

Chad

In 2006, several separate but intertwined developments threatened the political stability of Chad: the effects of the influx of refugees and militias into eastern Chad due to the crisis in neighboring Darfur; efforts by Chadian rebel groups to oust President Idriss Déby's government; an acute fiscal crisis; and a protracted revenue dispute with the World Bank and international oil companies. The May 2006 presidential elections, won by Déby following a constitutional amendment permitting him to run for a third five-year term, contributed to domestic discontent.

Human rights abuses in eastern Chad worsened in the wake of Chadian government efforts to repel a Darfur-based Chadian insurgency. There were indiscriminate and targeted attacks by Sudanese militia on Chadian civilians left unprotected by the Chadian military, and Chadian officials were complicit in the forced recruitment of refugees, including children, by Sudanese rebel movements.

Domestic Political Instability

Chadian rebels hoping to oust Déby prior to the presidential elections scheduled for May 3 staged a failed attack on N'djamena on April 13, 2006. While civilians in N'djamena did not appear to have been specifically targeted or indiscriminately attacked by Chadian government or rebel forces, at least 291 people died in the fighting, including civilians, government soldiers and rebels.

An estimated 250 suspected Chadian rebels who were captured during the coup attempt were held at the Gendarmerie Nationale in N'djamena in inadequate detention facilities, and several detainees were subjected to torture or deliberately cruel treatment.

Government security forces have been guilty of violations including extrajudicial killings, torture, beatings, arbitrary arrests and rapes, which have been met by near total impunity. The government has placed limits on freedom of speech and the

press; journalists who are critical of the government have been arrested on charges of defamation, and in some cases have been held in detention even after their charges have been dismissed.

Abuses Related to the Conflict in Darfur

Civilians in Chad have suffered human rights abuses as the conflict in Darfur has become increasingly cross-border and regional in scope. Chadian government security forces responded to the Chadian insurgency by redeploying troops away from long stretches of the Chad-Sudan border, leaving civilians exposed to raids by “Janjaweed” militias allied with the government of Sudan. Sudanese rebels, supported by a Chadian president desperate for allies among the many armed groups in the region, preyed upon Sudanese refugee camps in eastern Chad, forcibly recruiting civilians into their ranks.

Cross-border attacks on Chadian civilians by “Janjaweed” militias based in Darfur worsened in both scale and in intensity in 2006. In the first six months of the year, at least 50,000 Chadian civilians living in rural villages on or near the Sudan-Chad border were forced to leave their homes due to persistent attacks, which reached deeper into Chad than ever before.

In one of the worst known attacks, 118 civilians were killed on April 12-13 in the village of Djawara, approximately 70 kilometers west of the border with Sudan, simultaneous with the unsuccessful coup attempt by Chadian rebels. At the same time, Janjaweed militias reportedly killed 43 others in three villages in the Djawara vicinity: Gimeze, Singatao and Korkosanyo.

On March 17-19, a Sudanese rebel faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) lead by commander Khamis Abdullah and linked to the Chadian government forcibly recruited approximately 4,700 men and boys from UN-supervised refugee camps in Chad, many of them seized from schools. Many of the refugees were forcibly recruited and held in brutal conditions in training camps, and some individuals were exposed to torture and cruel treatment. Though most were eventually able to escape, some were integrated into rebel forces in Darfur.

Fiscal Crisis and Oil Revenue Disputes

Chad has been an oil producer since 2003, thanks in large part to financing provided by the World Bank, but the government ran a widening budget deficit in spite of high oil prices in 2006 and was often unable to pay salaries and pensions. In January, citing security needs, Déby pulled out of an unusual program designed by the World Bank to allocate the bulk of Chad's oil revenues to poverty-reduction projects, including priority sectors such as health, education and rural development. The World Bank froze the escrow account into which Chad's oil revenue flows, deepening the country's fiscal crisis.

President Déby has used much of the oil revenue that was supposed to help the poor on military hardware in a bid to bolster his regime against the threat of armed opposition groups. The government's lack of absorptive capacity and a high incidence of off-budget spending also raise concerns about corruption. The conflict with the World Bank was resolved in July with the government being accorded more discretion to spend oil income, but by August Chad was locked in another revenue dispute, this time with two foreign oil companies it accused of tax evasion.

The Trial of Hissène Habré

The long-standing campaign to bring Chad's former dictator Hissène Habré to justice reached a turning point in 2006 with Senegal's announcement that it would prosecute Habré on charges of torture and crimes against humanity. Habré, whose eight-year rule was marked by widespread atrocities, fled Chad following a 1990 *coup d'état* and took refuge in Senegal, where he was indicted and placed under house arrest in February 2000. Senegal's highest court later ruled that Habré could not stand trial in Senegal for crimes allegedly committed elsewhere, leading the Senegalese government to ask the African Union (AU) to decide where Habré should be tried. In July, citing Senegal's obligation under the 1984 UN Convention against Torture to either prosecute or extradite alleged torturers who enter its territory, the AU asked Senegal to reverse itself and prosecute Habré.

Key International Actors

Sudan exacerbated political instability in Chad in 2006 by backing both Chadian rebel groups determined to topple Déby and “Janjaweed” militia groups responsible for depredation and death in the volatile east of the country. Chad and Sudan signed an agreement in February under which they promised not to interfere in each other’s internal affairs and agreed not to host the opposition of one country in the other’s territory; but Chad unilaterally severed relations with Sudan following the April 13 coup attempt, which it blamed on Khartoum. On August 28, the two countries signed an agreement in Khartoum almost identical to the one they signed in February but at year’s end both governments continued to support rebel movements on either side of the border.

France has remained actively involved in Chadian affairs since Chad achieved independence from France in 1960, and has been a crucial ally to President Déby since he seized power in a 1990 *coup d’etat*. More than 1,000 French troops are permanently stationed in Chad under the terms of a military cooperation treaty.

During the April coup attempt, French Mirage fighter jets fired warning shots at an advancing rebel column. French jets made surveillance runs over rebel positions during the April coup attempt and once again during government combat operations in eastern Chad in late September; in both instances the French military shared intelligence on the disposition of the rebel forces with their Chadian counterparts.