

JABAL MARRA

DEATH VALLEYS

SALAAMEDIA REPORT
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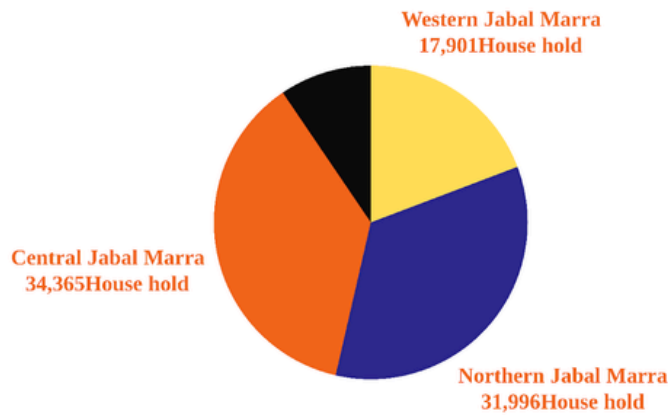
Escaping from conflict zones is not easy, it can mark the beginning of a new suffering in search of safety. Darfur civilians are facing major challenges throughout the current war in Sudan, while fleeing areas under artillery shelling, airstrikes and fierce battles. Civilians of Al-Fashir have been fleeing war consequences, which continued for more than eight months. Among those fleeing the hell of war is Mrs. Arafa Adam, who was forced to leave the sheltering center in Al-Fashir, where she was staying and relocated to areas controlled by the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM)- Abdul Wahid Mohamed Nur in Jabal Marra. “After spending two days on top of an overcrowded truck, we managed to reach Rokirow in Jabal Marra”, says [Arafa](#), describing her journey from AL-Fashir. She further said: “The journey was not easy. We faced many challenges, including lack of food and water, which made us worry about our health and that of our children”. Similarly, another IDP, Mr. Suleiman Ibrahim, explained that traveling between mountainous areas to reach Jabal Marra is very challenging, adding; “Families are forced to walk for days in very hard conditions facing harsh winter, making the journey more difficult”. Suleiman elaborated that; some IDPs prefer to travel by truck as it offers them some comfort, while others choose to walk due to lack of transportation means and money in addition to their suffering. “Many children and women are suffering from physical exhaustion and hunger, and some are forced to abandon their belongings or even family members“, he added.



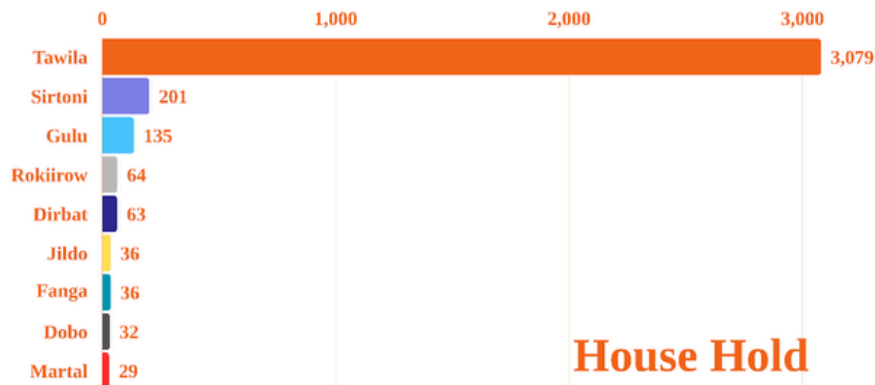
Influx of IDPs

Despite the difficulties facing those fleeing conflict zones to Jabal Marra, SLM-controlled areas received about 3,675 displaced families in the last three months. However, the number of displaced families from other areas in the region to Jabal Marra, has exceeded 93,000 families since April 2023.

**Families Displaced to Jabal Marra, according To the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
December 31, 2024 Update**



**Families Displaced to Jabal Marra Areas, according To the IDPs & Refugees Coordination Body
October 2024 to January 2025**



Military Alliance

The Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), led by Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nur, and the Gathering of Sudan Liberation Forces (GSLF), led by El Tahir Hajar, declared their formation of a neutral force to protect civilians, secure humanitarian and commercial convoys, and facilitate the movement of IDPs. This military alliance is based on a political declaration signed by the leadership of the two movements on October 1, 2023, in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Prior to the establishment of the joint forces a series of meetings were held between the two movements' chiefs of staff, Ahmed Abu-Tinga and Yusuf Karjakula, in Jabal Marra from September 26 to 30, 2023. Article 6 of the political declaration signed by the two movements stipulates the formation of a neutral military alliance to protect civilians and commercial convoys and to secure the movement of civilians and humanitarian workers. SLM emphasized that the force will protect civilians and secure convoys in areas controlled by the two movements, and they will be funded through the movement's entities, nor any third party.



Protection of Civilians

As an effect to Darfur's war of 2003, the United Nations and the African Union deploy a [joint peacekeeping force](#) (UNAMID). The mission was mandated to protect civilians and ensure safe delivery of humanitarian aid to the region. However, by mid- 2021 the mission's [mandate](#) came to an end. Prior to the mission's departure, the country's transitional government on January 1, 2021, declared the [formation](#) of a National Mechanism to undertake civilian protection. In a related development, the same Government agreed with Darfur armed movements to deploy a 12,000-strong force for the protection of civilians in the region based on the provisions of Title II, Chapter 8, Article (29) of [Juba Peace Agreement](#). The 12000 troops were to fill the security vacuum following the departure of UNAMID forces, beside creating a conducive environment for humanitarian assistance as well as protecting civilians.

Early 2023, the Civilians Protection Force was deployed to Darfur states, but never functioned due to the eruption of war on April 15, 2023. In August 2023, a [neutral](#) joint force of five armed movements was formed to protect civilians and secure [humanitarian aid convoys](#) from Kosti in the White Nile State to Darfur. However, some of the movements that formed the force deviated from neutrality and opted to fight alongside the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Now, two movements remained neutral, including the GSLF, which recently joined the SLM to form the new Civilian Protection Force.

“ After spending two days on top of an overcrowded truck, we managed to reach Rokirow in Jabal Marra ”

Arafa Adam, an IDP

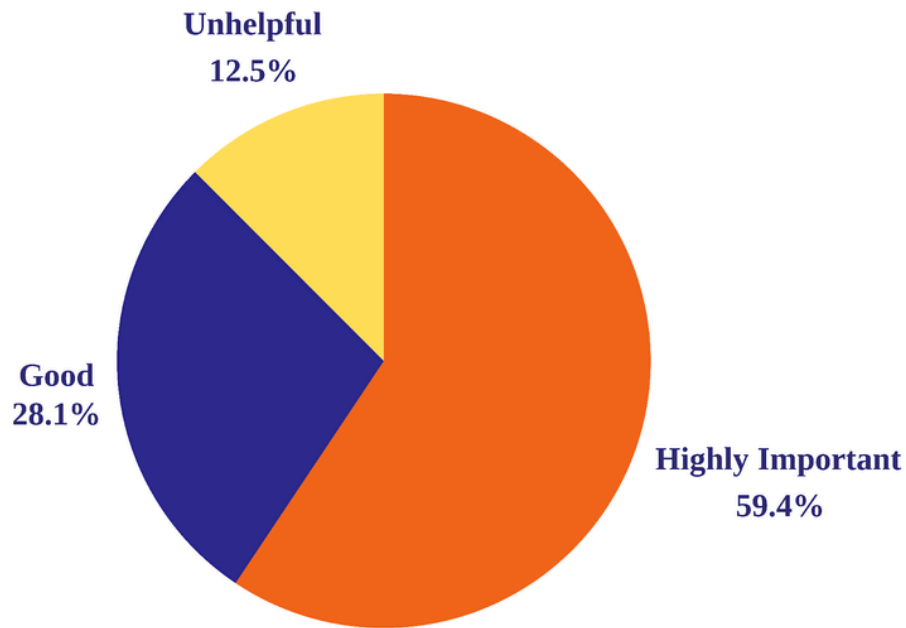
Joint Action

In the past the two movements (GSLF and SLM) carried out a [joint](#) activity in June 2024, evacuating thousands of citizens from Al-Fahir to SLM-controlled areas, when the fighting intensified between SAF and its allies against RSF. Tahir Hajar, the head of GSLF, stated on his Facebook page that; their forces escorted hundreds of trucks transporting IDPs from Zamzam camp to Tawila locality.

On the other hand, Mohammed al-Nayer, SLM spokesman, told SalaaMedia that the alliance formed by his movement and GSLF is not a rigid alliance. It welcomes any party that believes in its principles and goals, meaning, they can cooperate with any party that believes in protection of civilians and recognizes what is stated in the political declaration of the alliance. He pointed out that the scope of the joint force is limited to the areas controlled by the two movements or wherever accessible.

Responding to a question prompted by SalaamMedia, al-Nayer rolled-out any communication with the warring parties regarding coordination. He further explained that the declared force is significant and well-armed to carry out its stated duties of protecting civilians, adding: “It is an initial force and will increase quantitatively and qualitatively upon need and time“.

What Do You Think of the Recently-formed Neutral Force for Civilian Protection?



A Poll posted by SalaamMedia on WhatsApp Channel

Third Party

While carrying-out its first operation, the Neutral Civilian Protection Force (NCP) was ambushed by an armed force near Kabkabiya town in North Darfur, an RSF-controlled area. In a [statement](#), NCP blamed RSF for the incident. The force was escorting a convoy of more than a hundred trucks loaded with thousands of civilians fleeing the horrors of war to safe areas in North Darfur. NCP stated that the attack killed and injured several civilians as well as members among the force. From its side, RSF expressed its sadness upon the incident and referred to a third party who might have carried out the attack. In a [statement](#) by its spokesperson, RSF promised to form a joint committee to investigate the incident and called for more coordination with the neutral force at all levels to avoid similar incidents in the future.

“ Many children and women are suffering from physical exhaustion and hunger, and some are forced to abandon their belongings or even family members ”

Sulieman Ibrahim, an IDP

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The lawyer, Al-Aqib Jabakallah

Regarding convicted people during the conflict, whether they have the right to testify before the FFM or international courts, the lawyer Al-Aqib Jabakallah believes that “nothing prevents the Fact-Finding Committee from asking them about the trials that they have been subjected to, perhaps it is systematic process targeting certain categories or groups to violate their rights, including the right to life or confiscation of property. In this context the trials in Sudan seems like a sword to silence or eliminate some groups or individuals”. He explained that testifying before anyone has nothing to do with convicting any person of a crime, but rather related to the content of his/ her testimony. If a person was present or witnessed the events, or had knowledge through a third party, then the information he obtains, if provided or revealed, could prove or refute the responsibility of a person, group, class, or institution for a particular violation. He added, "Conviction of a criminal offense doesn't prevent testimonies that can be used to prove guilt or innocence. Therefore, those who were subjected to trials during this war can't be deprived later from the right to testify before international mechanisms."

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By examining the judicial systems that emerged during the current war in areas under the control of both warring parties, that most emergency courts within SAF controlled areas, adopted the Sudanese Criminal Laws and the Emergency Law, to file charges under Articles (51/A, 65 - provoking war against the state and aiding terrorism), which amounts to death or life imprisonment penalties. On the other hand, the courts in RSF controlled areas mostly resorted to the Sudanese Civil Laws, in addition to the Emergency and Negative Events Law, which penalties does not exceed financial fines or imprisonment for months. Therefore, lack justice standards are common denominator in courts of both parties, where there is no integrity in interrogation or investigations, and defendants are deprived of the right to defense or appeal. Therefore, national and international organizations must play an oversight role by putting pressure on parties to the conflict to respect human rights and guarantee justice, in addition to continue monitoring and documenting violations committed by both parties to ensure zero impunity.