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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”**

**Written statement* submitted by Sign of Hope, a non-governmental organization in
special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[8 March 2007]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human Rights Situation in Sudan

Sign of Hope wishes to draw the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council to human rights abuses carried out by Janjaweed militia in areas of Southern Darfur. As a result of the ongoing conflict at least two hundred thousand people were killed in the Darfur region alone. Some were killed during armed attacks. Many others died from disease and malnutrition. All parties to the conflict in Darfur have committed grave violations of human rights, including obstructing much needed humanitarian aid. Thousands of women and girls have been systematically raped. Villages throughout the region have been looted and burned to the ground. Over two million persons have either fled their homes or been displaced by the conflict. A further 200,000 people live as refugees on the Chad border or inside Chad. Both IDP (internally displaced people) and refugee camps were considered targets for attacks. All sides to the conflict in Darfur have failed to take basic measures to protect civilians. On February 27, 2007 the International Criminal Court's Chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo asked pre-trial judges to issue summons against Ahmed Haroun, State Minister of Interior during the height of the conflict, and militia commander Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb.

Moreover, Sign of Hope wishes to underline the importance of implementing the security-related provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). On 9 January, 2005, the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed the CPA in Nairobi, Kenya. It provides for a six-year interim period during which elections and a referendum on the final status of the currently semi-autonomous region of South Sudan. The CPA includes framework agreements on security, wealth and power sharing, the Transition Areas and a detailed implementation schedule.

Recent Janjaweed activities in Southern Darfur

The International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur stated in its report to the United Nations Secretary General, dated January 25, 2005, that Janjaweed is an Arab militia acting under the authority, with the support, complicity or tolerance of the Sudanese State authorities, and who benefit from impunity for their actions.

Sign of Hope found credible evidence for continued Janjaweed activities in Southern Darfur. A Sign of Hope human rights assessment team stayed in the area of Raga (Western Bahr-el-Ghazal) from February 23 to February 27, 2007. During their stay in Boro Medina (also called Sa'id Bundas), which is located 100 km to the west of Raga, the team conducted interviews on the grassroots level with persons affected by activities of Janjaweed militia. Sign of Hope found reliable evidence for very recent attacks of Janjaweed fighters in the area of Buram (Southern Darfur).

On February 25, 2007, the team talked to a 30-year old male civilian, who was attacked by three Janjaweed fighters on January 12, 2007, in the area of the village of Elabo (near Buram, Southern Darfur) while he was grinding sorghum together with his mother and his nephew. The aggressors, who belong to the Fellata tribe, whipped him and looted his property. A group of four Janjaweed fighters, also belonging to the Fellata tribe, beat the same man and stole his food on January 16, 2007, between Elabo and Kwashalal. On February 1, he arrived in the IDP camp in Boro Medina.

On February 25, 2007 the team moreover interviewed a 50-year old male civilian who was caught by 24 Janjaweed militia while approaching a water pump in Elabo, on January 12, 2007. One Janjaweed fighter threatened to kill him. He was then bound and whipped. On the same day, another male civilian (39 years), whom the team also talked to returned to his home village Elabo, where he had left some of his personal belongings, in order to collect these items. Three Janjaweed militia saw him approaching and shot at him with AK-47 guns, while running after him. The man managed to escape physically unharmed.

The more than 1000 IDPs in the camp near Boro Medina had been displaced from about 70 villages in Southern Darfur last August. During these attacks, about 1000 people were killed, according to survivors. They spent several weeks in the bush before they crossed the border to Southern Sudan. During this time, they have been repeatedly attacked by Janjaweed. The Sign of Hope team conducted several interviews with victims of these incidents. More IDPs are reportedly still on the way to Boro Medina.

Continued presence of militias in Raga (South Sudan)

Even though the area of Raga (Western Bahr-el-Ghazal) is part of South Sudan, there are still pro-Khartoum militias present. In Raga, the Sign of Hope team by talking to the respective commanders found out, that there are four armed military groups based in the town.

SAF and SPLA forces form a “Joint Integrated Unit (JIU)”, which was established under the CPA. According to their respective commanders, the JIU in Raga consists of around 640 soldiers from government army and SPLA forces.

The existence of a group of Fursan militia fighters is a clear violation of the CPA. According to its commander, Major Hamdan Ahmed al-Momin, the Fursan militia in Raga presently consists of 1320 fighters (interview conducted on February 26, 2007). The CPA states that upon signature of the agreement, the process of incorporation of individual members of all “Other Armed Groups” into the ranks of either SAF or SPLA shall start as soon as possible. The incorporation process should be completed within twelve months from January 2005. Regarding the Fursan militia in Raga, this has not been done.

Another armed group that is present in Raga and its vicinity is the so called “Quat al salam” militia. According to its commander Major Hassan Mohamed Abo, the “Quat al salam” militia in the region of Raga presently consists of 3750 fighters (interview conducted on February 26, 2007). As these forces seem to be under the overall command of Tom al-Nour, this former pro-Khartoum militia now appears to be part of the SAF. Under the provisions of the CPA this group has to be redeployed to the North at latest by July 9, 2007.

People in Raga consider the continued presence of the Fursan militia and of the “Quat al salam” as a threat to the security situation in the area and as a way of intimidation by Khartoum. The JIU based in Raga, seems to be unable to deal with these forces. “Only Khartoum can pull out these militias”, said Lt. Col. Ahmed Khalid Ahmed, one of the two commanders.

Recommendations

The Council should call upon all parties to the conflict in Darfur to stop the violence and to protect civilians in armed conflict.

The Council should call upon the Government of Sudan to take immediate steps to signal publicly that it is moving toward peace. Steps should include the public condemnation of human rights abuses, an end to supporting and directing the Janjaweed, and a willingness to hold officials accountable for their actions. All parties to the conflict in Darfur must stop the violence and take immediate steps to signal that they are moving toward peace.

The Council should call upon the Government of Sudan to acknowledge the findings of the International Court of Justice and to fully cooperate with the ICC to bring Ahmed Haroun and Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman to justice, as this would be a first important step to end impunity in Darfur.

The Council should specifically ask the Government of Sudan to fully implement the security related provisions of the CPA. To this end, the Council should urge the Government of Sudan to pull the Fursan fighters out of Raga as there is no room for Fursan militia or any 'Other Armed Group' in South Sudan.

Concerning the presence of the "Quat al salam" militia in Raga, the Council should point out that according to the CPA, all SAF and SPLA forces, with the exception of those assigned to the Joint Integrated Units, are to be redeployed to North and South of the 1.1.1956 border by July 9, 2007. The Council therefore should call upon the Government of Sudan to fully implement this provision of the CPA, as this step would clearly contribute to a stabilization of the security situation in the area.
