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Sudanese Refugees and IDPs Disproportionately Affected By Crisis

By Oritro Karim



Children are screened for malnutrition and provided with treatment at Elhmedia health centre, Rokoro, Central Darfur. Credit: UNICEF/Omar Tarig

UNITED NATIONS, Jul 3 2025 (IPS) -

Since the wake of the Sudanese Civil War in 2023, Sudan has faced a dire humanitarian crisis that has been marked by extreme violence, widespread civilian displacement, and an overwhelming lack of basic services in relation to the massive scale of needs. The latest reports from a host of United Nations (UN) organizations shed light on the rapid deterioration of living conditions for Sudanese internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

In March, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) issued its Global Displacement

Forecast Report, which detailed the projected trends in civilian movement for the remainder of the year. Sudan, which has been described as the world's most dire displacement crisis, accounts for nearly one-third of new global displacements this year. It is estimated that by the end of 2026, an additional 2.1 million Sudanese civilians will be internally displaced.

According to the latest Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) report from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of May 28, over 10 million civilians are currently internally displaced across all 18 states in Sudan. Roughly 7.7 million have been displaced since the wake of hostilities in April 2023 and have never returned home.

Additionally, IOM estimates that from June 26-29, approximately 3,260 households were displaced across several counties in the Bara locality of North Kordofan as a result of heightened violence. Over half of the displaced civilians reported were children under the age of 18-years old.

On June 29, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) released a situation report detailing the escalation of hostilities recorded in May. Renewed clashes between warring parties were reported in the West Kordofan, South Kordofan, Khartoum, and North Darfur states, spurring nearly 100,000 new internal displacement cases. West Kordofan was hit the hardest as brutal clashes in the areas surrounding the An Nuhud and Al Khiwai towns drove roughly 60,415 people away from their homes.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), since April 2023, over 4 million Sudanese civilians have been forcefully displaced to neighbouring countries, with Egypt and Chad housing the largest numbers of refugees. In early April this year, UNHCR recorded numerous armed attacks on displacement camps in North Darfur, including the Zamzam and Abu Shouk shelters, which further spurred mass movements to Chad.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) states that since April, over 80,000 Sudanese refugees have crossed into Chad, with approximately 68,556 being concentrated in the Wadi Fira and Ennedi Est provinces. As of June, there has been a daily average of 1,400 Sudanese civilians crossing into Chad.

UNICEF reports that despite the new surges of heightened insecurity, May saw an overall reduction in displacement, with roughly 1.1 million civilians returning to their sites of origin, most being recorded in Al Jazira. However, the vast majority of these individuals still struggle with risks of violence and an overwhelming lack of essential resources, such as food, shelter, healthcare, and water and hygiene (WASH) services.

UNHCR interviewed roughly 6,810 of the refugees in Chad. They found that nearly 60 percent of them had been separated from their families, and 72 percent reported experiencing severe human rights violations, including physical and/or sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and forced recruitment.

Additionally, Sudanese refugees and IDPs alike face heightened risks of food insecurity. According to UNICEF, over 17,766 children in Sudan were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. In Uganda, the World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that Sudanese refugees are relying on 500 calories per day, only roughly a quarter of the daily needs per person. In Chad, nutritional support has been stretched to its limits and food rations are to be significantly reduced in the coming months unless additional funding is secured soon.

"This is a full-blown regional crisis that's playing out in countries that already have extreme levels of food insecurity and high levels of conflict," said Shaun Hughes, WFP's Emergency Coordinator for the Sudan Regional Crisis. "Millions of people who have fled Sudan depend wholly on support from WFP, but without additional funding we will be forced to make further cuts to food assistance. This will leave vulnerable families, and particularly children, at increasingly severe risk of hunger and malnutrition."

Due to limited access to WASH services and healthcare for the majority of Sudanese IDPs, there have been 23,000 new cases of cholera declared this year. With cumulative cases exceeding 73,000, UNICEF warns that the health situation in Sudan is projected to deteriorate significantly as the upcoming rainy season approaches.

According to UNHCR, of the Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries, children bear the brunt of the crisis. It is estimated that 66 percent of refugee children lack access to educational services and roughly 30 percent have sustained serious injuries.

"(My son's) hand got ripped off by a shrapnel bomb, some got stuck in his right eye. He arrived at the MSF clinic in (Chad's) Tine camp several weeks ago. Each time, doctors and nurses struggled to even access the wound as the child was traumatized and in immense pain," said the mother of Mahanat, an eleven-year-old Sudanese refugee who fled to Chad after an April attack on the Zamzam camp in Sudan, in an interview with MSF.

UNHCR states that only 14 percent of humanitarian needs for Sudanese refugees have been met, leaving thousands particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events, adverse health conditions, and violence. It is estimated that the average Sudanese refugee receives roughly 5 liters of water per day, which is about 4 times less than the global average per person.

"Again, we ask donors, the UN, and humanitarian organizations to start providing or scaling up support in terms of food, shelter, sanitation, and medical care, including mental health services," said Claire San Filippo, MSF's emergency coordinator for Sudan. "The current response is grossly insufficient."

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