

# THE CITIZEN'S WEEKLY

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2007 • SECTION B



The ongoing situation is instigating one of the greatest refugee crises of our time,' says Lynsey Addario, who photographed these soldiers sitting by their truck while stuck in a sandstorm in Darfur.

**'I couldn't face the prospect of my child growing up and asking me, years later, what I had done, and having to say: "Nothing."**

— Chicago architect and curator **LESLIE THOMAS** on the inspiration for a travelling photo exhibit that focuses on the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur

## DARFUR close up

**LESLIE THOMAS** says it was Brian Steidle's photo at the right of this page that inspired her to act. 'Something in me snapped,' she explains. 'That gash in her back is blood and flesh.'

Though a world away from the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, the Chicago mother wanted to do something to move people beyond abstract statistics — conservative estimates suggest 200,000 have been killed — to see the fathers, mothers and children of Darfur.

'It's way, way, way too late to be dealing with this,' says

### EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Every day we surveyed evidence of killings: The conflict in Darfur knows no rules of war

### MY CAMERA WAS NOT NEARLY ENOUGH

BY BRIAN STEIDLE

**OUR HELICOPTER TOUCHED DOWN** in a cloud of camel-brown sand, dust and plastic debris. As the cloud gradually settled into new layers on the bone-dry desert landscape, we could make out the faces of terrified villagers. "Welcome to Sudan," I murmured to myself, grabbing my pen and waterproof notebook.

A former Marine, I had arrived in Sudan's Darfur region in September 2004 as one of three U.S. military observers for the African Union, armed only with a pen, pad and camera. The mandate for the A.U. force allowed merely for the reporting of ceasefire violations and the protection of observers. The observers sometimes joked morbidly that our mission was to search endlessly for the ceasefire we constantly failed to find. I soon realized that this was no joke.

The conflict had begun nearly 1½ years earlier and had escalated into a full-scale government-sponsored military operation that, with the support of Arab militias known as the Janjaweed, was aimed at annihilating the African tribes in the region. And while the ceasefire was supposed to have put a stop to that, on an almost daily basis we would be called to



Mihad Hamid: Tiny casualty

PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE THOMAS FOR THE CITIZEN'S WEEKLY