



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

**A Briefing Paper on the Darfur Crisis: ethnic cleansing**

This paper was prepared by a group of concerned humanitarian workers in Darfur who requested the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator to bring this to the attention of the international community

1. The three Darfur States are geographically located in the Sahelian belt covering Sub-Sahara from Mauritania to Sudan. This zone of fracture between nomadic and sedentary population is known for nurturing conflicts of interest between these two communities. Several countries have tried to address these issues by mediating these conflicts in one way or another. Both Mali and Niger have been quite successful in these attempts.
2. Sudan has traditionally had tense relations between its different communities, mainly Africans and Arabs. In spite of these usual conflicts, or because of their periodical reoccurrence, local coping mechanisms existed, by which local population and nomads negotiated on the basis of their best interest. Since the late 80s' however, peaks of violence were reported in the area and some organized movements of resistance were spontaneously rising, and dismantled.
3. Targeted attacks by nomads on settled farmers' villages not protected by GOS started to increase again following the drought in 2000. These tensions between sedentary and nomadic population had never been adequately addressed by GOS. Unable to maintain law and order in the region, this "ethnic conflict" between camel herders and pastoralists took a new dimension when an opposition-armed group was constituted by Fur and Zaghawas to protect the vulnerable sedentary communities.
4. In order to increase its capacity to fight SLA, the GOS has called for the support of a proxy force constituted by ethnic Arab fighters, the Janjaweed. Though the intention of Government of Sudan may initially not have been to target civilians, but potential SLA fighters, it is clear that today all Fur and Zaghawas villagers or town residents are systematically targeted. It seems to have become a military logic of Government of Sudan that the only way to defeat SLA is to remove the entire support base (villages where to hide and villagers who could provide SLA cover and food).
5. At the same time, Janjaweed seize this opportunity to settle old scores and get access to wealth, thus a marriage of convenience. The process goes voluntarily "out of control" of Government of Sudan and gives a free hand to the "implementing partners". Since these confrontations between SLA and

Government of Sudan have been taking place, all locally triggered negotiation mechanisms have been destroyed. Hence conflicts of interest are settled by the gun and not through dialogue.

### **Ethnic cleansing**

6. Ethnic cleansing is characterized by a deliberate policy executed through clear command-and-control arrangements by which a group, based on its race, origin or religion, is forcibly removed from an area.
7. The pattern witnessed in the Darfur region to forcibly remove non-Arab tribes (Mainly Fur, Zaghawas, Messalites and Birgit) from their villages is consistent in all areas. The sequencing of events is as follows:
8. Total disengagement of the administration and suspension of all services. Supplies and salaries are not paid any longer, leaving the above-mentioned communities in a vacuum where law and order are precarious. Should an Arab village be in the vicinity, no such measures are taken, on the contrary, protection is reinforced. The pattern is well illustrated at the border between South and West Darfur, where a cluster of Fur villages around Artala were left without administrative support and an Arab village, Kubum, located only 4 Km away, is fully serviced with schools, health and administration.
9. These villages are then alleged to have passed under SLA control though civilians argue that either they do not have any means to fight against SLA presence, or the potential presence of SLA is used as a pretext to launch pre-emptive attacks against non-Arab villages and seize their land. It is however evident that SLA is more likely to get its supplies (including by looting) in villages where they are sure that they will not find any GOS presence.
10. Based on the assumption that SLA is present in the village, the eviction process starts. Attacks are launched, either jointly between the Sudanese air force and GOS proxy forces (Janjaweed) or Janjaweed alone. On many occasions, residents recognize the nomads they used to deal with in the past during the "traditional" clashes linked to the transhumance of the herds. In spite of attempts made to negotiate, nomads make it clear that GOS has now given them a mandate to make these areas "Zurga free" (Zurga is a derogatory term for Black) and that they represent GOS in the area. Violence is systematically reported, people killed (especially males), goods including cattle looted, and houses burned. If people do not move immediately, a second more deadly attack is launched, and civilians are left with no option but to move away to the nearest "safe haven", which is usually also attacked within the next few days.
11. In the initial stage of this wandering life, people always try to stay as close as possible to their village of origin. It allows them, at high risks and usually at night, to go back to retrieve what is left of their belongings, should the village not be completely scorched. Even when the village has been emptied of its inhabitants, Janjaweed may go back and totally destroy what is left, specifically targeting irrigations systems and houses left untouched so as to

prevent SLA to use them as hideout. It must be understood that in an arid environment, the destruction of irrigation systems has the clear sinister message to the native population that there will be no return.

12. Attacks against villages are selective, based on ethnic background going beyond the difference between Arabs and non-Arabs. On the way between Kebkabyia and Birka Seyra (North Darfur), the landscape is characterized by a patchwork of untouched villages neighbouring scorched villages. Every single burned village was reported as formerly inhabited by Zaghawas and Fur. The other villages (inhabited by non Arab tribes reported as Tama, Gimir and Tungur) remaining untouched had made arrangements with Janjaweed. Arrangements included payments of large sums of money.
13. Once displaced, this population lives under constant threat of further displacement, since they seek refuge amongst kinfolk Fur/Zaghawas communities, who are most likely to be the next target of this policy.
14. Omdas (tribal leaders) and the Sultan of the Messalites have shown the UN the numerous representations made at the local level to Commissioners and Walis, and at Khartoum level, including to the President of the Republic. These representations included cases of extra-judiciary executions, rapes, thefts and looting. These representations were well documented but lead to no results. On one occasion, the Omda was told by his community to stop these representations (Manawashi, South Darfur).
15. The following elements let us conclude that Janjaweed militias are structured and under control, especially in an environment heavily controlled by the Government of Sudan security and military intelligence.
16. All Omdas of displaced communities in North Darfur named the same prominent Janjaweed militia leader. He was banned from Darfur by the previous Wali of the State on the ground that he was fuelling tribal conflicts. He had to remain in Khartoum. When the previous Wali of North Darfur was himself dismissed after the attack on El Fasher Airport on 24 April 2003, the named militia leader came back with strong political support from the Government following his "forced exile" in Khartoum.
17. Though originally from Kutum, this militia leader has set his base in Misteriha, an area located along a main road between Kabkabyia and Birka Seyra where governmental patrols are present on a constant basis. Villagers confirmed that Janjaweed militias (dressed in regular military fatigue) and manning checkpoints along this road were receiving their orders from Misteriha.
18. Prior to the attacks against Tawila, the UN witnessed and reported in its daily sitrep a large movement of Janjaweed militias coming from different directions and congregating in a make-shift camp located on the western slope of Jebel Si. Without means of communication and internal structure, more than 500 Janjaweed, fully equipped, could not operate in this environment.
19. Tawila was attacked for several days, less than a week after SLA was reportedly located in the market of the town. Though fully informed while the

attack was still ongoing, the Wali in El Fasher, located 60 Km away from Tawila by car, took 48 hours to send a delegation.

20. In West Darfur, the leader of Janjaweed militia is reportedly a named General of the Sudanese Armed Forces, based in El Geneina.
21. In South Darfur, a Government Minister from Khartoum has recently spent several days rallying Arab tribal leader, asking them to mobilize their forces to launch a counter attack in Buram following two consecutive offensives of SLA. Buram is an important Arab town. No mobilization has ever been mentioned in order to protect non-Arab towns.
22. One of the deadliest attacks, which were launched recently, was reported in Korma (North Darfur) on 19 March. Janjaweed governmental militia, provided with trucks, killed 48 people, including members of the Public Defense Forces. 22 women were raped and scores of wounded were evacuated by humanitarians when access was granted days later. There is consistent reporting that during the second day of the attack, on 20 March, a military helicopter landed in Korma to re-supply the Janjaweed and evacuated wounded Janjaweed. For the record, the UN in Khartoum, based on the advice of the field, informed the State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs of the potential attack on Korma on 4 March, 16 days prior to the attack, requesting the authorities to take appropriate measures to protect civilian population. To the best of our knowledge, the warning was ignored.
23. The systematic targeting of Birgit, Fur, Messalites and Zaghawas civilians continues, throwing an additional couple of thousands IDPs on the roads every week. Protection of IDPs is under the responsibility of the Government.

**The Following violations of the most basic elements of Humanitarian Law/Human Rights have been seen on the ground**

- Collective punishment against Birgit, Fur, Messalites and Zaghawa communities in towns as well as in villages. These collective punishments are inflicted in an indiscriminate manner on the assumption that these populations support SLA.
- Abduction and detention of civilians against payment of ransom. Birka Seyra village council kept a record of the sums extorted since July, which amounted to 1.8M SD. (200 SD is the average daily income of an IDP when he can find work)
- Targeting of males during operations against villages is reported on a constant basis. 5 children and 1 woman displaced in Tawila and interviewed on 26 February confirmed that their father/husband were killed during the attack against their village, Karegn, located in the Jebel Si. The attack against Karegn took place on 20 February.
- Lack of freedom of movement for Fur and Zaghawas. The UN was informed on 25 February that members of the village council of Birka Seyra tried to go to Kebkabyia in order to meet with the commissioner and bring up the issues of lack of law and order. They were prevented to move and were under the threat of illegal arrest at Janjaweed checkpoint.

- Repeated pattern of rapes, including gang rapes against schoolgirls, are reported on a consistent manner. These incidents have been documented in Tawila (27 February), in Morney (3 and 4 March) and in Kubum (19 and 20 March). These incidents are only some out of dozens that are reported during attacks. The vast majority of rapes are not even reported due to the sensitivity of the incident.
- The abduction of raped women is consistently reported.
- The systematic destruction of irrigation systems (as witnessed in Birkey Sayira where 57 bullet impacts were counted on a motor pump) has been documented.
- The forced payment of various “fees” up to 4,000 SD per month per household to go back to one’s own house and land.
- The looting of goods in towns and cattle in the villages.
- Faulty judiciary system, if any (Kebkabyia)
- The general vacuum following total disengagement of central authorities contributes to the culture of impunity which is now widespread.

#### **The International Community should**

- seek to inform the UN Security Council through a humanitarian briefing, and request statement and action from the Security Council.
- ask for an independent Commission of Enquiry on Darfur.
- request the Commission of Human Rights in Geneva to act.
- consider targeted sanctions against the identified perpetrators of the ethnic cleansing (such as international travel bans, seizure of internationally-held assets etc.)
- consider mechanisms for the prosecution consistent with international norms of the identified perpetrators of the ethnic cleansing.
- redouble efforts to seek an internationally-monitored ceasefire.
- support the UN, ICRC and other international humanitarian organisations to expand presence in Darfur for both humanitarian assistance and protection.

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