

**Displaced persons in Khartoum: current realities and post-war scenarios**

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## **Table of contents**

List of tables

List of abbreviations

Acknowledgements

Summary

Prelude

The context

Displacement: causes and some basic facts

IDPs in figures

IDPs in Khartoum - the camps:

1. Wad Al Bashir
2. Al Salam Omdurman
3. Jebel Awlia
4. Mayo Farms

General observations

The question of repatriating IDPs: some fallacies and challenges

IOM's plan for the return and reintegration of IDPs (2004):

1. Objectives
2. Expected outcomes

Conclusions

Appendices

References

### **List of tables**

Table (1): Selected principal countries for world's IDPs

Table (2): Estimated population of the four IDP camps 2004 (HAC)  
and available services

Table (3): Number of IDPs in camps around Khartoum

### **List of abbreviations**

ACORD	Agency for International Cooperation and Development
ADVR	Administration of the Displaced and Voluntary Return
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistic
FAR	Fellowship of African Relief
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOS	Government of the Sudan
HAC	Humanitarian Assistance Commission
HAI	HelpAge International
IARA	Islamic African Relief Agency
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RC	Red Crescent
SCC	Sudanese Council of Churches
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army

UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Program

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## Summary

The objective of this report is to achieve the following aims:

1. Gather available information on IDPs in the international literature, studies, reports and documents issued by NGOs and international organizations working in the Sudan.
2. Gather information about living conditions of IDPs in camps around Khartoum and, where possible, provide figures showing the size of the problem.
3. Inquire about the option of repatriating IDPs to former places of their residence and some of the aspects related to this.

The report is based on a review of available literature on IDPs, including reports and documents. It is also based on interviewing government officials at the Humanitarian Assistance Commission (HAC). The section on living conditions of IDPs in the major camps is based on field visits to camps and unstructured interviews with 79 IDPs. The rationale behind conducting these interviews with IDPs is not so much about getting representative views, but rather to give a general idea about issues related to living conditions and people's take on the question of repatriation. Based on the above, the following summary can be made:

1. Displacement is caused by a mixture of complex factors. Some of these factors are explicit (natural calamities - desertification, food shortage and hunger - civil wars, ethnic conflicts and the generalized insecurity resulting from these factors), while others are implicit in the political economy of the Sudan. Political instability, misguided development policies and an ailing economy are some of the implicit factors that have been at work for a long time, creating an environment conducive to violence, massive population movements and a protracted decay in state institutions.
2. Displacement is a problem of a large-scale magnitude. Presently the total number of IDPs in the Sudan exceeds 5 million, which is the biggest figure worldwide. Despite this, the available literature on IDPs in the Sudan is scanty, something which is reflected in the lack of knowledge about the real magnitude of the problem and its socioeconomic and political implications.
3. Since the large-scale emergence of IDPs in the Sudan in 1983, the government has failed to develop any clear policy or vision to deal with the problem on a long-term basis. The government views the IDPs first and foremost as a security problem. This is evident from the locations of IDP camps and the restrictions imposed on people who want to access these camps, including researchers and foreign NGOs' staff. This security-laden policy has restricted the scope of alternative policies that could have otherwise been undertaken. The government abdicated its responsibilities toward IDPs, leaving the responsibility for their welfare to NGOs. One result of this policy is the dependency among IDPs on relief food.
4. The IDPs in Khartoum live in the margins of urban life. Their condition is one of destitution. Women, children and individuals from other vulnerable categories

bear the brunt of this marginal life. Windows for job opportunities are virtually non-existent. Significantly, however, the IDPs are exposed to a cultural milieu that is alien to them, which leads to socio-cultural displacement. Irrespective of the attitudes of their host communities, this cultural milieu is likely to have long-term implications for the IDPs.

5. What the different actors want to do with IDPs in the post-war period is as yet far from clear and there are competing views and policies with regard to the kind of policy or policies that are to be implemented. While UN agencies and NGOs are contemplating repatriation and reintegration programs, the government is currently undertaking a policy of integrating IDPs in Khartoum, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority (over 66 percent) of IDPs express their wish to repatriate. Lack of harmonious policy results in a state of confusion for the mediating actors (UN agencies and NGOs) and IDPs alike.
6. Research and policy on post-war scenarios for IDPs should focus on two aspects: repatriation to former places of residence and integration in present locations, which are the primary options for IDPs.



## **Prelude**

During the two decades long civil war in the Sudan, displacement is one of the challenges that have haunted the different governments in the country. The question of the displaced persons has also been at the heart of what Alex de Waal (1997) terms “humanitarian international.” With 4 million IDPs (the number of IDPs in the Sudan is now over 5 million as a result of the escalation of violence in Darfur), the Sudan reportedly has the biggest IDP population in the world. While the challenge during the last 20 years for both the government and donors was about issues related to security, protection and provision of relief food for the displaced, the challenge at the present time is to decide what to do with IDPs in the post-war era. This challenge is made particularly difficult by the numbers of IDPs and their lengthy stays away from their original areas. With the recent peace accords that were signed in Kenya between the government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), the war is practically over. Issues of post-war reconstruction, development and repatriation/relocation/resettlement of IDPs are now priority areas for the government, the civil society, NGOs, and donors.

As grave as it is, the conversation about IDPs has been plagued by a lack of focus and clarity. This is in part a result of the many difficulties inherent in the topic, but is made even worse by incomplete information. The exact numbers and living conditions of IDPs, as well as their status and attitudes about repatriation and resettlement remain unclear. Apart from a small number of reports conducted by NGOs and UN agencies (see below), there is a lack of documentation, and hence a lack of knowledge, about the displaced. This is of primary concern for those engaged with the IDPs and was explicitly expressed to the author by the staff at the Humanitarian Assistance Commission’s (HAC’s) Administration of the Displaced and Voluntary Return (ADVOR). The absence of proper knowledge only serves to increase the potential problems the IDPs represent in the post-war period. This report attempts to provide some knowledge about the lot of the displaced, their numbers, the role of NGOs, and general attitudes of IDPs with regard to repatriation, resettlement and relocation. By so doing, it is hoped that the report will provide some guidelines for both practical engagement and future research. The material on which the report is based includes available literature on IDPs, NGOs’ reports, official documents and field visits to four major IDP camps in Khartoum.

## **The context**

The issue of the displaced is not an isolated phenomenon in the Sudan. In fact, it is both a result and a cause of the state of crisis in the country. Having the biggest number of internally displaced persons in the world is indeed an indicator of the protracted crisis and malfunctioning of state institutions in the country. The Sudan has a total population of 34 million, constituting 8 percent of the total area of Africa. It has not experienced stability since it got its independence from Britain in 1956. The Sudan is characterized by so much ethnic, religious, cultural, climatic and livelihoods diversities that it is described as representing a microcosm of Africa. Nonetheless, in political lingo and international circles, the Sudanese are classified as forming binary social categories on the basis of geography (North versus South), religion (Muslims versus Christians) and ethnicity

(Arabs versus Africans). The emphasis on these broad dichotomies not only polarizes the entire country along these lines and deepens its problems, but it also overlooks the diversities that exist within each of these categories.

Political instability is one of the prominent features in the recent history of the Sudan. Since 1956, the country had six governments; three elected and three military regimes. The oscillation between democratic and totalitarian regimes created a sense of rampant mistrust in the country and affected the capacity of the state's institutions and their response to crisis. Instead of having the ability to deal with conflict in a positive way or mitigate its effect, the state in the Sudan shows a consistent pattern of transferring conflict to a higher threshold. In other words, the state contributes positively to the involution of conflict. How the Sudanese state apparatus reacted to the recent conflict in Darfur is a case in point. The continuous shaping and reshaping of administrative units (centralized systems of government, regional decentralized systems and, finally, scam federalism) resulted in serious grievances and the eruption of civil war in the south in 1983 and, recently, the strife in Darfur, which is creating a serious humanitarian crisis. Hopefully the political actors on both sides will undertake the process of political and institutional reform necessary to guarantee the success of the recently signed peace accords in Kenya.

The process of political decay in the Sudan has had a direct and drastic impact on the economy of the country. Rising rates of poverty (Ali 1994), declining GDP per capita, rising inflation and shrinking international assistance are some of the characteristic features of the Sudanese economy during the 1980s and beyond. As a result of this situation, it was estimated in 1994 that 84 and 94 percent of the population in rural and urban areas, respectively, live below the poverty line (Ali 1994). It is also reported that the middle class in the country has been pauperized (Sahl 2000). The decline of the Sudanese economy prompted people to opt for survival strategies that in many ways contributed to taking problems to higher levels. For example, rural-urban migration to greater Khartoum conurbation in search for security, education and job opportunities contributed to the dramatic increase in the population of the national capital and hence stressed the service sector. According to the 1993 population census, the population of Khartoum alone equals the population of the next 32 largest cities in the country. According to the same census, 25 percent of the population in the country lives in Khartoum (CBS 1993). It is worth noting that 40 percent of Khartoum's inhabitants are IDPs.

The *ad hoc* cultural and religious policies of the incumbent government since 1989 and beyond were the straw that broke the camel's back. The controversial authenticity<sup>1</sup> project resulted in a heightened religious and cultural polarization, which intensified the civil war, resulted in making the Sudan a pariah state, contributed to the violation of human rights and led to massive population movements. The direct bearing of these policies is manifest in separatist sentiments that might dismember the country unless

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<sup>1</sup> Authenticity or *taaseel* (Arabic) is what the project of the post 1989 government is all about. It means going back to one's own roots, and from the perspectives of the incumbent government those roots are necessarily Arabic and Islamic.

serious measures are taken to make the option of voluntary unity enticing. Voluntary unity and national integration are some of the issues that are gaining attention at the present time. The IDPs are at the heart of these issues, particularly in relation to integration. In collaboration with other governmental bodies, HAC is presently undertaking a program of integrating the existing IDP camps around Khartoum into the capital's system through organizing the camps and distributing residential plots to the displaced. This point will be looked at in more detail later in the report.

Political instability, economic malfunctioning, misguided development policies, religious and ethnic polarization are all factors that resulted in conflicts of a protracted nature and culminated in one of the worst humanitarian situations in the world. The second civil war (1983-2004) has reportedly resulted in the loss of 2 million lives, disrupted production systems in the war zone (Ahmed 1992) and destroyed the physical and moral fabric of the society, particularly that of southern Sudanese. Presently the civil society in the south is in shambles. Villages have been razed to the ground destroying all infrastructures, including that of social services such as hospitals and community centers. The civil war also affected women and children (El Nagar 1992) and resulted in the creation of hundreds of thousands of refugees (Assal 2004). The problem of IDPs is therefore an offshoot of the general macro political failures that are adumbrated above. But there are some specific factors that directly cause displacement. These include natural calamities and human-made disasters.

### **Displacement: causes and some basic facts**

The displaced are those people who are involuntarily driven from their original areas. The UN provides a definition that differentiates between displaced persons in general (which can include refugees) and those who are internally displaced. Thus, the UN defines IDPs as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural and human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border” (UN, quoted in Hampton 1998: xv). Forced population movements have extraordinarily diverse historical and political causes and involve people, who, while all displaced, find themselves in qualitatively different life situations and predicaments. Thus, it would seem that the term displacement is analytically useful not as a label for a generalized kind of person or situation, but only as a broad legal or descriptive rubric that includes within it but is not restricted to a world of different socio-economic statuses and personal histories (Assal 2002, Malkki 1995).

Since the resumption of the conflict in southern Sudan in 1983, internal displacement has been at the heart of humanitarian matters in the Sudan. In 1999, the UN estimated the distribution of IDPs within government-controlled areas as follows: some 1.8 million IDPs in Khartoum State, 500,000 in the east and the transition zone, and 300,000 in the southern states. The complexity and fluidity of IDPs' situations in southern Sudan makes it difficult to know the total IDP numbers. The latest comprehensive estimate dates back to USAID's survey in 1994, which confirms the presence of 1.5 million IDPs in the

southern Sudan (Ruiz 1998). Some of those IDPs in southern Sudan just roam around, trapped in rural areas by military operations between government and SPLA troops. The reports on IDPs in the south cover only those who manage to reach the major towns in the region. It is now more than one year since military operations ceased in the south, and the ceasefire has just been extended following the recent Kenya accords. There is thus an opportunity to study and assess the conditions of IDPs in the south. This would fill the gap of knowledge about IDPs and provide a good basis for post-war programs. However, this report only covers IDPs in the north, specifically those in Khartoum.

The IDPs are traditionally farmers, pastoralists and fishermen. In their present context, they earn marginal living as casual and seasonal laborers, petty traders and low-income wage earners. Otherwise they depend on relief food for their survival. The household size is an average of six to seven. As mentioned, the causes of displacement are complex and rooted in the political economy of the country. Two of these causes are explicit, however. These include the drought of the 1980s and the eruption of the second civil war in southern Sudan in 1983. The coincidence of these two causes blurs the distinction between man-made and natural calamities.

The 1984-85 drought resulted in the disruption of traditional production systems in eastern and western Sudan and led to mass displacement from these areas, particularly from Darfur and northern Kordofan. The drought and the consequent famines forced people to move eastward and settle in the outskirts of Omdurman. Northern Kordofan tribes (Kababish, Kawahla, Maganeen and Zaghawa-Kagmar) settled in Sheikh Abu Zaid area in 1985 before they were relocated to Al Salam camp. Some of these displaced persons voluntarily repatriated to their original areas in western Sudan following the recovery of drought-stricken areas in 1988 (Assal 2002). However, droughts in western Sudan recur frequently; a fact that affects the decision of those displaced when considering a return to their former places of residence. For instance, the 1990-91 drought in western Sudan resulted in yet another wave of displacement from Darfur and Kordofan. From 1990 and beyond, the tendency among drought IDPs is to settle in Khartoum on a permanent or long-term basis. A process of transformation is thus underway. The disruption of traditional production systems led to transforming small producers (pastoralists and farmers) either to displaced persons or to impoverished laborers who seek wage labor in urban areas. The eruption of war in Darfur in 2003 further complicated the already beleaguered position of people in that part of the country and resulted in the displacement of about one million individuals. The overwhelming majority of these people are trapped within Darfur, and only a few of them could make it to Khartoum. In March 2004, a few thousands were temporarily accommodated in Mayo camp in Khartoum.

Generally, the majority of IDPs are displaced as a result of war. The displaced from southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains primarily flee their areas as a result of civil war, and they constitute the majority of IDPs in Khartoum. The Dinka represents the biggest ethnic group living in the camps (especially in Jebel Awlia), followed by Nuba and other groups from western Sudan (Darfur and northern Kordofan). It is estimated that 70 percent of IDPs are displaced by wars in different parts of the country. The remaining 30

percent are drought displaced who are predominantly from western Sudan (El-Nagar 1996). War displaced may well exceed 90 percent if recent IDPs from Darfur are factored into the numbers.

The explicit causes of displacement can further be converted into the following simple typology:

1. Displacement may be simply a collateral effect of indiscriminate warfare. Such is the case with the IDPs from the south and the recent ones from Darfur.
2. The *forced regrouping* of people in peace villages and displaced camps, as undertaken by the government in the Nuba Mountains and around Khartoum, is another form of displacement. There is some debate whether or not the people thus regrouped are actually moved by force in a systematic manner. Even if people are trapped into the regrouping because of lack of supplies, the danger of being caught in combat zones or on the assumption that they will receive better services, regrouping people in peace villages and camps is one form of displacement. More indirect forms of obliging people to leave their homes include displacement by *attrition*, as reported by the UN (1999), from the Nuba Mountains, whose population - even if self-reliant in food production - is cut off from other essential supplies, such as medication.
3. Displacement can also be caused by the *disruption of subsistence farming* as a result of armed conflicts, inter-ethnic violence and state intervention. Compounded by drought cycles, this has resulted in a dramatic food shortage problem and eventual forced migration.

The cumulative effect of all displacement factors is a state of chronic insecurity and poverty. This in turn has led to a chronic population drain from the areas thus affected and into transition zones such as western Kordofan, southern Darfur and further north to Khartoum. The northwards movement of the displaced has in turn created other types of humanitarian problems. For example, the displaced in the transition zones are often exposed to economic exploitation by locals. In Greater Khartoum area, large numbers of displaced persons are considered illegal squatters. They are under the threat of forced relocation to settlement sites lacking the necessary infrastructure and services, as we see today in the four official camps in the outskirts of the national capital. Some of the general impacts of displacement on persons and communities can be summarized as follows:

1. The civil war (in different parts of the country, but particularly in the south) destroyed traditional systems of livelihood, e.g. farming, livestock production and fishing. Since the elderly (both women and men) actively engage in production in the countryside, the destruction of livelihood systems marginalized the elderly and eroded their social worth.
2. Community life was rampaged. As a result of the war, traditional mechanisms of arbitration and conflict resolution do not exist anymore. Where they exist, they are paralyzed and cannot function in ways that are conducive to conflict

- resolution and the maintenance of peaceful coexistence between members of the community.
3. War and displacement has also affected the family. In the Sudan, the family is one of the most important social institutions. In addition to its basic role of human reproduction and the socialization of children, the family is where the vulnerable segments of the population, like the elderly, belong and feel at home. The family unit in the war zone was hit hard as individual members went through shattering experiences. Even when members of the family escape death, they end up scattered in different locations within the country, and in extreme cases some members cross international borders as refugees (Assal 2004).
  4. The factors responsible for displacement, outlined above, set into motion a process of population de-stabilization of a considerable magnitude. Based on the figures on IDPs in the Sudan, 17 percent of people in the country are internally displaced. Since war is no longer confined to the south alone, this massive population movement will affect population distribution in most parts of the country. Already the majority of people who still live in the south are stuck in the major towns controlled by the government and the SPLA. The rural areas are just combat fronts for the government, the SPLA and a countless number of other militias.
  5. The majority of people in the IDP category are reduced to relief recipients. Their productive capacities have been eroded and too many of them are cut off from production systems for decades. The challenge of getting back to one's craft after all these years of dependence on relief food is indeed formidable. Procuring an alternative source of livelihood is yet another challenge that faces IDPs and those concerned with IDP's wellbeing.
  6. The massive movement northward of people from the south has affected the demographic structure in northern Sudan. Estimates show that 40 percent of Khartoum's inhabitants are IDPs, and most of these are southern Sudanese fleeing their home areas as a result of war. But IDPs are found in other towns all over northern Sudan as well, including Darfur. It is our argument that this situation will be one of the factors affecting the overall result of the right of self-determination at the end of the interim period. Despite the precarious conditions the IDPs live in, there is a chance to advance national integration through resettlement programs. Khartoum state's authorities are presently embarking on a process of formalizing IDP's position, through the distribution of usufruct residential plots. While this in itself is a positive step toward integrating IDPs, additional measures are needed to make this policy effective and advance the process of integration. These measures might have the unintended effect of creating ghetto areas around Khartoum instead of achieving integration.

### **IDPs in figures**

A lack of consensus over the exact number of IDPs in the Sudan is one of the problems that affect the way the condition of IDPs is understood, and also curtails policy design, implementation and monitoring. Furthermore, the conflicting estimates about the number of IDPs and their distribution also affect relief operations and the provision of services

for the displaced. Until 2002, different reports show that the Sudan has a total of 4 million IDPs, which constitutes the biggest number of internally displaced persons in the world. This figure has become 5 million as a result of the newly erupted civil war in Darfur. The distribution of IDPs within the country and the conditions under which they live are issues of contention between UN agencies, NGOs and the government. Over the recent years, however, different reports have tended to come to an agreeable approximation for the number of IDPs living in camps in and around Khartoum. A recent comprehensive report by CARE and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided a figure of 49,090 as the total number of IDP households living in camps in Khartoum, with 6.5 as the average of household size. The same report provides a figure of 326,209 as the total number of IDPs in the four major camps in Khartoum and other selected squatter settlements in the national capital. These figures concur more or less with the estimates obtained by the author from the HAC.

**Table (1) Selected principal countries for world's IDPs**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of IDPs</b>
Sudan	4,000,000
Angola	1,000,000- 1,500,000*
Colombia	1,400,000
Iraq	1,000,000
Afghanistan	540,000- 1,000,000
Burma	500,000- 1,000,000
Turkey	400,000- 1,000,000*
Bosnia & Herzegovina	836,000
Azerbaijan	576,000
Sri Lanka	560,000
India	520,000
Burundi	500,000
Rwanda	500,000
Lebanon	400,000- 450,000
Uganda	400,000
Russian Federation	350,000*
Peru	340,000

\* Reliable estimate of the number of displaced persons is unavailable

Source: US Committee for Refugees ([http://www.refugees.org/world/statistics/wrs99\\_table5.htm](http://www.refugees.org/world/statistics/wrs99_table5.htm))

The reasons underlying lack of consensus over the numbers of IDPs and their regional distribution are varied. One major reason is that these differing estimates relate to

different points in time. Both the numbers of IDPs and their regional distribution fluctuate over time. Another reason that might explain the variation in the estimates relates to practical strategies such as the allocation of relief food and the provision of services. Inflation of numbers at times of relief distribution is likely to occur. How the IDPs are defined is yet another factor that accounts for the varied estimates. Thus, “whereas UN sources seem to focus on the numbers of southern Sudanese, government estimates seem to include those from western Sudan (southern Kordofan and southern Darfur) and the southeast (Blue Nile Province) who were equally displaced due to war-related factors” (Ibrahim 1995: 36).

Conflicting estimates aside, there are certain aspects in the lives of IDPs that figures fall short of revealing. This is because displacement is not simply an issue of head count of those who are driven from their original areas to seek refuge in other parts of the country. There is a need to differentiate between geographical, socio-economic and socio-cultural connotations of displacement. The geographical connotation of displacement relates to simple movement of people, as a result of factors adumbrated above, from one area to another. A focus on this dimension of displacement ignores the extent to which people are forced to move from one area to another, their patterns of movement and the socio-economic background of people thus displaced.

Since displacement is also a consequence of socio-economic processes through which people are impoverished, it is important to view displacement as a social process in which there are varied statuses and degrees of impoverishment and vulnerability. For example, as a result of war the students and personnel of the University of Juba have become geographically displaced, but they cannot be considered socially displaced. Other similarly affluent or well-off categories that have been displaced by war (businessmen and civil servants) are similarly not considered as displaced in the social sense. The numbers of these categories are very small but the point is that too much emphasis on the process of movement alone blurs some important socio-economic differences, which determine policy design with regard to repatriation, resettlement and integration. Very little is known about those IDPs who are living outside the officially recognized camps. Those IDPs living with their relatives or on their own are said to be relatively better off (Komey 2002: 67) although there are no estimates showing their numbers or living conditions.

The third connotation of displacement (the socio-cultural dimension) has received very little, if any, attention by those concerned about the lot of IDPs. A look at the general public’s conceptions about IDPs will reveal the following:

1. A negative conception of displaced persons who are generally conceived of as a threat to health and social order. This conception, to some extent, underlines the policy of evacuating the IDPs to areas in the outskirts of Khartoum
2. They are held responsible for putting pressure on social services. Congestion in public transport and shortage in consumer goods that was at its peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s were said to be caused by the displaced.
3. They are considered alien to the areas in which they seek refuge.



4. In sum, the IDPs are seen as out of place.

These negative conceptions about IDPs and the concern over their immediate needs result in trivializing the long-term impact of displacement on the displaced themselves. The attention accorded to the IDPs so far has revolved around their need for relief food, immediate security, employment opportunities, medical provisions, and recently, following the signing of peace accords in Nairobi, issues of return and resettlement. Few reports, however, have highlighted aspects that affect the lives of IDPs in Greater Khartoum and are likely to have long-term implications for IDPs. These aspects include poverty (Osman and Sahl 2000), the condition of displaced women in the officially recognized camps (El Nagar 1996) and the socio-cultural dimension of displacement. An update on the condition of IDPs in the major camps in Khartoum was recently provided in a study conducted by CARE and IOM (2003). This study is discussed later in this report when looking at the present situation in the camps.

Osman and Sahl's (2000) report for the Agency for International Cooperation and Development (ACORD) dealt with poverty among IDPs living in Al Salam camp in Omdurman. Osman and Sahl (2000: 4-5) reported that the IDPs in Al Salam camp are relegated to the category of absolute poor, i.e. those who lack common basic needs like food, shelter, clothing and education. According to Osman and Sahl, the factors responsible for the destitution of the displaced are macro in nature and include the following:

1. Factors associated with displacement itself: drought spells, repeated famines, civil wars, rural-urban exodus, and demographic imbalances.
2. Political factors: political instability, bad governance, and lack of transparency.
3. Factors related to ad hoc macroeconomic policy-making: privatization policies and the government's abdication of its responsibilities toward individuals and communities.
4. Factors related to access and control over resources, both material and non-material such as marketable skills, education, networking and organizational skills and bargaining power.

Osman and Sahl concluded that despite the importance of NGOs' interventions, the contribution of these NGOs to combating poverty is questionable. The NGOs, claim Osman and Sahl, target IDPs as passive recipients of relief and assistance. Their interventions are thus carried out at the expense of long-term solutions that could help the displaced to be self-reliant. This type of intervention has contributed to deepening dependency among camp IDPs, eroding their self-confidence and transforming them into continuous relief seekers.

In a report carried out for the World Food Program (WFP), El Nagar (1996) investigated the lot of displaced women in Khartoum and highlighted the changes and imbalances in gender roles and relations wrought by displacement. The survey included the major IDP camps in Khartoum and focused mainly on women. The main findings of the report include the following:

1. The services provided by national and international NGOs (health care, education, feeding, water, environmental sanitation and training programs) fall short of meeting the needs of IDPs. These services are also gender-insensitive, as gender-differentiated needs have not been adequately addressed. Moreover, there is an obvious lack of coordination between the different NGOs operating in IDPs camps; hence they tend to duplicate their activities in these camps (see appendix 1).
2. Women are generally in a disadvantaged situation, characterized by high illiteracy rate (77 percent in the four camps).
3. Women's coping strategies are diversified, but constrained by limited skills and resources and poverty.
4. Food relief is very significant to IDPs, even when it is not sufficient.

The report also provided socio-economic data on education, health, nutrition and public participation of displaced women. It concluded that there is a total lack of public participation by both men and women. There is also no presence of civil society bodies. What exists is an informal cooperation between some voluntary groups and NGOs that is basically related to food ration and assistance. The precarious conditions under which people live represent an impediment to the development of structures that could mobilize people. People are most concerned with securing their basic needs, which include getting involved in income generating activities (El Nagar 1996: 67-8). An update to this report (CARE & IOM 2003) will be provided below, as well as the author's own observations on the camps.

El Nagar's findings with regard to the lot of women are in fact part of the manifestation of the uprooting of communities, a process described by Ibrahim (1995) as socio-cultural displacement. He defines this as "a process by which a community, due to external factors and contrary to its own will, is denied access to objects and symbols that are central to the maintenance and propagation of its socio-cultural identity, value systems and practices." Ibrahim argues that the dispossession of southern agro-pastoralists of their cattle, as a result of civil war and displacement, is one major dimension of socio-cultural displacement. For a southern Sudanese, cattle are more than a means and output of production or an object of consumption. Cattle are cultural symbols that mediate interactions that relate to marriage, ritual performances and settling disputes. The functions cattle have traditionally performed ceased to exist as a result of displacement. People find it hard to accept alternatives to cattle, since some of these alternatives are culturally stigmatized and in normal conditions conceived to stand in contradiction to all that cattle stood for in the home area. It is difficult to uphold these values in conditions of displacement.

Ibrahim maintains that socio-cultural displacement has at least partly underlain the reported increase in psychological and psychiatric disturbances among the displaced. The National Dialogue Conference (1989) dealt with the psychological effect of the war on displaced persons in Khartoum. The Report of the Investigation Committee on the Impact of War reported that the registers of psychiatric hospitals and reports show an increase in the incidence of psychological disorders among southern Sudanese living in displaced

camps and around Khartoum. Schizophrenia and depression were found to be the dominant types of disorders. These stresses question the adequacy of current plans, if there are any at all, regarding what to do with the IDPs in Greater Khartoum. These stresses also have long-term associations and consequences that will continue after the end of war. Some of the problems that are likely to haunt the IDPs are disarticulation and social damage inflicted on those who survived the vagaries of war and displacement.

### **IDPs in Khartoum: the camps**

IDPs in Khartoum make up 40 percent of the capital's current population; they also represent half of Sudan's displaced population. According to the Humanitarian Assistance Commission (HAC), approximately 270,000-300,000 IDPs live in the official camps established by the government during early 1990s. This figure is more or less congruent with the CARE and IOM estimate provided above. There are between 1.8 and 2 million IDPs in Khartoum. Out of these, 273,000 live in camps and the rest live in miserable squatter settlements and other residential areas in Khartoum. Based on HAC's estimates, the four camps (Wad Al Bashir, Al Salam Omdurman, Jebel Awlia and Mayo Farms) host respectively 55,500, 117,000, 52,000 and 58,500 IDPs. Women represent one third of the Khartoum IDP population. Average household size in the camps is 6-7 people. IDPs in the camps are mainly from the western and southern regions of the Sudan including Greater Kordofan, Greater Bahr Al Ghazal, Greater Darfur, Unity and Nile states (Jonglei, Blue and Upper Nile and Unity states) and from Greater Equatoria.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the policy of the government has been to bring IDPs together in fixed locations to simplify the job of providing services to them. Hundreds of thousands of IDPs who were hitherto living in squatter settlements and unfinished buildings and construction sites were literally evacuated to the four camps established by the government in 1992. The policy of evacuating IDPs and relocating them to official camps raised some concerns (cf. Africa Watch 1992, Africa Rights 1995, Cohen and Deng 1998). The concern of UN agencies and other NGOs working in the humanitarian field was that these newly established camps lack the basic infrastructure necessary to make them habitable. The location of these camps in the outskirts of the national capital means that IDPs are cut off from the conurbation and are not able to engage in activities that would enable them to generate income. It also implies that the displaced will have to be provided with relief food, since these camps are far away from areas where the IDPs could seek work as wage laborers.

In 1999, a UN Special Rapporteur provided the following statement on one of these camps:

“The Special Rapporteur and his party were able to visit only one of the camps set up by the government, where, reportedly, conditions, including primary educational and health facilities, are better than in other makeshift camps. It was, nevertheless, apparent that the displaced have basically been concentrated in an isolated and barren area, removed from any commercial center offering work opportunities. There is no general relief distribution for the displaced in Khartoum who are considered to be long-stayers, and many complained of insufficient food and

clothing. According to reports confirmed by the United Nations, food security in camps such as this one is precarious and malnutrition among children under five ranged from 12 to 24 per cent in 1997-1998. Of particular concern to the Special Rapporteur was the extremely precarious situation of displaced women and children, in the camps or on city streets. In particular, women lack adequate means of survival for themselves and their children. Many have no choice other than to engage in practices such as beer-brewing (traditional in the south, but strictly forbidden in the north under Shariah law) and prostitution. Displaced southern women charged with these crimes make up 95 per cent of Khartoum's Omdurman Prison population. Another alarming feature is the imprisonment of girls as young as 10, serving sentences for petty crimes, such as theft. The legal situation of these women and girls was examined during the visit to the prison by the Special Rapporteur's team." (UN Commission on Human Rights 1999).

Below are some characteristics of these camps as they stand presently.

### **Wad Al Bashir**

With a population of approximately 55,500, Wad Al Bashir is located along the southwest edge of Omdurman. There are three water containers in the camp. There are also four primary schools. The camp is in the middle of several re-planned and squatter areas, where the vast majority of inhabitants are also displaced. A process of organizing the camp into a proper residential area is currently underway and almost all the houses in the camp were destroyed. This process is undertaken by Khartoum state, whose current policy is to integrate the displaced into the capital's urban system. It is to be noted that this is a unilateral policy that did not take into account the point of view of the IDPs whose houses are being razed to the ground. Based on our field visits, the majority of people claim that they will return to their original areas, although they are not certain if they will stay there indefinitely. CARE and IOM's (2003) report concurred with these findings, concluding that the majority of IDPs intend to repatriate to their original areas, although they mentioned some conditions that must be fulfilled before their repatriation. During our visit, people were very busy building their homes. The materials that they use range from mud to carton, making use of waste material. Many of the displaced had no time for us when we visited the camp.

The lot of Wad Al Bashir IDPs is precarious at the present time. They are facing the coming rainy season without completed homes. They need immediate support, either through the provision of building materials and/or covering the costs of building, or through the distribution of tents as a short-term solution allowing people to protect themselves from the rains. The timing of this planning process in Wad Al Bashir is totally inappropriate. It should have been started long enough before the rainy season to allow people to rebuild.

### **Al Salam Omdurman**

With an estimated population of 117,000, Al Salam camp is close to Wad Al Bashir camp. Families displaced from other parts of the Sudan, including those affected by

urban planning policies in Khartoum, are directed to this camp, resulting in a rapid population growth in recent years. This camp is part of Al Salam locality, which was established 16 years ago to compensate those who were affected by the floods in 1988. The camp was erected in 1992 to host those IDPs who were expelled from different parts of Khartoum. At the present time, however, its inhabitants include people who are not originally displaced, because it is not difficult to sneak in and get a plot of land there. There are seven water containers that serve people. There are also 11 primary schools that have been built by NGOs and then handed over to the Ministry of Education, which runs them using the same curriculum as in other public schools. Primary health care units also exist and are run by NGOs (notably the Sudanese Council of Churches - SCC). Like Wad Al Bashir, this camp is also undergoing a process of reorganization and most of it has already been destroyed. According to HAC, the camp will be divided into 24 residential neighborhoods. Currently, though, a state of confusion is rampant in the camp. People are not sure whether they will get plots or not, upon organizing the camp and they complain about the unjust criteria for the distribution of lands. Moreover, dismantling the old camp has created a problem of water shortage and now many IDPs have to buy water from vendors at high prices.

In Al Salam Omdurman, as well as in Jebel Awlia, sultans play important roles in daily life. They are the link between the authorities and IDPs. They also manage disputes that occur in the camp. Unless it is a serious problem that requires the intervention of the police or security forces, the Sultan brings the parties together and settles the dispute. This type of traditional authority still functions, although there are changes that are brought about by virtue of the new situation. For instance, whereas in the past sultans were geographically separated, now there are many, from the same ethnic group, in the same camp. Each Sultan is responsible for a certain sector or part in the camp.

In Al Salam Omdurman, the Sultan is also involved in the process of ascertaining entitlements to residential plots. He knows the people in the camp and issues “residence certificates” that people must submit as proof of their presence in the camp. One issue that people are worried about is that the process of organizing the camp into a proper residential area might entice intruders who would buy their way into these camps to get plots and in the process some IDPs might lose their rights. This issue is real to the extent that there are land speculators who frequent the camp. This underlines the notoriously high land prices in Khartoum. Jokingly, an official at HAC mischievously related: “probably I should give a visit to the Sultan. I might get a plot there, after all!” The way things appear now, land speculation in these IDP camps is imminent.

### **Jebel Awlia**

With a population of approximately 52,000, Jebel Awlia camp is located in the southeast of Khartoum and is mainly occupied by war-affected populations from the Nuba Mountains and southern Sudan. In terms of buildings, this camp looks much better than Al Salam and is not different from other squatter settlements. What makes it different is its official status as an IDP camp. However, not everybody who is living in this camp is displaced. In fact, some of the inhabitants are from Gezira state. Over the years, many

people who are not displaced have found their way into these camps to get plots where they could pinch their makeshift homes. The likelihood of getting a legal residential plot in the future creates an incentive for people to sneak into the camp. Unlike Wad Al Bashir and Al Salam, the authorities did not start organizing this camp. One of the reasons the government is not working on this camp is because there is a conflict over land ownership. Much of the camp's residential area is claimed by a private company - Sundus - for agricultural activities. It is unclear how this conflict will be resolved. The authorities at HAC are contemplating relocating people to other areas, probably Mayo or Haj Yousif. There are 62 boreholes, representing the main source of water for the inhabitants. There are also seven primary schools.

Although some of the displaced manage to obtain casual jobs on construction sites or as domestic workers, the majority cannot afford to pay the cost of transportation into town or to other far locations, since Jebel Awlia is very far compared to the rest of the camps (it is located 40 kilometers from the center of Khartoum). As we noted above, not all of the camp dwellers are war-displaced from the south; some have migrated to Khartoum for economic reasons or for reasons related to drought and deforestation. As things stand, despite efforts under way to promote income-generating projects, this population does not have real prospects of economic and social integration; hence their fervent desire for peace that would enable them to go back home. In Jebel Awlia, out of the 24 households that we randomly interviewed, only three said they intend to stay where they currently are when peace is established. The rest expressed their wish to repatriate to their original areas.

### **Mayo Farms**

With an estimated population of 58,500, the camp is located immediately south of Khartoum and occupied by a war-affected population from the south and Nuba Mountains. Adjacent areas to Mayo camp have been organized and sold/allocated to citizens, including IDPs, over the past years. The organized parts of Mayo are inhabited by different categories of people: some of them are those who were compensated for losing their plots in other parts of Khartoum, others are IDPs, and yet others are those who could buy plots there. However, there are three areas that are primarily limited to IDPs. While the organized parts are built of mud, the ones inhabited by IDPs are made of makeshift materials and people are crammed in small plots. In Mayo, boreholes are the source of water for the inhabitants and there are 75 boreholes that were dug by the UNICEF, although it is unknown whether all these boreholes are presently functioning or not. Pit latrines were dug by FAR. There are six primary schools in Mayo. There are health care units, one of which is run by CARE where it operates a feeding center and literacy class for displaced women.

**Table (2) Estimated population of the four IDP camps in 2004 (HAC) and services available**

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Number of households</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Number of primary schools</b>	<b>Water sources</b>
Wad Al	7,000	45,500	4	3 containers

Bashir				
Al Salam	18,000	117,000	11	7 containers
Jebel Awlia	8,000	52,000	7	62 boreholes
Mayo	9,000	58,500	6	72 boreholes
Total	42,000	273,000	28	-----

Source: HAC

The estimate of CARE and IOM (2003) of the total number of IDPs living in camps (official and non-officials) is provided in the following table:

**Table (3) Number of IDPs in camps around Khartoum (CARE and IOM 2003)**

Camp	Total number of households	Total population
Idd Babiker	2,571	16,712
Baraka	4,006	26,039
Salama South	2,123	13,800
Soba Aradi	3,505	22,783
Mayo Farm	5,286	34,359
Mayo Village <sup>2</sup>	5,000	32,500
Dikhenat	1,600	10,400
Jebel Awlia	7,429	48,289
Wad Al Bashir	3,286	21,359
Al Salam	14,286	92,859
Total	49,092	319,100

Source: CARE and IOM 2003, p. 28.

In 2003, CARE and IOM, in partnership with the government of the Sudan (GOS) and the UN Development Program (UNDP) conducted a study in the above four IDP camps and other selected IDP areas. The study covered 6,300 IDP households. The result of this study is a demographic and socioeconomic profile for those IDPs who are living in camps. The study also touched on the question of repatriation/integration of IDPs. The following are some of the main findings of this study (IOM and CARE 2003: 14-27):

1. Some 44 percent of all IDPs where the study was conducted, of all age groups, have no education.
2. 36 percent of IDPs have no identification cards of any sort.

<sup>2</sup> Mayo Farms include Mayo village and the IDP camp. The camp is therefore part of Mayo village.

3. The major ethnic groups are Dinka and Nuba (representing 25.4 percent and 20.6 percent, respectively). Arab ethnic groups represent 14 percent, while Fur represent 13.1 percent. Other significant groups include Shilluk 4.1 percent, Bari 4 percent, Firtit 3.2 percent, Nuer 2.3 percent and Fonj 2 percent.
4. 95 percent of the IDP household members were reported as having no health related vulnerabilities. Of those IDPs declaring health vulnerability, a little fewer than 2 percent are chronically ill, 1 percent physically disabled and less than 1 percent mentally ill.
5. 31.4 percent of the households interviewed originated from Greater Kordofan, 19.2 percent from Greater Bahr Al Ghazal, 14.9 percent from Greater Darfur, 11.7 percent from Unity and Nile States (Comprising Jonglei, Blue and Upper Nile and Unity states) and 10.9 percent from Greater Equatoria.
6. 66.4 percent of the IDPs expressed their intention to return to their original areas, while 29 percent of them said that they wish to remain in their current location, and only 1.4 percent expressed their willingness to move to a third location.
7. The intentions to return to areas of origin, move to a new location or remain in the current place followed ethnic lines. Some ethnic groups expressed a very strong wish to return to their areas of origin. Those who expressed a strong wish to return include the Bari, 91 percent; Nuer, 90 percent; Dinka, 87 percent; and Acholi, 87 percent. On the other hand, a few ethnic groups expressed a remarkably stronger wish to remain where they currently are. These include the Fonj, 68 percent; and Arabs, 66 percent.
8. Of those households expressing a wish to return to their place of origin, 68.9 percent said they want to return immediately, 24.2 percent would like to return later, with the period of time unspecified.
9. Out of those who wish to return, 43.8 percent said that they would need money to re-establish their former activities.

Our observations and the few interviews that we conducted in the four major camps support the findings of the above study. For instance, out of the 79 heads of households that we interviewed, 41 (52 percent) are currently unemployed. 65 of them (82.2 percent) expressed their immediate wish to return to their areas of origin. The rest said they would not want to go back even if peace is fully restored. We cannot generalize from these interviews, nor can we say this small group represents all IDPs. Our objective is to see the general trends with regard to employment, attitudes toward the question of repatriation, and the general living conditions of IDPs in these camps, as well as what is available for people in terms of employment opportunities. From our visits to the camps and the interviews we carried out, the following specific observations, which concur with some of the earlier studies, can be reported:

1. The general, living conditions in these camps are very poor. This is manifest in the type of buildings people live in. In all these camps, poverty is rampant.
2. While some IDPs manage to work, employment opportunities in these camps are bleak. The result is that people travel for long distances to search for work. It is an irony that the non-governmental organizations, which work in these camps, do not recruit people from among the IDPs, and instead have “expatriate” staff. To be



- certain, some aspects of NGO work require technical capacities that IDPs do not have. However, one target should be recruiting people from within the IDP communities. This would create income-generating opportunities for IDP and would also build the capacities of IDPs.
3. Relief is not available for all IDPs and it is one of the important needs that people stress. Lack of food security is one thing that threatens the IDPs. According to the authorities at HAC, since 1997 the policy has been to reduce the distribution of relief food to IDPs in order to encourage them to be self-reliant. Relief is only distributed to the so-called vulnerable groups, which, according to CARE and IOM (2003), represent only 20-25 percent of IDPs. People in this group include: newly arriving IDPs, those who are recently dislocated from squatter settlements, the disabled, the elderly, orphans, widows and pregnant women.
  4. There is a very high sense of dependency among IDPs. The long stay in these camps without any certain future has created a feeling of uncertainty and helplessness among IDPs. The overall result is that people do not know exactly what to do and, instead of making decisions, they are waiting for the government and the operating NGOs to decide what to do with them.
  5. The IDPs living in these camps are grumpy, and almost all who we interviewed are not satisfied with the services the government and NGOs are providing for them. Some of them even attempt to dispute that NGOs exist at all in these camps.
  6. The current policy of organizing these camps into proper residential areas adds to the frustration of IDPs who are confused about their future. While the government is embarking on a policy of integrating IDPs in Khartoum, through providing them with land plots, some of the NGOs (notably IOM and CARE) are envisaging a program of voluntary repatriation. The result is that there is confusion at all levels. If this situation continues, it could result in the failure of all three alternatives (integration, repatriation and relocation).
  7. While the process of converting these areas into normal residential neighborhoods is currently under way in two of these camps, there appears to be no other policy of developing these areas if or when people are given their plots. The authorities at HAC simply argue that these people are Sudanese and therefore should be treated equally. This attitude ignores the fact that the position of IDPs is different from that of the general populace, both in the degree of vulnerability and access to resources that are vital to livelihood in the urban environment.
  8. The IDPs in Wad Al Bashir and Al Salam camps need urgent help before it is too late. Many of the IDPs' houses are already destroyed. While people are busy rebuilding their homes, using whatever material they can get, they are exposed to a physical threat in the inevitable event of rainfall. In the absence of immediate action, a health disaster is likely to occur.
  9. Apart from supporting the 28 primary schools in the four camps, NGOs are engaged in a variety of literacy and training classes for internally displaced women. Important as they are, these programs are limited in scope and cannot cover the majority of people in these camps. For instance, CARE's compound in Mayo camp provides health care facilities, a feeding center and training opportunities for women. However, CARE cannot provide these opportunities for all people in the camp.

10. The IDPs are worried about the possibility that once the process of converting their camps into normal neighborhoods is over, they will be abandoned or left alone. When people are given their plots, the authorities are likely to declare these camps as normal residential areas, in which case NGOs might pull out. This is one of the IDP population's serious concerns.

### **General observations**

The main sources of income for IDPs are daily casual labor and petty trade. Women generally provide the core income and perform most of the work. The bulk of IDPs' income is spent on food, which leaves no extra income for other basic or immediate needs. In the camps, the most stressful period is July-September. During this period, the demand for labor in the city is very low, because brick-making and general construction, mostly performed by men, stops. As a result, migration to rural farms and the large agricultural schemes for seasonal labor opportunities occurs.

The IDP camps are relatively well supplied with health facilities, unlike the squatter camps, only some of which have access to primary health care facilities. In the camps, training for health workers is required in most of the health units, covering topics like case management, rational use of drugs and data keeping. The supply of essential drugs needs to be reinforced in Jebel Awlia and Mayo camps where malaria and diarrhea are the main contributors to morbidity.

The general situation of water supply in the IDP camps is satisfactory, although the process of organizing the camps is affecting water supply in Wad Al Bashir and Al Salam camps. In the other camps, though, quality of water is relatively good and the distance covered to collect water is reasonable. The Red Cross (RC) and CARE are responsible for water in Al Salam camp, and the UNICEF dug boreholes in Mayo and Jebel Awlia camps. Initially there was no cost for participation or a community management system. However, in Al Salam camp, CARE has been working out a cost sharing modality. The authorities at HAC also indicated that a cost-sharing modality is being tried out and this is part of self-reliance strategies they are experimenting with in IDP camps. It must be noted that squatter areas are less well served. Um Baddah squatter area does not have a water source. The IDP camps have latrine coverage in both households and schools. FAR has been responsible for latrines in IDP camps.

Education at the primary level is generally available in the IDP camps, evident from the number of schools in each of the four camps. The report of CARE and IOM quoted above indicated that 67.6 percent of children in the 6-18 age category have attended primary school, but only 5.9 percent attended high school. Even in primary schools, though, the quality of education is poor due to lack of teaching resources and trained teachers as well as a dilapidated environment. Furthermore, there is a problem with regard to high school education - there are no secondary schools in the camps. To go to high school students have to travel for long distances. The cost of transportation can be prohibitive.

Security is an important issue in the camps we visited. The presence of security personnel is part of life in these camps. No activity in these camps can be undertaken without prior permission from the security authorities. The role of the security authorities is to ensure that things won't get out of hand and ensures peaceful coexistence between the different groups in the camps. On the ground, however, the security people are responsible for ascertaining that whoever comes to the camps has the proper papers and permission from the relevant authorities. To access these camps, one must obtain a security clearance and permission from HAC. Traditional leaders (chiefs and Sultans) play important roles with regard to settling disputes and conflicts between individuals and groups and talking with the different authorities on behalf of camp inhabitants. The regular security forces and HAC authorities intervene only in cases that get out of hand. The police handle homicide cases.

The IDPs' political participation is not visible at all, although according to HAC two parliament members are from the IDP community. In Mayo we were told that some IDPs are members in the National Congress (the ruling party) but it was not clear what roles these individuals play in the party. El Nagar (1996: 67) reported that public and political participation of IDPs is poor. She also found that those few who participate in government organizations and outlets are also the ones who participate in other (local) organizations on a voluntary basis. El Nagar concluded that the existing informal cooperation, on a voluntary basis, does not have an organizational capacity that renders it effective. At the present time, there exists some incipient civil society bodies that are basically concerned with providing services and taking care of the needs of IDPs. One such civil society body exists in Al Salam camp. It is called Sawa Sawa Association. It is concerned with the welfare of families and development. It collaborates with CARE and Red Cross in the area of water provision and management. A committee of eight people from this association is responsible for solving water problems.

We noted the absence of meaningful entertainment outlets in the IDP camps, although there are some clubs, mostly for men. In Jebel Awlia, there are places where men gather and engage in different sorts of entertainment. Also in Jebel Awlia, the premise of the Women Union is an outlet for women. In Mayo, there is one video center and a club.

These camps are divided into neighborhoods with distinct names. For instance, in Jebel Awlia there are "*Aboja*" and "*Bentyo*." In Mayo, one of the neighborhoods is called "*Mandella*." A neighborhood in Al Salam camp in Omdurman is called "*Jabarona*" (lit. we have been forced). Some of these names are connected to the original places from which these IDPs fled. For instance, *Bentyo* is where IDPs who fled from the Unity State live. Others, like *Aboja*, are related to some political events (peace talks between GOS and SPLA in Nigeria during the early 1990s). *Mandella*, represents the struggle and suffering of people. In Mayo, there is a recently organized block called "*Al-Yarmook*," which is a name of a battle that Muslims fought in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The diversity or the competing names in these camps is a clear indication of the cultural conflict in the Sudan as a whole. It is also an indication to the crisis of identity that underlies the conflict in the country.

Our observations from IDP camps cast doubts about the policies of integration, which the government is embarking on at the present time. These observations also cast doubts on the expressed wishes of IDPs to return to their original areas upon the conclusion of a final peace agreement in the country, which is scheduled to be sometime in August or September 2004. While the negotiating parties (the government and the SPLA) are busy talking about the modalities of wealth and power sharing, they are not talking expeditiously about the IDPs or addressing their future. It is generally agreed that currently there are three options for IDPs. These are voluntary repatriation, resettlement of IDPs where they currently live, and relocating them in another area. But as yet there are no clear modalities to go about all or any of these options, apart from the government's declared policy of integration. Our conversations with the authorities at HAC revealed that the government is counting on the "international community" to provide the necessary funds for post-war programs for IDPs. The IDPs themselves are confused about what will happen to them, even though the overwhelming majority of them say they want to repatriate.

### **The question of repatriating IDPs: some fallacies and challenges**

For the last two decades the concern over the lot of IDPs has been about protection, distribution of relief items and the provision of shelter. The government, donors and NGOs have basically been partners in achieving these objectives. But being partners is not a sufficient condition for achieving certain objectives since partnership can lack coordination. How far the objectives of protection, relief food provision and shelter have been achieved is a question that lies beyond the scope of this report. However, as the different reports and literature available on IDPs suggest, the condition of IDPs is far from ideal, despite the efforts carried out so far. In the early 1980s, relief operations for IDPs and drought-affected persons were the main activity around Khartoum, eastern and western Sudan (Abdel Ati 1988, 1993). Following the short-term recovery in the drought affected areas toward the end of the 1980s; NGOs shifted their activities from relief food distribution to the so-called community development programs, with the stated objective of helping vulnerable groups to become self-reliant (Assal 2002). The objective of achieving self-reliance has also been a government policy toward IDPs in camps and around Khartoum.

The policy of self-reliance for IDPs involved abandoning relief distribution or reducing it to a minimal level. Thus, since the mid-1990s, relief food has been distributed only to the most vulnerable, which includes, as we stated earlier, newly arrived IDPs, the elderly, the pregnant, orphans and the disabled. The policy of curbing relief distribution has been followed by endeavors to create income-generating opportunities for IDPs. However, as some reports indicate, these opportunities are bleak and cannot be considered vibrant enough to enable IDPs become independent (cf. Assal 2002, El Nagar 1996, Osman and Sahl 2000, Al-Battahani et al 1998). Perhaps we can argue that the policy of curbing relief distribution is theoretically conducive to transforming IDPs into productive agents, and therefore enhancing the likelihood of their integration into their current locations. Integrating IDPs into their host communities implies finding or creating alternative sources of livelihood. Contrariwise, keeping people on relief food means that the

existence of IDPs is a temporal phenomenon and that they are likely to be repatriated when conditions allow.

Based on what has been written about IDPs, particularly in Khartoum, and also on our field observations in the four major camps, after more than two decades of displacement, relief food is still very important for IDPs. This situation is a serious challenge to policies of resettlement and integration and it also indicates that the different partners concerned with the question of IDPs still have a long way to go. Our talk with the authorities at HAC and our conversations with IDPs in camps show clearly that there is a lack of coordination between the government, NGOs and the displaced communities or their incipient civil society bodies.

Since the start of peace talks between the government and the SPLA in 2002, the discourse on IDPs shifted toward the so-called three durable solutions paradigm (UNHCR 1995). These solutions include repatriation, resettlement and relocation. The different parties agree that all or any of these alternatives require funds in order to be implemented. Apart from that, there appears to be no consensus over a coherent or common modality to address the issue of IDPs in the post conflict era. What is to be done with IDPs is likely to affect the result of the referendum that will be carried out at the end of the interim six years period. The unilateral policy of the government to legalize the residential rights of IDPs in Khartoum came as a surprise for some NGOs, which are working out modalities of repatriating willing IDPs to their original areas.

In any case, with the advancement of peace negotiations, there is a corresponding increase in opportunities for large-scale return, resettlement and reintegration of IDPs. What is needed is a systematic approach that must involve a process of assessment at the community level to determine the absorptive capacity of return communities. Concurrently, return communities will require rehabilitation programs to ensure that the social infrastructure for sustainable return is in place, which will require a well-coordinated conceptualization of programmatic interventions, and linkage of international assistance.

Nonetheless, the political debates over how to implement the recent peace accords overshadowed thinking about what to do with IDPs. In this regard, both the government and the SPLA (which will be part of the government apparatus in Khartoum upon signing the final peace agreement) seem to be waiting for funds from donors and the international community, even though the authorities in Khartoum did start with the policy of integrating IDPs mentioned above. In the meantime, some NGOs and other international organizations (INGOs) are designing some policies that target the question of repatriation. In this regard, IOM is considering some plans for the repatriation and re-integration of IDPs. These plans are summarized by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC 2004: 237-240) and the UN as follows:

#### **IOM plans for the return and re-integration of IDPs (2004)**

1. IOM plans to assist about 100,000 “qualified” IDPs with the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2004.
2. IDPs qualifying for IOM assistance will be selected if they fulfill the criteria of being both “skilled” and belonging to “vulnerable groups.”
3. Out of the estimated 2 million IDPs expected to return, only about 5 percent, or 100,000 are expected to meet these criteria.
4. Such IDPs will be registered and provided return transport assistance.
5. Phase one will be planning for return through assessing needs in return communities and running information campaigns.
6. Phase two will focus on capacity-building and community rehabilitation.
7. IOM’s program will seek to improve HIV/AIDS awareness and training as well as mines awareness.

IOM proposes to assess, plan and implement a comprehensive return and reintegration program, with direct assistance for 100,000 qualified and vulnerable IDPs in partnership with OCHA. The IOM Sudan strategy foresees a phased approach to IDPs return and reintegration. Phase 1 will involve the activities that raise awareness about and assist planning in preparation for implementation in Phase 2. The assisted return of qualified IDPs in Phase 2 takes a community capacity building approach and thereby seeks to redress the dearth of capacity to deliver essential services in return areas. Furthermore, the program will seek to benefit and involve the whole community as well as returning IDPs. IOM will work with Sudanese counterparts as well as other relevant development partners and UN agencies such as OCHA and UNDP who are engaged in and are also planning similar interventions. The IOM program objectives in 2004 are to achieve further progress in relation to goals 1 - 6 (see following objectives) as well as the Millennium Declaration principles of human rights, governance and peace building.

### **Objectives**

IOM will support the interagency effort, in collaboration with the UN’s IDP advisor, by establishing a program based on modular interventions complimentary to the inter-agency IDP operational framework, according to the following objectives:

1. Where no survey has been conducted, survey IDPs collecting information pertaining to home community and reintegration needs.
2. Establish mobile information and return registration offices in IDP camps.
3. Develop a return registration database.
4. Coordinate interagency return community assessments, including identification of qualified IDPs, and initiate community sensitization activities.
5. Develop a community assessment database.
6. Provide return transport, and distribute reintegration kits.
7. Run community rehabilitation projects, emphasizing employment activities for community members and returnees, as well as small-scale development initiatives.

8. Scale up HIV/AIDS awareness and training through information and sensitization campaigns on HIV/AIDS and related diseases among the IDPs and their host communities and specialist skills as identified by a specialist agency.

The immediate objective of the interventions will be to identify the profiles and needs of the IDPs, in order to effectively implement sustainable return, resettlement and reintegration programs. This objective is closely linked with the support of host communities, and in recognition of the need of income generation projects to support community absorption capacity for at least 10 return communities. Return transportation assistance will be provided to an estimated 100,000 IDPs. This figure is based on the assumption that approximately 2,000,000 IDPs will opt for return and resettlement, with 5 percent of that population meeting vulnerability and skill definitions.

### **Expected Outcomes**

1. Set-up of national return and reintegration structures including a Return, Resettlement and Reintegration Task Force supported by the international community and government entities.
2. Database created consisting of the profiles and needs of IDPs in the Sudan as well as return communities.
3. Return transport assistance provided to 100,000 vulnerable IDPs.
4. Population stabilization in return communities.
5. Community rehabilitation projects completed in at least 10 return communities.
6. Increased awareness within the returning IDPs and their families on HIV/AIDS/STI and other diseases, as well as mines and other health hazards as may be defined by specialist agencies.

As they stand, these plans are nicely designed. They also seem to be implemented by a number of different agencies (IOM, UNDP, OCHA, CARE and others) that will coordinate their efforts to achieve these objectives. These plans are also wide in their scope, in the sense that they will include IDPs in the different parts of the country and not only those living in Khartoum. But it is interesting to note that while the government authorities in Khartoum emphasize integration, international organizations and UN agencies emphasize repatriation and re-integration in former areas of IDPs. The IOM's plans do not talk to those IDPs who decide not to repatriate, even though their numbers are not huge. Moreover, the designated figure of 100,000 (5 percent) for the vulnerable groups seems to be an underestimation. CARE and IOM (2003: 16) estimated that the "vulnerable groups" represent 20 percent of IDPs. Furthermore, the phrase "skilled and vulnerable" is unclear.

CARE and IOM's report found out that 66.4 percent of IDPs in Khartoum expressed their wish to repatriate to their original places, while 29 percent said they wish to remain in their present location. 36 percent of those who expressed their wish to return said they would send some members of the household first (CARE and IOM 2003: 21). The rest said they are willing to relocate in another place. In our visit to IDP camps and based on our interviews with people, we also found that the overwhelming majority of people want

to repatriate. However, when asked about the possibility of getting residential land plots, the majority of people we talked to said they do want their own legal plots. Further, some said they would leave their families here, go and see what exists in their original areas and then decide whether to take their families there or stay here on a permanent basis.

A precise picture of the intentions of IDPs regarding the different options in the post-war era is difficult to ascertain, although the reports we have been quoting and our own observations provide some clues about these intentions. This being the case, there are certain transformations that the IDP communities in and around Khartoum have undergone. These transformations affect to a greater extent the decisions of IDP households about the question of repatriation, and also direct their strategies, whether these strategies are of short or long-term nature. Apart from the consequences of displacement that we outlined earlier, and in addition to the direct costs people incur during their flight and in transition zones, there are other important facts that are likely to affect the way IDPs think of resettlement, relocation or return to their original areas. The following are some of the transformations that took place among the IDPs living in camps and other residential areas in Khartoum:

1. The shift in connections from areas of origin to current places of residence. Some displaced persons have been living in Khartoum since mid-1980s and have therefore established some kind of connection to the place. A parallel development is weakening connections, at least physical ones, with their original locations. A further transformation is that traditional gender roles have undergone change, notably with regard to the engagement of women in activities that generate income (Assal 2002a: 76-7, El Nagar 1996). Those who have been cut off from their original areas are not certain whether those places are still empty or available. In a workshop that was organized by HelpAge International (HAI) in April 2004 in Juba town in southern Sudan, in which the author of this report took part, the IDPs and their civil society organizations raised concerns about the likelihood that the original areas might not be safe or welcoming. That new people might inhabit those areas is yet another issue that worries IDPs who want to return.
2. The opportunities of education availed by NGOs allowed some IDPs to go to school. A few successful IDPs manage to go to college. A southern displaced person in Mayo camp says: “previously children were kept in the village to look after the cattle, which is the most important type of wealth we have, or work in the farm. Children are not taken to schools because people consider education as less rewarding. Only those naughty kids who do not obey their parents or refuse to tend cattle are the ones taken to school. The good ones remain to work for their families. With war and displacement, this situation changed, and now we have our kids at schools.”
3. The appearance of second generation displaced (can they be called displaced?). There are children born to displaced families or households who are now in their twenties or late teenage years. Some are at school and others engaged in different fields in the conurbation. For those whose children are at school, repatriation implies cutting their children’s education short. CARE and IOM’s report



indicated that in the age category 6-18 years, 67.6 percent have attended school. The permanent or lengthy stay in the national capital means that children know nothing or very little about where their parents came from, and as such they are likely to prefer staying where they currently are. Second generation IDPs also learned Arabic, and some parents express their concerns about the fact that their children prefer to speak Arabic rather than using their mother tongue.

Apart from the above transformations, there are other aspects that must also be considered. These include:

1. The IDPs are not a homogeneous stock, neither in terms of reasons responsible for their displacement nor in terms of their experiences further a field. Some of them are stuck in the major camps described in this report. Others are scattered in the sprawling squatter settlements around the conurbation. Still others are living with relatives. The 66.4 percent who said they want to repatriate come from the camps. The inhabitants of these camps constitute only 17 percent of the total number of IDPs living in Khartoum. The views of the remaining 83 percent of IDPs in Khartoum about any or all of the three so-called durable solutions are not accounted for. Given the fact that the IDP community is heterogeneous, it is expected that their views will be varied with regard to any particular policy.
2. The recent government's policy of integration creates a state of confusion for the IDPs, and might even represent a set back to the plans of UN agencies and other international organizations regarding repatriation and re-integration of IDPs.
3. The signing of peace accords, the right to self-determination and the prospects of donors' contribution to post-war reconstruction projects in the country, while representing catalyst impetus for changing the beleaguered lot of IDPs, can also prove to be dysfunctional. Too much politicization and too many expectations about donors' funds might lead the government to abdicate its responsibilities towards IDPs. At the present time, the only concrete and visible policy the government has is to integrate the IDPs in Khartoum. It is unknown, however, how this policy will succeed.

The above transformations and other aspects are some of the issues that policy-makers, donors, NGOs and those who are interested in the lot of IDPs need to think about when programs of resettlement, relocation and repatriation to original places are considered. The rationale for the government's very recent unilateral policy of integration is not clear for us. But in any case, this action represents a shift in policy and also negates earlier policies. The government's policies during the 1990s had been toward repatriating people to their original places or relocating them in the so-called productive areas. For instance, in 1990, the Council of Ministers announced its determination to eliminate the problem of displacement within one year. This was to be accomplished through both repatriation of over 800,000 displaced to areas of origin, and relocation of others to areas of production in Upper Nile, Bahr el-Ghazal, Kordofan and Gezira states. The stated rationale behind this policy was to reduce the dependency of IDPs on relief food. That policy did not materialize.

To be certain, the question of IDPs presents a daunting challenge to policy design, monitoring and implementation during this crucial time of the Sudan's history. It is not easy to judge what will happen to the displaced in the official camps or around Khartoum, in terms of implementing each or all of the three alternatives. The goals of the different players (the government, UN agencies and NGOs, and the IDPs themselves) seem to be diverging. The divergence of goals is overshadowed by the uncertain future of the country in its present shape. When the interim government assumes its responsibilities things might change with regard to adopting a harmonious policy in which the government, the different mediating actors, and the IDPs come to a common and collaborative ground for implementing post-war programs.

## **Conclusions**

This report tackled three main issues pertaining to the internally displaced persons in the Sudan, with special emphasis on IDPs in Khartoum. The issues discussed include reviewing the available literature or studies on IDPs in the Sudan, looking at the living conditions in the official camps and the question of repatriation to, and re-integration in, original areas. Based on the above, the following conclusions can be made.

There is a lack of international studies on IDPs in the Sudan. Most of the existing international studies are in the form of human rights accounts (cf. Africa Rights 1995, Africa Watch 1992) or reports to the Secretary General of the United Nations about the conditions of IDPs (cf. Cohen and Deng 1998). The international studies thus do not reflect the structural factors behind displacement, nor do they go at length to describe the realities of people who struggle to eke out a living in environments that are alien to them. However, due to the scale of this human tragedy, the problem of IDPs recently received increased attention by the UN and the international community. This attention is concurrent with the peace negotiations that are still going on in Kenya, and which are coming to a final conclusion in the coming months. This international attention also results in the production of more reports by the UN. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is also constructing a database for IDPs in the Sudan. This database is a compilation of reports and information provided by the UN, NGOs and the different media sources.

At the national level, there is a serious problem of documentation. It is a glaring fact that the government authorities responsible for IDPs know the least meaningful information about these people. We realized this through the interviews we carried out with some officials at HAC. We are tempted to suggest that government bodies dealing with IDPs do not have any clear policy toward these people, apart from the very recent policy of integration. There are very few publications on IDPs at the national level. What exist are unpublished reports that were either conducted as consultancy work for NGOs or small reports by undergraduate students. These types of reports are not part of the public record and are inaccessible. This contributes to obscuring the lot of IDPs and results in very little dissemination of knowledge. Here it is important to stress the fact that the restrictive policy adopted by the government impedes research and obscures the conditions under which IDPs live. To access the camps, one goes through too many hassles, including

getting permission from HAC, then permission from those responsible for the camps within HAC and, most important, security clearance. The authorities might have their own reasons for the restrictions they impose over the camps and on research on IDPs, but this contributes to impeding research and obstructing the construction of knowledge about IDPs. What is needed at the present time is a sound knowledge base that could lead to the success of post-war scenarios. At the present time, such knowledge does not exist.

With regard to the living conditions, IDPs have found themselves in an unwelcoming and hostile environment; socially, politically and culturally. Their skills, rooted in traditional agriculture and animal husbandry, are not needed. Those skills also cannot compete in the urban informal sector whose absorptive capacity is saturated. The IDPs are thus living in the margins of urban life in Khartoum. Lack of appropriate skills and the generally hostile urban attitude toward them have forced IDPs to rely on relief food for their survival. This reliance on relief food has become protracted and the IDPs are dependent on NGOs. The services provided by the NGOs working in the camps (water, health care facilities, education, and training opportunities), although significantly important, do not cover all IDPs. Furthermore, these services cover only those IDPs living in the official camps, since the authorities do not allow NGOs to operate outside these camps. It must be reiterated that IDPs living in the official camps represent only about 17 percent of IDPs in Greater Khartoum. The fate of those living outside the camps is unknown.

In all four camps, there are small markets in which some IDPs engage; buying and selling food items, tea and other products. But the capacity of these small markets is insignificant, and cannot avail any meaningful opportunities for people living in these camps. It is not clear what will happen to the job market when the process of organization, which is currently underway, ends. There is a window of opportunity for positive change in the living conditions of IDPs, given the fact that a comprehensive peace agreement will be concluded soon. However, a peace agreement alone cannot deliver goods and services for IDPs. The state of confusion about whether to repatriate the IDPs or integrate them where they currently live is part of the uncertainty, which is compounded by lack of planning and coordination on the part of different bodies working with IDPs.

Based on some reports and our visits to the camps, the majority of IDPs want to repatriate. The UN and other international NGOs are contemplating programs of repatriation and re-integration, but there is a lack of coordination between the government, NGOs and UN agencies. While UN agencies and INGOs are designing repatriation programs, the government is currently organizing IDP camps in an attempt to upgrade them and eventually integrate IDPs into Khartoum, through giving them legal residential plots. It is unknown what will happen as a result of these competing and contradictory programs, but we are likely to have a scenario whereby those queuing for repatriation assistance will also sign up for residential plots in Khartoum. There are no signs indicating that the policy of integration adopted by the government will succeed. Currently no other policy, other than upgrading these camps to proper residential areas, is contemplated. There is no guarantee that every IDP will be given a plot of land.

How safe the original areas are is yet to be known. The feasibility, in terms of security and infrastructures, of the original areas is one of the preconditions for the success of repatriation and re-integration endeavors. The way it looks now, the problem of IDPs is far from over. The challenges for the government, the UN and the international community are great; perhaps these challenges have never been greater. There is a need for research to focus on the two main options with regard to the future of IDPs, at least the ones living in Khartoum: repatriation to original areas or integration in the present locations. For those who are willing to repatriate, a needs assessment is urgently required. There is also a need for a study of the original areas to which people will return. For those who opt for resettlement and integration in their present locations, there is a need to assess their capacities, skills in order to design ways to make them self-reliant in such a way that their integration becomes meaningful. Without this, the newly transformed camps will just become ghettos, creating yet another problem.

## Appendix (1): National, foreign and international NGOs working in IDP camps

### 1. Wad Al Bashir Camp

Name of NGO	Nationality	Field of activities
Health Care	Sudanese	Health care, education, relief, emergency cases
Red Crescent	Sudanese	Health care and water
FAR	Canadian	Health, relief and environmental sanitation
MSF	French	Health care and emergencies
SCF (UK)	British	Drug supply
CARE	International NGO	Drug supply, water, maintenance of health care units and credit
IRC	American	Training

### 2. Al Salam camp, Omdurman

Name of NGO	Nationality	Field of activities
Health Care	Sudanese	Health care, education, and feeding
SCC	Sudanese	Health care, education, relief
IARA	Sudanese	Health
RC	Sudanese	Health, water and emergency relief
Love and Peace	Sudanese	Health and education
Mid Air	Swiss	Health and education
SCF	British	Drug supply
CARE International	International NGO	Drug supply, water and maintenance of health care units
El-Bir International	International NGO	Health
IRC	American	Training

### 3. Jebel Awlia Camp

Name of NGO	Nationality	Field of activities
Health Care	Sudanese	Health, education and relief
SCC	Sudanese	Health, education and feeding
IARA	Sudanese	Health
RC	Sudanese	Health
Sudra	Sudanese	Health, feeding and education
Direct Aid	Kuwaiti	Health
SCF	British	Drug supply
IRC	American	Income-generating activities and

		training
CARE International	International NGO	Drug supply, maintenance of health care units and credit

#### 4. Mayo Camp

<b>Name of NGO</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Field of activities</b>
Health Care	Sudanese	Health, education and feeding
SCC	Sudanese	Health care, education and feeding
Sudra	Sudanese	Health
Azza	Sudanese	Illiteracy classes, training and education for school dropouts
MSF	French	Health, feeding and emergency work
IRC	American	Income-generating activities and training
SCF	British	Environmental sanitation, drug supply and education
FAR	Canadian	Environmental sanitation
GOAL	Irish	Environmental sanitation
CARE International	International NGO	Drug supply, maintenance of health care units and project funding
South of the Sahara Development	International NGO	Health and emergency work

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