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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Situation in Eastern Chad

We wish to draw the attention of the 34th regular session of the Human Rights Council to the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Eastern Chad. Low-intensity, yet protracted interethnic fighting that pits nomad camel herders and settled farmers is reported in this region with devastating effects on human lives and livelihoods. The conflict is largely driven by ecological factors coupled with ill-governance and ineffective government interventions to protect the civilian population and to offer sustainable solutions that meet the needs of growing human and animal populations. The crisis is expected to aggravate due to the continuing migration of nomads from their drought-hit traditional areas to the rich Savannah zones to the south. The epicentre of this growing crisis is the Ouaddaï region, which is on the borderline adjacent to the civil war-torn Darfur region of western Sudan. With a population of more than 750,000 inhabitants, Ouaddaï is the fourth largest populated region of Chad. The overwhelming majority of the victims of the ongoing interethnic atrocities are members of the Maba community (also known as Bargo or Ouaddaïen), who are the indigenous inhabitants of the region.

In recognition of the gravity of the situation in Eastern Chad, the United Nations Security Council adopted a series of measures since 2007, including resolutions 1769 (2007), 1778 (2007), 1834 (2008), 1861 (2009) and 1913 (2010), in which the Council noted, *inter alia*, that the situation in Eastern Chad constitutes a threat to international peace and security. In resolution 1778 (2007) of 25 September 2007, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and authorized the European Union Operation in Eastern Chad and North Eastern Central African Republic, which entailed the deployment of the European Union Force in Eastern Chad and North Eastern Central African Republic (EUFOR Tchad/RCA) with a mandate to address the regional dimension of the Darfur crisis. Despite these efforts little progress has been made and in resolution 1861 (2009) of 14 January 2009, the UN Security Council expressed its deep concern “... *at armed activities and banditry in eastern Chad ... and western Sudan which threaten the security of the civilian population, the conduct of humanitarian operations in those areas and the stability of those countries, and which result in serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.*” Despite the success of these two operations, the mandates of both MINURCAT and EUFOR were terminated in early 2010 upon request of Chad due to heavy pressure from Sudan and its north African neighbours.

Instability, acts of violence and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Eastern Chad started in tandem with the armed conflict in Darfur. Following the influx of refugees from Darfur into Ouaddaï and Dar Sila in 2003, these regions became prime targets of cross-border attacks and looting by the Sudan government-backed *Janjaweed*. These murderous militias recruited some Chadian citizens of Arab origin into their ranks and started a campaign of destruction of habitats and forced displacement of the local African villagers in a bid to appropriate land owned by the latter.

The situation worsened in 2007 and 2008, when the governments of Chad and Sudan involved in subversive efforts to destabilize each other. The two governments avoided direct military confrontations and instead they used rebel groups on both sides of the borders to fight proxy wars on their behalf. The first aggression launched by Chadian rebels against Chad’s capital N’Djamena in early February 2008 with the logistic backing of the government of Sudan. A contingent of the notorious *Janjaweed* militiamen, who are known for their ruthless treatment of civilians, took active role in this attack. Chad soon replicated and the Darfur insurgent group the Justice and Equality Movement attacked Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum in May 2008.

Local African populations in the historical Ouaddaï region, including Dar Sila have been facing devastating attacks and destruction of their habitat since 2003. It is reported that in Dar Sila, interethnic fighting claimed the lives of hundreds of sedentary villagers and rendered thousands of others as internally displaced persons, especially in the area surrounding Tiero and Marena localities. There are no precise figures of casualties in Ouaddaï, however, the latest reported fatal attack against sedentary farmers in the region dates to 10 December 2016 when armed camel herders destroyed farms and attacked the villagers in Tiré locality near Abéché, capital of Ouaddaï region. Seven farmers were killed and eighteen others were injured during this attack. Below is a list of the names of villagers killed or injured in Tiré locality and its environs in December 2016:

Names of killed villagers:	Name of Village
1. Mr. Nourène Djibrine Yakhoub	Tiré
2. Mr. Matar Mougadame Mahmoud	Tiré
3. Mr. Mahamat Abdel Malick Mahamat	Tiré
4. Mr. Nourène Mahamat Yaya	Tiré
5. Mr. Hassan Ousmane Hibel	Chikchika
6. Mr. Bourma Mahamat Abba	Atilo
7. Mr. Ismael Hissein Al Kheir	Chikchika

Names of injured villagers:	
1. Mr. Mahamat Adam Doutoum	Tiré
2. Ms. Haoua Al habo Ahmat	Tiré
3. Mr. Abdoulaye Djibrine Yacoub	Tiré
4. Ms. Awadia Djibrine Yacoub	Tiré
5. Mr. Hassan Soumaïne Adam	Tiré
6. Ms. Fadile Abdoulaye	Tiré
7. Ms. Bitina Hissein Abdelkerim	Tiré
8. Mr. Abakar Moustapha Abouna	Tiré
9. Ms. Amzina Adam Doutoum	Tiré
10. Mr. Abdelkerim Idriss	Tiré
11. Mr. Amine Abdelkerim	Tiré
12. Mr. Djalal Adam Al Djali	Tiré
13. Ms. Amne Al Habo Ahmat	Tiré
14. Mr. Abakar Yassine Hassan	Tiré
15. Mr. Moussa Oumar	Tiré
16. Mr. Abdelatif Ahmat Issa	Tiré
17. Mr. Ahmat Ali Al Habo	Atilo
18. Mr. Sanoussi Yacoub Adam	Atilo

Conclusion and recommendations:

1. The human rights and humanitarian situation in Eastern Chad, especially in Ouaddaï region, is fragile and could escalate into a full-blown armed conflict between the pastoralists and farmers unless sustained efforts are made to address the root causes of interethnic conflicts in this part of the country.
2. There is no evidence indicating that the government of Chad supports the *Janjaweed* or other militia groups, however, its efforts to put a halt to the *Janjaweed* criminal activities and interethnic fighting are disproportionate to the gravity of the situation. Chad may not be able, with its own capabilities, to protect the local population or to disarm the *Janjaweed* militia.
3. The government of Chad made efforts to calm the situation and ensure security in Eastern Chad, notably by the formation of the Joint Sudan-Chad Border Force. Chad also introduced some measures to implement UN Security Council 1923/2010 of 25 May 2010 such as the deployment of the *Détachement Intégré de Sécurité* (DIS) and the strengthening of judicial and penal systems and the revival of local conflict resolution mechanisms. These efforts merit to be further supported and strengthened.
4. Efforts of Chad to address the situation in Ouaddaï need to be internationally supported, both technically and financially, as the country is facing severe military and economic hardships due to the presence of Boko Haram along its borders with Nigeria and Cameroon as well as the chaotic situation in Libya, which severely hindered trade with key regional and international markets. The decrease in crude oil price has particularly damaged Chad's economy, which became heavily dependent on oil revenue in recent years.
5. To avoid a major human rights and humanitarian crisis in Ouaddaï region and Eastern Chad, the following measures merit keen attention of the government of Chad and need to be implemented as a priority:
 - 5.1. Effective control of the proliferation of small-arms in Ouaddaï region and Eastern Chad;

- 5.2. Sustainable development projects to mitigate the negative effects of ecological degradation on the affected communities;
 - 5.3. Effective control of cattle herds and their migration routes toward the Sudanic Savannah zones and wetlands southward, which are traditionally inhabited by farmers;
 - 5.4. Effective measures to organize the expansion of mechanical farming and cultivated lands and their encroachment into traditional pastures; and
 - 5.5. Arresting and prosecuting all individuals accused of committing interethnic crimes in Ouaddaï region.
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