

CHAD

No protection from rape and violence for displaced women and girls in eastern Chad

"They used her, they used her horribly, she was bleeding badly when she was brought back here."

Mother of Khadija, a 14-year-old girl raped by armed men.

Grave conflict-related violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law continue in eastern Chad. Women and girls in the region continue to face rape and other sexual violence at the hands of armed groups.

Khadija (not her real name) a 14-year-old girl, fled her village to Aradip Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) site in Dar Sila region, eastern Chad, with her six siblings and her parents. Khadija's family left when her village was attacked by an armed group which had crossed the border from Darfur region in Sudan in November 2006.

On Monday 30 April 2007, Khadija woke early as usual to go and collect firewood outside the camp. Once outside she was caught and raped by several armed men.

"I left early in the morning with about 20 other girls... we walked for some time. After about three hours we were at the bottom of the mountains and we started to collect the wood. We were near the village of Ablogulla, there are Arab fariks [temporary settlements] nearby. There were five men, they were armed, two of them had green uniforms and three had black or brown trousers. We saw them only when they came running toward us. They were shouting at us, saying that we were the wives of the Toro Boro [Sudanese armed group or Chadian self-defence groups operating in eastern Chad.] Everybody started running in different directions. I was caught."



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Women returning from collecting firewood to Habile Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp.

Khadija's mother explained to Amnesty International what happened to her daughter after that:

"I will tell the truth. They used her, they used her horribly, and she was bleeding badly when she was brought back here. She has suffered very badly. A hunter found her lying in the woods and brought her home. She had thorns from the bush all over and lots of cuts. She was also bleeding down there; she was very bad for two days. I just washed her with hot water."

Khadija's story is also that of thousands of Chadian displaced girls and women who face daily danger from attacks. They need immediate and effective protection.

Forgotten victims of an ongoing armed conflict

Clashes between the security forces and armed opposition groups in Chad intensified from April 2006 onwards. In order to combat the armed groups, Chadian authorities withdrew government troops from the eastern border with Sudan, leaving civilians to face larger and more prolonged cross border attacks. These attacks have been mainly attributed to Janjawid (a combination of armed Sudanese militia groups). Also, in the last 12 months inter-communal violence between ethnic communities living in eastern Chad has increased.



In May 2007 an Amnesty International delegation visited eastern Chad. Amnesty International was able to collect information about individual cases but there is a lack of information about the true extent of gender-based violence in and outside IDP sites in eastern Chad. According to victims, local contacts and humanitarian agencies, harassment, intimidation and rape occur with complete impunity – no-one has been caught or punished.

Amnesty International found that women, who form the majority of internally displaced persons in the area, are the forgotten victims of the ongoing armed conflict. Women and girls are being assaulted and raped by members of militias, armed groups and even by Chadian government soldiers. They are particularly vulnerable when they venture outside IDP sites to collect firewood in the bush – a job delegated to them in part because women customarily collect firewood, and because men judge that women are less at risk of being killed by the armed groups. Also, humanitarian assistance in these camps is scarce, and young girls and women sell the firewood they collect at nearby markets to try and supplement the meagre assistance they receive.

Failure to protect

In this ongoing conflict civilians, and in particular women, have been left unprotected by the Chadian authorities. Law enforcement officers (gendarmes) regularly refuse to intervene when people are attacked outside IDP sites.

Khadija's mother told Amnesty International:

"As soon as we heard [that Khadija had been caught] my husband and I rushed to find her. A neighbour went to alert the gendarmes, but they refused to come. They said that they had told the women not to venture far from the site when going to collect wood. They said that they would look for her if she wasn't back by tomorrow."

In addition, Amnesty International collected information about the alleged involvement of Chadian soldiers in the intimidation and rape of displaced girls and women. A displaced woman from Habile IDP site in Dar Sila explained to Amnesty International delegates:

"When the military were here we had problems. Some women were attacked and houses were entered. Also in the bush some women were attacked. I know of about three or four women who were caught and raped. They don't speak openly [about what happened to them] but people know, they see them come out of the bush..."

In spite of diplomatic efforts by the UN and individual countries, the Chadian President has resisted the deployment of a UN multidimensional presence to protect civilians.



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Survivor of rape with her mother. She was raped while collecting firewood outside an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, in Dar Sila region, Eastern Chad.

Chad's obligations to protect its citizens

The Chadian government is failing to protect its population, despite its constitutional and international human rights obligations to do so. Under international law, the government of Chad has a duty to protect all those on its soil. This duty does not cease to exist in an armed conflict. Parties to an armed conflict have a responsibility to take all feasible measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

Internally Displaced People in Chad

Source: UNHCR

Population of Chad	10 million
Refugees from Darfur	230,000
Refugees from Central African Republic	46,000
Internally displaced people within Chad	170,000

Responsibility to protect – the international community must act now

The UN Security Council reaffirmed through resolution 1674 (2006) that "Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

At the same time, the document stressed the responsibility of the international community, through the UN, to help protect populations from these crimes.

If the Chadian authorities prove unable or unwilling to take measures to protect their population, then the international community must act. The international community should take urgent action to ensure that the civilian population, and especially women and girls, are adequately protected from these attacks.

More information on the human rights situation in eastern Chad can be obtained on Amnesty International's website:
www.amnesty.org/Chad
Amnesty International, International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

Urgent action needed

Please write to the Chadian authorities calling on them to:

- ▶ Take all effective measures to protect civilians, especially girls and women, inside and outside IDP sites in eastern Chad.
- ▶ Accept and cooperate with the deployment of a UN-led multidimensional presence with a mandate to protect civilians. The government must undertake immediate discussions with the UN Security Council with a view to securing prompt deployment.
- ▶ Investigate reports of rape and other serious human rights violations and abuses and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Please write to the UN Security Council calling on them to:

- ▶ Promptly pass a resolution creating the deployment of a multidimensional presence in eastern Chad with the mandate and the resources to use all means necessary, and in full compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law, to protect civilians at risk.
- ▶ Ensure that this multidimensional operation has a strong human rights mandate and the adequate capacity to protect women and girls from gender-based violence.
- ▶ Call on member states to fund UN agencies and international organizations in order to facilitate humanitarian assistance to IDPs and to put in place protective measures inside and outside IDP sites.

PLEASE SEND YOUR APPEALS TO:

Government of Chad

HE Idriss Déby Itno
President of Chad
Présidence de la République
N'Djaména
Chad

Fax: +235 51 45 01 or 235 52 44 73
Emails: cprint@intnet.td,
sgpr.tchad@intnet.td,
presicom.pr@intnet.td

Salutation: Dear President/Monsieur le Président

Please also send appeals to the Chadian Embassy in your country.

UN Security Council

President of the UN Security Council
820 Second Avenue, Suite 1600
New York, NY 10017, USA

(August) Permanent Representative, Congo
Fax: +121 27447975
Email: congo@un.int

(September) Permanent Representative, France
Fax: +1 212 3085700

(October) Permanent Representative, Ghana
Fax: +121 24213943
Email: ghanaperm@aol.com

Salutations: Your Excellency

Please raise Amnesty International's concerns with your own government

Who is Amnesty International?

Amnesty International is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories, who campaign for human rights. Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

We research, campaign, advocate and mobilize to end abuses of human rights – civil, political, social, cultural and economic. From freedom of expression and association to physical and mental integrity, from protection from discrimination to the right to shelter – these rights are indivisible.

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