

**PUBLIC**

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**03 November 2006**

**UA 293/06      Fear for Safety/Fear of Unlawful Killings**

**SUDAN      Civilians in West and North Darfur, particularly in the Jebel Moon area**

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Janjawid militias attacked eight villages and a camp of displaced people in the Jebel Moon area of West Darfur on 29 October, leaving at least 67 men, women and children dead. Other Janjawid attacks, including killings and abductions, have taken place in other parts of Darfur. Local inhabitants say the Janjawid are gathering in Sawani and Goz Banat, areas close to Jebel Moon, apparently in preparation for further attacks. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of civilians who have fled the area, and of other villagers in West and North Darfur States.

The attacks started before dawn at Ghribeish village and spread to other villages in the Jebel Moon area. They were carried out by Janjawid, reportedly wearing Sudanese military uniforms, on horseback and camels. According to reports, their uniforms and weapons were brand new, and were similar to the uniform and weapons of Janjawid militia based at the Sudanese Armed Forces camp at Tina, on the Chadian border. Upon entering each village, those on horseback reportedly opened fire randomly on the residents, while those on camels rounded up the livestock. When they had killed or displaced the villagers, they plundered goods and burnt the rest of the harvest, so that villagers lost all of their food supply. They also reportedly damaged the water supply. First reports said that at least 32 children were among the dead, mostly in Ghribeish, as this was the first village attacked, and people were taken by surprise. The other places attacked included the villages of Awain, Kishkish, Sunait and Garna, and the camp at Hajilijah which contained 3,500 internally displaced people.

The people attacked were mostly from the Zaghawa, Jebel and Erenga ethnic groups. The attacks reportedly took place because of ethnic links between some villagers and the members of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) or the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), armed opposition groups which have bases in the area. In addition to the civilians killed, some killed later in the day may have been members of the JEM and the SLA, who came and fought with the Janjawid.

According to reports, the majority of those living in the area have fled across the border to Chad. Others have gone to Sileah, about four kilometres from Hajilijah, which used to be an international humanitarian assistance point but has now been largely evacuated. Hundreds of people are still believed to be hiding in the bush around Jebel Moon. Humanitarian assistance cannot be provided due to insecurity throughout the area. The only access by international aid staff is by helicopter.

The day after the attacks, on 30 October, military observers and other forces from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) visited the area. Villagers were said to have been angry at AMIS failure to protect them from the Janjawid attacks.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) took up arms against the Sudanese government in Darfur in 2003, the Sudanese government armed and supported local militia, known as the Janjawid, as a proxy force against the rebels. The Sudanese government and the Janjawid deliberately targeted civilians of the same ethnicity as the rebel groups as a counter-insurgency strategy. Some 85,000 people have been killed, around 200,000 have died as a result of conflict-related hunger or disease, and more than two million people have been displaced. Rebel groups have also committed human rights abuses, including targeting humanitarian convoys and workers. Amnesty International and the UN have called the attacks committed in Darfur crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In May 2006, the Sudanese government and one rebel group, a faction of the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Minawi (known as the SLA/ MM), signed the Darfur Peace Agreement. The other SLA faction and the JEM refused to sign the agreement, saying it did not have enough guarantees on compensation, militia disarmament and political representation. Since the signing of the agreement, insecurity has worsened in Darfur, causing more killings of civilians, rapes and displacement.

Peacekeepers from the AU have been present in Darfur since 2004 with a mandate to "protect civilians under imminent threat and in the immediate vicinity". However, citing a lack of resources and a limited mandate, they rarely protect civilians under attack. On 31 August, the UN Security Council passed a resolution to send UN peacekeepers in Darfur to take over from the AU. The Sudanese government stated that it would refuse to allow the UN to deploy troops in Darfur, and sent more than 10,000 Sudanese Armed Forces into Darfur to "restore security" in the region. Since 31 August the government has been attacking areas under the control of armed groups which have not signed the Darfur Peace Agreement.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- condemning the killing of at least 67 civilians, including at least 32 children, in attacks by Janjawid militias in the Jebel Moon area of West Darfur on 29 October;
- expressing concern for the safety of civilians in the area, particularly as reports suggest the Janjawid are gathering there in preparation for further attacks;
- urging the Sudan Government to immediately disarm the Janjawid and bring to justice anyone involved in attacks on civilians;
- calling on the Sudan Government to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches all those who need it in the area.

**APPEALS TO:**

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**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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Minister of Internal Affairs  
Ministry of Interior  
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**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

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and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 December 2006.