CHAD: POWDER KEG IN THE EAST

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WORKING TO PREVENT
CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Eastern Chad is a powder keg with potential to destabilise the entire country as well as neighbouring states and worsen the already dire humanitarian situation. Local conflicts based on resource scarcity have been exacerbated by national and regional political manipulation. The population has already suffered enormously, from the domestic Chadian disputes, the Darfur crisis and the proxy war between Chad and Sudan alike. The two governments, with support from their international partners, should resume implementation of the Dakar Agreement, but a conference specifically dedicated to the conflict in eastern Chad should also be organised in order to allow local and national actors to find solutions to the domestic causes of the crisis. This conference should be integrated into the existing structures of the peace process in Chad.

Chad's successive regimes have failed to ensure the well-being and security of the population in the East, thereby fuelling mistrust of the central government. In order to counter armed opposition groups, the regimes first of Hissène Habré and now of President Idriss Déby have used a divide-and-conquer strategy, pitting ethnic groups against one another. Nevertheless, eastern Chad was relatively stable until 2003, despite a tense political climate and sporadic bloody clashes. The humanitarian and security problems that have shaken it since then are unprecedented, with spillover from the Darfur crisis aggravating pre-existing interethnic confrontations and strengthening cross-border intercommunal loyalties.

Large-scale internal displacement and a massive influx of Sudanese refugees have upset eastern Chad's demographic balance and intensified the struggle for resources. Both the Chadian government and rebel groups have armed their supporters, leading to bloodier banditry and bloodier inter-ethnic conflicts that often pit farmers against cattle breeders and making the work of humanitarian workers increasingly difficult. The central government has systematically co-opted for its own political purposes traditional mediation and conflict management mechanisms, such as *diyah*, the compensation due for shedding blood.

For more than five years, the Déby regime has instrumentalised the troubles in eastern Chad in order to perpetuate itself. Déby has been able not only to divide his political opponents at the local level in the East, but also to limit the political space for his adversaries at the national level. His strategy has had two phases. During the first, in 2004-2005, the government tried and failed to consolidate the support of its Zaghawa ethnic base. Following splits among the Zaghawa, Déby stoked the historical mistrust between the Zaghawa and Tama ethnic groups in Dar Tama. He claimed that the Front uni pour le changement (United Front for Change, FUC), the main coalition of rebel groups at the time, was an alliance between the Tama and the Janjawid of Darfur ill-repute and had been armed by Khartoum to eliminate the Zaghawa on both sides of the border. To the international community, he depicted the FUC as the "Chadian-armed right hand of the Sudanese Islamist regime", a characterisation that was widely accepted, given the many Janjaweed attacks against Sudanese refugees in Chad.

During the second phase, from 2006 to the present, the government has tried with limited success to win the allegiance of the Dadjo ethnic group in Dar Sila by providing support both for existing Dadjo self-defence groups and for the creation of new, mostly Dadjo militias. This support is supposed to protect civilians from Janjawid attacks, but its real purpose is to enlist the Dadjo in fighting Chadian rebel groups. In turn, rebel leaders have used the crisis as a convenient political justification for settling scores with Déby. Sudan has exacerbated the instability in the East by supporting virtually all the rebel groups, even though they are strongly divided along ethnic lines.

The international community has had a pair of peace-keeping missions on the scene since February 2008 to alleviate spillover effects of the Sudanese conflict into eastern Chad: a European Union force (EUFOR) and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). However, neither significantly improved the security situation. On 15 March 2009 MINURCAT took over the responsibilities of EUFOR but with a mandate that, like those of

its predecessors, is limited to reducing insecurity in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the surrounding areas and does not include, as it needs to, promoting a political process that treats the Chadian roots of the crisis.

The international community should end its head-in-the-sand attitude and deal with the root causes of the crisis by putting pressure on the Chadian government to organise the conference on the conflict in eastern Chad cited above. That conference should include representatives of the central government, rebel groups, customary leaders and opposition political parties. It should examine the fundamental political causes of the instability in the East and put in place an adequate framework for dealing with them. MINURCAT should be mandated to organise the conference and act as a neutral body for selecting many of its participants. France, which has reinforced Déby without helping the Chadians to find a durable solution to the crisis, should pressure the government to engage with the communities in the East for the organisation of such a conference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Chad:

1. Contribute, with MINURCAT's help, to the organisation of a peace conference on the eastern conflict and send governors and prefects as representatives of the government to participate in tackling the following issues:

   a) conflict between farmers and cattle breeders and access to land and water;

   b) the issue of *diyah*;

   c) the role of traditional chiefs;

   d) the spread and circulation of weapons and regional disarmament; and

   e) reconciliation and harmonious coexistence of communities.

2. Agree, at the conclusion of this conference, to a permanent mediation council composed of key figures from the East who are accepted by the participants of the conference and who would monitor implementation of the conference's resolutions and mediate between the government and local chiefs.

3. Cooperate with MINURCAT and do not restrict the movement of its personnel.

4. Open a new round of negotiations with the rebel groups based on the Syrte Agreement in order to agree on a sustainable ceasefire, define assembly points and create a joint military commission.

5. End any support for Chadian militias as well as, in accordance with the Dakar Agreement, for Sudanese armed groups and work towards normalisation of bilateral relations with Sudan.

To Chadian Rebel Groups:

6. Agree to a long-lasting ceasefire and resume, under UN oversight, dialogue with the Chadian government on the basis of the Syrte Agreement and support the holding of a peace conference on eastern Chad.

To the Government of Sudan:

7. End support for incursions and armed attacks by Chadian rebels operating from Sudanese territory and work towards normalisation of bilateral relations with Chad in accordance with the Dakar Agreement.

To the United Nations Security Council:

8. Mandate MINURCAT to organise the peace conference for eastern Chad and act as a neutral body for the selection of its participants.

9. Ensure MINURCAT has all necessary troops and equipment to fulfil its mandate, including helicopters.

To the UN Secretary-General:

10. Appoint a special envoy to lead the negotiations relating to the peace conference for eastern Chad.

To MINURCAT:

11. Monitor the Chadian police and gendarmes who staff the UN-created Détachement Intégré de Sécurité (DIS) rigorously in order to improve protection of refugees and internally displaced persons.

12. Accelerate troop deployment.

To the Government of France:

13. Support diplomatically and financially the organisation of the peace conference on eastern Chad and make its financial, military and political support to the government conditional on progress in that conference and other national conflict resolution mechanisms.

To the European Union:

14. Finance and help organise the peace conference on eastern Chad.

To the Government of Libya, the African Union, and the wider International Community:

15. Support diplomatically and financially the organisation of the peace conference on eastern Chad.

16. Help obtain Chadian and Sudanese respect for the Dakar Agreement.

17. Press the Chadian government and rebel groups to resume talks on the basis of the Syrte Agreement.

Nairobi/Brussels, 15 April 2009

CHAD: POWDER KEG IN THE EAST

I. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the outbreak of a security and humanitarian crisis in Darfur, eastern Chad has experienced widespread instability. The Chadian authorities have presented the current troubles as a purely Sudanese problem, imported into Chad; in so doing, they have deliberately sought to hide its national and local roots. However, the Darfur crisis has merely exacerbated a conflict that is essentially Chadian in origin.[1] The epicentre of the instability and the armed attacks which affect the region generally referred to as the Chadian "East" lies in the *départements*[2] of Assoungha, Ouara, Dar Sila, Biltine, Dar Tama et Kobé, along the border with Sudan, which host most of the refugee camps and sites for displaced population.[3] These *départements* lie within a wider geographic band, extending

from north to south, linking the two triangles formed by the convergence of international frontiers. This strip of territory begins in the north, in Ennedi, where the Libyan, Chadian and Sudanese frontiers come together – and it ends in the south east, in Salamat, meeting point of the borders of Chad, Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Semi-desert in its northern half, but with more trees covering its southern half, this zone has been the main theatre for the insurrections and revolts which have punctuated the history of the Chadian state since independence. This is due as much to its physical distance from the Chadian capital, N'Djamena,[4] as to the local inhabitants' resistance to a national centre of power whose legitimacy is questioned and which is only represented on the ground by a security apparatus.[5] At the same time, the presence in the East of numerous armed groups challenging the regime of Idriss Déby has perpetuated a general atmosphere of tension. Developed on an ethnic basis, these rebel groups recruit from the civilian population, thus further contributing to the militarisation of a region where "everyone is a fighter".[6] In order to sustain its power, and divide its opponents, the regime of President Déby has sought to capitalise on pre-existing ethnic rivalries. Although this strategy has paid off for N'Djamena, it has considerably exacerbated inter-community violence.

Right up to the present time, the mass movements of Sudanese refugees and internally displaced populations have largely upset the socio-political balance in the East of the country and stirred up ethnic rivalries. Two factors explain this situation. Firstly, in this arid

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[1] This report follows the publication, on 24 September 2008, of the last Crisis Group report which looked at the Chadian crisis as a whole and the prospects for resolving it: Crisis Group Africa Report N°144, *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, 24 September 2008.

[2] A *département* is an administrative division of Chad based on the country's geography. *Départements* are an inheritance of the former French colonial system in Chad and can be referred to in English as districts.

[3] Decrees 415, 416, 419/PR/MAT/2002 of 17 October 2002 and 119, 200 of 10 May 2004, and Administrative Order 002/PR/08 of 19 February 2008, provided for the reorganisation of Chadian administrative districts: subsequently, the prefectures of Biltine and Ouaddaï, and a part of Salamat adjacent to Soudan – which constituted the Ouaddaï in geographical terms – were reorganised into three large regions: Wadi Fira, Ouaddaï and Sila. Wadi Fira region is subdivided into three *départements*, on a broadly ethnic basis: Dar Tama (Tama, plus large minority Zaghawa and Massalit populations), Biltine (Zaghawa and Gorane), and Dar Kobé (Zaghawa). Ouaddaï region consists of Assoungha (Ouaddaïans, Moubi – who have come from Guéra – and Maba), Ouara (Maba, Arabs and Ouaddaïans) and Abdi (Arabs and Ouaddaïans). Dar Sila region is subdivided into *départements*: Kimiti (Dadjo, Mouro and Massalit) and Djourf El Hamar (Dadjo, Arabs). These are the most important ethnic groups, in terms of population; but there are also smaller groups. Most Sudanese refugees and internally displaced people from the East of Chad are currently located in Assoungha, Kimiti, Biltine, Dar Tama, Ouara and Dar Kobé.

[4] Thus Abéché, the main town in the east of Chad, is located 900 kilometres from N'Djamena. It has stronger trade ties with Sudan and with Libya than with N'Djamena or the other towns in Chad. The distant nature of such physical connections accentuates the sense that the East – just like the Chadian north – Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti – is a region that stands apart within Chad as a whole.

[5] For an account of the history and the underlying causes of the insurrections in the East of Chad, see Robert Buijtenhuijs' *Le Frolinat et les guerres civiles du Tchad (1977-1984): la Révolution introuvable* (Paris, 1987).

[6] Crisis Group Report, *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, op. cit.

region, where good land and pasture is rare, the presence of new arrivals can be viewed by indigenous residents as a threat. Although the first waves of arrivals were initially given a generally warm welcome by local populations, because of traditional ethnic ties,[7] the accelerating growth in the number of Sudanese refugees and internally displaced people eventually produced tension. The hostility of non-Arab local populations towards Arab tribes was later exacerbated by accounts of the violence said to have been carried out by Arab Janjaweed and the Sudanese armed forces.

Besides these general factors, one has to take into account the problems specific to each area. Sometimes these problems trigger periodic surges in tensions – such as repeated arguments over the level of *diyah* (blood price),[8] administrative boundaries or the uneven and non-transparent allocation of national resources.[9] There has been no attempt to deal with such national and local political issues; in practise this limits the potential impact achievable through the deployment of a peacekeeping mission that lacks any kind of mandate or framework for intervening in national politics.

This new Crisis Group report describes the factors that are at the root of the current socio-political and security crisis in the East of Chad. It shows how Chadian players – the government and rebel groups – have been responsible for the worsening of ethnic tension. It stresses the vital need for the international community to rethink its strategy, to prevent the powder keg in the East from setting the whole of Chad alight.

II. THE SPECIFIC POLITICAL FEATURES OF THE CHADIAN EAST

Eastern Chad has been stagnating since independence; it is in a state of critical underdevelopment. The difficulties of this situation are compounded by a cycle of repeated violence and rebellions, from which the civilian population is the first to suffer. To impose their authority on a region that has such an "unruly" reputation, the colonial administration and governments of Chad since independence have relied mainly on the use of force, neglecting the development of public services concerned with the well-being of the local people, which might thus have won their confidence.

Marginalised under the regime of President Tombalbaye because of its geographical remoteness, the region laboured under a further handicap during the 1960s and 1970s: it was disconnected from the rest of the country in economic terms yet subject to attack politically, because it was the main recruiting ground for fighters in the various rebel groups. From the 1980s onwards, power in N'Djamena was seized by armed groups originating in the East; yet despite their takeover of central government, the East was no less unruly or unstable. Today, the arrival en masse of Sudanese refugees from Darfur and internally displaced Chadians once again alters the fragile equilibrium of this region and the pattern of conflicts that take place there.

The regimes of both Hissène Habré and Idriss Déby have given priority to the East in their strategy for holding on to power.[10] This has been the principal breeding ground for their fighters. And, although differing in their nature and the length of their stay in power, both regimes[11] have pursued an approach to

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[7] The same ethnic groups live on both sides of the Sudanese border.
[8] See section III.4.
[9] For example, the town of Abéché has no tarmac streets, although it is regarded as the "capital" of the whole of eastern Chad. Moreover, no tarmac road links it to N'Djamena or other towns in the Chadian interior.

[10] In contrast to Idriss Déby who is a Zaghawa – one of the princial ethnic groups in the east – Hissène Habré does not come from this region; he is a Gorane, from Borkou, in the far north. Even so, in the East he could count on a substantial Gorane minority, who settled in Biltine in the early 1980s, after moving from the drought-afflicted north in successive waves of migration. An alliance of the Gorane and the Zaghawa in 1982 allowed Hissène Habré to use Eastern Chad as a launchpad for the offensive that would allow him to take power in N'Djamena. This alliance broke apart in 1989 when Zaghawa officers, including Idriss Déby, embarked on a rebellion against the Habré regime. For an outline of this complex past history of Chad, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°111, *Chad: Back towards War?*, 1 June 2006, and Crisis Group Report, *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, op. cit.
[11] Hissène Habré held power from 1982 to 1990. Behind a façade of ultra-nationalist rhetoric, his one party regime was

governing characterised by the co-opting of the local military elite and a failure to tackle the fundamental problems – with consequences for the region that have been disastrous. The role of the warlords has been to deliver the support of the communities from which they originate; commanders and their troops then received rewards commensurate with the reliability of their commitment in serving the regime.[12] The more fighters a warlord has provided to defend the government, the more personal recompense he has received, generally in material and not political form. The capacity to give handouts and choose where they go is monopolised by a close circle around the president, drawn essentially from members of his ethnic group.[13] The sole role of this layered system of allegiances is to deliver, for a period of time at least, the military support necessary to keep the president in power. This had the effect of placing leaders of Eastern ethnic groups that were historical rivals – such as the Gorane, Zaghawa and Tama – alongside each other at the heart of power, but without instigating a policy of reconciliation at the local level.[14]

For Hissène Habré, the immediate consequence of this policy was the resurgence of rivalry between the Gorane and the Zaghawa. The latter – dissatisfied with their subordinate role at national level and feeling victimised at the local level by the abuses of Gorane troops – went into opposition in April 1989. Even during his early years in power Idriss Déby had to live with the risks attached to this layered structure of allegiances which he himself had exploited to its fullest. His core military support rapidly fragmented, as the warlords who had been supporting him began to feel marginalised once more.[15]

Hissène Habré had responded to dissent, veiled or overt, with indiscriminate repression targeting the entire ethnic group concerned.[16] By contrast, Idriss Déby tempered the use of force, opting instead for financial means to provoke division among dissident groups. The success of this tactic explains the collapse of most of the alliances between those opposing him: Idriss Déby has maintained his position by buying off former allies who had temporarily gone into rebellion and by forging new alliances with elements in the opposition camp.[17] This policy has allowed his regime to overcome a succession of rebel challenges launched from eastern Chad – and thus to remain in power for 18 years. Still, the fundamental problems remain unchanged.[18]

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a brutal dictatorship. The regime of Idriss Déby, in power since 1990, is authoritarian, but it does allow a degree of freedom of expression and permits the functioning of political parties; the latter have little real room for manœuvre, but are at least able to exist. For an in-depth analysis of both the Hissène Habré and Idriss Déby regimes, see Mohamed Tétémadi Bangoura, *Violence politique et conflits en Afrique: le cas du Tchad* (Paris, 2006).

[12] A commitment to serve the regime means that a warlord who has been coopted, and his ethnic group, must be ready to engage in military action to keep the regime in power and, when necessary, carry out abusive action to intimidate opponents.

[13] The report of the Chadian justice ministry on the crimes and embezzlement committed by Hissène Habré's regime reveals that during his time in power the most important decisions were taken by a parallel cabinet recruited solely from the Anakaza, the Gorane sub-clan to which Habré belongs. This parallel cabinet went by the Gorane name *Ain Galaka.* See "Rapport sur les crimes et détournements de l'ex-président Hissène Habré et ses complices [Report on the crimes and embezzlements of former president Hissène Habré and his accomplices]", ministry of justice, Chad, June 1991. In the same vein, most of the Zaghawa opponents of President Déby – who have been his closest colleagues – generally admit that during the time when they were close to the president the big decisions were always taken within the close inner circle of the presidential family. The official cabinet and government were only informed afterwards. See "Tchad: les frères Erdimi à l'offensive [Chad: the Erdimi brothers on the offensive]", *La Lettre du Continent*, 28 September 2006.

[14] For the armed coalition that supported Habré, like Déby's, was the product of an agreement between military commanders, without any real political project. While the political mani-

festos that gave formal voice to these agreements make reference to the grand but vague principles of Chadian national unity and democratisation, they make no mention of the recurrent ethnic tensions in the East or of the question of power sharing, issues left for "future consultations".

[15] Maldom Bada Abbas (Hadjaraï, from Guéra) was the first to embark on rebellion. He was followed by Abbas Koty (Zaghawa), Mahamat Garfa (Tama), Acheikh Ibni Oumar (Arab), Youssouf Togoïmi (Gorane), Mahamat Nour (Tama), the Erdimi brothers (Zaghawa), Hassaballah Soubiane (Arab), Mahamat Nouri (Gorane), and so on. For details on these various revolts, see the last two Crisis Group Reports: *Chad: Back towards War?* and *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, both op. cit. These are the most significant rebellions. Many other warlords have also turned against the Déby regime; moreover, the above list includes only those warlords from the East or with an ethnic base in the East.

[16] In the East as in the South of Chad, Hissène Habré had no hesitation in using the apparatus of repression against civilians, to discourage them from any attempt to support the rebels. This was the case in 1984 in southern Chad, in 1987 in Guera – against the Hadjaraï – and also in 1990 in Biltine, in opposition to the Zaghawa.

[17] The most emblematic examples are Abbas Kotty, Mahamat Nour, Yaya Dillo and Hassan Al Djineidi, whose support the government managed to secure.

[18] In fact, Idriss Déby's regime always appears vulnerable but continues to hang on to power by cleverly playing on the interests of the different clan chiefs.

Because the presidential powerbase relies primarily on co-opting warlords, the latter have come to dominate local political life, relegating the civilian elite and non-violent political campaigning to a secondary role. Since the outbreak of civil war, most political players who come from the East or are based in the region have resorted to armed struggle at one time or another in their political life.[19] This pattern contrasts with the circumstances currently prevailing in other regions of the country, particularly the West and the South, where no rebel groups have been set up.

Meanwhile, the intellectual elite from these regions of the country is little involved in the current rebellion; it seems to prefer to join traditional political parties in the unarmed opposition.[20] The last armed group to operate in Western Chad, the Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement (Movement for Democracy and Development, MDD), led by Moussa Medela, ceased operations in February 1992, after its leader had been arrested;[21] since then, no armed group has sustained a continuing presence in the region. The same is true in the South of Chad, where the last rebel group[22] was dismantled in 1998.

The militarisation of political engagement in the North-East means that it has become normal to take up arms as a main form of action, while non-violent means of resolving political difficulties play only a secondary role.[23] The most serious result of this phenomenon has been that entire generations are encouraged to become fighters, transforming Chad into one vast military camp. Because the local military elite need fighters to back up its clout at national level, it tends to recruit all the fit and capable men in its region. Just like the warlords, the troops are thus armed civilians who have become fighters. Peasant farmers or herdsmen are recruited voluntarily or press-ganged into joining the government army or the rebel groups for the duration of a military campaign. Soldiers while conflict endures, they resume their lives as farmers or herders during periods of truce, often having failed to secure their promised earning, which is generally seized by the commanders.

The fluidity with which people move between civilian and military life facilitates the distribution of weapons among the population – and that means that community-level conflicts become particularly bloody. The sight of men carrying military weapons has become part of daily normality. In Abéché for example, soldiers are encountered in all sectors of civilian economic life, including drinks stalls and markets. It is the same at Adré – the country's biggest military garrison – and Goz Beida, Iriba, Guereda and most other urban centres in the East. Members of the Sudanese Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), allies of the Chadian president, are found on the fringes of Bahaïs and Am Djaress, while Chadian rebel groups seek to maintain a presence in Hadjer Marfaïne, on the Chad/Sudan border.

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[19] The opponent Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh, now dead, or Ali Abderrahmane Haggar, are exceptions to the rule. Even the region's intellectuals, who for a long time refused to engage in armed struggle, have now joined the rebellion. This is the case for Abakar Tollimi, Djibrine Assali (who for many years was general secretary of Chad's trade union federation), Abderrahmane Koulamallah, etc. Chad's prime minister, Youssouf Saleh Abbas, who comes from the Abéché region, also spent time in the Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad (Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad, MDJT) rebel group.

[20] The leadership of the latest rebel coalition – formed on 18 January 2009 – consists exclusively of politico-military leaders from the East or the far North of the country. See the list of members of the political bureau of the Union des forces de la résistance (Union of Forces of the Resistance, UFR) on www.toumai-tchad.com/article-27295641.html.

[21] Moussa Medela (a Kanembou from the West) and his command team were arrested by the Nigerian authorities and sent back to Chad in February 1992. Most are thought subsequently to have been executed. See Ngarléjy Yorongar, *Le Tchad, le procès d'Idriss Déby, témoignage à charge* (Paris, 2003).

[22] These were the Forces armées de la République fédérale (Federal Republic Armed Forces, FARF) of Laokein Bardé Frisson, who was himself killed in 1998.

[23] In September 2008 the chiefs of Moura and Marfa, in Ouaddaï district, joined the rebellion, further boosting the camp of those who have chosen rebellion as the means to express their frustration.

III. THE DYNAMICS OF TODAY'S VIOLENCE

Inter-communal violence is currently destabilising eastern Chad at three levels. Locally the problem reflects a traditional struggle for land resources and water that are in short supply. However, regional factors also come into play: there are knock-on effects from the crisis in Darfur, with which there are close cross-border ties. The violence is also being politically manipulated at a national level, while traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution have been distorted. The situation in the East has thus come to be of central importance for the stability of the country as a whole.

A. LOCAL VIOLENCE

The majority of so-called "traditional" conflicts have their roots in quarrels between farmers and livestock herders living alongside each other and in disputes between rival ethnic groups over access to grazing land or wells. Normally, local mediation arrangements allow such differences to be resolved and contained without lasting damage to inter-community relations. However, the long drought experienced by the region in the mid-1980s fundamentally altered the make-up of the local population. It forced communities living in the north, in Biltine and Ouaddaï, to emigrate southwards to Dar Sila, where the land is said to be more fertile. Demographic pressure has thus steadily intensified; as a result, conflicts between communities over access to land and grazing have become more frequent. In some cases, "indigenous" communities[24] have found themselves living alongside new arrivals for the first time. The majority of the most serious cases of inter-communal violence have occurred in three *départements* – Dar Tama, Dar Sila and Ouara.

1. Dar Tama

There is a long history of animosity between the Zaghawa the Tama and this seems to be rooted in the collective psyche of these communities, thus fuelling a climate of mutual rejection. Among both groups, prejudiced attitudes are strongly and widely rooted in the collective imagination. In Iriba,[25] the Tama are often viewed with condescension,[26] while in Guereda – the capital of Dar Tama – one will often hear the Zaghawa described as "greedy, lazy people who cannot be trusted to keep their word.[27] Members of both communities generally view each other with contempt.

Even so, until the early 1990s there were no violent clashes between the two groups, who inhabited areas that were relatively far apart, with the Zaghawa in the north, in Ennedi, and the Tama in the south of Biltine.[28] The first incidents were reported in the early 1990s when Zaghawa leaders, although still a minority in southern Biltine, began to behave like a dominant group, encouraged by the fact that one of their own, Idriss Déby, was now head of state.

A stake in power, and the goodwill of local authorities, produced a sense of superiority among Zaghawa leaders; they began to behave aggressively towards neighbouring ethnic groups, particularly the Gorane, the Tama and the Massalit. This hostile attitude took the form of condescension, contempt and acts of violence that became increasingly humiliating for the victims;[29] in particular, there was a surge in acts of cattle theft, carried out with complete impunity. Such acts of theft had traditionally been of symbolic significance, a rite of passage through which, before entering adulthood, young Zaghawa had to prove their bravery and skill by making off with livestock belonging to neighbouring ethnic groups. After mediation between families, owners who had lost livestock were subsequently compensated in cash or offered replacement animals.

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[24] It is not easy to establish exactly who can be categorised as indigenous in eastern Chad, because of the frequent nomadic movements of population in the region. Frequent droughts have forced inhabitants to migrate from one area to another, to then settle there and, after some time, claim to be indigenous. This report designates as indigenous those ethnic groups that have been considered long-established majorities in particular areas, in contrast to the latest arrivals. Refugees who have arrived from Darfur since 2003 and internally displaced people are excluded from this categorisation.

[25] Considered to be a Zaghawa fiefdom.
[26] "The Tama have always been our slaves, our servants. That's the reality. We have always been superior to them; they are the ones who grow everything that we consume here in Iriba". Crisis Group interviews, Iriba, November 2008.
[27] Crisis Group interviews, Guereda, November 2008.
[28] Just like the Gorane, the Zaghawa only moved towards the south of Ennedi and Biltine because of the 1980s drought, in a search for good land and food.
[29] Besides the theft of cattle, members of the Tama ethnic group recall cases in which the threat of violence was used to force young Tama to work in fields belonging to Zaghawa. Many young Tama who joined the rebellion did so to escape from this form of serfdom. Crisis Group interviews, Guereda, November 2008.

But the accession to power of a Zaghawa in 1990 led to the distortion of this practice. Now feeling themselves to be dominant, the Zaghawa were no longer prepared to compensate the owners of the stolen animals. Groups of youths started to organise repeated large-scale cattle raids, during which neighbouring communities were deprived of their livestock. The Tama were particularly targeted by this phenomenon; their young girls were also kidnapped and often raped. The fact that those carrying out these acts benefitted from impunity fostered deep Tama bitterness towards the Zaghawa community.

This was the context that in 1994 saw the birth of a Tama rebel group, the National Resistance Alliance (ANR – Alliance nationale de la résistance). In 2005 it split, leading to the creation of the Rally for Democracy and Liberty (RDL – Rassemblement pour la démocratie et la liberté)[30] led by Mahamat Nour Abdélkerim,[31] a Tama warlord. Having obtained weaponry from Sudan and agreed alliances with other rebel movements – to form the United Front for Change (FUC, Front uni pour le changement) – the RDL and associated groups launched an offensive in April 2006; it was defeated in the suburbs of N'Djamena.[32]

This offensive was linked to a shift in attitudes in Dar Tama. Now equipped with their own armed wing, the Tama were no longer prepared to continue suffering Zaghawa domination. An increasingly fierce struggle developed between the two communities; at local level this took the form of spiralling provocations and revenge attacks for the humiliations and damage suffered in the past. In the absence of any state authority, the dominance that the Zaghawa had long exercised with impunity was faced with a growing Tama refusal to accept the situation indefinitely; their resistance was expressed through accelerating number of acts of violence, themselves just as reprehensible as those of the Zaghawa.[33]

From 7-9 November 2008, the village of Korok,[34] situated in Birak district, on the edge of Dar Tama, a few kilometres from the Sudanese frontier, was the scene of the most serious inter-communal clashes between Tama and Zaghawa since those October 2007 at Guereda. The Birak clashes were once again sparked by the routine theft of about 100 goats belonging to the Zaghawa; it seems that Tama were responsible. In just a few hours a dramatic confrontation took place, resulting in the death of 50 people, and the displacement of some 700 families.[35]

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[30] For a glossary of Chadian rebel movements and their evolution, see the preceding Crisis Group report, *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, op. cit.

[31] The career of this Tama warlord epitomises the policy of coopting the military elite that has already been described. A former officer of the Chad national army, Mahamat Nour Abdélkerim fought alongside Idriss Déby in his victorious 1990 campaign to overthrow Hissène Habré. But in the mid-1990s he rebelled, after concluding that, within the new regime, his Tama ethnic group was continuing to be marginalised. In April 2006, military offensive came within an ace of overthrowing Déby. Six months later, in October 2006, he once again pledged allegiance to the central government, after agreeing to sign a peace accord, against the wishes of his own fighters. His military allies accused him of sacrificing his own troops in return for a rich reward from the regime and the promise of a role in politics. He secured the post of defence minister but found himself marginalised within the government, and thus once again opted for rebellion in the upheavals of February 2008. Today he is said to be in the Arabian Gulf. The present extent of his influence over his soldiers, who were initally quartered at Guereda but later dispersed among other armed groups, is uncertain. Still, the resources that he seems to have acquired during his brief journey within the regime could enable him to play a role in politics in the near future.

[32] Until this defeat, the FUC, of all the Chadian rebel groups, seemed the one best placed to overthrow Déby, thanks to the support it was getting from Sudan. But while this backing enabled the FUC to mount a serious threat to the regime, it sooned proved to have a downside: for the Chadian

government sought to persuade national and international opinion that the FUC rebels were the "Chadian armed wing of the Islamist Sudanese regime. Against the context of a surge in the number of Janjaweed raids against civilian populations, this argument rapidly found an echo both in Chad and abroad.

[33] The abuses committed by FUC Tama rebels against Zaghawa civilians in Guereda reflected their desire for revenge. In the same way, the violent Tama attacks on Zaghawa – mainly women and children – in the Kounoungo refugee camp, illustrate the desire to exact revenge for the humiliations that were suffered in the past and remain rooted in the Tama collective memory. See "'They Came Here to Kill Us': Militia Attacks and Ethnic Targeting of Civilians in Eastern Chad", Human Rights Watch, January 2007.

[34] Generally designated as a village, Korok is in fact a geographic location around which are scattered dozens of small hamlets (eg, Iyor, Kobong, Dourné Didiayi, Korabo, Amara, Jajamé, Tiré, Katiré, Malaga, Toumoundou, Tentema, Agounti). Originally, these hamlets were inhabited by Chadian Tama families, who from 2003 onwards were joined by Tama and Zaghawa refugees from Sudan. See UNHCR, "Rapport d'évaluation à Birak: Mission inter agences du 16 au 18 novembre 2008 [Evaluation report at Birak: Inter-agency mission, 16-18 November 2008]".

[35] According to the United Nations inter-agency enquiry team sent to the scene (UNHCR, MINURCAT and OCHA), cattle thefts are in reality merely a pretext for attacks that had been in preparation for several months. The assailants used heavy weapons, including mortars, and they had the

The theft was made from a field on the fringes of Korok village, where Tama were living.[36] After this incident, hundreds of Zaghawa mounted on camels carried out night raids for three days against 11 Tama villages around Korok, which were almost entirely burnt to the ground. The assailants are said to have been supported by personnel in military uniform using heavy weapons.[37] Witness accounts collected by the humanitarian agencies highlighted the fact that the attacks were meant to terrorise Tama peasant farmers, to force them to permanently abandon the Birak district and surrounding area.[38] They succeeded in this goal; most of the Tama villagers fled Birak district and the neighbouring district of Bali, scattering into Sudan and the Chadian interior.

After these attacks, the Chad army, which has an important base at Koulbous, about 10 kilometres from Korok, deployed units in order to prevent new attacks; a government delegation was sent to visit the Tama and Zaghawa chiefs in an effort to prevent a spiral of reprisals. However, the humanitarian agencies say that the authorities did not launch any enquiry to identify those who carried out the attacks.[39] For its part, EUFOR (the EU military operation in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic) maintained a presence at the village of Dourné from 11 November onwards, to dissuade any further attacks and ensure the security of humanitarian agency operations in the area. Although no further attacks have been re-

ported since this deployment, the situation still remains very tense between Tama and Zaghawa villagers.

For more than five years both the Chadian army and the rebel groups have tussled for control of Birak district because of its strategic location at the foot of the Hadjer Marfaïne mountain,[40] which marks the frontier between Chad and Sudan.[41] Since the outbreak of fighting in 2004, the two sides have tried to recruit people from the district to use as forward scouts.[42] The worsening of the tension between the Zaghawa and the Tama, following the Guereda clashes, opened up a clear rift between the two communities living in the district. Although not a universal phenomenon, this saw large numbers of young Tama joining the rebellion, while many young Zaghawa chose to join the government military forces or their allies in JEM.[43]

Beyond these military alliances, the district is also the subject of a struggle between the Zaghawa and the Tama who, with the arrival of refugees from Sudan, have progressively less room to graze their livestock. There are now frequent disputes between villagers from the two groups; they readily take up firearms to kill each other's livestock. After the collapse of the rebel offensive in February 2008, the Zaghawa appear to have benefited from their alliance with the government forces to drive the Tama off the land that they wanted to seize from them.[44]

2. Dar Sila

In Dar Sila, the Dadjo are viewed as the majority ethnic group.[45] However, the region also has communi-

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support of reinforcements who came from Sudan. These facts prove that, far from being spontaneous, the events at Birak are part of the series of planned attacks that have been causing bloodshed in Dar Tama since 2006. UNHCR, "Rapport d'évaluation à Birak", op. cit.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid. The UNHCR evaluation mission was not able to establish if the individuals wearing military uniforms belong to the Chadian army or to rebel groups. As soon as news of these attacks emerged, the Chadian government blamed "attackers who had come from Sudan". In telephone interviews carried out in March 2009 Crisis Group was unable to clearly ascertain where these attackers – who had heavy weapons – had come from. Leaders of Chadian rebel groups insist that they must have been Sudanese Zaghawa from JEM. This hypothesis is plausible but is open to question, because those JEM rebels in Chad were reported to have been involved in events near Tiné, further north in Dar Tama. Other witness accounts collected by Crisis Group suggest that the attackers were Zaghawa troops from the Chad army, who had intervened without informing their superiors. Visiting Birak on 20 February 2009, President Déby accused "mercenaries who had come from Sudan" of carrying out these attacks. See www.presidencetchad.org/etape_Birak.htm.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Hadjer Marfaïne – "the mountain of hyenas" – is a low mountainous massif separating Chad from Sudan. It is also the name of two villages that have the same name and are located either side of the frontier. To distinguish between them, people refer to Hadjer Marfaïne/Chad and Hadjer Marfaïne/Sudan. The headquarters of the Chadian rebel coalition is in Hadjer Marfaïne/Sudan. When rebel press statements state that they are in Hadjer Marfaïne, the Chadian groups do not always make clear which village they are referring to. Indeed, they appear to play on this ambiguity to claim that their headquarters is in Chad and deny any reliance on a rear base in Sudan. Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, November 2008.

[41] See the UNHCR evaluation report already cited, as well as the situation report from EUFOR about the events at Birak; the latter can be found at: www.lepoint.fr/actualites-monde/serieux-incidents-au-tchad/1648/0/291892.

[42] Crisis Group telephone interviews, March 2009.

[43] Crisis Group telephone interviews, March 2009.

[44] On this point, see "Rapport d'évaluation à Birak", op. cit.

[45] Recent studies suggest that the Dadjo probably arrived in Dar Sila in the fifteenth century, having migrated from the Gulf of Aden; these are the grounds on which they now see

ties of Mimi, Mouro, Massalit, Arabs, Kadjakse and other minority groups.[46] From 1982 onwards, the population was boosted by other groups, essentially derived from Arab tribes, who moved in with their livestock to take advantage of the pasture, water-holes and fertile land for which Dar Sila is known.[47] The growth in the number of livestock gradually stirred up a latent conflict between nomadic Arab herders and the mainly Dadjo, Mimi and Mouro farmers. But mediation by local chiefs contained sporadic clashes provoked by this conflict.

The early communal tensions in Dar Sila originally arose within the Dadjo majority, many of whom resented their sultan's allocation of land to newcomers without consulting his own community.[48] But later the Dadjo developed hostility towards Mimi who had come from Ouaddaï; this animosity was fuelled by Dadjo notables jealous of the wealth of Ouaddaïan traders who had become admired throughout the region for their business savvy.

The rise of these tensions was also illustrated by the attack on Am Djimena, a Dadjo village, in March 2003. The mainly Arab assailants seem to have been assisted by some Mimi who harboured a sense of grievance

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themselves as indigenous. Indeed, this long settlement history, and the superior status of the Dadjo sultanate within the region is generally recognised by local groups. See, in particular, "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation: une étude anthropologique sur le Dar Sila [Source of Violence, Mediation and Reconciliation: an Anthropological Study of Dar Sila]", a European Commission study carried out by Christine Pawlitzky and Stephan Reyna, January 2007.
[46] For instance the Sinyar, Fongoro and Moubi.
[47] For greater detail on the geographical distribution and history of settlement, see "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation", op. cit.
[48] In fact, it seems that many Dadjo were not unhappy when this sultan, Saïd Ibrahim Mustapha, was deposed by the Chadian government in 2007. A former primary school teacher whose well-judged opinions impressed foreign interlocutors, the sultan was nevertheless under challenge within his own entourage because he was seen as too conciliatory towards neighbouring ethnic groups. After the outbreak of conflict in Dar Sila in 2006, it seems that he opposed the creation of Dadjo militias and the formation of an alliance of "black" population groups to fight the Arab tribes allied to the Janjaweed. It was because of his opposition to this arrangement that he was deposed by the Chad government and replaced with his son. See "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation", op. cit., and Johanne Begin Favre, "Insécurité: une explication environnementale de la violence au Ouaddaï (Tchad oriental) [Insecurity: an Environmental Explanation of Violence in Ouaddaï (Eastern Chad)]", doctoral thesis presented at the University of Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, November 2008.

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towards the Dadjo.[49] These attacks were followed by occasional clashes between the Dadjo and the Mimi, which only ended in early 2006, after contacts between the traditional chiefs of the two ethnic groups.

However, the spread of communal violence does seem to have been sparked by the destabilisation of the region, as a result of the Darfur crisis, which led to attacks on villages in the district. The goal of these raids was cattle theft and pillage and initially they targeted all ethnic groups in the region, without distinction. Even so, the creation of Janjaweed militias, from 2004 onwards, radically changed the dynamics of the conflict. The fact that the majority of the militia fighters were Arab led to a change in attitudes towards Chadian Arab tribes – who now found themselves blamed for all the thefts of cattle in the region, despite the local activities of highway bandits who were not necessarily Arab. Just like the non-Arab ethnic groups, Chadian Arabs were also influenced by echoes of the situation in Darfur: the radical ideology propagated by the Janjaweed was inciting them to drive non-Arab tribes out of "their" territory. And attitudes among the non-Arabs were changing as they head from arriving Darfur refugees about the atrocities that had taken place there.

Such mutual hostility is not unique to the Arab/non-Arab relationship.[50] In particular, tensions have increased between the Dadjo and the Mouro in the Kerfi area. This was previously inhabited by Dadjo families; they had to leave it because of the major drought of the 1970s-1980s. Later, the Mouro came to occupy the area and seek their livelihood there. Fleeing the first attacks of the Arab tribes, the Dadjo came to the region, but this time as [internally] displaced people. The government administration agreed to create a district for them – a move that upset the Mouro. In July 2008, tension between the two communities degenerated into an overt crisis, during which the Mouro district chief was killed. Fearful of Mouro revenge, the Dadjo district chief was taken back to Goz Beida by the regional governor.[51]

From 2004 onwards, both the central government and the Chadian rebel groups have sent out emissaries with roots in the region, in an attempt to persuade local

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[49] See "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation", op. cit.
[50] The distinction between "Arabs" and "non-Arabs" is not obvious. It has not always been linked to skin colour, because some Arabs are as dark as non-Arabs. Nor is it religous, because all these ethnic groups adhere to Islam. At times it seems to be purely the product of the political effects of the situation in Darfur.
[51] Crisis Group interviews, Goz Beida, November 2008.

ethnic groups to enrol in their respective forces, in return for a promise of weapons for self-defence in case of attack.[52] Case by case, and depending on the threats they face, the various communities have chosen whether to ally themselves with the government or with the rebels. But there has been no generalised commitment to either one camp or the other.

The attacks by the Janjaweed, which began to intensify after the massacres at Moudeina in September 2005[53] and Tiero and Marena in March 2007,[54] have encouraged the establishment of Dadjo self-defence militias financed by the Chadian regime. Government envoys apparently told Dadjo leaders that to avoid suffering continued Janjaweed raids they should ally themselves with the Chadian army.[55] The creation of the militias was followed by the signature of two defence agreements between the Dadjo and the regime. Made public in April 2007 by the Chadian armed opposition, the documents confirming these accords apparently stated that the Dadjo would commit to defend the government against any armed plot by providing it with men of fighting age. In return, the Dadjo are said to have asked for – and obtained – the regime's commitment to provide them with weapons and financial aid. The existence of such an agreement

has been denied by both the government and the now deposed Dadjo sultan – who has never admitted to participating in any negotiations prior to such a deal.[56]

Henceforth organised in militias, right through 2006 the Dadjo nevertheless organised a string of attacks on Arab and Mimi villages that they suspected of collaborating with the Janjaweed. The Janjaweed responded by staging violent incursions, sometimes with the support of Chadian rebel groups.[57] Despite several attempts at mediation between the senior figures in both communities, the violence continued right through 2007, particularly in the outskirts of Kerfi and Dogdoré. The most recent attacks date from October and November 2008.[58]

3. Ouara

A crossroads district that includes Abéché, the regional capital, Ouara has a population drawn from all the main ethnic groups in the Eastern Chad. The violence that is taking place there demonstrates how the Chadian state has completely lost its authority over the various peoples who inhabit its territory and has allowed itself to become the prisoner of as single group.

The most recent episodes of violence are rooted in the events of Gniguilim. In August 1993, a feud between Zaghawa and Ouaddaïans – following the theft of some cattle – sparked a fight in the small village of Gniguilim; more than a hundred people were killed and many were wounded, most of them Ouaddaïans. Witnesses reported that the Zaghawa attackers were not arrested, although they had been clearly identified; the military authorities merely called on the families of the victims to remain calm.[59]

To express their anger toward the Zaghawa, the Ouaddaïans organised violent demonstrations in Abéché and in N'Djamena. These were suppressed with

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[52] The Chad government emissaries are said to have persuaded the Arabs and the Dadjo to support the government forces against the Chadian rebels. For their part, the rebels have threatened the Dadjo in particular with Janjaweed reprisals unless they agree to collaborate with them. Faced with a Dadjo refusal to openly commit their community, this threat would have been rapidly executed: this would have meant bloody Janjaweed attacks on Dadjo villages right through 2006. Crisis Group interviews, Goz Beida, November 2008.
[53] In September 2005, Arab horsemen attacked the Dadjo hamlet of Moudeina, killing 64 people and forcing dozens of families to flee. This raid was not only the first operation in Chad by Sudanese Janjaweed, it also provided confirmation for the first time of the Chadian Arabs' participation in attacks against non-Arab groups in eastern Chad.
[54] On 31 March 2007, the villages of Tiero and Marena, inhabited by Dadjo, were set on fire and completely destroyed in an attack attributed to the Janjaweed, supported by Chadian Arabs. According to many sources, this attack cost more lives than any other since the outbreak of the security crisis in eastern Chad. More than 400 dead were counted. Fleeing villagers were hunted down in the bush by attackers, the men and even baby boys were systematically killed while the women were raped. See, in particular, Jérôme Tubiana and Victor Tanner, "Au Tchad: un second Darfour [In Chad: a Second Darfour]", Outre-Terre, n°20, 2007.
[55] See "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation", op. cit. According to this report, in May 2005, when Janjaweed attacked the Dadjo at Djabal Gada, the Chadian army forces stationed in the area did not intervene.

[56] It is because he was opposed to these agreements that the Sultan of Goz Beida, Saïd Ibrahim Mustapha, was summoned to N'Djamena by the authorities.
[57] According to several sources, the CNT (Concorde nationale tchadienne – Chadian National Accord), a rebel group formed of Chadian Arabs, openly collaborated with the Janjaweed. Its leader, Hassan Al Djineidi, is now a member of the Chad government.
[58] In October and November 2008, inter-communal clashes occurred in the surroundings of Kerfi, Dogdoré and Birak; about 10 people were killed. See "Rapport sur la situation humanitaire au Tchad [Report on the Humanitarian Situation in Chad]", OCHA, 27 November 2008.
[59] See, in particular, Johanne Begin Favre, "Insécurités", op. cit., where the author cites several articles about the affair in *Le Monde*.

extreme brutality causing a further 50 or so additional deaths.[60] After several months of calm, anger flared up again in January 1994, when a mutiny in an Abéché army camp set off a fresh Ouaddaïan revolt; this too was severely repressed. The mutiny began when Ouaddaïan fighters from the Front national tchadien (FNT – Chadian National Front),[61] tired of waiting to be integrated into the government army after a peace agreement, attacked the Abéché military garrison. In response to this attack, the Garde républicaine (GR – Republican Guard) [62] intervened in Abéché town, killing more than 200 civilians whom they regarded as accomplices of the mutineers.[63] The feud between the Ouaddaïans and the Zaghawa was further stirred up by the death of an opposition figure of Ouaddaïan origin, Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh – for which the government was blamed.[64]

Tensions across the Abéché region are also fuelled by land disputes between the original inhabitants and newcomers and the Zaghawa in particular. The original inhabitants of Abéché accused the state authorities of giving plots of land around the edge of the town and near the airport to officers in the Chadian army, as a reward for their loyalty to the regime.[65] These inhabitants also claim that Zaghawa illegally claimed land that has not been allocated or attempted to illegally take over private property. It is said that com-

plaints to the authorities on this issue are not usually followed up.[66]

4. The failure and distortion of local conflict management structures

The numerous grievances that cause rifts between the communities of eastern Chad were usually resolved through well-tested practices of inter-communal mediation.[67] But the generalised violence now afflicting the region shows that, having been distorted by political manipulation, these practices no longer work effectively.

When nomadic pastoralists and settled peasant farmers are living alongside each other disputes over access to grazing land and wells can often crop up.[68] When such conflicts lead to bloody clashes, a local system of conflict resolution is normally set up. The leaders of the two communities in dispute gather under the auspices of mediation by the local sultan, district chief or government sub-prefect [administrator], to take account of the damage suffered. After lengthy discussions, a level of fair compensation is set, including a sum of *diyah*[69] to be paid if their have been human victims.

The colonial administration and, later, the authorities of the independent Chadian state, have enacted legislation designed to provide a general framework for

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[60] See, in particular, Johanne Begin Favre, "Insécurités", op. cit.

[61] The FNT was a rebel faction led by Al Harris Bachar, a warlord originally from Ouaddaï; this movement signed a peace agreement with the Chadian authorities in 1994 in Libreville (Gabon). After its troops mutinied in Abéché, the agreement was rendered meaningless because the revolt led to the massacre of almost all the FNT fighters. See Mohamed Tétémadi Bangoura, op. cit.

[62] The Republican Guard was the Chadian army's elite force, mainly recruited from the Zaghawa and charged with providing close protection for President Déby. After the emergence of internal rifts among the Zaghawa, from 2004 onwards, Idriss Déby decided to disolve the unit in September 2005 to replace it with the DGSSIE (Direction générale de sécurité des services et des institutions de l'Etat – the General Security Directorate of the Services and Institutions of the State), a unit whose composition was broadened out to include other Chadian ethnic groups.

[63] See Mohamed Tétémadi Bangoura, op. cit.

[64] This opponent was kidnapped by government forces after the rebel attack. A commission of enquiry charged with looking into his case concluded that he had "probably died".

[65] Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, January 2009. The town's new district of Goz Amer, situated beside Abéché airport and notable for plush new buildings said to be funded by "Chadian army generals", is reportedly built on land subject to dispute, having been seized from locals.

[66] Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, January 2009.

[67] Crisis Group interviews, N'Djamena, November 2008 and Goz Beida, January 2009. See also "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation", op. cit.

[68] It should be noted here that even the distinctions between indigenous people and outsiders or between nomads and settled populations cannot always be clearly drawn. Some pastoralists are not purely nomadic because they sometimes settle temporarily in an area to grow crops during the rainy season. Furthermore, many farmers also have livestock – which they sometimes entrust to seasonal migrants. Finally, "nomadic" and "sedentary" families are frequently linked through marriage, further clouding any distinction between the two.

[69] *Diyah* is a form of compensation paid – in certain Muslim societies – by the author of a blood crime to the family of the victim. In Chad the amount varies, depending on the age, social status and ethnicity of the victim. The sum is generally set by joint agreement between the families of the victim and the author of the crime. But it can also be set by traditional chiefs, the imam, the sultan or the representative of the state. The value of this payment is always a subject of argument because those ethnic groups that are less dominant or powerful within government circles always feel hard done by when it comes to the sums that they must pay or receive under the *diyah* system.

pastoralists and farmers living alongside each other.[70] Time boundaries are set for the seasonal migration of livestock – before crops are sown and after they have been harvested. Areas for grazing are designated outside cultivated land or clearly identified individual plots. Central government has also set up a travelling administration, assigned both to ensure that these rules are respected and to act as a mediator between the state and local community structures if conflicts arise.

The proliferation of bloody disputes, despite the existence of these preventative systems is mainly due to two factors. The demographic pressure that resulted from the 1980s[71] drought has seen grazing land severely constrained as land is kept aside for cultivation.[72] Meanwhile, the intensification of the Chad civil war has profoundly altered the nature of the disputes: farmers and herders are often also combatants, confronting each other through military actions that are a political expression of what used to be routine neighbourhood disputes.

Diyah, a traditional tool for handling disputes linked to blood crimes, is a financial compensation paid to the victim's family by the author of the crime. In a region where prison did not exist, *diyah* played a major role. It spared people the need for vengeance by leading the author of a crime to recognise that he was at fault: by paying *diyah*, he confessed his guilt and admitted that he had a lifelong moral responsibility towards the family of the victim. The financial compensation was in fact a secondary feature.

Until the mid-1980s, the Chadian state made no attempt to regulate this practice, leaving communities or traditional chiefs to set levels of *diyah* payment themselves. The only new feature introduced by the public authorities[73] – and one that remains in force – is that the payment of *diyah* has no influence on the actions of state courts once a case has been brought before them.

Hissène Habré's arrival in power led to a radical change in the application of *diyah*. To win goodwill among the Muslim community and his own Gorane ethnic group, Hissène Habré allowed the widespread adoption of a system that was not covered by the law but was commonplace: traditional or district chiefs were authorised to adjust the level of *diyah* to be paid, according to the ethnicity or religion of the victim. The figure was set at a high level when the victim was Muslim, and even higher if the victim was Gorane. Moreover, given the strength of their control over the military hierarchy, the Gorane could get away with refusing to pay *diyah* by threatening reprisals against a victim's family who insisted on compensation. Living under a dictatorship at that time, no one dared to challenge these distortions.[74]

While the arrival in power of Idriss Déby brought an end to the payment of exorbitant sums to the Gorane, it did not lead to a more effective regulation of the *diyah* system. Considering themselves to be dominant and equipped to threaten reprisals, it was now the Zaghawa leaders who wanted to unilaterally set the value of the *diyah* payments that they were prepared to pay – or to receive from other communities.[75]

The practice of paying *diyah* has become less common, particularly in N'Djamena. However, in the north and the east it remains commonplace. In Dar Sila, the Arab tribes offered a peace agreement with the Dadjo, to end ethnic war. The Dadjo reportedly rejected this initiative, arguing that no peace deal was possible while the Arabs were avoiding payment of *diyah* for all the Dadjo victims of the conflict. The events at

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[70] Under Law N° 4 of October 1959, which regulates the conditions of nomadic transhumance.

[71] The 1980s drought was the most serious that eastern Chad has experienced in the past three decades. The subject always crops up in discussions with local people and it appears to have fundamentally upset the socio-demographic balance of the region. The drought followed a cycle of climatic dusturbances that affected the Sahelian belt in Africa; these were most severe between 1980 and 1986, when it hardly rained at all. This led to a major famine, from 1980 to 1986, which affected the whole of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, and especially Ethiopia and Somalia. See "Les Oualad Rachid du Ouadi Rime (Djedaa Batha): une chefferie agro-pastorale du Sahel tchadien face à la sécheresse des années 1980 [The Oualad Rachid of Ouadi Rime (Djedaa Batha): an agro-pastoral chieftancy in the Chadian Sahel confronted with the 1980s drought]", Moussa Mahamat, doctoral thesis, Université de Bordeaux 3, 1995.

[72] See Andrea Behrends, "Neither nomads versus settlers nor ethnic conflicts: the long history of changing alliances and politicized groups on the Chad/Sudan border", in Richard Rottenburg (dir.), "Nomadic-sedentary relations and failing state institutions in Darfur and Kordofan (Sudan)", Orientwissensschaftliche Hefte, n°26, 2008, pp. 25-70.

[73] Through Decree N°6-67 of 21 March 1967, concerning reform of the judicial system and Decree N°7 of 7 May 1970, concerning the attribution of certain judicial powers to traditional chiefs.

[74] See "Rapport sur les crimes et détournements de l'ex-président Hissène Habré et de ses complices", op. cit.

[75] Today, it is commonplace for other communities to complain that the practice of *diyah* has spread to cases of attack on the lives of Zaghawa, even in cases of accidents. The sums concerned are said to vary between several hundred thousand to tens of millions of CFA francs (100,000 CFA francs = €150 Euros). Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, January 2009.

Gniguilim outlined earlier also exemplified the way in which *diyah* has been distorted. Fearing that resentment among the Ouaddaïans would spread and undermine its power, the Chadian government carried out discreet negotiations with traditional chiefs, to pay *diyah* for those who had been killed. By this action, the regime managed – at least temporarily – to limit the scale of a rebellion which could have become a much more serious affair. Still in agreeing to pay the *diyah* itself, it transferred guilt from those who had originally fired the shots to the state – which thus became an accomplice and a guarantor [for the future behaviour of the original culprits].

Like *diyah*, the role of traditional chiefs is now manipulated by central government, which thus undermines their capacity to deal with local conflicts. The intervention of the Chadian government, in January 2007, forcing the Dadjo sultan to make way for his son – who was readier to acquiesce in the arming of the militias – threatened to seriously undermine the legitimacy of the Dar Sila sultanate: for custom dictates that the position of sultan only changes hands on the death of the incumbent. So the legitimacy of the new sultan is in jeopardy, both because of the circumstances in which he came to office, and because his father is still alive and continues to exercise a degree of influence over local community leaders.[76] This raises doubts about the capacity of the Dar Sila sultanate to serve as a mediating institution, both among the Dadjo and between the various communities living under its administration.

In the case of Dar Tama, the sultan of Guereda, Haroun Mahamat Abdoulaye, was arrested in October 2007 and in effect deposed by the central government, because he was believed to have maintained close ties to the FUC rebellion. After his arrest, the authorities took him to N'Djamena. Since then, he has been succeeded by a distant cousin whose legitimacy is under challenge within his own community. The deposed sultan is currently still in N'Djamena – where he was released in May 2008; but the authorities have banned him from Dar Tama and, so far, he has not gone back there.[77] Lacking a mediation institution whose legitimacy is accepted by everyone, the military authorities and district chiefs have awarded themselves the right to rule on disputes. Yet their authority remains in question, because they are often biased and, coming

from other areas, poorly informed about the local procedures for conflict resolution.[78]

Finally, opponents criticise the Chadian government for setting up a hitherto non-existent Zaghawa sultanate at Bahaï – under the guise of administrative reforms; this is headed by Timane Déby, brother of President Idriss Déby. This manoeuvre, they say, is aimed at establishing a parallel institution of control, which will favour the Zaghawa community.

B. REGIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER DYNAMICS

The long trail of Sudanese refugees forced to settle in Chad over the past six years or more, and the movements of internally displaced people fleeing in terror from their burning villages have had a devastating effect on the fragile sociological equilibrium of a region that was already in latent crisis. The military and security crises have been compounded by a demographic crisis that is potentially just as dangerous.

According to the last estimates and surveys carried out in February 2009 by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the East of Chad hosts 265,132 Sudanese refugees and 166,718 internally displaced people.[79] The number of Sudanese refugees represents an increase of about 50 per cent in the population living in the region.[80] The majority of internally displaced people are in Dar Sila.

Very quickly, the demographic impact of the influx of Sudanese refugees created tensions with local populations. The flow of aid to the refugees was soon criticised by local people, who felt they were equally deprived and were themselves calling for help from international humanitarian agencies. Spontaneous hu-

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[76] Crisis Group interviews, Goz Beida, December 2008.
[77] Crisis Group telephone interviews, March 2009.

[78] The administrative reform launched in 2004 also broke up the administrative units, pruning back the issues that fall under the responsibility of local chiefs – who themselves come under the authority of the governor, prefect and assistant prefect. Sometimes the authority of local chiefs is challenged by district chiefs, who are increasingly appointed on the basis of political criteria. Crisis Group interviews, Guereda, December 2008.
[79] "Statistiques mensuelles des réfugiés et déplacés internes au Tchad [Monthly statistics for refugees and internally displaced in Chad]", CNAR/HCR Protection, 28 February 2009.
[80] The vast majority of refugees belong to the Zaghawa, Massalit, Tama and Dadjo, four ethnic groups who are now on both sides of the Chad/Sudan frontier. They are scattered among 12 large camps: Farchana, Kounoungo, Am Nabak, Koukou Angarana/Goz Amer, Touloum, Iridimi, Oure Cassoni, Treguine, Bredjing, Mile, Djabal et Gaga.

man solidarity gave way to a mood of frustration, fuelled by a sense that some refugees were "behaving as if they were in conquered territory and failing to respect local customs".[81] Furthermore, the arrival of this wave of newcomers exacerbated the ongoing struggle over access to natural resources: the refugees were settled on tracts of land that could potentially have been cultivated or used for grazing. Despite grants or promises of financial compensation by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), local people still felt that this situation represented a serious loss of income.

However, the most serious consequence of the refugees' arrival is the transfer to Chad of the Sudanese inter-ethnic violence and to have given a regional dimension to the local conflicts that we have already described. In effect, this vast population movement has been reflected in a progressive redefinition of identities – and this process still continues.

From early on, nationality's role as a marker of identity became increasingly diluted; the arrival of the first Massalit and Zaghawa refugees saw a reinforcement of ethnic cross-border loyalties.[82] Chadian Zaghawa or Massalit spontaneously welcomed Sudanese refugees from these same groups, taking on their problems and the patterns of enmity that they had brought from Sudan. This takeover of a conflict that had initially been a foreign one tended to dilute the purely Chadian demands of the local rebellion; several groups involved in that revolt had, expressly or implicitly, endorsed the Janjaweed's participation in raids on settlements scattered along the frontier. Publicly presented as military offensives against the Idriss Déby regime, these incursions in reality amounted to Chadian rebel participation in inter-ethnic violence. Chadian rebel groups linked to populations of Arab origin sought to help their brothers in the struggle against non-Arab groups.[83]

Such sporadic and unannounced Chadian rebel alliances with the Janjaweed auxiliaries of the Sudanese army provided Chad's government with an excuse for denying any recognition of legitimacy to the rebellion, which it described as "mercenaries on Bashir's payroll".[84] Although it represented a reductive and simplistic analysis of the crisis in the East, this argument was based on the evident fact that the Chadian rebellion sometimes plays an ambivalent fluctuating role: it wants to be seen as a national resistance movement, yet it draws support from regional and local causes and allegiances.

To the political sources of tension, an element of armed banditry must be added, lured by the logistical, financial and communications assets of the international NGOs. Facilitated by the wide circulation of arms around the region and the porous nature of the Chad/Sudan frontier, such cross-border banditry operates effectively as an organised mafia whose main activity consists of selling back to Sudan the fruit of robberies committed in Chad – and vice versa.

Since 2003, the level of violence against civilians and humanitarian agencies has been rising;[85] the Chadian army and gendarmerie (paramilitary police) have failed to curb it. According to humanitarian agencies,[86] bandits who are detained are soon freed again thanks to their connections with the local authorities. Highway bandits and vehicle thieves also attack internally dis-

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[81] Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker, Farchana, January 2009.
[82] Idriss Déby himself profited from this state of affairs, because many of the Zaghawa who fought in his victorious military campaign of 1989-1990 were of Sudanese origin. When they entered N'Djamena, the city's inhabitants wondered where these soldiers – who spoke neither the local Arabic nor French – had come from.
[83] In October 2006, a rebel group of Ouaddaïans and Arabs claimed to have been involved in fighting the government army in Dar Sila. In reality, according to witness accounts collected a few days later (see, in particular, "Janjaweed, rebels spread Darfur bloodshed to Chad", Reuters, 18 October 2006), this attack was an incursion by Janjaweed who had come from Sudan and were supported by Chadian re-

bels. The fighting was in fact nothing more than a lightning raid on Dadjo civilians.
[84] President Déby has used this description on numerous occasions in referring to his armed opponents. See a recent interview with Radio France Internationale headlined "Tchad: un an après l'offensive rebelle", 5 February 2009.
[85] According to OCHA, between January 2008 and January 2009 some 135 security incidents relating to humanitarian personnel were reported. "Est Tchad: récapitulation des incidents sécuritaires (janvier 2008 – janvier 2009) [Eastern Chad: summary of security incidents (January 2008 – January 2009)]", OCHA, March 2009. From December 2005 to June 2006, 28 vehicles belonging to humanitarian aid agencies were stolen. "Chad: Spate of hijackings force aid cutbacks", IRIN, 13 June 2006. More recently, between January and June 2008 alone, 30 vehicles were stolen from Oxfam. "Growing security fears worry humanitarian workers in Chad", Voice of America, 18 July 2008. UNHCR has calculated that, in total, 82 vehicles were stolen in the East of Chad between October 2005 and March 2008. "UNHCR concerned about increasing violence in east Chad", summary of remarks by the UNHCR spokesperson Jennifer Pagonis, press conference, 16 May 2008, Palais des Nations, Geneva.
[86] Crisis Group interviews, employees of UNHCR Oxfam, Concern, International Rescue Committee, Abéché and Goz Beida, January 2009.

placed people travelling home to cultivate their fields or making their way to weekly markets. In isolated areas armed robbers attack farmers or internally displaced people, to steal their livestock and money. Most of these attacks are violent and cases of rape have been reported during 2008.[87]

In particular, the armed theft of humanitarian vehicles has become a chronic problem. On Saturday 20 December 2008, a vehicle belonging to the local arm of the International Criminal Court was stolen in full daylight in Abéché, at the main entrance to the main market, not far from the airport and the Croci military base, where Chadian and French soldiers are based. During the night of 5-6 December 2008, the base of the NGO Coopi at Koukou Angarana was burgled and 18 million CFA francs (about 27 000 euros) taken. On Wednesday 17 December an individual attacked the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and forced him to hand over the keys of his vehicle.[88] The Chadian daily newspaper *Le Progrès* reported that shortly before these three incidents, the Ouaddaï gendarmerie unit chased a group of armed robbers the length of Wadi Fira, but they managed to escape into Sudan with their loot.[89]

Such large scale banditry typifies the informal, illegal, violent and invisible practices that shape the power relationships in eastern Chad.[90] Those involved include

soldiers[91] and demobilised ex-combatants, members of rebel groups and armed civilians, all taking advantage of the prevailing instability to "moonlight" as robbers while continuing to present themselves as combatants. Such banditry further undermines the credibility of central government, and by association, the international community, who have proved unable to curb the phenomenon despite their impressive military presence.

C. THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND REBEL FRAGMENTATION

The principal Chadian protagonists concerned with the situation in the East – the central government and the rebel groups – exploit this poisonous atmosphere and the ethnic antagonisms described for political gains.

1. N'Djamena: the manipulation of local militias and patriotic language

The Chadian authorities have always denied any responsibility for the current deterioration in the situation. Invariably, they place the blame with Sudan, which they say is seeking to use the Janjaweed and the internal rebels as proxies to destabilise Chad. Such responses are not completely in discordance with reality, for the Chad rebels have themselves admitted that they benefit from Sudanese support. Equally, it is clear that the frequent Janjaweed incursions have played a decisive role in the destabilisation of Dar Sila.

However, on its own, this is not an adequate explanation. The Chadian government has played a predominant role in the aggravation of local tension through either action or inaction, even if it has not done so through a declared course of policy.[92] Its sluggishness

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[87] See "Mission incomplete: why civilians remain at risk in eastern Chad", Oxfam, September 2008.
[88] In these three cases, the Chadian gendarmerie was assigned to conduct the enquiry. The International Criminal Court vehicle was found parked in a private property at Kalaït, 300 kilometres north of Abéché. Apparently, the gendarmes simply took the vehicle away, without trying to catch the thieves or their accomplices. The ICRC vehicle was found abandoned by the thief, once he realised that the Chad gendarmerie was looking for him. And the authors of the burglary of the NGO Coopi were aided by "inside" friends among the organisation's own personnel. Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, Koukou Angarana, December 2008.
[89] *Le Progrès*, special issue, January 2008.
[90] The ease with which the Chad gendarmerie discovers who is responsible for certain sensitive thefts of vehicles from international organisations – like that of the International Criminal Court – shows that it is certainly capable of catching the criminals and is familiar with their networks of contacts. In late 2008, the prefect of Ouara, Thomas Kidandi Djossala, announced that "about ten stolen vehicles have been recovered, but those who carried out the robberies are still on the run". However, as the gendarmes themselves have admitted, some of the arrested individuals benefit from a degree of protection and are sure to go unpunished. In other cases, the gendarmes are forced into private negotiations with the thieves over the return of stolen items "to avoid stirring up trouble". This shows that, the problem is

not so much a shortage of resources – the reason generally cited by the authorities to explain their inability to curb banditry – as the fact that the authorities are themselves hostages or accomplices in a behind the scenes structure of power whose full extent is hard to define. Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, January 2009.
[91] From 8pm onwards, the streets of Abéché are practically deserted by the local inhabitants, afraid of being attacked by soldiers or other armed bandits. Daily, there are reports of thefts of motorbikes, mobile phones and cash. Crisis Group interviews, Abéché, November 2008.
[92] One might think that the Chadian government had no interest in seeing an entire region of the country so deeply affected by violence. The Chad leadership is well aware of the extra danger that this represents for a country struggling to find a way out of an endless war. From this point of

in responding adequately to the discontent among Ouaddaïans in Ouara, its passivity when faced with the proliferation of clashes between farmers and live-stock herders, its tendency to distort the function of local mediation systems and its cash-driven approach to patronage have helped to foster a climate of tension which has become the breeding ground of the current violence.

On a more active level, collusion between government troops and Toro Boro militias[93] in Dar Tama and Dar Sila has added to the volume of weaponry circulating in these two *départements* and led to particularly bloody inter-ethnic clashes. Increasingly vulnerable in the face of a proliferation in the number of rebel groups, from 2005 onwards the Chad government adopted a policy of containing this threat by manipulating local militias in Dar Tama and Dar Sila. Besides the military agenda, it also sought to take advantage of these local tensions in political terms. The aim was to present Chad to the outside world as a victim, the target of violent attacks of foreign origin, and to close down domestic debate by calling on the political class to unite behind the regime to face down the aggressor.

After the failure of the offensive by the FUC's Tama rebels in 2006, government stepped up support to the Toro Boro. It was probably not intending to push the Zaghawa and the Tama into an inter-ethnic confrontation; such an approach would have been too risky and could have brought about the collapse of the discreet negotiations which, under Libyan mediation, were then underway with Mahamat Nour.[94] The majority of the inter-ethnic clashes between Tama and Zaghana civilians really were spontaneous and uncontrolled, as

was the initial creation of self-defence militias by both camps.[95]

The decision to pull the government army out of Guereda made the situation worse. The town was initially left at the mercy of the Toro Boro militias, and later to the FUC fighters who came to take control in December 2006.[96] Shortly before the peace deal between Mahamat Nour and the Chadian government, the loyalist troops were thus pulled out of Guereda as a token of the authorities' commitment to reaching a peace deal. This situation allowed the FUC forces to enter the town, where they were supposed to be quartered until the peace agreement came into effect. The choice of Guereda as the assembly point seems to have been one of the personal demands of Mahamat Nour, who thought that his Tama fighters would thus be readier to accept the accord, which he was preparing to sign although it was challenged by some of his lieutenants.

Whilst Guereda was handed over to the FUC rebels, the surrounding districts of Dar Tama continued to suffer abuses carried out by pro-government militias, supported by Sudanese rebels. When it allowed Tama FUC fighters to occupy Guereda, the government was probably well aware that this could lead to clashes with the Zaghawa, given that the past disputes between the two groups remain very much alive today. According to civilian witnesses,[97] once they had settled in the town the FUC fighters began to search for Zaghawa, arresting those thought to have had a history of anti-Tama feeling and making death threats to the local authorities.

In Dar Sila too, the proliferation of inter-ethnic clashes and attacks against civilians in 2006-2007 followed a withdrawal of government troops from the *département*. This retreat reflected the Chadian government's concern to give priority to the protection of main towns (Adré, Abéché) and strategic routes, sacrificing

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view, instability in the East is not in the regime's interest at all. Indeed, President Déby is well aware of the dangers that would come from any implication of Chad in the Darfur war; his efforts to facilitate negotiations between Sudan's warring parties testify to the depth of his concern. His alliance with the Sudanese JEM rebels seems to be driven more by the imperatives of tactical survival than any wish to get even more involved in Darfur.

[93] The term Toro Boro initially referred to the Sudanese rebels in Darfur. Its use was later extended to encompass Zaghawa and Dadjo militias operating in Dar Tama and Dar Sila, to distinguish these from the Arab miliatias allied to the Janjaweed.

[94] These negotiations began in early September 2006 when Libyan emissaries established a line of contact between Mahamat Nour and the Chadian regime. Idriss Déby himself met Mahamat Nour in Guereda to discuss the key themes of their (future) peace agreement. See Crisis Group Report, *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, op. cit.

[95] See, on this point, "'They Came Here to Kill Us'", Human Rights Watch, op. cit.

[96] According to the Chadian armed opposition, the government forces abandonment of Guereda was driven by a government strategy aimed at dividing the FUC – with whom it was in a discreet negotiating process. From this point of view, the Chadian government knew perfectly well that certain FUC factions close to Mahamat Nour were preparing to support the regime and it was necessary to accelerate this process by making a gesture of good faith and permitting them to base themselves at Guereda. Crisis Group interviews, Paris, December 2008.

[97] See, on this point, "'They Came Here to Kill Us'", Human Rights Watch, op. cit.; and "Early to War: Child Soldiers in the Chad conflict", Human Rights Watch, July 2007.

the rural areas of no military value.[98] The provision of security in rural areas around Goz Beida was, in a sense, sub-contracted to Dadjo militias; poorly equipped and trained, they were not able to match Janjaweed, sometimes supported by Chadian rebels. Moreover, these Dadjo militias were simultaneously busy launching their own attacks against local Arab militias and the Mimi.

During this same period, everywhere in Chad, the government stirred up patriotic rhetoric designed to reinforce feelings of national identity and paint the Sudanese government as entirely responsible for the violence in the East. On several occasions Chadian leaders posed as the protectors of all the area's so-called "black" peoples – whether they were Chadian or Sudanese – threatened with attack by the Janjaweed, who are closer to the Arab ethnic groups dominant in Khartoum.[99] In so doing, the Chadian government was hoping for several political gains. In a context marked by the resurgence of tension with the Sudanese regime, it thus wanted to appeal to all the non-Arab ethnic groups of the East, and those of Darfur, to make common cause. The Khartoum regime, its Janjaweed auxiliaries and the Chadian rebels were thus described as the principal guilty parties in the region's tragedy.

In using such language the Chadian regime also aimed to dispel the image of clan-based governance, which had been so widely attacked by its opponents. The regime wanted to show the peoples of the East and, indeed, all Chadians, that it was not exclusively Zaghawa and that, on the contrary, it was fighting for the security of everyone and to defend a national territorial integrity that was threatened by Sudan. And the message that was aimed specifically at the Zaghawa aimed to make them understand that they were not sufficiently numerous to stand alone.[100] Finally, this

rhetoric also aimed to discredit the Chadian rebels, by painting them as the allies of a "genocidal" Sudanese regime.[101] As for Chad's Arab tribes, they were being warned not to cause any trouble.[102]

But far from reining in ethnic motivations, this patriotic language – coupled with the manipulation of local tensions – actually reinforced them. Indeed, faced with a rise in insecurity, the various communities became even more mistrustful of each other. Those, such as the Gorane, Zaghawa and Tama, that had harboured a several generation-old innate rivalry, suspected each other of seeking to profit from the instability, to avenge past or continuing causes of grievance.

2. The ethnic polarisation of the rebellion

Meanwhile, the rebel groups operating in the East also exploited ethnicity, even though their manifestos spoke of unity. Indeed, the ethnic nature of the rebellion has been evident throughout its five years of activity. All too often, the background from which the leaders had sprung defined the ethnic nature of the constituency from which they recruited their fighters. Thus the UFDD (Union des forces démocratiques pour le développement – Union of democratic Forces for Development) is largely drawn from the Gorane; the FUC has a majority Tama membership; the UFCD (Union des forces pour le changement et la démocratie – Union of Forces for Change and Democracy) has a Ouaddaïan majority; le RFC (Rassemblement des forces pour le changement – Rally of Forces for Change) brings Zaghawa fighters together, while the FSR (Front pour le salut de la république – Front for the Salvation of the Republic) has an Arab majority.

Certain rebel groups have easily fallen into the trap of ethnocentricity, openly presenting themselves as the defenders of a particular community threatened by supporters of the regime. That was the case with the FUC in Guereda and, above all, with the Arab rebels of the Concorde nationale tchadienne (CNT – Chadian National Accord); they collaborated closely with the Janjaweed in attacks against the Dadjo in Dar Sila.[103]

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[98] The Chadian government insisted that it had not deliberately left some parts of the East undefended. It said it was impossible for the Chad National Army (Armée nationale du Tchad – ANT), which had been seriously weakened by a string of defections, to be present everywhere at once and to simultaneously face the numeorus open challenges from Chadian rebels and also counter surprise attacks by the Janjaweed or their allies.

[99] On several occasions, the Chadian president had no hesitation in publicly describing the Sudanese regime as "Islamist and racist", notably in a public speech on Independence Square in N'Djamena after the African Union summit held in Addis Ababa in July 2007.

[100] When he started to implement this strategy, President Déby was being increasingly irritated by the Zaghawa, many of whom were openly challenging his authority and choosing to support dissidents who had rebelled.

[101] In an interview with Radio France Internationale on 5 February 2009, President Déby once again insisted that what was happening in Darfur was "genocide". Op. cit.

[102] Still, the Chadian president did not seek to completely alienate Arab tribes; indeed, on the contrary, he did everything he could to attract their support. Some observers see the president's marriage in 2005 to Hinda Ahmat Acyl, the daughter of a former leader of the Chadian Arabs, as an overture to this community. Crisis Group interview, Chadian journalists, N'Djamena, October 2008.

[103] See "Source de violence, médiation et réconciliation", op. cit.

In April 2006 and in February 2008, the failure of the rebels' attempts to seize national power was also due to a lack of coordination and an inability to agree on a single leader. The rebel leaders' reluctance to agree is primarily explained by the strength of their ethnic reflexes. Ethnic polarisation influences leaders, who cannot hold out for long against pressure from their entourages – who want to be sure that their groups will not find themselves in a minority position or even simply deprived of the leadership in any eventual coalition.

At the end of December 2008, the main rebel groups published a manifesto in which they set out their wish to create a new alliance. On 18 January 2009, the websites of the various rebel factions announced the formation of this coalition, to be known as the Union des forces de la résistance (Union of the Forces of Resistance – UFR), with Timane Erdimi as leader. However, one week later, new rifts appeared: the leader of the FSR Ahmat Hassaballah Soubiane is said to have challenged Timane Erdimi's leadership,[104] declaring his group's withdrawal from the new alliance.[105] Although part of the FSR leadership announced a few days later that it was disassociating from Soubiane's stance, it remains unclear whether Timane Erdimi's authority is recognised by all the rebel leaders. Moreover, the silence maintained by Mahamat Nouri since Erdimi's rise to the leadership of the UFR may point to a lack of enthusiasm about putting his group under the authority of the new leader.[106] This shows

that the coalition is far from solidly based and could, once again, fall victim to rivalries within the local military elite.

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[104] Erdimi and Soubiane have already worked closely with Idriss Déby in government. The rebellion of the former can be explained by family rifts with Déby, whose nephew he is; the latter, who is Arab, justified his decision to rebel by citing the essentially Zaghawa character of the regime. So it seems that Soubiane is not ready to accept a new Zaghawa leadership in charge of Chad. Furthermore Soubiane, whose group is not close to the Sudanese authorities, is not thought to have appreciated pressure from Khartoum for Erdimi to be chosen as leader of the UFR. Crisis Group telephone interviews, February 2009.
[105] See "Les Tchadiens n'ont-ils pas d'autres choix que celui de se soumettre à Timane Erdimi ou Idriss Déby? [Don't the Chadians have any choice other than to accept Timane Erdimi or Idriss Déby?]", 9 March 2009, available at www.tchadoscopie.com/article-28805721.html.
[106] In an interview published in February 2009 on most of the websites of the armed opposition, Acheikh Ibni Oumar – one of the principal Chad rebel leaders – admitted that Erdimi's authority was far from universally recognised among the rebels. He also clearly indicated that "[les chefs des autres groupes rebelles] ont le droit de demander des assurances pour qu'il n'y ait pas une monopolisation du pouvoir par Erdimi et son clan". ["[the leaders of the other rebel groups] have the right to demand assurances that Erdimi and his clan will not monopolise power".] See "Tchad:

Acheikh Ibni Oumar à cœur ouvert [Chad: Acheikh Ibni Oumar speaks openly]", interview available at www.dabio.net/Tchad-Acheikh-Ibn-Oumar-a-coeur-ouvert_a4723.html.

IV. PEACEKEEPING: AN ASSESSMENT

On 15 March 2009 the European peacekeeping mission (EUFOR) handed over to its United Nations successor (MINURCAT). Already present on the ground to assist in maintaining order in the refugee camps, MINURCAT has now taken over all EUFOR's tasks; it is therefore responsible for security outside the camps.

A. EUFOR/MINURCAT

In spite of the international community's deployment of troops to Eastern Chad, the population is still enduring a major humanitarian crisis. According to UN sources, the number of Sudanese refuges now stands at 265,132. Moreover, 166,718 displaced Chadians are also now living in camps; the population of host communities is about 700,000.[107] The humanitarian and security challenge is therefore huge.

Displaced people report[108] that EUFOR's patrols around the Dar Sila sites have curbed the frequency of attacks. Furthermore, the presence of the European forces has also obliged players in the Chad conflict to act with much greater prudence, because they now feel themselves to be under scrutiny. The warring parties having reined in operations since July 2008, the region has experienced relative calm.

While Brussels and Paris are proud of EUFOR's great success,[109] the humanitarian community feels that the mission has failed to meet all its initial objectives. Oxfam says: "Although the European troops made some civilians feel safer, the underlying security situation has not significantly improved".[110] During his last visit to Chad, John Holmes, the United Nations under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, expressed concern about the rising levels of insecurity,

caused by acts of banditry.[111] Criminality is increasingly widespread, with a rising level of sexual violence,[112] and it goes unpunished by the Chadian authorities. It has indeed become the most flagrant facet of the security problem, and is one of several factors[113] that help to deter any large scale return home by displaced populations.[114]

This has also made humanitarian operations difficult, because humanitarian workers have been targeted. In 2008, four humanitarian workers died in Chad,[115] and since the beginning of 2009, 160 serious cases of aggression have been reported.[116] Because of the resurgence in attacks against their offices and in thefts of their vehicles, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Solidarité and Action contre la faim (ACF), for example, suspended their operations in Dogdore et Ade in October 2008.[117] Despite the presence of a large number of displaced people in the two towns (36,500 out of 180,000, ie, 20 per cent of the total), EUFOR was unable to deploy into this area, because it lacked sufficient resources, particularly troops.[118]

The abuses committed by the armed groups are also a factor. The Chadian and Sudanese armed opposition movements often spread panic in the region and their presence sometimes leads to a suspension of humani-

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[107] "Statistiques mensuelles des réfugiés et déplacés internes au Tchad", CNAR/HCR Protection, op. cit.; "Highlights of the briefing: United Nations facilitates humanitarian mission to Chad-Central African Republic border", spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 11 February 2009.

[108] Crisis Group interviews, Koloma, décembre 2008.

[109] See for example Javier Solana, "Chad mission shows EU is effective in giving stability", *Irish Times*, 13 mars 2008; "Conclusions du Conseil relatives à l'opération EUFOR Tchad/RCA", Council of the European Union, 2932nd General Affairs Council,meeting, Brussels, 16 March 2009.

[110] "Insecurity still rampant in Chad as UN takes over from EU", Oxfam International, 13 March 2009.

[111] See "Protection of civilians and humanitarian workers are central to the concerns of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Coordinator of Emergency Assistance during his visit to Chad", OCHA, 24 November 2008.

[112] According to OCHA, sexual violence accounts for 35-40 per cent of the crimes committed at Koukou. "Rapport sur la situation humanitaire au Tchad [Report on the Humanitarian Situation in Chad]", OCHA, 26 January 2009.

[113] These factors include the absence of conflict resolution mechanisms at local level and the absence of state services in all essential sectors (health, education, economic viability).

[114] "Décision de la Commission du 26 janvier 2009 relative à l'approbation et au financement d'un Plan Global pour des Actions humanitaires sur le budget général des Communautés européennes en République du Tchad [Commission Decision on the approval and financing of a Global Plan for humanitarian operations in the Republic of Chad from the general budget of the European Communities]", European Commission, ECHO/TCD/BUD/2009/01000, 26 January 2009.

[115] "Chad: Renewed attacks threaten IDPs and humanitarian operations", Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 6 November 2008.

[116] "Rapport sur la situation humanitaire au Tchad [Report on the Humanitarian Situation in Chad]", OCHA, 26 January 2009.

[117] Ibid.

[118] "Chad: Renewed attacks", op. cit.

tarian activities.[119] The militarisation of the camps and IDP sites is thus a major concern, boosting the circulation of light arms and the active recruitment of adults and, in particular, children. Thus EUFOR's General Ganascia has admitted that his troops were in no position to curb the proliferation of weaponry and inter-communal violence.[120]

While EUFOR has contributed to an improvement in the infrastructure of territorial security, building a number of military camps that its successor, MINUR-CAT, will be able to use, the EUFOR-MINURCAT structure has failed to achieve its main goal – the creation of an environment that would favour the return of displaced people and protect the civil population and humanitarian workers against attack.

This was not for want of willpower on the ground. Quite the contrary: soldiers and the humanitarian community both put a lot of effort into ensuring that the mission functioned smoothly, even if they had problems in reaching a common understanding in the early stages, particularly in regard to the limits on EUFOR's mandate and the way that it functioned.[121]

The failure of EUFOR-MINURCAT to achieve a durable improvement in the security of Eastern Chad results from the way in which the two missions were conceived. The origins of this operation,[122] which was initially impeded by President Déby's refusal to accept a proper peacekeeping mission equipped with a political mandate, led to numerous unsatisfactory compromises. The first was that the UN mission was unable to deploy soldiers and had to limit itself to police – which meant that EUFOR had to provide the external security for the camps. Faced with the Chad government's determined opposition to the deployment of an integrated peacekeeping force, EUFOR was thus never designed as a proper "bridging mission" like Europe's Operation Artemis in Congo in 2003, whose role was to stabilise the security situation, in order to give the United Nations time to deploy into the theatre of operations. Indeed, right up to the end of 2008, it remained unclear whether MINURCAT was going to be mandated to take over from EUFOR.

Moreover, the European military mission was not equipped or trained for the task of keeping order. Both the population and the humanitarian community have difficulty understanding EUFOR was unable to intervene against those groups causing insecurity. Some humanitarian organisations and national governments had expected EUFOR to act as a buffer force between Chad and Sudan. This illustrates the gap between the needs and expectations of those suffering from the insecurity in eastern Chad and the willpower of Brussels, Paris or New York – who designed the structure of these missions on the basis of an analysis of the situation that had become largely obsolete. While insecurity in the Chadian East in 2005-2006 was due to the attacks of the Janjaweed and other armed groups, by 2008 the most important problem was the growth of banditry and criminality.

As a result EUFOR-MINURCAT has failed to curb the banditry, inter-community conflicts or inter-ethnic violence manipulated by the main Chadian players.[123] In regards to serious banditry, EUFOR's role was confined to a deterrent presence. It had no judicial powers to arrest suspects, a task that remained solely within the legal competence of the Chadian authorities. Mistakes in the way the mission has been conceived – reflected in shortcomings in the way it has operated – are not the only problem. The delay in deploying MINURCAT personnel, and the obstacles created by the Chadian authorities, have had a negative impact on the training of Chadian police for the Détachement intégré de sécurité (DIS – Integrated Security Unit),[124] charged with providing security in refugee camps, and thus on the performance of the mission.[125] The training of the 850 DIS members due to be deployed on the ground was not finished until the end of February 2009, a year after it had begun

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[119] "Rapport sur la situation humanitaire au Tchad [Report on the Humanitarian Situation in Chad]", OCHA, 26 January 2009.
[120] Angelique Chrisafis, "Impunity and lawlessness – the cancer of Chad", *The Guardian*, 16 March 2009.
[121] Crisis Group telephone interviews, humanitarian and EUFOR personnel, March 2009.
[122] See Crisis Group Report, *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, op. cit.

[123] As has been seen throughout this report, refugees, displaced people and civilians in the East of Chad continue to feel direct and indirect effects from clashes between the Chadian warring parties. Moreover, this situation was recognised by the UN Secretary General in his July 2008 report. "Rapport du Secrétaire général sur la Mission des Nations Unies en République centrafricaine et au Tchad [Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad]", S/2008/444, 8 July 2008.
[124] The DIS is a humanitarian protection force specially trained by MINURCAT for refugees, internally dsisplaced people and humanitarian organisations on the ground.
[125] EUFOR took six months to reach its full operational capacity, in September 2008. In total, 25 countries participated in the European mission, of which 19 provided troops. The biggest contingents came from France, with 1 177 soldiers, Ireland (447) and Poland (421).

(although the first operations by DIS members began work in October 2008).

Even the philosophy behind this force – trained by the UN but placed under the command of an officer appointed by the Chadian presidency – poses serious problems, because it could be manipulated for counterproductive political purposes. As UN instructors encountered by Crisis Group in N'Djamena par have admitted,[126] the first police trained for the DIS knew little or nothing of the context in the East, having come from other regions of the country. This shortcoming was later dealt with by recruiting gendarmes and police from the region itself, with a command of local dialects.

While the presence of an international force in the East does represent a step forward, the approach that was adopted for this intervention was deeply flawed. The analysis which saw the crisis in eastern Chad as essentially humanitarian failed to take account of the political and social causes of the conflict. This meant that, from the outset, the scope of the mission was limited to simply providing security for the refugees and internally displaced people, leaving the Chadian players to resolve the political crisis without international support. As EUFOR's soldiers were fighting – with a fair degree of success – against accusations of bias, linked to the presence of a French contingent in the force,[127] France blocked any political mandate, supporting President Déby's political strategy, which was to use the international deployment as a psychological deterrent against the armed opposition and its Sudanese supporters.

Thus, thanks to EUFOR, France actively contributed to the reinforcement of Déby's position, without helping the Chadians find a durable solution to their crisis. An already inadequate political process was hijacked by the regime and, through EUFOR, Déby reinforced his control over the East. Paris was able to get the European Union to share the costs of this operation and indirectly endorse its political goals. This having been said, and despite the German and British criticisms of France, the European member states and the European Union itself were never prepared to get politically involved in the resolution of the Chad conflict. Neither the European Commission nor any European country was ready to take the initiative of challenging French policy and proposing an alternative that would find a durable negotiated solution to the crisis.

B. MINURCAT: THE NEW MISSION AND THE PROBLEMS THAT IT FACES

The succession of attempts at achieving a political settlement – stretching back more than five years – has so far failed to produce a result. Yet the Security Council's Resolution 1861 (14 January 2009), extending MINURCAT's mandate, brought no fundamental change in the role of the United Nations in Chad.

Resolution 1861 calls on all concerned parties to act in a way that delivers "the effective protection of refugees, displaced people and the civilian population in danger. Continuing the theme set in Resolution 1778,[128] it stresses the importance of the Syrte Agreement,[129] particularly in regard to the establishment of a more representative government and the implementation of the 13 August agreement on electoral reforms.[130] Paragraph 6 gives MINURCAT the role of a mere observer in this whole process. Moreover, even if one of the mission's assigned roles is to contribute to the restoration of constitutional rule in Chad, Resolution 1861 places most emphasis on peripheral features, such as the security of refugees and the establishment of the DIS. Central questions such as governance or the reestablishment of a functioning state apparatus are left to the judgement of the Chadian state.

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[126] Crisis Group interviews, N'Djamena, October 2008.
[127] In mid-June 2008, the Irish EUFOR forces were hit by shots from Chadian rebels attacking Goz Beida. Although it seems that shots were exchanged, the Irish soldiers maintained a neutral stance. Following this incident, Chad's president publicly questioned EUFOR's *raison d'être*, claiming that it was incapable of protecting civilians.

[128] Security Council Resolution 1778, 25 September 2007, establishes a somewhat original model because it provides for two forces that differ in their nature and in the way they are recruited, lacking a genuinely political mandate. Operations on the ground should combine the efforts of these two components – the 300 police and 50 military liaison officers of the United Nations (MINURCAT) and the European Union force (EUFOR) of 3,700 men.
[129] See Section V, below. For an analysis of its state of implementation, see appendix C.
[130] The 13 August 2007 political agreement between the government and the political opposition essentially deals with electoral reform, but it does not provide the elements needed for a fundamental change in governance culture. The text focuses on four subjects: the make-up of the CENI (the Independent Electoral Commission), the electoral census, the legal framework for elections – in particular, the elections law – and the general political and security environment; it stresses the role of civil and military territorial administration and the future of the National Assembly, the Constitutional Council and the Supreme Court. For an analysis of its state of implementation, see appendix C.

The UN counts on the mission's good offices to "help the government and involved parties attack the underlying causes of insecurity in the East of Chad, in order to allow refugees and displaced people to return of their own free will in satisfactory security conditions. However, the resurgence of tension between Khartoum and N'Djamena in early 2009 raises doubts about whether this is possible.[131] The settlement of the conflict in the Chadian East depends on a wide range of factors – local, national and regional – and requires that the UN mission be given a political mandate.

At the operational level, the planned deployment of the blue helmets, to take over from EUFOR, will be seriously delayed, because of the inherent slowness of the UN administrative machinery.[132] Even if the mission reaches its full manpower level of 5,200 troops – 4,900 for Chad and 300 for the CAR –[133] it will still face the same equipment problems as EUFOR. Already, MINURCAT is warning that it will have difficulty operating without the helicopters it has requested.[134] It will have greater freedom of action at the operational level[135] – and that is why it wants more troops. It will

have special forces and reconnaissance units, so that it can cover a larger area than its predecessors. But it will need the right equipment if it is to fulfil its mandate.

The N'Djamena regime has done everything it can to resist the reinforcement of MINURCAT[136] in military and – with French help, as previously mentioned – in political terms.[137] There is a real risk that government troops will try to limit the movements of UN contingents, to have a free hand for their own military operations or manipulation of local militias. As attacks against humanitarian organisations continue,[138] the latter are preparing for large movements of population from Sudan to Chad, following the expulsion of 13 international NGOs from Sudan. This has followed the indictment of President Bashir by the International Criminal Court,[139] which has further destabilised an extremely fragile security situation.[140] Given the weak-

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[131] The Chad president, Idriss Déby, who was visiting the East of the country in early February 2009, accused Sudan of wanting to "plunge Chad into a civil war". He declared that "the enemies of Chad, that is to say the puppet government of Khartoum, have done all that they can, including the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, to destroy our country…. Henceforth … we shall take up our right to hot pursuit". www.presidencetchad.org/integralite_de_la_communication.htm.

[132] UN officials believe that MINURCAT will not be fully deployed before the end of 2009. Crisis Group telephone interviews, March 2009.

[133] Countries contributing troops to MINURCAT: Albania, Austria, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Croatia, Finland, France, Ghana, Ireland, Malawi, Namibia, Nepal, Norway, Poland, Russia, Togo and Uruguay. Libya reportedly offered troops but this was vetoed by France. Ghana and Norway are in the process of deployment, while Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malawi, Namibia, Nepal and Uruguay have not yet sent their troops. Crisis Group interviews, New York, March and April 2009.

[134] "Moreover, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly asks the Secretary-General to find ways of making economies in the cost of air transport, particularly through the pooling of air transport with other operations in the region". "The Fifth Committee examines a request for authorisation to make expenditure commitments for the military component of MINURCAT". General Assembly Fifth Committee, 35th Session, AG/AB/3895, 19 March 2009. Available in French at www.un.org/News/fr-press/docs/2009/AGAB3895.doc.htm.

[135] "The force would be configured to have an enduring presence in six sites of half a battalion each (initially at Iriba, Guéréda, Farchana, Goz Beida and later at Bahai and Koukou-Goz Amer). This would entail battalions of the stan-

dard United Nations strength of 800 troops, and a battalion-size mobile reserve supported by 18 helicopters." See "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad", S/2008/760, 4 December 2008, paragraph 58.

[136] See letter dated 28 October 2008, addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations Organisation, S/2008/679, 30 October 2008: "The Chadian government wishes to underline that it was agreed that this would not be a classical peacekeeping operation implying a degree of 'neutrality', 'impartiality' or 'good offices' in the context of some sort of peace agreement. The Chadian government believes that references to the so-called 'Brahimi' reports in its conception have been exceeded, notably in terms of the definition of the mandate, the strength and the format, particularly as these reports were never the subject of a consensus between Chad and the Secretary-General".

[137] The Chadian government tried to take over the air bases that EUFOR had built and rent them at a profit to MINURCAT. Crisis Group telephone interviews, United Nations officials, February and March 2009.

[138] On 17 March 2009, one of the offices of ACTED in the Goz Beida region was attacked by armed individuals. This led ACTED to temporarily close all its offices in Chad and suspend its activities in the country for 48 hours. See "ACTED deplores and condemns the attack against one of its offices and its staff in Chad", ACTED, 18 March 2009.

[139] "Chad: Aid groups on alert after NGO ouster from Darfur", IRIN, 10 March 2009.

[140] The risks of a new influx of Sudanese refugees are great. In effect, as has been described above, the local population has difficulty coping with the challenges posed by the presence of a large refugee population in its territory. A new influx could therefore provoke fresh tensions between communities, which will be exploited by the government and the rebels. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance capacity in the East of Chad is not unlimited and a new wave of refugees would only be absorbed with difficulty.

ness of its mandate, and the fact that its forces will not be fully deployed until late 2009, MINURCAT will probably not be in a position to effectively protect the population, particularly with an initial manpower of only 2,292 soldiers.[141]

V. DEFUSING THE POWDER KEG

A. A REGIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE FOR THE EAST

Pressure from the international community forced the main players in Chad to begin talks ended to break the deadlock. These discussions led to a series of political agreements, of which the most significant are the political platform of 13 August 2007, concerning reform of the electoral system and the Syrte ceasefire agreement of October 2007.[142] Implementation of the political platform is proving laborious because of the lack of pressure on the Chad government to put it into effect. The government repeatedly cites technical constraints and the events of February 2008 as the reasons for the delay in implementation. In reality, a lack of political will is clearly discernible: the regime is instinctively opposed to any reform that would undermine its own prospects for survival.

Until now, the support of the international community, and France in particular, for President Déby has merely led to a continuation of the established pattern of repression and co-opting factions into supporting the government. The confrontation between Sudan and the International Criminal Court (ICC) increases the risk of fresh instability. In this regional context, Chad's president would be wise to accept a credible roadmap for resolving the conflict in the East of his country, so that it is not drawn into a new wave of violence.

Until now, national efforts to resolve local conflicts have failed to restore a durable peace in the region. The causes of this failure lie in the approach chosen for resolving disputes: most national mediation efforts have focused on achieving a temporary calm, through consensus, rather than on finding durable solutions and identifying those responsible for violence and bringing them before the courts. Consensus is generally achieved after the representatives of the state have promised guarantees of compensation for damaged communities – who, in return, promise to refrain from seeking revenge of any kind.

This system is based on the institutionalisation of impunity, which means that the question of individual responsibility for violence is marginalised. Besides

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[141] Crisis Group telephone interviews, United Nations official, April 2009.

[142] Signed on 25 October 2007, the Syrte accord is the result of a dialogue between the Chadian government and five of the main Chadian rebel groups. When he signed this document document, the Chad president said that this was the last comprehensive agreement that "he was agreeing to sign with the Chadian armed movements". See appendix C.

this point, the effectiveness of the process is hardly helped by the weakness of the state institutions that are supposed to guarantee it. Heads of districts, sub-prefects and prefects lack the material and human resources to impose their authority and guarantee the negotiated consensus. Their authority over locally-stationed government troops is far from certain, because the troops are under the direct orders of the central government. Moreover, by its own use of militias, central government transforms the state and its local representatives into actors in the conflict, rather than impartial mediators.

The failure of attempts to mediate between Dadjo and Arabs in Dar Sila is explained by this lack of legitimacy: the Arab tribes have refused to take part in meetings organised by the envoys of a government that they suspect of backing their adversary. Whenever these mediation initiatives do succeed in calming tension at the local level – as in the Gniguilim episode in Ouara – they have still have no positive impact at the regional level, because they have not been accompanied by any general process of pacification and reconciliation. They have therefore delivered a peace that is artificial, based on the Chad government's preferred approach, which is to establish peace but neglect reconciliation.

The Chadian constitution provides for a national mediator;[143] but so far the mediator has only been involved in low profile negotiations. His capacity to deal with local conflicts is undermined by a lack of political will. The failure of the Syrte accord is explained both by this lack of political will and by the incoherent behaviour of the rebel leaders, who waver between their self-proclaimed wish to find a negotiated solution to all problems and a tendency to declare that the only way forward is through the fall of Déby.[144]

Operating in this context, Idriss Déby can both agree to sign an overall deal while openly continuing direct bilateral negotiations to persuade individual members of the rebellion to lay down their arms. The results of this tactic are clear: the rebellion is weakened, but the overall accords are undermined and efforts to tackle the state's fundamental problems are neglected.

The main cause of the cyclical resurgence of rebellion lies in the nature of this "peace by default". Those who abandon armed struggle and come to terms with the central government then return home – where they find that the situation remains unchanged and the region is still deprived. Their ethnic groups continue to tussle over the limited resources and their families continue to suffer from injustice. The frustration engendered by this situation fuels local tension and tends, once again, to alienate these individuals from the central government whose power they had only just accepted. The stability of the East will not therefore be achieved simply by reducing the number of armed groups, nor by providing temporary security for civilians; it requires a proper examination of the underlying problems and the development of mechanisms for resolving them.

To defuse the powder keg in the East, the Chadian government should accept the need for a peace conference in the East tasked with an in-depth examination of the local sources of tension. The conference should be held under the supervision of a committee drawn from both Chadian and foreign personalities; it should be organised under the aegis of MINURCAT and financed by the European Union. Participation would be confined to the major actors in the East – traditional chiefs, sultans, community representatives, non-governmental organisations, the central government, rebel groups, and the opposition political parties – who would be selected through a consultation mechanism set up by MINURCAT. The Chad state would be represented by regional governors and the prefects of the *départements*. The party in power could send a representative, as could the CPDC (Coalition des partis pour la défense de la constitution – the Coalition of Parties for the Defence of the Constitution).[145] The international community also should be

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[143] The role of national mediator is to serve as a medium for conciliation between citizens and the public administration. The 1993 presidential decree that set up this institution stipulates that the national mediator should contribute to social and political peace in all regions of the country. However, the decree specifies neither the mediator's mandate nor the subjects that they are empowered to deal with. Furthermore, this institution has been subordinated to the executive (the presidency and the prime minister's office), which reduces its room for political manoeuvre.

[144] See in particular their websites: www.tchadactuel.com, www.tchadespoir.com, www.tchadinfo.com. Contradictory declarations by rebel leaders can often be found on these sites; one day they can declare that they favour a dialogue to resolve Chad's problems, and then declare exactly the opposite the next day, judging that the only possible solution is the fall of "the dictator Déby".

[145] In 2002 the political opposition chose to organise itself under the aegis of the Coordination pour la défense de la constitution (Coordination for the Defence of the Constitution – CPDC), advocating the boycott of all elections organised by the regime. This produced an internal political deadlock. Finding itself unable to secure the holding of an inclusive dialogue that would involve the three actors in the conflict – the president rejected this option – the CPDC

represented, by envoys from the African Union, the European Union, Libya, France and the US.

The meeting should be treated neither as a mini national conference limited to the East, nor as a new framework for co-opting the local elite. It has to be the setting for an in-depth debate, leading to concrete proposals for a route out of crisis.[146] The discussions should be based around the following themes:

❑ the conflict between farmers and livestock herders;

❑ the question of *diyah*;

❑ the role of traditional chiefs;

❑ the circulation of arms and disarmament in the region;

❑ reconciliation between different communities and how they can live alongside each other.

Each of the themes discussed during the conference should be the subject of resolutions and recommendations which would be sent to the government of Chad and the international community. The organising committee would be responsible for monitoring how these resolutions and recommendations were implemented. Before the conference is held, the UN Security Council, in partnership with the African Union, should obtain a formal commitment from the Chadian authorities and the rebel groups to the observation of a ceasefire. A regional mediation committee should also be created to act as a permanent forum for consultation and mediation between the various communities of the region.

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agreed to negotiate alone with the government. These talks produced the political platform of 13 August 2007.
[146] In its report *Chad: A New Conflict Resolution Framework*, op. cit., Crisis Group recommends a new architecture for negotiations with three components to resolve the political and security crisis. The first element should be based upon the 13 August 2007 agreement, initiating new political negotiations *politiques* with an enlarged range of participants, including civil society. The second component would focus on the armed rebellion, to reach a permanent ceasefire accord and the integration of the rebel forces into the army. Supervised by the African Union, the third element would tackle the long-running conflict between Chad and Sudan and seek to bring an end to this war fought by proxy through rebel groups.

B. RELAUNCHING THE DAKAR PROCESS AND REINFORCING MINURCAT

At the regional level, the Dakar process continues to be blocked by the renewed deterioration in relations between Chad and Sudan, following the creation of a new Chadian rebel alliance supported by Khartoum. Even though diplomatic relations between Khartoum and N'Djamena briefly improved in November 2008, when the two countries exchanged ambassadors, they remained tense because of the internal pressures on both governments. With the support of Libya and the African Union, the two countries have already been able to agree on the deployment of a joint force to patrol the frontier and guard against rebel incursions; but no steps have been taken to put this project into practical effect.

On the basis of the Dakar agreement, a regional conflict resolution mechanism should be put in place under the aegis of the African Union. It should concentrate on eliminating the support that Sudan and Chad provide to the various armed groups, on improving security and the protection of civilians along their common border, on the control of arms trafficking and on dealing with the impact of this conflict on the Central African Republic (CAR). Other states that are neighbours of these three countries would act as guarantors of the various signed agreements.

To ensure the protection of civilians, MINURCAT needs to be reinforced. The deployment of blue helmets envisaged to take over from EUFOR is sure to suffer serious delays. The Security Council should make sure that the mission has the equipment essential to its proper operation, particularly helicopters suited to the demands of the terrain and special forces and reconnaissance units.

The international community, and France in particular, should put pressure on N'Djamena to stop obstructing the rapid deployment of the UN contingents and their freedom of movement. Viewing the crisis in the Chadian East as essentially a humanitarian problem, while ignoring the political and social causes of the conflict, has circumscribed the action of the UN mission in advance, limiting its role to the provision of security for refugees and internally displaced population, while leaving the Chadian parties to resolve the political crisis without international support. Yet the East Chadian conflict can only be settled through a local political process that tackles the fundamental problems that fuel the crisis. MINURCAT should support this process – and this means that the mission requires a proper political mandate.

VI. CONCLUSION

Today the East of Chad appears to be a region that in sociological and political terms is extremely heterogeneous, without a shared sense of identity. Although it commands the support of individuals, Chadian national sentiment does not necessarily bring with it a perceived duty of loyalty to towards the state – which many people feel has been taken over by a clan-based regime. The feel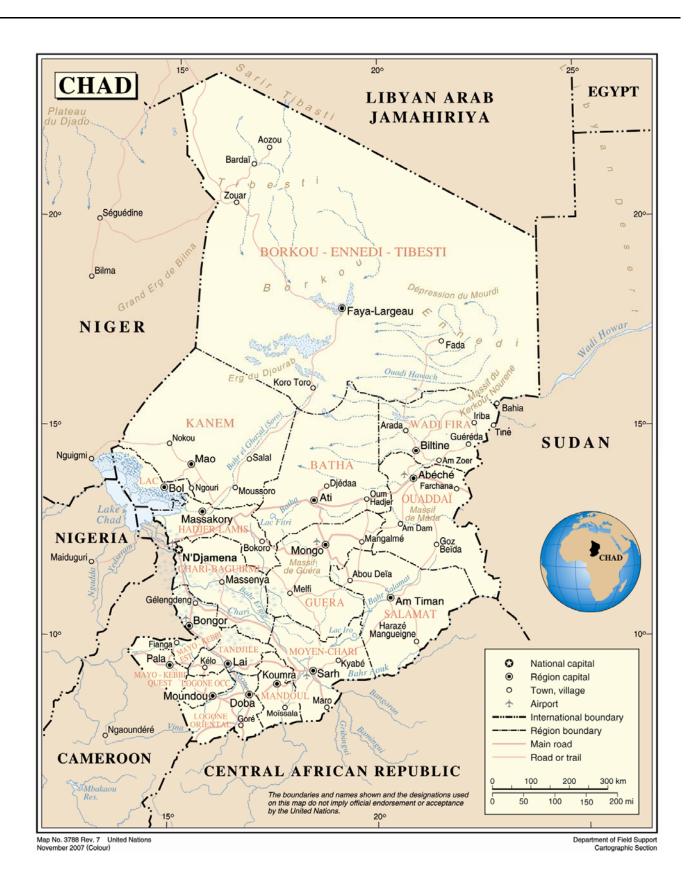ing of belonging to a common Muslim religion and culture also appears to be in decline, because insecurity has forced various communities to fall back on their own resources, forming ethnic refuges to guard against attacks from outside.

The East of Chad will therefore remain fertile ground for continuing rebellion and destabilisation from outside, as long as the fundamental problems described in this report remain unresolved and there is no in-depth consideration of the local roots of tension.

Nairobi/Brussels, 15 April 2009

APPENDIX A

MAP OF CHAD

APPENDIX B

MAP OF EASTERN CHAD

Enjeux humanitaires des conflits dans l'Est du Tchad

APPENDIX C

THE SYRTE AND DAKAR AGREEMENTS AND THE 13 AUGUST 2007 PLATFORM:
PEACE FACES THE TEST OF POLITICAL WILL

The various political attempts to resolve the conflict in the East have sought to take an integrated approach to tackling all the overlapping dimensions of the crisis. Thus, the Syrte accord between President Déby and the main rebel leaders sought to end confrontation on the various Eastern military fronts by committing the warring parties to a durable ceasefire. The 13 August 2007 political platform attempts to provide an overall response to the political grievances of the national opposition. And the Dakar accord aims to bring an end to cross-border incursions and calm the tensions between Chad and Sudan. Yet none of these agreements has produced lasting peace on the ground.

The reasons for the failure of the Syrte process

The Syrte (Libya) agreement of 25 October 2007 is the most wide-ranging in terms of the volume of pace commitments between the Chadian government and the rebel groups. This deal included the main groups in the Eastern rebellion[147] in a ceasefire that was supposed to precede the gathering of forces into a stationary area, prior to their integration into the national army.

From the outset, there were fundamental differences between the various Chadian players, in the way they approached the Syrte negotiations; this raised doubts over how far this process would influence events on the ground. While President Déby considered the Syrte talks to be the inclusive dialogue so often demanded by his armed opponents, the latter insisted that the discussions were merely the first stage of a process that should prepare for the holding of further round table negotiations that would include the non-military opposition.[148]

Formally, the document signed at Syrte takes the form of a standard agreement between a legitimate government and a rebellion: ceasefire, disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration of forces (DDR), rebel leaders' commitment to enter the democratic process and a commitment by the government to encourage the conditions this would require. The reasons for the failure of the Syrte process lie in this approach, which treats the Chadian rebellion as a standard homogenous rebellion, when in fact it is above all a struggle for influence within the military elite which has found that the East provides fertile ground for it to make itself felt.

In such a context, technical DDR operations appear highly inadequate as long as they lack a parallel serious political process aimed at tackling the causes of tension that fuel this war between rival leaders. The different peace accords signed in Chad over the last few years have had little impact, because they have failed to deal with the underlying dimensions of the internal crisis. The disarmament and demobilisation envisaged by these agreements have failed to reintegrate the combatants into civilian life because no arrangements have been planned for dismantling the underlying drivers of rebellion in the East. In this situation, these have been easily manipulated by the military elite to serve its tactical interests.

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[147] These were the UFDD, the Fundamental UFDD, the RFC and the CNT. The Chadian government subsequently announced that other rebel factions had joined the Syrte process. However, of all the main rebel leaders, only Hassan Al Djineidi of the CNT agreed to follow the Syrte process through by joining the Chadian government, where he is currently the state secretary [junior minister] reponsible for former combatants.

[148] The atmosphere surrounding the Syrte talks was heavily charged. Having refused to hold direct talks with the rebel leaders, President Déby preferred to delegate matters to his minister of infrastructure, Adoum Younousmi, a key confidant. This did not please the rebel leaders, who wanted to engage in talks with the president himself, as equals. After the signature of the agreement, Mahamat Nouri, one of the leaders of the rebellion, declared that "At Syrte, President Déby shook my hand without looking at me, and with much disdain." The president, for his part, told the press that the Syrte accord was "the last one" that he would agree to sign with the rebels. Eventually, all the rebel leaders present in Syrte complained about what they considered to be physical threats by the Libyan security services, to pressure them into agreeing to sign up as soon as possible to the draft agreement formulated by the Libyan mediators. See "Chad says peace deal definitive but rebels quibble", Reuters, 25 October 2007; and www.tchadactuel.com/index.php?2007/11/23/650-tchad-rien-n-a-ete-fait-pour-appliquer-l-accord-de-paix-rebelles.

The speed with which the Syrte agreement was put in jeopardy confirms this analysis. In February 2008, only five months after it was signed, the rebel leaders sought to take advantage of the strength they had gained from their new alliance – and weapons supplied from Sudan – to overthrow Déby. After the failure of this offensive, the rebels once again used their websites to stress their commitment to the Syrte accord, whilst a now stronger President Déby declared that henceforth there was no question of any further agreement between him and the rebel leaders.[149]

The limits of the 13 August 2007 political platform

As with the Syrte agreement, the 13 August 2007 deal[150] appears to be a rather limited tool for tackling all the causes of the internal political logjam in Chad. It marks the start of a political process that needs to be further developed. Designed to relaunch the electoral process and end the repeated boycotts by the non-armed opposition, this agreement created, in theory, the legal and technical framework necessary for organising national elections. It envisaged greater independence for the national electoral commission, a revision of the electoral roll and the neutrality of the state throughout the electoral process.[151]

As most observers have noted, the agreement focuses on the organisation of elections without tackling the deep causes of the Chadian crisis. By limiting its scope purely to the electoral process, it fails to consider the conditions in which opposition parties exist and the largely undemocratic nature of the incumbent regime which seeks to attract new adherents rather than aim for a genuine political understanding. Before this agreement, the Chad government was only prepared to talk to the internal opposition on condition that the talks were framed as a process of reconciliation between "brothers who had quarrelled but now want to wash their dirty linen within the family".[152] This meant that the dialogue was limited to individual discussions with the political elite, to satisfy their personal interests; it reduced the opposition to an elite being called on to promise allegiance. The underlying political issues were subtly postponed to "future consensual consultations".

The 13 August accord does represent a major advance, because – for the first time – it provides for a broad accord between the government and a non-military opposition alliance. Yet it nevertheless reflected political calculations: President Déby only accepted this agreement in order to placate his external supporters, particularly France and Gabon, who persuaded him that the resumption of internal dialogue was necessary. And President Déby's ultimate objective was to remain in power. Indeed, the Chadian government immediately pushed through new laws that were not in conformity with the terms of the 13 August agreement.

In December 2008 and January 2009, the national assembly – where the government has majority support -- adopted five draft laws relating to the implementation of the 13 August 2007 agreement. These draft laws concerned the independent electoral commission (CENI), the elections law, the status and role of traditional and customary rulers, the organisation and functioning Constitutional Council and the Supreme Court and the role of the heads of administrative districts. The opposition feels that these laws stray from the provisions of the original agreement.[153] Voting by nomadic electors and Chadians abroad – proven areas of fraud and abuse in past elections – was bolstered, for example. The CENI still lacks the autonomy to be totally independent and to run the elections process in a fully independent manner.

The Dakar agreement between Chad and Sudan

The overlap between the crisis in Darfur and the internal crisis in the East has led Chad and Sudan to sign a series of peace accords, of which the Dakar agreement is the sixth. The main feature of these agreements is that they have not contributed to ending either the mutual recrimination between the two countries or the cross-border incursions.

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[149] See Déby's interview on France 24, on 6 March 2008, available at www.france24.com/fr/20080306-talk-de-paris-idriss-deby-itno-president-tchad-rebelle-soutien-regime (Paris talk: Idriss Déby Itno President of Chad – rebel-support-regime).
[150] The full text of the agreement is available on www.tchadactuel.com/media/Accord_Politique.htm.
[151] The agreement of 13 August 2007 was signed by the party in power, the Mouvement patriotique du salut (MPS – Patriotic Salvation Movement) and by its allies and part of the non-military opposition in the Coalition des partis pour la défense de la constitution (CPDC – Coalition of Parties for the Defence of the Constitution). It was challenged by some members of the opposition such as Ngarlédji Yorongar and Neatobeye Bidi Valentin. The European Union delegation in Chad acted as facilitator.
[152] According to the terminology adopted by the offical media.
[153] See, on this point, the declaration of the CPDC dated 12 March 2009, available at www.tchadactuel.com/index.php?2009/03/12/2550-cpdc-communique-de-presse-du-12-mars-2009-declaration-liminaire.

Signed in March 2008 in Dakar, [154] the latest of these agreements between Chad and Sudan envisages the normalisation of relations between the two countries, the honouring of agreements made previously, the creation of a contact group and, above all, a commitment by both countries to ban all activity by armed groups and prevent these from using their two national territories. The central tool for implementing this new agreement is the establishment of an African buffer force on the frontier.

From March to November of 2008, the Dakar accord did contribute to significant progress on the ground. The meetings of the contact group facilitated the resumption of high level contacts between the authorities in both countries and cooled the exchange of verbal attacks between Déby and Bashir. In October 2008, the two countries resumed the diplomatic relations that had been broken in May of that year. On the ground, cross-border attacks and incursions became more sporadic and smaller in scale, largely thanks to EUFOR.

However, fundamentally, the truth is that relations between the two countries are still characterised by deep mistrust. The overlap between the interests of the Zaghawa in power in N'Djamena and those of the JEM makes it almost impossible to effectively ban operations by Sudanese rebel groups in Chad. And for their part, the Chadian warlords are reliant on Sudanese support without which they would be at a military disadvantage. Ultimately, the Sudanese regime needs the presence of the Chadian rebels on its territory to inhibit movements by JEM fighters and other Sudanese rebel groups along the frontier.

The re-emergence of tension between the two countries in January 2009[155] demonstrates the fragility of the Dakar accord and, above all, the need for any regional peace process to be accompanied by an internal political process to resolve the causes of the violence in Darfur and the East of Chad.

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[154] The text of the agreement is available at www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/RMOI-7CSKF8?OpenDocument.
[155] In January 2009, the resumption of fighting between the Sudanese government army and the JEM rebels sparked the deterioration of relations between Chad and Sudan. The Sudanese regime accused the Chadian government of being behind these attacks and rearming JEM. For his part, President Déby accused Sudan of having encouraged the formation of the Union des forces de la résistance (UFR – Union of the Forces of Resistance), the new Chadian rebel alliance. During his tour of Eastern Chad in February 2009, President Déby on several occasions denounced "the manoeuvres by Sudan and its mercenaries to destabilise Chad". See www.presidencetchad.org/etape_Birack_Tine.htm.

APPENDIX D

ACRONYMES

ACF: Action contre la faim

ANR: Alliance nationale de la résistance (National Alliance of the Resistance

ANT: Armée nationale tchadienne (Chadian National Army)

CENI: Commission électorale nationale indépendante (Independent National Electoral Commission)

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross

CNT: Concorde nationale tchadienne (Chadian National Concord)

CPDC: Coordination pour la défense de la constitution (Coordination for the Defence of the Constitution)

ICC: International Criminal Court

DIS: Détachement intégré de sécurité (Integrated Security Detachment)

DGSSIE: Direction générale de sécurité des services et des institutions de l'Etat (General Directorate of Security for State Institutions and Services)

EUFOR: European Union force

FSR: Front pour le salut de la République (Front for the Salvation of the Republic)

FUC: Front uni pour le changement (United Front for Change)

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

MINURCAT: United Nations Mission to Chad and the Central African Republic

MDJT: Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad (Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad)

MDD: Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement (Movement for Democracy and Development)

JEM: Justice and Equality Movement

MSF: Médecins sans frontières

OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

RDL: Rassemblement pour la démocratie et la liberté (Rally for Democracy and Liberty)

RFC: Rassemblement des forces pour le changement (Rally of Forces for Change)

UFDD: Union des forces démocratiques pour le développement (Union of Democratic Forces for Development)

UFCD: Union des forces pour le changement et la démocratie (Union of Forces for Change and Democracy)

UFR: Union des forces de la résistance (Union of Forces of the Resistance)

APPENDIX E

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is co-chaired by the former European Commissioner for External Relations Christopher Patten and former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since January 2000 has been former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with major advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity) and New York, a smaller one in London and liaison presences in Moscow and Beijing. The organisation currently operates nine regional offices (in Bishkek, Bogotá, Dakar, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Nairobi, Pristina and Tbilisi) and has local field representation in eighteen additional locations (Abuja, Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Cairo, Colombo, Damascus, Dili, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Ouagadougou, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Sarajevo, Seoul and Tehran). Crisis Group currently covers some 60 areas of actual or potential conflict across four continents. In Africa, this includes Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma/ Myanmar, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan Strait, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Russia (North Caucasus), Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine; in the Middle East and North Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Gulf States, Iran, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen ; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti and Venezuela.

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April 2009

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