

Joint study by REF and HPG

Darfuri migration from Sudan to Europe

From displacement to despair

Susanne Jaspars and Margie Buchanan-Smith

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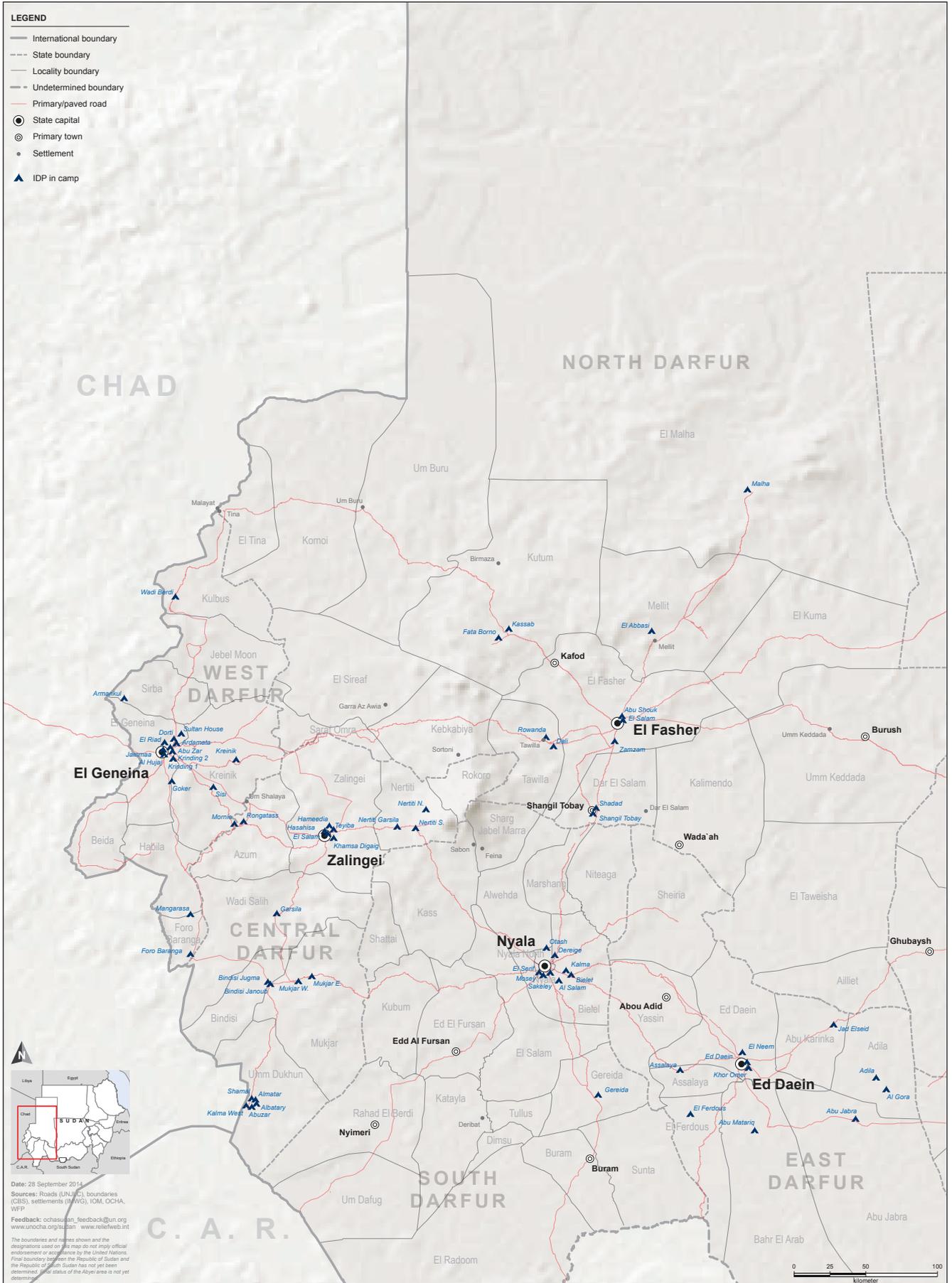
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Acronyms

AU	African Union
BMM	Better Migration Management
CADA	Centre d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile (reception centre for asylum seekers)
CAO	Centre d'accueil et d'orientation (reception and orientation centre)
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CEDEJ	Centre for Social, Legal and Economic studies
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DCIM	Department for Combatting Illegal Migration
DDRA	Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EUBAM	European Border Assistance Mission
EUTF	EU Emergency Trust Fund
FGD	Focus group discussion
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HCM	Higher Council for Migration
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
MDM	Médecins du Monde
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NCCPIM	National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Illegal Migration

NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Services
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFPRA	Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (French office for the protection of refugees and stateless persons)
REF	Research and Evidence Facility
RRDP	Refugee Rights Data Project
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SDG	Sudanese Pound
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SPRAR	Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati (System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees)
SSWA	Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad
TD	Terre d'Errance
UN OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	UN African Union Mission in Darfur
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Map 1: Darfur states, main towns and IDP locations



Source: UN OCHA, Sudan.

Executive summary

Objectives and methods of the study

This study examines migration from Darfur, and of people of Darfuri origin in Khartoum, to Europe. It focuses on Darfur because of its history of migration, conflict and displacement. The aim was to explore trends, drivers and constraints in migration, and to examine how current and recent migration patterns to Europe build on those of the past. The study analyses both the structural causes of migration and decision-making at the individual and household levels. It also analyses how policies influence migration (through migrant experiences) and the factors that facilitate and obstruct it, including smuggling and trafficking systems, social networks and the role of new communication technologies. It is one of only very few studies of the experience of migration of a particular group, along the entire journey from their place of origin to their destination, and the impact on the families and communities left behind.

Historical migration trends and their importance

Migration and displacement are part of the history and livelihoods of Darfur. Migration has long been an essential part of people's livelihoods in Darfur, whether seasonal or long-term labour migration, migration for pasture or in response to drought and famine. Some of this migration occurred within Sudan, and some of it outside Sudan, particularly to Libya, Egypt and the Gulf countries. Some ethnic groups, in particular the Zaghawa, used long-term migration to transform their livelihoods and to adapt to the worsening conditions in their homelands in the far north of North Darfur. Migration patterns changed completely with the 2003 conflict, when millions of people were forcibly displaced due to government and militia attacks, killing and destruction of livelihoods. Traditional migration patterns were blocked. When the crisis became protracted, migration to Libya resumed. Young men also left Darfur for Chad, Libya, Egypt, South Sudan and Israel, to find safety or work. Until 2013 the numbers migrating to Europe were limited.

Migration to Europe is in part the result of restricted options in the region. The number of Sudanese migrating by sea to Italy increased from 2013 and peaked from 2014 to 2016. Many were Darfuri. This trend coincided with renewed violence and displacement in Darfur, and the civil war and collapse of the state in Libya in 2014. At the same time, migration to South Sudan, Egypt and Israel became difficult due to conflict, political instability, changes in asylum laws and deterrence strategies. Civil war in Libya forced Sudanese to leave the country and led to the proliferation of smuggling networks. Libya and Egypt changed from destination to transit countries on the route to Europe. Increased migration to Europe is therefore in part a result of the limited alternatives available in the region. The groups migrating in largest numbers to Europe are those with a history of migration, with the Zaghawa forming the majority.

Who migrates to Europe?

The vast majority of Darfuris migrating to Europe were and are young men. For Sudanese generally, the proportion of men crossing the Mediterranean to Italy was much higher than for other nationalities taking the same route. The traditional norms of Sudanese society do not allow women to undertake these journeys on their own. Young men, in contrast, traditionally have responsibilities to take care of their families and to get married. Darfuri women mostly migrate to Europe for family reunification, generally about two years after the man's asylum claim has been accepted. There is some evidence, however, that social norms are changing, and a small number of Darfuri women have migrated to Europe on their own, usually the better-educated and better-off.

Most Darfuri migrants and refugees are poor, previously displaced and have little education. Before they left, they had mostly been involved in low-earning casual labour. At the same time, the ability to save at least a minimal sum of money and access social networks are important factors in being able to gather sufficient funds for the initial part of the journey to Europe. Not all Darfuris in Europe had been poor in Sudan. A considerable proportion are students, many

of whom had been politically active. A few are well-educated, mid-career professionals with well-paying jobs, who had to flee because their work put them under surveillance and harassment from national intelligence and security agencies.

The vast majority of Darfuris in Europe, or those wanting to leave Sudan, had a history of displacement. Some had been displaced early in the conflict and their families still lived in a camp. Others had been displaced as recently as 2016, or had been displaced multiple times. For many, therefore, their migration journey started years before they reached Europe.

The majority of Darfuris migrating to Europe belong to the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit ethnic groups. As the support base of the opposition, they were more vulnerable to attack and displacement and continue to experience violence in Darfur. Young men from other non-Arab ethnic groups also migrate to Europe, such as the Tunjur and Berti, as well as a few from Arab ethnic groups such as the Beni Halba. Members of Arab tribes such as the Rizeigat, Misseriya and Zayadia do not appear to migrate to Europe. It appears that young men in these tribes have been co-opted into militia or paramilitary groups.

Causes of migration

The causes of Darfuri migration are multiple, complex and interlinked. For many young Darfuris, attack, arrest and harassment by government forces, paramilitary groups and militia are the primary reason for leaving. Young men from particular ethnic groups come under close surveillance. Their movements are restricted and teenagers are persuaded to spy on their relatives. Internally displaced people (IDPs) and students are also particularly affected. They also experience discrimination in finding work, especially government and civil service jobs.

Displacement, discrimination and limited freedom of movement have contributed to **a loss of livelihoods, including access to land.** Combined with an inability to meet social responsibilities, and pressure from Darfuris who had already left for Europe, young men – in particular eldest sons – saw leaving for Europe as their only option. Young Darfuris expressed deep despair about their future, and had lost hope that the situation was ever going to get better.

The violence experienced by Darfuris from particular ethnic groups can be described as systemic persecution. While the numbers of Darfuris migrating to Europe are small compared to the overall number of displaced

people in Darfur, this movement is an indicator of the ongoing humanitarian crisis there.

Routes to Europe and changing destinations

Migration to Europe is not linear but occurs in stages. About half of Darfuris interviewed in Europe initially travelled to Libya, but conditions there, including theft, abuse and risks to life from militia or traffickers, forced migrants to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. Others planned to travel to Europe when they set out.

Migrant destinations often changed en route, from Italy or France to the UK, because of the very poor living conditions in the former, slow asylum procedures or because asylum had been denied, or from the UK to France, because of the difficulties and risks involved in reaching the UK. France is now the European country with the highest number of Sudanese asylum claims.

Many Darfuris initially want to go to the UK because of its historical links with Sudan, the presence of relatives and friends and because they believed that the prospects for education and work and respect for human rights were better in the UK than elsewhere.

Routes change quickly in response to border controls, but border controls did not stop migration. Migratory routes from Sudan to Libya include via Dongola (Northern Region), or via Malha or Tina in North Darfur. Darfuris also often migrate via Chad to find work mining gold, to fund their onward journey. In 2017, the Sudanese government blocked the Malha and Dongola routes. The most commonly used route at the end of 2017 ran to Tina, then Chad and on to Libya.

Increased border controls and the effects of the Dublin III regulations result in Darfuris being stuck in circular movements within Europe. Concentrations of Sudanese, including Darfuris, can be found in Ventimiglia, Brussels and Paris, and in Calais prior to the demolition of the ‘Jungle’ camp in October 2016. Darfuris circulated continuously between Calais, Paris and Brussels, depending on information they received about border controls and their chances of getting to the UK. According to the Dublin III regulations, refugees must claim asylum in the first country of entry in Europe: Italy for most Darfuris. When forcibly returned to Italy, or moved from the north to the south of Italy by the authorities, most Darfuris simply start their journey all over again in a bid to reach other European Union (EU) countries.

Some Darfuris have been forcibly returned to Sudan, or return themselves with little or no follow-up. Sudanese have been forcibly removed from France, Belgium and Italy, following formal or informal agreements with the government of Sudan. The number of Darfuris among them is not known, but none of the returning countries follows these cases up in Sudan.

The role of smuggling and trafficking networks

Smugglers are key facilitators of migration from Darfur to Europe. Darfuris undertake different types of journeys, but all involve the use of smugglers. With sufficient money it is possible to buy a visa and passport and fly directly to the UK or France, but few can afford this option. The full journey to Europe can also be organised through Libya, but this is also expensive and most Darfuris migrate in stages, for which they pay in instalments. It can take 2–3 years to reach Europe this way. Government agents, militia, paramilitary groups and rebel movements are all alleged to be involved in the smuggling of migrants to Libya.

Migrating in stages has made it possible for poor people to travel to Libya and then on to Europe, but it has also **made migrants vulnerable to exploitation**. They may be sold to traffickers, held for ransom or sold as bonded or slave labour to pay the remainder of the cost of their journey to Libya. Darfuris also have to work in Libya to save for the Mediterranean crossing. In Libya they experience theft, racism, attack and kidnapping.

Within Europe, extensive smuggling networks control illegal border crossings into the UK, but Darfuris have little access to these networks due to lack of funds or because the motorway service areas used for getting onto trucks are controlled by other nationalities. Most Darfuris experienced difficulties trying to cross borders within Europe. On the Ventimiglia crossing into France Darfuris were often picked up by the police and returned to Italy.

The role of information, social media and social networks in decision-making

Social media and information networks are important facilitators of migration. Darfuris in Darfur and in Khartoum accessed information before leaving Sudan,

mostly from friends and relatives already in Europe, including information on routes and smugglers, the risks involved and about life in Europe. They had limited knowledge about EU policies, asylum and migrant and refugee rights. Communication is usually via social media. Messages and pictures, which often gave an unrealistically positive impression of life in Europe, acted as an encouragement for others to leave.

Young Darfuris aspire to be in a place where their human rights are respected and where they are safe. Students aspired to freedom of expression and to be able to advocate for change in Sudan. Other aspirations included further education and employment to support family members back in Sudan. They also believed that acquiring a foreign nationality would provide them with a degree of protection if they went back to Sudan.

Most young men made the decision to migrate to Europe on their own. This is indicative of a changing culture; in the past, young men would not have acted without their families' blessing. Even when they knew the risks involved in the journey, they **preferred the short-term risks over what they called a slow and miserable death in Sudan**. They took the risks because they felt there were no viable alternatives in Sudan. Those who decided to stay either thought the risks on the journey were too great or felt that they should stay to bring about change.

Darfuris are poorly served through official information channels in Europe. This could be due to limited information being available in Arabic, or because most Darfuri migrants were poorly educated. Instead, Darfuris receive most of their information from other Sudanese, including information about conditions in different European countries, routes and how to move from one country to another. Most receive the same information, and so follow the same routes. The main information hubs are in Ventimiglia, Paris and Brussels.

Experience after leaving Sudan

Darfuris experienced exploitation, discrimination and physical violence throughout their journey. In Libya, they described their experience as being as bad as or worse than in Sudan. Most Darfuris experience some form of detention, where they can be beaten, tortured and deprived of basic necessities. They can be detained officially, as they are undocumented migrants; by smugglers and traffickers; or by militia, before risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean in unsafe boats.

After arrival in **Italy**, most Darfuris attempt to move quickly through the country. Most go straight to Ventimiglia, where they stay without shelter and without adequate assistance. Here they are vulnerable to the use of force by the police, often when caught trying to cross the border into France. Police use of force continues in **France**, and can include tear gas, destruction of irregular migrants' tents and confiscation of other goods, and access to services and assistance is restricted. As in Ventimiglia, Darfuris in Calais and Paris sleep rough in the street or in forests. Arrest and detention are common, particularly for Darfuris who do not apply for asylum. From early 2017, Darfuris started arriving in **Belgium**. While police may use less force because the park in Brussels where migrants and refugees have congregated is in the centre of the city, arrest and detention – with the possibility of forced removal – is a real threat. In all three countries, much of the assistance migrants received was provided by volunteer groups or concerned citizens, rather than by the state.

A small number of Darfuris make it to the UK, usually by risking their lives under buses or in trucks. Most spoke positively of how they were treated once they arrived, being given accommodation and financial assistance after making their asylum claim. A high proportion of Darfuris have been granted asylum. Most take over a year to find paid work and typically end up in menial jobs. When settled, Darfuri refugees often apply for their spouse and children to join them through family reunification, but this process is difficult, requires documentation that many Darfuri families do not have and can take months. Deprived of their extended family in Sudan and with poor language skills, women often feel isolated and depressed, and face the toughest challenges in integrating and adapting to life in the UK.

The physical and mental health of Darfuris in Europe is poor, with high levels of trauma as a result of their experience in Sudan and, especially, on the journey. This manifests itself in anxiety and depression, fear of crowded places, being unable to eat or sleep, an inability to talk about their experience, flashbacks, anger and domestic violence.

Consequences of migration for families left behind

Migration of a family member to Europe has positive and negative economic, social and political consequences for the family and community left behind. **The economic consequences depend on the journey and whether the person making it has been able to gain refugee status.**

If the young man is kidnapped or otherwise held for ransom, this can be a huge financial burden on the family. If they obtain refugee status and receive benefits or are able to find work – even if only menial jobs – Darfuris usually send remittances back to Darfur. This is usually after a period of two years. At community level, refugees may contribute to public infrastructure back home, such as wells, schools and clinics.

Socially, separation has an emotional impact, particularly for minors separated from their family or if the first news is that a son has been kidnapped. Mothers expressed feeling ill, shock and sadness. Unlike earlier migration patterns, most migrants are asylum-seekers and are unlikely to return to Sudan unless conditions there change. The departure of so many young men means that communities have lost an important source of labour and defence, and leaves care of the elderly to those who have stayed behind.

Policies, strategies and actions that impact on migration

The study findings highlight a **lack of legal migration channels for Darfuris**, thus necessitating irregular migration and the use of smugglers. This could be related to a lack of birth registration or passports, and an inability to get exit visas for this reason, or it may be due to more active discrimination. There is no national migration policy in Sudan, but instead a plethora of overlapping and sometimes contradictory policies and institutions. The current focus is on border control. Government policy towards IDPs and the camps in Darfur has further eroded young people's confidence in a positive and secure future in Sudan.

The migration policies of the EU and its Member States focus on **deterrence and containment of irregular migration**. European support to the Libyan coastguard is designed to prevent migrants from making the sea crossing, and engagement with Sudan around migration management (in particular halting smuggling and trafficking networks) and development funding under the Khartoum Process aim to stem irregular migration from the Horn of Africa. This approach does little to address the root cause of migration from Darfur, namely the systemic persecution of particular ethnic groups.

Reductions in humanitarian aid in Darfur were found to have little impact in triggering migration to Europe. While loss of livelihoods is undoubtedly a contributing factor in migration, and livelihood support is needed in Darfur, this alone is unlikely to reduce forced

and irregular migration. Migration has long been an integral part of Darfuri livelihoods, and is now an essential strategy in people's search for safety.

The EU has a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), but in practice **there is wide variation in asylum policies between EU Member States**. This is illustrated in the wide discrepancy in successful asylum requests by Sudanese in Italy, France, Belgium and the UK. This, together with the Dublin regulations and border controls, contributed to the continuous movement of Darfuris from one country to another.

Darfuris in Europe face a combination of border controls (Italy–France and France–UK), **slow asylum procedures** (France), the use of force by the police, **lack of protection or assistance** for those without legal status (because they do not apply for asylum), and the possibility of **arrest, detention and forced return** back to Sudan. Italy has a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sudan to combat 'illegal' migration, which has facilitated returns, while other

countries have informal arrangements for similar purposes. Some forced returns have been successfully challenged in the courts. The UK has explicitly attempted to create a hostile environment for migrants and refugees and does not provide a legal route for claiming asylum from abroad. Unaccompanied minors are legally entitled to join relatives in the UK, but many remain in France due to slow and inadequate processing of their cases.

The report provides **recommendations** in four areas:

1. Approaching migration management as one of the multiple challenges facing Darfur.
2. Addressing the root causes of migration from Darfur and for people of Darfuri origin leaving from elsewhere in Sudan.
3. Improving the treatment of Darfuri refugees during their journey, including in the various European countries they pass through or stay in.
4. Increasing opportunities for safe and legal migration from Darfur.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why this study?

In 2015, migration hit the headlines in Europe as the number of migrants and refugees arriving on the continent dramatically increased. Many came via the central Mediterranean route from Libya to Italy. Sudanese were the fifth, sixth and seventh largest categories of migrants arriving in Italy in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively, representing between 5% and 7% of migrants, or an estimated 8,500 in 2015, 9,300 in 2016 and 6,200 in 2017 (UNHCR Regional Bureau Europe, 2016a and b; UNHCR, 2017). Migrant and refugee sites in Europe reported a large proportion of Sudanese; one survey in the Calais camp in France in July 2016, found that, out of 7,037 migrants, 32% were Sudanese (RRDP, 2016b), and in Ventimiglia in Italy in August 2017 around 80% of migrants were Sudanese (RRDP, 2017a). Beyond these aggregate figures little is known about the trends and causes of recent migration from Sudan to Europe. This study focuses particularly on Darfur and people of Darfuri origin in Khartoum, because of Darfur's history of conflict and displacement, its people's traditional migration patterns (particularly to Libya) and because preliminary investigations suggested that many recent Sudanese refugees and migrants in Europe are from Darfur.¹ The study reveals the persecution and despair of many young Darfuris, and the risks and hardships they faced on their long journey to Europe, but also their determination to reach safety and a better life.

Migration and displacement have long been a response to food insecurity, famine and conflict in Darfur (de Waal, 1989). Darfur is the western-most area of Sudan, and like other regions in Sudan's peripheries has long been politically and economically marginalised. Since colonial times, political power, resources and services have been concentrated in central Sudan, with government dominated by an interconnected political and economic elite – mostly belonging to the northern Arab ethnic groups (see for example Hassan and Ray, 2009). With the lack

of development and the harsh arid conditions in much of Darfur, migration has become an essential part of many people's livelihoods. Economic decline and drought hit Sudan's peripheries hard, and led to famine and food insecurity in the 1980s and 1990s. Migration increased to towns, to central Sudan and to Libya and the Gulf.

Fifteen years of conflict have disrupted these patterns of migration. In 2004, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator labelled Darfur the world's worst humanitarian crisis (BBC, 2004). By early 2005, two million people had been displaced and 200,000 Darfuris had fled to Chad. The scale and severity of violence was unprecedented, including the destruction of villages, killings and sexual violence against ethnic groups believed to be the support base of the rebellion (Flint and de Waal, 2008). While displacement was highest in 2003 and 2004, recent years have seen renewed violence and large-scale displacement: more than one million people were newly displaced between 2015 and 2017 (UN OCHA, 2017). Given this history of migration and displacement, a key question is how these previous patterns of migration and displacement have influenced the current trend of migration to Europe. Historical trends are examined in detail in Chapter 2.

A number of recent studies have examined migration across the Mediterranean. Many have focused on trends, routes and the role of smuggling and trafficking networks, particularly through Libya and Sudan, as well as the causes and drivers of migration.² These studies have shown that migration is highly context-specific, and that developing nuanced, tailored and targeted policy responses requires information about the movements and intentions of people within a particular context. In this study we use an adapted livelihoods framework to examine in detail the context-specific causes, drivers and consequences of migration and displacement in and from Darfur, and of people from Darfur living in Khartoum (see Annex 1). We examine the whole process of migration, combining an analysis of migrants' goals or aspirations and the profiles, strategies and decision-making of individual migrants with an analysis of the wider

1 Discussions with Darfuri key informants in Sudan, key informants in the UK (academics and aid workers) and volunteers working in France (early 2016), and from reports such as Radio Dabanga (2015 and 2016).

2 See for example Altai Consulting, 2015; Collyer, 2015; Squire et al., 2017; UNHCR et al., 2017; Crawley et al., 2016.

social, political and economic policies that influence migration. The study also examines facilitators and obstacles to migration, including communication technologies, social networks and diaspora and smuggling and trafficking systems.³ These systems and networks also influence the experience of migrants.

This is the first study examining the entire migration journey from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe: from Darfur or Khartoum as the place of origin, through Libya, to Italy, France or Belgium and sometimes on to the UK (for security reasons and because of time constraints it was not possible to carry out fieldwork in Libya). It is also the first study that examines the recent migration of Darfuris from Sudan to Europe, as opposed to Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis migrating through Sudan (though it is also relevant to these populations). We investigate how smuggling and trafficking networks, information, social networks and past experience of migration influence each stage of the journey. The study also analyses migrants' experience in each country as a driver of migration (i.e. in determining the move from one country to the next, and in the information fed back to potential migrants), and how this relates to existing migration and asylum policies, from a protection, humanitarian and human rights perspective. The study also looks at the consequences of migration for the livelihoods of migrants' families, and the political economy of communities and populations.

Sudan's importance as a transit country for many migrants entering Europe has made it the centre of initiatives to tackle irregular migration, the most important of which is the EU-led Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (known as the Khartoum Process). The EU is especially involved in the prevention of trafficking and smuggling of migrants, but has also allocated funds for development projects to tackle the causes of instability and forced displacement. European governments have also increased their engagement with Sudan in recent years. At the same time, humanitarian programmes in Sudan are being wound down. Humanitarian assistance has been decreasing for some time as governments and aid agencies turn their attention to the return or integration of displaced populations, recovery and resilience.

1.2 A note on terminology

It is difficult to find migration terminology that adequately captures the complex reasons why Darfuris

3 These would be considered institutions in the livelihoods framework (influencing the migration process), but we have decided to use the terms 'facilitators' and 'obstacles' as these are more commonly used in migration studies.

leave Sudan, the migration process (including returns and forced returns) and the different conditions of Darfuris who seek asylum, have refugee status or have neither in different countries in Europe. Furthermore, the distinction between the categories of 'migrant' and 'refugee' has become highly politicised as states seek to limit their responsibilities around refugee status, protection and assistance. People may fall into more than one category at the same time, or change categories over time. For example, someone may be displaced by conflict and migrate for work inside Darfur or Sudan. A displaced person may continue to face persecution and flee to Libya and later Italy for safety. Definitions of forced or voluntary migration do not help in understanding the migrant experience. There is no clear binary distinction between the two: migration can be considered along a continuum, depending on available alternatives and thus the degree of choice or agency people can exercise (Bakewell, 2011; Erdal and Oeppen, 2017). The disconnect between categories, experiences and needs in migration terminology has been widely commented on. Bakewell (2011), for example, argues that part of this disconnect is because terms are used to simultaneously describe a process (including the degree of agency, causes, timescale and institutional engagement), a condition (the outcome of migration or displacement process) or a category (linked to legal rights and aid policies). Crawley and Skleparis (2017) suggest that, while they cannot be ignored, it is important to understand how categories have been constructed by politicians and policy-makers, and the functions this construction has.

Despite the inadequacy of terms to describe Darfuri migration, we perforce have to use existing vocabulary in this report to describe those we interviewed, and to analyse their journey and their situation in different countries. As much as possible, we write about *Darfuris* who want to leave, who are leaving or who have left Sudan. When this is not possible, we use 'migrants and refugees'. Otherwise, we use the following terminology:

- Internally Displaced Person (IDP) – based on the Guiding Principles, we use the term IDP for those who have clearly been forced to leave their homes due to conflict within Darfur and are now living in camps or towns in Darfur or elsewhere in Sudan.⁴

4 According to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998: Introduction (para. 2)): 'internally displaced persons 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'.

- Refugee – Darfuris who have left Sudan because of persecution. This reflects our empirical findings – their reported experience or fear of persecution – rather than their legal status (see below: recognised refugee). They are refugees under Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention,⁵ or the broader definition in Article 1(2) of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.⁶
- Recognised refugee – a Darfuri with the legal status of refugee.
- Asylum-seeker – Darfuris who have applied for recognition as refugees, whose status has yet to be determined.
- Migrant – Any Darfuri who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) the causes of their movement; or (4) their length of stay.⁷
- Potential migrant – a Darfuri who wants to leave Darfur or Sudan for political, security or economic reasons, or a combination of all three. They may face persecution, but being a refugee presupposes that an individual is outside their country of nationality or residence.
- Returnee – Darfuris who returned from Libya, Europe or elsewhere (e.g. Egypt or Israel). This could include Darfuris who have obtained the nationality of their country of asylum and who return on a temporary visit. Return can be voluntary or forced. We describe these variations in the text.
- Family of migrant – close family members of a Darfuri who migrated outside of Sudan and who

are still living in Darfur. This may refer to their parents, siblings, spouse and children. The person who has migrated may have left for any reason, and the text will clarify their status or reason for leaving if possible.

1.3 Objectives and research questions

The main objectives of this research were:

- To explore current trends, drivers and constraints in migration in and from Darfur, particularly into Europe.
- To understand how long-standing migration patterns have been transformed and adapted in the face of chronic conflict and regional instability.
- To inform policy and programming responses, in Europe and in Sudan, and to advise on appropriate interventions and the likely effect of current interventions targeting potential and actual migrants and refugees.

To achieve these objectives, the study set out to answer the following research questions:

1. How have migration trends and strategies in and from Darfur changed in the past 10–15 years? Who leaves? From which gender, age, livelihood, wealth and ethnic groups, and which geographical areas? What are their skills and education profiles?
2. What are the causes of, or the main processes influencing, migration trends, for example conflict, environmental degradation, marginalisation and political and economic processes in Sudan and in the region? (North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf countries)?
3. How do current migration trends in and from Darfur link to those from the past? What are the links between previous and new migrants, and those who stayed behind? What is the link between displacement, migration and refugee flows?
4. What is the process of international migration? How have journeys and destinations changed, and what influences this (Libya, Egypt, Europe)? What routes are migrants currently using, and how have these changed over time? How do they link with smugglers and traffickers?
5. What information sources and networks are migrants and potential migrants accessing? What is the role of social media, social networks and diaspora links and smuggler and trafficking networks in influencing migration decisions,

5 Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, refugees have to demonstrate an individualised risk of persecution on the basis of one of five criteria: race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, membership in a social group or political opinion. The state must also be the agent of that persecution, either in terms of deliberately committing the act of persecution or being unable or unwilling to stop someone else persecuting that individual in that way.

6 Within Africa, there is a slightly more generous definition of a refugee according to the 1969 OAU Convention, which stipulates that a group can be recognised as refugees without proving individualised risk. The OAU definition also recognises that ‘The term “refugee” shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality’ (Article 1(2)). This could mean that people fleeing famine, for instance, could be recognised as refugees, but only for as long as they remain in Africa.

7 This is the IOM definition.

- strategies and aspirations? What is migrants' understanding of the legalities of migration?
6. What are the consequences of migration, for migrants themselves, and for their families and communities?
 7. How do the policies and strategies of the Sudan Government, EU and individual European countries influence migration decisions, now compared to 5 or 10 years ago? What role do migration and displacement play within Sudan's political economy?
 8. How do current aid policies and practices, and changes in aid practices (humanitarian, resilience and development), influence migration?

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 A partnership approach

This research was carried out through a collaboration of UK- and Sudan-based research institutions, NGOs and voluntary agencies. The project was jointly led by the Research and Evidence Facility of the EU Trust Fund, based in the Department of Development Studies at SOAS University of London, and the Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI in London. In Sudan, collaborating partners were CEDEJ (the Centre for Social, Legal and Economic studies in Sudan – a French research institute based in Khartoum), the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies at the University of Khartoum and Oxfam America. All partners have previous experience in migration research or work on migration as a key theme in their programming. Fieldwork in Europe was facilitated by Oxfam Italy, the Sudan Action Group in Belgium and Help Refugees and Care4Calais in France.

1.4.2 Fieldwork

The study was multinational, with research carried out in multiple locations along the migrants' journey, in Darfur and Khartoum in Sudan, and in Italy, France, Belgium and the UK. In Sudan, three teams of Sudanese researchers carried out fieldwork in Central/South/West Darfur, North Darfur and Khartoum, with the support and guidance of two international researchers. Each team had a senior researcher or team leader, and one or two junior researchers (of similar age to potential migrants). Each of the Darfur teams also included a female researcher and an Oxfam secondee. Other Oxfam staff provided input at the planning and analysis stage. The two international researchers carried out fieldwork in Italy, France, Belgium and the UK together with Sudanese researchers, and in Italy with

Oxfam Italy and Oxfam America staff. Most fieldwork in Sudan and Europe took place in September and October 2017, with follow-up interviews to fill gaps in information in November.

The methods used were qualitative as the research was exploratory, data-driven and context-specific. Locations and population groups within Darfur were purposively sampled according to ethnic group, history of labour migration (e.g. Libya) or migration in response to food insecurity and famine, type of settlement (urban, rural, IDP) and development presence. North and Central Darfur were selected as states with a history of migration and large-scale displacement. West and some of South Darfur were chosen as states that had suffered large-scale displacement. Within each of these states, the research teams selected as wide a variety of ethnic groups and types of settlement as possible, given the time available and the security situation, using the table in Annex 2. Locations sampled were state capitals, camps and rural towns. In Khartoum, the team sampled localities according to the concentration of Darfuris, and interviewed students and student leaders from five different universities.⁸ The sampled locations were as follows:

- Central Darfur: Zalingei town, Hasahisa camp and Nertiti.
- South Darfur: Kass (and one key informant interview in Nyala).
- West Darfur: Geneina, Sisi and Albazar IDP camps.
- North Darfur: El Fasher town, Abou Shook and Zamzam IDP camps and key informants from Kutum and Malha, interviewed in El Fasher.
- Khartoum: Suq Libya, Suq Shabi, Dar El Salaam, Umm Badda, Mubarat, Mayo, AlBaraka and Al Wahda. Universities: University of Khartoum, University of Bahri, Nilein University, Ahliya University and Omdurman Islamic University.

The selection of these locations was made by the Sudanese and international researchers, all of whom have long-term experience of living and conducting research in Darfur and Khartoum. The Khartoum-based funders of the study were invited to participate in a planning workshop where the methodology was finalised.

In Sudan we carried out semi-structured key informant interviews, individual interviews and focus group discussions. The teams made sure the sample represented a range of different ethnic groups, including Zaghawa, Meidob, Fur, Tunjur, Masalit, Tama and representatives of Zayadiya, Rizeigat, Beni Halba and Misseriya. Because of their history of migration and/

⁸ University students were also sampled in Zalingei, Nertiti and El Fasher.

or displacement, the majority were Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit. The teams also made sure they interviewed people with a range of education levels (university graduates, secondary school students and school-leavers). The interviews carried out in Sudan comprised:

- Individual interviews with potential migrants, returnees and families of migrants.
- Focus groups discussions with young people (male and female) in their late teens and early 20s, some with limited education and others secondary school pupils, university students or graduates.
- Key informant interviews:
 - a. Community key informants: tribal leaders or other representatives of particular ethnic groups, IDP leaders, youth and student leaders and money transfer agents.
 - b. Key informants from organisations and local authorities: UN agencies, local and international NGO, donors, local government officers.
 - c. People involved in smuggling and trafficking: transporters and agents.

In Europe we conducted fieldwork in Italy, France, Belgium and the UK, along the journey taken by many Darfuris who reach Europe. In Italy, locations visited were Rome and Ventimiglia, in France fieldwork was done in Calais, in Belgium in Brussels, and in the UK in London, Birmingham, Bradford and Manchester. Each of these were selected because of the known presence of Darfuri migrants and refugees. In Ventimiglia, Calais and Brussels, we conducted semi-structured interviews with Darfuris in the places where they congregated, in industrial areas, in parks, train stations, informal camps,

where voluntary groups provided food to migrants and on the street. Sampling was largely based on presence and willingness to be interviewed. We carried out semi-structured interviews with:

- Recognised refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants.
- Key informants from organisations: representatives of UN agencies, NGOs (international and Sudanese), volunteer groups and Sudanese associations.

In Ventimiglia, Calais and Brussels, we interviewed Darfuris who had left Sudan recently and who left several years ago (e.g. ranging from 2005 to 2017, with the majority leaving between 2014 and 2017), and a range of ethnic groups (including Zaghawa, Fur, Tunjur, Masalit, Berti, Tama, Beni Halba, Jebel Misseriya), with the majority being Zaghawa. In the UK, we interviewed Darfuris who had arrived less than a year previously, and between 2008 and 2016, to analyse how well Darfuris had settled. These were mostly Zaghawa and Fur, but also included other ethnic groups, such as Masalit, Tunjur and Beni Halba. In all the locations, we selected key informants with good knowledge and experience of the situation of Darfuris or Sudanese more generally in that location. Because time for fieldwork was limited, we concentrated on interviewing migrants and refugees and key informants from volunteer and aid organisations, and complemented this with a review of policy documents and existing policy analysis.

The teams conducted a total of 248 interviews and discussions in Sudan and in Europe. The number of people consulted is much larger, as interviews with

Figure 1: Number of interviews carried out in different categories in Sudan

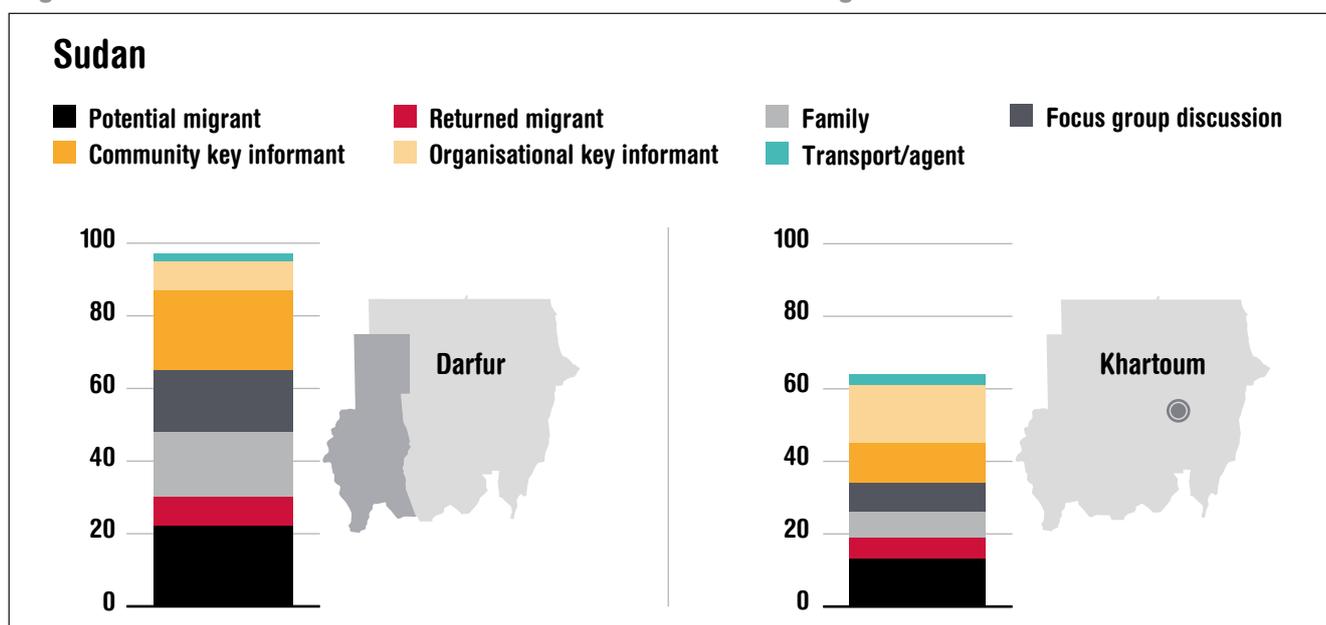
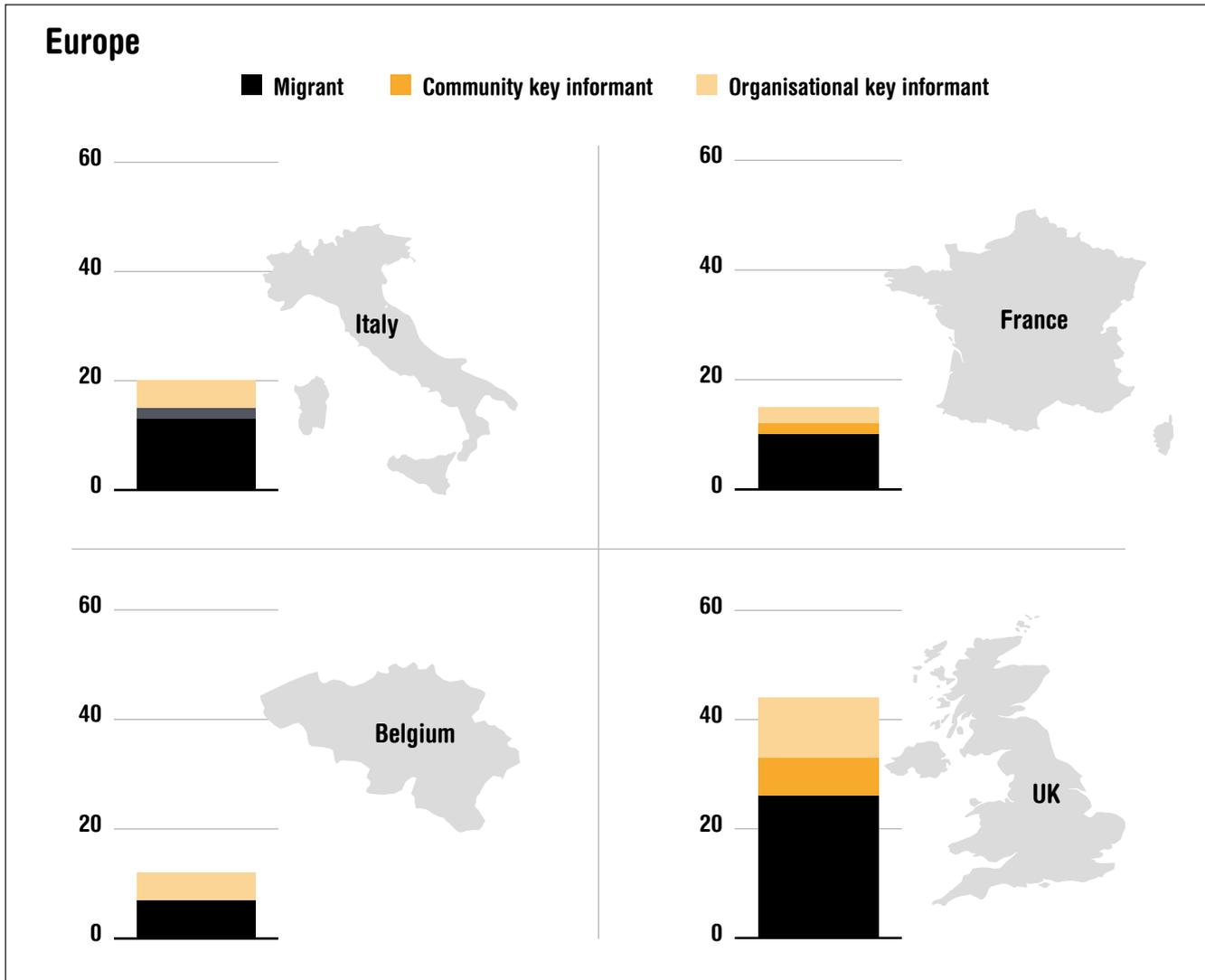


Figure 2: Number of interviews carried out in different categories in Europe



families generally consisted of two or three people, and focus groups generally comprised between four and six people. More information on the key informants interviewed is given in Annex 3. For the numbers interviewed in each location, see Annex 5.

The first stage of our analysis was to conduct a collective oral analysis workshop with the entire research team in Khartoum, where we pulled together preliminary findings according to our research questions and other themes that arose from the research. In analysing our findings further, we triangulated information on the same topic from different interviews (key informants, migrants, potential migrants, etc.), and from documents and reports if available, to maximise the validity of the findings (Bryman, 2008). We made as much use of quantitative data as possible, but no quantitative migration data was available for Darfur specifically. We used our conceptual framework (see Annex 1) to enhance the reliability of the analysis, and cross-checked some of the findings with key informants or followed

up issues with further interviews if findings were not clear. Interview transcripts were written up and analysed according to the key research questions and themes.

1.4.3 Literature review

In our review of the literature, we focused on published and grey literature on historical patterns and trends in migration in and from Darfur. We reviewed literature on migration from Sudan more generally where this appeared to relate to patterns of migration from Darfur. We also reviewed previous studies on migration through Libya and to Europe, and on policies that directly and indirectly influence migration, within Sudan and Europe. The literature review began before the fieldwork commenced, to inform and guide the methodology, and continued during the fieldwork and the analysis phase. Overall, we reviewed over 200 documents, including academic articles and book chapters, policy reports, agency reports, newspaper articles, web articles and reports of court cases.

1.4.4 Challenges

Insecurity and the need for permits for international researchers to travel to Darfur limited access. This challenge was addressed by working with an entirely Sudanese team in Sudan, and with supporting letters from the University of Khartoum. Even for the Sudanese team, travel within Darfur is hazardous due to the presence of militia and a general atmosphere of lawlessness. Some interviews with informants from rural areas were done by phone. In Zalingei, recent killings on a farm and in an IDP camp heightened tensions in September and made interviews in the camps impossible. The team was able to interview some IDPs in town. Similarly, in West Darfur the government was in the middle of a disarmament campaign, which meant that community and tribal leaders were busy collecting weapons and access to the IDP camps was heavily monitored. The pervasive surveillance of IDPs in camps made it difficult to conduct focus groups. When possible, interviews and focus groups were done in the researchers' offices or homes.

The sensitivity of irregular migration out of Sudan also made finding interviewees in Sudan challenging. The general atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion meant that the interviewer and interviewee often built on existing relationships of trust, directly or indirectly, to ensure that the interviewee felt as comfortable as possible in sharing their experience, knowledge and views. Establishing such relationships took substantial effort and time. Our researchers worked first with personal connections (e.g. key informants already known to them), who might then help to contact others, being careful not to rely on a single initial source. Even then, some people were reluctant to talk about migration (whether their own plans, or a family member who had migrated). The same applies to smugglers or smugglers' agents because they are involved in illegal activities. We decided to focus on transporters of migrants as key informants, but also gathered information on smuggling networks from migrants in Europe or returnees in Sudan. Few government officials were interviewed: in Khartoum this would have required interviews at a high level, where it was difficult to gain access; lower-level government officials in Darfur said they could not provide any information and usually declined to be interviewed (presumably because this had become a politically sensitive topic).

Darfuris in Europe were mostly willing to talk about their own story, although some were reluctant to discuss aspects of their personal experience, usually because of the trauma associated with it. For some migrants in Europe it was very emotional to recount their experience, and it was important for the

interviews to be conducted with great sensitivity. Some who had been granted asylum in the UK were unwilling to be interviewed, possibly because they associated such interviews with the asylum process itself. Nevertheless, through personal contacts and Sudanese community leaders in the UK it was possible to interview both men and women from Darfur, who were either asylum-seekers or refugees.

The study accessed as much quantitative data on migration flows as possible from secondary sources, but there are inevitable data gaps given the nature of irregular migration. For example, there are no figures for those departing Sudan irregularly, or data on the number of Darfuris in Libya, crossing the Mediterranean, in various places in Europe or who have died along their migration journey. Where relevant, we have included information on migration of Sudanese more generally, i.e. in terms of sea arrivals in Italy, voluntary or forced returns, on the assumption that a large proportion of these are from Darfur. Figures on Sudanese arrivals in Italy were only available going back to 2009 (from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Italian Ministry of Interior sources). Gathering data on the origins of *all* Sudanese migrants or refugees in Europe or a comparison of migrants and refugees from different parts of Sudan was beyond the scope of this study. We were also unable to access data on forced returns of Darfuris or Sudanese within Europe.

1.5 Report structure

The report structure broadly follows the order of our research questions. It starts with an overview of historical trends in migration in and from Darfur. It shows how conflict and political instability have increasingly constrained the national and regional options for migration (Chapter 2). This is followed by an in-depth analysis in Chapter 3 of who migrates to Europe and why, examining migrant profiles and assets (such as education, wealth and political status), and the complex interaction between the wider political, security, social and economic causes of Darfuris leaving Sudan. Chapters 2 and 3 are key to understanding the causes of current migration flows from Darfur to Europe. Chapter 4 examines the routes and journeys that migrants undertake; why and how destinations and routes change; and the role of smugglers and the diaspora as facilitators or obstacles in making migration possible.

Chapter 5 explores migrants' aspirations and how decisions are made about whether to migrate or not,

at the level of the individual and in the wider context of family and peer groups. It analyses in particular the role of information and social media in the process of decision-making, both before and during the journey. It also explores how migrants perceive the risk of migrating versus the risks of staying in Sudan, and the extent to which decisions to migrate are voluntary. Chapter 6 describes the actual experiences of migrants at each stage of their journey, in Libya, Italy, France, Belgium and the UK. This chapter demonstrates the dangers that they face, often as a consequence of the policies and government actions discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 7 takes the reader back to Darfur and people of Darfuri origin in Khartoum, and assesses the economic, social and political consequences for the families and communities left behind, positive and negative. Chapter 8 analyses the policies, strategies and actions of the Sudanese government, the EU and individual European governments (Italy, France, Belgium and the UK) that influence and impact on migrant experiences, journeys and the causes of migration. Chapter 9 presents the conclusions from the study, and policy and programming recommendations.

2 Historical trends in migration

2.1 Introduction

Migration has long been a key part of livelihoods in Darfur. This chapter examines historical migration processes in and from Darfur, and changes in migration trends in relation to wider political and economic processes in Darfur, Sudan and the region (in particular Libya, South Sudan and Egypt). It considers how migration has changed in three phases. First, migration before the 2003 conflict, when Darfur was relatively stable but migration formed an important livelihood strategy. An understanding of these historical patterns is important to analyse how current migration patterns build on those from the past. Second, the impact of conflict from 2003 onwards, both in terms of large-scale displacement in search of safety and protection, and previous migration strategies as a component of livelihoods. Third, the increase in migration to Europe after the fall of Gaddafi (or post-2011), as this event has been associated with increased migration from Libya to Europe more generally (see e.g. Crawley et al., 2016; Fargues, 2017).

As much as possible, the chapter uses literature on the migration of Darfuris. There is a wealth of information on migration of Darfuris before 2003, but much of the literature post-2011 on migration out of Libya to Europe concerns Sudanese generally, not Darfuris specifically. Section 2.2 therefore reviews a selection of the available literature to illustrate the nature of migration before the conflict, and focuses on labour migration and migration in response to food insecurity or famine. From 2011 onwards, the chapter reviews information on migration of Sudanese generally, with as much reference to Darfur as possible.

For readers who are not familiar with Darfur: it is the western-most area of Sudan, bordering Libya, Chad, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. The border with Chad is about 1,400km long, and with Libya 380km.⁹ The size of France, Darfur stretches from the Sahara desert in the north to tropical savannah in the south, with the fertile temperate climate of the Jebel Marra mountains in the centre. Livelihoods in Darfur vary according to these

conditions, with camel nomads in the far north, settled farmers and agro-pastoralists in the west and centre and cattle nomads in the south.

2.2 Migration before the Darfur conflict and humanitarian crisis

Darfuris have traditionally migrated for work – either seasonally or longer-term – and in response to food insecurity or famine within Darfur, to central Sudan, to neighbouring countries such as Libya, Chad and Egypt, and beyond to the Gulf countries. Migration patterns are also linked to ethnicity, livelihood groups and the geographical homelands of particular groups. Before the conflict, migration was mainly to meet economic needs, or in response to periods of acute food insecurity and famine. This section outlines some of the key aspects of this kind of migration before the conflict.

Migration to central Sudan has a long history. Both the colonial and the newly independent government¹⁰ encouraged migration to agricultural schemes in central Sudan to create an agricultural labour force. Labourers mostly came from western Sudan and West Africa, some staying all year but others only when harvests in Darfur were insufficient (O'Brien, 1983). Migration to central Sudan increased during periods of famine and food insecurity, starting in the 1970s and continuing throughout the 1980s and 1990s, from different parts of Darfur. The Darfuri population in Khartoum increased immensely from the 1980s onwards. Certain neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city, such as Mayo, Umm Badda, Dar Es Salaam and Haj Youssif, have a high proportion of Darfuri residents (Pantuliano et al., 2011).

Egypt and Libya's close relationship with Sudan has also encouraged migration, including from Darfur. Sudanese have settled in Egypt since the early twentieth century for education, business and medical treatment. Larger numbers of Sudanese arrived following the 1976 Wadi El Nil Treaty, which granted Sudanese the right to live in Egypt without

9 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/print_2096.html.

10 The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, which lasted from 1899 to 1956.

a residence visa.¹¹ By the mid-1990s, between 2.2 million and 4 million Sudanese were thought to be living in Egypt (Bakewell and De Haas, 2007). The link with Darfur goes back to the seventeenth century, with the slave and camel trade along what was known as the *Darb al Arbain* ('forty days' road') (O'Fahey, 2008). The connection between Libya and Darfur goes back equally far, associated with trade and pilgrim routes (Young et al., 2007). Darfuri labour migration started in the 1960s, and increased in the 1970s and 1980s as a result of the oil boom, Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi's open-door policy and deteriorating economic conditions, drought and famine in Darfur. Migration continued to increase until the mid-to-late 1990s, but by the early 2000s Libyan policies of reducing its dependence on foreign workers and anti-migrant sentiment led to an increase in the number of migrants trying to make their way to Europe (Young et al., 2007). The oil boom also led to new migration opportunities for Sudanese in the Gulf countries (African Rights, 1997). Opportunities declined from the 1980s, however, as these countries started to rely more on Asian labour.

Within Darfur seasonal labour migration was common, particularly in populations living in the northern and more arid part of Darfur, which in some cases gradually turned into longer-term or permanent migration. Family members migrated to southern parts of Darfur to work as labourers for planting and harvesting. For the Berti ethnic group, for example, such rural-rural migration was often more important as an additional source of income than migration to central Sudan or to other countries (Ibrahim and Ruppert, 1991). In the famine of the 1980s, large numbers of Darfuris migrated temporarily to Jebel Marra, southern parts of Darfur and to towns, as well as to central Sudan and Libya. This included the Berti, but also the Zaghawa and Meidob ethnic groups (see below). As drought and environmental degradation increased, these migration patterns became more permanent. Migrants would often stay for longer in southern parts of Darfur, or in larger central villages or urban areas. Casual work in towns during the dry season became common, and some settled permanently in towns such as El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, changing their livelihoods in the process (Pyle and Gabbar, 1993).

The Zaghawa are emblematic of changes in livelihoods with long-term migration. The agro-pastoral Zaghawa started migrating out of their homeland in the far north-west of North Darfur (for example Tina and Kornoi) during the drought of the 1960s, and by the 1980s less than a third were living in their homeland

(de Waal, 1989). They moved to southern parts of Darfur and became farmers, to urban areas and became traders or to Libya and the Gulf countries. On their return to Darfur, they invested money in farming, trade and education (Abdul-Jalil, 1988; Ibrahim, 1998). When outside their homeland, they maintained links and established networks of support both in Sudan and abroad. In Libya and the Gulf, as well as in Sudan, ethnically based networks helped newcomers establish themselves with employment, land or loans (de Waal, 1989). It appears that part of their success in adapting their livelihoods was a function of their readiness to give up their nomadic way of life and a long history of migration – well before the droughts of the 1960s (Abdul-Jalil, 1988). Over time, Zaghawa came to see trade as a source of prestige rather than a necessity brought on by the loss of livelihoods (Ruppert, 1991). The Meidob, in contrast, in the far north-east of North Darfur (for example Malha) did not migrate far out of their homeland until the 1980s. They live in a similarly harsh semi-desert environment, but their pastoral livelihoods were more resilient to drought. This meant they missed the oil booms in Libya and the Gulf (unlike the Zaghawa), and ended up migrating mainly to Libya for low-paid jobs such as herding. Lack of funds meant they often had to work illegally as they could not afford the bribes for passport and visas, and could give less support to new migrants (Ibrahim, 1998).

Other ethnic groups have different histories of migration. The Berti, farmers in the north-eastern part of Darfur, mostly migrated within Darfur – as discussed above. The Fur, living in the more fertile part of central Darfur, historically migrated to central and other parts of Sudan and to Libya. In the more arid Fur homelands of Jebel Si, migration has long been a necessity for maintaining livelihoods. The Fur from Jebel Si have migrated to central Sudan for long periods since the 1960s. Massive male outmigration became a dominant feature of Jebel Si (de Waal, 1989). Nomadic groups, most of whom claim Arab descent (for example the camel-herding Northern Rizeigat), migrated seasonally for pasture. Their routes went from Wadi Howar in the far north of Darfur in the rainy season to the Bahr El Arab, on the border with what is now South Sudan, during the dry season. Some migration routes crossed the border into Chad or the Central African Republic (Young et al., 2009). Other Arab nomadic groups, such as the Misseriya (around Kass, but whose base is in Chad and Kordofan), Beni Halba (around Idd-El-Fursan) and the Zayadia (around Kutum), all followed their own north-south migration (O'Fahey and Tubiana, c2007).

The migration of Darfuris to Europe and North America was limited prior to the start of the conflict

11 The treaty was terminated in 1995.

in 2003, though the UK has hosted a Sudanese diaspora community since the 1970s, including politicians in exile, asylum-seekers and skilled professionals. From 1989, following the Islamist coup in Sudan, some Sudanese migrated from the Gulf countries to Europe, the US and Canada, in some cases claiming asylum as refugees because of their political affiliations. Another factor was the massive expulsions of Sudanese workers from Arab states during the first Gulf war (Assal, 2007).

2.3 Displacement and migration (2003–2011)

Migration types and trends from Darfur changed completely with the start of the conflict in 2003. Levels of displacement were highest at the start, although displacement has continued throughout, and many of those displaced early on have been unable to return home and are still living in camps 14 years later.¹² Over time, some went back to traditional migration routes and destinations, such as Libya, but Darfuris also migrated to new destinations such as Israel. This section first discusses displacement due to conflict, followed by changes in migration trends up to 2011.

2.3.1 Conflict and displacement

The current conflict is usually considered to have started in 2003, when the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) rebel group attacked Golo in Jebel Marra (Flint and de Waal, 2008).¹³ It followed decades of conflict resulting from national and regional processes of Arabisation,¹⁴ and administrative changes which placed Arab ethnic groups¹⁵ in more powerful positions, undermining the authority of Fur and Masalit leaders in central and western Darfur respectively.

Government armed forces and Janjaweed militia responded with extreme violence, including the destruction of villages, killings and sexual violence.¹⁶ By early 2005, almost two million people had been displaced and hundreds of thousands had fled to Chad (Flint and de Waal, 2008: 145) and Egypt (Kunna, 2016). Around 130,000 people are estimated to have died between September 2003 and January 2005 (Guha-Sapir and Degomme, 2005). At the end of 2005, the World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that 3.23 million people were in need of food aid in Darfur (WFP, 2006).

The majority of the displaced belonged to the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa groups, which formed a support base for the two main rebel movements at the start of the conflict (the SLA and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)). Almost the entire Masalit population in West Darfur was displaced into camps (including in Geneina), leaving their fertile lands free for nomadic groups such as the Rizeigat and Misseriya to graze their livestock and, later, to farm (Tanner, 2005; Olsson, 2011). Large numbers of Fur and Zaghawa were displaced from central and northern Darfur to larger villages and towns such as El Fasher (North Darfur), Nyala (South Darfur) and Zalingei (Central Darfur), as well as to smaller towns such as Kass (in South Darfur).

Movements of young men to Central Sudan in search of safety were another early feature of the conflict. Darfuris who migrated to Khartoum earlier because of drought and famine were now hosting large numbers of extended family. Not all new migrants found work, and some men returned to Darfur in late 2005 and early 2006 as the crisis stabilised with the large-scale distribution of humanitarian assistance (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2007). Throughout the conflict, men and women from the 'professional class' and their families have moved to Khartoum, triggering a 'brain drain' from Darfur.

Some of those who fled to Egypt early in the conflict obtained refugee status and were resettled in the US, Canada or Australia.¹⁷ From 2004, some Sudanese have been able to travel easily to Egypt as their 'special status' through the Four Freedoms Agreement between Sudan and Egypt exempts them from visa requirements, but this has not been comprehensively implemented as Egypt has placed restrictions on the movement of men between the ages of 18 and 49 (Sudan Tribune, 2013). The UNHCR suspended

12 Trends in overall numbers of displaced or protracted displaced people were requested from UN OCHA Sudan, but were not available. Complications arise because of changes in reporting from overall displaced to vulnerable displaced or IDPs in need (and how this is worked out), or displaced people targeted for assistance. It also depends on whether the estimates are made by the Sudanese government and/or verified by the UN.

13 For a detailed history of the origins of the conflict, see Flint and de Waal, 2008; Prunier, 2008.

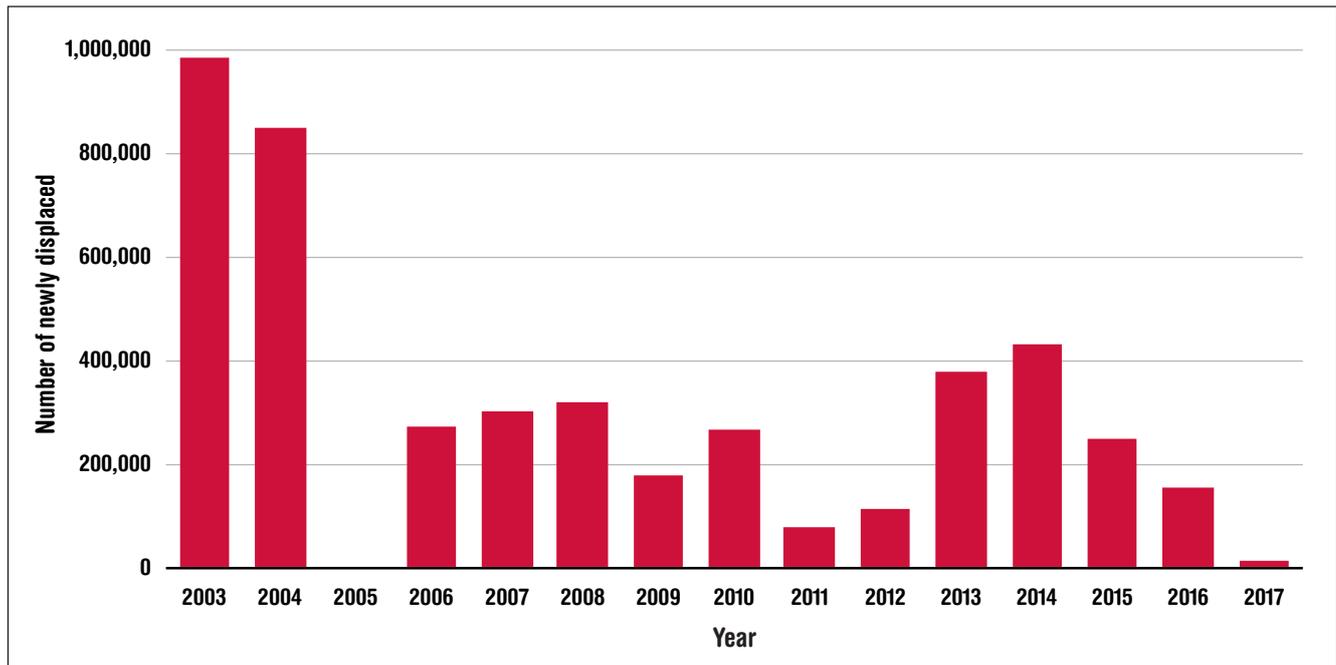
14 Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi armed Darfuri Arabs as part of his regional strategy of Arabisation and to support opposition to the Chadian government (Prunier, 2008).

15 Historically, ethnicity has been fluid in Darfur: people could be assimilated into a new tribe if they changed livelihood or migrated out of their area of origin. Non-Arabs could become Arab and vice versa (O'Fahey and Tubiana, c2007; Prunier, 2008).

16 The term *Janjaweed* is used to describe the militia mobilised by the Sudan government to fight the insurgency in Darfur. During this study, respondents often used the term generically when talking about the police, militia, bandits and paramilitary groups.

17 Key informant interviews with community leaders.

Figure 3: Number of newly displaced per year in Darfur



Note: No data exists for 2005

Source: UN OCHA (2018)

its refugee status determination interviews in 2004 following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese government and the rebel movements in the south, despite the fact that Darfur was not included in the CPA (Kunna, 2016). Although Egypt applied the 1969 OAU Convention in 2004, which enlarged the criteria for refugee recognition, it did not offer opportunities for resettlement.¹⁸ In 2005, Sudanese protests against UNHCR's perceived failure to protect their rights in Egypt resulted in 27 deaths and mass detentions (ibid.).

Following the events in Egypt, Israel became a new destination for Darfuris. Several of our Darfuri interviewees, from different ethnic groups and locations, had family members who had migrated to Israel or knew others who had done so. Many had initially planned to go to Egypt but left for Israel following the violence in 2005, or they heard that economic prospects were better in Israel. The journey across the Sinai desert between Egypt and Israel is notorious for human trafficking: migrants and refugees are vulnerable to abduction, torture and extortion, and people can be sold or killed (van Reisen et al., 2014). By 2012 there were over 15,000 Sudanese in Israel, some with refugee status but most with only temporary group protection (Feinstein International Center, 2012). From 2010 onwards, however, Israel instituted a policy of deterrence involving fines for employers of Sudanese asylum-seekers, detentions and

the erection of a wall along the border with Egypt (ibid.). By the end of 2013, migration into Israel had effectively stopped. This is likely to have had an effect on migration flows to Europe (see section 2.4).

Within Darfur, displacement due to incursions by armed forces, paramilitary groups and militia¹⁹ has been ongoing throughout the conflict (see Figure 3). The year 2010, for example, saw renewed large-scale displacement when Minni Minnawi, the SLA leader who had signed a peace agreement with the government in 2006,²⁰ returned to the opposition, and areas previously under his control were attacked by government forces (Human Rights Watch, 2011). In addition, many of those displaced in earlier years remained in camps as their home areas were still insecure, their houses and community infrastructure had been destroyed and their land was occupied by Arab ethnic groups. An estimated

18 Personal communication with Egyptian asylum lawyer.

20 The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

1.9 million displaced people were still living in camps at the end of 2011 (UN OCHA, 2011). Renewed large-scale violence and displacement from 2013 onwards is discussed below (see section 2.4.2).

2.3.2 Changing patterns of labour migration

In the early stages of the conflict, labour migration within Darfur and to Libya virtually stopped. People in SLA-held areas could not travel to government towns for work or to access markets. In government-held rural areas villagers were kept against their will and coerced into paying local Arabs for their protection (see for example Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2007). The border with Libya was officially closed in 2003 (Young et al., 2007), and by mid-2004 migration to Libya had almost ceased. Migration and the flow of remittances resumed in 2006–2007, with the payment of fees at the border.²¹ Routes to Libya were also at times blocked by insecurity.²² The combination of a declining labour market in Libya and the difficulties involved in returning to Darfur put pressure on migrants to travel to Italy even in 2004 (Young et al., 2007).

For IDPs migration became one of their main livelihood sources, as for example reported by Young et al. (2009) for IDPs in Zalingei and Kebkabiya. According to an IDP leader in Zamzam camp, North Darfur, youths moved out to look for work within North Darfur, as well as central and eastern Sudan, Libya, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.²³ Some IDPs (primarily women) also engaged in seasonal farm work, either as labourers on rented land or back on their own land. Where land had been occupied by Arab groups, special arrangements were required for payment or sharing of crops (Olsson, 2011). Families increasingly split between camps, villages and locations further afield.

Another trend during this period was work in South Sudan. Traders have long done business between Darfur and southern Sudan, but with South Sudan's independence in 2011 many young men migrated there to take advantage of new work opportunities in trade and business.²⁴ Migration to South Sudan was also seen as a quick way to earn money to migrate to Europe. People also migrated for work in gold mines,

at first in Jebel Amer in North Darfur (in 2011), and later in the Tibesti mountains on the border with Chad and Libya, and at Brao in Niger (see section 2.4.2).

2.4 Displacement and migration after 2011

Political unrest in the region more widely has been one of the main influences on migration: blocking migration to some countries, and facilitating migration to others. The fall of Gaddafi in Libya, revolution in Egypt and war in South Sudan have all influenced migration patterns and flows. Libya, Chad and Egypt became transit countries to Europe, and the migration of Sudanese to Italy increased, peaking in 2014–16, as shown in Figure 4. This period also coincided with an increase in violence in Darfur. Most of the Darfuris we saw in Europe had left Sudan in 2014, 2015 and 2016. In these years, 3,101, 8,509 and 9,327 Sudanese migrants and asylum-seekers were officially registered as arriving in Italy respectively. The numbers leaving for Europe do not reflect the scale of youth wanting to leave Darfur. Focus groups of young men often told us that most of their peers wanted to leave as soon as they could. All knew many youth who had already left.

2.4.1 Regional unrest

The 2011 revolution in Libya, the fall of Gaddafi and subsequent instability all posed threats to Sudanese and other migrants in the country. As pro- and anti-Gaddafi forces fought in 2011 (each side supported by a range of fighters from neighbouring countries²⁵), some Sudanese living in Libya returned to Sudan or left for Europe. According to one Darfuri interviewed in Ventimiglia: 'when the war in Libya started, what I saw was worse than what I had seen in Sudan.'

21 Key informant interview with Meidob community leader in El Fasher.

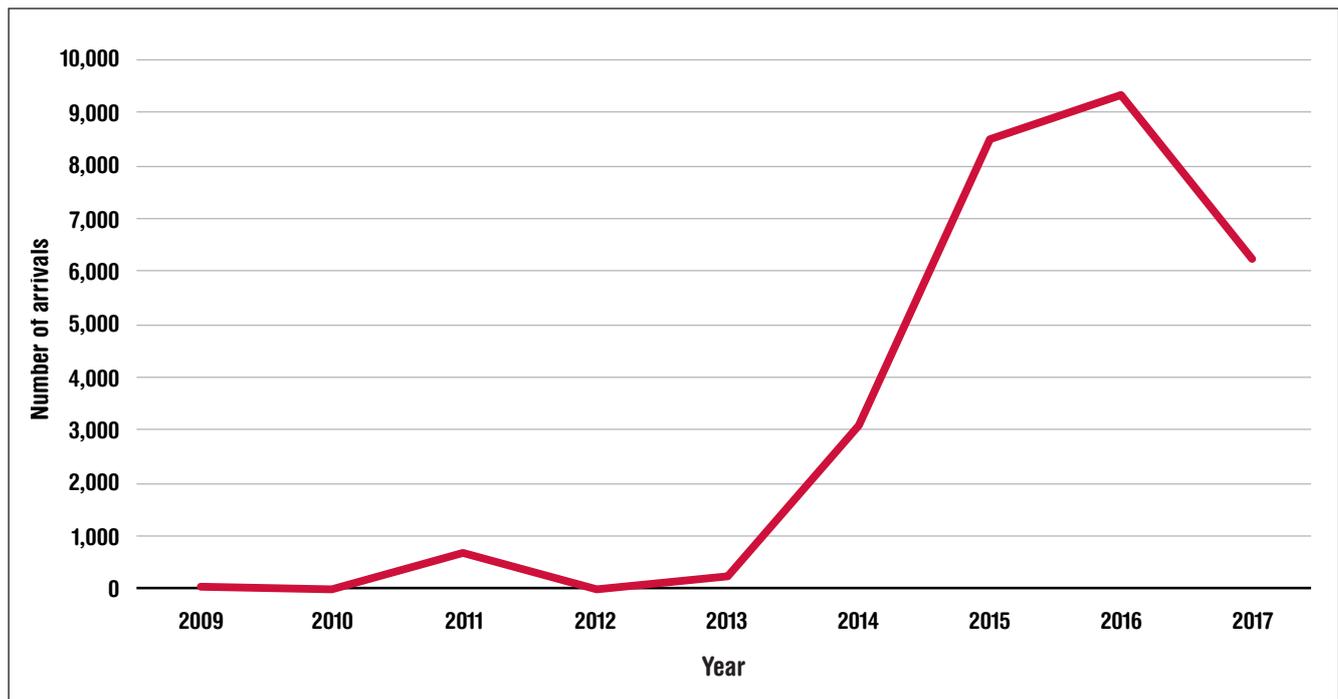
22 Interviews with Fur student leaders in Zalingei and Meidob community leader in El Fasher.

23 Key informant interview with an IDP leader in Zamzam.

24 Focus group discussion, male youth, University of Khartoum. Interview with a potential migrant in Abou Shook camp. Interview with a returnee in Umm Badda, Khartoum.

25 The Sudanese government and many of the Darfur rebel movements are active in Libya's ongoing civil war, as are regional powers including Chad and Egypt. Sudan's rebel movements have supported former Gadhafist General Haftar's National Libyan Army, which now controls much of the House of Representatives in eastern Libya. The Sudanese government supports the UN-backed Presidential Council of Fajez al-Sarraj, which in theory presides over the Government of National Accord, but in practice only controls part of western Libya. The Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) has had a presence in Libya since 2011, particularly in Kufra. It has supported various factions at various times, but from 2014 has joined with Zawiya militia to patrol the Sudan–Libya border. In 2016, RSF forces were attached to border control in Aweynat. Some have argued that the real objective of the RSF and NISS presence on the border is not to prevent migrants from entering Libya, but rather to fight Darfur's rebel movements (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017).

Figure 4: Arrivals of Sudanese in Italy (by sea)



Source: Farques (2017) and UNHCR

Data for Darfuri arrivals is not available, although from our interviews in Italy it was clear that a large proportion were from Darfur. Note that Figure 4 does not represent the total number of Sudanese migrants to Europe as some came via Greece, early registration of migrants into Italy was not as rigorous as it is now, and not all arrived by sea (see Chapter 4).

Those who had supported Gaddafi were now seen as the enemy, especially black²⁶ people ... It was impossible to go back to Sudan, so either I had to go to Tunisia where the Gaddafi militias were, go by sea to Europe, or go to Egypt. I chose the sea'. As Gaddafi had supported Darfur's rebel movements, and rebel movements now supported pro-Gaddafi forces, Sudanese from ethnic groups associated with the rebel movements were especially targeted.

By 2012 Darfuris appear to have started migrating to Libya once again. According to one study at the time: 'Migrants are drawn to Libya because there are good employment prospects, relatively high wages, and relative ease of passage to Europe, particularly in the post-revolution environment where controls are minimal' (Altai Consulting, 2013: 10). Smuggling services were well-established: according to one Darfuri who left Sudan in 2012:²⁷ 'since the collapse of the Libyan government there is no supervision of the port. If you have money, you can find a ship to

Europe quite easily'. Others reported being able to organise smugglers to get into Libya and for travel through Libya as well. Some Sudanese claimed asylum in Libya. In November 2013, UNHCR registered 676 refugees and 463 asylum-seekers in the country (ibid.).

Others fled Libya for Egypt. Together with other third-country nationals, they were housed in Salloum camp on the Libya-Egypt border. According to a report by Cairo's Migration Policy Centre, a total of 1,750 people in Salloum camp were registered as refugees, mostly from Sudan (presumably Darfur), of whom 248 departed for resettlement countries or for transit centres in Europe (Hafez and Ghaly, 2012). A cut-off date for registering in Salloum camp was set for October 2011. Jacobson et al. (2014) reports 24,850 Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt by 2012, and Kunna (2016) 24,000 recognised Darfuri refugees, with hundreds of thousands more unregistered. The number of Sudanese in Egypt increased when Israel closed its border. Some left Egypt for Europe during this period, including some of the Darfuris we interviewed in Europe. Irregular migration from Egypt increased following the overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi in August 2013, initially mainly Syrians, as security and protection for migrants and asylum-seekers deteriorated. According to the Global Initiative Against

26 In the construction of categories of Darfuris into Arab and African (or non-Arab), the Africans are also called blacks, or *Zurga*. The conflict in Darfur is often referred to as a conflict between Arabs and Africans, but this is a gross oversimplification.

27 Interview with an asylum-seeker in Bradford.

Transnational Organised Crime (2017), departures from Egypt increased in 2016 following the EU–Turkey deal in March that year to stop the flow of migration from Turkey. Our interviewees, in contrast, reported that migration from Egypt had become more difficult following a clampdown by the authorities. In November 2016, the Egyptian government passed a law penalising smuggling with a prison sentence and fines up to tens of thousands of dollars (Al-Khashef and Rollins, 2016).

From 2013, about 10,000 African asylum-seekers left Israel, many of them Sudanese. The Israeli government gave asylum-seekers the option of returning home or moving to a third country. Although these options were presented as voluntary, many were encouraged to leave because of their inability to obtain refugee status and the conditions of detention, and because of promises that they would be able to secure legal status in another country. Although Israel has not made public the third countries where asylum would be granted, it is known that they include Uganda and Rwanda. However, promises of legal status in these countries were not honoured, and many Sudanese travelled onwards to South Sudan, back to Sudan or to Libya (International Refugee Rights Initiative, 2015). Community leaders, particularly in Central Darfur, reported the return of migrants from Israel at this time.²⁸ In January 2018, Israel announced a plan to forcibly relocate Eritreans and Sudanese to countries in Africa or face indefinite detention (UNHCR, 2018).

The outbreak of conflict in South Sudan in late 2013 led migrants to return to Darfur or migrate to Libya. One potential migrant from Zamzam camp in North Darfur, for example, had been to South Sudan, lost everything and was now planning to migrate to Libya and on to Europe. Another, from Omdurman, had planned to go to South Sudan but now aimed for Libya and Europe instead. Finally, a more recent contributing factor to increased migration to Europe may be conditions for refugees in Chad, including the relocation of camps away from the border, reduced food aid and a change in education from Arabic to French.²⁹

As South Sudan, Israel and Egypt became more difficult destinations for either work or asylum, some tried to take the route via Turkey or Lebanon into Europe. Going to Europe via Turkey was one of the main routes before the Libya route opened up.³⁰

Darfuris would travel to Egypt and then to Turkey, or direct to Turkey by plane and then on to Greece (see Journey 1). At the start of the Syria crisis, in 2012, some Darfuris left for Turkey or Lebanon in the hope of claiming asylum there (and being resettled in the West), but if unsuccessful, as most of them were, they went on to Greece and other European countries.

2.4.2 The rise of migration to Europe

In 2014, the number of Sudanese migrating to Europe dramatically increased. The period from 2014 onwards was also associated with an increase in violence in Darfur, the start of the Libyan civil war, an increase in smuggling networks and a boom in gold mining, as well as blockages on the routes to South Sudan and Israel. What were previously destination countries, such as Libya and Egypt, became transit countries on the journey to Europe.

The years 2013 and 2014 saw an escalation in conflict and increased displacement in Darfur. In late 2013, the government created the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a new paramilitary group incorporating many of the Janjaweed militia. The RSF attacked, looted and destroyed large numbers of villages in North and South Darfur throughout 2014. In 2015 and 2016, the government (with the RSF) launched major offensives in the Jebel Marra region, the last rebel stronghold. The creation of the RSF was part of the Sudanese government's *seif-as-sakhan* strategy to resolve the conflict militarily (Strachan, 2016; UN Panel of Experts, 2017). These same years also saw increased attacks on farmers or IDPs attempting to farm and on IDP camps, as well as conflict over control of the gold mines in Jebel Amir in North Darfur. Some 380,000 people were newly displaced in 2013, 430,000 in 2014 and 247,000 in 2015 (see Figure 3). In 2016, the offensive against Jebel Marra also produced large numbers of newly displaced: 105,900 arrived in Sortony, Taweila and Kebkabiya in North Darfur (UNAMID, 2016). The total verified newly displaced for 2016 (and accepted by the Sudanese government) is 152,600 (UN OCHA, 2018). Although new displacement decreased in 2017, the UN reported 3.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Darfur that year (UN OCHA, 2017), the same number as at the height of the humanitarian crisis in 2005.³¹

The Sudanese government and the African Union–United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) have claimed at various times since 2009 that the conflict is over (Feinstein International Center, 2011:

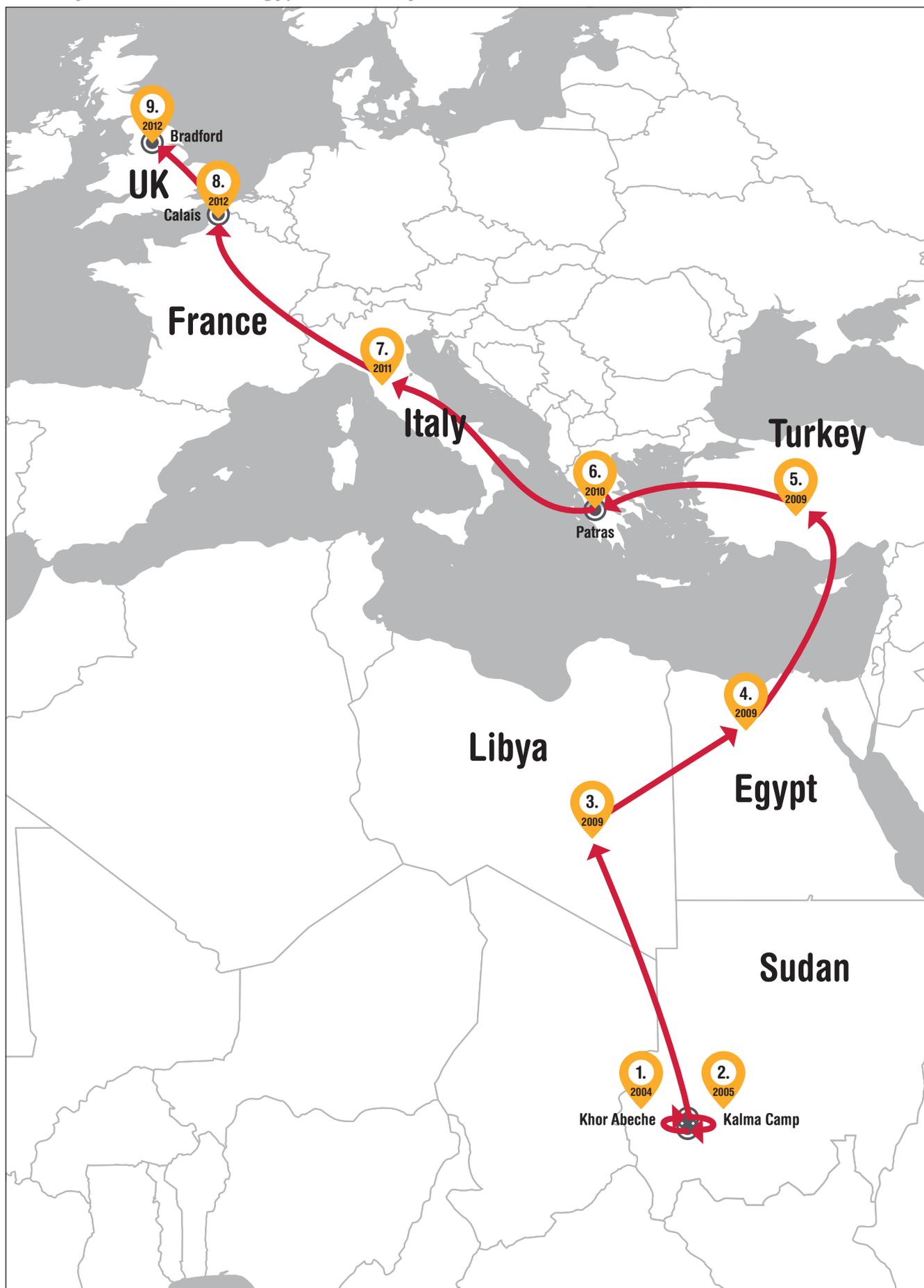
28 Key informant interviews with Fur IDP community leaders and focus groups in Kass and Zalingei.

29 Key informant interview with an ECHO representative.

30 Interview with a recognised refugee in London.

31 The 2018 UN OCHA *Humanitarian needs overview* reports government estimates of 1.8 million IDPs in need. See also fn. 12.

Journey 1: To the UK via Egypt and Turkey





YKHOR ABECHE, SOUTH DARFUR. 2004.

Mohamed's* family is from Khor Abeche. The village was attacked early on in the conflict. His family fled to Kalma camp in early 2005.



KALMA CAMP, SOUTH DARFUR. 2005.

The signing of the DPA in 2005 divided Kalma camp along ethnic lines. Mohamed's family left, returning to Khor Abeche. In 2010, the village was attacked again and his family moved to Direig camp outside Nyala.



LIBYA. 2009.

Mohamed left to find work in Libya. He worked for six months, but the high levels of exploitation he experienced forced him to leave Libya and travel to Egypt.



EGYPT. 2009.

Mohamed intended to apply to UNHCR for refugee status, but found that Sudanese were no longer being registered. He spent two months in Egypt.



TURKEY. 2009.

Mohamed travelled to Turkey with a view to trying again to register with UNHCR for asylum, but was advised to return to Egypt. He spent one month in Turkey looking for work.



PATRAS, GREECE. 2010.

Mohamed crossed the border from Turkey to Greece in early 2010, first to a refugee camp and then on to Athens, and finally to the port of Patras, where he spent two years trying to get into Italy.



ITALY. 2011.

Mohamed reached Italy, travelling under a truck on a ferry.



CALAIS, FRANCE. 2012.

Mohamed travelled by train to Nice and then Paris. He was encouraged by other migrants to go to Calais, where he was given an appointment to apply for asylum. When he heard that Darfuri asylum-seekers were being rejected in France, Mohamed decided to travel on to the UK concealed on a truck.



BRADFORD, UK. 2012.

On reaching the UK he was granted asylum two months after applying, and was housed in the north of England. His wife joined him through family reunification in 2013.

* Name has been changed to protect the individual's identity.

7), but in 2017 these claims gained greater traction. The UN has asserted that Darfur is more stable, that violent conflict and displacement have ceased and that any remaining violence is due to crime and failures of the local police and justice system.³² However, while most of Darfur is now in government hands, the rebel movements have not disappeared. In May 2017, factions of the SLA (SLA-MM and the newly created SLA-TC) and government security forces clashed in North and East Darfur. According to the UN Panel of Experts (2017), the main objective of the rebel movements was precisely to counter the perception that the war was over. Militia attacks have also continued, and the failure of law and justice means that the RSF, militia and other armed groups can act with impunity. According to the UNHCR Representative in Khartoum, the widespread presence of armed groups and high levels of impunity mean that Darfur, including IDP camps, is not safe.³³ These contrasting perspectives on Darfur need to be seen in the light of the greater engagement of Western governments with Sudan through the Khartoum Process, in an effort to stop migration to Europe, and the lifting of US economic sanctions in October 2017. Both benefit from a narrative that the war is over and that the Sudanese government is a legitimate political and trading partner.

Libya's civil war has resulted in territory being controlled by three competing 'governments', alongside a number of armed groups, city states and tribes in different parts of the country.³⁴ With the formal economy largely absent, smuggling has become one of the main opportunities for earning large sums of money quickly, including the smuggling of migrants, as well as fuel, vehicles, weapons, drugs and cigarettes (see for example International Crisis Group, 2017). Both rebel movements and Arab militia have been accused of involvement in smuggling and trafficking, as well as acting as mercenaries for the three 'competing' governments in the country and various armed groups (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017; UN Panel of Experts, 2017). As smuggling networks proliferated and the number of migrants grew, the conditions they were being held in deteriorated and exploitation increased. By this stage Libya had become one of the most dangerous transit

32 For example the UN Resident Coordinator (UNDP) and WFP Sudan Country Director, speaking at a meeting at Chatham House in June 2017. The meeting was on the record.

33 Key informant interview with UNHCR representative in Khartoum.

34 Regional actors are involved to varying degrees, with Sudan's rebel movements, Chad and Egypt supporting the Haftar's 'government' in the north-east, and Khartoum the internationally recognised government led by al-Sarraj.

countries, with smugglers and traffickers actively recruiting migrants to transport to Europe.

At the same time as smuggling networks increased, gold mines in the region proliferated, providing a source of income to fund migration. In 2013, large new discoveries were made in the Tibesti mountains on the border between Chad and Libya. Even larger discoveries followed in Niger in 2014. Sudanese formed a large part of the labour force in these mines, particularly Zaghawa, but also Masalit (traditionally living on the border between Darfur and Chad) and Arabs. Migrants from other countries, including Libya, Niger and Mauretania, were also present. The years 2013 and 2014 were the height of the gold rush in the Tibesti (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017). For many, mining for gold was (and still is) a way to raise money for onward migration (see Chapters 4 and 5). Effectively, what began as a source of income to support family and livelihoods in Darfur has become a step on the road to Europe.

Migration of Sudanese to Europe decreased in 2017. This should not be taken to reflect a decrease in numbers of Darfuris trying to migrate, or in the need for asylum and protection for sections of that population. It appears to be more to do with European policies and strategies to deter and prevent migrants from coming to Europe. This is discussed in Chapter 8.

2.5 Conclusion

Migration has long been an important component of Darfuri livelihoods. It remains so to some extent, but has changed from seasonal and longer-term labour migration within Sudan and to neighbouring countries, and as a response to drought and famine, to large-scale displacement during conflict, and from 2011 an increase in migration to Europe. Some ethnic groups with a history of migration (Zaghawa and Fur) have been displaced in large numbers because they also formed the main support base of the opposition. Conflict, violence and displacement in Darfur is ongoing. Even so, migration still builds on past patterns: Libya, Egypt and Chad have remained key destinations for Darfuris fleeing conflict, as they were for labour migration or in response to food insecurity and famine.

Regional political and economic processes have had a key influence on migration trends by either facilitating or blocking migration. The closure of one route, whether due to conflict or policy changes, led migrants and refugees to re-route elsewhere. In 2005, for example, when Darfuris could no longer claim asylum in Egypt, many left for Israel. From 2014, migration of Sudanese to Italy increased as opportunities for

migration to neighbouring countries became limited because of conflict or political upheaval. Conflict in South Sudan from 2013 and political instability in Egypt, combined with deterrent measures in Israel and deteriorating conditions for refugees in Chad, left migration through Libya to Europe as one of the

few options for Darfuris in search of safety and to find work. The collapse of the Libyan state enabled smuggling networks to flourish, and migration for gold in Chad and Niger provided a new source of income. The following chapter analyses in more detail the causes of Darfuri migration to Europe.

3 Who migrates to Europe and why?

3.1 Introduction

Migration has long been a feature of life in Darfur, but the reasons for it have changed over time. This chapter focuses specifically on recent migration to Europe, and analyses the profile of Darfuris and people from Darfur living in Khartoum who are leaving for Europe. Many recent studies of migration to Europe have looked at broad categories of causes, such as poverty, conflict or political oppression, for mixed migration from a range of countries.³⁵ This chapter looks in detail at the complex and context-specific reasons for leaving for Europe by a specific population group: Darfuris and people of Darfuri origin living in Khartoum.

The chapter analyses how migrant profiles and assets combine with wider structural processes in Darfur and Sudan to create vulnerability, the need or desire to migrate and the opportunities to do so. It starts by examining migrants' profiles and assets, looking at age and gender, socio-economic status, including livelihood, wealth, skills, education (or financial and human assets) and ethnic group (or social and political assets). It also analyses the history of displacement during the conflict as an influence on later migration to Europe. The following section examines the causes of migration as reported by Darfuris themselves, which were largely related to wider structural political, security, economic and social processes in Darfur and Sudan.

3.2 Who is migrating to Europe?

3.2.1 Age and gender

The large majority of Darfuris leaving for Europe were young men. Transporters in El Fasher, who smuggle migrants across the border and thus have in-depth knowledge of their profile, estimated the percentage

of young men amongst migrants to be 90–95%. Key informants most often mentioned an age range of between 18 and 30.³⁶ This was confirmed by the age of Darfuris interviewed in Europe for this study, the majority of whom were between 18 and 30. However, a minority of Darfuris we interviewed in Europe were in their 30s or were younger than 18 when they left Darfur, and minors form a significant proportion of Darfuris leaving for Europe. Our findings show that some were as young as 14 when they left, often on their own.³⁷ One key informant in Belgium, who works with Sudanese, including Darfuris, in Maximilian Park, estimated that about 20% of migrants and refugees were minors.³⁸ The young age of migrants represents a major change with earlier migration patterns. Previously trucks taking migrants to Libya would not take minors, and getting cash to migrate required the sale of livestock or agricultural produce – only a possibility for men, not for boys. A Fur tribal leader in Umm Badda, Omdurman, explained the change as follows:

Before the conflict the migrants were around 40 years old and above, from different ethnic groups ... and migration was mostly inside Sudan ... In the past the people migrate to improve the financial situations of their families, but during the conflict the migrants are young people, in 20–30 years of age, most of them belong to ... ethnic groups targeted by the government. When they do not find jobs or work decide to migrate. Now young people migrate for example from camp to town and work then to big city like Khartoum then to

35 See for example Altai Consulting (2013; 2015) and Crawley et al. (2016).

36 These age groups were mentioned by key informants in Europe (from volunteers or volunteer groups working with migrants), community and tribal leaders in Darfur and Khartoum and smugglers and transporters in Darfur and Khartoum. This was confirmed by our own interviews with migrants in Europe.

37 Two migrants interviewed in London and one in Ventimiglia, Italy, were 14 years of age when they left Sudan. One migrant interviewed in Dunkirk was 15 when he left.

38 Key informant interview with Sudan Action Group.

Table 1: Sudanese sea arrivals in Italy by age and sex

	2016	%	2017	%
Men	8,540	91.6	5,579	89.7
Women	293	3.1	96	1.5
Accompanied child	60	0.6	41	0.6
UASC*	434	4.6	505	8.1
Total	9,327		6,221	

Source: UNHCR (2016; 2017). * UASC = unaccompanied and separated children

gold mines ... and if [they] find enough money, they migrate to Libya then to Europe.

Although the great majority of migrants and refugees are men, some Darfuri women also migrate to Europe. Most come through the legal channel of family reunification after their husband has obtained refugee status, as explained in Chapter 6. In the UK, the number of Sudanese women coming for family reunification increased from 140 in 2010 to 858 in 2016, with the largest increase from 2015 to 2016.³⁹ Very few women migrate on their own, but according to the female vice-chair of the UK Zaghawa Association, this number too has increased: ‘Before, most women used to come for family reunification. Now some come as single ladies. Because life has changed in Sudan [i.e. more women are educated]’. Most women migrating irregularly appear to be better-off and better-educated.

Although there are no statistics on Darfuris migrating to Europe by age and gender, our findings are supported by recent figures collected by UNHCR’s Mediterranean Office for Sudanese overall, as shown in Table 1.

Of great concern in these statistics is the doubling of the percentage of unaccompanied minors from Sudan. If these minors are from Darfur, this may indicate a deterioration in the security environment for young boys. As the following section shows, parents send their teenage boys away because they fear for their safety. This corresponds with other studies showing that most migrants are young and male (see for example UNHCR et al., 2017: 36). The UNHCR statistics show that Sudanese crossing the Mediterranean have a lower percentage of women compared with some other nationalities, such as Nigerians, Eritreans and Ivorians. Overall, 13% of arrivals in Italy in 2016 were women, and 11% in 2017 (UNHCR, 2016; 2017). The lower percentage of Sudanese women migrating could be a

reflection of Sudanese social norms. As explained by female university students, women very rarely migrate irregularly, and culturally it is unacceptable to their families to allow them to travel alone. Even if the family did permit their daughter(s) to leave, they would be censured by the wider community. The high risk of sexual abuse of women is another major disincentive. A higher percentage of male migration to Europe applies to Sudanese generally, not just Darfuris. A recent study on Sudanese youth attitudes to international migration found that men preferred Europe and women preferred the Gulf states, but also that youth of both sexes could not accept the idea of a woman migrating abroad alone (Yaseen, 2012). However, Assal (2011) notes a lessening of the taboo around women migrating alone, in part because of forced migration due to conflict. Until 2005, a woman needed consent from her male guardian to get an exit visa.

3.2.2 Socio-economic status, experience of displacement and financing migration

To examine the impact of socio-economic status, the study considered financial and human assets, as well as the history of displacement. Darfuri migrants and refugees in Europe come from a range of educational backgrounds: some are university graduates, some completed secondary school and many have little education or no education at all. Key informants in Sudan and in Europe estimated that the majority of Darfuri migrants and refugees had little education. At the same time, all informants agreed that students form a substantial proportion of migrants, and related this to an increase in education levels among Darfuri youth during the conflict years (see Figure 5). Key informants estimated the proportion of university graduates at between 25% and 50%.⁴⁰ This corresponded with our interviews in Europe, particularly in Rome, Ventimiglia, Calais and Brussels.

39 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/asylum>.

40 Interviews with the founder of a Sudanese NGO in London, an NGO representative in Khartoum respectively, with the head of a student association in Khartoum. One key informant in the UK put the percentage of graduates among Sudanese in Bradford as low as 2–3%.

Table 2: Examples of work done by migrants and refugees when in Sudan

Darfuris in Europe	People from Darfur who want to leave Sudan
Daily labourer	Daily labourer
Bus conductor	Brick- and charcoal-making
Hairdresser	Builder
Small shop (trader)	Baker
Electrician	Shop assistant
Plumber	Shoe seller
Tailor	Restaurant worker
Collect firewood	Car washer
Brickmaker	

Out of those interviewed in these cities,⁴¹ 37% had been to university (although not all had completed their studies), while 23% had never been to school. Education levels per se, therefore, do not appear to be a driver of migration. This range of educational backgrounds was also found in other studies, for example Somali migrants to Europe and to Yemen (Ali, 2016; Research and Evidence Facility, 2017). In Darfur, one reason why some IDPs had little education was because, rather than go to school, they had to work to earn an income.

Key informants in Sudan and Europe perceived the majority of Darfuri migrants and refugees to be poor. One transporter of migrants to Chad, for example, estimated that 80% of migrants were poor. This usually meant they had little income and were involved in low-status jobs such as casual labour. Physical assets such as land also played a role: most Darfuri migrants and refugees had a history of displacement, and many had either lost their land or had lost access to it (see below). Darfuris interviewed in Europe, and potential migrants in Darfur and Khartoum, both graduates and the less well-educated, reported carrying out mostly low-status jobs in Sudan. Examples from Darfuris in Europe and those wanting to leave Sudan are given in Table 2, indicating that those who have already left or who want to leave are engaged in similar activities.

Other assets also need to be considered. While Darfuris who migrate to Europe may be poor, they need an initial amount of money to leave for Libya (see Chapter 4). A number of potential migrants said that they had not been able to leave before because they had not saved enough. Conversely, a facilitator

for migration was finally having made enough money to leave, as indicated in the quotes below:

I thought about migration before, but I did not have the money to cover the cost of my journey. This is why I decided to come to Khartoum to work and save the required money to finance my journey (potential migrant, Khartoum).

I work hard as a builder and plumber so as to save money and finance my migration journey. Money is the only constraint that delays my journey to start (potential migrant, Zamzam camp, El Fasher).

Sources of funds for migration include savings from work carried out in Sudan (such as the occupations in Table 2). Limited cases of theft (from employers or family) and drug dealing were also reported. More commonly, migrants or their families had to sell their possessions or travel to the gold mines or South Sudan to make enough money to finance the first stage of their journey.

Potential migrants also said that financial support from friends and relatives facilitated their migration to Europe. Friends in Sudan sometimes help in the expectation that, if the migrant is successful, they will then help them make the journey by remitting money back to Sudan.⁴² Those with extended social networks, including transnational networks, may have greater access to funds for migration, whether in the form of remittances, loans or one-off gifts. Even access to gold mines may depend in part on ethnic links with Chad, for example by the Zaghawa and Mahamid⁴³

41 We have information on the education status of 22 migrants. In the UK, we purposively selected both graduates and non-graduates.

42 Focus group of male students in Khartoum.

43 Musa Hilal's ethnic group.

Box 1: UNAMID employees seek asylum

Two refugees interviewed in the UK, both from Darfur, had worked for UNAMID, one for seven years and one for five. In both cases (independently from each other), the individuals were put under pressure from government security forces because of the work they had been assigned by UNAMID. Both feared for their safety, and decided they had to leave. This was against their wishes as they supported extended family networks out of their UNAMID salaries. In both cases they were granted asylum relatively quickly on arrival in the UK, and their spouse and children subsequently joined them through family reunification. In neither case did they receive any support from UNAMID at any point in the process, nor follow-up after they had arrived in the UK. In the words of one: 'UNAMID can't protect itself, how could it protect me?'. There are a number of other similar cases of former UNAMID employees now living as refugees in the UK.

(Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017). The importance of social networks has also been highlighted in a study on Somali migrants to Europe (Ali, 2016).

At the other end of the spectrum are refugees who had higher-status jobs in Sudan, such as Darfuris who worked for the UN, NGOs and in government positions, or larger traders. They were targeted by government security forces because of their work and had to leave (see Box 1). This group appears to account for a small proportion of Darfuris leaving for Europe.

The great majority of migrants interviewed in Europe and potential migrants in Darfur and Khartoum had a history of displacement. Out of 54 migrants and refugees interviewed in Europe,⁴⁴ only 16 (30%) had no history of displacement prior to their move to Europe. Similarly, the four Darfuri case histories presented in Collyer's study of migrants in Libya all had a history of displacement (Collyer, 2015). There are a number of variations on such histories:

- Families of migrants and refugees are displaced from their village of origin during the conflict and

are living in an IDP camp. In some cases families had been displaced early in the conflict and had been living in an IDP camp for 14 years or so. In other cases families were displaced for the first time in 2010 or as late as 2016.

- Families experience multiple displacements over the duration of the conflict, moving from one village to another, one camp to another, or return to their home village only to be displaced again. One Darfuri interviewed in Birmingham explained how his family had been displaced first to Mornei, close to their land, and had then moved to a camp in Zalingei because they had been attacked trying to farm (see Journey 2). Another example is from a Darfuri refugee in Bradford whose family was displaced to Kalma in 2005, returned to their village in 2006 after the Darfur Peace Agreement but were displaced again by renewed conflict in 2010, when they moved to Direig camp.
- Young Darfuris sent by their parents to live with relatives or other connections in central Sudan. One Darfuri in Belgium explained: 'I lived in Gedaref. My parents sent me to live there with my uncle in 2004. My uncle has asked my whole family to come and live with him, but my parents did not want to go. They just sent me'. He informed us this was relatively common practice.
- Darfuri youth studying or working in Khartoum with family in displacement camps back in Darfur. This was the case for the majority of potential migrants interviewed in Khartoum.

These experiences of displacement show that, for many Darfuris, their migration journey began well before their decision to leave Darfur: it began when their village was attacked and their families were displaced. This also means that, in the context of Darfur, categories of 'displaced', 'migrant' and 'refugee' are not distinct and do not reflect the experience of people who leave for Europe. Darfuris may fall into each of these categories simultaneously, or move from one to another. One study on migration to Greece finds that people often migrate in stages, with reasons and destinations changing over time. People might leave their country for political reasons and then move on for economic reasons and vice-versa (Crawley and Skleparis, 2017). In the case of Darfur, the start of the 'migration' journey can last many years before the decision is taken to leave for Europe, during which time people will have been forcibly displaced or perhaps migrated for work to Khartoum, South Sudan or the gold mines in Chad. The problem with categorisation becomes even more apparent when the complex and inter-related causes of migration to Europe – or leaving an IDP camp – are considered (see below), together with the exploitation and violence

⁴⁴ Out of the 56 interviewees in Europe (see Chapter 1), two were women, and both were interviewed with their husbands present.

experienced on their journey through Libya and Europe (see Chapter 4).

3.2.3 Ethnicity and geographical origin (social and political assets)

The majority of Darfuri refugees in Europe belonged to the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit ethnic groups, with Zaghawa the largest of the three.⁴⁵ As discussed in Chapter 2, these groups formed the support base of the rebellion and were displaced in large numbers as a result of attacks by government and government-aligned Arab militia. For some Zaghawa, their social networks made it easier to leave. The Zaghawa are the largest group of Darfuri asylum-seekers and recognised refugees in the UK, estimated at around 12,000 by the Zaghawa Association.⁴⁶ Community leaders in Birmingham and London explained this by pointing to their history of migration, a culture of risk-taking, and the resulting connections and wealth, as well as their role in the rebellion. As more Zaghawa migrate, new potential migrants will have examples, sources of information, and in some cases financial support to draw upon. Links between Zaghawa in different parts of the world are strong, in this case between those who have settled in Europe and those still in Sudan.

In our interviews in Italy, France and Belgium, we met many other Darfuri ethnic groups, including Tunjur, Berti, Tama, Birgo, Misseriya Jebel, and very small numbers of Arab ethnic groups, including Beni Halba, Ma'aliya and Beni Mansour. The range reflects the way that more ethnic groups have been drawn into the conflict over time, the splintering of rebel movements and government-aligned Arab groups fighting among themselves (see for example Flint, 2009; Gramizzi and Tubiana, 2012). In terms of geographical area, youth leave from all over Darfur (from East Darfur the least). Migrants belonging to these same ethnic groups also migrated to Europe from Khartoum, Gezira, Kassala and other locations in central and eastern Sudan.

Our interviews and observations in Europe⁴⁷ indicated that Darfuri Arab ethnic groups mostly do not migrate to Europe. This was confirmed by tribal leaders and representatives of the Rizeigat, Zayadia and Misseriya in Darfur. According to these leaders, this is because their youth were mobilised and recruited as militia by the government and are getting good salaries (see also Young et al., 2009). They may also be recruited as RSE,

border guards or the police, or be deployed in Yemen. An Ereigat tribal leader added that migration of the 'illiterate'⁴⁸ only started in 2012, by which time Arab youth were already working as militia. In addition, they may gain from being involved in transportation (being able to move more freely within Darfur), illegal trading of cars and other goods, smuggling of migrants to Libya and Chad and gold mining. One of the few Darfuri Arab ethnic groups that does migrate to Europe appears to be the Beni Halba, but only in small numbers. According to a Beni Halba leader in Khartoum, even for Darfuri Arabs life is difficult if they do not want to fight for the government.⁴⁹

Finally, although Darfur is the focus of this study it is not the only source of migrants and refugees from Sudan. In Italy, France and Belgium, we also met youth from Kordofan (North and South), where conflict began in 2011, and White Nile, as well as Nubians from Northern Region. Numbers from South Sudan are small but growing. Community representatives and experts in the UK reported that Arabs from other parts of Sudan have falsely claimed to be Darfuri in order to obtain asylum. The remainder of this chapter analyses why non-Arab Darfuris leave Darfur and Sudan.

3.3 Causes of migration

The causes of migration or of a desire to migrate are many, complex and interlinked. Darfuris interviewed in Europe said that they had left Darfur because of some degree of attack or ill-treatment by the authorities or militias during the conflict, with contributory reasons including discrimination, loss of livelihood and social pressures. Darfuris or people of Darfuri origin in Khartoum thinking about leaving Sudan also want to do so for a combination of political, security, social and economic reasons.

As in other conflicts and crises, as they become protracted the various causes of migration become impossible to separate (see for example Crawley et al., 2016; Crawley and Skleparis, 2017). When young men say they want to leave Sudan because they cannot get a job, for example, this needs to be seen in the context of family displacement and sometimes occupation of their

45 Key informants in the UK and Sudan.

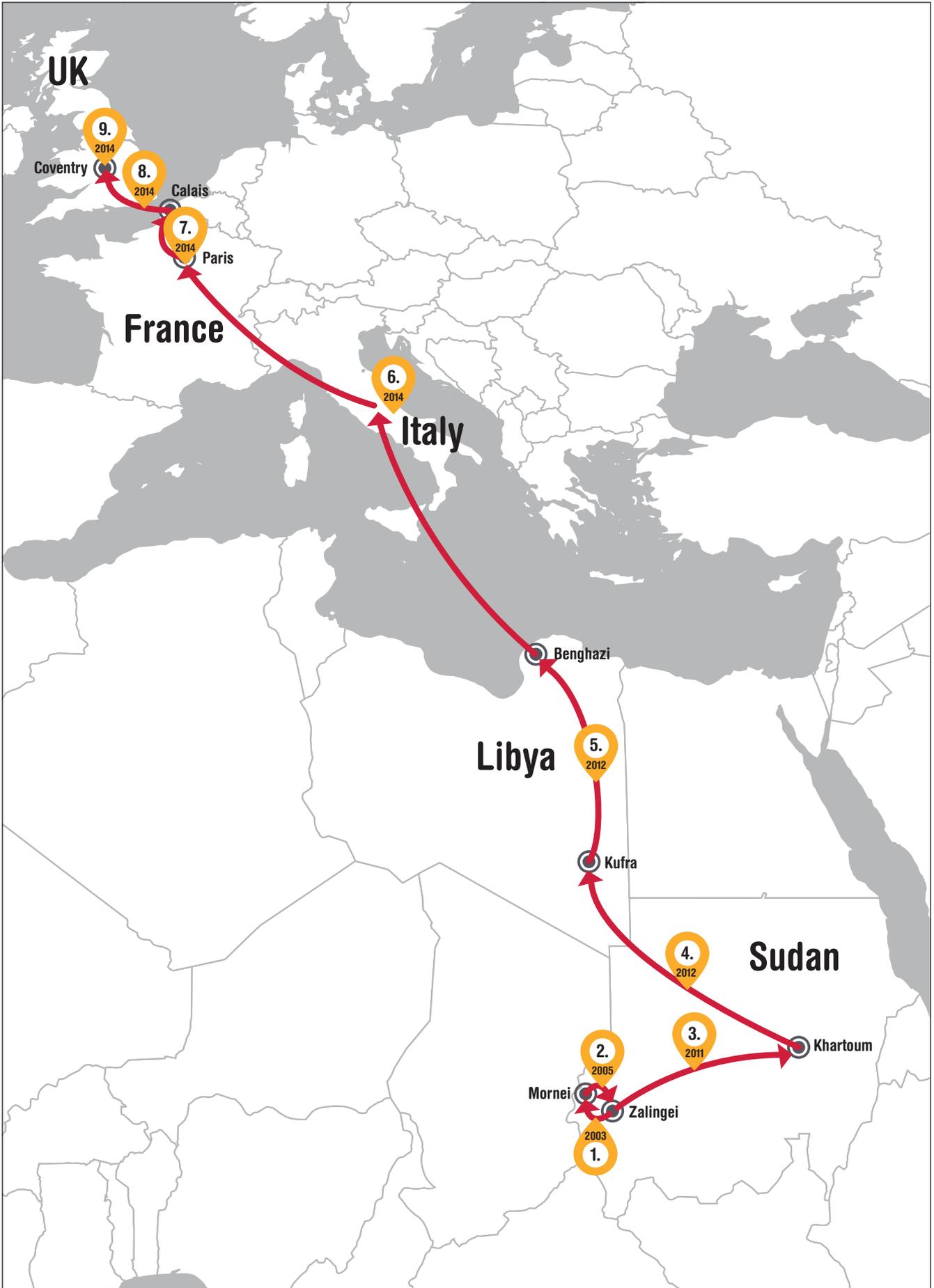
46 Interview with the deputy secretary-general of the Zaghawa Association.

47 Interviews with migrants and key informants.

48 His word.

49 A detailed history of marginalisation, power relations and conflict in Sudan and Darfur is beyond the scope of this report. It should however be noted that Darfuri Arabs have historically been one of the most marginalised groups in Darfur (see e.g. Young et al., 2009; de Waal, 2015). This is one reason why the Sudan government could recruit them as militia with the promise of money and land.

Journey 2: Within Sudan and to the UK



1.

ZALINGEI, SUDAN. 2003.

Yousif* was just seven or eight years old when he and his family were displaced. Their village was attacked and they fled to Mornei.

2.

MORNEI, SUDAN. 2005.

Yousif and his family stayed in Mornei for two years. After being attacked while farming they left for Zalingei in 2005, and stayed in Hasahisa camp. In Hasahisa, Yousif was not able to go to school because he had to work collecting firewood for sale.

3.

KHARTOUM, SUDAN. 2011.

In 2011, Yousif left for Khartoum to look for work. His mother felt that it was not safe for him in Zalingei. In Khartoum he was accused of being with the rebels and was repeatedly arrested.

4.

KUFRA, LIBYA. 2012.

In 2012, his uncle lent him 1,500 SDG to pay a smuggler to take him to Libya.

5.

BENGHAZI, LIBYA. 2012.

After being dropped in the Libyan desert, another smuggler asked for money to take him further. Yousif went to Benghazi. He met a Sudanese man who helped him find a job in a car repair shop, where he worked for 18 months. The Libyan owner refused to pay him. The same Sudanese man helped Yousif connect with smugglers, which made him think of going to Europe.

6.

ITALY. 2014.

Yousif thought of applying for asylum in Italy but was advised by other Sudanese to go to France instead.

7.

PARIS, FRANCE. 2014.

In France, Yousif tried again to apply for asylum but was told that there was a long wait. He was not told how long, and so he left.

8.

CALAIS, FRANCE. 2014.

Yousif spent a month in Calais. He was caught multiple times on lorries going to the UK, but eventually was lucky enough to make it.

9.

COVENTRY, UK. 2014.

On arriving in the UK Yousif applied for asylum immediately, and then waited 6–7 months for an interview. His claim was rejected because officials did not believe him when he told them he was Fur. His appeal was initially dismissed, but after three reports from experts his claim was accepted. In October 2017 Yousif was still waiting for it to be processed.

* Name has been changed to protect the individual's identity.

Box 2: Interconnectedness of reasons for leaving Darfur

In a focus group discussion with university graduates in El Fasher, participants cited the reasons for migrating:

- Security reasons: harassment and intimidation of youths by security forces.
- Economic reasons: unemployment and a harsh life due to declining rainfall in agricultural areas and insecurity, inflation and currency devaluation.
- Political reasons and the malfunctioning state, resulting in a lack of development and opportunities.
- Social reasons: these graduates have acquired education and awareness and found it very difficult to go back to their communities and live their lives according to old values and traditions. They are also aware that they cannot change the reality on the ground. They cannot make their communities embrace modern values, and see Europe as a suitable place for them and their new ideas.

As a result of all of the above, some people feel discriminated against and not treated equally and fairly as citizens possessed of equal rights. All these reasons have put excessive pressure on youth and youths became obsessed by migration.

original land, discriminatory employment practices, harassment and frequent arrests, and perhaps the death of an older male family member. An additional factor has been the increase in university attendance and frustration among more educated and globally connected young people. Participants in a focus group of male youth in El Fasher (see Box 2) said that harassment and intimidation was their primary reason for wanting to leave, followed by economic, political and social factors. Similar interconnected reasons were given by other key informants; student leaders in Nertiti and Zalingei, for instance, pointed to limited freedom of movement and expression, arrest and detention, the government's strategy of creating division between ethnic groups and lack of opportunities for IDPs as reasons for leaving. Although reasons for leaving are clearly interlinked, the remainder of this section discusses each of the contributing reasons for leaving Sudan or of wanting to leave in more detail.

3.3.1 Attacks, arrest and harassment

Conflict and violence continues in Darfur and against people from Darfur living in Khartoum, as reported by Darfuris interviewed in Europe and by key informants and focus groups in Darfur and Khartoum. In 2017, confrontation between government armed forces and rebel movements, and consequent displacement, decreased. Militia attacks however continued, in particular on IDP camps, and accounted for the largest number of reported incidents of violence in 2017. Armed violence was highest in North and Central Darfur (UN Panel of Experts, 2017), two of the main areas of fieldwork for this study. Darfur experts have warned against assuming that the conflict is over (ibid.; Tubiana, 2017).

The majority of Darfuris interviewed in Europe said that they had left because of an attack on themselves, a relative or a friend, being arrested or detained or being put under surveillance. One Darfuri in Calais who left Zalingei in February 2017 told us that 'I was with my cousin and my cousin was shot in the shoulder. This was when I decided it was time to leave Sudan'. Another left because he feared for his life after a friend attacked a member of an Arab militia⁵⁰ who had tried to steal their livestock. One recognised refugee in London left in 2014 because his brother had been attacked by an Arab militia. He had escaped, but his family were concerned that, if the brother left, the same militia would come for him. These findings are supported by the UN Panel of Experts (2017), which reported that armed militia groups, mostly of Arab ethnicity, continue to operate in Darfur in conjunction with the Sudanese security forces.⁵¹

A related reason for leaving or wanting to leave is the impunity with which abuse is perpetrated.⁵² According to two Darfuris in Brussels, who left El Fasher in 2017: 'They [Arab militia] can take any money you have on you. [They] can put you in prison for anything, accuse you of supporting the rebellion'. Zaghawa in particular reported a

50 Interviewees often referred to Arab militia and Janjaweed interchangeably, and in many cases did not distinguish between these groups, the police, paramilitary forces or the security and intelligence services.

51 The continued operation of Arab militia in Darfur is in contravention of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, agreed between the government and one of the smaller rebel movements, which required the Sudanese government to disarm all armed militia. The government authorities have been conducting arms collection campaigns since 2017 (UN Panel of Experts, 2017).

52 Reported by UN representatives at an on-the-record meeting at Chatham House in London and the UN Panel of Experts, as well as recent migrants and refugees in Europe.

deterioration in security, as explained by the same interviewees: 'Earlier the Zaghawa were strong. They were equal to the Janjaweed but they became weak over time. Before they could not let the Janjaweed enter the market. Now they can do anything they want ... From 2012/13, the situation has become very difficult. You cannot confront them'. One potential migrant in El Fasher also reported deteriorating security as his reason for wanting to leave. This deterioration in security for Zaghawa is linked to the return of Minnawi, the leader of one of the SLA-MM faction, to the rebellion. From 2006 to 2010, when Minnawi was a signatory to the DPA, areas held by his movement were relatively stable (Human Rights Watch, 2011; Gramizzi and Tubiana, 2012). Like the Darfuris interviewed in Chad by Müller and Bashar (2017) in 2008 and 2009, what made them desperate to leave was 'the perceived unwillingness by the government or any other actors to protect them ... combined with the inability to arrange protection on their own' (p. 776).

Arrest, surveillance and harassment by the security forces was a common reason for leaving or wanting to leave. Suspicions that young Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit men are supporting the rebels can lead to arrest, imprisonment and torture, and individuals can be required to report regularly to local security offices. The authorities may also try to recruit young boys to spy on their relatives. Two minors who left Mornei (West Darfur) and El Fasher (North Darfur) in 2015 and 2016 respectively had been arrested and released on condition that they spy on their family:

One day we had been talking at home about the situation (in Darfur) with some people who had come from Khartoum. The next day, soldiers came to the house, hit me with their guns and took me to jail ... They took my fingerprints and then sent me home but told me to report to them every week. They asked me to inform on my relatives. My uncle said 'you have to leave' (recognised refugee in London who left El Fasher in 2016).

In addition, Zaghawa families were concerned that their young men may be more vulnerable to harassment because the strength of the rebel groups had declined. Their families told them to leave Darfur because they feared for their safety.

Surveillance by the security forces severely limits freedom of movement. Two Darfuris in Calais, who left in 2015, reported: 'It is difficult for young men to stay in Zamzam. Even if they go for one month to El Fasher or Khartoum, you will be detained by

security on return. They will think you joined the opposition. You can leave the camp for any reason, even for one week, security will question you'. A recognised refugee in London (who had also left in 2015) raised a similar issue concerning conditions in Zamzam: 'there are no men over 25 in Zamzam now. Only women, children and old men. If you are over 25, they say you are with Minnawi ... They are watching everyone. So I decided I had to leave'. While this statement may be an exaggeration, it does indicate the extreme conditions experienced by young men in the camps.

Surveillance, arrest and torture is not limited to Darfur. Darfuris in Khartoum, including businesspeople, labourers and particularly students, reported similar treatment, and Darfuri businessmen told us that Zaghawa shops may be shut down.⁵³ According to an asylum-seeker in Birmingham, a former labourer who left Sudan in 2012: 'I left Zalingei in 2011 to Khartoum to look for work. In Khartoum, I was harassed, accused of being associated with the rebel movements. I was beaten by the security forces. Not arrested, just stopped. Many times. So finally I decided I had to go'. A migrant in Ventimiglia, who left in 2015, reported being 'jailed for seven months because they thought he was a rebel due to his place of origin'. The perception of Darfuris in Khartoum as a security threat worsened after a rebel attack on the city in 2008 (Gamal El-Din, 2012).

Groups particularly affected are IDPs and students, and a wide range of different interviewees highlighted that these issues are ongoing. IDP camps, particularly the larger ones, have long been considered a stronghold of the rebellion (see for example El-Mekki, 2007; Kahn, 2008). Although according to our informants some IDP leaders have been brought over to the government side, young men in the camps are still under suspicion. IDP youth focus groups from camps in Zalingei and IDP leaders in El Fasher and Geneina identified insecurity and daily harassment as the main reason why young men wanted to leave Sudan. According to the UN Panel of Experts (2017), this includes incidents of physical assault, rape, robbery, kidnap for ransom and intimidation, as well as excessive demands for compensation in disputes and illegal taxes. One refugee in Bradford told the study: 'Life in the IDP camp was very tough. It was like a prison. I was accused of being part of the rebel movement, so whenever I was caught by the Janjaweed I was

⁵³ Interviews with two Darfuris in Brussels who left Sudan in 2016, a recognised refugee in Birmingham and a recognised refugee in London.

Box 3: Harassment of IDPs in Darfur

'We have been investigated many times by security. If we gather together in the camp the government thinks we are doing something against the government or to support the SLA, because our village borders SLA controlled area' (IDP in Kass, South Darfur).

'I have two of my sons, university graduates. One studied law and the other one studied economics. They have been arrested and detained by security on allegations of supporting the rebel groups. These were false allegations. They have been arrested and detained three times with the same allegation. They were humiliated, subjected to torture and unjust treatment. My sons felt offended due to this experience and became psychologically disturbed. That is why they have decided to leave Sudan' (father of two migrants, Abou Shook camp, El Fasher, North Darfur).

Box 4: Student harassment and arrest

'I studied at Nyala University and used to talk to my friends about the situation in Darfur. This is our country, we see the government causing displacement, arming planes which they then use to bomb small villages. The government arrested us more than three times. In October 2007, we organised a demonstration. We said we want regime change, to stop the war. We were tear-gassed by the police and arrested for ten days. The second time was in 2010. We organised political debates at the university and tried to organise a demonstration. I was arrested and held for three days. In 2012, I was arrested for the third time. I finished my last exam. I was still engaged in political debate about wanting to see peace. Security said you can't come in to the university again because you have already finished your course. They tried to break the link between me and other students. I was arrested for 5–7 days. This last time I felt that my situation was very dangerous and maybe they would kill me. My family decided I should leave Sudan as my situation was too dangerous.'

beaten. I was put in prison twice, where I was beaten and tortured'.⁵⁴ (See also Box 3.)

Darfuri students have been targeted for surveillance, arrest and imprisonment. Darfuri students who had left Sudan linked their arrest and ill-treatment at the hands of Sudan's security forces particularly to demonstrations, whether they had been involved directly in organising them or not, or to a suspicion that they were supporting the rebel movements.⁵⁵ Many left Sudan before getting their certificate, as this required working for the government (often the military) for minimal pay. In a minority of interviews, mostly with people who left Sudan earlier (in 2008, 2009 or 2012), we were told that people had been at risk because of their direct involvement in political organisations or rebel movements.⁵⁶ (The story of one refugee in Manchester is given in Box 4.) In focus groups in Khartoum in September and October 2017, current Darfuri students reported that they were still subject to attack, arrest and investigation in response to demonstrations. Student leaders from three universities in Khartoum and three graduate focus groups in El Fasher (representing different ethnicities) all reported that political and security factors were the main reason for young people wanting to leave Sudan. These findings are supported by the UN Panel of Experts (2017), which reported the use of excessive force, arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention and torture of Darfuri students by the authorities and the security forces.

3.3.2 Discrimination

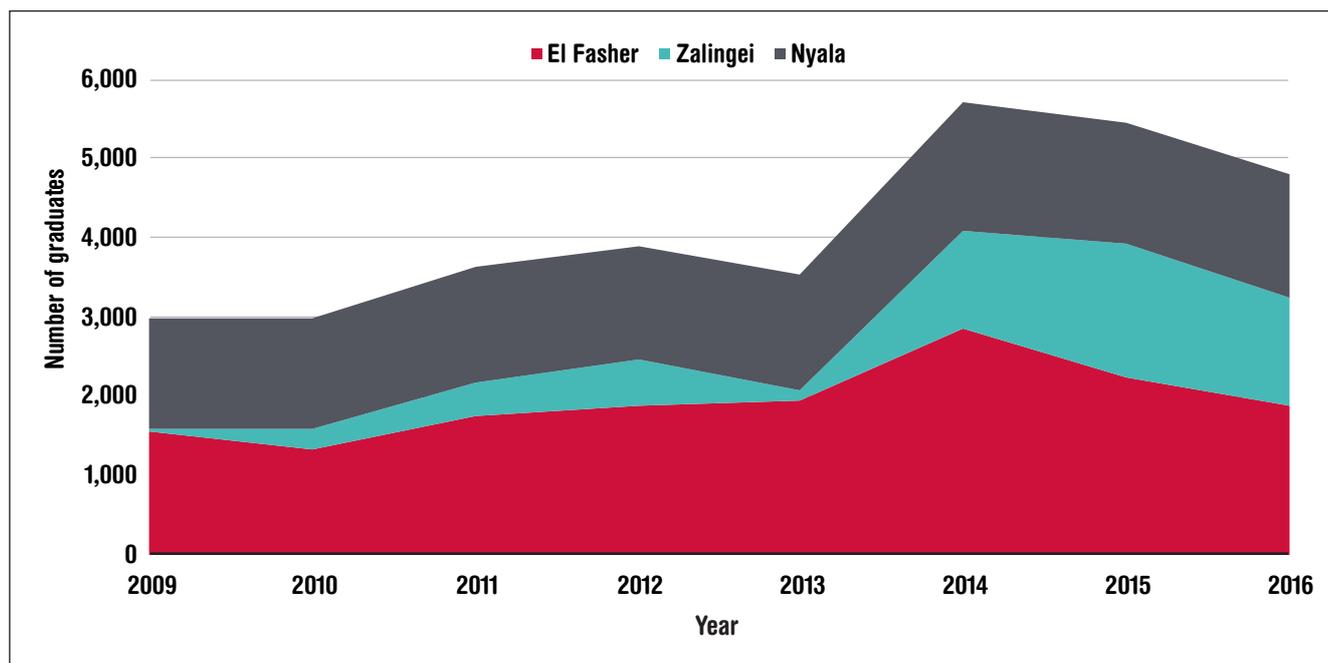
Darfuris face serious discrimination in getting civil service or government jobs and in setting up businesses, which often needs support from or connections with government officials. Marginalisation of and discrimination against Darfuris was one of the original causes of the conflict, and is still an underlying factor in the discontent young Darfuris feel today. Wealth and power have long been concentrated in central Sudan, with a disproportionately large proportion of ministerial and civil service posts going to people from the north (Yongo-Bure, 2009). Many potential

54 Similar statements were made in an interview with two migrants in Brussels, in interviews with two potential migrants in Kass and in IDP focus groups and interviews with IDP leaders in Zalingei and El Fasher.

55 A Darfuri in Brussels who left Sudan in 2016, a Darfuri in Rome who left Sudan in 2014, a recognised refugee in Manchester who left Sudan in 2014 and another who left Sudan in 2012.

56 A recognised refugee in London who left Sudan in 2012, and recognised refugees in Manchester who left in 2008 in 2009.

Figure 5: Increase in university graduates in Darfur



Source: Data provided by the individual universities.

migrants and tribal leaders identified the difficulties Darfuris face getting jobs as one of the main reasons for wanting to leave. Discrimination was an issue in both Darfur and Khartoum, particularly for students and graduates. Tribal leaders, students and the families of migrants all spoke of how young graduates often spent years applying for jobs without success, even when they met the criteria for the job, leaving them with no choice but to engage in low-status or risky jobs, such as trading in South Kordofan or mining for gold. Discrimination can extend to the provision of basic services; one Fur leader told us that areas of Khartoum where people from Darfur lived, such as Mayo, Haj Yousif and parts of Umbadda, have been neglected, an assertion echoed in an urbanisation study in Khartoum, which found that these areas lacked services such as health, water and sanitation (Pantuliano et al., 2011). As suggested by Bakhit (2014), it may well be that resentment at such discriminatory practices is stronger among younger, better-educated Darfuris in Khartoum, who are connecting with young people outside Sudan (through TV, internet and social media) in a way that their parents are not (see also Chapter 5). Darfuri colleagues in Khartoum told the authors that they had faced discrimination all their lives, but that the young cannot accept it.

Problems of discrimination in obtaining government and other higher-status jobs have been exacerbated by the increase in university graduates, particularly in Darfur. Even during the conflict, the number of graduates increased from 2009, as shown in Figure 5.

Universities were opened in El Fasher, Nyala and Zalingei in 1994.⁵⁷ Some IDPs had better access to education in the camps than in rural areas. According to Ali (2016), based on his longitudinal study of Abou Shook camp (near El Fasher in North Darfur), displacement led to an increased awareness of the importance of education. The increase was also due to the presence of schools and universities in close proximity, free education services and contact with urban communities. Community leaders in Zalingei thought that higher levels of education, combined with the lack of job opportunities and growing family needs, are an important factor driving migration because it encourages people to think about different livelihood options.

3.3.3 Loss of livelihoods

Loss of land and livestock is a major reason for young men leaving Darfur for Europe. According to one Fur leader in Zalingei: ‘now people migrate because most of them lost their livelihood sources and they faced shortage in the food for the family around the year’. In the camps, income-earning opportunities are limited to marginal and precarious activities such as daily labour on building or brick-making (see Table 2). The ongoing risk of attack in rural areas and land occupation make it difficult for displaced people to return home to farm even on a seasonal basis (and

57 Unfortunately data for the number of graduates in Nyala and Zalingei was only available from 2009.

return to the camp in-between). It is therefore not surprising that many interviewees said they had to leave because they had no money and no job.

Land rights and access have been central to the conflict. Traditionally, land rights in Darfur have been governed according to customary principles and managed by or through 'native administration'⁵⁸ (tribal leadership), and thus are closely associated with membership of a particular ethnic group, or submitting to its jurisdiction. The Sudanese government has manipulated ethnic grievances (particularly of the northern Rizeigat group) for political ends with the promise of land (as well as loot)⁵⁹ (de Waal, 2015); many farmers (for example of the Fur and Masalit ethnic groups) have been displaced, and some previously nomadic groups now occupy their land (Ollson, 2011; Abdul-Jalil and Unruh, 2013). IDP leaders and focus groups in Central, West and South Darfur highlighted how other groups had taken their land and that they were attacked when trying to farm.⁶⁰ According to one potential migrant in Kass: 'Many times we tried to return to our village to farm but Arabs prohibit or refuse us, our land is fertile land produc[ing] a large number of good quality crops, and they occupied our land. I went to Khartoum many times to work seasonally, but the work opportunities are very little'. Other studies have found that some IDPs returned to their land on a seasonal basis but at a cost – both financially and in terms of their safety. IDPs were required to pay local militia a large tax for farming (sometimes up to a quarter or half of their produce), and were exploited, intimidated and abused while there (Hovil, 2014; Abdul-Jalil and Unruh, 2013).

Loss of livelihoods and its consequences more generally was also an issue. According to one potential migrant, displaced to Kass from a village in Jebel Marra: 'we lost our livelihoods. In our area we used to grow fruits like orange, apple and grapefruit, and vegetables such as onion, garlic, potatoes and

58 Native administration in Sudan is a form of local governance introduced (or rather developed) during the British administration according to the philosophy of indirect rule. It mainly depended on recognising the jurisdiction of traditional tribal leaders over a given territory, on the basis that they represented the government among their people and represented their people in dealing with central state institutions.

59 Although this strategy turned out not to be entirely successful, and some militia from ethnic Arab groups were later integrated into the Border Guards and given a regular salary.

60 IDP leader in Al-Sisi camp (West Darfur), IDP focus group of young men in Hasahisa (Zalingei) and focus group with young women in Hamidia camp (Zalingei).

tomatoes. During the conflict, the roads to the market have been controlled by government militia. Now in Kass our situation is so bad we don't have enough money to get food. My brothers and sisters want to study but now they are out of school'. Müller and Bashar (2017) found that the key issue behind Darfuris' decision to leave for Chad was 'the destruction of a once viable material base resulting in the loss of livelihoods, combined with constant fear against which no defence seemed possible'. Loss of livelihoods has also been key a reason for young Darfuri men to leave for Europe.

3.3.4 Social and family pressure

Young men face a range of social pressures that contribute to the decision to migrate to Europe. As highlighted in a study on migration from Somalia, young men do not just leave in search of a better life or because they cannot find work, but because of what it means to be unemployed (Ali, 2016). For a young Sudanese man, the need to earn an income arises from a combination of social obligations closely linked to the concept of 'manhood'. Once a young person has grown from being a 'boy' to being a 'man', new obligations are automatically expected of him, including helping immediate family members with living expenses or caring for younger siblings. Social obligations are also related to the wider community, and reciprocal behaviour such as generosity with friends, making payments on social occasions (e.g. marriage) and making donations for communal activities (e.g. building a school, well or mosque) (Barth, 1967; Holy, 1974). At this stage in life, he will be subject to a range of social pressures: talk and gossip about marriage, commentary on how he treats his parents and what he is able to provide for his family. When the potential migrants we interviewed talked about not being able to earn money, the next sentence was often about not being able to support their family or not being able to get married:

Now I am unemployed, I do not have any work and my family is living in the IDPs camp. The situation is so difficult and my family depends on me. For this reasons I want to improve my financial situation for this I am thinking to migrate (potential migrant, IDP, Zalingei).

The very terrible economic situation is one reason [for wanting to migrate]. My family is suffering because of the bad economic situations. I wanted to get married and feel stable, but I cannot. My younger brothers need my help and support (potential migrant, El Fasher).

Feelings of responsibility were even higher if the migrant's father had died, and/or if they were the eldest son. Boys as young as 15 left to support their family. In Dunkirk, for example, an 18-year-old who left Omdurman in 2015 explained that, as he was the eldest, he had left to support his family without telling them. One potential migrant in El Fasher expressed frustration that he was unable to support his family because he himself needed support. Migration to Europe, and the money and information that migrants send back, brings with it new social pressures. As relatives start sending remittances to their families or money for marriage or to buy homes in town, this reinforces the impression that the migration has been a success, increasing the pressure to migrate on those left at home.

Fears about the prospects for marriage in Sudan were another reason for migration; the potential migrant we spoke to in El Fasher, for example, had yet to marry at the age of 30. The inability to marry and to transition to adulthood has been termed 'waithood' (Carling and Talleraas, 2016: 8). In a focus group of young female students in Khartoum, we were told that many women preferred to marry migrants because 'if the migrant makes money, he might come back for a wife, so the women can migrate legally with the right papers'. This is also evident in the songs women sing to encourage migration; a line in one translates as: 'If you are not going to Europe or to Yemen, I am not going to waste my time with you'. In Sudan, women's songs are a powerful tool for exerting social pressure and a means of social control through which the individual is socialised into the norms and values of the group. These songs define an individual's worth in the community, with conforming individuals praised and deviants criticised and rebuked.

3.3.5 No future in Darfur

The issues discussed in this section so far – attack and harassment, discrimination, loss of livelihoods and social pressure – can all be described as root causes of migration. i.e. 'the conditions of states, communities and individuals that underlie a desire for change' (Carling and Talleras, 2016). In analysing migration, these conditions need to be considered together with prospects for improvement. According to Carling and Talleras (2016), it is not only poverty or destitution (or even conflict) that makes people want to migrate, but also 'a feeling of inescapable stagnation'. Despite religious and cultural values of endurance and patience, young Darfuris had lost hope that conditions would change or improve within Sudan. Recent research among Eritrean migrants travelling to Europe came to a similar conclusion: 'decisions to cross borders irregularly despite extreme risks are

often taken when alternative options are perceived to be equally bad, or worse' (Hovil and Oette, 2017: 35). Respondents felt that they would never be able to leave the camps or be able to get a job, bring about political change or secure respect for their human rights or freedom of expression. Potential migrants said it was impossible to meet their aspirations, life had become unbearable, or that they had reached their limit and could not continue as they were.⁶¹ They described their lives as follows:

We are young men and we are living like old men in the displacement camp. We don't have any freedom. We can't go out. We are killed or harassed. There's too many bad things going on. All I want is a little protection and freedom of movement. Not feeling like I am living in a cage. I want the right to say whatever I want to say and what is true. I want to express what is happening in Sudan and ask questions (Darfuri in Ventimiglia who left Hamidia camp in Central Darfur in 2014).

The situation in Darfur is not going to improve, at least in the short term ... [I am leaving because of] the miserable situation and the daily problems inside in the camps, each day someone dies or is injured especially when go out the wadi for work or to forest to collect firewood or making charcoal. This is not a life at all. Our hands are on our hearts always (Potential migrant, Hasahisa camp, Central Darfur).

I have been trying to be patient, but right now I got quite convinced that I cannot continue with these difficult living conditions without work and with no hope that this is going to change soon (Potential migrant, Abou Shook camp, El Fasher).

Early in the conflict, these young men had hoped that the rebel movements would be able to bring about political change, and that their problems would be solved. However, over time they saw the rebel movements split, with some signing peace agreements with the government (e.g. the DPA in 2006). As the rebellion weakened, many young men became disillusioned and left the rebel movements. At the same time, they were still being subjected to attack and arrest, and were being monitored by Sudan's security apparatus. According to one youth leader: '[the youth] became frustrated and looked for other means to preserve their dignity and their future'.

⁶¹ Interviews with a potential migrant in Hasahisa, three potential migrants in El Fasher and potential migrants in North Darfur.

3.4 Conclusion

Migrants and refugees from Darfur are mainly young men, mostly poor, and mostly from the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit tribes, as well as other smaller non-Arab groups, who formed the main support base of the rebellion. Most are uneducated, but students form a considerable proportion. The vast majority have a history of displacement long before they migrate to Europe. The Darfur context (as do others) therefore challenges the categorisation of those who leave their home into migrant, displaced or refugee, as each migrant or refugee usually has a previous history of displacement due to conflict and migration for work.

Darfuris of ethnic groups suspected of supporting the rebellion face persistent and systemic persecution in the

form of harassment, surveillance and discrimination. These are the main root causes of migration to Europe, and IDPs and students are particularly vulnerable. Loss of livelihoods and social pressures are contributing causes, particularly for young Darfuri men, who find themselves unable to meet their social obligations or get married. Having lost their land and livestock, being displaced and seeing little or no possibility of finding work in Sudan has made leaving the country an imperative for many young men. Even though the numbers migrating to Europe are small compared to the overall displaced population in Darfur, this trend reflects the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Darfur, particularly the lack of protection. Young men had often waited for years for the situation in Sudan to improve, and the deep sense of despair about their future was palpable in many of our discussions.

4 Routes and journeys to Europe

4.1 Introduction

Darfuris migrated or fled to Europe using a number of different routes and methods. This chapter analyses the journeys that Darfuris take to Libya, through Libya, across the Mediterranean, through Europe and to their final destination – often the UK and more recently France. The chapter examines the journeys and routes themselves, and what facilitates and constrains migration along the entire route, including the cost, the role of smuggling and trafficking networks and the role of the diaspora and previous experiences of migration. It also analyses how journeys changed and what influenced this, and the outcome of migration journeys: eventual destinations, returns and forced removals and being trapped en route.

The chapter starts with an examination of the destinations of Darfuri migrants and refugees, and how or why they might have changed over time. This is followed by a section expanding on the non-linearity of routes, including returns and forced removals and circular movements within Europe. The chapter then analyses how smuggling and trafficking networks facilitate or obstruct migration, and the types of payment systems Darfuris use. The final section discusses the role of the diaspora in facilitating migration.

4.2 Changing destinations

Migration of Darfuris to Europe is not a linear process. Some interviewees in Europe said they had Europe in mind from the start, while others initially fled to Libya, Egypt or Turkey, or had migrated to Libya for work. Slightly more migrants and refugees interviewed in Europe had Europe as a destination from the start (21) than those who left initially for Libya (or Egypt or Turkey) (18).⁶² This is consistent

with what we heard in a group interview at Tiburtina railway station in Rome, where half the participants said they planned to travel to the UK from the outset, and the other half that they had intended to stay in Libya at first. The majority of those who said they had aimed for Europe from the start cited the UK as their final destination. A study by the Refugee Rights Data Project (RRDP) in Ventimiglia had similar findings: 51% of respondents, 80% of whom were Sudanese, said they were trying to reach the UK. From our fieldwork in Ventimiglia, the majority of Sudanese were from Darfur. Others were aiming for France (44%), Germany (3.7%) or other European countries (RRDP, 2017a).

The reasons for choosing the UK are given in Box 5. Interestingly, only Darfuris in Europe give information about asylum and return policies as reasons for choosing the UK, indicating that this is information they have gathered on their journey. Darfuris or those of Darfuri origin in Khartoum are concerned with safety, respect and work when they think of migrating to the UK. Both groups thought of the UK because of past colonial links and the English language, which some spoke already. Even those who could not speak English gave this as a reason either because they perceived English to be easier to learn than other European languages, or because they thought it would help with work opportunities later. As indicated in Box 5, many also wanted to go to the UK because they believed that the Dublin regulations would not apply in the UK and hence they would not be deported. These regulations determine which EU Member State is responsible for processing asylum claims, namely the first country where people claim asylum or have their fingerprints taken, which means that asylum-seekers can be returned to their first country of entry into Europe, which for Sudanese is usually Italy.

Those who initially fled or migrated to Libya said they had had no plans to come to Europe but found conditions in Libya so bad they had to leave. Of those who left Libya for Europe, most said they would decide once they got to Italy which European country they would aim for. If they then wanted to go

62 For the remainder, either people said they just fled, or no clear information was provided in answer to the question about their initial destination.

to the UK it was for the same reasons as those who wanted to go to the UK to start with (see Box 5). These findings are consistent with other studies of the dynamics of recent migration to Europe, which show that it occurs in stages (see for example Crawley et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is important to note that their movement to Europe was not voluntary. Conditions in Libya forced them on to Europe.

Having the UK or another European country in mind as a destination did not necessarily mean they would get there. In some cases, the destination in Europe changed en route, because of the living conditions Darfuris found themselves in, because of asylum or border procedures, or in response to information they received from other Darfuri migrants about conditions and procedures. Darfuris who initially intended just to go to Italy later migrated to France; those who went to France changed their destination to the UK; and those who wanted to reach the UK ended up in France. Box 6 is an extreme example of changing destinations while in Europe, but each of the individual elements was not unusual. Most Darfuris interviewed in Italy talked about the difficulties of living there (such as sleeping in the street),⁶³ even those who had refugee status, and that this was the main reason for migrating to France instead. As one migrant explained: 'I did not stay in Italy because I saw many things that discouraged me. It was just like Sudan. People had nothing'. In some cases, the destinations changed from the UK to France if the UK proved impossible to reach. However, two Darfuris we interviewed then changed their destination back to the UK, one because he could not get asylum in France and the other because the French authorities took too long processing his claim. As one asylum-seeker in Bradford explained:

My original plan was to come to the UK, but the route was blocked by the French government forces. So I was advised to apply for asylum in France ... I made an asylum application but it was rejected. I was given the right of appeal, but it was rejected again. So I decided to leave France – I had no other option. I went to Belgium to get to the UK.

Others changed their destination from France to the UK because of a lack of shelter while waiting to claim asylum or to find out the outcome of their claims, in particular having to sleep under the bridge at Porte de la Chapelle in Paris.⁶⁴

63 A Darfuri in Ventimiglia and a recognised Darfuri refugee in London.

64 E.g. interviews with a recognised refugee in Manchester and a refugee in France.

All potential migrants interviewed in Darfur and Khartoum had European destinations in mind. The UK was again the most popular destination (for the reasons given in Box 5), closely followed by Norway. Next were France and Germany, and after them Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland. Germany in particular was chosen because of its strong economy. Reasons for choosing particular countries included because friends were already there (in particular the UK and Norway), the possibility of employment (UK, Norway, Sweden, Belgium), a perception that migrants are treated well (UK, Norway) or the chance of a good education (UK, Norway).⁶⁵ The choice of destination is also based on perceptions of safety and rights (see Box 5) and expectations of support from other Darfuris. See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion.

4.3 Routes, returns and circular movements

It is not only changing destinations in Europe, or changes in destination from Libya to Europe, that highlight the non-linearity of Darfuri migration routes. Other variations include movements back to Sudan, circular movements within Europe and returns and forced returns from Europe back to Sudan. This section describes the current most common route to and through Libya, returns from Libya and then circular movements within Europe and back to Sudan. It highlights how routes, for groups and individuals, can change quickly depending on changing border control measures, asylum procedures, detention and forced returns.

4.3.1 Routes between Sudan and Libya

The vast majority of interviewees who left Sudan from 2014 onwards went to Libya. Migration from Darfur to Libya builds on historical migration routes from Malha and Tina in North Darfur, and from Dongola in Northern State. Darfuri traders have used the route from Mellit to Malha in North Darfur and on to Kufra in Libya since the 1970s. At that time, the journey to Kufra took 20–30 days by camel or 6–8 days by truck. Kufra remained a major centre for Darfuri migrants into the 2000s (Young et al., 2007). In 1993, the Sudanese government established a checkpoint in Karab Altoom, 40km from the Libyan border, which introduced a new migrant route from Dongola in Northern State to Kufra. Migration

65 France was mentioned in two cases, together with the UK, as possible destinations. In two cases, potential migrants mentioned France only, but gave no particular reason.

Box 5: Reasons for choosing the UK as a destination by Darfuris in Europe (M) and those thinking about leaving Sudan (PM)

- Historical ties with the UK (M+PM)
- English language/they speak some English already (M+PM)
- Presence of family and friends already in the UK (M)
- Good education opportunities (M)
- Easier to get asylum than in other European countries (M)
- No forced returns (back to Sudan or Italy) from the UK (M)
- Human rights respected (PM)
- Sudanese are respected (PM)
- Possibility of finding work (PM)

Box 6: How destinations changed for a refugee in London

'I did not plan to come here [the UK]. When I left Sudan, I did not think of any particular country. I thought of staying in Italy, but could not get [refugee] status there. Then I went to France, where I stayed for six months. I claimed asylum and waited for three months, but nothing happened. After six months I went to Belgium. I found some Sudanese there and asked them how to apply for asylum (you can always get information from other Sudanese about procedures in the country you are in), but they said Belgium was not a good place for getting asylum. They had been waiting for two years. I then tried to go back to France but was arrested at the border. I was told to leave Belgium within 24 hours. Then in France they asked why did you come back? I asked my friends in Germany whether I should go there, but they said only the Syrians are getting asylum. Then I asked my friends in Sweden, and they said only Eritreans. So I had to come to the UK. I am happy I made it here' (recognised refugee, interviewed in London).

between Tina in north-west Darfur to Chad and Libya also has a long history, as the Zaghawa homeland crosses these borders. Darfuri key informants reported that current routes to Libya were the same as before, but that the mode of transport and the ease and speed of migration had changed.

Migration studies examining the central Mediterranean route into Europe commonly mention the route from Omdurman to Dongola in Sudan's Northern state to Libya. This has been used for many years, not only by Sudanese but also by people migrating through Sudan to Libya and sometimes on to Europe, including Somalis, Eritreans and Ethiopians (see for example Altai Consulting, 2013; Collyer, 2015). People migrating directly from Darfur have continued to use the Malha and Tina routes to Libya. Sometimes migrants travel to Chad first and then on to Libya. It is also possible to go directly from Geneina to Chad (it is close to the Chadian border) and on to Libya from there.⁶⁶

Other nationalities now also use the Tina–Chad route (see for example UN Panel of Experts, 2017). From 2016, migration via the Dongola route from Khartoum has been more difficult as RSF troops have been posted at the border (Sudan Tribune, 2017). Which routes Darfuris take depends in part on their ethnicity (and therefore their connections with the tribal homelands of certain groups) as well as what they are able to pay. For example, Zaghawa are more likely to take the Tina or Chad route as this goes through their traditional homelands. The Malha route was said to be the cheapest, possibly because it is more direct, costing about 2,000 SDG (€260–290 at 2016–17 exchange rates⁶⁷).⁶⁸ More recently, however, the RSF presence has limited migration via the Malha route.⁶⁹ This means that the Tina–Chad route has – at the time of writing – become the main route into Libya.

Routes from Darfur to Libya and through Libya are shown in Map 2. Each of the routes through Libya takes migrants through areas controlled by militia, raising the risk of extortion or kidnapping (see for example UNHCR et al., 2017; Tubiana and Grammizi, 2017). Travel from the north-east to the north-west involves moving between territories controlled by competing authorities, and requires the use of smugglers (one Darfuri explained how they had to be hidden). Heavy fighting in the Ajdabia and Benghazi area in the east has meant that the Beni Walid route has become more popular since 2017 (UNHCR et al., 2017). In Libya, Darfuris join migrants from other countries: Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis in Kufra and West Africans in Sabha. Like migrants and refugees from

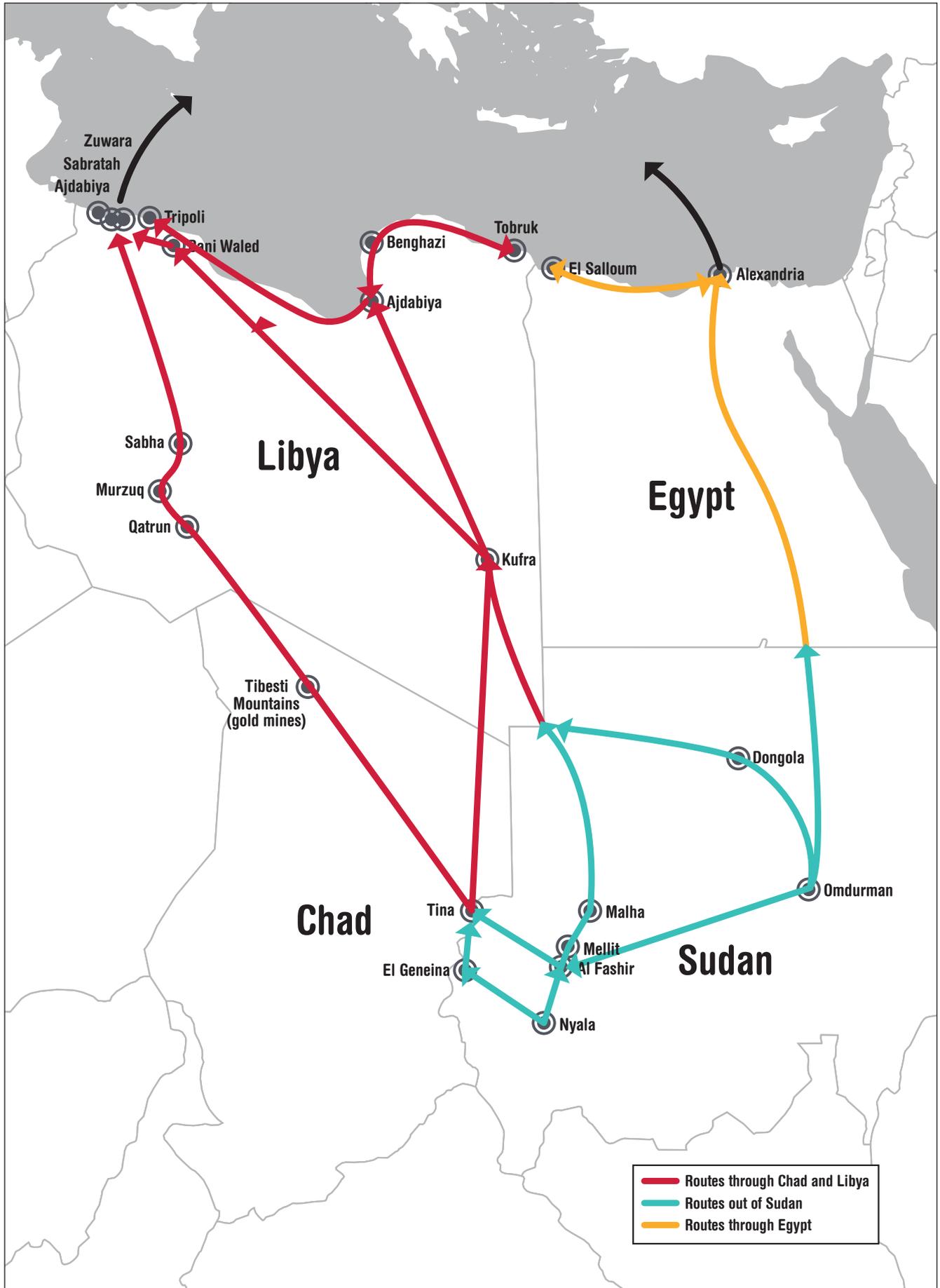
66 Note that these routes are similar to those taken by Darfuris during earlier periods of border closures, e.g. in 2004 (Young et al., 2007).

67 15 June exchange rates taken for each year.

68 Focus group of male youth in El Fasher (of mixed ethnicities) and three potential migrants from Zalingei.

69 Key informants (traders and transporters) in Darfur.

Map 2: Examples of routes out of Sudan and through Libya to the Mediterranean coast



other countries, Darfuris leave Libya for Europe from Zuwara, Sabratha and Zawiya to the west of Tripoli.

Most Darfuris ended up staying in Libya for more than a year, and often two or three. Even if they wanted to move on to Europe, almost all had to work to pay for the remainder of their journey to Libya, and save for the crossing into Europe. This could be casual labour such as construction, agricultural or herding work, or as shop or restaurant assistants. Many worked under conditions of extreme exploitation and hardship after being sold to traffickers to pay for their journey to Libya (this is discussed further in Section 4.4). Small numbers of better-off Darfuri men travelled through Libya quickly, having made larger one-off payments, discussed further below.

Not all Sudanese in Libya continued on to Europe; some claimed asylum in Libya, some were stranded or stayed to work and others returned to Sudan. Altai Consulting (2015) reports for Sub-Saharan migrants generally that some cannot afford the journey to Europe, and others are afraid to leave via the southern border or to make the crossing by sea to Italy. Some Sudanese claimed asylum in Libya: UNHCR registered 658 Sudanese refugees and 1,414 asylum-seekers in Libya in May 2015. It is not known, however, how many Darfuris have claimed asylum or returned to Sudan. In this study, IDP and community leaders from Zalingei, Nertiti, Kass and El Fasher reported that some migrants returned from Libya because they had not been able to find work and had therefore not been able to travel to Europe. Others returned because the risks they faced in Libya had been too severe, or because of the trauma they experienced. As one returnee from Libya in Khartoum explained: 'I returned in the same year I migrated [2015] for many reasons: Sudanese people especially Darfuris were killed by Libyan militias because they think that Darfuris fought beside Gaddafi. Militias attacked our house many times and robbed our possessions. For this reason I decided to return ... to die in Sudan'. We interviewed only one Darfuri who returned to Khartoum in 2017 having found a good job in Libya (he bought three cars with which to set up a taxi service).

IOM has assisted in voluntary returns from Libya since 2005. Figures provided by the IOM Office in Khartoum indicate that 523 Sudanese requested voluntary return in 2017, compared to just two voluntary returns in 2016.⁷⁰ This increase could be due to worsening conditions in Libya, in particular increased exploitation

and abuse by traffickers (see Section 4.4), conditions in detention centres (see Chapter 6), or because of EU support for the Libyan coastguard, making it more difficult to cross the Mediterranean. It is not known, however, how many Darfuris were among the returnees. Further research is needed on the movements of Darfuris between Libya and Sudan, and whether or why they return, and on Darfuris who are stranded because they are held captive, unable to pay to travel to Europe (or their families cannot pay ransom money) or afraid to return to Sudan.

4.3.2 Circular movements within Europe

For Darfuris who make it to Europe, key issues are the difficulties involved in crossing borders, Dublin returns and forced returns. Within Europe, travel within countries is relatively quick (Italy and France), but Darfuris get stuck at borders, particularly between Italy and France and between France and the UK, as border control measures have been strengthened in recent years (see Chapter 8). This explains the higher proportions of Sudanese among migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia (80%) and Calais (32%)⁷¹ than for those crossing the Mediterranean (5–7%) (see Chapter 1).

The crossing between Italy and France has become particularly difficult since 2017. Darfuris currently in Ventimiglia reported trying to cross the border many times, by road (walking), by train or more commonly by walking through the mountains, but have regularly been sent back by the police. They are either caught on the train, on the mountain route, or without papers in Monaco, Nice or Cannes and sent back to Italy from there.⁷² Some were sent back to Taranto in southern Italy, where they first entered the country, thus having to repeat part of their journey:

I want to go to Belgium and then UK, but face difficulties getting out of Italy. Ten days ago I was deported from Nice to Taranto, for the second time. So [I] came back to Tiburtina (Rome). I have tried to cross to France from Italy six times. [In addition to being deported from Nice] I was deported from Monaco, and from Menton. The French police are now using civilian cars to pick up migrants (Darfuri in Rome).

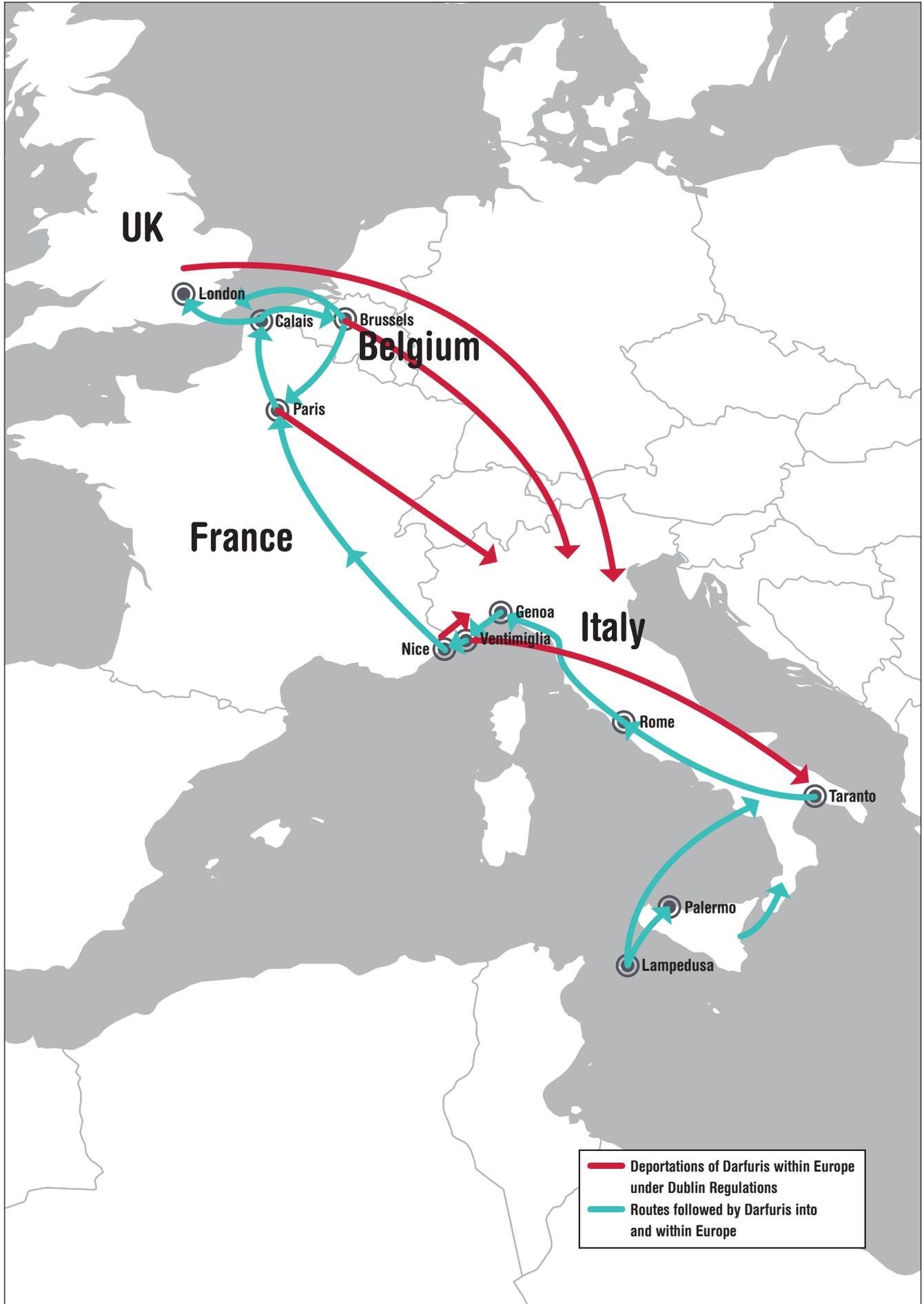
If migrants do not get caught crossing the France–Italy border, they make their way to Paris, and sometimes on to Calais or Brussels. Paris, in particular Porte de

70 There were 357 voluntary returns between 2005 and 2010 and 203 between 2011 and 2015.

71 Note that this was in 2016, before the 'Jungle' camp was demolished.

72 Interviews with a Darfuri in Rome and with six Darfuris in Ventimiglia.

Map 3: Darfuri movements within Europe



la Chapelle, is a major hub for Sudanese migrants, including large numbers of Darfuris. Those who decide to apply for asylum in France stay in Paris, but those who want to go to the UK make their way to Calais or Brussels. When migrants reach Calais (or nearby towns such as Dunkirk or Norrent Fontes) or Brussels, they again get stuck trying to cross to the UK. As on the Italy–France border, migrants reported making many attempts to get onto trucks going to the UK until finally succeeding.

It has become more difficult to cross from France to the UK since the demolition of the Calais ‘Jungle’ in October 2016 and increased border controls (see Chapter 6).⁷³ This has led to circular movements of Darfuris between Calais, Brussels and Paris searching for the best way to get onto trucks and into the UK (see Map 3 and Journey 3). As soon as they receive information that Darfuris are successful in getting to the UK from a particular place, many more will arrive there. Two Darfuris interviewed in Belgium, for example, reported that they had been moving continuously between Calais, Brussels and Paris for four months. Another reported moving to Brussels when the Jungle was demolished, staying there for three months and then coming back to France (to Norrent Fontes) when large-scale arrests started in Maximillian Park in Brussels (see Chapters 6 and 8). All Darfuris have to make these circular journeys until they get to the UK or decide to stay in France or try another European country. Even in the short period of our fieldwork, we met Darfuris in Brussels that we had seen a few days earlier in Calais.

Other circular movements within Europe relate to the Dublin III regulation, whereby anyone who has their fingerprints taken (asylum-seekers or anyone arrested) can be deported from France and Belgium (or any other EU Member State) to the first country of entry into Europe (see Chapter 8).

Darfuris could also be deported to Italy after being arrested and detained. According to a representative of a group of lawyers working with refugees in Brussels, Italy is not very organised when it comes to returnees under the Dublin regulations. Migrants can just try again to get to other European countries as soon as they get out of the airport.

The determination of Darfuris to move from one country to another in Europe, where they anticipate that life will be better, is striking. Many will try numerous times to cross borders that are officially

closed to them, between Italy and France and between France/Belgium and the UK in particular, often at great personal risk. Belloni (2016) has used gambling theory to explore this phenomenon among Eritrean migrants, where success is seen as a matter of luck and the costs of moving between countries are regarded as relatively low compared with the potential benefits of hitting the jackpot, alongside a sense that they cannot give up. As Belloni describes, migrant perceptions of the risks of illegally crossing borders within Europe are partly affected by the huge risks they have already taken to reach Europe, and relate to what she calls ‘the social, even existential, importance of the migration mission’, including social recognition (ibid.: 116). This analysis fits with what researchers for this study heard and witnessed in the behaviour of Darfuris and the decisions they were making. In northern France and Belgium, migrants spoke about getting on trucks as ‘chances’, or ‘*chance-at*’ (a mixture of Arabic and English), describing how they move to where they think they stand a better chance of successfully entering the UK.

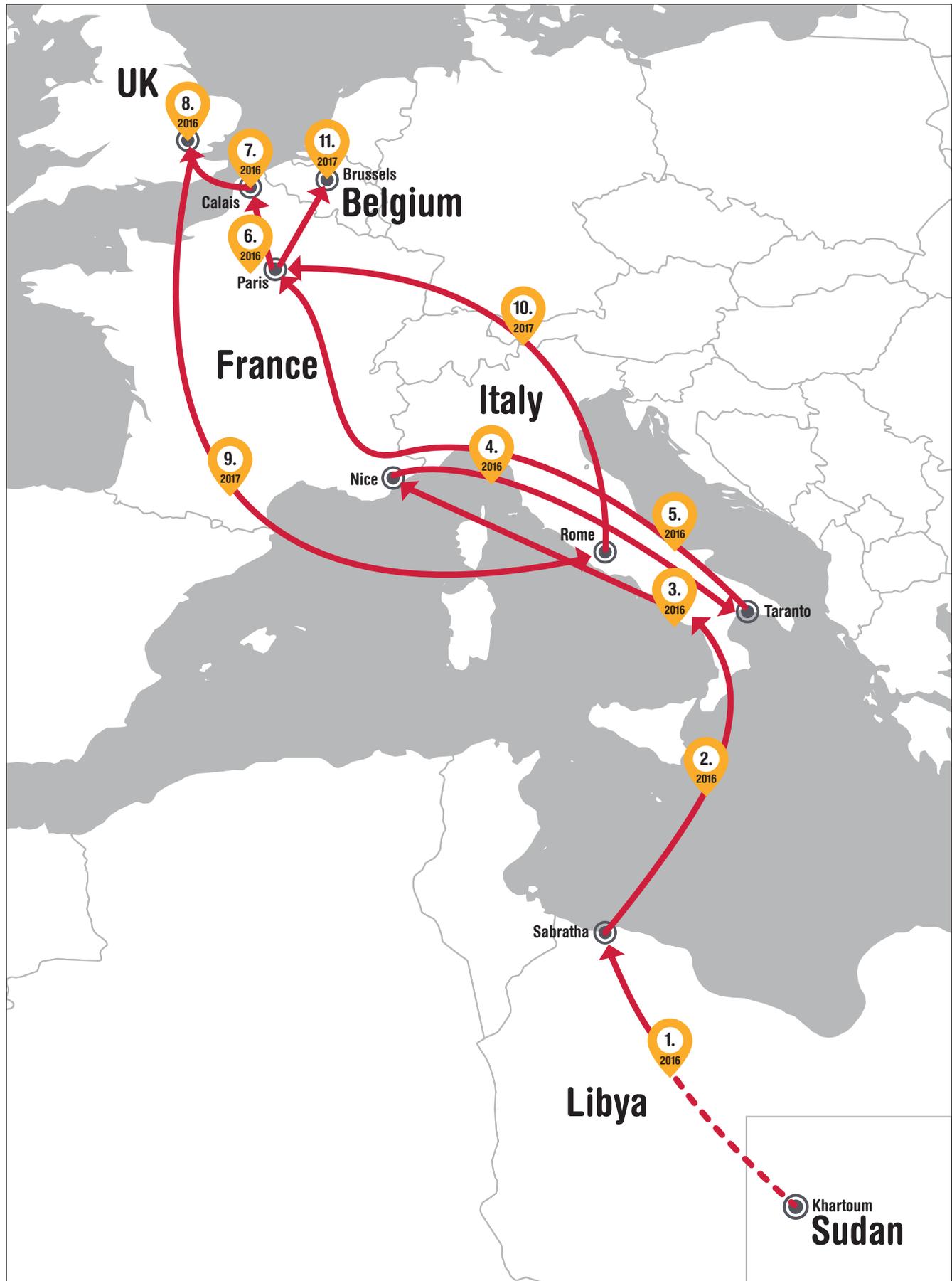
4.3.3 Return and forced removals

In addition to movements within Europe, a few Darfuris have returned from Europe to Sudan, some voluntarily and some forced. Voluntary returns include those who have obtained citizenship in a European country and who come back to Sudan on temporary visits. Participants in four focus groups in Zalingei said they knew people who had made it to the UK and who had come back to Darfur to see their families or to invest, after which they returned to the UK. A couple of returnees with citizenship in European countries said they had made enough money and decided to go back to Sudan (they returned from the UK and Germany and had migrated in 2002 and 2007 respectively). Another came on a short visit from France to see his family. Migrants can also return with the assistance of IOM. One of our interviewees returned after two years in France because he had not found work and the situation was not as he expected. Another returned after five years in the UK ‘because he was fed up with the life of a migrant and had earned some money to assist his relatives in Darfur’. IOM assisted with airfare and a grant on return. In total, IOM Sudan repatriated 65 Sudanese from France between 2005 and 2010, none from 2011 to 2016 and five in 2017. Again, the number of Darfuris among this group is not known, or whether those who returned in 2017 did so because of the poor conditions for asylum-seekers in France. Our findings also indicate that, when Darfuris gain citizenship in a European country, they may come back to Sudan and invest.

The governments of the European countries where we conducted our fieldwork have also forced a number

73 E.g. building of a wall along the motorway to Calais port, increased police numbers and equipment for checking body heat in trucks.

Journey 3: To Belgium and circular movements in Europe





KHARTOUM, SUDAN. 2016.

Ahmed* decided to leave Sudan because, as a Darfuri student, he had been repeatedly arrested. In July, he felt his position was impossible and he had to leave. Ahmed travelled via Halfa in Egypt to Libya.



SABRATHA, LIBYA. 2016.

From Halfa, Ahmed went to Sabratha in Libya and crossed to Italy. He had money to pay for the journey because he had worked while a student.



ITALY. 2016.

Ahmed was taken to a reception centre but had to sleep outside because there were no free beds. Other Sudanese advised him to go to France.



NICE, FRANCE. 2016.

The first time Ahmed went to France, via Ventimiglia, he was caught by the police and sent back to southern Italy, where he first arrived.



TARANTO, ITALY. 2016.

Ahmed returned again to France, this time through the Alps.



PARIS, FRANCE. 2016.

Ahmed took a train to Paris from Nice. He did not apply for asylum in Paris because he saw many people waiting to register asylum claims, many of whom were sleeping on the street.



CALAIS, FRANCE. 2016.

Ahmed went to Calais but was only there for three weeks before the 'Jungle' was demolished. He did not believe the French authorities when they said that he would not be sent back to Italy if he applied for asylum, so he kept trying to reach the UK.



UK. 2016.

Ahmed made it to the UK, stayed in a 'prison' near the airport, and was deported back to Italy after ten months.



ROME, ITALY. 2017.

Ahmed was deported to Rome. The police at the airport asked him whether he wanted to claim asylum, and when he said he did not he was given papers to leave the country.



PARIS, FRANCE. 2017.

In Paris for a second time, Ahmed decided to claim asylum. Fewer people were waiting to apply than previously, but after claiming asylum he still had to wait months, with nowhere to stay. He decided to go to Belgium.



BRUSSELS, BELGIUM. 2017.

Ahmed made daily attempts to board lorries to get to the UK. He did not apply for asylum in Belgium because he had heard he would not get it. At least in the UK he will have a place to sleep.

* Name has been changed to protect the individual's identity.

Table 3: Forced and voluntary returns from the UK and France

	2014	2015	2016
UK voluntary	81	41	26
UK forced	49	55	26
France voluntary	15	30	50
France forced	65	125	15

Source: EUROSTAT and UK Home Office.

of Sudanese to return (forced returns from Israel were discussed in Chapter 2), although again the proportion of Darfuris is unknown.⁷⁴ Forced returns have taken place from all countries included in this study: Italy, Belgium, France and the UK. In Belgium and France, deportees have been arrested for being undocumented or because they did not claim asylum when held in detention, or whose asylum claims were denied. (As discussed in Chapter 8, forced returns from Belgium created a political scandal.) Policies on releasing Darfuris from detention, returning them to Italy under the Dublin regulations or deporting them to Sudan are not consistent (policies and arrangements for forced returns are discussed further in Chapter 8). EUROSTAT and UK Home Office data shows that both voluntary and forced returns are highest from France and the UK (see Table 8). Although there were more forced returns from France than from the UK in 2014–16, in earlier years the position was reversed: 150–300 in 2004–2006, and over 100 in 2010 and 2011. No information exists on deportees once they are back in Sudan as no organisation monitors them.⁷⁵

4.4 Smugglers and traffickers

Key informants and focus groups in Darfur told us that smuggling networks and new means of transportation were amongst the most important facilitators of migration from Darfur, turning leaving Darfur and migrating to Europe from a desire into an actual possibility. This section discusses the role of smugglers and traffickers in facilitating or obstructing migration to and within Europe. It starts with a brief overview of the types of journey Darfuris undertake, followed by the organisation of smuggling in Sudan, smuggling and trafficking systems between Sudan and Libya and across the Mediterranean and smuggling systems in Europe.

74 Note that community leaders often also refer to returns from Libya as forced returns, given that they are often a response to the difficult conditions and risks in Libya and/or difficulties in finding work.

75 Interview with UNHCR Khartoum representative.

4.4.1 Types and duration of journey

Journeys to Europe can be undertaken in one go or in stages. The former is expensive and fast, the latter cheaper but can take many years. The quickest route is to fly straight to France or the UK, but only very few Darfuris were able to do this. The journey, with the total cost agreed in advance, could also be arranged via Libya or Egypt. Most Darfuri migrants travelled in stages, usually via Libya. On the whole, the more money paid the safer the journey, as being able to pay more means spending less time working in Libya and risking exploitation and abuse, buys a safer crossing of the Mediterranean and entails having to spend less time sleeping rough or being subject to police violence in Ventimiglia, Paris, Calais or Brussels (see Chapter 6). Examples of a relatively fast journey, and a slow one through Libya, are given in Box 7 (see also Journeys 2 and 4).

Migrating in stages, particularly via Libya, has enabled relatively poor people to reach Europe. The only initial outlay required is the cost of getting to Libya, which in some cases could be as little as 2,000 SDG (€260). This does not reflect the true cost, however, because migrants are likely to be sold to traffickers⁷⁶ in Libya, who either demand a ransom for their release or sell them to work on farms without pay for a number of months under highly exploitative conditions before they ‘buy’ their freedom. As one Darfuri in Belgium, who left Sudan in 2016, explained: ‘The smugglers cheat you. They say you can go to Libya for 2,000 SDG but when you get there you are imprisoned and have to pay more to continue. My family and friends helped me. They had to pay 12,000 SDG (€1,750) to release me’. These

76 According to IOM, ‘smuggling is the procurement of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident, for financial or other material benefit. Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction ... of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation’ (IOM, 2016).

Box 7: Contrasting journeys through Libya

Migrant who spent one month in Libya:

I was brought up in Saudi Arabia and worked there as a driver, but had to return to Sudan when my visa ended. I spent two months in Khartoum and then went to Egypt. I stayed for a week in Egypt. I had saved \$2,000 (€1,700) to pay for the journey from Egypt to Libya to Italy, including the Mediterranean crossing. I contacted someone in Egypt through a friend, who contacted the smuggler, who was European. I gave all the money in one payment to the agent. I spent one month in Libya, including two weeks and two days in an informal 'detention centre'. I had to pay for my food but I had money for that.

Migrant who spent three years in Libya:

I lived in Hamidia IDP camp until 2014, when I left for Libya. [In Libya] I tried to find work to pay for the journey to Europe. I spent about six months without a job. When I did get work, the money was not sufficient and I couldn't save. I was herding sheep. They paid me 300 Dinars (€180) per month, but then they didn't pay me for the other ten months, saying 'you don't have any documents'. They said insulting words, so I escaped and went to Jefra. I stayed with some Sudanese people. I found some daily gardening work. I only got 200 Dinars (€130) for one month, but the person I was working for was at least a little bit honest. I spent perhaps 18 months with him in total. I was also searching for routes and smugglers to Europe. The Sudanese found a young man to take me and I paid him 1,300 Dinars (€830) to go to Tripoli. They handed us to another smuggler in Ben Walid and he put us in a kind of hiding place. They tried to force me to pay more money by using torture. For example, they don't give you food for three days but when they discover you don't have any money, they let you go. Then I spent 27 days in a kind of camp before they sent us on our journey across the Mediterranean on 29 August 2017.

methods of extracting payment are explored further below. Being held for ransom and having to work to pay for part of the journey means that poor migrants can spend several years in Libya before crossing to Italy. As Chapter 6 discusses, conditions in Libya are

dangerous, with beatings, murder and a lack of food, water and hygiene in captivity common.

4.4.2 Organisational structure of smuggling in Sudan

The term 'smuggler' covers a range of actors. At the lower level are agents and brokers who make direct contact with the migrants. These brokers are often from the same ethnic group as the migrant. Agents contact the transporter or smuggler who controls the system, sets the price, organises transporters, determines where migrants gather and decides the route. Smugglers actively recruit young people. For example, one student leader informed us that, when he graduated, he was immediately contacted by an agent: 'why are you still here when most young people leave?'. Darfuris thinking about leaving Sudan said they would have no problem finding an agent who could help them with their journey, or that they had friends or relatives who knew where to find them.

In Khartoum, agents and brokers can be found in Suq Libya. In Darfur, where smuggling is likely to have become part of the war economy along with cars, fuel, weapons and drugs (see Chapter 2), smugglers or transporters have agents in El Fasher, Malha, Tina and Geneina, as well as in Chad and Libya. Transporters take migrants from Tina to Chad or Libya (Sabha or Mudruk), from Geneina to Chad, or from Malha to Libya (Kufra). They belong to the tribes that traditionally inhabit these areas and, in some cases, transported goods and people to Libya or Chad before smuggling became the business it is today. Transporters covering the Malha–Kufra route are generally Meidob, transporters covering the Tina route are Zaghawa, and those covering the Geneina–Chad route are often from Darfuri Arab tribes. Darfuris know they can pick up a smuggler in Malha or Tina. Although not the subject of this study, smuggling out of Sudan has become a lucrative business for getting migrants *through* Sudan to Libya, and has been described in a number of reports (see e.g. Collyer 2015; Strachan, 2016). Our sources indicate that smugglers in Omdurman may sell migrants to each other, or combine numbers sufficient for one journey. To avoid being linked to illegal payments, some agents refer migrants to a smuggler they are not directly connected with. In Darfur, smugglers have begun using four-wheel-drive vehicles rather than lorries, cutting the journey time to Libya to 1–3 days.

There is evidence of the involvement of government officials, militia and rebel movements in migrant smuggling. The involvement of government officials

in smuggling, particularly along the Dongola–Libya route, has been well-documented (ibid.). At the lowest level, security and military officials take bribes and fees to allow people across checkpoints and borders. In Omdurman, a reliable source confirmed the involvement of a national security officer in the collection of ransom money, which implies that there are links between national security personnel in Sudan and smugglers in Libya. One interviewee reported the involvement of Arab militia in smuggling migrants out of Darfur across the border near Adre (Chad), and the UN Panel of Experts (2017) suggests that Arab militia are involved in transporting migrants across North Darfur. It would also be difficult for traders to become involved in smuggling without some involvement on the part of Meidob militia and paramilitary troops in Malha. The UN Panel of Experts (2017) reported rebel movements in Darfur transporting migrants and demanding taxes to allow the passage of migrant convoys, and in Libya enticing Darfuris to work as mercenaries with promises of assistance in organising the crossing to Europe.

For the ‘cheaper’ journeys to Libya, there are clearly connections between smugglers in Sudan and traffickers in Libya, as Darfuris are either sold for ransom or have to work to pay the remainder of the cost of their journey (see below). In these cases, the smuggler in Sudan is in contact with smugglers or traffickers in Libya to provide information on whether a migrant has paid in full or owes money. Similarly, the possibility of buying a full journey to Europe implies an international network of smugglers, with links between smugglers in Sudan, Chad, Libya and Europe. A refugee in Birmingham, for example, bought the complete journey to France, paying the first instalment of \$2,000 (€1,500) in Khartoum, another \$500 (€370) at an airport in a nearby country (possibly Chad) and another \$1,000 (€750) to an agent on their arrival in Paris, who then took them to Calais. Journeys carried out by plane indicate collusion by airport, police and migration officials.

4.4.3 Types of smuggling and trafficking systems from Darfur

From the information we gathered, Darfuris appear to use at least three different systems to get to Europe.

1. A full or organised journey, where payment for the entire journey to Europe is paid for in advance, whether flying direct to a European country or via a third country.
2. Migration in stages, where migrants organise each part of the journey individually.
3. Migration in stages, including prearranged payment by instalment for the journey to Libya.

This section briefly discusses the first two options, but focuses on payment by instalment as the most common means of migration for Darfuri youth at the time of this research.

The first option was rarely used by Darfuris because it is very expensive. Examples include one Darfuri in Manchester (now a recognised refugee) who left Sudan in 2012, paid about £3,000 (around €3,700 at 2012 rates) for a tourist visa to France and travelled by plane. A returnee interviewed in El Fasher had flown direct to the UK in 2005 having paid 120,000 SDG (€5,350) to ‘someone with good connections with the police and migration office’ for a passport and visa.⁷⁷ Some migrants were able to buy a visa to Turkey,⁷⁸ and made their way to Europe from there. A full journey, with the total cost agreed in advance, can also be arranged via Libya or Egypt. Interviewees in Darfur estimated the cost at anywhere between 15,000 and 80,000 SDG (€2,000 to €10,000). When migrants gave us estimates in dollars, they ranged from \$4,000–\$6,000 (€3,500–€5,000). This kind of ‘organised journey’ through Libya to Europe is more often used by Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis (UNHCR et al., 2017) (see Journey 4).

The second option involves Darfuris organising each part of the journey separately, travelling to Malha, Tina or Geneina in Darfur, and then picking up smugglers who take them across the border to Chad or Libya, from where they have to find their own way. Costs vary widely depending on the route, the smuggler, the roadworthiness of the vehicle and the number of migrants being transported, as well as the migrant’s own connections. Potential migrants and transporters quoted figures ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 SDG (€250–€630⁷⁹) from Darfur to Libya, and 5,000–8,000 SDG (€630–€1,000) from Khartoum. Darfuris in Europe and returnees who had travelled earlier reported lower costs in 2012, around 1,300–1,500 SDG (€380–€440), indicating that the cost of getting to Libya had gone up as the smuggling business became more ‘professional’ between 2012 and 2017. Some Darfuris paid for their transport in gold if they were coming directly from the gold mines in Chad (one returnee from Libya, interviewed in El Fasher, said he paid 2g of gold to travel from Chad to Libya).

In the third option, pre-arranged payment by instalment, an agent or smuggler agrees with the

77 He returned in 2015 having made enough money to set up a business in El Fasher.

78 A refugee in Birmingham who left Egypt for Turkey in 2011, and a refugee in London who flew directly to Turkey in 2012.

79 October 2017 exchange rates.

migrant that they will pay for part of the journey on arrival in Libya. This option was most often mentioned by our interviewees, including Darfuris in Europe, returnees, potential migrants, families of migrants, focus groups in Darfur and key informants such as transporters and agents. According to one returnee in Khartoum (who left for Libya in 2014 and returned to Sudan in 2017):

the agreement is for payment to be made when the migrant arrives in Libya, the migrant gives money to his friend and when he arrives in Libya he calls his friend to give money for the smugglers. If his friend does not pay, the smugglers do not release him. They ask the migrant to call his family in Sudan to pay money or they force him to work until he has paid the money.

As this quote indicates, this system of payment by instalments leaves migrants open to exploitation and extreme risks to their safety, including having to work to pay off the smuggler or, in the worst cases, being sold to traffickers. One IOM study in Libya in 2016 found that almost three-quarters of migrants arriving in Europe via the central Mediterranean route had experienced some form of abuse or exploitation (IOM, 2016). The IOM study used the following as indicators of potential trafficking: ‘forced to perform work or activities against their will, carrying out work or performing activities without getting the payment expected and being kept at locations against their will (by entities other than governmental authorities)’ (ibid.). For Darfuris, trafficking included being held for ransom.

A number of Darfuris in Europe said they had been sold, held for ransom or had worked without pay for months:

When I arrived, we were sold. Arrested on arrival. It was as if we had already been sold in Sudan. We were put in prison and held for ransom. Had to pay 1,000 Dinar (€560). Someone from my tribe in Libya paid this for me. I spent three months in prison (Darfuri in Brussels, who left Darfur in 2014).

In Libya, I worked for three months, and was in prison for two months. They abducted me. They sold us. It was as if it is something had already been planned by the abductors ... They put pressure on us to call our parents to get money. They tortured me but I escaped (Darfuri in Dunkirk, who left Khartoum in 2015).

Ransoms reported by our interviewees ranged between 700–1,000 Dinar (€450–€640) and 7,000–50,000 SDG (€1,000–€7,300).⁸⁰ From our interviews, it is clear that many migrants had not expected to work without pay for as long as they did, nor did they expect to be ‘sold’. While this could simply reflect a reticence to tell friends and relatives about the experience, especially if it involved degrading treatment, it may also be a function of the increasingly exploitative and abusive nature of smuggling in Libya.

The progressive criminalisation of migration has led to further opportunities for smuggling networks to keep migrants in detention and to profit from them, thus promoting trafficking (Aziz et al., 2015). In the absence of a functioning central state, a whole new economy has developed around smuggling in Libya, providing what for many is one of the few ways of earning an income during the ongoing crisis in the country.

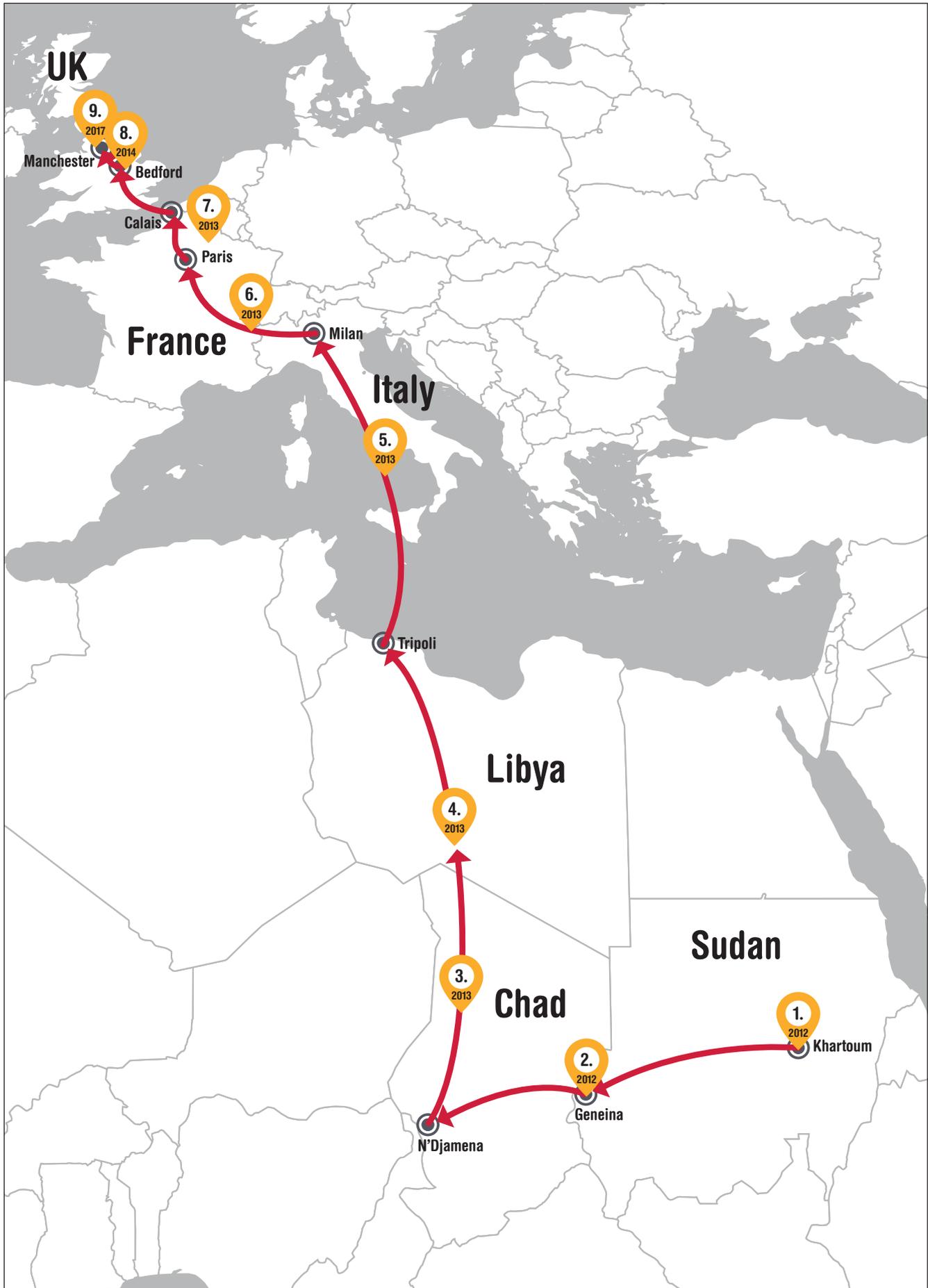
4.4.4 Crossing the Mediterranean

Smugglers recruit migrants either from where they were working or being held captive or through brokers, often Sudanese. Groups of up to 200 are brought to gathering points where they wait (sometimes for months) before boarding boats. These holding places are overcrowded and with extremely poor provision of food, water and sanitation. Migrants may be forced onto boats if they refuse to get into the boat they are shot there on the beach’. The crossing itself is one of the most dangerous parts of the entire migration journey, and those who make it to Italy have usually been rescued on the way, either by an Italian naval vessel or a ship run by one of the NGOs or voluntary groups operating in the Mediterranean. One returnee we interviewed in West Darfur said that he had been one of seven survivors from a group of 130 on a boat bound for Europe. He said the four days he had spent at sea was the worst experience of his life.

The financial cost varies according to the type of boat and the migrants’ ability to negotiate. One focus group in Rome explained that the price may vary from 700 to 2,000 Dinars (€450–€1,300): the higher amount will buy passage on a slightly better boat, with an engine and sometimes a satellite phone. A potential migrant in Darfur told us he thought that the cost was 14,000 SDG (€1,850) for ‘safe’ boats, and 6,000 SDG (€800) for ‘less safe’ ones. The few Darfuris in Europe who told us the cost of the crossing confirmed these highly variable rates: some paid around 2,000–3,000 Dinars (€1,300–€1,900),

80 2016 exchange rates.

Journey 4: A quicker, safer but more expensive journey via Libya to the UK





KHARTOUM, SUDAN. 2012.

Ibrahim* left for Europe immediately after graduating, having been detained and beaten as a student, and forced to sign a commitment that he would not cause any disturbance or join any rebel movement.



GENEINA, WEST DARFUR. 2012.

Ibrahim travelled from Khartoum to Geneina.



N'DJAMENA, CHAD. 2013.

From N'djamena, Ibrahim paid smugglers \$500 (around €420) for transport to Libya.



TRIPOLI, LIBYA. 2013.

Across the border in Libya Ibrahim found onward transport to Tripoli for \$100 (€85). On arrival in Tripoli, he waited for several months for passage across the Mediterranean, but was treated well because he had money. Eventually Ibrahim paid 1,300 Dinars to make the crossing. The boat (that was supplied with food, water and a satellite phone) was rescued and the passengers were taken to Italy.



MILAN, ITALY. 2013.

On arrival in Italy Ibrahim was advised against applying for asylum there by other migrants. He paid to take a bus to Milan, travelling with Ethiopians, and then travelled on to Paris by train, without paying.



PARIS, FRANCE. 2013.

Ibrahim spent the night in a Sudanese cafe in Paris, where he got information and advice about travelling to Calais, and left the next morning.



CALAIS, FRANCE. 2014.

Ibrahim contacted his family in Sudan to ask for money for shelter and to pay smugglers to get him to the UK. After a month of trying, he eventually got onto a truck to the UK.



BEDFORD, UK. March 2014.

Ibrahim arrived in the UK and was handed over to the police. He was taken to a detention centre in Bedford for four days, and was then moved to the north of England while his asylum claim was being processed. In December 2014 Ibrahim's claim was approved and he moved to Manchester.



MANCHESTER, UK. February 2017.

Ibrahim's wife joined him through family reunification.

* Name has been changed to protect the individual's identity.

and others as little as 300–600 Dinars (€190–€380).⁸¹ Many will have worked for years, often under exploitative conditions, to earn this money.

4.4.5 Smugglers as obstacles and risks for Darfuris in migrating through Europe

Within Europe, almost all Darfuris said they travelled without paying smugglers to cross borders, which made it more difficult, slower and more risky. Smuggling networks exist, but Sudanese told us they make little use of them as they had no money. No Darfuris interviewed on the Italy–France border were considering paying smugglers. One key informant noted that it was possible to pay €100 to get someone to take you across the border in their car, but most Darfuris do not have that kind of money. Interviews with key informants in Belgium, France and the UK indicate that some migrants pay with money sent to them from relatives (who insist they tell no one because it is illegal). One key informant in the UK said that he had paid a smuggler to help his nephews cross the Italy–France border. As another key informant explained: ‘there are two ways: 1. Those without money help each other. This has led to fighting and violence with the smugglers. 2. If you are lucky and you have a relative who can send money, they will send it to the smugglers.’

In Calais and northern France, smuggling networks have proliferated over the years. At the time of the study, in October 2017, smugglers from various nationalities – Afghans, Kurds, Ethiopians, Eritreans – controlled truck parking places along the two main motorways leading to Calais port, where migrants could get onto trucks, for a fee of around €300–€1,000. According to key informants in Calais, the more you pay the better the chances of making it to the UK. Costs increased when plans for the demolition of the Calais Jungle became known, and migrants could be asked to pay anything from €3,000–€5,000.

Following the demolition of the ‘Jungle’, in October 2016, Sudanese were unable to gain control over parking places because they were late in coming back to Calais. Ethiopians and Eritreans returned first, in December 2016/January 2017, Afghans followed in February/March, but the Sudanese did not return until May/July.⁸² One Darfuri told us: ‘When we arrived, there were only about two Sudanese in Calais. The Sudanese could not compete with the others for

parking places. The Ethiopians and Eritreans said we should go to Brussels. They tried to marginalise the Sudanese. Because we were few we kept silent. We tried to get onto the trucks discretely. The Sudanese still do not have their own place’. When the researchers were in Calais, in October 2017, the number of Sudanese was estimated at 50–100.

In these circumstances, the chances of getting onto a truck are low, and doing so is risky. The team was frequently told about a Sudanese who had been killed after trying to get on a truck in Norrent Fontes.⁸³ In the first three weeks of 2018, three migrants were killed on the road to Calais port. Undocumented migrants caught on trucks or trains can be detained and threatened with forced removals or – as is often the case in France – released in a remote area, from where they have to find their way back to Calais.

4.5 The role of the diaspora and earlier migrants

Members of the Darfuri diaspora played an important role in the journey, providing work, linking with smugglers in Libya and, if necessary, providing ransom money. Interviewees told us that they had been given initial funds for their journey by friends or relatives who had migrated earlier or who lived in Libya or the Gulf. Israel, Sweden, Germany and the UK were also mentioned as countries from where relatives or friends sent money. Arrangements to send money from Sudan to Italy could also be made with relatives, and recognised refugees in the UK helped migrants financially if they got stuck in Libya, Italy or France. Some also got help from relatives in Libya to cross the Mediterranean.

Connections with previous migrants and diaspora in Libya were crucial to the safety of migrants and to their ability to travel as quickly as possible through Libya. One migrant told us that people from the same ethnic group helped if migrants had been kidnapped and held for ransom. A Darfuri in Calais explained: ‘many migrants were met by relatives and those who were not met were captured. I was met by the father of my friend who took me to a village called Tajoura, where I was held with other migrants before crossing the sea’. It appears therefore that Darfuris are less likely to be kidnapped if they have relatives in Libya, and if they are kidnapped, relatives can help with

81 Interviews with three Darfuris in Belgium, a Darfuri in France, a refugee in Bradford and an asylum-seeker in Bradford. Many did not want to talk about the crossing.

82 Key informant interview in Calais.

83 In another example, in July 2017, a minor from the Nuba mountains was crushed to death while hanging below a bus en route to the UK.

paying the ransom money. For others, relatives helped with money if migrants had not been paid.

Sudanese contacts also helped find ‘honest’ smugglers, and safe work. A number of Darfuris said that they had worked in Sudanese coffee shops, restaurants or car repair workshops. Others stayed with and were supported for several months by Sudanese migrants living in Libya. Smugglers are usually found through Sudanese brokers, and migrants often said they knew of someone. Some of those with connections in Libya were Zaghawa, but not all. Other ethnic groups without a history of migration to Libya (Fur, Tunjur, Masalit, Tama) also received support from other Sudanese. It is likely that a number of long-term migrants have remained in Libya. According to Zaghawa key informants in the UK, many of these are Zaghawa businessmen. A more in-depth investigation into the relationship between long-term migrants and newer migrants travelling through Libya to Europe was beyond the scope of this study.

Migrants in Europe may also be assisted by other Sudanese. One refugee in Bradford told us that, in addition to help from voluntary agencies in France, some Sudanese residents took them to their homes for food. Another, a refugee in Manchester, stayed with a Sudanese man in Turkey. Some Sudanese have set up voluntary groups to assist migrants and refugees. Links between the UK diaspora (or long-term migrants) and new migrants coming to the UK appear to be few. Many of the long-term Sudanese migrants in the UK are established highly-skilled professionals from central Sudan’s Arab elite, and are not asylum-seekers.

The Zaghawa history of migration, and current migration to Europe in larger numbers, also means that they are likely to benefit more from assistance from previous migrants. This includes links between Zaghawa in Chad and Darfur, which made it easier for

Zaghawa to obtain passports and visas to go to France from Chad. The Zaghawa also account for a large proportion of the long-term migrants living in Libya, and thus are able to facilitate journeys there.⁸⁴

4.6 Conclusion

Darfuri migration from Sudan to Europe is not a linear process, and conditions in Darfur mean that it is effectively largely forced. It usually occurs in stages, not all of which are planned in advance. Conditions for migrants in Libya are dire, and crossing the Mediterranean is extremely hazardous. Once in Europe, onward movement is largely determined by the circumstances Darfuris find themselves in, or the information they receive from other migrants. Borders create concentrations of Darfuris in cities such as Ventimiglia, Calais and Brussels, and circular movements between Paris, Brussels and Calais. Asylum regulations, in particular Dublin III, cause further circular movements within Europe as Darfuris are returned to Italy. Returns of Darfuris to Sudan, from Libya and European countries, are known to take place, some of them forced, but no information is available on how these individuals are treated, or their situation once back in Sudan. Smuggling and trafficking networks are key facilitators of Darfuri migration from Sudan to Libya and Europe. Paying in instalments has enabled poor Darfuris to migrate to Libya and on to Europe, but they risk being held for ransom, sold or drafted into forced or slave labour. Darfuri migrants usually stayed in Libya for 2–3 years before accumulating the money to cross the Mediterranean. In Europe, the inability to pay smugglers and strengthened border controls create concentrations of Sudanese along borders and risks in crossing them, particularly getting onto trucks to enter the UK illegally.

84 This was mentioned in separate interviews with Zaghawa and Fur leaders in Birmingham.

5 Information, social media and social networks

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the role of information, social media and social networks in facilitating and constraining migration from Darfur to Europe. What information are people considering leaving Darfur accessing, through what channels, and how are social media and social networks influencing their decisions and aspirations? What information are they accessing along the journey? When people choose to leave, who is involved in the decision, and how do they perceive and assess the risks of migrating? Along the journey, how does information influence the means and direction of travel, and the choice of destination?

5.2 Information and decision-making in advance of migrating

Potential migrants – mostly young men in Darfur and Khartoum – access two broad categories of information:

- Information about life in Europe, in terms of general conditions, city life and education and job opportunities.
- Information about how to migrate, in terms of routes, transport, smuggler networks, risks and costs.

The main sources of this information, particularly about life in Europe, are relatives and friends who have reached Europe. The main means of communication is social media: posts on Facebook, messages sent through Facebook Messenger and photos, videos and messages sent through WhatsApp. Darfuris who have left earlier are also a source of information on routes and on some of the risks of migrating, as well as providing information on where to find smugglers. Potential migrants interviewed in Sudan repeatedly said that relatives and friends were the most trusted and influential sources of information. In the words of one young man in North

Darfur who had been gathering information and considering migrating for 18 months: ‘My friends and my relatives are the credible source of information. I do not trust any other source’. In one focus group in El Fasher, young men talked about migrant diaries and videos posted on Facebook: ‘Facebook is the most influential source and friends are the most trusted source’. Some interviewees also referred to direct telephone conversations with friends and relatives who had migrated to Europe. The importance of these social networks in informing and influencing decision-making about migration resonates with the findings of many other studies.⁸⁵ ‘We find that who transfers the message matters just as much as what the message is. It seems that information becomes trustworthy when it is transmitted by known social connections with whom the individual already shares a relationship of (at least some) trust’ (Hagen-Zanker and Mallett, 2016: 39).

Agents of smugglers, in towns in Darfur and in Khartoum, were cited as another important source of information, particularly about routes, transportation and costs. This is usually provided through face-to-face contact, but is less trusted as agents are known to be touting for business. Other information sources that Darfuris in Europe and those wanting to leave Sudan refer to include mass media, especially television, with images of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean and reports of those who do not make it. Some referred to their general school education, in which they learned about Europe, and especially about the UK.

Graduates and those from better-off families and families or ethnic groups with a history of migration, for example the Zaghawa, appeared to be better-informed than the less educated and those from ethnic groups without a history of migration. One Darfuri asylum-seeker in the UK from an ethnic group without a strong tradition of migration outside Sudan explained: ‘I didn’t know anyone in the UK, I didn’t know any migrants from before. So I didn’t have any

85 See also Cummings et al. (2015); Hovil and Oette (2017).

Table 4: Sources and types of information potential migrants are accessing

Type of information	Source
General information and images about life in Europe	Relatives and friends who have reached Europe as migrants*
Routes, means of transportation, costs	Relatives and friends who have reached Europe as migrants Agents of smugglers in Sudan
Risks of migrating	Relatives and friends who have reached Europe as migrants Families of migrants, left behind in Darfur TV
Education and job opportunities	Graduate relatives and friends who have reached Europe as migrants
Migrant and refugee rights and asylum	IOM and UNHCR

*The main source of information is in bold

information about the situation here, or in Libya’. Some students and graduates from Darfur receive almost daily posts and messages on social media from friends who have reached Europe.

Information about asylum and migrant rights and EU immigration policies, especially related to asylum, featured much less prominently in interviews with young men in Darfur and Khartoum. For most Darfuris, knowledge and information about migrant and refugee rights was extremely weak before they left. Where they did know something, it was often from agencies working in Darfur, such as IOM and UNHCR. Knowledge was usually at a very general level: for example that immigration policies had tightened and become less open to migrants from Africa.

Table 4 summarises the different types of information potential migrants from Darfur are accessing in Sudan, and the sources.

5.2.1 The influence of social media on perceptions of life in Europe

Social media has been hugely influential in shaping young people’s perceptions of life in Europe. Students in a focus group discussion in Khartoum told us:

We make contact with our friends outside through social media: Facebook, Messenger and WhatsApp... the situation outside is good, and they send us their photos, and photos with Khawajat (foreigners), and they tell us when they arrived in Italy the organisations took care of them.

Like many users of social media all over the world, Darfuris mostly post only the most positive images of their lives in Europe, for example of young men posing in front of a well-known and impressive landmark such

as the Eiffel Tower. A volunteer aid worker in Calais described how asylum-seekers had asked her to take photos of them in front of flowers, on the beach or in her car. The fact that some Darfuris posting photos are living rough on the streets or in forests in France or Belgium is much less likely to be shared. This resonates with the findings of other studies; Cummings et al. (2015) cite a study of migration aspirations in Senegal which shows how ‘biased images of wealth and Western luxury ... contribute in the eyes of young people in particular to “the widely acknowledged view that “Senegal is misery and Europe is paradise”’ (Cummings et al., 2015: 31, citing Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007).

To some extent there is a natural human motivation to reassure close family members so they do not worry. But there is also a cultural dimension to reassurance. One commonly used expression translates as ‘We are well, except that we don’t see you’, meaning we miss you. The research team observed this when a 17-year-old boy from South Darfur was called by his mother during the interview in Maximillian Park in Brussels. Despite the fact that he was living on the street, he reassured her that ‘we are fine, you can get everything here’, without actually describing the challenges or conditions he was facing. This tendency may be reinforced by the obligation that migrants feel towards family members and friends who have contributed financially to the costs of their journey. There is pressure not to express disappointment, but instead to show that the investment was worthwhile, and that they have a good life in Europe.

Several interviewees in Sudan acknowledged there might be some exaggeration about the quality of life in Europe, but most accepted images and posts from their friends and relatives at face value. Recognised refugees from Darfur who had reached and settled in the UK explained that their friends and relatives in Sudan simply did not believe them when they talked of the difficulties they faced in Europe:

Box 8: Examples of how young graduates from Darfur articulate their aspirations

'I am looking for safety and security. Then to fulfil my basic needs of life and to realise my dream, which is to live in a country that respects human beings and respects diversity. I expect my life in Europe will be much better than in Sudan in different aspects such as work and education opportunities, freedom and equality. My expectations are based on information I received from my friends and from some relatives living in the UK who were able to change their lives and to achieve their dreams in a very short period of time' (potential migrant interviewed in El Fasher, who is a graduate of Khartoum University).

'Migrants fear for their lives and their own future; the future in Sudan becomes so bleak and unknown. So [their] ambitions are to find a safe place to live in, to improve their standard of living and to support their families. Some youth migrants have bigger aspirations. They are energetic and creative, but they could not find a suitable environment in Sudan to achieve something. So, they want to migrate to countries that recognise this potential, will look after them and help them to achieve what they want' (FGD with young graduates, El Fasher, North Darfur).

It's very difficult. Some friends are asking me about it. It's totally different from what you expect. Even if you tell them the reality, they don't trust you, don't believe you.

When I am contacting friends at home, I tell them that here we live on the street. They ask me why. In Europe you have human rights, but I tell them no and send them photos. They do not believe me. They think that even in Sudan people do not sleep on the street. They cannot believe that this happens in Europe.

Social media is also enabling young people in developing countries to engage with a global youth culture, and this is strongly influencing migrants' decisions across Africa.⁸⁶ One research study of urban youth in Sudan highlights the weakened attachment they have to their 'homeland', and how the 'availability of technology and modern materials

[encourages them] to go beyond the national borders and the immediate environment around them' (Bakhit, 2014: 97). The majority of young Darfuris, whether living in Darfur or in Khartoum, are now part of Sudan's urban youth due to the rapid urbanisation associated with the Darfur conflict and displacement (Pantuliano et al., 2011).

5.2.2 Migrant aspirations for life in Europe

Information, both from Darfuris who have reached Europe and social media, has influenced the aspirations of potential migrants for their life in Europe. Young people thinking of leaving (and who had already left) often talked about their search for a 'better life'. On deeper questioning, this meant respect for human rights and freedom of expression, employment and business opportunities to support family members in Sudan and further education and skills development. Numerous interviewees repeated the words 'human rights' and being treated as 'a human being', and the lexicon of human rights is being used by Sudan's youth in a way that is new to this generation (see Box 8). Graduates and former student activists emphasised freedom of speech and political expression, and many spoke of having the freedom to advocate for change in Sudan. Europe is seen as a continent where these freedoms are guaranteed:

In Europe laws that organise the life of people are applied on the ground, and any person is treated as a human being regardless of his colour, nationality or religion ... This is not found in Sudan. Although there are laws like that, they exist on paper only and are not applied on the ground. This is what I heard from my friends who are there in Europe.

5.2.3 Who is involved in the decision to leave?

The majority of young men who leave appear to have taken this decision by themselves, and then discuss it with their families, or with peer groups and friends. Family members described this in different ways ('he consulted us'; 'he informed us and we discussed it as a family'). There were also cases where the family agreed very reluctantly ('my family initially refused to let me go. But I explained, and they half-understood') or accepted the decision as essential for the safety and economic well-being of their sons:

It is not an easy decision for the family to allow one of its members to migrate. Nevertheless, it is the very difficult situation we are all undergoing that compelled us to take or accept such a very

86 See, for example, Hamel (2009); Frouws et al. (2016).

difficult decision. Yes, they [two sons who left, one for Israel and one for Europe] consulted the family and we all agreed to their decision of migration (interview with family members in El Fasher, North Darfur).

There were a striking number of cases where the young man made the decision on his own and left without telling his family, usually because he expected the family would prevent him from going:

Regarding my youngest son who migrated to the UK, the decision was his own. He did not consult the family. He made his decision in consultation and agreement with his very close friends. This was contrary to the decision of the family, which was the youngest brother should stay, finish his education, help his mother and look after the family, especially his youngest sisters... it was his contact with his friends abroad that encouraged him to make his own decision, with no consultation with the family, and to find his way to Europe' (mother in an IDP camp in North Darfur, living with four daughters, where the family had taken the decision for the two older sons to travel to Libya to work to support the family)

In most of these cases the migrant made contact with his family by phone once he was en route, when he would attempt to explain his reasons for leaving.

The decision-making processes described above are indicative of changing social and generational dynamics. A generation ago it is highly unlikely that a young man would leave the country without the approval and blessing of his family. While family ties in Darfur remain strong, they have been weakened by the conflict, for example through living in IDP camps rather than tight-knit rural communities, and as young men have gained status through being fighters in the conflict or through higher levels of education, and as their lifestyles change. Social transformation has also been influenced by technology and social media, as described above.⁸⁷

5.2.4 How migrants assess the risk of migrating

Clear patterns emerged in how young people and potential migrants from Darfur perceive the risks in migrating irregularly, and in particular travelling to Europe. Interviewees often referred to risks during the journey itself, especially crossing the Mediterranean.

They were well aware that many had perished, but this was seen as a temporary and short-term risk compared with the long-term and continuous risk of staying in Sudan. This was often described as the risk of a possible 'quick death' during the journey over a 'slow death' in Sudan. Migrants were consciously taking the decision to face what they saw as short-term dangers over the prospect of long-term 'misery', a word often used in interviews to describe life in Sudan. Box 9 captures this through a number of quotes.

Hagen-Zanker and Mallett (2016) reflect on the 'normalisation' of risk. For those living in war zones, who have been exposed to violence and conflict for years, risk (danger) becomes part of how 'normal' is perceived. This may increase their willingness to take future risks through irregular migration. Making a particular journey can be normalised by large numbers of people from the same nationality or background embarking on that journey and that route. This then becomes a normal course of action despite the level of risk involved. The findings of this study contradict this, to the extent that the migrants we spoke to were well aware of the risks they would face on their journey. Risks are not being 'normalised', but being weighed against a potentially dangerous and miserable long-term future in Sudan.

There are some young people from Darfur who consider the risks and the potential dangers of migration to be too great, and have decided to stay, though that decision may be under constant review depending on the information they receive about the dangers of the journey, and depending on how their life evolves within Sudan. For others, the family may decide to spread the risk; in one case the family decided that one cousin, who had been accused of supporting the rebels, should go to Libya and then to Europe, while the other should stay to look after the family. Generally, however, young people interviewed as potential migrants appear to have a higher appetite for the risks of migrating than older family members, who may discourage them from leaving. One young Darfuri man interviewed in Calais told us: 'My mother did not want me to go to Europe. She knew the sea was very dangerous. My uncle [in Libya] was the same. I only contacted them when I was in Italy to say I was OK'. A number of those who have reached Europe have reassessed the risks of migrating based on their own experience and have actively discouraged younger male relatives from attempting the journey, regarding it as too dangerous. In the words of a recognised refugee from Darfur in Italy: 'I am very worried about my brother in Sudan. He is 18 years old and wants to come to Europe. I don't want him to come because it is very dangerous in Libya'.

⁸⁷ As reported by key informants, and as captured by Bakhit (2014).

Box 9: Perceptions of risk among potential migrants from Darfur

'There are many risks expected during the journey, for example getting lost in the desert and drowning in the sea, or being forced to return even when you arrive at your final destination. But all these risks can be tolerated because they are for a short period of time (days) but staying in Darfur is for a long period of time with an unclear future. This is a bigger risk than those faced along the route' (FGD with young graduates in Zalingei)

'They choose to migrate because staying in Darfur means a slow death. Because of this, quick death is better than a slow one' (interview in Zalingei, Central Darfur, with family members of a Darfuri who had left)

'I know there are a lot of risks. Yet it is better to take the risk than to give up and stay in the

camp' (potential migrant living in an IDP camp in El Fasher)

'To stay in Sudan you may face many risks and dangers compared with the routes to Europe. For this I can be patient with the risks on the journey because, at the end, I may achieve some of my hopes. But the risks in Sudan mean I do not have any hope. The future in Sudan is dark (interview with a potential migrant in an IDP camp in Central Darfur)

'Life in Sudan lacks respect for human dignity. It is better to die than to lose my dignity (potential migrant in an IDP camp in North Darfur)

'Dying is better than living a miserable life' (youth leader, Khartoum)

5.2.5 Why some remain

Despite the challenges of life in Sudan, not all young people aspire to a better life in Europe, or outside Sudan. Some hope to be part of the changes within Sudan that they long for, and are prepared to stay if they can. For example, a Darfuri student leader in Khartoum who does not want to leave told us: 'I want to convey the message to the youth: "Sudan is our country. As young people we need to stay and struggle for change". If they migrate, the country loses this section of the population'. Those who are politically active in opposing the current regime have to navigate security and intelligence. It was beyond the scope of this study to ascertain the extent to which political activists who have decided to stay have been able to avoid arrest and maltreatment. In a focus group discussion with female Darfuri undergraduates at one of the universities in Khartoum, they described some of those who have decided to stay as having somehow 'accepted' their situation in Sudan, almost in a fatalistic way.

5.3 Information and decision-making during the migration journey

Once they reach Europe, Darfuris predominantly receive information from other Sudanese in transit. This starts immediately on arrival in Italy, when they talk to and consult other Sudanese, as well as migrants of other nationalities, in the reception centres where they are taken after disembarkation. The information they

seek is mostly about general conditions in Italy, routes, how to travel by bus and train without any money and how to leave Italy for other European countries. This may be the first time they hear that the border between Italy and France is currently 'closed'. (A few may also be hearing for the first time that there is a sea to cross to reach the UK.) Based on this information, most head directly to Ventimiglia, the first 'informal information hub' where Sudanese have congregated. There they again consult each other, for example about how to cross the border avoiding police checks and where to get day-to-day assistance. Most have little information about how to proceed if or when they manage to cross the border, relying on making contact with other Sudanese in transit when they enter France: 'When I reached Italy I asked people where the border is. When I came to Milan, I heard from other Sudanese people that Ventimiglia is on the border to France. When I reach France I will ask people about the border with the UK'. This pattern is repeated as migrants move north to Paris, where there is again a major 'informal information hub' in Port de la Chapelle, where they consult other migrants, again mostly Sudanese, as well as Sudanese shop and restaurant owners in the area. This is a key point for information-sharing about how to reach the UK. One young male Darfuri interviewed in Dunkirk told us: 'I got a lot of information in La Chapelle. Sudanese have coffee shops there and restaurants, or shops selling snacks. They call it the "centre of Khartoum". You go there if you have 5 or 6 Euros and have a meal. You can just speak Arabic. People also give you information there'. Maximilian Park in Brussels is another 'informal information hub'.

What is striking about this pattern is, first, how Darfuris are picking up information in a piecemeal fashion, mostly about the next short step in the journey. Second, they are all getting the same information, and therefore almost all are following the same route and using the same modes of transport. Only a handful mentioned migrants of other nationalities as their source of information. This seemed to be more common among better-educated graduates, some of whom linked up with Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants in Italy. Some Darfuris with strong social networks, for example from the Zaghawa ethnic group, gleaned information from the recently arrived diaspora – recognised refugees and others who had come to Europe before them – about how to get from one place to another in Europe, and the best place from which to try to get to the UK. Most Darfuris have mobile phones when they first reach Libya, so can maintain contact with any friends and relatives they have in Europe.⁸⁸ But few have mobile phones by the time they reach Italy – they have been stolen in Libya – so they have usually lost contact with those relatives or friends. Some of those interviewed in France and Belgium did have phones once again (although it is not clear how they managed to get them), so they can be back in touch with their contacts in Europe.

Knowledge and understanding about asylum procedures in Europe is generally poor. RRDP's research in Ventimiglia found that only 8% of migrants interviewed said they had access to information about their rights and opportunities, and only 13% had access to information about European immigration rules and asylum law. Again, most Darfuris pick up information along the way from other Sudanese migrants. They mostly hear the same things:

- that it is difficult to get work in Italy if you are granted asylum, and you are likely to end up back on the street;
- that it takes a long time to be granted asylum in Germany;
- that it also takes a long time to get asylum in France;
- that you are unlikely to be granted asylum in Belgium; and
- that it is easier to get asylum in the UK, and conditions are better.

This is illustrated in the following quotes:

In Germany, if you ask for asylum it takes 3–4 years. In Belgium, it is very bad. No one in Paris or in Europe explained about claiming asylum

⁸⁸ A Darfuri interviewed in Calais described how cheaply calls can be made from Libya to Italy, at local rates.

or about rights as a migrant or refugee (young male Darfuri interviewed in Calais).

The only information I received was from other youth in Paris. I have no contacts in the UK. I heard that in the UK you are given a home and that you can study. That you will not be sleeping in the street (another young male Darfuri interviewed in Calais).

There is a lot of confusion about the implications of the Dublin Regulations,⁸⁹ and especially the consequences of being fingerprinted on arrival in Italy for claiming asylum in other European countries. For example:

Fingerprints are obligatory in Italy but in France and Germany they may still accept you. If fingerprinted in France, you cannot apply for asylum in another country. If you are rejected completely, the UK is the only country that may still accept you. On the other hand, we know someone in the UK who waited for one year. And someone who went from France to the UK and then Finland and who was deported to Egypt (two young males from Darfur, sharing their knowledge on fingerprinting, interviewed in Norrent Fontes in France).

The picture that emerges is of Darfuris in Europe being poorly served by official information channels and information provided by voluntary organisations and NGOs. Although agencies are working to provide information to Sudanese migrants in Italy, some of it in Arabic, it does not appear to be getting through. The RRDP study found that most documents given by the Italian authorities to migrants in Ventimiglia about how to claim asylum were in Italian, 'signalling an alarming failure on the part of the Italian authorities to communicate effectively with displaced people' (RRDP, 2017a: 29). In Calais, Darfuris were again struggling to access information from official channels and from voluntary organisations, with language again a major barrier. Resources for the provision of information appear to be more limited since the demolition of the Jungle. The reasons why Darfuris in transit in Europe are so poorly served with information through official channels, humanitarian agencies and voluntary groups deserve further investigation. It is not necessarily to do with information not being available, but may be

⁸⁹ This EU law, passed in 2013, is explained in Chapter 8. It determines that the first Member State where the migrant's fingerprints have been recorded or an asylum claim has been lodged is responsible for processing that migrant's asylum application, unless they have family connections in other Member States.

related to language and low levels of education among this group. This may mean that Darfuris are less well served with information, and therefore more dependent on hearsay, than migrants from other nationalities: a hypothesis that requires further testing.

5.4 Conclusion

Our findings about the types of information young Darfuris are accessing about life in Europe are similar to those of other studies: mostly through social media from friends and relatives who have gone before, painting a much rosier picture than the reality. The best informed are those ethnic groups with the strongest networks outside Sudan. The Zaghawa stand out in this respect. Better educated and better off Darfuris also tend to have the best connections and are therefore better informed. Key informants interviewed for this study described information networks connecting potential migrants with those who have already left, and new communication technologies such as social media as facilitating factors driving migration. Similar to the findings of research

with other migrant groups, this study also reveals the lack of knowledge among potential Darfuri migrants about their rights when they reach Europe. Indeed, Darfuris (and Sudanese in general) may be among the most poorly informed of all migrant groups when they reach Europe. Many are poorly educated with very limited language skills. The information being made available to them does not seem to be reaching them, and they are dependent on the same information circulating within the Sudanese migrant community.

How potential migrants assess the danger and risks involved in irregular migration, particularly in Libya and crossing the Mediterranean, relate closely to their feelings of hopelessness about their future in Sudan, described in Chapter 3. The risk of death en route is perceived by most as short-term and bearable compared with the long-term and unbearable prospect of an insecure and unfulfilled life in Sudan. This widely held sense among young Darfuris considering leaving Sudan, and those who have already left, that there are no acceptable alternative choices within their own country points to the forced rather than voluntary nature of the decision to migrate to Europe.

6 The experience of Darfuris leaving Sudan recently

6.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the experiences of migrants after they have left Sudan, in particular the risks faced by Darfuris during their journey, and the consequences for their wellbeing. It also examines their access to protection and assistance in different categories of migration: those who are applying for asylum; those who have refugee status or leave to remain (particularly in the UK); and those who are in neither category. (This also relates to the migration policies outlined in Chapter 8.) The chapter draws on interviews with migrants carried out for this study, as far as possible representing how they themselves expressed their experiences on the journey. These personal accounts are supplemented with key informant interviews with volunteers and aid workers supporting and in close contact with migrants from Sudan, and with findings from other relevant studies.

The chapter follows the chronology of migrant journeys from Sudan, starting with Libya, then following their route through Italy, France and Belgium to the UK, describing their very different experiences in each country. As explained in Chapter 1, the only migrant and refugee women interviewed for the study are in the UK: a few who came directly to claim asylum, most who came through family reunification. The other experiences described in this chapter relate mainly to migrant and refugee men, who constitute the large majority of migrants travelling irregularly to Europe.

6.2 Libya

IOM estimates that almost 41,000 Sudanese migrants were in Libya in 2017, though the actual number is almost certainly significantly higher (IOM, 2017a; Young et al., 2007). Even with this estimate, Sudanese constitute the fourth-largest group of migrants in Libya: 9% of the total migrant population. This section focuses on Darfuri migrants passing through Libya, rather than long-term Sudanese migrants who live and work there.

For many migrants, their experience in Libya was as bad as or worse than being back in Darfur. The absence of a central state authority, general lawlessness and a non-functioning judiciary mean militia and gangs can commit crimes with impunity. Migrants were held for ransom or sold as slave labour by smugglers (see Chapter 4), kidnapped by militia, robbed, harassed and beaten, and tortured and deprived of basic necessities while held captive or in detention facilities. Some Darfuris in Europe were too traumatised by their time in Libya to talk about it. This study's findings confirm those of other studies reporting the human rights violations of migrants and refugees in Libya (see for example Altai Consulting, 2015; UNHCR et al., 2017; Amnesty International, 2017).

Many interviewees had been kidnapped and spent time in some form of detention. A Darfuri in Rome explained: 'I was detained [kidnapped] twice in Libya when moving through militia-controlled areas. The first time I was held for 1.5 months, and had to pay 3,000 dinars (€1,900) ... The second time I was detained for three days. If you can't pay you are tortured, for example electrocuted'. The risk of kidnap continues even to the point of getting onto a boat. One family in North Darfur reported that their son was captured just before embarking, and they had to pay a ransom to release him. Libyan coastguards can also demand payment to let a boat through (Amnesty International, 2017).

While most Darfuri migrants were detained at some stage during their journey through Libya, they did not know whether they had been held in official detention centres or held captive by militia or smugglers. Libyan law criminalises irregular entry into the country and provides for people who enter irregularly to be detained, put into forced labour, fined and expelled (UNHCR et al., 2017: 128). Estimates of the number of detention centres maintained by the Department for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) range from 17 to 36, a number of which were operated by militia groups (Altai Consulting, 2015; UNHCR et al., 2017), and to which international organisations do not have access. Abuse of migrants in the centres has been widely

reported, including overcrowding and limited food, water and sanitation, as well as more direct forms of torture (UNHCR et al., 2017). There is no legal way of challenging detention, and the only way out is to pay a ransom. This story told by a migrant interviewed in Ventimiglia was typical:

In Ben Walid, I was captured and robbed. When in the detention centre I was asked to contact someone to pay ransom but I did not know who to call and then I was forced to work for free for two months. Those who did not want to work were killed. Some were injured. From Ben Walid I was sent to Masrata to work one month more. I was passed between different tribes and gangs and sold as a slave (16-year-old migrant from Zamzam camp in North Darfur, interviewed in Ventimiglia).

Even when not held captive or in detention, life is difficult for Sudanese migrants in Libya. They experienced frequent theft or non-payment for the work they had done. Statements such as: ‘I worked in Libya, for example in construction. I did all different kinds of work. Some people gave me money. Some didn’t (Darfuri in Ventimiglia) and ‘if you go to buy bread, it is taken from you, and your money’ (another Darfuri in Ventimiglia), were common.

The operations of international organisations in Libya are limited. Libya has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or formalised the presence of UNHCR. This means UNHCR is restricted in what it can do, but it has been able to secure the release of some migrants held in detention. IOM runs a voluntary return programme (see Chapter 4), but the extent to which return to Sudan is voluntary is questionable given that migrants are presented with a choice between indefinite detention and mistreatment in Libya or going home.

For those moving onward from Libya towards Europe, the final stage before crossing the Mediterranean is being held in a ‘Terkina’, which literally translates as ‘storage space’, typically a farm building or old warehouse. Darfuris described the experience as follows:

In the Terkina, 200 people were living in a small space. You don’t know when you are leaving. It was very tough. There is no bathroom. Some stay for 2–3 months in these places. The smuggler is responsible for you at that time, up to the time when you go. He can take you to work as a labourer during this time, for a few days, and he will take the pay. We were like slaves (Darfuri in Belgium).

On arrival [at a place near the sea] 300 of us were locked into a small building. For 8 days. People were standing over others. I could not sleep. Some died there. Out of our group of 18 people, one died of starvation. One tried to escape and was shot. One was injured and 4 were taken by a car. Only me and another migrant out of the 18 people could get to Italy. All the others died (Darfuri in Ventimiglia).

Most of the interviewees who crossed the Mediterranean said that they did so in highly unsafe rubber boats. For some, this was one of the worst experiences of their journey:

We crossed in rubber dinghies – some were leaking; people had to put their fingers over the holes in the rubber. We spent two days on the boat. The engine cut out. We were eventually rescued by the Italian navy (Darfuri in Rome).

The worst experience was on the boat. There was no food so we were trying to get fish. There was no toilet – that was forbidden. There was no water. We had 18 hours of fasting (Recognised refugee in Bradford).

The crossing was really difficult. A lot of screaming for help. It was stormy and raining. Everyone was crying. Vomiting. It took just one day but it was very bad (recognised refugee in London).

More than 13,000 migrants are estimated to have died on the central Mediterranean crossing since 2014, with the highest number of deaths in 2016.⁹⁰ As there is no mechanism for systematically recording deaths this is likely to be an underestimate (Fargues, 2017).

6.3 Italy

6.3.1 In transit

To the extent that they had escaped Libya and said that nothing could be as bad as their experiences there, there was a sense of relief and hope among Darfuris interviewed in Italy who had recently arrived.⁹¹ Even so, most did not plan to stay in Italy, and most were trying to pass through quickly. In the words of one volunteer, Sudanese migrants ‘disappear

90 <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>. An estimated 13,457 migrants are thought to have died between 2014 and 2017.

91 Some migrants were interviewed in Rome within a couple of weeks of arriving in Italy.

out of the formal system like ghosts because they just want to transit through Italy'. A couple of Darfuris who had been sent back to Italy from France and Belgium under the Dublin III regulation (see Chapter 8) – colloquially referred to by Darfuris and other migrants as 'being Dublinated' – complained that they were not treated as well in Italy as in other European countries. But for many new arrivals in Italy, negative perceptions of the country appeared to be based more on what they had heard about the prospects for getting work and accommodation, rather than their own first-hand experience.

After leaving the official reception centre to which they were first assigned, most received only little assistance and support from voluntary groups or humanitarian organisations until they reached Ventimiglia, unless they stopped in Rome at the informal camp run by Baobab in Tiburtina, a place now well-known amongst Sudanese arriving in Italy. The closed border between Italy and France means that most Sudanese are effectively stuck in Ventimiglia for weeks or even months.⁹² In order to avoid the authorities, migrants choose to live rough rather than in the tightly controlled and guarded Red Cross-run transit camp in Ventimiglia. They live in the open, under the flyover in Ventimiglia, where they are vulnerable to raids by the Italian police, who have demolished some informal encampments, often transporting migrants back to the south (RRDP, 2017a).

Many said that Ventimiglia was their first experience of the police employing physical force in Europe. According to a Darfuri migrant interviewed in the town:

I tried six to seven times to cross into France from Ventimiglia. The [French] police say: 'Welcome Sudani. Now go back'.... I have been beaten twice. I go through the mountains. I know it's dangerous, but this is for my life. They say: 'go back to Italy'.

In a survey by RRDP conducted in Ventimiglia, more than half of respondents said that they had experienced physical force at the hands of the French police at the border, and 40% had experienced the same from the Italian police. Almost three-quarters said they felt 'very unsafe', mainly because of the dangers associated with the border crossings, where there have been a number of fatalities (RRDP, 2017a). Even so, there was a strong sense that, if you tried hard enough, you would eventually make it across the border into France. And poor though their living

conditions were, some said that their situation was still better than what they had left behind in Sudan.

A number of NGOs and voluntary organisations in Ventimiglia interact with and support migrants. Caritas was providing two meals a day⁹³ to up to 400 migrants in early October 2017; Oxfam-Italy provided migrants with a backpack and a kit comprising shoes, a sleeping bag, raincoat, washbag and torch, as well as information and legal advice; and Spazio Eufemia provided free internet access, clothes, mobile phones and SIM cards. Agencies appeared to be working closely together, and had a rota to ensure that a staff member was in the Ventimiglia train station at night as a protection presence against traffickers. Several Darfuris also mentioned the help they had received from Italian citizens, who had given them food along their journey in Italy. Against this, RRDP's research (2017a) found that over 90% of migrants interviewed in Ventimiglia had experienced verbal abuse while in Italy.

Sudanese usually travelled through Italy in small groups of three or four, although they would sometimes get separated, for example if one or two members were put off the train. Minors appeared to be moving in groups of other Sudanese. A 17-year-old boy, who had left South Darfur when he was 14, was travelling with a group he had originally met when boarding a boat in Libya. RRDP's research (2017a) shows minors experiencing violence at the hands of the police, and being given inaccurate information, for example about their rights as minors.

6.3.2 Darfuris with refugee status

A group of Sudanese – mainly Darfuri – living in Rome had come to Italy in the early years of the conflict, between 2003 and 2005, and had been granted asylum. Most spoke Italian, but had found it hard to get jobs and were working in the informal sector. A few ran small street stalls in Rome, while most engaged in seasonal agricultural work on farms in the south of Italy, where there have been reports of exploitation of migrant labourers.⁹⁴ On a more positive note, two young Darfuri men who had been granted asylum in Italy were now working with aid organisations in Ventimiglia, in a voluntary or paid capacity. Both were also able to study.

93 The church in Ventimiglia had been hosting female and child migrants, but they were evicted by the Italian authorities in August 2017 (RRDP, 2017a).

94 See for example <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/oct/24/the-terrible-truth-about-your-tin-of-italian-tomatoes>.

92 For one to three months, according to the findings of the RRDP study (2017a).

6.4 France

6.4.1 History of migrants and refugees in northern France

Migrants and refugees hoping to make it to the UK have been coming to Calais for about 20 years.⁹⁵ The first camp, at Sangatte, was set up by the Red Cross in 1999 and closed down in 2002. The first ‘jungle’ camp was established with the influx of Afghan refugees from 2002, and was demolished in 2009.⁹⁶ A third, the ‘centre de Jules Ferry’, followed in 2015. With space for about 100 migrants, it was quickly overwhelmed, leading to the formation of a new ‘jungle’, which by the end of 2016 was housing an estimated 10,000 migrants and refugees.⁹⁷ A large proportion were from Sudan (32% according to RRDP (2016c)). Many of these were from Darfur. Other, smaller camps were set up along the coast, in northern France and the Pas de Calais, and along the motorways leading to Calais port (see Map 4). Key informants reported that Sudanese were also among the migrants and refugees in these camps, in particular Norrent-Fontes. None of the camps was officially recognised, and all have now been demolished.

Following the demolition of the Jungle camp in October 2016, the government relocated refugees and migrants to more than 160 Centres d’Accueil et d’Orientation (CAOs) in western and southern France, to provide temporary housing for four weeks while they decided whether to apply for asylum (Care4Calais, 2016). Many migrants – up to 3,000 – left before the demolition, moving to Paris, elsewhere in northern France and Brussels.⁹⁸ The evacuation was chaotic and confusing for the migrants, and the quality of services provided in the CAOs, ranging from accommodation and food to legal assistance and interpreters, varied widely.⁹⁹ While the French government promised asylum-seekers that they would not be deported under the Dublin regulations, asylum procedures were unevenly applied, and activists and volunteers reported having to vehemently insist on the right of migrants to apply for asylum in France. Auberge des Migrants told the research team that its follow-up monitoring had found that, out of all

asylum-seekers from the Calais Jungle, only about half had received their final asylum decision. Of those, 70% had been given asylum. The other half was either still awaiting an answer from OFPRA (the Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides) more than one year later, or was appealing initial decisions. Many left in the first few weeks after arriving at the CAOs because of the poor conditions there or because they did not want to apply for asylum in France. Migrants and refugees started returning to Calais from December 2016, and by January 2017 there were an estimated 2,000 migrants in northern France (Care4Calais, 2017b).

6.4.2 Experience of Darfuris in transit and while claiming asylum

Migrants and refugees in Calais and Paris risk arrest and detention by the police. Access to care and services is difficult and sometimes actively impeded by the government (volunteer groups have brought court cases to be allowed to provide food, medical care and clothes and other essentials). This applies particularly to Darfuris (and other irregular migrants and refugees) who have not applied for asylum in France, who are waiting for an appointment to claim asylum, or who have not been provided with accommodation while their asylum claim is being processed. It is highly likely that services in the camps in Sudan and Chad that Darfuri refugees and migrants left were better than what is being provided in Calais.

Darfuris interviewed in Calais for this study repeatedly said that their main problem was police action, and sometimes violence. Migrants without proof that they have applied for asylum can be arrested and detained at any time. A study by the RRDP in October 2017 found that three-quarters of migrants and refugees in Calais had been arrested and detained (RRDP, 2017d). In Calais, key informants and Darfuris reported that the large number of attempts to get onto trucks coupled with limited detention facilities meant that migrants were often released quickly after being arrested, but in unfamiliar places and a long way from the ‘Jungle’. The police sometimes take away their shoes. Migrants reported the common use of tear gas, often at night or in the early morning. One young Darfuri joked ‘I have a headache; maybe because the police forgot to spray me with the teargas last night’, implying that it was used so regularly that he had become addicted. Spraying clothes or sleeping bags with tear gas means they cannot be used for days. Migrants also reported the slashing of tents and confiscation of clothes and blankets.

These findings are supported by the documentation by the RRDP (2016a, b and c; 2017c and d) and Human

95 Interview with a volunteer.

96 <http://en.rfi.fr/france/20161027-history-Jungle-Calais-1999-2016-pictures>.

97 Key informant, Plateforme de Service aux Migrants.

98 Key informant interview, Care4Calais.

99 For some, food, or money to buy food, was insufficient, not Halal or unfamiliar.

Map 4: Routes to the UK and previous migrant/refugee camps in northern France



Source: Terre d'Errance.

Rights Watch (HRW, 2017b). An investigation by the Minister of Interior in response to the HRW report confirmed the use of excessive force and other abuses against migrants by the police in Calais (HRW, 2017a). HRW also reported police disruption of the provision of assistance and regular harassment of aid workers. In October 2017, RRDP reported that 90% of refugees and migrants in Calais said they did not feel safe; 92% had experienced police violence and 40% physical violence at the hands of French citizens (RRDP, 2017d).

During the fieldwork, the researchers also saw and were told about many migrants sleeping rough, under trees and bridges or in empty warehouses. Darfuris showed the researchers how they sleep on top of mounds of rubble or in empty warehouses in the industrial area close to the 'Jungle' so that it is more difficult for the police to get to them. They hid their clothes and sleeping bags among the stones or rocks nearby to prevent them from being taken away by the police.

In Paris, many Sudanese in transit and asylum-seekers also sleep in the street. Although a new reception centre was opened in November 2016, with only 400 beds and a maximum stay of only ten days capacity is insufficient. As in Calais, police action is common, in particular in the confiscation of sleeping bags and tents, use of physical force and teargas (RRDP, 2017b).

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has consistently highlighted the risk of hypothermia and other health issues for migrants sleeping in the streets in Paris (Pasha-Robinson, 2017; MSF, 2017). In Calais and Paris, migrants' health has been consistently poor. A health assessment in 2015 found that conditions in the Calais 'Jungle' constituted a humanitarian crisis (Dhesi et al., 2015), and the RRDP reported a poor health situation in 2016, and a worsening situation in 2017. Mental health has been highlighted as an issue in all the research conducted in Calais and Paris, including this study (see Section 6.7 below).

6.4.3 Evolution of the Sudanese community in France

In 2015 and 2016, Sudanese comprised the largest group of asylum-seekers in France. According to one study by RRDP in early 2017, three-quarters of Sudanese in Paris wanted to stay there (RRDP, 2017b). According to a Sudanese key informant, most Sudanese in Paris are from Darfur. The Sudanese community is centred on Port de La Chapelle, which has seen an increase in Sudanese restaurants and shops: from 2010 restaurants increased from about two to seven, and shops from three to 12.¹⁰⁰ An article

¹⁰⁰Key informant interview with NGO staff member in Paris.

in *Le Monde* estimates that the Sudanese community in Paris numbers 30,000 (Baumard, 2017).

Many asylum applicants are initially accommodated in the south of France, often waiting six months to see whether they can proceed with their application or whether they are going to be returned to Italy under the Dublin regulations. Many do not apply because they want to go to the UK, or because it takes too long to get an appointment to register an asylum claim. People waiting for their asylum claims to be processed are not allowed to work and do not receive state-sponsored language training. This, in addition to shortage of housing, were major issues for Sudanese, who often felt disconnected and lonely (Zeghnoune, 2016). Two recognised refugees interviewed in Calais said that it could take between two months and a year to get refugee status; they themselves had been granted refugee status in February 2016, but were still taking language classes and were on benefits: €550 a month, with €50 for accommodation deducted. According to a key informant in Paris, Sudanese mostly do manual work, such as building, painting, carpentry and farming, or work for large food companies. One returnee in Zalingei told the study that work in security is regarded as one of the most lucrative jobs.

6.4.4 Assistance for migrants and refugees in transit

Volunteer groups such as Help Refugees, Auberge des Migrants, Refugee Community Kitchen, Utopia 56 and Care4Calais distribute food, clothes, sleeping bags and other essentials, including mobile phone charging and internet access, in Calais and some of the smaller camps. Médecins du Monde (MDM) is one of the few traditional NGOs providing healthcare. Carving out the space for assistance has been a hard-fought battle in the face of official resistance. In March 2017, the mayor of Calais banned the distribution of food, water, blankets and clothing, arguing that the availability of assistance would attract more migrants to the town. The decision was overturned in court on the grounds that denying assistance was inhumane. In June, HRW reported that groups providing assistance had been given a two-hour slot in the evening for food distributions and a one-hour limit for everything else (HRW, 2017b). Another tactic has been to physically disrupt distributions and delay the implementation of judicial decisions in favour of assistance. These court cases have often been brought by volunteer groups. Box 10 gives the example of Norrent Fontes, where aid agencies also had to fight to be able to provide assistance, but where also – for a brief period – the mayor supported migrants and refugees.

Box 10: Facilitation and obstruction of assistance in Norrent Fontes

There was a camp in Norrent Fontes (on the road to Calais port) between 2012 and 2017. When the camp was established, the town mayor belonged to ‘EU hospitalité’, an initiative to support migrants, and shelter was provided for between 50 and 300 refugees, mostly Sudanese, Eritreans and Ethiopians. MDM and Terre d’Errance provided assistance. The mayor who took office in 2015 repeatedly tried to raze the camp. After a fire in 2015, the refugees pitched tents on private land. The mayor asked the police to evict the refugees because they were on private land, the land was at risk of flooding and the living conditions of the refugees posed a health hazard. Terre d’Errance went to court twice to prevent the eviction and the judge ruled that the refugees could stay, but in September 2017 the mayor gave two days’ notice for the refugees to leave the camp. As this was over a weekend, Terre d’Errance could not lodge an appeal until the following Monday, and the police claimed they did not receive it. The camp was destroyed on 18 September. When Terre d’Errance later went to court, the judge ruled that the mayor had no right to act as he had. Terre d’Errance continues to argue that the camp was illegally dismantled.

Source: Key informants in northern France.

6.5 Belgium

6.5.1 Experience of Darfuris in transit in Brussels

Darfuris in Belgium stay in Maximillian Park or nearby North Station in Brussels. Darfuris came to the park because it had also been the site of an informal camp in 2015, housing Iraqi and Syrian migrants and refugees. Maximillian Park is near the government’s immigration department, and the informal camp developed there because the Belgian government limited the number of asylum requests per day, leaving some asylum-seekers to sleep outside while they waited to lodge an asylum request (Francart and Borton, 2016). Almost all Sudanese migrants in Belgium are in transit to the UK.¹⁰¹ Those we spoke to said that they did not plan to apply for asylum,

¹⁰¹ We did not encounter or hear of any Sudanese wanting to claim asylum in Belgium.

and that, even if they wanted to do so, they would be returned to Italy under the Dublin regulations.

Between May and August about 600 migrants stayed in the Park. When Brussels became known as a place from where migrants could make it to the UK, many travelled directly from Paris. The initial response was from volunteer groups and individuals, and a small government-funded agency provided lodging until April 2017. More established NGOs, including MSF, the Red Cross and MDM, set up a humanitarian hub in September 2017. Despite initial government resistance to having the hub close to the park, in March 2018 a centre was established in Brussels North Station (also nearby the park). According to a key informant, it was functioning well. Sudan Action Group, Mmax and Caritas are providing legal assistance, and Citoyens Solidaires provides food twice a day, clothes, access to healthcare and legal advice and accommodation for women. The Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés provides support with appeal procedures, lawyers and interpreters, as well as a family hosting programme, where residents in Brussels offer accommodation to migrants in their homes. Several Darfuris interviewed had been hosted and found the programme very helpful. Increased citizen action is also a response to increased police actions in Maximillian Park, and has resulted in counter-actions by the police. Almost all interviewees in Brussels told us how, the previous Sunday, the police had surrounded the park at the same time as families were arriving there for the hosting programme.

According to one key informant, Maximillian Park's location in the centre of Brussels offers a degree of protection against police violence, and there was tacit acceptance that migrants and refugees can stay there. It is in public view, and citizens will often provide assistance to migrants there. Even so, police action remains a constant threat, including confiscation of phones, clothes, blankets and other possessions, and arrest. Harassment has become more severe over time, and arrests and beatings have become more common.¹⁰² Some Darfuris reported being arrested, detained and returned to Italy under the Dublin regulations. One of the main risks for migrants and refugees in Belgium is forced return back to Sudan (see Chapter 8). It also means that, other than during food distributions (by citizen volunteers and NGOs) migrants and refugees disperse and hide. According to one Darfuri in Calais: 'When I went to Belgium, I heard the police arrested many people and that

they returned migrants to Sudan. So then I came here, to the jungle in Calais and I am still trying to go to the UK'.

6.6 The UK

6.6.1 The experience of Darfuris while seeking asylum in the UK

Most Darfuris arriving in the UK have done so irregularly, in or under buses and trucks. They are usually handed over to or picked up by the police shortly after crossing the Channel and asked if they intend to claim asylum. Some interviewees have been placed in detention centres – the maximum time reported was 19 days – and others accommodated in cities and towns including London, Birmingham, Huddersfield and Wakefield.

Once they have lodged their asylum claim they are the responsibility of the Home Office, which allocates accommodation in a shared house run by a private sector contractor, which for most was G4S. They are also provided a weekly allowance of £35. Support from voluntary organisations such as Bradford Refugee Action can make an enormous difference, for instance in helping asylum-seekers understand official documentation related to their application, access assistance and organise schooling for their children. Minors are supposed to be given special assistance when they arrive in the UK and claim asylum. One Darfuri minor interviewed for this study in London confirmed that this was the case. He was given help in finding a solicitor and received refugee status within a couple of weeks of his Home Office interview, although he had waited six to seven months before the interview took place. He had been enrolled into full-time education, was studying English and was receiving a bursary of £120 a month. He compared his situation in the UK favourably with Italy and France, where he had been living rough, dodging the police and scavenging for food. Having lost contact with his family in Darfur, the Red Cross was trying to connect him through their family tracing service.

Darfuri asylum-seekers described the anxiety they felt during the waiting period, especially if they had been fingerprinted in Italy on arrival and were concerned about being deported back there. During this period they can neither study English nor work. Even so, several who had experienced the asylum system in other European countries spoke positively about their experience in the UK. One asylum-seeker we interviewed in Bradford said:

¹⁰² This history and changes in Maximillian Park were discussed with three key informants.

On the positive side, I have a place to live. I am provided with food. There are a lot of organisations to help you if you approach them, compared with Belgium and Italy where I was homeless/on the street, and there was no guaranteed food – I just got food occasionally. In France I could go for two weeks without a shower. And it was very cold. Here I feel like a human, with dignity. No one knows if you are a refugee or not.

Another, interviewed in Birmingham, said:

In Germany they do not care about people. No one asked why are you here for one and a half years. I applied for asylum there but was forced to. I was in a very isolated place. I spent more than 21 months doing nothing: no school, no work and in the end no asylum ... The situation here is better than in other countries.

From our sample of interviewees, many Darfuris who arrived in the UK before 2015 got asylum a couple of months after applying, but more recent claims appear to be taking longer. If the asylum claim is rejected, and especially if it is repeatedly rejected, asylum-seekers can drop out of the system and become destitute and homeless.

6.6.2 Darfuris' experience once asylum has been granted

Some Darfuris described a sense of freedom when they heard their asylum claim had been successful. Then the process of transition and integration begins:

When I was granted asylum I felt free. I had to think about my life, how to contribute and integrate. I was so confused about where to stay. I had many friends in different cities. I decided to transfer to Manchester [from Glasgow] – I found many people here, including close friends, so I decided to stay here (recognised Darfuri refugee in Manchester, who arrived in the UK in 2012).

This so-called 'move-on' period can be a very difficult time, especially for newly recognised refugees without relatives or friends in the UK, and again the support of voluntary organisations, including the Refugee Council, Bradford Refugee Action, the British Red Cross and Revive (in Salford), can be critical. Refugees have 28 days to transition out of the support provided by the Home Office and into the welfare system run by the Department of Work and Pensions. It usually takes longer than 28 days to get the necessary identity documents, including a National Insurance number (Basedow and Doyle, 2016). It is also necessary to have

a bank account to organise welfare payments, and banks require proof of income to open an account. Newly recognised refugees cannot provide this, so must get a note from a Job Centre that benefits are forthcoming. According to key informants working with Sudanese refugees in the UK, navigating the system and breaking through these barriers can take up to six months.

The immediate pressure is to find accommodation. Arranging private rented accommodation is difficult, and newly recognised refugees will rarely have the money to pay the deposit and rent in advance. Refugees may end up hungry and homeless, with their best option support from organisations such as the British Red Cross, which provides vouchers to the destitute of £10 per person per week for a maximum of 12 weeks. One refugee in Manchester described how he stayed in a shelter for the homeless – all other hostels had eight-week waiting lists – until he found other Darfuri refugees with whom he could stay. It took more than six weeks for his benefits to be approved under the new system, so that he could rent his own accommodation. According to another recognised refugee in London, who arrived in the UK in 2016:

The biggest challenge is accommodation. Staying in a hostel I still feel homeless. People come and go all the time, there are 400 people in total in the hostel. I have no kitchen or washing machine, just a place to sleep. I am in the queue for a council house. If I was able to work, finding accommodation would be easier. It is very difficult to survive on benefits. Sometimes I do not eat. I have been eating take-aways for six to eight months.

The poor English-language skills most Darfuri refugees possess is a major hindrance to finding work. At a minimum they said it takes six to seven months to get work, but for many it is over a year. One Sudanese community leader in Manchester thought that around half of recognised Sudanese refugees in the city were without work at the end of 2017. Most end up in menial jobs, often in security, for example guarding construction sites. Even this work is difficult to get and requires a security licence if working for a bona fide company. Most are working on zero-hours contracts for the minimum wage. The less well-educated who are unable to get the security licence may end up working for sub-contractors, which pay less than the minimum wage. Darfuris in the UK interviewed for this study were all desperate to work, and are also vulnerable to exploitation. As one well-educated recognised Darfuri refugee in Manchester explained:

The number of migrants is very large, and the opportunities for work very limited. For example

there are hundreds of applicants for warehouse jobs. Some Sudanese wait about 6 months, then take any job they can to earn money to send it back home. Some are working in local shops owned by [different ethnic groups]. You may get paid only 30 pounds for 12 hours work, which is against the law. It is not enough to live on and then you have no time to learn English. They don't know their rights.

According to a staff member of a voluntary organisation supporting migrants, the Sudanese are generally more poorly educated than asylum-seekers and refugees of other nationalities, for example Eritreans, and therefore struggle more in the workplace. Realising that their degree from Sudan does not qualify them for professional work in the UK, Darfuri graduates have enrolled at UK universities, but this involves a range of challenges including reaching the required English-language standard and taking out a student loan. For some the barriers have come as a surprise: 'I was thinking with a degree from Sudan I could find a job, but it is not the case. My degree is useless. The language barriers are much more difficult than I expected'. A couple who had been well-paid mid-career professionals in Darfur described the difficulties of adjusting: 'We were at the top [in Sudan]. Now we have to start from the beginning'. Only one recognised refugee we interviewed had started their own business, running a shop.

According to one Darfuri key informant, a community leader who has been in the UK for some years, in private many young refugees are deeply frustrated, living on the margins of British society and unable to get the work they want or the education they had hoped for. Even so, many still say their lives are better than in Sudan, and stress the importance of feeling safe and being treated 'like a human being'.¹⁰³ In the words of an asylum-seeker in Birmingham: 'Even if I had known everything I would still have come. Here no one can arrest you, beat you or kill you. Here you can eat, drink and it is safe'.

6.6.3 Family reunification

Being separated from family is deeply painful for many young men. Some talked of their distress and guilt at leaving ageing and sick parents behind in Sudan. Husbands have tried to bring their immediate family (usually wives and children) to the UK through the legal process of family reunification. Many start

the process two to three years after arriving in the UK, by which time they have been granted asylum and settled, and ideally have also found work. Fulfilling the requirements for reunification can however be difficult for many Sudanese families. Most marriages in Darfur are traditional, without documentation. In order to get a marriage certificate retrospectively, as well as a passport, the wife must travel from Darfur to Khartoum. The authorities may well refuse and bribes have to be paid. The date of a recently issued marriage certificate may not tally with the actual date of the marriage, and DNA tests are required for children. This is an expensive process at a time when the family may be very short of money as the husband has left Sudan. IOM supports the family reunification process in Sudan, and in the UK the British Red Cross organises air tickets and often accompanies the spouse to the airport to meet their family.

Migrants from Sudan have a long history of arranging marriage with a woman in Sudan from afar (Assal, 2011). (This is a similar practice to migrants from other Muslim countries.) The marriage contract may be negotiated and agreed by the man's family and representatives in his absence, and the marriage ceremony may also take place in Sudan in his absence.¹⁰⁴ The bride may then travel to join her new husband. This was common practice for young male migrants working in the Gulf, and is continuing for young male Darfuris granted asylum and settled in the UK. A recognised Darfuri refugee in Manchester explained:

My wife came through reunification. She arrived in Feb 2017... I was engaged before I left, but broke off the engagement because I was aware of the dangers of travelling to Europe, so didn't want her to worry etc. But then I made it safely so I contacted her to come. I had put her name down on the asylum application form.

A Sudanese community leader observed how some migrant men from IDP camps, originally from rural areas, are marrying more educated young women from urban centres, possibly because they have become a more attractive marriage proposition since settling in Europe (see Section 3.3.4). However, having never lived together before, in a new country and culture and without the support of extended family, this can be a challenging time.

¹⁰³ This phrase was repeated by a number of migrants of different ethnic groups and in different cities in the UK.

¹⁰⁴ As Assal (2011: 2) explains: 'the Islamic system of marriage does not require the physical presence of the two who should marry and is religiously and socially acceptable'.

A number of recognised refugees said that they would like to bring their ageing mothers (especially if widowed) to the UK so they could look after them as they would if they were still in Sudan. But according to UK policy, a substantial income is required to be eligible to bring parents over. Few Sudanese refugees are able to achieve this level of income.

Some Sudanese community leaders expressed concern at the rise of domestic violence in Sudanese households in the UK, though few refugees will talk about this. Traditional family dynamics from Darfur may sit uneasily in the UK. The husband controls the money and the wife may not know how much is coming into the household, or have any other source of income. Husbands can be overly protective of their wives, not wanting them to go out and be exposed to a Western culture. All of this can create conflict and tension. In Sudan there are ways of defusing domestic conflict, with extended family members stepping in. This is hard to replicate in the UK, though Sudanese community leaders have been asked to help. British laws on domestic violence are poorly understood in terms of what constitutes illegal behaviour, and there have been instances where husbands who have been violent within their families have been convicted.

6.6.4 The experiences of female Darfuri refugees in the UK

Darfuri women face the most problems in integrating and adapting to life in the UK. Their English skills are usually weaker than men's. Used to living in large extended families, they find themselves isolated at home, looking after their children with little external contact. According to one female refugee: 'The women are calling their families in Sudan and crying. But some don't want to tell their families in Sudan how difficult the situation is'. Many are depressed. According to a staff member working with a voluntary organisation supporting Sudanese refugees: 'you see a lot of the women breaking down with mental health issues'. For professional educated women it is very hard to find work. One described her predicament: 'It is very difficult to find a job. My experience with child protection or in human rights is not recognised. I have no extended family, and it is difficult to leave the children with others. So I have to be at home with the children a lot, and go with the children to school and back. In Sudan, children can walk to school on their own'. Unsurprisingly, children adapt fastest and overcome language barriers more quickly than their parents who may struggle to even know the name of the school their children are attending.

6.6.5 Sudanese community associations in the UK

Sudanese community associations in the UK play an important part in the lives of asylum-seekers and recognised refugees, to some extent replicating the social networks that are such an important part of Darfuri lives and livelihoods in Sudan. Most Darfuri migrants make contact with one of these associations soon after their arrival in the UK. Although some educated Darfuri recognised refugees were concerned that over-reliance on these community associations could be a barrier to integration in the UK, claiming that Sudanese refugees are 'just communicating with their own community', they nevertheless play a very important role in supporting recognised refugees and providing social connections, for both men and women. British staff of voluntary organisations in the UK commented on how close-knit and supportive the Darfuri refugee community is.

Most community associations are organised along ethnic lines (the exception is the Bradford Sudanese Community Association, which is open to all ethnic groups). They perform an important social function, supporting families when there is a death, for example helping to organise the funeral, or when a family member falls ill. They are also active during religious festivals such as Eid, enabling Sudanese to celebrate together. Most have very limited funds and are not able to rent premises or perform wider functions. Sudanese community leaders may be sought out individually to provide advice to asylum-seekers and recognised refugees, for example about how to access services in the UK, but this is not a role that the associations are able to provide on an ongoing basis in the way that more established voluntary organisations do. Associations may also step in to support asylum claims, especially where there is an appeal against a failed claim, though their role is usually confined to confirming the ethnicity of the claimant to the Home Office. For non-Arab Darfuris, ethnicity has been a key determinant of whether they will be granted asylum. How Sudanese community associations are organised in the UK to some extent mirrors divisions in Sudanese society. One association in Manchester, for example, is run by Sudanese who have lived in the UK since before the conflict in Darfur. Refugees from Darfur who have arrived later are distrustful of the association and see it as supporting the government of Sudan, and have set up their own separate association.

6.7 Trauma among Darfuris in Europe

Evidence of trauma is unsurprising given the experiences of most Darfuris after they leave Sudan.

Few migrants talked about this directly but many key informants did, including Sudanese community leaders in the UK and workers with voluntary organisations supporting migrants across Europe.

Trauma is evident in many different ways. Examples encountered through this study include:

- Two young male Darfuris in Ventimiglia describing how they could not tolerate crowded places. An unaccompanied Darfuri minor (16 years old) said that he could not sleep in the Red Cross camp in Ventimiglia because it was crowded, reminding him of the illegal detention centre in Libya where he was confined with 300 other people.
- Young Darfuri men interviewed in France and Belgium saying they were unable to eat and sleep: 'I lost weight because I am thinking a lot and cannot sleep ... I do not feel comfortable'.
- Darfuris not being able to speak at all, as reported by aid workers with voluntary organisations in Italy and the UK. The UK aid worker described the trauma of one recognised refugee: 'He had suffered torture. He had been a young soldier. He couldn't speak much, not even to the Sudanese ... At some time he developed psychosis. He tore up all his documents from the Home Office and shut himself in his room'.
- Some Darfuris experiencing flashbacks to what they had witnessed during the Darfur conflict: 'my wife got depression when she came here ... She has flashbacks to the killings in the village. She is suffering from PTSD'.
- Darfuri refugee men in the UK feeling their dignity has been affected by their experience, causing them to exert excessive control over their wife and children, sometimes tipping over into domestic violence.
- A Sudanese community leader in the UK commented on how quickly some Darfur refugees are incited to anger, which can become aggressive, which he attributes to trauma.

The extent of trauma among migrants has been confirmed in many studies. RRDP (2017a) found that almost two-thirds of migrants experienced health problems while in Ventimiglia, and 17% described this as a mental health issue. In France, minors presented with symptoms of anxiety, depression, PTSD and psychological distress. Some were suicidal because they could not join their relatives in the UK (Hunter and Pope, 2016). Lack of housing, lack of sleep and constant harassment have exacerbated mental health issues in the Calais area (RRDP, 2017d).

Trauma is widespread, in some cases extreme, yet there are few services to support migrants and refugees,

especially in transit. Services are better for recognised refugees in the UK, where voluntary organisations such as Revive in Salford, Bradford Refugee Forum and Sharing Voices provide some support for trauma; one interviewee described how the National Health Service in the UK was treating his wife for post-traumatic stress. One recognised refugee in London (who had been unable to talk about his journey through Libya) spontaneously suggested that he needed counselling, but language and cultural barriers can prevent Sudanese refugees from coming forward for help.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter describes the harsh reality of the migration experience for many Darfuri young men travelling irregularly through Libya, Italy, France, Belgium and, for a few, reaching the UK. The most extreme cases of brutality, abuse and exploitation occur in Libya, where some of the poorest migrants spend more than a year of their lives. They reach Europe, where they expect to find their human rights respected, but instead many experience police violence and abuse, and basic services such as shelter, food and water withheld by local authorities which want them out of their territory. Voluntary organisations and some NGOs step into the breach, doing their best to provide the most basic services. If it was not for the work of these local responders – described by one migrant in Ventimiglia as 'angels who help you – but there are not too many of them' – the human crisis unfolding in Europe's parks and streets would be much more severe. Not surprisingly, many Darfuris suffer trauma as a result of their experiences after leaving Sudan.

Large numbers of Darfuris in transit in Europe are living rough, in conditions that would be regarded by international humanitarian agencies as unacceptable in most IDP and refugee camps in Africa. Minors are among the most vulnerable, and are particularly poorly protected. Young Darfuris are risking their lives to come to and cross borders within Europe, while the Dublin regulations allow governments to push them back to where they started in Italy. Many Darfuris in France and Belgium do not apply for asylum for fear of being deported to Italy. Their lack of legal status as they move through Europe undermines their access to protection and assistance, deepening their vulnerability. When Darfuris do eventually claim asylum, usually in France or the UK, the process of status determination is often slow (and getting slower) and can be erratic. Transition and integration can also be a challenge, particularly for women refugees, and support from local authorities, NGOs and voluntary organisations is essential.

7 Consequences of migration to Europe for families of migrants and for local communities in Sudan

7.1 Introduction

Migration from Darfur to Europe is a new phenomenon, so the consequences for the families and communities migrants leave behind are still recent and have not previously been researched.¹⁰⁵ It is too early to say what the longer-term consequences will be, though some of our key informants are thinking and talking about the potential impact in the longer term. As migration to Europe is very different from traditional migration patterns and trends, the consequences cannot be extrapolated from earlier experience. One of the key differences is how conflict and associated factors are driving so much migration to Europe, and the fact that almost all migrants are seeking asylum. This raises the question whether Darfuri refugees in Europe are likely to return. Many of those interviewed thought not, at least in the foreseeable future. Studies among other population groups on the consequences of recent migration from Africa to Europe for the families and communities left behind have tended to focus on a particular aspect, such as family form (Mazzucato et al., 2015). This chapter compares the findings of this study with the findings of research in Somalia (Ali, 2016), and references other studies where appropriate.

This chapter looks at the economic, social and political consequences of migration to Europe. The first section, on economic consequences, explores the impact of the costs of migration and the flow of remittances, at household and community levels. The following

section describes some of the social consequences of migration, again at household and community levels. The political consequences are mostly at the community and national levels. Interviewees were asked about both the positive and negative consequences of migration for family members at home and for the wider community. This double-edged impact was expressed by many, especially interviewees in Sudan. For all the promise and positive benefits that migration may or is already delivering, there are financial and human costs and political implications. This was poignantly expressed by one mother with three sons living in Europe:

The positive impact is the improvement of the family's economic situation. They sent us money and our economic situation now is very good. The negative impact is that I feel the loneliness. I miss them so much and I feel anxious about how long it will be before they come back.

7.2 Economic consequences of migration to Europe

7.2.1 Household level

The longer-term economic consequences for the family left behind depend entirely on the success of their relative in settling and finding work in Europe. This can take time and is not guaranteed. In the short term, the family may find itself having to cover the financial costs of migration. As explained in Chapter 4, these can be considerable, especially if a ransom has to be paid in Libya if the relative is taken hostage. Some families of migrants told us how they had to use their savings and sell assets such as gold, land and livestock to cover the costs of their sons migrating.

¹⁰⁵ As Mondain and Diagne (2013) argue, looking at those 'left behind' is a way of understanding migratory processes more completely, although they challenge the negative connotations of those 'left behind' as 'victims' of migration.

Box 11: Covering the costs of migration

After searching for a job in Khartoum for three years, the family decided their 20-year-old graduate son should migrate to Europe: 'it's not good for him staying in Sudan without any work or job. He has friends outside and their situation is good and they are sending money back to their families'. He left in 2016. After working in gold mines in Niger to earn money, their son was captured and held for ransom on the border with Libya. The family had to pay 6,000 SDG (€870) for his release. Six months later he arrived in Tripoli and negotiated passage across the Mediterranean for 4,000 SDG (€580). The family

sent this amount but their son was cheated by the smugglers and never travelled. The family sent another 4,000 SDG (€580) and their son made it to Malta. They were contacted by him again from the French–Italian border, where he described the difficult situation he was facing and his need for more money. They sent him 3,500 SDG (€460). In total, the family has paid around 35,000 SDG (€4,600 at 2017 official exchange rates) to cover the costs of migration, including the ransom payment. At the time of the interview in October 2017, their son was not yet sending money back to the family.

This can of course affect their future livelihoods. In some cases families have had to sell their home to cover ransom payments.¹⁰⁶ One family, originally from North Darfur and now living in the Haj Youssif neighbourhood of Khartoum, bitterly regretted their decision to encourage their son to migrate as they were still paying off the debt a year later (see Box 11).

Ironically, the poorest households are most likely to face high and unpredictable payments as their sons are unable to make large one-off payments at the beginning of their journeys to expedite their travel through Libya. Migration can thus be a cause of further impoverishment for the family left behind in Sudan, without any guarantee that those costs will be recovered through remittances.¹⁰⁷ This in turn leaves sons with a strong sense of indebtedness to their family when they reach Europe. As Ali (2016) describes for Somali families who have had to cover ransom and other payments for their migrant sons and daughters, the sale of income-generating assets can affect the family's future capacity to sustain its livelihood and cope with future emergencies.¹⁰⁸

A mixed picture emerges about the remittances Darfuris are sending back from Europe. According to our interviews in the UK, most of those sending money

back are recognised refugees, and fall into one of the following categories:

- Single men living on benefits, saving small amounts to send back. According to interviewees in both Sudan and the UK, remittances from this group are likely to be in the region of £50 a month (or €50 for those living on benefits in other European countries, according to their families in Sudan). Although asylum-seekers are also living on benefits while they await a decision on their asylum application, no interviewees in this category in the UK had any surplus to send back.
- Men (single or who have been joined by their families), who have managed to find work, most commonly on zero-hour contracts.
- Men who have managed to set up businesses in the UK, although this is rare.¹⁰⁹

Those unable to send remittances from the UK back to family in Sudan include:

- Darfuri asylum-seekers living on benefits of £35 per week while they wait to hear the outcome of their asylum application.
- Some Darfuris who are recognised refugees and have dependents in the UK (usually family members who joined them through family reunification), and are struggling to meet the family's immediate needs, whether they are living on benefits while they seek work or have low earnings from security or other similar work.

¹⁰⁶ We were told of one case where a ransom of 180,000 SDG (\$13,800 at the black market rate in 2016) was demanded, and the family had to sell their house to pay it.

¹⁰⁷ Other studies have shown that migrants with higher levels of education are likely to send higher levels of remittances (Bredtman et al., 2018).

¹⁰⁸ Ali (2016) shows that Somali families are paying \$1,000–\$18,000 to meet the costs of migrating, including ransom payments.

^{109A} 38-year-old Sudanese refugee in Birmingham, who arrived in the UK in 2014, was joined by his wife and child through family reunification, and had succeeded in setting up a shop selling Sudanese food and clothes. He was able to send money back to his siblings in Sudan. His parents were dead.

Young Darfuri men interviewed for this study who were still on the move, in Italy, France and Belgium, were not sending money back. Indeed, they rarely had more than a few euros in their pockets.

At the Sudan end we heard from many families in Darfur and Khartoum who are receiving remittances from their relatives in Europe. But we also heard from many who were not yet receiving anything. A number of interviewees in Darfur stressed how long families had to wait before receiving remittances:

Till now in our camp there are no positive impacts [from migration], because migrants are either IDPs in Europe, or are still learning the language and building their skills. Maybe only a few of them found opportunities to work. So it is difficult to say there is a positive impact. The negative impact is that we lost most of our youth, some of them died, some are in camps, some we don't know their news, whether they are alive or not.

In a number of interviews, we were told that the family had lost the earning power of their departed son, implying they were actually worse off while waiting to see if he could eventually settle, work and send back money from Europe:

Following their migration, I missed their support at work. I could not find someone to support me closely in my business. However, the positive thing is both of them are studying now in the UK.

The family lost the power of one of its members. It lost the fruits of its planting.

Where Darfuri refugees are sending money back from Europe, even if it is only £50 a month (around 1,100 SDG at the prevailing exchange rate in September 2017), this can make a substantial difference for the family at home. The money can help cover daily living costs, including food, healthcare and education for younger siblings, enabling them to attend school and even university. There are also reports (mostly in Khartoum) of some families using remittances to buy a house. One key informant living in Khartoum (originally from Darfur), who is a member of an NGO and a voluntary organisation assisting migrants from his neighbourhood, described the importance of remittances at the household level:

It helped improve living conditions for families. It also improved the educational performance of young family members who are able to study at

private schools and universities. Many families are now able to obtain a good house in a town or city. Some migrants have enabled other family members to migrate.

As Collier (2013) argues, remittances are key to migrants staying connected with their families. However, the pressure on Darfuri refugees who are struggling to make a living in Europe can be substantial:

I would like to study but I have to support my mother who has been sick. I have been sending money for two years. I have also paid for my younger sister's education. This is difficult because the money I earn is really just enough for one person. I have to work long hours. But it is difficult for people in Darfur to look after themselves.

Three money transfer agents interviewed for this study in Central Darfur, North Darfur and Khartoum each said that remittances they are processing from Europe are now greater than remittances from Arab countries. The Khartoum agent described this as a recent phenomenon. For two out of the three, the UK is the main source of remittances from Europe, followed by France. The money transfer agent in Central Darfur ranked France as the main source, but it was unclear whether remittances from the UK were being channelled through the United Arab Emirates. The amounts remitted per family appear to be modest, as indicated in Box 12, confirming the accounts of family members and Darfuris interviewed in Europe, but they do nevertheless make a valuable contribution to daily household expenses. Levels of remittances tend to increase during religious occasions like Ramadan and Eid, and when the school year starts.

Box 12: Interview with money transfer agent in El Fasher, North Darfur

'Remittances from European countries now constitute over 85% of flows coming into Darfur from outside Sudan. The UK is taking the lead, accounting for 40% to 50% of these flows from Europe, then France (30% to 40%) and then Belgium (10% to 15%). The size of the money transfers to my office here in El Fashir range from €40 (1,000 SDG) to €150 (5,000 SDG). There are about four to five transfers per day. When the schools open and during the month of Ramadan, the size and number of transfers increase. Large transfers of €2,000 to €4,000 happen two to three times per year.'

In the case of two middle-class professionals formerly working for UNAMID, highlighted in Box 1 in Chapter 3, they described supporting many relatives in their extended families when they were living and working in El Fasher. Now they are living as recognised refugees in the UK they are struggling to cover the costs of the nuclear family that has joined them in the UK. One is able to send back £45 to £50 per month; the other nothing at all. Financially, their forced migration to Europe is a net loss to their families.

7.2.2 Community level

Where Darfuri refugees are sending back remittances, they may also be contributing to public infrastructure projects within the community, for example the construction of water points, clinics, schools and mosques. A Masalit community leader in an IDP camp in West Darfur explained:

There is no doubt the migrants played a good role in developing our local livelihoods. We have more than ten migrants sending money to their families. Some of them send money for trading. Other migrants contribute to social events like marriage, Eid, during Ramadan and for Eid el Adha. Some of them contributed to maintaining schools and hand pumps.

Interviewees in Darfur commented on the potential positive impact if migrants come back to Sudan with new skills, higher levels of education and new business ideas. But this depends on whether they return at all. If they are granted ‘permanent leave to remain’ (and possibly apply for nationality in their newly adopted country) after acquiring recognised refugee status, this is thought to be unlikely. Our findings show that, when they have acquired a European nationality, some Darfuris do go back to Sudan to invest or visit family, but usually only on short visits.

At the same time, the migration of young men has meant a loss of labour power for development projects and has contributed to a brain drain,¹¹⁰ especially of graduates. This was poignantly expressed by both younger and older generations:

Young people are the future of any country, so when a country loses them that means a loss for the future.

110 See Skeldon (2008) for a discussion on migration and development. Brain drain concerns need to be balanced with the benefits that families and national economies get from remittances.

The negative consequences of migration for the country is that the majority¹¹¹ of the migrants are qualified university graduates, and these are the manpower for leading the development of the country.

Both of our sons are graduates. This is not a loss for the family alone, but for the entire country. Sudan loses its energetic and productive human resources due to migration; this is the biggest loss. Yet, as in the case of our sons, migration may save their lives.

7.3 Social consequences of migration to Europe

7.3.1 Household level

Many families with relatives who have left for Europe talked about the emotional and psychological impact of their sons migrating, especially in the months just after they left. This is powerfully expressed in a number of quotes in Box 13, and resonates with the findings of Ali’s work (2016) on the psychological consequences of Somali youth migrating to Europe for the families left behind. The loss of contact between parents and their migrant sons exacerbates this sense of separation. There may be long gaps when the family has no information about the wellbeing of their relative. Two young men interviewed in Ventimiglia, who had reached Italy in August/September 2017, had not been in touch with their families in Darfur since they left, in 2014. This was a common occurrence for Darfuris in Italy although, as described in Chapter 5, they were more likely to be in touch with their families further along their journey in France and Belgium, when they had phones again. Some, however, have struggled to make contact even from the UK. One young refugee who had left Darfur in 2013 when he was 13 or 14 years old arrived in the UK at the end of 2015, and still had no contact with his family in 2017: ‘because they do not have smart phones. I have not been in touch for a long time. Their number is not working. I am trying to get hold of my family via the Red Cross but they still have not found them’.

When a family is contacted for ransom if their son is taken hostage in Libya, this is naturally a major source of distress: ‘Abduction is the biggest risk that negatively affects both the family and the migrants.

111 Although this was the perception of this particular family, the findings of this study indicate that the majority of Darfuris migrating to Europe are not graduates.

Box 13: The emotional impact of migration on families left behind

Family in Kutum, North Darfur, where their son had left without telling them in advance:

The whole family and his friends were shocked by his absence and missed him so much. We felt like we had lost a part of our own organs. I [the mother] got sick because of the shock and it took me several months to recover again. Now we are all fine and we receive his financial support.

Family in Abu Shouk IDP camp, North Darfur, whose eldest son had migrated to Israel:

At the beginning I [the mother] felt very sad that my son had left me behind. All family members felt sad. Only eight months after his arrival, however, he started to send us money. He kept sending money regularly. Now our economic situation has improved. His brothers and sisters were able to go to school and one of his sisters is now at the university.

Mother and her daughters in ZamZam IDP camp, North Darfur, with migrant sons:

Families and migrants miss one another and feel very emotional about this. Migration has a terrible psychological impact on the migrants and on the family as well ... On the other hand, migrants send money back to their families and help improve their standard of living.

As well as the money burden, abduction has a terrible psychological effect on families and migrants'. Many families have also had to deal with the tragic news that their son has died on the journey, usually while crossing the Mediterranean. One interviewee lost seven young men from his extended family when a boat carrying 370 people sank off the coast of Egypt. As a salaried employee, he had been able to travel to Egypt to investigate their fate. For many, they will never know what happened to their sons.

The high proportion of elder sons among Darfuris in Europe means the absence of the senior male in the family left behind. This can be associated with the social disintegration of the family, and younger siblings ignoring social norms as the senior women in the family are not seen to have the authority to ensure they conform. This may also be the case if

the husband migrates, leaving his wife and children behind. A student leader in Khartoum described this:

The man is the guardian of the household in Islam. If the guardian disappears the house is distorted. This affects the reputation of the family whether something bad happens or not [relating to the women of the household]. There is a Sudanese proverb: 'when the one with the moustache is absent the one with the tail appears', meaning that when the lion disappears, the dogs will play.

In one case, the man who left for Europe was both the eldest son and a married man. The family left behind were not happy with his decision to leave:

It was better to stay in Sudan. He is the eldest one among his brothers and his mother has died. He is the leader of the family. Now the family has lost the real leader of the family. Also his wife is now the family's responsibility. Until now he did not send money back for his wife and the family (interview with the family of a Darfuri migrant, living in Umm Badda in Khartoum).

Some young women left behind in Sudan expressed concern that the migration of so many young men had left them with the burden of caring for the family and for ageing parents. This is a concern for many male migrants as well. Several interviewed in the UK expressed their anxiety that they were not able to do more to support their parents.

7.3.2 Community level

The social consequences at community level are potentially profound, particularly for communities where many young men are leaving, though this is a relatively new phenomenon and the actual impact is as yet unclear. Migration to Europe is both enabling and encouraging the education of younger members of migrants' families, where remittances are used to cover education fees.

Although some expressed concern that the opportunity to migrate to Europe may encourage boys to leave secondary school early, the study did not find evidence of this. A potentially more destabilising consequence was voiced by young men from three different Arab groups (Masseria, Beni Halba and Northern Rizeigat) in Central Darfur. In the words of one:

If we consider improving educational and skills level as the positive consequence of migration,

this will create significant differences between Arab and non-Arab youth in the future, where non-Arab youth are likely to follow the civic life and the Arab youth are likely to follow the military life: this will decrease their chances to get civilian and political jobs which require educated and skilled persons.

As many young Arabs are already less well educated than their non-Arab peers, this could exacerbate current differences (Young et al., 2009). How this ultimately affects Darfuri society depends on many variables, for example whether this cadre of migrant young men from non-Arab ethnic groups ever return to Sudan, and how the political future of Sudan unfolds.

Often, it is the more outspoken and ambitious young men who leave, who have suffered discrimination in the workplace, are more likely to have been student activists and are intolerant of the oppression their ethnic group may have faced. This is also likely to be the cadre of current or future community leaders to whom others turn for advice. IDP leaders in Kass described this as a negative impact of migration: 'they are important persons in the community and they have social status in the community. These people have influence in the community'. Those left behind, both young and old, expressed their concerns that young Darfuris who live in Europe for some time would return with bad habits and an alien culture, undermining Sudanese values. Some feared they would abandon their religion.

It is too soon to know if these potential negative consequences will come to pass. But the social impact on young men who have remained in Sudan is already evident. They are regarded as 'second-best' as a marriage prospect by many young women, as discussed in Chapter 3, echoing the findings of other studies (for example Mondain and Diagne, 2013, on Senegal). As noted above, young men who have left are regarded as more promising husbands because they offer a better future in Europe. One student leader in Khartoum described how he found a woman he was keen to marry, but was met with the response: 'if you want to marry me, go to Europe'. Young female students in Khartoum expressed their concern about the demographic imbalance as young men leave, and that young women left behind are remaining unmarried, a sentiment echoed by a group of young women interviewed in Geneina in West Darfur: 'Young men go outside the country. As a result, for most of us women there is a lack of marriage opportunities'.

7.4 Political and security consequences of migration to Europe

Some student activists who had made it to the UK and been granted asylum believed that their departure from Sudan may have relieved their family of pressure and worry if they had been under surveillance by national security actors, although no families interviewed in Darfur or Khartoum raised this point. Instead, some felt that the loss of young men had reduced the capacity of communities (villages and IDP camps) to protect and defend themselves. Expanding on this point, a number of young people in Sudan (male and female) expressed concern that so many young men had left, and could therefore no longer be an active part of the changes in Sudan they so desperately wanted to see. Some recognised refugees from Darfur, interviewed in Europe and particularly in the UK, explained how they tried to remain politically active, attending discussions and debates and participating in protests, but those remaining in Sudan felt the loss of key champions and activists for change. One high-ranking youth leader told the study that it was precisely for this reason that the government did not act to curtail migration:

the government does not like to stop their migration because it sees how this will free them from those who might otherwise stay and join the armed rebel movements, or participate in civil movements against the government in the big cities in Sudan.

Some interviewees from ethnic groups such as the Zaghawa, which have suffered discrimination and harassment by the authorities, believed this view may be widely held within the government, but verifying this was beyond the scope of this study. Collier's (2013) exploration of whether emigration has generated pressure for improved governance in a range of countries of origin finds varied and often ambiguous results.

7.5 Conclusion

The consequences of migration to Europe for individual families are unpredictable, and depend on whether their son makes it safely, whether they have to pay a large ransom, whether he is granted asylum within Europe and whether he finds work. While there are many cases of 'success', where the migrant sends back small but significant sums of money, many families are receiving nothing while their sons are in transit, settling or finding work in Europe. In the

short term, the family may be worse off when their relative leaves, although in the longer term the flow of remittances could become a crucial source of income. This study suggests that remittances from Europe may have overtaken those from traditional destinations such as Libya and the Gulf countries, although this requires more investigation to be conclusive. However, the likelihood that migration to Europe will have negative consequences for the migrant and for their family appears to be higher than traditional migration experiences before the conflict. On a more personal level, migration is a bittersweet experience for families left behind. While it offers the promise of remittances for households impoverished by conflict and economic decline, it is also a source of emotional pain and suffering, especially for parents. This is exacerbated by the dangers of the journey and uncertainty about whether their sons will ever return.

Other chapters in this report have highlighted how changing society in Sudan, and in Darfur in particular, is influencing migration to Europe. This chapter demonstrates how migration, in turn, may be a trigger of social change. Darfuri young men from particular ethnic groups leave for a very different culture and life, and those left behind must take on additional caring roles and responsibilities. How it may be a source of political change remains to be seen as a small but significant swathe of activist youth depart, which may leave their communities more vulnerable to attack. The longer-term consequences for Sudan depend upon their success in furthering their education, and whether they return. If they do, they may bring back new ideas, skills and investment, but this could also deepen the divide between ethnic groups as young men from groups aligned to the government fall behind in terms of education and international exposure.

8 Policies, decisions and actions affecting migration

8.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews government and EU policies, decisions and actions, and how they relate to the causes of migration and migrant journeys and experiences. It is based on key informant interviews with European government donor representatives, UN agencies, volunteers and aid agency representatives and local government officers (in Darfur), as well as the migrants interviewed throughout this study. This is complemented with analysis of the evolving policy context by other researchers. The chapter starts with an analysis of the Sudanese government's policies on migration in relation to our findings on migrant experiences. It also reviews how the EU and European governments are working with the government of Sudan on migration issues, mainly through the Khartoum Process, and the implications of the findings reported in earlier chapters. A timeline of key policies is provided in Annex 4. The first half of the chapter ends with a summary of how international aid programming in Darfur has evolved during the conflict. The second half explores the policy context for migration in the four European countries where this study was carried out – Italy, France, Belgium and the UK – demonstrating how this impacts Darfuris when they reach Europe.

8.2 Sudanese government policies, decisions and actions

Sudan has never had a national policy on migration, nor does it have clear legal frameworks. There are a number of different pieces of legislation relevant to migration, most of which have been passed in the last five years, and a range of government institutions are responsible for different aspects of migration, including irregular migration into the country, asylum claims and responsibility for refugees and migration out of Sudan.

Our research findings demonstrate the consequences of the lack of legal channels for Darfuri migration out of

Sudan. As a result, most young men of Darfuri origin migrate irregularly, using smuggling and trafficking networks to leave the country, with the associated risks outlined above (see Chapters 4 and 6).

The limited legal channels for migration out of Sudan focus on labour migration. The main institutions with responsibility for Sudanese migrants working abroad are the Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA) and the Ministry of Labour. With the approval of the Ministry of Labour, the SSWA processes the papers for migrant labourers, facilitates the flow of remittances and the overseas stay and return of Sudanese migrant workers (IOM, 2011). The SSWA is oriented towards traditional labour migration from Sudan to the Gulf countries, rather than Europe. All migrant workers leaving Sudan through legal channels must have an exit permit. Sudanese wanting to leave who are not contracted to work abroad must apply for an exit visa (Di Bartolomeo et al., 2011). Interviewees¹¹² for this study claim that Darfuris from particular ethnic groups (usually those associated with the rebellion) are being denied exit visas, a claim also made by Collyer (2015). While some interviewees perceived this as further evidence of the discrimination many Darfuris face, it may also be a consequence of not having the requisite documentation, such as a birth certificate. Either way, it is currently very difficult for Darfuris to migrate legally. Even those who have reached the UK by plane (and have successfully claimed asylum) spoke of bribing officials at Khartoum airport to enable them to leave the country. In practice, most Darfuris leaving for Libya and Europe have no contact with any formal government institutions in Sudan before they leave, or with Sudanese embassies in European countries. On the contrary, they usually deliberately avoid any contact with government institutions.

The main institutions with responsibility for irregular migration into and out of Sudan are (ElMekki, 2017):

¹¹² Interviewees who made this point include community leaders in Zalingei, a focus group and a potential migrant in Khartoum.

- The National Population Council, formally an arm of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, responsible for data analysis and technical studies.
- The Ministry of the Interior, in charge of managing migrants on the ground, containing the Passport and Civil Registration Department, the Aliens Control Administration and the police.
- Military, paramilitary and intelligence institutions, engaged in border control.
- The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, created in 2014 under the Combating of Human Trafficking Act.
- The Higher Council for Migration, also established in 2014 and chaired by the Vice-President, on which all institutions and line ministries relevant to migration sit.

In recent years government action on irregular migration has focused on border control, encouraged by European governments' concerns to stem the flow of irregular migrants through Sudan into Europe. Institutionally, this has been dominated by the security sector: the police, military, security and paramilitary forces. The paramilitary RSF,¹¹³ which has a reputation for violent and ruthless counter-insurgency activities within Darfur (see Chapter 2), has played an active and controversial role along the border with Libya. Key informants for this study in North Darfur report the RSF's active involvement in border control, at times effectively blocking the migration route between Malha in North Darfur and Kufra in Libya, and cite the RSF as one factor constraining the irregular migration of Darfuris.¹¹⁴ A number of media articles in Sudan boast of the RSF's 'success' in apprehending and arresting 'illegal migrants' and human traffickers on the border.¹¹⁵ Some researchers have suggested that the real reason for the presence of the RSF on the Sudan–Libya border is not to prevent migrants from entering Libya but to fight the Darfuri rebel movements there (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017). Sudan's security institutions are known to operate with impunity (Elmekki, 2017), and there are high levels of corruption (All Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan, 2017. See also Chapter 4).

113 In January 2017, the Sudanese parliament passed a law integrating the RSF into the army, while remaining autonomous and under control of the president (Baldo, 2017).

114 For example, a transporter carrying migrants between El Fasher and Tina, as well as some community/tribal leaders.

115 See, for example, <http://www.sudansafari24.com/index.php/en/reports/item/2288-rsf-abort-the-largest-human-trafficking-attempt>; <http://www.africanews.com/2017/01/09/sudan-115-migrants-intercepted-in-northern-border-with-libya/>.

Political intervention and vested interests frequently shape the application of legislation and may be a further disincentive to Sudan developing a coherent national policy on migration (Elmekki, 2017). El Mekki (ibid.) argues that definitions and concepts are unclear, legislation is contradictory and the many institutions with responsibility for migration are uncoordinated. There is further confusion and contradiction between policies and actions at the national and sub-national levels. Both the legislative framework and government actions fall short of international standards.¹¹⁶ This highly irregular legal and policy context, with blatant violations of human rights, is a major challenge for European governments keen to see the Sudanese government as a key partner in controlling migration flows from the Horn of Africa to Europe. It also creates a confusing and contradictory policy context for Sudanese who decide or need to leave the country.

Chapter 3 captures the despair felt by many displaced young men living in camps about prospects for improvement in the future. In 2010 the government released a policy paper that talked about 'the voluntary, safe and orderly return of displaced people to their homes' as one of its top priorities (Government of Sudan, 2010). But as the conflict has continued this has been met with scepticism and distrust (Hovil, 2014). At the end of 2015, Vice-President Hassabo Abdelrahman announced that all IDP camps in Darfur would be closed the following year, claiming the war was over (see for example Sudan Tribune, 2015). Instead, there was a new wave of displacement of over 100,000 people in 2016 (see Chapter 2). More recently, the government has spoken of incorporating some of the larger IDP camps into urban areas as 'townships' or 'neighbourhoods'.¹¹⁷ For some years, the government has pursued a policy of building 'model villages' in Darfur, mostly with funding from Gulf countries such as the Qatari Fund for Development. This has been a highly controversial policy, with most IDPs refusing to move to the purpose-built villages (Radio Dabanga, 2017). The UN Panel of Experts (2017) reports a three-pronged government strategy on displacement, focused on voluntary return to areas of origin, integration into current host communities, or relocation to other areas. Overall, the government's determination to close down the IDP camps in Darfur while so many aspects of

116 For example, imposing the death penalty without fair trial standards for certain acts of trafficking, under the 2014 'Combating Human Trafficking Act'; these acts do not meet the criteria of a 'serious crime' in accordance with international law, as reported by Oette and Babiker (2017).

117 Personal communication, OCHA.

the conflict remain unresolved has fostered a sense of insecurity, fear of manipulation and hopelessness about the future among many IDP youth interviewed for this study, who are choosing to leave.

8.3 European policies and their impact on the movement of Darfuris within Europe

The European Agenda on Migration, launched in 2015, has four pillars: reducing the incentives for irregular migration; improving border control; developing a common EU asylum policy; and strengthening legal migration (EC, 2015). Under the third pillar, the CEAS established common minimum standards, though in practice there are variations in interpretation and implementation at national level (Borton and Collinson, 2017). Variations across Member States are keenly felt by Darfuris, whose movements around Europe are shaped by their knowledge and expectations of the different asylum systems in different countries (as described in Chapter 6).

Chapter 6 showed how fear of being deported back to Italy under the Dublin regulations deterred many Darfuris from applying for asylum in France and Belgium, making them vulnerable to arrest and detention and limiting their access to protection and assistance. The 2013 Dublin regulation (Dublin III) is part of the CEAS. This EU law determines that the Member State responsible for processing a migrant's asylum application is the first Member State where the migrant's fingerprints were recorded or an asylum claim was lodged. Dublin III allows Member States that migrants subsequently enter to return them to the EU country of arrival to process their application (which in practice disproportionately affects the so-called 'frontline' states, Italy and Greece).¹¹⁸ In theory, migrants can be transferred to other Member States where they have family connections,¹¹⁹ but this is difficult where the government units dealing with the Dublin regulations in

118 A relocation programme within the EU was agreed in 2015, but only for nationalities seeking asylum for which there has been a 75% recognition rate or above (Syrians, Eritreans and Yemenis, but not Sudanese). Under this scheme, 120,000 asylum-seekers should have been relocated from Italy, Greece and Hungary over a two-year period. By September 2017, less than a third of this target had been relocated (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/09/eu-countries-have-fulfilled-less-than-a-third-of-their-asylum-relocation-promises/>)

119 Under Article 17, governments can accept an asylum-seeker who has been fingerprinted elsewhere, for family reasons or on humanitarian grounds, as described in Chapter 6.

the most affected Member States are overwhelmed and may not reply quickly enough once a return transfer request is put to them.¹²⁰ This study heard of no cases of Darfuris being transferred to Member States where they have family connections (with the exception of some minors joining their brothers or sisters). Some forced returns under Dublin III have been successfully challenged when there were judged to be flaws in the asylum system and reception conditions in the EU country of arrival (see for example European Database of Asylum Law, 2015). The logic and practice of Dublin III reveals the fundamental lack of shared responsibility for irregular migration across the EU while the 'frontline' states carry the burden.

Most Darfuris interviewed in Europe had been rescued at sea, although they were often unclear about the identity of their rescuers. Sometimes it appeared to be the Italian Navy. EU and Italian policies for the search and rescue of migrants crossing the Mediterranean thus fundamentally affected the experience of almost all Darfuris interviewed in Europe. We also know that many Darfuris have drowned trying to reach Europe, as we have heard from families and key informants in Sudan.

Frontex, the EU's border security agency, supports national authorities with the provision of technical equipment and specially trained staff for border control. They are currently supporting the Italian authorities in five 'hotspots', receiving, screening and fingerprinting migrants on arrival. More rigorous registration of arrivals has contributed to increased numbers of migrants and asylum-seekers being transferred back to Italy from other EU Member States under Dublin III.

8.4 European policies and actions on migration from Sudan and the Horn of Africa

8.4.1 The Khartoum Process

The EU–Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (usually referred to as the Khartoum Process) was launched in November 2014 in response to growing numbers of irregular migrants entering Europe from the Horn. The initiative is a regional collaboration between the EU, its Member States,¹²¹ the African Union (AU) Commission and seven countries from

120 Key informant interview with UNHCR Italy.

121 Norway and Switzerland are also members.

the Horn of Africa,¹²² as well as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. The previous October, an AU Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants was established in Khartoum, with a slightly broader geographical remit for irregular migration to Southern Africa and the Middle East as well as Europe. The stated aims of the Khartoum Process include cooperation in tackling irregular migration and criminal networks (including prosecution and the development of appropriate legal frameworks), improving migration management, implementing preventive measures such as information campaigns, protecting and assisting refugees and victims of trafficking and promoting sustainable development (EU, AU and EU Member States, 2014).

The importance of Sudan as a transit country for irregular migrants from the Horn makes it an important member of the Khartoum Process. The EU has stepped up its engagement with the Sudanese government, and a High Level Dialogue on Migration has been in place since 2016. The Khartoum Process in Sudan has emphasised tackling smuggling and trafficking *through* the country more than irregular migration *from* Sudan itself, and assisting victims of trafficking and Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in Eastern Sudan. As such, it does not specifically address the substantial numbers of Darfuris migrating from Sudan itself, or the main drivers of this particular migration flow.

Building on the Khartoum Process, the Valletta Summit on migration in 2015 resulted in the Joint Valletta Action Plan and the launch of a €1.8 billion¹²³ EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa. Development programmes in Darfur funded by the EUTF, with migration as part of the rationale, are reviewed in Section 8.5 below. In 2016, Sudan received just 13% of EUTF funds (EC, 2016). The Better Migration Management (BMM) programme, coordinated by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), is one initiative under the EUTF implemented in Sudan, although not in Darfur.¹²⁴ The BMM has four main components, each of which applies to Sudan as follows (GIZ, 2017; Oette and Babiker, 2017).

- Policy harmonisation and cooperation intended to strengthen the Sudan government's approach

122 Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

123 Now nearly 2.5 billion.

124 The BMM programme is implemented in all seven countries in the Horn of Africa involved in the Khartoum Process, as well as Uganda, with a total budget of €46 million.

to migration and border governance, with the adoption of some of the new laws on asylum and trafficking mentioned above.

- Capacity development to strengthen government institutions responsible for migration and border management: providing training to Sudanese law enforcement and security agencies.
- Protection of victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants.
- Raising migrants' awareness of livelihood options within Sudan, including safe migration.

As above, the focus is on migrants in transit, especially Eritreans and Ethiopians, as well as border control. Designed to run between April 2016 and March 2019, the BMM in Sudan has started slowly. Criticism of BMM and caution on engaging with some of Sudan's security institutions have delayed some of its activities.¹²⁵ Engagement with Sudan's security institutions is limited to the Ministry of the Interior, and there is no direct transfer of funds to Sudanese government institutions.¹²⁶ At the time of the fieldwork in Khartoum, information campaigns on different aspects of migration were being planned by the British Council, but these were delayed due to lack of information on migrant decision-making.¹²⁷

The findings of this study suggest that the Khartoum Process should engage to a greater extent with the fundamental political drivers of irregular migration from Darfur. This echoes concerns presented by human rights activists, academics and other analysts. These can be grouped around five main areas.¹²⁸

- That the Khartoum Process addresses migration primarily through the lens of criminal justice, rather than focusing on the political drivers of irregular migration.
- That it privileges migration management over a human rights approach.
- That it is not evidence-based, but is instead driven by the imperative to reduce irregular migration to Europe.
- That it has been heavily government-oriented and has not involved civil society. As a result, civil society organisations in Sudan are highly critical of it.

125 Interview with BMM representative.

126 As stated by EU representatives. This would be prohibited due to Sudan's non-ratification of the Cotonou Agreement. An arms embargo is also in place.

127 Interview with British Council representative.

128 See Grinstead (2016); APPG (2017); Hovil and Oette (2017); Oette and Babiker (2017); Oxfam (2017). Also based on key informant interviews for this study.

- That it is difficult to see how the EU Trust Fund has been channelled and spent in support of the Khartoum Process.

During discussions and interviews for this study, researchers often encountered a perception in Sudan that EU funds had been provided to the RSF for border control under the Khartoum Process, which would have a direct impact on migrant routes and experiences. This has been strongly and consistently denied by the EU and there are no direct transfers of funds from the EU to the Sudanese government (European Union External Action, 2017). Nevertheless, a strong focus on stemming migration and on the criminal dimension of smuggling seems to be sending a message to some Sudanese actors that the EU wants the government to stop migrants at its borders. The European Parliament has also expressed concern about the role of the RSF in border control, and its claims to control illegal migration on behalf of the EU (European Parliament, 2016).

8.4.2 UK–Sudan Strategic Dialogue

In 2016, the UK government launched a bilateral UK–Sudan Strategic Dialogue with biannual high-level meetings alternating between Khartoum and London (APPG, 2017). The Dialogue represents a change in approach by the UK from its previous criticism of the Sudan government over its human rights record to a period of ‘phased engagement’. Although the Dialogue covers many topics, stemming irregular migration into Europe and specifically to the UK is a central concern, and a major focus has been the trafficking of migrants in transit in Sudan. In the second half of 2017 DFID commissioned research specifically on this issue. The findings of our study on migration from Darfur, however, imply that the fundamental reasons why young Darfuri men are leaving Sudan should feature in the Strategic Dialogue.

8.4.3 MOU on migration between Italy and Sudan

Also in 2016, the Italian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sudan to combat ‘crime, illegal migration and border issues’, with a direct link to the Khartoum Process.¹²⁹ The MOU was signed by the Public Security Department of the Italian Ministry of the Interior and by the National Police of the Sudanese Ministry of the Interior. After the signing of the MOU, the Italian government

deported 48 Sudanese irregular migrants to Khartoum and invited members of Sudan’s security institutions into the country to screen migrants identified for repatriation.¹³⁰ At the time of writing, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is considering a case, supported by the Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration, challenging the Italian government on its forced returns of five Darfuris (out of the 48 deported in 2016) in August 2016. The ECHR has given permission for this to be taken forward (see Lopez Curzi, 2017; ANSA Infomigrants, 2018).

8.5 Aid programming in Darfur

As the conflict has become protracted, humanitarian assistance to Darfur has steadily declined (see Figure 6). The Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, for example, was less than 50% funded.¹³¹ With competition for humanitarian aid resources from other major and higher-profile crises in the world, it has become increasingly hard to raise funds for Sudan. This is compounded by the very high costs of operating in Darfur, because of its remoteness and the extensive restrictions and controls imposed by the government on agency operations.

Food aid and food assistance have been the main forms of humanitarian assistance. From peak levels in 2005, food aid quantities have fallen due to funding, logistical and security constraints, but also because of assumptions that, over time, conflict-affected populations will be able to meet at least part of their food needs themselves (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2014). In 2017, rural communities received food assistance only in response to specific shocks (drought, floods), and only about 40% of IDPs in camps were considered sufficiently vulnerable to receive food vouchers, with another 25% entitled to food-for-assets (WFP, 2015).¹³² WFP’s latest food security monitoring, now limited to IDP camps, has shown an increase in food insecurity (WFP, 2017).

The reduction in aid was not mentioned spontaneously when community leaders, focus groups or potential migrants were asked about causes of migration in interviews for this study. When asked whether aid influenced the decision to leave, some tribal leaders, IDP leaders and student leaders said it did, but almost

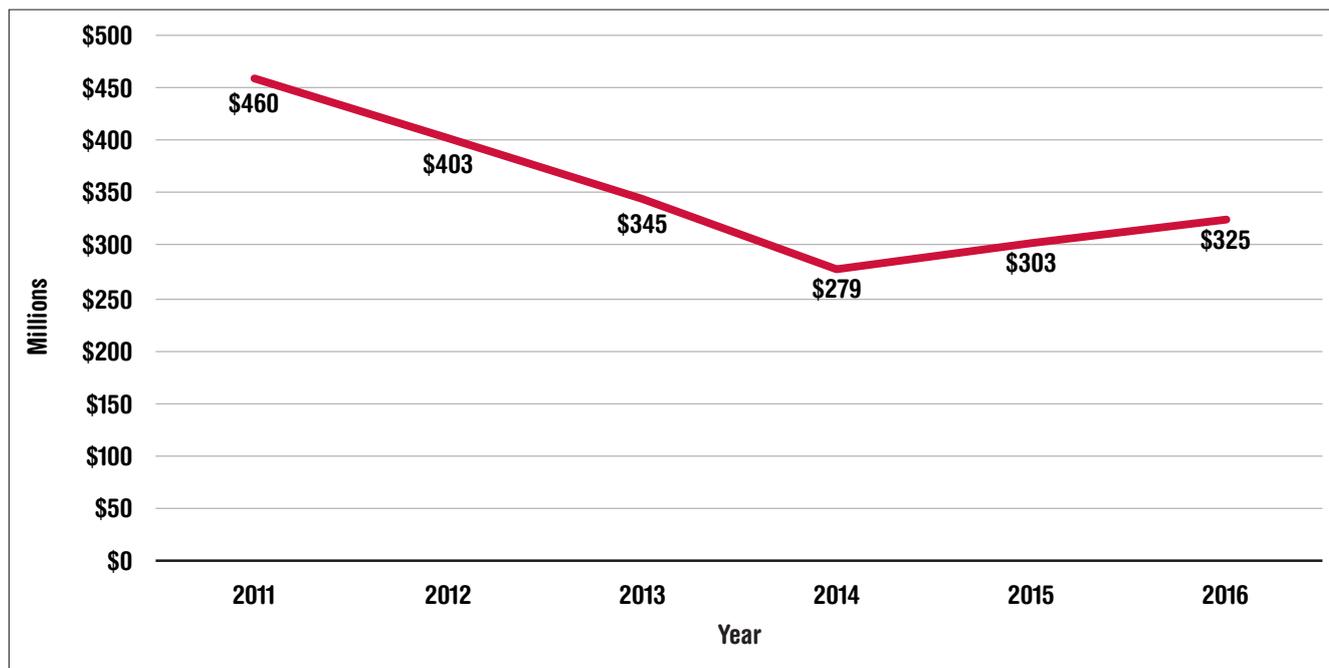
129 See Sudan Tribune (2016) for the statement released by the Italian Embassy in Khartoum

130 See, for example, the critique by the Human Rights and Migration Law Clinic of Turin (Borletto et al., 2017) and Lopez-Curzi (2017).

131 <http://www.unocha.org/sudan/>.

132 Key informant interview with WFP Khartoum.

Figure 6: Humanitarian funding for Darfur



Note: This figure uses OCHA FTS tracking data for Sudan and assumes that funding to Darfur was allocated according to HRP project requirements.

Source: Annual data provided by OCHA.

all potential migrants said it did not (only three said that a reduction in aid had influenced their decision to migrate). The expulsion of aid agencies (initially ten NGOs in Darfur expelled in 2009 after the indictment of President Omar al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court (ICC)) was mentioned almost as often as the reduction in aid by community leaders, and linked to a general deterioration in the situation in the camps, and sometimes to migration. As one IDP leader in Zamzam camp in El Fasher explained:

Before the expulsion of the aid agencies from Darfur, the percentage of migration from Darfur to Europe was low. After the Sudanese government expelled INGOs, the work opportunities decreased and humanitarian aid was reduced. The situations got worse when the government imposed control over aid agencies and over UNAMID as well ... Additional measures imposed on the IDPs' populations are education fees. The monthly ration has been reduced.

The expulsion of INGOs not only meant a reduction in aid programmes, but also the loss of a large number of jobs with these agencies in camps and towns.

Since 2008 the aid paradigm has shifted, from providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection to building resilience. This is associated with an overall reduction in assistance to Darfur, and an increased

emphasis on behaviour change and capacity-building, for example in food security, nutrition and health (see Jaspars, 2018 for a critique). Described as a 'crisis of protection' early in the conflict, the international community has struggled to respond. UNAMID's long-term failure to protect has been well-publicised and has contributed to a sense among Darfuris that they have been let down by the international community (see for example Reliefweb, 2008; Hovil and Bueno, 2016). Meanwhile, UNAMID's capacity is falling. A 40% drawdown of troops was agreed in 2017 (UN Security Council, 2017). NGOs involved in protection activities were expelled in 2009 (for example IRC). The protection activities of agencies with this as their mandate have been restricted since the expulsions of 2009. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s activities were suspended in 2014, and it is only just beginning to re-establish itself. UNHCR's current protection activities are limited, and include community empowerment, care of minors and domestic violence,¹³³ rather than monitoring attacks and harassment faced by much of the IDP population in Darfur, and putting pressure on the authorities to meet their responsibilities.

A smaller amount of aid programming in Darfur focuses on youth and vocational training, but those involved interviewed for this study readily admit that it is unlikely to reduce the migration of young people:

133 Interview with UNHCR Khartoum.

‘the aspirations of the youth are very high, ranging from political to economic concerns. This requires cooperation between different government institutions and NGOs ... to tackle the root causes that push the youth to migrate’.

At the time of writing there are three projects/programmes targeting Darfur, funded by the EU Trust Fund for ‘stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa’:¹³⁴

- ‘Strengthening resilience for IDPs, returnees and host communities in West Darfur’, with the objective of improving the living conditions of IDPs, returnees and local communities, and thereby addressing the root causes of irregular and forced migration, through strengthening local health systems: €7 million, from 2016 – implementing partners: Concern and IMC.
- *Intervention logic in relation to migration:* IDPs and returnees are able to receive adequate healthcare and services, which is widely recognised as one of the main push factors of irregular and forced migration.
- ‘Wadi El Ku Integrated Catchment Management Project’ in North Darfur, with the objective of establishing climate-resilient livelihoods, reducing natural resource conflict and reducing displacement due to loss of livelihoods: €11 million from 2017 – implemented through UNEP.
- *Intervention logic in relation to migration:* reduced vulnerability and increased agricultural productivity will provide direct and indirect project beneficiaries with alternatives to forced migration and displacement because of loss of assets and destitution.
- ‘Fostering smallholder capacities and access to markets in food insecure areas of Darfur’, with the objective of enhancing the food and income security of smallholder farming households in Darfur: €8 million from the end of 2018 – implemented through WFP.
- *Intervention logic in relation to migration:* rural development can address factors that compel people to move by creating business opportunities and jobs for young people. It can also lead to increased food security, more resilient livelihoods, better access to social protection, reduced conflict over natural resources and solutions to environmental degradation and climate change.

Most other EUTF-funded projects target Eastern Sudan and Khartoum. It was beyond the scope of this study to

review whether other projects in Darfur funded by the EU and by EU Member States had migration-related objectives, or to evaluate project impact. However, the study provides no compelling evidence that the reduction of humanitarian aid in recent years has been a significant driver of outward migration, or that livelihoods projects have had a significant effect on people’s decision-making about migration. This could be explored in more depth in project evaluations or specific research on livelihoods interventions. Nevertheless, as so many Darfuris have lost their livelihoods during the conflict years, there is a clear need for aid-funded programming to support the livelihoods of different groups in Darfur, and to strengthen the resilience of households and communities.

8.6 Individual European country asylum policies and actions on migration

Given the impact that varying European asylum and migration systems have on migrant experience and decision-making, this section reviews policies and strategies for responding to irregular migration in four European countries: Italy, France, Belgium and the UK. In line with the scope of this study, it does so by focusing on the migrant perspective, rather than providing a comprehensive policy assessment. Chapters 4 and 6 have already examined the journeys and experiences of Darfuris travelling through these countries, and the reasons they apply for asylum in one European country rather than another.

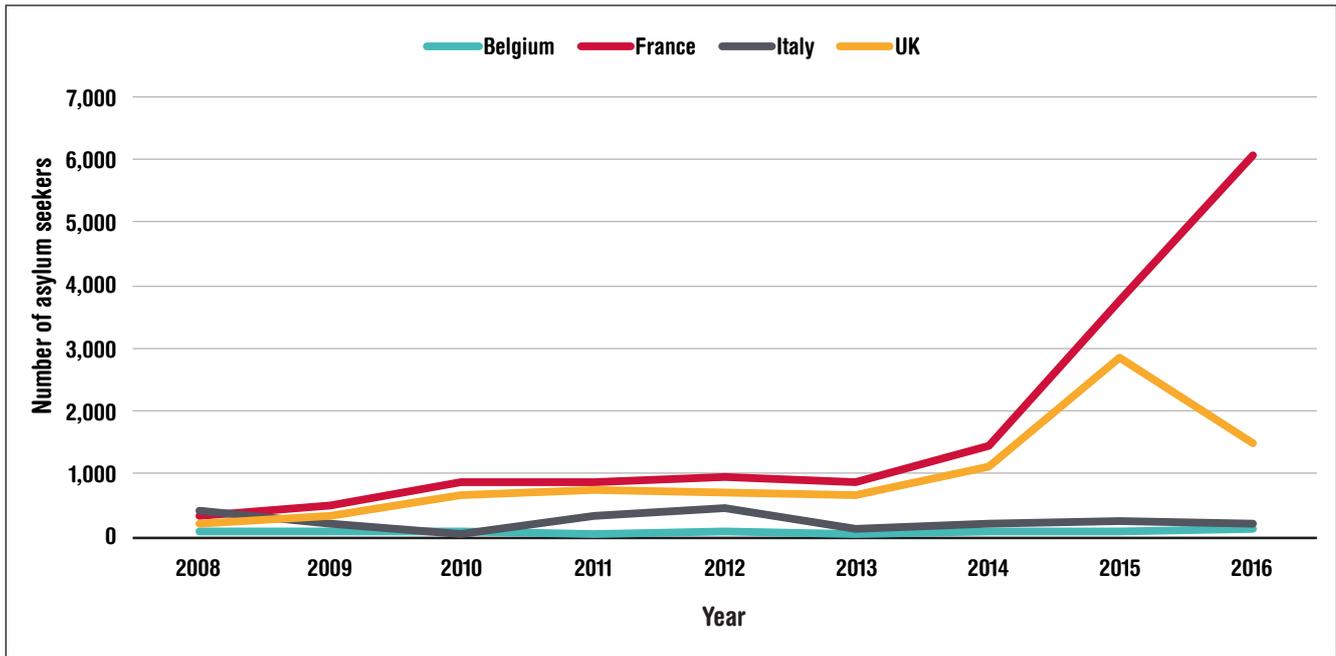
Figure 7 shows trends in Sudanese seeking asylum in each of these four countries since 2008. Some of the reasons for these trends are explained in the following sub-sections. Figure 8 shows the very different rates at which asylum is awarded to Sudanese in each of the four countries. From 2014 to 2016, the number of asylum-seekers in France dramatically increased, whereas in the UK it declined in 2016. The percentage of successful asylum claims has been consistently high in Italy and the UK, and has increased in France. The sections below discuss some of these trends in relation to the findings in earlier chapters.

8.6.1 Italy

On the frontline of irregular migration from Africa, Italy has also been at the forefront of European efforts to control its borders and stem irregular migration. During the 2000s there were numerous agreements with Libya aimed at curbing irregular migration, first with the Gaddafi regime and most recently through an

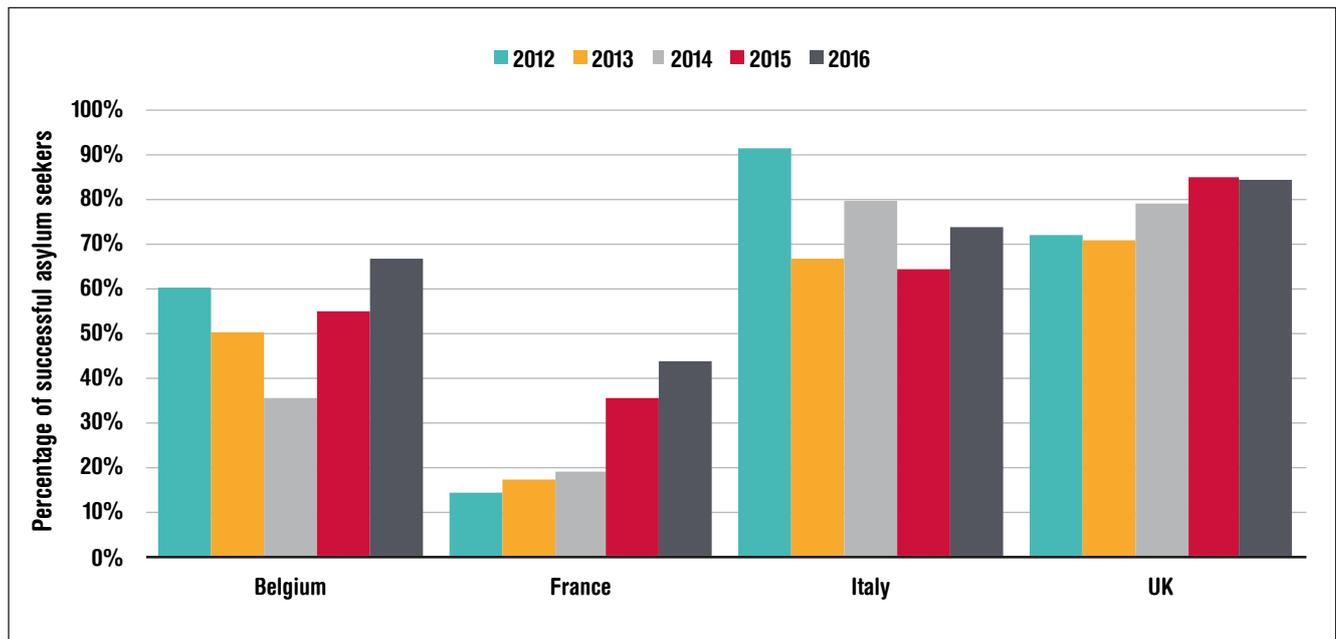
¹³⁴ The following information is drawn from the EU’s Action Fiche for each project.

Figure 7: Number of asylum-seekers from Sudan in four European countries



Source: Eurostat

Figure 8: Percentage of successful asylum-seekers from Sudan in four European countries



Source: Eurostat

MOU signed in February 2017 with the UN-backed Libyan Government of International Accord (see Palm, 2017). Like the 2016 MOU with the Sudanese government, the aim is to prevent irregular migrants reaching Italy through enhanced border controls,¹³⁵

¹³⁵ In 2017, Italy returned a number of speedboats (originally donated to Italy by the Gadaffi regime) to the Libyan coastguard, substantially strengthening its capacity (Amnesty International, 2017).

alongside periodic forced returns of migrants. In the past, the Italian government's agreements with Libya have been criticised for violating human rights, in particular the principle of *non-refoulement*. In one case the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Italy had violated human rights by forcing 24 migrants from Somalia and Eritrea who had been intercepted at sea to return to Libya (Amnesty International, 2012). In the summer of 2017 accusations arose in the Italian media that some NGOs engaged in search and

rescue missions in the Mediterranean were facilitating irregular migration to Italy by picking up migrants close to the Libyan coast. There were also claims that they were collaborating with smugglers (see Giacalone, 2017; Howden, 2018). This led to investigations by the Italian authorities and the drafting of a Code of Conduct by the Ministry of Interior that all NGO boats should have a government official on board and should not travel south of a certain latitude. The Code of Conduct was signed by some NGOs, while others, including MSF, refused.¹³⁶

As Figure 7 shows, very few Darfuris regard Italy as a welcoming destination and apply for asylum there, though the success rate of Sudanese who do apply for asylum in Italy is higher than in France or Belgium. There is no uniform reception system: refugees and irregular migrants arriving in Italy may be placed in a First Aid and Reception Centre (CPSA), in collective centres (CARA or CDAs) or in temporary reception centres (CAS) (see ASGI, 2018). This is when the legal position of the migrant should be established. Those considered economic migrants without a right to stay are given a week to leave the country after they have been fingerprinted and registered. This appears to have happened to some Darfuris transported by the police to southern Italy. Those who claim asylum are usually accommodated in temporary reception facilities run by the local authorities, and receive small discretionary welfare payments, typically around €2 a day. According to key informants interviewed for this study, and information provided to migrants by the Refugee Crisis Database in Italy, it can take eight months to a year for an asylum claim to be processed, although by law this is supposed to be six months.¹³⁷ If asylum is denied the migrant has 30 days to appeal, which some regard as insufficient, for example to find a lawyer.¹³⁸

Once the asylum claim has been approved, the recently recognised refugee moves to a second-line reception centre under the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR). SPRAR centres are run by local authorities, NGOs and social cooperatives, funded at the prefecture level, and are supposed to provide services and integration support, for example language training, for a period of 18 months.¹³⁹ After

this time, the refugee is expected to be independent and to fend for themselves, although in practice many end up back on the streets.¹⁴⁰ Organisations running SPRAR centres are provided with project funding, calculated on the basis of €35 per migrant per day. The number of centres is mushrooming in certain regions, for example in Tuscany, where a different approach of *accoglienza diffusa* (diffuse reception) has been tested. This model is based on small reception centres in apartments rather than large reception centres. These small centres are also more scattered in an attempt to distribute the migrants and facilitate their integration with local communities. NGO staff describe it as a lottery whether migrants are well looked after in the SPRAR centres, depending on which organisation is running the centre.

8.6.2 France

In France, Darfuris faced strengthened border controls, harsh conditions if they did not claim asylum and difficulties if they did. Border controls were reintroduced in 2015 after a number of terrorist attacks (Gaillard, 2017). Increased difficulties in crossing the border between Italy and France in 2017 were confirmed by interviews with Darfuris. In the camps in Calais and Paris in 2016 and 2017, Darfuris and other migrants and refugees experienced frequent harassment and dispersal and at times slow and inconsistent asylum procedures. Insufficient care provision and reception housing – or distrust thereof – mean that asylum-seekers often end up on the street. Darfuris reported that getting an appointment to register to make an asylum claim can take weeks. The Red Cross (2016) has reported slow and inadequate processing of unaccompanied minors, who are legally entitled to family reunification, with an average of 11 months from the initial request for an interview with the French authorities to eventual transfer to the UK. Our findings on migrant experience indicate that those who do not want to apply for asylum in France (in part for fear of being deported to Italy) subsequently receive little or no state support and are liable to deportation when arrested for being undocumented or for trying to enter the UK illegally.

In mid-2017, shortly after his election, President Emmanuel Macron promised to reform the asylum system, including better reception facilities, more accommodation and faster processing of claims. A new reception centre in Port de La Chapelle, however, provides only limited accommodation, and there have been regular evacuations of informal camps, notably

136 http://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/codice_condotta_ong.pdf

137 http://www.sprar.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/04-Quaderno-SC-Procedura-asilo_norma-e-prassi.pdf

138 Key informant interview with an NGO legal expert.

139 There have been cases of mafia involvement in running SPRAR centres in Rome.

140 Key informant interviews with workers for NGOs and volunteer groups.

in Paris and Calais. One key informant estimated that 60–65% of those evacuated from Paris were Sudanese. Some of those ‘cleared’ were staying in small tents close to the Paris reception centre, in the hope of getting in.

Migrants registering a claim for asylum are given certification (and an ID card) and are allowed to stay in France until the end of the asylum procedure. They are also provided with accommodation in centres (centres d’accueil pour demandeurs d’asile (CADA)) across France. In February 2018, President Macron announced a new immigration law which stipulates fines or imprisonment for people for crossing borders illegally, doubles the time that asylum-seekers can be put in detention (to 90 days), reduces the waiting time on asylum applications to six months, applies stricter criteria on eligibility for asylum and facilitates forced removal if these criteria are not met.

Several Sudanese who have failed to establish a claim to stay in France have been deported back to Sudan (Cimade et al., 2016). Radio Dabanga (2017) reported in March 2017 that 27 people were due to be deported from France, most of whom were from Darfur and the Nuba mountains. Twenty Sudanese were forcibly deported earlier in the year. A key informant reported that migrants deported from Calais are mostly those who do not apply for asylum, as those whose asylum claim is rejected have a right to appeal. This remains a sensitive subject. In January 2015, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the French government on the proposed return of two Sudanese asylum-seekers. The Court considered that the claimants’ profile and the Sudanese government’s systematic persecution of certain ethnic groups put their safety at risk if they returned to Sudan (European Database of Asylum Law, 2015).¹⁴¹ The case is now being used as a precedent in other legal attempts to stop forced returns.

In such forced returns, the French government also liaises with the Sudanese government. In September 2017, the French government confirmed that a Sudanese mission had travelled to France, but that France had no formal agreement with Sudan on forced returns (Belga, 2017).

8.6.3 Belgium

For Darfuris interviewed in Brussels, fear of forced returns was their main concern and a key determinant in their decision whether to stay in Belgium or return to Calais or Paris. Following arrest (for example if

caught travelling illegally on trains or when discovered hiding on trucks), some undocumented migrants and refugees are held in five closed centres. Key informants reported that they can be held there for months. In theory people in these centres have access to lawyers, but in practice this is not always the case. One Darfuri we interviewed stayed in a closed centre for 12 days, received no information on their rights and had no access to Arabic interpreters. In a visit by voluntary groups and a parliamentarian to one closed centre, 127Bis, Sudanese held there spoke of similar issues. They also reported that detainees who refuse to sign return papers are taken to the airport and threatened with deportation (Sudan Action Group, 2017). Detainees have also reportedly been told that, if their asylum claims fail, they will face abuse on their return to Sudan (Birnbaum, 2018).

Forced returns to Sudan from these centres have been politically controversial. In September 2017, Belgium’s Secretary of State for Immigration and Asylum, Theo Francken, invited a delegation from Sudan to review the cases of Sudanese migrants held in detention. The delegation was widely believed to include members of Sudan’s intelligence and security services, prompting an outcry in the media and from civil society groups and lawyers as it appeared that the Belgian government had made an agreement to deport people back to a country where they faced a high risk of persecution and torture. Key informants reported that, in some districts, lawyers managed to prevent forced returns immediately, although at a local rather than national level. For example, La Ligue des Droits de l’Homme (the Belgian Human Rights League) successfully took the Liege authorities to court on behalf of the 30 Sudanese people detained in that district. The Liege authorities are now forbidden to deport people, although the government has lodged an appeal. In Brussels, when the Progress Lawyers Network learnt of planned removals, they fought a similarly successful case against the forced return of two Sudanese clients. Despite the judgement forbidding forced returns, however, one of the migrants was deported on the same day – raising serious questions about its voluntary nature. This same group of lawyers, when interviewed in October, estimated that there were around 100 Sudanese in closed centres, 45 of whom had been identified by the Sudanese delegation. They argued that those identified by the National Intelligence and Security Services should immediately be assumed to be at risk and therefore offered asylum.

In December 2017, the forced returns caused a three-week political crisis when journalists obtained reports of the torture of migrants on their return to Sudan.

¹⁴¹ This was on the basis of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Politicians from both the governing coalition and the opposition demanded the resignation of Francken. The Prime Minister ordered an immediate inquiry and temporarily suspended all forced returns, but the findings of the enquiry proved inconclusive and removals are likely to continue. Finally, Belgium (like the UK) may be changing its asylum criteria for Sudanese migrants. A letter written on 24 October from the General Secretariat for Refugees and Asylum-seekers to Francken suggests that the Secretariat is currently determining whether all African tribes in Sudan should still automatically be eligible for asylum.

8.6.4 The UK

Apart from the very small number who can afford to fly into the UK, there is currently no legal route for asylum-seekers to enter the country (Crawley, 2010), and as we have seen migrants seeking entry have no choice but to risk their lives climbing into or under trucks and buses travelling from the continent to England. Figure 7 shows the sharp fall in Sudanese asylum-seekers in the UK in 2016, although the number appears to have risen slightly in 2017. Sudanese were among the top five nationalities applying for asylum in the UK in 2017.¹⁴² The reason for the fall in the number of Sudanese seeking asylum in 2016 requires further investigation, but stricter border controls are likely to be a factor.

Policy decisions are underpinned by the government's over-riding aim of discouraging irregular migration to the UK. Under the Le Touquet agreement, signed in 2003, France and the UK can erect border controls in each other's Channel ports, effectively moving the UK border to Calais and giving UK border officials the right to impose border checks in France. Under a separate agreement, the UK contributed €82 million for fences, security guards, dogs and detection technology, and the French authorities deployed more than 1,300 police and gendarmes.¹⁴³ As Figure 7 demonstrates, the number of Sudanese asylum-seekers in France increased sharply between 2015 and 2016 at the same time as it fell in the UK. The UK and France reaffirmed their commitment to the operation of juxtaposed controls via the Le Touquet and Canterbury agreements in the recent Sandhurst Treaty, signed between the two countries in January 2018. This commits both countries to strengthen operational

cooperation at their shared border (UK Government and French Government, 2018).

Once someone applies for asylum in the UK and is awaiting a response they are the responsibility of the Home Office. Although the UK has a reputation for a 'tough' asylum policy (see for example Refugee Council, 2018), a very high percentage of Darfuris have been granted asylum since 2011, a higher percentage than for most other nationalities (see Figure 8). Until recently, asylum would be granted on the basis of the migrant's tribal status if from a non-Arab ethnic group such as Fur, Masalit or Zaghawa (Asylum and Immigration Tribunal, 2009). This is beginning to change, and what are regarded as acceptable thresholds of risk appear to be rising. The Joint Fact Finding Mission of the UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service (UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service, 2016) concludes that: 'Persons from Darfur and the Two Areas have access to documents, housing, education and healthcare in Khartoum ... [although] in particular those of African descent, may experience societal discrimination in Khartoum ... In general, Khartoum is a safe place for persons fleeing from a private [*sic*] conflict in their local areas' (ibid.: 10). This has now been transferred into a Home Office policy note: 'Neither involuntary returnees nor failed asylum seekers nor persons of military age (including draft evaders and deserters) are as such at real risk on return to Khartoum' (Home Office, 2017: 5). The findings of this study challenge this conclusion. They show the high levels of discrimination that Darfuris of particular ethnic groups face in Khartoum, as well as persecution of Darfuri students, especially if politically active. Some key informants to this study anticipate a shift in the processing of asylum applications from group (e.g. ethnic) status to individual status following the Joint Fact Finding Mission. Individuals are now under greater pressure to demonstrate their involvement in opposition political activity in their asylum claim, and there appears to be a rising threshold of threat and harm that is regarded as acceptable by the UK government.¹⁴⁴

It was beyond the scope of this study to investigate the numbers or condition of failed Sudanese asylum-seekers held in detention centres in the UK, but it is worth noting that the UK is the only European country that can hold migrants indefinitely and has

142 See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2017/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to>.

143 <https://passeursdhospitalites.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/dc3a9claration-sur-les-migrations-prc3a9sidence-de-la-rc3a9publique.pdf>.

144 From key informant interviews, substantiated by the latest Country Guidance case on Sudan (Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber)) (2015). In this, the judge accepted that an individual may be arrested, detained, questioned, intimidated and 'rough handled', without specifying what 'rough handling' means in practice apart from not involving 'serious harm'.

one of the largest immigration detention facilities in Europe (The Migration Observatory, 2017).¹⁴⁵

According to interviews with Darfuri asylum-seekers for this study, it is taking longer to complete the asylum process compared with a few years ago. Whether this is deliberate policy is unclear given that the UK's asylum system is under growing pressure as the Home Office absorbs substantial cuts to its annual budget. There are signs of overwhelmed staff struggling to meet targets, inadequate training, the random assignment of cases to 'non-straightforward' designation to explain systemic delays, and slow processing of 'non-straightforward' cases (Hill, 2017). Combined, these affect the quality of interviews of asylum-seekers and contribute to poor decision-making (Bolt, 2017). Those supporting Sudanese migrants' asylum claims in the UK, and especially appeals against rejected claims, confirmed the random nature of the decision-making process in interviews for this study. The Refugee Council in the UK reports that the courts overturned Home Office decisions in 41% of asylum appeals in 2016 (Refugee Council, 2018).

Cuts to departmental budgets are affecting other government services in addition to the Home Office asylum system. For example, Job Centres are no longer able to provide interpreters and there have been cuts in legal aid, with legal aid lawyers unwilling to take on judicial reviews unless they are convinced of the likely success of the case. Services provided by NGOs and refugee support organisations have also suffered.¹⁴⁶ This was evident in Bradford, where the number of newly recognised refugees has been rising, while the capacity of support organisations has fallen.

8.7 Voluntary groups, NGOs and lawyers in Europe

Individual citizens and voluntary and civil society groups have played a key role in assisting and protecting migrants and refugees in Europe (DeLargy, 2016), and much of Europe's responsibilities towards migrants and refugees have been met by voluntary agencies, ranging from rescue in the Mediterranean to information about asylum procedures and rights, legal assistance, healthcare, food and shelter. The

145 In contrast, in France the limit was until recently 45 days, and in Italy 90 days. A recent independent review of the welfare of vulnerable people in detention documented shortcomings in the system, some of which were seen as in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights (Shaw, 2016).

146 Key informant interviews in the UK.

motivation for this 'humanitarian impulse' was often the absence, or perceived absence, of other sources of assistance, whether from governments or international NGOs (Borton, 2016). Researchers for this study met with a number of voluntary groups, in Italy, France and Belgium, observing first-hand the critical and at times life-saving assistance they were providing. Darfuris themselves commented positively on the support and assistance they were getting via these channels.

Often working in very different ways to traditional humanitarian agencies, for example in their use of social media as their main means of communication, the vital role many of these voluntary groups have played is widely recognised.¹⁴⁷ Yet it is not without its challenges, notably around coordination and inexperience in the organisation and provision of relief. While some established international humanitarian agencies have also played an important and at times high-profile role in responding to the needs of migrants in transit,¹⁴⁸ the relationship between voluntary groups and more 'traditional' humanitarian actors has often been tinged with distrust and suspicion.

A wider challenge has been the contraction of humanitarian space in a number of European countries as a result of government action. Examples include the pressure the Italian government has brought to bear to discourage search and rescue operations by NGOs in the Mediterranean, periodic police harassment of volunteer groups in Rome and deliberate attempts to disrupt relief distributions in Calais. In France, volunteer groups reported being tightly controlled in the assistance they were allowed to provide (see Chapter 6).¹⁴⁹ Both established agencies and newer organisations and voluntary groups are involved in advocacy campaigns across Europe to raise public awareness of the consequences of government policies towards migrants and asylum, to break down perceptions of 'them' and 'us' and to encourage solidarity with people fleeing conflict and persecution.¹⁵⁰ The plight of Sudanese migrants has

147 See also *Humanitarian Exchange* (67, September) on 'Refugees and vulnerable migrants in Europe'.

148 For example, MSF, MDM and some national Red Cross societies.

149 See also Carrera et al. (2016), a report commissioned by the European Parliament which demonstrates how EU legislation can deter humanitarian actors from providing assistance

150 See, for example, Oxfam's 'Stand as One' campaign (<https://actions.oxfam.org/international/stand-as-one/petition/>) and the Worldwide Tribe (<http://theworldwidetribe.com/>)

featured more prominently in some of this work in the last year (see for example RRDP, 2017a).

Volunteer (and paid) legal professionals and human rights institutions are playing a particularly important role in defending the rights of Darfuris where governments are violating international conventions (including the European Convention on Human Rights), their own country's laws, or EU laws such as the Dublin regulations. As indicated above, a number of cases have been taken to the European Court of Human Rights. Despite these efforts, the scale of the need for legal representation is far outstripping the capacity of voluntary groups. Some parliamentarians, at national and European levels, are also trying to hold European governments and the EU to account.

8.8 Conclusion

It is widely recognised that Europe still lacks a common and coherent migration and asylum policy, even though there have been five emergency summits on the topic and the issuing of the European Agenda on Migration (see for example Collet, 2015; Crawley, 2016). This study demonstrates some of the practical consequences for Darfuris arriving irregularly in Europe, as variable migration policies across different European countries as well as the Dublin III Regulation impact and influence their decision-making and movement from one country to another.

This chapter demonstrates the extent to which Europe's external engagement is part of the management of irregular migration, for example through support to the Libyan coastguard, and border control and development assistance to Sudan under the Khartoum Process and bilateral agreements with EU Member States. Migration from Sudan is approached primarily through the lens of criminal law by focusing on the illegal smuggling

and trafficking dimension, rather than engaging with its root causes. Halting or deterring irregular migration is prioritised in policy thinking and government action on migration within Europe as anti-immigration sentiment rises among European electorates. This has impacted on the scaling back of search and rescue in the Mediterranean, assistance strategies towards irregular migrants within Europe as well as law enforcement action. A similar approach now permeates the Sudanese government's official response to irregular migration. But until and unless the fundamental causes driving people to migrate are addressed, forced and irregular migration flows are unlikely to be reduced. In practical terms, as this study and other research have demonstrated, deterrence measures and border controls are expensive and mostly ineffective, influencing migration patterns rather than volumes, driving migrants to take more dangerous routes and encouraging smuggling networks (Cosgrave et al., 2016; Crawley et al., 2016; Cummings et al., 2015).

The current drive to curb migration from Africa to Europe has dangerous consequences for Darfuris leaving Sudan. The preoccupation with curbing migration risks overshadowing issues of forced displacement and protection in Darfur, both of which are as important today as they have been for much of the last 14 years. Particularly concerning is the cost of neglecting international conventions and human rights frameworks. Even though providing no material support, European governments engage with some of Sudan's security institutions to an extent unthinkable ten years ago.

As migration has become one of the hottest political topics in Europe, the policy debate has become polarised between those who believe stemming irregular migration is an overriding priority, and those documenting the associated impact and challenging new practices through the courts using international and legal frameworks.

9 Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

This is one of the very few studies that has looked at the whole process of migration for a particular population group – ethnic Darfuris – from their place of origin to wherever they have ended up in Europe, and from a systemic perspective. It takes account of historical patterns of migration and the political and economic context in Sudan and Darfur to understand the causes of migration, migrant journeys and experiences along their journey and at their destination, as well as the many influences on migrant strategies and decision-making. The study also explored the impact of migration to Europe on families and communities left behind, and on the wider political economy of Darfur.

Current migration patterns build on those from the past, which is a reminder of how migration has long been, and remains, an essential part of the livelihoods of Darfuri households. Particular ethnic groups, the Zaghawa and Fur, which have a long history of labour migration, formed the majority of migrants to Europe. The diaspora and previous migrants were able to assist with funds to start the journey, whether the older diaspora in Libya and the Gulf countries or more recent refugees in Europe, for example in the UK. Recent refugees also provided information about migration routes and conditions in European countries. A history of migration to Libya was particularly important, as current migration to Europe is mainly via Libya. Long-term Sudanese migrants in Libya helped with finding smugglers and safe work. Those with relatives or connections in Libya were less likely to be kidnapped and held for ransom, or could be helped more easily if they were.

Yet this new migration pattern is also very different from migration patterns of the past, in terms of destinations, timeframes and who is leaving and why. A key difference from past migration patterns is that current migration to Europe is mostly forced, and of young men who are highly unlikely to return without fundamental changes to political and economic

conditions in Sudan. Regional, as well as national, political processes have played a key role in creating the new trend in migration to Europe. Conflict and political instability, or changes in asylum or labour laws, have made it more difficult for Darfuris to find work, asylum or assistance in traditional destinations for labour migration, such as Libya, Chad, Egypt and the Gulf countries. Even newer destinations such as South Sudan and Israel are no longer accessible because of conflict and detention and forced return measures respectively. The restricted possibilities for migration to neighbouring countries has made migration to Europe one of the few options to find safety and work. Libya and Egypt have now become transit countries.

The main cause of migration from Sudan to Europe is systemic persecution of particular ethnic, social and political groups of Darfuris. The majority of Darfuris migrating to Europe are young men from the **Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit ethnic groups**, plus other smaller non-Arab tribes. These groups formed the main support base of the rebellion and were displaced in large numbers during the conflict. Contrary to the narrative being promoted by the government of Sudan that the Darfur conflict is over and that stability is being restored, this study provides evidence of persistent and pervasive harassment (including attack, arrest and detention), surveillance and discrimination of Darfuris of particular ethnic groups, within Darfur and in Khartoum. Darfuri refugees and migrants are mostly **young men, poor** and have limited education, although a considerable proportion were students. The vast majority of Darfuris interviewed in Europe and who wanted to leave Sudan had a history of displacement. **Internally displaced persons and students** were particularly vulnerable to attack, harassment and discrimination.

Loss of livelihoods and social responsibilities are contributing causes of migration. Displacement and conflict have led to loss of livelihoods and new opportunities are limited to marginal, precarious (or sometimes criminal) activities. The discrimination that many young Darfuris of particular ethnic groups are

experiencing further restricts their ability to earn a livelihood, which can in itself be considered a form of persecution (see UNHCR, 2011: 82). Many Darfuris had attempted to find employment or migrate for work in Sudan or the region first, but with little or no success. With the pressure of social responsibilities to fulfil, such as supporting parents and younger siblings, as well as marriage, they have resorted to seeking a living outside the country. What all young Darfuris of particular ethnic groups have in common is a sense of hopelessness and despair about their future in Sudan. Many young Darfuri men were aware of the risks of migrating to Europe, but for them the choice was between what they described as a quick death at sea or elsewhere en route, or a slow death in Sudan.

Displacement, migration and refugee flows are interlinked. Most migrant journeys started a long time before the decision to move to Europe. The vast majority of migrants had a history of protracted displacement stretching over years. For many, returning to their area of origin is not an option: it is either unsafe or impossible if their land has been occupied by others.

Very few youth from Darfuri Arab ethnic groups have migrated to Europe. Many have been recruited as militia by the government and now also form the basis of the Rapid Support Force, border guards and police. The exodus of young men who previously supported the rebellion, while those who receive government support stay in Darfur, is likely to influence the dynamics of the conflict and **power relations within Darfur** and Sudan. While it is difficult to predict how the situation will evolve in the short term, changing power relations could reinforce the occupation of land by groups aligned to the government, and therefore protracted displacement to urban areas. The departure of young men also leaves rural communities aligned to the opposition less well-defended and more vulnerable to attack. The longer-term consequences depend on migrants' success in furthering their education and whether they return. If they do, they may bring back new ideas, skills and investment, but this could also deepen the divide between ethnic groups as young men from groups aligned to the government fall behind in terms of education and international exposure.

Changes in Sudanese society also facilitate migration. The younger generation has unprecedented access to information, especially through digital means of communication, about what is happening in their own country and about living standards and opportunities elsewhere in the world. Even the poorly educated seem less prepared than their parents' generation to accept the limited opportunities available to them in Sudan,

and the levels of discrimination faced by certain ethnic groups. Further evidence of social change in Sudan is the extent to which young people are making their own decisions about migrating, whether or not they have the agreement and blessing of their parents and elders. This would have been unthinkable a generation ago.

Expectations of a better life in Europe are strongly influenced by information received on **social media** and positive images of life in Europe from migrants already there. This is a similar finding to other studies of migration from Africa to Europe. It may be reinforced by cultural factors which deter Sudanese migrants from revealing the tough realities of their life in Europe to family and friends in Sudan. Even when some have described those tough realities, they are rarely believed at home. The aspirations of Darfuri migrants are similar to the aspirations of migrants from other groups: safety, jobs and education. However, the emphasis that Darfuris placed on living in a country where human rights are respected, and where 'you are treated as a human being', was striking, and frequently repeated.

As other studies have shown, **smuggler networks and the Libya crisis facilitate migration.** The majority of Darfuris use a system of payment in stages that has enabled them to migrate, but also makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in Libya. This can involve being held for ransom or sold as slave labour. Having to work to pay for their Mediterranean crossing usually means staying in Libya for some time, thus increasing the risks and abuse they face. Many are boarding unseaworthy boats from Libya, a function of how much they are able to pay, putting them at greater risk of drowning. Within Europe, the majority of Darfuris were unable to pay smugglers, which marginalises them compared to other migrants and refugees, reduces their chances of crossing borders, and puts them at greater risk. These migration journeys indicate that **Darfuris are among the poorest migrants travelling from Africa to Europe.** The small proportion of better-off Darfuris who are able to pay larger sums of money for their passage to Europe, usually in one payment, are still at risk, particularly while crossing the Mediterranean (unless they can afford to fly to Europe, as some do), but complete their journeys faster and face fewer dangers en route.

Darfuris migrating to Europe mostly have low levels of education. **The consequences of being less well-educated and with minimal or no European-language skills** compared with many other migrant groups puts Darfuris at a disadvantage in Europe. They are poorly informed and do not access information generally available to migrants en route. Instead,

they depend on each other for information critical to decisions they must make about their journey and their destination in Europe.

The determination of those who have made it to the UK to find work and to contribute to society is striking and humbling. Even the well-educated, for example mid-career graduates, have been prepared to start a new undergraduate degree all over again, even though this means taking out a substantial student loan. The less well-educated try to improve their language skills. Many end up in poorly paid work, for example as guards on construction sites.

When migration flows are reduced to numbers, it is easy to forget **the emotional cost and human suffering of families torn apart by migration**, of parents never knowing if they will see their sons again, and of young men feeling lost in communities and societies that are not their own, experiencing the pain of long-term separation from their loved ones. To some extent this is mitigated for families (and even communities) left behind when they start to receive remittances from relatives in Europe. Even those on welfare benefits in Europe try to send money home. Monthly payments of just €50 or £50 can make a substantial difference to families in Sudan. There is some (albeit inconclusive) evidence that remittance flows from Europe may be overtaking remittances from traditional migrant destinations in the Gulf. For some families the consequences can be devastating if they lose their sons (particularly if they die on the journey), have to pay costly and impoverishing ransoms or if they lose the earning power of young men in the family for some years if they fail to get asylum and find work in Europe. In these cases, migration can actually increase the economic pressure on families left behind.

Most Darfuri female migrants reach Europe through family reunification, joining their refugee husbands legally. (A very small but increasing number of Darfuri women are arriving in Europe as irregular migrants.) Navigating the reunification process is a challenge for most Darfuri families as few have the requisite marriage or even birth certificates; bribes may have to be paid to obtain them in Sudan. When successful, however, this is one of the few opportunities for legal migration available to Darfuris.

European policies on migration from the Horn of Africa treat it as a security problem, and approach it through the lens of criminalisation. The focus is border control and stopping smuggling and trafficking networks for migrants moving through Sudan. This has strongly influenced migration policy in Sudan. Controversially, the RSF has been deployed along

the border with Libya: the militia which caused mass displacement in Darfur from 2014–2016 has been policing the border for smuggled migrants, including those escaping from Darfur. However, mobility in itself is not problematic. It is an essential part of livelihoods in Darfur. If lives are at risk, or certain groups are discriminated against or harassed, people need to be able to find safety, and migration is an important means of achieving this. These are the causes of forced migration and the risks associated with irregular migration that need to be addressed. **Forced migration of Darfuris from Sudan is thus a humanitarian, protection and livelihoods concern.** However, there has been little engagement with the root causes of this forced migration. Policies have been made and implemented without adequate analysis and understanding of why migration of Darfuris to Europe has risen in recent years. While the EU (and a number of other donors) have humanitarian and development projects in Darfur, these do little to address the root causes or the protection risks that are a major reason for forced migration to Europe. The evidence gathered in this study indicates that aid programming in Darfur has little impact on young people's decisions to leave.

Within Europe, policies are driven by the desire to curb migration. The Khartoum Process and bilateral agreements between European governments and Libya or the Sudanese government have effectively externalised border control to these countries. Borders have been closed within Europe. This study along with many others demonstrates how closing borders triggers the proliferation of smuggling networks and compromises migrant safety. This is particularly evident in Libya, where large numbers of migrants, including many Darfuris, are now detained or held in captivity under appalling conditions.

National asylum policies and procedures within Europe vary widely, and are often slow and inconsistent. The Dublin III regulations have triggered circular movements of Darfuris reluctant to apply for asylum in countries such as France and Belgium for fear of being deported to Italy. They try to reach the UK, their preferred destination, but are at risk of being arrested and deported because they do not have any documentation. Thus, they forego any international protection. According to some lawyers, recent forced returns to Sudan have violated international law, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. Local authorities limit the provision of humanitarian assistance in many areas, and migrants and asylum-seekers lack shelter and housing in Italy, France and Belgium. Combined, European policies and actions are intended to act as a deterrent.

This study documents, in some detail, the inhumane consequences of Europe's repressive approach to migration and lack of responsibility-sharing across European countries. Mental health issues are a major concern for irregular Darfuri migrants who have escaped conflict in Sudan, suffered extreme abuse in Libya and find themselves in limbo and poorly treated in much of Europe. Their aspirations of reaching a continent where they believe human rights are respected can be badly dashed. **Many young men display the symptoms of trauma**, yet services to address this are very limited.

Voluntary organisations have stepped into the breach where governments have failed, providing life-saving and other assistance to Darfuri migrants (among others). Many of these organisations as well as networks of lawyers are playing an important role in holding European governments to account against the international conventions they have signed up to. The solidarity amongst the Sudanese migrant community is also striking, while on the road and sleeping rough, as well as in the UK, mirroring social support networks in Sudan.

This study has revealed a **fundamental failure of protection**, by the Sudanese government, the EU and governments along the migration journey. This begins in Darfur, where the failure to protect certain groups is part of the reason why young men leave. Thereafter, at every stage in their journey, Darfuri migrants and refugees face discrimination and risks to their safety, to an extreme extent in Libya. This continues in Europe, a continent that aspires to abide by and promote international conventions and human rights.

9.2 Recommendations

The findings of this study provide an opportunity to ensure that policy discussions and decisions on migration from Sudan, *as a country of origin* (as opposed to a transit country), are based on evidence – in other words, based on what we know about who is leaving and why, and their experiences en route.

Our findings lead to four sets of policy recommendations aimed at different aspects of the migration process. The first is about approaching migration management as a wide set of intersecting challenges facing Darfur. The second set deals with the need to address the root causes of migration from Darfur, which are to a large extent also the unaddressed causes and consequences of the conflict. The third set addresses the need to improve the treatment of Darfuri refugees during their journey,

including in the various European countries they pass through or stay in. The fourth set of policy recommendations is about increasing opportunities for safe and legal migration from Darfur. Each of these is elaborated below:

1. Address migration management as one of a complex set of challenges facing Darfur after years of conflict and a protracted humanitarian crisis

Recent and current migration from Darfur to Europe is the result of the complex interaction of multiple factors, many of which are linked with the causes of the conflict itself and with the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Migration to Europe is a reflection of the ongoing crisis in Darfur, and will continue until a resolution is found. Migration management therefore needs to be seen as one of the multiple challenges facing Darfur.

1.1 Sustainable and effective migration management within Sudan requires an understanding of the many causes, drivers and consequences of migration.

This needs to go beyond an approach dominated by criminalisation, border control and smuggling and trafficking. It means understanding the whole process of migration, its root causes in Darfur and Sudan, the national and regional political and economic processes driving migration to Europe, the agency or choice that migrants have, the timescale and the various factors that facilitate and constrain migration along the entire journey (including social networks, communications technology and smuggling and trafficking systems). Such systemic thinking will lead to a broader range of policy measures and interventions to address the structural causes of forced migration, to facilitate migration to support livelihoods and to improve the circumstances of potential migrants in Sudan and along their migration journey. This study provides the systemic analysis that can underpin a more comprehensive approach to migration management. Specifically:

1.2 Approach migration from a protection, humanitarian and livelihoods perspective.

The movement of young Darfuris from Sudan to Europe is a protection, humanitarian and livelihoods issue. It is a humanitarian issue because young Darfuri men leave Sudan because they have experienced a protracted humanitarian crisis and a livelihoods issue because they have no hope of ever being able to earn a livelihood or take up the social responsibilities expected of them. It is a protection issue because they face ongoing risks to their safety from attacks, detention and abuse in Sudan and at every stage of their journey. It is recommended that the EU support

the analysis and monitoring of these aspects of migration to inform policies and responses.

1.3 Ensure aid programming is conflict-sensitive.

Any aid-funded programming intended to tackle migration – whether part of the Khartoum Process or other initiatives – must be politically informed and conflict-sensitive, underpinned by an understanding of the political drivers of migration. This is particularly important as aid agencies move from humanitarian to development interventions, which connect more closely with government and its agenda. Projects with the government of Sudan need to be carefully assessed in light of its actions in Darfur (and with other conflict-affected, marginalised and oppressed populations). The EU and its Member States must be more transparent and accountable regarding what is funded under the Khartoum Process, and through which channels.

2. Address the root causes of forced migration of Darfuris to Europe

Young men from particular ethnic groups are leaving Darfur for Europe because of systemic persecution, which manifests itself in frequent attacks and/or permanent fear of attack, harassment (including detention and torture) and discrimination in finding employment. A large proportion are from the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit ethnic groups, and have a history of displacement as a result of conflict. IDPs and students from these ethnic groups were particularly vulnerable to harassment and abuse. Some of this violence exists because the root causes of conflict remain unaddressed, including issues of land rights, access to resources and discrimination against certain ethnic Darfuris in employment practices more broadly. Migration of young Darfuris is mostly forced rather than voluntary, and can only be tackled by addressing its root causes. At a structural level, this will involve actions by the Sudan government, with the support of the EU and others:

2.1 Ending the persecution of particular Darfuri groups. To remove the political drivers of migration, the Sudanese government must promote truly equal citizenship for Darfuris, allow freedom of expression, assembly and association, and end attacks, harassment and surveillance of IDPs and Darfuri students of particular ethnic groups. Impunity for perpetrators of violence has to end. The EU and Member States should initiate a dialogue with the government of Sudan on the rights of Darfuris in Sudan, and should ensure that human rights are at the heart of their engagement with the Sudanese government. They should consider making any cooperation conditional on significant progress in ending the persecution of

Darfuris and addressing the unresolved causes of conflict (see below).

2.2 Address unresolved causes of conflict and ongoing violence. This requires the Sudanese government, with support from the EU, donor governments and other regional stakeholders, to address issues of land rights and occupation, access to natural resources, and an acceptable resolution (for all parties) to widespread displacement. The narrative that the conflict is over and that violence has decreased is not borne out by the findings of this study or by the experience of many Darfuris. Instead, renewed efforts are needed at national, regional and international levels to address the unresolved causes of conflict.

Without progress on these structural issues it will be difficult to achieve meaningful change. However, this will take time and more immediately actionable recommendations include:

2.3 Step up monitoring of protection for IDPs and students. There is an urgent need to step up protection for IDPs and students in particular. This requires greater involvement of agencies with a mandate for protection, such as the ICRC and UNHCR, to monitor the harassment, arrest and detention of these groups, as well as ongoing attacks, and bring reports of abuse to the attention of the relevant authorities in the government of Sudan, and to European governments.

2.4 Support livelihoods. Loss of livelihoods is a contributing cause of migration to Europe, and is closely linked to displacement, limited freedom of movement and access to land, and to discrimination. Aid programming to support livelihoods is very much needed in Darfur, although the operating environment for international and national agencies is heavily regulated and constrained. The EU, and other donors, should continue to exert pressure on the Sudanese government to allow access to those in need of humanitarian and development assistance. Livelihoods programming for IDPs could include skills training, agro-processing and small loans (drawing and building on previous studies).¹⁵¹ Two things should be noted. First, unless issues of land rights and access to resources are resolved, the impact of any aid to support livelihoods will be limited. Second, livelihood support – while needed – may not reduce migration. Forced migration is linked to ongoing violence and harassment, and for many Darfuris migration itself is a necessary component of livelihoods.

151 See for example <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6515.pdf>; <http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/Taking-Root.pdf>.

3. Address protection and humanitarian needs along the migration journey

There are certain steps that can be taken immediately to address protection and humanitarian needs for Darfuris along their journey, and structural steps that would significantly improve conditions for Darfuris and other asylum-seekers in Europe. Structural steps include:

3.1 Decision-making about forced returns should be informed by the findings of this study regarding systemic persecution of certain groups. This study shows that some Darfuris in Darfur and Khartoum continue to face persecution, whether in the form of attacks, harassment or discrimination or deliberate restrictions on their ability to earn a livelihood. Some EU Member States have forcibly deported Darfuris, while other Darfuris have returned with IOM assistance or on their own from Libya and European countries. Little is known about their fate when back in Sudan, or the extent to which some of the IOM returns are voluntary. EU Member States must take responsibility for monitoring the welfare of Darfuris they have deported from Europe back to Sudan, whether directly or through IOM or another partner. In addition, IOM needs to monitor Darfuris and other Sudanese returning to conflict zones. Some planned forced returns have been stopped by the European Court of Human Rights or by legal action through local or national courts. Articles 3 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights specify that no one shall be subject to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and that anyone whose rights under the Convention are violated shall have an effective remedy. The Convention should be the framework of reference for assessing removal cases.

3.2 Address inconsistencies in asylum regulations and increase burden-sharing. Darfuris move from country to country in Europe because asylum procedures and provisions vary between EU Member States, and because they fear being deported back to Italy under the Dublin III regulations. The fear of removal to Italy means that Darfuris may not apply for asylum in certain countries, and therefore remain undocumented (or without legal status) and outside of any legal protection or state assistance programmes (including shelter). Greater burden-sharing across EU Member States would give Darfuris the opportunity to apply for asylum safely in the European country with which they have the closest connection, operating within official systems and procedures rather than living precariously outside them.

The more immediate steps that need be taken to address protection and assistance needs are elaborated below. It is understood that governments of EU

countries are trying to balance the demands of their political constituencies to reduce migration with their obligations under international refugee, humanitarian and human rights laws (including the European Convention on Human Rights). In this sense, inadequate protection and assistance forms part of a strategy of deterrence. However, some basic provision needs to be made to preserve our common humanity. This cannot be left to volunteer groups alone.

3.3 Provide adequate shelter, food and water for refugees in transit and those waiting for asylum claims to be considered. Asylum-seekers or Darfuris who do not apply for asylum for fear of being returned to the country of first entry under the Dublin framework or because they want to join relatives in another country are not being adequately protected or assisted. All should be provided with adequate shelter, food and water, according to internationally agreed humanitarian standards, for example the Sphere Standards. For those who apply for asylum, the EU Directive on minimum standards for the reception of asylum-seekers needs to be implemented. Too many Darfuris (and other migrants and refugees) have to wait for long periods to apply for asylum without adequate shelter or other assistance. The protection of Darfuri minors in Europe has to be prioritised and assured.

3.4 End police violence against migrants and refugees in transit or waiting for asylum claims to be processed. Throughout their journey within continental Europe, Darfuris have been subjected to police violence, ranging from violent arrest and apprehension at border crossings to being tear-gassed and having their tents and possessions destroyed or confiscated. How and why this is happening must be investigated, and it must be brought to an end.

3.5 Provide treatment for trauma for Darfuris in transit and in destination countries. Many Darfuris in Europe experience trauma as a result of their experiences during their journey, particularly in Libya. There is currently little provision to address such trauma. Improved provision of services by the state and by other qualified organisations to address trauma among Darfuris, along their journey and at their destination is needed. This would require sensitive interaction with Darfuris, and safe and confidential spaces and services, sometimes over an extended period depending on the individual case.

3.6 Improve communication about asylum procedures and rights in Europe. Darfuris are poorly informed about asylum procedures and rights in Europe. Further exploration is needed into why information is not reaching Darfuri migrants, before and after

they apply for asylum, so that more effective means of communication can be found, for instance through closer collaboration with Sudanese community leaders, NGOs and volunteer groups. Communication needs to be improved particularly on the rights of minors for protection regardless of asylum applications, and family reunification.

4. Increase opportunities for regular migration and legal pathways for Darfuris to claim asylum

4.1 Grant asylum to Darfuris who experience persecution. Contrary to recent UK Home Office policy that assesses Khartoum as safe for non-Arab Darfuris, and moves to change asylum policies in France and Belgium, Darfuris from certain ethnic groups, particularly the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit and other smaller non-Arab groups, continue to have a well-founded fear of persecution either because of attack and harassment or because displacement, occupation of land and discrimination restrict their ability to earn a livelihood. The Sudanese state and its closely-aligned militia are the agents of this

persecution. This must be given due and serious consideration in claims for asylum in Europe.

4.2 Facilitate legal migration for Darfuris out of Sudan. Migration is essential for safety and livelihoods, and restricting movement through border controls, detention or forced returns will not stop Darfuris from trying to leave Sudan. Instead, it increases the risks they face from smugglers and traffickers, whose businesses flourish in such circumstances. It also exposes them to human rights abuses in Libya. More open channels for legal migration to Europe are necessary as long as Libya and other regional destinations remain in crisis. Facilitating legal migration requires improved access to exit visas and passports for Darfuris by the Sudanese government, without discrimination, and facilitating the issuing of birth and marriage certificates to those without either, including for those migrating legally through family reunification. Further investigation is needed into the options for and obstacles to regular migration for Darfuris to the Gulf countries, Egypt and other countries in the region.

Annex 1

Frameworks and concepts that informed the study

The research used the livelihoods framework adapted for conflict-related emergencies (Lautze and Raven-Roberts, 2006: see below), combined with theories and frameworks of migration (as, for example, provided in Foresight, 2011; Van Hear et al., 2012; Carling and Talleras, 2016). Collinson (2009) has recommended the use of the adapted livelihoods framework to help analyse the social and economic processes that influence migration, its multiple context-specific causes and the dynamics of the migration journey. It has been used by Young (2007) to study the livelihoods of migrants in Libya, and by ODI to understand the motivations, perceptions and strategies of migrants and refugees (see, for example, Svoboda, 2016; Bellamy et al., 2017).

The livelihoods framework combines an analysis of wider structural political, economic and social causes and drivers of migration with the individual agency and decision-making of migrants themselves. The framework includes assets, policies, institutions and processes, strategies and goals (see Figure 9). Together, these elements can help analyse vulnerability, opportunity and the outcome of migration. **Assets** relevant to migration may include income, access to credit and remittances (financial), access to social and migrant networks (social), education and skills (human), access to land (physical) and connections to structures of power, for example to political authorities and militia (political). The mix of assets available to individual households helps to explain varying levels of vulnerability for different groups (for example linked to ethnicity, political affiliation and access to land), and therefore whether or not they are forced to leave Sudan, as well as their ability to leave, which may in turn be dependent on their financial assets and/or links to diaspora networks outside Sudan.

A number of policies and processes may create vulnerability and risks for particular groups and impact living conditions, and therefore the incentive or need to migrate. Within Darfur, **processes** such as protracted conflict and displacement, drought and environmental degradation and human rights

violations are likely to be important. Regional political processes, conflict and instability (for example in Libya, Egypt and South Sudan) create both constraints and opportunities outside Sudan. Historical processes can be an important determinant of future migration strategies. EU, European country or Sudan government **policies** can also be expected to facilitate or constrain migration, and have consequences for the experience of migrants (including their welfare and protection). Relevant policies will include not only migration policies but also asylum policies, aid policies and policies concerning IDPs.

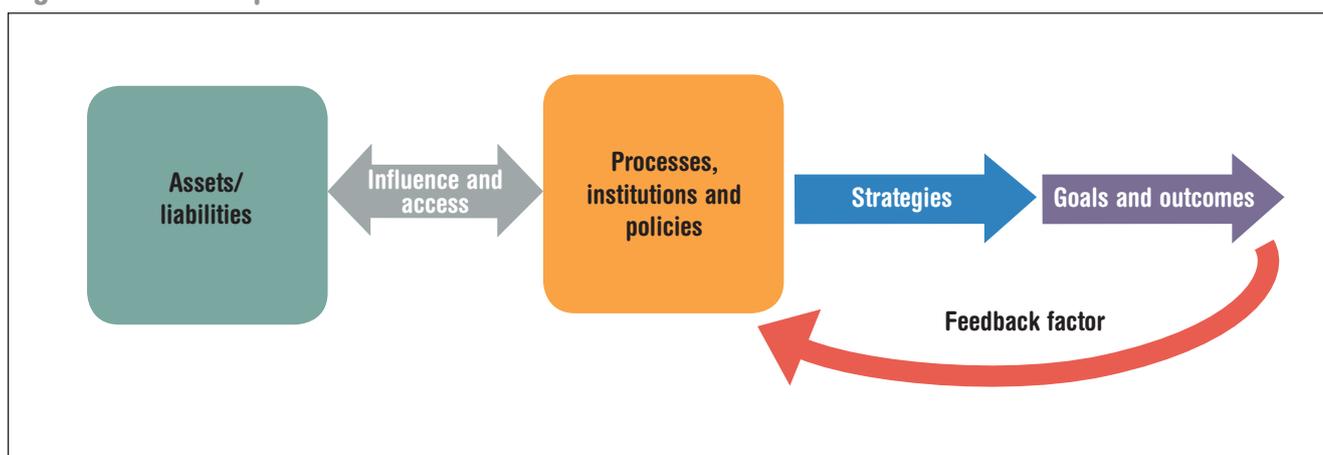
In migration, infrastructure (e.g. Crawley et al., 2015), mediating factors (Van Hear et al., 2012) or intervening **facilitators** or **obstacles** (Foresight, 2011) are important because they influence migrant options, aspirations and decision-making, as well as the risks migrants face on their journey. These include communication networks, technology (e.g. social media), diaspora links, visa regimes and smuggler and trafficking networks. Facilitators and obstacles affect how people perceive the possibility of migration, and are a key component of migrant decision-making and the success of migration journeys. This study examines these aspects particularly in relation to the role of information, social media and networks in **decision-making**, how migrants make their decisions, and the role of smuggling and trafficking networks in migrant decisions, experience and destinations. The feedback loop in the livelihoods framework (see Figure 9) adds an important dimension as migration outcomes will have an effect on aspirations, facilitators and obstacles (e.g. smuggling networks), institutions (social and power relations) and assets. As such, the **consequences** of migration on the family left behind, on communities and populations are an important dimension of the study of migration, from the immediate impact on the household's livelihood to the wider economic and political impact on particular communities and on Darfur and Sudan more broadly.

Migration strategies have different timeframes, destinations and motivations. In Darfur, for example, migration strategies include seasonal or long-term labour migration to different parts of Darfur, Sudan or beyond, migration in response to drought or

famine and forced migration and displacement due to conflict, violence and other human rights abuses. Over time, these strategies may overlap. People may migrate in search of immediate livelihood goals or aspirations, such as food security, safety and protection, or longer-term goals, such as education, secure employment and improved living conditions. **Aspirations** are also influenced by the outcome of the migration of others, the consequences of migration on families and communities and by facilitators and obstacles. The study placed particular emphasis on

migrant journeys and experiences along the journey, to shed light on the impact of migration policies and strategies throughout the migration process; to examine the factors facilitating and constraining migration; experience itself as a driver; the risks faced by migrants and refugees; and how these combined to determine eventual outcomes. For those who decide to migrate, not all will reach their destination. Some will be trapped en route (for example in Libya) or will be deported, some will lose their lives and others will never manage to leave (Foresight, 2011).

Figure 9: The adapted livelihoods framework for humanitarian crises



Source: Feinstein International Famine Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University.

Annex 2

Table for sampling: Central Darfur

Criteria		Proposed locations		
		Zalingei town	IDP camp	Nertete
1. Ethnic group	1. Fur	✓	✓	
	2. Zaghawa	✓		✓
	3. Arab	✓		
2. History of migration	Groups with a long history of migration pre-conflict	✓		
	Groups where migration is a more recent strategy		✓	✓
	Known that some have migrated to Europe recently	✓	✓	
3. Type of settlement/ experience of conflict (i.e. whether displaced or not)	Urban residents (not IDPs) in state capitals	✓		✓
	Rural residents			
	IDP camp		✓	✓
4. Development presence	EU-funded projects	✓		
	Presence of other aid- funded projects	✓	✓	
	No aid-funded projects			✓

Source: EUROSTAT and UK Home Office.

Annex 3

Key informant interviews

	Organisations	Community
UK	Waging Peace British Red Cross Chatham House International Refugee Rights Initiative UN Panel of Experts on Darfur DVOR (Sudanese Organisation, London) Worldwide Tribe Bradford Refugee Forum Revive (Manchester)	Zaghawa Association (London and Birmingham, male and female) Fur community leaders, Birmingham and Manchester Sudanese community leaders, Bradford
Italy	UNHCR (Rome) Oxfam (Rome and Ventimiglia) Baobab (Rome) Terres des Hommes (Ventimiglia) IOM (Rome)	Volunteers
France	Terre d'Errance Care4Calais Plateforme de services aux migrants	Volunteer Community representative (Paris)
Belgium	Sudan Action Group Progress Lawyers Network Plateforme Citoyens Solidaires MSF	
Khartoum	UNHCR IOM WFP UNDP ICRC SRCS DRC DFID British Council ECHO EU Delegation Dutch Embassy Italian Cooperation BMM (GIZ) University of Khartoum (Faculty of Law, Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics) Ahfad University (Department for Migration and Development)	Transporters Money transfer agents Smuggler agents Community leaders (Fur and Zaghawa) Student leaders NGO leaders
Darfur	DRC (Zalingei) ICRC (Geneina) UNHCR (El Fasher) UNDP (El Fasher) Voluntary Rural Network for Rehabilitation and Development (El Fasher) UNAMID (Nyala) GAYA (Nyala)	IDP leaders Tribal leaders (Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit, Meidob, Zayadia, Ereigat) and youth from Misseriya, Beni Halba and Abballa in Zalingei Student leaders Transporters Money transfer agents

Annex 4

Timeline of key policies

2017

October: US lifts economic sanctions

September: Additional hotspots established in Italy

January: Executive order by US President Barack Obama to ease sanctions and lift them in six months' time depending on progress in key areas (including improved humanitarian access, cooperation on counter-terrorism, resolution of the conflicts in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, ending support to armed opposition groups in South Sudan and tackling the Lord's Resistance Army)

January: Italy and Libya sign a bilateral MOU committing to increased cooperation to tackle irregular migration. Includes offer of ten speedboats. Although the status of the agreement is unclear after a Tripoli court suspended it in March 2017, the two governments have continued to implement the measures and programmes it articulates

2016

September: New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants: 193 states express concern for and solidarity with displaced populations and support for countries affected by large population movements

August: Umbrella organisation of opposition groups in Darfur and the Two Areas, Sudan Call, joins the Sudan government in signing the Roadmap Agreement in August 2016; agreement collapses, but ceasefires agreed

August: Report of UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service appears to conclude that Darfuris in Khartoum are not necessarily in danger

Mid-2016: EU starts a training programme for Libyan coastguard officials

March: Initiation of UK–Sudan Strategic Dialogue

2015

December: Second Vice-President Hassabo Abdelrahman announces that all IDP camps in Darfur will be closed by 2017

November: Establishment of EU Trust Fund and Valletta Action Plan to mainstream migration into EU Member States' development cooperation. 'Compacts' with countries of origin and transit countries

October: Establishment of hotspots to improve collaboration between national authorities and European agencies (the European Asylum Support Office, Frontex, Europol) in identifying, registering and fingerprinting arrivals and provision of medical care and information on migrant and refugee rights. Hotspots in Lampedusa, Sicily, and southern Italy

May: Launch of the European Agenda on Migration, consisting of actions to address root causes, border management, an EU asylum policy and new policy on legal migration

April: EU leaders agree to expand Operation Triton (rescue and border control) in the Mediterranean. Countries including the UK and Germany dispatch additional naval vessels to the region

March: Forced returns of detained Sudanese and Eritrean migrants or failed asylum-seekers from Israel start

2014

November: Initiation of the Khartoum Process. Forum for political dialogue and cooperation on migration between EU Member States and countries from the Horn and Eastern Africa, including Sudan

October: AU Khartoum Process starts

Late 2014: Operation Mare Nostrum suspended. Smaller EU rescue mission called Triton is launched, overseen by the European border control agency Frontex. Main concern is border control rather than rescue

September: Sudan accedes to the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, particularly women and children

March: Combating Human Trafficking Act enacted in Sudan, along with a new National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking

March: Egypt sets up the inter-ministerial National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Illegal Migration (NCCPIM), supported by IOM

March: Israel begins implementation of two transfer agreements of Sudanese and Eritrean migrants/asylum-seekers with African countries (Rwanda and Uganda)

2013

November: Government of Sudan launches the *seif-as-sakhan* campaign to resolve the conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile militarily

18 October: Operation Mare Nostrum begins in the Mediterranean

EU commits to supporting Libyan authorities to increase their border security, including an Integrated Border Management concept and strategy

Overthrow of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi

Mass expulsions of Sudanese from Saudi Arabia

3 June: The Israeli government begins implementation of the 2012 amendment to the infiltration law, whereby migrants and asylum-seekers crossing the border via Egypt can be imprisoned for three years, and those from Sudan (classed as hostile territory) indefinitely

May: The Sudanese and Libyan defence ministries agree to activate joint protocols on strategic cooperation in border control, trafficking and illegal immigration

May: The European Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Libya is approved, with an initial mandate for two years to support the Libyan authorities in strengthening the country's land, sea and air borders and developing a broader Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy

2012

August: EU-funded IOM START programme begins in Libya

Start of forced returns from Israel. Israel starts building wall on border with Egypt

2011

Overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya

European Court of Human Rights halts Malta's attempts to return migrants to Libya

2009

Hirsi v. Italy case halts 'push-backs' to Libya

2008

Creation of the Higher Council for Migration (HCM), under the presidency of the vice-president of Sudan

Bilateral agreement signed between Italy and Libya to intercept people before they reach Italy

2004

Libya signs the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Quotas established

Four Freedoms Agreement between Egypt and Sudan gives Sudanese 'special status' exempting them from visa requirements and guaranteeing reciprocal rights of residence, work and property ownership

2003

Dublin II regulation determines the EU Member State responsible for examining an application for asylum within the EU. The regulation maintains that the country that an asylum-seeker first arrives in is responsible for processing the application and prevents migrants from moving on to other European countries to apply for asylum

Repatriation agreement signed between Italy and Libya

1998

Organisation for the Affairs of the Sudanese Working Abroad Act defines the rights and duties of Sudanese labour migrants (e.g. taxes) and the role of the Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA)

1995

End of the Wadi El Nil treaty allowing free movement between Sudan and Egypt following an assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa attributed to Sudanese Islamists

1990

Sudanese–Libyan integration agreement includes provisions for free movement between the two countries

Legislation introduced in Sudan specifying the need for a permit from the Ministry of Labour for Sudanese to work abroad

1976

The Wadi El Nil Treaty between Sudan and Egypt allows Sudanese to enter Egypt without visas to live and work

Annex 5

Number of interviews carried out in different categories

Location	Migrant	Potential migrant	Returned migrant	Family	FGD*	Community Key informant	Organisation Key informant	Transport/agent
N. Darfur		8	4	8	6		3	
C. Darfur		7	2	9	7	8	3	2
W. Darfur		3	1	1	3	11	1	
S. Darfur		4	1		1	2	1	
Khartoum		13	6	7	8	1	16	
Italy	13				2	11	5	3
France	10						3	
Belgium	7					2	5	
UK (London)	6						9	
UK (Birmingham)	6					2		
UK (Bradford)	7					2	1	
UK (Manchester)	7					2	1	
Total	56	35	10	25	27	1	48	
Total	56	35	10	25	27	42	48	5

* This is the number of focus group discussions, not the number of people in the group, which generally ranged from four to six.

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