



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

11 February 2004
RCHC/SUD/Note 28
(A)

NOTE TO MR. EGELAND

Humanitarian access in Darfur Region, Sudan

1. Further to my notes of 26 January and 8 February (RCHC/SUD/Note 24 and 27), on 9 February the humanitarian community, led by the UK Ambassador and the Dutch Chargé d'Affaires (representing the EU Presidency), held a meeting on access in Darfur with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the State Minister of Foreign Affairs and the State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs. This was a follow-up meeting to the one held two weeks ago. These meetings have become a mechanism for humanitarian actors operating in Darfur to voice their access-related grievances to the Government of Sudan (GoS).
2. As stated during the meeting, access throughout Darfur continues to be restricted (see attached table.) UN staff already present in the region delivers assistance to some 100,000 war-affected beneficiaries, mainly in Kutum (North Darfur), while NGOs on the ground (MSF-France; Medair) provide relief to an additional 120,000 in West Darfur, including 40,000 in El Geneina. However the GoS continues to preclude international staff in Khartoum from accessing conflict-affected parts of Darfur. Recent promises made by the Foreign Minister regarding access to Nyala and Geneina (South and West Darfur) have failed to materialise. On 8 February, the authorities had stopped international NGOs from boarding a commercial flight to El Fasher (North Darfur), claiming that access to El Fasher was denied until further notice.
3. The State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs claimed to be unaware of the constraints surrounding NGO travel to El Fasher, and promised to examine this issue. He reiterated his promise that most of Greater Darfur would be accessible from 16 February. Upon the UK Ambassador and Dutch Chargé d'Affaires' suggestion, the GoS invited representatives of the international community to visit newly accessible IDP areas, including formerly rebel-held Tina, Kornoï and Umm Baru.
4. Referring to the proposed creation of a joint security/access assessment mechanism at local level composed of humanitarian actors and GoS security, the State Minister reported that he had instead recommended to local state-led food security and water emergency Committees that they include security elements.
5. The State Minister finally stated that Kutum town was now hosting in excess of 90,000 war-affected (including 65,000 IDPs), with some 1,000 new IDPs arriving daily. The GoS planned to relocate some of these displaced in Fata Borno town (a former IDP location, now completely deserted), others to Gouba, while the rest could remain in Kutum. According to the State Minister, IDPs would move on a voluntary basis, with security forces providing them with safety and protection guarantees. The UK Ambassador noted that by providing increased access to international relief workers, the GoS would usefully persuade IDPs that their areas of origin were safe enough to permit return.
6. UN Sudan continues to closely monitor the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur, while also actively preparing for a hopefully improved access in days to come.

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