



Fact Sheet

The Crisis in Darfur, Sudan

“I was taken away by the attackers... we were beaten and the Janjawid told us: ‘you, the black women, we will exterminate you; you have no God.’ We were taken to a place in the bush where the Janjawid raped us several times. For three days, we did not receive food and almost no water. They told us: ‘next time we come, we will exterminate you all, we will not even leave a child alive’.”

(A 20-year old woman from Dasa village in Darfur, now in a refugee camp in eastern Chad)

? What is going on in Darfur, Sudan

In Darfur, western Sudan, a catastrophic crisis is occurring. Each day, civilians face prospects of mass killings, torture, rape, destruction of villages, theft and other human rights abuses. Over 2 million people have been affected by this crisis.

? Why did the fighting begin

In February 2003, an armed opposition group called the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) emerged in the Darfur region of western Sudan in response to perceived economic marginalization and the government’s failure to protect villagers from attacks. Soon after, another armed opposition group called the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) surfaced citing similar complaints. The Sudanese government chose to suppress the armed opposition with force.

? What are they running from

The people of Darfur are fleeing attacks by *Janjawid* militias - bands of Arab fighters backed by the Sudanese Government. The *Janjawid* have been responsible for mass killings, torture, arbitrary arrest, detention, the torching of homes and entire villages, and the theft and deliberate destruction of crops and cattle. Over **50,000** people are believed to have lost their lives since the Darfur conflict erupted in February 2003. **Hundreds of thousands** more are at risk as the rains worsen and as roads become impassable for humanitarian agencies. Over **one million** civilians have been internally displaced by the conflict and **200,000** have sought refuge in neighboring Chad.

? Who are the victims of the conflict

In what can only be characterized as “ethnic cleansing,” the Sudanese Government and the *Janjawid* are deliberately killing civilians (reportedly targeting the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups) and routinely using rape and other forms of sexual violence as

weapons of war. These systematic and massive human rights violations constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Members of the *Janjawid* are reported to have made racist remarks while attacking the sedentary groups: “*You blacks, you have spoiled the country! We are here to burn you... We will kill your husbands and sons and we will sleep with you! You will be our wives!*” reported by a woman refugee in Goz Amer camp in Chad.

Refugees and Internally Displaced People

Food is scarce and sanitary conditions appalling in the camps inhabited by those displaced by the conflict. Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in makeshift camps are continued targets of attacks. Some of the IDP camps are under the control of the *Janjawid* militia – the very people who caused the IDPs to flee from their villages. There have been numerous reports of killings of men venturing outside the camps and rapes of women and girls. Children are said to be dying from malnutrition, thousands are estimated to be at risk of starvation and the current supplies of food, water and medicine have been deemed insufficient. The deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Darfur and Chad camps is additionally compounded by administrative delays imposed by the Sudanese authorities on international humanitarian organizations and the ensuing logistic difficulties caused by the rainy season. One Sudanese who reached Khartoum after three months in Mukjar camp, Darfur said: “*It is not a camp but a prison.*”

Women and Girls

Much of the violence perpetuated in the Darfur conflict includes grave human rights abuses against women. Human rights violations that have specifically targeted women and girls include abductions, sexual slavery, torture and forced displacement. In many cases the *Janjawid* have raped women in public, in the open air, in front of their husbands, relatives or the wider community. Women who survive this violence often suffer from severe mental and physical health problems, unwanted pregnancies, social stigmatization, and economic difficulties. Not a single member of the *Janjawid* or the armed forces has been charged with committing rape or abductions.

? How can I get more information? How can I help?

Please visit Amnesty International USA’s website for background information, opportunities for action and more: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/index.do>.

“I have lost everything now; I have nothing but the fingers of my two hands.”
(Sudanese Refugee)