

## CAUSES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN SUDAN

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### ABSTRACT

*Sudan is home to more internally displaced persons than any other country in the world. Internal displacement has been recognized during the late 1980s and became prominent on the international agenda in the 1990s. This paper attempts to shed light on the causes and socio-economic consequences of internal displacement in Sudan. The study relies heavily on secondary data. It finds that displacement in Sudan is caused by conflict, natural disasters (floods, droughts and desertification) and development projects. There were 3.3 million people displaced by conflict in the country as of the end of 2016. Displacement leads to child homelessness, psychological stress on the displaced women, increase of the displaced women's responsibilities for providing to their families, appearance of families without men-breadwinners and great reliance on aid and relief. It causes loss of properties and income sources, poor health services, concrete shift in consumption patterns and increase in school dropouts. Displacement threatens food security, deprives people of livelihoods and access to land and other natural resources. It is recommended that forced displacement should be prevented and IDPs are to be settled and integrated into local communities. Durable solutions should be adopted and governance reform and national dialogue are necessary for ending the conflict and achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace.*

**Keywords:** *Causes, Consequences, Displacement, Sudan.*

### INTRODUCTION

Sudan is a country in Northern Africa. It is bordered by Egypt to the north, the red sea, Eritrea, and Ethiopia to the east, South Sudan to the South, the Central Africa Republic to the Southwest, Chad to the west and Libya to the northwest. It is the third largest country in Africa. The Rive Nile divides the country into eastern and western halves. Sudan's population was estimated at 39.6 million in 2016. It is characterized by different climatic zones and all of them are liable to desertification which is regarded as an obstacle to achieving sustainable development (Maha and Mustafa, 2015). Sudan has experienced over two decades of violent conflict ending with the signing of a peace deal in Nairobi on January 9, 2005(Sulaiman, 2014). Internal displacement has been recognized during the late 1980s and became prominent on the international agenda in the 1990s. The growing conflicts were the main cause of this phenomenon (Brun, 2011). Millions of people worldwide are forced to flee their homes or places of

habitual residence each year, including in the context of conflict, violence, development projects, disasters and climate change, and remain displaced within their countries of residence. Women and children make up the majority of the internally displaced (IDMC, 2017). Displacement crises create logistical and humanitarian nightmares, threaten international security and risk the lives of displaced people, aid workers and peace keepers (Lischer, 2007).

Sudan is home to more internally displaced persons than any other country in the world. Problems such as flooding, under nutrition, lack of sanitation and health care, inadequate education and direct threats from violent conflict are faced by many Sudanese (UNICEF, 2011). There were 3.3 million people displaced by conflict in the country as of the end of 2016. These internally displaced people (IDPs) are living in camps in Darfur states, Blue Nile state, South Kordufan state and elsewhere in the country. Activities of armed groups in some parts of the country such as Darfur prevented the humanitarian organizations from assisting the IDPs (IDMC, 2017). The aim of this paper is to identify the causes and socio-economic consequences of internal displacement in Sudan. The rest of the paper is structured into A literature review, methodology, Analysis and discussion and conclusion.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **- Concept of Internal Displacement**

When people are forced from their homes but remain within their own country, they are known as Internally Displaced Persons (OCHA, 2010). Internally displaced persons (IDPs) do not cross a border to find safety. They are on the run at home and they stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement (UNHCR, 2018). Once it occurs, internal displacement brings about a set of circumstances that renders those affected highly vulnerable. Most obviously, it forces people from their homes, depriving them of shelter and the basic protection it can provide. Internal displacement leads to massive loss not only of commodities such as the home, income, land or other forms of property, but also of less tangible symbolic goods, such as cultural heritage, friendship and a sense of belonging to a particular place (Mooney, 2005). Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border" (United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998). Although internally displaced persons are often defined as those uprooted by conflict, human rights violations and natural or human-made disasters, they also include those

displaced by development projects (Robinson, 2003). The main difference between IDPs and refugees is that IDPs have not crossed an international border from their country of origin. Also, while refugees must be fleeing from strictly defined forms of persecution, IDPs include those displaced by armed conflict, human rights violations, and natural disasters (Zapata, 2012).

#### - Literature Review

Sudan has been virtually in a state of civil war since it gained independence from British-Egyptian rule in 1956, except for 11 years between 1972 and 1983, when the South was provided with some autonomy (Global IDP, 2005). It has one of the world's largest populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs), with almost two million IDPs in Darfur alone (Suleman, 2014). Those displaced in Sudan face the risks of landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property, social disintegration, and loss of access to community services and violation of human rights (Robinson, 2003). IDPs do not always end up in camps. The majority are taken in by host families, some find temporary shelter on the move and others may settle in urban areas. IDPs often move several times during their displacement (OCHA, 2010). Today the U.N. estimates that there are approximately 1.9 million Darfuri IDPs living in over 150 camps scattered across Darfur's three states (Zapata, 2012). Tribal fighting and presence of uncontrolled militia has resulted in increased insecurity in the region since the beginning of 2013, including in capital cities of the states (European Commission, 2015). About 4.5 percent of the population of Sudan's capital Khartoum is Darfuri IDPs, most of whom live in the massive urban slum "black belt" around the outside of the city. In 2007 the international community created the African Union/United Nations hybrid operation in Darfur, or UNAMID to protect civilians in Darfur. The international community has attempted to provide humanitarian relief for IDPs, but insecurity and Khartoum's hostility to the presence of international aid organizations has badly compromised the success of this effort. Insecurity prevents IDPs from leaving the camps and returning to their homes. The camps serve as a semi-permanent "solution" but life there is unpredictable so long as the root causes of the displacement remain unaddressed (Zapata, 2012). Due to conflict, insecurity and administrative impediments, humanitarian access, personnel and operations have been reduced in Darfur (European Commission, 2015).

The Sudanese conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states is an ongoing armed conflict between the Army of Sudan (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). Over 1.1 million people have been affected by the fighting, resulting in an increasing number of refugees in Ethiopia and South Sudan, as well as nearly 380,000 internally displaced

persons (European Commission, 2015). The war in Blue Nile state has had a horrible impact, with about a third of the state's population in need of humanitarian assistance (International Crisis Group, 2013). "In Abyei, an estimated 20,000 residents in 2010 remain displaced and reliant on food aid. Eastern Sudan is made up of the three states of Red Sea, Kassala and Al-Gedaref. Political marginalization and economic issues continued to plague the states of eastern Sudan. The humanitarian situation has also grown more severe since June 2012, when the Sudanese government expelled all foreign aid organizations from eastern Sudan (International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, 2014). There are an estimated 460,000 IDPs in Eastern Sudan in 2008. "Approximately 68,000 of them reside in camps, 276,000 in Red Sea State, 74,000 in Kassala State, and 42,000 in Gedarif State (IDMC, 2010). The pattern of displacement into Khartoum arises from the combination of conflict, drought, and famine that has afflicted the south and west of Sudan since the 1980s. By the mid-1980s an estimated three million people were displaced. About 1.8 million came to Khartoum (IDMC, 2010).

## METHODOLOGY

This paper relies heavily on secondary data. The data used is generated from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, papers, magazines, publications, studies conducted by researchers and websites. Descriptive statistics is used to analyze the data.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Displacement in Sudan is caused by conflict, natural disasters (floods, droughts and desertification) and development projects. Displacement took different forms and processes such as Collective Displacement and Small Groups and Individuals' Displacement. The civil wars in Sudan have generated the largest internally displacement population in the world ever during the past two decades (Global IDP, 2005). Two million people both in Government and SPLM-N-controlled areas in states of South Kordufan and Blue Nile are either internally displaced or severely affected by the conflict since 2011. It is estimated that there were more than 4.8 million IDPs in the country in 2010 (see table 1 below). Fighting between Government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) in some parts of the two states has led to displacement of 25,900 people in Government-controlled areas in 2014. It is estimated by SPLM-N that 800,000 people were either internally displaced or severely affected by conflict since 2011 in the two states and the overall estimated number of newly displaced people in 2014 is about 116,000, according to aid agencies and the SPLM-N (OCHA, 2014).

Geoffroy stated that displacement produced by the Darfur crisis occurred on a massive scale and few people headed to the central region and Greater Khartoum. Most of the displacement took place within Darfur or toward neighboring countries, mainly Chad. The majority of the IDPs encountered are women, children and the elderly. Within Darfur, most of the camps are located around the main cities. Tensions in Darfur started much earlier than 2003 and since then, it is estimated that more than 200,000 people died and about 2 million persons were displaced. After the secession of South Sudan in 2011 the number of IDPs decreased. This is due both to large-scale movement of southern Sudanese to South Sudan and the fact that former southern Sudanese IDPs, especially in and around Khartoum, were no longer counted as IDPs in Sudan (see table 2 below). According to Global IDP (2005), roughly one third of the entire population of Darfur has been affected by the conflict. It is noted that there are 101 locations, most of them camps, throughout the Darfur region hosting IDPs, which include 22 locations in North Darfur, 42 locations in South Darfur and 37 locations in West Darfur. There were about 63,000 IDPs in Kassala state as of November 2004. Up to 60,000 people displaced near the Sudan-Eritrea border in 1998 by fighting between government forces, and the National Democratic Alliance. Although no large population displacements occurred in eastern Sudan in 2004, the region still hosts some 63,000 IDPs in Kassala State and several thousands more in Port Sudan. There were about 300,000 IDPs in northern states of Gezira, Northern, Northern Kordofan, River Nile, Sinnar, Western Kordofan and White Nile in 2004.

**Table 1: Numbers of IDPs by Location, 2010**

Location	IDPs Number
Northern Darfur	509,000
Southern Darfur	1,411,000
Western Darfur	747,000
Khartoum	1,700,000
Transitional Areas	60,000
Southern	390,000
Total	4,817,000

Source: IDMC, 2010.

**Table 2: Numbers of IDPs by Location, 2013**

Location	IDPs Number
Greater Darfur	1,982,500
South Kordofan state	222,200
Blue Nile state	176,600
Other States	45,500
Total	2,426,800

Source: IDMC, 2014.

### - Causes of Internal Displacement

The main causes of displacement in Sudan are conflict, natural disasters and development projects.

#### (i) Conflict

Several conflicts are taking place currently in Sudan, including those of Darfur, Abyei, South Kordufan, Blue Nile and Eastern States. The main cause of fighting between Sudan's peripheries and the centre is "marginalisation". The discrepancies in development and services are striking and inhabitants of the peripheries often complain about the expropriation of their wealth, notably by taxes as well as exploitation of their land and resources (oil, minerals and water), without a legitimate share of the national budget being redistributed to their region (International Crisis Group, 2013). Violent conflict causes thousands of people to flee their homes every year in Sudan. Violence and insecurity continue to cause displacement since the Darfur conflict broke out in 2003. There are more than 2.5 million people internally displaced in Darfur, due to the fighting between government forces and rebel groups and fighting among Arab tribes (European Commission, 2015). Conflicts are commonly rooted in competition over resources (mainly land, water and oil) between nomadic and agricultural communities or between various ethnic groups (Global IDP, 2005). Most Arab groups in Darfur do not own land on the basis of the hakura (landholding) system. Secondary occupation of land has taken place in West Darfur, where nomadic Arab groups have occupied grazing land originally inhabited by non-Arab sedentary groups. Conflict in Darfur became partly a violent assault by landless tribal groups against groups with land (IDMC, 2010).

The Sudanese conflict in South Kordufan and Blue Nile States is an ongoing armed conflict between the Army of Sudan (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). As of October 2014 500,000 people having been displaced and about 250,000 people escaped to South Sudan Republic and Ethiopia. Fighting around Abyei in May 2008 led to the displacement of an estimated 50,000-60,000 people (IDMC, 2010). The conflict in Abyei is surrounding the exploitation of oil resources and tensions between Sudanese and South Sudanese could not be reduced (International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, 2014). Conflict in eastern Sudan was driven by a complex set of interrelated factors, such as historical feelings of exclusion and marginalisation, demands for fair sharing of power between different groups, inequitable distribution of economic resources, underdevelopment, absence of a genuine democratic process and other governance issues. Conflict in eastern Sudan caused displacement and there are an estimated 460,000 IDPs in 2008 in all the three states of Red Sea, Kassala and Al-Gedaref (IDMC, 2010).

### **(ii) Natural Disasters**

Displacement in Sudan also results from natural hazards, such as floods, droughts and desertification. Sudan is at high risk from these natural hazards in particular floods and drought (OCHA, 2016). Natural disasters destruct houses and put great pressure on already scarce resources and worsen food insecurity. In 2013, 15 states were affected by floods, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee (IDMC, 2014). On average, floods affect some 200,000 people every year. In 2016, over 200,000 people were affected and over 22,000 houses destroyed. Damage to crops and arable land leads to food insecurity in many parts of the country and heightens the vulnerability of people who were already food insecure. In 2015 and 2016, Sudan experienced unpredictable rainfall patterns which has negatively affected harvests, water availability and food supplies (OCHA, 2016). Drought is a frequent hazard in Sudan, it causes life threatening and brings a series of events and reactions that create a devastating cycle of environmental collapse, conflict and displacement. It forces the rural population to internally immigrate towards big cities. Sudan history of drought is so frequent and the severe droughts that affected the country were in 1886, 1913, 1940, 1967-1973, and 1980-1984 (Amna and Eltayeb, 2012). The droughts of 1983 – 85 were long-lasting and particularly wide-spread throughout the country. About 8.4 million people were severely affected and 7.8 million livestock were lost in Darfur, Kordofan, central, northern and eastern regions. Drought and famines caused dramatic food shortages, impoverishment and asset depletion and massive displacement and destroyed the rural economy in the affected areas (Geoffroy, 2007). Desertification in Sudan is the combination of both natural and human factors, which results in a decline of productivity or the degradation of natural resources. It has been accelerating at a faster rate over the last two decades, leading to marginalization and the loss of arable land. The spread of desertification affects the livelihoods of many Sudanese farmers (Britton, 2016). Millions of people may be forced to leave the land when it can no longer sustain them. Desertification is considered one of the main factors that cause the migration of rural populations to urban centres in Sudan (Omer et.al 2013).

### **(iii) Development Projects**

Displacement due to development projects has been historically associated with the construction of dams and various development projects such as mining, agriculture, airports, railways, roads, etc. Development – induced displacement is a social problem affecting both tribal and villages communities and well-developed urban areas. During the 20th century, the government of Sudan expropriated land of rural populations to implement vast development projects, such as mechanized-agriculture in central and eastern Sudan and dam construction like the Aswan dam and the new Merowe dam and in these cases, displacement takes the form of organized resettlements and land allocation for

new agricultural schemes. Due to development projects small farmers and nomads lost their land rights and were pushed out of rural areas (Geoffroy, 2007).

#### **- Social Consequences of Internal Displacement**

Displacement leads to dramatic emptying of regions from its population and it affects in a bigger extent rural areas (Geoffroy, 2007). Displaced persons reside in peripheral and poor areas of urban centers. Displacement of large numbers of people during conflict makes demographic changes in the ethnic composition of towns and villages. It leads to dramatic changes in family structure and gender roles. Under conflict situations many women become heads of households due to absence of men who are recruited to combat, stay behind to maintain land or migrate in search of work (Brun, 2011). Displacement leads to child homelessness, psychological stress on the displaced women, increase of the displaced women's responsibilities for providing to their families, appearance of families without men-breadwinners, great reliance on aid and relief, and the many life challenges facing IDPs, particularly children whose rights are violated. Some settlements become areas of grassroots conflicts, crimes of immorality, robberies, and alcohol and drug smuggling. Displacement causes disintegration of the rural traditional extended family, whose members are usually more than a dozen, into nuclear families, composed mostly of the parents, their children, and the nearest in kin. Dense population pressure affects the already meager vital services in the host area. (Ali & Mohammed, 2016). Both men and women become vulnerable to discrimination, physical violence and other forms of abuse (Brun, 2011). Social consequences of internal displacement include changes in identity and traditional leadership within the social group and within the household (Geoffroy, 2007). Displacement increases the risk of harassment, armed attack and abuse, recruitment of child soldiers, family separation, including increases in the number of unaccompanied children. It heightens risk of sexual and gender-based violence, particularly affecting women and children, and heightens risk for vulnerable groups. Displacement increases competition for scarce resources, especially in highly densely populated areas. Loss of identity documents also can result in a lack of legal recognition, freedom of movement, and participation in democratic and decision making processes (FAO in Emergencies, 2013).

#### **- Economic Consequences of Internal Displacement**

People migrate to urban centers and it is difficult for those depending on agriculture in their livelihood to return to farming and food production will be disrupted. Displacement destroys crops, assets and market structures (Brun, 2011). The presence of large numbers of displaced persons in host communities can strain public infrastructure and social services and potentially jeopardize development gains (Technical Working Group on Durable Solutions, 2016). Displacement means disintegration of rural economies and changes in access to

resources. It decreases farming production and food self-reliance and increases external dependency (Geoffroy, 2007). Displacement leads to loss of properties and income sources, poor health services, concrete shift in consumption patterns and increase in school dropouts. Women resort to new means of livelihood that are completely different from the ones in their original homelands, engaging in the informal economic sector as servants in households or selling food and teas in markets (Ali & Mohammed, 2016). Displacement threatens food security, deprives people of livelihoods and access to land and other natural resources. The main contributing factors to people's food insecurity in times of displacement include loss of access to land and housing, interruptions in or poor sources of income and livelihoods, food price inflation, a drastic decline in purchasing power, and a lack of resilience due to limited/no asset ownership (FAO in Emergencies, 2013).

In Darfur the massive displacement of population has been accompanied by the destruction of about 2000 villages including destruction of water points and burning of crops. To deal with food insecurity displaced persons in Darfur, Blue Nile State and Kordufan State have reduced the number of meals they consume to just one per day. Other common coping mechanisms used to deal with food insecurity include feeding on wild fruits, leaves and roots. Families with livestock are selling or slaughtering their animals. IDPs lack essential emergency shelter materials and non-food items. Due to lack of drinking water sources women and children are forced to walk distances of three to five hours or more to find water resources. Children do not have access to education and there is lack of medical and hygiene services (The Enough Project, 2013).

#### **- Solutions to internal displacement**

There are three durable solutions to situations of displacement: voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration or local settlement. The main idea behind the durable solutions is to help the IDPs to become self-sufficient, independent from aid, and to enable them to participate fully in social and economic life (Brun, 2011). Durable solutions are often gradual, long-term and complex processes that address humanitarian, development, reconstruction and peace-building challenges, requiring coordinated and timely engagement of different actors (FAO in Emergencies, 2013). Access to lost land, housing and property, restoration of livelihoods, delivery of services and accountable and responsive governance are the four key developmental barriers to achieve durable solutions for the displaced (The World Bank, 2011). IDPs are free to choose between return, local integration and settlement elsewhere in their country. The most preferable solution to IDPs is voluntary repatriation which is often a poor alternative due to limited prospects of a safe return (Brun, 2011). When return is possible returnees face different challenges relating to land, property right,

infrastructure and social services .It is difficult for these returnees to return to their exact previous life and community (Brun, 2011). In South Kordofan, deliberate destruction of water points, farms and homes by the army of Sudan and the rebels are frequent and prevent IDPs from returning home(IDMC,2014). Return movements either occur on a spontaneous basis or are organized by international agencies and Sudanese authorities. Returns from neighboring countries are mainly organized by UNHCR (Geoffroy, 2007).

Local integration and resettlement can take place in another part of the country. Local integration has received much less attention from almost all actors involved in internal displacement issues than return. It is the preferred settlement option of some IDPs in Sudan. Inadequate housing and lack of income-generation opportunities appear to be obstacles to local integration in the country (Ferris, 2011). Successful integration of IDPs depends on attitudes of host communities towards displaced people, demographics of displaced population, availability of land or underemployment in host communities, governmental policies and international assistance (Ferris, 2011). Resettlement of IDPs is a condition in which all individuals displaced from their homes during conflict are assured the option for a voluntary, safe, and dignified resettlement into new homes and communities. Once they reach their destinations, they should receive strong reintegration and rehabilitation support to build their livelihoods and contribute to long-term economic and political development. Resettlement represents a visible end to violent conflict, legitimizes the new political order, and restores normal life for the conflict-affected population (United States Institute of Peace, 2018). Durable solutions require sustainable livelihoods support in areas of return, local integration and re-settlement. They need local economic recovery interventions such as food/cash for work programs, rehabilitation of natural resource networks and development of food security strategies, policies and programs(FAO in Emergencies,2013).The benchmarks for durable solutions include long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; adequate standard of living ;access to employment and livelihood opportunities; access to mechanisms to restore housing, land and property; access to and replacement of personal and other documentation; voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement; Participation in public affairs and remedies for displacement-related rights violations (Technical Working Group on Durable Solutions,2016).

## **CONCLUSION**

Sudan is home to more internally displaced persons than any other country in the world. Displacement in Sudan is caused by conflict, natural disasters and development projects. The civil wars in Sudan have generated the largest internally displacement population in the world ever during the past two

decades. The majority of the IDPs encountered are women, children and the elderly. Those displaced in Sudan face the risks of landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property, social disintegration, and loss of access to community services and violation of human rights. Social consequences of internal displacement include changes in identity and traditional leadership within the social group and within the household. Displacement of large numbers of people during conflict makes demographic changes in the ethnic composition of towns and villages. Displacement causes dramatic changes in family structure and gender roles. It leads to child homelessness, psychological stress on the displaced women, increase of the displaced women's responsibilities for providing to their families, appearance of families without men-breadwinners, great reliance on aid and relief, and the many life challenges facing IDPs, particularly children whose rights are violated.

The economic consequences of displacement involve the disintegration of rural economies and changes in access to resources. Displacement leads to loss of properties and income sources, poor health services, concrete shift in consumption patterns and increase in school dropouts. It threatens food security, deprives people of livelihoods and access to land and other natural resources. There are three durable solutions to situations of displacement: voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration or local settlement. It is recommended that forced displacement should be prevented by the concerned bodies and IDPs are to be settled and integrated into the local communities where they are currently based. Governance reform and national dialogue are necessary for ending the conflict and achieving comprehensive and durable peace. Voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration solutions should be adopted to help the IDPs to become self-sufficient and to enable them to participate effectively in social and economic life.

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