



Fact Sheet—Violence against women

Sexual violence has become endemic in Darfur and is a defining component of the conflict. The Sudanese government and its militias continue to conduct a targeted campaign of sexual violence against women and girls. And this campaign has created a culture of impunity that has resulted in widespread gender-based violence by a wide range of actors.

Women live in constant fear of sexual violence, a phenomenon that contributes to the region's instability and is rapidly breaking down the social fabric in Darfur.

The Sudanese government purposefully aggravates this culture of violence and bears primary responsibility for the deteriorating situation for women in Darfur. However, the African Union, the United Nations, and the international community as a whole have failed to develop an effective approach to protect Darfuri women, prevent sexual violence and provide adequate support to survivors.

Patterns of violence:

- Rape and other forms of sexual violence are used as a weapon of war by Sudanese government forces and their proxy militia, the *janjaweed*.
- Rape is part of a systematic campaign designed by the government as a tool of intimidation and terror, to break down social structures.
- Women and girls are purposefully kept alive following systematic rape, often left with deep wounds to mark their violation, and returned to their communities to struggle with the physical, psychological, and social implications of the violence.
- Women and girls living in displaced persons camps remain at risk for sexual assault. Women are targeted, harassed, and raped when they leave the camps, both by the Sudanese police and military and *janjaweed* militiamen.
- There has been an increase in sexual violence and opportunistic rape by armed and civilian actors in and around the camps. This increase is attributable to the overall breakdown in security and is a consequence of the genocide.

Civilian protection:

- The previous peacekeeping force in Darfur, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), did not have the human or financial resources to effectively monitor the region.
- The inability of AMIS to prevent and respond to sexual violence left little foundation for the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), which replaced AMIS in January 2008.
- Since then, UNAMID troops and police have increased the number of confidence-building patrols in and around camps. But a continued lack of resources, including a limited number of formed police units, has restricted the length, frequency and scope of patrols.
- UNAMID has limited capacity to respond to large-scale attacks, not only because of Sudanese restrictions, but also because of a lack of equipment. Large-scale attacks often include systematic sexual violence and rape.
- Continued deterioration of security, increased banditry and direct attacks on UNAMID have greatly hindered the mission's ability to provide effective civilian protection, including for women and children.

Justice and accountability:

- In April 2007, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Sudanese government minister Ahmed Haroun and *janjaweed* militia leader Ali Kosheib, charging them with multiple counts of

war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ICC accused both men of targeting civilians with a systematic campaign of rape and sexual violence. Neither has been arrested.

- On July 16, 2008, the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC, Luis Moreno-Ocampo submitted a request for an arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir. The Prosecutor charged al-Bashir with three counts of genocide, five counts of crimes against humanity and two counts of war crimes.
- In his request, the Chief Prosecutor noted that “rape is an integral part of the pattern of destruction that the Government of the Sudan is inflicting upon the target groups in Darfur ... They use rape to kill the will, the spirit, and life itself.”
- As it stands, the Sudanese legal structure is more likely to persecute those who report incidents of rape than those who committed the crimes. Legal action addressing cases of rape cannot be taken against members of the military, security services, police or border guards. Since many of the members of the *janjaweed* have been integrated into the Sudanese Armed Forces, they are granted the same immunity.

What must be done:

Government of Sudan

- The Sudanese government has the responsibility to protect all Sudanese civilians and should immediately cease all attacks on civilians by government and *janjaweed* forces;
- The Sudanese government should display that rape and sexual violence will not be tolerated by publicly announcing that all Sudanese armed forces and militia perpetrating gender-based violence will be investigated and prosecuted;
- Further, the Sudanese government should immediately arrest government minister Ahmed Haroun and *janjaweed* commander Ali Kosheib as well as those under their command;
- Sudanese government forces and police should immediately stop harassing, threatening, and hampering the efforts of humanitarian agencies to provide assistance to survivors of sexual violence;
- Sudanese forces and police should immediately stop harassing and attacking women attempting to leave camps or while they collect sustenance materials; and
- Sudanese forces and police should immediately cease all intimidation, fear, and administrative tactics to prevent rape survivors from accessing legal or medical assistance.

UNAMID

- UNAMID should make prevention and response to sexual violence a priority when interpreting and fulfilling its mandate;
- U.S.-led train-and-equip programs for troops and formed police units should include gender sensitivity instruction and training to help prevent and appropriately respond to violence against women;
- Troop-contributing countries should make an effort to train and sensitize their troops and enforce strict action against those who engage in sexual misconduct;
- UNAMID should carry out, in coordination with the local community and humanitarian agencies, regular patrols inside and outside camps, markets, and villages, including “firewood” patrols and night patrols;
- UNAMID should include at every station well-trained female soldiers, civilian police, investigators and translators tasked to assist victims of sexual violence; and
- UNAMID should develop an enhanced mechanism to hold personnel accountable for acts of sexual exploitation in accordance with U.N. Zero Tolerance policy.

International Community

- UNSC Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in armed conflict should be fully implemented as relevant to Darfur, including the imposition of targeted sanctions for non-compliance; and
- U.N. member states should increase financial support to U.N. and humanitarian agencies leading the coordination of gender-based violence prevention and response programs.