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SUDAN

A worsening displacement crisis in need of a comprehensive response

Two years after the secession of South Sudan, the internal displacement crisis in Sudan remains a cause for serious concern. Piecemeal efforts to end conflicts and pave the way for durable solutions have failed, and increased fighting, border disputes and inter-communal violence led to the displacement of around 400,000 people in the first five months of 2013. Figures for other causes of displacement are difficult to come by, but 2012 saw an estimated 84,000 people displaced by flooding.

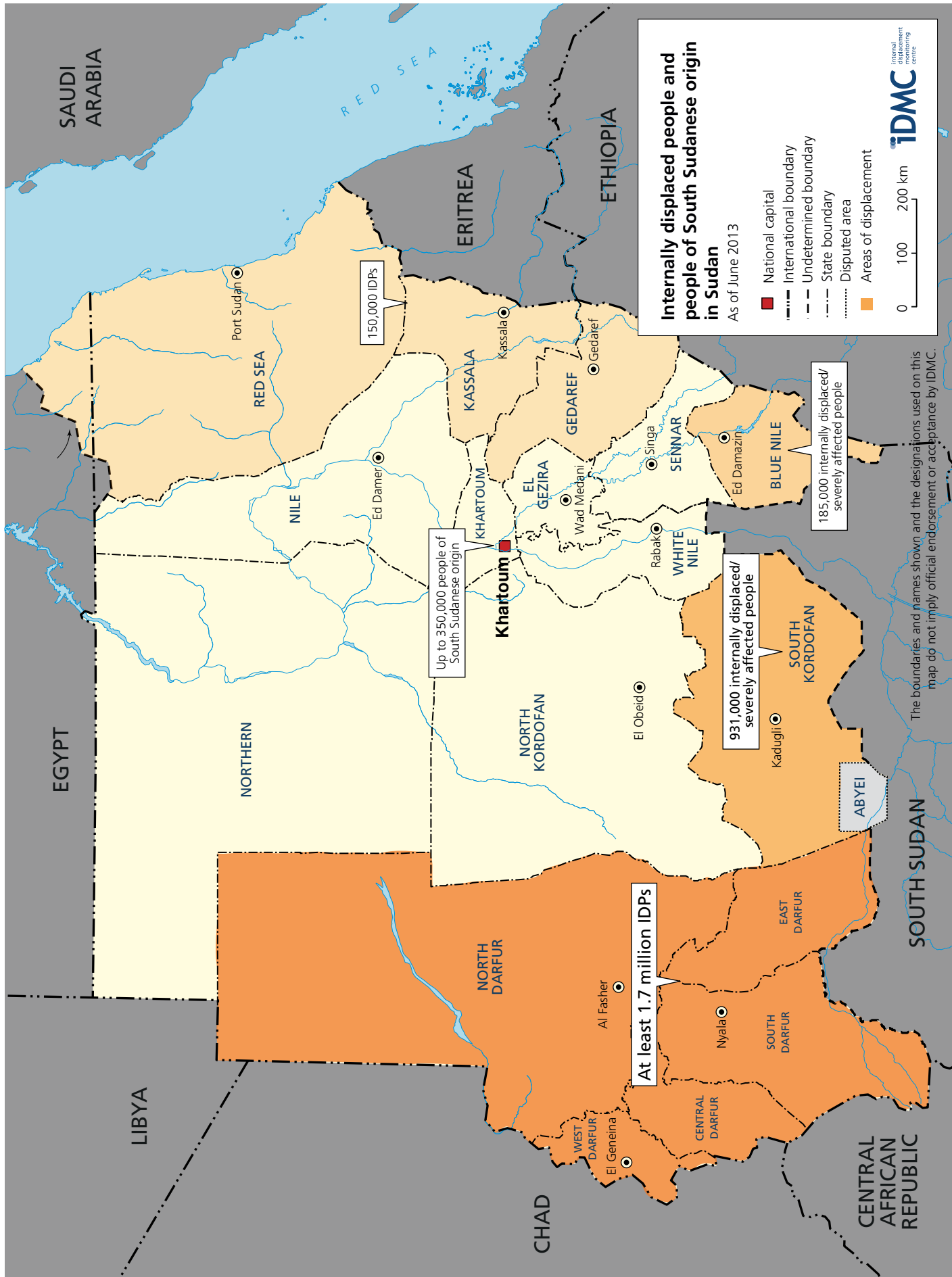
Both the Sudanese government and the international community have struggled to address the needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) effectively. IDPs have been victims of targeted attacks and looting, and as such face serious threats to their physical security and moral integrity. They also have difficulties in accessing basic services and markets, which has led to food insecurity and a dire situation in terms of their health. There is a lack of data on the scale of urban displacement and only limited understanding and assessment of urban IDPs' needs. As a result, IDPs not based in camps, and particularly those living in towns and cities, have become all but invisible.

There has been some progress in the implementation of agreements and frameworks relevant to supporting IDPs at the national and regional level, but it has been slow and insufficient. Serious challenges in terms of access and funding mean the humanitarian community has struggled to provide them with adequate assistance and protection.

If IDPs are to have a real chance of achieving durable solutions, sustainable peace and security are paramount. A comprehensive peace process is needed to address and resolve the common causes of Sudan's various conflicts. A holistic and inclusive approach to displacement is needed, which should address the needs of all IDPs wherever they live and wherever they intend to settle – be it in government or rebel-held areas, or rural or urban settings. In order to do so, the humanitarian and development communities must collaborate more fully to ensure that both immediate and long-term needs are met.



Young women at the new settlement in Zam Zam camp for IDPs in North Darfur.
(Photo: UNAMID/Albert González Farran, May 2013)



Source: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/maps

Background

History of conflict and displacement

Sudan has been the scene of one of the world's worst internal displacement crises over the past decade, hosting as many as 6.1 million internally displaced people (IDPs) at times ([IDMC, 2005](#))¹. The phenomenon is primarily linked to the conflicts and violence that have plagued the country since the year before its independence in 1956 ([UNMIS, n/d](#)), and which are the result of economic, political and socio-cultural marginalisation in southern Sudan, the Darfur region and the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

In 1983, the second Sudanese civil war broke out, pitting the Sudan's People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) against the central government. In 2005, after 50 years of almost continuous fighting, the two parties signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ultimately led to the independence of the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011. Since the signing of the CPA, as many as two million South Sudanese displaced to the north, primarily to Khartoum, are believed to have returned. In some cases they have done so voluntarily and in others they have been assisted by international agencies ([IOM, January 2013](#), [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs \(SR on IDPs\), May 2013](#)).

The CPA and South Sudan's ensuing independence did not, however, bring conflict or displacement to an end. The process failed to address the underlying issues that continue to be the main drivers of conflict in Sudan today. Instead it turned what had been an internal conflict into an international one, while within Sudan the fighting shifted to marginalised areas such as South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur ([ICG, November 2012](#)). The CPA's failure to address the interests

and grievances of the people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and frustration over the poor implementation of key parts of the agreement, contributed directly to the outbreak of conflict in the two states in 2011.

The peace process also sent a signal to other groups that armed conflict was an effective route to the negotiating table. It is striking that conflict in Darfur broke out in March 2003, only months after the signing of the Machakos protocol, which set out the principles of the CPA ([Lyman, 2011](#); [Fisher, May 2012](#); [DeWaal, May 2013](#)).

The fragmentation of armed opposition groups in southern Sudan and Darfur has further complicated both conflict dynamics and negotiations. In November 2011 a new dynamic emerged when the major armed groups in Darfur allied themselves with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) under the banner of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF). Since then, Darfur groups have fought in South Kordofan, explicitly linking the conflicts in the two areas and Blue Nile beyond their common causes ([ICG, November 2012](#)).

Economic situation

Sudan's economic situation has worsened since 2005, and this has fuelled popular discontent. Oil production and export made up 70 per cent of the state's income until July 2011, when under South Sudan's independence deal, Khartoum lost the majority of its oil fields. In February 2012, South Sudan brought oil production to a halt in a dispute with Sudan. Khartoum's fees for the transit of South Sudanese oil through its pipelines dried up, leading to a significant gap in the national budget and pressure on the Sudanese economy. The government was forced to implement austerity measures to reduce its expenditure, particularly in the health, education and development sectors ([ICG, November 2012](#)), which in turn has helped to fuel the ongoing political tensions and military conflicts.

¹ The peak number of 6.1 million IDPs in Sudan in 2004 includes IDPs in and from the states which now form the Republic of South Sudan.

This has taken place against a background of widespread poverty, especially in Sudan's peripheral regions, and a lack of capacity and funding at state level which has hampered the provision of basic services for the population as a whole ([ICG](#), November 2012; [SR on IDPs](#), May 2012; [OCHA](#), April 2013). Sudan's inflation rate is also relatively high, which has pushed up food prices and made food insecurity worse ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013; [ICG](#), November 2012).

Figures and patterns of displacement

Figures for internal displacement have risen dramatically over the last 12 to 18 months, particularly in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. At least 875,000 people fled their homes in these areas between January 2012 and May 2013 ([OCHA](#), December 2012; [OCHA](#), May 2013; [OCHA](#), June 2013). Around 550,000 people are living as refugees in neighbouring countries ([OCHA](#), May 2013).

The UN estimates that around 275,000 people have been displaced in Darfur since the beginning of 2013, three times the figure for 2012 and almost double the total for 2011 and 2012 combined ([OCHA](#), May 2013). There are also at least 1.4 million IDPs living in protracted displacement in the region's camps, down from 1.9 million at the beginning of 2012 ([OCHA](#), June 2013; [OCHA](#), November 2012). The drop is partly the result of the World Food Programme (WFP) re-registering IDPs in camps who were receiving food aid.

As of the end of April 2013, around 930,000 people in South Kordofan and 185,000 in Blue Nile were either internally displaced or severely affected by conflict ([OCHA](#), May 2013). This represents a near two-fold increase on the figure for December 2012.

As of May 2013, there were also an estimated 150,000 IDPs in the eastern states of Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

There is no overall figure for the number of IDPs in Khartoum. There are, however, as many as 350,000 former IDPs from South Sudan still living there, making people of South Sudanese origin a major vulnerable group in the city. Of the total, 40,000 are currently in extremely poor conditions in transit areas while they await their return to South Sudan ([OCHA](#), June 2013). Since the signing of the CPA in 2005, around two million South Sudanese have returned ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

Data collection and availability

The above figures provide a sense of the scale of displacement in some areas of Sudan, such as Darfur, and to lesser extent South Kordofan and Blue Nile. They are not, however, by any means comprehensive.

The collection of good quality data on internal displacement is particularly challenging in Sudan, given the lack of access to affected areas and the piecemeal and fragmented nature of any data that does exist.

Access restrictions mean figures tend to be provided by different entities in different areas, which makes comparison difficult because methodologies are not necessarily the same. They also make verification extremely difficult, which is particularly relevant as displacement figures are highly politicised. In South Kordofan and Blue Nile, for example, the figures published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are provided by the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in state-controlled areas, and by the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, SPLM-N's humanitarian wing, in areas controlled by the rebels. There are no means of verifying them independently.

There is little or no data on IDPs living in towns and cities, and this constitutes a further obstacle in providing a comprehensive view of displacement in the country as a whole. It is thought, however, that very large numbers of IDPs have

fled to urban areas, contributing to a general trend towards increasing urbanisation ([Young and Jacobsen](#), January 2013; [SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). Nor is there any extensive data on eastern Sudan or other areas where ethnic tensions exist and displacement could be significant. Figures for new arrivals in camps are not necessarily comprehensive, as they are often based on the number of people registered for food aid or other assistance.

The lack of good quality data makes it difficult to make an accurate assessment of IDPs' needs and the delivery of assistance. The absence of disaggregated data, including by gender and age, makes protection and vulnerability analysis within these groups all but impossible. There is no data with which to evaluate IDPs' progress towards achieving durable solutions, with the exception of figures on verified returns. There is no information, for example, on failed returns or renewed displacement.

Data on displacement caused by natural disasters and development is no better, and as such there is very little information on the scope of, or response to, either phenomenon. Based on the fact that more than 14,000 homes were destroyed by floods in 2012, mainly in Kassala, South Darfur, Gedaref and Sennar, it is estimated that around 84,000 people were displaced during the year ([OCHA](#), September 2012; [IDMC](#), May 2013). Food insecurity and seasonal drought are also thought to contribute to population movements, but here again no data is available.

Causes of displacement

Internal armed conflict

Armed conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile has become increasingly violent recently, especially since the second half of 2012 ([UNSG](#), April 2013; [Amnesty International](#), April 2013). The government increasingly uses aerial bombardments and both sides deliberately target civilians

([Amnesty International](#), April 2013; [ICG](#), February 2013). It has been reported that the government and the militias that support it target communities on the basis of their ethnicity and their perceived support for armed opposition groups. In doing so, it is said the government aims to use fear and displacement to cut off the support it believes communities afford armed groups, which may include the provision of food or shelter ([UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#), February 2013).

The fragmentation of Sudan's armed groups and parallel divisions in civil society have led to other local conflicts beyond those with the government and the militias that support it ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). In Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) have splintered into various armed groups, some of which have signed peace agreements with Khartoum. This has led to fighting between the different factions. In May 2013, the leader of a JEM splinter group was killed after his faction signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) ([UNAMID](#), May 2013). The proliferation of armed groups contributes to growing insecurity in the absence of the rule of law and a functioning justice system.

The sharp increase in displacement over the past 18 months reflects the failure of various political agreements, including the DDPD and the tripartite agreement on humanitarian access in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (see the national response section below). It also highlights the absence of any comprehensive approach to Sudan's various conflicts or the responses to the displacement they cause.

International conflict with South Sudan

Little information is available on the internal displacement caused in 2012 by the international conflict between Sudan and South Sudan, as the majority of the affected areas along the disputed border are under SPLM-N control. Given that the tensions behind the fighting between the two

countries are interrelated with those driving internal conflict in both, it is difficult to separate the displacement caused by one, the other or a combination of the two. Both Sudan and South Sudan accuse each other of providing support and safe haven to the other's armed groups ([Radio Miraya](#), June 2013).

The international conflict also affects people of South Sudanese origin living in Khartoum, as it influences their relationship with their Sudanese counterparts and leads to harassment and discrimination. The Four Freedoms agreement signed by Khartoum and Juba aimed, among other things, to ensure freedom of movement within and between the two countries for the citizens of each. Under its provision, people of South Sudanese origin ought to be able to stay in Khartoum if they wish. Many have grown accustomed to, or were even born in the urban environment of the Khartoum suburbs, and research has shown that – seven years after the signing of the CPA and despite South Sudanese independence – some would like to stay ([International Refugee Rights Initiative](#), May 2013). A number of factors, however, including direct harassment and discrimination, have meant that most feel they have little choice but to return to South Sudan.

Inter-communal fighting linked to natural resources
Increased competition for natural resources, including land, water, gold and gum arabic, has led to a rise in inter-communal and tribal clashes, mainly in Darfur, where they have displaced around 150,000 people in 2013 alone ([UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#), February 2013; [OCHA](#), May 2013). The widespread proliferation of small arms has helped to intensify the violence and makes a peaceful resolution less likely ([UNSG](#), April 2013).

The relationship between natural resources and conflict in Sudan is complex. On the one hand, the worsening economic situation has forced people to look for alternative livelihood sources ([UNSG](#), April 2013). This has led to a significant

increase in fighting over sources of gold, firewood and gum arabic, which in turn has often caused considerable environmental damage ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013; [Enough Project](#), May 2013; [UNSG](#), April 2013; [Young and Jacobsen](#), January 2013). Several sources accuse the government or pro-government militias of involvement in the clashes or of deliberately fuelling them ([Enough Project](#), May 2013; [Human Rights Watch](#), June 2013). At the beginning of 2013, fighting between the Aballa and the Beni Hussein tribes over gold mines in the Jebel Amir area of North Darfur forced around 100,000 people to flee their homes over a period of a few weeks ([UNSG](#), April 2013).

On the other hand, environment degradation in the form of desertification, deforestation and erratic rainfall has led to resources such as land and water becoming more scarce. This in turn has led to conflicts, particularly between farmers and pastoralists, and made food insecurity and vulnerability worse. ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). A violent land dispute broke out between the Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Central and South Darfur in April 2013, and caused the displacement of tens of thousands people, including some who fled across the border into Chad ([OCHA](#), April 2013).

Natural hazards

Sudden and slow-onset natural hazards cause displacement both directly and by compounding conflict dynamics. Between 2008 and 2012, sudden-onset natural hazards displaced as many as 238,000 people ([IDMC](#), May 2013). Floods in the states of Kassala, South Darfur, Gedaref and Sennar were particularly heavy in 2012, and forced around 84,000 people to flee their homes between June and October ([OCHA](#), September 2012; [IDMC](#), May 2013). Natural hazards also put further pressure on already scarce resources, fuelling conflict over them and the displacement it causes. Food insecurity and seasonal drought are also thought to contribute to population movements, but no data is available.

Protection and assistance needs

The primary humanitarian concern in Sudan's internal displacement crisis is IDPs' physical and moral integrity. Civilians have borne the brunt of the various conflicts, in which state policies such as ethnic targeting have at times made the deliberate human rights abuses committed by all parties worse. There have been repeated reports of targeted attacks on IDPs and their camps, often in retaliation for the activities of one party or another to the conflict and IDPs' perceived support for them ([UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#), February 2013; [ICG](#), February 2013).

Explosive remnants of war (ERW), unexploded ordnance (UXO) and the proliferation of small arms represent considerable risks to the physical integrity of IDPs and the civilian population in general. They also restrict freedom of movement and hamper livelihoods. Agricultural land is often contaminated in areas where a large percentage of the population depends on farming ([UN and Partners](#), November 2012)

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is widespread both during and after displacement, and IDPs are more vulnerable than the general population to such abuses ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). Displaced women and girls are particularly at risk, especially when they venture outside their camps to cultivate land or collect firewood. Arrests in rape and sexual assault cases are rare, and widespread impunity only serves to make the situation worse. Victims, meanwhile, rarely receive adequate psychosocial or legal support ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). In this context, it was encouraging that the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs pointed out in May 2013 that the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs had made some improvements in this area despite their lack of institutional capacity ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

Children in Sudan's conflict areas have acute protection needs. They may be separated from their

families or lose family members, which leaves them more vulnerable to abuse, including SGBV and forced recruitment. As a result, they have a greater need for psychosocial support. A number of parties to the conflict have recently stepped up efforts to reduce child recruitment in their ranks ([UN News Centre](#), September 2012; [UNAMID](#), February 2013; [UNSG](#), April 2013).

The risk of statelessness is a significant protection concern for people of South Sudanese origin in Khartoum as a result of their country's independence. For many southerners, access to civil documentation and identity papers remains a key challenge both in Sudan and South Sudan. The two states have signed agreements to prevent formerly Sudanese citizens from being rendered stateless, but gaps in implementation and practical constraints in terms of access have prevented many from obtaining identity documents.

The harassment and social exclusion that both southerners and Sudanese IDPs reportedly face in Khartoum raises questions over the extent to which returns to South Sudan are truly voluntary ([International Refugee Rights Initiative](#), May 2013). Religious and ethnic discrimination towards southerners has reportedly increased, including in the media and public discourse ([ICG](#), November 2012). Returnees in Khartoum's transit centres also face terrible conditions as a result of a lack of basic services such as sanitation ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

IDPs in Sudan have significant humanitarian needs, particularly in terms of food, health and shelter. Those in Darfur and South Kordofan are reported to have only very limited access to food. The ongoing conflicts hamper people's ability to cultivate land and access markets, and they also destroy crops, whether intentionally or not. According to the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS Net), 80 per cent of the people who suffer food insecurity in Sudan live in conflict-affected areas ([FEWS Net](#), January 2013). Access to food aid is difficult and irregular,

especially in areas not under government control ([FEWS Net](#), May 2013). IDPs in Darfur have repeatedly complained about irregular food distribution and claim gaps in delivery can be as long as a year ([Radio Dabanga](#), February 2013). Those in the Nuba mountains of South Kordofan have resorted to eating the roots and leaves of wild plants in order to survive ([ICG](#), February 2013).

Given their difficulties in accessing food, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, IDPs' health conditions are generally dire ([Amnesty International](#), April 2013), and humanitarian organisations face funding and access constraints that limit their ability to respond. Access to adequate housing is also a challenge, particularly for newly displaced people, and some IDPs in the Nuba mountains have sought shelter in caves ([ICG](#), February 2013). IDPs in camps in Darfur often live in rudimentary makeshift shelters which provide only limited protection from the elements ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013, [Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator](#), May 2013).

Relatively little is known about the situation of IDPs who live outside camps and settlements. There are no standard procedures to identify them or to address their protection and assistance needs, and those who live in urban or semi-urban settings have essentially become invisible ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). As is often the case with IDPs in urban areas, those in Sudan tend to have poor tenure security, and as the value of urban land increases they face a relatively high risk of eviction and secondary displacement. In Khartoum, around 665,000 IDPs were forcibly relocated between 1989 and 2008, most of them from 2004 onwards ([Tufts-IDMC](#), September 2008). In Garsila in West Darfur, IDPs reported that in May 2013 the government had taken possession of their homes and given them to military and government officials ([Radio Dabanga](#), May 2013).

Urban planning and development projects are likely to continue to heighten the risk of forced

evictions and secondary displacement in a country where rapid urbanisation has taken place over the past decade. A study of urbanisation in the context of conflict and displacement in Darfur found that IDPs in urban areas were particularly in need of livelihood support and training. Unable to rely on their usual practices such as farming as a result of their displacement, they turn to other coping mechanisms including casual labour, seasonal employment and small-scale trade. Such strategies, however, are considered unsustainable as they are often short-term, unreliable and insufficient to ensure food security ([Young and Jacobsen](#), January 2013).

National and international response

National response

Sudan adopted a [national policy](#) on internal displacement in 2009 which covers all phases of the displacement cycle, and some steps have been taken to put it into practice. The government has set up bodies with responsibilities in terms of the delivery of aid and assistance to IDPs. The key coordinating body is the HAC, which is also charged with providing technical assistance and supporting the planning, implementation and evaluation of responses, both national and international ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). Overall, however, implementation has been poor, in part the result of weak institutional capacity and in part because security concerns often override the response to IDPs' needs.

There are also a number of agreements which provide for the assistance of IDPs in specific areas of the country. These include the DDPD and the tripartite agreement on humanitarian access, but neither have led to an effective response to date. The DDPD includes encouraging provisions in terms of assistance and the achievement of durable solutions ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013), and the implementation of certain aspects, such as the creation of the Darfur Regional Authority, has

advanced well. That said, its provisions in terms of IDPs are among the most poorly implemented ([UNSG](#), April 2013; [SR on IDPs](#), May 2013; [Enough Project](#), August 2012).

The tripartite agreement consists of two separate memoranda of understanding intended to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. They are signed by the UN, the African Union (AU) the League of Arab States, the Sudanese government and SPLM-N. The signing took place in August 2012, but the parties failed to agree on action plans for the provision of assistance in areas not under government control. As a result, access to these areas continues to be denied ([OCHA](#), October 2012; [OCHA](#), May 2013). Sudan is a signatory to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lake's Region, which includes protocols on IDPs' protection and assistance and on returnees' property rights. It has also signed the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and other international human rights instruments. It should continue taking steps to implement its obligations under these international frameworks. Sudan has not yet signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention), but the government is reportedly studying the possibility of doing so ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

International response

In partnership with the Sudanese government, the international community provides humanitarian aid to IDPs and assists them in their search for durable solutions. The response, however, is based overwhelmingly on a piecemeal approach to displacement and reflects the broader approach to Sudan's multiple conflicts. At the regional level, Qatar and the AU have been key players in supporting peaceful solutions. Both have brokered peace agreements and continue their efforts in this sense, but their focus on specific geographical areas ignores the links between the root causes of Sudan's conflicts. Qatar brokered the DDPD and

hosted the Darfur donor conference to support its implementation, while the AU has separately put considerable effort into resolving the outstanding issues between Sudan and South Sudan. In September 2012, the two states signed a number of agreements in Addis Ababa, but their implementation has been limited.

The joint UN and AU peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID) is another example of a geographically specific rather than comprehensive approach to Sudan's conflicts, and to date it has had only limited success. The force has a clear mandate to protect civilians, but since its inception in 2007 it has struggled to do so, or to improve access to humanitarian assistance for IDPs and other vulnerable groups ([Enough Project](#), August 2012). In such circumstances, it is all the more important to support community as well as military protection mechanisms and to ensure that all parties to the various conflicts comply with international humanitarian law.

Access

Limited humanitarian access to affected populations is arguably the most significant challenge to an effective international response to internal displacement in Sudan. This has led organisations to develop regional responses based on access rather than more holistic approaches based on vulnerabilities.

In the aftermath of the International Criminal Court's indictment of President Omar Bashir, 13 international NGOs were expelled from Darfur and three national NGOs had to close their programmes in the region ([IRIN](#), March 2009). The remaining organisations have struggled to reorganise themselves to cover for the sudden lack of capacities and expertise, and many are unwilling to speak out about the humanitarian situation for fear of being expelled themselves ([Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies](#), April 2013). History appeared to repeat itself in 2012 with the expulsion of seven international aid organisations from eastern Sudan ([Sudan Tribune](#), June 2012).

Sustained engagement with displacement

Both the international humanitarian and development communities are hampered by a lack of funding. A degree of “Sudan fatigue” has set in, in part as result of the expulsions of international NGOs, but also because of poor political relations between Khartoum and western donors. There is a perception that the situation is intractable and that the government shows no political will to address the causes of conflict. Sustained and predictable financial support are, however, more important than ever at a time when the country’s needs are increasing ([Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator](#), May 2013). Development engagement in particular is needed, despite the inherent political challenges, if humanitarian gains are to be built upon and the root causes of displacement addressed.

In the absence of state capacity and will, the focus should be on community protection mechanisms and resilience building, and it is important that this takes place alongside the emergency response rather than after it. A good example of such an approach is the joint UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank transitional solutions initiative (TSI) in eastern Sudan ([UNHCR](#), October 2010). This is a community-based approach to building resilience among refugees, IDPs and host communities with a view to ending their dependency on aid and enhancing their self-reliance. It aims to include the needs of both the displaced and their host communities in the broader development agenda, and to ensure that issues crucial to the achievement of durable solutions are taken into account ([UNDP Sudan](#), 2012, [UNDP/UNHCR/World Bank](#), October 2010).

Durable solutions

IDPs can be said to have achieved a durable solution when they no longer have protection or assistance needs that result from their displacement,

and when they can enjoy their human rights without discrimination based on it. Durable solutions can be facilitated by IDPs’ return and reintegration in their places of origin, their local integration in their area of refuge or their relocation and integration elsewhere in the country.

Sudan’s 2009 national policy on IDPs mentions return, local integration and resettlement, but it favours return to the potential detriment of the other options. The danger of seeing return as a de facto solution is illustrated in Darfur, where IDPs who go back to their areas of origin face a number of significant challenges. The insecurity and conflict that they originally fled has in some cases still been ongoing or has resumed, and this has led to returnees being displaced again ([UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan](#), February 2013). Their situation is made worse by the widespread absence of the rule of law, in part the result of a continuing state of emergency and in part because of the impunity afforded to the security forces. Others find that their land has been occupied in their absence, leaving them with no real livelihood opportunities to make their return sustainable. There is also often less access to services in return areas than in places of refuge ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

As a result, some internally displaced families, especially in Darfur, have opted to split, with the men returning to cultivate land and prevent its occupation, while the women, children and elderly remain in camps. This gives rise to obvious protection concerns on the one hand, but ensures families maintain some degree of a safety net on the other, with options both in the case of worsening security or poor harvests ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). Such strategies highlight the need for a better understanding of the longer-term vulnerabilities IDPs face as a result of their displacement.

Despite the government’s focus on return, it is thought that many IDPs in Darfur would prefer to integrate locally in urban or semi-urban areas. Given that such decisions would contribute to ur-

banisation, it is crucial that IDPs' specific needs be included in general urban planning so as to avoid the expansion of informal settlements. This in turn would help to mitigate challenges such as poor access to services, lack of tenure security and housing rights, and construction in areas prone to hazards, which can lead to increased vulnerability and secondary displacement ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013).

If IDPs are to be given a real chance of achieving durable solutions, then sustainable peace and security are paramount. As the past has shown, piecemeal approaches to Sudan's various conflicts have failed. A comprehensive peace process is needed to effectively address their common causes and bring them to an end.

Similarly, only a comprehensive approach to displacement that addresses all causes at all stages of the process will truly contribute to durable solutions. This means not only ensuring political inclusion and the participation of communities affected by displacement, but also the resolution of issues around access to, and the allocation of, land and resources. This is particularly important in situations where natural disasters or access to natural resources either cause displacement directly or fuel the conflicts which drive it.

A more inclusive approach would also help address the gap between humanitarian and development interventions, furthering practices such as the TSI and the work of the governance, infrastructure and economic recovery sector, which was established by the UN's Humanitarian Country Team and the government in 2012. Its aim is to create an enabling environment for durable solutions by pursuing community-based early recovery work ([UN and Partners](#), November 2012). Darfur has also developed a recovery and reconstruction strategy for which a donor conference was held in April 2013. With pledges totalling \$3.7 billion, the strategy is now moving into its implementation phase ([International Donor Conference for Darfur](#), April 2013). This is an encouraging de-

velopment, but such planning needs to take place at the national level if all regions are to benefit.

The recognition of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) that an inclusive national approach is needed ([AU Peace and Security Council](#), January 2013) is an opportunity to establish a comprehensive response to displacement alongside a political process that addresses the causes of the country's various conflicts. Based on a common understanding of the challenges inherent in displacement, such an approach would address preparedness, prevention, response and durable solutions. Devising a plan for the holistic implementation of Sudan's national policy on IDPs that remedies its shortcomings would be a step in the right direction.

Neither Sudan's nor South Sudan's figures take into account the number of people displaced in the disputed Abyei Area, where more than 100,000 people were displaced following an incursion by the Sudanese Armed Forces in June 2011. Of these, between 48,000 and 65,000 people remain displaced (OCHA May 2013, South Sudan protection cluster, June 2013). Around 27,000 people are believed to have returned to their places of origin since early 2012, and thousands more commute regularly between their home areas and their places of refuge. Displacement dynamics in the area are complex and include pendular displacement, return and nomadic migration. Gaps in governance, infrastructure, housing, basic services and livelihood opportunities continue to hamper recovery and the risk of inter-communal violence linked to seasonal migration and resources remains. A referendum on the final status of Abyei is currently scheduled for October 2013. Without a political agreement on Abyei's disputed status, those affected are unlikely to find durable solutions even if they do return.

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. IDMC advocates for better responses to the needs of the millions of people worldwide who are displaced within their own countries as a consequence of conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural or man-made disasters. It is also at the forefront of efforts to promote greater respect for the basic rights of internally displaced people (IDPs). IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

What we do:

- Promote appropriate responses to internal displacement through targeted advocacy
- Provide timely, accessible and relevant information on internal displacement worldwide
- Develop research and analysis to help shape policies and practices that have positive outcomes for IDPs
- Provide training and support to country-based policy-makers and practitioners with a responsibility to protect IDPs

Who do we target?

IDMC is best placed to effect positive change for IDPs through advocacy to influence the decisions and practices of duty bearers and all those with a responsibility or capacity to promote or fulfil the rights of IDPs.

How do we operate?

As information on internal displacement is often controversial and politically sensitive, IDMC must continue to operate and be seen to operate as an independent and effective global monitor of this widespread phenomenon.

IDMC has become an indispensable resource for anyone seeking impartial data and analysis on internal displacement, independent of political or operational considerations. www.internal-displacement.org

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