

Sudan: Ethnic Cleansing in Darfur



According to President Bush, fighting in Darfur has “opened a new chapter of tragedy in Sudan’s troubled history.”

April 7, 2004 – Washington, DC

Photo: USAID/Columbia Helicopters

Map: USAID

The international community can no longer ignore the violence and atrocities taking place in Darfur.

For more than 20 years the people of Sudan have been witness to a civil war between the Government of Sudan in the north and the Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement/Army stationed in the south. Now as both sides are close to the signing of an agreement that would end the conflict in the country, the Sudanese government, using supported Jingaweid (Arab) militia group are systematically killing, looting and destroying ethnic African communities in the western Darfur region of the country.

"Some 1,000 people are being killed a week, tribeswoman are being systematically raped, 700,000 people have been driven from their homes, and Sudan's Army is even bombing the survivors. And the world yawns."

- Nicholas D. Kristof

- "Will We Say 'Never Again' Yet Again?"
New York Times March 27, 2004



Children gather in a refugee camp
Photo: USAID/Columbia Helicopters

The most recent round of violence started in February 2003, when two new rebel groups emerged. The Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) demanded that the Sudanese Government stop arming the Arab groups in Darfur and address longstanding grievances about underdevelopment in the region.

The Government answered by arming over 20,000 militiamen of Arab descent. The Government operates jointly with these militias, known as "Jingaweid," in attacks on civilians from the Fur, Masaalit, and Zaghawa ethnic groups. In the past year, over 700,000 civilians have been forced to flee their rural villages; over 110,000 refugees are encamped along the Chad border. The Jingaweid have perpetrated widespread atrocities against these civilians. For example, on July 25, 2003 after an attack on Shoba, a Fur village south of Kabkabiya, Amnesty International reported that at least 51 villagers, including many elders, were killed. On August 5, 2003 pro-government militias allegedly killed approximately 300 civilians in Kuttum, and destroyed and burned houses and shops.

Since 2003, the Government has provided air support for the Jingaweid militia groups on the ground, paving the way for raids. Aerial bombardments and targeting of innocent civilians have taken place in the villages of Anka, Baashoum, Gooz, Hebeela-Kejengessy, Jalla, Karnoi, Kutum, Moun, Sana Haya, Swani, Saliea, and others.

“The Arab militia and Army want to get rid of anyone with black skin... until there are no blacks left.”

- Refugee from Darfur

In February 2004, an eyewitness account of a raid on the village of Tawila noted that a well-organized attack by horseman and members of the military dressed in fatigues in which 67 people were killed, 16 girls abducted and over 93 females were raped. The attack displaced over 5,000 people. In March, another eyewitness reported that over 500 Jingaweid militia from different areas of Darfur gathered to strategize in a remote area of Darfur – something that would be next to impossible without organized supervision and a sophisticated means of communication.

Reports by refugees fleeing the violence indicate that uniformed government troops are accompanying the Jingaweid in numerous raids. This information is the latest to contradict government reports that its military is not involved in the fighting. The Government has not taken steps to bring the Jingaweid under control or prevent further attacks.

“The Sudanese government must immediately stop local militias from committing atrocities against the local population and must provide unrestricted access to humanitarian aid agencies. The government of Sudan must not remain complicit in the brutalization of Darfur.”

- President Bush, April 7, 2004
Washington, DC

Torture and Rape of Innocent Civilians

On August 12, security forces in Kass arrested and severely beat 24 men suspected of supporting the rebels in Darfur. On September 9, security forces released all but two of the men. There was no known action taken against the responsible members of the security forces.

Consistent reports from the field state that Jingaweid militia are engaging in mass rape while conducting raids in Darfur. On February 2004, the UN reported that a Jingaweid militia group raped 41 schoolgirls and teachers in an attack on Tawila, a town located in northern Darfur. It further reported that some victims were gang raped by 14 men in front of their families.

International NGOs have reported that Jingaweid militia brand the women with hot irons to permanently mark them and further ostracize them from their communities. These reports provide overwhelming and credible evidence that the Sudan military and government supported militia groups have committed grave human rights violations and ethnically cleanse Darfur. Credible reporting indicates that these atrocities are continuing since the signing of the ceasefire on April 8.

Denial of Humanitarian Assistance

Government forces obstructed the flow of humanitarian assistance to the Darfur region. Many thousands of civilians fled into Chad and were without access to any aid because of continued fighting.

The UN reported that there has been a total disengagement of Government administration and suspension of all services in non-Arab villages in Darfur. However, no such measures have taken place in Arab villages located in the Darfur region. For example, South Darfur/West Darfur border, non-Arab and ethnic Fur villages in the vicinity are without services but a largely Arab village only four kilometers away has full services complete with schools, health and administrative facilities.

“Whatever terms used to describe the situation, the international community cannot stand idle.”

-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

“10 Years After Rwanda Genocide, Annan Unveils Plans to Stop Future Massacres”

April 7, 2004



Children exhibit symptoms of starvation

*Photo: USAID/
Columbia Helicopters*

Continued Denial

The Government of Sudan seriously delayed giving visas to United Nations teams from investigating the situation in Darfur, and has denied visas to others. It is time that the international community stand united to fulfill its promise to allow humanitarian and human rights monitors to enter the Darfur region of Sudan. The Government of Sudan is denying assistance from reaching its own people. It is time that the international community stand united and denounce the violence and ethnic cleansing taking place in Sudan.