Introduction
Sudan has faced severe economic challenges since the beginning of 2018. The elimination of wheat and flour subsidies in February 2018, coupled with continual devaluations of the Sudanese pound (SDG) caused shortages of essential commodities and hard currency. The economic crisis is disrupting public services, impacting agricultural activities, and resulting in dramatic price increases for staple foods (FAO 10/12/2018; Fewsnet 12/2018). Deteriorating living standards triggered renewed nationwide protests since mid-December 2018. Calls for President Al-Bashir to resign are rising and protection concerns are increasing as protests are often violently dispersed, leaving many dead or injured and at least 1,000 demonstrators arrested (International Crisis Group 14/1/2019, OHCHR 17/1/2019; Amnesty International 18/1/2019, Al Jazeera 5/2/2019; HRW 10/2/2019).

Households across Sudan, including most IDPs, are struggling to meet their basic needs as staple food prices for wheat, millet and sorghum increased by 150-200% in 2018 (FAO 10/12/2018; Fewsnet 12/2018). Limited access to food, reduced purchasing power, and few livelihood alternatives for farmers have left an estimated 5.76 million people facing severe levels of food insecurity, especially in Khartoum, Red Sea, Blue Nile, White Nile, South Kordofan, Kassala, Gedaref and Darfur states (USAID 14/12/2018; WFP 11/2018; IPC 15/1/2019). Priority needs are food and health, as well as livelihood support and the availability of educational services (UNICEF 10/2018).

Anticipated Scope and Scale
Throughout 2019, food prices are expected to remain high and further increase by 200-250% as the Sudanese government fails to holistically address economic challenges (FAO 10/12/2018, Fewsnet 12/2018). Especially in conflict-affected areas, including South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur States, where markets access and alternative livelihood strategies are limited, Crisis and Emergency levels are expected to remain, aggravated by an early onset of the lean season 2019 (USAID 14/12/2018; WFP 11/2018). Political instability will continue and protection concerns will remain high as government authorities will likely continue to try suppressing further anti-governmental protests with violence (International Crisis Group 14/1/2019).

Key sectors impacted
- >150-200% increase in staple food prices
- Limited health services as medicines are short in supply and doctors on strike
- Continuos protests

Humanitarian constraints
- Shortages of fuel and hard currency affect humanitarian operations (WFP 10/2018). Access remains restricted especially in Abyei region and conflict-affected areas in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and. Protests are raising security concerns and intermittent internet and electricity cuts hinder effective response (USAID 14/12/2018).

Limitations
Anticipated impact of the economic crisis and service delivery is based on a general overview of Sudan’s situation. Impact, particularly related to food insecurity, in specific geographical areas, as well as for refugees and IDPs, may vary. Information on casualties related to the protests remains ambiguous.

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Crisis impact

Overview of the situation

Sudan has battled with economic instability for a long time, partly caused by US financial sanctions that were imposed in 1997 in response to severe human rights violations and continuous government support for "international terrorism" (BBC 30/1/2017; USIP 2018). The 2011 secession of South Sudan further affected the economy as Sudan lost 75% of its oil production fields, its main source of revenue. (EIA 5/3/2018; Financial Times 17/10/2011). Criticised by international human right groups, the US lifted its sanctions in October 2017 to motivate the Sudanese government to fight human rights violations while remaining partners with Sudan given its key geopolitical and security role in the region. However, Sudan’s economy remains fragile despite the sanctions removal, particularly since the country remains classified as a “sponsor of terror” which limits access to debt relief and international financial aid (FP 3/7/2018).

At the start of 2018, the economic situation severely worsened due to a set of economic restructuring reforms to access foreign exchange and governmental funds as recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Among other changes, the government cut wheat and fuel subsidies and devalued the Sudanese pound (SDG) several times; from 6.7SDG/USD to 30SDG/USD in February 2018, and to 47.5SDG/USD in October 2018. Exchange rates on the parallel market, often the only available trade, rose to 70 SDG/USD in the end of 2018, restricting foreign trade even further. The shortage of hard currency intensified, adding to rising inflation rates which reached 72.9% in December 2018, a severe increase compared to 25% in 2017. In sum, high inflation rates combined with high external debts, declining national GDP, and the rapid depreciation of hard currency, decreased the private sector’s and the government’s ability to import necessary commodities such as fuel, wheat and medicines (Radio Dabanga 3/2/2019; Sudan Tribune 19/1/2019; Fewsnet 12/2018; Trading Economics 10/2018, ECNA 08/10/2018; International Crisis Group 14/1/2019). Additionally, major cuts in the 2019 budget are planned as part of a 15-month austerity programme, leaving needed investments unattended. However, cuts in the security spending are not under consideration (UNICEF 10/2018).

The economic crisis not only increased food and non-food prices sharply but further impacted health services, economic and agricultural activities across Sudan (Sudan Tribune 19/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 12/12/2018; Reuters 08/11/2018; Radio Dabanga 18/10/2018; Fewsnet 12/2018).

At the end of 2018, living costs were at an all-time high, leading to decreased purchasing power, while public salaries have not been adjusted since 2012, leaving many households struggling to meet their basic needs. A proposed social protection scheme to offset worsening living conditions was not implemented by the government (FAO 10/12/2018; Middle East Eye 14/09/2018; Reuters 17/09/2018; International Crisis Group 14/1/2019).

Crisis impact by sector

Health: The economic crisis puts additional strain on Sudan’s already under-resourced health system. Some medicine prices have increased by around 300% during the past months. More than 200 types of medicine are completely unavailable in Sudan (Radio Dabanga 12/12/2018). In particular, anti-seizure medication and lifesaving immunoglobulin are in short supply as well as medications needed for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Pharmaceutical companies struggle to import medicine due to the inflation rates and the liquidity crisis (Radio Dabanga 08/11/2018). Many hospitals throughout Sudan are lacking basic equipment such as bandages, oxygen masks, and cotton (Radio Dabanga 9/10/2019). The continuous fuel shortage is severely affecting health operations. Patients face constraints in accessing emergency care as cash is often the only payment accepted, but cash is difficult to obtain (Sudan Tribune 11/2/2019; Al Jazeera 5/2/2019; Radio Dabanga 18/12/2019).

Medical professionals treating injured demonstrators are increasingly experiencing detentions and violence committed by government security forces. Health services in urban centres are interrupted as a total of seven hospitals have been directly attacked and raided and doctors and pharmacists are joining the anti-governmental protests (Physician for Human Rights 4/2/2019; Radio Dabanga 4/2/2019; UN News 17/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 20/1/2019; Sudan Tribune 21/1/2019; BBC 18/1/2019; Middle East Eye 15/1/2019). Since July 2018, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) has arrested striking medical personnel for protesting against non-payment of their salaries and advocating for increased health expenditure in the national budget services (Business live 22/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 20/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 16/1/2019).

Food Security: 6.2 million people in Sudan depend on food assistance (OCHA 1/12/2018). The combination of high staple food prices, low fuel supply, and lower than normal...
purchasing power has resulted in more households relying on food assistance than in previous years, even during the current harvesting period (November to February 2019). Civilians in central and eastern semi-mechanized areas are especially affected (FAO 10/12/2018; Fewsnet 12/2019; Fewsnet 09/2018).

Despite favourable rainfall in 2018 which would have led to an above-average harvest in 2018/2019 under normal circumstances, 5.76 million Sudanese people (13% of the population), including most IDPs, are currently facing Crisis (IPC-3) or worse food insecurity levels (WFP 11/2018; Fewsnet 12/2018; IPC 15/1/2019; see attached map). Humanitarian assistance is preventing worse outcomes. Worst affected areas are Khartoum and Blue Nile, White Nile, Southern Kordofan, Kassala, Gedaref, Red Sea, and Darfur states (IPC 15/1/2019). IDPs and poor households in conflict-affected areas in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile are of particular concern. A total of 1.99 million IDPs, as well as host communities, are already facing elevated levels of food insecurity as insecurity persists and access remains restricted. Their levels of food insecurity are likely to deteriorate during the 2019 lean season to Emergency (IPC 3) (FAO 2018; Fewsnet 12/2019; OCHA 01/12/2018). Available data on food security levels among refugees in Sudan suggest Stressed (IPC 2) levels (Fewsnet 12/2018).

**High food prices:** The removal of subsidies on imported wheat in February 2018 increased wheat prices sharply and increased the demand for millet and sorghum as substitutes. Across Sudan, food prices generally rose 150-200% above average in 2018 and are expected to increase up to 200-250% during the lean season (May-to-September). (IPC 15/1/2019; Fewsnet 12/2019). Local cereal prices are assumed to continue to increase atypically in April to at least May, marking another 50-100% increase to 2018 and 210–240% increase compared to the five-year average (FAO 1/2/2019; Fewsnet 11/2018). Livestock prices have also risen by around 70-80% compared to 2017 (Fewsnet 12/2018; IPC 15/1/2019).

High production costs have also contributed to the increase in food prices. Prices of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and herbicides tripled from September 2017 to September 2018 (Fewsnet 09/2018). Costs for seasonal agricultural labour that almost doubled since May 2018 are an additional contributing factor (Fewsnet 12/2018). Extreme shortages of fuel since March 2018 have raised transportation costs by 70% from September 2017 to 2018, making access to markets more costly (Fewsnet 09/2018; Fewsnet 06/2018; Radio Dabanga 4/12/2018; FAO 10/12/2018).

As food consumption gaps are present during harvest season, and harvests may not be sufficient to offset these gaps, it is likely the effects of the lean season (July to September) will start early in 2019 due to early depletion of savings and a continuous reduction in food access for vulnerable people and low-wage earners (Fewsnet 12/2018; FAO 1/2/2019).

**Livelihoods:** Food prices are rising faster than wage increases, putting livelihoods under threat. Furthermore, the shortage of hard currency leaves farmers unable to pay labour forces, reducing agricultural activities. In order to cope, many rural Sudanese are looking for non-agricultural employment, trying to sell their agricultural assets, and reducing purchases of basic non-food items to retain cash income and to afford food (FAO 10/12/2018; Fewsnet 11/2018). Consequently, the range of different livelihood strategies is reducing and a shift from agriculture to traditional mining and other low-skilled labour is prevalent. People are migrating from rural to urban areas to find alternative sources of income. (IPC 15/1/2019).

Livelihoods are affected by fuel shortages that have resulted in limited water supply for irrigation and livestock in areas of North Kordofan, North Darfur and Gedaref that rely on pumped water from boreholes. (Fewsnet 06/2018).

**Harvest season 2019/2020:** As households sell agricultural/non-food items, and food stocks are depleted from early onset of the lean season in 2018, limited means to buy seeds or spend on labour for the next planting season (May-July) are available (USAID/4/12/2018; FAO 2018). It is therefore expected that less land than usual will be prepared and cultivated, leading to reduced 2019/2020 harvests (Fewsnet 12/2019).

**Nutrition:** High malnutrition rates are widespread in Sudan, with estimated GAM rates up to 24.5% in some affected localities (IPC 15/1/2019). An estimated 2.4 million children are acutely malnourished, 700,000 of those severely (UNICEF 23/11/2018 UNICEF 20/12/2018). Limited health and WASH services, as well as reduced access to affordable food for most vulnerable people, will severely deteriorate the nutrition situation.

**Protection:** The government has responded to the protests with violence, using live ammunition, tear gas, and attacking the injured inside hospitals. There are varying reports on the number of casualties but at least 30-45 people have died and many more were injured (Reuters 4/2/2019). More than 1,000 people have been arrested, including opposition leaders, academics, journalists, and doctors (Amnesty International 18/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 11/1/2019; Sudan Tribune 15/1/2019; African Centre for Justice and Peace 17/1/2019; HRW 18/1/2019). As anti-government groups face persecution, supporters of the protests are facing severe protection concerns.

The government is blocking national and international media outlets that cover the protests and banned all information about the demonstrations (Sudan Tribune 22/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 21/1/2019; BBC 21/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 16/1/2019). Journalists reporting about the protests are continuously arrested. Since the beginning of the year, censorship on the newspaper is becoming more frequent, and social media is regularly blocked, confirming the fact that Sudan ranks 174 of 180 in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index (CPJ 2/2/2018; Radio Dabanga 20/12/2018; Egyptian Streets 21/12/2018; The East African 9/2/2018; Reuters 07/1/2018).
Since September, teachers in several areas in states including White Nile, Central Darfur, and North Kordofan are striking as salaries often remain unpaid and general educational conditions are perceived as insufficient (Albawaba 20/1/2019; Radio Dabanga 11/12/2018; Radio Dabanga 23/10/2019).

**Vulnerable groups**

Urban residents are faced with shortages of food. They are heavily impacted as they rely on market purchases to obtain their food (Fewsnet 11/2018; WFP 11/2018).

In general, poor households, particularly in Kassala, North Darfur, North Kordofan and Red Sea that significantly depend on agriculture are severely impacted by the economic crisis due to limited access to markets, reduced purchasing power, and limited alternative livelihood strategies (FAO 10/12/2018; Fewsnet 12/2019; WFP 11/2018).

Undocumented refugees are vulnerable as they are not covered by UN protection schemes and are at risk to have less access to food due to high prices.

Women, children and older people are particularly impacted by the shortage of medicines as these groups tend to have the highest healthcare needs. Pregnant women and people with chronic diseases as well as disabled people are at risk as they may face challenges receiving needed medication. Access to pre-natal care and emergency obstetric services remains challenging.

There are no current data on increased levels of child marriages due to economic factors. However, girls especially in rural areas are at heightened risk of early. Approximately, one in three girls in Sudan are married before the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides 2019).

**Aggravating factors**

**Continuous conflict**

Even though overall fighting decreased in 2018 in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, violence persists in these conflict-affected states. Despite ceasefire agreements and renewed national peace talks between major opposition groups and government forces, ongoing conflicts disrupt food production and other livelihood activities, and have impeded access to natural resources and basic services (Radio Dabanga 02/12/2018; Sudan Tribune 03/12/2018; Radio Dabanga 27/11/2018). The shortages of basic commodities and high food prices will further deteriorate the situation (IPC 15/1/2019). As protests are spreading to remote regions, including IDP camps and conflict-affected areas, the possibility of armed groups joining demonstrations is increasing the risks of violence, committed both by government forces and armed groups (Radio Dabanga 4/2/2019; Sudan Tribune 15/1/2019; Business Life 13/1/2019; The citizen 14/1/2019; Middle East Eye 15/1/2019). Security concerns further rise, especially in IDP camps in the Jebel Marra area of Darfur, as tensions, including verbal threat of killings, between governmental Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the armed group Sudan Liberation Movement -Abdel Wahid (SLM-AW) have been rising since November 2018 and UNAMID (African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur) is retreating its troops (UNAMID 20/12/2018; Radio Dabanga 11/12/2018; Sudan Tribune 3/12/2018; Radio Dabanga 7/11/2018). A peak in violence is likely to hinder ongoing peace negotiations. It is further likely to leave people living in areas of violence without needed support as the reduced numbers of UNAMID forces, make international organizations prioritising areas to support that do not need armed escorts (WFP 10/2018; Sudan Tribune 18/12/2018; USAID14/12/2018; ICRC 17/12/2018; Middle East Eye 15/1/2019).

**Recurrent natural disasters**

Sudan is prone and highly vulnerable to droughts and heavy rainfall causing floods. These events put stress on the region’s rainfed agriculture and pastoralist systems, worsening food availability, and can aggravate the challenging economic situation.

County-wide dry spells during the 2017 rainy season (June - September) reduced harvested yields in the following 2017/2018 season. In some areas, a decrease of crop production from 65% up to 90% was recorded (FAO 2018). Food stocks were depleted early and consequently pushed the lean season to start in January 2018, four months earlier than usual (FAO 1/4/2018). 90% of the cultivated crops and 85% of firewood is produced and collected in the area considered as drought-prone, around 70,000 sqm. Additionally, desertification processes are ongoing, especially in North Darfur, as rainfall reduced, water demands increased, and changes in land use have depleted water sources (ECHO 23/11/2018; UNSPIDER 2018; Climate Links 2016).

Additionally, heavy seasonal rains and flash floods between July to November 2018 affected over 200,000 people across Sudan damaging and destroying houses, livestock and agricultural yields (USAID 14/12/2018; OCHA 4/11/2018; Khalifa Foundation 28/08/2018). Even if most farmers were able to re-plant their fields after the major inundations, poor households were impacted (Khalifa Foundation 28/08/2018).

Many Sudanese have not yet recovered from both events and were consequently not able to rebuild their coping capacity, which is needed to face high food prices and/or another year of reduced harvest incomes, evoked by the economic crisis (Khalifa Foundation 28/08/2018; Fewsnet 12/2018; FAO 1/2/2019).

**Response capacity**

**Local and national response capacity**

Economic reforms including a 15-month economic austerity programme are likely to contain major cuts in the health and education budget, as well as a continuation of the subsidy cuts – crucial investments to improve the life of the affected population (UNICEF
Outlook for key drivers

Economic development

The economic outlook for the first half of 2019 is likely to remain poor. Although the government will continue trying to meet requirements to access international funds, it is unlikely to holistically address economic challenges such as corruption, accessing foreign investments and enhancing free trade quickly enough to yield tangible improvements in public services. Meanwhile, inflation is likely to remain high, hard currency scarce, and commodity prices high.

Sanctions and foreign investment

Although the US and Sudan agreed to resume talks about the removal from the US list as a State “sponsor of terror”, they did not state a clear timeframe (Financial Times 08/11/2018, VoA 14/11/2018, Sudan Tribune 09/11/2018, HRW 07/11/2018). In the meantime, Sudan will remain blocked from accessing foreign investment, while protests are likely to continue to be marred with violence and human rights violations and government attacks on civilians are likely to continue to be reported. There is little indication of a political commitment towards sharply improving humanitarian access and ensuring human rights to a level that could change this deadlock (Middle East Eye 14/09/2018, BBC 11/07/2018, ENCA 08/10/2018 Military Times 07/11/2018). As a result, potential foreign investments and access to debt relief measures that could help revive Sudan’s economy will remain unlikely. (Financial Times 08/11/2018, VoA 14/11/2018, Sudan Tribune 09/11/2018, HRW 07/11/2018).

Political stability and leadership

Another barrier to significant economic improvement is President Al-Bashir remaining in office, which is highly likely despite some speculation he may step down or be removed. His incentives to step down are minimal as he would have to face the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide committed in Darfur as well as charges by the new government on corruption and other violations (Sudan Tribune 20/1/2019, International Crisis Group 14/1/2019, HWR 18/1/2019; HRW 10/2/2019; Al Jazeera 20/1/2019). Further, in preparation for the 2020 election Al-Bashir announced to run as the main candidate despite a constitutional two-term limit. He is planning on amending the current constitution that would allow him to run for presidency again (Radio Dabanga 18/12/2018, Financial Times 23/11/2018, Middle East Eye 14/9/2018, Al Jazeera 10/8/2018, Sudan Tribune 12/2/2019). In addition, an overthrow of the government by the Sudanese military forces is extremely difficult due to the fragmentation of several security forces and their rival power relations (Al Jazeera 5/2/2019; International Crisis Group 14/1/2019; Al Jazeera 20/1/2019).

Lastly, an internationally forced removal of Al-Bashir is also unlikely. Only a few governments publicly condemned the violence against the demonstrators, and main international actors such as the African Union, Arab League and the EU are keeping silent.
Good relations with a stable Sudan, a key transit country for migrants from the Horn of Africa heading to Europe, is important to many governments as they want a reliable partner in the region and are interested in cooperating with Sudan in prohibiting continuous migration to Europe (Al Jazeera 20/1/2019; IOM 19/12/2018; Deutsche Welle 12/11/2018; HRWF 10/07/2018; Dabanga Radio 11/1/2019; Al Jazeera 20/1/2019). International actors are therefore unlikely to pressure or encourage Al-Bashir to step down without a clear succession plan (Al Jazeera 20/1/2019; Dabanga Radio 11/1/2019).

**Information gaps and needs**

- Impact of the economic crisis on the 2018/2019 harvest for different geographical locations remains unclear.

- Numbers of detention cases, injuries and fatality cases due to the protests are uncertain.

- As the government is blocking journalists, information from reliable media outlets become more difficult to obtain.

- Needs assessments related to the impact of the economic crisis from a gender perspective is missing.

- Information about food security of refugees residing in Sudan is limited.

- State of health and educational services in remote areas is unclear.

- Information on cross-sectoral needs of the affected population living in the contested area of Abyei is severely limited.
Map: Acute and projected food insecurity phases in Sudan

Source: (Fewsnet 12/2018)
Chart: Wholesale Prices of Sorghum in Sudan from November 2016 until November 2018

Source: (FAO 10/12/2018)