


"At this moment, terrible things are happening today in Darfur, Sudan" ---Kofi Annan, January 24, 2005, to the UN General Assembly; January 24, 2005

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Eric Reeves
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Kofi Annan's statement today of this long conspicuous truth must still gain significance from its extraordinary context. For Annan was addressing the UN General Assembly and world leaders on the occasion of an unprecedented UN commemoration of the Holocaust of World War II. There could be no more powerful reference to human evil and mass destruction. Moreover, the Secretary-General did not shy away from naming other genocides, including those in Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda. He was powerfully echoed by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, who painfully observed, "if the world had listened, we may have prevented Darfur, Cambodia, Bosnia and naturally Rwanda," (Reuters, January 24, 2005).

But a grim and disconcerting irony stalks Annan's comments. For it was Annan who headed UN peacekeeping operations during the Rwandan genocide, and who bears much responsibility for international failure to stop the unspeakable carnage. Indeed, the irony became savage today when Annan went on to invoke Edmund Burke's famous declaration, "all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." For "nothing" is precisely what Annan and the US administration of Bill Clinton engineered in response to the desperate plea for intervening troops from Lt. General Romeo Dallaire, UN force commander at the time of the genocide in Rwanda.

Moreover, "nothing" also comes perilously close to defining what the international community is providing in the way of means for halting current genocide in Darfur. Though aid organizations continue heroically to confront the challenges of the world's greatest humanitarian crisis, insecurity has severely attenuated the reach and efficacy of assistance. This is insecurity orchestrated by Khartoum, with a clear understanding of its implications for humanitarian access and transport. This is insecurity that deliberately impedes humanitarian aid delivery and is fully consistent with Khartoum's larger genocidal ambitions in Darfur as revealed by almost two years of savagely destructive counter-insurgency warfare.

To be sure, there are occasional reports that fighting has diminished in some areas within Darfur; but other accounts indicate continuing intense violence and village destruction (see below). And in much of Darfur there is simply nothing left: almost all the non-Arab or African villages have been destroyed and civilian populations have been virtually entirely displaced. There is nothing to support either civilians or insurgents; the agricultural economy has totally collapsed. The consensus within the Dafuri diaspora, among those who have significant contacts within Darfur, is that 90% of non-Arab/African villages have now been destroyed. And while some previously closed roads and humanitarian corridors may now again be open, others remain closed; moreover, the risk of further attenuation of aid deliveries is extremely high.

NOTHING WILL COME OF NOTHING

And yet there is no international plan to enhance security for humanitarian operations in Darfur; there is no prospect of diplomatic settlement in next month's reconvened talks in Abuja, Nigeria (Khartoum ensured the collapse of the last round of talks [December 2004] by mounting a sustained military offensive immediately prior to the opening of negotiations); there is no effective monitoring force in place for a cease-fire that is merely notional (see below); Khartoum is not abiding by its formal commitment to halt offensive military flights over Darfur; there is nothing in place, or contemplated, that can stop what has become the inexorable logic of genocide by attrition. A ghastly status quo has descended upon

Darfur, reflected in the significant diminishment of on-the-ground news coverage, and the growing lack of effective attention to Darfur in the wake of the north/south peace agreement.

Perversely, at this very moment of paralysis and diminished attention, the scale of human destruction in Darfur's catastrophe is finally being recognized in some news quarters. In general, however, there remains an intellectually slovenly refusal to report data and evidence that strongly suggest total mortality in Darfur and eastern Chad, over the course of two years of extremely violent conflict and displacement, now exceeds 400,000 human beings (see January 18, 2005 mortality assessment by this writer, at <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=30&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>).

[The Associated Press, to its immense credit, has begun the process of assessing this evidence and data; see Appendix 1 for an analysis of the January 20, 2005 AP report on violent mortality in Darfur.]

To gather an appropriate sense of urgency, we must bear in mind that the data and evidence available also suggest that monthly mortality has been approximately 35,000 human beings throughout the greater Darfur region (including Chad and inaccessible rural areas of Darfur), and according to UN Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland, this number may rise to 100,000 per month if continuing insecurity forces humanitarian organizations to suspend their operations in Darfur (Financial Times [UK], December 15, 2004).

Food insecurity also continues to grow more severe, as had been predicted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (October 2004) and other humanitarian organizations. The US Agency for International Development-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS Net) has warned that "the situation in North and West Darfur [is] extremely food insecure" (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, January 20, 2005).

But despite the clear and growing risk to a conflict-affected population that now numbers approximately 3 million human beings (for estimates of monthly mortality and conflict-affected population, see <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=256&page=1>), there is no evidence of a willingness to intervene, either on the part of the UN in New York or other actors in the international community. After two years of brutal warfare, reflecting Khartoum's unmistakable genocidal ambitions in Darfur, the regime faces no real consequences for its systematic counter-insurgency policy of "deliberately inflicting on the non-Arab or African tribal peoples of Darfur conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part" (from the language of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide).

These fundamental realities will not change without a significant international humanitarian intervention, with all necessary military support. Either humanitarian operations and transport routes are afforded much more robust security, or their reach will contract. Extremely vulnerable civilians populations must be protected or they will continue to fall victim to ongoing military attacks and Janjaweed predations. Indeed, especially in the wake of a north/south peace agreement (Nairobi, January 9, 2005), Khartoum will calculate with a vicious shrewdness just how much international "good will" it has purchased, and how far this is likely to translate into diminished pressure over ongoing genocide in Darfur.

We may be quite sure that the National Islamic Front regime---which remains the only national authority in Sudan, despite the January 9th agreement---will do only the minimum required to ensure that international consensus does not gather around a robust course of action. With continuing strong diplomatic support from the Arab League, China, and much of the Islamic world, Khartoum clearly has no fear of the sanctions that were first proposed half a year ago by the US in a July 30, 2004 UN Security Council resolution (No. 1556).

Certainly the regime is well aware of China's explicit threat to veto any sanctions measure against

Khartoum's genocidaires (the threat was made publicly by the Chinese ambassador to the UN following passage of a second UN Security Council Resolution [No. 1564] on September 18, 2004). There seems no will even to impose targeted sanctions on key members of the regime (including travel bans and asset freezes); and the vague threat of such sanctions has been fully anticipated by the regime over the many months of their being mooted.

PERCEPTIONS IN KHARTOUM

In assessing the UN's commitment to Darfur, Khartoum has been guided above all else by the inability of the world body to secure any compliance with the singular "demand" of the July 30, 2004 Security Council resolution, viz. that the regime disarm the Janjaweed and brings its leaders to justice. (This "demand" formalized what the National Islamic Front regime had explicitly promised Kofi Annan on July 3, 2004 in a "Joint Communiqué" signed in Khartoum.) Half a year later, the Janjaweed face no threat of disarmament, and no Janjaweed leader has been brought to justice. Can we possibly doubt that there is anything but contempt on Khartoum's part for UN "demands" or threats?

This is the context in which to assess Khartoum's response to an impending report from a UN-appointed commission of inquiry (created by the September 18, 2004 Security Council resolution). This report was to have been issued tomorrow (January 25, 2005), announcing its findings and possible referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC). But it now appears that the report will be deferred, possibly until next week or later. It is clearly enmeshed in UN politics, as well as the international politics that surround the ICC.

Given this political context, the report will most likely find that massive war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed in Darfur, but will not announce a determination of whether genocide has been committed. This will be a reticence growing not out of an assessment of the evidence in light of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, but rather what might be called "the politics of genocide." Here, for example, the demurral or refusal to speak honestly about genocide in Darfur---by the Arab League, by the African Union, and by influential AU leaders (such as President Obasanjo of Nigeria)---will have far more to do with what is said than the overwhelming evidence of the crime of genocide. The expedient calculation is likely to be that given a referral to the ICC on the basis of "crimes against humanity," there is no need to roil the international diplomatic waters with the searing honesty of a genocide determination.

The politics of the ICC also govern this report, especially as defined by the attitudes of three key permanent (veto-wielding) UN Security Council members: the US, China, and Russia. Though much recent opinion writing has focused on whether the US will block a UN Security Council referral to the ICC (necessary when a country, like Sudan, is not party to the Rome Statute that created the ICC), the real issue is whether China will allow such a referral to move forward. China is distinctly less enthusiastic about the ICC than the Bush administration (and for good reason), and has plenty of diplomatic support from Russia. Given China's appalling human rights record, its history of savage repression in Tibet, the legacy of Tiananmen Square, and its general vulnerability to criminal prosecution, Beijing is highly unlikely to acquiesce in a UN Security Council referral to the ICC. Russia's unease over its ghastly brutality in Chechnya likely ensures another killing vote against referral to the ICC.

And would such a referral make a difference in any event? And in a way that responds to the urgency of continuing, massive genocidal destruction? Though some observers claim that the Khartoum regime is genuinely fearful of referral to the ICC, this is mere speculation---a wishful assessment of the diplomatic "body language" of a ruthlessly survivalist regime that has proved extraordinarily adept at evading international censure and meaningful consequences for past genocidal actions.

Until there is in place a fully credible set of consequences for its failure to halt massive, ethnically targeted human destruction in Darfur, Khartoum will continue to act as it has for the past two years and

more. And the regime will continue to be guided by the assumption that the international community is too eager to preserve the success of a north/south peace agreement to issue ultimatums over Darfur. There is little reason to quarrel with this assessment.

THE FAILURE OF THE AFRICAN UNION FORCE IN DARFUR

Khartoum has also been powerfully encouraged by international willingness to accept, by default, the African Union monitoring force as the sole guarantor of security in Darfur. For it is now fully clear that the AU force in Darfur remains---months after initial deployment---woefully inadequate, logistically incapable, and unable to conduct timely investigations of many of the most egregious violations of the cease-fire renegotiated (under AU auspices) in Abuja, Nigeria on November 9, 2004.

Though Western assistance (including provision of military/logistical contractors) to the AU has been less than fully robust or aggressive, the last month of painfully slow deployment is largely the responsibility of the African Union itself. Months after securing (highly limited) terms of deployment from Khartoum, there are still fewer than 1,300 AU personnel in the field, and not nearly enough equipment, especially transport and communications gear. Most significantly, the AU has no peacekeeping mandate: it is meaningfully charged only with monitoring violations of the cease-fire by parties to the cease-fire (notably, this does not include the Janjaweed).

At the same time, Khartoum has grown increasingly canny in exploiting the weaknesses and lack of capacity on the part of the AU, and has been especially emboldened by AU inability to conduct an appropriate number of field investigations and issue prompt assessments of responsibility for violence. Though some AU personnel are attempting to expand the de facto mandate of the mission, and though some AU officers are leading as effectively as possible under virtually impossible constraints, Khartoum clearly sees that no real pressure derives from AU reporting, and indeed, that the international community is increasingly content with a new "moral equivalence" between the insurgency movements on the one hand, and Khartoum and its Janjaweed militia allies on the other.

The insurgency movements have much to answer for over the past two to three months, especially in failing to do more to alleviate insecurity for humanitarian organizations. But the expedient assertion of "moral equivalence," made explicitly and implicitly by the UN and other international actors, convinces Khartoum that its most mendacious assertions, its most absurd charges, will result in the stalemate of international judgment.

In a particularly brazen example, Khartoum declared (January 23, 2005) that "a group of Darfur rebels attack al-Malam areas on the borders of North and South Darfur states. They burnt eight villages and killed many people." (Reuters [Khartoum], January 23, 2005).

But this account is unlikely in the extreme: there have been no confirmed reports of such attacks on villages and civilians by either of the major insurgency groups during the course of the war. Moreover, the statement to Reuters came from "an armed forces official, who declined to be named" (Reuters [Khartoum], January 23, 2005). If Khartoum is doing anything other than trying to deflect blame from itself, why wasn't this statement issued by an official who allowed himself to be named and held accountable, should the AU investigate this incident? This statement gives all signs of being an effort on the part of Khartoum at "preemptive exculpation."

That the regime is engaged in such efforts is made clear in an important dispatch today from the New York Times (dateline Labado, South Darfur). Labado was the site of a brutal attack by Khartoum's military forces on December 16, 2004 in which many civilians were killed and an aid worker for Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) was "murdered" (the word choice is that of MSF in its press release on the occasion of Khartoum's air- and- ground attack on Labado). Dozens of other MSF workers scattered into the bush with the attack, and not all have been accounted for. Many civilians were killed,

and Labado was laid waste.

The New York Times dispatch offers a terrifying picture of pure mendacity put in service of deflecting blame for the war crimes defining the attack on Labado:

"Government soldiers began moving on Labado in early December, camping several miles outside of town. Then, according to the commanding officer of the troops that took the town, SLA rebels mounted a surprise attack on their camp, killing several soldiers. On December 16 [2004] the soldiers retaliated, pounding Labado with helicopter gunships and mortar fire. When the smoke cleared, nearly 100 people were dead, according to village leaders. More than 20,000 town residents fled with the 20,000 residents of a refugee camp at the edge of town." (New York Times [Labado], January 24, 2004)

But the account of the attack from civilians is markedly different:

"Moussa Ahmed Ibrahim, the sheik of the town, said the rebels had been there, living among them, but had fled at the first sign of an attack by Arab militiamen, known as the janjaweed."

And the victims of the Labado attack, humanitarian workers report, were overwhelmingly civilians:

"In Muhagiriya [near Labado], Ran van der Wal, coordinator for the health program run by Doctors Without Borders here, said virtually all of the patients treated for war wounds were civilians. 'We are seeing women, we are seeing children with shrapnel wounds,' Ms. Van der Wal said. 'It is not a war between armies. It is a kind of war on civilians.'" (New York Times [Labado], January 24, 2005)

In defending these military actions, Khartoum's commanding officer at Labado offered a transparently absurd explanation:

"Major Morhi el-Din, a senior officer of the government force that led the charge on Labado, said the fires that burned the huts had been started by bullets fired at SLA fighters hiding in the town---an explanation that seemed to defy logic. 'We shot at them in self-defense, and that started the fires,' Major Din explained. 'We did not start these fires.'" (New York Times [Labado], January 24, 2005)

That such patent absurdity is even offered suggests that Khartoum fears no consequences from its actions; and unsurprisingly, there is still no authoritative account of the Labado attack from the AU monitoring force. The AU helicopter sent to investigate was fired upon while flying over territory militarily controlled by Khartoum and returned to base.

Moreover, there have been numerous other attacks on villages by Khartoum's forces that have yet to receive adequate investigation, giving the regime the inevitable impression that it may operate with essential impunity. For example, Reuters recently reported the observation of UN spokesman George Somerwill:

"Somerwill said the United Nations had reports of attacks by armed tribesmen in four villages in South and North Darfur, with heavy casualties inflicted in one attack on January 9 and 10, [2005]. The attacks had yet to be confirmed by the African Union, responsible for monitoring a shaky April ceasefire in the region." (Reuters, January 19, 2005)

Such belated investigations ensure that Khartoum's sense of impunity, along with that of its Janjaweed militia allies, only grows. Indeed, we have further evidence of precisely this development in today's dispatch from the New York Times (currently an almost singular news presence in Darfur):

"As many as 25 [villages] have been burned to the ground in recent days in this restive patch of Darfur, a vast arid region roughly the size of France. On January 14, [2005], an attack on the town of Hamada left

more than 100 people dead, including many women and children, said foreign military and aid officials in Darfur. Thousands more have fled their homes, adding to the two million people pushed into tattered camps in Sudan and neighboring Chad by the conflict." (New York Times [Labado], January 24, 2005)

The Sudan Organization Against Torture (SOAT), an increasingly important source of information from the ground in Darfur, also reported recently on the Hamada attack:

"On 16 January 2005, the air forces and the Janjaweed militias attacked and destroyed Hamada, Birgid tribe village, 50 km northeast of Nyala, Southern Darfur state using Antonov aircrafts. Reportedly, at least 69 civilians were killed and 10s were wounded during the attack including five children. The details of the civilians killed and wounded are as followed [SOAT lists the names of many of those killed and wounded]." (SOAT, "Darfur: Hamada Village Destroyed," January 19, 2005)

These are clearly attacks by Khartoum's regular military forces and the regime's murderous Janjaweed militia allies. They are not the attacks of the insurgency groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement Army (SLA) or the Justice and Equality Movement [JEM], or even the groups that have split from the main insurgency movements. These military actions, including aerial assaults, continue a fully established pattern of undeterred violence that has been in evidence for over 20 months: non-Arab or African villages and civilian populations have been relentlessly, deliberately attacked by Khartoum's forces and militia allies, with comprehensive destruction the inevitable result.

This has been the engine of massive human displacement and destruction in Darfur, and it signifies the deepest disingenuousness for the clear historical record of these past 20 months to be ignored in assigning blame for attacks like that on Hamada. Certainly the present inability of the AU to monitor in effective fashion the nominal cease-fire does nothing to change this historical record.

Moreover, the Khartoum regime has continued to harass and arrest humanitarian aid workers. This will inevitably have severe and unfortunate effects on recruitment efforts in the future. Reuters recently reported from Khartoum ("Darfur aid agencies complain of staff arrests," January 19, 2005):

"Aid agencies in Sudan's Darfur region are concerned at systematic arrests and harassment of their staff working in the strife torn region, a UN official said on Wednesday. The United Nations had raised the issue with authorities in South Darfur state, one of the most insecure areas in the remote western region, UN spokesman George Somerville told reporters in Khartoum. 'The incidents have been harshest towards local staff,' he said. 'It has been particularly bad in South Darfur.'" (Reuters, January 19, 2005)

This deliberate disruption of humanitarian operations has been part of Khartoum's genocidal strategy since December 2003, when UN special envoy for humanitarian affairs Tom Vraalsen first reported the regime's "systematic" denial of humanitarian access to areas in which the Fur, Massaleit, Zaghawa, and other non-Arab/African tribal groups were concentrated. Present tactics of arresting and harassing Sudanese nationals working for aid groups are especially significant, since these people constitute approximately 90% of the humanitarian staff throughout Darfur.

"CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO BRING ABOUT PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART"

Human Rights Watch today (January 24, 2005) released a new report on Darfur, "Targeting the Fur: Mass Killings in Darfur." The report reiterates findings from 2004, including,

"the round-up, detention and execution in March [2004] of more than 200 Fur farmers and community leaders in West Darfur's Wadi Saleh and Mukjar provinces." (Human Rights Watch release, January 24, 2005)

Human Rights Watch also documents how, in the same period,

"thousands of Fur men, women and children in the South Darfur province of Shattaya were attacked by Janjaweed militias and detained, raped, tortured and kept in inhuman conditions in Kailek camp. In both West and South Darfur, local government officials were deeply implicated in these crimes."

[See also originating reports on Kailek death camp by this writer: "'Ethnic Cleansing' or Genocide in Darfur?" at:

<http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=160>)

and

"African Auschwitz: The Concentration Camps of Darfur," at

<http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=191&page=1>]

Moving to the present, Human Rights Watch reports:

"An overwhelming majority of the tens of thousands of displaced Fur in these areas remain all but imprisoned in the larger government-held towns due to continuing violence in rural areas. Despite the fact that there is no active conflict in the area, government-backed militias on almost a daily basis continue to attack and rape women and girls when they leave towns to work in the fields or in search of firewood." (Human Rights Watch release, January 24, 2005)

These are the realities that the international community is now prepared to countenance. And though the plea from Human Rights Watch that these atrocities be prosecuted is of course fully warranted, it is transparently insufficient to stop acts of genocide and crimes against humanity from continuing.

We may be just as sure that the threat of prosecutions will not improve the character of humanitarian aid in Darfur. The most recent UN Darfur Humanitarian Profile (No. 9, December 1, 2004) is forced to acknowledge that even among accessible populations within Darfur, 54% have no clean water, almost half are without sanitary facilities, and 36% are without any primary health care. These people, in terribly overcrowded conditions, remain extremely vulnerable to disease. And though the UN World Food Program was able to reach 1.5 million people in Darfur during December 2004 (with 23,600 metric tons of food), this represents approximately half the total number of conflict-affected persons in the greater Darfur humanitarian theater. Many hundreds of thousands of people continue to go without food, or with severely inadequate food rations---especially in inaccessible rural areas. They are slowly starving to death, or succumbing to diseases related to severe malnutrition. There is no end in sight.

You are right, Mr. Secretary General: "At this moment, terrible things are happening today in Darfur, Sudan." And it is no less true today than in the late 18th century: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." But evil is triumphing in Darfur---the evidence is everywhere.

Eric Reeves
Smith College
Northampton, MA 01063

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

Appendix One: The Associated Press and global mortality in Darfur

In a moment of impressive journalistic integrity, the Associated Press (January 20, 2005) has responded to evidence of violent mortality in Darfur that has been continuously cited by this writer since September 15, 2004 (see "DARFUR MORTALITY UPDATE: September 15, 2004; Current data for total mortality from violence, malnutrition, and disease," at <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=215&page=1>). The Associated Press thus becomes the first news-wire organization to suggest the massive scale of violent mortality in Darfur (see dispatch at <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/6847039/>).

At the same time, perhaps inevitably, AP fails to discuss a key epidemiological report bearing on violent mortality published in *The Lancet*, the UK's most distinguished medical journal (*The Lancet*, October 1, 2004, "Violence and mortality in West Darfur, 2003-04"). This study, the only one of its kind, finds that well over 90% of the displaced populations in Darfur (in particular, two large camps for the displaced in West Darfur) have been violently displaced. The conservative assumption by this writer has consistently been that only 80% of the total displaced population in Darfur have been violently displaced.

AP first notes:

"Fritz Scheuren, president of the American Statistical Associations, said the [Coalition for International Justice] survey methods were correct, and Juan Mendez, the U.N. envoy for the prevention of genocide, called it comprehensive. Smith College professor Eric Reeves, a researcher into the conflict, said if the figure held for all of Darfur's 2 million displaced the implication would be 200,000 killed."

AP then proceeds to observe:

"However, there is no certainty that the experiences of the displaced in Chad---the group the sample came from---are the same as those of other refugees who did not reach Chad, or of all of the 6 million people of Darfur.

But the key governing assumption for the figure derived by this writer---of over 200,000 violent deaths---is in fact considerably more conservative than that suggested by the only study speaking to the issue of violent displacement as a percentage of total displacement. This is evidently not understood in the AP analysis.

Moreover, AP takes insufficient account of the randomizing techniques used in the key larger study in question ("Documenting Atrocities in Darfur," by the Coalition for International Justice, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/36028.htm>):

"Furthermore, projecting a precise death toll estimate from the survey is problematic because there is no certainty about the size of the group each refugee would consider to be 'family'---a key element in the calculation. Refugees included extended family---such as uncles and cousins---in their answer." (AP, January 20, 2005)

But in fact, even if the "family" in question were an extended rather than a nuclear family, the randomizing techniques used by the Coalition for International Justice (CIJ) ensured almost no overlap in familial reporting on mortality:

"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]." ("Documenting Atrocities in Darfur," page 5)

More significant is the fact that those conducting interviews for the CIJ found that interviewees often

reported more than one family member had been killed, often several more than one. Yet the statistical derivation offered by this writer presumed that only one family member has been killed among the 61% who reported seeing (at least) one family member killed.

Secondly, the CIJ study could take no account of the number of families in which all members were killed, and who thus had no reporting presence in the camps where interviews took place. Further, the CIJ study reports that 28% of those interviewed "directly witnessed" persons dying from the consequences of displacement before reaching Chad. These deaths must be considered the direct consequence of violence, if not violent deaths per se, and would significantly increase violent mortality totals.

Given these statistical considerations, a figure of more than 200,000 violent deaths has a much greater plausibility than the Associated Press is able to suggest.