

## Urgent alert on imminent threats to civilians in Darfur, Sudan

**SUDAN, November 7, 2023—As violence against civilians and the risk of mass atrocities escalates across Darfur, Nonviolent Peaceforce urges the international community to urgently press the safe movement of civilians from El Fasher.**

Over the last two weeks, the threat of mass atrocities against civilians in the Darfur region has rapidly escalated, including in Nyala (South Darfur) and in El Fasher (North Darfur). As fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) spreads in the region, civilians are trapped without food and water, and unable to safely move away from active fighting or from armed forces who pose a real threat to them. There is an urgent need to establish safe movement for civilians, and the international community needs to press for safe pathways (for civilians as well as supplies) with parties to the conflict.

“Safe passage has become all but impossible for civilians. Civilian neighborhoods, schools and hospitals are being targeted, and people have no way to reach safety,” said Nic Pyatt, the Head of Mission for NP in Sudan. “People are being trapped in the city as the conflict reaches their doorstep, with no access to water, humanitarian aid or medical services.”

There is particular concern about civilians in El Fasher, which has seen a rapid increase in its civilian population in recent months as displaced communities have sought safety in the area. Many of those who have sought safety in the town are from ethnic groups that have been targeted by armed groups, and who face grave danger as militias encircle the town.

Without safe passage, and robust demands from the international community for protection of civilians and safe movement, civilians face grave risks of violence

and mass atrocities. This would likely mirror atrocities perpetrated in El Geneina earlier in the conflict, where the bodies of at least 1000 civilians have been discovered in mass graves in recent months. Women and girls face widespread targeting for sexual violence.

Civilians report an ongoing humanitarian disaster. Overnight, the main water supply to El Fasher was cut, depriving civilians of water. People face severe additional shortages of food, fuel and medicine. Thousands of civilians displaced from the surrounding area have no access to shelter, existing in the streets amid ongoing shelling and gunfire. Throughout El Fasher, people are suffering from life-threatening illnesses – including dengue fever, malaria, and typhoid – with no access to medical services. Telecommunications are largely unavailable, making it difficult for civilians to receive information about ongoing threats and to make informed decisions about their safety and movements.

**Without international action, these conditions will continue to deteriorate. The window of opportunity for action is narrow, and efforts to arrest the conflict must be dedicated, coordinated, and immediate. As the Jeddah talks continue, international actors must urgently intervene to arrest the ongoing violence, provide for safe movement, and protect civilians.**

## **Contact**

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*NP is an international protection agency. Our mission is to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies, build peace side-by-side with local communities, and advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity.*