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Country Policy and Information Note

Sudan: Non-Arab Darfuris

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#) / Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, which is compared and contrasted where appropriate so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture is provided of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 21 October 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by the state or government-sponsored militias because the person is a member of a non-Arab Darfuri tribe.

1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 There are many non-Arab Darfuri (NAD) tribes in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan. The largest are the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massalit. Other tribes include the Meidob, Dajo, Berti, Kanein, Mima, Bargo, Barno, Gimir, Tama, Mararit, Fellata, Jebel, Sambat and Tunjur. The different groups vary in size, language and relationships with Arab groups (see [Ethnic demography](#)).
- 1.2.2 The term 'Darfuri' is used as a short-hand for non-Arab Darfuri throughout the assessment section and should not be taken to mean Arab or other Darfuri groups.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 The person's actual or imputed race.
- 2.3.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on Convention reasons see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.4 Risk

a. Caselaw

- 2.4.1 In the country guidance (CG) case of [AA \(Non-Arab Darfuris - relocation\) Sudan CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00056](#), heard 4 November 2009 and promulgated on 18 December 2009, the Upper Tribunal (UT) found that: 'All non-Arab Darfuris are at risk of persecution in Darfur...' (Headnote)
- 2.4.2 In the CG case of [MM \(Darfuris\) Sudan \(CG\) \[2015\] UKUT 10 \(IAC\)](#), heard 7 October 2014 and promulgated on 5 January 2015, the UT clarified that 'Darfuri' is to be understood as relating to a person's ethnic origins, not as a geographical term. Accordingly, it includes Darfuris who were not born in Darfur (paragraph 14). Thus, persons who are ethnic non-Arab Darfuri in origin, regardless of whether they had lived in Darfur or elsewhere in Sudan, would be at risk on return to Khartoum.
- 2.4.3 The Tribunal in [MM](#) also found that there was, at the time of the hearing, no new, cogent evidence indicating that non-Arab Darfuris were not at risk of persecution in Sudan (paragraph 13).
- 2.4.4 The CG cases of [AA](#) and [MM](#) are based on evidence gathered in 2009 and 2014 respectively. [AA](#) is unusual in that it reflects a Home Office concession in its operational guidance note of November 2009 that non-Arab Darfuris were likely to be at risk. The Home Office's position was reached because:
 - there were reports in 2008 and 2009 of widespread arrests (numbering in the 1000s) of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum by the state following an attack on the capital by the Darfuri rebel group, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), in May 2008; and
 - in March 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. In response, the government expelled 13 international NGOs from Sudan, closed a number of local human rights groups and arrested human rights and humanitarian workers. This severely reduced the scope for local and international groups to monitor and report on human rights violations. In addition, press censorship increased restrictions of freedom of expression.

- 2.4.5 The Home Office did not therefore have sufficient information to determine if non-Arab Darfuris were generally at risk or not in Khartoum (see [section 3.8 of Sudan OGN, November 2009](#)). The guidance in [AA](#) therefore reflected the Home Office's own position based on a particular set of circumstances and a general lack of information about the human rights situation.
- 2.4.6 The reported case of [AAR & AA \(Non-Arab Darfuris - return\) Sudan \[2019\] UKUT 282 \(IAC\)](#) was heard between 12 and 14 February 2019 and followed by a post-hearing case management review (CMR) on 10 July 2019, promulgated on 7 August 2019 but not published until 17 September 2019.
- 2.4.7 In light of changeable country conditions, the UT in [AAR and AA](#) held a CMR on 10 July 2019 after which it concluded that: '... in light of the volatility of the situation in Sudan, the absence of the cogent evidence needed to set aside existing Country Guidance and in light of AAR and AA having waited for an extensive period of time for a final determination of their protection claims, the respondent conceded that a further delay was not appropriate and that the appeals should be determined on the basis of the existing Country Guidance cases. The respondent accepted that this meant that the appeals had to be allowed where the appellant's profiles as Darfuris brought them within the ratio of AA (Sudan) and MM (Sudan). The Tribunal allows the asylum appeals of AAR and AA on that basis.' (paragraph 29)
- 2.4.8 The UT went on to observe: 'The answer to the Country Guidance question that was originally asked in these appeals is as follows. The situation in Sudan remains volatile after civil protests started in late 2018 and the future is unpredictable. There is insufficient evidence currently available to show that the guidance given in [AA \(non-Arab Darfuris - relocation\) Sudan CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00056](#) and [MM \(Darfuris\) Sudan CG \[2015\] UKUT 10 \(IAC\)](#) requires revision. Those cases should still be followed.' (paragraph 30)
- 2.4.9 In the CG case of [KAM \(Nuba – return\) Sudan CG \[2020\] UKUT 00269 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 31 May and 1 June 2018, 30 August 2018, 24 and 25 October 2019 and with final written submissions on 5 December 2019, and promulgated on 1 September 2020, the UT considered the risks faced by members of the Nuba, a non-Arab group from South Kordofan, holding that the Nuba were not generally at risk of persecution. While the UT made it plain that it was not providing country guidance on non-Arab Darfuris, with whom parallels had been drawn, it indicated that its findings in regard to the Nuba might merit reviewing the guidance with regard to non-Arab Darfuris, observing that:
- 'Our decision is solely concerned with the position of individuals of Nuba ethnicity in Sudan. We rejected earlier an argument based upon a reliance on the CG decisions dealing with non-Arab Darfuris. We have reached our conclusions based upon the evidence relating to Nuba and not non-Arab Darfuris. But a broader contention was made before us that the position of the Nuba is the same as non-Arab Darfuris, i.e all Nuba and non-Arab Darfuris are at risk in Greater Khartoum. We have rejected that contention in relation to those of Nuba ethnicity. We make no findings in relation to non-Arab Darfuris and, as we indicated above, nothing we said should be understood to undermine the existing CG decisions in respect of non-Arab Darfuris. We would simply observe that if the comparison is maintained, on

the evidence we saw in relation to Nuba, it might well have implications for the assessment of the risk to non-Arab Darfuris on return' (paragraph 251).

■ NADs in Khartoum

- 2.4.10 There is no exact number of Darfuris in Khartoum but there are estimated to be 100,000s to perhaps a 1 million, representing a significant proportion of the city's total population. Many, but not all, Darfuris are poor, working in menial jobs and live in informal settlements lacking in basic services – known as the 'Black Belt' – that surround Khartoum. However, there are Darfuris represented across society including in the government, law, academia and other professions (see [Ethnic demography](#) and [Khartoum](#)).
- 2.4.11 Sudan is dominated by riverine Arab groups who have historically controlled the highly centralised state centred in Khartoum, considering themselves superior to and discriminating against African groups including Darfuris. General societal and state attitudes appear to have begun to change during the 'revolution' against the former regime of President Al Bashir and the formation of the transitional civilian-military government in August 2019, which has since introduced reforms to the law to improve fundamental rights. However, such discriminatory attitudes are likely to remain pervasive within the state until significant reform is achieved (see [Societal attitudes to race](#)).
- 2.4.12 Prior to the ousting of former president Al Bashir, Darfuris were sometimes perceived by the state to be sympathetic to or even directly linked to Darfuri armed opposition groups. However, with the exception of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW), all the main Darfuri armed groups have signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JBA) in October 2020, joined the government and now hold ministerial and regional governor posts. The JPA also includes a government commitment for a quota of 20% of Darfuris in the public sector, although it is unclear when this will be implemented. While the SLA-AW has not signed the JPA, it has agreed a ceasefire and remains in talks with the government (see [Political environment – Non-Arab Darfuris within the transitional government](#)).
- 2.4.13 Historically, various agencies of the state – including the police, Sudan Armed Forces, and, in particular, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) – have been responsible for discriminating and targeting Darfuris. Additionally, the militia group, the Rapid Support Force (RSF) – composed of former Janjawid and linked to the atrocities in Darfur during the war in that region between 2003 and 2008 – remains active throughout the country, including in Khartoum. While there has been some security sector reform, notably with the NISS renamed the General Intelligence Service (GIS) and its powers to arrest and detain removed, sources indicate there has been limited substantive security sector change. However, the security forces do not appear to be a unified body, but are composed of various interest groups (see [Political environment](#)).
- 2.4.14 The transitional government has shown some willingness to investigate past crimes in Darfur and agreed to hand over 5 suspects accused of war crimes in the region, including Al Bashir, to the International Criminal Court. At the time of writing, not all of these individuals have been handed over (see [Investigations into Darfur war crimes](#)).

- 2.4.15 Freedom of expression has improved with few reports of censorship or intimidation or other violence against media workers or activists. The US State Department observed that domestic and international civil rights groups were generally able to operate. In December 2019 the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights opened a country office in Khartoum and in June 2020 the UN Integrated Transition Mission in Sudan was established to support the political transition to democratic rule. However, despite progress in opening up civic space, restrictive practices are still being used against civil society groups as financial exemptions given to some civil society organisations have been revoked. (see [Freedom of expression](#)).

criticisms of the civilian component of the government and criticisms directed against its military component are treated differently. Whilst the civilian component will take no action against criticism by citizens and activists, criticism levelled at the military component (SAF, RSF or the police) of the transitional government does lead to action.

- 2.4.16 There is no evidence in the sources consulted that, since the formation of the transitional government in August 2019, the state has been targeting Darfuris for arrest or other forms of harm on grounds of their ethnicity or place of origin, association with former rebel groups or other political organisations, or other grounds, such as being a student. One source cited in the report compiled by the Belgian government claimed that disappearances in Khartoum, including Darfuris, had increased but this lacked detail and was not corroborated by other sources. A number of sources suggest that Darfuris face discrimination and suspicion from the security forces and, if arrested, are likely to be subject to worse treatment than other groups. Some sources also reported that Darfuris may face discrimination in obtaining ID cards, access to accommodation, employment and education. The extent and nature of the discrimination they may face depends on various factors including ethnicity, place of origin, social network, economic status, political view and religion (see [Khartoum](#)).
- 2.4.17 The available country evidence does not indicate that all Darfuris face treatment that amounts to serious harm or persecution. While there is discrimination in accessing public services, the evidence does not establish that by its nature and repetition it, in general, amounts to persecution or serious harm.
- 2.4.18 **Therefore, given the significant change in the country situation since the promulgation of [AA](#), [MM](#) and [AAR and AA](#), including the ousting of the former Al Bashir regime, the establishment of the transitional government, the signing of the JPA with most Darfuri armed groups, the opening of political and civic space, and the absence of evidence of the targeting of Darfuris in Khartoum (or elsewhere) by the state, there are very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the assessment that all non-Arab Darfuris are likely to be at risk of persecution based on their ethnicity alone in Khartoum.**
- 2.4.19 **Instead, each case must be considered on its facts and the assessment of risk depending on a careful analysis of the person's individual circumstances, taking into account their gender, ethnicity, education,**

economic situation, support network and past experiences in Sudan, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they may be at risk of persecution.

- 2.4.20 For further information on the treatment of opposition to the state, see the country policy and information note on [Sudan: Opposition to the government](#).
- 2.4.21 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

Darfur

- 2.4.22 Sudan's political transition over the past two years has changed the dynamics of the security situation in Darfur. The ousting of the former president Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, and the formation of the transitional government in August 2019, led to the signing of the October 2020 Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) between the transitional government and Darfur's armed groups. The peace agreement has ended the conflict in Darfur between the signatories – with an agreed ceasefire and a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme underway. It has also integrated Darfur's armed group leaders into the government. The JPA also focuses on a number of issues in Darfur – investing public money, land reform, power and wealth sharing, transitional justice, security arrangements and the return of displaced people. All signatories to the JPA have respected the agreement and there is no longer a conflict between the rebel groups and government forces (see [Political environment](#)).
- 2.4.23 The Sudan Liberation Army–Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLA/AW) faction, is the only rebel movement still operating in Darfur. Whilst the rebel group has criticised the transitional government and abstained from formal negotiations and the signing of the JPA, Abdul Wahid al-Nur – the group's leader – has been involved in unofficial talks with the government. Since March 2020, the SLA/AW has held a ceasefire and has committed to ending hostilities with the government (see [Political environment](#) and [Sudan Liberation Army – Abdul Wahid al-Nur \(SLA/AW\) faction](#)).
- 2.4.24 The security situation in Darfur continues to be unstable. There is an increasing number of inter-communal clashes between ethnic tribes due to land ownership disputes, years of sectarian manipulation along ethnic lines by the former regime and resource scarcity – exacerbated by the failing economy and climate change. Since December 2019, fighting between tribal groups has reportedly led to around 190,000 internally displaced people (IDP), burning and looting of villages and homes, sexual violence and over 400 killings. (See [Darfur – Security situation](#)).
- 2.4.25 The security situation is a key priority for the transitional government who has condemned the violence. In attempts to stabilise the region, the government has taken a number of measures – such as dispatching security forces, sending government delegations to areas of instability, encouraging tribal leaders to promote reconciliation between ethnic groups and forming a National Plan for Protection of Civilians. So far, government forces have failed to de-escalate the violence and restore calm in the region as police forces are outnumbered and overpowered by armed tribal groups. In addition, there are reports that some members of the Rapid Support Forces

(RSF) participate in tribal fights, placing allegiance to their tribal affiliation rather than their uniform (See [Darfur – Security situation](#)).

- 2.4.26 The consequences of conflict, displacement, under-development and environmental degradation means that many people are dependent on humanitarian assistance. Insecurity continues to limit access to IDPs and the provision of humanitarian services – which has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Critical services are jeopardised and curfews being put in place compromise access to essential services. Thousands of internally displaced people are fleeing to areas where there is a lack of shelter and other basic needs, such as water, food and sanitation facilities (see [Darfur – Humanitarian situation](#)).
- 2.4.27 Whilst the reasons for the insecurity has changed, the security situation remains unstable and the humanitarian and human rights situation remain poor. There continues to be large-scale attacks against civilians and sexual violence against women committed by tribal armed groups. Whilst the government and rebel groups have entered a ceasefire, and all but one rebel group has signed a peace agreement, criminality and violence remain prevalent.
- 2.4.28 **The available evidence, therefore, does not establish that there has been significant or durable improvement in the situation in Darfur to depart from the caselaw of [AA](#). Non-Arab Darfuris continue to face serious human rights violations in Darfur at the hands of armed tribal groups which are likely to amount to persecution or serious harm.**
- 2.4.29 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 There is a significant and established community of non-Arab Darfuris resident in Khartoum, with many Darfuris migrating to the city because of the poor economic, political and human rights situation in Darfur. It may be reasonable for a Darfuri who has not previously lived in Khartoum to relocate to that city.
- 2.6.2 However, careful consideration to the reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis must be taken, taking full account of the individual circumstances of the person. Those who lack support networks (family and tribe), have limited education and financial means may find it particularly difficult to relocate.

- 2.6.3 If the person is able to demonstrate that it is not reasonable for them to return to, or relocate to Khartoum, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to another area of Sudan.
- 2.6.4 For further guidance on internal relocation see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002..
- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 21 October 2021

3. Ethnic demography

3.1 Nationally

- 3.1.1 The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) report to Khartoum published in November 2018 by the Home Office, based on interviews with a range of sources in August 2018 (UKHO FFM report 2018), observed:

‘A number of sources noted that there is limited reliable official data... including size of the Sudanese and Darfuri population.

‘Three sources provided different figures for the size of the total population of Sudan, ranging from 28 million (based on the 2008 census) to 40 million.’¹

- 3.1.2 The 2020 USSD report only noted that ‘The population includes more than 500 ethnic groups [in Sudan] speaking numerous languages and dialects. Some of these ethnic groups self-identify as Arab, referring to their language and other cultural attributes.’²

- 3.1.3 The Country of Information Research Unit (CEDOCA) of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) in Belgium³ published a report based on various sources on 28 June 2021 on the situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their regions of origin, covering the period between April 2019 and March 2021 (Cedoca report 2021). It stated:

‘There is a lack of reliable population data for Sudan. According to the World Bank’s data, the population of Sudan was 42,813,238 in 2019...

‘The Sudanese population is a multi-ethnic mix of more than five hundred ethnic groups. In the words of [the US Department of State] USDOS in its report on human rights in Sudan in 2019, the majority (70%) consider themselves Arab and generally regard the African tribes as (to a greater or lesser extent) inferior. Arab tribes from the north of the country traditionally dominate the government...’⁴

- 3.1.4 Mohamed Osman, an assistant researcher on Sudan for Human Rights Watch, stated in an interview with the Country Policy and Information Team (CPIT) on 27 May 2021, that there are ‘[n]o recent numbers of the size of the [non-Arab Darfuri] NAD population. No systematic data collection – something the government want to do.’⁵

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3.2 Darfur

- 3.2.1 Dr David Hoile noted in ‘Darfur in Perspective’, first released in March 2005 and revised in January 2006, that:

¹ UK HO, ‘[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)’ (Section 1.1), November 2018

² USSD, ‘[2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan](#)’, (section 6) March 2021

³ CGRS, ‘[CEDOCA](#)’, undated

⁴ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Sections 1.1 , 1.1.1), 28 June 2021

⁵ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

'The largest [non-Arab] ethnic group within Darfur are the Fur people, who consist mainly of settled subsistence farmers and traditional cultivators. Other non-Arab, "African", groups include the Zaghawa nomads, the Meidob, Massaleit, Dajo, Berti, Kanein, Mima, Bargo, Barno, Gimir, Tama, Mararit, Fellata, Jebel, Sambat and Tunjur. The mainly pastoralist Arab tribes in Darfur include Habania, Beni Hussein, Zeiyadiya, Beni Helba, Ateefat, Humur, Khuzam, Khawabeer, Beni Jarrar, Mahameed, Djawama, Rezeigat, and the Ma'aliyah.'⁶

- 3.2.2 Ahmad Sikainga, a professor of African history at The Ohio State University⁷, mentioned in a 2009 article:

'Darfurians represent a multitude of ethnic and linguistic groups. They include non-Arabic speaking groups such as the Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa, Tunjur, and Daju as well as Arabic-speaking such as Rizaiqat, Missairiyya, Ta'isha, Beni Helba, and Mahamid, just to name a few... There are also a large number of West Africans, such as Hausa, Fulani, and Borno. These diverse groups are dispersed among each other and share similar physical and cultural characteristics.'⁸

The FFM report to Khartoum published in November 2018 by the Home Office, based on interviews with a range of sources in August 2018 (UKHO FFM report 2018), observed: 'One source estimated the population of Darfur was 10 million.'⁹

- 3.2.3 The Cedoca report 2021, based on a range of sources, noted:

'According to the latest population census in Sudan in 2018, the population of Darfur is 7.5 million. The Darfur Infrastructure Development Report of 2016 of the African Development Bank (AFDB) reports a total population of nearly 8.2 million according to an unspecified estimate from 2010...

'Arab and non-Arab tribes live alongside one another in Darfur. The main Arab tribes are the Rizeigat, Maaliya, Salamat, Beni Hussein, Habania, Zeiyadiya, Beni Helba, Ateefat, Humur, Khuzam, Khawabeer, Beni Jarar, Mahameed, Djawama, Taaysha and Misseriya. The Fur people are the largest non-Arab group, followed by the Masalit. The Zaghawa are a non-Arab tribe which is partly nomadic. Other important non-Arab tribes include the Meidob, Dajo, Berti, Kanein, Mima, Bargo, Barno, Gimir, Tama, Mararit, Fellata, Jebel, Sambat en Tunjur.'¹⁰

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3.3 Khartoum

- 3.3.1 The CIA World Factbook reported Khartoum's population to be just under 6 million in 2021¹¹, while a paper by the Institute of Development Studies and

⁶ David Hoile, '[Darfur in Perspective](#)' (p5), March 2005

⁷ OSE, '[Department of history](#)', undated

⁸ OSE, '[The World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis': understanding the Darfur conflict](#)', 5 February 2009

⁹ UK HO, '[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)' (Section 1.1), November 2018

¹⁰ Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)' (Sections 1.1 , 1.1.1), 28 June 2021

¹¹ US CIA, '[World Factbook](#)' (Sudan), updated 24 August 2021

East African Research Fund of February 2020 estimated its population was around 8 million¹².

- 3.3.2 However, the UKHO FFM report 2018, based on a range of sources, noted: 'The population of Khartoum... was estimated by one source to be around 10million.'¹³ The source continued that:

'Migration of different groups to Khartoum, including Darfuris, appears to be increasing[ly] driven by a number of factors including the poor economic situation...; the "centralisation" of the Sudanese state in the capital...; the availability of services...; and, in the case of Darfuris, the ongoing political and security situation in Darfur... The growth in population can be seen in the expansion of the shanty towns surrounding Khartoum, where South Sudanese and people from the Nuba mountains can also be found... along with Darfuris...'¹⁴

- 3.3.3 The UKHO FFM report also noted, citing various sources, that:

'Sources were not aware of reliable data of the size of the non-Arab Darfuri population in Khartoum... but it was thought to be "substantial"... with one source believing they are the majority of the city's population... Estimates ranged from 100,000s... to 1 million... The King of the Berti estimated, based on a "rough" census undertaken by community members splitting Khartoum into 6 districts, that the population of the Berti in Khartoum was 200,000... Many Darfuris came to Khartoum during the conflict in Darfur (2003 to 2008)..., but migration from Darfur continues... As a way of illustrating the size of the population of Darfuris in Khartoum in the absence of credible statistics, based on personal experience and contacts, the university professor from Darfur, a non-Arab Darfuri by background, observed that: 'During social celebrations, for example, deaths or weddings, Darfuris invite hundreds or thousands of people from the areas they originate... citing his daughter's wedding due to take place in December, where he had booked a hall to accommodate 1,500 people, which would be predominately be people from his area of and (non-Arab) tribe in Darfur... Salih Osman [of the Darfur Bar Association] thought the number of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum was increasing 'due to those leaving Darfur and being forcibly displaced following the eruption of the conflict in 2003. Those who have enough means in Darfur travel to other parts of Sudan, mostly to Khartoum.'¹⁵

- 3.3.4 See the [UKHO FFM report 2018](#) for more information about the distribution of the non-Arab Darfuri population within Greater Khartoum – the 3 towns of Khartoum, North Khartoum and Omdurman.

- 3.3.5 The Cecoca report 2021, based on a number of sources, noted:

'Landinfo reports that many of those who are referred to as IDPs in fact see themselves as migrants. It is also difficult to differentiate between displaced persons, migrants and other urban poor in the city slums... IDPs [as defined by Cedoca are people]... who have left their region of origin because of

¹² UK IDS and EARF, '[Khartoum Land Nexus Research Team \(2020\)...](#)' (section 1), February 2020

¹³ UK HO, '[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)' (Section 1.1), November 2018

¹⁴ UK HO, '[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)' (Section 1.1), November 2018

¹⁵ UK HO, '[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)' (Section 1.3), November 2018

conflict, drought or for economic reasons but have not crossed any internationally recognised borders. Many Darfuris and Nuba live elsewhere in Sudan as a result of the conflict in their region of origin, primarily in and around the capital Khartoum. Some are recent arrivals to the capital, while others have already lived for decades in Khartoum, or were born there.’¹⁶

- 3.3.6 The same report noted: ‘Labour migration is also playing a part in the city’s population growth. Whilst many find better opportunities as far as education or living conditions are concerned, according to IRRI [International Refugee Rights Initiative], large numbers quickly discover that they are second-class citizens in an environment which boasts about its cultural and religious superiority...’¹⁷

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3.4 Ethnic inter-mixing

- 3.4.1 Ahmad Sikainga, a professor of African history at The Ohio State University¹⁸, mentioned in a 2009 article:

‘A long history of internal migration, mixing, and intermarriage in Darfur have created remarkable ethnic fluidity: ethnic labels are often used only as a matter of convenience. For instance, in the Darfur context, for the most part the term "Arab" is used as an occupational rather than an ethnic label, for the majority of the Arabic speaking groups are pastoralists. On the other hand, most of the non-Arab groups are sedentary farmers. However, even these occupational boundaries are often crossed...’¹⁹

- 3.4.2 The UKHO 2018 FFM report also noted, citing various sources, that in Khartoum ‘Some Darfuris have inter-married with other groups, including Arabs.’²⁰

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Section 4 updated: 21 October 2021

4. Societal attitudes to race

- 4.1.1 The UKHO FFM report noted:

‘...Dr Ille commented on the factors affecting discrimination in Sudan:

“... the main issue seems to be how others perceive and treat the individual, rather than how the individual can be described based on information he or she gives about him- or herself. But stereotypes are notoriously difficult to trace because of the fine line between different levels of latent and open prejudices, and discrimination; patterns of obvious targeting are rare, since discrimination is often cross-sectional (e.g. ethnic and socio-economic and gender). This is relevant to note because the socio-economic position is not only an expression but also a cause of discrimination, which always

¹⁶ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Sections 2), 28 June 2021

¹⁷ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.1), 28 June 2021

¹⁸ OSE, ‘[Department of history](#)’, undated

¹⁹ OSE, ‘[“The World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis”: understanding the Darfur conflict](#)’, 5 February 2009

²⁰ UK HO, ‘[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)’ (Section 1.3), November 2018

necessitates somebody to be in a weak-enough position to be excluded from the general rules of competition.”...

“There is thus a potential cross-sectional chain of elements that lead to discrimination (and only an individual case assessment can tell, whether it applies): a provenance from Darfur increases the probability of being seen as potential rebel and of having been cut off from previous sources of wealth; without existing networks, displacement to urban areas, especially with the current strongly increasing prices, enhances this precarious situation and pushes people towards living in areas with others in a structurally similar situation, mostly with weak public services or even physical threats by governmental organs; the combination of the previous and the present provenance increases the difficulty to be perceived as reliable, for instance in accessing financial services, and limits the ability to concentrate on self-development, for instance through education. This is the general nature of structural inequality and is experienced by people from all of the so-called marginalized areas in Sudan – although, apart from the Nuba Mountains, they have not experienced the same level of violence in their home areas as people from war areas in Darfur.”²¹

- 4.1.2 The July 2020 United Nations General Assembly Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan stated: ‘Long-standing discrimination and inequality continues to plague Sudanese society, negatively impacting the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.’²²
- 4.1.3 The independent expert interviewed by CPIT on 4 June 2021 stated: ‘Amongst those Arabs who feel superior, some view all black Sudanese, not just [non-Arab Darfuris] NAD, as not being equal. Not seen this lead to any level of violence in Khartoum. Perhaps these groups would not obtain jobs alongside Arabs – an Arab owner may choose an Arab worker, but maybe the same happens with a black owner choosing a black worker.’²³
- 4.1.4 Mohamed Osman, assistant researcher for HRW, observed in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021: ‘...we can’t speak about societal attitudes/treatments – this is not clear.’²⁴
- 4.1.5 The same source noted: ‘Nearly everyone displaced in Darfur – there are around 1 million in IDPs – are non-Arab, such as Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa. Black Sudanese groups (that is non-Arab including non-Arab Darfuris (NAD)) are seen as ugly and called “cockroaches” as a racial slur. Non-Arabs in Darfur complain about mistreatment and Arabs being empowered to suppress NAD.’²⁵
- 4.1.6 The Cedoca report 2021 noted based on various sources:
‘Regional fault lines between the centre and peripheral areas (Darfur, the Two Areas, Eastern Sudan) have long made for social and economic inequality. The government and the Arab population groups have for decades discriminated against persons from the peripheral areas both within

²¹ UK HO, ‘[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)’ (Section 3.2), November 2018

²² UN General Assembly, ‘[Report of the Independent Expert...](#)’ (Page 4), 30 July 2020

²³ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

²⁴ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

²⁵ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

and outside their areas of origin on grounds of their religious, ethnic and/or tribal origin. Sources report, in particular, ethnic discrimination against the Nuba, Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa....

‘African Sudanese are discriminated against on the basis of their darker skin colour and are called abid, the Arabic word for slave...

‘The former regime promoted Islam as the state religion and glorified the Arab character of Sudan. During an interview with Cedoca, the Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour describes how for decades the Sudanese regime propagated a specific vision and narrative of what it means to be Sudanese:

“‘The previous regime did everything to promote Islam and Arabism – via the school curriculum, via the media and the mosques, via any platform. Even the black people are brainwashed. Black women use cosmetics to whiten the skin, they wear arab clothes, but even then they are called slaves’...”

‘The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains states during an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021 that Darfuris and Nuba still experience social discrimination:

“‘There has been a shift since the revolution but people with power and money still treat people from this area in a second class citizens [...]

“‘People become more open minded but the constant information/propaganda flow from the former government about people from the Nuba Mountains and Darfur (‘they are evil’, ‘they destroy the country’ etc) is still in the minds of certain people.”

‘Elnour specifies how racial prejudices translate into everyday life:

“‘The first suspect in any crime is a person of these marginalized areas. Even if most of the soldiers are from these areas, they are brainwashed, they cannot do other work, they are not educated or not skilled, they go in the army and police and follow orders.”

‘The chair of a Sudanese women’s organisation has this to say about it in an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021:

“‘The discriminations that Nuba and Darfuri people face by police and judiciary are manifestations of the society. The society feeds into that prejudice. It has been constructed for a long time, that is why it keeps happening regularly and without being questioned.”

‘She goes on to say that racial discrimination is not consistent, but rather depends on other elements, including the financial situation and professional activities of the person in question.

“‘In principal Sudan is a very polarized country in terms of ethnicity and tribal backgrounds. There is racial discrimination, supremacy, but it is not consistent or structured. If you are a rich person from Darfur, it is unlikely to experience marginalization. If you are part of a network of well-resourced people like traders, neither so. For example, the big market – Soukh Libya/Libya market in Omdruman [sic] – is dominated by Darfuri from the Zagawa tribe. They are wealthy people and known to be cross border traders.”

‘She adds that the situation is worse for Nuba than for Darfuris.

“The situation for people from the Nuba Mountains is even harsher. Darfuri can easily identify with the central Sudanese culture since they have stronger cultural ties. The Nuba have a history of slavery and conflict with the north. They experience more hardship than Darfuri as far as settling in Sudan is concerned. A number of Nuba are also non-muslim.’²⁶

4.1.7 The Cedoca report 2021 summarised its findings based on various sources:

‘Notions of Arab supremacy and the condescending attitude towards communities from marginalised regions, embedded among the traditional Sudanese elite and deeply rooted in Sudanese society, continue to exist and, according to many sources, this situation is unlikely to change in the near future. The extent and nature of the discrimination a person may face depends on a combination of connected and mutually reinforcing factors such as ethnicity, origin, network, economic status, politics or religious profile.’²⁷

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Section 5 updated: 21 October 2021

5. Political environment

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 The US Congressional Research Service (USCRS) paper of November 2020 on the decision of the US government to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) observed:

‘[Sudan is in]... a political transition following the April 2019 military ouster of Sudan’s long ruling leader, Omar al Bashir, who took power in a 1989 coup. Removal from the SST list has been a top priority for Sudan’s new prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, who has described Bashir’s Islamist regime as “one of the most brutal and repressive regimes in human history” in a 2019 U.N. address... Hamdok’s government has sought to end Sudan’s international isolation and internal conflicts, pursuing peace with insurgents and reforms to improve human rights and religious freedom. The transition is fragile; the government, formed out of a power-sharing arrangement between a disparate civilian coalition and security chiefs, faces mounting public frustration over an economic crisis inherited from the former regime. A new peace deal with insurgents may change the country’s political dynamics, but whether it will empower civilians or security actors is subject to debate.’²⁸

5.1.2 International Crisis Group reported in February 2021 that:

‘Following Sudan’s 2018-2019 revolution, the country’s civilian and military elites agreed in the August 2019 constitutional accord to seek to redress the imbalance between the periphery and the centre. The [Forces for Freedom and Change] FFC and [Transitional Military Council] TMC committed to ensuring that Sudan would shift away from the autocratic, highly centralised state that Bashir had presided over to a democratic, pluralistic system

²⁶ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.3), 28 June 2021

²⁷ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (page 41), 28 June 2021

²⁸ USCRS, ‘[Sudan’s Removal from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List](#)’, 9 November 2020

benefiting all Sudan's diverse people. Peace talks followed shortly thereafter and, after almost a year of negotiations in Juba between transitional officials and civilian and armed opposition representatives, including from rebel outfits in Darfur and the Two Areas, the parties signed a deal on 3 October 2020.²⁹

- 5.1.3 The United Nations Security Council's Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNSG report), published on 1 September 2021, stated:

'Notable progress was achieved in advancing key elements of the Sudanese political transition. Leading components of the transitional Government renewed their commitment to work together, against a backdrop of growing popular frustration over the country's political and economic challenges. Sudanese protestors continued to express their grievances and collective demands peacefully, despite isolated violent incidents. In addition, important measures were taken to implement aspects of the Juba Peace Agreement of 3 October 2020. On 14 June, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok appointed new State governors (walis) for North Darfur, West Darfur and the Blue Nile State. Meanwhile, talks resumed between the transitional Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, a major group not a signatory to the Agreement...

'The Council of Ministers announced a series of economic, political and security priority measures on 27 June, following a three-day closed-door retreat, including the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. They also outlined various social mitigation measures to help alleviate the adverse impacts of economic reforms. The Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Khalid Omer Yousif, affirmed that the transitional Government would provide the resources necessary to ensure implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and, in particular, expedite implementation of the security arrangements protocol. In early July, the Council of Partners of the Transitional Period set a new deadline for the long-awaited formation of the Transitional Legislative Council, with its first session slated for 17 August, the second anniversary of the signing of the Constitutional Declaration. However, the Council remains to be established.'³⁰

- 5.1.4 For background on political events following the ousting of former President Al-Bashir in April 2019 to early 2021, see the country policy and information note, [Opposition to state](#).

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5.2 The Juba Peace Agreement: Darfuri rebel groups

- 5.2.1 International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in February 2021:

'Sudan's October 2020 peace agreement, involving the interim government and rebel movements in Darfur and the Two Areas, among others, is an important step in the country's transition after the ouster of former President Omar al-Bashir. The deal allows for representatives from armed groups in

²⁹ ICG, '[The rebels come to Khartoum: How to implement Sudan's new peace...](#)', 23 February 2021

³⁰ UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the...](#)' (Paragraphs 2 – 6), 1 September 2021

the country's peripheries to take government posts and for significant public money to go to these areas. It is a way to rebalance the Nile Valley elites' decades-long domination of Sudan's political system...

'... In early February [2021] , representatives of armed groups from Darfur and the Two Areas (as South Kordofan and Blue Nile are known) were appointed to the cabinet and Sovereign Council, which oversees the transition. They will also take up seats in the yet-to-be-formed legislative council, which is expected to oversee the executive and craft laws, including those designed to pave the way for elections...'³¹

5.2.2 The ICG report of February 2021 also observed:

'The Juba Peace Agreement is actually a collection of accords setting out principles covering power and wealth sharing, land reform, transitional justice, security arrangements and the return of displaced persons...

'The important provisions for the rebels are questions related to integration of their leaders into government and their fighters into the security forces, as well as how power sharing between their regions and Khartoum will evolve. Rebels are to be absorbed into security agencies with those who are not returned home through a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) program that will help them find civilian livelihoods. According to the deal, signatory armed groups will also receive three seats in a newly expanded fourteen-member Sovereign Council, which under the August 2019 agreement acts as government's executive organ, and one quarter of the cabinet seats. The deal also sets out a change in power sharing between centre and periphery, suggesting that Sudan adopt a federal system of governance. As steps in that direction, it provides for restoring Darfur's former status as a single region, improving national representation for Darfuri tribes and increasing control over natural resources and Darfuris' national political sway while also granting greater autonomy to the Two Areas.'³²

5.2.3 Freedom House reported in its Freedom in the World report of March 2021, covering events in 2020:

'In October 2020, the government signed the Juba Peace Agreement with the SRF [Sudan Revolutionary Front] alliance and another rebel group, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) Minni Minnawi faction. The peace deal, which was meant to end ethnic insurgencies and alleged government war crimes in... Darfur, included provisions for a special court for war crimes, the integration of rebels into the security forces and political institutions, economic and land rights, and the creation of a fund to address social and economic marginalization in the conflict areas and support the return of displaced persons.'³³

5.2.4 However, two Darfuri rebels groups did not sign the Juba peace agreement: the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N), led by

³¹ ICG, '[The rebels come to Khartoum: How to implement Sudan's new peace...](#)', 23 February 2021

³² ICG, '[The rebels come to Khartoum: How to implement Sudan's new peace...](#)', 23 February 2021

³³ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2021](#)' (Section C3), 3 March 2021

Abdelaziz al-Hilu, and the Sudan Liberation Army – Abdul Wahid faction (SLA/AW), led by Abdul Wahid al-Nour³⁴.

- 5.2.5 The United Nations Security Council's Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNSG report), covering the period from 16 February 2021 to 1 May 2021 and published on 17 May 2021, noted that whilst there was limited progress in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement:

'On 18 March, Abdul Wahid al-Nur, leader of the Sudan Liberation Army- Abdul Wahid faction (SLA/AW), met with the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, in Juba to discuss their respective visions for achieving a comprehensive peace in the Sudan. Abdul Wahid Al-Nur proposed a road map for a Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue not related to the Juba Peace Agreement. On 29 April, the SLA/AW issued a statement denying engagement with the South Sudanese mediation team as part of the Agreement.'³⁵

- 5.2.6 However, the UNSG report also acknowledged that '...there was limited progress in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement.' The report added: 'On 25 March [2021], the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Mostafa Tambour became the latest signatory to the Juba Peace Agreement. Tambour signed the Agreement in Juba in the presence of General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, Sovereign Council member El Hadi Idris, the Minister of Youth and Sports of the Sudan and the South Sudanese mediation team.'³⁶

- 5.2.7 The report continued:

'The South Sudanese mediation team visited Khartoum during the reporting period to discuss with Sudanese parties to the Juba Peace Agreement and the United Nations the steps needed to accelerate the implementation of the Juba agreements. Discussions included efforts to complete the formation of the Transitional Legislative Council, government institutions, the appointment of walis [governors], the status of the eastern track and engagement with non-signatories....'³⁷

- 5.2.8 The report of the UN Secretary-General, 'Review of the situation in Darfur and benchmarks to assess the measures on Darfur', 31 July 2021, observed:

'The commitment of the transitional Government to the Juba Peace Agreement is broadly recognized, but there are concerns that implementation of the Agreement has been slow. The dire economic situation in the country remains the foremost focus of attention for the transitional Government, but progress in implementing the key provisions of the Agreement is critical to stability in Darfur. Many of the mechanisms and commissions called for in the Agreement have not yet been formed. The authorities of the Governor of Darfur vis-à-vis the state-level governors have

³⁴ International IDEA, '[The Juba Agreement for peace in Sudan](#)' (Page 12), 21 April 2021

³⁵ UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations...](#)' (Para 7), 17 May 2021

³⁶ UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan and the activities ...](#)' (paragraphs 8 and 9), 17 May 2021

³⁷ UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations...](#)' (Para 11), 17 May 2021

not been clarified, nor have the administrative structures of the region and states been defined, which impedes the implementation of the details agreed upon by the signatories. Armed group signatories of the Agreement have criticized the inaction of the transitional Government in implementing the security arrangements, while the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction (SLA-AW) remains outside the Agreement, with considerable support in some camps for internally displaced persons. At the same time, there is serious concern that actors associated with the previous regime are seeking to undermine the transitional Government and the nascent peace process.

‘The slow pace of implementing the Juba Peace Agreement means that many of the underlying sources... of insecurity and instability in Darfur have yet to be addressed. Land, water, climate and environmental issues remain important underlying conflict drivers that have been addressed in the Agreement but have yet to be tackled. These issues affect relations between tribal communities; nomads, herders and farmers along migratory corridors; and internally displaced persons and refugees seeking to return to their lands. The Darfur conflict has resulted in a breakdown of law and order and governance structures, which have yet to be fully restored. Atrocities and human rights violations committed during the conflict also generated unfulfilled demands for accountability and reconciliation... These factors, combined with repeated failures to fully implement prior peace agreements, have generated considerable distrust between the Darfuri population and government authorities.’³⁸

5.2.9 The United Nations Security Council’s Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNSG report), published on 1 September 2021, stated:

‘Efforts to bring non-signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement into the peace process continued. A new round of negotiations between the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction and the transitional Government resumed on 27 May in Juba. The talks, which built on the joint Declaration of Principles signed between the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction and the transitional Government on 28 March, were adjourned on 15 June to allow the parties to expand consultations and broaden inclusivity. While the parties did not reach an agreement on a framework agreement, they made significant progress on key elements that were expected to guide the overall process once talks reconvene after consulting with their constituencies... Following the adjournment of the first round of talks, the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur, announced the signing of a political declaration in Kauda, South Kordofan, on 29 July. In the statement, it was noted that the two movements agreed on the need for the unity of the Sudanese State based on secularism, democracy, liberalism, equal decentralized citizenship and balanced development. It also underscored the right of all Sudanese people to determine their fate and their administrative and political future.

‘Initial measures to begin implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement security arrangements also commenced. On 30 June, the Chairperson of the

³⁸ UNSG, ‘[Review of the situation in Darfur...](#)’ (paragraphs 8 and 9), 31 July 2021

Sovereign Council, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, issued three decrees establishing the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and sectoral and area committees. The decrees also explicitly referenced the role of UNITAMS as participating in the Joint High Military Committee and chairing the Permanent Ceasefire Committee. This development followed a joint statement issued on 27 May by several signatory armed groups, criticizing the transitional Government for the “slow pace” of implementing the security arrangements. In a meeting with the leadership of the armed forces on 27 June, Lieutenant General al-Burhan stated that the army was committed to implementing the security arrangements and reforming its structures as agreed in the Juba Peace Agreement.³⁹

- 5.2.10 At the time of writing, the SLA-AW and SPLM-N groups had not signed the Juba Peace Agreement and remained outside of the transitional government.

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5.3 Non-Arab Darfuris within the transitional government

- 5.3.1 Radio Dabanga reported on 25 February 2020 that ‘The Sudanese government and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel alliance agreed during the peace negotiations in Juba... to allocate 20 per cent of the Sudanese civil service to Darfuris’. The report added that ‘The 20 per cent representation will apply to ministries, ambassadors, diplomatic missions, commissions, government agencies, government-owned companies, managers, and intermediate jobs.’⁴⁰
- 5.3.2 In August 2020, Al Jazeera reported that ‘The transitional government made some positive steps by choosing some professionals from marginalised communities for important posts, such as Justice Minister Nasreldin Abdelbari, who is of Fur background.’⁴¹
- 5.3.3 Following the Juba Peace Agreement, in February 2021, Joseph Tucker, senior expert for the greater Horn of Africa at the think-tank, the US Institute for Peace, observed that the government announced a new cabinet including former rebel leaders:
- ‘Twenty-five ministers were announced. All but five ministers were replaced. Only four of the ministers are women. The ministers of defense and interior hail from the security sector as previously agreed between the government’s civilian and military factions. Some posts have gone to high-profile political leaders... In addition to representatives of groups from Sudan’s peripheries, such as Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, the east and other areas, the refashioned Cabinet introduces new leaders from the broad yet fragile Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance.’⁴²
- 5.3.4 Al Jazeera further reported new posts in the cabinet included ‘... Darfur rebel leader Gibril Ibrahim as finance minister in a cabinet reshuffle on Monday.’⁴³

³⁹ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the...](#)’ (Paragraphs 2 – 6), 1 September 2021

⁴⁰ Radio Dabanga, ‘[Peace negotiations: 20% of Sudan civil servants to be Darfuri](#)’, 25 February 2020

⁴¹ Al Jazeera, ‘[Do Black lives matter in Sudan?](#)’, 13 August 2020.

⁴² USIP, ‘[What Does Sudan’s New Cabinet Mean for its Transition?](#)’ 8 February 2021

⁴³ Al Jazeera, ‘[Sudan’s prime minister names new cabinet](#)’, 8 February 2021

Gibril Ibrahim is the leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) who fought the former regime's government forces in Darfur in the 2000s⁴⁴ and a member of the Zaghawa⁴⁵.

5.3.5 The Sudan Tribune reported on 2 May 2021:

'Minni Minnawi the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement has been appointed Governor of the Darfur region [comprised of 5 states]...

'The Sudanese Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok said Minnawi's appointment comes in accordance with the Juba Peace Agreement.

'The 3 October 2020 deal provides to establish a regional authority in the western Sudan region.

'The chairman of the Darfur region is nominated by the armed groups that took part in the peace process while his deputy is appointed by the transitional government.'⁴⁶

5.3.6 Radio Dabanga reported on 3 May 2021:

'Minawi reacted [to the decision to appoint him governor] by saying that he considers the decision a serious step towards the implementation of the peace agreement. He thanks those who made efforts to implement the agreement, in particular the members of the Sovereignty Council and the Prime Minister, and said he was looking forward to successful joint cooperation.'⁴⁷

5.3.7 The UNSG report, covering the period between 16 February 2021 to 1 May 2021, published on 17 May 2021, stated:

'While the Prime Minister had announced that State governors (walis) would be appointed by 15 February, followed by the formation of the Transitional Legislative Council no later than 25 February, these appointments did not occur in accordance with the envisioned timeline. The only exception was the reported appointment of Minni Minawi, head of the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi faction (SLA/MM), as Governor of the Darfur region per a decree of 29 April. This appointment is in keeping with the provisions of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan, which granted the authority for this appointment to the Darfuri armed groups that participated in the peace process, with the deputy to be appointed by the transitional Government.'⁴⁸

5.3.8 The independent expert interviewed by CPIT on 4 June 2021 stated: 'Minni Minawi has been appointed the governor of the newly formed Darfur region (combining West, East and South Darfur), but it is unclear what that means in practice. Gibril Ibrahim is the Minister of Finance. Both he and Minni Minawi are Zaghawa. Gibril Ibrahim lives in Khartoum and Al-Hadi Idris, head of the Sudan Revolutionary Front, are all rich paid to join the peace agreement by gulf states.'⁴⁹

⁴⁴ The National News, '[Who are the prominent faces of Sudan's new government](#)', 9 February 2021

⁴⁵ [Independent expert, Interview with CPIT, 4 June 2021, Annex A](#)

⁴⁶ Sudan Tribune, '[Minnawi appointed governor of Darfur region](#)', 2 May 2021

⁴⁷ Radio Dabanga, '[Rebel leader Minawi appointed governor of Darfur](#)', 3 May 2021

⁴⁸ UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations...](#)' (Para 2), 17 May 2021

⁴⁹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

5.3.9 Sudan Tribune reported on 13 June 2021:

‘According to a statement issued by the Cabinet on Sunday, Hamdok appointed Nimir Mohamed Abdel Rahman as Governor of North Darfur replacing Mohamed Hassan Arabi, and Khamis Abdallah Abkar as Governor of West Darfur instead of Mohamed Abdallah Aldoma...Abdel-Rahman is the Deputy Chairman of the Sudan Liberation Movement - Transitional Council, while Khamis is a leader of a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement and heads the Sudanese Alliance.

‘These decisions come within the framework of the Juba Peace Agreement signed on 3 October 2020. The deal provides to appoint 4 people nominated by the signatory groups as governors of a number of states in the Blue Nile and Darfur.’⁵⁰

5.3.10 The June 2021 Cedoca report stated ‘...A confidential source informed the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 2021 that there is so far little sign of the number of Darfuris in government posts increasing.’⁵¹

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5.4 Investigations into Darfur war crimes

5.4.1 The 2021 Human Rights Watch report, covering events of 2020, noted:

‘...In June, the International Criminal Court (ICC) took into custody its first suspect of serious crimes committed in Darfur.

‘On August 31, the government and a coalition of rebel groups signed a peace deal in Juba that would end the country’s internal armed conflicts and provide for cooperation with the ICC in its Darfur investigation, and establishing a national special court for Darfur crimes...

‘The Attorney General’s Office formed several committees to investigate past crimes and rights abuses including in Darfur, but no investigation has yet led to prosecutions...

‘On February 11, a member of the sovereign council, a collective presidency body composed of both civilians and military, publicly announced the government’s commitment to cooperate with the ICC, which officials reaffirmed throughout the year.

‘On June 9, the ICC prosecutor announced that a Janjaweed militia leader, Ali Mohamed Ali (“Kosheib”), surrendered to the ICC in the Central African Republic and is currently facing charges at the Hague. ICC arrest warrants for al-Bashir, two former officials, and a rebel leader are outstanding. Al-Bashir and the two former officials are detained in Khartoum.

‘The ICC prosecutor visited Khartoum in October and discussed with Sudanese officials modalities of cooperation, including on the execution of outstanding arrest warrants.’⁵²

5.4.2 Freedom House reported in its Freedom in the World report, covering events in 2020:

⁵⁰ Sudan Tribune, ‘[Sudan’s prime minister appoints 3 state governors in Darfur...](#)’, 13 June 2021

⁵¹ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.2.2), 28 June 2021

⁵² HRW, ‘[World report 2021 – Sudan](#)’, 13 January 2021

‘During peace talks in February 2020, the government reached an agreement with Darfuri rebel groups to turn over to the ICC the five Sudanese suspects accused of war crimes, including al-Bashir. Prime Minister Hamdok reaffirmed this position in August. In June, Ali Kushayb, one of the five suspects, voluntarily surrendered in the Central African Republic. The Sudanese government welcomed and met with ICC representatives in Khartoum in October, but al-Bashir and other suspects remained in Sudanese custody at year’s end.’⁵³

5.4.3 Sudan Tribune reported on 27 May 2021:

‘The pre-trial judges ended the hearing on the confirmation of charges against Ali Kushayb a militia leader suspected of war crimes in Darfur, the International Criminal Court (ICC) said on Wednesday.

‘During the 3-day hearing, the ICC General Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda told the judges that Kushayb committed 31 crimes against civilians in West Darfur state...

Within 60 days the court will decide whether or not there is sufficient evidence for the charges made by the prosecution.’⁵⁴

5.4.4 On 9 June 2021, Sudan Tribune reported:

‘Fatou Bensouda outgoing General Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) called on the Security Council to persuade Sudan to hand over Ahmed Haroun to The Hague tribunal.

‘Bensouda on Tuesday dedicated her final briefing before the 15 member body to the situation in Darfur, the first case to be referred to the court by the Council in March 2005.

‘In a very emotional briefing that took place a week after a visit to Darfur, she underscored that all the indicted former officials are now detained in Khartoum and there no legal impediment to their surrender to the ICC.

‘Also, she pointed to "credible reports" about Haroun’s wish to be transferred to the war crimes courts.’⁵⁵

5.4.5 The BBC reported on 27 June 2021:

Sudan says it will surrender former officials who are wanted for alleged war crimes in the Darfur region to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

‘As yet, Sudan has not named the individuals being handed over.

‘The country’s rulers had already promised to surrender ex-President Omar al-Bashir who was in power during the conflict but this has not yet happened...

‘Sudan’s decision comes weeks after the ICC’s outgoing chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, visited the country and urged its leaders to surrender all those wanted including Mr Bashir, 77.

⁵³ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2021](#)’ (Section C3), 3 March 2021

⁵⁴ Sudan Tribune, ‘[ICC pre-trial court ends confirmation of charges hearing against...](#)’, 27 May 2021

⁵⁵ Sudan Tribune, ‘[Press Sudan to surrender Haroun, Bensouda tells Security Council](#)’, 9 June 2021

‘He was the first person to be charged by the international court for the crime of genocide.

‘Other ex-officials wanted by the ICC are Former Defence Minister Abdelraheem Muhammad Hussein and former Minister of the Interior Ahmad Harun.’⁵⁶

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Section 6 updated: 21 October 2021

6. Freedom of expression

6.1 Civil society and human rights reporting

6.1.1 See the CPIN on [Sudan: Opposition to the Government](#) for more information on political rights and freedom of expression.

6.1.2 The USSD 2020 report stated:

‘The 2019 constitutional declaration provides for the unrestricted right of freedom of expression and for freedom of the press as regulated by law, and the CLTG [civilian-led transitional government] reportedly respected these rights.

‘...There were few reports of reprisals against individuals who criticized the government, with the primary exception of criticism of the security services. On July 18, the [Sudan Armed Forces] SAF stated they had appointed a special commissioner to file lawsuits against individuals who insult the army, including activists and journalists; however, no such cases were filed during the year. According to Human Rights Watch, there were also reports of intimidation of journalists and activists who criticized the security services.

‘...The CLTG generally respected press and media freedoms and issued a number of media licenses, although media continued to be dominated by former regime loyalists.

‘...Unlike under the prior regime, there were no reports of the CLTG using violence and harassment against journalists.

‘...In contrast with previous years, there were no reports of government censorship or print confiscations. Many journalists, however, practiced self-censorship in reporting on corruption...

‘...The law holds editors in chief potentially criminally liable for slander for all content published or broadcast.

‘...In contrast with previous years, there were no reports of authorities using national security as a justification to arrest or punish critics of the government or deter criticism of the government.

‘...The 2019 constitutional declaration provides for freedom of expression, including for media, and the CLTG took measures to respect these rights. The CLTG allowed foreign journalists, including those previously banned by the Bashir regime...

⁵⁶ BBC, [‘Sudan agrees to hand over Darfur war crimes accused’](#), 27 June 2021

'The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority.'⁵⁷

6.1.3 The independent expert stated in an interview with CPIT on 4 June 2021:

'Political rights / freedom of speech has demonstrably improved.

'The space to speak your mind has increased - there are instances where journalists are pulled up but there is now backlash for anyone who does this, so the military are learning not to. More freedom has been an outcome of the political changes.

'Various laws, the public order laws, have been repealed. This has had a positive effect in many ways but provoked backlash from conservatives. Still, women are being beaten for transgressing these rules in some areas.

'Political activists – everyone is able to speak freely, however they are not good at creating platforms. Political parties that have come to the fore have not used their opportunity well, they are not ready to contest elections and to build constituencies...

'Feel there is less monitoring going on. There is likely to be a new use of technology - the RSF have become more of a national entity and can monitor because of its access to internet networks. The main internet provider – Sudatel - is privately owned but infiltrated by the state. There are no laws to stop the state snooping around. The RSF have a new media centre.'⁵⁸

6.1.4 Mohamed Osman stated in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021:

'There is "Darfur fatigue", less reporting on the region. This silence is motivating Human Rights Watch to go to Darfur. The narrative is that everything is ok and let's move on. There are few foreign correspondences within the region – there is a noticeable silence of reporting, we do not know the scale of things. Fundamental changes mentioned earlier have been seen and noted from people we have been talking to over the last 2 years or year and a half. However, the silence – lack of reporting - has pushed us to go and report from the ground...'⁵⁹

6.1.5 Mohamed Osman further stated:

'Freedom of expression has improved.

'Print media can publish anything, no cases of censorship as far as we know. However, a few incidents where the state-owned Sudan News Agency did not give permission to some protest groups to talk. Political activists/opponents accused the agency of political bias, not giving them access to this platform. But there is definitely a substantial openness in terms of freedom of expression – of course we see a worrying violent crackdown of protests.

'All senior positions are affiliated with civil political groups – criticism comes from protest groups, resistance groups or other political parties not involved

⁵⁷ USSD, '[2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)' (Section 2A), 30 March 2021

⁵⁸ UK HO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

⁵⁹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

in the transitional government, saying they don't have access to state media institutions.

'The Communist Party and some civil society groups dropped out of the Freedom for Forces of Change quite early, but apart from the Communist Party, no other political parties dropped out.

'People, including political groups outside of the government, can criticise whoever including the army, the RSF, and intelligence agencies – we are not seeing concerns of backlash. There are a few cases when the army threaten with lawsuits, but they never follow through...

'[The internet] is relatively free. There is more access, but people complain about the increase of costs. There is an increasing use of Facebook, live streaming and zoom, and Clubhouse (an app that allows audio chats with others anonymously).

'The telecoms industry is private, with 3 main providers that are private companies with no government control over them.'⁶⁰

- 6.1.6 The USSD report for 2020 noted 'Unlike under the Bashir regime, a number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials often were cooperative and responsive to their views, although some restrictions on NGOs remained, especially in conflict zones.'⁶¹

- 6.1.7 The USSD also observed that:

'In September 2019 the CLTG signed an agreement to open a UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Khartoum, with field offices in Darfur, the Two Areas, and East Sudan, and the CLTG cooperated with these offices.

'In April the CLTG authorized the UN independent expert on human rights in Sudan to visit the country, but due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the visit was cancelled.

'The CLTG also allowed the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan to conduct an assessment in August, including on human rights.'⁶²

- 6.1.8 The Office for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted:

'During the reporting period, the Government has made some legislative and institutional changes that have had a positive impact on the civic space... Nonetheless, increasingly restrictive practices are being used by the authorities to curtail the ability of civil society to exercise the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and participation. On 21 January 2021, the outgoing Minister of Labour and Social Development endorsed new regulations that impose stringent restrictions on civil society. Those regulations were suspended by her successor, who has temporarily reactivated the 2013 regulations. It has been reported that the Minister of

⁶⁰ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

⁶¹ USSD, '[2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)' (section 5), 30 March 2021

⁶² USSD, '[2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)' (section 5), 30 March 2021

Finance and Economic Planning revoked financial exemptions granted to some civil society organizations on 15 February 2021. The right to freedom of association is severely curtailed by such measures, especially if access to resources is restricted.’⁶³

6.1.9 Based on various sources, the Cedoca report 2021 noted:

‘... there has been greater freedom of expression since August 2019. According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, criticisms of the civilian component of the government and criticisms directed against its military component are treated differently. Whilst the civilian component will take no action against criticism by citizens and activists, criticism levelled at the military component (SAF, RSF or the police) of the transitional government does lead to action. Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, reflects on the freedoms won:

“Incidents after the revolution are far less in numbers than before. Before the revolution there was impunity, before the revolution there was secrecy, and now there is more transparency, any incident will go viral, it will be dealt with in the media, since the media is far more free than before, even national tv can be critical for the sovereign council for example.”⁶⁴

6.1.10 The same report noted:

‘The chair of a Sudanese women’s organisation has this to say... in an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021:

‘...“At the moment those people [people working for ngo’s, working in the humanitarian field trying to get help to the conflict areas] do not face any problems. We have space, we are able to talk. We are able to criticize openly. The situation is volatile, we do not know for how long we will be able to talk freely. The biggest threat is the continuity of insecurity in conflict areas and the very systemic persecution of poor people.”’⁶⁵

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6.2 UN mission to Sudan

6.2.1 The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights opened a country office in Sudan in December 2019⁶⁶ and on 3 June 2020, the United Nations adopted a resolution which established the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission (UNITAMS) in Sudan. It’s mandate stated:

- ‘[UNITAMS is] ...a special political mission, to provide support to Sudan for an initial 12-month period during its political transition to democratic rule.
- ‘Headquartered in Khartoum, UNITAMS will support Sudan through a range of political, peacebuilding and development initiatives, including assisting the nation to achieve the goals of the Constitution Declaration of August 2019, and carrying out its National Plan for Civilian Protection.

⁶³ UNHRC, ‘[Report of the Office of the United Nations High...](#)’ (paragraphs 23 and 24), 27 July 2021

⁶⁴ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.4.2), 28 June 2021

⁶⁵ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.4.2), 28 June 2021

⁶⁶ UNHRC, ‘[Report of the Office of the United Nations High...](#)’ (paragraph 1), 27 July 2021

- ‘The Mission’s specific strategic objectives, underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), include:
 - ‘Assisting the political transition, progress towards democratic governance, protection and promotion of human rights, and sustainable peace...
 - ‘Supporting peace processes and implementation of future peace agreements...
 - ‘Assisting peacebuilding, civilian protection and rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile states)...
 - ‘Supporting the mobilization of economic and development assistance and coordination of humanitarian assistance by ensuring an integrated approach with UN agencies, funds and programs and through collaboration with international financial institutions...
- ‘Through its good offices and the provision of technical support and working closely with the United Nations Country Team with which it is integrated, UNITAMS will focus on the following strategic priorities:
 - ‘Supporting political stability.
 - ‘Supporting the constitution-making, electoral and census processes.
 - ‘Supporting institutional reforms and the promotion and protection of human rights.
 - ‘Supporting the conclusion of an inclusive peace process
 - ‘Supporting the implementation of the peace agreement
 - ‘Supporting the strengthening of the protective environment, in particular in conflict/post-conflict areas
 - ‘Supporting the achievement of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation between communities
 - ‘Supporting international resource mobilization and national socio-economic reforms
 - ‘Supporting the establishment of a national architecture for development planning and aid effectiveness
 - ‘Supporting the conclusion of an inclusive peace process

‘UNITAMS will integrate gender considerations as a cross cutting issue throughout its mandate. This includes, for example, assisting the Government of Sudan in ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels in peace and political processes and in all social and economic aspects of life, as well as implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.’⁶⁷

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⁶⁷ UNITAMS, ‘[Mandate](#)’, undated

7. Khartoum

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 Based on various sources, the Cedoca report 2021 noted:

‘During an interview with Cedoca, the Sudanese journalist and security analyst says the number of incidents has fallen since the disbanding of the NISS:

“Despite these violations, however, it is important to note that the level of crackdown against the groups from the marginalised regions has decreased in places such as Khartoum and major urban areas outside the conflict regions. This is largely due to the dissolution of the former National Intelligence and Security and Service (NISS) which systematically persecuted members of the ethnic groups coming from the conflict areas. The current transitional government took measures to halt these violations by delegating the power of arrest and detention to the Sudanese police. The police should only detain persons and hold them in custody on legal grounds... However, the military component whose leading members belonged to old regime, continue to commit violations against non-Arab persons. These violations, albeit in narrower scale than before, are still being carried out by the Sudanese military factions and security units.”⁶⁸

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7.2 State treatment and attitudes

7.2.1 Human Rights Watch in its annual reports covering events in 2019⁶⁹ and 2020⁷⁰ did not refer specifically to targeting or ill-treatment by the state of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum or elsewhere.

7.2.2 Neither did the USSD human rights reports covering events in 2019⁷¹ and 2020⁷² specifically identify abuses against non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum or elsewhere on grounds of race or ethnicity alone.

7.2.3 However, the 2019 USSD report did note, in regard to students under the Bashir regime (prior to April 2019):

‘... Security forces conducted multiple raids on Darfuri students’ housing throughout the year. During the raids NISS confiscated students’ belongings, including laptops, school supplies, and backpacks.

‘This type of activity appeared to have ceased, or been dramatically reduced, under the CLTG [civilian-led transitional government].’⁷³

7.2.4 The USSD report covering events in 2020 does not refer to Darfuri students in Khartoum or elsewhere experiencing similar problems⁷⁴.

⁶⁸ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.4.2), 28 June 2021

⁶⁹ HRW, ‘[World Report 2020](#)’ (Sudan), January 2020

⁷⁰ HRW, ‘[World Report 2021](#)’ (Sudan), January 2021

⁷¹ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)’ (section 1F), 11 March 2020

⁷² USSD, ‘[2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan](#)’, March 2021

⁷³ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)’ (section 1F), 11 March 2020

⁷⁴ USSD, ‘[2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan](#)’, (section 6) March 2021

- 7.2.5 The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) noted in a Country of Origin query response on the situation of non-Arab Darfuris (including Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit, Bergu, Dajo) in Khartoum, in the period of August 2019 - May 2020, based on a number of sources, published in June 2020:
- ‘No information on specific instances of ill-treatment and attacks on the non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum in the reference period could be found amongst consulted and used sources in time constraints of this query response.
- ‘International Crisis Group did not record any incident in Khartoum targeting non-Arab Darfuris in the reference period. The source reported on several demonstrations in Khartoum in the reference period, including on 12 September 2019, 21 October 2019 and 20 February 2020. Sources reported that four protesters were killed in Omdurman near Khartoum on 1 August 2019 without providing further details on the victims.
- ‘UNOCHA reported that violence and armed conflict in 2019 resulted in some 500 deaths across Sudan with highest numbers recorded in Khartoum, Red Sea, Darfur, South-, West- and North Kordofan. In the third quarter of 2019, the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) recorded 95 incidents that killed 5 persons in Khartoum, without providing further information on the victims...’⁷⁵
- 7.2.6 The UNSG report, covering the period between 9 September 2020 to 23 November 2020, published on 1 December 2020⁷⁶ as well as the UNSG report covering the period between 16 February 2021 to 1 May 2021, published on 17 May 2021⁷⁷, and the UNSG report published on 1 September 2021⁷⁸, do not mention specific targeting of non-Arab Darfuris.
- 7.2.7 The independent expert interviewed by CPIT on 4 June 2021 stated: ‘[He had] Not heard that NADs are being singled out in Khartoum. There are plenty of powerful Darfuris in the capital. What is happening in the wealthy areas of Khartoum is that a lot of Darfuris are showing up with millions in cash. There is no clashing but it is shocking. However, these are Arab Darfuris, not NAD.’⁷⁹
- 7.2.8 The independent expert added regarding non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum,:
- ‘If you speak to the average Sudanese in Khartoum, life is hard. Food prices change overnight. Issues are economic or social rather than from the state. The economic issue has the most potential to end the transition or to save it. The government has to undertake structural economic reforms – it receives a lot of assistance from the international community for debt relief.
- ‘You do not see groups clashing in Khartoum, it is pretty relaxed – there are areas in towns where only Darfuris and northerners live but this is not a racist thing per se.
- ‘No sense of NADs being treated differently given my level of access as a westerner – sure there is sometimes some sort of discrimination, but no

⁷⁵ EASO, ‘[COI Query: Sudan – Non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum](#)’, 16 June 2020

⁷⁶ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations...](#)’, 17 May 2021

⁷⁷ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations...](#)’, 1 December 2020

⁷⁸ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations...](#)’, 1 September 2021

⁷⁹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

worse than being, for example, Sikh and Pakistani in Paris or Bradford and people take a bad shine to you. It is not systematic and there is no mass violence against NAD per se. Cannot ever remember seeing this at any point in Khartoum. Don't expect there to be grievances in Khartoum.

'The problem is more about resources in the peripheries – that is what people are fighting over - winner takes all. But in Khartoum, in an urban area, it is not about land at all. Perhaps there is competition for jobs because so many people are unemployed....People should not return to Sudan because the economy is an absolute mess and people cannot support themselves.

'Do not think much has changed in Sudan at a social level. All changes have been political, the social underpinnings are not that different.'⁸⁰

- 7.2.9 Mohamed Osman, assistant research for HRW, observed in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021:

'There is an absence of information about [treatment of NAD by the government] ... or bad news. There was a narrative of non-Arab Darfuris being rivals to the government but because of the peace process this narrative no longer takes place. There are no visible hostilities by the state against NAD and there is an increase of community awareness and resistance committee groups actively working over the last two years. There is definitely more of a fundamental and positive movement towards, and treatment of, NAD. We do not see largescale discrimination or ill-treatment.

'...Effective access to education and jobs is a challenge. Nor are we clear that the changes will be sustainable.'⁸¹

- 7.2.10 The Cedoca report 2021 based on various sources, noted:

'Salma Abdalla, postgraduate researcher at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, writes the following about this [on the treatment non-Arab Darfuris] in an email sent on 5 March 2021 to Cedoca:

“Non-Arab people from Darfur... face difficulties to prove their Sudanese citizenships. Not only that they are treated differently by officers, but also, they are required to provide more prove in comparison to Arab groups. There are many cases where officers at the ministry of interior delayed issuing these documents - a practice [that] often leads to serious consequences in the lives of these people, such as missing national exams or losing travel opportunities.”⁸²

- 7.2.11 Furthermore, the report noted:

'Various people who contacted Cedoca for the purposes of this Focus quoted that slogan ["we are all Darfur"] to indicate a changed attitude in Sudan, although many said that the solidarity shown led to few concrete results after the revolution. The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains mentions the power of the military component of the transitional government:

⁸⁰ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

⁸¹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

⁸² Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)' (Section 2.1.2.1), 28 June 2021

“The civilian government tries to be more inclusive, but the military component has the old regime way of thinking...”

7.2.12 The Cedoca report 2021 also stated:

[Maddy] Crowther [of Waging Peace], “mentions in an interview with Cedoca the substance of a political profile is different in Sudan from in Europe: “The threshold of being a threat to the regime is still very low.”

‘Enrico Ille, a researcher attached to the LOST Research Network, refers to the great complexity of the situation today in an email sent to Cedoca on 1 February 2021:

“The situation has become much more complicated in a less straightforward authoritarian and discriminatory setting. The operation of security and military agents is much more obscure under the new government, and very much defined by resistance to change in the political landscape.

“In general, I would say that political activism directed against the supporters of the old regime is the most critical factor for personal insecurity at the moment, rather than origin from the mentioned areas [Darfur and the Two Areas]. However, the historical structures of inequality, where these areas are marginalized, are still in place as well.”...

‘Albaqir Mukhtar notes the following in an interview with Cedoca in February 2021:

“The law enforcement agencies are mostly against the revolution, people have been tortured and killed also after the revolution, not necessarily people from Darfur, but also people from northern Sudan. It had an ideological basis, if somebody is part of the revolution and from Darfur, probably they will be treated harsher.”

‘Enrico Ille notes that it is very difficult to estimate what impact the peace agreement will have on the situation of the Darfuris and Nuba:

“The biggest difficulty is to assess how the peace agreement and the power shift to armed groups from Darfur (RSF, JEM, SLM etc.) will influence the actual situation of people from there - especially since these are aggressive groups with a long history of grievances, also against each other... If anything, it is even more difficult now to say something about somebody's situation just based on a region she or he comes from.”

‘Mossaad Mohamed Ali, executive director of the African Centre For Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), reports in an email sent to Cedoca on 14 March 2021 that his organisation has heard of no incidents of people having been targeted by the security services because of the real or supposed sympathy or involvement with the armed rebels in the conflict zones since the revolution of 2019:

“During the period of the previous regime, people coming from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile encounter[ed] more problems with security services than others because they were considered supporting the armed movements in these states, but after the 2018 revolution [sic], and under the transitional government, we as ACJPS have not documented such cases.”

'Dame Rosalind [Marsden; associate fellow at Chatham House, former UK Ambassador to Sudan] states in October 2019 that the public order services are still enforcing the Public Order Law, which is no longer in force in the country, in the outlying districts of Khartoum and Omdurman. The Public Order Police are reportedly still harassing tea-sellers. Since these are the same police officers working in those districts under the former regime, these arbitrary forms of harassment continue. The chair of a Sudanese women's organisation mentions in an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021 that the number of Nuba in prisons is disproportionately high:

"If you visit jails, it is apparent how they are mostly occupied by people of the Nuba Mountains and especially by a majority of women from the Nuba Mountains and Darfur from smaller tribes that lack a network and support."

'In an interview with Cedoca in February 2021, Crowther mentions some anecdotal reports of harsher treatment being meted out in the districts of Khartoum where Darfuris... live. A number of incidents involving activists in the centre of the city have been well documented, but the potentially larger number of attacks on African citizens in the outlying districts continue to be ignored. Crowther also notes, like Mohaned Elnour that there is an absence of monitoring organisations in these neighbourhoods. She adds that the government provides no protection. The police do not investigate reported instances of abuse and murders. It is difficult to establish the precise situation in the outlying districts where Darfuris and Nuba live because there is no organisation monitoring them.'⁸³

7.2.13 The same report added:

'Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, states in an interview with Cedoca in February 2021 that Darfuris and Nuba run an increased risk of harsh treatment when they come into contact with the law enforcement agencies:

"If they [Darfuri and Nuba] come across the law enforcement agencies they are more likely to face discrimination, the police for instance, they will probably treat them in a harsher way than their northern counterparts in society – these institutions have been built on racial discrimination which was the policy of the former regime."

'Bushra Gamar of HUDO refers during an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021 to the harsh approach adopted by the security services in their dealings with Darfuris...:

"The government – police – usually criminalizing them without any crime... and they are treated harsh..."

'He adds:

"The mentality of the government and the ruling groups has not changed since they are the same group with the same mindset as before the revolution. The dominant mentality in Sudan culture is discriminative and racist in favour of Arab ethnicity, so to be changed it needs generations time.

'In Khartoum there is a kind of slight change, it is done because the international community is looking at Khartoum and the ruling group needs to

⁸³ Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)' (Section 2.1.4.2), 28 June 2021

furberish [sic] their reputation. But when we talk about the African groups in Khartoum, it is still the same. However, the military component within the transitional government is al-Bashir's security committee, everything is there, if we talk about NISS, it is still there. Adding to that, now we have RSF in to Khartoum holding official and political roles within the government. Recently, you may not hear about arrests anymore, except here and there, such as the activist that has been killed by torture under RSF arrest. But there are many disappearances. Disappearances are rising in Khartoum. [...] Because people are poor, illiterate and do not know their rights, they fear the police – the people in the black belt do not dare to report disappearances and we do not know the actual number of disappearances.”

‘In the sources consulted, Cedoca found no further indication of a rising number of disappearances in Khartoum in the period between April 2019 and March 2021, apart from the persons who disappeared during the revolution as from December 2018, during the violent action taken against the sit-in in Khartoum on 3 June 2019 and the crushing of the demonstrations in June and July 2019. Mass graves found in November 2020 have been linked to those disappearances.

‘In an email sent to Cedoca on 5 March 2021 Salma Abdalla writes that one of the first things the security services ask people when they arrest and question them is their tribe and origin:

“Recruitment of security service personnel ensures to employ those [who] identify as Arabs or sympathize with the agenda of the ruling party. Members of security services are indoctrinated to identify and repress potential threats [against] the state including rebel and armed groups from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile. [...] During interrogations by security service or police, it is very common that the first question the detainee is usually asked is to identify their tribe. This question is used by security personnel to assess, detect and single out potential threats [against] the state. Those who identify as non-Arabs from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile are met with suspicion and often accused of belonging to rebel armed groups, which makes them vulnerable to torture and severe punishment. If the security service officer identifies the detainee to be Arab, their chances to survive torture and punishment is much higher than a non-Arab detainee in the same room. Family name, birthplace or mastering the northern dialect are tools to profile them ethnically.”

‘The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes in the general official country report on Sudan of March 2021 that there are no reports of poorer treatment and targeted arrests and detentions of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum in media reports dating from after the power change in August 2019.’⁸⁴

7.2.14 The Cedoca report 2021 stated:

‘Asked which profiles most frequently encounter discrimination, the independent journalist and Sudan expert gave the following reply in an email sent on 2 March 2021:

⁸⁴ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.4.2), 28 June 2021

“Non-Arab still face discrimination. Christians even more. But for political/students/activists/NGO-personnel/alleged supporter of rebel movements, it’s better than before the revolution. Supporters of groups non-signatory to Juba, notably Fur supporters of Abdelwahid... are likely to face discrimination, including from rebels signatory to Juba.

‘The chair of a Sudanese women’s organisation has this to say on the subject in an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021:

“Definitely university students who are poor and come to the center, they experience discrimination, lack of access to resources. The education institution does not offer any support, they are on their own, and there is consistent protest and lack of engagements by state officials in hearing them...

‘They [alleged supporters of rebel movements] are not openly persecuted. I am not aware of any recent case – that is, in the past few months. There are public debates being held, people can speak out nowadays. [...]’⁸⁵

7.2.15 The Cedoca report 2021 further noted:

‘During an interview with Cedoca, the Sudanese journalist and security analyst says the number of incidents has fallen since the disbanding of the NISS: “Despite these violations, however, it is important to note that the level of crackdown against the groups from the marginalised regions has decreased in places such as Khartoum and major urban areas outside the conflict regions. This is largely due to the dissolution of the former National Intelligence and Security and Service (NISS) which systematically persecuted members of the ethnic groups coming from the conflict areas. The current transitional government took measures to halt these violations by delegating the power of arrest and detention to the Sudanese police. The police should only detain persons and hold them in custody on legal grounds. [...] However, the military component whose leading members belonged to old regime, continue to commit violations against non-Arab persons. These violations, albeit in narrower scale than before, are still being carried out by the Sudanese military factions and security units.”’⁸⁶

7.2.16 The Cedoca report 2021 summarised its findings:

‘Notions of Arab supremacy and the condescending attitude towards communities from marginalised regions, embedded among the traditional Sudanese elite and deeply rooted in Sudanese society, continue to exist and, according to many sources, this situation is unlikely to change in the near future. The extent and nature of the discrimination a person may face depends on a combination of connected and mutually reinforcing factors such as ethnicity, origin, network, economic status, politics or religious profile.

‘Under al-Bashir’s regime, both Arab and non-Arab opponents of the Sudanese regime, e.g. human rights activists, critical journalists, politically active students, lawyers, tribal leaders and actual and perceived sympathisers of rebel movements risked repression by the authorities and

⁸⁵ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.5), 28 June 2021

⁸⁶ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (pages 29 and 30), 28 June 2021

the nowdisbanded NISS in particular. It remains unclear how bodies such as the GIS and the RSF are treating Nuba and Darfuris and whether the transitional government is able to exercise effective control over the conduct of the security sector. Some contacts say that political activism aimed at the old regime is a critical factor for personal jeopardy rather than ethnicity or origin.

‘The ACJPS has heard of no incidents of people having been persecuted by the security services because of their real or supposed actual or presumed sympathy or involvement with the armed rebels in the conflict zones since the revolution of 2019. Several sources cite anecdotal reports of harsher treatment being meted out by security services in the districts where Darfuris and Nuba live.’⁸⁷

- 7.2.17 The OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Sudan between October 2020 and 30 June 2021, dated July 2021, observed that the ‘volatile situation and tensions throughout Darfur... remain a concern’. However, the report made no mention of the specific discrimination, targeting or ill-treatment of non-Arab Darfuris by the state and/or its proxies in Darfur, Khartoum or elsewhere in Sudan⁸⁸.
- 7.2.18 Sudan Tribune⁸⁹ and Radio Dabanga⁹⁰, two independent Sudanese news outlets, have not reported on specific targeting of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum on their online news website.

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7.3 Access to public services and accomodation

- 7.3.1 The UKHO FFM report noted, citing various sources, that: ‘...most Darfuris live in the shanty towns that surround the capital with other non-Arab groups, such as the Nuba and South Sudanese...The government has not permitted the establishment of internnally displaced person (IDP) camps in and around Khartoum.’⁹¹
- 7.3.2 For more information on Darfuri employment profiles and representation across society, see the [Report of the FFM to Khartoum](#).
- 7.3.3 The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) noted in a Country of Origin query response for information on the situation of non-Arab Darfuris (including Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit, Bergu, Dajo) in Khartoum, in the period of August 2019 - May 2020 based on a number of sources:

‘No or only very limited information on the living conditions and access to employment of the non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum in the reference period could be found amongst consulted and used sources in the time constraints of this query response.

‘...A report of the Dutch government on the situation in Sudan released in October 2019 indicates that the number of “displaced persons” living in Khartoum is not known.... Other sources noted in 2018 that ‘[m]ore than 50

⁸⁷ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (page 41), 28 June 2021

⁸⁸ UNHRC, ‘[Report of the Office of the United Nations High...](#)’ (section III), 27 July 2021

⁸⁹ Sudan Tribune, ‘[About](#)’, undated

⁹⁰ Radio Dabanga, ‘[About us](#)’, undated

⁹¹ UK HO, ‘[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)’ (Section 1.5), November 2018

per cent of residents [of Khartoum] are living in informal settlements and squatter settlements on the outskirts of the city, or in neighbourhoods that lack basic infrastructure. Sources indicated that informal settlements were subjected to forced evictions and demolitions by the al-Bashir government... No information on the situation of the informal settlements in the reference period could be found amongst consulted and used sources in the time constraints of this query response.

‘After the change of the government in August 2019, 1 in 5 people of “working age” did not have a job in Sudan according to a report by Al Jazeera. Another source estimated that half of the population was unemployed in Sudan in November 2019. In December 2019, rising inflation was reported to be a continuous problem in Sudan. Rising unemployment and inflation in Sudan were reported again in April 2020.

‘In January 2020, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) stated that “[a]s the economic crisis [in Sudan] continues, people in urban areas, including Khartoum, are increasingly struggling to cope.” The same source noted that access to services “varies widely” in different neighborhoods of Khartoum and that it can be “non-existent”. The same source assessed that 793 000 people in Khartoum were one step on their scale before reaching “acute food insecurity”.⁹²

7.3.4 The Cedoca report 2021, based on various sources, noted:

‘The living conditions and income levels of inhabitants of Khartoum differ considerably between the various districts in the city. Landinfo says the settlement pattern in Khartoum is based more on social class than ethnicity and regional background. The Norwegian country of origin information centre concludes that internally displaced persons and migrants from Darfur and marginalised regions largely live under the same conditions as the urban poor. The IDS [Institute of Development Studies] also identifies the poverty of many migrants as the factor which will determine where they live in the city.

‘...Most Darfuris, however, live in the shanty towns that surround the capital, where there is a lack of services, water and electricity, with other non-Arab groups, such as the Nuba and South Sudanese. Most have informal jobs selling tea, sugar, water and air time for mobiles.

‘A Sudanese journalist and security analyst who lives in Brussels and wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, writes the following in an email of 12 February 2021:

“People from the so-called marginalised areas including the South Kordofan, Darfur and the Blue Nile regions who resettled in urban cities in Khartoum and elsewhere across Sudan suffer exclusion from economic opportunities and lack of services. IDPs and members from these communities who settled in Khartoum for instance, exclusively live in ghettos and poor neighbourhoods in the city’s peripheries in areas such as Mayo, Al-Haj Yousif, Dar al-Salam and others. These areas are characterised by lack of basic services in education, health care and rundown conditions. The

⁹² EASO, ‘[COI Query: Sudan – Non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum](#)’, 16 June 2020

longstanding inequality facing these communities is rooted in the Sudanese politics of exclusion marginalisation adopted by successive government in the center which led to rebellion and wars in the above-mentioned regions. A significant number of civilians from these regions had to flee elsewhere as a result of direct attacks against them and their livelihoods. They are thus pushed to the fringes and subjected to deprivation and destitute in the new areas they settled in after displacement. By design and through monopoly of power, quality education, access to services, employment opportunities are exclusively created and offered to the members of the constituencies of the ruling elites in the center and the northern parts of the country. This is the structural political problem facing the country. It is the root cause of the armed conflict between the peripheries (Darfur, the South Kordofan and the Blue Nile) and the traditional power base in the center.”

‘There are no official IDP camps in Khartoum. Former official IDP sites have disappeared in the poor outlying districts. Most internally displaced persons live in unofficial settlements in an area known as the black belt, in shanty towns on the outskirts of the city, where there is no electricity, proper drinking water and public services. Waging Peace, a British NGO which documents human rights’ violations in Sudan, and NMP [Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation] note that there are few schools and healthcare institutions in that zone, and that many are unable to afford education or healthcare. Also, since many IDPs do not have ID cards, access to such facilities is difficult. The humanitarian conditions in these settlements are poor and reports emerge every now and then of forced evictions of internally displaced persons...

‘Geir Skogseth, Sudan analyst of Norway’s Landinfo, describes these squatter settlements as follows:

“A large share of the population of greater Khartum live in so-called non-registered settlement areas, that is areas where people build housing without permits, and without the government providing any sort of infrastructure. As far back as in 1995, ‘about 2 million squatter live in more than one hundred squatter settlements forming what has come to be called ‘the Black Belt of Khartoum’. Out of a total urban area of 500 square kilometres, some 30-50% of the land is taken by squatter settlements.’ The growth of these informal areas has continued since the 1990s.

‘Formally, these areas are either considered to be privately owned agricultural land (and zoned for that purpose) or land owned by the state. People settling on agricultural land may have purchased it from the owners, but without registering the transfer of ownership with the authorities or attempting to rezone it (both would probably involve a lot of bureaucracy, fees, bribes, etc., which is particularly challenging for poor and uneducated people from the periphery). Civilian authorities collect little information about the population in these areas, and have on several occasions not only actively resisted ‘formalising’ such areas (which would give them the responsibility to provide infrastructure – water, sanitation, electricity, roads,

schools, clinics), but even evicted large groups of people and destroying privately built infrastructure.’⁹³

7.3.5 The same report continued:

‘The living conditions of Darfuris and Nuba reflect the general humanitarian situation in Khartoum and the present economic malaise in Sudan. Popular protests, prompted by a lingering economic crisis which sharply increased the cost of living in the country and made for shortages of bread, fuel, essential medicines and cash, led in April 2019 to a military coup which brought an end to the thirty-year regime of president Omar al-Bashir. The economic crisis has by no means disappeared since the formation of a transitional government comprising a military and civilian component. The UN Security Council states on 1 March 2021 that poor families in urban areas will probably have limited access to food until May 2021 because of the high food prices which are limiting households’ purchasing power. Mohaned Elnour, a Sudanese human rights lawyer who lives in London, says in an interview with Cedoca that all Sudanese are suffering as a result of the economic crisis, but emphasises the precarious situation of Darfuris and Nuba:

“Most of the Sudanese, whatever their ethnicity, they are all suffering. There is a general lack of good education and health care. But it is particularly bad for children of Darfur and Nuba mountains, you can see them beg on the streets in all cities.”⁹⁴

7.3.6 The same Cedoca report 2021 reported:

‘...Access to public services depends mainly on a person’s financial means. Bushra Gamar of HUDO mentions the financial aspect as an important factor during an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021:

“They [Darfuri and Nuba] have a very low income, nowadays in Khartoum, to access education, health and essential rights, you need money. The poor do not have access. Education for example is divided in public and private education. Private education is better, but very expensive. The public education is very poor. Only a small amount of money has to be paid but even then, sometimes parents cannot fulfill this, which forced children to engage in child labor like shoe shining.”

‘Gamar goes onto say:

“Health care is expensive, and these days hospitals do not accept people because of the COVID crisis. It’s a general problem for everyone, public and private hospitals. They charge high – a person with an income of 300 USD per year, how can he access this?”

‘The Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour also says: “It depends on their financial situation... no one will be denied health care if they have money.”

‘The three European research services see no systematic discrimination... The scarcity of public services in the slums, with health and educational

⁹³ Cedoca, [‘The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...’](#) (Section 2.1.2), 28 June 2021

⁹⁴ Cedoca, [‘The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...’](#) (Section 2.1.2), 28 June 2021

services limited, also applies to infrastructure such as water supply, sewage systems and electricity. According to NMP, the lack of truly affordable education often drives children into child labour.

‘Bushra Gamar has this to say on the subject:

“In the marginalized area of ‘the black belt’ there is no infrastructure, electricity or water. People have to walk a distance to get water. People working downtown, they have to travel hours to reach their work.”⁹⁵

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7.4 Employment and the economy

7.4.1 The UKHO FFM report also noted, citing various sources, that ‘The Darfuri community in Khartoum is ethnically, socially and economically diverse, and includes (wealthy) individuals who hold positions in government, business, law, academia, the security forces and in medicine, as well as several thousand students... Darfuris have also established community and ethnic associations in areas where they have settled in Khartoum. However, most Darfuris... are mostly employed in menial jobs.’⁹⁶

7.4.2 The FFM report to Khartoum published in November 2018 by the Home Office observed:

‘A number of sources identified that many non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum live in poor parts of the city and in the shanty towns that surround it, doing “menial” jobs such as selling tea, sugar cane, water, construction and farm labouring in areas just outside of the city.

‘However, sources also acknowledged that there are non-Arab Darfuris spread across Sudanese and Khartoum society. The Second Secretary Political at the British Embassy likened the situation of Darfuris to that of British Muslims, who are “spread across society, there are poor Muslims but also doctors, lawyers, etc.” The source observed there are wealthy Darfuris and poorer Darfuri working on farms. Darfuris are in:

- Government
- Business
- Medicine
- ‘Law, noting there is a Darfuri Bar Association [DBA] (which, according Salih Osman [of the DBA], includes 500 Darfuri lawyers, the majority of whom are in Khartoum)...
- ‘...Similarly, the professor from Darfur acknowledged that there are some non-Arab Darfuris in position of authority, such as in the security forces (albeit their allegiance is to their “political masters”, the ruling National Congress Party). The professor also agreed that there are “Darfuris throughout Khartoum – in law, academia, government, business. There are some Darfuris in positions outside of Khartoum, for example some

⁹⁵ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.2.1), 28 June 2021

⁹⁶ UK HO, ‘[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)’ (Section 1.5), November 2018

are doctors or lawyers, but their numbers are small as Darfuris access to education is less than other groups.”⁹⁷

7.4.3 The Cedoca report 2021 stated:

‘Albaqir Mukhtar, the director of the Al-Khatim Center for Enlightenment (KACE), states the following in an interview with Cedoca:

“The more wealthy from conflict areas can be found in the town. For the Darfuri those a bit wealthy are mostly Zaghawa, known for trading at the market called Souq Libya/Libya market. The others, living in the slums, they do marginalized jobs like cleaning, washing (manually), labor in building/construction, and other likes. Women do some of those jobs and tea maker/sellers [sic].”...

‘It is difficult to say whether the fact that many Darfuris... work in the informal sector or have low-paid jobs is the result of discrimination or the absence of the necessary qualifications. Albaqir Mukhtar says it is difficult to pinpoint the precise causes of the limited access Darfuris... have to education, healthcare, accommodation and the job market:

“You can’t tell – you have to understand the situation in Sudan – there is poverty everywhere, even people who are educated and have a university degree, they are unemployed. The unemployment rate is more than 60 percent. It is very difficult to find any job. These people can only do menial unskilled work, mostly in construction. They work as hustlers in the street and get employed by traders, day to day, they roam the streets holding their goods in their hands and backs. The opportunities for women are better. They sell foods or drinks, tea and coffee. They only need limited means to start a business under a tree.”

‘The limited access to education, or to high-quality education, has a negative impact on the opportunities of Darfuris ...in the labour market, says Bushra Gamar:

“High ranking jobs are not possible since the majority of these groups is illiterate and they cannot get the recommendation (letters or authorized persons) needed. The jobs they are doing are low level jobs: washing, cleaning, house labor with very little wage - you can work all month and get 10 dollar.”

‘In an email sent to Cedoca on 5 March 2021, Salma Abdalla, postgraduate researcher at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, indicates various reasons why Darfuris... face difficulties in finding jobs. The lack of infrastructure and education in their region of origin or in the impoverished districts of the towns or cities to which they migrate means that many Darfuris... lack the necessary knowledge and skills for jobs in the formal labour market. It is also important that they have a network they can rely on as a means of securing a place in the formal labour market:

“The ongoing economic crisis has left most of Sudanese citizens under extreme poverty. However, people from Darfur... who move to Khartoum

⁹⁷ UK HO, ‘[Report of a fact-finding mission to Khartoum, Sudan](#)’ (Section 1.5), November 2018

and to other northern cities face multiple difficulties in finding work, housing and access to healthcare and schooling...

'Long years of war and marginalization by central government have disadvantaged these regions in terms of economic and social developments. Therefore, people from these areas face multiple challenges to integrate in the new communities due to lack of the skills required to compete with people from relatively stable regions, doubled with systemic discrimination in the host communities. In a society where social network represents a great asset to make a living, lacking those networks leaves you with very limited options. People who have moved to Khartoum prior to the war, have adapted and developed some skills to survive resources [sic] that are not available for newcomers.'

7.4.4 The Cedoca report 2021 stated

'Various sources note that men and women working under the regime of the former President al-Bashir tended to employ people of the same ethnic origin. The only way of finding work in a tight labour market is through well-positioned relatives within the extended family, says Abdelmoneium in 2017. Unskilled labour for a low wage is usually the only option... Albaqir Mukhtar says this is possibly still the case because the same civil servants are still in post... In October 2020, Radio Dabanga quotes a student from South Kordofan who says employers still favour people from their own family circle or their own ethnic group: "The few employment opportunities announced are being contested by tens of thousands of graduates. And we know that they are only announced for the purpose of information, as they have often already been distributed to relatives of people working there."...'⁹⁸

7.4.5 Furthermore, the report added:

'According to Salma Abdalla, these groups also face social discrimination in Khartoum:

"Ethnic profiling is very common in Sudan, although subtle and often camouflaged. People are judged according to their ethnicity, especially those who hail from non-Arab ethnic groups face discrimination from those who identify themselves as Arabs. The latter consider themselves more superior and they are not ready to acknowledge their racism and refuse to sacrifice their privileges that have been enforced by successive regimes. Take for instance the job market, people from Darfur... have less opportunity to be recruited in government positions or promoted in the military's higher ranks regardless of their merits. Recruitment committees are still controlled by members with racist mentality and consider people from these 3 regions [Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile] as less deserving of recruitment in government positions. There are ministries that are known to recruit people from particular tribes from northern Sudan. Another example is the issuing [of] official documents such as passport/birth-certificate or National ID."

'Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, says society's view of Darfuris, Nuba and other marginalised groups is slowly changing. He adds that lower government posts are still held by civil servants of the former regime so

⁹⁸ Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)' (p20), 28 June 2021

certain discriminatory practices and views continue to exist, in particular as regards recruitment procedures:

“I guess this is continuing until now since the government has not changed, apart from the top leadership. There are new ministers, new governors, new directors but the body of the civil servants in the government is more or less the same.

‘Things are started [sic] to change, the revolution raised the slogan for equality for all people, there was the famous slogan in the revolution about Darfur – “we are all Darfur”. The current government has concluded the Juba peace agreement with Darfurian Armed movements. In this agreement it has been agreed on positive discrimination for Darfurians and extra money for development in Darfur.

‘The Africa tribes in Darfur... have been persecuted, oppressed, and excluded for decades during al Bashir’s regime– things will not change overnight. Things after the revolution are better for them, but most of them are not yet enjoying the fruits of the revolution. The educated amongst them, those who apply for jobs in government can benefit, but the majority, the uneducated, the unskilled, and women may have to wait for some time before things start to change for them... it needs a decade with these policies in place before the situation will gradually change.”

‘Various sources indicate that the economic opportunities for Darfuris and Nuba have not improved since the transitional government took office in August 2019. An independent journalist and expert on Sudan, who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, informed Cedoca in an email sent on 2 March 2021 that the difficulties Darfuris and Nuba experience in Khartoum and other towns and cities as regards job opportunities, accommodation, education and access to healthcare are “much like before the revolution”. The chair of a Sudanese women’s movement, who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, tells Cedoca in an interview that little has changed in the economic situation of these marginalised groups since the transitional government took office in August 2019:

“We are a woman rights organization. We see the same rate of women criminalization and arrests as before, due to the harsh economic situation and with a legal framework criminalizing women, for example alcohol brewers...

‘The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains outlines the impact of the current crisis on the employment opportunities of Darfuris and Nuba in an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021:

“Right now when people from these areas go to Khartoum, they have an extremely difficult time to find work because of the economic situation, it is extremely hard... It is a really bad situation for people from Two Areas and Darfur to find work. Ethnic issues do play a role. There is definitely a notion of racism. The word “slave” is used very openly to black people as Darfuri, Nuba and people from Blue Nile.”⁹⁹

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⁹⁹ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.1.2.2), 28 June 2021

8. Darfur

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 The Cedoca report 2021 noted: 'Darfur is divided into five states: Central Darfur (capital - Zalingei), East Darfur (Ed Daein), North Darfur (El Fasher), South Darfur (Nyala) and West Darfur (El Geneina).'¹⁰⁰

8.1.2 Radio Dabanga summarised in a June 2021 article:

'Darfur has a long history of strife between often Arab herding tribes and non-Arab African herders or sedentary farmers, which were exploited by the previous regime of dictator Omar Al Bashir who supported the Janjaweed militia that carried out many attacks on farmers. Al Bashir employed these militias, largely made up of Arab nomads, to repress a revolt over ethnic discrimination in the region, mainly targeting non-Arab African farmers. According to the UN, the conflict left at least 300,000 people dead and displaced more than 2.5 million.

'Officially, the [Rapid Support Force] RSF militia, set up by the ousted Al Bashir regime in 2013, was integrated into the Sudan Armed Forces in August 2019. At the same time, however, the militia stays a force unto itself. The RSF, which grew out of the Janjaweed who fought for the Sudanese government in Darfur, is widely believed to be responsible for atrocities in the country in the past seven years. Many Sudanese hold the paramilitaries also accountable for the violent break-up of the Khartoum sit-in on June 3, 2019.'¹⁰¹

8.1.3 Mohamed Osman, an assistance researcher on Sudan for Human Rights Watch, stated in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021:

'If you look at El Geneina, which is ethnically divided, there are certain blocks for Arabs and some for Africans, but there are some in the same blocks - there is a level of co-existence that exists there, as well as in certain parts of the country. It is just the political triggers that keep pushing this escalation of violence between groups. Some Arabs said they no longer want to be used in an ethnic war, that they have been used for political ends. For example, the Arab militia leader, Musa Hilal was aware that they were being used by the political elite. There is now a certain political awareness that Arabs have been used in a bigger political agenda in Darfur.

'The last decades of conflict have exacerbated differences and made it harder to socially co-exist. When African groups talk about recruitment from Chad from Arab tribes, what they say is Arab tribes exist on the other side of the Sudanese border, so they are not Sudanese, so they see Arabs as invaders. A lot of this new narrative is coming from both sides of ethnic groups – they see the other as invaders or outsiders. But people also say we live with Arabs and went to schools with Arabs.'¹⁰²

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¹⁰⁰ Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfur and Nuba...](#)' (Section 1.1.1), 28 June 2021

¹⁰¹ Radio Dabanga, '[At least 36 die in South Darfur clashes](#)', 8 June 2021

¹⁰² UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

8.2 Human rights

8.2.1 Regarding whether NADs are subject to human rights violations because of their ethnicity alone, Mohamed Osman of HRW stated in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021:

‘We do not have a large presence in Darfur – I would say most information would be from media contacts, based on scattered reports of arrests by the intelligence agencies - but not as large scale as we used to see. There were a series of demonstrations last year which involved violent crackdowns – we saw a number of arrests that may have involved application of emergency laws, but beyond that no noticeable patterns of arbitrary arrest or torture or ill-treatment as far as we know. Which is a big improvement on the situation before the transitional government.

‘We noticed immediately after protests, around July and August 2020, that many arrests were carried out by the RSF. Military forces were driven by the idea that NAD are linked to rebel groups – this is no longer the situation and one of the reasons we see a de-escalation...

‘As far as we know, no international human rights/humanitarian group has been to Darfur since the political changes. According to our research, we identified in West Darfur that there has been a decline in attacks against civilians and humanitarians but there is a failure of the government to protect its citizens and investigate abuses.’¹⁰³

8.2.2 The of UN Human Rights Council Report the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, published on 27 July 2021, stated:

‘In regard to the six reported grave violations against children, a total of 55 cases were reported against 54 children (40 boys; 13 girls; 1 sex unknown). Of that total, 52 cases of serious violations were verified involving State and non-state actors. The killing and maiming of children continued to be the most prevalent violation, with 53 cases reported, mostly in Darfur. Additionally, in the context of intercommunal violence, on 16 January 2021, in the Krinding camps for internally displaced persons located in El Geneina, 15 children were killed, (12 boys, 2 girls and 1 sex unknown) and 13 children were maimed (7 boys and 6 girls), most of them from the Masalit tribe. Three girls were subjected to rape and attempted rape in West Darfur and Central Darfur in late 2020 and January 2021. The perpetrators were reportedly never held accountable.

‘The commitments of the Government of the Sudan to protecting civilians are enshrined in the ambitious national plan for the protection of civilians, which was presented to the Security Council in May 2020 following the decision on the drawdown of UNAMID. The Juba Peace Agreement also includes ambitious commitments to the protection of civilians. The most important instrument for physical protection of civilians is the 20,000- strong Joint Protection Force, composed of both government security forces and the forces of the Darfuri armed movements that signed the Juba Peace Agreement. The Joint Protection Force is mandated to undertake the

¹⁰³ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

constitutional, moral and political responsibility of the Government in protecting civilians...

‘Delays in the implementation of the national plan for the protection of civilians continue to create a protection gap in Darfur. The lack of timely action by the Government forces to deter or to stop the last three horrific violent incidents in El Geneina and the weak accountability by State authorities in relation to all violations associated with intercommunal armed conflict raise serious concerns regarding the lack of adequate protection of human rights. If this situation remains unaddressed, it could undermine public confidence in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and disrupt the building blocks of the country’s transition agenda.’¹⁰⁴

8.2.3 The United Nations Security Council Report of the Secretary-General review of the situation in Darfur and benchmarks to assess the measures on Darfur, published on 31 July 2021, stated:

‘The overall situation in Darfur has improved since July 2004, when the Security Council first adopted measures to address the deteriorating security situation in the region. The change was largely brought on by the democratic revolution of December 2018 and other positive developments, such as the political agreement on establishing the structures and institutions of the transitional period between the Transitional Military Council and the Declaration of Freedom and Change Forces signed on 17 July 2019; the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August 2019 signed by the Forces for Freedom and Change alliance and the Transitional Military Council; the national action plan for the protection of civilians of 21 May 2020; and the Juba Peace Agreement, signed on 3 October 2020.

‘The Juba Peace Agreement, which comprises a national framework and separate tracks to address specific issues of concern to each region in the Sudan, represents the best opportunity for the country to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable peace for all its citizens. The Darfur Agreement between the Transitional Government of the Sudan and Darfur Parties to Peace includes protocols on power-sharing; wealth-sharing; justice, accountability and reconciliation; internally displaced persons and refugees; development of the nomads and herders sector in the Darfur region; land and hawakeer; a permanent ceasefire; and final security arrangements. Implementation of the protocols has the potential to comprehensively address the underlying causes of conflict in Darfur.

‘Since the onset of the democratic transition in the Sudan, the transitional Government has implemented some ambitious political reforms, which have also had a positive impact on Darfur. They include a Cabinet reshuffle, the expansion of the ruling Sovereign Council of the Sudan in February 2021 to include the armed group signatories of the Agreement, and the appointment of Minni Minawi as the Governor of the Darfur region on 29 April 2021 and of two of the five Darfur state governors (walis) on 14 June 2021. The recent adoption of legislation establishing the Peace Commission, the Anti-

¹⁰⁴ UNHRC, ‘[Report of the Office of the United Nations...](#)’ (Paragraphs 10 and 11), 27 July 2021

Corruption Commission and the Transitional Justice Commission is also an important step.’¹⁰⁵

8.2.4 The report continued:

‘...Sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, remains a major concern. In 2020, there were 105 documented cases of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 65 women, 39 girls and 1 boy. Incidents were attributed to elements of SLA-AW and armed nomads, with the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces also being implicated. In terms of the impact of insecurity on children, the United Nations verified that, in 2020, there were 292 grave violations against 274 children (143 boys, 131 girls), 12 including recruitment of children by signatories and non-signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement. In the rural areas, as well as with internally displaced populations, a lack of security prevents the cultivation of land during the current rainy season and the harvesting of crops between November and February. Internally displaced persons (mainly women) who return to their land to cultivate it risk attacks by those who illegally occupy the land.

‘This insecurity has also had an impact on the drawdown of UNAMID. Since January 2021, 11 of the 14 UNAMID team sites, which have been handed over to civilian authorities, have been looted. Since June 2021, various forces of the signatory armed groups have been deployed outside the perimeter fence of the UNAMID logistics base in El Fasher. On a number of occasions, these armed groups interfered with the freedom of movement of UNAMID personnel and infringed on their security, and may have been positioning themselves to take over the assets of the camp upon the departure of UNAMID. In early July 2021, a joint security force was formed, through the coordination of the Sudanese Armed Forces, to provide ongoing security around the liquidation operation at El Fasher. As at 23 July, UNAMID reported that there had yet to be an improvement in command and control of the joint security force, but there had been a reduction in the presence of armed groups in the vicinity of the UNAMID logistics base.

‘The regional dimension of the security situation relating to Darfur also remains of considerable concern. While in Khartoum, the assessment team organized a round-table discussion with the relevant Panels of Experts. These Panels stressed the security challenges posed by the porous borders between the Darfur region in the Sudan with Libya, the Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan. They stressed the continued flow of arms and armed groups to and from Darfur and countries of the region, which threatened the security and stability of Darfur, as well as those countries.’¹⁰⁶

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8.3 Sudan Liberation Army – Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLA/AW) faction

8.3.1 Based on various sources, an October 2020 European Asylum Support Office (EASO) COI query on armed groups, the security situation and internal displacement situation, stated:

¹⁰⁵ UNSC, ‘[Review of the situation in Darfur...](#)’ (Paragraphs 3 – 5), 31 July 2021

¹⁰⁶ UNSC, ‘[Review of the situation in Darfur...](#)’ (Paragraphs 11 and 12), 31 July 2021

‘The SLA/AW is the only rebel group that has maintained a significant presence inside Darfur, with its activities concentrated in the Jebel Marra area, ‘a mountain range spanning over the three states of Central, North, and South Darfur’. It draws support from the Fur tribe, particularly in IDP camps in Darfur. The SLA/AW has been increasingly fragmented and losing territorial control due to infighting and internal divisions on the engagement of negotiations with the government. Abdul Wahid Nur’s control of the SLA/AW as well as support among IDPs of the group have reportedly ‘significantly eroded’ in 2019 due to questioning of his ‘leadership style and strategy’ ...’¹⁰⁷

- 8.3.2 The United Nations Security Council ‘Letter dated 13 January 2021 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council’ reported:

‘In Darfur, SLA/AW [Sudan Liberation Army – Abdul Wahid] increased its capability in Jebel Marra by recruiting new fighters and purchasing weapons, thanks to new gold-mining revenues. While clashes between SLA/AW and the security forces were relatively limited, ongoing internal fighting tore the movement apart and resulted in the displacement of at least 20,000 local civilians and numerous human rights violations...’¹⁰⁸

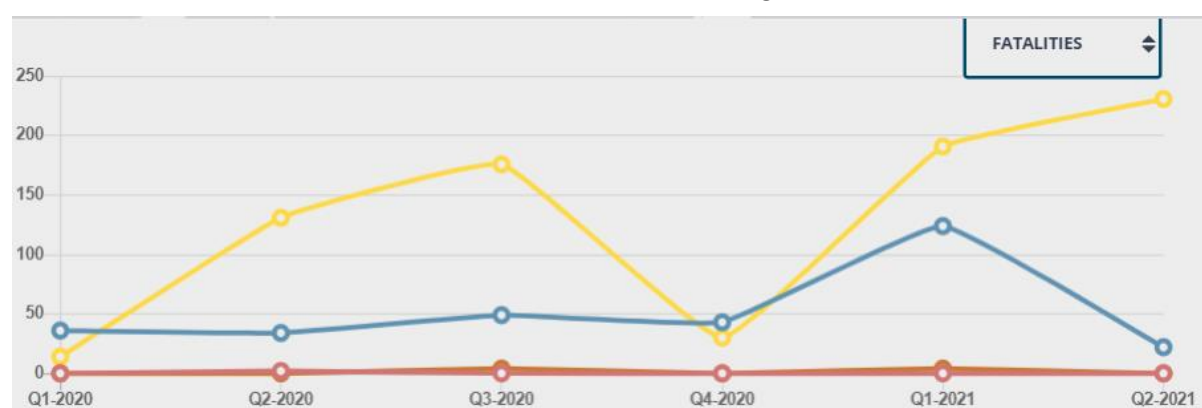
- 8.3.3 The Independent expert stated in a meeting with CPIT on 4 June 2021: ‘Al-Nur is an important leader and many follow him in the IDP camps, but I think he is losing support as there is much fragmentation of the SLA-AW. He still holds command but he is not a good politician and has not delivered to them in any particular way.’¹⁰⁹

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8.4 Security situation

- 8.4.1 ACLED provided data for the period 1 January 2020 to 1 June 2021 for Central, North, South and West Darfur.

- 8.4.2 The number of fatalities are shown in the image below:

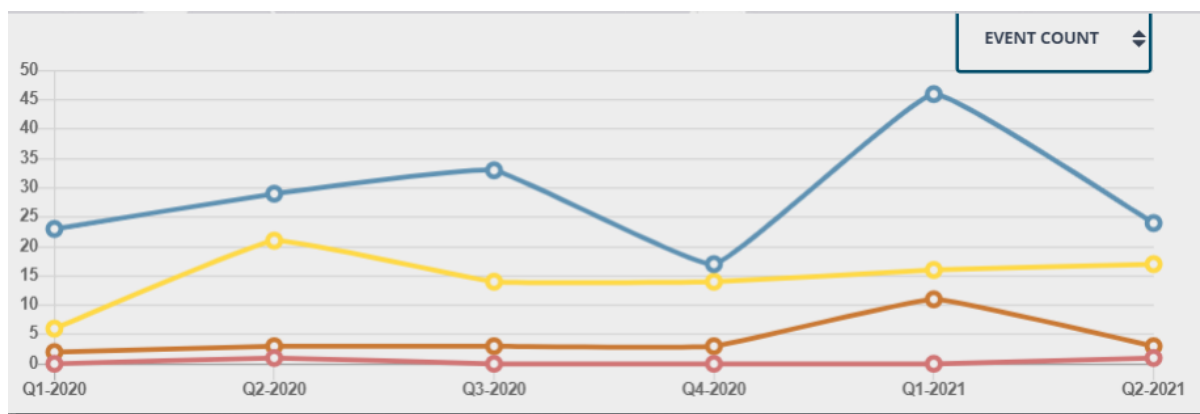


- 8.4.3 The number of incidents are shown in the image below:

¹⁰⁷ EASO, ‘[COI Query: Sudan – Armed groups. Security situation...](#)’ (Para 2.3), 13 October 2020

¹⁰⁸ UN, ‘[Letter dated 13 January 2021 from the Panel of Experts...](#)’ (Summary), 13 January 2021

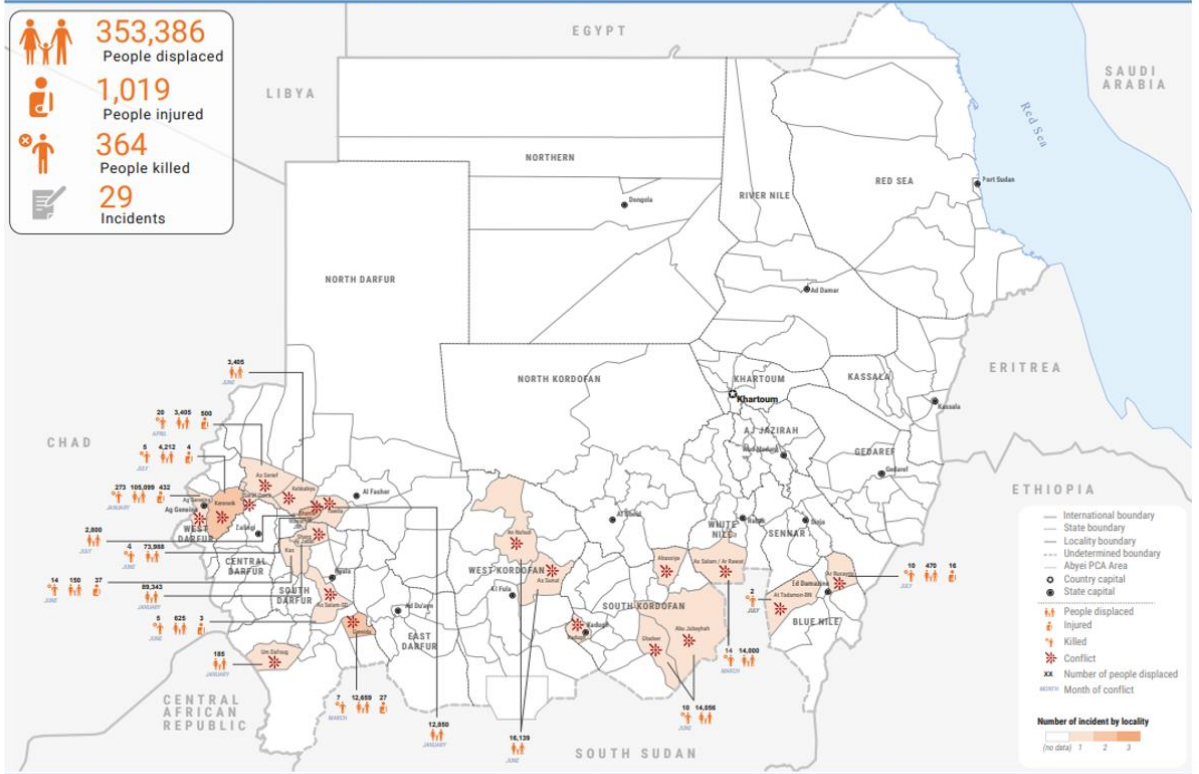
¹⁰⁹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)



8.4.4 The information shows that there were a total number of 287 events and 1,091 fatalities¹¹⁰.

8.4.5 The following map from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs shows the location of intercommunal conflicts and armed attacks from January 2021 to July 2021, as well as the number of incidents and number of people displaced, injured and killed:

¹¹⁰ ACLED, '[Dashboard, Sudan, Darfur, 1 June 2020 – 4 June 2021](#)', undated



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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- 8.4.6 The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), ‘a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project’¹¹², shows various data in the Darfur region. From 1 June 2020 to 4 June 2021, the dashboard shows 1,022 reported fatalities and 262 total events in the Darfur region, those being 81 battles, 3 explosions or remote violence and 178 violent events against civilians ¹¹³.
- 8.4.7 The independent expert stated in an interview with CPIT on 4 June 2021: ‘Since the formation of the transitional government, since September 2019 - there is a couple of phases to consider when talking about security: ‘One key phase is the fall of Bashir and the other, which started before Bashir left and the catalyst of his fall, is the decline of the economy. The ‘old guard’ squirrelled away their ill-gotten gains. Economic difficulties continue now, particular in urban areas, less impact in rural areas which have had to exist without support from the centre. Fuel, wheat prices, even subsidised, are high, this has led to smuggling of commodities. The economy and its decline exacerbate bad conditions for people. Inflation is spiralling and people are suffering in Khartoum. ‘In terms of security, the main points that are most impactful are the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) and climate change.

¹¹¹ Ecol.net, '[Sudan Intercommunal Conflicts and Armed Attacks...](#)', 8 August 2021

112 ACLED, 'About ACLED', undated

¹¹³ ACLED, 'Dashboard, Sudan, Darfur, 1 June 2020 – 4 June 2021', undated

‘The JPA that was signed between most of the Sudanese armed groups and the transitional government brought armed groups into the government.

‘Security reform has been proposed but is not really heading anywhere for now. Before the signing of the agreement, its contents were filtered back to Darfur. The agreement worried groups that used to enjoy life under Bashir and benefitted from his government because they feared the return of NAD IDPs.

‘With the prospect of returns, it is not clear where those returning to Darfur will go or where they will return to exactly. Empowered Arab groups (and lots of different groups self-identify as Arab) do not want non-Arabs to return to Darfur to claim land. The Arab groups benefitted under the former government and have been in Darfur for 10, 20 and 30 years - so there is a huge multi-layered problem overland rights - there is a whole legal process that should be put in place to sort this out, but there isn’t.

‘When the JPA agreement was signed, some people returned to Darfur from Chad. Only a bit of violence caused those returnees to leave again.

‘The government has set up a land commission and a compensation and justice mechanism – realistically very little of that will get done.

‘The other problem is climate change which is narrowing planting and grazing areas in Darfur and across the Sahel and reducing where people can live. People have no incentive to return.

‘Another point is the departure of UNAMID in Darfur. UNAMID has been drawing down since December 2020 and is officially leaving at the end of June 2021. This has happened with the prime minister’s and military’s acquiescence and with China’s and Russia’s support in the UN. There is no real planning in place in the drawdown to protect civilians in Darfur, it also affects humanitarian and health programmes. At their height, UNAMID had tens of thousands of troops in the region. UNAMID was aggressively emasculated – it couldn’t access certain places and is broadly viewed as a failed mission. However, Darfuris wanted a drawdown plan.

‘The government has a take-over (from UNAMID) plan but it is ‘underbaked’. Half of its forces are from the military and the other half are from the former armed groups. Some of whom have returned from Libya, fighting as mercenaries on either side of the Libyan war.’¹¹⁴

- 8.4.8 The Independent expert stated in an interview with CPIT on 4 June 2021: ‘There is a competition for resources in Darfur. Armed groups are interested in capturing mines and gold mines, so even groups are coming back from Libya. The government is broke, if the money is not going to Khartoum, even less money is going to the peripheries. Around 300 companies are owned by the military, the government is trying to bring these under civilian control. It’s a delicate issue.’¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

¹¹⁵ UKHO, Note of meeting with Independent Expert, 4 June 2021, [Annex A](#)

- 8.4.9 The UN Human Rights Council Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, published on 27 July 2021, stated:

‘The volatile situation and tensions throughout Darfur and in South Kordofan state remain a source of concern. The root causes of the violence, which are linked to competition over access to water resources and pastoral land, have been exacerbated by the proliferation of weapons. Furthermore, the competition for limited resources has been compounded by decades of political manipulation and interference in local tribal affairs. This has stoked tensions and exposed civilians to a significant risk of attacks, killings and sexual violence... The consequences have been dire, exacerbated by the termination of the UNAMID mandate on 31 December 2020, which deprived civilians of the physical protection of peacekeepers, led to continued delays in the operationalization of dedicated national joint security forces to civilian protection and added to prevailing impunity for human rights violations.

‘The Joint Office continues to document violence perpetrated by non-state actors on civilians. On 15 January 2021, in West Darfur, confrontations between the Masalit and Arab tribes in El Geneina and the Krinding camps for internally displaced persons resulted in 162 deaths, 300 injured and the displacement of over 100,000 civilians. On 18 January 2021, in South Darfur, another clash between the Fallata and Rezeigat tribes in Tawilla village resulted in 72 deaths, 73 injured and over 20,000 civilians displaced. From 3 to 7 April 2021, a confrontation between Masalit and Arab tribes in El Geneina led to the killing of 144 people, with 233 injured. On 5 June, 35 people were killed and dozens were injured during tribal clashes between the Taisha and Fallata tribes in Mandwa village in South Darfur. Overall, it is estimated that over 200,000 civilians have been displaced in the violence during the reporting period. The clear identification of perpetrators remains a challenge. Some reports suggest the possible involvement of armed elements in El Geneina town in support of two ethnic groups to the confrontations in January 2021 in West Darfur.

‘In the Jebel Marra area of Darfur, interfactional clashes between rival rebel commanders have caused displacements and disrupted civilian lives and livelihoods, including restricted access for humanitarian actors. The failure by security forces to act preemptively to deter violence, provide physical protection or separate the rival groups may indicate complicity or acquiescence to the violence.’¹¹⁶

- 8.4.10 The United Nations Security Council Report of the Secretary-General review of the situation in Darfur and benchmarks to assess the measures on Darfur, published on 31 July 2021, stated:

‘In terms of security, while a semblance of stability has been restored to the region and access for humanitarian actors has improved, the current security situation in parts of Darfur remains of concern. The withdrawal of the African Union -United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was largely assessed to have left a security and programmatic vacuum, which has yet to be filled by the transitional Government or state-level authorities. Although

¹¹⁶ UNHRC, ‘[Report of the Office of the United Nations...](#)’ (Paras 6 – 8), 27 July 2021

the conflict dynamics are no longer predominantly characterized by fighting between the various armed group signatories and state security forces, insecurity persists. Of primary concern are the increasing frequency of intercommunal violence; clashes among nomads, herders and farmers; clashes between SLA-AW and security forces in Jebel Marra in West Darfur; clashes between factions within SLA-AW; the presence of armed groups from other countries that are using Darfur as a rear base of operations; the actions of armed individuals and militias, some associated with the previous regime; criminality; and the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons.

‘As a result of these sources of insecurity, civilians are still experiencing violent attacks, harassment and intimidation by armed groups and some state security entities...’¹¹⁷

- 8.4.11 The UNSG report on the Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, published on 1 September 2021, stated:

‘There was a rise in security incidents across the Sudan... Delays in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and the Juba Peace Agreement left civilians vulnerable to the deteriorating security situation. The transitional Government continued efforts to provide physical protection in Darfur through the deployment of joint Government forces to de-escalate violence and calm tensions. However, intercommunal clashes continued to be the main source of insecurity.’¹¹⁸

- 8.4.12 For more information, see the [UNSG report on the Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan](#), published on 1 September 2021, paragraphs 11 to 16.

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8.5 Humanitarian situation

- 8.5.1 The United Nations Security Council report dated 13 January 2021 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council which stated: ‘The overall international humanitarian law situation has not improved during the reporting period.’¹¹⁹

- 8.5.2 Mohamed Osman stated in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021:

‘There is widespread inaccessibility of key infrastructure for education and health. For instance, in West Darfur there is not even a single Covid-19 testing centre – people have to travel to another state or go somewhere else for testing. There are issues such as the underfunding of hospitals, the low number of police stations and prosecution officers in Darfur. We never really researched the socio-economic situation so we cannot give numbers.’¹²⁰

- 8.5.3 Furthermore, Mohamed Osman further stated:

¹¹⁷ UNSC, ‘[Review of the situation in Darfur...](#)’ (Paragraphs 10 and 11), 31 July 2021

¹¹⁸ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the...](#)’ (Paragraph 10), 1 September 2021

¹¹⁹ UN, ‘[Letter dated 13 January 2021 from the Panel of Experts...](#)’ (Summary), 13 January 2021

¹²⁰ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

‘There are humanitarian pledges from Friends of Sudan for example and a lot has to do with debt relief. But we have not seen international sponsorship for peace building in Darfur, reliant on the government providing the funding. There were already pledges of humanitarian assistance to Sudan before the peace process. There is a dispute over the monies given to government then being sent to Darfur. The rebels wanted the post of minister of finance in the transitional government to ensure access to funding. Money that is supposed to go to Darfur never gets there – result of corruption.

‘The government has created a ‘corruption committee’ but its focus has been to dismantle Bashir’s former party and to look to the future, rather than look at past corruption.’¹²¹

- 8.5.4 The UNSG report on the Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, published on 1 September 2021, stated:

‘The fragile economic situation, intercommunal conflict and localized armed clashes in Darfur... and recent heavy rains, continued to drive humanitarian needs. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic remained a challenge, affecting the safety and livelihoods of vulnerable Sudanese and refugees. High food prices persisted amid deepening inflation, causing increasing food insecurity. According to WFP, in June 2021 the average cost of the local food basket was 282.86 per cent higher compared with June 2020 and 13 per cent higher than the previous month, mainly owing to the depreciation of the Sudanese pound. The humanitarian community was working with the transitional Government to enhance response preparedness during the rainy season.

‘Owing to an increase in intercommunal conflict, as at 5 August, more than 353,000 people had fled their homes in West and South Kordofan and West, North, Central and South Darfur since the start of 2021. Finding sustainable solutions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return or integration of displaced persons residing in overcrowded gathering points in El Geneina remained an urgent priority, particularly as sanitary conditions had worsened following the start of the rainy season.

‘In North Darfur, on 15 July, clashes in Sortony reportedly resulted in approximately 30,000 internally displaced persons fleeing to surrounding mountains; some have since returned. Health, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene services were currently unavailable. Residents in Sortony relied on rainwater or an open well near the camp for drinking water. While clearance for an inter-agency humanitarian mission to Sortony had yet to be granted, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society undertook a food distribution effort on 6 August...’¹²²

- 8.5.5 For information on services and support from The World Health Organisation, see [WHO presence in Sudan](#).
- 8.5.6 For more information, see [The New Humanitarian](#) and [Reliefweb, Sudan Humanitarian Fund Annual Report 2020](#).

¹²¹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

¹²² UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the...](#)’ (Paragraphs 28 – 30), 1 September 2021

8.6 IDPs

8.6.1 The UN Humanitarian Needs Overview stated in February 2021:

‘There are 2.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Sudan. Most of them are in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile, which have been the epicentres of conflict over the past 17 years. These are also the areas where 52 per cent of people in need are concentrated. This means that almost half of the people in need are in non-conflict central and eastern parts of the country, whereas in 2018, 74 per cent of people in need were in conflict areas - Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.’¹²³

8.6.2 The United Nations Security Council Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, covering the period between 24 November 2020 to 15 February 2021, published on 1 March 2021, stated:

‘Intercommunal tension and violence in parts of Darfur have heightened concerns about protection. In West Darfur, approximately 149,000 people were displaced across El Geneina and surrounding villages, following the outbreak of violence on 15 January 2021. That includes over 84,000 people displaced within El Geneina town and an estimated 64,000 people to sites outside that town. The intercommunal clashes have also triggered the displacement of 3,500 people to Chad. In South Darfur, it is estimated that 19,300 people were displaced by intercommunal fighting near Gaida on 18 January and need humanitarian assistance. Gaida hosts one of the biggest camps for internally displaced persons in the Sudan... In addition, over 7,800 people were displaced to Katur village, following intercommunal fighting in late January 2021 in several villages in the East Jebel Marra locality in South Darfur.’¹²⁴

8.6.3 The 2020 USSD report noted:

‘Large-scale displacement continued to be a severe problem in Darfur and the Two Areas.

‘The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported the vast majority of the displacement during the year was triggered by intercommunal and other armed conflict. Reports of IDPs attempting to return to or access their farmlands in Darfur increased. Many IDPs faced chronic food shortages and inadequate medical care. Significant numbers of farmers were prevented from planting their fields due to insecurity, leading to near-famine conditions in parts of South Kordofan. Information regarding the number of IDPs in these areas remained difficult to verify. Armed groups estimated the areas contained 545,000 IDPs and severely affected persons, while the government estimated the number as closer to 200,000. UN agencies could not provide estimates, citing lack of access. Children accounted for approximately 60 percent of persons displaced in camps.

¹²³ Reliefweb, ‘[Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 \(December 2020\)](#)’, 22 February 2021

¹²⁴ UN Security Council, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities...](#)’ (Para 30), 1 March 2021

‘Some UN agencies were able to work with the Darfur governor’s advisers on women and children to raise awareness of gender-based violence and response efforts.

‘There were reports of abuse committed by government security forces, and armed opposition groups against IDPs in Darfur, including rapes and beatings...

‘Outside IDP camps and towns, insecurity restricted freedom of movement; women and girls who left the towns and camps risked sexual violence. Insecurity within IDP camps also was a problem. The government provided little assistance or protection to IDPs in Darfur. Most IDP camps had no functioning police force. International observers noted criminal gangs aligned with armed opposition groups operated openly in several IDP camps.’¹²⁵

8.6.4 The UNSG report, covering the period between 16 February 2021 to 1 May 2021, published on 17 May 2021, stated:

‘Close to 237,000 people have fled their homes so far in 2021 due to intercommunal conflict reported in West, North and South Darfur, according to the International Organization for Migration. This is a significant increase compared with 2020, when about 58,000 people were newly displaced in Darfur. In West Darfur, humanitarian actors assisted those affected by the conflict between Masalit and Arab communities in mid-January, which had led to the displacement of 109,000 people in and around El Geneina.

‘Renewed fighting in El Geneina in early April caused an estimated 65,000 new displacements. Some humanitarian partners temporarily paused operations due to the security situation but resumed them as of 15 April. By 29 April, about 104,000 people had received emergency food assistance, about 65,000 had accessed health-care services and 2,000 had received non-food items in El Geneina town, while 9,500 internally displaced persons had received non-food items outside El Geneina. Congestion at gathering points for internally displaced persons, as well as the need to find solutions for the voluntary relocation or return of displaced persons, remained priorities to be addressed.

‘South Darfur has witnessed increasing intercommunal conflict since the beginning of the year. The latest conflict-induced displacement occurred on 30 March, when the Government’s Humanitarian Aid Commission reported that about 2,800 people had fled from Graidia, Sharg al-Jabal and Tullus localities. This followed earlier displacement caused by intercommunal conflict in East Jebel Marra in January and February. Food has been delivered to 13,000 internally displaced persons and 13,000 residents and non-food items have been distributed to 1,360 people; water, sanitation and hygiene and nutrition services have also been provided.’¹²⁶

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¹²⁵ USSD, ‘[2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)’ (Executive Summary), 30 March 2021

¹²⁶ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United...](#)’ (Paras 37 - 40), 17 May 2021

9. Freedom of movement

9.1.1 The USSD 2020 report noted:

‘The law provides for the freedom of movement, foreign travel, and emigration, and although the government largely respected these rights, restrictions on travel to conflict areas remained.

‘...Armed opposition groups still reportedly restricted the movement of citizens in conflict areas .

‘Internal movement was generally unhindered for citizens outside conflict areas...

‘...The Miscellaneous Amendments Act abolished the requirement for an exit visa thus allowing Sudanese citizens to depart the country without prior permission.

‘...Many activists returned to the country from self-exile after the CLTG took power. For example, after the removal of President Bashir in 2019, the former Transitional Military Council forcibly deported leaders of armed movements to South Sudan; in July some of these leaders returned to participate in peace discussions in Khartoum. Several prominent opposition members also returned to the country to participate in the formation of the new government. Some members of the armed movements remained in exile, however, and some expressed concern regarding their civic and political rights should they return to Sudan...

‘Outside IDP camps and towns, insecurity restricted freedom of movement; women and girls who left the towns and camps risked sexual violence. Insecurity within IDP camps also was a problem. The government provided little assistance or protection to IDPs in Darfur. Most IDP camps had no functioning police force. International observers noted criminal gangs aligned with armed opposition groups operated openly in several IDP camps.¹²⁷

9.1.2 Freedom House reported in its Freedom in the World report, covering events in 2020: ‘The 2019 interim constitution affirms freedom of movement and the right to travel—including overseas—for all citizens, but these rights are still impeded in practice by state security forces and other armed groups across the country, including those engaged in clashes between ethnic communities in 2020. ...’¹²⁸

9.1.3 Regarding whether restrictions of movement exist in and around Khartoum for NAD, Mohamed Osman stated in an interview with CPIT on 27 May 2021:

‘In Khartoum, absolutely not.

‘If there are restrictions, these are around military check points. We see more tension at military checkpoints, I have been hearing this a lot around South Darfur. The main reason for this is in the Kalma camp where there are rebels belonging to the Sudan Liberation Army - Al-Nur, one of the 2

¹²⁷ USSD, ‘[2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...](#)’ (Sections D and E), 30 March 2021

¹²⁸ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2021](#)’ (Section G1), 3 March 2021

movements which has not signed the Juba Agreement. This is the only situation I can imagine.

‘Once out of Darfur, if you travel by car, I think there are very few checkpoints. You usually see checkpoints when you are within Darfur, but closer to the border with Libya and Chad, checking migration and smuggling.’¹²⁹

9.1.4 Mohamed Osman further added:

‘In Darfur, there is better access to services than in the past although still some restrictions, there are challenges during large scale events such the cancellation of flights and the deployment of aid. But there is definitely much more access now. Some humanitarians report delays but are not very concerned. The limits on access are because of Covid-19 and bureaucratic delays and because of the political structure of the country – there is a lack of clarity with these things. But politically we are not seeing barriers of access such as for journalists, they are pretty much accessible from that standpoint although we have yet to test HRW’s ability to gain access.’¹³⁰

9.1.5 The Cedoca report 2021 based on various sources noted:

‘As well as overland travel by road, rail travel is also possible between Khartoum and the city of Nyala in South Darfur. Sudan Railways Corporation is one of the longest railway connections in Africa. It links Khartoum with Nyala, via El Obeid, Sennar and Kosti. This train service opened in December 2013 and operates twice a month. Rail travel is slow (40 km/h) and offers minimum levels of comfort.

‘Lastly, Darfur has several airports, including the one in El Geneina in West Darfur, El Fasher Airport in North Darfur and Nyala Airport in South Darfur.

‘Infrastructural limitations are possibly reducing the opportunity to travel. The fuel shortages throughout the country are driving up transport costs, and this is having a negative impact on the mobility of the population. Roads continue to be affected by violence. Added to that are the numerous road accidents caused by reckless driving and the poor condition of the roads.

‘In an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021, Bushra Gamar, director of the Sudanese NGO, Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), said that people from Darfur and the Two Areas can travel with ease to other towns or cities outside the region and do not require any special documents in order to be able to do so. He added:

“For ordinary people, they have to pass some security checks (in towns). If you don’t have any political activity, it is very smooth to travel, by air, road and sometimes by train, but for activists it is better to avoid that kind of travel. People coming from SPLA-N [Sudan People's Liberation Army-North] controlled areas [in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan] or from SLM-AW [Sudan Liberation Movement – Abdul Wahid] held areas in Jebel Marra [in Darfur] may get trouble at checkpoints, you could be detained.”

¹²⁹ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

¹³⁰ UKHO, Note of meeting with Mohamed Osman, 27 May 2021, [Annex A](#)

‘Bushra Gamar’s answer to the question as to who mans the checkpoints was as follows:

“The Sudan Armed Forces, Intelligence personnel, recently the RSF [Rapid Support Forces] is with them and people in civilian clothing – probably NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service]/Intelligence. At the moment, the NISS [GIS] never arrests directly, they give the order to Military Intelligence (MI). In some checkpoints you can find a civilian component for taxes (trucks, buses). There are sometimes three or four huts/shelters in one checkpoint...

‘The Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour also stated, in an interview with Cedoca on 26 February 2021, that Darfuris can travel freely and without any difficulty to various places in Sudan:

“There are some control posts inside Darfur, controlled by Janjaweed, but there is no official control post to prevent people to enter other regions. However, you never know what will happen: will they check you or take you money... There are official checkpoints on the state borders, controlled by police and army but they don’t prevent anyone from entering these states.”¹³¹

9.1.6 The Cedoca report continued:

‘During an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021, Bushra Gamar of HUDO says that Darfuri and Nuba are settling outside Khartoum in towns and cities such as Port Sudan, Atbara and Kosti, and in El-Gadaref (Al-Qadarif) and Gezira states. He concludes that Darfuris and Nuba are settling in places where there is a great demand for manual labour:

“You can find Nuba and Darfuri in the whole of Sudan...

‘You find Darfuri in El-Gadaref working as labourer at businesses and in agriculture. In El Gezira, there is also a big agricultural projects [sic] where Darfuri are working as laborers...

‘In North Sudan, you can find Darfuri... only in small amount (beyond Atbara, in Karima Dongula etc.)...

‘Generally, you will find Darfuri... where the manual labour is needed like in Kosti and Rabak of White Nile State, attracted by the work in Kenana and Assalaya sugar companies farms.”...

‘Darfuris... organise themselves as a community and live isolated lives, says Bushra Gamar. Wealthy Darfuri and Nuba are also settling in residential areas.

“Everywhere they live/settle, they organize as a community, living together, somehow isolated. The small numbers among them in town or residential areas are the wealthy people.”¹³²

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¹³¹ Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 1.1.2), 28 June 2021

¹³² Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba...](#)’ (Section 2.2), 28 June 2021

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Ethnic demography
 - Nationality
 - Darfur
 - Khartoum
 - Ethnic inter-mixing
- Political environment
 - Overview
 - The Juba Peace Agreement: Darfuri rebel group
 - Non-Arab Darfuris within the transitional government
 - Investigations into Darfur war crimes
- Freedom of expression
 - Civil society and human rights reporting
 - UN mission to Sudan
- Societal attitudes to race
- Khartoum
 - Overview
 - State treatment and attitudes
 - Access to public service and accommodation
 - Employment and the economy
- Darfur
 - Overview
 - Human rights
 - Sudan Liberation Army – Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLA/AW) faction
 - Security situation
 - Humanitarian situation
 - IDPs
- Freedom of movement

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Annex A: Notes of meetings

Independent expert

The independent expert was interviewed by 2 members of CPIT via a video call on 4 June 2021. Notes of the interview were then shared with and approved by the independent expert on 4 June 2021.

The expert requested that his identity and the organisation for which he works were not disclosed.

Introduction

Sudan is dominated by the riverine Arab tribes, often collectively known as 'Jalabiya' (because of the traditional robes they wear). They are entirely Arab and are seen as the core of Arab identity in Sudan. They have prestige because they believe they come from the Gulf states and are descendants of the prophet Mohamed. There is a racist approach to divide the country between Arabs and non-Arabs.

Arabs (in the peripheries) were leveraged by the elite for political reasons under (former) President Bashir until the 2018 revolution. This led to deep imbalances of power, economic resources.

Nearly everyone displaced in Darfur – there are around 1 million in IDPs - are non-Arab, such as Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa. Black Sudanese groups (that is non-Arab including non-Arab Darfuris (NAD)) are seen as ugly and called 'cockroaches' as a racial slur. Non-Arabs in Darfur complain about mistreatment and Arabs being empowered to suppress NAD.

The situation with General 'Hemedti' [General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, vice-president of the Sovereign Council] is complex. A lot of people in the peripheries see him as a means to redress the imbalance between the centre and the peripheries.

Security situation

Could you describe the security situation in Darfur and whether it has improved since the formation of the transitional government?

Since the formation of the transitional government, since September 2019 - there is a couple of phases to consider when talking about security:

One key phase is the fall of Bashir and the other, which started before Bashir left and the catalyst of his fall, is the decline of the economy. The 'old guard' squirrelled away their ill-gotten gains. Economic difficulties continue now, particular in urban areas, less impact in rural areas which have had to exist without support from the centre. Fuel, wheat prices, even subsidised, are high, this has led to smuggling of commodities. The economy and its decline exacerbate bad conditions for people. Inflation is spiralling and people are suffering in Khartoum.

In terms of security, the main points that are most impactful are the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) and climate change.

The JPA that was signed between most of the Sudanese armed groups and the transitional government brought armed groups into the government. Security reform has been proposed but is not really heading anywhere for now. Before the signing of the agreement, its contents were filtered back to Darfur. The agreement worried

groups that used to enjoy life under Bashir and benefitted from his government because they feared the return of NAD IDPs.

With the prospect of returns, it is not clear where those returning to Darfur will go or where they will return to exactly. Empowered Arab groups (and lots of different groups self-identify as Arab) do not want non-Arabs to return to Darfur to claim land. The Arab groups benefitted under the former government and have been in Darfur for 10, 20 and 30 years - so there is a huge multi-layered problem overland rights - there is a whole legal process that should be put in place to sort this out, but there isn't.

When the JPA agreement was signed, some people returned to Darfur from Chad. Only a bit of violence caused those returnees to leave again.

The government has set up a land commission and a compensation and justice mechanism – realistically very little of that will get done.

The other problem is climate change which is narrowing planting and grazing areas in Darfur and across the Sahel and reducing where people can live. People have no incentive to return.

Another point is the departure of UNAMID in Darfur. UNAMID has been drawing down since December 2020 and is officially leaving at the end of June 2021. This has happened with the prime minister's and military's acquiescence and with China's and Russia's support in the UN. There is no real planning in place in the drawdown to protect civilians in Darfur, it also affects humanitarian and health programmes. At their height, UNAMID had tens of thousands of troops in the region. UNAMID was aggressively emasculated – it couldn't access certain places and is broadly viewed as a failed mission. However, Darfuris wanted a drawdown plan.

The government has a take-over (from UNAMID) plan but it is 'underbaked'. Half of its forces are from the military and the other half are from the former armed groups. Some of whom have returned from Libya, fighting as mercenaries on either side of the Libyan war.

There were hundreds of people killed in tribal violence in south and west Darfur at the end of 2020 / January 2021 and violence between Arab and non-Arab groups happened a few weeks ago in west Darfur. The government failed to protect civilians.

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) (former Janjaweed) is still in Darfur but not trusted by local people. Tens of thousands have been displaced because of inter-communal fighting, between Masalit and Arab groups. One on one fights occur in markets and escalates into clashes involving 100s or 1000s and there is no mechanism in place to stabilise these fights. The government is unable to do anything about the violence. UNITAMS, the UN Mission in Sudan, has a tiny budget for the entire country – around US\$37 - there is only 60 staff, so they do not have the capacity to keep the peace. Russia and China wanted to see UNAMID leave without a replacement capacity.

Are RSF targeting groups?

Heard that the RSF (ex Janjaweed) will be put in place as security and anecdotal accusations that RSF have used inappropriate force. It is inappropriate and inadequate for the Janjaweed to protect civilians in Darfur after the genocide, given their past history of violence. It is inappropriate for them to act as security for people

they have raped and killed. There is no way you can have that group protect a traumatised population. Heard that some RSF members were involved and sided with Arabs in the fighting that occurred in 2021.

The RSF, and all other groups which signed the JPA, have not provided information about the numbers of their fighters for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process (DDR). They recruited immediately after signing the JPA because they want to claim money from the DDR process.

Hemedti has ambition and wants to be the head of state. This is my strong sense of things, and speaking to military intelligence, they feel the same way. Unemployment is sky high and Hemedti has been diversifying the RSF recruitment process, he wants a national force. Hemedti is recruiting all sorts of people, including non-Arab Darfuris across the country from the East and South Kordofan. The RSF are looking to be more diverse to be politically viable. On paper, the RSF are part of the armed forces, but expect a divergence between the 2.

In south Darfur RSF sometimes are fighting each other, split along tribal lines. Some RSF members will leave barracks to fight with communities and place family allegiance over uniform. Hemedti is wealthy and continues to make money and investments in the country, he operates with total impunity.

The Arabs from the riverine elite hate Hemedti and he hates them. They will never accept him because he is seen as an uneducated camel herder from Chad who has become the most powerful man in the country. Non-Arabs who have not been affected by Hemedti see him as bringing non-Arabs to a powerful place in the centre which is why non-Arabs are happy to buy into the RSF. Hemedti aims to create a 'coalition of the peripheries'.

The other 2 individuals to worry about are Musa Hilal, who has just been released from jail and is the head of the Sudanese Revolutionary Awakening Council movement fighting in Libya, and Abdul Wahid al-Nur, leader of the Sudan Liberation Army – Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLA-AW) faction who was based in Paris and is now in Juba, South Sudan. Al-Nur is an important leader and many follow him in the IDP camps, but I think he is losing support as there is much fragmentation of the SLA-AW. He still holds command but he is not a good politician and has not delivered to them in any particular way.

There is a competition for resources in Darfur. Armed groups are interested in capturing mines and gold mines, so even groups are coming back from Libya. The government is broke, if the money is not going to Khartoum, even less money is going to the peripheries. Around 300 companies are owned by the military, the government is trying to bring these under civilian control. It's a delicate issue.

Regarding the level of violence - the peace agreement is meant to bring peace. But the JPA brought rebel groups into the government but did not bring peace. The government doesn't have the money to bring armed groups into the fold. Former rebel group fighters are roaming around and are a security threat. The longer they wait around, the more tired they will become of the peace process and there is plenty of space for increased criminality. Human trafficking and the smuggling of drugs still occur - there is so much criminality in Darfur which many groups are happy to be involved in.

There have been some serious spikes in violence. The government is not in a position to address the violence. If the conflicts become large-scale – then the

government flies Hemedti out to Darfur, but there is no sustainable way to avert or solve the conflict.

Treatment of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum

In the past NAD may have been targeted because of their links to rebel groups. However, there is now the JPA and most of these groups have representatives in the government. Are NAD now targeted by the state?

Not sure. Not heard that NADs are being singled out in Khartoum.

There are plenty of powerful Darfuris in the capital. What is happening in the wealthy areas of Khartoum is that a lot of Darfuris are showing up with millions in cash. There is no clashing but it is shocking. However, these are Arab Darfuris, not NAD.

Are there powerful NAD in Khartoum?

Yes, Minni Minawi has been appointed the governor of the newly formed Darfur region (combining West, East and South Darfur), but it is unclear what that means in practice. Gibril Ibrahim is the Minister of Finance. Both he and Minni Minawi are Zaghawa. Gibril Ibrahim lives in Khartoum and Al-Hadi Idris, head of the Sudan Revolutionary Front, are all rich paid to join the peace agreement by gulf states.

What about middle-class NAD or the 'Darfuri on the street'?

If you speak to the average Sudanese in Khartoum, life is hard. Food prices change overnight. Issues are economic or social rather than from the state. The economic issue has the most potential to end the transition or to save it. The government has to undertake structural economic reforms – it receives a lot of assistance from the international community for debt relief.

You do not see groups clashing in Khartoum, it is pretty relaxed – there are areas in towns where only Darfuris and northerners live but this is not a racist thing per se.

No sense of NADs being treated differently given my level of access as a westerner – sure there is sometimes some sort of discrimination, but no worse than being, for example, Sikh and Pakistani in Paris or Bradford and people take a bad shine to you. It is not systematic and there is no mass violence against NAD per se. Cannot ever remember seeing this at any point in Khartoum. Don't expect there to be grievances in Khartoum.

The problem is more about resources in the peripheries – that is what people are fighting over - winner takes all. But in Khartoum, in an urban area, it is not about land at all. Perhaps there is competition for jobs because so many people are unemployed. Amongst those Arabs who feel superior, some view all black Sudanese, not just NAD, as not being equal. Not seen this lead to any level of violence in Khartoum. Perhaps these groups would not obtain jobs alongside Arabs – an Arab owner may choose an Arab worker, but maybe the same happens with a black owner choosing a black worker. People should not return to Sudan because the economy is an absolute mess and people cannot support themselves.

Do not think much has changed in Sudan at a social level. All changes have been political, the social underpinnings are not that different.

Freedom of speech - can people speak their mind?

Political rights / freedom of speech has demonstrably improved.

The space to speak your mind has increased - there are instances where journalists are pulled up but there is now backlash for anyone who does this, so the military are learning not to. More freedom has been an outcome of the political changes.

Various laws, the public order laws, have been repealed. This has had a positive effect in many ways but provoked backlash from conservatives. Still, women are being beaten for transgressing these rules in some areas.

Political activists – everyone is able to speak freely, however they are not good at creating platforms. Political parties that have come to the fore have not used their opportunity well, they are not ready to contest elections and to build constituencies.

What has happened to the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS)?

NISS are now the General Intelligence Service (GIS). They are much less operational – they lost their guns and surveillance powers. They used to have the best security forces in the country, could act with impunity and strength. GIS is much more benign in many ways and a lot of that has been transferred to military intelligence and the RSF. It is good that NISS has been disabled - they helped Bashir stay in power.

Is there less monitoring of people?

Don't know. Feel there is less monitoring going on. There is likely to be a new use of technology - the RSF have become more of a national entity and can monitor because of its access to internet networks. The main internet provider – Sudatel - is privately owned but infiltrated by the state. There are no laws to stop the state snooping around. The RSF have a new media centre.

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Mohamed Osman – Assistant Researcher on Sudan for Human Rights Watch

Mohamed Osman was interviewed by 2 members of CPIT via a video call on 27 May 2021. Notes of the interview were then shared with Mohamed by email, which he amended and approved on 27 May 2021.

Biography: [Mohamed Osman \(MO\) has worked for Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#) as an assistant researcher covering Sudan since December 2018 and was last in Sudan in February 2020. He is hoping to travel to Darfur in the coming months. There is not a HRW representative currently in Sudan.

Mohamed Osman's research focus is on Darfur.

Security situation in Darfur

Could you please describe the current security situation in Darfur? Has it changed under the new transitional government? And if so, how?

The situation in Darfur needs to be seen in the wider context of, and reflects the dynamics of, the political transition since 2019.

Since the formation of the transitional government in September 2019, the government has made civilians a priority but has also wanted the termination of the United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) peace-keeping mission in Darfur. Since the drawing down of the mission in 2019 inter-communal violence has spiked. In terms of understanding a change, there has been no active confrontation between rebels and government forces. The decrease in violence

between the government and rebels begun before the ousting of [former president] Bashir. However, there are now growing reports of increasing criminality and inter-communal violence. UNAMID made a difference, they were a deterring factor for violence.

From December 2019 to January 2020 we witnessed large attacks in El Geneina – where 60 or 70 people were killed. Attacks in January 2020 and April 2020 combined caused about 300 deaths. For us, that was one of the earliest indicators of concerns in this region and how things would go.

Many sources and groups characterise the sporadic incidents as inter-communal violence. The understanding of this characterisation is shifting. We kept seeing different events happening from time to time - nothing large scale, rather individual events concerning ethnic groups. Not all were Arab vs African (NAD) groups, they were largely driven by contention of ownership of land in West and South Darfur. Since the bouts of violence, largely triggered by armed Arab militia, in El Geniena in January 2021 and again in April 2021, it is clear that the security situation is still of concern.

Security triggers in Darfur have a lot to do with the wider political process and the key is the Juba Peace Agreement. Many groups have seen this process side-line any role or voice for them, in terms of a lack of deployment of security forces to provide protection. There has been no realistic security reform, also there is the issue of integrating the former rebels into the armed forces. There have been clashes between former rebels, government forces and civilians.

The government imposed a security plan in June 2020, adopted and endorsed by the UN Security Council. The implementation is currently rather vague and officials are still talking about forming the joint security forces envisioned under this plan. The government's pledge of protecting civilians is an ambitious plan – it doesn't involve community involvement. The issue with the political process includes the inclusion of rebel groups from Darfur. Speaking to people over the last few days - there are different tensions about political representation, such as from the (NAD) Masalit tribe – a notable group that has historically lacked political representation and there is a lot of division within the tribe itself. The traditional leadership of the Masalit is against/clashed with the new leadership which emerged in the revolutionary movement in Sudan in 2019.

Internally displaced people (IDPs), in particular, say they have been arming themselves with weapons after the incident in El Geniena in April 2021. Journalists who have been to the area have said they heard the same. This is mostly the Masalit group – my understanding is that people are cautious to say they have weapons in IDP camps. Accessing weapons is easier for them, given the closeness to Chad and Libya and the ongoing conflict. Two rebel groups – the Sudan Liberation Movement – Abdul Wahid (SLM-AW) and the Sudan Liberation Army – Al Nur (SLA-Nur), are both starting to have influence within IDP camps, including the smuggling of weapons and providing training. I cannot speak on the scale of this, but this is what we have heard from people within the IDP camps. This is concerning because we can see that IDPs groups feel they are left behind by the international community and transitional authorities.

The IDPs do not trust their representatives who are involved in the signing of the political process, do not trust the government security forces and do not trust the

rebels. The situation is made worse by attacks by Arab militia groups, not always the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as a group but may include individual RSF members. The RSF participated in the attacks in El Geneina in April 2021

What we heard about the last attack is the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) participated heavily. The RSF clashed with one rebel group in El Geneina called the Sudanese Coalition Forces – one of the groups formed around the Juba peace process mostly representing the Masalit. The group's leader is Khamis Abakkar - a few days [on 13 July 2021] ago he was appointed governor of West Darfur. There is a lot of scattered information with various research and media reports and contacts with humanitarian organisations in the region. The scale of the violence is not clear - we examined satellite images which shows the damage was massive, but it is difficult to properly assess. It is not clear whether Khartoum has a political vision outside of the Khartoum region and beyond the immediate political process.

The RSF are currently recognised as a military force and their leader is currently vice chairperson of Sudan's Sovereign Council. The force is an evolution of the Arab militia's Janjaweed.

Everyone in Darfur is worried that the security situation will continue to be unstable or escalate in the future. Security reform will take a long time: it is complicated.

Is the government able to do much?

The civilian part of the government is indifferent in a way because they don't see this as an immediate issue at the moment – they have other priorities. Cannot say much about the military's interest.

Members of government forces take arms and fire at each other based on ethnic affiliation, for example Masalit police against Arab RSF. Doctors from El Geneina confirmed most of the police forces are from Masalit or are of African origins. The government said they have had no control over security forces in terms of protecting civilians. There is an issue regarding the collaboration between security forces and governors appointed by the civilian government. In West Darfur, for example, the army is unable or unwilling to get involved in protecting civilians or deterring attackers and refuses to obey the (Masalit) governor. Arabs would say that their governor is Masalit himself and so he is bias to his people. Part of a concern they have is that they have been marginalised and left behind by a polarised humanitarian community. It is more complicated now with the return of ex-rebels to regions.

A few conversations from people in Darfur is that UNAMID made a difference in Darfur and admitted that UNAMID wasn't the greatest but it had a system in place that would help in alleviating casualties.

A lot of armed actors in the region are under the umbrella of the peace process which has put an end to large-scale conflict and has sustained a ceasefire. You no longer see the large-scale military camps which target civilian populations – we see another form of violence from new actors which are influenced by the new political situation in the country. The situation is not worse – probably much better but different than in the past.

Triggers and drivers and dynamics of tension still manifest along ethnic lines, including land ownership and access to land, voluntary return of (NAD) IDPs to land, but most land is occupied by Arab tribes in Darfur which could trigger another cycle of violence in the future.

Are there mixing between groups?

If you look at El Geneina, which is ethnically divided, there are certain blocks for Arabs and some for Africans, but there are some in the same blocks - there is a level of co-existence that exists there, as well as in certain parts of the country. It is just the political triggers that keep pushing this escalation of violence between groups. Some Arabs said they no longer want to be used in an ethnic war, that they have been used for political ends. For example, the Arab militia leader, Musa Hilal was aware that they were being used by the political elite. There is now a certain political awareness that Arabs have been used in a bigger political agenda in Darfur.

The last decades of conflict have exacerbated differences and made it harder to socially co-exist. When African groups talk about recruitment from Chad from Arab tribes, what they say is Arab tribes exist on the other side of the Sudanese border, so they are not Sudanese, so they see Arabs as invaders. A lot of this new narrative is coming from both sides of ethnic groups – they see the other as invaders or outsiders. But people also say we live with Arabs and went to schools with Arabs.

Have the authorities been working on de-escalating the violence?

I think the approach of the government is to send high level political delegations to the areas, having meetings and signing of the ceasefire for a truce, assigning prosecutors to the region. But what happened in El Geneina in April 2021 shows these actions do not hold, because demands of accountability do not happen. The IDP African groups want disarmament of Arab militias and want the Arabs to leave the land that has been occupied by the Arab groups. The Arabs are being more politically mobilised, they also suffered, they seek humanitarian assistance and want the dismantling of IDP camps, criminality, and unlawfulness. There are different demands from groups.

On a local level, at least in West Darfur, the governor is Masalit himself and sides with Masalit but has no control of deployment of security forces - military and armed forces. We cannot see a change in which a way the armed forces act, they just protect government offices and do not want to get involved with protecting civilians. The RSF, in some incidences, deters violence and appear to get involved in restoring stability. Other times RSF members fight with Arab tribes and arms them - the RSF denies this and no one is talking about it anymore.

The RSF is refusing to integrate into the armed forces. Even the question on whether the RSF are absorbing ex rebels – there is more temptation to join the RSF than the army for political power and money (however not aware of NAD joining the RSF). For example, there is a higher salary, higher protection, so there is no prospect in reforming the RSF and no prospect of them being integrated in regular armed forces. The RSF were due to be part of the armed forces and then the national intelligence and security service, then it became a vague regular force under the president. Under the transitional constitutional charter, the RSF is recognised as a regular armed force under the command of Hemedti.

Mostly Arabs join the RSF, however in early 2020 it wanted to become more 'national' – including more groups. There was an early 2020 campaign in Eastern Sudan which was seen to be tied to RSF participation on the Yemen war, so the RSF wanted more man-power – but non-Arabs do not want to join the RSF. But some non-Arab ethnic groups have joined but as a result of being seconded from the regular armed forces.

Human rights in Darfur generally

Are NADs subject to human rights violations including arbitrary arrest, detention and ill-treatment, because of their ethnicity?

We do not have a large presence in Darfur – I would say most information would be from media contacts, based on scattered reports of arrests by the intelligence agencies - but not as large scale as we used to see. There were a series of demonstrations last year which involved violent crackdowns – we saw a number of arrests that may have involved application of emergency laws, but beyond that no noticeable patterns of arbitrary arrest or torture or ill-treatment as far as we know. Which is a big improvement on the situation before the transitional government.

We noticed immediately after protests, around July and August 2020, that many arrests were carried out by the RSF. Military forces were driven by the idea that NAD are linked to rebel groups – this is no longer the situation and one of the reasons we see a de-escalation.

How easily are NGOs and the media able to report?

There is 'Darfur fatigue', less reporting on the region. This silence is motivating Human Rights Watch to go to Darfur. The narrative is that everything is ok and let's move on. There are few foreign correspondences within the region – there is a noticeable silence of reporting, we do not know the scale of things. Fundamental changes mentioned earlier have been seen and noted from people we have been talking to over the last 2 years or year and a half. However, the silence – lack of reporting - has pushed us to go and report from the ground.

In Darfur, there is better access to services than in the past although still some restrictions, there are challenges during large scale events such the cancellation of flights and the deployment of aid. But there is definitely much more access now. Some humanitarians report delays but are not very concerned. The limits on access are because of Covid-19 and bureaucratic delays and because of the political structure of the country – there is a lack of clarity with these things. But politically we are not seeing barriers of access such as for journalists, they are pretty much accessible from that standpoint although we have yet to test HRW's ability to gain access.

As far as we know, no international human rights/humanitarian group has been to Darfur since the political changes. According to our research, we identified in West Darfur that there has been a decline in attacks against civilians and humanitarians but there is a failure of the government to protect its citizens and investigate abuses.

There is widespread inaccessibility of key infrastructure for education and health. For instance, in West Darfur there is not even a single Covid-19 testing centre – people have to travel to another state or go somewhere else for testing. There are issues such as the underfunding of hospitals, the low number of police stations and prosecution officers in Darfur. We never really researched the socio-economic situation so we cannot give numbers.

Is the money from humanitarian aid manipulated or is it an issue?

There are humanitarian pledges from Friends of Sudan for example and a lot has to do with debt relief. But we have not seen international sponsorship for peace building in Darfur, reliant on the government providing the funding. There were already pledges of humanitarian assistance to Sudan before the peace process. There is a

dispute over the monies given to government then being sent to Darfur. The rebels wanted the post of minister of finance in the transitional government to ensure access to funding. Money that is supposed to go to Darfur never gets there – result of corruption.

The government has created a ‘corruption committee’ but its focus has been to dismantle Bashir’s former party and to look to the future, rather than look at past corruption.

Freedom of movement

Is it possible to travel by road and air from Darfur to Khartoum?

I cannot tell. I think I see a continuation of movement from outside of Sudan to Libya into Europe. I see more of this in the media, I assume it is increasing. I cannot see any visible change between now and the past about that.

Are there restrictions in movement in and around Khartoum? If so, what are these, how do they affect Darfuris?

In Khartoum, absolutely not.

If there are restrictions, these are around military check points. We see more tension at military checkpoints, I have been hearing this a lot around South Darfur. The main reason for this is in the Kalma camp where there are rebels belonging to the Sudan Liberation Army - Al-Nur, one of the 2 movements which has not signed the Juba Agreement. This is the only situation I can imagine.

Once out of Darfur, if you travel by car, I think there are very few checkpoints. You usually see checkpoints when you are within Darfur, but closer to the border with Libya and Chad, checking migration and smuggling.

Treatment of NAD by state in Khartoum

How does the government view and treat NAD tribes generally? Has this treatment changed since 2019 with the formation of the transitional government? If so, in what way?

There is an absence of information about this or bad news. There was a narrative of non-Arab Darfuris being rivals to the government but because of the peace process this narrative no longer takes place. There are no visible hostilities by the state against NAD and there is an increase of community awareness and resistance committee groups actively working over the last two years. There is definitely more of a fundamental and positive movement towards, and treatment of, NAD. We do not see largescale discrimination or ill-treatment.

However, we can’t speak about societal attitudes/treatments – this is not clear. Effective access to education and jobs is a challenge. Nor are we clear that the changes will be sustainable.

No recent numbers of the size of the NAD population. No systematic data collection – something the government want to do.

What is the state of freedom of expression/association?

Freedom of expression has improved.

Print media can publish anything, no cases of censorship as far as we know. However, a few incidents where the state-owned Sudan News Agency did not give

permission to some protest groups to talk. Political activists/opponents accused the agency of political bias, not giving them access to this platform. But there is definitely a substantial openness in terms of freedom of expression – of course we see a worrying violent crackdown of protests.

All senior positions are affiliated with civil political groups – criticism comes from protest groups, resistance groups or other political parties not involved in the transitional government, saying they don't have access to state media institutions.

The Communist Party and some civil society groups dropped out of the Freedom for Forces of Change quite early, but apart from the Communist Party, no other political parties dropped out.

People, including political groups outside of the government, can criticise whoever including the army, the RSF, and intelligence agencies – we are not seeing concerns of backlash. There are a few cases when the army threaten with lawsuits, but they never follow through.

Are parties and groups outside of the government able to meet and gather?

The political party affiliated with the former regime was made illegal. The group stopped using the name of the former ruling party and renamed themselves the 'National Islamic Alliance' – there are more restrictions for them. It is fine for them to meet - around 90% of the time they are given permission to meet, 10% of the time they are not allowed - and talk to the media, but in terms of protesting, that becomes a trickier situation.

The government uses a militarised response to demonstrations generally, in East Sudan and in Khartoum. There is freedom of assembly, but police brutality and the use of force at demonstrations is one of the main human rights concerns we are seeing at the moment.

Does that apply to not just the former regime party, which was renamed, but to all opposition groups regarding protests? Are they all treated in a heavy-handed fashion?

Yes. Sometimes there is a heavy crackdown and the authorities apologise and promise not to act like that again, but nothing really happens. During demonstrations, political authorities have little ability to control the security forces in the way they want to.

How is internet freedom?

It is relatively free. There is more access, but people complain about the increase of costs. There is an increasing use of Facebook, live streaming and zoom, and Clubhouse (an app that allows audio chats with others anonymously).

The telecoms industry is private, with 3 main providers that are private companies with no government control over them.

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **5.0**
- valid from **21 October 2021**

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

Changes from last version of this note

Update of country information and assessment.

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