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GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION NEEDS OF PEOPLE FLEEING SUDAN

April 2025

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Map of Sudan



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Introduction

1. This position supersedes and replaces the May 2023 *UNHCR Position on Returns to Sudan*.¹ It is based on information available up until 15 April 2025, unless otherwise stated.
2. On 15 April 2023, fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdelfattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary force led by Mohamed “Hemedti” Hamdan Dagalo, in multiple cities across the country, including the capital Khartoum.² The security

¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Position on Returns to Sudan*, May 2023, www.refworld.org/policy/countrypos/unhcr/2023/en/124252.

² International Crisis Group (ICG), *Stopping Sudan's Descent into Full-Blown Civil War*, 20 April 2023, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/stopping-sudans-descent-full-blown-civil-war.

situation has continued to deteriorate throughout 2023, 2024 and into 2025, with the conflict spreading to almost every State in the country – with devastating impact on civilians.³ The security situation remains fluid with both the RSF and SAF carrying out offensives and reclaiming and retreating from different areas across Sudan.⁴ As of April 2025, the SAF had regained control of Khartoum and El Gezira State, as well as most of Omdurman and parts of Sennar.⁵

3. On 6 May 2023, representatives from the RSF and the SAF met in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia resulting in the “Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan”, in which parties agreed to respect international humanitarian and human rights law and to open humanitarian corridors and allow safe passage for civilians.⁶ Throughout 2023, 2024 and into 2025, continued negotiations were carried out including numerous short-lived ceasefires; to date the talks have been unsuccessful in achieving a durable ceasefire or peace agreement.⁷ In February 2025, the RSF announced a political charter to form a government in areas it controls.⁸
4. The mandate of the UN Integrated Transitional Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), established in 2020 to support Sudan’s return to democratic rule, was terminated by the Security Council on 1 December 2023 pursuant to a request from the Sudanese authorities.⁹ On 29 February 2024, UNITAMS completed its withdrawal from Sudan.¹⁰

Security Situation

5. Between 15 April 2023 and 15 April 2025, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) documented 11,113 incidents of battles, remote violence/explosions and violence against civilians, causing 37,818 civilian and non-civilian deaths; the largest number of incidents (5,523) occurred in Khartoum,¹¹ and over 2,400 incidents occurred in Darfur.¹² The UN Secretary-General stated in October 2024 that the conflict had “devastated the lives and livelihoods of the Sudanese people”, resulting in displacement, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and homes, and a sharp deterioration in security and living conditions for the population.¹³
6. The fighting has been characterized by ground engagements in populated urban areas and the use of

³ UN General Assembly (UNGA), *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf, para. 20. “Heavy fighting that started in Khartoum, quickly spread to Darfur and the Kordofans and has had an impact on every state [...]”. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan*, 21 December 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2024-december-2023>, p. 3. See also, The Guardian, *Death, Displacement and Devastation – Two Years of War in Sudan*, 15 April 2025, www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/15/sudans-two-years-of-war-and-its-devastating-toll; Protection Cluster, *At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict*, 15 July 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2113453/At+a+Glance_Protection+Impact+from+the+Conflict_No.+29_2024.08.02.pdf, pp. 1-4; Aljazeera, *After a Year of War in Sudan, What Is the Situation Now?*, 11 April 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/11/why-did-war-break-out-in-sudan-a-year-ago-where-does-it-currently-stand; UN Security Council (UNSC), *Situation in the Sudan Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2715 (2023)*, 29 February 2024, S/2024/204, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105958/n2405132.pdf, para. 2.

⁴ While the RSF advanced across the country through mid-2024, taking key towns and areas, a renewed offensive by the SAF between September 2024 and February 2025 reclaimed territory in northern Khartoum, El Gezira and Sennar. ICG, *Battle for Khartoum Marks a Crossroads in Sudan’s Civil War*, 21 February 2025, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/battle-khartoum-marks-crossroads-sudans-civil-war; Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), *Artillery Shelling and Airstrikes Surge in Sudan*, 16 September 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/09/16/artillery-shelling-and-airstrikes-surge-in-sudan-september-2024/>. For a map showing territorial control as of 9 April 2025, see Institute for the Study of War (ISW), *Africa File, April 10, 2025: RSF’s Northern Sudan Campaign*, www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/africa-file-april-10-2025-rsf-s-northern-sudan-campaign.

⁵ ACLED, *Two Years of War in Sudan: How the SAF Is Gaining the Upper Hand*, 15 April 2025, <https://acleddata.com/2025/04/15/two-years-of-war-in-sudan-how-the-saf-is-gaining-the-upper-hand/>; ICG, *Two Years On, Sudan’s War is Spreading*, 7 April 2025, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/two-years-sudans-war-spreading.

⁶ Aljazeera, *Rival Sudan Factions Meet in Saudi Arabia as Pressure Mounts*, 6 May 2023, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/6/rival-sudan-factions-meet-in-saudi-arabia-as-pressure-mounts. This was re-affirmed by the parties in November 2023. See Radio Dabanga, *Sudan War: Outcome of Jeddah Talks ‘Not a New Agreement’*, 10 November 2023, www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-war-outcome-of-jeddah-talks-not-a-new-agreement. However, as of January 2025: “The Jeddah Platform negotiations remained stalled and the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan unimplemented.” UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 15.

⁷ United States Institute of Peace (USIP), *Without Sudan’s Warring Parties in Geneva, What’s Next for Peace Talks?*, 4 September 2024, www.usip.org/publications/2024/09/without-sudans-warring-parties-geneva-whats-next-peace-talks; The National, *Sudan’s Rival Parties in Geneva for UN-hosted Ceasefire Talks*, 12 July 2024, www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2024/07/12/sudans-rival-parties-in-geneva-for-un-hosted-ceasefire-talks/.

⁸ Aljazeera, *Sudan’s RSF, Accused of Genocide, Signs Charter to Form Rival Government*, 23 February 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/23/sudans-rsf-allies-sign-charter-for-rival-government-despite-criticisms; New York Times, *Sudanese Paramilitaries Announce Plan for Breakaway Government*, 18 February 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/02/18/world/africa/sudan-rsf-government.html. See also, BBC, *Paramilitaries Declare Rival Government in Sudan*, 15 April 2025, www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgrgqj8ynzo.

⁹ UN, *Security Council Agrees to Terminate UN Mission in Sudan*, 1 December 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144257>; Reuters, *Sudan Asks UN to ‘Immediately Terminate’ Political Mission Letter*, 17 November 2023, www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudan-asks-un-immediately-terminate-political-mission-letter-2023-11-16/. See also, UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission (UNITAMS), *Mandate*, accessed 24 February 2025, <https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/mandate>.

¹⁰ Sudan Tribune, *UNITAMS Completes Withdrawal from Sudan, Urges End to Conflict*, 29 February 2024, <https://sudantribune.com/article282742/>.

¹¹ According to their data, 5,523 incidents occurred in Khartoum, followed by 1,397 in North Darfur, 1,294 in El Gezira, 485 in South Darfur, 480 in North Kordofan, 296 in South Kordofan, 281 in West Darfur, 255 in Sennar, 218 in West Kordofan, 208 in White Nile and 201 in Central Darfur. Sporadic incidents of violence occurred throughout the rest of the country. ACLED, *Data Export Tool*, accessed 22 April 2025, <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

¹² Ibid; ICG, *Halting the Catastrophic Battle for Sudan’s El Fasher*, 24 June 2024, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/b198-halting-catastrophic-battle-sudans-el-fasher.

¹³ UNSC, *Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan*, 21 October 2024, S/2024/759, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2117374/n2429174.pdf, para. 2.

airstrikes, including drones.¹⁴ Parties to the conflict have continued to use indiscriminate weapons such as air and artillery strikes on civilian areas.¹⁵ Hospitals, markets, IDP camps—in particular, the camps around Al Fasher—and residential areas have been targeted by airstrikes and artillery.¹⁶

7. Over the course of the conflict, shifting frontlines have caused repeated displacements and civilian casualties.¹⁷ There are reports of armed actors deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and medical facilities.¹⁸ Private businesses, public institutions and, in some cases, entire towns have been looted, occupied or destroyed, with the Darfur region, Khartoum and El Gezira particularly affected.¹⁹
8. Since May 2024, the RSF and SAF have clashed over Al Fasher, the last area controlled by the SAF in Darfur.²⁰ Escalating violence in Al Fasher has resulted in civilian deaths and the disruption of humanitarian aid, and endangered the lives of hundreds of thousands of Darfuris who had been displaced in camps surrounding the city from other parts of the region.²¹ On 11 April 2025, the RSF attacked and took control of Zamzam IDP camp, killing at least 400 civilians, including 12 humanitarian workers, and causing displacement to neighbouring villages and camps.²²

Human Rights Situation

9. Following the outbreak of hostilities, reports have persisted of the RSF targeting non-Arab civilians across Darfur, killing hundreds of people and causing internal and cross-border displacement.²³ Both

¹⁴ UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 25. As of August 2024, the SAF has carried out over 280 drone attacks, while the RSF had carried out at least 10 drone attacks, including in non-frontline areas. ACLED, *Drone Warfare Reaches Deeper into Sudan as Peace Talks Stall*, 23 August 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/08/23/drone-warfare-reaches-deeper-into-sudan-as-peace-talks-stall-august-2024/>. See also, ACLED, *Foreign Meddling and Fragmentation Fuel the War in Sudan*, 12 December 2024, <https://acleddata.com/conflict-watchlist-2025/sudan/>; ACLED, *Data Export Tool*, accessed 22 April 2025, <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

¹⁵ "Parties to the conflict continued to launch attacks on densely populated areas, often without prior warning, and to use explosive weapons with wide-area effects, particularly in Khartoum State, the Darfur region and some areas of the Kordofan region". UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 25. See also, ACLED, *Artillery Shelling and Airstrikes Surge in Sudan*, 16 September 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/09/16/artillery-shelling-and-airstrikes-surge-in-sudan-september-2024/>.

¹⁶ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Under Siege: The Situation of Human Rights in El Fasher, North Darfur Since May 2024*, December 2024, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/20241220-ohchr-sudan-country-office-on-siege-in-el-fasher-north-darfur.pdf, paras 15-20, 22-25, 27-28. See also, Human Rights Watch (HRW), *World Report 2025: Sudan*, 16 January 2025, www.hrw.org/document/2120050.html; Sudan War Monitor, *Sudanese Air Force Kills Nearly 200 Civilians in Attacks on Markets*, 10 December 2024, <https://sudanwarmonitor.com/p/sudanese-air-force-kills-nearly-200>. Between 15 April 2023 and 30 November 2024, 236 violent incidents affecting markets, including 64 incidents of aircraft- or drone-delivered explosive weapons and 40 incidents of artillery strikes were reported. Insecurity Insight, *The Sudan Crisis: How Over a Year of Violence and Humanitarian Access Restrictions Have Produced Famine Conditions*, January 2025, www.reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-crisis-how-over-a-year-of-violence-and-humanitarian-access-restrictions-have-produced-famine-conditions-january-2025.

¹⁷ For example, civilian harm spiked when the RSF pushed into Sennar in June 2024 and in Darfur around Al Fasher since April 2024, as well as during the SAF offensive which began in late 2024. See HRW, *Sudan: Armed Group Allied to the Military Attacks Village*, 25 February 2025, www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/25/sudan-armed-group-allied-military-attacks-village; The Africa Report, *War Keeps Following Us: Sudanese Flee Again as Frontline Moves South*, 2 July 2024, www.theafricareport.com/353623/war-keeps-following-us-sudanese-flee-again-as-frontline-moves-south/.

¹⁸ "Attacks on health workers and facilities in Sudan are having a devastating impact. At least four major attacks against health care facilities were reported for January 2025, resulting in 70 killed, 21 wounded and significant damage to and/or suspension of health operations." OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot* (January 2025), January 2025, www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-january-2025. See also, Protection Cluster, *At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict*, 15 July 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2113453/At+a+Glance_Protection+Impact+from+the+Conflict_No.+29_2024.08.02.pdf, pp. 1-4. The RSF reportedly used civilians to shield themselves from attacks. OCHA, *Sudan: Conflict in Sinja, Sennar State Flash Update No. 02*, 4 July 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-conflict-sinja-sennar-state-flash-update-no-02-4-july-2024-enar>.

¹⁹ Protection Cluster, *At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict*, 15 July 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2113453/At+a+Glance_Protection+Impact+from+the+Conflict_No.+29_2024.08.02.pdf, pp. 1-4; The Guardian, *Increasing Number of Villages Torched across Sudan Shows Conflict Is Intensifying – Report*, 17 April 2024, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/apr/17/increasing-number-of-villages-torched-across-sudan-shows-conflict-is-intensifying-report. "Several areas of Greater Khartoum appear to have been flattened." UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 39, see also para. 47.

²⁰ OHCHR, *Under Siege: The Situation of Human Rights in El Fasher, North Darfur Since May 2024*, December 2024, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/20241220-ohchr-sudan-country-office-on-siege-in-el-fasher-north-darfur.pdf, paras 3, 5; Protection Cluster, *Protection of Civilians' Note: Conflict in Darfur: Key Protection Impacts in June-July 2024*, 25 August 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/protection-civilians-note-conflict-darfur-key-protection-impacts-june-july-2024-15-august-2024>, pp. 1-3.

²¹ "The situation is being compounded by almost impassable obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian relief. Since May [2024], roads into Zamzam and El Fasher have been rendered inaccessible by fighting around the city, and more recently by damage caused by heavy rains and floods". UN, *Sudan: UN Urges Immediate Action to Stop Fighting in El Fasher*, 18 September 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154511>. "Perhaps over a million displaced Darfuris [...] are caught in the crossfire, and both sides are perpetrating atrocities." ICG, *Halting the Catastrophic Battle for Sudan's El Fasher*, 24 June 2024, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/b198-halting-catastrophic-battle-sudans-el-fasher. According to a representative from the Sudan Doctors' Union: "over 4,000 people have been killed and more than 5,000 injured" since [...] May 2024." Asharq Al-Awsat, *Sudan Doctors' Union: War Death Toll Tops 40,000*, 26 June 2024, <https://english.aawsat.com/arab-world/5034313-sudan-doctors%E2%80%9999-un-war-death-toll-tops-40000>.

²² The Guardian, *'They Were Chanting as Rhey Killed People in their Homes': Survivors Describe Attack on Sudan's Zamzam Camp*, 18 April 2025, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/apr/18/survivors-attack-sudan-zamzam-camp-rapid-support-forces-paramilitaries; Deutsche Welle (DW), *Sudan: 400,000 Forced to Flee Zamzam Camp in Darfur*, 14 April 2025, www.dw.com/en/sudan-400000-forced-to-flee-zamzam-camp-in-darfur/a-72244970; OCHA, *Sudan: Displacement from Zamzam camp, North Darfur State Flash Update No. 01*, 15 April 2025, www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-displacement-zamzam-camp-north-darfur-state-flash-update-no-01-15-april-2025, p. 1.

²³ In West Darfur the RSF targeted the Masalit community, particularly in El Geneina. In June 2023: "Masalit men were systematically targeted. [...] Women were assaulted, raped and robbed [...] because of their ethnicity." UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf, paras 52, 54. In November 2023, RSF forces killed an estimated 800 civilians over the course of six days, mainly in two camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) inhabited mostly by Masalit civilians. HRW, *'The Massalit Will Not Come Home': Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan*, 9 May 2024, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/05/sudan0524web.pdf, pp. 48-91, 167-171. "[E]thnically motivated attacks by the RSF and its allied Arab militias against African ethnic groups, particularly the Zaghawa and the Fur, continue". OHCHR, *Sudan Conflict Taking More Dangerous Turn for Civilians*, January 2025, www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/sudan-conflict-taking-more-dangerous-turn-civilians. See also, OHCHR, *Under*

the SAF and the RSF have reportedly targeted individuals based on their ethnicity or place of origin across Sudan, including in Darfur, Khartoum, North Kordofan and El Gezira.²⁴ Both parties have used airstrikes and/or shelling to target neighbourhoods populated by specific ethnic groups or communities.²⁵ In April 2024 the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination published a decision on Sudan under its early warning procedures and expressed grave concern over the increase of ethnic violence, including the targeting of “Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa” persons by the RSF and allied militias, and the targeting of “members of Arab tribes from Darfur and Kordofan” by the SAF and allied militias.²⁶

10. Both parties to the conflict have targeted and attacked doctors, journalists, humanitarian workers, lawyers, activists, human rights defenders and protestors.²⁷ Persons associated with the Sudan Resistance Committees, which were important grassroots actors in the pro-democracy movement and which have been providing local assistance to civilians since the conflict began, have been harassed and arrested by the SAF and by the RSF.²⁸ The RSF have reportedly maintained detention centres in Khartoum where they imprisoned persons perceived to have supported the SAF.²⁹ The UN Fact-Finding Mission stated in September 2024 that it had documented “multiple incidents of threats, intimidation, harassment, attacks and reprisals against individuals involved in documenting human rights violations, including human rights defenders, lawyers, emergency response room and resistance committee members, and other members of civil society” by both the SAF and the RSF, as well as abusive prosecution by the SAF of activists perceived as supporting the RSF.³⁰ Detainees in both SAF and RSF

²⁴ *Siege: The Situation of Human Rights in El Fasher, North Darfur Since May 2024*, December 2024, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/20241220-ohchr-sudan-country-office-on-siege-in-el-fasher-north-darfur.pdf, para. 51.

²⁵ Both the RSF and the SAF have reportedly arrested, detained and summarily executed civilians based on their ethnicity. Aljazeera, *Sudan's Army Carries Out Ethnic Killings in Gezira State*, 23 January 2025, www.aljazeera.com/features/longform/2025/1/23/sudans-army-accused-of-ethnic-killings-after-recapturing-strategic-city. “OHCHR also received reports that summary killings in Al-Gazira, Khartoum and North Kordofan States by the [SAF] Special Operations Forces and mustanfreeen had been largely ethnically motivated based on perceived support for the Rapid Support Forces.” UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, paras. 45-46. “Detention based on ethnicity and torture were widespread in both the RSF and the SAF places of detention [in Khartoum State].” OHCHR, *Don't Ask about Him: Detention Facilities and Practices in Khartoum State in the Context of the Conflict in the Sudan*, 6 March 2025, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2123386/report-ohchr-sudan-country-office-detention-facilities-khartoum.pdf, para. 33. Reporting on the detention of 72 Christians from the Nuba mountains by the SAF, Justice Africa Sudan noted “that these detentions are part of a large crackdown on people, in particular activists and volunteers, who did not leave their homes during the occupation of the RSF. Most of them stayed because they did not have the means to flee.” Radio Dabanga, *Justice Africa Sudan: Fleeting Nuba Christians Detained by Military Intelligence*, 14 October 2024, www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/justice-africa-sudan-fleeing-nuba-christians-detained-by-military-intelligence.

²⁶ The SAF has reportedly carried out drone strikes in predominantly Arab neighbourhoods. ICG, *Halting the Catastrophic Battle for Sudan's El Fasher*, 24 June 2024, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/b198-halting-catastrophic-battle-sudans-el-fasher. “June 6-13 [2023] – The RSF and allied forces begin another wave of attacks, targeting at least six majority-Massalit neighborhoods and four IDP sites, and shelling some gathering sites including al-Zahra girls’ boarding school.” HRW, *The Massalit Will Not Come Home: Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan*, 9 May 2024, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/05/sudan0524web.pdf, p.33.

²⁷ Specifically, at “reports of ethnically motivated abuses perpetrated inter alia in the Darfur and Kordofan states, in particular attacks on civilian neighbourhoods using heavy artillery, widespread killings of civilians, gang rapes of women and girls and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, the killing of persons fleeing the conflict zones, attacks on camps and sites for internally displaced persons, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, forced displacement, looting, burning and destruction of villages and towns, targeting mostly members of the Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa ethnic groups, and committed principally by members of the RSF and allied militia [...] Alarmed also by reports of arbitrary detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings allegedly perpetrated by SAF and allied militia targeting mainly members of Arab tribes from Darfur and Kordofan based on their perceived ethnic or tribal origin”. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Decision on Sudan*, 12 April 2024, https://tinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FEWU%2FSDN%2F9982&Lang=en, p. 1. See also, UNSC, *Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan*, 21 October 2024, S/2024/759, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2117374/n2429174.pdf, para. 10.

²⁸ “[Reportedly] SAF and their allied militia have killed or arrested anyone labeled as RSF collaborators, including small business owners or volunteers in humanitarian Emergency Response Rooms and other activists and civilians. [...] Likewise, Amnesty International has received worrying reports of lists being circulated of people to be targeted as alleged ‘partners of the RSF’. The lists include the names of politicians, activists, medical workers, public prosecutors and members of protest groups.” Amnesty International, *Sudan: Civilians at Imminent Risk of Reprisal Attacks as Fighting Rages in Khartoum and Darfur*, 7 February 2025, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/02/civilian-activists-human-rights-defenders-medical-workers-and-humanitarian-workers-are-at-imminent-risk-of-deadly-reprisal-attacks/. See also, OHCHR, *Sudan: UN Human Rights Chief Appalled by Widespread Extrajudicial Killings in Khartoum*, 3 April 2025, www.ecoi.net/en/document/2123716.html; UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf, paras 80-83.

²⁹ UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, paras 56-57; Aljazeera, *They're Targeting Us: Sudan's Army Cracks Down on Democracy Activists*, 9 January 2024, www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/1/9/sudans-army-is-retaliating-against-activists-amid-the-war-for-their-role-in-bringing-down-their-former-boss-and-president-omar-al-bashir-in-april-2019. “Members of the Emergency Response Rooms and the resistance committees were victims of arbitrary arrests and detentions by the SAF in Khartoum [...]. They appear to be a direct target of SAF Military Intelligence, as they accuse them of being RSF collaborators.” UNGA, *Findings of the Investigations Conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan into Violations of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, and Related Crimes, Committed in the Sudan in the Context of the Conflict that Erupted in mid-April 2023*, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CPR.6, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2118542/A-HRC-57-CRP-6-en.pdf, para. 243.

³⁰ OHCHR, *Don't Ask about Him: Detention Facilities and Practices in Khartoum State in the Context of the Conflict in the Sudan*, 6 March 2025, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2123386/report-ohchr-sudan-country-office-detention-facilities-khartoum.pdf, paras 34-90; US Department of State, *2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Sudan*, 23 April 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/document/2107672.html. Reportedly, both the RSF and SAF have carried out death sentences for supporting the opposing side. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), *Sudan: Protect Lives, Stop Death Sentences and Execution of Civilians*, 4 July 2024, <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/sudan-stop-death-sentences-and-execution-of-civilians/>.

As of June 2024, 63 of the 65 cases tried by the National Committee of Investigation on Human Rights Violations, War Crimes, and Violations by the Rebel Rapid Support Forces and Other Crimes concerned “offences against the state and sedition” and the “mission received information that these cases target Sudanese civilians for their activities as lawyers, humanitarians, grass-roots activists, human rights defenders or emergency response room coordinators. This is indicative of the National Committee being involved in selective justice, primarily targeting activists perceived as affiliates of the [RSF].” UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf, paras 82, 100. See also, International Service for Human Rights, *Sudan: Protect Civilians' Lives, End Mass Arrests, Targeting of Lawyers, Doctors, Activists*, 26 July 2024, <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/sudan-end-killing-mass-arrests-and-targeting-of-lawyers-doctors-and-activists/>; UNSC, *Situation in the Sudan Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2715 (2023)*, 29 February 2024, S/2024/204,

detention centres have reportedly been subjected to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, including beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, and extrajudicial executions.³¹

11. Conflict-related sexual violence is rampant, with the UN documenting cases of rape, gang rape and sexual slavery, including against children.³² In Sudan, cases of conflict-related sexual violence are “vastly underreported, including because of stigma, fear of reprisal, Internet shutdowns and mobile phone disruptions, or simply due to the collapse of medical and judicial institutions.”³³ From December 2023 to December 2024, the number of survivors seeking gender-based violence services, including for conflict-related sexual violence, increased by 288 per cent.³⁴ In Darfur, the RSF and allied militias have used rape as a weapon against non-Arab Masalit women, including those fleeing to Chad to escape the conflict.³⁵ The RSF has also targeted female “human rights defenders, journalists and medical personnel” with sexual violence.³⁶ Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented incidents of both the RSF and the SAF committing rape, with victims ranging between 9 and at least 60 years old, in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri between April 2023 and February 2024.³⁷
12. The UN documented 1,721 grave violations that affected 1,526 children in 2023, a “285 per cent [year on year] increase.”³⁸ The RSF and SAF have targeted “[u]naccompanied children and children from poor families” for recruitment.³⁹ Underage recruitment by the RSF of children as young as 14 has been documented in Khartoum, Darfur, North Kordofan and West Kordofan.⁴⁰ There have also been reports

³¹ www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105958/n2405132.pdf, para. 23. “In general, accusations of affiliation with the RSF are extremely challenging to rebut, both because there is often no real evidence to challenge per se but also as, owing to Sudan’s pervasive militarisation, most civilians can be seen as connected in some way – however loosely – to the RSF and other armed groups, e.g., through tenuous association with a friend or relative. Owing to the breadth of ethnicity-based targeting by both sides [...], it is not uncommon for civilians to be arrested separately by both the SAF and the RSF on the basis that they support the ‘other side’.” REDRESS, *Serious Human Rights Violations Perpetrated in the Context of Mass Civilian Detention in Sudan*, September 2024, https://redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Sudan-Arbitrary-Detention-Report_EN-v.2.pdf, p. 22.

³² OHCHR, *Don’t Ask about Him’: Detention Facilities and Practices in Khartoum State in the Context of the Conflict in the Sudan*, 6 March 2025, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2123386/report-ohchr-sudan-country-office-detention-facilities-khartoum.pdf, paras 32-33, 41-52, 78-82, 86-90; UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 61; HRW, *Sudan: Warring Parties Execute Detainees, Mutilate Bodies*, 28 August 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/document/2114334.html; Irregular Warfare Initiative, *Unlawful Detention and Torture in Sudanese Conflict: Urgent Need for International Action*, 18 April 2024, <https://irregularwarfare.org/articles/unlawful-detention-and-torture-in-sudanese-conflict-urgent-need-for-international-action/>.

³³ Between April 2021 and 15 November 2024, OHCHR documented 120 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, likely a vast underestimate, in Khartoum, Darfur, Al-Gazira, Gedaref, Kassala, North Kordofan, Red Sea and West Kordofan. The incidents involved “at least 203 victims (162 women, 36 girls, 4 men and 1 boy). [...] In over 70 per cent of the 89 incidents documented in total, men in [RSF] uniforms and armed men affiliated with the [RSF] were implicated as perpetrators, while the [SAF] were implicated in three incidents. [...] Reports of sexual violence appeared to follow a geographical pattern as the fighting spread across the country.” UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan* A/HRC/58/29, 20 January 2025, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, paras 48, 50. See also, UNHCR, *Protection Brief Gender-Based Violence: Sudan Situation*, 8 July 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109800>, p. 4; UNSC, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, 4 April 2024, S/2024/292, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2110409/n2406241.pdf, para. 66. According to UNICEF, “[a] total of 221 rape cases against children were recorded [from January 2024 until March 2025].” UNICEF, *Sudan’s Child Rape and Sexual Violence Crisis*, March 2025, www.unicef.org/sudan/reports/sudans-child-rape-and-sexual-violence-crisis. “Horrible, systemic sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war in Sudan – including against children”. UN, *Sexual Violence Used as Weapon of War in Sudan, Humanitarians Warn, Demanding Security Council Action*, 13 March 2025, <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16018.doc.htm>.

³⁴ UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 49. “Sexual and gender-based violence are pervasive but underreported due to stigma, silence for fear of retaliation, and a lack of protection services”. Reuters, *Civilians Suffering Horrendous Violence in Sudan Conflict, MSF Says*, 22 July 2024, www.reuters.com/world/africa/civilians-suffering-horrendous-violence-sudan-conflict-msf-says-2024-07-22/.

³⁵ UN Women, *Gender Alert: No Excuse: Calling for an End to Gender-based Violence in Sudan*, December 2024, www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/sudan-gender-alert-no_excuse_en_2024.pdf.

³⁶ “Sexual violence reported in West Darfur State was often linked to ethnically motivated attacks by the Rapid Support Forces against the Masalit community, which was consistent with findings from the previous reporting period. [...] More than half of the reported rape incidents took the form of gang rape – a consistent trend since April 2023 – indicating a coordinated use of sexual violence in the context of the conflict, mainly by the [RSF] and their allied Arab militias, which may amount to a war crime”. UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, paras 51-52. “In all states of Darfur, perpetrators targeted internally displaced women and girls, in particular those of African ethnicity, including Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa peoples.” UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan*, 4 March 2024, A/HRC/55/29, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2104975/g2402924.pdf, para. 47. See also, UN, *Sexual Violence Used as Weapon of War in Sudan, Humanitarians Warn, Demanding Security Council Action*, 13 March 2025, <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16018.doc.htm>; HRW, *The Massalit Will Not Come Home’: Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan*, 9 May 2024, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/05/sudan0524web.pdf, pp. 113-115.

³⁷ UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf, para. 60.

³⁸ HRW, *“Khartoum Is Not Safe for Women!” Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Sudan’s Capital*, 28 July 2024, www.hrw.org/report/2024/07/28/khartoum-not-safe-women/sexual-violence-against-women-and-girls-sudans-capital.

³⁹ “Owing to significant access constraints, the information [...] does not represent the full extent of grave violations committed against children in the Sudan. Yet, the over 285 per cent increase in grave violations, from 2022 to 2023, and the fact that 72 per cent of the total of verified violations occurred between April and December 2023 is testament to the dramatic impact of the conflict”. UNSC, *Children and Armed Conflict in the Sudan*, 7 June 2024, S/2024/443, <https://undocs.org/S/2024/443>, para. 19.

⁴⁰ “There were credible reports the RSF and SAF recruited unaccompanied children and children from poor families and used child soldiers in the conflict since April 15.” US Department of State, *2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Sudan*, 23 April 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/document/2107672.html. “Children also joined the fighting to protect their families or communities from harassment or abduction, which was cited by community members as a risk, particularly for families in which no member was associated with one of the parties to the conflict.” UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 44. Boys have also been recruited via Arab community leaders. See UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan*, 4 March 2024, A/HRC/55/29, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2104975/g2402924.pdf, para. 67.

⁴¹ OHCHR, *Don’t Ask about Him’: Detention Facilities and Practices in Khartoum State in the Context of the Conflict in the Sudan*, 6 March 2025, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2123386/report-ohchr-sudan-country-office-detention-facilities-khartoum.pdf, paras 53-54; UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf, para. 66; The New Arab, *Are the RSF Recruiting Children to Fight in Sudan’s War?*, 28 February 2024, www.newarab.com/analysis/are-rsf-recruiting-children-fight-sudans-war; African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, *Sudan: The Continued Use of Child Soldiers in the Armed Conflict in South Darfur*, 3 January 2024, www.acjps.org/publications/sudan-the-continued-use-of-child-soldiers-in-the-armed-conflict-in-south-darfur.

of forced and coerced recruitment of adults.⁴¹

13. With the justice system having broken down across much of the country, impunity is the norm.⁴² On 13 July 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced it would be investigating allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sudan committed during the current conflict.⁴³ On 29 January 2024, the prosecutor of the ICC told the UN Security Council that there were reasonable grounds to believe that both the SAF and the RSF have committed Rome Statute crimes in Darfur.⁴⁴

Humanitarian Situation

14. In February 2025, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan stated, “civilians [in Sudan] have been exposed to unprecedented levels of violence and suffering.”⁴⁵ The widespread fighting has led to shortages of food, water, medicine, fuel and electricity, and has left many civilians without access to essential services.⁴⁶ The conflict has disrupted supply chains, restricted humanitarian access and is driving rampant food insecurity.⁴⁷ Over 30 million persons, more than half of the Sudanese population—including 16 million children—are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025.⁴⁸
15. The conflict has driven rising humanitarian needs across the country, including in areas not affected by active fighting, and forced displacement has overwhelmed the humanitarian response capacity, the infrastructure of displacement sites and public services.⁴⁹ It has caused soaring inflation, estimated to have exceeded 500 per cent during the first quarter of 2024, increased poverty and disrupted agricultural production.⁵⁰ During 2023, Sudan’s gross domestic product (GDP) reportedly contracted by

⁴¹ Ayin, RSF, SAF Conduct Recruitment Drives across Darfur as Fighting Intensifies in El Fasher, 3 December 2024, <https://3ayin.com/en/recruitment/>. Between December 2023, when the SAF withdrew and the RSF seized El Gezira State, and March 2024, the RSF reportedly forcibly recruited almost 700 men and 65 children in the area, including by withholding food. CNN, ‘Enlist or Die’: Fear, Looming Famine and a Deadly Ultimatum Swell the Ranks of Sudan’s Paramilitary Forces, 21 March 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/03/18/africa/sudan-hunger-forcible-recruitment-jazira-intl-cmd/index.html>. See also, The Washington Post, Sudan’s Warring Sides Forcibly Recruit Civilians, even Refugees who Return, 30 November 2023, www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/29/sudan-war-refugees-rsf-military/.

⁴² “The Sudan continued to witness the breakdown of the rule of law. Even in areas less affected by the conflict, the absence of justice officials, the failure of the State to pay officials and the targeted destruction and looting of rule-of-law infrastructure, including police stations, courts and prisons, deepened the vacuum in the justice system and resulted in impunity for widespread violations.” UNSC, *Situation in the Sudan Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2715 (2023)*, 29 February 2024, S/2024/204, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105958/n2405132.pdf, para. 29. See also, The New Arab, Sudan’s War: Civilians Caught Between Military Trials and RSF Arrests, 2 July 2024, www.newarab.com/analysis/sudans-warring-sides-target-civilians-arrests-sham-trials.

⁴³ UN, *Darfur: International Criminal Court Launches Investigation into Surging Violence*, 13 July 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1138692>.

⁴⁴ UN, *Reasonable Grounds to Believe Sudanese, Opposition Forces Committing Atrocity Crimes in Darfur, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Tells Security Council*, 29 January 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15573.doc.htm>. The Rome Statute gives the International Criminal Court (ICC) jurisdiction over the following crimes “of concern to the international community”: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. ICC, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 2021, www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/Rome-Statute-eng.pdf, Art. 5. See also, ICC, *Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Darfur, Pursuant to Resolution 1593 (2005)*, 28 January 2025, www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-united-nations-security-council-situation-darfur.

⁴⁵ OCHA, *Protect Civilians in Sudan, They Have Suffered Enough in Nearly Two Years of Conflict*, 27 February 2025, www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/protect-civilians-sudan-they-have-suffered-enough-nearly-two-years-conflict-situation-united-nations-resident-and-humanitarian-coordinator-sudan-clementine-nkweta-salami. See also, UNHCR, *UN Urges Global Action to Protect and Support Civilians Devastated by Sudan’s War*, 17 February 2025, www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/un-urges-global-action-protect-and-support-civilians-devastated-sudan-war.

⁴⁶ OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025*, 31 December 2024, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1220>. “Fifteen months since the beginning of the armed conflict [...], millions of people do not have access to essential services like food, water, and healthcare.” ICRC, *Sudan: ICRC Calls for Greater Access to Deliver Humanitarian Aid as Millions of People Go Without Basics for Survival*, 17 July 2024, www.icrc.org/en/article/sudan-icrc-calls-for-greater-access-to-deliver-humanitarian-aid. See also, UNSC, *Situation in the Sudan Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2715 (2023)*, 29 February 2024, S/2024/204, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105958/n2405132.pdf, para. 38.

⁴⁷ “Dire humanitarian conditions persist across Sudan along with persistent challenges in accessing humanitarian aid due to ongoing insecurity, road closures, and limited transportation options. Displaced households cannot access goods and services in markets due to high inflation, supply shortages, looting, cash shortages, and telecommunication outages.” UNHCR, *Sudan Emergency: Two-Year Impact Update*, 16 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115752>, p. 2. See also, OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025*, 31 December 2024, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1220>; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *Famine Takes Grip in Africa’s Prolonged Conflict Zones*, 15 October 2024, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/famine-takes-grip-in-africas-prolonged-conflict-zones/>.

⁴⁸ “Sudan faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with 30.4 million people—over half the population—requiring assistance in 2025. Among them are 16 million children, representing the nation’s future. The people in need comprises 14.3 million non-hosting residents (47 per cent), 8.9 million internally displaced persons (29 per cent), 6.4 million host community members (21 per cent), and 0.89 million refugees (3 per cent). Over half of those affected are children, and 50 per cent are women and girls.” OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025: Overview*, 23 January 2025, www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-overview, p. 1. Prior to the current conflict, Sudan was already affected by a major humanitarian crisis, with 15.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, including approximately 11 million people in need of emergency assistance. OCHA, *Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023*, 7 November 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-november-2022>.

⁴⁹ OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025*, 31 December 2024, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1220/document/sudan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025>. “The surge of newly displaced people across Sudan has overwhelmed public services and resources in the areas of arrival, creating appalling living conditions, particularly in hundreds of gathering sites where new IDPs continue to arrive.” OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan*, December 2023, https://crisisresponse.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1481/files/appeal/documents/HNRP_2024_Sudan.pdf, p. 6.

⁵⁰ World Food Programme (WFP), *Market and Trade Update 2024 Q1*, 17 May 2024, <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000158805/download/>, pp. 2-3. The conflict has disrupted agricultural livelihoods in a context where up to “60–80 percent of the entire population is engaged or reliant on agriculture for income.” Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *5 Things You Should Know about How Conflict in Sudan Is Devastating Agriculture and People’s Food Security*, 15 April 2024, www.fao.org/emergencies/resources-repository/news/detail/5-things-you-should-know-about-how-conflict-in-sudan-is-devastating-agriculture-and-people%27s-food-security/en. “The value of the Sudanese Pound (SDG) against foreign currencies continues to deteriorate rapidly. On Wednesday, the US Dollar exchange rate in the parallel market surged to SDG2,100, marking a 13 percent loss in value since early June [2024]. The USD rate in the Bank of Khartoum reached almost SDG1,854.” Radio Dabanga, *US Dollar surpasses 2k Sudanese Pound mark in parallel market*, 12 July 2024, www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/usd-surpasses-2k-sudanese-pound-mark-in-parallel-market.

37.5 per cent—underlining the devastating impact of the conflict on Sudan’s economy.⁵¹

16. An estimated 24.6 million people in Sudan, or almost 52 per cent of the population, face crisis levels of food insecurity.⁵² Areas affected by active conflict have the worst levels of food insecurity.⁵³ According to UN Experts, both parties to the conflict “are using food as a weapon and starving civilians”.⁵⁴ Reports indicate malnutrition rates are soaring—with some 3.2 million children under the age of five likely to experience acute malnutrition in 2025.⁵⁵ Children make up almost half of persons identified as in need of humanitarian assistance, and over half of all persons displaced.⁵⁶
17. As of December 2024, more than 17 million children in Sudan were out of school,⁵⁷ with 10,400 schools, over half of all schools in the country, in active conflict zones, and another 3,200 in areas less affected by violence used as displacement shelters.⁵⁸ Education in all parts of the country is affected, with the salaries of many teachers and other education workers not having been paid since the onset of the conflict in 2023.⁵⁹ With the prolonged barriers to access to education, concerns have been expressed about the impact on children’s emotional and mental well-being; their exposure to risks of forced recruitment and sexual violence while they are out of school; as well as the long-term impact on the life-long earning ability of a future generation of adults who are currently missing out on education during childhood.
18. The healthcare system is in crisis mode, with between 70 and 80 per cent of hospitals no longer operational in conflict-affected States, and 65 per cent of the population unable to access health services.⁶⁰ Hospitals and clinics that are still operational struggle to get essential medicines and are looted by armed actors.⁶¹ Health facilities have been attacked by armed actors at least 156 times since April 2023.⁶² Inadequate sanitation, including in areas of displacement and IDP sites, have led to deadly outbreaks of water-borne and contagious diseases like cholera and measles.⁶³ In addition, since the

⁵¹ African Development Bank Group, *Sudan Economic Outlook*, April 2024, www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/sudan/sudan-economic-outlook. See also, Africanews, *Sudan’s Economy Contracts 40% as War Rages*, 28 February 2024, www.africanews.com/2024/02/28/sudans-economy-contracts-40-as-war-rages/.

⁵² More than 24 million people across Sudan will likely experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between December 2024 and May 2025. Famine has been declared in Zamzam, Al Salam and Abu Shouk camps in North Darfur and in the Western Nuba mountains. Integrated Food Security Classification (IPC), *Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation - Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025*, 24 December 2024, www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1159433/.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 1. See also, UNHCR, *Sudan Emergency: Two-Year Impact Update*, 16 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115752>, p. 4; USIP, *As Famine Spreads Across Sudan, Protecting Civilians Must be a Priority*, 18 July 2024, www.usip.org/publications/2024/07/famine-spreads-across-sudan-protecting-civilians-must-be-priority. “People trapped in conflict zones continue to experience severe shortages of food, fuel, and water, amid dramatic increases in the prices of goods, and persistent electricity outages.” Protection Cluster, *At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict*, 15 July 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2113453/At+a+Glance_Protection+Impact+from+the+Conflict_No.+29_2024.08.02.pdf, p. 2.

⁵⁴ UNICEF, *Generational Crisis Looms in Sudan*, 28 January 2025, www.unicef.org/sudan/stories/generational-crisis-looms-sudan; OHCHR, *Using Starvation as a Weapon of War in Sudan Must Stop: UN Experts*, 26 June 2024, www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/using-starvation-weapon-war-sudan-must-stop-un-experts.

⁵⁵ UNICEF, *Generational Crisis Looms in Sudan*, 28 January 2025, www.unicef.org/sudan/stories/generational-crisis-looms-sudan. See also, IPC, *IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis: June 2024 to February 2025*, 22 July 2024, www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Sudan_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Jun2024_Feb2025_Report.pdf, pp. 2, 15.

⁵⁶ OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025*, 31 December 2024, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1220>; International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Sudan Mobility Overview*, 16 July 2024, https://dtm.iom.int/dtm_download_track/59201?file=1&type=node&id=40511, p. 2.

⁵⁷ “The conflict has upended the lives of 24 million children, with over 17 million out of school, creating a generational catastrophe. School-aged girls face additional threats, including child marriage, female genital mutilation, and sexual exploitation and abuse, which can significantly exacerbate the barriers to their return to school.” OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 – Overview*, 23 January 2025, www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-overview, p. 7. As of December 2023, nine in ten displaced children reported that education was unavailable in their location. OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan*, 21 December 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2024-december-2023>, pp. 3, 7, 23.

⁵⁸ UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan* A/HRC/58/29, 20 January 2025, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 79. See also, Sudan Education Cluster, *Education in Crisis Following Sudan Conflict 2023*, 16 October 2023, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/13a65d0eb5af45d7b3b25da25cfe0d59>.

⁵⁹ UNICEF, *Humanitarian Situation Report No. 19*, 30 June 2024, www.unicef.org/media/158751/file/Sudan-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.19-May-2024.pdf, p. 2; UNHCR, *Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan: January-December 2024*, 6 February 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106482>, p. 12.

⁶⁰ “Prior to the current crisis, Sudan had an estimated 6,500 primary healthcare facilities and 300 public hospitals across the country. WHO estimates that 70 – 80% of health facilities in areas worst affected by conflict, such as Al Jazirah, Kordofan, Darfur and Khartoum, and about 45% in other parts of the country, are now barely operational or closed”. World Health Organization (WHO), *Sudan Surpasses 100 Attacks on Healthcare since 2023 Armed Conflict Began*, 24 September 2024, www.emro.who.int/media/news/in-sudan-there-have-been-more-than-100-attacks-on-health-care-since-the-armed-conflict-began.html. See also, WHO, *After 2 Years of Conflict Sudan’s Health System Faces Collapse as Rainy Season Nears*, 15 April 2025, www.emro.who.int/media/news/after-2-years-of-conflict-sudans-health-system-faces-collapse-as-rainy-season-nears.html. Prior to the conflict, Sudan’s health system was already in poor condition, with the WHO ranking it 162nd out of 188 countries worldwide. Care International, *Sudan – Khartoum, Al Gezira, East Darfur, South Darfur: Rapid Gender Analysis*, 14 October 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/596d7c0e-c191-4aac-b926-9696ddfd49fb/RGA-Sudan-October-2023.pdf>, p. 16, see also p. 5.

⁶¹ MSF, *A War on People: The Human Cost of Conflict and Violence in Sudan*, 22 July 2024, www.msf.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/20240721_MSF_Sudan_Report_ENG_Digital_0.pdf, p. 4; Protection Cluster, *At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict*, 18 April 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2107400/at_a_glance_protection_impact_from_the_conflict_update_26_2024.04.15.pdf, pp. 1-3.

⁶² As of 15 April 2025, the WHO had verified 156 attacks on Sudan’s health care system. WHO, *After 2 Years of Conflict Sudan’s Health System Faces Collapse as Rainy Season Nears*, 15 April 2025, www.emro.who.int/media/news/after-2-years-of-conflict-sudans-health-system-faces-collapse-as-rainy-season-nears.html. Insecurity Insight reported larger numbers, with “575 attacks on Sudan’s health care system [...] [between] April 2023 and 14 February 2025. In these incidents, 127 health workers were killed, 96 injured and 73 arrested. Health facilities, including maternity and children’s hospitals were damaged at least 144 times, some on multiple occasions, and occupied on 52 occasions”. Insecurity Insight, *Attacks on Health Care in Sudan*, 9 April 2025, <https://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/51-19-March-01-April-2025-Attacks-on-Health-Care-in-Sudan.pdf>, p. 1. See also, UNGA, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, 20 January 2025, A/HRC/58/29, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/29>, para. 37.

⁶³ “As of 21 June 2024, at least two-thirds of the 18 states in the country are experiencing three or more outbreaks of different diseases simultaneously.” By 31 May 2024, the government and the WHO reported 11,212 suspected cholera cases which had caused at least 309 deaths. However, data collection “has been challenging, with no reports

onset of the rainy season in June 2024, above normal rains and subsequent flooding have caused large-scale displacement and heightened the risk of disease, including in IDP camps.⁶⁴

19. Humanitarian access remains constrained in many areas, including due to insecurity.⁶⁵ In September 2024, the International Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan reported that both the RSF and the SAF had blocked aid to areas controlled by the other party, including areas with severe humanitarian needs.⁶⁶ Between 15 April 2023 and 15 July 2024, 23 aid workers were killed and 33 were injured.⁶⁷ Despite overwhelming needs, the humanitarian response plan for 2024 received only 69.9 per cent of its total funding requirements, indicating a significant shortfall.⁶⁸

Refugees and Internal Displacement

20. Since April 2023, displacement has reached record numbers and as of 17 March 2025, a total of 12.9 million persons had been newly displaced within Sudan or had fled to neighbouring countries as a result of the current conflict, including refugees from other countries who had sought safety in Sudan.⁶⁹ Over 3.8 million persons have fled to neighbouring countries, including 1.5 million to Egypt, more than 1 million to South Sudan, 774,754 to Chad, an estimated 256,000 to Libya, 73,246 to Uganda, 72,529 to Ethiopia and 42,797 to the Central African Republic.⁷⁰ Before the current conflict, Sudan hosted over 1.1 million refugees, mostly in Khartoum; over 775,000 refugees have returned to neighbouring countries—mostly to South Sudan—generally in adverse circumstances.⁷¹
21. As of December 2024, an estimated total of 11.5 million persons were internally displaced across Sudan, including an estimated 2.7 million persons who had been displaced prior to the current conflict, making it the world's largest internal displacement crisis.⁷² Spreading conflict has the potential to re-

from the five Darfur states and West Kordofan state since the start of the conflict." WHO, *Sudan Conflict and Refugee Crisis*, 17 July 2024, https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/emergencies/situation-reports/20240717_sudan-emergency-sitrep-2.pdf, p. 4. Between mid-May 2023 and mid-September 2023, an estimated 1,200 children died of measles. UNHCR, *As Sudan Conflict Rages On, Health Crisis Hits Displacement Camps*, 6 October 2023, www.unhcr.org/news/stories/sudan-conflict-rages-health-crisis-hits-displacement-camps. "The conflict has brought the country's health system to the verge of collapse, and people are facing a lethal combination of displacement, shortage of potable water, hunger and disease." UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, [www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/files/2024/11/2416312.pdf), para. 85.

⁶⁴ UNHCR, *Sudan Emergency: Two-Year Impact Update*, 16 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115752>, p. 4; OCHA, *Sudan: Situation Report*, 1 September 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-update-1-september-2024>, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁵ "Humanitarian access challenges in Sudan continue to exacerbate the worsening humanitarian crisis. Bureaucratic impediments, operational interference, active hostilities and violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities are the main obstacles to delivering humanitarian assistance". OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (January 2025)*, January 2025, www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-january-2025. See also, OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (March 2025)*, 17 April 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-march-2025>. In June 2024: "About 1.78 million people were denied crucial humanitarian assistance due to violence, logistic constraints and travel approval delays. In Darfur, close to 836,000 people were denied assistance, followed by Kordofan, with 617,000 individuals, and 114,000 people in Khartoum." Between 15 April 2023 and 30 June 2024, a total of 1,035 access incidents were reported. OCHA, *Sudan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot*, 7 July 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-june-2024>.

⁶⁶ "[The SAF], including through their intelligence services, have hampered the transport of humanitarian aid through border crossings to communities in need of aid, especially access to locations controlled by the [RSF], which are also preventing access to areas under the control of the [SAF]. From February to August 2024, the [SAF] blocked the passage of humanitarian assistance from Chad through the Adré border crossing, based on perceived benefit to the [RSF], while the [RSF] blocked the delivery of medical supplies to El Fasher on the basis that it would benefit the [SAF]. The Sudanese authorities reopened the Adré border crossing from 15 August 2024, as talks led by the United States continued in Geneva." UNGA, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan*, 7 November 2024, A/HRC/57/23, [www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2114950/g2416312.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/files/2024/11/2416312.pdf), para. 87. See also, The New Humanitarian, *Sudan in-depth: Aid Efforts Blocked and Weaponised amid Sweeping Cuts and Army Gains*, 11 April 2025, www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2025/04/11/sudan-depth-aid-efforts-blocked-and-weaponised-amid-sweeping-cuts-and-army.

⁶⁷ "The actual number of aid workers killed and injured may be higher as systematic reporting is inhibited by a range of factors." Protection Cluster, *At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict*, 15 July 2024, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2113453/At+a+Glance_Protection+Impact+from+the+Conflict_No.+29_2024.08.02.pdf, p. 1. A total of 24 humanitarian workers have been killed since the war started. OCHA, *OCHA Urges Security Council to Act on Sudan Humanitarian Crisis*, 18 June 2024, www.unocha.org/news/ocha-urges-security-council-act-sudan-humanitarian-crisis.

⁶⁸ OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS), *Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024*, accessed 15 April 2025, <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/1123/summary>.

⁶⁹ This number includes persons who have, since the start of the conflict, been internally displaced (8.9 million); refugees, asylum seekers and returnees who have fled to neighbouring countries (3.8 million); and refugees who have been forced to relocate within Sudan (approximately 260,000). UNHCR, *Sudan Emergency: Population Movements from Sudan*, 17 March 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115190>.

⁷⁰ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal: Sudan*, accessed 23 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation>. "There are now 12.9 million forcibly displaced due to the outbreak of conflict in Sudan since April 2023 [...]. Sudan and neighbouring countries were already hosting large refugee populations before this new emergency and require additional support to provide protection and critical life-saving assistance, including for those who have been secondarily displaced within Sudan." UNHCR, *Sudan Situation Map Weekly Regional Update - 24 Feb 2025*, 25 February 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/114666>.

⁷¹ "Since the start of the conflict in Sudan in mid-April 2023, large numbers of civilians have been forced to flee, including people who were already internally displaced and refugees from other countries who had sought safety in Sudan. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled into neighbouring countries or returned home in adverse circumstances". UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal: Sudan Situation*, accessed 23 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation>. "In March 2023, Sudan reached the highest registration number of refugee and asylum seekers in the year with 1,144,675. South Sudanese make up the majority." UNHCR, *Refugees and asylum-seekers by country of asylum as of 31 January 2025*, 31 January 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115150>. "Increasing roundups, detentions, and events of deportation of foreigners, including of refugees and asylum-seekers without proper documentation, have been reported in several locations in Sudan." UNHCR, *External Update #70: Sudan Situation*, 19 July 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/110033>. See also, Sudan War Monitor, *Sudanese Military Targets South Sudanese for Mass Deportation*, 13 July 2024, <https://sudanwarmonitor.com/mass-deportations-white-nile>.

⁷² "In 2024, Sudan saw an intensification of the conflict mainly in Khartoum, Al Jazeera, Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile states with persistent use of heavy weaponry with wide area effects including artillery shelling and aerial bombardments. The impact of the conflict on civilians is grave [...]. In some cases, as in the Darfur region, civilians faced a range of obstacles to flee conflict areas, often facing multiple protection violations while in flight such as harassment, extortion, and violence at checkpoints. [...] Over December 2024, Zamzam IDP camp in North Darfur was subject to artillery shelling on multiple occasions while barriers to movement inhibited camp residents from seeking safer safety elsewhere." UNHCR, *UNHCR Sudan IDP Response Quarterly Q2 - Q4*, 20 February 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/114585>. According to IOM: "An estimated total of 11,585,384 IDPs were displaced to 10,238 locations, in 185 localities, across all 18 states in Sudan." IOM, *DTM Sudan Mobility Update (15)*, 5 February 2025, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/dtm-sudan-mobility-update-15>.

displace IDP populations.⁷³ As of December 2024, an estimated 28 per cent of persons who had been displaced prior to the conflict had faced secondary displacement.⁷⁴ Living conditions in many areas of displacement and IDP sites are reportedly overcrowded and poor, and many displaced persons lack access to basic services.⁷⁵

22. During 2024 and into 2025 there have been some returns of Sudanese from neighbouring countries, including in adverse circumstances.⁷⁶ Many of these individuals remain displaced inside Sudan, primarily because their areas of origin are insecure and/or inaccessible.⁷⁷

Access to Territory

23. As the situation in Sudan remains fluid and uncertain, UNHCR calls on all countries to allow civilians of all nationalities fleeing Sudan timely and non-discriminatory access to their territories and to respect the principle of non-refoulement at all times. While States may regulate the entry of foreigners, measures to this effect may not prevent foreigners from seeking and enjoying asylum from persecution under international law.⁷⁸ This applies to Sudanese nationals as well as persons of other nationalities and stateless persons, including persons who are not in possession of passports or other forms of identity documentation. Third country nationals who flee the conflict in Sudan but who are not in need of international protection should be allowed to access safe territory with a view to facilitating their onward travel.

International Protection Needs

24. All claims for international protection by nationals and stateless persons who were formerly habitual residents of Sudan should be processed in fair and efficient procedures in accordance with international and regional refugee law. UNHCR is concerned about an increase in international refugee protection needs for people fleeing Sudan since the outbreak of civil war on 15 April 2023. Persons who may be in need of international refugee protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention⁷⁹ include in particular:
- Political activists, human rights defenders, persons associated with resistance committees and emergency response room volunteers;

⁷³ During 2024, the number of IDPs in Sudan increased by an estimated 27%, with most hosted in South Darfur (16%), North Darfur (14%), Gedaref (10%), River Nile (9%), and Central Darfur (8%). While Gedaref did not host many IDPs during 2023, as conflict spread to Sennar, displacing many who had already been displaced from Khartoum and El Gazira, the number of IDPs increased by 192%. IOM, *A Year in Review: Displacement in Sudan (2024)*, 5 January 2025, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/year-review-displacement-sudan-2024>, pp. 2, 4, 8. "Between 01 April 2024 and 16 December 2024, DTM reported [...] sudden displacement from Al Fasher locality, North Darfur. These reported incidents displaced an estimated 423,389 individuals (84,975 households). These individuals include those IDPs who were already displaced prior to the escalation and experienced secondary displacement." IOM, *DTM Sudan: Conflict in Al Fasher, North Darfur*, 20 December 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/dtm-sudan-focused-flash-alert-conflict-al-fasher-north-darfur-state-update-005-20-december-2024>, p. 1.

⁷⁴ IOM, *A Year in Review: Displacement in Sudan (2024)*, 5 January 2025, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/year-review-displacement-sudan-2024>, p. 2. See also, UNHCR, *Sudan Emergency: Two-Year Impact Update*, 16 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115752>, p. 4.

⁷⁵ "Sudan has over 11.5 million IDPs as of 10 December 2024, with 44 per cent of them living in camps, informal settlements, and collective centres. [...] IDP sites across Sudan's 18 states are overcrowded and lack basic services, creating precarious living conditions. In White Nile State, Cluster intention surveys conducted in April 2024 revealed that 86 per cent of the displaced people intend to remain in a place of displacement, primarily due to safety, security, and proximity to services where available." OCHA, *Site Management*, 31 December 2024, <https://humanitarianaction.info/article/37-site-management>. See also, UNHCR, *As Sudan Conflict Rages On, Health Crisis Hits Displacement Camps*, 6 October 2023, www.unhcr.org/news/stories/sudan-conflict-rages-health-crisis-hits-displacement-camps. "Food is the highest priority among IDP families as over 97 per cent of IDPs across Sudan were hosted in localities with high levels of acute food insecurity or worse (IPC Level 3+). An estimated 89 per cent of displaced families are unable to afford their daily food requirements." OCHA, *Sudan Humanitarian Update*, 30 July 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-update-29-july-2024-enar>, p. 2.

⁷⁶ See UNHCR, *External Update #103: Sudan Situation*, 30 March 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115404>; UNHCR, *EHAGL Returns Dashboard*, updated 14 April 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/rbehagl>. See also, Zawia3, *Sudanese Refugees in Egypt Return Amid Khartoum Offensive*, 17 April 2025, <https://zawia3.com/en/sudanese-2/>; Refugees International, *No Model of Refuge: Sudanese Refugees in Egypt*, February 2025, <https://d3jwam0i5codb7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Egypt-Report-Feb-2025-FINAL.pdf>, p. 25; Sudan Events, *Expectations of the Return of 4,000 Sudanese Refugees from Juba to Port Sudan*, 30 January 2025, <https://sudanevents.com/index.php/2025/01/30/expectations-of-the-return-of-4000-sudanese-refugees-from-juba-to-port-sudan/>; Radio Dabanga, *Sudanese Returnees from Ethiopia: 'The World Is Watching our Suffering in Silence'*, 12 August 2024, www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudanese-returnees-from-ethiopia-the-world-is-watching-our-suffering-in-silence.

⁷⁷ Information available to UNHCR. During the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2024, there was an increase in returns from Egypt. As of February 2025: "Most of these individuals remain displaced, primarily because their areas of origin are still insecure." UNHCR, *Quarterly Report: Internal Displacement Response Sudan*, 20 February 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/114585>, p. 3. "The war has pushed Sudan to the brink [...] [a]nd even with the violence, many displaced people are attempting to return to their homes, only to find total devastation". IOM, *Urgent Global Action Needed to Prevent Greater Regional Instability as Sudan War Enters Third Year*, 15 April 2025, www.iom.int/news/urgent-global-action-needed-prevent-greater-regional-instability-sudan-war-enters-third-year.

⁷⁸ UNHCR, *Guidelines on International Protection No. 14: Non-Penalization of Refugees on Account of their Irregular Entry or Presence and Restrictions on their Movements in Accordance with Article 31 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, HCR/GIP/24/14, 23 September 2024, www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2024/en/148632, paras 1, 4, 32; UNHCR, *Key Legal Considerations on Access to Territory for Persons in Need of International Protection in the Context of the COVID-19 Response*, 16 March 2020, www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2020/en/122898, paras 1-3; UNHCR, *Legal Considerations on State Responsibilities for Persons Seeking International Protection in Transit Areas or "International" Zones at Airports*, 17 January 2019, www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2019/en/122443, paras 3-4.

⁷⁹ UNGA, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28 July 1951, UN Treaty Series, Vol. 189, p. 137, www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1951/en/39821 and UNGA, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 31 January 1967, UN Treaty Series, Vol. 606, p. 267, www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1967/en/41400.

- Individuals who are perceived by one party to the conflict to be associated with another party to the conflict on the basis of their ethnicity or their place of origin. This includes, *for example*, non-Arab civilians from the Darfur region or areas under control of the RSF;
 - Women and girls, including survivors and persons at risk of gender-based violence or conflict-related sexual violence;
 - Children at risk of underage and forced recruitment;
 - Survivors and people at risk of trafficking, including children;
 - Humanitarian workers and medical personnel;
 - Journalists.
25. This list does not presume to be an exhaustive enumeration of all profiles of Sudanese applicants who may have a well-founded fear of being persecuted. Each application for international protection should be assessed on its merits, taking into account the evidence provided by the applicant as well as all relevant country of origin information. UNHCR notes that family members and others closely associated with persons at risk of persecution are frequently at risk themselves.
26. In addition, given the complex security, human rights and humanitarian environment in Sudan, UNHCR considers that persons fleeing the ongoing conflict in Sudan, as well as Sudanese nationals who are outside the country and who cannot return there because of the conflict, are likely to be in need of international refugee protection under UNHCR's broader mandate criteria,⁸⁰ Article 1(2) of the 1969 OAU Convention,⁸¹ under the Cartagena Declaration;⁸² or complementary forms of protection including subsidiary protection under Article 15(c) of the EU Qualification Directive.⁸³ UNHCR welcomes States' granting of refugee status to people fleeing situations of conflict and violence in Sudan using a *prima facie* approach, including based on Article 1(2) of the 1969 OAU Convention.

Availability of Protection

27. In light of the ongoing conflict and the information presented above, UNHCR does not consider that the authorities are willing and able to provide protection to Sudanese persons at risk of persecution or other forms of serious harm. UNHCR also does not consider that there is any other actor of protection in Sudan.

Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative

28. In view of the volatility of the situation in the entire territory of Sudan, UNHCR does not consider it appropriate to deny international protection to Sudanese and former habitual residents of Sudan on the basis of an internal flight or relocation alternative.

Exclusion Considerations

29. There may be individuals who have been associated with acts that bring them within the scope of the exclusion clauses contained in Article 1F of the 1951 Convention.⁸⁴ In such cases, it will be necessary to examine carefully any issues of individual responsibility for crimes that may give rise to exclusion from international refugee protection. In addition, to preserve the civilian character of asylum, States would need to assess the situation of arrivals carefully so as to identify armed elements and separate

⁸⁰ UNHCR, *Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees and His Office*, October 2013, www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2013/en/94483; UNHCR, *MM (Iran) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department – Written Submission on Behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 3 August 2010, C5/2009/2479, www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/amicus/unhcr/2010/en/75841, para. 10.

⁸¹ Organization of African Unity, *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa* ("OAU Convention"), 10 September 1969, 1001 UN, Treaty Series 45, www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/oau/1969/en/13572.

⁸² *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*, *Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama*, 22 November 1984, www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/rri/1984/en/64184, para. III(3).

⁸³ European Union, *Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on Standards for the Qualification of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Beneficiaries of International Protection, for a Uniform Status for Refugees or for Persons Eligible for Subsidiary Protection, and for the Content of the Protection Granted (Recast)*, 13 December 2011, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0095&from=EN>, Article 15. See for example France, *Cour Nationale du Droit d'Asile*, N° 23024696, 21 December 2023, www.cnda.fr/content/download/217597/2053763/version/3/file/23024696.pdf, para. 16, where the Court found that at the time of the decision North Darfur must be regarded as being affected by a situation of indiscriminate violence of exceptional intensity.

⁸⁴ UNHCR, *Guidelines on International Protection No. 5: Application of the Exclusion Clauses: Article 1F of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 4 September 2003, CR/GIP/03/05, www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2003/en/14733.

them from the civilian refugee population.⁸⁵

Changed Circumstances as a Ground for Fresh or Subsequent Applications or for Sur Place Claims

30. UNHCR calls on States to ensure that Sudanese applicants who lodged their claim prior to 15 April 2023 but who have not yet received a decision, are able to provide additional information to support their claim in light of the changed circumstances in Sudan and the new or heightened risks they may face as a result. Similarly, UNHCR calls on States to ensure that Sudanese nationals who were already outside Sudan prior to 15 April 2023 but who had until that point no need to apply for asylum are able to lodge a sur place claim based on the new risks they may face in Sudan due to the changed circumstances in the country.
31. UNHCR also calls on States to ensure that Sudanese nationals and stateless persons who were formerly habitual residents of Sudan whose claim for international protection was rejected prior to 15 April 2023 are able to lodge a fresh or subsequent claim, on the basis that the current situation in Sudan amounts to changed circumstances that may give rise to a need for international protection as refugees or otherwise.
32. In light of the primacy of the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR calls on asylum States to allow Sudanese nationals and stateless persons who were formerly habitual residents of Sudan who, prior to 15 April 2023, received complementary forms of international protection, including subsidiary protection under EU law, that are not equivalent in terms of legal status and access to rights as refugee protection, to lodge a new claim for refugee protection in light of the changed circumstances in Sudan.

Family Reunification

33. UNHCR calls on States to facilitate and expedite family reunification procedures for Sudanese with family members who have been left behind in Sudan or who have been displaced across the region. The principle of family unity is protected under international law, including in binding regional legal instruments.⁸⁶ Family reunification is often the only way to ensure that the right to family life and family unity of refugees is respected. In light of the current situation in Sudan, and with many embassies and consulates continuing to be closed in Sudan, UNHCR is concerned that many Sudanese refugees may face considerable administrative barriers in realizing this legal right; similar concerns apply to refugees of other nationalities who may still have family members in Sudan. UNHCR calls on States to take into account the constraints that refugees may face in being able to meet taxing administrative and documentation requirements and proposes that affordable, pragmatic and flexible approaches be taken, including through the use of innovative processing methods and remote interviews. UNHCR encourages States to apply liberal and humane criteria in identifying qualifying family members, taking into account diverse family compositions and structures.

Refugees and Asylum-Seekers (Other Nationalities)

34. People of nationalities other than Sudanese may also choose, or be compelled, to leave Sudan as a result of developments related to the conflict, and should be allowed to do so. Some of these persons may have been recognized as refugees or registered as asylum-seekers in Sudan. South Sudanese nationals are the largest group of refugees in Sudan, while the country also hosts significant refugee populations from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Syria, and Yemen, among others.⁸⁷ If travelling onwards to third

⁸⁵ See UNHCR, *Operational Guidelines on Maintaining the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Asylum*, September 2006, www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2018/en/122651.

⁸⁶ UNHCR, *The Right to Family Life and Family Unity of Refugees and Others in Need of International Protection and the Family Definition Applied*, January 2018, 2nd edition, www.refworld.org/reference/research/unhcr/2018/en/120412 (see in particular Ch. 2); UNHCR, *Summary Conclusions on the Right to Family Life and Family Unity in the Context of Family Reunification of Refugees and Other Persons in Need of International Protection*, Expert Roundtable, 4 December 2017, www.refworld.org/reference/confdoc/unhcr/2017/en/120836 (see in particular para. 3 and references to regional legal instruments provided therein).

⁸⁷ For UNHCR country guidance on these populations, see UNHCR, *UNHCR Position on Returns to South Sudan – Update IV*, May 2024,

countries in search of safety, these persons should be referred to national asylum procedures for consideration of their applications for international protection. Refugees who are compelled by the situation in Sudan to return to their country of origin in adverse circumstances may find themselves in a situation where they need to flee again to a third country; such persons too should be referred to national asylum procedures for consideration of their applications for international protection.

35. In addition, there may be foreign nationals, as well as stateless persons and persons with undetermined nationality, who were in need of international protection and who enjoyed other forms of legal stay in Sudan. UNHCR recommends that these persons be referred to the national asylum procedure in the country where they seek international protection.

Returns to Sudan

36. UNHCR recognizes individuals' fundamental human right to return to their country of origin. UNHCR equally acknowledges that return may take place in adverse circumstances, in contexts where the standards for voluntary repatriation are not fulfilled. This may occur owing to several factors, including when protection is not adequately guaranteed in the country of asylum, making return the only viable alternative. Such returns should not be construed as being indicative of improved circumstances in the country of origin. Similarly, the ability of refugees to return home for short periods, including to maintain links with family and community and check on the prevailing situation, can help pave the way for more durable returns in the future once conditions permit. Given the ongoing conflict and the general volatility of the current situation in Sudan, UNHCR does not consider that such short-term visits to Sudan undermine the overall assessment provided in this document with regards to the international protection needs of Sudanese nationals and stateless persons who were formerly habitual residents of Sudan.
37. The situation in Sudan continues to be volatile and may remain uncertain for some time to come, creating significant challenges for the safe and dignified return of those determined not to be in need of international protection. Against that background, in the exceptional situation that persons originating from Sudan are found not to be in need of international protection, neither under the 1951 Refugee Convention nor under broader definitions contained in regional instruments, UNHCR calls on States to exercise caution when considering forced returns to the country.
38. UNHCR will continue to monitor the situation in Sudan with a view to assessing the international protection needs arising out of the current situation.

UNHCR
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