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PRESS RELEASE

This press release is issued by the Press Office of the UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

UNHCR WELCOMES DANISH DONATION

The UN Refugee Agency UNHCR welcomes the decision by the Danish Government to donate 8 million DKR to support UNHCR activities in Chad. This assistance will significantly contribute to help our office meet the big humanitarian challenges in Chad, a country facing one of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies.

Fleeing killings and aerial bombardment, civilian refugees from Sudan's western Darfur region keeps pouring into neighbouring Chad. While 700,000 are believed internally displaced in Sudan itself, about 110,000 Sudanese civilians have fled into Chad since fighting broke out one year ago. The refugees in serious need of protection are currently scattered along a 600 km stretch of remote and volatile borderland in poverty-stricken Chad.

Daily relief flights with more supplies: plastic sheeting, jerry cans, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, tents and sanitary kits commute continuously to eastern Chad.

And in a race against time, UNHCR works to move Sudanese refugees from the unstable border to safer sites further inland before the start of the rainy season in late May. One refugee camp has been set up. More are planned for.

Denmark's important contribution will assist UNHCR in protecting these refugees, who are some of the most exposed, vulnerable and needy people. Denmark will hopefully inspire others to follow suit.

To continue this operation and to enable us to expand the relocation movements, UNHCR is still in urgent need of funding. Our current needs are at least USD 10.3 million for 65,000 refugees in 2004.

The UN Refugee Agency works continuously to raise the money needed to prepare for and respond to refugee emergencies. Over 97% of our funds come from entirely voluntary financial contributions, from governments, the private sector and private individuals.

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More information about the unfolding crisis in Chad can be found on the UNHCR website: www.unhcr.ch/news

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