

Tarshana Project Update

November 2022



Source: UN OCHA Sudan

“We have many ethnic groups in Sudan. Here in Tarshana we are open to building a network with other communities. We want peace in Darfur, but the doors have always been locked to us. In Tarshana we did not have a platform where we can communicate with others. So, we want NP to come here more. We do not only want humanitarian aid but also aid for our minds”

Participant in community protection training evaluation exercise on November 22 in Tarshana

NP conducted its first scoping mission to West Darfur in El Geneina and Kereneik in July 2022, marking the beginning of the operationalisation of Unarmed Civilian Protection in West Darfur. Kereneik locality is a hot spot, having witnessed two major cycles of violence in December 2021 and in April 2022. Tarshana is an underserved nomadic area within Kereneik locality, approximately 20 km from Kereneik town.

Most of the current disputes in the Tarshana area are over natural resources, access to land, issues related to migratory routes and crops, and perceived deep-rooted inequalities with Kereneik town, inhabited by non-Arab, farmer communities. Through close communication and analysis with the community, NP is implementing awareness raising activities on protection, GBV and peaceful coexistence, community protection trainings, and protective patrols, to respond to the challenges they face (see below for details), and to enhance the safety and security of at-risk communities in Tarshana

while promoting non-violent responses to conflict and enhance social cohesion among nomadic and non-arab farmer communities.

Increased Humanitarian Access

NP is currently the only organization with long-term static presence of international staff in Kereneik locality. NP has established an office base in Kereneik with a mix of international alongside national staff roving between Kereneik (3-4 days a week), and El Geneina.

NP has a forward-leaning approach to conflict response by embedding staff within the community for extensive relationship building as well as acceptance and trust. NP’s civilian-to-civilian action radically centres those most affected by violence, using relationships and encouragement, rather than violence and fear, to open safe spaces for reimagining safety and security. This approach has had significant impact in increasing access for other humanitarian agencies in the locality. Many organizations that had previously been operating in Kereneik and surrounding areas before the April 2022 attack had either halted operations entirely, or significantly limited their presence. Others had grown to rely on the use of armed escorts due to the perceived heightened security risk in the area. NP, using its UCP principles, specifically the core principle of nonpartisanship, has been able to negotiate



independent access with local authorities. Other organisations have now returned to the locality, often without armed escorts, in large part attributable to NP's efforts. With greater humanitarian presence, and less visibility of armed actors in their presence, the community feels a greater sense of security and their freedom of movement has improved.

"As part of my work, I attended the NP trainings in Rosi, Galala and now Tarshana. have seen that the good thing is that NP tries to contribute towards building peace while other organizations focus on material aid. NP's work can help people work on creating peace that in turn helps them get their own income rather than relying on aid,"

HAC Representative during a certificate giving ceremony on 15 November in Tarshana, West Darfur after completion of NP training



Community Protection Meetings

Through a series of consultative community protection meetings held in Tarshana, the community identified the following protection risks and vulnerabilities:

- Reproductive health is a major concern; there is only one formally trained doctor in Tarshana, and infant / mother mortality rates are high.

- Limited access to healthcare; the local health centre in Tarshana only has access to basic medicine for malaria and pain killers.
- Community members, particularly women and girls, fear for their safety when farming the land, and in accessing services in Kereneik, (e.g. the market and hospital), due to the threat of assault and harassment from non-Arab communities in the area. There has been some improvement recently, but a perceived threat remains.
- The three water pumps in Tarshana are not functional.
- In most *damras* (nomadic villages), households share the watering points with animals, consuming water that is unfit for human consumption.
- The community raised their concerns about the high level of food insecurity. West Darfur has the highest prevalence of food insecurity in Sudan, with 65% of the population at risk, and Kereneik locality, including Tarshana, is greatly affected.² Based on these protection risks and vulnerabilities, NP will use its relationships with the humanitarian community and local authorities to advocate for the improvement of conditions in Tarshana, NP will also continue to work side-by-side with the community to co-create and develop responsive solutions to these concerns, so the community itself may be able to address these issues, including through engaging in their own advocacy.

Community Protection Trainings (CPTs)

The recently launched trainings in Tarshana are contributing to improvements in knowledge, attitude, and skills that can improve the ability of the Tarshana community to collectively respond to violence. The trainings have encouraged healthy discussions among participants around actionable nonviolent strategies for violence reduction and prevention and led to an increased willingness to reflect on and address the human needs of conflicting parties. The need to engage all parties to the conflict as well as communities

affected by violence was recognized by participants as key to creating a safe and secure environment in which everyone contributes to maintaining peace.

“In the eyes of the community, boys are not supposed to be going to fetch water. This is a form of cultural violence,”

A female participant during community protection training day in Tarshana on 08 November 2022

NP considers ‘Women, Peace and Security’ to be a core part of its work because gender-based violence is often perpetuated by cycles of violence that the organization works to interrupt. Nomadic women represent a demographic that is least seen and heard within Sudan. The trainings created a safe space for women and men in the community to reflect on culturally gendered

roles, positive practices that can be reinforced, and negative practices that lead to cultural violence. As mitigation measures, participants expressed their commitment to establish girls’ and boys’ clubs in the school.



Success story: Networking as a Protection Tool in Tarshana

A participant from the nomadic community reflected on how he had applied the community protection training in his day-to-day life. A few days after the training, he met a farmer from Kereneik in his farm. The participant took initiative and approached the farmer despite the existing tensions between nomads and farmers in Kereneik and Tarshana. The participant assisted the farmer in loading watermelons onto his truck as they got to know each other.

Afterwards, they exchanged phone numbers and the participant asked the farmer to alert him in case he found any animals from the nomads trespassing on his farm, since this is a common source of conflict during the current agricultural season across Darfur. A few days later the farmer called the participant to seek his assistance since 60 cattle had invaded some of the Kereneik farmers’ land. The farmer urged the farmers not to take any violent response. The participant then resolved the issue with other Tarshana residents. The participant attributed this nonviolent response to the NP training he had attended on networking with diverse groups as a protection tool.