

# SUDAN

# West Darfur



## 1. REPORT SUMMARY

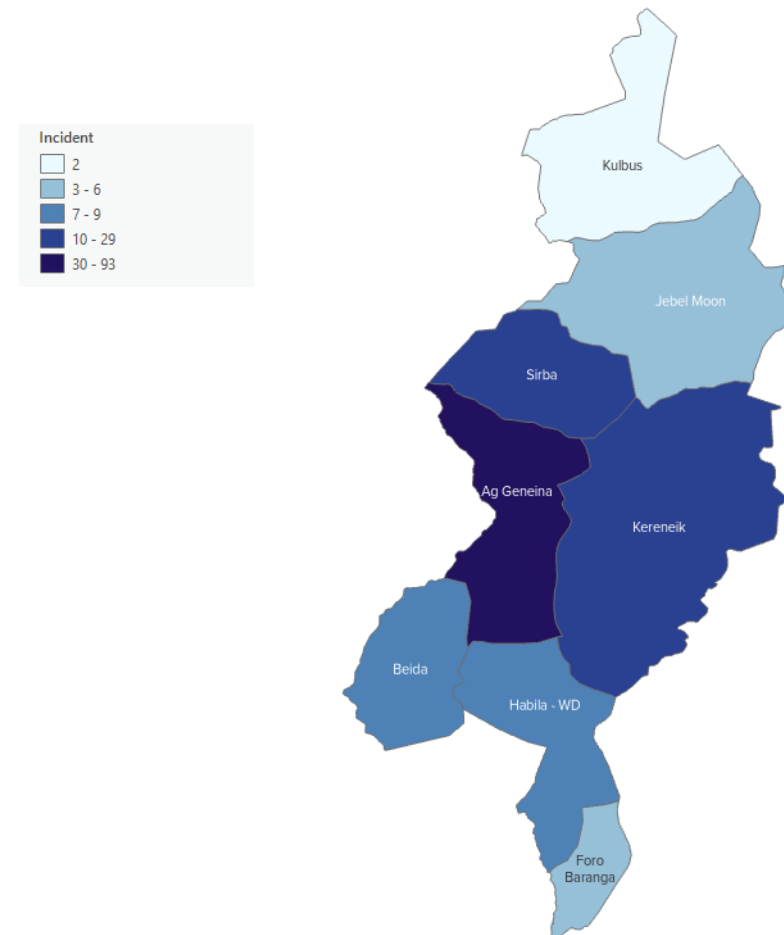
West Darfur has suffered severe bouts of intercommunal violence since the withdrawal of UNAMID from the state in mid-2019. In 2020, there were five major inter-communal clashes. The first incident was in late December 2019 / January 2020, when an attack on IDPs in El Geneina town camps secondarily displaced over 41,000 IDPs to public buildings in the town. Surrounding towns and villages were also heavily impacted. The second incident occurred in May and June 2020 in Jebal Moon and the third in July 2020 in Mesteri town, Beida locality, and the villages surrounding Geneina. In 2021, there were two major inter-communal violent clashes in El Geneina and surrounding localities leading to the deaths and injuries of hundreds of individuals, including civilians.

As of 28 April 2022, significant conflict in Krenik locality and El Geneina has resulted in an unconfirmed number of deaths, injuries and displacement.<sup>1</sup> There have been several incidents outside Geneina (Forobaranga – Fur/nomads, Krenik – Tama/Gimir, Jabel Moon – Masseriya Jabal/nomads). As of 22 March, per the IOM’s Emergency Event Track (EET), there are 153,374 displaced persons in temporary gathering sites in schools and public buildings in Geneina town, Jabal Moon, Sirba and Krenik localities. While most families hosted at these gathering points belong to the Massalit tribe, protection teams have also identified families from Fur, Bargo, Aringa, Dajo and Tama tribes.

While efforts of the Government of Sudan (deployment of security forces, sending high-level delegations, negotiations etc.) did not resolve the inter-communal clashes, humanitarian organisations in the past two years only responded to the urgent protection and assistance needs of the conflict-affected population. The analysis recommends several actions to be taken by the Government of Sudan (GoS) and international organisations to reduce the level of

violence, provide protection to civilians while looking for durable solutions for IDPs.

### Severity Scale of the covered geographical area

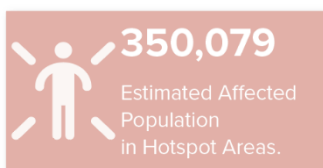


<sup>1</sup> NRC Press Release: Sudan: Tens of thousands flee after deadly attacks in West Darfur

## 2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

The uncertainty of Sudan’s transition, compounded by armed conflict, clashes, human rights violations and criminal activity, severely impacts the West Darfur population, including IDPs and returnees.

### Severe levels of insecurity and violence.



The number of hotspot localities identified by the Protection Sector in West Darfur increased from five to seven<sup>2</sup> out of eight localities. Throughout 2021, the Protection Sector recorded the killing of over 392

individuals and injuries of 434 civilians. The IOM’s DTM EET for El Geneina alone has registered 497 killed and 508 injured due to intercommunal violence between January and April 2022. There were also incidents in Krenik (violence between Tama and Gimir). The figure is likely to be much higher in Mesteri of Beida locality and other areas. In 2022, there has been significant inter-communal violence in El Geinina, Jabal Moon and Krenik localities. As Per EET, 53 were killed and 21 injured in Jabal Moon and 67 killed and 78 injured in Krenik localities, for a total of 120 dead and 99 wounded in the two localities. The consequences of recent violence starting on 24 April 2022 in Krenik and El Geinina are still being assessed.



<sup>2</sup> The Protection Sector defines hotspots as localities experiencing recurrent violence, presence of armed persons and UXOs, land mines, increased criminality, and a high risk of further violence and conflict

<sup>3</sup> Protection Analysis Update Sudan, April 2022

### Multidimensional impact on population vulnerabilities and coping capacities.

West Darfur is among the most affected States by violence connected to the root causes of conflict, including power-sharing, land ownership, access to resources and criminality. The resurgence of intercommunal conflicts results in the killing of civilians, the destruction of property and displacements. Access to markets is interrupted, and income-earning opportunities, market activities and trade flows have been reduced. This adds to the effects of increased inflation, the decrease in Sudanese pound value, and the increase in electricity, food, livestock, and staple prices<sup>3</sup>.

The high prices of cereals are being driven additionally by lower-than-expected harvests together with high production and increased transportation costs.<sup>4</sup> Livestock prices remain stable but are still around 200 % above prices in 2021. Electricity tariffs increased by up to 600 per cent in January 2022.<sup>5</sup> The population’s purchasing power has drastically reduced, increasing the level of food insecurity and deepening the overall vulnerability of the people. Due to the persistent insecurities in the hotspots all over the West Darfur state, most IDPs and farmers have lost access to their farms and depend on humanitarian assistance.

West Darfur has been partially affected by 2021 heavy rains and floods. COVID-19 cases continue to increase, with 41,766 positive and over 3,300 associated deaths in Sudan, with fewer reported cases in West Darfur.

The Federal Ministry of Health reported 1,822,868 cases of malaria compared with 1,456,413 during the same period in 2020 in Sudan.

<sup>4</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network Key Message Update February 2022

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, 2 March 2022

Over 1,860 cases of hepatitis E had also been registered between June and December 2021 in Sudan.

### Access and security challenges

The main problem is the lack of implementation of sustainable security arrangements based on the provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement, specifically the integration and creation of joint forces and sustainable deployments. The current practice is only reactive – where intercommunal violence incidents happen, the authorities react by deploying a large number of forces (SAF, RSF and CRP) that never remain in those areas for long and are eventually re-deployed to other areas. These ad-hoc security arrangements are not effective or sustainable. The capacity of local police, in terms of numbers, communication and transportation, remains very limited.

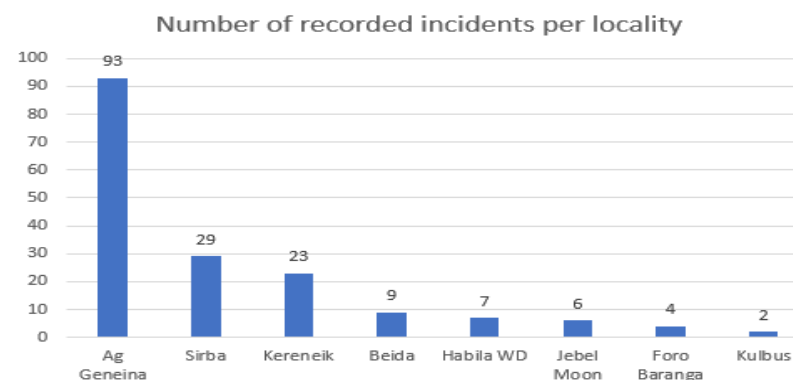
During the first quarter of 2022, West Darfur is seeing increasing tensions and violence in several localities. Renewed attacks by armed nomads on the civilian population, market owners and members of communities are taking place, specifically in Jebal Moon, Sirba, Krenik, El Geneina town and locality. Therefore, the safety and security of the population and humanitarian workers remain a priority concern at the gathering points, other areas of displacement, return, and in areas of previous residence. The unpredictable security situation in the villages of origin is caused by the lack of permanent established police/military bases to provide security to the returning population. In 2020 and 2021, humanitarian actors often had to evacuate their staff due to security concerns and could not monitor the situation and provide assistance to the conflict-affected population in El Geneina town, locality, Beida, Jabal Moon, Krenik localities.

## 3. PRIORITY PROTECTION RISKS

West Darfur population is impacted by several protection risks simultaneously. The capacity to ensure the protection of civilians and basic access to the population is seriously challenged. The population is widely constrained by violence and insecurity, economic deprivation, and intra-state and national political instability.

Protection monitoring was conducted in 89 gathering points (regrouped in 16 clusters) in Geneina town, in parallel by three teams, including UNHCR and its partners World Relief (WR) and Child Development Foundation (CDF). In total, 1,520 community management structures were assessed, including leadership and sector-based committees.<sup>6</sup>

### RISK 1: Attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure and unlawful killings

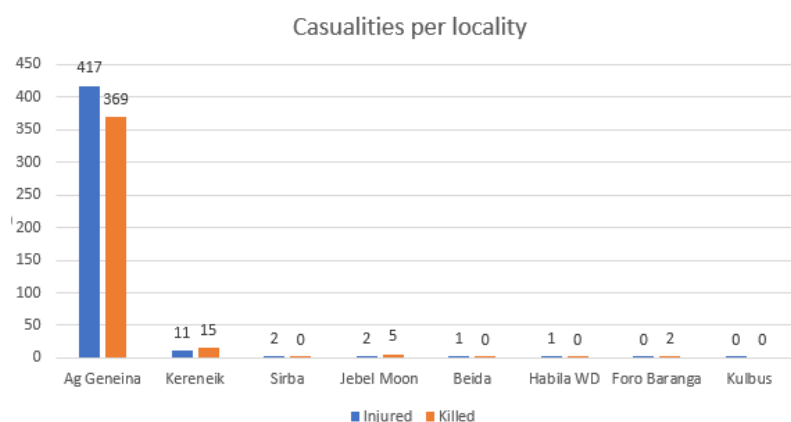


The West Darfur population faces death and injuries as a result of deliberate actions by armed nomads and other armed groups.

<sup>6</sup> The Protection sector participated as well in all OCHA-led interagency assessment and monitoring missions to assess protection and security situation.

Violence and attacks are motivated by political or economic factors and in the absence of a judicial or security system.

The situation remains unpredictable with regular security incidents, specifically in El Geneina, where a minor incident can trigger inter-communal violence. The displaced population has indicated provision of security, rehabilitation of basic infrastructures (water points, health centres, schools, and shelters) and peaceful coexistence initiatives (committees) as prerequisites for return to the places of origin or previous displacement.



## RISK 2: Displacement and secondary displacement due to violence and conflict

West Darfur is one of the states affected by the conflict in early 2003, causing displacement of the population inside the state and to Chad. The current numbers are reflected in the below table:

In 2021, over **100,000** people were displaced by inter-communal violence that began on 16 January between communities in El Geneina and its surrounding villages. This is in addition to previous waves of displacement in late 2019 and early July 2020. The latest escalation in violence marks the continuation of a long history of

inter-communal disputes in the region. In El Geneina town, most of the displaced (coming from Krinding 1 and 2 IDP camps, Sultan House area and other sites nearby) sought shelter in temporary gathering points located in schools and other public facilities in Geneina town. At present, the gathering sites are highly congested. Others IDPs reside in surrounding villages and localities still marked by insecurity and high crime rate. Following the cessation of hostilities agreement between Representatives from Arab and Massalit communities on 13 February 2021, the security situation in El Geneina is stable but highly volatile. A list of demands by protesters, agreed to by the federal delegation, has not been fulfilled by the State and the Government of Sudan. There were fears that the sit-in protests would resume at the end of February, but the resumption now does not appear imminent.

Number of IDPs per Hotspot Localities as of January 2022		
West Darfur	Ag Geneina town and locality	104617
	Beida	21225
	Habila	36050
	Foro Baranga	3175
	Krenik	181585
	Jebel Moon	3427
	<b>Total</b>	<b>350079</b>

Furthermore, since December 2021, the Krenik locality has witnessed significant displacement due to the surge of intercommunal violence. An estimated 61,621 individuals are currently seeking shelter in Krenik town, Um Tajuk and Murayat villages, and Ardamata IDP camp in El Geneina locality. In November 2021, 6,730 individuals were reportedly displaced to Murnei village due to intercommunal clashes between Arab tribes near Murnei village in Krenik locality. The violence led to the displacement of additional 11,100 people from Adikong, Domi, Dokaiat and Jegijegi<sup>7</sup> in El Geneina, with 4500 people

<sup>7</sup> Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)



The main protection concern is the lack of safety and security at the gathering sites and areas of previous displacement and origin (camps and villages), with IDPs fearing potential repeated attacks. This is aggravated by limited security forces providing physical protection around the sites and prevailing distrust towards the government security forces by the IDP communities. They would like to be protected by international military forces.

### **RISK 3: Impediments and restrictions to access resources, opportunities, services, documentation and justice**

The presence of nomad settlements in the vicinity of the camps and the lack of basic services in the camps is impacting the return. Many families expressed the prolongation of their trauma due to continuous shooting at night close to their gathering points and their ongoing experience of physical and verbal assault at these and outside sites. Inadequate shelter and inadequate WASH facilities not meeting the minimum standards are other factors negatively impacting the lives of the communities. They also face a lack of means to purchase food, limited livelihood opportunities, no education services and the unavailability of adequate health and nutrition services, including maternal and reproductive.

West Darfur is among the States where the civilian population take the highest brunt of the macro-economic effect of the political instability and conflict in Sudan, in the form of the increased cost of life (200% increase in staple food prices, 318% inflation, 600% in electricity tariffs, etc.), reduction of livelihood and economic capacities to cope (disruption of harvesting, increased input costs, etc.) and disruption of general social cohesion and the consequent severing of social ties.

Rule of law, access to justice, and government social protection remain weak in West Darfur. Perpetrators of crime often face no consequences. After the violence in Geneina in January 2021, all

judges and prosecutors left out of fear of being targeted – only returned towards the end of the year. Still, IDPs now occupy courts and prosecutors' offices as temporary gathering sites. 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. For example, in Jabal Moon in mid-2021, a negotiated settlement between the nomads and Misseriya Jabal broke down when the nomads reportedly failed to pay the agreed Diya. High casualty incidents are also making such settlements not feasible. Minor incidents often escalate to intercommunal violence because the community lacks an outlet to resolve disputes and de-escalate incidents.

### **RISK 4: Gender-based violence**

In West Darfur, lack of privacy due to severe shelter congestion aggravate the protection situation of the displaced, particularly women, girls and Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs). Women and children make up the majority of the displaced population and are exposed to SGBV and other protection risks. Congestion and high proportions of women-headed households in gathering sites are significant concerns. It increases GBV risks and makes it challenging to deliver protection services requiring privacy and confidentiality.

Many women have reported incidents of rape/harassment and require psychosocial support. Women and girls attempting to return to Krinding IDP camps to collect the rest of their belongings are subjected to verbal and physical assaults. In some instances, armed men harass and block their entry into the camps.

In other localities, IDPs women from the Massalit tribe were reportedly attacked by nomads; several women were pregnant and suffered extensive injuries, including specific gender-based incidents. Victims were later referred to health care services. There is a general concern that some of the reported GBV incidents may cause possible further violence and retaliation.

## **RISK 5: Grave violations against children**

In West Darfur, child protection concerns remain in the state as per the key findings from the recent assessments conducted across the localities in the state, including assessments conducted in Kreinik, Sirba, and Forobarang. The findings indicated that recurrent attacks in the different localities have led to the displacement of children and their families and increased cases of SGBV against women and girls.

The high rate of harassment in some areas like Kreinik prevents women and girls from moving out of their homesteads for more than a kilometer without facing harassment. The practise of female genital mutilation is also a risk among some communities. All the localities assessed noted child labour and a high risk of children being recruited into armed groups.

It was also pointed out that there are increasing grave violations against children, including injuries, maiming and killing and attacks on schools. The recent conflicts in the West Darfur have resultant effects on changing children's behaviour. Approximately 150 children reported showing unusual behaviour, including stress, trauma, acting and imitating like armed combatants, carrying toy sticks, pointing them as guns, and drawing pictures of guns. Children were observed engaged in grazing livestock and collecting water and firewood. The presence of teenage mothers was also observed. Teenage girls and women reported they face harassment from the nomadic youths while moving about to fetch water and collecting wood. They pay in the form of grains for their safety to their harassers.

## **4. RESPONSE**

The Protection Sector, its AoRs and partners conducted regularly protection monitoring activities both remotely and by presence to ensure protection by presence, assess the situation, needs/services and enable timely solutions/specialised referrals and evidence-based

advocacy. Protection partners also actively participated in the interagency assessment and monitoring missions. While protection partners have established 24 community-based protection committees and delivered protection services, food, ES/NFIs, health, WASH and other sectoral interventions were provided as per the assessment and monitoring activities findings.

Furthermore, with the support of protection actors, the state Ministry of Health and Social Development has deployed over 65 social workers in the gathering points involved in identifying and supporting PSNs and PSS. Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs) are particularly affected: Over 10,510 PSNs have been registered across 95 gathering sites, Jabel Moon and Beida. Main PSN categories identified include (but are not limited to): physical and mental disabilities, single parents, persons with critical medical conditions, unaccompanied and separated children, single elderly persons, SGBV survivors, female-headed households; pregnant and lactating women<sup>9</sup>.

The family support program (cash transfer) launched in February 2021, suspended by the World Bank, was supposed to cover West Darfur, among other states. Its closure is further impeding the civilian population's access to minimum basic needs.

The Protection Sector has been actively engaged in advocacy efforts with the state authorities at all levels and engaged with Nomad, Misseriya Jabal and Masalit community leaders on various issues, including humanitarian access, search for durable solutions and awareness of the need to ensure adherence to the humanitarian principles. There is also ongoing working-level engagement with various state authorities on the protection issues identified by the community during protection monitoring and rapid needs assessments conducted in the communities.

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<sup>9</sup> Identified by UNHCR Protection partner World Relief (WR)



## 5. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO RESPONSE

**Safety and security** remain a priority concern both at the gathering points and in areas of previous residence. The unpredictable security situation in the villages of origin is due to the lack of permanent established police/military bases to provide security to the returning population.

**Limited freedom of movement** of IDPs to go and farm or search for their livelihoods remains a challenge making the IDPs depend mainly on humanitarian support.

**The location of some gathering points** in proximity to unsafe roads poses protection risks to the IDP communities, especially children.

**Congestion** is a major concern as it increases GBV risks and makes it challenging to deliver protection services requiring privacy/confidentiality. High proportions of female-headed households in the gathering points further increase the need for responses.

**The absence of effective political efforts** to address the underlying causes of inter-communal conflicts, especially between the Masalit and the Arabs and Misseriya Jabal and Arabs, leaves the population in constant fear and insecurity.

When security is deployed, as in Krinding camps since April (over 10 SAF checkpoints), the **absence of intercommunal dialogue** and **reconciliation** between the Masalit and Arabs of Umduwein is a significant hindrance to effective solutions. IDPs have returned spontaneously, and others expressed willingness to return to Krindings.

**Fighters move freely** through the assessed areas with weapons on pickup trucks in the presence of children and youths. The youth particularly have no livelihood options or skills to seek employment elsewhere.

Child labour is prevalent due to the absence of functioning schools. Overall, girls are at risk of child marriage. This has been coupled with

a lack of schools and community awareness as the locations have **no established community-based child protection networks**. Although six Community-Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPNs) were established in 2018, but some members fled from the community due to insecurity, thus leading to a low level of awareness and a weak or no case management system. The Family and Child Support Unit is not in place, and there are no social workers.

**Recent damage assessment** in Krinding shows that almost 12,000 shelters are either fully or partially damaged. Schools, clinics and other public infrastructure in the camps were also severely damaged. However, partners cannot fully commit to rehabilitating these shelters and facilities if the prospect of returns is still unclear while at the same time providing assistance at the gathering sites.

Many IDPs lost their **documentation** during the conflict, and some children born in the gathering points have yet to be issued birth certificates.

## 6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

There is a need for urgent solutions to the situation in IDP gathering points.

- Active inter-communal dialogue and reconciliation efforts should be deployed urgently, especially between the Massalit and Arabs and Misseriya Jabel essential before IDPs can safely return/relocate back to camps/villages - safe and sustainable returns.
- The GoS must strengthen security and the rule of law in areas of displacement and areas of origin of IDPs. Deployment of security forces by itself needs to be accompanied by high-level intercommunal reconciliation efforts. Therefore, the GoS should undertake concrete steps to strengthen security and rule of law, including increased support to civilian law enforcement (SPF) and access to justice (rural courts, legal aid); and take measures to address the trust deficit that leads most IDPs to ask for

international security forces, including peacebuilding initiatives to foster inter-communal reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

- The GoS, supported by the UNCT/HCT (incl. the Durable Solutions Working Group) and UNITAMS, should implement concrete actions in IDPs' areas of origin to address barriers to return or to enable IDPs to integrate into their areas of displacement, namely locally: (i) ensuring adequate security arrangements are put in place; (ii) restoration of basic services; (iii) Housing, Land and Property (HLP) restitution through the removal of unlawful occupants and provision of alternative HLP to them, alongside fair compensation for HLP damage/destruction; and (iv) explore options for regularisation of existing camps/sites.
- The Governor's Office should establish and activate the State-level Protection of Civilians Committee required as part of the implementation of the National Plan on Protection of Civilians (NPPOC) and invite representatives from IDPs and other affected communities to participate – alongside relevant civilian authorities (HAC, State-level line ministries, locality

administrations), security and police forces, civil society actors, UN protection agencies.

- Security escorts remain a significant challenge – availability and costs. This impacts protection monitoring and other humanitarian missions. Similar to the State's efforts to ensure protection during the farming season (planting and harvesting), the strategic deployment of extra security forces dedicated to this task is essential for the authorities to improve security on key mission routes and reduce the need for security escorts.
- UNCT and the Protection Sector need to scale their programming in areas of origin and IDP gathering sites.
- The SAF Commander has flagged that the current deployment of joint forces in West Darfur is not sustainable, and in some locations, soldiers will need to be replaced with SPF/CRP. There is a need to ensure a coordinated change of commands to avoid security gaps. The efforts to create the joint forces as called for in the Juba Peace Agreement should be expedited, with active engagement with the signatories not to recruit children.