



**UNITED NATIONS**

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**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

**9,000 NEWLY DISPLACED AFTER CLASHES IN CHAD**

(New York, 12 April 2007): As a result of violent clashes between ethnic militias in eastern Chad on 31 March, more than 9,000 people have fled their homes and sought refuge in Habilé, a site which already hosts 7,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). Aid organizations have been quick to respond to this new wave of displacement, but despite their efforts, humanitarian gaps remain, especially in the water and sanitation sector.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as many as 450 people may have been killed in the attacks. Many houses in the villages of Tiéro and Maréna were torched and bodies were left lying on the ground. The exact number of victims of these attacks will probably never be known.

“Once again, civilian populations are paying the price of violence,” said John Holmes, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “The latest incidents in eastern Chad demonstrate the urgent need to increase security in the area. The Chadian authorities have the prime responsibility to protect their population, and I urge them to do more to avoid the repetition of such tragedies. As I told the Security Council last week in my briefing on my mission to Chad, I am convinced that the establishment of some kind of international security presence is more necessary than ever to protect civilians in this part of the world.”

An estimated 140,000 IDPs are living in Eastern Chad, while the region is hosting an additional 235,000 refugees from Sudan and 48,000 from the Central African Republic. Unconfirmed reports mention on-going heavy fighting between the Chadian army and the rebel group Concorde Nationale Tchadienne (CNT) near Daguessa on the border with Sudan. Though humanitarian organizations have no access to the area, OCHA is concerned that thousands of civilians may be fleeing this area, too.

*For further information, please call: Stephanie Bunker, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 5126, mobile +1 917 892 1679; Kristen Knutson, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 9262; 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).*