

Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis in South and East Darfur States, Sudan

October 2022

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Acronym List

cash-for-work	CFW
civil society organizations	CSO
Community Based Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	CBCRM
Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	CEDAW
Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund	DCPSF
Darfur Peace Agreement	DPA
Doha Document for Peace in Darfur	DDPD
female genital cutting/mutilation	FGC/M
focus group discussions	FGD
Forces for Freedom and Change	FFC
gender-based violence	GBV
German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development	BMZ
gross domestic product	GDP
internally displaced persons	IDP
(international) non-governmental organization	(I)NGO
intimate partner violence	IPV
key informant interviews	KII
National Action Plan	NAP
Sudanese pound	SDG
Sudan Liberation Army	SLA / SLA-AW
United Nations	UN
village saving and loan association	VSLA
World Food Program	WFP

Executive Summary

CARE International in Sudan is implementing the project “Enhancing resilience through improved food security, disaster risk reduction and peaceful co-existence in South and East Darfur states, Sudan” (1 September 2021 – 31 August 2025) through funding from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project addresses the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of women, youth, and persons with disabilities to strengthen their resilience to buffer, adapt, and respond to future shocks at an individual, family, and community levels. This gender sensitive conflict analysis in East and South Darfur – representing eight villages – is to understand the causes, power and gender dynamics, and actors of conflicts in the project area.

Contextual Background

Sudan has a complex and turbulent history marked by civil wars, government transitions, internal conflicts, rights abuses, the secession of South Sudan, and protracted economic crises. Sudan’s weak economy, coupled with natural disasters compounded by climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and political tensions have triggered conflict and violence – historically and presently, especially in Darfur (Ahmed, 2022). Amongst those most affected by these conflicts are displaced persons and women. Ongoing conflict for decades has triggered mass displacement within Sudan: more than three million internally displaced persons (IDPs) live in the country (IDMC, 2021). Women and girls (who also make up the majority of IDPs) experience deeply engrained inequities, discrimination, and violence within the household, socially, and embedded within informal and formal structures.

Unfortunately, violence and conflict are on the rise again in Sudan. In 2021, the United Nations reported the number of people killed

and displaced in Darfur in 2021 was eight times higher than during 2020. Intercommunal violence includes both physical and sexual violence between local citizens, IDPs, rival tribes, rebel movements, soldiers, and government-affiliated militias (Freedom House, 2022). Today, the types of conflict most common in East and South Darfur are land and resource conflict, gender-based violence (GBV), and political conflict (as both a specific type of conflict and a key driver of the other two forms of conflict).

Conflict Types and their Root Causes and Drivers

Political conflicts occur between the government – including the military regime and the popular committees formed under the regime – and resistance committees. The root cause of conflict is over the sharing of power and wealth. However, the dimension of ethnicity was introduced when the government and the non-state actors (e.g., Sudan Liberation Army/SLA-AW) recruited and armed aligned tribes to fight alongside them against each other. Other elements have driven members of tribes to perpetuate this battle including poor public services and economic structures that leave residents – especially young men – with the perception that they have no other options to earn money, dangerous social norms that promote sexual and physical violence, and the proliferation of illegal arms (Ahmed, 2022). Conflicts between political parties have also been a key driver influencing people from different social groups and tribes, contributing to the further unraveling of the social fabric and unity in the region (AbuBaker H. M., 2020).

As a result of political conflicts, there are areas in Darfur, primarily in East Jabal Marra, that are under the control of non-state actor movements. Especially near the borders of

non-state actor-controlled and government-controlled villages, incidents of cattle looting, attacks, property theft, kidnapping, rape, and sexual harassment are higher and are considered unsafe, especially for women and girls.

While conflict may be driven in part now by the divide between tribes of Arab origin and African origin and their alignment with government or non-state actor groups, they are diverse beyond this divide, with the language and occupation being the most significant. As such, political tensions built upon ethnic identities spill over into disputes about land and resources between livelihood groups (i.e., Arab pastoralists and non-Arab farmers).

Land and resource conflicts are the most common type of (visible) conflicts that occur in both East and South Darfur. This is not surprising, as agriculture and livestock are the main livelihoods and food sources for the majority of the population in the targeted areas. The conflicts are typically between settled farmers / farming communities and pastoralists / nomadic communities, which are reinforced by ethnic / tribal divides. The types of land and resource conflicts that occur are based on the ownership of land, use of land, access to and use of natural resources (e.g., water, forests), and looting of cattle or other property. Underpinning all land and resource conflicts is access to water, which is a persistent problem due to climate change's impact on rainfall.

Land ownership is a structural issue predominantly grounded in traditional land tenure systems based on tribal affiliations ("*Hawakir*"). Conflict sparks when other tribes seek authority and power outside of the traditional landowners. Community members find that this inherited system leads one tribe to have absolute domination over specific geographic areas at the expense of others, creating economic divides due to availability and accessibility problems for livelihoods.

Even outside of *Hawakir*, modern land ownership issues exist, especially for women who – despite being the primary agricultural workers – have no rights to own land. Land ownership, thus, is a structural issue that triggers conflicts rooted in ethnic identities and perpetuated by economic and gender divides.

Land use is the more common driver for conflict, however. Historically and presently, farming and grazing has been managed through demarcation (Alredaisy, 2012). Conflicts arise when farmers or pastoralists cross borders, intentionally or otherwise, that mark farms, grazing land, or livestock migratory routes. For instance, the non-identification or legalization of the livestock migratory routes and stopover areas triggers disputes between farmers and pastoralists. When farmers move beyond the borders and expand their farm, there is less area for animals to graze or find water. Conversely, when pastoralists deviate from their designated livestock migratory routes and grazing areas, it leads to destruction of crops. Both groups have also destroyed or contaminated water supplies to discourage stored water for cultivation or herd stopover points. Conflicts increase ten-fold or more during agricultural seasons and, as seasonal migration and harvest happen every year, a persistent cycle of land use conflict persists (Ahmed, 2022).

As Darfur has been experiencing an acute humanitarian crisis, communities typically lack the basic services needed to live a healthy life. Structural deficits in the country drive disputes and violence down to the village level. For example, the available food supply is linked to the agricultural practices in the community, as people not only depend on their farms and livestock for their livelihoods but also for their own food security. When people experience food insecurity, they are forced to protect their assets and livelihoods at all costs (Ahmed, 2022). This puts women at even higher risk as

the main carers for the family with an obligation to provide even when it may be dangerous. Other structural deficits include government failures (e.g., poor use of budget), insufficient clean water supply, weak public services, poverty, unemployment, and alcohol and drug problems. Without options, poverty-stricken (young) people resort to looting, joining non-state actor movements, or forcing their way onto others' land to increase their livelihood opportunities.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is often invisibilized because it is kept within the home and not meant to be spoken about. Women/girls' experiences of GBV are silenced due to social norms and the stigma that could be attached to them. The types of GBV described by community members fall into four interlapping, non-mutually exclusive categories: domestic/family violence (e.g., hard beating), community social violence (e.g., social exclusion), harmful traditions and customs (e.g., female genital cutting/mutilation (FGC/M)), and violence as a weapon (e.g., rape).

GBV is deeply rooted within social norms and customs in the male dominated Darfuran society. Women are viewed as weak, without any intelligence or good ideas, and may even be thought of as the vessel of the devil. Women also face formal discrimination and disadvantages because Sudan's laws and policies are closely aligned with Sharia law, many of which perpetuate the dominance of men and enable GBV (e.g., in the event of divorce, children go with their father). While some supportive laws are in place – including the guarantees of equal treatment that were present in the interim constitution – the government and law enforcement rarely take action to implement or enforce the laws to prevent or respond to GBV. Furthermore, conflict is a key driver for GBV. Early and forced marriage, rape, sexual abuse and harassment, and hard beating increase during times of conflict both within the household and by outsiders. When traveling for chores

especially in remote areas near forests or livestock migratory routes, women and girls risk being attacked by warring tribes. Within the home, GBV increases as men struggle to adjust to their lives becoming destabilized with changing norms and gender roles (e.g., more women working outside the home), and many increasingly turn to alcohol and drugs.

Impact of Conflicts on the Community and (Young) Women

The conflicts have manifested deeper divides, tribal intolerances, and violence between the non-state actor movements and the government. They have economic, physical, and psychological impacts on all members of the community, including both the victims and the perpetrators. Overwhelmingly, conflicts have left women and girls with higher risks for their personal physical and psychological safety and more obligation to take care of their households' needs, including their financial needs. Impacts can be direct and immediate (e.g., loss of life or limb, rape, etc.) and indirect and longer lasting (e.g., psychological consequences of trauma, changes in livelihood opportunities, loss of opportunities such as education).

Conflict has had an impact on perceptions of masculinity and femininity. While in times of peace, women were expected to stay within the home only, many more are now working outside of the home as well. Oftentimes, women are left as the head of the households as a result of conflict and fall into deep poverty as they are forced to support their families on their own with little opportunity for income generation. It has doubled women's burdens and responsibilities as men have not shifted their norms around housework to be contributors. Women oftentimes experience difficulties in accessing economic opportunities, so many are forced to accept work at a lower payment or engage in risky, illegal, or informal occupations. This has shifted some of the social norms and expectations about women's behaviors economically, but little

has changed in relation to their rights and responsibilities in public and political life. They are still socially and politically excluded from decision-making spaces as these remain in the hands of men. If they deviate from their expectations, they risk severe consequences including social isolation, beating, or even death.

Views of masculinity have shifted as a result of conflict to be heavily focused on fighting and defending. Historically, it was considered shameful for a man to rob, kill, or even to harm a woman. Now, community members feel that it is viewed as common to kill others and to rape, beat, and sexually harass women. Women and girls have become less mobile as a result because traveling outside of the villages involves more risks of sexual harassment, abuse, beating, or rape in the outlying areas around their village.

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Mechanisms

It is socially unacceptable, especially for women, to seek justice through the formal justice system except in rare, severe cases. Traditional, “informal” justice systems are much more common and important in the remote areas of East and South Darfur, especially in the absence of accessible modern governance structures. The structures include the Native Administration, Judiya, and Community Based Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (CBCRMs), but community leaders (e.g., Ajaweed, Sheikh, non-state actor leaders, politicians) as individuals can also act as traditional justice duty-bearers. All of these structures have a role in conflict resolution by making decisions about punishments, shepherding reconciliation between conflicting parties and communities, establishing community-based agreements, managing natural resources, enforcing laws, and brokering decisions and payments of blood money and compensation. They also play a role in promoting peace and social cohesion. These structures are widely accepted by the local community and their

decisions are often enforceable as a result.

While they are generally perceived to be fair and are favored for being costless, women and young women experience that they are often unjust. This is contributed in large part because women are not included in most of these structures (except for CBCRMs). Community-based governance structures are represented by male members of the tribe, relatives, and even close family members of the victims and perpetrators. Thus, it brings shame to a woman to face these men if she brings a case forward. That is why, in most cases, women avoid them when seeking justice for issues that may impose stigma on her or tarnish her family’s reputation. CBCRMs tend to be more favored, though, especially by women, because they are more diversely representative of the community that they serve.

Women are only welcome as leaders in two ways: as members of CBCRMs – which is required by the (I)NGOs that typically set up and support them – and as Hakamas (elder female singers) who sing songs in support of war or peace. To some extent, conflict has opened opportunities for women to engage as members of CBCRMs and to shift their focus as Hakamas as instigators of war to promoters of peace. Unfortunately, the shift has yet to make a significant impact since women still view traditional structures as perpetrators of violence.

Action Plan for Peacebuilding and Equality

The study uncovers a variety of lessons and recommendations aimed at tackling the gendered dimensions of conflict. After many years of bad experiences, people have come together to find peaceful co-existence through community-based agreements, strong community-based governance systems, collaborative approaches to solve disputes and conflicts, and social ties such as inter-marriage and cooperative livelihood activities. Based on community

recommendations and the findings, the study's recommendations to civil society and actors engaged in conflict resolution and peacebuilding are:

- *Integrate positive shifts in gender norms and relations at household and community levels* within the wider ecosystem of interventions, being mindful of potential negative externalities. For instance, capitalize upon positive social norms about women, work with young women to counter their perceptions about “normal” and “acceptable” levels of violence, and raise awareness about the existence and consequences of GBV amongst men.
- *Strengthen the individual and structural capacities of diverse actors in the community.* Be mindful about who is and is not participating in capacity strengthening, why those people, and how is this support being delivered. Engage community-based governance structures, government, women, and youth, Hakamas, and VSLAs in capacity strengthening.
- *Influence community-based governance structures* to foster more inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches to conflict mitigation and resolution. For example, influence the inclusiveness of existing structures and form new ones where needed, look for and leverage allies, and set up conflict early warning systems.
- *Engage in meaningful, strategic lobby and advocacy* with decision-makers and powerholders from village to national level on topics including harmful marital laws against women, land ownership and inheritance laws that prevent women from having land, land registration policies, gender and youth quotas, amongst others.
- *Develop sustaining women's collective protection mechanisms and practices* such as encouraging women to travel in groups, engaging in temporary income stabilization activities, creating kitchen garden nutrition programs, leading awareness raising efforts on topics such as GBV and alcohol abuse, and providing sexual and reproductive health and family planning services to women.
- *Conduct supplemental research and analysis* to better understand the impacts of conflict among different groups of women and the variety of power imbalances that shape conflict, justice, and development.
- *Take actions to mitigate the potential for land and resource conflict* to occur through agricultural, migratory, and water-based solutions such as demarcating livestock migratory routes and farms, providing services for livestock and farms (e.g., water), and raising awareness about climate change and its impact on the land and migration.

PART I: SETTING THE SCENE

1. Introduction

This goal of this gender sensitive conflict analysis is to support CARE Sudan to better understand the causes, power and gender dynamics, and key stakeholders of conflicts in its project area. It presents findings from the inputs of 193 people in eight villages in East and South Darfur, and supplements and validates the findings with 44 secondary sources. The report is divided into three parts, beginning with an introduction to the study and its methodology and an overview of the context in Sudan. The majority of the report then follows, presenting the findings from the primary data collection triangulated with the project's baseline study. It concludes with suggestions for future programming actions as raised by the study participants themselves and derived through the analysis of the data.

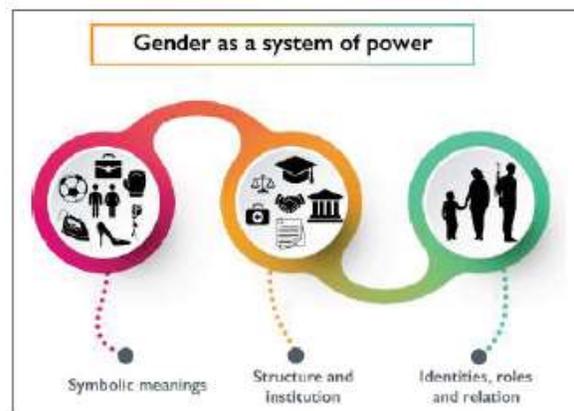
a. About the project

CARE in Sudan is implementing the project “Enhancing resilience through improved food security, disaster risk reduction and peaceful co-existence in South and East Darfur states, Sudan” (1 September 2021 – 31 August 2025) through funding by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It is operating in East and South Darfur states in the communities of Abu-Karinka and Bahar Alarab localities in East Darfur and Kass and Jebel Mara localities in South Darfur. The project aims to address the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of women, youth, and persons with disabilities to improve food and nutrition security, and peaceful coexistence. It works with these groups to strengthen their resilience to buffer, adapt, and respond to future shocks at an individual, family, and community levels.

b. About this study

While conflict analysis has been viewed for a long time as the foundation for designing effective programming in conflict-affected settings, it overlooks the power and gender dynamics present in these settings. Conducting gender sensitive conflict analysis provides a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the root causes, key drivers, main stakeholders, and consequences of conflict from a gender perspective. It uncovers not just the harmful gender norms that perpetuate inequalities, but also different forms of conflict, exclusions, and other types of violence through a gender lens.

Thus, the overall objective of the gender sensitive conflict analysis is to understand the causes, power and gender dynamics, and actors of conflicts in the project area. The analysis intends to inform CARE's programming, providing CARE with quality inputs and strategic guidance to effectively engage or mainstream peacebuilding (social cohesion) at the community level.



Source: Conciliation Resources. 2015. Gender & conflict analysis toolkit. London: CR.

2. Methodology

A team of local, national, and international researchers and enumerators collaborated to conduct the study. The study relied upon both secondary data review and primary data collection through key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD). The qualitative data collection also included two activities for the participants: conflict mapping (see Annex 4) and stakeholder mapping (see Part II of the report). The selection of participants was conducted in consultation and coordination with both the national consultant and the CARE staff. Attention was paid to the gender balance, age, and ethnic groups represented. In total, 24 FGDs and 20 KIIs were conducted across eight villages¹ reaching 193 people in total. Of the participants, 55% were male and 45% were female. The following groups of people participated in the data collection: INGOs and NGOs affiliated with the program, local civil society organizations (CSO), local government officials, community leaders, and community men and women (30+) and young men and women (18-29).

There are several limitations to consider. First, the participants were selected by CARE staff in CARE intervention areas; thus, they are more likely to be informed about and/or engaged in the elements of focus in this study. Furthermore, the villages included in the study are those that were accessible during rainy season. Therefore, some of the harder to reach or more isolated villages are less well represented by the data. Finally, intra-group power asymmetries were observed during the FGDs in East Darfur and affected the natural flow and transparency of information shared by some respondents. One unique challenge arose in Karra village where an interpreter was brought in for the women in the focus group, but it is likely the intent behind the many of the questions was lost in the translation.

3. Context in Sudan

a. Geography and Demographics

The country has a complex and turbulent history, marked by civil wars, internal conflicts, rights abuses, the secession of South Sudan, and protracted economic crises. Sudan is situated at the crossroads of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, sharing borders with seven countries as well as the Red Sea. Of Sudan's approximately 44 million people (with a 50/50 gender balance as of 2021 (The World Bank, 2021)), there are more than 500 ethnic groups and the vast majority (approximately 70%) identify as Sudanese Arabs. The remaining population are of black African groups including Fur, Beja, Nuba and Fallata. Nearly everyone adheres to Sunni Islam (97%) (Minority Rights Group International, 2019). Sudan's population is young: the median age in Sudan is just 18.9 years old and with 61% of its total population is under the age of 24 (World Population Review, 2022).

Darfur is one of the most remote regions of the country. Darfur (as an administrative region) is made up of five states, two of which – East Darfur and South Darfur – are the focal states of this study. East Darfur was carved from South Darfur in 2012. South Darfur is the most populous state in Darfur, and it has the highest number of IDPs (20% of the population).

¹ East Darfur: Alfeweilih and Helal in Abu Karinka; Sarhan and Bowat Alkhil in Bahar Alarab
South Darfur: Gabra and Karra in East Jabal Marra; Alkherwi and Umlayouna in Kass

Table 1: Demographic profile of Sudan, East Darfur, and South Darfur

	Area	Population	IDPs in population	Refugees in population	(Major) ethnic groups
Sudan	1.86 million km ²	44 million (50% women)	7.2% (57% women)	2.5% (45.7% women)	more than 500; majority Sudanese Arab, Fur, Beja, Nuba, Fallata
East Darfur	53,600 km ²	600,000	16.4%	19%	Rezeigat, Ma'aliya, Birgid, Zaghawa
South Darfur	81,000 km ²	3.6 million	20%	2%	Fur, Dajow, Fallata, Habaniya, Tyesha, Masalit, Bani Halba

b. War and Peace

Violence and conflict are on the rise in Sudan. In 2021, the United Nations (UN) reported the number of people killed and displaced in Darfur in 2021 was eight times higher than during 2020. The intercommunal violence included both physical and sexual violence occurring between local citizens, IDPs, rival tribes, rebel movements, soldiers, and government-affiliated militias (Freedom House, 2022). Violence and conflict are not new for Sudan; the country has a long history of both. The war in Darfur that emerged in February 2003 is a significant marker in Sudan's history that shapes its current context. Although estimates vary, the UN estimates that 300,000 died, hundreds of thousands of women were raped, two million were displaced, and 400 villages were destroyed as a result (Lewis, 2021).

Some have argued that the attempts to peacefully resolve tensions in Darfur (e.g., Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA)) have been largely unsuccessful because the conflict has been rife with misinformation (AbuBaker H. M., 2020) and women were absent or poorly represented at the negotiation and agreement tables (Shai & Vunza, 2021). The perceived disregard of the conflict's root causes and exclusion of those most affected create deeper fractions in an already fragile region. This makes building consensus on peace strategies and processes challenging (AbuBaker H. M., 2020). What began as a war waged between government forces and opposition groups has morphed today into a more complex conflict situation involving smaller militia groups whose loyalties and interests routinely change. Invisible actors are capitalizing upon tensions to influence political agendas. The consistency of conflict but unpredictability in terms of hostilities has resulted in an ever-changing landscape of war and peace across Darfur. It has cost the region thousands of lives and led to millions of displacements (AbuBaker H. M., 2020).

c. Political Settlement

Years of conflict, economic strife and rising prices, and longstanding political grievances led to the toppling of El-Bashir from power after nearly 30 years in April 2019 following continuous mass demonstrations from December 2018. Women, especially young women, were vital in the revolution, representing an estimated 70% of protesters (George, Saeed, & Abdelgalil, 2019). A Transitional Government and a constitutional charter followed the revolution, which held the promise for economic and social reform. Despite their pivotal role played in the revolution and a 40% quota instituted during the transition, less than 25% of the cabinet seats were filled with

women (Abbas, 2020). Bashir's legacy left behind residual social norms and practices against women's rights. Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), a coalition of political groups that opposed Bashir, were even reluctant to push for the inclusion of women in political spaces (Abbas, 2020).

One year after the Juba Peace Agreement, in October 2021, the military took over the Transitional Government and dissolved the newly set-up government structures and the constitutional charter. The Prime Minister was forced to step down in January 2022 (The World Bank, 2022). Since March 2022, General Abd-al-Fatah al-Burhan Abd-al-Rahman has been the acting as the Chair of Sudan's Sovereign Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces, making him the de facto head of state (CIA, 2022). Women are once again rising against the authoritarian government, becoming more visible in the public space, and honing a stronger pro-democracy, anti-military message (Bajec, 2021).

d. Economy

Sudan suffers from a weak economy that has been contracting for several years. Like other countries, Sudan was hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Coupled with conflict and political instability, Sudan's gross domestic product (GDP) dropped 3.6% in 2020 (African Development Bank Group, 2022). A state of economic emergency was declared in September 2020 when, at that time, more than nine million people were in acute need of humanitarian assistance and more than 16 million were moderately food insecure. However, 2021 saw a marginal GDP increase of 0.5%, but it was not felt by the people as inflation rose by 359% (up from 163% in 2020) as a result of depreciation of the Sudanese pound (SDG) and fuel subsidies being removed. Poverty also increased by half a percentage point (now 55.9%), unemployment remained high at 18% (African Development Bank Group, 2022), and shortages in vital supplies such as fuel and grain grew (Ahmed, 2022).

Two-thirds of the population lives in a rural area (CIA, 2022), including in East and South Darfur. There, agriculture is a mainstay of the Sudanese economy, engaging nearly 65% of the population – both through the labor force and subsistence (CIA, 2022). Although the majority of the population depends on agriculture, it accounts for a minority of the GDP (UNHCR, 2022). This contributes toward East and South Darfur being among the poorest states in the country – with a poverty rate of 67% – and among the most food insecure (Ahmed, 2022).

e. Impact of Climate Change

Climate change has had a significant impact on Sudan's livelihoods and its stability. In fact, as indicated in the baseline study, "the conflict in Darfur is considered one of the best-documented climate change-driven conflicts in the world" (Ahmed, 2022). Due to the climate crisis, Sudan has fluctuated between excessive floods and droughts, causing desertification in many areas. Many families and communities have lost entire stocks of cattle, which negatively impacted their livelihoods and standards of living, and forced their migration in search of other opportunities. The dramatic reshaping of the environment has also restructured communities, demographics, and economic systems. Desertification and flooding have been major contributors to the food insecurity. For instance, the record-setting 2020 floods devastated the crops and damaged infrastructure (The World Bank, 2022). Four in ten farmers reported a disproportionately low crop yield because of the flooding, sending people already vulnerable further spiraling into a humanitarian crisis. Average rainfall nationwide is decreasing by 0.5%

annually, but its variability is becoming more dramatic. In South and East Darfur, this unpredictable rainfall in a region where 77% of households depend upon rain-fed agriculture as a primary source of income only deepens conflicts over prized natural resources of water and land (Ahmed, 2022). Thus, the root causes of the Darfur conflict can be traced to disputes between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers over natural resources that have become scarcer due to climate crises (Ahmed, 2022).

f. Displacement and Migration

Ongoing conflict for decades has triggered mass displacement within Sudan: more than three million IDPs live in the country (IDMC, 2021), most of whom reside in camps East and South Darfur (USAID, 2022) (Ahmed, 2022). People have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict, natural disasters decimating land and livelihoods, and loss of cattle assets (Ritchie, 2018). Oftentimes with displaced families, women increasingly contribute to the economic wellbeing of their households, and many become the primary earners (AbuBaker H. M., 2020). Overall, IDPs struggle to support themselves: the World Food Program (WFP) Strategic Plan for Sudan (2019-23) found that more than half are food insecure and less than 2% can fully provide for their own food needs (Ahmed, 2022).

Even though conditions are dire for IDPs, many still prefer life in the camps to returning to their villages under the current conditions. For example, in Kass, 70-80% of the surrounding villages are now deserted. They remain deserted because they lack not only livelihood opportunities, but also infrastructure and basic services. People find Kass town to be safer with better access to education and health services. Today, typically only men return during the rainy season to farm, leaving women and children behind in the camps (Ritchie, 2018).

Despite insufficient conditions, Sudan hosts more than one million refugees (USAID, 2022), which is one of the largest refugee populations in Africa (UNHCR, n.d.). Sudan's position bordering seven other countries makes it a hotspot for migration; it is both a destination for refugees and a country for transit on the route to Europe (The World Bank, 2022). The refugee population consists of primarily South Sudanese people (70%), followed by Eritrean (11%) and Syrian (8%), and most recently those fleeing the eruption of violence in Ethiopia's Tigray region (5%) (UNHCR, n.d.). Unlike IDPs which are more commonly women, men are the majority of refugees (54.3%) (UNHCR, 2022).

g. Women's Rights

Gender norms play a monumental role in contributing to inequities, discrimination, and violence. In most regions of Sudan, including in Darfur, gender norms typically restrict women's rights and abilities. Typically, women are expected to play a domestic role whereas men are meant to make household and community decisions, resolve conflicts, and control economic assets. For example, the norm that women should stay in the home restricts their access to engaging in public decision-making spaces and limits their ability to influence decisions that affect their lives. Gender norms are shaped by paternalistic, patriarchal ideas and values and gender roles and responsibilities. Many of these norms and beliefs have made their way into

law and policy as well. Laws that restrict women's rights in the case of divorce or to own land, for example, are structural barriers that contribute toward Sudan's poor delivery of women's rights.

As a result of these formal and informal structures, Sudan sits at the bottom of many indicators of women's rights and is falling. On the Women, Peace, and Security Index, for example, Sudan is ranked 162 out of 170 countries. This is due to factors including (but not limited to): very high rates of organized violence and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV); poor women's financial inclusion, education, employment, and cell phone use; and notably, Sudan has the worst rate of laws and regulations that limit women's ability to participate in society and the economy (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2021). On the Gender Equality Index (GII) by UNDP that assesses reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market, Sudan's value is 0.553 – indicating very high inequality between women and men (UNDP, 2022).

Box 1: History of the women's rights movements

The women's rights movement emerged most notably in the 1950s with the establishment of the Sudanese Women's Union in 1952. Over the decades to follow, women's social, legal, and political rights grew and were codified. However, the initiation of Sharia Law from 1983 set women's rights back dramatically and many of the rights gained became rights lost. The most conservative interpretations of Sharia law were enacted in 1989, which set the tone for unprecedented discrimination against women. The Interim National Constitution in 2005 indicated a potential shift with its strong language about gender equality but eventually the debate stalled (Ritchie, 2018). The most noteworthy change in recent history for women's rights came with the 2019 revolution led by women. For example, many laws that strictly punished women for acts that were considered indecent, such as participation in public life, were abolished. Women's organizations, alliances, associations, and groups newly emerged and existing ones grew stronger (Whipkey, 2021).

4. Brief Overview of Study Villages

The study represents eight villages across four localities and two states. Understanding basic contextual commonalities and differences between each helps to put into perspective some of the findings.

The population of the villages ranges from 16,000 in Alkherewi to just 2,500 in Karra. On average, the villages in South Darfur are larger (averaging around 13,000 people, with the exception of Karra). In East Darfur, the village populations are smaller ranging from 3,960 in Alfewelih to 10,800 in Sarhan. All villages in South Darfur have an even 50/50 male/female population, whereas in East Darfur the population of women is slightly higher than men (51%). In four villages, there is just one ethnic group present (Malia in Alfewelih and Helal, Saada in Gabra, and Fur in Karra). In the other half of the villages, there are two or more ethnic populations present: Rigat and Barno in Sarhan and Bowat Alkhil (Bowat Alkhil also has a South Sudanese refugee population); Hutia, Gemir, and Talba in Alkherewi; and Hutia and Saada in Umlayouna.

In all villages, land fuels the major economic activities. The primary economic activities in every village in East Darfur and Karra in South Darfur are farming and animal husbandry. In Alkherewi and Umlayouna, the population practices an agropastoral lifestyle and in Gabra, the population is nomadic.

PART II: STUDY FINDINGS

5. Types of Conflict

Of the villages, only Alfewelih has experienced a significant conflict recently (2022). Study respondents all expressed that their villages are peaceful, welcoming, generous, friendly, and quick to come together during both good and hard times. However, most noted conflict in the areas surrounding their own village due to the non-state-actor movements². Overall, though, the public perception in these villages is that the security situation has improved, which is contrary to the data showing increasing violence state-wide over the past years.

Despite expressing an overall sense of peaceful co-existence, community members were easily able to describe a variety of types of conflict that persist in their communities. The types of conflict discussed in most detail were land and resource conflict and gender-based violence (GBV). In addition, political conflict was frequently cited.

a. Political Conflicts

Political conflict underpins, and could be considered a root cause of, both other types of conflict (i.e., land and resource, GBV). Political conflicts occur between the government – including the military regime and the popular committees formed under the regime – and resistance committees that are typically led by tribal leaders. Some areas in Darfur (primarily in East Jabal Marra locality) are under the control of non-state actor movements rather than the government. In these areas, outsiders are not permitted. Political and armed actors have been accused of “perpetrating consistent and widespread violations of human rights, such as murder, rape, torture, unjust arrests, theft, the burning of villages, and the deliberate destruction of crops and livestock, which had mostly affected women in the different Darfurian communities” (AbuBaker H. , 2022). The random and political recruitment of tribes and ethnic groups by political and military actors as well as the armed struggle movements is creating more violence, including GBV and land and resource conflicts.

a.1. Root Causes and Key Drivers

Study respondents broadly categorized the root causes of political conflicts as ethnic in nature: between tribes of Arab origin and African origin. However, the tribes are diverse beyond this divide, with language and occupation being the most significant (see section below on land and resource conflicts for more details) (AbuBaker H. M., 2020). The South Darfur respondents were of Arab ethnicity and felt that they are discriminated against by the armed struggle movements in the non-state actor-controlled villages.

While the conflict may be defined by tribal and ethnic divides, CSO representatives emphasize that the true root causes and key drivers of political conflicts are over power and wealth. INGO, NGO, and CSO respondents believed that the government is aligned with the Arab-origin tribes and will mobilize and support these tribes to support their political agenda. To ensure tribal loyalties, the government has supported the expansion and politicization of the Native Administration for political gains. Thus, conflicts between political parties have also been a

² In this study, non-state actor movements are those led by groups such as the Sudan Liberation Army / SLA-AW.

key driver influencing people from different social groups and tribes, contributing to the further unraveling of the social fabric and unity in the region (AbuBaker H. M., 2020). Local CSO respondents shared that because of these political conflicts, the government is discriminating against Darfur region and its non-Arab people through imbalanced development and unequal sharing of power and wealth. The imbalance of development projects drives armed groups to continue the fight against the government.

Additionally, a lack of supportive structures contributes to growing non-state actor movements. Sudan's history of conflict has had a long-term impact on citizen's ability to get an education. This has trapped people in a cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. For young people, this increases their likelihood to join armed groups (Ahmed, 2022). Also, harmful social norms build upon these vulnerabilities. For example, intentional killings and paying blood money. Intentional killings occur often as revenge or retaliation for other violence, creating a cycle of conflict. In these cases, the victims' families must receive blood money ("diyya") or have the crime perpetrator sentenced to death.

Respondents shared that both the government and non-state actor movements recruited and armed tribes to fight alongside them against each other. The proliferation of small arms smuggled from neighboring countries or those that have been distributed by military actors and non-state actor groups has deeply affected Darfur (AbuBaker H. M., 2020). The presence of such arms not only makes the violence more dangerous, but it leads to an increase in armed robbery and has instilled a greater sense of fear amongst villagers. As schools have been deconstructed and drop-outs followed, the disenchantment of young people was capitalized upon, and weapons have been distributed to them directly. Young people are compelled to serve as warriors, acting against even their own families and communities. (AbuBaker H. M., 2020).

a.2. Geographic Hotspots

During the conflict mapping exercise, the places that respondents indicated as being unsafe were almost exclusively those considered non-state actor-controlled areas under the control of non-state actor groups and the Fur tribe specifically (see Annex 2).

In South Darfur, respondents named many such villages, with Finna village³ and Korngbal being mentioned by all categories of respondents in all villages of the study in the state (except for Umlayouna⁴). In these villages – as well as in Sara and Sabon Alfagor villages – respondents shared incidents of cattle looting, rebel attacks, property theft, kidnapping, raping, and sexual harassment. These villages are especially prone to looting because they border government-controlled land and when people and property cross the border into non-state actor-controlled land, they become difficult or impossible to track and get back. Fewer unsafe areas were named in East Darfur (only in Alfewelih).

During the conflict mapping exercise, the unsafe villages were all in the mountains. Typically, the livestock migratory route runs between the respondents' village and the unsafe villages. In Karra, the community's agricultural area is on the other side of the livestock migratory route; meaning, community members including women would have to cross the migratory route that

³ Finna is a rebel-controlled village by the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) in the mountains of South Darfur.

⁴ None of the study participants in Umlayouna felt there were any unsafe places in or near their village.

is utilized by members of different villages to be able to reach some of their agricultural plots. As will be discussed in further detail in the section on land and resource conflicts, livestock migratory routes are one of the most dangerous places in the community for conflict and violence. The location of these “unsafe” villages on the opposite side of the livestock migratory route indicates an informal separation of tribes and livelihood lifestyles.

b. Land and Resource Conflict

Land and resource conflicts are the most common type of (visible) conflict that occur in both East and South Darfur. This is not surprising, as agriculture and livestock are the main livelihoods and food sources for the majority of the population in the targeted areas. Most (72%) of the villagers practice traditional rainfed agriculture (66% in South Darfur state and 78% in East Darfur). Many (29%) supplement their livelihoods, particularly during off-seasons, with a secondary income source as well (Ahmed, 2022). Agricultural and livestock production are affected by many factors, both those within the control of the State (e.g., weak agricultural extension services and provision of production inputs) or the farmers and pastoralists themselves (e.g., low uptake of improved production methods), as well as those outside of their control (e.g., droughts and erratic rainfall) (Ahmed, 2022).

The types of land and resource conflicts that occur are based on the ownership of land, use of land, access to and use of natural resources, and looting of cattle or other property. The conflict typically occurs between settled farmers / farming communities and pastoralists / nomadic communities, and respondents highlight that these groupings have an ethnic / tribal underpinning.

Cattle looting is an unfortunately common practice in Darfur, especially in East Jabal Marra, according to the study participants. Respondents said that the non-state actor movements loot the cattle and take them to the non-state actor-controlled areas. Not only is cattle looting recurrent, respondents said that looting of properties is also a persistent problem. The non-state actor movements are armed, and it is not allowed for villagers from the other communities to travel to non-state actor-controlled areas. Therefore, retrieving lost property such as cattle is difficult and dangerous.

b.1. Root Causes and Key Drivers

b.1.1. Land Ownership

In Darfur, the attachment to land is deeply rooted in the traditional practice of ‘*Hawakir*’, the traditional land tenure system. *Hawakir* emerged during the 17th century in the period of the Fur Sultanate. Sultans demarcated more sparsely populated territories (*hawakir*) to notable male individuals to maintain their power and control over these areas. This led to the land tenure of Darfur to the Zagahawa, Fur, Massalit, and other sedentary tribal chiefs (i.e., the name Darfur means “land of the fur”). The system formally concluded after Sudan’s independence and the introduction of land registration, but it is still informally practiced and remains a central component of many tribes’ identities and notions of ‘home’ (Praz, 2014). A CSO study respondent in Gabra explained that the *Hawakir* still dictates land ownership in many villages. In fact, most of the agricultural land is claimed by customary land rights alone, with less than a quarter of households holding official land registration. The system does not grant any land ownership rights to women, however, despite women being the larger proportion of people working in agriculture (Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Sudan, 2021). In many cases, different tribes

co-exist on the same land without ownership or management rights by way of the *Hawakir*.

Proportions of working age women and men working in agriculture (for profit or own-use)



Source: Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Sudan, DSWG Sudan, UNHCR, JIPS (2021). Thematic Brief: Access to Land and Tenure.

The Gabra CSO respondent said that *Hawakir* is the main root cause of conflict in Darfur. Conflict sparks when other tribes seek authority and power outside of the *Hawakir* landowners. Other study participants across East and South Darfur agreed, expressing that it is “unfair that some tribes have the land of their grandfathers while other tribes have no land.” They felt that this inherited system leads one tribe to have an absolute domination over specific geographic land at the expense of others. Those without land ownership rights creates availability and accessibility problems for livelihoods. Land ownership, thus, is a structural issue that triggers conflicts rooted in ethnic identities and perpetuated by economic divides.

Outside of the challenges related to *Hawakir*, other land ownership conflicts have arisen. As discussed in the previous section on political conflict, the attempts of the non-state actor movements to control more areas across Darfur have led to the occupation of new land by these groups. As such, traditional forms of land ownership such as *Hawakir* and modern and more formalized land designations have not been upheld when these armed movements are successfully able to take over land. This issue was raised most in the village of Karra.

Only in Gabra were IDPs mentioned. The Gabra community leaders felt that the “refusal” of IDPs to return to their places of origin was a driver of land and resource conflict. A return to ancestral homeland is aligned with the notion of *Hawakir*, as the community leaders do not see the IDPs as traditional owners of the land with any right to occupy and utilize its resources. However, the Peacebuilding Fund found that returning is difficult for IDPs: 81% (across Sudan) are unable to access the agricultural land they had before displacement (Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Sudan, 2021). Other studies have documented a similar challenge in Kass locality. People fled the villages for IDP camps and urban centers during the war in 2003. Since that time, pastoralists have moved onto the land. It has triggered land disputes between the original inhabitants and the new residents (Ritchie, 2018) as returnees are claiming land ownership without any documentation or demarcation available for their property (AbuBaker H. M., 2020).

b.1.2. Land Use

Respondents described this as the most common cause for land and resource conflicts. Historically and presently, farming and grazing has been managed through demarcated routes (Alredaisy, 2012). Non-identification or legalization of livestock migratory routes and stopover areas leads to conflicts and disputes between farmers and pastoralists. The lack of clearly defined and demarcated migratory routes gives rise to the issue of commitment of both sides. Some men and community leaders felt that pastoralists do not commit well enough to demarcated livestock migratory routes. When pastoralists deviate from their designated livestock migratory routes and grazing areas and take their animals into the agricultural land, it leads to destruction of crops. Pastoralist leaders, on the other hand, explained that the expansion of agriculture narrowed the livestock migratory routes and reduced grazing areas at

the designated resting and stopover points. Conflict may also arise between farmers. The border between two farms should always be marked by a non-cultivated space, water run, forest, or another natural landmark; disputes arise between farmers when one moves beyond these borders and expands their farm.

The Sheikh of Alfewilih village informed the study team that *“the disputes between farmers and pastoralists usually occur during the annual migration of nomads from South to the North and vice versa. The migration from South to North with the start of the rainy season coincides with the cultivation of crops. If the farmers cultivate the migratory routes, the resting areas and the routes leading to water sources, it will lead to massive destruction of crops. The dry season migration from North to South coincides with the harvest time.”* The project baseline study confirmed this. It found that conflicts increase during agricultural seasons due to animal and herder encroachment on farming land, amounting to as many as 30 cases of conflict per month – up from 2-3 cases per month during the off-season (Ahmed, 2022). Seasonal migration and harvest happen every year, resulting in a persistent cycle of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists.

Box 2: Emergent area: gold mining

Another land use issue that was raised in Umlayouna only was related to mining areas. Of the eight villages in the study, only Umlayouna has a gold mining area within the village borders. Therefore, only in Umlayouna was it identified as an unsafe area, but few details as to its gendered implications emerged. Thus, the impact of gold mining on women must be further studied.

b.1.3. Water and Other Natural Resources

Water is invaluable and essential to both farmers and pastoralists. As drought is not uncommon in Darfur, access to water is a contentious issue. Respondents in East Jabal Marra, South Darfur, especially raised this as a key driver of conflict. While water was mentioned across all villages, it generated little discussion compared to issues around land use and ownership and related ethnic dimensions. Past studies in the region, however, have uncovered disputes directly over water sources. Both farmers and pastoralists have also destroyed or contaminated water supplies to discourage stored water for cultivation or herd stopover points (Ritchie, 2018).

Surprisingly, no respondents spoke to the changing climate conditions and impacts directly. Extensive literature exists on the topic, however. Heavy dependence on natural resources – especially water – for livelihoods means that farmers and pastoralists are severely exposed to the effects of climate change including fluctuating/unpredictable rainfall, which are exacerbated due to overgrazing, declining soil fertility, and a chronic fuel shortage (Ahmed, 2022). Droughts and scarcity of freshwater due to the changing climate have forced inhabitants of areas experiencing desertification in the north toward the more forested areas with more fertile land in the south, where the villages of this study are located. Thus, many of the disputes between nomadic and sedentary tribes discussed by the study respondents are rooted in the competition over natural resources that has grown because of climate change (AbuBaker H. M., 2020).

b.1.4. Structural Deficits

As Darfur has been experiencing an acute humanitarian crisis, communities typically lack the basic public services needed to live a healthy life. Structural deficits described include government failures, food insecurity, insufficient clean water supply, weak basic services,

poverty and unemployment, and alcohol and drug problems.

- **Government failures:** Some respondents felt that the government does not collect revenues or spend any budget to address the basic needs of the community. This sentiment has been echoed by other studies that have found mismanagement of natural resources and ineffective policies and regulations that contribute to the mistrust and de-legitimation of the government. Local communities do not trust that the government can administer resources properly and fairly, especially in light of mega projects that were more detrimental than helpful (e.g., dams). The government has also proven itself not to have sufficient knowledge about borders and land tenures, prioritizing urban expansion over historical traditional ownership (Yahya & Elkareem, 2021).
- **Food insecurity:** The available food supply is linked to the agricultural practices in the community, as people not only depend on their farms and livestock for their livelihoods but also for their own food security. The baseline study found that 63% of the population in the project area is experiencing food insecurity and practicing negative coping mechanisms (e.g., reducing food intake, consuming lower quality food, borrowing money), particularly before the harvest (May-October) as they have run out of income from the prior year having invested the remainder in cultivation for the current season (Ahmed, 2022).
- **Insufficient clean water supply:** In Karra village, respondents said that they do not have a protected source of drinking water. The baseline study found that it is common for women and children to travel far distances to fetch water, which may be of poor quality and bad for their health. The government does not have the needed infrastructure or logistical wherewithal to provide a healthy and sustainable water supply to many villages (Ahmed, 2022).
- **Poverty and unemployment:** In most villages, poverty and youth unemployment are high: the national youth unemployment rate is 35.6% (World Bank, 2022). Only in a small number of areas are NGOs providing vocational training (just 10% of the surveyed respondents in the baseline study, at rates three times higher for East Darfur than South Darfur) (Ahmed, 2022). The government is not filling this gap. Without options, some poverty-stricken young people resort to looting, joining non-state actor movements, or forcing their way onto others' land to increase their livelihood opportunities.
- **Weak basic services:** Social structures are absent in the communities to support the improvement of livelihoods. Respondents in Karra also said they do not have a school or clinic, although most of the other villages had both.
- **Alcohol and drug problems:** Many respondents also shared that alcohol and drug use is becoming more common. Focus group discussants in Bowat Alkhal explained that young perpetrators of conflicts are increasingly using drugs and alcohol because it is now believed that these will help them to fight bravely and not be afraid. They attribute the abuse of alcohol and drugs as a driver of conflict. Under the influence, young men especially are triggered to use violence and to loot properties.

b.2. Geographic Hotspots

Disputes are most common, respondents indicated, at livestock stopover and resting areas and in livestock migratory routes that pass through agricultural land. This is because nomads / pastoralists have long seasonal migration along the routes and livestock needs to be able to rest and graze before resuming the migration again. Even if the stopover and resting areas are

cultivated, the nomadic / pastoralist communities have no other option but keeping their animals there. Partly, because they know that these stopover areas must not be planted but mainly because the livestock will not be able to resume the journey forward without having enough food and rest. The disputes start when the farmers try to prevent them from landing.

Looting and robberies happen both within the village and along the migratory routes. A respondent during an earlier study found that *“armed robbery takes place when the men in the village are busy... like when they are conducting the communal prayers, the village is attacked, animals and properties are taken”* (AbuBaker, 2020).

Box 3: Study experience with violence

Only 24 hours after the study team’s visit to Alfewilih village, three men were killed in one of the identified hotspots areas (Kafarnkola village-ED) as a result of a dispute over cultivation areas.

b.3. Key Stakeholders

Most commonly, land and resource conflicts are perpetuated by men. In land use conflicts, the perpetrators are specifically male farmers and pastoralists. Land ownership conflicts, however, are driven by ethnic/tribal identities. In all cases, it is often young men who are carrying out the violence on the front lines despite it being the elder male leadership typically orchestrating the conflict and making decisions about its resolution. Young men are perceived as the “warriors” without the wisdom needed to participate in resolving conflict. As such, men (especially young men) are also the primary victims of land and resource conflicts because they are the fighters in the frontlines, potentially losing their lives or limbs.

Women and young women were found by nearly all respondents to be the most negatively impacted segments of the community. They lose their husbands, children, and others in the conflict and are constantly subjected to GBV including rape, abduction, and harassment.

The stakeholders of land and resource conflict was very consistent across villages with just a few notable exceptions:

- Only in Umlayouna were miners mentioned as perpetrators.
- Only in Karra were new settlers mentioned as perpetrators.
- Only in Alkherwi were nomadic peoples mentioned as perpetrators and cattle breeders and merchants mentioned as victims.
- Only in Gabra were humanitarian aid agencies and traders mentioned as victims.

Table 2: Land and resource conflict stakeholder mapping

High Influence, Low Interest	High Influence, High Interest
Armed groups	Native Administration Government Ajaweed CBCRMs Non-state actor leaders

International community Humanitarian aid agencies Livelihood groups Cattle breeders Merchants Children Low Influence, Low Interest	Farmers Pastoralists Community leaders Young warriors Women Community in general Miners Low Influence, High Interest
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Overwhelmingly across all villages, respondents felt that the Native Administration had both the greatest influence over and interest in land and resource conflicts because of their responsibility to ensure the peaceful coexistence of the community. This was reflected similarly for other decision-making bodies including Judiya (carried out by Ajaweed⁵) and Community Based Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (CBCRMs). Government and non-state actor leaders both also have a high interest in the conflicts over their competing priorities: to secure control over land (non-state actor-controlled or government-controlled). Community leaders in Sarhan village say community leaders are themselves the most negatively impacted by conflicts because they are the decision makers responsible and, in most cases, they pay from their pockets to accommodate conflict resolution meetings and conferences.

c. Gender-Based Violence

Study respondents indicated a variety of types of GBV that occur in their community. Some of the GBV that occurs is invisibilized; it is kept within the home and not to be spoken about or women/girls' experiences of GBV are silenced due to social norms and the stigma that could be attached to them. The types of GBV described fell into four interlapping, non-mutually exclusive categories: domestic/family violence, community social violence, harmful traditions and customs, and violence as a weapon (see Table 4).

Table 3: Types of GBV highlighted by study respondents

Domestic / Family Violence	Community Social Violence	Harmful Traditions and Customs	Violence as a Weapon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard beating ▪ Rape ▪ Sexual abuse ▪ Domestic violence ▪ Economic violence ▪ Psychological violence ▪ Lack of family planning ▪ Humiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social exclusion ▪ Psychological violence ▪ Women being forced to sit in the back of public gatherings ▪ Political exclusion ▪ Humiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation (FGC/M) ▪ Early marriage ▪ Forced marriage ▪ Domestic/internal marriage ▪ Polygamy ▪ Always serving men first ▪ Girls' poor education ▪ Torture / killing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rape ▪ Sexual harassment ▪ Sexual abuse ▪ Kidnapping / abduction ▪ Torture ▪ Killing

The baseline report asked women and children about the presence of GBV in their lives. It found that one-third of respondents experienced physical violence and approximately one in

⁵ Judiya is a traditional justice mechanism and Ajaweed are respected local elders who are mediators for Judiya.

ten experienced rape, sexual harassment, and/or verbal violence (Ahmed, 2022).

The impacts of GBV on women as described by the community members include:

- **Psychological:** loss of self-confidence, self-esteem, dignity; feelings of shame and loneliness; increase in depression, anxiety, stress; fear of intimacy and sexuality
- **Physical:** injury, torture, side effects due to lack of medical treatment, suicide
- **Economic:** increased likelihood to become poor, unemployed; loss of opportunity to seek work out of the home
- **Social:** Experiences of stigmatization and social exclusion, avoidance of public gatherings and places, loss of opportunities to get a proper education, loss of children, limited mobility

Respondents said that families may also suffer consequences of GBV. For instance, families or tribes of perpetrators may need to pay blood money to the family of a rape victim or in cases of illegal pregnancies. Also, families of divorced women experience GBV consequences as they must provide again for the divorced women who are forced to return home. The children of divorce suffer the most serious consequences in a family, though, because of Sudanese marital law that requires them to leave their mothers and go with their father. When they are separated, they lose the adequate and proper care of their mothers.

c.1. Root Causes and Key Drivers

c.1.1. Social norms and traditions

Overwhelmingly, respondents emphasized that GBV is deeply rooted within social norms and customs in Darfurian society. Women are viewed as weak, without any intelligence or good ideas, and are even thought to be the vessel of the devil. All respondent types acknowledged that their communities are male dominated where women are regarded as second-class citizens at best and evil at worst. This is something that has been a passed down tradition over generations, according to community members. They described a “men-first” society both in the theoretical sense (i.e., men’s ideas and decisions are prioritized) and in the literal sense (e.g., men are always served first at the table, speak first, etc.).

From birth, women and girls are disadvantaged socially and culturally. Families discriminate against female newborns; for example, fathers throw large celebrations and are willing to spend more money when a male child is born. Girls are taught from an early age that they must serve and respect the boys and ask permission from them for anything they need. Conversely, the boys are taught that they are responsible from their sisters and to keep the honor of the family, so they must control the behaviors of their sisters. In general, daughters are considered a source of shame and dishonor to the family. Families marry them off as early as possible to avoid any potential scandals.

Women must fulfil the physical and sexual needs of her husband at any time, regardless of her own needs or wishes. NGO representatives explained that this leads to cases of marital rape. However, due to the prevailing norms that women – especially wives – must meet all needs of men, things like marital rape are not discussed. If it were, the woman would be regarded as selfish and would be heavily stigmatized. Also, “hard beating” as described by the female respondents, or wife battery, is exceedingly common and viewed as a necessary practice for disciplining and controlling women. In fact, a prior study found that some rural women considered it a defining feature of their husband’s ‘care’ and that there are ‘normal levels’ of

acceptable violence, especially if a woman or girl ‘deserved it’ for asking about money, arguing, being lazy, going out of the house without permission, or refusing intimacy. However, the same study shows that its acceptability, especially in urban areas and amongst those more educated, is decreasing (Ritchie, 2018).

Box 4: Proverbs symbolizing the embeddedness of GBV in social norms

Evidence of the embeddedness of violence against women is presented within the many proverbs that exist within Sudan. For example, an Arabic proverb says “*Alsawt li talata Almara wa Alhomara wa Alnogara*”, which means “the whip is for three: woman, jackass, and drum.” This indicates that these three things cannot function without beating: music cannot be heard unless the drum is beaten, the female donkey is obstinate when is used in travelling and must be whipped to go fast, and a woman cannot do good things unless she is beaten. Also, there is another saying: “Woman is beaten by her sister.” This is derived from the belief that the greatest punishment for a woman who commits a mistake is to marry another woman; a woman can accept all kinds of punishments more than having the second wife.

c.1.2. Laws and policies

While root causes of GBV may be found within social norms and practices, respondents share that there are other structures also drive the persistence of violence against women. Most notably, women face discrimination and disadvantages in law and policy. Sudan’s laws and policies are closely aligned with Sharia law, many of which perpetuate the dominance of men and enable GBV (Ritchie, 2018). For example, Section 52 of the Muslim Personal Act of 1991 requires wives to obey their husbands in all contexts, including meeting their sexual demands. It also outlines husbands’ rights: “(a) to be taken care of and amicably obeyed; and (b) to have the wife preserve herself and his property” (OECD, 2019). Also, the Muslim Personal Law Act includes articles that permit early marriage (from 10 years old), require dowry as a marriage requirement, restrict women’s inheritance rights, and discriminate against women’s rights to testify in legal proceedings (OECD, 2019). Under Islamic inheritance law, females receive only half of the wealth that their male relatives receive based on the idea that it is a man’s duty to care for the women. Numerous respondents also emphasized the marital law that grants men the right to the children in the event of divorce.

Sudan does have some supportive laws and policies in place, though. For instance, the government adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) in March 2020. The NAP’s overarching goals are: 1) to actively involve women in peace-building, peacekeeping, peace negotiations and decision-making processes at all levels, and in relief, reconstruction and development; 2) promoting the recognition of women’s rights before, during and post armed conflict; and 3) ensuring the protection of women against any form of gender-based violence, and putting an end to impunity (Women Peace and Security Programme, n.d.). However, while the transitional government ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2021, it did not endorse the provisions about women’s equality in marriage, divorce, and parenting (Freedom House, 2022). Thus, even when supportive laws are in place – including the guarantees of equal treatment that were present in the interim constitution – respondents find that the government and law enforcement rarely take action to implement or enforce the laws.

c.1.3. Conflict

As described earlier, GBV can be used as a weapon of war (or other conflict more broadly). Any type of conflict increases the rate of GBV, according to respondents. Some shared that GBV in terms of early and forced marriage, rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and hard beating increase during times of conflict both within the household and by outsiders. When traveling for chores such as collecting timber, firewood, or water – especially in more remote areas near forests or livestock migratory routes – during times of conflict, women and girls say that they risk being attacked by warring tribes. In an earlier study, girls shared that they choose to collect firewood in groups (up to 30 girls travel together in Kass, for example) during daylight hours only to lower their risk (Ritchie, 2018).

Conflict is also a trigger for other conditions and behaviors that drive GBV. For instance, many respondents spoke of growing issues with alcohol and drug use amongst men. Other studies have shown that men's alcohol consumption, which increases during rainy season when they are working less, makes them more prone to using violence (Ritchie, 2018). Also, men are noticing a disruption in their traditional family structure due to the changing economic roles of women. A past study found that this contributed to more alcohol use – and subsequently more domestic violence – by men as they struggled to adapt to changing norms (El-Bushra, El-Karib, & Hadjip, 2002).

c.2. Geographic Hotspots

In cases of domestic/family-based violence, GBV often occurs in the home. However, no study respondent mentioned homes as hotspots for violence. Instead, they focused on the types of violence that occur by people outside of families. Therefore, they shared that most cases of GBV take place outside of the village, usually when girls and women are out collecting firewood or timber. Women and young women in Bowat Alkhiil, Helal, and Sarhan explained that the areas that are unsafe for them include forests, distant areas of farms, livestock migratory routes, and refugee camps. They explained that women and young women are at risk in these areas for sexual violence including rape and harassment because they are remote from the village, and they have denser foliage making it easier not to be seen. Generally, they have the sense that the community is helpless and not able to ensure the safety of women in these areas. They feel it should be the task of the government to do so. Critically, the men and community leaders in these villages did not mention these same risks. Therefore, the men and community leaders are either less aware of the GBV risks women face around their village or they are unwilling to speak about it.

Box 5: Safety in IDP camps

IDP camps were not discussed in any of the villages. However, they have been highlighted in past studies of Darfur as a safer place for women. In fact, women explained that they choose to remain in urban IDP camps for their own safety as they face fewer risks for GBV there (Ritchie, 2018). This is an area for more exploration.

During the community mapping exercise, a few notable findings came to the forefront:

- In Bowat Alkhiil, the forest where a rape case was reported is located next to a water harvesting point. This is noteworthy because the map indicates the clinic, school, and government checkpoint all nearby to the unsafe waterpoint. This suggests that the forest still harbors more dangers for women despite some significant community and government structures nearby that are apparently unable to make it safer.
- In Sarhan, farms in the north were noted as unsafe areas for GBV despite their proximity to the CBCRM tree and the police station. Again, this indicates that community

structures – including law enforcement – are not sufficiently deterring violence against women from happening nearby.

- In Sarhan, the refugee camp is located close to the livestock stopover area. Sarhan was the only place where a refugee camp was shared as being dangerous. It is worth examining further the correlation of the refugee camp being near to a stopover location – known as a ‘no go’ area – with its perception of being unsafe.

c.3. Key Stakeholders

Respondents explained that the male family members are typically the perpetrators against (young) women and are also responsible for ensuring the honor of the family. As such, male relatives have the highest interest and influence in GBV. Almost exclusively GBV is perpetuated by men, primarily domestically by close relatives including fathers, husbands, and brothers. None of the study respondents said that men or boys were victims of GBV, but some highlighted that those around the women who divorce as a result of GBV are also victims (e.g., children, families).

At the family-level, GBV is practiced in the form of FGC/M, early marriage, forced marriage, and domestic marriage. All respondents shared that it is strongly believed that it is the right of the family – almost always the male family members – to decide on GBV, as it is considered a family affair. Many community leaders said that these types of GBV are invisibilized by the community, and even if people see it happening (e.g., early marriage), they do not take any actions against it.

Many respondents said that things like rape and kidnapping are a product of other types of conflict and are utilized as a weapon of war. When used as a weapon, many respondents felt that young warriors or other young men from other tribes, without familial relations to their victims, were the primary perpetrators against the women and girls.

Table 4: Gender based violence stakeholder mapping

High Influence, Low Interest	High Influence, High Interest
Government Ajaweed	Male relatives Families Native Administration Community leaders CBCRMs Non-state actor leaders
Police Pastoralists Farmers Armed groups Neighboring/warring tribes Young warriors Community in general Addicts Criminals	Women Children Mothers
Low Influence, Low Interest	Low Influence, High Interest

Addressing GBV may be taken outside of the family, but typically only to the Native Administration or other traditional community structures. However, nearly all women and young women study respondents (but not men or community leaders) also indicated that community leaders, CBCRMs, and the Native Administration are also GBV perpetrators. Thus, the Native Administration, community leaders, and CBCRMs all have high interest in and influence over GBV. Women and young women explained that these community-based governance structures are not fair when women seek justice particularly for early and forced marriage, severe beating, and psychological abuse. As women are excluded from the Native Administration, Ajaweed, and community leadership positions, those who are making decisions about them as victims of GBV are not representative of them or understanding of their experience. Involving formal justice systems only occurs in the most extreme cases. In fact, police as influential decision-makers were only raised by women in Gabra.

The stakeholders of GBV listed were very consistent across villages with just a few notable exceptions, all of which were raised by young women:

- Only in Alfewelhi were neighboring tribes mentioned as perpetrators.
- Only in Bowat Alkhil were farmers mentioned as perpetrators.
- Only in Gabra were mothers mentioned as perpetrators.

6. Social Norms and Gendered Expectations

Conflict is rooted in masculine values of domination and competition. Some scholars assert that not only does violence assert a perpetrators masculinity, but enemies' inability to defend themselves, their property, or their women has a feminine connotation. As femininity is devalued and social norms diminish women's worth, conflict itself carries a gendered stigma (Yahya & Elkareem, 2021). Thus, gaining a deeper understanding of the social norms and gendered expectations of men and women in context helps to better uncover the roots and key drivers of conflict as well as potential solutions.

a. Social Norms Affecting Women

Discriminatory proverbs about women and reflect the belief that women are the property and responsibility of men (see box 7). "A woman is like hair that follows the neck" is a popular proverb shared by respondents. It means that women (the hair) must always follow the men (the neck). This summarizes the position of women – they are the followers, not the leaders. In all aspects of household and public life, women yield very little power and are typically excluded from decision-making. Communities are male dominated and women have a marginal role to play in private or public life.

Across all villages, respondents – men and women alike of all ages – shared similar expectations about the behaviors of women in their own

Box 6: Definitions related to social norms

Social Norms: the socially constructed behavioral rules and expectations that are constructed and shared by a reference group; they can be reinforced through sanctions.

Reference Group: the people (e.g., family, leaders, colleagues) whose opinions on the specific issue addressed by a social norm matter most.

Sanctions: the consequences that reinforce and sustain behaviors as a result of the approval or disapproval by a reference group.

communities. However, respondents felt that some tribes are stricter about women's position whereas others are a little bit more liberal. Respondents explained that women are expected to be decent, obedient, respectful toward men, submissive, and should always wear respectful dress. The burden of the responsibility to keep the family honor is high and societally, many said that women are considered a source of "evil" and "scandal."

The household is considered women's main responsibility. They should remain within the home and are expected to take on specific roles that revolve around the home such as the carer of the family (e.g., preparer of food, cleaner). For example, the proverb "almarā min albab wa warra", or "the place for the woman is from the outdoor and back" meaning women should stay inside the house. One of the main roles of wives is to receive and welcome guests appropriately. A local saying that "the generous man is by his wife" illustrates that the wife reflects the generosity of the husband, as she is the one who serves the guests in the home.

In public life, men and women do not mix: they eat separately and in public spaces, men take their places in the front and women sit together in the back if they are present at all. Men have the power to speak freely in public, hold leadership roles, and represent their families and their community but women do not. The common saying "behind every great man, there is a great woman" was also shared by respondents. Despite this being shared as a generally positive comment about the perception of women, it still speaks to the norm and practice that men are the leaders and come first and women are there to support them only and stay back. If a woman were to speak in public, she must speak last after men have spoken. "Kalam almarā kulo wara" or "the speaking of the woman must come at the end" is a common saying shared by study respondents. Even in times of conflict that directly affect women (e.g., GBV cases), they are usually represented by male relatives.

Politically, women are also excluded due to negative norms, traditions, and perceptions about their capabilities. Generally, women are thought not to be smart or capable. The widely used proverb in Darfur "alnswan shawrhin wa khalifhin" reflects this. It indicates that women are thought to always have unwise and illogical ideas; so, if a man wants to avoid the wrong and illogical path, he should consult a woman and immediately do the opposite. A variety of other common proverbs mimic this same idea that "*people will not succeed if they give their leadership to women,*" as shared by one focus group respondent.

The only exception to this exclusion is in the economic sphere for certain occupations. Women have more opportunities to participate in the labor force and even take on the head of household role. However, they are viewed as incapable to pursue career endeavors that are considered more academic. Study respondents shared two different but similar proverbs about if a woman studies law/engineering, she will still end up at the broom/stove. This further reflects the perception that women's capabilities and roles cannot go too far beyond the home. Even when women work and bring in income, though, men nearly always remain responsible for deciding on family spending. Women are not allowed to decide freely on their properties and do not enjoy the freedom to sell or donate in her agricultural production.

There may be opportunities to capitalize upon and open doors for conversations about improving women's representation in decision-making and leadership, though, based on the beliefs that women are better at taking responsibility and have kind hearts. When a woman is doing good work, her value is that of a hundred men ("bint bamit ragil"). Conversely, sayings about men speak to their lack of trustworthiness. For example, "alregal dol alsahab

alamanhom kadab”: men are just like the shadow of the cloud, those who trust them are liars or losers; and “alamn alregal amn almoya fi alghorbal”: those who trust men trust water in colander. These proverbs run opposite to the social norms in the community that limit women’s role in decision-making.

Box 7: Proverbs symbolizing cultural discrimination against women and girls

- “Whoever a man is, he is the woman’s guardian (caretaker)”: meaning, regardless who the man might be in terms of age, education, or responsibility, he is still the guardian of the woman anytime and everywhere.
- “Let your son choose his wife by himself but choose a husband for your daughter”: indicating that men know what is best and women must respect the choice of her father.
- “Almara mamlouka ela malak Almout” or “A woman is owned to death”: meaning, women have no independent character outside of the men who are responsible for them.
- “Ham Albanat lilmamat” or “The anxiety of having girls will remain up to the death”: meaning, girls will always be the source of anxiety and unrest for the family.
- “Do not trust woman even if she prays and fasts”, indicating that women are not trustworthy and men must be careful when dealing with them, even though praying and fasting are indication of pious and worship.

a.1. Shifts in Social Norms about Femininity and Women’s Roles

Respondents felt that women, more than men, deviate from expectations about them but only in relation to specific social norms about their role in the home. They explained that due to prolonged conflicts where many men lost their lives, livelihoods, and/or have moved elsewhere in search of opportunities, perceptions have changed about the ‘appropriate’ behaviors and work for women. Out of economic necessity, communities have been forced to change some of norms and traditions and accept women to work outside of the home. This leaves women and young women to take on roles that are traditionally held by men in East and South Darfur, including responsibilities such as providing for the household economically. Generally, though, women and any production/income she accumulates are still viewed as the property of men.

In some communities, focus group participants reported an increased appreciation of women’s and men’s roles, and an improved sense of how gender roles are mutually reliant. Now, women are now working outdoors and on farms, heading up their households, and contributing to family expenses. One respondent reflected, “*Most of women’s new roles that were imposed by economic necessity have now become a fact of life and normal.*” But, due to social exclusion and discriminatory social norms that influence women’s and young women’s mobility and decision-making power, they face burdens that restrict their ability to successfully have the influence of men even in male-dominated roles.

b. Social Norms Affecting Men

Men are expected to be the protectors of their family, defenders of their tribe, and defeaters of their enemies. The saying that men are the “lion of the forest” indicates the perception that men must be brave. This concept of masculinity is reflected in women’s popular songs and folklore that talk about their heroism in conflicts, defeat of others, and defense of their tribes.

Not only must men be brave, but they must also be strong. They are called ‘gamal alshill’ or ‘the camel of the load’. This camel for nomadic communities is strong enough to carry the heavy load of the family during the seasonal migration. When a man is called this, it means he is a man of wisdom who can solve disputes and carry all burdens. Also, families are expected to understand that all family views about community/public decisions will be represented by the men of the households.

These beliefs are reflected in behaviors from birth. Some tribes believe that the male babies must breastfeed longer than girls because they need more milk to fulfill their responsibility to be strong. The Omda in Helal village said “*the child of today is the father of tomorrow*” as a way of explaining that boys are believed to be the carriers of norms and traditions into the future. As boys grow up, they are told never to “cry as girls” or to sit or eat with girls or women. Rather, they are instructed to monitor their sisters’ behaviors and to be served by them. Boys benefit from a higher degree of freedom and flexibility in going places and playing outside without many restrictions as compared to girls.

Men are given priority in the quality and quantity of the food and are always served first. Women must wait until the men eat and are satisfied. While many respondents associated this norm with men being the breadwinners, they did not say that it has changed as now many more women are the breadwinners in the household. Rather, this norm is engrained within beliefs about male superiority rather than their household contribution as all respondents said that the men-first mentality is still very strong in their communities.

b.1. Shifts in Social Norms about Masculinity and Men’s Roles

Conflicts have significantly shaped and changed norms relating to masculinity. Historically, it was considered shameful for a real man to rob, kill, or to harm a woman. Now, it is viewed as common to kill and to rape, beat, and sexually harass women. Many felt that conflict has also increased drug use amongst men and contributed to higher rates of petty crime. Before, they said it was perceived as shameful to rob people and to be an addict, but now these are distinctive features of masculinity. Masculinity expectations now include fighting bravely in conflicts without regard for consequences, defeating the enemies at all costs, and bringing booties home. It is believed that men, especially young men, must have (and be prepared to use) guns and vehicles and/or horses to be always ready for war. A man must also always be willing to participate in recapturing properties, protect himself and his family, defend his community and tribe, and attack others.

c. Consequences of Deviation from Social Norms

Respondents said that norms for men and women are consistent across classes, ethnicities, and locations. They do not deviate from the norms except in very few circumstances related to the financial contribution of family members. In some cases, men cannot be the breadwinners for their families, such as the elderly and disabled men. Therefore, a man can allow his wife to go out for work to help with family expenses, although financial affairs are still considered his responsibility. Women can leave the home and go out for work to meet family needs if they still meet their family responsibilities. Respondents said that it is common to see women in the markets as petty traders and in the agricultural sector.

However, for women, the expectations regarding the respect, chastity, and the honor of the

family such as engaging in illegal relations are still the red line. Generally, if women do not obey norms, they face a myriad of different consequences depending on their action and their circumstance. Socially, they are considered odd and are oftentimes socially excluded, castaway, and forsaken. Within their family, they may not have the chance to marry or not be allowed to live within their family any longer. If women engage in highly stigmatized acts or behaviors such as illegal pregnancy, marriage without the consent of the family or the permission of the father, practicing of prostitution and so on, they may be subjected to severe punishments. Such acts are considered to be directly linked to the (dis)honor and reputation of the family, and traditions dictate swift and severe punishment such as torture, deportation, abandonment, social exclusion, or even death for dishonoring the family. One of the members of FGDs in Bowat Alkhil village told of an incident where five young females were tortured to death after being caught making secret mobile phone calls with their boyfriends from another village.

If men do not adhere to the norms prescribed to them, respondents said that they are considered a total disappointment and failure by their family and community. Relatives and friends will try to advise them and draw the attention of his offenses to the community so he can be corrected. In severe cases, community members said that social exclusion has occurred.

7. Impact of Conflicts on the Community and (Young) Women

The conflicts have manifested deeper divides, tribal intolerances, and violence between the movements and the government. They have economic, physical, and psychological impacts on all members of the community, including both the victims and the perpetrators. The impacts can be direct and immediate such as loss of life or limbs, loss of family members, and loss of assets. For example, in the case of land and resource conflicts, farmers and pastoralists suffer from damage to crops, encroachment/closing of livestock migratory routes, losing access to farming land or grazing areas, challenges accessing water points, and the paying the costs of resolving the conflicts. If conflict occurs with tribes from non-state actor-controlled areas, accessing these areas by tribes on government land to recapture looted livestock or property is problematic. Impacts may also be more indirect and longer lasting. These include the psychological consequences of trauma, changes in livelihood opportunities, loss of opportunities such as education, and much more.

a. Changing Livelihood Activities

Oftentimes, women are left as the head of the households as a result of conflict and fall into deep poverty as they are forced to support their families on their own with little opportunity for income generation. Women are now working in petty trade, agriculture, and even animal raising. In Karra, community leaders shared that 80% of the labor force in their agricultural sector are women, making women the most productive segment in their society. All community member respondents agreed that the social recognition of women as hard workers and economic contributors has increased. As a result, when conflict occurs over resources, women's livelihoods and the community's economic prosperity are significantly impacted. To some extent, this change has been beneficial for women in that they are freer to work outside the home and they have become more powerful economic agents.

However, joining the labor force has led to a variety of harmful consequences for women and girls. It has doubled women's burdens and responsibilities as men have not shifted their norms

around housework to be contributors. Also, women oftentimes experience difficulties in accessing finance to conduct income generation activities. Many will be forced to accept work at a lower payment than they deserve for their family's survival. It becomes more common during times of conflict to see women work, particularly in informal sector. More will turn to illegal markets such as prostitution or selling alcohol to make ends meet.

Some respondents said men's livelihood activities have changed as well. Prior to the conflicts, the men worked in farming land, animal rearing and trade between different villages. Many now refrain from going regularly to farmland or travelling long distances to trade. Leaving to do business is associated with risks of killing, abduction, and torture. Some said that men have handed over some of their roles and responsibilities to women to avoid these risks. But the risk for facing many types of violence is greater for women and girls. One respondent shared that women are considered daring when they undertake male jobs.

b. Loss of Opportunities and Mobility

With conflict, opportunities decrease for livelihoods, education, and mobility, amongst other things. The loss of education opportunities is especially high for girls. Girls are burdened with additional household responsibilities when conflict is occurring, and their mothers are working outside of the home. Also, the risks for leaving the house are greater during times of conflict. Many girls will not go to school – if schools are present and remain open – in an effort to lower their risks for GBV.

With widespread conflict, mobility risks increase. Respondents shared that traveling around their agricultural lands and to surrounding villages has more risks and they face more dangers. Women and girls often must further limit their mobility or risk sexual harassment, abuse, beating, or rape in the outlying areas around their village if the conflict escalates.

Political conflicts have resulted in several non-state actor-controlled areas outside of government control. If people who are not part of the non-state actor movements travel onto the non-state actor-controlled lands, they risk arrest. Study respondents shared that members of their communities (under government control) have been captured and arrested when they travel into non-state actor-controlled areas – by accident or otherwise. Women risk sexual harassment, rape, kidnapping, and physical violence.

c. Psychological Consequences of Trauma

Respondents were able to identify many psychological impacts of conflict and violence, particularly on women. They said that women who experience violence and trauma – especially personal incidents of GBV – become very shy, depressed, isolated, and anxious. They often lose their self-esteem and self-confidence. Others described women as more likely to be nervous, aggressive, and deviant when they are exposed to violence. One respondent in South Darfur said that women have become ready to kill in some cases. Another said that women are more prone to practice violence with their own children.

8. Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Mechanisms

a. Traditional Justice through Community-Based Governance Structures

Traditional, “informal” justice systems are very common and important in the remote areas of East and South Darfur, especially in the absence of accessible modern governance structures. These community-based governance structures are critical for resolving conflict over resources and re-establishing trust between different communities. The structures include the Native Administration, Judiya, and CBCRMs, but community leaders (e.g., Ajaweed, Sheikh, non-state actor leaders, politicians) as individuals can also act as traditional justice duty-bearers. Within the exception of the CBCRMs, all other community-based governance structures of made up entirely of men.

The community-based governance structures are inherited systems of governance that the community members are raised to believe in as the right and best way to resolve conflicts. These structures are widely accepted by the local community, they enjoy popular legitimacy, and their decisions are often enforceable as a result. They are perceived to be fair and are favored for being costless. Because they are respected, perpetrators (and victims) are more likely to implement the agreed upon outcomes or action points. Overwhelmingly respondents explained that it is socially unacceptable, especially for women, to seek justice through formal justice system except in rare severe cases of violence.

All of these structures have a role in conflict resolution by making decisions about punishments, shepherding reconciliation between conflicting parties and communities, establishing community-based agreements, managing natural resources, enforcing laws, and brokering decisions and payments of blood money and compensation. They also play a role in promoting peace and social cohesion. To some extent, these structures can restore social justice and slow down conflicts from escalating into large-scale violence, but some (mostly the Native Administration) can also launch war. Thus, periods of war and peace at the community-level are largely in their hands.

a.1. Types of Community-Based Structures

a.1.1. Native Administration

Every respondent group in every village shared that the Native Administration is the most likely to be responsible for conflict resolution decisions, particularly those related to political conflicts as they are responsible for resolving conflicts related to inter-tribal conflicts and between communities. This group has the most power and resources to enforce the decisions and laws as well as social norms and traditions. The members of the Native Administration may be selected by the community or, more commonly, may inherit their positions. All members are influential elder men and affiliated with a specific tribe. Those who are selected typically have high social recognition, popular legitimacy, and have financial resources. The presence of women in the Native Administration (or Ajaweed) is “*totally unacceptable in our norms and traditions*”, according to a respondent in Gabra. He elaborated, “*conflict resolution is a male role by definition.*”

The Native Administration communicates with the warring groups, arranges for meetings, and invites observers from other tribes and lead the negotiations with stakeholders. It plays a dual

role. It has the power to stop conflicts and punish the perpetrators as it enjoys sufficient popular legitimacy and is highly recognized by local communities. Because of their reputation, they are able to enforce the punishment of perpetrators easily, which curbs criminal activity. However, in many cases, it also decides if and when to go to war with other tribes. This occurs typically based on issues of land ownership (tenure). This is likely why they were named by respondents as perpetrators of violence themselves who have not displayed fair and equal justice to women. Therefore, their role – while it may be influential – may best serve the interests of men and powerholders.

a.1.2. Judiya and Ajaweed

The Ajaweed are local elder tribal mediators who may be members of the Native Administration or other influential members of the community. They are popularly selected and socially recognized. They usually come from a family, clan, or tribe not involved in the dispute. They are the mediators for Judiya through the bringing together of conflicting parties within a community or family and assessing their viewpoints until a solution is reached. Their responsibility lies within a community. They resolve intra-community issues within households, families, or between neighbors. They would likely play a larger role in land and resource conflicts that occur within a community and GBV. Very little specifics about this group were shared by the study respondents; however, they were consistently named as very influential decision-makers during times of conflict.

a.1.3. Community Based Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (CBCRMs)

CBCRMs are local mechanisms usually formed by (I)NGOs for primarily intra-community conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and social cohesion. They follow the guidelines of local governance structures, as well as traditional customs and practices. They work to manage issues and conflict within a community between families and neighbors, developing resolution strategies with opposing parties and translating them into action plans. Unlike Judiya, they tend not to handle conflict within a family.

The only formal role women hold in conflict resolution is through their seats in the CBCRMs. Typically, the selection of the membership of the CBCRM is conducted in close coordination between the (I)NGO projects, which provide criteria for the representation of women, youth, minority groups, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. The community members – usually community leaders and influential community members – select the representatives according to the criteria presented. The restructuring of the CBCRMs to include women, youth, and diverse tribes and livelihood groups has improved representative justice. This has helped in creating a common and neutral platform where diverse community groups

Box 8: Summary of community-based structures

Native Administration: tribe-based system subject to the Law of Local Administration System (LOLAS), which specifies its structure and roles. Seats (male only) are appointed and endorsed by the government at local and state level. They resolve conflicts related to inter-tribal conflicts or between communities.

Judiya: arbitration and mediation process led by the Ajaweed, who are male elders or notables (not necessarily community leaders, but often include religious leaders) from diverse tribes and livelihood groups. They handle intra-community issues within households, within families, and between neighbors.

CBCRM: usually initiated and formed by INGOs and other peace actors, diverse community members (including women and youth) mediate inclusive and neutral platforms where all community members can come together to discuss and resolve disputes and conflicts between families and neighbors.

can come together to discuss and resolve issues of shared concern, building upon existing traditional mechanisms for conflict and dispute resolution such as *Judiya*. In Sarhan, community members said that it is reducing tensions between diverse communities and the potential for future conflict. However, a prior study found that the women who sit in these committees are not necessarily representative, as they are those with the greatest wealth and status or are undermined by conservative elder males (Ritchie, 2018).

FGD participants were highly satisfied with the performance of CBCRMs. They overwhelmingly confirmed that they prefer to rely on their own justice mechanisms than going to modern courts or police. When asked why, they indicated that the community-based governance structures achieve accessible and affordable justice for ordinary citizens. The Omda of Sarhan village explained: *“the accessibility of the CBCRMs is based on the fact that committee members are members of the communities in which they are living. They also live under the same*

Box 8: CBCRM process for conflict resolution

The head of the CBCRM in Helal village, Abukarinka locality described the conflict resolution process of the CBCRM in detail. He explained: “A dispute is usually first reported to the CBCRM. The CBCRM contacts the parties as quickly as possible to ease tensions. The basic principle in mediation process is that all parties to the dispute accept the team of CBCRM and commit consensually to their recommendations before hearing them. The members of CBCRM swear on the Quran to be neutral. In meetings with disputed parties, the CBCRM relies heavily on symbolism quotes from the Quran or Hadith, and popular sayings and wisdom to extract apologies and forgiveness. They recall memories of past harmony between the disputed parties. The CBCRM normally questions the aggrieved party first, then the accused. After deep discussions and deliberations, the CBCRM will decide upon the available evidence and proof. Compensation will be calculated, collected, and handed over to individuals or groups recognized as victims. The process involves buy-in from both sides: the accused must acknowledge guilt and the CBCRM in turn asks the aggrieved for concessions on the blood money and compensation. The two parties shake hands and forgive each other. However, if one party is dissatisfied by the findings, the CBCRM may decide to sit again and review their decisions.”

condition as the people they serve and therefore, it is easy to access them at home or in the market to share concerns and problems without spending a single Sudanese pound.” A police officer said that police recognize that the CBCRMs are comprised of members of their local communities and have the most knowledge about their cultures and traditional practices. And a military investigator elaborated that the fragility of the situation in these communities, especially with IDPs, returnees, and refugees makes CBCRMs more important. Respondents also added that unlike the formal, modern justice system, CBCRMs aim to achieve compromise rather than punishment.

Police and military investigators interviewed during the study shared that, in their experience, the formal justice system prioritizes the outcomes of the CBCRMs and even advises disputing parties to resolve their problems outside the formal justice system. They said that unless the CBCRMs fail to resolve the conflict or directly seek their assistance, they will not intervene. A military investigator said, *“the formal justice system usually welcomes efforts to promote and develop the informal justice system to increase access to justice and rule of law, complementing the role of the government in restoring peace and stability.”* CBCRMs also have a right to take cases from the formal justice system, even if they have already been investigated by police, military investigators, or been reviewed by a judge. Therefore, their

way of resolving disputes is widely believed – even within formal justice spaces – to be more just and sustainable.

a.1.4. Community Leaders

Community leaders have influential roles in the local community. They enjoy popular respect and have the ability and power to mobilize the people at the grassroots level on what they believe is best for their community. Most are also members of a community-based structure such as the Native Administration, Judiya, or CBCRM. In fact, the Sheikh in Alfewelih is the head of their CBCRM. The Imam in Sarhan village explained that *“Mosques are platforms that bring diverse communities and livelihood groups together on Friday praying. We coordinate with the CBCRMs to use these gatherings for delivering peace messages. We usually work closely with all community-based governance structures for the restoration of peace and stability and for the dissemination of peace culture, peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and accepting of others.”* The Imam in Helal shared that they utilize verses from the Quran or the Hadith to call for tolerance, forgiveness, and the peaceful coexistence. He also attends mediation and conflict resolution sessions to encourage peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts.

a.2. Processes for Conflict Resolution

Each village named specific locations where decisions about conflicts would be made. In nearly all villages, the house of the Sheikh (or Omda) was named by most groups. As the Sheikh or Omda is the leader of the village and top person in community-based governance structures, people must go to his house when they seek justice. Other common locations for conflict resolution include the reconciliation tree/shelter, market, and Mosque. In Gabra, people have a meeting house at the basic school and in Alkherwi and Karra, respondents said the police station or security force premise were key locations in the community. For the most part, these locations are utilized due to traditions and old habits, so the community knows them well. They are also very accessible for the community – most are located centrally within the village.

Respondents in all villages shared similar processes for conflict resolution led by the community-based structures. Typically, they said, the Native Administration or community leaders intervene first to stop the ongoing conflict. Then, a traditional structure sits the conflicting parties together to mediate a discussion of the causes and impacts of the conflict. Their aim is to reach an agreement on how to move forward amicably; when they do, a peace agreement is signed especially if the dispute is with non-state actors. This may involve paying blood money or compensation of properties to victims, or it could be a plan for land use. Note: in all cases, women are not involved unless the incident is brought to the CBCRM.

However, during the stakeholder mapping exercise, though, respondents (mostly women and young women) shared that these structures are also perpetrators of violence. They distribute unequal justice, often not being fair to women in their rulings. As they are represented by male members of the tribe, relatives, and even close family members of the victims and perpetrators, it could bring shame to a woman if she brings a case forward. That is why, in most cases, women avoid them when seeking justice for issues that may impose stigma on her or tarnish her family's reputation. Due to the high stigma, most types of GBV are handled within the family only or women keep silent about it completely. Women present GBV only in the most severe incidents.

a.3. Women's Role in Community Structures

One respondent said that regardless of women's skills or self-confidence, communities will not accept the idea of men being led by women. According to the baseline study, only 18.5% of women have participated in any form of peace building or conflict transformation initiative compared to 30.5% of men. This drops more significantly for young women (14%) (Ahmed, 2022). When women do get leadership roles (e.g., as a CBCRM member), some respondents felt that her behaviors will lead to the disruption of existing power dynamics in the community, as people still do not believe in women holding leadership positions. Some respondents felt that women who take on leadership roles face risks of divorce, community insults and verbal violence, or being labeled as irresponsible.



Source: Ahmed, E. A. (2022). *Enhancing resilience through improved food security, disaster risk reduction and peaceful co-existence in South and East Darfur - Baseline Survey*. Khartoum: CARE International in Sudan.

Indirectly, though, respondents said that women can play significant role in community awareness activities and peacebuilding if well trained and prepared. Women have been identified as active participants in peace building activities, dissemination of peace culture through songs and folklore, and through the formation of women's groups to advocate for peace and teach children. Singing popular peace songs was mentioned most by respondents in all localities when asked how women were most involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They explained that Hakamas (traditional female singers) were more negative in the past, disrupting the stability of the communities, and singing songs that encouraged men to fight, rob, and kill others. However, after peace building interventions by (I)NGOs and the UN, many Hakamas have instead become singers for peace and acceptance. However, respondents in some communities said that some are still singing songs of war and encouragement to fight.

a.4. Effectiveness of Community Structures

When asked if community-based governance structures are functioning well, the majority of respondents felt that they were and that they were satisfied with them. However, the responses were variable across demographic groups. Older men, older women, and community leaders were most likely to be satisfied with the structures and report effectiveness. Young men were slightly more critical, saying they were functioning well to some extent and that they were moderately satisfied. The main deficiency they shared was that the structures do not ensure adequate representation of youth and women. Only Karra women and Umlayouna young women said they were not satisfied *at all* with how the structures were functioning because they are not fair and do not respond to women's needs.

Interestingly, most respondents said that the community-based governance structures are inclusive. But, when pressed more specifically about if they have adequate representation of women, most agreed that they did not. The respondents from all villages acknowledged the

inclusiveness of CBCRMs, but they highlighted that they are only inclusive because they were established by external intervention of INGOs or NGOs after intensive training and awareness sessions about the negative impact of women's social exclusion. Men in Karra were most open about their perceptions about the role of women, sharing that women are not well educated and do not have any experience with conflict resolution; therefore, they are not included in community-based governance structures except CBCRMs.

b. Modern Justice Institutions

Formalized, modern justice systems are not as common in the villages across East and South Darfur for a few reasons. First and foremost, due to the popularity and social acceptance of community-based structures. However, the scattered and remote context of Darfur also plays a role. In most cases, there is no formal justice system available at the village level. Police stations and courts are typically only present in the head of the Locality, making accessing these structures prohibitive for most community members in remote villages. Respondents cited several challenges hindering access to formal justice mechanisms. These challenges include complicated legal procedures, long distances to the head of the locality where the formal justice system is located, taking too long to resolve disputes, and unaffordable costs. With the additional risks of GBV that women and girls face when traveling that restricts their mobility further limits their accessibility and viability as a justice option.

Occasionally community members said that they will seek justice through the formal system in cases of very complicated crimes. Such crimes typically include those involving perpetrators out of the control of community-based governance structures such as armed non-state actor movements. Respondents emphasized that women are very unlikely to seek formal justice. Women may even be discouraged from seeking formal justice due to the complications it may bring to her personal life such as the need to repay a dowry (Ritchie, 2018) or the risk of losing her children if she is granted a divorce. The people who may go are men who do not submit to the norms and traditions of the local community and who have the financial means to incur the costs of travel.

c. Practices for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Respondents in every village reported knowing many tribes that co-existing peacefully without conflict. In fact, with the exception of the non-state actor-controlled areas, they believed that all other communities peacefully co-existed. Respondents explained that they have seen when the warring factions incur huge losses in lives and properties, people start to believe that fighting is not an effective means for addressing disputes and conflicts. It is easy to recognize that in the end, they explain, there is no winner in conflicts. After many years of bad experiences, they feel people have come together to reach community-based agreements and set up collaborative approaches to solve disputes and conflicts. For instance, many have agreed that if a criminal is traced back to a specific village, either the villagers hand over the criminal or pay back the looted properties.

They said that peaceful co-existence can be attributed to:

- An agreed upon collaborative approach for conflict resolution
- Signing of honor charts against aggression and protection of criminals
- Strong community-based governance systems that punish perpetrators
- Acceptance of each other and mutual respect

- Effective co-management of the available resources
- Cooperation in economic activities and collective livelihood groups
- Marriages across tribes and other social ties
- Presence of the government in the villages
- Use of Al-Fazza, a traditional system through which the community helps an individual in danger (e.g., recovering lost livestock, finding kidnapped women, etc.)
- Contribution of Al-Naffir, a traditional system whereby people work collectively to help an individual in need (e.g., constructing a home, digging water sources, etc.)
- Establishment of village savings and loans associations (see box 10)

Box 9: VSLAs as a peacebuilding approach

Village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) were mentioned by multiple respondent groups from Alkherwi, Gabra, Sarhan, and Umlayouna as being an effective approach to peacebuilding. They share that VSLAs bring women from different backgrounds together to establish social and economic interdependence, which helps them to interact and learn to accept each other. They feel these associations create safe platforms for women to get involved in decision making and gain life skills. The positive influence of VSLAs on women's voice and public participation was echoed in a previous study as well. This study found that women's economic empowerment influences their public participation by strengthening their personal agency and confidence, influencing public opinion about their capabilities and leadership potential, and by disrupting power imbalances within the home to give them more autonomy. Women in VSLAs were believed to be more powerful with the ability to wield more influence (Whipkey, 2021).

d. Influence of Civil Society on Conflict and Peace

Civil society actors from (I)NGOs to local CSOs and community groups are present in the villages and have an influence on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They are working on topics including gender equality, GBV prevention, strengthening community structures, etc.

INGOs such as CARE and ZOA, UN institutions, and NGOs (such as PDNO, GHO, JMCO, SADO) work on peacebuilding initiatives through raising community awareness and capacity strengthening. They utilize interventions such as workshops on peaceful co-existence; collaborating with stakeholders including the Native Administration, community leaders, religious leaders, and community-based governance structures to uncover the root causes of conflicts and coordinate activities in resolving them; and disseminating a peace culture through activities that bring people together. They are involved in strengthening capacities of the community, community leaders, CBCRMs, and natural resources management committees on conflict resolution and peace building in response to the different types of violence facing vulnerable groups. At times, they also form CBCRMs. Some engage in hands-on activities such as demarcating livestock migratory routes and stopover areas as a means to prevent conflict.

Regarding GBV, international to local civil society organizations and groups are identifying and analyzing the negative norms and traditions that contribute to GBV and designing interventions and strategies to eliminate GBV, including community awareness and capacity building of women for social justice. They also conduct community awareness sessions on GBV and how to combat it and hold sensitization meetings about the negative impact of FGC/M and early

marriage. They also have established protection group to advocate, prevent, and protect women against GBV. SADO, for example, has installed complaint boxes in each village to share incidents of GBV to be able to better respond to it.

Economic empowerment of women is also a core element of the gender and peacebuilding work of many civil society groups. Civil society projects promote a livelihood approach to peace building, leveraging economic interdependence to bring together diverse communities to produce and sell outputs. Some examples are youth farmer groups, VSLAs, and other income generation activities. Organizations such as CARE, UNDP's Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF), SADO, and USAID have all influenced the shifting norms of women's economic inclusion, especially through VSLA formation and support.

9. Conclusions

The compounding crises currently being experienced in Sudan including an economic crisis, political upheaval, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects of climate change on natural resources are driving the rise in violence and conflict in East and South Darfur. Three primary types of conflict have manifested deeper divides, tribal intolerances, and violence between the non-state actor movements and the government:

- **Political conflicts** between the government and resistance committees are stemmed from the desire for control over power and wealth but enflamed through introduced ethnic tensions and inequitable development that contribute to the further unraveling of the social fabric and unity in the region. As such, political tensions built upon ethnic identities spill over into disputes about land and resources between livelihood groups (i.e., Arab pastoralists and non-Arab farmers).
- **Land and resource conflicts** are the most common type of (visible) conflicts that occur in East and South Darfur. The types of conflicts that occur are based on the *ownership of land* (e.g., Hawakir traditional owners and modern registered owners vs. blocked and excluded groups, including women), *use of land* (e.g., pastoralism vs. agriculture), *access to and use of natural resources* (e.g., water, forests), and *looting of cattle or other property*. Underpinning all land and resource conflicts is access to water, which is a persistent problem due to climate change's impact on rainfall.
- **Gender-based violence** is commonly practiced within the home and outside. It occurs as domestic/family violence (e.g., hard beating), community social violence (e.g., social exclusion), harmful traditions and customs (e.g., FGC/M), and violence as a weapon (e.g., rape). GBV is driven by social norms and traditions, laws and policies, and conflict. While women/girls' experiences of GBV are silenced due to social norms and the stigma that could be attached to them.

These conflicts are underscored by the acute humanitarian crisis and resulting structural deficits in the country. Deficits such as food insecurity, insufficient clean water supply, weak basic services, poverty and unemployment, and alcohol and drug problems drive disputes and violence down to the village level. Without options, poverty-stricken (young) people resort to looting, joining non-state actor movements, or forcing their way onto others' land to increase their livelihood opportunities.

In all types of conflict, men are the primary instigators and perpetrators of violence, and there are specific groups of men that yield the power to determine periods of war and peace.

Consistently, it is those who hold the decision-making power about conflict resolution who are also the ones instigating violence. These actors include the Native Administration and non-state actor leaders. They also include male heads of household who continue harmful norms within their families or use violence against their wives. Only they have the power to end those violent practices.

While conflict has economic, physical, and psychological impacts on all members of the community, including both the victims and the perpetrators, they overwhelmingly leave women and girls with higher risks for their personal physical and psychological safety and more obligation to take care of their households' needs, including their financial needs. They are especially vulnerable due to the discriminatory gendered social norms that affect their daily lives. As a result, they are treated as second-class citizens with limited opportunity to use their voices, shape the decisions that affect their lives, or have a say over their bodies and resources. The social norms that perpetuate a men-first society in East and South Darfur are the same that perpetuate the unequal power position of women across all sectors – socially, politically, and economically. Women's and girls' vulnerability also stems from harmful formal structures such as discriminatory laws and policies that limit their rights. Sudan's male-dominated society keeps women out of leadership and decision-making roles. They are not included in most community-based governance structures (except for CBCRMs) and are often even stigmatized if they seek justice through these spaces, especially in incidents of GBV as it is considered a family affair.

Women have an opportunity to influence conflict resolution, however, through CBCRMs. CBCRMs tend to be more favored, especially by women and youth, because they are more diversely representative of the community that they serve and include several women and young people in their structure. Also, Hakamas hold some influence over conflict and peace as traditional singers. They can wield power over instigating conflict – especially through catalyzing young men to go and fight – and conversely and importantly, to foster moments of peaceful co-existence. These are the only two opportunities for socially recognized leadership of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding spaces. However, with women's increasing economic empowerment and social norms shifting to enable more women to take productive/financial roles outside of the home, there are opportunities to capitalize upon women's growing economic status and frame them as community leaders who could use their voice in conflict resolution and peacebuilding matters. In some communities, women in VSLAs are starting to do just that. Leveraging their growing community recognition is an emergent opportunity to create a new avenue for local women's leadership.

PART III: THE WAY FORWARD

In order for the “Enhancing resilience through improved food security, disaster risk reduction and peaceful co-existence in South and East Darfur states, Sudan” project to be effective in delivering its goals, there are a variety of lessons to be derived from the findings of this analysis. Generating support from different social groups and key stakeholders will be vital to address the causes and drivers of conflict and inequalities.

10. Community Experiences with Effective Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Community respondents shared their experiences with conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts that have been successful in their communities, and they fell into five overarching categories. Therefore, the following set of interventions and mechanisms are those directly derived from the study respondents, *in their voices*:

a. Governance, communication, and enforcement mechanisms

Relevant to all types of conflict	Relevant to land and resource conflicts	Relevant to gender-based violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Networking amongst all stakeholders to inform and prevent potential conflicts ▪ Establishment of an early warning system for conflicts and disputes ▪ Supporting reporting and justice-seeking behaviors through formal mechanisms ▪ Collection of illegal arms ▪ Inclusive participation of women and youth in decision making and community-based governance structures ▪ Investment in the basic needs such as education, healthcare, and water ▪ Sharing of wealth and power, especially by non-state actor movements, to ensure more equitable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment and training of natural resources management committees ▪ Designation of mining legislation ▪ Enhancement of Al-Fazza and Al-Naffir systems ▪ Sponsor and enhance community-based agreements for peaceful coexistence ▪ Hold peace conferences for diverse communities and livelihood groups ▪ Adopt consultative meeting plans with stakeholders to discuss the harvesting and migration cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating and enforcing of laws to prevent GBV, FGC/M, and early marriage (including setting minimum marriage age) ▪ Strengthening understandings of Sudanese laws that prevent GBV ▪ Fair punishment of GBV perpetrators

b. Awareness raising and capacity development

The community members spoke highly of approaches to raise awareness and strengthen capacity on a variety of different topics with diverse actors. Raising awareness about the negative impacts of violence and conflict, land use, gender issues, GBV, FGC/M, early marriage, UN resolution 1325, and women’s legal rights were named as key topics that have made an impact in the community. They shared that the strengthening of community-based governance structures on these topics as well as on general topics like conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peaceful coexistence, and leadership has been vital. Working with young people directly as agenda of change, engaging powerholders in exchange visits between communities, training peace promoters, and forming and strengthening advocacy groups (especially GBV groups) have also been successful approaches to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. They explained that targeting men specifically about women’s rights and the community generally through campaigns, especially radio campaigns, have increased awareness. They explain that the goal of these efforts is and should always be the promotion of mutual respect.

c. Agricultural and pastoral interventions

For land and resource conflicts, which are most discussed in East and South Darfur, the communities have acknowledged some approaches that have helped to resolve and/or mitigate conflicts. These include input-level interventions such as the demarcation of livestock migratory routes, reseeding of grazing lands, provision of production/agricultural inputs, and access to veterinary services as well as interventions requiring influencing including removal of farms that obstruct the livestock migratory routes and the granting of equal access amongst tribes (and genders) to land.

d. Water management

While water management is closely linked with agricultural and pastoral interventions, it was mentioned so often that it requires separate attention. Water-related interventions that have helped mitigate conflicts include improving access to water sources, more Haffirs and water points, opened routes to water points in stopover areas along the livestock migratory routes, and the rehabilitation of mining areas to make water sources more available.

e. Women and youth empowerment

Communities also felt that interventions aimed at women's and youth empowerment have been helpful at conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Some such interventions relate to forming and strengthening groups and capacities: women's associations, women's protection groups, VSLAs, joint livelihood groups, youth clubs, and sports teams. Other types of interventions focused on direct support in the form of establishing income-generating activities, women's centers, youth development centers, literacy classes, and basic education.

11. Recommendations for Gender-Sensitive and Gender-Transformative Programming

In addition to supporting the aforementioned efforts indicated by the community members, a variety of recommendations aimed at tackling the gendered dimensions of conflict are presented below. While the study analyzed the conflict broadly, the recommendations are aimed explicitly at understanding, addressing, and overcoming gender discrimination and mitigating inequalities that contribute to and/or result from conflict in Darfur.

a. Integrate positive shifts in gender norms and relations within the wider ecosystem of interventions, being mindful of potential negative externalities.

The findings uncover a variety of discriminatory gendered social norms that perpetuate harmful behaviors and practices such as those rooted in the beliefs that women are not smart or capable, they are servants of men, and are objects of shame or evil. These beliefs manifest into behaviors that keep women inside the home but out of household decision-making and limit their access to public participation. Programming must be mindful that shifting social norms is a complex and delicate process. Watch for any negative externalities that emerge such as resistance to norm change through physical or emotional violence, replacement with overly conservative policies, and empowerment of anti-change groups (Ritchie, 2018; Alvarez Minte, 2013). There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to shifting harmful social norms. Instead, identifying, understanding, addressing, and disabling them must occur through a broader ecosystem of interventions (Phillips, Whipkey, & Noble, 2019).

- Capitalize upon positive social norms such as women being trustworthy and hardworking. Utilize these positive perceptions of women to promote their deeper participation in community processes, particularly peacebuilding as it requires trustworthiness as a key trait of peacebuilders.
- Target the reference group(s) that keep the social norms in place. In most cases, these will be influential powerholders in the community including religious leaders, tribal leaders, and elders but also men in general. Work with them to raise their awareness about the norms and how they influence not only the women themselves, but the prosperity and health of the whole community. Engage role model men and powerholders through campaigns, home visits, community events, and more to start to shift public perceptions and open opportunities for change.
- Work with young women to shift their perceptions about “normal” levels of violence. When people are more educated and exposed to different ideas and perceptions, they are more likely to change their minds. In Sudan, as those with higher levels of education and even people who move to urban IDP camps accept GBV as normal less than those in sedentary rural settings. Work with educators to include information about different harmful norms and practices (e.g., FGM/C) in schools including their cultural roots, religious links, health dangers, and sexual consequences.
- Spread messaging about the existence of GBV in the household and in the community. Women and young women were more likely to speak about GBV in the data collection, and many men did not share their knowledge about GBV occurring. Spreading messaging about GBV in different settings that are already considered safe spaces will help to normalize the conversation, especially amongst men. For example, work with religious leaders to incorporate messaging against GBV in Friday prayers, launch a public radio campaign, and have Hakamas spread non-violence songs.

b. Strengthen the individual and structural capacities of diverse actors.

Capacity strengthening interventions are already present within most programming, including within the project affiliated with this study. However, being mindful about *who* is and is *not* participating in capacity strengthening, *why* those people, and *how* this support is being delivered has a consequential influence over its effectiveness. Specific groups and interventions to be considered by the project should include:

- **Community-based governance structures:** Strengthen the high interest, high influence groups – especially Native Administrations and CBCRMs – to make their decision-making around conflicts more equitable, to uphold the rule of law equally, and assist with peacebuilding efforts. With community leaders (e.g., Sheikhs), work with them to take responsibility for resolving small-scale disputes in the community.
- **Government:** Identify and work with role models in the political sphere who have prioritized equitable development to “work from within” to depoliticize the Native Administration and ensure equal development opportunities.
- **Women:** Strengthen women’s self-confidence through awareness raising on their rights, practicing public speaking, and leadership training to prepare more women from diverse social classes to challenge power dynamics hold leadership positions in CBCRMs, VSLAs, women’s associations, and other opportunities.
- **Hakamas:** As Hakamas yield more power over war and peace than other groups of women (and even more than some men), focus explicitly on this group to strengthen their capacities on peacebuilding, harm reduction, and role modeling. Leverage their influence to use them as role models for women’s leadership.

- **Youth:** Focus on vocational training for young people to mitigate youth unemployment and them joining armed groups. Create opportunities for youth alternative livelihoods for both young women and men such as electronic repairs, welding, carpentry, mechanics, handicrafts, engineering, weaving, teaching, healthcare, etc.
- **VSLAs:** Capitalize upon the positive public perception of VSLAs to incorporate deeper leadership, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution training for the members. Members will be more confident and prepared to take on other leadership roles within the community and earn more respect when exercising their voice. Ensure sustainability of the management of VSLAs with financial education, management, bookkeeping, etc.

c. Influence community-based governance structures to foster more inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches to conflict mitigation and resolution.

Community-based governance structures are at the heart of conflict resolution as they are the favored justice mechanism amongst citizens. However, they are not always inclusive nor are they always fair to women. As they are favored and rooted in local tradition, work *with* them to improve their equity and effectiveness rather than around or against them.

- **Influence inclusiveness of existing structures.** The study shows that (I)NGOs are effective influencers as CBCRMs require diverse representation and communities still find them to be very effective. It is important to go one step further and make sure that those on the CBCRM are not *only* the women and youth who have wealth and power, but that members of the committee represent the diverse cross-section of all sects in the community. Use this influence toward other community-based governance structures, showcasing the CBCRMs as examples of the benefits of representativeness. In particular, emphasize the incorporation of stakeholders with a high interest but low influence (e.g., young women) into structures to ensure that their needs and experiences are reflected and respected in decision-making.
- **Form new structures.** It may be necessary to form new structures based on specific topics or with certain stakeholders and accompany them until they are stable and wield influence. For instance, establish committees that bring together leadership from neighboring villages to discuss incidents of conflict and violence; include female representation to ensure that incidents of GBV are more likely to be captured and discussed. Also, setting up and strengthening water committees with a gender quota in areas where there is a higher potential for conflict over water. Make sure that a representative from the water committee is also in other the community-based governance structures so the water management responsibility is linked to general governance processes, highlighting its importance as a root cause of conflict.
- **Look for and leverage allies.** Identify community-based governance structures (e.g., CBCRM, VSLAs) that are already more inclusive of women than what is typical and more responsive to women's needs. Work with them to identify what makes their more inclusive approach beneficial to their community and how they manage social norms about women's secondary role in society. Utilize the lessons learned from them and organize exchange visits by other communities to influence changes.
- **Set up early warning systems.** There are limited to no early warning systems for conflict used by communities or institutions in East and South Darfur. Build a network of stakeholders – including government institutions, non-state actor leaders, women, farmers, pastoralists, youth, and other community leaders – to inform, warn, and prevent or mitigate potential conflicts as they are emerging. Monitor such a network

especially during annual migration and cultivation periods.

- **Leverage Al-Naffir.** Use the Al-Naffir system to (re)build social and productive infrastructure including water points, schools, and clinics. Work with the government and civil society to match communities' contributions with funding and ongoing staffing (e.g., teachers, clinicians).

d. Engage in meaningful, strategic lobby and advocacy with decision-makers and powerholders from village to national level.

Lobby and advocacy efforts are necessary to ensure that changes are embedded in national structures and can influence actions at local levels. However, the extent to which the changes will be sustainable during periods of fragile governance are unknown. Before undertaking any advocacy efforts, assess the political context and potential viability not only for the success of the advocacy, but also its potential sustainability in a changing context.

- Engage in lobby and advocacy efforts to influence the government to collect illegal arms and disarm unofficial groups.
- Demand changes to and enforcement of marital laws that are harmful to women and girls including: a minimum marital age, prohibition of FGM/C, and women's equal right to her children after divorce.
- Advocate for changes in land ownership laws and policies to give women the right to own their own land; this includes inheritance rights and the right to buy and rent land.
- Work with powerholders to make land rental more affordable and secure for IDPs, women, and nomads rights to agricultural land.
- Support tribal leaders and the government to formally register land to owners, regardless of ethnicity and gender, to mitigate questions and conflicts over land ownership; ensure that 'secondary occupants' (e.g., IDPs) and women have equal opportunity and rights to land ownership.
- Lobby for political quotas, including a gender quota and youth quota, at all levels of governance and follow-up to ensure its full implementation.
- Advocate for funding toward initiating and scaling GBV prevention and response mechanisms, including psychosocial support, legal assistance, shelters for GBV survivors, and training for health and community-based service providers.

e. Develop women's collective protection mechanisms and practices.

In a context where women are at heightened risks for violence, developing and sustaining protection mechanisms and practices is a necessary approach until stability and peace can be achieved. While this primarily involves accompaniment and support to women, it will also require awareness raising and actions among men to have a wider impact.

- Encourage women and girls to travel and stay in groups when going near areas with known risks to collect firewood, timber, water, or to work on the farms.
- Implement temporary income stabilization activities through business start-up grants for women and youth and cash-for-work (CFW) activities to promote solidarity and facilitate interaction among women, youth, farmers, pastoralists, and IDPs. Ensure these funds are equitably distributed among sub-groups to prevent escalation of internal conflict, especially amongst women.
- Create kitchen garden nutrition programs where women can support each other with agricultural activities and long-term food storage and preservation to mitigate

nutritional deficiencies, especially during the off-season.

- Lead awareness raising efforts about drugs and alcohol and violence and provide support structures for users—especially men—to help each other get and stay sober.
- Provide sexual and reproductive health and family planning services to women. Even if clinics are always not available in the community, rotating services amongst neighboring villages that provide education to women and girls about their options, contraception services, psychological support and counselling, and other information will help mediate some of the consequences of GBV and lower future risks.
- Provide financial support to women to seek formal justice if necessary and repay dowries after divorce because of GBV.

f. Conduct supplemental research and analysis.

Better understanding the impacts of conflict among different groups of women and the variety of power imbalances that shape conflict will help improve justice and development.

- Undertake case study research on the gendered differences in conflict between non-state actor-controlled villages and government-controlled villages to identify the different risks, needs, and experiences of women in each type of community to better contextualize interventions and outreach.
- Analyze the delivery of development funding against the political affiliations of the regions to uncover if and what power dynamics shape funding priorities for development projects.
- Support locality police stations to engage in monitoring and tracking of conflicts to track frequency, type, gender and age targeted, and change over time and seasonality.
- Assess if urban IDP camps are safer for women and if they differ in terms of getting justice for women who experience GBV.
- Research the gendered impacts of conflict in regions where gold mining or other extractive industries occur.

g. Take actions to mitigate the potential for land and resource conflict to occur through agricultural, migratory, and water-based solutions.

- Demarcate livestock migratory routes, stopover points, and farming land very clearly using hard-to-move markers.
- Adjust livestock migratory routes to go around farms rather than through them.
- Ensure there are sufficient livestock migratory routes separated from agricultural land with required services such as water points, fodder point, and pastures.
- Promote and raise awareness about the complementarity between livelihoods, recognizing the interdependence of pastoralism and rainfed cultivation.
- Raise awareness about climate change impacts and the implications for farmers and pastoralists, linking to dialogue about reasons for displacement; greater awareness about why communities are being displaced and encroaching on land may mitigate resentment and encourage more supportive policies around land rental, demarcation, and non-contamination of vital water sources.
- Provide water sources along livestock migratory routes and grazing areas.

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Annex 1: Methodology

Study objectives

Specifically, the analysis:

- Explores two primary types of conflict: land and resource conflict and gender-based violence.
- Provides a detailed understanding of the context, key drivers, and key stakeholders involved in issues of land and resource conflicts and gender-based violence.
- Examines the structural problems and impacts of social, political, and economic power relations on women and youth.
- Understands the role of local customs and culture in conflict and peace processes and how gender norms in target communities influence people's behavior towards conflict or peace.
- Determines critical current challenges and barriers to women's and youth's meaningful participation and leadership and provides recommendations and an action plan to eliminate or mitigate these inequalities.
- Maps the geographical locations of the key conflict hot spots in the target communities.

Research team

The research team included a national consultant with a team of local enumerators (per state) and an international consultant. The international consultant's responsibilities were to conduct the secondary data analysis, deliver draft data collection tools and the sampling framework, analyze the data, and write the report. The national consultant's responsibilities included reviewing, adapting, and translating the data collection tools; identifying participants and conducting all data collection per the sampling framework; transcribing and translating the data; and validating the report.

Inception phase

The inception phase was critical to shape the foundation of the data collection and analysis. A desk review of program documents and organizational reports was conducted to identify existing key datapoints and gaps in the available information. Key documents reviewed included the program proposal, draft baseline assessment, UN OCHA reports for Sudan, and an organizational study on gender norms in Darfur.

Based on the desk review, the methodology was planned in close consultation with the national consultant and the program staff. During this period, the methodology, data collection tools, sampling framework, and field sites were planned based on the best combination of available resources, accessibility, and representativeness to the full program target areas.

Data collection phase

The study used qualitative data collection methods; quantitative techniques (i.e., survey) were not used as survey data is available from secondary data sources. However, the qualitative data collection utilized multiple approaches to ensure a deeper understanding of the interplay

between issues of gender and conflict, focusing predominantly on the two main types of conflict identified by the program staff: land and resource conflict and gender-based violence. Participants were asked about the types of conflict that exists within each of those categories, how the conflict affects women in particular, drivers/root causes of conflict, the impact on their lives and the community, local actions to combat the violence, and barriers to women's inclusion in conflict resolution.

The national consultant and CARE staff made every effort to ensure a mix of men and women respondents. The selection of participants was conducted in consultation and coordination with both the national consultant and the CARE staff, to ensure an inclusive representation of diverse groups. Attention was paid to the gender balance, age, and ethnic groups represented in the data collection activities. The data was collected in person by enumerators, while maintaining safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Key informant interviews (KII)

KIIs were held with four stakeholder groups:

1. (I)NGOs associated with the program: CARE Sudan, JMCO, and SADO
2. Local CSOs that work on conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and/or gender
3. Local government officials such as the authorities whose mandate includes gender-responsiveness, peace and reconciliation, conflict mediation, and citizen engagement
4. Community leaders such as traditional leaders, women leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, etc.

Focus group discussions (FGDs)

The focus group discussions were structured as participatory workshops. The participatory approach was used to provide more opportunities to reveal the views, experiences, needs, and ideas of people directly affected by conflict, leading to more meaningful responses and insightful analysis.

The FGD workshops were held with the following groups:

- Men (30+ years old)
- Women (30+ years old)
- Young men (18-29 years old)
- Young women (18-29 years old)
- Community leaders (any age): e.g., traditional leaders, women leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, etc.

In addition to a set of discussion questions with the full group of participants, the FGDs also featured two main activities in which the participants were divided into sub-groups based on the two types of conflict:

1. **Conflict mapping:** The participants created a map of their community and the neighboring region. They put points on the map to identify where conflict typically occurs, where those affected by conflict can get help, and where the community discusses and/or resolves the conflict.
2. **Stakeholder mapping:** participants were asked to list the types of stakeholders by

category (e.g., community, government, civil society) who have an impact on the two different types of conflict. Once the types of stakeholders were listed, they identified which ones have the greatest influence and interest over the outcome of the conflicts.

Data collected

In total, 24 FGDs and 20 were conducted across eight villages reaching 193 people in total. Of the participants, 55% were male and 45% were female.

Table 1: List of FGD and KII data collection events

Locality	Village	FGDs					KIIs			
		Women	Men	Young Women	Young Men	Community Leaders	CSOs	Local Gov't	Community Leaders	(I)NGOs
Abu Karinka (ED)	Alfeweilih	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	2
	Helal	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	
Bahar Alarab (ED)	Sarhan	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	
	Bowat Alkhill	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	
East Jabal Marra (SD)	Gabra	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
	Karra	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	
Kass (SD)	Alkherwi	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	
	Umlayouna	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	
Total		6	4	5	5	4	6	4	6	4

Data analysis and report writing phase

The primary data collected was translated into English by the national consultant. Due to the volume of data collected, the national consultant provided summaries of the data collected per village and group as opposed to a verbatim raw transcript. Therefore, the first level of data analysis was conducted in Arabic at the national level. When the summarized transcripts were translated into English and shared to the international consultant, the international consultant conducted the next round of analysis. The data was coded and analyzed via the qualitative analysis software Dedoose. It was triangulated with additional secondary data sources, including quantitative metrics where possible. The analysis was reviewed by the CARE Sudan team and the national consultant to validate the findings.

Limitations

Conditions: The data was collected during the rainy season, making some of the villages inaccessible and travelling difficult. This influenced the villages chosen for data collection. Some of the harder to reach or more isolated villages are less well represented by the data.

Power imbalances: Intra-group power asymmetries occurred during the focus group discussions and affected the natural flow of information, especially in East Darfur where the

data collection began. In early data collection, mixed gendered groups were brought together in focus groups due to convenience of the participants and enumerators. It was immediately clear that women did not feel that they could speak freely in front of men or community leaders. They were also invisibilized by the men in the group. So, they were separated by gender into sub-groups for part of the activity. However, some data collected likely skewed more positively because women did not share their true experiences of gender-based violence. This was corrected in South Darfur data collection where women were always kept in separate focus groups than men or community leaders.

Sample bias: The participants were all selected by CARE in locations that receive programming through CARE and partners. Therefore, they were likely more informed about and/or engaged in the elements of focus in this study (e.g., gender issues). Thus, the findings likely skew toward more awareness of gendered issues than what would be found if the entire population in East and South Darfur were randomly sampled.

Translation: The data collection tools were written in English and translated into Arabic after being reviewed by Sudanese staff. It is likely that for some questions, the intention behind the question may have been better understood/answered by participants if written in local language first. Also, the data required translation into English. Some contextual or language-specific details may have been lost during the translation process. Also, all of the raw data collected was not translated verbatim. Thus, the nuance of some findings may have been lost in the summarization of the data collected.

Interpretation: In Karra village, a language constraint to communicate with the women's focus group discussion became apparent. An interpreter was brought in to translate the questions and answers. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient time to fully prepare the interpreter with the questions, resulting in a high likelihood that the intention behind the questions and the nuance of the responses was missed.

Annex 2: Named “Unsafe” Villages

Villages named by study respondents as unsafe, “no-go” areas

Unsafe Villages	Abu Karinka (ED)		Bahar Alarab (ED)		East Jabal Marra (SD)		Kass (SD)	
	Alfeweilih	Helal	Sarhan	Bowat Alkhil	Gabra	Karra	Alkherwi	Umlayouna
Albasham	X							
Alsahab	X							
Badi	X							
Finna					X	X	X	
Fogly					X			
Gobo					X			
Kafarnkola	X							
Korngbal						X	X	
Liba					X			
Maro							X	
Sabon Alfagor						X	X	
Sara							X	
Sawani					X			
Zagalona agricultural area				X				
None		X	X					X

Annex 3: Influence of (I)NGOs and CSOs on Conflict and Peace

International Actors

Present in all villages of this study is **CARE Sudan**. The primary work of CARE is to promote a gender-equal Sudan. To do so, they are identifying and analyzing the negative norms and traditions that contribute to GBV and designing interventions and strategies to eliminate GBV, including community awareness and capacity building of women for social justice. Economic empowerment of women – especially through the formation and support of VSLAs – is also a core element of CARE’s gender and peacebuilding work. Related to conflict prevention, CARE assesses the root causes of conflicts and supports local conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches based on the assessments. CARE strengthens the capacity of the community, community leaders, CBCRMs, and natural resources management committees on conflict resolution and peace building in response to the different types of violence facing vulnerable groups. At times, CARE also forms CBCRMs. In East Darfur, CARE demarcates livestock migratory routes and stopover areas as a means to prevent conflict.

Respondents shared other efforts by international actors such as the UNDP and ZOA. **ZOA** established and trained CBCRMs and implemented a variety of peace building projects that have increased community social cohesion. UNDP runs the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (**DCPSF**). The DCPSF operates a livelihood approach to peace building that brings together diverse communities and livelihood groups to produce and sell outputs. The project promotes social relations in addition to economic interdependence. Some examples are youth farmer groups, VSLAs, and other income generation activities.

NGOs

The two core NGOs present in the study villages are those associated with the project: JMCO and SADO.

Jebel Mera Charity Organization for Rural Development (**JMCO**) in South Darfur works on conflict resolution and peacebuilding through raising community awareness. They utilize interventions such as workshops on peaceful co-existence; collaborating with stakeholders including the Native Administration, community leaders, religious leaders, and community-based governance structures to uncover the root causes of conflicts and coordinate activities in resolving them; and disseminating a peace culture through activities that bring people together. They also conduct community awareness sessions on GBV and how to combat it and coordinate with local stakeholders on activities aimed at eliminating GBV.

Sudan Assistance for Development Organization (**SADO**) in East Darfur specializes in establishing and training CBCRMs and VSLAs on conflict resolution and peace building to promote social cohesion. They also focus on economic empowerment as a means to reduce poverty and the conflicts that result from it. Related to promoting gender equality specifically, they have established women’s protection groups to advocate against, respond to, and prevent GBV. Men are also involved VSLAs to promote acceptance of men and women working together. These men also benefit from women’s rights awareness raising sessions. Finally, SADO has installed complaint boxes in each village to share incidents of GBV to be able to better respond to it.

In addition to the project associated with this study, SADO has been implementing a women's empowerment project funded by **USAID**. One respondent felt that this is one of the most effective projects related to peace building and peaceful coexistence because of its heavy investment in the establishment and operation of accumulation saving and credit associations (ASCAs) as a livelihood approach to peace building. The associations are now functioning well and are networked with financial institutions to ensure sustainability.

Respondents from the communities named additional NGOs operating other projects that stood out to them as having a big impact on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. For example, **PDNO** contributed significantly to tribal reconciliations at the state level, attended during the Doha and Juba Peace Agreements, and implemented many awareness raising activities. Also, Green Hand Organization (**GHO**) worked with several stakeholders to establish and train community governance structures on peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts, restoration of trust and confidence, leadership skills, mediation, and negotiation.

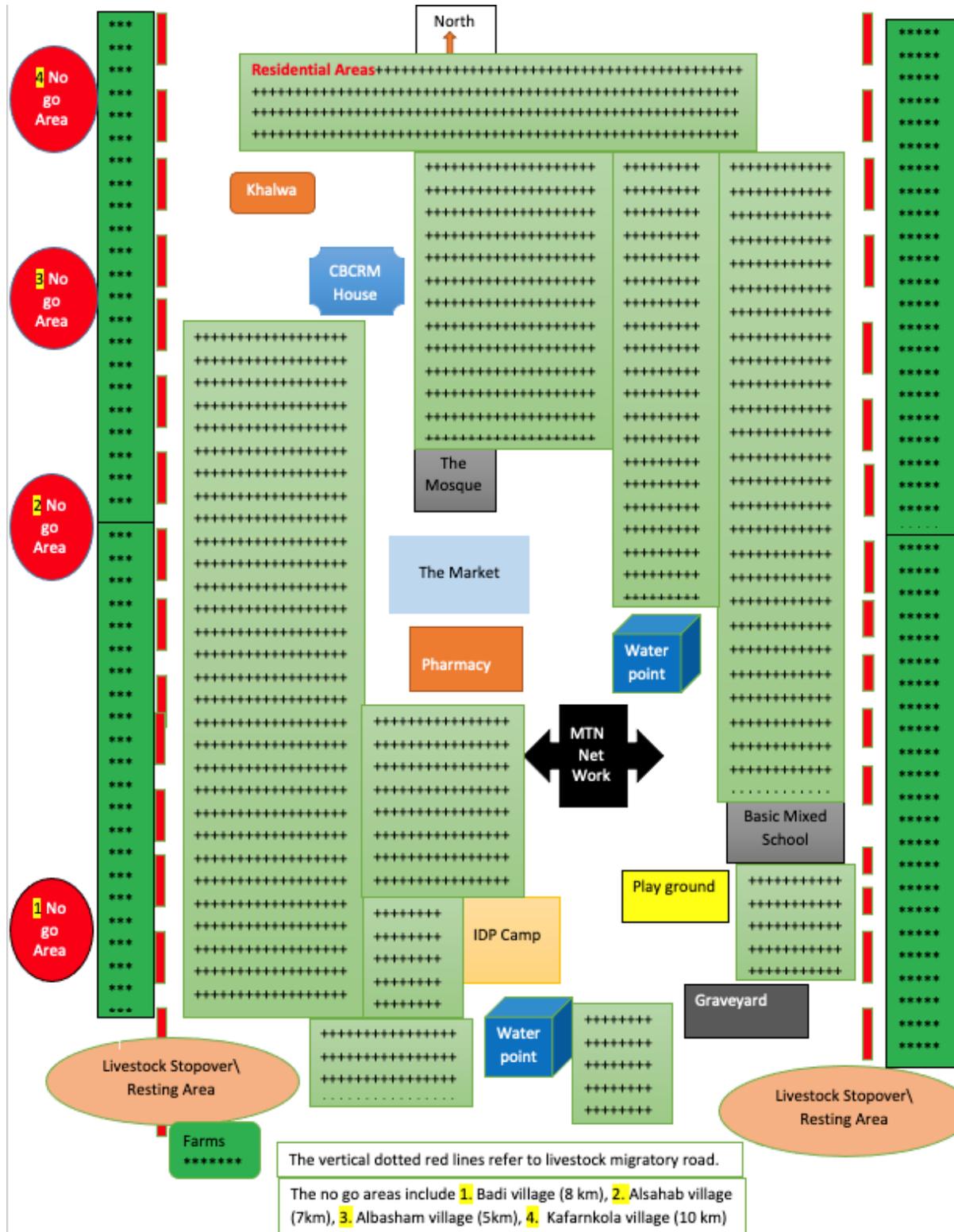
Local CSOs

Local CSOs including women's associations and youth associations conduct awareness sessions on peaceful coexistence, acceptance of others, and prevention of GBV. Some encourage Hakamas to sing for peace, stability, and social cohesion. They may also be active in solving minor disputes between women, neighbors, and families. Some will also advocate for women participation in decision making mechanisms. One women's association member said that they mobilize women for public work during peace conferences and reconciliation meetings to cook for and serve the participants.

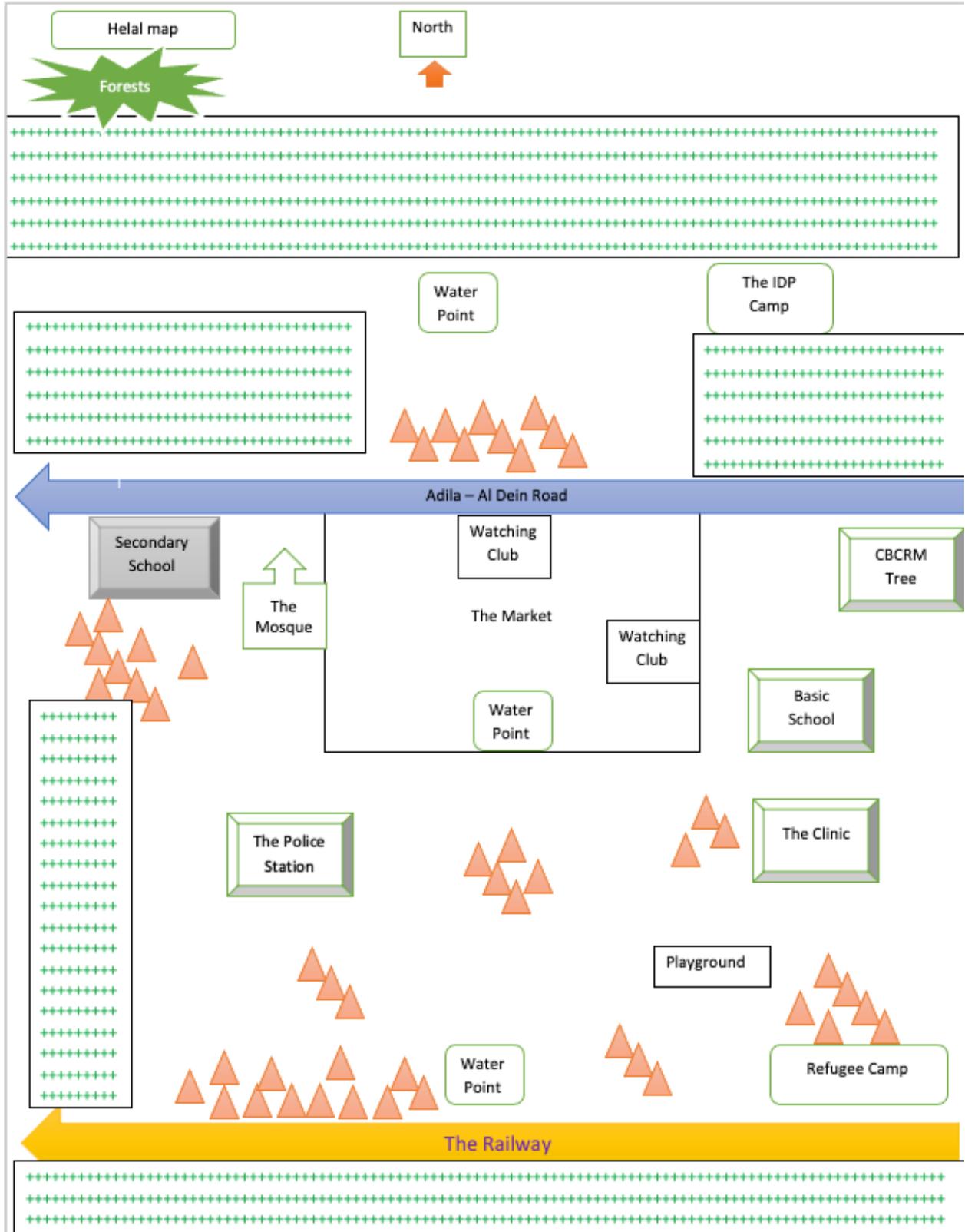
Regarding GBV, local CSOs have reported holding sensitization meetings about the negative impact of FGC/M and early marriage. They also have established protection group to advocate, prevent, and protect women against GBV. In Alfewelih, a local CSO conducts home visits to advocate girls' education and prevent GBV.

Annex 4: Community Maps

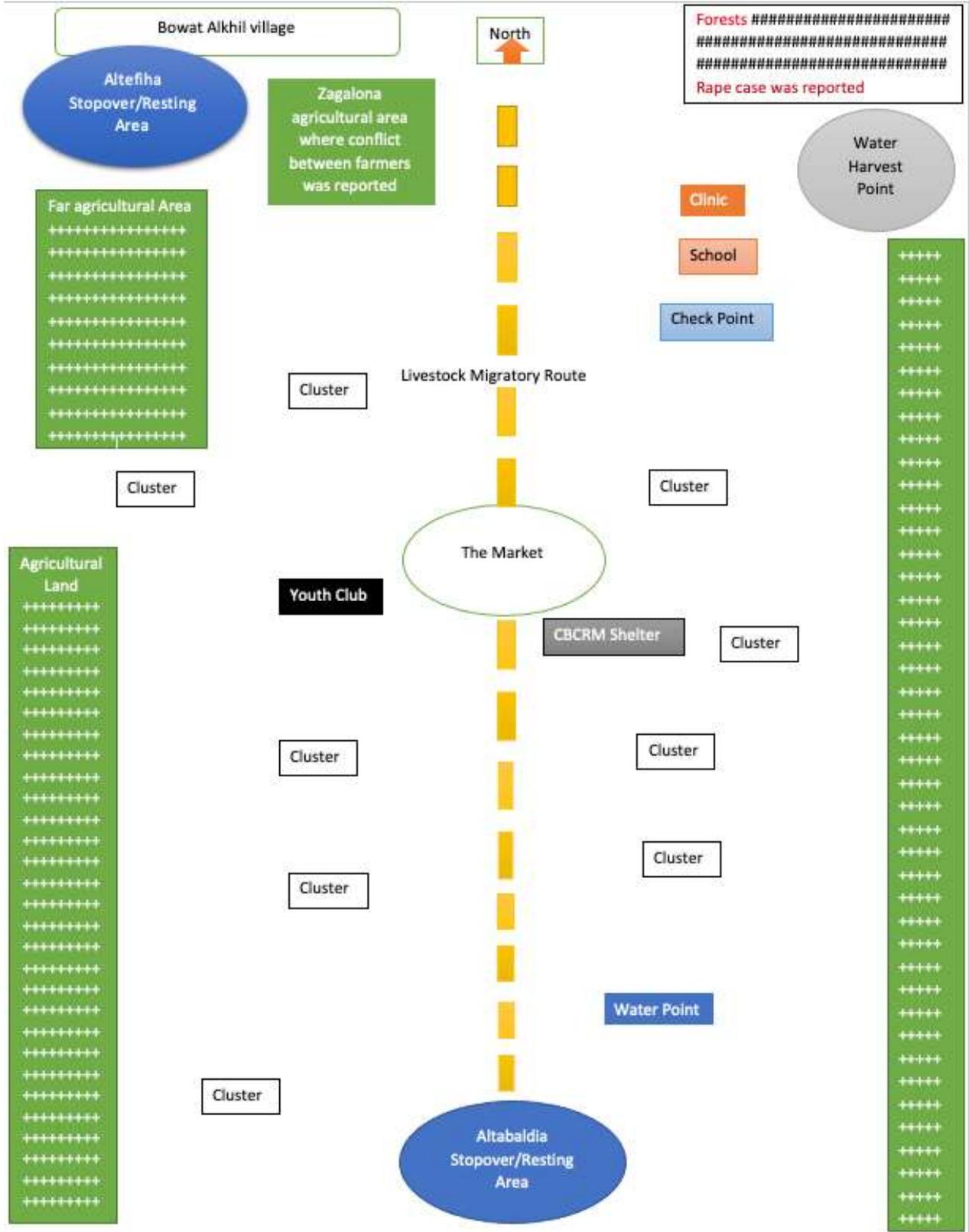
East Darfur, Abu Karinka Locality, Alfeweilih Village



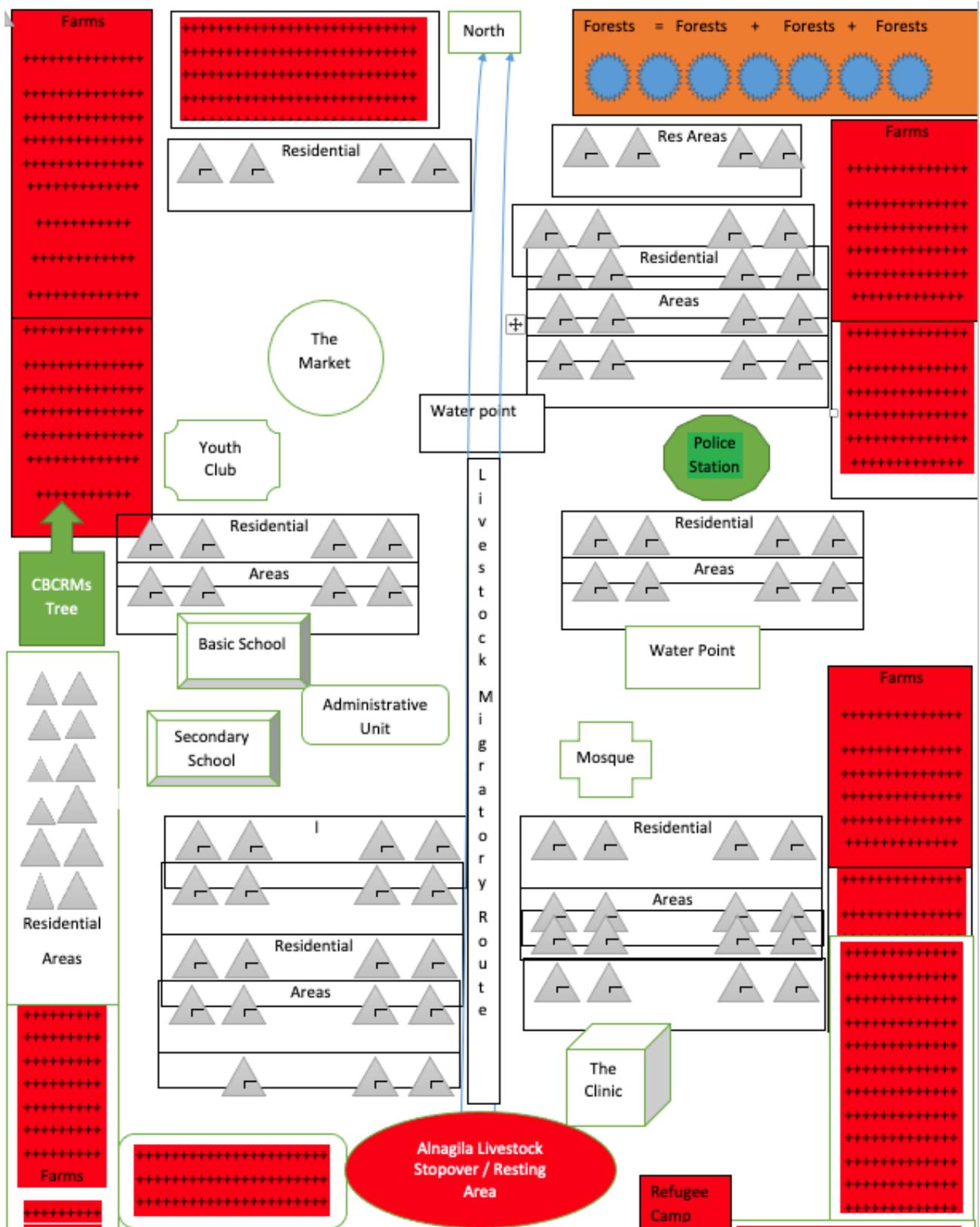
East Darfur, Abu Karinka Locality, Helal Village



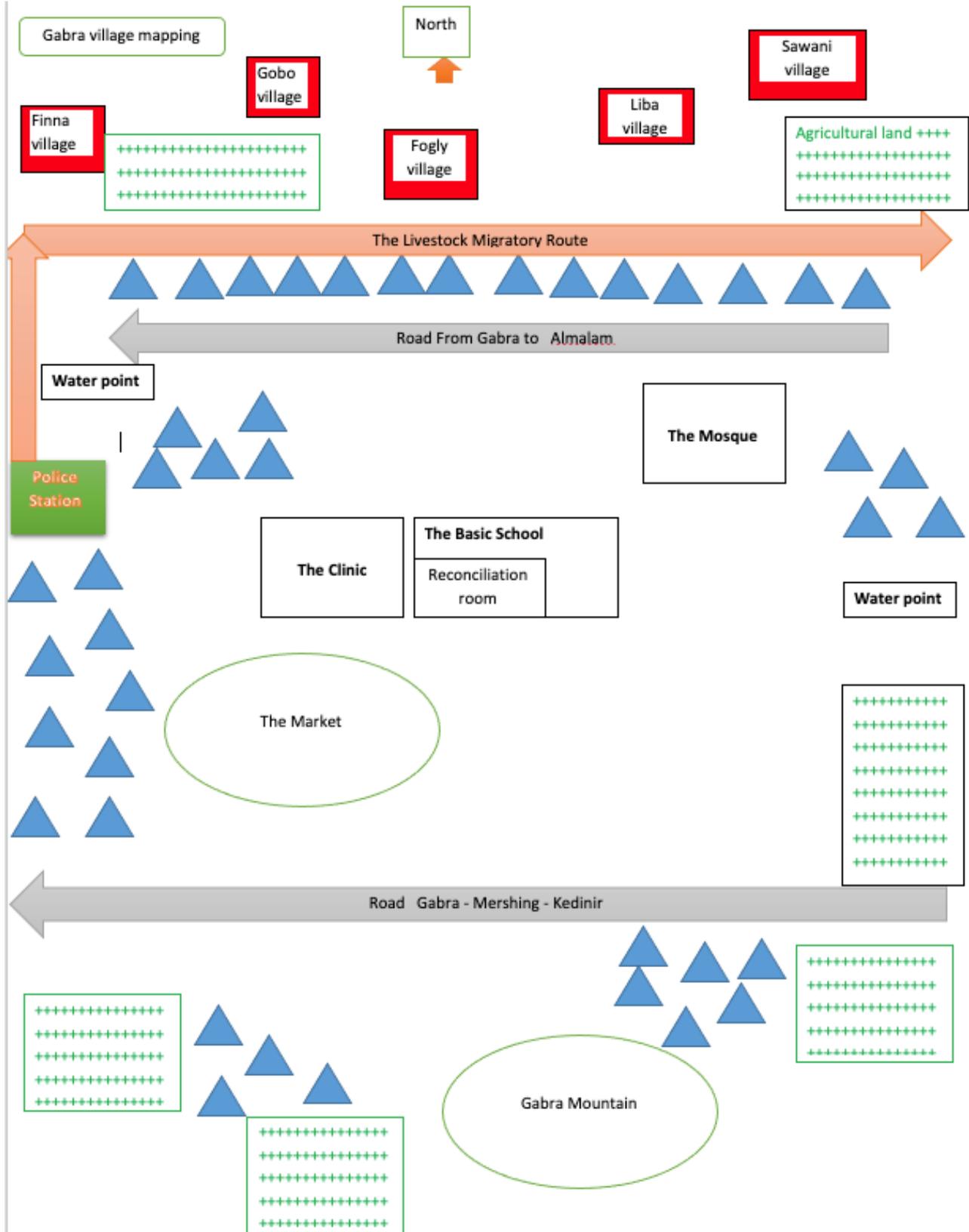
East Darfur, Bahar Alarab Locality, Bowat Alkhill Village



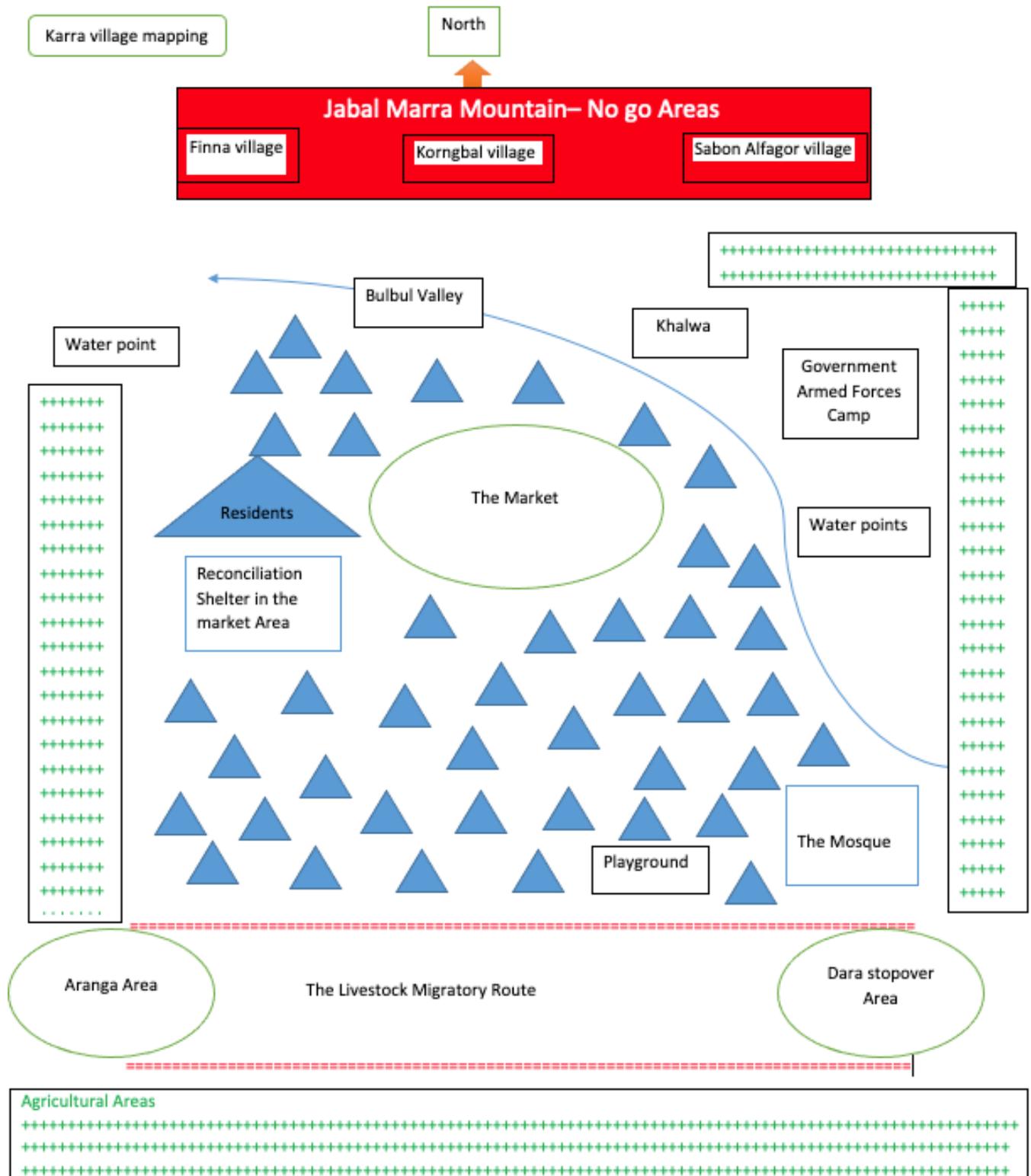
East Darfur, Bahar Alarab Locality, Sarhan Village



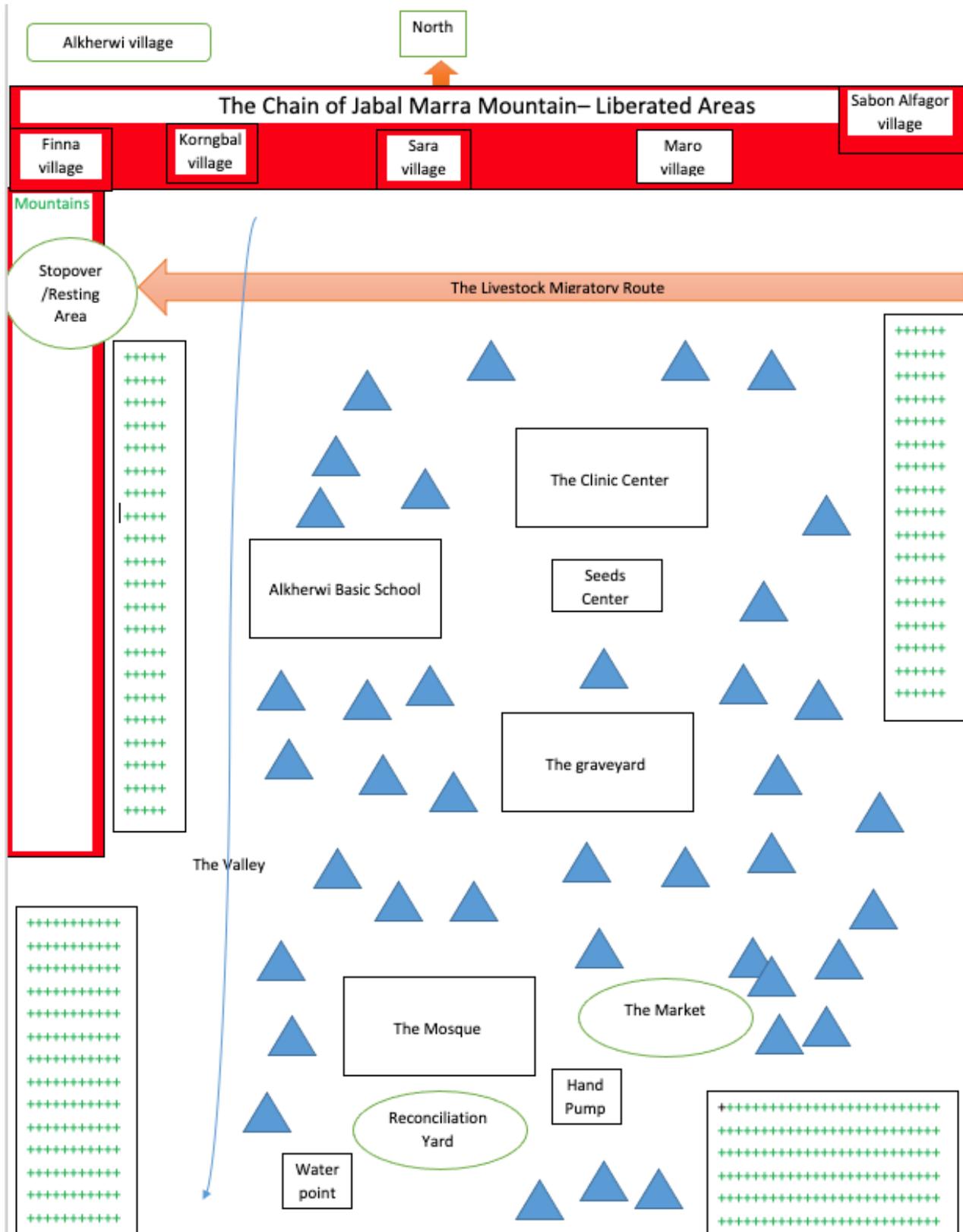
South Darfur, East Jabal Marra Locality, Gabra Village



South Darfur, East Jabal Marra Locality, Karra Village



South Darfur, Kass Locality, Alkherwi Village



South Darfur, Kass Locality, Umlayouna Village

