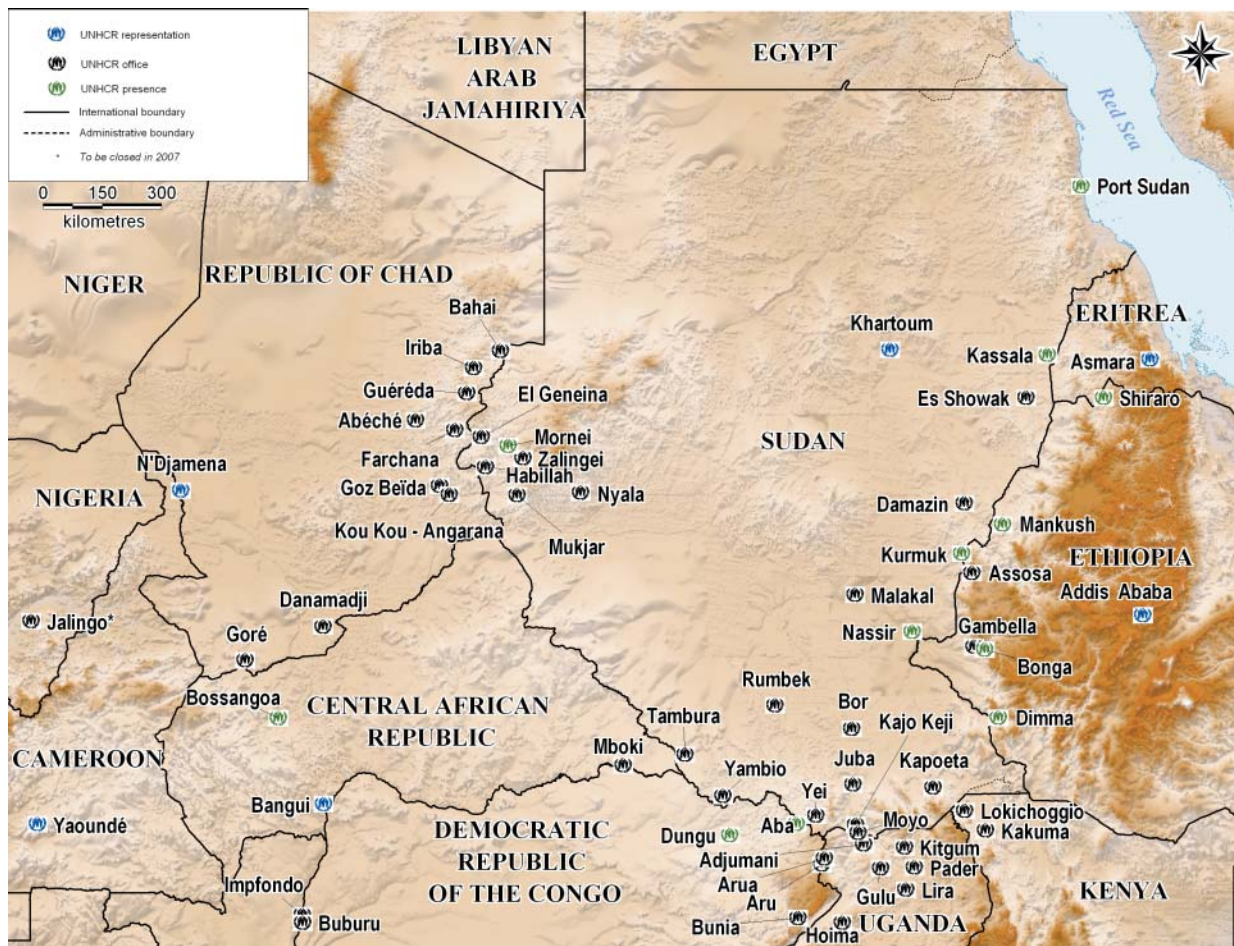# Chad and Sudan situation

Working environment

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2005 by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army has paved the way for the return of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to South Sudan. The returnees will come from the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

In 2006, UNHCR signed tripartite agreements with the refugee-hosting countries and Sudan. Though negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army gathered pace in August 2006, the prospects for a peace settlement are expected to hang in a delicate balance for the near future.

East Sudan also hosts some 210,000 Eritreans, the largest refugee group in the country. Approximately 95,000 of them live in 12 camps, while the remainder have settled either in rural settlements or urban centres. Political instability in Eritrea saw an influx of 600 to 700 Eritreans per month into eastern Sudan in 2006, undermining any real prospects for voluntary repatriation in 2007. As a result, in 2007 the Eritrean refugees in camps will continue to depend on humanitarian assistance from the international community.

Chad

Sudan

In spite of the long-awaited signing of a Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja, Nigeria in May 2006, Darfur remains in turmoil. A marked deterioration in security which began in late 2005 continued to spiral downwards in 2006. From January to September 2006, almost half of west Darfur was under UN Security Phase Four (emergency operation), limiting humanitarian workers' access to over 350,000 IDPs in the region. Acts of banditry, car-jacking and armed robbery directed at humanitarian workers doubled in number between 2005 and 2006. In July and August 2006, 12 Sudanese humanitarian workers were killed in Darfur.

In September, UN Security Council Resolution 1706 called for the deployment of 17,000 UN peacekeepers to Darfur. However, at the time of writing, Sudan continued to refuse UN peacekeepers access to its territory. It is widely believed that the humanitarian consequences of continued insecurity will be disastrous for the region, yet the prospects for a political solution seem remote. Sustainable humanitarian action is limited: UNHCR's work in Darfur, like that of other humanitarian agencies, has been compromised by the hazardous conditions.

The regional dimension of the conflict in Darfur has also had a destabilizing impact on Chad. Following desertions from the Chadian military in late 2005, several Chadian armed opposition groups began to operate from Darfur, mostly along the border areas and to some extent from CAR. On several occasions the opposition groups launched assaults against the Chadian armed forces, and reached the Chadian capital N'Djamena in April 2006. The presence of Chadian and Sudanese armed opposition groups, as well as reported incursions by the *Janjaweed* militia, were major factors in the deterioration of security in the border areas. An estimated 63,000 Chadians have been displaced internally, while some 10,000 have fled to Sudan. In May 2006, UNHCR established the Um Shalaya refugee camp in Sudan to protect and assist the people involved in this new Chadian influx.

The 12 refugee camps in eastern Chad, which together accommodate more than 200,000 Sudanese, have provided some measure of safety for refugees. But UNHCR is increasingly preoccupied with ensuring the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee settlements in the face of growing militarization in the region. Intra- and inter-ethnic tensions in or near the refugee camps have led to violent clashes among refugees and between refugees and the host population.

Finally, the unstable refugee security situation in northern CAR in 2006 also caused outflows to Chad. To date, some 13,000 Central African refugees have fled to southern Chad, where they joined approximately 30,000 of their compatriots who arrived in 2003. UNHCR and its partners have responded by monitoring the remote border areas and transferring refugees to camps further away from the border.

Strategy

Ensuring the protection of refugees and IDPs remains UNHCR's main strategic objective for its Chad and Sudan operations. The sheer scale of the operational area and regional and sub-regional complexities require that this objective be adapted to the realities on the ground.

In South Sudan, UNHCR will pursue the voluntary return of Sudanese refugees from neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, it will work in areas of return to ensure conditions conducive to the sustainable reintegration of both IDPs and refugees.

In east Sudan, UNHCR will promote greater self-reliance, assist camp populations and respond to the arrival of new refugees.

In Darfur, UNHCR will protect and assist IDPs and newly-arrived Chadian refugees by maintaining a presence in remote areas. By monitoring conditions in IDP settlements and rural areas the Office hopes to be able to protect the most vulnerable.

In Chad, UNHCR will protect and assist refugees in 15 camps accommodating a total of more than a quarter of a million people. Where possible, the Office will promote greater self-reliance among refugees while also serving as a catalyst for development.

Constraints

UNHCR's areas of operation in Chad and Sudan are remote and logistically challenging. Furthermore, the security of refugees and IDPs as well as of UNHCR's staff and partners is a constant concern. Ensuring a sustainable field presence under such harsh conditions requires high calibre staff, strong logistical and administrative support, and experienced field managers. Without solid, predictable funding, actions in the Field will remain very vulnerable to disruption.

Operations

UNHCR's country operations for **Chad** and **Sudan** are described in detail in the following country chapters.

West Darfur, Sudan. By using GPS technology UNHCR can map out the location of vulnerable displaced people and thus ensure that they are protected and assisted. *UNHCR / H. Caux*