

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

**UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF STARTS DARFUR VISIT IN KALMA CAMP**

(New York/Khartoum, 25 November 2008): John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, began a six-day visit to Sudan today by visiting Kalma camp in Nyala, home to around 88,000 internally displaced persons, constituting one of the largest camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Darfur.

At a meeting with the sheikhs in the camp, the ERC assured them of continued humanitarian support and listened to their concerns, including the incident of 25 August, when thirty-three IDPs were killed and 108 wounded after security forces surrounded Kalma camp. For their part, the sheikhs appreciated the work of aid organisations and the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), but called for reinforced protection.

“The number one priority is security. UNAMID police are now patrolling the camp on a round the clock basis, which has helped people to feel safer,” said Mr. Holmes. “But we still need to do more, not least to ensure women can feel safe as they move in and out of the camp,” he added.

In meetings with UN agencies and NGOs, aid workers voiced their continued concern about security incidents, including increasingly frequent car-jackings and break-ins, and a challenging work environment stemming from bureaucratic and other obstacles, particularly in sensitive areas related to protection of civilians.

These issues were also raised in a meeting with the Wali of South Darfur, who took note of these concerns and offered improved collaboration between UN agencies, NGOs and the government.

Mr. Holmes also toured part of the camp and witnessed the work of aid organisations on the ground. He met with primary school children and visited a women’s handicraft project, where women expressed their need for more opportunities to establish longer term livelihood prospects, and adult literacy classes.

Later in the afternoon the ERC visited UNAMID headquarters in El Fashir, where he held meetings with Joint Special Representative Adada and other senior officials. On Wednesday, Mr. Holmes travels to West Darfur to review the humanitarian situation there before heading to South Sudan on Thursday.

*For further information, please call: Orla Clinton, OCHA Sudan, 00 249 912174454; Stephanie Bunker, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 5126, mobile +1 917 892 1679, bunker@un.org; Nicholas Reader +1 212 963 4961, mobile +1 646 752 3117, reader@un.org, John Nyaga, OCHA-NY, +1 917 367 9262, nyagaj@un.org; Elisabeth Byrs, OCHA-Geneva, +41 22 917 2653, mobile, +41 79 473 4570, byrs@un.org. Stephanie Bunker, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 5126, mobile +1 917 892 1679; Elisabeth Byrs, OCHA-Geneva, +41 22 917 2653, mobile, +41 79 473 4570. OCHA press releases are available at <http://ochaonline.un.org> or [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).*