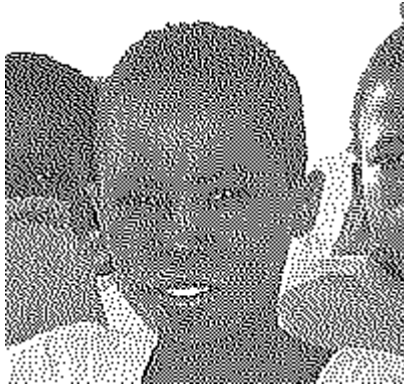


SUDAN CRISIS

In our silence we are complicit



Sudanese boys in a refugee camp in Adré, Chad. They had to flee their homes following attacks by the Janjawid.

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Women from North Darfur testifying to Amnesty International delegates in Tina Chad.

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"The *Janjawid* militias and the soldiers arrived on market day in Abu Jidad. The soldiers cordoned off the market and the *Janjawid* got inside to take the money and the cattle. They killed several persons. I saw the bodies of those killed. Some were killed by the gun, others by bayonet."

Ercouri Mahamat, Koranic student, from the village of Abu Gamra, near Kornoy town, in North Darfur.

Darfur is situated in the West of Sudan and covers an area the size of France (the size of Texas). For a number of years it was the scene of sporadic clashes between farming communities such as the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa, and nomadic groups, which led to many deaths and the destruction and looting of homes. The government blamed competition over scarce resources for the clashes.

In February 2003 a new armed opposition group, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) took up arms against the government, because of what they perceived as the lack of government protection for their people and the marginalisation and underdevelopment of the region. The support base of this armed group came mainly from the agricultural groups in the region. Shortly afterwards another armed group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) emerged.

The government of Sudan responded by allowing free rein to Arab militias known as the *Janjawid* (guns on horseback) who began attacking villages, killing, raping and abducting people, destroying homes and other property, including water sources and looting livestock. At times government troops also attacked villages alongside the *Janjawid*, and government

aircraft have been bombing villages sometimes just before *Janjawid* attacks, suggesting that these attacks were coordinated. The links between the Sudanese armed forces and the *Janjawid* are incontrovertible, the *Janjawid* are now wearing uniforms provided by the army.

"The *Janjawid* arrived and asked me to leave the place. They beat women and small children. They killed a little girl, Sara Bishara. She was two years old. She was knifed in her back."

Aisha Ali, from the village of Sasa, near Kornoy town in North Darfur.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of actions by the *Janjawid* and the government forces and large areas of Darfur have been depopulated. The UN estimates that there are now almost one million internally displaced people in Darfur who have fled from their burnt villages and taken refuge within Darfur, mostly in towns and camps, often in very poor conditions, while more than 120,000 have crossed the border into Chad.

A human rights crisis

According to the report issued by the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in May "the mission identified disturbing patterns of massive human rights violations in Darfur perpetrated by the Government of Sudan and its proxy militia, many of which may constitute war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. According to information collected, it is clear that there is a reign of terror in Darfur".

Since late 2003 hundreds of people from the Darfur region have also been arrested, apparently because they were suspected of contacts with the armed opposition groups operating in the region. Those arrested have been held under Article 31 of the National Security Forces Act, which allows detention for up to nine months without access to judicial review. Many of those detained have said they were tortured in custody.

On 8 April the government of Sudan and the SLA and the JEM signed a ceasefire agreement that was due to come into effect on 11 April. Under article 5 of the agreement "[t]he parties have decided to free all the prisoners of war and all other persons detained because of the armed conflict in Darfur" (article 5).

Amnesty International is calling on all parties involved in the Darfur conflict to immediately end human rights violations including the unlawful killing and abuse of civilians. The organisation is also calling on the international community to support the deployment of international human rights monitors to Sudan.