

## Darfur-Sudan Update

This fact sheet uses a background of war in the southern Sudan (the “ongoing political struggle over power and resources”) to highlight the recent events in the Darfur. According to the International Crisis Group Africa report (No 76, 2004) the recent eruptions of warfare in the Darfur since 2004 have altered the prospects for peace in the Sudan which looked promising in 2003. In the South peace talks between the government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement / Army (SPLA) have since stalled. This report argues that these “negative trends are not unconnected” with Rebels in the Darfur not participants in the peace talks concluding “they had to fight lest decisions on power and wealth sharing for the entire country be taken without them” (pg 1, Executive Summary).

Several points of clarification need to be stressed since the publication of this fact sheet.

1. The Janjaweed, although not an ethnic grouping as such are believed to be made up of mainly Arab militia in the Darfur, many of whom are nomadic tribesmen, who mounted on horses or camels have raided villages killing, looting, burning and raping. Increasing human rights reports refer to evidence of government training and arming of the Janjaweed since the SLA and JEM attacked military installations in early 2003. Human rights reports also refer to the repeated human rights violations, particularly rape and torture, by both government forces and the Janjaweed. Despite some reports of human rights violations from rebel groups such as the SLM/A this is far outweighed by the number of reported cases from government forces and the Janjaweed (see Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General, Geneva, 25 January 2005).
2. The reference to the reports of anti-government militia forces committing human rights abuses in the Dafur concern the SLM/A and other rebel groups in Dafur as well as the SPLM/A in the South. According to the Commission noted above “the SML/A as indicated by its name, is influenced in terms of agenda and structure by its Southern counterpart, the SPLM/A” (p 38 of above report). Indeed, the SML/A does consider itself to be “a national movement that aims along with other like minded political groups to address and solve the fundamental problems of all of Sudan” (p 37 of above report). However, in 2003 the SPLA in the South, as well as government forces and pro-government militias were reported in violating basic human rights when the government launched several military offences in Southern Sudan (US committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2005). Despite ongoing violence peace negotiations gained momentum during 2003. The US Department of State reports continuing violence and human rights violations by all groups in the Dafur and in the South.

“Although military activities appeared to decline in Southern and Eastern Sudan in late 2003, violence persisted in some areas, primarily in the Darfur region, and the outcome of peace negotiations remained in doubt” (US committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2005).

For latest developments in Darfur and in the south of Sudan see reports from Human Rights Watch, The United Nations Security Council and the International Crisis Group (ICG).