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**Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan
on the latest upsurge of violence in Darfur**

Khartoum, 9 December 2004: The Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sudan, Jan Pronk, expresses his concern at the escalation of violence in Darfur, in direct violation of the N'Djamena Ceasefire Agreement and the Abuja Protocols on humanitarian and security issues dated 9 November 2004. He is particularly concerned at the Government of Sudan military action on the roads around Al Fasher, which has led to the eruption of a new round of fighting in Darfur on 8 December. He regrets that these military actions to clear the roads from lawless elements were undertaken without taking into account the recommendations of both the United Nations and the African Union to ensure that these actions would be in full compliance with the agreements signed.

The Special Representative is concerned at the possible negative impact of the fighting on the upcoming Abuja talks. He fears that this round of negotiations, due to begin on Friday, 10 December, is headed for failure if the parties do not show restraint.

He is pleased with the decision of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) to attend the talks and hopes that this round of talks will produce a consensual Declaration of Principles for starting political negotiations.