

SUDAN

Humanitarian impact of multiple protracted crises

KEY PRIORITIES

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

Sudan is affected by a combination of political and economic instability, conflict, climate change-related shocks including heavy flooding and severe drought, endemics, and an influx of refugees from neighbouring countries. These factors have contributed to heightened poverty, increased population displacement, and food insecurity (FAO 12/10/2020). Sudan is also hosting an additional 30,000 refugees fleeing the crisis in Ethiopia. This will likely require further capacity and resources from the Sudanese government and international organisations, to deliver assistance both to the newly arrived refugees and the people affected by the protracted crises in Sudan.

In 2020, Sudan's economy – which had been in crisis since 2018 – suffered a sharp decline. The economic crisis, combined with unprecedented flooding and the depletion of state resources due to the economic crisis, resulted in an estimated 9.6 million people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and above levels of food insecurity. This was a 65% increase from the same period last year (June to September 2019), and the highest number ever recorded.

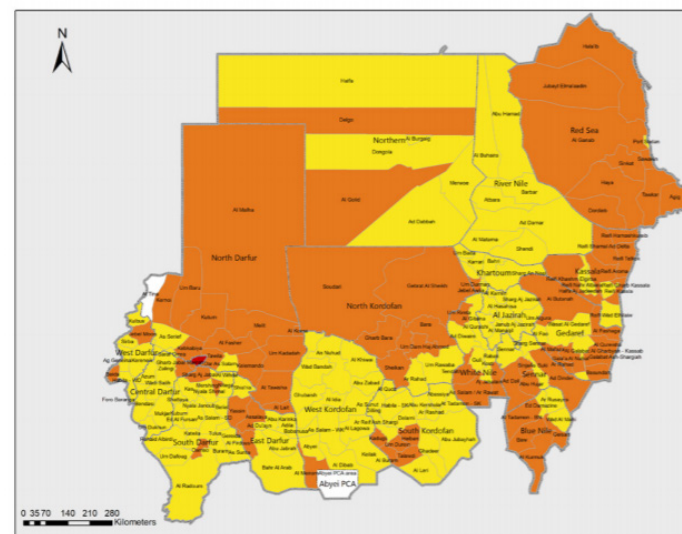
HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

Heavy rains and flooding since mid-July, conflict, an economic crisis – including fuel shortages and fluctuation of the Sudanese pound – and poor infrastructure such as roads and bridges hamper effective humanitarian operations. Although there were no COVID-19-related movement restrictions as at 23 November, the rising number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sudan is likely to result in the re-introduction of curfews, travel restrictions, and other containment measures.

LIMITATIONS

It is difficult to conduct frequent needs assessments in some remote parts of Sudan, so some information on needs – including in this note – are based on the latest reliable data, which can be several months or years old, and some data is based on estimations.

Projection Update October - December 2020



Key for the Map IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification



Source: IPC 10/2020

9.3 million

PEOPLE IN NEED
OF HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE

1.8 million

PEOPLE FACING
PROTRACTED INTERNAL
DISPLACEMENT

9.6 million

PEOPLE ARE FOOD
INSECURE

+875,000

PEOPLE AFFECTED BY
FLOODS IN 2020



CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

In December 2018, mass protests erupted against the Sudanese government after the price of bread tripled, leading to the overthrow of the then President Omar al-Bashir, who had been in power for over 30 years. Following the coup d'état, a transitional government was put in place in 2019. As Sudan continues to face a transition characterised by political instability, the country is confronting a complex humanitarian crisis. The complex crisis is characterised by:

- Protracted conflict and displacement
- Deteriorating economic conditions
- Limited access to basic services for the affected population
- Epidemic outbreaks, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is coupled with natural hazards, including:

- Floods
- Droughts
- Desert locust outbreaks.

The combination of these factors has left 1.87 million people in long-term displacement – and an estimated 9.6 million people were already food insecure before the floods in mid-July (OCHA 27/08/2020; WFP 16/10/2020). Sudan also hosts 1.1 million refugees from the region – the majority from neighbouring South Sudan (HRW accessed 11/11/2020).

The Humanitarian Needs Overview for Sudan estimated that 9.3 million Sudanese are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020, out of a total population of 43.8 million (OCHA 01/2020). In March, the state of Khartoum declared a state of medical emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, while in July North Darfur announced a state of emergency because of increased violence (The Africa Report 15/09/2020). On 5 September, following severe flooding, the Sudanese Transitional Government announced a three-month nationwide state of emergency and the entirety of Sudan was declared a natural disaster zone until November 2020 (OCHA 13/11/2020). On 10 September, an additional state of emergency was declared nationwide as cash stocks were depleted in banks across the country due to the fall of Sudan's currency (Financial World 14/09/2020; Al Jazeera 11/09/2020).

Economic crisis and political transition: Sudan is experiencing an economic crisis as a result of endemic corruption and mismanagement of finances. Sudan possesses many economically valuable natural minerals and raw materials, and its main exports are gold, live sheep

and goats, petroleum, and oily seeds. The main market for its exports is in regional Arab nations in the Middle East. Sudan imports 50% more than it exports, however (FT 27/09/2020; OEC accessed 11/11/2020; WITS accessed 11/11/2020). The main imports are wheat, sugar, and medicine (OEC accessed 11/11/2020; WITS accessed 11/11/2020). Sudan has a trade deficit that is contributing to its economic decline, together with the sharp devaluation of the Sudanese pound; it has been devalued four times since 2018 and has a current inflation rate of 32.4%. Since September 2020 – amid the economic and health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic – prices for staple foods, such as bread and sugar, have increased by 50% and are on an upward trend (The Guardian 17/09/2020). The unprecedented flooding, which destroyed large amounts of harvested crops and agricultural land, is preventing general access to food for poor households and has contributed to the increase in the price of staple food. Increased food prices and the loss in value of the Sudanese pound have made it difficult for economically vulnerable households to purchase food and other basic goods.

Since 1993, Sudan has been on the US list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, which effectively denies Sudan the right to access international loans from the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank (Al Jazeera 11/09/2020). Negotiations surrounding its removal from this list were in process between the two governments, contingent upon Sudan's recognition of the State of Israel. The process has been on hold since the start of the US presidential elections. If the currency continues to devalue, food shortages and inflated prices will continue to rise, increasing the possibility of unrest – as in December 2018. Current economic trends indicate that any further deterioration could have widespread and devastating consequences, particularly following the severe flooding.

Sudan has accumulated a debt of approximately USD 60 billion (International Policy Digest 17/09/2020; AP 24/09/2020). A high national debt may lead to government money going into debt repayment rather than government services such as healthcare. Economic debt may also slow down the economy as businesses borrow less money, hire fewer staff, and increase the prices of goods and services.

Refugees in Sudan: Sudan has a long-standing history of hosting refugees and continues to host 1.1 million people from Eritrea, Chad, Syria, Yemen, and other countries. The majority of the refugees – around 821,000 people – come from neighbouring South Sudan (UNHCR 31/05/2020; 31/10/2020). As of 23 November, Sudan is also hosting more than 38,000 people from Ethiopia who are fleeing the Tigray conflict. Kassala and Gedaref states are receiving most of the new arrivals (more than 26,000 refugees in Hamdayet and 11,000 in Ludgi and Abderafi) (UNHCR 17/11/2020). Sudan is also a transit country for many migrants from the Horn of Africa who are en route to Europe (HRW accessed 11/11/2020).



Natural hazards: Geographically, the majority of Sudan is located in the Sahel belt, a naturally dry area with a concentration of annual rainfall from July to September. This sharp contrast in seasonal climate creates two extremes – a severe lack of rain with long-lasting drought, or heavy rainfall and floods (EC-JRC 30/06/2019). In recent years, both the timing and intensity of the seasons have been increasingly unpredictable – an inconsistency that has been linked to climate change (Earth's Future 26/05/2020; Oxfam 2020). This year the rainfall was particularly intense and prolonged, and Sudan witnessed its most intense and widespread floods in 30 years, causing damage to houses, schools, healthcare facilities, water points, and other vital infrastructure. Thousands of people have perished, been displaced, or have been injured because of the floods (UN News 02/10/2020; UN 31/08/2020). In total more than 875,000 people have been affected by floods across Sudan in 2020 (OCHA 08/10/2020). North Darfur, Khartoum, Blue Nile, West Darfur, and Sennar are the states that have been most affected by the floods and people from these states account for 54% of all people affected (OCHA 30/09/2020).

While drier conditions are normal between September and November, unusually warm conditions might encourage the reinvasion of desert locusts and *Quelea* birds, which might damage crops. This year, a drier than usual September to November season is expected in coastal Sudan (IGAD 04/09/2020).

NEEDS OF THE AFFECTED POPULATION

Food:

An estimated 9.6 million people experienced Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or higher levels of acute food insecurity during the June to September this year (OCHA 22/10/2020). This is the highest number of people in Crisis and above (IPC Phase-3 +) ever recorded in Sudan. Sudan began 2020 with an agricultural output of 5.1 million tons – a 36% decrease compared to the output of the previous year (FEWS NET 28/02/2020). Food production is likely to be insufficient to meet the population's needs. Currently, 3.2 million people are also unable to access food either because of hurdles created by the flooding and/or periodic violence, or because their livelihoods have been affected by COVID-19 movement restrictions (Hussein, Dibia 07/2017). The price of food staples, such as bread and sugar, increased by 50% in August, preventing general access to food for poor households and hampering humanitarian assistance. Flooding since July has destroyed 2.2 million hectares of cultivated land. An additional 108,000 heads of livestock and 1.1 million metric tons of grain were lost (OCHA 28/10/2020; ACAPS 10/2020). Crop losses are expected in Gadaref, Sennar, and the Blue Nile as a result of anticipated delays in the harvest because of flooding (FEWS NET 10/2020). Humanitarian organisations face challenges in procuring supplies, as vendors' offers frequently change before the process is finalised (CDP 09/10/2020; OCHA 08/10/2020).

WASH:

In 2019, UNICEF estimated that around one-third of the population (12 million people) do not have access to safe drinking water and are at risk of catching diseases from contaminated water sources (UNICEF 03/2020). WASH infrastructure is also outdated, and poor community governance means that WASH services are lacking (WASH Cluster 31/12/2019). Only 23% of the population have access to basic hygiene services (WASH Cluster 31/12/2019). Around 12 million people across the country do not have access to latrines (UNICEF 03/2020). More than 63% of the population have no access to basic sanitation, while 23% do not have access to handwashing facilities with soap and water and 40% have no access to basic drinking water services (OCHA 13/11/2020). Poor sanitation and inadequate latrines are also likely to increase the spread of seasonal and waterborne diseases, such as dengue and cholera. This year, countrywide floods have polluted clean water sources and interrupted sewage and drainage systems (UN News 01/09/2020). Floods and landslides have destroyed and damaged nearly 30,000 latrines and contaminated thousands of water sources across the country, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases (OCHA 08/10/2020).

Health:

The arrival of COVID-19 has posed new challenges for the already stressed health system, resulting in a dramatic drop in the reach of basic health services, including immunisation programmes, maternal healthcare, and treatment for malnutrition (OCHA 30/09/2020). COVID-19 virus transmission has continued, with 15,839 confirmed cases and 1,193 deaths as of 11 November (WHO 23/11/2020). 70% of all COVID-19 confirmed cases are in Khartoum state where population density is the highest in the country, although over 60% of all COVID-19-related deaths have occurred outside of the capital (OCHA 01/11/2020; OCHA 05/2020). A polio vaccination campaign that was underway at the beginning of 2020 was suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and other essential health services have also been disrupted (OCHA 14/08/2020).

Malaria has two peak periods in Sudan: one during the rainy season and the other during the winter season. Mosquitoes breed best in a wet and damp climate and, with the heavy flooding this year, thousands of people are living or are displaced near stagnant water, increasing the risk of malaria spreading (OCHA 22/10/2020; Muslim Hand 17/09/2020). Malaria cases have been reported in seven localities of North Darfur – including an outbreak of seasonal malaria affecting 60,000 people – as well as in various locations in Sennar state (KFK 23/10/2020; Dabanga 20/10/2020). According to the WHO, by the end of September malaria had reached an endemic level in 11 out of 18 states, with 1.1 million malaria cases reported across the country (OCHA 22/10/2020; OCHA 14/08/2020). West Darfur also reported nearly 100 cases of chikungunya, and hundreds of cases of viral haemorrhagic fever have been



reported in northern River Nile, Kassala, Khartoum, Sennar, and West Kordofan states (OCHA 08/10/2020). As of 4 November, vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 continues to spread across at least 13 states, with Kassala state reporting eight cases – the highest number out of a total of 39 cases nationwide (UNICEF, WHO 04/11/2020).

Pharmacies have been reporting shortages of medicine, and many hospitals lack adequate equipment (Al Jazeera 10/09/2020). Around 3,200 health centres were damaged or rendered non-functional by the recent floods, compromising essential services to communities, especially in North Darfur, Khartoum, West Darfur, and Sennar (UNFPA 06/10/2020; OCHA 24/09/2020; UN News 02/10/2020). During 2020, the cost of health services increased by 90% and only 57% of essential emergency medicines were available by September (OCHA 30/09/2020). Approximately 81% of the Sudanese population do not have access to a functional health centre within two hours of their home. Many clinics are being forced to close during the COVID-19 pandemic because of lack of funds, medical supplies, and staff (OCHA 27/09/2020; Dabanga 04/06/2020). An estimated 8.6 million people are in need of lifesaving and life-sustaining health assistance (Health Cluster/WHO 08/10/2020; OCHA 23/11/2020).

Shelter:

More than 1.3 million people who have been affected by conflict, floods, and the economic decline are in need of emergency shelter and non-food items (Shelter Cluster 30/09/2020). IDPs and returnees – including pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and unaccompanied minors – are particularly vulnerable to protection and health challenges in the absence of adequate shelter assistance (Shelter Cluster 30/09/2020). The recent floods completely destroyed an estimated 175,000 houses and 92,556 houses were partially damaged (IFRC 15/10/2020; Humanitarian Response 12/10/2020). People affected by the floods are not only in need of shelter but also construction material to repair or rebuild their homes (OCHA 08/10/2020).

Education:

At the start of 2020, an estimated three million children aged 5–13 were not attending school. Because of recent floods and COVID-19-related school closures, children's education has faced severe disruption (UNICEF accessed 18/11/2020). More than 8.1 million students in Sudan have not been able to attend school as a result of COVID-19 lockdown measures that closed schools across the country on 15 March (UNICEF 07/2020). COVID-19-related school closures follow extensive interruption to learning in 2019 because of civil and political unrest (OCHA 23/11/2020). Prolonged school closures have enabled armed militias to take over closed school buildings for the purposes of lodging, training, and weapon storage facilities.

On 13 September, secondary school exams for the past academic year that had been postponed from April were held across Sudan; however, a significant number of students were absent (All Africa 16/09/2020). In North Kordofan, 1,067 learners were absent from the exams, while in El Fasher 1,864 students did not attend (All Africa 16/09/2020). In El Gezira state, 4,850 students were absent on the first day of school (All Africa 16/09/2020). The large number of absentees may be the result of lengthy school closures and an increase in poverty because of economic insecurity. Initially, schools were scheduled to reopen on 27 September, but the start of the new school term has been postponed until further notice, because of the increase in COVID-19 infections and so that the government can implement COVID-19 health measures (Dabanga 21/11/2020).

Since the floods began in mid-July, at least 560 schools have been completely destroyed or partially damaged, including school equipment and furniture (OCHA 20/10/2020; All Africa 16/09/2020). 63 schools were also used as shelter by people displaced by the floods, further prolonging the disruption to education. The floods have affected more than 137,000 children (Sudan Education Cluster 28/09/2020).

Humanitarian and operational constraints

In early 2020, the transitional government removed humanitarian operational restrictions put in place by the previous administration that required international actors to apply for authorisation to conduct humanitarian activities in Sudan.

Physical and security constraints: Access to areas in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur – which are controlled by non-state armed groups – remains restricted, and it is likely that there are numerous humanitarian needs and people in need, though this is yet to be confirmed. Physical accessibility to affected areas and populations is challenging because of heavy flooding that destroyed roads, disrupting access (Food Security Cluster 15/09/2020). Access to some areas is also limited because of the presence of landmines, particularly on the road between Kadugli and Talodi in South Kordofan, between Kadugli and Kauda, and the road linking Kurmuk in Blue Nile to the Ethiopian border (IFRC 20/10/2020). The majority of infrastructure such as roads and bridges in Sudan is currently in poor condition because of a lack of maintenance. This, coupled with fuel shortages, creates logistical constraints that delay or slow down the delivery of aid (GardaWorld 05/04/2020; IOM accessed 16/11/2020).

COVID-19 movement restrictions: Movement in and out of Khartoum is not allowed and some states in Darfur region have closed borders because of COVID-19 (OCHA 19/12/2019).



National response capacity

Sudanese authorities are responsible for the overall coordination of response efforts. Following a series of climate-related disasters in the 1980s, disaster management became a key focus for the country. In 1985, the Sudanese government established the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), previously known as the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. The HAC coordinates and consolidates humanitarian action across Sudan. The Sudanese Red Crescent Society focuses on community-based disaster preparedness. The Government of Sudan activated the Flood Task Force (FTF) in July when the rainy season began (IFRC 20/10/2020). The FTF monitored the flood situation in the country, in collaboration with the Sudan Meteorological Authority and the Ministry of Water Resources. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development established a national emergency centre to support the response coordination to the floods (IFRC 20/10/2020).

International response capacity

Various UN agencies – including UNHAS, WHO, UNHCR, IOM, WFP, FAO, and UNICEF – are active in Sudan. Several INGOs, including ICRC, IFRC, MSF, Action contre la Faim, Plan International, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Islamic Relief, and the Danish Refugee Council, are also present in various activities such as WASH, education, health, shelter, non-food items, and food and livelihoods.

Population coping mechanisms

Rising inflation, the generally deteriorating economic situation, and limited access to social services have forced the Sudanese population to resort to negative coping mechanisms that threaten the wellbeing of women and children in particular (UNICEF accessed 11/11/2020). The multiple crises have caused financial difficulties for many households that have lost their livelihoods, and negative coping strategies such as an increase in child labour and child marriage are being reported (OCHA 08/10/2020). The economic crisis and COVID-19 lockdowns and restriction of movement have also increased the risk of domestic and gender-based violence.

Information gaps and needs

- There is a lack of information regarding the security situation in conflict-affected areas.
- Accurate information on the level of access to public services in remote or rural areas is often limited.
- Humanitarian sectoral needs are based on the most recent reliable data, which can be several months old and based on extrapolated data and estimations of humanitarian needs in Sudan. Some sectors lack up-to-date information on people's exact needs.