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Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery
Governance

Sudan Country Profile

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About this report

This report was prepared by Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab Research Fellow in Antislavery Law and Policy), Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab Associate Director), and Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab Research Fellow).

The report is based primarily on research conducted from 2020-2021 and may not therefore consider more recent emerging evidence.

The authors welcome enquiries on the report and the project more broadly, which may be directed to Katarina Schwarz at Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk

About the project

The report was produced to support the research project ‘Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery Governance in the UK and the Top 20 UK Source Countries’, funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. The research team consisted of Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab, University of Nottingham), Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab), Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab), Alexandra Williams-Woods (CSIS, University of Liverpool), and Prof Jean Allain (Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull).

The **Rights Lab** is a University of Nottingham “Beacon of Excellence” and home to the world’s largest and leading group of modern slavery researchers. Through its five research programmes, impact team, and INSPIRE project, the Rights Lab is underpinning antislavery with an advanced research agenda, collaborating with civil society, business, and government, and elevating survivor-informed research as a key part of knowledge production to help end slavery.

The **Wilberforce Institute** at the University of Hull aims to advance fundamental knowledge of slavery and emancipation, informing policy, business practice and public debate at local, national and international levels. The Wilberforce Institute brings together experts in humanities, law and social sciences to help tackle this global problem head on

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1. Overview of antislavery in Sudan

1.1. The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery¹

	Vulnerability		Prevalence			Government response	
	Ranking ²	Score ³	Ranking ⁴	Absolute ⁵	/1000 ⁶	Ranking ⁷	Rating ⁸
2013	6	77.76	22	264,518	7.11	-	-
2014	3	82.6	8	429,000	11.30	150	C
2016	5	66.49	6	454,700	11.3	-	CC
2018	7	87.1	14	465,000	12.0	-	C

Although the nature of modern slavery makes measuring the phenomenon an inherently difficult task, the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index (GSI) aims to provide the 'best available data and information about the scale and regional distribution of modern slavery'.⁹ This includes **national prevalence estimates** of the number of people experiencing modern slavery in each country, calculated on the basis of a predictive model that accounts for individual and country-level risk factors.

National prevalence estimates are analysed in the context of results of Walk Free's **Vulnerability Model**. This model uses 'statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery'.¹⁰ The 2018 Vulnerability Model features five factors, made up of 23 distinct variables: governance issues, lack of basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict.

Walk Free also tracks **government responses** to modern slavery, tracking government efforts across five milestones: (1) survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of slavery; (2) criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery; (3) coordination occurs at the national and regional level, and governments are held to account for their response; (4) risk factors such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed; and (5) government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.¹¹

It should be noted that the scope, methodology, and sources underpinning GSI findings has changed over the years. This means that data between different reporting years is not directly comparable.

¹ Walk Free Foundation, 'The Global Slavery Index 2013' (2013), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2014' (2014), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2016' (2016), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2018' (2018), available [here](#).

² Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates high vulnerability relative to other countries.

³ Note: a higher score indicates increased vulnerability to modern slavery, with a median country score of 47.28 in 2018

⁴ Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates a high number of people experiencing modern slavery per 1000 in the overall population relative to other countries.

⁵ Note: absolute prevalence measures the estimated number of people experiencing modern slavery in the country.

⁶ Note: prevalence /1000 measures the number of people estimated to experience modern slavery per 1000 people in the overall population.

⁷ Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates better government responses to modern slavery relative to other countries.

⁸ Note: government response ratings are broken into scoring bands, with an A rating representing the strongest government response to modern slavery (with a score of 70-79.9), followed by BBB (60-69.9), BB (50-59.9), B (40-49.9), CCC (30-39.9), CC (20-29.9), C (10-19.9), and D (<0-9.9).

⁹ Walk Free Foundation, 'Global Findings' (2018), available [here](#).

¹⁰ Walk Free Foundation, 'Methodology: Vulnerability' (2018), available [here](#).

¹¹ Walk Free Foundation, 'Methodology: Government Response' (2018), available [here](#).

1.2. TIP Rankings 2001-2019¹²



The Trafficking in Persons report ranks countries into one of four tiers, as mandated by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (TVPA). A country's ranking is based on an assessment of the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons, rather than on the extent of trafficking within the country, and considers government action against the TVPA's minimum standards.¹³

Tier 1: Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, the country must continue to make progress in its anti-trafficking efforts each year.

Tier 2: countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:

- (a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- (b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or
- (c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.

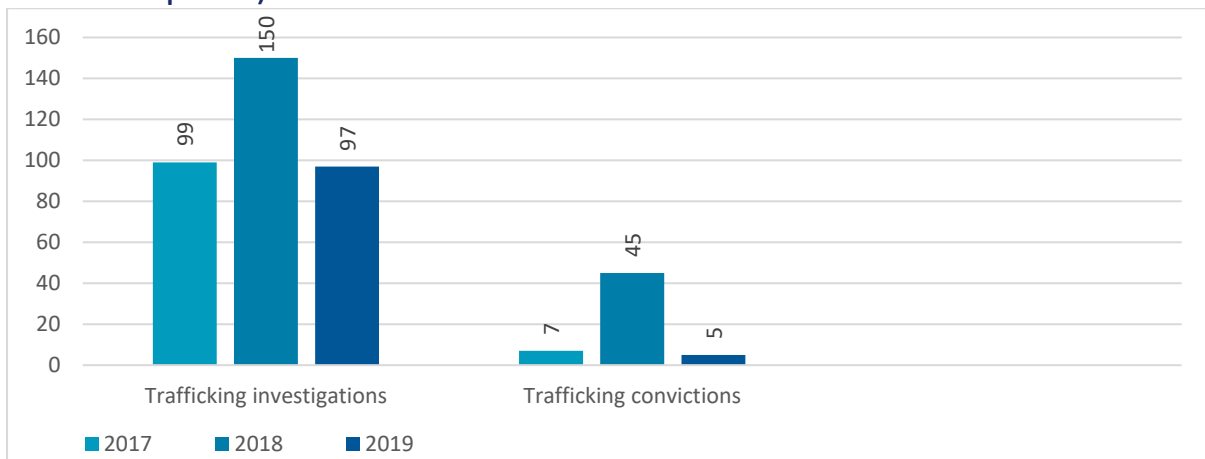
Tier 3: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. Countries ranked as Tier 3 may be subjected to restrictions on non-humanitarian, non-trade foreign assistance from the US. Impositions of such restrictions are determined by the President.¹⁴

¹² US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report' (2020), available [here](#); (2019) available [here](#); (2018), available [here](#); (2017), available [here](#); (2016), available [here](#); (2015), available [here](#); (2014), available [here](#); (2013), available [here](#); (2012), available [here](#); (2011), available [here](#); (2010), available [here](#); (2009), available [here](#); (2008), available [here](#); (2007), available [here](#); (2006), available [here](#); (2005), available [here](#); (2004), available [here](#); (2003), available [here](#); (2002), available [here](#); (2001), available [here](#).

¹³ Minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are found in section 108, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (United States), available [here](#).

¹⁴ See further US Department of State (2020), above n **Error! Bookmark not defined.**12, 40-41.

1.3. Quantitative measures on anti-trafficking governance (TIP Reports)¹⁵



Measure	Year	Qty	
Trafficking investigation and prosecution	2019	97	[1]
Trafficking convictions	2019	5	[1]
Trafficking investigations	2018	150	[2]
Trafficking convictions	2018	45	[2]
Trafficking-related trainings for law enforcement officials	2018	925	[2]
Trafficking victims identified	2018	1400	[2]
Trafficking victims referred to shelter	2018	142	[2]
Trafficking investigation	2017	99	[2]
Trafficking prosecution	2017	94	[2]
Trafficking convictions	2017	7	[2]
Trafficking victims identified	2017	400	[2]

¹⁵ Sources:

[1] US Department of State (2020), above n 12.

[2] US Department of State (2019), above n 12.

2. Treaty commitments¹⁶

Instrument	Ratification date
1926 Slavery Convention	9 Sep 1957
1953 Protocol to the Slavery Convention	N/A
1930 Forced Labour Convention	18 Jun 1957
2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention	N/A
1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	9 Sep 1957
1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	22 Oct 1970
1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	18 Mar 1986
1966 Optional Protocol to the ICCPR	N/A
1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	N/A
1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	N/A
1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	07 Mar 2003
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children	2 Dec 2014
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	2 Nov 2004
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	26 Jul 2005
2011 Domestic Workers Convention	N/A
Regional Instruments	
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) ¹⁷	
Khartoum Process ¹⁸	
1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	18 February 1986
Key International Commitments	
1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights	
1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power	
2005 UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law	
2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (5.3, 8.7)	
2017 Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	

¹⁶ UN Treaty ratification info sourced from UN Treaty Collection available [here](#); ILO Convention ratifications available [here](#); Rome Statute ratification status available [here](#). Membership data on the 2017 Call to Action is found at Delta8.7, 'Call to Action' available [here](#).

¹⁷ IGAD, available [here](#).

¹⁸ Khartoum Process, available [here](#).

3. General country context

3.1. Constitutional structure¹⁹

Sudan is a mixed legal system based on English common law and Islamic law.²⁰ Following the ouster of long-time President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, the transitional military government adopted a Constitutional Decree in August 2019, which suspended the 2005 interim Constitution.²¹ The 2019 Constitutional Decree stipulates that, the Transitional Legislative Council (TLC) will perform legislative functions until elections are conducted in 2022. The Constitution further notes that, the Sovereign Council, an 11-member body consisting of 6 civilian members from the coalition of opposition parties and 5 individuals selected by the transitional military council, is to lead the transitional government.²² Regarding the judicial arm, the National Supreme Court, consisting of 70 judges is the highest court in Sudan. Selection of judges is done by the Supreme Judicial Council, which replaced the National Judicial Service Commission following adoption of the 2019 Constitution.²³

3.2. Political context

Sudan is currently undergoing a transition following removal of President Omar al-Bashir by the country's army on 11 April 2019.²⁴ Before the military takeover, Omar al-Bashir had ruled the country for 30 years, after coming to power in a military coup in 1989.²⁵ Sudanese citizens started taking to the streets to protest the worsening economic situation in the country in late 2018, a protest which quickly turned into calls for regime change.²⁶ A state of emergency declared by al-Bashir on February 22 and subsequent decrees prohibiting public gatherings however did not deter the protesters. The long-time ruler was removed from office on 11 April by the Transitional Military Council (TMC), with Lieutenant General Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf initially serving as de facto head of state. General Auf's was however, replaced within 24 hours in favour of General Abdel al-Fatah Burhan, following public dissent.²⁷ The TMC dissolved the national legislature, the cabinet, state-level governments, and suspended the 2005 interim constitution.²⁸

On 5 July 2019, the TMC and the coalition of opposition parties agreed to form a civilian-led transitional government (CLTG), and on 17 August, both parties signed a constitutional declaration formally setting up a new government.²⁹ The CLTG is composed of a Sovereign Council, a Legislative Council, and a Council of Ministers headed by the prime minister. Dr. Abdalla Hamdok emerged as the country's prime minister and was sworn in on 20 August, thus dissolving the TMC.³⁰

Sudan has endured years of violent conflict.³¹ More than a third of the country's population live below the global poverty line and over 7 million individuals require humanitarian assistance.³² During Omar al-Bashir's 3-decade rule, Sudan was one of the most hostile countries in the world for journalists, with the country's National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) carrying out censorship and arrest of journalists.³³ The al-Bashir regime

¹⁹ The Constitutional Decree or the Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Period of 2019 available [here](#).

²⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, 'The World FactBook: Sudan', available [here](#).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Article 10 and 11 of the 2019 Constitutional Decree.

²³ Central Intelligence Agency, 'The World FactBook: Sudan', above n 20.

²⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Sudan', available [here](#).

²⁵ House of Commons Library, 'Political situation in Sudan', available [here](#).

²⁶ US Department of State, '2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan' (2019), available [here](#).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ UK Department for International Development, 'DFID: Sudan', available [here](#).

³² Ibid.

³³ Reporters without Borders, 'Media in need of rebuilding', available [here](#).

acted with impunity, regularly shutting down newspapers and imposed red lines that were impossible to cross.³⁴ The 2020 World Press Freedom Index ranks Sudan as 159 of 180 countries,³⁵ while in terms of democracy ranking, the 2019 Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit ranks the country as 147 among 167 countries.³⁶

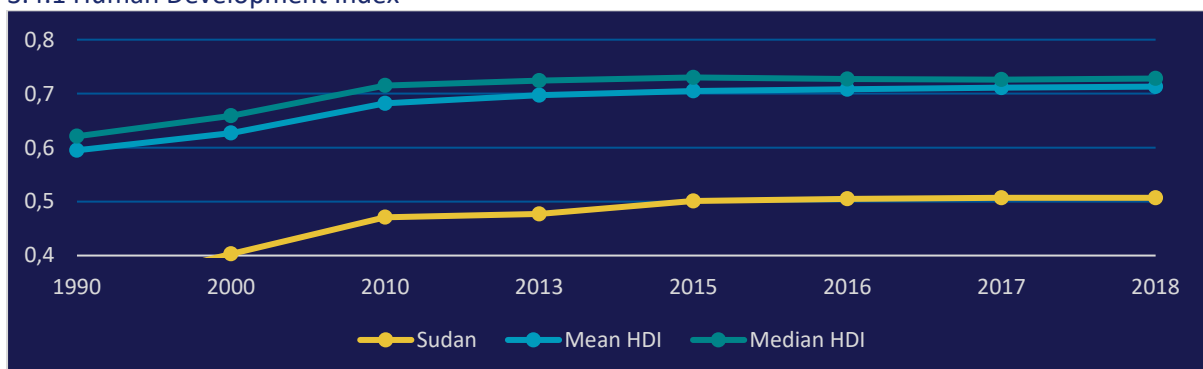
3.3. Migration profile

Although Sudan is an origin and destination country for international migration,³⁷ research shows that Sudan is also a major transit country, with 70% of respondents in a study indicating their intentions of moving to another country.³⁸ Many of the transiting migrants come from the East and Horn of Africa.³⁹ As of mid-2019, the total immigrant population in Sudan was estimated to be 1.2 million, while an estimated 2 million Sudanese migrants live abroad.⁴⁰ The vast majority of the immigrants are from neighbouring countries, especially Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Chad,⁴¹ representing a typical case of South-South migration.⁴²

Eastern Sudan serves as a passage for migrants from Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia seeking to reach Europe and Israel.⁴³ In addition, many Sudanese are making a perilous journey through the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. In 2015 for instance, the number of Sudanese migrants arriving in Italy by sea rose from 2,370 to 8,370.⁴⁴ Other Sudanese citizens migrate to Egypt, where they are the third largest migrant group, while some travel to Libya in hopes of onward migration to Europe.⁴⁵ It has been noted that, 'corruption, conflict, concurrent levels of deprivation and rapid economic expansion, porous borders and transnational kinship ties all help encourage, facilitate and expedite irregular migration' in Sudan.⁴⁶

3.4. Development profile

3.4.1 Human Development Index⁴⁷



The Human Development Index (HDI) measures average life expectancy, level of education and income for each country in the world. Each country is given a score between

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2019: A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest' (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, 2020).

³⁷ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, 'Sudan Migration profile: Study on Migration Routes in the East and Horn of Africa' (2017) 2 available [here](#).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Migration Data Portal (2019), available [here](#).

⁴¹ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, above n 37.

⁴² IOM, 'Migration in Sudan: A Country Profile 2011' (2011) 18, available [here](#).

⁴³ Hassan A. Abdel Ati, 'Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Eastern Sudan' (2017), available [here](#).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

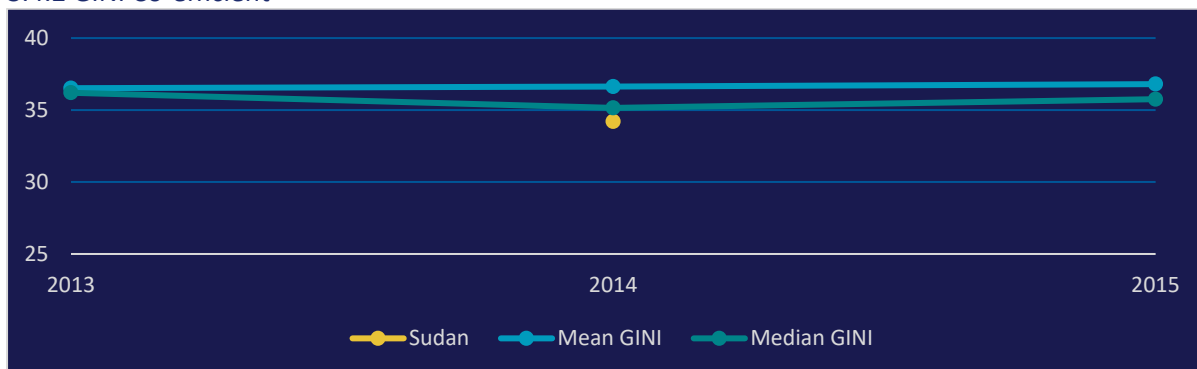
⁴⁵ Mixed Migration Hub, 'Country Brief: Sudan' (2018), available [here](#).

⁴⁶ Sasha Jespersen and Michael Jones, 'Sudan: From People Smuggling to Human Trafficking' (2016), available [here](#).

⁴⁷ UNDP, 'Human Development Indicators – Sudan' (2019), available [here](#).

0 and 1 - the closer a country gets to 1, the more developed it is.⁴⁸ Sudan's scores place it in the 'low human development' category.

3.4.2 GINI Co-efficient⁴⁹



Gini index measures the extent to which income distribution or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.⁵⁰

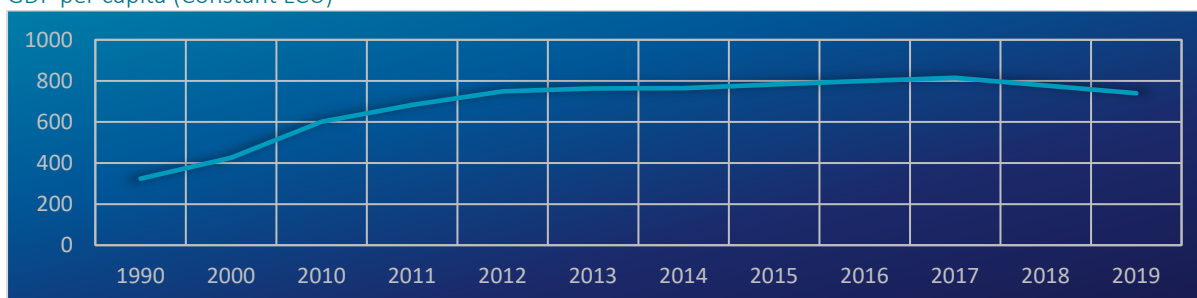
3.4.3 Sudan's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals⁵¹

Year	Rank	Score
2020	159	49.56
2019	147	51.4
2018	143	49.6
2017	139	49.9
2016	127	42.2

The Sustainable Development Reports assess implementation of, and progress towards, the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG Index and Dashboards summarise countries' current performance and trends across the 17 SDGs. All SDGs are weighted equally in the index. Changing indicators, data, and methodology used to determine rankings and scores mean that SDG index results are not comparable over time.⁵²

3.4.4 Sudan's GDP Rates

GDP per capita (Constant LCU)⁵³



⁴⁸ UNDP, 'Human Development Reports', available [here](#).

⁴⁹ World Bank, 'Gini index (World Bank estimate) - Sudan' (2017), available [here](#)

⁵⁰ World Bank, 'Metadata Glossary', available [here](#).

⁵¹ Sustainable Development Report (2020), available [here](#).

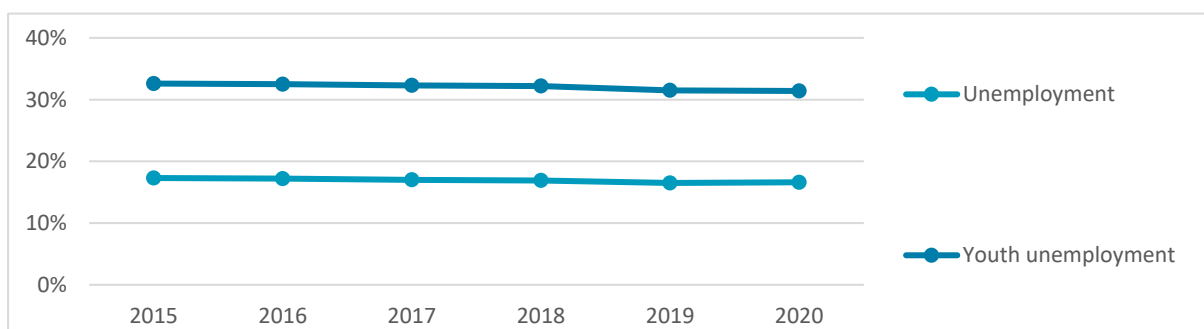
⁵² Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 'Sustainable Development Report 2019' (June 2019) 19.

⁵³ World Bank, 'GDP per capita (constant LCU) - Sudan', available [here](#).

GDP Growth Rate



3.4.5 Other relevant indicators⁵⁴



Sudan is ranked among the lowest countries in the world in terms of gender equality, scoring 0.560 on the 2018 Gender Inequality Index (rank 139).⁵⁵

3.5. Sudan’s human rights record

Significant human rights abuses were recorded in Sudan under al-Bashir’s government, including forced disappearance, torture, extra judicial killings and arbitrary detention.⁵⁶ Censorship and intimidation of journalists were also widespread, while the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association were significantly infringed upon. In addition, rights to religious freedom, political participation as well as freedom of expression were also undermined, while there was lack of accountability in cases involving violence against women, trafficking in persons, and child labour.⁵⁷ Individuals who converted to Christianity were charged with apostasy while Sharia law was imposed on non-Muslims.⁵⁸ In October 2018, a number of Christians were reportedly detained in South Darfur and forced to renounce their faith,⁵⁹ while pro-government and anti-government militias are allegedly committing rape and killing civilians. Also, in Darfur and the Two Areas, rebel groups and paramilitary forces are reported to be assaulting and sometimes killing civilians.⁶⁰ Violence against women, including rape, remains widespread, particularly in Darfur in and around camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).⁶¹

The authorities have not made any serious attempts to provide accountability for past and current violations of human rights either in conflict zones or in other parts of the country.⁶²

⁵⁴ Statista, ‘Sudan: Unemployment rate from 1999 to 2020’ (2020), available [here](#); Statista, ‘Sudan: Youth unemployment rate from 1999 to 2020’ (2020), available [here](#).

⁵⁵ BTI, ‘BTI 2020 Country Report’ (2020), available [here](#); UNDP, ‘Gender Inequality Index’ (2018), available [here](#).

⁵⁶ US Department of State, ‘2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan’, above n 26.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch, ‘Sudan: Events of 2018’ (2018), available [here](#).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Amnesty International, ‘Sudan 2019’ (2019), available [here](#).

⁶² Human Rights Watch, ‘Sudan: Events of 2018’, above n 58.

During the wave of protests that led to the removal of Omar al-Bashir, security agents detained and killed scores of protesters.⁶³ In one instance, security forces reportedly chased down protesters into hospital wards and impeded the provision of medical care.⁶⁴ During previous protests against the government, human rights activists as well as members of opposition parties were detained for several weeks without charges.⁶⁵

3.6. Social support systems

The 2016 Social Security Law repealing the Social Insurance Act 1974 is the main legislation governing social assistance in Sudan. The Law covers public and private sector employees as well as self-employed persons. There are, however, certain qualifying conditions to access the funds including old age, disability, and survivors (i.e., paid to an eligible survivor where the deceased was entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension).⁶⁶ Sudan also provides coverage for work-related injury within the framework of the Social Security Law – there are no minimum qualifying conditions; applies to all cases of accidents that are work-related. Further, under the 1997 Labour Code, employers are required to provide severance pay to employees depending on the number of years of employment.⁶⁷ The Labour Code also contains provisions protecting employees during sickness as well as maternity cover.⁶⁸

In 2016 the Sudanese government launched *Shamel*, an integrated programme for social support. Furthermore, in an Islamic economic system, *zakat* (alms giving) is considered to be the tool for caring for the welfare of the weaker members of society. In practice, while it is an allegedly important source of non-contributory social protection in Sudan – providing cash, transfers, subsidies, and other services–,⁶⁹ the state-managed zakat system suffers from stagnant corruption and malpractices.⁷⁰

It is important to note that the former military regime pursued a policy of privatisation, giving rise to corruption, fragmented financing, and stagnation of the public health-care system.⁷¹ The pension scheme is fragile and covers only a small segment of society, and the same applies to health insurance, which is unreliable and inaccessible to most of the population. Thus, many families depend on remittances from expatriates who live and work outside Sudan for their survival.⁷² Generally, spending on social assistance is considered low.⁷³

⁶³ Human Rights Watch, 'Sudan: Events of 2019' (2019), available [here](#).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'Sudan: Events of 2018', above n 58.

⁶⁶ Social Security Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, 'Sudan', available [here](#).

⁶⁷ Article 60, Labour Code 1997.

⁶⁸ Article 46 and 47 Labour Code 1997.

⁶⁹ International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, 'Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Sudan' (October 2018), available [here](#).

⁷⁰ BTI (2020), above n 55.

⁷¹ George Wharton, Omar E Ali, Siddiq Khalil, Hatim Yagoub, Elias Mossialos, 'Rebuilding Sudan's health system: opportunities and challenges' (2020) 395 *The Lancet* 171, 172.

⁷² BTI (2020), above n 55.

⁷³ International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, above n 69.

4. National modern slavery context

4.1. Modern slavery profile

Modern slavery, especially human trafficking is widespread across Sudan. Organised criminal networks, sometimes working with state officials, exploit the vulnerability of migrants by abducting them and extorting ransom from their families.⁷⁴ Traffickers subject unaccompanied migrant children as well as Sudanese children to forced labour and forced begging in large markets, public transportation, while others are subjected to sex trafficking.⁷⁵ Children are also exploited in brick-making factories, gold mining, collecting medical waste, street vending, and agriculture; are recruited as soldiers by governmental and non-governmental forces; and are greatly exposed to threats, physical and sexual abuse, as well as to hazardous working conditions with limited access to education or health services.⁷⁶ In 2018, Interpol reported rescuing 94 individuals, including 85 children from slavery-like practices from the streets and in illegal gold mines.⁷⁷ The victims were mostly from Chad, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Niger transiting via Sudan toward Europe; others were Sudanese nationals.⁷⁸

Criminal groups exploit Sudanese women and girls in domestic work and sex trafficking.⁷⁹ For instance, Sudanese traffickers compel Ethiopian women to work in private homes in Khartoum and other urban centres. Further, cross-border criminal groups force some Ethiopian women into commercial sex in Khartoum by manipulating debts and other forms of coercion.⁸⁰ Some 3.3 million individuals in Sudan, including over 1 million refugees and asylum-seekers, and 1.9 million internally displaced persons are at risk of trafficking due to their lack of economic stability.⁸¹ Most of the refugees and migrant population are people from the region attempting to escape conflict and poverty, especially South Sudan and Eritrea, due to traffickers targeting the consistent flow of migrants and asylum-seekers.⁸² The porous Darfuri border allows traffickers to operate with impunity trafficking migrants to Europe. In fact, the South Sudanese refugee population in Sudan nearly doubled since 2018, therefore leaving them particularly vulnerable to forced labour and sex trafficking.⁸³ The 2019 TIP Report notes that Libyan officials detained several Sudanese nationals in Libyan detention centres where they were at risk of forced labour and other criminal exploitation.⁸⁴

4.2. Causes and drivers of modern slavery and transnational trafficking

Modern slavery is caused by a variety of factors. Experts attribute 85% of trafficking in persons and human smuggling in Sudan to economic reasons, especially poverty, unemployment, and the high cost of living.⁸⁵ Other research has indicated that the Sudanese government is 'heavily implicated' in the outward migration from Sudan. Years of violent conflict, political repression, corruption, economic inequality and resource

⁷⁴ SOAS University of London, 'The Khartoum Process policy of engagement and human rights protection in Sudan', available [here](#).

⁷⁵ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 437.

⁷⁶ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

⁷⁷ Interpol, 'Human trafficking: 100 victims rescued in Sudan', available [here](#).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 437.

⁸⁰ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465

⁸¹ Ibid, 465; US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 438.

⁸² Human Rights Watch, 'Sudan: Events of 2018', above n 58.

⁸³ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

⁸⁴ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 438.

⁸⁵ Hassan A. Abdel Ati, above n 43, 15.

mismanagement are all cited as potential drivers of migration which renders many susceptible to trafficking.⁸⁶

Cooperation of military officers with traffickers also creates an atmosphere of impunity and vulnerability. In Eastern Sudan, for instance, there is evidence that military officials sometimes hand migrants over to traffickers, or fail to conduct thorough inspection at checkpoints.⁸⁷ The country's weak criminal justice system also induces exploitation. The failure to routinely identify or prosecute traffickers, even when there is clear violation of the anti-trafficking law, further perpetuates the practice.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, it has been observed that, unlike other countries, most of the migratory movements through Sudan is consensual, although widespread corruption, porous borders and concurrent levels of deprivation in addition to transnational kinship ties may exacerbate these trends. The conscription of Eritreans into national service has also triggered a huge exodus of Eritreans who are temporarily in Sudan with intentions of continuing to Europe.⁸⁹

4.3. Particularly vulnerable groups

Migrants of different genders and ages, especially from east Africa and Horn of Africa are vulnerable to modern slavery in Sudan. Around 70% of the over one million refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan are almost entirely dependent on the host community for their livelihoods,⁹⁰ which could expose them to the risks of modern slavery. South Sudanese nationals constitute the largest proportion of refugees in Sudan, totalling 858,607 individuals spread across the country.⁹¹ Given the link between migration status and modern slavery vulnerabilities, many of these individuals may be susceptible to modern slavery in its different forms. There is also evidence that migrants from West and Central Africa, especially Mali, Chad, and Niger are at risk of trafficking in Sudan; a further anecdotal evidence suggests that Chinese women working for small-scale Chinese firms are at risk of forced labour or sex trafficking by Chinese businesses.⁹² Traffickers sometimes abduct Eritrean refugees from refugee camps or from agricultural fields near camps. Refugees with no kinship ties in the country are more likely to work in these agricultural fields, and may be vulnerable to kidnapping and trafficking.⁹³

Children are also particularly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, especially in brick-making factories, gold mining, for collecting medical waste, street vending, and agriculture. They are recruited as soldiers by governmental and non-governmental forces; and are greatly exposed to threats, physical and sexual abuse, as well as to hazardous working conditions with limited access to education or health services.⁹⁴

⁸⁶ All Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan, 'Engagement beyond the Centre: An Inquiry Report on the Future of UK-Sudan Relations' 30, available [here](#).

⁸⁷ Ibid, 31.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Sasha Jespersen and Michael Jones, above n 46.

⁹⁰ UNHCR, 'Sudan Factsheet: August 2019' (2019), available [here](#).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 438.

⁹³ Hassan A. Abdel Ati, above n 43, 14.

⁹⁴ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

5. Antislavery governance frameworks

5.1. Legislative measures

5.1.1. Transitional Constitution 2019

Section 46 of the constitution explicitly prohibits slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour. The provision however, permits the use of forced labour as punishment following conviction by a competent court:

Article 47- Prohibition of slavery and forced labour

(1) Slavery and human trafficking shall be prohibited in all forms. No person shall be enslaved or subjected to forced labour.

(2) No person shall be compelled to perform work by force except as a punishment following conviction by a competent court.⁹⁵

5.1.2. The Combating of Human Trafficking Act 2014⁹⁶

The Act criminalises trafficking in persons under articles 7, although it does not contain any definition of exploitation. Article 7 specifically states that:

(1) There shall be deemed to have committed the offence of human trafficking, whoever kidnaps, transfers, abducts, transports, harbours, receives, detains or equips a natural person, with intent to exploit or use the same in unlawful business, or any acts, as may by nature degrade his dignity, or achieve unlawful aims in consideration of any of the following:-

- a. Material return, or promise therewith;
- b. Moral gain, or promise therewith;
- c. Granting any type of advantages.

(2) The acts mentioned in sub-section (1), shall be deemed human trafficking, where they have been accomplished by the use of force, or threat of use of force, or by any of the forms of coercion, abduction, fraud deception, or abuse of power and influence, or exploitation of a state of weakness or need, or by granting payments or advantages, or promise therewith, in order to obtain the consent of a person to traffic in another person upon whom he has control.

Thus, Sudan's anti-trafficking legal framework requires a demonstration of force, fraud, or coercion to constitute a child sex trafficking offense, which is not in line with the Palermo Protocol's definition. Further, the exclusion of 'exploitation' from this definition is a fundamental omission, which renders it inconsistent with international law.

Article 9 prescribes a punishment of 3 to 10 years' imprisonment for the offence. The punishment is imprisonment of 5 to 20 years or the death penalty, where the victim is female or a child below the age of 18 years or is disabled. The same penalty is prescribed where the offence is of a transnational nature, where the offender is part of a criminal group, or where the victim has been subjected to sexual abuse or organ removal.

5.1.3. Penal Code 2003⁹⁷

The 2003 Penal Code prohibits the kidnapping woman to compel her to get married in Section 307 CC:

Section 307- **Kidnapping or Abducting Woman to Compel her Marriage, etc.**

Whoever kidnaps or abducts any woman with intent that she may be compelled or knowing it to be likely that she will be compelled to marry any person against her will or in order that she may be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse or knowing it to be likely that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse, commits an

⁹⁵ The Constitutional Decree or the Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Period of 2019 available [here](#)

⁹⁶ The Combating of Human Trafficking Act 2014 is available [here](#).

⁹⁷ The 2003 Penal Code available [here](#).

offence and shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years and may also be liable to fine

Under Section 310, it is criminalised buying or selling of persons in order to use the victim for unlawful or immoral purposes:

Section 310- Buying or Selling or other Disposal of Persons.

Whoever buys, sells, hires, lets to hire or otherwise obtains possession or disposes of any person with the intent that such person shall be employed or used for any unlawful or immoral purpose or knowing it to be likely that such person will be employed or used for any such purpose, commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years and may also be liable to fine and forfeiture of properties.

Section 311 prohibits forced or compulsory labour with imprisonment of up to two years or fine or both, while kidnapping or abducting in order to commit forced or compulsory labour is prohibited under section 312, and is punishable with up to 7 years imprisonment.

Section 311- Unlawful Compulsory Labour

Whoever unlawfully compels any person to labour against the will of that person, commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or with fine or with both.

Section 312- Kidnapping or Abducting in Order to Subject to Unlawful Compulsory Labour.

Whoever kidnaps or abducts any person with intent that such person may be unlawfully compelled to labour against his will commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years and may also be liable to fine.

Other forms of transferring control or possession of persons are criminalised in Sections 313-315 CC:

Section 313- Transferring Control of Person with Intent to Subject him to Unlawful Confinement or Unlawful Compulsory Labour.

Whoever for money or money's worth, transfers or purports to transfer the possession or control of any person to another with intent to enable such other person to confine such person unlawfully or to compel him unlawfully to labour against his will, commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years and may also be liable to fine.

Section 314- Possession or Control of Person in the New Sudan after obtaining such Possession or Control Outside the New Sudan.

Whoever is in possession or control of any person within the New Sudan having obtained such possession or control outside the New Sudan by acts which would have constituted an offence if done within the New Sudan, commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished in the same manner as if such acts had been done within the New Sudan.

Section 315- Transferring outside the New Sudan the Possession of Person obtained within the New Sudan

Whoever being in possession or control of any person within the New Sudan, conveys such person outside the New Sudan and thereby transfers or purports to transfer the possession or control of such person in any manner which would constitute an offence if such transfer or purported transfer took place within the New Sudan, commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished in the same manner as if such transfer or purported transfer had taken place within the New Sudan.

Trafficking in persons for immoral purposes outside of Sudan is further prohibited under section 315(A) and is punishable with imprisonment of up to 7 years.

Section 315(A)– Trafficking in Persons for Immoral Purposes to be Carried Outside the New Sudan.

Whoever procures, entices or leads away, even with his consent, any person for immoral purposes to be carried outside the New Sudan, commits an offence and shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years and may also be liable to fine.

5.1.4. Child Act 2010⁹⁸

Section 46 of the legislation explicitly prohibits the enslavement, trafficking as well as the exploitation of children in forced labour:

Section 46- Employment of Children in forced labour prohibited.

(1) There shall be committed an offence whoever employ Children in traffic in slavery, of all the forms thereof; and no Child shall be enslaved, or subjected to forced labour, or compelling him to perform work by force.

(2) Whoever smuggle or assist in smuggling any child or children across borders for the purpose of forced labour, in traffic, compelling use, or use any form of violence.

More generally, **other forms of exploitation** of children are prohibited under Section 45:

Section 45- There shall be deemed committed an offence whoever

- (a) kidnapping of, traffic in and transfer any organ or organs of any child;
- (b) rape of children;
- (c) sexual harassment or sexual abuse of children;
- (d) the production, circulation, publication, import, export, exhibition, sale or possession of pornographic materials, relating to the child;
- (e) employment of children, for the purpose of sexual activities, for remuneration, or any of the forms of consideration;
- (f) Photograph by any means any child exercises actually or by imitation express sexual activities, or photo genitals of a child for gratifying sexual lust.

5.1.5. Sudan Armed Forces Act 2007⁹⁹

Section 14 of the Act prohibits the recruitment of children below the age of 18 years into the country's armed forces.

5.1.6. Cybercrime Act 2007¹⁰⁰

Section 20 of the legislation criminalises trafficking in persons via online platforms, with imprisonment of up to 10 years or a fine or both. It states, 'Any person who creates or publishes a site on an information network, computer hardware or similar for the purposes of trafficking in human beings or facilitating such a transaction shall be liable to a prison sentence not exceeding ten years or a fine or both penalties.'

At the state level, both Kassala state and El-Gadarif state adopted specific anti-human trafficking laws in 2010 and 2012 respectively.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Child Act 2010 available [here](#).

⁹⁹ Sudan Armed Forces Act 2007 available [here](#).

¹⁰⁰ Cybercrime Act 2007 available [here](#).

¹⁰¹ Indicated in the 2018-2019 National Action Plan, 21.

5.1.7. Domestic Workers Act 2008¹⁰²

It provides a legal framework for employing and registering domestic workers with limited labour rights and protections.

5.1.8. Act on the Employment of Non-Sudanese 2000¹⁰³

The Act regulates employment of non-Sudanese in the public, private and mixed sectors. Working opportunities to non-Sudanese workers depend on the lack of Sudanese workers able to perform the job (Article 6). Also, in absence of Sudanese workers, priority shall be given to nationals of African and Arab States over other nationalities (Article 7).

5.2. Prosecution

Sudanese authorities reported investigating and prosecuting 97 suspected traffickers during 2019 for forced labour and sexual exploitation crimes, of which five persons were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment between three and four years, and unspecified fines.¹⁰⁴ The Ministry of Interior reportedly investigated 150 trafficking cases during 2018. Thirty of those cases, involving an unspecified number of people were prosecuted, of which 45 individuals were convicted under the 2014 anti-trafficking law. During 2017, the government reported prosecuting 94 suspected traffickers, resulting in the conviction of 7 persons.¹⁰⁵ Further, the Kassala Anti-Trafficking Court reportedly heard 40 trafficking cases during 2018 involving 80 suspected traffickers charged under the 2014 Combating of Human Trafficking Act. Some 54 traffickers were convicted in 24 cases, with penalty ranging from 2 and 20 years' imprisonment. Twenty-three of those convicted Sudanese nationals while 31 were Eritreans.¹⁰⁶ A UNODC report further indicates that 244 suspected traffickers were brought before the police between 2017 and 2018 (231 men, 11 women, and two children).¹⁰⁷

The Sudan based African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), further recorded 7 human trafficking cases between July to September 2019, involving 15 suspected traffickers. In October 2019, the Kassala Public Criminal Court convicted one individual of human trafficking, imposing a fine of 50,000 Sudanese Pounds (\$1000); non-payment of the fine will attract 3 years imprisonment.¹⁰⁸

Factors hindering effective prosecution included authorities' conflation of human trafficking, smuggling, and kidnapping for ransom, and complicity of the authorities. On this note, the 2020 TIP Report noted 'some law enforcement and border officers were complicit in or otherwise profited from trafficking crimes specifically related to exploiting migrants along Sudan's borders. The government did not report investigating complicit officials in 2019, compared with investigating two government employees in 2018. Authorities did not report the status of the 2018 complicity investigation'.¹⁰⁹

5.3. National policies and plans

5.3.1. National Anti-trafficking Action Plan 2020-2022¹¹⁰

Sudan's National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT) adopted the 2020-2022 national action plan in March 2020.¹¹¹ The action plan is a follow up to the 2018-2019 National Anti-trafficking Action Plan, the country's first national action plan to combat

¹⁰² US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465

¹⁰³ See Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, 'Irregular Migration in Sudan: a Legal Perspective' (CARIM Analytic Synthetic Notes 2011/64, 2011) 6-7, available [here](#).

¹⁰⁴ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

¹⁰⁵ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 436.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ UNODC, '2018 GLOTIP Report: North Africa and the Middle East' (2018), available [here](#).

¹⁰⁸ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, 'Sudan: The Transitional government must adopt an effective and victim centered approach to combat Trafficking in persons', available [here](#).

¹⁰⁹ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465

¹¹⁰ National Action Plan available [here](#).

¹¹¹ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

trafficking in persons adopted in late 2017.¹¹² The key pillars of the action plan include trafficking prevention through reduction of vulnerabilities, public awareness raising, and support and care for relevant victims through improvement of identification and referral procedures. The action plan also prioritises investigation and prosecution of suspected traffickers and strengthening the overall criminal justice system.¹¹³ It further stresses the need for national, regional and international coordination to effectively address the crime.¹¹⁴

5.3.2. National Action Plan to Prevent the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict.

The action plan outlines a range of measures for protecting children involved in armed conflict. The prevention of child recruitment as well as the release of children already in national security forces is also an aspect of the action plan.¹¹⁵

The 2019 US TIP report indicates that the Kassala state government began drafting a state-level action plan similar to the national anti-trafficking action plan during the reporting period, however, the 2020 TIP report notes that authorities did not report whether drafting of the action plan had been finalised.¹¹⁶

5.4. National institutions and inter-departmental coordination

The 2014 Combating of Human Trafficking Act established a national anti-trafficking body, the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT), to coordinate broader anti-trafficking efforts in the country.¹¹⁷ NCCHT, which is composed of 19 government ministries¹¹⁸ is *inter alia*, mandated to develop national strategies to address the root causes of human trafficking, review relevant anti-trafficking legislation as well as coordinate between government and non-governmental bodies. NCCHT is further tasked with creating awareness raising programs and adopting measures to ensure the physical, social, and psychological rehabilitation of victims.¹¹⁹ Since its establishment in 2014, NCCHT has undertaken a number of activities, including drafting of the 2018/2019 anti-trafficking action plan.¹²⁰

Other national level actors include the police force, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Ministry of Health, the Humanitarian Aid Commission, the Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Justice.¹²¹ IOM also reports coordinating with the Sudanese Department of Passports and Immigration (an arm of the Interior Ministry) as well as the Sudanese Commissioner for Refugees (COR), to provide support and assistance to trafficking victims.¹²² Further, the Sudanese National Council for Child Welfare, which is part of the Ministry of Social Welfare,¹²³ is involved in support and assistance provision to vulnerable children. Through collaboration with international partners, the agency provided shelter and medical services to 84 child trafficking victims in 2019.¹²⁴

At the state level in Kassala, where human trafficking seems to be particularly widespread, the State Committee on Counter-trafficking (CCT), chaired by the Kassala Ministry of

¹¹² African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, above n 108.

¹¹³ ReliefWeb, 'The Government of Sudan Launches its First National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking', available [here](#).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, 'Sudan Signs Action Plan to Protect Children from Violations in Armed Conflict', available [here](#).

¹¹⁶ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report' above n 12, 465.

¹¹⁷ Combating of Human Trafficking Act 2014, Section 4.

¹¹⁸ US Department of State, '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 399.

¹¹⁹ Combating of Human Trafficking Act, 2014 Section 5.

¹²⁰ Hassan A. Abdel Ati, above n 43, 40.

¹²¹ IOM, 'Migration Crisis Operational Framework' (2019) 4, available [here](#).

¹²² IOM Sudan, 'Counter Trafficking in Persons & Smuggling in Migrants', available [here](#).

¹²³ IOM, 'IOM Organizes a two day workshop with the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking to develop the Sudan National Action Plan', available [here](#).

¹²⁴ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report' above n 12, 465.

Social Welfare coordinates anti-trafficking efforts with the support of international organisations.¹²⁵

The 2020 TIP report indicates that the Sudanese government improved its inter-ministerial coordination efforts during the reporting year. The authorities funded the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and better streamlined its national anti-trafficking mechanism.¹²⁶ In addition, officials of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) launched a unit to direct the government's child protection efforts in conflict-affected zones and trained over 5,000 members of its military on child soldiering and other child protection issues.¹²⁷

5.5. Victim support and assistance frameworks

The 2018-2019 anti-trafficking action plan is one of the frameworks underpinning victim support and assistance provision in Sudan. It particularly addresses issues of protection, care and support of trafficking victims. Specific objectives of the action plan include assessing the viability of setting up a nationwide 24/7 hotline for trafficking victims, providing training to victim responders, supporting victims with rebuilding their lives and reintegrating them back into society. It further aims to initiate the process of establishing a national referral system for trafficked persons, unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups as well as establishing secure shelters for victims.¹²⁸

Although a non-trafficking specific legislation, the 2010 Child Act is another important document dealing with the issue of support and assistance provision. Section 47(1) of the Act mandates Sudanese authorities to take 'appropriate measures to achieve the physical and psychological rehabilitation, and social re-accommodation of the Child, who is the victim of any of the forms of neglect, exploitation, abuse, torture, or any of the forms of harsh treatment, or severe, inhuman, or degrading punishment, or armed conflicts.' Section 47(2) further states that rehabilitation and re-accommodation of the child must be conducted in such a manner as to strengthen the health, dignity and respect of the child. In spite of the above, the 2020 TIP report noted 'the government did not report identifying or reintegrating any child soldiers the former regime recruited and used, despite credible reports Sudanese units used minors in combat roles'.¹²⁹

During 2017 and 2018, the government reported transferring 421 individuals, including 256 men, 128 women, 20 girls, and 17 boys to secure homes and provided them with medical and psychological assistance. Some 195 of these individuals were Eritrean citizens.¹³⁰ In 2019, Sudanese authorities reportedly identified around 1,200 trafficking victims.¹³¹ In addition, the National Council for Child Welfare collaborated with international partners and civil society organisations to provide shelter and medical services to 84 child trafficking victims from Eritrea and Ethiopia.¹³² Further, during 2018, the Ministry of Information identified 1,400 potential victims of human trafficking, compared to 400 during 2017.¹³³ The Criminal Investigation Department's anti-trafficking unit also reportedly referred 142 victims to a shelter run by an international organisation. The majority of the identified victims were from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia fraudulently lured to work under forced labour conditions in Sudan.¹³⁴

However, the government's inconsistent screening of vulnerable populations, as well as past denial of sex trafficking occurring within Sudan, likely resulted in the arrests and detention of women whom traffickers forced into commercial sex. 'Officials did not report disseminating or

¹²⁵ UNHCR, 'Sudan Country Refugee Response Plan', (2020) 46, available [here](#).

¹²⁶ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 464.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, 'National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking', (copy on authors' file).

¹²⁹ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

¹³⁰ UNODC, '2018 GLOTIP Report: North Africa and the Middle East', above n 107.

¹³¹ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 437.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

implementing child trafficking victim identification SOPs developed in 2018 in partnership with an international organization'.¹³⁵ Further, the government did not report registering or protecting any domestic workers under the law during the reporting period within the framework of Sudan's Domestic Workers Act of 2008.¹³⁶

5.6. Training and capacity-building for responders

During 2018, the Judicial and Legal Sciences Institute, a government funded agency developed and disseminated standard operating procedures (SOPs) to assist prosecutors, law enforcement agents, and judicial official to identify child victims of trafficking in a more standardised way.¹³⁷ Further, the Sudanese Ministry of Information reportedly organised 30 anti-trafficking trainings for 925 law enforcement officials in 2018, while the government collaborated with some international organisations to train around 103 officials during 2017.¹³⁸ In April 2018, the Judicial and Legal Sciences Institute also collaborated with an international organisation to train members of the judiciary as well and other law enforcement officials on data collection and reporting.¹³⁹ In addition, the government's Commissioner of Refugee Affairs (COR) partnered with the UN to train members of the Police Investigation Department, judges and prosecutors in east Sudan on anti-trafficking strategies.¹⁴⁰

The 2020 TIP report notes that for the first time since 2017, Sudanese officials held a workshop in September 2019 to raise awareness on the exploitative nature of domestic work.¹⁴¹

5.7. Public awareness raising

The 2018 US TIP Report notes that the National Committee to Combat Trafficking employed different media channels to raise public awareness of human trafficking during 2017.¹⁴² Also, in the preceding year, local media raised public awareness on the risks of human trafficking, specifically targeting third country nationals.¹⁴³ However, the 2019 TIP Report indicates that Sudanese authorities did not report developing awareness campaigns on human trafficking, and made no efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts and forced labour.¹⁴⁴

5.8. Efforts to address vulnerabilities and drivers

As a first step to addressing the root causes of human trafficking, Sudan acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) in 2014, and enacted the first national anti-trafficking law the same year. The government has undertaken a number of awareness raising programs on the risks of modern slavery and is training some of its officials on child trafficking issues. As earlier indicated, a unit has been created within the country's armed forces to help limit the recruitment of children into armed forces, while training is organised for members of the military on child soldiering issues.¹⁴⁵ During 2017 for instance, the government strengthened its procedures for assessing age and established disciplinary mechanisms in the military to punish individuals engaged in child recruitment.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁵ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 436.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 437.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 465.

¹⁴² US Department of State, '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 118, 399.

¹⁴³ US Department of State, '2017 Trafficking in Persons Report' (US Department of State, 2017), above n 12, 373.

¹⁴⁴ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 437.

¹⁴⁵ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 464.

¹⁴⁶ US Department of State, '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 118, 398.

5.9. Frameworks for international coordination

Sudan has entered into several bilateral and multilateral agreements for preventing modern slavery as well as protecting relevant victims. The Regional Programme for the Arab States 2016-2021, of which Sudan is a part of, for instance, affirms the importance of addressing illicit trafficking and other organised crimes in the Middle East.¹⁴⁷ The programme aims to strengthen national, regional and international efforts to combat transnational organised crimes, including human trafficking.¹⁴⁸ Further, the League of Arab States has established a range of mechanisms for achieving broader cooperation, especially with regard to migration within the region. Some of the mechanisms include the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP), a non-binding, flexible and informal forum established in 2014 to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among member states.¹⁴⁹

The AU-Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (AU HoAI), established in 2014, is another forum where countries from the Horn of Africa exchange information, share experiences, debate issues and discuss approaches and measures to address human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the region. The thematic issues discussed within the AU HoAI include prevention of human trafficking and migrant smuggling, strengthening of protection and assistance to victims of human trafficking and smuggled persons, and enhancing rule of law, prosecution and border management.¹⁵⁰

The first African Union regional conference on human trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa was hosted by Sudan.¹⁵¹ During the conference, Sudanese authorities signed a number of bilateral border management and intelligence-sharing agreements, which included anti-trafficking strategies, with participating countries.¹⁵² Sudan has also developed a strategic partnership with the EU and several European countries to address irregular migration and human trafficking,¹⁵³ while it continues to engage with members of the Khartoum Process to address the migration and human trafficking flows from the region to Europe.¹⁵⁴ Further, Sudan is a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), where countries from the horn of Africa collaborate to address human trafficking, smuggling and other development issues.¹⁵⁵ A number of IGAD meetings have specifically focused on the issue of human trafficking.¹⁵⁶

Also, in May 2013, the defence ministries of Sudan and Libya agreed to adopt joint protocols on strategic cooperation in border management, trafficking and irregular immigration.¹⁵⁷ The 2019 TIP report indicates that in collaboration with an international organisation, the Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad provided shelter, medical services, counselling, financial and reintegration support to 730 Sudanese returning from Libya, mostly human trafficking victims.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁷ UNODC, 'UNODC and LAS launch second Regional Programme for the Arab States at high profile Cairo event', available [here](#).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'League of Arab States Contribution to the 15th Coordination Meeting on International Migration', UN/POP/MIG-15CM/2017/7 (2017), available [here](#).

¹⁵⁰ IOM, 'African Union – Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling', available [here](#); African Union, 'Khartoum Declaration on AU-Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants', available [here](#).

¹⁵¹ UNHCR et al., 'Strategy to Address Human Trafficking, Kidnappings and Smuggling of Persons in Sudan: Strengthening Alternatives to Onward Movements 2015-2017', available [here](#).

¹⁵² Walk Free Foundation, 'Country Data: Sudan' (2018), available [here](#).

¹⁵³ Reliefweb, 'Sudan to develop national anti-human trafficking strategy', available [here](#).

¹⁵⁴ UNHCR et al., 'Strategy to Address Human Trafficking, Kidnappings and Smuggling of Persons in Sudan: Strengthening Alternatives to Onward Movements 2015-2017', above n 151.

¹⁵⁵ IGAD, available [here](#).

¹⁵⁶ IGAD, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route', available [here](#).

¹⁵⁷ Susanne Jaspars and Margie Buchanan-Smith, above n 46, 110.

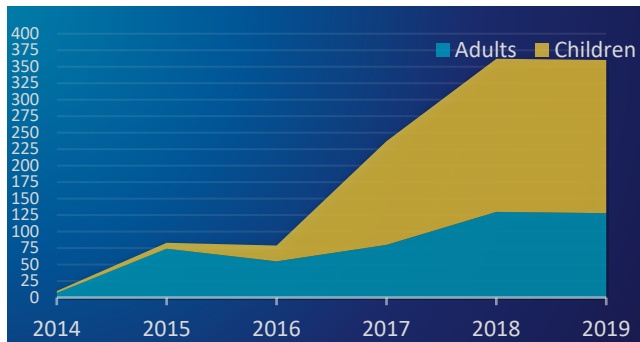
¹⁵⁸ US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 437.

6. Experiences of modern slavery of Sudanese nationals in the UK

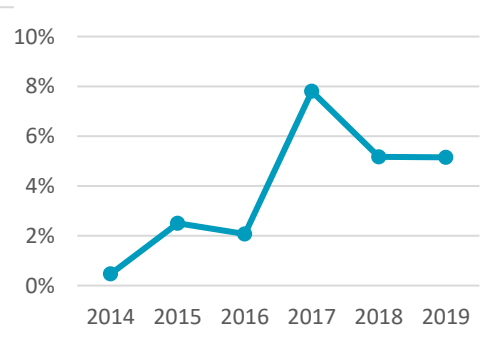
6.1. Sudanese nationals in the UK National Referral Mechanism

Sudanese nationals have consistently been in the top twenty nationalities represented in National Referral Mechanism referrals. The number of Sudanese nationals referred into the NRM has varied from 10 potential victims referred in 2014, up to 362 referrals in 2018. Male adults have made up the majority of Sudanese nationals referred into the NRM in the period 2014-2016, while children conform the majority of Sudanese nationals referred into the NRM in the period from 2017-2019, with between 3 (2014) and 232 (2018) Sudanese nationals referred who were minors at the time of their exploitation from 2013-2019.¹⁵⁹

Number of Sudanese nationals referred into the NRM by age at time of exploitation

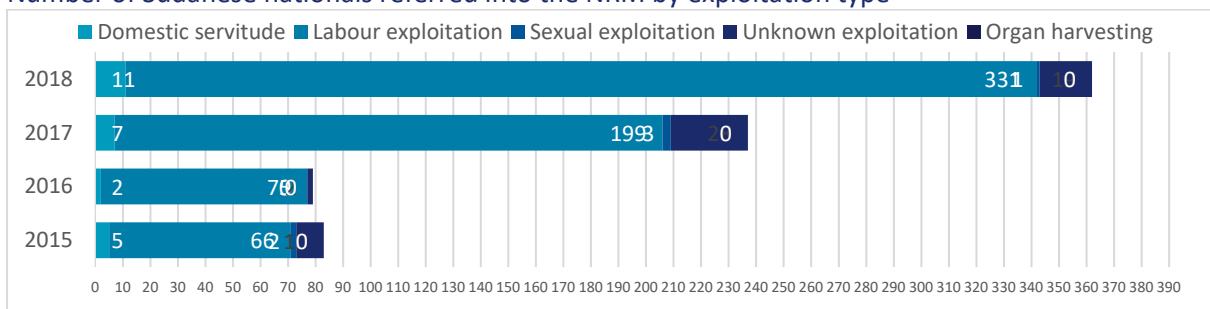


Proportion of potential victims referred into the NRM that are Sudanese nationals



Sudanese nationals referred into the NRM typically experience labour exploitation, with only a small proportion of Sudanese potential victims recorded as having experienced domestic servitude, sexual exploitation or unknown forms of exploitation. While gender data was not disaggregated by nationality from 2015-2019, NRM reports included such data in the 2014 report. In 2014, the majority of Sudanese nationals referred into the UK NRM were male (90%)—consistent with the trend of victims of labour exploitation being majority male.

Number of Sudanese nationals referred into the NRM by exploitation type¹⁶⁰



¹⁵⁹ Home Office, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK: End of Year Summary 2019: Data tables' 2nd edn available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018' (2019) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2017' (2018) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2016' (2017) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2015' (2016) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2014' (2015) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre: National Referral Mechanism Statistics 2013' (2014) available [here](#).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. Note that exploitation type data is not disaggregated by nationality in the 2013, 2014, or 2019 data and these years are therefore excluded.

6.2. Typical journeys from Sudan to the UK for trafficking victims

Typical journeys from Sudan start in Khartoum before moving towards Dongola, Kordofan and Al Dabba before moving onto Darfur or Allwainat.¹⁶¹ Trafficking victims will then move towards Libya before travelling onto Egypt and then Europe, often undertaking work in Libya to fund the rest of their journey to Europe.¹⁶² Many of the journeys into Europe begin in Italy coming from boats in Egypt from ports near Alexandria although they run the risk of detention along the way.¹⁶³ There are also experiences of Sudanese nationals boarding unsafe boats susceptible to drowning to cross the Mediterranean.¹⁶⁴

6.3. Experiences of exploitation and working conditions

There is very limited information available on the experience of Sudanese nationals who end up in the UK and the working conditions they experience. Reports indicated women particularly struggle to adapt to UK life due to lack of support from their extended family that they would have at home, and difficulties with language.¹⁶⁵

It has been reported exploitation on the journey to the UK, since those who travel through Libya tend to experience many forms of violence and exploitation such as torture, rape and being held for ransom because traffickers try to get money from their family members.¹⁶⁶ They are also often kidnapped by armed groups and some of them sometimes end up in warehouses in border towns.¹⁶⁷

6.4. Consequent effects of trafficking on survivors

The effects of the journey to the UK from Sudan can severely affect Sudanese's mental health due to the high levels of trauma experienced. This can have multiple effects on their life presenting as anxiety and depression and hindrances like being unable to eat or sleep, fear of crowded place and flashbacks.¹⁶⁸

Sudanese women who end up in the UK who struggle with the language barrier and being apart from the support of their extended families also face mental health struggles. They often end up with depression and feelings of isolation during their time in the UK, and they are at greater risk of domestic violence.¹⁶⁹

6.5. Particular needs, requirements, and considerations for support and engagement of Sudanese national survivors in the UK

While there is not much information about what happens to those who are deported back to Sudan, responsibility needs to be taken to monitor the situation of those sent back to conflict zones, such as Karthoum. Although there are claims that certain areas are safe to return to, there is still the fear of persecution which must be taken seriously when looking at claims for asylum.¹⁷⁰ Finally, to help support Sudanese national survivors in the UK it is important to provide a trauma-oriented treatment in a safe and confidential manner.

¹⁶¹ Hassan A. Abdel Ati, above n 43, 33.

¹⁶² US Department of State, '2019 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 438; Sussane Jaspars and Margie Buchannan-Smith, 'Darfuri Migration From Sudan to Europe Summary' (Humanitarian Policy Group, Research and Evidence Facility, 2018) 3, available [here](#).

¹⁶³ Hassan A. Abdel Ati, above n 43, 26.

¹⁶⁴ Sussane Jaspars and Margie Buchannan-Smith, above n 162, 3-4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 4.

¹⁶⁶ UNHCR, 'Desperate Journeys: Refugees and Migrants arriving in Europe and at Europes Borders' (2018) 18, available [here](#).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Sussane Jaspars and Margie Buchannan-Smith, above n 162, 4.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 7-8.

Without proper support and services available those returning to Sudan may have serious health risks.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 8; Waging Peace, 'Mental health in Sudan – the psychiatric & psychological infrastructure' (2016) 1, available [here](#).

7. The impact of COVID-19

7.1. Government's Response to COVID-19

Authorities in Sudan are implementing diverse measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. In early March, the Transitional Government set up the 'High Committee for Health Emergencies', an inter-ministerial body, to coordinate national response to the pandemic.¹⁷² To further curb its spread, the government closed all airports, seaports and land crossings and declared a public health emergency during mid-March.¹⁷³ In addition, on 13 April, the authorities announced total lockdown measures in Khartoum and suspended group gatherings, including Friday mosque prayers.¹⁷⁴ The measures were extended to other states as the virus spread beyond the capital.¹⁷⁵ The government further restricted intra-state public transports, with a country-wide curfew imposed.¹⁷⁶ However, the implementation of these precautions is complicated by the weakness of Sudan's transition government and its fragmented health system.¹⁷⁷

To address the economic effects of the virus, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development has proposed a \$110 million program to support around 30% of the population, through direct cash transfer and provision of supplies for one month.¹⁷⁸ As Sudan was already dealing with huge macro-economic imbalances prior to the pandemic, the virus outbreak puts further pressure on the country's economic system.¹⁷⁹ The government has however received funding pledges and donations from richer countries and multilateral financial institutions, to increase capacity to combat the virus. For instance, the US government has announced a donation of nearly \$13.7 million,¹⁸⁰ while the EU has pledged a support package to the country, including its Humanitarian Air Bridge program, which provides vaccines, medicine, medical equipment, water purifiers, and medical staff protective equipment to Sudan.¹⁸¹ The Islamic Development Bank has also reportedly provided \$35 million to Sudan, while the World Bank has pledged a \$35 million package to the country.¹⁸²

7.2. Impact of COVID-19 on Sudanese workers and vulnerable population

The coronavirus is increasing vulnerabilities for many Sudanese where half of the population live below the poverty line.¹⁸³ Lockdown measures, including the closure of schools, market places, universities, and ban on public gathering is negatively affecting the livelihoods of millions, especially individuals working in the informal sector.¹⁸⁴ The country's Finance Minister Ibrahim al-Badawi has noted that government revenue has dropped 37% from previous projections, while the IMF has estimated that Sudan's economy will shrink by 7% during 2020.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷² Arab Reform Initiative, 'Sudan: Managing COVID-19 Pandemic During a Time of Transition' (2020), available [here](#).

¹⁷³ ILO, 'Country Policy Responses: Sudan', available [here](#).

¹⁷⁴ Arab Reform Initiative, above n 172.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ ILO, 'Country Policy Responses: Sudan', above n 173.

¹⁷⁷ H. N. Altayb et al, 'The current situation of COVID-19 in Sudan' (2020) 37 *New Microbes and New Infections* (2020), 100746.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ KPMG, 'Sudan: Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19', available [here](#).

¹⁸⁰ US Embassy in Sudan, 'United States Government Provides Nearly \$13.7 Million to Respond to COVID-19 in Sudan', available [here](#).

¹⁸¹ European Union, 'European Humanitarian Air Bridge arrives in Sudan as part of the EU's Global Response to tackle COVID 19', available [here](#).

¹⁸² KPMG, above n 179.

¹⁸³ Human Rights Watch, 'Sudan Should Not Let COVID-19 Scuttle Transition', available [here](#).

¹⁸⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Financing the Revival of Sudan's Troubled Transition', available [here](#).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Before the pandemic, Sudan experienced soaring inflation and high unemployment rates, which has worsened with the outbreak of the coronavirus.¹⁸⁶ As a fragile state with nearly two million of its citizens displaced by conflict, many face extreme conditions in camps and informal settlements where they are unable to meet their basic needs. Added to this, Sudan is home to over 1 million migrants and refugees.¹⁸⁷ Further, there are reports of Sudanese authorities harassing and even beating up doctors for violating lockdown rules, despite having relevant travel permits.¹⁸⁸ Some migrants held in quarantine shelters have also reportedly left the facilities owing to poor living conditions.¹⁸⁹ Overall, the coronavirus pandemic is severely affecting Sudanese workers and vulnerable populations, including migrants and refugees. However, the exact impact on modern slavery victims is unknown, given lack of data.

¹⁸⁶ UN News, 'Sudan: Coronavirus could be tipping point for "untold suffering", Bachelet urges sanctions relief', available [here](#).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ BBC News, 'Coronavirus in Sudan exposes new leaders', available [here](#).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.