



# Where to Now? Agency Expulsions in Sudan: Consequences and Next Steps

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On 4 March, the government of Sudan expelled 13 international NGOs and revoked the licences of three national NGOs.<sup>1</sup> In all, 7,610 aid workers – 308 internationals and 7,302 nationals – have been directly affected in Northern Sudan (including Darfur), where these agencies accounted for 40% of aid workers, delivering more than half the total amount of aid. NGO services – access to water, health and medical services, food rations – have been jeopardised. Assistance to Darfur's 2.7 million-plus displaced people has been severely compromised, and a number of health-related crises are already emerging. In the Three Areas, the repercussions of these expulsions could undermine the gains made in realising the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In Eastern Sudan, the expulsion of these agencies has deprived the region of critical food, livelihoods and medical assistance.

This situation has brought the *modus operandi* of international humanitarian assistance agencies into sharp focus as those NGOs and UN agencies still in Sudan struggle to plug the gaps.

This ALNAP-HPG paper offers a snapshot of what the expelled agencies were doing, where they were based and the type of assistance they were providing at the time of their departure.

It looks at the challenges these agencies had to tackle, how their programmes evolved, the extent to which these agencies had developed contingency plans and remote working capacities and the challenges involved in scaling up operations to make up for the shortfall in services.

Finally, it discusses the immediate implications, as well as suggesting a number of ways forward for the UN system, donors and international NGOs.

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<sup>1</sup> The 13 international NGOs are Action Contre la Faim (ACF), CARE International, Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Médecins Sans Frontières Holland (MSF-H) and Médecins Sans Frontières France (MSF-F), Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam GB, the Planning and Development Collaborative International (PADCO) (PADCO technically describes itself as a development firm and not an NGO), Save the Children UK and Save the Children US and Solidarités. The national NGOs are Amal Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights Development and Environment and the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO).

## 2. OVERVIEW: THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN NORTHERN SUDAN AND THE THREE AREAS

### *Darfur*

The first years of the Darfur conflict, 2003–2004, were characterised by widespread violence, systematic destruction of livelihoods and large-scale displacement. By early 2005, levels of conflict had decreased, though fighting continued in parts of South and West Darfur, creating further displacement. A new wave of violence followed the partial signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006, which led to the fragmentation of non-signatory groups. Darfur now suffers from localised conflict, growing banditry and increased violence against humanitarian workers.

The humanitarian consequences of the conflict in Darfur, which entered its sixth year in 2009, have been dire. By October 2008, there were an estimated 2.7m internally displaced people, with an additional 2m residents considered affected by conflict (UN, October 2008). In 2003–2004 the humanitarian crisis was at its worst, with an acute malnutrition prevalence of 21.8% for Darfur as a whole (WFP/UNICEF, 2005), and an estimated 160,000 excess deaths between September 2003 and June 2005 (CRED). Between 2004 and 2005, malnutrition and mortality dramatically declined, largely as a result of the humanitarian operation (WFP/UNICEF, 2005). From 2006, however, both nutrition and food security started to deteriorate again, although food security has shown a temporary improvement for some population groups in 2008 (WFP, 2008; WFP, 2009). Food security is thought to have improved temporarily due to good rains and less crop destruction,<sup>2</sup> but insecurity and limited income-earning opportunities remain key constraints.

Threats to livelihoods and protection persist: IDPs and rural farming populations continue to face risks to their safety, and all groups face restrictions to their freedom of movement, be it to collect firewood, farm, access markets or herd livestock (Jaspars and O’Callaghan, 2008). Livelihood strategies have considerably diversified since 2004, but options remain limited and are insufficient to meet people’s basic needs (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006; Young et al., 2007; Young et al., 2009a). Certain strategies are also unsustainable because they entail significant risks to the environment (e.g. brick-making, which uses large amounts of water and wood), jeopardise physical safety or, as is the case with some Arab pastoral populations, because they are coercive and violent (Jaspars and O’Callaghan, 2008; Young et al., 2009b). As other livelihood options contract, many groups are resorting to the collection and sale of natural resources, fuelling conflict (Bromwich and Buchanan-Smith, 2008). Humanitarian assistance will therefore continue to be needed for the foreseeable future, both to protect livelihoods and to save lives.

Of particular concern is the conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and opposition groups around Muhajeria and Shearia in South Darfur in January and February this year, affecting about 100,000 people and leaving an estimated 30,000 newly displaced. Many people fled to Zamzam camp in North Darfur, which was already operating at full capacity. Recent expulsions included NGOs providing healthcare and shelter in Zamzam (UN-OCHA, 2009b).

### *Three Areas and Eastern Sudan*

In much of the rest of the country, a brutal 21-year conflict was brought to an end in January 2005, with the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the

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<sup>2</sup> Also note that the assessment in 2008 was done at harvest time, but the one in 2007 was carried out during the hungry season.

Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). During the conflict, more than two million people were killed by famine, fighting and disease, 600,000 fled to neighbouring countries and an estimated 4m others were displaced within Sudan. The three 'transitional' areas along the border between North and South Sudan (Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) saw some of the heaviest fighting. Humanitarian indicators in the Three Areas remain cause for concern, and political tensions are high, particularly in Southern Kordofan and Abyei; clashes between the SAF and the SPLA in May 2008 displaced an estimated 60,000 civilians (UN-OCHA, 2009e).

Socioeconomic recovery in the Three Areas has been slow. Blue Nile has the lowest life expectancy for women in Sudan, at 51.2, and only 29% of children attend primary school. Health and education facilities are extremely limited. Approximately 13% of children under five suffer from moderate malnutrition, and 2% are severely malnourished (UN-OCHA, 2009e). Access to services is also extremely limited in Southern Kordofan. In 2005, there were only 12 hospitals in the entire state. While Northern states on average have 22 doctors per 100,000 people, the equivalent for Southern Kordofan is four (Klugman and Wee, 2008). There are significant disparities in service and infrastructure access, with better access in areas that were held by the government during the war. Available data shows that there is one hospital per 115,000 people in the former government-controlled areas of the state, compared to one per 800,000 in former SPLM areas, and one PHCC per 23,000 and 133,000 people respectively (Klugman and Wee, 2008). In former SPLM areas of both Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, particularly Kaoda and Kurmuk, NGOs deliver most essential services.

In Eastern Sudan, the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Eastern Front opposition coalition signed the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in 2006. Progress in implementing the agreement has been extremely slow, and the area remains profoundly underdeveloped. Kassala and Red Sea states have the highest malnutrition rates in the country, and global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates exceed the emergency threshold of 15% (Pantuliano, 2005). Food insecurity is chronic, and even moderate shocks resulting from drought, floods or other causes result in massive negative impacts. A Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) assessment in January 2008 in Hamashkoreib and Telkuk in Kassala State indicated huge food security and livelihood needs.

Eastern Sudan also has high maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates, with under-five mortality at 2.01 per 10,000 per day in Kassala State and 1.83 in Red Sea State. Access to safe drinking water is about 39% in Kassala State, 37% in Gedaref State and 33% in Red Sea State. Access to sanitation facilities is even lower (26% in Kassala State, for example).

### 3. THE IMPACT OF THE EXPULSIONS ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

#### *Darfur*

Before the expulsions, the humanitarian operation in Darfur was the largest in the world, with more than 16,000 humanitarian workers in the region (UN-OCHA, 2009a). Such a large operation has been warranted by the weak capacity of the government to address the crisis, especially at state level, and the fact that the government has limited access to much of Darfur. At the time of writing, the UN and the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) were conducting an assessment of the gaps in humanitarian assistance created by the expulsions, and initial estimates suggest that UN agencies will only be able to cover 20–30% of the shortfall. Coordination mechanisms are also likely to be affected, both in Darfur and nationally.

All sectors in Darfur have been affected by the expulsion of agencies from Sudan, including food distribution, food security, nutrition, water and sanitation, health, shelter and protection. Water, sanitation and healthcare are expected to be of particular concern, with food needs being covered at least temporarily. All agencies expelled (apart from MSF-F/H) were involved in water and sanitation programmes. This will have immediate consequences on the supply of water for most IDP camps in Darfur, including large camps such as Kalma and Kass in South Darfur, Zalingei in West Darfur and Abou Shook in North Darfur. Much of the water for these camps is supplied through boreholes, but these require fuel to operate; permission to transport fuel has to be obtained weekly and reserve stores are not allowed. In some camps, such as Kalma, fuel supplies are expected to have run out already, and there have been reports that the community is collecting money to keep the boreholes running. UNICEF is making arrangements with the government Water, Environmental and Sanitation (WES) department and other agencies to supply fuel for about 15 days, to keep water supplies going. The government has promised to allow communities access to fuel to keep boreholes running. Hand-pumps provide an alternative source of water, but cannot meet all needs, particularly during the current dry season, and some camps, such as Shangil Tobai in North Darfur, do not in any case have any. Shangil Tobai recently received nearly 3,000 people, many of them women and children fleeing renewed fighting.

If adequate water supplies cannot be maintained and people are forced to turn to other water sources, the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea will significantly increase, especially with the onset of the rainy season in May. Diseases spread rapidly when people are living in very basic, overcrowded camps. The situation is particularly critical in Kalma camp, where 63,000 displaced people depended on Oxfam GB (one of the expellees) for water, and where a meningitis outbreak has been reported. Although meningitis is not a water-borne disease, sick people need access to clean, safe water and sanitation.

The expulsion of IRC and MSF-H/F will leave major gaps in the provision of healthcare in camps including Nertiti, Zalingei, Muhajeriya, Nyala and Kass. UNICEF is making arrangements to meet this shortfall, and is paying national staff of expelled agencies to keep clinics running over the next two months. IRC's clinics in Abu Shook and Al Salaam are up and running, and clinics in Otash and Kalma are still open. Although some local MSF staff remain in Kalma, other programmes have been shut down completely, with obvious implications for the 290,000 IDPs they were serving. The closure of clinics also has implications for disease surveillance and early warning of future epidemics. The government reportedly plans to take over the clinics, although this could be problematic given anti-government sentiment in some of the camps. A key implication of government staff taking over the clinics would be a perceived loss of confidentiality: experience suggests that rape survivors will probably refuse to be treated by staff seen as close to the government, and the number of women seeking assistance will fall.

In food distribution, ACF, CARE, SC-US and Solidarités were key implementing partners for WFP, responsible in total for over 1m people in North, South and West Darfur. WFP has made arrangements for a two-month distribution for populations covered by these agencies. There are a number of reasons why food distribution is perhaps less of an immediate concern. First, the logistics of getting food to distribution points is covered by WFP and private contractors; second, the actual food distribution itself is done by Food Relief Committees (FRCs), established by WFP in 2007, many of which were already working without supervision; third, WFP has been able to 'borrow' 200 national staff from the expelled agencies (storekeepers, security guards, distribution teams). Where there is no agency presence, as in Gereida, WFP will undertake the distribution itself. Although these measures ensure that food continues to be distributed, WFP expects it to be haphazard and there will be little monitoring or reporting. The temporary improvement in food security in Darfur noted above also gives WFP and its cooperating partners some space to find longer-term solutions.

Meanwhile, any reduction in food assistance or unequal distributions between different areas or camps could increase the risk of violence, especially in the camps.

Six of the expelled NGOs (ACF, CARE, SC-US, MSF-H and -F and SUDO) were supporting emergency nutrition programmes for moderately or severely malnourished individuals in the three Darfur states. Overall, 34 therapeutic feeding programmes and 19 supplementary feeding programmes were lost throughout Sudan as a result of the expulsion of these agencies. Some were working with WFP to set up a blanket feeding programme for all children under five. Unless specialised agencies still present in Darfur can expand their programmes, there is a risk that acute malnutrition will increase further.

Many of the expelled agencies were also involved in food security and livelihood support programmes, for both camp-based and rural populations. These programmes ranged from vocational training, income generation and fuel-efficient stoves to agricultural and livestock support, including agricultural inputs, training in improved practices and veterinary care. Whilst small in scale compared to more mainstream humanitarian responses, such interventions are important in protracted crises, both to support the diversification of livelihood strategies and to utilise all possible means to meet basic needs.

Ensuring the protection of civilians will also become more difficult. While the mandated protection agencies – ICRC, UNHCR and UNICEF – are still present, many of the expelled agencies were involved in activities designed to reduce exposure to threats and address the consequences of such exposure, for instance work on gender-based violence (emergency medical assistance and support to survivors) and child protection (child-friendly spaces to provide recreational and social assistance and to address issues of exploitative labour or forced recruitment). Other work included facilitating contact between IDPs and peacekeepers to increase the regularity and protective benefit of monitoring by peacekeepers, and facilitating dialogue and local-level peace initiatives in divided communities. Protection activities were already severely constrained, but their complete absence in some camps could well increase the potential for violence and abuse. A further protective function played by international actors involved highlighting protection concerns to national and international actors through dialogue and advocacy. This has helped to ensure that Darfur is understood as a crisis involving mass human rights abuses, rather than solely a humanitarian emergency. With the expulsion of so many international staff, even this minimal level of protection has been removed. It is questionable whether UN agencies are able to fill the gap given their limited presence in Darfur, and the restrictions placed on all organisations carrying out protection activities.

A sudden decrease in aid could further destabilise the security situation in Darfur, especially in the already-overcrowded camps, and could have a significant impact on the movement of IDPs. Movement to better-served camps or areas may risk aggravating the situation in settlements which are already over capacity. In this regard, it will be crucial to determine the differential impact of gaps in assistance as a result of agencies' expulsions on camp versus rural populations and farming versus pastoral populations (or pro-government and opposition groups). All of this could have a significant impact on movements of IDPs as well as exacerbating existing tensions between and within groups. Decreasing levels of aid could also spark riots in some of the camps. Any deterioration in security would further hamper the efforts of other NGOs to scale up to meet new needs. The recent kidnapping of three international MSF workers is particularly worrying.

**Box 1: Meningitis epidemics in Kalma and Nertiti (pop. 90,000)**

In the meningitis outbreak at Kalma camp in South Darfur, 41 suspected cases have been reported and the situation has been termed an outbreak by the State Ministry of Health (SMoH) following testing. Two meningitis deaths were reported from the camp on 10 March. Nine cases of suspected meningitis have also been confirmed by the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) commissioner for Nertiti, West Darfur. Three tests were positive. Some areas close to Nertiti are not assessable to the HAC, and there is a high probability that there are more cases. Because of the expulsions, there is no direct access to healthcare, as MSF-F was the only medical actor in the area. WHO has confirmed a total of 54 cases across Darfur since January: South Darfur accounts for 41, with four deaths; North Darfur has five cases, while West Darfur has four.

*Three Areas and Eastern Sudan*

The expulsions have left large parts of the Three Areas and Eastern Sudan without any humanitarian cover or recovery and reintegration support. The expulsions hit three of the largest organisations working in Abyei (Mercy Corps, PADCO and Save the Children US), and five of the main aid providers in Southern Kordofan (CARE, Mercy Corps, NRC, PADCO and Save the Children US). These agencies operated across all sectors and in all localities (including former SPLM closed areas) with fully functioning offices in Kadugli, Abu Jebeiha, Lagawa, Dilling, Kauda, Al Fula and Muglad. Blue Nile State will be particularly affected by the expulsion of Mercy Corps, which met 10% of the state's needs in the education sector.

The expulsion has halted major projects with significant budgets, designed to support the implementation of the CPA through recovery, development and reconstruction activities, including the reconstruction of Abyei town (administrative offices, equipment and furniture and re-establishing the town's electricity supplies), rebuilding bridges in Southern Kordofan and Abyei and rehabilitating clinics in Kurmuk.

The closure of these programmes is likely to increase tensions in this fragile region, which has experienced bouts of conflict over the past 18 months. Unlike in Darfur there is very little additional capacity beyond the expelled agencies to fill the gaps. The Three Areas have suffered from a lack of investment from donors and international agencies, and increased resources had only recently been mobilised, largely as a result of mounting tension in the region and in the wake of the clashes in Abyei last year. The agencies expelled were the main recipients of these new funding flows. Their departure is likely to have a direct negative impact on ongoing efforts to promote peace and stability, particularly in Abyei and Southern Kordofan, both through the provision of 'peace dividends' and reconciliation activities, such as the promotion of local conflict resolution and reconciliation conferences.

The decision to expel the international NGOs may also increase tensions between the ruling National Congress Party and the SPLM, as it appears that the latter was not consulted on the decision. The SPLM is seeking to contest the move in order to allow the organisations concerned to continue operating at least in former SPLM-controlled areas of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, as well as in Abyei. These regions have seen no development work for two decades, and the large infrastructure and development projects recently initiated by the expelled agencies will inevitably come to a halt. Very few international actors with similar capacity operate in these areas. On 17 March, the deputy speaker of the Southern Kordofan state parliament, Siddiq Mansour, publicly expressed his dismay, stressing that the expulsion of the NGOs would lead to a crisis in the state: 'these are big projects', he said, 'building and supporting schools, building hospitals and supplying medicines, drilling bore holes, all these [interventions] are being done by the NGOs. Expelling them means that all these activities will collapse' (Sudan Radio Service, 17/3/09).

Eastern Sudan has been similarly affected by the expulsion order, which covers the three main aid providers in the region, IRC, Oxfam GB and Save the Children UK. These were among the very few international agencies working in Red Sea and Kassala states, and the closure of their water, livelihoods and education programmes will hit some of the poorest and most marginalised communities in the country. Red Sea and Kassala are chronically food-insecure areas, experiencing annual flooding and cyclical droughts which have at times led to famine. The majority of the rural population of the two states has suffered severe livelihoods erosion and increasing vulnerability, and many have been pushed towards urban centres, where they occupy squalid slums. Beja pastoralists in particular are unable to cope with and recover from drought, floods and other external shocks. The expulsion of Oxfam GB will deprive Red Sea State of the technical capacity to support the Early Warning System created by Oxfam, raising concerns about the government's ability to predict and respond to crises in the east. The expulsions are likely to have limited immediate impact on food assistance, provided that WFP is able to make arrangements for food distribution directly or through local partners. However, they will bring to a halt long-standing interventions aimed at addressing chronic food insecurity in both Red Sea and Kassala states.

The departure of the international NGOs is likely to have repercussions for the implementation of the almost moribund Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) signed 2006. Recovery, livelihoods and nutrition programming in Agig and Tokar localities will stop, and the rehabilitation of former Eastern Front-controlled areas such as Hamashkoreb and Telkuk will be seriously hampered. Programmes at risk include a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) project funded by UNICEF, targeting Eastern Front ex-combatants, and covering 19,000 children in Haiya, Sinkat, Halaib and Port Sudan. As with the SPLM, the Eastern Front was not consulted about the expulsions. The Front, which is currently undergoing a political crisis, is likely to be further alienated from Eastern Sudan society, particularly youth, potentially fuelling fresh unrest.

#### **Box 2: The impact on the CPA**

NGO expulsions in the Three Areas and Eastern Sudan will have a direct negative impact on efforts to implement the CPA. There will be direct repercussions on support to peace and reconciliation activities, such as local-level negotiations, particularly around the contested issue of access to natural resources. It will also further delay the delivery of already limited peace dividends in the Three Areas. Tensions at the community level, particularly in SPLM-administered areas and in Misseriyya, are increasing. These areas are already unserved or underserved by the state Government of National Unity (GNU), and the withdrawal of services provided by departing NGOs will increase levels of frustration.

Examples of essential programming supporting the implementation of the CPA which have been heavily affected by the expulsion order include:

- The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme (RRP) 2009: \$15.8m for the Three Areas; \$4.5m for Red Sea State.
- Programmes supporting reconciliation meetings, dialogue, conflict prevention and response (\$17m for 2009).
- Essential conflict reduction activities including water projects to reduce conflict along Misseriyya migration routes, and schools, hospitals and dams in SPLM-administered areas.

## 4. HANDING OVER AND SCALING UP IN AN EMERGENCY

The expulsion has raised key questions about operating modalities and humanitarian assistance in Sudan, bringing to light a number of critical challenges. These include the lack of local capacity to take over from the departed agencies, continued acute shortages of fuel, food, water and medicines, and the severe impediments to existing NGOs and the UN system as they seek to scale up and cover the gaps.

### *Access and remote programming*

Most, though not all, agencies providing humanitarian assistance in Darfur started working there in 2004, and have gradually scaled up their interventions since then. Humanitarian access is currently extremely limited; in October 2008, the UN estimated that it was only able to reach 65% of the affected population, because of general insecurity, targeted violence against aid workers and bureaucratic impediments (e.g. difficulties in getting travel permits). However, this does not adequately reflect the geography of access, which is mainly limited to towns and villages with IDP camps. Many rural areas have been inaccessible to international agencies for some time (see map in Annex 1).

As a consequence of limited access, many agencies had already started working with community-based organisations (CBOs) and local NGOs before the expulsion order was issued. As we have seen, WFP established food relief committees (FRCs) composed of IDP representatives in 2007. Whilst in theory these committees were intended to promote participation in distribution, in practice their role was to assist in the management of distributions, and FRCs in food-insecure locations have been conducting distributions without supervision. For example, SC-US covered 15 remote locations including 11 villages in rural Geneina and four in the south-west, where the majority are IDPs (Young and Maxwell, 2009). In some ways, therefore, WFP and its CPs were well prepared for the current situation. Elsewhere, agencies operating in IDP camps or other areas work with IDP or community committees, and several of the expelled NGOs were in the midst of a significant capacity-building programme for local partners when they were told to leave. 'Remote management' was being implemented in some very isolated or insecure areas. For example, CARE worked with Community Committees, which managed the day-to-day operations of WatSan and food distribution programmes.

Whether these local partners can continue operating in the absence of the international NGOs that supported them is not clear. Obtaining the materials and goods needed to keep programmes running may be difficult, and many of the health and hygiene activities community committees carried out were undertaken alongside international NGOs, rather than on their own. In particular, there is a widespread feeling that local partners will not be able to continue to effectively operate in the WatSan sector without the specialist technical knowledge of international NGOs.

Some pros and cons of different approaches to remote management learned in other contexts are discussed in Table 3 overleaf.

**Table 1: Remote management mechanisms**

Approach	Agent	Description	Potential benefits	Potential weaknesses
Remote 'control'	National staff	Agency senior staff direct programming and manage local employees from a distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Continuity of leadership</li> <li>•Better oversight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Communications problems</li> <li>•National staff bear great responsibility but have little authority</li> </ul>
Remote support	National staff	Local staff assume decision-making authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Capacity-building (individuals)</li> <li>•No time lag for decision-making</li> <li>•More flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of oversight</li> <li>•Dearth of experienced national staff</li> <li>•Corruption risk</li> </ul>
Sub-contracting arrangements	Local NGOs	Programmes formerly implemented or managed by international agency handed to local NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Capacity-building (organisations)</li> <li>•Greater acceptance</li> <li>•Better targeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Partiality</li> <li>•Lack of contextual analysis</li> <li>•Difficult to identify/screen</li> </ul>
Community partnership arrangements	CBOs/community leaders	International agency arranges for community group / leaders to implement some portion of its programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More stable and familiar presence to population</li> <li>•Better targeting</li> <li>•Community ownership</li> <li>•More resilient to insecurity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Partiality</li> <li>•May not be representative</li> <li>•Risk of elite capture</li> </ul>
Government partnership arrangements	National or local government authorities	INGO develops programme consulting with government authorities and/or hands over existing programme as 'exit strategy'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Promotes long-term development</li> <li>•May promote security via increased community acceptance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More suitable for development aims than relief</li> <li>•Independence, neutrality suffer</li> <li>•Government may not have local support</li> <li>•Corruption risk</li> </ul>
Outsourcing	Commercial contractors	Fee for service arrangement with private firm to do basic provision		

Source: Stoddart et al., 2006

*Potential for other organisations to scale up*

Scaling up will be difficult for those NGOs that remain in Sudan given current restrictions on visas for international staff to work in Sudan and problems obtaining travel permits for Darfur. Visas can take 4–5 months to come through, whilst travel permits are often refused or subject to considerable delay. Even national staff recruitment is subject to government approval. Similar delays have been experienced by personnel waiting to be deployed in Eastern Sudan and the Three Areas. No ‘fast track’ procedures appear to have been put in place by the HAC.

NGOs still in Sudan are reluctant to take on the work of their expelled counterparts for fear of supporting government claims that these agencies can easily be replaced. It is in any case very difficult to start new projects in Sudan. Experience shows that, due to bureaucratic impediments, the minimum time required to start a new project (including recruiting national staff and finalising technical agreements) is two months. An INGO needs 27 weeks to get expatriate staff into Darfur, and even longer for the Three Areas and the East, where no fast track procedures exist. Access to the North–South border and Eastern Sudan has been tightly restricted by government requirements for travel permits and a lack of infrastructure. In addition, delays are common in obtaining technical permits, and in releasing equipment and resources from customs. A case in point is the delays involved in bringing drugs into the country, stemming from the requirement to align stocks with the drugs-list published by the government once a year.

International agencies still on the ground are now conducting needs assessments to work out how to scale up their operations. However, most say that they do not have the capacity to plug the holes and would in any case need permission from the government to take over projects and hire staff previously employed by the expelled agencies. There are also concerns that expanding programmes would require changes in security arrangements, especially in the wake of the recent kidnapping of MSF staff. Whilst local NGOs may be able to take on some of the programmes left behind by the expelled agencies, donors are less likely to fund these NGOs unless they are working with international agencies. Most local NGOs do not have the capacity to take on such big, diverse and technical projects, and two of the most capable local NGOs, SUDO and Amal Centre, have been suspended. It may also be difficult for Sudanese NGOs from Northern Sudan to work in some of the more politicised camps in Darfur and in former SPLM-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. IDPs in Kalma have strongly objected to government attempts to enter the camp. In August 2008, government troops and police killed 32 people in Kalma during a search operation. Agencies new to Darfur, such as the Islamic Medical Association and the Egyptian Medical Mission, lack experience of the region.

Even where it is feasible to hand over activities to other agencies, the circumstances in which the expulsions were handled make doing so difficult. Some agency staff were asked to leave Darfur overnight. Agencies have had their assets and bank accounts frozen, and have therefore been unable to pay local staff or hand over equipment such as vehicles or relief material to others. Computers have been seized, which means that organisations do not have access to vital information such as needs analysis, project design and budgets, staffing structures and capacities, lists of beneficiaries, medical records and procurement details. Contingency plans had been put in place in Sudan ahead of the expulsions, especially in Darfur, and drugs, water and food had been stockpiled in the camps. However, the extent of the government’s action took everyone by surprise, and as a result detailed contingency plans did not exist. Some lessons learnt on scaling up are given in the box overleaf.

### **Box 3: Key pointers on scaling up emergency programmes**

#### *Establish a scaling-up chain and address issues all along it*

In an emergency, scaling up is necessary at a number of different levels within and across organisations, from donors all the way through to local organisations. Inadequate capacity at any level affects the support provided further down the chain.

#### *Need for technical backstopping in projects implemented by partners*

Agencies that work through partners need to ensure that there is adequate technical capacity within, or contracted by, their partner organisations. In the design and approval of projects, agencies should be aware of their partners' capacity in all the areas essential to the success of the project, and should consider providing technical 'backstopping' where appropriate. Given the continuing presence of UN agencies and the ICRC in Darfur, these issues will apply as much to these organisations as to local partners.

#### *Recruitment issues*

Recruitment problems are often the single most significant constraint to appropriate scaling up. Agencies should consider coordinating among themselves to support the establishment of an appropriate shared database of human resources. The 'People in Aid' code of best practice in the management and support of aid personnel should be considered here.

#### *Donor requirements*

Different donor reporting requirements can place administrative strains on agencies and local partners. Donor agencies at all levels should coordinate among themselves to reduce the difficulties caused by their own information requirements. NGOs should also be aware that donors are often far more flexible than NGOs claim they are with respect to the integration of capacity-building costs in plans and budgets, especially with sectoral programming.

#### *Coordination needs specific resources*

Early coordination, exchange of information and coordination in procurement can improve the scaling up of responses, the allocation of resources and the impact of resulting interventions. Agencies should consider the specific allocation of financial and human resources to coordination and information exchange between themselves, and with other organisations, as appropriate.

#### *Address the trade-offs between scale and quality*

Agencies with minimal direct operational presence can be reluctant to risk scaling up significantly as they are aware of their own and their partners' capacity limitations. Ironically, it is often the stronger organisations which recognise their own capacity issues and decide not to extend their interventions.

#### *Be aware of issues of corruption when scaling up rapidly*

In Afghanistan, rapid expansion of programmes and activities following the fall of the Taliban led to a capacity problem, with many agencies relying on new, under-qualified and inexperienced staff, which was perceived by many experienced aid workers to be an important factor in corruption risk. The rush to expand and hire staff necessitated using social and family networks, which, while achieving immediate results, led to later problems such as conflicts of interest in management.

Source: Research on the ALNAP Evaluation Reports Database

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS

Temporary measures are being put in place to continue the provision of lifesaving assistance for the coming two weeks to two months. It is clear, however, that there will be considerable gaps in assistance. The UN estimates that it can only cover 20–30% of the needs met by the expelled agencies in Darfur, and there are no clear signs that other agencies can provide substantial additional capacity, at least in the short term. This could lead to serious humanitarian consequences in terms of renewed violence, displacement and possibly a deterioration in health and nutrition in some population groups.

The resilience of the Sudanese people in situations of hardship should however not be forgotten. Conflict-affected people in Darfur have diversified their livelihood strategies over the past five years, and while some of these strategies are not sustainable or entail risks, Darfur has shown remarkable resourcefulness in finding ways to meet basic needs. This is not unprecedented. In Southern Kordofan, people living in war-affected areas of the Nuba Mountains were denied any form of humanitarian assistance by a government blockade on external aid between 1989 and 2002, and had to rely on their own ability to survive.

While the expulsions may not immediately lead to a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe, there are, however, a number of other short- and medium-term implications in terms of security, access and the application of principles and minimum standards in relief. There are also longer-term issues around what this means for humanitarian action in Sudan and possibly beyond. The expulsions profoundly undermine humanitarian coordination and communication in the country as most of the expelled agencies were major actors on state and national coordinating bodies. The expelled organisations included the three INGO representatives on the UN Humanitarian Country Team, half of the INGO Steering Committee and most of the players in state-level Inter-Agency Management Groups (IAMGs) and INGO steering committees. Affected agencies were also leading major consortium projects and contributing to communication and coordination between agencies in the Three Areas and the East.

The expulsions will also have implications for the multiple peace processes in the country, as they will threaten recovery in other war-affected areas of Sudan beyond Darfur, as well as undermining the prospects for sustainable peace. Affected agencies have been increasingly active in developing interventions aimed at conflict resolution, particularly focused on the shared management of common resources, an issue at the heart of much local conflict. The CPA is supposed to provide people with security and development. The expulsion of NGOs from war-affected states such as Eastern Sudan and the Transitional Areas will further undermine the implementation process, with the danger of substantial repercussions for the forthcoming elections and the 2011 referendum in the South.

In the medium term, there is a real danger of increased violence, insecurity and displacement in Darfur. A decrease in aid, or inequalities in its provision, for example as a consequence of aid agencies' inability to reach some areas or population groups, could lead to violence and/or population movements within Darfur or into Chad. Increased insecurity would clearly further hinder the provision of assistance and the ability of agencies still present in Darfur to expand their programmes. It will also make it difficult for new agencies to start operations in the region. With issues of independence and impartiality in mind, it is essential that agencies remaining in Sudan develop clear criteria governing how they operate, based on humanitarian principles, and that they are supported in this by the UN and donors.

Agencies remaining in Darfur must ensure that their responses are based on objective needs assessments. In Darfur, the humanitarian community has long been perceived as partial, with a focus on IDP populations in camps. The needs of pro-government groups, including some pastoralists, have been neglected (Young et al., 2009b). There is an opportunity now to reshape the humanitarian operation in Darfur, and for the international community to be

seen to provide a neutral, impartial and independent response. This will give it the credibility to advocate and support the application of principles by others.

Working more extensively with local NGOs or government ministries will allow assistance to continue, but independent monitoring and reporting will be essential to ensure the impartiality of the humanitarian response. Access to certain areas held by opposition groups, including Jebel Marra and large parts of North Darfur, may also become more difficult as local ministries are not able to work there, and local, non-Darfurian NGOs may be perceived as too close to the government. The inability of government technical staff to access some camps and areas during the UN/HAC assessment in Darfur confirms these fears. At the same time, Darfurian NGOs, whilst enjoying better access, may be subject to political pressures and may thus also face difficulties in acting impartially. In addition, local NGOs and national staff are also likely to flee in the face of security threats, particularly if they are not from the region. There is thus a real danger that the humanitarian operation will face difficulties in reaching and assisting areas and population groups most in need. This in turn could lead to displacement from remote rural areas into already overcrowded camps.

How to operate with agencies new to Darfur, and possibly new to humanitarian work, is likely to become a key issue for the international agencies staying behind. The overall aim of humanitarian assistance in Sudan must be to alleviate the suffering of civilians as a result of conflict or natural disasters, and this should remain the paramount goal of those agencies still in Sudan, and those that have been asked to leave. The key issue is therefore how to do this most effectively, given the current context.

## 6. SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD

A series of coordinated actions by stakeholders in Sudan is required in order to ensure that no critical gaps are left in the humanitarian and recovery operation in the country, should the decision to expel the 13 international organisations and suspend two of the main implementing national partners in Darfur and other areas not be revoked. These actions should be considered by the expelled INGOs and INGOs still in Sudan, UN agencies and donors. A number of suggestions for each of these actors are presented below:

### ■ Expelled INGOs should consider the following:

1. Explore the possibility of transferring capacities and stocks to NGOs still on the ground, partners or local staff, as quickly as possible.
2. Engage in dialogue for partnership with regional/local civil society to transfer 'operational knowledge' and offer technical partnerships for interested and capable agencies.

### ■ INGOs still in Sudan should consider the following:

3. Ensure that their own response is neutral and impartial, based on assessments of the needs of all conflict-affected groups. Even if assessment is not possible, improving impartiality should include an examination of how INGOs engage with different groups, in particular their relationship with Arab groups, not only in terms of programming but also employment practices.
4. Ensure that avenues are kept open with expelled and suspended organisations and their former staff, in order to prevent loss of institutional knowledge, and to capitalise on key learning and achievements that may otherwise disappear.

5. Investigate the acceptability of national NGOs and non-Western NGOs and develop modalities of working with these agencies to ensure adherence to humanitarian principles and minimum standards. In particular, it would be useful to share experiences of remote programming in Sudan and elsewhere and develop innovative ways of continuing to meet needs through this kind of programming (e.g. supporting national staff to set up local NGOs).
6. Continue working with the UN system and the government of Sudan to ensure that lifesaving assistance is maintained to those most in need.

■ **The UN system should consider the following:**

7. Fill gaps in assistance coordination in areas agencies have left and ensure ongoing dialogue with expelled agencies:
  - a. While OCHA has played a leading role in coordinating the response to the expulsions in Darfur, the Resident Coordinator's Support Offices (RCOs) in the Three Areas, the East and in the greater Khartoum area will need to be bolstered to ensure that assessments are undertaken and to help identify and coordinate responses to fill gaps. This should include added capacity to prevent and respond to potential humanitarian needs arising from annual natural events, such as flooding and the hunger gap, as well as localised insecurity.
  - b. Provide a mechanism to enable ongoing dialogue and collaboration with expelled agencies.
8. Improve understanding of needs on the ground and response options across Sudan:
  - a. Undertake assessments of gaps in assistance similar to the one recently conducted in Darfur in the East and the Three Areas.
  - b. Assessment findings in Darfur should be analysed and disaggregated by population group (rural, urban, IDP, resident, pastoral, farmer, pro-government and opposition groups) as responses may vary by category.
  - c. Baseline statistics and essential data should be collected across Sudan, including in peri-urban areas of Khartoum where some of the expelled agencies operated.
  - d. Research and information on community and household coping mechanisms as well as on wider adaptations to crisis in different parts of the country must be collated, so that needs assessment and analysis can build on existing information.
9. Assess and strengthen the capacity of key actors on the ground who can fill the gaps if the expulsion order is not revoked:
  - a. Review the experience and capacity of non-Western humanitarian organisations that have been called on to replace the expelled agencies and develop a strategy for working with these agencies that adheres to humanitarian principles and minimum standards. This should include both agencies already known to the UN system, and organisations with little or no prior experience of acting as UN operational partners.
  - b. Strengthen and enhance the operational capacity of UNAMID and UNMIS to support essential lifesaving relief assistance in remote or highly insecure areas.
10. In support of all of the above, the UN should ensure clear and consistent leadership in the development of a common strategy for those agencies remaining or coming into Darfur. This includes:
  - a. The application of humanitarian principles, including the provision of assistance on the basis of need to all conflict-affected populations.
  - b. Promoting the safety and security of staff of agencies remaining in Darfur, and of the national staff of those agencies that have been expelled.
  - c. Redeployment of the national staff of expelled agencies to other NGOs – both those remaining and new ones.

- d. Continued provision of logistical support to agencies remaining in Darfur (UNHAS).

■ **Donor countries should consider the following:**

11. Establish flexible funding approaches that are responsive to the changing context. In particular:
  - a. Show flexibility in the transfer of resources and assets awarded to any of the expelled or suspended organisations.
  - b. Clarify their willingness to engage with and fund 'new actors' – OECD donors should make their stance on the expulsions public, and clarify whether they would be willing to provide funding to potential new actors. Non-OECD donors should clarify their response to the expulsions, and explain what their policies for providing funding are likely to be.
  - c. Ensure that pooled funding to support UN capacity in critical sectors is not compromised – donors should make sure that potential financing shortfalls are adequately mitigated in the event that the UN system has to scale up its activities dramatically.
12. Advocate for a minimum sufficient time for handing over activities to local NGOs or training new NGOs coming into Darfur.
13. Establish whether they plan to become directly involved on the ground:
  - a. Both OECD and non-OECD donors (particularly China, India, the Gulf donors and regional organisations like the League of Arab States) should review their preparedness to take a more hands-on approach to bilateral assistance and make their preparedness public.
14. Continue to support action research to provide a better understanding and deeper analysis of the impacts of the crisis, support local capacities and assess the consequences of limited or no independent monitoring or supervision of aid programmes (e.g. on markets and the role of local organisations). Action research should also continue, to build partnerships between local, national and international organisations.

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