

SYNOPSIS :

DARFUR

« By a relief worker in the field »

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May 2005 / April 2006 - Sudan

I was a relief worker with Action Against Hunger in Darfur from May 2005 until April 2006. I was Program Coordinator for North Darfur. Action Against Hunger is active in North and South Darfur in nutrition, food distribution, food security (which consists in giving the means of producing food by way of seeds and tools distributions) as well as water and sanitation.

I went there first as a professional relief worker. But I loved this people and I took pictures of them. I lived with them for 11 months, I did my work of humanitarian professional sometimes with happiness, often with frustration.

This war started in 2003 and has resulted in over 200,000 deaths and 2.5 million displaced persons. The camps of Darfur are impressive, spreading endlessly, filled with thousands of people who have lost everything. Today, relief workers are still active there. But the conflict has complexified, peace negotiations have stopped one year ago and they cannot work properly because of constant insecurity, especially in rural areas. There is no rule of law in Darfur, no punishment, no justice, whoever the murderers, the thieves, the bandits or the rapists are.

The first victims of this conflict are as always women and children. I witnessed suffering and a lot of depravation. I met women with their malnourished children in therapeutical centers. When relief workers arrive in 2004, children were dying everyday. Today, thanks to the nurses, they survive. But the region needs constant support and if the humaniarian agencies leave, the situation will deteriorate if it is not already the case of rural areas where access is today impossible.

But life goes on and the people of Darfur still believe in peace and a new life. My pictures show the situation as it is, the work of relief workers in the field but also the extraordinary strength of the people I met there. To show them full of dignity, courage and happiness is my way of paying my respects to them.

These pictures are part of a book which shares in words and images my experience as a relief worker in Darfur. The book is simply called « Darfur » and is published by Editions du Cherche-Midi. 1€ per book goes to Action Against Hunger www.actioncontrelafaim.org.