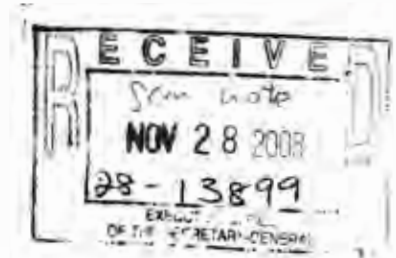


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Note to Mr. Nambiar

**UPDATE ON MISSION TO CHAD** ✓

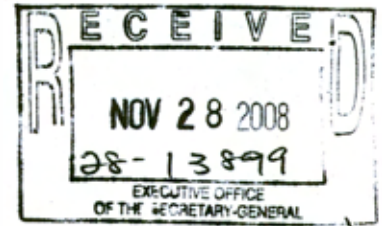


Please find attached a note to the Secretary-General regarding my recent mission to Chad.

*/ J. Holmes*  
John Holmes  
28 November 2008

Note to the Secretary-General

**VISIT TO CHAD, 21-24 NOVEMBER**



1. I visited Chad for the second time in 20 months to assess the humanitarian situation and response, particularly in eastern Chad, and discuss the issues with the Government. The main objectives of the mission were to observe first hand the country level coordination mechanisms; to discuss the progress of MINURCAT and EUFOR from a humanitarian perspective, and the transition to MINURCAT II can; to advocate for continued donor support; and to assess the impact of increasing insecurity on the humanitarian community. I met the Prime Minister, Mr. Youssouf Saleh Abbas, the Ministers for External Affairs and Interior, local authorities in the east, key members of the diplomatic community, the MINURCAT and EUFOR **leadership** and the humanitarian community. I also visited a Darfur refugee camp in Farchana near the border, an IDP site near Goz Beida and the village of Louboutigué, where there have been some IDP returns.
2. The last major military attack on N'Djamena was in February 2008, and while the security situation in eastern Chad remains extremely volatile, we have recently been through a calmer period overall, which has helped stabilise the situation and our own efforts. Nevertheless, the underlying tensions from continuing conflict and the long-running difficulties with Sudan have not gone away. And increasing acts of banditry and criminality in the east (with about 160 security incidents recorded against humanitarians since the beginning of the year) are causing greater concerns for protection of civilians, and for the safety of humanitarians, than ever before. One or two NGOs have already withdrawn, wholly or partially, because of this, and we will have to work hard to keep the rest.
3. Since my last visit, the overall humanitarian situation has stabilised. There are 263,000 Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad, 57,000 CAR refugees in Southern Chad, and over 180,000 IDPs in eastern Chad, numbers which have not changed much over the last year. Nevertheless, the long-term presence of the refugees and IDPs is resulting in growing tensions with the host population, not least due to the additional strain placed on the already fragile environment in many areas, as well as the classic problem of resentment by the original population of more favourable treatment for the new arrivals. There is an urgent need to address these issues.
4. The militarization of the refugee camps and IDP sites is an increasing concern, in particular the phenomenon of forced recruitment (including children) by armed groups, notably JEM, which seriously **jeopardizes** the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps. This is compounded by the widespread proliferation of small arms, as well as human rights violations, particularly against women during the course of their daily activities outside the camps. There is almost complete impunity for criminals, because of the almost complete absence of state administration and any judicial system.

5. I will continue to press for donor resources to meet these growing humanitarian needs, put by the CAP for 2009 at almost \$389 million. As far as the Darfur refugees are concerned, the assumption is that there is little chance of their return for a least a year or two yet, and the focus has to be on strategies aimed at self-sustainability. For IDPs, there have been some voluntary returns in recent months - a fragile process based on local reconciliation efforts. We must support this, without putting too much pressure on the IDPs to go back before the conditions are right. Ensuring security is the basic need, but this must go hand in hand with basic social infrastructure and a stronger presence of local authorities.
6. EUFOR has helped to stabilize the overall situation in the east, and provide some reassurance to the local community and the humanitarians, but has neither the mandate nor the capacity to attack local banditry. Hopes are now pinned on the progressive deployment of the newly trained local Chadian gendarmes, the Détachement Intégré de Sécurité (DIS), supported by MINURCAT. Around 160 had already deployed to the east at the time of my visit. I was favourably impressed by their keenness and behavior, though this is inevitably a superficial judgment. The remaining contingents now need to deploy quickly. Effective deployment of MINURCAT II from March will be vital.
7. With the Chadian authorities, I expressed my hope that the re-establishment of full diplomatic relations between Chad and Sudan would favour a political solution of the Darfur crisis. The Prime Minister expressed cautious optimism about this, but the overall attitude of the government is still to blame all their problems on Khartoum and the Darfur crisis. There is no doubt that they will not be able to move forward properly on many fronts, including development of the east, until the Darfur spillover effect is contained, but this is also a convenient excuse for lack of action. I pressed the authorities to take their own responsibilities more seriously in the east, both for security and the provision of basic services. Their answers on this front were less than convincing. I also stressed the need to respect the principle of voluntariness in future IDP returns, and to make sure NGOs in particular were not subject to harassment or unnecessary and costly bureaucratic requirements.
8. Overall, I left Chad, despite all the problems I have mentioned, feeling slightly more optimistic than I had expected. The crisis atmosphere has subsided a little. But I am also very conscious that another rebel attack, by JEM into Sudan, or by the Chadian opposition into Chad, could throw everything into chaos again. The Sudan ICC sword of Damocles also hangs over any prospect of greater stability in Chad. So the risks remain considerable.



John Holmes  
28 November 2008

CC: Mr. Le Roy  
Mr. Pascoe  
Ms. O'Brien  
Mr. Nambiar  
Mr. Guterres  
Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Amaning