

Impacts of Conflict on Natural Resources and Livelihoods in North Darfur



University of Medical Sciences and Technology
Faculty of Economics, Social and
Environmental Studies
Department of Environmental Studies
Khartoum, Sudan



As of 5 January 2015, IDMC (internal displaced monitoring center) estimated that there were 3,100,000 IDPs in Sudan.

This includes figures in the region of Darfur and the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

In 2013, at least 319,700 people were internally displaced because of flooding in 15 states, exceeding the total of 238,000 for the period 2008-2012.

Food insecurity and seasonal drought were also thought to contribute to population movements, but here again no data is available. As of August 2014, floods had already displaced at least 82,400 people.

- At the present time, almost 2.4 million Darfurians are internally displaced – about one-third of the population.
- Around 250,000 Darfurian refugees are living in refugee camps in Chad, with additional thousands living in villages inside the Chadian border and dispersed throughout the country.
- In addition, there are an unknown number of Darfurians who have been displaced outside of Darfur throughout Sudan which have received very little attention, in part because of traditional labor migration patterns.
- And there are around 180,000 internally displaced Chadians and approximately 25,000 Chadians who have sought shelter in Darfur.

The climate of Darfur ranges from arid in the far north, to semi-arid in the south.

It is characterized by high temperatures, high evaporation (typically 4–12 mm/day) and regular seasonal, but highly variable, rainfall.

From the 1960s to the mid-1980s annual average rainfall decreased by around 30%.

Since then it appears to have partially recovered, but is still significantly lower than in the 1950s, especially at El Fasher.

Introduction

This research is investigating the impacts of conflicts on the environment and the livelihoods of people in North Darfur State which is located in the western part of Sudan and covers an area of 296,420Kms.

The majority of the state population are considered as rural and nomads (2,165,539) while only 351,594 (El Fashir town) are considered as urban population.



Map showing North Darfur State

Objective

Main objective:

- To assess the impacts of conflicts on natural resources and livelihoods of the affected population in Elfasher locality –North Darfur for the period between 2003- 2014.

Specific Objectives

- Assess the current status of the land, forests and pasture lands.

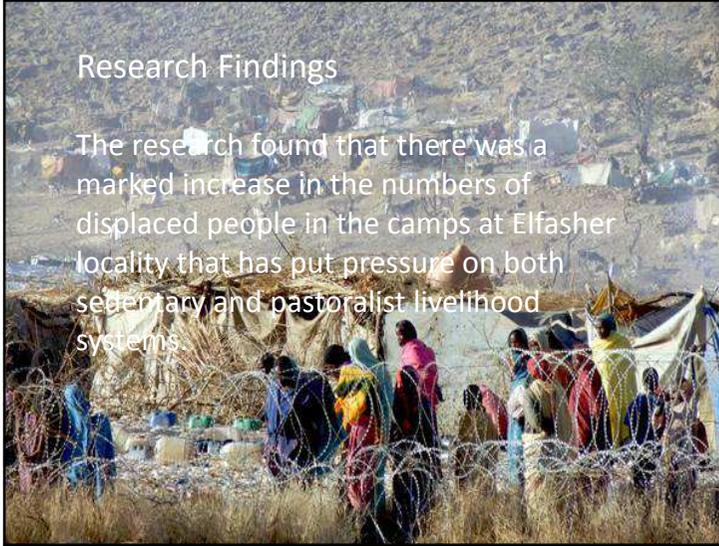
Research Methodology

The research process was built on a participatory approach engaging mixed techniques and combining both quantitative and qualitative aspects, : key methods used are Key informant interview (KII)and focal group discussions(FGDs).

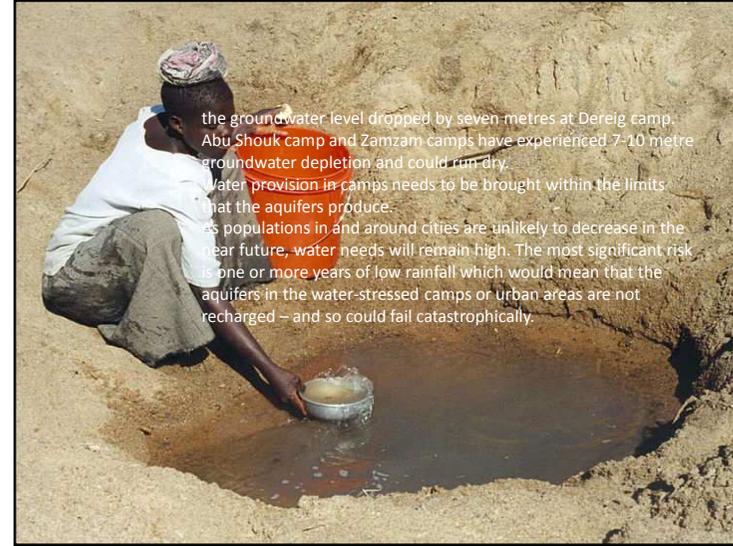
This in addition to secondary data collected from reports, baseline surveys and studies from relevant stakeholders.

Research Findings

The research found that there was a marked increase in the numbers of displaced people in the camps at Elfasher locality that has put pressure on both sedentary and pastoralist livelihood systems.



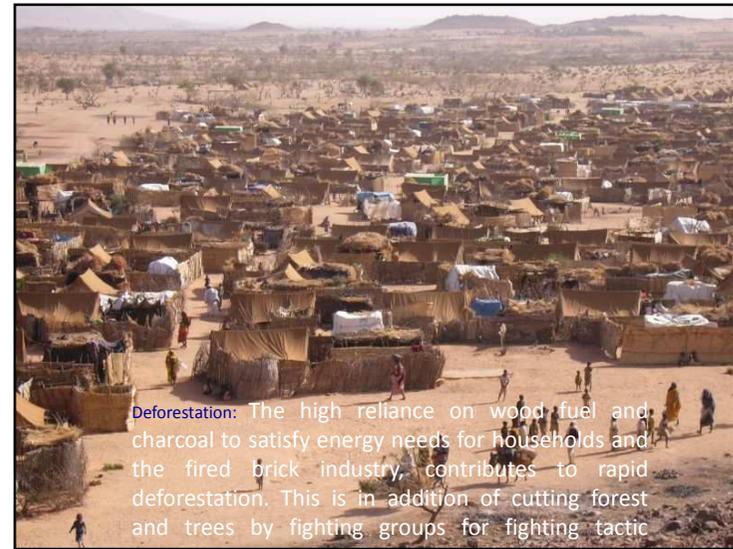
the groundwater level dropped by seven metres at Dereig camp. Abu Shouk camp and Zamzam camps have experienced 7-10 metre groundwater depletion and could run dry. Water provision in camps needs to be brought within the limits that the aquifers produce. As populations in and around cities are unlikely to decrease in the near future, water needs will remain high. The most significant risk is one or more years of low rainfall which would mean that the aquifers in the water-stressed camps or urban areas are not recharged – and so could fail catastrophically.



Findings continued

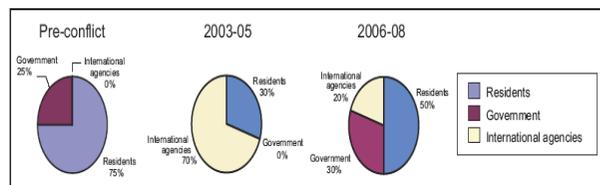


Abushouk Camps. N. Darfur



Deforestation: The high reliance on wood fuel and charcoal to satisfy energy needs for households and the fired brick industry, contributes to rapid deforestation. This is in addition of cutting forest and trees by fighting groups for fighting tactic

Figure 3. Growth in demand for bricks during the conflict years – estimates by brick kiln operators in El Fasher



Source: interviews with brick kiln operators, El Fasher



Destruction of Natural and physical assets: Natural and physical assets are being destroyed as a feature of the war – farmers’ crops are grazed by pastoralists’ livestock, rangeland is burnt to prevent grazing and hand pumps are destroyed.



Livelihoods: Crisis livelihood strategies have short-term horizons, undermining the natural resource base.

Findings continued

- **Animal route blocked:** Migration routes are blocked, leading to overgrazing in areas where livestock are concentrated.
- **Women vulnerabilities increased:** Women are the most affected by conflict and environmental degradation since they burden the cooking for the family and if the head of the household died they take the responsibly. Cultivation, animal rearing, collection of water and fire wood for cooking are also handled by women.
- **Deteriorating of water access:** The available water resources in the stat are very much constrained by wide seasonal and annual variations, poor accessibility, limited capacities of water storages facilities and infrastructures. These factors result into localized water abundances, but spatially (in time and space), scarcity and vulnerability to climatic fluctuations.

Findings continued



Collecting water; Zamzum Camp- Elfasher

Limitations and constrains

The key constrain for this research was the security situation which impacted some process of data collection (questionnaire) negatively.

Conclusion and recommendation

- Humanitarian programs in Darfur needs to make stronger linkages between conflict, protection, livelihoods and environment in addition to Impacts assessment in each area.

Recommendations continued

- Open the blocked livestock routes using the conflict sensitive approach with the participation of all stakeholders including farmers, pastoralist settlers and others, to reduce the pressure on limited rangeland and pasture and hence prevent the potential conflict which again impacted the livelihoods and environment negatively.

