



# Sexual Violence in Darfur

*Alliance* **DARC**  
working together against sexual violence



December 2006





# **Sexual Violence in Darfur**

A paper produced by  
AllianceDARC for the Day for  
Darfur on 10 December 2006 in  
association with the Save Darfur  
Coalition.

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## The Alliance for Direct Action against Rape in Crises and Conflicts

Sexual violence is a brutal crime. Millions - mostly women and children - in war and disaster zones around the world are subjected to it. Few receive help. Most have no access to justice. Impunity is widespread. There is increasing global awareness of the problem. But words must turn into focused action, and much more must be done.

AllianceDARC's mission is to bring practical help to women suffering from or threatened by sexual violence in conflicts and crises, and to prevent such further violence.

Reliant on people who share our motivation to do something to tackle sexual violence, AllianceDARC serves its collaborating partners in the field, to facilitate, promote, and expand their outreach to achieve four strategic objectives:

- >> Rebuild broken lives
- >> Redress wrongs and bring personal safety
- >> Report reality
- >> Reduce future sexual violence, especially through mobilizing Men



If you would like to help, or for more information, please contact [info@alliancedarc.org](mailto:info@alliancedarc.org), +41 79 830 4223 or [www.alliancedarc.org](http://www.alliancedarc.org).

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## Sexual violence in Darfur

**A paper produced for the Day for Darfur on 10 December 2006 in association with the Save Darfur Coalition<sup>1</sup>**

### Introduction

Vast atrocities of killing and sexual violence have continued against specific groups of people in Darfur, ever since the crisis erupted in 2003 with a systematic scorched earth campaign targeting specific populations and carried out by the Janjaweed and their supporting militia.

As a result, over the past three years, more than 400,000<sup>2</sup> have been killed or died of disease or malnutrition, more than two million displaced<sup>3</sup> and tens of thousands<sup>4</sup> of women and girls have been subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence as deliberate means of waging war. Whether in times of peace or war, rape has also been widely used “to keep women in their place”. Survivors of rape remain burdened by life-long stigma, risk disease including HIV, and are rendered destitute if ostracised by their community. These women are also often forced to bear the

children of their perpetrators and are subjected to increased risk of HIV/AIDS.

Witnesses to large-scale attacks typically record repeated and systematically-conducted incidents of widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence committed by armed groups. For example:

>> “More than 200 women have been sexually assaulted in the last five weeks alone around Darfur’s largest displaced camp, Kalma... This is a massive spike in figures. We are used to hearing of 2 to 4 incidents of sexual assault per month in Kalma camp.”<sup>5</sup>

>> “The incidence of sexual and gender-based violence in and around camps of internally displaced persons remained high throughout Darfur. With reports of assaults coming in on a daily basis, incidents of kidnapping of village women also continued to be reported; in the Masteri and Geneina areas of Western Darfur up to 20 women went missing in November [2005].”<sup>6</sup>

>> “...only a partial representation of the real number of victims, 500 survivors were treated in South and West Darfur during a period of over four months. A large majority of women were raped outside of populated areas and while they were pursuing their ordinary daily activities, such as collecting firewood or water.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org)

<sup>2</sup> See “Darfur Mortality Update: April 30, 2005 Current data for total mortality from violence, malnutrition, and disease” by E Reeves, Sudan Times Sunday 1 May 2005, for discussion on basis of estimated figure.

[http://www.sudantribune.com/article.php3?id\\_article=9364](http://www.sudantribune.com/article.php3?id_article=9364)

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty international press release “Protect the people of Darfur: UN Peacekeepers now” September 2006<sup>3</sup> The Sunday Times Magazine “Is there blood on his hands?” October 1 2006 [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2099-2368626\\_1,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2099-2368626_1,00.html)

<sup>4</sup> G Gagnon and B Dinnick “Sudan: Words Are Not Enough” Human Rights Watch. First published in The Globe and Mail, June 11, 2004. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/06/11/sudan8812.htm>

<sup>5</sup> International Rescue Committee “Sudan: Increased sexual assaults signal Darfur’s downward slide” 23 August 2006, from <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LTI0-6SXNRG?OpenDocument>

<sup>6</sup> UN Security Council Monthly Report 23 December 2005 S/2005/825 <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/648/57/PDF/N0564857.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>7</sup> Médecins sans Frontières “The crushing burden of rape: sexual violence in Darfur” 8 March 2005 [msf\\_download\\_pdf.php?id=2160&filename=report-sexuelle-gewalt-darfur-03-2005.pdf](http://www.msf.org/press/2005/03/08/sexual-violence-darfur-03-2005.pdf)

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>> The fact-finding UN Commission on Human Rights reported widespread abuses in Darfur, stating that the population in Darfur region – mostly from the Fur ethnic communities of the Masalit, Dajo, Tunjur, Tama and Zaghaws had been the “victim of systematic human rights violations”, committed mainly by militias such as the Janjaweed, Murahleen and Popular Defence Forces and describing the conduct of a strategy of forced displacement of the non-Arab population of the region. Attacks against refugees and displaced persons, the rape of women and girls, abduction of children, burning of villages, looting and destruction of livestock by the militias were also reported.<sup>8</sup>

>> In an attack in 27 February 2004 in the Tawila area of Northern Darfur, “seventy-five people were killed, and more than a hundred women and girls were raped—six of them in front of their fathers”.<sup>9</sup>

>> UNICEF reported “a very large number of rape cases, in one case targeting school girls and teachers, gang rape of minors by up to 14 men, abduction of children and women as well as killings of many civilians” in North Tawila.<sup>10</sup>

>> The town of Kailek was seized for 50 days by Janjaweed. Women and men were separated and 80 rapes were reported.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> UN press release “Eight UN human rights experts gravely concerned about reported widespread abuses in Darfur, Sudan” 26 March 2004

<http://www.un.org/news/Press/docs/2004/afr873.doc.htm>

<sup>9</sup> UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, March 22 2004<sup>9</sup> S Power “Dying in Darfur: Can the ethnic cleansing in Sudan be stopped?” The New Yorker Issue 30 August 2004

[http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/040830\\_fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/040830_fa_fact1)

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Humanitarian Situation Report; Darfur Crisis, Sudan, 11 March 2004  
<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/darfur/uploads/sit>

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[uation/unsitreps/2004/march/04.%20sitrep%2011%20Mar%2004.doc](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/march/04_20sitrep%2011%20Mar%2004.doc)

<sup>11</sup> UN Security Council, pg. 95



## Sexual violence in Darfur

### The effects and consequences

As a cheap tactic of war, “the mass rapes in Darfur have been among the most effective means to terrorise tribal populations, break their will, and drive them away”<sup>12</sup>. Rape is feared all the more in Darfur, for two reasons. Most important, a woman who has been raped is ruined; deeply traumatised, in some cases she is thrown out of home by her family and forced to survive on her own. Raped women – not the perpetrators - are blamed. The woman is shamed for life, and so is her entire family. The second reason is that people in the Darfur region practice an extreme form of female genital cutting called infibulation, in which a girl’s vagina is sewn shut until marriage. Thus when an unmarried girl is raped, the act leads to additional painful physical injuries and the risk of HIV transmission increases.

Left traumatised by the crime of rape itself, the consequences of sexual violence on women are long term. Some include:

>> Medical. The full range of health needs as a result of the severe effects of physical violence of rape is exacerbated by female genital mutilation (FGM) practised on the majority of women in the Darfur region<sup>13</sup>. Medical consequences include internal bleeding, fistulas, incontinence and infection with sexually transmitted diseases such as Hepatitis B and C and HIV. The vast majority of survivors do not seek out nor have access to appropriate medical care.

<sup>12</sup> N. Kristof “Genocide in Slow Motion” The New York Review 9 February 2006  
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/18674>

<sup>13</sup> FGM prevalence is 49% in West Darfur, 83% in North Darfur and 91.8% in South Darfur.

>> Pregnancy as a result of rape. Both child and mother will likely suffer ostracism, trauma and further abuses of their rights. In addition to being thrown out of home, pregnant women have been reported arrested and detained in prison for illegal pregnancy.

>> Stigma and ostracism towards survivors of rape. In a testimony by a Darfur refugee in Chad, girls aged 9 to 13 who were raped while collecting firewood now have no prospect of marriage<sup>14</sup>.

>> Social and economic. Raped married or unmarried women may be rejected by their community and household without financial means for survival.<sup>15</sup>

>> Mental health problems as a result of stigmatisation, ostracism, pregnancy by perpetrators and irrecoverable destruction of survivors’ lives.

>> The low status of women further undermines the long-term consequences of rape. Impunity for rapists is promoting a climate of more violence against women as it increasingly is viewed as normal. The normalcy of violence, developed by impunity in general, is lethal for women and for building up new standards of ethics among humans.

<sup>14</sup> Amnesty International “Darfur crisis: Testimonies from Eastern Chad” 29 June 2006  
AI Index: AFR 20/007/2006  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR20072006>

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Sexual Violence and its Consequences Among Displaced Persons in Darfur and Chad,” April 12, 2005, pg. 10.  
<http://hrw.org/backgrounders/africa/darfur0505/darfur0405.pdf>

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Rape and sexual violence, is aimed at, and has an immense impact on destabilising family bonds and the entire social fabric, and instil fear in still vulnerable populations<sup>16</sup>. Raids displacing people out of their villages, and repeated attacks on those displaced in camps perpetuates the desperation and hopelessness facing the people of Darfur.

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<sup>16</sup> Gingerich, T and J Leaning "The use of rape as a weapon of war in the conflict in Darfur Sudan" Physicians for Human Rights, October 2004  
[http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/xfbcenter/HSPH-PHR\\_Report\\_on\\_Rape\\_in\\_Darfur.pdf](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/xfbcenter/HSPH-PHR_Report_on_Rape_in_Darfur.pdf)

## Sexual violence in Darfur

### A means of ethnic cleansing and genocide

“Ethnic cleansing”, “genocide” and “a crime against humanity” have been variously used to describe the systematic orchestration of killing and raping of specific targeted tribes in Darfur. The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan described the crisis in March 2004: “this is more than just a conflict; it is an organised attempt to do away with a group of people”<sup>17</sup>. Inquiries by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court identified “high numbers of... mass rapes and other forms of extremely serious gender violence”<sup>18</sup>. Widespread rape has been carried out in Darfur to humiliate and demoralise, as part of a programme to terrorise and many do not doubt that in Darfur there has been a systematic effort to kill people and wipe out specific tribes, and that it amounts to genocide.

Under international law sexual violence as a tactic in war is considered a crime for which states can be held accountable<sup>19</sup>. As a kind of torture, rape

has been considered as a crime of war and a crime against humanity since the ICTY. The 1949 Genocide Convention defines genocide as: “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such”. The act can include killings or injuries or psychological distress, or simply restrictions on births. Recently, a United Nations Commission of Inquiry found that the abuses carried out in Darfur amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Convention prohibits attacks on civilians. It assigns (in this case) responsibility on the Government of Sudan (GoS) for prosecuting under national law any party to the conflict guilty of committing abuses; The GoS is also responsible for any proxy forces under its control. Reports by Amnesty International, International Crisis Group (ICG) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) indicate evidence of cooperation between the Janjaweed and government forces<sup>20</sup>. More recently, the African Union Ceasefire Commission reported documented instances of involvement by the GoS forces, from December 2004 to January 2005<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> BBC interview by UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, 19 March 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Amnesty International “Darfour, une lueur dans la nuit” 9 June 2006  
<http://www.amnestyinternational.be/doc/article8174.html>

<sup>19</sup> Article 49 of the regulations annexed to the 1907 Hague Convention assures respect for “family honour and rights”. Applying to international conflicts, Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 clearly states that women shall be protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault. Women are protected in non-international conflicts by Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Women are given further protection under the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions. Common Article 3 establishes minimum guarantees for all armed conflicts and thus serious violations of its

provisions in all armed conflicts are war crimes. Rape in wartime, comes under a definition of torture or inhumane treatment as an action wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health and can be considered a grave breach under Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (which sets out crimes for which states can be held accountable). Source: Gutman, R and D Rieff, editors, “Crimes of war: what the public should know” 1999 Norton & Company New York / London.

<sup>20</sup> HPG briefing note: Humanitarian issues in Darfur, Sudan, April 2004  
<http://www.odi.org.uk/HPG/papers/HPGBriefingNote3.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Letter to all UN Security Council Members, Aegis Trust, May 2005  
[http://www.protectedarfur.org/Downloads/Protect\\_Darfur\\_Dossier.pdf](http://www.protectedarfur.org/Downloads/Protect_Darfur_Dossier.pdf)

## **Sexual violence in Darfur**

### **The sexual violence continues**

Since the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006, the sexual violence has worsened and civilians have borne the brunt<sup>22</sup>. The conflict has also expanded into Chad and the Central African Republic as have the associated rapes and killings. Still today, the people displaced and living in IDP and refugee camps are not protected from Janjaweed who regularly target civilians collecting water and gathering firewood. Women are frequently raped since the remaining alternative is for their men folk to be killed when performing these essential tasks. Sudanese security forces, including police deployed to protect IDPs, and allied Janjaweed militias have been implicated in continuing acts of rape and sexual violence<sup>23</sup>. Women IDPs and refugees report also being forced to exchange sexual favours for desperately needed goods and services<sup>24</sup>.

The African Union has recently ended its firewood patrols which provided armed escorts for women, due to mandate and financial issues<sup>25</sup>. The recently reported "massive spike" in sexual violence in

Kalma<sup>26</sup> indicates the deteriorating situation of security and a renewed campaign of raids on villages.

Humanitarian organizations providing assistance to survivors have been hampered. Following publication of an MSF report in 2005<sup>27</sup>, two MSF employees were arrested on charges of spreading lies against the state. Since then attacks against humanitarian actors have sharply risen<sup>28</sup>. Accused of espionage and of falsely reporting 80 cases of rape around Kalma, the Norwegian Refugee Council was expelled from South Darfur where it was attending to 300,000 displaced people.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Peter Moszynski, British Medical Journal, November 2006

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Watch "Darfur: women raped even after seeking refuge. Donors must increase support to victims of sexual violence" press release 12 April 2005  
<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/04/11/sudan10467.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Gingerich and Leaning, pg. 25

<sup>25</sup> UN OHCHR, "Fourth periodic report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in the Sudan: deepening crisis in Darfur two months after the Darfur Peace Agreement: an assessment" UN OHCHR in cooperation with the UN Mission in the Sudan, June 2006  
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/sd/docs/4tHCHCRjuly25final.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> International Rescue Committee "Sudan: Increased sexual assaults signal Darfur's downward slide," 23 August 2006, from <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LTI0-6SXNRG?OpenDocument>

<sup>27</sup> "The crushing burden of rape: sexual violence in Darfur" Médecins sans Frontières, 8 March 2005. [https://www.aerzte-ohne-grenzen.de/obj/\\_scripts/msf\\_download\\_pdf.php?id=2160&filename=report-sexuelle-gewalt-darfur-03-2005.pdf](https://www.aerzte-ohne-grenzen.de/obj/_scripts/msf_download_pdf.php?id=2160&filename=report-sexuelle-gewalt-darfur-03-2005.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Médecins sans Frontières "Darfur: A crisis of human suffering," MSF article 14 November 2006, from [http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=E52B51E1-5056-AA77-6C35C87E4DD20560&component=toolkit.article&method=full\\_html](http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=E52B51E1-5056-AA77-6C35C87E4DD20560&component=toolkit.article&method=full_html)

<sup>29</sup> IRIN News "Sudan: Norwegian aid agency shuts down Darfur operation" UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 10 November 2006, from [www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=56313&SelectRegion=East\\_Africa&SelectCountry=SUDAN](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=56313&SelectRegion=East_Africa&SelectCountry=SUDAN)



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### No avenue for justice

Since mid-2005, external pressure has influenced the Sudan Government to stop “arresting rape victims and it is allowing the use of [post-exposure prophylaxis] PEP kits”<sup>30</sup> which reduce the risk of HIV in rape victims when administered properly. However, the police are still failing to act with due diligence in their treatment of survivors and in investigation of cases. Mistreatment of the survivors by the police has been widely reported. Sexual violence goes largely under-reported - partly because survivors are aware there is virtually no chance crimes will be investigated nor perpetrators prosecuted, and partly because of the fear of social stigma that survivors and their families face. The legal system continues to fail victims who manage to bring their claims to court; not a single conviction on rape charges has been made on cases involving an IDP survivor<sup>31</sup>.

### What must be done

The continued campaign of sexual violence by Janjaweed and other militias must be stopped. All parties to the conflict must stop immediately the violence, respect human rights and international human rights law, ensure the safety and personal security of civilians and grant unhindered humanitarian access in Darfur<sup>32</sup>. Responsibility to protect civilians in Darfur must be taken - whether by custom, conscience, core principles of humanity, or codified by international law, rape is outlawed as an act of war.

Women who have been subjected to sexual violence should receive rehabilitation and recompensation. This should come from a fund installed by the International Community to help women get through the first trauma of sexual violence and rebuild her life afterwards.

It is vital that people in refugee camps and people on the move are sensitised, with information about sexual violence and its multi-faceted consequences for women, and also for the whole community. The shame must be shifted from victim to perpetrator – so that women get the support and not the stigmatization from their social environment. Village elders, camp leaders and police must be involved in sensitization campaigns.

Before they are deployed, humanitarians must also be sensitized to be able to treat rape survivors in a trauma-sensitive way. In contrast, what often happens is that the women they intend to help are re-traumatized because of

<sup>30</sup> The New York Review 9 February 2006<sup>30</sup> N Kristof

<sup>31</sup> UN OHCHR, pg. 11

<sup>32</sup> UN OHCHR “Acting rights chief concerned over deteriorating situation in Darfur region of Sudan” Press document 24 January 2004 UN acting High Commissioner for Human Rights Bertrand Ramcharan

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the wrong approach. Very few women speak about their needs in these circumstances and humanitarians may not perceive the needs on their own. It is important for humanitarians to be able to be aware of, sensitive to and be able to gauge the situation in the appropriate way.

There is a dire need for more and improved actions and services. Gender based violence should be mainstreamed into organisations and programmes, new and improved programmes developed, and prevention activities undertaken. Increased provisions urgently needed include emergency contraception, comprehensive treatment of sexually transmitted disease and post-exposure prophylaxis against HIV.

The international community should implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 immediately and adopt an action plan for Darfur and the Sudan. Any mandate - a peace-keeping or a military one - must involve women - as especially endangered humans, survivors of rape, and as agents of peace and conflict resolution. This means that the UN must deploy more women on all levels of the mandate as the women in Darfur need other women to talk about what has happened to them and for supporters to hold the perpetrators accountable and deliver them to the International Criminal Court. Under international mandate, a gender adviser should be deployed to report human rights violations against women directly to the UN. Sanctions for delivering perpetrators must be followed-up by the UN and member states. In possible peace talks it is vital that women from Darfur are involved by the international community - they have profound knowledge of dynamics and power plays.



## Sexual violence in Darfur

### Additional Documents

- >> “Beyond victimhood: women’s peacebuilding in Sudan, Congo and Uganda” International Crisis Group (ICG) 28 June 2006  
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4186&l=1>
- >> “Crimes of war: what the public should know” Roy Gutman and David Rieff, editors. 1999 Norton & Company New York / London.  
<http://www.crimesofwar.org/thebook/book.html>
- >> “Darfur: assault on survival. A call for security, justice and restitution”. Physicians for Human Rights 2006  
<http://www.phrusa.org/publications/sudan.html>
- >> Darfur: Rape as a Weapon of War: Sexual Violence and its Consequences, Amnesty International, July 19, 2004  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf540762004> AI Index: AFR 54/076/2004
- >> Darfur, Three Months Hence: Extrapolating from Current Conditions. Sunday, August 13, 2006 - 10:59 AM  
[www.sudanreeves.org](http://www.sudanreeves.org)
- >> “Ending violence against women – the role of the International Criminal Court” Amnesty International 4 April 2006  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGACT770162005?open&of=ENG-JPN>
- >> “Empty Promises? Continuing Abuses in Darfur, Sudan,” Human Rights Watch, August 11, 2004  
<http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sudan/2004/>
- >> Open letter to the members of the United Nations Security Council: the situation in the Sudan, Amnesty International 21 February 2005. Ref UN/NYt/006/95 and AI Index: AFR 54/024/2005  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf540242005>
- >> “Protect the people of Darfur UN peacekeeper now” press release Amnesty International [www.amnesty.org/sudan](http://www.amnesty.org/sudan).
- >> Report on the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General, January 25, 2005  
[http://www.un.org/News/dh/sudan/com\\_inq\\_darfur.pdf](http://www.un.org/News/dh/sudan/com_inq_darfur.pdf)
- >> Sexual violence and its consequences among displaced persons in Darfur and Chad: A Human Rights Watch briefing paper, April 2005  
<http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/darfur0505/>
- >> Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the Secretary-General. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1564 (2004) of 18 September 2004. United Nations Security Council 1 February 2005 S/2005/60.
- >> “Sudan: Norwegian aid agency shuts down Darfur operation” IRIN News, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 10 November 2006  
[www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=56313&SelectRegion=East\\_Africa&SelectCountry=SUDAN](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=56313&SelectRegion=East_Africa&SelectCountry=SUDAN)
- >> “Violence against women in war: handbook for professionals working with traumatised women medica mondiale e.V. (ed)  
[http://www.medicamondiale.org/\\_en/bibliothek/eigene/handbuch/](http://www.medicamondiale.org/_en/bibliothek/eigene/handbuch/)
- >> “Women in an insecure world: violence against women facts, figures and analysis” M Vlachová and L BIASON (eds), Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005.
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