Beat: News

Health workers, children, among 200 killed in ‘senseless and brutal attacks’

Intercommunal Violence in West Darfur

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"Recent intercommunal violence in areas of West Darfur, Sudan, that has left scores dead, including two health workers, must stop immediately, a senior official with the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday.

Nearly 200 civilians were killed over the past six days alone in renewed clashes between the Arab Rzeigat and African Masalit communities, around the town of Kereneik.

Two health facilities were also attacked, and thousands of displaced people have sought refuge in the town’s military compound.

“WHO joins the Special Representative of the Secretary General and other humanitarian agencies and partners in calling for an immediate end to these senseless and brutal attacks on civilians, healthcare workers and health facilities,” said Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Respect health workers, facilities.
The two health workers were killed when armed gunmen attacked two hospitals in Kereneik and the state capital, El Geneina, this past weekend.

WHO said these attacks were a major violation of international law, and called for the neutrality of health workers, health facilities and patients, to be respected.

The UN agency added that during the holy month of Ramadan, parties to the conflict should respect the core values of mercy, respect, trust and solidarity.

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“Healthcare workers providing life-saving care to injured civilians are already overwhelmed and should not be at risk of intimidation or attack,” said Dr. Al-Mandhari.

‘Children are not a target’.
At least 21 children, including an 11-month-old baby, were reportedly killed in the violence, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said on

Thursday.

Adele Khodr, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, underlined that “children are not a target” in hostilities.

“The killing of children is a grave violation of their rights. Nothing justifies killing children. We renew our appeal for peace and call on the authorities in Sudan to protect children in Darfur and across Sudan from harm and violence at all times,” she said.

Investigate the attacks.
Meanwhile, the?UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for an investigation into the attacks and urged the Sudanese authorities to take urgent steps to prevent further outbreaks of communal violence in West Darfur.

Michelle Bachelet was appalled by reports of the killings, injuries and displacement, according to a statement issued on Wednesday.

“I am concerned that this region continues to see repeated, serious incidents of intercommunal violence, with mass casualties.? While initial measures taken by the authorities to calm tensions are welcome, I urge the authorities to address the underlying causes of violence in this region and fulfil their responsibility to protect the population,”?she said.

Ms. Bachelet called for immediate action, including to assist the wounded and to facilitate humanitarian assistance for the displaced.

“I call on the Sudanese authorities to conduct prompt, thorough, impartial and independent investigations into these attacks and hold all those responsible to account in accordance with international human rights law. The victims and their families have a right to effective remedies,” she said.

The human rights situation in Sudan has continued to deteriorate since the military coup in October 2021, according to her Office.

The High Commissioner urged the Sudanese authorities to take credible steps to create an environment conducive to an inclusive political settlement that would put the democratic transition back on track. "

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