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World Report 2011 - Chad

Events of 2010

A rapprochement agreement between Chad and Sudan, signed January 15, 2010, marked the end of a five-year proxy war. The normalization of relations led to the repatriation of Chadian rebels from Sudan, the opening of the border between the two countries in April after seven years of closure, and the deployment of a joint force to secure the border, though attacks on civilians in the area continue. President Idriss Déby visited Khartoum, Sudan's capital, in February for the first time in six years; and in July Chad, a state party to the International Criminal Court, hosted Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, earning the dubious distinction of being the first ICC member state to harbor a suspect from the court. The Chadian government clashed with rebel forces in eastern Chad in January and April. Criminality, banditry, kidnappings, carjackings, and armed robbery targeting humanitarian agencies led to the withdrawal and temporary suspension of some humanitarian operations.

In January the government of Chad requested that the United Nations begin the process of withdrawing the peacekeeping mission in eastern Chad. The government cited the mission's slow deployment, uneven record of success, and improvements in the security situation as reasons for its decision. In May the UN revised the mission's mandate and authorized its gradual drawdown and closure by the end of the year, and effectively shifted full responsibility for the protection of civilians, including displaced populations and refugees from Darfur, to the Chadian security forces.

The implementation of the reforms promised in an August 2007 agreement with opposition parties has been slow and uneven. President Déby, one of Africa's longest-serving heads of state, has failed to make adequate funding available and has instead tightened his grip on power. Despite a new media law passed in August, the government continues to suppress free speech.

Throughout the country, government forces continue to arbitrarily arrest and detain civilians and suspected rebels, often on the basis of ethnicity, and subject them to ill-treatment and torture, sometimes in unofficial places of detention. Chad's prison conditions are among the harshest on the African continent.

Weak institutions of justice contributed to a culture of impunity. The government has not investigated or prosecuted serious abuses against civilians, such as killings and rapes by government security forces and rebels following clashes at Am Dam in May 2009. The disappearance of opposition leader Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh during the February 2008 attack on N'Djamena, the capital, remains unresolved.

Drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Chad

Peacekeepers from the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) have been in eastern Chad and northeastern Central African Republic since mid-2008 with a mandate to protect refugees and displaced populations, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and promote human rights.

Following the UN decision to draw down the mission by the end of 2010, representatives of UN agencies formed a working group with the Chadian government to improve security for humanitarian groups in eastern Chad. The plan includes consolidation of the Chadian Integrated Security Detachment (DIS), a component of MINURCAT comprised of Chadian police forces trained by the UN, which provide security in and around the refugee camps. However, the plans do not clearly address the security concerns of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), or the local population.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

More than 250,000 Sudanese refugees and 168,000 Chadian displaced people live in camps and elsewhere in eastern Chad. In April approximately 5,000 new Sudanese refugees arrived from West Darfur, following renewed fighting there between the Sudanese rebel group Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and Sudanese government forces.

The security situation of refugees and IDPs in camps remains precarious, with continued reports of human rights abuses and other crimes. The militarization of camps, unexploded landmines, and the proliferation of arms in eastern Chad continue to put civilians at risk. Humanitarian needs were greatly exacerbated by food shortages and pockets of famine. Severe flooding destroyed the infrastructure of some refugee camps and left 4,000 refugees completely without shelter.

In May the prime minister encouraged IDPs to return to their areas of origin. An estimated 20,000 people returned in the Dar Sila and Ouaddai regions between April and July, but the sustainability of these movements is uncertain. Returnees continue to report cases of unlawful killings, attacks, and theft. The lack of basic infrastructure, such as access to drinking water, health centers, or schools also stops many IDPs from returning home. Inequity in the justice system and violations perpetrated by the Chadian Armed Forces further add to this climate of fear.

Sexual Violence

Sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, early and forced marriages, and female genital mutilation, was reported frequently to UN human rights monitors in eastern Chad; in the first half of 2010 DIS registered over 250 complaints in this area. Most victims are children. The high levels of violence are exacerbated by an entrenched culture of impunity and structural gender inequality. Rapes occur in domestic settings, near victims' residences, and outside villages, refugee camps, and IDP sites; perpetrators include members of the Chadian National Army (ANT). Women and girls do not have adequate access to health and legal services.

Child Soldiers

Various Chadian security forces, including the ANT and JEM, continued to recruit and employ children in eastern Chad. In January and February six children recruited to JEM between 2007 and 2008 deserted and returned to the Iridimi refugee camp. In September the special representative of the secretary-general for children and armed conflict presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council listing both the ANT and JEM as parties that recruit and use children. In 2007 the Chadian government signed an

agreement with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to release all children from its armed forces.

On September 14, 2010, the Chadian government arrested four Sudanese rebels who were allegedly recruiting child soldiers in the Goz Amir refugee camp. UNICEF has demobilized over 800 child soldiers in Chad over the past three years; more than 90 percent of these children were affiliated with Chadian armed opposition groups.

In June the government hosted a regional conference on child soldiers with five other Central African nations, leading to the adoption of the "N'Djamena Declaration," which pledges to stop the use of children in armed conflict and to release and reintegrate child soldiers.

Hissène Habré Trial

The Senegalese government continues to delay judicial proceedings against former Chadian president Hissène Habré, who stands accused of crimes against humanity and torture during his 1982-1990 rule. In 2006 Senegal accepted an African Union "mandate" to prosecute Habré "on behalf of Africa," but then stated that the prosecution would not move forward unless international donors assumed the full expense of organizing a trial, which Senegal estimated at US\$40 million.

In July 2010 a joint African Union-European Union team, with the support of the United States, presented Senegal with a proposed budget of \$11.7 million for the trial. Senegal has accepted the proposed budget and a donors' conference is scheduled to take place in Dakar, the Senegalese capital, by the end of 2010.

Meanwhile thousands of victims of torture and killings under Habré's rule have never received compensation or recognition from Chad's current government, and many of Habré's henchmen still hold key positions of power, including state security jobs.

International Actors

Despite solid evidence of widespread and serious human rights abuses in Chad, the country's key international partners have refrained from pressing the Chadian government on its human rights commitments. By lodging a formal request to the UN for the non-renewal of the mission's mandate, Chad succeeded in diverting international attention from its election and domestic human rights problems.

The government of Chad received ongoing military support from both France and the US. France has had troops stationed in Chad since 1986; currently they number 1,000 soldiers. Yet the Chadian government has started to question the justification of the French deployment and, during celebrations of Chad's 50th anniversary of independence, President Déby said that France must "pay a price" if it "wants to stay in Chad, to use its airplanes, and train its soldiers there." It is not clear yet how France's stated plan to reorganize troops stationed in its former colonies and negotiate new defense agreements will affect its military cooperation with Chad.

As one of the key US allies on the African continent, Chad received US military assistance under the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership, a scheme through which the US sends Special Forces instructors to train antiterrorist commandos in Chad. US President Barack Obama issued a waiver allowing US military assistance to continue to flow to Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Yemen, despite State Department findings that these countries violate the US Child Soldiers Prevention Act.

China is becoming an increasingly important international player in Chad. Attracted by the growing petroleum industry in the Sahel region of Africa, Chinese companies have increased their presence there. In June 2010 the China National Petroleum Corporation – one of China's largest oil and gas companies, which is also present in Sudan – began working on an oil pipeline in southwestern Chad. The pipeline is expected to be operational in 2011 and will facilitate the transport of crude oil from the Koudalwa field (300 kilometers, or 186 miles, south of N'Djamena) to the Djarmaya refinery (north of N'Djamena).

In early February 2010 Chad won reelection onto the Peace and Security Council of the AU, the AU's most important organ in charge of the day-to-day management of peace and security issues on the continent.

Correction

The English version of the Chad chapter of the 2011 World Report incorrectly states that a joint African Union-Europe Union team presented Senegal with a proposed budget of \$9 million for the Hissène Habré trial. The correct proposed budget for the trial is \$11.7 million (8.59 million Euros). (January 24, 2011)

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