

Children of Darfur Portray a 21st Century Genocide

Adapted from "Children of Darfur Know About Life Amid Carnage," by Felicia Lee, *New York Times*, 7/6/05: E3



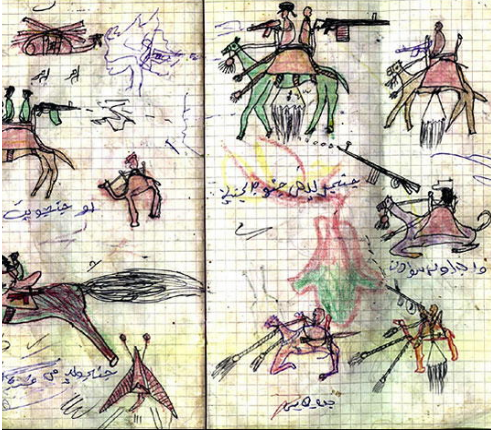
A helicopter attack on civilians in Darfur.

Darfur, in the Sudan, is the 21st century's first genocide. Once again, most of the world stood by and took no action. The United Nations estimates that 200,000 people either starved to death or were killed in Darfur and 2.4 million people were displaced between February 2003 and July 2005. These acts of genocide grew out of a conflict between the Sudanese government and Islamic and Arab militias on one side and rebel groups who tended to be Black African and Christian. The militias, known as "janjaweed" [men on horses], shouted racial insults at Black Sudanese as it committed atrocities against civilian populations.

Many of these atrocities were documented in drawings by children. Human Rights Watch workers in refugee camps along Darfur's border with Chad gave children crayons and paper to keep them occupied while they interviewed their parents about the ethnic violence. The twenty-seven drawings are part of a traveling exhibit called "The Smallest Witnesses: The Conflict in Darfur Through Children's Eyes." They can also be view on the internet at <http://www.hrw.org/photos/2005/darfur/drawings/>.

A crayon drawing by Taha, who is 13 or 14 showed helicopters in the sky and houses engulfed in flames. A drawing by 13-year-old Salah shows women screaming as they are being kidnapped and taken away to be raped. A third drawing shows men firing automatic rifles while riding horses and camels.

"These are not generic guns that a 10-year-old boy would draw but guns they've actually seen," said Dr. Annie Sparrow, who is a pediatrician and researcher with Human Rights watch. Dr. Sparrow believes that the details in the drawings provide evidence of the involvement of the Sudan government in the genocidal attacks.



Automatic weapons fired from horses and camels.



Women being taken captive by raiders.