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Home Office

# Country Policy and Information Note

## Sudan: Non-Arab Darfuris

Version 6.0

August 2024

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# Executive summary

In April 2019 President Omar al-Bashir was ousted from power and a civilian-led transitional government (TG) was established in August 2019. In October 2020, the TG signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) with key armed groups from Darfur, leading to improved conditions for Non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum. However, the security, humanitarian, and human rights situation in Darfur remained poor. In October 2021, the military, supported by JPA signatories, staged a coup against the civilian part of the TG. In April 2023, conflict erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with intense fighting in Khartoum and Darfur, both largely controlled by the RSF.

According to source consulted the SAF and the RSF have engaged in ethnic-based recruitment in Khartoum, and Darfur, with SAF recruiting from African tribes and RSF from Arab tribes. At the start of the conflict, the JPA signatories formed a Joint Force to protect civilians and humanitarian supplies in Darfur and adopted neutrality but, as the war developed changed their stance and began to support the SAF while Arab militias sided with the RSF. The JPA involvement in the fighting against the RSF in Darfur and Khartoum has led to retaliatory attacks by the RSF and allied militias against Non-Arab Darfuris.

The situation of Non-Arab Darfuris in Darfur has not improved since the promulgation of CG case [AA \(non-Arab Darfuris - relocation\) Sudan CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00056](#) in which the Upper Tribunal (UT) found that 'All non-Arab Darfuris are at risk in Darfur'. The war between the SAF and RSF has assumed an ethnic dimension in Darfur with the RSF and allied Arab militias engaging in ethnically motivated attacks against NADs. The RSF has engaged in ethnically targeted attacks, forced displacement and ethnic cleansing, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances and hate speech against Non-Arab Darfuris especially the Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa.

In Khartoum, sources reported ongoing ethnic-based arbitrary arrest and detention, sexual violence, revenge attacks, and both RSF and SAF targeting each other's perceived supporters, but they are not clear whether these were targeted at Non-Arab Darfuris. The situation in Khartoum is in flux and, due to the ongoing conflict, it's difficult to obtain up to date and accurate information about the treatment of Non-Arab Darfuris there. Therefore, there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from the extant CG caselaw.

From the sources consulted, there is no information about the situation of NADs elsewhere in Sudan. It is noteworthy that absence of information does not imply issue is not happening.

Decision makers should continue to apply [AA \(non-Arab Darfuris - relocation\) Sudan CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00056](#), [MM \(Darfuris\) Sudan CG \[2015\] UKUT 10 \(IAC\)](#) and [AAR & AA \(Non-Arab Darfuris - return\) Sudan \[2019\] UKUT 282 \(IAC\)](#) when considering claims from Non-Arab Darfuris including viability of relocation to Khartoum.

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# Assessment

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is information in the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general**, a person:

- faces a reasonable degree of likelihood/real risk of persecution/serious harm by the state or non-state actors because the person is a non-Arab Darfuri
- is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- can relocate within a country or territory to avoid persecution/serious harm
- merits a grant of asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave
- if a claim is refused, it is likely 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.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 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](#)).
- 1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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- 1.1.4 The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

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### 1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 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.

- 1.2.2 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).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## 2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed race.
- 2.1.2 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.
- 2.1.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 3. Risk

### 3.1 General situation and caselaw

- 3.1.1 Non-Arab Darfuris are likely to be at risk of persecution or serious harm from state/quasi state bodies.
- 3.1.2 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) held that: 'All non-Arab Darfuris are at risk of persecution in Darfur and cannot reasonably be expected to relocate elsewhere in Sudan.' (Headnote)
- 3.1.3 In the subsequent 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' relates to a person's ethnic origins and is not a geographical term. It stated: 'Darfuri' is to be understood as an ethnic term relating to origins, not as a geographical term. Accordingly, it covers even Darfuris who were not born in Darfur.' (Headnote).
- 3.1.4 The reported case of [AAR & AA \(Non-Arab Darfuris - return\) Sudan \[2019\] UKUT 282 \(IAC\)](#) heard between 12 and 14 February 2019 and was 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. The UT in [AAR and AA](#) observed: '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 and MM] requires revision. Those cases should still be followed.’ (Para 30)

- 3.1.5 In April 2019 military commanders and pro-democracy demonstrators ousted former president Omar al Bashir. Subsequently Sudan was ruled by a power-sharing transitional government (TG) made up of the military – Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group - and civilian leaders (see [Overthrow of President Omar Bashir and Transitional](#)).
- 3.1.6 In October 2020 the TG and Darfuri armed groups signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) which resulted in signatory groups joining the government and the treatment of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum improving (see [Juba Peace Agreement](#)).
- 3.1.7 In October 2021, the military faction in the TG staged a coup against the civilian faction, dissolved the TG and took control for itself. The JPA signatories supported the coup (see [October 2021 coup](#)). However, differences and competition between the SAF and RSF culminated in the break-out of conflict between them in April 2023. The fighting quickly spread across the country, but was particularly violent in Khartoum, Darfur, and Kordofan, leaving tens of thousands dead and millions displaced. RSF controls most of Darfur, Greater Khartoum and central Sudan, while the SAF are dominant in the south and east of the country (see [Conflict between Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces April 2023 -](#)).
- 3.1.8 When war broke out between SAF and RSF in April 2023, five Darfur armed movements signatory of the JPA formed a joint force to protect civilians and adopted neutrality in the war. However, in November 2023 the SLA/MM, JEM- Gibril Ibrahim, the Gathering of the Sudanese Justice and Equality Forces (GSJEF) and GLSF faction led by Abdallah Yahya supported the SAF. Based on Arab solidarity and substantive financial means, the RSF attracted support from various Arab armed groups including several former commanders and dissident groups formerly aligned with the RSF rival, Musa Hilal, the Third Front-Tamazuj and Arab factions of the Sudanese Alliance (SA). Both the SAF and RSF also engaged in ethnic based recruitment in Darfur with the former recruiting from non-Arab Darfuris and the latter from Arab- Darfuri tribes. The RSF carried out revenge attacks on non-Arab Darfuri civilians because of the actions of the Darfuri armed groups (see [Darfur armed groups](#)).
- 3.1.9 The conflict has led to the breakdown of administrative functions as the RSF and SAF have sought to exert control over the (shifting) territories they occupy (see [Collapse of government institutions](#)).
- 3.1.10 Since the outbreak of the conflict the situation in Sudan has continued to deteriorate with reports of civilians being targeted, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, forced displacement and sexual- and gender-based violence committed by all parties in the conflict (see the country policy and information notes [Sudan: security situation](#) and [Sudan: humanitarian situation](#)).

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## 3.2 Situation in Khartoum

- 3.2.1 In Khartoum sources indicate that protesters, human rights activists, journalists, resistance committee members, and civilians accused of supporting the opposite warring side have been targeted, including some based on their ethnicity although it is not clear which ethnic groups. There are, however, no reports in the sources consulted of non-Arab Darfuris being singled out and adversely treated because of their ethnicity (see [Khartoum – human rights situation](#)).
- 3.2.2 The situation in Khartoum is in flux because of the ongoing conflict and up to date and accurate information about the treatment of non-Arab Darfuris is difficult to obtain. Therefore, there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from the CG caselaw.
- 3.2.3 When considering claims from NADs including whether relocation or return to Khartoum is viable, decision makers should apply the extant caselaw: [AA](#), [MM](#) and [AAR & AA](#): ‘All non-Arab Darfuris are at risk of persecution in Darfur and cannot reasonably be expected to relocate elsewhere in Sudan.’ However, each case must be considered on its facts and merits with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they may be at risk of persecution.

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## 3.3 Situation in Darfur

- 3.3.1 The available evidence 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 the RSF and armed tribal groups which are likely to amount to persecution or serious harm.
- 3.3.2 Darfur is largely controlled by the RSF and allied militias. Sources report that the RSF have attacked and killed non-Arab ethnic groups, notably during its assault on El Geneina in mid-2023 where up to 15,000, mostly Massalit as well as Fur and Zaghawa, may have been killed (see [Conflict-related targeting of non-Arab Darfuris \(NADs\)](#)).
- 3.3.3 The RSF and allied Arab militias have engaged in other ethnically-based violations against non-Arab Darfuris including arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, ethnic cleansing and sexual and gender based violence (see [Arbitrary arrests and detention](#), [Disappearances](#), [Ethnic based attacks](#) and [Sexual and gender based violence](#)). The government is unable to provide protection against those violations due to the collapse of government institutions (see [Collapse of government institutions](#)).

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## 3.4 Situation elsewhere in Sudan

- 3.4.1 Elsewhere in Sudan, there is no reporting in the sources consulted of the population size or targeting of non-Arab Darfuri groups (see [Non-Arab Darfuris outside Darfur and Khartoum](#)).
- 3.4.2 In general, the situation in Sudan at the time of writing, as it was at the time the UT considered the cases of [AAR and AA](#), is volatile, albeit for different

reasons. While there is not clear evidence of targeting of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum or areas outside of Darfur on grounds of their ethnicity alone, given the general human rights situation and continuing ethnically based violence against non-Arabs in Darfur by the RSF, there is an absence of very strong cogent evidence to depart from the UT's findings in [AA and MM](#).

- 3.4.3 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **4. Protection**

- 4.1.1 There is no effective protection in Khartoum, Darfur or elsewhere.
- 4.1.2 The rule of law has broken down with the SAF and RSF actively contesting areas and are trying to exert control in territories they occupy. Both parties have been responsible for human rights violations, with impunity widespread (see [Collapse of government institutions](#)).
- 4.1.3 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **5. Internal relocation**

- 5.1.1 Internal relocation is not likely to be viable for non-Arab Darfuri because the UT in [AA](#) held that non-Arab Darfuris cannot reasonably relocate from Darfur to elsewhere in Sudan (Headnote).
- 5.1.2 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **6. Certification**

- 6.1.1 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.
- 6.1.2 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

## About the country information

This contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

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

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **August 2024**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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## 7. Ethnic demography

- 7.1.1 The CIA World Factbook estimated the population of Sudan to be 50,467,278 in 2024. According to the source, Sudanese population is a multi-ethnic mix of more than 500 ethnic groups with Sudanese Arabs accounting for 70% of the population.<sup>1</sup>
- 7.1.2 On 28 June 2021, the Country of Information Research Unit (CEDOCA) of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) in Belgium<sup>2</sup> published a report based on various sources about Darfur and Nuba outside their regions of origin, covering the period between April 2019 and March 2021 (Cedoca report 2021). The report 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).'<sup>3</sup>
- 7.1.3 Citing various sources, EUAA COI report – Sudan: Country Focus Security situation in selected regions published on 25 April 2024 (EUAA Sudan COI Report April 2024) noted that: 'Darfur's overall population is contested, with estimates ranging between 6 million and 9.5 million people. Sudan expert Reeves leans towards the more conservative estimates, between 6 and 6.5 million people. Between thirty and ninety ethnic groups or tribes, depending on their definition, inhabit the area, with ways of life that can be nomadic, semi-nomadic, and sedentary.'<sup>4</sup>
- 7.1.4 Cedoca observed 'Arab and non-Arab tribes live alongside one another in Darfur ... 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,

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<sup>1</sup> CIA Factbook '[Sudan](#)' (people and society), updated 10 July 2024

<sup>2</sup> CGRS, '[CEDOCA](#)', no date

<sup>3</sup> Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their regions ...](#)' (page 6), 28 June 2021

<sup>4</sup> EUAA, '[Sudan country focus: Security situation in selected regions ...](#)' (page 47), 25 April 2024

Bargo, Barno, Gimir, Tama, Mararit, Fellata, Jebel, Sambat en Tunjur.<sup>5</sup>

- 7.1.5 Dr David Hoile noted in 'Darfur in Perspective', first released in March 2005 and revised in January 2006, that 'The largest [non-Arab] ethnic group within Darfur are the Fur people, who consist mainly of settled subsistence farmers and traditional cultivators'<sup>6</sup> and that '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.'<sup>7</sup>

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## 7.2 NADS in Khartoum

- 7.2.1 A February 2020 report by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) noted: 'The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Khartoum', Khartoum consists of three cities around the Niles, connected through ten bridges – Omdurman along the western bank, Khartoum North or Bahri on the eastern bank in the north, and Khartoum between the Niles in the south. All three cities are expanding away from the river; the urban settlement now stretches more than 40km both in east–west and north–south directions.'<sup>8</sup>

- 7.2.2 According to a March 2023 report by UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as of 2023 Khartoum had an estimated population of 9.4 million.<sup>9</sup>

- 7.2.3 The Cedoca report 2021 noted:

'Since the 1970s, Khartoum's population growth has largely been driven by internal displacement ... The conflict in Darfur as from 2003 has resulted in a new influx of internally displaced persons ... Bushra Gamar [director of the Sudanese NGO, Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO)], cites violence and the centralisation of public services in Khartoum as possible factors causing people to settle in the capital.'

'Labour migration is also playing a part in the city's population growth ...

'... Sources consulted in February 2016 by the Denmark-UK fact-finding mission in Sudan and neighbouring countries, and in August 2018 by the UK fact-finding mission in Khartoum, estimate the number of IDPs in Khartoum to be between several hundred thousand and several million. According to a source from the joint mission in 2016, Nuba and non-Arab Darfuris together represent around 60% to 70% of the total population of Khartoum. In a decision of September 2020, the British Upper Tribunal refers to estimates of the number of Nuba and Darfuris in Khartoum ranging between one million and five million. According to the Upper Tribunal, there is undoubtedly a very sizeable population of Nuba and Darfuris living in Khartoum.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their regions ...](#)' (page 6), 28 June 2021

<sup>6</sup> David Hoile, '[Darfur in Perspective](#)' (page 5), March 2005

<sup>7</sup> David Hoile, '[Darfur in Perspective](#)' (page 5), March 2005

<sup>8</sup> IDIS, '[The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Khartoum](#)' (page 1 to 2), February 2020

<sup>9</sup> OCHA, [Sudan: Khartoum State Profile](#) (March 2023)

<sup>10</sup> Cedoca, '[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their regions ...](#)' (page 12), 28 June 2021

## 7.3 NADS outside Darfur and Khartoum

### 7.3.1 The Cedoca report 2021 observed:

‘The UK’s Home Office writes after the fact-finding mission of August 2018 that sources consulted indicate that many Darfuri in Gezira state work as farm labourers. Gezira is an agricultural area about 20 km from Khartoum with a population of over four million people, 25% of whom come from Darfur. Many belong to African tribes, including Tama, Bergo, Gimir, Tongor, Salamat, Fur and Zaghawa tribes, as well as several Arab tribes.

‘During an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021, Bushra Gamar of HUDO says that Darfuri ... 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.’<sup>11</sup>

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## 8. Political/security context

### 8.1.1 For information including the overthrow of president Omar al Bashir, the formation of a civilian led transitional government (TG), the October 2021 military coup that overthrow the TG and current security situation see the Country policy and information note [Sudan: security situation](#) and for information on current humanitarian situation in Sudan see the Country policy and information note [Sudan: humanitarian situation](#).

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## 8.2 Overthrow of President Omar Bashir and Transitional

### 8.2.1 In April 2019 the military ousted Sudan’s long ruling leader, Omar al Bashir, who took power in a 1989 coup<sup>12</sup>.

### 8.2.2 Freedom House’s report covering the events of 2021 summarised the aftermath of ousting of long-serving President Omar al-Bashir in 2019: ‘After military commanders and a prodemocracy protest movement ousted the repressive regime of longtime president Omar al-Bashir and his National Congress Party (NCP) in 2019, Sudan was ruled by a transitional government in which military and civilian leaders agreed to share power until national elections could be held.’<sup>13</sup>

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## 8.3 Juba Peace Agreement

### 8.3.1 The International Crisis Group reported in a February 2021 (ICG report 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 [which led the demonstrations against al Bashir] and [Transitional Military Council] TMC [which assumed power] committed to

<sup>11</sup> Cedoca, ‘[The situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their regions ...](#)’ (page 35), 28 June 2021

<sup>12</sup> USCRS, ‘[Sudan’s Removal from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List](#)’ (page 1), 9 November 2020

<sup>13</sup> FH House, ‘[Freedom in the world 2022 – Sudan](#)’ (overview), 28 February 2022

ensuring that Sudan would shift away from the autocratic, highly centralised state that Bashir had presided over to a democratic, pluralistic system 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.<sup>14</sup>

8.3.2 The 17 September 2020 UN Secretary-General's report on the situation in the Sudan observed:

'On 29 August, a peace agreement was reached between the transitional Government, the SRF alliance and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Minni Minawi faction, concluding nearly a year of negotiations mediated by the Government of South Sudan. Signatories under the SRF umbrella included the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement/Transitional Council and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar faction. The agreement includes a number of protocols and covers key issues related to security arrangements and the integration of combatants into the Sudanese army, land ownership, transitional justice, power-sharing and the return of displaced persons. The SLA-Abdul Wahid al-Nur faction did not participate in the Juba-based negotiations and has rejected the agreement.'<sup>15</sup>

8.3.3 The 24 January 2022 final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan to the UN Security Council covering the period from 13 March to December 2021 observed:

'In accordance with the power-sharing provisions of the Agreement [JPA], the leaders of three major movements (the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA/MM,) the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army/Transitional Council (SLA/TC)) joined the Government of the Sudan and kept their positions as Ministers and Governors (Walis). For example, Gibril Ibrahim (JEM) became the Minister of Finance, Khamis Abkar (Sudanese Alliance) was appointed Governor of West Darfur and Nimir Mohamed Abdulrahman (SLA/TC) became the Governor of North Darfur. The Government of the Sudan also created the umbrella position of a regional Governor (Hakim) for all five states of Darfur; Minni Arko Minawi was appointed to this post in May 2021 but has mainly stayed in Khartoum'.<sup>16</sup>

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## 8.4 October 2021 coup

8.4.1 USSD Human Rights Report 2022 stated:

'Sudanese Armed Forces Commander General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his allies seized control of the government on October 25, 2021. Burhan usurped the authority of a civilian-led transitional government formed in 2019 following a popular revolution that brought the 30-year regime of President

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<sup>14</sup> ICG, '[The rebels come to Khartoum: How to implement Sudan's new peace ...](#)', 23 February 2021

<sup>15</sup> UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the ...](#)' (paragraph), 17 September 2020

<sup>16</sup> UNSC, '[Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraph 4 b), 24 January 2022

Omar al-Bashir to an end ... Burhan ... instituted a military-controlled Sovereign Council to oversee governmental functions. The Sovereign Council comprises Burhan, Rapid Support Forces Commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (aka “Hemedti”), three other general officers, and three signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement ...<sup>17</sup>

- 8.4.2 A 19 November 2021 opinion piece from a policy think-tank in Khartoum, published by Al Jazeera commented: ‘Last month’s coup was orchestrated by four unlikely allies – Head of the Sovereign Council Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, his deputy General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo known as “Hemedti”, Minister of Finance Gibreil Ibrahim, and Governor-General of Darfur Mini Minawi...’<sup>18</sup> In an undated analysis piece published after the October 2021 coup, the Sudan Tribune, a France-based news site ‘run by a team of Sudanese and international editors’<sup>19</sup> noted that coup’s coalition included ‘the Sudanese Armed Forces, RSF, the Islamists/National Congress Party (Bashir’s party) and four of the signatories of the Juba Peace Accord (SPLM, JEM & two factions of SLM).’<sup>20</sup>
- 8.4.3 In a January/February 2022 update, the Rift Valley Institute noted: ‘Two key Darfuri signatories [to the JPA] - the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minnawi (SLA-MM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) - benefitted from the JPA and supported the coup. Since then, JEM and its leaders have stayed close to the military, while SLA-MM has grown somewhat disenchanted.’<sup>21</sup> Similarly, a February 2023 report by Cedoca (Cedoca February 2023) noted that ‘[T] military staged a coup supported by the armed rebel groups. The rebel leaders were the only non-military representatives retaining their positions in the Sovereign Council after the coup ...’<sup>22</sup> On 3 March 2022, Africa Confidential described how 3 members of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) have remained on the ruling Sovereign Council after the October 2021 coup and how ‘some of the SRF fighters aided the military in repressing protests against Burhan’s 25 October coup.’<sup>23</sup>

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## 9. Conflict between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) April 2023 -

### 9.1 General overview

For detailed information on the conflict including the security and humanitarian situation see the Country policy and information notes [Sudan: security situation](#) and [Sudan: humanitarian situation](#).

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### 9.2 Recent developments in the SAF-RSF war

- 9.2.1 The 29 February 2024 UN Secretary-General’s report on the situation in Sudan covering developments from 1 December 2023 to 20 February 2024

<sup>17</sup> USSD ‘[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#)’ (executive summary), 20 March 2023

<sup>18</sup> Al Jazeera, ‘[Sudan’s coup is on shaky ground](#)’, 19 November 2021

<sup>19</sup> Sudan Tribune, ‘[About us](#)’ no date

<sup>20</sup> Sudan Tribune, ‘[Sudan democratic transition: the path forward](#)’, no date

<sup>21</sup> RVI, ‘[What next for the Juba Peace Agreement? Evolving ...](#)’ (page 4), Jan/Feb 2022

<sup>22</sup> Cedoca, ‘[Sudan: Security situation in Darfur and the Two Areas](#)’ (page 14), 23 February 2023

<sup>23</sup> Africa Confidential, ‘[Schisms in the junta are widening](#)’, 3 March 2022

(UNSC report February 2024) noted:

'The fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces intensified and continued to expand, affecting new areas of the Sudan during the reporting period. The Sudanese Armed Forces remained largely in control of eastern and northern States, whereas the Rapid Support Forces expanded into Al-Gazira State, capturing Wad Madani. In response, the Sudanese Armed Forces, their supporters and civilians called for popular mobilization in several States. The Rapid Support Forces also remained in control of most of Khartoum and Darfur. The Sudanese Armed Forces launched counter-offensives in parts of Khartoum and expanded its aerial bombardments in several parts of the Sudan.'<sup>24</sup>

- 9.2.2 Regarding the areas of control exerted by the RSF and SAF, the 15 January 2024 final report of the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan to the UN Security Council (report of the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan) covering the period from 12 March 2023 to 22 December 2023 dated 15 January 2024 noted: 'By mid-December 2023, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had secured control of four of five Darfur states, including strategic cities, supply routes and border areas. RSF captured Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) headquarters in South Darfur (Nyala on 26 October), Central Darfur (Zalingei on 31 October), West Darfur (Ardamatta on 4 November) and East Darfur (Ed Daein on 22 November) ... SAF retained a presence only in North Darfur State, in particular its headquarters in El Fasher ...'<sup>25</sup>
- 9.2.3 The Economist, a UK-based newspaper, noted on 23 May 2024 that: 'Sudan has splintered into a messy patchwork of competing militias and rebel movements. The capital, Khartoum, is dominated by the RSF. The SAF controls most of the agricultural lands in the east and the oil terminal in Port Sudan on the Red Sea. Arms and mercenaries are also pouring into Sudan across its borders with Chad, Libya and the Central African Republic, and across the Red Sea.'<sup>26</sup>
- 9.2.4 On 30 June 2024 Al Jazeera reported that the RSF announced on X that it had captured Singa, the capital of Sienna state which according to the report meant that the RSF 'are closing in on Port Sudan on the Red Sea, where the army, government and the United Nations agencies are now based.' The report further noted that 'The RSF controls most of the capital Khartoum, Gezira state in the centre of the country, the vast western region of Darfur and much of Kordofan to the south.'<sup>27</sup>
- 9.2.5 In April 2024, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project that collects information on the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world<sup>28</sup> published a situation update covering the one year of conflict (ACLED report April 2024). It noted: 'Since fighting first broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April, ACLED

<sup>24</sup> UNSC '[Situation in the Sudan pursuant to Security Council ...](#)' (paragraph 2), 29 February 2024

<sup>25</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan...](#)' (paragraphs 4 to 5), 15 January 2024

<sup>26</sup> The Economist, [Sudan: the war the world forgot](#), 24 May 2024

<sup>27</sup> Al Jazeera, '[Sudan's RSF claims it has captured a key city in the southeast](#)', 30 June 2024

<sup>28</sup> ACLED, '[About ACLED](#)', no date

records 5,550 events of political violence and more than 15,550 reported fatalities in Sudan...In all of Sudan, ACLED records over 1,400 violent events targeting civilians since the war began.<sup>29</sup> As of 13 August 2024, ACLED recorded 7,131 organised violence events - battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians – and 19,709 associated fatalities in Sudan since 15 April 2024<sup>30</sup>.

- 9.2.6 The conflict has also caused internal and external population displacement. According to the August 2024 International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix report an estimated 7,914,235 individuals were displaced internally and 2,312,968 externally since 15 April 2023<sup>31</sup>.

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### 9.3 Collapse of government institutions

- 9.3.1 A June 2023 protection brief by the UNHCR noted:

‘The safety and security of the civilian population appears to be threatened by the collapse of law and order and the related widespread rise of criminality. Prison breaks and the absence of law enforcement actors have contributed to episodes of assaults, robberies, and other violent acts perpetrated against people attempting to reach services as well as against families on the move to reach safe destinations ...

‘... Reports of GBV, particularly conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls, are increasing at alarming trends ... They are reportedly perpetrated by parties to the conflict against civilians both in Khartoum and in other areas, as well as when people are on the move. These acts go unpunished in the current breakdown of law and order and security vacuum...’<sup>32</sup>

- 9.3.2 On 19 August 2023, the Sudan Tribune, reported:

‘Following the start of confrontations between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15, the signatories to the peace agreement established a joint force tasked with protecting civilians and commercial convoys in Darfur, as well as those heading to the western Sudan region. They emphasized that they would not take side in the conflict within the military component.

‘However, this force has fallen short in ensuring the safety of civilians in significant Darfur locations including El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, Zalingei, the capital of Central Darfur, and now Nyala. The intense clashes that have erupted in South Darfur’s capital, raise doubts among the Darfur population about the force’s effectiveness, resources, and legitimacy.’<sup>33</sup>

- 9.3.3 The November 2023 UNSC Sudan situation report observed:

‘The conflict continued to severely impact the administration of justice ... Justice institutions in Khartoum and Central, North, South and West Darfur

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<sup>29</sup> ACLED ‘[Situation Update | April 2024 One year of war in Sudan](#)’, 14 April 2024

<sup>30</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#), (Sudan/organised political violence accessed 13 August 2024

<sup>31</sup> IOM, ‘DTM [Sudan mobility update \(5\)](#)’ (page 1), 7 August 2024

<sup>32</sup> UNHCR, ‘[UNHCR Protection Brief – Sudan](#)’ (pages 5 and 7), June 2023

<sup>33</sup> Sudan Tribune, ‘[Challenges mount for Darfur Joint Force after failure to protect ...](#)’, 19 August 2023

ceased to function. In North Darfur, the joint armed struggle movement force of the armed movement signatory parties to the Juba Peace Agreement assumed some justice functions, including dispute resolution, to fill the vacuum left by formal justice institutions. The absence of justice sector officials owing to the conflict... has significantly limited the capacity of the formal justice sector to administer judicial proceedings... In East Darfur, major cases could not proceed since only three junior judges and two prosecutors were in office. In Khartoum on 16 September, the building housing the Ministry of Justice was burned down following clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, increasing concerns over the potential loss of vital legal records.<sup>34</sup>

- 9.3.4 On 22 February 2024, OHCHR published an advance report based on various sources on the human rights situation in Sudan covering the period from 15 April to 15 December 2023 (OHCHR report February 2024). It noted:

‘In Khartoum State, Darfur and Kordofan regions, attacks and looting targeting the judiciary and courts impacted the administration of justice and the rule of law. In Khartoum State, courts and public prosecutions ceased activities soon after the conflict erupted. Between July and September, several judicial facilities, including courts, were hit by missiles completely destroyed. Other court buildings were looted and set on fire, including in May the Dar El-Salam court complex in Omdurman, and the Criminal Court of the Anti-Corruption and Public Fund Violations ... On 16 September, the Ministry of Justice in Khartoum was largely destroyed when fire erupted following clashes between the parties ...

‘The departure or displacement of judicial personnel due to the conflict contributed to the shutdown of justice institutions in some areas. Many judges, prosecutors and other judicial staff fled Khartoum to other States, including the Chief Justice...’

‘All civilian prisons in Khartoum were reportedly evacuated between 21 and 25 April in response to the security and humanitarian situation, either deliberately or following clashes between the parties ...

‘In the current circumstances, the domestic justice system does not have the means or capacity to conduct prompt, independent, and credible investigations or to prosecute persons in a manner consistent with international human rights norms and standards ...<sup>35</sup>

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## **10. Darfur armed groups in the conflict since April 2023**

### **10.1 Formation of Darfur joint protection force**

- 10.1.1 On 27 April 2023, the Sudan Tribune, reported that following the outbreak of the conflict 5 armed movements that signed the Juba peace agreement including the Sudan Liberation Movement Minni Minnawi bloc (SLM-MM), the Sudan Liberation Movement Transitional Council (SLM-TC), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Forces Gathering (SLFG), and the Sudanese Alliance Forces (SA) formed a joint force to

<sup>34</sup> UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the ...](#)’ (paragraphs 28-29) 13 November 2023

<sup>35</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Situation of human rights in the...](#)’ (paragraphs 87 to 91, 93 and 95), 22 February 2024

protect civilians and escort humanitarian in Darfur. According to the report, these armed movements, stated that they would maintain a neutral stance in the ongoing conflict between the RSF and SAF<sup>36</sup>.

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## 10.2 End of Darfur armed groups' neutrality

### 10.2.1 The report by the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan covering from 12 March to 22 December 2023 observed:

'The overall conflict between SAF and RSF put pressure on the Darfuran armed movements to choose a side. That conundrum triggered divisions among and within the movements. Initially, most of the armed movements publicly adopted a position of neutrality. Exceptions were the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) branch of Mustafa Tambor, which, from the beginning, has supported SAF against RSF in Central Darfur, and SA [Sudanese Alliance], led by the Governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abdallah Abakar, whose forces have engaged in fighting alongside civilians in El Geneina against RSF and allied militias since June.

'However, the situation changed dramatically on 16 November when several key leaders of armed movements, including Minni Minawi (Chair of the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA/MM)) and Gibril Ibrahim (JEM Chair) declared their support for SAF...'<sup>37</sup>

### 10.2.2 ACLED report April 2024 covering from April 2023 to April 2024 noted:

'During the initial stages of the conflict, JPA signatories formed the neutral Darfur Joint Protection Force, which aimed to protect civilians and properties. This force is now split, with some groups supporting the SAF and others choosing to remain neutral. Neutral groups have broken away and formed their own protection force, but some of their military leaders are joining the mobilization in El Fasher despite their political leadership's stance. Meanwhile, the SLM/A faction led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur — a holdout rebel group that did not sign the JPA — has expanded control across Jabal Marrah, a mountainous area stretching across the border between North, Central, and South Darfur. Unlike other groups, al-Nur's SLM/A faction has not signed any agreement with the transitional government, and continues to remain neutral despite deploying forces to El Fasher and warning against RSF attacks.'<sup>38</sup>

### 10.2.3 The report by the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan covering 12 March to 22 December 2023 observed: 'In the months leading up to the conflict, SAF sought to forge alliances with traditional chiefs from non-Arab Darfuri communities. It targeted in particular those that faced confronted ongoing issues with Arabs and RSF, such as the Fur and Masalit. SAF attempted to bolster its forces with their support.'<sup>39</sup> The same source added: 'At the beginning of 2023, RSF launched a large-scale recruitment campaign in Darfur, with a focus on South and West Darfur, in particular among local

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<sup>36</sup> Sudan Tribune, '[Peace groups deploy combatants to protect civilians in North Darfur](#)', 27 April 2023

<sup>37</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraphs 7 to 8), 15 January 2024

<sup>38</sup> ACLED '[Situation Update | April 2024 One year of war in Sudan](#)', 14 April 2024

<sup>39</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraph 20), 15 January 2024

Arab communities'<sup>40</sup>

- 10.2.4 The report by the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan covering 12 March to 22 December 2023 further noted that: 'Recruitment drives by the two warring parties intensified after war had broken.'<sup>41</sup> According to the same source SAF capitalized on the antagonism between the Zaghawa, Berti and Massalit with the Arabs to recruit from these communities<sup>42</sup> and the RSF attracted various Arab groups based on Arab solidarity and substantive financial means<sup>43</sup>. The source noted:

'... On the basis of Arab solidarity and substantive financial means, RSF attracted various Arab armed groups and militias, including former foes.

'In its military operations in Darfur and Khartoum, RSF had an increasingly heavy reliance on those new allies ...

'Several commanders and factions of the Third Front-Tamazuj, a group initially closer to SAF, have also joined RSF since the beginning of the fighting ... Among the Arab factions of the SA armed group, most of the key leaders and commanders ... also joined RSF.'<sup>44</sup>

- 10.2.5 In a 5 February 2024 news report, the Middle East Eye, an independently funded digital news organisation covering stories from the Middle East and North Africa<sup>45</sup> stated:

'Thousands of Sudanese civilians have taken up arms against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary, which now controls about half of the country, including the capital Khartoum, much of Kordofan, and the vast western region of Darfur.

'The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) ... has supported calls to mobilise against its enemy and has armed civilians...

'Some analysts have warned that the army's current mobilisation will fuel tribalism and polarisation in Sudan, and that it could lead to an all-out civil war. Many of those civilians taking up arms say that they are not supporting the army, but that they are defending themselves from RSF attacks in the absence of any effective protection from the SAF.

Thousands of people in el-Gezira, River Nile, North and South Kordofan, Kassala, and Darfur, among other states and regions, have armed themselves or been armed by the SAF to ward off RSF attacks.'<sup>46</sup>

- 10.2.6 ACLED's situation update covering 25 November 2023 to 5 January 2024

'Following the RSF's capture of four out of the five states in Darfur in November, concerns about an RSF assault on El Fasher city, the capital of the remaining SAF-held North Darfur state, prompted mobilization among Darfur rebel groups and ethnic militias to defend the city. As tensions heightened, all parties involved in the Darfur conflict deployed troops,

<sup>40</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraph 23 ), 15 January 2024

<sup>41</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraph 23 ), 15 January 2024

<sup>42</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraphs 26 to 27), 15 January 2024

<sup>43</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraphs 28 to 30), 15 January 2024

<sup>44</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraphs 10 to 12), 15 January 2024

<sup>45</sup> MEE, '[About us](#)', no date

<sup>46</sup> MEE '[Sudanese take up arms against RSF as army begins to push back](#)', 5 February 2024.

including the SAF, the RSF, the factions of Minnawi, Abdul Wahid al-Nur, and Tambor of Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), Justice and Equality Movement Jibril Ibrahim faction, and various ethnic militias, including the Zaghawa. The SLM/A-Minnawi faction and Justice and Equality Movement Jibril Ibrahim faction were united under the banner of the Darfur Joint Forces.<sup>47</sup>

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### 10.3 Darfur armed groups involvement in fighting

#### 10.3.1 The October 2023 United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) protection brief noted:

‘The governor of the Darfur region, Minni Minnawi, leader of a Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) signatory armed group and political movement (Sudan Liberation Movement – Minni Minnawi bloc, or SLM-MM), has led the engagement of SLM-MM in some clashes with RSF in North Darfur, alongside ... [the] Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), for the explicit purpose of ‘protecting civilians ... However, both groups, as well as the South Darfur-based Gathering of Sudanese Liberation Forces (GSLF), remain officially neutral in the broader conflict.

‘In contrast, SLM-AW has taken a more forward-leaning posture and now claims to control several areas around its traditional base in Jebel Marra, including localities in North, South and Central Darfur, again for the purpose of ‘protecting civilians’ ... Meanwhile, SLM’s Tambour bloc (SLM-Tambour) based in Central Darfur has explicitly declared an allegiance with SAF, as has Musa Hilal, the former leader of the Darfur Border Guards (a government-backed paramilitary force), who maintains a following in North Darfur.’<sup>48</sup>

#### 10.3.2 The report by the UN Panels of Experts on the Sudan covering from 12 March to 22 December 2023 noted: ‘Between 1 and 3 November, RSF and allied militias attacked Ardamatta and fought SAF soldiers, some GSLF fighters who joined SAF headquarters in May, members of the SA and Masalit self-defence groups.’<sup>49</sup> According to the UNSC report February 2024, in December 2023 the SLA -AW and the SLA-MM clashed with the RSF in South and North Darfur, in El Fasher<sup>50</sup>.

#### 10.3.3 The ACLED situation update covering from 25 November 2023 to 5 January 2024 May 2024 observed:

‘...After renouncing their neutrality, several armed movements within the Darfur Joint Forces — including SLM/A-Minnawi and JEM-Gibril Ibrahim — were deployed to battle frontlines in and around Khartoum and al-Jazirah states in support of the SAF after al-Jazeera fell to the RSF in December 2023. On 19 April 2024, the Darfur Joint Forces issued a statement announcing the initiation of battles to “liberate” the Refinery from the RSF. Following this statement, the SAF and allies captured key sites in the vicinity

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<sup>47</sup> ACLED, ‘[Situation Update | January 2024 Sudan: The Rapid Support Forces ...](#)’, 12 January 2024

<sup>48</sup> UNHCR, ‘[Protection Brief Darfur Region](#)’ (pages 5 to 6), October 2023

<sup>49</sup> UNSC, ‘[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)’ (paragraph 75), 15 January 2024

<sup>50</sup> UNSC ‘[Situation in the Sudan pursuant to Security Council ...](#)’ (paragraph 17), 29 February 2024

of the refinery, such as an RSF camp on nearby al-Jari mountain on 19 April and the General Intelligence Services building on 26 April.<sup>51</sup>

#### 10.3.4 ACLED's situation update covering 10 January to 8 March 2024 observed:

'The recurring pattern of rebel groups intervening to protect civilians from attacks by the RSF has had severe repercussions for the most vulnerable people. For example, in West Darfur, the Sudanese Alliance Forces, under the leadership of former governor Khamis Abkar, intervened between April and June 2023, to defend the Masalit ethnic group. However, this intervention resulted in a series of retaliatory campaigns by the RSF and allied Arab militias against the Masalit, including ethnic cleansing and forced displacement.'<sup>52</sup>

#### 10.3.5 The 28 June 2024 ACLED Horn of Africa situation update observed with respect to the battle for El Fasher, North Darfur:

'...The Darfur Joint Forces and the Zaghawa ethnic militias supplemented the infantry troops that the SAF lacked for the conflict in El Fasher. The Darfur Joint Forces, a coalition of armed groups established to protect civilians in El Fasher, began to mobilize in November. This timeline allowed the proper training of volunteers and facilitated the movement of troops and supplies, as there were only sporadic clashes between the RSF and the SAF due to a peace deal brokered by the native administration of El Fasher.

'The Zaghawa ethnic group, based in North Darfur and East Chad, has a long history of conflict with Darfur Arab militias — also known as the Janjaweed — who are now fighting with the RSF ... Many members of the Zaghawa ethnic group responded to a mobilization call from the SAF, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) faction led by Minni Minnawi, and the Zaghawa native administration on 24 April, after the RSF and its allied Arab militias attacked non-Arab villages west of El Fasher and seized Mellit on 14 April.'<sup>53</sup>

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## 11. Khartoum

### 11.1 Conflict and humanitarian situation – general

#### 11.1.1 For information on the general levels of violence and humanitarian need arising from the conflict in Darfur, see the Country policy and information notes [Sudan: security situation](#) and [Sudan: humanitarian situation](#).

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### 11.2 Treatment of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum

#### 11.2.1 While sources mention targeting by RSF and SAF forces on grounds of ethnicity (see [General Human rights situation in Khartoum](#)) none of the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) refer to non-Arab Darfuris specifically.

#### 11.2.2 Sources reported of human rights violations in Khartoum including unlawful killings of civilians, arbitrary arrest and detention some of it based on

<sup>51</sup> ACLED, '[Situation Update | May 2024 Sudan: The RSF sets its eyes on North Darfur](#)', 17 May 2024

<sup>52</sup> ACLED, '[Situation Update | March 2024 Sudan: Escalating Conflict in Khartoum ...](#)', 15 March 2024

<sup>53</sup> ACLED, '[Situation update: Fighting deepens around El Fasher in Sudan ...](#)' 28 June 2024

ethnicity, enforced disappearances and rape and sexual violence (see [General Human rights situation in Khartoum](#)). However, the information from the sources did not indicate that non-Arab Darfuris were subjected to those abuses based on their ethnicity.

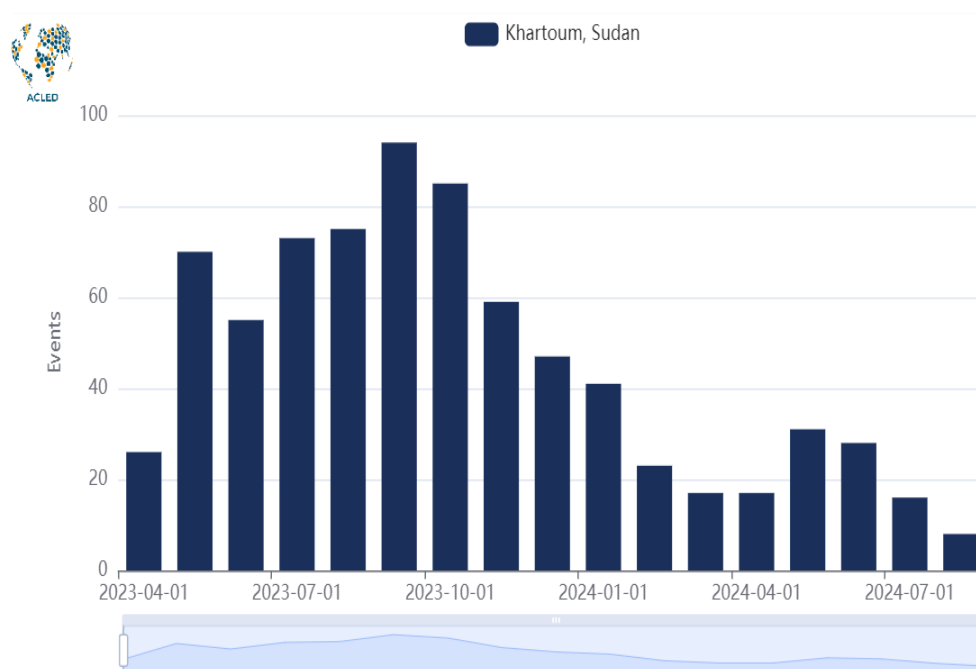
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## 12. General Human rights situation in Khartoum

### 12.1 Armed attacks on civilians

12.1.1 The OHCHR report February 2024 covering from 15 April to 13 December 2023 observed: 'Establishing accurate numbers of civilian casualties has been challenging' and that OHCHR received multiple reports of the unlawful killing of unarmed individuals including children and women by the RSF' as well as 'allegations of the unlawful killing by the Rapid Support Forces of humanitarian volunteers and others who denounced or tried to prevent harming of civilians and looting of property in Khartoum State.'<sup>54</sup>

12.1.2 From 15 April 2023 to 13 August 2024, ACLED recorded 765 events of civilian targeting in Khartoum which represented 36.6% of all civilian targeting events in Sudan (n=2,091)<sup>55</sup>. ACLED has produced below chart showing monthly events involving civilian targeting in the period under review.

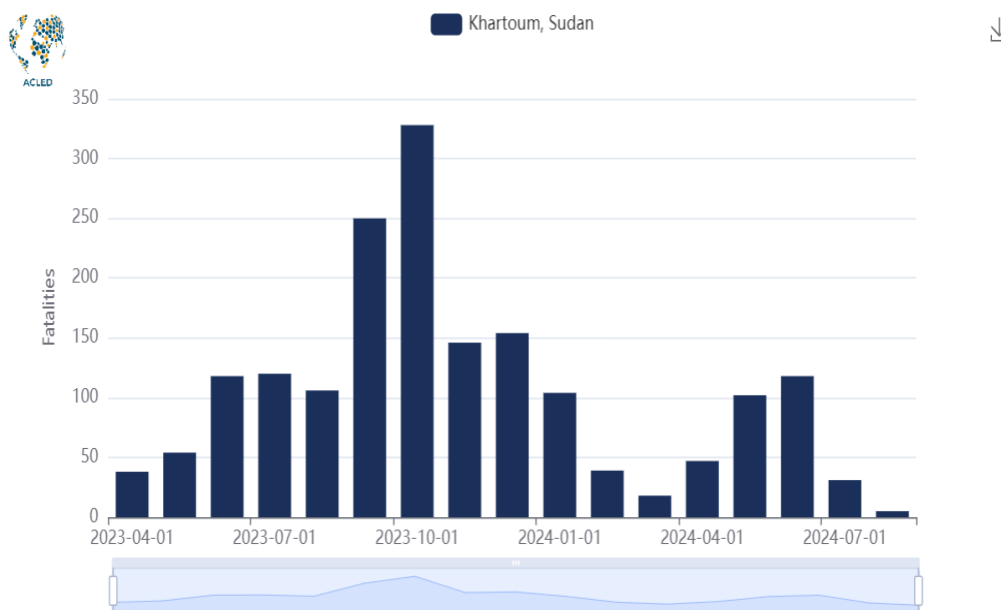


12.1.3 With respect to fatalities from civilian targeting in Khartoum from 15 April 2023 to 13 August 2024 ACLED recorded 1,778 fatalities which represent 34.4% of all fatalities from civilian targeting in Sudan (n=5,168)<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> OHCHR, '[Situation of human rights in the Sudan...](#)' (paragraphs 35 to 36, 38), 22 February 2024

<sup>55</sup> ACLED '[ACLED Explorer](#)', (Civilian targeting), accessed 13 August 2024

<sup>56</sup> ACLED '[ACLED Explorer](#)', (Civilian targeting), accessed 13 August 2024



- 12.1.4 ACLED has defined ‘civilian targeting’ as events ‘in which civilians were the main or only target’<sup>57</sup>. It should be noted that fatalities count are only estimates. As ACLED observed: ‘... Fatality data are typically the most biased, and least accurate, component of conflict reporting. They are particularly prone to manipulation by armed groups, and occasionally the media, which may overstate or underreport fatalities for political purposes. These figures should therefore be understood as indicative estimates of reported fatalities, rather than definitive fatality counts.’<sup>58</sup>

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## 12.2 Arbitrary arrests and detention and enforced disappearances

- 12.2.1 The April 2024 United States State Department country report on human rights in Sudan (USSD HR report) covering events in 2023 noted: ‘Security forces, the RSF, and armed militias regularly arrested and detained individuals arbitrarily, including protesters, human rights activists, journalists, resistance committee members, and civilians accused of supporting the opposite warring side.’<sup>59</sup>

- 12.2.2 The OHCHR report February 2024 covering from 15 April to 15 December 2023 noted:

‘Both parties to the conflict have allegedly arbitrarily detained hundreds of individuals, including women and children, including in... Khartoum... Most victims were picked up on the street, at checkpoints or from homes.

‘... Detainees have been held in official detention facilities and unofficial places of detention by both parties. In Khartoum and Omdurman, corroborated information indicates that the Sudanese Armed Forces used its military sites, Military Intelligence headquarters, military prisons, General Intelligence Service premises, and some police stations as places of

<sup>57</sup> ACLED ‘[ACLED Codebook](#)’ (civilian targeting), 9 November 2023

<sup>58</sup> ACLED ‘[ACLED Codebook](#)’ (reported fatalities), 9 November 2023

<sup>59</sup> USSD, ‘[2023 Country report on human rights practices: Sudan](#)’ (section 1 D), 23 April 2024

detention, whereas the Rapid Support Forces used military sites, security premises and civilian buildings taken over during the fighting. In some cases, detainees were held incommunicado for up to four months... The whereabouts of hundreds of other civilian detainees ... remain unknown.

‘The Rapid Support Forces detained mostly individuals perceived to be members or supporters of the Sudanese Armed Forces, members of the National Congress Party, or in some cases based on their ethnic origin or affiliation with certain tribes. The Sudanese Armed Forces detained individuals perceived to be members or supporters of the Rapid Support Forces, supporters of the Political Framework Agreement, in some cases based on their ethnic origin or affiliation with Arab tribes of the Darfur region, or for anti-war opinion. Lawyers have been subjected to arbitrary detention by both parties.

‘Members of the resistance committees and emergency rooms were also detained by both parties for providing voluntary humanitarian assistance in neighbourhoods affected by the war in Khartoum.’<sup>60</sup>

12.2.3 On 25 September 2023, The New Arab, a London based English-language news and current affairs website that reports on the Middle East and North Africa<sup>61</sup> reported that according to the pro-democracy Emergency Lawyers there were 52 illegal detention centres in Khartoum with 44 controlled by the RSF and 8 by the army in Khartoum which were holding as many as 5,000 detainees<sup>62</sup>.

12.2.4 A March 2024 report covering April 2023 to March 2024 by the African Centre for Justice and Peace (ACJPS), a non-governmental organization that monitors and promotes human rights and legal reform in Sudan<sup>63</sup>, (ACJPS report March 2024), that both SAF and RSF engaged in arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detention of civilians based on their ethnicity or political affiliation<sup>64</sup>. The report did not provide details of the ethnic origin or composition of those arrested but noted that ‘those most affected are; political activists, human rights defenders, resistance committee members, civil activists, and other professionals among others.’<sup>65</sup>

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## 12.3 Enforced disappearances

12.3.1 On 13 July 2023, The New Arab, in an analysis piece reported:

‘In Khartoum state alone, there have been 451 documented cases of civilians who have been forcibly disappeared since the war began on 15 April, said Gillian Kitley, director of the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Sudan. The actual number is feared to be much higher.

‘Most of those who have been disappeared have been arrested by either the

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<sup>60</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Situation of human rights in the Sudan...](#)’, (paragraphs 54 to 58), 22 February 2024

<sup>61</sup> The New Arab, ‘[About us](#)’ no date

<sup>62</sup> The New Arab, ‘[In the shadows of Sudan’s war, illegal detention sites surge](#)’ 25 September 2023

<sup>63</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Our mission](#)’ no date

<sup>64</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Sudan War: Arbitrary arrest, torture, and ill-treatment behind ...](#)’, (pages 4), 14 March 2024

<sup>65</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Sudan War: Arbitrary arrest, torture, and ill-treatment behind ...](#)’, (pages 4), 14 March 2024

army, and in particular the Military Intelligence, or the RSF, often on suspicion of supporting the other side in the war ...<sup>66</sup>

- 12.3.2 The OHCHR, in their report covering 15 April-15 December 2023, said they ‘... continued to receive reports of missing persons, which raises concerns of enforced disappearances. A national missing persons initiative led by civil society recorded that 715 people were missing as of 15 October, including 650 men, 47 women, 16 boys and two girls. Many were believed to be held incommunicado in areas under the control of the Rapid Support Forces including in Khartoum and North Kordofan as well as many parts of Darfur. Khartoum State accounted for 595 cases, including 43 women. However, the actual number of victims could be significantly higher ... As of 20 October, the Sudan Police Forces reported 113 cases of missing persons since June 2023. By 3 August, the Attorney General reportedly registered 500 cases.

‘According to information received by OHCHR, hundreds of people disappeared in areas controlled by the Rapid Support Forces in Khartoum, including 228 individuals who disappeared during the period between 15 April and 31 May and at least 49 women.’<sup>67</sup>

- 12.3.3 A 27 April 2024 report which was compiled by observers affiliated with the Sudanese Group for Victims of Enforced Disappearance, drawing data from credible sources and published by ACJPS noted that between 15 April 2023 and 15 April 2024, there were 947 victims of enforced disappearances recorded in Khartoum: 389 in Khartoum, 281 in Bahri and 277 in Omdurman. According to the report, enforced disappearances, predominantly target civilians accused of collaborating or affiliating with any of the fighting parties, and sometimes driven by financial motives<sup>68</sup>. The report did not provide the ethnic profile of those disappeared nor state that non-Arab Darfuris were specifically targeted.

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## 12.4 Rape and sexual violence

- 12.4.1 A 22 November 2023 report by ACJPS noted:

‘Women Organisations documenting SGBV have verified 124 rapes as of October 2023 with the actual number likely extending into the thousands. Challenges in obtaining reliable data have included poor phone connections, frequent power cuts, difficulties in tracking survivors who have fled to neighboring countries, and fear of reprisals hindering survivors from speaking out. The RSF paramilitary group, occupying civilian neighborhoods in Khartoum and Omdurman, is implicated in the majority of documented rapes, often using sexual violence as a brutal strategy to force people to evacuate their homes ... Campaign groups report instances of women being kidnapped by the RSF for ransom, often experiencing rape during captivity. Testimonies point to the RSF's involvement in rapes, including disturbing incidents of women being assaulted in front of their families...’<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> The New Arab ‘[In the chaos of war, a desperate search for Sudan's missing](#)’, 13 July 2023

<sup>67</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Situation of human rights in the Sudan ...](#)’, (paragraphs 63 to 64), 22 February 2024

<sup>68</sup> ACJPS, ‘[A Report on Enforced Disappearances One Year into Sudan War](#)’ 27 April 2024

<sup>69</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Sexual and gender-based violence \(SGBV\): A tool Used to instill ...](#)’ 22 November 2023

#### 12.4.2 A 30 November 2023 OHCHR press release noted:

‘UN experts today expressed alarm about the escalation of violence in Sudan, particularly sexual violence committed in the conflict, primarily by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)...

“We are appalled by reports of widespread use of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, as a tool of war to subjugate, terrorise, break and punish women and girls, and as a means of punishing specific communities targeted by the RSF and allied militias,” the experts said. The experts noted that similar gender-based violence has also been used against non-Sudanese migrants, refugees and stateless persons.

‘In August 2023, the experts raised concerns at reports of multiple serious violations perpetrated in particular by the RSF. This included reports of sexual exploitation, slavery, trafficking, rape, and acts tantamount to enforced disappearances, which in some cases may have been racially, ethnically and politically motivated, including for expressing opposition to the presence of armed groups in an area. Since then, reports of forced prostitution and forced marriage of women and girls have also emerged.

‘These serious acts are reportedly no longer concentrated in Khartoum or Darfur, but have spread to other parts of the country, such as Kordofan,” the UN experts said ...’<sup>70</sup>

#### 12.4.3 The OHCHR report February 2024 covering from 15 April to 15 December 2023 noted:

‘Since mid-April, there have been widespread allegations of sexual and gender-based violence in the areas most affected by fighting, including Khartoum State ...

‘As of 15 December, OHCHR received credible reports of 58 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, gang rape, attempted rape and other forms of sexual violence, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, by both parties to the conflict and their allied groups, which are prohibited under international law. These incidents involved at least 118 victims ... 26 of the incidents took place in Khartoum ... In 39 incidents, the perpetrators were identified as men in Rapid Support Forces’ uniforms; in nine as armed men affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces ... In two incidents, members of the Sudanese Armed Forces were identified as the perpetrators ...’<sup>71</sup>

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## 13. Darfur

### 13.1 Conflict and humanitarian situation – general

#### 13.1.1 For information on the general levels of violence and humanitarian need arising from the conflict in Darfur, see the country policy and information notes [Sudan: security situation](#) and [Sudan: humanitarian situation](#)

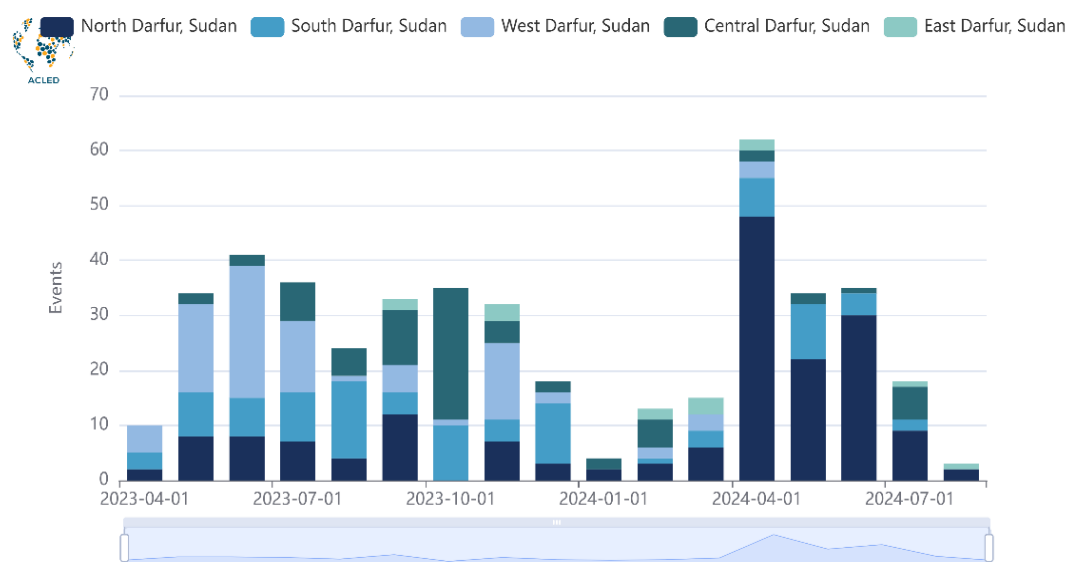
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<sup>70</sup> OHCHR ‘[Sudan: UN experts appalled by use of sexual violence as a tool ...](#)’ 30 November 2023

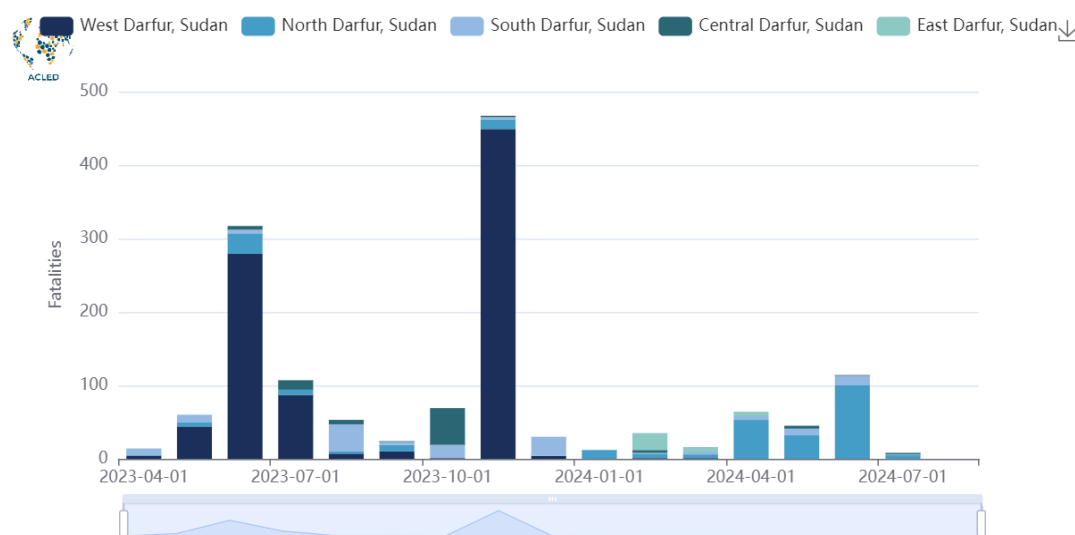
<sup>71</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Situation of human rights in the Sudan...](#)’ (paragraphs 45 to 48), 22 February 2024

## 13.2 Armed attacks on civilians

13.2.1 From 15 April 2023 to 13 August 2024, ACLED recorded 447 events of civilian targeting in Darfur which represent 21.4% of all civilian targeting events in Sudan (n=2,091). Of the total events in Darfur, 173 occurred in North Darfur, 97 in South Darfur, 89 in West Darfur, 73 in Central Darfur and 14 in East Darfur<sup>72</sup>. ACLED has produced below graph showing civilian targeting events from 15 April 2023 to 13 August 2024.



13.2.2 Regarding fatalities associated with civilian targeting, ACLED recorded 1,435 from 15 April 2023 to 13 August 2024 which represent 27.8% of all fatalities from civilian targeting in Sudan (n= 5,168). 887 fatalities occurred in West Darfur, 280 in North Darfur, 145 in South Darfur, 88 in Central Darfur and 35 in East Darfur<sup>73</sup>. ACLED has produced below chart showing fatalities from civilian targeting in Darfur from 15 April 2023 to 13 August 2024.



<sup>72</sup> ACLED '[ACLED Explorer](#)', (Civilian targeting), accessed 13 August 2024

<sup>73</sup> ACLED '[ACLED Explorer](#)', (Civilian targeting), accessed 10 July 2024

- 13.2.3 It is not possible to determine from the ACLED data neither the number of events nor fatalities against non-Arab Darfuris as the data is not disaggregated by ethnicity.

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### 13.3 Conflict-related targeting of non-Arabs Darfuris in West Darfur

- 13.3.1 On 22 September 2023 Reuters published an investigative report on the RSF attack on El Geneina based on interviews and an analysis of satellite imagery, photographs, social media footage and lists of the dead compiled by local rights activists. It observed:

‘As Sudan plunged into civil war, the ethnic-African Masalit tribe came under weeks of systematic attacks in West Darfur by the paramilitary RSF and allied militias. In the city of El Geneina, at least 1,000 bodies were buried in Al Ghabat cemetery – which filled with hastily dug mass graves...

‘It was a rolling ethnic killing campaign that lasted for weeks. The target: the city’s darker-skinned Masalit tribe ... The Arab attackers, multiple survivors said, often referred to the Masalit as “anbai,” meaning slave.

‘The killings, dozens of witnesses recounted, included executions of El Geneina residents who were identified as Masalit, sometimes after being interrogated by RSF and Arab militia fighters. The militiamen, survivors said, were particularly focused on killing Masalit men and boys, seen as potential fighters ... The survivors’ accounts reveal a campaign that was systematic and coordinated. Mortar fire was directed at specific areas of El Geneina where the Masalit lived. Roadblocks were set up on main arteries to control movement in the city. Arab militiamen specifically hunted for prominent figures in the Masalit community. When the campaign was over, RSF and Arab militiamen oversaw an effort to hide the atrocities, which included burying bodies on the city’s outskirts, more than 15 witnesses told Reuters.’<sup>74</sup>

- 13.3.2 The OHCHR report covering 15 April to December 2023 observed:

‘... Between May and November, the Rapid Support Forces and its allied Arab militias carried out at least ten attacks against civilians in El Geneina and surrounding areas, including attacks carried out between 24 April and 16 June that targeted primarily the Masalit community, killing thousands of people . On 14 June, the Governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abbakar, a prominent Masalit and leader of the Sudan Alliance, was killed while in the custody of the Rapid Support Forces in El Geneina .

‘OHCHR gathered first hand testimony of unlawful killings by the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias of primarily individuals from the Masalit community while fleeing towards the Sudanese Armed Forces base in Ardamata and on the road to Chad during attacks that took place between 24 April and 16 June. Consistent accounts indicated that people were mainly shot at close range after being ordered to lie on the ground, or when armed men opened fire into fleeing crowds ...

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<sup>74</sup> Reuters, ‘[The slaughter of El Geneina: How Arab fighters carried out ...](#)’ 22 September 2023

'Killings in West Darfur by the Rapid Support Forces and its allied Arab militias continued over the following months. At least 55 civilians, including five women and four children, were reportedly killed in Morni (80 km east of El Geneina), between 26 and 29 June. At least 18 civilians, including four women and one child, were reportedly killed in Kerenik, between 3 and 5 July; and several hundred people were reportedly killed in Ardamata between 4 and 10 November after the Rapid Support Forces overran the Sudanese Armed Forces base.'<sup>75</sup>

- 13.3.3 In May 2024 Human Rights published a report (HRW report May 2024), about the numerous serious violations by the RSF and allied forces based on over 220 interviews, verification and assessment of 110 photographs and videos, and analysis of satellite imagery and documents shared by humanitarian organizations. The summary of the report observed:

'From late April until early November 2023, the RSF and allied militias conducted a systematic campaign to remove, including by killing, ethnic Massalit residents ... from El Geneina, home to an ethnically mixed population of around 540,000 people. Violence began on April 24 and continued in phases over seven weeks, peaking in mid-June, with another surge in November ...

'The events are among the worst atrocities against civilians so far in the current conflict in Sudan. The total number of dead is unknown. Sudanese Red Crescent staff said that on June 13, they counted 2,000 bodies on the streets of El Geneina and then, overwhelmed by the numbers, stopped counting. Two days later, on June 15, a large-scale massacre took place. The UN panel of experts on the Sudan estimated, citing intelligence sources, that between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed in El Geneina in 2023.'<sup>76</sup>

- 13.3.4 The same source added:

'A short bout of clashes broke out on April 24 between the SAF and the RSF, and then the RSF and allied militias attacked majority Massalit neighborhoods. They clashed with predominantly Massalit armed groups, including forces from the Sudanese Alliance, led by the late state governor, Khamis Abdallah Abbakar, as well as Massalit men—primarily youth—loosely organized and mobilized in local "self-defense groups."

'Over the next weeks ... the RSF and allied militias systematically targeted unarmed civilians, killing them in large numbers. Adolescent boys and men were especially singled out for killings, but among those unlawfully killed were also many children and women. The RSF and allied militias also appear to have targeted injured people as well as prominent members of the Massalit community, including lawyers, doctors, human rights defenders, academics, community leaders, religious figures, and local government officials ...

'During their campaign, RSF fighters and allied militias used derogatory racial slurs against Massalits and people from other non-Arab ethnic groups. They told them to leave, that the land was no longer theirs, and that it would

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<sup>75</sup> OHCHR, '[Situation of human rights in the Sudan ...](#)' (paragraphs 40 to 42), 22 February 2024

<sup>76</sup> HRW, '[The Massalit will not come home": Ethnic cleansing ...](#)' (pages 1 to 2), 9 May 2024

be “cleaned” and become “the land of the Arabs.” ...

‘Throughout the seven-week campaign, SAF soldiers largely hunkered down in their barracks, unable or maybe unwilling to protect the population. The UN Panel of Experts found that, “throughout the attacks, [the SAF] failed to protect the population.”

‘On June 14, the governor of West Darfur and leader of the Sudanese Alliance armed group, Khamis Abbakar, was killed ... His killing, coinciding with the collapse of Massalit forces’ ability to fight back against RSF attacks in primarily Massalit neighborhoods, led to a mass exodus from El Geneina. Some civilians and fighters tried to go west, toward Chad, only to come under attack by the RSF and militias. Many civilians and fighters then decided to flee toward Ardamata, a northern suburb of the city hosting a garrison of the Sudanese Armed Forces, leaving overnight in a convoy of tens of thousands of civilians and fighters.

‘In the early hours of June 15, the RSF and allied militias attacked the convoy as it proceeded through El Geneina, killing civilians in large numbers...

‘The killings continued over the following days in El Geneina and on the road to Chad, where tens of thousands of civilians, as well as Massalit fighters, headed in search of refuge.

‘On the road, the RSF and allied militias shot and killed or injured large numbers of civilians, including disarmed fighters. Arab civilians living in villages along the route to Chad extorted, beat, and harassed fleeing civilians. During the exodus, RSF forces sought to identify prominent Massalit community leaders, apparently to prevent them from reaching Chad.

‘Satellite imagery corroborates that, since the RSF and allied militias took control of El Geneina in June, predominantly Massalit neighborhoods have been systematically dismantled, many with bulldozers, preventing civilians who fled from returning to their homes.

‘In early November, nearly five months after the June 15 massacre, RSF and allied militias again killed at least 1,000 civilians in El Geneina’s suburb of Ardamata, according to the United Nations. The forces also looted civilian property and assaulted and unlawfully detained scores of predominantly Massalit people.

‘As a result of these atrocities, over 570,000 predominantly Massalit people, as well as members of other non-Arab groups, are now in refugee camps in Chad, with little hope of returning home safely in the near future.’<sup>77</sup>

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### 13.4 Conflict-related targeting of non-Arabs Darfuris in North Darfur

#### 13.4.1 An April 2024 report by the Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR), a non-governmental organization that promotes and protects human rights in

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<sup>77</sup> HRW, “[The Massalit will not come home](#)”: Ethnic cleansing ...’ (page 2), 9 May 2024

Darfur and other areas of Sudan<sup>78</sup>:

‘...[F]rom the morning of April 12 to April 13, 2024 ... RSF soldiers ... renewed their attack on about fifteen villages, particularly those to the west of El Fasher and internally displaced Camps of Jiqi, Qariq, Jarqa, Umm Ashush village, Hilla Khamis, Sarfaya, Majdoub (A), Majdoub (B), Majdoub (C), Muqrin, and Qarqaf. This led to thousands of civilians being displaced, including children, women, and disabled people ...

‘Eyewitnesses confirmed that the recent attack destroyed about 15 villages, including Sarfaya, Darma, Barka, Kuym, and Umm Hagalig, leading to the burning of a large number of homes and causing the displacement of hundreds of civilians who are now on their way to El Fasher and Shukra.

‘Eyewitnesses also report that a joint force of armed movements moved on April 13, 2024, to protect civilians from the RSF and militias attacking the villages, leading to clashes between the two parties, with heavy casualties among them and also to civilians’<sup>79</sup>

- 13.4.2 Reporting on the same attack, a statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued on 26 April 2024 stated:

‘Since early April, the RSF has conducted several large-scale attacks on the villages in western El-Fasher mostly inhabited by the African Zaghawa ethnic community. RSF has burned down some of the villages, including Durma, Umshosh, Sarafaya, and Ozbani. Such attacks raise the spectre of further ethnically motivated violence in Darfur, including mass killings. Last year fighting and attacks between the Rizeigat and the African Masalit in West Darfur left hundreds of civilians dead or injured, and thousands displaced from their homes.’<sup>80</sup>

- 13.4.3 In April 2024 the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR), an international consortium of parliamentarians, scholars, jurists, human rights defenders, NGOs, and students united in the pursuit of justice<sup>81</sup>, published a report on ‘Breaches of the Genocide Convention in Darfur from April 2023’ which covered April 2023 to April 2024. It noted: ‘On June 18-19 2023, the RSF and its allied Arab militias overran Tawila from all directions, and nearby areas, and killed civilians, raped women, razed the market, and burned properties ... As in previous years, the RSF and its allied Arab militias directed their attacks primarily against the Fur and Zaghawa with the same modus operandi.’<sup>82</sup>

- 13.4.4 The ACLED situation update covering from 6 April to 10 May 2024 noted:

‘On 14 April [2024], the RSF gained control of Mellit city [located 60 kilometres north of Al Fashir, North Darfur] after clashing with a coalition of SAF-allied groups...

‘[T]he RSF campaign on Mellit sparked intense violence near El Fasher, with incidents reported in 13 villages in the surrounding areas — including

<sup>78</sup> DNHR, ‘[Who we are](#)’, not dated

<sup>79</sup> DHRN, ‘[The RSF has burned fifteen villages in El Fasher, North Darfur state](#)’, 14 April 2024

<sup>80</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Türk expresses grave concern at escalating violence in El-Fasher](#)’, 26 April 2024

<sup>81</sup> RWCHR, ‘[Mission statement](#)’ no date

<sup>82</sup> RWCHR, ‘[Breaches of the Genocide Convention in Darfur, Sudan ...](#)’ (page 23) 14 April 2024

frequent civilian targeting. Between 4 April and 10 May, there were a reported 20 attacks on civilians, including extrajudicial killings, torture, large-scale property destruction, and looting. The violence targeted disproportionately non-Arab ethnic Zaghawa communities and exhibited analogous organizational tactics to those deployed during the counterinsurgency campaign in 2003, when the Janjaweed targeted non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur such as the Masalit and Zaghawa. Since 15 April 2023, ACLED records at least 19 attacks against non-Arab communities by the RSF and Arab militias in North Darfur.

'In April 2024, the RSF and its allied militias launched these targeted attacks as retaliation against Zaghawa SAF-allied Minni Minnawi and Gibril Ibrahim, who lead the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) faction and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), respectively. These two groups are actively fighting the RSF in El Fasher...' <sup>83</sup>

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### 13.5 Arbitrary arrests, detention and enforced disappearances

#### 13.5.1 The 22 September 2023 investigation report by Reuters noted with respect to the attacks in El Geneina:

'... Yahia, an El Geneina merchant, said he was rounded up with 10 other men by masked RSF fighters and Arab militiamen on June 15 and held in a water facility that was used as a detention center. For three days they were locked in a room without food or water. Some of the men, he said, started to drink their own urine. "It was a terrible thing, but they were so thirsty," he said. On the third day, the men were lined up. Their captors quizzed them about their tribal affiliation, promising not to harm them...

'Yahia said he lied and lived. He told his captors he was a member of another non-Arab tribe.

'All three men said detainees were tortured. One of the three, Salah Moussa, said he was tied to a mango tree and forced to hang by his arms for two days. He now has difficulty lifting his arms or holding objects. "My body became numb," he said. Bruising was still visible around his ankles and wrists where he said he was tied up.

'After several days, Yahia said he bribed his way out of the detention center. His captors let him go after relatives and neighbors paid them a sum equivalent to \$800 [GBP 622.9<sup>84</sup>].' <sup>85</sup>

#### 13.5.2 A 26 November 2023 HRW report noted that following the attack on Ardamata [West Darfur] on 5 November 2023:

'The Rapid Support Forces and Arab militiamen rounded up and detained a large number of men and boys, primarily Massalit, individually or in large groups from various parts of Ardamata ...

'Videos on social media that Human Rights Watch verified and analyzed also show Rapid Support Forces and Arab militiamen detaining large groups of

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<sup>83</sup> ACLED, '[Situation Update | May 2024 Sudan: The RSF sets its eyes on North Darfur](#)' 17 May 2024

<sup>84</sup> Xe [Currency converter](#) Exchange rate as at 14 August 2024

<sup>85</sup> Reuters, '[The slaughter of El Geneina](#)' 22 September 2023

men and children, most in civilian clothes, although several appear to be in Sudanese Armed Forces uniforms. In some of the videos the Rapid Support Forces and Arab militiamen order them to sit down or run...

'Kamal, 44, who was living in the Ardamata camp, said that on November 3 and 4 he saw Rapid Support Forces and Arab militias "rounding up hundreds of men and taking them in different directions" ...

'Mahmoud, 31, from Ardamata camp, said Rapid Support Forces and Arab men came to his house on November 4 during house-to-house searches. He said he and dozens of other detained men were all taken to the headquarters of the Sudanese-Chadian joint forces in al-Jamarek neighborhood in El Geneina, which has been under the control of the Rapid Support Forces since the start of the conflict in late April:

"When we arrived there, there were already other detainees. In total, we were around 400, including children. We were treated very badly. I was detained there for a day and Rapid Support Forces soldiers just kept torturing us all the time, beating us with whips and sticks. They kept asking: 'Are you Massalit?' 'Are you a fighter?' 'Where is your gun?' I was released the next day, but there were still many left there.'

'Three witnesses described seeing Rapid Support Forces and Arab militiamen detaining males from other non-Arab ethnic groups ...'<sup>86</sup>

- 13.5.3 The OHCHR report February 2023 covering from 15 April to 15 December 2023 noted: 'OHCHR received information that the Rapid Support Forces and allied Arab militias targeted Ardamata and Dorti camps for internally displaced persons and Al-Jazeera, Al-Kabri and Al-Rassafa neighbourhoods, which are mostly inhabited by the Masalit. They reportedly arrested men, women and children, separated women from men, and later unlawfully killed most of the men.'<sup>87</sup>

- 13.5.4 The report by the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan covering from 12 March to 22 December 2023 noted:

'The Panel received reports of [among other things] widespread ... arbitrary arrests and detention, by RSF and allied militias targeting community leaders, lawyers, journalists, resistance committee members and human rights activists. The targeting was due primarily to the work that they performed before and during the conflict as they continued to monitor, report on and advocate against violations committed by the warring parties.

'For example, the Darfur Bar Association reported to the Panel that ... 16 members [had been] arbitrarily detained and tortured ... by RSF and allied militias ...

'Similarly, RSF and, sometimes, SAF harassed, arbitrarily arrested, detained and tortured civilians in El Fasher, Zalingei, Nyala and El Geneina on suspicion that they were ethnically aligned with the opposing warring party. This affected both Arab and African communities...'<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> HRW, '[Sudan: New mass ethnic killings, pillage in Darfur](#)' 26 November 2023

<sup>87</sup> OHCHR, '[Situation of human rights in the Sudan ...](#)', (paragraphs 40 to 42), 22 February 2024

<sup>88</sup> UNSC, '[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#)' (paragraphs 61 to 64), 15 January 2024

### 13.5.5 A 9 May 2024 report by HRW observed:

‘RSF and allied militias appear to have targeted prominent Massalit community members. Human Rights Watch interviewed 24 human rights activists, lawyers, government officials, civil servants, intellectuals and community leaders, who described how they and other prominent Massalit figures were targeted, explicitly or apparently, for their role and work. The attackers carried out ... unlawful detention, ill-treatment and torture ... against many viewed to be prominent Massalits ... Most figures were Massalit, but some people of other ethnic identities were also singled out and, in some cases, accused of being pro-Massalit.

‘Rapid Support Forces and allied militias unlawfully detained and arrested people largely from the Massalit community. The RSF and its allies held people in both formal facilities, such as police stations, and informal sites, such as schools and homes.

‘... The captors subjected those detained to torture and inhumane and degrading punishment, reportedly electrocuting one detainee. They raped one woman in detention. Interviewees were detained for up to 11 days. Two were released after an Arab resident and an RSF member respectively vouched that they were not fighters.

‘Many of those detained were prominent members of the Massalit community... All interviewees said the assailants interrogated them, demanding information about their relations with prominent officials, about their human rights work, about Massalit fighters, or about their role within the Massalit fighting forces ...

‘The RSF and allied militias continued to detain and ill-treat civilians after the June 15 [2023] exodus and massacre ...

‘RSF and allied militias also arrested some people on the road to Chad and brought them back for detention to El Geneina.’<sup>89</sup>

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## 13.6 Rape and sexual violence

### 13.6.1 On 7 August 2023 Radio Dabanga, an independent Sudanese news and information broadcaster and publisher<sup>90</sup> reported:

‘The Women’s Future Organisation has recorded 103 incidents of rape in South and West Darfur since the outbreak of war between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15 ...

‘According to Nahla El Khazraji, director of the South Darfur NGO for women development, 24 victims of the documented 103 rapes received treatment.

‘Several survivors declined treatment. “They fear stigmatisation should their cases be revealed,” she told Radio Dabanga. “People in Darfur tend to trust women NGOs more than governmental organisations because of their discreet data handling, respect for privacy, and confidentiality practices.”

‘The director confirmed that RSF soldiers and allied gunmen are responsible

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<sup>89</sup> HRW, “[The Massalit will not come home](#)”: Ethnic cleansing ...” (pages 106, 132-136), 9 May 2024

<sup>90</sup> Radio Dabanga, [About us](#) no date

for most of the rape cases recorded in South and West Darfur, but she made a differentiation between two types of RSF paramilitaries: “There are disciplined RSF soldiers that follow the laws of the RSF, and there are the janjaweed who operate under RSF’s auspices and are involved in killing and plundering.”

‘According to Nahla El Khazraji, director of the South Darfur NGO for women development, 24 victims of the documented 103 rapes received treatment.

‘Concerning the many cases of sexual violence documented in El Geneina, West Darfur, she said that they were clearly “targeted against certain tribes, to violate the dignity of the women, families, and communities of these tribes.” She added that the organisation recorded 73 cases of sexual assaults in West Darfur despite a communication blackout since May.’<sup>91</sup>

13.6.2 An August 2023 press release by the OHCHR stated:

‘UN experts today expressed alarm at reports of brutal and widespread use of rape and other forms of sexual violence by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) during the four-month-old internal armed conflict in the Republic of Sudan and called for an end to the ongoing violence...

“Sudanese women and girls in urban centers as well as in Darfur have been particularly vulnerable to violence. The lives and safety of migrant and refugee women and girls, primarily from Eritrea and South Sudan, have also been seriously affected,” they said.

“It is alleged that men identified as members of the RSF are using rape and sexual violence of women and girls as tools to punish and terrorise communities. Some of the reported rapes appear to be ethnically and racially motivated,” the experts said.’<sup>92</sup>

13.6.3 A November 2023 ACJPD report noted an escalation in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the context of the ongoing conflict between the SAF and RSF. The report noted:

‘... Campaign groups report instances of women being kidnapped by the RSF for ransom, often experiencing rape during captivity. Testimonies point to the RSF’s involvement in rapes, including disturbing incidents of women being assaulted in front of their families. The scale of the issue is alarming, with numerous cases documented, some resulting in fatalities. In Darfur, the pattern of sexual violence echoes the genocidal war of the mid-2000s, where Arab militias known as the Janjaweed targeted sub-Saharan African groups...

‘In the Darfur region, SGBV has since the early 2000s been utilised as a method of ethnic cleansing and the systematic destruction of communities, with women and children being the primary targets.’<sup>93</sup>

13.6.4 The report by the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan covering from 12 March 2023 to 22 December observed:

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<sup>91</sup> Radio Dabanga, ‘[Calls to address sexual violence in Darfur, El Burhan orders ...](#)’ 7 August 2023

<sup>92</sup> OHCHR, ‘[UN experts alarmed by reported widespread use of rape and sexual ...](#)’ 17 August 2023

<sup>93</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Sexual and gender-based violence \(SGBV\): A tool used to instill ...](#)’ 22 November 2023

‘The escalation of the conflict exposed women and girls to increased risks of sexual violence. Sexual violence not only was widespread, but also escalated across Darfur as the conflict progressed. The Panel interviewed reliable sexual and gender-based violence local monitors who reported 262 rape cases over the period from April to August [2023]. The figures were likely to be much higher owing to underreporting, the overall lack of access to health care, lack of Internet connectivity and the fear of stigma and marginalization from the victims’ communities.

‘Widespread sexual violence committed by members of RSF and allied militias were reported in all areas under RSF control. Women and girls aged 9 to 75 were at risk of being raped in camps for internally displaced persons, when traveling, at checkpoints and in their homes. Racial slurs were common during the violations. In El Geneina, women were targeted owing to their Masalit ethnicity. In Nyala, almost all the cases of sexual violence occurred in camps for internally displaced persons and in neighbourhoods inhabited by African communities. Similar patterns were observed in Zalingei and El Fasher.

‘Kidnapping, ransom and sexual exploitation formed part of the conflict-related sexual violence patterns. For example, reliable local sources reported at least 25 cases of kidnapping, rape and sexual exploitation at the RSF-controlled Aldaman hotel in Nyala. In El Geneina, the Panel received reports of 16 girls having been kidnapped and raped by multiple men in an RSF house.’<sup>94</sup>

13.6.5 The OHCHR report covering 15 April to 15 December 2023 noted:

‘As of 15 December, OHCHR received credible reports of 58 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, gang rape, attempted rape and other forms of sexual violence, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, by both parties to the conflict and their allied groups, which are prohibited under international law. These incidents involved at least 118 victims (98 women, one man, 18 girls and one boy). ... 10 [of the incidents took place] in South Darfur, 10 in North Darfur, and 12 in other states, including Central Darfur...[and] West Darfur ... In 39 incidents, the perpetrators were identified as men in Rapid Support Forces’ uniforms; in nine as armed men affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces, together comprising 83 percent of the whole incidents. In two incidents, members of the Sudanese Armed Forces were identified as the perpetrators. Some of these incidents may amount to war crimes.

‘... In all Darfur States, perpetrators targeted internally displaced women and girls, particularly those of African ethnicity, including the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa. In the context of the attacks by the Rapid Support Forces and their allied Arab militias in West Darfur between May and November, OHCHR received reports that women and girls, including many from the Masalit community, were victims of sexual violence, including rape.

‘In at least eight incidents documented in [among other places] ...North Darfur and Central Darfur States, victims were abducted and held sometimes in inhuman conditions and subjected to ill-treatment. In one

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<sup>94</sup> UNSC, ‘[Final report of the Panel of Experts on the...](#)’ (paragraphs 65 to 67 ), 15 January 2024

incident, a victim was held for 35 days and frequently gang raped by the Rapid Support Forces ...”<sup>95</sup>

- 13.6.6 ACJPS has documented in various reports incidents of sexual violence against NADs by men in RSF and SAF uniforms, Arab militia, and unidentified masked men. It documented the rape of 14 females including children from Utash and Kalma IDP camps in South Darfur between May and November 2023<sup>96</sup>, the rape of 51 women and girls in Zalingi and Garsilla localities in Central Darfur between 15 September to 25 October 2023<sup>97</sup>, and sexual violence against at least 33 female IDPs living in Kalma camp in South Darfur between 13 November and 20 December 2023<sup>98</sup>. The source further commented: ‘RSF particularly has continued to use sexual violence against women and girls as one of the means of warfare in their conflict with the SAF’<sup>99</sup>

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## 13.7 Hate speech

- 13.7.1 The USSD HR report covering events in 2023 noted: ‘There were multiple reports of hate speech and discriminatory language during the year. Reports increased following the outbreak of the conflict. The United Nations and international human rights organizations reported the RSF and allied militias used hate speech to polarize communities in West Darfur and justify the targeted killings of members of the Massalit community, including the Governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abbaker.’<sup>100</sup>
- 13.7.2 In a statement issued on 26 April 2024 the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted that it was: ‘Gravely concerned at the escalation of inter-ethnic tensions, violence and hate speech in the Sudan, particularly in Darfur, Khartoum and Gezira states’<sup>101</sup> and urged Sudan to: ‘address and prevent further escalation of ... incitement to racial hatred and racist hate speech and hate crimes...’<sup>102</sup>

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## 14. Non-Arab Darfuris outside Darfur and Khartoum

- 14.1.1 CPIT could not find any information about treatment of NADs in other regions in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)). It is important to note that the absence of evidence is not necessarily information of absence, especially considering the ongoing conflict and displacement of millions of people.

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<sup>95</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Situation of human rights in the Sudan](#)’ (paragraphs 45 to 48), 22 February 2024

<sup>96</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Fourteen female IDPs including children sexually violated in South Darfur](#)’ 3 January 2024

<sup>97</sup> ACJPS, ‘[Central Darfur: 51 women and girls sexually abused in Garsilla and ...](#)’ 12 January 2024

<sup>98</sup> ACJPS, ‘[South Darfur: At least thirty three female IDPs including children from ...](#)’, 16 March 2024

<sup>99</sup> ACJPS, ‘[South Darfur: At least thirty three female IDPs including children from ...](#)’, 16 March 2024

<sup>100</sup> USSD, ‘[2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Sudan](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

<sup>101</sup> CERD, [Prevention of racial discrimination, including early warning and...](#) (2024), 26 April 2024

<sup>102</sup> CERD, [Prevention of racial discrimination, including early warning and...](#) (2024), 26 April 2024

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) 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](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

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

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture 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](#).

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# Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Demography:
  - Darfur
  - Khartoum
- Political background -April 2019 to April 2023
  - Transitional government
  - Juba Peace Agreement
  - October 2021 military coup
- Current situation
  - April 2023 war between the RSF and SAF
  - Role of Darfur armed groups
- Situation of NADs in Khartoum and Darfur
  - Current security situation
  - Civilian targeting including ethnically based attacks
  - Arbitrary arrest, detention and enforced disappearances
  - Rape and other sexual violence targeting NADs
- Protection of civilians including administration of justice

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **6.0**
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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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## Changes from last version of this note

Assessment, Updated guidance on dealing with claims by NADs, Updated COI Advice

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