

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Report of the High-Level Mission on the situation of  
human rights in Darfur pursuant to HRC decision S-4/101

**Statement delivered by Professor Jody Williams, Head  
of the High-Level Mission and Nobel Laureate for  
Peace at the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**



**Geneva, 16 March 2007**

*Mr. President, Madam High-Commissioner, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am honoured to present the High-Level mission's report on the situation of human rights in Darfur. I am delivering this statement today as the head of the Mission, and also on behalf of Mission members the Honourable Mart Nutt, Professor Bertrand Ramcharan, Doctor Sima Samar, and Ambassador Patrice Tonda. Each has served with honour and distinction, and I was proud to serve with them.

Mr. President, please allow me, at the outset, to pay tribute to you. Throughout this process, you have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the success of our mission, while, at the same time, fully respecting the Mission's independence and integrity. For this, we owe you a debt of gratitude.

Allow me as well to recognize the outstanding contribution of the team of human rights staff appointed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to accompany and support the Mission. Their role was essential, and their professionalism impeccable.

Thanks are also due to the many friends who worked so hard to facilitate the work of this Mission, among them the African Union in Geneva and in Addis Ababa, UN agencies and staff based in New York, Geneva, Khartoum, Darfur, Addis, N'Djamena and Abeche, the many member States that made special efforts to assist us, and the dozens of organizations and hundreds of individuals that took the time to meet with the Mission. Most of all, we must thank the refugees and victims that welcomed us in their midst, and trusted us with their stories.

*Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,*

I am pleased to report that the High-Level Mission has succeeded in carrying out the tasks mandated to it under Human Rights Council Decision S-4/101. A detailed account of our work, findings and recommendations is contained in our report [document number A/HRC/4/80].

As requested by the Council's decision, the report contains a situation assessment. It describes a pattern of counterinsurgency by the Government of the Sudan together with Janjaweed /militia. It also notes that rebel forces are guilty of abuses of human rights and violations of humanitarian law. Civilians are victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity which continue across the region. Killing, rape, torture, arbitrary arrest, repression of political dissent, and abuses of political freedoms occur with chilling frequency. Ineffective mechanisms of justice, the free flow of weapons, the absence of meaningful disarmament, and a climate of impunity have left the region a stranger to the rule of law. Deprivation and denial of economic and social rights, rooted in decades of economic marginalization and underdevelopment, have been further exacerbated. The conflict continues to fester. Abuse is feeding on abuse. Millions are displaced. More than 200,000 are dead. Humanitarian space is shrinking. Hope is fading.

As mandated in the same decision, the report also contains a needs assessment. It affirms that critical needs for improving the situation of human rights in Darfur are

numerous. Among the most pressing, it identifies enhanced protection for civilians, renewed progress toward sustainable peace, expanded humanitarian space, increased accountability for perpetrators, programmes to address root causes, serious efforts to ensure the implementation of existing recommendations from human rights bodies, and compensation for victims of human rights violations.

*Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In a landmark decision at the World Summit in September 2005, -- and in the very same document mandating the establishment of this Council --- the international community, building on the obligations of member States under the UN Charter, formally embraced the principle of the responsibility to protect. In doing so, it recognized that every State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Where a State is unable or unwilling to do so, it is the responsibility of the international community to take action to ensure effective protection. Sadly, in Darfur, the solemn declaration of the World Summit has rung hollow. It is the civilians of Darfur who continue to suffer as a result.

*Mr. President,*

In our recommendations, we have called upon the international community to take urgent action to protect the people of Darfur. We have respectfully proposed that this Council address these violations, establish a special mechanism to monitor the situation and press for protection and accountability, and support the establishment of an independent national human rights commission to further protection on the ground.

We have recommended that the General Assembly compile a list of foreign companies whose activities have an adverse impact on human rights in Darfur. We have called on the international community to ensure the effective protection of civilians in Darfur by deploying the proposed peacekeeping/protection force, cooperating with the ICC, and pressing for the implementation of outstanding resolutions on Darfur. We have called upon individual member States to support UN and AU efforts, as well as the establishment of a national human rights commission and programmes of compensation for victims. We have further called on States to prosecute war criminals through the exercise of universal jurisdiction in national courts outside of Sudan.

We have also called for the convening of a national conference on peace and human rights for the Sudan with participation of all stakeholders. Furthermore, we called for a regional conference on the safeguarding and promotion of peace and human rights in the region including the participation of all neighbouring and other concerned States. Both conferences should be supported and facilitated by the international community under the auspices of the UN and the AU.

For its part, we have called on the Government of the Sudan to respect its international obligations by admitting the proposed UN/AU force, removing obstacles to humanitarian assistance, ensuring the free movement of human rights monitors, cooperating fully with the ICC, and implementing the many outstanding recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms. We called for an end to the targeting of civilians, an end to support for Janjaweed/militia forces, and action to

disarm those forces. The Government should hold perpetrators to account, facilitate the safe return of refugees and IDPs, and ensure compensation for victims. Sudanese laws and policies must be harmonized with the Interim Constitution and international human rights standards. Moves must be made toward democratization and free and fair elections, and the establishment of fair and equitable policies to reverse discrimination and marginalization of the people of Darfur.

Finally, we have called upon all armed rebel movements to strictly respect the requirements of international human rights and humanitarian law, take all necessary steps to clearly distinguish themselves from the civilian population, abstain from efforts to recruit fighters in IDP and refugee camps, cease all attacks against civilian and humanitarian targets, ensure the free and safe access and movement of humanitarian personnel, and cooperate in good faith in the pursuit of peace.

*Mr. President, Madam High-Commissioner, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As we have concluded in our report, the situation of human rights in Darfur remains grave, and the corresponding needs profound. The Sudan has not met its responsibility to protect. And, in spite of many efforts, the international community has not yet been effective in protecting civilians on the ground. The record is clear and documentation overwhelming. There are no more thresholds to cross or facts to find. Innocent civilians continue to suffer and die. They do not need more reports. They are pleading for protection. The Human Rights Council must take action to alleviate their suffering and give the people of Darfur hope for the future.

*I thank you.*