

PHR

Physicians for
Human Rights

DESTROYED LIVELIHOODS

A Case Study of Furawiya Village, Darfur

Preliminary Briefing



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Physicians for Human Rights
2 Arrow Street, Suite 301
Cambridge, MA 02138
617.301.4200



Overview

The Government of Sudan and its proxy militias in Darfur have carried out a two-year rampage across the region, with widely documented massive displacement, killing of civilians, torture, rape of women and children, and destruction of villages. Although referred to in the recently released report of the UN Commission of Inquiry, the systematic destruction of the livelihoods, the lifestyle and the economic future of displaced Darfurians are documented in less detail and not amply covered in human rights and war crimes analyses.

In Darfur, the sweeping destruction of homes, community structures, wells, food production/crops, livestock, personal assets, combined with restricted access to humanitarian aid and continuing violence, has created an untenable environment for displaced Darfurians. They have experienced the virtual elimination of the attributes of civil society, their cultural identity that is tied to their villages, and the very fabric of their social structures.

To understand and describe in more complete detail the meaning of village destruction for the Darfurian victims, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) researched the story of one of the over 1,000 villages destroyed in the genocidal campaign: Furawiya- a prosperous Zagawha village located sixty kilometers from the Chad border in North Darfur. A team evaluated the systematic destruction of the means for survival of this village's war-affected population and applied traditional livelihoods indicators to major human rights abuses, crimes of war, and genocide. PHR placed particular attention on evaluating social and community systems, economic capacity, and prospects for return. Macro factors (e.g. markets, trade, tribal affiliation, political economy, conflict) all affect the livelihood strategies, assets, and goals of the different groups in Darfur. To complement its study of Furawiya, PHR also traveled to southwestern Darfur, where from air and land, the team photographically documented the utter devastation of dozens of villages and interviewed eyewitnesses about their losses.

PHR's interviews with internally displaced persons in Darfur and refugees who fled across the border into Chad and photographs of destroyed villages in Darfur, substantiate and amplify its previous findings that the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the GOS-supported Arab militia have forced largely non Arab Darfurians from their homes-- knowing how difficult it is to survive in this inhospitable terrain without outside assistance. It is quite evident that the presence of humanitarian aid organizations has prevented the death by starvation and disease and stayed the annihilation of the Furawiyan population.

Any resolution to the current conflict in Darfur must first address security and protection of civilians who have been expelled from their homes.

According to a 76 year-old farmer from Furawiya currently living at Kashuni refugee camp on the Chad/Sudan border, he longs to return home free from fear.

“We will not return to our homes unless we can be guaranteed that we will not be attacked again.”

But while security remains the paramount concern of the war-affected waiting to go back to their villages, the return of land and restoration of possessions, wealth, and civil and economic structure—all essential components of livelihoods – is a second essential requirement.



"I have lost my home, my camels and my cows, my crops have been burned. The medical clinic has been looted. Here [in the refugee camp] I have security, I have food, I have medical care," continued the 76 year-old father of eight who has been in poor health for over two years. " I can't go home unless I can be assured that I can get access to medicines and all the things we can get here in the refugee camp."

Background

In May 2004, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) conducted a health and human rights investigation along the Chad/Sudan border. Based on dozens of eyewitness accounts, PHR found lines of evidence indicating an organized attempt to affect group annihilation tantamount to an unfolding genocide. The indicators of genocide included: consistent pattern of attacks on villages, consistent pattern of destruction of villages, consistent pattern of hot pursuit with intent to eradicate villagers, consistent pattern of targeting non Arabs, consistent pattern of systematic rape of women and a consistent pattern of destruction of livelihoods and means of survival.¹ PHR was particularly interested in focusing on the clause of the Genocide Convention that refers to the destruction of "conditions of life." A second PHR research team returned to the region in January 2005 to document with eyewitness testimony and hundreds of photographs the targeted obliteration of livelihoods of non-Arab Darfurians.

The destruction and denial of conditions compatible with life constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The use of starvation and deprivation of basic human needs as weapons of war are violations of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, June 8, 1977.

While the UN Commission of Inquiry report on Darfur released in January 2005 did not find evidence of intent of the government of Sudan to pursue a policy of genocide, statements in the report concluding that "elements of genocide might be deduced" from the acts perpetrated by the Government and its militias are enhanced by this new PHR research. In particular, PHR's livelihood study is applicable to Article 6(c) of the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court which defines Genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

Furawiya Village: A Case Study of Destroyed Livelihoods

Prior to the Conflict: A Thriving Community

Prior to this recent conflict that began in the spring of 2003, Furawiya was productive and intensely interdependent. In the harsh environment of Western Sudan, families depended heavily on their village for trade, social and financial exchange, maintenance of livestock, and pooling of resources to maintain mosques, clinics and schools. Families and communities were linked by common religious, social, tribal and community roots that have been present for centuries.

Furawiya and its surrounding smaller villages was inhabited by an estimated 13,000 people, according to tallies of villagers and other sources. It is comprised of the main village of Furawiya (estimated population 7,252) and five surrounding villages, all within a few miles of each other. Krakir is the largest of these, located east of Furawiya across the *wadi* (river bed), with a population of 2,548. Kolkul (pop 1078), Sirkinkok (pop 882) and Hangala (pop 686) are located to the south, and the smaller village of Towaiasha (pop 588) to the northwest.

¹ "PHR Calls for Intervention to Save Lives in Sudan: Field Team Compiles Indicators of Genocide", June 23, 2004. www.phrusa.org/sudan

Community Structure

Relative to other villages in Darfur of the same size, the life and livelihood of Furawiya appears to have been rich and productive.

Inhabitants of Furawiya belong to the Zaghawa Tribe. Village leadership is comprised of a combination of tribal leadership, family leadership (*omda*), village leadership (*sheikh*), and governmental authority. However, even though the villagers paid government taxes, they relied on themselves for the provision of basic municipal services. For example, it was the *sheikh* who led the effort to obtain voluntary contributions from villagers for the construction and administration of a health clinic, two primary schools and two mosques.

The community is primarily agrarian and pastoral. Each family farmed its own fields, cultivated gardens, maintained livestock and bought and sold at the *suk*, or local market. Families inherited their land from their father's side of the family. Each family can trace its ancestry back many generations. The land passed from one family to the next. Extended families lived in the same compound, farmed the same land and passed it on to their next of kin. Although there is no formal written documentation of land ownership, the boundaries of farmland are well accepted. A few families were not landowners. They were generally regarded as less affluent, but still maintained significant wealth from the herding and trade of livestock and acquisition of goods to buy and sell at the *suk*.

Living Wealth –Livestock

Aside from land ownership, the primary source of wealth was livestock. Livestock is the main industry of this region in Darfur, and most of the exportable income-generating products from Furawiya are livestock. Almost everyone in Furawiya owned livestock, which typically included donkeys, horses, cattle, camels, sheep and goats.



An affluent family would own 15-20 camels, 4-6 donkeys, one or two horses, 6-10 cattle and 200-300 sheep and goats. Even families who were considered the least affluent would have at least a donkey or two and 20 or more sheep and goats. Donkeys are ubiquitous among villagers and are essential to life in rural Darfur, as they are used to transport water from the well or watering hole (*wadi*) for water for the family and domestic animals and to transport food and people. They are remarkably versatile, hardy, and are an essential part of everyday life. Horses are less common, and may be used for more rapid transport. Camels are the most valuable livestock. A fully-grown camel can be valued at 500-1000 USD. Wealthy families can build enormous herds of camel, sometimes over 1,000 head, and use them for trade and building assets. Those with camels in

Furawiya typically herded them together and moved them many kilometers away from the village for grazing along trading routes. Sheep and goats are a source of wealth and food. These livestock stay closer to home, and are typically tended by young children of the family within several kilometers of the village. Cattle are also tended closer to home. Equivalent value for livestock varies based on the season, but typically a mid-sized camel may be worth two to three cows, or ten or more sheep and goats.

Farm Production

Planting of crops occurs in May or June, just prior to the three month rainy season. Crops are harvested in January. The most common crops are sorghum and millet, but fousel (beans) and groundnuts may also be cultivated. Families harvest their own crops. Grain or beans are used for cooking, stored in baskets in homes, and sold at the market. In general, excess produce are not transported for sale in large quantities outside of the village, but stored in homes for future use. Gardens are an important form of supplemental food source for the village. Each family maintains a large garden and may grow watermelon, tomatoes and other produce, such as okra and cassava, which they use for food and sell at the market.

Community Exchange

The economic engine of Furawiya is the local market, or *suk*. The market is open on specified days of the week for each village, on roughly a rotating basis. Villages nearby come to open air markets and under small temporary structures to sell produce, goods and items that have been acquired from larger cities, including clothing, shoes, carpets, baskets, blankets and a remarkable array of merchandise. In these small markets, one can find watches, toys, snack foods and cold drinks. Goods and money are exchanged, as is information and news of surrounding villages often obtained by a radio playing in the market.

Household Structure

Homes in the village are basic but functional. The family compound is usually surrounded on two or three sides by a four to five foot semicircular mud wall. Inside the compound, the most common permanent structure is a round mud hut with a hard mud floor and thatch roof. These structures are used for sleeping. In large families, the parents and very young children stay in one hut, the boys in another and the girls in a third. There are also rectangular mud structures, sometimes with tin roofs, that serve the pantry and kitchen area. Each family has two latrines, one for men and one for women, and a cooking fire. Several families may share a mud oven, used to bake bread. PHR's interviews with numerous people from Furawiya reveal that wealth is not displayed by the size or number of structures, but on the amount of cattle and somewhat by one's possessions.

Most families have items such as cooking pots, plates, bowls, mats, blankets, mattresses and basic necessities. Carpets are of significant value and can cost as much as a small or mid-sized camel (200-400 USD). Families often maintain cash in their homes. Cash is commonly kept in a safe or locked metal box, which also contains important documents such as passports, identification papers, medical certificates, diplomas and family photos. Many heads of household carry some amount of cash with them.

The Conflict in Furawiya: A Timeline

The timeline below was developed largely from eyewitness accounts of inhabitants from Furawiya. A variety of news accounts on Darfur and the village of Furawiya have supplemented the timeline as well

February 2003: People in Furawiya hear news of clashes between Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) rebels and Government of Sudan (GOS) troops. SLA attack GOS positions in Tine and Kutum.

April 2003: The SLA attack the provincial capital of north Darfur, El Fasher. GOS commander is captured and brought to Furawiya, which is a SLA stronghold, for interrogation.

May, 2003: First aerial bombing, by GOS Antonov airplanes, of Furawiya begins and continues "almost daily" until January 2004. Many people build bomb shelters while many others flee to the hills outside of town taking with them livestock. At night, villagers occasionally return to the village.

December 2003: GOS drops an estimated 24 bombs on a large herd of animals near the three wells in the *wadi* in Furawiya, killing hundreds of camels, cows, sheep and goats.

January 23, 2004: Bombing of Furawiya stops.

January 29, 2004: Janjaweed militia, supported by GOS forces, attack outside of Furawiya. They come from four different directions to the village on horseback. The first attack comes at 9 a.m. SLA fighters retaliate and the Janjaweed withdraw. At 4 p.m., the GOS-supported militia arrive, supported by two GOS helicopter gunships. The Janjaweed then follow, and stay in the camp for three days. Over 40 SLA are killed in the battle.

January 30, 2004: 6:00 a.m.: Low-flying GOS Antonov bombers pass over the region of Furawiya, but uncharacteristically do not drop bombs. In the distance, people see smoke from villages south of Furawiya. The women and children of Sirkunkok, Kolkul and Hangala run into hiding in the bush, and head northwest for the road that leads to the Chad border. Older children and some villagers sent out to tend the herds are separated from families and forced to flee Southwest.

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January 30, 2004: 7:30 a.m.: GOS Antonov bombers continue to fly overhead. Approximately 25 GOS technicals, Toyota Landcruisers with mounted rocket launchers, and other GOS vehicles carrying troops enter near Sirkunkok. They surround the village. Janjaweed fighters follow them on horseback and several large transport lorries. The Janjaweed ride into the mostly deserted town and capture eight people before they can flee. They loot the homes, taking any new clothing, mattresses, blankets, pots, pans and valuables they can load onto trucks to sell at nearby markets. They find safes and metal lock boxes and break them open, taking valuables and burning other documents. They set Sirkunkok on fire while four GOS tanks move in to demolish the mud brick buildings.

GOS and Janjaweed militia then head to Hangala and Kolkul, similarly encircling villages, capturing the few remaining civilians, looting and in some cases destroying the village.

January 30, 2004: 8:30 a.m.: Janjaweed and GOS troops split up and head toward Krakir in the east and toward Furawiya village. The leader of Furawiya hides up on the small mountain just east of the village, and sees the advance. They arrive in southern Furawiya village near the girls' school. They round up a total of twenty people from each village and hold them for questioning.

A Soviet-made GOS Mirage fighter plane shoots four bombs into the region of Krakir and Furawiya. Three explode and one remains unexploded near the boys' school in Krakir.



January 30, 2004: 10:00 am: By mid-morning, southern Furawiya is being looted, and set aflame. GOS militia surround the region while Janjaweed loot and destroy homes. The attack moves to Towaisha, a small village a few kilometers northwest of Furawiya.

January 30, 2004: 10:00 am: By mid-morning, southern Furawiya was being looted, and set aflame. GOS militia surrounded the region while Janjaweed looted and destroyed homes. The attack continues in Towaisha.

January 31: mid morning: The twenty people who had been captured by the Janjaweed and GOS are interrogated, then brought to an area near Towaisha and murdered. Their bodies are placed in a hastily dug mass grave.

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Following the ground assault and almost complete evacuation of Furawiya of its villagers, the Janjaweed occupy the village for several days.



The Aftermath: Life and Livelihoods Destroyed

The attacks in January 2004 devastated Furawiya. In addition to the murder and rape that took place, a community, wealth, and way of life was completely destroyed. One year after the attack, Furawiya is a ghost town with no sign of this formerly growing and productive village.

Presently, most of the people inhabiting Furawiya are SLA troops. Some of the SLA troops are originally from Furawiya. A few of the villagers, who refused to leave and were spared by the attackers, have remained and a handful of villagers who fled to the hills during the attack have returned as well.

But the majority of the survivors have dispersed to camps in Chad and some have fled to El Fashir where they remain in IDP camps located outside of the city. About 8,000 people from Furawiya and its surrounding villages are refugees at the Kashuni camp in Chad near the Sudan border.

According to an account given to PHR by one Furawiya resident who never left, nearly all the prewar livestock was lost. Bombing killed Forty percent of the livestock. Twenty percent were stolen or eaten by Janjaweed forces. Of the remaining animals, many died as a result of lack of food and water during the long trek to Chad (where there was no fodder available) or from neglect in Furawiya. The minimal number of goats and sheep that are now in Furawiya have made their way back by themselves. If every household in this one village alone had an average of 2 fully grown camels valued at a minimum of \$500, the loss in Furawiya of camels would be more than 2.5 million US dollars.

Food production for family consumption and for upkeep of their livestock was completely wiped out. Not only were homes attacked, looted and/or destroyed, the crops were also burned. Because of continuing intimidation and regular return attacks against Furawiya (in May, June, July and August 2004 per UN assessment report), villagers are unable to return home.

Without access to their land, there is no home and no farm. Without the farm, there is no way to eat or feed livestock. Without livestock, there is reduced access to water and no economy or ability to trade in the market. The continuation of attacks and intimidation has forced the population into the harsh desert to live off of the wild grains and berries that grow wild on the land. It is only the presence of international aid organizations that has prevented the starvation and complete annihilation of the Furawiyan population.

This is a case study of only one village in Darfur. When this detail is applied to the estimated 700 - 2000 villages destroyed (UN Report, paragraph 236) in Darfur, the scale of livelihood destruction is enormous.

The Story of Hadia Ali Ismael

In the early morning of January 30, 2004, Hadia Ali Ismael, a 35-year-old mother of eight, heard the approach of the GOS military and Janjaweed. She quickly gathered five of her eight children and ran into hiding into the barren countryside north east of her village of Hangala, a few kilometers away from Furawiya. Her other three children were tending the cattle at the *wadi*, near Towaisha. With no food, no possessions, and no donkey, she hid in the brush until night to avoid marauding Janjaweed. Many of the villagers joined her on the road heading to Carieri an artificial lake on the Sudan/Chad. They traveled by night for four days, hiding far off the road in the brush during the day, where they foraged for nuts and small berries in the sparse foliage en route to the border. She set up temporary camp in a dry *wadi* along the border near the Sudanese town of Bahai. By lining up small sticks under a scrub bush, she sheltered her five children from wind, sand and sun.

Hadia was from a large and prosperous family in Furawiya. She and her husband have eight children, four daughters, ages 17, 15, 13 and 10, and four sons, aged 8, 6, 4 and 2 years old. The four older girls tend the cattle and fetch water, and the younger children stay with her at home, in the garden and out in the field. Her home was a traditional mud-walled compound, with three huts for sleeping and one square mud brick building for cooking and storage. She grew tomatoes, onions and watermelon in her garden. She and her family planted sorghum and fousel (beans) in the summer and harvested in late January. During the time of the attack, she was still

harvesting the year's crops. In her home, she stored fifty baskets of grain to sell and store for the off season.

Hadia described most of her family's assets in terms of livestock. She owned four donkeys, 20 cows, 15 camels and over 100 sheep and goats. At the time of the attack, three of her daughters were tending all of the animals except two donkeys at the *wadi*, about two kilometers away from the village.

She did not know the whereabouts of her other three children. Two of the daughters would join her several months later in the refugee camp after their own flight across the south western border. The eldest daughter made her way to Fashir City to stay with relatives. Hadia lost all of her livestock, including her donkeys. She lost all of her possessions, and was only able to collect her children and escape with nothing.

"We have things we need to live, but it is not our home."

Ultimately, Hadia joined up to eight thousand others from Furawiya who traveled to Kashuni Camp, near Bahai on the Chad border. The remaining population of Furawiya scattered and found their way to other camps; Touloum, Mille and Iridini. They all had lost virtually everything; all of their possessions, cattle, and wealth. Her husband has gone to fight for the SLA and has not returned to the refugee camp.

Living in a refugee camp, Hadia describes the sentiments of many "we have things we need to live, but it is not our home." The primary requirement for her return to what remains of her burned home and destroyed village is security and protection from the Janjaweed and the GOS militia. Although reconstruction of her village would be an additional incentive, it was not considered a requirement for return. If security were restored and her entire village went back to resettle, she would go. "I will stay with my people, and go where they go" she insisted. When asked what she hoped for the future, she replied, "I only know I have to get my life back, to return and start again." Despite the tremendous losses at the hand of the GOS and Janjaweed, she, like most others in Kashuni Camp, want more than ever to return home to rebuild their village and rebuild their future.

Methods

A full report based on this study is in preparation. The qualitative study was conducted by Physicians for Human Rights from January 18-30, 2005. The village of Furawiya, located in the north of the West Darfur province about sixty km from the Chad border, was selected based on the availability of prior data and background information from previous studies of the village and its surrounding area.

The PHR investigative team located displaced inhabitants of the Furawiya living in the Kashuni refugee camp north of the Bahai, Chad along the Sudan-Chad border. Twenty key informant interviews were conducted with selected male and female members of the village in order to provide background information and a chronology of events. In addition, four focus groups entirely composed of 3-4 villagers from the Furawiya region, participated in semi-structured interviews utilizing proportional piling and diagrams to describe circumstances of flight, asset loss and distribution of wealth. Based on interviews with village leaders and focus groups, a timeline was created describing the initial assault and eventual destruction of villages.

The PHR field team was composed of PHR lead investigator John Heffernan, Michael Van Rooyen, MD, a humanitarian aid and human rights expert from the Harvard School of Public Health, and Michael Wadleigh, an Academy-Award winning director and a photographer. Assistance was provided by Helen Young of Tufts University, an expert on livelihoods in Sudan, Alex de Waal a fellow of the Global Equity Initiative at Harvard University and an expert on Sudan, Susannah Sirkin, Deputy Director of Physicians for Human Rights, and Joey Renert, research consultant. The document was prepared by Barbara Ayotte, PHR Director of Communications.

Recommendations

To ensure return of people to their homes, safe lives, and prevent further attacks, PHR calls on the UN Security Council to support:

1. Immediate enhanced protection for displaced Darfurians as the highest priority. PHR supports a more robust mandate for the African Union peacekeepers and a dramatic increase in their training, equipment, logistics, numbers and capacity. The UN Security Council must make every effort to ensure that the Government of Sudan disarm and disband the Janjaweed militia forces and must ensure that all parties respect the ceasefire agreement.
2. A system of accountability that punishes perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is an essential element of justice for the Darfurian victims. PHR supports the prompt passage of a UN Security Council resolution referring the crimes in Darfur to the International Criminal Court.
3. Targeted sanctions on the government of Sudan and others responsible for the ongoing attacks.
4. Compensation and reparation for Darfurians to restore their livelihoods and communities as part of the court processes, peace negotiations and agreements, and proposed sanctions and other economic agreements. PHR supports the UN Commission of Inquiry's recommendation to the UN Security Council that a Compensation Commission be established. The UN should consider tying compensation to sales of Sudanese oil and other commodities on the international market.
5. A short-term scheme or fund to provide basic economic essentials for return of communities once security can be assured and call on donor nations to respond amply to the current OCHA request for Darfur.

Physicians for Human Rights has hundreds of photos documenting the three-week investigation. PHR will release its full findings and recommendations for action in a forthcoming report.

*Founded in 1986, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), based in Boston, MA, mobilizes the health professions to ensure the health and dignity of all people. As a founding member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, PHR shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.
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