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Sudan

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Sudan, a republic with an estimated population of 39.4 million, is governed according to a power-sharing arrangement established by the January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the 22-year civil war between the north and south and established an interim Government of National Unity. The government's mandate extends until scheduled elections in 2009. The Government of National Unity is composed of the National Congress Party (NCP), dominated by Islamists from the north and ruled by authoritarian President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and his inner circle, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the political wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led predominantly by Christians and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions from the south. In 2000 Bashir was reelected, and his political party won 340 out of 360 seats in the parliament in deeply flawed elections boycotted by all major opposition parties. The SPLM acts as the ruling party of the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan, established in October 2005. The autonomous government ratified a separate constitution in December 2005. A referendum to determine whether the south will become an independent entity is scheduled for 2011. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control of the security forces and government-aligned militia; however, there were some instances in which elements of the security forces and government-aligned militia acted independently.

The country experienced several violent ethnic conflicts during the year. Despite the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) by the government and Minni Minawi's faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) in May 2006, the ethnic conflict in Darfur continued. Government forces, government-aligned militia (janjaweed), Darfur rebel groups, and tribal factions continued to commit serious abuses during the year. Tensions and violence persisted in the south over the implementation of the CPA. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of violence in the east, where the rebel Eastern Front signed a peace agreement with the government in October 2006. Conflict on the country's western border with Chad was, in part, a spillover of the conflict in Darfur and, in part, attributable to Chadian rebel forces based in Darfur who were opposed to the rule of Chadian President Idriss Deby. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel movement, allegedly made incursions into Southern Sudan and attacked and killed civilians.

In Darfur government forces, janjaweed, Darfur rebel groups, and tribal factions committed serious abuses during the year, including the reported killing of approximately 1,600 persons. Government, janjaweed militias, and tribal factions razed numerous villages, committed acts of torture, and perpetrated violence against women. Darfur rebel groups were also responsible for rape and attacks on humanitarian convoys and compounds to steal equipment and supplies, resulting in injury to humanitarian workers. Civilians continued to suffer from the effects of genocide. In 2004 then-U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the Government of Sudan and the Jingaweit (janjaweed) bear responsibility." Many times during the year President Bush referred to actions in Darfur as genocide. According to the UN, more than 200,000 persons have died, 2.2 million civilians have been internally displaced, and an estimated 231,000 refugees have fled to neighboring Chad since the conflict began in 2003. Despite the presence in Darfur of the African Union-led international monitoring force (African Union Mission in Sudan or AMIS), security remained a major problem throughout the year.

In Southern Sudan delays in CPA implementation, particularly the provisions of its security arrangements governing demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration, continued to foment insecurity. Clan violence, some allegedly orchestrated by the government in Khartoum in response to increasing north/south tensions, remained high. The SPLA's integration of militias termed by the CPA as "Other Armed Groups" was largely complete, although integration of other new militia groups continued.

The government's human rights record remained poor, and there were numerous serious abuses, including: abridgement of citizens' rights to change their government; extrajudicial and other unlawful killings by government forces and other government-aligned groups throughout the country; torture, beatings, rape, and other cruel, inhumane treatment or punishment by security forces; harsh prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, including incommunicado detention of suspected government opponents, and prolonged pretrial detention; executive interference with the judiciary and denial of due process; forced military conscription of underage men; obstruction of the delivery of humanitarian assistance; restrictions on privacy and freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and movement; harassment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and of local and international human rights and humanitarian organizations; violence and discrimination against women, including the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM); child abuse, including sexual violence and recruitment of child soldiers, particularly in Darfur; trafficking in persons; discrimination and violence against ethnic minorities; denial of workers' rights; and forced labor, including child labor, by security forces and both aligned and non-aligned militias in Southern Sudan and Darfur.

Antigovernment and insurgent groups also committed numerous, serious abuses in Darfur. Factions of the SLA, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and other rebel groups in Darfur committed killings, including of AMIS peacekeeping forces, beatings, abductions, rape, robbery, destruction of property, forcible conscription, and recruitment of child soldiers. They restricted freedom of movement of populations under their control and access of relief workers and supplies, and kidnapped nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were reports that the government and its agents committed politically motivated killings in connection with the conflict in Darfur. Rebel groups in Darfur were also responsible for killings, including the deaths of AMIS peacekeeping forces.

Government forces and aligned militias were responsible for attacks and killings in neighboring Chad. There also were reports of numerous extrajudicial killings (see section 1.g.).

On March 24, nearly 200 police and elements of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) attacked a house belonging to the SLM/Minawi in Omdurman; 10 persons were killed, including several invalids. The attackers then ransacked the nearby SLM/Minawi party headquarters. Three policemen were also killed.

The police and army killed demonstrators.

Approximately 51 civilians reportedly died due to landmines in the south between January and September, although some observers believed the number to be much higher since only a small percentage of deaths were actually reported to the UN (see section 1.g.). The government continued to cooperate with the UN Mine Action Group to remove landmines in the south.

Interethnic conflict resulted in deaths during the year.

Unlike in the previous year, no journalists were killed.

b. Disappearance

There were continued allegations that the government was responsible for politically motivated disappearances, including those of persons suspected of supporting rebels, especially in Darfur.

An estimated 15,000 Dinka women and children were abducted, mainly from 1983 to 1999; thousands of these remained unaccounted for at year's end. Observers believed that some of those abducted in the past were sold into de facto slavery as forced laborers, while others were drafted into the military. In some cases the abductees escaped or eventually were released or ransomed; in other cases they were killed.

Unlike in 2006, there were no reports of Dinka who were previously abducted being returned during the year by the government's Committee to Eradicate the Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWC). The CEAWC has received no government funding since April 2006.

Rebel forces in Darfur reportedly abducted persons, including government officials and humanitarian aid workers.

There also were reports of periodic intertribal abductions of women and children in eastern Upper Nile and Jonglei states.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) kidnapped children in Uganda and brought them into Southern Sudan. For example, on March 28, armed men alleged to belong to the LRA abducted six girls ranging in age from 12 to 17 years old. The girls remained missing at year's end.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Although the Interim National Constitution, adopted in 2005, prohibits such practices, government security forces continued to torture, beat, and harass suspected political opponents and others. In Darfur and other areas of conflict, government forces, rebel groups, and tribal factions committed torture and abuse.

In 2005 the Government of Southern Sudan adopted a separate constitution based on common law, which prohibits torture; however, SPLA forces did not respect these provisions in practice.

In accordance with Shari'a (Islamic law), the Criminal Act provides for physical punishments, including flogging, amputation, stoning, and crucifixion--the public display of a body after execution. Under the interim constitution, the government officially exempts the 10 southern states from Shari'a law, although its application in the south still occurred on an ad-hoc basis, and traditional customary law was frequently applied against defendants. Traditional or customary courts in the south routinely imprisoned women for lengthy pretrial detention on allegations of adultery. Northern courts routinely imposed flogging, especially for production of alcohol.

Government security forces tortured persons in detention.

For example, on July 14, NISS officers arrested 44 persons, including opposition politicians, and former police and military officers,

for alleged coup plotting. Hand-written notes by the detainees detailing human rights violations surfaced on the Internet in August. Family members and lawyers also reported incidents of torture and mistreatment. The most frequently reported forms of torture included severe beating on the face, hands, and feet. One detainee reported being lifted up several times by his mustache while sitting on a chair. Others were threatened with sexual violence if they did not confess to plotting a coup. Most detainees stated that they were blindfolded after their arrests, during transfer between detention sites, and during interrogations. At year's end, all 44 detainees had been released.

On August 26, security forces arrested Shaiba Dirar, a leader of the Beja Congress, after a political debate he had organized at the local Beja Congress club. Dirar, who was released three days later, reported that he was tortured with electricity while in detention.

Police forcibly dispersed student protesters, which resulted in deaths and injuries.

Throughout the year police conducted sporadic raids on houses occupied by Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees or migrants; police reportedly beat the refugees and used tear gas.

Security forces beat IDPs. For example, on October 28, security forces entered Otash IDP camp in South Darfur and used sticks and rubber hoses to forcibly move IDPs who had fled there from a neighboring camp.

There was a clear and documented pattern of rape and sexual abuse directed at IDPs of all ages in Darfur.

Government forces and aligned militias in Darfur were responsible for injuring many civilians during attacks on rebel forces, and during attacks on civilian settlements, including aerial bombardment.

Factions of the SLA, JEM and other Darfur rebel groups were also responsible for civilian injuries in Darfur.

Other parts of this report contain information related to this section.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions throughout the country remained harsh and overcrowded. Most prisons were old and poorly maintained, and many lacked basic facilities such as toilets or showers. Health care was primitive; prisoners usually relied on family or friends for food. Prison officials arbitrarily denied visits to prisoners.

The government routinely mistreated persons in custody. There were credible reports that security forces held detainees incommunicado; beat them; deprived them of food, water, and toilets; and forced them to sleep on cold floors. Prisoners died from lack of health care and poor prison conditions.

Juveniles often were held with adults and in some cases subjected to sexual abuse by adult inmates. High-ranking political prisoners reportedly often enjoyed better conditions than did other prisoners.

The government did not permit regular visits to prisons by domestic human rights observers. In 2005 the government agreed to allow unfettered access to UN monitors; however, the government routinely denied requests by the UN to visit prisons. The government refused to grant the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to government prisons during the year. By contrast, the Prisons Directorate of the Government of Southern Sudan routinely granted prison access to the ICRC, UN, and other international observers.

Detention centers operated by rebel forces were comparable to those operated by the government. On August 14, United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) observers visited a detention facility operated by SLA/Minawi in Dar al Salaam, North Darfur, where the observers were able to interview detainees. All detainees reported very poor detention conditions and lack of food. Three detainees had been whipped and beaten during their detention. The SLA and other rebel groups allowed the ICRC access to some prisoners during the year.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The interim constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention without charge; however, the government continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain persons under the National Security Act.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The NISS and the Ministry of Interior both have security forces under their control, along with the police force responsible for internal security. The police forces include regular police units and the Popular Police Force, a parallel progovernment force that received higher pay than regular forces. The effectiveness of the Popular Police Force varied, depending on the strength of the local militias and security forces. The army is responsible for external and internal security. Police corruption was a problem, and some police officers supplemented their incomes by extorting bribes.

The Southern Sudan Police Services (SPSS) continued to lack resources. In Maridi, in West Equatoria State, police lacked uniforms, radios, sufficient vehicles, and office equipment. The local jail had only one cell, with no toilet. Police required complainants to pay three dollars (six Sudanese pounds) before investigating their cases. Local police complained that SPLM

officials routinely intervened in police affairs, forcing police to release relatives and friends without following legal procedures. For example, Arthur Akuien Chol, the former finance minister of the Government of Southern Sudan, escaped from jail with the assistance of a personally-aligned militia; Chol was being held on corruption charges.

Impunity remained a serious problem, although on a few occasions during the year courts prosecuted police and other officials for abuses they had committed. In May 2006 the Special Criminal Court for the Events in Darfur issued a verdict on the only case referred to it since its establishment in 2005.

There were reports that victims who complained of police abuse were punished.

Arrest and Detention

Warrants are not required for an arrest. Under the Criminal Code, an individual may be detained for three days without charge, which can be extended for 30 days by order of the director of security and another 30 days with the approval of the prosecuting attorney. Under the National Security Act, which supercedes the Criminal Code, an individual accused of violating national security may be detained for three months without charge, which the director of security may extend for another three months. In practice, indefinite detentions were common. The law provides for the individual to be informed of the arrest charges at the time of arrest and for prompt judicial determination without undue delay, but these provisions were rarely followed.

The law allows for bail, except for those accused of crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment, and there was a functioning bail system.

Although the law provides for access to a lawyer, security forces often held persons, including criminal detainees, incommunicado for long periods in unknown locations without access to their lawyers or family members.

Individuals were arbitrarily arrested and detained. In general the authorities detained persons for a few days before releasing them without charge or trial; however, there were exceptions, particularly for perceived political opponents.

On January 10, police arrested 11 members of the Sudanese Socialist Ba'ath Party during a demonstration protesting the execution of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. The detainees, who were charged with disturbing the public, were subsequently released on bail.

In February security forces arrested the secretary general of the Juba Students Union. No reason was given for his detention. His status was unknown at year's end.

In November security forces arrested Ammar Najmeddin al-Jak, the SPLM secretary for media and culture for Khartoum State. No reason was given for his detention, and he remained in custody at year's end.

Journalists were arrested and detained during the year.

Religious leaders were arrested and beaten.

Security forces often targeted southern women in IDP camps because they produced and sold traditional home-brewed alcohol; these women were arrested and imprisoned for up to six months under Shari'a law. Some women were held in prison until they could pay the fine, regardless of time served in prison, thereby effectively serving indefinite sentences. Vagrant children accused of committing crimes were detained for indefinite periods.

Arrests and detentions of NGO members and civil society groups also occurred.

Arbitrarily lengthy detention before trial was common; an estimated one third of prisoners were in pretrial detention. Trial delays were caused by large numbers of detainees and judicial inefficiency, such as the failure of judges to appear for court.

The government routinely used house arrest without due process.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Although the interim constitution and the law provide for an independent judiciary, the judiciary was largely subservient to the president or the security forces, particularly in cases of crimes against the state. The judiciary was inefficient and subject to corruption.

A judiciary committee recommends and the president appoints the chief justice and justices of the Supreme Court. The president appoints the Constitutional Court's seven members. On occasion courts displayed a degree of independence. For example, appeals courts sometimes overturned decisions by lower courts on political cases, particularly decisions from public order courts. However, political interference with the courts regularly occurred.

The judicial system includes four types of courts: regular, military, special, and tribal courts. Within the regular court system, there are civil and criminal courts, appeals courts, and the Supreme Court. Military courts tried only military personnel and did not provide the same rights as civilian and criminal courts. Special courts in Darfur operated under the state of emergency to try crimes against

the state; there were three such courts, one in each Darfur capital. Tribal courts functioned in rural areas to resolve disputes over land and water rights, and family matters. The Criminal Act governs criminal cases, and the Civil Transactions Act applies in most civil cases. Shari'a is applied in the north, but not in the south, under the interim constitution. However, some judges in the south reportedly continued to follow Shari'a legal procedures. In October 2006 the Government of Southern Sudan adopted a new penal code based on common law and in May 2007, 240 public prosecutors were hired; in practice, however, traditional or customary law was used more often due to inadequate judicial staffing and lack of capacity in the judicial system.

Trial Procedures

The interim constitution and law provide for fair and prompt trials; however, this was often not respected. Trials were open to the public at the discretion of the judge. In cases of national security and offenses against the state, trials were usually closed. Juries are not used. The accused normally have the right to an attorney, and the courts are required to provide free legal counsel for indigent defendants accused of crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment; however, there were reports that defendants frequently did not receive legal counsel and that counsel in some cases could only advise the defendant and not address the court. There were reports that the government sometimes denied defense counsel access to the courts or did not allow the calling of defense witnesses. In the south, despite its exemption from Shari'a law, women were still not allowed to testify as witnesses without the backing of three men. According to the interim constitution and law, there is a presumption of innocence; however, this was not respected in practice. Defendants have a right to appeal, except in military trials, where there is no appeal.

Military trials, which sometimes were secret and brief, did not provide procedural safeguards. For example, the defendant's attorney could advise the defendant but could not address the court. Witnesses may be permitted to appear at military trials.

The Special Courts Act created special three-person security courts to deal with violations of constitutional decrees, emergency regulations, and some sections of the Penal Code, as well as with drug and currency offenses. Special courts, composed primarily of civilian judges, handled most security-related cases. Attorneys could address the court. Lawyers complained that they sometimes were granted access to court documents too late to prepare an effective defense. Sentences usually were severe and implemented at once; however, death sentences were referred to the chief justice and the head of state. Defendants could file appellate briefs with the chief justice. The defendant has seven days to appeal a decision; the decision of the appeal court is final. Special criminal courts operated in Darfur as authorized by presidential decree.

Lawyers wishing to practice were required to maintain membership in the government-controlled bar association. The government continued to arrest and harass members of the legal profession whom it considered political opponents. For example, security forces arrested three lawyers monitoring the June 14 protests against the construction of the Kajbar Dam.

In the south, the Government of Southern Sudan employed a judicial system of traditional chiefs' courts, payam (district) courts, county judges, regional judges, and a court of appeals. Traditional courts have been formalized and integrated into the judicial system. The court system did not function in many areas due to lack of infrastructure, communications, funding, and an ineffective police force. Local judicial personnel also were inadequately trained, with only one judge having a law degree. The Government of Southern Sudan recognized traditional courts or courts of elders, which applied customary law to most cases, including domestic matters and criminal cases. Local chiefs usually presided over traditional courts, but defendants have the right of appeal to a regular court; there were no reports that this occurred.

In parts of the south and the Nuba Mountains, where civil authorities and institutions did not operate, there were no effective judicial procedures beyond customary courts. According to credible reports, military units in those areas summarily tried and punished those accused of crimes, especially for offenses against civil order.

During the year, due process was suspended in several cases. For example, on January 23, the Damazin General Court convicted and sentenced to death a young man claiming to be under 18 years of age; the youth was convicted of murder. The judge and Attorney General's Office both claimed that the youth was over 18 years of age, though they had no documentation of birth. The youth was not represented by defense counsel.

In May one Australian, two Kenyans, and one Sudanese working for a Kenyan construction company were convicted of the murder of a Ukrainian man in Rumbek, Lakes State. The judge acted as prosecutor and jury, and his verdict was overturned only as a result of international pressure on the Government of Southern Sudan. Post-mortem reports indicated that the Ukrainian had committed suicide. The three international workers were acquitted in June; the Sudanese remained in custody.

On November 10, the Bahari Wasat Criminal Court in Khartoum convicted 10 persons, including a 16-year-old boy, and sentenced them to death for the September 2006 killing of the editor-in-chief of *Al Wafaq*, Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed. More than 70 persons were detained during the five-month investigation, mostly of Darfurian origin. According to UNMIS, several reported being forced under torture to claim affiliation with Darfur rebel groups. Nineteen individuals, including two women, were ultimately charged in connection with the murder; the court acquitted nine of the defendants for lack of evidence.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners; however, the government held an undetermined number of political detainees, including members of opposition parties. Security forces arrested numerous persons suspected of supporting rebels in Darfur. Security forces reportedly detained without charge, tortured, and held incommunicado political opponents. Detentions of such persons generally were prolonged. Security forces frequently harassed political opponents by summoning them for questioning, forcing them to remain during the day without questioning, and then ordering their return the following day--a process that sometimes continued for weeks.

On July 14, NISS officers arrested 44 alleged coup plotters. The detainees included Mubarak Al Fadil Al Mahdi, leader of the Umma Renewal and Reform Party, and Ali Mahmoud Hassanein, deputy chairman of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and former police and military officers. After over one month of incommunicado detention, authorities transferred 26 of the detainees, including Mubarak Al Fadil Al Mahdi and Ali Mahmoud Hassanein, from NISS to police custody in Khartoum's Kober Prison and released the remaining detainees. Several of the detainees alleged that they were tortured while in detention.

In August the government expelled two foreign diplomats who had requested to visit Ali Mahmoud Hassanein.

On December 1, the minister of justice dropped the charges against Mubarak Al-Fadil Al Mahdi and released him after five months in detention. On December 31, Ali Mahmoud Hassanein and the remaining detainees were released by presidential decree.

Unlike in the previous year, no members of Hassan al Turabi's Popular Congress Party were detained; however, several members arrested in previous years remained in detention.

The government did not permit international humanitarian organizations to have access to political detainees.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

There was access to court for lawsuits seeking damages for human rights violations, but the lack of an independent judiciary made it unlikely that such lawsuits would be successful. There were problems enforcing domestic court orders.

Property Restitution

There were numerous ongoing disputes between the government and various churches involving confiscated church property. There were no reports of court ordered property restitution or compensation.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The interim constitution and law prohibit such actions, but the government routinely violated these rights in practice. Security forces frequently conducted night searches without warrants and targeted persons suspected of political crimes.

In Darfur, throughout the year, government armed forces and aligned militia continued to bomb and burn villages, loot property, and attack IDP camps (see section 1.g).

Police often entered IDP areas without a warrant in search of illegal alcohol brewing and often seized property unrelated to brewing. Police also extorted money from illegal alcohol brewers by threatening them with prison.

A wide network of government informants conducted surveillance in schools, universities, markets, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

In several areas the government sought to forcibly resettle or displace local populations. In 2006, in Northern State, nomads in the areas around Sani, Burti Gareb, Kurkuban, and Sherri Island complained that the government's Merowe Dam Project Implementation Unit seized their traditional grazing land without compensation and gave it to a foreign construction company, denying the nomads access to water wells in the area. Armed police continued to prevent the nomads from using the land or water throughout the year.

During the year no suitable alternate site was found for the 12,000 persons displaced during the August 2006 demolition of a squatter camp in Gezira State. Despite a lack of water, sanitation, and health facilities at the relocation site, the government rejected humanitarian assistance, according to UN sources. The government promised to provide land to relocated persons, but administrative problems and a requirement to provide a marriage certificate limited the prospects of land ownership for the most vulnerable, particularly for female-headed households. During the first six months of the year, police detained at least 11 residents on charges of illegally squatting on the relocation site.

Government-aligned forces and rebels continued to recruit and accept child soldiers in Darfur (see section 1.g).

A Muslim man may marry a non-Muslim, but a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim, unless he converts to Islam; however, this prohibition was not observed or enforced universally, particularly in the south or among the Nubans. Non-Muslims may adopt only non-Muslim children; no such restrictions apply to Muslim parents.

The Government of Southern Sudan generally did not interfere with privacy, family, home, or correspondence in the south. Unlike in the previous year, southern militias, especially the South Sudan Independence Movement, did not forcibly conscript citizens, including children.

g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts

Darfur

The conflict in Darfur has roots in both government neglect of the region and ethnic tensions between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farming communities, exacerbated by scarce resources and the government's support of the nomad militias.

During the year all parties to the conflict engaged in attacks and other acts of violence which resulted in the reported killings of approximately 1,600 persons, numerous injuries, the internal displacement of 280,000 persons in Darfur, and widespread property destruction. The conflict worsened due to increased attacks by rebel groups on humanitarian workers and civilians, the continued factionalization of rebel groups, and intertribal warfare. The use of rape as a weapon and the recruitment of child soldiers continued to be widespread.

Killings

Government forces and government-aligned militias engaged in the deliberate killing of civilians, including continued aerial bombardment of civilian targets, such as homes, schools, and markets. According to a UN report, the government painted white the aircraft used to conduct bombing raids and transport arms to Darfur, the same color as UN and AMIS aircraft, in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1591.

For example, UNMIS reported that in late April government helicopters and Antonovs repeatedly bombed several areas in western North Darfur, including the villages of Umm Rai, Birmaza, Anka, and Al Jira. The bombings resulted in numerous civilian casualties and the destruction of houses, schools, and personal property.

On September 18, government forces bombed the village of Birmaza, North Darfur, killing an eight-year-old boy and seriously wounding a 12-year-old girl. The bombs killed numerous livestock and destroyed houses.

On September 25, government forces bombed Um Hijelij, North Darfur, killing at least three women.

Government forces and government-aligned militias attacked IDP camps, civilian facilities, and housing, resulting in civilian deaths.

For example, on January 6 and 7, Sudanese border intelligence guards from the Arab Rizeigat tribe attacked several Arab Tarjum villages near Wadi Bulbul, South Darfur. Witnesses reported that on January 6, guards used machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades against them. As the inhabitants fled, hundreds of armed fighters entered the village on foot, camel, and by vehicle. Several elderly men were killed, and the village was looted. The following day, men wearing khaki uniforms and civilian attire attacked the neighboring village of Muhajerja-Moraya, killing at least 17 persons.

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the attacks continued throughout the spring. On February 25, Rizeigat border intelligence guards attacked the town of Amar Jadeed using vehicles and heavy weaponry. The attackers entered the village and began shooting at male inhabitants and looting livestock. At least 37 persons were killed.

On March 31, Rizeigat border intelligence guards mounted a similar attack on Morayajengay, where many Tarjum IDPs who had fled the earlier attacks had resettled. According to witnesses, more than 60 persons were killed.

On September 10, government troops in 75 vehicles attacked the town of Haskanita, North Darfur, and then burned most of the empty town to the ground; two civilians were killed, and 25 were injured. The ground attack followed an aerial bombardment of Haskanita the same day.

On October 8, approximately 900 government-aligned militia attacked Muhajerja, South Darfur, killing at least 30 civilians and destroying 70 to 100 houses. Eyewitnesses reported that militia shot at persons randomly and looted the central market.

There were no reports that the government prosecuted or otherwise penalized attacking militias or made efforts to protect civilian victims from attacks. Government forces provided logistic and transportation support, weapons, and ammunition to government-aligned militias.

Darfur rebel groups also attacked AMIS peacekeeping forces and personnel, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and government-aligned militias, civilians, and other rebel factions, killing hundreds of persons.

On January 22, the government exhumed the bodies of eight men who had been part of a group of at least 19 Massalit men arrested by SLA/Minawi forces in September 2006.

On July 1, fighting in Thabit, North Darfur between SLA/Minawi and National Redemption Front (NRF) rebels left three SLA/Minawi fighters dead. In retaliation, a large group of SLA/Minawi soldiers entered the local market and began harassing civilians. They then shot and killed a fifty year-old Tama tribesman.

On August 29, a large group of JEM fighters attacked a Sudanese military base in Wad Banda, West Kordofan, killing at least 40 reserve police.

During the year Darfur rebel groups or other unidentified armed groups killed 19 AMIS peacekeepers.

On April 1, SLA/Minawi forces reportedly killed five Senegalese AMIS peacekeepers in Umm Barru, North Darfur.

On September 30, several hundred unidentified rebel fighters stormed an AMIS camp in Haskanita, South Darfur, killing 10 peacekeepers and wounding many more. The attackers looted and burned the camp and escaped with weaponry and vehicles.

Intertribal fighting also resulted in the killings of civilians.

For example, in early August fighting between the government-allied Tarjum and Rizeigat Arab tribes in South Darfur resulted in the deaths of at least 100 civilians.

Physical Abuse, Punishment, and Torture

All parties to the conflict perpetrated acts of torture and abuse.

On February 14, a 55-year-old Fur woman was beaten by SLA/Minawi forces outside of Kunda village. According to UNMIS, the men accused her of providing food to a rival faction.

In March an IDP from the Rwanda camp reported that armed SLA/Minawi gunmen attacked 50 farmers in the area of Wadi Tina. When the IDP tried to flee, he was hit in the arm and then beaten with sticks and gun butts.

On September 9, approximately 40 unidentified militiamen attacked the villages of Merkele and Modogulu, West Darfur. The militiamen pillaged homes and beat those who resisted with sticks and whips. Four militiamen beat and whipped a 60-year-old sheikh and accused him of harboring rebels.

Child Soldiers

Recruitment of child soldiers remained a serious problem in Darfur. In August the UN issued the *Report of the Secretary-General on Children in Armed Conflict in the Sudan*, which cited credible reports that the SAF, government-aligned Popular Defense Forces (PDF), janjaweed, central reserve police, and numerous Darfur rebel groups including the JEM, the SLA/Minawi, the SLA/Wahid, the SLA/Peace Wing, and the SLA/Abu Gasim recruited child soldiers. The UN report also cited recruitment of child soldiers by Chadian rebel forces operating inside Sudan. Darfur rebel groups also reportedly recruited child soldiers in the Sudanese refugee camps in Chad.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) worked to raise awareness of the law and of the dangers in using child soldiers. In June, UNICEF signed an action plan with SLA/Minawi that committed the group to identify locations of child soldiers.

Other Conflict-related Abuses

The UN's International Commission of Inquiry in Darfur found in 2005 that "rape or other forms of sexual violence committed by the janjaweed and government soldiers in Darfur was widespread and systematic." This trend continued during the year. The majority of victims were women and girls who lived in IDP camps and were raped when they left their camps to gather firewood, water, or food. Women often described the perpetrators as "men in uniform," either government or rebel soldiers. Rape victims were almost always beaten, threatened with death, and subjected to racial epithets during attacks. In some cases attackers killed their victims.

In April four armed men dressed in camouflage uniforms raped two young women who were collecting firewood outside the Kassab IDP camp. The women were whipped and raped for several hours before being released.

According to UNMIS, on August 13, seven government soldiers raped an 18-year-old woman from an Arab tribe in El Fasher, North Darfur. The victim stated that she was walking home when approached by a group of soldiers, who beat her and then took her to a tent close to a SAF checkpoint, where they raped her for three hours.

According to a November report by the UN Human Rights Council, UN agencies documented 46 victims of sexual violence from June to October. The UN estimated that the number of victims of sexual violence was actually significantly higher due to limited access to certain areas and underreporting of abuses.

Authorities, particularly the police, often obstructed access to justice for rape victims. For example, after three incidents in April of abduction and rape in the Silea area of West Darfur, the police commander stated that an investigation indicated the abductions and rapes were part of a tribal dispute and that law enforcement should not be involved. Witnesses stated that they provided names of the attackers to the police; the police commander denied this claim. The commander further stated that one of the victims had recently engaged in sexual intercourse, showed no signs of rape, and should be charged with adultery.

During the year the government continued to take small steps to curb violence against women in Darfur. The government printed medical booklets for doctors detailing proper treatment of rape victims. The government also pledged to deploy 40 female police officers in South Darfur. However, significant problems remained, including the harassment and intimidation by police of rape victims, lack of investigations into rape allegations, and the continued impunity of the police in Darfur.

During the year, there were no successful prosecutions for rape in Darfur.

Despite the 2005 government announcement of a "humanitarian moratorium," to lift restrictions on visas and the importation of supplies by humanitarian organizations, the government continued to place restrictions on humanitarian access to Darfur.

On March 28, the government and the UN signed the Joint Communiqué, an agreement intended to reduce bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian assistance by improving the efficiency with which the government processes visas and travel permits and clears customs for humanitarian NGOs. Although NGOs noted some improvements in the timely processing of visas and travel permits, the government still frequently harassed humanitarian workers and obstructed the delivery of assistance.

The government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) continued to request that NGOs refrain from interviewing or selecting staff unless they used a five-person selection panel and had HAC officials present, significantly delaying the hiring of new staff in Darfur.

On January 19, local police and security officials raided an international NGO compound in Nyala and arrested 20 persons, including five UN staff members, AMIS staff, and other NGO personnel. Several of those arrested sustained injuries during their detention, and one person was sexually assaulted. All personnel were subsequently released. The government took no action against responsible police and security officials.

Rebel forces attacked commerce on the roads, including humanitarian aid shipments, and seized goods, vehicles, and persons, including government officials and humanitarian aid workers.

Rebel forces and bandits also obstructed the flow of humanitarian assistance to the Darfur region and were responsible for attacks on humanitarian workers that resulted in injury.

The UN estimated that at least 2.2 million persons had been displaced by the conflict in Darfur and that another 231,000 persons had fled to Chad. Despite the signing of the DPA in May 2006, continued attacks and violence in Darfur, perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, resulted in hundreds of thousands of new displacements, and some existing IDPs were displaced for the second or third time. For example, the UN estimated that the number of newly displaced IDPs increased by approximately 250,000 between January and July due to increased fighting and insecurity. In the second week of October, the UN and other agencies reported that intense fighting in Muhajeria, South Darfur resulted in the displacement of 40,000. Darfur IDPs did not return in any significant numbers to their place of origin, although small scale spontaneous returns to certain villages occurred. Hundreds of thousands of persons, largely southerners and westerners displaced by famine and civil war, continued to live in squatter slums around Khartoum.

The government provided little assistance or protection to IDPs. In Darfur, local police established checkpoints near some IDP camps, though police made little effort to provide security. In the south, the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, an agency of the Government of Southern Sudan, provided protection and assistance to returning IDPs.

There were numerous reports of abuses committed against IDPs, including rapes, beatings, and attempts by the government to forcibly return persons to their homes, or to alternative IDP camps and other sites. There were credible reports that the government harassed IDPs in Darfur who spoke with foreign observers, especially high-profile foreigners, demanding to know the content of their discussions.

The government occasionally blocked commercial and road access to IDP camps, purportedly for security reasons.

Insecurity in Darfur, especially outside of IDP camps, restricted IDPs' freedom of movement; women and girls who left the town risked sexual violence.

The government forced or coerced IDPs to return to their villages by promising food and money; however, most IDPs who returned to the villages to receive the assistance later returned to the IDP camps.

The government forced IDPs to relocate to alternative IDP camps or other sites.

Following several days of interethnic clashes inside Kalma Camp, an IDP camp in South Darfur, the governor of South Darfur announced on October 20 plans to divide the camp into nine smaller camps. At year's end, approximately 20,000 of the estimated 90,000 residents in Kalma camp had left the camp as a result of the clashes. According to the International Organization on Migration (IOM), Sudanese security forces and the government's Humanitarian Affairs Commission forcibly relocated approximately 500 IDP households between October 26 and October 28.

Southern Sudan

There were fewer reported direct confrontations between the SAF and the SPLA during the year; however, conflict between other armed groups and intertribal fighting, especially in the ceasefire zone areas of Southern Kordofan, Eastern Equatoria, and Upper Nile State, resulted in the deaths of at least several hundred civilians.

Killings

Forces with the government-allied PDF were responsible for the deaths of numerous civilians and returning IDPs.

UNMIS continued to receive reports that SPLA soldiers committed extrajudicial killings during the year.

On November 4, six Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) soldiers from the SPLA shot and killed three members of the SSPS in Yambio, West Equatoria State. The six JIU soldiers allegedly targeted the three SSPS officers because they were unhappy with the conduct of an SSPS investigation into the murder of another JIU soldier.

Intertribal clashes also resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths.

On May 5, armed members of the Toposa tribe attacked unarmed members of the Didinga tribe in Lauro, Eastern Equatoria State, killing 54 persons, mostly women.

In August fighting between Murle and Nuer groups resulted in over 80 deaths.

In late November armed Murle and Dinka Bor groups clashed over incidents of cattle rustling, killing at least 35 persons and wounding over 40. The clashes spilled over into the town of Bor, where Dinka Bor stormed a hospital, killing four Murle patients and wounding a member of the hospital staff.

Physical Abuse, Punishment, and Torture

UNMIS received credible reports that SPLA soldiers and members of other armed groups abused civilians.

According to the UN, in March an SPLA soldier allegedly raped a seven-year-old girl in Unity State. The SPLA soldier was in detention awaiting a court appearance at year's end.

On May 11, four men alleged to be SPLA soldiers halted a truck transporting 60 persons at Panyok, Abyei. The soldiers told the driver that he must have permission before traveling south and then reportedly beat all of the passengers with sticks.

Child Soldiers

Unlike in the previous year, the UN received no credible reports that the SAF and SPLA recruited child soldiers, according to *the UN Report of the Secretary-General on children in armed conflict in the Sudan*. However, both the SAF and SPLA failed to prevent children from voluntarily associating with armed groups aligned with their forces.

For example, the UN confirmed the presence of children at the SPLA Kilo 7 barracks in Unity State in 2006; the children did not leave the barracks until July 2007.

There were reports that SAF-aligned militias continued to recruit child soldiers.

Other Conflict-related Abuses

Unlike in the previous year, there were no credible reports that new landmines were laid in the south.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The interim constitution provides for freedom of thought, expression, and of the press "as regulated by law"; however, the government severely restricted these rights in practice. Despite lifting emergency laws in 2005, the government continued to censor print and broadcast media. Journalists also practiced self-censorship.

Vocal critics of the government were harassed and arrested during the year, although the government charged such persons with other offenses, such as coup plotting.

There were many daily newspapers, mainly in urban areas, reflecting somewhat differing political views. Several newspapers also reprinted articles from the international press, some of which were critical of government policies. There was one formally government-controlled newspaper in Arabic and one in English, although security services also controlled other newspapers. A number of independent publications were under intensive scrutiny during the year, and their employees were intimidated and arrested.

The English-language press complained of prejudice, noting that the Arabic test required of all accredited journalists was much more difficult than the English test. Many Anglophone journalists thus could not report or had to do so unofficially. For example, the *Khartoum Monitor* employed both Arabic- and English-speaking journalists so that the unaccredited English-speakers could translate articles written by their accredited Arabic-speaking colleagues who could not write in English.

The government controlled the media through the National Press Council and security forces and censored criticism of government actions and policies in Darfur. The National Press Council, which is charged with issuing licenses, administering professional examinations for journalists, and responding to complaints, was subject to significant government influence. In the event of a complaint, the council could warn a newspaper or suspend it indefinitely and suspend journalists for up to two weeks.

The government directly controlled radio and television and required that both reflect government policies. Television had a permanent military censor to ensure that the news reflected official views. Some foreign radio broadcasts were available in the country. A private FM radio station continued to operate. Despite the government's license requirement and the high price of satellite dishes, citizens had access to foreign electronic media; the government did not jam foreign radio signals. In addition to

domestic and satellite television services, there was a pay cable network, which directly rebroadcast uncensored foreign news and other programs.

Except for Southern Sudan, international media were not allowed to operate freely in the country, and some foreign journalists were denied visas.

Government security forces arrested, harassed, and intimidated journalists.

On March 24, security forces reportedly detained and beat a journalist for Sudan Radio Service after the journalist attempted to report on a security force attack on SLM/Minawi headquarters in Omdurman that killed 10 SLM representatives. Security forces released the journalist after five days but did not return his equipment.

On March 25, the Ministry of the Interior served BBC correspondent Jonah Fisher with an expulsion order citing the journalist's reporting on Darfur. Fisher departed Sudan on April 13.

On June 20, police arrested a political reporter for the independent daily newspaper *Al Rai Al Shaab* after he wrote an article about protests at the Kajbar Dam. He was released after two months in detention. Security forces arrested and detained four other journalists in June for attempting to report on the protests at the Kajbar Dam. The journalists were released after one week.

During the year the government imposed a number of public information bans on reporting on certain sensitive subjects. In February a court ordered a ban on all independent reporting on Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Al-Wafaq* who was found beheaded in 2006. Newspapers that violated these orders were routinely shut down for periods of several days, or had their editions confiscated by national security officials.

On February 1, authorities closed the independent Arabic daily newspaper *Al-Sudani* for publishing information on the Mohamed Taha case. The Ministry of Justice issued a ban against reporting on the case of Mohamed Taha in September 2006. *Al-Sudani* resumed operations several days later.

In March the minister of justice instructed all newspaper editors to cease publishing news on the prosecutions of crimes committed in Darfur.

In May the minister of justice filed a defamation suit against *Al-Sudani* following the publication of an editorial calling for his resignation in relation to a money-laundering case under investigation. An editor and one reporter for *Al-Sudani* were arrested and held for several days before being released.

On May 22, the National Press Council banned newspapers from publishing information on Darfur rebel groups' activities and interviews with rebel political leaders and field commanders; however, the ban was not enforced.

On August 21, authorities confiscated thousands of copies of the daily newspaper *Al Rai Al-Shaab* after the newspaper reported on a recently foiled plot to attack certain embassies in Khartoum; the government had banned the press from reporting on the plot.

Authorities in Southern Sudan generally respected press freedom, although there were some reports of harassment of journalists. Police in Southern Sudan detained the editor in chief of the *Citizen* newspaper for one day for reporting on a financial scandal.

Internet Freedom

The government monitored Internet communications, and the NISS read e-mail messages between private citizens. Some Web sites deemed offensive to public morality were blocked by the National Telecommunications Corporation, as were most proxy servers, but there generally were no restrictions on access to news and information Web sites. Internet access was generally available and widely used in urban areas, but it was limited by lack of infrastructure outside of cities.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

The government restricted academic freedom. In public universities, the government appointed the vice chancellors, who were responsible for administering the institutions. The government also determined the curriculum. While many professors lectured and wrote in opposition to the government, they exercised self-censorship. Private universities were not subject to direct government control; however, in some cases, professors also exercised self-censorship. Nonetheless many university professors in exile returned to the country.

In February, clashes broke out between students at Shendi University and police forces who tried to break up a peaceful student strike.

The government frequently censored films, especially those imported from the West, if they were deemed offensive to public morality.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of Assembly

Although the interim constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly, the government severely restricted this right in practice. The government formally banned all rallies and public demonstrations in the country, although this was not always enforced. The authorities generally permitted government-authorized gatherings but disrupted gatherings they perceived to be politically oriented.

Islamic orders associated with opposition political parties, particularly the Ansar (Umma Party) and Khatmiya (Democratic Unionist Party), continued to be denied permission to hold large public gatherings. Government security agents occasionally attended opposition political meetings or summoned participants to security headquarters for questioning after political meetings.

Police use of excessive force to disperse demonstrators resulted in deaths and injuries.

In February, following protests at Neelain University in Khartoum in which one student was killed by police, students affiliated with the minor opposition group Sudan Congress Party (SCP) were arrested by national security officials. All reported being mistreated during their detention.

On June 14, Central Reserve police opened fire on demonstrators protesting the construction of the Kajbar Dam, killing four persons and wounding 10 others. According to newspaper reports, police used live fire to disperse the demonstrators. On June 19, video footage of the attack appeared on "You Tube," showing footage of corpses with gunshot wounds to the head.

According to UNMIS, on August 6, students at Upper Nile University in Malakal demonstrated over the election of new student union officers. The SSPS, backed by the SPLA, confronted the students as they took their demonstration into the town and shots were fired, killing one student and injuring four others.

Authorities took no action against security forces who used excessive force.

Freedom of Association

The interim constitution and law provide for freedom of association, but the government severely restricted this right in practice. Although there were 20 officially registered political parties, the law effectively prohibits traditional political parties linked to armed opposition to the government. The Political Parties Act allows some formerly banned political parties to resume their activities, but the parties were required to notify the registrar in writing of their intention to participate in elections. Observers believed that the government controlled professional associations.

The government continued to harass some opposition leaders who spoke with foreign organizations or embassies.

c. Freedom of Religion

The interim constitution and law provide for freedom of worship throughout the country; however, the government continued to place restrictions on non-Muslims, non-Arab Muslims, and Muslims from tribes or sects not affiliated with the ruling party. The NCP, which originally came into power with a goal of Islamization, treated Islam as the state religion, declaring that Islam must inspire the country's laws, institutions, and policies. While the government generally allowed non-Muslims to worship freely in approved places of worship, authorities in the north continued to restrict Christian activities.

In February the government established the Commission for the Rights of Non-Muslims in the National Capital, a CPA mechanism for protecting religious freedom. The president appointed the commission's chairperson, who then selected 28 commissioners from the judiciary, the Ministry of Justice, and representatives from Islamic, Christian, and traditional religious groups.

The interim constitution of Southern Sudan also provides for freedom of worship in the 10 states of Southern Sudan, and the government of Southern Sudan generally respected the rights of southerners to practice the religion of their choice.

Religious organizations and churches were subject to the same restrictions placed on nonreligious corporations. Although the law requires religious groups to register to be recognized or to assemble legally, registration reportedly was no longer necessary, and churches, including the Catholic Church, declined to register.

There were reports that security forces harassed and at times threatened to use violence against persons on the basis of religious beliefs and activities; it was unclear whether the harassment was for religious or political reasons.

For example, on January 1, police raided the seat of the Episcopal Church of Sudan Diocese of Khartoum with tear gas, injuring six worshippers. The raid occurred during an annual prayer service to mark the coming of the New Year.

In December 2007, Gillian Gibbons, a British teacher at a private elementary school in Khartoum, was arrested on the general charge of "abuse of religion," under Shari'a law after permitting young students in her class to name a teddy bear Mohammed. The specific charges against her were blasphemy, inciting religious hatred, showing contempt for religious beliefs, and insulting Islam. She was convicted of insulting Islam, then pardoned and deported. Reports indicated a disgruntled former employee with a personal grudge against the school alerted authorities in order to have the school closed.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that police raided cathedrals or that security forces arrested imams for preaching on controversial issues.

The use and construction of houses of worship required government approval. Applications to build mosques generally were granted, but applying to build churches was more difficult. According to the Sudan Inter-Religious Council, the government issued two permits in 2006 for the construction of new churches, but church officials reported that they never received the permits; no permits were issued during the year. As a substitute, the construction of small churches continued with owners registering the land for personal rather than church use.

While the law permits non-Muslims to convert to Islam, conversion by a Muslim is punishable by death. Authorities occasionally subjected converts to intense scrutiny, ostracism, intimidation, or encouraged them to leave the country; however, there were no reports of conversion punished by death.

Although some non-Muslims converted to Islam to obtain or keep a job, for promotions and job advancement, or for other social services or benefits, there was no evidence of forced conversions during the year.

Christian religious workers, including priests and teachers, experienced lengthy delays in getting visas.

Under the state-mandated curriculum, all schools in the north—including private schools operated by Christian groups—are required to teach Islamic education classes from preschool through university. Some public schools excused non-Muslims from Islamic education classes, but others did not.

Children who were abandoned or whose parentage was unknown—regardless of presumed religious origin—were generally considered Muslims, at least in the north. Christian families were generally permitted to adopt only Christian children.

In the south, Christians, Muslims, and followers of traditional indigenous beliefs generally worshiped freely; however, many of the region's Muslim residents had departed voluntarily over the years. Although the Government of Southern Sudan officially favored secular government, Christians dominated the bureaucracies. Local government authorities often had a close relationship with local Christian religious authorities.

Societal Abuses and Discrimination

Some non-Muslim businessmen complained of petty harassment and discrimination in awarding of government contracts and trade licenses. Christians reported pressure on their children in school; teachers and media characterized non-Muslims as nonbelievers. There also were reports that some Muslims received preferential treatment regarding limited government services, such as access to medical care, and in court cases involving Muslim against non-Muslim. However, non-Arab Muslims and Muslims from tribes and sects not affiliated with the ruling party, such as in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, stated that they were treated as second-class citizens and were discriminated against in government jobs and contracts in the north and government-controlled southern areas. For example, the employment application of the Ministry of Energy and Mining emphasizes nationality, creed, and tribe; Muslims associated with the NCP were given preference in government employment.

The Jewish community remained small, and there were no reports of anti-Semitic violence during the year; however, government officials made anti-Semitic comments. For example, on several occasions senior officials blamed the conflict in Darfur on "Jewish entities."

For a more detailed discussion, see the [2007 International Religious Freedom Report](#).

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The interim constitution and law provide for freedom of movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government restricted these rights in practice.

Movement generally was unhindered for citizens outside conflict areas; however, at times foreigners needed government permission for domestic travel outside of Khartoum, which could be difficult to obtain and was sometimes refused. Foreigners must register with the police on entering the country, obtain permission to move from one location to another, and reregister at each new location within three days of arrival. The Government of Southern Sudan did not restrict the movement of foreigners in the south, although foreigners were required to register upon entry.

Although foreign NGO staff could obtain entry visas and work or travel permits for Darfur and the Three Areas, there were numerous reports of continuing delays and restrictions. The government generally implemented its policy of issuing humanitarian visas within 48 hours, but nationals of some countries encountered difficulties in obtaining visas to work with NGOs.

Prior to the October 2006 peace agreement signed by the government and the Eastern Front, supporters and members of the Eastern Front, a rebel group comprising the Rashaida Free Lions, Beja Congress, and JEM faced increased restrictions on their movement throughout the eastern part of the country, and internationally.

The government detained persons, particularly opposition political figures, at the airport and prevented them from traveling due to "security concerns." For example, on August 20, the government prevented the director of a local NGO working in Darfur from departing the country to attend a conference overseas and confiscated his passport.

The government required citizens to obtain an exit visa to depart the country; however, the issuance of exit visas was pro forma and generally not used to restrict citizens' travel.

Women cannot travel abroad without the permission of their husbands or male guardians; however this prohibition was not applied in the south and was not strictly enforced for members of the NCP.

The law prohibits forced exile, and the government did not use it. Opposition leaders remained in self-imposed exile in Cairo, Asmara, and other locations during the year.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, up to 2.7 million persons remained displaced from their areas of origin in Southern Sudan as a result of the north-south civil war (see section 1.g).

There were estimates that up to 2.2 million persons had been displaced by the conflict in Darfur, including hundreds of thousands of persons newly displaced or displaced for the second or third time during the year (see section 1.g).

The UNHCR reported that 526,998 Sudanese refugees resided in neighboring countries, because of the conflicts in the south and Darfur. Some 231,000 of these were in Chad, and another 162,000 were in Uganda; the remainder were in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, and Kenya. Improved security in the south increased the return of displaced populations into areas of origin that were severely affected by the war and lacked basic services. More than 56,000 refugees and tens of thousands of internally displaced persons from the north/south conflict returned to their areas of origin, particularly to the Nuba Mountains region and Central Equatoria. There were no reports local militias subjected displaced populations who returned to the south to illegal taxation.

Protection of Refugees

The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol, but the government has not established a system for providing protection to refugees. In practice the government did not provide protection against "refoulement," the forced return of persons to a country where there is reason to believe they feared persecution.

On September 27, the government deported at least 15 Ethiopian refugees to Ethiopia; the deportation occurred despite government promises to UNHCR not to refoule additional refugees following an August 7 deportation of Ethiopian refugees. UNHCR expressed concern that Sudan had not met its international humanitarian obligations to ensure protection and avoid forcible returns of legitimate asylum seekers and refugees. The government had not responded to UNHCR requests about the welfare of the remaining refugees at year's end.

In May 2006 the NISS forced the deportation of four Ethiopians who were seeking asylum in the country. The four refugees were members of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, an Ethiopian opposition group, and faced prosecution for treason and the death penalty in Ethiopia.

After authorities attacked a group of Ethiopian refugees in December 2006, several Ethiopian refugees barricaded themselves in front of the UNHCR office in Khartoum; police arrested them in February. Throughout the year security forces in Khartoum North and Damazine targeted Ethiopian refugees by raiding their houses, beating them, and using tear gas against them.

In July security forces in Khartoum arrested several hundred Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees. According to Amnesty International, many of the detainees were recognized refugees or asylum seekers.

The government granted refugee status or asylum to a large number of asylum seekers, but there was no standard determination procedure, and government officials reportedly were unresponsive to applications for refugee status.

The government also provided temporary protection to individuals who might not qualify as refugees under the 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol. Up to 30,000 Chadian refugees have been allowed to reside in Darfur without formal refugee status and were provided basic services.

The government cooperated with the UNHCR and other humanitarian assistance organizations in assisting refugees and asylum seekers in some cases; in others, the government defied agreements and targeted refugees and asylum seekers for abuse.

Child refugees did not receive free primary school education nor were they treated as citizens as required by the 1951 convention. Refugees were vulnerable to arbitrary arrests, harassment, and beatings because applicants did not receive identification cards while awaiting government determination of refugee status. Refugees could not become resident aliens or citizens, regardless of their length of stay. Refugees were not entitled to work permits.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Although the interim constitution provides citizens the right to change their government peacefully, the CPA established an interim government until national elections are held; under the CPA, national elections are scheduled for 2009.

The interim constitution establishing the Government of National Unity, adopted in 2005, provides for power sharing nationwide between the NCP and the SPLM. On October 11, the SPLM suspended its participation in the Government of National Unity at the ministerial level to protest the NCP's perceived lack of commitment to the CPA's implementation. On December 27, the SPLM

rejoined the Government of National Unity, and a new cabinet was sworn in. The DPA, which was incorporated into the interim constitution upon its signing, also contains provisions for power sharing and the inclusion of Darfurians at all levels of government, although the majority of the power-sharing provisions in the DPA remained unimplemented at year's end. The interim constitution established a three-member presidency to head the government, consisting of a president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir (NCP); a first vice President, Salva Kiir Mayardit (SPLM); and a vice president, Ali Osman Taha (NCP). The DPA created a fourth ranking member in the presidency, a senior assistant to the president, Minni Minawi. A bicameral legislature is composed of the 450-member National Assembly and 52-member Council of States. Legislative and cabinet positions are allocated by a CPA-specified formula that reserves 52 percent of the positions for the NCP, 28 percent for the SPLM, 14 percent for northern opposition parties, including those from Darfur, and 6 percent for southern opposition parties. The DPA mandates that prior to national elections, the Government of National Unity shall allocate not less than 12 seats in the National Assembly to nominees from the Darfur rebel groups that have signed the DPA.

Government of National Unity members took office in 2005, and in October of that year Salva Kiir Mayardit, the country's first vice president and president of the Government of Southern Sudan, appointed the cabinet of the Government of Southern Sudan. At the same time, Kiir appointed governors of the 10 states of Southern Sudan, and each southern state also formed its legislative assembly with 48 members allocated proportionally as stipulated in the CPA: 70 percent to the SPLM, 15 percent to the NCP, and 15 percent to other southern political forces. Southern Sudan's legislative assembly approved an interim constitution in 2005, which President Kiir signed in December of that year.

The DPA-mandated Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA), headed by the senior assistant to the president, and charged with implementing the DPA and promoting coordination and cooperation among the three Darfur states, was established in April, though not fully implemented. The DPA also mandates that a referendum on the permanent status of Darfur shall be held not later than July 2010 to determine whether the Darfur region should remain as three separate states or create a single region and regional government to administer all three states.

Elections and Political Participation

Presidential and parliamentary elections were last held in 2000; they were marked by serious irregularities, including official interference, electoral fraud, insufficient opportunities for voters to register, and inadequate election monitoring. All major opposition parties boycotted the elections.

The law allows the existence of political parties but prohibits parties linked to armed opposition to the government, and the government routinely denied permission for and disrupted gatherings viewed as politically oriented. Security forces arrested, detained, and on occasion reportedly tortured political opponents. Security forces raided the offices of political parties. For example, on September 11, security forces raided three offices belonging to the SPLM. During the year opposition parties became more vocal in demanding inclusion, and the government sought the support of additional parties to add legitimacy to the CPA.

The government continued summarily to dismiss military personnel as well as civilian government employees whose loyalty it considered suspect in a process called "separation for public interest." Authorities fired or arrested military officers either because they were from Darfur or did not support the ruling party strongly enough.

The president appointed the governors and senior officials of the 26 states in the country's federal system. These appointees were not necessarily representative of their constituencies.

Women had the right to vote. There were approximately 70 women in the 450-seat National Assembly, three national female state ministers, and one female minister in the Government of National Unity. The Government of Southern Sudan agreed to set aside 25 percent of all government positions for women, although in practice representation was far short of that goal. The DPA also includes provisions to ensure the representation of women at all levels of government.

Government Corruption and Transparency

The law does not provide criminal penalties for official corruption, and the World Bank's worldwide governance indicators reflect that corruption was a severe problem. During the year the auditor general released a report alleging the embezzlement of \$400 million (800 million Sudanese pounds) from government institutions. The National Assembly formed an investigative committee; however, the committee had released no findings by year's end. Government officials were not subject to financial disclosure laws.

There were no laws providing for public access to government information, and the government did not provide such access.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Various local human rights groups were active in the country, but they suffered from government harassment, particularly those groups reporting on sexual violence. The government was generally uncooperative with and unresponsive to domestic human rights groups. Major local NGOs included Sudan Organization Against Torture and Sudan Development Organization. In an effort to silence them, the government often charged human rights groups with spreading false information. For instance, the government harassed NGOs in Darfur, intimidated their local staff, and arrested and detained workers treating victims of sexual violence. Government security forces often detained humanitarian staff members under the Criminal Act, usually on charges of spreading false information.

During the year 13 human rights workers were killed, 59 were assaulted, 61 were arrested and detained, and 147 were kidnapped, according to the UN. Also according to the UN, there were 77 attacks on humanitarian convoys, and 137 humanitarian vehicles

were hijacked or stolen during the year.

On March 28, the government and the UN signed the Joint Communiqué, an agreement intended to reduce bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian assistance by improving the efficiency with which the government processes visas and travel permits and clears customs for humanitarian NGOs.

Despite the signing of the Joint Communiqué, humanitarian NGOs operating in Darfur continued to face bureaucratic impediments to their work. All NGOs must register with the HAC, the government's entity for regulating humanitarian efforts. In 2005 the HAC assumed a role in hiring NGO national staff, which caused major delays in hiring new staff for Darfur and resulted in some NGO selections not being considered. During the year a directory of procedures was signed to clarify processes for all humanitarian communication with the government; however, the HAC applied such rules inconsistently, often changing them without prior notification.

In March the South Darfur HAC issued a decree suspending more than 50 local human rights NGOs.

In August the government expelled the country director of the international NGO CARE, accusing him of engaging in unspecified illegal activities.

In March 2006 the government enacted the Organization of Humanitarian and Voluntary Work Act, which requires government approval before NGOs can begin work on projects and places restrictions on the acceptance of foreign money by NGOs operating in the country. Many NGOs believed that the government used the new law to curtail their work on human rights.

Rebels and other armed bandits abducted NGO workers and contractors, particularly in Darfur. Banditry and armed robbery of humanitarian convoys by rebel groups in Darfur was common. For example, between July 14 and July 17, armed men conducted five separate attacks on vehicles transporting UN World Food Program commodities in South Darfur. According to UN reports, attacks against aid workers increased by 150 percent from June 2006 to June 2007. Such attacks have forced humanitarian aid workers to relocate on numerous occasions.

The UN continued to investigate the humanitarian situation in Darfur. The UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan and the UNHCR visited the country during the year. However, the government denied entry to a delegation from the UN Human Rights Council. UNMIS deployed observers to Darfur to monitor and investigate the human rights situation. The UN special rapporteur issued reports to the UN on the situation in the country.

In March 2005 the UN Security Council referred Darfur to the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court (ICC). In June 2005 the chief prosecutor opened an investigation into Darfur without the cooperation of the government, which refused to hand over any alleged perpetrators associated with the conflict to the ICC. On February 27, ICC chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo named Ahmad Muhammad Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and Ali Muhammad Abd al-Rahman, a janjaweed militia commander, as war crimes suspects and summoned them to appear before the court. The government refused to cooperate with the ICC.

In September the government appointed Ahmad Muhammad Haroun to co-chair a national committee to investigate human rights abuses.

The Advisory Council for Human Rights, with representatives of human rights offices in 22 ministries and agencies, is the government's major focal point for the promotion and protection of human rights. The council provided lists of detained individuals to the international community.

Section 5 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, or religious creed, but discrimination against women, religious groups, and ethnic minorities continued. Mechanisms for social redress, particularly with respect to violence against women and children, were ineffective.

Women

Women in Darfur were vulnerable to abuse and rape. Many victims did not report their cases either to family or authorities for fear they would be punished or arrested for "illegal pregnancy." Despite a 2005 decree that waived the requirement for rape victims to file a police report before receiving medical treatment, some local authorities continued to require the report. According to the UN and several international NGOs, many local police were unaware of the new policy. Many women distrusted the police, and few victims actually filed reports.

The police arrested unmarried pregnant women who claimed to have been raped. Unless a rape victim could provide proof of the crime, she could be charged with the capital offense of adultery.

The punishment for rape under the law varies from 100 lashes to 10 years' imprisonment to death. Spousal rape is not addressed. In most rape cases convictions were not publicized; however, observers believed that sentences often were less than the legal maximum.

There are no laws specifically prohibiting domestic violence. Violence, including spousal abuse, against women was common,

although there were no reliable statistics on its prevalence. Women who filed claims were subjected to accusations of lying or spreading false information, harassment, or detention, which made many women reluctant to file formal complaints, although such abuse constituted grounds for divorce. The police normally did not intervene in domestic disputes. The government launched its Violence Against Women Action Plan in 2005; the program included awareness posters and a media campaign of zero tolerance for violence against women, increased the number of female police officers, and expanded training for police in Darfur. Southern women displaced by the north/south conflict were vulnerable to harassment, rape, and sexual abuse, particularly during informal repatriation to their place of origin (see section 1.g).

Prostitution is illegal but widespread throughout the country.

While no law specifically prohibits sexual harassment, the law does prohibit gross indecency, which is defined as any act contrary to another person's modesty. The penalty for gross indecency is imprisonment of up to one year and 40 lashes. Harassment reportedly occurred, although reliable statistics were not available. There were frequent reports of sexual harassment by police in Darfur and elsewhere.

Some aspects of the law discriminated against women, including many traditional legal practices and certain provisions of Shari'a as interpreted and applied by the government. In accordance with Islamic law, a Muslim woman has the right to hold and dispose of her own property without interference, and women are entitled to inheritance from their parents. However, a widow inherits one-eighth of her husband's estate; of the remaining seven-eighths, two-thirds goes to the sons and one-third to the daughters. It is much easier for men than for women to initiate legal divorce proceedings.

Since, under Islamic law, a non-Muslim woman takes on the religion of her husband at marriage, a Muslim man may marry a Christian or Jew, and their children will be considered Muslim. The same is not true for a Muslim woman, who cannot legally marry a non-Muslim unless he converts to Islam. This prohibition usually was neither observed nor enforced in areas of the south or among Nubans (most of whom were Muslim).

Women cannot travel abroad without the permission of their husbands or male guardians; however, this prohibition was not enforced strictly for NCP members. To obtain an exit visa, children must receive the permission of their father or their paternal uncle. Women cannot apply for exit visas for their children.

Although women generally were not discriminated against in the pursuit of employment, they were not legally permitted to work after 10:00 p.m., in theory limiting their employment opportunities. Nonetheless, many women did work after 10:00 p.m., including women in official positions such as airport security. Women were accepted in professional roles; more than half the professors at Khartoum University were women.

Various governmental bodies have decreed that women must dress modestly according to Islamic standards, including wearing a head covering, but police rarely enforced such decrees. Women often appeared in public wearing trousers or with their heads uncovered.

A number of women's groups were active, focusing on a wide range of social and economic issues.

Children

The government was somewhat committed to children's rights and welfare, but there were great disparities by regions. While education is compulsory through grade eight, UNICEF reported that only half of school-age children attended primary school. The law provides for free basic education up to grade eight, but students continued to be expelled from class for failing to pay school fees, despite a 2005 government decree prohibiting the practice; nearly all children were charged fees for "school support" or "community contribution." There were wide educational disparities among states and sometimes between genders, particularly in the eastern and western regions; for example, enrollment was 78 percent in Khartoum State and only 30 percent in the eastern part of the country. In the north boys and girls generally had equal access to education (enrollments of 50 and 47 percent, respectively), although girls were more affected by early marriage and the fact that many families with restricted income chose to send sons and not daughters to school. In the urban areas of the south, fewer than 27 percent of primary-school-age children attended school and there was a basic education gender disparity of three boys for each girl.

While school enrollment among IDPs and in nomadic communities remained low, there was an increase in student numbers during the year. Approximately half of school-age IDPs in Khartoum were enrolled in school. According to the Sudan Household Health Survey, approximately 750,000 of the 1,750,000 children of primary school age in Darfur were enrolled.

Boys and girls had equal access to health care.

A large number of children suffered abuse, including abduction, enslavement, and forced conscription.

FGM remained widespread, particularly in the north. FGM was becoming less common as a growing number of urban, educated families abandoned the practice. In a compromise with tradition, some families adopted clitoridectomy, the least severe form of FGM, as an alternative to infibulation. Although no form of FGM was illegal, the health law prohibited doctors and midwives from performing infibulations, the most common form of FGM. The government actively campaigned against it. Several NGOs worked to eradicate FGM.

The law establishes the legal age of marriage as 10 for girls and 15 or puberty for boys. There were no reliable statistics on the extent of child marriage.

Child prostitution, trafficking of children, and sexual abuse of children remained problems, particularly in the south. Children engaged in prostitution for survival, usually without third-party involvement.

Government-aligned militias and rebel forces conscripted or accepted young men and boys into the aligned militias in Darfur.

Child labor remained a problem, mainly in the informal sector. In the south children, particularly girls, often worked in the fields.

The government operated "reformation camps" for vagrant children. Police typically sent homeless children who had committed crimes to these camps, where they were detained for indefinite periods. Health care and schooling at the camps generally were poor, and basic living conditions often were primitive. All of the children in the camps, including non-Muslims, must study the Koran, and there was pressure on non-Muslims to convert to Islam. In the IDP camps in Darfur and refugee camps in Eastern Chad, rebel groups often conscripted teenage males. Conscripts faced significant hardship and abuse in military service, often serving on the front line. There were reports that abducted, homeless, and displaced children were discouraged from speaking languages other than Arabic or practicing religions other than Islam.

Trafficking in Persons

Although the law prohibits slavery and forced labor, the law does not specifically address trafficking in persons, and there were reports that persons were trafficked from and within the country. There were some reports that the abduction of women and children continued in the south due to tribal clashes.

There were no informed estimates on the extent of trafficking, including for camel jockeys, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, or other types of forced labor. There were credible reports that tribal leaders with government connections transported children to the Persian Gulf to be used as jockeys in camel races or as laborers. In April the governments of Sudan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a bilateral agreement establishing claims facilities to compensate former Sudanese child camel jockeys for their injuries. UNICEF and the government's National Council for Child Welfare estimated that 219 children were repatriated from the UAE.

There were credible reports that intertribal abductions of women and children continued in the south. Victims frequently became part of the new tribal family, with most women marrying into the new tribe; however, some victims were used for labor or sexual purposes. The government acknowledged that abductions occurred and that abductees were sometimes forced into domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. CEAWC and its 22 joint tribal committees investigated abduction cases, but have not engaged in any transport or retrieval missions since early 2006 due to lack of funding.

During the past 20 years, the LRA kidnapped more than 20,000 Ugandan children, took them back to the northern part of Uganda, and forced them to become sex slaves, porters, or soldiers. Many of the victims were killed. The LRA also abducted citizens while raiding towns in Southern Sudan. The government permitted the Ugandan army access to Southern Sudan to pursue the LRA. Although Ugandan military operations have significantly reduced LRA numbers, the LRA continued to operate in the south and to hold child abductees, despite its August 2006 signing of an agreement to cease hostilities; such LRA attacks restricted humanitarian activities.

Shari'a and the State of Emergency Law prohibit all forms of sexual exploitation, and penalties include fines and imprisonment. However, there were no prosecutions under these laws during the year.

The government conducted antitrafficking public information and education campaigns at the national, state, and local levels.

Persons with Disabilities

While the law does not specifically prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities, it does stipulate that "the state shall guarantee to persons with special needs the enjoyment of all the rights and freedoms set out in the constitution, access to suitable education, employment, and full participation in society." The government did not discriminate against persons with disabilities but has not enacted any special legislation for persons with disabilities, such as mandating accessibility to public buildings and transportation. Credible sources noted that prisoners with mental disabilities were chained 24 hours per day.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The population is a multi-ethnic mix of more than 500 Arab and African tribes with numerous languages and dialects. Northern Muslims, numbering approximately 16 million persons, traditionally dominated the government, while southern ethnic groups fighting the civil war (largely followers of traditional indigenous religions or Christians) numbered approximately six million. The fighting in Darfur was between Muslims who consider themselves either Arab or non-Arab.

The Muslim majority and the government continued to discriminate against ethnic minorities in almost every aspect of society in the north. Citizens in Arabic-speaking areas who did not speak Arabic experienced discrimination in education, employment, and other areas. There also were reports of discrimination against Arabs and Muslims by individuals in the Christian-dominated south.

There were occasional reports of intertribal abductions of women and children in the south, primarily in the eastern Upper Nile. The abductions were part of traditional warfare in which the victor took women and children as bounty and frequently tried to absorb them into their own tribe. There were traditional methods of negotiating and returning the women who were taken in these raids. Many of these women were raped and "chose to marry" their abductors, rather than return home and be stigmatized.

Fighting between ethnic groups, such as between Dinka and Nuer or among Nuer tribes resulted in the killings of several hundred persons during the year.

Other Societal Abuses and Discrimination

Homosexuality is a crime, but no one has been prosecuted on the charge; there is societal but not official discrimination against homosexuals.

Incitement to Acts of Discrimination

The government and government-supported militias actively promoted hatred and discrimination, using standard propaganda techniques to incite tribal violence. Credible sources noted that the government supported one tribe over another, arming certain tribal militias against other tribes.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

Although the law provides for the right of association for economic and trade union purposes, the government denied this right in practice. The Trade Union Act established a trade union monopoly in the government. Only the government-controlled Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF), which consists of 25 state unions and 22 industry unions, can function legally; all other unions were banned. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has frequently noted that the trade union monopoly contravened the principles of freedom of association. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions continued to recognize the "legitimate" Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation--the national trade union center that functioned prior to the ban--which operated in exile.

The law does not prohibit antiunion discrimination by employers.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law denies trade unions autonomy to exercise their right to organize or to bargain collectively. The law defines the objectives, terms of office, scope of activities, and organizational structures and alliances for labor unions. The government's auditor general supervised union funds because they were considered public money.

While labor organizing committees have the right to organize and bargain collectively, in practice the government dominated the process of setting wages and working conditions through its control of the steering committees. A tripartite committee comprising representatives of the government, the government-controlled SWTUF, and business set wages. The absence of labor legislation allowing for union meetings, the filing of grievances, and other union activity greatly reduced the value of these formal rights. Local union officials raised some grievances with employers, although few raised them with the government. There were credible reports that the government routinely intervened to manipulate professional, trade union, and student union elections.

Specialized labor courts adjudicated standard labor disputes, but the Ministry of Labor has the authority to refer a dispute to compulsory arbitration.

Strikes were considered illegal unless the government granted approval, which has never occurred. In most cases employees who tried to strike were subject to employment termination; however, workers went on strike during the year and were not terminated.

There is one export processing zone located in Port Sudan, and it is exempt from regular labor laws.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children; however, there were reports that such practices continued.

Although the government continued to deny that slavery and forced labor existed, CEAWC acknowledged that abductions had occurred.

Both the government and rebel factions continued to conscript men and boys into the fighting forces.

Abduction, forced labor, and sexual slavery of women and children continued.

d. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

Although mandated by the interim constitution to protect children from exploitation, the government did not effectively do so, and child labor was a serious problem. The legal minimum age for workers was 18 years, but the law was not enforced in practice. Young children worked in a number of factories, and severe poverty produced widespread child labor in the informal and rural farming economy. Children were engaged in shining shoes, washing cars, street vending, begging, herding animals, construction, and other menial labor.

There were reports that government and government-aligned militias conscripted children and accepted children as soldiers. Child trafficking continued, and child prostitution was widespread.

Child labor existed in the south, particularly in the agricultural sectors, where children were employed as field workers, harvesters, and street vendors. Child labor in such areas was exacerbated by lack of schools, extreme poverty, and the lack of an effective legal minimum age for workers.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Women, and Child Affairs has responsibility for enforcing child labor laws; however, enforcement was ineffective.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The minimum wage was \$62 (124 Sudanese pounds) per month, which did not provide a worker and family a decent standard of living. The Ministry of Labor, which maintained field offices in most major cities, was responsible for enforcing the minimum wage, which employers generally respected. Workers who were denied the minimum wage could file a grievance with the local labor ministry field office, which then was required to investigate and take appropriate action. There were reports that some workers, including postal and health workers, were not paid their regular wages. Due to a lack of capacity and difficulties in establishing the new government in the south, civil service workers, including teachers, often worked for long periods without getting paid. The only payment many teachers received were informal school fees paid by the parents of the children.

Legal foreign workers had the same labor rights as domestic workers. Southern IDPs generally occupied the lowest paying occupations and were subject to economic exploitation in rural and urban industries and activities.

The law, which was generally respected, limits the workweek to 48 hours (six eight-hour days), with a day of rest on Friday. Overtime should not exceed 12 hours per week or four hours per day. There was no prohibition on excessive compulsory overtime.

Although the laws prescribe health and safety standards, working conditions generally were poor, and enforcement by the Ministry of Labor was minimal. The right of workers to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without loss of employment is not recognized.

