

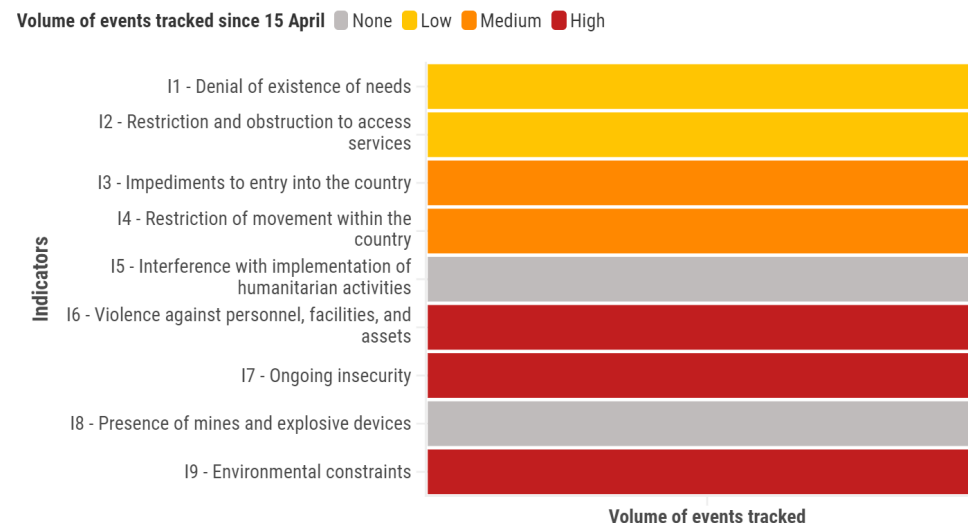
### CRISIS OVERVIEW

On 15 April 2023, fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), mainly in Khartoum, the capital, Omdurman town, and Merowe city in Northern state. Fighting rapidly spread to cities in other states, such as Nyala (South Darfur state), Al Fasher (North Darfur state), Al Obied (North Kordofan), and Ag Geneina (West Darfur state). As at 29 April, fighting had killed at least 410 civilians and injured more than 2,000, with numbers likely to increase as the fighting continues (AP 29/04/2023; Euronews 30/04/2023). The fighting has displaced more than 75,000 people internally across Sudan, and 580,000 are projected to have crossed the borders to Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan (OCHA 28/04/2023; UNHCR 01/05/2023). Damage to critical infrastructure has been severe, especially in Khartoum, where more than 60% of healthcare facilities have closed as a result. Only around 15% of Khartoum’s healthcare facilities were operating at full capacity as at 28 April (UN 26/04/2023; OCHA 28/04/2023; ACAPS 27/04/2023).

Fighting has severely restricted humanitarian access. After the targeting of aid workers and facilities, humanitarian organisations have suspended their operations in most parts of Darfur. In Khartoum, consistent fighting has stalled international operations, especially after armed clashes in the airport area delayed aid flights. As at March 2023, nearly 16 million people, including 1.1 million refugees, were already dependent on humanitarian assistance in Sudan. Before the most recent displacements, Sudan was already hosting more than 3.7 million IDPs as at August 2022, mostly in Darfur and Kordofan regions (UNHCR accessed 27/04/2023; IOM accessed 27/04/2023; OCHA 07/11/2022).

The conflicting parties had agreed on a temporary ceasefire, which started on 25 April; the ceasefire was then extended for 72 hours beginning 30 April. Despite this, as at 1 May, there were reports of clashes and air strikes, and the insecure environment continued to challenge humanitarian access (Reuters 25/04/2023; The Guardian 01/05/2023; BBC 29/04/2023). Since the beginning of the conflict between the SAF and the RSF, several incidents of looting and supply chain disruptions have caused humanitarian aid shortages. On 30 April, the first aid flight landed, with the International Committee of the Red Cross bringing eight tonnes of medical supplies and equipment into the country (ICRC 30/04/2023; CNN 30/04/2023; CGTN 01/05/2023). On 1 May, the World Food Programme announced lifting the temporary suspension of operations in Sudan that started on 15 April (UN 01/05/2023).

### Events tracked in ACAPS Access Events Dataset



Source: ACAPS Access Events Dataset

#### About this report

**Aim:** the report provides a snapshot of the humanitarian access situation in Sudan following the start of fighting between the SAF and the RSF on 15 April 2023, focusing on conflict-affected areas. It also provides some insights into the overall humanitarian access situation in the country since the military takeover in October 2021.

**Methodology:** ACAPS conducted this brief analysis following the ACAPS humanitarian access methodology, which assesses humanitarian access according to three main pillars: the access of people in need to humanitarian aid, the access of humanitarian organisations to people in need, and security and physical constraints.

**Limitations:** there is a lack of specific information on the level of humanitarian access at the subnational level. The situation is extremely volatile, and it is difficult to confirm whether humanitarian access has improved, deteriorated, or remained the same in conflict-affected areas or other areas that the conflict has not directly affected.

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS IN SUDAN AFTER 15 APRIL

Insecurity and infrastructure damage have been the main drivers of humanitarian access constraints in Sudan after the escalation of hostilities on 15 April 2023. Access constraints in Khartoum and surrounding areas differ from those in Darfur region. Aerial bombardments, as well as significant roadblocks and movement restrictions, affect Khartoum. These constraints have led to a lack of access to food, water, and healthcare for the people affected and the relocation of the humanitarian staff to Port Sudan, where organisations have established new hubs (UN 24/04/2023 a). In Darfur region, the main access constraints are targeted attacks on aid workers and humanitarian organisations' assets, as well as insecurity. The mobilisation of ethnic militias as proxies for the RSF is adding to the spread of violence. Access constraints in Darfur result in the movement of people away from services as they flee the violence and the suspension of humanitarian operations because of insecurity and looting. In all conflict-affected areas, infrastructure damage has led to internet and electricity blackouts and fuel, water, and food shortages, creating logistical challenges for humanitarian operations.

That said, humanitarian access gradually improved between 15 April and 1 May:

**EXTREMELY LIMITED**

**First week:** fighting and insecurity quickly overwhelmed responders, limiting humanitarian action.

**Second week:** humanitarian workers and operational headquarters moved to Port Sudan to resume aid and assistance programmes

**30 April:** the first aid flight from the International Committee of the Red Cross landed in the Port Sudan airport, and other aid deliveries will likely enter the country in the coming weeks.

**PARTIALLY LIMITED**

**1 May:** WFP announced lifting the temporary suspension of operations in Sudan.

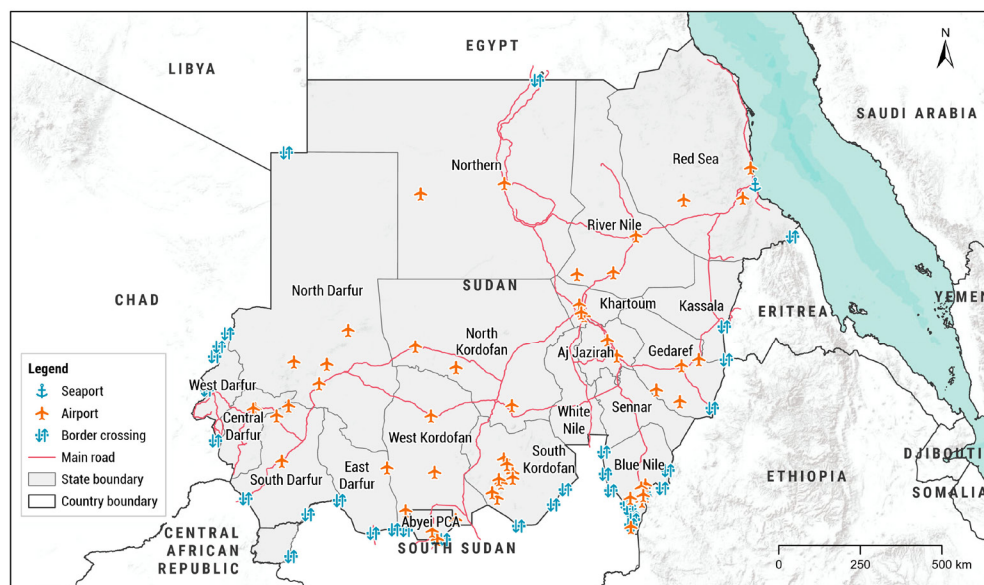
Sudan's long legacy of civil war has consistently created multiple humanitarian access challenges. Before April 2023, the post-military takeover in October 2021 that established a military government dominated the context. The unstable political situation made humanitarian access challenging, with the economic crisis driving heightened levels of need. Insecurity throughout 2022, especially in Darfur region, continued to signal that further violence remained likely even while high-level negotiations seemed to provide a pathway back to a civilian administration.

## Pillar 1: access of people in need to humanitarian aid

Following the recent clashes, road and airport closures resulting from the conflict have restricted people's movement away from conflict-affected areas to seek safe access to humanitarian aid and other services. Some neighbouring countries initially closed their border crossings from fear of insecurity. Reports indicate that most of the fighting in Khartoum and other state capitals, such as Al Fasher, Al Obeid, and Nyala, happens along major roads (ACLED 28/04/2023). Commercial air space is closed until 13 May, and airports across the country are not functioning, including Khartoum International Airport, which suffered some damage from the armed clashes (MSF 21/04/2023; Aviacionline.com 21/04/2023; VOA 01/05/2023). As a result, airlines have cancelled commercial flights to and from Khartoum International Airport. The Port Sudan airport in Red Sea state has not suffered any damage from the clashes, but it is only operational for military purposes. Civilian evacuations are operating through the Port Sudan airport, but a permit from the Civil Aviation Authority and the approval of the SAF are required for civilian flights (Logistics Cluster 28/04/2023; ACLED 28/04/2023; Aviacionline.com 21/04/2023; Al Jazeera 27/04/2023).

Following an escalation of hostilities in Darfur region, people have attempted to cross the border to Chad. Some reports indicate that Chad initially closed its borders, but as at 1 May, people were entering Chad, and the borders were open (MSF 21/04/2023; Al Jazeera 26/04/2023). Sudanese people attempting to reach Ethiopia report that the journey is very dangerous because of insecurity on both sides of the border. Ethiopia only allows Sudanese with visas to enter the country but otherwise, its borders are closed. It is unclear if there are any irregular crossings to Ethiopia (MEE 27/04/2023). People have also experienced many delays in crossing to Egypt, with the added difficulty of travelling without food or water (MEE 27/04/2023; Al Jazeera 28/04/2023).

## Sudan: main roads, airports, seaports, and border crossings



**Coordinate system:** GCS WGS 1984

**Source:** ACAPS using data from OCHA 15/08/2018, 09/04/2020, and 03/06/2020

**Disclaimer:** the boundaries and names depicted, as well as the data used on this map, do not represent ACAPS' sponsorship or acceptance. ACAPS is not liable for any map misuse or misinterpretation.

### Pillar 2: access of humanitarian responders to the affected population

Most humanitarian organisations face movement restrictions in conflict-affected areas, mainly because of insecurity, limiting their ability to reach people in need. Aid workers caught in the crossfire and the looting of humanitarian organisations' assets have also affected humanitarian access. Some organisations continue to provide services, especially medical assistance, in the affected areas when possible. Humanitarian operations continue in other states, such as Blue Nile and White Nile, where there have been fewer reports of armed clashes (OCHA 28/04/2023). There are an estimated 100 international and local organisations across Sudan. Since many have suspended operations, grassroots committees and civil society organisations, such as the Sudanese Doctor's Association, have been responding to needs (Al Jazeera 25/04/2023; DW 21/04/2023). In non-conflict-affected areas, humanitarian organisations could face further difficulties in implementing their operations once aid supplies run out while airport and road closures continue.

Some organisations have suspended operations in Khartoum and other conflict-affected areas because of insecurity preventing aid workers from reaching places of work such as medical facilities. Even when staff can reach facilities, shortages in medical supplies do not allow them to attend to the increasing number of people requiring medical attention. The closure of airports and main roads has also made it challenging to deliver medical supplies to hospitals and medical centres (MSF 21/04/2023; WHO 23/04/2023; ACAPS 27/04/2023). Insecurity and movement restrictions have also interrupted the supply of food, water, and other NFIs inside and outside Khartoum (STC 17/04/2023; Al Jazeera 25/04/2023).

Aid workers and their assets have also been subject to violence and lootings, leading them to temporarily suspend operations. The WFP has halted operations across Sudan after crossfire during the 15 April clashes killed three staff members in North Darfur state (UN 16/04/2023; Al Jazeera 17/04/2023). On 21 April, an IOM aid worker died in North Kordofan state, and another staff member went missing in Khartoum. IOM has had to relocate its staff to safer areas, affecting their operations (IOM 25/04/2023). Many incidents of looting have affected the warehouses and assets of the UN and other organisations, especially in Khartoum and Darfur region. The looted assets included humanitarian supplies, vehicles, and items from offices and compounds (OCHA 17/04/2023; IOM 25/04/2023; ACLED 28/04/2023; UN 30/04/2023).

### Pillar 3: security and physical constraints

The insecurity and physical constraints arising from the recent clashes have had the biggest impact on humanitarian operations across Sudan. Insecurity has prevented people in need from reaching services and aid and has stopped aid workers from delivering aid, with people being advised to stay indoors (AP 29/04/2023; France 24 29/04/2023; Euronews 30/04/2023).

The conflict has resulted in displacements and evacuations within the country and across borders, but it remains unclear if displaced people can access services and aid in the areas they have moved to. A significant international effort is underway to provide emergency relief in the border areas. These are geographically remote areas, especially in Chad, but there is existing humanitarian infrastructure and operational presence, which is increasing.

In South Darfur, people living around the SAF headquarters in Nyala town have had to evacuate their homes and seek refuge in surrounding villages (OCHA 17/04/2023; IOM 25/04/2023). Clashes have been increasing in West Darfur state, mainly in Ag Geneina. The partial reopening of the markets is limiting people's access to food. In other towns in West Darfur, such as Habila and Beida, incidents of armed men looting and intimidating residents have resulted in the displacement of an unknown number of people internally to safer areas or over to Chad (OCHA 17/04/2023 and 26/04/2023; ACLED 28/04/2023; IOM 25/04/2023).

Armed clashes have resulted in attacks affecting many healthcare facilities, ambulances, and health personnel in the conflict-affected areas, especially in Khartoum, restricting people's access to medical assistance and aid workers' ability to provide services. The attacks include the hijacking of ambulances carrying patients and paramedics, targeted military attacks on health facilities, the looting of medical supplies, and military forces seizing health facilities (WHO 18/04/2023; IR 25/04/2023; OCHA 17/04/2023; Nature 28/04/2023). Attacks, staff fatigue, and a lack of supplies have led to the closure of 16 hospitals in Sudan, including nine in Khartoum (WHO 18/04/2023).

The conflict has made it difficult for humanitarian organisations to access people in need, and insecurity has temporarily suspended many humanitarian activities (STC 17/04/2023; Al Jazeera 25/04/2023; MSF 21/04/2023; WHO 23/04/2023). Fighting has resulted in several humanitarian organisations, including the WFP, Relief International, Medical Teams International, Islamic Relief, and Médecins Sans Frontières, temporarily suspending some of their operations in Sudan (Al Jazeera 25/04/2023). The WFP suspended their operations following the death of three of their aid workers and significant damage to a UNHAS aircraft during an exchange of gunfire in Khartoum, affecting their ability to move staff and aid workers across the country. Operations resumed on 1 May (UN 16/04/2023 and 01/05/2023). Relief International and Medical Teams International have also paused their programmes in conflict-affected areas, although the latter still conducts some essential activities within the refugee camps it serves (RI 17/04/2023; MTI 24/04/2023). Because of insecurity, Médecins Sans Frontières teams have relocated their staff to safer locations (MSF 26/04/2023). UNHCR has also suspended its activities for staff safety (UNHCR 21/04/2023). Extreme insecurity has caused Islamic Relief to suspend operations in most of Darfur, Khartoum, and North Kordofan (IR 25/04/2023). The conflict has also led many UN and other international organisations to temporarily relocate their international staff to Port Sudan in Red Sea state, limiting their ability to respond to needs (UN 24/04/2023 b; Al Jazeera 25/04/2023).

The conflict and infrastructure destruction have caused a shortage of fuel and electricity, resulting in a scarcity of vital resources, such as food, water, medicine, and other supplies. Transportation costs to leave conflict-affected areas have risen sharply, and infrastructure damage has disrupted communication systems. These obstacles have created difficulties for civilians and aid workers to communicate and provide aid to those in need. Humanitarian organisations such as the Danish Refugee Council and the Norwegian Refugee Council have reported challenges in planning, logistics, and communication because of internet blackouts and fuel and electricity shortages (Al Jazeera 25/04/2023; IR 25/04/2023; IOM 25/04/2023).

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS BEFORE THE CONFLICT

---

Despite the military takeover in October 2021, humanitarian access had been slowly improving in Sudan before the recent escalation of conflict in mid-April 2023. There had been fewer reports of requests for incentives and fees for the delivery of humanitarian aid since June 2022. There were also fewer incidents of the looting of aid and the targeting of healthcare facilities between June–December 2022 compared to January–June of the same year. Some physical access constraints hindered people's movement and aid delivery following the rainy season and floods between June–September, but humanitarian responders still managed to reach people (ACAPS 14/12/2022).