

STATE PROFILE | NORTH DARFUR

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KEY FACTS



91,650
children under-five are severely acutely malnourished



157,264
school-aged children are out of school



1:10 children die during childbirth



898,931
people lack access to safe water



709,925
people do not have access to sanitation

SITUATION IN NORTH DARFUR

North Darfur state is one of the eighteen states of Sudan, and among the worst performing states in terms of critical child indicators. According to the MICS (2014) the state scores particularly low on the following indicators: birth registration, early marriage for girls, net intake rate in primary education, primary completion rate, under-five mortality rate, measles immunisation coverage, stunting, exclusive breastfeeding, use of improved drinking water source, and use of improved sanitation facilities. On other child indicators, North Darfur scores higher, including primary completion rate (88.7 per cent), stunting (45.9 per cent) and exclusive breastfeeding (75.6 per cent).

Demography

The population of North Darfur state is 2,827,155 people (1,392,545 women and 1,434,610 men)¹. There are 1.3 million children (aged 0 -18) in North Darfur, and 631,696 youth (aged 18-24). The vast majority of the population has significant humanitarian and development needs. The major ethnic groups are the Berti, Fur, Medob, Rezigat Abala, Zagawa, and Zayadia.

Refugees: 33,410

After the separation of South Sudan and the subsequent civil war, many people fled to Sudan with the majority staying in the border regions. Currently, 18,480 refugees (17,458 in Al Iait and 1,022 in El Fasher) live in North Darfur.

IDPs: 891,378

Conflict, floods and drought have displaced communities. Currently, more than 528,038 internally displaced persons have found shelter in North Darfur. The ZamZam IDP camp is the second largest camp in Darfur, hosting about 121,000 people.

Returnees: 301,151

With changing conflict zones and shifting front lines, 34,435 households (185,560 individuals) decided to return to their location of origin. However, security is tenuous, and returnees often lack access to basic services in their communities, with infrastructure being destroyed or neglected in hard-to-reach or abandoned areas.

Host communities.

More than one million people of the local population living in areas hosting refugees, IDPs or returnees. The additional burden on the already overstretched social services make these communities extra vulnerable.



Geography

North Darfur is located in the northwest of Sudan and - with more than 296,420 square kilometers - occupies more than half of the Darfur territory. The population density is 9.1 persons per square kilometer. The state borders Chad and Libya, as well as the states of Central, East, South and West Darfur, North and West Kordofan and Northern State. North Darfur includes parts of the mountainous Jebel Marra region to the south. The state consists of 18 localities: El Fasher, El Malha, Mellit, Sarf Omra, Alseraf, Kekabiya, Kutum, Alkoma, Um Kedada, Kalamando, Altewash, El Lait, Alwaha, Um Brou, Karnoi, El Tina, Dar El Salam and Tawila.

Climate

The North Darfur climate is characterised by a semi-desert in the middle and dry savannah in the south of the state, with low rainfall (average of 195 mm/year) and unfavourable geological structure to hold groundwater. Climate change has resulted in increasing droughts, affecting the livelihoods of many people living in the state. In the north of the state, acute and chronic food insecurity continues to threaten people's lives and livelihoods, and is driven by prolonged conflict, environmental deterioration and disasters. Climate projections suggest that crop failures - due to inadequate or highly variable rainfall - could increase with 70 per cent by 2050, and that might lead to an increasing number of residents (particularly farmers) to migrate to other states to search for better livelihood opportunities.²

Economy

The main stay of North Darfur's economy is traditional agriculture and livestock. Agriculture is for 80 per cent rain-fed, for 15 per cent done through inundation irrigation, and for five per cent through canal-irrigation. With most of the land arable, agriculture produces good yields of sorghum and millet for local consumption and export to other states. Cash crops include ground nuts, sesame, kerkadeh (hibiscus), beans, watermelon and gum arabic. Agriculture and animal husbandry have been the state's main exports, and the base for much of El Fasher's manufacturing industry, for example the processing of oil from groundnuts and sesame. The absence of economic opportunities and the country-wide economic crisis continue to represent significant challenges for the Darfuri population. Durable solutions for the displaced and returnees are hindered by lack of livelihood opportunities, limited access to basic services and natural resources (e.g., land and water). In addition, insecurity in areas of return and insufficient policies and assistance to vulnerable populations hamper local integration and resettlement of displaced and conflict-affected populations.

1 Central Bureau of Statistics

2 National Adaptation Plan Committee

HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Continued Population Movement

Prolonged and sporadic conflict over many years - largely concentrated in Jebel Marra area in the south of North Darfur - is the result of several factors: the presence of an armed group (SLA-AW) that continues to fight the government and have refused to engage in any peace process, including boycotting the ongoing negotiations in Juba; fighting between factions within the armed group, and intercommunal conflict driven primarily by competition over natural resources as well as shortages of economic and livelihood opportunities. Some of these tensions are underpinned by environmental factors, including climate change, desertification due to cutting of trees for charcoal production and brick molding, forest fires, low annual rainfall and reduced size of cultivated land due to insecurity.

The impact of conflict on children and their communities has been profound, including an increase in the number of female-headed households, with high number of populations fleeing areas of violence. Internally displaced persons are largely displaced due to conflict caused by competition between farmers and pastoralists over scarce resources.

North Darfur hosts the second largest internally displaced population in the country, with an estimated 528,038 IDPs living in camps. Zamzam IDP camp - near the state capital of El Fasher - is the second largest IDP camp in Darfur, hosting about 121,000 people according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Patterns of movement have changed in 2020 and are likely to further change in 2021. The influx of internally displaced persons seen in previous years has started to cease in 2019 with the relative improvement in security situation, triggering the return of more IDPs to their original villages. Inadequate housing for IDPs and returnees in their villages and areas of origin (together with access to land) has been identified as a major obstacle to return and therefore to the achievement of durable solutions. Besides, returnees often claim that no support has been provided by local and state authorities, which do not have the necessary capacity and financial resources to ensure that return take place in safety and dignity.



Poor Child Indicators

North Darfur state's nutrition indicators are among the worst in Sudan (MICS 2014). Given that Sudan has witnessed a continued decline in under-five mortality rates, it is of great concern that North Darfur is the only state that recorded a sharp increase (of 69 to 90 deaths per 1,000 live births which is way above the Sudan average of 68) between 2010 and 2014. The state also has low performance in measles immunisation coverage (68 per cent against Sudan average of 81 per cent), and water and sanitation coverages (of 50 per cent and 12 per cent against Sudan averages of 68 per cent and 33 per cent respectively), which are critical to child survival. In addition, neonatal mortality remained high at around 44 deaths per 1,000 live births, denoting poor maternal and early childhood health care. Moreover, the total number of children (aged 6-14 years) enrolled in basic schools in North Darfur was 427,430 (49 per cent girls), constituting 84.7 per cent of the total number of school-age children, positioning North Darfur on the fourth lowest rank nationwide on out-of-school children's rates. However, 157,264 (82,070 boys, 75,194 girls) 36 per cent of school-age children are still out-of-school and in need of urgent interventions.

Although the Government of Sudan, international and national partners, communities and families made a noteworthy effort to address these low indicators, an integrated comprehensive approach in response is required where multiple services are delivered in an integrated manner, tackling root causes towards durable solutions.

Conflict and Peacebuilding

Absence of justice institutions, including weak justice and correctional systems, insufficient rural courts to mediate local conflicts and tensions are a major challenge affecting people in North Darfur. Weak state institutions also have a significant impact on land dispute resolution mechanisms and relations between communities, in addition to hampering the creation of conditions for a conducive protection environment. In this context, the Government of Sudan's institutions lack the basic capacities and financial resources to prevent and respond to protection-related issues and concerns, which translates in weak capacity in adhering to humanitarian principles, human rights and international humanitarian law.

The deteriorating economic situation, high unemployment rates, lack of livelihood opportunities (especially among most vulnerable individuals such as young people and women) as well as presence of armed groups (especially in parts of North Darfur within the Jebel Marra area) as well as in neighbouring Libya are other relevant factors that contribute to rising tensions in several parts of North Darfur.

The focus of UNICEF is to uphold the rights of children and women by supporting services that contribute to social cohesion and resilience while also supporting young people's role in their development and that of their community.

KEY RESULTS IN 2021

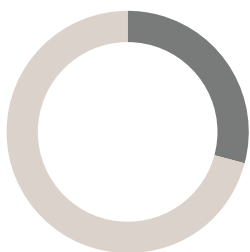
Unicef budget for North Darfur:

USD 8,356,400

as of 1 April 2022

Funds received ▶ **29%**

Funding gap ▶ **71%**



40,581 severely acutely malnourished children (SAM) (under-five) in North Darfur were treated.

135,525 children were reached with polio vaccinations, and **114,442** children with measles vaccinations.

49 communities in North Darfur were declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF), including El Fasher.

80,270 people were provided with sanitation facilities.

Access to learning opportunities was enhanced for **63,474** children (**32,279** boys, **31,195** girls).

600 teachers (**322** women and **278** men) received training to improve their teaching and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

44,608 children benefited from psychosocial support services, children with special needs were referred to specialized services.

2,170 vulnerable children benefited from legal support services, including services related to gender-based violence, in Family and Child Protection Units (FCPU).

81 unaccompanied and separated children were reunified with their families.

200 adolescents benefited from social entrepreneurship training and were provided with seed funding to run small microfinance activities.