



**HUDO Centre**

***"GO TO CHAD AND NEVER COME BACK!"***



## **Ethnic Targeting in the Ongoing Armed Conflict in Sudan**

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**Cover photo:** A ten-year-old child carrying his four-year old sister from El Geneina to Adré (a distance of about twenty kilometres) after their mother was assassinated by a sniper inside her house. They had spent a full night beside her dead body before the ten-year-old child decided to flee to Chad.

The photo is a still from a video filmed and broadcast in June 2023 by Al-Jazeera

[الجزيرة ترصد معاناتهم.. لاجئون من مدينة الجنينة السودانية يصلون إلى تشاد \(218\) - YouTube](#)

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## Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	3
Executive Summary .....	4
1 Introduction.....	6
1.1 About HUDO Centre.....	6
1.2 Contextual Analysis .....	7
1.3 Methodology.....	9
1.4 Challenges .....	10
1.5 Limitations:.....	10
2 Legal analysis .....	12
3 Ethnic Targeting and Mass Displacement: .....	17
Background:.....	17
3.1 Mass displacement of Masalit people in West Darfur:.....	18
Introduction.....	18
Impacts on Masalit Community: .....	26
3.2 Ethnic targeting of other communities by RSF .....	28
Introduction .....	28
Impacts on other communities targeted by RSF:.....	31
Call for action from Masalit people of West Darfur .....	32
Call for action by other targeted communities .....	33
4 Strange Faces Concept: Ethnic targeting in SAF controlled areas.....	35
Introduction.....	35
Impacts: .....	43
Call for action by Strange Faces victims .....	44
5 Recommendations:.....	46
5.1 To the fighting parties SAF and RSF: .....	46
5.2 To the Sudanese authorities, .....	47
5.3 To regional actors (AU and IGAD): .....	47
5.4 To international actors (UNSC, OHCHR, and ICC) .....	47

## Acronyms

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
APII 1977	Geneva Conventions Additional Protocol II - 1977
AU	African Union
BN	Blue Nile
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
GIS	General Intelligence Services
ICC	International Criminal Court
HUDO	Human Rights and Development Organization
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons/People
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SK	South Kordofan
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

## Executive Summary

Human rights and development organization (HUDO Centre) is a Sudanese human rights organization based in Kampala, Uganda. Given the challenges associated with the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan, HUDO Centre carried out research relating to the human rights violations and abuses that overlap from historical injustices to the present situation of armed conflict. The study was about the violations and abuses that took place in the ongoing armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) from April 2023 to date.

HUDO Centre specifically set out to conduct research about the mass displacement in West Darfur, ethnic targeting, and the ‘strange faces order’ which worsened the already dire situation among Sudanese communities. Armed conflict was a continuation of the already prevailing challenges of human rights abuses and violations.

The researchers were selected and trained before they engaged and interviewed the victims (Sudanese citizens) that have been facing injustices related to mass displacement and ethnic targeting. The case study was the Masalit ethnic group of West Darfur and other non-Arab populations.

According to the findings, the perpetrators happened to be security forces including SAF and the RSF plus other militias that are affiliated to both security forces. The ethnically targeted attacks led to forced displacement of Masalit communities and other tribes of African descent. The practice gravely affected the Masalit ethnic group and other non-Arab populations especially in El-Genina and other places within Sudan. There are other cases of **strange faces-order** which is an un-written and ambiguous law that was practiced (implemented) unreasonably in the Northern states of Sudan (SAF controlled areas) since 2024.

The findings were that mass displacements and ethnic targeting took place whereby both the SAF and RSF were implicated, however the RSF was singled out by victims as the main perpetrator of racially and ethnically motivated attacks on non-Arab communities precisely because of their race and ethnicity. Victims testified that the attacks were racially and ethnically motivated and that there were mass killings, and sexual violence, whereby Arab men targeted non-Arab women and additionally used ethnic

and racial slurs before, during, and after sexual assaults. SAF was also implicated in conducting targeted arrests, detention, and racial profiling of civilians from ethnic identities allegedly to be connected to, or in support of, the RSF. The SAF targeted ethnic groups of western Sudan for assault and arrests for their suspected affiliation with the RSF.

In conclusion, the majority of the victims and their kinsmen recommend that there should be a mechanism to push for the end to this armed conflict. They also recommend that justice should prevail and that perpetrators are held to account. HUDO Centre also recommends that international humanitarian law (IHL) should be observed, and that perpetrators (SAF, RSF and their allied militias) of abuses, violations, and atrocities should be held accountable.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About HUDO Centre

Human Rights and Development Organization (**HUDO Centre**) is an independent, non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-profit making organization based in Kampala, Uganda. It works towards the promotion of human welfare for vulnerable communities in its working areas. HUDO Centre believes in promoting human welfare without racial, religious, or gender discrimination.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009, HUDO Centre was established and officially recognized as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Sudan. In June 2011, when armed conflict erupted in South Kordofan, HUDO Centre's certification as an NGO was revoked by the Sudanese government. However, HUDO Centre continued to work under very tight and threatening conditions. In order to fulfil its mission, the HUDO Centre office was moved and officially registered in Uganda on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 as non-profit company limited by guarantee under the name of **HUDO Centre**. After operating for some period, on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017, HUDO Centre was registered in Uganda under the NGO Board as a foreign NGO. However, the mandate was expanded to include a special program for refugees.

HUDO Centre undertakes human rights monitoring in Sudan. Currently, we are the leading organization in human rights monitoring activities within government-controlled areas of South Kordofan (SK) and Blue Nile (BN) States.

***HUDO Centre's vision:*** A world where everyone's human rights are protected and fulfilled without discrimination.

***HUDO Centre's mission:*** To champion universal access to rights-based information and services to vulnerable and underserved communities through sustainable innovations, humanitarian support, strategic partnerships, rights empowerment, capacity building, research, and advocacy.



The ongoing armed conflict in Sudan has led to the humanitarian crises of famine, mass displacement, death, sexual violence, and widespread human rights violations and abuses. Before the start of the armed conflict, there was a civilian uprising in 2019 which resulted in the ouster of the Omar Al-Bashir regime which had formerly lasted almost thirty years. The civilian street protests persisted in demanding democracy and civilian leadership. As a result, the joint military-civilian government was established, but was shortly overthrown by a coup in October 2021. The coup leaders were General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (the commander of SAF and in effect the country's president), and his deputy the RSF leader General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. The two generals disagreed on the proposed shift towards civilian rule. They also disagreed among themselves on the plans to incorporate RSF soldiers into the official army/SAF based on the framework agreement.<sup>5</sup> As a result, fighting between the two sides began on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023, leading to today's devastating crisis.

Before the current armed conflict, certain regions of Sudan, like South Kordofan (SK), Blue Nile (BN), and the Darfur states hosted and produced internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees. Currently, Sudan is producing one of the largest displacement crises in the world, with over 12 million people displaced<sup>6</sup> both internally and across borders due to ongoing armed conflict. Noting this level of migration, there has been a general failure to accurately describe historical ties and closeness of family members and kin communities with many Sudanese nationals across neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and others.

Research carried out by Human Rights Watch (HRW)<sup>7</sup> indicates that *“from April to November 2023, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allied militias in El Geneina (West Darfur state) killed thousands of people and displaced many others as refugees and IDPs. Such acts may constitute war crimes under international humanitarian law (IHL) because they were committed in the context of ethnic cleansing campaign against the ethnic Masalit and other non-Arab populations in and around El Geneina”*. Such kinds of forced displacements have been taking place in other states of Sudan like South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

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<sup>5</sup> [Framework-Agreement-Final-ENG-05122022.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-sudan-what-happening-and-how-help>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/09/sudan-ethnic-cleansing-west-darfur>

The ambiguous bylaws like the “strange faces law/ order” decreed in 2024 by the de facto government of Sudan under the SAF, it formed part of the extraordinary notices and verbal orders. This was created during the current conflict and it aimed at restricting access to SAF-controlled areas in Northern, Eastern, and parts of Central Sudan by individuals presumed to be associated with the RSF. The ‘strange faces order’ involves racial, ethnic, and sometimes religious, targeting.<sup>8</sup> In the context of the ongoing armed conflict, if you are found in certain locations when you are from west Sudan,<sup>9</sup> you are considered or assumed to be against SAF and anti- Islamic establishment<sup>10</sup>. However, the deliberate introduction of the ‘strange faces order/law’ in SAF-controlled territories is an act of ethnic targeting by SAF authorities.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.3 Methodology

This research is a continuation of HUDO Centre’s human rights monitoring and documentation efforts. The focus in this report is to identify and document the human rights violations that have been taking place during the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan since April 2023, to give the victims a human face, and to ensure that there is accountability.

The research was based in Sudan with particular focus on areas in which the conflict has been most intense, like Darfur, Blue Nile, Kordofan, and other states. The information sought after was about the human rights violations related to forced displacements, ethnic targeting, the ‘strange faces order’, and the resulting impacts. The focus was on West Darfur where the majority of the forced displacement victims were from the Masalit community together with other African tribes, whereas ethnic targeting and the impact of the ‘strange faces order’ was across Sudan.

The information was gathered from primary and secondary sources. In total, fifty-five people were interviewed. However not all the interviews were included in the report. The research team subjected all interviews to further scrutiny and in the end twenty-two were used. The interviewees included the

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<sup>8</sup> [Extremists demolish Pentecostal Church buildings in Khartoum - CSW](#)

<sup>9</sup> Please see an investigative report in Arabic written by a journalist in New Horizon magazine (مجلة أفق جديد) about cases of the ‘strange faces order’ before the courts in Sudan: [أفق جديد | مجلة أفق جديد](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Christians arrested after fleeing conflict, others report being pressured to convert - CSW](#)

<sup>11</sup> [CSW concerned at increase in ethnically motivated attacks following SAF takeover of Wad Madani - CSW](#)

victims, relatives of the victims, community leaders, and eye witnesses among others, and they were of different genders. Open sources of information were accessed online including from credible news agencies like the BBC, testimonies within YouTube videos, and reports from the international NGOs like Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International (AI), and other international agencies like UN bodies.

The interviews were carried out by ten trained human rights monitors supported by HUDO Centre staff. Each monitor was given a target of interviewing between 4-5 interviewees. The interview methods used varied: some were conducted face-to-face and others were conducted remotely (through Zoom, WhatsApp, or direct calls). Interviews were routinely conducted in Arabic.

The interviewees were briefed about the purpose and nature of the research, and interviewee consent was sought before any interview could start. Interviews were recorded, and facts were cross-checked during a documentation phase.

All the names used in this report are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the interviewees, and avoid retaliation by the perpetrators.

#### **1.4 Challenges**

Finding the victims for face-to-face interviews was not easy because of security issues, fear, and lack of trust. For security reasons, most of the face-to-face interviews were conducted in the HUDO Centre office, and UN compounds in refugee camps, which involved transport and logistical costs.

Conducting remote interviews in Sudan and Chad was also hard due to the difficulties in securing reliable internet access, and other security concerns. Displacement and economic challenges disrupted monitors' ability to locate victims and conduct more interviews.

#### **1.5 Limitations:**

There were limited funds to conduct this research. Other limitations were logistical: like organizing/scheduling for travel, finding suitable venues for conducting interviews etc. The fact that this research was conducted amidst armed conflict made it difficult for both interviewees and interviewers to

freely interact or meet. HUDO Centre is also facing a situation of a limited number of monitors and contact persons on the ground due to ongoing displacement including cross-border.

## 2 Legal analysis

In this chapter we demonstrate the violations committed during the ongoing non-international armed conflict of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in Sudan which constitute serious breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL), Sudan's Constitutional Document, and other binding regional and international instruments. The deliberate targeting of civilians, racial discrimination, ethnic profiling through the mass displacement of communities and the implementation of the 'strange faces order', reflect patterns of violations that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or other grave violations under the Rome Statute.

Millions of people have become refugees or been internally displaced to other areas within Sudan, exposing them to violations of IHL, including the arrest of individuals simply because their faces were unfamiliar (as identified by the 'strange faces order') in the location to which they had fled in search of safety.

**The Geneva Convention (IV) 1949**<sup>12</sup> and Additional Protocol II aim to protect civilians in non-international armed conflicts. These instruments require all parties to the conflict to respect and treat individuals who are not taking part in hostilities in a humane manner. This includes prohibiting indiscriminate attacks, ensuring humane and dignified treatment of detainees, and providing special protection for vulnerable groups such as women and children. A clear distinction between civilians and combatants is considered a fundamental element of these obligations.

**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**<sup>13</sup> laid the foundation for the global human rights system. In particular, articles (3) guarantee the right to life, liberty, and security of persons; and article (13/1) emphasizes the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Nevertheless, these rights have been guaranteed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/assets/treaties/380-GC-IV-EN.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>

**The Constitutional Document of Sudan**<sup>14</sup> for the transitional period in its current state (amended 2025) states that: “The State undertakes to protect, promote, and guarantee the rights contained in the Bill of Rights<sup>15</sup> to all without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, language, religion, political opinion, social status, or other reasons.”

**The Fact-Finding Missions:** the evidence collected by the two Fact-Finding Missions established by the UNHRC<sup>16</sup> the ACHPR<sup>17</sup> shows that both the (SAF, the RSF, and their respective allied militias, committed large-scale human rights and international humanitarian law violations, many of which may amount to war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.<sup>18</sup>

Both the SAF and the RSF have been accused of attacking civilians and destroying property and infrastructure, obstructing access to humanitarian aid for civilians in need, violating children’s rights, and conducting arbitrary arrests, torture, and ill-treatment in areas under their control which amount to war crimes.

The RSF and its allied militias were specifically accused of committing other war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include widespread sexual violence, rape, sexual slavery, abduction, and the recruitment and use of children in hostilities, plus pillage and looting. The RSF also committed large-scale violations on the grounds of ethnicity particularly against the Masalit community in El Geneina, including killings, torture, and rape, which amounts to persecution.

### **Racial Discrimination:**

The term ‘racial discrimination’ *shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or*

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<sup>14</sup> <https://moj.gov.sd/files/download/425> (available in Arabic)

<sup>15</sup> Its part of the constitutional document.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session57/A-HRC-57-CRP-6-en.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2025-10/report-virtual-joint-fact-finding-mission-human-rights-situation-sudan-eng.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.icc-cpi.int/publications/core-legal-texts/rome-statute-international-criminal-court>

*impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*<sup>19</sup>

**Ethnic cleansing:** This is an unlawful practice(s) aimed at changing the ethnic, religious, or racial composition of an affected population (commonly referred to as ‘ethnic cleansing’) and such constitutes a serious violation of IHL. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols strictly prohibit targeting individuals or groups based on their ethnic identity. Such violations are considered to be war crimes, crimes against humanity with elements of genocide under international law<sup>20</sup>.

**Ethnic Targeting:** an act of targeting, undermining or treating differently certain individuals based on their ethnicity, religion, culture, colour, or origin<sup>21</sup>.

Article 17 of Geneva Convention (Additional Protocol II), prohibited the forced movement of civilians: *The displacement of the civilian population shall not be ordered for reasons related to the conflict unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand. Should such displacements have to be carried out, all possible measures shall be taken in order that the civilian population may be received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition.*

*Civilians shall not be compelled to leave their own territory for reasons connected with the conflict.*<sup>22</sup>

### **The ‘strange faces order’:**

The ‘strange faces order’ targets individuals whose facial features appear to be from western Sudan. As a verbal directive, there is no actual text accompanying the ‘strange faces order/law’ which is, for instance, published in the Sudan gazette. The order operates via a set of verbal orders that authorities apply to any person seemingly of western Sudanese origin who has fled to the northern Sudan states and

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<sup>19</sup> Article 1 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969.  
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/cerd.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> [Oxford Public International Law: Ethnic Cleansing](#)

<sup>21</sup> There is no clear definition for ethnic targeting however HUDO Centre described the term.

<sup>22</sup> <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/assets/treaties/475-AP-II-EN.pdf>

other parts of central Sudan. This kind of act contradicts the freedom of travel and movement, (Banjul)<sup>23</sup> and the article (12) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966.<sup>24</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The evidence collected by field monitors demonstrates that the ongoing non-international armed conflict in Sudan since 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 has been marked by serious violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, the Sudanese Constitutional Document, and other agreements related to the protection and dignity of human beings, including the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. These violations have also been reported by the two fact finding missions (AU & UN).

The conduct of both SAF and RSF, and their allied militias, fails to meet the minimum standards required under the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol II. The deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate attacks, and obstruction of humanitarian assistance constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law and Jeddah Agreement<sup>25</sup> on the cessation of hostilities and the opening of safe humanitarian corridors.

These violations were compounded by patterns of racial discrimination, ethnic targeting, and mass displacement, including the use of the ‘strange faces order’ to arrest, harass, or target internally displaced persons based on appearance, and ethnic origin. Such practices violate fundamental rights, including the rights to life, liberty, security, equality, and freedom of movement, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Bill of Rights in the Sudanese Constitutional Document.

The RSF and their allied militias have committed atrocities which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including sexual violence, persecution on ethnic grounds, and attacks against the Masalit community in West Darfur and other parts of Sudan. When these acts are collectively assessed

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<sup>23</sup> African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted June 27, 1981 ([https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36390-treaty-0011 - african\\_charter\\_on\\_human\\_and\\_peoples\\_rights\\_e.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36390-treaty-0011 - african_charter_on_human_and_peoples_rights_e.pdf))

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> [Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan - United States Department of State](#)

and analyzed, they clearly fall within the patterns prohibited under the Rome Statute, including murder, torture, rape, forced displacement, and persecution. These kinds of atrocities may necessitate the intervention of the ICC though insofar as the ICC's mandate (via UNSC 1593) is currently limited to Darfur.

Overall, the documented violations reveal a clear failure - or deliberate pattern - by the parties to the conflict to distinguish between civilians and combatants, protect vulnerable groups, and prevent acts that undermine human dignity. The scale, severity, and discriminatory nature of these violations underscore the urgent need for effective accountability mechanisms, enhanced protection measures for civilians, and sustained international engagement to prevent the commission of further atrocities. Without such efforts, violence, displacement, and impunity will continue to threaten the rights, safety, and survival of millions of people in Sudan.

### **3 Ethnic Targeting and Mass Displacement:**

#### **Background:**

During this ongoing armed conflict between SAF and RSF, deliberate attacks and mass displacements of civilians particularly in West Darfur were rampant. The attacks were mainly carried out by the RSF and their allied militias targeting the Masalit communities and other communities or tribes of African ancestry, which are not considered to be Arab. During the attacks, there was killing, looting, torture, burning down of houses, and sexual violence, among other violations. According to the victims who were interviewed, the aim of the attacks by the RSF was to forcefully take over their inherited land. Interviewees also indicated that the attacks had been happening before the ongoing armed conflict and that this had already driven many to live in the IDP camps/ centres which were then further attacked during the current ongoing armed conflict. Territories where the RSF has control, communities particularly comprised of African tribes from the Nuba Mountains and Darfur, were equally attacked and targeted based on their ethnicity.

### 3.1 Mass displacement of Masalit people in West Darfur:

*Being Masalit became a great challenge<sup>26</sup>*



*A refugee camp in Chad (Channel 4 News)<sup>27</sup>*

#### **Introduction**

The Masalit tribe is an indigenous African tribe inhabiting western Darfur in Sudan (Dar Masalit),<sup>28</sup> and other locations in Darfur like Geraida in South Darfur, as well as in eastern Chad. Members of this tribe speak the Masalit language (Masara). They have a Sultan<sup>29</sup> in El Geneina and a king in Gereida. During the conflict of April 2023, the Dar Masalit have been attacked widely (in West Darfur in particular) by RSF and allied Arab militias. Interviewed victims and survivors say the purpose of the attacks is to displace them and grab their land.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Rawda WhatsApp records on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025

<sup>27</sup> Photo captured from a video ([Sudan: RSF accused of killing hundreds of people from the Masalit community in the Darfur region](#))

<sup>28</sup> It means land of Masalit

<sup>29</sup> Sultan is the highest title in their community leadership hierarchy structure.

**Amnesty International** in a report ‘ ‘Death Came to Our Home – War Crimes and Civilian Suffering in Sudan’’ stated that:

*“Since April 15, the West Darfur town of El Geneina and surrounding areas have been hit by waves of attacks and violence - pitting the RSF and allied Arab militia against the SAF-backed Sudanese Alliance armed group and Masalit armed fighters. This has resulted in the death and injury of hundreds of civilians - most of them Masalit; and the destruction and looting of homes and key civilian infrastructure and facilities such as El Geneina Teaching Hospital," and the main markets in El Geneina and other towns, including Misterei and Tandelti ”<sup>30</sup>*

**Human Rights Watch** in a report “The Massalit Will Not Come Home” *Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan*” stated that:

*“Escalating Attacks on Massalit Displacement Sites and Neighborhoods starting on April 24 and through mid-June, the RSF and Arab militias led three major waves of attacks on majority-Massalit neighborhoods where Massalit forces were present. They deliberately looted and burned down neighborhoods identified as Massalit. They also systematically targeted the sites in the city where internally displaced persons (IDPs)- largely Massalit- and other non-Arab communities were living. They did so on foot and in vehicles, attacking with gunfire, but also with explosive weapons, which increase the risk of unlawful killings and injuries from indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. RSF forces looted and burned down site after site, shooting civilians as they fled. ”<sup>31</sup>*

The statements below narrate the experiences of the victims, survivors, eye witnesses, and community leaders.

**Jalal-Eldin**, 38 years old: On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 he was at home with his family in El Geneina city, when a heavy attack was carried out by RSF.

*“That morning, while we were at our home in Al-Jamarek neighbourhood, RSF supported by Arab militias (Janjaweed) attacked us with heavy gunfire. During the attacks they were*

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<sup>30</sup> Death Came to Our Home, Amnesty International, August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Watch, The Massalit Will Not Come Home, May 2024, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2024/05/sudan0524web\\_0.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/05/sudan0524web_0.pdf)

*systematically targeting Masalit homes however other African tribal communities were also affected. In many cases, the attackers climbed over walls of houses—especially those of Masalit families and killed the residents inside. For example, my neighbour Mr. Abbas, was killed inside his house. My own house was spared only because the attackers did not realize it belonged to a Masalit family. I had bought it recently and moved in just a few months earlier. The assault continued as they shot, tortured and killed civilians for about two months.*

*We decided to flee to Chad and during the journey, we passed through fourteen (14) RSF checkpoints whereby, at every checkpoint, we were humiliated, interrogated, and threatened. At checkpoints, they asked about our tribes and if someone admitted to being a Masalit, they were killed or arrested immediately. Many people were killed, beaten, or disappeared, while the RSF shouted at them to hurry and leave, saying: Move, move! This is Arab land now.”<sup>32</sup>*

**Halima**, 43 years old, a victim and community leader, was at home with her family in El Geneina when the RSF attacked.

*“On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023, at 8:00 am, while I was at home with my family, I heard gunshots in the western part of the city, shortly afterward, RSF supported by Arab militias, stormed the southwestern outskirts of the city. They targeted and burned the IDP centres where most of the Masalit tribe are hosted.*

*The situation stabilized for a short while, and most of the displaced persons returned to their neighborhoods. However, on 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023, RSF forces and allied militias attacked again the same neighbourhoods, looted properties and burned civilian homes with petrol. This forced the residents to flee and take refuge in the Al-Zahraa University dormitory in Al-Madaris neighborhood.*

*After Governor Khamis Abdalla Abaker was killed (on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023) El Geneina was fully controlled by RSF. The attackers killed many people, and they kept on saying that they needed to “clean up the remaining Masalit”. The surviving Masalit split into two groups, one headed to west, and the other east towards the SAF headquarters in Ardamata <sup>33</sup>.*

*I witnessed this myself. The Masalit tribe were hard-pressed and moved out like locusts, it's as if we are in the land of resurrection, going where we do not know.*

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<sup>32</sup>Interview with Jalal-Eldin, Kampala, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

<sup>33</sup> It is a suburb about 2 km outside El Geneina, where the SAF military garrison is based.

*On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023, my home was raided by the Janjaweed at 3:00 p.m. They came in five RSF vehicles carrying armed soldiers, and jumped over the wall of my house and surrounded me in the living room. One of them tied my hands behind my back, and told me they had come for me. They mocked us, saying, “You pretend to be educated in your tribe - activists, cadres, we came here with a recommendation. They tied me up with ropes, and set fire on a plastic sheet, and let the molten plastic drip onto my thigh, causing severe burns then after they went promising to come back. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023, I managed to flee to Chad with the help of my brother who lives abroad.”<sup>34</sup>*

**Abaker**, 32 years old, from El Geneina. He and his family were attacked by the RSF at home.

*“On 23 April 2023, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) together with allied Arab militias attacked our neighbourhoods in the south and western parts of El Geneina city, this area was mainly inhabited by the Masalit tribe. They also attacked other parts of the city, targeting the Masalit, as well as IDP camps/centres. The attackers killed, looted property, and burnt down homes. Around 29 April 2023, our house was attacked by RSF and my family were gathered in one room. They fired bullets at the locked doors and windows, threw several grenades inside, my younger brother was injured by shrapnel. We had learned that RSF had prepared target lists of activists and public figures, and our family was among those targeted. The intended targets were my father, my brother, and I. Fortunately we were not at home by then, we used to hide separately within the city. After the attack, we managed to evacuate our family to another neighborhood. On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023, we lost all contact with my father. We searched everywhere but found no trace of him. To this day, we don’t know whether he is dead or alive. After the killing of Governor Khamis and the massacre of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023, people began fleeing to Chad. The attackers seemed to allow an exit route but monitored it carefully, targeting specific individuals. Arab militias had long prepared for this, even if the armed conflict hadn’t started in Khartoum, they intended to eliminate Masalit, seize their lands, and exploit resources.”<sup>35</sup>*

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Halima, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mr. Abaker, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 8th August 2025.

**Mujahid**, 43 years old. On 24 April 2023, he was with his family at home when the attack on El Geneina city occurred.

*“While I was with my family at our house in Al-Jabel neighborhood we heard heavy gunfire. We later got to know that RSF was killing people while targeting the Masalit, particularly educated and intellectual individuals. Many lawyers and community leaders were searched for, identified, and killed inside their homes, some of those lawyers are; Mohammed Ahmed Kodi (from Nuba) killed on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and Alsadiq Mohammed Ahmed (the Humanitarian Aid Commissioner) killed on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Khamis Arbab Ishaq, Tariq Hassan Yagoub Almalek (murdered on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023)<sup>36</sup>.*

*The snippers killed the passersby, water sources were deliberately destroyed, and anyone who attempted to fetch water from the few remaining sources risked being shot. The Masalit people have been their main targets.*

*On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023, I moved with my family to Chad. During my displacement journey to Chad, RSF and Arab militia repeatedly shouted at us: “This is now Arab land and no longer Masalit land!” They forced us to echo after them: “Arab Land (Dar Arab)”. When we reached to an area called Runga, RSF and nomads gathered a large group of displaced people (about two thousand people), they addressed us openly, declaring that: ‘We are the Arab Gathering-Movement,<sup>37</sup> we are RSF. **Go to Chad and never come back.** This is now Arab land, no longer Masalit land. We are the ones who arrested and killed the governor. ‘It was at this moment that I first learned of the governor’s death.’<sup>38</sup>*

**Rowda**, 23 years. She is a medical worker. She was in El Geneina when the armed conflict started in April 2023.

*“After the outbreak of the armed conflict on 15 April 2023, I was working in providing first aid to the wounded people at Al-sadaga IDP centre (in the city of El Geneina). During this period, the Masalit tribe were directly targeted. This targeting was systematic, while SAF was stationed at Ardamata garrison (about 2 kilometres away), yet they did not intervene to protect civilians*

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<sup>36</sup> He is a member of Geraida king of Masalit and was active lawyer in Krending IDP camp case that RSF was accused in attacking the camp in 2019 and 2020.

<sup>37</sup> This is an Arab coalition established in the 1980s which was supported by President Ghaddafi of Libya.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mr. Mujahid, WhatsApp call, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

when RSF and allied Arab militias were committing the violations. The attackers came in military vehicles some written on the phrase “Rain without Lightning”<sup>39</sup>, accompanied with large numbers of soldiers on motorcycles, others riding horses, and many on foot, and they were masked.

On June 13, 2023, we were a group of female paramedics inside the health facility when militias attacked us. They killed the wounded, raped some of the girls, and beat me along with others. As for the young men, if anyone admitted to be Masalit, would be killed immediately. I was also asked about my tribe, though I denied being Masalit, I was beaten because of my appearance and skin color. But they let me go because I was carrying wounded children.

On June 14 2023, El Geneina was attacked entirely, and Governor Khamis Abaker was killed. People scattered, some fled towards Ardamata, where the army (SAF) garrison (base) was. Others fled towards Chad, passing through five villages belonging to the RSF militias and checkpoints. There, we were insulted by words like; “You ambai<sup>40</sup>, your real country is not here, you cannot live in this area.”

When encountering militias/Janjaweed, or RSF on the road, they would first ask about your tribe. If you said you were Masalit, you were doomed, so you had to deny your identity and claim another tribe. They would then demand you speak the language of the tribe you claimed. If you failed, they would kill you. **Being Masalit became a great challenge**, so we never mentioned it until we reached Chad. The attackers used words like ‘slaves’, ‘ambai’, ‘remnants of the army’. and “we will eliminate you from existence especially the Masalit.”<sup>41</sup>

**Ibrahim**, 30 years, was residing in Khartoum studying at Khartoum University. When the armed conflict erupted in April 2023, he fled to Uganda. But his family and relatives were affected by the El Geneina attacks before they fled to Chad.

*“In April 2023, RSF targeted areas, their neighbourhoods and homes, mainly inhabited by Masalit community. They looted shops at the market, assaulted and killed many young men,*

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<sup>39</sup> ‘Rain without lightening’ is a term attributed to the leader of RSF promising disaster to anybody who faces the RSF during fighting.

<sup>40</sup> This is a word derived from the word Nuba and it is used by west Sudan’s Arab populations as a slur, identifying individuals of (black) African origin as slaves.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Rawda WhatsApp records, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

women and girls. The attackers taunted them, saying: “You slaves, we have chased you away, El Geneina is now Arab land, not yours.”

*In El Geneina attacks, I lost two of my uncles. Our family home was completely looted and destroyed. My extended family was displaced to refugee camps in Chad by July 2023.*

*Throughout the attacks and up to now, I have remained in regular contact with my family, although we have lost many close relatives. No any kind of intervention made by the military (SAF) or police as the military kept themselves in Ardamata garrison while police fled to Chad in civilian clothes.*

*There was slogan used for long time by the perpetrators towards Masalit “either we enslave them or chase them away”. The main reason is the land and to eliminate Masalit in order to secure their (Arab) stay with no counter-fighting from them (Masalit), for this reason Arabs kill the Masalit males indifferently young or old.”<sup>42</sup>*

**Haroun**, an active lawyer from El Geneina witnessed the conflict of 15 April 2023 said:

*“The fighting began on April 16, 2023, and continued for two months. During this period, the RSF was attacking the Masalit and some African tribes but the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) did not provide protection. The attackers’ goal was to seize the land of the Masalit. One of the soldiers stood in front of the house of Sultan (of the Masalit) and said: “From now on, there is no Masalit land; it is Arab land”<sup>43</sup> During the repeated attacks, the attackers used racist slurs such as ‘slave’, ‘ambai’, and ‘Nuba’. They killed even children and patients inside the hospital.*

*After two months of continuous violence, most of the Masalit civilians decided to flee from El Geneina toward Ardamata. However, at Al-Naseem Bridge and Kaja Valley (Wadi Kaja), they faced new attacks by RSF and many people were killed and others were swept away by the floodwaters of Wadi Kaja. Those who managed to reach Chad now suffer from psychological trauma.*

*During the conflict in El Geneina, many people were killed, others were detained inside metal containers, some died inside while others were buried alive in mass graves in west of El Geneina. The civilians, especially the Masalit in El Geneina, were questioning why the Sudanese*

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Ibrahim, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

<sup>43</sup> [\(230\) Announcement before Masalit Sultan's house - YouTube](#) (the video is in Arabic)

*authorities had abandoned them and failed to fulfill their obligations to defend them. The Masalit have been left alone in the world. The Masalit will not give up their land.*”<sup>44</sup>

**Sarah**, 44 years from El Geneina, was with her family when the armed conflict started on 15 April 2023:

*“When the armed conflict began in Khartoum and it spread directly to El Geneina. The attacks were relentless, resulting in the deaths of many civilians.*

*The attacks on the Masalit people were frequent, and by the second week of the conflict, dead bodies were lying in the streets, decomposing. I saw the decomposing dead body of Mr. Tariq (the son of Masalit king), lying in the road because people were unable to bury their dead. Anyone who tried to bury the dead would be killed immediately. My family and I spent two months trapped in the siege, unable to leave due to the militias' attacks.*

*In Dar Al-Naeem neighborhood, twelve (12) men were arrested, loaded onto a military vehicle, and taken towards the west of the city, where they were killed, and some of them were my relatives. The houses of Masalit people were burned and completely looted by the Janjaweed.*

*This led to civilians fleeing to Ardamata and others fled to Chad, where we arrived in poor physical and psychological condition.*”<sup>45</sup>

**Salih**, 43 years. He is a community leader and has been in exile for more than ten years. He is one of the Masalit figures wanted by the RSF.<sup>46</sup>

*“For nearly two months (April–June 2023), the RSF launched daily attacks against communities - particularly the Masalit - forcing people out of their homes, villages, and IDP camps across West Darfur State. They specifically targeted community leaders, politicians, activists, and educated individuals whose names appeared on RSF’s secret lists.*

*By June and July 2023, the Masalit community and other Black African tribal groups (accused of supporting or cooperating with the Masalit) were subjected to intense pressure and violence. As a result, they fled to Chad in search of safety and are now living in refugee camps in eastern Chad.*

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Haroun, WhatsApp records, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Sarah, WhatsApp records, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

<sup>46</sup> RSF created a list of wanted Masalit community leaders, and he is among them.

*The perpetrators/Arab militias want to forcefully take the land of the Masalit. This was their intention even before the current war. The RSF used the ongoing war with SAF to push their agenda of displacing the Masalit and other African tribes. Based on what the perpetrators were saying during the attacks and their methods of attack, I believe that they were targeting Masalit as an ethnic group. For instance, the following words were used by the perpetrators during the attacks; “this land is no longer for the Masalit but for the Arabs”, “you will only see or access El Geneina on the screen (via television or videos)”, implying that Masalit will never come back to El Geneina.”<sup>47</sup>*

### **Impacts on Masalit Community:**

During the research, interviewees pointed out varied impacts which were physical, psychological, and social-economic. Attacks on civilians and the resulting forced displacement left deep scars that extend far beyond immediate losses. Bodies subjected to violence or harsh displacement conditions bear long-term health consequences like physical injuries, weakened immunity, malnutrition, and psychological trauma.

The impact extends beyond the individual, affecting the wider social fabric. Communities forcibly displaced face widespread consequences, including the loss of social ties, disruption of economic structures, and reduced access to education and employment, all of which contribute to prolonged fragility and instability. Understanding these interconnected effects is a crucial step toward developing humanitarian solutions that restore the ability of some of those affected to rebuild dignified and secure lives. The following are the impacts narrated by interviewees:

***Jalal El din, 38 years, a victim from El Geneina:***

*“My cousin Yagoub sustained a serious spinal injury that may cause permanent disability and another cousin Yaseen is still missing after being abducted.*

*The massacres and atrocities have left deep psychological scars, especially on children who suffer from nightmares and insomnia.*

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Salih, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

*The Masalit community has been fragmented and scattered across refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Many loved ones remain missing or confirmed dead.*"<sup>48</sup>

**Halima**, 43 years, the victim and community leader from El Geneina stated that:

*" My family suffers ongoing trauma, despair, and uncertainty about my father. No psychological or material support from NGOs was provided (applications to Defend Defenders and Frontline Defenders ignored) "*<sup>49</sup>

**Mujahid**, 43 years, from El Geneina said:

*"We are all traumatized psychologically. My children remained fearing any armed person or in military uniform with repeated nightmares. I feel like I'm not human "*<sup>50</sup>

**Haroun**, a lawyer from El-Geneina narrated that:

*"There are very many people that were wounded, some managed to receive treatment in Chad, while the others are still in Adré seeking treatment for broken legs and back injuries. "*<sup>51</sup>

**Salih**, 43 years, a community leader from Masalit Said:

*"There are social stigma and shame especially on the part of women and girls who were raped"*<sup>52</sup>

**Other victims** describe various impacts such as trauma, and psychological torture to the victims. There are those whose parents, children, siblings and other relatives were killed. Some sustained lifelong injuries and some loss of property, houses, sources of income, and a sense of belonging.

One person said: *"Our homes and properties were looted and destroyed. Even house structures were dismantled -doors, windows, and roofing (iron sheets) removed. I fled with nothing except personal and family documents. "*

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Jalal El din, Kampala, 20th July 2025.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Halima, HUDO Centre, Kampala, 20th August 2025.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Mujahid, WhatsApp call, 15th July 2025.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Haroun, WhatsApp records 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Salih, HUDO Centre, Kampala, 29th September 2025.

Another victim said: *“I lost two of my uncles and I feel anger has been dominating our life. Families were fragmented between countries and camps. My education was affected with no hope about the future. The memory of the tragedy is still fresh in my mind and I have become careless.”*

### **3.2 Ethnic targeting of other communities by RSF**

#### **Introduction**

Some interviewees in this report indicated that the RSF engaged in patterns of violence that appeared to target specific ethnic groups in various areas. The attacks by RSF were particularly against people from the Nuba Mountains and Darfur. These incidents often involved killings, damaging, looting of civilian property, torture, and verbal abuse which indicated that the attacks were ethnically motivated. Understanding these dynamics is essential for analyzing the humanitarian impact and the broader implications for peace and accountability in Sudan.

The accounts below are the testimonies of interviewees.

**Nasir**, 41 years, from Nuba background, fled from Sudan to Uganda where he was then interviewed. In 2023, his home in Khartoum was attacked by RSF.

*“On 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 early morning a group of armed RSF soldiers invaded my house where they were confronted by my father, and I also appeared before them. I heard them insulting my father saying: “you old man, no need for you to live anymore, you Nuba slave, we consider you as a fly” and one of them immediately shot him on his chest and he died instantly in front of my eyes. Later, I went to the market and the armed RSF soldiers in uniform (I know them because they were my neighbours) arrested me, while insulting me using words like Nubawi,<sup>53</sup> Abid (slave), Abulda,<sup>54</sup> falangai,<sup>55</sup> and fulool.<sup>56</sup> They took me to one of their facilities, tortured and inflicted more pain on me after I inquired why they were mistreating me yet they were my neighbors.”<sup>57</sup>*

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<sup>53</sup> This means 'Nuba individual'.

<sup>54</sup> Means soldier (mostly used by RSF soldiers to describe the victim as a SAF soldier)

<sup>55</sup> Falangai is an old word used in describing a follower who carries out orders without will or understanding.

<sup>56</sup> Followers of the former regime (Al-Bashir regime).

<sup>57</sup> Nasir was interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025 from Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

**Khalil**, 41 years old from Tunjur tribe in El Fasher of North Darfur. He lives with his two children at Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda. Before coming to Uganda, and specifically at the beginning of armed conflict (April 2023), he was a resident of Ombada in Omdurman, Sudan. At the start of the war, he was arrested and tortured by RSF soldiers.

*“By September 2024, I decided to leave Khartoum for Nyala with my children. Early March 2025 (before reaching Nyala), I returned to Omdurman after hearing that the situation had improved. On arrival, I found my home occupied by RSF members, specifically Bashir and Al-Zubair. After confronting them, they left, but the next day they returned in RSF uniform, accompanied by a commander named Radi. They took me in a vehicle to a school near Ombada Police Station. While there, they beat me harshly and insulted me with ethnic slurs: “You slave, you Ambai, you Abulda”. They tortured me and threatening to kill my children if I reported or challenged them. After humiliation, I decided to leave Sudan for good with my children and I traveled to Uganda.”<sup>58</sup>*

**Kafi**, 41 years, is from South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains, but the armed conflict started when he together with his family were residents of Khartoum.

*“When the armed conflict began on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 I was living in Khartoum, in Al-Shajara /Al-Lamab neighbourhood.*  
*On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023 at about 2:00 pm, while I was walking, eight masked armed members of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) wearing kadmoul<sup>59</sup> intercepted me with a military vehicle (a Land Cruiser). They beat me and forced me into their vehicle and took me to Jabra neighbourhood. They put me inside a house where I found about fourteen detained men, including elderly men. They also seized my two smartphones. They began beating me with whips and sticks and verbally abusing me and then asked me about my tribe. I told them I am from the Nuba tribe. They tortured me physically and insulted me. They said: “You are sons of Kabbashi<sup>60</sup>” and that “we cannot live in the same country because you are the reason we couldn’t capture Khartoum.”*

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<sup>58</sup> Interviewed with Khalil on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda.

<sup>59</sup> This is a covering worn over the head and face used by the desert nomads (camel keepers) to protect them from the dust and direct sunbeams. It has been used widely by Darfur armed groups (mostly Zagawa) and Arab militias who are historically camel keepers living in desert conditions.

<sup>60</sup> Referring to the deputy commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, General Shas-Eldin al-Kabbashi, who is from Nuba ethnicity.

*“You Nuba are slaves to the Arabs,” they said. “We do not want the ‘Zurga’<sup>61</sup> We must kill you and throw your bodies in the dump (the garbage site) or into the sewage wells like dogs.” They ordered me to lie on the ground. One of them put the muzzle of his rifle against my neck while another fired a shot near my head, saying: “You Nuba are dogs, you must die.” He said: “people like you; we kill them, we do not bury them; and throw them to the dogs.” While I was lying on the ground, they fired another shot which hit my left arm, and then they left. I was later taken to the hospital by one of RSF soldiers (on humanitarian ground), and that’s how I managed to leave that place. I later joined my family and on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2025, we came to Uganda via South Sudan and now we are at Kiryandongo refugee settlement.”<sup>62</sup>*

**Kaka**, 57 years, from Nuba Mountains. She was health worker. When the armed conflict started on April 2023 she was in Khartoum.

*“On 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023, I travelled from Khartoum to Muglad where I used to work. As we approached Dilling city, at RSF checkpoint, one armed soldier putting kadmoul came toward us, he ordered all passengers to disembark and then said: “You claim this vehicle carries only people from the Misseriya tribe<sup>63</sup>, but here is a Nuba woman!” He pulled me out of the vehicle, causing me to fall on my back, and began beating me with a whip, while other soldiers shouting: “Kill this Khadim/slave!”. One of the passengers - a man from the Misseriya tribe - intervened and said: “Why are you beating this woman? She is old enough to be your mother. Leave her; she is with us, and we are all Misseriya.” The soldier then backed off, and they left me. We arrived in Muglad the same day.*

*I returned to my work at Muglad hospital, where RSF began bringing their wounded soldiers for treatment. We used to work under threat and insults to treat them, this situation compelled me to resign from the hospital and move to work at a private clinic. However, my work at the clinic lasted only a few days, as RSF members also started bringing their wounded soldiers there, I was repeatedly threatened, insulted for my ethnicity, called “khadim/slave”, and heard them telling their members in my presence: “Surround this slave; don’t let her escape.”.*

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<sup>61</sup> A derogatory term used to denote a black Darfuri individual, though it is currently used to denote a black person in Sudan generally.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Kafi on 12th September 2025 Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>63</sup> Misseriya is an Arab tribe of Kordufan.

*On May 2024, I travelled to South Sudan but along the way, we encountered several RSF checkpoints. I was beaten again and fell on my back, causing a spinal curvature later, and even my daughter was assaulted. We eventually reached Wedweil Camp, where we stayed for almost one year and we travelled to Uganda with my daughter and have settled in Kiryandongo camp.”<sup>64</sup>*

### **Impacts on other communities targeted by RSF:**

The interviewees expressed the following impacts as the result of their ordeal:

**Nasir:** *“I lost my father, my elder son was also shot and killed when I was under detention, my right knee is injured which hinders me from walking long distances and I have constant pain and sometimes I fall down suddenly.*

*As a family, we lost our valuable things, people around me are traumatized psychologically, my children have nightmares. Now we are living in exile away from my beloved community and home.”<sup>65</sup>*

**Khalil:** *“I experienced bodily harm in form of rape with a metal rod. This caused severe rectal injuries and nonstop rectal bleeding plus difficulty in defecating due to fear of prolapse. I’m traumatized, with feelings of shame, fear of sitting with others due to possible blood stains, depression, my children are also traumatized, with no one to care for them except me. Sometimes I avoid community gatherings. I lost all my savings, house, furniture, and possessions. Currently I’m not able to provide adequately for children.”<sup>66</sup>*

**Kafi:** *“The arm amputation led to my being disabled, I’m unable to perform any job because of my disability. I am depressed because of feeling helpless as father of five children and cannot provide food, water or clothing for them while living in exile.”<sup>67</sup>*

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Kaka, 23rd August 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>65</sup> Nasir was interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025 from Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>66</sup> Interviewed with Khalil on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Kafi on 12th September 2025 Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

**Kaka:** *"I lost many relatives from my family whom were killed together with my husband and niece. Currently my back still paining me and feel numbness in my arms. I and my daughter still suffering difficulties in sleeping. We have been separated from our community, family and land/Sudan."*<sup>68</sup>

### **Call for action from Masalit people of West Darfur**

The people interviewed from the Masalit community suggested various calls for safeguarding and restoring their dignity, ensuring justice, and stability across the region. The Masalit community faced severe humanitarian and safety challenges resulting from ongoing violations, displacement, and the destruction of their homes and livelihoods. Despite numerous assessments and documented recommendations from human rights groups, humanitarian organizations, activists, and community leaders, many of these urgent calls for intervention have not been fulfilled. Now is the time to turn concern into meaningful actions because lives, cultural heritage, and entire communities remain at risk. This demands collective responsibility and decisive engagement.

**Jalal-Eldin**, 38 years talked about the justice and the situation of displaced people, said:

*"The perpetrators to be fully accountable for their crimes of killing, looting, and forced displacement, we reject compromise, only justice is acceptable.*

*The displaced people guarantee access to education for their children, provide support for widows and families who lost breadwinners, and ensure safe conditions for displaced people to return home, rebuild their houses, and receive proper compensation."*<sup>69</sup>

**Halima**, 43 years, a victim and community leader, recommends that:

*"The need to halt foreign intervention especially the countries that are involved in providing logistical and moral support to RSF, and stop foreign fighters from Chad, Niger, Mali, the Central African Republic, and Libya from joining the Rapid Support Forces."*<sup>70</sup>

**Abaker**, 33 years, he is worried about documentation efforts and Masalit activist in Chad and he said:

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Kaka, 23rd August 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Jalal-Eldin, Kampala, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Halima, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

*“Expand documentation efforts to match the scale of atrocities. The NGOs should develop new tools for preserving collective memory. Protect civil society actors in Chad, especially Masalit activists stranded and without support, since Chad is used by RSF as a backyard.”*<sup>71</sup>

**Mujahid**, 43 years, in his call for justice and peace said:

*“Justice and accountability in accordance with the law should apply towards RSF and their allied militias for the crimes committed against us. We need peace and genuine effort with seriousness and without hidden agendas to end the armed conflict.”*<sup>72</sup>

**Ibrahim**, 30 years, expressed his wishes:

*“I wish this report to achieve something tangible not to be only research made for shelving.”*<sup>73</sup>

**Salih**, 43 years, a community leader in exile for a long time, said:

*“The war should come to an end but the Masalit should regain their land. The perpetrators should face justice, and reconciliation is needed to ensure the future of Sudan and people to live peaceably alongside each other.”*<sup>74</sup>

### **Call for action by other targeted communities**

Other communities across Sudan like the Nuba and other African communities continue to face grave and escalating threats from the RSF in its controlled territories as violence intensifies and protection mechanisms fail. These communities are left without suitable security, justice, or humanitarian support. The scale and severity of the violations demand urgent steps and coordinated action from national, regional, and international actors to protect civilians, ensure access to life-saving assistance, and pursue accountability for the ongoing atrocities. The following are the victims’ suggestions:

**Nasir**: *“RSF should be held accountable for what they did to me and to other victims in general.”*<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Mr. Abaker, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 8th August 2025.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Mr. Mujahid, WhatsApp call, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Ibrahim, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Salih, HUDO Centre office, Kampala, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

<sup>75</sup> Nasir was interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025 from Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

**Khalil:** *“I call on relevant authorities and international organizations to ensure justice, accountability, and protection of survivors during conflict.”*<sup>76</sup>

**Kafi:** *“The burden of armed conflict falls solely on civilians not officials. I have lost my arm yet I’m innocent. I wish the war to stop and for people to sit down and discuss issues cautiously and thoroughly. I hope the armed conflict ends, conditions improve, and the people of Sudan will be reunited.”*<sup>77</sup>

**Kaka:** *“Stop the conflict as it destroys Sudan and more people has been killed and more to come if doesn’t stop.”*<sup>78</sup>

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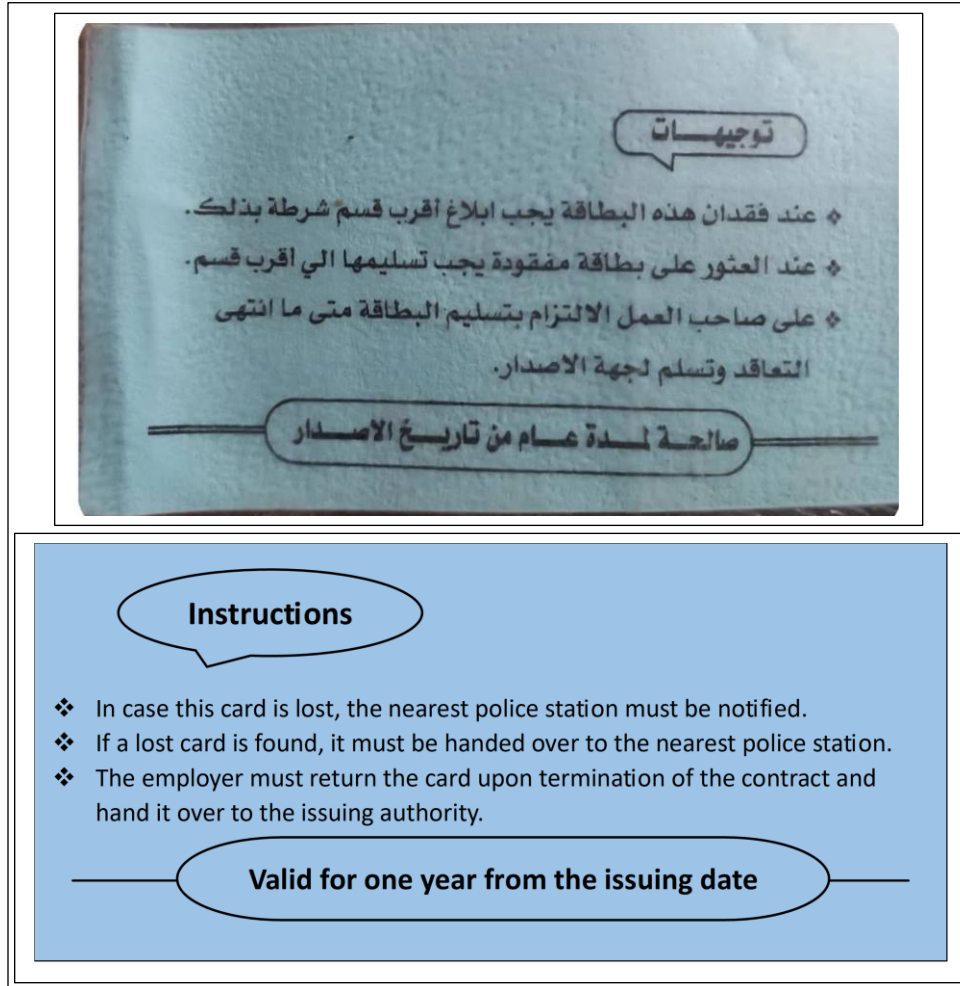
<sup>76</sup> Interviewed with Khalil on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Kafi on 12th September 2025 Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Kaka, 23rd August 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

#### 4 Strange Faces Concept: Ethnic targeting in SAF-controlled areas

*You should be grateful that a white man like me even touched you*<sup>79</sup>



*Top: the original back of the ID; Below, its English translation by HUDO Centre*

#### Introduction

Practices and terms which target individuals on an ethnic basis are not entirely new within Sudanese communities. However, since the armed conflict started in April 2023, the ‘strange faces’ verbal orders (directives) have been used officially in SAF-controlled territories. The main principle of the ‘strange faces order’ was that individuals whose facial features appeared unfamiliar or ‘strange’ to the local populations should be handed over or reported to the authorities. However, the directive only applied to

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Nafisa, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025, online WhatsApp record.

persons from west Sudan origin (Arab and non-Arab tribes) who has fled to the northern Sudan states and other parts of central Sudan. This kind of act or order contradicts the freedom of travel and movement, (Banjul)<sup>80</sup> and the article (12) of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The ‘strange faces verbal order’ which was launched and implemented in the northern states of Sudan, central, and eastern states, is a harmful form of hate speech and ethnic targeting of IDPs from West Sudan. It is ethnic targeting practiced in the SAF-controlled territories which hinder some of the targeted communities from moving towards northern states.



*Two samples of ID from two different localities in River Nile State, the only difference between the two IDs is the colour, and one of them interestingly includes the national number (translated by HUDO Centre)*

The testimonies below are from the victims, eye witnesses, and experts who experienced or have knowledge about the directives and mistreatment related to the ‘strange faces order’.

<sup>80</sup> African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted June 27, 1981

**Ahmed**, 43 years, is from Abu-kershola, South Kordofan state. He shared his experience about ethnic targeting while he was in Atbara, Sudan, saying that victims are not protected by the authorities or legal structures. The authorities or government is aware of such bad practice and the governor partly encourages this discrimination and misconduct through public speeches (pronouncements).<sup>81</sup>

*“I travelled to Atbara and joined my two brothers Ismaeil and Jafar. However, I found that people from western Sudan (Darfur, Kordofan, and Nuba Mountains) are treated differently from the northern Sudanese. We were often subjected to interrogation asked questions such as; “Why are you here?”, “Where are you going?” and are frequently accused of being affiliated with the RSF.*

*Before coming to River Nile State, individuals must obtain a work ID issued at the Shendi checkpoint or at the state capital, Al-Damir. Without it, they risk being deported back to their place of origin.*

*I have been interrogated twice. On one occasion, I was in a public vehicle and we were stopped by seven armed Mustanfirin (Albaraa militia)<sup>82</sup> led by SAF soldier. Most of them dressed in SAF uniform and use military vehicles. I was the only passenger ordered to step out while the driver and the rest were told to continue their journey. I was questioned on the street and ordered to show my ID and phone. They asked me repeatedly: “Why are you here? Where did you come from? When are you going back? What are you doing here? Who are you staying with?” They searched my phone thoroughly while hurling insults at me and other words like “You people annoy us, all of you are RSF supporters. Westerners are envious.”<sup>83</sup>*

**Suliman**, 27 years, is from Al-Khowei town in West Kordofan State, Sudan. He is from Hamar tribe. His 19-year-old younger brother Yousif was arrested, tortured, and imprisoned without cause. He was arrested while travelling to sit for exams (O level) in Dongola, Northern State where he had registered.

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<sup>81</sup> It's a video in Arabic for River Nile State governor gives some directives [# شاهد | والي نهر النيل : كل من ينتمي إلى قحت او متعاون مع التمرد عليه مغادرة الولاية خلال ثلاثة أيام](#)

<sup>82</sup> It's one of the Islamic militias that currently fighting beside SAF.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Ahmed, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025, as a victim of ethnic targeting.

*“On October 7, 2024, Yousif travelled from Al-Khowei towards Dongola to prepare and sit for the exams. He arrived on October 10, 2024 in Al-Dabba (Northern State). Yousif was subsequently arrested along with two other young men from West Kordofan at a checkpoint near Al-Golid by armed militia (popularly called “Al-Mustanfarin”<sup>84</sup>) working under the command of SAF. Yousif was taken in a Land Cruiser pickup to an interrogation centre in Al-Golid. While there, he was formally charged under Articles 50 (Undermining the Constitutional Order) and 51 (Waging War Against the State) of the Sudanese Criminal Code 1991. Under unfair trial, currently he is in prison serving four years’ verdict. ”<sup>85</sup>*

**Rajaa**, 33 years. During the interview, she stated that most of the arrests in conflict zones were carried out based on ethnic and tribal grounds, especially in areas controlled by the SAF.

*“In August 2024, while I was on a bus travelling from Khartoum to Al-Managil via Al-Azzazi<sup>86</sup> route which was under the SAF control territory, four (4) armed SAF soldiers stopped the bus and forced all passengers to disembark, they asked me about my tribe, I replied that I belonged to the Ta’aysha tribe (Arab from Darfur). I was told to sit aside and then asked where I was from. I answered that I was from Al-Fashir, to which one soldier accused me that “You are from Janjaweed people sent here for intelligence work”. They seized my phone and detained me in what appeared to be police holding facility. That night I was beaten and transferred from one prison to another for many days. ”<sup>87</sup>*

**Osman**, 42 years, is a teacher from West Kordofan and of Misseriya community. Currently, he is a refugee based at Kiryandongo refugee settlement in Uganda.

*“On 17 July 2023, around 4:00 p.m., I was on public transport to Omdurman market, we were stopped at SAF checkpoint near Sabrin market in Al-Thawra. Three armed SAF soldiers in uniform ordered me to get off. They began questioning me about my name and tribe. When I told them that I was from the Misseriya tribe, one of the soldiers said, “He is either Janjaweed or sent to spy on our territory”. Later, they locked me alone in a detention cell and six soldiers*

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<sup>84</sup> The armed civilians who have joined SAF under the mobilization call by Sudanese authorities.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Suliman, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 (online/virtual).

<sup>86</sup> Al-Managil and Al-Azzazi are towns in Al-Jazeera state.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Rajaa, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

*entered my cell, began to beat and kick me with their boots plus hurling endless insults at me calling me Janjaweed, “militia”, swearing at my mother and many other degrading words. I was in that detention for six days. I was released after the help of one of my cousins, a SAF soldier who was contacted by my family members to search after my disappearance. Under his efforts, he located me in detention and secured my release. After being freed, I decided to leave Omdurman and Sudan.”*<sup>88</sup>

**Nafisa.** 21 years, was a first-year student at Ahfad University Living in Mayo<sup>89</sup> with her family. When the war broke out, she was on her way to university.

*“On 15<sup>th</sup> April, a Rapid Support Forces (RSF) soldier stopped me and asked about my tribe and religion. I told him that I’m Nuba and Christian. He replied, “Oh, you are an apostate,” and began to intimidate me and he sexually harassed me. I was terrified and cried. Because of the armed conflict our family relocated to Fadasi (Al-Jazeera state) where we stayed for about seven months. During this period, we faced a lot of discrimination and isolation from both the local community and some officials (authorities) because we are Nuba and Christians.*

*During that period, neighbours rarely spoke to us or returned our greetings. Some of the shopkeepers refused to sell goods to us, and some people insulted us openly, calling us “Black” or “slaves.” One day, while I was in a queue to buy milk, the seller told me, “Go back, slave, the priority is for my tribesmen.”*

*Another day, a police officer stopped me and my sister without any reason. He whipped my sister and slapped me, and when we asked why, he said, “**You should be grateful that a white man like me even touched you**”.*<sup>90</sup>

**Ayoub,** 27 years, from the Fur tribe from Zalingei, Tulolo village, Central Darfur State, currently living in Kiryandongo refugee settlement in Uganda.

*“On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024, I was in Wad Al-Nayel, Sennar State, when the RSF attacked and took control of the city. I fled on foot/running together with other people towards Blue Nile State. On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, we were stopped by seven SAF soldiers at Roseries check point. They asked for*

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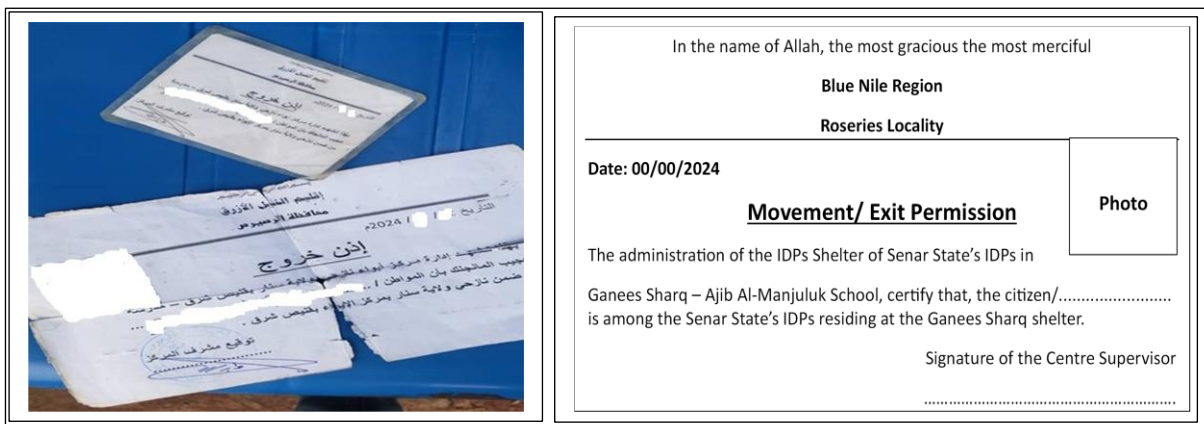
<sup>88</sup> Interview with Osman, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>89</sup> A neighbourhood in Khartoum.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Nafisa, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025, online WhatsApp record.

our identity documents and I was the only one carrying documents; the other three (all from Blue Nile) had no identity documents. After showing my ID, I was the only one detained the other people were released.

That night, I was beaten as they were telling me that “You are RSF, all Darfurians belong to the RSF, especially the Fur tribe.” I was released in August 2024 and permitted to travel to Damazin. I was also given a document (movement permit) to allow me to move. However, while in Damazin, I was arrested many times by SAF soldiers even after presenting to them the movement permit. Sometimes I could find other people from Darfur in the cell.



*Ayoub’s movement permit - left: the original documents and right: the English translation by HUDO Centre*

After these repeated arrests and threats, I decided to leave Sudan on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025. I travelled from Damazin to Rabak and crossed into Renk of South Sudan, then to Uganda through Juba. Currently, I’m settled in Kiryandongo refugee settlement.”<sup>91</sup>

**Mojahid**, 48 years, a Sudanese human rights lawyer/expert stated that:

“From my 20+ years of human rights experience, violations were usually committed by the state. Disturbingly, since this armed conflict began, northern civilians have also become perpetrators—threatening Sudan’s already fragile social fabric.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Ayoub, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

*During this armed conflict often accusations of RSF affiliation are based on trivial grounds. Simply finding an RSF-related video or photo on someone's WhatsApp (common on Sudanese phones nowadays) can lead to execution or a death sentence if the phone's owner is from the west Sudan, while northerners with the same material face no consequences". Then the victims are mainly people from Blue Nile, Kordofan (Nuba) and Darfur communities considered to be inferiors"*

*Further Examples of violations and Abuses are:*

*Nuba communities fleeing Khartoum to Shendi and Atbara (River Nile State) were arrested, tortured, and denied resettlement. This act forced them to establish IDP camps outside the towns, but the authority demolished the camps twice, declaring the people "unwanted." Similar actions were taken in Halfa of Northern State.<sup>92</sup>*

*In Mubi village (Al-Jazeera State), which largely inhabited by Nuba and most of them are Christians. When RSF forces captured the village, they forced residents to convert to Islam or face execution. Some of them managed to flee to SAF-controlled areas were arrested on arrival and accused of collaborating with RSF.<sup>93</sup>*

*The Islamic militia Al-Baraa Ibn Malik, allied to SAF, has aggressively targeted western Sudanese communities in Al-Kanabi<sup>94</sup> of Al-Jazeera State and slaughtered many of them and burned their houses.*

*The Sudanese government has intentionally pursued a plan to demolish houses and churches in areas inhabited by displaced communities from Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, especially in Khartoum's so-called "black belt" (peripheral settlements).<sup>95</sup> These communities have lived there for decades due to wars in their homelands. Similar demolitions have already been carried out in Al-Jazeera State, targeting Al-Kanabi. In this regard, the government's justification is to "secure and clean the capital"—a phrase that exposes the racist intent behind these measures.*

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<sup>92</sup> Video of demolishing IDP camp in Atbara city of River Nile State

[\(5\) Barnaba Tawor - ، صباحا ١٧/٩/٢٠٢٥ بتاريخ اليوم الثلاثاء الموافق | Facebook](#)

<sup>93</sup> Video gives example of a large arrest campaign against black Africans in Khartoum after being captured by SAF [\(5\) Facebook](#)

<sup>94</sup> Kanabi is the plural of Kumbo in Arabic, it derives from the word 'camp'. The Kabani were agricultural camps within the Al-Jazeera agricultural scheme created by the labourers mostly from Darfur and the Nuba Mountains. Over time these have converted into villages.

<sup>95</sup> The demolition operation in Khartoum [إزالة العشوائيات في الخرطوم والجزيرة: حرب داخل الحرب - أتر](#)

*The ongoing violations are not only committed by state authorities and armed groups, but increasingly by the public in northern Sudan. These practices of discrimination, expulsion, and targeted violence threaten to irreparably damage Sudan's social fabric.”<sup>96</sup>*

**Abdu-Elrahman**, 67 years, Sudanese peace and development expert from South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains, noted that:

*“The state itself is responsible for spreading this culture because it has historically been controlled by northern groups, serving their Arab-Islamist political project. The military authority has been using the “Strange Faces law” especially in northern states and Khartoum to justify abuses like: preventing students from sitting for their exams, arresting women, sentencing them under false charges and jailing them, declaring others as “unwanted persons””<sup>97</sup>.*

**Fatima**, 19 years, is from Awlad Rashid, and residing in Khartoum, said that:

*“We lived together with our mother in our family home located in Khartoum State when the war broke out in April 2023. At that time, our father was in Nyala, South Darfur. Our area, Kereri, was under the control of the SAF, and a checkpoint was set up directly in front of our house. In June 2023, five armed SAF soldiers came to our home and arrested my elder brother Musa without providing any reasons. He was transported in a military pickup to one of the SAF detention centres. He was released the following evening after being tortured. He informed us (family) that he was detained at SAF facility near Sabrin Market, where he was interrogated about his tribe and accused of being an RSF soldier or spy. This was based solely on his Darfuri identity. He spent the entire night being insulted, tortured (beaten), called names such as “Janjaweed” and “militia”. The next morning, a soldier who personally knew him happened to come to the detention centre. That soldier intervened and confirmed to the SAF officers that my brother and our family had no ties to the RSF, which led to his release. Because of my brother's arrest and the growing hostility from our neighbours, our family decided to leave Omdurman and moved to Nyala where our father was. Later, my elder sister and I decided to travel to Kampala to continue our education.*

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<sup>96</sup> Interview with Mojahid, online, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Abdelrahman on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Kampala - Uganda

*In May 2025, while in Kampala, we received sad news that my brother Musa had been shot dead by RSF soldiers in Nyala. RSF accused him of spying for the SAF”<sup>98</sup>.*

**Impacts:**

The interviewees expressed suffering that they had been subjected to the ‘strange faces’ directive both from authorities and within communities. The Victims pointed out various impacts on their lives and their families:

**Ahmed**, 43 years, said that:

*“Some people were beaten and tortured, I know one called Omer from Nuba who was tortured which led him to be admitted at hospital for eight days and after that he preferred to leave the River Nile state and went back to Khartoum. We fear to go out of the house because of interrogations and questions or to disappear. I know three people (Sabir, Jamal and Alzaki) from Nuba Mountains nobody knows their fate up to now.*

*There is no social cohesion, there is Loss of property and money; some peoples’ phones were confiscated, others were asked to pay for being released and others their families asked to pay ransom to be freed.”<sup>99</sup>*

**Suliman**, 27 years said: *“As a family, we are all bothered by Yousif’s torture and imprisonment. We are even worried for his life.”<sup>100</sup>*

**Rajaa**: *“I was subjected to torture and bodily harm including rape, broken hand, and fingernail removal. This caused lasting pain, swelling of my leg and I’m not able to work normally. This also caused psychological harm. I also lost my husband, home belongings/property and I’m now a refugee.”<sup>101</sup>*

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<sup>98</sup> The interview was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025, in Kampala.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Ahmed, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025, as a victim of ethnic targeting.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Suliman, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 (online/virtual).

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Rajaa, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

**Osman:** *“I sustained injuries on my head, was humiliated and forced to leave my family and seek refuge in Uganda. Our family house was completely demolished by the bomb with everything in it.”*<sup>102</sup>

**Ayoub:** *“I was tortured and I move with torture marks. The detention caused severe distress for me and my family. I was also humiliated, insulted with ethnic slurs, and pushed to leave my homeland. I was forced to leave my family and community. My chances of education and social development were severely reduced. Detention prevented me from working, and my family suffered financially. My relatives in IDP camp (Zalingei) were also attacked by RSF, who looted all food, property, and livestock.”*<sup>103</sup>

**Fatima:** *“My brother lived with physical injuries as a result of beatings by SAF soldiers and he was later killed by RSF in Nyala (from different perpetrator). I’m hurt psychologically by the suffering and death of my brother. Our entire family was disappointed by the actions of our neighbours. Socially, we developed a bad feeling while in Omdurman that we don’t belong to that community. My family is experiencing economic hardship because we lost the property like our house in Khartoum with everything in it, the death of our father and the elder brother who were taking care of us.”*<sup>104</sup>

### **Call for action by ‘strange faces’ victims**

The interviewees who were subjected to the ‘strange faces orders’ expressed their distress and wished for perpetrators to be held accountable. They hope the current political problems will be solved so that Sudanese can live and move freely. The victims narrated the following:

**Ahmed, 43 years:** *“The security organs should fulfill their responsibility in protecting the victims. The transitional justice should take place to bring justice for victims and punishment for the perpetrators. In order to keep the social justice intact, equality under citizenship should be applied.”*<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with Osman, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Ayoub, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>104</sup> Interview, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Kampala, Uganda.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Ahmed, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025, as a victim of ethnic targeting.

**Rajaa:** *“All the perpetrators of human rights violations must be prosecuted. The survivors should receive protection, medical care, and recognition.”*<sup>106</sup>

**Osman:** *“I need those people to be held accountable and the law should deal with them.”*<sup>107</sup>

**Ayoub:** *“Advocacy is needed to secure the release of civilians who are arbitrarily detained. Provide humanitarian and educational support to victims, since some of them are students, this will help them rebuild their lives.”*<sup>108</sup>

**Abdu-Elrahman:** *“The international pressure must be applied so that the judiciary does not serve as a tool of political repression. Many innocent people are facing similar injustices; we need justice for innocent victims like Omer.”*<sup>109</sup>

**Fatima:** *“We need justice for my late brother from the two fighting parties (SAF and RSF).”*<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Interview with Rajaa, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Osman, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Ayoub, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Abdelrahman on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Kampala - Uganda

<sup>110</sup> Interview conducted 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Kampala, Uganda.

## 5 Recommendations:

There is the need for effective justice mechanisms to secure accountability and provide redress for victims. Justice is not only a legal necessity but a prerequisite for restoring dignity, preventing further atrocities, and ensuring lasting peace. For justice to be achievable in Sudan, there is the need for robust international pressure coordinated with sanctions, protection for witnesses and investigators, regional courts or hybrid tribunals. This can be possible with a stable civilian government ready to cooperate with international justice, documentation of crimes for accountability, grassroots reconciliation, and truth-telling initiatives. This calls for a strong civil society in Sudan to be a key participant in pushing for justice, plus stronger institutional support with the presence of international backing.

Several deep-rooted political, legal, and practical obstacles make accountability slow, selective, or entirely absent. Here are the core reasons:

1. Lack of Political Will: Even when mechanisms for justice exist, leaders often avoid prosecuting allies, and prioritize political stability over accountability.
2. Ongoing Armed Conflict and Insecurity: Investigators cannot safely access areas where atrocities occur. Victims, witnesses, and local human rights workers risk retaliation.
3. Perpetrators Still Control Power: Perpetrators hold *de facto* power, they can obstruct investigations with impunity, intimidate victims, and block reforms.
4. Weak or Collapsed Justice Institutions: the years of conflict and authoritarian rule have compromised and politicized Sudan's judiciary system. Local courts are not functioning effectively, and police seem to be cooperating with armed actors.

HUDO Centre is concerned about the safety and protection of civilians in Sudan during this armed conflict between SAF and RSF and their allied militias. HUDO Centre recommends the following.

### 5.1 To the warring parties, SAF and RSF:

- They should immediately stop the armed conflict, engage in dialogue (peace talks), create safe passage for humanitarian assistance, and allow civilians to live their normal life.
- They should respect the International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and stop racial discrimination against African communities in Darfur and Northern States.
- To stop targeting the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in their controlled territories.
- To stop targeting and displacing the residents from villages, and abide by IHL.

- To be guided by the requirements of the Jeddah ceasefire agreement of May 2023 which guaranteed the protection of civilians and civilians' properties.

## **5.2 To the Sudanese authorities:**

- Investigate violations attributed to the conflict, identify perpetrators, and conduct fair trials for the parties.
- Stop discriminative policies and bylaws.
- Regulate those in leadership positions from engaging in provoking speeches.
- Respect international and domestic laws.

## **5.3 To regional actors (AU and IGAD):**

- Put pressure on the warring parties to stop the armed conflict, and investigate the ongoing atrocities and human rights violations committed by all groups.
- Establish a regional platform for Sudan's peace, and address the root causes of the conflict in Sudan.
- Implement the recommendations of Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) established by the ACHPR.
- Conduct special investigations into El-Geneina attacks of April 2023 and racially discriminating acts.

## **5.4 To international actors (UNSC, OHCHR, and ICC)**

- To put sanctions on the external parties (state and organization/companies) that provide political and logistical (including weaponry and military equipment) support to both sides of the armed conflict in Sudan.
- Expand the ICC mandate of the UNSC (resolution 1593) which was initially limited to Darfur to include the entire Sudan.
- To exert pressure on all parties of the armed conflict in Sudan to allow the safe passage of humanitarian aid.
- Push for peaceful dialogue and address the root causes of the conflict.
- Make sure that there is accountability for all violations and abuses, regardless of the perpetrators.
- Support documentation efforts to match the scale of atrocities.