



Sudan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 20 April 2009

Any evidence of adverse treatment by the authorities or other ethnic groups of members of the Berti tribe in Sudan?

In a section titled "Background" a *Human Rights Watch* report refers to the Berti and other ethnic groups in Darfur as follows:

"Crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by Sudanese military and militia forces have included the targeted killing, summary execution, assault and rape of thousands of civilians, the destruction of hundreds of villages, the theft of millions of livestock, and the forced displacement of more than two million people. Overwhelmingly targeted were communities sharing the ethnicity of or geographic proximity to the two main rebel movements. These ethnic groups initially included the Masalit, Fur, and Zaghawa, and later expanded to include communities of Dajo, Tunjur, Meidob, Jebel, Berti, and other non-Arab tribes." (Human Rights Watch (12 December 2005) *Entrenching Impunity Government Responsibility for International Crimes in Darfur*, pp.6-7)

An *Associated Press* report states:

"These are unhappy times for the king of the Berti tribe, with tens of thousands of his people killed, harassed or chased from their homes by fighting in Darfur." (Associated Press (17 October 2006) *Situation dire for civilians in Darfur, but many cautious to lay blame amid violence de Montesquiou, Alfred*)

This report also states:

"More than 200,000 people have been killed in the ongoing fight and an estimated 2.5 million people have become refugees many of them Berti villagers. The latest fighting in the north of Darfur has left more than 350,000 people without any form of humanitarian aid, aid groups say. And at least 18,000 new villagers have fled to refugee camps on the outskirts of the regional capital of El Fasher. In the vast no man's land that constitutes the front line between the Sudanese army and various rebel groups, Berti villagers are less concerned about speaking out than their leaders. They say they are being regularly bombed by government aircraft." (ibid)

An *IRIN News* report on El Salaam IDP camp states:

"As they spoke, an Antonov plane flew overhead and the sounds of explosions could be heard in the distance - underlining why members of the Berti community had fled their homes. They ran for cover each time an explosion reverberated

through El Salaam [or peace] camp.” (IRIN News (12 September 2006) *Sudan: Newly displaced yearn for peace*)

An *IRIN News* report on the situation in Kutum states:

“Kutum is a government-controlled town of 45,000, 120 km northwest of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State. The town's stability is fragile, however, as the Sudanese authorities suspect its predominantly Fur, Tunjur and Berti inhabitants support the Darfur rebels.” (IRIN News (20 February 2006) *Sudan: Tension still high in Kutum town*)

In a section titled “Attacks on IDPs” a *United Nations Human Rights Council* report states:

“On 8 July 2008, three armed men believed to be Border Guards opened fire on three civilians while attempting to rob them, killing a 25 year old Berti man and injuring two men. The perpetrators were seen entering a house where Border Guard soldiers reside. Although the case was filed at the Awsat police station on 8 July, and police have been informed about the location of the suspects, reports indicate that no arrests have been made.” (United Nations Human Rights Council (2 September 2008) *Report prepared by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan on the status of implementation of the recommendations compiled by the Group of Experts mandated by the Human Rights Council in resolution 4/8 to the Government of the Sudan for the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 4/8 pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 6/34*, p.29)

In a section titled “In Darfur: Summary Executions and Attempted Summary Executions” this report states:

“On 9 June a 47-year-old Berti man was arrested in Nyala after NISS had threatened to abduct his wife if he did not surrender himself. On 11 June, the police (not the NISS who arrested him) brought the body of the victim to his family. The family was unable to verify whether there were any signs on the body as to the cause of death as the police had prepared the body for burial before bringing the body to the family. The man was said to have been in good health before his arrest. There is a police autopsy report, but the results have so far not been disclosed. The family is of the opinion that the arrest of their relative was related to the Omdurman attack. The Prosecutor’s Office has initiated an investigation.” (ibid, p.58)

A section titled “Torture, degrading, inhumane and cruel treatment” states:

“On 11 May NISS arrested two merchants from Central Sudan in Nyala, apparently for their suspected involvement with the Omdurman attack. The families of the detainees were allowed access to them after they approached the NISS with a Berti tribal committee headed by the Nazir. UNAMID’s attempts to gain access to the detainees were denied by the NISS. The Director of NISS told the HRT that the men were arrested following orders from Khartoum and

therefore all requests including access should be directed at the Khartoum level.”
(ibid, p.62)

This section also states:

“On 9 June a 25-year-old man from the Berti tribe was arrested by unknown men believed to be NISS officers. According to the family, the NISS, the police and police 'mubaheth' (intelligence) in Nyala have denied the arrest. The whereabouts of the man is unknown. On 9 June, unknown armed men suspected to be officers from the NISS arrested a 17-year-old boy from the Berti tribe in his family home in Hay Al-Wihda, Nyala, South Darfur. The whereabouts of the detainee is unknown. The detainee’s family added that NISS in Nyala have denied making the arrest.” (ibid, p.63)

In a section titled “Arbitrary detention” this report states:

“Between 10 May and 23 of June, NISS officials in South Darfur have arrested and detained twenty-three people from the Zaghawa, Berti and Arab tribes on the basis of their suspected involvement in the attack on the city of Omdurman.”
(ibid, p.65)

In a section titled “Patterns of abuse (sub-section titled “Towns, villages, and rural areas”) a *Human Rights Watch* report on sexual violence in Darfur states:

“In an example from North Darfur, three armed Arab men reportedly raped a Berti woman and her daughter who were out collecting wood. According to the survivors, the men approached on camels and asked what tribe the women belonged to and whether they had seen any other camels roaming the area. The men pointed their weapons at the women and ordered them to follow them to a nearby village, where they took the mother and daughter into an abandoned hut and proceeded to rape them in turns. During the rape, one said, 'You Bertis are slaves. Go and tell your men to come meet us.'" (Human Rights Watch (7 April 2008) *Five Years On – No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur*, pp.16-17)

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.

References:

Associated Press (17 October 2006) *Situation dire for civilians in Darfur, but many cautious to lay blame amid violence* de Montesquiou, Alfred
<http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/>
(Accessed 20 April 2009)

Human Rights Watch (7 April 2008) *Five Years On – No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur*

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/darfur0408/darfur0408webwcover.pdf>
(Accessed 20 April 2009)

Human Rights Watch (12 December 2005) *Entrenching Impunity Government Responsibility for International Crimes in Darfur*
<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/darfur1205webwcover.pdf>
(Accessed 20 April 2009)

IRIN News (12 September 2006) *Sudan: Newly displaced yearn for peace*
<http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=61043>
(Accessed 20 April 2009)

IRIN News (20 February 2006) *Sudan: Tension still high in Kutum town*
<http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=58190>
(Accessed 20 April 2009)

United Nations Human Rights Council (2 September 2008) *Report prepared by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan on the status of implementation of the recommendations compiled by the Group of Experts mandated by the Human Rights Council in resolution 4/8 to the Government of the Sudan for the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 4/8 pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 6/34*
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/48d74cd92.pdf>
(Accessed 20 April 2009)

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Human Rights Watch
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
LexisNexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
UK Home Office