

HRI THE
2011 HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE
INDEX

DARA
IMPACT
MATTERS

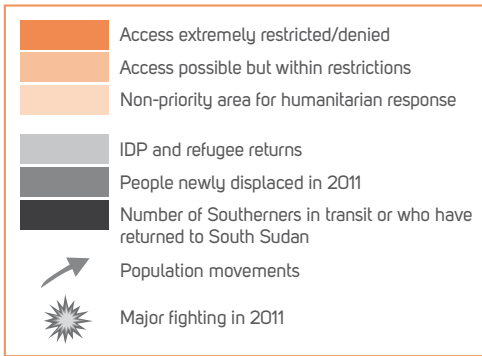
FOCUS
ON **SUDAN**

MUCH OF THE SAME, IF NOT WORSE

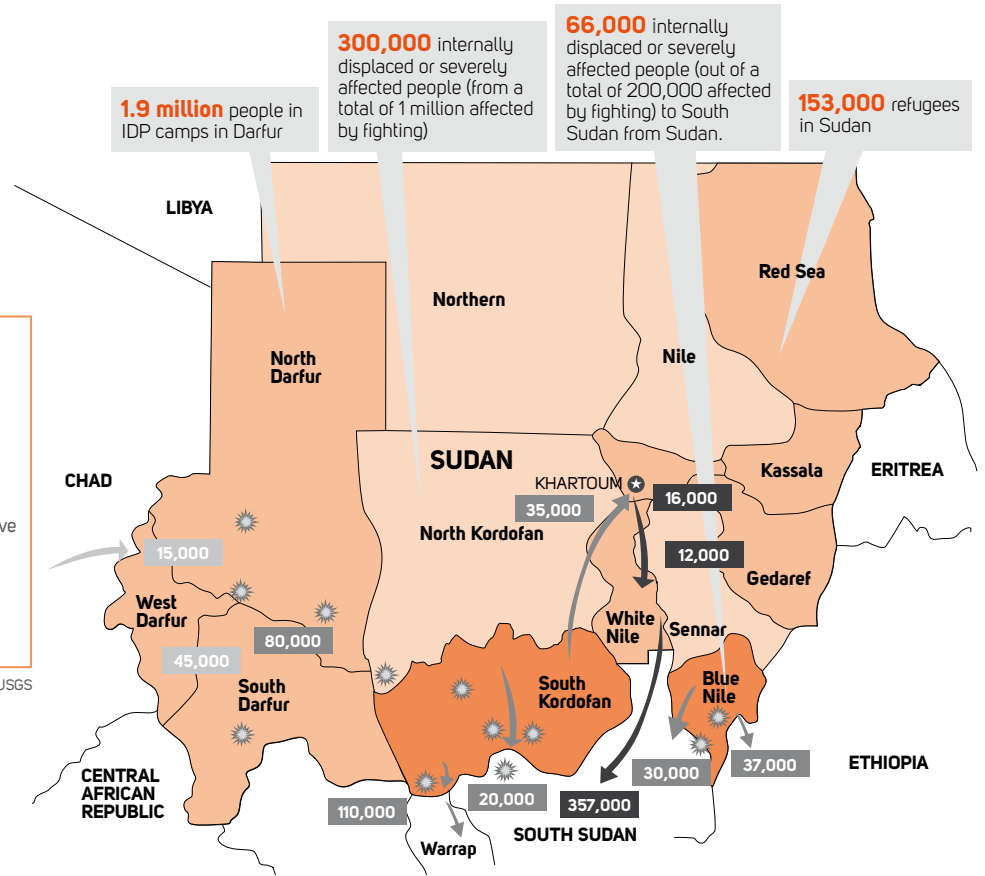


CRISIS AT A GLANCE

SUDAN



Source: OCHA, UNHCR, Natural Earth, USGS



TOTAL FUNDING TO SUDAN IN 2010:

US\$ 1.384 BILLION

74% INSIDE THE CAP

THE CRISIS AND THE RESPONSE

● The Republic of South Sudan was born on 9 July 2011 in a context of instability due to increased fighting between the Sudanese Army and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North rebels in the border region of South Kordofan.

● 468,000 new internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees have been created in the past year due to the ongoing violence in the border states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan. These new IDPs and refugees are supplementary to the 110,000 refugees in South Sudan from the oil-rich region of Abyei. Meanwhile, 1.9 million people still reside in camps in Darfur.

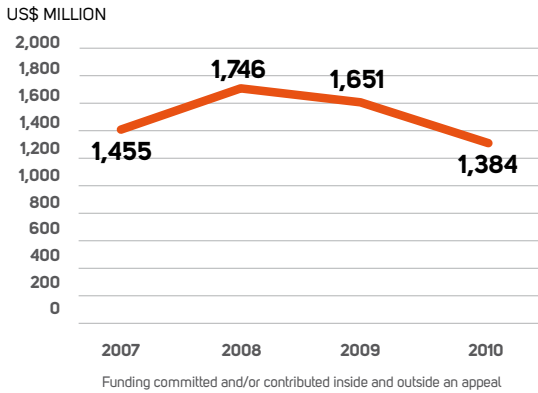
● Humanitarian access in some areas of Darfur and of South Kordofan is denied by the Sudanese Armed Forces, leaving hundreds of thousands of civilians without assistance. Humanitarian actors disagree over how to address the rift and to coordinate assistance in border areas.

Cover photo: A family arrives in Bentiu with all of their belongings piled onto a donkey cart. Returnees passing through Bentiu can rest in a primary school before completing their journey. / UNHCR / A. Coseac / November 2010

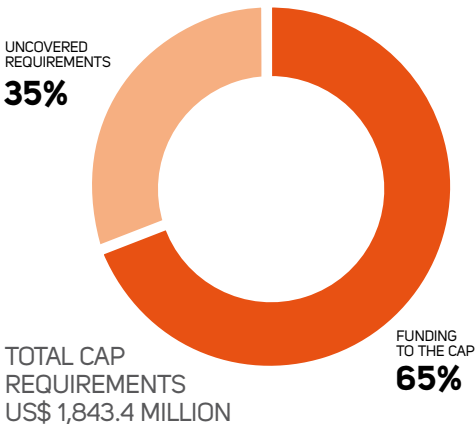


SUDAN

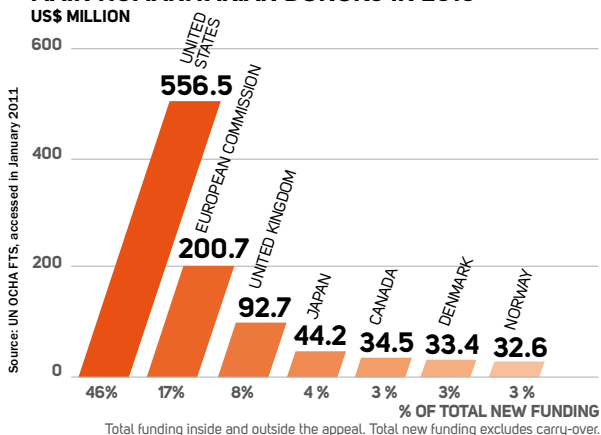
TOTAL HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO SUDAN



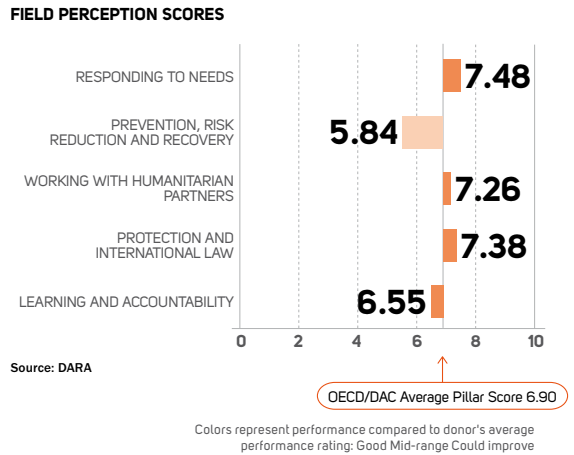
2010 SUDAN CAP COVERAGE



MAIN HUMANITARIAN DONORS IN 2010



HRI DONOR PERFORMANCE BY PILLAR



DONOR PERFORMANCE

- The Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) provided approximately 10% of funding in 2010. Although it has contributed to some improvements in coordination, greater effort is needed to streamline management and improve monitoring.
- Few donors advocate for safe humanitarian access despite agreement over this need. Donors should take advantage of the High-Level Committee for Darfur to advocate towards the Sudanese authorities for access to Darfur, and consider expanding the mechanism for other regions.
- Donors consider protection and gender important issues in programme design, but could do more to advocate to the Sudanese authorities to ensure partners are able to implement these activities.

MUCH OF THE SAME, IF NOT WORSE

2011 will go down in Sudan's history as the year that saw a new independent country emerge: the Republic of South Sudan. Following decades of armed conflict, South Sudan celebrated its Independence Day on 9 July 2011. The founding of the world's newest state was seen as a great step forward in Africa's most recent history. The divorce, however, may turn out to be not so peaceful. Air raids and attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) against the Sudan's People Liberation Movement-North on South Sudanese villages, and even a refugee camp in November, have dashed hopes that Sudan and its new neighbour would co-exist peacefully.

Meanwhile, the unity of the new state is equally under threat. Tensions within South Sudan among different ethnic groups and communities have existed for a long time. The attacks on villages, burning of homes and cattle raids, however, became increasingly vehement in late 2011 and may be the prelude to future internal, armed conflict. The United Nations (UN) Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Valerie Amos, has identified the humanitarian crises in the two Sudans as a priority of the international community.

In 2010, the Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) asked the rhetorical question whether or not Sudan was seeing a humanitarian mission without an end (DARA 2011). Looking at the events of 2011, this question would be answered with a resounding yes. Instead of a reduction in humanitarian needs, Sudan has seen new wars erupting. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), fighting in the border states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan created 468,000 newly internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees by the end of the year. Prior to this, 110,000 refugees had fled to South Sudan from the disputed oil-rich region of Abyei, where a new UN peacekeeping force was

deployed in July. These new conflicts accompanied an already debilitated environment due to the dire situation in Darfur, where 1.9 million people remain in camps (OCHA, 2011).

Much of the occurrences in Sudan fall under the radar. In 2011, most international attention has

■ INSTEAD OF A REDUCTION IN HUMANITARIAN NEEDS, SUDAN HAS SEEN NEW WARS ERUPTING

been on the monumental changes in North Africa and the Arab world, while humanitarian agencies focused their efforts on the food crisis in the Horn of Africa. Under these circumstances, the HRI field research team found a humanitarian community

that appeared to be addressing the new Sudanese crises as "business as usual" when it should be of pressing importance. The sense of urgency seemed to be lacking, especially on the part of the UN.

Years of painful, almost fruitless negotiations with the Sudanese authorities over humanitarian access may be one reason for this passivity. Humanitarian assistance is not popular in Sudan and the authorities have become highly skilled in restricting the operational environment for international agencies. At best, the Sudanese authorities accept humanitarian response in the form of service-delivery, while limiting visas and work permits for international staff. However, they have gone as far as to seal off a war-torn area and declare it unsafe for humanitarian agencies, a condition currently seen in much of Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. This pattern has been in place for decades and there is little doubt that these limitations to humanitarian assistance will remain in the near future unless the country makes monumental changes similar to those in Northern Africa.

LEADERSHIP

Addressing the restrictive operational environment is a matter that highly depends on effective humanitarian leadership and coordination. Improving leadership and coordination have been the two key priorities for the ERC in 2011. In Sudan, however, many of the people interviewed by the HRI, including donor, UN, and non-governmental organisations (NGO) representatives, noted the lack of leadership from the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), the UN's top humanitarian official in Sudan. His particular silence on the Sudanese authorities' practices of obstructing humanitarian response is considered highly problematic.

■ A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN MAY BE TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE HUMANITARIAN AGENDA, WHICH REQUIRES A MORE INDEPENDENT COURSE OF ACTION

In June 2011, aid agencies in the town of Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan, found their supplies and offices looted and ransacked. Humanitarian officials estimated that rebuilding their presence and programmes would take weeks, if not months. Meanwhile,

violence and mass atrocities leading to the displacement of thousands of civilians continued to be reported. Nonetheless, the HC resisted NGO calls to declare the situation in South Kordofan an emergency, which would raise the level of very much needed attention.

When asked for his strategy, the then HC mentioned his efforts to facilitate a peace-deal for Abyei with the Sudanese government. He felt that by speaking out, he would confirm Khartoum's views of the international humanitarian community. Aware of the rift in humanitarian and governmental collaboration, the HC asserted that "the Sudanese government perceives the international humanitarian agencies as self-serving, interested in perpetuating



the industry, wanting to keep people in camps, having no interest in rebuilding Darfur, and pushing the agenda of regime-change." He felt constructive engagement with the authorities was more effective at delivering results. One example of such a result, he pointed out, was his achievement to reverse the government's decision regarding the expulsion of an American NGO several months earlier.

The approach of the then HC raises the question of whom, and on what basis, is the HC's performance monitored and appraised? In Sudan, the HC had multiple reporting lines, including one to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator. The UN believes that, in principle, humanitarian authority is only appropriate for someone accredited as Resident Coordinator. The latter function is easier to sell to the Sudanese government because it focuses on development aid, requiring close relations with them. Clearly, such a close association with the government may be a detriment to the humanitarian agenda, which at times, may require a more independent course of action.

Instead of the HC, it was the ERC and the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) Country Representative in Sudan who spoke out for increased humanitarian access. More recently, other voices on the ground have joined them, including the OCHA

Head of Office and the acting HC, with the end of augmenting humanitarian access to Blue Nile and South Kordofan. OCHA should keep systematic records of repeated denials of humanitarian access in order to build an evidence-based argument for the necessity of action.

Following the transfer of the HC to Tripoli, the UN could not immediately find a candidate to fill the HC function. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative in Sudan, who has a long-standing career in humanitarian response, was appointed HC as an interim arrangement with the support of some key humanitarian actors in the country. Nevertheless, it is expected that the new Resident Coordinator, with no humanitarian background, will soon assume the position of Humanitarian Coordinator as well.

in humanitarian response so that they may bring these concerns to the attention of the donors.

Effective coordination, however, cannot only depend on NGOs. It also depends on the clusters,

which in Sudan, have not been fully implemented, as the Sudanese government is not keen on the mechanism and prefer the term, 'sectors'. They also insist on co-chairing the meetings and signing off on every new project proposed

■ HUMANITARIAN ACTORS WORK IN A MORE COORDINATED AND RIGOROUS MANNER TO ASSESS AND PRIORITISE NEEDS

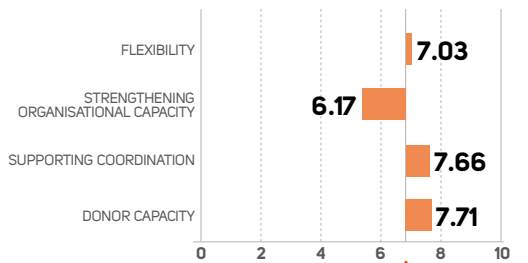
by the humanitarian community. Such a level of control may be unhealthy when taking into account the basic humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence, but in Sudan, it is the reality for every humanitarian actor involved.

In such a context, division among UN agencies only creates greater difficulty. Clearly, the HC has the responsibility to address such competition, facilitate agreement on key questions, for example the best way to gain humanitarian access, and build humanitarian kinship with the HCT partners.

COORDINATION

DONOR PERFORMANCE ON WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES



Source: DARA

Colors represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating: Good Mid-range Could improve

Closely related to leadership is the system of coordination. At the time of HRI's field research, the meetings of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) came across as ineffective; the real conversations in Khartoum were happening elsewhere, although the situation seem to have improved with the new HC. The steering committee of the forum of international NGOs is one example, and is well-placed to discuss trends, scenarios, and gaps

THE COORDINATION PICTURE IN SOUTH SUDAN

The picture with regards to leadership and coordination is a very different one in South Sudan. Here, the HC is well-known for her bold attitude and robust advocacy. In terms of ensuring the effectiveness of the clusters, she has insisted that only those relevant to the needs would be put in place. She also wanted the clusters to be co-chairled between the UN and NGOs in order to ensure buy-in. The HCT's main function is to decide on strategies and priorities in which NGOs play a key-role, mainly because of their high level of organisation in South Sudan. At the end of 2011, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) recognised the South

Sudanese coordination framework as an example of good practice. The real test for the HC and her colleagues may be yet to come, should South Sudan plunge into war. After its fight for independence, the Government of South Sudan has become less keen on international NGOs. Recently, NGOs in South Sudan also reported increased difficulties for them to work in the country.

DONOR BEHAVIOUR

With humanitarian agencies lacking access to Blue Nile State and South Kordofan, the question must be asked: what kind of support can donor governments provide in the use of diplomatic means to put pressure on the Sudanese authorities? Looking into

■ WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN DONOR GOVERNMENTS PROVIDE IN THE USE OF DIPLOMATIC MEANS TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT?

the donors' reactions on the lack of access in South Kordofan, the HRI team witnessed an interesting phenomenon, comparable to a game of ping-pong. In a meeting hosted by NGOs, both the NGOs and donor representatives agreed on the need to address the lack of access to South Kordofan, but both expected each other to be the ones to take action. The donors asked the NGOs to undertake assessments and to share information on

the situation. On their part, the NGOs considered that the donors should address the lack of access with the authorities, especially with the military intelligence.

The responsibility of donors to push for increased access is also a factor in the context of Darfur. Several interviewees reported a reduction in funding due to the lack of access. This lack of access implies that humanitarian agencies cannot sufficiently monitor and verify the distribution of aid. The European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and the Netherlands were singled out as the donors

who reduced their funding for this reason. Many interviewees also noted the alignment of the policies of the UK, ECHO, and the Netherlands.

The mechanism for donors to promote humanitarian access in Darfur is the High-Level Committee for Darfur. This mechanism was established by the Joint Communiqué on the facilitation of humanitarian activities in 2007. While one interviewee referred to the meetings as 'content-free', the committee is the only mechanism in Sudan that brings together various parts of the Sudanese government, including a number of donor governments and international humanitarian agencies. Participants from the Sudanese government include the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), the National Intelligence Services --considered the main obstacle for humanitarian access-- and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If there is one place the Sudanese authorities could be asked to honour its humanitarian obligations under international law, it is this mechanism. Donor governments should reflect on how they could use this mechanism more effectively, not just for Darfur, but also for other parts of Sudan.

THE COMMON HUMANITARIAN FUND

The financing of humanitarian response in Sudan has changed little over the past several years. According to OCHA's Financial Tracking System, it continues to be among the top recipients of humanitarian funds in the world, with US \$902,293,943 in 2011. One funding mechanism that continues to be the topic of hot debate is the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF). The CHF is a pooled fund, which has been utilised in Sudan since 2006. In 2010, it funded more than 250 projects for a total of US\$156 million - just over 10% of the total funding (nearly US\$1.4 million) donors allocated to Sudan for the year (OCHA 2011b). In other words, those who claim that the CHF is "all talk" are unaware of the reality.

Bored boys at UNHCR's way station in Torit. Having a safe place to shelter during the journey home helps reduce the risk of violence and exploitation during large-scale population movements. / UNHCR / A. Coseac / November 2010



A March 2011 evaluation of the CHF in Sudan concluded that while the fund “is a work in progress,” it “has served the humanitarian community well in Sudan” (Cosgrave, et al. 2011). It noted that the CHF had been particularly helpful in terms of improved coordination. This conclusion, which is related to the HC determining the allocation of the funds, however needs further qualification. Without exception, interviewees from the NGO community told the HRI team that they viewed the allocation of the CHF funds as a process intended to make everyone happy. One NGO representative qualified it as a “pie-sharing exercise.” Among the larger NGOs, the sense prevails that the fund does not see much return on investment, especially when compared to other donors.

OCHA's office in Sudan, one of the largest in the world, has a significant undertaking in managing the CHF. Every project for which funding is requested must be part of the work plan for Sudan; special forms must be completed, and several layers of decision-making are involved for a fund that is comparable to a medium donor. Moreover, about half of the international staff in the Khartoum office is involved in managing the CHF, while the accountability of its funding in terms of monitoring project implementation has been reported as one of its weaknesses. Clearly, timely funding decisions are critical in ensuring effective response, but further

thought should be given to CHF's management. OCHA's office is largely absorbed by its administration— are these costs worth the benefit? As a CHF is being set up in South Sudan, it is yet to be seen if those involved in the process will learn from the experiences of their northern colleagues.

PROTECTION AND GENDER

Addressing protection concerns is a risky undertaking for humanitarian agencies in a country like Sudan, which year after year receives poor ratings for its human rights record. High on every agency's mind remains the expulsion of a dozen or so international humanitarian NGOs on 4 March 2009, the same day that the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for the Sudanese President and the Minister for Humanitarian Affairs. At the time, media sources quoted Sudanese officials' statements claiming these organisations had violated “the laws of the humanitarian work” and that “their involvement in cooperation with the so-called International Criminal Court have been proved by evidence,” (UNMIS 2009). While the NGOs denied links with the ICC, the tendency has been for many of them to avoid any association with human rights or protection issues. Advocacy, one of the most important contributions that humanitarian agencies can make toward protection, is probably at its lowest point, as fears for new expulsions continue to dominate the environment. Many humanitarian agencies' operations considered the *Save Darfur* alliance their enemy. In the words of one of our aid workers: “everything we say will be used by them to support their campaign.” As a result, humanitarian agencies refrain from even the slightest criticism of the Sudanese authorities even though it obstructs humanitarian response. Few countries see international NGOs imposing a similar level of self-censorship as seen in Sudan.

Surprisingly, protection does appear to be high on donors' agendas in Sudan. Many interviewees noted that donors were pushing protection as a humanitarian priority. The HRI team was informed of donors requesting agencies to collect and report

protection concerns in South Kordofan, where the Sudanese Armed Forces have blocked humanitarian access. Nevertheless, putting protection into practice in such a challenging context seems more of a desire than a reality.

The donor community appears to also require their partners to integrate gender concerns, at least on paper. Similar to protection, gender is a sensitive topic in Sudan. Most agencies report that their donors increasingly identify gender as a humanitarian priority in terms of inclusion in programme designs. Unfortunately, it appears that this expectation is no more than paying lip-service to the issue, as little occurs when agencies do not follow up on their intended activities because of the restrictive environment.

TIME FOR RENEWED, PRINCIPLED ENGAGEMENT

The Sudanese government studies the international humanitarian community carefully and knows its inner-workings perhaps even better than the agencies themselves. Counting on the humanitarian agencies' unconditional desire to remain present in the country, it knows exactly how much it can 'squeeze' them and maintain restrictions on them. At the same time, the humanitarian community is unable to draw a common line in the Sudanese sand. Such a line would determine what level of government interference the agencies find unacceptable. Should the Sudanese authorities continue to flout internationally-recognised humanitarian principles, the agencies might reconsider their operations, including the ultimate step of withdrawal. Nevertheless, such a drastic measure would stand in sharp contrast with the humanitarian imperative of alleviating human suffering wherever it may be found.

Seasoned humanitarian workers will remember the days of 'Operation Lifeline Sudan' (OLS), an UN-led arrangement, developed in the late 1980s which promoted a certain level of unhindered

humanitarian access. OLS had its shortcomings, but it still served the humanitarian community by creating an arrangement with the UN, which

provided leadership, coordination and logistical support based on a common set of humanitarian principles (Taylor-Robinson 2002). The UN should consider recreating such an arrangement, if it is to escape the daily struggle of negotiations with the authorities of the two Sudans. Especially at a time when the risk of further armed conflict is much higher than the chances for peace, humanitarian agencies

■ AT A TIME WHEN THE RISK OF FURTHER ARMED CONFLICT IS HIGHER THAN THE CHANCES FOR PEACE, HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES NEED TO EXPAND THEIR EFFORTS TO ASSIST AND PROTECT THE SUDANESE POPULATION

need to expand their efforts to assist and protect the Sudanese population. Operations cannot be considered effective unless Sudanese authorities allow cross-border movements, and humanitarian actors show greater leadership and coordination between Sudan and South Sudan.



INFORMATION BASED ON 39 FIELD INTERVIEWS WITH KEY HUMANITARIAN ACTORS IN KHARTOUM AND JUBA FROM THE 19TH TO THE 27TH OF JUNE 2011, AND 246 QUESTIONNAIRES ON DONOR PERFORMANCE (INCLUDING 147 QUESTIONNAIRES OF OECD/DAC DONORS). THE HRI TEAM WAS COMPOSED OF BEATRIZ ASENSIO, BELÉN CAMACHO, MARYBETH REDHEFFER, ED SCHENKENBERG (TEAM LEADER) AND KERRY SMITH. THEY EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO ALL THOSE INTERVIEWED IN SUDAN.

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HRI THE 2011 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX

FOCUS ON is a series of research papers on issues, donors and crises which result from our work for The Humanitarian Response Index (HRI). The HRI is an independent assessment of donor performance against Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles.

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