

SUDAN

North Darfur



1. REPORT SUMMARY

The State of North Darfur is facing a protection crisis on multiple fronts. As of October 2021, North Darfur hosts the second largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region after South Darfur, with 666,217 IDPs across 13 localities. Most IDPs have been displaced and secondarily displaced since the conflict began in 2003, with periods of return followed by new displacement due to regular conflict and violence.

The Government of Sudan does not register IDPs or IDP returnees. Thus, the number of IDP returnees is available only through the self-report of community members to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The 2021 withdrawal of the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), continued impacts of the 25 October 2021 military coup, and lack of implementation of the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) are factors which have contributed to increased risks to civilians across the State, including for IDPs, returnees, refugees and host communities.

The Protection of Civilians is further impacted due to the low capacity of State authorities and the large-scale presence of armed groups. Inter-communal violence, often precipitated by clashes over access to land and natural resources, has led to regular cycles of new displacement. The humanitarian community in North Darfur has been unable to fully respond to the crisis due to the fragile security environment whereby protection monitoring, and inter-sectoral missions cannot be conducted due to a lack of guarantee of physical safety in accessing affected communities, and requirements that UN entities move to the field with police escorts provided by the Government.

As the largest state in the Darfur region, vulnerable persons across North Darfur must travel long distances to reach protection services, which are centered almost entirely on Child Protection (CP) and

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in a handful of localities. Access to legal assistance, including Housing, Land and Property (HLP) services, is extremely limited due to a low understanding of communities on processes required to obtain critical civil documentation, the low capacity of the State Civil Registry and the low presence of formal legal mechanisms.

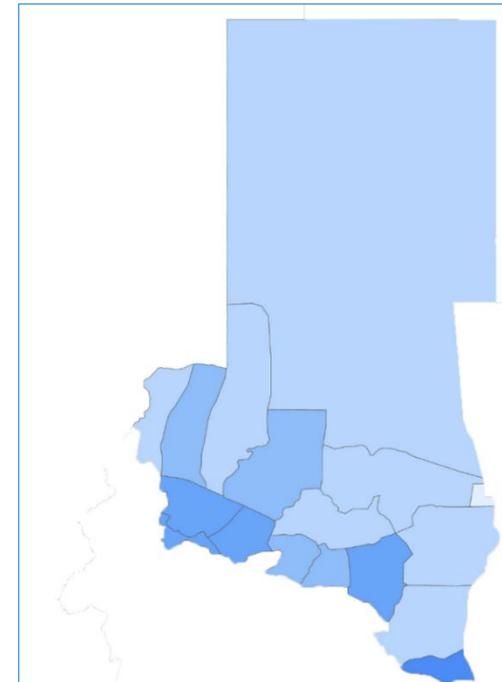


Figure 1: Protection Severity Mapping North Darfur

Major significant concerns are held regarding the upcoming 2022 agricultural season due to high levels of violence and economic inflation, leading the Protection Sector to highlight that more attention is needed from the international community on the challenges facing North Darfur.

Methodology and Limitations

The Protection Sector used analysis of qualitative and quantitative data taken from protection monitoring missions, interagency needs assessments, and rapid protection needs assessments to draft this document. Key information gaps include the consequences of missing civil documentation and information on housing, land and property issues at the community level.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

The uncertainty of the Sudanese transition, compounded by armed conflict, inter-communal violence, human rights violations and a rise in criminality, have led to severe impacts on the protection environment in North Darfur for all civilians.

Affected Communities



As of 2021, the North Darfur Protection Working Group recorded the deaths and injuries of 187 and 116 civilians, respectively. In the first quarter of 2022, 28 injuries and 26 deaths were reported.

As of April 2022, the number of hotspot localities identified by the North Darfur Protection Working Group increased from 4 to 12¹.



Key Challenges

North Darfur is among the most affected States in the Darfur region concerning challenges regarding Housing, Land and Property (HLP); competition between communities over ever-scarce natural resources due to the impacts of climate change; recurrent drought; and inter-communal violence and high numbers of armed groups. Attacks against IDP farmers, destruction of agricultural land, and destruction of civilian property, including housing, have increased humanitarian needs as agriculture often serves as both the only source of livelihood and food security for vulnerable communities.

Economic shocks, including the decreased value of the Sudanese Pound (SDG), have created further challenges in accessing basic needs, including electricity, food and support for livestock.

Recurrent drought and increased pests, inflation, and inter-communal violence are expected to dramatically and negatively impact the agricultural yield for 2022, with some projections that North Darfur may face IPC Phase 3. Communities report that the cost of a 1 kg bag of millet has increased from 2,000 SDG in 2021 to 13,000 SDG in 2022—outside of the scope of affordability for most communities. Communities also report rising rates of malnutrition, particularly affecting children under 5.

As of April 2022, an estimated 41,766 persons have tested positive throughout Sudan for COVID-19 since the pandemic began, with an estimated 3,300 persons dying from the disease in the country. The Federal Ministry of Health reported 1,822,868 cases of malaria in 2021, compared to 1,456,413 in 2020. Increases in cases of dengue fever, previously unknown in the State until recent years, were also reported, raising concerns regarding the capacity of the North Darfur State Ministry of Health’s ability to mitigate and control mosquito-borne diseases. Over 1,860 cases of hepatitis E, impacting primarily pregnant women, were also registered between June and December 2021.

Security Environment and Access

In the first quarter of 2022, North Darfur escalated inter-communal violence, mainly between nomads and IDP farmers in As Serief, Dar-as-Salam, Kebkabiya, Kutum and Tawilla Localities. The widespread presence of armed nomadic groups, JPA signatories, the Rapid Security Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have created an environment whereby the security forces and armed

¹ The Sudan Protection Sector defines Hotspots as geographical areas (sites, Localities) experiencing inter-communal violence, presence of armed groups, the presence of UXOs/land mines and increased criminality. Hotspots face

high risk of further conflict. Hotspot Sites are individual geographical locations within Hotspot Localities with the same characteristics.

groups compete for control over various geographical locations, placing civilians at high risk when conflict occurs.

Following the 2021 withdrawal of UNAMID, general criminality has significantly increased in North Darfur with regular reports of carjackings, looting and random attacks, impacting both displaced persons and the host community. Attacks on commercial vehicles on main roadways, including from Al Fasher to main towns in localities, are a risk for transporting critical goods and for humanitarian assistance reaching those who need it most. The physical presence of the Sudan Police Force (SPF) is extremely limited due to a lack of human and financial resources, including vehicles, communication means, adequate training and the ability to open and conduct investigations. The limited or lack of female police, including in some main towns or localities, is also a significant deterrent for female civilians reporting incidents.

Safety and security remain a key concern in IDP camps, IDP gathering sites, main towns and villages, and humanitarian actors to assess their situation and provide protection services and humanitarian assistance. Despite a ban on motorcycles issued in 2016, armed groups regularly conduct attacks on civilian locations using a combination of motorcycles, camels, horses and vehicles. The majority of IDP camps and sites in North Darfur were established in the mid-2000s, have large populations and lack the regular presence of police and security forces. Humanitarian actors do not manage any IDP camps or gathering sites. State authorities generally designate civilians from the Locality level to manage camps in tandem with community leaders.

Large-scale displacement from Tawilla to Al Fasher from July to September 2021 resulted in several hundred families arriving at the Zam Zam IDP camp, the largest IDP camp in North Darfur and the only IDP camp in Al Fasher locality open to new arrivals. Since November 2021, regular standoffs between nomadic groups and IDPs in Zam Zam have led to concerns regarding potential large-scale attacks on the camp. IDPs from rural areas of Tawilla locality displaced to IDP camps within the locality also report fear of leaving camp due to the

presence of both security forces and armed groups near peripheries, leaving vulnerable households without access to agriculture, their only livelihood, and increasing potential for food insecurity. Women and girls report leaving camps to gather firewood only under cover of darkness at night to avoid potential GBV and harassment. In contrast, men often do not go at all, given the risk of attack or recruitment.

Access for humanitarian actors to safely reach affected communities has been drastically impacted by limited or lack of security, leading to delays in conducting inter-sectoral assessments and the provision of life-saving assistance.

Hotspot Localities in North Darfur State				
Kabkabiya: town, surrounding villages and Sortony				
Kutum	Tawilla	DareSalam:Shangil Tobaya		
Saraf Umra	As Sereif	Al Lait	Al Korma	Al Tina
Milit	Al Fasher including El Fasher Rural			
Umbaru				

3. PRIORITY PROTECTION RISKS

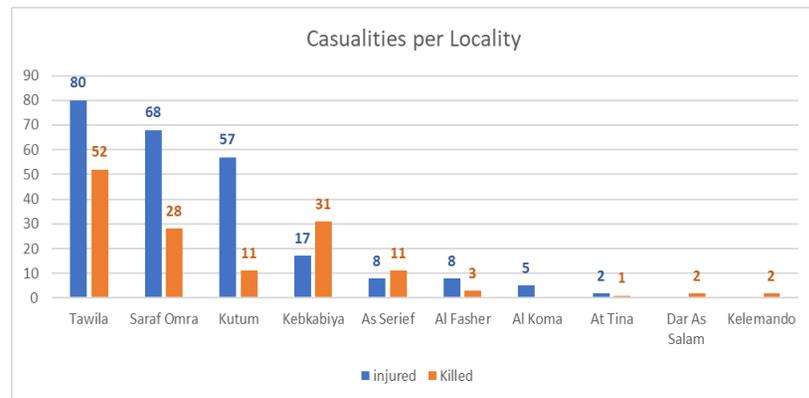
The capacity of the North Darfur State authorities to guarantee the Protection of Civilians continues to be extremely limited due to political and economic instability at State and Federal level. Aftershocks of the 25 October 2021 military coup and the lack of implementation of the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for Protection of Civilians contribute to an unstable security environment. Therefore, priority protection risks include:

RISK 1: Attacks on civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure

Attacks on civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure are one of the main protection risks for communities in the State. While inter-communal violence is most common between IDP farmers and nomads and other groups, factional fighting between government and SLA AW forces and its splinter factions is also common. The

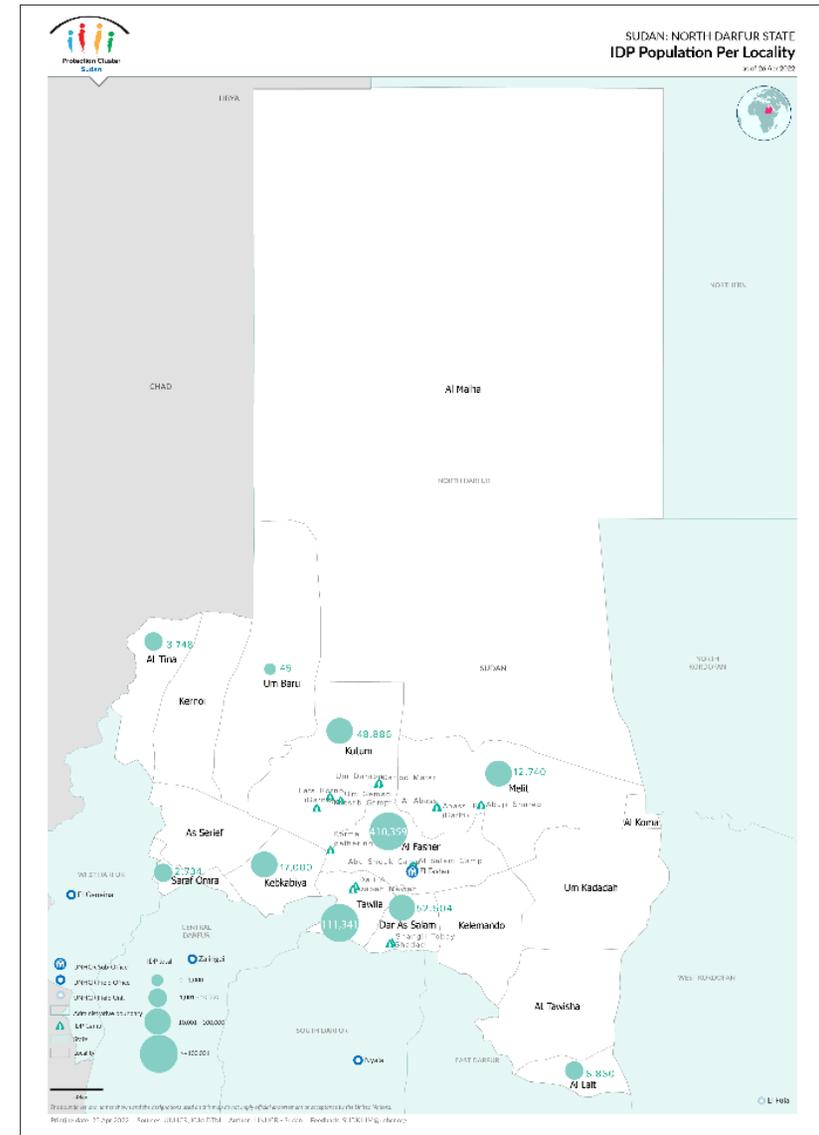
farming season plays a significant role in inter-communal violence as IDPs return near or to their areas of origin to farm small plots of land they own or rent. As the farming season often falls in tandem with nomads migrating their livestock, like in other parts of Darfur, nomads will often accuse IDP farmers of infringing upon migration routes or returning to areas where, according to them, IDPs do not originate from or vis versa, IDPs accusing the nomads of destroying their crops. From July 2021 to April 2022, at least 17 villages across the State were reported as destroyed by armed nomads, with the intentional destruction of homes, crops and property also reported during attacks leading to challenges in returning to areas of origin.

Indiscriminate attacks on civilians have led to protests in town centres and Al Fasher town, whereby civilians demand authorities take action against alleged perpetrators in accordance with Sudanese law. In November 2021, protests against the security forces and armed groups in Shangil Tobaya, Dar-as-Salam Locality, led to the destruction of police vehicles, government offices and partial destruction of the local hospital, interrupting service provision.



UNAMID facilities across North Darfur localities, known as “Team Sites”, consisted of key infrastructure, including computers, pre-fabs, medical equipment, and water purification supplies, among other resources. Despite plans for UNAMID to hand over Team Sites to communities and the North Darfur authorities, most facilities have been looted by armed groups, including the Team Site in the Sortony

IDP Gathering Site in Kebkabiya Locality and the UNAMID compound in Al Fasher town.



To mitigate violence, the Governor of North Darfur has deployed peaceful co-existence committees consisting of community leaders

and government authorities to quell tensions and mediate disputes in hotspot locations. These measures, however, have not been successful. Instead, the deployment of Joint Forces consisting of SAF and RSF, in coordination with the State Security Committee, has been the only proven measure to stop the violence. The limited presence of security forces and the need for a larger-scale presence around North Darfur has often meant that once Joint Forces are deployed elsewhere, violence resumes. Community trust in the RSF is also a significant concern as some communities allege that the forces are aligned with nomads in certain areas.

Community-Based Structures (CBS), including CBPNs, and community leaders, are actively engaged with UN agencies and partners in identifying incidents of inter-communal violence, displacement, and protection incidents.

RISK 2: Denial and impediments to access to services and civil documentation

According to a UNHCR protection monitoring pilot of CBPNs conducted in February and March 2022, 56 per cent of communities in North Darfur report having experienced physical harm in their communities. Out of the total, 75% report challenges in access to food, 53% report barriers in access to water, and 62 per cent report barriers in access to health care. Furthermore, 84% of interviewed IDPs report challenges in accessing livelihoods, and 62% of communities report Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs) face barriers in accessing assistance and service.

Besides, 43% of community members report fees as the key barrier to not being able to access government services. Regarding missing civil documentation, the four main document types include the National Number, Birth Certificate, National ID and Marriage Certificate: 33 per cent of community members report never having had these documents. HLP challenges remain the key barrier

prohibiting return to areas of origin for many displaced persons. Though some displaced persons have successfully returned in the two decades since the conflict began, others are continuously uprooted due to secondary land occupation by nomadic groups. In the Tawilla locality, IDPs report 3,000 families have returned to rural areas near Tawilla town between 2018-2019, following stability and relative peace. From 31 July to September 2021, almost all these families were again displaced due to reported attacks by nomadic groups and the inability to prove linkages with the land.

In IDP camps and sites, service provision is almost non-existent outside of WFP food assistance and minor health care services. Inadequate shelter and inadequate WASH facilities not meeting minimum standards have led to the spread of infectious diseases and placed children at particular risk. One Primary Health Care (PHC) facility serves 400,000 IDPs residing in Zam Zam IDP camp in Al Fasher Locality. In Tawilla, IDP camps have one supplementary feeding program that serves children under five. Lack of Child-Friendly Spaces, activities for youth and schools leads to child labour and early marriage in camps, with 62 per cent of IDPs living in camps reporting children were married in their communities, and 90 per cent reporting children were working.

PSNs are particularly impacted by lack of services: 2427 cases have been identified (824 Male, 1603 Female), out of which 1053 (400 Male 653 Female) received material assistance. Main PSN categories identified include (but are not limited to): physical and mental disabilities, single parents, persons with critical medical conditions, Unaccompanied and Separated Children, single elderly persons, GBV survivors, female-headed households, and pregnant and lactating women².

The capacity to address protection risks is further weakened by the local currency depreciation, impacting the ability of protection partners to implement projects and contributing to a high staff

turnover. The lack of guarantees in the safe implementation of projects is also a significant impediment to providing services.

RISK 3: Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

GBV remains the most significant protection risk for women and girls in North Darfur. Regular displacement, lack of privacy at home, and reliance on women and children to fetch water and firewood are major risk factors. During the agricultural season, women and children are regularly attacked by armed individuals/ groups during transport to and from farming areas and while conducting agricultural activities.

Service provision for survivors is extremely limited in North Darfur. It is mainly available in the main towns of Kutum, Kebkabiya and Al Fasher localities, where survivors must pay transport costs out of pocket and face dangerous conditions on roads. Following the 25 October coup, doctors and health care workers providing GBV services have faced resurgent stigma and threats, leading some to relocate to Al Fasher town out of fear for their physical safety. This has restricted care to towns where services are available. Doctors must sign off on official paperwork for access to services, including lab tests, Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) and medication. IDPs in Zam Zam IDP camp in Al Fasher locality report that survivors of GBV following the 2021 farming season need Psycho-Social Support (PSS), which is only available from a handful of almost entirely male social workers at the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). IDPs in Tawilla town and IDP camps have recorded over 200 cases of GBV from 31 July 2021 to April 2022, highlighting that the local hospital has no specialised services and only admits survivors to stop bleeding. The North Darfur GBV Working Group has identified Tawilla as an area in need of services but has been unable to implement due to continuous violence and lack of security. While women and children have identified coping mechanisms, such as collecting firewood at night to mitigate the risk, the threat of GBV remains

prevalent. Experts should investigate incidents related to the conflict between armed groups and communities in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV). Most survivors do not report cases to the SPF, citing a lack of trust in the authorities to open an investigation, high levels of impunity for alleged perpetrators and intimidation by security forces and armed groups.

RISK 4: Grave violations against children

Children in the Darfur states of Jabal Mara and Jabal Moon continue to be the most affected by grave child rights violations in Sudan, as well as children in rural areas and internally displaced children. The access to conflict-affected children and populations for monitoring, reporting and response purposes in Jabal Mara, including North Darfur, remains a continued challenge. The access restrictions were mainly due to security concerns and administrative impediments. Therefore, no figure provided will indicate the overall scope of grave violations against children in Sudan. Still, the United Nations could capture and verify some cases. Despite the challenges, child rights violations were reported in North Darfur in the two first months after the military takeover. Overall in Sudan, in October 2021, the United Nations verified 27 incidents of child rights violations, mainly arbitrary arrests and detention of children; in November 2021, 33 incidents of child rights violations were verified, mainly incidents of children injured and arbitrary arrested and detained; in December 2021, 62 incidents of child rights violations were verified, especially arbitrary arrests and detention cases; in January 2022, 56 incidents of child rights violations were verified, particularly arbitrary arrests and detention cases; in February, 34 incidents of child rights violations were confirmed, mainly maiming cases; and at the moment of reporting one case of maiming in March 2022. The United Nations also received 82 credible reports of children arbitrary arrested and detained in January (7), February (62) and March (13).

In March 2022, Tawilla locality hosted more than 30,000 IDPs, mainly from East Jabal Mara and South Tawilla -the border between central and North Darfur, where the Social Welfare office in Tawilla reported that they documented around 32 cases of rape for minors from July 2021 up to March 2022. Women groups from the newly displaced persons in July 2021 reported that SGBV cases are happening daily. However, they are not reporting cases due to stigma and poor services at the locality in terms of treatment and other medical services. Kabkabiya, including Sortoni, Tawilla and Darelsalam localities, are affected mainly by the Jabal Mara crisis in 2021 to 2022.

4. RESPONSE

From 2021 to April 2022, the North Darfur Protection Working Group (PWG) has conducted and participated in protection monitoring and inter-agency missions to the following locations: Abu Shouk, Al Salam and Zam Zam IDP camps in Al Fasher Locality; the Sortony IDP Gathering Site in Kebkabiya Locality; Shangil Tobaya town in Dar-as-Salam Locality; Tawilla town and Tawilla IDP camps in Tawilla Locality; and As Serief town in As Serief Locality. During missions, the PWG, in coordination with the North Darfur CP and GBV Working Groups, conducts monitoring by using protection monitoring tools and holding Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant (KI) interviews with North Darfur authorities, traditional community leaders, women's representatives, youth representatives and other vulnerable community members.

The PWG, CP and GBV Working Groups also liaise with Community-Based Protection Networks (CBPNs), the backbone of the protection response in North Darfur, to identify incidents and risks and to make referrals to services where they exist. CBPNs are the primary source of monitoring by humanitarian actors across the Darfur region.

The Protection Sector regularly coordinates with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) on response to humanitarian needs and capacity-building, with

MoSD co-leading the PWG, CP and GBV Working Groups in conjunction with UN agencies. From October to December 2021, UNHCR and UNITAMS held a week of capacity-building sessions with the North Darfur State Protection of Civilians (POC) Committee, conducting sessions on the nine thematic pillars of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians (NPPOC). Activities included substantive discussions between government authorities and community leaders and discussion of a Terms of Reference and a corresponding work plan. However, the events of 25 October 2021 have left the future of the NPPOC unclear as the Federal-level NPPOC mechanism has been dismantled, and Federal authorities have provided no instruction or resources to the State POC Committee to implement the Plan.

The Protection Sector also regularly collected information on the protection of civilians' concerns and communicated them through Protection of Civilians Advocacy briefs to concerned stakeholders. In March 2021, the Sector also facilitated the SRSG's and members of his delegation (principals of main UN agencies) mission to North Darfur, organised their meetings with the governor and members of the POC committee, visits to the project sites and meetings with the NGO partners.

5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Protection of Civilians

The Government of Sudan should provide robust support to authorities in North Darfur to carry out the following activities to strengthen the Protection of Civilians:

- Access to Security:
 - a. The Sudanese Police Forces (SPF) should be provided with physical and financial resources to increase their presence and capacity across North Darfur, with an active presence in the main towns of localities in addition to Al Fasher. The SPF

should be enabled to carry out impartial investigations against persons accused of criminal activity without fear of retribution from the Government, security forces and/or non-state armed actors. They should also be empowered to prevent the looting of livestock and the destruction of civilian property, including agriculture spaces and homes.

- b. The State Security Committee should guarantee safe, consistent access for humanitarian actors in accessing affected communities during conflict and disasters. Humanitarian corridors should be created for civilians to flee without risk of harm in congruence with International Humanitarian Law.
- Access to Justice: Most civilians reside in rural areas without access to formal courts and little trust in formal judicial mechanisms. As such, the State Native Administration should be capacitated in their roles overseeing Rural Courts by enhancing their knowledge of Sudanese law, International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law to avoid rights violations during judicial proceedings. State-level justice actors from formal courts should work hand-in-hand with Rural Courts to ensure that all civilians have equal access to justice.
- Peaceful Co-Existence: The State Security Committee should endorse peaceful co-existence activities of the Governor and his cabinet to mediate conflict between communities. Lack of trust between communities and in the capacity of the State and its armed forces continues to lead to cycles of violence and continuous displacement. Peaceful co-existence activities should be civilian-led but must be endorsed by State Security, given the role of the armed forces in providing security.

Implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) and National Plan for the Protection of Civilians (NPPOC)

- The Government of Sudan should clarify the importance of the National Plan on the Protection of Civilians (NPPOC) and advise

and give directions to State POC Committees on their roles and responsibilities. As of 2022, the North Darfur POC Committee is established but inactive and is not utilised by the Government of North Darfur in the Protection of Civilians. If clarification is made on the NPPOC, the State POC Committee should be capacitated with financial and human resources to carry out the implementation of the Plan.

- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) activities, as stipulated in the JPA, should be implemented without delay, focusing on agricultural areas of the state that witness heavy violence- including the killing and injury of civilians, in addition to widespread GBV during the farming season.
- North Darfur authorities should ensure that rule of law is enforced to prevent looting and theft of livestock and mediate disputes between communities to prevent escalation of tensions between communities into inter-communal violence. North Darfur authorities should also ensure that security forces are present at checkpoints to safeguard the physical safety and security of affected communities.

Gender-Based Violence

- The Government of Sudan should support the North Darfur authorities in ensuring that humanitarian assistance for survivors is provided without delay, with services available in the main towns of localities. Healthcare workers, including doctors, should be free to provide GBV services without fear of violence or retribution, and assistance for GBV survivors, including Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) and PEP kits should be available for public usage and not appropriated by the State or private clinics.
- Specialised services, including Psycho-Social Support (PSS) and individual case management, should be made available at the locality level through the Ministry of Social Development to avoid transport fees and long travel times to access State capitals where

such services are more readily available. The Ministry of Social Development should receive resources to invest in the training of social workers and hiring more female social workers, focusing on deployment outside of State capitals.

- The North Darfur authorities should convene a gender-sensitive investigatory committee with representation of men and women in coordination with the State Legal Administration Department, the Sudan Police Force and North Darfur authorities to hold alleged perpetrators of violence, including GBV, to account in accordance with Sudanese Law, International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law.

Child Protection

- Call on authorities in North Darfur to protect children from harm and violence.
- Children should not be arrested and detained without due process/provisions, as it violates international standards on juvenile justice, risking further violations of their rights.
- Provide a safe environment in schools and other informal learning facilities.
- Orientation of the decision-makers at both national and state-level on child rights and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) on the treatment of children in custody/ detention