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JOINT STATEMENT

**by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, Humanitarian Aid
Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, and Commissioner for
Development Andris Piebalgs on the escalation of violence in Darfur**

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, and Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Development, issued the following statement today:

"We are profoundly disturbed by the ongoing escalation of fighting and widespread displacement of civilians in Darfur. With increased conflict in North and South Darfur involving the Sudanese Armed Forces, militias, rebels as well as inter-tribal clashes, an estimated 215,000 people have been displaced since the beginning of 2014. These clashes came with severe violations of the rights of the civilian population, which add to the distress of more than 3.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Darfur and more than 2 million displaced people. These tragic developments stand in sharp contrast to the expressed desire by the government for a national dialogue that is comprehensive and inclusive of all parties.

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Many crisis-affected people are not able to receive life-saving assistance due to lack of access, resources and security. We call on the Sudanese authorities to respect international agencies' mandates and their staff, and to provide aid workers in a timely manner with the necessary travel permits to intervene where humanitarian needs exist.

The EU has provided substantial humanitarian assistance for the people of Darfur since the beginning of the crisis ten years ago. Alone for 2014, the EU has already committed more than 37 million euro to respond to urgent humanitarian needs. Moreover, the EU is giving strong support to UNAMID and is working closely with international partners to support a comprehensive, just and inclusive peace process that can lay the foundation for socio-economic development. In line with its pledge (of 27.5 million EUR) at the 2013 Doha Conference for Darfur, the EU is already implementing development projects in the areas of health, education, food security and natural resources across Darfur wherever the situation allows.

We reiterate our appeal to the Government of Sudan and all groups involved in the conflict to re-double their efforts to reach a settlement through dialogue"
