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**Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan,
Emmanuel Akwei Addo* ****

* This document is submitted late so as to include the most up-to-date information possible.

** The annexes to the report are reproduced in the language of submission only.

Summary

The Commission on Human Rights, in its decision 2004/128, decided to appoint an independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan for a period of one year. The new independent expert, Emmanuel Akwei Addo, travelled to the Sudan and Kenya from 19 to 31 August 2004 and delivered an oral report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 29 October (see annex II). The present report constitutes his report to the Commission.

Low-level conflict has simmered in Darfur, the Sudan, for years, characterized primarily by disputes between nomadic and sedentary groups because of increased competition for resources. Clashes between farming groups and nomads were regular, as was the use of traditional reconciliation mechanisms. In February 2003, however, following attacks by the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) against government forces, including the police and army, reportedly in protest at what they perceived as their marginalization, the intensity of the conflict increased. In April 2003, the situation deteriorated further, following an attack by SLM/A on the airport at El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, resulting in the death of 70 military personnel and the destruction of planes.

The Government's response to the insurrection was ruthless and disproportionate. To flush out the rebel groups from their stronghold in Darfur, the Government deployed the might of the military, the Popular Defence Forces and nomad Arab militia, known as Janjaweed, against civilians belonging to the same tribal groups as the rebels. As a result, 1 million people were displaced and about 300,000 sought refuge in neighbouring Chad; an estimated 100,000 died.

The militia's indiscriminate attacks against civilians resulted in widespread killing and incidents of rape. The crisis in Darfur drew increased interest on the part of the international community and put the peace process on hold for some time. While the parties agreed to arrive at an agreement by the end of 2004, the situation remains unstable as insecurity is again on the rise. As a result of increased international attention and successive Security Council resolutions, the Government, which holds the primary responsibility for the protection of its citizens, has been repeatedly asked to disarm the militia. At the time of submitting this report, this request remains unanswered. In view of the Government's inability or unwillingness to respond, action should be taken. The African Union (AU) has increased its forces in Darfur by 3,000 and, in spite of the difficult situation on the ground and logistical constraints, has been very active, including in trying to expand its mandate to include protection of civilians. The United Nations has also increased its staff on the ground, to respond to the humanitarian crisis and monitor the human rights situation, but more needs to be done to contain the effects of the crisis.

The increased AU forces must be given a mandate to protect the civilian population, including internally displaced persons and, where possible, disarm the militia. At present, the AU forces cannot intervene in any fighting. They can only investigate incidents and report. Urgent consideration should be given to expanding the mandate of the AU in Darfur so as to include the protection of civilians. The efforts of the AU should be further supported, particularly in the field of human rights. Coordination should be strengthened between the AU and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with a view to addressing human right abuses and breaking the cycle of impunity.

Serious violations of human rights have occurred. There are strong indications that war crimes and crimes against humanity have taken place. Upon the Security Council's request in its resolution 1564 (2004), the Secretary-General has appointed an International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, whose task is to investigate reports of human rights violations, determine whether acts of genocide have occurred, and to identify the perpetrators of abuses with a view to ensuring accountability.

The Darfur peace process is in jeopardy, as rebels walked out of talks in Abuja in protest against two weeks of onslaught by the Government. The situation in the region seems to be deteriorating sharply. The rebels have grown more intransigent, and security on the ground is getting worse. Save the Children has now had four aid workers killed in Darfur, and aid groups are pulling back. During a recent press conference, an AU force commander warned that an "astronomical" amount of weaponry had been brought into Darfur, and suggested that the fighting was now poised to become much worse.

Meanwhile, on 19 November 2004, the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed a pledge in front of all 15 Security Council members meeting in Kenya to end their war in the South by 31 December 2004. The Government and SPLM signed the final two protocols of a peace accord, paving the way for a ceremony in January 2005 at which government and rebel leaders were to sign a peace agreement. On 9 January 2005, the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, ending Africa's longest-running conflict.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1 - 2	5
I. OBLIGATIONS OF THE SUDAN UNDER INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW	3 - 11	5
II. TRIP TO THE SUDAN	12 - 32	7
A. Civil and political rights	20 - 22	9
B. The plight of internally displaced persons	23 - 29	9
C. Kassala	30	11
D. Malakal	31 - 32	11
III. COMMENTS, ANALYSIS, OBSERVATIONS	33 - 52	12
A. Sources of conflict	33 - 40	12
B. The peace process	41 - 42	13
C. Gender violence and war crimes	43 - 48	14
D. Looting of animals and attacks on civilian objects	49 - 52	15
IV. CONCLUSIONS	53 - 60	16
V. RECOMMENDATIONS	61 - 72	17
Annexes		
I. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 9 January 2005		19
II. Statement by Emmanuel Akwei Addo, independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 29 October 2004		21

Introduction

1. In its decision 2004/128, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint an independent expert to consider the situation of human rights in the Sudan for a period of one year. The independent expert was requested to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to report to the Commission at its sixty-first session on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. The Commission also requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary assistance to the independent expert to enable him fully to discharge his mandate.

2. On July 2004, the Chairperson of the Commission of Human Rights appointed Emmanuel Akwei Addo as independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. The independent expert undertook a mission to the Sudan in order to establish direct contacts with the Sudanese authorities, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and Sudanese civil society. During his visit, and in this report to the Commission, the independent expert decided to focus his attention on the ongoing crisis in the Darfur region and on human rights-related developments in Kassala and Upper Nile states.

I. OBLIGATIONS OF THE SUDAN UNDER INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

3. The Sudan is a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Both these treaties were ratified in 1986. The Sudan has also ratified or acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1974), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1977), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1986). The Sudan is a High Contracting Party to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, to which it acceded in 1957. It is therefore bound to apply the provisions of these treaties. In addition, the Sudan has signed the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1986). Although it has not yet ratified the Convention, it has an obligation under international law not to take any action that would defeat its object and purpose.

4. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, like many of the treaties mentioned above, proclaims the entitlement to respect for life and personal integrity, prohibits slavery, torture, and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment and enshrines the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

5. These treaties, with other international standards drawn up by the United Nations or the African Union (AU), lay down standards of conduct, which all States parties are bound to uphold. They guarantee, inter alia, the right to life, the right not to be tortured or suffer cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the prohibition of slavery and the right to recognition as a person before the law. These standards may not be derogated from even in "time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed" (ICCPR, art. 4). The African Charter does not allow States parties to derogate from their treaty obligations, even during armed conflict.

6. International humanitarian law, embodied mainly in the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, regulates situations of armed conflict. It does not replace international human rights law, which is applicable in both peace and war, although it does permit the suspension of certain rights in times of public emergency. Nevertheless, human rights law plays an important complementary role with respect to international humanitarian law, since it offers additional protection for individual rights. The four Geneva Conventions contain certain minimum guarantees for the treatment of the civilian population, and are applicable to all parties in an internal armed conflict. Provisions contained therein forbid attacks on non-combatants (including soldiers who have laid down arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds or detention); torture and cruel treatment; the taking of hostages; and the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions except by properly constituted courts affording all the judicial guarantees that are recognized as indispensable by the nations of the world. Common article 3 is supplemented by the Additional Protocols. The Sudan has not ratified these protocols, but many of their provisions have the status of customary law, having been developed through practice, resolutions, *opinio juris* and more flexible interpretations of the current legal framework, and as such remain binding on all States. For example, Additional Protocol II includes articles prohibiting attacking civilians (art. 13); the destruction of articles essential to the survival of the civilian population and the use of starvation (art. 14); and the forced displacement of civilians (unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand) (art. 17).

International standards

7. The right to freedom of expression and the right to “seek, receive and impart information of all kinds” are laid down in international standards such as the ICCPR and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights. The Sudan, as a party to both, has an obligation to ensure freedom of expression and information. The right to freedom of expression is important not only to allow individuals to be aware of their rights and the means of protecting their rights, but also to enable them to expose and challenge violations of those rights.

8. According to the Human Rights Committee (general comment No. 10), the right to hold opinions without interference permits no exception or restriction. Any restrictions that may be imposed on the right to freedom of expression must be provided by law and justified as being necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others or for the protection of national security or public order. Such restrictions must be compatible with internationally recognized standards and must be strictly construed in order to advance the promotion and protection of the right, not to diminish or jeopardize it.

9. The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the body charged with monitoring the implementation of the African Charter, adopted at its thirty-second session in October 2002, in Banjul, a Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, expanding the obligations of States parties to the African Charter regarding the right to freedom of expression. The Declaration asserts that the right to freedom of expression “is a fundamental and inalienable human right and an indispensable component of democracy” (art. I). The Declaration provides that “attacks such as the murder, kidnapping, intimidation of and threats to media practitioners and others exercising their right to freedom of expression, as well as the

material destruction of communications facilities, undermines independent journalism, freedom of expression and the free flow of information to the public". It also requires States to "take effective measures to prevent such attacks and, when they do occur, to investigate them, to punish perpetrators and to ensure that victims have access to effective remedies" (art. XI).

10. The Sudan passed a State of Emergency Law in 1989 and has renewed it every year since then. Many actions against newspapers and journalists are taken under the State of Emergency Law. Although States may suspend certain rights during an emergency situation, the Human Rights Committee has stated that measures derogating from the provisions of ICCPR must be of an exceptional and temporary nature (see general comment No. 29, on derogation during a state of emergency (art. 4)). Even during an armed conflict, "measures derogating from the Covenant are allowed only if and to the extent that the situation constitutes a threat to the life of the nation" (para. 3). In addition, such measures must be limited to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation (para. 4). The African Charter does not allow States parties to derogate from the rights of individuals.

11. The independent expert was informed of the existence of a law prohibiting the assembly of more than two persons, even in one's own home, and of the detention of a well-known human rights lawyer under that law.

II. TRIP TO THE SUDAN

12. The independent expert visited the Sudan from 19 to 29 August and Nairobi on 30 and 31 August 2004. In Khartoum, he met with several government officials, including the Minister of Justice and the Advisory Council on Human Rights, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence, and the parliamentary committee on human rights. The independent expert also met with non-governmental and civil society organizations, members of political parties, human rights groups and individuals. The independent expert wishes to thank the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations for facilitating his first visit to the country. Special thanks go to the Advisory Council on Human Rights, which was the independent expert's main counterpart in organizing a successful visit. The independent expert was preceded to the Sudan by the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) mission to Darfur and the subsequent deployment of an initial group of eight human rights monitors, and other high-level actors.

13. In view of the dramatic unfolding of the Darfur crisis at the time of the visit, most of the independent expert's meeting focused on Darfur-related developments. More specifically, during his meeting with the Minister of Justice, the independent expert raised a number of concerns regarding a recent governmental circular relating to the issue of rape, requesting rape victims to obtain a police report before seeking medical treatment. While highlighting that, in keeping with criminal procedure, all cases of rape or any offence that causes harm must be reported to the police before any treatment is sought, the Minister agreed that the procedure was inappropriate and promised to issue another circular nullifying the effect of the first so that doctors could treat victims without an "incident report". The independent expert welcomes the issuance of the new circular.

14. The meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs focused on the overall political situation, including the links between the Naivasha peace process and the situation in Darfur. The Minister provided some background information on the Darfur crisis, including attacks by the rebels that, in his view, were the origin of the escalation of the conflict, as well as on the role of the Janjaweed, whose ruthless strategy of attacking, looting and killing the Minister defined as “part of the culture of Darfur”.

15. During his meeting with the Minister of Defence, the independent expert was provided with additional details concerning the situation in Darfur, in particular actions by the rebel groups and the Government’s response, for which the Minister, as Commander-in-Chief of the army, took responsibility. He shared the independent expert’s concerns at the impact of military action on civilians and noted that, while it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between military and civilian targets, particularly when civilians were used as human shields by the rebels, medical treatment and compensation should be provided to civilians hurt as a result of military operations. He confirmed that the Popular Defence Force (PDF) was being used in Darfur to complement the army.

16. While in Khartoum, the independent expert met with the members of the National Commission of Inquiry established by the Government to look into violations of human rights that had occurred within the context of the Darfur crisis. The independent expert was informed that the Commission had held meetings in Khartoum with the National Assembly and had organized special hearings with the administration in Darfur, civil society, ministers and parliamentarians. It had visited Abushok (El-Fashir), Mosey (Nyala), Mosebi and Kalma camps in Darfur, where it had met with security officers, the army and the police forces, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC). The Commission members also spoke to the victims. While a list of violations committed by the Janjaweed and the rebel groups had been compiled and investigations had begun on some cases of rape and other violations, the Commission had requested judges to investigate individual cases on its behalf. More specifically, the independent expert was informed that, in view of the impossibility for the Commission to investigate all allegations, the decision had been taken to delegate to the Chief Justice the authority to appoint three judges of the High Court to investigate specific allegations, in particular the use of rape as a weapon of war. In the view of the independent expert, such delegation by the Commission of Inquiry was an abdication of its responsibilities.

17. In other meetings, the independent expert received additional information on the work of the Commission. According to information received, the Commission had visited the three Darfur states in 72 hours. No other visit had taken place nor any investigation carried out. Reportedly, no contacts were established with the victims, and no camp was visited around El Geneina. Sources claimed that the Commission was biased in favour of the Government in its work and in general. For instance, it mainly interviewed members of the Government, police and army. The independent expert noted with disappointment that, at the time of submission of the present report, the Commission had not produced any results.

18. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1564 (2004), the Secretary-General appointed an International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, whose terms of reference are clearly spelled out in the resolution. More specifically, the International Commission of Inquiry was tasked with investigating reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in

Darfur by all parties; to determine also whether acts of genocide had occurred; and to identify the perpetrators of such violations with a view to ensuring that those responsible are held accountable.

19. The independent expert's meeting with members of human rights NGOs focused on the overall human rights situation in the Sudan. The independent expert had an opportunity to familiarize himself with some aspects of legislation impacting negatively on human rights, including the 1999 National Security Forces Act, particularly its section 31, which gives power to the security forces to detain individuals without charge.

A. Civil and political rights

20. Civil and political rights have not improved in the North, in spite of the conducive atmosphere generated by the peace talks. The security forces maintain their grip on political life and the legislation that they enforce blocks any real multiparty democracy; the Government of the Sudan has not taken steps to loosen these key components of its control. Torture and arbitrary arrests continued to be reported, particularly targeting political opponents. The security forces are invariably held responsible for such incidents. However, virtual impunity continues to be widespread.

21. There is a persistent lack of the rule of law in the Sudan. Political parties in general are unable to function, as the Government continues to restrict freedom of speech, expression and assembly throughout the country. Repeated claims by President Bashir that press censorship would end have been reportedly followed by continued confiscations and the imposition of heavy fines, mostly by security agents on English- and Arabic-language newspapers publishing anything which the Government perceives as threatening - including information about the peace talks or the conflict in Darfur.

22. The alleged coup attempt in September 2004, which led to the detention of 189 suspects, was perceived by the opposition to be a sham to divert attention from the crisis in Darfur. The detainees were all said to be members of the Popular Congress Party of detained Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi, who had been increasingly critical of the scorched-earth policy in Darfur adopted by the Government, as a result of which up to 50,000 people have been killed and about 1.6 million left homeless, according to the United Nations.

B. The plight of internally displaced persons

23. During his visit, the independent expert received reports describing the serious situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who continue to be victims of disappearances, rape, abduction, arbitrary detentions and other abuses. He also received specific information on a recent policy of relocation started by the Government. In this context, the independent expert refers the Government to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement developed by the former Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Mr. Francis Deng. Although they are not binding, the independent expert urges the Government to respect the principles contained therein.

1. Jaborona camp

24. On 27 August, in view of the serious concerns raised regarding the situation of the IDPs, the independent expert visited the Jaborona camp, the biggest IDP camp around Khartoum. Jaborona, the independent expert learnt, means roughly “they forced us” in Arabic. That is to say, the IDPs were not located there by their own free will. The camp is on the outskirts of Khartoum, in the harsh sun of the desert. While most of the international relief organizations left the area six years ago, some organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Sudanese Council of Churches, continue to provide free medical assistance to the IDPs in the camp.

25. While in the camp, the independent expert noticed that some of the IDPs’ dwellings had been demolished and some were in the process of being pulled down. Most of the camp’s inhabitants are people displaced from their homes in war-ravaged Southern Sudan. Neighbouring Wad Bashir camp hosts another 74,000 people. Reportedly, the Government has destroyed thousands of homes in both camps since mid-2003, leaving gaping, putrid holes where latrines once stood and forcing residents to erect feeble makeshift dwellings that provide little shelter. No alternative sites have been provided, and bulldozers were in action in Jaborona, Tawidad, Mandela and Mayo camps.

2. Darfur and its camps

26. The independent expert visited Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, on 22 August 2004. He also visited the Kalma camp, about 20 km from Nyala, the largest camp in the area, hosting about 90,000 IDPs. The Kalma camp is perceived by the Government to be the main focus of the insurgency.

27. Before the independent expert’s arrival, an incident had occurred in the camp that highlighted the rising tension among the IDP community. As a result of the incident, the Government closed the camp for three to four days and no one was allowed inside except the AU monitors and the military. The camp was reportedly looted and the IDPs were robbed of their possessions. The army allegedly found two AK-47s in the camp; 270 IDPs were arrested, but half of them were released.

28. The residents of Kalma camp are predominantly non-Arab. They come mainly from Shattaya. The independent expert was informed that all their houses had been burnt down. The IDPs said that they would never go back because they did not trust the Government. Moreover, they had nothing to go back to. There was also no security in their place of origin owing to the presence of the Janjaweed who, they said, had raped women. The rapes were reported to the police, but nothing happened. The IDPs said they wanted AU or United Nations forces to protect them. It was said that people from Sania Deleba who had returned home were attacked. The IDPs in Kalma said that they would rather die in the camp than go back.

29. On 30 August 2004, in Nairobi, the independent expert met with the representatives of the SPLM/A, including Chief Justice Michael Mkuei Lueth, Attorney-General Reuben Madol Arol and Martin Okeeruk, the SPLM/A liaison officer in Nairobi, who briefed him about the human rights situation in Southern Sudan. In addition, the independent expert was briefed about the status of the peace process and the six protocols that had been

signed at that time, including on wealth-sharing, power-sharing and security arrangements. They indicated that what was left was the discussion of details concerning the implementation of the agreement and compiling the six protocols into a single document. The SPLM/A acknowledged that the roots of the conflict in Darfur lay in marginalization, from which Southern Sudan had also suffered, hence the SPLM/A's moral support for the rebels in Darfur. The rebel groups the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) are both members of the National Democratic Alliance, as is the SPLM.

C. Kassala

30. The independent expert had the opportunity to meet with members of the Beja Congress. The meeting provided the independent expert with an opportunity to familiarize himself with the plight of the Beja, a nomadic people numbering about 4 million, living in the eastern Sudanese region of Kassala, who were reportedly politically and economically marginalized by the central Government for decades. More specifically, the independent expert was informed that, in spite of a wealth of natural resources, notably gold, about 50 per cent of the population suffer from tuberculosis and about 90 per cent of the children do not go to school. They do not speak Arabic. The Beja's frustration reached its height in the 1990s when the Government in Khartoum reportedly aggressively promoted its version of Islam in the region and sent the army to attack the populace. The SLA forged an alliance with the Beja Congress in January 2004. A joint declaration said both parties would "continue their struggle together until they got rid of marginalization, poverty, ignorance and backwardness", thus linking the Darfur crisis in the west with the plight of the Beja in the east.

D. Malakal

31. Owing to logistical constraints, the independent expert was unable to visit Malakal, Upper Nile. However, the independent expert was able to meet with the Deputy Governor of Upper Nile State, Joseph Bol Chan, in Khartoum. Mr. Bol Chan provided him with a briefing on the situation in the region. According to the Deputy Governor, following clashes between ethnic groups, notably the Nuer and the Shilluk, the situation in Upper Nile had improved and the area was now calm. The United States-funded Civilian Protection Monitoring Team (CPMT) had reported in October that armed groups, including the Sudanese national army, military intelligence and various armed militias purportedly aligned with the Government, mistreated civilians on several occasions in Southern Sudan. CPMT cited abuses in Malakal, where nearly 35,000 IDPs live. The IDPs had fled instability in Shilluk Kingdom, which started in 2003 when Dr. Lam Akol, head of the Government-allied SPLM-United (a SPLM breakaway faction), defected to the SPLM/A. According to CPMT, the armed groups "shot at, intimidated and threatened civilians in areas around Malakal, causing fear among local residents and in most cases, forcing them to abandon their life-sustaining economic activities such as fishing, collecting firewood and charcoal burning".

32. The independent expert had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Akol in Nairobi and to discuss with him the background of the situation in Upper Nile as well as the shifting alliances that characterized the past few years.

III. COMMENTS, ANALYSIS, OBSERVATIONS

A. Sources of conflict

33. Many eyewitnesses and victims of attacks have testified to the close coordination between government forces and militia partners in the conflict in Darfur. The militias have been supplied with equipment, arms and uniforms by government officials and have participated in joint ground attacks on civilians, often with aerial bombardment from the air force. IDPs told the independent expert that the military and the Janjaweed were responsible for the attacks. They said that the Janjaweed were people they had grown up with, so they knew them and could easily recognize them. When they saw a member of the Janjaweed they knew it, and no amount of denial by the Government could hide the fact. The Minister of Defence himself has admitted that the Government had used not only the military, but had also called in the Popular Defence Force. The use of the Sudanese air force to target civilians is one of the clearest signs of the direct involvement of the Government of the Sudan in large-scale unlawful killings, since neither the armed opposition groups nor the Janjaweed possess aircraft. Antonov aircraft, MiG jet fighters and helicopter gunships have been used by the Government in the conflict in Southern Sudan for deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and to provide support for militias who themselves commit grave human rights abuses. The same patterns of abuse have been found in the conflict in Darfur. Instead of fighting the rebels, government forces have waged a systematic campaign against the unarmed civilian population, which belongs to the same ethnic groups as the rebels, that is mainly the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa. Counter-insurgency warfare carried out with high-technology weaponry that the Government has unleashed on its own citizens is inherently intolerable because of its tendency to produce indiscriminate and massive destruction.

34. AU military observers have reported that militias have burnt civilians alive in the Darfur region. They said that men rode into villages on horseback, looted the market and chained people up before setting them ablaze. The AU fact-finding team visited the village of Suleia to investigate reports of an attack on 3 July 2004. They reported that the entire village had been burnt and deserted two days earlier. The African Union Ceasefire Commission (AU-CFC) concluded that this was an unwarranted and unprovoked attack on the civilian population by the Janjaweed, but was unable to substantiate allegations that government forces fought alongside them.

35. Despite the Government's denials, there is no shortage of reliable evidence that it has armed and encouraged the brutal actions of the Janjaweed. However, the Government seeks to have it both ways: it is unable or unwilling to disarm the Janjaweed, but at the same time it refuses to permit the AU forces to be deployed to protect civilians and bring the situation under control. At present, there are about 1,900 AU troops in Darfur, a number that is hardly adequate. Moreover, their mandate is not clear. As the IDPs told the independent expert, they do not trust the Government and they do not want the police or the army to be sent to protect them because they are the same people who had earlier rained terror upon and killed many of them. By all accounts the Janjaweed are fast dissolving into the military, the police and the Popular Defence Force, so sending in the army would be like sending the fox to guard the chickens.

36. Under the Protocol to Establish the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the AU has a far-reaching mandate to enhance the prospects of ensuring peace and stability on the continent. The Peace and Security Council has the right to intervene in a member State “in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity” (art. 4). Last year the African Union broke new ground by sending some 2,600 troops to Burundi to monitor the implementation of a ceasefire between the Government and the country’s main rebel group. This can also be done in the Sudan.

37. Reports by many non-governmental organizations and the IDPs in the camps describe a government strategy of forced displacement targeting civilians of the non-Arab ethnic communities from which the two main rebel groups, SLM/A and JEM, are mainly drawn. Victims and IDPs say the military are indiscriminately bombing civilians while both the government forces and militia are systematically destroying villages and conducting brutal raids against the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups.

38. Part of the reason why the Darfur rebels took up arms last year, apart from a long-standing resentment at perceived Arab domination of their region, was the limited nature of the peace talks, which involved only the SPLM/A and the Government and touched in great detail upon such matters as the percentage of government jobs to be allocated and power-sharing in three central oil-producing regions claimed by both sides. The Darfur region straddles the North and the South, so the two-party framework for the peace talks was inadequate. The discontents in Darfur have thus far largely been viewed as of secondary importance to those of the South, but they must be taken into account if a sustainable national peace agreement is to be reached. There is a real possibility that those who feel left out will seek to undermine any deal between the Government in Khartoum and the SPLM/A. It is therefore important to ensure that the grievances driving all conflicts are fully dealt with and addressed.

39. Tensions are fed by the same factors that led to the long-running war in Southern Sudan: a central Government that has exploited local resources, imposed its religious and cultural beliefs on a historically diverse population and consistently pitted local tribes and ethnic groups against each other for short-term tactical gain. Article 27 of the ICCPR provides as follows: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.”

40. Failure to achieve change peacefully has pushed more and more communities across the Sudan into confrontation with the central authorities. Their fear of being shunted aside has led them to armed conflict as a way of calling attention to their problems. The Beja in eastern Sudan, the Nubians in North Sudan and the Shilluks are among those who share these concerns. The massive military response by the Government, aside from taking a tremendous toll on the civilian population, will succeed only in deepening the resentment.

B. The peace process

41. The arrival of the AU-CFC tasked with monitoring a fragile ceasefire and agreements signed by rebels and the Government at peace talks in Nigeria have lifted hopes that violence in Darfur can be brought under control. “The protocols signed last week call for all prisoners of

war to be released unconditionally, so that is why we are releasing them”, said Abdou Ismail, the SLM/A representative attached to the AU-CFC, which negotiated the handover. “It is a sign of good faith and shows that we want to apply the protocols and bring peace”, he added.

42. Darfur rebels from the SLA handed over 20 prisoners of war to the African Union on 16 November 2004, which the rebels said was in line with peace agreements they had signed with Khartoum. About 2,000 villagers cheered and danced at a handover ceremony in Deribat, a village in the remote Jebel Marra mountains of South Darfur and a rebel stronghold, where the 20 captives were held for nine months. The prisoners were flown in two AU helicopters to El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, where they were due to be handed over to the Governor the following day. “We are very happy. We expected to be killed, not released”, said one of the freed men. The release was the first of its kind and offered a rare boost to peace efforts in Darfur. The AU saw the handover of prisoners as an important symbolic victory.

C. Gender violence and war crimes

43. Alarming reports of the systematic rape of hundreds of women by the Janjaweed have been emanating from the Darfur region over the past months, demonstrating the need for the international community to step up its pressure on the Government. The ceasefire agreement of 8 April 2004 is an important step, but remains insufficient. According to the United Nations and human rights groups, thousands of women have been raped in the course of the 20-month conflict. A recent report by Amnesty International called rape “a weapon of war”, often accompanied by racial insults, whipping, and public sexual acts as a form of humiliation. The report said that the Arab Janjaweed see attacking African women as a way to mortify African rebel groups. The long-term effects of these crimes can be seen in countries like Rwanda where many women and children remain traumatized and live with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, following systematic rape during the genocide 10 years ago. There have also been unconfirmed reports, including from Amnesty International, that many women and girls have been abducted to be used as sexual slaves or domestic workers.

44. At the time of submission of this report, the most recent incident was an attack on villages in the Tawila area at the end of February 2004. Residents and humanitarian aid workers, including from the United Nations, reported the systematic rape of women and schoolchildren. The former Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, said: “All houses, as well as a market and a health centre, were completely looted and the market burnt. Over 100 women were raped, six in front of their fathers, who were later killed.”

45. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which the Sudan has signed, characterizes rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity. The international community must ensure that the Sudan abides by its international legal obligations.

46. The independent expert considers that there are strong indications that war crimes have been committed in Darfur. In addition to rape, they include murder, torture, and intentional attacks against civilians and civilian objects. He considers also that crimes against humanity have also been committed in Darfur. They include forcible displacement and rape committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against the civilian population. There are strong indications that these crimes were committed both by the Janjaweed and government forces.

47. Rebels have also been accused of committing human rights abuses, but to a far lesser extent. Reports have been received regarding the torture of six persons by JEM; it and the SLM/A have been accused of sheltering their forces in civilian areas, thereby blurring the distinction between civilian and legitimate targets. Both rebel groups have taken hostages, including relief workers, although they are not reported to have hurt them and have released them quickly.

48. A serious incident of multiple abductions and possible summary executions, allegedly by SLM/A forces, took place along the Nyertite-Thur road, on the southern side of Jebel Marra, in West Darfur. Eighteen passengers, including University of Nyala students of nomadic Arab origin, were removed from a bus and taken away by an SLM/A commander. According to credible reports, some of those detained were killed while under his authority. The incident provoked clashes between SLM/A and nomadic militias in the Jebel Marra area and the withdrawal of aid workers from towns such as Nyertite in early November 2004.

D. Looting of animals and attacks on civilian objects

49. Members of the nomadic Aulad Zeid tribe told Human Rights Watch that rebels had stolen 4,000 female camels (*nagah*) from their tribe in 2003, from different locations. Some of them belonged to an eyewitness, who said that the SLM/A attacked early on three consecutive mornings during October 2003 when he and others were with their camel herds in the Abu Gamra area, North Darfur.

50. Rebel groups have also attacked government offices and some private commercial locations in Darfur, generally seeking weapons and ammunition stocks, money and other supplies. In South Darfur, rebel forces attacked the police station, *zakat* (Islamic charity) and other government offices in Yassin town in January 2004, looting money and supplies from the offices, according to witnesses. The rebels temporarily detained three policemen who were later released unharmed.

51. Attacks on civilian objects, including civilian administrative and private business offices, are violations of international humanitarian law. However, such objects become valid targets under international law when they serve a military purpose, such as being used to store weapons or ammunition. The civilians in such offices who do not take an active part in the hostilities may not be attacked. Incidental injuries, such as civilians suffer, are not violations of the international rules of war unless the attackers used indiscriminate or disproportionate force. With some exceptions, the rebel forces appear to have targeted objects such as buildings and weapons stockpiles, and not civilians, in these attacks.

52. Rebels have attacked many police stations and posts in Darfur. Police stations are being used for military purposes, and with police taking an active part in the hostilities, these are valid military targets under international humanitarian law and may be attacked (though armed rebel attacks remain violations of Sudanese law). Police forces include not only the regular police but also sometimes the Popular Police and newly constituted units such as the "Nomadic Police". Even the regular police have been militarized in Darfur. Often they are armed with military weapons, and have participated under army command in joint operations with the army. In mid-2004, the deployment of a newly recruited police force with military functions in many parts of Darfur further blurred their status.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

53. Everywhere the independent expert went, people expressed a desire for a democratic transformation and the rule of law. There have been arrests and detentions without trial by security forces. At the time of submitting this report, the Janjaweed had still not been disarmed. The number of African Union forces has been increased but the full complement of soldiers has not arrived; at the time of submitting this report about 1,900 were stationed in Darfur.

54. *Renewed human rights abuses in Southern Sudan.* Despite the continuation of the North-South peace process between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the main armed opposition group in Southern Sudan, fighting and killing of civilians, in particular in the Shilluk Kingdom, Southern Sudan, and Malakal have resumed. The Civilian Protection Monitoring Team issued a report on the killing of civilians.

55. *Reported tensions in eastern Sudan.* As in Darfur, there are feelings of tension in eastern Sudan, a poor and underdeveloped region, and that it is marginalized by the central Government. The main regional political force is the Beja Congress. There is an armed political group in eastern Sudan, the Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF), which are allied with the SPLM/A under the National Democratic Alliance, an umbrella body of Sudanese political opposition parties. SAF had sporadic clashes with government armed forces during the civil war with the South. Tensions are said to be on the rise in eastern Sudan, perhaps because, as in Darfur, political groups in eastern Sudan feel that they have been excluded from the North-South peace process and that the only way to obtain power and dialogue is to take up arms against the central Government.

56. The peace process between the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A continued under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Kenya and international mediation. SPLM/A and the Government had pledged to come to an agreement by 31 December 2004. A number of important protocols on power-sharing, the sharing of resources and the status of contentious regions (the Nuba Mountains, Abyei and Southern Blue Nile) had been signed and the two parties were discussing their implementation. A number of human rights organizations were concerned that human rights were barely mentioned in the peace process and have not formed part of the different agreements, and that underlying issues of injustice and discrimination had not been resolved, making any peace agreement potentially unsustainable. Moreover, massive human rights violations have been committed throughout the civil war and there seems to be no mechanism planned for recognition, accountability or compensation of victims.

57. It is assumed that the United Nations will send a peacekeeping force. The mandate of such a force is to be decided by the two parties to the peace process, and there is a risk that the mandate will be weak on the issue of human rights. Most of the human rights organizations would like the United Nations to have a robust human rights monitoring role as part of the peace agreement. Repressive security laws must be abolished and Sudanese civil society must be included in future constitutional and legislative reviews. Freedom of expression is crucial and must not be restricted; it also acts in defence of other rights. It allows other human rights violations to be exposed and acted upon. In addition, people must feel free to discuss or criticize the actions of the Government. If they feel that no one will listen to or act on social, economic, cultural or political problems, then people may turn to violent or unlawful means to secure

results. It is said that the Government of the Sudan only talks to those who bear arms. The critical results of the lack of freedom of expression is the crisis in Darfur. There must be channels and avenues for dialogue and open discussions of political, social, cultural and economic issues affecting the governed in the Sudan. The tragedy of the failure to ensure the right of freedom of expression and information has brought crisis not only to Darfur but also to the Sudan as a whole, and it is costly. Meanwhile, the Government has thrown the African Union's plan to restore peace to Darfur into turmoil, engaging in a fresh battle with rebel forces and defying international demands to halt its offensive.

58. The Government and SPLM/A signed a pledge on 19 November 2004 in front of all 15 Security Council members meeting in Kenya to end their war by 31 December 2004. On that day the Government of the Sudan and SPLM signed the final two protocols of the peace accord, paving the way for a ceremony in January 2005 at which the Government and rebel leaders would sign a comprehensive peace agreement, including eight protocols agreed to earlier. In fact, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to end the 21-year-long civil war in the Sudan between the central Government and the main armed group in the South, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, was signed on 9 January 2005. It is hoped that the peace agreement will usher in a new era for the protection of the rights of the Sudanese people as well as reforms to address injustice, discrimination and gross human rights violations in the country.

59. In Darfur, however, the conflict rages on, with civilians being targeted. Even as United States and other Western mediators pressed government and rebel representatives to finalize the North-South agreement, a government offensive in Darfur continued to drive thousands from their homes and land. Women leaving camps to collect firewood were raped on a daily basis. The African Union forces stationed in Darfur to monitor a moribund ceasefire lack the numbers to have any real protective power or deter abuses. Details of the latest fighting were given by United Nations spokesperson George Somerwill after an assessment team was sent to Hamada, Juruf and Gemeiza villages in South Darfur State. The International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, appointed under Security Council resolution 1564 (2004), issued its findings on 26 January 2005. This body offers real hope that those who have led and implemented the heinous abuses in Darfur will be brought to justice.

60. Given the extent of the crimes and widespread impunity for the crimes, the Security Council can only act on the Commission's report by referring the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court, which has the jurisdiction to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Since the Sudan has not ratified the requisite treaty, however, the only way the question of Darfur can be brought before the International Criminal Court is through a Security Council referral. A referral to the Court could perhaps persuade political leaders in Khartoum and Darfur that they could face prosecution. This, in turn, could help prevent more civilians from losing their homes and livelihoods and spending months and years in camps.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

61. **The Government of the Sudan should repeal article 31 of the National Security Forces Act which allows up to nine months' detention outside the control of the judiciary.**

62. **The Government of the Sudan should ensure that all reports of detainees being held incommunicado are fully and independently investigated and that those suspected to be responsible for these acts are held accountable.**
63. **All security forces, including members of the National Security Agency, should inform detainees immediately of the reasons for their arrest and promptly inform them of any charges against them.**
64. **The relevant authorities should ensure that the detainees' families are promptly notified of their arrest and place of detention.**
65. **Security forces should allow every detainee prompt, regular and confidential access to family and lawyers.**
66. **All detainees should be brought promptly before a judge. The Government of the Sudan should end incommunicado detention.**
67. **The immunity from prosecution of the national security forces contained in article 33 of the National Security Forces Act should be repealed.**
68. **There should be an immediate investigation of any complaint of ill-treatment against any member of the security forces.**
69. **The relevant authorities should provide compensation for victims of torture as well as medical treatment and rehabilitation.**
70. **The Government of the Sudan should ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment without reservations.**
71. **Grievances emanating from other regions should be accepted and addressed. The peace process is now over, a comprehensive agreement having been signed. The conflict in Darfur and others that are likely to emerge must be adequately addressed. Article 21, paragraph 3, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." There must be respect for the rule of law and lifting of the restrictions imposed on political parties. The guns must be taken out of the hands of the militias. The most important thing is the disarmament of people who are not part of the military.**
72. **The Government of National Unity under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement should demonstrate its commitment to human rights by ratifying: the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, without reservations; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights; and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.**

Annex I

THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT OF 9 JANUARY 2005

Here are the main points of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on 9 January 2005 between the Government of the Sudan and the southern rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), ending Africa's longest-running conflict:

- **Protocol on the South's Right of Self-Determination:** According to the protocol on the right of self-determination (known as "Machakos Protocol") signed in July 2002, the South will hold a referendum after a six-year transition period to determine whether the region will secede or be part of Sudan. During the interim period, which starts after six months from the day a final deal is signed, the areas in the South will be exempted from Islamic Shariah law;
- **Protocol on Power-Sharing:** According to a power-sharing protocol signed in May 2004, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the current Government in Khartoum will form a Government of national unity with a decentralized system of administration. SPLM/A will also set up a separate semi-autonomous administration in the South. Dr. Garang, the SPLM/A Chairman, will hold the post of first vice-president in the national Government and general elections at all levels of government will be held at the end of the third year. English and Arabic will be the official languages in the country and people from south Sudan will make up 30 per cent of the country's post-conflict civil service;
- **Protocols on the Administration of Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile States:** According to the two protocols, which were signed in May 2004, disputed regions of the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile will each have their own government headed by a governor directly appointed by registered voters. An official from either the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) or Khartoum will hold the governor's post on a rotating basis until elections are held at the end of the third year. The states will express their views in a "popular consultation" on the final peace deal through their respective elected parliaments. Any disagreement will be addressed by the national Government, while representation in their two assemblies will be: Ruling National Congress Party (55 per cent) and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (45 per cent);
- **Protocol on Abei State:** According to the protocol on Abyei, signed in May 2004, this oil-rich state, currently part of western Kordofan, will be accorded special status under the presidency. Its residents will be citizens of both Western Kordofan in northern Sudan and Bahr el Ghazal State in Southern Sudan and will be administered by a local executive council elected by the residents of Abyei. International monitors will be deployed to monitor implementation of these agreements in Abyei, while its residents will hold a separate referendum, simultaneous with one in Southern Sudan, to determine whether it maintains its special status in the north or will be part of Bahr el Ghazal in the South;

- **Protocol on Wealth-Sharing:** According to the Wealth-Sharing agreement which was signed in January 2004, national wealth, notably on revenue from some 250,000 to 300,000 barrels of oil a day produced in Southern Sudan, will be shared equally. Oil revenue from wells in the South, where most of the petroleum exploited is located, is to be split on a 50-50 basis between the southern and national governments, after at least 2 per cent is given to the states where the oil is produced. Communities in areas of oil production, which are mostly found in the South, will have a say in extraction contracts. A National Petroleum Commission, comprising officials from both governments, is to be set up to formulate policy and negotiate exploitation contracts. Half of the non-oil revenue, essentially taxes and levies, collected in the South by the national Government is to be allocated to national Government, monitored by a joint commission. A dual banking system is to be set up, an Islamic one in the North, where charging interest is forbidden, and a conventional one in the South, where a special branch of the central bank will be established. The central bank is to issue a new currency with a design reflecting Sudan's cultural diversity;
- **Protocol on Security Arrangements:** According to the Security Arrangement Protocol, which was signed in September 2003, more than 100,000 government troops in Southern Sudan and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) troops deployed in the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile will withdraw under international monitoring, while respecting the North-South boundary drawn in 1956. Coordination between and command of the two forces will be assumed by a new Joint Defence Board made up of top officers from both sides. Both the government army and the SPLA will remain separate and shall be considered and treated equally as Sudan's National Armed Forces (SNAF). During the interim period, the two forces will contribute an equal number of troops to form Joint Integrated Units (JIU) to be deployed on both sides of the border. The deployment of JIU will be as follows: 24,000 troops in Southern Sudan, 6,000 in the Nuba Mountains, 6,000 in Southern Blue Nile and 3,000 in the capital, Khartoum.

Annex II

STATEMENT BY EMMANUEL AKWEI ADDO, INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SUDAN, TO THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 29 OCTOBER 2004

“Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends from the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations,

“In its decision 2004/128, the Commission on Human Rights decided to appoint an independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. On 13 July 2004, I had the honour to be appointed to that position by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights. Accordingly, I visited the Sudan from 19 to 29 August and Nairobi on 30 and 31 August, to meet with representatives of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). I wish today to thank the Government of the Sudan for extending an invitation to me and for facilitating my mission.

“In Khartoum, I met with several governmental departments and officials, non-governmental organizations, representatives of political parties, human rights and civil society groups as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs). I also visited Nyala, South Darfur, where I had the opportunity to visit the Kalma IDP Camp, which hosted some 90,000 people.

“During my visit, I learnt that the human rights crisis in Darfur degenerated when, in February 2003, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), a rebel group, attacked government security forces and the airport of El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, destroying planes and reportedly killing about 70 military personnel.

“The Government’s response was to put down the insurrection ruthlessly. With a view to flushing off the two rebel groups, that is, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), from their stronghold in Darfur, the Government deployed the might of the military, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) and Arab militias, popularly known as the Janjaweed, on unarmed, defenceless and innocent civilians, who belong to the same tribal group as the rebels. As a result, about a million and a half civilians have been displaced internally and have been living in fetid camps for the past months. In addition, about 500,000 people were forced to flee the country and become refugees in neighbouring Chad. An estimated 50,000 civilians were feared dead. The true number may never be known.

“Instead of fighting the rebels, the Government forces, together with the Janjaweed militias, have waged a systematic campaign against the unarmed civilian population.

“Mr. Chairman,

“The counter-insurgency warfare carried on with high-technology weaponry that was unleashed by the Government of Sudan on its own citizens is inherently intolerable because of its tendency to produce indiscriminate and massive destruction.

“Consistent with the African Union Peace and Security Council Protocol, the African Union has been endowed with a far-reaching mandate to enhance its prospects of ensuring peace and stability on the continent. The Peace and Security Council was visualized as having the legal power to intervene in member States’ domestic affairs, where abuses and violations of human rights were recorded and principles of good governance were flawed.

“I consider that there are strong indications that war crimes have been committed in Darfur. They include murder, torture, rape and intentional attacks against civilians and civilian objects. There are also strong indications that crimes against humanity have been committed in Darfur. They include killings, forcible displacements and rape committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against the civilian population.

“Mr. Chairman,

“The two-party framework in which Sudan’s peace talks are being held is not adequately addressing all the country’s current armed conflicts, especially the long-running rebellions in the ‘three areas’ (Abyei, the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile) in the North and the more recent outbreak of armed conflicts in Darfur in western Sudan. There is a real potential for those who feel ignored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace process to undermine any deal that is between only the Government in Khartoum and the rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army. It is therefore incumbent upon the IGAD mediation and the international observers to ensure that the grievances driving conflicts in these areas are fully dealt with in any comprehensive peace deal. Malakal, Beja in Kassala and Unity State are all trouble spots which must not be overlooked.

“Everywhere I went, I found that a desire for a democratic transformation and the restoration of the rule of law were expressed by the people. On the other hand, I regret to note that, at the time of reading this statement, the Janjaweed have not yet been disarmed.

“Mr. Chairman,

“The African Union, with the help of the United Nations and the international community at large, must consider sending more of their forces to Sudan to protect the IDPs and civilians. It is clear that the Government is not able or willing to disarm the militia nor is it able to effectively protect the IDPs and the civilians. Consideration should be given to broadening the forces’ mandate to include disarming the militia. All this could be done under article 17 of the Peace and Security Agreement of the African Union with the support and backing of the United Nations and the international community.

“These are highlights of a fuller report to be submitted later. I thank the Lord Almighty for seeing me through safely in all my travels and protecting me from any attack.

“I thank you Mr. Chairman.”
