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Chad: 20,000 More Displaced in Last Three Weeks

This is a summary of what was said by UNHCR spokesperson Jennifer Pagonis—to whom quoted text may be attributed—at the press briefing, on 9 January 2007, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

UNHCR remains extremely concerned over the security situation in eastern Chad, where we've got more than 220,000 Darfur refugees and now over 100,000 internally displaced Chadians—20,000 of them uprooted within the past three weeks.

While there has been a decrease in fighting between the Chadian army and opposition forces, intercommunal conflict continues in south-eastern parts of the country near the border with Sudan's Darfur region. More than 10,000 Chadians have been driven from their homes in cross-border attacks by alleged Janjaweed militia in the Borota region, and another 10,000 have fled more than 20 villages and are now gathered in the town of Gassire, 8 km north of Goz Beida. This insecurity is now posing a direct threat to refugee camps housing thousands of Sudanese from Darfur.

UNHCR yesterday sent a technical mission to Gassire to assess conditions there and the needs of the thousands of displaced Chadians. Humanitarian agencies, whose activities had already been reduced because of the insecurity, are now severely over-stretched.

Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno has said the government will send troops to restore security in eastern Chad and said his government had made available 4 billion francs CFA (about US \$8 million) for assistance to Chadian internally displaced.

There are 220,000 refugees from Darfur in 12 UNHCR-run camps in eastern Chad as well as 46,000 refugees from the Central African Republic in southern Chad.

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