

COI Focus

SUDAN

Security situation in Darfur and the Two Areas

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Cedoca

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Contents

List of abbreviations.....	3
Introduction	5
1. Brief history	6
2. Current conflict situation.....	9
3. Combating parties	11
3.1. The Sudanese army and its allied forces	11
3.2. Rebel Forces and militias	14
3.2.1. Signatory armed groups.....	14
3.2.2. Non-signatory armed groups and militias.....	15
4. Typology of the violence.....	17
4.1. Darfur	17
4.2. Two Areas.....	22
5. Targets of the violence	26
6. Geographical distribution	28
7. Population displacements.....	31
8. Impact of the violence on daily life	34
Summary.....	37
Annexes	38
Bibliography	41

List of abbreviations

ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
ACJPS	African Centre For Justice and Peace Studies
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DSWG	Durable Solutions Working Group
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FFC	Forces for Freedom and Change
GIS	General Intelligence Service
GPC	Global Protection Cluster
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSBA	Human Security Baseline Assessment
ICG	International Crisis Group
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
JIPS	Joint IDP Profiling Service
JPA	Juba Peace Agreement
LJM	Liberation and Justice Movement
NCP	National Congress Party
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OHCHR	Office Of The High Commissioner For Human Rights
PDF	Popular Defense Forces
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Amry
SPLM/A	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army - North
SRF	Sudanese Revolutionary Front
SuAF	Sudanese Alliance Forces
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
TMC	Transitional Military Council

UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme

Introduction

The purpose of this COI Focus is to assess the security situation in the five states of Darfur, the Two Areas¹ and West Kordofan in Sudan. The report is particularly focused on the period from January 2022 to December 2022.

The report comprises eight parts. The first chapter briefly explains the history of the conflict, while chapter two describes the current situation of the conflict. The actors of violence are discussed in the third chapter. Chapters four, five and six deal successively with the types, targets and geographical distribution of the violence. Displacement and the impact of the violence on the daily lives of people in the region are discussed in chapters seven and eight.

Cedoca consulted Sudanese media such as Darfur24, Sudan Tribune, Radio Dabanga, as well as reports from NGOs such as the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and international organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International (AI) and International Crisis Group (ICG). Reports from governmental and intergovernmental sources, such as the United States Department of State (USDOS) and various UN agencies, were also used. In addition, Cedoca consulted the reporting of other European member states, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

From 30 October to 10 November 2022, the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo) and Cedoca conducted a joint fact-finding mission in Sudan. Information collected during meetings with sources in Khartoum is also included in this report.

This COI Focus uses numerical data on security incidents from the database of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a US non-profit organisation that collects, analyses and maps information on conflicts. Experienced researchers collect the data using information from a wide range of local, regional and international news sources and organisations. For Sudan, the following sources, among others, were used: the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Radio Dabanga, Al Rakoba, Sudan Tribune and the Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre. The database is publicly available on ACLED's website and is continually updated whenever new information becomes available (previously entered incidents are also updated when relevant).² The ACLED figures used by Cedoca in this COI Focus were retrieved on the 12th of January 2023. ACLED's inventory shows the type of violent event, actors of violence, a description of the events, their location and the number of fatalities.³ ACLED stresses that because its datasets reflect to some degree the reporting priorities of the media and organisations, the violence may be underestimated.⁴ In its Codebook, ACLED explains in detail the methodology applied for coding and the continuous checking of data.⁵ Given the methodology, coding and entering of data, ACLED's figures, according to Cedoca, can only be considered as an estimate and indication of trends regarding violence in a given period.

Cedoca continuously monitors the security situation in Sudan. In the event of fundamental changes or developments that significantly alter the situation on the ground, this COI Focus will be updated as quickly as possible.

¹ The Two Areas refer to the two southern provinces of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

² ACLED, *Coding review Process*, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

³ ACLED, *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). Codebook*, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

⁴ ACLED, *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). Guide for Media Users*, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

⁵ ACLED, *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). Codebook*, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

1. Brief history

In 1989, General Omar al-Bashir seized power in Sudan through a military coup led by the National Islamic Front (NIF), renamed the National Congress Party (NCP) in the late 1990s.⁶

In 2003, two rebel groups in Darfur, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), revolted against the central government in Khartoum. Most of the rebels were recruited from the local non-Arab communities, especially the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit. They fought in response to the marginalization of the region and the failure of the central government to protect the sedentary population from increasing attacks by nomads.⁷ The Sudanese government responded by deploying Arab militias known as *Janjaweed*. More than 400 villages were destroyed and millions of civilians were forced to flee the violence. The conflict in Darfur claimed more than 400,000 lives, of which the vast majority caused by man-made famine, and displaced more than 2,500,000 people.⁸

In 2006, Khartoum and the SLM/A-faction led by Minni Minawi (SLM/A-MM) signed the Darfur Peace Agreement. The JEM and the SLM/A-faction of Abdul Wahid Muhamed al-Nur (SLM/A-AW) refused to sign. Dissatisfaction with the deal created a new violent dynamic in the conflict. What had mostly been an armed struggle between the government forces and the rebels expanded into a conflict between the different rebel groups. The disgruntled Arab militias also started fighting each other and sometimes even turned against the government troops. Inter-ethnic violence in the Darfur region aggravated the security situation.⁹ In 2007, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was deployed in Darfur in order to stop the ongoing violence in the region.¹⁰

South Kordofan and Blue Nile – known as the Two Areas¹¹ – have been plagued by periods of conflict and insecurity since the 1980s.¹² In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended over 20 years of civil war but failed to address conflict drivers in the Two Areas. After South Sudan's independence six years later, tensions between the government and the now Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-N) reignited the civil war in South Kordofan in June 2011 and in Blue Nile three months later.¹³

⁶ The Popular Defense Forces (PDF) were a key instrument through which the NCP sought, as part of its so-called Civilization Project, to promote an Arab and Islamic identity across Sudan. In practice, this meant that in the Two Areas the NCP's allies were mainly drawn from Arab communities and that the SPLM/A was increasingly supported by non-Arab communities. Fighting during the war permanently displaced many SPLM/A supporters who lost access to their land in favor of NCP allies, whom the regime had empowered not only to fight the SPLM/A, but also to pursue their own land claims. Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

⁷ The conflict in Darfur can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, when Darfuris began to denounce the marginalization of the region by the Khartoum government. Tensions in Darfur increased due to drought and subsequent famine in the 1980s. Partly due to the drought, more and more conflicts about land rights and access to water between local farming communities and nomads took place. In addition, emerging Arab supremacist thinking among nomadic groups drew a sharp ethnic boundary between Arab and African groups. Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 01/2019, p. 94, [url](#)

⁸ More detailed information on the violence over time and in different areas in Darfur as well as the different causes for the high human toll can be found in de Waal A., Davenport C. & Hazlett C., 11/2014, [url](#); Sudan Tribune (de Waal A.), 27/08/2007, [url](#); ICG, 22/04/2015, [url](#)

⁹ Small Arms Survey (Flint J.), 10/2010, [url](#); ICG, 22/04/2015, [url](#)

¹⁰ UNAMID, s.d., [url](#)

¹¹ The JPA refers to South Kordofan, West Kordofan, and Blue Nile as the Two Areas. West Kordofan was abolished in August 2005 before being reestablished in July 2013. Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

¹² Many people from the Two Areas joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) rebellion in southern Sudan, with which they shared many political, social and economic grievances, as part of Sudan's Second Civil War (1983 – 2005). Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

¹³ Komey G. K., 09/2016, pp. 14-15, [url](#); AI, 07/2015, p. 7, [url](#); IRRI, 09/2016, pp. 21-22, [url](#); IRRI, 04/2015, p. 10, [url](#); Small Arms Survey (De Alessi B.), 08/2015, pp. 14-15, [url](#)

In 2011, the Sudanese government and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), an umbrella organization comprising a number of smaller rebel groups, signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).¹⁴ Implementation was flawed, and the LJM quickly split into several factions.¹⁵ The other major rebel groups rejected the DDPD and created the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), a coalition that at that time consisted of the SLM/A-MM, the SLM/A-AW and the JEM-Jibril¹⁶ from Darfur, together with the SPLM/A-N.¹⁷

As of 2014, violence in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile increased due to the Decisive Summer Offensive led by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).¹⁸ Although the offensive was directed against the rebels, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that the RSF, supported by the Sudanese Army and pro-government militias, repeatedly attacked villages, looted and burned down houses, and beat, raped and executed villagers.¹⁹ By the end of 2014, they controlled large parts of Darfur.²⁰ From mid-2016, armed clashes between government and rebel forces diminished. The conflict in Darfur became geographically confined to the area around Jebel Marra, a mountain range that spans the three states of Central, North and South Darfur, where clashes between security forces and the SLM/A-AW continued.²¹ The security situation in Darfur remained unstable as armed militias, criminals and gangs were found alongside the army, paramilitary groups and rebel groups. In a climate of general impunity, there were widespread instances of kidnappings, assaults, looting, people smuggling, carjacking and illegal checkpoints amid fighting for control of the gold mines in the Jebel Marra Mountains. In addition, Arab tribes were fighting among themselves in conflicts over land ownership, access to raw materials and livestock.²²

Various sources noted that the Sudanese government was waging a war of attrition in the Two Areas in the period 2011–2016 by targeting agricultural lands and water sources in rebel territory with airstrikes and disrupting food supplies across the front lines in order to drive civilians out of these regions. Limited food supplies and rising market prices lead to famine in some rebel-controlled isolated areas in the second half of 2015, according to UNOCHA.²³ Heavy fighting continued in the Two Areas until June 2016, when the SPLM/A-N and the government agreed to a cessation of hostilities.²⁴

By 2017, a rift had formed within the SPLM/A-N's leadership. That same year, violent clashes broke out in Blue Nile between communities supporting Malik Agar and Yasir Arman on the one side, and Abdelaziz al-Hilu on the other, leading to a formal split and numerous casualties. In October 2017, the SPLM/A-N elected al-Hilu as Chairman and Commander-in-Chief of the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu.²⁵ During

¹⁴ UNAMID, s.d., [url](#)

¹⁵ ICG, 22/04/2015, [url](#)

¹⁶ After Khalil Ibrahim, leader of the JEM, was killed in an air raid in December 2011, his brother Jibril Ibrahim was elected as his successor in January 2012. This fueled tensions within the JEM. Commander Bakheit Abdallah Abd al-Karim Dabajo established a splinter group in September 2012 under the leadership of Mohamed Bashar. In September 2012, Dabajo declared that he wanted to participate in the peace talks. The JEM-Bashar signed the DDPD in April 2013. HSBA, 08/2013, [url](#)

¹⁷ HSBA, 08/10/2012, [url](#); ICG, 22/04/2015, [url](#); Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

¹⁸ ICG, 22/04/2015, [url](#)

¹⁹ HRW, 09/09/2015, [url](#)

²⁰ UNSC, 09/01/2017, [url](#)

²¹ Since 2014, rebel groups such as the JEM and SLA-MM have increasingly lost ground in Darfur. Since then, the SLA-MM has been mainly present in Libya, while the JEM has a military presence in South Sudan. UNSC, 09/01/2017, [url](#)

²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs – The Netherlands, 20/06/2017, [url](#)

²³ IRIN, 27/07/2016, [url](#); Foreign Policy (Rhodes T., John M.), 19/05/2016, [url](#); UNOCHA, 02/03/2016, [url](#); ACLED (Pinaud M.), 09/12/2016, [url](#)

²⁴ Nuba Reports, 07/06/2017, [url](#); HSBA & Small Arms Survey, 03/2020, pp. 34–38, [url](#); Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

²⁵ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2018, pp. 103–104, [url](#); ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#); Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

the following years, Malik Agar tried to rebuild a political and military movement in the Two Areas (further referred to as SPLM/A-N Agar).²⁶

On April 11 2019, after months of civilian protests, the army put an end to the nearly thirty-year regime of president al-Bashir with a coup. On August 17, 2019, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), the driving force behind the months-long protests, signed a constitutional statement outlining the path to civilian rule. The newly established Sovereign Council under the leadership of General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan fulfilled the role of head of state during a three-year transition period. Abdalla Hamdok was appointed prime minister.²⁷

While the number of clashes between government groups and rebel forces further decreased after 2019, intercommunal conflicts became more frequent and intense after the fall of al-Bashir. The fall of the NCP regime in 2019 fueled further violence in the peripheries, as groups who had benefitted under the previous regime feared that the new government would readjust the balance and sought to strengthen their positions.²⁸ The ethnic entrenchment of militias and paramilitary groups turned interpersonal conflicts into violent confrontations between different ethnic groups associated with militias and armed groups.²⁹ Furthermore, the relocation of government personnel and security forces to Khartoum created a gap in the security arrangements in peripheral states.³⁰ Crime rose in Darfur and the Two Areas.³¹ Violence in these peripheral regions became increasingly concentrated in urban areas and IDP camps near urban centres.³²

The Juba peace process, initiated in September 2019, culminated in the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA)³³ on 3 October 2020 by the Sovereign Council and a number of rebel groups. Hopes that the agreement would bring peace to the country were slim from the outset, given the limited role of the signatory rebel groups in violent incidents in recent years, and the fact that two major rebel groups (the SLM/A-AW and the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu) did not sign the JPA.³⁴ The peace agreement contributed to an increase in violence in Darfur and the Two Areas. The JPA stipulated that refugees had a right to land taken from them by militias during the conflict in the early 2000s. Empowered by the transition, non-Arab communities displaced by violence intensified their demands for compensation, justice and the return of land. This led to a backlash from communities who wanted to retain their privileges and felt that their interests were threatened.³⁵

²⁶ In 2015, mistrust within the SRF coalition led the SPLM/A-N to leave the coalition. Malik rejoined the SRF in 2017, but the SPLM/A-N Agar remained sidelined in the Two Areas politics until the Juba peace process started in September 2019. Through the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA), adopted in October 2020, Malik was able to increase his political power, especially in Blue Nile. Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

²⁷ ICG, 23/02/2021, [url](#)

²⁸ USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); Rift Valley Institute, 04/02/2022, [url](#)

²⁹ ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, 17/01/2021, [url](#)

³⁰ IPI, 12/2019, p. 20, [url](#)

³¹ USDOS, 03/2019, [url](#); UNSC, 30/05/2019, p. 2, [url](#); IPI, 12/2019, p. 20, [url](#)

³² By attacking IDP settlements near contested land and/or by denying IDPs access to their original farmlands, the perpetrators are attempting to establish (or maintain) de facto control over these areas. Rift Valley Institute, 04/02/2022, [url](#); ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#)

³³ The JPA addresses issues related to power sharing, transitional justice, rebel integration into the military, the return of IDPs and land tenure. The transition period is set at 39 months from the signing of the peace agreement. The rebel groups are allocated three seats in the Sovereign Council and 25% of the seats in the transitional parliament and in the Council of Ministers. Radio Dabanga, 30/08/2020, [url](#); UNSC, 13/11/2020, p. 2, [url](#)

³⁴ Since 2014, rebel groups such as the JEM and SLA-MM have increasingly lost ground in Darfur. Since then, the SLA-MM has been mainly present in Libya, while the JEM has a military presence in South Sudan. UNSC, 30/05/2019, p. 3, [url](#); UNSC, 10/01/2019, pp. 21-22, p. 28, [url](#); ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#)

³⁵ The New Humanitarian(Kleinfeld P. & Amin M.), 08/04/2021, [url](#); The New Humanitarian(Kleinfeld P. & Amin M.), 15/06/2021, [url](#); The New York Times, 19/03/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#); Rift Valley Institute, 11/2022, [url](#)

More than two years after the signing of the JPA, the agreement remains largely unimplemented, except for the power-sharing chapter of the deal.³⁶ According to the Rift Valley Institute, the JPA implementation process became mainly concerned with apportioning political representation to its signatories.³⁷

On 25 October 2021, the Sudanese military seized power from the transitional government by a military coup, worsening instability in Sudan.³⁸ Further implementation of the JPA seems unlikely in the post-coup context. “The arrangements needed to keep a post-coup transitional government together run counter to requirements for a genuine comprehensive peace process and are likely to increase instability in Sudan’s peripheries”, according to the Rift Valley Institute.³⁹

2. Current conflict situation

As the political struggle in Khartoum deepened, violence in the peripheral states resumed, fueled by a power vacuum and the divided loyalties of the security forces.⁴⁰ The violence is also driven by a recent influx of fighters and funds from Libya, where many Darfuris have fought as mercenaries in recent years. Non-Arab communities, such as the Masalit, have begun forming self-defense militias to resist attacks by Arab communal militias as the Sudanese security forces have seemed impotent or unwilling to stop the violence.⁴¹ With communities taking justice into their own hands, small-scale criminal incidents can easily develop into episodes of mass violence.⁴²

The Sudanese authorities are portraying the violence in the peripheries as purely “tribal conflicts”. Different sources, however, point to complex causes of the violence.⁴³ Most of violent incidents in 2022 were linked to disputes over land, competition for scarce natural resources, political uncertainty, socioeconomic inequalities, civil unrest, and the increased presence of multiple signatory groups in Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile. The rise in clashes has resulted in an increase of cases of looting and burning of villages, and the loss of livelihood assets and livestock.⁴⁴

Mass violence between communal militias and attacks against civilians in Darfur and the Two Areas intensified after the October 2021 coup.⁴⁵ In parts of West Darfur, a renewed cycle of violence left hundreds dead, thousands displaced, hundreds of homes scorched and property looted. In April 2022, a large-scale attack on Kreinik by armed Arabs, who were joined by members of the RSF according to witnesses, affected at least 16 nearby villages. Local authorities stated that 165 people were killed, 136 injured and about 98,000 people have been displaced by the violence.⁴⁶

³⁶ The JPA entailed the disarmament and integration of non-government armed forces into government forces and the formation of joint forces for Darfur, but does not specify how many rebel combatants should be integrated into government forces or benefit from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs, nor does it give the timeline over which this transition should occur. USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); The Sudan Tribune, 18/12/2022, [url](#); HRW, 15/12/2021, [url](#); OHCHR, 15/06/2022, [url](#)

³⁷ The New York Times, 19/03/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#); Rift Valley Institute, 11/2022, [url](#)

³⁸ The Economist, 05/01/2023, [url](#)

³⁹ Rift Valley Institute, 04/02/2022, [url](#)

⁴⁰ The New York Times, 19/03/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

⁴¹ UNSC, 24/01/2022, [url](#); The New York Times, 19/03/2022, [url](#)

⁴² Global Protection Cluster, 23/12/2022, [url](#); UNSC, 24/01/2022, [url](#); The New York Times, 19/03/2022, [url](#)

⁴³ SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#); Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

⁴⁴ FEWS NET, 06/2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵ HRW, 15/12/2021, [url](#); OHCHR, 15/06/2022, [url](#); USDOS, 23/03/2022, [url](#)

⁴⁶ UNOCHA, 09/05/2022, [url](#); HRW, 12/01/2023, [url](#)

From May to August 2022⁴⁷, areas in West, North and South Darfur continued to witness insecurity linked to criminality, livestock rustling and access to land. Mass violence spread to areas that had remained relatively stable in recent years, including Kulbus (West Darfur), Ed Damazin and Rusayris (Blue Nile). In Blue Nile, significant clashes over land and political representation took place between the Hausa and the Funj, Hamaj, Berta (and some other indigenous groups), resulting in over 100 people dead and massive displacement in the region. In addition, violent incidents were reported in West and South Kordofan as well as in Kassala.⁴⁸

In the period September–November 2022, farm destructions occurred in West, North and South Darfur, with civilian casualties as a result of crop-related incidents between farmers and pastoralists.⁴⁹ However, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) report on the situation in Sudan covering the period 21 August–20 November 2022 notes a relative stable situation in Darfur with a reduction in large-scale violence. Local reconciliation agreements negotiated and signed during the summer months in West and South Darfur improved the stability in the area.⁵⁰ These reconciliation deals, reached under the auspices of the deputy chairman of the Sovereign Council and the leader of the RSF Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, generally known as Hemeti, have sought to end the fighting in Darfur. The deals have been opposed and criticized since many do not see the RSF leader as an impartial figure, and victims demand that members of Hemeti's own Rizeigat tribe and the RSF face punishment for their role in the violence in the region. Moreover, the Darfur Bar Association (DBA) reported that approximately 350 people were detained without charge across the province between June and August 2022 for their real or perceived rejection of Hemeti's reconciliation agreements.⁵¹

Violence rocked Blue Nile again in September 2022. Particularly vicious attacks followed in October 2022, killing more than 230 people and displacing thousands, according to the Sudanese minister of Health quoted by The Guardian.⁵²

With regard to rebel groups and government forces, the ceasefire between the SLM/A-AW and the Sudanese authorities was largely respected during 2022.⁵³ Following a six-month period with no reported incidents between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the SLM/A-AW, one armed clash took place in March 2022 in the Jebel Marra area of Central Darfur, reportedly after elements of SLM/A-AW ambushed a SAF convoy and injured five personnel.⁵⁴ Clashes in the Jebel Marra area of Central Darfur mostly concerned armed clashes between factions of the SLA/AW.⁵⁵ The peace process with the other non-signatory rebel group, the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu, which had begun in 2021, remained stalled.⁵⁶ The government and the SPLM-N renew unilateral ceasefires every six months approximately.⁵⁷

Criminality continued to pose a significant challenge in Sudan, according to the UNSC report of December 2022.⁵⁸ The Global Protection Cluster (GPC), a network of nongovernmental organizations, international organizations and UN-agencies engaged in protection work in Sudan, points out that the majority of incidents in Darfur are crimes such as thievery, cattle rustling, crop destruction, killings,

⁴⁷ The increased number of security incidents in the period May to August could be attributable in part to seasonal cultivation due to the rainy season.

⁴⁸ The Economist, 05/01/2023, [url](#); UNSC, 02/09/2022, [url](#); UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 3, [url](#); HRW, 12/01/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁹ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

⁵⁰ UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 3, [url](#)

⁵¹ ACJPS, 16/09/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 20/09/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 09/11/2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera (Nashed M.), 28/12/2022, [url](#)

⁵² DWAG, 21/01/2023, [url](#)

⁵³ SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

⁵⁴ UNSC, 17/05/2022, [url](#)

⁵⁵ UNSC, 02/09/2022, pp. 4–5, [url](#)

⁵⁶ UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 10, [url](#)

⁵⁷ Sudan Tribune, 23/01/2022, [url](#)

⁵⁸ UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

gender based violence (GBV), property destruction, shootings and physical assaults of IDPs during both planting and cultivation.⁵⁹ Signatory armed movements are suspected of engaging in various criminal activities – including robberies and cattle rustling – owing to the resource constraints they face.⁶⁰ Rarely were these criminal incidents investigated and prosecuted before a court of law, a situation fostering the culture of impunity.⁶¹

More than a year after the coup, popular resistance to military rule continued in November 2022, while the country remained without a civilian-led government.⁶² In December 2022, leaders of an alliance of civilian parties headed by the FFC-CC signed a new framework agreement with the military leadership and other political parties, promising a fully civilian government and elections in two years. The document lays out basic principles and government structures but defers five key contentious issues to a second phase of talks.⁶³ Pro-democracy activists view the agreement as a lifeline for the junta and vow to demonstrate until the military leave power. They find themselves in the company of several rebel leaders who backed the coup and are unhappy about the agreement's pledge to revisit the JPA which brought rebels from Darfur and southern Sudan into government.⁶⁴

3. Combating parties

3.1. The Sudanese army and its allied forces

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) consist of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The Sudanese military also includes paramilitary groups⁶⁵: the RSF⁶⁶, the Border Guards and the Reserve Department (formerly the Popular Defense Forces, PDF).⁶⁷

Former president Omar al-Bashir's long wars "turned the military and the paramilitary groups into something as big as the state" according to authors Thomas and El Gizouli in African Arguments⁶⁸.

⁵⁹ Radio Dabanga, 04/07/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 30/11/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#); HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

⁶⁰ UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 5, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#); HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

⁶¹ Radio Dabanga, 04/07/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#); HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

⁶² UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 14, [url](#)

⁶³ HRW, 13/12/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

⁶⁴ The Economist, 05/01/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁵ The Constitutional Declaration of August 2019 places the SAF and RSF under the direct command of the Sovereign Council acting as head of state. The wording reiterates the existence of the SAF and the RSF as two separate institutions but places them under the direction of a single authority. Full integration of the RSF into the military is also one of the security measures of the JPA. However, Hemeti has resisted these calls, which has sat badly with army generals who resent the paramilitary group's growing size and power. The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 10/05/2022, [url](#)

⁶⁶ The RSF were formed in 2013 to deal with increased rebel activity in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The RSF played a leading role in the *Decisive Summer* offensives between 2014 and 2016 in Darfur and the Two Areas and in the disarmament campaigns from 2017 onwards. According to various sources, they are responsible for a number of vicious counterinsurgency campaigns in Darfur, in which civilians were beaten and killed, and villages looted and then burned to the ground. Also in 2022, members of the RSF were accused of participating in incidents of violence in Darfur and the Two Areas. Enough Project (Baldo S.), 11/2017, [url](#); ACJPS, 18/04/2018, [url](#); AI, 11/06/2019, [url](#); FIDH, ACJPS, 12/2019, pp. 27-28, [url](#); The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 10/05/2022, [url](#); HRW, 22/06/2022, [url](#)

⁶⁷ The PDF were an Islamist paramilitary force founded in the early 1990s. The group officially disbanded in June 2020. The PDF were a key instrument through which the NCP sought, as part of its so-called Civilization Project, to promote an Arab and Islamic identity across Sudan. Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#); CIA, 18/01/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁸ African Arguments (Thomas E. & El Gizouli M.), 11/11/2021, [url](#)

The Military Balance, an annual publication on the size of the world's militaries, gives a sense of the scale of military expansion during the Bashir years.⁶⁹

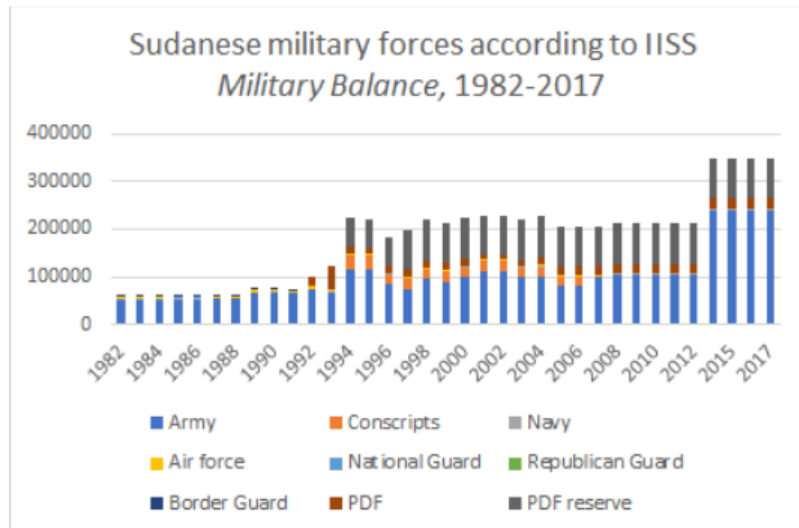


Figure 1: Sudanese military forces according to IISS⁷⁰

The security vacuum created by UNAMID's departure in 2021 is still felt in Darfur.⁷¹ In May 2020, Sudan's transitional government pledged to protect civilians in Darfur by deploying Joint Security Forces amongst other measures under a new national plan.⁷² These Joint Forces, meant to replace the security provisions offered by UNAMID, were also included in the JPA.⁷³ The peace agreement stipulated the establishment of a 12,000-strong Joint Force consisting of 6,000 government personnel (drawn from the SAF, RSF, police and the General Intelligence Service, GIS) and 6,000 members of rebel forces. The force's numbers were later increased to 20,000.⁷⁴ The Joint Force was meant to become operational by early January 2021, but its formation was only officially launched in September 2021.⁷⁵

The coup of October 2021 halted the difficult and flawed security reforms initiated by the civilian-led transitional government. According to HRW Sudan researcher Mohamed Osman, there was no such thing as Joint Forces in November 2022: "Rebel groups are trained in a very rushed way. They are getting uniforms and getting deployed. There is no evidence of cooperation with other forces."⁷⁶ Moreover, according to the BBC all these forces have competing ambitions.⁷⁷ Journalist Mat Nashed tweeted in November 2022 that "state forces are a) unwilling to provide security like the army or b) unable to, like the joint protection force that only exists in name or the RSF which has no reliable command-and-control structure despite attempts to brand the group as a national force".⁷⁸

⁶⁹ African Arguments (Thomas E. & El Gizouli M.), 11/11/2021, [url](#)

⁷⁰ The Military Balance via African Arguments (Thomas E. & El Gizouli M.), 11/11/2021, [url](#)

⁷¹ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

⁷² HRW, 22/06/2022, [url](#)

⁷³ Radio Dabanga, 04/10/2022, [url](#); Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022; Osman M., Researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

⁷⁴ USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#)

⁷⁵ USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Osman M., Researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

⁷⁷ BBC (Hashim M.), 26/04/2022, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Matnashed (@matnashed), 30/11/2022, [url](#)

Joint training of 3,300 troops did not begin until January 2022.⁷⁹ The first batch of Joint Security Forces⁸⁰ graduated at the start of July 2022, officially forming the new force. To the frustration of many, the country's most prominent and influential armed forces, the SAF and the RSF, have not yet joined. At the beginning of October 2022 the governor (*wali*) of Darfur, Minni Minawi, expressed his frustration over this fact.⁸¹

During a conversation in Khartoum in November 2022, Mohamed Osman said the number of Joint Forces is unknown:

"There are no data on the number of Joint Forces. We can only distract these numbers from graduation declarations made public. A wild guess is that there are approximately 4.000 soldiers in the Joint Forces."⁸²

The roles of the different government forces, both regular and paramilitary, are ambiguous. HRW argues that the current role of security forces is only reactive. In the face of intercommunal violence, the authorities react by deploying a large number of forces that do not remain in those areas for long and are eventually re-deployed to other areas. These ad-hoc security arrangements are not effective or sustainable, according to HRW. The capacity of local police, in terms of numbers, communication and transportation, remains also very limited.⁸³ The GPC adds that all security actors are slow to react to conflict and protect civilians, and some are accused of directly taking part in attacks. Accountability of armed actors for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law remains elusive.⁸⁴ As militias involved in these incidents of mass violence sometimes outnumbered government forces, the latter have in some cases retreated in the face of attacks, leaving civilians unprotected, as was the case during the attack on Kreinik in April 2022.⁸⁵

According to the Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), an independent NGO based in Kampala, government forces such as the RSF, GIS, SAF and police are involved in many security incidents in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.⁸⁶ The organization made the following table for the period from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2022:

Kind of violation	Area	Committed by		Remarks
		RSF/GIS/SAF/Police	Anonymous but armed	
Arbitrary Arrest	SK	2		Mostly by police particularly in BN
	BN	29		
Extrajudicial Killing	SK	22	19	Mostly RSF and PDF
	BN			
Injuries	SK	49	4	Mostly RSF and PDF
	BN			
Armed Robbery	SK	11	6	Mostly RSF and PDF
	BN			

Table 1: Reported violations committed within the first half of year 2022 (HUDO)⁸⁷

⁷⁹ The force's numbers were then also increased to 20,000. USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#)

⁸⁰ North Darfur is an important centre for these Joint Forces, as the only of the three batches of Joint Forces stipulated in the JPA has been implemented in El Fasher. Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022

⁸¹ Radio Dabanga, 04/10/2022, [url](#)

⁸² Osman M., Researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

⁸³ GPC, 02/05/2022, [url](#)

⁸⁴ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

⁸⁵ HRW, 22/06/2022, [url](#); Le Monde (Brachet E.), 11/07/2022, [url](#)

⁸⁶ HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 12, [url](#)

⁸⁷ HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 12, [url](#)

According to the GPC, tensions among JPA signatories, non-JPA signatories, the RSF and the SAF were on the rise at the end of 2022.⁸⁸ In February 2022, clashes occurred between members of government forces and a signatory armed group at a former UNAMID base in El Fasher (North Darfur), guarded by the former.⁸⁹ ACLED also recorded an armed clash between members of the SLM/A-TC and police forces in the city of Nyala concerning an unlicensed vehicle. Also according to ACLED, the SAF and RSF clashed in El Geneina on 25 – 27 April 2022.⁹⁰

3.2. Rebel Forces and militias

3.2.1. Signatory armed groups

In the last decade, newly formed irregular ethnic militias as well as paramilitary groups have played an increasingly larger role in the violence in Darfur and the Two Areas than the long-established rebel groups, most of whom have shifted their focus to Libya since 2015. Clashes with and among ethnical irregular militias claimed the highest number of lives, especially when members of the Arab Rizeigat were involved.⁹¹

The signing of the JPA gave the rebel groups important positions – far beyond their actual political significance – in prime minister Abdallah Hamdok's cabinet and the Sovereign Council.⁹² Representatives of the armed groups subsequently acted as allies of the military in the increasingly open conflict between civilian and military elements in the transitional government. In early October 2021, sixteen armed groups led by JEM and SLA-MM split from the FFC, forming the FFC National Accord (FFC-NA). Shortly afterwards, the military staged a coup supported by the armed rebel groups. The rebel leaders were the only non-military representatives retaining their positions in the Sovereign Council after the coup.⁹³ Several rebel leaders felt unhappy with the December 2022 agreements between the FFC-Central Council (FFC-CC) and the military as it entailed a revision of the JPA which brought them into government.⁹⁴

The JPA had important goals, including the dismantling and integration of armed groups into the army, but it did not specify how many fighters were to be demobilized or integrated into state security forces. Little progress has been made. The report of the UN Experts on Sudan pointed out that the absence of government support for the movements that signed the JPA made them rely on their presence in Libya and other profitable revenue-generating practices (such as gold mining and arms trading) to provide for their forces in Darfur.⁹⁵ At the same time, JPA signatories recruited new members to strengthen their following. However, the groups have little to offer the recruits other than the promise of future posts in the state security forces.⁹⁶

Fighters from the signatory groups who have returned from Libya pose a security threat to the population in Darfur as they turn to criminal activities. According to Muhammed Adam, a researcher at the University of Nyala, the signatory rebel groups have become one of the biggest security threats to Darfur. Instead of being integrated into a security force, they have turned into civil forces that possess heavy firepower, defend their tribal components and direct their weapons against other social

⁸⁸ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

⁸⁹ RFI, 19/02/2022, [url](#)

⁹⁰ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

⁹¹ ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

⁹² SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

⁹³ USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

⁹⁴ The Economist, 05/01/2023, [url](#)

⁹⁵ UNSC, 24/01/2022, [url](#)

⁹⁶ USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#); The New Humanitarian (Amin A. & Kleinfeld P.), 10/05/2022, [url](#)

groups. The lack of government security has led civilians to arm themselves. But citizens are rarely able to compete with the Arab militias, especially when the RSF gets involved.⁹⁷ The presence of returned groups has further militarized the region and increased levels of criminality and banditry.⁹⁸

The JPA also resulted in a franchising of new rebel factions splitting off from signatory rebel groups, contributing to the proliferation of armed groups in Sudan.⁹⁹

In February 2022, the SAF announced the integration of 1,000 fighters from forces of three signatory rebel movements (JEM-Jibril, SLM/A-TC headed by Hadi Idriss and the Sudanese Alliance Forces (SuAF) headed by Khamis Abkar) into the army.¹⁰⁰

In February 2022, the Joint High Committee for Security Arrangements, in a meeting chaired by Lieutenant-General al-Burhan, decided to gather all the forces of the signatory groups in cantonment sites located outside the cities. The decision was taken after several attacks by armed men on the former UNAMID sites and WFP warehouses in El Fasher. However, the Tamazuj Movement and SuAF did not implement it due to the lack of logistical means.¹⁰¹

3.2.2. Non-signatory armed groups and militias

The two most important long-established rebel groups that have not signed the JPA are the SLM/A-AW, based in Jebel Marra, and the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu, based in the Nuba Mountains and controlling the largest rebel territory in Sudan.¹⁰²

Since 2016, the SLM/A-AW¹⁰³ is the only active armed rebel group with a significant military force, presence and control in Darfur.¹⁰⁴ The SLM/A-AW enjoys support from the IDP community in Darfur. The group controls much of the territory in the remote Jebel Marra Mountains, home to hundreds of thousands of people.¹⁰⁵ According to a 2019-report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan, the SLM/A-AW controlled at that time an area stretching from Sortoni in North Darfur, Golo in Central Darfur to the area of eastern Jebel Marra in South Darfur.¹⁰⁶ According to a human rights researcher, the territory under full SLM/A-AW control is totally devoid of government services and presence.¹⁰⁷ The structure of this rebel group has eroded over the years. It consists of various loosely coordinated local groups led by different military commanders. The lack of consensus about participation in the peace process and competition over scarce resources and gold has divided the SLM/A-AW.¹⁰⁸ Since October 2019, fighting has been mostly within the group and between its numerous sub-factions vying for control of territory and gold mines.¹⁰⁹ For the period 1 January-31 December 2022, ACLED coded

⁹⁷ Ayin Network, 04/05/2022, [url](#)

⁹⁸ The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 10/05/2022, [url](#)

⁹⁹ Osman M., Researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

¹⁰⁰ Darfur 24, 05/02/2022, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ Radio Dabanga, 11/02/2022, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, 19/02/2022, [url](#)

¹⁰² Al-Hilu adopted a wary approach towards the transitional government and especially its military wing, who according to the Rift Valley Institute, also felt threatened by the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu's call for a wholesale change of Sudan's security sector. This, and the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu's call for a secular state, meant that even before the coup, a peace process with al-Hilu was always going to be difficult. Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#); USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#)

¹⁰³ The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) was formed in 2001, but soon split into a Zaghawa group led by Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) and a Fur group led by Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW). Later, even more, smaller splinter groups emerged, such as the Sudan Liberation Army-Transitional Council (SLA-TC). HSBA, s.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ UNSC, 31/07/2021, p. 3, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ TNH, 21/04/2021, [url](#); TNH, 06/04/2021, [url](#); UNSC, 31/07/2021, p. 3, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ UNSC, 10/01/2019, p. 13, [url](#); UNSC, 30/05/2019, p. 4, [url](#); Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022

¹⁰⁷ Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022

¹⁰⁸ A comprehensive overview of the different commanders and the structure of the SLA-AW can be found in UNSC, 10/01/2019, [url](#); UNSC, 10/04/2019, [url](#); Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022

¹⁰⁹ UNSC, 14/01/2020, [url](#); ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#); UNSC, 13/01/2021, pp. 14-15, [url](#)

seven incidents involving the SLM/A-AW, of which six battles between factions in Central and South Darfur, and one abduction of two pastoralists in Central Darfur.¹¹⁰

The SPLM/A-N initially formed the northern branch of the SPLM/A.¹¹¹ After the secession of South Sudan, it became an independent group active in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The movement split into two factions in June 2017 due to tensions between Chairman Malik Agar, who mainly enjoyed support among the Ingessana in Blue Nile, and Vice Chairman Abdelaziz al-Hilu, who had a strong following in the Nuba Mountains.¹¹² Between May 2017 and February 2018, clashes between the two sides cost dozens of lives in Blue Nile and in refugee camps in South Sudan. The faction led by Malik Agar is part of the rebel alliance SRF which signed the JPA. Abdelaziz al-Hilu's faction is the militarily dominant bloc, and is more assertive than the faction led by Agar on the issue of a secular state and self-determination for the Two Areas.¹¹³

Armed militias - mainly of Arab ethnicity, organized along tribal lines and difficult to control - are active in various parts of Darfur. They are involved in criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, human trafficking, arms and drug smuggling, and cattle theft.¹¹⁴ Jérôme Tubiana writes that these armed groups and militias - who engage in murder, rape, looting and arson - strongly mirror the *Janjaweed* and their actions at the beginning of the conflict in 2003.¹¹⁵ According to HRW, the Sudanese authorities have left a power vacuum in Darfur after UNAMID's departure that has been filled by armed groups.¹¹⁶ In March 2020, HSBA referred to various militias operating in South Kordofan and Blue Nile noting that they are driven by economic profit and self-interest rather than loyalty to any particular group.¹¹⁷

While conflict triggers vary from place to place, Mohammed Amin and Philip Kleinfeld indicate a trend of Arab militias attacking non-Arab civilians. Recent attacks also appear to involve the RSF.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, non-Arab communities such as that of the Masalit in West Darfur increasingly form tribal self-defense units. Sources mention that the Masalit are obtaining weapons from Chad¹¹⁹, the diaspora¹²⁰ and rebel groups¹²¹. This has allowed them and other non-Arab communities to repulse attacks of Arab militias. They have been able to inflict losses on attacking Rizeigat militias, but have also suffered high casualty rates in battles that have been larger than experienced previously.¹²²

¹¹⁰ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹¹¹ A detailed explanation of the origins of the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile as well as the course of the conflict until 2019 can be found in HSBA & Small Arms Survey, 15/03/2020, [url](#)

¹¹² HSBA & Small Arms Survey, 15/03/2020, pp. 34-38, [url](#)

¹¹³ ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ UNSC, 28/12/2017, p. 9, [url](#); UNSC, 12/03/2020, p. 11, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Al Jazeera (Tubiana J.), 06/07/2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ HRW, 14/12/2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ HSBA & Small Arms Survey, 15/03/2020, p. 48, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 10/05/2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ Rift Valley Institute, 04/02/2022, [url](#)

¹²⁰ Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

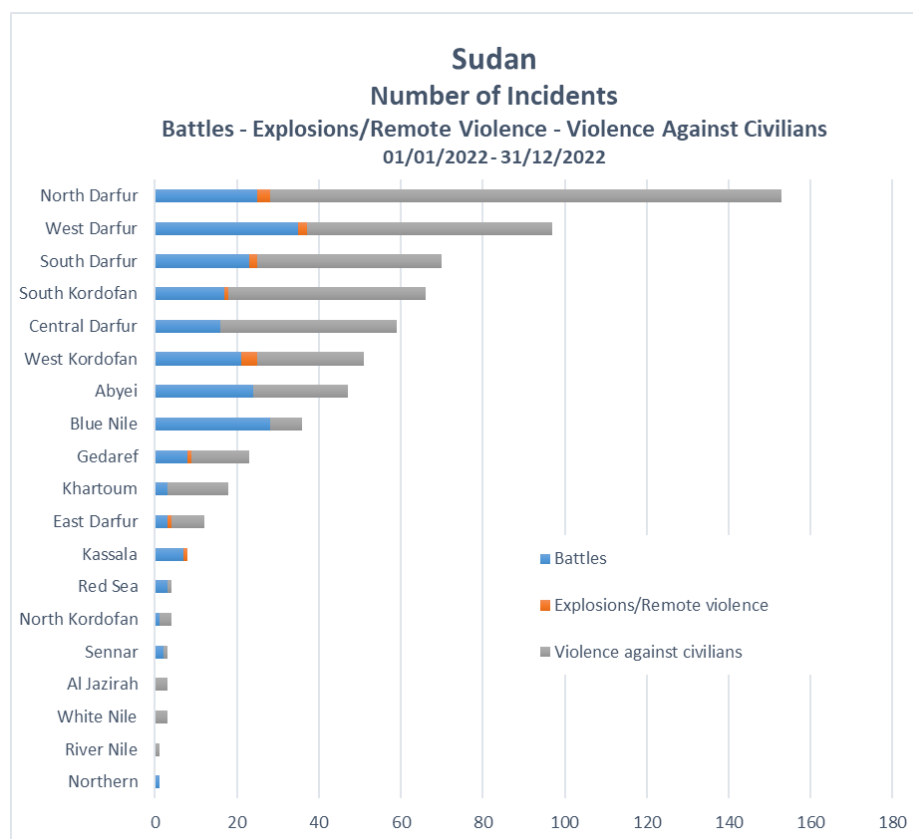
¹²¹ Al-Hilu, who is of Masalit origin, is also accused of fueling tensions between Masalit and Arabs in Darfur. There are reports that, since 2011, several hundred Masalit youth have joined al-Hilu's SPLM/A-N and that, since 2020, a limited number of them have returned to Darfur in reaction to Arab attacks against the Masalit. According to HRW's Mohamed Osman, Masalit self-defense militias reportedly get training and weapons from al-Hilu, and some were arrested because they were perceived as members of the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu. USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); Osman M., researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

¹²² Rift Valley Institute, 04/02/2022, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

4. Typology of the violence

For the period 1 January 2022-31 December 2022, ACLED coded 659 events in Sudan.¹²³ Of these, ACLED marked 217 events as *Battles*, 15 as *Explosions/Remote violence* and 427 as *Violence against civilians*.¹²⁴

The following graph shows the number of incidents in the categories *Battles*, *Explosions/Remote violence*, and *Violence against civilians* in the different states of Sudan. Of the national total of 659 incidents, 391 occurred in the five states of Darfur and 153 events in the Two Areas and West Kordofan.¹²⁵



Graph 1: Sudan. Number of Incidents. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2022-31/12/2022.¹²⁶

The following two chapters examine the typology of these events in Darfur and the Two Areas.

4.1. Darfur

The ACLED data in the following graph show the number of incidents and fatalities in Darfur recorded by ACLED over a two-year time span: from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022. While the number

¹²³ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹²⁴ ACLED also includes other incidents, specifically under the headings *Riots*, *Protests* and *Strategic developments*. These are not included in this chapter. A full overview of the different event and sub-event types can be found in a Cedoca note on ACLED methodology. CGVS - Cedoca, 21/05/2019, [url](#)

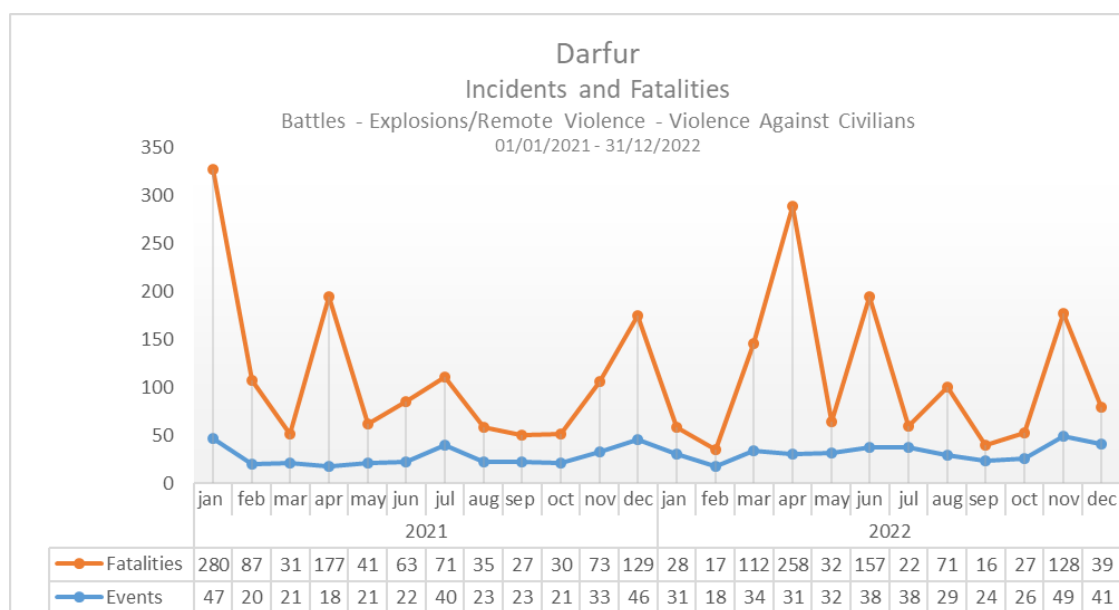
¹²⁵ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹²⁶ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

of violent incidents in the five states of Darfur is higher in 2022 (391) in comparison with 2021 (335), the number of fatalities was higher in 2021 (1,044) compared to 2022 (907).

The graph shows slight recurrent increases in the number of incidents in the periods June-August and October-January. A possible explanation for these upticks is the usual rise in clashes during the lean season from May to October, as IDPs return near or to their areas of origin to farm small plots of land they own or rent, and the farming season falls in tandem with nomads migrating their livestock. Nomads accuse IDP farmers of infringing upon migration routes and IDPs accuse the nomads of destroying their crops.¹²⁷

However, the fluctuations in the number of incidents are smaller than fluctuations in the number of fatalities. This indicates that there were violent incidents with high casualty numbers in, amongst others, April, June, August and November 2022.



Graph 2: Darfur. Incidents and Fatalities. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2021 – 31/12/2022.¹²⁸

Outbreaks of violence in Darfur usually follow a certain pattern. They are often triggered by individual disputes and criminal incidents. State security forces hold back, intervening belatedly or even retreating because they are no match for the attackers.¹²⁹ In other cases, members of state security forces have joined the attacks in private capacity, bringing their weapons and choosing sides according to their ethnicity.¹³⁰ Sources mention that state security forces have been reluctant to intervene in order to avoid a conflict with other state security forces, mostly the RSF, forcing local communities to defend themselves.¹³¹

According to several sources, the term “inter-communal” can be misleading as it obscures the political drivers of conflict and the alleged role that security forces play in orchestrating the attacks. It conceals

¹²⁷ GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#); OCHA, 25/07/2022, [url](#)

¹²⁸ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

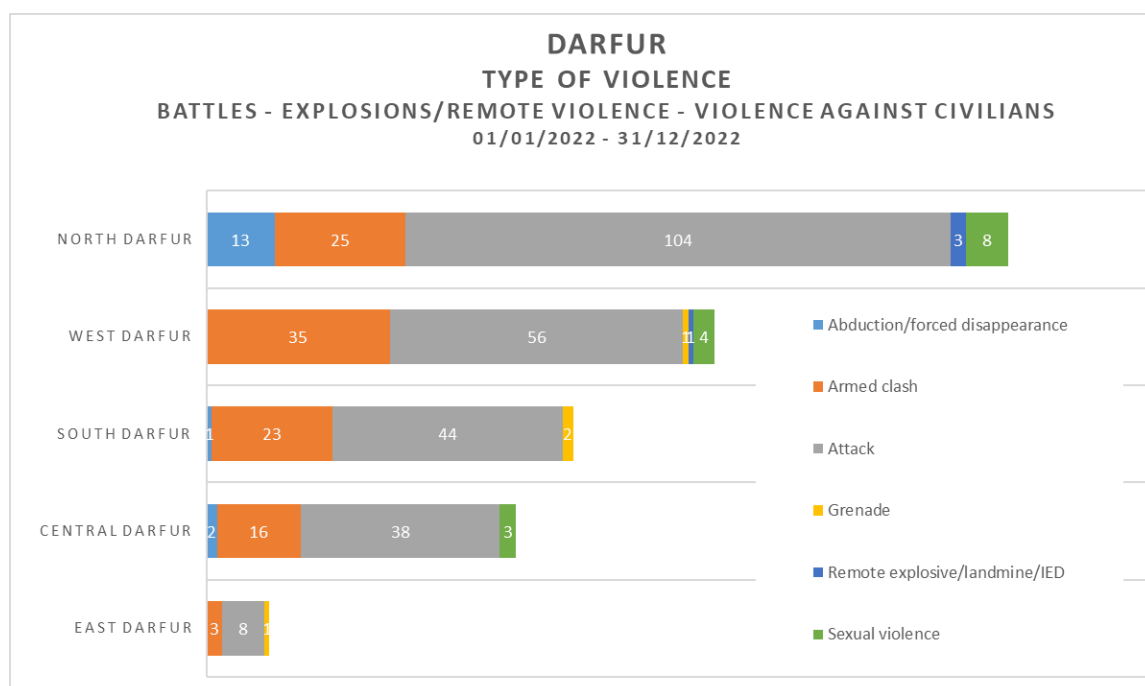
¹²⁹ SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#); Osman M., researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

¹³⁰ USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022; Osman M., researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022; Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

¹³¹ Osman M., researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022; Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

the political character of this violence, which arises from disputes over land, a lack of security, and wealth extraction by government-backed armed groups and their foreign patrons.¹³² It also obscures the asymmetry of the violence, putting communal (often non-Arab, IDP) self-defence militias against larger, well equipped Arab militias that are able to perform big-scale retaliatory attacks.¹³³ The scale of destruction hinders the return of IDPs to their land, and IDP camps themselves become dysfunctional because of the recurrent attacks.¹³⁴

For the period 1 January 2022–31 December 2022, ACLED coded 391 events in Darfur.¹³⁵ Of these, ACLED marked 102 events as *Battles* or *Armed Clashes*¹³⁶, 8 as *Explosions/remote violence* and 281 as *Violence against civilians* (of which ACLED registers 250 as *Attacks*, 16 as *Abductions/Enforced disappearances* and 15 as incidents of *Sexual violence*).¹³⁷ The following graph displays the occurrence of the different types of violence in each of the five states of Darfur for the period 1 January–31 December 2022.



Graph 3: Darfur. Type of Violence. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2022–31/12/2022.¹³⁸

¹³² New Arab (Nashed M.), 18/01/2023, [url](#); Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022; Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

¹³³ Although local violence also included conflicts between Arab or Arabized communities. USIP (Tubiana J.), 20/04/2022, [url](#); Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022

¹³⁴ Osman M., researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022; Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

¹³⁵ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹³⁶ ACLED categorizes a violent interaction between two politically organized armed groups at a particular time and location as *Battles*. If armed, organized groups engage in a battle, and no reports indicate a change in territorial control, the correct sub-event type is an *Armed Clash*. Apart from *Battles* with Ethiopian troops and militias in and around Al Fashaga, all *Battles* recorded by ACLED in Sudan in 2022 are categorized as sub-event type *Armed Clash*. In the following chapters of this report, Cedoca will refer to these armed confrontations as *Armed Clashes*.

¹³⁷ ACLED also includes other incidents, specifically under the headings *Riots*, *Protests* and *Strategic developments*. These are not included in this chapter. A full overview of the different event and sub-event types can be found in a Cedoca note on ACLED methodology. CGVS - Cedoca, 21/05/2019, [url](#)

¹³⁸ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

The category of *Violence against civilians* is divided into the categories *Attacks*, *Abductions/Enforced disappearances*, and *Sexual violence*. Attacks made up the bulk of violent incidents in Darfur. ACLED registered 250 attacks on civilians during 2022 in Darfur, mostly perpetrated by unspecified communal militias and in some instances by government forces such as SAF, RSF and police forces. ACLED recorded most attacks on civilians in North Darfur (104), followed by West Darfur (56) and South Darfur (44).¹³⁹ Attacks on civilians mostly targeted IDPs¹⁴⁰ and resulted in deaths, many injuries, destruction of civilian infrastructure and looting and burning of villages. Due to insecurity, people experienced impediments and restrictions to access resources, services, and justice. The following are examples of attacks against civilians in Darfur in this period:

- On 15 August 2022, militiamen in four-wheel drive cars and motorbikes attacked members of the Tungur ethnic group in Kutum (North Darfur) in revenge of the killing of two pastoralists. According to a community leader in North Darfur, at least seven people were killed and nine abducted. Three villages were totally destroyed by fire, two other were partially destroyed.¹⁴¹
- On 4 May 2022, armed men on camels and motorbikes shot and injured three civilians who were collecting hay for their animals in Tawila (North Darfur), according to Radio Dabanga.¹⁴²
- On 14 April 2022, Jabarouna village was attacked by a group of some 30 armed people dressed in RSF uniform on motorbikes. They shot randomly and looted cattle. According to HUDO, one person was killed.¹⁴³
- On 10 April 2022, armed men on horses and camels attacked civilians in two villages in Sirba locality (West Darfur), killing twelve people according to a witness cited by Radio Dabanga.¹⁴⁴

Of the sixteen abductions that ACLED recorded in Darfur in 2022, thirteen were carried out in North Darfur, mainly by communal militias and unidentified armed groups.¹⁴⁵ Examples of these abductions include the following :

- On 23 December 2022, unknown militiamen on camels abducted a young girl near Zamzam IDP camp (North Darfur).¹⁴⁶
- On 14 August 2022, unidentified militiamen abducted a farmer and looted his tractor in Tawila locality (North Darfur).¹⁴⁷

ACLED also recorded fifteen incidents of *Sexual violence* in Darfur in 2022.¹⁴⁸ It must be noted sexual violence is often subject to under-reporting due to the taboo and stigma associated with it. Moreover, access to justice for GBV survivors is limited due to lack of legal aid, shortages of female police officers, as well as community distrust of formal legal mechanisms. In addition, there are credible reports of state actors engaging in such crimes.¹⁴⁹ Sources indicated that Darfur has witnessed an increase in sexual violence since the coup in October 2021.¹⁵⁰ According to the UNSC, both members of the SLM/A-AW and government security forces have been involved in sexual violence.¹⁵¹ The conflict data recorded by ACLED also point to members of communal militias as actors of sexual violence. Many such incidents go unpunished because of the lack of law enforcement and victims' inability to identify

¹³⁹ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

¹⁴¹ Sudan Tribune, 17/08/2022, [url](#)

¹⁴² ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁴³ HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 18, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ Radio Dabanga, 11/04/2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ Darfur Monitors, 20/08/2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ ISHR, 15/03/2022, [url](#); Osman M., researcher Sudan for HRW, conversation, 01/11/2022

¹⁵¹ UNSC, 24/01/2022, [url](#)

perpetrators.¹⁵² During a conversation in Khartoum, representatives of the DBA mentioned that 165 cases of rapes in ZamZam IDP camp (North Darfur) had been filed to the police, but these have not been followed up since members of the RSF were involved in the incidents and they enjoy immunity.¹⁵³ A midwife operating in the El Neem IDP camp in El Daein (East Darfur) told Radio Dabanga in November 2022 that the health centre receives at least six women each month who became pregnant as a result of rape.¹⁵⁴

Most of the 102 *Armed clashes* that ACLED registered in Darfur took place between different communal militias, such as the Rizeigat and the Gimir militias or the Rizeigat and the Masalit militias in the districts of El Geneina, Kreinik, Kulbus and Jebel Moon (West Darfur), or the Berti and the Hamar militias in the districts Tawila and El Fasher (North Darfur) (see chapter 6 for a more extensive analysis of the geographical distribution of the violence). In some instances, government forces such as the SAF or the police clashed with a communal militia.¹⁵⁵ In SLM/A-AW-controlled areas of Jebel Marra straddling the border of South and Central Darfur, six instances of fighting between factions of the rebel group took place.¹⁵⁶ The following are some examples of armed clashes in Darfur:

- In March 2022, Radio Dabanga reported four attacks in villages near Jebel Moon (West Darfur) in one week time. According to a medical group and the governor (*wali*) of the region, the violence resulted in dozens of dead and wounded and many villages torched.¹⁵⁷
- From 22 April to 24 April, large-scale violence raged in Kreinik town (West Darfur) following the deaths of two Arab herders during a livestock rustling incident on 21 April. The day after, a retaliatory attack by more than 1,000 armed members of the Arab Rizeigat killed nine people in the market square of Kreinik, according to Le Monde. Joint security forces¹⁵⁸ were deployed to Kreinik but reportedly retreated in the face of another attack by Rizeigat assailants on 24 April, during which the Rizeigat took control of the town for several hours, looted and torched hundreds of shops and houses and opened fire on public buildings where many had sought shelter.¹⁵⁹ Several villages and camps for displaced people, mostly inhabited by Masalit, were razed to the ground by Arab militias. On the same day, the violence spread to the capital of West Darfur, El Geneina, with heavy fighting between the RSF and the Sudanese Alliance¹⁶⁰. According to the Ministry of Health, approximately 210 people, mostly Masalit, were killed and at least 100 people were injured in Kreinik alone.¹⁶¹ Witnesses stated that Rizeigat attackers were backed by RSF soldiers.¹⁶² Of the 36 villages across the Kreinik locality that were affected, five were completely looted and burned. OCHA stated that the number of displaced was estimated at around 125,000 people of which most

¹⁵² UNSC, 24/01/2022, [url](#)

¹⁵³ Representatives of the DBA, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

¹⁵⁴ Radio Dabanga, 30/11/2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ Clashes in Jebel Moon first erupted in mid-November 2021 over a land dispute between Arab and non-Arab tribes. Dozens have been killed since then and authorities have deployed more troops to the area. AP (Magdy S.), 11/03/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 11/03/2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ Le Monde reports that joint forces were already deployed in the region by the authorities to curb the violence in December 2021. Le Monde (Brachet E.), 11/07/2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ Le Monde (Brachet E.), 11/07/2022, [url](#); OHCHR, 27/04/2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ The SuAF is the armed movement of Khamis Akbar, the governor of West Darfur and member of the Masalit tribal group. SuAF is one of the rebel movement that signed the JPA. Sudan Tribune, 25/04/2022, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ UNSC, 17/05/2022, p. 4, [url](#); Le Monde (Brachet E.), 11/07/2022, [url](#)

¹⁶² According to Ayin Network, the heavily armed Arab militias are supported by Hemeti, and seek land and control of the state. In turn, the Masalit community are backed by the West Darfur State Governor and former rebel leader, General Khamis Akbar. Ayin Network, 04/05/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga (Tubiana J.), 09/05/2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 05/05/2022, [url](#); HRW, 22/06/2022, [url](#)

were already displaced by earlier violence, according to an inter-agency assessments carried out in April and May 2022.¹⁶³

- Between 6 and 11 June 2022, clashes erupted between the Gimir and Rizeigat communities in Kulbus (West Darfur). The Gimir community reported 101 of their people killed and 117 injured while an Amir of the Rizeigat stated that 25 Arabs were killed and 16 injured during the clashes. UNOCHA reported that 25 Gimir villages were attacked, looted, and burnt.¹⁶⁴
- On 9 November 2022, clashes erupted between the Misseriya and Awlad Rashid clan of the Rizeigat, both Arab nomadic herding tribes in Bindisi (Central Darfur), following an armed robbery. According to UNOCHA, at least 48 people were killed. Gunmen attacked mediators tasked by authorities to settle the dispute, killing another 24 people, UNOCHA reported.¹⁶⁵
- In November 2022, armed confrontations between SLM/A-AW and a splinter faction loyal to the RSF in eastern Jebel Marra resulted in multiple deaths. Local officials said 13 people were killed, while UNOCHA reported that dozens were killed because of the renewed conflict between the two factions.¹⁶⁶

The presence of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) continues to affect the lives of civilians in the Darfur region. Many incidents go unreported because of the lack of access to authorities and medical facilities, particularly in non-government-controlled areas in Jebel Marra.¹⁶⁷ For the period 1 January–31 December 2022, ACLED registered 4 incidents concerning IEDs and 4 incidents with grenades. An example is the detonation of unexploded ordnance injuring three children on 29 November 2022 in Ed Daein (East Darfur). The children were playing with the ordnance before it exploded.¹⁶⁸

4.2. Two Areas

The ACLED data in graph 4 show the number of incidents and fatalities in the Two Areas and West Kordofan recorded by ACLED over two years: from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022. There was a slight increase in the number of incidents in these three regions in 2022 (153) compared to the previous year (138), while the number of fatalities has more than doubled with 776 fatalities in 2022 compared to 321 fatalities in 2021.

Graph 4 indicates recurring rises in the number of incidents during the periods May-July and October-December, accompanied by a higher number of fatalities. There was a sharp increase in the number of fatalities starting in June 2022, mainly because of the violence in the districts Wad al-Mahi and Rusayris (Blue Nile).

¹⁶³ Many saw their homes set ablaze in December 2021 and have since been living in makeshift settlements. NRC, 25/04/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 09/06/2022, [url](#)

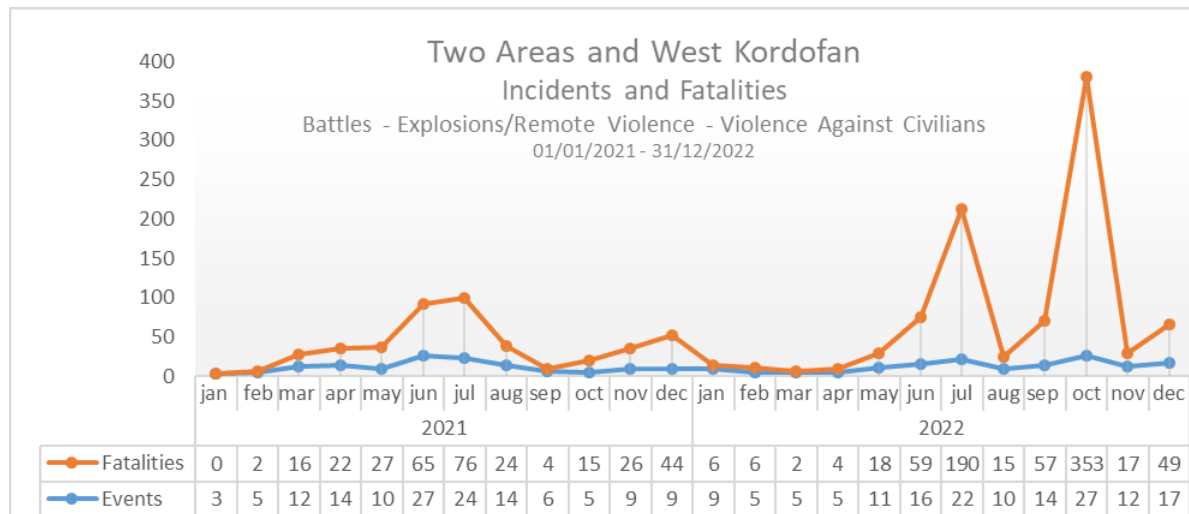
¹⁶⁴ UNOCHA, 14/06/2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ UNOCHA, 16/11/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 18/11/2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ Darfur24, 25/11/2022, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, 25/11/2022, [url](#)

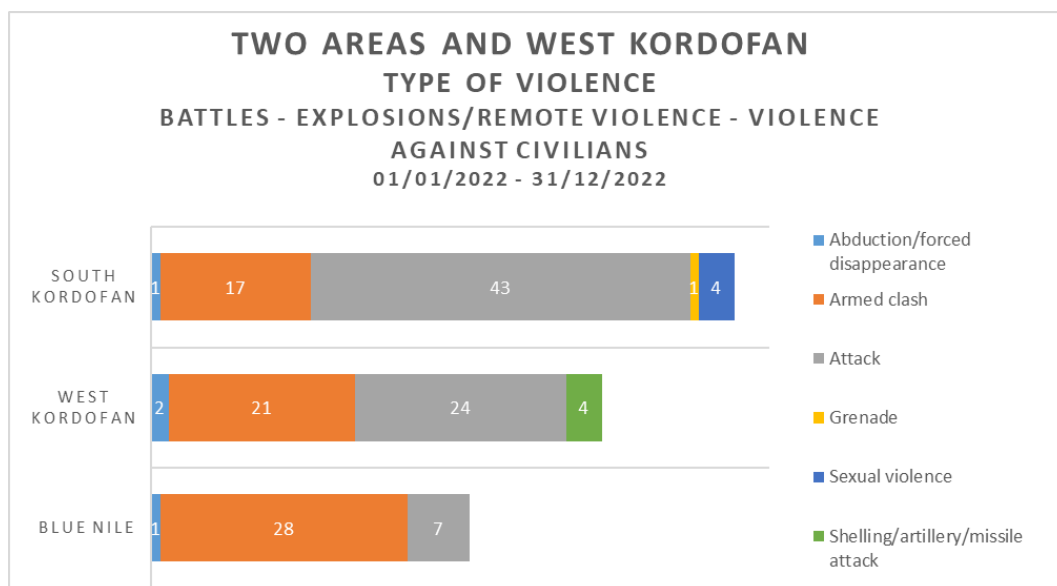
¹⁶⁷ UNSC, 24/01/2022, [url](#); UNMAS, s.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)



Graph 4: Two Areas and West Kordofan. Incidents and Fatalities. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2021–31/12/2022.¹⁶⁹

For the period 1 January 2022–31 December 2022, ACLED coded 153 events in the Two Areas and West Kordofan.¹⁷⁰ Of these, ACLED marked 66 events as *Armed Clashes*, 5 as *Explosions/Remote violence* and 82 as *Violence against civilians* (of which ACLED classified 74 as *Attacks*, 4 as *Abductions* and 4 as incidents of *Sexual violence*).¹⁷¹ These incidents are divided amongst the three regions as shown in Graph 5.



Graph 5: Two Areas and West Kordofan. Type of Violence. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2022– 31/12/2022.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ ACLED also includes other incidents, specifically under the headings *Riots*, *Protests* and *Strategic developments*. These are not included in this chapter. A full overview of the different event and sub-event types can be found in a Cedoca note on ACLED methodology. CGVS - Cedoca, 21/05/2019, [url](#)

¹⁷² ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

As was also the case in Darfur, attacks on civilians were the most widespread type of violence in the Two Areas and South Kordofan according to ACLED data for 2022. These attacks were mostly attributed to unidentified armed groups and communal militias. In many cases of murder and violence, the police did not respond and in some cases government forces (SAF and RSF) – were involved or complicit in the attacks and robberies in the region.¹⁷³ Examples of these attacks include the following:

- On 14 April 2022, about 30 armed men in RSF uniforms on motorcycles shot and killed one person and injured another near Abu Jubayha (South Kordofan), according to HUDO. They also looted animals.¹⁷⁴
- On 6 August 2022, armed people robbed travelers at the Al-Zeailana seasonal river in Abu-Kershola (South Kordofan). The travelers reported the case to the Abu-Kershola police but the police did not respond.¹⁷⁵
- On 5 September 2022, an unidentified armed group described as part of a Fulani tribe attacked Al-Raqariq pastoralists in Geissan (Blue Nile). The armed men looted a large number of cattle. ACLED recorded that three people were killed and two wounded.¹⁷⁶

The SPLM/A-N al-Hilu was responsible for two of the four abductions recorded by ACLED. The two abductions in West Kordofan were attributed to two unidentified armed groups.¹⁷⁷

According to the GPC¹⁷⁸, Blue Nile has high levels of GBV, but this is not reflected in the data of ACLED.¹⁷⁹ No incidents of *Sexual violence* were recorded by ACLED in Blue Nile in 2022. It must be noted that data on sexual violence is often subject to under-reporting due to the taboo and stigma associated with it. ACLED coded four incidents as *Sexual violence* in South Kordofan, all four by unidentified armed groups.¹⁸⁰

The GPC mentions that explosive ordonnances (EO) continue threatening people's lives in Blue Nile. About 63 locations still contaminated with EOs covering an area of four million square meters were registered in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) and awaiting clearance operations.¹⁸¹ ACLED did not record any incidents of *Explosions* in Blue Nile, but coded four incidents of shelling in West Kordofan and one incident with a grenade in South Kordofan.¹⁸²

Armed clashes recorded by ACLED in the Two Areas and West Kordofan throughout 2022 involved fighting between communal militias, such as between the Misseriya and the Nuba in the city of Lagawa (West Kordofan), or between the Kenana and the Hawazma in the city of Abu Jubayha (South Kordofan). Clashes also took place in rural areas of both regions, for example among the Bani Fadol militia and Bani Badr militia (both Hamar) in multiple villages east of An Nahud (West Kordofan) (see chapter 6 for a more extensive analysis of the geographical distribution of the violence). Some of these clashes involved government forces (RSF and police). In South and West Kordofan the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu was involved in four armed clashes: twice against an ethnic Zuruj militia, once against a Misseriya

¹⁷³ Radio Dabanga, 29/07/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 19/08/2022, [url](#); ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 12, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ HUDO, 14/08/2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ The Protection Analytical Framework of GPC guides its Protection Analysis Update. Updates are developed through a desk review of primary and secondary data from published and unpublished protection monitoring, sector analysis, protection advocacy briefs and flash updates, assessments, and reports produced by other agencies. GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ GPC, 12/2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ GPC, 21/12/2022, [url](#)

¹⁸² ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

ethnic militia, as well as one incident of factional infighting.¹⁸³ The following are examples of armed clashes in South and West Kordofan:

- In June 2022, conflict erupted between the Hawazma and Kenana tribes¹⁸⁴ in Abu Jubayha town (South Kordofan), following the armed robbery of a vehicle belonging to the Hawazma by members of the Kenana. During the robbery, one of the Kenana tribesman was killed. On 6 June, the conflict escalated and the fighting between the two tribes spread to other neighbourhoods of Abu Jubayha town. The fighting lasted for three days until the arrival of government security forces on 8 June. UNOCHA reported that 19 people were killed and 54 others injured, while 406 homes in Abu Jubayha were burned and about 18,300 were displaced due to the fighting.¹⁸⁵
- In Abu Zabad town (West Kordofan), clashes erupted between the Misseriya and Hamar tribes on 12 September, when tensions between the communities regarding land ownership in the locality escalated. According to the UNSC report of December 2022, three people were reportedly killed, and four injured.¹⁸⁶
- On 14 and 15 October 2022, members of the Misseriya tribe backed by RSF-soldiers engaged in armed clashes over land ownership with the Nuba and Dajo tribes in Lagawa (West-Kordofan), leaving at least 19 people dead, 34 injured, and a further 65,000 displaced, according to the UNSC report of December 2022.¹⁸⁷

ACLED registered 28 *Armed Clashes* in Blue Nile in the period 1 January–31 December 2022. All armed clashes took place in the months July–December 2022 and the actors involved were recorded by ACLED as communal militias. During the regime of former president Omar al-Bashir, rebels and the regime fought a deadly war whereas conflict between communities for access to water or land were rather rare.¹⁸⁸ According to journalist Mat Nashed, the unprecedented violence in Blue Nile is mostly political and “the result of a logic which has neglected, plundered and militarized the outskirts of the country since independence”.¹⁸⁹ Kholood Khair, director and analyst at Confluence Advisory, a “think-and-do-tank” in Khartoum, argues that the authorities in Khartoum have since independence relied on the tribalization of distant states to promote their own interests: their financial interests by ensuring, through local alliances, control over the land and its resources, and their political interests by arming certain factions against others.¹⁹⁰ In Blue Nile, the SPLM/A-N Agar has become the dominant political power since the signing of the JPA. However, the peace process has failed to include many communities, including SPLM/A-N al-Hilu supporters and groups not aligned with either SPLM/A-N faction, creating tensions over issues of political representation and land ownership.¹⁹¹

The demand by the Hausa community in April 2022 to be recognized as traditional land owners in Blue Nile resulted in deadly violence in the summer.¹⁹² The Hausa, who arrived in the region in the 1920s in search of pasture land for their herds and have since acquired economic weight, requested their

¹⁸³ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ In South Kordofan, former NCP allies have adopted different approaches to ensure their interests following the fall of Bashir. Some like the Kenana, Kawahla and Longon (the latter a Nuba community) have decided to engage with the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu, hoping the relative popularity of the rebel group will translate into significant political representation. Other communities, like the Hawazma community who were strong NCP allies and PDF supporters, pursued a policy of confrontation with the rebel groups. This is why, as the Rift Valley Institute argues, some sections of the Hawazma community have come into conflict not only with Nuba communities from SPLM/A-N controlled areas, but also with Kenana, Kawahla and Longon communities. Rift Valley Institute, 03/2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ UNOCHA, 14/06/2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 3, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 11/12/2022, [url](#); UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ Le Monde, 31/08/2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ RFI (Vincent L.), 21/07/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ RFI (Vincent L.), 21/07/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Rift Valley Institute, 04/02/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹² BBC, 23/07/2022, [url](#); RFI (Vincent L.), 21/07/2022, [url](#); Ayin Network, 20/07/2022, [url](#)

own native administrative body to govern areas where they are a majority. According to local custom, only so-called indigenous tribes can own land.¹⁹³ Significant violence occurred from 10 to 17 July 2022 between members of the Hausa community and members of the Funj, Hamaj and Berta communities. Although the conflict was triggered by a livestock rustling incident in the Geissan, it soon spread to other parts of the region, namely Wad al-Mahi, Rusayris and Ed Damazin. The clashes in Rusayris and Ed Damazin resulted in the killing of at least 117 individuals, hundreds of injuries and the displacement of 31,000 people, as reported by UNSC. Security forces were deployed to control the situation.¹⁹⁴ Despite the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement in August 2022, fighting erupted again in September 2022 in Ar Rusayris, Wad al-Mahi, and Geissan. The violence further escalated in October 2022, leaving more than 257 dead and 570 injured in Wad al-Mahi, Rusayris and Ed Damazin, according to UNSC.¹⁹⁵ The Hausa, on one side, and the Hamaj, Funj, Berta and Gumuz communities on the other, have traded accusations over responsibility for the attacks against civilians. Witnesses mentioned the involvement of government forces, former rebel groups and militias in the attacks.¹⁹⁶ The Governor of Blue Nile declared a state of emergency across the region on 21 October, giving full authority to security forces to restore order.¹⁹⁷ The conflict has resulted in the displacement of 127,961 persons, primarily from the Hausa ethnic group, an estimated 441 deaths and the injury of 469 individuals since July 2022, the GPC reported in December 2022.¹⁹⁸ In December 2022, IDPs were still sheltering in Ed Damazin.¹⁹⁹

5. Targets of the violence

Sudan has nearly 43 million inhabitants.²⁰⁰ Estimates regarding the population of Darfur range from 7.5 million to 11 million inhabitants.²⁰¹ As for the Two Areas, South Kordofan has an estimated population of between 1.4 million and 2.5 million people, with slightly more than 800,000 people living in Blue Nile.²⁰² West Kordofan has a population of about 2 million people according to a 2014 census.²⁰³

For the period 1 January 2022-31 December 2022, ACLED registered 1,930 fatalities in 659 events of the type *Battles*, *Explosions/Remote violence* and *Violence against civilians* in Sudan. More than 85 % of these fatalities (87.2 %), fell in the five states of Darfur, the Two Areas and West Kordofan. ACLED registered 1,683 fatalities in 544 events of the type *Battles/Armed Clashes*, *Explosions/Remote*

¹⁹³ Another source of tension is the perceived political allegiances with the state government under Bashir, although some argue the Hausa simply kept away from the anti-Bashir rebellion. Sudan Tribune, 26/10/2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera (Elfaki A.), 19/07/2022, [url](#); Le Monde, 31/08/2022, [url](#); Middle East Eye (Amin M.), 29/10/2022, [url](#); Le Monde, 31/08/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ ACJPS, 01/08/2022, [url](#); UNSC, 02/09/2022, [url](#); Le Monde, 31/08/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Sudan Tribune, 26/10/2022, [url](#); UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 4, [url](#); Middle East Eye (Amin M.), 29/10/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ Middle East Eye (Amin M.), 29/10/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ Sudan Tribune, 26/10/2022, [url](#); UNSC, 01/12/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ Conflict in Blue Nile has been triggered by disputes over access to land, economic domination and broader questions of ethnic identity, particularly between people considered indigenous to an area and those regarded as settlers. Like much of Sudan, Blue Nile lacks a comprehensive land registration, making it challenging to determine ownership, boundaries and zoning. Communities seen to be indigenous receive representation within the Native Administration, which entitles them to land rights. Though some Hausa have been given land in the past, a large part of this community rents land for farming. GPC, 25/12/2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ Radio Dabanga, 11/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ CIA, 18/01/2023, [url](#)

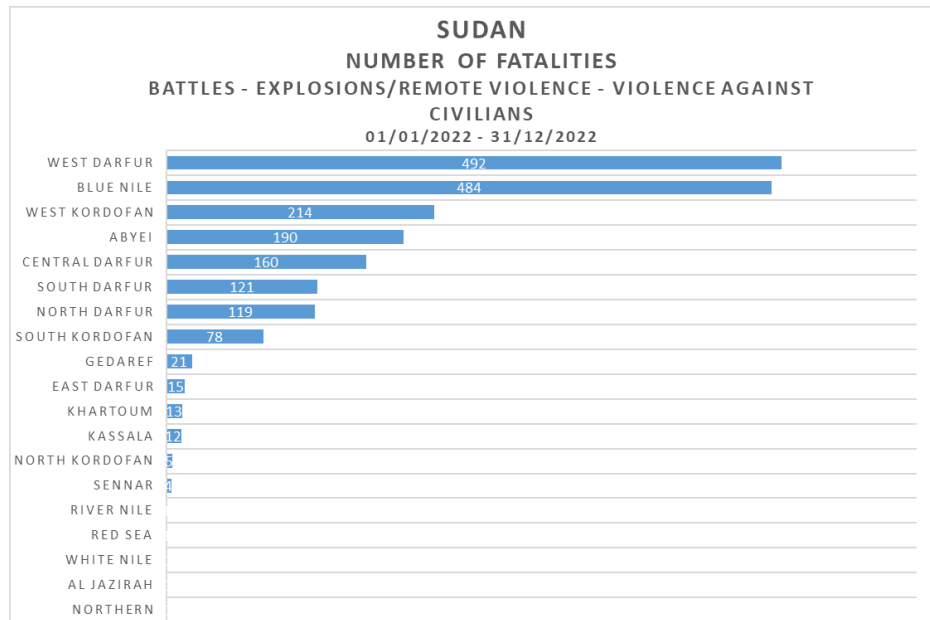
²⁰¹ Dabanga, 10/02/2017, [url](#); AFDB, 2016, p. 2, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9, [url](#); ACAPS, 28/07/2022, [url](#)

²⁰² AI, 07/2015, p. 12, [url](#); Sudan Consortium, 2016, p. 11, [url](#); Komey G.K., 09/2016, pp. 4-5, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), p. 2, 01/09/2020, [url](#); DFAT - Australia, 27/04/2016, p. 12, [url](#)

²⁰³ UNICEF, 2021, [url](#)

violence and *Violence against civilians* in these eight states, of which 907 fatalities in Darfur, and 776 in the Two Areas and West Kordofan.²⁰⁴

The following graph shows the number of fatalities in events of the type *Battles, Explosions/Remote violence* and *Violence against civilians* in the different states of Sudan:



Graph 6: Sudan. Number of Fatalities. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2022–31/12/2022.²⁰⁵

The number of fatalities recorded by ACLED in the *Fatalities* column includes civilian deaths as well as deaths among security personnel and militias. Injuries are not recorded. ACLED urges due caution when using fatality figures from its own or any other database.²⁰⁶ ACLED states that it cannot itself verify information on the number of fatalities. The organisation points out that of all conflict-related data, figures on fatalities are the most biased and least accurate. Such information is prone to manipulation by armed groups and sometimes by the media, which can lead to exaggerations or under-reporting. ACLED stresses that the figures are "reported" numbers and should be treated as such. ACLED further explains that the numbers entered in their database are estimates.²⁰⁷ More information on ACLED's methodology for entering fatality figures can be found in a note by Cedoca on ACLED's methodology.²⁰⁸

Most of the fatalities reported by ACLED in Darfur, the Two Areas and West Kordofan in the period 1 January 2022–31 December 2022 were linked to confrontations between armed opponents categorized as *Armed Clashes*. In Darfur, 660 of the total of 907 fatalities occurred in the context of *Armed clashes*. Events of *Violence against civilians* resulted in 234 civilian fatalities²⁰⁹, while *Explosions/Remote violence* accounted for 13 fatalities, of which 11 were civilians. In the Two Areas and West Kordofan, this trend is even more clear. Of the 776 fatalities, 666 were the result of *Armed Clashes*, 110 civilians

²⁰⁴ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ ACLED, *Fatalities*, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ ACLED, *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook*, 10/04/2019, p.31, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ CGVS - Cedoca, 21/05/2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ In some cases, ACLED specified the groups to which civilian fatalities belonged, but it did not do so consistently. For the 234 civilian casualties in Darfur, ACLED categorized 37 of them as IDPs, 35 as farmers and 23 as pastoralists. ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

died as the result of *Violence against civilians*. Incidents of *Explosions/Remote violence* resulted in no fatalities.²¹⁰

It is highly likely that there were civilian victims amongst the fatalities registered in events categorized as *Armed Clashes*, although it is difficult to deduce this from the data collected by ACLED. During factional fighting and conflict between armed groups, civilians are often attacked due to their imputed affiliation or because they are “in the wrong place at the wrong time”. Attacks on civilians and unlawful killings also took place during intercommunal conflict, often triggered by criminal activity or stemming from competition over resources (see 4.1 and 4.2).²¹¹ The authorities are failing to protect civilians or roll out any form of accountability efforts, leaving civilians vulnerable to ongoing cycles of attacks, according to HRW.²¹²

6. Geographical distribution

In the last decade, irregular ethnic militias and paramilitary groups have played a larger role in the violence in Darfur and the Two Areas than the rebel groups. Gerrit Kurtz argues that this change is also reflected in the shift of geographical hotspots: there were fewer incidents in Central Darfur, the historical base of the SLM/A-AW, but more in North, South and West Darfur.²¹³

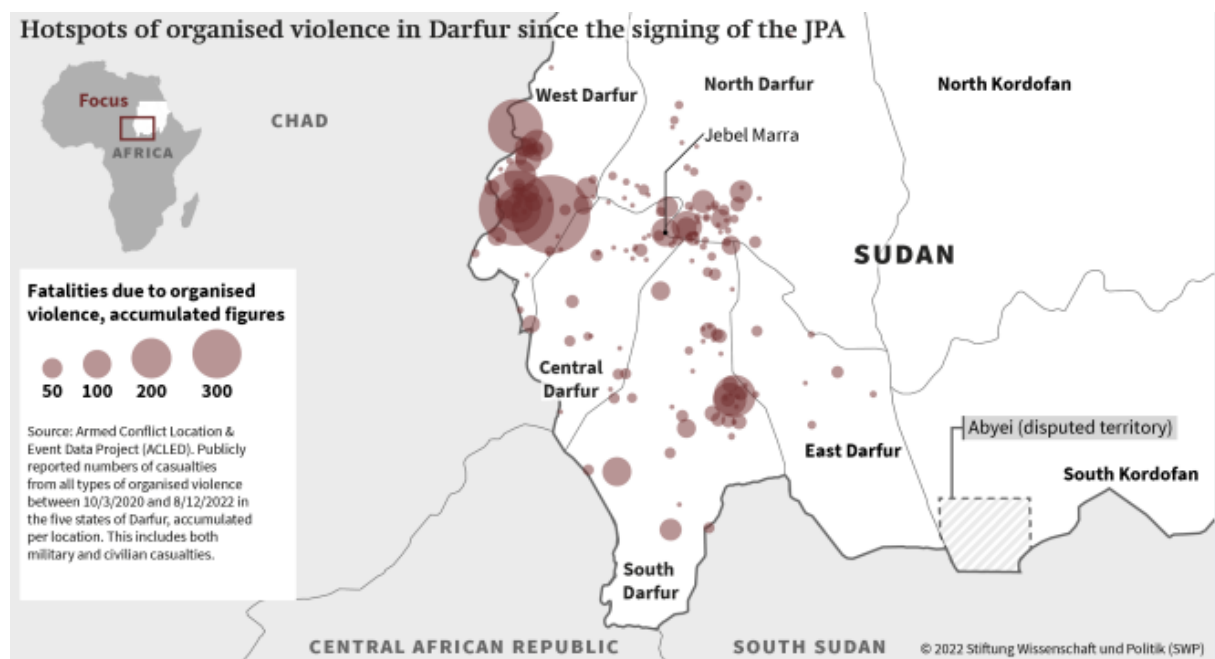


Figure 2: Hotspots of organized violence in Darfur since the signing of the JPA (09/2022)²¹⁴

In eastern and northern Jebel Marra on the border between Central and South Darfur, factional fighting between government and SLM/A-AW forces and its splinter factions took place throughout 2022, although on a lower level than in the period before 2019.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

²¹¹ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²¹² HRW, 13/12/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²¹³ ACLED, 27/08/2020, [url](#); SWP (Kurtz G.), 09/2022, [url](#)

²¹⁴ SWP, 07/2022, p. 4, [url](#)

²¹⁵ Radio Dabanga, 25/07/2022, [url](#); Darfur24, 22/08/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 24/11/2022, [url](#)

An analysis produced by Dr. Dan Watson for ACLED in August 2020 mentioned a geographical shift of violence in Sudan with serious violence increasingly taking place in and around towns and cities, contrasting with the predominantly rural fighting of the past. According to Dr. Watson, the reason for more frequent urban flare-ups is the systematic displacement resulting from attacks by government and pro-government forces over several decades that has forced large numbers of non-Arab groups into large IDP camps near urban centres. Since violence increasingly targeted IDPs, more incidents took place around city centres.²¹⁶ However, the sources Landinfo and Cedoca talked to in Khartoum stated that the overall security situation in the regional capitals Nyala (South Darfur) and to some degree El Fasher (North Darfur) and Zalingei (Central Darfur), is better than in El Geneina (West Darfur), and that Nyala, in particular, has always felt distanced from the violent events in Darfur.²¹⁷ ACLED data on incidents in these capital cities substantiated these statements. ACLED has not recorded any events of mass violence in Nyala, El Fasher or Zalingei in the last five years (2017-2022).²¹⁸ Journalist Mat Nashed argues that much of the violence in the region targets rural villages and IDP camps, where a significant proportion of the daily life of Darfurians takes place. Darfur is awash with weapons, security forces with no income and returning mercenaries from Libya that are also armed and have no income. In the absence of security sector reform, accountability and DDR, Mat Nashed believes that the security situation in the regional capital cities in Darfur could take a turn for the worst.²¹⁹ Jérôme Tubiana stresses that incidents in the countryside can have a rapid impact in the towns, referring to violence in El Geneina in 2021 and 2022. He describes Zalingei as very porous to any tensions coming from the surrounding IDP camps as well as from the countryside, and the security situation in El Fasher as tense since many of the signatory rebel groups are based in or around the town.²²⁰ Mat Nashed adds that general insecurity and lawlessness is the norm in El Fasher, meaning that violent incidents (such as robberies, beatings, rape) happen on an almost daily basis with no protection being available.²²¹

Figure 3 shows the geographical distribution of violent incidents in Darfur, the Two Areas and West Kordofan for the period 1 January 2022–31 December 2022. The yellow spheres represent *Armed Clashes*, the blue spheres represent incidents of *Violence against civilians*, the pink spheres represent *Explosions/remote violence* and the grey spheres indicate multiple event types. The size of the spheres indicates the number of incidents: the larger the sphere, the more incidents occurred at that location in 2022 according to data coded by ACLED:

²¹⁶ ACLED (Watson D.), 27/08/2022, [url](#)

²¹⁷ Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022; Osman M., Sudan researcher for HRW, conversation, Khartoum, 01/11/2022

²¹⁸ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 17/06/2022, [url](#)

²¹⁹ Mat Nashed, journalist who wrote about Sudan for – amongst others – Al Jazeera, New Lines Magazine, The New Arab, message through social media, 21/02/2023

²²⁰ Tubiana J., journalist and researcher specialised on Sudan, e-mail, 22/02/2023

²²¹ Mat Nashed, journalist who wrote about Sudan for – amongst others – Al Jazeera, New Lines Magazine, The New Arab, message through social media, 21/02/2023

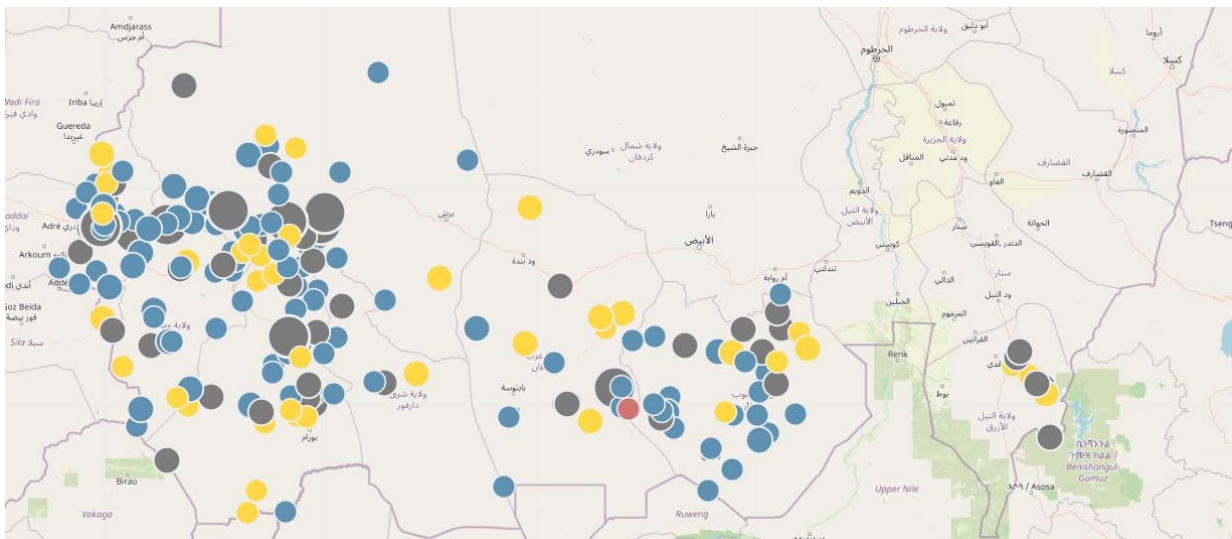


Figure 3: Geographical distribution of violent incidents (*Battles/Armed Clashes, Explosions/remote violence and Violence against civilians*) in Darfur, the Two Areas and West Kordofan. Graph by Cedoca on the basis of ACLED data for the period 01/01/2022–31/12/2022.²²²

The presence of many communal militias and the absence of police and security forces in some parts of North Darfur has resulted in high numbers of crimes and violent incidents, mostly attacks against civilians (theft, robbery, killings, rapes and abductions (see chapter 4.1)).²²³ As visible in Figure 2 and 3, the violence in North Darfur is concentrated in the southern part of the region, more precisely in the districts Tawila, El Fasher, Melit, Kutum, and Dar As Salam. The capital city of the region, El Fasher²²⁴, has seen seven attacks mostly by communal militias on civilians in the neighborhoods of the city, including theft, beatings and murder. At least two armed clashes took place in the city between police/SAF and unidentified armed groups: the looting of the former UNAMID base and an attack on a police car by gunmen. The other incidents in the district El Fasher happened in the ZamZam IDP camp near the regional capital city. ACLED recorded two abductions, three armed clashes, six attacks, two incidents of sexual violence (whereas the DBA mentioned 165 cases of rape in the camp²²⁵) and one incident with unexploded ordnance in ZamZam IDP camp in 2022.²²⁶

The whole region of West Darfur has seen violence throughout 2022, with most of the violence occurring in the districts El Geneina, Kreinik, Kulbus and Jebel Moon. Insecurity and the presence of armed groups have led to the militarization of daily life in the regional capital city of El Geneina. Elliott Brachet, journalist for Le Monde, described the city of El Geneina (West Darfur) as a place where “one cannot walk 100 metres without crossing an armed man”. At night, checkpoints appear on the roads, without it being possible to identify which force is controlling the vehicles. Elliot Brachet further states that at the slightest problem, everyone defends their tribe, regardless of the uniform (RSF, police,

²²² ACLED, s.d., [url](#)

²²³ GPC, 02/05/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²²⁴ ACLED divides the geographic information about an incident into nine columns in the data table: Region, Country, Admin1, Admin2, Admin3, Location, Latitude, Longitude, and Geo_precision. ACLED assigns a geographic precision code between 1 and 3 in the Geo_precision table. Precision code 1 indicates that the coverage specifically mentions a town or city and that coordinates are available for that location. Precision code 2 indicates that the coverage locates the event in a small portion of a region. Precision code 3 indicates that the reporting situates the incident in a larger region. ACLED encodes precision code 3 incidents in the nearest natural location or in the provincial capital if no other information is available. Here, Cedoca only refers to incidents as happening in the city of El Fasher when ACLED indicated the incident with a precision code 1 for the city. For more information on ACLED's methodology and how Cedoca handles the data, see CGVS - Cedoca, 21/05/2019, [url](#)

²²⁵ Representatives of the DBA, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

²²⁶ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

signatory groups) while the SAF seems unable to intervene.²²⁷ For the period 1 January 2022–31 December 2022, ACLED recorded twelve attacks against civilians, six armed clashes and one incident with a grenade in the city.²²⁸

In South Darfur, violence was more scattered over the region. Jérôme Tubiana mentions that the city of Nyala with its big IDP populations is largely dominated by Arabs, making the situation of non-Arabs, especially IDPs, potentially precarious when outside the camps and in town.²²⁹ According to ACLED data for 2022, the regional capital city of Nyala saw seven incidents over the whole year: six attacks against civilians and one armed clash pitting the SLM/A-TC against the police forces. The security situation in the capital city of Zalingei in Central Darfur is similar to Nyala according to the data ACLED recorded for the region in 2022, with four incidents in 2022 of which two armed clashes and two incidents of violence against civilians.²³⁰

As for the Two Areas, the state of emergency imposed in both states hindered monitoring and information gathering, according to HUDO. South Kordofan consists of seventeen localities, some located within territory controlled by SPLM/A-N al-Hilu and others under government control. Blue Nile consists of seven localities under government control with the presence of SPLM/A-N al-Hilu²³¹ in four localities (see annex 2). Access to SPLM/A-N al-Hilu-controlled areas was extremely limited.²³²

As can be seen on Figure 3, violence in Blue Nile throughout 2022 was mainly located in the east of the region, in the districts Wad al-Mahi (mostly in the city of Wad al-Mahi, and two incidents in the village of Uw Darfa), Rusayris, Geissan, and, to a lesser extent, in and around the capital city of Ed Damazin. In West Kordofan, most violent incidents happened in the east of the region as well. The districts Lagawa and Al Nuhud saw the most violence throughout 2022, while the capital Al Fula saw only one incident, according to the data ACLED recorded for the region. In South Kordofan, half of all violent incidents happened in three districts, namely Abu Jubayha, Abu Kershola and Kadugli (with eight of the eleven incidents in the capital city of Kadugli), which are areas with gold mining activities and a high presence of RSF and militias.²³³

7. Population displacements

There is no governmental authority in Sudan addressing the issue of IDPs.²³⁴ The Government of Sudan does not register IDPs or returnees. The number of IDP returnees is available only through self-reporting or by reports of community members to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Out of a total population of an estimated 43 million people, Sudan had 3,779,487 IDPs and an additional 1,384,720 returnees, according to DTM-data from March 2022.²³⁵ According to UNHCR, Sudan hosted 3,714,377 IDPs in July 2022.²³⁶ These IDPs are mainly located in Darfur and the Two Areas:

²²⁷ Le monde (Brachet E.), 12/07/2022, [url](#)

²²⁸ ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

²²⁹ Tubiana J., journalist and researcher specialised on Sudan, e-mail, 22/02/2023

²³⁰ Here, Cedoca only refers to incidents as happening in the cities of Nyala and Zalingei when ACLED indicated the incident with a precision code 1 for the city. ACLED, update accessed via export tool: 06/01/2023, [url](#)

²³¹ As of December 2019, according to HSBA, the SPLM/A-N al-Hilu controls most of the non-governmental areas in Blue Nile as well as those areas in South Kordofan originally under the control of the unified SPLM/A-N. HSBA & Small Arms Survey, 03/2020, p. 39, [url](#)

²³² HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 7, [url](#)

²³³ HUDO, 15/08/2022, p. 12, [url](#)

²³⁴ Representatives of the DBA, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

²³⁵ IOM DTM, 29/11/2022, [url](#)

²³⁶ UNCHR, s.d., [url](#)

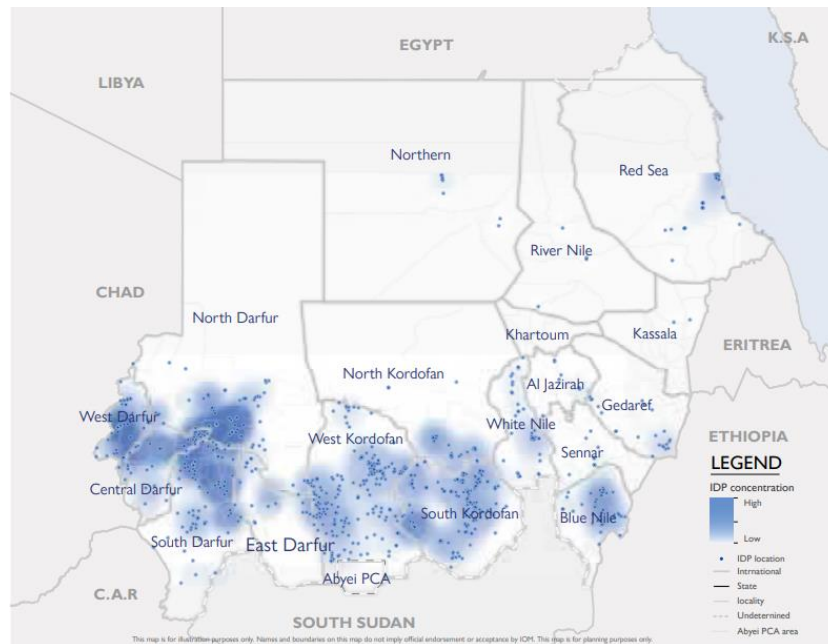


Figure 4: IDP Population Density²³⁷

Internally Displaced Persons by State

Location name	Data date	Population
South Darfur	31 Jul 2022	28.7% 1,065,597
North Darfur	31 Jul 2022	23.4% 870,715
Central Darfur	31 Jul 2022	14.8% 550,334
West Darfur	31 Jul 2022	13.2% 490,849
South Kordofan	31 Jul 2022	6.6% 245,353
Blue Nile	31 Jul 2022	4.1% 151,156
West Kordofan	31 Jul 2022	3.8% 140,213
East Darfur	31 Jul 2022	3.2% 117,751
North Kordofan	31 Jul 2022	1.5% 54,629
Red Sea	31 Jul 2022	0.5% 20,040
Gedaref	31 Jul 2022	0.2% 5,940
Kassala	31 Jul 2022	0.0% 1,800

Table 2: Internally Displaced Persons by State²³⁸

According to the data published on the UNHCR portal, Darfur had an IDP population of 2,795,246 people, out of a total population of 7.5 to 11 million.²³⁹ For the Two Areas and West Kordofan, the ratio was 536,722 IDPs to a total estimated population of about five million people.²⁴⁰

Most IDPs in Darfur have been displaced and secondarily displaced since the conflict began in 2003, with periods of return followed by new displacement due to regular conflict and violence.

²³⁷ IOM DTM, 29/11/2022, p. 5, [url](#)

²³⁸ UNCHR, s.d., [url](#)

²³⁹ UNCHR, s.d., [url](#); AFDB, 2016, p. 2, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9, [url](#); ACAPS, 28/07/2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ AI, 07/2015, p. 12, [url](#); Sudan Consortium, 2016, p. 11, [url](#); Komey G.K., 09/2016, pp. 4-5, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), p. 2, 01/09/2020, [url](#); DFAT - Australia, 27/04/2016, p. 12, [url](#); UNICEF, 2021, [url](#)

Intercommunal violence is one of the main drivers of displacement.²⁴¹ Between January and July 2022, more than 470,000 people were newly displaced in Darfur, with violence cited as the main reason.²⁴² UNOCHA reported on the displacement of up to 125,000 people as a result of the violence in Kreinik (West Darfur).²⁴³

The majority of IDPs live in formal settlements. The rest are hosted in schools and public facilities, live with relatives and friends within the host community, or in abandoned buildings. Inadequate shelter and inadequate washing facilities have led to the spread of infectious diseases.²⁴⁴ After the attack on Kreinik in April 2022, downtown El Geneina (West Darfur) was still occupied by nearly 100,000 displaced people in July 2022. These IDPs survived huddled under rags in schools, ministries or on sports grounds. All public buildings in the city had been converted into reception centres.²⁴⁵ According to one source, this situation was still ongoing in November 2022.²⁴⁶

Because of the widespread insecurity, many IDPs and farmers have lost access to their farms and depend on humanitarian assistance. Results from eight studies conducted in Darfur under the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) show that 81 % of IDPs are not able to access their agricultural land in the place of origin. Only 3 % of IDPs own farmland in their current location compared to 48 % of non-displaced residents, while the majority of IDPs must rent agricultural land. According to the eight studies undertaken in 2020-2021, 19 % of IDP households lack access to any farmland.²⁴⁷ This, in addition to the destruction of personal property, including farms, and cattle theft during violent incidents, have reduced income-generating activities and access to food, since agriculture is the main livelihood activity for the majority of IDPs and IDP returnees.²⁴⁸

Violence disrupted the delivery of humanitarian aid across the region, and the economic crisis affected the delivery of public services to IDPs.²⁴⁹ Increased bureaucratic and administrative impediments have also hindered humanitarian aid deliveries since the coup.²⁵⁰ Thus, IDPs faced major restrictions in accessing basic services. In IDP camps and sites, service provision was almost non-existent outside of WFP food assistance and minor health care services.²⁵¹ The lack of food in the IDP camps has resulted in several deaths in 2022. Dozens of people reportedly died of hunger in the Foro Baranga IDP camp (West Darfur) over a period of three months, as national and international aid organizations faced challenges accessing and distributing food and goods in the camp since the coup.²⁵² In Otash Camp (South Darfur) children became severely ill after eating waste from a landfill.²⁵³

Safety and security remained a key concern in IDP camps, IDP gathering sites, main towns and villages. The majority of IDP camps and sites have large populations and lack the regular presence of police and security forces.²⁵⁴ According to the GPC, many IDPs, especially women and girls, limit their movement outside of camps and settlements because of the continued presence of armed actors.²⁵⁵

²⁴¹ GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#); IOM Sudan, 07/2022, [url](#)

²⁴² IOM Sudan, 01/2022, [url](#); IOM Sudan, 07/2022, [url](#)

²⁴³ UNOCHA, 09/06/2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁴ IOM Sudan, 07/2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ Le Monde, 12/07/2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

²⁴⁷ JIPS, 13/04/2022, [url](#); DSWG, 06/04/2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁸ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ GPC, 05/2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 15/04/2022, [url](#)

²⁵¹ Global GPC, 10/02/2022, [url](#); GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁵² More than 17,000 camp residents left for Chad in search of aid, leaving 12,500 displaced living in the camp in dire conditions, according to reporting by Radio Dabanga in June 2022. Radio Dabanga, 24/06/2022, [url](#)

²⁵³ Radio Dabanga, 11/10/2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#); GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#)

8. Impact of the violence on daily life

Living standards have further fallen across the country as the coup hastened the economy's collapse. International funding has been suspended, the local currency has crashed, and food, fuel, and electricity prices have soared. The government has responded by increasing taxes and slashing public spending, which prompted waves of strikes and protests.²⁵⁶

Humanitarian agencies working across the country have experienced increased bureaucratic and administrative impediments since the coup, which has considerably restricted and slowed down the response.²⁵⁷ According to a source Landinfo and Cedoca talked to in Khartoum, current conditions are very similar to those before former president Omar al-Bashir's fall.²⁵⁸ Protection actors have reported restrictions on access to persons of concern in Blue Nile, South and West Kordofan, and IDPs in areas under the control of both factions of SPLM-N in the Two Areas and the SLM/A-AW-controlled areas in Darfur. Significant areas in these regions were out of range of the telecommunication networks and electricity, which made it difficult to obtain information.²⁵⁹ The rainy season and consequent flooding between June and September contributed to physical constraints, affecting the movement of people in need as well as humanitarian workers.²⁶⁰

Insecurity, violence and looting of vehicles on main roads have at times disrupted the continuity of aid deliveries and impeded humanitarian access to some areas in Darfur and the Two Areas.²⁶¹ In January 2022, the WFP suspended operations across North Darfur following the looting of three warehouses in El Fasher. WFP operations in North Darfur partially resumed in March 2022.²⁶² That month, several aid agencies suspended their operations in parts of West Darfur after two aid workers were killed in Jebel Moon.²⁶³ Fighting in Kreinik (West Darfur) in April 2022 forced the UN to temporarily suspend food distributions, affecting at least 62,850 displaced people in the town and two nearby villages.²⁶⁴ In the aftermath of fighting in Bindisi (Central Darfur) in October 2022, humanitarian organizations evacuated staff and suspended operations in the villages around Bindisi town, which affected about 30,000 people.²⁶⁵

Rule of law, access to justice and government protection remained weak in Darfur. After the violence in El Geneina (West Darfur) in January 2021, for example, all judges and prosecutors left and only returned towards the end of the year.²⁶⁶ The physical presence of police forces in North Darfur is extremely limited due to a lack of human and financial resources. The lack of female police is a significant deterrent for female civilians reporting incidents.²⁶⁷ Security arrangements, especially the forces meant to fill the security void that UNAMID's departure left in Darfur, have yet to be fully deployed (see 3.1). Incidents in Darfur were rarely investigated and prosecuted before a court of law. As a result, perpetrators of crimes often faced no consequences.²⁶⁸ In the absence of state protection, the only physical and social protection comes from families, relatives, clans and tribes - especially

²⁵⁶ The Economist, 05/01/2023, [url](#); The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 15/04/2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 15/04/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ Communication and Advocacy Specialist at a regional organization working on the involvement of women in politics in Sudan and other countries, conversation, Khartoum, 31/10/2022

²⁵⁹ The New Humanitarian (Amin M. & Kleinfeld P.), 15/04/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ ACAPS, 12/2022, [url](#)

²⁶¹ Radio Dabanga, 18/11/2022, [url](#); WFP, 01/03/2022, [url](#); GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁶² Radio Dabanga, 14/07/2022, [url](#)

²⁶³ NRC, 18/03/2022, [url](#); ACAPS, 12/08/2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁴ AP (Magdy S.), 25/04/2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ Radio Dabanga, 18/11/2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁶ GPC, 02/05/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ GPC, 04/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ Traditionally, the community has relied on community dispute resolution mechanisms under the native administration, but this is fraying also due to non-compliance and tensions between traditional leaders and youth. GPC, 02/05/2022, [url](#); GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

through native administration leaders that are often tasked with negotiating an end to violence. However, many non-Arab communities appear to be increasingly distrustful of their tribal leaders and accuse them of taking bribes in exchange for inking local reconciliation deals that were brokered by the RSF. The RSF - which is the very force that is supposed to provide security on behalf of the state - is often the force that threatens civilians. The lack of rule of law creates a climate of impunity for tribes - often Arab ones - that are aligned with the RSF to solve disputes or seek revenge through the barrel of the gun. The military, which is perceived as a more neutral force, rarely steps in.²⁶⁹ A source Landinfo and Cedoca talked to in Khartoum in October 2022, mentioned the following in relation to the impunity for the current violence in Darfur committed by RSF, former rebel groups and Arab irregular militia:

"When a complaint is filed, the complementarity principle is followed. Private lawyers get changed after interference by the RSF in North Darfur. El Geneina has three prosecutors for the whole of West Darfur. Even if there is will, there is a lack of capacity to investigate claims."²⁷⁰

The declarations of states of emergency and the presence of armed groups and militias in Darfur and the Two Areas have in some instances temporarily hindered the freedom of movement of civilians in these regions. For example, according to Al Jazeera, the PDF controlled most of the roads connecting El-Geneina (West Darfur) to its surrounding towns in the aftermath of the Kreinik attack in April 2022. As a result, locals needed to use armed convoys for protection to reach the state capital.²⁷¹ In October 2022, Ahmed Alomda Badi, Governor of Blue Nile, declared a state of emergency for thirty days, enforcing a night curfew and banning gatherings.²⁷²

Food security is a challenge to many people in conflict areas. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis on food security in Sudan released in June 2022, conflict is expected to continue to limit the food security of affected households in the Darfur, Blue Nile and in the Kordofan regions. For Blue Nile, for example, the share of the population experiencing acute food insecurity (phase 3 and 4) increased from 15 % in 2019 to 37 % in 2022, meaning that one out of every three people in Blue Nile was in that situation during the lean season of 2022 (June-September). After Blue Nile, Central (34 %) and East Darfur (27 %) had the highest food insecurity percentages in June-September 2022.²⁷³ In June 2022, the WFP warned that a record 15 million people in Sudan – one-third of the population – were facing acute food insecurity.²⁷⁴ In November 2022, UNOCHA reported for example that many farms in North and Central Darfur were torched or destroyed by animals during days of violence.²⁷⁵ Violent incidents where theft and destruction take place make host communities, IDPs, returnees and other vulnerable persons at risk of food insecurity.²⁷⁶

²⁶⁹ Mat Nashed, journalist who wrote about Sudan for – amongst others – Al Jazeera, New Lines Magazine, The New Arab, message through social media, 21/02/2023

²⁷⁰ Human rights researcher, conversation, Khartoum, 30/10/2022

²⁷¹ Al Jazeera, 05/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁷² Sudan Tribune, 21/10/2022, [url](#)

²⁷³ IPC, 28/06/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 08/08/2022, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ More than 17,000 camp residents left for Chad in search of aid, leaving 12,500 displaced living in the camp in dire conditions, according to reporting by Radio Dabanga in June 2022. Radio Dabanga, 24/06/2022, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ In the past, there used to be clearly marked pasture tracks and traditional tribal procedures for herding practices and the compensation of lost crops for farmers, but this changed during the regime of Omar Al Bashir. The regime supported the Arab herding tribes in the region, whilst looking down on non-Arab, often sedentary farmers. As a result, Darfur has a long history of strife between nomadic Arab herders and non-Arab African herders or sedentary farmers. Arab tribesmen were recruited by the previous regime of dictator Omar Al Bashir to join the Janjaweed militias. Al Bashir employed these Arab militias to repress a revolt over ethnic marginalisation in the region, mainly targeting non-Arab African farmers in what became known as the Darfur Genocide. Many of these farmers still live in camps for the displaced. Radio Dabanga, 30/11/2022, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 18/11/2022, [url](#); Le Monde (Brachet E.), 11/07/2022, [url](#); GPC, 02/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ GPC, 23/12/2022, [url](#)

The violence can have a devastating effect on the social fabric of villages and towns, as Elliot Brachet describes in the case of El Geneina (West Darfur): "Faced with permanent insecurity, everyone prefers to stay with their own, according to their tribe."²⁷⁷ There are no more shared markets, no more mixed marriages.²⁷⁸

Education and health services are generally weak in Darfur and the Two Areas.²⁷⁹ The already strained available services have become further stretched by violence and displacement. For example, after the attack on Kreinik (West Darfur) in April 2022, all schools in the city were littered with tents and makeshift shelters for months.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Le monde (Brachet E.), 12/07/2022, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ Le monde (Brachet E.), 12/07/2022, [url](#); Former official in Darfur, conversation, Khartoum, 03/11/2022

²⁷⁹ UNOCHA, 13/04/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 13/04/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 25/09/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 25/09/2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, 25/09/2022, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ Le Monde (Brachet E.), 11/07/2022, [url](#)

Summary

On April 11 2019, the army put an end to the regime of president al-Bashir after months of civilian protests. In October 2020, the Sudanese transitional authorities and a number of rebel groups signed the Juba Peace Agreement, but one year later the Sudanese military staged a new coup. As the political struggle in Khartoum deepened, the violence in the peripheral states resumed, fueled by a power vacuum and the divided loyalties of the security forces. Episodes of mass violence in West Darfur left hundreds dead, thousands displaced, and hundreds of homes destroyed. Violence also spread to areas that had remained relatively stable in recent years, including Kulbus (West Darfur), Ed Damazin and Rusayris (Blue Nile). Ceasefires between the two rebel groups, SLM/A-AW and SPLM/A-N al-Hilu, and the Sudanese authorities were largely respected.

In the last decade, irregular ethnic militias and paramilitary groups have played a growing role in the violence in Darfur and the Two Areas compared to the long-established rebel groups. Various armed communal militias - organized along tribal lines and difficult to control - were active in Darfur and the Two Areas in 2022. While conflict triggers varied from place to place, outbreaks of violence usually follow a certain pattern. They are often triggered by individual disputes and criminal incidents. There was a trend of Arab militias attacking non-Arab communal militias and civilians alike in the aftermath of such incidents. State security forces hold back, intervening belatedly or even retreating because they are no match for the attackers. In other cases, members of state security forces have joined the attacks in a private capacity, bringing their weapons and choosing sides according to their ethnicity. Meanwhile, tribal self-defense units, formed by non-Arab communities, were increasingly organizing themselves. Fighters from the signatory rebel groups, who have returned from Libya, also posed a security threat to the population. Impunity for violations by any of these armed actors persisted.

For the period 1 January 2022-31 December 2022, ACLED registered 659 events in Sudan, of which 391 events occurred in Darfur and 153 events in the Two Areas and West Kordofan. There was an increase in violent incidents in Darfur in 2022, and to a lesser extent in the Two Areas and West-Kordofan, compared with the previous year. In Two Areas and West-Kordofan, the fatalities linked to violence doubled compared with 2021. Attacks made up the bulk of the violent incidents. They mostly targeted IDPs and farmers, resulting in killings, looting, destruction and burning of villages. Most of the armed clashes took place between different communal militias.

For the period 1 January 2022-31 December 2022, ACLED registered 1,930 fatalities in Sudan. More than 85 % of these fatalities were recorded in Darfur, the Two Areas and West Kordofan. Most of these fatalities are linked to confrontations between communal militias. During fighting, civilians were often attacked due to their imputed affiliation or because they were "in the wrong place at the wrong time".

In Darfur, most of the violence occurred in the southern part of the districts Tawila, El Fasher, Melit, Kutum, and Dar As Salam (North Darfur), the districts El Geneina, Kreinik, Kulbus and Jebel Moon (West Darfur) and the different districts of South Darfur. Regional capital cities in Darfur, with the exclusion of El Geneina (West Darfur), were less affected by the insecurity than other parts of the region. Violence in Blue Nile was mainly centered in the east of the region, in the districts Wad al-Mahi, Rusayris, Geissan, and, to a lesser extent, in and around the capital city of Ed Damazin. In West Kordofan, most violent incidents happened in the districts Lagawa and Al Nuhud, and violence in South Kordofan was concentrated around Kadugli and the eastern part of the region.

Most IDPs in Sudan have been displaced multiple times, with periods of return followed by new displacement due to regular violence. Sudan housed 3,714,377 IDPs in July 2022. Darfur had an IDP population of 2,795,246 people out of a total population of 7.5 to 11 million. For the Two Areas and West Kordofan, the ratio was 536,722 IDPs out of a total estimated population of about five million people.

Annexes

Map of Darfur²⁸¹



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²⁸¹ FIDH, 11/2021, p. 8, [url](#)

SPLM/A-N presence in Blue Nile²⁸²

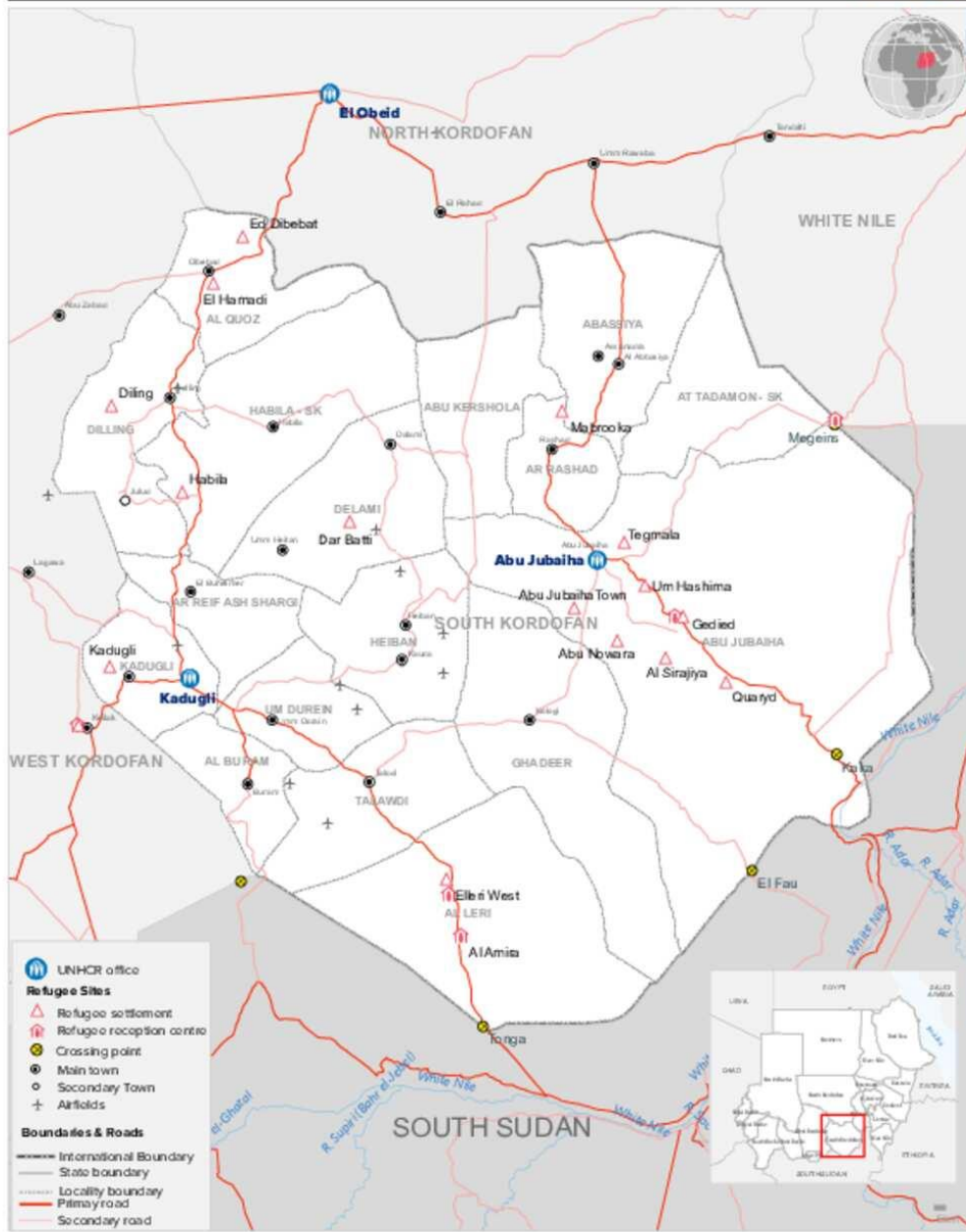


²⁸² RVI, 03/2020, [url](#)

South Kordofan State UNHCR presence and refugee locations²⁸³

SUDAN: South Kordofan State
UNHCR presence and refugee locations

As of 23 Jun 2020



²⁸³ UNHCR, 23/06/2020, [url](#)

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