

The NRC logo is a solid orange square with the letters "NRC" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

A photograph of an elderly woman sitting in a dimly lit room with mud-brick walls. She is wearing a vibrant orange and blue patterned headscarf and a matching shawl. Her expression is somber. The room has a thatched roof with visible wooden beams. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

# NRC SUDAN ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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**Norwegian Refugee Council**

**Al Nile Tower**

**Khartoum**

**Sudan**

**[www.nrc.no](http://www.nrc.no)**

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Cover photo by Ingebjørg Kårstad/NRC

# Table of contents

Foreword by the Country Director ..... 4

Overview ..... 5

Zooming in ..... 6

Our Approach in Sudan ..... 7

Our work in Sudan ..... 8

What we do in Sudan ..... 9

Supporting vulnerable populations in Sudan ..... 11

Evidence based approach: from data to action ..... 15

Listening to the people we serve ..... 16

## Foreword by the Country Director

We are pleased to share an annual summary of our results - the first full year of our operation in Sudan. The Norwegian Refugee Council returned to Sudan in the summer of 2020. With sudden refugee emergencies in the east and south, resurgent intercommunal violence and internal displacement in the Darfur region, we were compelled to quickly scale up. So we extended our services, stretching them to some of the most remote peripheries of the country.

In 2021, we simultaneously established and delivered humanitarian assistance and services to more than 153,000 people. I am immensely proud of the dedication of our team and what we accomplished in that first year. I am also very thankful for the cooperation of national and local authorities. They welcomed us back to Sudan and permitted us to work in different parts of the country while continuing to generously host more than a million refugees. I am extremely grateful to the donor governments that supported the coordinated humanitarian response in Sudan through us, including the European Union, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well to the Vitol Foundation, pooled funds (Sudan Humanitarian Fund, Education Cannot Wait Fund) and UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, UN OCHA) for their partnership. Above all, I am always humbled in meeting the people we are here to help: children fleeing

from Tigray; mothers thrice displaced in Darfur; South Sudanese parents in a legal limbo in Khartoum or isolated camps in White Nile, to name just a few that have left such an impression on me. They are always resourceful, brave and generous, and when I meet them, I'm always reminded that, really, they are part of the solution and must be involved in the decision making. The immediate future for them – for the more than four million refugees and people displaced by conflict in Sudan – as well as for the entire country hosting them, is a difficult one, fraught with challenges. Not only will we need to make sure that more humanitarian assistance is provided to more people in Sudan in 2021, we will need moral courage and support from all stakeholders to limit suffering and reduce the risks facing all people affected by armed conflict and displacement in the country.

*On behalf of the Norwegian Refugee Council in Sudan, thank you.*

William Carter  
Country Director

# Overview

Rayan Adam/ NRC



The year 2021 marked the re-emergence of a humanitarian crisis in Sudan largely driven by conflict, political instability, economic hardship and natural disasters. The country recorded unprecedented levels of displacement, with 430,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) forced to flee attacks and violent conflict, particularly in the Darfur states. Throughout the year, there were close to 2,000 security incidents, an increase of about 10 per cent compared with the year before. Attacks targeted villages, displacement camps and farmland, triggering a cascade of humanitarian needs.

The number of acutely food-insecure people reached an all-time high of 9.8 million as a result of the long-lasting economic crisis, austerity reforms and soaring inflation. Floods across 18 states also affected the lives of nearly 314,500 people, both Sudanese and refugees. These floods did not reach the magnitude of the 2020 flood disaster. The number of flood-affected people, however, increased by 54 per cent compared with a previous five-year average (2015-2019). An estimated 14.6 million people are projected to be in need across the country in 2022, including 1.16 million refugees. Overall, the number of people in need in Sudan in 2022 is the highest in ten years. The sudden political and constitutional crisis is likely to only exacerbate the multiple crises in the country.

## Zooming in

To respond to Sudan's multiple protracted and emerging crises, NRC expanded its humanitarian assistance across six geographical areas in 2021 through our four area offices: West (North and West Darfur), South (South Kordofan State), Central (Khartoum and White Nile States), and East (Gedaref State).

Deadly attacks on civilians and campaigns of destruction directed at villages and displacement settlements scarred all states of Darfur. In West Darfur in particular, attacks on displacement camps forced 105,000 IDPs to flee to overcrowded urban settlements, where the living conditions are mostly substandard. A large number of villages were burned across the state, particularly in the hard-to-reach localities of Jabal Moon and Kreinik.

**Darfur**

Gedaref in 2021 hosted the largest number of Ethiopian refugees (more than 48,000) who fled the raging war in Tigray Region. It also hosted about 18,700 refugees from Eritrea and South Sudan. The rainy season severely affected Gedaref's two major Ethiopian refugee camps, heavily damaging shelters, infrastructure and roads. Refugees from different tribes in Ethiopia continued to flee into Gedaref throughout 2021, although to a lesser degree.

**Gedaref**

Khartoum continued to host the largest number of refugees in the country in 2021. There are 113,000 refugees living in the "Open Areas", many of whom have been there for decades with poor access to assistance. Located in remote urban areas, these settlements became increasingly difficult to reach after 25 October's military takeover. Because of inflation, Khartoum also saw the largest increase in acutely food insecure people in 2021.

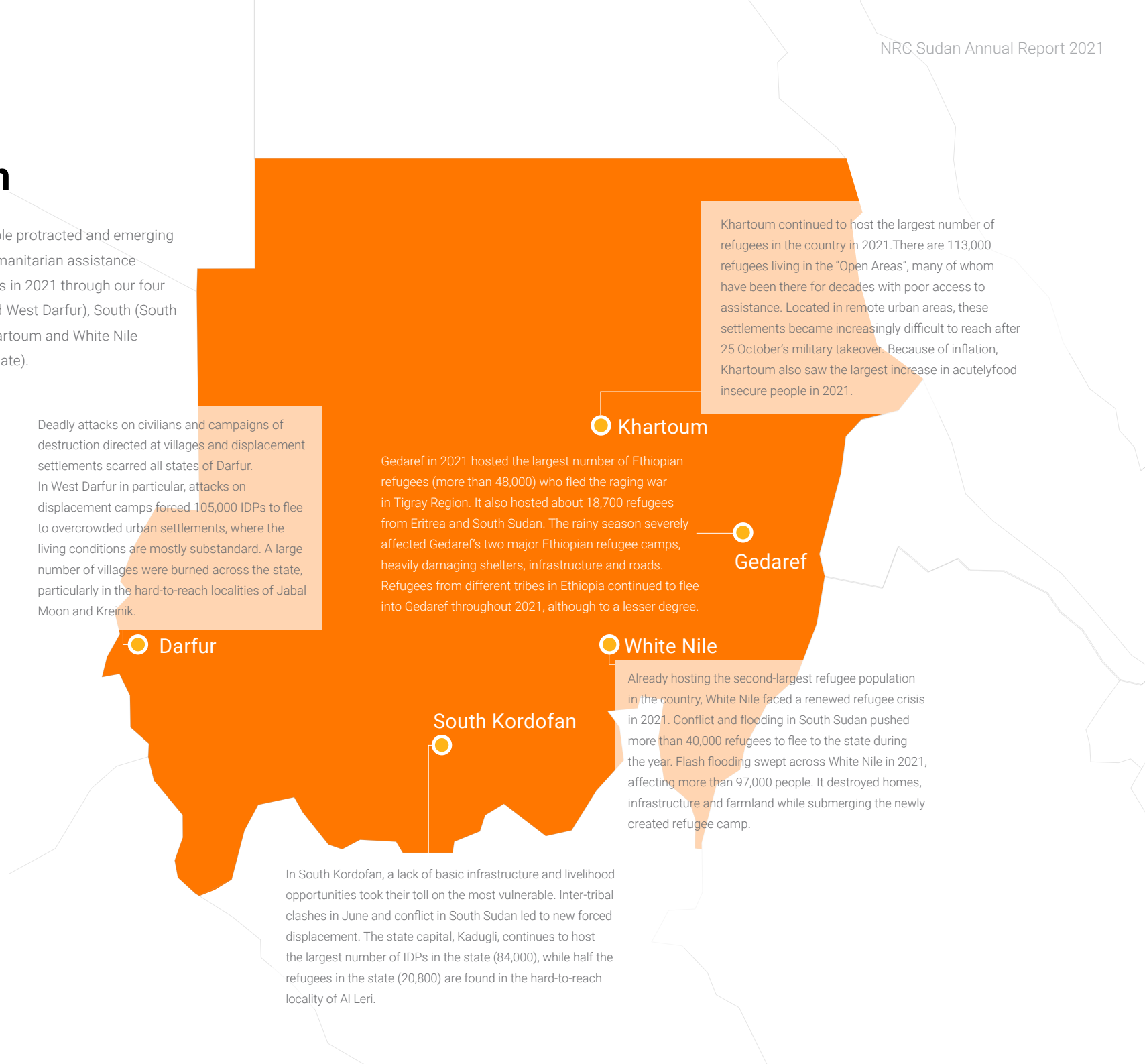
**Khartoum**

**South Kordofan**

In South Kordofan, a lack of basic infrastructure and livelihood opportunities took their toll on the most vulnerable. Inter-tribal clashes in June and conflict in South Sudan led to new forced displacement. The state capital, Kadugli, continues to host the largest number of IDPs in the state (84,000), while half the refugees in the state (20,800) are found in the hard-to-reach locality of Al Leri.

**White Nile**

Already hosting the second-largest refugee population in the country, White Nile faced a renewed refugee crisis in 2021. Conflict and flooding in South Sudan pushed more than 40,000 refugees to flee to the state during the year. Flash flooding swept across White Nile in 2021, affecting more than 97,000 people. It destroyed homes, infrastructure and farmland while submerging the newly created refugee camp.



## Our Approach in Sudan

The Norwegian Refugee Council is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee. We work in crises across 35 countries, providing life-saving and long-term assistance to millions of people every year.

Our overall objective in Sudan is to contribute to the survival, protection and dignity of conflict- and displacement-affected people while helping them to achieve durable solutions. We seek to respond to emergencies in the aftermath of violence and disaster and to tackle long-term displacement by promoting durable solutions through impactful programs and advocacy. We stand up for people forced to flee and promote and defend displaced people's rights and dignity.

NRC Sudan prioritises a participatory approach to programming, strengthening accountability for beneficiaries and other stakeholders. We deliver our services directly but also invest in partnership with local and international organisations. We have a broad perspective on local capacities and partnerships and strive to positively support local market capacities, as well as local and national authorities, as we deliver assistance.

We take a firm position against corruption and actively work to prevent, avoid, and detect all forms of it. We are committed to protecting affected populations from sexual exploitation and abuse in all our humanitarian response operations, and we ensure that our team delivers on this commitment through training, support and resources.



## Our work in Sudan

NRC experienced a milestone year in 2021. A year after returning to Sudan, NRC extended its services to three new areas: Darfur (West and North), South Kordofan, and White Nile, while consolidating its presence in Gedaref and Khartoum. We developed our portfolio of activities, ensuring that our range of services is coherent, integrated and adapted to the specificities of each local context. We heavily invested in our teams to ensure that we provide high quality services to people in need. Today, we count on more than 200 Sudanese employees, including around 70 women.



In 2021, we supported more than 178, 007 people in need across Sudan, more than half of them women.



Education: 17, 213 people assisted **(9,089 Female/8,124 Male)**



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): 21, 171 people assisted **(11,317 Female/9,854 Male)**



Shelter/Non-Food Items: 35, 922 people assisted **(19,479 Female/18,012 Male)**



Livelihood Food Security: 43, 656 people assisted **(26,193 Female/17,463 Male)**



Information Counselling and Legal Assistance: 1, 785 people assisted **(1,329 Female/456 Male)**



Camp Management: 35, 922 assisted **(18,641 Female/17,281 Male)**



Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance: 41, 884 people assisted **(18,040 Female/23,844 Male)**



USD \$4,878, 443 was distributed through cash grants to displacement-affected



**Total unique beneficiaries: 178,007 people assisted**



**91,624 Female**



**86,383 Male**

# What we do in Sudan



## Camp Management:

In displacement camps and non-camp settings, we work hand-in-hand with community structures, local authorities and humanitarian partners to support the overall coordination of assistance and address humanitarian gaps. We help reduce duplication of ongoing interventions, highlight priority needs and provide evidence-based information to assist response planning and service provision to displaced people.



## Education:

In coordination with the Ministry of Education, we support formal and non-formal education to ensure that displacement-affected children, adolescents and youth enjoy access to appropriate, quality schooling in safe and protected environments. Our response is multidimensional and covers school infrastructure, educational materials, capacity building for teachers, psychosocial support for both students and teachers, and life-skills training and support for teachers, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and community leaders.



## Livelihoods and Food Security:

We support displacement-affected people and vulnerable host communities to help them meet basic food needs in areas with high levels of food insecurity. We aim to increase access to income-earning opportunities through small-scale food production and smallholders' access to markets;



## Information, Counselling, and Legal Assistance (ICLA):

We help displacement-affected communities access legal documentation (national identity cards, birth registration, and marriage registration) so they have better access to services. We strengthen mechanisms of dispute resolution at the local level so they can resolve property and land issues.



## Shelter and Settlements:

We provide access to adequate housing for displacement-affected people. We support site preparation and allocation, distribute and pitch tents, help repair damaged shelters and build durable ones, while training communities in basic carpentry skills. We provide technical support for flood mitigation and distribute essential relief and household items.



## Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):

We supported Sudan's efforts to promote a community-led sanitation approach by providing household latrines and subsidised sanitary services and by assisting community-led hygiene campaigns. We seek to engage local resources (people, businesses and authorities) in the provision of WASH services.

# What we do in Sudan



## Cash and Market-based Approaches:

We design and deliver comprehensive, emergency cash responses to ensure that displacement-affected populations acquire their preferred items with choice and dignity. As part of our efforts to integrate a markets-based approach in our programming, we empower local public and private actors to take the lead in responding to the needs of their communities and to benefit host communities' struggling economies.



## Digital and Tech-Enabled Approaches:

We developed a digital hub to allow a two-way communication channel between NRC and displacement-affected populations. This enables people in need to raise questions and trigger emergency alerts; communicate their needs; obtain referrals for specialised services, and provide feedback and voice complaints. In its first month of operation, the digital community hub (DCH) received more than a thousand calls.



## Emergency response

After a shock, NRC dispatches field team to affected area as early as possible to survey needs and lead or contribute to a rapid response. This can include food, shelter, water, essential items to help families cover their basic needs for two months, until a longer-term solution can be found in coordination with other humanitarian partners.



## Advocacy:

We advocate for more rights and protection for displaced populations. We press for better assistance and for decision-makers to find lasting solutions to displacement. We invest in consultations, field research, and day-to-day engagement with communities to shed light on neglected humanitarian and protection issues. Our positions and policy recommendations are informed by the reality on the ground and by the people, we serve. We ensure decision-makers in the country and beyond hear their voices.



## Coordination:

NRC Sudan coordinates through the cluster system in Sudan, the Refugee Consultation Forum and the INGO Forum. Our approach to coordination goes beyond "participation," as we share our knowledge and expertise. We co-chair the Housing, Land, and Property Rights Sub-Sector and the Education Sector's Assessment Working Group. We also have provided training on humanitarian negotiations. We invest in state-level coordination in each of our areas of operation.

# Supporting vulnerable populations in Sudan

Since 2020, NRC has extended its operation across six states in Sudan, simultaneously expanding NRC's capacity as well as the services provided to support displacement-affected communities. We have opened offices in West Darfur, North Darfur, Gadaref, South Kordofan, Khartoum, and White Nile to work with refugees, internally displaced people, and host communities.

## Darfur - 35,922 people supported

NRC fully opened its office in West Darfur (Al Geneina) in June 2021 and established its main office in North Darfur (Al Fasher) in November 2021. NRC has now employed and trained 51 local staff at the two locations. We responded to the sudden and massive influx of IDPs into Al Geneina in 2021 by deploying site management programming and information counselling as well as legal assistance services. We focused on enhancing IDPs' access to basic services and assistance by putting communities at the centre of the response and helping them to exercise their rights. In 2021, NRC:

- Set up a fully functioning site management program across Al Geneina's temporary settlement sites. We strengthened community participation in the response and supported the coordination of services to IDPs in and outside of settlements.

- Contributed to improving living conditions in areas of displacement. We desludged 293 communal latrines in 90 settlements and led anti-cholera and cleaning campaigns in gathering sites during the rainy season. We also installed 100 public solar lights in Krinding camps. Supported the issuance of legal and civil documents to IDPs to allow them to claim and exercise their rights and access services. In collaboration with the state civil registry, 735 new "National Numbers" and 204 birth certificates were delivered. Sixty-one national numbers were replaced after the documents were destroyed in the war.
- Established strong collaboration with local partners, including state authorities. We partnered with communities and youth, providing temporary employment opportunities and safe community spaces. We also worked hand-in-hand with humanitarian partners, both international and local.
- Participated in the first inter-agency humanitarian mission to Jabal Moon in West Darfur, following the burning and looting of several villages in November. This led to a series of briefings alerting the humanitarian community to the escalating crisis in Darfur.

Will Carter/NRC



- Provided three rounds of multi-purpose cash assistance to meet the basic needs of 33,666 Ethiopian refugees (13,467 female; 20,199 male in both camps). This cash distribution gave refugees the ability to buy fresh food, clothes, and other essential items as they saw fit. It also stimulated the local economy by boosting local markets and businesses
- Distributed and set up 16,323 UNHCR-provided family tents and basic shelter items. To provide refugees with basic protection from the elements, we started the construction of durable shelters with the refugee community, ensuring that most of the material was locally sourced in order to support the local economy. We delivered household items to all refugees in both camps.
- Provided primary education services within the camps' setting. We built and maintained 39 classrooms (27 semi-permanent and 12 temporary structures) and supported 3,466 children (1,658 girls and 1,808 boys) in accessing quality education. All teachers and children benefitted from the provision of psychosocial support.

## **Gedaref - 57,251 people supported**

NRC started working in Um Rakuba and Tunaydbah camps in the early stages of the Ethiopian refugee crisis in late 2020. We swiftly set up an emergency response, in part thanks to the dedication of refugee youth who supported the delivery of our services. We focused in 2021 on addressing priority needs at the sites through the provision of basic primary education, temporary shelter solutions and cash for basic needs. We were the primary partner for distribution and management of non-food items. All efforts were aimed at stabilising the emergency situation and facilitating coordinated assistance with our partners, including local authorities. We set up an office in Gedaref and recruited more than 40 local and refugee staff. In 2021, NRC:

## **South Kordofan - 45,572 people supported**

In early 2021, NRC opened offices in South Kordofan's capital Kadugli. It also set up a field office in the hard-to-reach locality of Al Leri, where access is often cut off for days during the rainy season. Our strategy in 2021 was to implement accountable and robust systems. These included food security programming, through Cash for Food in IDP settlements and adjacent host communities in Kadugli, and WASH initiatives in Al Leri. We now have a team of 50 local staff in those locations. In 2021, NRC:

- Provided four rounds of cash-for-food distribution in three IDP camps and vulnerable host community households in Kadugli. We assisted 25,339 beneficiaries, allowing them to meet their basic food needs and reduce their likelihood of adopting negative coping mechanisms. For example, owing to the distributions, beneficiaries were more than 30 per cent less likely to cut down on their number of meals per day as a survival strategy.
- Provided access to water through the upgrading and rehabilitation of hand pumps, water yards and water sources. We installed solar panels to pump water from boreholes to ease access to water. We also trained communities in maintaining and repairing the water facilities themselves and leading cleaning campaigns.
- We invested in partnership, working with local water authorities and actively participating in mechanisms of coordination between humanitarian partners, both international and local.

Mortada Kajagla/ NRC



Mortada Kajagla/ NRC



## Khartoum - 29,787 people supported

We established our office in Khartoum in early 2020 to respond to the needs of protracted and neglected refugee populations living in urban peripheries, commonly known as the “Open Areas”. For decades, these informal sites have been hosting South Sudanese refugees with significant humanitarian needs. Our assistance focused on tackling the high levels of food insecurity while providing a safe learning environment for children. In collaboration with local authorities, we provided food assistance through cash programming. In 2021, NRC:

- Provided three rounds of cash for food distribution in Jabal Alwlia and Um Badaa to 18,672 refugees and vulnerable host communities (11,203 female, 7,469 male). After the distribution, the beneficiaries’ ability to cover their food needs increased by 20 per cent.
- Supported the Ministry of Education by increasing the absorptive capacity of formal schools, providing supplies and improving the learning environment for 11,451 students (6,552 girls and 4,899 boys). Working closely with authorities and parent-teacher associations, we rehabilitated six primary schools so they are accessible to refugee and vulnerable Sudanese children and improved water and sanitation facilities at those schools. We also trained teachers and key stakeholders in child protection and psychosocial support provision.



## White Nile - 9,475 people supported

NRC started operations in White Nile in July 2021. It sought to respond to the protracted refugee crisis in the state, as well as to new emergencies triggered by an influx of refugees and large-scale floodings. As White Nile is largely underserved by humanitarian actors, our main objective was to support both displaced populations and very vulnerable host communities in collaboration with partners and local authorities. We set up an office in Kosti and now have 14 staff. In 2021, NRC

- Worked with the Ministry of Education to identify and assess 11 primary schools to be prioritised for support. We worked with parent-teacher associations to identify the schools’ most important needs and mobilize community members to support education, improving community ownership and ensuring sustainability.
- Distributed cash assistance to 6,435 refugees and vulnerable host communities affected by the flooding (4,882 female; 1,553 male). This allowed the vast majority of beneficiaries to meet their basic needs, especially in terms of food.

Learn more about our activities on our website [www.nrc.no](http://www.nrc.no)

## Evidence based approach: from data to action

NRC Sudan strives to ground its programs, advocacy and strategies in thorough context and system analyses as well as a participatory and accountable approach.

In the third quarter of 2021, we conducted an essential needs assessment using both quantitative and qualitative analytical tools for Um Rakuba camp. This was part of an exercise to improve the multi-purpose cash distributions for camp residents so they could meet their basic needs. Our staff conducted 453 household surveys measuring food security, coping strategies, perceived concerns, and preferred assistance.

We also held five focus group discussions focussing on refugee households' priorities, their definition of essential needs, and their view of the assistance being provided. This allowed NRC and the wider humanitarian community to improve their understanding of the vulnerability of the population and create a localized expenditure basket, which informs the value of the multipurpose cash assistance. Learn more about the assessment [here](#)

### Our key research in 2021:

- Housing, land and property (HLP) rights' issues in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile and their implications for durable solutions." The findings from the research will inform our programming on durable solutions
- "An analysis of the Legal Frameworks governing Housing, Land and Property Rights in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur." The findings from the research are informing our programs on collective dispute mechanisms

- We started a connectivity needs and usage assessment in Sudan to understand mobile phone usage and access in the country, map mobile network coverage, and assess the feasibility of using mobile money. White Nile was assessed in 2021, and other locations will be included in 2022.
- In collaboration with Sudan's education sector (cluster), NRC played a lead role in the first ever (in institutional memory) nationwide Joint Education Needs Assessment for Sudan, highlighting critical needs and priorities to guide resource mobilization and allocation.

Mortada Kajagla/ NRC



## Listening to the people we serve

Mathilde Vu/ NRC



Our teams have a permanent presence and work at the heart of Sudan's humanitarian crises. As such, meaningful engagement with the communities we serve is one of our core values. We seek to increasingly involve them in our programme design and implementation, as well as in improving compliance with core humanitarian standards and the strengthening of our accountability mechanisms. In late 2021, NRC established the Digital Community Hub (DCH), an innovative, digital information sharing platform for beneficiary communication and accountability. The DCH provides information to displaced and hard-to-reach communities through voice calls and SMS. Callers can listen to an interactive voice response (IVR), a set of pre-recorded audio messages available

in English, Arabic, Tigrinya and Amharic by making selections on the key pad of their mobile phone. They can leave a message for NRC requesting additional information or details of their complaint/feedback.

We also consult communities and local actors to define our position and our advocacy priorities. In Gedaref, we collected multiple testimonies from refugees who, during the windstorms, struggled every night to keep their shelters afloat. This led us to alert the humanitarian community to gaps in the response, particularly the need to accelerate preparedness for the rainy season. We ensure constant communications with field-based employees. Thanks to our teams in West Darfur and their daily engagement with communities, we were able to draw the attention of the international community to the rising conflict in Darfur, highlight its human cost to the civilian population, and underscore the urgency of the crisis. We also rely on our experience and interaction with the communities to promptly apprise the humanitarian community of any breach of principles, as well as any emerging needs and gaps. We conduct regular humanitarian briefings for the diplomatic community on the situation of IDPs and refugees in Sudan to inform humanitarian policy and draw attention to neglected needs.

Read about the communities we serve [here](#).

Mathilde Vu/ NRC



## Thank you for your support

Total funding for 2021

# \$16,500,000

 178,007

people assisted

 8

offices

 1 in 4\$

given directly as cash assistance





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