

Violence and Suffering in Sudan's Darfur Region

The Crisis in Darfur

A preventable humanitarian crisis, affecting more than two million people, is raging in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Not since the Rwanda genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a calculated campaign of slaughter, rape, starvation and displacement. Government-backed militias, known collectively as the Janjaweed, are systematically eliminating entire communities of African tribal farmers. Villages are being razed, women and girls raped and branded, men and boys murdered, and food and water supplies targeted and destroyed. Victims report that government air strikes frequently precede militia raids.

According to the findings of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, January 25, 2005,

"government forces and militias conducted indiscriminate attacks, including killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement, throughout Darfur. These acts were conducted on a widespread and systematic basis ... The vast majority of the victims of all of these violations have been from the Fur, Zaghawa, Massalit, Jebel, Aranga and other so-called 'African' tribes."

The effects of this ethnic cleansing campaign have been devastating. It is estimated that at least 200,000 people have died. More than 1.6 million people have been displaced from their homes and over 200,000 have fled across the border to Chad. Many now live in camps lacking adequate food, shelter, sanitation, and health care. Women and girls who leave the camps to gather much needed firewood risk being attacked and raped by Janjaweed patrolling the countryside.

The Sudanese government continues to flout international law with impunity. They have made no progress in disarming or prosecuting the Janjaweed; Sudanese police forces have attacked displacement camps and forcibly relocated people; there have been recent reports of bombing in violation of agreements the government has signed.

In recent months, the situation has deteriorated significantly. Fighting has escalated and several relief organizations, unable to protect their workers, have pulled out of the region. If the violence continues and people do not receive adequate aid and protection, many more Darfurians will die.

Who We Are

The Save Darfur Coalition is an alliance of over 100 diverse faith-based, humanitarian, and human rights organizations that was formed in response to the massive crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan. Our mission is to raise public awareness and to mobilize efforts to help end the atrocities and reduce the suffering in Darfur and nearby refugee camps.

To learn more about the coalition, please visit www.savedarfur.org.