

Chapter 5

Labour Migration and Remittances A Mainstay of Livelihoods in Darfur

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Introduction

Migration across national boundaries in search of work has long been a feature of peoples' livelihoods in Darfur. There has always been considerable uncertainty about the number of migrants involved, the nature of their employment and their remittance behaviour. Estimates of global remittances by migrants are generally rising to levels that are on par with global development assistance and foreign direct investment in the developing world³. Choucri (1986) estimated remittances contributed more than 3 billion to the Sudanese economy. However such estimates are difficult to obtain given that formally recorded remittances generated by migration across national borders represent only the tip of the iceberg of the hidden economy⁴. Clearly the 'formal economy' inadequately represents the 'true' economy.

Studies and reports have continually remarked on the widespread scale of labour migration from Darfur, and the significance of the remittances sent back to Darfur⁵.

Surveys in north east Darfur in 1988 revealed that 20 per cent of households had a member working in Libya and sending back remittances. Wealth ranking exercises showed that receipt of remittances were a feature of better off wealth groups; the top wealth group often had a family member legally employed in Libya, while the migrant workers of medium wealth groups were more likely to be working without proper papers. Poorer wealth groups did not receive remittances⁶. The Food Economy profiles developed by SC UK indicate the importance of labour migration as a livelihood strategy in all Food Economy zones, and even have one zone titled 'Agro-Migrant Zone' for whom remittances are the second most important source of income for middle income groups⁷.

There are essentially three broad categories of labour migration, including:

1. Internal migration within Darfur for seasonal agricultural work, work as herders or drovers, or to find work in the main towns.
2. Internal migration to central and eastern Sudan, including Omdurman and Khartoum, and Gedaref in Eastern Sudan.
3. External migration to other countries, including Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and other Arab States. Relatively few Darfurians reach Europe.

This chapter focuses on external migration to Libya, and internal migration to Khartoum and Gedaref, Eastern Sudan. The individual case-studies in Chapter 3 provide the specific details of labour migration from each of the areas visited, and also impact of the crises on receipt of remittances and communications.

Labour migration to Libya

Labour migration and commerce across the desert through the trans-saharan routes and oases to Libya has been a historic feature of livelihoods in Darfur. The discovery of oil in Libya and the oil boom of the seventies and eighties intensified these existing patterns of migration and became a consistent feature of the region. The journey from Darfur to Libya on foot and by camel, lead by a desert expert, took around 30 to 35 days. The caravans traveled by night and rest during the day. The introduction of trucks and four wheel drive vehicles accelerated this process of labour migration and trade.

Little is known about the impact of economic sanctions in Libya on economic opportunities for Sudanese workers. For certain, high inflation and a contracting economy in the nineties in Libya significantly affected this phenomenon. Declining rates of exchange in the mid to late nineties were also to the disfavour of the Sudanese.

More recently, Libya has attracted world attention with the lifting of UN and US commercial sanctions. On April 23 2004 the United States lifted the majority of sanctions imposed on Libya under the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996, thus opening up opportunities for political and economic dialogue. Far more important than sanctions, the economy of Libya is bound up with the price of crude petroleum and the export quota's agreed by OPEC. With the recent lifting of sanctions a

significant increase in foreign investment is to be expected, which combined with the increase in export quota's of crude petroleum (as compared to the nineties) bodes well for the Libyan economy. But these positive affects will take some time to increase the demand for migrant labour as a critical input for economic performance.

Box 1 Oil and the economy of Libya

The Libyan economy still depends on oil exports for 95 per cent of its hard currency. Libya is said to have about 36 billion barrels of known oil reserves (3 per cent of the world total) but only 25 per cent of its reserves have been explored. Libya also has plentiful reserves of natural gas. Many multinational oil companies have shifted their focus from Iraq to Libya since the lifting of sanctions and growing security fears and uncertainty over that Iraq's investment climate. According to oil industry analysts quoted in the New York Times, Libya produces about 1.5 million barrels of oil a day, but is thought to be able to double that to 3 million barrels a day in a decade with foreign, particularly American investment and the introduction of new technologies⁸. Another reason given for the interest in Libya is that the crude oil produced there is low in sulfur, and thus is relatively easy and cheap to refine for consumption in the United States and Europe. And Libya's location provides relatively easy access to southern Europe and the United States.

Although the focus of American companies re-entering Libya is overwhelmingly on oil and gas, there are expected to be developments in tourism, business-class hotels and sales of technical equipment previously unavailable to Libyans⁸.

Libya's foreign workforce

As a result of Gaddafi's ideals of African Unity and Pan-Arabism, Libya has had a relatively open door policy to most other African nations. By the mid-nineties the open door policy was changing, as numbers of migrants had increased, inflation was at a record high and the economy was contracting (in part due to sanctions). The once welcoming environment was becoming increasingly hostile.

In 1995 Libya announced that it was ending its dependence on foreign workers to open up jobs for Libyans (rate of unemployment was 30 per cent), and to reduce illegal immigration. In response, over 335,000 foreigners were sent home in 1995, of which 200,000 were deported and the remainder left voluntarily⁹. This crackdown by the authorities included intensive raids or forced repatriation (known as *kasha*) in 1995. In these *Kasha*, the migrants were forcibly transported in trucks to Kufra and then across the Sahara to El Fashir and Mellit in north Darfur. Sudanese interviewed in Kufra also reported that people were given a seven day warning to give them the chance to leave, but after that people were rounded up and put in detention centers.

The *kasha* were prompted by the increasing security concerns of the Libyan government caused by the infiltration of fundamentalist Islamic groups who were thought to be trained in Afghanistan as *mujahedeen*. The infiltration of these groups into Libya was claimed to be facilitated by the Sudanese government¹.

In 1996 an estimated 4,000 Sudanese migrants broke out of the detention center in Hawza Elenab and marched to the Sudanese embassy. Interviewees claimed that around 300 to 400 were shot and killed. The mounting international pressure and criticism of the Libyan authorities over this incidence prompted the Libyan

¹ Since the lifting of sanctions, the Libyan Government has expressed renewed concerns over the Islamic extremists infiltration of Libya and other parts of the region to create a buffer state in the border regions of Niger, Chad, Sudan and Libya. These claims, however, came under the umbrella of fighting Islamic terrorists.

government to relax their clampdown, especially on the Sudanese. New waves of migrants quickly followed, smuggled by trucks from El Tina, Mellit and Kornoï in north Darfur to Kufra or from Chad to Sabha in Libya.

By 2000 the number of immigrants in Libya was estimated to be more than 2.5 million (one immigrant for every two Libyans). In the closed society of Libya, where it is unusual to openly discuss issues as democracy and economic policy, the open door policy and the increased number of migrants provided a vent for complaints from Libyans that quickly spilled over into expressions of general unhappiness. Immigrants were blamed for threatening the social fabric of Libya and for a wide variety of social problems such as crime, prostitution, drugs etc.

The withdrawals of the official and unofficial welcome for the immigrants in Libya lead to an increase in the number of migrants expanding their horizons to Europe just across the Mediterranean. *“We are trapped. Life here is not going to get better, and no one wants to go back across the Sahara to his home. I think Africans may try to take any risk to get to Italy”* said a Somali immigrant (www.ghanaweb.com). However, the trip to Europe is expensive costing \$1,200 to \$1,800. The financing of such a trip is usually provided by relatives already in Europe and the U.S. The money from these sources has to be transferred through the Hawala system between Europe and Libya for both Sudanese and non Sudanese immigrants (Box 2).

By August/September 2000 the resentment and tensions boiled over into violence in Zawiya and Zahrah and other locations in Libya. Reports for the figures for those killed range from 50 to 500. Many Sudanese were reported to be killed in those attacks.

Press reports describe an order by the Libyan authorities to crack down on employment of foreign workers with the aim of ‘the libyanization of employment’. The press reported that 130 died in the town of Zawiya, west of Tripoli, while Libyan officials later claimed only four died in the September fighting. In Benghazi the violence against migrants was said by interviewees to be more limited as there was government intervention. According to the media (AFP), an estimated 6,000 Sudanese were deported or fled following this.

Box 2 Onward travel to Italy from Northern Libya

Concerns about smuggling illegal immigrants to Europe from Libya have always been raised, especially by the Italians. In the light of Libya's interest and recent moves to pacify its relations with Europe this might mean Libya has to adopt a more strict policy on migration to limit trafficking gangs and smuggling of immigrants into Europe.

June to September is the main season for this smuggling activity. The smugglers are reportedly Libyan, and corruption among officials allows this to continue. There are also many Sudanese working in this business. A single passage to Libya costs between \$1,000 to \$1,200.

According to one source (deemed reliable) of the 20 to 30 boats leaving northern Libya for Italy, only 2 or 3 actually arrive. The others are either caught by the Libyan authorities, carried off-course by currents to Tunisia or Malta, or capsized. There are many stories of drowning among the Sudanese. The source estimates the number of who left from Bengazi area and died in their way to Europe to be 100 persons since 2002. It is to be noted that Bengazi area is not a major area for immigration to Europe. Tripoli is the main area of trafficking to Europe.

One Darfurian association tries to warn young Darfurians of the risks of traveling to Italy and what faces them of the detention and deportation that awaits them if they are able to get there. If they are still determined to leave, this association gives them a leaflet that explains that the holder speaks Arabic and requests the Italian authorities to help them because they are from Darfur.

The New York Times reported more than 400 illegal immigrants trying to reach Italy by sea arrived on the Sicilian island of Lampedusa over a period of three days from Libya. In late July, 2004, the Italian interior minister, Giuseppe Pisanu, warned Parliament that two million people are waiting to depart Libya for Italy¹

Recent migration trends

Since the rebellion erupted in Darfur in 2003 the flow of Sudanese immigrants into Libya has almost ceased for three reasons; first insecurity makes travel more hazardous, especially on the routes through the desert in North Darfur, second the national border between Sudan and Libya has been closed, and lastly many of the groups of young labour migrants are absorbed in the different tribal militia and warring factions.

Border closure between Sudan and Libya

Two developments in 2004 have further dramatically affected the situation of Sudanese migrant workers. First, was the closure of the national border between Sudan and Libya in May 2003, effectively stopping the traffic of migrant workers between Darfur and southern Libya, and the well established trade routes between Libya and Sudan (via Darfur). Communications have also been seriously affected.

The closure of the route has meant that Darfurians have not been able to opt for Libya as a place of refuge. Yet many arrived in Kufra just before the closure of the route and a some arrived through the Chad route which is still open. A few families arrived by air from ElFasher.

The closure of the border has had a significant impact on both the livelihoods and well-being of the Sudanese community, and also economic activity in Kufra. This is remarked upon at the highest level with the governor of Kufra stressing that this had affected work opportunities, and the volume of trade (livestock and general

goods) not just between Kufra and Darfur, but extending to other Arab countries (particularly Egypt, but UAE, and Saudi Arabia also) and the whole of Sudan.

Authorities require migrant workers to have health certificate

The second major development, in February 2004 the General People's Congress approved laws to restrict immigration and to expatriate Africans and other migrants who live in Libya but have no steady jobs. In addition, foreign workers including Sudanese are required to obtain a health certificate, showing they have passed successfully a series of clinical health tests², including HIV¹⁰. The certificate must be renewed every six months for restaurant workers and every year for others. These tests are only available to legal immigrants i.e. those with identity papers and those who can pay the fee LD70 (\$50). Failing the test risks forfeit of identity papers, prison and deportation. A health certificate and proper identity papers are required of any migrant worker. Interviewees estimated that the proportion of Sudanese with legal papers and health certificates were approximately 3 in every 10. As one woman, wife of a trader said, '*Even if you have money you are under pressure to go (back to Sudan)*'.

Push and pull factors for migration

Darfurian labour migration to Libya is a reflection of pull and push factors. The push factors include conscription and compulsory recruitment in the popular defense force in Sudan; limited work opportunities in Darfur; failing livelihoods as a result of recurrent drought and insecurity. The pull factors were the Libyan government 'open-door' policies, the potential for better paid work opportunities; the relative ease with which Libya may be reached (in terms of low cost and limited procedures as compared to other Arab countries) and the availability of contacts through friends, relatives and tribal clans in Libya. The latter includes access to a loan of approximately LD 50 on arrival for getting started.

Since 2003 and the eruption of the rebel insurgency and government counter-insurgency the pressures to leave have changed. As one young Darfurian in Benghazi, who arrived in July 2003, put it '*In Darfur we had three options; join the rebels, go to the camps or get out*¹¹'. Older Darfurians looked on it differently and considered it to be shameful for Darfurian men to leave Darfur at such a time¹².

Numbers of Sudanese

No official estimates of numbers of Sudanese were found, let alone numbers of Darfurians. The International Labour Organization's International Labour Migration Database has no statistics for either Sudan or Libya. In 1995, reports estimated the total population of Sudanese to be 500,000, of whom 70,000 left as a result of the deportations⁹. Sudanese interviewees quoted the Sudan Embassy official estimates of registered legal Darfurian workers in Libya of 250,000. The Sudanese Embassy is also reported to estimate that there are 70,000 illegal Darfurians in Libya, who crossed through the desert. This would make a total of 320,000 – 5 per cent of the total population of Darfur, which is 6.26 million. An alternative way of looking at

² The following tests are required from the health certificate: HIV, hepatitis B virus, Hepatitis C virus, urine complete, blood grouping, malaria, blood sugar in urine, ketones and complete blood tests, x ray and physical examination.

this figure is the proportion of households in Darfur with a migrant worker in Libya. Assuming an average household of 6, this would mean that 30 per cent of all households have a migrant worker in Libya. This average figure seems high and probably reflects previous years, since when numbers have declined. A more realistic estimate is considered to be in the range of 150,000 to 250,000 including both legal and illegal immigrants.

The Libyan prisons are also said to have high concentrations of Darfurians, one source believed there were 400 Darfurians in prison in Queffi prison in Benghazi. Many of these have been caught trying to travel illegally to Benghazi.

Kufra – a hub for Darfurian migrants

Kufra is the main transit point for Sudanese coming to Libya directly from Sudan via Darfur, and many are passing through on their way to the agricultural areas of Sebha, or the coast, including the major coastal cities of Benghazi and Tripoli.

Representatives of the Popular Congress for Sudanese in Kufra described recent trends in labour migration for Kufra¹³. A graphical representation of this is shown in Figure 1, based on maps drawn as a PRA exercise. The graph reflects the major trends in labour migration from Sudan as discussed above, including:

- The 1995 deportations, and subsequent fall in numbers arriving.
- The 2000 deportations, and subsequent fall in numbers arriving.
- In 2004 the impact of the closure of the border and indirectly the loss of trade and implications for livelihoods.

Figure 1 Annual number of Sudanese arriving and departing from Kufra, southeastern Libya

Darfurians in Kufra

In Kufra the majority of Sudanese are Darfurians – up to 80 per cent according to one source, while in Benghazi a smaller proportion of Sudanese are from Darfur (less than 30 per cent), yet they are still a very large community³. Most Sudanese in Kufra are living in Jincia – a small town for migrants about 10km from the main town of Kufra. Jincia means nationalities, and is home to people from Chad, Nigeria, Ghana Cameroun, Morocco, Egypt, Syria and Palestinians. Jincia is remarkable for its well-developed and extensive market place which closely resembles Souk Libya in Omdurman (Khartoum). This market mainly serves the migrants who wish to buy goods to take back or send back home. Sudanese and Chadians are the largest group. Other concentrations of Sudanese are found in the big agricultural project in Kufra, the livestock market, on the private farms or are working in the main town as traders or for organizations. According to one group currently, *‘thousands (of men in Darfur) want to come to Libya, but only a few have the money to come’*.

Migration Routes

The routes to and from Sudan have changed over the years. Up to 1993 the main transit route was from Mellit in North Darfur to Kufra by truck via the Libyan border

³ A Darfurian Hawala in Benghazi estimated the total number of the Darfurians in Benghazi and its suburbs to be 150,000.

town of Aweinat, and taking about seven days in total. Some trucks also went from Kutum, Tina and Kornoï in Darfur and Elhamra in North Kordofan.

In 1993 a new customs point opened in Dongola, thus requiring the route to go through Dongola but still transitting through North Darfur. At the same time, a new bus service started which opened up Libya to many Sudanese living in Central and Eastern Sudan. This 1993/94 period was associated with a 'rush' of sudanese migrants.

Since the border closure, there are four routes for Darfurians to travel to and from Libya:

1. Via Tina on the Darfur/ Chad border and through Chad and up to Kufra (see Figure 5).
2. Via Tine on the Darfur/ Chad border and through Chad and up to Sebha in south western Libya.
3. Through the desert (smuggled illegally).
4. Biweekly flights from El Fasher to Kufra costing One Way LD250 (\$188); Return LD350 (\$263), which is said to be an option only for the rich and for those with legal identity papers. However, nowadays this option is not common for Darfurians and many of the flights are cancelled because there are not enough travelers. Darfurians are concerned that they might be interrogated by the security when they arrive and also that they may not be able to leave ElFasher especially for those who live in the rural area.

There are two small towns called Tina, one either side of the Sudan/ Chad national border. There is a refugee camp about 15km from the Chadian Tina. Chadian Tina is an important hub for migrants, where large numbers of men were reported to be trying to get to Libya. However, few can afford the fare so there are also few trucks making the journey. Buses on the route from Tine are apparently rare.

The truck journey from Tina to Kufra takes about 15 days, with water supplies carefully rationed out to 3 cups of water per person per day, which although sparse is considered '*better than dying in Darfur*'. This journey costs between 250,000 and 750,000 Sudanese Pounds (about \$100 to \$300). The return journey from Kufra to Tina is also very expensive, as each passenger must pay fees at three main customs points and many smaller points. Each passenger must pay LD170 (\$128) for the journey, and about SP 400,000 (\$156) in fees. Through Darfur the taxes and one passage together cost about LD 80 – LD90 (\$60 - \$70). Some truck drivers are clearly concerned about the security of this road and the situation in Tine, which was reportedly bombed by Antonovs.

The third option of travelling illegally – *smuggling* through the desert is extremely arduous and risky both in terms of insecurity on the Darfurian side of the border, and because the vehicles cannot stop for provisions at the border checkpoints.

According to the Sudanese Popular Committee (and later verified with customs officials), the week before the teams visit a sudanese landcruiser was picked up by the Libyan police patrols inside Libya's borders with 35 passengers, of whom 28 had died¹³. Between 1997 and 2004, the SPC have recorded 486 deaths of travelers on the journey from the Sudan border to Libya. This figure represents only those who died after they crossed the Libyan borders and they were buried inside Libya. The

most hazardous part of the journey to Libya from Sudan is through the desert in north Darfur. Several sources confirmed that it was not uncommon for landcruisers to carry up to 40 passengers, which beggars belief but illustrates the pressure on transport.

The onwards journey in Libya depends on whether or not migrants have the appropriate identity papers (passport or travel documents), including health certificate. With the papers migrants may take a normal Libyan bus which costs LD13, without a passport or health certificate migrants must pay to be smuggled from Kufra to Benghazi on routes than bypass the security points. This costs more than LD 100 (\$75 or 2 – 3 months work)¹⁴.

The social and economic situation of the Sudanese migrant workers in Kufra

As a transit point for migrant workers, Kufra has a fluid population of migrants. According to the Governor of Kufra on average 10 to 12 thousand people pass through Kufra every month¹⁵. At peak levels of immigration up to 90,000 could be expected. Immigration is currently at its lowest point¹⁶.

Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of the Sudanese migrant workers living in Kufra, based on a survey by the University of Kufra. The sample was all men. A small number of Sudanese women are found, most of whom are the wives of established Sudanese workers or trades people. In other words women rarely if ever come to Libya unless it is to join their husbands. Although households are found where the man is no longer able to work and therefore the woman is the main provider¹⁷. In Benghazi for example, there were a few women working as teachers and nursing assistants.

It might be expected that labour migrants are predominantly young unmarried men seeking their fortunes, but Table 1 indicates that most are married, and that there are a high proportion aged 30 years and above. This profile suggests a relatively mature and skilled labour force with relatively high rates of literacy and education. Data from 2001 indicates that adult literacy in Darfur and Kordofan is around 38 per cent of the population older than 15 years¹⁸, which is about half that of the migrants to Libya (71 per cent). How this profile has been influenced as a result of young men being recruited to fight on either side is unclear.

Table 1 Profile of Sudanese¹ labour migrants in Kufra, south eastern Libya (July 2004)¹⁹

Age	15 – 30 years	42.5%
	31 – 50 years	48.5%
	> 50 years of age	9%
Marital status	Married	75.5%
	Unmarried	24.5%
Level of education	Primary and secondary education	71.3%
	Illiterate	26.4%
	University graduate	2.3%
Date of arrival in	After 2000	70.0%

Kufra	1990 – 2000	23.2%
	Before 1990	6.8%

1. Total sample 385 Sudanese, of which 300 (78 per cent) from Darfur

Social organization

In Benghazi, there is a Sudanese consulate with a sub-office opening in July/August in Kufra. There are a number of Sudanese associations recognized by the Libyan authorities and therefore permitted to operate openly in collaboration with groups like the Libyan Red Crescent. The Popular Congress for Sudanese in Kufra is one such group, and they stress their strong social and economic linkages between Kufra and Darfur and North Kordofan, both in stable times and in times of crisis. There are also Libyans with strong contacts with Sudan. For example, members of the Libyan Red Crescent worked in Darfur with the Sudanese Red Crescent during the 1985 famine.

The Popular Congress for Sudanese was established in 1981, and was essentially for political and military coordination purposes during the Numayri's regime (when followers of Sadiq el Mahdi left and re-grouped in southeastern Libya). One of its roles was to assist newly arriving migrants from Sudan, including raising contributions from other Sudanese, and organizing the burials of those who perished on the journey.

There are also a number of informal groups (ie. without official recognition by the Libyan authorities or the Sudanese Consulate) who organize support for the Sudanese communities, including supporting new arrivals, advice, information, help with accommodation, finding work, possibly credit and skills based training.

There are well developed and strong tribal and family networks, through which more established migrants assist newly arrived migrants particularly during their first two months in the country. Many Sudanese small businessmen, including tailors, shoecleaners and cobblers, described how their contacts had supported them initially and helped them set up with their small businesses, including both capital and skills training (working with other Sudanese).

These networks are under increasing strain with the decline in economic opportunities in Libya, combined with the polarizing effects of the conflict in Darfur. Although, the Darfur conflict is widely understood not to be a tribal conflict there is increasing anxiety and nervousness as news comes through of atrocities, personal losses or a loss of contact altogether. This is sufficient to cause ethnic groups to stick together more and sharpens the division between tribes. Tensions and limited conflict took place between the Zaghawa and the Arabs Darfurians in Bengazi. Although it is probably no coincidence that the leaders of the Popular Congress for Sudanese in Kufra are not from ethnic groups specifically associated with the rebel factions or government supporters (from north Kordofan) (and also who have been living in Libya for more than 20 years). A strong sense of Sudanese identity (rather than tribal identity) was evident in all discussions.

Before the closure of the Sudan Libya border there was active recruitment by the rebels in Libya; from Tripoli Darfurian men were given LD 200 for the journey back

to Darfur, and LD 200 to buy a weapon once they were there¹². The same source claimed that the GoS was also actively recruiting Arabs from other countries to join the Jinjaweed, although this could not be verified.

Employment

Sudanese who lived and worked in Libya through the nineties commented on the difficulties post 1995, when government restrictions and deportations made life much more difficult. This combined with the economic decline in Libya, has affected work opportunities for Sudanese migrant workers. In 1995 the foreigners in Libya included 8,000 hotel employees, 26,000 truck drivers, 70,000 masons, 300,000 factory workers and 500,000 agricultural workers²⁰. This shows the predominance of agricultural workers, but does not reflect the more skilled labour force, including artisans (tailors, skilled construction workers), professionals (technicians, doctors, engineers) and small business men (restaurant owners). From the survey by Kufra university, 71 per cent of respondents had completed primary and secondary education, 2.3 per cent were university graduates, while 26 per cent were illiterate¹⁹.

Kufra is generally a transit point for labour migrants, rather than a main destination for work. Available work varied between the unskilled work on farms, construction, loading trucks etc., to the often highly skilled government workers, technicians, artisans (self-employed tailors), restaurant businessmen, trans-border truck drivers, caravan guides, traders and middlemen (Figure 2)²¹.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of Sudanese migrants in these different occupations in July 2004 and before the border closure. There is a strong negative impact of the border closure on drivers and mechanics, livestock traders, other traders and restaurant workers – all those whose work depends on border traffic of migrants and trade. Conversely it has led to an increase in unemployment as represented by the category of daily labourer, who have no fixed work and will take whatever they can. Sudanese in Libya do not admit to being unemployed as this might risk detention and there is always the chance of daily labouring work.

Figure 2 Livelihoods of Sudanese before the border closure and currently (excludes those in transit)

Drivers and mechanics must be experienced drivers and mechanics in order to make the extremely arduous and hazardous journey between Sudan and Libya, and possibly onwards to Alexandria. They command high fees (Table 3). The opening of the aid corridor taking food aid to refugee camps in Chad, will depend on Sudanese truck drivers and mechanics.

A variety of merchants specialize in particular trade including livestock (camels and sheep), goods (household items and food), vehicle spare parts and finally agricultural seeds (see section below on trade).

The livestock trade is a major employer and source of livelihood for Darfurians in Kufra and in Darfur, including:

- Livestock owners in Darfur
- The *Sababit* or middlemen between the trader and livestock owner

- Herders or drovers (young men 20 to 30 years of age)
- *The Habir* – the guide and leader of the herders, usually older and very experienced.
- Livestock traders

There are two kinds of herder; those who work within Sudan who travel as far as Mellit, and those who take over the herding of camels from Mellit to Kufra. The former are paid on a daily rate, while the latter are paid a sum of LD250 (\$188) for the journey plus their food. The journey takes approximately 30 - 35 days.

A herd of 560 camels employ around 16 herders at a rate of 3-4 herders per 100 camels with only one *Habir* for the group. The herder would be paid around 250 LD (\$188) and food which cost around 60 LD (\$45). Some of these herders might stay and work in Libya. In that sense herding to Libya provides a good opportunity to migrate to Libya.

Workers at the Kufra Agricultural Project and Flour Mill²²

Kufra Agricultural Project is a large mechanized irrigated farm established with US assistance prior to the sanctions era. Much of the machinery is American, and thus the project has suffered from its inability to obtain US spare parts. Crop production is organized around approx 35 fields (1km in diameter, and 50 hectares area). In addition the project rears livestock (libyan sheep), and in the past fattened camels.

Of 140 foreign workers employed by the project, 41 per cent (54) are Sudanese showing their relative dominance the foreign workforce. Sudanese comprise 39 per cent of the skilled workers who are employed year round – these tend to be long-term employees with two men having worked for 24 and 26 years respectively. One skilled worker interviewed previously worked at the Gezira agricultural Scheme in Central Sudan. Seasonal workers are employed for three to four months depending on the needs of the project.

The project manager explained that the project had employed up to 150 sudanese workers five years previously, but this had declined in part as a result of the Governments plan to ‘libyanize skilled jobs’ and second because of the estimated 50 per cent decrease in production caused by lack of US spare parts due to sanctions. The project manage was hopeful that the lifting of sanctions would mean access to spare parts, and foreign investment.

Table 2 Foreign workers employed by the Kufra Agricultural Project and Flour Mill

	Sudanese	Other foreign workers	All
Skilled	22	34	56
Unskilled Seasonal workers	32		
Total	54 (39%)	86	140 foreign

Labour rates

Salaries are generally higher on the coast than in Kufra as shown in Table 3. Unskilled daily labourers in Kufra ranges are paid LD 2 to LD 3 per day, while in

Benghazi they are paid LD 3 to LD 5 per day. There is a sharp contrast between the highly skilled jobs and the unskilled jobs. Caravan leaders command the highest wage rates, followed closely by experienced lorry drivers, illustrating the importance of the caravan and camel traffic between Libya and Sudan. Even professional technicians employed by the Agricultural Project are not paid this much. Technicians are often employed with a ‘foreign contract’, which means that a proportion of their earnings are transferred through the banking system.

Table 3 Examples of daily wage rates for foreign workers in Kufra and Benghazi

	Kufra	Benghazi
Experienced lorry driver	LD 600 per journey to Darfur (\$450)	
Experienced cook	LD600 per month (\$450)	
Less experienced cook	LD300 per month (\$226)	
Grocery shop worker	LD150 -200 per month (\$113 - \$150)	LD150 (\$113)
Unskilled agricultural workers	Up to LD120 per month (\$90)	LD120 per month (\$90) LD150 per month (Wadi Shoba)
Skilled workers e.g. tailor	LD 250 – 500 per month (\$188 - \$376)	LD500 – 600 per month (\$376 - \$450)
Caravan leader/guide 1 journey	LD1500 (\$1,128) & food	
Caravan herder 1 journey Mellit to Kufra	LD250 (\$188)	
Daily labourers	LD 2 – 3 per day (\$2)	LD3 – 5 per day (\$4)
Government and private sector		LD200 – 250 per month (\$150 - \$188)
<i>Kufra Agriculture Project</i>		
Technicians	LD 700 per month (\$526)	
Seasonal labourers	LD150 – 190 per month (\$113 - \$143)	
Unskilled contract workers – local contract	LD190 – LD300 per month (\$143 - \$226)	
Unskilled contract workers – foreign contract	LD450 – LD500 per month (\$338 - \$376)	
Daily labourers (no contract)	Wage rates vary according to work done.	LD3 – 5 per day (\$4)

Costs of living for Sudanese migrant workers in Kufra

The government subsidises basic foodstuffs including wheat flour, oil, sugar. Wheat flour, for example, costs the Kufra Agricultural Project LD 385 (\$289) to produce per tonne, and is sold to Libyan consumers for LD 50 (\$38) per tonne. These food subsidies are only enjoyed by Libyan consumers, some of whom then sell part of their quota’s to migrants. The subsidies were designed to lessen the impact of high inflation for Libyan citizens, and allow all citizens easy access to their basic food needs. Migrants on the other hand have to pay full market price.

The most expensive costs for a family are house rental and health costs. House rent varies according to size but is in the range of LD 85 per month, and would accommodate x people. Hospital stays cost 30 LD per day plus an additional fee of 6 LD, although medicines are free. For delivery the charges are 50 LD, plus 30 LD for each day spent in the hospital. In case of Caesarian Section a payment of 500 LD for the operation should be made¹⁷.

Small businesses, such as tailors, tea shops and restaurants, have a wide range of associated costs. Shop rental in Kufra for example was about LD 120 (\$ 90) per

month, although this could house up to four tailors with an average income of LD 250 to 500 (\$188 - \$376).

Sudanese women in Libya

Sudanese women in Benghazi described how the salaries have decreased by half since 1996 in terms of their foreign exchange equivalent¹⁷. Exchange rates against the dollar have declined markedly in 1996 LD 100 was equivalent to \$350, while in 2004 LD 100 is equal to \$133.

There are some Sudanese women found working in Libya and some women accompanying their husbands. Several wives of Darfurian traders were interviewed in Kufra. In Bengazi a group of women who had been living in Libya from between 4 and 15 years described their work and lives.

During a focus group interview with a group of five Darfurian wives of traders how things have deteriorated after 1995 and how they are now considered at an all time low. Their hopes currently were *'That life will settle and peace will come and all people can go back and development will be good'*²³.

*Debt, credit and loans*⁴

Loans are available from friends and family when migrant workers first arrive, usually up to about LD 50 (\$ 38). They can also be organized through travel agents who are prepared to help with travel to other parts of Darfur.

Sudanese women in Benghazi explained they face particular difficulties paying for school fees for their children. To help with this they have a savings scheme known as the 'Sondook system' where a group of women each contributes a small sum, the sum total of which is given to one member¹⁷.

Remittances from Libya

Why do migrants remit?

The Darfurian labour migrants left Darfur for economic reasons to support their immediate and more extended family. More than 70 per cent were married and their families would have remained in Darfur, thus requiring substantial financial support. Remittances are more than just a form of 'insurance' against temporary shocks like drought, rather they form a part of the core livelihood strategies for rural communities throughout Darfur. This is indicated by the type of remittance as a large proportion is sent in kind in the form of basic household commodities including food.

Other reasons for sending back of remittances include to pay for big occasions such as weddings, funerals and feasts, and to support education of children.

Mechanisms for transfer

In Libya Sudanese migrant workers remit money and or goods back to Sudan by the following mechanisms:

- Hand-carried either personally or sent with a close friend or relative traveling by truck, landcruiser or plane (only suitable for small items and messages and limited to the better off).

- Through the Hawala system, which is only used by Darfurians in the coastal towns.

Since the closure of the national border between Sudan and Libya remittances from Libya to Darfur have almost ceased.

Amount

Focus groups estimated how much cash workers used to remit to Darfur before the crisis. The value and type of the remittance (cash or kind) depends on many factors; the income of the migrant worker; the family ties and responsibilities at home in Darfur; the system of transferring the remittance; the planned duration of stay in Libya; and the remittee's proximity to urban centres.

The income of the migrant worker obviously determines how much is available to send back (Table 4). Higher paid workers are able to send more but they are also able to send a higher proportion of their salary. This is presumably because basic living expenses in Libya fall within a limited range, which leaves a higher proportion of disposable income.

Table 4 Cash value of remittances sent by Sudanese migrant workers in Libya²⁴ (different income groups)

Monthly income	Annual income	Remittance	Per annum		Per cent of income
LD 250 – 350	\$ 2256 – 3258	LD 60 per month	LD 720	\$ 958	30% - 42%
LD 150 – 250	\$ 1353 – 2256	LD 60 every 3 months	LD 240	\$ 319	14% - 24%
Less than LD 150	Less than \$1353	Unable to remit regularly			

Table 5 Cash value of remittances sent by Sudanese skilled and unskilled migrant workers in Libya

Income group	Remittance	Annual income*	Remittances per annum	Per cent of income
Skilled workers	LD 90 per month	\$ 4,511	\$ 812	18%
Unskilled workers	LD 30 per month	\$ 1,353	\$ 271	20%

The estimates of remittances for different income groups were remarkably similar (from \$ 271 to \$ 319 for unskilled workers, and from \$812 to \$ 958 for skilled workers), and were supported by data from other interviewees. The most commonly cited amounts sent at any one time ranged between LD 30 and LD 90 (\$ 23 to \$ 68).

The amount remitted also depends on the nature and strength of family ties back in Darfur. Married men, whose wives and children were in Darfur obviously sent back a higher proportion of their earnings than single men with fewer dependents. One focus group in Darfur estimated that married men sent back between SP 300,000 and SP 400,000 every six months (\$ 230 – \$ 312 per annum), while single men sent about SP 100,000 to SP 200,000 every year (\$ 39 – \$ 78 per annum)²⁵.

Apart from money, it is very common for Darfurians to send back goods, including clothes, rice, sugar, infant formula and oil – all of which are more expensive in

Darfur. The option of sending goods rather than cash was preferred by those Darfurians who live with their families in Libya. It was also more common in Kufra than in the coastal towns of Libya, which were several hundred miles further from Darfur. For example, one young man described how he sent one sack of sugar and flour every month to his parents in Mellit.

The amount sent partly also depends on whether friends and family are traveling back home, and if they are able to carry goods or cash. Mellit is particularly well-served as this is where many of the Sudanese drivers come from, who before would willingly carry cash and goods for friends and family.

This has now stopped because of the border closure but there were examples of some men still trying to send cash. For example, one man recently sent \$200 hand-carried by a friend. But there are problems of sending cash rather than goods in the current context, first the very high inflation in Darfur⁴ (and shortages of some commodities) as a result of the crisis, second the insecurity and risk of being robbed or worse, and third, the poor communications.

There is an entire trade industry in Jincia⁵ that supplies goods to individual migrant workers for sending back to Darfur. Jincia market is famous, a vast souq with several hundred small shops, which closely resembles the souq at Omdurman. These traders in general goods reported that since the border has closed the demand for such goods has dropped significantly as people are not going back as few can afford the more expensive alternative route through Chad (about \$300 as compared to \$60 to \$70). When individuals travel with their own goods they took a much wider range of household items.

Box 3 Example of remittances received in Darfur from Libya

*Wadi Shoba (Kebkabiya)*²⁶,

Arab groups who worked as herders & agricultural labourers:

- Cash remittance sent every three months around 50 to 100 LD
- Sent every three to six months around 200 to 300 LD
- Sent every six to nine months around 700 LD

Range: \$38 to \$ 900

Goweij, Disr

The average frequency was said to be every 1.5 to 3 months, and the average amount 5,000 - 10,000 Sudanese Dinar.

Range = \$ 78 - \$ 350 per annum

*Jary, Disr*²⁷

Remittances were sent between every month, and every three months. Monthly amounts varied between SP 10,000 and SP 50,000, which is equivalent to \$47 to \$ 234 per annum. Quarterly amounts varied between SP 800,000 and SP 1200,000 (\$ 312 and \$ 470 per annum).

Range = \$47 to \$ 470

*Seraij*²⁸

⁴ Prior to the border closure prices in Darfur were lower than other places in Sudan, but as a result of conflict and border closure they are now much higher.

⁵ Jincia is an outlying village in Kufra, which is populated by migrants of all nationalities (jincia means nationality) and has a huge covered souq. Many of the shops in the souq are run by Darfurians of a particular ethnic group and geographic origin.

The amounts of money sent back varied between SP 100,000 to 150,000 per year
Range = \$ 39 and \$58 per annum²⁸.

El Geneina

The amount sent was between SP 200,000 and 300,000 pounds (\$78 - \$120) two or three times a year.²⁵

Range = \$ 150 to \$ 350

Zayadia focus group (men) Mellit²⁹

Four out of 10 families have a male family member working in Libya²⁹.

Remittances sent back ranged between \$100 to \$150 every 3 to 6 months

Range = \$200 to \$ 600

The Hawala system

The Hawala system is based on a network of *Hawaldars* – local financial intermediaries. To send a *Hawala*, (money or goods transfer) the person in Libya approaches the local Hawaldar who phones the Hawaldar in the destination town in Sudan, who then contacts the recipient in Sudan and asks them to come to the phone to speak with the sender. The sender then confirms to the Hawaldar in Sudan that the recipient is the right person, so the Hawaldar hands over the agreed sum. Only then is the Hawaldar in Libya paid by the sender. The Hawaldar's make their money by the differential in exchange rates between the two currencies.

The Hawala system is also only available to those who want to send remittances to people living in the main towns (or with contacts there), including for example, El Fasher, Mellit, Kutum, Geneina and Nyala. One Darfurian migrant said that the Hawala system was only used in an emergency, as it had the advantage of speed.

Darfurian traders and Hawaldars in Benghazi explained that the Hawala system functions as a part of a system that covers the Gulf and as far as Europe, serving all nationalities. Thus, relatives in other parts of the world were able to support their relatives and friends in Libya, especially those who were using Libya as a transit point to other countries. Traders unable to use the banking system in Bengazi use the Hawala system to transfer sums of about 2 million sudanese pounds (\$ 800) to the Gulf and Saudia Arabia to buy goods. These goods are then sent from Saudi Arabia directly to Sudan.

One Hawaldar in Bengazi explained that he has around 300 people of all nationalities sending monthly Hawalas worldwide. Around 48 of these (16 per cent) were thought to be from Darfur. The amounts vary from LD 60 to LD 240 per person (\$45 - \$180) with an average of 150 (\$113). Hawaldars are making use of satellite phones to greatly improve communications.

Costs of sending a Hawala

Sending a Hawala incurs costs, which is why Darfurians try to hand carry their remittances as much as possible. In Kufra, the Hawala system is less commonly used by Darfurian migrants than by Sudanese from other parts of Sudan. For example a cobbler described how he sends his wife in Gezira money every six months – currently for every LD 60 (\$45) he gives the Hawaldar, his wife will receive SP 100,000 (\$39). The difference (\$6) is the profit for the Hawaldar.

Communications

For people living in Kufra communications with Darfur have become more difficult since the closure of the border in May 2003. Before that they could send hand carried messages, recorded cassettes and letters. According to one interviewee, *'before June 2003 contact was good, letters were hand carried by relatives, but there has been no news since then'*. Many others also report no direct news since that time, but have learnt indirectly (in part through television reports) that their villages have been attacked and the inhabitants moved to displaced camps. Although without exception no-one had contact with friends or relatives in the displaced camps.

Phone calls are possible to friends and relatives in the main towns, and the wives of traders reported phoning relatives in Mellit. The better off can also send messages and money by plane hand carried by people they know. But generally phone calls are considered prohibitively expensive for most Darfurians. Phone communication between Benghazi and Darfur costs LD1.5 (\$1) for one minute

Labour migration to Libya - Concluding remarks

The situation in Darfur has dramatically affected labour migration to Libya. First the insecurity in north Darfur, principally as a result of rebel activity, has rendered the trade and migration routes unsafe. Second, the closure of the border has stopped all trans-border trade, labour migration and cut-off the usual channels of communications (hand carried messages) and the hand-carried systems for sending remittances. For many poorer Darfurians this effectively prevents them returning to Darfur (especially those in the Kufra area).

The closure of the border has created very specific problems among large numbers of stranded migrant workers. The Libyan Red Crescent have responded to localized health problems, with a distribution of medicines to the Sudanese community in May 2003. The long wait in Kufra without the opportunity of employment erodes the assets and savings that men wish to carry back with them, and also puts pressure on their food supplies and stretches to the limit support networks. There have been reportedly 6 suicides among the Sudanese living in Jincia in the past few months. Many Darfurians have reportedly put their luggage into storage, which is in large part the goods they wish to take back to Sudan and returned back to look for work in other parts of Libya. The cost of storage is LD500 (\$376) per month for goods that would fill one lorry.

The current limited prospects for migrant workers in Libya, combined with the threat of detention and difficulties of return to Sudan mean that many migrant workers are desperate. Many younger men have their sights set on Europe – hence the increase in illegal smuggling of migrants in boats from Libya to Italy, and the associated fatalities.

In the longer-term the economic situation in Libya is expected to improve as the lifting of sanctions and new investments begin to take effect. Libya relies heavily on a foreign migrant workforce, and the Sudanese are a particularly skilled and welcome group. The question is however how long will these positive affects take to trickle down and impact on the situation of the foreign migrant workforce who will be needed more than ever.

In economic terms the border closure has had a devastating effect on local and transnational trade (between Sudan, Libya and other Arab countries) and on the livelihoods of those engaged in livestock and other trade, travel and other services for migrant workers.

The trade of livestock and other commodities between Darfur and Libya has all but stopped as a result of border closure and also the insecurity in North Darfur. Beyond traders, this has severely affected all those livelihoods connected with this trade, including producers, middlemen, herders and guides. The falling supply of camels is causing prices in Kufra to rise, while prices of camels in Darfur have fallen. It is expected that the price of basic foodstuffs imported usually imported from Libya have risen in Darfur.

Internal migration to Khartoum and Gedaref

Darfur has strong links with central Sudan, in part because Darfurians have played a significant role in the shaping the politics of Sudan (they were the driving force during the Mah'diya in the 19th century) and also because of the long history of trade and migration. In more recent years Khartoum as the capital and main urban center of Sudan has attracted literally millions of people displaced by both natural and man made disasters as well as economic migrants seeking a means of survival for themselves and as a means of sending back remittances to support their rural home communities.

Gadaref State, in eastern Sudan is one of the richest States as it produces most of the sorghum and sesame crops in the Sudan. Gadaref has long attracted labour migrants particularly farmers from Darfur and Kordofan. Following the introduction of mechanized rain-fed agriculture in Sudan in the sixties the government of Sudan called upon Sudanese farmers to migrate towards places with high production potential. A survey in 1986, which captured the drought years of 1984 – 85, found that 2.3 per cent had left for central and eastern Sudan during the previous two years - implying a total of 76,000 migrants³⁰. During the famine years the labour market in Gedaref and Gezira slumped severely, as a result there was less money to remit, it was difficult to send, fewer people could afford to travel and it was more likely to be stolen or pocketed by the carrier. Interestingly 'only 16 per cent of the sampled households received remittances'

The Darfurian communities currently in Gedaref were therefore part of a long-standing tradition of labour migration to Eastern Sudan. As a result the communities were older and more established than the groups interviewed in Khartoum, with more than 40 per cent of those interviewed having lived there for more than three years, while about 15 per cent had arrived before 1997 (for more than 7 years) (Figure 4). There are established communities of Darfurians, with specific areas of the town named after villages or even towns in Darfur, for example, Geneina and Ardamatta. These neighborhoods are exclusively inhabited by Darfurians. The 1986 survey also found that 'no more Darfurians than normal came to Dar Sabah during the famine'³⁰, which implies that because of the distances involved, migration to eastern Sudan in times of crisis is not an short-term crisis strategy but instead is part of a longer-term livelihood strategy.

Figure 4 Time of arrival of Darfurian migrants to Khartoum and Gedaref

In contrast the majority of Darfurians interviewed in Khartoum had come to Khartoum principally as a result of the conflict, and had arrived relatively recently. About half of them had arrived in the past year (48 per cent) and the rest in the past 1 to three years (52 per cent). There are obviously more long-standing Darfurian residents in Khartoum, but these were not met as the study purposefully visited IDP camps in Omdurman and Khartoum. Only 12 per cent of the Darfurians interviewed had come in search of work. Another 10 per cent cited the lack of services in Darfur (education, health, etc.) as the reason for coming to Khartoum.

Reasons for migration

There is a long-standing practice of young male labour migration from Darfur, particularly Dar Masalit, to eastern Sudan and the sending back of remittances. Young men in Gedaref sent back remittances to provide financial support for their relatives (parents, brothers and extended family) and their local community, including the poor, in times of hardship like drought. Workers claimed about 20 per cent of the remittances sent back to Darfur were for 'the poor and needy'. As almost all migrant workers were from rural communities this must have provided a vitally important source of income in times of drought and insecurity. These remittances were sent annually in the form of cash at the end of the agricultural season. Workers either hand-carried this money themselves on their annual visits, or sent it through friends and relatives from the same village.

In Khartoum, most of the Darfurians interviewed had been displaced by the conflict and were finding it difficult to adapt to conditions in Khartoum, particularly the temporary IDP camps and problems with local authorities. It should also be noted that the Khartoum state government issued a directive prohibiting Darfurians from building and residing in new camps (they either live in old camps, with relatives in Khartoum or go back to Darfur).

The fierce competition finding jobs and low wage rates also limited their cash income. This meant they were not able to send back remittances to their families in Darfur. They further claimed they had lost contact with their families, following the attacks of the militias that had dispersed their original communities. In Khartoum displaced Darfurians agreed that the migration had affected them negatively; they had lost their livelihoods, and could not identify any positive aspects of their displacement to Khartoum. In contrast, more than half of the migrants (54 per cent) in Gedaref believed that migration had provided them with better job opportunities.

Characteristics of Darfurian migrants

Gender and age distribution

In Khartoum the gender distribution of Darfurian migrants was almost one male for every three females. This was explained by 'extended family obligations', where in any household you may expect to find the male head of the household, his family (wife and children), his mother/ mother-in-law, the divorced sisters and the wives of his brothers. The household could include any of the above mentioned scenarios or

even more scenarios to include other members depending on the ability of the male head of the household to provide and the participation of the household members in the expenses. It is customary in Darfur that the support role of extended family networks to be enforced during times of hardship.

In Gedaref the ratio of men to women was almost equal. This suggests a much more stable established Darfurian community, who have settled in Gederaf for economic reasons rather than fleeing conflict. A pattern of labour migration from Darfur has developed whereby young men who were successful in finding work, settled down, started their own families, often bringing a young wife from Darfur and then encouraging their close relatives to join them. This practice has perpetuated the flow of young Darfurian workers to Eastern Sudan and has provided the essential support networks to help new migrants establish themselves.

The Darfurians in Khartoum included a higher proportion of older people (6 per cent) and children as compared with Gedaref. Some households claimed to have between 10 and 12 household members (Table 6). In Gedaref, however, the Darfurian community followed the expected demographic profile of the Sudan urban family (4 children and parents).

Table 6 Household size of Darfurian migrants in Khartoum

Number of household members	Per cent of households
14 – 17	20%
10 – 13	45%
6 – 9	35%

Differences in the age and gender distribution of migrants in Khartoum and Gederaf can be explained by the nature of the migration. In the case of the Darfurians in Gedaref the migration was essentially voluntary for economic reasons, and was not associated with the conflict. By contrast in Khartoum, the migration was in response to the conflict and therefore involved all vulnerable household members including children and older people.

Ethnic composition

Over 70 per cent of the migrants interviewed in Khartoum and Gedaref were Fur (35 per cent), Masalit (25 per cent) and Zaghawa (12 per cent), reflecting the larger tribes from north western (Zaghawa and Fur) and western Darfur (Masalit). While the tribes of south Darfur were proportionally less (Rizeigat, Habbaniya, Beni Halba, Marareet etc). North Darfur has a relatively lower and unreliable rainfall than south Darfur, thus agriculture is higher risk with lower productivity. In addition North Darfur has suffered recurrent periods of drought and famine, which prompted out-migration. The Masalit are traditionally farmers from Western Darfur State and their experience as farmers has stood them in good stead in eastern Sudan (see Geneina case-study). Most of the migrants to eastern Sudan were of rural origin.

Figure 5 Distribution of Darfurian migrant workers in Central and Eastern Sudan by ethnic group

Relations between different Darfurian ethnic groups have been negatively affected by the current conflict in Darfur, especially those living in Khartoum. The strength of interaction between Darfurian ethnic groups in Gedaref appears to be stronger than in Khartoum; half of the Darfurians in Gedaref felt that relations were either strong or very strong, whereas in Khartoum only one quarter felt this (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Interaction between tribes in Gedaref and Khartoum

There was general agreement among all interviewees that historically tribal inter-relations were good, and that the many local disputes over access to natural resources in the past had not damaged them. Interviewees were keen to highlight how the traditional tribal administration was able to hold the social fabric in place.

In Khartoum it appears that relations and level of interaction between ethnic groups has since deteriorated; 25 per cent of Darfurian interviewees in Khartoum rated the level of interaction as weak.

Darfurians in Khartoum especially those who were IDPs have been directly affected by the conflict, which in turn has widened the gap between Darfurian ethnic groups, including those who live outside of the region. It could also be argued that the distance from the place of conflict reduces the tension between the various Darfurian groups.

Internal migration routes from Darfur

The majority of those who migrated from South Darfur State took the Nyala-Khartoum train. Previously this was a weekly service, but gradually deteriorated to first fortnightly, then monthly and has subsequently ceased altogether as a result of the insecurity and conflict in south Darfur.

Migrants from West Darfur State mostly traveled by lorries and trucks, which was cheaper than bus travel. The lorries were delivering goods from Omdurman to Geneina and on the return journey would take migrants. Few Darfurians can afford the bus fare let alone the price of an air ticket to Khartoum.

North Darfur migrants used buses, lorries and about 30 per cent of all Darfurian migrants claimed that they had walked following the livestock trade route from Darfur to Omdurman. The latter was the usual route (pre-crisis) for seasonal labour from El Fasher to Khartoum, and this takes 40 days³¹. Very few from West and South Darfur States claimed to have traveled on foot.

Accommodation

For safety and community support the majority of Darfurians in Khartoum (74 per cent), who were women and children, were living in groups in IDP camps. The other 26 per cent of those interviewed were dispersed within the local communities and had been forced by the Khartoum State to evacuate the temporary camps and live with relatives in Khartoum.

In Gedaref more than 60 per cent of the Darfurians interviewed were living in long established Darfurian neighbourhoods, and considered them selves as part of the local

community. In contrast, more recent newcomers were more likely to be living in obvious groups and were still in a process of adjustment. Nearly 40 per cent of those interviewed were living in obvious groups.

Employment

In Khartoum unskilled work opportunities were few in relation to the vast numbers of unskilled migrant workers and displaced people seeking work. The Darfurians interviewed commented on the lack of work opportunities, the fierce competition for work, and as a result the low wage rates. Most were engaged in marginal income-earning activities; selling water, vegetables and other small trade (Table 7). Some Darfurians were employed by the army.

By contrast, work opportunities in Gedaref were mostly agricultural and therefore more suited to the skills of Darfurians. None were engaged in the type of marginal activities described in Khartoum and the per cent working in construction was also less than in Khartoum. The latter might be a result of more construction activity in Khartoum or more limited opportunities in Gederaf.

Generally wage rates were higher in Gederaf, for example, construction workers earned almost twice as much as those in Khartoum (Table 7). Agricultural work in Gederaf also paid more than the marginal activities in Khartoum. The only activity in Khartoum that generated more income than the minimum wage rate was small trade, which tended to be favoured by younger men.⁶

Most of the women displaced in Khartoum were not able to find jobs (about 60 per cent), because of the lack of skills, language barriers and strong competition for work (Table 8). The majority of displaced working women in Khartoum were working in food processing (small restaurants?), tea stalls and vegetable vending. Women selling food and tea were able to make more money than men. Although they risked harassment from male customers and as most did not have the necessary licenses from the health and tax authorities they also risked harassment from government officials. In Gederaf Darfurian women who worked were mostly engaged in agricultural activities.

⁶ The minimum wage in Sudan is 300.000 SP a month (\$ 115.00), which is about \$4.00 per day assuming 30 days are worked.

Table 7 Type of work and wage rate rates - men

Location of Darfurian migrants	Type of work	Per cent	Wage per day LS
Khartoum	Small trade	20	9,000
	Water vendor	40	5,500
	Vegetable vendor	20	5,500
	Construction worker	16	4,000
	The army	4	4,000
Gederaf	Small trade (tombac)	30	10,000
	Construction worker	10	9,000
	Agricultural work	60	7,000

Table 8 Type and distribution of work and wage rates for Darfurian female workers (does not include those not working)

Location of Darfurian migrants	Type of work	Per cent	Wage per day LS
Khartoum	Food processing	43(17)	13,000
	Tea-making	37(15)	11,000
	Vegetable vending	20(8)	6,000
	Not working	60	
Gederaf (per season??)	Harvesting	40	750,000
	Crop cleaning	30	540,000
	Cultivating	30	540,000

Challenges

Current challenges facing Darfurians in Khartoum included limited work opportunities, instability, poor housing and the continuous harassment by the government officials who they claimed were trying to send them back to Darfur by making their stay in Khartoum as uncomfortable as possible (Table 8). In Gederaf Darfurians identified the seasonality of agricultural work as their major challenge, as this limited work opportunities to a single short season of mostly sorghum and sesame. Other problems included lack of home ownership and having to rent housing, and their limited access to good education. They thought that the available public education was very poor (under staffed and generally under resourced), while private education was too costly for them. The men and women working in food processing and the vending of vegetable and other perishable goods also identified problems with government officials, and the need for licenses (Table 8).

Table 8 Challenges facing Darfurians in Khartoum and Gederaf

Location	Challenge	Per cent
Darfurians in Khartoum	Limited work opportunities	47
	Instability	24
	Poor housing	22
	Problems with government	7
Darfurians in Gederaf	Seasonality of work	40
	Instability linked with housing	30
	No access to 'good' education	20
	Problems with government	10

In Khartoum the short-term goal of Darfurian communities was finding better job opportunities which would provide them with more freedom in choosing what to do with their lives. They were not pleased with the 'temporary camps' they were forced to live in, with the many restrictions they face on movement. Their other short term goal was better housing and services and better understanding from the local and national authorities. The majority were not optimistic about their situation or their future, "we just need to adjust and adapt ourselves to the new life" adding "only alsabr (patience) that will see us through".

All displaced people thought of their stay in the IDP camps as temporary and their goal was to return to Darfur. However this was conditional on the settlement of the Darfur conflict between the government and the opposing factions.

In Gedaref, the long term goal was not different, but they discussed the problem more broadly and were vocal about the causes of the conflict and ways forward towards peace. They attributed the conflict to the injustices in wealth distribution and development priorities of the government. They were not optimistic about the actions taken by the government, the opposition or the international community, and believed that the Darfurian community had been victimized by all parties, who were trying to settle their political differences and using the Darfurian community as the mechanism for that.

All the communities recognized that collective efforts at all levels were required to rebuild the infra-structure and stabilize Darfur. However, the majority had very little trust was given to the government who they claimed had previously never kept its promises to Darfur and had contributed to the eruption of the current crisis by policies biased towards pro-government groups rather than the community at large. Consequently very few (5%) believed that the current government would support the rehabilitation of Darfur. They further argued that if the government was not interested in the protection of communities in Darfur, why should it be trusted with the rehabilitation of the damage it contributed in creating.

They also argued that if peace is to be achieved, the tribal system of administration must be restored with additional authority. It also would mean greater equity in development and wealth distribution. Capacity building and improvement of services was considered to be a major factor in reaching peace. But, they also added "we got nothing from being dependent on government promises, this time it should be action by us Darfurians taking things in our own hands". As they claim, "with hard work, good will and struggle Darfur will be rebuilt".

Conclusions

Sudanese migrant workers in Libya are being squeezed hard on two sides. First the closure of the national border between Sudan and Chad by the Sudanese government has cut off the main route back for migrant workers to return to or enter from Sudan and cut-off communications and remittances (in cash and in kind). Second, Darfurian migrants have been affected directly and indirectly by the US/UN sanctions, in terms of suffering from the affects of inflation (without the protection of subsidies which are available to Libyans) and the contraction of the economy and

labour market. The latter contributed to the crackdown by the Libyan authorities on migrant labour, which started in 1995, and continues intermittently to this day. Currently migrants are suffering from the imposition of the health certificate requirements, which will inevitably lead to increasing numbers of illegal immigrants who cannot meet these requirements and more detentions of foreign workers.

The closed border has drastically reduced trade between Libya and Chad with significant negative effects on livelihoods in Sudan and especially Darfur, and among Libyans in Kufra. It is vital that the border is re-opened as soon as possible, but given the duration of the closure, the potential build-up of migrants on both sides and the insecurity in north Darfur, this must be done in a careful and controlled manner and with the full involvement and agreement of all parties (including the Libyan authorities, the Government of Sudan and the opposition in Darfur). Negotiations and agreements on the opening of the border and protection of trade routes will require commitments and actions by the opposition parties as well as the Government of Sudan. An information campaign is needed to inform Darfurians of the hardships and shortage of work in Libya, but until there is peace in Darfur Libya will remain an attractive option to Darfurians.

There are increasing numbers of Sudanese workers in Libya without legal papers and without regular work (in part because of the recent requirement for foreign workers in Libya to pay for a health test and their inability to return because of border closure). This situation combined with the insecurity and lack of opportunity in Darfur puts pressures on workers to seek opportunities to get to Europe, hence the increase in boat traffic. Every consideration should be given to granting an amnesty for all Sudanese in Libya without identity papers and health certificate, that would allow them the option to return back to Sudan or to take the health test and apply for identity papers and work legally in Libya (assuming conflict in Darfur is resolved).

Internal labour migration to Gedaref was mostly for economic reasons, linked with protecting livelihoods in Darfur by sending back of remittances. However, increasingly migration from Darfur particularly to Khartoum, is related to escaping the conflict, and has changed the demographic profile of migrants from groups that were principally men to predominantly women and children. The Darfurian communities in both cities but especially Khartoum, are facing many hardships related to; the instability; the collapse of communication systems; the sudden change of social environment and loss of their previous livelihoods; and the political tension created by the current conflict in Darfur.

Immediate steps should be taken to improve communications between Darfurian migrant workers and their families in Darfur, and to provide mechanisms for family tracing. This will automatically contribute to improving the flow of remittances back to Darfur. At the same time the security of routes and public transport, including bus routes to and from Darfur must be secured. A series of recommendations related to labour migration and remittances are provided in Chapter 6.

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CHAPTER 5

LABOUR MIGRATION & REMITTANCES - FIGURES

Figure 1 Annual number of Sudanese arriving and departing from Kufra, southeastern Libya¹

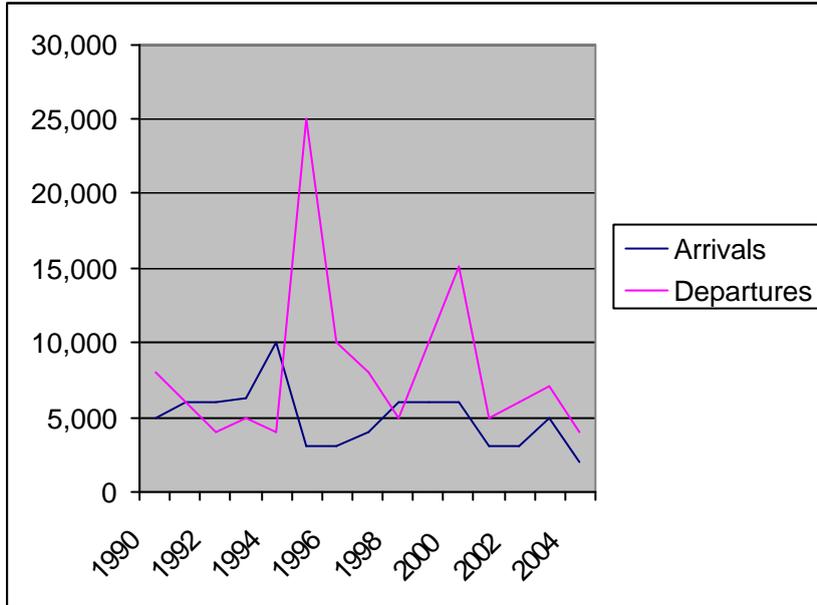


Figure 2 Livelihoods of Sudanese before the border closure and currently (excludes those in transit)²

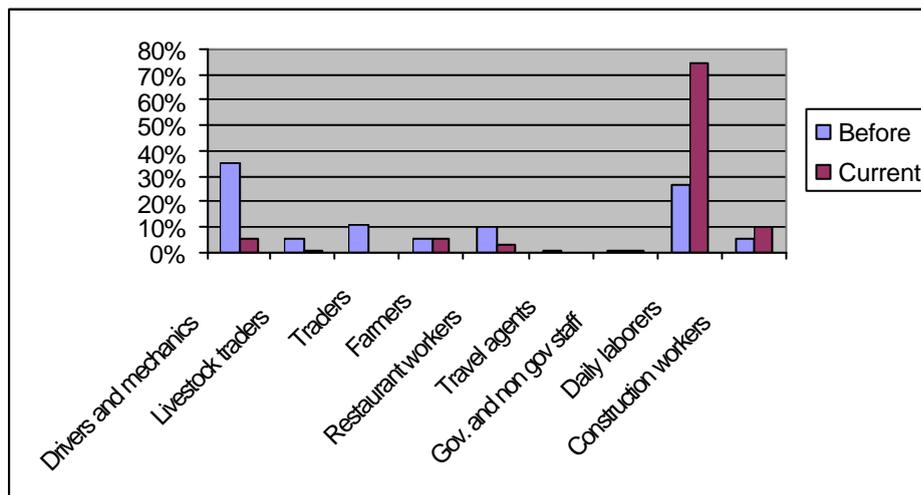


Figure 4 The Hawala Mechanism

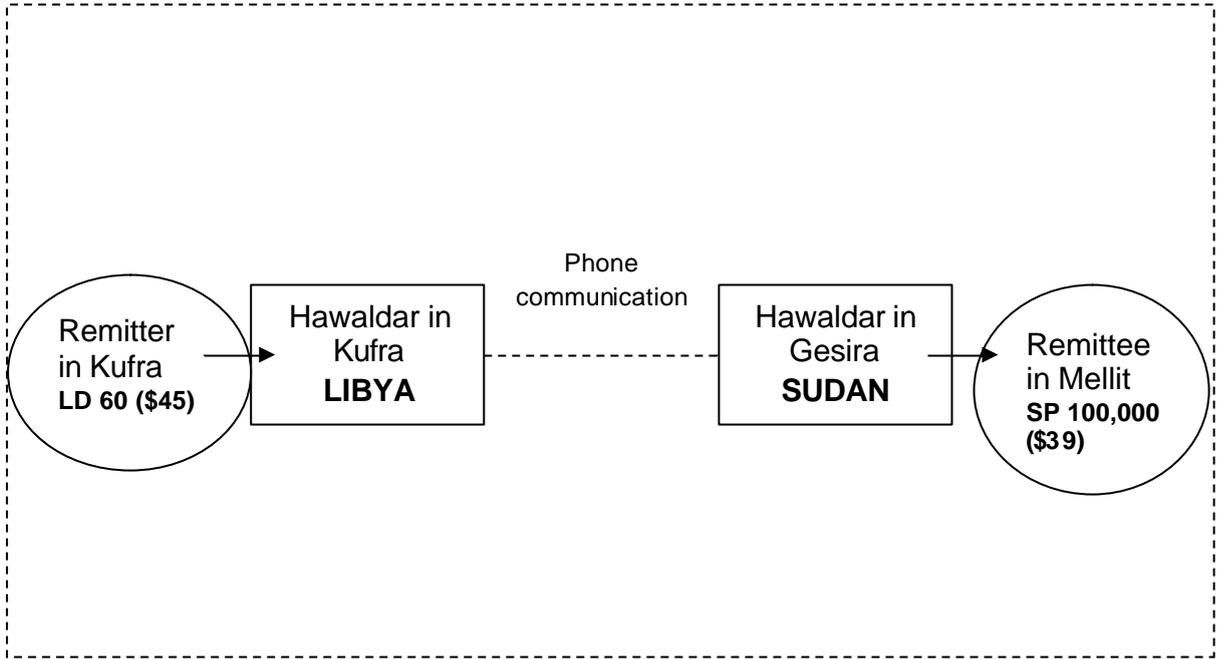


Figure 5 Time of arrival of Darfuriian migrants to Khartoum and Gedaref

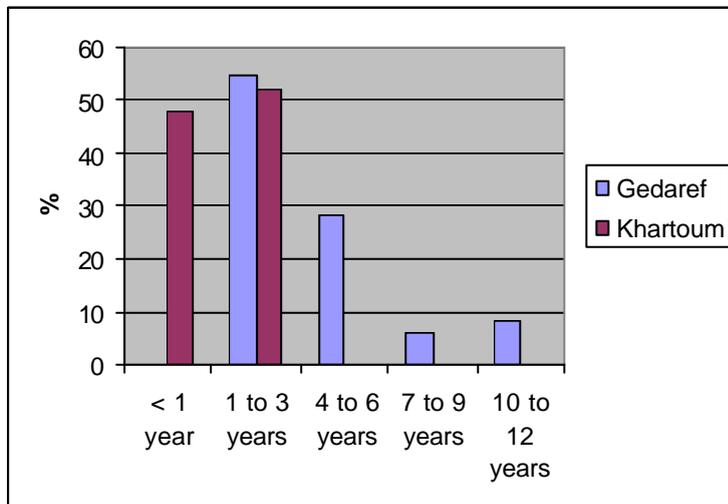


Figure 6 Distribution of Darfurian migrant workers in Central and Eastern Sudan by ethnic group

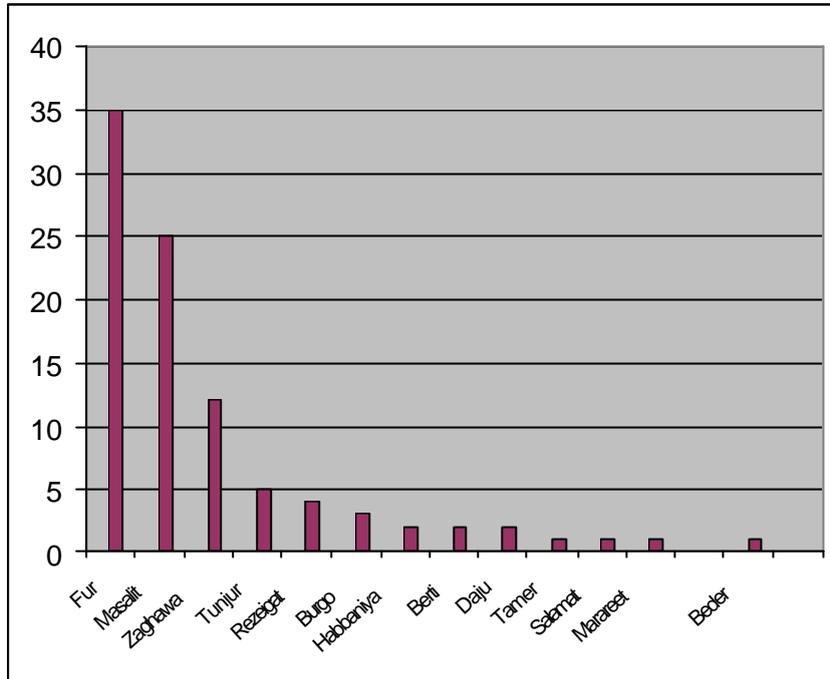
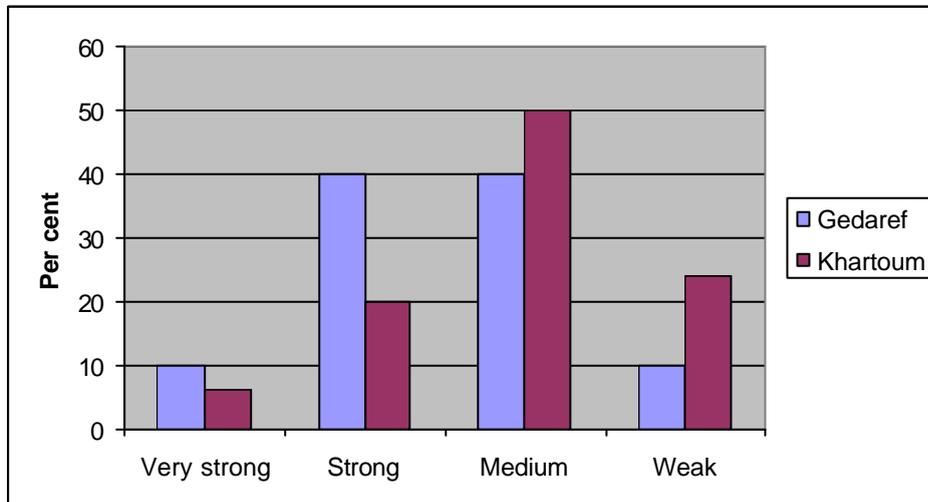


Figure 7 Interaction between tribes in Gedaref and Khartoum



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