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## Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Eastern Sudan

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**Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Eastern Sudan**

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## Forward

The idea of studying human smuggling and trafficking emerged during the summer of 2014, while I was conducting a survey on the socioeconomic conditions of border communities along the Sudanese eastern borders as part of ARUSS programme thematic research on borders. The idea suggested itself by the level of “normalcy,” tolerance, and sometimes even magnanimity felt when locals spoke about human smuggling activities and the relatively high level of engagement by local community members, including women, in those activities.<sup>1</sup> Given the supposedly clandestine and discrete nature of such activities, the willingness of locals to discuss them was a surprise. Another surprise was the level of approval and acceptance of the practice by some local and traditional leaders, who viewed migrant smuggling as an economic opportunity for the unemployed and low-income households as well as a service to smuggled migrants who are looking for a better life. Some leaders even justified the practice on religious basis as *halal* “permissible”, since it is a service provided for a negotiated price and by consent. We also noticed that Sudanese security forces charged with guarding the border tended to turn a blind eye to the practice of human smuggling.

Our initial surveys showed that most households in border communities are extremely poor. Accordingly, we started with the assumption that because smuggling requires resources, good connections, and power, people outside of the border area would be those primarily involved in the business (no one admitted to engaging in trafficking). We tried to trace the smuggling process, which took us from Sudan’s eastern border up to Dongola in northern Sudan. We tried to document stories of illegal migrants smuggled into Sudan and beyond and found few differences between stories, except in terms of the cost and duration of trips and whether they were self-driven or organised by relatives abroad. In the process of investigation, we came across some individuals who started as illegal migrants with smugglers but ended up as trafficked persons. Ultimately, they either, managed to escape, were freed by police, or paid the ransom demanded by the traffickers.

For those who experienced being trafficked, the stories varied according to the process followed, the victims’ and traffickers’ ethnicities, the route and location, and how the victims were freed. But all stories showed the negligence of authorities in preventing and/or combating the crime of human trafficking, as well as the brutal nature of the crime and the criminals involved. Over time, the research changed its character from exploratory to investigative to documentary, with a goal towards exposing what has been known by some, but has been hidden from the public.

Interestingly, hesitancy, secrecy, and a reluctance to provide information was much higher among some officials and victims than among most smugglers and even some traffickers. During the research process, researchers experienced threats and outright refusals to provide information or complete surveys, even though they made clear to all individuals and organisations that the research was being conducted only for academic purposes and committed to ethics of confidentiality and respect of privacy.

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<sup>1</sup> We later learned that the leaders of smuggling networks preferred to use women in the border area to hide illegal migrants because they are easy to control, less costly, and less likely to be suspected in the event of a police raid.

I would like to thank ARUSS for supporting the study, the University of Kassala for its great help in arranging contacts, and the data collectors for pressing forward in spite of the problems they endured during the field work.

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## List of abbreviations and non-English terms

ARUSS	Assisting Regional Universities in the Sudan and South Sudan
COR	Sudanese Commissioner for Refugees
CRP	Central Reserve Police
CSO	Civil Society Organization
<i>daffar</i>	Motorbus
DOS	Department of State (USA)
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Organization of West African States
<i>gawad</i>	Eritrean human smuggler (plural <i>gawadeen</i> )
<i>GAO</i>	Government Accountability Office (USA)
<i>GoS</i>	Government of Sudan
<i>hajan</i>	Camel racing
<i>halal</i>	permissible (an act is in accordance with the tenets of Islam)
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICAT	Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (UN)
IDP	internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IOM	United Nations International Organization of Migration
ILO	International Labor Organization
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
<i>kashaf</i>	Guide
LJM	Liberation and Justice Movement
MOJ	Sudan's Ministry of Justice
NCCHT	Sudan's National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking
<i>nighab</i>	Veil
NISS	Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHCHR	UN Human Rights Council
<i>omda</i>	Village chief
PDF	Popular Defense Forces (Sudan)
RSADO	Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
<i>samsar</i>	Human smuggler (plural <i>samsara</i> )
<i>shkrangi</i>	Translator
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SWAS	Sudanese Working Abroad Secretariat (Ministry of Labor)
<i>sug</i>	Marketplace or bazaar
TIP	Trafficking in Persons (US DOS Report)
UNDOC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs
UNTOC	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000
VOT	Victim of trafficking



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Human smuggling and trafficking in Sudan: an overview

Sudan has long been a hub for individuals from the Horn of Africa on their way to North Africa, Europe, and beyond, and this has only increased in recent years. In particular, eastern Sudan often serves as a passage for migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia who seek to reach Europe and/or Israel (Sudan Tribune 2013). In addition, Sudanese themselves are increasingly using international networks to leave their homes to seek new lives abroad. For example, from 2014 to 2015, the number of Sudanese reaching Italy by sea rose from 2,370 to 8,370—and increase of over 250% (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 12).<sup>2</sup>

Using international smuggling networks to travel abroad presents tremendous risks, however. For example, a 2014 report by Human Rights Watch claims that since mid-2010, hundreds and possibly thousands of refugees (most of them Eritrean) have been kidnapped in eastern Sudan and sold to traffickers in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, where they have been held and tortured until their relatives have been able to raise tens of thousands of dollars in ransom money. The report accuses security authorities in Sudan and Egypt of turning a blind eye to this violent trade in men, women, and children and, in some cases, even colluding with traffickers (ibid.; see also Siegfried 2014). They smuggle their captives to the Suez Canal, where they sell them to Sinai Bedouins, who then transport them across the Sinai Peninsula to “torture camps where their final ‘owners’ collect enormous ransoms” (Connell 2013). Between 2000 and 2012, the ransoms demanded grew from US\$ 3,000 to over US\$ 40,000 (a sky-high amount for Eritrean families). After Israel closed its border with Egypt to refugees in June 2012 (Sherwood 2012; HRW 2012), voluntary migration along the Sinai route ceased, but kidnappings continued (Connell 2013).

The term “human trafficking” was first used in relation to Sudan in the mid-1980s, in connection with the abductions of Dinka women and children from South Sudan by Arab tribes of South Kordofan and South Darfur. These abductions prompted what was then known as the El-Di’ayn Massacre (Mahmoud and Baldo 1987). During the 1990s, abductions took a political dimension, as the practice became linked to the conflict between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan’s central government. This occurred when “Arab” tribal militias started formally fighting with Sudan’s government and hence became a concern for the international community.

In response to reports of such abductions, the UN General Assembly and its Geneva-based Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) expressed concerns about human rights violations and slavery in Sudan and appointed a special UN rapporteur for the country (Gáspár Bíró), who produced six reports on the “Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan,” covering the years 1993, 1994, and 1995 (UNGA 1993; 1995; ECOSEC 1994; 1995; 1996). The latest of these concludes,

[T]he total passivity of the [Sudanese] Government after having received information for years regarding this situation can only be interpreted as tacit

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<sup>2</sup> According to UNHCR, nearly 9,000 of the 153,840 people who came to Italy by sea in 2015 travelled from Sudan (Dabanga 2016a).

political approval and support of the institution of slavery and the slave trade. (ECOSEC 1996, 12; see also Littman 1996)

The strong international campaign over the issue also prompted an investigation by the International Eminent Persons Group (IEPG 2002), which produced a report *Slavery, Abduction and Forced Servitude in Sudan*. This report confirmed the existence of slavery in Sudan, a practice used in conjunction with attacks carried out against civilian populations in rebel-held areas by pro-government militias.

Most early NGO reports link the phenomenon of human trafficking in Sudan to the North-South conflict. For example, early US DOS *TIP Reports* tend to focus in large part on internal trafficking in Sudan, in particular, involuntary conscription of children into the rebel army (see, e.g., US DOS 2007, 78). Early reports also indicate that the payment of ransoms by some humanitarian and religious groups to obtain the release of kidnapped victims has contributed to an escalation of the problem because it has created a “business” for middlemen from both Arab and African tribes (HRW 1999; 2002).

After conflicts flared up in Darfur, similar claims were made about abductions, forced labour, unlawful conscription, and exploitation of women and children by nearly all armed parties to the conflict in that region, including the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), the Popular Defence Forces, the *Janjaweed* (a tribal militia operating in western Sudan), Chadian opposition forces, Sudanese Armed Forces, and the Central Reserve Police (see, e.g., HRW 2002; Darfur Consortium 2008; US DOS 2008, 232; 2014, 358).

Between 2001 and 2013 and again in 2016 and 2017, the US Department of State featured Sudan as a tier 3 country in its annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*, meaning that it was not making “significant efforts to bring [itself] into compliance” with the US Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (US DOS 2001, 5, 98).<sup>3</sup>

Over the years, DOS has highlighted how the brutal combination of ongoing conflict, poverty, and a lack of rule of law and infrastructure have created a climate where Sudan has become a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking victims (e.g., US DOS 2017, 371). Even the earliest reports cite examples of Sudanese being transported abroad through Chad to Libya for involuntary servitude and young boys being trafficked to the Middle East as camel jockeys (US DOS 2003, 141; 2006a, 231).

During 2014, Sudan passed its Anti-Trafficking Act (US DOS 2014, 358–359). It also undertook a number of other national efforts, including (among other things) (i) ending “its public denial of the existence of human trafficking in Sudan,” instead acknowledging the breadth of the problem through press statements, conferences, and international efforts; (ii) adopting a joint strategy against human smuggling and trafficking with UNHCR and IOM (in December 2013); (iii) initiating an anti-trafficking section in the Ministry of Labour’s Secretariat of Sudanese

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<sup>3</sup> Currently, Sudan shares the tier 3 ranking with 22 countries (out of 184 countries reviewed) (US DOS 2017, 46). Of the countries ranked as tier 3 in the 2017 report, 13 (including Sudan) are in Africa, four are in Asia, two are in the Middle East, two are in Latin America, and two are in eastern Europe (ibid.).

Working Abroad to repatriate abused workers from the Middle East (in 2013); and (iv) achieving 70 convictions based on trafficking-related arrests (since 2011) (ibid., 359–360).

Due to these efforts, US DOS's 2014 *TIP Report* moved Sudan from tier 3 to the tier 2 watch list, meaning that the country was “making significant efforts to bring [itself] into compliance with” the standards of the US anti-trafficking law, although further efforts were needed (ibid., 43, 357). Although that report still focuses on cases of internal trafficking in Sudan, especially in areas of conflict, such as Darfur and South Kordofan, it does refer to abductions and brutalisation of Eritrean nationals by “smugglers from the Rashaida tribe,” a group widely believed to be responsible for most trafficking in eastern Sudan (ibid., 357–358; see also Connell 2013; Mezzofiore 2015). The 2014 *TIP Report* also pointed to the positive steps taken by Sudan government to fight human smuggling and trafficking. Some of the positive steps taken included the following:

- Sudan signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) of 2000 (though not yet ratified).
- Sudan hosted in 2005 the UN Conference for Transitional Organized Crimes (UNTOC, 2000) that covered human trafficking;
- Kassala State issued the first anti-trafficking law in the country, Kassala State Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling Law (2010), though it was not enacted because it was not approved by the Federal Government;
- Gedarif state's enactment of a law against illegal immigration and human trafficking in 2013;
- Sudan government decided in September 2013 issuing work permits to approximately 30,000 refugees (mostly Eritreans) in Kassala state (compared to just 180 permits in 2012), which reduces the refugees' vulnerability to exploitation, forced labor, and trafficking (ibid., 359–360);
- The SAF's child protection unit in 2013 conducted training for military personnel and started demobilizing child soldiers from its forces, the PDFs, and other government associated militias;
- GOS in December 2013 signed the Joint Strategy with UNHCR and IOM to address human trafficking, kidnapping, and the smuggling of persons in Sudan;
- GoS initiated in 2013-2014 prosecutions in over 25 suspected human trafficking crimes in Khartoum and Kassala states, and 28 convictions were made;
- GoS established in 2013 the “Rapid Emergency Taskforce and Response Unit” to deal with trafficking crimes in eastern Sudan;
- GoS established a national committee to combat child trafficking and illegal immigration and initiated an anti-trafficking section within the Sudanese Working Abroad Secretariat (SWAS) (Ministry of Labor) to repatriate abused workers from the Middle East, mainly female domestic workers and boys used as *hajan* “camel racing” riders;
- For the first time Criminal Investigative Division provided law enforcement information for inclusion in the US State Department TIP report, noting that trafficking-related arrests since 2011 had resulted in 70 convictions: and
- The government ceased its public denial of the existence of human trafficking in Sudan and acknowledged the scope and extent of the country's human trafficking problem through press statements, media outreach, conferences, and cooperative efforts with

foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations and allowing the government controlled print media to publish articles on human trafficking

However, the 2014 *TIP Report* also criticised the government for the following:

- failing to report investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees helping to facilitate human trafficking, in spite of assertions that police, border guards, and other government officials “facilitated abductions of Eritrean nationals, allowed potential victims to be transported across security checkpoints or international borders without intervention, and failed to take action against suspected traffickers” (ibid., 359);
- adopting, at the national level, ad hoc rather than strategic measures to combat trafficking (law enforcement, protection, and prevention), which has resulted in new forms of trafficking arising within the country without being unaddressed in any way;
- failing to make public data regarding cases of human trafficking and the government’s efforts to combat the practice;
- failing to employ a system for proactively identifying trafficking victims among vulnerable populations or a referral process for transferring victims to organisations and institutions providing care; and
- failing to make any efforts to assist victims of abduction and enslavement that occurred during the 22-year-long civil war in Sudan or to facilitate their safe return to their families (ibid., 358–360);

Like the United States, other international groups have also begun focusing on the trafficking situation in eastern Sudan in the past several years. Much of the shift in focus has been due to the importance of eastern Sudan as both a destination and a transit region for international migrants, mainly from the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia), but also from western and central African countries (Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Kenya) (Sahan and IGAD 2016). According to UNHCR, by the end of 2015, Sudan was host to some 460,000 refugees and asylum seekers, nearly one quarter of them Eritrean. The large numbers of transit migrants passing through Sudan strongly indicates the presence of well-organised networks of transporters, warehouses, and financial facilitators who collaborate to take migrants to their destinations.

In spite of its efforts in 2013 and 2014, Sudan has again been relegated to tier 3 by the US DOS. Its 2016 *US TIP Report* states, “The Government of Sudan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so” (at 348). The relegation back to tier 3 reflects an overall lack of significant anti-trafficking efforts by all levels of the country’s governing structures that bear responsibility for addressing the crime. The report cited child enslavement in West Kordofan, children forced military recruitment by the Sudan army and the Rapid Support Forces in Darfur, and in East Sudan the kidnapping of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees and their transfer into other countries for blackmailing and ransom. The report also alleged the involvement of Sudanese law enforcement agencies in trafficking activities (US DOS 2016). Nonetheless, Sudan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticised the report as “biased and intentionally distorting’ Sudan’s efforts to combat human trafficking” (Sudan Tribune 2016b).

## **1.2 Overview of the research**

### **1.2.1 Research objectives**

The primary objectives of this study are:

- i. To draw an overall picture of the scale and patterns of human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan, including the techniques and methods used in the process by smugglers and traffickers.
- ii. To find out the main characteristics of human smugglers and traffickers, as well as their clients and victims.
- iii. To review the stakeholders' responses to human smuggling and trafficking activities, including the government, local communities, the international community, and local CSOs, and analyse and assess the effectiveness of the strategies and methods these parties have used so far.
- iv. To make recommendations that can help stakeholders in combating human smuggling and trafficking practices and in protecting victims and vulnerable groups.

### **1.2.2 Key questions**

Initially, the research sought to answer four main questions:

- i. How significant and prevalent is human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan and their general trends?
- ii. Who are the perpetrators, aiding actors, and victims?
- iii. What factors increase the vulnerability of victims to human smuggling and trafficking?
- iv. How effective are current responses aimed at suppressing human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan?

However, the field work also raised numerous new questions about the smuggling and trafficking routes, how smuggling and trafficking networks are built, the involvement of official institutions and personnel in these networks, the social shielding and protection of smugglers and traffickers by local communities, and the prospects of the current programmes supported by the international community, in particular, the EU-initiated Khartoum Process. To the extent possible, this report tries to answer those questions as well.

### **1.2.3 Data collection methods**

The study depended on two main sources of information. First, the study involved desk research of secondary sources, including academic literature, technical reports (mainly from the institutions concerned), newsletters, and newspaper articles. Although much of this research was conducted online, researchers primarily relied on authenticated websites. In fact, most statistics on smuggled and trafficked persons were collected from sources available through UNHCR's website, since UNHCR's Kassala office was very reluctant to provide information.

Second, interviews were conducted to obtain information about the processes of trafficking and smuggling in eastern Sudan. In particular, individuals met include<sup>4</sup>:

- a. representatives of the security sector, including the police, public attorneys, and judiciary in Kassala and Dongola (5 individuals);
- b. members of the media (2 individuals);
- c. public leaders and community members (5 individuals);
- d. human traffickers, ex-traffickers, and/or facilitators in Kassala (28 individuals);
- e. smugglers and/or transporters of illegal migrants in Kassala, Gedaref, and Dongola (72 individuals);
- f. trafficking victims who managed to free themselves, flee their captives, pay ransom, or obtain freedom through police intervention (16 individuals);
- g. smuggled migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia (108 individuals);
- h. refugees living in camps or reception centres in eastern Sudan (15 individuals); and
- i. representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in Kassala and Gedaref (8 organisations).

Importantly, interview data was collected over the course of two years (2015 and 2016). Changes in transportation costs and routes followed over this time period resulted in some differences in information collected from individuals interviewed at different times. Furthermore, none of the Rashaida, alleged to be the primary perpetrators of human trafficking crimes, were amenable to being interviewed. In addition, no women involved in human smuggling or trafficking were willing to be interviewed. Finally, some traffickers and transporters threatened the researchers, despite assurances that interviews would be kept confidential and that the interviews were being conducted for purely academic purposes. The result was that interviews with some smugglers and traffickers were not completed to the satisfaction of those conducting the interviews.

#### **1.2.4 Research limitations**

The research faced numerous challenges that stood as limitations to the research:

- The greatest challenge to the research was difficulty obtaining accurate, up-to-date data about smuggling and trafficking activities in eastern Sudan. In part, this was due to the reluctance of key institutions such as UNHCR and the Sudanese Commissioner for Refugees (COR) to provide data and other information or to allow their staff to be interviewed as part of this research, even though the lead researcher approached them with an official letter from the Vice Chancellor of Kassala University. In some cases, official institutions simply did not have appropriate data. Whether the inability to obtain data was due to an outright refusal by the institutions concerned or because of lack of access to appropriate data, the researcher had to turn to the internet, including social media sources, to find information. Much of the information on these websites are unsubstantiated and sometimes false, with the enormous difficulty to verify their authenticity or validate their content;
- The lack of accurate and updated data showing the full picture for all parties to smuggling and trafficking activities, particularly the lack of access to information on the other side of the border, the source areas;
- Because of fear of the law, retaliation, or social sanctions, local communities, victims of trafficking, traffickers, and smugglers were often hesitant to share their stories. Even when

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<sup>4</sup> Annex III to this report contains a list of these individuals.

they spoke with researchers, ethnic considerations, fear, and/or personal interest may have caused bias within those testimonies;

- The complexity of the problem arising from the numerous parties involved, the extensive geography that needed to be covered, the continuous changes in patterns, methods of operation and numbers, security restrictions and the risks attached to the work of data collectors; and
- In spite of the generous support by ARUSS to this research, financial resources remain a major handicap to the scale of investigation, forcing it to focus on the two states of Kassala and Gedarif while the text of the report refers to eastern Sudan.

### **1.3 Key definitions: Human trafficking and human smuggling**

Human smuggling and human trafficking are very much interlinked and sometimes confused, but there are fundamental differences between the two terms. Both are carried out with the purpose of making a profit and involve human beings (victims) and criminal networks (see figure 1).

#### **1.3.1 Human trafficking**

“Human trafficking” (also called “trafficking in persons”) is a hotly contested term because of its potentially wide scope. For example, Salt and Hogarth (2000) list over 20 definitions of trafficking in their review of the literature. It has been used as an umbrella term for the act of recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labour or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Trafficking is becoming known globally as the new face of modern slavery, which takes the forms of sex trafficking, forced labor, bonded labor or debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, child sex trafficking, forced child labor and unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers.

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of 2000 (Anti-Trafficking Protocol) provides the most comprehensive definition. Article 3 defines “trafficking in persons” as follows:

*(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;*

*(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used. . . .*

Thus Palermo Protocol definition clearly sets the three elements of the trafficking crime, which differentiate it from other acts, such as smuggling and irregular migration. First, the trafficking act must involve recruitment, transport, transfer, harbour, or receipt of a victim. Generally,

recruitment of potential victims is carried out using mechanisms to trick individuals and obtain their consent to join a trafficking route (often without their realising they are about to be trafficked). For example, traffickers may make false promises about opportunities for them at the end of their journey or provide misinformation about the journey's costs or other requirements. Victims themselves may push to unwittingly join a trafficking route out of desperation to migrate to another locale (Harroff-Tavel and Nasri 2013, 104; Gebreegziabher 2013).

The actual transportation of a trafficking victim can occur within a country or across borders. In the legal sense, it includes facilitating and arranging the movement of the individual victims, including producing fake travel documents or providing food, shelter, or other services. At the transportation stage, corrupt government officials (such as immigration officials, border guards, and other security personnel) usually play an important role in helping traffickers.

Second, the act of trafficking act must be undertaken by means of the threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, deception, fraud, the abuse of power, the abuse of a position of vulnerability, or the gift or receipt of payments or benefits to win the potential victim's consent. When trafficking involves a child, there is no need to show an illegal means for it to be considered a crime (Anti-Trafficking Protocol, article 3/c).

The third element, exploitation of the victim, is the main purpose of the trafficking process. Traffickers employ numerous forms of exploitation, all generating huge profits and/or other benefits. Victims may be engaged in prostitution, domestic servitude, or forced labour. They may have their organs removed (usually resulting in death) and sold on the black market. Or their families may be extorted through demands for enormous ransom payments. Ultimately, victims are denied their value as human beings and treated as property that is useful only for the trafficker's end (Gebreegziabher 2013).

Trafficking can affect women, men, and children of any nationality. The international legal framework for countering this problem has been criticised as weak, especially when it comes to combating trafficking of persons to the Sinai Peninsula (which is where many victims of trafficking in Sudan end up) (Van Reisen and Rijken 2015).

### **1.3.2 Human smuggling**

“Human smuggling” is “the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person(s) across an international border, in violation of one or more countries’ laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents” (US DOS 2006b, 2). The term includes not only “the importation of people into a country via the deliberate evasion of immigration laws,” but also “the unlawful transportation and harboring of aliens already in a country illegally” (US ICE 2017). The UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (Anti-Smuggling Protocol), which entered into force 28 January 2004, defines “smuggling of migrants” (a term used interchangeably with “human smuggling”) as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (art. 3; at UNODC 2004, 54–55).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This protocol is one of several that supplement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (also called the Palermo Convention) (UN 2004). The Anti-Smuggling Protocol was prompted by the sharp



Unlike human trafficking, human smuggling is based upon consent between the smuggled person and the smuggler, a contractual agreement that typically terminates upon arrival at the destination. People seek to be smuggled for both “pull” factors, such as the hope of employment, economic opportunity, and a better quality of life, and “push” factors, such as to escape injustice, persecution, violence, conflict, poverty, and/or economic hardship in their home countries.

Smuggling operations are complex, involving networks of many major and minor players spreading over large geographical areas and different countries. Smuggled individuals are often exposed to risks such as threats, abuse, exploitation, torture, and sometimes death, and human smuggling has significant economic, social, and legal effects on the receiving society.

### **1.3.3 Differentiating human smuggling and human trafficking**

Technically, the elements of consent, exploitation, and source of profit constitute the basis for distinction between smuggling and trafficking. First, a smuggler-customer relationship is based on an agreement, while a trafficker-victim relationship is based on coercion, deception, or abuse by the trafficker(s). Second, a customer’s interaction with a smuggler usually terminates upon payment and arrival at destination, while a trafficking victim is often involved in a cycle of continued abuse and exploitation. Third, profits from smuggling operations are derived from the transportation and facilitation of the customer’s illegal entry or stay in another country, but profits from trafficking are derived mainly from exploitation of the victim.

Legally, the Palermo Protocols (including both the Anti-Smuggling and Anti-Trafficking Protocols) focus on the first of these elements (consent versus coercion) in framing the difference between smuggling and trafficking. For example, the Anti-Trafficking Protocol expressly addresses the need to protect trafficked persons as victims of a criminal act (arts. 2, 6–8; at UNODC 2004, 41–45), while the Anti-Smuggling Protocol tends to view smuggled migrants as “objects” of a process.

Regarding the obligations of the receiving country, article 6.3 of the Anti-Trafficking Protocol requires state parties to consider “implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological, and social recovery of victims of trafficking in persons,” such as housing, counselling, medical and psychological assistance, material aid, and opportunities for employment, education, and training (at UNODC 2004, 44). Article 7.1 requires states to consider adopting legislation to enable trafficking victims to remain in their territory in appropriate cases, whether temporarily or permanently (ibid.).

By contrast, the Anti-Smuggling Protocol contains rather minimal reference to the protection needs of smuggled persons. For example, article 9.1/(a) requires state parties to “[e]nsure the safety and human treatment of persons on board,” when it takes action against vessels engaged in human smuggling at sea (UNODC 2004, 58). Article 16 requires state parties to “afford appropriate assistance to migrants whose lives or safety are endangered by reason of being

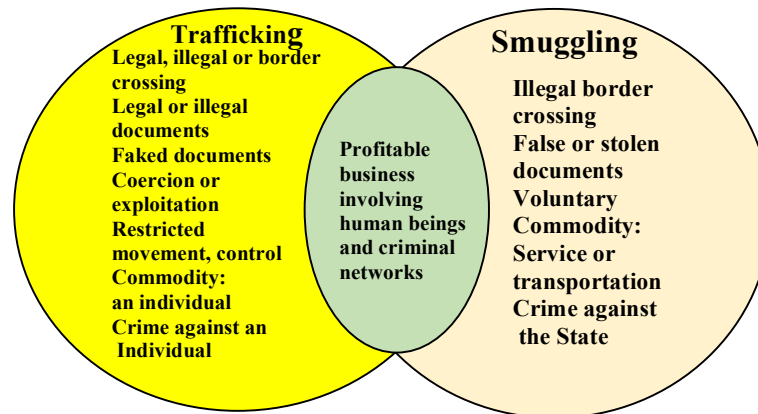
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rise in the practice of people smuggling during the last decades of the 20th century, and the large number of countries affected especially the United States (1990s) and Europe in the third millennium, when it was linked to what is called the “War on Terror.”

smuggled and to take into account the special needs of women and children” (UNODC 2004, 62).

The line between smuggling and trafficking can easily blur, however. A smuggled person can easily become the victim of human trafficking, whether based on his or her own actions (e.g., failing to pay the fees required to be smuggled), or the actions of the smuggler (e.g., selling the migrant to traffickers), or actions of a trafficking ring (e.g., attacking and kidnapping a group of migrants). Importantly, if a smuggled person becomes a victim of human trafficking at any point in the smuggling process, the original consent to be smuggled is annulled.

**Figure 1: Trafficking and Smuggling: similarities and differences**



*Source: Based on IOM (2015) and ICE (2013) definitions*

## 2. The development dimensions of human trafficking

Human trafficking is principally a development issue. The main factors that increase both vulnerability to being trafficked as a victim and a willingness to engage in it as a facilitator or trafficker are poverty, gender inequality, unemployment, poor education, poor governance, and weak rule of law—all development issues. Environmental and sociocultural factors can also influence an individual’s vulnerability to trafficking.

For trafficking victims, numerous environmental, economic, political, demographic, socio-cultural, and personal risk factors increase vulnerability to human trafficking:

- poverty, limited economic opportunities, and unemployment;
- poor governance and rule of law;
- political conflict, war, and violence;
- social exclusion, unmerited social and cultural structures (such as power, hierarchy, and social orders), and marginalisation and discrimination based on ethnicity, race, disability, or religion;
- limited educational opportunities;
- climate change; and
- natural disasters (World Bank 2009, 11).

The chief and most often mentioned economic factor is poverty, which is linked to unemployment and limited economic opportunities. However, as the ILO and UNICEF (2009, 23) point out, even though poverty is often cited as the primary risk factor for being trafficked, in most cases poverty alone will not push an individual into a situation where he or she could become a trafficking victim. Rather, the situation may be better referred to as “poverty plus”—a situation “where a ‘plus’ factor such as illness combines with poverty to increase vulnerability” to trafficking (ibid.).

For example, demography often creates a high vulnerability to trafficking for women and children who live in poverty. Women are often denied equal employment and educational opportunities, legal and political rights, and face several forms of gender-based violations, such as domestic and sexual violence, which are linked to social and cultural structures that contribute to the vulnerability of women to human trafficking (UNODC 2008). On the other hand, children, particularly girls, mostly become vulnerable to trafficking as a result of their parents and families’ socio-economic situation. Girls are also subject to violations of denial of education, domestic and income-earning work, and early marriage.

Other “plus” factors of human trafficking that are particularly apparent in conflict and post-conflict environments like Sudan include poor governance, weak rule of law, and economic disruption caused by climate change and natural disasters. Such situations encourage criminal activities and enhance the conditions for human trafficking to thrive by putting already vulnerable populations, such as women, children, IDPs, and drought and war refugees into situations where they are more at risk of being victims of human trafficking, since these groups are most likely to be distant from home, socially excluded (no protection), and economically destitute (Nelson, Guthrie, and Coffey 2004).

On the other side of the coin, rising youth unemployment and poverty in certain parts of the world may create incentives for young people to engage in human smuggling or trafficking activities. This is particularly the case in eastern Sudan. High unemployment, high poverty rates and rising cost of living, the significant impact of refugees on services, housing the job market, together with social tolerance of the smuggling and trafficking, and loose security controls have motivated many youth to engage in such activities as a means of making quick money.

## **2.1 Human migration, smuggling, and trafficking: The global picture**

Between 1965 and 2000, the number of international migrants doubled to approximately 175 million persons (Bhabha 2005). These individuals were driven by “prospects of a better life abroad, poverty, economic marginalisation, political and social unrest, and conflict” in their home countries (ibid.). Smuggling migrants is reportedly a nearly US\$ 7 billion industry, and millions of individuals employ smugglers each year (UN 2014; Pierce 2014) and according to the IOM, since 2000, over 40,000 of these smuggled migrants have died (IOM 2014a, 15). The United Nations (2015) has reported that 59.5 million individuals left their homes in 2014 due to “persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations.” This represents an increase of 8.3 million more people than the year before (ibid; see also Conant 2015).

Such massive increases in cross-border migration also increase the intensity of migrant exploitation and abuse. In 2005, the ILO published its first estimate of worldwide statistics on

forced labour, claiming that at least 2.45 million people were victims of forced labour between 1995 and 2004, due to international and internal human trafficking (Belser, de Cock, and Mehran 2005, 4, 14).<sup>6</sup>

By 2012, this estimate had increased to 20.9 million people (for the years 2002–2011), of which about 4.5 million (22%) were victims of forced sexual exploitation (ILO 2012, 13). A 2014 ILO report estimates that over US\$ 150 billion in illicit profits are made yearly through forced labour, of which \$99 billion is generated from commercial sexual exploitation (De Cock and Woode 2014, 13, 15; see also Thipanyane 2015).<sup>7</sup> A 2006 US report compares estimates from the US government, ILO, UNODC, and IOM and finds that women represent about 80% and minors represent about 30% of all trafficked persons (US GAO 2006, 12). Over two-thirds of trafficked persons are subjected to commercial sex, and about one-third are subjected to forced labour or other forms of exploitation (ibid.).

Combating human smuggling and trafficking is enormously difficult, due to the complexity of the development factors underpinning the phenomenon of cross-border migration as well as the complexity of smuggling and trafficking activities themselves. Especially in Africa, high levels of poverty, unemployment, corruption, and armed conflict, coupled with low levels of education and awareness and a lack of effective and good governance, contribute to the prevailing challenges of human smuggling and trafficking and undermine efforts to combat the phenomenon (Thipanyane, 2015).

In Africa, the countries of western and southern Africa have been quicker than those of eastern Africa (the Horn) to respond to the threat of human trafficking. For example, ECOWAS (Economic Organization of West African States) has produced an “Initial Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (2002–2003).” ECOWAS and ECCAS have jointly issued a “Regional Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2006–2009).” SADC (Southern African Development Community) has also developed a “Regional Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons (2009–2019)”. In November 2006, the African Union also adopted the “Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children,” which reaffirms international instruments on human trafficking and encourages African states to adopt legislative, administrative, and institutional measures to combat human trafficking and calls for comprehensive and coordinated interventions by African states.

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<sup>6</sup> A 2006 US government report estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 individuals are trafficked across international borders each year, although it recognises the ILO’s higher estimates (US GAO 2006, 2, 12–13).

<sup>7</sup> Of the overall global profits derived from forced labour, about 9% is derived from Africa, 32% from Asia-Pacific, 27% from developed economies, mostly the EU, and the rest from other parts of the world (De Cock and Woode 2014, 13). The rest of the profits are shared between Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Central and South-Eastern Europe (including former Soviet states) (ibid.).

### 3. Human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan

#### 3.1 The prevalence of migrants in Sudan

In the opening session of the Afro-Arab Youth Council International Forum on Immigration Issues, held in Khartoum on 22 October 2016, Sudan's minister of the interior stated that at present Sudan hosts about a million refugee, illegal, and transit migrants (Salman 2015). The prevalence of refugees in Sudan (and eastern Sudan, in particular) is nothing new, however. In fact, the earliest Eritrean refugees reportedly arrived in Sudan in 1968 (IRIN 2009). Today, about 60% of registered refugees are reportedly born in Sudan, to parents who migrated years ago.

The 2016 Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that there are 693,000 "refugees in need" in Sudan, including 126,000 (18%) in eastern Sudan (UNOCHA 2016, 2).<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere, UNOCHA reports that eastern Sudan hosts 93,965 refugees and asylum-seekers (UNOCHA 2015, 5). Regardless of the exact number of refugees in the eastern part of the country, these refugees place a tremendous resource pressure on Sudan and its humanitarian partners in that part of the country. More than 78,000 of the refugees in eastern Sudan have reportedly "lived for decades in the region's nine camps" in the Kassala, El Gezira, and Gedaref states (UNOCHA 2016, 12).<sup>9</sup> The rest live in mixed settlements classified by UNHCR as closed camps (Um Gulja, Um Rakoba, and Abu Rakham) or scattered throughout various urban and rural local communities.

Most refugees in eastern Sudan are Eritrean. Some stay for one to five years before they proceed to Europe or Israel (Salman 2015). But many others have been refugees for decades. The migration of refugees from Eritrea has not abated; eastern Sudan continues to receive new refugee arrivals at an average rate of 1,069 individuals per month (UNOCHA 2015, 5).<sup>10</sup>

Eastern Sudan remains the context of one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world. Since 2005, IOM Sudan has helped only about 20,000 non-Sudanese refugees to resettle in 19 different destinations in North America, Europe, and the Pacific. For example, in 2016, about 1,750 refugees were resettled in Canada, of which over 98% were Eritrean and the rest were Ethiopian (IOM 2016). This number represents 50% of Canada's commitment to resettle 3,500 refugees from Sudan by the end of March 2017 (ibid.).

According to a 2010 report of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, between 75,000 and 100,000 Ethiopians use a one-month tourist visa to cross the border [to Sudan] by bus through Metema each year (ILO 2011, 48). (This number does not include those who cross the Ethiopian-Sudanese border on foot.) Most women who travel this route use smugglers or traffickers in the hope of obtaining domestic work in Libya or traveling further on to Europe. .... some women are trafficked through this route for the purposes of commercial sex work (ibid., 48–49).

In many ways, the economic situation in eastern Sudan mirrors the situation in other parts of the country. Eastern Sudan has experienced war, drought, and poverty (due in large part to

<sup>8</sup> Of the remaining refugees, 327,000 are in Khartoum, 62,000 are in Darfur, 49,000 are in Greater Kordofan, and the rest are in other areas of the country (UNOCHA 2016, 2).

<sup>9</sup> These nine camps are Wad Sherifai, Shagarab I, Shagarab II, Shagarab III, El Girba, Kilo 26, Um Gargour, Abuda, and Fau 5.

<sup>10</sup> In 2009, a reported 1,800 Eritrean asylum seekers reached Sudan each month (IRIN 2009)

deterioration of the modern agricultural and industrial sectors in the area since the 1990s). Nonetheless, it has also had relative peace compared to other parts of the country, which has led it to become a thoroughfare to central Sudan for migrants from outside of Sudan as well as internally displaced persons from all other parts of the country. The region is also the main gate to the politically, environmentally, and economically troubled Horn of Africa Region, which creates an easy escape zone for refugees fleeing poverty, drought, insecurity, and human rights violations in other Horn of Africa areas. For example, available figures estimate a daily rate of about 120 refugees crossing into Sudan just from Eritrea, a number that makes UN support to Sudan extremely insufficient to support refugees or control armed gangs, according to a statement by the Kassala humanitarian aid commissioner (Al Taghyeer 2015). For Sudanese authorities, the difficulty of controlling the border against massive influxes of migrants (using numerous routes and means, including smugglers) and the lack of adequate resources to accept refugees and asylum seekers once they cross the border make first-hand control of the situation next to impossible.

For the lucky ones who reach refugee camps in eastern Sudan, the discouraging conditions they find there often mean that they seek to very quickly move on to northern Africa or further abroad. Many refugees (as well as Sudanese) have become disillusioned with UNHCR's work in the area and have expressed scepticism that UN agencies are serving western interests rather than local needs (Dirar 2016, 11–13). Recent developments, such as the Khartoum Process (See 7.3.1 below) seem to support those fears, as they suggest that Europe is using Sudan as a “shield” between Europe and an influx of refugees from the Horn of Africa. In other words, international agreements are transforming Sudan from a transit to a destination country, while failing to address problems in the source countries.

### **3.2 The vulnerability of smuggled migrants to trafficking**

Migrants seeking refuge in Sudan are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking crimes. Most of them seek to unlawfully enter Sudan by sneaking across the border, giving them a precarious legal status until a request for asylum can be granted. Having left difficult political and economic circumstances abroad, many are without a socioeconomic support system, such as a family or community support structure. Women and children crossing the border are especially vulnerable because they have often been denied rights essential for attaining self-reliance. Those seeking to prey upon these vulnerabilities use a variety of techniques to control their victims, including the following:

- debt, that is, requiring unexpected fees and then expecting the victims to work to pay them off (for example, through prostitution);
- isolation, for instance, by holding them where they have no contact with others or where no one around them speaks their language;
- deprivation of documents (such as passports);
- violence (including gender related violence); and
- threat, for example, saying they will report the victims as illegal migrants to the police.

Human trafficking business in the Sinai Peninsula has been severely hit by the anti-emigrant policy Israel adopted in 2011, which led to the decline in the number of Eritreans willing to migrate to Israel. In 2012 came to almost a complete stop as a result of the armed conflict between the Egyptian army and armed groups in Sinai. With the eruption of civil war in Yemen, the Red Sea route was almost totally abandoned.

Both claims of kidnapping and ransom demands in Sudan are on the rise (Dirar 2016; Humphris 2013, 12). As of 2013, ransoms demanded had reached up to \$16,000 and were still increasing (Humphris 2013, 12). In a report based on extensive interviews in 2011, Meron Estefanos (2011) draws one of the darkest pictures of the fate of kidnapped Eritreans who sought refuge in Sudan by ending up trafficked to the Sinai Peninsula. She describes the buying and selling, rape, torture, killing of trafficking victims, as well as the blackmailing of their relatives to pay ransom, claiming that hostages are bought for up to US\$ 18,000 and then sold for US\$ 20,000 for their organs (ibid.).

Since traffickers could no longer seek victims among migrants willingly travelling to Israel, they were left with four alternatives, all of which they currently use to kidnap trafficking victims:

- They kidnap Eritrean refugees from or near UNHCR refugee camps in eastern Sudan, particularly Shagrab. Most victims are kidnapped from agricultural fields near camps where they work to make up for the poor food rations provided in the camp.<sup>11</sup> Refugees with no relatives abroad are especially likely to work in these fields, and consequently are especially vulnerable to kidnapping.
- They collaborate with Eritrean intermediaries who pretend to help youth leave Eritrea by arranging the journey. In return for money, these Eritrean intermediaries actively participate in kidnapping and trafficking the youth by handing them over to Sudanese traffickers (Rashaida) who then transport them to Sudan's interior.
- They kidnap migrants crossing the Eritrean border into Sudan on foot.
- They exploit Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in camps, as well as Sudanese who express the willingness to travel to Libya or Europe. i.e. the process start by consent and change into kidnapping

In a conference recently held in Khartoum, experts attributed 85% of the spread of human smuggling and trafficking crimes to economic reasons, including unemployment, poverty, and the high cost of living (the income-need gap), noting that these economic factors also have implications on a person's ability to get married or pursue an education. As non-economic reasons for the spread of smuggling and trafficking, experts listed environmental conditions, sociocultural factors (such as ethnic and or religious discrimination), and political factors (such as civil conflicts, human rights violations, and a lack of freedom).<sup>12</sup> These explanations seem to focus on the reasons victims migrate, however, rather than the underlying drivers that force migrants to take the specific risks that lead to trafficking. They also seem to be a translation of current EU policy, which is built upon halting migration to Europe at any cost and unfortunately is being accepted by governments in the region (at least so long as adherence to the policy is based on financial assistance) (See section 7.3 below). In the case of Sudan, the EU policy has been described as supporting dictators who are already violating human rights instead of addressing the root causes of the problem (Crawford 2016).

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<sup>11</sup> UNHCR's ration per refugee for two weeks consists of a half kilo of lentils, half a litre of oil, and six kilos of sorghum or wheat.

<sup>12</sup> Afro-Arab Youth Council, International Forum on Immigration Issues, Khartoum, Oct. 22, 2016.

### **3.3 Reasons for the explosion of human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan**

Numerous factors contribute to the growth of human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan. While some of these are general factors that affect all countries in the Horn of Africa region, others are unique to Sudan. This section outlines some of the regional and national factors that create an environment where smuggling and trafficking flourish.

#### **3.3.1 Regional factors**

##### **1. Tensions and conflicts**

Tensions between countries, tribes, and ethnic groups in the region have contributed to an environment where members of groups seen as “undesirable” feel forced to migrate elsewhere for safety. For example, Eritrean opposition groups claim that the Eritrean regime is intentionally practicing ethnic cleansing against Muslims, tribes of Ethiopian origin, and minority groups (such as the Kunama tribe in the Eritrean border region), which drives refugees out of Eritrea and into Sudan. The compulsory drafting of Eritrean youth into the Eritrean army has created an additional incentive for youth to risk migration to Sudan.

Inter-governmental tensions also affect the migration routes themselves. For example, tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia have blocked the Ethiopian route out of Eritrea, making Sudan the only option for Eritreans seeking to flee their homeland.

##### **2. Tribal and ethnic relationships**

Some tribes are divided between Sudan and Eritrea (e.g., Beni Amir, Habab, Hadendawa, Shukriya, and Rashaida). The cross-border presence of these tribes not only creates an incentive for border-crossing, as Eritrean refugees try to reunite with their Sudanese relatives, but it also creates opportunities for smugglers and traffickers to build networks and secure some protection. Smuggling rings often run in the same ethnicity, while trafficking activities are more likely to cross the ethnic divide.

Eritrean refugees, who form the bulk of migrants to Sudan, especially youth, generally take the desperate measure of leaving their home country primarily because of political concerns, including bad governance, compulsory conscription, violation of human rights, and ethnic and religious discrimination against some groups. The failure of Eritrea’s regime to protect or inquire about the fate of Eritrean refugees exacerbates the rise in human smuggling and trafficking activities in eastern Sudan and hampers the international community’s ability to fight these activities.

Even within refugee camps in Sudan, ethnicity creates differences between groups:

Different ethnicities are thought to have different aspirations. . . . [P]eople from Akele-Guzai region are thought to have strong connections abroad and to be most likely going to Israel. Those from Maekel region are believed to be going to Europe, while those from Gash Barka are simply associated with smuggling people out of Eritrea and settling in Sudan. (Humphris 2013, 14)



### **3. Weak regional cooperation and commitment**

Sudan and its eastern neighbours have had historically weak regional cooperation, not only on human smuggling and trafficking problems, but also on border issues in general. This is evidenced by the poor resources all countries in the area have allocated to combating the problems of smuggling and trafficking and the reliance of these countries on international initiatives and support that may not always be in the best interests of the region (see section 7.3.1 below on the Khartoum Process).

Because of Sudan's delicate relationship with its eastern neighbours, Ethiopia and Eritrea, its ability to forge a regional solution to the political issues that are a root cause of migration to Sudan is limited. Furthermore, even if Sudan had the will and capacity to fight human trafficking, other countries in the region, such as Eritrea, neither have the capacity nor appetite to assist Sudan in stopping the quell of migration from its territory. Most recent efforts at the regional level have been in response to EU incentives aimed at reducing the influx of African refugees to Europe.

The transnational nature of human smuggling and trafficking creates a regional problem in fighting smuggling and trafficking. Smugglers and trafficking gangs are often of mixed nationalities and operate in the remote, porous border areas between countries. Sudan's particularly long eastern border—900 kilometres shared with Ethiopia, 600 kilometres shared with Eritrea, and a 750 kilometre coastline—hinders Sudan's ability to guard its borders with the limited means available to it.

### **4. Influence from the diaspora and among ethnic groups**

Eritreans in the diaspora and within the camps may also actively encourage smuggling and trafficking activities, for example, by “pay[ing] a broker to smuggle a family member out of Eritrea” (Humphris 2013, 11).<sup>13</sup> The Eritrean diaspora is part of a wide social framework of which smugglers form only a part; family, friends, and peers can also assist migrants with “financial resources, information or contacts, including smugglers” (Humphris 2013, 18). They may even directly assist in the smuggling itself. As one researcher explained regarding refugees in the Shagarab camp,

Many of those that decide to stay in Shegerab [camp] for a longer time are engaged in the business of trafficking people out of Eritrea to Khartoum or Israel. . . . Most of the people who stayed for over 6 months . . . are one way or the other engaged in trafficking business mostly as middlemen. (Mehari 2010; quoted in Humphris 2013, 14)

### **5. Spread of small arms in the region**

Spread of small arms in the region has been on the rise, particularly following the Eritrean-Ethiopian war (1998-2000), when many Eritrean soldiers crossed into Sudan and sold their weapons to survive. Sudan's government has failed to demobilise and disarm former combatants on the Eastern Front, as envisaged in the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement of 2006 (ESPA).

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<sup>13</sup> The same study states elsewhere that “reportedly, almost all Eritreans in the diaspora encourage their family and friends not to make the journey to Israel or Libya” (Humphris 2013, 7).

Instead, Sudan has allowed tribal militias to retain their weapons and act as border guards in the region, even creating paramilitary groups (Dabanga 2015a).

Some reports point to members of the Rashaida tribe who lived near Tesseney and were part of the Free Lions' during the war between the Eastern Front and the Sudanese army and who did not benefit from the ESPA (Humphris 2013, 17). They also were unable to find work in Sudan, which created an incentive to return to Eritrea and to begin conducting smuggling activities (Humphris 2013, 17; Smith 2011). These Rashaida members are currently thought to operate along the Eritrean border and in Kassala State and to keep smuggled and trafficked people in Mastoura, Abu Talha, Alhafair, Wad Hashai, Kassala and Al Girba (Smith 2011). Their access to small arms in these border areas has given them an extra edge against trafficking victims and law enforcement. Perhaps not surprisingly, they have developed a reputation as the most active in kidnapping refugees.

### **3.3.2 National factors**

#### **1. Characteristics of Sudan's border areas**

Sudan's eastern border is characterised by a lack of development and weak local institutions, creating an incentive for poor border communities to collaborate with and protect smugglers and traffickers whose profits may benefit the community. In some instances, even the power and influence of traditional leaders has been eroded, reducing their ability to control the areas using traditional means. Furthermore, the predominance of tribal politics often cuts through civil service and institutions, allowing for ethnic-based social protection for perpetrators and even a condoning of the practice.

#### **2. Negative attitudes towards refugees**

The long presence of tens of thousands of refugees in eastern Sudan and the real or perceived negative impact they have on the region (through pressure on natural resources, service institutions, and the job market in a saturated informal sector), has both reduced sympathy for refugees and precipitated an apathetic spirit among local communities towards the fate of those refugees. Local communities who could be helping to fight the problem by reporting suspected cases of abduction and trafficking instead turn a blind eye, and sometimes even aid in the crimes.

Furthermore, the intensification of cross-border migrant flows (particularly from Eritrea) during the last decade, coupled with increasing economic hardship in Sudan, has contributed to some unemployed Sudanese youth viewing migrants as an economic opportunity and helping to facilitate smuggling and trafficking. This is especially the case in urban areas, where youth unemployment and poverty rates are particularly high.

#### **3. Inadequate facilities and refugee protections within camps**

Conditions in Sudanese refugee camps are extremely poor in terms of accommodation, food rations, and services and rations only cover about 30% of refugee needs. This means many refugees must either search for work in nearby agricultural fields or travel further to Khartoum or elsewhere. This increases vulnerability both for refugees working in the fields (where they can be kidnapped) and for refugees seeking to migrate further (where they are often smuggled or trafficked). The problem is exacerbated by poor security arrangements within the camps themselves.

#### **4. Inadequate border security**

Sudanese authorities only loosely guard the country's eastern borders. Furthermore, most Human Rights Watch (2002, 2008, 2013) reports point to collaboration by security personnel with smugglers and traffickers in Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea, and Libya. The combination of inadequate border security and corrupt, self-serving government officials contributes to an influx of refugees and a reduced ability to control refugee movement after entry.

#### **5. Lack of refugee protection outside camps**

Even if Sudan had the will to protect refugees within Sudan and to control their movement inside the country, Sudan and UNHCR have not used their resources to do so successfully. For example, the arbitrary detention of refugees by Sudanese police and discrimination at the local level in areas such as Kassala creates unease among refugee youth and increases their willingness to take the risk of migrating further, thus making them vulnerable to exploitation by smugglers.

#### **6. Governmental will and capacity**

Sudan only publicly acknowledged its human trafficking problem in 2014 (US DOS 2014, 360). Official institutions such as the police, NISS, and COR often refuse to cooperate with CSOs or international institutions that could provide support and assistance with anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking work. Even to the extent Sudan has accepted such assistance, UN agencies and CSO programmes for addressing the problem often focus on workshops in towns involving urban elite participants but in rural areas they mostly apply a "hit and run" short visits approach and implement small-scale projects, rather than interacting with the local communities where these activities generally arise to discover long-term solutions.

Furthermore, Sudan has consistently tended to view human smuggling and trafficking solely from a security perspective, rather than considering the economic and human rights implications of these practices. For example, after freeing smuggling and trafficking victims, rather than handing them to UNHCR for care, the police often places victims in prison to await trial for violating Sudan's emigration law or simply so that they cannot evade testifying as witnesses in trafficking cases. Sometimes traffickers and victims are even kept in the same cell. The result is that some victims seek means of escaping Sudanese authorities and once again fall victim to smugglers and traffickers.

#### **7. Lack of accurate information**

Obtaining accurate information and statistics on the scope of the human smuggling and trafficking problem is extremely difficult. Even when smugglers and traffickers are caught, and victims freed, it may be difficult to find out the true extent of their activities. Victims may be unwilling to come forth, both because of fear of the law or fear of retaliation by the criminals and their aids. Some victims die in the smuggling and trafficking process, and their bodies may be burned, buried, or lost at sea. Finally, since traffickers often prey on vulnerable groups without social connections, some trafficking victims are not even known to be "missing."

#### **8. Limited Local CSOs' and NGOs' capacity**

Most CSOs and NGOs working on human trafficking issues in Sudan are local, with limited knowledge and limited technical, financial, and logistical capacities. Furthermore, they must

compete against each other and with government institutions and INGOs for the limited funds provided by donors, especially the EU. They are also neither independent politically from Government control and restrictions nor financially from donors, who often impose type of interventions and approach. As a result, their work is highly sporadic, non-programmatic, and heavily driven by donors' resources and agenda. This means none can exercise the independence needed to dive deep into the long-term issues underlying human smuggling and trafficking in the region.

#### **4. Documentation of human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan**

According to some locals, smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan started in the state of Kassala around 2005. At that time, some small groups abducted and/or recruited people with the purpose of recruitment of Mujahideen to Somalia and Middle Eastern countries, to join Daish in the Arab countries or the Shabab organization in Somalia. The move was motivated by the fact that most Eritreans were ex-combatants. This recruitment also included Sudanese who left without their family's consent, which made tracing difficult and heightened the risks. Operations gradually started to become organized starting with smuggling and transportation of refugees to Khartoum, then to Egypt, Israel, Libya, and Europe. Later, this developed into human trafficking through abduction or deception when the demand for smuggling rose and financial returns became higher.

However, the prevalence of human smuggling and trafficking is notoriously difficult to assess. The individuals involved in smuggling are unlikely to report this because of fear of arrest or deportation. Trafficking victims are even more difficult to track, unless they manage to escape or obtain freedom from their traffickers, e.g. after paying the ransom, usually one of its conditions is not to report about perpetrators and *then* choose to report it. Even those trafficking victims who are able to get away from their captors may not report the incident, as mentioned earlier due to fear of social sanction, retaliation, or arrest or deportation by police.

##### **4.1 UN documented incidents in eastern Sudan**

UNHCR and IOM are currently the only source of verifiable information on instances of human trafficking in Sudan. However, even their figures do not reflect the true magnitude of the problem, since they only include reported cases, that is, the tiny fraction of trafficked persons who are freed by police, manage to escape, or are able to pay the ransom demanded for their release. Furthermore, the reports UNHCR and IOM have publicly released thus far only cover a limited time period. The three public reports on human trafficking in Sudan relate figures from 2014, the first and second quarters of 2015 (UNHCR and IOM 2014; 2015b; 2015c). Each of these reports provides overall figures for human trafficking, but in slightly different contexts, which makes a comparison somewhat difficult.

For example, in 2014, UNHCR Sudan verified 113 victims of trafficking in Sudan, about half (56) in eastern Sudan and the rest in Khartoum (UNHCR and IOM 2014, 2). UNHCR notes that this is a significant decrease from 2012, when 338 cases were reported to UNHCR Sudan, suggesting this is due to Sudan passing its anti-trafficking law in 2014 (UNHCR and IOM

2015a).<sup>14</sup> The 2014 report also includes several descriptive statistics about victims of trafficking (see table 1).

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of victims of trafficking verified by UNHCR, 2014**

<b>Characteristics of Trafficking Victims</b>	
Total victims of trafficking verified	113 <sup>15</sup>
Breakdown of verified cases	56 in eastern Sudan, 57 in Khartoum
Average age	18
Unaccompanied minors (UAMs)	21.2% (24 of 113)
Type of migrant	Asylum seeker or refugees (vast majority)
<b>Characteristics of Traffickers and the Trafficking Act</b>	
Ethnicity/nationality of traffickers	Rashaida (first most commonly reported), Eritreans (second), Other Sudanese (third))
Most common area for kidnapping in Sudan	Eritrean-Sudanese border
Most common holding locations for victims	Urban areas (e.g., Kassala or Khartoum) and border villages
Relationship between smuggling and trafficking	25% of cases were initially reported to be smuggled into Sudan or Khartoum before victims were trafficked
Prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV)	71% of female victims in eastern Sudan 96% of female victims in Khartoum

Source: UNHCR and IOM 2014

UNHCR and IOM issued similar reports for the first and second quarters of 2015 (2015a; 2015b). UNHCR noted a 20% decline in registered new arrivals to Sudan in the first half of 2015, from an average of 1,350 per month in the first quarter to 1,076 per month for the first half of 2015 (UNHCR and IOM 2015b, 2). Regarding the victims of trafficking verified (66 overall in the two reports), each report contains slightly different details. About 17% of the victims reported in the first quarter received a permanent disability from their trafficking experience (UNHCR and IOM 2015a, 2). Of the female trafficking victims, 77% reported having survived gender based violence (UNHCR and IOM 2015b, 2).

The first quarter report also contains interesting facts about how the 24 victims in that report escaped captivity: 12 paid a ransom, eight escaped captivity, and two were freed from police intervention (UNHCR and IOM 2015a, 2).<sup>16</sup> The average ransom paid was US\$ 4,000 in the first quarter of 2015, but in the second quarter increased to US\$ 5,000 for

According to UNHCR and IOM's, on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2015 a convoy organised by COR was carrying 49 Eritreans from the Wad Sharifey reception centre (near Kassala) to the Shagarab refugee camp was attacked by an armed group in a pickup truck (UNHCR and IOM 2015b). 14 Eritrean asylum-seekers (including seven unaccompanied children) were abducted (Dabanga 2015c). Six were injured when they jumped from the truck to escape abduction. Later that week, authorities claimed to have freed 40 refugees from kidnapers in Kassala (Al Taghyeer 2015). The brother of one of the hostages reported that the kidnapers demanded US\$ 5,000 for his sister's release (Mezzofiore 2015).

<sup>14</sup> However, UNHCR Sudan fails to recognise that the decrease in cases reported may be due to victims' unwillingness to report, rather than a decrease in the practice of trafficking itself (UNHCR and IOM 2015a).

<sup>15</sup> Less than half of the victims verified experienced the trafficking in 2014; the majority reported the trafficking sometime after it occurred (UNHCR and IOM 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Data was not provided about the remaining two victims.

ransoms paid in eastern Sudan and went as high as US\$ 14,000 in Khartoum (ibid.; UNHCR and IOM 2015b, 2). The first quarter report lists an average length of captivity of 100 days; the second quarter report lists an average of 32 days in eastern Sudan and 110 days in Khartoum (ibid.).<sup>17</sup>

Many victims of trafficking keep trying, rather than avoiding the risk of falling victim to trafficking a second time. For instance, UNHCR and IOM report that out of a group of 47 victims of trafficking released by Kassala state police in June 2014, 38 individuals “had left Shagarab camp and [were] presumed to have travelled to Khartoum and beyond” (ibid 2015b, 2). UNHCR and IOM explain that many victims of trafficking feel “compelled to move to Khartoum and other urban areas” out of fear - “they feel unsafe both internally due to lack of communication opportunities between persons of concern and security staff, resulting in incidents such as rape, and externally from fear of traffickers on account of the camp proximity to where the trafficking originated” (ibid.)

The choice to migrate further may lead to further risks, however. For example, UNHCR and IOM’s 2014 report notes increases in trafficking and kidnapping of women in Khartoum: “While the situation in and around the Eastern refugee camps has significantly improved, with only two kidnapping incidents having taken place inside the camps since March 2013, an increase in cases of kidnapping and trafficking, in particular against women and girls, has been noted in Khartoum in 2014.”

#### **4.2 Incidents reported and documented by sources other than UNHCR**

A wide variety of other smuggling and trafficking incidents from eastern Sudan have been reported in media outlets and other sources. Examples include the following:

- A news outlet reported that in 2012 over 80 corpses were found on the border strip between Eritrea and Sudan—bodies of people smuggled from neighbouring African countries or kidnapped from refugee camps by gangs (Al-Nour 2013).
- In an interview with Nairobi-based Sudan Radio Service in October 2013, El-Fatih Mahmoud Awad, communication officer for the Free Lions Movement (a former anti-government movement in East Sudan), asserted that traffickers were targeting Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees as well as Sudanese. He explained that traffickers “smuggle small children between the ages of 11–14 [sic] from both genders with the aim of getting human organs” and that criminal groups have “fridges and doctors to harvest organs like kidneys, eye corneas and blood” (Adroub.net 2013).
- According to a newspaper report of December 2014, an armed battle between police and armed smugglers east of the Atbara River resulted in the freeing of six abductees and the confiscation of a vehicle and smuggled cigarettes (Sudan Tribune 2014).

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<sup>17</sup> Out of the 42 trafficking incidents verified in the second quarter, eight were verified in eastern Sudan and 34 were in Khartoum (UNHCR 2015b, 2).

- In the Um Steiba Forest 17 kilometres from the Eritrean border, a police raid freed 17 abductees in December 2015 (Al Saiha Newspaper 25/12/2015).
- In December 2014, eight refugees seeking to leave the Shagarab I refugee camp with smugglers drowned as they were trying to cross the Atbara River on rickety fishing boats. Ten other refugees managed to swim to river bank and returned to the camp (AFP 2014).
- In April 2015, two Sudanese military officers were reportedly stopped by the Gedaref state police at the village of Um Dorar, close to the Ethiopian border. The officers were found to be carrying 65 smuggled Ethiopians. They were arrested and charged with anti-human trafficking laws (Dabanga 2015b).
- On 8 June 2015, an armed battle between two smuggler groups near Al Gargaf on the Eritrean-Sudanese border resulted in the death of the famous Rashaida smuggler Salim Hamdan (also known as Al Aswad)
- In June 2015, an armed group reportedly attacked a vehicle leaving the Shagarab camp carrying 19 Eritrean asylum-seekers in a trip organised by a smuggler en route to Khartoum. After being shot at the truck overturned, killing the smuggler and four asylum seekers.
- On 27 June 2015, two abductees were liberated from their captives in the Al Hafair area, north of the town of Kassala, after a short exchange of fire. No arrests were made in connection with the incident.
- On 27 June 2015, Kassala state police freed 47 Eritrean asylum-seekers being held in a village outside of Kassala city. Those rescued included 11 women, 35 men, and one unaccompanied minor. The women had been raped repeatedly while they were held captive. Six traffickers were arrested, and the police also confiscated two trucks, arms, and ammunition. Liberation of the abductees followed an intensive exchange of fire between the traffickers and the police that lasted three hours. The six arrested individuals were charged with trafficking and kidnapping offences (UNHCR and IOM 2015c, 4; Dabanga 2015d).
- In July 2015 one person was abducted and the abductors, claiming to be Yamani nationals, demanded a ransom of 15,000 Saudi Riyals (Al Tayar 2015).
- Between 14 and 20 March 2016, using a car with no plates, a group of men dressed in women's *nighab*, made five attempts to abduct young girls (8–13 years old) within Kassala town (Mahmoud 2016).
- In June 2016, police arrested a gang of child smugglers in Kassala, along with two facilitators in Khartoum, following a tip-off from a bus company that became suspicious when 15-year-olds boarded a bus bound for Libya without accompanying parents (Dabanga 2016b).
- On 31 October 2016, eight Sudanese nationals accused of human trafficking were sentenced to death at the Special Crimes Court in Kassala. The group included AA, the most famous Sudanese trafficker in the region. In a statement by Major General Yahia Al-Hadi, chief of police for Kassala state, in the police operation that captured those traffickers, 40 German-made pieces of automatic weapons were found hidden in one of the Kassala town peripheral residential quarters. Unfortunately, AA managed to escape from the Public Order Court in Kassala on Wednesday 21 December 2016 (Sudanese Online 2016).

- On 12 November 2016, a policeman was killed in an exchange of fire with traffickers at a *hafir* (reservoir) in Al Shebeik area of the northern Butana region of Sudan (interview with police chief, May 2016).
- Several reports blame the Rashaida tribe for systematically abducting Eritrean refugees from Sudanese refugee camps and then selling them to Bedouin criminal gangs in the Sinai, where they are subjected to torture until a ransom can be paid (Connell 2013; Mezzofiore 2015).

## 5. Human smuggling and trafficking from the Horn of Africa

### 5.1 Smuggling and trafficking routes

In recent years, a large body of literature has been building on the scope and nature of human smuggling and trafficking in the Horn of Africa, focusing principally on issues such as the circumstances of migrants and refugees, routes taken, the drivers of migration, and general numerical trends. That research has been an important source of information for policy-makers regarding challenges refugees face when they undertake the perils of migrating from the Horn of Africa to Europe; however, “there remain critical gaps in understanding—notably with respect to the organisation, leadership, and methods of smuggling and trafficking networks” (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 6).

According to the Sahan Foundation and IGAD’s Security Sector Program, there has been a sharp increase in the volume of Eritreans fleeing their country into northern Ethiopia, much more than those entering into eastern Sudan. A record number of 34,451 Eritrean refugees checked into Ethiopian refugee camps between 1 January 2015 and 31 August 2015, raising the total number of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia to over 140,000 (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 9). A “significant proportion” of these refugees were reportedly unaccompanied minors (*ibid.*).

By contrast, UNHCR reported the arrival of only 1,000 Eritreans on average per month into camps in Sudan throughout 2014, stating that 80% of these arrivals would normally travel onwards. According to UNHCR statistics, the total population of the nine primary refugee camps in eastern Sudan *decreased* from 78,925 to 75,883 between 2013 and 2015 (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 9-10). Although there have always been discrepancies about refugee numbers in eastern Sudan, the figures mentioned by Sudanese authorities seem to be much higher than those cited by UNHCR. Certainly, the poor conditions of camps, restrictions in the camps, and a fear of abduction by traffickers from within and around camps (e.g., Shagarab) are driving refugees away from the camps, and many stay with relatives in towns, settle in formally-closed camps, or move directly to Khartoum. Many Eritreans, as well as Ethiopian and Somali migrants, enter Sudan from Ethiopia through the Gedaref state, where most of the closed camps exist.

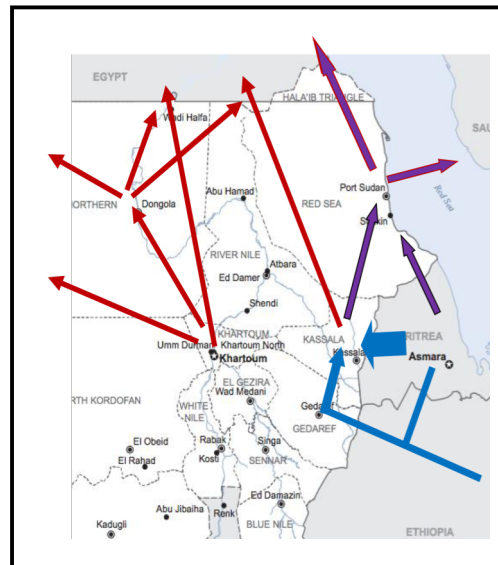
As other international routes (discussed below) have become closed or more dangerous, more and more migrants are using international routes that go through eastern Sudan to get from Africa to Libya, Europe, and beyond. This section discusses the main international migration routes from the Horn of Africa to Europe and then discusses the internal routes used to travel through Sudan.



### 5.1.1 International routes

As figure 2 below shows, migrants from the Horn of Africa crossing Sudan on their way towards Europe primarily use three routes, in addition to the sea route to the Gulf States.

**Figure 2: Human smuggling routes Crossing Sudan  
From the Horn of Africa**



#### ***a. Sea route to Gulf countries***

This traditional migration route goes across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Eden. Its use has declined considerably for migrants from Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan, due to the current armed conflict in Yemen, a 2015 decision by Saudi Arabia not to tolerate irregular migrants and to expel tens of thousands of Ethiopians from the country, and the high risk of abduction by pirates (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 11). Nevertheless, UNHCR figures suggest that even if human smuggling to the Arabian coast has slowed, it has not completely ceased. For example, between July and September 2015, nearly 5,000 Somalis and Ethiopians reportedly arrived to the Arabian coast via this route, and the true figure may be much higher (ibid.).

#### ***b. Southern Africa corridor***

This corridor runs from Sudan through Kenya to Tanzania or further into southern Africa (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 10). Some of those smuggled along this route may travel onwards to Latin America or even the United States (ibid.). This route became particularly active following the problems with the Gulf route.

#### ***c. The desert route through Sudan and Libya***

Since abandonment of the coastal and sea routes outlined above, the smuggling and trafficking route through Sudan to Libya and beyond has become the most important route in this region (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 10). A Sudanese news outlet reports that “Sudan is one of the main transit countries for Eritreans and Somalis travelling to Italy by sea” (Dabanaga 2016d). According to the IOM, in the January to August period of 2016, 8,066 individuals arrived to Italy from Sudan by sea, compared to 7,131 individuals during the same period of the 2015—marking

an increase of about 13% (Dabanga 2016d).<sup>18</sup> In addition, more and more Sudanese are also seeking to travel to Europe.

In particular, Khartoum has become a main hub for smuggling and trafficking trade. For traffickers, Khartoum is both a destination and a transit point, from which journeys to the north and west are organised. The lack of registration of refugees in urban areas has complicated efforts to protect vulnerable people in the capital from human traffickers.

Three groups of migrants migrate through Sudan, thus coming in contact with this trafficking risk. First, migrants and refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and few other African states use a route across the Ethiopian border into the Gedaref state. They generally obtain transport through human smugglers either from Addis Ababa (in the case of Ethiopians and Somalis) or from refugee camps in the Ethiopian-Eritrean border region (in the case of Eritreans). Some cross into Gedaref from the Ethiopian towns of Humera or Metema. The smugglers involved in this transport are usually Ethiopians or Sudanese.

Second, some Eritreans cross the border into the state of Kassala, either on foot or via smuggler transport. These migrants are most likely to be subject to trafficking.

Finally, some refugees living in camps or towns are transported across the Butana region of Sudan into Khartoum. (The Butana region covers most of Gedaref state, as well as parts of the states of Kassala, River Nile, Khartoum, Gezira, and Sennar). Some of these refugees migrate via this route by consent, but others are deceived into being transported.

#### *d. Egyptian route*

A fourth route that was the most active prior to 2013 was the Red Sea coastal route from Sudan into Egypt, then to the Sinai desert and Israel. This route has been linked to arms smuggling to Palestine, the thing that prompted several Israeli air strikes on convoys moving along the coast in Sudan. These strikes as well as the Egyptian army operations in Sinai since 2013 have almost totally blocked this route. Shewit Gebreegziabher (2013) added two other routes for women trafficked for domestic service in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and UAE: one to Djibouti through Dire Dawa and the second through Bole International Airport, Addis Ababa.

In view of the high risks on the Libyan route, some migrants, especially Sudanese, also opt to travel to Egypt to take boats to Europe from ports near Alexandria, although they also run the risk of detention along the way.

#### **5.1.2 Sudan internal routes**

When human smuggling started in Sudan, Kassala was the main collection point and the Khartoum-Port Sudan road was the main internal route to Port Sudan, Swakin, and Halaib (although sometimes people were transported across the mountains). From these areas, external routes extended through the desert or along coastal roads to Aswan and the Sinai Peninsula or across the Red Sea to the Gulf States. Smugglers and traffickers have since abandoned this route

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<sup>18</sup> Another report states that the arrivals of Sudanese to Italy by sea from January to September 2014 versus the same period in 2015 increased by over 250% (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 12) Arrivals to Italy from Eritrea and Somalia during the same period increased by only 11% and 144%, respectively (ibid.).

because of Israeli airstrikes on convoys along coastal roads, the intensity of Egyptian military operations in Sinai, the eruption of war in Yemen, and tightened security in Kassala state.

Table 2 below, shows the most active human smuggling routes eastern Sudan to the interior as stated by some of the interviewed smugglers. Temporary destinations within Khartoum are mainly in Sharg Al Nil locality, including the villages of Gaili, Un Dawan Ban, Abu Deleig, and Geraif Sharg.

**Table 2: Primary smuggling and trafficking routes from eastern Sudan**

Origin	Transit Area(s)	Destination
Eritrean border	Kassala or Gedaref – Butana	Khartoum State
Eritrean border	Gedaref - Medani	Khartoum State
Eritrean border	Wad Al Hileiw - Gedaref	Khartoum State
Ethiopian border	Gedaref - northern Butana - Sharg Al Nil	Khartoum State
Kassala state	El Girba - Eddamer or Shendi	Khartoum State
Kassala state	—	Wadi Halfa
Kassala state	Qoz Rajab	Egyptian border
Al Usra	Ghannam project	Gedaref state
Bahardar	Matama – Gallabat - Doka	Gedaref state

The main routes from Khartoum are shown in Table 3 and all of them are to destinations abroad.

**Table 3: Primary smuggling and trafficking routes from Khartoum state**

Origin	Transit Area(s)	Destination
Khartoum State	Dongola or Al Dabba	Egypt/ Libya
Khartoum State	Abu Hamad – Meroe - Al Dabba - Wadi Halfa	Egypt
Khartoum State	Abu Hamad – Meroe- Al Dabba- Al Atroon or Al Khannag - Al Eweinath (in Al Muthalath)	Egypt
Khartoum state	Dongola - North Kordofan state - Darfur state	Libya

## 5.2 Smuggling costs

### 5.2.1 Costs within Sudan

Internal transport within eastern Sudan and to Khartoum generally seems to be priced in a way that accounts for the situation of the customers. Somalis tend to be charged the highest rates, usually in US dollars, since they usually come in small groups of three to four families and have clear plans and are well-prepared for the trip. Eritreans tend to be charged less than Ethiopians. While Eritrean and Ethiopian women tend to travel in groups, men usually travel individually.

Individuals picked up from refugee camps tend to be charged more than those coming directly from the border. This is based on an assumption that those leaving refugee camps have arranged their trip through someone living abroad, which (according to smugglers) makes the trip riskier. The trip from Kassala or Gedaref to Khartoum is currently considered the riskiest leg and is accordingly priced higher. Table 4 below summarises approximate costs of being smuggled from within Sudan, based on interviews with 108 migrants who came to Sudan during the 2014–2016 period.

**Table 4: Approximate land transportation costs within Sudan, 2014–2016**

Migration Route		Approximate Cost (per head)		Notes
Origin	Destination	SDG	US\$	
Tesseney-Wad al Hiew or Gallabat	Gedaref	5,000–10,000	750–1,500	—
Al Humera, Ethiopian border	Gedaref	13,000–15,000	1,950–2,250	Route mostly involve Ethiopians
Ethiopian–Sudanese border	Gedaref or Medani	5,000–20,000 <sup>19</sup>	750-3,000	Route usually involves Somalis
Kassala/ Gedaref refugee camps	Khartoum	8,000–20,000	1,200–3,000	—
Gedaref/ Kassala (15 passenger minibus)	Khartoum	70,000–100,000	10,500–15,000	Minibus trips are usually organised from Khartoum or abroad (organizers contract the bus driver in advance)

### 5.2.2 Land transportation costs from the interior of Eritrea and Ethiopia

Table 5 below lists the transportation costs from within Eritrea and Ethiopia between 2014 and 2016, based on our interviews with migrants. The transport costs to the Sudanese border from within Eritrea or Ethiopia were between US\$ 100 and 1,500, depending on the route and the nationality of the individuals involved. The individuals interviewed only provided information on the cost of smuggling to the Sudanese border. However, a recent newspaper reported that the cost of smuggling from the interior of Eritrea and Ethiopia to Khartoum averages much higher, around US\$ 6,000 per person, including food and accommodation in temporary destinations (Al Noor 2016, 5).

**Table 5: Approximate land transportation costs from Eritrea and Ethiopia to Sudan (2014–2016)**

Migration Route		Cost (approx. US\$ per head)	Notes
Origin	Destination		
From Somali border via Ethiopia	Gedaref	1,500	Route involves Somalis
Addis Ababa	Sudanese border	300-500	Route involves Ethiopians & Somalis
Asmara-Tessenay	Sudanese border	100	Route involves Eritreans

### 5.2.3 Land transportation from Sudan to Libya, Egypt and Israel

Smuggling costs vary not only by route taken, but also over time. Some smugglers claim that the cost for the trip from Khartoum through Egypt to Israel was US\$ 3,500 to 5,000 in 2011, but in 2013 it was reported that smugglers charged US\$ 15,000 per head to smuggle people from Libya or Sudan to Israel (Humphris 2013, 11).

<sup>19</sup> The cost of this route rose dramatically between 2014 and 2016.

**Table 6: Approximate land transportation costs from Sudan to other countries, 2014–2016**

Migration Route		Approximate Cost (per head, except where indicated)		Notes
Origin	Destination	SDG	US\$	
Khartoum	Libya	6,700	1,000	Route involves Sudanese migrants; the trip lasts 9–10 days <sup>20</sup>
Khartoum	Libya	112,500 (per family of 3–4 individuals)	7,500 (per family of 3–4 individuals)	Route involves Somali families
Dongola	Libya	3,000–6,000	450–900	Route usually involves Sudanese
Khartoum	Via Port Sudan to Aswan, Egypt <sup>21</sup>	10,000–13,400	1,500–2,000	(2016)
Khartoum	Via Egypt/ Libya to Israel	100,000 (per group of 4)	15,000	(2016)

### 5.2.4 Costs at Sea

Based on the confession of a human trafficker arrested by Italian security forces, Nadeau (2014) reports that the cost for crossing the Mediterranean Sea by fishing boats to Italy is between US\$ 1,000 and 2,500 per head. In addition, passengers must pay other expenses, including US\$ 200 for a life jacket, US\$ 100 for each bottle of water or can of tuna, US\$ 200–300 for the “first class” section (the ship’s hull), US\$ 200 for a blanket or rain coat, and US\$ 300 to make a satellite phone call. Pregnant women are charged US\$ 150 extra and unaccompanied children are charged US\$ 1,500 (Nadeau 2014).<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, the Sudanese husband of one Ethiopian migrant claimed to have paid only US\$ 3,000 for the sea trip from Libya to Italy for his wife and her child plus the costs of food and water.<sup>23</sup>

## 6. The process of human smuggling and trafficking

### 6.1 Human smuggling

Smugglers use several methods to transport refugees and migrants into eastern Sudan and from there to Khartoum and other towns, both in Sudan and abroad. In line with the study objectives, our interviews focused on the trip up to Khartoum, which is a central hub for those who plan to travel abroad, as well as a final destination for many migrants who are looking for work or fleeing atrocities in their home country.

This section is based on accounts and descriptions provided by interviews with 108 smuggled migrants, 72 smugglers and transporters, and information provided by the police. It begins by discussing the types of individuals smuggled through Sudan to Khartoum and characteristics of smugglers before discussing the routes taken by smugglers operating in eastern Sudan.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with the husband (Sudanese) of a smuggled (Ethiopian) wife, Khartoum, June 2016; interview with two Sudanese youth, Khartoum, May 2015.

<sup>21</sup> This route has recently also reportedly been used to smuggle Syrians from Sudan to Egypt (Worley 2017).

<sup>22</sup> The fee for pregnant women is mainly used for catheters because many consider the urine of pregnant women to be poisonous (Nadeau 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Sudanese husband of an Ethiopian migrant, Khartoum, June 2016.

### **6.1.1 Characteristics of individuals smuggled through Sudan**

Based on our interviews, humans who are smuggled through Sudan generally fall into one of five groups:

#### ***Group 1: Somali migrants***

According to all smugglers interviewed, Somali migrants are the most organised of all groups smuggled through Sudan. In most cases, a contact in Khartoum or in Europe prepares the trip in advance. For those organised in Khartoum, most trips are facilitated by someone at Africa International University, and the accompanying financial transactions are made through a Somali-owned exchange bureau in Khartoum.

Somali migrants are usually collected from the Ethiopian border, which they reach through an Ethiopian smuggler (called a *samsar* or *gawad*). They are transported as a group to Gedaref and then to Khartoum. Because they are organised, pay for the trip in advance (usually in US\$), and have a travel plan, smugglers prefer Somalis as clients. In addition, they are usually traveling to Europe and have good back up, good response in emergencies, and are connected with family abroad which provide guarantees. Furthermore, because they almost always migrate as families, they are easy to control, according to smugglers.

#### ***Group 2: Groups organised through networks in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan***

The network usually includes members from the three countries. Migrants are collected through *gawad* within their country. Sudanese smugglers collect the migrants from border crossing points, accommodate (“store”) and feed them in or around Kassala or Gedaref, and then transport them to Khartoum. This method usually involves collaboration of security personnel (such as members of the army, police, or border guard), especially in Eritrea and Sudan. In particular, Eritrean army generals often facilitate the escape of military service draftees; payment for such a service is made to an account in Dubai.

#### ***Group 3: Groups organised within refugee camps in Sudan***

The refugee camps at Shagarab and Wad Shareefai are the best known for collecting migrants through Ethiopian and Eritrean *samsars* who live within or just outside the camps and are normally old residents of Sudan. This method usually involves partial payment by the migrant to the smuggler in advance; the other part is paid by a relative living abroad. There are several elements of risk to this group, as the smuggling operations often develop into trafficking through deceit of migrants, either through an agreement between a middleman (facilitator) and traffickers outside who usually hijack the vehicle transporting the migrants, an unplanned hijack operation, or if the second payment is not paid by the person abroad, in which case the abductors demands usually keep rising.

#### ***Group 4: Groups collected from within Sudanese towns (mostly Kassala)***

Migrants in these groups approach the smugglers’ agents, who are well known among refugees and Sudanese youth. An urban agent plays the facilitator’s role until the number of migrants needed for the trip is reached. The smuggler handles transport to Khartoum. The vehicle (usually a minibus) could be owned by the smuggler or rented. Sometimes more than one vehicle is used for a trip. Usually the smuggling route goes from Kassala to Gedaref, then through Butana to

Khartoum. The Butana route is heavily controlled by Shukriya and Bataheen drivers. The tarmac road is used in trips to Medani and involves paying bribes to security personnel at check points. This is called “buying the road” by smugglers and traffickers. The risk of being hijacked is highest on the Kassala-Gedaref leg (within the Rawashda forest), and all interviewees claimed that hijackers along this leg are from the Rashaida tribe.

***Group 5: Individuals and small groups crossing the border on foot***

These are mostly Eritrean and Ethiopian youth. They are transported by motorcycles, trucks, or minibuses, or may be collected from the road. Transportation costs are negotiated between migrants and drivers (who may or may not be regular smugglers). The destination in this case is Kassala and Gedaref or the villages around them. The risk of being attacked by traffickers is highest for these groups, since they usually have no contacts monitoring their progress in the trip. Sometimes traffickers pre-plan attacks based on information from informants in the border area.

Of the above groups, groups 1 and 2 are the most secure against the risks of trafficking, while the other groups (particularly group 5) undertake the greatest risks.

Annex I below shows the profiles of 25 smuggled individuals interviewed as part of this study. We selected these 25 individuals as representative of the 108 smuggled migrants interviewed, because they were willing to respond to all questions or part of family or group in the same trip. They include eight Somalis, 15 Eritreans, and two Ethiopians. Twenty are men and five are women, and their average age is 24.5 years. This sample does not reflect an accurate distribution of smuggled men and women in Sudan, however; smugglers told us that women ages 15–30 constitute about 70% of migrants and Sudanese represent 5% of those smuggled abroad (we did not interview any Sudanese who were smuggled).

Most individuals are single, although eight are married (six men and two women). In addition, at the time of our interviews, the majority (17) were hoping to obtain passage to Europe; one planned to travel to Canada thereafter. Only five individuals interviewed intended to stay in Sudan (in Khartoum). The individuals cited a variety of reasons for choosing to be smuggled, but they generally centred on political or economic reasons. Some individuals also sought to join family members already living abroad.

**6.1.2 Characteristics of human smugglers and transporters**

Individuals from numerous Sudanese tribes are involved in smuggling in eastern Sudan. Youth in eastern Sudan have particular incentives to engage in smuggling, due to high rates of unemployment in that region. For some individuals, smuggling is the only source of available livelihood, while for others it is a way to quickly accumulate capital to start a legal business.

Several leaders of smuggling networks, as well as facilitators, are well known to the public, particularly in Kassala. Smuggling networks are organised around the group being smuggled. For example, the network in charge of smuggling Somalis includes a Somali coordinator (in Khartoum), an Ethiopian smuggler (in Addis Ababa), Sudanese smugglers (at the border and in Gedaref, Khartoum, and Libya), and a Libyan smuggler (who is in charge of residence and the trip to Europe). Trips of smuggled groups from the Kunama tribe, who claim to experience

ethnic discrimination and denial of rights (official papers) by the Eritrean state, are coordinated by their sheiks in collaboration with sheikhs on the Sudanese side (IRIN 2002).<sup>24</sup>

Out of the 72 human smugglers and/or transporters interviewed as part of this study, we selected 20 individuals to provide a representative sampling of those involved in facilitating the process of smuggling. The selection of these 20 individuals was based on completeness of information and representation of data collected 2015 and 2016 in Kassala and Gedaref. As Annex II shows, the 20 individuals selected range in age from 18 to 42. All are men, as we were unable to track any female smugglers. The table lists current and former occupations for the individuals shown, as some were currently working as smugglers at the time of the interview, while others had worked as smugglers in the past.

### **6.1.3 The human smuggling process**

A typical organised smuggling trip starts at the first collection point. For example for a group of Eritreans, the first collection point might be at Tesseney or Sebderat, a town in Eritrea. The group would be guided on foot through the mountains near the border by a *gawad* responsible for providing water and food (usually dates) and a *shkrangi* (translator). The *gawad* and *shkrangi*'s roles end at the border when Sudanese smugglers take the migrants.

The main collection points on the Sudanese side of the border are Talata Jubal, Jabal Hura, and Shalaloab. A *kashaf* (guide) joins the group to ensure safe passage (that is, to avoid or pay security check points). His tasks ends in the town of Kassala. Once the migrants are delivered to Kassala, they are taken to houses (called “stores”) to be held for five to seven days, while they await their further trip. Most of these stores are in Al Amriya, Hai Al Arab, Mastoor, Alsawagi, and Aljanobia. During their stay in the stores, migrants are not allowed to leave the house. The Kassala coordinator feeds them, and they pay for their food at an average of SDG 250 (ca. US\$ 37) per day. Urban youth (facilitators) assist the Kassala coordinator in guarding the store, supplying food and water, collecting information, and recruiting clients from within Kassala to join the group.

Once a critical mass of migrants has been amassed, the group is transported across the Butana plains to Khartoum. These transporters are usually from Shukriya, Bataheen, Beni Amir tribes, or other northerners. According to smugglers, in 2016, the trip to Kassala cost SDG 30,000 (ca.

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<sup>24</sup> The Kunama are a Nilotic ethnic group that inhabits Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Eritrean Kunama tribe is one of the minority ethnic groups, constituting only 2% of the population (about 100,000). They live in an isolated area between the Gash and Setit rivers. Their area extends along the Sudanese border in Eritrea and the districts of Humera in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and has been called the “breadbasket of Eritrea” (Refugees International 2004). Historically, the Kunama have been dominated by other ethnic groups (e.g., the Hadareb and Nara), and they have often been forced from their traditional lands. (The Eritrean government’s official policy is that all land is state property, and it encourages large commercial farms.) In addition, many Eritrean Kunama were forced to migrate to Ethiopia after the Ethiopian-Eritrean War (1998–2000) (ibid.). For the most part, they were relocated in the tense and contested area of Badme in the Ethiopian border region (ibid.). Since 1991, the Gash-Setit area has witnessed the settlement of populations from other regions of Eritrea, particularly highlanders, but also including demobilised ex-fighters and individuals who were displaced to Sudan and the Tigrinya by the Ethiopian–Eritrean War and are returning to their homelands (Naty 2002, 3–4).



US\$ 4,500) per head and the trip to Khartoum cost SDG 60,000 (ca. US\$ 9,000) per head. Migrants who fail to pay are sold to traffickers.

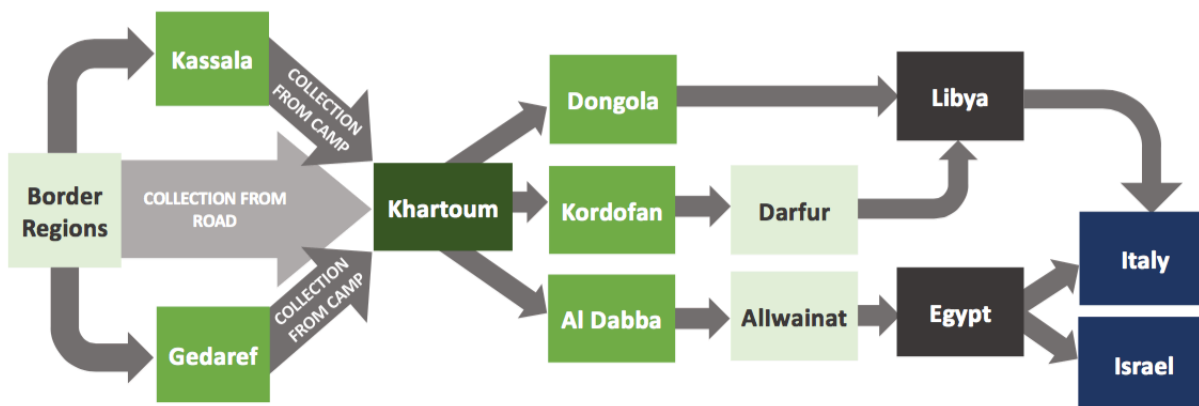
Some migrants ultimately aim to travel to Europe. A coordinator for the trip to Khartoum serves as the primary link between network members in Eritrea, at the border, in Kassala, and in Europe. The price of the trip to Europe (usually in US\$) is fixed through negotiation between the Khartoum coordinator and the European network member.

#### 6.1.4 Human smuggling routes in Sudan

The eastern Sudan route is currently the most important route used by migrants and asylum seekers as the starting point of the long journey to North Africa and Europe. As figure 3 below shows, migrants starting out in eastern Sudan travel to Khartoum and then onwards to other parts of Sudan before leaving the country.

Each of these routes presents different risks for the individuals involved. Some arise from the smugglers themselves. For example, smugglers may exploit migrants financially or physically (through forced labour or sexual requirements). Individuals and groups being smuggled can also come under attack from traffickers, thus becoming subject to additional exploitation, torture, or even death. The routes themselves also present dangers. For example, routes from Al Dabba and Dongola to Libya cross desert regions where migrants can easily become lost and die of thirst and starvation if they are not accompanied by an experienced guide.

Figure 3: Smuggling routes through Sudan



Although all smuggling routes in Sudan present some level of risk, law enforcement is much more active in some areas of the country than others. For example, although police regularly patrol the roads and other routes between the Kassala and Gedaref refugee camps, their ability to identify and uncover collection and storage locations in and around Kassala and Gedaref towns themselves are weak. Similarly, law enforcement's presence is high on the roads leading to Khartoum from Kassala and Gedaref but very weak in the Butana plains used by smugglers and along the border area in Kassala and Gedarif states. Likewise, police presence along the road from Khartoum towards Al Dabba and Dongola is quite visible, but virtually non-existent beyond those points. Annex III below lists some of the common areas of smuggled refugee migration in

Sudan, the risks in each of those areas, and the level of law enforcement activity to guard against those risks.

In spite of law enforcement involvement in some areas of the country, it is important to also remember that most smuggling operations involve security personnel in some way. While some operations directly involve security personnel (e.g., those in group 2 above), in other instances security personnel may turn a “blind eye” to smuggling operations, thus allowing them to occur.

### **6.2.5 Transitional hubs**

#### **a. The Khartoum hub**

Since 2012, Khartoum has been a major collection, waiting, and distribution point for illegal migrants and trafficking victims on their way to Libya and or Egypt. Temporary waiting places for new groups arriving in Khartoum are mainly in Sharg Al Nil county, in villages such as Abu Deleig, Um Dawan Ban, Idd Babiker, and Al Geraif. (Ethiopians are concentrated in this last town), as well as in farms around Khartoum and other villages where smugglers and/or drivers have social connections that secure social silence. Inside Khartoum, accommodation areas are scattered in three main towns of Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omduran, but are heavily concentrated in the areas of Al Geraif west, Al Amarat, Al Daim, and Al Riadh, Gabra, and Al Sahafa)..

Inside Khartoum state, a network of leaders run smuggling operations from Suq Libya, supported by smaller networks within the residential areas where migrants are hidden. The smaller networks consist mostly of Eritreans who have been in Khartoum for a long time and act as middlemen between the leader’s agent, Sudanese drivers, and those who want to travel. The individuals facilitating the smuggling monitor the movement of police vehicles and move groups of migrants in and out of Khartoum during the early morning hours to evade detection. The Eritrean middlemen gather migrants in one place and transport them in small batches to houses in Omdurman, close to Suq Libya (such as Um Badda, Ala’amriya, Sallha, or Suq Libya itself). From there, they are taken to the western side of Omdurman, where four-wheel drive vehicles carry migrants to Dongola or Kordofan. Finally, large Hino trucks take the travellers to Libya.

The transfer of payment for smuggling usually occurs through a formal exchange bureau or third party. Payment networks usually run along ethnic lines. For Somalis, the most active facilitator is at Africa International University, and trips are organised and controlled with very few Sudanese involved until migrants arrive to Libya. For Eritreans and Ethiopians, middlemen from their ethnic group usually transfer payment through Sudanese traders abroad. For Sudanese hostages in Libya and in the desert, ransom money is paid to traders, mainly in Suq Libya, who then transfer the money to hostage takers. Middlemen and hostage takers within Sudan normally use a cell card to receive funds and then destroy it. Smugglers use mobile phones to conduct business.

Men in Khartoum, whether from border areas or refugee camps, are usually there by consent as smuggled migrants intending to travel to Europe through Libya. Except for the few exploited for forced labour (mostly in Sudanese farms), men in Khartoum are treated well. However, they can be trafficked later in their journey when they are in the desert, as they become totally isolated and under the traffickers’ control.

For women, however, the situation is entirely different. The few who travel with male relatives may be consensual participants on the desert journey from Khartoum to Libya, but the rest are almost certainly victims of trafficking. For example, during our interviews, we learned that at least nine houses and flats in Al Daim are confirmed points where immigrants are kept waiting to be smuggled to Libya (usually via the Dongola area). Each of these residences accommodates 20–30 individuals, and most of them are young females. Locals observe a continuous change in the occupants of these residences, as well as the faces of those who sell tea nearby. During the period of waiting in Khartoum, smuggled individuals are completely under the control of smugglers, who require them to work in prostitution, tea selling and other jobs to pay for their trip forward. Because of their deprivation of liberty and exploitation, these smuggled women in essence become victims of human trafficking.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, nearly all trafficking victims in Khartoum are women. Generally, they are Eritrean or Ethiopian women, although a few other nationalities have been reported, including Syrian. These women are classified into three categories: (i) the youngest, who are forced into sex work; (ii) the smart and lively, who are forced to live and work in cafeterias and restaurants; and (iii) the rest, who are used as domestic workers. The women are kept in well-guarded houses and prevented from movement outside, including contact with relatives living in Khartoum or Sudanese individuals. Their documents are also confiscated, creating an incentive to avoid escape.

Khartoum became a major centre for in-country trafficking of victims transported from eastern Sudan border areas or refugee camps starting in 2011, when intense military operations in Sinai and civil war in Yemen blocked the traditional migration routes via the Red Sea to the Gulf States and to Egypt. The expansion of trafficking activities from eastern Sudan into Khartoum marked a big turn in the form and scale of trafficking. The business of human trafficking became better organised and took on a multi-national character, meeting most international legal definitions of the practice. The transformation of the trafficking business in Khartoum also led to the intensification of smuggling and trafficking activities in eastern Sudan, since this area is a more readily available supply area for the Khartoum market than the distant markets of Egypt and the Gulf.

#### **b. The Dongola hub**

The area around Dongola town, the capital of Northern state, is a second place where migrants congregate before being smuggled further. Similar to the situation in Khartoum, locals observe a continuous change of faces, as migrants leave and new migrants arrive. Most migrants in the Dongola city are Eritrean and Ethiopian women, and all of them live in shops owned or rented by Sudanese traders.

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<sup>25</sup> Several interviewees referred to a specific hotel, said to be used by a traffickers' network. The hotel was historically linked to the leadership of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) during Eritrea's war of independence. We were unable to obtain any material evidence to link the hotel to the trafficking business. Some also noted that the areas of Athene, Sahara Hotel, and Tigani Yousif Beshir Park are the key areas for kidnapping trafficking victims, and that internet cafes in Al Sahafa are used for the exchange of victims and communications between victims and their families. Again, we were unable to obtain information to verify these third party accounts.

Al Dabba town, just south of Dongola seems to have an even larger concentration than Dongola itself. There are two reasons for this. First, the town is at the crossroads of routes to Omdurman, Kordofan, Darfur, and Wadi Halfa. In addition, the police seem to be less vigilant in Al Dabba than in Dongola.

Another area of concentration near Dongola is around the Al Khandag gold mining area, where both men and women work to pay for trip costs. Some are kept in camps in the desert and supplied with water and food by trucks or pickups from the River Nile area, as is the case for those staying in the Dambo village, in Al Golid locality, north of Dongola.

One Ethiopian woman claimed that she was traveling on a contract to Israel, to give birth to three children in return for an agreed sum of money and the freedom to leave afterwards.

Migrants from the area around Dongola are smuggled during the night to either Al Atroon or Al Khannag. From there, they travel to Al Eweinat in Al Muthalath (the Triangle), where the borders of Sudan, Egypt, and Libya meet. Al Muthalath is an area known for an intensive trade in dates and vegetables, although recently it has become known more as a hub for human smuggling and trafficking.

According to police sources, during the 2013–2016 period police in the Dongola area captured nearly 3,000 illegal migrants through in 11 major police operations (see table 7 below).

**Table 7: Returned smuggled migrants in the Dongola area (2013–2016)**

Year	Number of returned persons	Number of operations
2013	732	2
2014	500	3
2015	326	2
2016	1,300	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>13</b>

*Source: Police Records, Dongola*

About 2,000 of these returned migrants were women and children. Most of them were Eritreans, although there were also a few Ethiopians and Somalis.<sup>26</sup> The foreign migrants were charged under Sudan’s emigration law and sentenced to fines of SDG 30,000 (ca. US\$ 4,500) each, along with deportation. Rather than being deported, however, most of those charged were sent to Shagarab refugee camp in Kassala. The Sudanese drivers and facilitators were sentenced to between seven and 15 years of imprisonment and fines reaching up to SDG 300,000 (ca. US\$ 45,000).

### **c. The death routes**

Because of the dangers involved, the routes from Dongola to the Libyan border (a distance of about 850 km) and from of Al Dabba through Al Eweinat to Wadi Halfa on the Egyptian border (a distance of about 570 KM) are both called “Death Roads.” Passengers not only face risks of dying through sunstroke, thirst, or traffic accidents (as cars are driven at high speeds on these

<sup>26</sup> Police investigations revealed that the Somali migrants each possessed US\$ 2,000, and their trips had been coordinated and paid for by an agent stationed at Africa International University in Khartoum.

routes), but they also face the risk of falling into the hands of traffickers in the lawless deserts. Pickup trucks and Hino ZY trucks are often used for transporting people because they can pass through sandy roads to avoid security checkpoints. Passengers may be roped to the body of these vehicles to prevent them from falling out as the vehicles travel at dangerously high speeds, which can result in the loss of limbs. If they are caught by traffickers, they may be killed in an effort to obtain organs for trade.

In fact, up to Al Dabba and Dongola, the transport process could be described as illegal migration or human smuggling, but as soon as migrants reach the desert the process can easily become trafficking if either party fail to honour its part of the agreement. Migrants who fail to pay the agreed fee may become victims of trafficking, while transporters may become traffickers by demanding a ransom from victims or their families, even if they previously paid the expenses of the trip.

According to one smuggling driver, the money generated from one trip to Libya equals the price of the car used and this is why it is worth the risk.

Bandits and armed groups in the border areas of Darfur and Libya also sometimes become traffickers, attacking the vehicle and taking over the human cargo. One interviewee who survived such an attack explained that in his case the transporter and the armed group had an agreement to that end. Most victims of such trafficking are Eritreans, although Ethiopians, Syrians, and Sudanese are increasingly becoming involved.

## 6.2 Human trafficking

### 6.2.1 Characteristics of human traffickers

Very few smugglers are *not* somehow either involved in dealings with traffickers or involved in trafficking itself. Even those who engage in smuggling individually using their personal motorbikes or cars to transport individuals between the Eritrean or Ethiopian border and the towns of Kassala and Gedaref indicated that they have dealt with traffickers in their work. From a list of 28 human traffickers, ex-traffickers, and/or facilitators (collectively, “human traffickers” for purposes of this section), interviewed in Kassala, 8, shown in Annex IV, were chosen to draw a profile for the “small traffickers” who are involved in the process, but not including large network leaders. Those 8 individuals were selected based on the completeness of information and the differences in their stories.

Most trafficking networks within eastern Sudan were initially built around ethnic bases, particularly among tribes with a presence in both Sudan and Eritrea. With the growth of the phenomenon, geographical expansion and the growth of business scale, traffickers started to cross tribal lines as they have to pass through areas of other tribes, where some services may be needed. Many of those we interviewed pointed to the Rashaida as the main champions of the trafficking business, but unfortunately, we were unable to interview any members of this tribe involved in trafficking (see also Connell 2013; Mezzofiore 2015). Nonetheless, our own field observation and interviews suggest that the tribe in eastern Sudan most involved with trafficking is actually the Beni Amir tribe, followed by the Rashaida, the Hadandawa (Samarandiwab), and

others.<sup>27</sup> Each border tribe operates in its own area for protection of its members and to make use of local knowledge about roads as well as connections in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The human traffickers we interviewed explained that the following are required to become involved as a facilitator, agent, or assistant for a human trafficking network:

- trustworthiness (and the ability to prove this),
- connections and relationships in Sudan and Eritrea,
- knowledge of roads used for smuggling and trafficking,
- good connections with influential security personnel, and
- willingness to take risks.

In addition, individuals who wish to directly engage in trafficking need to have at least one vehicle as well as sufficient money to start the business.

The average age of the traffickers we interviewed was 41, which is slightly higher than smugglers (34 years). This may be because many traffickers become involved in that business only after conducting smuggling operations for a number of years. Annex IV below provides additional information about how the 8 highlighted human traffickers became involved in the trafficking business and what exact trafficking operations they undertake. This table provides an overview of the myriad ways traffickers get engaged in this work. The continuity of a trafficker's operations depends on the level of revenue generated, the confidence the trafficker is able to build among potential victims and facilitators, and connections with security officials.

## **6.2.2 The human trafficking process**

As figure 4 below shows, the trafficking process itself involves gaining control over vulnerable victims (see section 3.2 above) before exploiting them and ultimately subjecting them to blackmail, abuse, torture, and/or death. Traffickers gain control over victims through abduction, buying victims from smugglers, and deceit. Often, these methods overlap.

### **a. Abduction**

Abduction generally occurs in one of two ways. First, traffickers may abduct individuals or small groups as they cross the border on foot, often from Eritrea. These attacks are often random, but sometimes occur based on tips provided by informants from the border area who are recruited by traffickers. These abductions are often very violent and involve gunfire; often lives are lost. Second, a *samsar* or *gawad* may pre-arrange an abduction with a trafficker. These abductions usually involve groups of migrants that are mostly women, as they are considered most profitable and are less resistant to capture.

However, other forms of abduction have recently emerged, suggesting the high level of risk traffickers are willing to take in order to make money. For example, in broad daylight (at 3 PM) on 4 June 2015, a group of Rashaida attacked a police-guarded convoy organised by COR and UNHCR, which was carrying refugees from the Wad Sharifai reception centre near Kassala to the Shagarab refugee camp. The attackers abducted 14 refugees, including five women, two men, and seven children. A security officer facilitated the operation in Wad Shareefai. That officer

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<sup>27</sup> However, the trade of human organs is claimed to be an exclusive Rashaida business, according to all those interviewed.

was later summoned to Khartoum, where it was found that he received a huge sum of money for his assistance. However, according to local informants, none of the abductors was captured.

Another developing phenomenon is the increase in attempts to abduct young women and children within Kassala town.<sup>28</sup> Between March 14th and 20th 2016, a group of men dressed in women Nighab, made 5 attempts to abduct young girls (8-13 years) within Kassala town in AlKurmuta and AlSawagi AlShimaliya (Mahmoud 2016). This is alarming because it could prompt tribal and ethnic conflicts within the town.

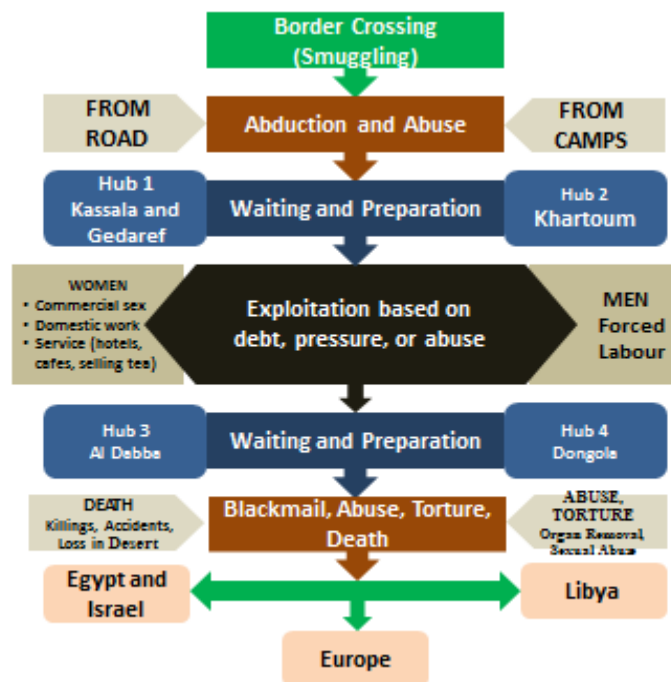
**b. Buying victims from smugglers**

Traffickers pay smugglers the transport and maintenance costs of migrants who fail to pay for their journey. In addition, some smugglers act as agents for traffickers. However, most victims of human trafficking and organs trade in eastern Sudan are Eritreans abducted from the road, rather than those smuggled via networks.

**c. Deceiving victims**

This occurs when a smuggler develops into a trafficker either by sheer greed or to avoid being arrested. This is most common for groups that are collected individually through urban facilitators and agents and usually takes place away from the victims’ homes (e.g. after they leave Khartoum). Migrants intending to go to Libya are the least guaranteed to reach their intended destination.

**Figure 4: The Trafficking Process**



Once traffickers in eastern Sudan have gained controls of their victims, they “store” (imprison) them in the areas of Wad Shariefai, Mastora, El Girba, and the Butana forest. They then may

<sup>28</sup> We managed to meet two of the girls who were saved from being abducted

exploit them in any number of ways. For example, they may sell them to traffickers in Khartoum where they are subject to sexual and labour exploitation. Or they could sell them to international traffickers for transport to Egypt or Libya. They may blackmail their victims and demand ransom from their families. Often, these victims have relatives abroad (Eritreans and Ethiopians) and the Beni Amir from the Sudanese. Or they may even harvest their victims' organs for sale.<sup>29</sup> Unlike smugglers who rely on mobiles for communication, traffickers operate only through the internet and Thuraya satellite devices

## **7. Developments since 2014**

### **7.1 Sudan Government accomplishments**

In response to international pressure and the intensification of kidnapping and human trafficking of transit migrants from the Horn of Africa towards North Africa and Europe, Sudan's government has taken several measures to combat human smuggling and trafficking:

- In March 2014, the national legislature adopted a law to combat human trafficking. The definitions in this law match UN definitions of the crime to a great extent. The law also avoids a potential handicap in article 7 of the Penal Code (which could exclude family members from harbouring charges) by making family members who harbour victims equally responsible.
- From 13 to 16 October 2014, Sudan hosted the African Union's first Regional Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling from the Horn of Africa in Khartoum. The conference brought together four Horn states (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan), five partner countries (Djibouti, Yemen, South Sudan, Tunisia, and Libya), two leading UN agencies (IOM and UNHCR), and relevant INGOs and regional economic communities (including IGAD and ECOWAS). The conference adopted a declaration of intent to combat human smuggling and trafficking in the region, a plan of action for doing so, and terms of reference for a regional committee that planned to meet again in six months' time to discuss implementation. In particular, the declaration laid out member state commitments to ratify international conventions on human smuggling and trafficking, to address the socioeconomic causes of migration, to strengthen law enforcement efforts, to protect victims, and to foster cooperation with international organisations willing to assist in developing the capacity to fight these crimes.
- In 2014, Sudan established a National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT), which met for the first time in October of that year. The committee operates as an inter-ministerial body to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts at the national level.
- On 28 November 2014, Sudan took part in a meeting with colleagues from other African and EU countries where they agreed upon the Khartoum Process (discussed in detail in part C below).
- On 2 December 2014, Sudan acceded to the UN Anti-Trafficking Protocol.

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<sup>29</sup> Although such organ trade was usually carried out in Egypt in the past, we learned through interviews that such operations have recently been carried out by Egyptian doctors within some villages in Kassala state. The organs are then taken to Egypt for sale on the black market. We were challenged to visit the graves of burnt corpses of some organ trade victims, but we were not able to do so or to otherwise confirm this report.



- In 2016, Sudan established a special attorney and court in the state of Kassala, where most of the trafficking crimes occur.<sup>30</sup>

Sudan has also proposed increased cooperation between Sudan, Libya, and Egypt. Such cooperation would include information-sharing, the establishment of joint forces, and joint efforts to strengthen border controls. Although Sudan and Ethiopia have been engaged in joint initiatives to tackle smuggling and trafficking activities across their common border in the Blue Nile and Sennar states of Sudan (the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia), this cooperation does not yet extend to the northern border regions of Humera and Metema, which are the principal entry points for refugees and migrants to Sudan (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 35).

The following subsections focus specifically on three of Sudan's primary activities to combat human smuggling and trafficking — the establishment of NCCHT in 2014, Sudan's direct operations to find and arrest smugglers and traffickers (and to free victims), and enhancements within Kassala State security sector.

### **7.1.1 The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking**

The NCCHT was created in 2014, in accordance with the Anti-Human Trafficking Law of 2014. It is the highest authority charged with fighting and presenting solutions to the driving causes of human trafficking crimes. It is composed of 15 members representing a variety of federal ministries. The committee is headed by the country's under-secretary of justice, who is aided by five executive staff members.

The committee has an advisory role on protection and prevention. It collects reports from the police and the judiciary and makes recommendations to all donors. The committee relies on its UN partners (UNHCR, IOM, UNODC, and UNICEF) to provide safe housing and services to trafficking victims and vulnerable groups.

The NCCHT has put in place a five-year “National Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy,” which commenced in 2016. The main elements of the strategy are (i) building the capacity of the judiciary, prosecutors, and police officers to enforce the anti-trafficking law; (ii) raising awareness among CSOs, youth, students, teachers, local administrations, and the general public; and (iii) building partnerships with neighbouring countries.

A study by Sudan's Council of Ministers revealed that during the 2014–2015 period, 46 charges of human trafficking were registered by police. During this same period, 692 individuals were reportedly victims of human trafficking. Between 2008 and 2015, police issued 741 indictments for human trafficking offences (Al Noor 2016, 5).

However, over two years after its establishment, NCCHT's impact on human smuggling and trafficking is still weak. This can be attributed to a number of administrative factors:

- A lack of financial resources, as no budget has been allocated for NCCHT's work (it is totally dependent on the Ministry of Justice's budget, which has forced NCCHT to

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<sup>30</sup> The court is for “Major Crimes,” a term that also includes terrorism and crimes against the state. However, it has mainly been dealing with human smuggling and trafficking crimes.

recommend to the MOJ that it set aside a percentage of funds confiscated from sentenced traffickers for NCCHT’s operational costs);

- A lack of physical work space, as NCCHT has no offices (although IOM has promised to build these);
- A lack of consistency among NCCHT members, since some ministries keep changing their representatives on the committee; and
- A lack of familiarity of some NCCHT members with the issue of human trafficking (see Al Taghyeer 2015).

According to reports produced by Sudan’s Ministry of Interior, NCCHT activities were at their peak between during the period 2014–2015, but regressed in 2016. Sudan’s government attributes this drop in activity level to the government’s lack of success in combating smuggling and trafficking, due in part to international assistance that does not include development projects and international sanctions on Sudan (ibid).

The nature of human smuggling and trafficking itself only exacerbates the ability of NCCHT to carry out its role. Poor conditions in refugee camps push individuals to leave and risk being trafficked. In addition, continuous changes in the strategies and tactics of traffickers (who command substantial resources and modern means) makes it virtually impossible to stay abreast of trafficking, leading to a continued rise in migration across the Mediterranean Sea and through others corridors, in spite of global efforts to stop the phenomenon.

However, one NCCHT member, Ismail Omar Tairab, still considers trafficking a narrow and opportunistic practice towards foreigners such as Ethiopian domestic workers, whose passports are held. He has stated his belief that most kidnapping and trafficking activities are carried out by members of one tribe from eastern Sudan and Sudan does not experience other “dangerous acts as is the case in Europe and Egypt” (ibid).<sup>31</sup>

### **7.1.2 Direct operations**

Sudan has also stepped up its direct operations against human trafficking gangs, particularly in the state of Kassala and other eastern regions of the country. Operations against these criminals have been going on since late 2014, largely under the command of Kassala’s police force, and have resulted in the arrests of an unspecified number of smugglers and traffickers, as well as the release of hundreds of victims.

For example, between October 2014 and May 2015, Sudanese authorities cited 21 police anti-smuggling or anti-trafficking operations in the Gedaref and Kassala states. In one of these, which occurred in early November 2014, Sudanese police in Kassala state engaged human smugglers in a fire fight, setting free six Eritrean hostages and recovering at least one rifle. Similarly, on 27 June 2015, police exchanged fire with traffickers in the Ghabat al Qitir area of Kassala state and were able to free 47 asylum-seekers of Eritrean origin (including one unaccompanied minor)

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<sup>31</sup> By “dangerous,” reference was made to forced labour, drug smuggling, blackmailing, sexual exploitation of women, posting compromising positions on the internet, and trading in human organs (Al Taghyeer 2015).

held by human traffickers. The police also were able to arrest six traffickers on site, as well as to confiscate two pickup trucks, arms, and ammunition belonging to the traffickers. The police reported that the abductors had demanded a ransom estimated to SDG 4 million (ca. US\$ 160,000) in exchange for freeing all of the victims.<sup>32</sup> In early July 2016, the Khartoum Central Court issued 10-year prison sentences against eight defendants for working in a human trafficking criminal network (Sudan Tribune 2016b). Specifically, the court found that they deceived their victims by promises to take them to work in a gold exploration area in Sudan's Northern state (ibid.).

A more recent 2016 report states that operations in eastern and north-western Sudan have led to the release of 850 trafficking victims, but the report does not break out how many of victims were released in the eastern part of the country (Sahan and IGAD 2016, 34–35). In spite of these efforts, however, in October 2016, Dabanga news website reported a statement by the Kassala state police chief reporting an *increase* in human trafficking and smuggling in 2016, explaining that “many trafficking gangs kidnap foreigners crossing Sudan on their way to the north . . . and force them to pay ransom for their release” (Dabanga 2016c). This is somewhat startling as the head of intelligence in Kassala state police stated in an interview that reported cases of human smuggling and trafficking dropped by 50% during 2016. He attributed this to the intensification of police activities and their wider geographical coverage, in addition to a UNHCR-led public awareness campaign and heavy criminal sentences handed down by the special (Major Crimes) court.<sup>33</sup>

### **7.1.3 Kassala security sector**

Kassala was one of the first states in the region to pass an anti-trafficking law (in 2010).<sup>34</sup> Since that time, several serious steps have been taken in Kassala state to combat human smuggling and trafficking. An institutional framework for fighting these crimes has been established, including (i) special forces (detectives and intelligence) specifically assigned to human smuggling and trafficking cases; (ii) a special attorney for human smuggling and trafficking cases; and (iii) a special Major Crimes Court (the first outside Khartoum), established by Sudan's Chief Justice order number 132 in 2016.

Other efforts in Kassala have supported this framework. For example, UNHCR has provided training and logistical support to police and security forces on the investigation of human smuggling and trafficking cases. A greater level of coordination between the police, the public prosecutor's office, and the judiciary have enabled the faster processing of cases dealing with smuggling and trafficking issues.

As a result, the Kassala public prosecutor's office was able to press charges against the six suspects arrested 27 June 2015 (UNHCR and IOM 2015c, 4).<sup>35</sup> The prosecutor's office has also

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<sup>32</sup> During the same period, however, UNOCHA reports state that demands by traffickers are generally between US\$ 5,000 and US\$ 40,000 per head; UNOCHA (2013) “Sudan: Combating human trafficking in the east”, 19 December, <https://www.unocha.org/country/top-stories/all-stories/sudan-combating-human-trafficking-east>

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Major General Awad Abdel Fattah, Head of Police Intelligence, Kassala State, May 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Other early states to adopt anti-trafficking laws were Red Sea (also in 2010) and Gedaref (in 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Specifically, they were charged with kidnapping, illegal detention, rape, illegal weapon possession, attempted homicide, and violations of the Anti-Terrorism Act (UNHCR and IOM 2015c, 4).

charged 16 individuals involved in 11 other trafficking cases reported to them (ibid.).<sup>36</sup> The cases against these 16 perpetrators involve 93 victims, all of whom are Eritrean nationals (ibid.). At the same time, investigating and prosecuting human smugglers and traffickers is a dangerous pursuit. Several armed clashes have been reported between the police and trafficking groups, and even between different trafficking groups themselves, which has resulted in unconfirmed deaths of smuggled and trafficked persons.

Kassala's security sector faces four serious challenges in its work, however, and they include:

**1. Detention of trafficking victims:** The Kassala public prosecutor's office keeps trafficking victims in detention in Kassala prison until they give testimony against their perpetrators. This is out of fear that victims may run off before the case is decided. Witnesses are also often charged with illegal migration under article 30 of Sudan's Immigration Act. These actions overlook the rights of victims to the trafficking crime, and UNHCR continues to advocate for an end to this practice and alternative ways of ensuring witness attendance at trial.

**2. Misconduct by some policemen:** It has repeatedly been said by smugglers, traffickers and informants that some police and security officers often collaborate with human smugglers and traffickers. This is likely due to the low pay of police officers compared to their cost of living, since smugglers and traffickers are usually able to offer huge sums of money in exchange for police assistance in these crimes. However, none of the police officers charged in smuggling or trafficking cases have been testified against by individuals, which suggest that those individuals have a fear of retaliation or social sanctions within their communities.

Not only is police misconduct a problem in regards to the actual activities of smuggling and trafficking, but it also creates problems in the overall system of immigration to Sudan. For example, several Eritrean smugglers (*gawadeen*) have acquired Sudanese National identification cards, which makes their mobility much easier and detection difficult, and which suggest their long stay in Sudan and/or mis-conduct and corruption within the emigration police force.

**3. Conduct of intelligence gathering:** In most cases, police gather intelligence about smuggling and trafficking crimes through their own investigative efforts. Police continuously map potential areas of smuggling operations and routes and monitor suspected persons.<sup>37</sup> In some cases, police may be tipped off by volunteers or may obtain information from individuals through more coercive means. However, a concern is that a major source of information to the police is often from what is called "shadow intelligence personnel." These individuals are paid by the police for information, which may create an incentive for certain perpetrators to rat out or threat their colleagues for economic or vengeful reasons.

**4. Prosecution of trafficking crimes:** Although Sudan has passed a national anti-trafficking law, most cases recorded at the Kassala police stations involve smuggling charges that can be dealt with under the Penal Code, such as transporting, accommodating, and supporting migrants in return for money. Thus, the 2014 anti-trafficking law, so far has not been subjected to many tests in the courts.

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<sup>36</sup> These 16 individuals were charged under the 2014 Anti-Trafficking Act (ibid.).

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Police General Awad Abdel Fattah, Head of Intelligence for Kassala State, May, 2016.

## **7.2 UN agencies efforts to fight smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan**

Multiple UN agencies work together to fight human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan, under the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) framework. Coordination, however, is by and large at the planning level, but on the ground each agency operates within its mandate, geographical area of coverage, and in line with its government partner. Agencies operative on combatting smuggling and trafficking in east Sudan include the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Children Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Population Fund (UNPFA). Each of these agencies is tasked with somewhat different responsibilities with regard to refugees and asylum seekers.

### **7.2.1 UNHCR and IOM**

UNHCR and IOM began working with Sudan's government on address human smuggling and trafficking issues in 2012 and adopted a Joint Strategy to Address Human Trafficking, Kidnappings and the Smuggling of Persons in Sudan in 2013 (UNHCR 2015a; IOM Sudan Mission 2015). One important service they perform is verifying and documenting instances of trafficking in Sudan (see section 6.2 above). This constitutes the only current source of verifiable trafficking figures, even though all indicators suggest that the numbers UNHCR and IOM have presented are only a tiny percentage of the actual picture.

UNHCR and IOM have also established reception centres for asylum seekers at Hamdayet, Gargaf, and Wad Shariefai, as well as safe housing and medical treatment for asylum seekers and trafficking victims. In collaboration with CSOs, UNHCR and IOM provide awareness programmes targeting refugees and affected communities. They also provide training and logistical support to security sector institutions in the region.

In 2015, UNHCR, IOM, and the government of Sudan updated and lengthened their joint strategy (UNHCR and IOM 2015a). The new strategy foresees roles, not only for UNHCR and IOM, but also for UNPFA, UNODC, and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and specifically aims at the following:

- a. Enhancing security and mitigating risks
- b. Strengthening protection responses for trafficking victims
- c. Building national capacity
- d. Identifying solutions and alternatives; and
- e. Enhancing cooperation (UNHCR and IOM 2015a, 5)

In furtherance of this strategy, UNHCR has taken the following actions in eastern Sudan:

- hosting programmes to sensitise about 3,000 asylum-seekers about the risks of smuggling, kidnapping, and trafficking;
- referring and admitting trafficking victims for residence in the Kassala safe shelter;
- providing individual counselling sessions and medical treatment for victims of trafficking;

- monitoring and assisting victims of trafficking who are witnesses to prosecutions under Sudan’s 2014 anti-trafficking law (with assistance from UNHCR’s national legal aid partner, the Sudanese Organization for Development);
- providing psychosocial assistance in refugee camps (in collaboration with the Sudanese Red Cross in refugee camps);
- training civil servants and CSOs working with refugees; and
- conducting awareness-raising sessions in local communities.

UNHCR is also active in Khartoum, where it has done the following:

- providing food, clothes, hygiene kits, medical assistance (including HIV/AIDS tests), and psychosocial and medical referrals to victims of trafficking;
- registering victims of trafficking to expedite cases for shelter residents (with the cooperation of COR);
- holding information sessions on the risks of human smuggling, kidnapping, trafficking, and irregular movement, as well as on methods of personal protection (2,708 refugee arrivals participated in over 25 sessions between April and June 2015);
- sharing information with UNHCR’s counter-trafficking department in Ethiopia;
- giving individual counselling and financial assistance to victims of trafficking; and
- providing psychosocial assistance to trafficking victims (in collaboration with Al Fanar and Seema, two Khartoum based national NGOs).

On the other hand, IOM’s activities are mainly limited to Khartoum. They include the following:

- screening cases of migrants to identify trafficking victims;
- providing psychosocial counselling, medical, and other services (including facilitating the home return of those who have given informed voluntary consent to return), as well as monitoring their progress;
- assisting migrants who had been apprehended trying to cross out of Sudan
- providing support to vulnerable migrants (such as meals, medical attention, and counselling);
- training members of Sudan’s Ministry of Justice about international migration law (provided June 2015);
- facilitating a study tour to Egypt for 10 members of Sudan’s National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking;
- assisting irregular migrants in detention to return home after a waiver of the penalty by the aliens department for irregular presence in the country;
- providing humanitarian assistance to migrants apprehended by the police (meals, medical attention, and counselling);
- training of journalists on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants (provided to journalists from 12 daily newspapers); and
- undertaking an analysis of data collected in 2015 to map trends of trafficking cases screened to inform further interventions and contributes to the research and advocacy component of the strategy.

The involvement of other UN agencies in anti-human trafficking work has generally been limited in eastern Sudan. Nonetheless, other agencies are beginning to become more and more involved in these issues.

### **7.2.2 UNFPA**

UNFPA's focus is on assisting refugees, migrants, and trafficking victims with issues related to reproductive health. In collaboration with Sudan's Ministry of Health, the Sudan Family Planning Association, and the Sudan Fertility Care Association, UNFPA provides medical treatment and psychosocial services through mobile clinics in areas with high refugee and migrant concentrations in Khartoum. UNFPA also distributes personal hygiene kits to vulnerable refugee and migrant women and girls and victims of smuggling, trafficking and exploitation living in safe houses.

UNFPA has trained health service providers in Khartoum state on the clinical management of rape, targeting health providers from hospitals that serve refugees and migrants, as well as other doctors, counsellors, psychologists and social workers who work with these groups. As well, UNFPA has provided awareness-raising training to 50 Eritrean youth peer educators (both girls and boys) in Khartoum. They training dealt with gender based violence prevention and response, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health. The peer educators will then convey this knowledge to their peers.

To guide future planning, UNFPA has also assessed service gaps with regard to reproductive health, gender based violence, and psychosocial support for urban refugees, trafficked and irregular migrants, and other vulnerable groups, both in Khartoum and in eastern Sudan.

### **7.2.3 UNODC**

Following Sudan's adoption of its anti-human trafficking law in March 2014, UNODC organised a three-day training session for members of the NCCHT and other relevant practitioners in November 2014 (UNODC 2017a). The training focused on best practices for implementing the new anti-human trafficking law, including methods for investigating and prosecuting cases, as well as identifying and protecting human trafficking victims. The workshop was meant to be practical and involved advice on how to interview trafficking victims, mechanisms for interagency and cross-border cooperation in trafficking cases, and other concrete steps Sudan could take to curb human trafficking.

Later in November 2014, UNODC co-hosted an awareness-raising session with the EU's delegation to Sudan. Government officials, journalists, diplomats, activists, celebrities, and youth attended the event, which was meant to boost public sentiment against human trafficking (ibid.). UNODC undertook both these activities in the context of the Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking, a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at building national capacity to fight human trafficking among Arab nations (UNODC 2017b).

UNODC has also coordinated directly with Sudan's NCCHT. For example, in April 2015, UNODC organised a training workshop for members of NCCHT to assist them in developing a national strategy and action plan for combating human trafficking in the country (UNHCR and IOM 2015c, 10). Thirty-five individuals attended the workshop, representing a variety of

government institutions and other organisations. Later that year, UNODC hosted seven members of NCCHT's subcommittee tasked with drafting the national strategy at a workshop in Cairo (ibid.).

#### **7.2.4 UNICEF**

Thus far, UNICEF's role has been limited to proposing the establishment of three family and child protection units in Kassala state (in localities where refugee camps are located), as well as allocating funds for the rehabilitation of buildings allocated by the government for these units. In Khartoum, UNICEF also advocated for the 2012 strategy discussed above.

### **7.3 European Union efforts to fight human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan**

Sudan and Europe have had a long rift, based on Europe's claims that Sudan has violated the human rights, supported terrorism, and failed to cooperate with the International Criminal Court. In 2013, however, the EU opened a new chapter of cooperation with Sudan's government, centred on assisting Sudan to control transit migration through the country. In November 2014, the roles of African countries vis-à-vis Europe on migration issues was memorialised in the Khartoum Process, which is also the basis of the EU's assistance to Africa under the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2015) and its strategy for combating Africans' illegal migration to Europe (which was built and approved on December 2016).

#### **7.3.1 The Khartoum Process**

The Khartoum Process (also called the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative) was initiated in a meeting of 39 states, including 31 European and 8 African countries, in Rome in November 2013. The initiative aims at establishing a continuous dialogue for enhanced cooperation on migration and mobility, while identifying and implementing concrete projects to address trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants. It is considered a form of regional collaboration between countries of origin, transit, and destination regarding the route between the Horn of Africa and the European Union (IOM 2014b).

In its first phase, the initiative's activities to concentrate on addressing human trafficking and smuggling, through the following measures:

- “developing cooperation . . . between countries of origin, transit and destination to tackle irregular migration and criminal networks, through concrete measures . . . such as information-sharing, focused training and capacity building, technical assistance and the exchange of best practices” (ibid., 3);
- when requested, cooperating with countries in the region to strengthen their capacities to manage migration;
- helping countries set up national strategies to strengthen coordination between agencies involved in combating human smuggling and trafficking;
- assisting countries in establishing preventive measures, such as awareness-raising campaigns;
- aiding national law enforcement and judicial agencies to identify and prosecute criminal networks involved in human smuggling and trafficking;
- setting up or strengthening criminal law frameworks to foster ratification and implementation of relevant UN protocols;



- fostering sustainable development in origin and transit countries to tackle the origins of irregular migration;
- when requested, assisting countries to set up and manage reception centres to give asylum seekers access to asylum procedures and to provide counselling to migrants;
- developing a regional framework to facilitate the return of migrants—including voluntary return—and their reintegration in the country of origin; and
- “supporting the victims of human trafficking and protecting the human rights of smuggled migrants” (ibid., 4)

From these above steps, it is clear that, while the obligations of African countries are very clearly set, the obligations of EU countries are loose and unspecific (other than the obligation to support victims of trafficking). This also indicates a mistrust on the part of EU towards African states, or at least a recognition by the EU of the possibility that African governments would misuse the support promised.

### **7.3.2 Sudan’s implementation of the Khartoum process**

Following adoption of the Khartoum Process, Sudan and eastern Sudan, in particular, have hosted successive visits by western officials, which suggests a recognition by these visitors of the crucial role Sudan can or is expected to play in European efforts to curb illegal migration from the Horn of Africa. During the last quarter of 2015, eastern Sudan, received several delegations from western countries, including the US embassy in Khartoum, the German government, the German international aid agency, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK National Crime Agency’s representative to the Horn of Africa, and the EU Delegation to Khartoum. These delegations also held high-level meetings with the federal authorities in Khartoum, including members of Sudan’s National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking.

The US delegation had a declared objective to curb human trafficking in Kassala state, but all other delegations were more concerned with preventing mass migration to Europe. In particular, Germany and the United Kingdom have committed with Sudan to prevent migrants from the Horn of Africa from entering Europe, as well as to fight human trafficking in Sudan. For example, the German government has committed EUR 12 million for projects targeted towards easing the illegal migration of Africans to Europe via Sudan (Sudan Tribune 2015; Dabanga 2015e). Its international aid agency entered an agreement to that end with Sudan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Horn of Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in December 2015 (Dabanga 2015e). Under this commitment, Germany’s first project was to be a EUR 2 million project in Kassala state, cited as a key border crossing point for refugees from Eritrea (ibid.).

UK delegation talks resulted in an agreement between Sudan and the United Kingdom to promote cross-border cooperation among law enforcement in domain of migration. EU delegation representatives declared the objectives of improving border management, confronting smuggling, protecting asylum seekers, and providing meaningful alternatives to migrants and host communities (see EC 2016a).

During a two-day visit to Khartoum in April 2016, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, announced a EUR 100 million aid package to

Sudan as part of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (Sudan Tribune 2016a). The Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was established in 2015 “to tackle instability and the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement” (ibid.). This visit followed an earlier visit by Sudan’s Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour to Brussels, where Sudan and the EU opened a discussion on border control issues, among other things (All Africa 2016). In a statement released before his arrival in Sudan, Minica said, “Our new support of €100 million will essentially focus on improving the living conditions for those who call Sudan home, helping returnees to the country to reintegrate back into society, and improving security at the border” (Sudan Tribune 2016a). Among other things, Sudan’s government has requested EU assistance for improved infrastructure at 17 crossing points and “reception centres” with “custody rooms” in the towns of Gedaref and Kassala (Crawford 2016).

In December 2016, under its Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the EU approved a package of projects to improve stability in the Horn of Africa region and “address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement” (Dabanga 2016e). It allocated EUR 170 million for that purpose, including EUR 39 million for Sudan (ibid.). The commitment made late 2016 was 12 million and actual delivery was EUR 2 million (to Kassala).

### **7.3.3 The problem with EU projects**

The effectiveness of the EU strategy to stem the flow of irregular migrants and refugees has been described as, at best, questionable (Amnesty International 2016a; 2016b). A coalition of 104 human rights, humanitarian, medical, migration and development agencies has criticised the strategy for the following:

- basing EU financial assistance to countries hosting large number of refugees on their “ability and willingness . . . to cooperate on migration management,” without providing mechanisms for monitoring whether such management complies with human rights (EC 2016b, 6, 9, 17);
- failing to offer concrete proposals for putting in place “pathways for people to come to the EU legally” (ibid., 5), instead implying that European countries are “bearing a disproportionate responsibility for resettling refugees” when this is not statistically true (Amnesty International 2016a, 2);
- ignoring evidence showing that deterrence strategies aimed at stopping migration are not only ineffective, but also will increase human suffering by “forc[ing] people to take longer and more dangerous routes” to reach Europe and increasing the incentives for human smuggling to continue (ibid.);
- allowing the EU to strike “migration management” agreements with countries that commit grave human rights violations, such as Afghanistan, Eritrea, and Sudan, thus perpetuating the cycle of abuse and repression that causes people to flee (ibid.);
- failing to create “a mechanism to monitor and ensure respect for international human rights laws and standards,” which creates the risk that European countries will “become complicit in a range of serious human rights violations” (ibid.);
- creating a “very real risk of breach of international law which forbids push-backs to places where people are at risk of rights violations” (Amnesty International 2016b); and

- at its core, reorienting Europe’s development aid towards stopping migration, which contradicts the EU’s commitment to use development cooperation with the aim of eradicating poverty (Amnesty International 2016a, 1).

In an interview with journalist Salih Ammar of *Al Taghyeer* (2016), a Sudanese government official and member of the NCCHT, Ismail Omar Tairab, accused the EU of seeking to turn Sudan into “*a large prison for migrants.*” He questioned European Union focus on security and policing aspects in its efforts to stop the waves of migrants arriving in their countries and ignoring the importance of development and awareness aspects. Tairab called upon the European countries to help Sudan and African countries in addressing development challenges, and stressed that the current policy would cause deterioration of relations between states and their peoples, because some countries may be forced to close their borders, which will lead to “serious consequences” (Ammar 2016). Also, a European activist has described the “reception centres” the EU has promised to establish in Sudan as being “detention camps” being provided at the request of dictators (Crawfurd 2016).

Crawfurd goes on to argue that the majority of funds set aside in the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa are being spent on “development” and “livelihoods” projects that are not likely to change migration patterns. This is because they are based on a common assumption that if the economic situation of displaced and vulnerable people is improved, they will not need to migrate. Crawfurd challenges that assumption, based on a literature review by Michael Clemens (2014), which concludes that at both the macro and micro level there is a *positive* relationship between income and the likelihood to migrate—at least until a country’s income level reaches the upper-middle class. Clemens finds that the relationship between income and likelihood of migration is weak, but positive, at the individual (micro) level: richer families are more likely to emigrate than poorer families. At the national (macro) level, the evidence is more mixed, but he concludes that until a country reaches a per capita GDP of about US\$ 6,000 to 8,000, the relationship between income and emigration is positive (richer families are more likely to emigrate), but once per capita GDP exceeds this level, the relationship becomes negative (richer families are less likely to emigrate). Crawfurd suggests that this is likely because of credit constraints: many individuals and families would prefer to move to a richer county and becoming a little richer enables them to do so (Crawfurd 2016).

In short, the EU policy and other international agreements proposed for Sudan, largely ignore the more important, non-economic drivers of migrant flows. The real causes of irregular migration lie in the countries of origin, mainly in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and include violence, conflict, and human rights abuses. These factors push people to take greater risks than poverty; in fact, millions of people in the Horn of Africa managed to live in poverty when their security was not threatened. The EU policy, memorialised in the Khartoum Process, sets forth objectives of protecting asylum seekers and providing “alternatives” to the migrants in Sudan, implying that Sudan will simply provide a solution to the problem that protects Europe. However, the initiative has no guarantee of actually ending (or even abating) irregular migration. It could even be said that the initiative serves government regimes in the region, rather than individual migrants and refugees.

#### **7.4 Developments within smuggler and trafficking networks**

As major stakeholders, smugglers and traffickers, and the communities they live and operate in, are also undergoing changes in how they operate. Smugglers and traffickers manage to stay at least one step ahead of law enforcement in terms of the tools and methods they use, whether it be four-wheel drive vehicles, automatic machine guns or Thuraya satellite devices instead of mobile phones. All of these technologies make it difficult to restrain their activities and increase the dangers to victims and law enforcement personnel.<sup>38</sup>

Particularly smuggling, but also trafficking, networks presently include members of numerous Sudanese tribes, rather than just members of the Rashaida tribe, as was the case in the past. These networks operate in both rural and urban areas, covering vast geographical areas. While in the past, smuggling and trafficking tended to be confined to border regions in the eastern states, these practices are spreading to other parts of Sudan, including Khartoum, River Nile, Northern, Kordofan, and Darfur states, which makes monitoring trafficking activities and coordination among security organs increasingly difficult. With the shift towards moving people through Libya and towards Europe, networks are becoming more international than local.

Furthermore, the nature of those individuals who are trafficked has also changed. Although the vast majority of trafficking victims continue to be foreigners, Sudanese nationals are also being targeted more and more by traffickers.

Finally, the financial aspects of trafficking are becoming increasingly complex. Even within Kassala town, money transfers go through intermediary banks or third parties abroad, making them difficult to trace.

#### **7.5 Challenges to the Sudanese State in dealing with human smuggling and trafficking**

Sudan's current predicament is centred on its inability to meet obligations under international instruments, even if it wanted to. Sudan is a state party to the UN Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (of 1951 and 1967, respectively) and the UN Anti-Smuggling Protocol and Anti-Trafficking Protocol (of 2000). However, it lacks the resources to effectively implement its obligations under these treaties.

For example, the UN Trafficking Protocol requires state parties to consider "implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological, and social recovery of victims," including housing, counselling, medical, psychological, material assistance, and employment and training opportunities. (art. 6.3). As well it requires state parties to consider adopting legislation to enable trafficking victims to remain in their country "temporarily, or permanently, in appropriate cases" (art. 7). The UN Refugee Convention goes further, barring Sudan from forcibly returning refugees to a land where their "life or freedom would be threatened on account of . . . race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (art. 33.1).

However, events in the region are exacerbating the problem of foreigners attempting to enter Sudan. For example, a recent UN Human Rights Council report on Eritrea stresses the

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<sup>38</sup> At least one officer was killed in 2016.

“systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations” for which the Eritrean government is responsible, questions the effectiveness of EU aid to Eritrea as a means of reducing migration, and indicates that refugees from Eritrea will continue to flow into Sudan for the foreseeable future (OHCHR 2015, 1; see also Van Reisen and Smits 2015). The war in Yemen, Somali pirates on the Red Sea, and the intensification of military operations in Sinai desert, leave Sudan as the only “relatively safe” route for migrants on their way to the north.

If Sudan wishes to comply with international law, it cannot return these refugees to their countries of origin. Yet Sudan cannot economically afford the cost of supporting them, either, even for a temporary period, because of the huge number of refugees it already accommodates in eastern Sudan. As well, by hosting ever more refugees, the government may face resentment of the local population, who feel the impact of refugees on employment, housing costs, availability of public services, and the natural environment. Some locals attribute the rise of human trafficking in the region on the influx of refugees. For these reasons, perhaps it is not surprising that since May 2011, amid global criticism, Sudanese authorities started rounding up, jailing and deporting refugees. Sudan deported more than 300 Eritreans back to Eritrea, 104 in 2014 and at least 442 in 2016, some of them registered refugees (HRW 2016).

Furthermore, the practical difficulties of Sudan’s weak law enforcement infrastructure and coordinating anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking activities among the many Sudanese ministries and departments tasked with tackling the problem (over 10 national institutions and seven states), as well as corruption within these government agencies, create additional hurdles to overcome.

## **8. Findings and recommendations**

1. *Smuggling routes.* Over the last five years, the main routes used by human smugglers and traffickers in the Horn of Africa region have changed from the Red Sea and Red Sea coastal routes to inland routes. Current routes mainly run through the Butana region to Khartoum, then to Dongola, and from there northwards to Egypt or westwards to Libya. The former main hubs of Port Sudan, Kassala and Gedaref are being replaced by Khartoum, ElDebba and Dongola as the main distribution points. The main destinations have also changed from the Gulf States and Israel to Libya and Europe (especially Italy).
2. *The Khartoum hub.* Khartoum has become the main waiting and transit point for smuggling and trafficking, and it is one of places where the worst exploitation of victims (especially women) occurs. Furthermore, it appears that anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling efforts by law enforcement are the weakest among the affected areas of Sudan.
3. *Growth of trafficking in eastern Sudan.* In the past, Sudan was the main ground for smuggling, while abductions and trafficking activities (including torture, ransom demands, and sales) tended to occur in Egypt, Libya, and along the desert route. Now, eastern Sudan is home to all of these activities. In spite of the success of police campaigns against smugglers and traffickers in eastern Sudan and improvements in anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking laws, the number of victims of these crimes is on the rise.

4. *Identities of smugglers and traffickers.* Although the international community and many local sources have previously focused on the Rashaida as the primary smugglers and traffickers, our field work confirms the involvement of individuals from several Sudanese tribes (especially in smuggling), as well as collaboration by Eritrean and Ethiopian groups. In fact, most smuggling operations are headed by Sudanese individuals who have smuggled goods to Eritrea in the past and/or Eritreans who have lived in Sudan for a long time.
5. *Claims of Law enforcement collaboration.* Most international reports point to collaboration by security personnel with smugglers and traffickers. For example, a 2014 HRW report discussed 13 cases in which Sudanese police handed victims over to traffickers. In eight of these cases, the report claims the transfer happened inside, or just outside, a police station in the town of Kassala (HRW 2014; see also Kestler-D'Amours 2014).
6. *Societal shielding of perpetrators.* The societal shielding of smugglers and traffickers based on ethnicity or tribal affiliation is quite evident in eastern Sudan. The growing societal silent consent and/or approval of youth engagement in human smuggling and/or trafficking reflect a new culture of ethnic intolerance that feeds on the growth of tribal politics and poverty. These attitudes are likely to continue expanding from foreigners to nationals (and, in fact, some attempts were made inside Kassala) and will threaten peaceful coexistence.
7. *Telecommunications.* Telecommunication companies are contributing to the problem of human smuggling and trafficking by allowing (i) easy communication and cash transfer between smuggling networks and (ii) the use of unregistered and easy to change SIM cards, which makes it nearly impossible to trace perpetrators.
8. *Smuggling Victims' Rights and Obligations Dichotomy:* One major legal dichotomy is UNHCR's objection to the imprisonment of smuggling victims by Sudanese authorities (as illegal migrants) or their temporary detention awaiting perpetrators' trial. The UNHCR position contradicts the obligatory inclusion of migrant smuggling offences in the National Criminal laws for the countries that have ratified the Anti-Smuggling Protocol, and it also denies the Sudanese legal authorities the main witnesses of smuggling and trafficking crimes, that would seek justice for the victims.
9. *Root causes of human smuggling and trafficking.* The root causes of the problem of human smuggling and trafficking in source countries are primarily political and economic, particularly in Eritrea. In addition, the motivations for engaging in human smuggling and trafficking in Sudan are both economic and social. Obviously, unless these causes are addressed, the flow of refugees will continue, as well smuggling and trafficking operations. If Europe's closed door policy succeeds, Sudan will pay the long-term costs of refugee concentration within its boundaries, making it (the big prison).
10. *Khartoum Process efforts.* No results have so far been felt on the ground for the so-called Khartoum Process and the plans launched after the Regional Conference for Combating Trafficking held in Khartoum in 2014.

## 8.1 Recommendations for the international community

The international community, including UN agencies as well as donors and INGOs, should consider doing the following to combat human smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan:

1. Within Eritrea, the only viable solution (no matter how remote) to the refugee problem is essentially political. In particular, basic adjustment are needed in terms of governance and economic development policies. To achieve these, the international community must change its perception of the problem from one induced by poverty to one that is politically motivated and then draw its policies and actions accordingly.
2. Causes of the crimes of human smuggling and trafficking are multi-dimensional and primarily developmental in nature. Therefore, a development rather than a security approach is needed to address the root causes and prevent the crime. Addressing the basic needs of vulnerable groups is an important shield for them against abuse and exploitation. These needs may be part of an overall development plan and not specific project, which can help cultivate hope and confidence in the future among these groups in areas with a high incidence of smuggling and trafficking. In addition, such efforts can help rebuild social protection and safety nets, as many individuals in these vulnerable groups have likely lost internal social mechanisms or the ability to protect themselves individually against violence and exploitation.
3. Given the high levels of poverty and low levels of development in eastern Sudan, the international community must link its humanitarian activities to refugees to long-term growth-oriented development aid and investment strategies to the region, thus improving levels of security to both refugees and their local hosts.
4. While the Sudanese government must abide by international law concerning refugees' protection and avoid deportation (especially Eritreans), the UNHCR has to revise its procedures with regards to providing reliable protection, shelter, food and basic services to refugees in eastern Sudan and, in collaboration with Government authorities and donors, devise mechanisms where refugees can support themselves by utilising their own capacities.
5. In line with the UN agencies' joint strategy (2015–2017) with its four components of enhancing security and reducing risks, strengthening protection to trafficking victims, building national capacities and enhancing cooperation, and finding alternative solutions, UN agencies and other members of the international community should do the following:
  - a. Establish well-equipped reception centres for asylum seekers close to the border.
  - b. Improve security conditions, services, and the general environment in refugee camps.
  - c. Take measures to speed up the processing of asylum application papers (UNHCR)
  - d. Design and implement medium- and short-term social programmes that may be more effective at influencing local attitudes towards smuggling and trafficking than the current strategy of urban workshops and “hit-and-run” visits to rural communities.
  - e. Support refugee host communities through economic development projects, services and awareness programmes (through media such as radio, TV, and theatre), and other mechanisms that promote peaceful co-existence and refugee protection.

- f. Engage with local CSOs as partners rather than merely using them for delivery contracts. In particular, take steps to build CSO capacity to conduct community work (e.g., through training), especially programmes that target increasing awareness and changing attitudes of traditional leaders.

## **8.2 Recommendations for Sudan's eastern border regions**

Sudan's government should work with its eastern neighbours and the international community to undertake the following regional cooperation measures:

1. Regional cooperation and coordination is needed on both security and development issues. Such cooperation is especially vital in relation to border control, but that should be accompanied with providing alternative livelihood sources for border communities, some of whom play a facilitation role in the trafficking process. Europe's top-down approach serves Europe's objectives, but does not necessarily serve the countries of the region. In particular, the victims of smuggling and trafficking are harmed the most. The international community's involvement is vital, not just to provide resources (which seems to currently be the priority of the region's governments), but also to make sure these resources are used for their designated purpose, to benefit the people, not just their governments.
2. Countries in the region should develop programmes for exchanging information, engaging in joint border surveillance, developing joint capacity, and providing programmes and trainings on migration laws for law enforcement personnel.
3. Regional governments should consider joint development projects as a practical form of cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

## **8.3 Recommendations for Sudan's national government**

Sudan's national government should take the following steps to strengthen its framework for combating human trafficking in all its forms:

1. Develop an initiative to combat human trafficking and transitory migration. At a minimum, the initiative should include the following: (a) a plan for cooperation among Sudan's three eastern states; (b) assistance to those state governments to enhance the capacity of state law enforcement to patrol borders and routes used by smugglers and traffickers and to uproot corruption within the security sector; (c) a large-scale awareness programme that targets the border communities and tribal groups that consent to smuggling and trafficking activities and enables collaboration between traditional leaders, CSOs, and international donors; (d) the development of alternative livelihood options for youth groups who for lack of alternatives, collaborate with smugglers and traffickers.

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<sup>39</sup> This recommendation was also made in the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). The AUBP, also sometimes referred to as the Niamey Convention, was adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, June 2014. It aims at uniting and integrating Africa through peaceful, open and prosperous borders through developing and strengthening good neighborly relations between border communities, territorial administration and other relevant bodies. See African Union Peace and Security Council website; <http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/27-au-border-programme-aubp>



2. Require the commitment of all government agencies and officials involved in the security sector (including the police, prosecution service, judiciary, and other security services) to the principles of (a) accountability in the design and implementation of anti-trafficking responses, both towards perpetrators of smuggling and trafficking crimes and to their victims; (b) improved access to justice by broadening the spaces in which trafficked persons and migrants may assert and enjoy their human rights; (c) combating all forms of discrimination on account of nationality, ethnicity, race, social status, gender, religion, or refugee status that may inhibit their ability to impartially enforce the law to protect refugees, trafficked persons, and other migrants; and (d) strengthening and upholding labour laws without discrimination and irrespective of nationality or refugee status.
3. Pass and enforce heavy sentences for smuggling and trafficking crimes, especially for collaborators and facilitators from within law enforcement institutions.
4. Strengthen legal protection (including labour safeguards) for workers against labour exploitation (including child labour) and increase worker access to justice institutions, especially for those working or forced to work in the mining, agriculture, or domestic service sectors, which are globally known to be among the sectors where forced labour and exploitation are practiced most.
5. Raise worker awareness against labour exploitation (including child labour) and on workers' rights to access justice and law enforcement institutions.

#### **8.4 Recommendations for State governments in eastern Sudan**

Governments of the eastern states of Kassala and Gedaref should take the following steps to combat human smuggling and trafficking, working with the international community (including NGOs and CSOs) as needed:

1. Set combating human smuggling and trafficking as a government priority and develop an Eastern Sudan regional plan to combat these crimes.
2. Conduct in-depth multi-disciplinary studies on human smuggling and trafficking to understand the complexities of the causes and processes from both the victim and perpetrator perspectives. Such research will help law enforcement authorities understand the nature, characteristics, and causes of victims' vulnerabilities, as well as the perpetrators' motives, organisation, methods of work, and the physical and social routes they follow.
3. Coordinate social and economic programmes to combat human smuggling and trafficking with other actors (national government institutions, CSOs, INGOs and local institutions, at both the planning and implementation stages.
4. Create and/or consolidate conditions for peaceful coexistence and revitalisation of indigenous social protection systems through awareness and educational programmes, economic opportunities, and signifying the value and benefits of cooperation as opposed to competition, particularly among communities with heterogenous ethnicities living under conditions of economic scarcity and social vulnerability such as IDPs, refugees and border communities.
5. Provide job opportunities and skills through training to unemployed urban youth who often play an important role in facilitating smuggling and/or trafficking and also may be potential victims of these crimes, if they chose to migrate.
6. Rise above the current tribal-induced political quota system which provides protection to some perpetrators.

7. Improve border surveillance and ensuring rotating border security forces on a continual basis to decrease the ability of border forces to collude with traffickers.
8. Press international organisations (such as UNHCR) to improve conditions in refugee camps.
9. Take steps to integrate long term-settlers of refugee camps into the local labour market.
10. Enhance access to justice for victims of smuggling and trafficking and provide protection to those who report violations and crimes.

### **8.5 Recommendations for civil society organisations and NGOs**

Within a frame of coordination, as opposed to the current competition for resources allocated to the fight against human smuggling and trafficking, national CSOs and NGOs in the region should do the following:

1. Avoid activity-based and delivery-contracted interventions, with donors or intermediaries (INGOs) and design and submit long term projects to donors as initiatives to address smuggling and trafficking problems.
2. Projects should be comprehensive and cover the areas of public awareness, legal support, protection, capacity development and providing economic alternatives to youth groups.
3. Projects should focus on peaceful co-existence between tribal groups as well as between Sudanese and refugees.
4. Since human smuggling and trafficking constitute some of the worst forms human rights violations, combating them should be part of programmes of all CSOs operating in the region, each within its specialisation and geographical area of operation.
5. Build a database on smuggling and trafficking incidence through networking with CBOs in border areas and around refugee camps.
6. Build bridges with concerned parties in the law enforcement and security sector.

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## ANNEXES

**Annex I: Profiles of selected individuals smuggled through Sudan, 2014–2016**

No.	Gender	Age	Nationality	Marital Status	Education Attainment	Intended Destination	Motivation
1	M	35	Somali	Married	University	Europe	Political - (escaped from detention)
2	M	21	Somali	Single	Secondary	Europe	Economic/political - (feared recruitment by Al Shabab)
3	M	18	Somali	Single	Secondary	Europe	Economic/political - (insecurity)
4	M	22	Somali	Single	Secondary	Europe	Economic/political - (insecurity)
5	M	18	Somali	Single	Basic	Europe	Economic/political - (insecurity)
6	M	24	Somali	Married (with 4 children)	Secondary	Europe	Physical/political - (beaten by Ethiopians when praying; arrested in Gedaref; taken to UNHCR safe house; left safe house)
7	M	27	Somali	Married (with 3 children)	Secondary	Europe, then Canada	Physical/political - (arrested in bus in Medani; handed to UNHCR; fled Shagarab camp)
8	F	22	Somali	Married (with 2 children)	Secondary	Libya, then Europe	Social - (planning to go to Khartoum on her way to Libya to join husband; fled camp)
9	F	21	Eritrean	Single	Secondary	Europe	Physical/political - (escape military service after being raped in military camp)
10	F	18	Eritrean	Single	Basic	Khartoum	Economic - (to find work)
11	M	25	Eritrean	Married	Basic	Khartoum	Political - (military deserter)
12	M	22	Eritrean	Single	Secondary	Norway	Political - (to avoid military service)
13	M	25	Eritrean	Single	Secondary	Khartoum	Political - (to avoid military service)
14	M	19	Eritrean	Single	Secondary	Israel	Economic/political
15	F	20	Eritrean	Single	Secondary	Libya, then France	Economic
16	M	28	Eritrean	Single	Basic	Europe	Economic/political - (lack of human rights; ethnic discrimination <sup>1</sup> )
17	M	31	Eritrean	Single	Basic	Europe	Economic/political
18	M	32	Eritrean	Single	Basic	Europe	Economic/political
19	M	25	Eritrean	Single	Basic	Europe	Economic/political - (to escape military service)
20	M	38	Eritrean	Married	University	Egypt, then Sweden	Political - (escaped army prison in Eritrea; now escaping Shagarab Camp to Khartoum)
21	F	24	Eritrean	Married (with 2 children)	Secondary	Libya	Social - (to join husband; left Shagarab Camp)
22	M	31	Eritrean	Married	Secondary	Khartoum	Economic/political - (was working in Khartoum, returned to Eritrea but was detained; returned back to Sudan & now fleeing refugee camp)
23	M	22	Eritrean	Single	Secondary	Israel	Not identified
24	M	20	Ethiopian	Single	Secondary	Khartoum	Economic/political - (fled from police following threat of deportation; currently working in a restaurant)
25	M	24	Ethiopian	Married (with 2 children)	Secondary	Netherlands	Social - (detained by security on bus to Khartoum; fled to Khartoum before returning to Gedaref; plans to go to Netherlands to join brother)

<sup>1</sup> Ethnic discrimination is a claim repeatedly made by Kunama tribe members.

**Annex II: Profiles of selected human smugglers and transporters in Sudan**

No.	Age	Ethnicity or tribe	Current residence	Current occupation(s)	Former occupation(s)	Operation area	Partners	Storage of Smuggling persons	Notes
1	35	Hamaseen	Wad Shariefai, Kassala	Farmer	Human smuggler (HS)	Sudanese border via Butana to Khartoum	He works with an Eritrean samsar, a <i>kashaf</i> , and a Sudanese government official	W. Shariefai, Galsa	5% of those he smuggled abroad were Sudanese
2	35	Rubatabi	Al Sawagi Al Janobiya, Kassala	Farmer	HS	Sudanese border to Kassala	He works with a Sudanese army major general	Kassala	The major general used his position to pass people through checkpoints
3	30	Beni Amir	Hai AlArab, Kassala	HS; taxi driver	Same	W. Shariefai via Kassala to Khartoum	He works with a group of Khartoum smugglers; with a HS in Kassala, a coordinator in Khartoum, a contact in a refugee camp, and a Sudanese government officer	Alsawagi	He uses the taxi as a cover; he was arrested once
4	43	Beni Amir	Al Shaabiya, Kassala	HS; truck driver	Same	Sudanese border to Kassala	Individual <i>gawad</i> (Ethiopian guide)	No storage (stay by the road)	—
5	29	Eritrean	Al Murabaat, Kassala	HS; across border Driver	Same	Sudanese border to Kassala	He works with a driver and his brother in Eritrea	Kassala	—
6	43	Shukri	Kassala	HS; NGO driver	Same	Between refugee camps and Kassala	He works with an Eritrean samsar within refugee camps and HSs in Kassala	Refugee camps, Kassala	He uses the NGO car; he stopped NGO work
7	26	Beni Amir	Awwad	HS; guardian of holding facility (“store”) for smuggled persons	Same	Eritrea via Kassala and El Girba to Khartoum	He works in a group of five under a trader who fixes the prices; his specific job is transport and storage	Border villages, Kassala, Girba (cost covered by trader)	He quit university studies to do HS; his family used to work in HS, so he uses his connections and knowledge of area
8	52	Artiga	Kassala (Khatmiya), Kassala	Shop owner, bus owner, landlord; HS (part-time)	HS (full-time); soldier	Eritrea via Kassala to Khartoum and beyond	He runs a network of over 20 HSs, including Eritreans, Sudanese policemen, and youth drivers; his drivers are Beni Amir (because they know the roads and the language)	Uses unemployed urban youth for storage in Kassala	He began HS activities while a soldier; made use of his dual Sudanese Eritrean nationality and relations with police for crossing permits and check points; arrested once, but released after bribing police

No.	Age	Ethnicity or tribe	Current residence	Current occupation(s)	Former occupation(s)	Operation area	Partners	Storage of Smuggling persons	Notes
9	42	Hamaseen (dual Eritrean and Sudanese nationality)	Wad Shariefai, Kassala	HS	Goods smuggler; Eritrean border guard	Eritrean interior via border areas to Kassala	He started individually, but now work with a Rashaida network (because the Rashaida reportedly pay better)	He has his own storage facilities in Kassala, Hafayer, and El Girba	He makes use of dual nationality and connection with Eritrean border guards
10	27	Aswarti Beni Amir	Wad Shariefai, Kassala	HS; goods smuggler	Truck driver	Eritrea to Kassala	He works with people from Eritrea for Rashaida when smuggling people; alone when smuggling goods	Not applicable (only transport)	He stated that he never hands persons he know or relatives to Rashaida
11	18	Ashraf	Ghasib , Kassala	HS; HS facilitator	Assistant truck driver	Ghasib and Kassala	He works as facilitator for Eritreans who want to stay in Kassala and have Sudanese national IDs; he shares 50% of the payment with driver	Ghasib and Kassala	He makes use of his father's family in Eritrea and knows the road and official linkages in Eritrea; he pays security officers; he does not work with Rashaida
12	25	Beni Amir	Murbaat, Kassala originally from Awwad	Owner of 6 shops (primary occupation); HS (part-time)	Previously Sudanese border police, Now HS	Eritrea to Kassala	He started as a facilitator for smugglers, then as a partner; he left the police force to work full-time as HS	Kassala (but provided by others)	He uses his connections in the border area to facilitate smuggling
13	32	Samarandi wab (Hadandawa)	Murbaat, Kassala	HS; trader and owner of several trucks (with family)	Goods smuggler	Eritrea to Kassala	He works with his brother (another HS who attracted him to the business), as well as for agents who pay all costs	Not applicable (only provides transport)	He is a law graduate; he uses his brother's connections and makes payments to police at checkpoints; he only works with migrants and agents who pay all costs
14	42	Samarandi wab	Wad Shariefai, Kassala	HS	Goods smuggler	Eritrea via Kassala and Gedaref camps to El Girba	He works with traffickers who facilitate the passage	Kassala, Laffa, and Awad (by HTs)	He knows the roads and language, has connections; he makes payments to security personnel but not involved in storage
15	36	Hawasa	Gedaref	HS (since 2010)	Teacher and raksha driver (until 2007); farmer; translator for smugglers	Network operates from Ethiopia via Gedaref to Khartoum and abroad	He was invited by a smuggler neighbour to translate; now he is part of the network	Gedaref and surrounding villages	Since he began working as HS, he married and bought a car, house, and farm; he only works with Somalis and views work as <i>halal</i>

No.	Age	Ethnicity or tribe	Current residence	Current occupation(s)	Former occupation(s)	Operation area	Partners	Storage of Smuggling persons	Notes
16	42	Northerner	Gedaref	HS	Local tax collector; HS (part-time)	Ethiopian border to Gedaref	He became engaged via a smuggler who rented a government car from him and became his partner; now he operates independently	Gedaref	He makes use of his knowledge about area and the government car; now he owns his own car as well as agricultural land
17	35	Dhabaina	Gedaref	HS	Driver; cigarette smuggler	Saraf Hamra via Gallabat to Gedaref	He transports migrants for a local official who works with a police officer	Gedaref (not involved, as he provides transport only)	He makes 2 trips/week (about 50 persons per trip)
18	30	Masaleet	Gallabat	HS	Sudanese border guard	Matamma via Kuneina to Gedaref	He operates with an Ethiopian group with a network from Ethiopia via Gedaref to Khartoum; the income is split equally between the three legs	Gedaref (operated seasonally)	He learned the trade while a border guard; he uses agricultural workers as a cover operation
19	36	Hamari	Gedaref	HS	Truck driver	Gedaref to Khartoum	He collaborates with an Ethiopian group in Matamma, as well as 2 Sudanese in Gedaref and Khartoum	Abu Anaja, Wad Sanad, Gedaref, and Idd Babiker in Kassala state; Khartoum state	He makes 2 trips/week (about 50 persons per trip); payments by the migrants are sometimes made to an agent in Khartoum; he communicates via WhatsApp; Now he owns 4 houses and 2 pickup trucks
20	38	Tama	Gurreisha	HS; farmer	Assistant truck driver; farmer	Ethiopian border via Alusra to Bereir or Wad Harri) and to Gedaref	He operates individually, using a motorbike; he may sometimes collaborate with one policeman	Not applicable	He only works during harvest season as a cover; he transports 2 persons a day



**Annex III: Routes, activities, and risks**

<b>Route or Area</b>	<b>Activities Occurring</b>	<b>Risks to Refugees and Migrants</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Police Presence</b>
Border areas near Kassala and Gedaref	Refugee infiltration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical abuse</li> <li>• Sexual/labour Exploitation</li> <li>• Abduction</li> </ul>	High	Absent
	Human smuggling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploitation</li> </ul>	Low	Absent
Collection and storage points in and around Kassala and Gedaref towns	Hiding migrants awaiting transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual exploitation of women (rape)</li> <li>• Financial exploitation (inflated costs of living expenses)</li> <li>• Forced labour</li> </ul>	Medium	Weak
Roads between the Kassala and Gedaref refugee camps	Official refugee transfer (by UN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed attacks</li> <li>• Abductions</li> </ul>	Low (although one convoy was attacked and refugees abducted)	Strong presence
Forest route between Kassala and Gedaref towns	Human smuggling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed attacks</li> <li>• Abductions</li> <li>• Trafficking</li> <li>• Torture</li> <li>• Blackmailing and ransom demands</li> <li>• Sexual exploitation of women</li> <li>• Killing and organ removal</li> </ul>	Very high	Very active (highest success rate in freeing refugees and foiling attacks) because of police continued surveillance and presence
Other roads in Kassala state and Gedaref state on the Butana plain	Smuggled transport of migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed attacks</li> <li>• Abductions</li> </ul>	Medium	Weak
Route from Gedaref to Khartoum via Gezira state and River Nile state	Human smuggling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual exploitation of women</li> <li>• Traffic accidents (due to speed, bad roads, darkness)</li> </ul>	Low (Rashaida rarely operate in northern Butana)	Weak
Khartoum	Hiding refugees or holding refugees in captivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual exploitation of women (rape and commercial sex)</li> <li>• Forced labour (men and women)</li> <li>• Torture</li> <li>• Financial exploitation</li> </ul>	Extremely high	Absent

Route or Area	Activities Occurring	Risks to Refugees and Migrants	Risk Level	Police Presence
Routes from Khartoum to Al Dabba and Dongola	Transportation of migrants (with smugglers in total control)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual exploitation of women (rape and abuse)</li> <li>• Torture</li> <li>• Families' blackmailing/Financial exploitation</li> </ul>	Very high (and migrants include Sudanese)	Active
Routes from Al Dabba and Dongola to Igdabia and Eliwainat (and then onwards to Libya, Egypt, or Israel)	Transportation of migrants (with smugglers in total control, including of water, food, and communication)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual exploitation of women (rape and abuse)</li> <li>• Torture</li> <li>• Killings</li> <li>• Financial exploitation (ransom demands)</li> <li>• Sales to traffickers</li> <li>• Getting lost in desert (leading to death)</li> </ul>	Extremely high (and migrants include Sudanese)	Absent

**Annex IV: Profiles of selected human traffickers, ex-traffickers, and trafficking facilitators in Sudan**

No	Age	Ethnicity or tribe	Current residence	Current occupation	Past Occupation	Operation	Entry into Market	Storage of Trafficked Persons	Additional Information
1	33	Lahawiyin	Al Swagi and Kamain	Human trafficker (HT) (full-time)	Goods smuggler, then HS (used to only work with females aged 18–25)	He obtains customers through paying samsars	After working as a HS, he joined AA's network; his work has developed from there to include HT arms and drugs smuggling	Al Kamain, Al Sawagi Al Shimaliy, and Al Janobiya	He claim to have ceased working as HS and HT after the network leader was arrested following a gunfire battle
2	50	Shaigiya	Not provided	Farmer; taxi driver in Swagi	HT	He is part of a network; his task is transport from the border to Kassala and storage until he is paid	An army officer linked him to the network	AlSwagi	He said that he stopped HT activities in 2013 after losing his army partner; the activities provided capital for his current business
3	42	Hamaseen (dual Eritrean and Sudanese nationality)	Not provided	HT	Eritrean border guard; HS	After the Eritrean government tightened the border crossing, he began to use camels for transporting goods and smuggling people	He started individually as a goods smuggler; he now works with Rashaida on the route via Al Hafair, because Rashaida pay better	He has his own storage facilities in several places in Kassala town	He has lived in Sudan for 20 years and makes use of his connections with Eritrean border guards
4	27	Aswarti and Beni Amir	Wad Shariefai	HS, HT, goods smuggler	Assistant truck driver	He smuggles goods from Sudan and smuggles humans from Eritrea	He works with Rashaida as samsara and facilitator, paying relatives on the border for assistance	Not applicable (only provides transport to Kassala)	He asserted that he never hands relatives to Rashaida
5	43	Beni Amir	Al Shaabiya	HS, HT	Truck driver+	He operates individually using his private car	He work individually using a <i>gawad</i> (Eritrean HS)	Hand them to traffickers with stores	
6	35	Beni Amir	Not provided	HS, HT store guardian	Same	He works with a network of five people, including government staff	Not provided	Transport and guard trafficked persons	He uses cars and motor bikes
7	45	Beni Amir	Not provided	Pastoralist; HS; HT	Same	He operates from the interior of Eritrea to Kassala and beyond; he owns safe houses and facilitates international trips, has agents in Eritrea, in Aldabba for travellers to Egypt, and in Butana for travellers to Khartoum), and has partners in security	He started HS by camel before enlarging the business	Some are kept in safe houses; others are sent to camps to be picked up later after they secure money	He uses three different mobile phones and gives codes for victims to use (in the local language); stated that knowing Tikrinja is an advantage in the business

No	Age	Ethnicity or tribe	Current residence	Current occupation	Past Occupation	Operation	Entry into Market	Storage of Trafficked Persons	Additional Information
8	52	Artiga (dual Sudanese and Eritrean nationality)	Khatmiya Kassala	HS full time; Shop and bus owner; landlord; HT (part-time)	HT (started in 2006); soldier	He runs a HS network and has attracted over 20 people to the business including Eritreans (for collection), policemen (for crossing permits and checkpoints), urban youth (for storage), and Beni Amir drivers who know the road and language)	He started on his own initiative while a soldier	Within Kassala	He was caught once, but was freed after paying bribes

## **Annex V: Testimonies of Some Smuggled and Trafficked Individuals**

### **1. M. A. M. (El Girba refugee camp, 11 July 2015)**

M. A. M. related the experience of his niece's abduction by Rashaida traders:

My niece crossed the border from Keren [Eritrea]. At the Al Laffa police station, she and her fellow passengers were sold to a Rashaida trader. The Rashaida took them to the desert and asked them for their telephone contacts at home.

My niece called and informed me that she had been abducted and was now with the abductor, who spoke to me and demanded SDG 30,000 [ca. US\$ 4,500]. I told him that I was a refugee living in a camp and could not afford that amount of money. He said, "If you want your daughter, you will pay. If not, we have a girl for free." I asked how I should give him the money, and he asked me to transfer it through the same number from which he made the call. For two days, I kept begging him to reduce the figure to SDG 15,000 [ca. US\$ 2,250]. Finally, I transferred SDG 10,000 [ca. US\$ 1,500]. I sold my wife's gold to pay the ransom. After he received the money, I asked him to hand me the girl in El Girba. He refused. He said, "The girl will be released in Mankoot in an hour, and if you failed to arrive on time, forget about the girl and the money you sent."

I took a taxi. When I arrived in Mankoot, the smuggler asked me to drive towards Kassala and to stop at the first fuel station. When I arrived there, I found my niece. I called him, but his number had been disconnected.

I do not know what they did to her. She is in good health, except for the beating that left marks on her body. She and her fellow prisoners were only fed one piece of bread each per day. After her release, she went to Khartoum, where she lives with her aunt. She was only able to tell us that the prisoners were sold by the police to the Rashaida. She said they [she and her fellow passengers] were tricked from the start by a car driver, who told them he was going to Kassala. They paid him the fees for transport, but they were taken directly to the police station instead. It seems there was an agreement between the driver, the police, and the trafficker.

Although the name of the Rashaida trafficker is known, we did not inform the police of the incident because we know others who have reported incidents and did not get any help. I have a nephew who disappeared the same way. His family paid the ransom and informed the police. Because they did that, all of those who were abducted were released except my nephew, who is still missing.

A few days ago, I saw some Ethiopians who were released after paying ransom to Rashaida abductors. They cannot move because of the torture they were subjected to.

## **2. K. (from a cell at the police station in Kassala)**

At the time of the interview, K. was a 15-year-old Eritrean boy and a survivor of the armed attack of a UNHCR vehicle transporting refugees to the Shagarab refugee camp on 4 June 2015. He related the story of the experience of himself and his 14-year-old cell mate:

In search for security, we crossed the Sudanese border from Eritrea and immediately handed ourselves to the Sudanese police. We were 12—eight boys and four girls, all between 14 and 20 years old. The border police handed us to UNHCR, which brought two vehicles to take us to the Shagarab refugee camp, six in each vehicle. The two of us (the youngest boys) and the four girls were in one car. About 15 minutes after the cars started moving, just after midday, we heard gunshots and our car was under attack. Everyone tried to run, but we were caught by a group from the Rashaida, who attacked the cars. We spent the first day in a forest; then, they took us to a place known as Sageea'a [known to the police] where they kept us in a deep pit. We spend the day in the pit and we slept outside it during the night. During the days, when the pit was in the sun, we were tied to trees by chains. Each day the four girls were taken to sleep with the Rashaida men.

We were kept for 22 days in the pit. During that period, they contacted our families who seem to have paid the ransom because we were allowed to stay outside after that, although we were still chained. A week later, we were released in a forest. We walked for two days until we reached a Hadendawa village and told our story. They received us and alerted the authorities, who came and collected us. And here we are.

## **3. M. H. (El Girba refugee camp)**

At the time of the interview Mohammed, a Sudanese man in his 20s, lived in the El Girba refugee camp. He was a trafficking and sea trip survivor. He had decided to travel abroad to improve his life and obtained a contract for transport in Saudi Arabia. While in Khartoum to process his papers, a group of friends convinced him to travel to Libya and Italy. This is his story:

We made an agreement with an Eritrean samsar from camp 26. He took us to Suq Libya to a Sudanese samsar, who took us with a group of Eritreans and Ethiopians to the northern side of Omdurman. At midnight on 3 March 2014, we all started the trip towards Dongola. We were stopped at a checkpoint, where police took all the mobile phones, watches, and cash of the Eritreans and Ethiopians before allowing us to pass.

We spent one day in Dongola, where we bought our food—even though we had paid for it in advance. Some of us did not have money. We lived on the biscuits we paid for. The next day, we were taken in a large truck, and after five days we arrived in Al Oweinat (Al Muthalath). Six Land Cruisers arrived to take us further. There were about 50 of us divided among the Land Cruisers. When we arrived at the resting point within Sudan, we found others there, divided into groups of 25. All the women (of which there were about 25) were separated from

the others in an area called “al Tarkeena,” where they were raped. When we objected, we were beaten and told “this route is not for Sudanese.”

The girls were raped one by one by the 13 men in charge (five Sudanese and eight Rashaida). This happened before our eyes just a few metres away. The girls were also severely and continually beaten from the afternoon to the morning. When one of the Sudanese men (from Gezira) went to them and told them that what they were doing was unacceptable, he was shot dead. We were not allowed to bury his body until two days later, after much begging. We told his family about this incident after we reached Libya. One of the girls also committed suicide after being raped. By the time we reached Libya six individuals had died, some of hunger.

We arrived in Ajdabiya [Libya] on April 1 and were taken directly to prison. The women were classified by age into different rooms, and all of them were raped by the Libyan prison guards. All the prisoners’ families were contacted and told to pay SDG 6,000 [ca. US\$ 900]. They were told that if the payments were not made, the prisoners would be beaten. After payments were made, we were released and asked if we want to go to Cafeteria Kassala (owned by people from Kassala) or Cafeteria Al Sanaiya (owned by people from western Sudan). We chose Al Sanaiya because we were told that Cafeteria Kassala was a trafficking point.

An old man gave SDG 1,000 [ca. US\$ 150] to my brother Abdel Rahman for us to get a taxi to Bengazi. But we wanted to go to Tripoli, so we returned to Ajdabiya and hired a taxi for SDG 10,000 [ca. US\$ 1,500] to take us to Ajdabiya, along with five Ethiopian girls who were related to the smuggler who had organised the trip. Because we protected those girls, the smuggler organised a sea trip for us at a discounted rate of US\$ 1,000. We were taken to a place called Kramain, where we found about 100 persons and several smugglers. We and about 50 other persons were kept in an 8 by 5 metre room with no windows and no fan and during Ramadan.

One of the smugglers (from Asawrta, Eritrea) used to smuggle people from Kassala to Sinai through Saudi Arabia, until he was deported on a drug case. He took us to a bigger Saudi samsar, who owned the boat that was to take us to Italy. After 12 days, we were taken to a farm 135 kilometres east of Tripoli. When our total number reached 185, we were taken to a dock of the Libyan Navy, where a Libyan officer who worked with the Saudi smuggler met us.

The next day, we were given a mobile telephone that would work at sea (a Thuraya device), along with emergency numbers of the Libyan, Tunisian, and Italian coast guards. We were told that we would be taken to an island where small boats would be waiting to take us to the Italian shore. After about 300 miles into the sea (and 80 miles before reaching international waters), the ship broke down. We did not have life jackets, although we had paid for them. One of the

Eritrean passengers had already fixed the ship twice, but he could not fix the ship after the third breakdown.

We sent out May Day calls, but both the Italian and Tunisian coast guards responded that the ship was not in international waters. At first, the ship's captain refused to take us towards Tunisia (a distance of only 40 kilometres) because he feared arrest. Ten minutes after the captain finally started moving towards Tunisia, the boat capsized and soon sank. We immediately started to see dead bodies. We swam from 2 AM until morning, helping some passengers who could not swim. Some of the passengers died before a wave scattered us. By morning only two of my Kassala friends remained and two were confirmed dead. At 11 AM, we saw an oil ship. After tying the dead bodies together, we started to swim towards the ship, which we reached after another one and a half hours. The ship picked us up but refused to carry the dead bodies, instead asking us to call the Tunisians. The ship called the Libyans, and four small boats arrived. After my friend and I put on life jackets, we started to put the bodies into the boats. When we tried to raise a body partly eaten by fish, the Libyans refused and took off, leaving us in the water. After a while, one boat came back and picked us up.

Only 23 of us survived. My friend Ibrahim and I saved eight of them. Ibrahim and I were the only two Muslims; all other survivors were Christians. Because we were only two, we could not bury all 80 bodies we had found, so we went to the prison for help. After all bodies had been buried in one grave, we were taken as prisoners in the Al Khubz prison. I was almost paralysed. However, a friend from the Um Gargour refugee camp took care of me and a Sudanese woman. The woman's brother was a doctor and was able to provide medical attention.

Four days later, one of the Saudi smugglers came to the prison. A Sudanese man had sent him there to ask about his brother. Through him, the families were informed about those who died and my survival. I later learned that the Saudi smuggler waited outside the prison to pay our fines, so that he could blackmail our families again to pay ransoms. He sent one of his aides inside the prison with a cell phone and US\$ 1,200. I took the cash and cell phone after threatening to tell the prison officers that he was the smuggler (and threatening that he would be shot immediately). After 12 days, and following prayer, a Sudanese came and asked about my name. He was smuggler originally from El Girba. He got me out of prison for free (even though I was supposed to pay US\$ 1,000 to the Libyans).

I tried to find the Saudi smuggler, but when he discovered this, he alerted the Libyan police to follow me. I then tried to go to the Sudanese embassy to obtain a temporary visa, but that embassy in Al Khubz does not treat people like human beings. Rather, you pass through several samsars to get to them. Finally, I was able to get to Misrata, where Ibrahim and I were able to get temporary exit visas and (through smugglers) left for Cairo. From Cairo, I took a plane to Sudan. Ibrahim crossed the sea and went to Europe, as was requested by his brother who lived in Israel.



#### **4. Mohamed Ibrahim Egail**

Mohammed, a Sudanese man, related the story of his 17-year-old brother:

My brother was in his second year of secondary school. He told us [his family] that during a school holiday he was going to travel to Khartoum with money he had to buy some mobile phones to start a trading business. After arriving in Khartoum, he called to tell us that he was traveling to Libya. Soon after that, we lost contact with him.

After three days, somebody called to tell us that my brother was with him, and we would have to pay for his trip to Libya. We asked to hear his voice. The man on the line said, “That is not possible now, but he will contact you as soon as we arrive in Libya.” We followed the news, and 11 days later we heard that a car had been stopped by police on the Libyan border. We were able to obtain the telephone number of one person in the car (Gibriel). We called the number and Gibriel confirmed my brother’s presence and that Gibriel would return him to Sudan, but only if we covered all of the costs, including the payment of bribes to the authorities. Gibriel demanded US\$ 1,000 along with additional funds for food and water. We agreed to pay SDG 6,000 [ca. US\$ 900].

Gibriel then left my brother to be captured by Sudanese police near Dongola. He was taken by a joint police, military, and security force and kept in a military camp.

I tried to retrace my brother’s steps to find him. I contacted an Ethiopian whose family was from Gedaref and lives in Gabra [a town in Khartoum state], since my brother had stayed with him. The Ethiopian took me to a Zaghawa samsar in Omdurman. I was forced to join 72 persons in a garage and I was not allowed to leave. After three days, the number of people in the garage reached 92. At that time, we were all taken in a motorbus (*daffar*) to a point north of Omdurman. A sheep was slaughtered there, and we had a good meal. Afterwards, we all boarded a [Hino] ZY truck and started the trip to Dongola. We were accompanied by a guide who knew the road and had a Thuraya [satellite] device. The truck broke down twice. The first time, a Toyota Box brought us a new battery. The second time, the police arrived, caught us, and took us to Dongola. I was able to find my brother in the army camp in Dongola. A week later, all the 87 remaining persons were returned to Khartoum, except the driver and the guide, who were detained by police. Because my brother was under age, he was released without any payment or punishment. The police kept those older than 18 (both Sudanese and foreigners). The trip to Dongola and back took 15 days.

#### **5. Other stories from refugees living in camp (Kilo 26)**

Interviews were conducted with 15 individuals residing within Kilo 26 refugee camps. In all camps visited, refugees complained of a lack of basic services, especially limited access to water and poor food. In addition, the health and education services and shelter offered in refugee

camps in Sudan are extremely poor. Even worse, several interviewees related tales of favouritism and even terrorisation by camp personnel. Consider the following examples:

- At the time of her interview, Lamlam was in her 50s and suffered from cancer. She had five children, including one disabled child. She had resided in the camp since 2003, awaiting resettlement in vain. She said that she questions the indicators used for resettlement prioritisation.
- B. T. was another interviewee from the refugee camp. He told an interviewer that money is what governs the relationship between refugees and UNHCR staff. For example, he explained that refugees who pay can have their applications for resettlement processed faster and are able to go to the country of their choice.
- In an interview S. S. explained that she and her husband came to Sudan after her husband was detained in Eritrea. S. S. was abducted and raped inside the camp. SS tried to commit suicide after her husband was abducted from within the refugee camp, because when she informed the camp manager of his abduction, she was accused of lying.
- K. K., who lives in a very difficult psychological state, refused to mention his name because of fear of retaliation by security officers at the camp (26). He explained that camp security officers had previously tried to rape his wife in front of him. When he objected, this created problems for him with the camp administration and complicated his life in the camp. He accused camp staff of misuse of authority.

Although several refugees interviewed (both those listed above and others) indicated that they had made complaints to UNHCR Kassala about the shortages of basic necessities and the terrorisation practiced by camp security personnel, they all explained that they received no response.

## Annex VI: List of Individuals Interviewed

Individual(s) Interviewed	Position or Title	Interview Place(s)	Interview Date(s)
<b>Security Sector Personnel</b>			
(Judge) Al Sadig Abdel Rahman AlFaki	Head of Major Crimes Court	Kassala	2016
(Dr.) Khairiya Ahmed Mohammed	Head of Public Attorney Office	Kassala	2016
(Major General) Awad Al Meftah Nur Alhuda	Chief of Police Intelligence	Kassala	2016
(Ms.) Saadiya Muktar	Project officer, Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Project	Kassala	2015
Abdel Azim Ahmed Ali	COR Director	Kassala	2015
<b>Media</b>			
Ahmed Shakspear	Journalist	Kassala	2015
Ahmed Bamint	Journalist	Kassala	2015
<b>Other Individuals</b>			
Ramadan Ahmed Ramadan	Lawyer and activist	Kassala	2015
Mohammed Al Hassan	Retired teacher; <i>omda</i> (village chief)	Kassala	2015
Al Sheikh Salim	Rashaida <i>omda</i>	Abu Dahan	2015
Salah Mahmoud	Activist	Kassala	2015
Abdel Fattah Mahmoud Idris	Father of a trafficking survivor	Kassala	2015
<b>Anonymous Interviews</b>			
28 anonymous human traffickers, ex-traffickers, and/or facilitators		Kassala	2016
72 anonymous human smugglers and/or transporters		Kassala, Gedaref, and Dongola	2015-2016
16 anonymous trafficking victims		Kassala, Gedarif	2015-2016
108 anonymous smuggled migrants		Kassala, Gedarif, Shagarab, Kilo 26	2014, 2015, 2016
15 anonymous refugees in camps and reception centres		Kilo 26	2016
8 anonymous NGOs or CSOs members		Kassala and Gedaref	2015-2016

Sudan has long been a hub for individuals from the Horn of Africa on their way to north Africa, Europe, and beyond, and this has only increased in recent years. In particular, eastern Sudan often serves as a passage for migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia who seek to reach Europe and/or Israel. In addition, Sudanese themselves are increasingly using international networks to leave their homes to seek new lives abroad. For example, from 2014 to 2015, the number of Sudanese reaching Italy by sea rose from 2,370 to 8,370—and increase of over 250%.

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