



**Joint Oral Statement
Follow-up of the HRC Decisions / Report of Darfur Experts Group
13 June 2007**

We welcome the report of the group of experts on Darfur. The report rightly focuses on the most urgent areas of human rights abuse in Darfur and offers concrete recommendations for improvement. Sadly, the Sudanese government's response is largely a litany of superficial steps that minimize and deny the reality of the situation in Darfur.

Today, the situation for civilians in Darfur remains as bleak as in 2004, if not worse. It will not improve until the government of Sudan undertakes a fundamental shift of attitude, recognizes the problems, and reverses its abusive policies in Darfur. These policies include the formal legislative immunity and the unofficial impunity given to those responsible for attacks on civilians, the government's complicity in physical and verbal attacks on humanitarian aid workers, IDPs and refugees, and the consistent obstruction of international efforts to improve the situation.

For instance, the government's response to section 1.2, the experts' recommendations on protecting women and girls from sexual and other forms of violence, is grossly inadequate. What is urgently needed is a real commitment to investigate, prosecute and arrest those individuals responsible for sexual violence and other attacks. Instead, the government's response lists a number of seminars and awareness raising events, asks for financial support from the international community for computers and other equipment, and fails to demonstrate serious will to address the fundamental problem: the fact that rape and sexual violence has been formally and informally sanctioned by Sudanese government policy.

The government's response to recommendation 3.3 on cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) provides another example of its obfuscation.

Sudan rejects Security Council resolution 1593 and claims that national proceedings are underway. Yet Human Rights Watch research has concluded that only 13 cases were brought before the Special Criminal Courts for Darfur in 2005, and all were for minor offenses. None of the crimes charged reflected the massive scale and gravity of the atrocities in Darfur. No senior commanders or superiors were charged for their part in the atrocities. In the past year no new cases have been tried before the Special Criminal Courts. On the contrary, two members of Military Intelligence who were among the handful of individuals convicted by the courts, were granted amnesty last June.

In summary, as the experts note in their report, regardless of the government of Sudan's promises and agreements, "it is the human rights situation on the ground which will provide the measurement of any improvement." To date we see no progress on that score.

We urge the Human Rights Council to:

- Call on the government of Sudan to fully and genuinely implement all the recommendations in the report;
- Insist that Sudan cooperate immediately with the ICC Prosecutor's ongoing investigations and promptly hand over the two individuals subject to arrest warrants to the ICC
- Extend the mandate of the experts and request that they report to the Sixth Session regarding progress on the implementation of recommendations in the report.