

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	809
Land:	Sudan
Kilde:	The world Health Organization (WHO)
Titel:	High-level mission to Sudan reaffirms WHO commitment, calls for urgent action to address and end the extreme health and humanitarian crisis
Udgivet:	9. september 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	23. oktober 2024

High-level mission to Sudan reaffirms WHO commitment, calls for urgent action to address and end the extreme health and humanitarian crisis

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Regional Director Dr Hanan Balkhy yesterday concluded a two-day mission to Port Sudan, where they reaffirmed WHO's commitment to reaching all Sudanese in need and called on the international community to urgently act to end the extreme health and humanitarian crisis.

During their visit, Dr Tedros and Dr Balkhy met with Sudanese leaders, including Lt. Gen. Abdul Fatah Al-Burhan, Chairman of Sudan's Transitional Sovereignty Council; Deputy Chairman of Sudan's Sovereignty Council Dr Malik Agar; and Federal Minister of Health Dr Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim Awadallah. The discussions centered on the devastating impact of the ongoing conflict and the critical need for unhindered humanitarian access to ensure that life-saving aid reaches all those in need, regardless of their location.

"The international community has seemingly forgotten about Sudan and is paying little heed to the conflict tearing it apart, with serious repercussions for the region," Dr Tedros said during a press conference held today in Port Sudan. "That is why I have come to Sudan. I am here, with my sister Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Director, to meet with the wide range of partners involved in the response, and to call for urgent and scaled up action to provide more resources, more access to humanitarian aid, and more security to health workers and the patients they serve."

He added: "We are calling on the world to wake up and help Sudan out of the nightmare it is living through. ... We must not fail the people of Sudan."

Much of Sudan's health system has been devastated by the conflict, with more than 100 attacks on healthcare facilities in the over 500 days of conflict leading to significant casualties among health workers and patients. The insecurity has forced many health workers to flee with their families, worsening the shortage of medical staff. This exodus has further weakened the health system's ability to provide essential services, leaving many Sudanese without access to critical care.

The high-level WHO mission included a visit to a nutrition stabilization center supported by WHO, where Dr Tedros and Dr Balkhy saw firsthand the impact of the malnutrition crisis gripping Sudan. Currently, 3.6 million children are acutely malnourished, with 730 000 suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The ongoing conflict has exacerbated food insecurity, making it increasingly difficult to deliver essential nutrition and health services to vulnerable populations.

At an internally displaced persons camp, Dr Tedros and Dr Balkhy saw the difficult living conditions the people face. The camp's residents are struggling with a lack of food, medicine, and clean water, exposing them to heightened risk of disease outbreaks and other health threats. The daily risks include threat of gender-based violence, particularly against the estimated four million women and girls at risk due to the ongoing conflict.

Dr Balkhy emphasized the critical need to respect the sanctity of healthcare, in line with international humanitarian law. "Sudan's health infrastructure is in ruins, with many facilities destroyed, looted, or abandoned. To rebuild and stabilize the health system, there must be significant investment not only in restoring facilities but also in strengthening the health workforce," Dr Balkhy said. She linked this to the broader economic aspect, noting that without a functioning health system, the economic recovery and future stability of Sudan are at risk.

Following the mission, Dr Tedros and Dr Balkhy underscored the need for concerted international action – both to advance peace and provide the necessary short- and long-term aid. "Our priority is to ensure that every Sudanese in need receives the assistance they require, wherever they are in the country. This will only be possible through sustained peace, substantial investment in health infrastructure, and full, unimpeded access for humanitarian efforts across Sudan by whatever means needed, including both cross-line and cross-border from neighbouring countries.

"The only way forward is peace, for which the warring parties themselves have the greatest responsibility, with support from the international community. The world must not look away—this crisis demands our immediate and collective response."

The conflict has left some 25 million people — more than half of the country's population — in dire need of humanitarian aid. Of these, 14.7 million require urgent assistance for a range of life-saving support, for which the humanitarian sector has requested US\$ 2.7 billion, which is less than half of the funding required.

WHO's current funding gap for the Sudan health crisis is concerning, with only 24% received out of the total WHO ask, severely limiting the ability to address the crisis.

The high-level visit also included the inauguration of the new premises of WHO's office in Port Sudan, expanding WHO's ability to reach people affected by the crisis.