



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Sudan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 January 2011**

### **Information on the current security situation in Darfur**

An article by *Bloomberg Business News* in January 2011 notes:

“Three people were killed in an exchange of fire in Sudan's western region of Darfur between the government and a rebel group, the United Nations-led peacekeeping mission said” (Bloomberg Business News (10 January 2011) *Firefight in Sudan's Darfur Kills Three People, UN Reports*).

In January 2011 a report by *Human Rights Watch* states:

“Conditions in Darfur have deteriorated in the weeks leading to the referendum, with a resumption of conflict between Sudanese government forces and Sudan Liberation Army rebels loyal to Mini Minawi, a signatory of the now-defunct 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, in several locations in North and South Darfur. Clashes and attacks on civilians by government forces in Khor Abeche, Shearia and Shangil Tobayi have caused the displacement of 32,000 people” (Human Rights Watch (8 January 2011) *Sudan: Deteriorating Situation in Darfur*).

This report also notes:

“Information about security in Darfur and the impact of violence on civilians is largely unavailable despite the large presence of UN peacekeepers and civilian staff in Darfur. The UN human rights office has not issued public reports on human rights issues in Darfur for two years. The UN humanitarian coordination office stopped publishing humanitarian needs profiles for Darfur in late 2009, and the peacekeeping force has only recently started releasing basic humanitarian reports” (ibid).

*Reuters* in January 2011 states that:

“The United Nations should publish reports on rights abuses and a humanitarian crisis in Sudan's Darfur region where violence has flared in recent months, a coalition of rights groups said on Saturday. Violence in Darfur has increased with new clashes forcing thousands more to flee their homes. Government troops have resumed hostilities with the only insurgents who signed a 2006 peace deal and there has been more fighting with other rebels” (Reuters (8 January 2011) *Sudan: UN should publish Darfur reports - rights groups*).

This report also states:

“The world's largest U.N.-funded peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) works in Darfur but has struggled to stop clashes” (ibid).

A document published by *Amnesty International* in January 2011 states:

“In December, more than 20,000 people were displaced by government attacks, including on Dar Al Salam, Shangil Tobaya and Khor Abeche camps in north and south Darfur. The areas were subsequently reclaimed by armed groups. These attacks have been largely unreported and Amnesty International believes that the human rights violations carried out against civilians in Darfur are being disregarded by the international community as attention shifts towards the referendum” (Amnesty International (7 January 2011) *Human rights violations surrounding the south Sudan referendum*, p.1).

In January 2011 *Agence France Presse* states that:

“A Darfur alliance of rebel splinter factions said on Monday that it has agreed to sign a final peace settlement with the Sudanese government. The Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) "confirms that negotiations have come to an end and the movement is awaiting the final peace document," its leader Al-Tijani al-Sisi told reporters in the Qatari capital” (Agence France Presse (3 January 2011) *Darfur rebel group agrees to deal with Khartoum*).

This document also states:

“The Khartoum government has for several months been trying to secure a comprehensive peace agreement with all rebel groups in the Darfur region of western Sudan. The LJM was expected to finalise a peace deal with Khartoum in mid-December after agreeing a ceasefire last March, but the accord has yet to be signed. Darfur has been gripped by a civil war since 2003 that has claimed 300,000 lives and displaced 2.7 million people, according to UN figures. Khartoum says 10,000 people have died in the conflict” (ibid).

A paper released in December 2010 by the *United Nations* states:

“On 12, 24 and 25 November, SAF aircraft bombed several targets in disputed territory along the Southern Darfur/Northern Bahr El Ghazal border. Approximately 2,500 civilians fled the attacks, which wounded at least four SPLA soldiers and led to the death of one child. SAF claims to have been targeting JEM forces. UNMIS has not been able to verify the presence of JEM in the area. On 24 November, NCP accused SPLM of sheltering Darfur rebel groups in the South, warning that such actions would be seen as “a declaration of war”. SPLM leaders denied the allegations, stating that any rebels in the South were not there at their invitation. However, they stated that they had treated wounded JEM soldiers, in the spirit of international humanitarian law. Those incidents, as well as other security and military concerns, were discussed in a constructive manner at a meeting of the Joint Defence Board in Juba on 30 November, which contributed to the de-escalation of the tensions...Subsequently, on 6, 8 and 9 December, SAF aircraft bombed the area of Timsaha in Western Bahr El Ghazal State. No casualties were reported as a result of the bombing, which did not target SPLA positions. A meeting of the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee held in Juba on 15 December confirmed the bombings, recorded them as a violation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and decided to refer the matter to the Ceasefire Political Commission” United Nations (31 December 2010) *Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan*, p.7).

A report issued in December 2010 by the *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre* states:

"In Darfur, large-scale attacks on civilians have become less common but insecurity prevails in most areas. Over 100,000 of almost 270,000 people newly displaced in Darfur in 2010 were displaced in eastern Jebel Marra, where sporadic fighting between government and rebel forces has continued since February 2010. Meanwhile, Darfur witnessed the continued failure of peace talks, further fracturing of anti-government forces, greater restrictions on humanitarian access, and violence in IDP camps such as Kalma camp" (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (23 December 2010) *Sudan, Durable solutions elusive as southern IDPs return and Darfur remains tense*,p.1).

## **Information on the current security situation regarding the referendum**

In January 2011 *Reuters* states:

"South Sudan's independence referendum will meet international standards, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, who is observing the plebiscite, said on Thursday" (Reuters (13 January 2011) *S.Sudan vote will meet global standards-Carter*).

An article in *Bloomberg Business Week* from January 2011 reports:

"Turnout in Southern Sudan's referendum on independence has passed the 60 percent threshold required for a valid result, the deputy chairman of the commission that organized the vote said. "We are already above the threshold of 60 percent yesterday," Chan Reec Madut told reporters today in Juba, the capital of the semi-autonomous region. More than 2.3 million people already voted, he said, and the commission has received no reports of security problems. The week-long referendum in Southern Sudan entered its fifth day today, as lines at voting booths started to thin out. The plebiscite is the centerpiece of a 2005 peace agreement that ended Sudan's two-decade civil war, in which about 2 million people died. The result is set to be announced by Feb. 14, according to the commission. Southern Sudan's independence, 54 years after the end of British rule in Sudan, would be declared in July" (Bloomberg Business Week (13 January 2011) *Sudan's Referendum Turnout Passes 60 Percent, Commission Says*).

It is stated by *BBC News* in January 2011 that:

"South Sudan has reached the 60% turnout needed to pass the referendum on secession from the north, the south's ruling party and ex-rebel group says" (BBC News (12 January 2011) *South Sudan's referendum vote reaches 60%, says SPLM*).

A report issued in January 2011 by *BBC News* states:

"Ten people have been killed in an ambush of a convoy of south Sudanese civilians near the north-south border, a minister in the south has said. Internal Affairs Minister Gier Chuang said 18 people were hurt in Monday's attack in South Kordofan, north of the border, by Misseriya Arab tribesmen. He said the civilians were returning home to vote in Southern Sudan's ongoing independence referendum. Some 30 people reportedly died earlier in the nearby disputed Abyei area" (BBC News (11 January 2011) *South Sudanese civilians killed in ambush*).

In January 2011 *BBC News* states:

"Clashes in Sudan's disputed oil-rich Abyei region have killed at least 30 people including police, reports say. Abyei has long been seen as a potential flashpoint for

renewed north-south violence as it lies on the border and is claimed by both sides” (BBC News (10 January 2011) *Police killed in Abyei during south Sudan referendum*).

It is stated in January 2011 by *The Guardian* that:

“At least 23 people have died in clashes with Arab nomads near Sudan's north-south border, leaders in the contested Abyei region said today, on the second day of a week-long referendum on southern independence. Analysts cite Abyei as the most likely place for north-south tensions to erupt into violence during and after the vote, the climax of a troubled peace deal that ended decades of civil war” (The Guardian (10 January 2011) *Sudan referendum marred by deadly border clashes*).

*Human Rights Watch* in January 2011 report that:

“A giddy optimism prevails in Juba, in Southern Sudan. Almost everyone in this dusty boomtown -- from teachers and students, to politicians and bodaboda taxi drivers -- says they will choose separation from the North in the January 9 referendum for southern independence. If they do, the ten southern states of Sudan will become Africa's newest nation, with enormous state-building challenges ahead. They will have to build the rule of law from scratch here and end entrenched patterns of communal violence and human rights abuses, especially by southern security forces. Meanwhile, in Sudan's northern states, which will also emerge as a new country, the mood is grim. In recent weeks, the Khartoum government has stepped up its hostile rhetoric and cracked down on northern human rights activists, journalists, critics, and opponents of the ruling party” (Human Rights Watch (8 January 2011) *As Sudan Referendum Nears, Northerners Brace for Backlash*).

The *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* in January 2011 reports:

“An average of 2,000 people are crossing into South Sudan every day, according to a UNHCR official. “We anticipate that many more will return in the coming months following the referendum,” he said, adding: “Many of the returnees who have lived in the North for years say they have left for fear of the unknown and the opportunity to start afresh in their native South.” “ (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (7 January 2011) *Number of Sudanese heading south ahead of referendum tops 120,000*).

A report issued in January 2011 by *Amnesty International* states:

“No agreement has yet been reached on the rights of northerners living in the south and southerners living in the north (which total more than one and a half million). In particular southerners in the north already face persecution and marginalization - most live in camps for the displaced with no security of tenure and many suffer harassment at the hands of security forces. (Amnesty International (7 January 2011) *Human rights violations surrounding the south Sudan referendum*,p.2).

A report published in December 2010 by the *United Nations* states:

“While the security environment in Southern Sudan has shown significant improvement during the reporting period, the situation remains potentially volatile...Throughout October, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and SPLA traded allegations of cross-border incursions and provocative military build-ups. UNMIS noted some minor adjustments to the deployment of both forces along the border, but

did not confirm any significant build-up. UNMIS efforts to verify those reports were hampered by the lack of access to key locations in Southern Darfur, the former western Kordofan area, White Nile State and Sennar State, which are out of the ceasefire zone” (United Nations (31 December 2010) *Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan*, p.6).

A paper released by the *Norwegian Refugee Council* in December 2010 states:

“Despite six years of recovery and reconstruction, the humanitarian situation in Southern Sudan has worsened since 2008 with more people displaced in the south than in Darfur in the last 24 months” (Norwegian Refugee Council (December 2010) *Southern Sudan: Between a rock and a hard place*,p.4).

It is also stated in this report that:

“There has been a fragile peace between the north and Southern Sudan during the CPA period. Some key targets have been met such as the establishment of the GoNU and GoSS and most recently, national elections were held in April 2010. Overall though, many of the expected peace dividends hoped for by the Southern Sudanese have failed to materialise, especially at the local level. Sporadic politicised violence has also erupted in Abyei, Jonglei and Unity States, associated with the 2010 elections, and between Northern and Southern troops from 2006 to 2009” (ibid,p.5).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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