



OFFICE OF UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN CO-ORDINATOR
FOR THE SUDAN

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RCHC/SUD/Note 20

NOTE TO MR. EGELAND

Relocation of Intifada IDP Camp, South Darfur, Sudan

1. When Ambassador Vraalsen and I visited Nyala (capital of South Darfur) on 7 December, we encouraged the authorities to improve the living conditions of the long-suffering IDPs of Intifada camp; (see previous reports). The GOS said then that relocation would be the best way to do this. We urged that, if that was the case, any relocation must be done voluntarily with full humanitarian access to the concerned population. The situation of the Intifada IDPs was extremely precarious because of Government restrictions on the construction of humanitarian facilities, especially sanitation and shelter since, according to Government, the IDPs were on private land. As a result, during the period 22 December to 8 January alone, WHO reported 33 new deaths, mainly children under five.
2. On 14-16 January, the State Government of South Darfur began to relocate the 8,000 IDPs in Intifada to a new camp near Belial village, about 14 km East of Nyala. The IDPs were unwilling to move mainly out of fear for their security at the new site. To avoid being moved, most fled the camp area with their belongings and settled in or around Nyala. Only 165 IDPs agreed to embark on trucks provided by the authorities, reportedly in part as a result of pressure and intimidation. Humanitarian agencies observing the move reported that the State Government obstructed the delivery of humanitarian supplies to camp residents, promising instead that such supplies would be provided at the new location. Some 24 armed police with a vehicle with a mounted machine gun, arrived at the camp to encourage people to relocate. They reportedly threatened already traumatized IDPs that their shelters would be burned if they did not agree to move.
3. As you know, peace talks between GoS and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) have broken down. Also, fighting and insecurity have increased throughout Darfur, rendering most IDP locations outside the state capitals of Nyala and El Fasher insecure. In the past weeks, Arab militias (*Janjaweed*) have reportedly attacked 9,000 IDPs upon their arrival in Geneina town (West Darfur), as well as IDP camps in Kebkabiya (North Darfur) hosting some 51,000 IDPs. The GoS has recently denied travel permits for international staff for all areas in Greater Darfur except El Fasher town (North Darfur) and has cancelled some previously issued travel permits, reducing humanitarian access to less than 1% of the estimated one million IDPs in the region.
4. MSF (France and Holland) have approached me to express their strong concerns on the safety and welfare of the former inhabitants of Intifada camp, as well as other IDPs who cannot be reached and have had their villages burned and destroyed. I have urged them not to leave Darfur – as this would reduce international humanitarian access even further. They have issued a public statement, which has been carried in the international media. MSF have since received a formal notification from the GoS, with warning that that they may be requested to leave the country.
5. Recommendation. In addition to repeated in-country representations that we continue to make, you may wish to issue a press statement from HQ specifically to express concern over Intifada. But in deciding on whether or not to do so, you may wish to give serious consideration also to the GoS demarche on the UN's public handling of Darfur (ref. my note of 14 January). In coming weeks, the anticipated framework peace agreement between Northern and Southern Sudan, and possible associated statements by the SG and the Security Council could present further opportunity to reiterate our concerns about the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Darfur.

Dr. Mukesh Kapila