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DARFUR BLEEDS

Militia Attacks on Civilians in Chad

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH



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Photographs by Kadir van Lohuizen/Agence VU
on assignment for Human Rights Watch

Some of those wounded in attacks by Arab militias in Dar Sila, eastern Chad, in October and November 2006 seek treatment in a hospital in Goz Beida, Chad. Many are suffering from gunshot wounds.



The human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur has become a regional crisis that demands a strong international response, which thus far has been weak, divided and ineffective.

KEY FACTS ABOUT DARFUR AND CHAD

- At least 200,000 Sudanese civilians in Darfur have died since the conflict ignited in early 2003.
- At least two million Sudanese civilians have been displaced from their homes since mid-2003.
- At least four million people in Darfur are current wholly or partly dependent on food aid.
- At least 90,000 Chadian civilians have been displaced by violent attacks in eastern Chad in recent months.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN DARFUR RIGHT NOW?

In October 2006, the Sudanese armed forces launched a military offensive against Darfur rebel movements that did not sign the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement. The Sudanese government's military campaign combines ground attacks by militia forces and indiscriminate aerial bombardment.

Sudanese government aircraft indiscriminately bombed villages in North Darfur and around Tine, Chad in October and November 2006, killing and injuring civilians. The Sudanese government has specifically targeted water points in North Darfur, some of which are essential for the survival of displaced civilians and their livestock.

Sudanese government-backed militia attacks on civilians have escalated in all three Darfur states since October 2006. In North and West Darfur, militias continue to attack civilians and destroy villages and crops. Dozens of civilians were killed in such attacks around the Kutum, Bir Meza and Disa areas of North Darfur.

In West Darfur, the attacks on Jebel Mun on October 29 and Sirba on November 11 are only the most publicized incidents in an escalating offensive that includes parts of the Jebel Marra mountains.

In South Darfur, clashes between various rebel factions and government-backed tribal militias have displaced tens of thousands of people in the past six weeks. Militias attacked at least 14 villages in the area east and south of Muhajariya in the past six weeks, killing and wounding dozens of civilians.

The Sudanese government's continuing policy of arming the "Janjaweed" or Arab militias and supporting them as a paramilitary ground force remains a key cause of the violence against civilians and a major obstacle to regional stability. Human Rights Watch research indicates that the Sudanese government continues to actively recruit militia members in several locations in Darfur, including in Kebkabiya and Zalingei towns, offering financial incentives as well as training and arms.

The proliferation of armed groups along Darfur's international borders is having a negative impact on the security of civilians throughout the region. Cross-border attacks have become routine, with civilians the main target for looting and raiding.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CHAD RIGHT NOW?

Chad is experiencing both an internal armed conflict and the effects of the Darfur crisis next door.

- A Chadian insurgency against the Chadian government based in Darfur and supported by the Sudanese government is launching attacks into Chad.
- Sudanese militia operating from Darfur are increasing attacks against Chadian civilians in eastern Chad.
- The political tensions generated by the Chadian conflict—and by attacks originating from Darfur—are inflaming ethnic tensions among communities in Chad.

A year ago, while many Chadians faced increasing pressure over resources due to the influx of Darfurian refugees, few were directly affected by the violence. Today, armed attacks in eastern Chad have displaced at least 90,000 Chadians and have included the use of rape and sexual violence against women and girls.

Chadians are among both the victims and the perpetrators of violence, and Chad's ongoing political crisis is having potentially long-lasting consequences for relations between ethnic groups in the volatile and lawless east of the country.

Ethnic militia groups are coalescing on either side of the political divide. Certain groups composed mainly of non-Arab members of Dajo and Muro ethnicity receive organizational support, training and in some instances, weapons and ammunition, from individuals associated with the Darfur rebel movements, who are in turn armed and backed by the Chadian government. In cases documented by Human Rights Watch, these groups have been responsible for abuses ranging from the recruitment and use of child soldiers to attacks directed at Chadian Arab civilians and communities.

Conversely, other militias operating in eastern Chad appear to be drawn mainly from the Chadian Arab community and are operating either independently or in conjunction with Sudanese Arab militias. These ethnic lines are not definitive however, as a number of Chadian Arab groups appear to have resisted involvement in attacks altogether, and other non-Arab communities are participating in attacks against their ethnic kin alongside the Arab militia. Local-level decision-making by village chiefs and the relative status of inter-communal relations appears to account for the differing dynamics in various areas.

Taken as a whole, however, recent sectarian attacks are contributing to the politicization of ethnicity, which is very worrying in view of the steady influx of arms and ammunition into the rural southeast of Chad. The trend of communities becoming increasingly militarized and creating ethnic-based security alliances threatens to widen the cycle of violence still further, particularly if cross-border attacks continue.



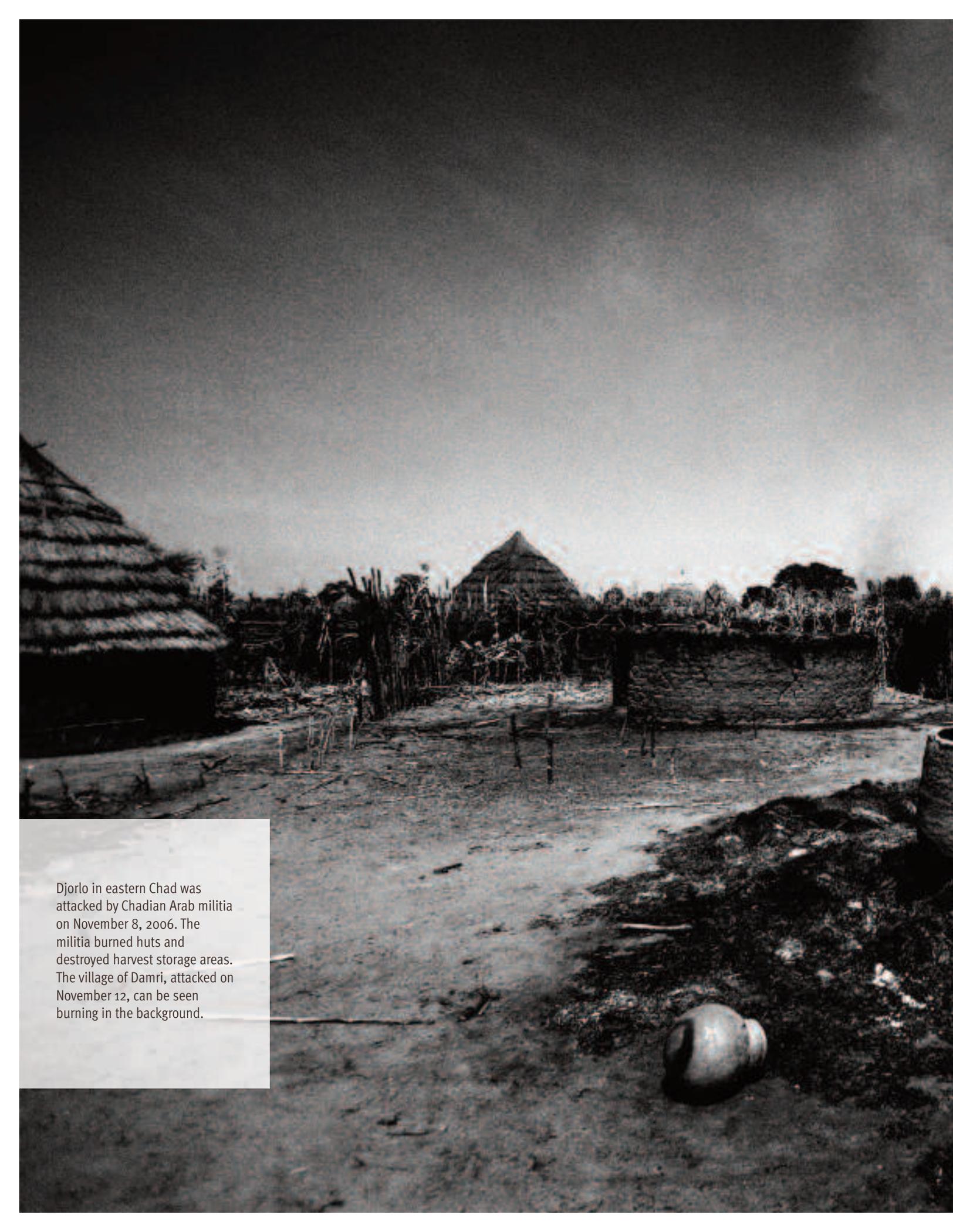
(above) People await food distribution from humanitarian agencies.

(right) Sudanese refugees live in makeshift shelters in the desert outside Birak, on Chad's border with Sudan.





Bandikao in eastern Chad was attacked by militias composed of Chadian Arab nomads in early November 2006. An estimated 56 people died, and 41 were wounded. Because of insecurity on the roads, the wounded were cut off from aid until November 13, when a Chadian army force opened the road and evacuated some of the wounded to a local hospital.



Djorlo in eastern Chad was attacked by Chadian Arab militia on November 8, 2006. The militia burned huts and destroyed harvest storage areas. The village of Damri, attacked on November 12, can be seen burning in the background.





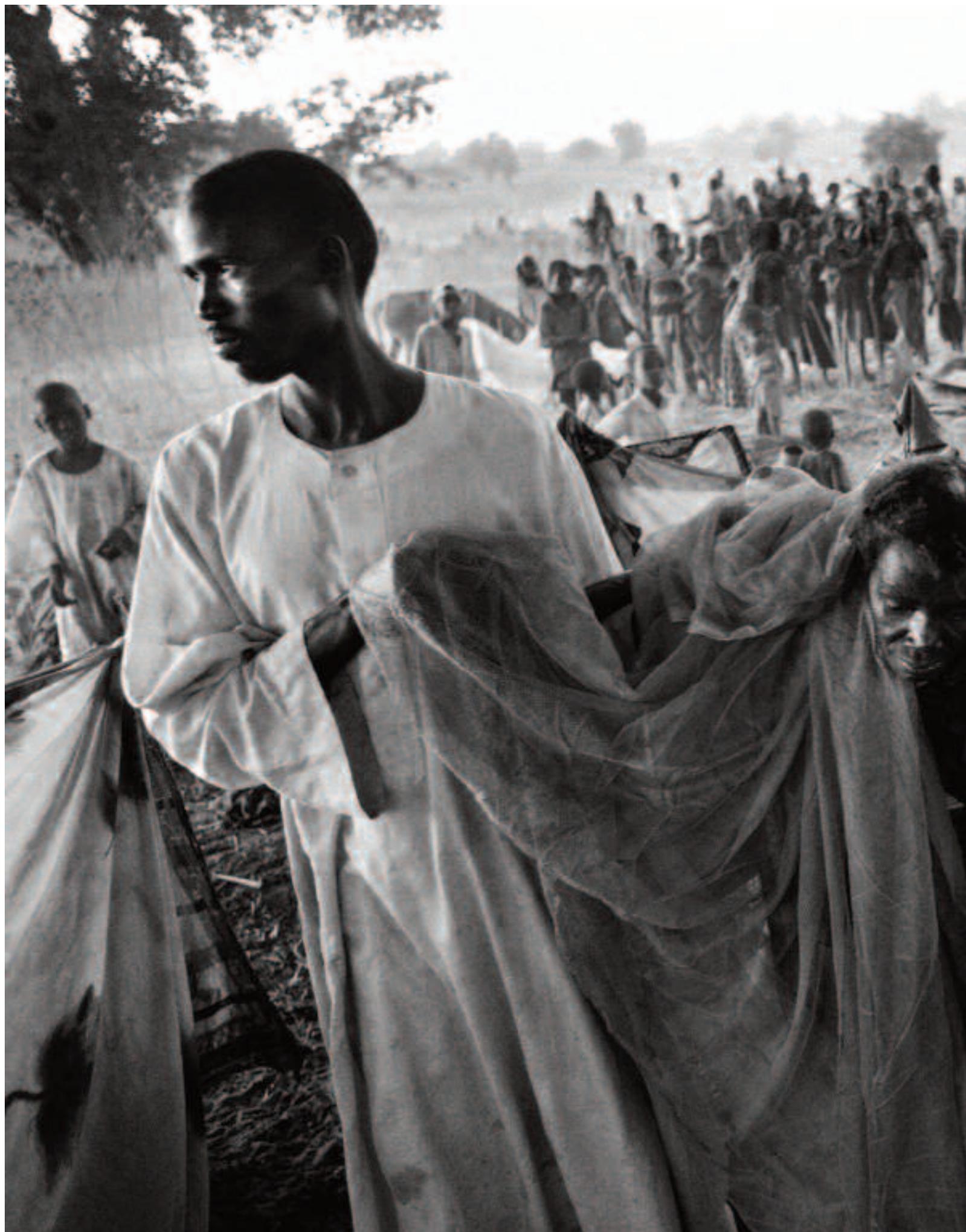
A bomb crater near Tine, Chad, after Sudanese government aircraft bombed the area in October 2006. The Sudanese government uses Antonov airplanes to indiscriminately bomb civilians living near the border between Chad and Sudan.

A woman flees the recent attacks on villages between Koukou and Kerfi.





Chadian civilians from a neighboring village, between Kerfi and Goz Beida, await the arrival of a truck to bring them to safety. Many have fled for fear of attacks by Arab militias.





A wounded woman is led to shelter. Chadian militia groups have attacked dozens of villages in southeastern Chad in November 2006, killing several hundred civilians, injuring scores more and driving at least 10,000 people from their homes.



Bahai is a desert town in Chad on the border with North Darfur, Sudan. The town is a major base for Sudanese rebels fighting the government in Khartoum. Soldiers of the National Redemption Front rebel coalition are mounting a Katyusha rocket launcher on the back of a pick-up truck.



(above) Villagers, armed with bows and arrows, patrol Djorlo after it was attacked by Chadian Arab militia on November 8, 2006.



(left) Chadian civilians who fled Arab militia attacks on their villages arrive in Kerfi.



Bandikao in eastern Chad was attacked by militias composed of Chadian Arab nomads in early November 2006. The village chief was lured out and executed. When the villagers came out to respond, in some cases armed with bows and arrows, they were massacred. An estimated 56 people died, and 41 were wounded. Many villagers tried to retrieve the dead and wounded but they were attacked again and some were killed. The village was inaccessible for 10 days and the wounded could not be evacuated because the militias were still on the road, targeting people. On November 13, the Chadian army went in to try to evacuate the wounded.





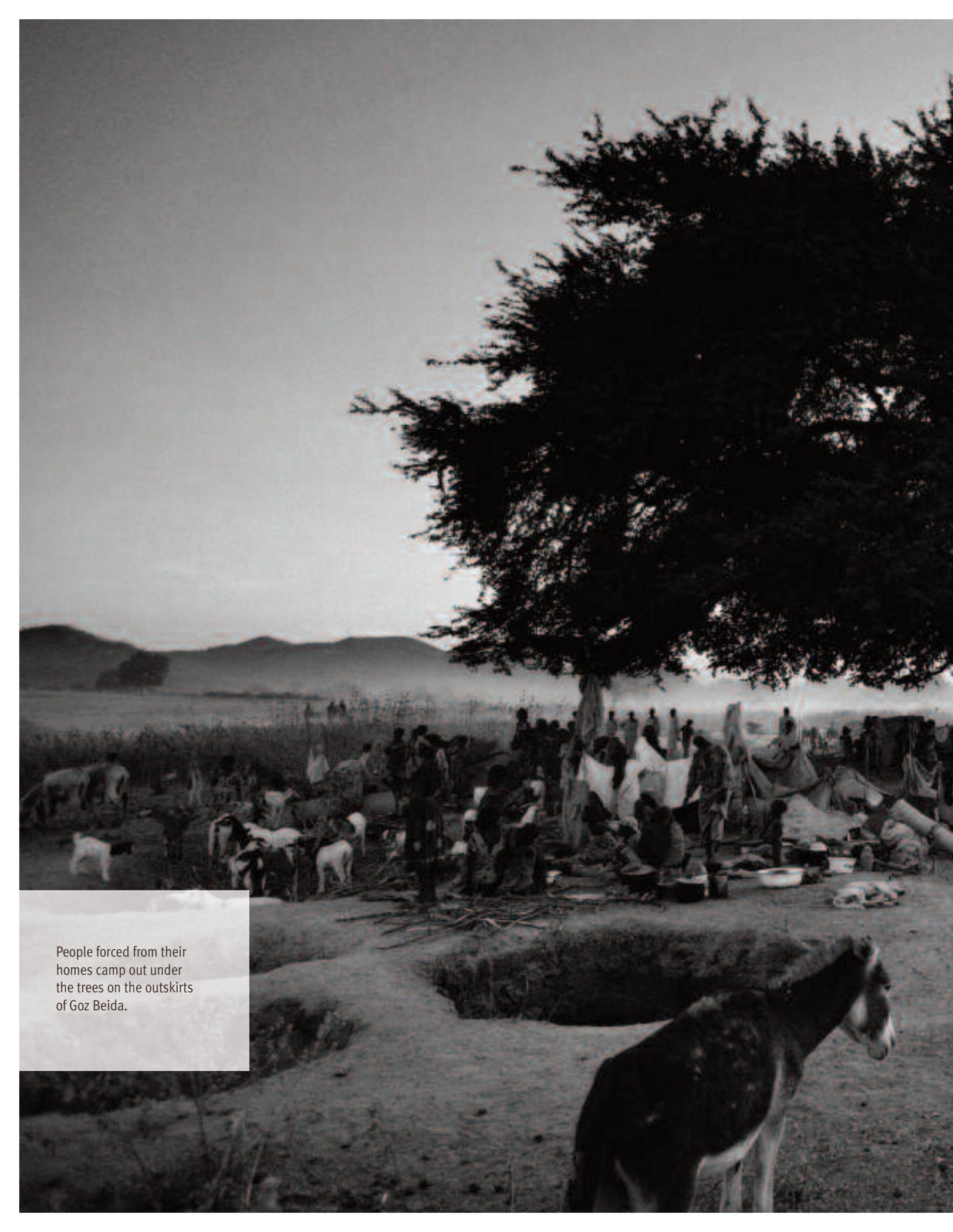
Civilians forced from their homes due to indiscriminate attacks against them find refuge at Konoungou, a large camp outside Guereda in northeast Chad.

Sudanese refugees live in makeshift shelters in the desert outside Birak, on Chad's border with Sudan. They fled the October 29 attacks by Sudanese militias in Jebel Mun, West Darfur, Sudan. Dozens of children were killed in the attacks on several villages and a camp for internally displaced persons in Jebel Mun.

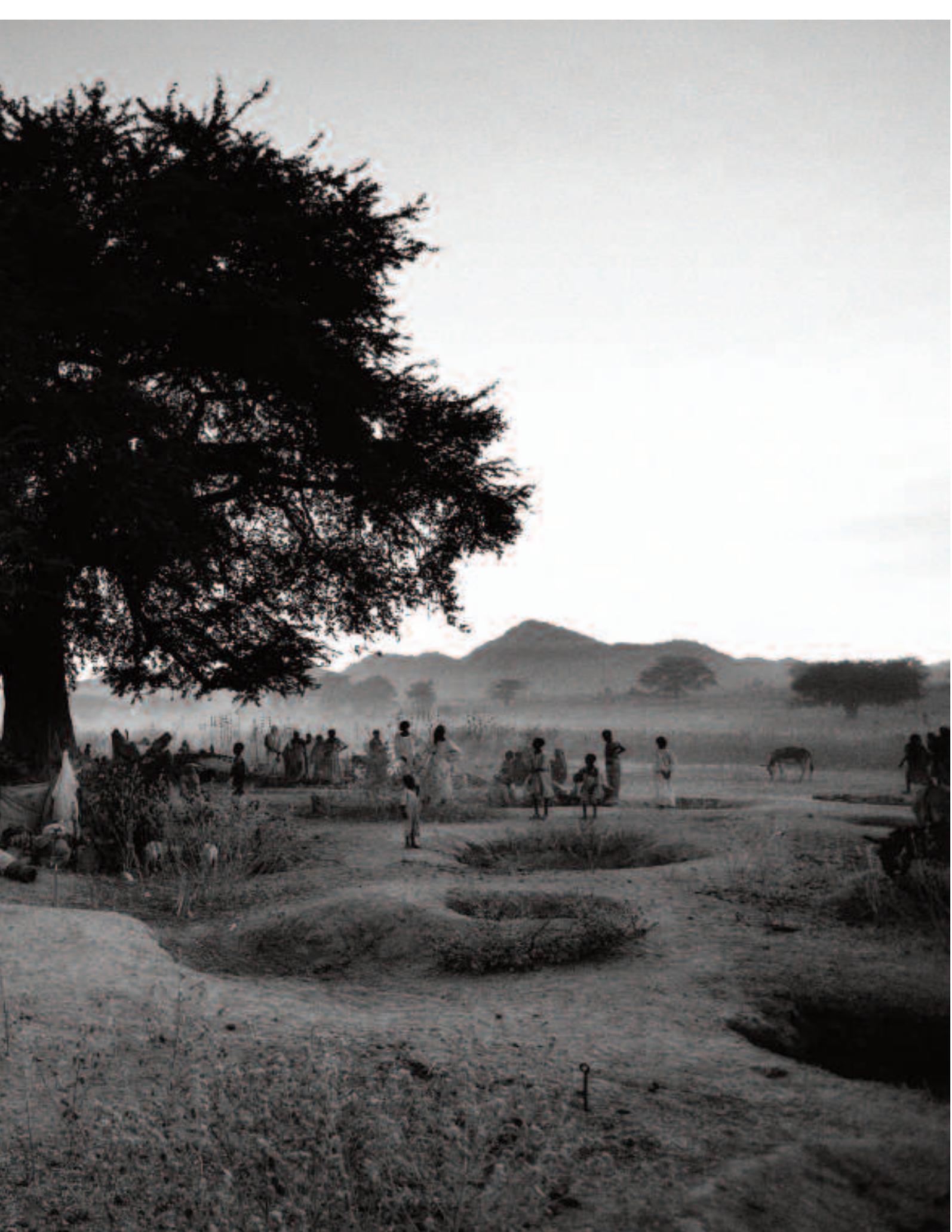




Chadian civilians wounded in attacks by Arab militias in October and November 2006 seek treatment in a hospital in nearby Goz Beida, Chad. Many are suffering from gunshot wounds.

A black and white photograph capturing a scene of displacement. In the foreground, a dark-colored donkey stands on the left, facing right. The middle ground is dominated by a large, dark, leafy tree on the right side, under which a group of people is gathered. They appear to be in a makeshift camp, with some individuals sitting on the ground and others standing. There are various items scattered around, including what looks like a cooking pot and some bags. In the background, a wide, flat landscape stretches out towards a range of low mountains under a pale, overcast sky. The overall atmosphere is one of hardship and displacement.

People forced from their homes camp out under the trees on the outskirts of Goz Beida.



WHAT CAN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DO?

ON DARFUR:

- Secure the Sudanese government's consent for deployment of a strengthened international force with UN elements in Darfur, obtain the required support from multilateral and regional organizations and states for that deployment and ensure that the force includes the following elements at a minimum:
 - A mandate authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, including the use of all necessary measures to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel;
 - Sufficient troops and military capacity to deploy in rural areas and protect civilian movement, secure key roads for civilian and humanitarian transport and monitor the UN arms embargo, particularly along the Chad border;
 - Rapid reaction capacity, including sufficient aerial support, to deter and respond to incidents of violence against civilians.
- Demand that the Sudanese government cease offensive military flights, as required in UN Security Council Resolution 1591 (and defined in the UN Panel of Experts report of October 2006).
- Urge increased international support for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) until a strengthened international force is in place, calling for international support in the deployment of additional personnel, equipment, logistical support, and other resources from national and multilateral forces, including attack helicopters to enhance AMIS's capacity to protect civilians.
- Apply targeted sanctions including travel bans and asset freezes (as authorized under UN Security Council Resolution 1591 of March 29, 2005) on senior Sudanese government officials should they continue to fail to consent to the deployment of a stronger international force in Darfur. Impose sanctions on those individuals or groups responsible for human rights abuses or violations of the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement.

ON CHAD:

- As authorized under UNSC resolution 1706, urgently deploy an international presence of military personnel and human rights monitors along the Chad/Sudan border to: protect and deter further attacks on civilians; monitor the arms embargo established under UNSC resolutions 1556 and 1591 in cooperation with the UN Panel of Experts; report on the movement of insurgent armed groups across the border; and investigate and publicly report on cross-border attacks on civilians and other incidents in the border zone.
- Demand that the government of Chad cease support for armed groups responsible for attacks on civilians, including those factions of the Darfur rebel groups responsible for forced recruitment of refugees and use of child soldiers, and refrain from arming abusive ethnic militias.
- Demand that the government of Sudan cease support for armed groups responsible for attacks on civilians in Chad, including with arms and other forms of support.

Human Rights Watch is dedicated to defending and protecting the human rights of people around the world. We conduct on-site investigations of human rights abuses in more than seventy countries worldwide and publish our findings in reports that are known for uncompromising accuracy. These reports are used in high-level policy discussions and in the media to shape the public agenda, shame abusers, and press for change. Through this methodology, Human Rights Watch seeks to improve the lives of countless people and secure justice and human dignity for all.

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Front cover: Recent arrivals of Sudanese refugees in Kounoungo camp in eastern Chad. These refugees, displaced by the war in Darfur, had been living on the border between Chad and Sudan since 2003, but were forced to flee again because of the fighting in the fall of 2006 in Chad.

All Photographs

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