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# Sudan: Country Report – an update

The situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile

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15 October 2018 (COI between 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018)

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## Explanatory Note

This report presents country of origin information (COI) on Sudan specifically in relation to the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (also known as the ‘Two Areas’) between 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 on issues identified to be of relevance in refugee status determination for Sudanese nationals. This report is an update of ARC’s [Sudan: Country Report: The situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile](#) report published on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016.

As documented mainly in section [3.5 Denial of humanitarian access](#), **access, let alone humanitarian access, to the Two Areas is extremely limited if at all possible and granted**. This makes human rights reporting and assessing the humanitarian situation on the ground very difficult. The Human Rights and Development Organization (Hudo) Centre, an “independent, non-government, non-partisan and non-profit Sudanese organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights, peace building and development”<sup>1</sup>, has for example identified the following limitations and challenges in its own reporting as detailed in its latest annual report covering 2017:

- Due to security threats, some of the victims and witnesses do not easily reveal information
- Field monitors’ effort to gather information was and is still hindered by the general state of insecurity in the conflict areas intensified by the government’s imposition of state of emergency in the two states.
- The keen suspicion from security and intelligence agencies to anybody that talks about human rights.
- The number of monitors is limited in terms of geographic coverage and this implies that certain incidents happen without being noticed/ reported
- The withdraw (quitting) of some monitors which further reduces on number.
- Poor means of transport
- The general fear by the monitors in case the interviewed victims were subjected to torture and forced to reveal their (monitor’s) identity.<sup>2</sup>

The COI presented is illustrative, but not exhaustive of the information available in the public domain, nor is it determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. All sources are publicly available and a direct hyperlink has been provided.

A list of sources and databases consulted is also provided in this report, to enable users to conduct further research and to conduct source assessments. Research focused on **events** from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 until 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 with special focus on sources published in 2017 and 2018 where applicable. Only annual reports covering 2017 have been included. All sources were accessed in September and October 2018.

The following reports which post-date the cut-off point have been included given that they address issues of relevance addressed in this report:

- ❖ Amnesty International and 30 other human rights organisations, [Addressing the Serious Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Sudan](#), 4 September 2018
- ❖ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [Call for a Strong Monitoring and Reporting Mandate on Sudan](#), 4 September 2018
- ❖ Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018

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<sup>1</sup> Hudo Centre, [About Hudo](#), Undated, Last accessed: 8 October 2018

<sup>2</sup> Hudo Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 1.7 Limitations and challenges, p. 5



- ❖ Hands Off Cain, [\*Sudan: Khartoum Sent over 1000 S. Sudanese to death\*](#), 10 September 2018
- ❖ Radio Dabanga, [\*Protest against arrest of photographers in Talodi, South Kordofan\*](#), 13 September 2018
- ❖ HUDO Centre, [\*Arrest and Death Caused by Torture\*](#), 13 September 2018

This document is intended to be used as a tool to help to identify relevant COI and the COI referred to in this report can be considered by decision makers in assessing asylum applications and appeals. **This report is not a substitute for individualised case-specific research and therefore this document should not be submitted in isolation as evidence to refugee decision-making authorities.** Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy, the authors accept no responsibility for any errors included in this report.

## Sources and databases consulted

Not all of the sources listed here have been consulted for each issue addressed in the report. Additional sources to those individually listed were consulted via database searches. This non-exhaustive list is intended to assist in further case-specific research. To find out more about an organisation, view the 'About Us' tab of a source's website.

### Databases

[Asylos's Research Notes](#)

[EASO COI Portal](#)

[European Country of Origin Information Network \(ECOI\)](#)

[Relief Web](#)

[UNHCR Refworld](#)

### News

[Afrol News](#)

[Al Jazeera](#) [Sudan pages]

[All Africa](#)

[Inter Press Service](#)

[IRIN news](#) [Sudan pages]

[Radio Dabanga](#)

[Radio Tamazu](#)

[Reuters Africa](#) [Sudan pages]

[Sudan Tribune](#)

### Sources

[28 too Many](#) [FGM]

[Aegis Trust](#)

[Africa Center for Strategic Studies](#)

[African Arguments](#) [Sudan pages]

[African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes \(ACCORD\)](#)

[African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies \(ACJPS\)](#)

[African Studies Centre Leiden](#)

[Aidsmap](#)

[Amnesty International](#) [Sudan pages]

[Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit \(ATLEU\)](#)

[Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project \(ACLED\)](#) [Sudan pages]

[Article 19 \[Freedom of expression and information\]](#)

[Assessment Capacities Project \(ACAPS\)](#) [Sudan pages]

[Association for the Prevention of Torture](#)

[Atlantic Council](#)

[Atlas of Torture](#)

[Avert](#) [HIV/AIDS]

[Brookings Institution](#)

[Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies](#) [Sudan pages]

[Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

[Centre for Security Governance](#)

[Centre for Strategic and International Studies](#)

[Child Rights International Network](#) [Sudan pages]

[Child Soldiers International](#)  
[The Christian Post](#)  
[Christian Solidarity Worldwide](#)  
[CHR Michelsen Institute](#) [Sudan pages]  
[CIA World Factbook](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Combatting Terrorism Center](#)  
[Committee to Protect Journalists](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Death Penalty Worldwide \(Cornell Law School\)](#)  
[Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Doctors Without Borders](#)  
[The East African](#)  
[The Economist Intelligence Unit](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Eldis](#)  
[Enough Project](#)  
[Equal Rights Trust](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Eric Reeves, Sudan Research, Analysis, and Advocacy](#)  
[European Council on Foreign Relations \(ECFR\)](#)  
[European Institute of the Mediterranean \(IEMed\)](#)  
[Foreign Affairs \(published by Council on Foreign Relations\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Freedom House – Freedom in the World 2018](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Frontline Defenders](#)  
[Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index 2018](#)  
[Global Aids Program Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation](#)  
[Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack](#) [Sudan pages]  
[The Global Forum on MSM and HIV](#)  
[Global Fund for Peace](#)  
[Global Initiative on Psychiatry](#)  
[GlobalSecurity.org](#)  
[Governance Social Development Humanitarian Conflict \(GSDRC\)](#)  
[Hands off Cain](#)  
[Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research](#)  
[Hot Peach Pages](#) [DV]  
[Hudo Centre](#)  
[Hudson Institute](#)  
[Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Humanitarian Response](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Humanity & Inclusion \[formerly Handicap International\]](#)  
[Human Rights Watch](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada](#)  
[Institute for Economics & Peace – Global Peace Index 2018](#)  
[Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa](#)  
[Institute for the Study of War](#)  
[Institute for War and Peace Reporting](#)  
[Inter-African Committees on Traditional Practices](#)  
[Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre \(IDMC\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[International Alert](#)  
[International Bar Association](#)  
[International Centre for Prison Studies](#)  
[International Commission of Jurists](#)  
[International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#)  
[International Crisis Group](#) [Sudan pages]

[International Disability Alliance](#)  
[International Federation for Human Rights](#) [Africa pages]  
[International Federation of Journalists](#)  
[International Freedom of Expression Exchange](#)  
[International Institute for Strategic Studies](#)  
[International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[International Office for Migration Sudan Mission](#)  
[International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#)  
[International Refugee Rights Initiative](#)  
[International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims](#)  
[International Rescue Committee](#)  
[IPI Global Observatory](#)  
[Jamestown Foundation](#)  
[Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor](#)  
[Long War Journal](#)  
[Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Minorities at Risk Project](#)  
[Minority Rights Group International](#)  
[National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism \(START\) – Global Terrorism Database \(GTD\)](#)  
[Nuba Reports](#)  
[Oakland Institute](#)  
[OECD's Social Institutions & Gender Index](#)  
[Open Society Foundations](#)  
[Orchid Project](#) [FGM]  
[Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration \(ORAM\)](#)  
[Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](#)  
[Oxfam](#)  
[Peace Women](#)  
[Penal Reform International](#)  
[Physicians for Human Rights](#)  
[Refugees International](#)  
[Reporters Without Borders](#)  
[Rift Valley Institute](#)  
[Right to Education](#)  
[Saferworld](#)  
[Save the Children](#)  
[Small Arms Survey](#)  
[Small Arms Survey's Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan](#)  
[South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\)](#)  
[Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa](#)  
[Stop FGM Now](#)  
[Sudan Consortium](#)  
[Sudan Democracy First Group](#)  
[Sudan Social Development Organisation \(SUDO \(UK\)](#)  
[Their World](#)  
[Transparency International](#)  
[UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) [Annual Human Rights Report 2017]  
[United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[United Nations Committee Against Torture](#)  
[United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

[United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#)  
[United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances](#)  
[United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)  
[United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)  
[United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) [Sudan page]  
[United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#)  
[United Nations Human Rights Council](#)  
[United Nations Human Settlements Programme \(UNHABITAT\)](#)  
[United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#)  
[United Nations News Centre](#)  
[United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UNOCHA\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#)  
[United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict](#)  
[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#)  
[United Nations Population Fund \(UNPFPA\)](#)  
[United Nations Secretary General](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children](#)  
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences](#)  
[United Nations Women](#)  
[United Nations World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#)  
[United States Congressional Research Service](#)  
[United States Department of State](#) [Annual human rights report; annual religious report; annual labour report; annual trafficking report; annual terrorism report]  
[United States Institute of Peace](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Unrepresented Nations and People's Organisation](#)  
[Uppsala Universitet – UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia](#)  
[Validity](#) [Mental health]  
[Waging Peace](#)  
[Walk Free Foundation > The 2018 Global Slavery Index](#)  
[Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict](#) [Sudan pages]  
[Women Living Under Muslim Laws](#)  
[Women News Network \(WNN\)](#)  
[Women's Refugee Commission](#)  
[Women Under Siege Project](#)  
[World Bank](#) [Sudan pages]  
[World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) [Sudan pages]  
[World Organisation Against Torture](#)

## List of Acronyms

<b>ACAPS</b>	Assessment Capacity Project
<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
<b>ACJPS</b>	African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
<b>BGs</b>	Border Guards
<b>CoH</b>	Cessation of hostilities
<b>DMI</b>	Directorate of Military Intelligence
<b>FEWS NET</b>	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
<b>GoS</b>	Government of Sudan
<b>HART</b>	Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
<b>HUDO Centre</b>	Human Rights and Development Organisation Centre
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>MI</b>	Military Intelligence
<b>NCP</b>	National Congress Party
<b>NHRMO</b>	National Human Rights Monitors Organisation
<b>NISS</b>	National Intelligence and Security Service
<b>PDF</b>	Popular Defense Forces
<b>SAF</b>	Sudanese Armed Forces
<b>SKBNCU</b>	South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit
<b>SPLA-N</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Army-North
<b>SPLM</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
<b>SPLM-N</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
<b>SRF</b>	Sudan Revolutionary Forces
<b>SUNA</b>	Sudan News Agency
<b>(UN)OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

## 1. Background information

### 1.1. Geographical information [Maps of Sudan, South Kordofan and Blue Nile]

#### Sudan

The website Nations Online provides a useful administrative map of Sudan accessible [here](#).<sup>3</sup>

#### South Kordofan & Blue Nile

Human Rights Watch provided the following map of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, both situated in southern Sudan:<sup>4</sup>



#### South Kordofan

A detailed administrative map of South Kordofan published in February 2015 by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) can be accessed [here](#).<sup>5</sup>

For a more detailed map of South Kordofan including its main towns and villages see Sudan expert, Eric Reeves', map [here](#).<sup>6</sup>

IOM produced a map, which provides a summary on the IDP caseloads in South Kordofan as of July 2017 (see section 8. Internally Displaced persons (IDPs), [8.1.2 South Kordofan](#) [Displacement figures] for further information), and also shows the administrative centres and their main towns.<sup>7</sup> The map can be accessed [here](#).

The following extract, taken from the 2016 report by the Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan, provides a useful summary with regards to the Nuba inhabitants of the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan:

<sup>3</sup> See NationsOnline, [Administrative Map of Sudan](#), Undated, Last accessed: 26 September 2018

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Map of South Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017

<sup>5</sup> See OCHA, [Sudan: South Kordofan State Administrative map \(February 2015\)](#), 4 February 2015

<sup>6</sup> See Eric Reeves, [Map of South Kordofan, now the focus of Khartoum's military efforts](#), 12 March 2016

<sup>7</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Summary on the IDP's caseloads in South Kordofan State](#), 20 July 2017

The Nuba Mountains are located within Southern Kordofan State, bordering South Sudan. Under current administration the region is divided into five provinces, namely Kadugli, Dilling, Rashad, Abu Jibeha and Talodi. The conflict ridden state is home to an estimated population of one million inhabitants, the vast majority of whom are either displaced or severely affected by the ongoing conflict. As of September 2015, neighbouring South Sudan had received over 250,000 refugees from the region.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants are commonly known as the Nuba, comprised of an ethnically diverse people, who speak at least 50 different local languages and have three dominant religious beliefs, Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion. Despite this significant heterogeneity, the Nuba share a number of fundamental common cultural practices and beliefs, and, widely recognize themselves as Nuba.<sup>8</sup>

### Blue Nile

The International Refugee Rights Initiative issued a map of Blue Nile in 2016 including a demarcation line of the then approximate SPLA-N/SAF frontline, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>9</sup>

A detailed administrative map of Blue Nile published in September 2012 by OCHA can be accessed [here](#).<sup>10</sup>

The International Refugee Rights Initiative provided the following geographical background regarding Blue Nile:

Blue Nile State is located in south-east Sudan, with South Sudan to the south-west, Ethiopia to the southeast and Sudan's Sennar State to the north. The state is divided into the six counties of Damazin, Tadamon, Bau, Roseires, Geissan and Kurmuk, and is mostly a flat plain, with hills and escarpment along the Ethiopian frontier and in the centre of the state (the Ingessana Hills). The Blue Nile River crosses the state, flowing from Ethiopia's Lake Tana, via Damazin, to the north. The total area of the state is slightly over 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and its capital Damazin lies 550km south of Khartoum.<sup>11</sup>

With regards to who is settled in Blue Nile State, the same source reported:

In recent decades, a considerable population of immigrants has settled in Blue Nile State, and distinctions have been made between those who are seen to be "indigenous" to the territory and those who are seen as "non-indigenous" or "newcomers". The "indigenous" groups of Blue Nile include, among others, the Ingessana (Gamk) people, from the centre of the state and the Ingessana Hills, the Berta and the Gumuz peoples, from the state's north and close to the border with Ethiopia (with many living in Ethiopia as well), and the Uduk, the Jumjum and the Koma peoples, living in the southern part of Blue Nile, closer to South Sudan.<sup>6</sup> Each group has its own distinct language. The "indigenous" people in Blue Nile were, and many still are, agro-pastoralists, meaning that their livelihoods are based on animal herding and cultivation, the latter including sorghum, sesame, cotton and okra.

The "non-indigenous" populations of Blue Nile include members of Sudanese Arab (or "Arabised") and nonArab communities, as well as West Africans that migrated to the area. Members of northern Sudanese Arab communities often came to Blue Nile as traders, business owners or administrators. Arab (in particular, Rufa'a Al-Hoi), as well as West African (mostly Fulani, or "Fellata", in Arabic) nomadic groups have increasingly settled in Blue Nile State during the second half of the 20th century. To a large extent their migration to Blue Nile has been the result of the state's climate, which

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<sup>8</sup> Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan, [Gender Under Bombardment: Gender Disparities in SPLM/A-North Controlled Areas of Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan](#), 2016, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Nuba Women's Struggle for Rights and Equality*, p. 11

<sup>9</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Background to the paper*, p. 3

<sup>10</sup> See OCHA, [Sudan: Blue Nile State – Administrative Map](#), September 2012

<sup>11</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Background*, p. 9



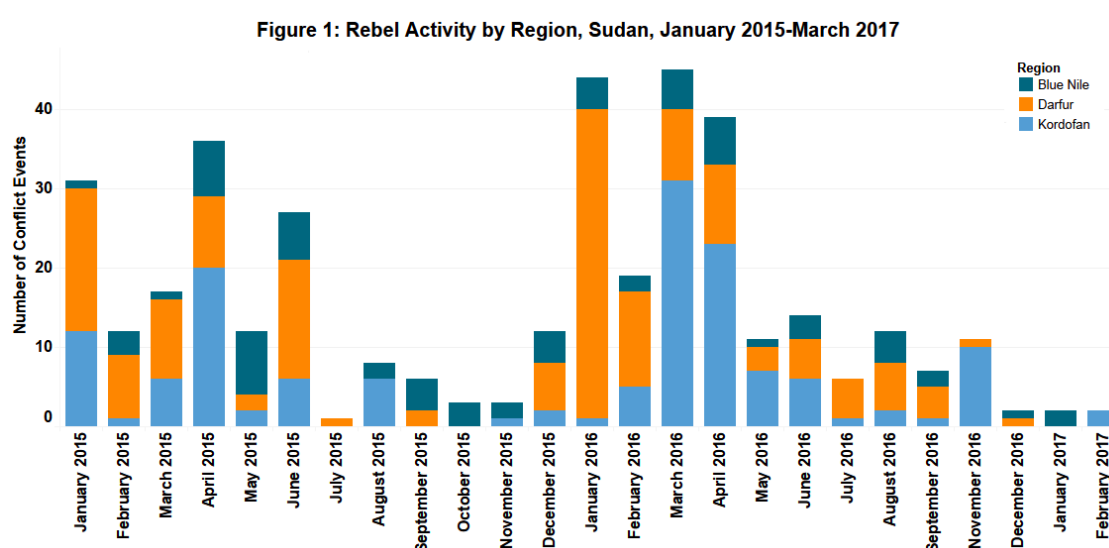
is suitable for livestock husbandry. In addition, Blue Nile's large commercial agricultural schemes also attracted both Sudanese from other parts of the country and foreigners.<sup>12</sup>

A June 2016 IRIN report on the Blue Nile stated that "There isn't much in SPLA-N-controlled Blue Nile, including people. Today, there are only about 80,000. More original inhabitants live outside the state than inside. More than 130,000 are in refugee camps across the border in Maban County in South Sudan; another 40,000 are in camps in Ethiopia. According to a 2008 census, Blue Nile State as a whole, including both government and rebel-held areas, numbered 800,000 people".<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2. Current state of the conflict

### 1.2.1. Brief overview

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED) provided the following figure documenting rebel activity by region in Sudan from January 2015 till March 2017:<sup>14</sup>



### 2016

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan described the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in his report covering the period from October 2015 to June 2016 as follows:

The resumption of ground hostilities between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, followed by aerial bombardment by the government forces, shelling and attacks against civilians led to a rapid deterioration of the security situation in the two areas since January 2016. These attacks reportedly resulted in deaths and injuries to civilians and the destruction of homes, crops, livestock and other civilian objects. According to reports received, the most affected areas were Kurmuk County in Blue Nile and Heiban and Dalami Counties in Southern Kordofan [...]

As the violence persisted, the humanitarian situation became even more disturbing, with increased displacement and food insecurity. The fear of aerial bombardment forced civilians, especially women

<sup>12</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Background*, pages 9/10

<sup>13</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan's Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016

<sup>14</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – March 2017 Update](#), 11 April 2017

and children, to flee their homes to safe locations which were difficult to reach by humanitarian actors.<sup>15</sup>

A September 2016 International Refugee Rights Initiative report looking at civilian perspectives on the conflict in Blue Nile provides a useful summary of the war that broke out in September 2011 in Blue Nile in its 'Introduction', whilst the section on 'Civilian perspectives on the causes of the conflict' provides further background on the causes of the current conflict. The report can be accessed [here](#).<sup>16</sup> The same source also noted that:

After five years of fighting in Blue Nile State and with little sign that the conflict might end any time soon, civilians are having to adapt to a context in which war has become the norm, and are facing incredibly hard choices involved in the conflict and increasingly limited choices as a result. Inside the SPLM-N held areas, fighting and aerial bombardments are ongoing, and livelihood opportunities are extremely limited. Meanwhile, the refugee camps in South Sudan are being drawn into the interconnected conflicts of Blue Nile State and South Sudan, and tensions between refugees and the host communities in Maban are making survival in the camps more and more challenging. It is in this context, while fighting continues to displace new populations from Blue Nile that some refugees are choosing to go back into Sudan, either to government or to SPLM-N held areas. They do not necessarily go back to their homes, but rather to territories that are deemed less prone to aerial bombardments or where some livelihood opportunities exist.<sup>17</sup>

In its analysis covering the first half of 2016, ACLED noted that:

The spike in conflict in March and April [2016] was driven by the escalation of the conflict in South Kordofan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N). Peace talks between the government and the rebels failed in December [2015] after the SPLM-N accused state forces of attacking their positions during the negotiations [...] The two parties disagreed over the nature of the dialogue, with the government maintaining that the objective of the talks is to settle the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, while the SPLM-N has called for a more holistic approach to resolve the multiple conflicts Khartoum has with its peripheral regions [...] In response, the government launched a heavy offensive on the rebel-held areas of Um Sediba, Al-Maradis, El Lipo, Kutna, Ugab, Karkakaia, and El-Bir in March, though reports differ over whether the offensive resulted in the government securing territory.<sup>18</sup>

With regards to the month of May 2016, the same source reported that:

May [2016] witnessed a dramatic drop primarily in South Kordofan. This may be because Sudan is beginning to enter the wet season where mobility is severely reduced, limiting the ability of armed actors to move the weapons and vehicles necessary for an armed campaign. Sudan has witnessed similar slumps in levels of political violence from early summer to December [2015], typically after a spike in violence [...] In the run up to the rainy season the government and the rebels typically intensify their operations in order to secure key areas before the rain makes movement difficult.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 28 July 2016, paras. 58 & 60

<sup>16</sup> See International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016

<sup>17</sup> See International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Introduction*, pages 4/5

<sup>18</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – June 2016 Update](#), 10 June 2016

<sup>19</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – June 2016 Update](#), 10 June 2016

The US Department of State stated that “In June 2016 President Bashir declared a four-month unilateral cessation of hostilities (COH) in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states (the “Two Areas”).”<sup>20</sup>

The UN Human Rights Council in its resolution adopted in September 2016 condemned “any party’s violations or abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law reported in the States of [...] Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, including attacks on civilians and humanitarian aid workers, the indiscriminate bombing of humanitarian facilities, and sexual and gender-based violence, and urges all parties to resort to peace and to sign a permanent ceasefire” and “Expresses deep concern at the human rights situation and the security situation in conflict-affected areas, particularly in the [...] States of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and the profoundly negative impact of this on civilians, in particular women and children, and encourages the Government of the Sudan to continue its cooperation in order to facilitate the visits of the Independent Expert to conflict zones, in fulfilment of his mandate”.<sup>21</sup>

In its analysis covering the whole of 2016, ACLED reported that:

Conflict spiked in Sudan in the first half of the year, primarily driven by battles opposing government and rebel forces, which reached their highest levels since 1997 [...] clashes also escalated between the government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile over March-May [...] Battles and remote violence reduced in the second part of the year, due to the onset of the rainy season when mobility is restricted, and preparations for the November renewed fighting season.<sup>22</sup>

The same source provided the following figure showing the number of conflict and protest events by type and location from January – November 2016:<sup>23</sup>

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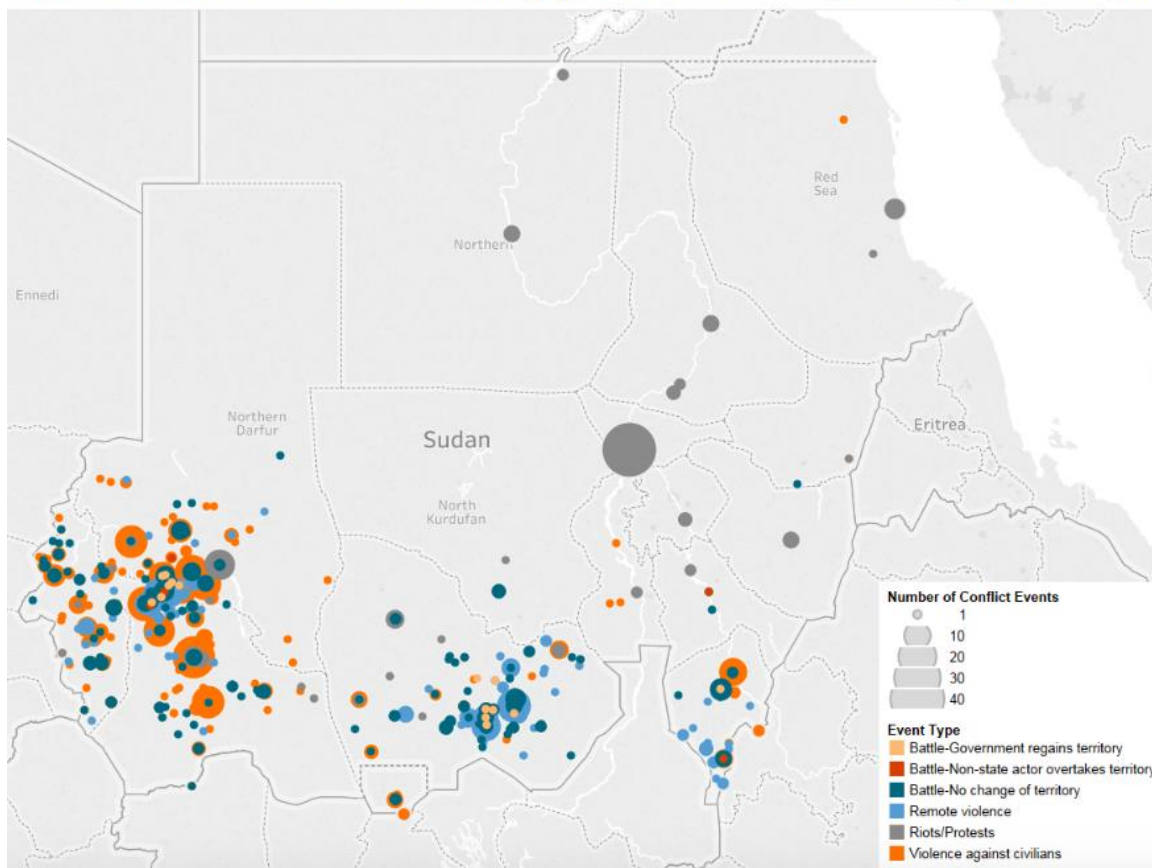
<sup>20</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Executive Summary*

<sup>21</sup> UN Human Rights Council, [Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 30 September 2016](#), 5 October 2016, *paras. 16 and 23*

<sup>22</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – December 2016 Update](#), 9 December 2016

<sup>23</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – December 2016 Update](#), 9 December 2016

**Figure 2: Number of Conflict and Protest Events by Type and Location in Sudan, from January - November 2016.**



The Small Arms Survey's Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan noted that "The government's cessations of hostilities in [...] the Two Areas from late 2016 onwards followed large-scale military-strategic offensives by Sudanese forces in [...] Blue Nile during 2016".<sup>24</sup>

## 2017

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan described the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in his report covering the period from October 2016 to June 2017 as follows:

The Independent Expert continued to receive reports indicating that government forces and the Sudan People Liberation Movement-North had engaged in sporadic military attacks in Southern Kordofan State, despite the declared cessation of hostilities. In that regard, he received information about the attack that had taken place on 12 February 2017 in El Mashayesh, 35 kilometres west of Kadugli, an area reportedly heavily inhabited by the civilian population.<sup>25</sup>

The same source further noted "In [...] Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, despite a decline in military operations between government forces and armed opposition movements, the prevalence of armed groups, including government-backed militias and other armed actors, who operate in total impunity, continue to pose a serious threat for the protection of civilians and human rights".<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Small Arms Survey's Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan, [Lifting US sanctions on Sudan: Rationale and Reality](#), May 2018, p. 10

<sup>25</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 27 July 2017, para. 51

<sup>26</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 27 July 2017, para. 85

Following its visit to the Nuba Mountains Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published a report in January 2017 which found that:

The policies of direct military attacks leading to forced displacement – coupled with the exacerbation of access to sources of food – inevitably aggravate the serious problems of food shortage already caused by the combination of war and a poor rainy season. It is estimated that there will be dangerously high levels of food insecurity and a real risk of famine in the coming months.

These ruthless policies, already well documented and still being perpetrated by GOS, reflect President Al Bashir's avowed commitment to turn the Republic of Sudan into an 'Arabic, Islamic nation' by attempted genocide of African indigenous peoples in the Two Areas and of Christians, traditional believers and Muslims who do not accept his Islamist ideology.

These policies are consistent with the similar genocide being perpetuated by GOS in Darfur. It is thought by people in the Two Areas that GOS is currently focusing its military might predominantly in attempts to conquer Darfur. It will then bring its full military capacity to overcome Blue Nile, leaving the Nuba Mountains vulnerable to attack from three sides with all the military forces combined to achieve its final objective of subjugation of these three regions of Sudan.<sup>27</sup>

Nuba Reports noted in July 2017 that "The latest cases of violence in Blue Nile State appear to be less driven by SPLM-N leadership but more SPLM-N factions working autonomously. Both leaders have largely advocated for peace and reconciliation", yet "The fractures within the SPLM-N movement in Blue Nile continue to fall along ethnic lines. Commanders and political leaders loyal to Agar and the former leadership predominantly emanate from the Angassana tribe while other supporters of rival commanders belong to other ethnic groups, including the Uduk people".<sup>28</sup>

The US Department of State stated that "The government repeatedly extended the COH, and as of year's end [December 2017], no offensive military actions had resumed, except for infrequent skirmishes between armed groups and government forces [...] the continued COH allowed for increased stability and an overall improvement in the human rights situation in [...] the Two Areas, as the government ceased its aerial bombardments and scorched-earth tactics in conflict zones".<sup>29</sup>

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research reported in its annual 'Conflict Barometer' covering 2017 that there was a "remarkable development [...] observed in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions: the war between SPLM/A-North and the government de-escalated significantly to a violent crisis due to peace negotiations between the two conflict parties and the split of SPLM/A-N in March [2017]".<sup>30</sup>

## 2018

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan described the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in his report covering the period from September 2017 to June 2018 as follows:

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<sup>27</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [Report of visit to South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), January 2017, *Main Findings*, p. 2

<sup>28</sup> Nuba Reports, [Sudan Insider: SPLM-N political insecurity in Blue Nile continues, affects citizens](#), 31 July 2017

<sup>29</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Executive Summary*

<sup>30</sup> Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC), [Conflict Barometer 2017](#), February 2018, *Global Development*, p. 14

Despite the prolonged period without a mutually agreed cessation of hostilities, no clashes were reported between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in Blue Nile and South Kordofan during the reporting period.<sup>31</sup>

The same report noted with special reference to the Blue Nile that “displaced communities fought along ethnic lines following a split within the leadership of the armed opposition group SPLM-N in July 2017. Nevertheless, the internal SPLM-N conflict in Blue Nile had generally ceased by October 2017. However, tension remained high as the two factions maintained different camps and showed no signs of reconciliation”.<sup>32</sup> Describing the situation further the report stated that “On 17 February 2018, the two SPLM-N factions fought in the areas of Tunfona, Marmaton, Goz Bagar, Aljamamat and Alfug. People were displaced again and fled to areas south, with reports coming in of new displacements of civilians in the region. An assessment mission led by humanitarian actors reported up to 500 civilians displaced. The situation was described as dire with houses burned, property looted and little to no access to food, water, shelter and health services”.<sup>33</sup>

Following its visit to Blue Nile in January 2018 HART found that there are two issues of concern regarding the political situation in Blue Nile:

First, the lifting of the US sanctions in October 2017: there are reports that the GoS [Government of Sudan] have been using the associated increase in resources to increase their military capability, including a build-up of armed forces and missiles on the northern Blue Nile border. This is fuelling the suspicion that the ceasefire will not last and that the Khartoum regime will use this time for consolidation of its military position to continue to impose their Islamist agenda.

Secondly, SPLM-N divided into two factions last July when Chairman Malik Agar and Deputy Chairman Abdul-Aziz Al-Hilu disagreed over proposed policies regarding relationships with GoS, particularly regarding self-determination or autonomy. Clashes occurred between the two factions, causing further displacement of civilians and increasing tensions among the local people. No dialogue has yet been arranged between Malik Agar and Abdul-Aziz Al-Hilu to try to settle the disagreement.<sup>34</sup>

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit's (SKBNCU) 'Humanitarian Update' of March 2018 noted that “Following internal SPLA-N clashes in February [2018], Malik Agar announced a unilateral cessation [sic] of hostilities in Blue Nile State on March 3rd with the rival faction led by Abdel Aziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N Hilu). Security is reported to be calm since then and free movement of IDPs are reported [...] Despite the relative calm in the past month, the security situation in Blue Nile is extremely precarious and that affects access and therefore also partners' operational planning for 2018”.<sup>35</sup>

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network's (FEWS NET) June 2018 'Food Security Outlook', “Since the beginning of 2017, the security situation has remained relatively calm across most SPLM-N-controlled areas of South Kordofan. No direct fighting between SPLM-N and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) has been reported in the area since the declaration of the unilateral ceasefire in

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<sup>31</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 18

<sup>32</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 22

<sup>33</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 58

<sup>34</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Political Situation*, p. 5

<sup>35</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: March 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Protection and Security Situation*, p. 6



January 2017. Nevertheless, access by humanitarian actors to SPLM-N controlled areas, population movement, access to livelihood activities, and trade flows into the area remain restricted”.<sup>36</sup>

According to the Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO) the biggest threat to the civilian population in the Two Areas is “the systematic looting of the communities’ livestock and other properties by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and its allied militias. NHRMO has documented that between June 2016 and July 2018, a total of 20 civilians were killed, 10 injured and three abducted as a result of these looting raids”.<sup>37</sup>

### 1.2.2. Territorial control

A map produced by the SKBNCU in April 2016 showed the SPLM/A-N frontlines in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and can be accessed [here](#).<sup>38</sup>

The 2016 report by the Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan contains also a map showing SPLA-N strongholds in South Kordofan, which can be found [here](#).<sup>39</sup>

In June 2016 IRIN’s report on the Blue Nile contained a map showing the then “active fighting” areas and the SPLA-N controlled territory, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>40</sup>

By way of explanation the report described that “Blue Nile State sits wedged in the southernmost part of Sudan, with Ethiopia to the east and South Sudan across the western border. On this map, the purple areas represent sites of active fighting. The original front line cuts northwest across the state. The Ingessana Hills, rebel leader Malik Agar’s birthplace, is the only patch of SPLA-N controlled territory north of the front lines”.<sup>41</sup>

The annual human rights report by the Hudo Centre covering 2017 focusing on the Two Areas, noted with regards to territorial control that “South Kordofan state consists of seventeen (17) localities, some are located within a territory controlled by SPLA-N and others are under government control. Blue Nile State consists of seven (7) localities under government control with the presence of SPLA-N in four (4) localities”.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.2.3. Peace negotiations/ceasefires

#### 2016

By way of background, Amnesty International provided the following overview with regards to the March 2016 peace agreement:

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<sup>36</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *Areas of Concern, IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan State (Figure 4), Current situation*, p. 8

<sup>37</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO), [Civilian perspectives on the current ceasefire \(cessation of hostilities\) in the Nuba Mountains/Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states of Sudan](#), 3 September 2018, p. 2

<sup>38</sup> South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update – March 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 8 October 2018, p. 2

<sup>39</sup> Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan, [Gender Under Bombardment: Gender Disparities in SPLM/A-North Controlled Areas of Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan](#), 2016, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Nuba Women’s Struggle for Rights and Equality*, p. 12

<sup>40</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan’s Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016

<sup>41</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan’s Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016

<sup>42</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 1.5.1 *Geographical scope*, p. 4

In March [2016], peace negotiations between the Government of Sudan, the opposition and armed opposition groups facilitated by the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) collapsed. These talks were the eleventh of their kind since 2011. Despite the failure to reach common ground, the Government of Sudan and the AUHIP chairperson, Thabo Mbeki, signed a Roadmap Agreement for peace in Sudan while the opposition and rebel groups declined. The Roadmap commits parties to urgently end conflicts in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan and ensure humanitarian access to all populations in these areas. The Agreement also commits parties to engage in an inclusive National Dialogue process. Opposition political parties and armed opposition groups, owing to international pressure, signed the Roadmap on August [2016]. The ceasefire declared in June has since been breached but no major battles have taken place. However, local human rights monitors report that military activity in South Kordofan during the current [2016] rainy season has been higher than in the previous two rainy seasons.<sup>43</sup>

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan reported that on 18 June 2016 the Government of the Sudan announced a four-month unilateral cessation of hostilities.<sup>44</sup> He further “welcomed the six-month unilateral ceasefire declared by the Sudanese Revolutionary Front in South Kordofan and Blue Nile on 28 April 2016”.<sup>45</sup> However, according to UN News no agreement was reached on a cessation of hostilities during round of negotiations held in August 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.<sup>46</sup> According to a news article from The East African, the government’s lead negotiator, Ibrahim Mahmoud reportedly stated that “The main reason the negotiations broke down was the rebels’ deal-breaking request that, following the ceasefire, humanitarian aid be delivered by airlift to rebel areas in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile from Ethiopia, South Sudan and Kenya. This was wholly rejected by the government delegation”.<sup>47</sup>

In October 2016 the International Crisis Group reported that the government would “extend unilateral ceasefire in conflict zones until end 2016”.<sup>48</sup>

## 2017

The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) provided the following analysis regarding peace negotiations in 2017: “Peace negotiations on the conflict in the Two Areas (Blue Nile and South Kordofan) have stagnated with no progress made in 2017. The SPLM-N split has negatively affected the negotiations, as the Sudanese government can no longer hold discussions with a unified SPLM-N body and some members of the government’s negotiation team have rejected to negotiate with a faction of SPLM-N [...] Both factions of SPLM-N have expressed a level of readiness to discuss humanitarian matters, but discussions on the political agenda have not progressed”.<sup>49</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted that in January 2017 the government declared a cessation of hostilities in the Two Areas to allow humanitarian access.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: Five years and counting: Intensified aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan state](#), 29 September 2016, *The signing of the roadmap agreement – false hope?*, p. 11

<sup>44</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 28 July 2016, para. 60

<sup>45</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 28 July 2016, para. 60

<sup>46</sup> UN News, [Sudan: Ban ‘disappointed’ at failure to reach truce agreement](#), 18 August 2016

<sup>47</sup> The East African, [Sudan ceasefire talks collapse after less than a week](#), 16 August 2016

<sup>48</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), October 2016, Sudan

<sup>49</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Humanitarian Overview: An analysis of key crises into 2018](#), November 2017, Sudan, Overview 2017, Current situation, p. 43

<sup>50</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), January 2017, Sudan



In July 2017 the Sudanese government extended its unilateral ceasefire in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states by four months, reported the same source.<sup>51</sup>

In August 2017 the SPLM-N led by Al-Hilu declared a six-month unilateral ceasefire.<sup>52</sup>

In October 2017 President Bashir extended its ceasefire between government forces and rebels in South Kordofan and Blue Nile until the end of the year, reported the International Crisis Group.<sup>53</sup>

## 2018

In January 2018 the Sudanese government extended its unilateral cessation of hostilities for a further three months, Africanews reported.<sup>54</sup>

In February 2018 the International Crisis Group reported that the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu met for talks, for the “first since October 2016” but failed to secure cessation of hostilities agreement, “hitting deadlock over humanitarian access to Two Areas”, whilst the SPLM-N faction led by Malik Agar “protested exclusion from talks”.<sup>55</sup> The same source further noted that the SPLM-N al-Hilu “extended its unilateral ceasefire for four months” in the Two Areas.<sup>56</sup> At the beginning of March 2018 the SPLM-N faction led by Malik Agar declared a unilateral cessation of hostilities in the Blue Nile.<sup>57</sup>

At the end of March 2018 the Sudanese government extended its unilateral ceasefire with rebels in the Two Areas for an additional three months, until the end of June 2018, as documented by The East African based on state news agency Suna reporting.<sup>58</sup>

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan described the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in his report covering the period from September 2017 to June 2018 as “a prolonged period without a mutually agreed cessation of hostilities” between the Government and the SPLM-N.<sup>59</sup>

In its May 2018 ‘Humanitarian Update’, SKBNCU noted that the unilateral ceasefire has been extended from 1 June to 30 November 2018 by the SPLM-N (Al Hilu).<sup>60</sup>

In July 2018 the International Crisis Group reported that the Sudanese government had extended its unilateral ceasefire with rebels in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states until the end of the year.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), July 2017, Sudan

<sup>52</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), August 2017, Sudan

<sup>53</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), October 2017, Sudan

<sup>54</sup> Africanews, [Sudan's Bashir extends ceasefire with rebels for 3 months](#), 4 January 2018

<sup>55</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), February 2018, Sudan

<sup>56</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), February 2018, Sudan

<sup>57</sup> Sudan Tribune, [SPLM-N: Agar declares unilateral ceasefire after fresh clashes in Blue Nile with al-Hilu forces](#), 4 March 2018

<sup>58</sup> The East African, [Sudan extends ceasefire with rebels to June](#), 29 March 2018

<sup>59</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 18

<sup>60</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: May 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, Protection, p. 4

<sup>61</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), July 2018, Sudan

## 2. Actors involved in the conflict

### 2.1. Government forces

For information on human rights abuses committed by government forces and their supporting paramilitary militias in the context of armed conflict view sections [3. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians](#), [6. Women and girls](#), and [7. Children](#). For information on rule of law abuses committed by the security forces, see sections [4. Rule of Law and access to justice](#) and [5. Human rights situation: civil and political rights](#).

#### 2.1.1. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information about the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) stationed in South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

The CIA World Factbook states that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) consists of the: Land Forces, Navy (includes Marines), Sudanese Air Force (Sikakh al-Jawwiya as-Sudaniya) and Popular Defense Forces.<sup>62</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “The Ministry of Defense oversees all elements of the SAF, including the Border Guards (BGs) and DMI [Directorate of Military Intelligence] units”.<sup>63</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in March 2018 that the President of Sudan, Omar Al Bashir has promised to “rebuild the Sudanese Armed Forces and to equip them with up-to-date technologies”, whilst also promising to undertake to raise army salaries.<sup>64</sup>

#### 2.1.2. Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

BY way of background, the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) provided the following background:

The Rapid Support Force (RSF) is an additional armed force created by the government in 2013 to help defeat the opposition armed groups across the country. The RSF is under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) and is primarily active in the conflict regions of Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile.<sup>65</sup>

In its analysis covering 2016, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED) noted that:

Pro-government militias, including the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) [...] supported ground offensives by government forces in the three states [Darfur, South Kordofan & Blue Nile], a strategy so far

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<sup>62</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), [World Factbook Sudan](#), last updated: 26 September 2018 [last accessed: 8 October 2018], *Military and Security*. Note that this particular information is dated ‘2016’ in the original source.

<sup>63</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., d. *Arbitrary Arrest or Detention*

<sup>64</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Al Bashir promises to ‘rebuild the Sudan Armed Forces’](#), 8 March 2018

<sup>65</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Sudan](#), Latest updated: 12/09/2018, *Politics and Security, Political Stakeholders, Pro-government forces*

predominant in Darfur [...] RSF engaged in violence in Blue Nile for the first time since their creation in 2014 and have continued to operate in Kordofan.<sup>66</sup>

In its September 2016 report focusing on the past five years of aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan, Amnesty International similarly reported that “A new dynamic in 2016 has been the involvement of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in ground offensives in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The RSF is a Sudanese government force under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). Created in 2013 specifically to fight against rebel groups throughout Sudan, the force is reportedly better equipped than other paramilitary and militia groups”.<sup>67</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “In 2013 the government created the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as an element of the security apparatus, which as of June 2016 fell under SAF--no longer under NISS--but reported directly to the president. The RSF continued to play a significant role in the government’s campaigns against rebel movements and was implicated in the majority of reports of human rights violations against civilians. The government tightly controlled information about the RSF, and public comment critical of the RSF often resulted in arrest or detention”.<sup>68</sup> The same source further noted that the Sudanese government “infrequently” pressed charges against SAF officers”.<sup>69</sup>

Human Rights Watch reported that in January 2017 the Rapid Support Forces Act was passed to regulate the force, but “forces continued to operate under the same commander independently of the army”.<sup>70</sup>

The Sudan Tribune noted in May 2017 that “The Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir Saturday has pledged to crush the rebel groups stressing the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are ready to declare the country free of rebels and mercenaries soon”.<sup>71</sup> The same source further noted that that the Rapid Support Forces Act, passed earlier in 2017, “integrates the notorious militia in the Sudanese army and provides that its commander is appointed by the President of the Republic”.<sup>72</sup>

According to a blog post written by Nicki Kindersley and Magdi el-Gizouli, Co-Directors of Studies for the Rift Valley Institute’s Sudan and South Sudan Course, in April 2018 “The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) previously deployed against rural rebels and urban protestors now act as first responders for European border security and disrupt migrant routes to Libya and Egypt, en route to the Mediterranean shores”.<sup>73</sup>

### 2.1.3. National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS)

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<sup>66</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – December 2016 Update](#), 9 December 2016

<sup>67</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: Five years and counting: Intensified aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan state](#), 29 September 2016, *Impact of aerial bombardments and ground attacks on civilians*, p. 5

<sup>68</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

<sup>69</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

<sup>70</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2018: Sudan – Events of 2017](#), 10 January 2018, *Law Reform*

<sup>71</sup> Sudan Tribune, [Sudanese president vows to crush rebellion soon](#), 13 May 2017

<sup>72</sup> Sudan Tribune, [Sudanese president vows to crush rebellion soon](#), 13 May 2017

<sup>73</sup> Kindersley N. & El-Gizouli, M., [This year in Sudan and South Sudan](#), 30 April 2018

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information about the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) operating in South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

By way of background, Amnesty International provided the following summary as to Sudan's Parliament approval of controversial amendments to the 2005 National Interim Constitution in January 2015 which increased the powers of the NISS and "granted the President greater powers to appoint and remove senior officials, including state governors and other senior constitutional, judicial, military, police and security post holders. The constitutional amendment to Article 151 transformed the NISS from an intelligence agency focused on information gathering, analysis and advice to a fully-fledged security agency exercising functions usually carried out by the armed forces or law enforcement agencies".<sup>74</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that "The Ministry of Defense oversees all elements of the SAF, including the Border Guards (BGs) and DMI [Directorate of Military Intelligence] units", but "did not investigate human rights violations by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), the military, or any other branch of the security services, with limited exceptions relating to the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)".<sup>75</sup> The same source also included the following general information about the NISS:

- While the law provides NISS officials with legal protection for acts committed in their official capacity, the government reported NISS maintained an internal court system to address internal discipline and investigate and prosecute violations of the National Security Act, including abuse of power under the act. Penalties included up to 10 years in prison, a fine, or both for NISS officers found in violation. During the year, however, the government refused access to information regarding how many cases it had closed. A key national dialogue recommendation was to rescind unilateral additions to the constitution that exempt NISS from the national jurisprudence system. Despite promises to implement all national dialogue recommendations, the government did not include NISS reforms as part of the national dialogue package of laws it presented to the National Assembly
- NISS is responsible for internal security and all intelligence matters. It functions independent of any ministry. Constitutional amendments passed in 2015 expanded NISS's mandate to include authorities traditionally reserved for the military and judiciary. Under the amendments, NISS may establish courts and is allowed greater latitude for making arrests; its officers are shielded from normal prosecution.<sup>76</sup>

#### **2.1.4. Law enforcement**

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information about law enforcement operating in South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that "The Ministry of Interior oversees the national police, including security police, Special Forces police, traffic police, and the combat-trained Central Reserve police. There was a police presence throughout the country", but also noted that corruption among police forces continued to be a problem<sup>77</sup> With

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<sup>74</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 2. *Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented, Article 2 and paragraph 1 of the List of Issues*, p. 6

<sup>75</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Executive Summary and Section 1., d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention*

<sup>76</sup> See various sections as highlighted above in US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Section 1., d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention*

<sup>77</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Section 1., d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention*

regards to immunity, the US Department of State noted that “the government infrequently lifted police immunity”.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.1.5. Paramilitary militias

#### Two Areas

Sudan Democracy First Group provided the following overview with regards to government-backed militias in the Two Areas in its March 2017 report:

Throughout its rule, the National Congress Party (NCP) established an infamous reputation of relying heavily on militias outside of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), in managing its multiple wars in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan/ Nuba Mountains. The regime bases their recruitment strategies on the politicizing of ethnic relations and the manipulations of tribal affiliations, as well as offering financial temptations to new recruits. The reliance on these militias increased steadily within recent years, providing them with needed weaponry and logistics. The support provided contributes to operations within Sudan and neighboring countries, serving the various goals and objectives of the regime.<sup>79</sup>

#### South Kordofan

The Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan provided the following overview as to the distribution of paramilitary forces in South Kordofan as of 2016:

Paramilitary forces in South and West Kordofan have mostly been remobilized since 2011, when the war resumed. These forces appear to fall mostly under the PDF banner and largely recruit among local Arab pastoralists. By 2012 numbers for paramilitary forces in what was then South Kordofan (including what is now West Kordofan) ranged between 20,000 and 40,000, constituting roughly half of the SAF troops deployed in the state. There appears to be separate tribal PDF units for the two main sections of the Missiriya (the Humur and Zurug, with some Humur sections also reportedly more autonomous than others) and for Hawazma sections. [...]

Native administrators and politicians from the Missiriya and Hawazma tribes reportedly play a key role in mobilization at both the local and the national levels, as do SAF and military intelligence officers. Nuba paramilitary forces are also present, including an estimated 1,000 men under Nuba leader Kafi Tayara. Initially PDF, they are now said to be part of the RSF. Similar trends to those recently observed in Darfur have been reported in South and West Kordofan, including an upgrading of some PDF to RSF. In addition to the Darfur Rizeigat RSF who fought in South Kordofan in 2013–14, local RSF fighters have been recruited since 2014. An initial group of Missiriya, Nuba, and Darfur fighters was reportedly equipped with 60 vehicles under the command of former PDF leader at-Taj at-Tijani from the Missiriya Ajayra Awlad Kamil. This group falls under the joint command of the NISS, Hemmeti, and the West Kordofan state government. With some groups reassigned to the RSF, other PDF fighters may simply demobilize. Missiriya PDF fighters in particular have long complained of unpaid salaries and lack of compensation for their ‘martyrs’. Some are increasingly refusing to mobilize and have even joined JEM and the SPLM-North (SPLM-N), as well as engaging in intertribal fighting. This has particularly been the case since 2013 as part of an underreported but vicious land dispute between the Awlad Umran and Zioud sections of the Missiriya. [...]

Once a key mobilizer, former SAF major general, Keilak commissioner, and chairperson of the South Kordofan security committee Bandar Ibrahim Abu-al-Balul (of the Missiriya Falayta) even joined JEM in 2014 in protest against RSF abuses against Missiriya civilians. In sharp contrast with the growing Rizeigat representation in the government since the 2015 general elections, the Missiriya seem to be losing influence. Khartoum-backed Nuer militias have been hosted in South and West Kordofan for a long time and are active against both South Sudan and the SPLM-N in the Nuba Mountains. Some of

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<sup>78</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 1., d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

<sup>79</sup> Sudan Democracy First Group, [Militias of Bashir’s Regime and the Proxy War](#), 8 March 2017

these militias are said to have been reactivated since 2013 after the start of the new civil war in South Sudan, and have been partly integrated into the SPLM in Opposition (SPLM-IO).<sup>80</sup>

### Blue Nile

The Sudan Democracy First Group report noted with special reference to the Blue Nile State that the Sudanese government failed to establish local militias, which meant that it had to “import its active militias from other areas of Sudan” as for example in May/June 2016 “when the regime brought the RSF- a militia which originally was formed in Darfur- to the Blue Nile Region”.<sup>81</sup> According to the same source “the attempt to introduce the RSF, known by the name of its leader Hemedti, into the war in Blue Nile, aimed at repeating the Darfurian model of genocide and mass atrocities. Their involvement in fighting the proxy-war further included participation into the killings and displacing of indigenous communities to outside of the Blue Nile, availing the regime opportunity to confiscate the lands and rich natural resources of the region”.<sup>82</sup> Yet, the RSF militias “were not able to attain the strategic goals of the regime. This led to their subsequent departure, after achieving only one military victory against SPLM- N that controls significant parts of the region” according to the same source.<sup>83</sup>

The Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan provided the following overview as to the distribution of paramilitary forces in Blue Nile as of 2016:

[...] paramilitary forces in Blue Nile currently number at least 5,000 men. They are recruited among communities originally from West Africa such as Fellata (Pula) and Hausa, with members of each community reportedly fighting in distinct paramilitary forces.<sup>66</sup> The Fellata PDF forces are reportedly under the command of Abderahman Hassan ‘Jirewa’. Their main force is the Katiba Mabinom (‘sleepless battalion’).

Arabs (including the Rufa’a al-Hoy) have also been recruited into militias.

In addition, labourers working in agricultural schemes north of Blue Nile state, who were originally from various parts of Sudan, including Darfur, were also conscripted, and sometimes forced to join on an ad hoc basis.

While militias in Blue Nile seem to be mostly recruiting among ‘newcomers’ to the state, members of communities considered as ‘indigenous’ or old settlers have also joined up, in particular since disputed elections in 2010, notably in a militia called ‘Kobaji’. Even some Ingessana (SPLM-N chairman Malik Agar’s tribe) are said to have been enlisted into a small local PDF force, while the Jumjum and the Christian Uduk of southern Blue Nile have continued to support the insurgency.

Other paramilitary forces are recruiting among the Christian Maban community from South Sudan immediately south of Blue Nile under SAF brigadier generals Kamal Loma and Muntu Mutallah Abdallah, both of whom are Maban. It is unclear whether their agenda is to fight for their community in Upper Nile or to fight the SPLM-N in Blue Nile, or both. These forces, notably the ‘Maban Heroes’ militia, continuously threaten the Blue Nile refugee camps in Maban county.<sup>84</sup>

The same report further noted with regards to the deployment of Darfur Arab militias and local RSF fighters in Blue Nile:

Darfur Arab militias, including from the Border Guards and RSF, were reportedly deployed in Blue Nile in 2016, triggering opposition among local NCP branches.<sup>104</sup> There are reports of local RSF fighters

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<sup>80</sup> Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan, [Remote-control breakdown: Sudanese paramilitary forces and pro-government militias](#), April 2017, p. 8

<sup>81</sup> Sudan Democracy First Group, [Militias of Bashir’s Regime and the Proxy War](#), 8 March 2017

<sup>82</sup> Sudan Democracy First Group, [Militias of Bashir’s Regime and the Proxy War](#), 8 March 2017

<sup>83</sup> Sudan Democracy First Group, [Militias of Bashir’s Regime and the Proxy War](#), 8 March 2017

<sup>84</sup> Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan, [Remote-control breakdown: Sudanese paramilitary forces and pro-government militias](#), April 2017, ps. 8 and 10



being recruited and trained in Disa (which historically is a base for militia training at the national level) close to Roseires since early 2015.<sup>85</sup>

#### **2.1.6. Popular Defence Forces (PDF)**

Almost no COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information about the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) operating in South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

The Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO) Centre reported in its 2017 annual report that “the PDF is a government allied militia that is dominated by Arab nomad’s tribe” in South Kordofan.<sup>86</sup>

#### **2.1.7. Military service**

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing information about military service specific to South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

The US CIA’s World Factbook stated that “Sudan has both compulsory and voluntary military service with a 1 to 2 year service obligation for people ages 18-33. A requirement that completion of national service was mandatory before entering public or private sector employment has been cancelled (2012)”.<sup>87</sup>

In a query response dated October 2016, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada noted with regards to the legal framework on military service in Sudan that:

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Khartoum-based lawyer noted that the legislation governing military conscription in Sudan is the National Service Act 1992, and that the age of conscription is for men 18 to 33 years old (Lawyer 29 Sept. 2016). The National Service Act of 1992 states that “[e]very Sudanese who completed eighteen years and did not exceed thirty three years of age shall submit to the imposition of National Service” (Sudan 1992, Art. 7). However, a report by War Resisters’ International (WRI), a UK-based network of pacifist and anti-militarist groups in over 40 countries (WRI n.d.), states that the age for service was extended from 18-33 to 18-45 in 2013 as part of the “updated Sudan Military Service Act in 2013” (ibid. 21 Apr. 2015). [...] WRI and the lawyer both state that the length of military service is 12 months for university and college graduates, 18 months for high school graduates, and 24 months for others (ibid.; Lawyer 29 Sept. 2016).<sup>88</sup>

The same source further stated with regards to conscription that “In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an independent researcher who specializes in Sudan stated that under national conscription, ‘all people [are] targeted for conscription at [the age of] 18,’ unless they service by payment of a fine or by being registered as a student (Independent researcher 26 Sept. 2016). WRI also indicates that postponing military service for students is possible (WRI 21 Apr. 2015). According to the lawyer, deferment of military service for students is addressed in Section 12

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<sup>85</sup> Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan, [Remote-control breakdown: Sudanese paramilitary forces and pro-government militias](#), April 2017, p. 10

<sup>86</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 17

<sup>87</sup> CIA World Factbook, [Sudan](#), Updated 12 July 2018

<sup>88</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Sudan: Information on military service, including for the purpose of attending university; information on punishment for refusing or evading military service, including upon return to Sudan after an extended absence, such as since 2002 \(2014-September 2016\) \[SDN105640.E\]](#), 5 October 2016, *Military Service and Deferment for University Studies*

of the National Service Act 1992, but there are no specified parameters for thisment [sic] (Lawyer 29 Sept. 2016)".<sup>89</sup>

On the possibility of being exempted from military service the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada query response cited the provisions of the National Service Act section on Applications for Pardon or Postponement, stating that "The Director is the authority to decide [sic] on applications for full exemption, partial or temporary. The Minister decides on postponement. Sudan Ambassadors and counsellors abroad has [sic] the authority for temporary decisions on applications for postponement of service for those residents abroad, and they have to notify the Administration immediately (Sudan 1992)".<sup>90</sup>

### **2.1.8. Defection from government forces**

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing information on defection from government forces in South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

Regarding punishment for refusing or evading military service the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada query response provided the following information:

The National Service Act 1992 states that

28.1 Whoever contradicts this Act shall be punished by imprisonment [for a] period not exceeding three years, or shall be fined, or with both penalties.

...

28.3 Any person subject to do the service shall be punished with imprisonment for a period of not less than two years and not exceeding three years who does not present himself for recruitment, or tries to avoid service through deceit, or by inflicting any harm to himself. (Sudan 1992, Art. 28.1).

The Sudan Tribune cites the 2013 military reserve law as indicating that those who refuse to join the reserve forces without a valid excuse will be fined and jailed for up to six months, while conscripts who commit a crime during their service period will be imprisoned for three years (Sudan Tribune 3 July 2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to the independent researcher, the punishments for refusing or evading military service have included fines, prison or forced conscription, but that the punishments have been "very unevenly applied" (Independent researcher 26 Sept. 2016). According to the Senior Fellow, to avoid military service "many people simply disappear from Khartoum and the major towns when their military service is required" (13 Sept. 2016). Without providing details, the WRI [War Resisters' International] states that the "General Provisions section of the 2013 military service guideline" lists a number of procedures against those who refuse or evade military service, including:

- Communicating with their places of work to freeze their jobs;
- Communicating with their places of work to terminate employment;
- Pursuing them by raiding their homes and places of work;
- Enacting legal procedures against them;
- Publishing their names in local newspapers; Filing cases against them at the State Security Prosecution for crimes against national security (WRI 21 Apr. 2015).

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<sup>89</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Sudan: Information on military service, including for the purpose of attending university; information on punishment for refusing or evading military service, including upon return to Sudan after an extended absence, such as since 2002 \(2014-September 2016\) \[SDN105640.E\]](#), 5 October 2016, *Military Service and Deferment for University Studies*

<sup>90</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Sudan: Information on military service, including for the purpose of attending university; information on punishment for refusing or evading military service, including upon return to Sudan after an extended absence, such as since 2002 \(2014-September 2016\) \[SDN105640.E\]](#), 5 October 2016, *Punishment for Refusing or Evading Military Service*



Further information and a copy of the "General Provisions section of the 2013 military service guideline" could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. The independent researcher explained that military service evasion has often been "used as an excuse to target people who were already a target of security interest" (ibid.). Further information on instances of prosecution and implementation of punishments for evasion could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this.<sup>91</sup>

#### **2.1.9. Forced recruitment of young men**

See also section [7.1. Recruitment and use of children](#).

An October 2016 query response by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada described the situation regarding forced recruitment of young men in Sudan:

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Senior Fellow at Harvard University's François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, who is also a professor of English at Smith College and has written numerous books and articles about human rights issues in Sudan, stated that "forcible conscription is rampant" in the Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions, particularly targeting "African men" knowledgeable about the terrain and military operations (Senior Fellow 12 Sept. 2016). The same source indicated that there is also forcible conscription in Khartoum, which has occurred from 1989 to the present, targeting "African men who have found themselves in Khartoum for economic or political reasons" (ibid.). [...]

The Senior Fellow stated that "forcible conscription is a real threat to any Sudanese," including those with a legal student deferment (Senior Fellow 12 Sept. 2016). He also noted that the laws "are imposed wildly asymmetrically among ethnic groups" and that "good families from riverine Arab backgrounds can typically easily evade service" due to bribery and corruption (ibid.). The independent researcher similarly indicated that many wealthier families have "bought their way out of conscription one way or another" (Independent researcher 26 Sept. 2016).

Sources indicate that Sudan does not allow for conscientious objection (Independent researcher 26 Sept. 2016; IFOR 3 Oct. 2016).<sup>92</sup>

#### **2.1.10. Human rights abuses committed & immunity enjoyed by government forces**

See also information included in sections 1.2. Current state of the conflict, [1.2.1. Brief overview](#); [3. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians](#); [6.1. Sexual and gender-based violence \(SGBV\)](#), [6.4 State response to SGBV](#), and [7.1. Recruitment and use of children](#).

##### 2016

The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation published a report in 2016 summarising the attacks on civilians in South Kordofan between 2011 and 2016, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>93</sup>

In its analysis covering 2016, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED) noted that:

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<sup>91</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Sudan: Information on military service, including for the purpose of attending university; information on punishment for refusing or evading military service, including upon return to Sudan after an extended absence, such as since 2002 \(2014-September 2016\) \[SDN105640.E\]](#), 5 October 2016, *Punishment for Refusing or Evading Military Service*

<sup>92</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Sudan: Information on military service, including for the purpose of attending university; information on punishment for refusing or evading military service, including upon return to Sudan after an extended absence, such as since 2002 \(2014-September 2016\) \[SDN105640.E\]](#), 5 October 2016, *Military Service and Deferment for University Studies*

<sup>93</sup> See Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Attacks on civilians in Southern Kordofan, Sudan 2011-2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018

Pro-government militias are mostly involved in violence against civilians and civilian property, including unlawful killings, abductions, rapes, lootings and burnings of properties [...] Along with regular government forces, they are responsible for nearly half of the overall violence against civilians in the country.<sup>94</sup>

Amnesty International together with 30 other human rights organisations highlighted in its letter of September 2016 to the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council its “serious concerns over the human rights and humanitarian situation in Sudan” and specifically that following declaration of ceasefires by the Government of Sudan and the two factions of the SPLM/A-N which have been largely upheld, “monitors on the ground have reported incidents of looting of property and abductions by armed militias allied to the Government of Sudan. These incidents, which may amount to ceasefire violations, have contributed to food insecurity and remain a serious concern for communities in South Kordofan and Blue Nile”.<sup>95</sup>

Human Rights Watch reported in September 2016 with regards to impunity for human rights violations committed that “The government has made no tangible progress in providing accountability for crimes committed in [...] the Two Areas since 2011, the killing of peaceful protesters, ill-treatment and torture of detainees, or other serious abuses. Sudan’s security forces including national security officials are shielded from prosecution for abuses by a patchwork of immunities. The Sudanese government’s widespread human rights violations and failure to investigate and prosecute those responsible justify specific scrutiny by the Human Rights Council over the Sudan situation”.<sup>96</sup>

With regards to the month of May 2016, Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation found that “Attacks against civilians in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile [...] continued in May, albeit at a reduced rate compared to incidents reported during the previous two months. Our monitors recorded a total of 29 incidents in the two areas with the majority of them (20 out of the 29) taking place in Southern Kordofan’s Heiban County resulting in the deaths of six children from a single incident”.<sup>97</sup>

The same source reported that June 2016 “saw the least reported number of incidents of violence and human rights violations carried out directly or indirectly by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states since January 2016”.<sup>98</sup> However, it still noted that “two men and a woman were abducted by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) while working on their farms in Oli village, Alazrag Payam. Their whereabouts are still unknown”.<sup>99</sup>

In the period July – September 2016, the Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) attacked civilians in their

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<sup>94</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – December 2016 Update](#), 9 December 2016

<sup>95</sup> Amnesty International and 30 other human rights organisations, [Addressing the Serious Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Sudan](#), 4 September 2018, p. 2

<sup>96</sup> Human Rights Watch, [The Sudanese government should investigate and prosecute those responsible for human rights violations](#), 21 September 2016

<sup>97</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: May 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>98</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: June 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>99</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: June 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 2

farm, killing a woman and injuring a man in South Kordofan.<sup>100</sup> The motives were not known or included in the report.

Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that in October and November 2016 “incidents of human rights violations in Southern Kordofan (SK) seemed to be on the rise following a lull in the fighting over the previous few months and the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate. There were nine shelling incidents, generating 89 shells, one looting incident, one bombing incident and one abduction, with three people injured”.<sup>101</sup>

Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that in the period December 2016 – February 2017, whilst there was an absence of aerial bombardments, incidents of looting took place by Sudan government sponsored militias, including the Popular Defence Forces (PDF).<sup>102</sup> According to the same source this continued into March – May 2017.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, Nuba Reports noted that “The local human rights organization Sudan Democracy First Group cite 15 incidents in April and May [2017] of the pro-government militia Popular Defence Force and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) soldiers looting villages in Delami and Heiban counties in South Kordofan”.<sup>104</sup>

## 2017

The annual human rights report by the Hudo Centre focusing on the Two Areas in 2017, provided graph showing reported human rights violations in the Two Areas against civilians, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>105</sup>

The same source noted that following the killing by the PDF of two children in South Kordofan “The case was reported at Abbasiya police and filed as anonymous yet the perpetrators were recognized by the military group who were informed and had been following them soon after the incident. The perpetrators were not arrested and no further procedure was taken”.<sup>106</sup> In May 2017 “a group of militia headed by SAF Lieutenant Colonel/ Suliman Al-AlBaesh came to Hagar Jawad village on five pickup vehicles. On arrival, they started to beat/ whip the residents randomly (regardless of age or gender). One person/ [sic] Suliman Abukalam was shot dead as he resisted (by fighting back) the violent acts of the militias. About thirty people were injured and valuable items were looted”.<sup>107</sup>

At the end of June 2017 PDF soldiers shot dead two community leaders in Blue Nile following an argument about cattle assess for drinking.<sup>108</sup> Hudo Centre further noted that “the witness and victim’s family were threaten [sic] by PDF not to talk about the case”.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: July, August and September 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>101</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: October and November 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>102</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: December 2016, January and February 2017](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, pages 1/2

<sup>103</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: March – May 2017](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>104</sup> Nuba Reports, [Sudan Insider: Ceasefire aside, intermittent conflict and hunger in two areas](#), 5 July 2017

<sup>105</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2 Section Two: Incidents, p. 6

<sup>106</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2.2.1 Murder of two children, pages 11/12

<sup>107</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2.2.2 Killing and looting in Hagar Jawad village, p. 12

<sup>108</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2.2.2 Killing and looting in Hagar Jawad village, p. 14

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) has documented the following abuses against civilians, including IDPs in South Kordofan and Blue Nile during 2017: “indiscriminate aerial bombing of civilian populated areas the use of cluster bombs, and other indiscriminate attacks on civilians by Government forces and allied militia, as well as the continued blockade of humanitarian aid, looting, destruction of civilian facilities, killings and sexual violence committed by paramilitary forces and other Sudanese government forces, which has led to forced displacement of civilian populations” and that it was particularly concerned by the “quasi-total impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of the violations documented”.<sup>110</sup> No further specific details regarding these human rights violations were included in the annual report.

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “A state of emergency in [...] Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan allowed for arrest and detention without trial”.<sup>111</sup> It further noted that “military personnel and paramilitary forces committed killings in [...] the Two Areas. Most reports were difficult to verify due to continued prohibited access to conflict areas, particularly [...] SPLM-N-controlled areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States”.<sup>112</sup> The same report also noted that “Human rights organizations accused government forces of perpetrating torture and other human rights violations and abuses. Government forces abused persons detained in connection with armed conflict as well as IDPs suspected of having links to rebel groups. There were continuing reports that government security forces, progovernment and antigovernment militias, and other armed persons raped women and children”.<sup>113</sup> It was further stated with regards to impunity that “Government authorities did not investigate human rights violations by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), the military, or any other branch of the security services, with limited exceptions relating to the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). The government failed to adequately compensate families of victims of shootings during the September 2013 protests, make its investigation results public, or hold security officials accountable. Impunity remained a problem in all branches of the security forces and government institutions”.<sup>114</sup>

## 2018

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation provided the following overview as to the human rights situation in the period September 2017 to March 2018:

Apart from the casualties of the fighting in Blue Nile state in February 2018, the information in this report provides strong evidence that civilians and their property are being directly and deliberately targeted by the Sudanese government and/or its allied militias as most of the attacks referred to were carried out against clearly identifiable and unarmed civilians.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2.2.2 Killing and looting in Hagar Jawad village, p. 14

<sup>110</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Report on Human Rights Situation in Sudan, December 2016 – December 2017](#), Undated, Last accessed: 4 October 2018, 1. Introduction, p. 3

<sup>111</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

<sup>112</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., g. Abuses in Internal Conflict

<sup>113</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., g. Abuses in Internal Conflict

<sup>114</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Executive Summary

<sup>115</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p.1

Of the five incidents recorded in South Kordofan in the above named time period, there were “three cattled [*sic*] looting attacks resulting in the theft of 89 cows [by armed men of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF)], an incident of exploded anti-personnel mine and another of suspected murder where three people were killed [unknown perpetrator(s)]”.<sup>116</sup>

The ACJPS documented the following human rights violations associated with attacks on civilians in South Kordofan from January to March 2018: “sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention and killing of civilians [...] The Military Intelligence has continued to target civilians with arbitrary arrest and detention on basis of their perceived political affiliation with the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement-North. ACJPS also documented the rape, at gun point, of a 20 year old by an officer of the Sudan Armed Forces”.<sup>117</sup>

With regards to impunity for such human rights violations the same source noted that:

Human rights violations against civilians in conflict settings continue to occur as victims face barriers to justice and accountability due to lack of effective mechanisms and legal immunities afforded to government authorities, fostering a climate of endemic impunity. Victims and/or survivors of sexual violence face even tougher barriers and often do not report incidents due to insecurity, stigma, the fear of reprisal and other obstacles. Among the obstacles are laws and policies that fail to ensure a safe environment for reporting sexual and gender based violence incidents and a consistent failure to prosecute these crimes.<sup>118</sup>

In July 2018 Radio Dabanga stated that “Three people including a boy were shot dead and six others wounded in the area of Dalami in South Kordofan” by soldiers who then stole “63 cows and 80 goats”.<sup>119</sup>

Amnesty International in its September 2018 submission to the UN Human Rights Committee reported that “the climate of impunity fostered by lack of accountability for crimes under international law and serious human rights violations remained prevalent, especially in conflict areas”.<sup>120</sup> It further noted that “Despite numerous reports on and evidence of arbitrary arrests, excessive and unlawful use of force, unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment by security forces or police, the Sudanese government does not appear to have conducted prompt, independent and effective investigations into the reports; or brought charges against those reasonably suspected of criminal responsibility; or prosecuted them in fair trials. It also does not appear to have taken any positive action to prevent further crimes under international law or human rights violations, such as reforms to the national security agency, the police and policing practice”.<sup>121</sup>

The same source further highlighted that the legal framework governing the security services “guarantees them impunity for human rights violations, thereby institutionalising policing practices

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<sup>116</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, pages 2/3

<sup>117</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human rights violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>118</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human rights violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>119</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Three killed as Sudanese troops steal livestock in South Kordofan](#), 9 July 2018

<sup>120</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 2. *Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented, Article 2 and paragraph 1 of the List of Issues*, p. 6

<sup>121</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 5. *Administration of justice and immunity for state agents, Articles 2 and 14, and paragraph 21 of the List of Issues*, p. 15

detrimental to human rights. Sudanese laws that govern the armed forces, the police and the NISS all contain provisions conferring immunity on perpetrators of human rights violations. The National Security Act 2010, the Police Act, and the Armed Forces Act all include immunities for acts committed 'in good faith' and 'in the course of duty'. Immunities can only be waived by the relevant governing bodies of the Ministry of Interior, Defence or the Director of the NISS".<sup>122</sup>

According to the Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO) the biggest threat to the civilian population in the Two Areas is "the systematic looting of the communities' livestock and other properties by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and its allied militias. NHRMO has documented that between June 2016 and July 2018, a total of 20 civilians were killed, 10 injured and three abducted as a result of these looting raids. In total, the monitors recorded 67 incidents of human rights violations with 65 committed by GoS/SAF and its allied militias while two were committed by SPLM/A-N. The SPLM/A-N authorities took action against the perpetrators from within their ranks; both cases were taken to court and the perpetrators held accountable but there is no evidence that GoS took any action against the perpetrators of human rights violations from their forces and/allied militias. Up to now, three people who were abducted are still missing and there is no news as to their whereabouts".<sup>123</sup>

## **2.2. Armed opposition groups**

For information on human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups view section [2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups](#).

### **2.2.1. Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army – North (SPLM/A-N)**

The 2016 report by the Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan provides a gendered analysis with regards to the every day workings of the SPLM/A-N, which can be viewed [here](#).<sup>124</sup>

#### SPLM-N leadership dispute

For a more in-depth analysis of the leadership divide within the SPLM-N, as of July 2017, consult the Enough Project report [A Question of Leadership](#).<sup>125</sup>

In March 2017 the International Crisis Group noted that the SPLM-N announced the resignation of Deputy Chairman Abdelaziz Al-Hilu, "who cited his disagreements with lead negotiator and Chairman Yassir Arman over group's position on autonomy for S [South] Kordofan in post-conflict settlement".<sup>126</sup>

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED) provided the following analysis of the factionalism in the SPLM-N in its April 2017 report:

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<sup>122</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 5. Administration of justice and immunity for state agents, Articles 2 and 14, and paragraph 21 of the List of Issues, p. 15

<sup>123</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO), [Civilian perspectives on the current ceasefire \(cessation of hostilities\) in the Nuba Mountains/Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states of Sudan](#), 3 September 2018, p. 2

<sup>124</sup> See Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan, [Gender Under Bombardment: Gender Disparities in SPLM/A-North Controlled Areas of Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan](#), 2016, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, pages 16 - 32

<sup>125</sup> See Enough Project, [A Question of Leadership: Addressing a Dangerous Crisis in Sudan's SPLM-N](#), July 2017

<sup>126</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), March 2017, Sudan



Last month [March 2017], the group's deputy chairman, Abdel-Aziz Hilu, resigned and accused Secretary General Yasir Arman of refusing to include the right of self-determination in the agenda of the peace talks with the Sudanese government [...] The Nuba Mountains Liberation Council (NMLC) endorsed Hilu's demand for self-determination and decided to freeze the peace process [...] SPLM-N Chairman Malik Agar decided to overrule the NMLC's decision and create a temporary committee to force a consensus between the factions.

The rift within the SPLM-N does not just represent a threat to the peace process but also raises the possibility of inter-rebel violence.<sup>127</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted in June 2017 that:

Leadership dispute continued within rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N): following non-lethal clashes end-May between factions loyal to Chairman Malik Aggar and former Deputy Chairman Abdelaziz al-Hilu who resigned in March [2017], Nuba Mountains Liberation Council (NMLC) (body within SPLM-N in S Kordofan) voted to remove Aggar and lead negotiator Yassir Arman and appoint al-Hilu as chairman. Fighting broke out end-June [2017] between factions loyal to Aggar and al-Hilu in south of Blue Nile state. Aggar group defeated and crossed into former Upper Nile state, S Sudan (casualties unknown).<sup>128</sup>

In July 2017 "Leadership dispute continued within rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N): SPLM-N's regional political group in Nuba Mountains [...] endorsed [...] June [2017] appointment of former Deputy Chairman Abdelaziz al-Hilu as Chairman, replacing Malik Aggar. Dispute triggered fighting throughout month between supporters of al-Hilu (mostly ethnic Uduk) and Aggar (mostly Ingessana) in Blue Nile state", reported the International Crisis Group.<sup>129</sup>

In August 2017 the SPLM-N continued to "fuel fighting in Blue Nile between supporters of Chairman Malik Aggar (mostly ethnic Ingessana) and rival Abdelaziz al-Hilu (mostly ethnic Uduk)", which left "several dozen fighters and one humanitarian worker dead, reported the International Crisis Group.<sup>130</sup>

In October 2017 the SPLM-N confirmed Abdelaziz al-Hilu as new chairman following a leadership dispute and "endorsed Nuba people's right to self-determination; al-Hilu's main rivals former chairman Mali Aggar and former Secretary general Yassir Arman, did not attend", reported the International Crisis Group.<sup>131</sup>

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research summarised in its annual 'Conflict Barometer' covering 2017 the leadership quest as follows:

In March, SPLM/A-N split into two sections. The original section continued to be led by chairman Malik Agar (SPLM/A-N-Agar), while former deputy chairman Abdelaziz al-Hilu took the lead of the new section (SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu), which was endorsed by political bodies Blue Nile Liberation Council and Nuba Mountains Liberation Council. Al-Hilu had accused Agar of not fully representing the movement in the peace talks led by the AU, concerning in particular the issue of selfdetermination of the Nuba Mountains. In the wake of the split, communal rivalries rose along ethnic lines, also triggering further tensions within the newly formed SPLM/A-N factions, and spreading to refugee camps across the South Sudanese border. In the last week of May, for instance, clashes erupted between Agar supporters and opponents in a Doro refugee camp, Maban county, Eastern Nile state, South Sudan,

<sup>127</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – March 2017 Update](#), 11 April 2017

<sup>128</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), June 2017, Sudan

<sup>129</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), July 2017, Sudan

<sup>130</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), August 2017, Sudan

<sup>131</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), October 2017, Sudan

leaving at least 35 people dead and thousands displaced. On June 10, the government criticized the differences within the SPLM/AN, claiming they would hinder peace talks [...]

On November 3, the government stated their preferences to negotiate with an unified SPLM/A-N. On November 30, Agar encouraged the Sudanese opposition, which had boycotted elections since 1989, to participate in the 2020 elections, given that al-Bashir would not run again. The government welcomed Agar's call but stated that the SPLM/A-N-Agar had to participate in the peace process to transform into a political party.<sup>132</sup>

### Blue Nile

The September 2016 International Refugee Rights Initiative's report looking at civilian perspectives on the conflict in Blue Nile noted that the establishment in 2014 of a civilian SPLM-N administration was an "attempt to legitimise the movement's control over the populations in the so-called 'liberated areas'. SPLM-N government institutions are less developed in Blue Nile than they are in Southern Kordofan, where they were established earlier, and have limited capacity due to Blue Nile's minimal infrastructure and the ongoing war."<sup>133</sup> According to the same report at the end of April/early May 2016 the structure included "13 secretariats (responsible for issues including education and health); a police force; a judiciary (including one Chief of Justice for the Two Areas, a high court and a number of community administration courts) and in Blue Nile State, a governor and a deputy, three commissioners for the counties of Kurmuk, Tadamon and Bau, as well as officials at the district level. These institutions replaced the earlier system of military control over civilian populations that had previously been in place".<sup>134</sup>

According to a blog post written by Nicki Kindersley and Magdi el-Gizouli, Co-Directors of Studies for the Rift Valley Institute's Sudan and South Sudan Course, in April 2018: "The split in the SPLM/A-N between the Abd al-Aziz al-Hilu-led Nuba-dominated block and the supporters of Malik Agar in the Blue Nile state and Yasir Arman in the diaspora, has undermined the movement's coherence and its call for another 'New Sudan'. Abd al-Aziz al-Hilu's call for Nuba Mountain's self-determination is not backed by the required political or military strength. Malik Agar and Yasir Arman have little more to offer than eloquent sloganeering".<sup>135</sup>

### **2.2.2. Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)**

Very limited COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing information on the Sudan Revolutionary Front operations in South Kordofan or Blue Nile.

By way of background, the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) provided the following background:

The Sudan Revolutionary Front was established in 2011 as a loose alliance of Sudan's main opposition armed groups, with the shared goal of overthrowing the National Congress Party. The SRF includes the Sudan People's Liberation Movement - North (SPLM-N), which controls areas in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and Darfur's three largest opposition groups: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid Al Nur (SLM-AW), and the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Arkou Minnawi (SLM-MM).<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIK), [Conflict Barometer 2017](#), February 2018, *Sudan (SPLM/A-North/South Kordofan, Blue Nile)*, p. 103

<sup>133</sup> See International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Introduction*, p. 5

<sup>134</sup> See International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Adjusting to a new status quo? SPLM-N civil authority*, p. 33

<sup>135</sup> Kindersley N. & El-Gizouli, M., [This year in Sudan and South Sudan](#), 30 April 2018

<sup>136</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Sudan](#), Latest updated: 12/09/2018, *Politics and Security, Political Stakeholders, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)*



### 2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups

See also information included in sections 1.2. Current state of the conflict, [1.2.1. Brief overview](#); [3. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians](#), [6.1. Sexual and gender-based violence \(SGBV\)](#) and [7.1. Recruitment and use of children](#).

In its August 2017 ‘Humanitarian Update’, the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit) noted with regards to South Kordofan that “Inter-community conflict and cattle raiding [including by non-state armed groups] continues to threaten the security of civilians living or cultivating near conflict lines. These events not only have the direct consequences of death, rape, and injury to members of the community, but also create a pervasive sense of fear for those trying to work and trade in these areas. As many communities are dangerously food insecure, women and children will have no option but to work in these dangerous locations, putting vulnerable populations at an elevated risk of violence”.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, with regards to Blue Nile, the same source noted that “as a result of intra SPLA-N clashes, one aid worker and three civilians were killed in Blue Nile, including two children [...] Thousands of people are reportedly displaced. The CU has received several reports of destroyed homes, burnt or looted shops, theft of livestock, and destruction of farmland. Alleged human rights violations have also occurred during the fighting. It is not possible with current resources to fully assess the impact of this violence, but it is clear that nearly everyone is affected”.<sup>138</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “A state of emergency in [...] Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan allowed for arrest and detention without trial”.<sup>139</sup> It further noted that “paramilitary forces committed killings in [...] the Two Areas. Most reports were difficult to verify due to continued prohibited access to conflict areas, particularly [...] SPLM-N-controlled areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States”.<sup>140</sup> The same source further noted that “rebel groups continued to commit killings, rape, and torture of civilians. Local militias maintained substantial influence due to widespread impunity. There were reports of both progovernment and antigovernment militias looting, raping, and killing civilians”.<sup>141</sup> The same report however noted also that “The extent to which rebel groups committed new human rights abuses could not be accurately estimated, largely due to limited access to conflict areas. The state of detention facilities administered by the [...] SPLM-N in their respective rebel-controlled areas could not be verified due to lack of access”.<sup>142</sup>

The African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) documented that in March 2018 three civilians were killed by two soldiers of the SPLM-N.<sup>143</sup> The source did not provide further information on possible motives.

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<sup>137</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: August 2017](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Protection and security situation update*, p. 5

<sup>138</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: August 2017](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Protection and security situation update*, pages 5 and 6

<sup>139</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., e. *Denial of Fair Public Trial*

<sup>140</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., g. *Abuses in Internal Conflict*

<sup>141</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Executive Summary*

<sup>142</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., g. *Abuses in Internal Conflict*

<sup>143</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human rights violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

According to the Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO) it has recorded “67 incidents of human rights violations [between June 2016 and July 2018] with 65 committed by GoS/SAF and its allied militias while two were committed by SPLM/A–N. The SPLM/A–N authorities took action against the perpetrators from within their ranks; both cases were taken to court and the perpetrators held accountable but there is no evidence that GoS took any action against the perpetrators of human rights violations from their forces and/allied militias”.<sup>144</sup>

### 3. Security situation: Impact of the conflict on civilians

See also information and maps included in section 1.2. Current state of the conflict, [1.2.2. Territorial control](#). This section should also be read in conjunction with sections [2.1.10. Human rights abuses committed & immunity enjoyed by government forces](#), [2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups](#) and [8. Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\)](#).

Daily reports on attacks, clashes and the general security situation in the Two Areas can be accessed through the following news sites:

- [Radio Dabanga](#)
- [Radio Tamazuji](#)
- [Sudan Tribune](#)

The monthly ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) includes information on access to health care, food insecurity amongst other issues of relevance for an assessment on the impact of the conflict on the Two Areas. Its reports can be accessed [here](#).<sup>145</sup>

Regular updated analysis on the conflict and documenting human rights violations in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile can be found, amongst others, via the following websites:

- [African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies \(ACJPS\)](#)
- [Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project \(ACLED\)](#) [Sudan page]
- [Assessment Capacities Project \(ACAPS\)](#) [Sudan pages]
- [Hudo Centre](#)
- [Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust](#) [Sudan pages]
- [Nuba Reports](#)
- [Sudan Consortium](#)
- [Sudan Social Development Organisation \(SUDO \(UK\)\)](#)
- [United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#)

#### 3.1. ground attacks

#### Aerial bombing campaigns and

This section should be read in conjunction with 1.2. Current state of the conflict, [1.2.1. Brief overview](#).

#### Two Areas

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<sup>144</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO), [Civilian perspectives on the current ceasefire \(cessation of hostilities\) in the Nuba Mountains/Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states of Sudan](#), 3 September 2018, p. 2

<sup>145</sup> See UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan](#)

For the month of April 2016, Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that “The government of Sudan (GoS) continued its ‘summer offensive’ [...] characterised by two major trends. Firstly, it continued with the ground offensive it began in March 2016, pressing hard against the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) particularly in the counties of Heiban, Delami and Umdorien. Secondly, it tried to consolidate its positions in the villages it had captured from SPLA-N, namely Alazrag village (in Heiban County) and Mardis village (in Delami County)”.<sup>146</sup>

With regards to the month of May 2016, Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation found that “Our monitors reported a total of 52 bombs dropped by the government of Sudan (GoS) planes in civilian areas of Southern Kordofan and 39 dropped in civilian areas of Blue Nile. In addition, there were two incidents of artillery shelling in Southern Kordofan”.<sup>147</sup>

Following its visit to the Nuba Mountains Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2017 and found that “Bombardment of civilians by Antonov aircraft, together with repeated shelling with longrange missiles, continues in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. It has caused civilian deaths, injuries and displacement to locations with life-threatening conditions. The displacement prevents people from tending their crops, especially as the Antonovs target anyone working in the fields”.<sup>148</sup>

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that in the period September 2017 to March 2018 there was an absence of aerial bombardments by the Sudan Air Force (SAF) and “ground attacks by Sudan government forces involving mass movement troops appear to have ceased”.<sup>149</sup>

### South Kordofan

UN News reported in May 2016 that the number of people fleeing fighting between government forces and rebels continued to rise with nearly 7,000 people crossing into neighbouring South Sudan since January 2016 to “escape aerial bombardments, hunger and a lack of educational opportunities for their children. UNHCR said arrivals this month alone have so far topped 2,000”.<sup>150</sup>

For the month of April 2016, Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that “In its bombardment of Southern Kordofan, the GoS has not made a distinction between civilian settlements and military targets and consequently it is the civilians who continue to suffer most from the violence. More critically, the intensive aerial bombardments carried out by GoS have succeeded in creating a climate of fear which discourages the population from carrying out their daily activities. April is the month in which the communities usually undertake land clearance in preparation for planting but the aerial bombing has significantly undermined these agricultural activities. In addition, the capture of Mardis village, by the Sudanese

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<sup>146</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: April 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>147</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: May 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>148</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [Report of visit to South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), January 2017, *Main Findings*, p. 2

<sup>149</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p.1

<sup>150</sup> UN News, [Surge in people fleeing conflict in South Kordofan state in Sudan](#), 20 May 2016

Armed Forces (SAF) at the end of March, has meant that there is currently insufficient land for cultivation”.<sup>151</sup>

In its analysis covering the first half of 2016, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) noted that:

The rains do not only affect ground operations but also limit the government’s aerial bombing campaign [...] The use of barrel bombs against rebel-held areas is a key pillar in the government’s fight against the SPLM-N with instances of remote violence accounting for between 36% and 59% of violent conflict events since February 2016. Aerial bombing event frequency halved between April and May [...], potentially and additionally due to Sudan’s current thawing of relations with the West, particularly the European Union which perceives Khartoum as a key ally in stemming the current migrant crisis [...] However, the government’s bombing campaign has threatened to destabilise this rapprochement with the high profile killing of six children in Heiban by a government bomber at the very beginning of May [2016]. The act drew widespread condemnation from the ‘Troika’ (Norway, the United Kingdom and United States).<sup>152</sup>

In its September 2016 report, focusing on the past five years of aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan, Amnesty International found that:

many of the attacks have targeted civilian objects and civilian areas which have no legitimate military objective. The attacks have also involved the use of weapons which are inherently indiscriminate, such as cluster bombs, or been carried out in situations which are inevitably indiscriminate due to the circumstances of the attack, such as the use of unguided bombs dropped from Antonov aircraft in civilian areas. Amnesty International received some of the reports raised herein from independent local human rights monitors and was not able to independently verify these incidents.<sup>153</sup>

The same source further concluded that “As a consequence of the targeted and indiscriminate aerial and ground attacks, as well as the denial of humanitarian access, civilians in South Kordofan continue to experience gross and systemic human rights violations, including to the rights to life, healthcare, education, food, safe water and adequate housing. Amnesty International has concluded that the crimes under international law are of such a nature and scale that they may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity”.<sup>154</sup>

IRIN reported in October 2016 that “aid workers and local officials have [...] reported suspected chemical weapons use by the government” in the Nuba Mountains region of South Kordofan.<sup>155</sup> According to the same source “Without soil samples, it’s impossible to verify the allegations, but medical officials told IRIN they have seen symptoms consistent with chemical weapons exposure stretching back over at least four years of conflict”.<sup>156</sup> The article was written in light of Amnesty International’s investigation on Sudan’s possible use of chemical weapons against civilians in the western region of Darfur.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: April 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *pages 1 and 2*

<sup>152</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), [Sudan – June 2016 Update](#), 10 June 2016

<sup>153</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: Five years and counting: Intensified aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan state](#), 29 September 2016, *Introduction*, p. 3

<sup>154</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: Five years and counting: Intensified aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan state](#), 29 September 2016, *Introduction*, p. 3

<sup>155</sup> IRIN, [Sudan and chemical weapons – a serial offender?](#), 10 October 2016

<sup>156</sup> IRIN, [Sudan and chemical weapons – a serial offender?](#), 10 October 2016

<sup>157</sup> See Amnesty International, [Scorched earth, poisoned air: Sudanese government forces ravage Jebel Marra, Darfur](#), 29 September 2016

In its analysis covering the whole of 2016, ACLED noted that:

Remote violence, corresponding mainly to aerial attacks perpetrated by government forces against alleged rebel strongholds, escalated in all three states [Darfur, South Kordofan & Blue Nile] in the context of these clashes, and continued throughout the rainy season. [...] In South Kordofan, they [remote violence] concurrently rose from 66 in 2015 to 100 in 2016, reaching levels unseen since the end of 2012, when a similar government aerial campaign targeted the SPLM-N in the Nuba Mountains [...] The ability of the government to regain territory from rebels through these campaigns is unclear. However, their effects on civilian populations, through the alleged use of indiscriminate, unguided and chemical weapons and the damaging of plantations and harvests, have been largely denounced.<sup>158</sup>

In February 2017 the International Crisis Group noted that the “Killing of seven cattle herders from Hawazma [...] unidentified gunmen reportedly led to clashes” between government forces and the SPLM-N, with the former claiming that the government had started “new dry offensive in South Kordofan and violated its unilateral ceasefire”.<sup>159</sup>

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that in the period September 2017 to March 2018 “Due to the suspension of bombing and massive ground attacks, the situation has been generally calmer, particularly in SK [South Kordofan], but with incidents of looting of livestock (i.e. cattle, goats, sheep) by armed militias allied to the government of Sudan”.<sup>160</sup>

### Blue Nile

By way of background, the International Refugee Rights Initiative report based on interviews carried out in late April and early May 2016 in Juba and Maban (South Sudan), and SPLM-N held southern Kurmuk County, Blue Nile State, noted that:

Aerial bombardment of civilian populations in areas associated with, or controlled by, the SPLM-N soon became one of the main characteristics of the government’s war against the SPLM-N. These indiscriminate

air attacks, also carried out by the government regularly in Southern Kordofan State and Darfur, have had a terrible impact on the lives of the people of Blue Nile. In the SPLM-N held areas, air raids by Antonov planes sometimes take place on a daily basis, characteristically with more attacks during the dry season when fighting between the armed forces on the ground also escalates.

Although many civilians have learned to recognise the sound of approaching planes and have dug foxholes in an attempt to provide themselves with some shelter during raids, the bombs still often claim lives or cause terrible injuries, kill livestock, and destroy crops and private property. In addition, the indiscriminate nature of the attacks, and the fact that they can take place at any time, has had a terrible psychological impact on the population. The sound of the planes, sometimes lingering in the sky above several villages for a significant time before finally dropping bombs on any of them, constantly disrupts any normal activity and sends people to hide.<sup>161</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in May 2016 that aerial bombardments and military operations by the Sudanese government have continued since April 2016 until mid-May 2016 causing approximately 30,000 civilians to flee.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – December 2016 Update](#), 9 December 2016

<sup>159</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), February 2017, Sudan

<sup>160</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p.1

<sup>161</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Impact of war, Civilians targeted*, pages 21/22

<sup>162</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘Thousands’ fled bombing in Sudan’s Blue Nile this month](#), 23 May 2016

Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that in June 2016 “There were five incidents of aerial bombing in Blue Nile state, all in Al Kurmuk County. A total of 30 bombs were dropped by Antonov planes in several areas, with one of the bombing incidents happening after the declaration of the ceasefire. Nobody was killed but one man was injured, two goats killed and crops destroyed”.<sup>163</sup>

In June 2016 IRIN published a report focusing on what it called ‘Sudan’s Forgotten Front’: the conflict in Blue Nile.<sup>164</sup> It reported that “There’s no concrete number, but humanitarian and human rights monitors on the ground say more than 4,000 bombs have been dropped on SPLA-N-controlled territory in Blue Nile in the past five years. In one week, between the 6th and the 12th of May [2016], 69 bombs were dropped”.<sup>165</sup>

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research provided the following summary as to the violence it documented throughout 2017:

On January 9, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) attacked positions of SPLM/A-N in Blue Nile, breaching a one-month ceasefire agreement that had been signed on 12/31/16. Six days later, the government extended the ceasefire agreement for another six months. However, on January 17, SPLM/A-N claimed that in another attack by SAF in Alrum, Blue Nile, one of their members had been injured. On, February 21, clashes between SPLM/A-N and SAF in Kaduqli, South Kordofan, left one soldier dead and several wounded. In March, SPLM/A-N split into two sections. [...]

SPLM/A-N-Agar claimed they had repulsed government attacks on June 26 in Taga, Blue Nile, and September 15 in Khour Jadad, Blue Nile, which had left several people dead and injured. SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu declared a unilateral cessation of hostilities on August 2. In September, 27,000 civilians were displaced in Blue Nile due to violence between SPLM/A-N and government forces, including the alleged looting and burning of houses and shops. On October 8, the government extended its ceasefire with SPLM/A-N until the end of the year. After a SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu general conference from October 8 to 12, the faction reiterated their demand for self-determination, which the government rejected. [...]

Between December 1 and 10, the government reportedly attacked SPLM/A-N positions in Blue Nile twice, which left at least four government troops dead. Meanwhile, SPLM/A-N stated they had attacked a military convoy on December 6 in Blue Nile, which killed seven soldiers and injured 28. On December 19, the government stated its readiness to resume peace talks with the SPLM/A-N-Agar. SPLM/A-N-Agar declared an unilateral six-month ceasefire for Blue Nile on December 28. Throughout the year, both SPLM/A-N and the government reportedly continued to target civilians and civilian infrastructure, including large-scale lootings of crops and villages. The government also continued its policy of cutting humanitarian access to conflict regions, thereby reinforcing an already strained food situation.<sup>166</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted in June 2017 that fighting was reported around Bau town between SPLM-N and Sudan Armed Forces.<sup>167</sup>

In February 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that “Dozens of people were killed and wounded in bloody battles between the two factions of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), respectively led by Abdelaziz Adam El Hilu and Malik Agar”, and also led to a “displacement of

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<sup>163</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: June 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 3

<sup>164</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan’s Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016

<sup>165</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan’s Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016

<sup>166</sup> Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC), [Conflict Barometer 2017](#), February 2018, *Sudan (SPLM/A-North/South Kordofan, Blue Nile)*, pages 103/104

<sup>167</sup> International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch: tracking Conflict Worldwide](#), June 2017, *Sudan*



about 9,000 people to the Wadaka area in El Kurmuk locality”.<sup>168</sup> According to the Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation 19 civilians lost their lives but were unable to establish the number of those who were injured.<sup>169</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in April 2018 that the RSF, “backed by army troops, attacked areas controlled” by the SPLM-N and claimed that it had “regained control over the areas Goya El Jadida, Goya El Gadima, Kabadik, and Jiko”.<sup>170</sup>

### **3.2. Casualties caused by aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.1. Aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks](#).

#### **3.2.1. Two Areas**

In April and May 2016, the International Refugee Rights Initiative together with the National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation found that in Blue Nile and South Kordofan “there had been a significant increase in the number of children killed and injured by bombs. Overall, the monitors documented a total of 101 incidents of aerial bombardments, shelling and ground fighting resulting in the deaths of 41 people (six men, four women and five children) and injury to 53 people (eight men, seven women and 22 children)”.<sup>171</sup>

With regards to the month of May 2016, Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation found that “a total of 13 people killed in the two areas, three of them from Blue Nile”.<sup>172</sup>

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation provided graphs with regards to the number of incidents against civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and the number of civilians killed between June 2011 and February 2018, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>173</sup>

#### **3.2.2. South Kordofan**

Early April 2016 Radio Tamazuj reported that “At least two women and a child were killed and 24 others including children wounded on Sunday when the SPLA-North rebel group shelled Kadugli town of Sudan's South Kordofan state”.<sup>174</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in May 2016 that “An air raid by the Sudanese Air Force in Heiban in the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan, resulted in the death of a baby [...] Six others were wounded”.<sup>175</sup>

In its September 2016 report, focusing on the past five years of aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan, Amnesty International found that “Over the

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<sup>168</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘9,000 displaced’ by deadly clashes between SPLM-N factions in Blue Nile](#), 23 February 2018

<sup>169</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 4

<sup>170</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan forces take control of rebel-held areas in Blue Nile](#), 30 April 2018

<sup>171</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [Letter regarding the Human Rights Situation in Sudan in advance of the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council](#), 7 September 2016

<sup>172</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: May 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>173</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 5

<sup>174</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [3 dead, 24 injured after SPLA-N rebels shell Kadugli](#), 5 April 2016

<sup>175</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Baby killed in bombing in Heiban, South Kordofan](#), 24 May 2016

course of five years of conflict, large numbers of civilians have been killed or badly injured in the attacks, particularly by bombs and rockets launched from Antonov planes and MiG and Sukhoi fighter jets, as well as from long-range artillery shelling on the ground. Others have been killed and injured by unexploded ordnances”.<sup>176</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported that “The government forces and allied militias have reportedly killed 541 civilians, including 13 children, and burned 25 villages in the Nuba Mountains” between 25 March and 12 April 2016.<sup>177</sup>

Early April 2016 Radio Dabanga reported that “The bombing of a school in Dalami locality, South Kordofan, caused the death of the headmaster and the wounding of two pupils”.<sup>178</sup>

Human Rights Watch noted that on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016 “the government dropped hundreds of bombs that killed at least 45 people in the Nuba mountains, including six children in Heiban”.<sup>179</sup> The joint report by the Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that during the memorial service for the six children, “a Sudanese jet dropped two bombs in the area, injuring four more children and killing a 6-month old baby”.<sup>180</sup>

In the period July – September 2016, the Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that “SAF fired 60 shells” killing two people and damaging a house in Tablo village, Tangal Payam.<sup>181</sup>

Hudo Centre reported that in early September 2016 “Public Defense Force (PDF) soldiers attacked Al-Sanadra village of Al-Abbasiya locality in South Kordofan state. They came with more than twenty motorcycles accompanied by two land-cruiser vehicles. The attack was based on a claim that some cattle were looted and the footsteps passed through Al-Sanadra village. As a result of the attack, nine (9) people were killed, about twenty (20) wounded and some houses were looted and burnt down. Also cattle were looted and many residents of Al-Sanadra were displaced”.<sup>182</sup>

The September 2016 Amnesty International report noted with regards to 2016 that “The impact of the conflict on children was particularly marked this year. There has been a significant increase in the number of children killed and injured by bombs compared to 2015”.<sup>183</sup>

The Sudan Consortium together with the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted in 2016 that “Over the five years of monitoring, NHRMO and the Sudan Consortium have collected evidence of a total of 68 children killed and over 110 injured, with thousands more internally

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<sup>176</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: Five years and counting: Intensified aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan state](#), 29 September 2016, *Impact of aerial bombardments and ground attacks on civilians*, p. 4

<sup>177</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘541 civilians killed in Sudan’s Nuba Mountains’: NGO](#), 25 April 2016

<sup>178</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Teacher killed in air raids on South Kordofan schools](#), 29 April 2016

<sup>179</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Human Rights Benchmarks for Sudan: Eight Ways to Measure Progress](#), 3 May 2017, *II. Missing Human Rights Benchmarks, 1. Respect for the Right to Life by Ending Attacks on Civilians and Indiscriminate Bombing*

<sup>180</sup> Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Impact of the conflict in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan on children](#), 2016, Last accessed: 1 October 2018 pages 2/3

<sup>181</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: July, August and September 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>182</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2.5.2 Court Trial (proceedings) of Al-Sanadra Case, p. 30

<sup>183</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: Five years and counting: Intensified aerial bombardment, ground offensive and humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan state](#), 29 September 2016, *Impact of the conflict on children*, p. 9



displaced or in refugee camps in South Sudan. From January to June 2016, 7,500 people fled Southern Kordofan to become refugees in South Sudan, nearly 3,000 of which arrived in May alone [2016]. Nearly 90% were women and children, with one in ten children alone or without a family member”.<sup>184</sup>

Following its visit to the Nuba Mountains Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2017 and found that “As recently as 9 January [2017], SAF and militias in Blue Nile attacked areas of Arum in Bau County, killing civilians and forcing them to flee from their homes”.<sup>185</sup>

In July 2018 Radio Dabanga stated that “Three people including a boy were shot dead and six others wounded in the area of Dalami in South Kordofan” by soldiers who then stole “63 cows and 80 goats”.<sup>186</sup>

### **3.2.3. Blue Nile**

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing information on casualty figures by aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks in Blue Nile, beyond those presented in 3.2. Casualties caused by aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks, [3.2.1. Two Areas](#).

## **3.3. Unexploded ordnance (UXO)**

### **3.3.1. Two Areas**

Very limited COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information on unexploded ordinances in the Two Areas.

UNOCHA’s 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview report noted that “over 291,150 people are exposed to the threat of landmines/ERW) in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and West Kordofan”.<sup>187</sup>

According to OCHA’s ‘Humanitarian dashboard’ covering January – March 2018, “Mine and explosive remnant of war clearance is needed for some 26 km2 of land in South Kordofan and Blue Nile; land release, mine risk education interventions and victim assistance”.<sup>188</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in March 2018 that the “UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, UNMAS and NMAC said that 20 per cent of known contaminations remain to be handled, most in conflict-torn South Kordofan and Blue Nile states”.<sup>189</sup>

### **3.3.2. South Kordofan**

Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation reported that in June 2016 “Four incidents were the result of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) in the area from earlier fighting. Two

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<sup>184</sup> Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Impact of the conflict in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan on children](#), 2016, Last accessed: 1 October 2018 p. 2

<sup>185</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [Report of visit to South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), January 2017, *Main Findings*, p. 2

<sup>186</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Three killed as Sudanese troops steal livestock in South Kordofan](#), 9 July 2018

<sup>187</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 23

<sup>188</sup> OCHA, [Sudan: Humanitarian Dashboard: Jan-Mar 2018](#), 31 March 2018, p. 3

<sup>189</sup> Radio Dabanga, [UN: ‘80% of landmines, UXOs cleared in Sudan’](#), 25 March 2018

of the UXO incidents resulted in the death of three children and injuries to seven people including four children. Children are especially vulnerable to death and injury from UXOs because they do not usually understand the danger they pose and are tempted to handle them”.<sup>190</sup>

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that in the period September 2017 to March 2018 there was one incident of an exploded anti-personnel mine, which killed a lion.<sup>191</sup>

### **3.3.3. Blue Nile**

No COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information on unexploded ordinances in Blue Nile.

### **3.4. Forced displacement**

This section details forced displacements in South Kordofan and Blue Nile as a result of aerial bombardment campaigns and ground attacks. For information on displacement figures and the humanitarian situation of those forcibly displaced consult section [8. Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\)](#).

This section should be read in conjunction with 1.2. Current state of the conflict, [1.2.1 Brief overview](#) and [3.1. Aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks](#).

#### **3.4.1. Two Areas**

Very limited COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing specific information on forced displacement as a result of aerial bombardment campaigns and ground attacks in the Two Areas.

According to UNOCHA’s 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview “While there was limited displacement in 2017, access to newly opening areas in [...] South Kordofan and Blue Nile has led to identification of new needs for IDPs, returnees and host communities in these areas. In addition, a large number of those who have fled their homes since 2004 remain displaced [...] Key gaps in data remain for example, in nongovernment controlled areas of SK and BN, as there is no access to these populations”.<sup>192</sup>

#### **3.4.2. South Kordofan**

Sudan Safari 24’s news article of June 2017 noted that “The number of people arriving from areas controlled by the SPLM North to South Kordofan is increasing. The number of people arriving from areas controlled by the SPLM North to South Kordofan is increasing after about 600 people a month have arrived in Kadugli, the state capital, the UN has said”.<sup>193</sup> According to reporting by Radio

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<sup>190</sup> The Sudan Consortium/National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: June 2016](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>191</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 2

<sup>192</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 7

<sup>193</sup> Sudan Safari 24, [UN: Deterioration in Areas of SPLM control in South Kordofan](#), 18 June 2017

Dabanga “it is estimated that about 3,000 people have arrived this year so far. This is an increase from the average of 100 people per month reported in 2016”, UN OCHA stated.<sup>194</sup>

### 3.4.3. Blue Nile

By way of background, the International Refugee Rights Initiative report based on interviews carried out in late April and early May 2016 in Juba and Maban (South Sudan), and SPLM-N held southern Kurmuk County, Blue Nile State, noted with regards to forced displacement:

Another characteristic of the war in Blue Nile are the high levels of displacement within and from the state since 2011. Without a doubt, this movement of populations, resulting primarily from the indiscriminate attacks against civilians and the growing humanitarian needs in the affected areas, has impacted individuals, families and communities, and changed the social, political and economic landscape of the entire state and the surrounding borderlands [...]

This massive displacement has inevitably divided families, in situations in which families scattered either to different countries or to opposite sides of the frontline. In the areas affected by violence, including inside SPLM-N territories, some villages have been abandoned by most of their residents. Other villages inside SPLM-N held areas now host returnees or IDPs [...]

the entire refugee population in both South Sudan and Ethiopia – around 172,000 – amounts to 16-20 percent of Blue Nile’s pre-war estimated population.<sup>195</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported that between mid-April to mid-May 2016 “aerial bombardments have led to the flight of thousands of residents from Shali and El Rom in Blue Nile state” causing “approximately 30,000 civilians to flee”.<sup>196</sup>

In May 2016 Radio Tamazuj reported on the forcible displacement of over 2,000 people from Bau locality in Buk town “after Sudanese Army accused them of spying for the SPLM-North rebel group, some of the displaced said”.<sup>197</sup>

In June 2016 the same source noted that “About 476 families (an estimated 2,380 people) arrived from Kurmuk at various locations in Ed Damazin locality in April [2016] [...] Reports from aid organisations indicate that an additional 200 people have arrived in Roseires locality from Bau and Kurmuk localities since April”.<sup>198</sup>

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research reported in its annual ‘Conflict Barometer’ covering 2017 that “In September 2017, 27,000 civilians were displaced in Blue Nile due to violence between SPLM/A-N and government forces, including the alleged looting and burning of houses and shops”.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, Amnesty International noted that “the simmering leadership dispute within SPLM-N heightened tension among Sudanese refugees in Maban County in South Sudan and triggered violent ethnic clashes between the two rival SPLM-N factions in Blue Nile, resulting in the displacement of thousands of people from the SPLM-N-controlled area to government-controlled areas in Sudan, and to refugee camps in South Sudan and Ethiopia”.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘More Nuba flee from SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan’](#), 11 June 2017

<sup>195</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Impact of war, Displacement: community impact*, pages 26/27

<sup>196</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘Thousands’ fled bombing in Sudan’s Blue Nile this month](#), 23 May 2016

<sup>197</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [2,000 forcibly displaced from Bau in Sudan’s Blue Nile state](#), 20 May 2016

<sup>198</sup> Radio Dabanga, [New displacement in Sudan’s Blue Nile](#), 19 June 2016

<sup>199</sup> Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC), [Conflict Barometer 2017](#), February 2018, *Sudan (SPLM/A-North/South Kordofan, Blue Nile)*, pages 103/104

<sup>200</sup> Amnesty International, [Report 2017/18: The State of the World’s Human Rights](#), 22 February 2018, *Sudan, Armed Conflict, South Kordofan and Blue Nile*, p. 346

In February 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that “Dozens of people were killed and wounded in bloody battles between the two factions of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), respectively led by Abdelaziz Adam El Hilu and Malik Agar”, and also led to a “displacement of about 9,000 people to the Wadaka area in El Kurmuk locality”.<sup>201</sup> Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that “In Wadaka, the situation is extremely dire, with 9,000 IDPs who had recently fled from their homes in Danfona in the middle of the night. They left carrying nothing with them and no help has reached them from any NGO. They said that HART was the first NGO to reach them. They are trying to survive, scavenging for food, eating leaves and roots with no nutritional value, to ease hunger pains. They have no other supplies such as clean water or blankets”.<sup>202</sup>

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit’s (SKBNCU) ‘Humanitarian Update’ of March 2018 noted that “Following internal SPLA-N clashes in February [2018], Malik Agar announced a unilateral cessationon [sic] of hostilities in Blue Nile State on March 3rd with the rival faction led by Abdel Aziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N Hilu). Security is reported to be calm since then and free movement of IDPs are reported. The large numbers of displaced after these clashes in February remains in need of protection, humanitarian aid and food assistance. The areas affected by clashes in February were Tanfona, Alsama-Aradeba, Marmaton, Goz-Bagar, Goz-Aljamamat, PaKg, Goz Adam AbdulaK, Goz-Arab, Goz-Kordalla, Sharsharo and Tokush. A joint assessment conducted in mid March by the SRRA, CU and most partners, revealed that over 12,000 people are displaced by the fighting. Most IDPs have resettled in Gesis, Wadaka- Aljebel, Jebel-Lebo, Jebel-Jero, Goz-Abu-rassin, Balila-centre and Sammari [...] Despite the relative calm in the past month, the security situation in Blue Nile is extremely precarious and that affects access and therefore also partners’ operational planning for 2018”.<sup>203</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in April 2018 that following RSF’s attack in areas controlled by the SPLM-N (Goya El Jadida, Goya El Gadima, Kabadik, and Jiko”, “The fighting resulted in the displacement of a large number of civilians, mostly elderly people, women and children, who took refuge in the mountains”.<sup>204</sup>

### 3.5. Denial of humanitarian access

#### 3.5.1. Two Areas

Freedom House noted in its annual report covering 2017 that “The government restricts freedom of movement in conflict-affected areas, particularly in [...] South Kordofan, and Blue Nile, where a state of emergency is in place”.<sup>205</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “The government impeded the work of UN agencies and delayed full approval of their activities throughout the country, particularly in the Two Areas; however, such restrictions were fewer than in prior years.

<sup>201</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘9,000 displaced’ by deadly clashes between SPLM-N factions in Blue Nile](#), 23 February 2018

<sup>202</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Severe Food Insecurity*, p. 8

<sup>203</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: March 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Protection and Security Situation*, p. 6

<sup>204</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan forces take control of rebel-held areas in Blue Nile](#), 30 April 2018

<sup>205</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018: Sudan](#), 27 August 2018, G. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS: 1 / 16

NGOs also alleged the government impeded humanitarian assistance in the Two Areas”.<sup>206</sup> The report further reported that “NGOs must register with the HAC [Humanitarian Agency Commission], the government entity for regulating humanitarian efforts. While humanitarian access generally improved during the past year [...] the HAC on occasion obstructed the work of NGOs including in [...] the Two Areas [...] including by interfering with their hiring practices and denying travel permits, or not issuing them in a timely manner. The HAC often changed its administrative procedures and regulations without prior notification and did not apply them consistently across the country”.<sup>207</sup>

The organisation Safeguarding Health in Conflict noted in its report covering 2017 on the access to humanitarian aid and health services in the Two Areas that “In Sudan, neither the Sudanese government nor the rebel group have allowed aid into rebel-controlled parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. No one in the rebel-held areas has had access to government health services or unhindered humanitarian aid since the conflict began. There are only five doctors and just two functioning hospitals for perhaps as many as 900,000 people. There are no ambulances in the rebel-held area and few civilian cars”.<sup>208</sup>

IRIN reported in April 2018 that six months after US sanctions were lifted, promised aid access is limited and Blue Nile and South Kordofan still cut off.<sup>209</sup> According to the same news article “The Sudanese government insists all aid must come directly from Khartoum to prevent any trafficking in other goods, such as weapons. The SPLM-N says it wants at least some to come through Kenya, Ethiopia, or South Sudan – countries it views as allies”.<sup>210</sup>

The Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan noted in its May 2018 report that the Sudanese government continued to “completely refuse the crossborder supply of aid to SPLM-N-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. US diplomats argue that this impasse is at least as much a consequence of the SPLM-N’s rejection of alternative supply routes via government-held areas and its insistence that 20 per cent of aid should come via the Asosa crossing point from Ethiopia as it is due to government-imposed impediments (Koutsis, 2017a) (although the SPLM-N’s position is at least comprehensible in view of the government’s past manipulation of humanitarian access in Darfur via government-held territories). More fundamentally, the HAC’s [Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission] system of restricting access using visa delays, aid agency expulsions, and short-term travel permissions— described by one US diplomat as ‘the deliberate construction of a vast bureaucracy built to impede humanitarian access’<sup>34</sup>—remains in place”.<sup>211</sup>

In June 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commissioner announced that the authorities developed new, restrictive conditions for international organisations engaged in the provision of humanitarian aid in Sudan’s conflict areas, including the Two Areas.<sup>212</sup> These restrictions include the provision that foreign organisations “cannot carry out work in Sudan without the consent of a national partners”.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 2., d. Freedom of Movement

<sup>207</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

<sup>208</sup> Safeguarding Health in Conflict, [Violence on the Front Line: Attack on Health Care in 2017](#), 2018, p. 10

<sup>209</sup> IRIN, [Six months after US sanctions lifted, promised aid access in Sudan remains limited](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>210</sup> IRIN, [Six months after US sanctions lifted, promised aid access in Sudan remains limited](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>211</sup> Small Arms Survey’s Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan, [Lifting US sanctions on Sudan: Rationale and Reality](#), May 2018, p. 32

<sup>212</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan govt. denies policy of forced eviction from Darfur camps](#), 11 June 2018

<sup>213</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan govt. denies policy of forced eviction from Darfur camps](#), 11 June 2018

The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) noted in August 2018 that “Humanitarian access overall remains poor, particularly in [...] other states where armed groups are active, such as Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Travel procedures for humanitarian organisations have been eased, but heavy administrative procedures and interference present significant obstacles to the timely provision of assistance. UNAMID personnel are denied access to conflict areas by government forces. The government generally denies access to aid organisations in Blue Nile areas administered by SPLM-N (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North)”<sup>214</sup>.

### 3.5.2. South Kordofan

The National Human Rights Monitors Organization spoke to 127 individuals in different counties in Nuba Mountains of SPLM/A-N controlled areas of Southern Kordofan between August and November 2017 and found that “the civilians in the areas controlled by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army–North (SPLM/A–N) are suffering from lack of food, shelter, medicine and water, as well as basic social services like health care and education, among other needs”<sup>215</sup>.

### 3.5.3. Blue Nile

By way of background, the International Refugee Rights Initiative report based on interviews carried out in late April and early May 2016 in Juba and Maban (South Sudan), and SPLM-N held southern Kurmuk County, Blue Nile State, noted with regards to humanitarian access that:

since the beginning of the war [2011], humanitarian access to the SPLM-N held areas has been consistently denied by Khartoum. Negotiations and diplomatic efforts have been fruitless, with the SPLM-N demanding that aid should be delivered through South Sudan or Ethiopia, and the government maintaining that it should only be allowed into SPLM-N held areas from the north. Without a green light from Khartoum, most humanitarian agencies are unwilling to conduct cross border operations into SPLM-N held areas from South Sudan or Ethiopia.<sup>216</sup>

In relation to what kind of humanitarian assistance was available at the time of the research in April/May 2016 in the SPLM-N held areas, the same source explained that:

Under these circumstances, humanitarian assistance in the SPLM-N held territories is extremely limited, and the few local organisations operating in these areas refrain from publishing information on the amount of assistance that they are providing. A few local initiatives of humanitarian assistance were mentioned by interviewees. Most notably, the Funj Youth Development Association (FYDA, a local NGO) has been involved in the distribution of some food items in the SPLM-N areas since late 2012. At the time of research [April/May 2016], it only provided very limited assistance once a year, during the rainy season. Health and education services are also extremely limited inside the SPLM-N areas. Massive displacement in and from Blue Nile State has resulted in a lack of staff capable of maintaining clinics or schools. With no humanitarian assistance, they also lack the necessary equipment. Since 2012, there have been only five primary schools and no secondary schools operating in SPLM-N held Blue Nile. Children in these areas have not had access to routine vaccinations since the beginning of the conflict.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Humanitarian Access overview](#), August 2018, Sudan, p. 5

<sup>215</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Civilian’s view in the Nuba Mountains about the Humanitarian Access](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 1

<sup>216</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Impact of war, Humanitarian aid blocked*, pages 22/23

<sup>217</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Impact of war, Humanitarian aid blocked*, p.23



In government controlled areas, the same source noted that “heavy restrictions have been imposed on humanitarian organisations since the outbreak of the conflict, and access to populations in need, including IDPs, and to Blue Nile State as a whole, remains restricted ‘through the implementation of effective bureaucratic hurdles, both structural and systematic,’ according to the UN. UN humanitarian assessments, under government supervision, were only allowed from early 2013, but international staff members were often barred from taking part in these, and were generally prevented from accessing the state. As at mid-2016 there was only one international UN staff present in Blue Nile”.<sup>218</sup>

### 3.6. Access to health care

#### 3.6.1. Two Areas

The World Health Organization reported in November 2016 that “Due to insufficient funding, 11 health units in North, South and West Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states have been closed. In addition, 49 facilities are at risk of closure. These facilities are run or managed by national NGOs and the State Ministries of Health (SMoHs). A total of US\$ 7Million is urgently needed to keep these health facilities running for a year”.<sup>219</sup>

#### 3.6.2. South Kordofan

According to Radio Dabanga reporting in May 2016 residents of El Dalanj complained about the deteriorating services including lack of medicine and a shortage of medical and healthcare staff, at the locality’s hospital.<sup>220</sup>

In July 2016 Radio Dabanga reported that people in Delling live in a “deteriorated situation as a result of the siege” especially with regards to living conditions and access to health services with many people “resorting to traditional medicine to treat the injured and the sick”.<sup>221</sup>

In May 2017 Human Rights Watch published a report focusing on the lack of access to reproductive healthcare in Sudan’s rebel-held Southern Kordofan.<sup>222</sup> The report noted that

Reduced access to health services is one of the many devastating consequences of six years of armed conflict between Sudanese government forces and the armed wing of the rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-North).<sup>223</sup> It further noted that “Healthcare access was low in the four areas currently under the control of rebels– and worse than in other parts of Sudan because of marginalization by Sudan’s government and earlier conflicts— even before the current war began in 2011. The poor humanitarian situation there cannot be entirely blamed on the conflict. However, unlawful government bombardment, destruction of clinics including by bombing, poor distribution of medicines, and hard-to-cross frontlines have all further reduced access”.<sup>224</sup> The report

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<sup>218</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Impact of war, Humanitarian aid blocked*, pages 24/25

<sup>219</sup> World Health Organization, [Sudan Health Sector Quarterly Bulletin \(3rd Quarter, July – September 2016\)](#), 05 November 2016, p. 1

<sup>220</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Understaffed South Kordofan hospital deteriorating](#), 29 May 2016

<sup>221</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudanese suffer from siege on western Nuba Mountains](#), 12 July 2016

<sup>222</sup> See Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017

<sup>223</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, *Summary*, p. 1

<sup>224</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, *Summary*, p. 2

also stated that “Humanitarian organizations estimate that there are some 900,000 people living in rebel-held areas of Southern Kordofan (and a small area of neighboring Western Kordofan state). Only roughly 650,000 of them are accessible to aid workers. Largely volunteer-run clinics in the rebelheld area often lack supplies, and health workers, including midwives, have little formal training or capacity. Hospitals and clinics, which appear to have been specifically targeted, have also been damaged by aerial bombardment by Sudanese government planes”.<sup>225</sup>

According to the report, there are only “two working hospitals”, both located in Heiban county, “which can be a long journey—several hours or even two days—even by car from other parts of the rebel-held areas. Sometimes, because of active frontlines, the hospitals are entirely inaccessible. These hospitals are the only facilities with the staff and equipment for surgery, treatment of serious wounds, and medical testing. Doctors working in these hospitals told Human Rights Watch that they regularly treat civilians or combatants who had reached the hospital only after lengthy journeys. There are no ambulances in the rebel-held areas and very few civilian cars”.<sup>226</sup>

The SPLM/A-North secretariat of health runs “around 175 clinics across the area that provide basic health care. None of the secretariat staff receive a salary. While this network of clinics means that, in theory, most communities are served by one, the clinics are typically staffed by volunteer nurses or community health workers, who often have no or only basic training. The clinics lack basic equipment like weighing scales or test kits. Rapid tests for malaria are the exception”.<sup>227</sup> With regards to medication, the same report noted that “Chronic shortages of medicines and difficulties in transporting them mean that basic medicines to treat malaria, worm infections and respiratory diseases are often not available [...and] Only a few facilities provide vaccinations, and child vaccination coverage is extremely low in part because of a lack of refrigerators”.<sup>228</sup>

With special reference to women and girls living in rebel-held areas of the Nuba mountains, the report noted that they have “little or no access to contraception, adequate antenatal care, or emergency obstetric care—leaving them unable to control the number and spacing of their children, and exposing them to serious health complications and sometimes death”.<sup>229</sup>

Reuters reported in June 2017 on the last remaining doctor in the Nuba mountains since 2011, who treats up to 500 patients a day “be it for disease or injuries from explosives”.<sup>230</sup>

The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust reported in September 2017 that “Consistent with seasonal norms, cases of malaria appear to have substantially increased in September. Local clinics reported being overwhelmed by cases of malaria in all locations the CU [Coordination Unit] was able to assess. Access to trained medical staff and appropriate drugs is highly limited for most of the population, and currently there are not adequate statistics on specific needs of the population. More medical capacity is sorely needed to address the needs of nearly a million people in SPLM/A-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army North] areas of South Kordofan”.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, II. A Weak Health System, p. 32

<sup>226</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, II. A Weak Health System, p. 33

<sup>227</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, II. A Weak Health System, pages 33/34

<sup>228</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, II. A Weak Health System, p. 34

<sup>229</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“No Control, No Choice”: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Sudan’s Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), May 2017, Summary, p. 1

<sup>230</sup> Reuters, [INTERVIEW—Quit dithering, says last doctor in Sudan’s Nuba mountains](#), 1 June 2017

<sup>231</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), September 2017, p. 2



A doctor at Lueri Hospital speaking to Radio Tamazuj noted in November 2017 that the “health situation in Lueri area, which lies under the control of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), worsened due to lack of medicines in the Nub Mountains region”.<sup>232</sup> The same source further noted that the hospital “had received over 9,000 patients over the past two months, saying most of the patients were suffering from malaria”.<sup>233</sup>

OCHA noted in its humanitarian bulletin for December 2017 that “According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) in Sudan has recently reported an increase in the number of suspected dengue fever cases during the period 2 October to 8 December 2017. A total of 137 suspected cases, including three deaths, were reported from Khartoum, Kassala, East and West Darfur, South Kordofan, Red Sea, River Nile and Gezira states over this period”.<sup>234</sup>

According to UNOCHA’s 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview “The protracted crisis in Sudan and inadequate funding have had a major impact on all levels of healthcare, notably in conflict-affected areas, such as Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. About 36 per cent of the Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities across Sudan are not fully functional, either due to staff shortages or poor physical infrastructure. Only 24 per cent of functional health facilities offer all main service components of the PHC package (42 per cent in Darfur is due to NGO support)”.<sup>235</sup>

In its January 2018 report the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) stated with regards to health care in South Kordofan that “There were no major disease outbreaks reported by the local Secretariat of Health in this period. However, access to healthcare remains a serious challenge for the population. Access to trained medical staff is highly limited for most of the population and more medical capacity is sorely needed to address the needs of nearly a million people in the areas. Pediatric care in particular is substantially lacking throughout the region. As reported in August of 2017, access to basic pediatric medicines or nutritional commodity was only 22% for the Central Region and 0% for the Western Jebels. The CU [Coordination Unit] is not aware of any changes to these metrics over the last 6 months and anticipates the child population still faces substantial disadvantages in their access to health care”.<sup>236</sup> The same source further wrote that “The population continues to move towards reliance on shallow hand dug wells as the dry season continues. These sources are often shared by humans and animals and pose a high probability of contamination. No major updates in this period. Due to a lack of infrastructure and supplies, water-borne illness still threatens a community without sufficient access to healthcare. More boreholes or treated water distribution centers are badly needed”.<sup>237</sup>

SKBNCU’s ‘Humanitarian Update’ of February 2018 noted that “access to healthcare remains a serious challenge for the population. Access to trained medical staff is significantly limited for most of the population and more medical capacity is sorely needed to address the needs of nearly a million people in the region. Pediatric care, in particular, is substantially lacking throughout the region. As reported in August of 2017, access to basic pediatric medicines or Nutrition commodity

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<sup>232</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Complaints of lack of medicines in Lueri area, Nuba Mountains](#), 8 November 2017

<sup>233</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Complaints of lack of medicines in Lueri area, Nuba Mountains](#), 8 November 2017

<sup>234</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Bulletin / Issue 27 / 4 – 17 December 2017](#), 17 December 2017, p. 1

<sup>235</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 22

<sup>236</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 2

<sup>237</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 3

was only 22% for the Central Region and 0% for the Western Jebels area. The CU has found no evidence of any changes to these metrics over the last 6 months and anticipates the child population still faces substantial disadvantages in its access to health care”.<sup>238</sup>

In its May 2018 ‘Humanitarian Update’, SKBNCU noted that “Large swathes of Southern Kordofan are inadequately covered by health services and the lack of qualified medical staff, no incentives and transport to reach areas are impacting particularly paediatric child care. Routine immunizations are not done, particularly putting children under age 5 at great risk of contagious diseases. In the Western Jebels, which has an estimated population of 300,000 and an area of 4,219 km<sup>2</sup>, no drugs or vaccinations have been transported yet this year from the central health secretariat (in Southern Kordofan in the SPLM-N liberated area). There has been no immunization campaign carried out in Western Jebels since 2015”.<sup>239</sup>

The SKBN Coordination Unit noted in its latest published update of June 2018 that “In the Western Jebels of South Kordofan, there have been reports of malnutrition by the only hospital in the area, and an urgent assessment is needed. In addition, there are reports of goiter cases in Dilling and Al-Sunut, which reveals that thousands of people face severe dietary constraints”.<sup>240</sup>

Reverend Matta Al Mubarak of the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) told Radio Tamazuj in July 2018 that “many people are suffering from eye diseases and due to lack of health facilities they are not able to get medical attention”.<sup>241</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in August 2018 that “Seven people have been infected with severe diarrhoea at Abu Jubeiha in South Kordofan. The infection believed to be acute watery diarrhoea, is often caused by cholera. A health source reported to Radio Dabanga that Abu Jubeiha hospital has received seven cases of the disease during the past two days”.<sup>242</sup>

### 3.6.3. Blue Nile

In April 2016 Radio Dabanga reported that the residents of El Kurmuk have complained of a severe shortage of medical staff, as well as equipment and medicines, at the city’s hospital amid the spread diseases such as malaria.<sup>243</sup>

In June 2016 IRIN published a report focusing on what it called ‘Sudan’s Forgotten Front’: the conflict in Blue Nile and noted that “There are no functioning clinics in SPLA-N-controlled Blue Nile. The few professionals who remain have nothing in the way of medication, supplies or equipment”.<sup>244</sup>

Radio Dabanga noted in September 2016 that “Hundreds in the Blue Nile state are reported to have died or are infected with water-borne diarrhoea, feared to be caused by Cholera”. The same article reported that “The Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors said that deaths in the Blue Nile as a result of diarrhoea have exceed 99 cases, 75 of which were children: 30 in El Damazin and 45 in El

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<sup>238</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Health and Nutrition*, p. 2

<sup>239</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: May 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Health*, p. 2

<sup>240</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: June 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Health*, p. 2

<sup>241</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Education, health services lacking Religious leader](#), 2 July 2018

<sup>242</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Diarrhoea, healthcare shortages in Kordofan, Khartoum](#), 27 August 2018

<sup>243</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Health crisis in Sudan’s Blue Nile](#), 28 April 2018

<sup>244</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan’s Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016

Roseires. They describe the situation in Blue Nile state as ‘tragic, catastrophic’ and that ‘the hospitals’ handling of the crisis as shameful and irresponsible for people's lives’”.<sup>245</sup>

In its annual report on human rights in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (covering 2017) the Human Rights and Development Organization (Hudo) Centre described how suspected cholera outbreak was being registered by doctors only for them to be arrested as the Health Ministry refused to disclose the actual numbers of affected people and insisted to call it a ‘watery diarrhea’ outbreak.<sup>246</sup>

UNICEF noted in a January 2017 report that “According to findings of the recent inter-agency assessment in Kurmuk locality in Blue Nile State, patients with serious conditions are reportedly referred to Assosa in Ethiopia or Damazine in Blue Nile, with both referral locations requiring patients to travel about 80 km to reach them.”.<sup>247</sup>

A September 2017 SKBNCU report provided the following overview with regards to access to health care in Blue Nile:

Reports of Acute Watery Diarrhoea just north of the SPLA-N [Sudan People's Liberation Army-North] and Government of Sudan frontline increase concerns of the illness spreading into the region. This is an immediate concern as access to health care in Blue Nile is highly limited and few clinics have the needed drugs to deal with such an outbreak. Health facilities in Blue Nile already faced many challenges to serving the population, and this is likely exacerbated by the needs of a newly displaced population as a result of the conflict. The fighting within the SPLA-N continues to inhibit access to humanitarians and threatens the population’s access to medical services external to Blue Nile. People remaining inside will have little ability to move to better equipped clinics in the Maban refugee camps due to conflict, and will have highly limited access to medical care inside Blue Nile. Desperately needed drugs are unlikely to be available in the region while malaria and water-borne disease are expected to increase during the rainy season. Children are also at risk of treatable diseases, with very low immunization rates and poor access to primary health care in both the Central Region and Western Jebels. Acute watery diarrhoea, malaria, skin and eye infections were the main identified health risks to children in a recent SKBN CU [South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit] rapid assessment.<sup>248</sup>

According to OCHA’s 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview “The protracted crisis in Sudan and inadequate funding have had a major impact on all levels of healthcare, notably in conflict-affected areas, such as Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. About 36 per cent of the Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities across Sudan are not fully functional, either due to staff shortages or poor physical infrastructure. Only 24 per cent of functional health facilities offer all main service components of the PHC package (42 per cent in Darfur is due to NGO support)”.<sup>249</sup>

Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that with regards to healthcare “There are 28 health clinics in SPLA-N held-territory, covering a population of 90,000 people. These clinics provide universal health care and midwifery but are chronically short of trained manpower and medical supplies. The majority of care is provided by community health workers and traditional birth attendants. There are no qualified midwives operating in the area and 12% of all births end in maternal death, one of the highest

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<sup>245</sup> Radio Dabanga, *‘Hundreds’ suffer from diarrhoea in Sudan’s Blue Nile*, 15 September 2016

<sup>246</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), *Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan, January – December 2017*, 11 February 2018, pages 26/27

<sup>247</sup> UN Children’s Fund, *Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report*, January 2017, p. 2

<sup>248</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), *SKBN CU Humanitarian Update*, September 2017, p. 2-3

<sup>249</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview*, February 2018, p. 22

maternal mortality rates in world. 7% of maternal deaths are caused by sepsis due to suboptimal practice”.<sup>250</sup> The same report further noted with regards to the spread of diseases and the availability of immunisation vaccines that “There are high incidences of diarrhoeal diseases, tuberculosis, leprosy, skin diseases, sexually transmitted diseases and malnourishment but no medicines to treat them with. Childhood immunisation and public health vaccines are unavailable”.<sup>251</sup>

SKBNCU noted in a January 2018 update that “In 2017 there were a reported 21 functioning health clinics in Blue Nile, the latest report from CU [Coordination Unit] monitors suggests only 11 of these clinics are now functioning. Lack of access to drugs and qualified clinicians are the main reason for clinics reporting not being able to see patients. For more serious cases, tribal tensions along the South Sudan-Sudan border make it difficult to access the only regional hospital, which is in the Maban refugee camps”.<sup>252</sup>

In a further January 2018 report HART provided an overview of health facilities in Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) held territory in Blue Nile:

There are 28 health clinics in SPLA-N held-territory, covering a population of 90,000 people. These clinics provide universal health care and midwifery but are chronically short of trained manpower and medical supplies. The majority of care is provided by community health workers and traditional birth attendants. There are no qualified midwives operating in the area and 12% of all births end in maternal death, one of the highest maternal mortality rates in world. 7% of maternal deaths are caused by sepsis due to suboptimal practice. Both the Medical Director and Secretary of Health stated that even one trained midwife would reduce this to zero overnight. The only referral hospital available is Maban over the border in South Sudan as El Kurmuk to the north is inaccessible due to the continued violence. Complicated pregnancies and trauma have to be transported by any means available as there is no ambulance service. There are high incidences of diarrhoeal diseases, tuberculosis, leprosy, skin diseases, sexually transmitted diseases and malnourishment but no medicines to treat them with. Childhood immunisation and public health vaccines are unavailable. Public health including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene is being managed by a team of Volunteer Health Trainers. The Army clinicians stated that they have their own medical supply chain but it is still wanting for antibiotics and painkillers, tourniquets and dressings to manage combat wounds. Sick and injured troops are cared for in the civilian medical chain and are therefore dependent on Maban hospital.<sup>253</sup>

In its February 2018 ‘Humanitarian Update’ SKBNCU noted that “There are mixed reports this month on the functioning of health clinics in Blue Nile, but reports suggest that more than 21 are functioning, with a report from the Secretary of Health of a leprosy outbreak in the Komo Ganza area. Komo Ganza and Wadaka payams, cut off during rainy season, still report a shortage of drugs. Access to drugs and qualified clinicians remains the main reason reported by clinics for not being able to see patients”.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [\*“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan\*](#), January 2018, *Healthcare and Wellbeing*, p. 10

<sup>251</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [\*“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan\*](#), January 2018, *Healthcare and Wellbeing*, p. 10

<sup>252</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [\*South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update\*](#), January 2018, p. 3

<sup>253</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (Author), published by ReliefWeb, [\*“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile\*](#), Sudan, January 2018, p. 10

<sup>254</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [\*Humanitarian Update: February 2018\*](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Health and Nutrition*, p. 3

World Vision reported in February 2018 that “Inadequate health facilities and services such as shortage of qualified personnel to provide health care and a shortage of essential drugs in Kurmuk locality, Blue Nile state. Persistent water problems could result into a wave of displacements in parts of Blue Nile state if the current water problems are not urgently addressed”.<sup>255</sup>

SKBNCU’s ‘Humanitarian Update’ of March 2018 noted that “The health situation in Blue Nile is particularly critical. The number of functioning clinics is reported to be 4 in Wadaka Payam, 7 in Chali Alfil Payam, and 9 in Yabus Payam. However, there is a lack of medicines and trained staff. More so, there is no referral system for bringing patients out to Maban where the only regional hospital exists. Lately, with the influx of IDPs into Wadaka Payam after the February clashes, there is further stress on the health facilities in this area”.<sup>256</sup>

While the same source noted in its latest ‘Humanitarian Update’ published June 2018 that “While partners are supporting the 23 functioning clinics in Blue Nile, access to clinics in Wadaka and Chali Alfil is blocked by swamps and increased water levels, affecting the quality of health services. Furthermore, the Yabus river has cut the Komo Ganza community off from health services until at least October. Communities in Wadaka payam and Chali Alfil payam are facing the same challenges with swamps and increased water levels blocking partners operating in the health sector. Vast areas are now only accessible on foot. Continued cases of malaria, eye infections, diarrhea and onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness, have been reported in the last month throughout all three monitored payams of Wadaka, Chali Alfil and Yabus, in Kurmuk county, Blue Nile”.<sup>257</sup>

Radio Dabanga, also reporting in June 2018, stated that “Six cases of acute watery diarrhoea – which is often caused by cholera – have been admitted to Ed Damazin Hospital in Sudan’s Blue Nile State this week. The rains have also seen an increase in cases suspected to be the mosquito-borne haemorrhagic (severe dengue) fever admitted to Port Sudan hospital. Sources told Radio Dabanga that the isolation ward of the hospital received four cases of watery diarrhoea from Syrio, north of the Blue Nile state capital and two other cases from Ed Damazin town itself. They pointed out that the cases have emerged after this week’s rainfall and that there has been a move by Ed Damazin health authorities to combat the disease”.<sup>258</sup>

### **3.7. Food insecurity**

#### **3.7.1. Two Areas**

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) noted in its ‘Humanitarian Update’ published May 2018 that “According to the March-April 2018 Report of the Food Security Monitoring Unit (FSMU), both South Kordofan and Blue Nile populations are vulnerable to a spike in extreme food insecurity similar to the one recorded during the 2017 dry season as only few households have sufficient food stocks to last through the lean season. Despite the ceasefire and households’ increased access to far farms throughout the 2017 agricultural season, food stock positions are at the same level now than they were last year. However, FSMU says in its March-April

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<sup>255</sup> World Vision, [Sudan Ease Africa Hunger Crisis Situation Report 01-28 February 2018](#), 12 March 2018, p. 1

<sup>256</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: March 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Health and Nutrition*, p. 4

<sup>257</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: June 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Health*, p. 2

<sup>258</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Acute watery diarrhoea, dengue fever reported after rains in Sudan’s Blue Nile, Red Sea states](#), 3 June 2018

Report that ‘in Blue Nile, where active conflict disrupted the agricultural season, food stock positions were worse in both January and April of 2018 than they had been 12-months earlier’”.<sup>259</sup>

The same source published a map, reproduced by the May 2018 FSMU Quarterly Report, showing food insecurity in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>260</sup>

In its latest ‘Humanitarian Update’ published June 2018 SKBNCU reported that “As food stocks are depleting, and most markets are poorly functioning, with limited availability of commodities and rocketing prices, coupled with consumers’ lack of purchasing power, the food gap for over a million people in South Kordofan and Blue Nile is growing. The areas of Wadaka in Blue Nile and the counties of Thobo (Boram), Umdorein and Heiban in South Kordofan are especially affected [...] The conflict in South Sudan and high inflation of the South Sudanese pound is further affecting the livelihood opportunities of the communities in Blue Nile and the southern counties of South Kordofan”.<sup>261</sup>

### 3.7.2. South Kordofan

Nuba Reports noted in July 2017 that “According to the South Kordofan-Blue Nile Coordination Unit and the Famine Early Warning System, two organizations that monitor food security and displacement, hunger levels in the Nuba Mountains has reached critical levels and is expected to deteriorate further in the months ahead. Substantial numbers of households in South Kordofan are relying entirely on wild foods or compelled to relocate to refugee camps or government-controlled areas in search of sustenance”.<sup>262</sup>

Amnesty International noted in its 2018 report on Sudan that “The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS-NET) reported that the humanitarian situation in SPLM-N-controlled areas in South Kordofan was dire. The rate of chronic malnutrition was estimated at 38.3% due to long-term food deprivation and recurrent illness”.<sup>263</sup>

The 2018 US Department of State country report on human rights practices (covering 2017) noted that “Significant numbers of farmers were prevented from planting their fields due to insecurity, leading to near-famine conditions in parts of Southern Kordofan”.<sup>264</sup>

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit’s (SKBNCU) ‘Humanitarian Update’ of March 2018 noted that “The Food for Peace (FFP) fact sheet of USAID for Sudan (4 April 2018) reports that food security among IDPs in opposition-controlled areas of South Kordofan is expected to deteriorate from Crisis (IPC 3) to Emergency (IPC4) levels between June and September. That can result in high acute malnutrition and excess mortality. As a matter of fact, food shortage in South Kordofan is one of the main drivers for the displacement of people to the refugee camps in South Sudan”.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: May 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Food Security and Agriculture*, p. 1

<sup>260</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: May 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Food Security and Agriculture*, p. 2

<sup>261</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: June 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Food Security and Agriculture*, p. 1

<sup>262</sup> Nuba Reports, [Sudan Insider: Ceasefire aside, intermittent conflict and hunger in two areas](#), 5 July 2017

<sup>263</sup> Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2017/18 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Sudan](#), 22 February 2018, *South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

<sup>264</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)*

<sup>265</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: March 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Food Security and Agriculture*, p. 1



In a March 2018 report Waging Peace described the food security situation in South Kordofan as follows:

The Nuba Mountains intermittently suffer from famine conditions because their farms have been repeatedly targeted by the regime's campaign of aerial bombardment. The most reliable information about food security comes in the form of humanitarian updates from the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit, which are shared privately with agencies and NGO partners. The latest of these, released in January 2018, stated that although January and February are historically the least lean months in the year because of harvest times: "Based on key informant interviews performed by the CU [Coordination Unit], it is likely the current harvest's food stocks will not last beyond April. With the following early harvest beginning in August, this will create at least a 3 month food gap." Furthermore, The Famine Early Warning Systems Network reported that the rate of chronic malnutrition in SPLM-N-controlled areas in South Kordofan was estimated at 38.3% due to long-term food deprivation and recurrent illness. Dr Tom Catena commented on 07.02.18: "Food security in our area is poor again this year. The rains were not very good and we had one major flood which damaged the sorghum crops of many. There are still many internally displaced people who are unable to cultivate to any large extent. Insecurity prevents farmers from cultivating in areas with good farmland as they fear attack by Arab nomads and cattle raiders""<sup>266</sup>.

A July 2018 World Food Programme report noted that "The food insecurity in North and South Darfur, Blue and White Nile states (Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) Classification 3) and, South Kordofan (IPC Classification 4) will likely persist until late 2018. This is due to limited agricultural labour and other livelihood opportunities, and low asset holdings. IDPs are among the most affected population".<sup>267</sup>

### 3.7.3. Blue Nile

Radio Dabanga reported in August 2016 that according to a human rights observer, Ibrahim Beis, "the already dire humanitarian situation in Blue Nile State is deteriorating more because of the armed conflict in South Sudan [...] Two children died of starvation recently".<sup>268</sup>

Amnesty International noted in its annual report covering 2017 on Sudan that "FEWS-NET [Famine Early Warning Systems Network] estimated that 39% of households in Blue Nile were severely food insecure".<sup>269</sup>

Nuba Reports noted in July 2017 that "Qualitative reports from Blue Nile suggest that less than 50 percent of households have food stocks remaining at the end of April, and many must depend on foraging for wild food or relocation for survival, the Coordination Unit said".<sup>270</sup>

SKBNCU noted in a January 2018 report that "Blue Nile faces numerous challenges to food security in 2018. The conflict, which spanned the region and displaced thousands, will certainly lead to poor food security in the coming lean season. The October assessment reported by FSMU [Food Security and Monitoring Unit] displayed a grim situation for the population even as they enter the far farm harvest season, with 21% of the population reported as severely food insecure. This is very

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<sup>266</sup> Waging Peace, [Risk to individuals from Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), March 2018, p. 4

<sup>267</sup> World Food Programme, [Sudan Country Brief July 2018](#), 31 July 2018, p. 1

<sup>268</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Two children starve to death in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), 1 August 2016

<sup>269</sup> Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2017/18 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Sudan](#), 22 February 2018, *South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

<sup>270</sup> Nuba Reports, [Sudan Insider: Ceasefire aside, intermittent conflict and hunger in two areas](#), 5 July 2017

concerning, as this data was collected during the one annual harvest season”.<sup>271</sup> The same report further stated that “The conflict further exacerbated a difficult season by separating substantial portions of the population from their harvest. The conflict began in May and lasted through August, a very important time in the seasonal calendar for cultivation. Even in areas where planting was possible, subsequent conflict and displacement prevented a proper maintenance of crops during the growing season. Many farmers we [sic] unable to properly weed or treat for pests, leading to very poor harvest in much of Blue Nile. The overall food outlook for Blue Nile is grim. Much of the population is likely to run out of food stores in March, potentially triggering a new round of displacements to refugee camps in South Sudan and Ethiopia”.<sup>272</sup>

Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that “There are multiple reasons for food scarcity in Blue Nile. Constant movement by civilians avoiding bombs and attacks from the GoS has prevented them from cultivating many crops and maintaining any resilience to natural disasters, including the floods in October 2017 which ruined majority of the crops they had been able to grow and which were to be used for food until the next harvest”.<sup>273</sup>

SKBNCU’s ‘Humanitarian Update’ of February 2018 noted that “Blue Nile faces numerous challenges to food security in 2018. The conflict, which spanned the region and displaced thousands, will certainly lead to poor food security in the coming lean season. Due to the conflict in May to August 2017 a very important time for cultivation was missed, followed by flooding in August which impacted near and far farms. The recent round of clashes in February lead to another, ongoing round of displacement and triggered the disappearance of some food commodities from weekly markets, as the ability of traders from different directions to bring commodities was greatly diminished”.<sup>274</sup>

An April 2018 report by the same source stated that “In Blue Nile food security is more volatile than in South Kordofan since the conflict has reduced the availability of farming land. In the Koma Ganza areas, south of Yabus, due to a poor harvest season, food stocks are reported to be already consumed and, according to CU [Coordination Unit] monitors, people started eating the roots of trees. An estimated 8,000 people live in the area, according to population figures of 2016. In Wadaka, where the CU reported last month that people were eating roots to survive, an emergency food distribution to 9000 IDPs in around six villages, has brought short term relief but more assistance is needed. Those communities had been displaced by fighting in February 2018 and were unable to plant”.<sup>275</sup>

#### **4. Rule of Law and access to justice**

##### **4.1. Local conflict resolution mechanisms**

An April 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported with regards to lack of effective remedies that:

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<sup>271</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 2

<sup>272</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 2

<sup>273</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Severe Food Insecurity*, p. 8

<sup>274</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Food Security and Agriculture*, p. 2

<sup>275</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), April 2018, p. 2



Efforts have been undertaken to rebuild the justice system, but challenges continue, due to the lack of dedicated and coordinated attention, including the provision of proper human and financial resources. The Special Rapporteur points out that, due to the prolonged conflict, the formal justice system is dysfunctional and unable to be effective, in particular in regions that continue to be affected by instability. This is particularly reflected in the lack of access to justice for women, underreporting and widespread impunity especially with regard to cases of violence against women. Outside large cities, the formal justice system remains inaccessible owing to geographic distance, security concerns, lack of information and awareness, and the inefficiency and non-responsiveness of the system.<sup>276</sup>

A September 2016 International Refugee Rights Initiative report noted that “In 2013, the SPLM-N established civilian government institutions in the territories under its control in Southern Kordofan. In 2014 these were expanded to Blue Nile”.<sup>277</sup> With regards to the structure in place the source described:

13 secretariats (responsible for issues including education and health); a police force; a judiciary (including one Chief of Justice for the Two Areas, a high court and a number of community administration courts) and in Blue Nile State, a governor and a deputy, three commissioners for the counties of Kurmuk, Tadamon and Bau, as well as officials at the district level. These institutions replaced the earlier system of military control over civilian populations that had previously been in place. [...]

The civil administration is currently less developed in Blue Nile than it is in Southern Kordofan,<sup>174</sup> mainly as a result of the limited capacity of its structures and institutions under the current circumstances, in which most resources are invested in fighting, and in which there is almost no infrastructure of any sort inside the “liberated areas”.

As such, while there are clear structures of governance, not all civilians are familiar with them in practice, as there is a continued reliance on the hierarchical ‘traditional’ community administration. This system of community leadership is based on sheikhs (or chiefs, in some of the communities), omdas, and nazirs was preserved in the camps as well, where communities have in general settled in groups based on their home area in Blue Nile. These structures are deeply rooted in the communities, and are a recognisable system for governance and conflict resolution even in the context of displacement.<sup>278</sup>

The same source further noted that “Therefore, under the new SPLM-N administration, the first avenue for conflict resolution for most civilians has remained their local sheikh or chief. In the camps, issues can be raised via these community leaders to the NGOs, the camp management or SPLM-N representatives in some cases. Inside SPLM-N held areas in Blue Nile, issues that are not resolved within the community administration are theoretically transferred to the relevant SPLM-N authorities or judiciary, though the extent to which SPLM-N judicial institutions in Blue Nile State are indeed functional is unclear”.<sup>279</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of State’s annual report covering 2017, “Due to long distances between court facilities and police stations in conflict areas, local mediation was often the first

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<sup>276</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 93

<sup>277</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Adjusting to a new status quo? SPLM-N civil authority*, p. 33

<sup>278</sup> See International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Adjusting to a new status quo? SPLM-N civil authority*, p. 33

<sup>279</sup> See International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Adjusting to a new status quo? SPLM-N civil authority*, p. 34

resort to try to resolve disputes. In some instances tribal courts operating outside the official legal system decided cases. Such courts did not provide the same protections as regular courts”.<sup>280</sup>

## 4.2. Arbitrary arrest and detention

This section documents the legal provisions that provide for arrest and detention in Sudan and how they are used against the populations in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. For illustrative incidents of arbitrary arrest of persons perceived to oppose the government, see the relevant profiles addressed in section 5. Human rights situation: civil and political rights, [5.1. Freedom of expression, association, and assembly](#), in particular:

[5.1.1. Political opposition parties and activists](#)

[5.1.2. Lawyers as political opposition members and activists](#)

[5.1.3. \(Suspected\) members of the SPLM/A-N](#)

[5.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N](#)

[5.1.5.1. Treatment of critical journalists, citizen-journalists, bloggers, etc.](#)

[5.1.6. Civil society organizations and civil society activists, including women’s rights activist](#)

Amnesty International explained in a July 2018 urgent action with regards to the powers of the NISS that:

The NISS maintains broad powers of arrest and detention under the National Security Act 2010 (NSA), which allows suspects to be detained for up to four-and-a-half months without judicial review. NISS officials often use these powers to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals, and many have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Under the same Act, NISS agents are provided with protection from prosecution for any act committed in the course of their work, which has resulted in a pervasive culture of impunity. The constitutional amendment to Article 151 (NSA) passed on 5 January 2015, that expanded the mandate of the NISS, has exacerbated the situation. The amendment transformed the NISS from an intelligence agency focused on information gathering, analysis and advice, to a fully-fledged security agency with a broad mandate to exercise a mix of functions usually carried out by the armed forces or law enforcement agencies. It gave the NISS unlimited discretion to decide what constitutes a political, economic or social threat and how to respond to such threats. Neither the NSA nor the revised Article 151 explicitly or implicitly require the NISS to abide by relevant international, regional and domestic law in the operation of its duties.<sup>281</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of State’s annual report covering 2017, “The Interim National Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention and requires that individuals be notified of the charges against them when they are arrested. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, however, remained common under the law, which allows for arrest without warrants and detention up to four and one-half months. Authorities often released detainees when their initial detention periods expired but took them into custody the next day for an additional period. Authorities, especially NISS, arbitrarily detained political opponents and those believed to sympathize with the opposition. The law does not provide for the right of persons to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court”.<sup>282</sup> Moreover, “A state of emergency in Darfur, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan allowed for arrest and detention without trial”.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.e. *Trial Procedures*

<sup>281</sup> Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Health Concerns for Detained Sudanese Activist](#), 6 July 2018

<sup>282</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.d. *Arbitrary Arrest or Detention*

<sup>283</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1. e. *Denial of Fair Public Trial*

The UK Foreign & Commonwealth annual report covering 2017 reported that “Although the impact of conflict on civilians continued to diminish, government and government affiliated forces continued to violate and abuse human rights with impunity in conflict-affected areas. [...] Arbitrary arrests and the summoning of political activists and journalists continued throughout the year, with multiple reports of torture and ill- treatment by the Sudanese authorities of these detainees”.<sup>284</sup> According to Amnesty International’s annual report covering 2017, “NISS officials and other security forces targeted opposition political party members, human rights defenders, students and political activists for arbitrary arrest, detention and other abuses”.<sup>285</sup> Similarly, Human Right Watch’s annual report for 2017 recorded that “Security officials detained opposition members, journalists, and labor leaders throughout the year, often for long periods without charge or access to lawyers. They routinely beat detainees during interrogations”.<sup>286</sup>

An April 2018 Op-ed by Amnesty International’s Regional Researcher for the Sudan reported that:

The NISS has broad powers of arrest and detention under the National Security Act 2010. This Act has systematically been used as an instrument to intimidate, silence, and punish political opponents. NISS has the power to detain suspects for up to four-and-a-half months without judicial review. The same law also shields NISS agents from prosecution for any offence they commit in their work. This has resulted in a pervasive culture of impunity. [...]

The unlawful detentions last for months, even over a year, without access to a lawyer, with very few family visits, and limited access to medical care. Some are released after they are made to sign a commitment not to oppose the government.<sup>287</sup>

The same source further noted that “many thousands of people, including both local and foreign journalists, [...] are arbitrarily arrested, abused and tortured in Sudan. Amnesty International has documented and reported many disturbing cases of arbitrary arrest and torture of journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders, doctors, political activists and students”.<sup>288</sup>

In April 2018 the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that it had “serious safety concerns for the continued arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detention of individuals including human rights defenders/activists, political opposition members and leaders in connection with the 2018 anti-austerity protests as well as on basis of their political affiliation. ACJPS has continued to monitor the arbitrary arrests and detention as well as ill-treatment of detainees including denying them the necessary health care”.<sup>289</sup>

Amnesty International contended in a September 2018 submission to the UN Human Rights Committee that:

During the reporting period, across Sudan, National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) officials and members of other security forces targeted opposition political party members, human rights defenders, students, internally displaced persons from Darfur and political activists for arbitrary arrest, detention and other human rights violations. Most of those detained reported that they were subjected to torture and other ill- treatment while in detention.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>284</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), [Human Rights and Democracy: the 2017 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#), 16 April 2018

<sup>285</sup> Amnesty International, [Report 2017/18 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Sudan](#), 22 February 2018

<sup>286</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2018 – Sudan](#), 18 January 2018

<sup>287</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

<sup>288</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

<sup>289</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [More Detainees Released as Sudanese Authorities Continue to Target Individuals With Travel Bans, Arbitrary Arrests and Incommunicado Detention](#), 4 April 2018

<sup>290</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018

### Two Areas

The Human Rights and Development Organization (Hudo Centre) recorded in its annual report documenting events in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in 2016 that “The violations and abuses included in this report are; arbitrary arrest and torture which were mainly carried out by Military Intelligence (MI) and National Intelligence and security Services (NISS) in conflict areas. This intensified because of the emergency status which allows the military forces to arrest civilians. [...] Many atrocities like arbitrary arrests, unlawful killing, torture, sexual violence among other forms of violence have been committed by RSF, PDF, NISS, MI and in some cases police. People like members of SPLM-N, former SPLA soldiers, students’ unions and Christians have been targeted and arrested arbitrary[ily]”.<sup>291</sup>

The Hudo Centre similarly recorded in its annual report covering 2017 that “The general state of insecurity and violations persisted because SK and BN are still under the state of emergency ‘as declared by the president of Sudan in 2011’. Many atrocities like arbitrary arrests, torture, assault, detaining people incommunicado, detaining civilians in military camps and other forms of violations have been committed by Police, SAF, PDF, NISS and MI”.<sup>292</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “Human rights groups continued to report that government forces and militias raped, detained, tortured, and arbitrarily killed civilians in [...] government-controlled areas of Blue Nile”.<sup>293</sup>

In January 2018 the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported that:

The Government of Sudan has responded to widespread disgruntlement over recent austerity measures by arresting and detaining opposition political party members, activists and individuals; censoring newspapers by seizing their daily-print runs prior to distribution and use of force (including firing live ammunition) to disperse protests. The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) is aware of 18 individuals, including opposition political party leaders, students, advocates and human rights defenders, currently under custody in Sennar, North Kordofan, Kassala, Khartoum and Blue Nile states without charge or access to family and/or legal representation, for suspected involvement in the anti-austerity protests or voiced concerns about the austerity measures that have caused sharp increases in the prices of basic commodities. [...]

NISS has targeted individuals such as teachers, opposition political party leaders, students and activists, suspected of leading or coordinating the protests through arrest and detention. Some of the detainees were subsequently released while others remain in NISS custody. The detainees have been held in the custody of NISS without charge or access to lawyers or family visits.<sup>294</sup>

The same source documented in a report covering human rights violations during January to March 2018 in South Kordofan, “human rights violations associated with attacks on civilians including sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention and killing of civilians”.<sup>295</sup> The same source further noted that:

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<sup>291</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p. iii and p.3

<sup>292</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p.3

<sup>293</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 1., g. *Abuses in Internal Conflict*

<sup>294</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [18 Individuals Arbitrarily Detained in the Wake of Anti-Austerity Protests Throughout Sudan](#), 12 January 2018

<sup>295</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

On 15 January 2018, the Military Intelligence under the command of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) stationed at the Barnwa checkpoint in South Kordofan arrested Mr. Saeed Mohamed Saeed, a 28 year old from the Nuba tribe, as he was traveling back from Lagawa town. He was detained incommunicado at an unknown location and released on 18 February 2018. Reasons for his arrest remain unknown.

On 23 February 2018, the Military Intelligence stationed at the Abuhabil bridge checkpoint arrested Mr. Shaib Ismail, a 24 year old, and detained him at the SAF headquarter base in Aldalang, in South Kordofan.

On 6 March 2018, the Military Intelligence of Al Abbasiya Tagali in South Kordofan arrested Mr. Mohamed Awad, 38 year old, and detained him at the military intelligence base in Al Abbasiya Tagali. It is suspected that he was detained on basis of perceived political affiliation with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)

On 6 March 2018, the Military Intelligence of Um Rawaba in North Kordofan arrested Mr. Mansour Altoum from the Um Rawaba Market and detained him at the military intelligence base in Al Abbasiya Tagali. It is suspected that he was detained on basis of perceived political affiliation with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).<sup>296</sup>

### 4.3. Unlawful or disproportionate punishment for crimes

No information was found on the use of unlawful or misappropriate punishments specifically in Blue Nile or South Kordofan. Information on the situation across Sudan more generally has therefore been included.

Amnesty International explained in an April 2018 public statement that the current criminal code and the public order laws in Sudan, allow internationally banned corporal punishments including amputation and stoning:

For example, under Sudan's Criminal Act of 1991, 18 about 20 offences are punishable by flogging. These cover a wide array of acts, ranging from abetment, theft, "obscene and indecent" acts, to breach of public peace, and include acts that should not be criminalized at all such as consensual sexual relationships between men and women or between men.

Those found guilty of any of the above offences would receive between 20 to 100 lashes. Sudan has justified corporal punishment, flogging in particular, according to its own interpretation of Shari'a law. Sudanese officials have justified flogging saying it was better for the victims to have been lashed rather than hold them in detention.<sup>297</sup>

The same source further noted that "flogging remains widely practised in Sudan, often on a daily basis, for a wide range of offenses, and following a summary trial, especially by the Public Order Courts. Flogging is also widely used in prisons across Sudan as a disciplinary measure".<sup>298</sup>

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan in his report covering the period from September 2017 to June 2018 noted "Public morality offences, including "indecent dress", discriminate against women and are limiting their movement and role in public life. Humiliating corporal punishments of lashing violate international human rights norms".<sup>299</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of State's annual report covering 2017, "In accordance with the government's interpretation of sharia (Islamic law), the penal code provides for physical punishments, including flogging, amputation, stoning, and the public display of a body after

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<sup>296</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>297</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: It's High Time to Ratify the UN Convention Against Torture](#), 9 April 2018

<sup>298</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: It's High Time to Ratify the UN Convention Against Torture](#), 9 April 2018

<sup>299</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 37

execution, despite the constitution's prohibitions. Courts routinely imposed flogging, especially as punishment for indecent dress and the production or consumption of alcohol".<sup>300</sup> The same source further described:

The law prohibits indecent dress and punishes it with a maximum of 40 lashes, a fine, or both. The law does not specify what it deems to be indecent dress. Officials acknowledged authorities applied these laws more frequently against women than men and applied them to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Most women were released following payment of fines.

In October women's rights activists reported that 45,000 complaints were issued against women under the Public Order Act in 2016. Of these, 15,000 women received the punishment of lashings. These numbers could not be independently verified.<sup>301</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies documented that "On 26 November 2017, the Public Order Court in Al Haj Yousef, Khartoum North convicted nine people, including six children aged between 13-16 years for violating articles 69 (disturbing public peace) and 77 (public nuisance) of the Sudanese Criminal Act 1991. The six children were sentenced to 20 lashes each, while the three adults were sentenced to 3 months imprisonment and a fine of SDG 5000 (approximately \$750) each. [...] The nine were arrested on 25 November 2017 from Eljareef neighbourhood following a peaceful demonstration against a plan by authorities to seize land in the area".<sup>302</sup>

Hands Off Cain reported in May 2018 that "A woman was lashed 75 times after a court found her guilty of marrying a man without her father's consent, her lawyer and rights activists said. The woman, a native of the war-torn Darfur region of Sudan, was flogged at a police station in Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum, after having served a six-month prison sentence".<sup>303</sup>

#### 4.4. Death penalty

No information published between 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 on the awarding and implementation of the death penalty in South Kordofan or Blue Nile was located amongst the sources consulted. More general information on the use of the death penalty in Sudan has been included below.

Amnesty International explained in an April 2018 public statement that "The death penalty is applicable to 15 offences, including, in some cases, death by stoning, which amounts to torture, but has never been applied. Theft and armed robbery, are punishable by amputation".<sup>304</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies documented 142 death sentences and 2 executions from 2011-2015 and lists the number of offenders sentenced to death by court and crime and analyses that "One of the most concerning trends in Sudan is the use and threat of use of the death penalty as a tool against political opponents to the ruling National Congress Party".<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. *Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

<sup>301</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. *Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

<sup>302</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Six Children Sentenced to 20 Lashes for Participating in a Peaceful Demonstration](#), 12 December 2017

<sup>303</sup> Hands Off Cain, [Sudan: Woman Flogged for Marrying Without Her Father's Consent](#), 16 May 2018

<sup>304</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: It's High Time to Ratify the UN Convention Against Torture](#), 9 April 2018

<sup>305</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [The Wide Application of the Death Penalty in Sudan](#), August 2016, p.16



The Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide lists the crimes punishable by death<sup>306</sup> and the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies sets out the legislation that prescribes the death penalty in Sudan.<sup>307</sup> The Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide noted that according to its Executions and Death Sentences Monitor, as of 26 September 2018 there had been no executions in Sudan in 2018 and none in 2017 although this figure represents the number of “executions reported in the media. Because of the secrecy surrounding capital punishment, we are not able to offer a reliable estimate”.<sup>308</sup> Hanging is reportedly the predominant method of execution in Sudan, although execution can be carried out by stoning for hadd offenses.<sup>309</sup>

According to Amnesty International, Sudan recorded over 17 death sentences in 2017.<sup>310</sup> Hands Off Cain cited Achol Malong Deng, a South Sudanese coordinator for the Refugee Council of Sudan as stating that “there are a total of 1,020 South Sudanese prisoners sentenced to death in Sudan”.<sup>311</sup> She noted that the individuals have been jailed in different parts of the country but did not specify where they are being held.<sup>312</sup> Deng further noted that “execution is taking place, but without them getting any legal assistance and that their relatives are not informed before the execution”.<sup>313</sup>

The International Refugee Rights Initiative noted in a joint letter for the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council that the death penalty “which is implemented by hanging in Sudan, is not restricted to the most serious of crimes. The crime of apostasy – which itself should not constitute a crime under international law – carries the death penalty. Crimes against the state charges that carry the death penalty have been used increasingly often since 2011 to punish and silence political opposition party members and other activists who have criticized government policy. Since the last review the scope of application of the death penalty has been widened. The crime of apostasy has been broadened to include additional prohibited acts and a new crime of trafficking attracts the death penalty”.<sup>314</sup>

In August 2016 a group of UN human rights experts called on the Sudanese authorities to “drop charges carrying the death sentence brought against six people linked to a prominent Khartoum-based organisation, Training and Human Development (TRACKS)”, charged with criminal conspiracy, undermining the constitutional system, waging war against the State, espionage, and terrorism by the Sudanese State Security Prosecution Office.<sup>315</sup> According to SUDO (UK), in August 2017 the Sudanese government released and cancelled all charges against these six Sudanese human rights offenders, though the organization remained concerned that one individual still possibly faces charges in a separate trial.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 2 October 2018]

<sup>307</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [The Wide Application of the Death Penalty in Sudan](#), August 2016, p.7

<sup>308</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 2 October 2018]

<sup>309</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 2 October 2018]

<sup>310</sup> Amnesty International, [Death Sentences and Executions 2017](#), April 2018, p.7

<sup>311</sup> Hands Off Cain, [Sudan: Khartoum Sent over 1000 S. Sudanese to death](#), 10 September 2018

<sup>312</sup> Hands Off Cain, [Sudan: Khartoum Sent over 1000 S. Sudanese to death](#), 10 September 2018

<sup>313</sup> Hands Off Cain, [Sudan: Khartoum Sent over 1000 S. Sudanese to death](#), 10 September 2018

<sup>314</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [Letter regarding the Human Rights Situation in Sudan in advance of the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council](#), 7 September 2016

<sup>315</sup> UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, [Sudan: UN rights experts condemn charges of death penalty crimes for human rights activists](#), 31 August 2016

<sup>316</sup> SUDO (UK), [Sudan: SUDO \(UK\) welcomes release of six human rights defenders wrongfully detained](#), 31 August 2017

Forced into a child marriage, Noura Hussein killed her abusive husband as he attempted to rape her.<sup>317</sup> She received a death sentence but this was reduced to five years in prison by an appeal court.<sup>318</sup> However, according to a statement from the women's and girls' rights organisation Equality Now, the state prosecutor has filed a petition for the death penalty to be reinstated, as reported by Their World in August 2018.<sup>319</sup>

#### 4.5. Detention conditions

The World Prison Brief reported that according to national prison administration figures as of July 2017, the prison population was approximately 21,000.<sup>320</sup> The same source noted that according to the most recently available occupancy level statistics, the occupancy level as of mid-2009 was 255.3%.<sup>321</sup> As of 2013, the percentage of pre-trial detainees as a percentage of the total prison population was 20.4%, female prisoners made up 2% of the prison population, and juveniles a further 2%.<sup>322</sup>

The April 2016 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade report assessed that:

Conditions in detention and prison are harsh and can be life-threatening. There is a high level of overcrowding. [...] Statistics regarding the number of individuals held in detention or prison by the NISS are unknown. DFAT understands that conditions for individuals detained or imprisoned by the NISS are worse than those in mainstream facilities.

Healthcare in detention and prison is often inadequate, with some prisoners being unable to access necessary medication or physical examinations. Authorities generally provide food, water and sanitation although it is often of poor quality and prisoners regularly rely on family and friends for food. Prisoners are able to practice their religious beliefs and some facilities have dedicated areas for Christian observance. Prisons are significantly overcrowded, which is exacerbated by poor infrastructure, ventilation and lighting.

Women and men are held in separate prisons or segregated areas of prisons. In general, living conditions for women are superior to equivalent facilities for men. In Khartoum, juveniles are not held in the same facilities as adults, but are sometimes held with adults outside of Khartoum.

Prisoners convicted of specific crimes, such as political crimes, are often held separately from other prisoners.

Officials allow some visitors, including lawyers and family members. However, individuals held in NISS facilities are generally not allowed visitors. The Government has allowed a few restricted visits by international observers. International observers were unable to access NISS facilities.<sup>323</sup>

An April 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported with regards to violence against women in custodial settings:

The Special Rapporteur is concerned that many women are sentenced and incarcerated for minor crimes, including for being unable to pay back microfinance loans, or for informal small economic activities that meet subsistence needs, including being tea ladies, food sellers and domestic workers.

The Special Rapporteur was informed that many women who have served their time remain in prison, because they cannot afford to pay the compensation (diyya) or the money that they owe to lenders. In addition, the Special Rapporteur notes with concern that pregnant women are regularly imprisoned

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<sup>317</sup> TheirWorld, [Sudan prosecutor tries to reinstate death sentence for child bride Noura](#), 24 August 2018

<sup>318</sup> TheirWorld, [Sudan prosecutor tries to reinstate death sentence for child bride Noura](#), 24 August 2018

<sup>319</sup> TheirWorld, [Sudan prosecutor tries to reinstate death sentence for child bride Noura](#), 24 August 2018

<sup>320</sup> World Prison Brief, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 2 October 2018]

<sup>321</sup> World Prison Brief, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 2 October 2018]

<sup>322</sup> World Prison Brief, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 2 October 2018]

<sup>323</sup> Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), [DFAT Country Information Report, Sudan](#), 27 April 2016, Section 5.23-5.26



and give birth in prison without the appropriate medical care. Access to other medical services, such as routine tests for HIV/AIDS and cancer detection, including Pap tests, are not available.<sup>324</sup>

An African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) report covering the period December 2016 to December 2017 noted that:

Reports of detention conditions in Sudan are showing that treatment of prisoners and their engagement in hard labour without any precautions such as protective gear, to ensure that their safety and health are not at risk, contravenes with protections provided under Sudan law and international standards.<sup>325</sup>

An August 2016 ACJPS report documented the conditions of prisoners on death row as follows:

Conditions in detention facilities in Sudan are very poor. The detention facilities lack adequate health care and food supplies due to inadequate resources which result in the perpetuation of a poor overall infrastructure of the system. The treatment of prisoners often runs counter to internationally acceptable standards, with those on death row being routinely shackled or subjected to solitary confinement in small cells.[...]

Death row inmates in Sudan have permanent fixture of handcuffs connected to shackles on their legs for the duration of their stay on death row. Testimonies taken by ACJPS researchers have shed light on how the shackles cause skin chaffing and severe wounds and pain to prisoners. The pain and discomfort is further increased due to the fact that the shackle chains are very short, preventing detainees from being able to stand upright. Detainees have testified to ACJPS that the shackles force them to crouch down when they walk. These restrictive and painful conditions are a permanent burden, as the prisoners are kept chained not only inside the cells, but also when they are working and during visits with families and lawyers. This creates an atmosphere not only of discomfort but also of humiliation.<sup>326</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of State's annual report covering 2017, "Prison conditions throughout the country remained harsh, overcrowded, and life threatening" and that "According to human rights activists and released detainees, DMI [Directorate of Military Intelligence] officials also detained civilians on military installations, especially in conflict areas".<sup>327</sup> The same source further documented that:

Overall conditions, including food, sanitary and living conditions, were reportedly better in women's detention facilities and prisons, such as the Federal Prison for Women in Omdurman, than at equivalent facilities for men, such as Kober or Omdurman Prisons. In Khartoum juveniles were not held in adult prisons or jails, but they were reportedly held with adults elsewhere.

Prison health care, heating, ventilation, and lighting were often inadequate. Some prisoners did not have access to medications or physical examinations. Authorities generally provided food, water, and sanitation to prisoners, although the quality of all three was basic. Whereas prisoners previously relied on family or friends for food, families were not allowed to provide food or other items to family members. Most prisoners did not have beds. Former detainees reported needing to purchase foam mattresses. Ventilation and lighting conditions differed among prisons. Overcrowding was a major problem.

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<sup>324</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraphs 30-31

<sup>325</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Report on Human Rights Situation in Sudan December 2016-December 2017](#), 2 January 2018

<sup>326</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [The Wide Application of the Death Penalty in Sudan](#), August 2016, p.16

<sup>327</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. Prison and Detention Center Conditions

There were reports of deaths due to negligence in prisons and pretrial detention centers, but comprehensive figures were not available. Local press reported deaths resulting from suspected torture by police (see section 1.a.). Human rights advocates reported that additional deaths resulted from harsh conditions at military detention facilities, such as extreme heat and lack of water.

Authorities regularly denied prisoners held in NISS facilities visits from family and lawyers and, in the case of foreign prisoners, from foreign government representatives. Some former detainees reported security forces held them incommunicado; beat them; deprived them of food, water, and toilets; and forced them to sleep on cold floors.

Political prisoners were held in special sections of prisons. The main prison in Khartoum, Kober Prison, contained separate sections for political prisoners, those convicted of financial crimes, and others. NISS holding cells in Omdurman prisons were known to local activists as “the fridges” due to the extremely cold-controlled temperatures and the lack of windows and sunlight. [...]

Christian clergy held services in prisons, but access was irregular and varied across prisons. Sunni imams were granted access to facilitate Friday prayers. Shia are prohibited from leading prayers. As a result, no Shia imams were allowed to enter prisons to conduct prayers. Detained Shia Muslims were permitted to join prayers led by Sunni imams.<sup>328</sup>

Human Rights Watch noted in a May 2017 publication that “The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) regularly detains activists, students, lawyers, doctors, community leaders, human rights defenders, and perceived government critics. It often holds detainees for long periods, without access to a lawyer or family visits”.<sup>329</sup> The U.S. Department of State’s 2017 annual report similarly noted “NISS officials frequently denied holding individuals in their custody or refused to confirm their place of detention. [...] Police reportedly allowed some visitors, including lawyers and family members, while prisoners were in custody and during judicial hearings. Political detainees and other prisoners held in NISS custody seldom were allowed visits from lawyers or family members, despite repeated requests for access. Visitors generally were not allowed access to prisoners held in NISS custody, however”.<sup>330</sup> With regards to pre-trial detention the same source documented that “lengthy pretrial detention was common. The large number of detainees and judicial inefficiency resulted in trial delays. In cases involving political defendants accused of subverting national security, the accused may be held for as long as four and one-half months, with the possibility of further extended detention periods, before being formally charged”.<sup>331</sup>

The 2017 U.S. State Department report also considered that “The state of detention facilities administered by the SLM/AW and SPLM-N in their respective rebel-controlled areas could not be verified due to lack of access”.<sup>332</sup>

#### Detention conditions in the Two Areas

In May 2016 Radio Tamazuj reported that “A citizen called Mustafa Hussein was tortured to death inside military intelligence in Sudan’s Blue Nile state. [...] The family member said the chief told them there are dozens of citizens still in military intelligence custody in bad conditions”.<sup>333</sup> A November 2016 article from the same source recorded that “Two local youth died two days being released from military intelligence custody in Damazin town in Sudan’s Blue Nile state, multiple sources said.

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<sup>328</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. Prison and Detention Center Conditions

<sup>329</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Human Rights Benchmarks for Sudan - Eight Ways to Measure Progress](#), 3 May 2017

<sup>330</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. Prison and Detention Center Conditions

<sup>331</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.d. Arrest procedures and treatment of detainees

<sup>332</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.g. Abuses in Internal Conflict

<sup>333</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Sudanese citizen tortured to death at Blue Nile military intelligence prison](#), 10 May 2016

[...] They revealed that the detainees inside the prison can reach 100, saying all of them are civilians. The detainees are currently living in bad humanitarian conditions, according to the same sources”.<sup>334</sup>

A May 2017 Radio Tamazuj article detailed that “ Sudan’s Military Intelligence in Blue Nile State has released more than 60 detained civilians, including 35 women accused of spying for the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N), a military source said. [...] The source, who preferred anonymity, told Radio Tamazuj the detainees faced bad conditions while in detention. He further said other people are still in detention in Damazin town”.<sup>335</sup>

The Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO Centre) recorded in its annual report on the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile covering 2017 that “many times people under detention have been denied their rights like medical access, family and lawyers’ visits”.<sup>336</sup>

#### 4.5.1. Torture in detention

Amnesty International explained in an April 2018 public statement that whilst Sudan signed the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) in 1986, it is still yet to ratify the Convention.<sup>337</sup> According to the U.S. Department of State’s annual report covering 2017, “The 2005 Interim National Constitution prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, but security forces reportedly continued to torture, beat, and harass suspected political opponents, rebel supporters, and others”.<sup>338</sup> The same source further described that

Government security forces (including police, NISS, and SAF Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) personnel) beat and tortured physically and psychologically persons in detention, including members of the political opposition, civil society, and journalists, according to civil society activists in Khartoum, former detainees, and NGOs. Reports of torture and other forms of mistreatment included prolonged isolation, exposure to extreme temperature variations, electric shock, and use of stress positions. [...] Human rights groups alleged that NISS regularly harassed and sexually assaulted many of its female detainees. [...]

Detainees reported physical violence by guards. Political detainees reported facing harsher treatment. One former detainee recounted being forced to beat a fellow detainee while both were blindfolded. He stated he did not know who he was beating until the other detainee screamed in pain. Other former detainees recounted hours-long beating sessions during which NISS agents reportedly rounded up multiple prisoners, moved them to a large room, beat them with closed fists, and struck them with weapons.

Rebel groups in Darfur and the Two Areas reportedly detained persons in isolated locations in prison-like detention centers.<sup>339</sup>

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan in his report covering the period from September 2017 to June 2018 noted “Prior to his mission, the Independent Expert had received reports of restrictions on political rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of

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<sup>334</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Two youth die after being released from military intelligence prison in Damazin](#), 24 November 2016

<sup>335</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Army intelligence agents release over 60 detained civilians in Blue Nile](#), 25 May 2017

<sup>336</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p.3

<sup>337</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: It’s High Time to Ratify the UN Convention Against Torture](#), 9 April 2018

<sup>338</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. *Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

<sup>339</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.c. *Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

religion, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and degrading treatment, perpetrated by the Sudanese security forces”.<sup>340</sup>

An August 2016 African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and REDRESS Trust submission to the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan noted that “Authorities, in particular the NISS, have used torture and other ill-treatment to suppress political opposition, obtain confessions, and / or to discriminate against marginalised groups. Several cases have been documented in which human rights defenders were arbitrarily arrested, detained and subjected to torture and other ill-treatment by the NISS”.<sup>341</sup>

The UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office reported in its annual report covering 2017 that “Arbitrary arrests and the summoning of political activists and journalists continued throughout the year, with multiple reports of torture and ill- treatment by the Sudanese authorities of these detainees”.<sup>342</sup>

Amnesty International explained in a July 2018 Urgent Action that the Sudanese National Intelligence Service (NISS) “maintains broad powers of arrest and detention under the National Security Act 2010 (NSA), which allows suspects to be detained for up to four-and-a-half months without judicial review. NISS officials often use these powers to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals, and many have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment”.<sup>343</sup> The same source recorded in an August 2018 Urgent Action that:

Amnesty International has documented dozens of cases and received numerous reports of the NISS crackdown on activities of anti-government political activists, human rights defenders and civil society activists in 2016 and 2017. Between November 2016 and February 2017, the NISS arrested dozens of opposition political party members and other activists who supported the civil disobedience action in November and December 2016 which was held in protest against the rise in fuel, electricity, transport, food, and medicine costs in Sudan. Those detained were subjected to various forms of torture and other ill-treatment including electric shock, beatings, whippings, solitary confinement, and severe psychological stress, such as threats of rape during interrogations. In many cases the activists are held for weeks or months without being charged with any crime.<sup>344</sup>

Freedom House considered in its 2018 ‘Freedom in the World report’ that “Torture and abuse of detainees and prisoners is rampant, with political detainees from Darfur subject to particularly harsh treatment”.<sup>345</sup> Similarly, Human Rights Watch reported in February 2018 that “ill detainees in custody of NISS are at risk of ill-treatment. The security agency is known for ill-treatment and torture of detainees, and, under Sudanese law, has wide-ranging powers of arrest and detention for up to four and a half months without judicial review”.<sup>346</sup> The same source noted in an earlier report from 2017 that “Many NISS detention centers are in unmarked homes or offices, reminiscent of the “ghost houses” from the 1990s known for torture and ill-treatment. Detainees are beaten, abused,

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<sup>340</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 20

<sup>341</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and REDRESS Trust, [Submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan on the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment in Sudan](#), 31 August 2016

<sup>342</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), [Human Rights and Democracy: the 2017 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#), 16 April 2018

<sup>343</sup> Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Health Concerns for Detained Sudanese Activist](#), 6 July 2018

<sup>344</sup> Amnesty International, [Online Activist Held Incommunicado Over a Month](#), 30 August 2018

<sup>345</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018](#), January 2018

<sup>346</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Prisoner Release Left Many Activists Behind](#), 22 February 2018

and some tortured; some female activists have reported being sexually harassed in detention. To date, no NISS officers have been held accountable for abusing detainees”.<sup>347</sup>

#### Torture in detention in South Kordofan and Blue Nile

The Human Rights and Development Organization (Hudo Centre) recorded in its annual report documenting events in 2016 that “The violations and abuses included in this report are; arbitrary arrest and torture which were mainly carried out by Military Intelligence (MI) and National Intelligence and security Services (NISS) in conflict areas. This intensified because of the emergency status which allows the military forces to arrest civilians. There are also cases of extrajudicial killing and death under torture mostly carried out by military and their allied militias (the Rapid Support Force and People Defense Force (PDF)”.<sup>348</sup> The same source documented the following death under torture in Blue Nile:

On 16th February 2016, Elnour Mohammed Elfadeel, 26 years old, was arrested from his house by the NISS in Bout at Tadamoun Locality. He was accused of being in possession of a gun without official license. On 17th February 2016, he was brought to Damazin military hospital in a critical condition where he died at the hospital on the same day. On 18th February 2016 his family was informed about his death. The family could not receive the dead body without a postmortem which NISS denied, and then the community leader advised them to bury the dead body in Damazin. Medical sources informed HUDO that, the cause of death was fractures on his neck and skull as a result of torture.<sup>349</sup>

The same source noted in its report covering 2017 that “The general state of insecurity and violations persisted because SK and BN are still under the state of emergency ‘as declared by the president of Sudan in 2011’. Many atrocities like arbitrary arrests, torture, assault, detaining people incommunicado, detaining civilians in military camps and other forms of violations have been committed by Police, SAF, PDF, NISS and MI”.<sup>350</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported on an incident in January 2018, “According to students of the University of Delling in the northern part of South Kordofan, NISS officers have detained 54 fellow students from the university campus. 68 others have been arrested by the police. The students were held after they set fire to university buildings on Friday, in protest against the killing of two of their colleagues by an army soldier the day before. The soldier entered the campus with a gun hidden underneath his clothes, and began to shoot at the students. Two were hit and died instantly. The shooter then committed suicide”.<sup>351</sup> Furthermore a student “said that the students detained by NISS agents suffered ‘various sorts of torture’. The 68 students held in police custody face charges related to sabotage, damage of state buildings, and public nuisance”.<sup>352</sup>

An April 2018 Op-ed by Amnesty International’s Regional Researcher for the Sudan reported that “many thousands of people [...] are arbitrarily arrested, abused and tortured in Sudan. Amnesty International has documented and reported many disturbing cases of arbitrary arrest and torture of journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders, doctors, political activists and students”.<sup>353</sup> The same source further noted that (emphasis added):

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<sup>347</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Human Rights Benchmarks for Sudan - Eight Ways to Measure Progress](#), 3 May 2017

<sup>348</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p. iii

<sup>349</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p. iii

<sup>350</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p.3

<sup>351</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan: Reports of torture in South Darfur, South Kordofan](#), 15 January 2018

<sup>352</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan: Reports of torture in South Darfur, South Kordofan](#), 15 January 2018

<sup>353</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

Armed security forces in plainclothes, forcefully handcuff, blindfold and shove victims into their cars. Victims are beaten with sticks, iron bars, gun butts, or kicked, and verbally abused. Several victims told Amnesty International that they were severely beaten for hours by several NISS agents. Some are subjected to electric shocks, whippings, solitary confinement, or they are forced to stand facing a wall, and not are to talk to each other. Some have fainted during the torture. Some have been raped.

**People from the conflict areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile are subjected to even worse treatment and spiteful racial insults.**

**“Before they ask you your name, they ask you where you are from and your tribe. If your tribe is not a tribe they approve of, you get tortured for your tribe, then you get tortured for your political affiliation, or group, or for being in a protest,”** Mohamed Salah [torture survivor] affirmed.<sup>354</sup>

Radio Dabanga recorded in June 2018 that:

The Sudanese Military Intelligence released a man from El Abbasiya after severely torturing him during his detention that lasted more than three months.

Mohamed Awad Bakheet, a 45-year-old trader at El Abbasiya market, was arrested by military intelligence (MI) agents on March 5. His whereabouts were unknown, the Sudanese Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO) reported at the time. Bakheet is a former member of the rebel SPLM-N in South Kordofan.

On June 7, Bakheet was released with severe torture scars and in a bad psychological condition. A doctor informed HUDO that the kind of scars seem to be a result of a leather whip saturated by sulfuric acid, which may be used by Sudanese MI to intensify the pain on the victim. The itching of the skin may last long.

He concluded that Bakheet was severely beaten or slashed on his back, denied medical care and psychologically harmed by racist insults. Currently he suffers from the torture wounds – of which HUDO released photographic evidence – and scars, and his skin is itching severely. He is not able to lay on his back and sleep.<sup>355</sup>

In September 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that “Members of the Military Intelligence (MI) have reportedly beaten-up and tortured six men in Abbasiya in South Kordofan. One of the victims succumbed to his wounds on Saturday. [...] The men had publicly criticised an accident in which a motorcycle driver was run-over by an MI vehicle in the area”.<sup>356</sup> Reporting on the same incident the HUDO Centre documented that “On 8th September 2018, Mr. Aldouma M. Osman died at Um-Rawaba hospital as a result of torture. He was tortured by the Military Intelligence (MI) in Al-Abbasiya after being arrested together with other eight (8) civilians. [...] According to a reliable source from Um-Rawaba hospital informed HUDO that, the cause of death was renal failure and high degree of skin burning by sulfuric acid”.<sup>357</sup>

## **5. Human rights situation: civil and political rights**

### **5.1. Freedom of expression, association, and assembly**

With special reference to the general situation in Sudan, the 2018 US Department of State country report on Sudan (covering 2017) noted with regards to the right to freedom of assembly that “Although the Interim National Constitution and law provide for freedom of peaceful assembly, the government severely restricted this right. The criminal code considers gatherings of more than five persons without a permit to be illegal. Organizers must notify the government 36 hours prior to

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<sup>354</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

<sup>355</sup> Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan MI release man after torture](#), 26 June 2018

<sup>356</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Man 'tortured to death' in South Kordofan](#), 12 September 2018

<sup>357</sup> HUDO Centre, [Arrest and Death Caused by Torture](#), 13 September 2018



assemblies and rallies”.<sup>358</sup> The same source further provided the following overview of the right to freedom of association and its implementation in practice:

The Interim National Constitution and law provide for freedom of association, but the government severely restricted this right. The law prohibits political parties linked to armed opposition groups. The government closed civil society organizations or refused to register them on several occasions. In June the HAC [Humanitarian Aid Commission] suspended the activities of Sharie al-Hawadith, an NGO in Kassala that provided medical treatment. According to independent reports, the organization received a letter from local authorities in eastern Sudan notifying them they were suspended. No reason was provided.

Government and security forces continued arbitrarily to enforce provisions, specifically Articles 7 to 14, of the Sudan Voluntary and Humanitarian Works Act of 2006, frequently referred to as the NGO law, including measures that strictly regulate an organization’s ability to receive foreign financing and register public activities.

The government maintained its policy of “Sudanization” of international NGOs. Many organizations reported they faced administrative difficulties if they refused to have progovernment groups implement their programs at the state level.<sup>359</sup>

Amnesty International noted in an April 2018 statement that “Since January 2018, Amnesty International has documented an intensified crackdown on opposition political activists in connection with sporadic protests over the rise of cost of living in Sudan. Hundreds were arrested and detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Many of those released reported that they had been subjected to torture or other ill-treatment while in detention”.<sup>360</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) noted its concern in May 2018 over the “targeting of Sudanese citizens by the authorities for their online activity” and further reported that:

Over the years, social media platforms have been increasingly used by Sudanese citizens to voice concerns over the governance of their country, among others. Given the restrictive space, the online platforms are seen as a medium to freely express concerns and commentary on different issues affecting the ordinary citizen. Sudanese activists have also relied on social media to run different campaigns including the 2016 civil disobedience campaign against anti-austerity measures. Various media houses in Sudan have also launched online news sites that have made it possible to publish articles on topics that might have otherwise been deemed red line topics and exposed them to pre-print or post print censorship and other restrictive tactics used by the authorities. However the Government has extended its repressive tactics and carried out arrests and interrogation of individuals for their online activity and relied on crimes under the Cybercrimes Act to charge individuals for their social media activity.<sup>361</sup>

#### **5.1.1. Political opposition parties and activists**

##### Throughout Sudan

A September 2016 letter from 36 NGOs and individuals to the UN Human Rights Council stated that “Across Sudan, national security officials and other security forces have targeted opposition party

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<sup>358</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 2. *Respect for Civil Liberties, b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association*

<sup>359</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 2. *Respect for Civil Liberties, b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association*

<sup>360</sup> Amnesty International, [Sudan: It’s High Time to Ratify the UN Convention Against Torture \[AFR 54/8199/2018\]](#), 9 April 2018, p. 6

<sup>361</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Four Sudanese citizens charged with defamation and cybercrimes for social media activity](#), 4 May 2018



members, human rights defenders, students, and political activists for arrest, detention, and other abuses. [...] Authorities continue to break up demonstrations and political forums using excessive force and mass arrests”.<sup>362</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of State’s annual report covering 2017, “Security forces detained political opponents incommunicado and without charge. NISS held some political detainees in isolation cells in regular prisons, and many were held without access to family or medical treatment and reportedly suffered physical abuse. Human rights activists asserted NISS ran “ghost houses” where it detained opposition and human rights figures without acknowledging they were being held. Such detentions were prolonged at times. [...] Government security forces (including police, NISS, and SAF Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) personnel) beat and tortured physically and psychologically persons in detention, including members of the political opposition, civil society, and journalists, according to civil society activists in Khartoum, former detainees, and NGOs”.<sup>363</sup>

The 2017 U.S. State Department report also documented that:

Security forces frequently conducted searches without warrants and targeted persons suspected of political crimes.[...]

The government monitored private communication and movement of individuals and organizations without due legal process. A wide network of government informants conducted surveillance in schools, universities, markets, workplaces, and neighborhoods.[...]

Individuals who criticized the government publicly or privately were subject to reprisal, including arrest. The government attempted to impede such criticism and monitored political meetings and the press. [...]

Authorities monitored and impeded political party meetings and activities, restricted political party demonstrations, used excessive force to break them up, and arrested opposition party members.<sup>364</sup>

The UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office reported in its annual report covering 2017 that “While the government demonstrated an increased willingness to engage with the international community on human rights issues, the state continued to restrict freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, and to carry out the arbitrary detention of political and human rights activists”.<sup>365</sup> Furthermore, “Arbitrary arrests and the summoning of political activists and journalists continued throughout the year, with multiple reports of torture and ill- treatment by the Sudanese authorities of these detainees”.<sup>366</sup>

Freedom House explained in its 2018 ‘Freedom in the World report’ that “Sudan has more than 100 political parties but they face obstacles that prevent them from operating and competing freely. The government imposes onerous regulations on opposition parties, and uses the NISS to intimidate, harass, and detain opposition officials”.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> [Letter from 36 NGOs and individuals regarding the human rights situation in Sudan in advance of the 33rd session of the UN Human Rights Council](#), 7 September 2016

<sup>363</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1.b. Disappearance and c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

<sup>364</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1f. Arbitrary or Unlawful Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence, 2.a.. Freedom of Expression, Including for the Press, Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

<sup>365</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), [Human Rights and Democracy: the 2017 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#), 16 April 2018

<sup>366</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), [Human Rights and Democracy: the 2017 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#), 16 April 2018

<sup>367</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018](#), January 2018

According to Amnesty International's annual report covering 2017, "The activities of civil society organizations and political opposition parties were extensively restricted. The National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) prevented many civil society organizations and opposition parties from holding events".<sup>368</sup> Similarly, Human Rights Watch's annual report for 2017 recorded that "Security officials detained opposition members, journalists, and labor leaders throughout the year, often for long periods without charge or access to lawyers. They routinely beat detainees during interrogations".<sup>369</sup>

Human Rights Watch noted in a May 2017 publication that "The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) regularly detains activists, students, lawyers, doctors, community leaders, human rights defenders, and perceived government critics".<sup>370</sup>

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan in his report covering the period from September 2017 to June 2018 noted "It is also reported that dozens of prominent political activists, human rights defenders and journalists were arrested by the National Intelligence and Security Service from their homes or offices and held incommunicado or taken to undisclosed locations" and "Prior to his mission, the Independent Expert had received reports of restrictions on political rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and degrading treatment, perpetrated by the Sudanese security forces".<sup>371</sup>

Amnesty International explained in a July 2018 urgent action with regards to the situation in Sudan in general that "Between November 2016 and February 2017, the NISS [the Sudanese National Intelligence Service] arrested dozens of opposition political party members and other activists who supported the civil disobedience action in November and December 2016, which was held in protest against the rise in fuel, electricity, transport, food, and medicine costs in Sudan. Those detained were subjected to various methods of torture and other ill-treatment, including electric shocks, beatings, whippings, solitary confinement, and severe psychological pressure. This included threats of rape during interrogations. In many cases the activists have been held for weeks or months without being charged with any crime. In 2018, at least 140 opposition party members, human rights defenders, students and women rights activists were arrested and detained by the NISS between 6 January and 10 February in connection with sporadic protests around Sudan over the rise in the cost of food and medicine. In April 2018, they were all released without charge".<sup>372</sup>

In September 2018 the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) submitted to the UN Human Rights Council that:

Our organizations are concerned about the suppression of peaceful protests by government security forces with unlawful use of excessive force, attacks on the media and impermissible restrictions on access to information, targeting of various civil society actors including human rights defenders, activists, journalists, bloggers and other dissenting voices with threats, intimidation, harassment, arbitrary detention and trumped-up criminal prosecutions, other restrictions on independent civil society, use of torture and other ill-treatment by national security officials, and on-going violations in the conflict areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.<sup>373</sup>

<sup>368</sup> Amnesty International, [Report 2017/18 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Sudan](#), 22 February 2018

<sup>369</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2018 – Sudan](#), 18 January 2018

<sup>370</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Human Rights Benchmarks for Sudan - Eight Ways to Measure Progress](#), 3 May 2017

<sup>371</sup> UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, para. 12 and 20

<sup>372</sup> Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Health Concerns for Detained Sudanese Activist](#), 6 July 2018

<sup>373</sup> International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [Call for a Strong Monitoring and Reporting Mandate on Sudan](#), 4 September 2018

Amnesty International contended in its September 2018 submission to the UN Human Rights Committee stated that “During the reporting period, across Sudan, National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) officials and members of other security forces targeted opposition political party members, human rights defenders, students, internally displaced persons from Darfur and political activists for arbitrary arrest, detention and other human rights violations. Most of those detained reported that they were subjected to torture and other illtreatment while in detention”.<sup>374</sup>

For information on the treatment of civil society activists, see [5.1.6. Civil society organizations and civil society activists, including women’s rights activists](#), and for information on the treatment of SPLM/A-N members see the section [5.1.3. Suspected members of the SPLM/A-N](#).

#### South Kordofan:

Radio Dabanga reported that in April 2016, “agents of Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) detained three South Kordofan activists and took them into detention in Kadugli. A family member told Radio Dabanga that the three detainees are El Fadheel Mohammed, Mohamed Rajab Adrawan and Daoud El Faki Kuku. ‘The security authorities also launched a campaign of arrests among the cadres of the opposition parties in the city, following the military campaign in the region’”.<sup>375</sup>

The Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO Centre) recorded in its annual report documenting events in 2016 the following arrests of community leaders in South Kordofan:

On 31st March 2016, Tagali community leader (Omma) of Tagali tribe/ Nuba Mr. Mahmoud Idriss Alzaibaq was arrested in Al-Abbasiya town by NISS for one day and released on condition that he reports to NISS office daily. The interrogation was about his support and assistance to the IDPs in Abbasiya town. He reported to NISS office for one month before being freed.

On 21st November 2016, MI arrested Omer Yousif, 50years old in Al-Abbasiya. He is a community leader, social activist and a member of the high committee of Sanadra massacre. The committee was founded for gathering the efforts and finance from different Tagali residents in order to support the victims and to pay the expenses of Al- Sanadra trial lawyers. He was interrogated about the activities of the committee, which embassies they had met in Khartoum and what they said to embassies. He was released on 24th November 2016. [...]

On 15th June 2016, MI in Al Abbasiya arrested three people including an old man while they were on a visit. The arrested people are:

1. Hamid Ibrahim Taweer, 73 years old, retired civil servant.
2. Ibrahim Adam Kalaka, 52 years old, engineer.
3. Muamar Elsaed Agoumy, 37 years old self-employed.

The three were arrested by MI from the house of Abakar Belo at Al-Omma Neighborhood in Al Abbasiya South Kordofan. They were taken to the military base and they could not be accessed by visitors. The three detainees were with others including Tegali’s community leader Ahamed Elmansour Geiley. They were part of a delegation that represented the tribe of Adam Essa Agoumy who was sentenced to death. This visit was meant to perform/conduct the known agreement (Rakuba) since Abakar Belo is the brother of the murdered person. [...]

On 18th October 2016, military intelligence (MI) in Damazin arrested nine (9) people in Gogash neighborhood of Damazin town. The arrest happened while MI shot bullets in the air which

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<sup>374</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 4. *Liberty and security of the person and humane treatment of persons deprived of their liberty, Articles 7, 9, 10, 19, 21 and 22 and paragraph 19 and 20 of the List of Issues*, p. 11

<sup>375</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Activists detained in Kadugli, South Kordofan](#), 7 April 2016

threatened the people in the whole neighborhood. The arrested people were members of Gogash neighborhood committee which was formed on the request of BN governor.<sup>376</sup>

Radio Tamazuj reported that in September 2016, “Sudanese national security in Abu Jubeiha locality in South Kordofan State have detained 7 youth leaders for hours before releasing them because of some calls by the youth in the area to call for improvement of services especially electricity, which has been cut off for two months. Speaking to Radio Tamazuj, one of the youth leaders who preferred not to be named said the youth were arrested because they handed the national security a letter to allow them to have a meeting in al-Balsam secondary school to discuss the deteriorating services in the area”.<sup>377</sup>

In April 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that (emphasis added):

The Committee of Solidarity with the Victims of the September Demonstrations has confirmed the presence of a large number of political detainees still in the detention of Sudan’s security apparatus despite the presidential decree issued this month to release all political detainees.

Chairman of the committee Siddig Yousef told Radio Dabanga that **most of the detainees are from conflict zones such as Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile**, or students from various parts of the country.<sup>378</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported the arrest of photographers in South Kordofan in September 2018:

Dozens of youths gathered in front of the police station of Talodi in South Kordofan on Wednesday morning, in protest against the arrest of five activists.

The activists were held in Talodi on Sunday. They were accused of photographing and filming military installations in the area and inmates of Talodi prison, and posting them on social media, lawyer Mohsin Saad reported on Monday.

Lawyer Ali Suleiman told Radio Dabanga on Wednesday evening that two of them, Adil Hamid and Imam Jado, were released on bail that afternoon.<sup>379</sup>

### Blue Nile :

In June 2016 Radio Dabanga recorded that:

For two consecutive weeks, the security service has carried out a large campaign of detentions in Blue Nile’s capital, where people have protested the presence of paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. They accuse them of committing atrocities against the civilians.

An activist in Ed Damazin speaking to Radio Dabanga, on the condition of anonymity, recounted the situation in Ed Damazin. He estimated that the security service (NISS) detained 200 activists from the city in the past two weeks; since fighting sparked in the area of Kilgo.<sup>380</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported that “The Sudanese security service (NISS) arrested a number of politicians who joined the protests in Khartoum, Sennar and Blue Nile towns in January [2018]. State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Babikir Digna, told the press in Khartoum at the time that his ministry ‘will not hesitate to crack down on any subversive demonstration against the price hikes’”.<sup>381</sup>

<sup>376</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p.6-7

<sup>377</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Security detain, release youth leaders in Abu Jubeiha, South Kordofan](#), 16 September 2016

<sup>378</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Hundreds of detainees still not released in Sudan](#), 18 April 2018

<sup>379</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Protest against arrest of photographers in Talodi, South Kordofan](#), 13 September 2018

<sup>380</sup> Radio Dabanga, ["200 detained" in security campaign in Blue Nile](#), 10 June 2016

<sup>381</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Detained opposition leader's health 'deteriorating'](#), 2 March 2018

The Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO Centre) described the murder of two community leaders in Blue Nile:

On 29th June 2017, Ommda Ali Hussein Osman, 57 years old the Mayor/ Ommda of Fulani tribe in Tadhmon locality was shot dead by PDF soldiers in Bout.

29th June 2017, at 7: 00 PM in West of Bout town at the watering area (Hafira) which is owned by PDF and guarded by four PDF soldiers, there was an argument between Ommda Ali Hussein Osman, 57 years old, and the Tenant of Hafira Yousef Ali Hamoda to whom he had paid for his cattle to access the watering area for three days, in which the tenant denied the payment. Thereafter, Yousef Hamoda ordered the PDF soldiers to shoot Ommda Ali by saying “shoot this Fulani man”. They shot him dead immediately. One of the people (witness) who heard the gun shots and rushed to the scene was arrested and threatened not to say anything.<sup>382</sup>

In January 2018 the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that:

The Government of Sudan has responded to widespread disgruntlement over recent austerity measures by arresting and detaining opposition political party members, activists and individuals; censoring newspapers by seizing their daily-print runs prior to distribution and use of force (including firing live ammunition) to disperse protests. The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) is aware of 18 individuals, including opposition political party leaders, students, advocates and human rights defenders, currently under custody in Sennar, North Kordofan, Kassala, Khartoum and Blue Nile states without charge or access to family and/or legal representation, for suspected involvement in the anti-austerity protests or voiced concerns about the austerity measures that have caused sharp increases in the prices of basic commodities. [...]

NISS has targeted individuals such as teachers, opposition political party leaders, students and activists, suspected of leading or coordinating the protests through arrest and detention. Some of the detainees were subsequently released while others remain in NISS custody. The detainees have been held in the custody of NISS without charge or access to lawyers or family visits.<sup>383</sup>

In April 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that (emphasis added):

The Committee of Solidarity with the Victims of the September Demonstrations has confirmed the presence of a large number of political detainees still in the detention of Sudan’s security apparatus despite the presidential decree issued this month to release all political detainees.

Chairman of the committee Siddig Yousef told Radio Dabanga that **most of the detainees are from conflict zones such as** Darfur, South Kordofan, **Blue Nile**, or students from various parts of the country.<sup>384</sup>

### 5.1.2. Lawyers as political opposition members and activists

The U.S. Department of State’s annual report covering 2017 noted with regards to the situation for lawyers in general in Sudan that “Lawyers wishing to practice are required to maintain membership in the government-controlled Sudanese Bar Association. The government continued to arrest and harass lawyers whom it considered political opponents”.<sup>385</sup>

<sup>382</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p.3

<sup>383</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [18 Individuals Arbitrarily Detained in the Wake of Anti-Austerity Protests Throughout Sudan](#), 12 January 2018

<sup>384</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Hundreds of detainees still not released in Sudan](#), 18 April 2018

<sup>385</sup> U.S. Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 1.e, Trial Procedures

An April 2018 Op-ed by Amnesty International's Regional Researcher for the Sudan reported with regards to Sudan in general that (emphasis added) "many thousands of people [...] are arbitrarily arrested, abused and tortured in Sudan. Amnesty International has documented and reported many disturbing cases of arbitrary arrest and torture of journalists, **lawyers**, human rights defenders, doctors, political activists and students".<sup>386</sup>

According to the undated website of the independent Dutch Foundation 'Lawyers for Lawyers', "Several lawyers have fled from Sudan after being arrested and tortured by the Security Service or by NISS".<sup>387</sup>

The U.S. Department of State reported the following incident against a lawyer in 2017 (location not specified):

Unknown intruders on broke into the home of a human rights lawyer who defended multiple pastors in religious freedom trials on August 19, while his family was out of town. The individuals broke the metal locks on his steel door, took all of his English-language files and academic papers, and two removable flash drives. They also took his family's television, his two children's guitars and laptops, and his wife's jewelry. In October 2016 unknown assailants also broke into his home and smashed all of the windows and mirrors; no belongings were taken. The lawyer was forced to relocate his family as a result of the intrusions. Observers alleged that authorities may have been responsible for both incidents.<sup>388</sup>

In a May 2018 report on the case of Noura Hussein, a 19-year-old Sudanese woman sentenced to hang for killing her husband after he allegedly raped her, Radio Dabanga stated that her defence lawyers were "were prevented by authorities from holding a press conference in Omdurman".<sup>389</sup> In response to the same case an European Parliament joint motion reported that "the intimidation of defence lawyers represents an attack on the fair trial process".<sup>390</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in December 2018 on the arrest of a lawyer in Kadugli, South Kordofan:

Ten security service agents arrested Bilal Hamid Kalimni, a lawyer and legal advisor, from his office adjacent to the market in Kadugli.

A witness told Radio Dabanga that the agents entered Kalimni's office, handcuffed him, and transferred him to the office of the security service.

The arrest sparked discontent among lawyers in Kadugli. "It's humiliating, the arrest happened without the consent of the Sudanese Bar Association of lawyers," a lawyer told Radio Dabanga.

It is worth mentioning that Kalimni represents a landowner in a trial against a company that plans to open a gold factory in Kadugli. The factory would make use of cyanide, a chemical that is harmful to the environment. The plans are opposed by residents of Kadugli, and land owners have already demanded the local government to immediately stop building the factory.<sup>391</sup>

In August 2018 Radio Dabanga reported that "the security authorities held lawyer Abdallah El Doma, the chairman of the Darfur Bar Association and co-president of the Umma National Party at the airport and confiscated a passport. The Darfur Bar Association said in a statement that El Doma was returning from the USA after attending a ceremony honouring Abdelrahman Al Gasim, the secretary

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<sup>386</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

<sup>387</sup> Lawyers for Lawyers, [Sudan](#), undated [accessed 21 September 2018], Position of lawyers and activities of L4L

<sup>388</sup> U.S. Department of State, [2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Sudan](#), 29 May 2018

<sup>389</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan security ban press conference by condemned woman's lawyers](#), 17 May 2018

<sup>390</sup> European Parliament, [European Parliament resolution on Sudan, notably the situation of Noura Hussein Hammad \(2018/2712\(RSP\)\)](#), 30 May 2018

<sup>391</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Lawyer in South Kordofan gold factory case arrested](#), 16 December 2016



of foreign relations of the Bar Association, who won the American Bar Association for Human Rights in Chicago, held at the airport for a short time before releasing his passport”.<sup>392</sup>

### 5.1.3. (Suspected) members of the SPLM/A-N

This section should be read in conjunction with the totality of section [5.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N](#).

The Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO) detailed in its 2017 annual report that in May 2016 a 42 year old trader and SPLM-N member was hit by an axe on his head on his way to mosque.<sup>393</sup> According to his son, three unidentifiable masked people attacked him and a case was filed with the local police but “no further investigations were held”.<sup>394</sup>

The Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO) reported in March 2018 on the arrest of Mohamed Awad, a former member of Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).<sup>395</sup> According to the same source he was arrested by agents of the Military Intelligence in relation with an incident at Kalenda village where SPLA-N soldiers murdered three unarmed civilians, amongst others the sheikh of the village.<sup>396</sup> According to a June news article by Radio Dabanga, the Sudanese Military Intelligence eventually released him after “severely torturing him during his detention that lasted more than three months”.<sup>397</sup>

### 5.1.4. Individuals (perceived to be) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N

This section should be read in conjunction with [4.5. Detention conditions](#) and [4.5.1. Torture in detention](#).

As explained by the International Refugee Rights Initiative, it should be borne in mind that:

While support for the SPLM-N comes chiefly from the “indigenous” communities of Blue Nile, the simplistic political labelling of groups along ethnic lines, more often done by outsiders than by locals in the context of the Sudans as a whole and Blue Nile specifically, obscures more complex and nuanced dynamics within communities and sometimes even families.

During the second civil war, many of the groups in Blue Nile were divided when some men from the same communities and ethnic groups joined the SPLA, while others fought on the government side. Such divisions have also occurred in the current war, although it is difficult to estimate on what scale: for a variety of reasons, from ideological ones to mere personal circumstances, not all “indigenous” people necessarily stand behind the SPLM-N.

Many of the civilians interviewed said that they know people from their communities or other communities who are fighting with both SAF and the SPLA-N. Some were also familiar with cases of defections between the two sides.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan Congress Party President banned from travelling to Sudan Call Paris meetings](#), 19 August 2018

<sup>393</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 19

<sup>394</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 19

<sup>395</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Urgent Action. Arrest of civilian by MI in Al-Abbasiya, Sudan](#), 20 March 2018

<sup>396</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Urgent Action. Arrest of civilian by MI in Al-Abbasiya, Sudan](#), 20 March 2018

<sup>397</sup> Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan MI release man after torture](#), 26 June 2018

<sup>398</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative, [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspective on the conflict in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, *Impact of war, Civilians targeted*, p. 25



According to the 2018 US Department of State country report on Sudan (covering 2017) "There were reports of individuals detained due to their actual or assumed support of antigovernment forces, such as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) [...] Unlike in prior years, no local NGOs reported that women were detained because of their association with men suspected of being SPLM-N supporters".<sup>399</sup> The same source further noted that "Human rights organizations accused government forces of perpetrating torture and other human rights violations and abuses. Government forces abused persons detained in connection with armed conflict as well as IDPs suspected of having links to rebel groups".<sup>400</sup>

#### 5.1.4.1. Two Areas

On the topic of individuals perceived to be supporters of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) the August 2016 Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding mission report stated that "According to the source [a London based NGO], a person from [...] the Two Areas could also be targeted even if they were not politically active. In the source's view, this was the result of two main factors. Firstly, ethnicity was highly politicised across Sudan, in particular in relation to those who were deemed to be supporters of the armed opposition groups based on a shared kinship. Those of a Nuba descent were considered as supporters of the SPLM-N, an armed movement fighting against the Government in the Two Areas, whilst members from the Ingessana – the same group to which Malik Agar, a leading figure of the SPLM-N, belonged – were also similarly targeted as potential informers, members and so forth".<sup>401</sup>

Regarding the treatment of persons traveling from the Two Areas to Khartoum the same report wrote that "According to NHRMO [National Human Rights Monitors Organisation], when travelling through KIA [Khartoum International Airport] persons from the Two Areas would be treated differently because of being perceived to be affiliated with SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] and they would be subject to more intensive questioning about their background and political involvement".<sup>402</sup>

The Human Rights and Development Organization (Hudo) Centre recorded in its annual report documenting events in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in 2016 that "Through the field monitors and focal people on the ground, HUDO managed to gather credible information about arbitrary arrests. The arrests were carried out mainly by MI, NISS in the two states where the state of emergency was declared. [...] The arrested people were mainly unarmed civilians from different villages and towns. Most of them were accused of associating or supporting the SPLA-N".<sup>403</sup>

<sup>399</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 1. *Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees*

<sup>400</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, 1. g. *Abuses in Internal Conflict*

<sup>401</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 101-102

<sup>402</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 88

<sup>403</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p.6

Radio Dabanga reported in April 2018 that “The Committee of Solidarity with the Victims of the September Demonstrations has confirmed the presence of a large number of political detainees still in the detention of Sudan’s security apparatus despite the presidential decree issued this month to release all political detainees. Chairman of the committee Siddig Yousef told Radio Dabanga that most of the detainees are from conflict zones such as [...] South Kordofan, Blue Nile, or students from various parts of the country. ‘They have been arrested on the pretext of association with the armed movements and called for their immediate release as political detainees or bringing them to fair trials,’ he said. ‘Those who participated in the recent anti-austerity demonstrations, including opposition leaders and political activists have all been released’.<sup>404</sup>

#### 5.1.4.2. South Kordofan

In its analysis covering 2016, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED) noted that:

In South Kordofan, offensives targeted areas previously unaffected by conflict but on which many populations rely for food production (Karkaria, Al Azraq and Al Maradis for instance) [...] Government forces set up bases in these areas and stayed throughout the rainy season, building up their capacity ahead of the resumption of conflict in November, but also preventing civilians from returning to their homes and farming their crops. This was perceived as a strategy designed to push civilians out of rebel-held areas.<sup>405</sup>

The Hudo Centre recorded in its annual report documenting events in 2016 that fit within the time frame for this report the following incidents (emphasis added):

On 2nd September 2016, Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) raided Almaash village, arrested some people and confiscated some of their goods. SAF accused the people of this village that they supply and act as a pathway to SPLA-N in getting their supply from Dilling. The following people were arrested;

1. Mrs. Hano Hassan, 30 years old trader, with infant of one year. SAF confiscated her goods<sup>13</sup> worth eight thousand Sudanese pounds (about 550 USD). She was released on 9th September 2016 with a condition that she should not go back to her village. She was ordered to leave Dilling village and go to Khartoum.
2. Mrs. Beera Kardawesh, a 50 year old housewife. She was released on 9th September 2016.
3. Ismail Khamees, 38 year old farmer was released on 20th September 2016. Idris Wari, 40 years old trader. After arresting him, he was taken to Kadogli prison and later released unconditionally on 28th October 2016. [...]

On 1st April 2016, two military vehicles with a group of armed soldiers under the command of a Captain came to a weekly Market of Gardood-Yama village. On arrival, they ordered Suliman Rabeh Abu Kalam to go where they had parked. When he arrived before them, they held a short conversation with him and instantly shot him dead as police watched and they took away the dead body.

The family of the deceased reported the case to police but the police declined to register the case and could not follow the armed group to bring back the dead body.

An eye witness said: “the conversation held between the victim and the soldiers was about the victim’s brother who is a member of SPLA-N”. [...]

On 12th June 2016, Amna Adam Kuku, 28 years old, was killed by SAF soldier while asking her about her brother who they suspected to be with SPLA-N. He shot her dead with his gun and run back to his military base at Elfaid Eastern School<sup>20</sup>. The family went to the base but, the chief officer threatened them not to come back again to ask. Up to now no case was opened or investigation and the family are threatened.<sup>406</sup>

<sup>404</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Hundreds of detainees still not released in Sudan](#), 18 April 2018

<sup>405</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project (ACLED), [Sudan – December 2016 Update](#), 9 December 2016

<sup>406</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p.6 and p.17

In June 2016 Radio Dabanga reported that a civilian was shot dead by two soldiers with an eyewitness reportedly stating that the conversation between them was about the victim's brother, who is a member of the SPLA-N.<sup>407</sup>

In September 2016 Radio Tamazuj reported that a student was shot and killed in Abassiya Tagali area by a pro-government militia.<sup>408</sup> The same source explained that "The local leader pointed out that the national government assured them that it instructed security agents not to associate local residents of Abassiya area with the SPLA-North rebels", suggesting that the killing was instigated by the perceived association of the student to the SPLA-N.<sup>409</sup>

In September 2016 the Hudo Centre reported that 37 police officers entered a secondary school in Al-Abbasiya town and started shooting in the air while students and teachers were in the classroom.<sup>410</sup> When questioned by the headteacher about the reason for the shooting, one of the police officers replied "we had information that students were planning to demonstrate about Al-Sanadra incident. This is a message to them, this time we fired on air but, if they dare demonstrate, the fire will be on their chests after all, you all belong to SPLA-N".<sup>411</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in October 2016, based on reporting from the Hudo Centre, that two sisters were raped by two men who claimed to be 'police criminal investigators' and accused them of being members of the SPLM-N.<sup>412</sup> Following the rape, the two women went to the police office to report it but were forced to accuse two men they had never seen, a trader and his friend who is a government employee, both Nuba.<sup>413</sup>

The Hudo Centre reported in April 2017 on the arrest of a former teacher in Al-Abbasiya, South Kordofan for being associated to the SPLA-N (Sudan People's Liberation Army-North):

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017, Military Intelligence (MI) in Al-Abbasiya arrested Mr. Alsamani Osman Mahmoud for purportedly being affiliated to SPLA-N. Since then, he had been kept in isolation which created fear that he could be subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

Mr. Alsamani Osman Mahmoud, 50 years old is married and a father for four children, former teacher and a trader.

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017, while Alsamani was at the weekly market of Souq Aljabal in Al-Abbasiya locality where he partly sales his goods, he was arrested by MI officers and taken to Abbasiya military base where he was detained.

HUDO got reliable information that, Mr. Alsamani is under pressure to admit in matters he never committed and they accused him of associating with SPLA-N that he is in contact with some of their officers.<sup>414</sup>

According to a May 2017 statement published by the Hudo Centre: "In Dilling town the security authorities (NISS and MI) put a lot of monitoring on peoples' movement. The security mainly suspects people from Dilling peripheries using motorbikes and they accuse them of supplying SPLA-

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<sup>407</sup> Radio Dabanga, [HUDO urges investigation into killing by Sudan soldier in Kordofan](#), 14 June 2016

<sup>408</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Student killed by government militia in Abassiya Tagali, South Kordofan](#), 16 September 2018

<sup>409</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Student killed by government militia in Abassiya Tagali, South Kordofan](#), 16 September 2018

<sup>410</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan, January – December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p. 25

<sup>411</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan, January – December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p. 25

<sup>412</sup> Radio Dabanga, [HUDO urges Sudan govt. to release two wrongly accused Nuba](#), 14 October 2016

<sup>413</sup> Radio Dabanga, [HUDO urges Sudan govt. to release two wrongly accused Nuba](#), 14 October 2016

<sup>414</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Civilian arrest and suspected to be under torture by MI in Al-Abbasiya](#), Sudan, 26 April 2017

N. For this reason, many people are arrested and tortured. HUDO Centre frequently receives field reports about such kind of arrest”.<sup>415</sup> Radio Dabanga reported early May 2017 that “Sudanese army soldiers shot a Nuba farmer in Delling” who has since been held in incommunicado detention by Military Intelligence without being allowed to see his relatives, a doctor, and a lawyer.<sup>416</sup> According to the HUDO Centre he was released after spending about six months incommunicado and without any legal ground or justification.<sup>417</sup> It was also reported by Radio Dabanga that “Military Intelligence agents in Delling [...] have imposed restrictions on the people living in the area concerning the purchase of basic commodities”.<sup>418</sup> According to a resident of Delling town “They claim that we smuggle the goods to areas under control of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North”.<sup>419</sup>

According to the Hudo Centre, “On 14th May 2017, a group of militia headed by SAF commander named lieutenant colonel/ Suliman Al-Baesh came to Hagar Jawad village on five pickup vehicles. On arrival, they started to beat/ whipping the residents randomly (regardless to age or gender). As a result, one person/ Suliman Abukalam died, about thirty people were injured and peoples’ valuable items were looted. All this happened because some residents are accused of allying to SPLA-N”.<sup>420</sup>

In its annual report on human rights in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (covering 2017) the Hudo Centre described the arrest and detention of the following individuals:

On 11th April 2017, Mr. Alsamani Osman Mahmoud, 50 years old, retired teacher was arrested by MI at a weekly market in Al-Abbasiya. He was taken to Al-Abbasiya military base and accused of associating with SPLA-N. That he communicates with some of their officers. He was later released on 29th May 2017 after assaulting him physically (beating) and psychologically (insulted).

On 6th May 2017, Hafiz Musa Alnour, a 25 years old farmer, was shot on his left leg and arrested by SAF in Dilling. He was taken to Dilling’s Military custody and accused of transferring goods to SPLA-N area. The MI authority confiscated his motorbike, denied him proper healthcare, family visits and access to his lawyer. On 21st May 2017 he was transferred to Kadogli MI custody.

Mr. Hafiz was later release on 7th November 2017 in Kadogli after spending about six months incommunicado and without any legal ground or justification. He was released without any charges and the conditions of his release are not known. He was permitted to collect his motorbike and phone from NISS office in Dilling which were confiscated from him the day of his arrest. [...]

On 4th July 2017, Mr. Shamsoun Tuba a 25 year old farmer, his wife Hawa Nouredin Mamourey, 23 years old and his sister Khameesa Tuba, 21 years old were arrested by MI from his residence in Sheishan neighborhood of Umbrambeta. They first assaulted/ beaten Shamsoun before taking him together with his wife and sister to the military camp premises.

Four (4) armed SAF soldiers headed by a member of MI by name of Nouredaeim came to Shamsoun’s house at 05:30 AM. They beat/assaulted Shamsoun as his family members and neighbors who came to find out watched. They accused him of spying because he had relocated from the SPLA-N territory to the government controlled territory. The arrest was therefore connected to the family’s displacement.

Shamsoun and his family members were later released but on different dates. They were released with a condition not to talk to anybody about what transpired during their detention. The sister Ms. Khameesa was released on 24th July 2017, his wife was also released on 26th September 2017 and Shamsoun himself was released on 27th September 2017. [...]

On 29th July 2017, Mr. Mohammed Ghaboush Yasein 27 years old, a teacher by profession (graduate) who works as a trader in his home town was arrested by a group of four (4) Sudan Army Forces (SAF)

<sup>415</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Shooting and Arrest of Hafiz Musa Alnour in Dilling, Sudan](#), 26 May 2017

<sup>416</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘No medical care for injured Nuba farmer in custody’: HUDO](#), 28 May 2017

<sup>417</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p. 7

<sup>418</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Population of South Kordofan’s Delling not allowed to buy much sugar, flour](#), 8 May 2017

<sup>419</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Population of South Kordofan’s Delling not allowed to buy much sugar, flour](#), 8 May 2017

<sup>420</sup> HUDO Centre, [KILLING AND ASSAULTING OF RESIDENTS BY SAF IN HAGAR JAWAD/ SUDAN](#), 28 May 2017

in Khor-Eldelaib. He was suspected by SAF to be trading with SPLA-N. Mr.Ghaboush was first assaulted/ beaten before being taken to the military base of Khor-Eldelaib and he was later transferred to unknown place. No information about his whereabouts or release up to the time of publishing this report.

On 2nd October 2017, a group of military intelligence (MI) personnel headed by captain named Altayeb came on three (3) land cruiser vehicles and arrested five family members in Elfaid Um-Abdallah. The arrested people included an underage/boy and all were accused of associating with SPLA-N.

The arrested people are; Mukhtar Badawi Adam Shaheer, 18 years old; Elsheikh Abdallah Alhasab Mohammed Shaheer, 17 years old; Hassan Albadawi Mohammed Shaheer, 23 years old; Alhasab Aldaw Alkhairi, 34 years old and Adam Aldaw Alkhairi, 52 years old. All the five are cattle keepers from Elfaid Um-Abdallah. They were assaulted/ beaten during the time of arrest, tied and put on the vehicles driven around the village market showing them to people and soon after they took them to Abu- Kershola MI office (50 km north Elfaid Um-Abdallah).

HUDO got reliable information that the detainees were transferred to El-Obeid MI custody except Adam Aldaw Alkhairi who was held at Abu-Kershola MI custody. They were held in isolation and denied family visits. They are suspected to be under torture and ill-treatment.

On 18 October 2017, Adam Aldaw Alkhairi was been released form [sic] Abu-Kershola MI custody. [...]

On August 2017, a 70 year old farmer by name of Ismail Mohammed Ali was arrested by MI in Al-sobaq village in Abbasiya Tagli. By the time of his arrest, he had gone to the areas under the SPLA/N control to attend his son's wedding. Ismail has got many family members that are spread out in the two areas which are under government and SPLA-N control.

Ismail was later transferred to Abbasiya MI office where he spent more than one month in detention. He was later released on 15th September 2017. After his release, he went back to Sobag village.<sup>421</sup>

As for the teacher who worked as a trader and was arrested by SAF officers, suspected of trading with the SPLA-N, by the time of publishing its annual report [early 2018], the Hudo Center had no further information on his whereabouts or release.<sup>422</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in January 2018 that MI officers had held three people whom they accused of assisting the SPLM-N by smuggling fuel into an area controlled by the SPLM-N.<sup>423</sup>

In an April 2018 update on the human rights situation in South Kordofan the African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) stated that "From March 2014 to October 2017, Ms. Stacy (not her real name), 39 year old, married woman was sexually abused and exploited by Mr. Khalid Gaffer, a security guard at the Aldalang University, after he threatened to report her to the Military Intelligence that she was communicating with her husband who is a member of the SPLM-N", reported the same source.<sup>424</sup>

The same source documented that between January to March 2018 in South Kordofan, "The Military Intelligence has continued to target civilians with arbitrary arrest and detention on basis of their perceived political affiliation with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement-North".<sup>425</sup> The same source further noted that (emphasis added):

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<sup>421</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan, January – December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p. 6-9

<sup>422</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan, January – December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p. 8

<sup>423</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudanese held in Darfur, Kordofan for alleged links with rebel groups](#), 22 January 2018

<sup>424</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>425</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

On 6 March 2018, the Military Intelligence of Al Abbasiya Tagali in South Kordofan arrested Mr. Mohamed Awad, 38 year old, and detained him at the military intelligence base in Al Abbasiya Tagali. It is suspected that he was detained on basis of perceived political affiliation with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).<sup>426</sup>

Three other men detained by the MI around the same time on suspicion of supporting the SPLM have been released after two weeks.<sup>427</sup>

Radio Dabanga recorded in June 2018 that:

The Sudanese Military Intelligence released a man from El Abbasiya after severely torturing him during his detention that lasted more than three months.

Mohamed Awad Bakheet, a 45-year-old trader at El Abbasiya market, was arrested by military intelligence (MI) agents on March 5. His whereabouts were unknown, the Sudanese Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO) reported at the time. Bakheet is a former member of the rebel SPLM-N in South Kordofan.

On June 7, Bakheet was released with severe torture scars and in a bad psychological condition. A doctor informed HUDO that the kind of scars seem to be a result of a leather whip saturated by sulfuric acid, which may be used by Sudanese MI to intensify the pain on the victim. The itching of the skin may last long.

He concluded that Bakheet was severely beaten or slashed on his back, denied medical care and psychologically harmed by racist insults. Currently he suffers from the torture wounds – of which HUDO released photographic evidence – and scars, and his skin is itching severely. He is not able to lay on his back and sleep.[...]

Bakheet was arrested by the MI in El Abbasiya in connection with a deadly incident in South Kordofan. Lawyers said that there is no legal ground linking him to the incident, but he was held incommunicado and could not be accessed by his family or lawyers.<sup>428</sup>

Following a range of killings and theft of livestock in the area of Dalami in South Kordofan between March and July 2018 by “armed men loyal to the government”, a representative of the Nuba Mountains Human Rights Monitoring Network, Emile Daniel, told Radio Dabanga that “The aim of the attacks is to destabilise the area and to force the people living in areas controlled by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) to leave”.<sup>429</sup>

#### **5.1.4.3. Blue Nile**

In its 2017 annual report on human rights (covering 2016) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile the Hudo Centre documented several incidents in 2016, the following of which occurred in the reporting period for this report (post 2 April 2016) and noted the arrest of a doctor accused of being a SPLA-N (Sudan People's Liberation Army-North) supporter in Blue Nile: “On 11th April 2016, Dr. Ibrahim Saad, 43 years old, medical doctor, was arrested by MI Damazin on the accusation that he communicates to SPLA-N members using his phone. He was released on 19th June 2016”.<sup>430</sup>

In May 2016 Radio Tamazuj reported on the forcible displacement of over 2,000 people from Bau locality in Buk town “after Sudanese Army accused them of spying for the SPLM-North rebel group, some of the displaced said”.<sup>431</sup> The same source further reported that “a member of Sudan’s

<sup>426</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>427</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Three released by Military Intelligence in South Kordofan](#), 26 March 2018

<sup>428</sup> Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan MI release man after torture](#), 26 June 2018

<sup>429</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Three killed as Sudanese troops steal livestock in South Kordofan](#), 9 July 2018

<sup>430</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 7-8

<sup>431</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [2,000 forcibly displaced from Bau in Sudan's Blue Nile state](#), 20 May 2016



National Parliament Kumundan Joda confirmed that people have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to harassment by Sudan Armed Force from one side accusing them of spying for the SPLM-N, and by elements of SPLM-N from the other side accusing them of spying for the Sudanese army".<sup>432</sup>

The same source further reported that in June 2016 nine dead bodies were found floating in Blue Nile River after being arrested earlier by MI of which one was arrested by a SAF soldier under accusation of spying for the SPLA-N.<sup>433</sup>

In June 2016 Radio Dabanga recorded that:

For two consecutive weeks, the security service has carried out a large campaign of detentions in Blue Nile's capital, where people have protested the presence of paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. They accuse them of committing atrocities against the civilians.

An activist in Ed Damazin speaking to Radio Dabanga, on the condition of anonymity, recounted the situation in Ed Damazin. He estimated that the security service (NISS) detained 200 activists from the city in the past two weeks; since fighting sparked in the area of Kilgo [...]

They said that as soon as the militiamen arrived, they encroached on some civilians calling them racist names.<sup>434</sup>

SUDO UK reported in September 2016 on several cases of persons arrested in Blue Nile under the suspicion of being supportive of the SPLM/A-N:

11/09/2016. Military Intelligence forces released a civilian from detention having been held for a period of two months. The civilian was arrested in July 2016 on his way from his farm in Belang area, situated in Kurmuk locality, to his home. He was arrested under suspicion of being an SPLM/A-N fighter.

17/09/2016. Military Intelligence forces released a civilian from detention inside the military garrison in Demazin. The civilian was arrested in Deireng area situated in Bao locality in August 2016, under the pretext that he had allegedly communicated with the SPLM/A-N and provided them with information, an accusation that was found to be wholly inaccurate. There are another estimated 80 detainees, mostly Ingessana, within the military garrison in Demazin.<sup>435</sup>

Radio Tamazuj reported in December 2016 that "Sudan's Military Intelligence has detained without charge at least 16 civilians at Samsur area in Bau locality in Blue Nile State" multiple sources have said, falsely accusing them of spying for the SPLA-IO.<sup>436</sup>

Radio Tamazuj reported in mid-May 2017 of the detention by intelligence officers without charge of an unconfirmed number of people including 25 women at Samsur and Boleng areas in Bau locality, accusing them of spying for the SPLA-N.<sup>437</sup>

At the end of May 2017 Radio Tamazuj article detailed that " Sudan's Military Intelligence in Blue Nile State has released more than 60 detained civilians, including 35 women accused of spying for the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N), a military source said. [...] The source, who

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<sup>432</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [2,000 forcibly displaced from Bau in Sudan's Blue Nile state](#), 20 May 2016

<sup>433</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 21

<sup>434</sup> Radio Dabanga, ["200 detained" in security campaign in Blue Nile](#), 10 June 2016

<sup>435</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of September 2016](#), September 2016, p. 11

<sup>436</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Army intelligence agents arrest 16 civilians in Blue Nile](#), 6 December 2016

<sup>437</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Army intelligence agents arrest dozens of civilians in Blue Nile](#), 11 May 2017



preferred anonymity, told Radio Tamazuj the detainees faced bad conditions while in detention. He further said other people are still in detention in Damazin town”.<sup>438</sup>

#### 5.1.4.4. Nuba (South Kordofan)

This section should be read in conjunction with [5.2. Freedom of religion](#).

Deliberate targeting of Nuba communities living in South Kordofan are covered in the following sections: [3.1. Aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks](#); 3.2. Casualties caused by aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks, [3.2.2. South Kordofan](#); 3.3. Unexploded ordinance (UXO), [3.3.2. South Kordofan](#); 3.4. Forced displacement, [3.4.2. South Kordofan](#); 3.5. Denial of humanitarian access, [3.5.2. South Kordofan](#); 3.6. Access to health care, [3.6.2. South Kordofan](#); and 3.7. Food insecurity, [3.7.2. South Kordofan](#).

As a way of background, the Sudan Democracy First Group as reported in an article by Radio Dabanga reported in 2016 that “religious discrimination has clearly been executed by the Sudanese government on the people of the Nuba Mountains. ‘The security apparatus appears to consider their churches in Khartoum as centres of undesirable gatherings and their leaders as opinion leaders who are categorised as security threats given their influence in their parishes. This combination of ethnic and religious targeting and discrimination against Sudanese citizens of Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan and Blue Nile origin has become a key tool of the political conflict in the two regions’”.<sup>439</sup>

An April 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported with regards to racialized/ethnic violence in Sudan:

The Special Rapporteur received allegations about targeted harassment of women from minority ethnic groups, including Darfuri and Nuba women. Their humiliation is in particular linked to their perceived racial identity and questioning of their “Arab” identity. Information was shared about the practice of cutting the hair of some women from Darfuri communities, as well as sexual harassment and/or rape allegedly conducted against both Darfuri and Nuba women by the State authorities. It was also reported that persons of Nuba origin had fewer job opportunities, might be more likely to be victims of violence or threats by the authorities, and were the target of discriminatory application of the law.

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions described above regarding unfettered access and reprisals, it was difficult to gather more information on the manifestations of violence. It is regrettable that the State authorities have denied that racial and ethnic identity is the source, and can be an exacerbating factor, of violations being experienced by women from minority communities.<sup>440</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in July 2016 that the Sudanese Military Intelligence detained three Nuba tribesmen, belonging to the Tagali tribe, interrogating them about another individual who is a member of the SPLM-N.<sup>441</sup>

The Hudo Centre recorded the following incident in its annual report documenting events in 2016 that:

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<sup>438</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Army intelligence agents release over 60 detained civilians in Blue Nile](#), 25 May 2017

<sup>439</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Nuba community calls for rights on Day of World's Indigenous people](#), 10 August 2018

<sup>440</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraphs 33-34

<sup>441</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Three Nuba tribesmen held by Sudanese Military Intelligence](#), 3 July 2018

On 11th October 2016 morning, Mr. Alhaj Kowa, 54 years old, from Chad/ Nuba ethnic, went to his farm four (4) km southeast Habilla but, he didn't come back to his house by evening. The following day/morning 12th October 2016 his family went to the farm to look for him. They family found him dead with two bullets on his head and the other on his chest and they found the farm/garden destroyed by cattle grazing. They went and reported the matter to the police. The police went with them (family) and they started on the investigations by following the footsteps of the cattle. They ended up at Faio village (9 km southeast of Habila). Before entering the village, a group of armed PDF ordered the police officers to go back and the police complied with their order and went back without investigating.<sup>442</sup>

Also in October 2016 Radio Dabanga reported that a Nuba farmer was "beaten, racially abused, and insulted by a herder" with the local police reportedly looking-on and laughing during the incident.<sup>443</sup>

The Hudo Centre reported in November 2017 on the release of a Nuba farmer that has been detained for six months for alleged connections with SPLA/N (Sudan People's Liberation Army-North):

Hafiz Musa Alnour, 25 years old, farmer, married and father was arrested on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017. He is from Kalendi village near Kurgul of South Kordufan about 50 km South Dilling town. He was arrested by Military Intelligence (MI) in Dilling, Sudan after injuring his leg. The MI accused Hafiz of transferring goods to SPLA/N area which was never proved.

Since then he was kept in MI custody, had no access to treatment and family visits. On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2017 he was transferred to NISS custody in Kadogli where his mother was allowed to visit him once.

Mr. Hafiz has been released after spending more than six months (185 days) incommunicado without any legal ground or justification. He was released without any charges and the conditions of his release are not known. He has permitted to collect his motorbike and phone from NISS office in Dilling which were confiscated from him the day he was arrested.<sup>444</sup>

According to the African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), "On 15 January 2018, the Military Intelligence under the command of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) stationed at the Barnwa checkpoint in South Kordofan arrested Mr. Saeed Mohamed Saeed, a 28 year old from the Nuba tribe, as he was traveling back from Lagawa town. He was detained incommunicado at an unknown location and released on 18 February 2018. Reasons for his arrest remain unknown".<sup>445</sup>

Waging Peace noted in a March 2018 report that "It should be clear that Nuba individuals are persecuted in a direct and sustained fashion as part of the regime's war in South Kordofan. It is of particular relevance that it is this context of conflict that provides the basis for the persecution of Nuba as an ethnicity in Sudan. Nuba individuals are by their nature assumed to be either an active part of, or sympathetic to, the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North], and this then often forms the basis of their targeting and ill-treatment. It is important to note that actual membership or allegiance to the SPLM-N is not required for this to be the case. It is sufficient for such qualities to be imputed, although of course an active political profile would significantly increase an individual's risk profile. And besides, most Nuba individuals are in some manner connected to the SPLM-N through large family networks".<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2016](#), 7 May 2017, p.20

<sup>443</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Farmer beaten, abused in South Kordofan](#), 23 October 2016

<sup>444</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Update – Release of Hafiz Musa after six months in detention](#), 14 November 2017

<sup>445</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>446</sup> Waging Peace, [Risk to individuals from Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), March 2018, p. 5-6

An April 2018 Op-ed by Amnesty International's Regional Researcher for the Sudan reported that "many thousands of people [...] are arbitrarily arrested, abused and tortured in Sudan. Amnesty International has documented and reported many disturbing cases of arbitrary arrest and torture of journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders, doctors, political activists and students".<sup>447</sup> The same source further noted that (emphasis added):

Armed security forces in plainclothes, forcefully handcuff, blindfold and shove victims into their cars. Victims are beaten with sticks, iron bars, gun butts, or kicked, and verbally abused. Several victims told Amnesty International that they were severely beaten for hours by several NISS agents. Some are subjected to electric shocks, whippings, solitary confinement, or they are forced to stand facing a wall, and not are to talk to each other. Some have fainted during the torture. Some have been raped. **People from the conflict areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile are subjected to even worse treatment and spiteful racial insults.**

**"Before they ask you your name, they ask you where you are from and your tribe. If your tribe is not a tribe they approve of, you get tortured for your tribe, then you get tortured for your political affiliation, or group, or for being in a protest,"** Mohamed Salah [torture survivor] affirmed.<sup>448</sup>

#### 5.1.4.5. Other ethnic groups

This section should be read in conjunction with [5.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities](#).

An April 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported with regards to violence in custodial settings against women belonging to ethnic and/or religious minority groups:

During the visit, the Special Rapporteur was informed of alleged cases of arbitrary detention of women human rights defenders, including students and women belonging to ethnic and/or religious minority groups. The arrests are usually carried out by officers of the National Intelligence and Security Services or by other State agents. Despite the existence of article 51 of the National Security Law (2010), during interrogation women are allegedly intimidated and suffer torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including being raped in some instances. The Special Rapporteur is concerned about the occurrence of such acts and the targeting of female human rights defenders generally, and in particular women belonging to ethnic and/or religious minority groups. Furthermore, women are allegedly threatened upon their release, and warned about reporting the violations or seeking medical care.<sup>449</sup>

On the topic of ethnic groups perceived to be supporters of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) the August 2016 Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding mission report citing a UN official stated that "The UN official stated that [...] a person's tribal affiliation was a source of suspicion for the authorities, particularly if a person was of African descent. According to the source those from Zaghawa, Masalit and Fur tribes, were more likely to be suspected by the NISS [National Intelligence and Security Services] of supporting rebel groups. However, the source emphasised that not everybody from these tribal groups would be suspected and targeted. The NISS only targeted those who were suspected of being involved in specific activities supporting the rebel groups, according to the source".<sup>450</sup>

<sup>447</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

<sup>448</sup> Amnesty International, [Op-ed: Will Sudan end torture?](#) 3 April 2018

<sup>449</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 32

<sup>450</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 106

Citing a source from the International Crisis Group, the August 2016 joint fact-finding-mission report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the UK Home Office further stated that “Crisis Group also considered that in Blue Nile State, indigenous ethnic Ingessana similarly risked being perceived as supporters of the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] rebel group, who were active in the Two Areas”.<sup>451</sup>

In its 2017 annual report on human rights (covering 2016) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile the Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO) noted on the arrest of Ingessana community leaders in Damazin stating that “On 26th January 2017, the Angasana community leaders Mr. Ramadan Ismail (Ommada/ Mayor) and Mr. Eisa Malik (the Shaikh of kakar village) were both arrested by MI [Military Intelligence] from their houses in Damazin. The MI interrogated them about their refusal to convince the youth from their tribe (Angasana) to join the Rapid Support Force. They were later released on 10th February 2017 (after 14days) with no charges”.<sup>452</sup>

In a July 2017 report the Enough Project described the ethnic tensions triggered in Blue Nile state by the power struggles inside the SPLM-N (Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North):

Divisions in the SPLM-N leadership are creating a real risk of ethnic polarization and violent intercommunal conflict that have already materialized in areas controlled by the movement in Blue Nile state and in refugee camps across the border in South Sudan [...]

The SPLM-N's divisions have already triggered deadly violence between the SPLM-N's army units in Blue Nile state that support opposite sides of the divide. Incidents of ethnically driven infighting among refugees using traditional weapons occurred; dozens of people were killed and injured, and thousands fled the camps to seek protection. The violence continued intermittently through July and remained to be contained at this writing, with real prospects for it to escalate if left unaddressed [...]

Ethnic tensions that were simmering just below the surface in SPLM-N-held areas of Blue Nile state and in the camps for refugees across the border in South Sudan erupted under the pressures generated by the leadership divisions. Many communities in the area face extreme hardships and have been forcibly displaced from their homes by the war. Desperation is increasing with the lack of prospects for attaining peace at the national level that would allow them to return to their ordinary life. Ethnic favoritism that the SPLM-N reportedly practiced in Blue Nile state under Agar limits access to opportunity and representation and factors heavily in appointments to senior positions in the civil and military structures, which further exacerbates these social tensions.<sup>453</sup>

Simialrly, Nuba Reports noted in July 2017 that “The fractures within the SPLM-N movement in Blue Nile **continue** to fall along ethnic lines. Commanders and political leaders loyal to Agar and the former leadership predominantly emanate from the Angassana tribe while other supporters of rival commanders belong to other ethnic groups, including the Uduk people [...] Some of those in Blue Nile State who support the new leadership under Hilu stem from perceived ethnic favouritism within the SPLM-N structure under Agar”.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [\*Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016\*](#), August 2016, p. 38

<sup>452</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [\*Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan\*](#), 11 February 2018, p. 9

<sup>453</sup> The Enough Project, [\*A Question of Leadership Addressing a Dangerous Crisis in Sudan's SPLM-N\*](#), July 2017, p. 12

<sup>454</sup> Nuba Reports, [\*SUDAN INSIDER: SPLM-N POLITICAL INSECURITY IN BLUE NILE CONTINUES, AFFECTS CITIZENS\*](#), 31 July 2017

#### 5.1.4.6. Christians

This section should be read in conjunction with [5.2. Freedom of religion](#).

Limited information was found specific to the treatment of Christians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile perceived to be associated with or supportive of the SPLM-N.

##### Two Areas

Citing a source from the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO), the August 2016 joint fact-finding-mission report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the UK Home Office noted that “NHRMO advised that a Christian could be identified as ‘pro-government’, if they were sympathetic and non-critical about government policies, e.g. security operations in Darfur and the Two Areas. [...] Similarly tribal chiefs or elders from Darfur and the Two Areas would not necessarily be perceived as opposed to the regime if they adopted or supported government policy. According to the source the authorities may support these chiefs and elders economically, to encourage them to support the government”.<sup>455</sup>

A June 2017 joint letter submitted to the US Secretary of State and signed by seven US civil society organisations stated that “Sudan’s constitution guarantees the freedom to worship and establish and maintain places of worship. However, the reality is that members of religious and ethnic minority groups face discrimination and harassment. In particular, those living in conflict areas mainly in South Kordofan and Blue Nile are particularly vulnerable to religious based discrimination as a mechanism to create fragmentation between groups and thus exert state control”.<sup>456</sup>

In an April 2017 article Radio Dabanga reported on the reaction of SPLM-N’s secretary general to the assassination of a Christian church elder in Omdurman:

Yesterday the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs showed its regret of the murder of a church elder at the Evangelical School and Church in Omdurman on Monday. The attack “will not affect the freedom of religion”.

[...] The secretary-general of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), Yasir Arman, said he is concerned that an investigation into the matter will lead to the security agencies playing a role in its outcomes. In a statement today he claimed that the Sudanese government systematically infringes on the rights of Sudanese Christians. “They have become more vulnerable after the secession of South Sudan.”

[...] According to secretary-general Arman, Sudan “undermines” the rights of freedom of religion which led to the secession of, mostly Christian, South Sudan. Because the majority of the Sudanese Christians live in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, “the government is targeting [them] through the racial war and denial of humanitarian assistance”.<sup>457</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in a May 2017 article on the amnesty granted by the Sudanese president to a pastor and two activists, convicted for supporting rebel movements in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur:

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<sup>455</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 89

<sup>456</sup> Enough Project, [7 U.S. Organizations Urge Secretary Tillerson to Consider Issues Relating to Religious Freedom and the Persecution of Religious Minorities in Sudan](#), 29 June 2017, p. 1

<sup>457</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Church attack 'isolated', no threat to Christianity: Sudan FM](#), 7 April 2017

Rev. Hassan Abdelrahim Kodi from the Nuba Mountains and Darfuri student and activist Abdelmunim Abdelmoula were sentenced by a court in Khartoum to 12 years in prison last January, for aiding espionage, spreading false news about Sudan, and stirring up religious strife between communities.

The Czech Petr Jašek was sentenced to life imprisonment (which amounts to 24 years in Sudan) and a fine of SDG 100,000 (\$15,440). His charges were espionage, illegally entering Sudan, and spreading false news about the country. But President Omar Al Bashir granted him pardon after a personal request by the Czech Foreign Ministry.

The amnesty was granted after Kodi and Abdelmoula had spent more than sixteen months in custody and in prison, firstly by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), the State Security Prosecutor's office and then in Kober prison.

The news about the case for long was full of contradicting details, as it was unclear for some time that Jašek was not a priest but a Christian activist. The prosecution against the men alleged that a \$5,000 donation by Jašek in 2015 in reality was meant to support rebel movements in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur.<sup>458</sup>

### South Kordofan

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) noted in a November 2017 update on Sudan that “Nuban Christians in the Nuba Mountains, Khartoum and Omdurman have been especially targeted as both religious and ethnic minorities. The government’s under the radar destruction and expropriation of churches and arrest of pastors is part of a broader campaign to shrink the space available for Christians to practice their faith. The Sudanese government justifies this persecution by misleadingly arguing that with South Sudan’s secession, there are no more Christians”.<sup>459</sup>

The 2018 annual report on religious freedom (covering 2017) from the US Department of State similarly stated that “Some observers stated a factor in the government’s intervention was that most SCOC [Sudanese Church of Christ] members are ethnically Nuba, from the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan state, where the government was fighting a continuing insurgency. The observers said the government has accused ethnic Nuba of supporting the 2011 secession and continuing conflict in the areas adjacent to the border with South Sudan and has thus targeted them for their religious and ethnic affiliations”.<sup>460</sup>

### **5.1.5. Freedom of the Media**

Limited information was found specific to the freedom of the media in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Some information has therefore been included on the situation in Sudan more generally.

### Throughout Sudan

By way of background, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) summarised the situation in Sudan as follows:

The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) have continuously employed a number of tactics intended to censor information deemed to be critical of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) published in print and online media. Tactics utilized by the NISS include summoning journalists, preventing the distribution of printed copies of newspapers without rationale; imposing “red lines” on media through telephone communication to editors-in-chief; and blacklisting journalists from publishing their work in newspapers.

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<sup>458</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan also pardons co-convicted of Christian activist](#), 12 May 2017

<sup>459</sup> US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [Policy Update: Sudan: Christian Persecution](#), November 2017, p. 2

<sup>460</sup> US Department of State, [2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Sudan](#), 29 May 2018, *Government Practices*



Post-print censorship is routinely used by the NISS to intimidate editors from publishing on what are often referred to as 'red line' issues, which are issues that the authorities deem sensitive and seek to control in public debate. It is also thought to have the intended impact of causing editors to self-censor to avoid financial losses. Though the issues deemed 'red line' are often blurry and unclear, current themes subjected to censorship include any coverage of crackdown on popular protests, worsening economic situation, corruption, human rights violations, reporting on the conflicts in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, the relationship between Sudan and other Gulf states and internal rift within the ruling party.<sup>461</sup>

Amnesty International in its September 2018 submission to the UN Human Rights Committee provided the following summary with regards to freedom of expression in 2016 up to early 2018:

During the reporting period, the government of Sudan continued its harassment and censorship of newspapers which regularly faced arbitrary confiscation of their publications. During 2016, 12 newspapers had their issues confiscated on 22 different occasions. Dozens of journalists were arrested and interrogated by the NISS Media Office and the Press and the Publications Prosecution Office in Khartoum.<sup>51</sup> In the second half of 2017, authorities confiscated print-runs belonging to six newspapers on 26 occasions. Restrictions on the right to freedom of expression continued with newspaper editors and journalists regularly instructed not to cover subjects considered as a security threat. Twelve journalists were repeatedly summoned and investigated by the NISS, and two others were convicted for reporting on issues said to be a threat to security [...]. In the first half of 2018, the Sudanese government continued their suppression on press freedom including by re-introducing pre-press censorship, confiscating entire print runs of independent newspapers and arbitrarily arresting journalists.<sup>462</sup>

Freedom House noted in its 2018 annual report on political rights and civil liberties in Sudan (covering 2017) with regards to press freedom that "Sudan's diverse media faces many obstacles due to government restrictions, censorship, and harassment of journalists by NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] agents. Journalists are forbidden to publish stories about 15 so-called red line issues, including articles about the NISS and the army. In July [2017] alone, at least three reporters were interrogated or detained by NISS agents for allegedly crossing these lines. In July [2017], Saudi Arabia deported three Sudanese bloggers to Khartoum. The men, who had helped organize antigovernment protests, were detained and have been held incommunicado ever since. A favored NISS tactic is to seize the print runs of newspapers that publish articles it does not like. This practice occurred with regularity in 2017; even progovernment publications and a sports newspaper were impacted".<sup>463</sup>

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office noted in its Sudan chapter of the annual report on human rights (covering 2017) that "Following a marked decrease in the seizure of newspapers by the security services in the first half of the year (confiscation of three print-runs), more than 30 print-runs were confiscated in the second half of 2017, the majority in December. Sudan continues to be ranked 174th out of 180 countries cited in the World Press Freedom Index. [...] Arbitrary arrests and the summoning of political activists and journalists continued throughout the year, with multiple reports of torture and illtreatment by the Sudanese authorities of these detainees".<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Violations against free press and freedom of expression in Sudan May/June 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 4 October 2018

<sup>462</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 6. *Freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association*, 6.1 *Silencing the press*, pages 17/18

<sup>463</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018 - Sudan](#), 16 January 2018, *Freedom of Expression and Belief*

<sup>464</sup> UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy. The 2017 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Report](#), July 2018, p. 49



In its 2017 'Freedom on the Net' report (covering the period June 2016 – May 2017) Freedom House described the legal environment governing press and internet freedom: "Sudan has restrictive laws that limit press and internet freedom. Most notably, the Informatic Offences (Combating) Act 2007 (known as the IT Crime Act, or electronic crimes law) criminalizes the establishment of websites that criticize the government or publish defamatory material and content that disturbs public morality or public order. Violations involve fines and prison sentences between two to five years".<sup>465</sup>

The same report further described the main legal developments that took place during the reporting period:

In June 2016, the Minister of Communications and Information Technology announced draft amendments to the electronic crimes law, which are expected to include defamation on social media platforms and communications apps, and increase penalties to up to 10 years in prison. In early 2017, the First Deputy Prosecutor of the Cyber Crime Unit, Abdel Moneim Abdel Hafez, also stated that the government was seeking to implement programs that control the spread of information on social media. The Minister of Justice also approved establishing a new cybercrimes prosecution unit in August 2016.

In November 2016, the highly restrictive Press and Printed Press Materials Law of 2004 was updated to include specific clauses pertaining to online journalism, extending onerous limitations long placed on the traditional press to the online sphere, such as provisions that hold editors-in-chief liable for all content published by their press outlets. National security imperatives also restrict journalism, particularly under the 2010 National Security Act, which gives the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) immunity from prosecution and the permission to arrest, detain, and censor journalists under the pretext of national security.

In December 2016, the vice president of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) announced that online activists would not be allowed to enter Sudan and that they would be detained upon arrival.

In October 2017, the ministry of information and broadcasting proposed new amendments to the Press and Publications Act that will reportedly require digital newspapers to register with the Journalism Council and subject social media to other government controls.<sup>466</sup>

The 2018 US Department of State country report on Sudan (covering 2017) summarised the general situation in Sudan with regards to press freedom as follows: "The Interim National Constitution provides for freedom of the press, but authorities prevented newspapers from reporting on problems deemed sensitive. Measures taken by the government included regular and direct prepublication censorship, confiscation of publications, legal proceedings, and denial of state advertising. Confiscation in particular inflicted financial damage on newspapers already under financial strain due to low circulation. Throughout the year the government verbally warned newspapers of "red line" topics on which the press could not report. Such topics included corruption, university protests, the national dialogue, political negotiations in Addis Ababa, the conflict in South Sudan, the weak economy and declining value of the Sudanese pound, cholera outbreaks, government security services, and government action in conflict areas".<sup>467</sup>

In May 2017 Nuba Reports noted that authorities continue to deny access, including for journalists, to the conflict regions within Sudan and quoted journalist and press freedom advocate Abdelgadir Mohammed as stating: "It is not easy for local and foreign reporters to access conflict areas in Sudan unless they have permission from NISS [...] Moreover, local reporters are banned by law from reporting about the conflict zones, it counts as an alleged threat to national security".<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Freedom House, [Sudan: Freedom on the Net 2017](#), 14 November 2017, *Legal Environment*

<sup>466</sup> Freedom House, [Sudan: Freedom on the Net 2017](#), 14 November 2017, *Legal Environment*

<sup>467</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, a. Freedom of Expression, Including for the Press*

<sup>468</sup> Nuba Reports, [Sudan's silent conflicts: State censorship in the war zones](#), 3 May 2017

According to reporting by Radio Dabanga, in February 2018 the Sudanese government had requested an Egyptian satellite service to suspend the Dabanga Dusan satellite TV programme following its complaint about the news channel to the Egyptian authorities.<sup>469</sup>

The same source reported in a May 2018 article that “The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) has forbidden newspapers in Sudan from publishing any material related to the fuel crisis that has impacted the entire country for several months. The NISS ban includes writing about protests and demonstrations or ‘negatively writing about goods’. [...] The fuel crisis in most Sudanese states including Kordofan, Darfur, the Eastern states has created problems in access to water, consumer goods and transportation”.<sup>470</sup>

In an article from August 2018, Sudan Tribune reported that “Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) on Monday seized copies of Al-Jareeda and Al-Saiha newspapers from the printing house without stating reasons. Journalists working for the two newspapers told Sudan Tribune the confiscation comes in continuation of previous confiscations which began prior to Eid al-Adha holiday. They pointed out that the NISS director Salah Gosh, in a recent meeting with Chief-Editors of the newspapers, has stated redlines that mustn’t be crossed including the president of the republic. Gosh also warned the Chief-Editors against covering news of the armed movements in Darfur, and the Two Areas. [...] Also, reliable sources told Sudan Tribune that the NISS has targeted Al-Jareeda because of its continued reporting on the opposition alliance ‘Sudan Call’ which includes armed groups from Darfur region, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states”.<sup>471</sup>

### South Kordofan

In a May 2017 article the International Freedom of Expression Exchange provided an overview of the freedom of the media in South Kordofan:

A media blackout pervades Sudan's other conflict in what are known as the Two Areas: the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State. Despite over 4,000 bombs dropped on civilian targets since 2012 in the Nuba Mountains, the few international media outlets covering the conflict correctly refer to it as a ‘forgotten war’. The remote location with limited access, coupled with the government's efforts to block journalists reporting from the Nuba Mountains, has severely limited coverage, according to Musa John, a local journalist working with the only radio station, Kauda FM, in the rebel-controlled capital. Foreign journalists must sneak in to acquire access, John said, while local journalists “fear for their life, if they try to report here [the government] automatically accuses them of supporting the rebels.” As such, Khartoum ensures neither Sudanese citizens nor the international community have a clear picture about the Nuba Mountains, he adds. “You can imagine, when there is heavy fighting foreign journalists will come –perhaps once a year—but this does not give a full picture of events on the ground, especially for other issues besides the conflict,” John said.

Choosing to work as a journalist in the rebel-controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains is not easy. “There are so many challenges,” John said, “Lack of access, resources and the challenges of war –to name a few.” John, commonly referred to as ‘Mosquito’ by his peers since he is “always buzzing around” was hit by shrapnel from a warplane bombing a village near Al-Azrak on World Press Freedom Day last year. “I felt like I went to my grave and was brought back again”.<sup>472</sup>

Waging Peace noted in a March 2018 report that “Press coverage of events in the Nuba Mountains is almost non-existent, following the regime’s deliberate obstruction of media freedom. Covering the conflict in South Kordofan has become a ‘red line’ issue for NISS [National Intelligence and Security

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<sup>469</sup> Radio Dabanga, [More voices of outrage at Radio Dabanga satellite blackout](#), 8 March 2018

<sup>470</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan press banned from reporting on fuel crisis](#), 2 May 2018

<sup>471</sup> Sudan Tribune, [Sudan’s security apparatus confiscates two newspapers](#), 27 Aug 2018

<sup>472</sup> International Freedom of Expression Exchange, [Sudan's silent warzones](#), 3 May 2017

Service], who are tasked with keeping the press in check”.<sup>473</sup> The same source further stated that “The media black-out on events in the region continues. For example in May 2017, the Press and Publications Court in Khartoum convicted Madiha Abdala, former Editor of Sudanese Communist Party newspaper Al-Midan, of ‘dissemination of false information’. She was fined her 10,000 Sudanese pounds (around \$1,497), for publishing an article on the conflict in South Kordofan in 2015”.<sup>474</sup>

#### Blue Nile

In its annual report on human rights in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (covering 2017) the Hudo Centre noted that “On 1st October 2017, the head of program/ Abduelhafeez Omer Ebaid and the program director/ Tariq Kuku of Blue Nile radio in Damazin were ordered by NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] to report to NISS office at Damazin. They reported and were interrogated by NISS about re- broadcasting a program called Clinic on-air which was recorded four (4) years back and it was about the spread of viral hepatitis in Madinah 10 by then. NISS has linked the re-broadcasting to the watery diarrhea that was going on. The two were released after some hours of interrogation”.<sup>475</sup>

Reporters Without Borders noted in a January 2018 article that “All copies of six newspapers critical of the bread price hikes were seized as they came off the presses on 7 January by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) without any official explanation being given. Four of these newspapers – Al-Tayar, Al-Mustagilla, Al-Karar and Al-Assayha – are independent and two – Akhbar Al-Watan and Al-Midan – support opposition parties. Yesterday the NISS seized all the copies of the daily Al-Jareeda and the weekly Al-Bahth, which had covered protests against the price hikes in the capital, Khartoum, and in the Darfur and Blue Nile Regions. *Al-Midan* was again seized as it came off the press today because of its coverage of these protests, in which one person was killed”.<sup>476</sup>

#### **5.1.5.1. Treatment of critical journalists, citizen-journalists, bloggers, etc.**

Limited information was found specific to the treatment of journalists in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Some information has therefore been included on the treatment of media professionals who write about the conflict in the Two Areas but are based elsewhere in Sudan.

#### Throughout Sudan

In its 2017 ‘Freedom on the Net’ report (covering the period June 2016 – May 2017) Freedom House provided an overview of the main legal developments with regards to online journalism and their implementation in practice: “The highly restrictive Press and Printed Press Materials Law of 2004 was updated in November 2016 to include specific clauses pertaining to online journalism, extending onerous limitations long placed on the traditional press to the online sphere. Draft amendments to the IT Crime Act were introduced in June 2016 to further regulate online speech. Arrests and interrogations for online activities continued in the past year, particularly as heavy-handed censorship on the print and broadcast sectors led journalists to migrate online to disseminate news. Harassment and technical attacks remained high”.<sup>477</sup> Describing the climate for bloggers and online journalists in general in Sudan, the same source noted that “No online news outlet, social media, or communications platforms were restricted this year. Social media users were active in organizing

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<sup>473</sup> Waging Peace, [Risk to individuals from Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), March 2018, p. 3

<sup>474</sup> Waging Peace, [Risk to individuals from Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), March 2018, p. 5

<sup>475</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan](#), 11 February 2018, p. 28

<sup>476</sup> Reporters Without Borders, [Sudan RSF decries Sudanese security agency’s seizure of eight newspapers](#), 11 January 2018

<sup>477</sup> Freedom House, [Sudan: Freedom on the Net 2017](#), 14 November 2017, *Violations of User Rights*

civil disobedience campaigns against the government's austerity measures, though so-called Cyber Jihadists worked to thwart the campaigns by impersonating social media accounts and disseminating misinformation".<sup>478</sup>

The report further explained that "Compared to the highly restrictive space in the traditional media sphere—which is characterized by pre-publication censorship, confiscations of entire press runs of newspapers, and warnings from NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] agents against reporting on certain taboo topics; the internet remains a relatively open space for freedom of expression, with bold voices expressing discontent with the government on various online platforms. Online news outlets such as Altareeg, Altaghyeer, Radio Dabanga, Hurriyat, and Alrakoba cover controversial topics such as corruption and human rights violations. Facing heavy censorship, many print newspapers have shifted to digital formats, circulating censored or banned material on their websites and social media pages; as a result, Sudanese citizens increasingly rely on online outlets and social media for uncensored information".<sup>479</sup>

In its annual report on Sudan (covering 2017) Amnesty International wrote that "In the second half of the year, authorities confiscated print-runs belonging to six newspapers on 26 occasions. Restrictions on freedom of expression continued with newspaper editors and journalists regularly instructed not to cover any subjects considered a security threat. Twelve journalists were repeatedly summoned and investigated by the NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service], and two others were convicted for reporting on issues said to be a threat to security".<sup>480</sup>

Reporters Without Borders ranked Sudan 174<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in its 2018 World Press Freedom Index. The source explained that "Harassment of the media intensified at the start of 2018. Eighteen journalists, including the correspondents of foreign media, were arrested in January while covering opposition protests. An independent radio station was shut down, and two journalists were banned from practicing their profession for a year. Led by Omar al-Bashir, who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, Sudan's regime is exceptionally hostile to press freedom and often resorts to harassment, censorship, seizures, closures, and Internet cuts. The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) uses the most brutal methods to gag the media and silence dissent, shutting down independent and opposition newspapers such as Al-Tayar, Al-Jareeda, Al-Midan and Al-Watan, or confiscating entire issues as they come off the press. In response to the censorship, the print media have turned to social networks to circulate and publish their stories".<sup>481</sup>

In its August 2018 report the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan stated "Press censorship by government security agents continued unabated during the reporting period. The National Intelligence and Security Service continued to intimidate and instil fear of arrest in journalists, which consequently impeded press freedom, freedom of opinion and freedom of expression. At least three newspapers were confiscated by officers of the Service multiple times between 15 and 18 January 2018 for publishing articles that were critical of the Government's response to the demonstrations. In addition, security officials arrested at least 15 journalists. Six journalists were arrested in Khartoum on 16 and 17 January and released on 21 January. There are

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<sup>478</sup> Freedom House, [Sudan: Freedom on the Net 2017](#), 14 November 2017, *Limits on Content*

<sup>479</sup> Freedom House, [Sudan: Freedom on the Net 2017](#), 14 November 2017, *Media, Diversity and Content Manipulation*

<sup>480</sup> Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2017/18 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Sudan](#), 22 February 2018, *Freedom of expression*

<sup>481</sup> Reporters Without Borders, [Sudan. Open season on journalists](#), 2018

credible reports that Amel Habani, a woman journalist and human rights activist, was subjected to ill-treatment amounting to torture during her arrest”.<sup>482</sup>

### South Kordofan

Radio Dabanga reported in September 2017 on the confiscation of *El Tayar* newspaper copies for publishing an interview with the chairman of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N):

The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) confiscated the printed copies of *El Tayar* newspaper on Tuesday from the printing press for the second time this week.

The security apparatus did not provide any reasons for the confiscation. A journalist from *El Tayar* said in Sudanese media that an officer from the NISS arrived at the printing press early Tuesday morning to order the confiscation of copies, before distribution to the capital city and state capitals.

*El Tayar* lost around SDG100,000 (\$14,870) in the costs of printing, advertisements and salaries because of the confiscation, the journalist estimated. Copies were also seized last Saturday when *El Tayar* decided to publish an interview with the chairman of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).

[...] The acting editor-in-chief of *El Tayar*, Bahaeldin Eisa, was subjected to a long questioning by NISS officers on 7 September, because of an interview with Abdelaziz El Hilu published that morning. Security agents questioned Eisa for about three hours about the interview Shamayel El Nur had conducted by telephone with El Hilu in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan.<sup>483</sup>

Waging Peace noted in a March 2018 report on the treatment received by a journalist covering South Kordofan:

In fact, one of our interviewees for this report whom we spoke to on 16.11.2018 (Ms B, an interview conducted with her in 2014 is also included in Annex I) was a former journalist in Sudan. She was tasked with covering South Kordofan, or the Two Areas (this term is used to refer to both South Kordofan and the Blue Nile). She described intimidation tactics including an unwarranted search of her family home, being barred from relevant press conferences, or having an invitation revoked at the last minute, and causing financial hardship. For instance, she was removed from a flight to attend an event, questioned by security officials, and not allowed to board. More seriously, she was also sometimes dragged to the police station when interviewing witnesses, and even held overnight on occasion. She says her only course of action was to self-censor to avoid harassment. The paper for which she worked was also harassed due to the issues it covered. Its editor had to flee abroad, sending money to his team via couriers on cross-border flights, and paying a security guard as they were regular victims of ‘random’ crime like knife attacks.<sup>484</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in an April 2018 article on the arrest of online activists for defaming the governor of South Kordofan:

Police in Khartoum state arrested an activist for ‘defamation of character’ of the South Kordofan governor on Facebook. Two other activists were arrested under the same complaint.

The police arrested activist Awadiya Mursal from her home in El Haj Yousef in Khartoum North and took her directly to Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan. The state government made a criminal complaint against her and others for defamation of the character of the governor of South Kordofan on Facebook.

Earlier, police in Kadugli arrested activists Mohsin Mousa and Mahmoud Mahjoub following the same complaint. They have remained in police custody.

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<sup>482</sup> UN Human Rights Council, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, paragraph 32

<sup>483</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan newspaper confiscated for second time this week](#), 13 September 2017

<sup>484</sup> Waging Peace, [Risk to individuals from Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), March 2018, p. 3

The fourth and final person the criminal complaint was made against, is the director of the national aid organisation the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) in the state. His current state is unknown at the time of publication.

The activists posted texts on Facebook, accusing the state governor of smuggling gold from Kadugli in the government's vehicles, and that their contents were seized on the way to Khartoum.

Residents in Kadugli have confirmed the accusations of gold smuggling against the governor, alleging that "the governor has been smuggling gold for his personal benefit while neglecting the development of the state".<sup>485</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) similarly reported in May 2018 on the clampdown on social media activity in South Kordofan:

On 12 April 2018 at 5 PM, a group of police officers dressed in uniform and NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] officers dressed in plain clothes arrested Mr. Muhsin Musa from his home in Hajar Anaar neighborhood of Kadugli in South Kordofan. He was then taken to the police station and charged with defamation under article 159 of the Criminal Act, 1991 and article 17 of Cybercrimes Act, 2007 following a complaint filed by Mr. Eisa Abakar, the Governor of South Kordofan.

Mr. Muhsin had previously voiced concerns over the lack of water, electricity, fuel services and increase of prices of basic commodities in South Kordofan on his Twitter account. He had also tweeted about the corruption in South Kordofan and mentioned that Mr. Abakar was privately benefiting from the gold mining in the state. The police interrogated him about his social media activity. Mr. Muhsin is still being detained by the police in Kadugli.

On 21 April 2018, the police of Khartoum Bahri arrested Ms. Awadia Mursal Abdulrahman and added her as a co-accused to the case against Mr. Muhsin. She is accused of using her Facebook account to share similar information published by Mr. Muhsin as well as making comments about Mr. Abakar's commercial dealings. Ms. Mursal was later transferred to police custody in Kadugli in South Kordofan where the original case was filed.<sup>486</sup>

### Blue Nile

According to a September 2016 report published by SUDO UK "The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) prohibited newspapers and media outlets from reporting on the outbreak of cholera in Blue Nile [sic], Sennar, El Jazeera, Khartoum, Kassala, Gedaref and White Nile states as well as the attacks on doctors and their subsequent protests".<sup>487</sup>

The same source reported on a legal case brought forward by Blue Nile TV against two journalists:

The Press and Publications Court postponed court proceedings for the second time in the case of Blue Nile TV against journalist Hayder Khairallah and Ashraf Abdelaziz, the editor of Al-Jareeda newspaper. The case was postponed because of the failure of the Prosecution to provide any witnesses. Haider Khairallah and Ashraf Abdelaziz are both charged under Article 159 (Defamation) and 26 (Aiding) of the 1991 Sudanese Criminal Act. Al-Jareeda newspaper have backed up their allegations of corruption based on their possession of two reports from the Board of Governors of Blue Nile TV on the channels performances in 2015 and 2016. The reports reveal financial irregularities in the functional and organisational structure through the use of financial shares (20%) of Federal Endowments without authority. Additionally, they showcase the dissimulation of Islamic Endowments Authority profits since the founding of the company in 2014. The reports furthermore recommend establishing an investigation into the Endowments Authority profits and to return funds of SDG 66,333 and to cover the debts that currently amount to SDG 6,382,280.<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Online activists arrested for defaming South Kordofan governor](#), 20 April 2018

<sup>486</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Four Sudanese citizens charged with defamation and cybercrimes for social media activity](#), 4 May 2018

<sup>487</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of September 2016](#), September 2016, p. 14

<sup>488</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of September 2016](#), September 2016, p. 15



A 2017 report published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) described the risks encountered by female journalists working in Sudan and the Blue Nile State stating that “The problems facing female journalists in Sudan are multiple: harassment, discrimination, violence and all the problems that afflict their male counterparts: kidnapping, press freedom controls, natural disasters, lack of medical care, conflict, even snakebite, animal attacks and getting lost in the wilderness. [...] In the border region with Ethiopia around Ad-Damazin in the Blue Nile State, where conflict and weapons trafficking continue, kidnappings, shootings and attacks on journalists are great risks. But here too the natural landscape is a threat. “Journalists have been lost in the desert, this area has many deserts, and also forests, there is always a problem of being lost in this area,” said Dr Asma [workshop facilitator in Wad Medani]”.<sup>489</sup>

The annual human rights report by the Hudo Centre focusing on the Two Areas in 2017, documented that in October 2017 the head of program and the program director of Blue Nile radio in Damazin were “ordered by NISS to report to NISS office at Damazin. They reported and were interrogated by NISS about re- broadcasting a program called Clinic on-air [...] which was recorded four (4) years back and it was about the spread of viral hepatitis in Madinah 10 by then. NISS has linked the re-broadcasting to the watery diarrhea that was going on. The two were released after some hours of interrogation”.<sup>490</sup>

#### **5.1.6. Civil society organizations and civil society activists, including women’s rights activists**

##### Throughout Sudan

Amnesty International in its September 2018 submission to the UN Human Rights Committee provided the following summary with regards to freedom of association and assembly in 2016 up to early 2018:

During the reporting period, Sudanese opposition political parties and independent civil society organization were constantly prohibited from organizing any public events outside their premises. The Sudanese authorities cited unidentified security considerations to justify the restriction on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.<sup>491</sup>

In its June 2017 report KACE Sudan provided the following overview of the legal provisions that regulate civil society organisations in Sudan:

In 2016, a new draft law regulating civil society in Sudan began to circulate. This law is broadly similar to the Sudanese Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act of 2006 (VHWA) which currently regulates civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sudan, but tightens the legal framework further and risks shrinking the already extremely limited space for civil society in Sudan. The current legal framework is already extremely problematic, as it focuses on humanitarian work and does not explicitly recognize human rights, research and advocacy based groups, unduly restricts the ability of organizations to register, fails to set a clear time line or time limit for consideration of registration requests, requires them to re-register annually, and prohibits access to foreign funding without government permission. In practice, the law has allowed for the de-registration or closing of a number of organizations, including the Al Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE) in a move which was

<sup>489</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), [An attack on one is an attack on us all. Successful initiatives to protect journalists and combat impunity](#), 2017, p. 69-70

<sup>490</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, 2.4.5 Interrogation of Radio operators in BN by NISS, p. 27

<sup>491</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 6. Freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, 6.2 Clampdown on political opposition and civil society organizations, p. 18



ruled by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to be a violation of its members' rights to freedom of association. Unfortunately, the targeting of CSOs has not been limited to attacks under this law, and bank accounts have been frozen, premises raided, and members have been arrested and faced politically motivated charges.<sup>492</sup>

An August 2017 KACE Sudan report noted that "The government of Sudan oversees a hostile environment for CSOs [Civil Society Organizations]. Not only is the 2006 VHWA Act [Sudanese Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act] among the most restrictive in the region, forbidding access to foreign monies without permission and creating onerous registration requirements, CSOs are also subject to other forms of harassment, from arrest, interrogation and prosecution on politically motivated charges. The government has forcibly closed many organizations, while others have moved out of the country under pressure".<sup>493</sup>

The 2018 US Department of State country report on Sudan (covering 2017) stated that "The government was uncooperative with, and unresponsive to, domestic human rights groups. It restricted and harassed workers of both domestic and international human rights organizations. According to international NGOs, government agents consistently monitored, threatened, prosecuted, and occasionally physically assaulted civil society activists. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that the government arrested NGO-affiliated international human rights and humanitarian workers".<sup>494</sup>

In a 2018 report the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) described the violations committed against female human rights defenders during the period June 2016 – February 2018 as follows: "The NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] routinely practices physical and psychological torture and other forms of ill treatment against political opponents and civil activists, including female human rights defenders. Detainees are often assaulted upon arrest, en route to or immediately upon arrival at a detention centre (NISS personnel call this a "reception party") or during subsequent interrogation. Victims are often forced to face the wall to make identification of perpetrators more difficult".<sup>495</sup> The same source further stated that "The NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] have subjected female human rights defenders in Sudan to arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention over long periods. At the time of preparing this report, ACJPS knows of 30 women who have been subjected to such detention for periods ranging from one day to three months on NISS premises, in prisons and in private apartments".<sup>496</sup>

The February 2018 report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders wrote that "The Special Rapporteur notes with regret the ongoing pattern of judicial harassment practices carried out against civil society organizations and human right defenders in the Sudan. He is deeply troubled by information received detailing alleged torture, cruel and inhuman treatment, or otherwise serious ill-treatment of human rights defenders while in detention in the Sudan. These alleged acts are in contravention with the absolute and nonderogable prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as codified in article 5 the UDHR

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<sup>492</sup> Al-Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE), [\*The Watch. A review of conditions for civil society in the Horn of Africa\*](#), 1 June 2017, p. 43-44

<sup>493</sup> Al-Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE), [\*Shrinking Civil Society Space in the Horn of Africa\*](#), August 2017, p. 73-74

<sup>494</sup> US Department of State, [\*Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan\*](#), 20 April 2018, Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

<sup>495</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [\*Situation of Female Human Rights Defenders in Sudan June 2016 - February 2018\*](#), 2018, p. 6

<sup>496</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [\*Situation of Female Human Rights Defenders in Sudan June 2016 - February 2018\*](#), 2018, p. 9

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights], article 7 of ICCPR [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights] and articles 2 and 4 of CAT [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment]”.<sup>497</sup>

The same report further described the situation of human rights defenders stating that “The Special Rapporteur remains alarmed by the hostile environment in which human rights defenders have to operate in the Sudan. He firmly calls upon the authorities of the Sudan to take concrete steps to prevent and put an end to the arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defenders, to investigate all claims of enforced disappearances and harassment against them and to initiate disciplinary, civil, or criminal proceedings against the perpetrators to prevent impunity. The Special Rapporteur calls upon the Sudan to cease all practices that have the effect of depriving or discouraging human rights defenders from exercising their rights to communicate with international organizations as well as for advocating for human rights both individually and in association with others on national and international levels”.<sup>498</sup>

In its August 2018 report the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan stated with regards to the situation of civil society organizations and activists that “The Independent Expert received reports of incidents of harassment, arrests and prolonged detention targeting representatives of civil society organizations, without affording them or their families access to legal representation”.<sup>499</sup>

#### South Kordofan

Citing a source from the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO), the August 2016 joint fact-finding-mission report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the UK Home Office noted with regards to the treatment of civil society organisations that “The NHRMO representative similarly explained that it would not be safe for the NHRMO staff to visit Khartoum because their human rights monitoring work in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile State made them a perceived opponent of the regime”.<sup>500</sup>

Hudo Centre detailed the following arrest in November 2016:

On 21st November 2016, MI [Military Intelligence] arrested Omer Yousif, 50 years old in Al-Abbasiya. He is a community leader, social activist and a member of the high committee of Sanadra massacre. The committee was founded for gathering the efforts and finance from different Tagali residents in order to support the victims and to pay the expenses of AlSanadra trial lawyers. He was interrogated about the activities of the committee, which embassies they had met in Khartoum and what they said to embassies. He was released on 24th November 2016.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> UN General Assembly, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst - Addendum - Observations on communications transmitted to Governments and replies received](#), 16 February 2018, paragraph 123

<sup>498</sup> UN General Assembly, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst - Addendum - Observations on communications transmitted to Governments and replies received](#), 16 February 2018, paragraph 127

<sup>499</sup> UN Human Rights Council, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#), 13 August 2018, paragraph 23

<sup>500</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 88

<sup>501</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 6

The same source noted in its 2018 annual report on human rights (covering 2017) on the arrest of four social activists in South Kordofan stating that:

On 27th January 2017, four social activists were arrested by NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] at Adoliama police checkpoint. The detainees were sensitizing people about toxic effects of cyanide in the gold mines. The arrested activists were; 1) Khlalid Mohamed Madibo, 30 years, civil servant. 2) Almahi shabo, 36 years old, agricultural engineer. 3) AlsadigYagoob, 37 years, accountant. 4) Ahmmmed Albahar, 38 years, Dilling university employee. The detainees had been transferred to Adebaibat NISS office and they were accused of distributing posters. They were later released at midnight on the same day with a condition of reporting everyday to NISS office which lasted for one month.<sup>502</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in March 2017 that “The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) summoned environmental activist Ibrahim Naima to its offices in Abu Jubeiha in South Kordofan on Tuesday morning. Naima told Radio Dabanga that the security services questioned him on his relationship with a locally distributed statement calling on the people of the region to resist gold factories using deadly cyanide by force of arms. He said that he denied any connection with the statement, and pointed out to the NISS that ‘the resistance to these factories is run and carried out through an accredited committee that is known and recognised by all the official authorities in the locality’ [...] Sudan’s federal Ministry of Metals deployed police to protect the gold factories in reaction to protests against several gold mining factories in South Kordofan. The ministry sent a force of 190 policemen in two batches to protect the factories in Talodi, Abu Jubeiha and Kologi. The last batch arrived in Kologi on Sunday, but withdrew after locals started to gather in a large group”.<sup>503</sup>

In December 2017 Radio Dabanga reported that “Four teachers who were arrested in Kologi in South Kordofan last month because of their protests against the use of toxins in gold mining, are facing capital charges”.<sup>504</sup> In November 2017 the same source already reported on the arrest of up to four anti-mine demonstrators following mass protests against mining companies operating in the region.<sup>505</sup>

In April 2018 Radio Dabanga reported on the arrest of three South Kordofan activists by the NISS.<sup>506</sup> The same source noted further in August 2018 that five young men were released on bail following their arrest a week earlier whilst holding a symposium on the danger of cyanide, a chemical which is harmful to human and animal health and used in gold mining.<sup>507</sup>

### Blue Nile

Citing a source from the National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO), the August 2016 joint fact-finding-mission report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the UK Home Office noted with regards to the treatment of civil society organisations that “The NHRMO representative similarly explained that it would not be safe for the NHRMO staff to visit Khartoum because their human rights monitoring work in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile State made them a perceived opponent of the regime”.<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 11 February 2018, p. 6

<sup>503</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Environmental activist summoned by South Kordofan security](#), 29 March 2017

<sup>504</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Four South Kordofan teachers may face death penalty](#), 24 December 2017

<sup>505</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Two more anti-mine protestors detained in South Kordofan](#), 23 November 2017

<sup>506</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Activists detained in Kadugli, South Kordofan](#), 7 April 2018

<sup>507</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Security releases young cyanide protesters in South Kordofan](#), 24 August 2018

<sup>508</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish](#)

In its 2017 annual report on human rights (covering 2016) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile the Hudo Centre summarised cases of activists arrested in Blue Nile during 2016:

On 5th June 2016, the social activist/ Saif-Elnasr Minalla Mahmoud, 34 years old, civil servant, was arrested by MI [Military Intelligence] in Damazin. He was one of the youth who was active in social media. Most of the activists in Blue Nile speculated that, it could be the reason for his arrest. He was released on 19th June 2016.

On 7th June 2016, the social activist/ Ismail Tawakul Fadul, 35 years old Engineer, was arrested by MI in Damazin. He was part of the youth that campaigned against providing Saudian investors cultivation land in Blue Nile state in which the community's interest were ignored. Some observers linked his arrest with this campaign. He was released on 19th June 2016.

On 9th June 2016, activist/ Isam Omer Ibrahim, 53 years old, an author, was arrested by NISS in Damazin town. The NISS accused him that he had offended the governor through his writings; he was released on 19th June 2016.

On 17th September 2016, Mohamed Ahmed Khaleifa, a 35 years old government employee was arrested by NISS in Damazin for taking photos of patients at hospital who were suspected to be suffering from cholera. He was released after eight days on 25th September 2016 without opening a case against him.<sup>509</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in a June 2016 article that "For two consecutive weeks, the security service has carried out a large campaign of detentions in Blue Nile's capital, where people have protested the presence of paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. They accuse them of committing atrocities against the civilians. An activist in Ed Damazin speaking to Radio Dabanga, on the condition of anonymity, recounted the situation in Ed Damazin. He estimated that the security service (NISS) detained 200 activists from the city in the past two weeks; since fighting sparked in the area of Kilgo".<sup>510</sup>

In an article from January 2018, Radio Dabanga similarly reported that "The intelligence service in Ed Damazin, Blue Nile state, arrested activist Ali Hageo following a demonstration against the price rises on Sunday. The NISS have also arrested El Mahi Suleiman, the head of the Sudanese Congress Party branch in Sennar. Reportedly also the president of the party, Omar El Digeir, and Dr Jalal Mustafa who is an official of the party's human rights secretariat, have been detained. On Sunday, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Babikir Digna, told the press in Khartoum that his Ministry "will not hesitate to crack down on any subversive demonstration against the price hikes".<sup>511</sup>

#### **5.1.6.1. Demonstrators, protestors and persons speaking out**

##### Throughout Sudan

Freedom House considered in its 2018 'Freedom in the World report' that "The NISS intimidates individuals who engage in private discussion of issues of a political nature, and reportedly monitors private communications without adequate oversight or authorization. People who take part in demonstrations or meetings considered unfriendly to the government face the threat of subsequent

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[Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 88

<sup>509</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 9

<sup>510</sup> Radio Dabanga, ["200 detained" in security campaign in Blue Nile](#), 10 June 2016

<sup>511</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan security arrests politicians in price hike protests](#), 9 January 2018.

arrest and questioning by NISS agents. [...] The authorities have repeatedly used deadly force to disperse protesters”.<sup>512</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) together with 16 other human rights organisations published an open letter to relevant UN Committees and Special Rapporteurs highlighting Sudanese authorities’ reaction to the recent January 2018 protests, including the beating of peaceful protestors with sticks and batons and firing of tear gas and live ammunition into crowds.<sup>513</sup> They further noted that “the security forces have arrested and detained scores of Sudanese citizens including opposition political party leaders, human rights defenders/activists, journalists, student activists and others for prolonged periods without charge or trial”.<sup>514</sup>

### South Kordofan

Radio Tamazuj noted in September 2016 that “Sudanese national security in Abu Jubeiha locality in South Kordofan State have detained 7 youth leaders for hours before releasing them because of some calls by the youth in the area to call for improvement of services especially electricity, which has been cut off for two months”.<sup>515</sup>

The Hudo Centre recorded the following incident in its annual report covering 2017:

On 27th January 2017, four social activists were arrested by NISS at Aldoliama police checkpoint. The detainees were sensitizing people about toxic effects of cyanide in the gold mines. The arrested activists were;

- 1) Khilid Mohamed Madibo, 30 years, civil servant.
- 2) Almahi shabo, 36 years old, agricultural engineer.
- 3) Alsadig Yagoob, 37 years, accountant.
- 4) Ahmmed Albahar, 38 years, Dilling university employee.

The detainees had been transferred to Adebaibat NISS office and they were accused of distributing posters. They were later released at midnight on the same day with a condition of reporting every day to NISS office which lasted for one month.<sup>516</sup>

Kace Sudan reported in May 2017 on the arrest of a protester in South Kordofan stating that “On the morning of Friday April 15, 2017, citizens of the city of Al-Leera in the state of South Kordofan burned the offices of the National Security and Intelligence Services and two of its vehicles as an act of protest against the national security torturing a citizen of the city. A witness, who preferred to remain anonymous, stated that “four national security personnel assaulted Abdallah Al-Tabaq inside the national security buildings; he was quickly transported to Khartoum to receive treatment as he was badly injured.” The witness further revealed that on Thursday night, Abdallah found a national security officer inside his house without any justification – resulting in a clash between the two. The national security officer headed to the national security headquarters, only to return to Abdallah’s

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<sup>512</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018](#), January 2018

<sup>513</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Open letter concerning the crackdown on peaceful protests and the wave of arbitrary arrests and continued incommunicado detentions by Sudanese government forces](#), 14 February 2018

<sup>514</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Open letter concerning the crackdown on peaceful protests and the wave of arbitrary arrests and continued incommunicado detentions by Sudanese government forces](#), 14 February 2018

<sup>515</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Security detain, release youth leaders in Abu Jubeiha, South Kordofan](#), 16 September 2018

<sup>516</sup> HUDO Centre, [Report on human rights situation in South Kordofan, Blue Nile States/Sudan, January-December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p.6

house with four of his associates. They forcibly took him away to their office in the city, assaulted and tortured him”.<sup>517</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in November 2017 on the use of lethal force against anti-mining protesters in South Kordofan:

A person was killed and two were wounded in a demonstration in Kologi, South Kordofan, against the gold mining companies in the area on Sunday.

Hundreds of protesters burned the house of the commissioner of Kologi and locality buildings in anger, rejecting the activities of the gold mining companies which they accuse of using the toxic chemical cyanide, which can contaminate the environment and harm humans, animals and nature.

Riot police shot and wounded three protesters, including a higher secondary school student. He was taken to Abu Jubeiha hospital for treatment where he succumbed to his injuries. He was buried yesterday.

The protest erupted after the Friday prayers when dozens of residents from El Tirtir and El Tadamon gathered for a vigil in front of the house of the locality commissioner. A delegation of the Sudanese Company for Mining held a symposium there at the time.<sup>518</sup>

Radio Dabanga further reported in December 2017 on the arrest of four teachers in South Kordofan in connection to the anti-mining protests stating that “Four teachers who were arrested in Kologi in South Kordofan last month because of their protests against the use of toxins in gold mining, are facing capital charges. [...] Initially two young men were arrested. Later more people were held, including the four teachers who have officially been charged this week. Dr El Jeili Hamouda, Legal Adviser to the National Committee for Environmental Advocacy, told Radio Dabanga on Friday that the local department of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) filed a complaint against the four defendants for inciting riots, undermining the constitutional order, and threatening the national security. The last charge is subject to the death penalty in case of conviction. According to the lawyer, the four teachers have been held in the South Kordofan capital of Kadugli for more than a month without being charged on the pretext that there were other suspects awaiting interrogation”.<sup>519</sup>

The African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) raised its concern in January 2018 on the arbitrary arrest of students in South Kordofan: “ACJPS is concerned for the safety and well-being of students from Aldalang University in South Kordofan who have been arbitrarily arrested after joint security forces (National Intelligence and Security Services, Military Intelligence, Sudan Armed Forces and Police) raided the university following a student protest staged after an officer of the Sudan Armed Forces indiscriminately shot and killed two students on the university campus. At least 49 students were detained during the raid. ACJPS has serious concerns for the five students currently detained incommunicado at the Military Intelligence offices in Aldalang. [...] According to information received, about 117 students were arrested during the raid and are currently being held under NISS, Military Intelligence and Police custody in Aldalang. ACJPS was able to confirm the arrest of 49 students by the NISS, Military Intelligence and Police”.<sup>520</sup>

Front Line Defenders similarly reported in February 2018 that “In South Kordofan, an estimated 117 students were arrested during a raid at an Aldalang University protest which took place on 12

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<sup>517</sup> Al-Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE), [Sudan News Network Issue 12](#), May 2017, p. 10

<sup>518</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Student succumbs to bullet wounds in anti-mining protest, South Kordofan](#), 13 November 2017

<sup>519</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Four South Kordofan teachers may face death penalty](#), 24 December 2017

<sup>520</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [South Kordofan: Students from Aldalang University arbitrarily arrested after SAF officer shot two students to death](#), 18 January 2018



January in response to the Sudan Armed Forces' fatal shooting of two students, Zahra Eltigani and Suliman Abdulkarien, the previous day. Protests against the rise in the cost of food in Sudan began on 7 January 2018 after the government made a decision to cut subsidies. The protests have been met with excessive use of force by Sudanese forces, leading to the death of one protester and several others being injured, and a nationwide crackdown on journalists and activists".<sup>521</sup>

According to Radio Dabanga reporting on an incident in January 2018, "According to students of the University of Delling in the northern part of South Kordofan, NISS officers have detained 54 fellow students from the university campus. 68 others have been arrested by the police. The students were held after they set fire to university buildings on Friday, in protest against the killing of two of their colleagues by an army soldier the day before. The soldier entered the campus with a gun hidden underneath his clothes, and began to shoot at the students. Two were hit and died instantly. The shooter then committed suicide".<sup>522</sup> Two weeks later 50+ students were acquitted by a South Kordofan court, whilst the NISS were still holding 16 students.<sup>523</sup> According to Radio Dabanga it had received reports of students being tortured in detention.<sup>524</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in April 2018 that a number of activists and environment defenders have been arrested three of which were detained "after they posted texts on Facebook, accusing the South Kordofan governor of smuggling gold from the state capital Kadugli and using government vehicles for that purpose. They claimed that a number of these vehicles, on their way to Khartoum, were recently seized by the authorities".<sup>525</sup>

In August 2018 Radio Dabanga reported on the arrest and release of five protesters in South Kordofan stating that "The security service in South Kordofan has released five young men on bail. They were arrested a week ago when they were holding a symposium. A witness told Radio Dabanga that last Saturday, members of the Sudanese security service (NISS) stormed a symposium held by youths in the town of Talodi. They staged the event to raise the residents' awareness about the danger of cyanide, a chemical which is harmful to human and animal health. Imam Ali, Shawgi El Amin, El Naeem Abdelmoneim, Mahjoub Mahmoud and Hamdan Yagoub were arrested, and released on bail on Thursday".<sup>526</sup>

### Blue Nile

Radio Dabanga reported that over the period of two consecutive weeks in June 2016 "the security service has carried out a large campaign of detentions in Blue Nile's capital, where people have protested the presence of paramilitary Rapid Support Forces" whom they "accuse [...] of committing atrocities against the civilians".<sup>527</sup>

In its 2017 annual report on human rights (covering 2016) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile the Hudo Centre detailed the arrest of 9 people in Blue Nile after protesting on the quality of water:

On 18th October 2016, military intelligence (MI) in Damazin arrested nine (9) people in Gogash neighborhood of Damazin town. The arrest happened while MI shot bullets in the air which threatened the people in the whole neighborhood. The arrested people were members of Gogash neighborhood committee which was formed on the request of BN governor.

<sup>521</sup> Front Line Defenders, [Sudan: Continuing crackdown and detention of human rights defenders](#), 16 February 2018

<sup>522</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan: Reports of torture in South Darfur, South Kordofan](#), 15 January 2018

<sup>523</sup> Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan court acquits 50+ students of vandalism](#), 4 February 2018

<sup>524</sup> Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan court acquits 50+ students of vandalism](#), 4 February 2018

<sup>525</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Environmental activists detained in South Kordofan](#), 22 April 2018

<sup>526</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Security releases young cyanide protesters in South Kordofan](#), 24 August 2018

<sup>527</sup> Radio Dabanga, ["200 detained" in security campaign in Blue Nile](#), 10 June 2016



[...] On 15th October 2016, residents of Gogash discovered that their water tap was mixed with blood. On the second day (16th) a group of residents went to the slaughter house and they found a leakage from it flowing to the main pipe. They ordered the butcher to stop slaughtering in this location. The following day, the governor sent them a messenger to form a committee and to come for meeting with him. The same day a committee was formed and met the governor. The governor informed them that, they don't have a right to stop the butchery and he promised to remove the slaughter house within six months. They complied with the order but requested the governor to give them a letter to show their fellow residents who they represented. Then the governor got annoyed and threatened them by saying "this act is a security threat and I know how to deal with." On 18th October 2016, the military surrounded Gogash and they started shooting in the air. They raided the houses of committee members and arrested them all. As a result most of the residents fled their houses. Later on 21st October 2016 the detainees were released after the community leaders' mediations. Up to end of 2016, nothing was done concerning the slaughtering house.<sup>528</sup>

The African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies reported in January 2018 that "the Government of Sudan has responded to widespread disgruntlement over recent austerity measures by arresting and detaining opposition political party members, activists and individuals; censoring newspapers by seizing their daily-print runs prior to distribution and use of force (including firing live ammunition) to disperse protests. The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) is aware of 18 individuals, including opposition political party leaders, students, advocates and human rights defenders, currently under custody in Sennar, North Kordofan, Kassala, Khartoum and Blue Nile states without charge or access to family and/or legal representation, for suspected involvement in the anti-austerity protests or voiced concerns about the austerity measures that have caused sharp increases in the prices of basic commodities".<sup>529</sup>

Daily Sabah reported in a January 2018 article on anti-austerity protests in Blue Nile and Darfur stating that "A student was killed and one opposition leader arrested in Sudan during protests Sunday against soaring bread prices, officials and witnesses said. Protests broke out in areas of war-torn Darfur and Blue Nile states as well as the capital Khartoum with demonstrators burning tires and blocking roads and police firing tear gas. Bread prices more than doubled this week as flour manufacturers raised prices amid dwindling wheat supplies after the government decided to stop importing grain and allowed private companies to do so. Anti-riot police fired tear gas at hundreds of students and residents who staged rallies in the towns of Geneina and Nyala in Darfur and Damazin in Blue Nile, witnesses said".<sup>530</sup>

## 5.2. Freedom of religion

This section should be read in conjunction with 5.1.4. Individuals (perceived to be) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N, [5.1.4.6. Christians](#).

According to the Aid to the Church in Need report focusing on the worldwide treatment of Christians during 2015-2017:

In countries such as Sudan, the Islamist threat was mainly from the government, which human rights observers accused of causing religious freedom to "spiral downwards". In the 2015-17 period, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir pursued a hard-line Islamist agenda, deeply hostile to Christians, resulting in "churches being torn down each month" [...] Christians being arrested for alleged proselytism and women being fined for wearing "obscene" immodest dress. When the government removed the

<sup>528</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 9-10

<sup>529</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [18 individuals arbitrarily detained in the wake of anti-austerity protests throughout Sudan](#), 12 January 2018

<sup>530</sup> Daily Sabah, [Student killed, opposition leader arrested amid bread price protests in Sudan](#), 7 January 2018

citizenship rights of people with origins outside the country, it sparked a massive exodus of Christians, who were forced to go to their ancestral homelands in neighbouring South Sudan, in spite of having lived in Sudan itself for 30 years or more.<sup>531</sup>

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom annual report provided an overview of freedom of religion in Sudan during 2017:

Religious freedom conditions in Sudan remained poor in 2017. The government of Sudan, led by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, imposes a restrictive interpretation of Shari'ah law and applies corresponding hudood punishments on Muslims and non-Muslims alike. During the year, government officials continued to arrest church leaders, harass members of various Christian denominations, and destroy or confiscate church properties. Individuals affiliated with several Evangelical congregations were arrested, fined, and evicted from their homes—and one was killed—for opposing government efforts to take over their leadership and confiscate their properties. Two churches were demolished in 2017, and Christian schools were ordered to open on Sundays following a new government directive. Individuals prosecuted under Shari'ah-based morality provisions for “public order” violations were largely from marginalized religious and ethnic communities; they typically received summary trials without legal representation, and convictions routinely resulted in lashings. Government policies and societal pressure promoted conversion to Islam.<sup>532</sup>

The Enough Project reported in its December 2017 report on Sudan's religious oppression that:

The Sudanese regime led by President Omar al-Bashir, which has waged war against its own citizens for much of its 28 years in power, has recently engaged in discreet and systematic acts of persecution against the country's Christian minority [...]

At this pivotal time, the regime's attacks on Christians have included the demolition of multiple churches. [...]

The Sudanese regime's recent attacks have also involved the arrests and interrogations of numerous clergy members and parishioners resisting the Sudanese government's attempts to seize control of church buildings and land. [...]

These recent incidents follow a well-documented pattern of persecution and attacks by the Sudanese government and security forces that the U.S. government and many Sudanese nongovernmental organizations have documented for years.<sup>533</sup>

The same source further highlighted the Sudanese's government links with extremist religious groups as follows:

The current Sudanese regime maintains documented, longstanding links with active extremist religious groups within Sudan, some of which call for jihad, advocate for groups like alQaida or the Islamic State group, threaten Westerners and Western interests, and/or are routinely involved in committing or inciting acts of religious persecution within Sudan. Some of these groups are associated with domestic attacks on religious groups (which include but are not limited to Christians, Muslim Sufi groups, and moderate Muslim scholars), and on rights defenders and intellectuals. Khartoum maintains these relationships with extremists to increase domestic and international political support for its leadership in Sudan and to demonstrate its support for jihad to international extremists. The Sudanese government also keeps these ties to claim an edge in intelligence gathering for Western intelligence services, by infiltrating extremist groups to acquire information, though these groups in turn use the space they are given by the Sudanese government to threaten Western interests. The

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<sup>531</sup> Aid to the Church in Need, [Persecuted and Forgotten? A report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2015](#) [17, Executive Summary](#), December 2017, p. 22

<sup>532</sup> US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2018 Annual Report](#), April 2018, p. 90

<sup>533</sup> Enough Project, [Radical Intolerance: Sudan's Religious Oppression and Embrace of Extremist Groups](#), December 2017, [Overview of attacks on Christian communities in Sudan](#), p. 4

regime in Khartoum also cultivates these ties with Salafist groups (those who adhere to an ultraconservative interpretation of Islam) and Salafist jihadi groups (ultraconservatives who support holy war against Muslims and non-Muslims they consider as threats to their interpretation of the religion) to protect the dominance of Sharia law in Sudan and intimidate and repress those of other faiths and beliefs (including Christians and many others) who seek greater rights and freedoms in Sudan.<sup>534</sup>

### 5.2.1. Two Areas

Limited information specific to freedom of religion in the Two Areas was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report. This section should be read in conjunction with [5.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities](#).

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom found in its annual report covering 2017 that “The government reports the presence of 36 Christian denominations in the country. Christians reside throughout the country, primarily in major cities such as Khartoum, Port Sudan, Kassala, Gedaref, El Obeid, and El Fasher. Christians also are concentrated in some parts of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State [...] Government statistics indicate less than 1 percent of the population, primarily in Blue Nile and South Kordofan States, adheres to traditional African religious beliefs”.<sup>535</sup>

A June 2017 joint letter submitted to the US Secretary of State and signed by seven US civil society organisations stated that “Sudan’s constitution guarantees the freedom to worship and establish and maintain places of worship. However, the reality is that members of religious and ethnic minority groups face discrimination and harassment. In particular, those living in conflict areas mainly in South Kordofan and Blue Nile are particularly vulnerable to religious based discrimination as a mechanism to create fragmentation between groups and thus exert state control”.<sup>536</sup>

According to a June 2018 Christian Solidarity International press release “In the religiously mixed Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile regions of the Republic of Sudan, which have long been the scene of revolt against the central government in Khartoum, Christian communities are among the targets of the Sudanese military's counterinsurgency campaigns. In the capital Khartoum and other cities, the government periodically arrests local Christian leaders and closes church buildings. Protestant denominations and those churches whose members have roots in the Nuba Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile bear the brunt of the persecution”.<sup>537</sup>

### 5.2.2. South Kordofan

According to a September 2016 report published by the CHR Michelsen Institute “The Nuba people represent the majority of the population of South Kordofan, estimated to be around 2 508 000 persons. Nubas are a sedentary group of African origins. They embrace Islam, Christianity and some indigenous beliefs. The nomadic Baggara Arabs are the next largest group of people in South

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<sup>534</sup> Enough Project, [Radical Intolerance: Sudan's Religious Oppression and Embrace of Extremist Groups](#), December 2017, *Executive Summary*, p. 2

<sup>535</sup> US Department of State, [2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Sudan](#), 29 May 2018, *Section I. Religious Demography*

<sup>536</sup> Enough Project, [7 U.S. Organizations Urge Secretary Tillerson to Consider Issues Relating to Religious Freedom and the Persecution of Religious Minorities in Sudan](#), 29 June 2017, p. 1

<sup>537</sup> Christian Solidarity International, ["Christianity in Sudan" - CSI's John Eibner contributes to Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity](#), 18 June 2018

Kordofan. Of significant size are also the Jellaba traders from northern Sudan, who have strong links to state power and wealth, and the Fellata, originally migrants from West Africa”.<sup>538</sup>

In a September 2017 article Morning Star News noted the targeting of ethnic Nuba that are members in the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOS) stating that “Most SCOC members have roots among the ethnic Nuba in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan’s South Kordofan state, where the government is fighting an insurgency. The Nuba along with other Christians in Sudan face discrimination and harassment, as Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir has vowed to introduce a stricter version of sharia (Islamic law) and recognize only Islamic culture and Arabic language”.<sup>539</sup>

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom noted in a November 2017 update on Sudan that “Nuban Christians in the Nuba Mountains, Khartoum and Omdurman have been especially targeted as both religious and ethnic minorities. The government’s under the radar destruction and expropriation of churches and arrest of pastors is part of a broader campaign to shrink the space available for Christians to practice their faith. The Sudanese government justifies this persecution by misleadingly arguing that with South Sudan’s secession, there are no more Christians”.<sup>540</sup>

The same source further noted that “Sudanese authorities particularly target the Bahri Evangelical Church, a denomination within the Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church. These churches’ congregations include ethnic Nuban and South Sudanese Christians. For years, the Sudanese government has demolished or expropriated Bahri Evangelical Church and Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church churches and related buildings”.<sup>541</sup>

The 2018 annual report on religious freedom (covering 2017) from the US Department of State similarly stated that “Some observers stated a factor in the government’s intervention was that most SCOC [Sudanese Church of Christ] members are ethnically Nuba, from the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan state, where the government was fighting a continuing insurgency. The observers said the government has accused ethnic Nuba of supporting the 2011 secession and continuing conflict in the areas adjacent to the border with South Sudan and has thus targeted them for their religious and ethnic affiliations”.<sup>542</sup>

The 2018 US Commission on International Religious Freedom noted that “USCIRF has documented almost 50 churches and related church buildings that were demolished, partially demolished, or threatened with demolition since 2011. Five of these buildings were destroyed in Khartoum’s bombing campaign that targeted civilian gathering areas in Southern Kordofan”.<sup>543</sup>

### 5.2.3. Blue Nile

The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) noted in a January 2018 report following a visit to Blue Nile that “Local leaders in Blue Nile are deeply angered by Khartoum’s policy of ethnic cleansing of

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<sup>538</sup> CHR Michelsen Institute, [\*Civilians’ Survival Strategies amid Institutionalized Insecurity and Violence in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan\*](#), September 2016, p. 4-5

<sup>539</sup> Morning Star News, [\*Sudan Detains, Interrogates Elder in Campaign to Take over Church\*](#), 27 September 2017

<sup>540</sup> US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [\*Policy Update: Sudan: Christian Persecution\*](#), November 2017, p. 2

<sup>541</sup> US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [\*Policy Update: Sudan: Christian Persecution\*](#), November 2017, p. 9

<sup>542</sup> US Department of State, [\*2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Sudan\*](#), 29 May 2018, *Government Practices*

<sup>543</sup> US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [\*Sudan: The Shrinking Space for and Increasing Persecution of Christians\*](#), November 2017, p. 7

indigenous African peoples and religious cleansing of moderate Muslims (who do not support the Islamist ideology promoted by the GoS – Government of Sudan), Christians and traditional believers. They believe the current assault is part of a longer-term strategy to conquer Blue Nile, before moving on to the Nuba Mountains”.<sup>544</sup>

### 5.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities

This section should be read in conjunction with 5.1.4. Individuals (perceived to be) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N, [5.1.4.4. Nuba \(South Kordofan\)](#) and [5.1.4.5. Other ethnic groups](#).

#### 5.3.1. Two Areas

Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that “Local leaders in Blue Nile are deeply angered by Khartoum’s policy of ethnic cleansing of indigenous African peoples and religious cleansing of moderate Muslims (who do not support the Islamist ideology promoted by the GoS), Christians and traditional believers. They believe the current assault is part of a longer-term strategy to conquer Blue Nile, before moving on to the Nuba Mountains”.<sup>545</sup>

Freedom House noted in its 2018 annual report on political rights and civil liberties in Sudan (covering 2017) that “Accusations of ethnically targeted violence have also been leveled against the government for its handling of the wars in the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where there has been repeated, indiscriminate aerial bombardment of civilians”.<sup>546</sup> The same report further noted that “Sudan’s political system heavily favors the ethnic groups, predominantly Arab and Muslim, who live around Khartoum. Peripheral regions—notably Darfur, the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and eastern Sudan—are marginalized”.<sup>547</sup>

The US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) stated that “Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred based on gender, religion, and ethnic, tribal, or party affiliation. Ethnic minorities often complained that government hiring practices discriminated against them in favor of ‘riverine’ Arabs from northern Sudan”.<sup>548</sup>

#### 5.3.2. South Kordofan

An Open Doors International/World Watch Research Unit report dated August 2016 described the ethnic composition of South Kordofan as follows: “Located in southern Sudan and bordering with the northern part of South Sudan, South Kordofan and Blue Nile are religiously and ethnically diverse states. The Nuba People live in Kadugli and in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan State. The Nuba are black Africans numbering about 1.5 million. They belong to more than fifty tribes and follow Islam, Christianity or traditional religions”.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>544</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile](#), Sudan, January 2018, p. 6

<sup>545</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Genocidal Policies*, p. 6

<sup>546</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018 - Sudan](#), 16 January 2018, *Functioning of the Government*

<sup>547</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018 - Sudan](#), 16 January 2018, *Political Pluralism and Participation*

<sup>548</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, e. *Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation*

<sup>549</sup> Open Doors International / World Watch Research Unit, [Sudan: Ethnic cleansing and the persecution of Christians](#), 26 May 2016, p. 8

Radio Dabanga reported in an October 2016 article on the treatment received by a Nuba farmer in South Kordofan that “A Nuba farmer was beaten, racially abused, and insulted by a herder when he protested the grazing of the latter’s livestock on his farm in El Fayd in South Kordofan a week ago. The local police reportedly looked-on and laughed”.<sup>550</sup>

According to an August 2017 report published by the Hudo Centre: “South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains state is mainly inhabited by Nuba ethnic tribes, tribes of Arab origin and others like Fulani, Fur, Masaleit, etc. The Nuba and other African groups are mainly farmers (cultivators) whereas the Arab ethnic groups are generally cattle keepers”.<sup>551</sup>

Without specifying the treatment in South Kordofan, an April 2016 report by the UN Human Rights Council (UN HRC) stated that: “The Special Rapporteur [on violence against women] received allegations about targeted harassment of women from minority ethnic groups, including [...] Nuba women. Their humiliation is in particular linked to their perceived racial identity and questioning of their “Arab” identity. Information was shared about [...] sexual harassment and/or rape allegedly conducted against [...] Nuba women by the State authorities. It was also reported that persons of Nuba origin had fewer job opportunities, might be more likely to be victims of violence or threats by the authorities, and were the target of discriminatory application of the law”.<sup>552</sup>

In a September 2016 SUDO UK report on a Baggara militia revenge attack in South Kordofan it was stated that “Members from the SPLM/A-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army North] abducted a shepherd and looted some 58 livestock in two separate incidents on the 1st September 2016. This resulted in the mobilisation of a large force of approximately 70 persons consisting of members of the Baggara – though mostly Misseriya and members of the Popular Defence Forces. Initially the force had intended to travel to Tassi area to retrieve the abducted individual and the livestock. Instead, the militia attacked the village of Al-Sanadrah killing eight civilians and wounding 11”.<sup>553</sup>

In a 2018 report documenting civilian views on the humanitarian access in the Nuba Mountains, the National Human Rights Monitors Organization wrote that “It was found that religious leaders collectively felt that people in the Nuba Mountains are treated as less human and do not have equal rights as others. An Imam shared the indiscriminate way civilians are targeted: ‘They don’t differentiate civilians from military, only attack them all by Antonov [bomber plane] without mercy not even [toward] children and women’”.<sup>554</sup>

Waging Peace noted in a March 2018 report that “It should be clear that Nuba individuals are persecuted in a direct and sustained fashion as part of the regime’s war in South Kordofan. It is of particular relevance that it is this context of conflict that provides the basis for the persecution of Nuba as an ethnicity in Sudan. Nuba individuals are by their nature assumed to be either an active part of, or sympathetic to, the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North], and this then often forms the basis of their targeting and ill-treatment. It is important to note that actual membership or allegiance to the SPLM-N is not required for this to be the case. It is sufficient for such qualities to be imputed, although of course an active political profile would significantly

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<sup>550</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Farmer beaten, abused in South Kordofan](#), 23 October 2016

<sup>551</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan](#), 23 August 2017, p. 4

<sup>552</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 33

<sup>553</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of September 2016](#), September 2016, p. 2

<sup>554</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Civilians’ views in the Nuba Mountains about the Humanitarian Access](#), 5 February 2018, p. 5



increase an individual's risk profile. And besides, most Nuba individuals are in some manner connected to the SPLM-N through large family networks".<sup>555</sup>

In April 2018 the African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported that "On 15 January 2018, the Military Intelligence under the command of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) stationed at the Barnwa checkpoint in South Kordofan arrested Mr. Saeed Mohamed Saeed, a 28 year old from the Nuba tribe, as he was traveling back from Lagawa town. He was detained incommunicado at an unknown location and released on 18 February 2018. Reasons for his arrest remain unknown".<sup>556</sup>

### 5.3.3. Blue Nile

According to an August 2017 report published by the Hudo Centre "Blue Nile State is inhabited by both African ethnic groups and Arabs whose main activity is farming (cultivating and cattle keeping)".<sup>557</sup>

An April 2016 joint submission to the Universal Periodic Review for Sudan by the ACJPS, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRR) noted that "In Blue Nile, Government forces have arbitrarily detained residents, raped women and girls, and restricted residents' movements, farming, and access to food. Entire communities have been displaced by Government forces in what appears to be collective punishment for their perceived support to the rebel movements based on ethnic identity".<sup>558</sup>

SUDO UK noted in a July 2016 report that "SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] force attacked civilians belonging to the Fallata ethnic group in Silk village, which is located in Bao locality. The attack resulted in the death of eight civilians, the looting of some 700 sheep and the destruction of civilian infrastructure and crops. The deceased civilians, three men, three women and two children, were brought to Demazin hospital and handed over to relatives. Silk village was previously inhabited by members of the Ingessenna ethnic group, however they were forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of their perceived allegiance to the SPLM-N".<sup>559</sup>

In a September 2016 report SUDO UK stated that "Members of the SPLM/A-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army North] attacked individuals from the Fallata ethnic group in Addasi area situated in Geissan locality resulting in the death of three shepherds and the looting of some 200 sheep. The attacks are the result of alleged cooperation between members of the Fallata and the Government of Sudan in targeting members of the Ingessana ethnic group in an attempt to seize their land. The Fallata routinely graze their livestock in areas controlled by the SPLM/A-N".<sup>560</sup>

Citing a source from the International Crisis Group, the August 2016 joint fact-finding-mission report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the UK Home Office stated that "Crisis Group also considered that in Blue Nile State, indigenous ethnic Ingessana similarly risked being perceived as supporters of the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] rebel group, who were

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<sup>555</sup> Waging Peace, [Risk to individuals from Nuba Mountains in Sudan](#), March 2018, p. 5-6

<sup>556</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>557</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan](#), 23 August 2017, p. 4

<sup>558</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and International, Refugee Rights Initiative (IRR), [Key concerns and recommendations for the UPR for Sudan](#), April 2016, p. 6

<sup>559</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of July 2016](#), July 2016, p. 13

<sup>560</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of September 2016](#), September 2016, p. 11



active in the Two Areas”.<sup>561</sup> The same report noted that “Applicants from the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile State and Sudanese of South Sudan tribal origins, border tribes between Sudan, South Sudan and Darfur, may all face specific difficulties in obtaining the National Number, a national ID number. This was because they had to have proof that they ethnically belonged to tribal groups which belonged to Sudan. Birth in the territory was not enough to be recognised as a Sudanese national and you needed to prove this by establishing that your parents or ancestors belonged to Sudanese tribal groups. Those whose names were seen to have a ‘Southern’ origin, even when they possessed Sudanese nationality documents would not be entitled to nationality and they had to have proof otherwise”.<sup>562</sup>

Citing several sources, the same report noted that “Western Embassy (A), in Khartoum, had received reports that access to some areas of Blue Nile State was strictly controlled and those travelling to the region needed permission to enter and leave these areas. NHRMO [National Human Rights Monitors Organisation] remarked that persons moving across the ‘front line’ from rebel held SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] territories in the Two Areas would be subject to stringent security checks to ensure that they were not affiliated to rebel groups”.<sup>563</sup>

In a September 2016 report the International Refugee Rights Initiative cited the experiences of non-Arab people living in Blue Nile: “As another man, a sheikh in Doro refugee camp, originally from Mayak, said: ‘We cannot cure people because there are no health services. The people in Khartoum get everything.’ He further argued: ‘The Arabs hold all the authority – they distribute everything. They push it into their areas. Only with equality we can live together in peace.’ Or as an omda in Yusuf Batil said: ‘He [Omar al-Bashir] doesn’t want black people. He just cares about our lands, our minerals and our mountains. Even if we are all destroyed, he will not care’”.<sup>564</sup>

The same report further described the marginalization of indigenous communities in Blue Nile:

The interviews demonstrated how most “indigenous” communities of Blue Nile State associate their Sudanese identity with their Funj origins and their long history in the area. Interviewees consistently stated that they primarily identify themselves according to their ethnic community. National Sudanese identity was often described as secondary, but directly related, to “indigenous” Funj identity. “I am Sudanese because I can tell you my family’s history eight to nine generations back. They were born in Wadaka, in Sudan, in Blue Nile,” explained one refugee living in Doro. Another refugee from Roseires argued that “the original Sudanese are Funj. However, this identity is contested by the Sudanese government, which promotes the notion of Sudanese identity as being synonymous with an Arab-Muslim identity. A man in Doro refugee camp, originally from Gabanit, explained: “The Arabs feel that they are more Sudanese. For me, I feel that I am originally Sudanese.” Another woman currently living in Gendrassa, said: “If Bashir agrees or not, I am Sudanese.” A woman from Mayak, now a refugee in Doro, said that she feels Sudanese but joked that “when Omar chased us away, I

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<sup>561</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [\*Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016\*](#), August 2016, p. 38

<sup>562</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [\*Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016\*](#), August 2016, p. 92

<sup>563</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [\*Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016\*](#), August 2016, p. 31

<sup>564</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [\*A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State\*](#), September 2016, p. 17

don't know if I am Sudanese or not." A man in Yusuf Batil refugee camp said: "If they recognise that I am Sudanese as well, and I have the freedom to choose my religion and my leaders, this war will end."<sup>565</sup>

The report further analysed the impact of immigrant communities to the ethnic composition of Blue Nile State:

With Blue Nile being a destination for considerable numbers of migrants in recent decades, questions of identity and belonging are not only drawing lines and fuelling tensions between "indigenous" communities and the government, but also, though to a lesser extent, between these communities and more recent populations of "newcomers". As many of the immigrants to Blue Nile are – like the "indigenous" groups – not Arabs (most notably, the West African Fellata), the division between "indigenous" and more recent immigrants remains more influential than the one between Arabs and non-Arabs, and certainly more than the one between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Some interviewees (all of whom self-identified as being from "indigenous" communities) mentioned those who were seen as West African or Arab as being "less Sudanese" as a result of their migration to the region. A woman from Damazin, for example, stated that "the Hausa and Fellata are less Sudanese because they came from outside, from another country." Others, however, maintained that they were also Sudanese due to their long history in the region. For example, one man said that Arabs were "less Sudanese" but now "because they have [been] a long time in Sudan, they became Sudanese." Another man from Soda said that the Fellata are now "a part of the community of Blue Nile, because they were there for a long time."<sup>566</sup>

On the relationship of the indigenous communities in Blue Nile with the Sudanese government the same source wrote that:

Both the Fellata and the Rufa'a, like other pastoral non-Funj groups in Blue Nile State, have been affiliated in recent decades with the government. Members of both groups were allied with the government during Sudan's second civil war, were armed and trained, and participated in fighting against the SPLM [Sudan People's Liberation Movement]. This alliance served their interests as they had pre-existing conflicts with some SPLM-supporting Funj communities over grazing lands, migration routes and cattle raids. These tensions grew before the second civil war started as a result of the loss of land for agricultural schemes. During the current conflict, the government has established local militias again, predominantly among Fellata and Arab groups, to fight the SPLA-N [Sudan People's Liberation Army-North].

Local communities and SPLM-N officials interviewed described the alliances between the Arab and West African nomad groups and the government as alliances that were meant to improve their status in the state and allow them to acquire lands and cattle that originally belonged to "indigenous" communities. Supporting the government against the SPLM was thus described as a way to gain rights that these groups lack since they are "newcomers" to the state. One man from Wadaka, for example, said that the Fellata side with the government because they "were promised that if they capture land, Bashir will give it to them."<sup>567</sup>

In a July 2017 report the Enough Project described the ethnic tensions triggered in Blue Nile state by the power struggles inside the SPLM-N (Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North):

Ethnic tensions that were simmering just below the surface in SPLM-N-held areas of Blue Nile state and in the camps for refugees across the border in South Sudan erupted under the pressures

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<sup>565</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [\*A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State\*](#), September 2016, p. 17-18

<sup>566</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [\*A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State\*](#), September 2016, p. 19

<sup>567</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [\*A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State\*](#), September 2016, p. 19-20

generated by the leadership divisions. Many communities in the area face extreme hardships and have been forcibly displaced from their homes by the war. Desperation is increasing with the lack of prospects for attaining peace at the national level that would allow them to return to their ordinary life. Ethnic favoritism that the SPLM-N reportedly practiced in Blue Nile state under Agar limits access to opportunity and representation and factors heavily in appointments to senior positions in the civil and military structures, which further exacerbates these social tensions.

[...] Statements coming from the SPLM-N areas in Blue Nile foreshadowed where brewing tensions could lead if the dispute is not rapidly contained. Starting in March, a number of conflicting statements have been exchanged by SPLM-N factions in Blue Nile state, both supporting and opposing the SPLM-N national-level Leadership Council led by Agar. Fractures along tribal lines have emerged between commanders and political leaders loyal to Agar and hailing from the Ingassana people, and other supporters of rival commanders who belong to other ethnic groups, including the Uduk people. These fractures will deepen further if left unaddressed. There are also reports alleging intimidation in the Nuba Mountains of those suspected of supporting Agar and Arman, causing the flight of several SPLM-N cadres from the region.<sup>568</sup>

In an October 2017 article Radio Tamazuj reported that “Traditional leaders of Geissan Locality in Sudan’s Blue Nile state have accused the state government of marginalizing their people and locality [...] They accuse the governor of favouring certain ethnic groups over their tribe in the state, citing lack of representation in the state government”.<sup>569</sup>

Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that “Over 300,000 people have fled to neighbouring Ethiopia and South Sudan to seek refuge, leaving only 90,000 remaining in SPLA-N controlled Blue Nile state. Hundreds of thousands remain in Government controlled areas. There are reports that much of their land (especially in the Ingessena region) has been taken over by the GoS and given to its supporters – large plantations given to Arab leaders from neighbouring countries; smaller land plots given to supporters such as mercenaries. The indigenous civilians are unable to cultivate in large areas and many have fled as IDPs to a camp in the Doro area; large numbers are held reportedly, not allowed to leave, for forced labour on the land that was once their own”.<sup>570</sup>

## **6. Women and girls**

### **6.1. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**

#### **6.1.1. Two Areas**

Limited information specific to sexual and gender-based violence in the Two Areas was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report. Contextual information on the situation in general across Sudan has therefore also been included.

An April 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women provided an overview on gender violence in Sudan:

During the visit, it was impossible for the Special Rapporteur to verify the true extent of the phenomenon of violence against women and girls owing to a range of factors, such as the limitations regarding official data on violence against women and the lack of mechanisms to collect or disaggregate data. Social stigma and cultural norms surrounding violence against women have also

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<sup>568</sup> The Enough Project, [A Question of Leadership Addressing a Dangerous Crisis in Sudan's SPLM-N](#), July 2017, p. 12-13

<sup>569</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Geissan leaders complain of marginalization in Blue Nile](#), 21 October 2017

<sup>570</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Humanitarian Situation*, p. 7

led to significant underreporting of incidents, particularly cases of domestic violence. Lack of knowledge about relevant laws, the ineffective implementation of such laws and the lack of accountability for gendered crimes further contribute to the challenges faced in ascertaining accurate information on such incidents as well as their prevalence rates.

The Special Rapporteur received information and also noted during the visit that numerous manifestations of violence against women and girls existed and remained widespread. In addition, girl children are further exposed to harmful cultural practices, including female genital mutilation and early marriage.<sup>571</sup>

With regards to the prevalence of domestic violence the UN Special Rapporteur noted that she “was informed that domestic violence is widespread, pervasive and remains largely invisible, due to the absence of reporting mechanisms and statistics as well as a lack of adequate policies and programmes. The Special Rapporteur heard numerous accounts of domestic violence, both directly from victims and also from service providers. The description of weapons used, including rocks, and the injuries sustained by women, including permanent damage to the eyes, were underpinned by statements about the lack of access to assistance, whether from family, friends, neighbours or State authorities. Seeking redress from the police and the courts, including seeking a divorce, was an exercise in futility for most women”.<sup>572</sup> The same report further wrote that “During her visit, the Special Rapporteur was informed of cases of sexual violence and rape in the Sudan, which seem to be more prevalent in conflict areas. She was also informed of the practice of abduction and rape of young women and girls, resulting in defilement, thus enabling the achievement of the goal of marriage through coercive and violent means”.<sup>573</sup>

A June 2016 joint civil society statement signed by 24 individuals and civil society organisations called on the Sudanese government to end the widespread sexual violence committed by its security forces stating that “In Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, where ongoing conflict and the government’s persistent aerial bombardments have forced half of the population to flee their homes, Sudanese forces have also repeatedly engaged in sexual violence. In February 2015, for example, the Sudanese monitoring group, Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), reported how government forces raped at least 8 women in Kadugli, the capital of Southern Kordofan, in one week. In late 2014, large numbers of women fleeing government-controlled areas in Blue Nile told Human Rights Watch researchers how they were raped by government soldiers”.<sup>574</sup>

Freedom House noted in its annual report on political rights and civil liberties in Sudan (covering 2017) that “Women face extensive discrimination. Islamic law denies women equal rights in marriage, inheritance, and divorce. Traditional and religious law restricts the property rights of women. Women convicted of adultery can face the death penalty. Police use criminal code provisions outlawing ‘indecent and immoral acts’ to prohibit women from wearing clothing of which they disapprove. Violence against women is a major problem, particularly in conflict-affected regions, and few perpetrators are brought to justice”.<sup>575</sup>

Speaking on International Women’s Day in March 2017, Najwa Musa, a civil society leader for the Two Areas pointed to the “high mortality rate among pregnant women of the Two Areas due to the

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<sup>571</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 14-15

<sup>572</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 16

<sup>573</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 19

<sup>574</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Joint Civil Society Statement regarding Sexual Violence in Conflict](#), 19 June 2016

<sup>575</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2018 - Sudan](#), 2018, *Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights*

lack of health care and hospitals” and also condemned the “high incidence of domestic violence against women ‘and because of a lack of awareness, they cannot achieve their legal right in the event of violence against them. This includes early marriage and female genital mutilation”.<sup>576</sup>

In a February 2018 article the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict provided an analysis of the situation regarding sexual violence in Sudan:

A key observation from my visit to Sudan is the existence of a deep-seated culture of denial which enhances and feeds the culture of silence about sexual violence. Unlike victims of other crimes where perpetrators are condemned, it is usually the victims of sexual violence who are shamed or stigmatized.

As a result, victims of sexual violence are very often fearful of reporting the crime or seeking assistance, further compounding their suffering. Because sexual violence is so vastly underreported, the lack of reported cases cannot be equated with the absence of violence.

It deeply saddened me to hear interlocutors in Sudan doubting and questioning victims as well as the appalling nature of these crimes. The pervasive culture of denial is the most serious obstacle to eradicating this heinous crime.

In many of my meetings, senior government officials explained that there is no sexual violence in Sudan because such violence is strictly prohibited by the Islamic religion. No religion or faith, however, is immune from sexual violence.

[...] During my brief visit, I learned that women continue to be raped while collecting water or firewood, or when they leave camps to pursue livelihood activities. I also heard from women who are unable to return to their pre-war homes due to the absence of security and fears of being raped. In addition, women told me about sexual violence committed in the context of inter-communal conflicts over land and natural resources.<sup>577</sup>

Amnesty International in its September 2018 submission to the UN Human Rights Committee noted that “Article 152 of the 1991 Criminal Act gives POP extensive powers to arrest any person deemed to wear “indecent dress” and the punishment if found guilty is 40 lashes, or with a fine, or with both. In practice, the law is used exclusively against women and girls”.<sup>578</sup>

#### **6.1.2. South Kordofan**

An April 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that she had “received allegations about targeted harassment of women from minority ethnic groups, including [...] Nuba women. Their humiliation is in particular linked to their perceived racial identity and questioning of their ‘Arab’ identity. Information was shared about [...] sexual harassment and/or rape allegedly conducted against [...] Nuba women by the State authorities. It was also reported that persons of Nuba origin had fewer job opportunities, might be more likely to be victims of violence or threats by the authorities, and were the target of discriminatory application of the law”.<sup>579</sup>

Search for Common Ground’s report, following a baseline study conducted in South Kordofan in July 2016, found that “Experts interviewed by the research team asserted that the effects of violent conflict included women’s social withdrawal, causing more women to choose not to participate in community events. Domestically, women also face the effects of gender-based violence. 71.4% of

<sup>576</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Women bear the brunt of suffering in Sudan](#), 8 March 2018

<sup>577</sup> Inter Press Service - News Agency, [Culture of Deep-seated Denial of Sexual Violence in Sudan](#), 28 February 2018

<sup>578</sup> Amnesty International, [SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE 124TH SESSION, 8 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2018](#), 10 September 2018, 8. Gender equality, violence against women and harmful traditions, Articles 2, 3, 6, 7, 17, 23, 24, 25 and 26, p. 22

<sup>579</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 33

the survey respondents agreed (14% somewhat) that exposing women to violence, especially domestic violence, impacts women and community development negatively. However, leaders and experts interviewed asserted that, while most people of South Kordofan agree that domestic violence has a negative impact on women and the community, most do not do anything to fight or prevent it”.<sup>580</sup>

SUDO UK noted in a July 2016 report that “Three policemen assaulted and raped three women working as tea ladies in the Torog neighbourhood of Dilling. The women were raped as they returned to their homes following work at approximately 00:00. They were stopped by the policemen who demanded to know what they were doing. Following which the women were subsequently raped. The women awoke shortly after losing consciousness and returned to their homes. The incident was not reported to the police”.<sup>581</sup>

In its 2017 annual report on human rights (covering 2016) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile the Hudo Centre wrote on the rape of two sisters in South Kordofan stating that “On 16th September 2016, two sisters A. G. N, 24 years old, married and R. G. N, 18 years old, unmarried were raped by two men at Talodi town and the victims reported the case at Talodi police. The perpetrators who were recognized by the victims had not been arrested, instead two other people Sabir Jamjam, 25 years old, government employee and Ahmed Bakheit, 26 years old trader who were not at the scene of crime were accused by police and subsequently arrested. The two detainees are known critics [sic] the government officials. On 15th December 2016, the two were released after the rape victims disclosed that, the police officer/ Yousif Omran forced them to accuse the two (Sabir Jamjam and Ahmed Bakheit). No investigation taken against the policeman while a case filed against the two victims for false information [sic]”.<sup>582</sup> The same report further noted that “The sexual violations that took place in conflict areas were regularly committed by security forces and its allied militias. The police did not carry out investigation or even in some incidents file cases. Half of the victims of the sexual violence were underage girls (child abuse/defilement)”.<sup>583</sup>

A May 2017 report published by Human Rights Watch described cases of domestic violence in South Kordofan as follows:

The SPLM/A-North [Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army North] Secretariat of Social Development and Women's Rights, together with the women's association, has worked to tackle domestic violence in at least Heiban and Delami counties, including through holding meetings with the community and asking senior people from the civilian administration to address the issue in public. “There was a gathering and we were all warned by the chief,” Rabha Yabus, a 30-year-old from the area, said, “I was beaten but now my husband has stopped.” However, domestic violence cases are still reported to local organization staff and civil servants. One woman who worked for the local civilian administration said that she had to find transport to hospital up to six times a month for women who had been seriously beaten by their husbands. “Recently a woman was cut badly on her skull, another one the skull was dented,” she said. Six of the 25 interviewees, from different counties, said that their husbands beat them. One of them, Amal Tutu, said: Women's rights are going backwards. Even when you want to express yourself you are not listened to. Even when you're very

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<sup>580</sup> Search for Common Ground, [Empowering Women as Key Partners in Building Peaceful and Resilient Communities in Sudan](#), July 2016, p. 4-5

<sup>581</sup> SUDO UK, [Human Rights Abuses in Sudan over the Month of July 2016](#), July 2016, p. 13

<sup>582</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 23

<sup>583</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States](#), 7 May 2017, p. 22



tired your husband can make you get up and do your work. I have been beaten when I resist many times. Five others said that their neighbors, relatives or women they knew well were also beaten.<sup>584</sup>

The Hudo Centre reported in January 2018 on the following rape case: “On 14th January 2018, S. K was raped by two members of Popular Defense Forces (PDF) in Um-Brembeta/ Sudan. The victim reported the case at Um-Brambeta police but the police did not carry out investigations or arrest the perpetrators. Mrs. S.K is 50 years old, married and a farmer who resides in Hadaba village near Um-Brambeta town of South Kordufan”.<sup>585</sup>

The same source further noted that it “regularly receives reports about rape cases committed by members of security agencies in South Kordufan. Generally, police opens such cases as ‘anonymous perpetrators’. Other victims are not given chance to open a case though the perpetrators are known and protected”.<sup>586</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported in April 2018 on two cases of sexual violence in South Kordofan stating that “On 3 March 2018, Ms. Daisy (not her real name), 20 year old woman, was raped at gun point by two soldiers in uniform from the Sudan Armed Forces as she was out fetching firewood. From March 2014 to October 2017, Ms. Stacy (not her real name), 39 year old, married woman was sexually abused and exploited by Mr. Khalid Gaffer, a security guard at the Aldalang University, after he threatened to report her to the Military Intelligence that she was communicating with her husband who is a member of the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North]”.<sup>587</sup>

### 6.1.3. Blue Nile

An April 2016 joint submission to the Universal Periodic Review for Sudan by the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRR) noted that “In Blue Nile, Government forces have arbitrarily detained residents, raped women and girls, and restricted residents’ movements, farming, and access to food. Entire communities have been displaced by Government forces in what appears to be collective punishment for their perceived support to the rebel movements based on ethnic identity”.<sup>588</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in an August 2016 article that “A woman has reportedly been killed and her daughter raped, allegedly by a member of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) stationed in Blue Nile state. An activist from El Kurmuk locality told Radio Dabanga [...] ‘One of the SAF personnel stationed at Camp Birka accosted the women and began to rape the daughter. Her mother defended her, hitting the soldier with a farming tool, whereupon he hit her with a rifle butt, killing her outright.’ The daughter also suffered a broken leg”.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> Human Rights Watch, [No Control, No Choice: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017, p. 29

<sup>585</sup> Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), [Urgent Action: Raping of a Woman in Um-Brambeta, Sudan](#), 24 January 2018

<sup>586</sup> Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), [Urgent Action: Raping of a Woman in Um-Brambeta, Sudan](#), 24 January 2018

<sup>587</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>588</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and International, Refugee Rights Initiative (IRR), [Key concerns and recommendations for the UPR for Sudan](#), April 2016, p. 6

<sup>589</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Mother killed, daughter raped in Sudan's Blue Nile](#), 10 August 2016



The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) reported in June 2017 that “Regional clinics in Blue Nile and nearby Maban have reported cases of rape by armed soldiers. The SKBN [South Kordofan Blue Nile] Coordination Unit is not in a position to put estimates on lives lost or able to fully monitor the impact of this conflict on communities. However, it is apparent that women’s and children’s security have been broadly impacted by the fighting”.<sup>590</sup>

## 6.2. FGM

The issue of FGM in Sudan was part of a meeting organised by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in October 2016 during which Professor Ellen Gruenbaum, Professor of Anthropology of Purdue University, Indiana, USA, provided her insights on, for example, why people continue to practice FGM, prevalence rates etc. in Sudan, followed by discussion with the other meeting participants. The full transcript can be accessed [here](#).<sup>591</sup>

With regards to female genital mutilation (FGM) practices in Sudan the Special Rapporteur on violence against women stated in an April 2016 report that “The Special Rapporteur was informed that the practice of female genital mutilation remains prevalent in the country. Statistics indicate that the national rate of female genital mutilation is approximately 65.5 per cent, with prevalence rates varying in the different regions. It is primarily girls under the age of 12 who undergo the procedure. Women who are not circumcised are also pressured to undergo the procedure before getting married. Reports indicate that some young girls die from the shock and pain caused by the mutilation, which is normally done without anaesthesia, as well as from infections and massive blood loss.”<sup>592</sup>

A June 2016 report by the UN Children’s Fund noted that “The overall prevalence of FGM/C [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting] in Sudan in 2014 among those aged 15-49 years, is 86.6 percent. FGM/C rates are slightly higher in rural areas (87.2 percent) than in urban areas (85.5 percent) [...] States with prevalence above the national level but lower than 90 percent (from 86.9 percent to 89.0 percent): Gezira; Khartoum; South Darfur; South Kordofan and Red Sea”.<sup>593</sup> The same source further stated that “At the national level, 90 percent of the circumcised women have their flesh removed from the genital area, 3.6 percent have their genital area nicked without removing flesh and 77.0 percent have their genital area sewn closed/or sealed. [...] Flesh removal is widely practiced in all states [...] In West Darfur, South Kordofan, River Nile, Red Sea and Kassala, the prevalence varies between 81.8 percent and 86.3 percent. In the other states, it varies from 90.0 percent and 99.1 percent. As for the nicking of the genital area without flesh removal, it is rarely practiced [...] the prevalence varies from 0.1 percent to 6.1 percent”.<sup>594</sup>

According to a 28 Too Many report published in July 2018 “In Sudan, the prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 is 86.6”.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), June 2017, p. 5

<sup>591</sup> Gruenbaum, E., [FGM/C Trends and Issues in Sudan](#), in European Asylum Support Office (EASO), EASO COI Meeting Report: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) & COI, 25-26 October 2016, pages 31 - 44

<sup>592</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 28

<sup>593</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 13-14

<sup>594</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 21

<sup>595</sup> 28 Too Many, [Sudan: The Law and FGM](#), July 2018, p. 1

The Guardian reported in a February 2016 article that “Female genital mutilation [FGM] is spreading among minority groups in Sudan despite widespread efforts to eradicate the practice, say campaigners. Women from communities which previously shunned FGM have told the Guardian they are being pressurised to undergo the procedure as adults to avoid being ostracised in a country with one of the highest FGM rates in the world. The latest Unicef report estimates that 87% of Sudanese women and girls aged between 15 and 49 have been cut”.<sup>596</sup>

Citing UNICEF, a European Asylum Support Office (EASO) COI meeting report on FGM(C), dated October 2016, stated with regards to the ethnicity of women subjected to FGM(C) in Sudan that “Sudan has refused to collect that specific information on ethnic origin, while it is such a diverse place with peoples coming from all over the Middle East and Africa that it does make interpretation and programming in a certain communities very difficult, because we don’t have the precise information”.<sup>597</sup>

Regarding the consequences for girls or women refusing FGM(C) in Sudan, the same report cited the opinion of expert Ellen Gruenbaum, Professor of Anthropology, Purdue University, Indiana, USA: “In several parts of Sudan, there has been very strong ability of a family who wants to either protect a girl or to cut a girl to do what their preference is without interference from others in the society. So therefore I think the family is really important. The ultimate decision making, the issue of how many relatives are brought into the process is the tricky part – because I think if the parents agree, they can effectively protect for the most part, but I know of exceptions to grandmothers or senior aunts being able to go ahead and conduct the circumcision if the parents aren't present. If that is the case, then there is no recourse because who is going to take your mother to court? That would be really shameful to the family, for you to prosecute your mother or take the midwife for that matter. So you really have to know the family's circumstances to be able to make a judgement on it”.<sup>598</sup>

#### **6.2.1. Two Areas**

No information specifically mentioning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the ‘Two Areas’ was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report.

#### **6.2.2. South Kordofan**

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women stated in an April 2016 report that “During the visit, the State authorities indicated their commitment to prohibit and eradicate female genital mutilation, including through the development of a strategy and a national action plan. The Special Rapporteur points out that while some states, including South Kordofan and Gadaref, have implemented legislation prohibiting the practice, there is unfortunately no legislation at the national level in this regard”.<sup>599</sup>

According to a June 2016 report by the UN Children’s Fund South Kordofan was grouped in the category of states with above the national level prevalence of FGM/C [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting]: “States with prevalence above the national level but lower than 90 percent (from 86.9 percent to 89.0 percent): Gezira; Khartoum; South Darfur; South Kordofan and Red

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<sup>596</sup> The Guardian, [FGM spreading to minority groups in Sudan, say campaigners](#), 15 February 2016

<sup>597</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), [EASO COI Meeting Report Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) & COI](#), 25-26 October 2016, p. 13

<sup>598</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), [EASO COI Meeting Report Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) & COI](#), 25-26 October 2016, p. 43

<sup>599</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 29

Sea”.<sup>600</sup> Regarding the form of circumcision and variation by area of residence and state, the same source noted that “Flesh removal is widely practiced in all states, with its prevalence varying from 77.9 percent in Khartoum to 99.1 percent in East Darfur. In West Darfur, South Kordofan, River Nile, Red Sea and Kassala, the prevalence varies between 81.8 percent and 86.3 percent. In the other states, it varies from 90.0 percent and 99.1 percent”.<sup>601</sup>

The same reported noted on social attitudes towards FGM/C [Female Genital Multilation/Cutting] abandonment that “Women living in only 4 states (South Kordofan, Sinnar, Gadarif and West Darfur) have significantly different attitudes towards the FGM/C practice than those of the Northern women (the reference modality). For example in South Kordofan, women are 50 percent more likely to favour the abandonment of the practice than the Northern women”.<sup>602</sup>

Human Rights Watch noted in a May 2017 report that “The civilian administration has done some work to end female genital mutilation (FGM), which is common in some areas closer to government-controlled parts of Southern Kordofan. All women and girls interviewed in Hadara village, Delami county, said that they, their sisters, and all the women and girls they knew, had clitorodectomies as young children. (FGM was not reported in any of the other sites of research.) Sudan has a startlingly high national prevalence of FGM, just under 87 percent according to joint UN and government research. Restrictions on access to aid have meant that women and girls in the rebel-held area have been unable to benefit from efforts by the government and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and partners to end the practice”.<sup>603</sup>

The 2018 US Department of State country report on Sudan (covering 2017) noted that “FGM/C [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting] remained a problem throughout the country. No national law prohibits FGM/C, and the procedure continued to be used on women and girls throughout the country. The government launched a national campaign in 2008 to eradicate FGM/C by 2018, and since 2008, five states had passed laws prohibiting FGM/C: South Kordofan, Gedaref, Red Sea, South Darfur, and West Darfur”.<sup>604</sup>

According to a 28 Too Many report published in July 2018 “The following four states have attempted to criminalise FGM: South Kordofan (FGM prevalence 88.8%) – the first Sudanese state to adopt legislation. The Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2008) places responsibility on parents and guardians to protect females (up to 18 years of age) from FGM. Reporting incidents of FGM is the responsibility of all. This law also provides for the payment of compensation to the victim of FGM by the person who performed the act”.<sup>605</sup> The same report further noted that “In South Kordofan, the Ministry of Health has issued a code of conduct for midwives, instructing them not to perform FGM. The Ministry of Health is also conducting reproductive health programmes to raise awareness of the effects of FGM and why it should not be practised. Furthermore, South Kordofan’s Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation Act calls for life imprisonment, cancellation of medical licences for doctors and nurses, and confiscation of property for repeat offenders”.<sup>606</sup>

<sup>600</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 12

<sup>601</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 21

<sup>602</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 36

<sup>603</sup> Human Rights Watch, [No Control, No Choice: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017, p. 28-29

<sup>604</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

<sup>605</sup> 28 Too Many, [Sudan: The Law and FGM](#), July 2018, p. 3

<sup>606</sup> 28 Too Many, [Sudan: The Law and FGM](#), July 2018, p. 4

The report added that “South Kordofan – The Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2008) includes a range of penalties from three years’ imprisonment and compensation payable to the victim, up to ten years’ imprisonment and compensation payable to the victim’s family in the case of the victim’s death”.<sup>607</sup>

No additional information was found regarding the actual implementation of the law and any prosecutions resulting from it.

### 6.2.3. Blue Nile

A June 2016 report by the UN Children’s Fund noted that “Girls are cut at age 5.7 on average: The mean age at circumcision among circumcised girls aged 0-14 is 5.7 years. It significantly differs by area of residence (slightly) and across states (widely). Variations across states are more important with the mean age increasing from a minimum of 3.7 years in Kassala to a maximum of 7.8 years in East Darfur. Circumcision of girls at an early age (before age 5) is more practiced in five States: Red Sea (23.6 percent), Kassala, River Nile, North Kordofan and Blue Nile (between 10 and 16 percent)”.<sup>608</sup> According to the same source Blue Nile State was grouped in the category of states with intermediate prevalence of FGM/C [Female Genital Multilation/Cutting]: “States with intermediate prevalence (from 61.2 percent to 84 percent): West Darfur; Blue Nile; Gadarif; Kassala; West Kordofan; Sinnar”.<sup>609</sup>

The same report further noted that “The word Saleema is far more used in the Blue Nile state (35.5 percent) than in other states, where between 4.4 percent and 21.3 percent use it [...] Women using the word Saleema to name uncircumcised girls are more open to the idea of abandoning FGM/C [Female Genital Multilation/Cutting] than women using other words. While 88.6 percent of women using the Saleema word favour discontinuation of FGM/C practice, only 62.4 percent of women using the expression ‘not circumcised’ and less than 50 percent of women using other words/expressions, feel the same. As for the relationship between the use of the word Saleema and FGM/C practice, prevalence is 30 percent higher among girls whose mothers do not use the Saleema description (32.5 percent) than girls whose mothers use it (23.0 percent). This holds irrespective of the age group of the girls”.<sup>610</sup>

According to a 28 Too Many report published in July 2018 “FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] prevalence in Blue Nile state is listed at 68%”.<sup>611</sup>

### 6.3. Forced/early marriage

The CHR. Michelsen Institute noted in September 2018 with regards to child marriage in Sudan that:

Child marriage is legal in Sudan, and boys and girls can marry from the age of ten due to the country’s strict interpretation of Sharia law. Our findings indicate that control of girls’ chastity, protection of girls from the stigma of being unmarried and the socialisation of girls into obedient wives are

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<sup>607</sup> 28 Too Many, [Sudan: The Law and FGM](#), July 2018, p. 5

<sup>608</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. vii

<sup>609</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 12

<sup>610</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 89

<sup>611</sup> 28 Too Many, [Sudan: The Law and FGM](#), July 2018, p. 1

important drivers of child marriage. These are made worse by poverty, poor educational facilities and negative attitudes to girls' prospects.

The Sudanese government has taken a low-profile approach to the problem of child marriage and have thus far achieved no tangible results in ending the practice.<sup>612</sup>

The same source provided the following overview of the legal framework regarding marriage in Sudan:

According to the 1991 law, the age of consent to marriage is *tamyeez*, that is, maturity understood as the age at which a minor has attained the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. A subsequent provision explicitly allows the guardian to contract a minor in marriage when there is overriding interest in doing so, and with the permission of a judge. Here, it does stipulate the specific age of 10, effectively making 10 the minimum age of marriage. Further, the 1991 law provides that a male guardian (*wali*) should only arrange the marriage of his ward with her consent. However, a subsequent section of the article on consent essentially gives the guardian the power to contract a marriage without the permission of his ward, so long as she consents later on. A contract concluded by the guardian before securing his ward's consent may be termed voidable, but her refusal to consummate the marriage does not automatically void the contract. Rather, the woman must petition the court and prove that she did not consent to the marriage.<sup>613</sup>

A 2017 UN Children's Fund report similarly noted with regards to the legal framework on child marriage in Sudan that:

In Sudan, in legislation and in practice, Sharia law defines adulthood at the age of puberty and thus does not include protection against child marriage. Article 40 of the Personal Status Law of Muslims (1991) provides that pre-pubescent girls as young as 10 may be married with the consent of a male guardian and a Sharia court judge. Under Sudanese law, for a civil marriage contract to be valid, one of the criteria requires that the minimum age for men be 18 and for girls 16 and both parties must consent to marriage. However, a woman needs permission from a male guardian to validate the marriage. The CRC [Convention on the Rights of the Child] has identified recommendations focused on the priority need to adopt legislation that sets the minimum age for marriage as 18 years and criminalizes child marriage. However, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is working on revising the 1991 Personal Status Law, with a key informant at the MoJ reporting that the review has been a collaborative process with other government entities and civil society organizations. They expect to make several important changes, including setting the minimum age.<sup>614</sup>

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women stated with regards to early and forced marriages in an April 2016 report that "Lack of data makes it difficult to ascertain the extent of the practice of early and forced marriage. Nevertheless, throughout her visit, the Special Rapporteur was informed that early marriage remained prevalent in the country. Moreover, in situations of poverty and as accepted social practice, parents perceive a girl child as a source of wealth and income, which further contributes to the practice. Legislative provisions, including article 40 of the Sudanese Personal Status Law for Muslims, which states that a 10-year-old girl can get married if it is 'justified' before a court of law, allow for justifications that do not take into consideration the best interests of the girl child".<sup>615</sup>

A June 2016 report by the UN Children's Fund stated that child marriage is a common practice in Sudan, providing the following overview:

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<sup>612</sup> CHR. Michelsen Institute, [Interventions for the abandonment of child marriage in Sudan](#), September 2018, *Child marriage in Sudan*

<sup>613</sup> CHR Michelin Institute, [Family law reform in Sudan: A never ending story?](#), June 2018

<sup>614</sup> UN Children's Fund, [Child Marriage in the Middle East and North Africa](#), 2017, p. 66

<sup>615</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 26

More than one tenth (11.9 percent) of women aged 15-49 years were married before 15 years of age. The practice is slightly more common in rural than in urban areas and widely differs across the states, from a minimum of 5.1 percent in Northern to a maximum of 18.6 percent in Kassala. The practice is more widespread in the Darfur and Kordofan states than elsewhere. The same pattern is observed when considering women aged 20-49 years. This similarity of both patterns is an indication that the phenomenon is not recent in the country. Marriage before age 18 years is considered child marriage, but it is very common in Sudan, since nearly two fifths of all women aged 20-49 years were already married before their 18th birthday (38.0 percent). Marriage among adolescent girls is widespread in Sudan. More than one in five adolescents (21.2 percent) is or has already been married. It is more common in rural areas (26.0 percent) than in urban areas (11.2 percent). Differences across states are marked, with the prevalence varying from a minimum of 12.0 percent in Khartoum to 33.1 percent in Gadarif.<sup>616</sup>

According to a September 2017 CHR Michelin Institute report on child marriage “Sudan is among the African countries with a high prevalence of child marriage. In Sudan, 10.7% of women aged 15 to 49 were married before the age of 15, and 38s% were married before the age of 18 (CBS and UNICEF 2010)”.<sup>617</sup>

The same report summarised civil society initiatives aimed at addressing child marriage in Sudan as follows:

Child marriage in Sudan has received heightened attention since late 2016 when it emerged as a recommendation from the UN after Sudan presented its Universal Periodic Report. In addition, the topic has recently come onto the public agenda in the context of reforming the Muslim Personal Law of 1991. That law sets the minimum age of marriage at tamyeez (“maturity”), which is 10 years old under the law. Furthermore, under the 1991 law, a woman needs a male guardian (a father, brother, or uncle) to contract her marriage. When the 1991 act was passed, the Islamic government of the time employed religious arguments to defend the legalization of child marriage. However, both government and civil society are now working for both legal and social change. In particular, the NGO Sudan Organization for Research and Development (SORD) has advocated for legal reform of the 1991 law’s provisions on child marriage. The SEEMA Center [Center for Training and Protection of Women and Child’s Rights] has also turned its attention to child marriage, particularly by working with victims. In December 2015, the Sudanese government launched the African Union campaign to end child marriage in Africa. In addition, the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW), under supervision of the Sudan’s minister of social welfare, has formulated a strategy for abandoning the practice, which is in process of being endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers.<sup>618</sup>

The same report described the state response to child marriages:

Progress in Sudan on the specific issue of child marriage has been limited. Despite international and domestic pressure for making 18 the minimum age of marriage, the Muslim Personal Law of 1991 remains unchanged. Neither the National Strategy for Women Empowerment nor the National Family Strategy of 2009 even mentions child marriage. Although the 2010 National Child Rights Act includes provisions against discrimination of the girl child, it does not mentions child marriage specifically. However, the 2010 Child Act does define a child as a person below the age of 18, and since the 2010 Child Act is to take precedence over all other laws, women inside and outside of the government are of the belief that a reform of the Muslim Personal Law with regards to child marriage is inevitable.

<sup>616</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. x

<sup>617</sup> CHR Michelin Institute, [Girls, Child Marriage, and Education in Red Sea State, Sudan: Perspectives on Girls’ Freedom to Choose](#), September 2017, p. 5

<sup>618</sup> CHR Michelin Institute, [Girls, Child Marriage, and Education in Red Sea State, Sudan: Perspectives on Girls’ Freedom to Choose](#), September 2017, p. 6



NCCW [National Council for Child Welfare] continues to tackle child marriage through awareness raising, but with a low profile. A strategy to eliminate child marriage, which was initiated by NCCW, is still waiting approval by the parliament. There are a few NGOs, especially SORD [Sudanese Organization for Research and Development], that call for the end of child marriage. According to SORD, however, it is not enough to merely raise the minimum age of marriage to 18; Sudan must also get rid of male guardianship in marriage. There is need for more advocacy to reform discriminatory laws.<sup>619</sup>

### 6.3.1. Two Areas

No information specific to forced/early marriage in the Two Areas was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report.

### 6.3.2. South Kordofan

A June 2016 report by the UN Children's Fund stated that "Marriage before age 18 is considered child marriage, but it is very common in Sudan, since nearly two fifths of all women aged 20-49 years were already married before their 18th birthday (38.0 percent). Differences by area of residence are significant: 42.3 percent in rural areas compared to 29.1 percent in urban areas. By State, variations are even more marked with the rate of child marriage ranging from 19.0 percent in Northern to 57.4 percent in East Darfur. In half of the states, it is higher than 40 percent and in 5 states, half or more of the women were married before age 18. As for very early child marriage, it is especially evident in [...] Kordofan states, where the practice is well established".<sup>620</sup> The same report noted that the percentage of women aged 20-49 who were married before age 15 was 20.7 for South Kordofan.<sup>621</sup>

A May 2017 report published by Human Rights Watch described the situation in South Kordofan with regards to early marriages stating that "The people we interviewed said that in rebel-held Southern Kordofan child marriage is common and families often value educating their sons over their daughters. In some areas, many families still practice female genital mutilation (FGM). Women experiencing domestic violence lack legal protections, including against rape in marriage. A 2016 NGO report on women's rights and gender in the rebel-held areas of Southern Kordofan concluded that "the SPLM/A-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement Army-North] remains a traditional male-dominated and militarized movement with no clear agenda for delivering on their rhetorical commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls ... (they are) to a large extent gender-blind and with strong patriarchal tendencies"". <sup>622</sup>

The same report further stated that "In the rebel-held areas families often marry off their daughters early, especially if the family cannot afford to send some or all of their children to school. Some interviewees said that sometimes, especially when they were displaced from villages, there was no nearby school available. 'Early marriage is common. No one is trying to stop it. About 14 or 15 is normal, much worse since the war because there's no money,' Hanasi Mohsin, who works for the social development secretariat in Heiban town, said. Of the 25 women interviewed, 14 of them had

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<sup>619</sup> CHR Michelin Institute, [Girls, Child Marriage, and Education in Red Sea State, Sudan: Perspectives on Girls' Freedom to Choose](#), September 2017, p. 17

<sup>620</sup> UN Children's Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 81

<sup>621</sup> UN Children's Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 81

<sup>622</sup> Human Rights Watch, [No Control, No Choice: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017, p. 26

married before they were 18 years of age, most guessed or said they were around 15 years of age, and two of them were married as soon as they had started menstruating”.<sup>623</sup>

### 6.3.3. Blue Nile

A June 2016 report by the UN Children’s Fund stated that “Marriage among adolescent girls is widespread in Sudan. More than one in 5 adolescents (21.2 percent) is or has already been married. It is more common in rural areas (26.0 percent) than in urban areas (11.2 percent). Variations across states are marked, with the prevalence varying from a minimum of 12.0 percent in Khartoum to 33.1 percent in Gadarif. Kassala and Blue Nile, are the two other states with the highest prevalence (30 percent)”.<sup>624</sup> The same report noted that the percentage of women aged 20-49 who were married before age 15 was 19.7 for Blue Nile.<sup>625</sup>

Middle East Eye noted in a May 2018 article that “Sudan has not signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, an “international bill of rights for women” which the UN General Assembly adopted in 1979, and rights groups have long complained there are insufficient policies in place to protect them. The laws have significant consequences for Sudanese women and children: more than a third of women in Sudan were married before they turned 18, according to a 2010 government survey. In the country’s poorest households, more than half of women were married as teenagers, and in southern Sudan’s Blue Nile state, 19 percent of women are married before 15, according to the Thomson Reuters Foundation”<sup>626</sup>.

## 6.4. State response to SGBV

### 6.4.1. Two Areas

Limited information specific to state response to SGBV in the Two Areas was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report. Contextual information on the situation in general across Sudan has therefore also been included.

The periodic report submitted by the government of Sudan to the UN Human Rights Committee in October 2017 summarised the measures taken by the state against sexual and gender based violence: “As part of its efforts to combat violence against women and children, the authorities have taken a number of measures in terms of legislation and strategic policies. The Criminal Code as amended in 2015 stipulates penalties for offences that fall within the concept of violence against women, such as sexual harassment. It also differentiates between adultery and rape. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2014 stipulates harsher penalties for trafficking when the victims are women or children”.<sup>627</sup> The same report further stated that “Domestic violence is criminalized and punished under article 142 (minor violence) and article 139 (serious violence) of the Criminal Code. Furthermore, under the 1991 Personal Status Code, women have the right to divorce on grounds of

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<sup>623</sup> Human Rights Watch, [No Control, No Choice: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017, p. 27

<sup>624</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 82

<sup>625</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) and Child Marriage in Sudan – Are There any Changes Taking Place?](#), June 2016, p. 81

<sup>626</sup> Middle East Eye, [Where marital rape is legal: Sudanese teen’s death sentence fuels wider fight](#), 19 May 2018

<sup>627</sup> Government of Sudan (Author), published by UN Human Rights Committee, [Fifth periodic report submitted by the Sudan under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2017 \[7 September 2017\] \[CCPR/C/SDN/5\]](#), 11 October 2017, paragraph 34

harm suffered. Special criminal courts and prosecutors' offices have been created to deal with family matters".<sup>628</sup>

In an April 2016 report the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women described the legal remedies available for women who are victims of domestic violence as follows:

Theoretically women have the right to lay charges against their alleged abusers for simple or serious harm, but such cases are rare and difficult to bring before a court, due to factors relating to the justice system, and to social and economic factors, including stigma and barriers to access to justice. Women who are subjected to domestic violence are generally encouraged to seek reconciliation because violence against women is largely viewed as a private matter which should be resolved within the family. The Special Rapporteur was informed that, owing to the limited facilities for reporting violence and the lack of an effective response if such facilities are used, victims of domestic violence face further problems, including being encouraged by the police to seek reconciliation, which contributes to their revictimization. Such factors contribute to the silencing and denial of the problem, and also to the denial of remedies. Furthermore, a large number of women and girls live in a context of deep inequality, underdevelopment and poverty, which exacerbates both their vulnerability and also their access to effective remedies.<sup>629</sup>

The same report further stated that "The Special Rapporteur is concerned by the widespread lack of access to justice for women victims of domestic violence, including the absence of legal assistance or State sponsored legal aid, as well as by the culture of impunity and the silencing of victims".<sup>630</sup>

A June 2016 joint statement issued by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and a number of other human rights organisations indicates that: "The scale of sexual violence is likely much greater than any reports indicate. Independent monitors are unable to access most of Sudan's conflict affected areas and survivors often do not report incidents, due to insecurity, stigma, the fear of reprisal and other obstacles. Among the obstacles are laws and policies that fail to ensure a safe environment for reporting sexual and gender based violence incidents and a consistent failure to prosecute these crimes. Despite recent changes to the definition of the offence of rape in Sudan's criminal law, the law remains unclear about evidence standards that apply and women who report sexual offences remain at risk of prosecution for adultery or committing 'immoral acts' if they fail to prove a rape case. [...] Accountability for sexual violence is rare to non-existent. [...] Prosecutions are made even more difficult by the broad immunities granted to Sudan's armed forces and government officials, which cover 'acts performed in the line of duty.' These immunities can only be lifted by the Ministry of the Interior or Justice in the event they elect to prosecute".<sup>631</sup>

An August 2016 joint submission by the Redress Trust and the African Centre for Justice and Peace to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan on the Prohibition of Torture and Ill-treatment in Sudan provided the following background on the legal provisions regarding sexual violence: "In response to long-standing concerns, Sudan adopted several changes in its criminal law on sexual violence in February 2015. These include separation of the definition of rape from adultery in Article 149 of the Criminal Act of 1991 and inserting an offence of sexual harassment in Article

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<sup>628</sup> Government of Sudan (Author), published by UN Human Rights Committee, [Fifth periodic report submitted by the Sudan under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2017 \[7 September 2017\] \[CCPR/C/SDN/5\]](#), 11 October 2017, paragraph 43

<sup>629</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 17

<sup>630</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan](#), 18 April 2016, paragraph 18

<sup>631</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Joint Civil Society Statement regarding Sexual, Violence in Conflict](#), 19 June 2016

151(3). Prior to these amendments, Article 149 defined rape as a form of zina (sex outside of marriage; adultery). The implications of this definition have been that a woman who had been a victim of rape or sexual violence could be tried for the crime of zina if she was unable to “prove” her lack of consent to the sexual act”.<sup>632</sup>

The same report further describes the impact of the reforms taken and current gaps:

These reforms constitute important steps, although gaps remain. The revised Article 149 created further legal uncertainty relating to the possible continuing conflation of the offence of rape with the offences of ‘adultery’ and ‘sodomy’ as the penalty for rape (set out under Article 149 (2)) remained unchanged and still refers to rape by way of those acts. This uncertainty exposes complainants to a risk of prosecution for the offence of adultery if they fail to prove rape. The definition of sexual harassment under Article 151 remains vague.<sup>25</sup> Article 151 (3), if applied in a similar fashion as public order offences, may have the result of criminalising women for what is considered inappropriate conduct, thus raising concerns about the right to privacy and non-discrimination. In addition, where any of these acts is alleged to have been committed by or with the involvement of a public official, the latter would benefit from immunity, thereby significantly reducing the likelihood of criminal accountability of the perpetrators.<sup>633</sup>

A 2017 UN Children’s Fund report stated that “Gender inequity in marriage and divorce remains a challenge for women in Sudan, with men having legal power over their wives and children. Sections 25(c), 33, 34, 40(3), 51, 52, 91 and 92 of the Muslim Personal Law Act of Sudan, 1991 provide that the contract of marriage for a woman shall be concluded by a male guardian; confer different rights in marriage to men and women; and mandate wife obedience. Sudan does not have a specific law prohibiting domestic violence or marital rape”.<sup>634</sup>

#### **6.4.2. South Kordofan**

Human Rights Watch described in a May 2017 report on South Kordofan the legal provisions on domestic violence and rape and their implementation in practice:

The SPLM/A-North [Sudan People’s Liberation Movement Army-North] areas use the “New Sudan” laws and penal code, which punishes rape with up to 14 years of imprisonment and a fine. There are no other provisions in force that specifically protect women against gender-based violence. The justice system in rebel-held areas is mostly staffed by volunteers with little or no training. There are about 1,500 volunteer police working in the rebel-held Nuba mountains—only a small proportion of whom are women—and they have had no specific training or protocols on handling or investigating gender-based violence. The rebel-held region has 21 volunteer judges who have not had any recent training, but no prosecutors or lawyers. The head of the judiciary, Kodi Abd Rahman Harik, said that as far as he was aware, there had been no trials of perpetrators of domestic violence since 2011 and only one case of rape. International doctors working in the area said that they had treated a few rape cases over the years. Women’s rights advocates said they believe rape in marriage is fairly common, and six of the 25 women interviewed said that they had no choice but to have sex when their husbands wanted to. “You can say no if you’re menstruating, otherwise you have to do it,” a 35-year-old woman, Amal Ali, said. “You have to have sex when he wants, if you refuse you might be caned. This has happened to my neighbors. For me, whether you like it or not, you do it,” another woman explained. Under the “New Sudan” laws, non-consensual sex, or sex against a woman’s will, is not

<sup>632</sup> Redress Trust, African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan on the Prohibition of Torture and Ill-treatment in Sudan](#), 31 August 2016, paragraph 9

<sup>633</sup> Redress Trust, African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan on the Prohibition of Torture and Ill-treatment in Sudan](#), 31 August 2016, paragraph 10

<sup>634</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Child Marriage in the Middle East and North Africa](#), 2017, p. 70

rape if the man is married to the woman. Only one health NGO provides post-rape care that includes the provision of emergency contraception if requested as outlined by World Health Organization standards. None of the women interviewed knew that seeking medical attention is important after rape. There is no counselling or long-term psychological support available in rebel-held areas, including for survivors of sexual violence.<sup>635</sup>

The same report further stated that “Women and girls in rebel-held Southern Kordofan face discrimination and violence, and have limited avenues for redress. All the women interviewed for this report felt that women’s rights were either at a standstill, or were going backward. Often women said they felt undervalued, including in their lack of voice or influence in their family lives, communities or in the SPLM/A-North [Sudan People’s Liberation Movement Army-North] administration. Women face multiple barriers to full participation in public life, including in the peace processes”.<sup>636</sup>

The Hudo Centre reported in January 2018 that it “regularly receives reports about rape cases committed by members of security agencies in South Kordofan. Generally, police opens such cases as ‘anonymous perpetrators’. Other victims are not given chance to open a case though the perpetrators are known and protected”.<sup>637</sup>

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) noted in its April 2018 briefing on ‘human rights violations in South Kordofan’ that “Human rights violations against civilians in conflict settings continue to occur as victims face barriers to justice and accountability due to lack of effective mechanisms and legal immunities afforded to government authorities, fostering a climate of endemic impunity. Victims and/or survivors of sexual violence face even tougher barriers and often do not report incidents due to insecurity, stigma, the fear of reprisal and other obstacles. Among the obstacles are laws and policies that fail to ensure a safe environment for reporting sexual and gender based violence incidents and a consistent failure to prosecute these crimes”.<sup>638</sup>

#### **6.4.3. Blue Nile**

No COI published within the set time frame for this report and specific on state response to SGBV in Blue Nile was found amongst the sources consulted.

### **7. Children**

#### **7.1. Recruitment and use of children**

##### **7.1.1. By government forces**

At the end of March 2016 the Sudanese government signed an action plan, which included the promise to stop the recruitment of children in its national security forces, measures to release child soldiers and improve protection of children affected by armed conflict reported Their World.<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> Human Rights Watch, [No Control, No Choice: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017, p. 30-31

<sup>636</sup> Human Rights Watch, [No Control, No Choice: Lack of Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Rebel-Held Southern Kordofan](#), 22 May 2017, p. 26

<sup>637</sup> Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), [Urgent Action: Raping of a Woman in Um-Brambeta, Sudan](#), 24 January 2018

<sup>638</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Human Rights Violations in South Kordofan](#), 11 April 2018

<sup>639</sup> Their World, [Sudan signs plan to end recruitment of child soldiers](#), 28 March 2016

#### 7.1.1.1. Two Areas

Limited information specific to recruitment and use of children by government forces in the Two Areas was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report. Contextual information on the situation in general across Sudan has therefore also been included.

The March 2017 report by the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan provided the following overview on recruitment and use of children:

The recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups is criminalized under Sudanese law. However, the country task force verified 39 cases of underage recruitment and use by government forces, 31 of which were attributed to the Popular Defence Forces and 8 to the Sudan Armed Forces, mostly in 2012 and 2013 [...]

During the reporting period, the country task force verified 230 cases of the recruitment and use of children (all boys), approximately 17 per cent of which were attributed to government forces (39 cases) and 76 per cent to armed groups (104 cases to SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North], 70 to SPLA [Sudanese Liberation Army] and 17 to unidentified armed elements). Over two thirds of the total figure for the recruitment and use of children was documented in the early stages of the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, namely, until the end of 2013. From 2014, a decreasing trend was observed. Crossborder recruitment and use of children by SPLM-N in South Sudan and, allegedly, by SPLM/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) in the Sudan, was also documented [...]

While the verified figures remained low for government forces, additional, credible information was received regarding the recruitment and use of children by the Sudan Armed Forces and the Popular Defence Forces that could not be verified. For example, in July and August 2015, three boys were reportedly recruited by the Sudan Armed Forces in El Damazin and released after their parents intervened. In 2015, a recruitment campaign by the Sudan Armed Forces was reportedly ongoing in Blue Nile State, during which children were allegedly recruited after obtaining official documents with a falsified age.<sup>640</sup>

The periodic report submitted by the government of Sudan to the UN Human Rights Committee in October 2017 details the measures taken by the state against military recruitment of children: "Article 43 of the 2010 Children's Act prohibits the recruitment and employment of children in the armed forces or in armed groups, or their involvement in hostilities. All laws relating to the military, such as the 2007 Armed Forces Act, the 2008 Police Act and the 2013 National Service Act state that recruits must not be less than 18 years of age".<sup>641</sup>

The US Department of State annual Trafficking in Persons report covering 2017/2018 stated that "Sudanese law prohibits the recruitment of children as combatants and provides criminal penalties for perpetrators; however, children remained vulnerable to recruitment and use as combatants and in support roles by non-governmental armed groups and militias, primarily in Sudan's conflict zones of Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile".<sup>642</sup>

According to a June 2018 country update on Sudan, published by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) "Children are not only at risk of being recruited or conscripted into armed forces from IDP camps but may also be recruited from khalawa or religious

<sup>640</sup> UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan](#), 6 March 2017, paragraph 21

<sup>641</sup> Government of Sudan (Author), published by UN Human Rights Committee, [Fifth periodic report submitted by the Sudan under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2017 \[7 September 2017\] \[CCPR/C/SDN/5\]](#), 11 October 2017, paragraph 71

<sup>642</sup> US Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2018 - Country Narratives - Sudan](#), 28 June 2018, Trafficking Profile



schools that exist across the country. Sudanese citizens explained how some of these boarding schools prey on the vulnerability of the poor who send their children to the schools that serve as a tool of the Sudanese government to cultivate supporters as well as gain new recruits for various war fronts”.<sup>643</sup>

#### **7.1.1.2. South Kordofan**

No COI published within the time frame set for this report and specific on child recruitment by government forces was found amongst the sources consulted.

#### **7.1.1.3. Blue Nile**

The March 2017 report by the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan noted that “During the reporting period, the country task force verified 230 cases of the recruitment and use of children (all boys), approximately 17 per cent of which were attributed to government forces (39 cases) and 76 per cent to armed groups (104 cases to SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North], 70 to SPLA [Sudanese Liberation Army] and 17 to unidentified armed elements). Over two thirds of the total figure for the recruitment and use of children was documented in the early stages of the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, namely, until the end of 2013. From 2014, a decreasing trend was observed. Crossborder recruitment and use of children by SPLM-N in South Sudan and, allegedly, by SPLM/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) in the Sudan, was also documented”.<sup>644</sup>

An August 2017 report by the UN General Assembly noted that “The United Nations received allegations of recruitment and use of boys between twelve and seventeen years old by government forces, particularly in Blue Nile [...] although no cases could be verified”.<sup>645</sup>

### **7.1.2. By armed opposition groups**

#### **7.1.2.1. Two Areas**

Reuters reported in a November 2016 article that “One of Sudan's largest rebel groups, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), signed an accord on Wednesday with the United Nations to end the use of child soldiers, a U.N. representative said”.<sup>646</sup>

The March 2017 report by the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan noted that “During the reporting period, the country task force verified 230 cases of the recruitment and use of children (all boys), approximately 17 per cent of which were attributed to government forces (39 cases) and 76 per cent to armed groups (104 cases to SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement], 70 to SPLA [Sudanese Liberation Army] and 17 to unidentified armed elements). Over two thirds of the total figure for the recruitment and use of children was documented in the early stages of the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, namely, until the end of 2013. From 2014, a decreasing trend was observed. Crossborder recruitment and use of children by SPLM-N in

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<sup>643</sup> US Commission on International Religious Freedom, [Country Update: Sudan](#), June 2018, p. 6

<sup>644</sup> UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan](#), 6 March 2017, paragraph 20

<sup>645</sup> UN General Assembly, [Children and armed conflict; Report of the Secretary-General \[A/72/361-S/2017/821\]](#), 24 August 2017, paragraph 162

<sup>646</sup> Reuters, [Sudan rebel group signs U.N. accord to end use of child soldiers](#), 23 November 2016

South Sudan and, allegedly, by SPLM/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) in the Sudan, was also documented”.<sup>647</sup>

#### **7.1.2.2. South Kordofan**

No COI could be located amongst the sources consulted and within the set time frame regarding forced recruitment by armed opposition groups in South Kordofan.

#### **7.1.2.3. Blue Nile**

A May 2016 UN Children’s Fund report noted that “In March 2016 inter-agency mission to Blue Nile state revealed a high number of children who are associated with armed forces and groups. Separated children, child-headed households and street children were also identified in several localities across the State”.<sup>648</sup>

The May 2018 report of the Secretary General of the UN General Assembly stated that “While no cases of child recruitment and use could be verified, the United Nations received allegations of the recruitment of boys by a splinter group of SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] in Kurmuk, Blue Nile, prior to the group’s integration into SAF [Sudanese Armed Forces]”.<sup>649</sup>

### **7.2. Rape of children**

#### **7.2.1. Two Areas**

The March 2017 report of Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan noted that “During the reporting period, 13 cases of rape of children between the ages of 8 and 17, including one boy, were verified, 8 of which were attributed to the Sudan Armed Forces, 1 to the Popular Defence Forces, 1 to the Rapid Support Forces and 3 to pro-government militias [...] Of those attributed to the Sudan Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, six took place in 2015 and three in 2016 in Blue Nile State. For the cases documented in 2015 and 2016, suspected perpetrators were arrested, and five trials were held. Four members of the Sudan Armed Forces were convicted and sentenced to between 1 and 10 years’ imprisonment, and dismissed from the army”.<sup>650</sup>

#### **7.2.2. South Kordofan**

Information specific in relation to the rape of children in South Kordofan was not located amongst the sources consulted.

#### **7.2.3. Blue Nile**

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<sup>647</sup> UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan](#), 6 March 2017, paragraph 20

<sup>648</sup> UN Children’s Fund, [Child Protection Sub sector Bulletin 30 January to 30 May 2016](#), 30 May 2016, p. 2

<sup>649</sup> UN General Assembly, [Children and armed conflict; Report of the Secretary-General \[A/72/865-S/2018/465\]](#), 16 May 2018, paragraph 175

<sup>650</sup> UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan](#), 6 March 2017, paragraph 34

An August 2017 report by the UN Secretary-General noted that “The rape of 4 girls between thirteen and fifteen years old by Sudanese Armed Forces elements in Blue Nile was verified and reported to the police, resulting in the arrest and sentencing of perpetrators”.<sup>651</sup>

### 7.3. Access to education

#### 7.3.1. Two Areas

Limited information specific to access to education in the Two Areas was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report. Contextual information on the situation in general across Sudan has therefore also been included.

OCHA noted in its Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017 that “There are 4 million school-aged children (4-16 years) living in the eight conflict-affected states in Sudan (the 5 Darfur states, South/West Kordofan and Blue Nile); an estimated 1.6 million of these children are affected and in need of Education in Emergencies (EiE) support. The school enrollment rate in these states currently stands at 51 per cent, which is lower than the 59 per cent average enrollment rate recorded in the rest of the country. Many school-age refugees require education assistance”.<sup>652</sup>

The 2018 US Department of State country report on human rights practices (covering 2017) noted that “The law provides for tuition-free basic education up to grade eight, but students often had to pay school, uniform, and examination fees to attend. Primary education is neither compulsory nor universal”.<sup>653</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in a November 2017 article on access to education that “Member of Parliament Abdelbagi Girfa reported that 15,000 children in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states did not take the basic and secondary school exams this year because they did not receive the national number to register with”.<sup>654</sup>

The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) stated in January 2018 that “Recent reports show that there are approximately 255,000 children in the Two Areas, with little or no access to trained teachers or schools”.<sup>655</sup>

The January 2018 ‘Humanitarian Update’ by the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) noted that “Education in the Blue Nile continues to be severely compromised due to insecurity, lack of resources and the endurance of the humanitarian crisis. The school year still has not started despite being scheduled to begin in October 2017. The 35 bush primary schools in the area lack basic education material and qualified teachers and only five were opened as of this report date. By January 2018 only schools in Yabus Payam were open. In Chali Alfil and Wadaka Payams the community is still constructing new primary schools and is expected to open middle February 2018.

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<sup>651</sup> UN General Assembly, [Children and armed conflict; Report of the Secretary-General \[A/72/361-S/2017/821\]](#), 24 August 2017, paragraph 164

<sup>652</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017](#), December 2016, p. 18

<sup>653</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

<sup>654</sup> Radio Dabanga, [School dropouts in South Kordofan and Darfur](#), 12 November 2017

<sup>655</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [The UK and Sudan: Trade Relations and Human Rights](#), 4 January 2018

More education opportunities for the children in the area are desperately needed, more so in the current situation where the conflict has the potential to affect boys of potential military stature”.<sup>656</sup>

In its overview of the implementation of the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan in Sudan in the first quarter OCHA stated that “More than 250,000 children are out of school in Blue Nile, South and West Kordofan. Without immediate support and with the current economic crisis the number is expected to go up with children enforced to leave schools because of parents/families, unaffordability to cover schooling costs”.<sup>657</sup>

The Global Partnership for Education noted in an August 2018 article that “Sudan has one of the largest numbers of out-of-school children in the Middle East and North Africa region: approximately 2.5 million children are not in school, with girls being more than half of them. The quality of education is poor; and there is a desperate need for textbooks, trained teachers, and better school infrastructure”.<sup>658</sup>

SKBNCU noted in its latest ‘Humanitarian Update’ published June 2018 that “With primary schools out of session for holidays, secondary schools continue. There are eight secondary schools in South Kordofan and none in Blue Nile. In general, across both states, there is a lack of school materials. The lack of single curriculum to use remains a concern. While the Kenyan curriculum is still in use in schools in South Kordofan it’s no longer possible for pupils to sit the end of primary examination (KPCE) and only limited numbers of kids are able to go to refugee camps in South Sudan to sit the South Sudan Curriculum examination. In Blue Nile, the Sudan curriculum is still widely used. With this situation, students will have no access to higher education or other opportunities past the basic, underresourced schools in the Two Areas”.<sup>659</sup>

### **7.3.2. South Kordofan**

Radio Dabanga reported in April 2016 on the bombing of a school in Dalami, Southern Kordofan state:

The bombing of a school in Dalami locality, South Kordofan, caused the death of the headmaster and the wounding of two pupils [...] It is the fifth school in the Nuba Mountains that suffered damage from an aerial bombardment in the last month [April 2016].<sup>660</sup>

Nuba Reports wrote in a May 2016 article on the destruction of a school in the Nuba Mountains, during fighting between the state and rebel forces: “On May 28th, Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) based in Al Azrak sent over 100 troops in 18 technicals and two tanks to attack Guru, an abandoned town 2 kilometers away [...] “When the tank entered Guru, they shot and destroyed the school [and] started burning houses,” said SPLA-N Major Kanar Lodi Tutu. This is the second school targeted by SAF in the last week. A few days ago a Primary school in a civilian area was bombed by the Sudan Air Force”.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 4

<sup>657</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Dashboard, Jan - Mar 2018](#), 1 July 2018, p. 3

<sup>658</sup> Global Partnership for Education, [Building the foundation for a strong education system in Sudan](#), 23 August 2018

<sup>659</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: June 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Education*, p. 2

<sup>660</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Teacher killed in air raids on South Kordofan schools](#), 29 April 2016

<sup>661</sup> Nuba Reports, [SAF launches limited attack on rebels from Al Azrak](#), 30 May 2016

In August 2016 schools in Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan, were shut due to “acute shortage of bread” as a by-product of the ongoing fuel and logistics crisis being reported across Sudan, stated Radio Dabanga.<sup>662</sup>

The same source noted in January 2017 that about 40 basic schools in rural areas were facing “a severe shortage of school equipment and teachers”.<sup>663</sup>

A September 2017 Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) report stated with regards to access to education in South Kordofan that “Schools have been out of session and little has changed in the last month. Teacher training opportunities are rare and generally under-resourced, meaning the months away from classes could not be used to build capacity in most of the region. Investment in education is badly needed. There are approximately 255,000 school age children in the region and very little access to trained teachers or well-equipped schools”.<sup>664</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in November 2017 that “teachers in South Kordofan complained about the poor schooling facilities in the area. There is a shortage of latrines, and many of the classrooms are built of straw and are often inaccessible during the rainy season because of leakages”.<sup>665</sup>

In a January 2018 report the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) noted with regards to the access to education in South Kordofan that “Education is generally progressing in line with expectation from the previous five years, with most schools currently functioning. There remains little support to this important sector and classes often take place without access to trained teachers, sufficient school supplies, or buildings for the students”.<sup>666</sup>

An OCHA inter agency assessment report conducted in 15 rural communities and 3 urban communities in Al Abbasiya Town, South Kordofan in February 2018 provided an overview of the situation: “Classrooms in existing schools are overcrowded with 70 to 100 students per class. Government policy caps class size at 45. Some children are working to support their families. In a few cases Christian children are not attending school”.<sup>667</sup>

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit’s (SKBNCU) ‘Humanitarian Update’ of February 2018 noted that “Education generally is progressing as normal with most schools currently functioning, though at greatly reduced capacity. There remains little support to this important sector and classes often take place without the support of trained teachers, sufficient school supplies or classroom buildings. There are families with 5 to 10 children in school and each child’s school fees amount to around 2,500 SSP, in addition to other school-related requirements. Given that families depend highly on agricultural production for their economic well-being, the less than adequate output of the last agricultural season means most of the pupils will remain out of the schools as their families are unable to meet the schools’ financial requirements”.<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan-wide bread shortage shuts schools in South Kordofan capital](#), 8 August 2018

<sup>663</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Shortages at basic schools in Sudan’s South Kordofan](#), 18 January 2017

<sup>664</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), September 2017, p. 4

<sup>665</sup> Radio Dabanga, [School dropouts in South Kordofan and Darfur](#), 12 November 2017

<sup>666</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 4

<sup>667</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbasiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 1

<sup>668</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Education*, pages 3/4

The same source's 'Humanitarian Update' of March 2018 noted that "Most of the 250 registered schools are functioning, but at greatly reduced capacity. With only limited support to schools in the Central Region, in the Western Jebels the local communities and parent teacher associations (PTAs) take the lead on mobilizing support, building and managing schools".<sup>669</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in a March 2018 article on the shortage of teachers in Habila, South Kordofan:

Schools in the area of Habila have faced a severe shortage of teachers since 2011, when war re-erupted in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan.

The basic schools of Barkanda, Atou, and Kajala in Habila locality had to close their doors after the armed conflict between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North broke out in June 2011.

Kartakila Waltan, the principal of the Kabila Basic School, told Radio Dabanga that a number of students of the three schools were able to enter other basic schools "that are also in need of more teachers and equipment". However, many students in the rebel-controlled area of Habila did not return to the classes. The distances between their homes and the schools were too great [...]

He added that the 773 students of five basic schools in Habila, Daliba, Shengoul, Kalanda, and Dandando, must sit on stones during lessons.

"The schools are in dire need of teachers, furniture, school books, and stationery. In some of the schools, there is only one teacher," he said.

The school principal attributed the deterioration of education in Habila to the siege imposed on the area by the government seven years ago, "that halted the provision of health and education services, and blocked all humanitarian aid".<sup>670</sup>

Reverend Matta Al Mubarak of the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) told Radio Tamazuj in July 2018 that the people of Nuba Mountains lack education, especially secondary education for girls with currently only three secondary schools for boys and girls operating in the entire Nuba Mountains.<sup>671</sup>

In an August 2018 article Radio Dabanga reported on the closure of schools in South Kordofan as a result of food shortages "The acute shortage of bread being reported across Sudan as a by-product of the ongoing fuel and logistics crisis has caused the school classes to stop in Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan. Long queues from bread are reported from El Gezira. An employee told Radio Dabanga that yesterday the city witnessed a complete lack of bread as all the bakeries stopped working because of the lack of flour. He said school headmasters stopped school classes in the morning and ordered pupils to go home because there was no bread for breakfast".<sup>672</sup>

### 7.3.3. Blue Nile

In June 2016 IRIN published a report focusing on what it called 'Sudan's Forgotten Front': the conflict in Blue Nile and noted that "Education is equally non-existent. Even before war broke out, there were no secondary schools in southern Blue Nile. Young children walked for hours to reach the nearest primary school. Now, children are everywhere during the day: playing, helping out at home, and carrying water. The few barely functioning schools in Yabus have no supplies. No teachers still working there have more than a primary school education themselves".<sup>673</sup>

<sup>669</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: March 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Education*, p. 5

<sup>670</sup> Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan: Chronic need for teachers in conflict-torn Habila](#), 4 March 2018

<sup>671</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Education, health services lacking Religious leader](#), 2 July 2018

<sup>672</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Sudan-wide bread shortage shuts schools in South Kordofan capital](#), 8 August 2018

<sup>673</sup> IRIN, [Blue Nile: Sudan's Forgotten Front](#), 21 June 2016



OCHA noted in a February 2017 report with regards to out-of-school children that “The highest percentages of these out-of-school children are in Blue Nile (46.8 per cent), Kassala (45.1 per cent) and West Darfur (45.7 per cent) states”.<sup>674</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in July 2017 on the school facilities in Blue Nile stating that “In Blue Nile state, a ministerial delegation found that there are no toilets in 111 school buildings, including 18 secondary and 93 basic schools, all at state level”.<sup>675</sup>

A September 2017 Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) report stated that “Resources for education in Blue Nile are scarce, likely creating a situation worse than South Kordofan for boys and girls. Added to this, the current conflict has the potential to affect boys of potential military stature. Progress made to keep children under 18 out of the military needs to be maintained, and educational opportunities created. There are currently no education opportunities offered to provide these children an important alternative, support to this sector is desperately needed”.<sup>676</sup>

Radio Tamazuj reported in December 2017 that “Academic activities at two government primary schools in Al Geissan locality in Sudan’s Blue Nile state are being seriously hampered due to shortage of teachers. Multiple sources told Radio Tamazuj on Sunday that Al-Mukhtar and Aisha primary schools are continuing academic activities with a small number of teachers, besides the shortage of textbooks.

The same sources pointed out that the locals accused the state ministry of education of refusing to recruit teachers from the area to address the shortage of teachers. They noted that the current situation in government schools will negatively affect the primary school leavers next year”.<sup>677</sup>

Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that with regards to education “There is little access to education for children in Blue Nile with only 32 primary schools. There are no paid teachers, no teacher training, no exercise books, pens, pencils, chalk boards, etc. Education is a priority as they want the younger generation to have good future – learning to read and write but also skills such as carpentry, mechanics and construction”.<sup>678</sup> The same source further noted that “The bombing hindered concentration and many students left to the refugee camps in Ethiopia and South Sudan to receive better schooling. There are only 40% of Girls in school who often drop out due to cultural traditions such as early marriage”.<sup>679</sup>

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit’s (SKBNCU) ‘Humanitarian Update’ of February 2018 noted that “Education in the Blue Nile continues to be severely compromised due to insecurity, lack of resources and the endurance of the humanitarian crisis. Schools were reported to have been closed in Wadaka due to the insecurity in the area brought about on by the clashes reported in

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<sup>674</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Bulletin, 23 January – 5 February 2017](#), 5 February 2017, p. 1

<sup>675</sup> Radio Dabanga, [High price of school supplies in Sudan](#), 2 July 2017

<sup>676</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), September 2017, p. 4

<sup>677</sup> Radio Tamazuj, [Shortage of teachers hampers education in Al-Geissan locality, Blue Nile](#), 11 December 2017

<sup>678</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Challenges for Education*, p. 9

<sup>679</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Challenges for Education*, p. 9

February. Primary schools are reported to be open in Chali Alfil and Yabus, but not all are functioning”.<sup>680</sup>

The same source’s ‘Humanitarian Update’ of March 2018 noted that “Conflict and insecurity in 2017 prevented students from preparing for exams. It also led to a decline in the number of students enrolling in 2018 [...] for the three payams (Wadaka, Chali Alfil and Yabus Payams) and for the isolated areas in Zozok (Keli Payam) and Amora in Gessian County. According to the Secretariat of EducaKon, the major needs identified in this sector are better trained teachers, more text books and school materials, and increased student attendance”.<sup>681</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in March 2018 on the decision to resume basic school exams in Blue Nile:

On Tuesday, 103 students sat for the basic school examination in El Kurmuk, a town on the border of Sudan’s Blue Nile state with Ethiopia. It is the first time students in the area have taken the exam since 1998.

At the same time, 135 nomadic students sat for the basic school exam at El Zahraa school in the state capital of El Damazin.

In a statement following the exam sessions, Deputy Governor Abdelrahman Bilal Beleid said that “these students sitting for the basic exams are evidence of the expansion of security and peace in Blue Nile”.

In his statement, the deputy governor said that “the presence of children of nomads and returnees in the examinations confirms the state government’s interest and keenness to create a school environment for all segments of the state”.<sup>682</sup>

In its May 2018 ‘Humanitarian Update’, the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit) noted that “In Blue Nile, there are only 35 schools in an area of around 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> and no functioning secondary schools which not only force families to send their children out of the area to attend school, but also could affect boys of potential military stature”.<sup>683</sup>

## 8. Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Note that research focused mainly on information published in 2018 and late 2017 to provide the most up-to-date information available. Older sources were included where they provided useful contextual background or context. Some of the information found does not specifically distinguish between the humanitarian situation of IDPs and those living in a specific area more permanently; where possible overlaps exist (e.g outbreak of infections, virus etc.) such information has been included in this report.

This section should be read in conjunction with section [3. Security situation: Impact of the conflict on civilians](#), particularly [3.4. Forced displacement](#), [3.5. Denial of humanitarian access](#), and [3.6. Access to health care](#).

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<sup>680</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Education*, p. 4

<sup>681</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), [Humanitarian Update: March 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 2 October 2018, *Education*, p. 5

<sup>682</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Blue Nile state: Basic school exams resume after 20 years](#), 7 March 2018

<sup>683</sup> South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN Coordination Unit), [Humanitarian Update: May 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, *Education*, p. 4

The monthly 'Humanitarian Bulletin' published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) includes amongst others information on displacement figures and access to basic services in the Two Areas. Its reports can be accessed [here](#).<sup>684</sup>

Useful maps and infographics can be found [here](#).

Regular updated analysis on the situation of IDPs in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile can be found, amongst others, via the following websites:

- [Assessment Capacities Project \(ACAPS\)](#) [Sudan pages]
- [Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#) [Sudan pages]
- [Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust](#) [Sudan pages]
- [Humanitarian Response](#) [Sudan pages]
- [South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\)](#)
- [Sudan Consortium](#)
- [Sudan Social Development Organisation \(SUDO \(UK\)\)](#)
- [United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan](#)

The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) provided the following analysis regarding IDPs in Sudan in 2017: "IDPs are particularly vulnerable due to insufficient food, lack of clean water, and poor hygiene services. In 2018, protection, food security and health needs are likely priority concerns".<sup>685</sup> The same report further noted with regards to health provisions that "Throughout 2017, Sudan has been facing public health crisis. Acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) continues to spread in Sudan after it was first reported in Blue Nile state in August 2016".<sup>686</sup> With regards to access to food, the source noted that "Around 3.8 million people are food insecure in Sudan and the situation is likely to continue [in 2018]. Between July and September 2017, over 3.2 million people were expected in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and over 160,000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) particularly in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan".<sup>687</sup>

### 8.1. Displacement figures

With regards to displacement figures in Sudan the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) noted in a May 2018 report that "Data collection on internal displacement is a complex and political issue in Sudan, and there is a lack of access to certain areas. This figure of 2,072,000 IDPs is a low estimate, because apart from the Blue Nile caseloads, it is based only on registration information and not on data obtained through other methods (key informant information, beneficiary lists from humanitarian partners, etc). There are areas within Darfur, South Kordofan and West Kordofan that are not covered, also no organisations have information on IDPs living in or around Khartoum. IDMC figure, methodology and rationale IDMC's displacement estimates for Sudan are based on IOM's [International Organization for Migration] IDP registration data, covering the 5 states of Darfur and South and West Kordofan, as well as an estimate from the Humanitarian Aid Commission for Blue Nile state, which is not covered by other organisations. This data has been used as registrations

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<sup>684</sup> See UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan](#)

<sup>685</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Humanitarian Overview: An analysis of key crises into 2018](#), November 2017, Sudan, p. 42

<sup>686</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Humanitarian Overview: An analysis of key crises into 2018](#), November 2017, Sudan, Overview 2017, Current situation, p. 43

<sup>687</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Humanitarian Overview: An analysis of key crises into 2018](#), November 2017, Sudan, Overview 2017, Outlook for 2018, Predicted Developments, p. 44

provide a more accurate estimate of IDP populations (minimising the risk of double counting) and provide the most detail regarding the years, states and localities in which people were registered”.<sup>688</sup>

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network’s (FEWS NET) June 2018 ‘Food Security Outlook’, “According to a recent update from the Government of Sudan, the number of IDPs across Sudan has reduced from 2.3 million last year to about 1.9 million in May 2018, most of whom are protracted IDPs in Darfur”.<sup>689</sup>

### 8.1.1. Two Areas

The 2018 US Department of State country report on human rights practices (covering 2017) noted that “Large-scale displacement continued to be a severe problem in [...] the Two Areas, but there was a significant decline in conflict-related displacement owing to ceasefires observed by the government and most armed groups. Government restrictions and security constraints, however, continued to limit access to affected populations and impeded the delivery of humanitarian services, although to a lesser extent than in prior years”.<sup>690</sup>

In an update on Sudan published in May 2018, the IDMC described the humanitarian situation similarly as follows: “In 2017, there were no major new offensives between the conflict parties, but the country still faced regular incidents of violence [...] In the Two Areas, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, peace negotiations between the SPLM-N and the government stalled, in part due to a split in the SPLM-N which occurred between May and July [2017], which created a faction along ethnic lines and led to clashes between supporters of both sides. Humanitarian actors had limited access to most conflict affected areas in [...] South Kordofan and Blue Nile”.<sup>691</sup>

In a December 2017 report the International Organization for Migration provided an overview on displacement figures in Sudan:

People living in protracted displacement in Darfur since 2003 and those displaced or affected by conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states since 2011 account for the majority of the people in need of humanitarian aid. According to a recent update from the Government of Sudan, the number of IDPs across the country has reduced from 2.3 million to about 2 million. Based on revised estimates, there are about 386,000 returnees in Sudan. The UN and partners will continue to work with the Government to further verify the returnees.

[...] In government-controlled areas of South Kordofan, 8,380 people have been reportedly displaced in 2017, of whom 4,348 were verified. No new displacement was reported in government-controlled areas of West Kordofan and Blue Nile. About 9,000 people were reportedly displaced in SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] areas in Blue Nile as a result of internal fighting between SPLM-N factions, however, these reports cannot be verified.<sup>692</sup>

A January 2018 joint Food and Agricultural Organization/World Food Programme report on food insecurity situation in conflict-affected countries stated that “According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in late September [2017], 2.3 million vulnerable IDPs were in need of humanitarian assistance, of which 2.1 million were in Darfur and 240 000 in Blue Nile and South Kordofan States. A lack of basic services and infrastructure, compounded by insecurity in some

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<sup>688</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, [SUDAN - Contextual Update](#), May 2018, p. 4

<sup>689</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *National Overview, Current Situation, Conflict and South Sudanese refugees*, p. 4

<sup>690</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)*

<sup>691</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, [SUDAN - Contextual Update](#), May 2018, p. 2

<sup>692</sup> International Organization for Migration, [Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot](#), 31 December 2017

areas, continues to prevent the return of displaced people to their places of origin. Refugees from South Sudan are also experiencing high levels of food insecurity. The influx of refugees increased in 2017, with around 455 000 people in White Nile, East and South Darfur and South Kordofan States as of mid October. This distress migration is likely to increase competition for available domestic food and lead to food price increases”.<sup>693</sup>

OCHA noted in a February 2018 report that the UN estimates that armed movements in South Kordofan and Blue Nile lead to an additional 545,000 people that are displaced in areas under their control.<sup>694</sup>

According to the same source’s ‘Humanitarian Snapshot’ Infographic of March 2018 between 90,000 and 545,000 IDPs in Blue Nile and South Kordofan where the SPLM-N are present have no access to humanitarian assistance.<sup>695</sup>

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network’s (FEWS NET) June 2018 ‘Food Security Outlook’, “Field observations indicated the relatively reduced fighting between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People Liberation Movement North – Abdel Aziz al-Hilu (SPLMN-AH) faction in South Kordofan state over the past year has encouraged IDPs to return for cultivation in government-controlled areas of South Kordofan state. Similar patterns of return are reported in governmentcontrolled areas of Blue Nile state.”.<sup>696</sup>

### **8.1.2. South Kordofan**

In June 2016 UNHCR noted with regards to people fleeing from conflict in South Kordofan that “So far in 2016, more than 7,500 refugees have arrived in Yida in South Sudan’s northern Unity. The area is already home to some 70,000 refugees. Nearly 3,000 people arrived in May [2016] alone”.<sup>697</sup>

According to the mid year humanitarian report for 2017 published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) “A total of 20,522 IDPs and refugees were tracked by the IOM DTM [Displacement Tracking Matrix] team in South Kordofan State. The tracking system in South Kordofan alerts the humanitarian partners in the State about the new arrivals of displaced and mobile populations as soon as they arrive at the sites where the tracking hubs are active”.<sup>698</sup> A map produced by IOM provides a summary on the IDP’s caseloads in South Kordofan as of July 2017, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>699</sup>

According to OCHA’s 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, as of December 2017 179,665 IDPs were classified as “people in need”.<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), [Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations - A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council](#), January 2018, p. 31

<sup>694</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 5

<sup>695</sup> UNOCHA, [SUDAN: Humanitarian Snapshot](#), 31 March 2018

<sup>696</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *National Overview, Current Situation, Conflict and South Sudanese refugees*, p. 4

<sup>697</sup> UNHCR, [5 years into South Kordofan conflict, refugees are still fleeing](#), 3 June 2016

<sup>698</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), [IOM Sudan Mid Year Humanitarian Summary 2017](#), January-June 2017, p. 4

<sup>699</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Summary on the IDP’s caseloads in South Kordofan State](#), 20 July 2017

<sup>700</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 14

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network's (FEWS NET) June 2018 'Food Security Outlook', "Approximately 145,000 to 160,000 people are internally displaced in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan, including in Haiban, Buram, and Um Dorain localities and some parts of El Reifalshargi. Al Dalanj, Kadugli, Taludi, and Lagawa localities. Most of these populations have been displaced since 2011/12".<sup>701</sup>

World Vision reported in July 2018 that "An estimated 400,000 are currently living as IDPs in South Kordofan state dispersed in various localities (OCHA March 2017). There were an estimated 36,452 South Sudanese refugees in South Kordofan as of 30 June 2018 (UNHCR)".<sup>702</sup>

### 8.1.3. Blue Nile

In a September 2016 report the International Refugee Rights Initiative noted with regards to displacement figures in Blue Nile State that "Reliable data on internal displacement in Blue Nile State is hard to ascertain. Estimations of the number of IDPs within the state stood at 176,000 by the end of December 2013, but the current number is likely to be higher not least because during 2015 an additional 20,000-30,000 persons were forcibly displaced from Bau County to the outskirts of Damazin. These IDPs are scattered in different locations in both government and SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] areas. Estimations of the displaced population, and the population in general, inside the SPLMN areas, vary, but suggest that most people in these territories are IDPs. The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA, the SPLM-N's humanitarian wing), estimated in late 2012 that 98,003 people lived inside the SPLM-N held territories in Blue Nile State, of which 79,550 were internally displaced. The same number of IDPs was reported by the SRRA in mid-2015".<sup>703</sup>

The SKBNCU reported in September 2017 that "Blue Nile remains in a crisis with a substantial portion of the population displaced by conflict. A recent assessment by the CU [Coordination Unit] indicated there were at least 27,000 individuals displaced as during September [2017]".<sup>704</sup>

According to OCHA's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, as of December 2017 47,392 IDPs were classified as "people in need".<sup>705</sup>

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that by the end of January 2018, "one source [Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust]" put the number of IDPs in Blue Nile at 36,000 and those who have fled the country at 300,000.<sup>706</sup>

HART noted in a January 2018 report on Blue Nile that "Over 300,000 people have fled to neighbouring Ethiopia and South Sudan to seek refuge, leaving only 90,000 remaining in SPLA-N [Sudan People's Liberation Army-North] controlled Blue Nile state. Hundreds of thousands remain in

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<sup>701</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *National Overview, Current Situation, Areas of concern, IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan State (Figure 4)*, Current situation, p. 7

<sup>702</sup> World Vision, [Sudan - July 2018 Situation Report](#), 22 August 2018, p. 1

<sup>703</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, p. 26

<sup>704</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), September 2017, p. 2

<sup>705</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 14

<sup>706</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 3



Government controlled areas. There are reports that much of their land (especially in the Ingessena region) has been taken over by the GoS [Government of Sudan] and given to its supporters - large plantations given to Arab leaders from neighbouring countries; smaller land plots given to supporters such as mercenaries. The indigenous civilians are unable to cultivate in large areas and many have fled as IDPs to a camp in the Doro area; large numbers are held reportedly, not allowed to leave, for forced labour on the land that was once their own".<sup>707</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in February 2018 that deadly clashes between SPLM-N factions led to the displacement of 9,000 people in Blue Nile: "Dozens of people were killed and wounded in bloody battles between the two factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), respectively led by Abdelaziz Adam El Hilu and Malik Agar in Sudan's Blue Nile state this week. The fighting has also reportedly led to displacement of about 9,000 people to the Wadaka area in El Kurmuk locality, close to the border with South Sudan".<sup>708</sup>

## **8.2. Access to education**

This section should be read in conjunction with [7.3. Access to education](#) for non-IDP children.

### **8.2.1. Two Areas**

No COI published in 2018 on access to education for IDPs specifically mentioning the 'Two Areas' was found amongst the sources consulted.

### **8.2.2. South Kordofan**

The report of an inter-agency mission that took place from 16 to 21 October 2016 to assess the situation of the displaced people in 5 locations in Abu Kershola Locality, South Kordofan State found that "Classrooms are overcrowded due to absorption of some of the children from IDP communities. Generally the classrooms do not have benches, the blackboards are missing or damaged, and some students study under trees".<sup>709</sup> The same source further noted that "No education supplies were provided or distributed since 2014 apart from limited SCS [Save the Children Sweden] supplies (books and benches) as the SK [South Kordofan] MoE [Ministry of Education] did not make any reports on shortages to the education partners. Some IDPs households were forced to keep some of their children out of school to support them in growing food, grazing cattle or other income-generating activities. School fees was a major factor that discouraged parents from sending their children to school, where 40-70% of total IDPs children under school age are OOSC [Out of School Children]".<sup>710</sup>

According to OCHA's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview "Around 1.7 million school age children (4-16 years) need Education in Emergencies (EiE) support, including about 0.8 million IDPs, in addition to returnees, vulnerable host communities and school-age refugees. According to vulnerability indicators, these numbers are mainly in the eight conflict-affected states (Darfur states, South and

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<sup>707</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), published by ReliefWeb, ["There was nobody to help us": Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile](#), Sudan, January 2018, p. 7

<sup>708</sup> Radio Dabanga, ['9,000 displaced' by deadly clashes between SPLM-N factions in Blue Nile](#), 23 February 2018

<sup>709</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 1

<sup>710</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 8

West Kordofan and Blue Nile). School enrollment rate in these states currently stands at 47 per cent, which is far below the average enrollment rate in the rest of the country”.<sup>711</sup>

An OCHA inter agency assessment report conducted in 15 rural communities and 3 urban communities in Al Abbassiya Town, South Kordofan in February 2018 noted that “Access to education is also a challenge for most IDP children of school going age as the parents cannot raise the required fees for initial registration and annual fees as well as other fees charged to support school feeding programmes. This is forcing parents to prematurely release some of their children into the labour market”.<sup>712</sup> The same report specified that “many children from IDP community are not in school because of lack of money to pay school fees including registration (250sdgs) and annual fees (100-150sdgs per a child), buy school uniform and pay for school feeding. Classrooms in existing schools are overcrowded with 70 to 100 students per class. Government policy caps class size at 45. Some children are working to support their families. In a few cases Christian children are not attending school”.<sup>713</sup>

### **8.2.3. Blue Nile**

Very limited COI was published within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted on access to education for IDPs in Blue Nile.

A September 2016 report published by the International Refugee Rights Initiative stated that “Health and education services are also extremely limited inside the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] areas. Massive displacement in and from Blue Nile State has resulted in a lack of staff capable of maintaining clinics or schools. With no humanitarian assistance, they also lack the necessary equipment. Since 2012, there have been only five primary schools and no secondary schools operating in SPLM-N held Blue Nile”.<sup>714</sup>

In a March 2018 report following a joint assessment to Wadaka Payam, Blue Nile, Sudan Consortium stated with regards to the situation of displaced people that “Conflict and insecurity in 2017 prevented students from sitting for exams. It also led to a decline in the number of students enrolling in 2018 [...] for the three payams (Wadaka, Chali Alfil and Yabus Payams) and for the isolated areas in Zozok (Keli Payam) and Amora in Gessian County. According to the Secretariat of EducaKon, the major needs identified in this sector are better trained teachers, more text books and school materials, and increased student attendance”.<sup>715</sup>

## **8.3. Two Areas**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.5. Denial of humanitarian access.](#)

### **8.3.1. Access to basic services**

The joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi, dated August 2016, noted that “According to NHRMO [National

<sup>711</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 18

<sup>712</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 4

<sup>713</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 1

<sup>714</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, p. 23

<sup>715</sup> Sudan Consortium, [SKBN Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), March 2018, p. 5

Human Rights Monitors Organisation], civilians from the Two Areas fled to government held areas, including Khartoum, because in SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] held territory the living conditions were exceptionally dire, with no access to food, healthcare or other essential services".<sup>716</sup>

OCHA noted in its Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017 that "Of the 3.5 million people in need of WASH [Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene] assistance, 2.1 million are IDPs in Darfur and the remainder are residents in areas with poor access to WASH facilities such as in eastern Sudan, conflict-affected people from the Kordofan region, White and Blue Nile States, Darfur, refugees or returnees".<sup>717</sup>

According to the same source's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview "Across Sudan, it is estimated that 4.9 million people do not have access to adequate drinking water and safe means of defecation, and that their hygiene practices do not improve their health status. Seventy per cent of the people in need are in the five states of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile especially in the areas recently accessed in 2017".<sup>718</sup>

### **8.3.2. Shelter**

No COI published in 2018 on access to shelter for IDPs specifically mentioning the 'Two Areas' was found amongst the sources consulted, except the US Department of State 2018 country report (covering 2017) which stated that "As in previous years, the government did not establish formal IDP or refugee camps in [...] the Two Areas".<sup>719</sup>

### **8.3.3. Food**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.7. Food insecurity](#).

The 2018 US Department of State country report on human rights practices (covering 2017) noted that "Many IDPs faced chronic food shortages".<sup>720</sup>

The European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations provided a map, dated March 2018, depicting the levels of malnutrition in Sudan amongst refugees and IDPs and found that 227,057 individuals are currently food insecure in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which can be accessed [here](#).<sup>721</sup>

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network's (FEWS NET) June 2018 'Food Security Outlook', "The protracted conflict in [...] South Kordofan and Blue Nile states since 2011 has disrupted access to main livelihood activities, function of markets, eroded households' livelihood

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<sup>716</sup> Danish Immigration Service; UK Home Office (Author), published by Danish Immigration Service, [Sudan: Situation of Persons from Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Khartoum; Joint report of the Danish Immigration Service and UK Home Office fact finding missions to Khartoum, Kampala and Nairobi Conducted February – March 2016](#), August 2016, p. 88

<sup>717</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017](#), December 2016, p. 21

<sup>718</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 21

<sup>719</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, section 2., d. Freedom of Movement

<sup>720</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)

<sup>721</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, [Sudan: Refugees, IDPs and Malnutrition – DG ECHO Daily Map](#), 28/03/2018

asset holdings and limited households' access to income earning opportunities in these areas. Meanwhile, the persistent sharp increase of staple food prices has reduced the ability of poor households and protracted IDPs to access food through market purchase, especially during the June to September peak lean season when cereal prices will be highest. The persistent macroeconomic challenges in the form of high inflation and local currency devaluation have resulted in reduced purchasing power for many households in Sudan, particularly poor households. Approximately 20-30 percent of IDPs and poor households in SPLM-N controlled areas are likely to face significant food consumption gaps between June and September 2018 and will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4)".<sup>722</sup>

#### **8.3.4. Health care**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.6. Access to health care](#).

The 2018 US Department of State country report on human rights practices (covering 2017) noted that "Internally displaced children often lacked access to government services such as health and education due to both security concerns and an inability to pay related fees. In October 2016 UNICEF reported approximately 70 percent of IDPs were children".<sup>723</sup> The same report further reported that "Many IDPs faced [...] inadequate medical care".<sup>724</sup>

### **8.4. South Kordofan**

#### **8.4.1. Access to basic services**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.5. Denial of humanitarian access](#).

The report of an inter-agency mission that took place from 16 to 21 October 2016 to assess the situation of the displaced people in 5 locations in Abu Kershola Locality, South Kordofan State found that "Only about 10% of the IDPs have latrines in their households and there are no communal latrines. Regarding water sources, a major challenge is the widespread use of un-protected open hand-dug wells with poor water quality. The WASH [Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene] situation in schools is dire because most of the schools either do not have water and sanitation facilities or have an inadequate coverage. School children practice open defecation".<sup>725</sup>

According to OCHA's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview "Across Sudan, it is estimated that 4.9 million people do not have access to adequate drinking water and safe means of defecation, and that their hygiene practices do not improve their health status. Seventy per cent of the people in need are in the five states of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile especially in the areas recently accessed in 2017".<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>722</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *National Overview, Current Situation, Most likely food security outcomes*, p. 7

<sup>723</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons*

<sup>724</sup> US Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Sudan](#), 20 April 2018, *Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)*

<sup>725</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 1

<sup>726</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 21

An OCHA inter agency assessment report conducted in 15 rural communities and 3 urban communities in Al Abbassiya Town, South Kordofan in February 2018 provided an overview of the access to basic services for IDPs:

In all the assessed areas, the security situation is calm and the residents report enjoying good personal safety. The communities either do not have essential services or are critically underserved. Some of the communities have organised themselves to sustain services such as water sources, constructed a few schools using locally available materials and set aside space for health facilities like in Banat. However, not all communities have started such initiatives.

The overall water and sanitation situation of the villages assessed is critical. What is available is unsafe for human consumption, many residents reported water shortage and having to walk a long distance to water sources. Under sanitation, more than 90 per cent of the population practice open defecation and the affected population has poor knowledge and adaptation of good hygiene behavior. Currently IDPs are accessing approximately 10 litres per person per day which is below recommended 15 litres per person. Water sources are located far from where people live and it takes between 2 – 6 hours to fetch water and in the dry season it extends to 12 hours. Water sources have no storage facilities and a large number of hand pumps are broken.<sup>727</sup>

The same source further stated that “Basic services are not available in most of the assessed areas. For example, during house visits, the mission found some women who said they were sick, but could not go to hospital because the health facilities were far and they did not have money to pay for consultation or prescribed drugs. There is a high incidence of breakage of hand water pumps and search for water for domestic is the chore that takes most of the time for the women”.<sup>728</sup>

In a May 2018 article OCHA provided an overview of the situation of IDPs in Kadugli, South Kordofan:

There are nearly 200,000 IDPs, 35,000 refugees and thousands of returnees in Kadugli. Most of these people are women and children seeking a respite from years of hardship [...]

Gisma, an IDP in the Murta settlement in Kadugli, told Mr. Lowcock that people arrive with nothing but their clothes. She explained that women face particular challenges, as they have to walk great distances in search of firewood and don't feel safe. Gisma noted that there is not enough food, and she told the ERC [Emergency Relief Coordinator] that the community's priority needs are education and health. Many children who arrived from SPLM-N-controlled areas lack documentation, making schooling more difficult. [...]

Community leaders Hassan and Tia told the ERC that the Murta settlements are overcrowded, with many homes hosting three to five families. Aid partners provided new shelters and the situation improved, but there is a lack of plastic sheeting, which is urgently needed as the rainy season sets in. IDPs have few opportunities to earn a little cash, such as collecting firewood or gathering animal waste for manure. The only school and nursery in the settlements are overcrowded.<sup>729</sup>

#### **8.4.2. Shelter**

The report of an inter-agency mission that took place from 16 to 21 October 2016 to assess the situation of the displaced people in 5 locations in Abu Kershola Locality, South Kordofan State found that “Most of the IDPs have inadequate shelters. Physical verification of the current shelters showed that most of the displaced people lost all their assets and belongings during the conflict and while in displacement. This is compounded by the fact that a majority of the IDPs are women and children.

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<sup>727</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 1

<sup>728</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 4

<sup>729</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian relief chief visits one of the world's most forgotten crises](#), 16 May 2018

Some cases of people with special needs (PSNs) were also identified”.<sup>730</sup> The same report further noted that “A Physical inspection of the shelters indicated that the living condition of the IDPs in terms of shelter is inadequate. However, all IDPs are vulnerable and most of them are women and children in addition to people with special needs (PSNs). A few of the IDPs received plastic sheets and kitchen sets in 2014, but the majority of the IDPs did not receive any NFIs [Non-Food Items] since arriving in 2014. Physical verification of the current shelters showed that displaced people lost all of their assets and belongings during the conflict and while in displacement”.<sup>731</sup>

A December 2017 report published by the US Agency for International Development stated that “From October 2–5, a UN interagency assessment team traveled to South Kordofan’s Dilling town and estimated that approximately 10,000 IDPs—or 1,900 households—require humanitarian assistance in areas around Dilling. The IDPs, most of whom are women and children, are sheltering in flood-prone areas and have indicated willingness to return to areas of origin”.<sup>732</sup>

The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) stated in January 2018 that “During HART’s recent visit to the Nuba Mountains, they visited families who escaped the fighting by taking shelter in caves. The stories are tragic, where families have lost their homes and loved ones to air strikes coordinated by the Government of Sudan (GoS). Those that managed to flee to the mountains are still not safe, having to deal with burns and deep wounds as a result of the shelling on top of cobra bites, malaria, acute watery diarrhoea and malnutrition. With the lack of humanitarian access, the limited supplies that HART are able to provide mean the difference between life and death”.<sup>733</sup>

#### 8.4.3. Food

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.7. Food insecurity](#).

The report of an inter-agency mission that took place from 16 to 21 October 2016 to assess the situation of the displaced people in 5 locations in Abu Kershola Locality, South Kordofan State provided an overview of the food security situation for IDPs:

In all the visited locations, IDPs did not have enough food stocks, and a majority informed the mission that they eat only one meal per day. In some homesteads, the cooking fire is not lit for a whole day. More than 60% of the displaced populations are women and children. Out of the assessed 697 households in the 5 locations, 23% and 4% are headed by women and children respectively. Nutrition centres exist in various locations but lack supplies such as RUTF/ RUSF [Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food and Supplementary Food] as well as products required for routine medication and micro nutrient support. Some of the centres are managed by volunteers and do not have adequate skilled staff. The mission found the highest concentration of malnourished children in Higeer. A sample of 272 children screened during the assessment resulted in 168 experiencing normal growth, 60 at risk of malnutrition, 25 with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 19 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM). The children with SAM came from Higeer (9), Abu Kershola urban (6) and Elbobaya (4).<sup>734</sup>

<sup>730</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 1

<sup>731</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 7

<sup>732</sup> US Agency for International Development, [Sudan – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2018](#), 1 December 2017, p. 3

<sup>733</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [The UK and Sudan: Trade Relations and Human Rights](#), 4 January 2018

<sup>734</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 1



According to OCHA's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview "Population displacement in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile is one of the major drivers of food insecurity, undernutrition, and livelihoods impoverishment. This is reflected in disruption of food production and food systems, destruction of crops and livestock, loss of assets and income, erosion of household livelihood asset holdings, limited household access to income earning opportunities, and restricted trade flows. Displacement also puts pressure on host communities to share limited resources, causing further deterioration of food security and increased vulnerability of both groups. The majority of displaced and host communities are not able to meet their food and livelihood security needs and mostly engage in non-reversible coping strategies".<sup>735</sup>

A January 2018 joint Food and Agricultural Organization/World Food Programme report on food insecurity situation in conflict-affected countries stated that "In conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan and Darfur States, in particular, poor households and IDPs endure extremely limited income sources coupled with the early depletion of cereal stocks because of local production shortfalls during the 2016 season".<sup>736</sup>

In a January 2018 report the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust provided an overview on the situation of food security in South Kordofan:

In 2018 the CU [Coordination Unit] notes disparate results of the harvest across South Kordofan. CU monitors report comparatively better performance of crops in the Western Jebels, and in the central region overall better performance in the northern county of Delami. Of particular concern is the comparatively deficient performance of Heiban county, the most densely populated region. The CU has verified substantial amounts of crop failure in this area due to poor climatic conditions and higher rates of fungal and insect related crop damages, though specific harvest figures are not known at this time. This coincides with an already greater rate of food insecurity in the county, likely due to the presence of a substantial number of IDPs from the 2016 conflict. While the output from the 2017/2018 harvest will almost certainly exceed that of the previous year, there is still cause for concern in South Kordofan. This harvest will certainly fall below the 10-year average harvest for this area and likely create a substantial food gap in the coming months. Based on key informant interviews performed by the CU, it is likely the current harvest's food stocks will not last beyond April. With the following early harvest beginning in August, this will create at least a 3 month food gap. Of specific concern are the IDPs in Heiban county who often lack access to any kind of harvest. With the crops in this region performing comparatively poorer, it is likely that the normal community support to these individuals will be insufficient. More analysis is needed on this community and what prospects they face in 2018.<sup>737</sup>

The OCHA inter agency assessment report based on an assessment conducted in 15 rural communities and 3 urban communities in Al Abbassiya Town, South Kordofan in February 2018 provided an overview of the situation of food security for IDPs: "On food security, 65% have food stock for three months (from November up January), 25% have enough for 5 months and only 10% report having enough food stocks for one year. The price of staple food such as sorghum and millet are more than double compared to same time last year at 25 SDG for Sorghum and 35 SDG for millet as opposed to 12-18 SDG for the same respectively. Most of the villages visited have no open

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<sup>735</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 20

<sup>736</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), [Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations - A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council](#), January 2018, p. 31

<sup>737</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update](#), January 2018, p. 1-2

markets days. The purchasing power is weak due to lack of livelihoods”.<sup>738</sup> The same source further stated that “Nutrition services are provided through 8 OTP Centres: Al Abbassiya, Tabasa, Tajor, Karmogeyia, Elmuraat, Tab Elzaraf, Eldabadeb, Bared, Abu Jamoos, Eljabal Elahamer in Al Abbassiya Locality for the treatment of Severe Acute Malnourished (SAM) children without complications. These services are supported by UNICEF, SCI and Concern. The OTPs [Out- Patient Therapeutic Programm] work closely with a Stabilization Centre (SC) in Al Abbassiya Hospital managed by the State Ministry of Health (SMOH) for treating SAM cases with complications. Most of the OTPs are in areas close to Al Abbassiya Town. In most of the hitherto closed areas there is no humanitarian assistance being provided. In September 2017, UNICEF supported SMOH to establish a satellite OTP for screening and treatment of SAM children in the newly accessible areas of Aljebielat, Alsanadra, Choliya, Kalinda, Jugaya, Shawaya, Tofin and Mundaraba, where 707 children were screened; 12 were found to have SAM and one child had Oedema in addition to 70 who had MAM [Moderate Acute Malnutrition]. All the children were treated. In October 2017, UNICEF supported SMOH to carryout mass MUAC screening for all”.<sup>739</sup>

OCHA outlined its predictions regarding food security in South Kordofan in an April 2018 report stating that “Most internally displaced persons (IDPs) in areas controlled by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan and IDPs in the Jebel Marra area of Darfur are likely to continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity through May 2018. This is mainly due to their displacement, poor harvests or limited agricultural opportunities, and/or very high staple food prices. The food security among IDPs in SPLM-N areas of South Kordofan is likely to deteriorate further to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels between June and September 2018. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in South Sudan reported in its latest operational update that 1,269 new arrivals from SPLMN areas in South Kordofan were registered in Yida refugee settlement, Unity State (near the border with Sudan) during 1-15 March 2018. This represents 132 per cent increase compared to the same period last year when 545 new arrivals were registered. Food shortage in South Kordofan is the main driver for new arrivals, according to UNHCR”.<sup>740</sup>

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network’s (FEWS NET) June 2018 ‘Food Security Outlook’, “WFP’s Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) Report in November 2017 stated that in government-controlled areas of South Kordofan state, over 20 percent of populations surveyed in Dellami, Alreefshargi, Talodi, Rashad, and Abu Karshola localities have poor or borderline food consumption (FC). Food consumption in SPLM-N controlled areas is expected to be worse than in government-controlled areas due to reduced access to cultivation and higher food prices in SPLM-N controlled areas. Due to prolonged displacement, restricted population movements and trade flows, high loss of animals and other assets, most IDP households in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan have resorted to various coping strategies that wild food consumption, limiting meal size, and reducing meal frequency, alongside begging”.<sup>741</sup>

The same source further predicted for June to October 2018 that:

Given, the reduced asset holding by IDP households’ in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and the limited purchasing power resulting, in part, from the projected sharp increases in cereal and

<sup>738</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 1

<sup>739</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 8

<sup>740</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Bulletin | Issue 06 | 19 March – 1 April 2018](#), 1 April 2018, p. 1-2

<sup>741</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *Areas of Concern, IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan State (Figure 4), Current situation*, p. 8

non-cereal food items during the first half of the scenario period, most IDP households' access to basic food items as well as diet diversity will further deteriorate. Therefore, about 30 to 40 percent of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas will face extreme food consumption deficit during the first half of the scenario period and will face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity. Household access to food is likely to improve with the start of harvests in October and increase access to wild foods and in-kind assistance from the host community. However, most IDPs in SPLM-N-controlled areas, lack of humanitarian assistance and the projected high prices of staple and non-staples induced by the macro-economic changes, about 20 – 25 percent of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas will face moderate food consumption deficit during the second half of the scenario period and will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity.<sup>742</sup>

A July 2018 World Food Programme report noted that “The food insecurity in North and South Darfur, Blue and White Nile states (Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) Classification 3) and, South Kordofan (IPC Classification 4) will likely persist until late 2018. This is due to limited agricultural labour and other livelihood opportunities, and low asset holdings. IDPs are among the most affected population”.<sup>743</sup>

#### **8.4.4. Health care**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.6. Access to health care](#).

The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) noted that “Information on health needs is limited due to lack of access”.<sup>744</sup>

The report of an inter-agency mission that took place from 16 to 21 October 2016 to assess the situation of the displaced people in 5 locations in Abu Kershola Locality, South Kordofan State found that “Generally the area suffers inadequate health services coverage because of lack of health cadres (doctors, medical assistants, midwives and lab technicians). The health centres are in dire need of furniture and equipment such as Higeer and Umbaraka health facilities. The situation has been compounded by lack of financial support for the recurrent expenses to maintain operations. Most of the IDPs seek medical attention at the Abu Kershola Health facility which is 2-3 hours walk. Abu Kershola also suffers from shortage of essential drugs”.<sup>745</sup>

According to reporting by Radio Dabanga in June 2017 “The area of Murta has the highest number of new arrivals in 2017 and there are major gaps in humanitarian assistance as it is a newly established settlement that has almost no basic services in place [...] The displaced arriving in Murta, mostly women and children, cited poor conditions including food insecurity as the reasons for fleeing their homes in the SPLM-N areas. Medical attention is not being provided upon arrival and some pregnant women did not receive medical attention for almost a week following their arrival. There are no sanitation facilities and no access to clean drinking water in Murta.”<sup>746</sup>

A December 2017 report published by the US Agency for International Development stated that “From October 2–5, a UN interagency assessment team traveled to South Kordofan’s Dilling town

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<sup>742</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), [Sudan: Food Security Outlook](#), June 2018, *Areas of Concern, IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan State (Figure 4), Current situation*, p. 9

<sup>743</sup> World Food Programme, [Sudan Country Brief July 2018](#), 31 July 2018, p. 1

<sup>744</sup> Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), [Sudan](#), Latest updated: 12/09/2018, *Health, Healthcare availability and access, South Kordofan*

<sup>745</sup> Government of Sudan - Water and Environmental Sanitation, [Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016](#), 30 October 2016, p. 1

<sup>746</sup> Radio Dabanga, [‘More Nuba flee from SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan’](#), 11 June 2017

and estimated that approximately 10,000 IDPs—or 1,900 households—require humanitarian assistance in areas around Dilling. The IDPs, most of whom are women and children, are sheltering in flood-prone areas and have indicated willingness to return to areas of origin. According to the assessment, displaced populations are unable to access health care services due to the long distance to the nearest health facility. In addition, most health care centers lack adequate staff. The assessment team also noted that poor WASH [Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene] infrastructure has resulted in populations consuming water from unprotected sources, increasing the risk of waterborne disease transmission. Relief organizations are preparing to assist IDPs with emergency health, livelihood, and WASH assistance”.<sup>747</sup>

OCHA noted in its humanitarian bulletin for December 2017 that “According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) in Sudan has recently reported an increase in the number of suspected dengue fever cases during the period 2 October to 8 December 2017. A total of 137 suspected cases, including three deaths, were reported from Khartoum, Kassala, East and West Darfur, South Kordofan, Red Sea, River Nile and Gezira states over this period”.<sup>748</sup>

An OCHA inter agency assessment report conducted in 15 rural communities and 3 urban communities in Al Abbassiya Town, South Kordofan in February 2018 provided an overview of the access to health care for IDPs:

Health care is not available in most of the assessed communities, where it is available, it is too expensive for the IDPs. Medical treatment is sought either in Al Abbassiya Town or Umrwaba which is more than 50kms away from the assessed areas. There is a shortage of health professionals, drugs, medical equipment and physical structures to house primary health care services. Banat and Tabasa have health facilities structures but no medical staff, furniture or equipment as they were looted during the conflict. During the AWD [Acute Watery Diarrhoea] outbreak in 2017, Al Abbassiya Locality had a CFR [Case Fatality Rate] of 16%. Kumsoro and Megeitaat had one of the highest CFRs in the country at 30%. Pregnant women and children below 5 years do not receive routine vaccination. In Nutrition, all the assessed areas do not have nutrition services for treatment of malnourished children or pregnant and lactating women, except Tabasa and Al Abbassiya Town. The two offer out-patient therapeutic program and supplementary feeding programme supported by Save the Children. Also, a satellite out-patient therapeutic programme (OTP) is now operational in Banat and Megeitaat.<sup>749</sup>

The same source further stated that “IDPs in Hi-Almadaris, Alsouq and Buri and within Al Abbassiya Town, together with the hosting community, receive medical services from 5 health centres and one rural hospital. However, access to these facilities is limited due to the high cost of consultation fees that ranges between 30 and 50 SDGs. Care International is providing services at no fee while another clinic that was supported by Sudanese Red Crescent is no longer operating after the sponsored period ended”.<sup>750</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported in August 2018 that “Seven people have been infected with severe diarrhoea at Abu Jubeiha in South Kordofan. The infection believed to be acute watery diarrhoea, is

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<sup>747</sup> US Agency for International Development, [Sudan – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2018](#), 1 December 2017, p. 3

<sup>748</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Bulletin / Issue 27 / 4 – 17 December 2017](#), 17 December 2017, p. 1

<sup>749</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 1

<sup>750</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report: Al Abbassiya Locality, South Kordofan State- 4-8 February 2018](#), 2018, p. 7

often caused by cholera. A health source reported to Radio Dabanga that Abu Jubeiha hospital has received seven cases of the disease during the past two days”.<sup>751</sup>

## 8.5. Blue Nile

### 8.5.1. Access to basic services

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.5. Denial of humanitarian access](#).

A September 2016 report published by the International Refugee Rights Initiative stated that “Health and education services are also extremely limited inside the SPLM-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North] areas. Massive displacement in and from Blue Nile State has resulted in a lack of staff capable of maintaining clinics or schools. With no humanitarian assistance, they also lack the necessary equipment”.<sup>752</sup>

Radio Dabanga reported that between May and December 2016 “at least 13 people, mostly children and elderly, have died of food and medicine shortages [...] They were among about 9,000 people who were displaced in May by internal SPLM-N fighting as well as the torrential rains”.<sup>753</sup>

Following its visit to Blue Nile, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) published its report in January 2018 and found that in Wadaka “the situation is extremely dire, with 9,000 IDPs who had recently fled from their homes in Danfona in the middle of the night. They left carrying nothing with them and no help has reached them from any NGO. They said that HART was the first NGO to reach them. They are trying to survive, scavenging for food, eating leaves and roots with no nutritional value, to ease hunger pains. They have no other supplies such as clean water or blankets”.<sup>754</sup>

The Sudanese National Human Rights Monitors Organisation noted that in March 2018 it conducted a joint humanitarian assessment mission in Wadaka Payam, El Kurmuk County with a number of civil society and humanitarian organisations and found that:

the following villages were affected by the conflict: Tunfona, Alsama-Aradeba, Marmaton, Goz-Bagar, Goz-Aljamamat, Patig, Goz Adam Abdulati, Goz-Arab, Goz-Kordalla, Sharsharo and Tokush. The assessment also confirmed a massive population movement of IDPs out of these areas as the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate due to insecurity and lack of basic humanitarian services. Most of the IDPs have “settled” in Gesis, Wadaka-Aljebel, Jebel-Lebo, Jebel-Jero, Goz-Aburassin, Balila-centre and Sammari villages but they lack basic humanitarian services including shelter and most of them were living under trees. Their needs include food, medical care, water, education, clothing and basic security. Children, the elderly and pregnant women were the most vulnerable IDP groups as a result of hunger, malnutrition and disease. A number of women delivered their babies in the bush without basic maternity services and antenatal care. The IDPs also lacked potable water and are using unprotected boreholes, wells and surface water.<sup>755</sup>

### 8.5.2. Shelter

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<sup>751</sup> Radio Dabanga, [Diarrhoea, healthcare shortages in Kordofan, Khartoum](#), 27 August 2018

<sup>752</sup> International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [A Crisis Normalised: Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), September 2016, p. 23

<sup>753</sup> Radio Dabanga, [More than 10 people died from hunger, lack of medicines in Blue Nile State](#), 1 January 2018

<sup>754</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [“There was nobody to help us”: Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile, Sudan](#), January 2018, *Severe Food Insecurity*, p. 8

<sup>755</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), Undated, Last accessed: 1 October 2018, p. 3

In a project appeal submitted to OCHA for 2017, World Vision described the access to shelter for IDPs in Blue Nile as follows: “In BN [Blue Nile], according to the inter agency Rapid Assessment report conducted March 2016 in Blue Nile state, most households lack lifesaving NFIs [Non-Food Items]. The most vulnerable households do not have a source of income in all new IDPs locations and they found to live in temporary shelters made of grass and bamboo which does not provide adequate protection from rains, insects, and diseases. According to WV [World Vision] monitoring visits the most vulnerable and people in need are 4800 (2352 F & 2448 M) situated in the three localities of El Kurmuk, EL Roseires, and Geissan”.<sup>756</sup>

In its annual report on human rights in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (covering 2017) the Hudo Centre described how “a delegation consisting of the governor (BN), BN state minister of planning and Damazin locality governor visited the IDPs camp in Alshaheed Afandi where the shelters/ huts had been flooded and damaged by the heavy rains. Soon after the delegation’s tour, the BN governor announced that ‘those IDPs do not deserve any aid because they are in unplanned/ random area’”.<sup>757</sup>

The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) reported in September 2017 that “Heavy rains and severe flooding exacerbated the already challenging displacement situation in Blue Nile. With thousands displaced and no access for humanitarian relief, people have suffered from contaminated water, lack of shelter from rains, and an increased risk of illness. The main market in the region was flooded, causing an unknown amount of property damage”.<sup>758</sup>

The National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO) described in a 2018 report the needs of IDPs living in Wadaka Payam, El Kurmuk County:

Between 11 and 15 March 2018, a number of civil society and humanitarian organisations including NHRMO conducted a joint humanitarian assessment mission in Wadaka Payam, El Kurmuk County. This was aimed at investigating the humanitarian situation of IDPs affected by the internal conflict between SPLM/A-N [Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army North] factions in western Wadaka Payam. The findings indicated that the following villages were affected by the conflict: Tunfona, Alsama-Aradeba, Marmaton, Goz-Bagar, Goz-Aljamamat, Patig, Goz Adam Abdulati, Goz-Arab, Goz-Kordalla, Sharsharo and Tokush. The assessment also confirmed a massive population movement of IDPs out of these areas as the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate due to insecurity and lack of basic humanitarian services. Most of the IDPs have “settled” in Gesis, Wadaka-Aljebel, Jebel-Lebo, Jebel-Jero, Goz-Abu-rassin, Balila-centre and Sammari villages but they lack basic humanitarian services including shelter and most of them were living under trees. Their needs include food, medical care, water, education, clothing and basic security. Children, the elderly and pregnant women were the most vulnerable IDP groups as a result of hunger, malnutrition and disease. A number of women delivered their babies in the bush without basic maternity services and antenatal care. The IDPs also lacked potable water and are using unprotected boreholes, wells and surface water.<sup>759</sup>

### 8.5.3. Food

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.7. Food insecurity](#).

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<sup>756</sup> World Vision, [Provision of Emergency Shelter and Non Food Items to restore human dignity of protracted, newly displaced IDPs and returnees in 3200 in South Darfur and 4800 in Blue Nile States during 2017](#), Undated, Last accessed: 4 October 2018, p.2

<sup>757</sup> Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan, January – December 2017](#), 11 February 2018, p. 28

<sup>758</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [SKBN CU Humanitarian Update](#), September 2017, p. 3

<sup>759</sup> National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September 2017 – February 2018](#), 2018, p. 3



According to OCHA's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview "Population displacement in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile is one of the major drivers of food insecurity, undernutrition, and livelihoods impoverishment. This is reflected in disruption of food production and food systems, destruction of crops and livestock, loss of assets and income, erosion of household livelihood asset holdings, limited household access to income earning opportunities, and restricted trade flows. Displacement also puts pressure on host communities to share limited resources, causing further deterioration of food security and increased vulnerability of both groups. The majority of displaced and host communities are not able to meet their food and livelihood security needs and mostly engage in non-reversible coping strategies".<sup>760</sup>

The Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) noted in a January 2018 report on food security in Blue Nile that "There are multiple reasons for food scarcity in Blue Nile. Constant movement by civilians avoiding bombs and attacks from the GoS [Government of Sudan] has prevented them from cultivating many crops and maintaining any resilience to natural disasters, including the floods in October 2017 which ruined majority of the crops they had been able to grow and which were to be used for food until the next harvest. [...] In Wadaka, the situation is extremely dire, with 9,000 IDPs who had recently fled from their homes in Danfona in the middle of the night. They left carrying nothing with them and no help has reached them from any NGO. They said that HART was the first NGO to reach them. They are trying to survive, scavenging for food, eating leaves and roots with no nutritional value, to ease hunger pains. They have no other supplies such as clean water or blankets".<sup>761</sup>

A January 2018 joint Food and Agricultural Organization/World Food Programme report on food insecurity situation in conflict-affected countries stated that "Between October and December, over 30 percent of food insecure people were concentrated in the Darfur States where there are large numbers of displaced people. Blue Nile, North Kordofan, Kassala and Gadarif also had high levels of food insecurity – between 13 and 19 percent of their population is in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4)".<sup>762</sup>

In April 2018 HART reported that "Emergency food aid funded by Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) has been successfully delivered to 9,000 displaced people facing starvation in Blue Nile State, Sudan. HART visited the area in January 2018, and issued an urgent appeal for £50,000 for sorghum (the common grain) and cooking oil for families forced to flee from violent conflict".<sup>763</sup> The same source further described the food security situation in Blue Nile stating that "People living in Blue Nile areas administered by SPLM-N (Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North) have consistently suffered severe food shortages because the Government of Sudan denies access by aid organisations. Their problems have recently been exacerbated by internal fighting within SPLM-N and by severe flooding".<sup>764</sup>

A July 2018 World Food Programme report noted that "The food insecurity in North and South Darfur, Blue and White Nile states (Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) Classification 3) and, South Kordofan (IPC Classification 4) will likely persist until late 2018. This is due to limited agricultural

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<sup>760</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), February 2018, p. 20

<sup>761</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), published by ReliefWeb: ["There was nobody to help us": Oppression by the Government of Sudan and Food Shortages in Blue Nile](#), Sudan, January 2018, p. 8

<sup>762</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), [Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations - A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council](#), January 2018, p. 30

<sup>763</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [Food Aid Feeds Thousands in Blue Nile](#), 30 April 2018

<sup>764</sup> Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), [Food Aid Feeds Thousands in Blue Nile](#), 30 April 2018

labour and other livelihood opportunities, and low asset holdings. IDPs are among the most affected population”.<sup>765</sup>

#### **8.5.4. Health care**

This section should be read in conjunction with [3.6. Access to health care](#) and [8.5.1. Access to basic services](#).

Very limited COI was located within the time frame of this report amongst the sources consulted providing information specific to access to health care for IDPs in Blue Nile.

OCHA reported in its ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ of mid-November 2016 that a lack of funding was forcing humanitarian organisations to either “hand over or close down their health facilities” in in North, South and West Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states affecting “769,00 people – including IDPs and host communities”.<sup>766</sup>

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<sup>765</sup> World Food Programme, [Sudan Country Brief July 2018](#), 31 July 2018, p. 1

<sup>766</sup> OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: 7-13 November 2016](#), 13 November 2016, p. 1