

21 December 2009

**Chad:**

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## **IDPs in east facing continuing violence and hardship**

*Around 168,000 people were internally displaced in eastern Chad in September 2009, as a result of conflict and human rights abuses related to tensions between Chad and Sudan, internal armed conflict, and inter-ethnic attacks against civilians. This number had fallen slightly from a 2008 high of 185,000, about one fifth of the population of eastern Chad. A profiling report showed in 2008 that 95 per cent of these internally displaced people (IDPs) were located in the Department of Dar Sila, and that almost 60 per cent were women between the ages of 15 and 40.*

*Despite the presence of United Nations and European Union peacekeepers, and repeated attempts to resolve internal and international conflicts, the causes of displacement have not ended, and widespread attacks by criminal gangs on civilians including IDPs and humanitarians have made eastern Chad extremely insecure. Since 2008, between 20,000 and 25,000 people have returned to their villages in the face of food insecurity and a lack of sources of income in IDP sites, but they have gone back to very unstable conditions. For most IDPs in eastern Chad, return is not yet a viable option.*

*Food insecurity and the lack of access to agricultural land and to natural resources such as water and firewood have been among the main concerns of IDPs. Meanwhile, they have faced arbitrary arrest, punitive fines, and various forms of gender-based violence. Internally displaced children have had limited access to primary education and no chance of further schooling, while the army has continued to recruit them despite a 2007 demobilisation agreement with UNICEF.*

*With the government committed to military investment rather than social development, and national and international protection agencies hamstrung by access and capacity limitations, it remains unlikely that conditions in eastern Chad will permit durable solutions for IDPs in the foreseeable future.*



## Background and causes of displacement

Since 2005, up to 185,000 people have been displaced in eastern Chad as a result of conflict-related violence and human rights abuses. The main causes are tensions between Chad and Sudan, internal armed conflict in Chad, and inter-ethnic attacks against civilians; the three are also intricately linked.

The war in neighbouring Darfur caused a large influx of refugees over the border into eastern Chad. It also brought Darfuri rebels from the same Zaghawa ethnic group as Chad's President Idriss Deby. His willingness to allow them to operate from bases inside Chad spurred the government of Sudan to respond in kind by letting Chadian rebels operate from Darfur. Since then, the two governments have accused each other of harbouring and funding the other's armed opposition (OCHA, 21 June 2009). They have waged what has been described as a proxy war in which each other's rebels have carried out the actual fighting (Small Arms Survey, April 2008). The two countries have broken diplomatic ties on more than one occasion, and signed numerous peace agreements that have yet to succeed.

With these tensions as a backdrop, internal armed conflict erupted in Chad in 2006, after Deby reformed the constitution in order to run for a third term in office. Chadian rebels based in Darfur accused him of limiting government posts to members of his ethnic group, and of using oil revenues to buy arms and bolster the government, instead of investing in social services and infrastructure to develop the country (ICG, 26 August

2009). Presidential elections were held in May 2006, and Deby won 65 per cent of the vote (IRIN, 29 May 2006). The results were contested by the political opposition which boycotted the election, and which had never accepted the legitimacy of Deby's initial rise to power by means of a military coup in 1990. An attempted coup preceded the 2006 election, and a second coup attempt in February 2008 and attacks in May 2009 have highlighted the failure of efforts to consolidate peace (OCHA, 21 June 2009).

Inter-ethnic attacks against civilians have also caused internal displacement in eastern Chad. Sudanese Janjaweed militias carried out cross-border raids against Chadian villages in 2006 and 2007, exploiting long-standing land disputes between ethnic groups. They perpetrated human rights abuses including massacres, rape, looting and burning of villages, and the forced internal displacement of up to 185,000 people who fled to camps (HRW, June 2009). It is widely believed that Chad's military strategy of concentrating troops at key entry points along the border left villages within Chad without protection and open to attacks (AI, 28 June 2006). While civilians may not be the intended targets of rebel attacks against government forces, the fighting has killed hundreds of people, and levels of insecurity have escalated in the wake of each confrontation.

Inter-ethnic violence has decreased considerably since 2007, only to be replaced by widespread attacks against civilians including internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees and humanitarian workers, by bandits and criminal gangs known as "*coupeurs de route*" who have acted with almost total impunity. These crimi-

nal attacks have multiplied despite the presence of European Union forces, UN peacekeeping troops, and international and Chadian police units tasked with protecting IDPs, refugees, and humanitarian workers.

## **Peacekeeping operations and peace agreements**

### *Peacekeeping operations*

In 2007, in response to the growing levels of insecurity and human rights abuses in eastern Chad, the UN Security Council authorised the creation of MINURCAT, the UN Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR), among the objectives of which was to help build up Chad's justice system and monitor the human rights situation; and the deployment of European Union (EU) troops known as EUFOR to protect Chadian IDPs and Sudanese refugees, safeguard humanitarian operations, and help restore stability. EUFOR was largely unable to ensure security in the absence of government forces (HRW, June 2009), and ill-equipped for the task of combating criminal gangs (IRIN, 16 May 2008).

EUFOR was replaced by UN peacekeeping troops in March 2009, and the mission's mandate was extended for one year (UNSC, 14 January 2009). Despite authorisation to deploy 5,200 troops, MINURCAT is currently working at half operational capacity with only 2,600 troops on the ground (UNSC, 14 October 2009). This is due to a lack of funding and to problems in the acquisition and transportation of military equipment by troop-contributing countries.

MINURCAT is also mandated to train a specialised Chadian police unit, known as the *Détachement intégré de sécurité* or DIS, to provide security in IDP sites and refugee camps and to patrol main towns in eastern Chad. As of September 2009, MINURCAT had trained over 800 DIS officers (UNSC, 14 October 2009). However, permanent DIS posts have only been set up in refugee camps, and patrolling all 38 IDP sites is said to be impossible due to lack of capacity and resources. Furthermore, humanitarian organisations have expressed grave concerns about abuses committed by DIS members.

MINURCAT has been unable to significantly improve the security situation in eastern Chad. UN officials have said that without its planned complement of troops and equipment, MINURCAT will be unable to protect IDPs, refugees, and humanitarian workers (UN, 12 November 2009), or to create a secure environment conducive to the safe return of IDPs. The force's operational mandate also prevents it from being deployed to the border, thereby allowing Chad and Sudan to continue intervening freely in each other's internal crises (European Security Review, March 2008); and it has no political mandate to promote an inclusive peace process between the government and all parties concerned, including armed insurgents (ICG, 15 April 2009).

### *Peace agreements*

Facilitated by the EU, the government and the political opposition signed an electoral reform agreement in August 2007 to oversee the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 2010. Some progress has been made in imple-

menting the agreement, such as the completion of a general population census. However, the agreement excludes armed insurgents from any negotiations or dialogue, and critics have highlighted the urgent need for a political dialogue between the government and opposition groups, both armed and unarmed, which focuses on the situation in eastern Chad rather than Darfur (Enough Project, February 2008).

In July 2009, the government and a coalition of three rebel groups known as the National Movement (*Mouvement national*) signed a peace agreement in Tripoli under the sponsorship of the Libyan government (ReliefWeb, 26 July 2009). However, the Union of Forces for the Resistance (*Union des forces de la resistance*), the main insurgent coalition bringing together eight rebel groups, remains outside the framework of any peace agreement. The internal political crisis and armed conflict in Chad will not be resolved without the participation of all rebel groups in negotiations.

Chad and Sudan have signed numerous agreements to end the support of each other's rebel groups, but none of these have been respected. The two most recent were the Dakar Agreement of March 2008 and the Doha Agreement of May 2009. A contact group (including representatives of Libya, the Republic of Congo, Senegal, Gabon, Eritrea, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union) was created to monitor the implementation of the Dakar Agreement, but the group has not met since November 2008; the implementation of the Doha Agreement has yet to begin (UNSC, 14 October 2009).

## Latest displacement figures

Since 2007, UNHCR and its partners have conducted several profiling exercises to determine the number and location of IDPs and provide disaggregated data on their age and sex. A profiling report showed in 2008 that 95 per cent of IDPs were located in the Department of Dar Sila, and that almost 60 per cent were women between the ages of 15 and 40 (UNHCR, November 2008).

As of September 2009, there were over 168,000 IDPs living in 38 IDP sites in eastern Chad (OCHA, September 2009). The majority have little or no means of sustaining themselves, making humanitarian assistance vital (OCHA, 30 November 2009). The highest number of IDPs reported to date by the UN has been 185,000 in mid-2008 (OCHA, June 2008). This translates roughly into one in five of the local population in eastern Chad being internally displaced (OI, April 2009). No new internal displacements were reported in 2009.

Chad also hosts 270,000 Sudanese refugees in 12 camps along the eastern border with Sudan, and 81,000 Central African refugees in 11 camps along the southern border with CAR (UNHCR, December 2009).

## Protection and assistance needs of IDPs

In 2009, the protection monitoring of IDP sites conducted by UNHCR and its partners found the main protection risks of IDPs to be insecurity, circulation of small arms in IDP sites, arbitrary arrest, punitive fines, theft of property, and violence against women including domestic vio-

lence, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM). Domestic violence and FGM were the two most frequent types of violence against women observed by protection monitors in IDP sites (OCHA, 21 April – 4 May 2009).

The humanitarian community has established a referral system which allows victims of human rights abuses to seek medical, psychosocial, and legal assistance. Medical and psychosocial referrals are handled by international humanitarian organisations such as COOPI and HIAS, while legal assistance is provided by APLFT (*Association pour la promotion des Libertés Fondamentales au Tchad*), a national organisation of lawyers funded by the UN to provide free legal services (OCHA, 11-23 February 2009). While the referral system is an important and welcome step towards the protection of IDPs, it has many gaps that must still be addressed. One clear example is that APLFT is constrained by the limitations of the Chadian legal system. As there are no working courts in areas of displacement, victims must wait for the presence of roving courts once or twice a year to pursue legal action. Other problems are cultural and relate to the reluctance of most victims of sexual violence to seek assistance for fear of stigmatisation or reprisals from their communities.

Displaced children have also faced a range of threats. In IDP sites they have had limited access to primary education and no chance of further schooling. One of the main problems is the lack of qualified school teachers. UNICEF and its partners, including the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and *Première Urgence* (PU), have trained teachers from displaced communities to fill this gap, but

displaced parents have been unable to pay their wages, making the process unsustainable. UNICEF continues to lobby the government to deploy and pay qualified teachers to work in IDP sites (OCHA, 26 March – 20 April 2009).

Government armed forces have continued to recruit children, despite a May 2007 agreement with UNICEF to demobilise children from the army and integrated rebel groups. Some of these children have fled from government training camps and returned to the IDP sites from where they were recruited, and they have reported severe abuses (UNSC, 7 August 2008). In September 2007, the UN identified the need to disarm, demobilise and rehabilitate between 7,000 and 10,000 children used in combat and non-combat roles by government forces and rebel groups (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2008).

As required by Security Council Resolution 1612, the UN country team in Chad has established a task force on children and armed conflict, which is in December 2009 co-chaired by MINURCAT and UNICEF. The task force visits IDP sites and refugee camps to monitor the recruitment of children by armed groups. In August 2009, MINURCAT completed the rehabilitation of a transition centre where demobilised child soldiers are housed prior to being reunited with their families (UNSC, 14 October 2009).

Food insecurity, the lack of access to agricultural land, and the lack of natural resources such as water and firewood are three main concerns for IDPs in eastern Chad. In October 2009, the World Food Programme (WFP) declared that 40 per cent of the estimated 11 million popula-

tion of Chad were suffering from food insecurity (OCHA, 2-16 October 2009). This was due to the poor distribution of rains in 2009, resulting on the one hand in droughts, a poor harvest, and a significant shortage of the staple millet crop, and on the other hand in floods and the destruction of food stocks (FEWSNET, 25 November 2009).

### **Issues of return**

Since 2008, between 20,000 and 25,000 IDPs have returned to their villages of origin (OCHA, 25 June 2009). However, they have gone back to very unstable conditions, and without the support from traditional leaders that is needed to resolve the inter-ethnic conflicts that may have caused their displacement in the first place (OI, April 2009). They have been forced back by food insecurity, lack of access to land, and lack of income-generating activities in IDP sites.

UNHCR and its partner humanitarian agency Intersos have implemented a project to assess and profile villages of return. The idea is to provide reliable information on living conditions, population movements, gaps in social services, and possible returns. While this is a fundamental step towards determining whether return is possible, a new security grading system raises questions about the consistent protection of returnees. Villages are colour-coded as red, yellow, or green, according to how safe it is for IDPs to return. People from “safe” areas classified as green will no longer be considered as IDPs or receive food or non-food items such as sleeping mats, kettles and jerry cans. However, they will be allowed to remain in IDP sites and use schools, health services and water distribution

points there (IRIN, 22 October 2009). This system should be carefully reviewed by the UN, as return is not the only durable solution and IDPs should not be forced to return to villages of origin just because these have been deemed safe.

For most IDPs in eastern Chad, return is not yet a viable option; however the UN has included the return of IDPs to their areas of origin in a series of benchmarks for evaluating MINURCAT’s performance. Humanitarian agencies have expressed concern that using return as a measure of success might encourage MINURCAT to put pressure on IDPs to return prematurely (HRW, June 2009). Some are still traumatised by the violence of forced displacement, while others cite ongoing insecurity, loss of land and property, and lack of basic services in villages of origin as major obstacles to their return.

### **National and international responses to internal displacement**

#### *National response*

Despite being an oil-producing country, Chad ranked 175th out of 182 countries on the 2009 Human Development Index (UNDP, 2009). With a view to reducing poverty in Chad and improving governance through the best possible use of oil revenues, the World Bank financed the building of an oil pipeline from Chad through Cameroon (WBG, 20 November 2009). In the six years since the pipeline became operational, Chad has used its oil revenues to buy weapons with which to fight insurgent groups, instead of investing in social services, reducing poverty and improving governance, all of which are essential components for protecting

and assisting IDPs and achieving durable solutions. In 2007, Chad spent 4.5 times more money on the armed forces than it did on health, education, and other social spending combined (AlterNet, 2 December 2009).

The government has taken steps to respond to the situation of IDPs, but their impact has been limited. In 2007, it established a national committee to assist IDPs, the *Comité national d'assistance aux personnes déplacées* (CNAPD), but it has limited resources and staff, and has delivered only sporadic assistance. In 2008, the government also set up the CONAFIT committee to coordinate humanitarian activities with MINURCAT, EUFOR and the humanitarian organisations working in Chad. The government has yet to enact national legislation to protect IDPs.

In October 2009, the African Union adopted the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the first legally binding regional instrument to protect the rights of IDPs. The Convention cannot enter into force until it is ratified by 15 African States. While the number of IDPs in Chad is not as high as in other African countries, ratification of the Convention by Chad would show its commitment to protecting the rights of IDPs and achieving their durable return, resettlement or reintegration. By ratifying the Convention, Chad could act as a positive example for the region, given its strategic geo-political position between CAR and Sudan.

#### *International response*

The UN humanitarian response is led by a Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Co-

ordinator who is also the UNDP Representative, while the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has overall responsibility to coordinate the requests for funding of humanitarian organisations through a consolidated appeals process (CAP). More than 70 international humanitarian organisations provide assistance to displaced communities in eastern Chad, including IDPs and Sudanese refugees. The cluster system was introduced in Chad in July 2007 to improve the protection and assistance of IDPs by humanitarian agencies. Chad was chosen as one of five pilot countries because of the complexity of its humanitarian crisis and the marked failings of the international community's response to IDPs (FMR, December 2007). These failings were characterised by an inability to maintain refugee camps in a stable environment while also responding to the needs of thousands of IDPs in a region with a sudden rise of insecurity.

13 clusters are now operational in Chad: protection, food security, health, nutrition, camp management/shelter/non-food items, water and sanitation, education, emergency telecommunications, early recovery, logistics, coordination and support services, security of staff and operations, and multi-sector activities for IDPs and refugees. Each cluster works closely with government counterparts, and meetings of the clusters are often co-chaired by government officials as a way to involve the government as an operational partner.

As of 25 November 2009, 68 per cent of the \$400 million requested in the 2009 CAP was funded; however clusters had received widely varying percentages of their initial requests: nutrition was 93 per cent funded and coordination and support

services 74 per cent, while multi-sector activities for IDPs and refugees were 53 per cent funded, water and sanitation 42 per cent, protection 40 per cent, health 28 per cent, education 15 per cent and agriculture only 14 per cent (OCHA, 18 November – 10 December 2009). The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) recognised that Chad was an underfunded emergency, and allocated \$5.5 million for life-saving assistance programmes to IDPs there (CERF News, October 2009).

The consolidated appeal for 2010 is for \$451 million, to fund programmes to provide emergency relief including food aid and assistance to IDPs and to increase the self-sufficiency of displaced communities (OCHA, 30 November 2009).

#### *Humanitarian access*

Humanitarian organisations have been increasingly targeted in eastern Chad, and were facing an average of 25 attacks a month by 2009 (OI, 13 March 2009). In the first nine months of 2009, there were 192 serious attacks on humanitarian workers (UNSC, 14 October 2009), including killings and abductions; the number of security incidents has doubled since 2008 (VOA, 13 November 2009). In May 2008, the Head of Mission for Save the Children UK was shot and killed by bandits while travelling in a convoy near the border with Sudan (BBC, 1 May 2008). On average, UNHCR has two vehicles stolen a day, and the town of Abeche, a hub for humanitarian operations in Chad, has the highest-ever rates of crime against aid agencies (IRIN, 7 December 2009).

The delivery of aid has thus been repeatedly interrupted, leaving displaced com-

munities whose lives are already precarious without assistance. According to the UN, at least 96,000 people are at risk of deteriorating living conditions due to continued suspensions or reduction of operations (UN News, 1 December 2009). High levels of insecurity have also prevented the access of humanitarian agencies to IDPs living with host communities in areas closer to the border with Sudan, rendering needs assessments and the delivery of aid particularly difficult.

Criminal gangs in eastern Chad have started kidnapping aid workers. A French staff member of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was abducted in early November and remains in captivity (VOA, 24 November 2009). The US Department of State issued a travel warning to Chad, emphasising that neither UN peacekeeping troops nor the government of Chad has been able to control criminal gangs attacking humanitarian workers (USDoS, 23 November 2009). While the travel warning highlights a situation that humanitarian organisations are well aware of, it underlines the fact that humanitarian space is shrinking at rapidly alarming rates.

Although UN peacekeeping troops and DIS police officers have provided military escorts for humanitarian workers, many agencies are unwilling to use escorts so as not to risk compromising their perceived neutrality. For some humanitarian agencies, the solution is rather to secure the roads on which aid convoys must travel (IRIN, 16 May 2008). This need is highlighted by a November 2009 attack against a convoy of UN agency vehicles that was being escorted by DIS, showing that even armed escorts are vulnerable to

criminal gangs (OCHA, 18 November – 10 December 2009).

A meeting on humanitarian space in Chad is scheduled to bring together government officials and security forces, UN peacekeeping troops, UN agencies, and humanitarian organisations in the capital N'Djamena in late January 2010. An important subject for discussion will be the impact that the arrival of international aid organisations has had on the local population. According to Groupe URD, a

French think tank, humanitarian organisations have driven up the cost of living significantly, generating resentment among the local population and encouraging the view that attacks against them are a form of justice (IRIN, 7 December 2009).

*Note: This is a summary of IDMC's new internal displacement profile on Chad. The full profile is available online [here](#).*

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## **About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre**

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

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