

United Nations Press Release
18 May 2007

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights called today for an immediate and independent investigation into the involvement of Sudanese security forces in attacks on villages near Nyala, South Darfur, that have left over 100 people dead and thousands displaced since January of this year. The Office is seriously concerned that to date no effective action has been taken by the Government to prevent the attacks or bring the perpetrators to justice.

In a report released today, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights documents violence in an area known as "Bulbul" resulting from a dispute over land between the Rizeigat Abbala and Tarjum groups. The report, issued in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Sudan, details the involvement of Border Intelligence Guards in attacks by the Rizeigat Abbala on the Tarjum starting on 6 January. The latest large-scale attack was reported on 31 March. Members of both groups describe themselves as Arab.

()The report concludes that Sudan is failing to protect the human rights of the population in the Bulbul area, and in particular the right to life. The responsibility to protect includes carrying out investigations, prosecuting perpetrators and providing reparations to victims, UN High Commissioner Louise Arbour recommended in the report. Since January 2007, despite clear evidence that members of its security forces were involved in the attacks, the Government did not meet its obligations under international law to take effective action to prevent the attacks, control members of its security forces and use of its equipment, pursue the attackers or intervene to protect civilians.

Excerpt from the Seventh periodic report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in the Sudan- Involvement of Sudanese security personnel in attacks on the Bulbul area of South Darfur from January to March 2007.

This report is issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). It documents violations of international human rights law during attacks on villages in South Darfur during an ongoing dispute between members of the Tarjum and Rizeigat Abbala.

()This is not the first dispute between members of these groups, however what is particularly striking is the intensity of the fighting, the high number of casualties and, in particular, the involvement of Sudanese security personnel, weapons and vehicles' in the attacks on villages.

()Despite clear and consistent evidence gathered between January and March 2007 that members of government security forces were involved in the attacks, the Government did not take effective action to prevent the attacks, control members of its security forces and use of its equipment, pursue the attackers or intervene to protect civilians. There were some attempts to promote reconciliation, however these fell far short of what was required under the circumstances to prevent further loss of life.

Moreover, after the attacks, insufficient action was taken to identify and prosecute those responsible or provide reparation to the victims and the Government has still not taken measures to prevent the reoccurrence of the attacks. The ongoing impunity for these crimes is of great concern and is a violation of Sudan's obligations under international law ()

Full report available at:

http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/united_nations/c37

Full UN press release available at:

<http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/69B910048B7A7A03C12572DF00372CA2?opendocument>