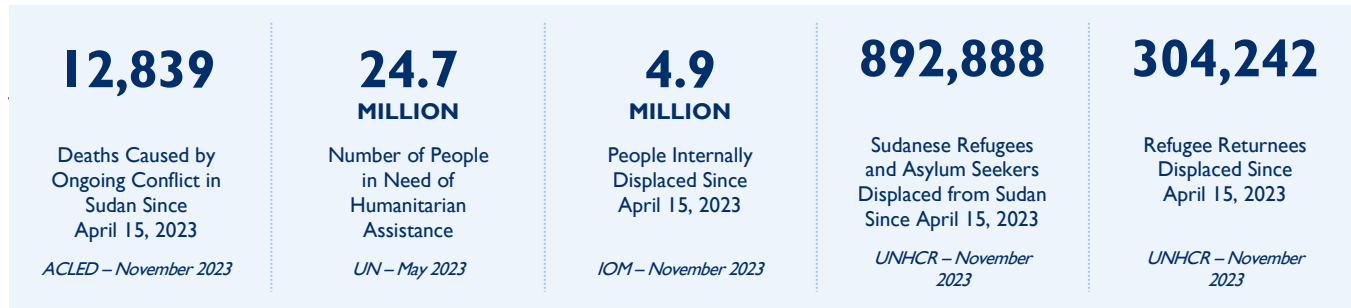


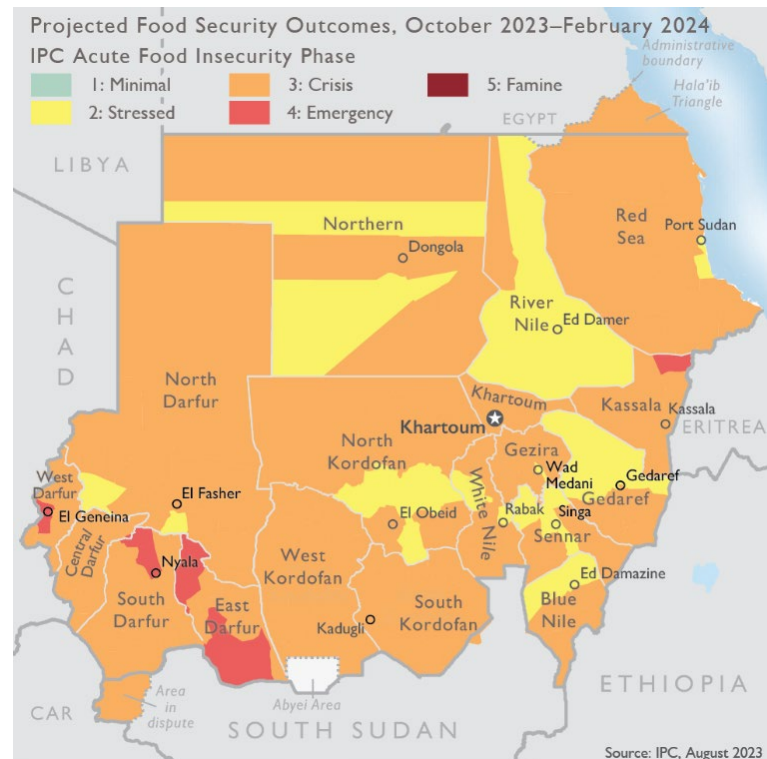
# Sudan – Complex Emergency

NOVEMBER 9, 2023

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- RSF actors took control of three key SAF military posts in Central, West, and South Darfur states in recent weeks, further expanding RSF territorial control in the region, media and the UN report.
- The second round of negotiations between the RSF and SAF concluded on November 7 without a ceasefire agreement.
- FEWS NET projects Crisis levels of food insecurity between October 2023 and May 2024, with Emergency levels of food insecurity predicted in Darfur and Kordofan regions and Khartoum State.
- Armed conflict, bureaucratic and administrative impediments, and rising transportation costs continue to restrict humanitarian assistance, according to the UN.



<sup>1</sup> FY 2024 funding for the Sudan Complex Emergency will be included in future products when committed/obligated. For information on the U.S. Government (USG)'s funding toward the response in FY 2023, refer to Sudan Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #20 released on September 29, 2023, available on the USAID website at <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work>.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### **RSF–SAF Clashes Escalate Across Darfur; RSF Expands Territorial Control and May Hinder Humanitarian Access**

Violence between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Darfur region escalated in October as the RSF expanded its territorial control in the region, resulting in further displacement and exacerbating the already high level of humanitarian need, according to the UN.<sup>2</sup> Notably, RSF forces took control of SAF's 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division headquarters in West Darfur's capital city of El Geneina on November 4; SAF's 21st Infantry Division headquarters in Central Darfur's capital city of Zalingei on October 31; and SAF's 16th Infantry Division in South Darfur's capital city of Nyala—the only remaining SAF-controlled military post in South Darfur—on October 24, according to international and national media. Clashes in Nyala on October 24 resulted in 140 deaths and displaced more than 17,500 people between October 22 and November 6, according to the UN. Meanwhile, RSF attacks near Zalingei's El Hasaheisa internally displaced person (IDP) camp on October 3 resulted in dozens of civilian deaths and the displacement of nearly 13,000 IDPs from the camp to Zalingei's El Hamidiya IDP camp, the UN reported on November 2. Local media also reported increased RSF–SAF clashes in North Darfur's capital city of El Fasher between October 26 and November 1. The U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for an immediate cessation of attacks in El Fasher and raised concern over reports of further impending attacks, in a November 1 statement. Secretary Blinken also echoed the Governor of North Darfur's appeal to the parties to the conflict to allow civilians to safely move to more secure areas.

Relief actors raised concerns that the recent RSF takeovers in the Darfur region could restrict the humanitarian community's ability to move supplies into and around Darfur due to conflict-related access impediments on main roads and a potential SAF block of supplies entering RSF-controlled areas. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan, Officer-in-Charge of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) Clementine Nkweta-Salami released a statement on November 2, raising concern about the military escalation in the Darfur region, and its impact on civilians, and reiterated her call on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law to protect civilians in the course of hostilities. Of the estimated 4.9 million individuals displaced in Sudan between April 15 and October 22, armed conflict has displaced 1.4 million individuals in the Darfur region alone prior to the recent escalation in conflict, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports. The U.S. Government (USG), including USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) and the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM), and their implementing partners are monitoring the impact of the RSF takeover on humanitarian operations in the Darfur region, including operations in bordering countries.

### **Second Round of RSF–SAF Humanitarian Negotiations in Jeddah Ended on November 7**

The USG, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)—participating on behalf of the African Union—convened the second round of humanitarian negotiations between the RSF and SAF in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia between October 26 and November 7. The second round of negotiations focused on facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance, establishing ceasefires, and building toward a permanent cessation of hostilities. The negotiations concluded without a ceasefire agreement; however, both parties reaffirmed their obligations under the

<sup>2</sup> Darfur region comprises the following states: Central Darfur, East Darfur, North Darfur, South Darfur, and West Darfur.

May 11 Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan. In addition, the parties indicated support for the establishment of Humanitarian Forum for Sudan led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) which plans to facilitate the implementation of commitments made in Jeddah, resolve humanitarian access impediments, and identify points of contact to assist with movements of humanitarian personnel and assistance. In a November 7 joint statement, co-facilitators of the negotiations noted that RSF and SAF entities committed to implement confidence-building measures, including the establishment of communication between RSF and SAF leader; the arrest of prison escapees and fugitives; the improvement of each side's official media discourse and reduction of inflammatory rhetoric; and actions concerning each side's warmongers and pro-war elements. DSRSG/RC/HC Clementine Nkweta-Salami welcomed the agreement to establish an OCHA-led Humanitarian Forum and called on parties to the conflict to proceed in tangible actions, in a November 7 statement.

In the first round of negotiations between May and June, RSF and SAF representatives signed a ceasefire agreement and the May 11 Declaration, which defined the obligations of both sides under international humanitarian and human rights law to facilitate and safeguard humanitarian action to meet the emergency needs of civilians. However, neither party upheld the ceasefire nor the Declaration during the following months. The USG is coordinating with the UN to monitor the parties' adherence to the commitments made during the second round of negotiations.

### **FEWS NET Projects Crisis and Emergency Levels of Food Insecurity Between October 2023 and May 2024**

More than six months of conflict in Sudan has deteriorated food security conditions as the widespread destruction of property, looting of assets and food, and violence against civilians continue to undermine household access to income and food sources around the country, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reports. Widespread Crisis—IPC 3—levels of acute food insecurity are projected between October 2023 and May 2024, with Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity predicted in areas of country experiencing high conflict, including Darfur and Kordofan regions and Khartoum State.<sup>3</sup> FEWS NET projects the majority of Darfur and Kordofan regions will experience Crisis levels of food insecurity, with some populations expected to experience Emergency food insecurity outcomes where conflict remains high. Populations in Khartoum are also predicted to experience Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity during the period, with Khartoum's Omdurman city anticipated to face Emergency levels through January 2024.

Food security outcomes in Darfur and Kordofan regions are likely to slightly improve due to the start of the harvest and end of lean season—which lasts from April to July.<sup>4</sup> However, food insecurity will remain elevated amid ongoing conflict and insecurity due to the poor macroeconomic situation, high staple food prices, and reduced physical access to markets, which are likely to hinder household's ability to meet basic food and non-food needs. In addition, harvests are expected to be below average, with high conflict areas experiencing significantly below-average harvests. The ongoing conflict has adversely affected agriculture production including, delayed and reduced access to finances from the Agricultural Bank of Sudan due to service interruption since the start of the conflict; limited access to agriculture inputs, including labor; high fuel costs; inadequate access to irrigation due to poor cleaning and

<sup>3</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity. IPC Phase 5 is referred to as "Catastrophe" when classifying a household and "Famine" when classifying an area. Famine conditions occur when at least 20 percent of the population in a given area face an extreme lack of food; the Global Acute Malnutrition prevalence, measured by weight-for-height z-score, exceeds 30 percent; and the mortality rate exceeds two people per 10,000 individuals per day.

<sup>4</sup> Kordofan region comprises the following states: North Kordofan, South Kordofan, and West Kordofan.

maintenance of irrigation canals; and reduced access to fields in areas closer to heavy fighting, according to FEWS NET. In areas of Sudan with heightened ethnic tensions, the fear of violence and insecurity has limited households' ability to engage in crop cultivation and access typical income sources. In addition, the conflict has damaged major transportation routes, resulting in reduced trade flows and high commodity prices, FEWS NET reports.

### **Rising Transportation Costs, Bureaucratic Impediments Hinder Aid Delivery**

Heightened conflict across Sudan, obstructive bureaucratic and administration impediments, rising transportation costs, and the lack of commitment from parties to the conflict to enable the safe passage of humanitarian assistance continue to hinder relief organizations from accessing people in need, according to the UN and USG partners. Active conflict and resultant insecurity remain the largest barriers to aid delivery, the UN reports. Insecurity prevented 70 trucks from delivering relief commodities to Darfur and Kordofan states between August and September, the UN recorded nearly 20 incidents committed against humanitarian personnel during the same period. In addition, bureaucratic challenges and visa delays constrain humanitarian personnel capacity in Sudan. Opaque guidance from the Government of Sudan (GoS) has resulted in a lack of clarity around proper visa procedures, and relief actors report varying guidance from GoS personnel, according to the UN and international NGO partners (INGO). Bureaucratic challenges affect the deployment of technical staff, particularly in the protection sector, which further exacerbates the already limited service delivery. In addition, the limited number of commercial transport companies and inflated transportation costs in Sudan have complicated the delivery of humanitarian supplies to hard-to-reach areas, according to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, a multi sector coordinating body for humanitarian activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders. For example, relief actors postponed the movement of nearly 80 trucks carrying approximately 6,520 metric tons (MT) of food supplies into Khartoum and eastern Sudan in October due to fuel shortages and elevated transportation costs. The conflict in Sudan has also prevented the GoS Ministry of Health from paying transporters on a regular or timely basis, resulting in transporters threatening to stop providing transport services to nutrition centers, the Nutrition Cluster reports.<sup>5</sup> A pause in transport services would further reduce the already declining availability of nutrition commodities and supplies at nutrition centers in Sudan. For instance, 18 out of 66 outpatient therapeutic nutrition programs in Central Darfur reported that they have run out of nutrition supplies as of October 19, according to the UN.

Moreover, relief actors postponed or canceled several humanitarian deliveries in August and September due to the inability of parties to the conflict to provide safe passage for humanitarian assistance. Despite access constraints, humanitarian actors, including USG partners, delivered nearly 100,000 MT of relief items across Sudan between August and September, the UN reports. In addition, the UN facilitated the delivery of more than 1,200 MT of relief supplies—including food, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) supplies—cross-border from Chad to Sudan by the end of September.

### **Heavy Rains and Flooding in Red Sea State May Impede Aid Operations**

Heavy rains and subsequent flooding in Red Sea State's capital city of Port Sudan and nearby Suakin town on October 28 resulted in at least seven deaths and damage to approximately 190 houses, according to the UN. Floods also cut off the road connecting Suakin with Red Sea's Tokar town leaving populations in southern Red Sea isolated. Port Sudan has become the hub for humanitarian operations since the eruption of conflict in mid-April. It is also one of the main locations people around the country have fled to, with nearly 123,600 IDPs currently residing in the state as of October 24, according to IOM. The

<sup>5</sup> The coordinating body for humanitarian nutrition activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

heavy rains and floods may worsen health, shelter, and WASH conditions for both host community members and IDPs in the area, particularly for the more than 5,000 IDPs who are sheltering in Port Sudan gathering sites, many of whom were already experiencing deteriorating WASH conditions. Heavy rains and flooding since the onset of the wet season in July had affected approximately 89,000 people across nine states as of November 2, according to the UN.

## KEY FIGURES



**3 Million**

People reached with WFP food assistance between the onset of the crisis in mid-April and early October



**1,000 MT**

Of medical supplies shipped by WHO across Sudan with USAID/BHA support between April 15 and October 4



**3.2 Million**

Children screened for malnutrition by USG partner UNICEF between April 15 and September 30

## U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### FOOD SECURITY

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support multiple UN agencies and NGOs to bolster food security and livelihoods throughout Sudan. In partnership with USAID/BHA, the UN World Food Program (WFP) provides emergency food assistance to people experiencing acute food insecurity countrywide through cash transfers for food and U.S.-sourced and locally and regionally procured cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil. The UN agency reached an estimated 3 million people across Sudan between the onset of the crisis in mid-April and early October with support from USAID/BHA and other donors.

### HEALTH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support, IOM, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNHCR, the World Health Organization (WHO), and additional NGO partners to provide life-saving health care across Sudan. USAID/BHA partners provide essential medicines, support health facilities, and train implementing partners to support critical health needs. In addition, USG partners—including UNFPA and UNICEF—support essential health interventions for IDPs, refugees, and other vulnerable populations in Sudan and Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries.

### NUTRITION

With USAID/BHA and State/PRM support IOM, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and other partner organizations prevent, identify, and treat acute malnutrition through multi-sector integrated interventions, including the provision of nutritional supplements, as well as agriculture, food security, health, and WASH activities. As of September 30, more than 80 percent of outpatient therapeutic programs were active—with varying levels of supplies, staff, and operability—across Sudan to treat severe acute malnutrition in children under five years of age. USAID/BHA-supported nutrition programming includes educational activities and malnutrition treatment focused on children and pregnant and lactating women.



**141,000**

Women and girls reached with dignity kits and information about GBV services between April 15 and October 29 by USG partner UNFPA

## PROTECTION

USG partners—including UNFPA, UNICEF, and several NGOs—provide conflict-affected and vulnerable people with USG support in Sudan as well as neighboring countries. Between April 15 and October 29, UNFPA delivered reproductive health kits sufficient to support reproductive health needs for an estimated 48,000 individuals across 15 states. During the same period, UNFPA reached approximately 141,000 individuals with dignity kits and awareness raising sessions on clinical management of rape services, psychosocial support, gender-based violence (GBV) case management, and referrals to other services.



**3.4 Million**

People in Sudan provided with safe drinking water by USG partner UNICEF between April 15 and September 30

## WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, and NGOs to provide emergency WASH assistance in Sudan. With USAID/BHA and other donor support, UNICEF reached an estimated 3.4 million people in Sudan with safe drinking water between April 15 and September 30. USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners—including UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO—also assist in preventing and containing disease outbreaks, including cholera, dengue, and malaria. During Sudan’s annual rainy season, USG partners support flood-affected populations with emergency WASH supplies—such as chlorine for water purification, hygiene kits, and water containers—to ensure access to safe drinking water.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- In April 2019, a civilian uprising grew out of protests against fuel shortages, high bread prices, and other economic issues. On April 11, 2019, Sudanese military officials overthrew President Omar al-Bashir in support of a popular revolution, and subsequent political uncertainty contributed to heightened humanitarian, security, and protection concerns. In August, a signed constitutional declaration detailed arrangements for a civilian-led transitional government for a 39-month period, with Abdalla Hamdok appointed as Prime Minister. However, following political unrest, the military took over the transitional government on October 25, 2021, arresting civilian leadership. On November 21, Hamdok was reinstated as Prime Minister under a power-sharing agreement with SAF military leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, but thereafter resigned on January 2, 2022. The October 25 military takeover sparked widespread protests across the country. Military leaders and representatives of civilian pro-democracy parties subsequently signed a preliminary agreement to establish a two-year transitional civilian government on December 5, 2022.
- Fighting between RSF elements and the SAF began on April 15, 2023, significantly escalating the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. On April 23, USAID/BHA activated a regionally based Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team to coordinate the USG response to escalating needs.
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee activated a system-wide scale-up for Sudan—formerly known as an L3 emergency—from August 29, 2023 to February 28, 2024, according to a recently released press release from UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths. The scale-up will mobilize the

operational capacities and resources needed to match the scale, complexity, and urgency of the crisis in Sudan.

- The UN estimates that 24.7 million people require humanitarian assistance in Sudan in 2023, an increase from 15.8 million estimated to be in need prior to the RSF–SAF conflict. Access restrictions, bureaucratic impediments, insecurity, and limited funding hinder relief agencies’ ability to respond to humanitarian and recovery needs in Sudan.
- On October 31, 2023, U.S. Ambassador John T. Godfrey reissued a declaration of humanitarian need (DHN) in Sudan for FY 2024. The U.S. Mission in Sudan has issued disaster declarations or DHNs due to the complex emergency in Sudan annually since 1987.

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## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)