

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **No more delay: UN Human Rights Council must address human rights violations in Darfur**

Amnesty International urges the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to take immediate action to address the grave human rights violations taking place in Darfur.

The HRC is scheduled to consider on Friday, 16 March the report of the High Level Mission on the situation of human rights in Darfur, established on 13 December 2006 by the HRC at its fourth special session.

The High Level Mission's findings confirm those of Amnesty International's research, and those of other organizations, including the UN. Civilians in Darfur continue to be murdered, raped, forcibly displaced and suffer other serious human rights violations by the government of Sudan, the Janjawid militia and other armed groups. According to current information reaching Amnesty International, the human rights catastrophe in Darfur continues and has spread into eastern Chad. Contrary to assertions of the Sudanese government, attacks on civilians by the Janjawid militia are ongoing.

Although armed groups opposed to the Sudanese government have committed serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, the government of Sudan bears the primary responsibility for protecting civilians in Darfur. Not only has the government persistently failed to fulfil its responsibility, it is continuing to support Janjawid militias which, together with Sudanese government forces, bear the largest responsibility for grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur and eastern Chad.

Amnesty International believes that the report of the High Level Mission provides the Council with a considered and authoritative assessment of the current human rights situation in Darfur and with sound recommendations for the protection of the civilian population. Crucially, these recommendations are addressed not only to the government of Sudan and the armed groups, but also to the Security Council -- which must step up its efforts towards the deployment of a United Nations African Union hybrid peacekeeping force. It is imperative that the HRC make a substantial contribution to the protection of civilians in Darfur by acknowledging the gravity of the current situation and by calling for measures to protect the civilian population of Darfur at this session.

Amnesty International is deeply dismayed by the efforts of the government of Sudan and its allies to discredit and prevent the HRC from considering the report of the High Level Mission. This is particularly disturbing given the refusal of the government of Sudan to cooperate with the HRC by failing to issue the visas necessary for the full High-Level Mission to carry out its work inside the Sudan. This refusal blatantly ignores the HRC's decision to establish the High Level Mission, which was adopted by consensus

following intense consultations that involved representatives of the government of Sudan.

The refusal of the government of Sudan to cooperate with the High Level Mission marks the fourth time since the creation of the HRC less than a year ago that a government has refused to cooperate with a mechanism established by the HRC. Israel refused to cooperate with the fact-finding mission established by the HRC at its first special session, the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon established at the second special session, and the high-level fact-finding mission established at the third special session. Amnesty International is deeply concerned that this negative trend is undermining the authority of the HRC and will, if not addressed, harm the ability of the HRC to take effective action to promote and protect human rights in accordance with its mandate.

Amnesty International urges the HRC to now:

- welcome and carefully consider the report of the High Level Mission;
- acknowledge the extremely serious human rights and humanitarian situation in Darfur and eastern Chad;
- recognize the Sudanese government's failure to provide protection to civilians in Darfur;
- condemn the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and hold the Sudanese government, the Janjawid militia and other armed groups accountable;
- transmit the report of the High Level Mission to the Security Council and urge it to consider the recommendation addressed to it in the report;
- call on the government of Sudan to implement, in full and without delay, the recommendations made to it by the High Level Mission, as well as Special Rapporteurs, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Secretary-General, the International Commission of Inquiry, and those included in the resolutions adopted by the HRC, the former Commission on Human Rights and the Security Council;
- remain seized of the situation of human rights in Darfur by continuing to assess the implementation by the government of Sudan of the recommendations mentioned above; and
- find effective means to address non-cooperation by governments with the HRC, including reporting publicly to the General Assembly those countries that fail to cooperate with the mechanisms of the HRC or otherwise comply with its decisions.