


DARFUR MORTALITY UPDATE: March 11, 2005

(4787 total words in this text)

(88 Reads) 

Current data for total mortality from violence, malnutrition, and disease

Eric Reeves

March 11, 2005

Building on eleven previous assessments of global mortality in Darfur, this analysis finds that approximately 380,000 human beings have died as a result of the conflict that erupted in February 2003, and that the current conflict-related mortality rate in the larger humanitarian theater is approximately 15,000 deaths per month. This monthly rate is poised to grow rapidly in light of famine conditions now obtaining in various parts of rural Darfur and threatening the entire region. Badly weakened populations are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of disease and malnutrition, ensuring that a recent decline in mortality rates within more accessible camp areas will not continue. Indeed, the huge disparity between humanitarian need and humanitarian capacity strongly suggests that gross mortality in the coming "hunger gap" (April/May through September) and its aftermath will be measured in the hundreds of thousands lives lost, disproportionately children under five.

The larger situation in Darfur is authoritatively captured in a recent report from the International Crisis Group, which looks at the crisis in its broadest political context:

"Khartoum made peace with the [southern] Sudan People's Liberation Movement in part to head off mounting pressure over Darfur. So far the gambit is working. The international community is deeply divided---perhaps paralysed---over what to do next in Darfur. The situation on the ground shows a number of negative trends, which have been developing since the last quarter of 2004: deteriorating security; a credible threat of famine; mounting civilian casualties; the ceasefire in shambles; the negotiation process at a standstill; the rebel movements beginning to splinter, and new armed movements appearing in Darfur and neighbouring states. Chaos and a culture of impunity are taking root in the region." ("Darfur: The Failure to Protect," Africa Report No. 89, March 8, 2005)

Within this "chaos" and "culture of impunity," Khartoum's relentlessly efficient engine of human destruction continues to race. It daily becomes more likely that the final toll from genocide in Darfur will eventually exceed the 800,000 who died in Rwanda's genocide of 1994. Whatever the grim final total, a credible, assiduous retrospective analysis of available mortality data provides the most authoritative basis for prospective estimates; such continues to be the primary justification for ongoing mortality assessments by this writer.

JAN EGELAND ON DARFUR MORTALITY

UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland continues to declare some of the bluntest truths about Darfur, particularly in the wake of his recent tour of the region. Speaking to reporters at UN headquarters in New York, Egeland explicitly corrected the irresponsibly promulgated mortality figure---"70,000"---that has been most often cited by news organizations:

"Egeland said the old figure of 70,000 dead from last March [2004] to late summer [2004] was unhelpful. 'Is [the global figure for mortality in Darfur] three times that [70,000]? Is it five times? I don't know, but it's several times the number of 70,000 that have died altogether,' [Egeland told reporters]." (Reuters, March 9, 2005)

But even Egeland's estimate, suggesting total mortality in the very general range of 300,000 deaths,

gives little sign of having taken full account of extant data bearing on violent mortality, as opposed to mortality from disease and malnutrition (Egeland highlights, for example, pneumonia and diarrhea in his comments). Here the study conducted in August/September 2004 by the Coalition for International Justice (CIJ) remains our most important indicator: this expert collection of statistically significant data strongly suggests total violent mortality in excess of 200,000. In the CIJ study (the basis for the US determination that genocide is occurring in Darfur), 1136 carefully randomized interviews with displaced persons along the Chad/Darfur border revealed that 61% of this population witnessed the violent death of a family member.

Given the large population of displaced persons statistically represented by these refugees in Chad, as many as 240,000 violent deaths may be conservatively inferred from the CIJ data. Of particular significance are the randomizing techniques for the interviews conducted, which work to eliminate any possible overlap in "family" reporting of mortality (this is true whether we construe "family" as nuclear or extended). Indeed, the statistical bias of the CIJ data is towards under-reporting of violent mortality: individuals who report witnessing more than one family member killed are represented as reporting only one death; families killed in their entirety (and thus without a reporting presence in Chad) are not represented; moreover, the deaths of those who died as a direct result of flight from violence are not reflected in the CIJ interviews.

A fully revised overview assessment of violent mortality in Darfur is included here as Appendix 1, with primary focus on data from the Coalition for International Justice ("Documenting Atrocities in Darfur," September 2004), and the epidemiological study of violent mortality in West Darfur by Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres and others (The Lancet, October 1, 2004, "Violence and mortality in West Darfur, Sudan [2003-04]: epidemiological evidence from four surveys").

Appendix 2 offers a brief overview of evidence suggesting that excess monthly mortality is currently in the range of 15,000 for the greater Darfur humanitarian theater. Given the mortality estimate offered by this writer as of January 1, 2005 (340,000; see February 10, 2005 analysis at: <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=490&page=1>), such a current monthly mortality rate argues for a global figure of 380,000 excess deaths since the outbreak of conflict.

ONGOING VIOLENCE AND A CLIMATE OF IMPUNITY

Violence and violent mortality continue to be defining features of the Darfur crisis. This includes the brutal reality of racially/ethnically-charged sexual violence directed against the women and girls of Darfur's non-Arab or African populations. Indeed, rape and gang-rape---often accompanied by extreme violence---have become essential instruments of Khartoum's genocidal war in Darfur, with clear official sanction from local and national governmental authorities:

"Rape is being used as a deliberate way to fragment the family and community,' said one local aid worker, speaking on condition of anonymity. 'Many of these women are raped by soldiers, and police as well as the [Khartoum-allied] janjaweed [militia].'"

"When a judge visited from Garsila, a nearby town where similar cases [of rape] have been reported, he merely cautioned the officers to stop recording the women's names lest the list should be used as evidence against them." (The Globe and Mail, Canada [dateline: Bendisi, West Darfur], March 5, 2005)

The cautionary advice from the judge reported here reflects official complicity in what---aggregated---are massive "crimes against humanity."

Reuters reports on a particularly valuable recent study by Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres that confirms what has long been evident, viz. the ethnic/racial animus in rape as a weapon of

war:

"After they abused us [Fur women], they told us that now we would have Arab babies; and if they would find any Fur women, they would rape them again to change the colour of their children,' the women said in the report." (Reuters, March 7, 2005)

A subsequent Reuters dispatch reports on the consequences of rape for girls and women facing the terrible choices that come from pregnancy in such circumstances:

"Women suffer knowing they are carrying the child of their attackers and the social stigma of being pregnant and unmarried in Sudan's conservative society. 'Some of the girls who were raped were brought...with ruptures in their wombs after abortions. Little girls scared out of their minds not knowing which was worse---a village midwife's knife or carrying a Janjaweed's baby,' a Sudanese aid worker in Darfur said." (Reuters, March 8, 2005)

Khartoum's only response to the new report from Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) ("The Crushing Burden of Rape: Sexual Violence in Darfur") is to seek its suppression and to contrive a preposterous political conspiracy:

"The MSF head of mission in Sudan, Paul Foreman, said the government had asked the agency not to publish the report, which will be released on Tuesday for international women's day. 'They have expressed their strong desire that we don't publish it, and I politely declined.'" (Reuters, March 7, 2005)

"[Khartoum's State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Mohamed Yousif Abdalla] on Tuesday accused three international aid agencies of an orchestrated political campaign to play up the issue of rape in its troubled Darfur region to distract from problems in the rest of the world." (Reuters, March 8, 2005)

These efforts at suppression and denial represent the extent of the regime's concern for sexual violence of the most extreme sort:

"Women told MSF that they were beaten with sticks, whips or axes before, during or after the act of rape. Some of the raped women were visibly pregnant, as much as five to eight months, at the time of the assault." (Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres, "The Crushing Burden of Rape: Sexual Violence in Darfur," March 8, 2005 at <http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=87E5F426-8A66-407E-B6E33C9E577F54CF>)

OTHER REPORTS OF CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN DARFUR

Though violence has generally decreased in Darfur, primarily because of the extremely high levels of destruction among African villages throughout the region, it remains a source of substantial human mortality. Moreover, the pervasive atmosphere of fear and insecurity are directly related to previous violence and the clear threat of violent assault that persists, both in rural areas and in the environs of camps for the displaced. Several recent reports make clear that the current African Union monitoring force is having only very marginal success in the few pockets where it is able to deploy.

The Sudan Organization Against Torture (SOAT) reports on "Attack and Destruction of Toray Village":

"At 6am on 29 [sic] February 2005, over 500 armed militias supported by the armed forces allegedly from Nama military camp, west of Kass town, attacked and destroyed Toray village south of Jebel Marra, [South Darfur]. Reportedly, at least 17 civilians were killed, three women were raped and 11 wounded during the attack. Following the attack, the militias occupied the village and prevented those wounded from leaving to seek medical assistance despite the severity of some of the injuries." (SOAT, March 7, 2005)

A number of other violent Janjaweed attacks are reported by the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), an especially valuable source of news as Khartoum continues its restriction of access to international journalists:

"At least 16 people have been killed by unidentified gunmen in South Darfur state amidst reports of continuing violence in western Sudan, UN officials told IRIN in the capital, Khartoum. 'A number of Internally Displaced Persons reported that in an attack in Thursday, 20 kilometers north of the town of Kass in South Darfur, approximately 16 people were killed on 23 February, [2005]' Leon Willems, spokesperson for the UN Advance Mission in Sudan, said on Wednesday [March 2, 2005]."

"Those killed, Willems added, were apparently attacked while on their way to tend to their land in nearby place called Salakoyo. 'The AU is aware of these reports and investigations are ongoing,' Nourredine Mezni, a spokesperson for the African Union in Khartoum, told IRIN."

"Reports of more armed clashes and other ceasefire violations in Darfur had continued to be received even as the AU was attempting to bring the warring parties back to the negotiation table, the officials said. During the weekend of 26 and 27 February [2005], a number of incidents were reported, including an attack by tribal militias on a village called Aduana, in South Darfur." (IRIN, March 2, 2005)

Moreover, we must bear in mind how much goes unreported in the vast reaches of Darfur, a region the size of France. Rural areas and areas to which the AU does not travel or has no access may endure extreme levels of violence with no reporting presence.

THE FAILURE OF THE AFRICAN UNION FORCE IN DARFUR

The "tribal militias" referred to in the IRIN dispatch are, of course, the Janjaweed, Khartoum's brutal military proxy force in Darfur. And although the African Union spokesperson declares that "the AU is aware of these reports and investigations are ongoing," it has become all too clear that this is an essentially meaningless statement. Yet again, it falls to Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, to speak the bluntest and least palatable truths:

"[Egeland] lashed out at African leaders for failing to meet their commitments to supply a robust peacekeeping force for Darfur. He called it one of the biggest paradoxes of our time that after agreeing the region was a priority, the AU had come up with a force of 2,000 to quell violence in an area the size of France." (Voice of America, March 9, 2005)

In fact, the AU has yet to deploy even 2,000 personnel, and has provided adequate equipment (particularly transport and communications) for far fewer than even this number. Egeland continued:

"'It's very strange. If all the heads of state in Africa say we will make it work and it's a priority, and they--in ten months they produce such a small force---something is very wrong. The African Union has to be better internally,' [Egeland said]."

Highlighting the town of Labado, which was razed by Khartoum and its militia forces in December 2004, Egeland pointedly remarks:

"'If you move beyond the refugee camps, the killing continues; women are systematically abused and raped. [] In Labado, which is really ground zero for this Darfur war, 90 men and four vehicles, one Toyota and three pickups. That's not very much.'" (Voice of America, March 9, 2005)

Not very much indeed.

What is the AU political response to the realities that Egeland has so frankly characterized? Mendacity and distortion constitute a great deal of this response, perhaps best represented in remarks by Nigerian President and Chair of the African Union, Olusegun Obasanjo: "'Things are looking greatly better in Darfur,' Obasanjo said" (Agence France-Presse, February 28, 2005). But Obasanjo is far from alone in refusing to accept AU responsibility for the painfully slow and uninspired deployment of forces, and the refusal to request or accept desperately needed international help. We learn far too much about the lack of urgency in AU attitudes from a recent Agence France-Presse dispatch:

"[The African Union] has so far deployed some 2,000 of an expected 3,320 troops to Sudan's troubled western region of Darfur. 'In Darfur, we know that we need to send more troops, and a fact-finding mission will leave on March 10, [2005]' AU's Peace and Security Commissioner Said Djinnit told AFP. 'When it returns, we will be able to present our proposals.'" (AFP, March 8, 2005)

Such a time-frame---"a fact-finding mission will leave on March 10, [2005]"---is unconscionably leisurely so many months after the scale of Darfur's crisis became evident, and its genocidal realities undeniable. Certainly so long as the AU represents the entire international non-humanitarian commitment to Darfur, so long as fewer than 2,000 troops are tasked with providing security to several million civilians as well as humanitarian operations throughout an area the size of France---without the aid of an explicit mandate for civilian protection---such leisure is a moral and political scandal. If, as Egeland has rightly insisted of Darfur, "there is no other place in the world where so many lives are at stake" (Voice of America, March 9, 2005), then we must recognize it is the African Union that is failing Africa.

The claims of logistical problems and lack of funding by Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the AU Commission on Peace and Security, also seem scandalously belated, even expediently self-exculpatory:

"The African Union has appealed yesterday for logistics support that will enable it to deploy 3,500 AU troops in Darfur. [] 'We have a logistic problem, which has not been addressed before. That is why we are asking for this support to fill the gap, [Konare said]." (The Daily Monitor [Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; headquarters of the AU], March 9, 2005)

It is now almost a year since the AU committed to monitoring the cease-fire of April 8, 2004; it is over five months since the AU committed to deploy 3,500 personnel for the same task. During this time many tens of thousands of people have died, and hundreds of thousands have been displaced; humanitarian operations are deeply compromised by insecurity; agricultural production continues to collapse; and millions of people remain at risk from attack and the consequences of inadequate humanitarian access directly related to insecurity. How, under what imaginable set of circumstances, is it appropriate for the Chair of the AU Peace and Security Commission to be lamenting the fact of a "logistic problem, which has not been addressed before"?

The answer lies in an AU unwillingness to recognize the acute need for international assistance, and a corresponding refusal to ask for such assistance. This attitude---ultimately a claim that Darfur's fate must be governed by the glib assertion of "African solutions for African problems"---is captured in a revealing dispatch from Inter Press Service in Berlin:

"Lotte Leicht, director of the Brussels office of Human Rights Watch, argued at the [Darfur] panel discussion [in Berlin] that the AU had failed to protect the people in Darfur. The AU should accept help from the EU, she said. 'I have never seen that 25 foreign ministers are almost down on their knees, begging the AU to take more help from the EU.'" (Inter Press Service [dateline: Berlin], March 3, 2005)

Moreover, it is the AU that has failed in negotiations with the Khartoum regime to secure a mandate for either peacekeeping or any but the most highly restrictive possibility of civilian protection. It is the AU that has failed to oversee any diplomatic progress in negotiations in Abuja, Nigeria; and it is the AU that has failed to find the collective political will to force Khartoum to accept the need to deal with issues of

substance and commit fully to a cease-fire during negotiations.

No doubt Egeland yet again speaks most comprehensively about the international failure in Darfur:

"The world has failed utterly in the most important aspect, which is to heal the wounds of the warring parties by political efforts,' he said in the telephone interview [with Agence France-Presse]." (AFP, March 6, 2005)

But so long as the AU view of Darfur is defined by the conviction that there must be "African solutions for African problems," and so long as the requirements of the Darfur crisis vastly exceed current AU capacity, an exclusively AU response ensures that mortality rates in Darfur will grow rapidly with the approach to the "hunger gap" (again, April/May through September).

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND MORTALITY IN DARFUR: A checklist

In addition to the clear indications of impending famine (see "Engineered Famine: Khartoum's Weapon of Genocidal Mass Destruction" at:

<http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=42&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>), there are a number of deeply ominous signs that mortality from disease and malnutrition is set to increase dramatically:

[1] Evidence continues to accumulate that Khartoum remains intent on seriously interfering with humanitarian delivery and capacity in Darfur. Such interference has been recently reported by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the World Food Program, and many humanitarian organizations operating in Darfur.

[2] Various breaks in the food "pipeline" are now predicted, including a March 2005 break in the "pipeline" for pulses (leguminous foods), the second largest component in the balanced food basket necessary for human health (World Food Program Situation Report on Darfur, March 2-8, 2005).

[3] Approximately 50% of the camp populations in Darfur are still without access to clean water or sanitary facilities (Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 10, January 1, 2005; this continues to be the most recent UN assessment available). This greatly increases the risk of diseases such as cholera and dysentery.

[4] Water supplies in Darfur are ever more seriously threatened, with dire consequences for displaced persons and the region as a whole:

"Water is increasingly in short supply for both people and livestock---an essential component of the economy in Darfur,' the International Committee of the Red Cross reported in its Sudan Bulletin of 28 February [2005]. According to the ICRC, the natural water catchments in the region had been ruined in the fighting and by lack of maintenance. The drought exacerbated the situation. Oxfam reported that an estimated 85,000 internally displaced persons in Abu Shouk camp, in North Darfur, had been receiving only 7.8 litres of water per person, per day---about half of what is considered a standard amount." (IRIN, March 4, 2005)

OUTLOOK

There is nothing on the horizon suggesting that Romeo Dallaire's increasingly desperate pleas for intervention in Darfur will be heard:

"The spirits of Rwandans are being joined to those killed in northern Africa [in Darfur]. They call upon us to call upon our dignity and our sense of responsibility,' Dallaire said." (Globe and Mail [Canada], March 9, 2005)

But instead of "responsibility," we find only Kofi Annan declaring that no member of the Security Council is prepared to send UN peacekeeping forces to Darfur (Reuters, March 7, 2005). Thus nine distinguished human rights and foreign policy organizations have urged Security Council members to "reject this [current Security Council] resolution on the grounds that another weak resolution will exacerbate rather than ameliorate the situation in Darfur. The current draft resolution sends precisely the wrong signal after one year of unfulfilled promises and continued attacks, further emboldening the Government of Sudan" (March 9, 2005).

This occurs against the backdrop of China, Russia, and Algeria lobbying hard---and evidently successfully---for an even weaker resolution. And the AU will neither acknowledge its limitations nor ask for appropriate international assistance in Darfur.

Human destruction continues apace in Darfur. There is no "dignity," there is no "responsibility" in our response, only the assurance that we will witness exorbitant civilian deaths for months and years to come.

Eric Reeves
Smith College
Northampton, MA 01063

413-585-3326
ereeves@smith.edu
www.sudanreeves.org

APPENDIX 1: Violent mortality in Darfur

The figure here of 380,000 excess deaths during the Darfur conflict reflects a conservative assumption of violent mortality of approximately 200,000. This figure---aggregated with total deaths from disease and malnutrition as of January 1, 2005 (140,000), as well as mortality in the current year (40,000)---is the basis for a gross mortality total of 380,000 (again, see also <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=490&page=1>).

In fact, data from the August/September 2004 study by the Coalition for International Justice justifies a statistical derivation of as many as 240,000 violent deaths if we use displacement data provided by the UN's Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 10 (January 1, 2005), the most current Profile available. The number of Internally Displaced Persons in Darfur is here reported as 1.84 million, reflecting data gathered primarily from UN World Food Program and other humanitarian registrations in accessible camp areas. At the same time, the UN High Commission for Refugees currently reports that 213,000 Darfuris have been registered as refugees in Chad, indicating a total displaced population of over 2 million.

There are also many hundreds of thousands of Darfuris currently beyond humanitarian reach, and yet displaced and extremely vulnerable to violence. This number can only be very generally estimated on the basis of pre-war population figures and anecdotal reports from the field, as well as some data from the International Committee of the Red Cross. The assumption here is that 500,000 additional people are displaced and not yet reflected in data collected by either the World Food Program, the UN High Commission for Refugees, or other humanitarian organizations. This yields a total figure of displaced persons, in Darfur and Chad, of 2.5 million.

On the basis of 1,136 carefully randomized interviews, conducted among the Darfuri refugee population in Chad at numerous locations along the border, the Coalition for International Justice (CIJ) found that "sixty-one percent [of those interviewed] reported witnessing the killing of a family member"

("Documenting Atrocities in Darfur," at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/36028.htm>). The statistical issue is how representative this sample is for the entire displaced population in Darfur and Chad.

There has been a good deal of misplaced statistical concern about whether the "family" of the person witnessing the death of another "family member" is defined as an immediate (nuclear) family member or an extended family member. In fact, this concern betrays a misunderstanding of the statistical implications of CIJ's randomizing of interviews. For given the number of camp locations (19) where interviews took place, and the randomizing techniques used within the camps---

"refugees were selected using a systematic, random sampling approach designed to meet the condition in Chad. Interviewers randomly selected a sector within a refugee camp and then, from a fixed point within the sector, chose every 10th dwelling unit for interviewing. [] One adult [from the dwelling unit] was randomly selected [for interviewing]" (CIJ study, page 5)---

the chances of overlap in reported deaths for even "extended family" members are statistically negligible. Of much greater concern are three factors that would significantly increase the total for violent mortality in the CIJ study, were they readily quantifiable:

[1] the CIJ interviewers very frequently spoke with people who witnessed the violent deaths of more than one family member, but there is no way in which the CIJ collation of data was able to capture this plurality in mortality reporting;

[2] the CIJ study was unable to reflect violent deaths in families excluded by virtue of having been killed in their entirety, and thus having no reporting presence in Chad;

[3] a great many persons died in the immediate aftermath of violent assault, but were not witnessed as having been killed and thus were excluded from this CIJ mortality category.

It is impossible to estimate the net statistical implications of these three factors for gross violent mortality, but it is certainly very substantial and far in excess of any redundancy in "family" members reporting having witnessed the killing of another family member.

2.5 million displaced persons, given an average Darfur family size of five, represent approximately 500,000 families. If there is no family overlap in reporting, and if the refugee population in Chad is fully representative of the displaced population within Darfur, then the CIJ finding that "sixty-one percent [of those interviewed] reported witnessing the killing of a family member" argues for a figure of over 300,000 violent deaths.

Is there reason to assume that displacement into Chad has been more violent than displacement in Darfur itself? The only relevant epidemiological study available strongly suggests that this is not the case. Published in *The Lancet* (Britain's premier medical journal), this study offers clear evidence that displacement is overwhelmingly related to violent attacks. In two camps, Zalingei and Murnei, statistically rigorous assessments found that "direct attack on the village" accounted for displacement of 92.8% of the Zalingei population and 97.4% of the Murnei population (the combined camp populations is approximately 110,000) (*The Lancet*, October 1, 2004, "Violence and mortality in West Darfur, Sudan [2003-04]: epidemiological evidence from four surveys."

If we (conservatively) assume that the violently displaced population in Darfur and Chad is "only" 80% of the total displaced population, then the violent mortality total falls from 300,000 to 240,000.

Again, the current assessment assumes violent mortality of 200,000 as of January 1, 2005, reflecting a statistical reconciliation with the even more conservative assessment of violent mortality by Jan Coebergh, MD ("Sudan: genocide has killed more than the tsunami," Parliamentary Brief, February 2005,

Volume 9, No. 7; at <http://www.thepolitician.org/>). Coebergh's is the only other extant analysis of global mortality in Darfur.

APPENDIX 2: Monthly mortality rate for Darfur

Evidence from a variety of sources suggests that mortality rates have in recent months come down significantly in camps for the displaced in Darfur. The UN World Health Organization estimate of excess mortality up to 10,000 per month in the camps (September/October 2004) is no longer relevant for the larger, more secure, and more accessible camps (Egeland highlighted, for example, the huge Kalma camp outside Nyala, South Darfur).

But if mortality rates have dropped in the camps, the number of conflict-affected persons in Darfur has grown dramatically: from just over 2 million in Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 7 (October 1, 2004) to over 2.6 million in Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 10 (January 1, 2005). And this number is rising relentlessly and very rapidly; Egeland recently declared that,

"Some are predicting 3 million, some are predicting 4 million, some are predicting more than that, of people in desperate need of life-saving assistance as we approach the hunger gap in mid-year...whose lives will be at stake." (UN News Center, February 18, 2005)

If we take these figures seriously, and if we accept that there are very large and extremely vulnerable rural populations not presently captured in the Darfur Humanitarian Profiles (which also exclude Darfuri refugees in Chad), then even a Crude Mortality Rate significantly lower than that obtaining in September/October indicates a very high monthly mortality rate (the Crude Mortality Rate [CMR] indicates deaths per day per 10,000 of population). Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 7 (October 1, 2004), in addition to recording high Global Acute Malnutrition (22%) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (4%), reported camp mortality rates of 1.5/day for North Darfur and 2.9/day per West Darfur (South Darfur, where violence has been greatest in recent months, was too insecure for assessment, though there are strong indications that the CMR was in excess of 3.0/day).

An ongoing average CMR of even 1.5/day for a conflict-affected population of 3 million (including the most vulnerable rural populations) would indicate a monthly mortality rate of over 13,000 human beings. Continuing violent mortality in Darfur, as well as excess mortality in Chad, almost certainly brings total monthly mortality to over 15,000, or 40,000 for the current year.