



North Darfur: An ongoing battle for the control of Elfashir

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) echoes the demands of the UN Security Council that all parties to the conflict ensure that civilians' rights in Elfashir are protected including by allowing those wishing to move within and out of Elfashir to safer areas to do so and that the parties allow and facilitate the rapid, safe, unhindered and sustained passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, including by removing bureaucratic and other impediments.

Despite several demands by the national, regional, and international community (including the UN Security Council) to end the siege of Elfashir, the warring parties have intensionally continued the gruesome attacks and violations against civilians resulting in the death and injury of thousands. There have also been reports of eight cases of sexual violence cases against women and girls in Elfashir.

On 11 September 2024, the RSF launched a new series of attacks targetting shelters occupied by civilians (IDPs) such as IDP camps, schools, and social clubs in the Kafout neighborhood in Elfashir. Emergency Room shelters were also targeted during these attacks resulting in the death of seven civilians including four children and the closure of the shelter. The shelling of an IDP shelter resulted in the death of three IDPs including two females and the injuring of three others.

There was another random shelling on 12 September 2024, in the Kafout neighborhood that resulted in the killing of an unidentified male civilian in front of his residence.

In another separate incident, a shelling attack in the Alhawara neighborhood located a few meters from Kafout Emergency Room shelter resulted in the death of two children who were playing outside their home.

Abusjool IDP camp was shelled by RSF resulting in the death of 14 civilians while 30 others sustained severe injuries.

On 14 September 2024, SAF aircraft shelled several locations in Elfashir killing at least 5 civilians and destroying several houses in Alazmah and Eltijania neighborhoods.

Witness and victim testimonies

A large number of civilians would like to be evacuated from Elfashir due to the attacks in the city but unfortunately, they are unable to because of restrictions on movement. Mr. Ahmed Farooq from Kafout Emergency Room talked to ACJPS and said “...*the situation in Kafout neighborhood is very sad. The Emergency Room is only able to provide humanitarian services to the civilians either in the shelters or in their homes because of the movement restrictions....*,”

“... *we are currently focused on helping the injured who are admitted to hospitals as they require more resources and attention. We have so far organized at least 60 evacuation trips for civilians out of the city in the last four months. Unfortunately, we are now facing some challenges including inadequate resources, and are unable to evacuate an approximate total of 150 residents from the neighborhoods within Elfashir. However, we are hopeful that the situation will soon change for the better....*,” Mr. Ahmed added.

Mr. Khalid (not real name), a human rights defender told ACJPS that “... *my family and I have unfortunately failed to leave Elfashir and we are currently living in Zamzam IDP camp. We are seeking support from human rights organizations to be evacuated to any other safe state within Sudan or out of the country if possible....*,”

Mr. Adam (pseudo name), a human rights defender in Elfashir told ACJPS that “... *the humanitarian situation in Elfashir is dire and the restrictions on movement has only made the situation worse as civilians are unable to seek or receive aid. The total number of civilians in Elfashir currently is estimated at 344,648 and the Zamzan IDP camp which previously hosted approximately 295,000 IDPs opened its doors to 142,595 new IDPs following the outbreak of the war....*,”

Mr. Hassan (pseudo name), a human rights defender told ACJPS “.... *the only chance of fleeing from Zamzam Camp to Tawilla area is with the help of Mr. Abdul Wahid Noor who organizes evacuation trips for IDPs in Zamzam to Tawilla every Friday. Others have been able to flee through Khazan Jaded to Lybia or Eastern Sudan State....*,”

Background

On 13 June 2024, the UN Security Council [adopted a resolution](#) demanding that the Rapid Support Forces halt the siege of Elfashir and call for an immediate halt to the fighting and de-escalation in and around the capital city of North Darfur State. The Council called for the withdrawal of all fighters that threaten the safety and security of civilians, with the support of local mediation mechanisms. The Council also demanded that all parties to the conflict ensure civilians be protected, including by allowing those wishing to move within and out of Elfashir to safer areas to do so and requested that the parties allow and facilitate the rapid, safe, unhindered and sustained passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, including by removing bureaucratic and other impediments.

The attacks in Elfashir have led many humanitarian organizations to suspend their operations in the city. For example, several Emergency Rooms in Elfashir are non-functional and a few that are

still operating are doing so at half capacity. ACJPS was reliably informed that some of these organizations are trying to review their working methods and others could be closing.