



THE COST OF NEGLECT: *TWO YEARS OF WAR IN SUDAN*

APRIL 2025



PHOTO: Early morning in Farchana refugee-site where IRC treats people for different medical conditions at the health-centre.

INTRODUCTION

Sudan's war is entering its third year, leaving devastation in its wake. What began on April 15, 2023, as a power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) under General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo ("Hemedti") has spiraled into the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with over 30 million people in humanitarian need. By some estimates up to 150,000 have been killed.

This is not a national conflict—it's an internationalized war fueled by geopolitical ambitions. As more external players back opposing sides, Sudan risks further fragmentation while the crisis spills out across borders, threatening regional stability. Despite documented evidence of the role of regional actors in sustaining the violence, they continue to act with impunity. United Nations (UN) Member States have proved unwilling to consistently call out their actions.

A CATASTROPHE OF "STAGGERING SCALE AND BRUTALITY" - ANTONIO GUTERRES, THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL



Nearly a year ago, the IRC warned that Sudan was a catastrophe the world was choosing to ignore. Today, the situation has deteriorated further with war winning out over peace, and civilians paying the costs. The IRC's annual Emergency Watchlist assesses countries at the greatest risk of humanitarian deterioration in the coming year. In 2025, it placed Sudan at the top for the second year running.

With the June to September rains approaching, roads and bridges will become impassable, and hundreds of thousands of people will be cut off from humanitarian assistance. Pre-positioning supplies to support people through the rains is essential, but funding cuts and humanitarian access barriers are undermining preparedness efforts.

There are no excuses for inaction. Without a change in the approach taken by Member States to the war, the conflict will continue unabated,

humanitarian access will remain constrained and denied, and civilians will suffer. Sustained diplomatic efforts and scrutiny of warring parties and their sponsors, combined with steps to scale up the humanitarian response, are urgently needed to break the cycle of violence, hunger, and displacement that millions of Sudanese are trapped in.

This report first explores how and why the war in Sudan has evolved into the complex crisis that now engulfs the country and increasingly the region. It then examines the scale and trends of humanitarian needs and the barriers and challenges that agencies face in trying to meet them, before highlighting a series of recommendations to prevent a further deterioration of the situation and to scale up the humanitarian response. In short, we call on UN Member States and donors to:

- **Sustain diplomatic engagement to de-escalate violence and mitigate the risk of a regional conflagration.** Under African Union (AU) leadership, a single unified negotiating track should be created that brings together senior representatives from all sides, key sponsors like Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and appointed Special Envoys. All regional and international actors should establish and maintain in-country engagement with the warring parties and their sponsors. In parallel, regional powers should use all points of leverage over warring parties to encourage a de-escalation of violence.
- **Enhanced efforts to protect and reach civilians.** Barriers to aid delivery must be dismantled and the presence of the UN expanded across Sudan. Progress on these steps is a prerequisite to address the urgent humanitarian and protection needs facing the Sudanese population and cannot be held hostage to ceasefire negotiations. Commitments to improved aid delivery should be matched with improved funding that is accessible to local responders. Finally, stringent safeguards are urgently needed to protect civilians and critical infrastructure.



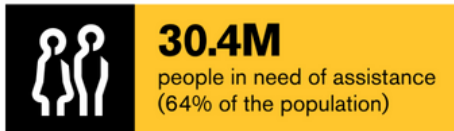
Nafisa Ali, 37, poses for a photo outside her home in Kiryandongo reception center. Before the war erupted in Sudan, Nafisa enjoyed a happy marriage, residing with her husband, and leading a fulfilling life with her two children attending an international school. “My life is totally destroyed,” Nafisa said.

Kiryandongo Refugee Center, Uganda

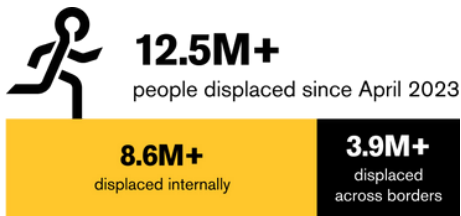
All clients' names mentioned in this report have been changed to protect their privacy.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS ARE THE HIGHEST THEY'VE EVER BEEN AND SET TO WORSEN

MORE PEOPLE ARE IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE THAN EVER BEFORE



Today, over two thirds of the population are in need of humanitarian assistance, the highest number ever recorded and twice the number in need two years ago. More than half of these (16 million) are children. Sudan also holds the unenviable title of the world's worst displacement crisis.



Many forced from their homes live in overcrowded sites, including government buildings, schools, and former offices. Humanitarian workers report that conditions are dire, with water shortages that lead to poor hygiene conditions and the spread of disease. Others are forced to sleep in makeshift shelters or under trees without blankets or sufficient clothing to keep warm.

FAMINE HAS NOT ONLY BEEN CONFIRMED, IT IS EXPANDING

This time last year, famine loomed over Sudan. Today, famine conditions have been confirmed in five locations in North Darfur and the eastern Nuba mountains, and are expected to spread to five more areas by May 2025. The numbers of

affected people are staggering—with three times more people facing severe food insecurity today than in February 2023—yet action to address the food crisis has been lacking.



Reports from Darfur demonstrate how desperate people have become, with a majority of the population resorting to selling possessions or eating food stored for the next planting season, while in South Kordofan children are reported to be eating leaves to sate their hunger. Where food is available, prices remain prohibitively high for people with limited opportunities to earn an income. In February 2025, the cost of the local food basket remained 134% higher than the same time last year.

Below: Gedaref, Sudan. Hiba's children play together inside their shelter. Displaced from their home in Khartoum by war, Hiba's family has faced multiple relocations.



At a time when the risk of famine spreading to other parts of the country is high, the ability to track and address it declines. Sudan has suspended its participation in the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) system - the collective mechanism for monitoring food insecurity - making further assessments difficult to complete. In addition, the United States (US) aid cuts have seen the shuttering of FEWSNET, a key global resource for famine data and prevention.



Typically in Sudan, food security deteriorates during the rainy season, and starts to improve again when the harvests start in October. Seasonal acute malnutrition tends to follow similar patterns. The risk of famine will therefore increase in the coming months unless urgent steps are taken now.

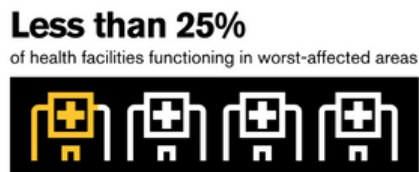
TIMELINE OF THE SPREAD OF FAMINE



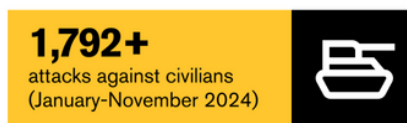
CIVILIANS AND AID WORKERS REMAIN UNDER THREAT

The conflict continues to be marked by violations of international law and deliberate targeting of civilians. In December 2023, the US Government concluded that war crimes had been committed. In January 2025, it further concluded that members of the RSF and allied militias had committed genocide in Sudan.

Critical civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, continue to be attacked. At least 559 attacks on healthcare were recorded between April 2023 and February 2025. Sudanese civilians must now travel for hours or even days for treatment—meaning many go without essential care.



Aid workers are also at risk. 2024 was the deadliest year for humanitarian workers in Sudan, with 54 people killed. Far from being accidental, evidence points to deliberate targeting, including aerial bombardment in Yabus, attacks in ZamZam camp, Darfur, and violent attacks against local responders in many locations. Despite the risks local volunteers face, the UN still does not systematically track, document and report on attacks against frontline responders or on the access challenges they face, nor are they provided with access to security reporting to allow safe planning of their own operations.



A WAR AGAINST WOMEN'S BODIES

The UN reports that sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), in particular rape and gang rape, are widespread. Women activists, human rights defenders and first responders who document violations and provide services to survivors have also been the targets of attacks. A rapid needs assessment conducted by IMPACT Initiatives in January 2025 in three localities of Central Darfur found women and girls report facing physical harassment or violence (70%), sexual abuse, exploitation or harassment (65%), and domestic violence (54%).



SINCE THE START OF THE CONFLICT, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT RISK OF

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED, REACHING OVER

12 MILLION PEOPLE,

25% OF THE POPULATION



Samar Yaqub, stands in front of the IRC's antenatal care and family planning section within the camp clinic. Displaced from Khartoum due to conflict, Samar now works with IRC to offer vital prenatal care and delivery support to women in the camp. IRC's services ensure the well-being of mothers and their newborns.

Gedaref, Sudan.

TWO YEARS ON: HOW AND WHY THE CRISIS HAS DETERIORATED

1 TOOTHLESS DIPLOMACY LEAVES CONFLICT ACTORS FREE TO ESCALATE VIOLENCE

One year ago, we warned that the people of Sudan were being failed by international inaction. Today, two years after the outbreak of war, the consequences of this failure are more stark than ever. No diplomatic effort to date has managed to meaningfully bring conflict parties together. Efforts to mitigate civilian harm are little more than words on a page. Humanitarian needs have surged.

Despite multiple warnings by the IRC and others, diplomatic actors continue to make the same mistakes. Since April 2023, diplomatic processes, including the [Jeddah talks](#), the [Intergovernmental Authority on Development \(IGAD\) process](#), the [African Union \(AU\) Initiative](#), the [Turkish-Libyan initiative](#), and the [Aligned for Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan \(ALPS\) talks](#), have launched and faltered at best, or failed at worst. These diplomatic efforts largely suffer from common challenges:

- **Diplomatic efforts are disjointed and duplicative.** After the Jeddah talks and IGAD-led talks in 2023, we [warned](#) that the presence of multiple diplomatic tracks would allow conflict actors to “forum shop” and choose the process that served them best. Now, as progress through the ALPS Forum has stalled, we see a return to disjointed and uncoordinated engagement. In late January, Türkiye offered to [mediate](#) between the SAF and the UAE while around the same time IGAD announced its own [plans to mediate](#) the war. Meanwhile, the UN Secretary General’s Personal Envoy for Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra, is kickstarting proximity talks between conflict parties to discuss each party’s planned political roadmaps. Recent information shared from the [Sudan Senior Officials Meeting in Brussels](#) on 13 March 2025 also suggests that the US is

considering restarting the ALPS Forum to engage parties on humanitarian access.

- **Progress on agendas remains limited.** Diplomatic efforts have sought to achieve diverse outcomes including ceasefires, civilian protection, humanitarian access, and in some cases, a political settlement. Yet, progress on agreements and implementation has been limited. The Jeddah track resulted in the [Jeddah Commitments to Protect Civilians](#), yet widespread violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) by both sides continue. The ALPS talks contributed to some limited agreements on [cross border humanitarian access](#), but made no political inroads as the SAF refused to join in person. The UN Security Council (UNSC) also remains deadlocked in efforts to contain violence, failing to [expand](#) the arms embargo beyond Darfur, despite [evidence](#) of international arms supply. Efforts to revive diplomatic focus on Sudan, including the April 2025 [London conference](#), are commendable, but with neither warring party invited, concerted efforts will be required to ensure their support for decisions made.
- **There is ineffective pressure on conflict parties and their sponsors.** To date, international efforts to tilt the scales away from war towards peace have not meaningfully influenced the actions of warring parties and their sponsors. Prior to leaving office, President Biden’s team agreed [sanctions](#) on Burhan for fueling war and on Hemedti for committing genocide. Biden’s team also [appealed](#) to the UAE and others to stop supporting the warring parties. Others, like the [United Kingdom \(UK\)](#) and the [European Union \(EU\)](#), also enacted sanctions. Meanwhile, Security Council resolutions are undermined through [vetoes](#) or, when passed, by the failure to implement the agreed measures. Despite these efforts, warring parties continue to reject or ignore calls for [ceasefires](#).

2 CONFLICT DYNAMICS ARE GROWING MORE COMPLEX

In our 2024 **Sudan Watchlist Crisis Alert**, we identified three major reasons why the conflict continues to escalate and spread. Those drivers are not just relevant today - they have worsened.

➤ **2024: Leaders on both sides believe that continued conflict is in their best interest**

➤ **NOW: Leaders on both sides insist on more war and reject calls for a ceasefire**

This year has seen the SAF make rapid advances, reversing gains made by the RSF in 2024. Supported by strategic military guidance and hardware from international partners, the SAF has taken territory in North Darfur, Al-Jazirah, Sennar and claims full control of Khartoum, including the airport and the symbolic Presidential Palace. The SAF has also rejected calls for a ceasefire. However, the advances do not mean the outcome of the war is decided. The RSF still controls significant territory. In March 2025, it captured the strategic desert city of Al-Maliha in North Darfur and despite SAF advances in Khartoum in March, fighting was still reported in areas across Omdurman. The RSF remains unwilling to negotiate from a position of weakness, and with limited pressure to end international support, they are likely to fight on, for example in Darfur, with grave implications for civilians.

➤ **2024: The conflict is dragging in more groups – and increasingly playing out along ethnic lines, particularly in Darfur**

➤ **NOW: Local militias and armed groups tied to the former ruling party are actively participating in the war**

The conflict has grown to involve multiple groups fighting for both the SAF and the RSF.

- To advance on multiple fronts, the SAF increasingly relies on the Joint Darfur Force (made up of allied Darfuri armed groups), Minni Minawi's Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North faction

led by Malik Agar (SPLM-N-Agar), and recruits from various armed groups with connections to the former ruling party.

- Over 30 organizations are included under the RSF's Advisory Council alone, however, many of the fighting groups remain only nominally under RSF command and control. In addition to its military alliances, in February 2025, the RSF signed an official charter with the Sudan Revolutionary Front and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N-al-Hilu), in an attempt to cement its plans to create a parallel government system.

The diversity of fighting factions has implications for Sudan's stability. With numerous groups involved on both sides, a peace deal will need to address diverse interests, and hence will be more difficult to broker and sustain. For the RSF, its advances have been predicated on the ability to offer fighting groups the spoils of war through looting and land appropriation. As the RSF is forced to retreat and can no longer offer the same largesse, there is a risk that limited command and control structures become further strained with implications for the stability of RSF controlled territory due to potential infighting between armed groups. In this scenario, civilians will suffer.

➤ **2024: Regional powers are pumping weapons into Sudan rather than pushing for peace**

➤ **NOW: Old and new war sponsors are destabilizing Sudan and the region**

Since the start of the war, key regional and international partners have provided support to warring parties. For example, UN experts have found what they describe as "credible" evidence that the UAE is providing weapons and ammunition to the RSF via Amdjarass in eastern Chad. Today, the internationalization of the conflict continues to intensify with an array of regional and global players seeking to advance their own strategic interests in Sudan. With limited international efforts to curtail support to the warring parties, the brutal conflict has been allowed to escalate.

CONFLICT IN SUDAN HAS HAD SPILLOVER EFFECTS FOR THE ENTIRE REGION

As the civil war intensifies and the humanitarian crisis worsens, the turmoil is spreading to neighboring countries threatening to destabilize the entire region. South Sudan and Chad are especially vulnerable.

CHAD

Chad has been in a fragile transition since Mahamat Déby took power following his father's death in 2021, and sought to legitimize his rule through disputed elections. Now, political divisions over the Sudan war, combined with internal disputes for power, pose serious questions for the stability of the Chadian Government. Following the signing of multiple military and economic agreements with the UAE in mid-2023, Déby reversed the rapprochement between Chad and Sudan agreed by his father in 2010. After this, reports of the UAE sending military supplies to the RSF via Chad began - the Chadian Government denies these claims.

Accusations of support to the RSF have weakened President Déby's relationships with the Zaghawan elite - a tribal group who hold key roles in the Chadian Government and whose members live on both sides of the Chad/Sudan border. Tensions rose in particular after the RSF besieged El Fasher, where many Zaghawa live, and reports suggest ethnic Chadian Zaghawa are crossing the border to fight against the RSF. To escape poverty, some Chadians are also joining RSF-affiliated militias as a source of income. In March 2025, in an escalation of tensions, a senior member of the Sudanese military stated that Chadian support to the RSF made airports in the capital N'djamena and at Amdjarass "legitimate military targets".

SOUTH SUDAN

The conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan are becoming intertwined, leaving South Sudan on the brink of civil war and marking a serious blow

to the 2018 peace agreement that ended five years of brutal fighting. Since the Sudan war began, South Sudan lost two thirds of its state revenue that was dependent on oil exports via a now damaged pipeline to Port Sudan. The country plunged into an economic crisis that escalated political tensions threatening to push the fragile country into full blown conflict. To facilitate repairs to the pipeline that runs through RSF and SAF territory, President Kiir sought to balance diplomatic relations with both sides. However, with oil exports stalled, and facing rising political pressure due to his inability to maintain essential services, pay the government wage bills and sustain his patronage network, President Kiir accepted a \$13bn loan from the UAE in April 2024. Reflecting the UAE's strategy in Chad, the deal appears to have ensured at least tacit South Sudanese support for the RSF. As part of the support, the UAE has built a field hospital near the Sudan border which is reportedly treating RSF fighters, while the RSF is now fighting against forces opposed to the Juba Government, the Sudan People Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLM-IO). At the same time, an attack by the White Army - a Nuer militia reportedly aligned with the South Sudanese opposition - against a military base in Nasir, Upper Nile, may have been supported by the SAF. Now, tensions in South Sudan appear to reach a tipping point with the arrest of Vice President Dr Riek Machar and clashes between the South Sudanese Army and Dr Machar's SPLM-IO breaking out across the country.

Escalations in both countries come at a time of enormous humanitarian needs. In South Sudan, over 7 million people are acutely food insecure and years of violence and under development have decimated basic services including health care. The country is also home to more than 1 million people who have fled Sudan. Chad already hosts over 900,000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees in Ouaddaï province bordering Darfur. Ouaddaï is already beset with developmental challenges, including a lack of basic services and infrastructure.

THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE REMAINS UNEVEN, CONSTRAINED AND INADEQUATE

The humanitarian response in Sudan remains constrained by parties' failure to abide by their obligations to facilitate the delivery of aid and Member States' failure to hold them to account.

AID DELIVERY IS BLOCKED BY BUREAUCRACY – OFTEN BY DESIGN

As the economy falters and governance of Sudan becomes increasingly contested, the SAF and RSF have sought to expand their oversight of, or control over, aid provision.

- In 2024, over 70% of humanitarian INGOs operating in Sudan faced severe access constraints, including movement restrictions and travel permit delays or denials.
- In areas under SAF control, visa delays continue to slow down critical aid operations and deployment of humanitarian personnel. Between September 2024 and March 2025, only 40% of INGO visa applications have been approved.

Now, as Sudan further splinters into two areas of control, both sides have established independent mechanisms to manage aid delivery. In RSF-controlled Sudan, the Sudanese Agency for Relief and Humanitarian Operations (SARHO) has started duplicating the procedures that the SAF's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) uses to control aid delivery, including charging humanitarian agencies fees to operate and demanding oversight of recruitment. Negotiation of these requirements leads to significant delays in the delivery of assistance across the country. Agencies operating in both the east and west of Sudan find themselves stuck between SARHO and HAC, with both threatening to pull support for aid programs if agencies engage with the alternative authorities. Without increased diplomatic support from the UN and Member

States to push back on these trends, aid delivery is slowed or stopped—and civilians suffer.

LIFE-SAVING AID IS STILL STRUGGLING TO GET PAST BORDERS AND FRONTLINES

1. CROSS BORDER AID DELIVERY

With humanitarian access to millions of people in Sudan constrained by the actions of warring parties, aid delivered from neighbouring countries should be a lifeline—but it is fraught with obstacles.

- **Chad, Adre:** Following extensive negotiations in August 2024, the SAF temporarily re-opened the Adre border crossing from Chad into Darfur for three-months in a deal that has since been extended twice. Yet delays, bureaucratic red tape and infrastructural shortcomings in Darfur mean aid trickles in far too slowly. Between August 2024 and February 2025, only 1,300 trucks reached Darfur - half the number MSF estimates are needed monthly to feed those facing extreme hunger.
- **Chad, Al-Tina:** Insecurity along the border and on the route to North Darfur has severely hampered deliveries through the Al-Tina crossing into RSF-controlled territory. A WFP convoy that set out on January 8, 2025 took three months to reach Tawila due to roadblocks and escalating violence.
- **South Sudan:** The deterioration of stability in South Sudan poses risks to the humanitarian response in Sudan. Currently humanitarian programs in the Kordofan regions are heavily reliant on cross border access from South Sudan.

2. CROSS LINE AID DELIVERY

The challenges of crossline access underscore the complexity of the conflict. While there have been some glimmers of progress—around 460 trucks carrying 25,900 metric tons crossing frontlines between August 2024 and January 2025—access remains fragmented.

- Deliveries from areas controlled by the Sudan Liberation Army, led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLA-AW) into SAF-controlled parts of North Darfur have stalled since December 2024 after the RSF seized a key road.
- Elsewhere, agreements between the SAF and RSF have enabled only sporadic aid deliveries. In December 2024, a food shipment reached over 78,000 people in southern Khartoum—the first such delivery since the conflict began.

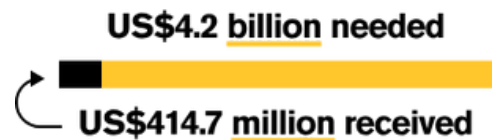
The SAF's recent territorial gains and accompanying shifts in the frontlines of the conflict are coinciding with the imminent start of the rainy season, when the few remaining bridges will buckle under the floodwater surge, dirt roads will dissolve into thick mud and become impassable, and entire communities will become isolated. This perfect storm reinforces the urgency of establishing consistent, dynamic negotiations over crossline access.

THE UN'S PRESENCE REMAINS UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED

The UN has a critical role to play in effective humanitarian response, providing coordination structures, information, and vital logistics capacity. Yet, the SAF has yet to grant permission for the UN to set up a permanent operational presence or deploy staff—including senior decision makers and essential monitoring teams—outside of areas under their control, including in Zalingei, Central Darfur, and in South Kordofan. Instead, only time-bound and mission-specific permissions, including to accompany convoys to RSF areas, have been granted. In areas outside of SAF control, the absence of a centralized coordination mechanism has led to

fragmented responses, duplication of efforts, and operational inefficiencies, undermining efforts to reach those most in need. While NGOs have made efforts to self-organize, the lack of financial support and unified representation for engagement with local authorities, conflict actors, and donors has limited the overall impact of the humanitarian response.

US AID CUTS CRIPPLE SUDAN'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE



Since January 20, the US Government has terminated 83% of all aid contracts. In 2024, US funds accounted for nearly half of all humanitarian assistance in Sudan. As of early April 2025, Sudan's coordinated response plan was only 10% funded—around 30% of current funding (around US\$125 million) was expected to come from the US and may not materialize as humanitarian partners continue to struggle to secure payments from the US Government. Response plans for Chad and South Sudan are similarly underfunded (5.3% and 10.6%), as is Sudan's regional refugee response plan (1.3%). These figures mask the real impact of the funding decision made. Programs that were a lifeline to millions of Sudanese are closing.

- At least 60% of the 1,400 community soup kitchens that served an estimated 2 million people are no longer able to operate.
- By the end of January 2025, at least 335 health facilities across the country had been affected, further limiting access to essential services such as maternal and child health, vaccinations, and disease surveillance.

As programmes are shuttered without warning, the trust and acceptance that organizations have spent years building with communities and local authorities is being eroded, jeopardizing not only the future delivery of aid, but also the safety and security of aid workers.

RAMPANT INFLATION IS NOW COMPOUNDED BY A DEBILITATING LIQUIDITY CRISIS

Since the start of the conflict, the value of the Sudanese pound has all but collapsed, eroding people's ability to purchase food and other essential items.



THE PRICE OF GOODS IN THE MARKET

HAS RISEN BY MORE THAN **142%**
IN THE PAST YEAR ALONE

To make matters worse, Sudan has been experiencing a severe liquidity crisis following the introduction of new banknotes by the Central Bank in December 2024. The introduction of the new notes was motivated by a desire to combat inflation, strengthen economic confidence, and stabilize the monetary system. The result has been widespread cash shortages for both the civilian population as well as for humanitarian actors, resulting in delays in the distribution of cash and in-kind food supplies. In January, aid agencies estimated that US\$11.5 million worth of assistance targeting 500,000 people had been delayed as a result.

LOCAL RESPONDERS REMAIN UNDERFUNDED AND OVERBURDENED

Since April 2023, volunteer-run mutual aid groups have set up hundreds of communal food kitchens, supported hospitals and health centers, and helped restore and maintain water, power and internet services. They have helped protect civilians from violence by sharing information, creating safe paths and shelters, and by supporting evacuations and relocations. Operating at great personal risk, these groups have extended services to populations that international aid agencies cannot reach but they remain inadequately supported.

- In 2024, mutual aid groups received just 8% of the funding distributed by the Sudan Humanitarian Fund, with only 16% of the overall funding for Sudan going to local NGOs and civil society organizations.
- In 2025, even before the US funding cuts, mutual aid groups estimated a funding gap of almost US\$12 million a month.
- By some estimates, US funding accounted for 70-80% of the total funding for local organizations leaving a huge gap in support.

But it is not just the level of funding that restricts the ability of local responders to increase their activities, it is also the way funds are managed. Heavy bureaucratic reporting and compliance requirements make it nearly impossible for local responders to directly access funds that flow through the traditional humanitarian system. While some INGOs have been acting as intermediaries between donors and local partners, establishing equitable partnerships and procedures that allow the transfer of greater levels of funding remains constrained by agency and donor policies.

Below: Amina Hassan El-Sayed with her daughter Fatima, seven months, outside a IRC health-centre in Ourang, eastern Chad, where Fatima is being treated for malnutrition.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent further loss of life and facilitate a return to peace, UN Member States and donors should urgently take the following steps.

1. SUPPORT CONDITIONS FOR PEACE, NOT WAR

Maintain high level diplomatic engagement.

To demonstrate commitment to ending the war and stemming the risks of a regional conflagration, all Member States including those in the region, should maintain diplomatic engagement with the warring parties and their sponsors at the highest level and establish in-country diplomatic presence. The AU should ensure Sudan is a standing agenda item in the AU-Peace and Security Council (PSC) monthly sessions.

Establish one, unified negotiating track.

UN Member States should formalize a single negotiating forum to de-escalate violence. The group should be convened under the leadership of the AU and include participation by senior representatives from both warring parties and – as called for by [UN Security Council Resolution 2736](#) – the UAE, Egypt as well as all appointed Special Envoys for Sudan. This approach would avoid “forum shopping,” whereby parties engage only with the diplomatic tracks they believe are most favorable to their objectives.

Maximise mechanisms to influence the warring parties and their sponsors.

- Leverage the findings of the UN Panel of Experts who document violations in Sudan and consistently callout, in private engagement and public communications, the roles of regional actors in sustaining the conflict.
- The reliance of warring parties on [commodity exports](#) should be leveraged by regional powers to encourage de-escalation of the violence.

2. ENSURE AID REACHES THOSE THAT NEED IT MOST

Encourage conflict parties to agree to an immediate three-month moratorium on all bureaucratic impediments to aid delivery.

Humanitarian diplomatic efforts in Sudan should shift from securing and celebrating specific access solutions, such as one-off humanitarian convoys that require significant effort for limited humanitarian gain, to reaching an agreement that structurally changes the access environment in Sudan. States should use all diplomatic channels with HAC and SARHO to establish an initial three-month moratorium to allow partners to preposition supplies and scale up response ahead of the rainy season. The agreement should ensure the timely issuance of entry and travel permits and visas, maintain and expand cross border access from Chad and other neighbouring countries, and secure sustained crossline access from SAF to RSF areas.

Prioritize and advocate for unfettered UN access to areas outside SAF control.

Exert diplomatic pressure on all relevant parties, including direct engagement by the Secretary General, to ensure the UN obtains a blanket approval to establish an operational presence, and deliver a principled response, in all areas of Sudan regardless of who is in control.

Ensure humanitarian access is not contingent on a ceasefire.

In line with obligations under IHL, warring parties should protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance and not use agreements on access as bargaining chips in ceasefire negotiations. In addition, when seeking to reach agreements on humanitarian access with warring parties and their sponsors, states should ensure discussions are informed by operational realities and experience of frontline humanitarian responders.

Any agreements reached should not undermine or slow local level access negotiations that are vital to sustained aid delivery and should ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

3. CONTINUE TO PRIORITISE FUNDING FOR THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN SUDAN, AND FOR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Immediately release funds to support the humanitarian response.

The US should immediately initiate payment for all contracts that have not been terminated. All donors should protect support to Sudan and the regional response, and take steps to ease the liquidity crisis facing humanitarian responders, including by increasing upfront payments, ensuring that all owed funds have been transferred and providing flexibility in existing grants to enable partners to re-prioritise activities and respond to new crises (even if new funding is not immediately available).

Agree a coordinated response to the loss of US funding.

The response in Sudan will face severe funding shortages requiring donors to collectively agree how to maintain support for life saving service and basic needs interventions. Decisions on a collective approach should be informed by a shared analysis of gaps in the existing humanitarian response and donors' geographical presence and funding availability.

Elevate the role of local response.

With access challenges and funding restrictions across Sudan, donors can ensure limited assistance continues to reach those most in need by increasing support to local responders and mutual aid groups, including women-led organizations that are at the forefront of the GBV response. All donors should create funding

structures that are accessible to local responders and embrace flexibility and risk-sharing frameworks that empower local responders to lead and innovate, rather than be overwhelmed by reporting requirements.

4. PROTECT CIVILIANS AND CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Secure implementation of existing commitments on civilian protection.

Member States should use high level events, including the upcoming London conference, to secure agreements on implementation and monitoring of parties' obligations under IHL and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) to protect civilians—especially women and girls—and civilian infrastructure, recognizing that protecting civilian lives and infrastructure is in every party's own strategic interest. As conflict frontlines shift, member states should caution SAF and RSF against targeting humanitarian responders or civilians perceived to support the opposition.

Expand and rigorously implement the arms embargo beyond Darfur.

Recognizing that the dynamics of the conflict extend well beyond Darfur, it is critical to broaden the scope of the current UN arms embargo to cover all of Sudan and those that support the warring parties. Member States should also enhance monitoring mechanisms to track illicit arms transfers.

Increase scrutiny of violations of IHL and take steps to constrain the ability of parties to the conflict to continue harming civilians, including women and girls.

As a demonstration of warring parties commitments to civilian protection, they should allow the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan to conduct its investigation across all parts of Sudan. The Mission should present its findings to the General Assembly and UN Security Council.



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

International Rescue Committee

122 East 42nd Street

New York, NY 10168-1289 USA

Rescue.org