

INTERNALLY DISPLACED IN CHAD:

TRAPPED BETWEEN CIVIL CONFLICT
AND SUDAN'S DARFUR CRISIS



Internally displaced in Chad: Trapped between civil conflict and Sudan's Darfur crisis

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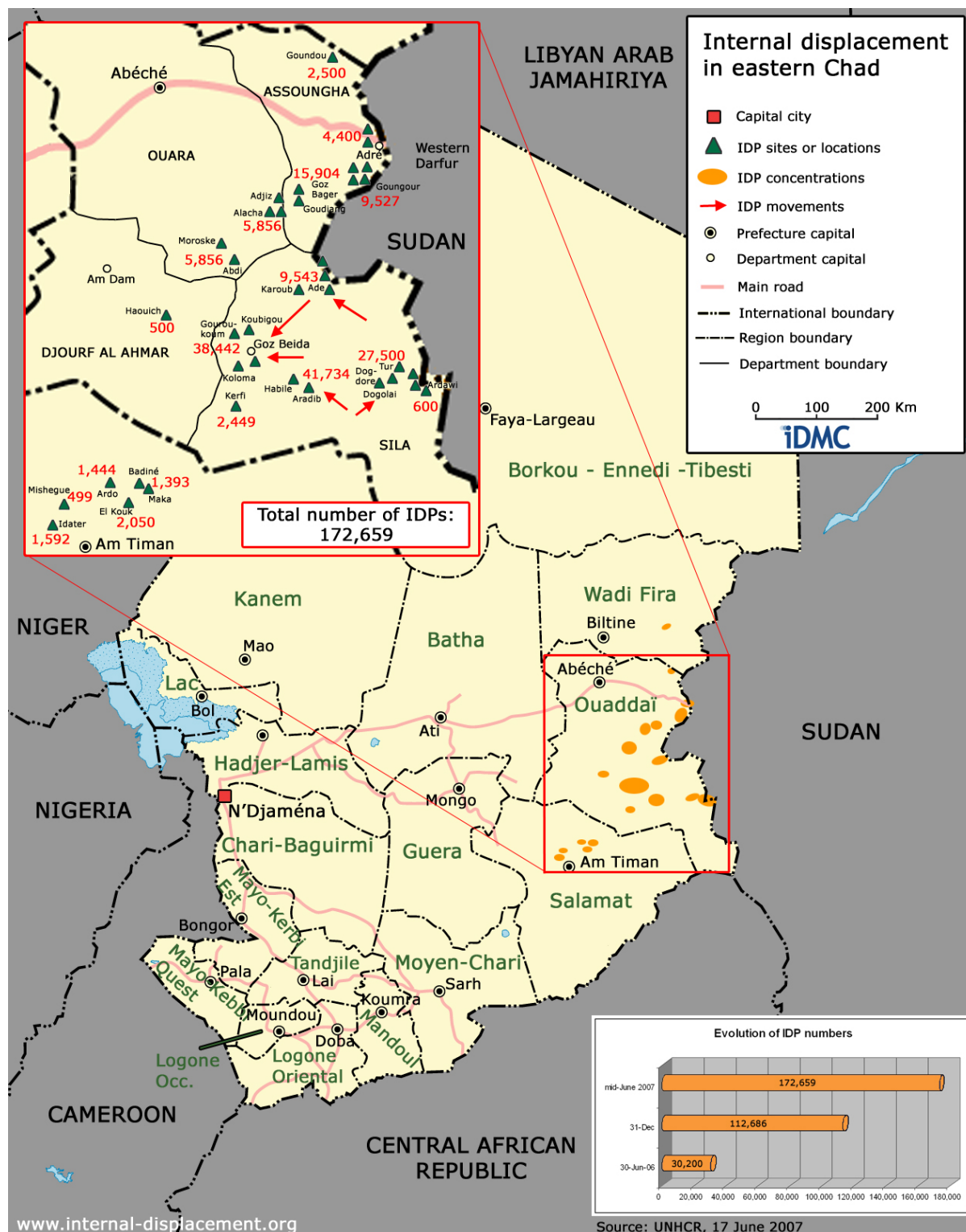
Cover photo: Women waiting for the distribution of government provisions in Gassiré IDP site (Mpako Foaleng/IDMC, 28 April 2007)

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Map of internal displacement in south-eastern Chad



Executive summary

Over the last two years, an estimated 172,600 people have been internally displaced in the south-eastern regions of Chad bordering Sudan's Darfur, including more than 120,000 within the last seven months. They have been displaced by a combination of armed conflict between the government and rebel groups, cross-border raids by militias from neighbouring Sudan, and increasing inter-communal violence. The internal displacement crisis worsened from mid 2006 as, in response to increasing attacks from Chadian rebel movements, the government withdrew the Armée Nationale du Tchad (Chadian National Army, ANT) from south-eastern areas to other more strategic points. This led to a security vacuum along the border with Darfur in which (mainly non-Arab) civilians and villages have been subjected to continuous cross-border attacks attributed to armed militia groups known as Janjaweed. These factors have combined to encourage and trigger inter-ethnic violence and banditry that has forced people to flee, including Arab Chadians who started to be subject to attacks. The increasing militarisation of communities and the ongoing military recruitment (including of children) in IDP sites adds to the overall deterioration in the security situation.

While more than 45,000 Chadians have taken refuge in Darfur, the majority of the displaced have moved westwards to take refuge in the departments of Assounga, Bahr Azoum, Dar Sila, Dar Tama and Ouara. More than 100,000 are concentrated around Goz Beida, Goz Amer and Dogdoré in Dar Sila department, while others have sought security and assistance close to Sudanese refugee camps and humanitarian organisations. However, many displaced people remain in the most insecure border areas, to the south of Goz Amer, where access is limited. In this volatile security situation, displacement is ongoing and while some people have been forced to move repeatedly, others have had their freedom of movement severely limited.

Together with forced displacement, violations of humanitarian law and civilians' rights have been committed in eastern Chad by the Sudanese and Chadian rebel and militia groups, and sometimes by soldiers of the ANT. Targeted attacks against civilians, mainly women and children and often in IDP sites, have included arbitrary killing (sometimes by burning the victim alive), mutilations, and rape. Civilians have often had their houses, livestock and other property destroyed or stolen. Humanitarian workers have been subjected to attacks, physical threats and theft of their vehicles.

All this is hampering IDPs' enjoyment of a whole range of basic rights, including access to food, water, shelter, security and a livelihood. The displaced people are extremely vulnerable, and they have very limited access to already-scarce resources including water, food and healthcare. The level of school attendance in Chad is generally very low, and it is estimated that many of the children of school age currently living in IDP sites have not finished the school year or have not yet been enrolled. In addition, different armed groups have recruited many children including those in IDP sites.

The immediate challenge is to ensure the physical security of civilians and humanitarian operations. While the government should take responsibility for the

protection of civilians, Chad's security forces have failed to control the activities of armed groups operating across the border from Sudan or from within Chad. Given the weak presence of state institutions and functioning law enforcement structures in the conflict-affected areas, crimes on all sides have been committed with total impunity.

The government response to the displacement crisis has so far been inadequate. Although the government has created a Committee for the Assistance of IDPs, composed of representatives of civil society and different ministries under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Relations, Social Action and Family, there is still confusion over which government agency is the focal point for IDP issues, and no national legal framework specifically directed towards the protection of the rights of IDPs has been developed.

Irrespective of IDPs' prospects for return, the authorities in Chad should step up efforts, with the support of the international community, to fulfil their responsibility to ensure that IDPs have access to adequate living conditions, healthcare, food, education, and protection from arbitrary displacement, in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. There is a need to reduce tension between displaced populations and host communities by reinforcing local traditional and religious mechanisms, enhancing and increasing access to basic social services, and integrating humanitarian action into longer-term development assistance.

The international response has been limited due to a low level of preparedness, shortcomings in security, access and accurate information on the situation, human resource constraints, and information management. Coordination and communication between UN agencies on the one hand, between UN agencies and NGOs and ICRC on the other, and also between NGOs has been very weak due to a lack of effective coordination structures between the capital N'Djamena and regional and local offices concerning the scope of the displacement crisis and the overall response strategy to adopt. During the last seven months, there have been a series of appeals, but the level of assistance sought has lagged behind the rapidly growing needs of the population.

The Chadian government, which had sought international help for months, has been reluctant to approve the deployment of a "multidimensional presence" as currently proposed by UN Security Council Resolution 1706. There is however concern over the expected impact of the deployment of a peacekeeping force on the security of civilians and humanitarian operations in the current context if it is not in the framework of a lasting regional and national peace process.

Key recommendations

To the Security Council

- Call on the government of Chad to immediately ensure that no support is provided to armed groups responsible for attacks on civilians, no arms are distributed to militia groups, and to take urgent action to restore law and order.
- Call on the government of Sudan to ensure that no support is provided to Sudanese armed groups responsible for attacks on civilians in Eastern Chad.
- Call for the immediate establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Chad with a mandate to monitor and publicly report on human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuses, including those towards IDPs, especially in the conflict-affected east.

To the government of Chad

- Clearly instruct all armed groups including allied militias and Sudanese rebel groups operating in eastern Chad, to respect international humanitarian and human rights law and to end attacks and abuses against civilians (including IDPs) and humanitarian workers.
- Appoint a clear IDP focal point with the overall responsibility for protecting IDPs' rights.
- Through the IDP focal point, seek technical support and training in contingency planning in order to improve its emergency preparedness and response to conflict-induced internal displacement.
- Seek assistance from the international community to develop a National IDP Policy, including clear return and resettlement strategies in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- Put an effective end to impunity and ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are identified and brought to justice, including members of the security forces and pro-government militias.
- Counter inter-ethnic conflict by entering into dialogue with religious and traditional leaders of all ethnic groups.
- Restore security in the departments most affected by conflict and banditry.
- Ensure that IDPs can move freely and return to home areas without fear of harassment or attack, in particular members of the Dadjo ethnic group and Chadian Arabs wishing to work their fields or to return to their village of origin.

To the National Committee of Human Rights

- Support the government in developing a national policy on the protection of IDPs' rights in Chad.
- Develop a programme to monitor the situation and the rights of IDPs in Chad.

To the Chadian rebel groups

- Issue clear orders to all combatants under your control to respect international humanitarian and human rights laws, and to end abuses against civilians.

To the Sudanese rebel groups

- Cease support for Chadian militia groups and other armed groups responsible for attacks against civilians.
- Issue clear orders to all combatants under your control to respect international humanitarian and human rights law, and to end abuses against civilians.

To UN agencies in Chad

- Develop an IDP response strategy based on the principles of clear leadership, accountability and predictability.
- The Humanitarian Coordinator should seek a stronger leadership role to engage the government on the need to address the root causes of displacement and to protect IDPs' rights.
- Further strengthen the capacity of the UN's Human Rights Division to collect IDP-specific information and to advocate for IDPs' rights at various levels.

To UN agencies and international NGOs in Chad

- Collaborate to enable timely, coordinated and comprehensive support to IDPs in eastern Chad within a cluster-based response mechanism.
- Facilitate and support initiatives by IDPs, local populations and traditional leaders to establish or revive conflict resolution and mitigation mechanisms.

To donors

- Support projects within different appeals to improve the protection of IDPs (and other vulnerable groups).
- Beyond the emergency IDP response, support projects that focus more on longer-term goals, including conflict prevention, resolution and reconciliation in potential areas of return.

Important sets of recommendations regarding IDPs have been included in the following document and should be considered:

- "They Came Here to Kill Us". Militia Attacks and Ethnic Targeting of Civilians in Eastern Chad", Human Rights Watch, January 2007

Background

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, landlocked Chad has experienced decades of instability, misrule, corruption, military coups and low-intensity conflict, interspersed with periods of full-scale civil war with international dimensions. Despite its wealth of natural resources (uranium, kaolin, gold, limestone, sand and gravel, salt) and since 2003 its oil revenue, Chad remains on UNDP's Human Development Index for 2006 as the seventh-lowest performing of 177 countries.

In 1990, Idriss Déby Itno overthrew the dictatorial regime of Hissène Habré and raised hopes that he would bring the stability necessary for Chad's development. In 1996, the country embarked on a democratic transition which led to political plurality and a series of (albeit irregular) elections in 1996/1997, 2001/2002 and 2006. However, the underlying political and social schisms have not been addressed and the country has continued to face coup attempts, rebellions and mutinies.

Despite several peace deals signed with various rebel armed groups within and outside Chad, the political and security situation started deteriorating in 2005, following a number of major attacks by Chadian rebels based in Sudan's Darfur, including the attacks of December 2005 on Guereda and Adre in eastern Chad, as well as the attempted coup in March 2006. The situation has remained particularly tense since the April 2006 rebel offensive in several Chadian provinces, including the capital N'Djamena, even though it was repelled by the Chadian army with the significant military assistance of the French. The relocation of armed forces from the border areas to strategic towns has created a security vacuum in vast areas of eastern Chad, leaving residents of many villages caught up in the conflict without any sort of protection.¹

The conflict in Darfur, which since 2003 has caused massive population movements across the border into eastern Chad, has also increased political tensions inside Chad, not least because of the military involvement of Déby Itno's ethnic group, the Zagawa, one of the groups that straddle the border with Darfur. The assistance given by Déby Itno to Sudanese rebel groups operating from eastern Chad prompted the Sudan government's decision to harbour Chadian rebel groups in Darfur. Tensions started to mount between Chad and Sudan amid mutual accusations of arming, financing and harbouring respective rebel groups, which resulted in the suspension of diplomatic relations in April 2006. The two countries have since restored diplomatic relations and signed several peace deals, agreeing to stop conflict spilling across their borders; however, these agreements have so far failed to prevent the cross-border violence. Also, the two governments disagree on the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur and in eastern Chad.²

The dissatisfaction with Déby Itno's handling of the conflict, and with the corruption surrounding his management of the oil wealth, as well as social unrest stemming from the deepening economic crisis, have plunged eastern Chad into a state of continuing conflict and have led to a growing radicalisation of the political and military elites.³

¹ UN OCHA, November 2006, p.9; UNHCR, February 2007, p.3

² Roy and Massey, May 2007, p.4.

³ Ibid.

Causes of displacement

Forced displacement in eastern Chad has been caused by an armed conflict between the government and rebel groups, cross-border raids by militias from neighbouring Sudan and spiralling inter-communal violence.

Since the end of 2005, there has been intensive fighting between the government forces and numerous rebel groups. Nevertheless, the internal conflict may not be the major direct cause of displacement. Of greater consequence is the government's decision to withdraw the *Armée Nationale du Tchad* (Chadian National Army, ANT) from the south east to concentrate only on strategic centres, in response to the increasing attacks from rebel movements elsewhere in Chad. This move has left the area along the south-eastern border with Darfur devoid of security. Since then, civilians and villages in the Dar Sila and Dar Assounga departments of the Ouaddai region bordering Darfur, inhabited mainly by non-Arab populations, have been subject to continuous cross-border attacks. These attacks have been primarily attributed to Sudanese militia groups known as Janjaweed (literally, "thieves on horseback" or "Arab nomads").⁴

Another cause of displacement is the increasing internal and cross border inter-ethnic violence. Although Chadian society is ethnically diverse, religiously divided and prone to factionalism, traditional conflict-prevention mechanisms have long been effective in ensuring the fragile but peaceful coexistence of the communities living on both sides of the border between Chad and Darfur. This area is mainly populated by Ouaddai, Massalite, Arabs, For and Dadjo. Recently, these mechanisms have broken down and traditional leaders have lost authority. While cross-border attacks by militias have been mainly directed at non-Arab populations, Chadian ethnic militia groups have tended to raid Chadian Arab villages viewed as complicit to the Sudanese Janjaweed. In addition, some Arabs in villages close to those previously attacked have reportedly fled to avoid possible future attack on their village. Consequently, the relationships between the different ethnic groups, already exacerbated by competition for scarce water, grazing land and other resources, have significantly deteriorated.

The increasing militarisation of different ethnic groups adds to the inter-communal violence that causes the displacement of civilians. Because of the government's failure to ensure security in the volatile border area, civilians have started to provide for their own protection by organising self-defence forces and entering into security alliances with neighbouring militias, most of the time along ethnic lines. The Sudanese rebel groups that are operating in eastern Chad with the support and backing of the Chadian government have in some instances trained, organised and supplied these community-based militias.⁵ In other parts of Chad, security alliances and local officials are reportedly exploiting ethnic differences and triggering violence between communities. Searching for strategic advantage in counter-insurgency efforts, they distribute weapons to traditional adversaries of some of the ethnic groups associated with the Chadian rebel

⁴ "In fact, this term encompasses a wide range of armed actors, including rebels, bandits, militias, etc. These various actors lean on different ethnic groups at a time of strained relationships between nomads and sedentary populations, who are fighting over access to land, water and agricultural resources." MSF, 18 December 2006.

⁵ HRW, January 2007, p.5

movements.⁶ There is concern that this tactic may be used in eastern Chad in order to weaken Chadian rebel groups, which are confederations of ethnically-based militias. Indeed, while sporadic disarmament campaigns have targeted mainly Arab populations, in January 2007 the Chadian security forces reportedly distributed 1,000 Kalashnikovs to the Dajjo, who are the population group most affected by displacement.⁷

In addition, movements of troops and the presence of rebels carrying out training exercises in the mountains on the border with Darfur are threatening the safety of civilians, and forcing them to abandon their villages.⁸

Increasing number of IDPs

Although humanitarian organisations agree that the number of IDPs has been increasing continuously since April 2006, there is no common understanding of the current scope of the displacement situation, and the estimates of the number of IDPs differ. While some organisations have reported a figure of 105,000 to 120,000, other agencies have proposed a range of between 140,000 and 165,000. However, a profiling exercise undertaken in 14 IDP sites by Intersos, IFORD, UNHCR and ICRC in April 2007 estimated the total number of IDPs in the Dar Assoungou and Dar Sila departments of Ouaddai region at 146,896. This figure still needs to be validated by humanitarian agencies. It does not, however, cover all IDP sites or areas which are currently inaccessible to humanitarian organisations. Moreover, people continue to be forcibly displaced, with around 1,000 newly displaced reported around Guereda in Wadi Fira region in May 2007.⁹ As of mid-June 2007, UNHCR estimates that there are more than 172,600 IDPs in eastern Chad.¹⁰

Patterns of displacement

While more than 45,000 Chadians have taken refuge in Darfur, the majority of displaced people have moved westward and taken refuge in the Assoungou, Bahr Azoum, Dar Sila, Dar Tama and Ouara departments. The more than 100,000 IDPs who are hosted in the Dar Sila are mainly concentrated around the villages of Goz Beida, Goz Amer and Dogdore. Others have moved close to refugee camps and humanitarian actors in the hope of finding security and assistance. Most IDPs are concentrated in nine major sites and 17 scattered smaller sites where security is not always guaranteed, while many other displaced people have remained in the most insecure border areas, south of Goz Amer, where humanitarian access is limited. IDPs to the north of Goz Bagar have been displaced at least twice since 2005. In Abdi, IDPs started to arrive at the beginning of 2007 and continue to arrive at the sites.

While the Darfur crisis started in 2003 and brought about the flow of more than 230,000 Sudanese refugees to eastern Chad, the internal displacement crisis in this

⁶ Ibid., p.6

⁷ IDMC interviews with IDPs and traditional and religious leaders, 26, 27, 28, 29 April 2007 in Goz Beida and Koukou.

⁸ NRC's IDMC interviews, 26 April 2007 in Goz Beida.

⁹ UNICEF, 15 May 2007; WFP, 16 May 2007; UNICEF 11 June 2007

¹⁰ UNHCR, 17 June 2007

region only started at the end of 2005 and developed in three main waves. The first wave took place between the end of 2005 and mid-2006, when some 53,000 civilians¹¹ were forced to flee the south-eastern border with Sudan's Darfur. From February to April 2006, several villages near the border were attacked, forcing the residents to move to what they thought would be safer areas. There they were attacked and displaced again. Some 12,000 civilians were reported to be concentrated in the area of Goz Beida, while the rest remained closer to their villages.¹²

The second wave of displacement started at the end of 2006 along with a significant deterioration of the security situation. In November 2006, following a wave of inter-ethnic violence between Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups, some 50 villages south-east of Goz Beida were raided and at least 30 burned and destroyed. Over 250 people were killed and hundreds wounded. The attacks resulted in the displacement of some 25,000 civilians who gathered in the outskirts of Goz Beida, near Koukou Angarana, and in Koloy/Ade area.¹³ Between December 2006 and January 2007, the situation deteriorated further and another wave of attacks in the Koukou-Angarana area left 30 people dead and displaced an estimated 20,000 Chadians. More than 10,000 were displaced as a result of cross-border attacks, allegedly by Janjaweed militia, in the region of Borota. Another 10,000 from more than 20 villages fled inter-communal hostilities and gathered in the village of Gassire, 8 km north of the town of Goz Beida, while other displaced moved towards Goz Amir refugee camp.¹⁴

The third wave started on 31 March 2007 when, following brutal attacks on the villages of Tiero and Marena 45 km east of the village of Koukou-Angarana, more than 9,000 civilians from 31 villages were forced to flee. Between 200 and 400 people were killed and at least 80 wounded. The people displaced, who took refuge in the new Habilé site for IDPs, blamed the attacks on Janjaweed militiamen on horses and camels assisted by Chadian rebels with heavy weaponry and vehicles.¹⁵ At the time of writing, displacements continue.

Lack of security

In eastern Chad, civilians face serious security risks related both to ongoing fighting between various armed groups and attacks on villages and IDP sites. Acts of violence against civilians are committed by the Sudanese and Chadian rebel and militia groups and sometimes by soldiers of the ANT. There are reports of deliberate targeting of civilians, especially women and children.¹⁶ IDPs are exposed to a range of threats to their personal security and integrity, including when they are in IDP sites. There have been cases of arbitrary killings, including by burning alive, and of rapes and mutilation. Moreover, the displaced often have their houses and other property destroyed or taken away. The attacks are of varied intensity and range from the theft of cattle to setting whole villages on fire. Hundreds upon hundreds of homes have been burned to the

¹¹ UN OCHA, November 2006, p.1

¹² UNHCR, February 2007, p.3

¹³ MSF, 22 November 2006; UNHCR, 24, 28 November 2006; AI, 1 December 2006; IRIN, 11 December 2006

¹⁴ MSF, 18 December 2006; UNHCR, 5 January, February, 2007

¹⁵ UNHCR, 10 April 2007; OXFAM, 20 June 2007

¹⁶ UN OCHA, November 2006 p.1 ; AI, 1 December 2006

ground and their inhabitants have lost all their assets, including livestock and food supplies.¹⁷ Attacks on humanitarian aid workers and cases of theft of humanitarian personnel's vehicles are also reportedly on the rise.¹⁸



Burned houses in Aradib village, 29 April 2007 (Photo: Mpako Foaleng/IDMC)

An important risk factor stems from the fact that some combatants of the so-called Toroboro – members of Sudanese rebel groups and Chadian militias fighting alongside the ANT – live among the civilian population. This exposes civilians to further attacks by groups opposed to the government. Undisciplined and drunk Toroboro combatants pose further threats to civilians, for example by harassing adolescent girls.¹⁹

Finally, the increased number of armed men and the circulation of small arms, including in IDP sites, have led to an increase in highway banditry. This, in turn, has reduced the flow of goods such as food in the affected regions.²⁰ Extortion and racketeering are rampant.²¹

Forced displacement, human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuses in eastern Chad continue. The immediate challenge is to ensure the physical security of civilians and humanitarian operations. Although the government is responsible for the protection of civilians, Chadian security forces have failed to prevent cross-border raids by militia groups from Sudan, and have been unwilling or unable to control the activities of armed groups operating within Chad. Given the weak presence of state institutions in the conflict-affected areas and the absence of functioning law enforcement structures, crimes by all sides have been committed with total impunity.²²

¹⁷ Fewes Net, May 2006, pp.2-3; UNHCR, 10 April 2007

¹⁸ UN OCHA, November 2006 p.1.

¹⁹ UN OCHA, November 2006 p.1.

²⁰ FewesNet, January 2007, pp.2-3; IDMC interviews with traditional leaders, 26 April 2007 in Goz Beida

²¹ WFP, 2 May 2007

²² UN OCHA, May 2007, p.5

No mechanism is in place to systematically monitor, document and follow up on violations and abuses of IDPs' human rights.

Freedom of movement

Freedom of movement remains severely limited by the volatile security situation. The limitations are often due to the high risks involved in moving outside IDP sites. When IDPs do leave to look for resources such as firewood, they expose themselves to attacks by armed groups and individuals; there have also been reports of women being raped or beaten by host communities when they ventured too far from the site. Inability to move freely deprives the displaced people of access to resources, mainly water and land, and denies them their livelihoods.²³

The displaced are afraid to return to their villages because armed groups are still controlling many areas in the region. There is no systematic mechanism for disseminating information on the situation in their villages of origin and locations of attacks. Some displaced people have tried to return to salvage their belongings and, in the process, they have been killed.²⁴ As there are no sure guarantees of an end to the displacements, there is also no possibility of safe return.

Recruitment and use of child soldiers

Armed groups on all sides have recruited and continued to use child soldiers. The ANT have been recruiting in IDP sites, including Gassiré, Kouroukoun, Habilé and Aradib.²⁵ Youth and children are also said to be recruited by army officials. They are recruited by ethnic militia groups as well, or they join such groups for their own security. In schools along the troubled eastern zone near Sudan, it is understood that when a boy is suddenly absent from the classroom, he has probably joined one of the fighting groups. Some children join the army after armed men have killed members of their families.²⁶ In the military installations in Mongo in the region of Guera alone, UNICEF and Child Protection NGOs have identified and registered 400 children associated with armed groups, most of whom originate from the conflict-affected area of Guereda.²⁷ It is reported that *Forces Unies pour le Changement*, the rebel group that has lately signed a peace agreement with the government, has more than 1,000 child soldiers in its ranks.²⁸

Recently, Chad's government admitted that there are child soldiers in the ANT and signed an agreement with UNICEF for the demobilisation of children enrolled in armed forces and groups. UNICEF will also help the government prevent the recruitment of children and ensure their liberation and reintegration into their communities.²⁹

²³ UN OCHA, May 2007, p.5

²⁴ UNHCR, 24 November 2006

²⁵ IDMC interviews with traditional and religious leaders in Goz Beida, 26, 27 April 2007.

²⁶ VOA, 15 May 2007

²⁷ UNICEF, 31 May 2007

²⁸ UNICEF, 9 May 2007

²⁹ UNICEF, 9 May 2007



Young boys waiting for distribution of government provisions in Gassiré site, 28 April 2007
(Photo: Mpako Foaleng/IDMC)

IDP sites

When the displacements started, the Chadian government and humanitarian organisations agreed on the need to avoid setting up “camps” for the internally displaced so as not to create a “pull factor” for all those desperate for humanitarian aid. The displaced initially lived with host families and were assisted mainly through community-based programmes. However, as more and more civilians were forced out of their homes and villages, settlements could no longer be avoided. The government, together with humanitarian organisations, selected a number of sites close to host villages, to which humanitarian organizations have access and where IDPs can have access to water and land for cultivation and where they can be protected. However, in a number of areas such as in Goz Beida, even after negotiations between the government, UNHCR and displaced people, the IDPs refused to move to new sites although their current locations were prone to flooding, did not meet the agreed criteria and belonged to host communities who would need them for cultivation.³⁰

³⁰ RI, 11 April 2006 ; UN OCHA, 30 November 2006



Gassiré IDP site, 28 April 2007 (Photo: Mpako Foaleng/IDMC)

The criteria used by the government to locate IDP sites have to be reviewed in order to avoid tensions between the displaced groups themselves, and with host communities. In view of the limited resources available, the continued presence of Sudanese refugees and IDPs has caused unrest between the displaced and host populations.³¹ In Farchana and other areas of the Dar Sila, some sites are located on flood-prone areas on land generally cultivated by host populations. Some IDP sites, as well as refugee camps, are very close to Arab villages and can only add to the tensions that already exist between the communities. In addition, the concentration of newly displaced people close to refugee camps and IDP sites has put enormous pressure on resources such as water, firewood and pasture land, and friction between IDPs and host communities is recurrent.³²

Living conditions

Until recently, the assistance provided by many organisations in Chad focused on the refugees arriving from Sudan's Darfur and neglected host communities and IDPs. Indeed, during the first months of displacement, there were very good mechanisms of solidarity among the population in place. Long before the intervention of humanitarian organisations, IDPs were taken care of by host communities which provided them with shelter and food even though their own resources were very limited. In some areas, there has been no screening of IDP's living conditions from the beginning of displacement, and the assessment of needs is difficult. The continuously deteriorating security situation and the increasing number of IDPs has led to a significant reduction in the already-scarce resources of host communities, whose vulnerability is in some areas equal to that of IDPs.³³ Nonetheless displaced groups, and particularly those

³¹ UN OCHA, November 2006, p.9

³² FewNet, January 2007, pp.2-3.

³³ WFP, February 2007, 4

recently displaced, face particular difficulties in ensuring access to food, water and healthcare.

The ongoing and unpredictable crisis, the incapacity of the national authorities to tackle the increasing security concerns and the deterioration of the socio-political environment are all hampering IDPs' enjoyment of basic rights, and their access to a livelihood.³⁴



An elderly displaced man constructs a bed in Gouroukoum IDP site, 28 April 2007
(Photo: Mpako Foaleng/IDMC)

Food and water

The population of Chad is generally poor and inhabitants of the conflict-affected south-east already live in chronic poverty and face problems in accessing resources. In this context, IDPs face serious difficulties in accessing food.³⁵ In Kerfi and in Ade, the nutritional status of IDPs is reportedly grave. Research carried out by MSF in the camps around Goz Beida at the end of May 2007 found that one child in five was suffering from acute malnutrition and that the mortality rates, as registered from 30 March to 20 May 2007, were very high.³⁶ While COOPI found that one person in ten was suffering from acute malnutrition and one per cent from severe acute malnutrition, ICRC found global malnutrition rates of 65 per cent at the border area with Darfur. These differences result no doubt from different assessment methodologies used by aid agencies and they highlight the need to harmonise information gathering.³⁷

³⁴ UN OCHA, November 2006 p.1.

³⁵ WFP, 28 May 2007, p.17

³⁶ MSF, 8 June 2007

³⁷ UNICEF, 11 June 2007

There are certainly gaps in the humanitarian response due to the volatile security situation and the inadequacy of nutrition activities undertaken such as food and water assistance. To help fill that gap, UN OCHA launched a three-month emergency plan in April 2007. However, there are already concerns that its objectives in terms of food, water and shelter are inadequate to cover the current levels of need.³⁸

Health

Access to healthcare services in IDP sites and areas of refuge is difficult. Few viable medical centres are available and medical personnel is lacking. Overcrowding in IDP sites and the difficult living environment have a negative impact on IDPs' health condition. Displaced families are living in makeshift shelters, which will not protect them from the rains during the rainy season from June to September. Given the poor quality of shelter and lack of access to clean water, there is a growing risk of malaria and diarrhoea caused by water-borne diseases such as hepatitis E. This risk will further increase during the rainy season.³⁹ An increase in diarrhoea cases has already been registered in the IDP sites of Habilé III and Koloma and of hepatitis E in Koloma and Gouroukoun IDP sites.⁴⁰ Access to certain areas such as Abdi is restricted and, consequently, the provision of medical care is limited and IDPs' health situation is precarious.⁴¹



IDP shelter for newly arrived in Habilé III site, 29 April 2007 (Photo: Mpako Foaleng/IDMC)

³⁸ MSF, 8 May 2007

³⁹ WHO, 6 May 2007, p.7

⁴⁰ WHO, 25 June 2007, p.1

⁴¹ UNICEF, 31 May 2007

There is an urgent need to monitor and address epidemics and to prevent the deterioration of IDPs' health by increasing hospital capacity and support to health centres, improving water supply and responding to nutritional problems.⁴² Psychosocial support is also necessary for people affected by trauma and those who have experienced sexual violence, often widows or unaccompanied children.⁴³

Education

The school attendance level in the eastern part of Chad is generally very low. Due to the increasing insecurity, the education system in the conflict-affected regions has collapsed. Many schools are closed because both regular and community-hired teachers have left, sometimes more than two years ago, due to arrears in the payment of salaries and persistent insecurity. Consequently, children have been recruited by militia groups or the army.⁴⁴

There is little information on how many students have been affected by displacement and how displacement has disrupted the education process. In April 2007, the UN country team estimated that out of 140,000 displaced people, around 40,000 are children of school age. Many of these children have not finished the current school year or have not yet been enrolled. An example of a primary school in Habilé is illustrative of the difficulties facing education providers. The Habilé school originally hosted 300 students, but after waves of violence forced families from surrounding villages to seek safety in the area, the school ended up hosting more than 1,500. Most of the new students had never attended school before.⁴⁵

Another challenge is the maintenance of school infrastructures. IDPs lack school materials, teachers and community-hired teachers. Many of the current teachers come from the displaced communities and do not have adequate skills. Many have been hired by humanitarian organisations. With violence ongoing, students' parents associations have collapsed and need to be restructured also within IDP sites.

⁴² MSF, 8 June 2007

⁴³ UN OCHA, 9 May 2007

⁴⁴ VOA, 15 May 2007; JRS, 41 May 2007

⁴⁵ UN OCHA, 9 May 2007



Displaced children in Gouroukoun site, 28 April 2007 (Photo: Mpako Foaleng/IDMC)

Where schools still function, major challenges exist. Recurrent attacks on villages force schools to cancel classes. There is usually no registration processes, which makes it hard for teachers to track students. To solve that problem and track students during waves of violence, for example, the Jesuit Relief Services helped to create a student registration system.⁴⁶ As schools were closed or abandoned, a number of children joined militia groups or the army and others may have been forcibly recruited.⁴⁷

Strong advocacy is needed to convince the government to pay community teachers using resources from the oil income as provided for by the agreement with the World Bank. Where possible, feeding in schools should be created to encourage children's attendance and reduce their exposure to unexploded ordnance and other risks associated with accessing food. There is also a need for vocational training to provide life skills training to adolescents, to prevent them from being recruited in armed groups or exploited by host communities.

National Response

The Government of Chad bears the primary responsibility for ensuring the security of all civilians on its territory, including IDPs, and for the protection of their human rights. The main challenge at present is to secure the stronger engagement of central authorities and their cooperation with local and traditional authorities in areas affected and threatened by displacement.

⁴⁶ VOA, 15 May 2007

⁴⁷ Ibid

So far, the government response to the displacement-related human rights, humanitarian and protection crisis has been minimal and inadequate, not least because both at the policy and operational levels there is little knowledge and experience in tackling such emergencies. In addition, there has been a lack of substantive action by the government at the central level; there is no clearly identified government institution responsible for the rights of IDPs and no national legal framework specifically directed towards their protection.. The government has created a Committee for Assistance to IDPs (*Comité Chargé d'Assistance aux Personnes Déplacées*) composed of representatives of civil society and of different ministries. This body is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Relations, Social Action and Family. At the same time, there is another inter-ministerial agency, the National Committee for the Reintegration of Refugees (*Comité National de la Réinsertion des Réfugiés*) under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, which has also been associated with IDP-related issues. As a result, there is confusion about which government agency is the focal point for IDPs.

The absence of a clear government focal point adds to and explains the lack of any concerted response to the displacement crisis and the lack of cooperation with humanitarian organisations in the capital and in the east. This results in parallel responses within uncoordinated and ineffective strategies. In the beginning of the year, the government released some \$8 million for emergency assistance to IDPs. The Committee for Assistance to IDPs has started distributing food and non-food items to the displaced in certain IDP sites, as witnessed by IDMC in the Gassiré site. However, the extent to which these distributions meet IDPs' immediate emergency needs is not known.

While the government is intent on the return of IDPs to their areas of origin, it has not yet developed any strategy to address the root causes of inter-ethnic violence which have caused the displacement. A state of emergency was introduced for six months, but civilians continued to be displaced because of violence.⁴⁸ The situation has been compounded by the continuing absence of viable local administration and social services in many areas in the east, especially between Goz Beida and the frontier with Darfur, from which the government forces withdrew. There are also reasons to believe that the government is undermining the efforts of traditional leaders to find solutions to inter-communal violence. For instance, the government pressured the Sultan of Dar Sila, who was engaged in conflict mediation in the department, to resign.

Some local authorities have requested that the government provide military assistance to protect civilian areas from further attacks, and to prevent inter-communal violence. However, the authorities in N'Djamena have not always heeded these requests.⁴⁹

Despite the fact that security is not yet restored, the overarching goal of the central government is the return of all displaced persons to their original homes. The strategy seems to be focused on the preservation of the government's stability and the integrity of the territory against Chadian rebels, but not necessarily on the security of civilians.

⁴⁸ IRIN, 25 may 2007

⁴⁹ IDMC Interviews Goz Beida and Koukou, 28, 29 April 2007; IRIN, 7 June 2007

International response

At the international level, the response has been limited as it has suffered from a low level of preparedness, shortcomings in monitoring due in part to the unpredictable security situation, and constraints in human resources and information management. Coordination and communication between UN agencies, between UN agencies and NGOs and ICRC, and also between NGOs themselves, has been very weak, as disconnection between the capital and regional and local levels has prevented a shared and effective understanding of the scope of the displacement crisis and the overall response strategy to adopt. There is a need for more systematic, better-planned, more effective coordination, with clear roles and responsibilities.

Since the displacement crisis started, the UN agencies have been using an approach modelled on the cluster approach, with sectoral responsibility for coordinating the protection and assistance for IDPs delegated to the UNHCR Deputy Representative based in Abéché in the south-east. UNHCR, as at the global level, is the lead agency for three clusters: protection, site management and coordination, and shelter; WHO for health; UNICEF for nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene; and WFP for logistics and food security.⁵⁰ Since April 2006, the response strategy has consisted of building support where IDPs are located.

Yet the lack of the formal activation of the cluster approach made the coordination heavier, led to the confusion of roles, a lack of accountability and an absence of overall long term strategic planning on issues facing vulnerable groups including IDPs and host communities. Indeed the previous strategy started to fall apart when the security situation worsened and the number of IDPs drastically increased from some 40,000 in April 2006 to over 172,600 as of June 2007. Until February 2007, the UN Office of the Humanitarian Affairs was based only in the capital N'Djamena, and the response suffered from poor reporting and weak information management.

However, in February 2007 UN OCHA opened offices in conflict-affected eastern areas. The recruitment of a Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator is ongoing, although it has been suggested that this position will only help to improve coordination if a workable process is identified for the humanitarian agencies (including NGOs and the ICRC) with headquarters in the capital and operational offices in the east. Furthermore, the UN country team in June 2007 made a request to formally implement the cluster approach to enable clear leadership, accountability and predictability. In this process, clear cluster leads would be identified in N'Djamena and Abéché, within a system in which NGOs are considered as policy-making partners as well as implementing partners.

The appeals process has been fragmented. Since November 2006, there have been three funding appeals for programmes targeting IDPs' needs in Chad. The first was the 2007 UN Consolidated Appeal Process which requested some \$170.7 million, most of it to fund refugee programmes and only a few millions targeting some 53,000 IDPs. The second, launched in February 2007, is a UNHCR supplementary appeal for \$6.2 million for the protection and assistance to IDPs in Chad from January to December 2007; and

⁵⁰ UN OCHA, 30 November 2006, pp.4-5

in April 2007, the UN launched a revised appeal for \$23.5 million to fund a 90-day programme of IDP Emergency Assistance.⁵¹ This latest appeal includes UNHCR's funding needs for protection and shelter, and non-food items already contained in the previous UNHCR appeal. NGOs expressed concern that the latest appeal does not match the overall IDP needs, and indeed donors are also confused over the co-existence of these different appeals. Looking ahead, accurate and comprehensive information and data are crucial in order to identify needs and gaps in assistance in order to design relevant appeals and plan relevant humanitarian responses. The aforementioned profiling exercise undertaken in April 2007 aims at addressing this gap.

Further constraints hamper the response of international agencies to the needs of IDPs in eastern Chad. The operational capacity of humanitarian actors including the UN, ICRC and international NGOs currently active in eastern Chad (such as Intersos, Coopi, ACF, IRD, MSF-Holland and France, OXFAM UK and Intermon, Première Urgence, JRS, HIAS and Mentor Initiative) has reached its human resource limit. The difficult environment and the shortage of implementing partners further limit the capacity to deliver aid.

The deteriorating security environment has resulted in limited and sporadic access, thereby hampering humanitarian operations and creating an unpredictable situation which has not made it easy to plan ahead. Incidents including car hijacking and violent robberies have become major concerns to humanitarian workers who have also been physically threatened. Armed men from all parties to the conflict have attacked humanitarian premises and staff. Some vehicles belonging to humanitarian actors have been seen used by the ANT.⁵²

In line with Security Council Resolution 1706, the UN Secretary-General recommended the establishment of a "multidimensional presence consisting of political, humanitarian, military and civilian police liaison officers in key locations in Chad, including in the internally displaced persons and refugee camps and, if necessary, in the Central African Republic" to address the humanitarian situation in the two countries and to stem the spill-over from Sudan's Darfur conflict. The Chadian government, which had sought international help for months, has been reluctant to approve the deployment of the international force in the form in which it is currently proposed. In lieu of the multidimensional force, the government of Chad has requested a "civilian force", and has argued that a UN military force should not be deployed in Chad on the basis that the government of Sudan had refused the deployment of such a force in Darfur.⁵³ There is also concern over the expected impact of the deployment of a peacekeeping force on the security of civilians and humanitarian operations in the current context if it is not in the framework of a credible regional and national peace process.

⁵¹ UNHCR, February 2007; UN OCHA, 9 May 2007

⁵² UNOCHA, November 2006, p.7; OXFAM, 20 June 2007

⁵³ UN SG report, S/2007/97, paragraph 33.

Testimonies

1. A Man from Gassiré IDP site:

"I am 45 years old. I am the chief of Tessou village. I have three wives and 16 children. I lost one kid during the attacks on my village. The Janjaweed came to my village and attacked us. They took all our belongings and killed some of us. The problem with the Janjaweed started two years ago, and we have been displaced for 11 months. In my village, we were 1421 people. During the attacks, we left with very few things. Some people had parents in Goz Beida who helped them. Now on this site we collect firewood, which we sell on the market in Goz Beida in order to make a bit of money to buy some provisions.

"We cannot go back home now because there is no security in our village, and there is no guarantee that if we return security will be provided.

"Here in the site we appointed the chief of the chiefs and his deputy with whom we discuss our problems before he acts as our interlocutor with the authorities."

2. A Woman from Gassiré IDP site:

"My name is Kaltouma Abdarhama. I do not know how old I am. I come from Faride village. My family and I have been on this site for six months. One evening, the Ouadai, Arabs and Mimi, whose villages are neighbouring ours (inhabited mainly by Dadjo people), made an alliance to come and invade our village. They killed some of us and stole our livestock. While we were fleeing, some of us died on the road. What caused this attack is that my brother's horse was stolen from our village, and the youngsters of the village followed the footprint of the horse which led them to the Mimi village called Fagata. When the youngsters of my village arrived in Fagata, they asked the villagers to give them back the horse but they refused. Three days after, the Mimi, Ouadai and Arabs made an alliance to come and attack our village. The combat lasted for three days. The first day, which was a Wednesday at the end of the rainy season, they burned our village.

"We fled to our field of millet. The next day, men came out and buried the dead. The second day we were hoping that the government would come and rescue us, but they never came. The assailants went and attacked another neighbouring village named Adjamena, mainly populated by Dadjos and Mobi. Because of this further attack, we fled. Some of us managed to take our livestock. Nevertheless, the Mimi people followed us and took the livestock. My family lost everything except our donkey, which we found on our way while fleeing because it had run away when the village was attacked.

"In my village, my children used to go to the Koranic school, which was burned during the attacks. In the site, they will start at the Koranic school. We are waiting for the straw to cover the roof of the hangar for the school.

“I am preparing seeds so that if I am awarded a piece of land I will have something to plant.”

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About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

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

Through its work, the IDMC 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 IDMC website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

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