

STATE PROFILE | WEST DARFUR

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KEY FACTS



12,500
children under-five are severely acutely malnourished



84,907
school-aged children are out-of-school



Up to **60,516**
children under-five have not been vaccinated against preventable diseases



450,250
million people have no access to sanitation



700,350
people lack access to safe water

SITUATION IN WEST DARFUR

Demography¹

West Darfur has a little over 1.8 million inhabitants. It is the third biggest of Darfur's five states with around 12 per cent of the population categorised as internally displaced. There are 755,700 children (aged 0-18) in West Darfur, and 215,934 youth (aged 18-24). The majority of the population of the state do not enjoy their full rights and humanitarian and development needs are significant. The major ethnic groups are Aarb, Bargo, Dago, Eringa, Fallata, Fur, Howsaa, Masalit, Marariet, Misseriya-Jebel, Moon, Tama, Zaghawa.

Refugees: 448

There is no refugee camp in West Darfur State, however, UNHCR registers and verified a small number of refugees, while fluctuating numbers of unregistered refugees find shelter in temporary settlements.

IDPs: 323,469

Conflict, floods, and drought have displaced communities. Many of the IDPs lack access to basic social services.

Returnees: 84,485

The volatile context has led to thousands of people returning to their place 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, returnees sometimes re-enter the IDP community.

Host communities

Many communities in West Darfur are hosting IDPs and returnees. The additional burden on the already overstretched social services makes these communities extra vulnerable to shocks and stresses, and commonly causes tension within and between these groups.



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Geography

The state of West Darfur is located in the far west of Sudan and has eight localities. It borders the states of North Darfur to the northwest and Central Darfur to the southeast, as well as Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) to the West on a 750 kilometres long border. The state covers 23,550 square kilometers with a population density of 22 persons per square kilometer. The capital of the state is El Geneina (also a locality) with 538,390 inhabitants. The eight (8) localities are: Beida, Forbaranga, Geneina, Habila, Jebel Moon and Kerenik, Kulbus, and Sirba.

Climate

Several vulnerability indices rank Sudan among the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate variability and change. Many parts of Sudan, including Darfur, have increased frequency of droughts, desertification, and high rainfall variability over the past few decades, which contribute to the deteriorating socio-economic situation of communities and households. Desertification has been a significant stress factor in pastoralist societies and contributed to inter-communal tensions. Besides, acute, and chronic food insecurity continues to threaten people's lives and livelihoods and is driven by prolonged conflict, environmental deterioration, and disasters. As long ago as 2007, research carried-out by the UN Environment Programme found that - with rainfall down by up to 30 per cent over 40 years and the Sahara advancing by well over a mile every year - tensions in the Sahel and specifically Darfur were increasing between farmers and herders over disappearing pasture and evaporating water holes.

Economy

West Darfur's economy relies on agriculture and livestock with 80 per cent of the population engaged in these sectors, practicing traditional rainwater-dependent methods to grow largely wheat, beans, groundnuts, sorghum, millet and sesame. There are no large farm estates in West Darfur, most farms work on a self-sufficiency basis. The remainder of the population is made-up of pastoral groups (around 15 per cent), and those involved in trade (around 5 per cent). The latter is engaged in trading crops, including sugar, and other food and non-food items brought from Khartoum to sell to Chad and bordering states. With the majority relying on subsistence farming, it is estimated that around 54 per cent of the population are food insecure, and that more than 100,000 (7 per cent) face emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity.² The rapid increase in food prices (55 per cent inflation in 2019), together with a fuel shortage, is exacerbating the existing challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

2 WFP Comprehensive Food Security Analysis 2019

HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Ethnic Conflict



In West Darfur, tension and conflict between the indigenous Darfuri farming people and the nomadic herder population is the main source of the significant displacement in the state. Intercommunal tensions are commonly caused by competition over land and natural resources. The main conflict triggers include accusations that land is occupied illegally by Arab nomads, control over water sources, and pasture and crop destruction during the farming season (November and December) by animals owned by nomadic herders. Problems relating to land tenure and the management of natural resources are exacerbated by differing customary, statutory, and religious legal systems of ownership.

Early 2021 clashes erupted in the Krinding area of Geneina town. Since April 2021, inter-communal conflict has escalated in the Hay Al Jebel area of Geneina town, resulting in additional displacement. There are 149,647 individuals (29,975 households) seeking shelter in Geneina and its surrounding villages. The internally displaced person (IDP) caseload was displaced from Krinding IDP camps (37%), Hay Al Jebel area (27%), Sultan House area (10%) and other sites nearby (26%). The numbers of IDPs are slowly decreasing as displaced households are slowly returning to their locations of origin as the security situation stabilises. Based on a ranking scale, the three main priority needs for the displaced caseload in Geneina town are WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), food and emergency shelter. On the other hand, the three main priority needs for the displaced caseload in the villages surrounding Al Geneina town are food, non-food items (cooking utensils) and WASH.

Return to villages, durable stability and peace, is dependent not only on the area being more secure, but also on the provision of basic services, resolution to enduring land issues, and those displaced having confidence in their ability to rebuild communities and livelihoods.

Continued Population Movement

As reflected above, IDPs, and the frequency of the cross-border population movement with Chad and Central African Republic (those temporarily fleeing conflict and unrest or returning home to Darfur) has dramatically increased the humanitarian needs that continually strain the capacities of the local community, government, UN agencies and NGOs. Maintaining service provision for IDP's in their place of displacement (many have been living in camps for several years and recently in schools and government institutions), as well as supporting services for 'returnees' to return to their area of origin requires additional resources as well as agile and coordinated efforts between all stakeholders to identify and work toward durable solutions to address these issues.

Conflict and Peacebuilding

One of the greatest bottlenecks for sustaining peace and contributing to the sustainable development in West Darfur State is the ongoing latent and manifest conflicts, socio-political unrest, and inter-tribal fighting. While, for instance, some IDP communities continue to return to their original villages on a seasonal basis to farm their lands, they live for much of the year in 'unsettled' status elsewhere. A lasting return will not happen without the strengthening of conditions for what has been described as a 'safe return', including the provision of basic services. One of the key elements required for this to take place is the establishment of durable solution for the displaced, strengthened governance - including access to services, as well as a culture of peace and respect for rights. In 2021, UNICEF partnered with UNHCR and UNDP to implement a Peacebuilding Fund Project (PBF) in West Darfur; the agency has also committed to make significant investment in building capacity of UNICEF staff and partners in peacebuilding, conflict-sensitive programming as well as climate change adaptation. The focus of UNICEF is to uphold the rights of young people by supporting services that contribute to social cohesion and resilience while also supporting young people's role in their own development, and that of their community.

The state has limited institutional capacities and relies heavily on support of the UN and international aid organisations for responding to emergencies and the delivery of basic services. UNICEF is responding to the needs of children and women through an integrated and multi-sectoral approach that promotes strong links between humanitarian and development activities. The aim is to meet the immediate (emergency) and longer-term needs of affected populations; to do this, UNICEF is supporting the strengthening of local capacities, systems, and services.

KEY RESULTS IN 2021

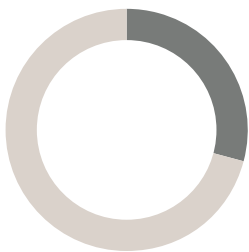
Unicef budget for North Darfur:

USD 14,824,348

as of 1 April 2022

Funds received ▶ **20%**

Funding gap ▶ **80%**



11,523 severely acute malnourished (SAM) children were treated in 78 out-patient therapeutic programme (OTPs) and eight stabilisation centers.

405,180 bed nets (long-lasting insecticidal nets) were distributed.

201,006 children received polio vaccination and vitamin A supplementation, and **42,222** children received measles vaccination.

35 communities in West Darfur were declared as open defecation free (ODF). A total of **27,200** people was reached with sanitation facilities.

19,648 girls and boys were reached with learning materials and **20,493** children gained access to safe learning environments in 2020. Furthermore, **10** classrooms were constructed, and **30** classrooms were rehabilitated.

Capacity -building support was provided to **1,100** teachers, and **748** members of parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and school improvement committees with the aim of improving the education system.

19,080 children received psychosocial support and **472** child cases were diverted outside the formal judiciary system to be addressed locally.

83 unaccompanied or separated children were reunified with their families.