

## Genocide in Darfur

Darfur is in the western part of Sudan, bordering on Libya, Chad, and the Central African Republic.

Darfur is a region in Sudan the size of France. It is home to about 6 million people from nearly 100 tribes. Some nomads. Some farmers. All Muslims. In 1989, General Omar Bashir took control of Sudan by military coup, which then allowed The National Islamic Front government to inflame regional tensions. In a struggle for political control of the area, weapons poured into Darfur. Conflicts increased between African farmers and many nomadic Arab tribes.

In 2003, two Darfuri rebel movements- the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)- took up arms against the Sudanese government, complaining about the marginalization of the area and the failure to protect sedentary people from attacks by nomads. The government of Sudan responded by unleashing Arab militias known as Janjaweed, or “devils on horseback”. Sudanese forces and Janjaweed militia attacked hundreds of villages throughout Darfur. Over 400 villages were completely destroyed and millions of civilians were forced to flee their homes.

In the ongoing genocide, African farmers and others in Darfur are being systematically displaced and murdered at the hands of the Janjaweed. The genocide in Darfur has claimed 400,000 lives and displaced over 2,500,000 people. More than one hundred people continue to die each day; five thousand die every month. The Sudanese government disputes these estimates and denies any connection with the Janjaweed.

The Sudanese government appears unwilling to address the human rights crisis in the region and has not taken the necessary steps to restrict the activities of the Janjaweed. In June 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) took the first step in ending impunity in Darfur by launching investigations into human rights violations in Darfur. However, the government of Sudan refused to cooperate with the investigations.

On March 4, 2009 Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, became the first sitting president to be indicted by ICC for directing a campaign of mass killing, rape, and pillage against civilians in Darfur. The arrest warrant for Bashir follows arrest warrants issued by the ICC for former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Harun and Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb. The government of Sudan has not surrendered either suspect to the ICC.

Darfuris today continue to suffer and the innumerable problems facing Sudan cannot be resolved until peace is secured in Darfur. According to UN estimates, 2.7 million Darfuris remain in internally displaced persons camps and over 4.7 million Darfuris rely on humanitarian aid. Resolving the Darfur conflict is critical not just for the people of Darfur, but also for the future of Sudan and the stability of the entire region.