice in Sudanese courts have consistently proved false.

**Use of excessive lethal force against demonstrators:** On 29 January 2005 in **Port Sudan** more than 20 demonstrators were killed by security services. Two national Commissions of Inquiry were set up to investigate this but neither has reported publicly.

**Continued use of prolonged detention without charge or trial** of suspected political opponents or

critics of the government: Those arrested are still held for days, weeks, and sometimes months without access to the outside world. One example is **Dr Mudawi Ibrahim**, Director of the Sudan Social Development Organization, a human rights defender, who was held from his arrest on 24 January until 23 February, when his wife was allowed to visit him for the first time after he went on hunger strike demanding to be charged or released. Scores of people remain in detention without charge or trial: for instance **Ma'mun Issa Abdel Gadir**, a Darfur community leader, from Niyertiti has been imprisoned since February 2004 without charge or trial and visited only twice by his family.

**The State of Emergency remains in place:** Emergency laws allow the Sudanese authorities to detain people indefinitely, without charge or trial, to break up peaceful demonstrations and to violate human rights under the pretext of counter-insurgency. Some laws legalize human rights violations: National Security Forces Act Article 31 allows prolonged detention without charge; Article 33 allows national security forces members immunity from prosecution and Article 10(i) of the 1993 Law of Evidence allows evidence obtained by torture to be accepted.

**Demolition of camps for displaced people in Khartoum:** The Khartoum authorities have frequently demolished homes in settlements for displaced people in Khartoum describing it as part of "urban renewal". This has still been continuing over the past months. Since December 2004 the homes of at least 11,000 displaced people in Shikan, a settlement north of Khartoum, have been demolished and the displaced have been moved to El Fateh more than 30 km north of Khartoum. On 22 March the advocacy director of the UN Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was quoted as saying: "Security forces arrived without advance warning and started to load the displaced people onto trucks. People were not allowed to bring any personal belongings, and most arrived in El Fateh with only the clothes they were wearing".

#### **Freedom of Expression:**

**Media control blackout on the UN Security Council resolution (1593):** The Sudanese media received a circular instructing them not to comment in favour of the resolution which refers the situation in Sudan to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The media coverage has been predominantly of criticism of the resolution. Reporting about Darfur is also heavily censored.

**Targeting of political opposition:** 17 Beja Congress members, a political party in eastern Sudan, remain in detention and. In addition, the Umma Party main office in Omdurman was raided by security forces and temporarily closed when they were planning celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the April uprising which overthrew President Ja'afar Nimeiri. Among the political opposition scores of supporters of the Popular Congress (PC) have been arrested since September 2004 or before. In September 2004 two PC student activists from marginalised groups died a few hours after their arrest, apparently as a result of beating at the hands of the national security forces. The government promised inquiries into their deaths, but no results have ever been made public.

#### **Key recommendations for the Commission on Human Rights resolution on Sudan to include:**

The appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the Sudan with a clear monitoring component;  
A call for the ending of the emergency laws which limit human rights -- the government of Sudan should bring Sudanese law in conformity with fundamental principles of human rights;  
Pressure on the government of Sudan to disarm the militias in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1556 and 1591; Commission support for the African Union peacekeeping forces in Darfur in carrying out their mandate to monitor and verify the disarmament of the militias

#### **Relevant Amnesty International documents:**

**AI Index: AFR 54/027/2005:** Update on detention of human rights defender

**AI Index: AFR 54/028/2005:** Update on arrests in eastern Sudan of Beja Congress members

**AI Index: AFR 54/037/2005:** Sudan: UN resolutions provide an opportunity to build human rights and end impunity in Sudan

**Amnesty International- Norway press release:** Sudan Oslo Donors' Conference must ensure

aid benefits Sudanese people, not unaccountable leaders  
**AI Index: AFR 54/036/2005:** Sudan: Recommendations to donors funding Sudan

Public Document

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