A new wave of violence in Sudan's Darfur region is a "shocking indication" of the international community's collective failure to stem "horrendous crimes" there, the United Nations has warned, amid daily reports that the killings continue unabated.

Despite regular Security Council discussions and an African Union (AU) mission, a new UN report says: "Large-scale attacks against civilians continue, women and girls are being raped by armed groups, yet more villages are being burned, and thousands more are being driven from their homes."

Its findings leave few doubts that the world's efforts to stem Sudan's catastrophe are not working, despite its leaders' assertion at last year's UN summit that all nations bore a "responsibility to protect" civilians from crimes against humanity.

Officials are warning that the AU presence needs either a substantial boost, or to be transformed into a fully fledged UN mission. The report says the situation is getting worse; the confirmed number of violent civilian deaths doubled from October to November, caused both by "politically motivated attacks and criminal banditry".

Talks between the Sudanese government and Darfur rebels are continuing but have had little success. The UN report pointed to an internal leadership struggle within the main Darfur armed rebel group, which has hindered negotiations, as well as an influx of Chadian military deserters into Darfur.

Idriss Deby, the Chadian president, has been calling on the AU to condemn Sudan for what he says is its support for rebels seeking to overthrow him, and has declared a "state of belligerence" between the two countries. Sudan has dismissed the allegations, but as long as the crisis in Darfur continues it will have a destabilising effect on both countries, analysts say.

"Darfur has provided an environment where rebel groups can operate, very simply it's a lawless and chaotic place," said David Mozersky, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, who recently visited Chad.

"Clearly Darfur has the capacity to have a negative impact and destabilising effect on Chad, and the longer it goes on without a political settlement, or at least an improvement in the security situation, the region will suffer security and economic implications."

In Darfur, the UN says the situation has been deteriorating since September, while AU officials complain that they lack resources and need more international assistance for their mission. One series of inter-tribal militia attacks in southern Darfur in November resulted in 60 deaths, huts torched and crops set alight, the worst single incident this year. The UN blamed the government of Sudan for a "continuing failure to protect its own population", as well the international community's impotence