

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

AI Index: IOR 41/041/2005 (Public)  
News Service No: 097  
19 April 2005

### **2005 Commission on Human Rights: Agenda item 19: Advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights**

#### ORAL STATEMENT BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

*Delivered by Gwyneth Williams*

#### **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr Chair,

Agenda item 19 is the Commission's vehicle for mandating advisory services and technical assistance to help countries that are emerging from situations marked by serious human rights violations and demonstrate a real commitment to improve their respect for human rights. However, as we have seen at this and previous sessions, the severe shortcomings that currently characterize the workings of this Commission lead to the inappropriate consideration of situations of serious human rights violations under this agenda item. Any suggestion that the human rights situation in Darfur, Sudan can be considered as a matter of advisory services and technical cooperation only contributes to the Commission's "credibility deficit" highlighted by the UN Secretary-General.

The provisions of Sudan's Humanitarian and Security Agreements have been breached since the day of their signature in Abuja on 9 November 2005. Nearly two million people are displaced in Darfur; their situation remains insecure. Civilians are continuously targeted by militias in attacks supported or condoned by the government. On 7 April 2005, militias carried out what the African Union (AU) mission and the UN in a joint statement described as a "senseless and premeditated attack" on Khor Abeche, South Darfur, "burning everything in their paths and leaving in their wake total destruction". Before the attack, the AU force was prevented from stationing itself in the area to protect the population, by "what can only be inferred as deliberate official procrastination over the allocation of land for the troops' accommodation."<sup>1</sup> After the attack, the AU force called for the arrest of the known leader of the raid, but the government did nothing to act on this.

Sexual violence, such as the targeting of women who leave camps to fetch fire wood and water, continues in Darfur. In a report of 8 March, *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) said they had treated almost 500 women who were raped between October 2004 and February 2005. MSF also reported the arrest of women who fell pregnant as a result of rape and who were subsequently charged with illegal pregnancy, which is a punishable offence under the Sudanese Penal Code.

The internally displaced continue to travel from place to place in search of security; over the past

couple of weeks more than 200 persons who fled Khor Abeche came to Galab Camp while others fled from the insecurity in Kass town in South Darfur to Kalma Camp near Nyala. They do not feel safe to return home. This means that, at the beginning of the rainy season in Darfur, the displaced will live another year in frustration and increasing despair in camps in Darfur and Chad.

There can be no doubt that the human rights crisis in Darfur continues and yet governments here at the Commission seem hesitant, like last year, to deal with the primary responsibility of the Sudanese government for these gross violations of human rights. The children, women, and men of Darfur are not only victims of violations in their homeland; they are also the victims of the perverse logic of this Commission that gives politics and formalities precedence over measures to protect them. This obvious inability of governments -- all governments -- to work constructively together to address effectively the human rights crisis in Sudan does not contribute to the credibility of this Commission.

Reform of the UN's human rights machinery is imperative. Amnesty International urges governments to use the opportunity created by the reports of the High-level Panel and the Secretary-General to establish a body capable of promoting and protecting all human rights of all persons in all countries at all times.

Thank you, Mr. Chair

---

<sup>1</sup>Joint Statement by the African Union Mission in the Sudan and the United Nations Mission in Sudan on the attack and destruction of Khor Abeche on 7 April 2005 by armed militia.