Please cite as: EUAA, '3.10.1. Child recruitment' in *Country Guidance: Sudan*, June 2025.

3.10.1. Child recruitment

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus 2024, 2.6.; Country Focus 2025, 2.7.; Security 2025, 1.2.1. (c), 2.1.2., 2.6.2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Whereas Sudan is party to the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) and has domestic legislation prohibiting the recruitment of children, no sanctions are provided by the criminal legislation. Child soldiers in Sudan are known as *Jana jaish* and have long been used in past armed conflicts.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Child recruitment amounts to persecution.

Cases of child recruitment by both the SAF and the RSF and their allies, have been reported by various sources. Despite the lack of precise statistics, different sources report that thousands of children have been recruited and used in the ongoing conflict. It was reportedly occurring across the country and was carried out by all belligerents, including those who had signed the JPA. In addition to being deployed in combat, recruited children are also used by armed groups for tasks such as operating checkpoints, transporting ammunition, conducting basic reconnaissance and surveillance, and performing labour in military camps. The RSF reportedly uses children as human shields, bodyguards, informants, and combatants, as well as for conducting security patrols, manning checkpoints, carrying out searches, monitoring detainees, looting, committing arson, perpetrating acts of torture in detention centres, and recording crimes to post on social media.

Furthermore, reports indicate that means of recruitment include coercion, threats, violence and abduction, intimidation, torture, summary execution and denial of food and medical care.

Finally, it should be noted that children who have actually been recruited and who suffer from complex trauma or other medical conditions will face a lack of adequate care and rehabilitation.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

For children the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution, in relation to child recruitment, should take into account **risk-impacting**

circumstances, such as:

- **Past recruitment:** children who were actually recruited and escaped recruitment or were released face a higher risk as they are more vulnerable since they are already known to the actors.
- **Gender:** boys are more likely to be targeted for recruitment.
- **Age:** teenagers and children of 'fighting age' (11 to 17 years old) are more likely to be targeted for recruitment.
- **Background of the child and the family:** children affected by the conflict and/or having affected relative(s) are more likely to be lured into child recruitment (by desire of revenge, to defend their family/community, with promises of material or monetary gain through a mix of narratives of 'coercion, fear, and manipulation').
- **Displacement:** displaced school-aged children coupled with the closure of the school system and the limited access to social services, have further exacerbated children's vulnerability to recruitment.
- **Socio-economic situation of the child and the family:** unaccompanied and poor children are more likely to be targeted for recruitment.
- **Ethnic background in relation to home area:** depending on the area, children from certain communities are more likely to be targeted for recruitment. Sources reported that, particularly in Darfur and the Kordofans, the RSF and Arab militias recruit men and boys by calling on their members and allies to defend the community under the ancient Sudanese tradition of the *Faza'a*.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for children falling under this profile, this is likely to be for reasons of **(imputed) political opinion**, since a child who refused or escaped recruitment from the SAF or the RSF may be seen as a political opponent. It could also be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group** e.g. boys who refuse to join an armed group or to take up arms to defend their community, as they may be stigmatised by the surrounding society and/or seen as dishonouring the family/community for departing from Sudanese tradition (*Faza'a*) and because of their common background which cannot be changed (refusal to take up arms).

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