



On 19 April 2023, people flee their neighborhoods amid fighting between the army and paramilitaries in Khartoum, Sudan. © UNICEF/UN0831619/AFP

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Sudan Country Office

Clashes between Sudanese
Armed Forces and Rapid
Support Forces

Humanitarian External
Situation Report No. 1

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for every child

Highlights

- The perilous security situation across the country makes it very difficult to collect and verify information, but while fighting continues, children will continue to pay the price. At least 9 children have reportedly been killed in the fighting, and more than 50 children have reportedly been injured as hostilities continue in Khartoum, the Darfurs and North Kordofan.
- UNICEF calls on all parties to refrain from attacking civilian infrastructure on which children depend - such as water and sanitation systems, health facilities and schools.¹
- Out of 34 hospitals in the city, 16 have become non-functional while others have compromised functionality.
- The fighting has disrupted critical, life-saving care for an estimated 50,000 severely acutely malnourished children. These vulnerable children need ongoing, round-the-clock care, which is being put at risk by the escalating violence.
- Safe access to, and provision of food, water, hygiene, and other essential supplies is constrained across most of Sudan with the situation worsening day by day. In some areas the price of basic commodities such as bottled water, food staples, fuel for cooking and for cars has risen by 40 - 60 percent, sometimes more.
- The fighting has compromised the central cold chain in Sudan, including millions of lifesaving vaccines and vital medication, including insulin doses for children. Electricity supporting the central cold chain remains unstable with only 2 days worth of fuel remaining for the back-up generator. On 27 April, the EPI office in South Darfur was attacked; cold chain equipment, vehicles, records and assets have been either looted or destroyed. It is estimated half of the vaccines have been lost.
- All schools and educational institutions in Sudan are closed, severely impacting the well-being of children.
- International aid agency staff have largely been evacuated from Khartoum and Darfur; national staff are being relocated away from hotspots. Critical UN staff remain in Port Sudan where a hub has been established to lead humanitarian operations in the country

¹ *UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell's statement on situation of children in Sudan*
[Escalating violence in Sudan puts millions of children at risk \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org/sudan/stories/escalating-violence-in-sudan-puts-millions-of-children-at-risk)

Funding Overview and Partnerships

The additional humanitarian needs arising from the recent conflict will be thoroughly assessed as soon as the situation allows. Before the conflict erupted, humanitarian needs across Sudan had reached record levels, with 15.8 million people—about a third of the total population—requiring humanitarian assistance, according to the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

Donors who wish to contribute to the Sudan response can do so against the existing Sudan 2023 HAC requiring US\$ 584.6 million for 2023; currently only 12 per cent funded. The HAC is based on the inter-agency Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

Situation Overview

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began in Khartoum on 15th April and spread quickly to neighboring cities, the Darfurs and other areas across Sudan.

After 11 days of escalating conflict, both the SAF and the RSF agreed to a 72-hour ceasefire started midnight on 24th April. Brokered by the United States, the purpose is to allow civilians to seek medical care, secure basic supplies and where possible, to relocate to safer areas. Now in its final day, the ceasefire has resulted in less intense fighting in some places, but in Khartoum, North, South and West Darfur states, North Kordofan and in pockets across the country, clashes and even air bombings continue to be reported. In Geneina, West Darfur, the situation has escalated as the conflict between RSF and SAF has reignited intercommunal clashes; people are afraid to leave their homes, seeking to arm themselves for protection and looting is widespread.

Bitter fighting has taken place, locally brokered ceasefires facilitated by Civilian Committees have brought a measure of fragile calm though the situation remains tense.

At least 499 people have been killed nationwide, including 166 in Khartoum, 174 across the Darfurs, and more than 4,741 people injured, according to the Ministry of Health, as of 25 April. The Ministry further reports that thirteen of the fatalities are national health workers. In the first week, three WFP staff were killed when caught in crossfire in North Darfur and an aid worker from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was killed after the vehicle he was traveling in with his family south of El Obeid, North Kordofan, was caught in a crossfire between warring parties. Both agencies have suspended operations. This brings the number of aid workers killed in Sudan since 15 April to five.²

UNICEF, and other humanitarian agencies, have been looted by armed individuals in Khartoum and across Darfur states and serious security threats have hampered UNICEF's capacity to provide critical humanitarian assistance in the conflict affected areas.

According to the Khartoum State Ministry of Health, out of 34 hospitals in the city, 16 have become non-functional while others have compromised functionality. The WHO has also confirmed 15 attacks on healthcare facilities since the start of the conflict. All schools and educational institutions in Sudan are closed. The well-being of children is severely impacted as schools provide a protective environment against physical threats such as exploitation, abuse, and involuntary recruitment into armed groups.

² OCHA Sudan: Clashes between SAF and RSF - [Flash Update 4 \(updated 22 April\)](#).

Lack of safe drinking water—which is widely reported in conflict-affected areas—is increasing the risk of water-borne diseases, including cholera, while vector control efforts for mosquito-borne diseases (including dengue fever and malaria) could cause cases to rise, according to the Ministry of Health.

According to UNHCR, around 270,000 people are expected to flee Sudan into neighbouring countries. Some 20,000 refugees have already arrived in Chad while more expected in the coming days. The internal displacement is also on rise – in North Kordofan, between 7,500 and 8,000 people reportedly displaced from El Obeid due to the increased violence, with children and women being the most vulnerable.

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, has called on both sides to ‘silence their guns and to ‘put the interests of their people front and centre’ (25 April 2023).

Humanitarian Needs

While the situation is rapidly evolving, UNICEF’s response strategy will focus on several key areas, including:

- Ensuring the safety and security of personnel and civilians.
- Preparing to deliver humanitarian aid including mapping of access, logistical routes and partners with the aim responding to new humanitarian needs, including:
 - Provision of health kits/supplies to facilities the treatment of injured persons.
 - Sustaining critical services, such as healthcare and vaccination, treatment of children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM).
 - Providing access to WASH services.
- Engaging in high-level advocacy for continuous humanitarian access, which is currently restricted, and the protection of children’s rights. Advocacy for children’s rights, Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations of Child Rights (MRM).
- Close coordination with UN Agencies, I/NGOs, and partners to optimize understanding of operational footprint and capacity on the ground, information sharing and efficient and effective collaborations.
- Noting that the current security situation limits UNICEF and partners ability to respond to the emerging crisis.

Summary Analysis of expected Programme Needs and Responses

While needs are yet to be determined the below captures estimated initial needs.

Health

- **Needs:** Response to mass trauma/casualties and additional humanitarian caseload; support FMOH (Federal Ministry of Health) to secure vital vaccines and critical medicines from being destroyed due to violence and lack of power supply and sustaining health services.
- **Response:** UNICEF has provided emergency health kits, essential supplies and medicines to hospitals and primary healthcare centres to support the treatment of the injured and access to life-saving health services. This includes health and nutrition kits to five primary healthcare centres and one stabilization centre in El Fasher, North Darfur. Securing funding/fuel to save millions of doses of vaccines (US\$40 million worth) and vital medications currently in cold

chain, including insulin for children, and engaging in high-level advocacy. Support to Public Health Centers (PHCs) in affected areas with supplies and equipment.

- **Gaps and constraints:** Many hospitals and pharmacies are closed, limiting access to lifesaving care and commodities. Dispatch of quarterly vaccine and other health supplies is being affected and some supplies are looted/destroyed; some states are likely to report stock-out. Targeting and looting of personnel, premises, and assets, including ambulances and SRCS (Sudanese Red Crescent Society), poses significant risk for humanitarian health actors.

Nutrition

- **Needs:** Sustaining existing interventions, especially prioritizing treatment of children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). The caseload of malnutrition could start rising in the coming months due to displacement and shortage of food. While sufficient nutrition supplies to last till end of June have already been prepositioned in the field locations, replenishment will be needed due to widely reported looting across several states.
- **Response:**
 - Prioritize interventions to sustain Stabilization Centers for children with SAM complications, followed by treatment for SAM children without complications, where/when possible.
 - Assess existing capacity of partners, taking into account that almost all partners are facing security issues, looting of assets and supplies.
 - Assess the situation of prepositioned supplies and determine the need for replacements due to looting.
 - Estimate the potential increase in caseload.
- **Gaps and constraints:** Disruption of supply pipeline for both offshore pipelines and local production, which relies heavily on imported ingredients.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- **Needs:** Access to water remains one of the main challenges in Khartoum and other affected states. In Khartoum several neighborhoods face severe shortage of water due to power outage, lack of fuel and damage to some of the water supplies. Access to water supplies in El Fasher was interrupted due to an electrical outage. Limited access to water supplies in the prolonged Internally Displaced Persons camps was also reported due to the lack of fuel. In Eltahir, the water quality treatment unit and drilling rig and other equipment have been destroyed
- **Response:** With UNICEF's support, WES (Water and Environmental Sanitation) North Darfur provided safe water to Elfashir hospital through water trucking. In addition, UNICEF has provided the required WASH support (water treatment chemicals, water tanks and collapsible containers) to the State Ministry of Health in Khartoum to sustain WASH services in six hospitals .
- **Gaps and constraints:** The normal operation of some of the water supplies in Khartoum town has been disrupted by the ongoing conflict. Access to water supplies remains one of the challenges for SWC staff. Securing safe routes for SWC staff will help in restoring the water services.

Child Protection

- **Needs:**
 - An increasing number of children and parents are expected to be in need of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).
 - Prevention and response to child separation from family during the current crisis, and promotion of family-based care in the child's best interest.
 - Monitoring, analysis and reporting on Grave Violations (MRM) on Child Rights (with a focus on Khartoum, North Kordofan, North Darfur).
 - Prevention and response to child recruitment and use by armed actors.
 - Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response services.
 - Mine risk education.
- **Response:** UNICEF is working with partners to respond to abovementioned needs situation allowing, with focus on MRM, ensure essential supplies for children in detention and in care institutions, and provide support to identified unaccompanied and separated children. 60 community volunteers have been deployed in Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman to provide MHPSS.
- **Gaps and constraints:** Prevalent security situation limits UNICEF and partners ability to respond to the emerging crisis.

Education

- **Needs:**
 - Protection from physical threats: the closure of schools and learning centers leave children vulnerable to
 - exploitation, abuse, and involuntary recruitment into armed groups
 - Psychosocial support: Children affected by the ongoing crisis require psychosocial support in safe learning spaces to cope with trauma resulting from the crisis.
 - Children need access to safe schools and alternative safe learning spaces that foster and prioritize their well-being and safety.

Response:

- Distribution of Education in Emergency supplies prepositioned in schools, benefiting approximately 16,000 children, to mitigate the adverse effects of school closures.
 - Provide psychosocial support to children affected by the crisis, equipping them with essential skills to cope with trauma, through counseling and other interventions at schools and alternative safe learning spaces.
 - Establish safe and child-friendly learning spaces, ensuring that children's well-being and safety are prioritized, by providing necessary infrastructure and support.
- **Gaps and constraints:**
 - Same as above

Social Inclusion and Cash Assistance

- **Needs:** Sustaining existing programme of Mother and Child Cash Transfer Plus (MCCT+) potential cash response.
- **Response:** Assess feasibility provided the situation.
- **Gaps and constraints:** A thorough assessment of risks as well as mitigations will be required to undertake cash programming under the current active conflict situation.

Supply and Logistics

UNICEF warehouses across Sudan had sufficient supplies prepositioned for an initial response in Khartoum, including medical, WASH and nutrition supplies. Several supplies are also stored in government counterpart warehouses. However, some supplies have been looted, and at the moment, the security situation, shortage of fuel, targeting of large vehicles/trucks allows only very limited dispatch and access to the UNICEF warehouses across the country.

UNICEF have been able to release a small quantity of health kits and RUTF worth approx. \$13,000 and are planning the distribution of additional health and WASH supplies once the situation allows. A supply plan has been developed for critical supplies, adding to what is already in country, and orders are being processed accordingly for shipment.

Access to and within the country remains a challenge. Replenishing of supplies in some field locations is challenging. With the main international airport in Khartoum shut down, all air shipments have been diverted, most critically for vaccines. Some supplies are stranded at transit points. For now sea shipments continue to Port Sudan however the situation remains volatile, and UNICEF is exploring alternative entry points.

Ongoing construction projects are being monitored to ensure that quality standards are maintained. Some projects require mandatory periodic inspection and approval by UNICEF engineers. These may be delayed until access to these sites by UNICEF is possible.

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