

SITUATION UPDATE: SUDAN APRIL 2025



The situation in Sudan continues to deteriorate as the country approaches two years in a civil war that has caused humanitarian catastrophe.

War between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted on April 15, 2023. Both sides have committed atrocities. In January 2025, the U.S. Department of State determined that the RSF committed genocide through acts such as ethnic killings, systematic rape and acts of sexual violence, and preventing access to lifesaving aid. Both the SAF and RSF have been accused of committing war crimes. While the SAF and RSF are the two primary warring factions, there are also several smaller armed groups and militias involved in the conflict.

Famine is widespread, civilians are being killed, hundreds of children have been raped, aid is being cut off. Sudan is engulfed by brutality and needs collective attention and action.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) reported on the humanitarian and displacement situation in Sudan in December 2024. The following is a situation update as of April 2025.

Displacement Crisis

There are over 11 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Sudan. Over 8 million of these IDPs were displaced after war broke out between the SAF and RSF in April 2023. In addition to those

displaced in Sudan, over 3.9 million people fled across borders, seeking refuge in neighboring countries.

Sudan is the largest displacement crisis in the world. Sudan is also the largest child displacement crisis in the world.

Around 5 million children have been displaced since the war began, including an estimated 1 million children who fled to other countries.

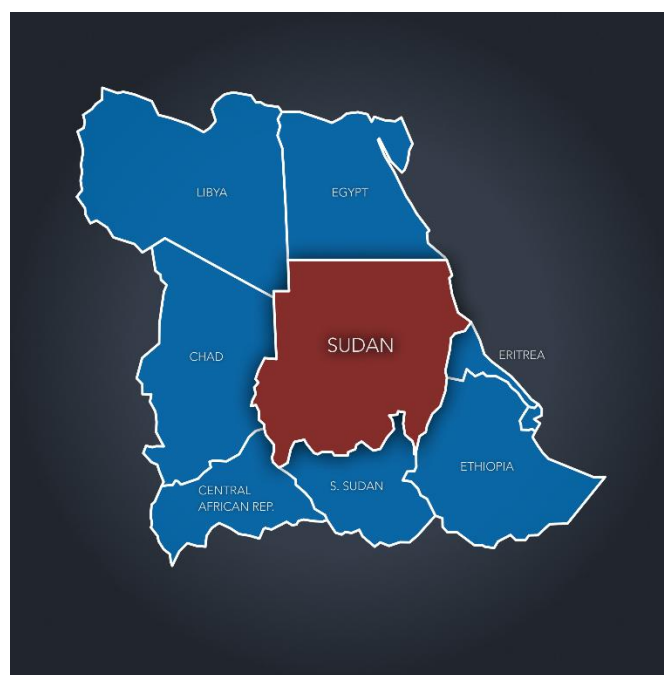
On March 23, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) reported that people have been internally displaced from all 18 states in Sudan to 10,285 locations in 185 localities. Khartoum represented the top state of origin for IDPs (31 percent), followed by South Darfur (18 percent) and North Darfur (16 percent) states.

Schools and bus stops in Sudan have been converted into overcrowded displacement sites, where thousands of people are forced to live unsheltered. They are without sanitation facilities, and often with little to no food and clean water. The United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) detailed how in Gedaref, about six hours from Sudan's capital of Khartoum, a former bus station now serves as an IDP settlement hosting around 6,600 people.

Most of Sudan's neighboring countries have received large influxes of people fleeing violence—both Sudanese nationals and those who were refugees in Sudan before the war began. In its March 23 Mobility Update, IOM's DTM recorded that the majority of cross-border



Map 1: Top states of origin for IDPs.



Map 2: Sudan & neighboring countries.

movement was into Egypt (1,514,827 people), South Sudan (1,100,342 people), and Chad (984,067 people). Ethiopia, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Libya also received many displaced people from Sudan.

In Chad, the Adré transit site became an informal displacement camp due to its proximity to the border with Sudan. Over 250,000 refugees from Sudan are in Adré, resisting relocation to the refugee camps deeper in Chad. Many of the camps are located far from the border with little infrastructure and minimal resources. Viewing the refusal to relocate as a security risk, the government of Chad directed refugees to leave the Adré transit site and instead settle in the camps. Outside of lifesaving emergency services, the provision of resources and protection services were not available at the Adré transit site. On March 5, IOM and the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) [announced](#) the expansion of the humanitarian hub in Farchana, Chad, which aims to strengthen cross-border operational capacity for Sudan and provide assistance to an additional 220,000 people. However, on April 7, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners in Chad [noted](#) that they were forced to pause the building of new sites to house refugees due to funding cuts.

Civilians Under Attack

There is a protection crisis in Sudan. The SAF and RSF, as well as allied armed groups, have repeatedly been accused of carrying out targeted and indiscriminate attacks against civilians that could amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and even genocide.

On January 7, 2025, the U.S. Department of State released a [genocide determination](#) in Sudan. It concluded that the RSF and allied militias committed genocide, noting the groups had,

“...systematically murdered men and boys—even infants—on an ethnic basis, and deliberately targeted women and girls from certain ethnic groups for rape and other forms of brutal sexual violence. Those same militias have targeted fleeing civilians, murdering innocent people escaping conflict, and prevented remaining civilians from accessing lifesaving supplies.”

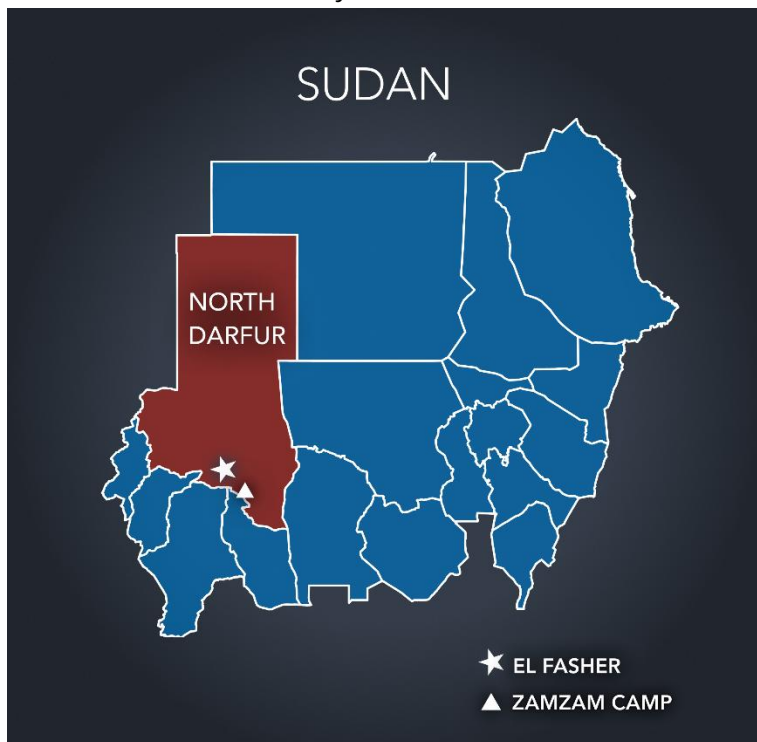
In February, it was [reported](#) that the RSF perpetrated a three-day barrage of attacks in White Nile state, in what was described as a “massacre.” Hundreds of people, including infants, were killed in the attacks, which “included executions, kidnapping, forced disappearance, looting, and shooting those trying to escape.”

Air strikes and shelling in public spaces have killed scores of people. On February 1, at least 60 people were [killed](#) and over 150 injured when the RSF reportedly launched a strike on a busy market in Omdurman. On February 25, Human Rights Watch [found](#) that allied groups to the SAF intentionally targeted civilians in a January attack on the village of Tayba in Gezira state. At least 26 people were killed, including a child, and more were injured. The group—the Sudan Shield Forces—were accused of looting food supplies and setting fire to houses.

On March 24, the RSF reportedly targeted civilians during their evening prayers at a mosque in East Nile, Khartoum, killing at least five people and injuring many others. On March 25, the SAF was accused of killing hundreds of people in an air strike on Tur'rah market in western Darfur—described as a “horrific massacre.”

On March 6, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report detailing the arbitrary detention, torture, and abuse of detainees by the SAF and RSF in Khartoum State. The report found that “tens of thousands of people, including women and children, have been held without charge, with limited or even no contact with their families, in squalid and overcrowded facilities, since the conflict broke out in April 2023.” The report also documented discriminatory treatment of individuals from the Darfur and Kordofan regions based on ethnicity or perceived affiliation.

The RSF, controlling much of Darfur, has unleashed siege in and around El Fasher—the capital city of North Darfur. Their targeting of civilians has included attacks on displaced communities. Zamzam camp in North Darfur—one of the largest displacement camps in Sudan—has endured multiple assaults that exacerbate an already dire humanitarian crisis in the camp. In February, the RSF relentlessly attacked Zamzam and other camps in the area. Amnesty International condemned the group's incursion on February 11 in Zamzam that lasted days and resulted in the killing of numerous displaced people. On March 6, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Clementine Nkweta-Salami deemed access to Zamzam camp “nearly impossible” due to escalating violence.



Map 3: North Darfur. El Fasher. Zamzam camp.

Trapped in Famine

Zamzam camp hosts about half a million displaced people and consistently receives new arrivals fleeing neighboring areas. The needs in Zamzam are overwhelming—famine was confirmed in the camp in 2024, people are starving to death, diseases are spreading, and violence has led to the suspension of essential aid services. On February 24, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders announced the suspension of all activities in Zamzam camp following attacks in and around the camp.

MSF noted that, in the first three weeks of February alone, its teams in Zamzam received 139 wounded patients, mostly with gunshot and shrapnel injuries. Attacks on medical care and aid workers and the blockage of supplies severely weakened capacity for emergency response, leaving many of those sick and wounded trapped in Zamzam.

On February 26, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced it would pause the distribution of lifesaving food and nutrition assistance in Zamzam due to the intensifying violence. Displaced people in and around Zamzam are staring down famine and starvation—a pause in food distribution could be a death sentence for many. WFP spokesperson Leni Kinzli highlighted the consequences of the forced pause, stating, “People, particularly children, are already dying of hunger in Zamzam. And the fact that we are forced to suspend operations will make that even worse.” On March 12, Save the Children warned that children’s lives were “on the brink” in Zamzam, as conditions rapidly deteriorated.

Children in Sudan are bearing some of war’s deepest scars. Over 53 percent of those displaced are children and they have suffered two years of violence, trauma, and instability.

Children have come under attack and their bodies turned into battlegrounds. On February 5, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that at least 40 children were killed in just three days across Sudan, including in shelling attacks on public markets.

Over 17 million children are out of school in Sudan. Attacks on schools and surrounding areas by warring parties, the transformation of schools into shelters for IDPs, and children being forcibly displaced have all kept millions of children from accessing education.

Additionally, a shocking report compiled by UNICEF and gender-based violence service providers in Sudan revealed that hundreds of children were being raped and sexually assaulted by armed men in Sudan. The scourge of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), including against children, has become a sickening hallmark of the war.

Sexual Violence

In under two years, the number of people at risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), in Sudan has more than tripled to 12.1 million people.

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted, facing growing threats of abduction, exploitation, enslavement, gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence.

UNICEF’s report analyzed 221 rape cases against children, recorded by providers since the start of 2024. Sixteen of the cases were children under the age of five. Four one-year-olds were the youngest survivors. These cases represent only a small fraction of actual figures. Fear of retribution by armed groups, high levels of stigma, fear of rejection by family and community members, and challenges accessing services result in SGBV going underreported. On March 13, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell told the UN Security Council,

“In Sudan today, sexual violence is pervasive. It is used to humiliate, dominate, disperse, forcibly relocate, and terrify an entire population.”

An adult female survivor described her ordeal being held by armed men in a room with other women and girls, stating, “After nine at night, someone opens the door, carrying a whip, selects one of the girls, and takes her to another room. I could hear the little girl crying and screaming. They were raping her.” About 66 percent of the recorded cases were girls, however, 33 percent were boys, who also endure stigma and challenges to report and seek help.

On March 7, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan stated that its work “revealed that sexual violence in Sudan is not incidental: it is systematic, widespread, and used as a weapon of war.” Despite its documented findings, the Mission noted that “the true scale of these atrocities remains obscured by fear, stigma, and impunity.”

Displaced women and girls in Sudan are especially at risk of experiencing SGBV. The UN Humanitarian Coordination Forum (HCF) highlighted that risks of sexual violence and exploitation are heightened for Sudanese women and girls “while in transit, in temporary shelters, or at border crossings.”

SGBV causes irreparable harm to survivors, both physically and mentally. With ongoing war, many survivors in Sudan are left without adequate medical and psychosocial support.

Humanitarian Needs

30.4 million people need humanitarian assistance in Sudan—16 million are children.

Communities have been destroyed, health services have collapsed, famine has been confirmed in five locations, and warring parties continue to obstruct aid.

In December 2024, the Famine Review Committee (FRC) concluded that Famine (IPC Phase 5) was present in Zamzam, Abu Shouk, and Al Salam camps, as well as in the Western Nuba Mountains. The FRC projected that famine would continue in those areas and expand in the North Darfur localities of Um Kadadah, Melit, El Fasher, At Tawisha, and Al Lait. Risk of famine remains extremely high in other areas of Sudan, such as in Al Jazirah and Khartoum states.

Over 24 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity in Sudan, and the situation is projected to worsen this year.

The malnutrition crisis has had a particularly devastating impact on children. MSF data showed staggering rates of children under five years old suffering from acute malnutrition in various parts of the country—such as 35.5 percent in North Darfur in December 2024 and 23 percent in South Darfur in October 2024.

This year, children in the Nuba Mountains were described as “reduced to skin and bones.” In the Hajr al-Jawad camp in the Western Nuba Mountains, aid stopped coming and the SAF were accused

of deliberately blocking aid from reaching the region. Here, starvation has silenced children—a silence said to only be broken by occasional high-pitched cries, children too weak to move.

On March 21, UNICEF condemned the looting of lifesaving humanitarian supplies meant for malnourished children at Al Bashair Hospital in Jabal Awlia, Khartoum. This included at least 2,200 cartons of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), which in turn put the lives of over 2,000 severely malnourished children at risk.

As hunger spreads, so does disease. A cholera outbreak in Kosti, White Nile State resulted in over 2,243 cases reported to Sudan's Ministry of Health from February 20 to February 26—nearly 400 cases every day. At least 70 people were confirmed to have died. After a drone strike damaged the town's power facility, communities were forced to consume contaminated water from the White Nile River, which was believed to have caused the outbreak. The Kosti outbreak added to the over 53,735 cases and more than 1,430 deaths recorded since the cholera outbreak was declared in 2024. Malaria and dengue fever have also plagued communities. Less than a quarter of health facilities function in Sudan's worst-affected areas—they are overstrained and unable to respond and treat the level of need.

The people of Sudan have been pushed into greater suffering following cuts to foreign aid by donor governments.

Most recently, the startling halt and cut to humanitarian assistance by the United States left both international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as UN agencies in crippling funding lapses. On March 9, the Sudan INGO Forum released a statement on the impacts of U.S. grant terminations, noting that for women, children, and other vulnerable groups in Sudan, the impacts "will likely be apocalyptic." In war-ridden regions throughout Sudan, displaced populations rely heavily on aid for survival. The decision by the U.S. Government caused the closure of nearly 80 percent of emergency food kitchens in Sudan.

Widespread ramifications of aid cuts have not only hit within Sudan, but also in neighboring countries grappling with an influx of Sudanese refugees. On March 18, the New York Times reported on the calamitous impacts felt in the Aboutengue Camp in Chad, mostly for women and children. Survivors of SGBV, thousands of students, and people in need of medical care—all impacted by aid cuts from the United States.



Map 4: The Nuba Mountains, where starvation is taking place.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that “reducing America’s humanitarian role would have far-reaching consequences, not only for those in need but also for global stability.” Guterres urged the United States to reconsider its funding cuts. On March 10, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan released a statement calling the cuts by top government donors “a catastrophic blow to humanitarian assistance in Sudan, a country in the grip of one of the deadliest humanitarian crises of our times.”

Recommendations

- The atrocities in Sudan must end. **All warring parties must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to protect civilians and allow the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations through all crossline and cross-border routes.
- **All warring parties must reach a permanent cessation of hostilities.**
 - The UN Security Council, African Union, influential governments, and regional bodies should strengthen diplomatic engagement for sustainable peace and recovery in Sudan.
- **All perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence must be held accountable**—it is a war crime—and survivors must have access to justice. **All survivors should have access to comprehensive medical care and psychosocial support.**
- Abrupt funding cuts and suspensions will prohibit lifesaving humanitarian assistance from reaching those who need it most. **Donor governments should urgently reconsider these cuts and restore funding to the humanitarian response in and around Sudan.**
 - **Governments, donors, the private sector, faith-based actors, foundations, and individuals should immediately work to fill the catastrophic funding gaps.**
 - **Funding for child protection and education** should be prioritized within the humanitarian response in Sudan.
- **Neighboring states should respect the principle of non-refoulement** and refuse any tactics that arrest, arbitrarily detain, and result in other pushback policies against Sudanese refugees.