



# Children in Crisis

## UNICEF emergency response in Sudan and neighbouring countries

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The lives and futures of families and children in Sudan continue to be threatened by the heavy fighting that broke out in Khartoum on 15 April 2023 and extended throughout Sudan. The ongoing conflict is pushing already vulnerable children and women deeper into hardship. Thousands of families are fleeing Khartoum and other cities, with an estimated 175,000 children crossing into neighbouring countries and 600,000 children becoming internally displaced as of 30 May.

UNICEF needs US\$ 837.6 million to continue providing life-saving assistance in Sudan as per the revised [2023 Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\)](#), an overall US\$253 million increase to meet the additional urgent needs. This includes expanding nutrition treatment to over 620,000 children that are estimated will be affected by severe wasting throughout the year, half of whom may die if not helped in time.



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*On 19 April 2023, people flee their neighbourhoods amid fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.*

## Immediate humanitarian needs

The humanitarian situation in Sudan was already precarious and is now catastrophic. Humanitarian needs had already reached record levels. As a result of the conflict, the estimated number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased by 57 per cent from 15.8 million to 24.7 million, including **13.6 million children in Sudan in need of lifesaving humanitarian support**.

As of 23 May, at least 730 people have been killed and 5,500 wounded across Sudan since the conflict started, according to Federal Ministry of Health figures. At least 196 children have been killed and another 1,865 injured according to information received by UNICEF, with increasing reports of gender-based violence (GBV) against girls and women. The security situation, however, seriously hinders the ability of UNICEF and partners to collect and verify information.

The safety and wellbeing of humanitarian workers and assets remain of grave concern. Five aid workers, including four UN staff members, have been killed. Humanitarian premises have come under attack and looted, including UNICEF supplies and properties.

Safe access and provision of essential supplies and services are severely constrained across many parts of Sudan. Households are running dangerously low on food, fuel and cash, while the rapidly increasing inflation is further reducing their purchasing power. This increases the risk of malnutrition among children, water borne diseases, displacement and exposure to violence including GBV.

Sudan already had one of the highest malnutrition rates in the world and is expected to dramatically worsen. The fighting has disrupted lifesaving treatment services to about 50,000 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). While 80 per cent of Outpatient Therapeutic Programmes remain operational with UNICEF's support, nutrition services in several hotspots have been suspended and the supply pipeline disrupted with potentially fatal consequences, including due to the burning of Sudan's largest factory producing Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF).

Access to health-care is severely affected. According to WHO, 60 per cent of health facilities are not functioning. Fighting has disrupted the national vaccination programme and compromised the central cold chain system, including millions of lifesaving vaccines and vital medication such as insulin, with electricity supply unstable and limited access to fuel for running generators. Vaccines and cold chain equipment in West and South Darfur have been destroyed.

Access to safe drinking water remains a major challenge in conflict-affected areas, increasing the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera. Several neighbourhoods in Khartoum, for example, face severe shortage of water due to power outage, lack of fuel and damage to water systems.

Schools and learning institutions in conflict affected areas remain mostly closed. Nearly 7 million school-age children were already out of school before the conflict, one in three girls and one in four boys. These numbers have increased significantly, especially in Khartoum, with girls less likely to return to school. Out of school children are at greater risk of physical and mental threats, including recruitment into armed groups and GBV.



*On 27 April 2023, as conflict escalates in Sudan, a group of refugees, mostly women and children, rest under a tree to protect themselves from the high temperatures after crossing into the Chadian village of Koufroun, which is situated on the Chad-Sudan border.*

## Spill over to neighbouring countries

Many children and families are on the move trying to flee the violence – internally and across international borders. An estimated 1.2 million people have become internally displaced since the start of the conflict. Asylum seekers from Sudan, returnees and refugees from neighbouring countries, and third country nationals are crossing daily to neighbouring states, with multiple protection and assistance needs, and some continuing to transit to other countries of destination. Displacement increases protection risk such as GBV, family separation, or mental health issues. Children and women are also reportedly waiting for days in various border crossings without adequate shelter, access to health, food or water and sanitation (WASH).

As of 29 May, there were:

- In **Egypt**, 169,565 newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers, according to UNHCR.
- In **Chad**, 90,000 newly arrived refugees and more than 16,000 returnees, according to UNHCR.
- In **South Sudan**, 79,609 newly arrived South Sudanese returnees, and over 5,000 Sudanese and non-Sudanese refugees, according to IOM and UNHCR.
- In **Central African Republic (CAR)**, 10,368 newly arrived refugees and 3,456 returnees, according to UNHCR.
- In **Ethiopia**, 10,457 newly arrived refugees (5,128 Sudanese, 4,731 Eritrean, 178 South Sudanese), 28,030 Ethiopian returnees, and 4,530 third country nationals, based on regional authorities and UN partner reports.

Many communities receiving displaced populations are already affected by multiple emergencies. Basic services and humanitarian partners' capacity in these locations are overstretched by pre-existing large scale humanitarian needs. Chad, for example, is already hosting more than 600,000 refugees and the humanitarian appeal is only 9 per cent funded as of late May. Egypt was already hosting nine million migrants and refugees before the crisis broke out, with one million assessed as vulnerable. The situation is also expected to worsen in many of Sudan's neighbouring countries during the rainy season with floods and road closures increasing the risk of food insecurity and the spread of diseases such as cholera.

## Sudan response

UNICEF has been operating in Sudan for over seventy years and remains committed to delivering for children, especially the most vulnerable. An operational team has temporarily relocated to UNICEF's Port Sudan sub-office from where to continue to stage country-wide operations.

An estimated additional 8.9 million people, half of whom are children, are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict and on top of pre-existing needs. A total of 13.6 million children are facing urgent needs. Working with local partners, staff and communities on the ground, UNICEF's emergency response will follow a 3-prong strategy:

**I. HOTSPOTS:** Maintaining critical and lifesaving basic services through local partners and staff on the ground in conflict-affected areas, such as in Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan regions.

**II. DISPLACED POPULATIONS:** Providing urgent assistance to the newly displaced and host communities in the five states with no ongoing conflict and along border areas where there are the largest gathering points: Gedaref, Gezira, Kassala, Red Sea and White Nile.

**III. BASIC SERVICES (ONGOING):** Continuing treatment of children with SAM, primary healthcare, including vaccinations, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, education in emergencies and cash plus programming, for recurrent emergencies such as floods and epidemics.

In coordination with other humanitarian partners, UNICEF will prioritize the following interventions for children:

- **Health:** UNICEF continues to support primary health-care centres and hospitals working closely with health authorities, and to maintain immunization services across 12 states by securing vaccine cold chain, supplies and distribution. At least 244,000 children have been reached with the Polio Zero Dose since the latest conflict started.
- **WASH:** UNICEF is providing safe drinking water and restoring critical WASH services prioritising health-care facilities and IDP gathering points. In Khartoum, for example, UNICEF has supported six hospitals in coordination with the Ministry of Health.
- **Nutrition:** UNICEF is prioritizing continued treatment of children with SAM and has resumed mass screening and provision of maternal, infant and young child nutrition, wherever security allows. 50,000 cartons of RUTF were distributed from Khartoum to other locations to maintain the immediate pipeline.
- **Child protection:** UNICEF is working with partners to respond to the growing protection concerns with a focus on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on Grave Violations on Child Rights. UNICEF is responding to identified cases, providing mental health and psycho-social support, as well family tracing, reunification and alternative care for unaccompanied and separated children. GBV prevention, mitigation and response services are also prioritized.
- **Education:** UNICEF supports children's access to safe schooling and other learning opportunities including by providing supplies to schools, individual learning materials and establishing safe and child-friendly learning spaces such as 42 E-learning centers currently operational.
- **Humanitarian Cash Transfers:** UNICEF continues to implement the cash transfer programme to pregnant and lactating mothers in eastern Sudan and is working to expand it to address the humanitarian needs of the IDP population.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Accountability to Affected Populations and disability inclusion will remain at the core of UNICEF's response. Throughout its interventions, UNICEF will leverage safe engagement with women-led organisations and young people.

**Supplies and logistics:** prepositioned supplies in warehouses throughout the country facilitated an initial response, with over 2500 Metric Tonnes of medical, WASH and nutrition supplies distributed since mid-April. The security situation including risk of looting, as well as fuel and cash shortages, limit access to warehouses and the dispatching and replenishing of supplies. With the central warehouse under threat, two rounds of trucks worth US\$ 3 million were successfully dispatched from Khartoum to Madani. UNICEF continues to explore alternative entry points and ways of delivering aid to and within Sudan. UNICEF has received or is due to receive several shipments by air and sea to Port Sudan of lifesaving multisectoral programme supplies, including vaccines.

## Response in neighboring countries

UNICEF's teams in neighbouring countries are working with host governments and partners to provide immediate lifesaving response as people arrive, including right at the border crossings, like in Argeen and Qustol in Egypt. UNICEF is supporting the set-up of essential services at reception and transit centers. UNICEF response includes:

- Provision of safe **water** through water trucking, water treatment, digging and repair of boreholes, sanitation facilities, hygiene items and NFI kits to meet refugees, returnees and host communities' needs.
- **Nutrition** outreach, screening and referral services for children under five suffering from SAM in health centers and mobile clinics, and provision of nutrition supplies.
- Provision of **health** screening referrals, vaccination, essential drugs and medical kits to ensure access to health care and services benefiting host, refugee and returnee populations.
- **Child Protection** and **GBV** prevention, mitigation and response, including mental health and psychosocial support, child friendly spaces, case management and referral to specialised services, family tracing and reunification, and supporting unaccompanied and separated children and prevention of childhood statelessness.
- **Education** services to ensure refugee, returnee and host community children and adolescents can access inclusive, quality education and learning opportunities in safe and protective environments.

In addition to this immediate response, further need assessments are underway while pre-positioning of stocks is prioritized in areas where road access will soon be challenged by the rainy season. The Sudan emergency regional response plan is preparing for an outflow of more than one million people, including 640,000 refugees and 204,000 refugee returnees by October 2023, including:

- 350,000 refugees to Egypt.
- 100,000 refugees, 5,000 returning refugees, 30,000 returning Chadian migrants and 3,000 third country nationals to Chad.
- 70,000 refugees amongst 124,000 host community population, and 15,000 returning refugees to Ethiopia.
- 60,000 refugees and up to 180,000 returning refugees to South Sudan.
- 10,000 refugees and 5,000 returning refugees to CAR as well as 10,000 impacted people from the host community.
- 20,000 refugees to Libya.
- Secondary movements are expected to Somalia and Kenya.



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*On 30 April 2023, 16-year-old Ikhrum, who was forced to flee her home in Sudan when her village was attacked and her house burnt down, sits in the shade of a tree, waiting for the distribution of non-food items by UNICEF and its partners in Kounfroun, Chad.*

## Funding needs

UNICEF needs US\$ 837.6 million throughout the year to continue providing life-saving assistance as per the revised [2023 Sudan Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\)](#). The appeal has increased by US\$253 million and plans to reach 11.9 million people, including 9.4 million children, out of 24.7 million people in need, including 13.6 million children. Out of this total, 8.9 million people, half of whom are children, are estimated to be in urgent need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, in addition to the pre-existing 15.8 million people in need. UNICEF's original HAC appeal for Sudan, however, was only 12 per cent funded as of mid-May. The cost of running operations in Sudan has also considerably increased due to access constraints and the new security situation on the ground.

UNICEF is currently reviewing HAC appeals for [CAR](#), [Chad](#), [Egypt](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Libya](#) and [South Sudan](#) to respond to the refugee and returnee outflow based on ongoing assessments on the ground. Immediate and initial funding needs include:

- **Egypt** US\$ 12.3 million to address needs at the border and broader needs in urban centres, with an overall target of 115,000 people.
- **Chad** US\$ 13.8 million to support the provision of health, nutrition, child protection, WASH and education services, including urgent supplies, with an overall target of 50,000 children in need.
- **South Sudan** US\$ 8.6 million to address immediate WASH, nutrition, child protection and health needs upon arrival and transit, with an overall target of 97,400 people, including 64,560 children.
- **CAR** US\$ 6.2 million for immediate response, with an overall target of 25,000 people.
- **Ethiopia** US\$ 9.3 million for integrated package of services for refugees, host communities and returnees, with an overall planning figure of 53,000 refugees, 87,000 host community individuals, and 20,000 returnees.
- **Libya** US\$ 2 million for preparedness.



On 24 May, mothers and children attend a mobile clinic organized by UNICEF and Patients Helping fund (PHF) in Silki locality, a hard-to-reach area in Kassala state, Sudan.

To ensure an immediate, efficient, and quality response to the urgent humanitarian needs in Sudan and neighbouring countries, UNICEF has already allocated \$2.3 million flexible Global Humanitarian Thematic Funding (GHTF) to Sudan, as well as additional funding to Egypt, South Sudan and to Chad.

For its response in Sudan and neighbouring countries, UNICEF is appealing for:

- **Flexibility in the use of existing funding and the conditionalities through which they can be implemented** to make sure we reach and support children in need with critical support.
- **Flexible, timely and unearmarked contributions, which are critical to enable UNICEF to promptly respond to current and increasing humanitarian needs**, and to ensure a principled response that is able to adapt based on emerging needs.
- **High level advocacy about the urgent need to meet the rights of every child**, the children of Sudan and its neighboring countries are the future of a stable, peaceful, productive, and prosperous Sudan. Ultimately, children in Sudan need peace.

As the assessment of needs are made available, UNICEF HAC appeals for each response will be updated accordingly online: [Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal | UNICEF](#)

**Without timely, flexible, resources, the most vulnerable and affected children, young people and families will suffer greater exposure to the impacts of the fighting in Sudan and limited access to critical services and protection.**

# For every child,

Whoever she is.

Wherever he lives.

Every child deserves a childhood.

A future.

A fair chance.

That is why UNICEF is there.

For each and every child.

Working day in and day out.

In more than 190 countries and territories.

Reaching the hardest to reach.

The furthest from help.

The most excluded.

It's why we stay to the end.

And never give up.