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SUDAN

Other crises distract attention from tremendous needs of IDPs

As the third anniversary of South Sudan's independence approaches and as the three-year conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile continues, the situation in Sudan remains deeply worrying. There is on-going fighting between non-state armed groups and the government (including aerial bombardment), inter-communal violence and tensions over land and other resources. The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) rose in early 2014 due to an escalation of military campaigns in South Kordofan and inter-communal violence in the Darfur region. As of December 2013, there were an estimated 2,426,700 IDPs in government- and



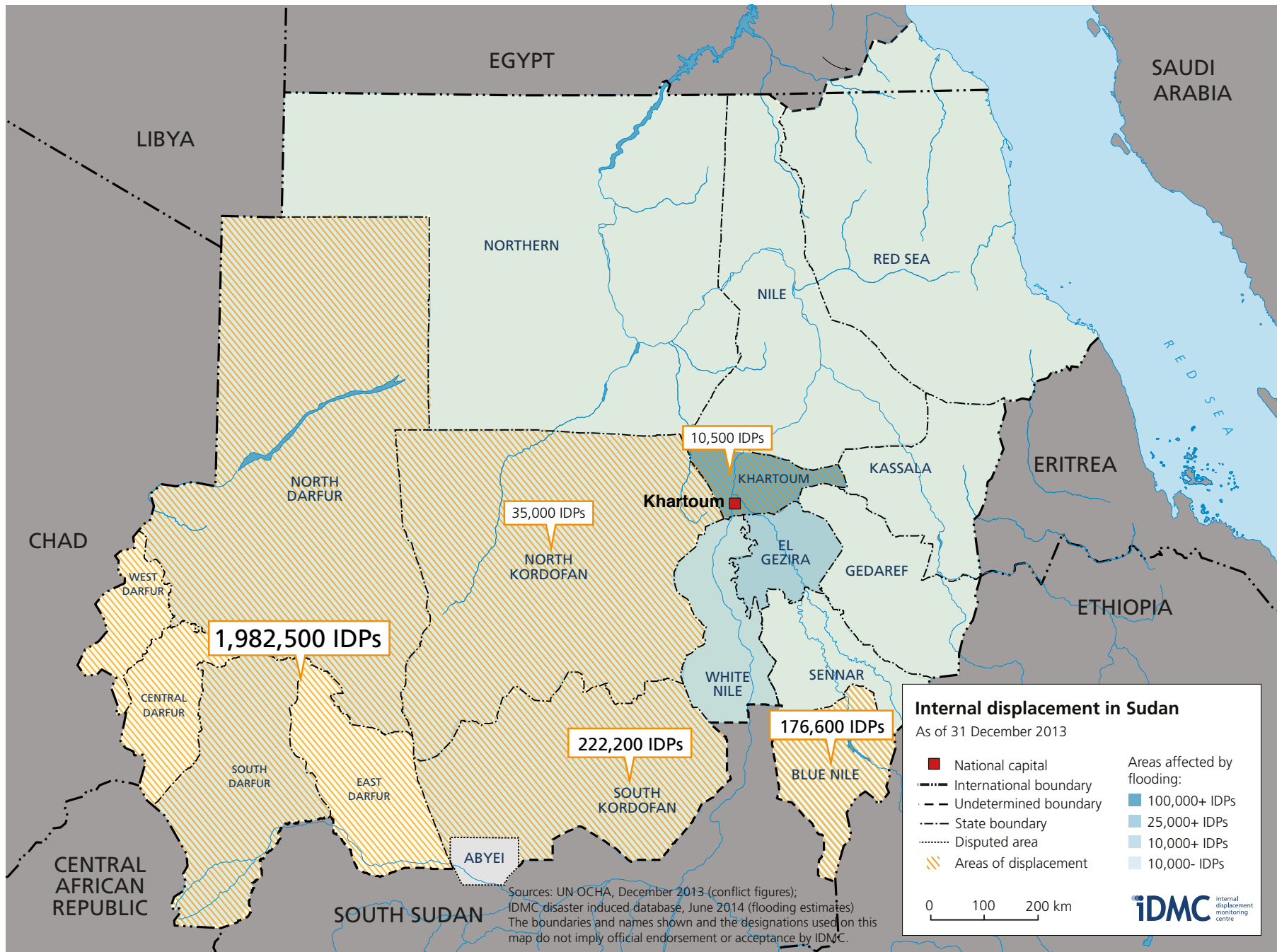
A woman with her baby is temporarily sheltered in a school in Al Salam camp for IDPs, South Darfur, Sudan. Photo: Albert Gonzalez Farran/UNAMID, March 2014

opposition-held areas of Sudan, predominantly in Darfur and the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile but also in other areas. In addition, floods also displaced thousands of people in 15 states in 2013.

The UN has estimated that 6.1 million people – 17 per cent of Sudan's population – require some form of humanitarian assistance in addition to development aid in 2014 ([OCHA](#), June 2014). Among the most vulnerable of this population, IDPs have tremendous needs and are victims of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

The Government of Sudan's approach to addressing the needs of IDPs in areas under its control has been piecemeal. Restrictions on access to certain areas in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile states and on the activities of national and international humanitarian actors continue to have dire consequences for affected communities, making prospects of achieving durable solutions to displacement remote. The launch in April 2014 of the second stage of the government's "Decisive Summer" campaign to crush opposition armed groups is already causing further displacement and could cause further deterioration in an already dire humanitarian situation ([Sudan Tribune](#), April 2014; [OCHA](#), May 2014).

With humanitarian attention focused on massive displacement crises in the neighbouring states of South Sudan and the Central African Republic, lack of international attention to Sudan's equally grave internal displacement crisis and on-going conflicts has resulted in an inadequate funding response. Thus the immediate and long-term needs of IDPs are not being addressed by either the national authorities or the international community.



Map by: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map

Background and causes of displacement

The protracted north-south civil war (from 1955 to 2005, with an 11-year cessation), on-going conflicts in Darfur since 2003, and in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states since 2011, have resulted in Sudan having one of the world's largest internally displaced populations. Internal conflicts in Sudan have been driven by political and socio-cultural marginalisation, land dispossession, inter-ethnic conflict, repeated failures to implement peace agreements and the concentration of power and resources in the Arabised north and centre of the country ([ICG](#), February 2013; [ICG](#), June 2013). As a result of South Sudanese independence, Sudan lost much of the oil income which had accounted for more than half of its total revenue ([World Bank](#), December 2013). The country has fallen further down the UN Human Development Index, in 2013 ranked 171st of 187 countries ([UNDP](#), 2013).

It had been hoped that the 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) – which paved the way for the independence of South Sudan in July 2011 – together with international focus on Darfur and support for peace negotiations, might herald an end to conflict and displacement in Sudan. However, the failure of the CPA to resolve contentious border claims or address grievances in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the government's failure to implement a promised referendum in the disputed Abyei region and the collapse of negotiations with armed groups in Darfur, have all laid the ground for further conflict.

Over a decade of fighting in Darfur has pitted government and opposition forces and pro-government militias against one another in a shifting array of alliances. It is widely reported that all parties to the multiple conflicts in Darfur have deliberately targeted civilians ([HSBA](#), July 2013; [ICG](#), January 2014). The fragmentation of armed

groups in Darfur has led to further local conflicts ([HSBA](#), July 2013). Since November 2011 an alliance of the major anti-government armed groups in Darfur – known as the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) – has been formally allied with, and fighting alongside, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Conflict over natural resources – including grazing land, gold, and gum arabic – and inter-communal violence and clashes between farmers and transhumants are further causes of population movements in Darfur and across central Sudan ([OCHA](#), December 2013; [ICG](#), January 2014).

In South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the SPLM-N, and subsequently with the SRF, has been on-going since 2011 and intensified in April-June 2014 ([OCHA](#), May 2014; [OCHA](#), June 2014). Bombardments and clashes between armed actors continue to displace hundreds of thousands of people in government- and opposition-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states ([OCHA](#), September 2013; [OCHA](#), June 2014). Sudan and South Sudan continue to be at loggerheads over disputed border zones, especially Abyei and its oil reserves. Both governments have accused each other of supporting armed groups in the other's territory ([Security Council Report](#), September 2013). It is not known if those tensions have created further recent displacement as their impacts are hard to differentiate from those of internal armed conflict and inter-communal violence.

Regional spill-over impacts of the conflict which began in South Sudan in December 2013 have had a severe humanitarian impact in Sudan. As of 4 June 2014, 85,700 South Sudanese refugees had arrived in several locations, including White Nile, Khartoum, Darfur, West, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, further adding to humanitarian crises in areas with substantial IDP populations and scarcity of resources ([OCHA](#), June 2014).

Displacement in Sudan also results from recurrent sudden and slow-onset natural hazards, such as floods or droughts. In addition to the destruction of houses, natural disasters put great pressure on already scarce resources and worsen food insecurity ([SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). In 2013, 15 states were affected by floods, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee. In some cases, IDPs affected by conflict may be secondarily displaced by disasters, exacerbating their burdens.

Displacement figures

As of 31 December 2013, there were at least 2,426,700 IDPs in Sudan. This included 1,982,500 IDPs in Darfur, 222,200 IDPs in South Kordofan, 176,600 in Blue Nile and 45,500 IDPs in other states (OCHA database, December 2013). The total number of IDPs in Sudan has decreased significantly from a peak of around five million in 2010. This is due both to large-scale movement of southern Sudanese to South Sudan and the fact that former southern Sudanese IDPs, especially in and around Khartoum, were no longer counted as IDPs in Sudan. However, since 2011, the number of IDPs has been steadily increasing.

The first months of 2014 brought further displacement in Darfur as conflict between the SAF, affiliated militias and armed groups intensified ([OCHA](#), March 2014). As of 29 June 2014, 385,000 people had been newly displaced in Darfur in 2014, of whom 247,600 remained displaced at that date ([OCHA](#), June 2014; [OCHA](#), June 2014). If this trend continues the total level of new displacement in Darfur in 2014 could exceed the figure of 380,000 in 2013 ([OCHA](#), May 2014).

Bombardment and fighting between government forces and the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and Blue Nile has displaced more than 100,000 people in recent months ([OCHA](#), June 2014 ; [OCHA](#), June 2014).

In 2013, at least 319,700 people were internally displaced because of flooding in 15 states (IDMC Disaster-induced Displacement Database, June 2014), exceeding the total of 238,000 for the period 2008-2012 ([IDMC Global Estimates](#), May 2013).

Challenges of gather data

Collecting good quality data on internal displacement is fraught with difficulties due to lack of, or restricted, access to affected areas, the piecemeal and fragmented nature of data that is collected, differing definitions and methodologies and political manipulation of displacement data by authorities. IDMC, like others, is unable to verify displacement data.

IDP figures for Sudan are compiled and published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In Darfur, OCHA receives information on IDP figures from local authorities, the government, other UN agencies and international and national NGOs. The methodologies used by these actors vary and include biometric registration of IDPs in camps by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

In South Kordofan and Blue Nile, figures published by OCHA are provided by the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in government-controlled areas and in opposition-controlled areas by the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA, the humanitarian wing of the SPLM-N) and also by the independent South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), which works with local civil society and international humanitarian actors to monitor displacement and humanitarian conditions.

There is little or no data on IDPs living in towns and cities in Sudan. This constitutes a further obstacle to providing a comprehensive view of displacement. This is significant due to large

numbers of IDPs fleeing to urban areas during the past decade, contributing to Sudan's accelerating urbanisation. In Darfur many IDP camps have been incorporated into formerly distinct towns, or have become towns in their own right ([UNEP](#), June 2007; [Young and Jacobsen](#), January 2013; [SR on IDPs](#), May 2013). There is also a data gap in eastern Sudan and other areas where ethnic tensions exist but where the scale of forced displacement remains unknown.

The lack of quality data makes it difficult to make an accurate assessment of IDPs' needs. The absence of disaggregated data, except for cases where biometric registration has taken place such as in Darfur, makes protection and vulnerability analysis all but impossible. There is little data with which to evaluate IDPs' progress towards durable solutions. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is the only agency reporting figures on verified returns but there is no information on failed returns or secondary displacement. Little is known about IDPs who live in informal settlements, with host families or in urban settings.

Data on displacement caused by natural disasters, development projects, food insecurity and drought is non-existent or patchy.

In Darfur, there are currently around 1.9 million IDPs who live in camps, excluding those people newly displaced at the beginning of 2014 ([GSFC](#), 2014). In several instances IDPs have sought refuge near bases of the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) ([UN](#), March 2014). Some IDPs in South Kordofan reportedly live in caves in the Nuba mountains ([ICG](#), February 2013; [Radio Dabanga](#), May 2014; [OCHA](#), June 2014). There is little precise information on IDPs in Blue Nile but it is reported they often need to find makeshift shelters and seek refuge in caves ([Amnesty International](#), June 2013).

Protection and assistance needs

IDPs affected by Sudan's multiple conflicts are often very vulnerable as they lack access to basic services and therefore require humanitarian assistance.

Threats to physical and psychological well-being

IDPs have repeatedly been victims of targeted attacks by armed groups and militias who burn their shelters, steal livestock and often force IDPs to flee again ([UN](#), March 2014; [UN](#), March 2014). Some IDPs, as well as South Sudanese refugees, seek refuge in camps, putting more pressure on already scarce resources of water, food, sanitation and shelter ([OHCHR](#), March 2014; [OCHA](#), June 2014). IDPs who seek shelter in villages are an additional burden to communities with already inadequate basic services ([OCHA](#), September 2013).

Sudan is one of the countries in the region with the largest quantities of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and unexploded ordnance (UXO), posing enormous threats to the physical safety of IDPs as well as a considerable obstacle to return to contaminated places of origin and to the resumption of farming ([UNMAS](#), August 2013).

For many years there have been reports of rape and other instances of gender-based violence (GBV) in Darfur, indeed earlier this year the UN Secretary General reported that GBV is one of the dominant characteristics there, and continues to be extensive. Despite considerable international advocacy for enhanced protection, displaced women and girls are still being attacked inside camps and also targeted while searching outside for firewood and other natural resources ([SG](#), April 2014). GBV crimes are committed by both the government forces and armed groups ([UN](#), March 2014). GBV survivors are left with poor or no psychosocial or legal support. Reporting perpetrators remains very difficult as complaints procedures are hard to access despite considerable efforts by the humanitarian community to promote the rule of law ([Radio Dabanga](#), February 2014).

Access to food, water and health

According to the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS Net), IDPs are the most acutely food insecure in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan. Sixty per cent of the 4.5 million Sudanese judged to be food insecure are in Darfur. This is mainly due to on-going fighting and poor harvests (FEWS Net, April 2014).

Access to water and health services remain major challenges for IDPs (OCHA, December 2013). More than 77 per cent of facilities have been affected by the conflict and in Darfur many are simply inaccessible (OCHA, December 2013).

In addition, bombardment of civilian infrastructure prevents the population from accessing medical care (MSF, June 2014).

Child protection

In addition to displaced children being separated from their families, forcibly recruited or exposed to GBV risks, access to schooling is very limited. In IDP camps, there is a lack of teachers, classrooms and education (OCHA, September 2013). Some schools have been burnt down (OCHA, January 2014).

The numerous protection issues which IDPs face considerably hamper their freedom of movement, preventing them from resuming a normal life or returning home.

Durable solutions

The quest for durable solutions – through either returning home, locally integrating or resettling elsewhere in Sudan – remains as fraught with difficulties as it has been for many years. This is primarily the result of the government's lack of capacity or will to deliver security and services, and to the continued insecurity and difficult ac-

cess in places of origin (Strategic Response Plan, December 2013). The number of verified returns in Darfur declined from 109,000 in 2012 to some 36,000 in 2013 (OCHA, March 2014).

No precise information is available on IDPs' intentions but it is thought that many IDPs in Darfur would prefer to integrate locally in urban or semi-urban areas (IDMC interview, May 2013). Many suspect that should they attempt to return they would face continued risks of further displacement due to on-going violence in places of origin, or would be unable to find food. Local integration is also difficult due to a lack of provision of basic services, such as health care or education (OCHA, October 2013).

In South Kordofan, deliberate destruction of water points, farms and homes by SAF and RSF combatants are frequent and prevent IDPs from returning home (SKBNKU, May 2014; Amnesty International, June 2014; OHCHR, June 2014).

The United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan has noted in a report on government-controlled areas the need to better coordinate and organise return programmes in South Kordofan (OHCHR, February 2014).

An interesting example where development actors have sought to contribute to durable solutions is a village for returnees in Darfur which is part of a broader plan financed by Qatar to encourage voluntary returns (Radio Dabanga, November 2013; OHCHR, February 2014). Such interventions cannot succeed unless all armed actors refrain from attacking humanitarian agencies (ICG, January 2014). Such projects have potential but must be designed in consultation with the IDP population and also take heed of the needs of those who seek to integrate locally or resettle.

Former Southern Sudanese IDPs still in Sudan

Since the 2005 signing of the CPA an estimated two million people of South Sudanese origin, who had been IDPs before South Sudan became independent, have returned to South Sudan (SR on IDPs, June 2014). As of 31 December 2013 there were 10,500 IDPs in Khartoum (OCHA database, December 2013). The Four Freedoms agreement signed by Sudan and South Sudan in 2012 aims to ensure freedom of movement within and between the two countries and allows people of South Sudanese origin to remain in Khartoum if they wish ([African Arguments, October 2012](#)). Despite independence, significant numbers of South Sudanese would like to stay in Sudan ([International Refugee Rights Initiative, June 2013](#)). A number of factors, however, including harsh living conditions and direct harassment and discrimination, mean that most feel they have little choice but to return to South Sudan despite the uncertainty that awaits them there ([SR on IDPs, June 2014](#)). In 2014, few returns have taken place, and there are rumours of returnees going back to Sudan (IOM, June 2014).

National response

Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission remains the key coordinating body mandated to assist IDPs ([SR on IDPs, May 2013](#)). In 2013, the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), established by the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), announced the launch of a new database, using data gathered by different international organisations to register IDPs in the various camps in Darfur and use data for planning returns ([OCHA, October 2013](#)).

Sudan has developed a number of national and sub-national frameworks that are either dedicated to internal displacement or address it. In 2009, a [national policy](#) covering all phases of displacement was adopted which focuses on return and resettlement, rather than local integration of IDPs. However, its implementation has been poor and slow. The government has signed different agreements in specific areas of the country such as the 2011 DDPD. However, little has changed in recent years as there is a lack of funding and capacity for DDPD implementation. The government – together with the UN, the AU and SPLM-N – signed a tripartite agreement on humanitarian access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile in 2012 but the parties have failed to elaborate an action plan to make this a reality. Sudan has been party

to the *Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region* (Great Lakes Pact) and its protocols on internal displacement since 2006 but is yet to sign the *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (Kampala Convention).

Under the auspices of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), talks resumed between the government and the SPLM-N in February 2014 ([OCHA, February 2014](#)). Their primary aim was a ceasefire to enable humanitarian assistance and to provide a space for dialogue on a range of political, security and humanitarian issues ([African Union, May 2014](#)). However, the process has stalled. It is hoped that a planned visit to South Kordofan and Blue Nile by the AUHIP chair may help put pressure on both the government and the SPLM-N to make humanitarian access a priority of the talks ([SKBNCU, May 2014](#)).

International response

In partnership with the Sudanese government, the international community provides protection and humanitarian aid to IDPs and assists them in the search for durable solutions. UN agencies and most international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) work through the sector system

– one similar to the cluster system developed in other humanitarian crises. There are eleven sectors including education, food, security and livelihoods, health and water.

An encouraging initiative launched by OCHA in West Darfur in January 2014 is the Humanitarian Hotline, a camp referral system for effective communication between IDPs and a referral officer in case of human rights abuses. IDPs may make free calls from their mobile phones to communicate their needs in order to receive a prompt response ([OCHA](#), December 2013).

In September 2013, the Human Rights Council decided to renew the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. He has provided valuable updates on the human rights situation of not only IDPs but the overall civilian population ([OHCHR](#), February 2014).

Established in 2007, UNAMID has a core mandate responsibility to protect civilians, including IDPs ([UN](#), May 2014). Despite efforts to provide physical protection to IDPs by patrolling and redeploying peacekeepers where needed, it has struggled to do so given considerable challenges such as government restrictions ([UN](#), April 2014). In June 2014, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, addressed the UN Security Council on the dramatic situation in Darfur where no major progress has been made, calling for immediate and concrete action. In addition, she called for an independent investigation into allegations of UNAMID being manipulated into “covering up” crimes committed by the Government of Sudan ([UN](#), June 2014).

The decision taken in February 2014 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights – which found Sudan responsible for the arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and ill-treatment of 88 IDPs– is a milestone in the fight for the rights of IDPs in Sudan ([REDRESS](#), February

2014). The case, dating from 2005, revealed police officers and soldiers had forcibly relocated several thousand IDPs living in the Soda Arabi camp in south-east Khartoum. These violent confrontations resulted in killings as well as arrests of IDPs. Those detained were denied access to a lawyer and to medical care, and were tortured and held for more than 12 months. The Commission requested Sudan to compensate the victims ([ACHPR](#), November 2013).

The gravest of the many challenges facing international humanitarian actors in Sudan in providing material assistance and protection to IDPs is difficult or impossible access to affected-communities due to insecurity, logistical challenges, bureaucratic impediments and restrictions imposed by the government on access to opposition-controlled areas. Since 2011 the government has repeatedly denied the humanitarian community access to opposition held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, putting populations at great risk ([Humanitarian Policy Group](#), July 2013).

In February 2014, HAC suspended the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), citing “technical issues” and asking ICRC to review the 1984 legal agreement defining the legal and diplomatic status of the organisation in Sudan. In response, ICRC decided in May 2014 to reduce staff by a third after having had its activities suspended for 15 weeks, with negative impacts on aid delivery to IDPs ([ICRC](#), May 2014). In April 2014, the Sudanese authorities asked the head of the UN Population Fund, Pamela DeLargy, to leave the country, accusing her of violating Sudanese laws and interfering in domestic affairs ([Radio Dabanga](#), April 2014). At the same time the humanitarian organisation Merlin –following its merger with Save the Children – was expelled from Darfur in 2009 ([Reeves](#), April 2014).

The work of humanitarian actors is hampered by armed groups who sometimes threaten to steal fuel, food, ammunition and money and install ran-

dom checkpoints in order to target UN agencies' vehicles ([OCHA](#), October 2013).

Insufficient funding is a further challenge: the [Strategic Response Plan](#) launched in December 2013 includes two objectives to protect IDPs from violence and exploitation and help them achieve a durable solution. As of July 4 2014, only 43.6 per cent of requested funds had been pledged ([ETS](#)

[OCHA](#), July 2014). The least funded sectors were emergency shelter and non-food items, protection, recovery, returns and reintegration.

Grave challenges remain in assisting Sudanese IDPs during all phases of their displacement. Fighting may escalate in the coming months and trigger further displacement. Prospects for Sudan's IDPs remain bleak.

Abyei

Neither Sudan nor South Sudan's displacement figures take into account the number of people displaced in and from Abyei area, because its status remains disputed. An incursion by the Sudanese armed forces drove more than 100,000 people from their homes in May 2011. Other causes of displacement are complex and include tensions linked to nomadic migrations, such as those of the Misseriya ([HSBA](#), May 2014).

As of December 2013, 20,000 members of the Ngok Dinka ethnic group were displaced in Abyei and 25,000 outside the area ([OCHA](#), December 2013). Little information on new displacements is available, but in May the UN reported incidents of inter-communal violence and the movement of members of the Ngok Dinka community from central to southern Abyei to escape the activity of armed groups ([UN SG](#), May 2014).

Chapter IV of the CPA is dedicated to the resolution of the Abyei conflict. It envisaged a vote in parallel to the referendum in southern Sudan to define the area's status ([CPA](#), 2005). The vote, however, has been postponed several times and the provision is still to be implemented. In October 2013, the Ngok Dinka community organised an unofficial referendum on whether Abyei should be part of Sudan or South Sudan. Many displaced people returned to the area to cast their ballots, and 99.9% of voters expressed the wish to join South Sudan. The referendum, however, was not recognised by Sudan, South Sudan or the international community. In June 2014, several Ngok Dinka leaders rejected the creation of a joint administration as set out in UN Security Council resolution 2156, and called instead for the result of their referendum to be accepted ([Sudan Tribune](#), June 2014)

Abyei has also been affected by the current crisis in South Sudan. At least 6,500 South Sudanese people have arrived in the area since December 2013, increasing pressure on already scarce resources ([OCHA](#), May 2014).

The Sudanese and South Sudanese governments must organise a vote on Abyei's status as a matter of urgency. As things stand, the status of people displaced in and from the area is uncertain, and it is unclear who is responsible for assisting and protecting them beyond temporary arrangements ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014).

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement. For the millions of people worldwide displaced within their own country, IDMC plays a unique role as a global monitor and evidence-based advocate to influence policy and action by governments, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs.

IDMC was established in 1998 at the request of the Interagency Standing Committee on humanitarian assistance. Since then, IDMC's unique global function has been recognised and reiterated in annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

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