



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH

# PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF DARFUR

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Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch

## SUDAN/CHAD

### 'No one to help them'

### Rape extends from Darfur into eastern Chad

***"We heard the Janjawid decide to open fire on the mosque and so we decided to run out... They captured the women... The men were holding their throats and sitting on their bodies so they could not move, and they took off their clothes and then used them as women. More than one man would use one woman. I could hear the women crying for help, but there was no one to help them."***

A woman speaking to Amnesty International about an attack on Djorlo, Chad, on 7 November 2006.

It is impossible to know how many women have been raped since the armed conflict began in Darfur in 2003. There have certainly been thousands.

The names of 250 women who had been raped, and harrowing information about their cases, were recorded by Amnesty International on a 10-day visit to just three refugee camps in Chad in 2004. Many of the women had been gang raped. There are 173 camps for displaced people in Darfur and 12 refugee camps in Chad.

Over 500 victims of rape were treated at 25 clinics of Médecins sans Frontières in Darfur between October 2004 and mid-February 2005. Most had been raped by members of Janjawid militias as they went about normal daily tasks outside the camp.

Recent months have seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of rapes as Darfur has been plunged into new fighting. In just one camp in Darfur, Kalma camp, the International Rescue Committee reported that rapes of women rose from under four to 200 a month during five weeks in July and August 2006.

Despite the presence of an African Union peacekeeping force (African Union Mission in Sudan, AMIS) and international awareness of what is happening in Darfur, in 2006 rapes and other violence against women and girls have increased, not diminished.

Women rarely report rapes, even to medical staff, and humanitarian organizations have had to pull out of many areas of Darfur. The number of women receiving medical treatment is thus probably only a fraction of those raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence by fighters are recognized as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The large-scale and often systematic rape of women is the most flagrant example of the violence suffered by women in Darfur. Over and over again Darfuris have expressed this as something out of the ordinary and horrific: "It didn't happen in any previous war ever fought in Darfur".

At the beginning of the conflict, women would not talk about rape. "Women will not tell you easily if such a thing happens to them. In our culture, it is a shame, and women will hide this in their hearts so that the men do not hear about it", one woman refugee in Chad told Amnesty International in 2003.

Only in the second year of the killings and mass forced displacements, when thousands had been raped, when the children of rapes were being born, and when it was clear that rape could no longer be hidden, did women begin to talk.

### Rape as a weapon of war

Rape and other forms of sexual violence in Darfur are not just a consequence of the conflict or of undisciplined troops. Rape is a weapon of war. Its aim is to humiliate, punish, control, instil fear, and to drive women and whole communities from their land. The circumstances in which rapes are committed and their increasing number suggest that rape is often used to terrorize populations, to threaten them, to forcibly displace them.



The vast majority of rapes, abductions, sexual enslavements and other forms of sexual violence have been committed by the government-supported Janjawid militias.

*"Suddenly the Janjawid attacked us... The majority [of the girls] managed to escape; me, my cousin and my sister were captured... One of them forced me on the ground and all the time I was resisting them... all the time one of the Janjawid kept his gun pointed at my head... Four of them raped me."*

A 16-year-old girl describes an attack to Human Rights Watch, February 2005.

The Sudanese Janjawid have now taken their brutal attacks on civilians across the border into neighbouring Chad. In alliance with armed elements from certain ethnic groups in Chad, their aim appears to be to empty the areas bordering Sudan of a diverse range of ethnic groups who identify themselves and are identified by others as "African" rather than "Arab." They are again raping women as part of this process.

*"It was the 8th day of Ramadan [30 September 2006] and eight of us – we are all about the same age between 15 and 16 – were looking for firewood... We then came across three men on horseback wearing jellabiyas... They pointed their guns at us and insulted us, calling us Nawab [plural of Nuba or "Africans", used as an insult] and telling us that the land did not belong to us. They also hit us with their horse whips and ends of their rifles. They then took one of the girls, and one held her by her arms and one by her legs and one raped her, they took turns... Only four of the girls were raped."*

A Dajo girl speaking to Amnesty International in Chad, November 2006.

Members of the armed forces, police and reserve police have also committed rape.

*"They wore army uniforms and one had a Kalashnikov... They whipped me with two whips, used by three men... I said nothing, I could not scream. I was raped by all five. I did not report the rape because they were government soldiers."*

A woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch in North Darfur, July 2004.

Increasing numbers of rapes, by displaced men of displaced women, are reported within the camps for the internally displaced, where hundreds of thousands of Darfuris are often effectively imprisoned by Janjawid militias. Many of those who live or work in the camps say that there is more domestic violence too, by husbands and family members.

There are far fewer reports of rape involving armed opposition groups. However, a number of rapes by members of the Minni Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Army – one of the signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement in May and now operating alongside government forces – were reported in the Tawila area in April 2006 and at the time of attacks and killings in Korma on 5 and 6 July 2006.

## Sexual enslavement and attacks near the camps

Some women are kept in sexual slavery. One woman from Darfur described what happened to her when her village was attacked. She had a baby in her arms and said she was two months pregnant when she was raped.

*"I was taken away by attackers in khaki and civilian clothes along with dozens of other girls and had to walk for three hours. During the day, we were beaten... We were taken to a place in the bush where we were raped several times at night. For three days, we did not receive food and almost no water. We were surrounded by armed guards. After three days, the Janjawid had to move to another place and set us free."*

A woman from Darfur, interviewed by Amnesty International in Chad, 2004.

Such abductions continue in 2006. On 7 October 2006, during an attack on Djimeze Djarma in Chad, a group of women were captured by Janjawid and held for 20 days.

*"The men made us cook, fetch water, feed their camels and horses, and cook food for them. They would move between us and if we disobeyed they would beat us with their whips. We suffered a lot. I thought that I would be killed."*

A woman interviewed by Amnesty International in Chad, November 2006.

Most of the internally displaced, especially in West Darfur, are virtual prisoners in the camps. The Janjawid occupy the land and those who venture out of the camps face the threat of being killed, beaten or raped. These terror tactics ensure that vast swathes of territory are kept empty of targeted ethnic groups who will not dare to return to their land. Gathering firewood and fetching water are traditionally women's work, but women who leave the camps for these necessities of life risk rape in 2006 as in 2004.

*"In Garsila the women wanted to bring firewood and water, and many were raped by Janjawid."*

A man from Garsila district, Darfur, interviewed in 2004.

## Impunity for the rapists

Those who rape benefit from almost total impunity. AMIS forces have often tried to protect women, for instance by carrying out firewood patrols, but they lack sufficient numbers of troops. When a woman is raped, they tend to take no action.

*"The AU [AMIS] is not interested in the displaced... When girls are raped in the neighbourhood of the camp, the AU's only action is to bring the girl back to the camp. They do not carry out any investigation into the event."*

A Masalit woman from Darfur, speaking to Amnesty International in Chad, 2006.



The police are deeply distrusted, particularly by those who have been raped.

*"I cannot complain to the police, they will punish me even more, some Janjawid are in the police and some policemen themselves are Janjawid."*

A girl who had been raped, talking in a North Darfur camp for the displaced in 2004.

The police frequently fail to take action to protect civilians under attack. In one case villagers sought shelter at a police station. The police reportedly stood by while Janjawid raped women, and shot and tortured men from their community who tried to protect them.

*"They took girls away for long hours and brought them back later. Girls were crying, we knew they raped them. Some of us were raped in front of the crowd... I resisted them... They hit me and decided to rape me in front of others... Some young men tried to protect us... they received shots in both their legs... Others were hanged on the tree naked."*

A Fur woman from South Darfur, interviewed by Human Rights Watch, February 2005.

## The trauma and the stigma

The perpetrators of rape know very well the effect rape will have on a woman – not only the personal, psychological consequences, but that a married woman might be divorced, an unmarried woman never find a husband.

*"Then two of the men raped me... I have not told anyone what happened to me... I do not know how my husband would react if he were to know. Men are different and some get angry with the woman."*

A displaced woman near Goz Beida in Chad, speaking to Amnesty International, November 2006.

Even when families arrange a marriage for a daughter who has been raped, the victim remains traumatized and the social stigma can devastate the family.

*"My daughter screams at night... I never talk to her about what happened, although she knows that I know what happened to her... Her father became very ill since that time. He never goes out with the rest of the men and he does nothing but staying inside the room... Now my daughter is married to her cousin, but where is he? He does not communicate with her or with us."*

The mother of a 16-year-old girl, interviewed by Human Rights Watch, South Darfur, February 2005.

Rape can in some circumstances result in death or lasting injury. Female genital mutilation by infibulation, which occurs among some groups in Darfur and eastern Chad, can increase

the severity of injuries incurred during rape, and can contribute to, for example, severe blood loss.

*"They beat us and told us that you blacks are not going to stay here, we will finish you all. They then grabbed my half-sister who was only 10 years old... I saw two of them lie with my half-sister and then they went away. When we got there she was very hurt and was bleeding. She continued to bleed for the following two days and then died."*

A displaced woman describing an attack by uniformed men near Goz Beida in Chad to Amnesty International, November 2006.

The dilemmas facing women who become pregnant as a result of rape are great. Some leave their families to hide their shame. Others are rejected by their family and give up the child for adoption. Others again stay and raise the child.

*"A raped girl comes back to her family, and eventually delivers the baby and raises the child, as infanticide would be haram [forbidden]"*

A refugee from Darfur in Chad, interviewed in 2006.

The UN Secretary-General said in March 2005 that he was "very concerned by the disturbing reports of arrests by the police of unmarried women in the Mukjar area (West Darfur) who have become pregnant as a result of rape." Pregnant unmarried women in Sudan have frequently been charged with adultery and face a flogging if convicted. Adultery is a capital crime for a married woman under the 1991 Penal Code.

## Surviving

When Amnesty International delegates tried to discuss the extent of the problem of rape in Darfur with the Sudanese government in 2004, every member of the government they met said that rape could not happen in Sudan. In July 2004 the government set up Rape Committees, composed of a woman judge, prosecutor and policewoman, which travelled to each Darfur State. But women said they did not trust the Committees, which reported that they had found only isolated rape cases.

An overstretched community of humanitarian workers and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has difficulty in providing medical services or counselling to most of those who suffer rape or sexual violence. However, some humanitarian agencies and Sudanese NGOs are working with raped women from the camps in particular, and some women from the camps in Darfur are also counselling and helping women. One woman in a displaced camp in South Darfur who was raped in front of her husband – who was killed when he tried to protect her – overcame her grief and anger, and committed herself to provide support to other women who had survived violence.

## Time to protect the women of Darfur and Chad

The horrific pattern of sexual and other violence against women which has emerged from Darfur is by no means unique. In recent years, hundreds of thousands of women affected by conflict around the world have suffered the same fate.

Violence against women, as defined in international standards, is prohibited at all times, in all its forms, by international and regional treaties, as well as by customary international law. Even in times of armed conflict, women and girls have the right to be free from crimes which constitute violence against women.

Today, there can no longer be any excuse for ignoring the scale of crimes against women in conflict. With almost daily news reports from war zones across the globe, no one can claim that they do not know what is happening. No one can hide behind the excuse that nothing can be done. There is an urgent need to find more effective forms of action proportionate to the scale and gravity of the crimes that are unfolding.

### African Union

Send appeals calling on the African Union to:

- ▶ immediately reinforce AMIS and ensure that it acts proactively and effectively to protect civilians;
- ▶ ensure AMIS and any future peacekeeping force in Darfur has a strong gender component and gives a high priority to the protection of women and girls;
- ▶ ensure the involvement of local women in all initiatives aimed at conflict resolution, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

#### Send your appeals to:

His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare  
Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union  
African Union Headquarters  
PO Box 3243  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

**Fax: +251 11 551 78 44**

**Email: [KonareAO@africa-union.org](mailto:KonareAO@africa-union.org)**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

### UN Security Council

Send appeals to the Chair of the UN Security Council, calling on the Security Council to:

- ▶ immediately reinforce AMIS with command and control structures and with sufficient logistics to ensure that it acts effectively and proactively to protect civilians;
- ▶ ensure that AMIS and any future peacekeeping force in Darfur has a strong gender component and gives a high priority to the protection of women and girls;
- ▶ ensure the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which requires all peace agreements to involve local women in their implementation and in conflict resolution, and to ensure the human rights of women and girls.

#### Send your appeals to:

President of the UN Security Council  
820 Second Avenue, Suite 1600  
New York, NY 10017, United States of America  
(December) **Permanent Representative, Qatar**

**Email: [qsc@qatarmission.org](mailto:qsc@qatarmission.org)**

**Fax: +1 212 953 2947**

(January) **Permanent Representative, Russia**

**Email: [rusun@un.int](mailto:rusun@un.int)**

**Fax: +1 212 628 0252, +1 212 517 7427**

(February) **Permanent Representative, Slovakia**

**Fax: +1 212 286 8419**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

### Sudanese government

Describe the violence against women and express your concern. Urge the government of Sudan to:

- ▶ facilitate the deployment of an effective peacekeeping force in Darfur with a strong mandate to protect civilians;
- ▶ disarm and demobilize Janjawid militias;
- ▶ halt all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law;
- ▶ allow unhindered access for humanitarian and human rights organizations to Darfur;
- ▶ ensure that perpetrators of rape are promptly brought to

justice in trials that meet international standards of fairness. The safety of victims and witnesses should be protected.

#### Send your appeals to:

Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir  
President and Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces  
President's Palace  
PO Box 281  
Khartoum  
Sudan

**Fax: + 249 183 776603 / 777583**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**and to the Sudan Embassy in your country.**