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ANNEX

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Sudan

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action:	Contribute to prevention and mitigation of violence against civilians in Sudan
Action Reference:	NDICI CR 2023 / 23
Cost:	EUR 750 000 (European Union (EU) contribution).
Budget Line:	14 02 03 10
Duration:	Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947.
Lead service:	FPI

2. ACTION SUMMARY

The action aims to mitigate and prevent violence against civilians in accessible conflict affected areas of Sudan and in particular in Blue Nile State. Sub-national conflict re-escalated in Blue Nile State during the second half of 2022 leading to major violence, displacements and inter-ethnic and inter-communal tensions.

Since mid-April 2023, the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led to a conflict affecting most of the country. This has brought additional instability and further violence in Blue Nile State is expected.

The strategy for the implementation of this action is twofold: Engagement with armed actors/groups through meetings, workshops and campaigns should lead to behavioural change and enhance the protection of civilians. Moreover, community leaders, civil society organisations (including youth and women) will be capacitated to advocate for peace and stability. Conflict mapping, analysis and recommendations will be critical parts of this support.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

The Blue Nile Region in Sudan has been severely affected by violence and instability. Decades of armed conflict between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation movement (SPLM-N) have caused inter-communal conflicts, population displacements and have weakened local community structures.

In 2020, major armed groups signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) including the SPLM-N under the command of General Malik Agar. The JPA designated Blue Nile State as an autonomous region and SPLM-N under General Agar maintained a larger share of the governance. However, some major armed groups, including the SPLM-N faction¹ under the command of General Al Hilu, remained outside the peace process and continued to compete over power.

The military coup in October 2021 added new dynamics in Blue Nile State and the conflict re-escalated in 2022. While most signatories of the JPA supported the coup leaders, other political forces maintained a strong opposition to the military-led government under General Al-Burhan. This led to a widened gap between the SPLM-N (Agar)-led government and other forces opposing the coup and the new situation allowed for old grievances and political competitions to further surface. Inter-ethnic tensions, in particular land disputes between the Hausa tribe, originally from West Africa, and other Blue Nile tribes including the Funji, Hamaj and Berta emerged. The Hausa, although considered as non-native, have become a major demographic force. At the same time, they are seen as having been cooperative with the former regime of Al-Bashir in the past. The Hausa have been directly affected by violence resulting in major and forceful displacements within Blue Nile and to neighbouring states. In addition to this, the split between the SPLM-N has created its own ethnic dimensions with further grievances and complications among other Blue Nile tribes. Although a local peace deal was brokered in January 2023, it was not implemented and was superseded by further outbreak of fighting and violence.

The fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that escalated in April 2023, has provoked more instability and uncertainty in the Blue Nile State. SAF traditionally recruits Funjis, while the RSF has been reported to recruit Hausas. This adds an additional layer to the conflict and, as a consequence, inter-communal violence between the Funji and the Hausa has been increasing. While it is not yet clear how exactly the fighting between SAF and RSF would contribute to the complications of the Blue Nile conflict dynamics, it seems that there is an increased availability of small arms in circulation and that there is a spill-over of the conflict to South Kordofan.

Blue Nile State is of strategic importance to both war-waging parties, also due to the fact that it is bordering Ethiopia and key to Africa's biggest hydro-electric project to date, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD project). It also contains another major dam with the capacity to determine the course of the Nile.

¹ SPLM-N split into two factions in 2017: SPLM-N (Agar) and SPLM (Al Hilu).

The need to prevent and mitigate violence in conflict affected areas of Sudan, and in particular in Blue Nile State, through engaging with armed actors, community leaders and civil society is thus urgent and necessary.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

Increased inter-communal tensions in Blue Nile State, further aggravated by the escalation of fighting between Sudan’s military and main paramilitary force in April 2023, constitute an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4)(a) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, second paragraph, points (a), (n) and (p) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to (a) support, through the provision of technical and logistical assistance, for the efforts undertaken by international, regional and local organisations and by State and civil society actors in promoting confidence-building, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation, transitional justice, women’s and youth empowerment, in particular with regard to community tensions and protracted conflicts; (n) support for measures to promote and defend respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, and the related international instruments, and (p) support for measures to address the potential impact of sudden population movements with relevance to the political and security situation, including measures addressing the needs of host communities.

3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Impact	Mitigation
Access to areas of project implementation is denied by security actors.	High	Regular engagement with security actors; continuous analysis of the security situation to anticipate conflict and adapt activities.
The security situation deteriorates further affecting the implementation of the action.	High	Continuous monitoring of the security situation; flexible approach to align programme activities; working in small local teams; clear guidelines ensuring staff safety.

Risks	Impact	Mitigation
EU support can be perceived as biased towards specific political actors.	Medium	Principles of neutrality and independence throughout project implementation; regular and transparent engagement with all actors.
Displacement alters the population dynamics in the target locations.	Medium	Population dynamics are continuously analysed and activities tailored to the evolving situation.
Absence of a genuine commitment for dialogue among armed actors, community leaders and civil society organisations.	Medium	Sustained bilateral and multilateral engagements on the importance and relevance of this action. Tailor activities in line with specific actors.
Rainy season jeopardises access to some areas.	Low	Advance planning and close coordination with local partners and actors on how to organise logistics and movements.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to preventing and mitigating violence against civilians in accessible conflict affected areas in Sudan.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 Engage armed actors to promote behavioural change that leads to prevention and mitigation of violence;
- 4.2.2 Support community leaders and civil society organisations to advocate for the protection of civilians, peace and stability.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1): Armed actors are engaged to promote humanitarian norms and behavioural change leading to the prevention and mitigation of violence.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Conduct a mapping of key armed stakeholders and analyse their role in perpetrating or inducing violence;
- 5.1.2 Develop recommendations to armed and civilian actors, government as well as international actors about how violence can be prevented and/or mitigated;
- 5.1.3 Facilitate the dialogue between armed actors to promote the protection of civilians;
- 5.1.4 Support armed actors to sign new policy commitments that contribute to a safer and protective environment and monitor ongoing commitments.

Expected Result (2): Community leaders' and civil society organisations' capacities are strengthened to advocate for the protection of civilians and to contribute to peace and stability.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Conduct a mapping of local conflict resolution mechanisms and analyse their role in preventing violence;
- 5.2.2 Organise trainings to capacitate civil society and community leaders to increase civic space and advocate for a safer and protective environment;
- 5.2.3 Support local conflict resolution mechanisms and protection-based multilateral dialogue between communities and community leaders;
- 5.2.4 Facilitate dialogue between civil society, community leaders and armed actors.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures².

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives and results as presented in sections 4 and 5.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The type of applicants targeted for this direct award is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation with experience in crisis affected contexts in Sudan.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

² www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 750 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

Indicative budget breakdown

Components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Component 1: Contribute to prevention and mitigation of violence against civilians in Sudan		
6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management)	750 000	n/a
Total	750 000	

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under direct management. It will be devolved and sub-delegated to the **European Union Delegation in Sudan**, with the support of the Commission for the conclusion of the contracts implementing the action.

6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final report. Each report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

6.5 EVALUATION

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.6 AUDIT

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle has adopted a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

The 2022 “Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for external actions” reference document shall be used to establish the appropriate contractual obligations.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The action contributes to the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. It is part of a wider support of DG ECHO and EU Member States (Germany, France – under discussion) that focuses on capacity building of armed groups and community leaders on international humanitarian law and enhances the protection of civilians. Close and regular coordination between the support of the different donors will be ensured.

The focus on conflict analysis and support to dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms of this action will provide insights on conflict dynamics that can be useful for further political and policy interventions.