

Over 500,000 at risk of being abandoned in Chad

As the UN is set to visit Eastern Chad, President Deby calls for the end of UN mission

More than half a million people in Chad and Central African Republic (CAR) will be left without protection if the UN Mission (MINURCAT) mandate is not renewed, warns IECAH (Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action), an international think tank based in Madrid, Spain. The warning comes as the UN Under-Secretary for Peacekeeping Operations arrives in Chad for a two-day visit. Chad has called for the UN Mission to leave the country, over a month before the mandate's expiration.

In the report launched today, the think tank warns of the serious risks faced by **more than half a million** people if they would be left without protection in an insecure and lawless environment like Eastern Chad.

Jesús Nuñez, head of IECAH and author of the report says,

"The international community and specially the Security Council members must not leave more than a half a million people marooned in a lawless territory like Eastern Chad. It is their responsibility to pull the strings to make sure that the UN renews the mandate and ensure effective protection for these people."

Just weeks before the UN Mission's mandate expires, the Government of Chad has notified the UN that it does not want to renew the mandate after March 2010. This statement has come less than one year after the mission was deployed. The UN peacekeeping force has not even reached its full mandated capacity of 5200 personnel. The Government's reason for its decision is the slowness of the UN, the uncertain impact on security on the ground and the general change in the context that had originally justified an international military presence.

Although the United Nations' response has not achieved initial expectations, the UN Force and the *Detachement Intégré de Sécurité* (DIS) – a Chadian police force trained, supported and monitored by the UN – are crucial to keep the security of Chad. Evidence from the ground shows that despite its slow deployment and shortcuts, MINURCAT has helped to improve security in the camps and their surroundings. The two bodies are presently filling a role that the Government of Chad is currently incapable of undertaking in a comprehensive and accountable manner.

"Mr Leroy will see it for himself: the people of Chad and the Central African Republic need protection. The people demand it. He should honestly address the Mission's shortcuts but also ensure its presence until the Government of Chad is ready to guarantee the protection of civilians in Eastern Chad ", said Nuñez.

The alleged switch in context highlighted by the Government of Chad - including agreements with Sudan and reduction of rebels' capacities- have not resulted in security and protection of the IDPs, refugees, host communities and humanitarians. Despite an alleged decrease of the rebels' capacities, the impoverished refugees, internally displaced persons and local

communities remain exposed to banditry. Tensions over scarce resources between populations also continue to build.

“President Deby has now the opportunity to show to the international community his desire to protect his own people. But its Government has yet to address many internal and structural factors that would prove it is ready to do so. MINURCAT is still the best tool to provide security for the civilians, and current negotiation must be the tipping point to ensure it becomes a successful mission”, added Nuñez.

Notes to editors:

- 267,000 Sudanese and 57,000 Central African Republic refugees, as well as 170,000 Chadian IDP's and the communities living in Eastern Chad are in need of protection in Chad.
- At the behest of the Government of Chad, the UN Security Council mandated, in September 2007, a multidimensional mission in eastern Chad. This consisted, initially, of: a UN civilian component (MINURCAT); the creation of a Chadian community police force, the Detachement Intégré de Sécurité (DIS), tasked with addressing insecurity in refugee camps and IDP areas, protecting humanitarian activities and building Chad's own community policing structure; and a transitional European-led military component, the 3,700-strong EUFOR, focused primarily on the protection of civilians, to be replaced by a 5,200-strong UN military force, MINURCAT II in March 2009, with a similar mandate
- As of mid-February 2010, MINURCAT II Force deployment was still only around 68%, less than half of the helicopters pledged to the mission have been delivered, field bases are not completed owing to logistical delays and the new troop contingents do not always meet minimum Force Requirements.
- **Full report available at:**
http://www.iecah.org/ver_completo.php?id_articulo=669
- Spokesperson available for interviews in English and Spanish.

For more information contact:

Ida de la Hera Salvador

Press Responsible

Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action (IECAH)

ida.delahera@iecah.org (+34) 692 19 60 27