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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on situation in Darfur (Sudan)**

The EU wishes to express its serious concern at the situation in the Darfur region of western Sudan. The scale of the humanitarian crisis continues to escalate, with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) estimated to be in excess of 700,000 requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. The EU calls on the Government of Sudan to grant UN agencies and other relief organisations continued and full access to all areas of Darfur, as the plight of the local populations requires urgent attention. The EU recalls its concern expressed in the joint communiqué resulting from the EU-Sudan political dialogue held in Khartoum on December 18th 2003 and its appeal to “all the parties to ensure protection of the civilian population and to allow for unhindered humanitarian access for the population in need”.

The EU is alarmed at reports that Janjaweed militias continue to systematically target villages and centres for IDPs in their attacks. The EU strongly condemns the attacks and calls upon the Government of Sudan to put an end to Janjaweed atrocities. The EU also calls on the Government of Sudan to thoroughly investigate the attacks carried out and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. The EU calls on the rebel groups operating in the Darfur region to commit to providing safe passage to relief agencies and refrain from any activity that harms the delivery of relief. The EU also urges all parties to the conflict to agree to an immediate cease-fire and to restore stability to the region through facilitated peace talks.

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