

COI Focus

SUDAN

The situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their regions of origin

28 June 2021

Cedoca

Oorspronkelijke taal: Nederlands

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This document is a translation of the thematic paper bearing the original title "Soedan. De situatie van Darfoeri en Nuba buiten hun herkomstregio's" and published on 28/06/2021.

This is a translation from Dutch into English by the UK Home Office

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List of abbreviations

ACJPS	African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AFDB	African Development Bank Group
ARC	Asylum Research Centre
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSW	Christian Solidarity Worldwide
DBA	Darfur Bar Association
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
DNMD	Darfur Network for Monitoring and Documentation
GIS	General Intelligence Service
HUDO	Human Rights and Development Organisation
IDP	<i>internally displaced person</i>
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MEMO	Middle East Monitor
NMP	Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation
POP	Public Order Police
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SRF	Sudanese Revolutionary Front
UNAMID	United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
USDOS	United States Department of State

Introduction

This Focus describes the situation of Darfuris and Nuba outside their own region of origin in Sudan. It is an update of the COI Focus *Sudan. Darfuris in Khartoum* of 10 April 2018 and the second part of the COI Focus *Sudan. Security situation in the Two Areas/Situation in Khartoum of persons from the Two Areas* of 22 January 2019. The research is focused in particular on the period between April 2019 and March 2021. The research was concluded on 26 April 2021.

The term Nuba is a collective name for different ethnic groups of African origin living in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan or originating from that region. In this document, therefore, the term Nuba refers to those communities in their entirety and/or to persons in the Nuba Mountains or beyond who belong to those communities.

The term Darfuri is used in this document as a collective name for the various ethnic groups of African origin who live in Darfur and/or to persons outside Darfur who belong to those communities.¹

The security situations in Darfur and the Two Areas are the subject of separate reports, specifically the COI Focus *Sudan. Security situation in Darfur* of 28 January 2021 and the COI Focus *Sudan. Security situation in the Two Areas* of 28 January 2021.

Since the military coup of April 2019 and the formation of a transitional government in August of that year, Sudan has been in a fragile phase of transition. At the time this Focus was completed in March 2021 it was difficult to say whether and to what extent the altered political landscape will change the situation of Darfuris and Nuba in the country.

Cedoca consulted Sudanese local media including the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) and media from the diaspora such as the Sudan Tribune or Radio Dabanga. Cedoca also drew on information obtained from, on the one hand, Sudanese NGOs including the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and, on the other, international organisations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International (AI), International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) or the International Crisis Group (ICG). Reports by governmental and inter-governmental sources including the United States Department of State (USDOS), the United Nations (UN) mission and the African Union in Darfur (United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur, UNAMID) and other UN agencies contain valuable information. Cedoca also consulted the reports of other EU Member States including the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and also searched the internet using the Google search engine, the Refworld, Ecoi.net and Factiva databases, as well as the websites of international media channels.

¹ The British Upper Tribunal, an administrative appeals court, determined in 2015 that Darfuri is to be understood as an ethnic term relating to origins, not as a geographical term: even people who have never lived in Darfur, but whose parents or ancestors have their origin in the region, must be regarded as Darfuri. Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 05/01/2015, p. 1, [url](#)

1. Geographical situation and population

There is a lack of reliable population data for Sudan. According to the World Bank's data, the population of Sudan was 42,813,238 in 2019.²

The largest urban agglomeration in Sudan is located around the capital Khartoum, at the confluence of the Blue Nile and the White Nile, and includes North Khartoum (or Bahri) on the northern bank of the Blue Nile and the eastern bank of the Nile, and Omdurman, on the Nile's western bank.³ References in this report to Khartoum are references to this agglomeration in its entirety.



Figure 1: Khartoum, Sudan (Google Maps)⁴

According to a study of Institute of Development Studies (IDS) of February 2020, the urban population of Khartoum reached almost eight million inhabitants in 2018.⁵ The city is experiencing increasing inward migration, driven by the poor economic situation, the centralisation of state and services in the capital and continuing insecurity in outlying regions including Darfur and the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan.⁶

After Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman, the seven Sudanese cities with the largest population per city – according to the disputed count of 2008 - are Nyala (South Darfur), Port Sudan (Red Sea), El-

² World Bank, s.d., [url](#)

³ World Population Review, 16/06/2018, [url](#); IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, p. 2-4, [url](#)

⁴ Google Maps, s.d., [url](#)

⁵ IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, p. 1, [url](#)

⁶ UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9, [url](#)

Obeid (North Kordofan), Kassala (Kassala), Wad Madani (Gezira), Gedaref (Gedaref) and Al Fasher (North Darfur).⁷

The Sudanese population is a multi-ethnic mix of more than five hundred ethnic groups. In the words of the USDOS in its report on human rights in Sudan in 2019, the majority (70%) consider themselves Arab and generally regard the African tribes as (to a greater or lesser extent) inferior. Arab tribes from the north of the country traditionally dominate the government.⁸

This research focuses on persons originating in Darfur, and more specifically to persons belonging to non-Arab or African communities of Darfur (hereinafter referred to as Darfuris), and on persons originating in the Two Areas, and more specifically to persons originating in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan and who are members of the Nuba community. The following two chapters contain a brief description of the demographic situation in Darfur and the Two Areas.



Figure 2: Map of Darfur and the 'Two Areas', South Kordofan and Blue Nile⁹

1.1. Darfur

1.1.1. Geographical situation and population of Darfur

Darfur is divided into five states: Central Darfur (capital - Zalingei), East Darfur (Ed Daein), North Darfur (El Fasher), South Darfur (Nyala) and West Darfur (El Geneina).¹⁰

According to the latest population census in Sudan in 2018, the population of Darfur is 7.5 million.¹¹ The *Darfur Infrastructure Development Report* of 2016 of the African Development Bank (AFDB) reports a total population of nearly 8.2 million according to an unspecified estimate from 2010.¹² The UK Home Office estimates that there are 10 million inhabitants in the five federal states of Darfur.¹³

Arab and non-Arab tribes live alongside one another in Darfur. The main Arab tribes are the Rizeigat, Maaliya, Salamat, Beni Hussein, Habania, Zeiyadiya, Beni Helba, Ateefat, Humur, Khuzam,

⁷ City Population, 05/09/2019, [url](#)

⁸ USDOS, 02/2020, [url](#); Nederland – ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 04/10/2019, p. 92, [url](#)

⁹ HART, 09/11/2017, [url](#)

¹⁰ International Donor Conference for Reconstruction and Development in Darfur, 2013, [url](#)

¹¹ Dabanga, 10/02/2017, [url](#)

¹² AFDB, 2016, p. 2, [url](#)

¹³ UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9, [url](#)

Khawabeer, Beni Jarar, Mahameed, Djawama, Taaysha and Misseriya.¹⁴ The Fur people are the largest non-Arab group, followed by the Masalit. The Zaghawa are a non-Arab tribe which is partly nomadic. Other important non-Arab tribes include the Meidob, Dajo, Berti, Kanein, Mima, Bargo, Barno, Gimir, Tama, Mararit, Fellata, Jebel, Sambat en Tunjur.¹⁵

1.1.2. Opportunity for Darfuris to travel outside Darfur

The COI Focus *Sudan. Security situation in Darfur* of 28 January 2021 provides a comprehensive analysis of the security situation in Darfur. This chapter examines the opportunity for persons from Darfur to travel out of the region and settle elsewhere.

The map below shows the road network in Sudan and the roads connecting Khartoum to various towns and cities in Darfur via the city of El Obeid in North Kordofan.¹⁶



Figure 3: Sudan Road Network (08/08/2018)¹⁷

¹⁴ UK Home Office, 11/2019, p. 11, [url](#); Nederland - ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, [url](#)

¹⁵ UK Home Office, 11/2019, p. 11, [url](#); Nederland - ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, [url](#)

¹⁶ Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, p. 75, [url](#)

¹⁷ Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, p. 75, [url](#)

The main road from El Obeid in North Kordofan to El Fasher and Nyala in Darfur is paved and accessible throughout the year for all types of traffic. The other section is unpaved. Some parts of the unpaved road are accessible only during the dry season, with alternative routes being used during the rainy season. The rainy season affects transport charges because drivers have to rely on longer routes to reach poorly accessible destinations.¹⁸

As well as overland travel by road, rail travel is also possible between Khartoum and the city of Nyala in South Darfur. Sudan Railways Corporation is one of the longest railway connections in Africa. It links Khartoum with Nyala, via El Obeid, Sennar and Kosti.¹⁹ This train service opened in December 2013 and operates twice a month.²⁰ Rail travel is slow (40 km/h) and offers minimum levels of comfort.²¹

Lastly, Darfur has several airports, including the one in El Geneina in West Darfur, El Fasher Airport in North Darfur and Nyala Airport in South Darfur.²²

Infrastructural limitations are possibly reducing the opportunity to travel. The fuel shortages throughout the country are driving up transport costs, and this is having a negative impact on the mobility of the population.²³ Roads continue to be affected by violence.²⁴ Added to that are the numerous road accidents caused by reckless driving and the poor condition of the roads.²⁵

In an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021, Bushra Gamar, director of the Sudanese NGO, Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), said that people from Darfur and the Two Areas can travel with ease to other towns or cities outside the region and do not require any special documents in order to be able to do so. He added:

"For ordinary people, they have to pass some security checks (in towns). If you don't have any political activity, it is very smooth to travel, by air, road and sometimes by train, but for activists it is better to avoid that kind of travel. People coming from SPLA-N [Sudan People's Liberation Army-North] controlled areas [in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan] or from SLM-AW [Sudan Liberation Movement – Abdul Wahid] held areas in Jebel Marra [in Darfur] may get trouble at checkpoints, you could be detained."²⁶

Bushra Gamar's answer to the question as to who mans the checkpoints was as follows:

"The Sudan Armed Forces, Intelligence personnel, recently the RSF [Rapid Support Forces] is with them and people in civilian clothing – probably NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service]/Intelligence. At the moment, the NISS [GIS] never arrests directly, they give the order to Military Intelligence (MI). In some checkpoints you can find a civilian component for taxes (trucks, buses). There are sometimes three or four huts/shelters in one checkpoint. Inside Blue Nile they tax travelers for 'security'.²⁷

The Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour also stated, in an interview with Cedoca on 26 February 2021, that Darfuris can travel freely and without any difficulty to various places in Sudan:

"There are some control posts inside Darfur, controlled by Janjaweed, but there is no official control post to prevent people to enter other regions. However, you never know what will

¹⁸ Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, p. 76, [url](#)

¹⁹ Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, p. 84, [url](#)

²⁰ Radio Dabanga, 18/12/2013, [url](#)

²¹ Federale Overheidsdienst Buitenlandse Zaken, s.d., [url](#); Wikipedia, 25/09/2019 (last updated), [url](#)

²² Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, p. 66-70, [url](#)

²³ Radio Dabanga, 26/03/2019, [url](#); USAID, 05/2018, [url](#)

²⁴ Radio Dabanga, 15/01/2020, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 13/02/2020, [url](#)

²⁵ Radio Dabanga, 03/02/2020, [url](#)

²⁶ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²⁷ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

happen: will they check you or take you money... There are official checkpoints on the state borders, controlled by police and army but they don't prevent anyone from entering these states."²⁸

1.2. Two Areas

1.2.1. Geographical situation and population of the Two Areas

The Two Areas comprise the two southern federal states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The Nuba Mountains are located in the centre of the state of South Kordofan, whose capital is Kadugli. In July 2015, AI puts the number of inhabitants in South Kordofan at 1.4 million, one third of whom are internally displaced persons (IDPs).²⁹ According to the Sudan Consortium, a coalition of African NGOs working together to assist Sudan, South Kordofan is home to an estimated population of one million inhabitants, the majority of whom are either displaced or severely affected by the conflict.³⁰ Researcher Guma Komey puts the figure at 2.5 million inhabitants in 2016, with a majority of ethnic Nuba.³¹

Estimates regarding the number of Nuba in Sudan vary. In 2003, the Sudanese government estimated that there were nearly one million Nuba in Sudan.³² Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) estimates the number of Nuba to be 3.7 million.³³

The term Nuba is a collective name for dozens of different African ethnic groups who speak different local languages and have three dominant religious beliefs, Christianity, Islam or traditional African religion. The Nuba live in the zone surrounding Kadugli and in the Nuba Mountains. Despite their diversity, these communities share fundamental cultural practices and beliefs and widely recognise themselves as Nuba.³⁴ Sudanese Arabic is said by IRRI to be the *lingua franca*. According to the Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation (NMP), a British NGO which promotes the rights of the Nuba, they all have dark-coloured skin and a historical legacy of discrimination and exclusion.³⁵

The Baggara, primarily nomadic cattle-herders, are the most significant Arab community in South Kordofan, with the Misseriya and Hawazma being the largest ethnic groups.³⁶ Researcher Guma Komey also mentions the Jellaba, traders originating in the north of Sudan with close ties with the political elite, and the Fulani or Fellata, who originally migrated from West Africa. HUDO also mentions other African communities including the Fur and Masalit.³⁷

According to the disputed population census in 2008, Blue Nile, whose capital is Ed Damazin, has 832,000 inhabitants.³⁸ Communities of African and Arab origin live in Blue Nile as well.³⁹ IRRI estimates the population of the state as follows: the indigenous communities, each with their own language and who are mainly farmers and cattle herders, include the Ingessana and the Uduk;

²⁸ Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

²⁹ AI, 07/2015, p. 12, [url](#)

³⁰ Sudan Consortium, 2016, p. 11, [url](#)

³¹ Komey G.K., 09/2016, pp. 4-5, [url](#)

³² Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), p. 2, 01/09/2020, [url](#)

³³ Het is niet duidelijk of het DFAT ook de Nuba in andere delen van Soedan, zoals in de hoofdstad Khartoem, meetelt: Australian Government - DFAT, 27/04/2016, p. 12, [url](#)

³⁴ Sudan Consortium, 2016, p. 11, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), p. 2, 01/09/2020, [url](#)

³⁵ NMP, 04/2015, p. 1, [url](#); IRRI, 04/2015, p. 9, [url](#)

³⁶ Komey G.K., 09/2016, pp. 4-5, [url](#); AI, 07/2015, p. 7, [url](#); IRRI, 04/2015, p. 9, [url](#)

³⁷ HUDO, 11/02/2018, p. 4, [url](#); Komey G.K., 09/2016, pp. 4-5, [url](#)

³⁸ IRRI, 09/2016, p. 21, [url](#)

³⁹ HUDO, 11/02/2018, p. 4, [url](#); Komey G.K., 09/2016, pp. 4-5, [url](#)

recent immigrant groups include both Sudanese Arabs and non-Arab communities, as well as West African immigrants known as Fulani or Fellata.⁴⁰

1.2.2. Opportunity for people from the Two Areas to travel outside the region

The COI Focus *Sudan. Security situation in the Two Areas* of 28 January 2021 provides a comprehensive analysis of the security situation in the Two Areas. This chapter examines the opportunity for people from the Two Areas to travel out of the region and settle elsewhere.

The above map showing the road network in Sudan (see figure 3 on page 7) identifies the roads connecting Khartoum to various places in South Kordofan via the city of El Obeid in North Kordofan, and the roads running to Ad-Damazin in Blue Nile.⁴¹

Logistical and infrastructural restrictions reduce the opportunity to move freely within the Two Areas and between the Two Areas and other regions of the country, such as Khartoum. Enrico Ille, a researcher attached to LOST Research Network, writes in an email dated 20 December 2019 that the infrastructure in the Two Areas was already pitiful and inadequate before the conflict began.⁴² Logistics Cluster cites as an example the fact that although the main road that links El Obeid with Kadugli is paved and accessible to all traffic, the roads from El Obeid to Abu Jebeeha, Kalogi and Talodi in South Kordofan are accessible only outside the rainy season.⁴³ Fuel shortages and the high prices for petroleum and diesel are hindering transport between towns, cities and villages in South Kordofan, runs one of Dabanga's headlines in February 2020.⁴⁴

In its report of February 2020, the Asylum Research Center (ARC) says it has no information regarding the freedom of movement of Nuba within the Two Areas, nor in the cities of Khartoum and Omdurman.⁴⁵

In February 2020, Radio Dabanga reported that a bus passenger from the Nuba Mountains was insulted and detained by security staff in Kosti in the state of White Nile. He was released following pressure by fellow passengers who refused to travel to Khartoum without him.⁴⁶ HUDO notes that the security officers accosted the man on account of his skin colour. The man in question, Hassan Elamein Suliman Natu, is 29 years old, belongs to the Teera people (Nuba tribe), and is a university graduate.⁴⁷

Cedoca contacted the founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, and asked him about the opportunities available to Nuba wishing to travel from the Nuba Mountains and South Kordofan to Khartoum and other towns or cities. He has the following to say in an interview on 5 February 2021:

"There are tons of checkpoints along the way, it is very dangerous. Some areas are more dangerous than others to travel from. The western part of the Nuba Mountains is easier than the eastern part to travel from. But it is very dangerous, the only way to do it is on a motor bike. It can be troublesome and expensive. [...] I have heard – people told me – government soldiers are present at the checkpoints. Bribes are paid. This makes travelling expensive. I haven't heard of

⁴⁰ IRRI, 09/2016, p. 9, [url](#)

⁴¹ Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, p. 75, [url](#)

⁴² Ille E., email, 20/12/2019

⁴³ Logistics Cluster, 26/04/2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Dabanga, 04/02/2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵ ARC, 02/2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Radio Dabanga, 25/02/2020, [url](#).

⁴⁷ HUDO, 25/02/2020, [url](#)

people being stopped, except for one case where a motorbiker travelling back, was ambushed and killed, but I am not sure about the reason. He was an Arab. Banditry comes and goes.”⁴⁸

On 21 April 2021, Cedoca again contacted this person to ask him why he labels travel from and to South Kordofan as dangerous. Below is his reply:

“In order to travel to and from Nuba a person must go through many checkpoints. These checkpoints are manned by government soldiers or police. These are the same soldiers that have attacked people in Nuba. During the conflict, it was impossible to travel to and from Nuba. While there has not been any fighting, a peace deal is yet to be signed, which means there is still a front line that needs to be crossed if a person was to travel to or from Nuba. While travel has become easier it is still risky to travel to and from Nuba due to the abusive behavior of the people in charge of the checkpoints. Sometimes the Nuba are forced to pay a bribe and there is the threat of arrests and beatings.”⁴⁹

As for travel from the Nuba Mountains, the Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour stated in an interview with Cedoca on 26 February 2021 that most people travel via South Sudan.⁵⁰

In an email sent to Cedoca on 14 February 2021, Bushra Gamar referred to an incident in Al-Abbasiya in the Nuba Mountains at the end of 2020 in the course of which twenty people were arrested during a journey from a rebel-controlled area:

“In Al-Abbasiya in the Nuba mountains, on December 6th, 2020, twenty people were arrested, female and children, coming from SPLA-N El Hilu controlled area moving outside, they were arrested because they came from rebel held territory. In conflict areas you have town gates or checkpoints, when you approach a town you will find a checkpoint that inspects people, cars, trucks. The twenty people were detained at such a checkpoint and held for days.”⁵¹

2. People from Darfur and the Two Areas

This chapter deals with displaced persons from Darfur and the Two Areas in Sudan. Landinfo reports that many of those who are referred to as IDPs in fact see themselves as migrants. It is also difficult to differentiate between displaced persons, migrants and other urban poor in the city slums.⁵² This Focus defines IDPs as people who have left their region of origin because of conflict, drought or for economic reasons but have not crossed any internationally recognised borders. Many Darfuris and Nuba live elsewhere in Sudan as a result of the conflict in their region of origin, primarily in and around the capital Khartoum. Some are recent arrivals to the capital, while others have already lived for decades in Khartoum, or were born there. This Focus uses the term IDPs for both categories.

⁴⁸ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

⁴⁹ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, email, 21/04/2021

⁵⁰ Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

⁵¹ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, email, 14/02/2021

⁵² Landinfo, 03/11/2008, [url](#)

2.1. Khartoum

2.1.1. Number and origin

According to the World Population Review, Khartoum is a rapidly growing city whose population in 2018 numbers between six and seven million inhabitants, nearly two million of whom are IDPs.⁵³ According to IDS, there is an urban population of nearly eight million inhabitants that year.⁵⁴

Since the 1970s, Khartoum's population growth has largely been driven by internal displacement. A series of natural disasters, including a severe drought and starvation in the 1970s and early 1980s in the west and east of the country, is driving thousands of displaced persons to the capital. During the North-South civil wars of 1956-1972 and 1983-2005 millions of internally displaced persons left the south of the country (today's South Sudan, as well as South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei) for the north, with many seeking refuge in Khartoum. The conflict in Darfur as from 2003 has resulted in a new influx of internally displaced persons. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9 January 2005, which brought an end to the conflict between the north and the south, was intended to help the IDP population in Khartoum to return through UN-led programmes. Owing to the limited access to services in their region of origin, and also for economic and security reasons, many of those who settled in the south following the CPA began returning to Khartoum in 2011, when the conflict broke out in the Two Areas.⁵⁵ Bushra Gamar cites violence and the centralisation of public services in Khartoum as possible factors causing people to settle in the capital.⁵⁶

Labour migration is also playing a part in the city's population growth.⁵⁷ Whilst many find better opportunities as far as education or living conditions are concerned, according to IRRI, large numbers quickly discover that they are second-class citizens in an environment which boasts about its cultural and religious superiority.⁵⁸

Landinfo reported in 2008 that an estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million of the 8 million people who live in greater Khartoum are IDPs.⁵⁹ Sources consulted in February 2016 by the Denmark-UK fact-finding mission in Sudan and neighbouring countries, and in August 2018 by the UK fact-finding mission in Khartoum, estimate the number of IDPs in Khartoum to be between several hundred thousand and several million. According to a source from the joint mission in 2016, Nuba and non-Arab Darfuris together represent around 60% to 70% of the total population of Khartoum.⁶⁰ In a decision of September 2020, the British Upper Tribunal refers to estimates of the number of Nuba and Darfuris in Khartoum ranging between one million and five million. According to the Upper Tribunal, there is undoubtedly a very sizeable population of Nuba and Darfuris living in Khartoum.⁶¹

Geir Skogseth, Sudan analyst of Norway's Landinfo, shared the following demographic information about Khartoum with Cedoca in October 2018:

"There are no reliable available official statistics on the population of greater Khartoum, seeing that it would not include the population living in non-registered areas. Also, official demographic data would not present the ethnic distribution or regional origin of the residents in a given area.

⁵³ World Population Review, 16/06/2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴ IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, p. 1, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, [url](#); UK Aid & ODI, 01/2011, p. 6, [url](#); IRRI, 05/2013, p. 3, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, p. 12, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 14, [url](#); IDS (McGranahan G. et al.), 02/2020, p. 2, [url](#)

⁵⁶ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

⁵⁷ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 10, [url](#); IRRI, 05/2013, p. 7, [url](#)

⁵⁸ IRRI, 05/2013, p. 7, [url](#)

⁵⁹ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, [url](#)

⁶⁰ DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, p. 11, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 14, [url](#)

⁶¹ UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9-12, [url](#); Nederland – ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 04/10/2019, p. 93, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), p. 2, 01/09/2020, [url](#)

Still, migrants with origins in the Nuba mountains clearly constitute a significant segment of the population in greater Khartoum. In an IDP household survey conducted by IOM [International Organisation for Migration] in North Sudan in 2006, 33.8 % of the households originated in South Kordofan and 29.6 % identified as Nuba⁶², but it's difficult to say if this estimate is representative (though the definition of IDP used includes persons migrating for reasons other than security from violence). A field study from the al-Baraka shantytown in Khartoum also identifies Nuba as an important community in that particular area⁶³ [...]. In conclusion, available research indicates that the Nuba are an important community in greater Khartoum, but we do not have access to accurate figures.”⁶⁴

The vast majority of the internally displaced persons in Khartoum come from the western and southern regions of Sudan. The IOM's 2006 survey to which Skogseth refers revealed that 40% of the IDPs in Khartoum came from southern Sudan, today's South Sudan. According to the study, slightly less than 13% of the IDPs came from what were then the three states comprising Darfur.⁶⁵ The largest ethnic groups among the internally displaced persons in Khartoum at that time were the Dinka, the Nuba and the Fur.⁶⁶ According to various sources, women, children and the elderly make up the majority of those IDPs, whilst the proportion of young men is small. The IDPs mainly come from South Sudan, Darfur and the Two Areas.⁶⁷

2.1.2. Living conditions

The living conditions and income levels of inhabitants of Khartoum differ considerably between the various districts in the city.⁶⁸ Landinfo says the settlement pattern in Khartoum is based more on social class than ethnicity and regional background. The Norwegian country of origin information centre concludes that internally displaced persons and migrants from Darfur and marginalised regions largely live under the same conditions as the urban poor.⁶⁹ The IDS also identifies the poverty of many migrants as the factor which will determine where they live in the city.⁷⁰

The Darfuri community in Khartoum is ethnically, socially and economically diverse, and includes (wealthy) individuals who hold positions in government, business (examples include the traders at Libya Market in the western part of Omdurman), academia, the security forces and in medicine, as well as several thousand students. These affluent persons from Darfur or the Two Areas live in the better districts of Khartoum, such as the city centre.⁷¹ Some Darfuris have inter-married partners from other groups, including Arabs. Amjed Farid El Tayeb, political activist and spokesman of the Sudan Change Now movement, notes that some wealthy Darfuris tend to claim an Arab identity and cut their ties with the Darfuri community.⁷² Most Darfuris, however, live in the shanty towns that surround the capital, where there is a lack of services, water and electricity, with other non-Arab

⁶² Skogseth G. refers to the following publication: IOM, 09/2006

⁶³ Skogseth G. refers to the following publication: Bakhit M., 2015

⁶⁴ Skogseth G., Sudan expert from Landinfo, email, 05/10/2018

⁶⁵ This interview-based survey was conducted in 6,480 households (with a total of 40,048 family members) at 54 locations in Sudan, specifically in the states of El Gezira, Gedaref, Kassala, Khartoum, Nile, Northern, Red Sea, Sennar and White Nile. Owing to the large number of IDPs in Khartoum, the survey was conducted at 30 different locations and representatives of 3,600 households (with a total of 22,608 family members) were interviewed. IOM, 09/2006 via Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 10, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 10, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Urban Refugees, 14/08/2014, [url](#) ; Abdelmoneium A.O., 2017, pp. 53-55, [url](#)

⁶⁸ IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, p. 5, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, pp. 12-13, [url](#)

⁷⁰ IDS (McGranahan G. et al.), 02/2020, p. 2, [url](#)

⁷¹ DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, pp. 10, 25-31, [url](#)

⁷² UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 15, [url](#);

groups, such as the Nuba and South Sudanese. Most have informal jobs selling tea, sugar, water and air time for mobiles.⁷³

A Sudanese journalist and security analyst who lives in Brussels and wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, writes the following in an email of 12 February 2021:

"People from the so-called marginalised areas including the South Kordofan, Darfur and the Blue Nile regions who resettled in urban cities in Khartoum and elsewhere across Sudan suffer exclusion from economic opportunities and lack of services. IDPs and members from these communities who settled in Khartoum for instance, exclusively live in ghettos and poor neighbourhoods in the city's peripheries in areas such as Mayo, Al-Haj Yousif, Dar al-Salam and others. These areas are characterised by lack of basic services in education, health care and rundown conditions. The longstanding inequality facing these communities is rooted in the Sudanese politics of exclusion marginalisation adopted by successive government in the center which led to rebellion and wars in the above-mentioned regions. A significant number of civilians from these regions had to flee elsewhere as a result of direct attacks against them and their livelihoods. They are thus pushed to the fringes and subjected to deprivation and destitute in the new areas they settled in after displacement. By design and through monopoly of power, quality education, access to services, employment opportunities are exclusively created and offered to the members of the constituencies of the ruling elites in the center and the northern parts of the country. This is the structural political problem facing the country. It is the root cause of the armed conflict between the peripheries (Darfur, the South Kordofan and the Blue Nile) and the traditional power base in the center."⁷⁴

There are no official IDP camps in Khartoum. Former official IDP sites have disappeared in the poor outlying districts.⁷⁵ Most internally displaced persons live in unofficial settlements in an area known as the *black belt*, in shanty towns on the outskirts of the city, where there is no electricity, proper drinking water and public services.⁷⁶ Waging Peace, a British NGO which documents human rights' violations in Sudan, and NMP note that there are few schools and healthcare institutions in that zone, and that many are unable to afford education or healthcare. Also, since many IDPs do not have ID cards, access to such facilities is difficult.⁷⁷ The humanitarian conditions in these settlements are poor and reports emerge every now and then of forced evictions of internally displaced persons.⁷⁸

During the UK Home Office fact-finding mission of August 2018 various local Sudanese sources stated that most Darfuris and displaced persons from South Kordofan and Blue Nile live in Fatah (Omdurman), Dar es Salaam (Omdurman), Umbadda (Omdurman), Haj Yusuf (North Khartoum), Ingaz (South Khartoum) and Mayo (also known as Mandela camp).⁷⁹

Geir Skogseth, Sudan analyst of Norway's Landinfo, describes these squatter settlements as follows:

"A large share of the population of greater Khartoum live in so-called non-registered settlement areas, that is areas where people build housing without permits, and without the government

⁷³ UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9-12, [url](#);

⁷⁴ Sudanese journalist and security analyst living in Brussels, email, 12/02/2021

⁷⁵ UK Aid & ODI, 01/2011, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, pp. 27-28, [url](#); USDOS, 20/04/2018, [url](#); IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Waging Peace, 03/2018, p. 12, [url](#); NMP, 04/2015, p. 8, [url](#); Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, p. 79, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), p. 2, 01/09/2020, [url](#); IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, [url](#); IDS (McGranahan G. et al.), 02/2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Waging Peace, 03/2018, p. 12, [url](#); NMP, 04/2015, p. 8, [url](#)

⁷⁸ UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 11, [url](#); Nederland - ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 04/10/2019, p. 102, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 08/09/2016, [url](#); IDS (Osman S.M. et al.), 02/2020, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 11, [url](#); Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, p. 79, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, p. 26, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 16-17, [url](#)

Formally, these areas are either considered to be privately owned agricultural land (and zoned for that purpose) or land owned by the state. People settling on agricultural land may have purchased it from the owners, but without registering the transfer of ownership with the authorities or attempting to rezone it (both would probably involve a lot of bureaucracy, fees, bribes, etc., which is particularly challenging for poor and uneducated people from the periphery). Civilian authorities collect little information about the population in these areas, and have on several occasions not only actively resisted 'formalising' such areas (which would give them the responsibility to provide infrastructure – water, sanitation, electricity, roads, schools, clinics), but even evicted large groups of people and destroying privately built infrastructure^{81, 82}

Figure 1: Map of Khartoum



⁸³ UK Aid & ODI, 01/2011, p. iv, [url](#)

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes in March 2021 that little or no information about the situation of non-Arab Darfuris and groups from the Nuba Mountains in Khartoum was published in the period between September 2019 and January 2021, and refers to, among others, studies carried out by EASO and ARC during 2020.⁸⁴

The living conditions of Darfuris and Nuba reflect the general humanitarian situation in Khartoum and the present economic malaise in Sudan. Popular protests, prompted by a lingering economic crisis which sharply increased the cost of living in the country and made for shortages of bread, fuel, essential medicines and cash, led in April 2019 to a military coup which brought an end to the thirty-year regime of president Omar al-Bashir. The economic crisis has by no means disappeared since the formation of a transitional government comprising a military and civilian component.⁸⁵ The UN Security Council states on 1 March 2021 that poor families in urban areas will probably have limited access to food until May 2021 because of the high food prices which are limiting households' purchasing power.⁸⁶ Mohaned Elnour, a Sudanese human rights lawyer who lives in London, says in an interview with Cedoca that all Sudanese are suffering as a result of the economic crisis, but emphasises the precarious situation of Darfuris and Nuba:

"Most of the Sudanese, whatever their ethnicity, they are all suffering. There is a general lack of good education and health care. But it is particularly bad for children of Darfur and Nuba mountains, you can see them beg on the streets in all cities."⁸⁷

2.1.2.1. Access to public services

Norway's Landinfo and the Danish and UK migration research services state that Darfuris and Nuba have the same access to public services as internally displaced persons from other places and poor migrants who have settled in the capital.⁸⁸ Several sources cited by, among others, the UK Home Office, specify that access to hospitals and schools is difficult for all poor residents of Khartoum, regardless of ethnicity or origin.⁸⁹ Access to public services depends mainly on a person's financial means. Bushra Gamar of HUDO mentions the financial aspect as an important factor during an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021:

"They [Darfuri and Nuba] have a very low income, nowadays in Khartoum, to access education, health and essential rights, you need money. The poor do not have access. Education for example is divided in public and private education. Private education is better, but very expensive. The public education is very poor. Only a small amount of money has to be paid but even then, sometimes parents cannot fulfill this, which forced children to engage in child labor like shoe shining."⁹⁰

Gamar goes on to say:

"Health care is expensive, and these days hospitals do not accept people because of the COVID crisis. It's a general problem for everyone, public and private hospitals. They charge high – a person with an income of 300 USD per year, how can he access this?"⁹¹

The Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour also says: "It depends on their financial situation [...] no one will be denied health care if they have money."⁹²

⁸⁴ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, pp. 58-59, [url](#); EASO, 16/06/2020, [url](#)

⁸⁵ WFP, 12/2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶ UNSC, 01/03/2021, p. 9, [url](#)

⁸⁷ Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

⁸⁸ UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 11

⁸⁹ Home Office, 08/2017, pp. 29, 31, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, pp. 26, 27, 46, 47, 77, 80, 82, 90, 91, 96, [url](#)

⁹⁰ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

⁹¹ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

The three European research services see no systematic discrimination. The obstacles Darfuris and Nuba experience exist for other groups, too, owing to the poor economic situation, under-resourced public services and the government favouring its supporters, writes the UK Home Office in 2018.⁹³ It notes, though, that the level of public service provision in the slums surrounding Khartoum, where the majority of Darfuris and Nuba live, is lower than in the central areas of the city. The scarcity of public services in the slums, with health and educational services limited, also applies to infrastructure such as water supply, sewage systems and electricity.⁹⁴ According to NMP, the lack of truly affordable education often drives children into child labour.⁹⁵

The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains mentions the lack of funds for education:

"The schools that are provided in slums and the places where these communities live in Khartoum, are under resourced. People cannot pay school fees because of economic situation. Some churches in Nuba communities started schools but these are also under resourced."⁹⁶

Bushra Gamar has this to say on the subject:

"In the marginalized area of 'the black belt' there is no infrastructure, electricity or water. People have to walk a distance to get water. People working downtown, they have to travel hours to reach their work."⁹⁷

Maddy Crowther, executive director of Waging Peace, writes in her report *Risks on return for Darfuris in Sudan* of January 2019, that whilst some sources point to the financial situation of these marginalised groups and the limited infrastructure in their districts as the causes of the limited access to public services, others stress that there is discrimination as regards access to education, healthcare, accommodation and employment.⁹⁸

Various sources indicate that inhabitants of Khartoum need ID papers in order to be able to gain access to public services. This applies in particular to education. However, people are often able to access health services without such documents. According to those sources, Darfuris and Nuba find it difficult to obtain official documentation.⁹⁹ In May 2013, IRRI notes that obtaining a national number, a requirement for the issue of a national ID card, is extremely difficult for marginalised groups and in particular for those from the south of the country (or who are regarded as southerners). IDPs often lack the necessary documents. Persons from the Two Areas, in particular Christians, experience specific problems owing to their origin.¹⁰⁰ According to the Denmark-UK fact-finding mission, persons originating from the Two Areas are able to obtain national numbers and ID documents, but IDPs often face difficulties because they need to be able to produce witnesses to corroborate their identities.¹⁰¹ The Darfur Bar Association (DBA) told a UK fact-finding mission in August 2018 that it is particularly difficult for women from conflict areas who live in Khartoum to obtain a national number because they will often no longer have the male relative they need to be

⁹² Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

⁹³ UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 11

⁹⁴ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 13, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, pp. 10, 25-31, [url](#)

⁹⁵ Abdelmoneium A.O., 2017, pp. 55-57, [url](#); NMP, 04/2015, p. 6, [url](#)

⁹⁶ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

⁹⁷ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

⁹⁸ Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 18/01/2019, pp. 30-31, [url](#)

⁹⁹ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 13, [url](#); IRRI, 05/2013, p. 7, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, p. 25, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 62-63, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 18/01/2019, pp. 30-31, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 27/08/2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ IRRI, 05/2013, p. 7, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, p. 25, [url](#)

able to produce as a witness.¹⁰² Salma Abdalla, postgraduate researcher at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, writes the following about this in an email sent on 5 March 2021 to Cedoca:

“Non-Arab people from Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile face difficulties to prove their Sudanese citizenships. Not only that they are treated differently by officers, but also, they are required to provide more prove in comparison to Arab groups. There are many cases where officers at the ministry of interior delayed issuing these documents - a practice [that] often leads to serious consequences in the lives of these people, such as missing national exams or losing travel opportunities.”¹⁰³

Various sources consulted show the importance of a network for Darfuris and Nuba in Khartoum, in particular for newcomers. The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains has this to say on the subject:

“A lot of time, people coming from the Nuba Mountains are new to Khartoum, they come from a situation of a bush to a city which they are not used to. The ability to go around is based on family members there. For people coming from these regions language is an issue. Their knowledge of Arabic is limited. [...] Everybody relies on family.”¹⁰⁴

In August 2018, the DBA tells the UK fact-finding mission in Khartoum that the various communities living in the capital, including the Nuba and other ethnic groups, are forming associations to represent the interests of the community, promote social interaction and sometimes also to act as mediator in personal disputes.¹⁰⁵ Bushra Gamar mentions in an interview with ARC the existence in Khartoum of several local NGOs and community-based organisations, formed by the local community within the slum district, which help people. However, there are so many displaced persons that there aren’t enough organisations to be able to give everyone the help needed.¹⁰⁶

2.1.2.2. Employment and economic circumstances

The Danish and UK migration services state in February 2016 that persons from the conflict areas, in particular those of African origin, can face social discrimination in the labour market.¹⁰⁷ Again, it is difficult to label clearly the employment situation of Darfuris and Nuba in the city.

Darfuris and Nuba often find themselves in the informal sector and have precarious jobs in laundries, the construction sector, agriculture, street trading or as guards. Low incomes cause many of them to start engaging in illegal activities, including the brewing and selling of alcoholic drinks, resulting in, among other things, arrests. In some cases Darfuri business people are forced to pay excessive levels of tax or face being harassed into leaving.¹⁰⁸ In its report for 2019, the USDOS notes that female migrants working as maids or tea-sellers are sometimes unpaid or forced to make payments to the police. They also reported intimidation and the seizure of their possessions. According to observers, such intimidation has largely stopped under the transitional government.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 62-63, [url](#)

¹⁰³ Abdalla S., email, 05/03/2021

¹⁰⁴ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹⁰⁵ UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 19, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ ARC, 03/2021, pp. 171-172, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ DIS, UK Home Office, 08/2016, pp. 10, 25-31, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 14, [url](#); Home Office, 08/2017, pp. 31, 34, [url](#); Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, p. 73, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, pp. 10, 28, 29, 41, 50, 71, 80, 82, 88, 89, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 11

¹⁰⁹ USDOS, 02/2020, pp. 42-43, [url](#)

However, there are also some important Zaghawa traders and Fur shopkeepers who enjoy good relations with the former regime.¹¹⁰ Albaqir Mukhtar, the director of the Al-Khatim Center for Enlightenment (KACE), states the following in an interview with Cedoca:

“The more wealthy from conflict areas can be found in the town. For the Darfuri those a bit wealthy are mostly Zaghawa, known for trading at the market called Souq Libya/Libya market. The others, living in the slums, they do marginalized jobs like cleaning, washing (manually), labor in building/ construction, and other likes. Women do some of those jobs and tea maker/sellers [sic].”¹¹¹

A minority of the Darfuris and Nuba working in Khartoum work in academia, the civil service, the security services or the media, or as doctors or teachers. Darfuris holding government positions can face discrimination when it comes to promotion and those working for the security forces remain stuck in lower ranks. According to various sources, it is difficult for highly educated Darfuris to find jobs in the public sector.¹¹²

The general level of unemployment is sky-high in Sudan.¹¹³ According to the USDOS, discrimination on the grounds of, among other things, ethnicity, featured in the labour market in 2019. Ethnic minorities reported that government hiring practices discriminated against them in favour of “riverine” Arabs from northern Sudan. The USDOS does not make clear whether this has continued since the transitional government took office.¹¹⁴ In February 2020, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the transitional government agreed, as part of the peace negotiations, that 20% of government posts should be held by Darfuris.¹¹⁵ It is also stated in the peace agreement of 3 October 2020 that 5% and 14%, respectively, of government posts must be held by people originating in South Kordofan and eastern Sudan.¹¹⁶ A confidential source informed the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 2021 that there is so far little sign of the number of Darfuris in government posts increasing.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to say whether the fact that many Darfuris and Nuba work in the informal sector or have low-paid jobs is the result of discrimination or the absence of the necessary qualifications. Albaqir Mukhtar says it is difficult to pinpoint the precise causes of the limited access Darfuris and Nuba have to education, healthcare, accommodation and the job market:

“You can’t tell – you have to understand the situation in Sudan – there is poverty everywhere, even people who are educated and have a university degree, they are unemployed. The unemployment rate is more than 60 percent. It is very difficult to find any job. These people can only do menial unskilled work, mostly in construction. They work as hustlers in the street and get employed by traders, day to day, they roam the streets holding their goods in their hands and backs. The opportunities for women are better. They sell foods or drinks, tea and coffee. They only need limited means to start a business under a tree.”¹¹⁸

The limited access to education, or to high-quality education, has a negative impact on the opportunities of Darfuris and Nuba in the labour market, says Bushra Gamar:

¹¹⁰ DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, p. 95, [url](#)

¹¹¹ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021; Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹¹² Landinfo, 03/11/2008, p. 14, [url](#); UK Home Office, 08/2017, pp. 31, 34, [url](#); Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, p. 73, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, pp. 10, 28, 29, 41, 50, 71, 80, 82, 88, 89, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 11

¹¹³ Radio Dabanga, 05/10/2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ USDOS, 02/2020, pp. 42-43, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Radio Dabanga, 25/02/2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ International IDEA, 23/10/2020, p. 12, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 58, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

"High ranking jobs are not possible since the majority of these groups is illiterate and they cannot get the recommendation (letters or authorized persons) needed. The jobs they are doing are low level jobs: washing, cleaning, house labor with very little wage - you can work all month and get 10 dollar."¹¹⁹

In an email sent to Cedoca on 5 March 2021, Salma Abdalla, postgraduate researcher at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, indicates various reasons why Darfuris and Nuba face difficulties in finding jobs. The lack of infrastructure and education in their region of origin or in the impoverished districts of the towns or cities to which they migrate means that many Darfuris and Nuba lack the necessary knowledge and skills for jobs in the formal labour market. It is also important that they have a network they can rely on as a means of securing a place in the formal labour market:

"The ongoing economic crisis has left most of Sudanese citizens under extreme poverty. However, people from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile who move to Khartoum and to other northern cities face multiple difficulties in finding work, housing and access to healthcare and schooling. [...]"

Long years of war and marginalization by central government have disadvantaged these regions in terms of economic and social developments. Therefore, people from these areas face multiple challenges to integrate in the new communities due to lack of the skills required to compete with people from relatively stable regions, doubled with systemic discrimination in the host communities. In a society where social network represents a great asset to make a living, lacking those networks leaves you with very limited options. People who have moved to Khartoum prior to the war, have adapted and developed some skills to survive resources [sic] that are not available for newcomers."¹²⁰

Various sources note that men and women working under the regime of the former President al-Bashir tended to employ people of the same ethnic origin. The only way of finding work in a tight labour market is through well-positioned relatives within the extended family, says Abdelmoneium in 2017. Unskilled labour for a low wage is usually the only option.¹²¹ Albaqir Mukhtar says this is possibly still the case because the same civil servants are still in post.¹²² In October 2020, Radio Dabanga quotes a student from South Kordofan who says employers still favour people from their own family circle or their own ethnic group:

"The few employment opportunities announced are being contested by tens of thousands of graduates. And we know that they are only announced for the purpose of information, as they have often already been distributed to relatives of people working there."¹²³

According to Salma Abdalla, these groups also face social discrimination in Khartoum :

"Ethnic profiling is very common in Sudan, although subtle and often camouflaged. People are judged according to their ethnicity, especially those who hail from non-Arab ethnic groups face discrimination from those who identify themselves as Arabs. The latter consider themselves more superior and they are not ready to acknowledge their racism and refuse to sacrifice their privileges that have been enforced by successive regimes. Take for instance the job market, people from Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile have less opportunity to be recruited in government positions or promoted in the military's higher ranks regardless of their merits. Recruitment committees are still controlled by members with racist mentality and consider people

¹¹⁹ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹²⁰ Abdalla S., email, 05/03/2021

¹²¹ Abdelmoneium A.O., 2017, pp. 55-57, [url](#)

¹²² Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

¹²³ Radio Dabanga, 05/10/2020, [url](#)

from these 3 regions as less deserving of recruitment in government positions. There are ministries that are known to recruit people from particular tribes from northern Sudan. Another example is the issuing [of] official documents such as passport/birth-certificate or National ID.”¹²⁴

Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, says society’s view of Darfuris, Nuba and other marginalised groups is slowly changing. He adds that lower government posts are still held by civil servants of the former regime so certain discriminatory practices and views continue to exist, in particular as regards recruitment procedures:

“I guess this is continuing until now since the government has not changed, apart from the top leadership. There are new ministers, new governors, new directors but the body of the civil servants in the government is more or less the same.

Things are started to change, the revolution raised the slogan for equality for all people, there was the famous slogan in the revolution about Darfur – “we are all Darfur”. The current government has concluded the Juba peace agreement with Darfurian Armed movements. In this agreement it has been agreed on positive discrimination for Darfurians and extra money for development in Darfur.

The Africa tribes in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains have been persecuted, oppressed, and excluded for decades during al Bashir’s regime– things will not change overnight. Things after the revolution are better for them, but most of them are not yet enjoying the fruits of the revolution. The educated amongst them, those who apply for jobs in government can benefit, but the majority, the uneducated, the unskilled, and women may have to wait for some time before things start to change for them... it needs a decade with these policies in place before the situation will gradually change.”¹²⁵

Various sources indicate that the economic opportunities for Darfuris and Nuba have not improved since the transitional government took office in August 2019. An independent journalist and expert on Sudan, who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, informed Cedoca in an email sent on 2 March 2021 that the difficulties Darfuris and Nuba experience in Khartoum and other towns and cities as regards job opportunities, accommodation, education and access to healthcare are “much like before the revolution”.¹²⁶ The chair of a Sudanese women’s movement, who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, tells Cedoca in an interview that little has changed in the economic situation of these marginalised groups since the transitional government took office in August 2019:

“We are a woman rights organization. We see the same rate of women criminalization and arrests as before, due to the harsh economic situation and with a legal framework criminalizing women, for example alcohol brewers.

Police brutality is more experienced in peripheries and squatter parts of the cities, the areas where IDP’s are living. Based on our own monitoring the number of women imprisoned due to moral laws is increasing. The new government introduced a ‘funny’ law that prohibits muslim women brewing alcohol while non-muslim women can brew it but cannot sell it to Muslims. It puts women and alcohol brewers in a difficult position. It does not incriminate the buyers. Most of these women are from the Nuba Mountains. They experience high prevalence of persecution and extortion. The fines are very high.”¹²⁷

The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains outlines the impact of the current crisis on the employment opportunities of Darfuris and Nuba in an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021:

¹²⁴ Abdalla S., email, 05/03/2021

¹²⁵ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

¹²⁶ Independent journalist and expert on Sudan, email, 02/03/2021

¹²⁷ Chair of a Sudanese women’s organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021

"Right now when people from these areas go to Khartoum, they have an extremely difficult time to find work because of the economic situation, it is extremely hard. The situation in Khartoum at the moment is even worse than in the Nuba Mountains where there are farms. As the result of the economy being down, buildings are not being built. A lot of Nuba work in the construction sector and live off making bricks. It is a really bad situation for people from Two Areas and Darfur to find work. Ethnic issues do play a role. There is definitely a notion of racism. The word 'slave' is used very openly to black people as Darfuri, Nuba and people from Blue Nile."¹²⁸

2.1.3. Attitude of society

Regional fault lines between the centre and peripheral areas (Darfur, the Two Areas, Eastern Sudan) have long made for social and economic inequality. The government and the Arab population groups have for decades discriminated against persons from the peripheral areas both within and outside their areas of origin on grounds of their religious, ethnic and/or tribal origin. Sources report, in particular, ethnic discrimination against the Nuba, Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa.¹²⁹

Despite positive developments in Sudan, notions of Arab supremacy and the condescending attitude towards communities from marginalised regions, embedded among the traditional elite and deeply rooted in Sudanese society, continue to exist.¹³⁰ According to the UN expert on human rights in Sudan, Sudanese society is still plagued with lasting discrimination and inequality and this has an impact on the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens.¹³¹ African Sudanese are discriminated against on the basis of their darker skin colour and are called *abid*, the Arabic word for slave.¹³²

The extent and nature of the discrimination a person may face depends on a combination of factors based on background, experiences and activities.¹³³ Various sources argue that there is no single element, ethnicity for example, but rather a variety of mutually reinforcing elements which play a part in discrimination.¹³⁴ Enrico Ille has this to say on the subject:

"There is thus a potential cross-sectional chain of elements that lead to discrimination (and only an individual case assessment can tell, whether it applies): a provenance from Darfur increases the probability of being seen as potential rebel and of having been cut off from previous sources of wealth; without existing networks, displacement to urban areas, especially with the current strongly increasing prices, enhances this precarious situation and pushes people towards living in areas with others in a structurally similar situation, mostly with weak public services or even physical threats by governmental organs; the combination of the previous and the present provenance increases the difficulty to be perceived as reliable, for instance in accessing financial services, and limits the ability to concentrate on self-development, for instance through education."¹³⁵

The former regime promoted Islam as the state religion and glorified the Arab character of Sudan. During an interview with Cedoca, the Sudanese human rights lawyer Mohaned Elnour describes how for decades the Sudanese regime propagated a specific vision and narrative of what it means to be Sudanese:

¹²⁸ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹²⁹ USDOS, 03/2019, [url](#); UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9-12, [url](#); Nederland – ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 04/10/2019, p. 92, [url](#); Coda (Nashed M.), 08/03/2021, [url](#)

¹³⁰ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, p. 17, [url](#)

¹³¹ UNHRC, 30/07/2020, p. 4, [url](#)

¹³² Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 27/08/2019, [url](#); BBC, 26/07/2020, [url](#); Al Jazeera (Albahi K.), 13/08/2020, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, p. 34, [url](#)

¹³³ UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 10, [url](#)

¹³⁴ UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 140, [url](#)

¹³⁵ UK Home Office, 11/2018, [url](#)

"The previous regime did everything to promote Islam and Arabism – via the school curriculum, via the media and the mosques, via any platform. Even the black people are brainwashed. Black women use cosmetics to whiten the skin, they wear arab clothes, but even then they are called 'slaves'." ¹³⁶

Racial prejudices are deeply rooted in society and the situation is unlikely to change in the near future.¹³⁷ The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains states during an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021 that Darfuris and Nuba still experience social discrimination:

"There has been a shift since the revolution but people with power and money still treat people from this area in a second class citizens. [...]"

People become more open minded but the constant information/propaganda flow from the former government about people from the Nuba Mountains and Darfur ('they are evil', 'they destroy the country' etc) is still in the minds of certain people."¹³⁸

Elnour specifies how racial prejudices translate into everyday life:

"The first suspect in any crime is a person of these marginalized areas. Even if most of the soldiers are from these areas, they are brainwashed, they cannot do other work, they are not educated or not skilled, they go in the army and police and follow orders."¹³⁹

The chair of a Sudanese women's organisation mentions the following concerning this topic during an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021:

"The discriminations that Nuba and Darfuri people face by police and judiciary are manifestations of the society. The society feeds into that prejudice. It has been constructed for a long time, that is why it keeps happening regularly and without being questioned."¹⁴⁰

She goes on to say that racial discrimination is not consistent, but rather depends on other elements, including the financial situation and professional activities of the person in question.

"In principal Sudan is a very polarized country in terms of ethnicity and tribal backgrounds. There is racial discrimination, supremacy, but it is not consistent or structured. If you are a rich person from Darfur, it is unlikely to experience marginalization. If you are part of a network of well-resourced people like traders, neither so. For example, the big market – Soukh Libya/Libya market in Omdruman – is dominated by Darfuri from the Zagawa tribe. They are wealthy people and known to be cross border traders."¹⁴¹

She adds that the situation is worse for Nuba than for Darfuris.

"The situation for people from the Nuba Mountains is even harsher. Darfuri can easily identify with the central Sudanese culture since they have stronger cultural ties. The Nuba have a history of slavery and conflict with the north. They experience more hardship than Darfuri as far as settling in Sudan is concerned. A number of Nuba are also non-muslim."¹⁴²

¹³⁶ Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

¹³⁷ Report of Dame Rosalind Marsden dated 27/08/2019, annex to Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 82-83, [url](#); Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

¹³⁸ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹³⁹ Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

¹⁴⁰ Chair of a Sudanese women's organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021

¹⁴¹ Chair of a Sudanese women's organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021

¹⁴² Chair of a Sudanese women's organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021

2.1.4. Attitude of the authorities and the security services

2.1.4.1. The situation under former President al-Bashir

The UK Home Office notes in August 2018 that it is not so much other citizens who discriminate against Darfuris and Nuba, but rather the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).¹⁴³ Under the regime of the former President al-Bashir both Arab and non-Arab opponents of the Sudanese regime, e.g. human rights' activists, critical journalists, politically active students, lawyers, tribal leaders and actual and perceived sympathisers of rebel movements risked repression by the authorities and the NISS in particular.¹⁴⁴

The government of al-Bashir and his security apparatus treated Darfuris and Nuba with suspicion because they regarded them as potential political opponents and associated them with the rebels. Those who had enjoyed a university education were also targets. Individual attacks were usually politically motivated and not based purely on ethnic grounds.¹⁴⁵ An NGO which wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons states that politically active people were not the security services only target. Darfuris finding themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time ran a greater risk of discrimination and violence than their compatriots.¹⁴⁶

Maddy Crowther of Waging Peace concluded in January 2019 that anyone categorised as a Darfuri was more likely to face discrimination and repression at the hands of the authorities and the security services. Her report *Risks on return for Darfuris in Sudan* was produced against the background of daily demonstrations against the regime of former President al-Bashir. The regime initially attempted to use Darfuris as scapegoats. Dozens of Darfuri students were arrested and forced to confess on national television. The demonstrators showed their solidarity with slogans such as "we are all Darfur".¹⁴⁷ Various people who contacted Cedoca for the purposes of this Focus quoted that slogan to indicate a changed attitude in Sudan, although many said that the solidarity shown led to few concrete results after the revolution. The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains mentions the power of the military component of the transitional government:

"The civilian government tries to be more inclusive, but the military component has the old regime way of thinking. Up to now, getting humanitarian aid in the Nuba Mountains is very difficult. While the civilian component is doing the best they can, they lack the power on the ground."¹⁴⁸

Since the demonstrations began in December 2018, the presence of Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in towns and cities has increased and they are taking on the duties of the police; the same applies in Khartoum.¹⁴⁹ According to various sources, Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemeti and head of the RSF, together with other actors from the Transitional Military Council (TMC) were responsible for the brutal break-up of the sit-in in Khartoum on 3 June 2019 during which at least 128 people died.¹⁵⁰ Negative attitudes towards marginalised groups, such as Darfuris and Nuba, are

¹⁴³ UK Home Office, 11/2018, pp. 9-12, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, p. 35, [url](#); USDOS, 03/03/2017, [url](#); AI, 22/02/2018, [url](#); DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, pp. 10,20,33,40, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 01/2019, pp. 25-29, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 82-83, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 18/01/2019, p. 28, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ Nederland - ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 04/10/2019, p. 93, [url](#); Al Jazeera (Albair K.), 13/08/2020, [url](#); Foreign Policy (Tubiana J.), 09/07/2019, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 18/01/2019, pp. 17-20, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹⁴⁹ Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 18/01/2019, pp. 20-21, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ Sudan Tribune, 25/06/2019, [url](#); FIDH, 05/06/2019, [url](#); Freedom House, 04/03/2020, [url](#)

alive and well within the TMC, which since August 2019 has been part of the governing coalition with representatives of the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC).¹⁵¹

Although all demonstrators have violence to contend with, Crowther notes that racial profiling was involved in the incidents on 3 June 2019. The most flagrant abuses were experienced by those regarded by the security services as the most extreme figures and whose mistreatment would not have serious consequences.¹⁵² Crowther mentions individual attacks on Nuba before and after 3 June 2019.¹⁵³ Sudan expert Hafiz Mohamed reports repeated attacks in Um Bada after 3 June 2019. He speculates that such reprisals are reserved for districts where marginalised groups such as the Darfuris and Nuba live because the attacks would not attract major media attention.¹⁵⁴

The TMC disbanded the NISS following the bloodbath of 3 June 2019 and replaced it in July 2019 with the newly-formed General Security Service (GIS).¹⁵⁵ The authority of the GIS is limited to protecting national security by collecting and analysing information and passing it on to the competent authorities.¹⁵⁶ The operational branch of the NISS, responsible for arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, threats and intimidation of human rights advocates, lawyers, political opponents and other critical voices, was dissolved.¹⁵⁷ According to confidential sources from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are indications that Military Intelligence (MI, part of SAF) has taken over the operational role of the former NISS.¹⁵⁸ Bushra Gamar also mentions that MI makes the majority of the arrests.¹⁵⁹

Crowther notes that all the security agencies have been merged into a single force, whereas previously one agency was played off against another. She says an all-powerful security body has been created, ensuring impunity for every crime committed by the security forces.¹⁶⁰ Other analysts say that the transitional government, and therefore the military component within it as well, can hardly be considered to be a block. The fault lines between all those members of the transitional government, e.g. between the SAF and the RSF, under al-Bashir have not disappeared with the fall of his regime.¹⁶¹

Mohaned Elnour states that a number of former human rights' activists are members of the transitional government in Sudan, meaning that an important monitoring instrument has disappeared. He warns that there are no critics left now to complain of human rights' violations.

"Human rights defenders have become a part of the government. There is currently no organization following the human rights situation in Sudan, and the government is closing its eyes on violations."¹⁶²

¹⁵¹ FIDH & ACJPS, 12/2019, [url](#)

¹⁵² The Economist, 01/07/2019, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 08/2019, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁵³ One example quoted by Crowther is a national footballer, Saifeldin Terry, a Nuba, who joined a protest with his team mates, but was arrested and interrogated. Another Nuba footballer, Mutaz Kabier, also received more aggressive treatment than his team mates. The absence of other documented cases does not mean that they do not exist, says Crowther. She says it is likely that one reason such incidents went unreported is that the internet was down at the time. Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 08/2019, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 08/2019, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Washington Post (Gallop J.B.), 19/01/2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ HRW, 16/07/2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ FIDH & ACJPS, 12/2019, [url](#); Sudan Tribune, 23/08/2019, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ In July 2020, the transitional government repeals a number of sections from the National Security Act of 2010 relating to, among other things, the immunity of the NISS. This meant members of that service could not be prosecuted for acts carried out on duty. Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 05/03/2021, p. 51, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹⁶⁰ Crowther M., uitvoerend directeur Waging Peace, telephone conversation, 22/02/2021

¹⁶¹ Skogseth G., telephone conversation, 22/03/2021

¹⁶² Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

It remains unclear how agencies such as the GIS and the RSF are treating the Nuba and the Darfuris and whether the transitional government is able to exercise effective control over the conduct of the security sector.¹⁶³

2.1.4.2. The current situation

In its decision of September 2020 in the proceedings KAM (Nuba – return) Sudan CG [2020] UKUT 00269 (IAC) concerning the risk Nuba face upon return to Sudan, the Upper Tribunal finds that there is a risk of persecution or serious ill-treatment for those who are perceived to be a sufficiently serious threat to the Sudanese regime. According to the Upper Tribunal, the situation has not evolved such that the risk of persecution to those who were perceived to be a threat to the regime before the political developments of 2019 has now completely evaporated with the fall of the al-Bashir regime and the installation of a transitional government. The Tribunal notes, though, that political activity against the al-Bashir regime may have a dwindling relevance to the current Sudanese government, including the army and the GIS.¹⁶⁴ Crowther mentions in an interview with Cedoca the substance of a political profile is different in Sudan from in Europe: “The threshold of being a threat to the regime is still very low.”¹⁶⁵

Enrico Ille, a researcher attached to the LOST Research Network, refers to the great complexity of the situation today in an email sent to Cedoca on 1 February 2021:

“The situation has become much more complicated in a less straightforward authoritarian and discriminatory setting. The operation of security and military agents is much more obscure under the new government, and very much defined by resistance to change in the political landscape. In general, I would say that political activism directed against the supporters of the old regime is the most critical factor for personal insecurity at the moment, rather than origin from the mentioned areas. However, the historical structures of inequality, where these areas are marginalized, are still in place as well.”¹⁶⁶

His words are echoed by Masou El Hasan, leader of the Sudanese Communist Party, who in March 2021 reported having received a death threat addressed to “all members of the revolutionary forces, the SCP and those who oppose the policies of the former regime”.¹⁶⁷ The arrest and detention of Hajooj Kuka, political activist, filmmaker and Nuba, and the death of Baha Eldeen Nory Mohamed Ali, a member of a resistance committee, in December 2020 after he was abducted and tortured by the RSF in Khartoum, point to the risks run by political activists who favour revolution.¹⁶⁸ There are many active resistance committees¹⁶⁹ and also many human rights’ and political activists in Sudan. The small number of documented arrests and attacks on activists – Eldeen Nory, Hajooj Kuuka, Waad Bahjat, ten members of a resistance committee in South Darfur and two activists in South Kordofan¹⁷⁰ – cause suspicions that these are in fact exceptions, and that activists are not being systematically arrested and attacked.¹⁷¹

Albaqir Mukhtar notes the following in an interview with Cedoca in February 2021:

¹⁶³ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 46, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ Crowther M., executive director of Waging Peace, telephone conversation, 22/02/2021

¹⁶⁶ Ille E., email, 01/02/2021

¹⁶⁷ Radio Dabanga, 17/03/2021, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ ACJPS, 30/12/2020, [url](#); Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 87, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ The Sudanese resistance committees are informal neighbourhood networks of Sudanese inhabitants who organised civil disorder campaigns against the government of Omar al-Bashir and played a key role during the Sudanese revolution.

¹⁷⁰ ACJPS, 20/10/2020, [url](#); DNMD, 15/08/2020, [url](#); HUDO, 17/01/2021, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ Skogseth G., telephone conversation, 22/03/2021

"The law enforcement agencies are mostly against the revolution, people have been tortured and killed also after the revolution, not necessarily people from Darfur, but also people from northern Sudan. It had an ideological basis, if somebody is part of the revolution and from Darfur, probably they will be treated harsher."¹⁷²

Enrico Ille notes that it is very difficult to estimate what impact the peace agreement¹⁷³ will have on the situation of the Darfuris and Nuba:

"The biggest difficulty is to assess how the peace agreement and the power shift to armed groups from Darfur (RSF, JEM, SLM etc.) will influence the actual situation of people from there - especially since these are aggressive groups with a long history of grievances, also against each other. The same can be said of South Kordofan, where people accused of being close to SPLM-N Al-Hilu are still arrested, in addition to the activists of the resistance committees (all over Sudan). If anything, it is even more difficult now to say something about somebody's situation just based on a region she or he comes from."¹⁷⁴

Mossaad Mohamed Ali, executive director of the African Centre For Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), reports in an email sent to Cedoca on 14 March 2021 that his organisation has heard of no incidents of people having been targeted by the security services because of the real or supposed sympathy or involvement with the armed rebels in the conflict zones since the revolution of 2019:

"During the period of the previous regime, people coming from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile encounter[ed] more problems with security services than others because they were considered supporting the armed movements in these states, but after the 2018 revolution [sic], and under the transitional government, we as ACJPS have not documented such cases."¹⁷⁵

Dame Rosalind¹⁷⁶ states in October 2019 that the public order services are still enforcing the Public Order Law, which is no longer in force in the country, in the outlying districts of Khartoum and Omdurman. The Public Order Police are reportedly still harassing tea-sellers. Since these are the same police officers working in those districts under the former regime, these arbitrary forms of harassment continue.¹⁷⁷ The chair of a Sudanese women's organisation mentions in an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021 that the number of Nuba in prisons is disproportionately high:

"If you visit jails, it is apparent how they are mostly occupied by people of the Nuba Mountains and especially by a majority of women from the Nuba Mountains and Darfur from smaller tribes that lack a network and support."¹⁷⁸

In an interview with Cedoca in February 2021, Crowther mentions some anecdotal reports of harsher treatment being meted out in the districts of Khartoum where Darfuris and Nuba live. A number of incidents involving activists in the centre of the city have been well documented, but the potentially larger number of attacks on African citizens in the outlying districts continue to be ignored. Crowther also notes, like Mohaned Elnour¹⁷⁹, that there is an absence of monitoring organisations in these neighbourhoods. She adds that the government provides no protection. The police do not investigate

¹⁷² Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

¹⁷³ The authorities and the rebels signed the Juba peace accord on October 3, 2020. The SLA-AW and SPLM-N El Hilu are not part of the agreement.

¹⁷⁴ Ille E., email, 15/02/2021

¹⁷⁵ Ali M. M., executive director ACJPS, email, 14/03/2021

¹⁷⁶ Dame Rosalind Mary Marsden is a British diplomat. She was the British Ambassador in Sudan between 2007 and 2010 and the EU Special Representative in Sudan between 2010 and 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Report of Dame Rosalind Marsden dated 27/08/2019, annex to Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 82-83, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 27/08/2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ Chair of a Sudanese women's organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021

¹⁷⁹ Elnour M., Sudanese human rights lawyer, telephone conversation, 26/02/2021

reported instances of abuse and murders. It is difficult to establish the precise situation in the outlying districts where Darfuris and Nuba live because there is no organisation monitoring them.¹⁸⁰

Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, states in an interview with Cedoca in February 2021 that Darfuris and Nuba run an increased risk of harsh treatment when they come into contact with the law enforcement agencies:

"If they [Darfuri and Nuba] come across the law enforcement agencies they are more likely to face discrimination, the police for instance, they will probably treat them in a harsher way than their northern counterparts in society – these institutions have been built on racial discrimination which was the policy of the former regime."¹⁸¹

Bushra Gamar of HUDO refers during an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021 to the harsh approach adopted by the security services in their dealings with Darfuris and Nuba:

"The government – police – usually criminalizing them without any crime. [...] and they are treated harsh. I have one example of last December – African man from Nuba was killed by police in Atbara while implementing arrest of him, other one died in Khartoum on the same month after having been interrogated under torture by police."¹⁸²

He adds:

"The mentality of the government and the ruling groups has not changed since they are the same group with the same mindset as before the revolution. The dominant mentality in Sudan culture is discriminative and racist in favour of Arab ethnicity, so to be changed it needs generations time.

In Khartoum there is a kind of slight change, it is done because the international community is looking at Khartoum and the ruling group needs to furbish their reputation. But when we talk about the African groups in Khartoum, it is still the same. However, the military component within the transitional government is al-Bashir's security committee, everything is there, if we talk about NISS, it is still there. Adding to that, now we have RSF in to Khartoum holding official and political roles within the government. Recently, you may not hear about arrests anymore, except here and there, such as the activist that has been killed by torture under RSF arrest. But there are many disappearances. Disappearances are rising in Khartoum. [...] Because people are poor, illiterate and do not know their rights, they fear the police – the people in the black belt do not dare to report disappearances and we do not know the actual number of disappearances."¹⁸³

In the sources consulted, Cedoca found no further indication of a rising number of disappearances in Khartoum in the period between April 2019 and March 2021, apart from the persons who disappeared during the revolution as from December 2018, during the violent action taken against the sit-in in Khartoum on 3 June 2019 and the crushing of the demonstrations in June and July 2019.¹⁸⁴ Mass graves found in November 2020 have been linked to those disappearances.¹⁸⁵

In an email sent to Cedoca on 5 March 2021 Salma Abdalla writes that one of the first things the security services ask people when they arrest and question them is their tribe and origin:

"Recruitment of security service personnel ensures to employ those [who] identify as Arabs or sympathize with the agenda of the ruling party. Members of security services are indoctrinated to identify and repress potential threats [against] the state including rebel and armed groups from

¹⁸⁰ Crowther M., executive director of Waging Peace, telephone conversation, 22/02/2021

¹⁸¹ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

¹⁸² Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹⁸³ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

¹⁸⁴ Radio Dabanga, 09/08/2019, [url](#); ACJPS, 20/10/2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ Radio Dabanga, 12/11/2020, [url](#); MEMO, 12/11/2020, [url](#)

Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile. [...] During interrogations by security service or police, it is very common that the first question the detainee is usually asked is to identify their tribe. This question is used by security personnel to assess, detect and single out potential threats [against] the state. Those who identify as non-Arabs from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile are met with suspicion and often accused of belonging to rebel armed groups, which makes them vulnerable to torture and severe punishment. If the security service officer identifies the detainee to be Arab, their chances to survive torture and punishment is much higher than a non-Arab detainee in the same room. Family name, birthplace or mastering the northern dialect are tools to profile them ethnically.”¹⁸⁶

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes in the general official country report on Sudan of March 2021 that there are no reports of harsher treatment and targeted arrests and detentions of non-Arab Darfuris in Khartoum in media reports dating from after the power change in August 2019.¹⁸⁷

In its decision of 1 September 2020, the Upper Tribunal notes that incidents such as arrests, detentions or ill-treatment of Nuba are not of a nature such and not sufficiently numerous that it can be concluded that all Nuba run a real risk of persecution or serious ill-treatment. The Upper Tribunal concludes in the same decision that the risk of persecution and serious ill-treatment for an individual is based on the forms of a perceived political threat to the (former) regime. The Nuba origin of a person can create suspicions of support for rebel groups, but does not in itself constitute a risk of that person being perceived as a threat and having reason to fear arrest, detention or mistreatment.¹⁸⁸

Various sources indicate that there has been greater freedom of expression since August 2019.¹⁸⁹ According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, criticisms of the civilian component of the government and criticisms directed against its military component are treated differently. Whilst the civilian component will take no action against criticism by citizens and activists, criticism levelled at the military component (SAF, RSF or the police) of the transitional government does lead to action.¹⁹⁰ Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, reflects on the freedoms won:

“Incidents after the revolution are far less in numbers than before. Before the revolution there was impunity, before the revolution there was secrecy, and now there is more transparency, any incident will go viral, it will be dealt with in the media, since the media is far more free than before, even national tv can be critical for the sovereign council for example.”¹⁹¹

During an interview with Cedoca, the Sudanese journalist and security analyst says the number of incidents has fallen since the disbanding of the NISS:

“Despite these violations, however, it is important to note that the level of crackdown against the groups from the marginalised regions has decreased in places such as Khartoum and major urban areas outside the conflict regions. This is largely due to the dissolution of the former National Intelligence and Security and Service (NISS) which systematically persecuted members of the ethnic groups coming from the conflict areas. The current transitional government took measures to halt these violations by delegating the power of arrest and detention to the Sudanese police.

¹⁸⁶ Abdalla S., email, 05/03/2021

¹⁸⁷ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 84, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 34-36, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ Freedom House, 04/03/2020, [url](#); USDOS, 02/2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ In September 2019, the human rights campaigner from Darfur known as Ibrahim Showtime was run over by a military vehicle. According to a confidential source, the GIS was probably responsible for the collision. Ibrahim Showtime championed the rights of Darfuris and young people. He published online articles and vlogs. In 2020 he was arrested for using insulting language towards the police. No charges were brought against him. Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 05/03/2021, p. 82 en p. 88, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

The police should only detain persons and hold them in custody on legal grounds. [...] However, the military component whose leading members belonged to old regime, continue to commit violations against non-Arab persons. These violations, albeit in narrower scale than before, are still being carried out by the Sudanese military factions and security units.”¹⁹²

2.1.5. Situation of specific profiles in Khartoum

Asked which profiles most frequently encounter discrimination, the independent journalist and Sudan expert gave the following reply in an email sent on 2 March 2021:

“Non-Arab still face discrimination. Christians even more. But for political/students/activists/NGO-personnel/alleged supporter of rebel movements, it’s better than before the revolution. Supporters of groups non-signatory to Juba, notably Fur supporters of Abdelwahid and 2 areas supporters of Abdelaziz, are likely to face discrimination, including from rebels signatory to Juba.”¹⁹³

The chair of a Sudanese women’s organisation states the following on the subject in an interview with Cedoca on 25 February 2021:

“Definitely university students who are poor and come to the center, they experience discrimination, lack of access to resources. The education institution does not offer any support, they are on their own, and there is consistent protest and lack of engagements by state officials in hearing them. [...]

They [alleged supporters of rebel movements] are not openly persecuted. I am not aware of any recent case – that is, in the past few months. There are public debates being held, people can speak out nowadays. [...]

At the moment those people [people working for ngo’s, working in the humanitarian field trying to get help to the conflict areas] do not face any problems. We have space, we are able to talk. We are able to criticize openly. The situation is volatile, we do not know for how long we will be able to talk freely. The biggest threat is the continuity of insecurity in conflict areas and the very systemic persecution of poor people.”¹⁹⁴

The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains cites Christians and women as the groups more likely to face discrimination in Sudan. He also mentions the situation of activists:

“The activist community are watched and are experiencing some similar attacks like the Nuba and Darfuri have experienced before although there are differences. Nuba and Darfuris are ethnic groups that have been attacked while activists are specifically attacked for their political views.”¹⁹⁵

This chapter focuses on three specific profiles within the Darfuri and Nuba communities which possibly experience discrimination in Sudan, namely women, Christians and students/young people.

2.1.5.1. Women

In a 2015 report, the NGO NMP describes the living conditions of displaced women and children, many of whom are of Nuba origin, in Khartoum. They live in extreme poverty, and many find themselves in forced-labour situations and suffer ill-treatment. Thousands of Nuba children live on

¹⁹² Sudanese journalist and security analyst living in Brussels, email, 12/02/2021

¹⁹³ Independent journalist and expert on Sudan, email, 02/03/2021

¹⁹⁴ Chair of a Sudanese women’s organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021

¹⁹⁵ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021 en email, 20/02/2021

the street.¹⁹⁶ The USDOS states in 2018 that displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to domestic and sexual slavery.¹⁹⁷ Various sources also make reference to the Public Order Act and how this Act criminalises women in particular. Under the regime of the former President al-Bashir women from the *black belt* who worked in the informal sector as tea-sellers, traders, water-sellers, etc. were the target of the security services. Female street traders are vulnerable to clear-up operations by the Public Order Police (POP), detention, fines and harassment. Equipment is routinely seized. Tea-sellers are also often accused of prostitution or spying for the rebel groups in Darfur or the Nuba Mountains, charges which are based solely on their ethnicity.¹⁹⁸

The RSF and the army killed a number of tea-sellers associated with the protests at the end of 2018 and in early 2019 during the suppression of demonstrators on 3 June 2019. The RSF and the army also used sexual violence against female demonstrators.¹⁹⁹ In August 2019, Sudanese activists informed HRW that 17 people had been missing since 3 June 2019, including women who used to work as tea-sellers or food-sellers in and around the sit-in area.²⁰⁰ A women's trade union in Khartoum states in June 2019 that nearly 5,000 female sellers had been the victim of sexual violence and other abuse by members of the RSF and the security forces.²⁰¹ The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains had this to say about it to Cedoca:

"Women are targeted. During the protests many soldiers took advantage and there was a lot of rape – shaming of women – this racist idea, they did not see it as a big deal to rape a women from these communities. Sexual violence is very common but hard to talk about. If a women was involved in the revolution, the chance she has experiences with sexual violence are high."²⁰²

The transitional government has introduced changes which are improving the position of women in Sudan. At the time this Focus was completed, it was too early to assess the impact of those changes on the position of Darfuri and Nuba women, and women in general.²⁰³

On 29 November 2019, the transitional government in Sudan repealed the Public Order Act.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, according to Dame Rosalind, women in the outlying districts of Khartoum, mainly Nuba women, are still the target of those enforcing the Public Order Act.²⁰⁵ The Darfur Network for Monitoring and Documentation (DNMD) reports the arrest by the POP on 13 August 2020 of a 36-year-old woman from Hajj Yousef district in Khartoum for possession of alcohol. According to the same article, even after the legislative amendments of July 2020 – in particular the amendments of Sections 78 and 79 of the Criminal Law Act van 1991 concerning the brewing, possession and sale of alcohol for/to Muslims²⁰⁶ – more than fifty Christian women were convicted for selling alcohol.²⁰⁷

Civil-society organisations also criticise the transitional government's legislative amendments as inadequate and vague, and meaning that women (and men) can still be sentenced to severe penalties, including life imprisonment and the death penalty. The organisations also report that

¹⁹⁶ NMP, 04/2015, p. 4, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ USDOS, 28/06/2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ Mada Masr, 21/05/2019, [url](#); Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 01/2019, pp. 4-5, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ HRW, 17/11/2019, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 03/10/2019, [url](#); BBC, 15/06/2019, [url](#); TNH, 06/06/2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ HRW, 17/11/2019, [url](#)

²⁰¹ SIHA, 08/07/2019, [url](#)

²⁰² Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²⁰³ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 69, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Radio Dabanga, 29/11/2019, [url](#); ARC, 05/02/2020, p. 34, [url](#); MEMO, 30/11/2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 01/2019, pp. 4-5, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, p. 42, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ In July 2020, the transitional government introduced a number of amendments to the Criminal Law Act of 1991, the Criminal Procedure Act of 1991 and the National Security Act of 2010. For more information, see REDRESS, 07/2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ DNMD, s.d. [2020], [url](#)

various sections of law in the Criminal Code, the Personal Status Law and the Evidence law have remained unchanged.²⁰⁸

The Sudanese human rights and women's rights activist Waad Bahjat was arrested in November 2020 because of a video she had livestreamed on Facebook and in which she shows soldiers harassing women near a service station in Khartoum.²⁰⁹

2.1.5.2. Christians

According to DFAT, the Christian community, which mainly lives in Khartoum, the Nuba Mountains and in the north of the country, makes up about three per cent of the total population.²¹⁰ The former Sudanese government regarded the Arab Muslim identity as the single Sudanese identity and promoted it as such for thirty years.²¹¹ Mossaad Mohamed Ali, director of ACJPS, explains how the issue of religious freedom is bound up with the prevailing view on Sudanese identity and the Islamist agenda of the former regime:

"The issue of religious freedom is bound up with broader social debate about Sudanese identity. Although there is tremendous ethnic and religious diversity in Sudan, the regime has articulated a vision of Sudanese identity as Muslim and Arab and expresses hostility to those who challenge that identity. This also includes Muslims who espouse more heterodox versions of Islam and disagree with the implementation of Islamic law, including corporal punishment. [...]"

The contestation surrounding the implementation of Islamic law, particularly for non-Muslims, was a central part of the North-South civil war which ravaged for over twenty years. [...]"

Since the end of the interim period and the succession of South Sudan in 2011, however, the space offered for diversity of religious practice and belief has been narrowed as the government has sought to pursue its Islamist agenda with new energy."²¹²

Anthropologist and independent researcher Enrico Ille observed forms of systematic and situational discrimination against Christians in Khartoum in 2018:

"An even more complicated issue is Christianity, especially since not all Nuba are Christians (actually only a small minority) and not all Christians are Nuba. [...] there are clear patterns of discrimination against Christians that have been highlighted in several reports and journal articles. Some of this discrimination is systemic - such as the removal of allowing Sunday to be made a holiday in Christian-majority schools, some is situational - such as the targeting or even destruction of churches in specific neighborhoods, some is a combination - such as the observation of some Christian institution by security forces (in my own neighborhood in Omdurman, for instance, in front of a Catholic clinic), or the judiciary's and police's weak support or even open rejection of protests against the expropriation of church land property for the sake of private investors."²¹³

The linguist, anthropologist and Sudan researcher who was contacted by Cedoca in 2018 and wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons notes that religious, ethnic and political characteristics are often interwoven:

²⁰⁸ SIHA, 12/08/2020, [url](#); The Criminal Law Blog, 18/05/2020, [url](#); Ayin Network, 07/08/2020, [url](#); CMI, 07/2020, [url](#); Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 70, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ Radio Dabanga, 14/01/2021, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Australian Government - DFAT, 27/04/2016, pp. 36-37, [url](#)

²¹¹ IRRI, 09/2016, p. 18, [url](#)

²¹² Ali M. M., executive director ACJPS, email, 24/09/2018

²¹³ Ille E., researcher attached to the LOST Research Network, email, 29/10/2018

"A portion of Nuba people are Christian, and Christianity is linked with a troubled status in Sudan. [...] But, in short, being Christian has been cause for specific attacks against churches, and Christian communities struggle to obtain rights to worship, building permits for churches etc. Historically, there have been periods of crackdown when even praying took place in secret because the governments' tolerance for religious pluralism deceased (e.g. during the 1990s) and in 2011-2013. Being Christian has become linked with being in the opposition since the majority of South Sudan is Christian and those whose political affiliations tend towards the SPLA, can be Christian. Of course, there are plenty of Nuba Muslims as well, however, even those supporting the SPLA/SPLA-N."²¹⁴

Freedom of religion is enshrined in the interim constitution of August 2019, as it was in the interim constitution in force since 2005, during the regime of former President al-Bashir.²¹⁵ The interim constitution of August 2019 no longer identifies Islam as Sudan's preferred religion and Sharia law as the basis for legislation. The constitution of August 2019 prohibits forced conversion, discrimination on the grounds of religion and incitement of religious hatred in the media.²¹⁶ Shortly after he took office in September 2019, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announced that the transitional government would tackle discrimination on the grounds of religion. The representation of the Christian communities within the government has improved, not least since the Coptic woman Raja Abdul Masih joined the Sovereign Council.²¹⁷ Between 1999 and 2018 Sudan was on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)'s Country of Particular Concern list, where freedom of religion is "systematically, continually and substantially violated". At the end of December 2019, the US put Sudan in the milder category of Special Watch List.²¹⁸ In February 2020, USCIRF visited Sudan and determined that the transitional government had put an end to the most flagrant forms of religious suppression of the former regime.²¹⁹

On 10 July 2020, the Sovereign Council of Sudan officially abolished the death penalty for apostasy.²²⁰ As far as is known, the government has not introduced any changes as regards the sections of law prohibiting blasphemy.²²¹

The Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) organisation reports in May 2020 that, despite positive developments, various concerns remain regarding religious minority groups, including the burning down of churches, threats and criminal prosecution of church leaders.²²²

The British Upper Tribunal quotes examples of Christians in Khartoum who are experiencing intimidation and restrictions in following their faiths. Religion was, primarily for Christians, an additional risk factor, but there is no persecution or serious ill-treatment of Christians as such, stated the Upper Tribunal in September 2020.²²³

²¹⁴ Linguist, anthropologist and Sudan researcher, email, 08/11/2018

²¹⁵ The East African, 26/08/2019, [url](#)

²¹⁶ Freedom House, 04/03/2020, [url](#); USDOS, 06/2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷ USDOS, 10/06/2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸ USDOS, 10/06/2020, [url](#); USCIRF, 04/09/2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹ USCIRF, s.d. [2020], [url](#)

²²⁰ Radio Dabanga, 13/07/2020, [url](#); BBC, 12/07/2020, [url](#); Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 39-40, [url](#)

²²¹ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, pp. 61-63, [url](#)

²²² A building of the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) in Jabarona in Khartoum was attacked in December 2019 and three times in January 2020. Leaders of the churches were repeatedly threatened by Muslim extremists in the neighbourhood. In February 2020, unidentified perpetrators set fire to a SCOC church in Omdurman. CSW, 01/05/2020, [url](#); Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, pp. 61-63, [url](#)

²²³ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 39-40, [url](#)

2.1.5.3. Students and young people

Various sources report that students from Darfur and the Nuba Mountains experienced discrimination under the former regime of al-Bashir.²²⁴ All the sources consulted agree that critical students were at risk of being monitored and arrested by the security services.²²⁵ Both the security services and the pro-government students spied on the Darfuri students. Numerous sources report that Darfuri students – and Nuba students as well – were suspected of sympathising with rebel movements.²²⁶ In January 2017, Amnesty International (AI) devotes a report to the situation of non-Arab Darfuri students in Khartoum and notes that between 2003 and 2016 at least 10,000 Darfuri students were picked up and jailed by the security services.²²⁷

Before the academic year for universities began in October 2019, the transitional government disbanded the student groups affiliated with the former government party, the National Congress Party (NCP). Hamdok also dismissed 28 rectors and 35 vice-rectors, many of whom had links to the NCP. Nonetheless, universities and colleges remained places of conflict throughout 2019. At the end of October 2019, students with links to the NCP attacked a group of students who supported the transitional government at the Alzaiem Alazhari University. Twenty-seven were injured in the attack.²²⁸ In November 2019, Darfuri students demonstrated against their racist treatment by the university in Dongola (Northern State).²²⁹

The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains says he has no proof that current or former Nuba students are still security service targets as was the case under the previous regime:

“In the past, educated Nuba definitely were [a target of discrimination and persecution]. I know stories and names of people that have been executed, always the educated people. The former regime and military always saw educated people from these areas speaking about liberation, as a threat. In the past there is a history of searching for these people and killing or arresting them. Currently I do not have evidence that this is still going on but it is possible.”²³⁰

In its decision of 1 September 2020, the Upper Tribunal states that the Darfuri or Nuba identity of a student is a relevant factor when determining the risk of persecution or serious ill-treatment.²³¹

Dame Rosalind notes in October 2019 that Nuba youngsters are being recruited by the RSF in the poor outlying districts of Khartoum and Omdurman. Tribal leaders are paid generously by Hemeti to help recruit for the RSF, something they do in their region of origin and within their own community in Khartoum.²³² The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mounts also reports recruitment by the RSF and the SAF. He has this to say about it:

“Recruitment of people from the Nuba Mountains in the army and the RSF is a big issue, especially if conflict in the regions starts again. The RSF is known to grab youngsters – people without family members for example – and to force them to go and fight their own people. [...]

²²⁴ DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, p. 30, [url](#); Al Fanar Media, 04/07/2017, [url](#); NMP, 04/2015, p. 6, [url](#); ACJPS, 04/2017, p. 23, [url](#); Democracy First Group, 01/10/2018, [url](#)

²²⁵ Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, p. 35, [url](#); USDOS, 03/03/2017, [url](#); AI, 22/02/2018, [url](#); UNHRC, 27/07/2017, p. 6, [url](#); HUDO, 11/02/2018, p. 10, [url](#)

²²⁶ DIS, UK Home Office, 01/08/2016, pp. 10, 19, 33, 81, 113 ff., [url](#); AI, 01/2017, pp. 22-25, [url](#); Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 20/06/2017, pp. 46-48, [url](#); NMP, 04/2015, p. 6, [url](#)

²²⁷ AI, 01/2017, [url](#)

²²⁸ Freedom House, 04/03/2020, [url](#); Nederland - Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 66, [url](#)

²²⁹ Freedom House, 04/03/2020, [url](#); Radio Dabanga, 29/11/2019, [url](#)

²³⁰ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²³¹ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 38, [url](#)

²³² Report of Dame Rosalind Marsden dated 09/10/2019, annex to Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 90, [url](#)

RSF is mostly made up by Darfuri/Nuba and Blue Nile people. [...] It [forced recruitment] happens in any place where they [forced recruits] can be taken without repercussion.”²³³

Cedoca found no information about forced recruitment by the RSF in 2020 and 2021 in the sources consulted.²³⁴ This does not alter the fact that forced recruitment might be taking place out of sight of observers and the media. According to the USDOS, the RSF recruited child soldiers in May 2019.²³⁵ A Small Arms Survey report published in June 2020 suggests that the RSF is also recruiting among non-Arab Darfuris, primarily from the Zaghawa group. According to a local source cited in that report, since al-Bashir’s removal, non-Arabs are prepared to join the RSF, primarily for financial reasons.²³⁶

2.2. Elsewhere in Sudan

The conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas are causing internal displacement. Many displaced people are settling in other parts of their regions of origin, in some cases in refugee camps, or leaving for Khartoum. Others are settling in other parts of Sudan or in other countries. This chapter deals with the situation of Darfuri and Nuba in other parts of Sudan, outside the capital. The sources consulted contain little to no information on this subject.

In an email sent on 5 October 2018, Geir Skogseth informs Cedoca that a sizeable number of Nuba live in the Sennar and Nile states:

“It’s clear from IOM’s 2006 household survey that Nubans also form a significant share of IDP households in states outside of Khartoum not currently seeing armed conflict, with the share of IDP households identifying as Nuba varying between 13,6 % in Sennar state and 67,2 % in Nile state”²³⁷.²³⁸

The UK’s Home Office writes after the fact-finding mission of August 2018 that sources consulted indicate that many Darfuri in Gezira state work as farm labourers. Gezira is an agricultural area about 20 km from Khartoum with a population of over four million people, 25% of whom come from Darfur. Many belong to African tribes, including Tama, Bergo, Gimir, Tongor, Salamat, Fur and Zaghawa tribes, as well as several Arab tribes.²³⁹

During an interview with Cedoca on 5 February 2021, Bushra Gamar of HUDO says that Darfuri and Nuba are settling outside Khartoum in towns and cities such as Port Sudan, Atbara and Kosti, and in El-Gadaref (Al-Qadarif) and Gezira states. He concludes that Darfuris and Nuba are settling in places where there is a great demand for manual labour:

“You can find Nuba and Darfuri in the whole of Sudan. The Nuba are working in the business of loading and unloading. That is why they are present in Port Sudan in big numbers. They are also present in Atbara where they do labor work in the railway corporation. Many Nuba live in Medani, a town 136 km outside of Khartoum.

You find Darfuri in El-Gadaref working as labourer at businesses and in agriculture. In El Gezira, there is also a big agricultural projects [sic] where Darfuri are working as laborers. Most of Darfuri and Nuba there stay in camps (known by name of *kanabi*) within the agricultural fields. Now, the residents of these camps, some fifth generation laborers, are demanding basic rights

²³³ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²³⁴ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, [url](#); ARC, 03/2021, p. 40, [url](#)

²³⁵ USDOS, 25/06/2020, [url](#)

²³⁶ Small Arms Survey, 06/2020, [url](#)

²³⁷ Skogseth G. refers tot he following publication: IOM, 09/2006

²³⁸ Skogseth G., Sudan expert from Landinfo, email, 05/10/2018

²³⁹ UK Home Office, 11/2018, p. 17, [url](#)

and have formed the Kanabi coalition. There are many conflicts witnessed between African and Arab groups in these regions in which some camps were burnt by the Arab groups.

In North Sudan, you can find Darfuri and Nuba only in small amount (beyond Atbara, in Karima Dongula etc.)

Generally, you will find Darfuri and Nuba where the manual labour is needed like in Kosti and Rabak of White Nile State, attracted by the work in Kenana and Assalaya sugar companies farms.”²⁴⁰

The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains also makes reference to employment:

“In El Obeid there are many Nuba, in Kosti too [...] They settle there for work and family. El Obeid is closer to the Nuba Mountains. There is movement and trade between Kosti and the cities in the Nuba Mountains. People can travel there with motorbike.”²⁴¹

Darfuris and Nuba organise themselves as a community and live isolated lives, says Bushra Gamar. Wealthy Darfuri and Nuba are also settling in residential areas.

“Everywhere they live/settle, they organize as a community, living together, somehow isolated. The small numbers among them in town or residential areas are the wealthy people.”²⁴²

In an interview on 12 February 2021, the Sudanese journalist and security analyst tells Cedoca that Darfuris and Nuba are subjected to racial profiling. Individuals are sometimes the targets, experiencing arbitrary detention and being addressed in coarse language, but sometimes an entire community can suffer this, as was the case in El-Gadaref and Kassala:

“Generally speaking [...] [they] have been subjected and more likely to be subjected to racial profiling (for being non-Arab), arbitrary detention, torture and death. While civil society activists, journalists and bloggers alike face high threats by virtue of their involvement in pro-rebel/opposition activities, members of these groups are sometimes targeted collectively on racial ground. Examples of such treatment are manifested by attacks against the Nuba people of South Kordofan in the eastern region in the cities of Al-Qadarif and Port Sudan and Kassala. The Nuba members were viewed as ‘outsiders’ by the indigenous inhabitants in the cities during a cycle of intercommunal violence between July 2019 and October 2020. The government security authorities remained passive towards the violence and did little to stop acts of killings, looting and burning of homes.”²⁴³

In May 2020 people of the Beni Amer and Habab tribes clashed with people from the Nuba Mountains in Kassala. Eight people died and another eighty were injured. Reconciliation talks between tribal leaders and the deployment of additional security staff restored peace to the town.²⁴⁴ At least 25 people lost their lives during the violence in Port Sudan between people of the Beni Amer tribe and people from the Nuba Mountains in August 2020. People complained about the authorities’ inadequate response, reports Radio Dabanga.²⁴⁵ Other contacts also refer to inter-community violence in 2019 and 2020 in Al-Gadaref and Kassala. Albaqir Mukhtar, director of KACE, has the following to say about this:

“The situation [for Darfuri and Nuba] is even worse [than in Khartoum], especially in Kassala and Port Sudan– there have been tribal clashes recently, tribalism is high in these regions – there is

²⁴⁰ Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²⁴¹ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²⁴² Gamar B., executive director of the NGO HUDO, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²⁴³ Sudanese journalist and security analyst living in Brussels, email, 12/02/2021

²⁴⁴ Radio Dabanga, 23/09/2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ Radio Dabanga, 12/08/2020, [url](#)

no rule of law like in Khartoum, and not as much exposure and transparency since it is far from the center.”²⁴⁶

The founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains says other residents of Port Sudan regard the large Nuba community in the city as outsiders and that this community experiences racism, e.g. when it comes to access to healthcare:

“There are also many Nuba in Port Sudan. When large populations of Nuba left [after the signing of the CPA in 2005], others took some of the areas in the slums [...] When the second war started, in 2011, those people returned to escape the bombing in the Nuba Mountains [...] Recently there was conflict in the east, in Port Sudan. [...]

Racism stems into health care. Nuba are not necessarily offered place, they are not treated equally as far as care goes within hospitals. Especially in Port Sudan when these issues were ongoing, Nuba wounded in the fighting had the feeling not being treated the same way, or not being treated at all. This goes back to the old racism”²⁴⁷

2.3. Treatment upon return

The sources consulted contain no or only scant information about the treatment of returning Sudanese by the authorities on their return to Sudan since the transitional government came to power in August 2019. There is a similar lack of information as regards Darfuris and Nuba who return to Sudan.

In a case heard in 2016, the British Upper Tribunal considered that the applicant, a failed asylum seeker, did not run a risk of serious harm simply on account of his forced return or the rejection of his asylum application. The Upper Tribunal argued in the same case that if problems were indeed systematically encountered by forced returnees, this information would have filtered out. The Upper Tribunal also referred to the fact that Sudanese refugees are returning voluntarily on the strength of agreements with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and that this does not suggest a generalised risk.²⁴⁸ In its decision of September 2020, the Upper Tribunal finds that an individual of Nuba ethnicity is not at real risk of persecution or inhuman treatment on return – whether in the Nuba Mountains, Khartoum or Khartoum International Airport – simply because of his or her ethnicity.²⁴⁹ The Upper Tribunal goes on to say, though, that it is likely that a person would be questioned about his or her activities since leaving Sudan upon returning. Other than this, there is an absence of evidence to show that a failed asylum seeker, were he to be detained upon arrival in Khartoum, would attract the attention of the NISS or undergo treatment that would place him in danger simply on account of being a failed asylum seeker, finds the Upper Tribunal.²⁵⁰

Between 31 August 2019 and 26 February 2021, IOM assisted with the voluntary return of 1,308 Sudanese migrants. The vast majority of the returnees came from Libya, Egypt, Niger and Chad. Three people assisted by IOM returned from European countries, specifically, Belgium, Denmark and the United Kingdom.²⁵¹ A further twenty people returned voluntarily to Sudan from the Netherlands in 2020. Twelve people returned in 2019 and thirteen in 2018. Between August 2019 and December 2020 not a single person was forcibly returned from the Netherlands to Sudan. There are no published figures of forced return and voluntary return from other countries. A confidential source

²⁴⁶ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

²⁴⁷ Founder of a press agency in the Nuba Mountains, telephone conversation, 05/02/2021

²⁴⁸ Upper Tribunal, 14/04/2016, par. 198, 222, 250, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, pp. 61, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, p. 25, [url](#)

²⁵¹ IOM, s.d. [26/02/2021], [url](#)

told the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs that there had been two to three cases of forced return from Germany in the reporting period. According to the source, no irregularities were identified and the returnees were able to leave the airport without any problems.²⁵²

In its official country report of March 2021 the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that no, or hardly any, problems involving returnees have been identified, but that this does not mean returnees will not encounter difficulties. For instance, there have been some reports of interrogations, detention and possible extortion of people upon their return to Sudan.²⁵³

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide, the Sudanese Christian business man Ashraf Samir Mousad Obid returned to Sudan on 27 January 2020 after having fled the country in 2015. He is reported by Christian organisations to have fled at the time because he had experienced intimidation by the NISS after he sold a plot of land to a local church. The GIS had given an assurance that all the names which had previously been on a travel restriction list had been removed and that those who had been targets of the former regime of al-Bashir would be able to travel freely. When he arrived at the airport, Obid was arrested by the GIS only to be released a short time later. The Ministry of Internal Affairs informed him on 30 January 2020 that he could not leave Sudan.²⁵⁴

An article from the French media site Médiapart dated February 2020 mentions three cases of people returning from France, in August, November and December 2019. The article reveals that the August and December 2019 returnees were forcibly expelled under escort of French police officers. According to the article, all three returnees were interrogated at the airport about their trips to Europe and the accounts they had given as asylum seekers. The article states that the interrogations were carried out by the GIS. One of the three returnees was arrested the day after his arrival and held for four days. According to the article, that returnee was not subjected to any physical violence, although he was interrogated twice a day about this trip to France and the relationships he maintained in France. The article also mentions that this returnee has reportedly disappeared.²⁵⁵

In an email to Cedoca sent on 15 March 2021 Maddy Crowther refers to the case of a man who returned to Sudan in 2018, where he was threatened and forced to lie low until early 2020.²⁵⁶ She notes the following about this case in her report of January 2019 *Risks on return for Darfuris in Sudan*:

"I am in contact with a gentleman from a prominent Darfuri tribe who was a member of a Government Ministry when he resided in Sudan. He subsequently had to flee the country. Following his return he was handed by the multiple guards accompanying him to NISS. He has claimed that there was rough treatment [...]. In the time since he has essentially been forced into house arrest due to threats made against him by security forces, who have been making regular enquiries as to his whereabouts with known relatives. NISS have told him he cannot leave Khartoum and return to his family in Darfur."²⁵⁷

The man was eventually taken back by the UK Home Office, which acknowledged that the man had been wrongly been repatriated. In January 2020, *The Guardian* covered the difficulties the failed asylum seeker had experienced in Khartoum. The man gave evidence about threats and intimidation directed at his family and friends in the capital.²⁵⁸ Crowther notes that the mere presence of the security staff who accompany an individual upon his or her arrival at the airport put that individual in

²⁵² Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 107, [url](#)

²⁵³ CSW, 01/05/2020, [url](#); Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 108, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ CSW, 01/05/2020, [url](#); Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 108, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ Médiapart, 11/02/2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ Crowther M., executive director of Waging Peace, email, 15/03/2021

²⁵⁷ Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 01/2019, p. 36, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ The Guardian, 17/01/2020, [url](#)

danger. In her report of January 2019, interviewed Sudanese say they would prefer to be sent back without officials accompanying so as to avoid attracting attention to themselves.²⁵⁹

The other people contacted and consulted by Cedoca for the purposes of this Focus say they have no knowledge of any Sudanese, whether or not voluntary returnees, having experienced problems at the airport or after their arrival since the coup of April 2019 and the formation of a transitional government in August 2019.²⁶⁰ At the same time, Albaqir Mukhtar states that this does not necessarily mean that there have been no problems. For instance, it cannot be ruled out that certain people, with a low profile and who lack a strong and articulate network, are experiencing difficulties and that this is going unnoticed by the action groups and the media.²⁶¹

According to a confidential source from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the transitional government takes no action against people who criticise it whilst abroad, but it is certainly possible that individuals, especially those with links to the former regime of al-Bashir, will take action when a person returns. When asked about this, the source said he knew of no instances of problems of this kind having occurred after the transitional government took up office.²⁶² Salma Abdalla notes more or less the same thing in an email sent to Cedoca on 5 March 2021:

"The composition, practices and mentality of the security forces continue as it used to be during the former regime, and they are still far from understanding basic principles of human rights. [...] Sudanese nationals (failed asylum seekers or others) who are being forcibly or voluntarily returned to Sudan through Khartoum International Airport fate should be a source of serious concern."²⁶³

In a subsequent email dated 22 April 2021 she adds the following:

"[Failed] asylum seekers, particularly from Darfur and Nuba mountains, are at risk of maltreatment and being discriminated against by security personnel. [...] [The] security service has always been a bigoted entity against the people of Darfur and Nuba mountains. The reforms of the security forces have not been implemented and the discrimination against people from marginalized groups continues to be practiced. Maltreatment by the security forces ranges from harassment, assault, interrogation to torture in detention. There are numerous reports about individuals being killed during 'investigations' in the detention by the security service."²⁶⁴

Salma Abdalla goes on to refer to the well-documented case of Baha Eldeen Nory, who died in detention under torture by RSF soldiers, and to the use of force against peaceful demonstrators by the security services on 3 June 2019.²⁶⁵ Cedoca found no further examples of people having died violent deaths in detention at the hands of the security services in the period after the transitional government came to power in August 2019 in the sources consulted and within the period in question.

Dame Rosalind, who was consulted by the Upper Tribunal in August 2019, argues that Nuba returning from abroad are likely to be viewed as politically active and run an increased risk of poor

²⁵⁹ Crowther M., executive director of Waging Peace, email, 15/03/2021; Waging Peace (Crowther M.), 01/2019, pp. 34-51, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 89, [url](#); Chair of a Sudanese women's organisation, telephone conversation, 25/02/2021; Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

²⁶¹ Mukhtar A., director of KACE, telephone conversation, 19/02/2021

²⁶² Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 89, [url](#)

²⁶³ Abdalla S., email, 05/03/2021

²⁶⁴ Abdalla S., email, 22/04/2021

²⁶⁵ Abdalla S., email, 22/04/2021 en 26/04/2021; ACJPS, 30/12/2020, [url](#)

treatment in Khartoum as long as members of the former regime continue to play an active part in transitional government institutions and security bodies.²⁶⁶

In its official country report of March 2021, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that it is unclear whether the circumstances at Khartoum International Airport changed after the transitional government took office in August 2019. Nor is it clear whether the treatment people receive from the GIS is any different from treatment they received in the past from the NISS.²⁶⁷

The Sudanese journalist and security analyst who lives in Brussels writes in an email sent on 12 February 2021 that returnees with valid documents will not experience any difficulties upon arrival at Khartoum airport:

"The procedures at the airport are somehow standard. If such returnees can produce valid travel documents that authorise entry to the country, they would face no problems. For instance, if a voluntary returnee possesses a temporary travel document or laissez-passer- that is issued to them by a competence Sudanese authority - they could use that to proof their identity at the airport and enter the country."²⁶⁸

The journalist and security analyst refers to the tense situation in February 2021 which prompted the Sudanese authorities to be extra vigilant when checking documents because of the fear of Somali or Ethiopian rebels trying to enter Sudan:

"It is important to note that the new government in Khartoum is a bit concerned about some nationals from the neighbouring east African, including Somalia and Ethiopia entering the country on fake documents or by falsely claiming to be Sudanese. The fact that many of them speak Sudanese Arabic and look similar in physical features make it hard sometime to identify them. In the wake of the ongoing military confrontation with neighbouring Ethiopia over border dispute, the Sudanese army and its military intelligence in particular are working very closely with the rest of border agencies to screen anyone entering the country. The Sudanese government is also trying to chase and identify hundreds of Ethiopian rebel fighters from the Tigray region who crossed the border into Sudan since October 2020 when they staged a rebellion against the central government in Addis Ababa. All Sudanese borders, including Khartoum Airports are tightly controlled in terms of identity and passport control. For the Airport authorities, it would not be sufficient for someone to claim to be a Sudanese national - specially if they were forced to return to the country without proper documents."²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), 01/09/2020, p. 17, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ Nederland – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 05/03/2021, p. 107, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ Sudanese journalist and security analyst living in Brussels, email, 12/02/2021 en 26/02/2021

²⁶⁹ Sudanese journalist and security analyst living in Brussels, email, 12/02/2021

Summary

Sudan has nearly 43 million inhabitants, with around 8 million living in the urban agglomeration of Khartoum. Estimates of the population in the five federal states of Darfur range from 7.5 million to 10 million. As for the Two Areas, South Kordofan has an estimated population of between 1.4 million and 2.5 million people, with slightly more than 800,000 people living in Blue Nile.

Khartoum is a rapidly growing city and is experiencing increasing inward migration, driven by the poor economic situation, the centralisation of services in the capital and continuing insecurity in outlying regions including Darfur and the Nuba Mountains. Estimates of the number of Darfuris and Nuba living in Khartoum range from hundreds of thousands to five million. There is undoubtedly a sizeable population of Nuba and Darfuris living in Khartoum. Many displaced persons live in poor shanty towns in an area known as the *black belt* on the outskirts of the city where is virtually no infrastructure for water supply, electricity, healthcare or education.

The Darfuri and Nuba communities in Khartoum are ethnically, socially and economically diverse. The sources consulted generally agree that people's financial situations will determine their living conditions, including the part of the city in which they live and their access to public services such as education and healthcare. Some sources mention discrimination as regards the issue of identity documents and in the labour market, which leads to many ending up in the informal sector. They mention the part that officials of the former regime who have remained in post play in this. Others cite the economic crisis, the lack of the necessary skills and a network as the reason for the difficulties in finding a job in the formal sector.

Notions of Arab supremacy and the condescending attitude towards communities from marginalised regions, embedded among the traditional Sudanese elite and deeply rooted in Sudanese society, continue to exist and, according to many sources, this situation is unlikely to change in the near future. The extent and nature of the discrimination a person may face depends on a combination of connected and mutually reinforcing factors such as ethnicity, origin, network, economic status, politics or religious profile.

Under al-Bashir's regime, both Arab and non-Arab opponents of the Sudanese regime, e.g. human rights activists, critical journalists, politically active students, lawyers, tribal leaders and actual and perceived sympathisers of rebel movements risked repression by the authorities and the now-disbanded NISS in particular. It remains unclear how bodies such as the GIS and the RSF are treating Nuba and Darfuris and whether the transitional government is able to exercise effective control over the conduct of the security sector. Some contacts say that political activism aimed at the old regime is a critical factor for personal jeopardy rather than ethnicity or origin.

The ACJPS has heard of no incidents of people having been persecuted by the security services because of their real or supposed actual or presumed sympathy or involvement with the armed rebels in the conflict zones since the revolution of 2019. Several sources cite anecdotal reports of harsher treatment being meted out by security services in the districts where Darfuris and Nuba live.

Darfuris and Nuba elsewhere in Sudan may be subjected to racial profiling. Individuals are sometimes the targets, experiencing arbitrary detention and being addressed in coarse language, but sometimes an entire community can suffer this, as illustrated by the outbreaks of violence in Kassala in May 2020 and Port Sudan in August 2020

The sources consulted contain no or only scant information about the treatment of returning Sudanese by the authorities on their return to Sudan since the transitional government came to power in August 2019. Since then, hardly any problems involving returnees have been identified, although there are some reports about interrogations, detention and possible extortion of people

upon their return to Sudan. It remains unclear whether the circumstances at Khartoum International Airport have changed since August 2019.

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