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## **Darfur Background Information and Timeline**

Since the eruption of conflict in 2003, Darfur, western Sudan, has been ravaged by killings, torture, destruction and rape since 2003. Despite international outrage and demands around the globe to end the brutality, the deadly conflict continues. Darfur remains one of the world's worst human rights and humanitarian catastrophes.

Civilians have become victims of egregious human rights violations, primarily at the hands of the government of Sudan and the Janjawid, an allied militia. Together, they have been responsible for killings, torture, rape, detentions, forced displacement, the burning of homes and villages, and the theft and deliberate destruction of crops and cattle. Rebel groups have also perpetrated killings, rape, looting, abductions, and other human rights abuses. Today:

- 300,000 men, women, and children have died
- 2.6 million have been displaced from their homes and live in camps for refugees or Internally Displaced Person (IDPs) or wherever they can, in a courtyard, under a tree.
- An unknown number of women and girls have been abducted, raped, and abused
- A generation of children has reached school-age not knowing a home

The humanitarian crisis is exacerbated by the remoteness of the area, restrictions by the Sudanese government on humanitarian operations, press, and human rights monitors, and rampant insecurity on the ground. Attacks by armed assailants on aid workers have drastically reduced operations, and humanitarian aid groups no longer have access to some areas of Darfur. In many areas, roads are under the control of roaming Janjawid militias or factions of armed opposition groups. Government armed forces, police paramilitaries, Janjawid, and other armed groups, such as bandits, establish checkpoints where they often extort money. Humanitarian aid convoys are hijacked for the vehicles and supplies they carry, and the drivers are assaulted or kidnapped, and some have been murdered.

## Timeline:

### 2003

In February 2003, two opposition groups called the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) emerged in Darfur and attacked government troops. The SLA and JEM stated their attacks were in protest of the government of Sudans (GOS) failure to protect local villagers from attacks by nomadic groups, and economic marginalization of the region. After initial indications that the GOS was seeking a peaceful solution, it chose instead to resolve the conflict by force, beginning in March 2003. Since that time the fighting has continued.

### 2004

In 2003 and 2004, Amnesty International supplied some of the earliest documentation – eyewitness testimony from the ground – that warned of the impending catastrophe in Darfur.

In July, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) began deployment. Charged with a mandate to monitor and report, it attempted to provide some measure of security for civilians and aid workers in Darfur. With a force of less than 7,000 deployed by the end of 2007, for a region the size of France, AMIS was under-equipped, with too few personnel on the ground and too limited a mandate to provide security for civilians.

On September 18, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1564, which called for a Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to assess the conflict.

Chad brokered negotiations in N'Djamena between the Sudanese government and the two rebel groups, the JEM and the SLA, leading to the April 8 Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement. Other signatories were Chad and the African Union. The ceasefire was to come into effect on April 11, 2004, but Janjawid and rebel attacks continued and have since.

### 2005

In January 2005, the UN Secretary-General's Commission of Inquiry on Darfur issued a well- documented report that indicated there were some 1.6 million internally displaced persons as a result of the ongoing violence and more than 200,000 refugees from Darfur in neighboring Chad. The report asserted that GOS forces and allied militia had committed widespread war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, torture, mass rape, summary executions, and

## Darfur Facts

arbitrary detention. The Commission also determined that the Janjawid militia operated alongside, or with ground or air logistical support from, the GOSs armed forces.

### 2006

In 2006, the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed between the government of Sudan and one of the armed groups fighting in Darfur – the Sudan Liberation Army /Minni Minawi faction (SLA/MM). Only a few other armed factions have signed the peace agreement since. Though most of the peace agreement has not been implemented, the control of some government posts and areas of Darfur were handed over to the SLA/MM and to other factions (collectively known as the signatories) that accepted the Darfur Peace Agreement.

On August 31, the UN Security Council approved a resolution to send a new peacekeeping force of 17,300 to the region, but the GOS refused to consent to its implementation.

In November, the UN Secretary-General brokered a compromise for a joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission.

### 2007

The International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted two Sudanese men, Ahmed Haroun, Sudan's Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ali Kushayb, a Janjawid militia leader, on 51 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur. The government of Sudan refused to cooperate with the ICC, and despite warrants out for their arrest, both men initially remained free in Sudan.

On July 31, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1769 authorizing the deployment of 26,000 peacekeepers and police under a UN-African Union hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID). UNAMID deployment began soon after.

On September 25, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1778 authorizing a European Union mission in eastern Chad and northeastern Central African Republic (EUFOR) supported by a small UN peacekeeping mission (MINURCAT). EUFOR/MINURCAT deployment has been very slow going. Widespread violence and insecurity persist throughout the broader conflict region.

### 2008

On January 1, there was a formal transfer of command from the African Union to

## Darfur Facts

### UNAMID.

On May 10, Darfur rebels launched an attack on the capital of Khartoum, causing further instability within the region. The government of Sudan continues to carry out aerial and ground attacks with complete disregard for the protection of civilians.

In July, Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo submitted to the pre-trial chamber of the International Criminal Court an application for the issuance of an arrest warrant against Sudanese president Omar al Bashir for 10 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, saying that he had masterminded massacres in Darfur and that he should stand trial for genocide.

In October, the Sudanese Government announced that it had arrested militia leader Ali Kushayb, who had previously been charged by the ICC with war crimes and crimes against humanity, stating that it would conduct its own trials for war crimes suspects.

Through dozens of reports, Amnesty continued to help pressure the international community to respond to the massive human rights violations in Darfur, especially the perilous conditions for women and girls who are targeted by soldiers for rape and sexual violence. AI continues to campaign to end the violence, protect civilians, ensure the unimpeded and safe delivery of humanitarian aid, and hold perpetrators accountable for massive human rights abuses in Darfur.

Amnesty International and other human rights organizations are now focusing on achieving the full deployment of the UNAMID force, which Sudan continues to obstruct. Less than half of UNAMID is on the ground, while civilians from Darfur, eastern Chad, and the Central African Republic continue to suffer ongoing mass displacement, killings, rape, and other egregious human rights violations. Continued U.S. and international action is essential to ensure a full and speedy UNAMID deployment, unhindered humanitarian access, and attention to the broader conflict region.