
Press Release

Government of Chad must protect internally displaced women from violence

GENEVA, 25 November 2010 – The government of Chad is failing to protect internally displaced women and girls, according to a report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

As the world marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, internally displaced women and girls in eastern Chad face widespread and serious violence at the hands of armed militias and bandits, government troops, and members of their own communities and families. “Their rights are consistently violated,” said NRC Secretary General Elisabeth Rasmusson, “not only by perpetrators of violence, but also by a government that does not protect or assist them or provide access to justice.”

One in five members of the local population has been internally displaced as a result of internal armed conflict, inter-ethnic violence over land and natural resources, and banditry. As a consequence, eastern Chad is now home to around 171,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) residing in 38 camps.

The Chadian government has not deployed security forces to protect civilians; it has not provided essential health care, shelters or support for survivors of violence; it has not implemented laws that prohibit violence against women and girls, or investigated and prosecuted those responsible, even when they are members of the armed forces.

According to Rasmusson: “The failure to protect internally displaced women and girls in Chad represents a huge barrier to their future well-being and to the development of their communities. As international peacekeepers prepare to leave Chad, the need for the government to meet its duties becomes ever more urgent.”

More than 70 international humanitarian organisations provide assistance to displaced communities in eastern Chad. However, there are gaps in their protection mechanisms. Victims of sexual violence may need a medical certificate to proceed with a legal case, but they struggle to get these certificates from NGO doctors wary of engaging in court processes. The mobile courts set up by the UN only visit each area once a year and so far they have rarely addressed sexual violence cases.

The lack of livelihoods available to internally displaced men, and their resulting frustrations, have also been associated with an increase in domestic violence; internally displaced men need support to develop new trades with which they could find work in other parts of the country to support their families.

Notes for Editors:

Full and summary versions of the report, entitled *National outrage: Violence against internally displaced women and girls in eastern Chad*, can be downloaded at www.internal-displacement.org/countries/chad.

The Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), established by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), is the leading international body monitoring internal displacement worldwide. For more information, contact Kate Half, Head of IDMC (+41 22 799 0703 / kate.half@nrc.ch) or Laura Perez, IDMC Country Analyst for Chad (+1 646 267-1090 / laura.perez@nrc.ch).