Divergent Views of Internal Displacement Person on Developmental Options in North Darfur State, Sudan

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ABSTRACT Due to the conflict in Sudan's Darfur Region since 2003, El Fashir City, the capital of North Darfur State has grown by 200 percent to be the second largest city in the Region. This study examines the views of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with regard to resettlement or return back to their original villages. In this study the primary data sources used include: government and Non-Governmental Organizations reports, government policy papers and statistical data from statistics departments in Khartoum and El Fashir. This study also relies on data from in-depth interviews with internally displaced persons and the representatives of both the government and international organizations. The study shows that 91 percent of IDPs want to be resettled in the places where they stay. This research concludes by suggesting that the solution to the predicament of internally displaced persons depends on the participation of all stakeholders in the State.

INTRODUCTION

As of December 2017, there were over 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world, including about 40 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) displaced by conflict (Huang and Graham 2019). The causes of conflict in most developing countries are related to a lack of development, which results in poverty and unemployment, economic and political marginalization, widespread corruption and absence of the rule of law. A combination of these factors creates conditions that may nurture conflicts that lead to internal displacement of people and refugees (Christensen and Harild 2009). In 2016, about 2.6 million civilians had been displaced since the outbreak of the Darfur conflict in 2003. Conflict between Government forces and armed opposition movements from 2014 to 2016 triggered significant displacements (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) 2017). Approximately there are 280 000 refugees in 12 IDPs camps in Chad (United Nations OCHA 2013; United Nations 2010). Most of the largest IDPs camps in Darfur region are located near the main cities, namely Nyala, El Fashir and El Geneina. Due to this phenomenon, there has been evidence of increased urbanization and consequent pressure on the local authorities to provide basic services and livelihood opportunities.

The aim of this study is to provide an assessment of the internally displacement persons' resettlement or return back to their original villages and the challenges of basic services provision to the IDPs in the context of the conflict in Darfur. Staying in the city may be preferred by many of the urban IDPs, particularly if they do not have legal right to property or land in their place of origin. Also the longer the IDPs stay in the protected area in city, the more unlikely they are to return to their places of origin (Lyytinen 2009).

The influx of IDPs in Darfur to the major cities has contributed to an accelerated urbanization process, putting enormous pressure on the government authorities and the already limited urban services. After more than 10 years of displacement and access to free, improved services, many of the displaced persons have grown accustomed to urban settings and humanitarian assistance. It is generally expected that a significant percentage of the IDPs may wish to remain in urban areas and to settle there, because of urban services and potential income-generating opportunities (Darfur Regional Authority 2013). Responding to such a rapid pace of urbanization in Darfur has been challenging for state and federal authorities, as well as for the international community.

Due to the conflict, 50 percent of the people in Darfur live in and near major urban areas; before the conflict there were only 20 percent (UNDP 2011). For example El Fashir city in North Darfur State which has recently grown to be the second largest city in Darfur, has expanded by 200 percent since 2003, due to push and pull factors directly or indirectly linked to the conflict. In addressing this change, it is important to bear in mind that critical issues related to urbanization, particularly land tenure and the rights of IDPs to return, resettle or integrate as they choose, need to be considered. In this case the study shows that more than 80 percent of the IDPs refuse to return to their original villages. The serious problems facing the IDPs in returning to their home-lands are security issues, provision of basic services, justice and reconciliation and land occupation. During the conflict period, nomads occupied the farmers' lands and used them as grazing areas for their animals. In many of the areas of return, conflict over land will remain a serious, ongoing concern in North Darfur State. The best strategies to resolve these problems should be by returning the lands to their original owners and providing security and basic services to those who want to return to their villages and integrate those who went to stay in their IDPs camps into society in a way that promotes sustainable development and establishing improved livelihood for them.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the Kennedy (2009) triangulation method, which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data. Documentary data, which includes published and unpublished reports in Sudan and North Darfur, were collected from government and NGOs offices. To further source its primary data, this research also relied on consultative meetings and in-depth interviews with government and NGO representatives. In addition, this research also used questionnaires to acquire additional data. From December 2018 until March 2019 the author conducted numerous formal and informal interviews with (1) expatriates working for international NGOs (N=45) and (2) professionals and administrations working in the government sector in the state (N=50) and IDPs representatives

in ZamZam, AbouShouk and El Fashir camps (N=70) as well as 3 focus group discussions with IDPs representatives (one group from each IDPs camps). All the government officials' and IDPs representatives' interviews were conducted in Arabic and transcribed into English, coded and analyzed using content analysis.
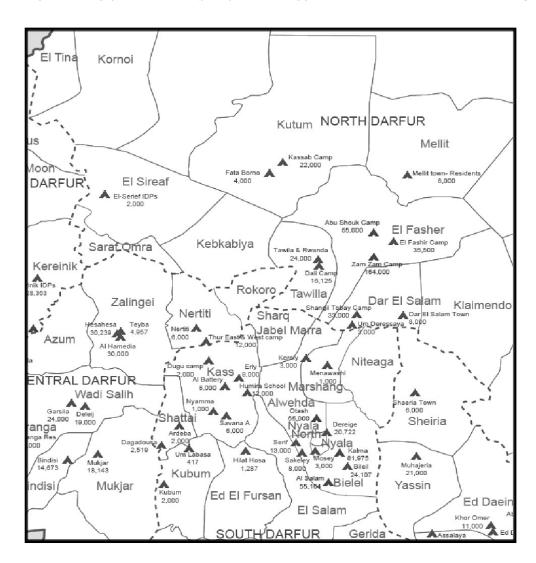
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It has recently been noticed that the Sudan government is taking advantage of the decline in attention of international and regional to the ongoing tragic war in Darfur which started in 2003.

Moreover, the Government intended to deceive national and international actors that the war in the Darfur had come to an end. Such political claims, coupled with attacks on IDPs and IDP camps and the attempts to force the exit of the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) are intended to create a smokescreen for the current intensive Government's campaign of violence and control. The government wants to impose a new reality on the ground by dismantling the IDP camps and further erode the international presence and oversight in Darfur region. Therefore this study discusses the views of the IDPs, government representatives and NGOs' representatives about whether the IDPs want to return back to the original villages or reintegrate in the society where they stay in camps around El Fashir city. This study also discusses the challenges that face the IDPs to return back to their old village and the opportunities that are available in their camps where they now stay around El Fashir city. Currently there are more than 55 000 persons in AbouShouk, more than154 000 persons in ZamZam camp and more than 35 000 persons in El Fashir Camp as seen in Figure 1.

This figure includes all IDPs camps in North Darfur State, but the study focused only on three IDPs camps around El Fashir city: AbouShouk, ZamZam and El Fashir camps. These are the biggest IDPs camps in North Darfur State (Fig. 1).

According to an interviewee (1-1, 15 January 2019, El Fashir) living in AbouShoik IDP camp west north of ElFashir city who said: *"we don't go back home because the security situation is very bad and our people who tried to*
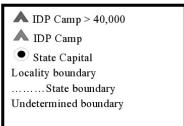
Fig. 1. Map of IDPs camp in North Darfur State, Sudan

go back home were killed by government militias and our land had been occupied by Arab militias. Therefore, if the government wants us to leave the camp and go back home they must provide security by disarming the Arab militias from their guns, get them out from our land and provide basic social services such as school and health centers as well as shelters". This was confirmed by what Mamabolo, the head of UNAMID mission in Darfur said in July 2017*, "Many of IDPs in Darfur have fled their land and their homes because of the war. It's also quite problematic because in certain areas that land is now occupied by other people, so there is going to be a focus on how to have them go back to their places of origin."*

Another interviewee (1-2 25 March 2019) living in El Fashir camp north El Fashir city said *"why do you want me to go back home instead of staying here. There is no security at all and still the Janjaweed occupied our lands and we don't have shelter there because our shelters were destroyed by Janjaweed militia themselves and government military forces. There are no basic services available such as water sources and education and health services for our children. Therefore I don't want to go back, I prefer to stay here. It is better for me and my family because here there are a lot of international organizations providing our basic needs such as food, shelters, health services and education for our kids".* This was confirmed with Lyytinen (2009) who said that *"staying in the city may be preferred by many of the urban IDPs, particularly if they do not have legal right to property or land in their place of origin. Also the longer the IDPs stay in the protected area in city the more unlikely they are to return to their places of origin."*

Also another interviewee (1-3, 15 February 2019, El Fisher) living in ZamZam IDP camp indicated that*: "the living conditions in IDPs camps are very miserable but we don't have another option, as you know our land has been occupied by other people and they have guns. Anybody trying to go back and claim his land were be killed, therefore people are afraid to go back home. They need to be integrated in El Fashir town by planning the land where we stay now*

and give it to us so that it will become our new village."

This was confirmed by what Mamabolo, the head of UNAMID mission in Darfur who said in July 2017, *"In certain areas in Darfur people aren't really thinking of going back, because some of them are near urban areas and they've started new lives. There will be those who want to go back if there is some improvement, and there are those who will say they've made a living elsewhere."*

Therefore, the IDPs representatives pointed out that there is no security in the rural areas because several IDPs families were attacked by governmental militias while returning to their villages or after settling on them. This forced them into repeating the same harsh experience of displacement.

Therefore, 91 percent of IDPs representative indicated that they want to be resettled around El Fashir city where they stay now, while only 5 percent of them indicated that they want to return back home as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: The IDPs view about whether they return back home, resettle them around El Fashir city, North Darfur State, Sudan

The choice	The number	Percent
I want to be resettle here in camp	64	91
I want to return back to my original village	3	5
I don't know	3	4

Source: Filed Work December, 2018

In this regard, 91 percent of the IDPs interviewed indicated that they preferred to resettle around El Fashir city because it is safe and basic services such as education, water well and health services are available. They described that their land back home was still under occupation by the Janjaweed. While 5 percent of them preferred to return back home to farm their land if possible because the living in the IDPs camp is very difficult in terms of income, shortages of shelters and basic services, and 4 percent of them don't know whether they preferred to stay in IDPs camps or return back home. They depend on the majority of IDPs camps settlements discussions.

**Secondly: The Government
Representatives' Views**

An interviewee (2-1, 12 January, 2019, El Fashir), the head of humanitarian office affairs in El Fashir city, said: *"the IDPs must return to their old villages because the security situation is very good after we defeated the rebels' groups on the ground and we provided shelters and basic social services such as schools and health centers and wells for drinking water. I hear that the IDPs claims that their lands have been occupied by Janjaweed militias, but these are all lies, no one occupied their lands, but they are not willing to go back and work in their farm because they get food for free for more than ten years, therefore they want to stay in IDPs camps and get food and other things for free."*

Another interviewee (2-2, 27 February, 2019, El Fashir) working at the humanitarian office in El Fashir city said: *"the security situation in rural areas now became stable and there are no armed militias as before in 2006 and 2007, but the IDPs do not want to go back home because they fear that the Arab militias are still there and occupied their lands. The government offered the IDPs three options, saying they should either be integrated into existing towns, stay in the camps after they are being planned or return to their original villages voluntarily. Unfortunately, most of IDPs refuse to back to their original villages and they want to stay in their camps after they are being planned around the main cities such as El Fashir city due to insecurity in rural areas ".* This was confirmed with what (OCHA 2016) report said " *despite the cessation of hostilities between the Government of the Sudan and opposition armed groups since 2016, the situation of IDPs remains challenging due to a combination of factors, such as generalized insecurity and targeted attacks by a multiplicity of armed actors."*

Another interviewee (2-2, 27 February, 2019, El Fashir) working at a health office in El Fashir, said: *"that government moves to convince the IDPs to engage in the voluntary return programs is nothing but an attempt to put their lives and property in danger of genocide because the security situation in the rural areas is still bad, pointing the IDPs are forced to stay in the camps despite their miserable conditions because they have no other option."* The government must integrate these people into existing towns such as El Fashir city by planning for them in the areas where they stay now and provide roads, electricity, water, schools and health facilities for them.

Therefore, 95 percent of government representatives argued that the IDPs must return to their villages to farm their land rather than stay in camps as consumers, but only 5 percent of government representatives argued that the government, international NGOs and UN agencies must assist the IDPs and resettle them around El Fashir city.

Third: The NGOs Representatives' Views

Another interviewee (3-1, 10 January, 2019, El Fashir) working for World Food Programme (WFP) in El Fashir city stated that: with regards to the return of the IDPs to their original villages or reintegrate them into the community in El Fashir city, "I would say to the government and its partner it is better to reintegrate the IDPs in the areas where they stay now around El Fashir city by planning for them and providing for them social services, roads and electricity". This was confirmed with what De Waal (2009) said "even if there were a peace agreement tomorrow it is likely that the majority of the IDPs would not return back to their original villages.

Another interviewee (3-2, 20 January, 2019, El Fashir) working for World Health Organization (WHO) said that:*"we travel a lot to rural areas to provide health services to the people, but we are suffering from security situation in rural areas. Many times we sent people and the criminals killed them and looted their vehicles in the roads between El Fashir and El Tina in western Sudan border with Chad. Therefore the security situation in the rural areas is very bad and the government tries to push the IDPs to return to their original villages without providing security and social services for them. In this regard I would say that at this moment the government should plan the area where the IDPs stay on around El Fashir city and provide the security and basic services for them and try to integrate them into the main city population."*

Another interviewer (3-3, 17 May, 2019, El Fashir) working for International Red Cross (IRC) stated that: *"the preference of IDPs to stay in the camps is not a preference for luxury, with all the misery and suffering of life there. The camps provide relative safety from government and militia forces attacks and assault as a result of the presence of international organizations."*

Therefore, 89 percent of NGOs representatives argued that as long as the government and international community are not able to provide security and basic services in rural areas, the IDPs must resettle around El Fashir city, while only 11 percent of NGOs representatives argued that the IDPs must return to their original villages, but these are mostly local NGOs supported by government.

The Status of Basic Services Provision in IDPs Camps

An interviewee (1-4, 17 January, 2019, El Fashir) from Abou Shouk IDPs camp in north west of El Fashir city, said that: *"most of the social services such as health care, education, water and sanitation services and food and shelters provided for us by international organizations such as UNICEF, UNDP and WHO and so on, because the government has nothing to provide for us and we completely depend on NGO to provide everything we need and without their assistant we can't be able to live"*.

An interviewee (1-5, 11 January, 2019, El Fashir) from El Fashir camp north west of El Fashir city said that: *"we don't have enough social services such as health, education water and so on, the government people do not provide any social services for us because they do not want us to stay in this camp, they want us to go back home, and they knew that there is no security in rural area where we stayed before the conflict started in 2003. The international organization provides some social services such as health, education and sanitation as well as food and shelters, but it's not enough. We are suffering living in IDPs camp but we don't have another place to go."*

Interviewer (1-6, 9 February, 2019, El Fashir) from ZamZam camp south of El Fashir city said that: *"we are not going back to our original villages because there is no security in rural areas where we stay before; there are criminals who kills everybody who goes there. There are no social services such as health, education clean water for drinking and so on. We need to stay in this camp even it is not good for living, but at least we have access to the free health services, education for our children, clean water for drinking and sanitation services provided for us by international NGOs."*

Therefore, International organizations provide 70 percent of services such as health care, education facilities, water pumps and sanitation services as well as food and shelters in IDPs camps in North Darfur state as seen in the Table 2.

Table 2: Basic services provided by NGOs and government in IDPs camps in North Darfur State, Sudan

Basic services	The provider	Percent
Food and shelters	NGOs	93
	Government	4
	Others	3
	Total	100
Water	NGOs	72
	Government	24
	Others	4
	Total	100
Sanitation	NGOs	85
	Government	14
	Others	1
	Total	100
Health care	NGOs	88
	Government	9
	Others	3
	Total	100
Education	NGOs	60
	Government	38
	Others	2
	Total	100

Source: Humanitarian Affairs Office Report 2019

Urbanization Policies in Sudan

Existing urbanization policies in Sudan faces lack of a national vision and the application of the "site and services" application. The emerging reality is that more than 50 percent of Darfur people are living in cities without adequate access to basic social services, while the average of Sudan is 33.1 percent (United Nations 2010). Accordingly, in Sudan, a shift in urban and regional policies that involve the development of intermediary villages and small

towns that enhance regional development is becoming a recurrent social and political agenda. Such policies require a clear strategy to address both urban and rural development strategies simultaneously, including those creating opportunities for communities to return to their villages, creating incentives for sustainable socio-economic development, and establishing improved livelihood conditions.

The current demographic concentration in and around El Fashir city underscores the need to plan for multi-ethnic, peace promoting and income-generating urban development mechanisms.

El Fashir has a Master Plan that covers a 15-year period from 2006 to 2021, but the plan does not take into account how El Fashir has changed during the Darfur conflict.

From an early stage of the conflict, the government has always wanted to see IDPs return home.

Evidence from the IDPs interviewed indicate that a large proportion more than 90 percent of the long-term displaced people have no intention to return to their rural areas of origin. However, the government authorities refuse to accept this reality.

In El Fashir city, there is an urgent need for long-term urban planning for increased and strategically located basic services and resettle the IDPs around El Fashir city.

CONCLUSION

After more than 10 years of displacement and access to free basic services, 90 percent of the displaced people in IDPs camps around El Fashir city have become increasingly accustomed to urban settings and humanitarian assistance, particularly youth and women. In this context the lies about stability and peace, and the possibility of voluntary return of displaced persons, actively promoted by governmental officials is facing the lack of credibility according to the IDPs representatives views. The IDPs sees that any return of IDPs must be by restoring security and disbanding the government militias that continue to attack their villages. The IDPs demanded individual and collective compensation for the losses suffered by the IDPs before any voluntary return, and that the issue of those who want to be resettled on the lands around El

Fashir city where they stay now and provide security and basic services for them. The challenges facing the government and internationals organization are how to reintegrate the IDPs to the city community and provide basic services to them, or evacuation of their land from new settlers (Janjaweed militia) and compensate them and provide the security and basic services in their old villages to return and farm their lands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From long-term perspectives, the government of Sudan should conduct the prompt and comprehensive disarmament of pro-Government armed militias and other groups with links to the Government, and return the land that occupied by the Janjaweed militias to the IDPs whom are currently staying in the camps. Also the government and NGOs should provide shelters and water and basic servicers in the displacement areas. In short-term the government should plan that IDPs camps resettle the IDPs in the areas where they stay now and the NGOs and government should provide the security, water and basic services to the IDPs and reintegrate them into host communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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