

Darfur Destroyed: Sudan's Perpetrators Break Silence

A few days before the issue of an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant for President Omar al Bashir, Khartoum's agents and surrogates revealed the hand of the regime in the genocidal campaign in Darfur.

In a 20 minute film released on the brink of that decision, Khartoum's executioners broke their silence to reveal how Darfur's atrocities were planned, financed and carried out - and who was responsible. **To view the film visit www.vimeo.com/3161513** (Footage and audio available for broadcast. Contact David Brown, david.brown@aegistrust.org)

Since 2003, at least 300,000 civilians have died in Darfur and millions have been displaced from their homes, many of them at the hands of militia nicknamed the 'Janjaweed' ('devils on horseback'). Time after time, survivors stated - and international observers confirmed - that as they murdered, raped, looted and burned village after village, the Janjaweed was backed by the Sudanese army and air force. Yet the Sudanese Government has consistently denied responsibility for atrocities in Darfur and to this day, says it has nothing to do with the Janjaweed.

However, the defectors in this film - some of them speaking publicly for the first time - tell a very different story.

Created by the Aegis Trust with the support of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Egypt), Human Rights First (USA) and the Society for Threatened Peoples (Germany), the film features interviews conducted by researchers including Phil Cox (Native Voice Films) and Frank Dutton (former deputy head of investigations at the ICTY).

Between them, a senior Army finance officer, a Janjaweed commander, a regular soldier and a Janjaweed fighter explain why and how the Sudanese Government created

and launched the Janjaweed militia; how it disguised the militia, once atrocities in Darfur came to world attention; how it armed and paid the Janjaweed; how the Janjaweed worked with Sudan's regular army and air force, and how rape has been used as a weapon against the civilian population.

The witnesses implicate Sudanese Government figures at the highest level - including Ahmed Harun (Minister for Humanitarian Affairs), Ali Osman Mohammed Taha (Second Vice President), and even Omar al-Bashir himself.

Moataz El Fegiery, Executive Director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) states: "If you don't believe the victims, or if you mistrust the UN, then you should at least listen to the voices of the perpetrators. In their own words, they describe the Sudanese Government's role in killing its own people."

Dr James Smith, Chief Executive of the Aegis Trust, states: "As one-time servants of the Bashir regime, the defectors in this film provide powerful evidence of the responsibility of the Sudanese Government for mass atrocities in Darfur. As they themselves have said: those responsible should be brought to account and answer at the ICC - even if they include the President himself."

Nicolas Burniat, Pennoyer Fellow at Human Rights First noted: "For too long, the international community has allowed the government in Sudan to get away with murder in Darfur. To this very day, many countries continue to sell weapons to Khartoum, allowing the Sudanese army to keep sending fresh arms to Darfur, as shown in Aegis Trust's film. Whether or not the ICC issues an arrest warrant against Bashir, these countries must decide between pushing Sudan to face its responsibility to cooperate with the Court or continuing to support a suspected war criminal."

The defectors in their own words

- Popular Defence Force / Janjaweed commander: "The Sudanese Government, all time he said, no genocide there, no rape there. I am from the PDF - Janjaweed - I want to tell the World the truth."
- Sudanese army paymaster: "As a human being, I'm not able to feel good about this. I am paying them and they're going to kill other people."
- Popular Defence Force / Janjaweed commander: "The President of Sudan, Omar el Bashir, sent four billion Sudanese pounds for the Popular Defence Force in Nyala to be distributed as an incentive."
- Popular Defence Force / Janjaweed commander: "...when you destroy the wells, or when you cut the trees, or when you burn the village, this means you expel the civilians from the village. This is an instruction from...It is came from Khartoum."

- Janjaweed fighter: "Rape can happen. Rape can happen... What would happen is, they took the girls and the women away, just out of sight, and they started to rape them."
- Sudanese soldier: "They shout 'Kill the slaves' and 'Fuck the slaves.' They take girls and rape them. They rape and torture them. They want the children to be different in colour, to be like them."

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For more information, or to arrange interviews, contact David Brown at the Aegis Trust in the UK on +44 (0)7921 471985, email: david.brown@aegistrust.org or Krista Minter at Human Rights First in New York at 212-845-5207, email: minterk@humanrightsfirst.org.

Notes to Editors

For a full transcript of the film, contact Krista Minter, minterk@humanrightsfirst.org.

- A Video News Release on Mini DV tape is available on request, containing a broadcast quality version of the full film, together with a clean copy of the footage (stripped of music and subtitles).
- A shot list is available to accompany the VNR. This gives full time codes for the film and includes copyright information (all footage and audio of the Janjaweed commander and some of the GVs used in the film are copyright to Native Voice Films. All other material comes cleared for broadcast).
- Audio clips from the film required for broadcast can be made available for download on request.

The film is also available in Arabic, and will shortly be available in other languages including French and German (more information available on request).