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African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights  
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## ORAL STATEMENT BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

### Protection of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: Sudan

Chairperson, Commissioners,

The conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan has resulted in serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Amnesty International is seriously concerned that more than 1.5 million people are internally displaced within the region, mostly in camps and settlements inside and on the edge of towns, while more than 200,000 people have fled from Darfur to neighbouring Chad. The people have fled because the government, which should have been protecting them, supported and funded militias to drive them out of their lands.

When faced with armed insurgence a government has the right to take action. But it is a fundamental rule of international humanitarian law that civilians should not be targets. Attacked by militias funded and armed by the government and by government armed forces and airplanes, the displaced live in insecurity and fear. They have a profound distrust in their own government, which has failed to protect them and has even attacked them. They report that camps are surrounded by members of the same militias who killed people from their villages and drove them out; going outside the camps, men risk to be killed and women to be raped.

Fear and intimidation also inside the camps is great. At the camp in Zamzam, for example, the displaced see that the police who are guarding the camp – the police who should be protecting the displaced – have their trenches dug on the side of the camp and their guns trained on the displaced, not on the grasslands outside where the militias roam. Displaced people are being forcibly dispersed from camps or relocated to other camps. On 1 November 100 soldiers and 15 trucks moved the displaced from al-Jir and Wadi Sikala camp near Nyala.

Some displaced went to Sherif camp, others dispersed in Nyala. A few days later similar incidents occurred in Al-Geer camp in Nyala.

Amnesty International is profoundly concerned about the forced return of displaced persons to their villages, which have often been looted and destroyed, and at the numerous reports of undue pressure put on displaced people to go back to areas where they do not feel it is safe.

People must be able to return when they want to; and before they are asked to return, the areas of return must be made safe and their livelihood restored. There are now 12,000 police in Darfur; but the displaced do not trust the government police to defend them. They say the “Janjawid” militias have been recruited into the army, the Popular Defence Force, the police, the popular police and the border police. They will only feel safe if at the lowest district level they know there is an outsider who will watch what is happening, who will report publicly on human rights violations and who will take immediate action to end them.

Amnesty International calls on the African Commission to publicly and strongly condemn the human rights violations against internally displaced persons, and to ask the government of Sudan to comply fully with the international humanitarian and human rights standards concerning the protection of civilians. We also urge the African Commission to make public the report of its July 2004 mission to Sudan. Working together with the African Union Peace and Security Council, the African Commission must ensure that the government of Sudan implement fully its findings and recommendations.

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