



## Press Release

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### **The Chadian Minister of Human Rights and MINURCAT's Deputy SRSR Visit Arkoum IDP Site**

**N'Djamena, 25 August 2008** – The Chadian Minister for Human Rights and Protection of Liberties and Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) in Central African Republic and Chad, completed a three-day mission to eastern Chad on 22-24 August. The scope of the mission was to visit internally displaced persons' (IDPs) to have a first-hand impression of their situation and to identify key human rights concerns in the region.

The delegation first arrived in Abeche, and continued to Hadjer Hadid to brief the local authorities on the reasons of the visit. The mission then proceeded to Arkoum, a village near the border with Sudan and currently hosting some 13,700 IDPs. The Minister took the occasion to highlight the importance of human rights for her fellow citizens: "Human Rights are everyone's business," she said. "The rights to security, health, food, the very right to life, are fundamental and inalienable rights. There cannot be any development if these rights are not respected and implemented," she added. The issue of violence against women was also among the major concerns the Minister touched upon.

In Arkoun, the Minister and the DSRSG had also the opportunity to listen and speak directly to IDPs, who gathered for the occasion. They informed the Minister about their plight: "We fled our villages and arrived here four years ago due to insecurity. Almost 200 of our people were killed by armed elements forcing us to leave our homes," said one man. "We want to go back to our villages, but we cannot until the conditions for our return are created," he implored. The Minister assured them that the Government is fully aware of their problems, and action will be taken in conjunction with the United Nations Mission in Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and the humanitarian community. The DSRG explained that MINURCAT was established with the specific mandate to help the Government improve the security conditions for refugees and IDPs.

At the end of the visit, the Minister expressed her gratitude for the help and support provided by MINURCAT to make her mission possible. "From now on, the Ministry of Human Rights and MINURCAT will speak with one voice," she said.

**For more information, please contact:**

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