



**HOTEL RWANDA:
House Party Organizing Guide**

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Dear Activist,

In 1994 almost one million people were killed in a systematic genocide in the central African country of Rwanda. As the world stood by, a handful of brave, resourceful and inspiring individuals did all they could to save Rwandans from brutal deaths. Paul Rusesabagina, whose story is portrayed in the powerful and hopeful film *Hotel Rwanda*, reminds all of us what one person can accomplish when moved to act.

Hotel Rwanda addresses a horrific issue: genocide. This is a difficult and upsetting topic. Yet, as the film shows, while people and governments chose to ignore the 1994 Rwandan genocide, one individual bravely risked his life and stood up to the horror, calling upon all of his resources to first save his family, then ended up saving 1,268 helpless refugees.

Terry George, *Hotel Rwanda's* director, takes us on Paul's journey, showing the country's struggle and how the world turned a blind eye. He leads us in the end to a place of hope and promise.

The enclosed discussion guide, a companion piece to the film, has been adapted from a teacher's guide produced by Amnesty International USA in cooperation with United Artists for use in the classroom.

The purpose of this guide is to explore the history of the crisis and generate debate and discussion. What moves any of us to action? What influences our actions and behaviors? How do we reconcile our inaction in the face of injustice? How do we mobilize others, and how do we tap into our own resources to create change? It is also a tool for analyzing what will be effective in the future as the international community confronts similar conditions.

Hotel Rwanda is now available for rent or purchase on VHS or DVD, and provides an excellent opportunity to discuss and debate all of these important issues.

We have heard the phrase "never again," yet again today we see evidence of human tragedies.

As you watch this movie, I hope you are troubled by what you see. I hope you are inspired by Paul's actions, I hope you are moved and you do whatever you can to ensure that never again truly means never again.

Karen Robinson
Director, Human Rights Education
Amnesty International USA

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How to Plan Your House Party

1. Choose a time and place for your house party. Remember to set aside time at the event to introduce Amnesty. The film is just over two hours long so allow extra time for discussion.
2. Get the word out to your friends and family that you will be hosting a house party.
3. Hint – the promise of food, even something simple like popcorn or cookies, always gets a bigger crowd.
4. Set up a table with fact sheets and an action that people can take. Printable materials are included in this organizing kit. You can also include some general information about Amnesty and how to join.
5. If you are planning on using the Sudan photo exhibit, be sure to print them out before hand to be passed around or posted on a wall for viewing.
6. Once everyone has arrived, start with a short spiel about Amnesty International. Also, give a brief introduction to the film that tells your audience how it fits in with Amnesty's goals and actions. A sample introduction is included in this organizing kit.
7. Prior to the movie, ask the audience to read through one or more of the discussion topics that you will address after the movie. Following the movie, engage the audience in a discussion about the movie.
8. If you hold a house party, let us know how it went. Send us photos! Go to: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/hotelrwanda.html> to send in your stories and photos.



Discussion on Personal and Collective Responsibility

These discussion questions are designed to identify the importance of personal responsibility to the group or community and to examine personal motivations for actions.

After watching the movie, participants will be asked to reflect upon and discuss Paul's journey. They will then be asked to reflect upon an instance in their life when they witnessed an injustice and examine their response.

If there are a large number of participants, consider organizing everyone into groups of 3-4 individuals.

Paul's Journey

- What role did Tatiana Rusesabagina play in shaping Paul's actions?
- Who else influenced Paul's decisions?
- How did Paul's definition of family expand to include the community later on in the film?
- How and why does Paul's attitude change over the course of the movie?
- How would you characterize his level of personal responsibility and investment as events unfolded?
- How would you describe Paul's level of empowerment throughout the movie? Explain.

Personal experiences

- Do you remember a time when you witnessed an injustice? Explain.
- Did you consider intervening to stop the injustice while it was happening?
- What influenced your decision for action or inaction?
- What did you feel as you witnessed the injustice?
- Put yourself in the victim's place, how would you want the witnesses or bystander to respond?
- Would you react differently in the future?

Wrap Up

- What can we learn about personal and collective responsibility in the case of the Rwandan genocide?

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The International Community

These discussion questions are designed to help participants examine and analyze various groups within the international community and their responses during the genocide in Rwanda.

The Rwandan genocide could and should have been prevented, had all the components of the international community acted decisively, forcefully and in a coordinated manner.

Discuss the following items:

Identify the international community mentioned in the film, including the United Nations, United States, Belgium, France, humanitarian/human rights organizations (for example: The Red Cross), and the Hutus and Tutsis.

Divide the participants into six groups, identifying themselves as a sector of the "international community" mentioned above (the United Nations, the United States, Belgium, etc.). Participants should analyze their group's position before and during the violent conflict. They should discuss among themselves the following key questions:

- How did your group's interests affect your actions/inactions?
- What influence did your group have during the conflict?
- What is the nature and limit of responsibility of each group?
- Support personal views with evidence from the film and/or from personal knowledge of current events.

After the groups have had 15-20 minutes to talk, reconvene everyone as a whole to give students an opportunity to share their ideas and thoughts from the smaller groups.

- Discuss each role within the international community.
- What kind of force would be needed to stop the genocide?
- Discuss the failure of each group to respond. How was the response portrayed in the film?
- At what points could someone have intervened and possibly changed the history of the genocide?
- In the film, Colonel Oliver (Nick Nolte) displays his frustration in the bar to Paul for the international community's decision not to intervene in Rwanda. What was his statement and do you agree? Why or why not?



About Hotel Rwanda and Human Rights

Hotel Rwanda

Amnesty International is proud to support Hotel Rwanda – an important and timely film that chronicles the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that claimed the lives of over 800,000 people and created a refugee crisis affecting over 3 million others. Paul Rusesabagina, played by Don Cheadle, proved that one man can truly make a difference.

Amnesty International commends Terry George, A. Kitman Ho, Don Cheadle, Sophie Okonedo, and everyone involved in this cinematic achievement. The organization also applauds MGM/UA for distributing such a poignant and powerful film.

Amnesty International extends its deepest appreciation to MGM/UA for its support of our human rights work. MGM/UA permitted Amnesty International to include donation cards in all Hotel Rwanda DVD's. The studio also made a generous donation of \$150,000 from anticipated DVD sales to Amnesty International at our 2005 Annual General Meeting in Austin, Texas. Amnesty International PSAs also appear on all rental copies of Hotel Rwanda.

The Human Rights Crisis in Sudan

By depicting the horrors of genocide, Hotel Rwanda can help prevent massive human rights abuses from taking place in other parts of the world. Right now, tens of thousands of people are believed to have lost their lives in Darfur, Sudan since February 2003 at the hands of the *Janjaweed* militias - bands of Arab fighters backed by the Sudanese Government. Over 1.5 million civilians have been internally displaced by the conflict and 200,000 have sought refuge in neighboring Chad.

Ten years ago, Paul Rusesabagina took action and saved lives. He is an inspiration to everyone to act now on behalf of the people of Darfur, Sudan.

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About Amnesty International

Amnesty International (AI) is a worldwide, voluntary movement of people who campaign for human rights. Our vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards. Our mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression and freedom from discrimination, within the context of our work to promote all human rights.

The beginning . . . In 1961, the late British lawyer Peter Benenson read a newspaper story of two Portuguese students sentenced to seven years in jail. Their crime? Raising their glasses in a toast to freedom. On May 28th of that year, the London Observer carried a full-page story - an "Appeal for Amnesty, 1961." Benenson asked readers to write letters asking for the release of the students who had been victims of injustice, as well as other "prisoners of conscience." The response was so overwhelming that by the end of the year-long "Appeal for Amnesty," groups of letter writers had formed in a dozen countries. Amnesty International was born.

Today . . . more than 1.8 million Amnesty International members worldwide are leading the struggle to defend human rights and save lives. Members in more than 150 countries create public pressure to stop human rights abuses by organizing campaigns on specific issues and developing programs of action for specific countries. By writing letters, lobbying government officials, publicizing abuses and organizing events, members are actively fighting for human rights. Approximately 350,000 of the worldwide members are in the US, and many belong to one of AIUSA's 1,850 local and student groups.

Amnesty International campaigns on a wide range of human rights issues worldwide, including stopping violence against women, ending the use of child soldiers, combating "war-on-terror" related abuses, and controlling the trade in arms and economic resources that fuel armed conflicts. Other examples include supporting the establishment of the International Criminal Court, advocating for an adequate standard of living for refugees, the internally displaced, and people living under occupation, promoting access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, demanding corporate accountability in Indonesia and other countries, and working to defend environmental defenders in Latin America, Asia, and other parts of the world.

AI members take action to protect individuals at risk of human rights abuses such as arbitrary detention, torture and ill treatment, death threats, and execution. When Amnesty International learns that someone is in danger, it mobilizes its Urgent Action Network of

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more than 80,000 volunteers in 85 countries to write, e-mail or fax government authorities to pressure them to prevent the abuse.

AI has a large, growing, and diverse membership. But without your interest, action, and support, our work cannot be as powerful. Dedicated activists, like you, are needed to ensure that the fundamental human rights of all people are protected.

Every day, people turn to Amnesty International to protect their human rights. And for more than 40 years, Amnesty International has made a difference.

Pressure from letters, faxes and e-mails written by our members has helped free more than 40,000 political prisoners worldwide. Amnesty International campaigns get the job done. Our campaign against torture led to the UN's adoption of the Convention Against Torture. Our pursuit of international justice spurred the arrests of Chile's General Pinochet and the former Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic. AI has successfully campaigned for the rights of rape victims in South Africa to receive treatment for HIV/AIDS. In 1977, Amnesty International won the Nobel Peace Prize for having "contributed to securing ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world."

Amnesty International stands with people in every country of the world who are on the front lines of the fight against repression, torture, abductions and killings.

During 2002 and 2003 Amnesty International conducted an intensive and far-reaching analysis of human rights in the world. Amnesty International releases its findings to the international community to publicize its concerns, to advocate for change and to hold human rights violators accountable for their crimes.

Today Amnesty International stands not only for prisoners of conscience...but also prisoners of violence, and prisoners of poverty. Join us in our defense of human rights for all. You can make a difference. Write a letter, sign a petition, or log on at www.amnestyusa.org. In hundreds of communities across the country, Amnesty International's local and student groups meet regularly to write letters and organize actions on behalf of victims of human rights violations. Now it's easier than ever to take action. Through our online Human Rights Action Center, tens of thousands of online activists receive email alerts when someone is at risk of a severe human rights violation and then sign electronic letters of protest. Online activists also find information on pending legislation where their action can make a difference.

There are many ways you can become involved: volunteer your expertise on a country; join a local group or one of our networks focusing on such issues as women's rights, children's rights or human rights education. Join our Action Center or Urgent Action networks. Or simply write a check to support our work.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the foundation of the international system of protection for human rights. It was adopted in 1948 by the United Nations general assembly on December 10th, which is celebrated annually as International Human Rights Day. The 30 articles of the UDHR establish the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of all people. It is a vision for human dignity that transcends political boundaries and authority, committing governments to uphold the fundamental rights of each person.

Who funds Amnesty International's (AI) work?

AI is a democratic, self-governing movement funded largely by its worldwide membership and by donations from the public. No funds are sought or accepted from governments for AI's work in documenting and campaigning against human rights violations.

Is Amnesty International a partisan organization?

No, AI is impartial. It is independent of any government, political ideology, or religious creed. It does not support or oppose any government or political system, or the political opinions of the victims whose rights it seeks to protect. AI is concerned solely with the protection of human rights in each case, regardless of the ideology of the government, opposition forces, or the beliefs of the individuals.

How does Amnesty International get information about human rights abuses?

AI's campaigning activities are based on meticulous research. The organization systematically and impartially researches the facts about individual cases and patterns of human rights abuses. Research into human rights violations and individual victims is conducted by the International Secretariat of AI. During 2002 and 2003 Amnesty International conducted an intensive and far-reaching analysis of human rights in the world.

AI sources of information

- Prisoners
- Prisoners' relatives and friends
- Lawyers
- Religious bodies
- Community workers
- Humanitarian organizations

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Refugees and exiles
Journalists
Diplomats
Travelers
Public news media
Underground press
AI research missions

What are Prisoners of Conscience?

Prisoners of Conscience (POCs) are people detained because of their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, color, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or other status who have not used or advocated violence. Some POCs are prominent individuals, active and well-known in public life. Most, however, are ordinary women, men, and children who come from all walks of life. They frequently are not political dissidents. They are imprisoned simply for their peaceful exercise of their human rights.

What is a political prisoner?

A political prisoner is anyone whose imprisonment is politically motivated. Perhaps the "crime" is politically motivated; perhaps the arrest, trial, or sentence has political undertones. In cases where it is not clear, AI's legal office makes a determination on a case by case basis. When political prisoners do not qualify as POCs (suspected members of armed opposition groups, for example), AI works to ensure fair and prompt trials. If a prisoner is detained without charge, AI will generally ask that he or she be charged with a recognizable crime or be released.

What is a fair trial?

The United Nations sets out international standards on fair trials, by which AI urges countries to abide. AI advocates fair trials within a reasonable time for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial.

What is "cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishments?"

Both the Convention Against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights forbid "cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment". Although the term has not been defined specifically, it is intended to be interpreted so as to provide the widest possible protection against abuses, whether physical or mental --such as stun belts used as restraints, twenty-four hour a day isolation units, and death by stoning.

What are Extra-Judicial Executions (EJEs)?

Extra-Judicial Executions (political killings) are killings by the government or government-backed forces that take place outside the legal system, without a trial or other legal hearings. EJEs are planned executions done with a total lack of regard for due process of law and/or judicial procedure as protected in the UDHR. These killings are often the work of regular military and police forces, special units that function without normal supervision and "death squads" that operate while the government looks the other way. The term does not include killings by warring factions.

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What is a “disappearance”?

AI opposes the “disappearance” of any individuals -- when government or security forces apprehend people but never officially acknowledge their detention. These people may be prisoners of conscience or may be facing torture or the threat of execution. “Disappearances” cloud the identity of the perpetrator. If there is no identifiable victim, prisoner, or body, no one can be accused of having done anything wrong.

Why does AI oppose the death penalty?

AI unconditionally opposes the death penalty on the grounds that an execution is a cruel, inhuman and degrading form of punishment that violates international human rights standards. The application of the death penalty is arbitrary and unfair, and it is applied in a discriminatory manner against the poor or against racial or ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the chance of executing an innocent person is too high. Since 1973 in the US, over 100 people have been released from death row after they were found to be innocent.

What do AI members do about human rights in their own country?

An integral part of AI’s work is the international nature of its concerns. To complement the work of local human rights organizations and use AI's role as a worldwide human rights organization most effectively, the organization has adopted limitations on work done by AI members on their own country. These limitations primarily affect the work members do on individual cases. While this differs from country to country, there are a number of areas where Amnesty International USA members do work in the United States. They include work on death penalty abolition, refugee and asylum concerns, legislative work, ratification of international human rights treaties, and human rights education and awareness.



Rwanda Timeline

Pre-Colonial

Rwanda was a highly centralized kingdom presided over by Tutsi kings who hailed from one ruling clan. The king ruled through three categories of chiefs: the cattle chiefs, the land chiefs, and the military chiefs. The chiefs were predominantly, but not exclusively, Tutsi, especially the cattle and military chiefs. Although the relationship between the king and the rest of the population was unequal and parasitic, the relationship between the ordinary Hutu, Tutsi and Twa was one of mutual benefit mainly through the exchanges of their labor. The relationship between the ordinary people was symbiotic. By the time the Germans came as the first colonial conquerors, the social structures of present-day Rwanda were highly organized and pyramidal in nature. The hierarchical and organized society of Rwanda laid a foundation upon which the subsequent genocide of 1994 was constructed.

Colonialism

1918 Under the Treaty of Versailles the former German colony of Rwanda-Urundi is made a United Nations protectorate to be governed by Belgium. The two territories (later to become Rwanda and Burundi) are administered separately under two different Tutsi monarchs. Both Germany and Belgium turned the traditional Hutu-Tutsi relationship into a class system. The minority Tutsi (14%) are favored over the Hutus (85%) and given privileges and western-style education. The Belgians used the Tutsi minority to enforce their rule.

1926 Belgians introduce a system of ethnic identity cards differentiating Hutus from Tutsis.

1957 PARMEHUTU (Party for the Emancipation of the Hutus) is formed while Rwanda is still under Belgian rule.

1959 Hutus rebel against the Belgian colonial power and the Tutsi elite; 150,000 Tutsis flee to Burundi.

1960 Hutus win municipal elections organized by Belgian colonial rulers.

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Independence

1961-1962 Belgium withdraws. Rwanda and Burundi become two separate and independent countries. A Hutu revolution in Rwanda installs a new president, Gregoire Kayibanda; fighting continues and thousands of Tutsis are forced to flee. In Burundi, Tutsis retain power.

1963 Further massacre of Tutsis, this time in response to military attack by exiled Tutsis in Burundi. Again more refugees leave the country. It is estimated that by the mid-1960s half of the Tutsi population is living outside Rwanda.

1967 Renewed massacres of Tutsis.

1973 Purge of Tutsis from universities. Fresh outbreak of killings, again directed at the Tutsi community. The army chief of staff, General Juvenal Habyarimana, seizes power, pledging to restore order. He sets up a one-party state. A policy of ethnic quotas is entrenched in all public service employment. Tutsis are restricted to nine percent of available jobs.

1975 Habyarimana's political party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (NRMD) is formed. Hutus from the president's home area of northern Rwanda are given overwhelming preference in public service and military jobs. This pattern of exclusion of the Tutsis continues throughout the 1970s and 1980s

1986 In Uganda, Rwandan exiles are among the victorious troops of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army who take power, overthrowing the dictator Milton Obote. The exiles then form the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi dominated organization.

1989 Coffee prices collapse causing severe economic hardship in Rwanda.

July 1990 Under pressure from Western aid donors, Habyarimana concedes the principle of multi-party democracy.

Oct 1990 RPF guerrillas invade Rwanda from Uganda. After fierce fighting in which French and Zairean troops are called in to assist the government, a cease-fire is signed on March 29, 1991.

1990-1991 The Rwandan army begins to train and arm civilian militias known as Interhamwe ("Those who stand together"). For the next three years Habyarimana stalls on the establishment of a genuine multi-party system with power-sharing. Throughout this period thousands of Tutsis are killed in separate massacres around the country. Opposition politicians and journalists are persecuted.

Nov 1991 Prominent Hutu activist Dr. Leon Mugesera appeals to Hutus to send the Tutsis "back to Ethiopia" via the rivers.

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Feb 1993 RPF launches a fresh offensive and the guerrillas reach the outskirts of Kigali. French forces are again called in to help the government side. Fighting continues for several months.

Aug 1993 Following months of negotiations, Habyarimana and the RPF sign a peace accord that allows for the return of refugees and a coalition Hutu-RPF government. 2,500 U.N. troops are deployed in Kigali to oversee the implementation of the accord.

Sept 1993-Mar 1994 President Habyarimana stalls on setting up a power-sharing government. Training of militias intensifies. Extremist radio station, Radio Mille Collines, begins broadcasting exhortations to attack the Tutsis. Human rights groups warn the international community of impending calamity.

March 1994 Many Rwandan human rights activists evacuate their families from Kigali believing massacres are imminent.

April 6, 1994 President Habyarimana and the president of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, are killed when Habyarimana's plane is shot down near Kigali Airport. Extremists, suspecting that the president is finally about to implement the Arusha Peace Accords, are believed to be behind the attack. That night the killing begins.

For the latest human rights information on Rwanda, go to:
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/rwanda/>



Human Rights in Sudan

Over 70,000 people are believed to have lost their lives since the conflict in Darfur, Sudan erupted in February 2003. Systematic human rights abuses have occurred by all parties involved in the conflict, but primarily by the Sudanese government and government-backed Janjawid militia. Over 1.5 million civilians have been internally displaced by the conflict and 200,000 have sought refuge in neighboring Chad. The United Nations has appointed an Independent Commission of Inquiry and the African Union has established a presence in the country to monitor the situation. Secretary General Irene Khan led a delegation to Khartoum and Darfur September 13-21, 2004.

For the latest human rights information on Sudan, go to:
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/>

What is going on in Darfur, Sudan?

In Darfur, western Sudan, a catastrophic crisis is occurring. Each day, civilians face prospects of mass killings, torture, rape, destruction of villages, theft and other human rights abuses. Over 2.6 million people have been affected by this crisis.

Why did the fighting begin?

In February 2003, an armed opposition group called the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) emerged in the Darfur region of western Sudan in response to perceived economic marginalization and the government's failure to protect villagers from attacks. Soon after, another armed opposition group called the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) surfaced citing similar complaints. The Sudanese government chose to suppress the armed opposition with force.

What are they running from?

The people of Darfur are fleeing attacks by Sudanese armed forces and the *Janjawid* militias - bands of Arab fighters backed by the Sudanese Government. The *Janjawid* have been responsible for mass killings, torture, arbitrary arrest, detention, the torching of homes and entire villages, and the theft and deliberate destruction of crops and cattle. Over **180,000** people are believed to have been killed since the Darfur conflict erupted in February 2003. **Hundreds of thousands** more are at risk as the rains worsen and as roads become impassable for humanitarian agencies. Over **1.8 million**

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civilians have been internally displaced by the conflict and **495,000** have sought refuge in neighboring Chad.

Who are the victims of the conflict?

In what can only be characterized as “ethnic cleansing,” the Sudanese Government and the *Janjawid* are deliberately killing civilians (reportedly targeting the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups) and routinely using rape and other forms of sexual violence as weapons of war. These systematic and massive human rights violations constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Members of the *Janjawid* are reported to have made racist remarks while attacking the sedentary groups: *“You blacks, you have spoilt the country! We are here to burn you...We will kill your husbands and sons and we will sleep with you! You will be our wives!”* reported by a woman refugee in Goz Amer camp in Chad.

Refugees and Internally Displaced People. Food is scarce and sanitary conditions appalling in the camps inhabited by those displaced by the conflict. Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in makeshift camps are continued targets of attacks. Some of the IDP camps are under the control of the *Janjawid* militia – the very people who caused the IDPs to flee from their villages. There have been numerous reports of killings of men venturing outside the camps and rapes of women and girls. Children are said to be dying from malnutrition, thousands are estimated to be at risk of starvation and the current supplies of food, water and medicine have been deemed insufficient. The deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Darfur and Chad camps is additionally compounded by administrative delays imposed by the Sudanese authorities on international humanitarian organizations and the ensuing logistic difficulties caused by the rainy season. One Sudanese who reached Khartoum after three months in Mukjar camp, Darfur said: *“It is not a camp but a prison.”*

Women and Girls. Much of the violence perpetuated in the Darfur conflict includes grave human rights abuses against women. Human rights violations that have specifically targeted women and girls include abductions, sexual slavery, torture and forced displacement. In many cases the *Janjawid* have raped women in public, in the open air, in front of their husbands, relatives or the wider community. Women who survive this violence often suffer from severe mental and physical health problems, unwanted pregnancies, social stigmatization, and economic difficulties. Not a single member of the *Janjawid* or the armed forces has been charged with committing rape or abductions.

How can I get more information? How can I help?

Please visit Amnesty International USA’s website for background information, opportunities for action and more:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/index.do>