

## **A POLICY OF FORCED EXPULSION**

By Eric Reeves

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"This enforced movement of people is very, very, very, very worrisome at the moment"---Jan Egeland, UN Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs, commenting on the expanding forced expulsion of displaced populations from Darfur camps

There can be no doubting the catastrophic effects of what is daily more obviously Khartoum's grim plan in Darfur. Responding to growing international awareness of conditions among the immense concentrations of African tribal populations in camps throughout Darfur, Khartoum has decided to expel forcibly these people, demanding that they return to "their" villages. In fact, the vast majority of these villages have already been destroyed by Khartoum and its Janjaweed militia allies. What remain are scattered towns and concentrations of villages, fully under the control of the Janjaweed and Khartoum's security forces. These will become the new "homes" for the displaced populations, where they will no longer "need" humanitarian assistance, and this in turn will obviate the necessity of an international presence in Darfur.

Jan Egeland, UN Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs, clearly sees evidence of this, as indicated in an Associated Press dispatch of July 15, 2004:

"Thousands of Sudanese who fled their homes because of attacks by government-backed militias in the Darfur region are being forced to leave refugee camps and return to their villages, the U.N. humanitarian chief said. [Egeland] said the United Nations has received reports of 'big pressure' forcing people from camps in western Darfur. 'This enforced movement of people is very, very, very, very worrisome at the moment,' he said. 'This is one of the key points to monitor in the next days and weeks---that return is voluntary, and that security is re-established for the civilian population.'" (Associated Press, July 15, 2004)

But of course security is not in the process of being "re-established"; on the contrary, it continues to deteriorate rapidly, as Egeland himself had indicated the previous day in a BBC dispatch ("Darfur security 'deteriorating'"):

"The United Nations' top emergency relief official has warned that the

security situation in Sudan's Darfur region is becoming more difficult. Jan Egeland, who has just visited Darfur, said relief supplies had been looted and humanitarian workers attacked by militia." (BBC, July 14, 2004)

Today (July 17, 2004), the BBC notes "that there have been reports that Janjaweed raids have intensified this week [July 10 to July 17, 2004], despite government claims to be disarming the militia." The US Agency for International Development Darfur emergency "fact sheet" for July 16, 2004 also cites UN reports of various serious incidents of Janjaweed violence over the past week, directed against civilians near camps for the displaced (US AID "fact sheet," "DARFUR---Humanitarian Emergency," July 16, 2004).

These and numerous other reports and assessments define, with compelling authority, the nature of the extreme physical insecurity currently prevailing within the rural areas and near the camps in Darfur. It is into these environments that Khartoum is now officially committed to forcing populations expelled from the camps (see statements from Khartoum's Minister of the Interior and Chair of the Humanitarian Affairs Commission [HAC] in July 15, 2004 analysis by this writer; available upon request).

The consequences of forced mass expulsions in the context of such pervasive insecurity are clear:

"Humanitarian workers fear that a forcible mass return of some 1.2 million Internally Displaced Persons in Darfur could result in enormous fatalities." (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, July 13, 2004)

Many hundreds of thousands of people would see a dramatic increase in levels of insecurity, as well as be faced with a lack of humanitarian access and food aid. Most would likely die, even as the mortality rates within populations in the camps themselves are already very high and rising precipitously. In these camps, various logistical and security issues have grown steadily more acute, giving threat of even more precipitously rising mortality rates.

For a pervasive lack of security threatens the people of Darfur in others ways as well. Undersecretary Egeland is reported as declaring that, "Darfur was becoming too dangerous for aid workers" (BBC, July 14, 2004). And in a chilling moment of speculation, Egeland described, "my worst scenario [is that] that the security will deteriorate, that we will step back at a moment we have to actually step up [emergency relief]" (BBC, July 14, 2004).

## CONSEQUENCES OF INSECURITY

All evidence, from a variety of authoritative sources on the ground in Darfur, suggests that this "worst scenario" is playing out at greater speed and with greater ferocity than even Egeland has suggested. In addition to Janjaweed attacks on civilians, individual humanitarian vehicles, humanitarian personnel, and even entire humanitarian convoys, this brutal militia force has set up a greatly increased number of check-points on key humanitarian road corridors. Aid workers are reporting increasing threats and hostility at these check-points, and these threats in turn work to compromise in dramatic fashion the present humanitarian capacity, already woefully inadequate to current humanitarian need.

Moreover, there are growing numbers of informed reports from the ground in Darfur that the Janjaweed are rapidly being incorporated into both the "police" forces of Darfur, as well as Khartoum's regular military. Despite Khartoum's various promises to disarm the Janjaweed (promises publicly reneged upon in some regime-controlled newspapers), the reality is otherwise, as the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks suggested with its July 12, 2004 dispatch from al-Geneina:

"[Sources] working in Darfur say little has actually been done to match what they describe as [Khartoum's] 'rhetoric.' Local sources told IRIN that the Janjawid were simply being incorporated into the army and the paramilitary Popular Defence Forces (PDF), to officially remove them from the public eye. The UN has also received reports of the same tactic in recent weeks." (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks [dateline: al-Geneina] July 12, 2004)

## INCREASINGLY DEADLY MISMATCH BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN NEED AND HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY

Moreover, even as security deteriorates in many ways, the mismatch between humanitarian need and capacity continues to grow more deadly. The problem is compounded by UN assessments that seriously understate the scope of this need, especially concerning the size of populations in desperate need. John Prendergast of the International Crisis Group has just completed a very significant assessment mission inside rebel-held territory in Darfur, and writes in the New York Times of his findings:

"While Western dignitaries visited the camps teeming with refugees from Darfur and elsewhere, I encountered large numbers of displaced civilians inside the rebel-held areas of Darfur, where no camps exist and not a drop of international assistance has been delivered. There are

potentially hundreds of thousands of survivors who have fallen through the cracks. Some of them say they are afraid to travel to government-controlled camps and unable to make it to the border. They are running out of food." (New York Times, July 15, 2004)

In fact, private conversations with well-placed sources within the humanitarian community indicate a growing consensus that there are at least several hundred thousand people presently in the desperate situation described by Prendergast. This is one reason we must regard with deep skepticism present UN World Food Program assessments of the number in critical need of food aid throughout Darfur. These assessments are based on surveys done in areas to which there is access, or on the basis of the displaced populations in camps to which there is at least tenuous access. They thus leave out of consideration huge numbers of people of the sort Prendergast encountered. One human rights source, recently back from the region, estimates that the number of people unable to trek to the Darfur/Chad border or beyond the reach of humanitarian relief is in the range of 500,000 (Darfur has a total population of approximately 6,500,000 in its three states).

There are also numerous credible reports of large numbers of displaced persons settling on the outskirts of camps, though not formally registered or figuring in humanitarian assessments and estimates. Camps themselves are growing far more rapidly than are the humanitarian resources slowly and belatedly making their way into Darfur. A UN News Center dispatch yesterday (July 16, 2004) concerning the Kalma camp near Nyala offers a shocking example:

"In South Darfur, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are concerned about a sudden rise in the number of internally displaced people at a camp at Kalma. There are now 70,000 residents at the camp, with more people arriving every day---compared to 30,000 at the end of last month." (UN News Centre, July 16, 2004)

A precipitous increase of 40,000 people, in a camp that was already overwhelmed by 30,000 residents, is a formula for catastrophe. A large malaria outbreak could, without sufficient clean water or medical resources, quickly take the lives of over 10,000 in this one camp alone (the camp was deliberately located in a low spot in the area, ensuring that water would collect and mix with human and animal sewage during the rainy season).

The lack of adequate food supplies on the ground in Darfur is suggested by the soaring rates of malnutrition being reported by humanitarian organizations: Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rates (statistically, a third of these people will die) have exceeded 5% in some populations; at

least two humanitarian organizations are reporting Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates that have reached 50% in some populations. This is the portrait of a famine accelerating.

## INSECURITY AND GENOCIDE

Prendergast's findings also make clear that security for civilians remains non-existent in much of Darfur:

"I was not prepared for the far more sinister scene I encountered in a ravine deep in the Darfur desert. Bodies of young men were lined up in ditches, eerily preserved by the 130-degree desert heat. The story the rebels told us seemed plausible: the dead were civilians who had been marched up a hill and executed by the Arab-led government before its troops abandoned the area the previous month. The rebels assert that there were many other such scenes." (New York Times, July 15, 2004)

It is to these rural areas---defined by mass executions, the most violent use of rape as a weapon of war, the absence of an international presence, and the almost total lack of food---that Khartoum is seeking to expel the African tribal populations that have already been forced to flee from the destruction of their villages, and then to seek the tenuous security of "camps."

Insecurity is not an accidental by-product of the war in Darfur: it is the primary instrument of genocide. And the Janjaweed, so consistently and authoritatively reported as working militarily hand-in-glove with Khartoum's security and regular military forces in Darfur, are the primary means of insecurity, the primary weapon by which Khartoum has conducted its genocidal war on the African peoples of Darfur.

The forces of the Janjaweed have burned over 2,000 villages throughout Darfur; they have slaughtered, raped, tortured, and abducted many scores of thousands of human beings; they have displaced approximately 1.5 million people, putting them at acute risk from famine and famine-related disease. The Janjaweed have systematically destroyed foodstocks, seedstocks, water wells and irrigations systems, agricultural implements, and livestock---and in the process created a "war-affected" population of 2.3 million people.

The cruelty of the Janjaweed, as well as the militia's intimate relations with Khartoum's leaders, is suggested in an extraordinary interview published yesterday (July 16, 2004) by The Guardian (UK). Perhaps the most notorious of the Janjaweed leaders, Musa Hilal, was interviewed at length in Khartoum, under the most lavish of circumstances, revealing a great deal about Hilal's "comfort level" in

the capital city.

[It should be said that it is one thing for a distinguished newspaper to conduct such an interview, with very clear news value and offering a deeply revealing look into the heart of evil in Darfur; it is quite another for US charge d'affaires (and thus senior US diplomat in Khartoum) Gerald Gallucci to conduct a discussion with such a war criminal and terrorist. That Mr. Gallucci very recently conducted such a discussion, in an official US capacity, should be the cause for the greatest consternation and demands explanation. Musa Hilal heads the US State Department's list of suspected war criminals in Darfur.]

The Guardian found this Janjaweed leader, "dressed in a crisp white robe and prayer cap," sitting in a plush chair as he "patted his nephew's head and offered sweet pastries" (The Guardian [dateline: Khartoum] July 16, 2004). The interviewer later noted:

"In Khartoum Mr Hilal showed no fear of being arrested. There were no bodyguards and no security checks at the gates of the walled compound. When the interview concluded, he was relaxed enough to joke about the Janjaweed with the Guardian's photographer." (The Guardian [dateline: Khartoum] July 16, 2004).

But The Guardian also establishes beyond reasonable doubt that Hilal was the commander during the notorious atrocity at Tawilah in February 2004, described at the time by the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks:

"In an attack on 27 February [2004] in the Tawilah area of northern Darfur, 30 villages were burned to the ground, over 200 people killed and over 200 girls and women raped---some by up to 14 assailants and in front of their fathers who were later killed. A further 150 women and 200 children were abducted." (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, March 22, 2004)

As evidence of Hilal's central role in this atrocity, The Guardian notes:

"The Guardian has established from witnesses in the town of Tawilah in north Darfur, which was attacked in February, that Mr Hilal has commanded Janjaweed forces in the field. Saddiq Ismail, 45, a retired teacher in the town, said Mr Hilal had arrived [to lead the atrocity] by helicopter [[NOTE: this can only have been a helicopter from the Khartoum regime's regular military forces---Eric Reeves]], accompanied on the ground by five Landcruisers and gunmen on horses and camels. 'Musa Hilal was dressed in military uniform [NOTE: this uniform was

certainly provided by the Khartoum regime's regular military forces---Eric Reeves]]. He was directing his men. He is the leader and gave all the orders,' Mr Ismail said." (The Guardian [dateline: Khartoum] July 16, 2004).

The Guardian also reports on Hilal's broader role: "Witnesses have identified [Hilal] as the coordinator of attacks in which civilians have been massacred and raped in front of their families, and their villages burned." (The Guardian [dateline: Khartoum] July 16, 2004)

Moreover, The Guardian finds yet further evidence of the animating racism/ethnic hatred that lies behind such brutal assaults:

"The Guardian has spoken to a deserter from a training camp run by Mr Hilal, who said the Janjaweed commander whipped up racial hatred among his fighters. When the recruits first arrived in the camp, at Mistriyah in north Darfur, Mr Hilal made a speech in which he told them that all Africans were their enemies." (The Guardian [dateline: Khartoum], July 16, 2004)

The Guardian notes in this context that, according to the deserter interviewed, Hilal used the derogatory Arabic word "Zurgha" ("Blacks") to describe African populations.

This is genocide unfolding. By means of this brutal militia force, and its savagely cruel commanders, Khartoum has created such levels of civilian destruction and displacement, has generated such extreme levels of insecurity, has so completely compromised food production and humanitarian relief capacity, has created such deadly concentrations of people now living in appalling health conditions, that the genocide can't be stopped. The nature of current discourse within the UN, both in New York and within the various agencies, as well as the lack of meaningful international leadership, has created a political vacuum in which no steps are being taken toward the humanitarian intervention required to mitigate the consequences of this engineered genocide.

This may still be "Rwanda in slow-motion"; but we are daily coming closer to "real time."

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