

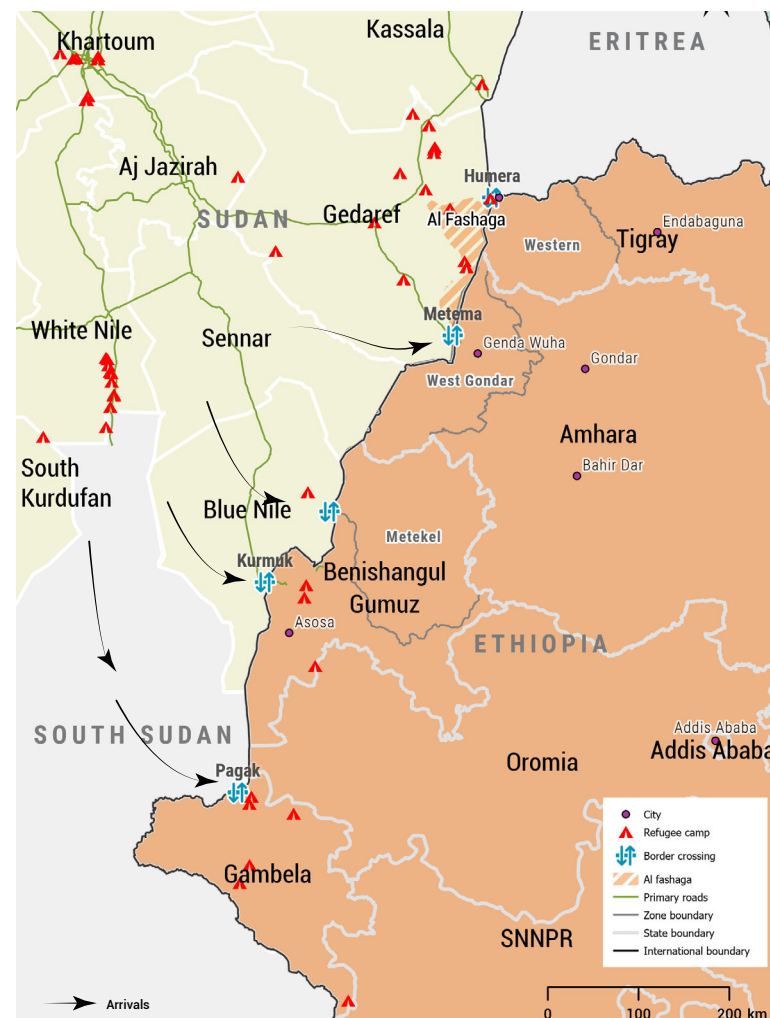
OVERVIEW

Since 15 April 2023, intense fighting has been occurring in the capital Khartoum and other parts of the country, between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). The heavy fighting has resulted in forced displacement into neighbouring countries, including Ethiopia, and will have broader implications for conflict in the region (OCHA 10/05/2023a).

KEY MESSAGES

- The escalation of clashes in Sudan has led to an influx of refugees, returnees, and third-country nationals into Ethiopia. The primary entry point is the Metema border post in Amhara region.
- As at 16 May, around 27,000 people have crossed into Ethiopia, including Ethiopians, Eritreans, Somalis, Sudanese, and individuals of various other nationalities (IOM accessed 17/05/2023; UNHCR 16/05/2023; OCHA 15/05/2023).
- The Ethiopian Federal Government's directive to centralise regional forces into the national army has sparked conflict and tension in Amhara region. This tension could affect the safety and movement of people from the border to their intended destinations in Ethiopia.
- Despite humanitarian and local authorities' response, the increase in arrivals necessitates assistance in food, water, sanitation, shelter, healthcare, and NFIs. There is also a need for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, shelter, protection measures for vulnerable groups, and transport to other destinations in Ethiopia.
- The arrival of newly displaced individuals is expected to add further strain to public services and resources, as Ethiopia already hosts over 900,000 refugees from various countries, including Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.
- The conflict in Sudan may escalate tensions over the disputed Al Fashaga as the SAF are distracted, and Amhara militias might take the opportunity to reclaim land. This would impact residents including those at the border area.

Population movement from Sudan



Source: UNHCR 02/05/2023 and 06/03/2023; Diva GIS accessed 17/05/2023; Geo Boundaries accessed 17/05/2023

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



About this report

Aim: this report provides an overview of developments in Ethiopia since the escalation of conflict in Sudan. It aims to analyse the impact of the Sudan conflict on Ethiopia and its implication for people affected and inform decision-making and programming.

Methodology: this report is based on the secondary data review of public information and key informant interviews in May 2023.

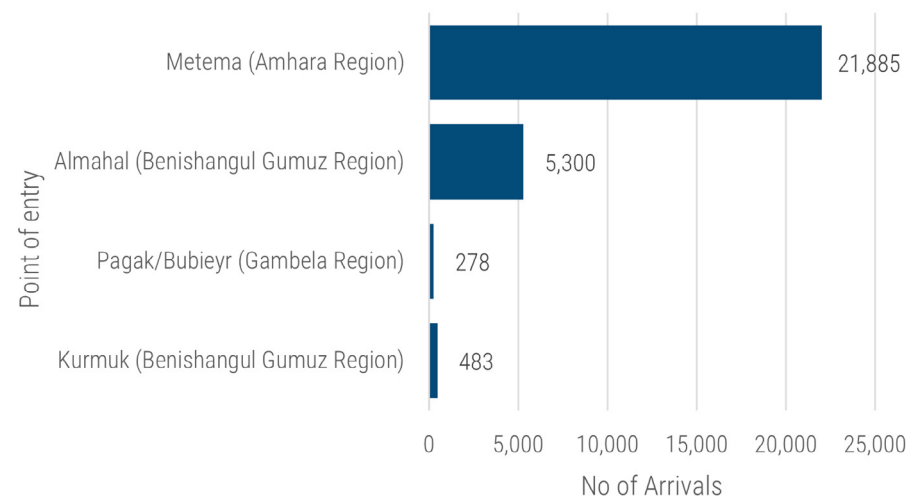
Scope: the report focuses on the impact of the Sudan conflict on Ethiopia.

Limitations: sections of this report present possible evolutions of the crisis, based on information available as at May 2023. The emergence of new information and the influence of factors not accounted for may change the outlooks, given that the Sudan crisis is ongoing.

DISPLACEMENT TO ETHIOPIA

New arrivals in Ethiopia

Graph 1: Arrivals in Ethiopia as at 16 May 2023



Sources: OCHA 15/03/2023; IOM accessed 17/05/2023; UNHCR 16/05/2023

The movement of people into Ethiopia started on 21 April through the Metema border but accelerated with the temporary ceasefire on 24 April (IFRC 08/05/2023). Ethiopia's border with Sudan has entry points in three regions: Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, and Tigray. The primary route for people crossing into Ethiopia has been via the Metema border post in West Gondar, Amhara region (IFRC 08/05/2023; OCHA 03/05/2023).

As at 16 May, more than 22,000 people had crossed into Ethiopia through the Metema border (IOM accessed 17/05/2023; IOM 11/05/2023; OCHA 11/05/2023 and OCHA 15/05/2023). Ethiopians comprise most of those crossing the border, but other nationalities include Eritreans, Ghanaians, Somalians, Sudanese, Syrians, Turkish and others (OCHA 05/05/2023 and 08/05/2023; IFRC 08/05/2023; Arab News 29/04/2023; VOA 23/04/2023). During the initial phase of arrivals, around 1,000 people arrived from Sudan per day through Metema, though this figure has decreased to around 650 arrivals per day since the week of 8 May (IOM accessed 17/05/2023).



Graph 2: Arrivals per day in Metema as at 16 May 2023



Source: IOM accessed 17/05/2023

Smaller numbers of people are also crossing into Benishangul Gumuz via Kurmuk town and Metekel zone (UNHCR 01/05/2023; OCHA 08/05/2023). As at 15 May, approximately 480 people had entered via the Kurmuk border point in Benishangul Gumuz region (UNHCR 16/05/2023). Between 24 April and 11 May, over 5,000 people crossed into Ethiopia through the border town of Almahal in Guba Woreda of Metekel zone in the Benishangul Gumuz Region (OCHA 15/05/2023). The number of arrivals crossing the Kurmuk border remains minimal, with approximately two to three people per day, and there have been no reported problems regarding border crossings (UNHCR 10/05/2023).

Gambela region also reported new arrivals. As at 15 May, around 270 South Sudanese refugees previously hosted in Sudan had arrived the Pagak-Bubieyr border crossing in Gambela region and were accommodated in existing refugee camps (UNHCR 10/05/2023; OCHA 11/05/2023).

Apart from the above-mentioned crossing points, there are reports of people crossing using irregular entry points (KII 16/05/2023).

Profiles of new arrivals

The profile of the displaced people influences where they move after reaching Ethiopia.

Most **third-country nationals** (i.e. not Ethiopians or Sudanese) have departed from the border area, either attempting to return to their home countries or proceeding to their intended destinations within Ethiopia. Gedaref, Sudan, continues to act as a visa processing station for third-country nationals before they cross into Ethiopia (IOM 09/05/2023; OCHA 05/05/2023). The majority indicated Addis Ababa as a planned destination, which for many might mean attempting to travel to other countries via Addis Ababa (IOM accessed 17/05/2023).

Some South Sudanese people arriving in Ethiopia will likely relocate to refugee camps hosting South Sudanese people, primarily in Gambela region, if there are pre-existing family links or ethnic ties. Arrivals also include some people who were refugees hosted in Sudan, for example from Syria (France 24 15/05/2023). Many people with sufficient means to pay for transport may travel to Addis Ababa or other major cities in Ethiopia. Some remain at the border if they lack funds for transport and visa processing fees (France 24 15/05/2023).

Some **Ethiopian citizens** who have returned are relocating to their regions of origin within the country (KII 10/05/2023; OCHA 05/05/2023; IOM 04/05/2023; IOM accessed 17/05/2023). Reports also indicate that many people who remain at the border need humanitarian assistance (OCHA 05/05/2023).

Many **Sudanese arrivals** at the border crossing intend to use Ethiopia as a transit point, as they possess visas for countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, or other destinations (KII 16/05/2023). Given the close proximity of the Sudanese border and the existence of a safe entry route, it is anticipated that the influx of Sudanese nationals into Ethiopia will persist.

Media reports indicate that the journey into Ethiopia is not without challenges. There are reports of insecurity and armed groups at checkpoints along the way to Metema (France 24 10/05/2023 a). According to social media posts, people travelling from Sudan are experiencing significant delays and stringent visa requirements. There are also movement restrictions across the border after 17:00 (TNH 01/05/2023; Arab News 29/04/2023; DW 28/04/2023).

Outlook

If the clashes in Sudan increase, Ethiopia will likely receive more refugees, returnees, and third-country nationals. This increase will worsen the current capacities of the receiving towns, including neighbouring Gendawuha, Metema (West Gondar zone) in Amhara region and Kurmuk (Asosa zone) in Benishangul Gumuz region. More displacements will likely



occur if the clashes move towards the border area of Sudan, including Gedaref. According to IOM, approximately 100,000 Ethiopians and 30,000 third-country nationals are expected to cross into Ethiopia, mostly through the Metema border, if the conflict persists (IOM 04/05/2023 and 11/05/2023; MMC 04/05/2023; The Guardian 05/05/2023).

RETURN TO ETHIOPIA OF REFUGEES FROM TIGRAY

At the start of the conflict, Sudan was hosting more than 70,000 Ethiopian refugees, mainly in eastern Sudan. These refugees include Ethiopians who had fled to Sudan since the start of the Tigray conflict in November 2020 (UNHCR 22/02/2023). Tunaydbah and Um Rakuba camps hosting Ethiopians in eastern Sudan are already experiencing the impact of the conflict, as humanitarian organisations have relocated their staff, and IDPs are arriving. The influx of people is straining the already limited resources, worsening the living conditions in the camps (NRC 17/04/2023; Addis Standard 29/04/2023). Reports indicate a disruption of basic services, including provision of medicine and food, as well as insecurity concerns (Addis Standard 29/04/2023; MSF 11/05/2023; NRC 02/05/2023).

If fighting further escalates in Sudan, Tigrayan refugees have limited options, as many may not wish to return to Ethiopia. Media reports earlier indicated that people displaced to Sudan as a result of the conflict in northern Ethiopia were unwilling to return because of safety issues, the loss of livelihoods, and fear of other people already occupying their homes (VOA 05/01/2023; The Guardian 05/01/2023). Given the existing political and security obstacles and the absence of a viable resolution for Western zone, people from that area are anticipated to experience prolonged displacement until the issue is resolved. Returning Tigrayan refugees will likely be internally displaced in Ethiopia, especially those from western Tigray, which is controlled by Amharan forces (Addis Standard 25/03/2023; The Reporter 22/04/2023; The Guardian 05/01/2023; ICG 23/11/2022). New displacements from Western zone were registered as recent as April (Addis Standard 12/04/2023; OCHA 24/04/2023).

Humanitarian access in Western zone has been restricted (OCHA 20/04/2023; Protection Cluster/UNHCR 01/03/2023; Logistics Cluster 25/04/2023). Humera is one of the entry points to Ethiopia, but there is little information on whether people are using this crossing. Crossing from Sudan into western Tigray may require passing through areas with heavy military presence given the conflict between Sudan and Ethiopia over Al Fashaga (ACLEd accessed 12/05/2023). Given the prevailing access challenges, the presence of armed groups constrains humanitarian assistance in the area (Protection Cluster/UNHCR 01/03/2023; Logistics Cluster 25/04/2023). As a result, people crossing through this area will likely find it difficult to get assistance.

ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Conflict in Amhara

On 6 April, the Federal Government issued a directive to centralise regional forces into the national army. This resulted in conflict and demonstrations in Amhara region, including Central Gondar and North Wello zones, among others Woldiya (ICG 10/05/2023; ACLED 06/05/2023). Amhara nationalists perceive the decision as restricting Amhara region's ability to defend itself and diminishing its control over Tigray's Western zone and other disputed areas (Reuters 09/04/2023; Chatham House 12/04/2023). Despite the call for dialogue, as at 4 May, there were reports of roadblocks and business closures in Gondar (BBC accessed 11/05/2023). Internet connectivity disruptions have also been reported in some towns, including Gondar, Lalibela, and Sekota (Logistics Cluster 25/04/2023). There were reported incidents of movement restrictions along the Metema-Gondar route and Gondar-Addis Ababa route, though reportedly they have not affected humanitarian organisations' movement so far (KII 16/05/2023). Given the conflict in Sudan, the region is also experiencing high costs of fuel which is likely to translate to increasing the cost of transport (KII 15/05/2023). The escalation of conflict and tension in Gondar will likely affect the safety and movement of arrivals if the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and Fano continue to engage (KII 10/05/2023). According to local authorities, some transport is available for displaced people to travel to Gondar (Addis Standard 26/04/2023).

Al Fashaga dispute

The escalating conflict in Sudan may trigger tensions over Al Fashaga. The disputed area is situated along the Amhara and Tigray border regions, and both Ethiopia and Sudan lay claim to it. This area has been a source of contention since the early 1900s (Chatham House 12/04/2023; ICG 24/06/2021). Reports indicate that armed forces from Eritrea, Ethiopia (including Amharan militias), and Sudan have all previously been present in the area, with clashes last occurring in 2021 as the SAF used the opportunity of the war in Tigray and the distraction of federal and regional Ethiopian forces to reclaim land (ACLEd accessed 12/05/2023; Chatham House 12/04/2023). As the conflict in Sudan develops, any intensification of hostilities, such as if Amharan militias moved into the area, would have implications for residents of the border region (Al Jazeera 06/05/2023). As recently as 19 April, there were allegations of Ethiopian forces moving into the border area, although this is difficult to verify (Addis Standard 20/04/2023; Al Sudani News 19/04/2023).



Pre-existing refugees in Ethiopia

The arrival of newly displaced people is likely to place additional strain on public services and already limited resources to meet the needs of refugees. As at early April, Ethiopia hosted over 900,000 people fleeing from different countries, including Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan (UNHCR 11/04/2023 and 12/05/2023). In early 2023, more than 90,000 Somalis fled to Somali region, Ethiopia, following clashes in the city of Laas Caanood, in Sool region, Somaliland (UNHCR 19/03/2023, 22/03/2023, and 12/05/2023; OCHA 16/02/2023).

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Given the growing number of arrivals and their increasing needs, there is high demand for humanitarian assistance, including food, WASH, shelter, transport, healthcare, protection services, and NFIs.

Challenges in providing health assistance in Metema include delays in the authorisation process for patients with chronic illnesses requiring travel permits to access referral facilities, a lack of medicine, ambulance scarcity, and insufficient operational space for the Ministry of Health's Emergency Medical Team (UNHCR 10/05/2023; OCHA 05/05/2023). In Kurmuk border region, reports indicate fuel, ambulance, and refrigerator shortages (OCHA 08/05/2023). There are restrictions on hospital referral services and mental health and psychosocial support at border crossing locations (OCHA 05/05/2023 and 09/05/2023; IOM 04/05/2023).

The pressing need for WASH facilities is evident, as access to clean water and improved sanitation is crucial to prevent the spread of diseases and maintain proper hygiene practices in the densely populated environments of Metema town (OCHA 15/05/2023; KII 16/05/2023). Despite the humanitarian and local administration response, there is still a need for temporary shelter for the new arrivals (OCHA 05/05/2023; UNHCR 11/05/2023).

Protection needs may be required given the presence of pregnant women, unaccompanied and separated children who are often affected in conflict situations (OCHA 10/05/2023; UNHCR 10/05/2023). Approximately 45% of the arrivals are women and girls, given this the provision of protection services is key (IOM accessed 17/05/2023). The establishment of mitigation and response mechanisms is also necessary to curb family separation, gender-based violence, exploitation, and sexual abuse (UNHCR 11/05/2023 and 04/05/2023). As at 16 May, cases of GBV were reported to have occurred at the border or in Sudan (KII 16/05/2023). Access to sanitary and dignity items at the border is limited.

The provision of mental health and psychosocial support is crucial for the arrivals. The traumatic nature of displacement and the loss of homes, possessions, and loved ones can have severe psychological impacts on individuals (KII 16/05/2023).

Individuals who arrived at Almahal, Metekel zone in Benishangul Gumuz region between 24 April and 11 May have reportedly not received any assistance. Access to the site is hindered by movement restrictions imposed in the woreda due to security concerns, posing challenges in delivering assistance to those in need (OCHA 15/05/2023).