Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Sudan: Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 1 July 2009

Information on the current situation in Sudan regarding the areas of and severity of conflict and its effect on female civilians

A June 2009 *IRIN News* report states:

> "NASIR, 24 June 2009 (IRIN) - Leaders from northern and southern Sudan are currently meeting in Washington against the backdrop of a series of bloody clashes between rival ethnic groups in the south in recent months.
>
> On 12 June, fighting broke out close to Nasir in Upper Nile State, Southern Sudan, when hundreds of armed Jikany Nuer men attacked a flotilla of 31 boats, including 27 carrying grain and other supplies for the UN World Food Programme (WFP), according to UN officials and eyewitnesses.
>
> "The boats were carrying supplies to our enemy," said Jikany youth Peter Gatwech, recovering from a bullet wound to his stomach in Nasir hospital. Dozens of people in Nasir said the attack on the boats was prompted after three other boats - thought to be carrying ammunition or arms upstream to the Lou - joined the convoy.
>
> The attack cut supplies to the more than 19,000 displaced Lou Nuer people in the eastern town of Akobo, who had fled earlier fighting against the Murele.
>
> The river convoy had to pass through Nasir - home of the Jikany Nuer people - and the latter want revenge for an attack by Lou gunmen on 8 May that left 71 mainly women and children dead in the village of Torkech." (IRIN News (24 June 2009) - *Sudan: Mounting ethnic tensions in the south – analysis*)

A June 2009 *Human Rights Watch* report under the heading 'Summary', states:

> "In the most deadly spate of intercommunal violence since the end of the 21-year civil war in 2005, more than 1,000 men, women, and children were killed in attacks in Jonglei state in Southern Sudan in March and April 2009. The attacks starkly demonstrate the failure of both the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to protect civilians from violence, in particular from intercommunal violence that appears to be intensifying.
>
> The recent surge in violence prompted UN officials to observe that in 2009 so far the death toll in Southern Sudan has been higher than in Darfur and to warn of its potential impact on elections scheduled in February 2010 and the referendum on

> southern self-determination in 2011.1 Both are politically contentious milestones in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the National Congress Party-led Government of Sudan and the Southern People's Liberation Army/Movement that could fuel local and national tensions and lead to further violence and human rights violations." (Human Rights Watch (21 June 2009) - *No One to Intervene: Gaps in Civilian Protection in Southern Sudan*, p.4)

The *Amnesty International* 2009 report for Sudan under the heading 'Armed conflict – Darfur', states:

> "The conflict in Darfur intensified with an increase in attacks and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.
>
> Attacks on villages noticeably increased in 2008, with between 270,000 and 300,000 people displaced during the year. Widespread human rights violations continued despite the deployment of UNAMID.
>
> The UNAMID force was incapacitated by insufficient troop numbers and inadequate military equipment. With only 11,415 total uniformed personnel supported by 721 international civilian personnel, 1,393 local civilian staff and 246 UN Volunteers as of 31 October, UNAMID was not able to effectively discharge its mandate in Darfur. Its lack of attack helicopters and heavy ground transport undermined its ability to protect civilians and its own troops. In the course of the year, 17 members of the force were killed in various attacks. UNAMID was unable to intervene on a number of occasions where civilians in Darfur were under attack.
>
> Attacks against humanitarian aid convoys peaked in 2008, leading to a reduction by half in the World Food Programme's aid delivery to Darfur. Eleven humanitarian staff members were killed between January and October. This sharp increase in the targeting of humanitarian workers, together with the hijacking of vehicles and abductions, limited the outreach activities of aid agencies and NGOs and their access to the most vulnerable communities in Darfur.
>
> In January, the Sudanese Armed Forces tried to regain control of the northern corridor of West Darfur from the JEM. The attempt resulted in attacks on the villages of Abu Suruj, Saraf Jidad, Silea and Sirba in West Darfur. The army, supported by the Janjaweed militia, resorted to aerial bombardments in support of their ground offensives. The entire area was inaccessible to humanitarian organizations and the UN from mid-December 2007 to March 2008. The attacks displaced an estimated 30,000 people, many to areas that were not easily accessible to aid agencies. The attacks were indiscriminate and the government's forces and security services looted and burned villages on their way. Damage to civilian property was widespread and at least 115 civilians were killed. In Sirba, several cases of rape were reported during and after the attacks.
>
> On 25 August the NISS sought to enter Kalma camp in South Darfur to search for illegal weapons and drugs. Kalma camp is home to more than 90,000

> internally displaced people (IDPs), the largest IDP camp in Darfur. When the inhabitants refused to allow the NISS to enter the camp, the NISS surrounded the camp, opened fire and reportedly shelled the camp. Access into and out of the camp was denied, including to the wounded and to humanitarian agencies. More than 47 civilians were killed. UNAMID did not intervene." (Amnesty International (28 May 2009) - *Amnesty International Report 2009 – Sudan*)

The same report under the heading 'Violence against women and girls', states:

> "Incidents of gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, continued.
>
> The operations of a large number of international NGOs committed to addressing violence against women continued being restricted by the government. Interference by the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission, which monitors and co-ordinates humanitarian work in Darfur, was reported to have increased in 2008. Amnesty International also received credible reports that workers from organizations countering gender-based sexual violence were harassed by the NISS over the year.
>
> In desperate attempts to free them from the conflict, women and their children continued to be sent by their husbands to the capital, where they ended up living in IDP camps around the city, often in extreme poverty." (ibid)

A March 2009 *UN News Service* report states:

> "The deteriorating security situation in some parts of Southern Sudan is preventing the return of refugees from Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported today.
>
> Last week, coordinated violent protests organized by war veterans from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) - who have not been paid their benefits for five months - paralyzed some towns in the Central and Eastern Equatoria region and disrupted lives for several days.
>
> After meetings with Southern Sudanese President Silva Kiir, from 19-20 March, the veterans lifted their blockade in the town of Yei, but the protests continue in Kapoeta, whose town centre is still occupied, UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmond told reporters in Geneva.
>
> These disturbances have impeded the movement of refugees and aid workers, forcing UNHCR to temporarily postpone or stop five repatriation convoys carrying nearly 1,000 returnees from Uganda." (UN News Service (24 March 2009) - *Violence thwarts refugee return to Southern Sudan – UN*)

The *US Department of State* 2008 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Sudan states:

> “Conflict in Darfur continued despite the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) between the government and Minni Minawi's faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A). Civilians in Darfur continued to suffer from the effects of genocide. Government forces bombed villages, killed civilians including internally displaced persons (IDPs), and collaborated with janjaweed militias and tribal factions to raze villages and perpetrate violence against women. The government supported Chadian rebel groups. During January and February, violence in West Darfur displaced tens of thousands of persons; approximately 12,000 persons were displaced to Chad. Darfur rebel groups continued to commit serious abuses. On May 10, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), a Darfuri rebel movement, mounted an attack on Omdurman, near the capital. Intertribal conflict also killed civilians. According to the UN, nearly 2.7 million civilians have been internally displaced, and approximately 250,000 refugees have fled to neighboring Chad since the conflict in Darfur began in 2003. During the year approximately 315,000 civilians were displaced within Darfur and to Chad. Estimates on the number of deaths vary. In 2006 the UN estimated that 200,000 persons had died as a result of the conflict.
>
> Tensions over CPA implementation persisted between the north and the south. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the SPLA forces engaged in open combat in the disputed Abyei region from May 14 until May 22. Intertribal violence in the south continued. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel movement formerly-based in Uganda, made incursions into Southern Sudan and attacked and killed civilians.” (US Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (25 February 2009) - *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Sudan*)

The report continues:

> “In Southern Sudan, serious human rights abuses were reported during the year, including extrajudicial killings and physical abuse of persons by the SPLA; poor prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrest; lengthy pretrial detention; use of child soldiers; abduction of women and children; and child labor. Interethnic violence was a problem.
>
> In Darfur government-aligned militias killed and injured civilians, including during attacks on villages; raped women and children; destroyed and looted civilian property; and used child soldiers.
>
> Rebel factions and bandits in Darfur killed and abducted persons, including civilians, humanitarian workers, and United Nations--African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeeping troops and workers; beat and raped civilians; recruited and used child soldiers; and restricted humanitarian access.
>
> The LRA attacked villages and killed and abducted civilians in the south.” (ibid)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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Freedom House
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International Crisis Group (ICG)
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