

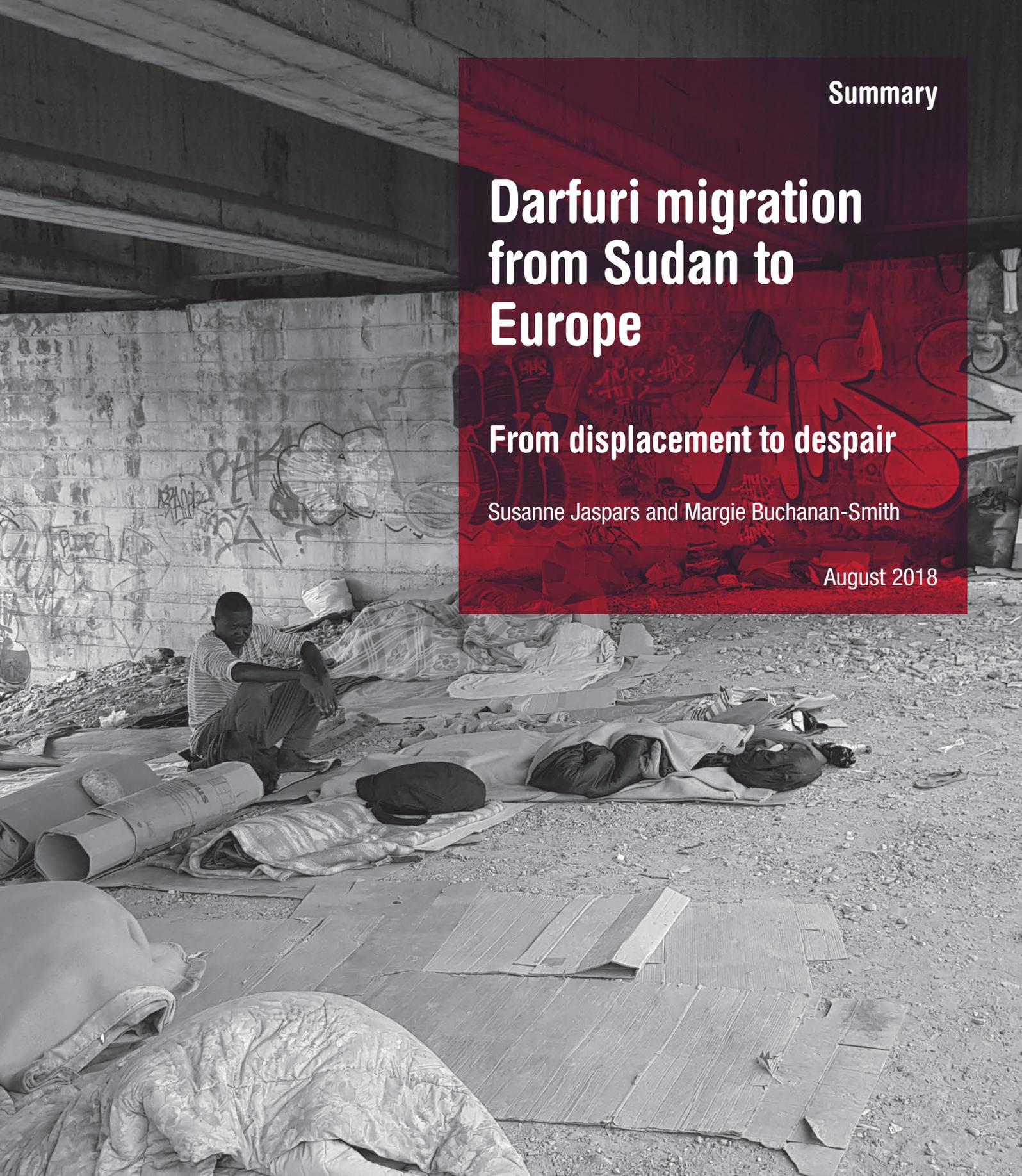
Summary

# Darfuri migration from Sudan to Europe

From displacement to despair

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# Summary

## Introduction

While much attention has been paid to Sudan as a transit country for Africans trying to reach Europe, little attention has been paid to Sudanese trying to reach Europe. Yet the Sudanese were the fifth, sixth and seventh largest categories of migrants and refugees arriving in Italy in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively. This study documents for the first time the experiences of young Darfuris, mainly men, fleeing Sudan for Europe. It is one of the very few research studies that has looked at the whole process of migration for a particular population group – ethnic Darfuris – from their place of origin to their final destination, 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, the journeys that Darfuris make and their experiences along the journey and at their destination, as well as the many influences on migration strategies and decision-making. The study also explores the impact of migration to Europe on families and communities left behind, and on the wider political economy of Darfur.

## Historical migration trends and their relevance

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 the country, 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 start of conflict in 2003. Millions of people were forcibly displaced due to government and militia attacks and the 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 a consequence of restricted options in the region.** The number of Sudanese migrating by sea to Italy increased from 2013 and peaked between 2014 and 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 increasingly difficult due to conflict, political instability, changes in asylum laws and strategies of deterrence. Civil war in Libya forced Sudanese to leave the country and led to the proliferation of smuggling networks. Libya and Egypt thus switched from destination to transit countries on the route to Europe.

Current migration patterns build on those from the past. Some ethnic groups that have a long history of labour migration, the Zaghawa and Fur in particular, form the majority of migrants and refugees to Europe. The history of migration to Libya is especially important, as current migration to Europe is mainly via Libya. Long-term Sudanese migrants in Libya help newly arrived Darfuris find smugglers and safe work. The rise in migration to Europe is in part a result of the limited alternatives in the region.

## Who migrates to Europe?

**The vast majority of Darfuris migrating to Europe are young men.** For Sudanese generally, the proportion of men crossing the Mediterranean to Italy has been 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 a responsibility to take care of their families and to get married. Darfuri women mostly migrate to Europe for family reunification, usually about two years after the man's asylum claim has been accepted. There is some evidence 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 Darfuris migrating to Europe are poor, previously displaced and have little education.** Before they left, most Darfuris had been involved in low-earning casual labour. The ability to save at least a minimal sum of money and to access social networks are also 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 few are well-educated, mid-career professionals with well-paying jobs, who had to flee because their work put them under surveillance and subject to harassment from Sudanese intelligence and security agencies. This includes former employees of the UN-African Union hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). A considerable proportion are students, many of whom had been politically active.

The vast majority of Darfuris in Europe, and those wanting to leave Sudan, have had a history of displacement. Some were 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 actually reached Europe.

**The majority of Darfuris migrating to Europe are from the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit ethnic groups.** As the support base of the opposition, these groups have been 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 other Arab tribes such as the Rizeigat, Misseriya and Zayadia do not appear to migrate to Europe. Many young men from these tribes have instead been recruited as militia by the government, and also into the Rapid Support Force, border guards and police.

## 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 (especially those mentioned above, linked to opposition movements) informed us that they come under close surveillance. Their movements are restricted and teenagers have described how they can be coerced into spying on their relatives. Internally displaced people (IDPs) and students are 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 their social responsibilities, young men – in particular eldest sons – saw leaving for Europe as their only option. Many young Darfuris interviewed for this study expressed deep despair and a sense of hopelessness about their future in Sudan. They had given up believing that things were ever going to get better. They are also 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.

**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. Contrary to the narrative 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 against Darfuris of particular ethnic groups, within Darfur and in Khartoum.

## Routes to Europe and changing destinations

**Migration to Europe is not linear but occurs in stages.** About half of Darfuris interviewed in Europe initially fled to Libya in fear for their lives or to find work. Conditions in Libya, including theft, abuse and risk to life from militia or traffickers, forced them to leave and cross the Mediterranean to Europe. Others planned to travel to Europe when they set out from Sudan. **Many of this group of Darfuris wanted to reach the UK** because of its historical links with Sudan, the presence of relatives and friends and because they believe that the prospects for education and work and respect for human rights are better in the UK than elsewhere. But destinations often changed en route, for example from the UK to France, because of the difficulties and risks involved in reaching the UK. For others the route changed 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. France is now the European country with the highest number of Sudanese asylum claims.

**Routes change quickly in response to border controls, but border controls did not stop migration.** The main migration routes from Sudan to Libya were via Dongola

(Northern Region), or via Malha or Tina in North Darfur. Darfuris also migrate via Chad to find work mining gold in order to fund their onward journey. In 2017 the Sudanese government blocked the Malha and Dongola routes. The most commonly used route by the end of 2017 was via Tina, then Chad and on to Libya.

**Increased border controls and the effects of the Dublin III regulations have resulted in Darfuris being stuck in circular movements within Europe.** There are concentrations of Sudanese, the majority of them Darfuris, in Ventimiglia, Brussels and Paris, and previously in Calais prior to the demolition of the 'Jungle' camp in October 2016. Darfuris circulated continuously between Calais, Paris and Brussels, depending on the 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 by European governments, (or returned themselves), but with little or no follow-up. Sudanese have been deported from France, Belgium and Italy where these governments have 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 their journeys in different ways, 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. This is also expensive, but safer than migrating in stages, which is how most Darfuris travel, paying in instalments. It can take two to three years to reach Europe in this way. Government agents, militia, paramilitary groups and rebel movements are all alleged to be involved in the smuggling of people to Libya.

Migrating in stages has made it possible for poor people to travel to Libya and then on to Europe. It has also **made migrants and refugees 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. Most Darfuris also have to work in Libya to save for the Mediterranean crossing. They are boarding unseaworthy boats, a function of how much they are able to pay, putting them at greater risk of drowning.

**Within Europe, extensive smuggling networks control illegal border crossings** into the UK. But the majority of Darfuris were unable to pay the smugglers, and have little access to the motorway service areas used for getting onto trucks in France and Belgium for the onward journey to the UK because they are controlled by other nationalities. This marginalises the Darfuris compared to other migrants and refugees. It reduces their chances of crossing borders, and puts them at greater risk. It appears that Darfuris are among the poorest migrants and refugees travelling from Africa to Europe.

## **The role of information, social media and social networks in decision-making about migration**

**Social media and information networks are important facilitators of 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. Before leaving Sudan, Darfuris in Darfur and in Khartoum mostly accessed information from friends and relatives already in Europe. This included information on routes and smugglers, the risks involved in migrating and life in Europe. They had very limited knowledge about EU policies, asylum or migrant and refugee rights. Communication is usually via social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp. Messages and pictures, which often gave an unrealistically positive impression of life in Europe, acted as an encouragement for others to leave. This 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 where migrants have given a frank account of conditions in Europe they are rarely believed at home.

**Young Darfuris aspire to be in a place where their human rights are respected and where they feel safe.** Students aspire 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 were to return 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 and refugees are poorly educated, with minimal or no European-language skills. This puts them at a disadvantage compared with many other migrant and refugee groups. 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.

## The experience of Darfuris 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 experienced some form of detention, where they can be beaten, tortured and deprived of basic necessities. They can be detained officially as undocumented migrants, or by smugglers, traffickers or militia, before risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean in unsafe boats.

After arrival in **Italy**, most Darfuris attempt to move quickly through the country. They head to Ventimiglia, where they stay without shelter and with limited assistance. When trying to cross the border into France they are often picked up by the police and subject to abuse and the use of force. Police use of force continues in **France**, and can include the use of tear gas, destruction of tents and confiscation of other goods. Access to services and assistance is again restricted. As in Ventimiglia, Darfuris in Calais and Paris sleep rough in the street or in forests. Arrest and detention is 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 and refugees received was provided by volunteer groups or concerned citizens, rather than by the state. 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.

**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. 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. Most take over a year to find paid work and typically end up in poorly paid menial jobs, for example as guards on construction sites. When settled, Darfuri refugees often apply for their spouse and children to join them through family reunification. This is one of the few opportunities for legal migration available to Darfuris, but the process is difficult, requires documentation that many Darfuri families do not have and can take months. Women who do come to the UK face the toughest challenges in integrating and adapting to life in the UK. Deprived of their extended family in Sudan and with poor language skills, many feel isolated and depressed.

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 as 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 both positive and negative economic, social and political consequences for the family and community left

behind. **The economic consequences for the family depend on the journey and whether the person making it has been able to gain refugee status.** If they do obtain refugee status and are eligible for benefits, or find work – even if only menial jobs – they usually send remittances back home. This is usually after a period of two years. Monthly payments of just €50 or £50 can make a substantial difference to families in Sudan. But the economic consequences can also be devastating for families that 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 increase the economic pressure on families left behind.

**Migration also has a major emotional impact,** particularly for minors separated from their family or if the first news is that a son has been kidnapped or has died. Mothers reported feeling ill, shock and sadness when their sons left, especially if they left without informing the family. 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.

**At the community level,** remittances from those granted asylum may contribute to the building of public infrastructure back home, including wells, schools and clinics. But the departure of so many young men also 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**

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 on border control and stopping smuggling and trafficking networks for migrants moving through Sudan. This has strongly influenced the approach to migration by the government of Sudan. There is no national migration policy in Sudan, but instead a plethora of overlapping and sometimes contradictory policies and institutions.

**The lack of legal migration channels accessible to Darfuris** fuels the flow of irregular migration and dependence on smuggler networks. Government policy towards IDPs and their intention to close the camps in Darfur has further eroded young people's confidence in a positive and secure future in Sudan.

Within Europe, **policies of deterrence and containment** 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. European support to the Libyan coastguard is designed to prevent migrants from making the sea crossing. Engagement with the government of Sudan on migration management (in particular halting smuggling and trafficking networks) and funding available under the Khartoum Process aim to stem irregular migration from the Horn of Africa. This study along with many others demonstrates how closing borders triggers the proliferation of smuggling networks and compromises the safety of those fleeing their country. This is particularly evident in Libya, where large numbers of migrants and refugees, including many Darfuris, are now detained or held in captivity under appalling conditions. The European approach does little to address the root causes of forced migration of Darfuris to Europe, particularly the systemic persecution of particular ethnic groups.

**Reductions in humanitarian aid to 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. It is now an essential strategy in the search for safety.

The EU has a Common European Asylum System, but in practice **there is wide variation in asylum policies between EU Member States.** This is illustrated in the discrepancy in successful asylum requests by Sudanese in Italy, France, Belgium and the UK. This, together with the Dublin regulations and border controls, has contributed to the continuous movement of Darfuris from one country to another. This study documents, in some detail, the inhumane consequences of Europe's repressive approach to migration and lack of responsibility-sharing across European countries.

**Darfuris who reach Europe face a combination** of border controls (Italy–France and France–UK), **slow asylum procedures and poor provision of assistance** (France and Italy), 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** 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 the slow and inadequate processing of their cases.

Above all, 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. Finding themselves in limbo and poorly treated in much of Europe, Darfuris' aspirations of reaching a continent where they believe human rights are respected can be badly dashed.

## 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.

The findings lead to four sets of policy recommendations aimed at different aspects of the migration process.

### 1. Address migration management as one of a complex set of challenges facing Darfur after years of conflict and a protracted 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 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). 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. Young Darfuri men leave Sudan because they have experienced a protracted humanitarian crisis and they have no hope of ever being able to earn a livelihood or take up the social responsibilities expected of them. 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 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 the 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

Migration of young Darfuris is largely forced rather than voluntary, and can only be tackled by addressing its root causes. At a structural level, this will involve actions by the Sudanese government, with the support of the EU and others:

**2.1 End 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 the conflict (see below).

**2.2 Address the 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 and access to natural resources, and promote 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. 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, in particular for IDPs and students. This requires greater involvement of agencies with a mandate for protection, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to monitor 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.** Aid programming to support livelihoods is sorely 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).<sup>1</sup>

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.

### **3. Address protection and humanitarian needs along the migration journey**

There are measures 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 the systemic persecution of certain groups.** Little is known about the fate of Darfuris who have been forcibly deported back to Sudan from the EU, or the extent to which some International Organisation for Migration (IOM) returns are voluntary. EU Member States must take responsibility for monitoring the welfare of Darfuris 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.** 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.

More immediate steps to address protection and assistance needs include:

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<sup>1</sup> See for example [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6515.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6515.pdf) and <http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/Taking-Root.pdf>.

- 3.3 Provide adequate shelter, food and water for refugees in transit and those waiting for asylum claims to be considered.** All migrants 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. 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 in continental Europe, Darfuris have been subject to police violence. 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.** 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.** Further exploration is needed into why information is not reaching Darfuri migrants (for example about asylum procedures and their rights in Europe), 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.



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