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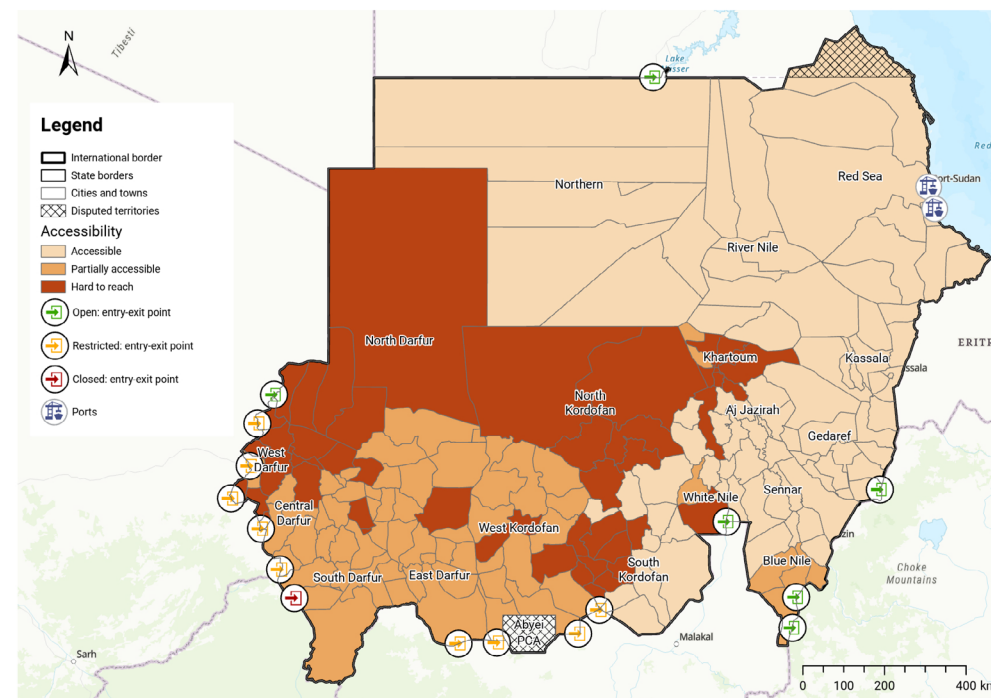
INTRODUCTION

Since the onset of war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023, humanitarian access in Sudan has persistently been a major challenge (KII 25/02/2024; ECHO 25/04/2024). Since April 2024, 1.7 million people have been denied assistance in the Darfur and Kordofan regions, as well as in Aj Jazirah and Khartoum states, as a result of humanitarian access impediments (OCHA 05/06/2024). Despite the growing scale of humanitarian needs, access impediments have been on the rise (TNH 29/06/2024). The situation is aggravated by an expanding conflict that has engulfed regions previously calm in 2023, such as Aj Jazirah state (TNH 29/05/2024; ICG 11/04/2024). Many of the hinderances to humanitarian access and aid flow are deliberate, perpetrated by the SAF, RSF, and other non-state armed groups (UN Women 31/05/2024; FP 28/05/2024; MSF 12/04/2024). Obstruction by parties to the conflict is often the result, as they arbitrarily deny assistance to civilians living in areas controlled by the opposing party, an act that may amount to war crimes (HRW 15/03/2024; KII 05/04/2024; Govt. US 29/01/2024). As a result, most of the Greater Darfur and Kordofan regions, Aj Jazirah state, and the capital Khartoum have been significantly cut off from assistance: the first degradation of access occurred in the first months of the war, the second in December 2023 (coinciding with the SAF's ending of crossline assistance in RSF-controlled areas), and the third in February 2024 (coinciding with the SAF's revocation of cross-border access from Adré) (OCHA 20/03/2024; HRW 15/03/2024).

By 5 May, there were reports of about 1,000 Sudanese refugees arriving daily at the Adré border crossing point in Chad, their primary reason for fleeing Sudan being lack of access to food (KII 05/05/2024). This influx comes in the context of SAF officials obstructing humanitarian organisations from delivering cross-border assistance from Adré or directly accessing Central, East, South, and West Darfur states through El Tina border crossing point. UN organisations require SAF approval to deliver directly to final destinations, instead of first transiting at El Fasher (KII 05/05/2024; Redress 01/03/2024). El Fasher is currently the epicentre of escalating conflict between the SAF, RSF, and their respective allies, rendering the city inaccessible and UN assistance to the rest of Darfur a challenge (TNH 29/05/2024).

The current pattern and SAF/RSF obstruction and denial of aid assistance are similar to past Sudanese crises, where aid flow and humanitarian access were tightly controlled by the Government and non-state groups and applied selectively (CSF 30/10/2023). Previous Sudanese Governments politicised and instrumentalised aid by denying access in order to deliberately subdue communities in Darfur and the now independent South Sudan (CSF 06/02/2024). In the

Map 1. Border crossing points and physical accessibility



Source: ACAPS using data from the Logistics Cluster (accessed 09/05/2024); OCHA HDX (accessed 09/05/2024)

1980s and throughout Operation Lifeline Sudan, the Government obstructed aid delivery into South Sudan, deliberately targeting and bombing humanitarian cargo and aid workers to deny aid delivery in some instances (USCRI 17/08/2000). In the current war, both parties continue to instrumentalise the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as in the case of Aj Jazirah, Khartoum, and the Greater Darfur and Kordofan regions.

Following the 5 March 2024 exchange of a note verbale between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and UN, which authorised the use of the El Tina-Mellit-El Fasher cross-border corridor, and a further agreement on 13 March, which permitted 60 UN trucks to transit via the

Adré-El Geneina-Zalingei-Nyala-Ed Deim corridor, effectively denying unimpeded assistance to affected populations in RSF-controlled areas, the RSF entered and captured Mellit locality on 14 April, undercutting assistance via Mellit and El Fasher. The current war on El Fasher is in part a further instrumentalisation of humanitarian assistance by the RSF, who are attempting to gain control over the only SAF-approved cross-border route from Chad. Humanitarian organisations are also hamstrung by the denial of missions to assess, monitor, and report on the humanitarian situation. Up until 5 May, UN personnel requests to travel from Chad to Jebel Marra and El Fasher – submitted on 5 April and 31 March – had received no response (KII 05/05/2024).

Foreign governments, intergovernmental entities, and humanitarian organisations have attempted to facilitate an agreement to cease hostilities and implement modalities for unimpeded humanitarian access and safe humanitarian corridors (Govt. US 23/02/2024; Sudan INGO 16/05/2023). An example is the Sudan Humanitarian Ceasefire Talks in Jeddah, facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States, and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development, which also represents the African Union (OCHA 29/10/2023; IGAD 27/10/2023). Up until the Humanitarian Country Team's access update of May 2024, none of these efforts have had any significant success in expanding humanitarian space or guaranteeing the safe and unimpeded passage of personnel and assistance (AJ 31/10/2023).

Still, limited humanitarian assistance is being delivered by mutual aid groups and community-based grassroot initiatives operating in zones of active combat, but, given resource and capacity constraints, this is often insufficient to meet needs (TNH 02/08/2023; HPN 11/10/2023). Mainstream aid response has also made some gains accessing populations in need, especially in RSF-controlled areas, by negotiating access under the leadership of the Humanitarian Country Team (WFP 05/04/2024; OCHA 25/04/2024). Despite these efforts, aid response remains limited as a result of insecurity, obstruction, and funding shortfalls, while needs are growing as the conflict becomes more protracted.

About this report

Aim: this report aims to highlight Sudan's current access situation, using a regional focus to account for regions' markedly different access situations.

Methodology: this report follows ACAPS's Global Access methodology, categorised into three pillars of access: people's access to humanitarian assistance; humanitarian responders' access to people in need; and physical and security constraints. This report relies on analysis of publicly available secondary sources and eight key informant resources and interviews.

Limitations: as a result of low permissibility and a complex access environment, information on Sudan is neither complete nor conclusive, as warfare zones are largely inaccessible and there is minimal public documentation and information reporting capacities. ACAPS, however, has received confidential documents on access from several sources, who remain anonymous here to protect their identities. This report does not track access events in the country, but instead highlights humanitarian access trends at a regional level in Sudan.

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NATIONAL OUTLOOK OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

The intensification of conflict and associated violence has led to the deterioration of security, posing barriers to humanitarian operations (OCHA 25/04/2024). Humanitarian access is constricted throughout much of Sudan because the parties to the conflict continue to arbitrarily deny access and assistance to civilians (IRC 12/04/2024). Persistent power shortages and communication blackouts continue to hinder humanitarian operations and programming by posing logistical obstacles (Africanews 29/04/2024). At the same time, fuel shortages have resulted in movement restrictions for crisis-affected populations, who are equally confronted with persistent communication blackouts caused by the RSF and SAF. Such blackouts hinder the flow of information and access to resources such as online banking, which remains the primary modality for remittances and cash-based programming (NRC 13/05/2024).

Crossline challenges

While SAF officials prefer aid delivery across multiple frontlines, especially between Port Sudan and El Fasher, insecurity and deliberate obstruction have posed barriers to this mode of delivery (Radio Dabanga 04/05/2024; Chatham House 14/03/2024). Two crossline routes were proposed for the delivery of aid from Port Sudan to El Fasher, North Darfur. The first, the northern route, commences in Port Sudan and traverses Ad Dabbah, Atbara, and Mellit before terminating in El Fasher (KII 25/02/2024; FEWS NET 12/04/2024; WFP 06/06/2024). The RSF rejected this route, complicating its use, and subsequently encircled El Fasher and captured Mellit in pursuit of the last SAF stronghold in the Greater Darfur region, leading to a spike in insecurity for aid convoys (OCHA 25/04/2024).

The alternative, southern route, which goes from Port Sudan through Kosti and El Obeid to El Fasher, has not been in use since December 2023 as a result of increased SAF and RSF military interference, insecurity, and the lack of approved crossline aid delivery permits (OCHA 25/04/2024; KII 05/05/2024). Typically, permissions for crossline aid movements require coordination between federal governments, state governments, and non-state groups, a process that is both cumbersome and time consuming (KII 01/05/2024). While moving aid cargo across multiple front lines, organisations rely on negotiations with state and non-state representatives to gain access. Criminality, more rampant in areas not under the control of parties to the conflict, is a further complicating factor, as criminal gangs extort aid convoys under the banner of 'protection fees' (KII 15/04/2024; Protection Cluster 15/04/2024). The RSF and various local militias have been reported to impose such fees at checkpoints in their areas of control. Moving consignments from Port Sudan to the Greater Darfur region takes up to six months by road (Logistics Cluster 11/06/2024; OCHA 25/04/2024; WFP 05/04/2024; KII 01/05/2025). Aid

organisations also only load consignments after getting approval from the Humanitarian Aid Coordination (HAC) and relevant state offices, otherwise a daily fee of USD 200 is incurred (KII 01/05/2024). En route, aid organisations encounter a plethora of armed individuals, who often claim and publicise on social media that they have protected aid convoys, further politicising the delivery humanitarian assistance (KII 01/05/2024; KII 15/04/2024; OCHA 25/04/2024).

Cross-border challenges

Aside from the El Tina border crossing from Chad to Darfur, other border openings – including at Wadi Halfa and Argin (from Egypt to Sudan's Northern state), El Galabat (from Ethiopia to Gedaref state), and Renk-Kosti (from South Sudan to White Nile state) – are still operational for people and commercial movements, but remain considerably difficult for aid organisations (WFP 19/06/2023; iMMAP 22/11/2023; KII 04/05/2024; Radio Dabanga 11/06/2024). Use of these border crossing points is constrained by legal barriers and blockages from both Sudan and the respective corresponding governments. The challenges associated with obtaining the relevant travel permits make these borders less effective for the timely delivery of aid (Logistics Cluster 11/06/2024; KII 05/04/2024). Entry into Sudan is strictly controlled, as Port Sudan remains the only authorised entry point for humanitarian personnel (KII 25/02/2024). On 7 March, however, the SAF announced its intention to open all border crossing points except the one at Adré. Humanitarian organisations have insisted that all border crossing points should be opened and unimpeded humanitarian access facilitated (Radio Dabanga 06/03/2024; KII 24/02/2024). Despite pledges to open border points, SAF directives require that aid organisations using the Renk-Kosti border crossing deliver assistance only to the SAF-controlled White Nile state, not to the inaccessible areas of the Greater Kordofan region (Sudan War Monitor 22/05/2024; KII 25/02/2024; FEWS NET 12/04/2024). At border crossing points, the threat of insecurity remains a concern, as both state and non-state stakeholders seek to benefit from aid transiting through their areas of control (UNFPA 27/05/2024; iMMAP 22/11/2023).

Widespread insecurity impedes aid access and delivery

As the conflict in Sudan has intensified, the security situation has deteriorated, with direct implications for humanitarian access and people in need (OCHA 25/04/2024). Throughout the war, the SAF and RSF have both failed to uphold their commitment to facilitate the safe passage of humanitarian assistance, with clashes and violence deterring humanitarian organisations from delivering on their mandate (UN 20/03/2024). Insecurity arises from the armed conflict, as the presence of mines and explosive ordnances have contaminated conflict hotspots (STC 10/04/2024; Radio Dabanga 06/05/2024; The New Arab 21/01/2024). The war has been characterised by aerial bombardments from SAF aircraft, unarmed aerial vehicles, and SAF and RSF artillery shells (Sudan War Monitor 12/01/2024). The indiscriminate nature of

such attacks has resulted in an increased risk of civilian and aid worker collateral damage (HRW 21/01/2024). By 18 April 2024, 21 aid workers had been reported as killed and 36 injured (both conservative estimates) since the war began in April 2023 (Protection Cluster 15/04/2024; OCHA/UNRC 11/12/2023). Throughout the war, humanitarian organisation assets – such as warehouses and compounds – have been targeted and looted by various armed groups, limiting service delivery (IASC 31/05/2024; UNHCR 15/08/2023).

Procedures designed to delay, deny, and obstruct humanitarian assistance

The warring parties impose multiple restrictions on humanitarian assistance within areas under their control. Both the SAF and RSF have instituted a string of procedures designed to impede humanitarian efforts. For instance, visa applications for INGO aid workers take up to three months to approve, invariably for a single-entry visa with a duration of two–three months. Only UN organisations are granted multiple entry visas, while INGOs grapple with restricted access (OCHA 15/05/2024; DEVEX 30/04/2024; TNH 29/06/2023). In May 2024, however, INGO visa approvals increased to 79, up from 17 in April, while UN staff visas reduced to 21, down from 25 in April (OCHA 05/06/2024). By 5 June, 279 of the total 330 visa applications submitted by humanitarian organisations had been approved since April 2023. Only one has been rejected, however, the remaining are still pending approval (OCHA 05/06/2024).

Alongside visa limitations, approvals for the movement of humanitarian convoys are also delayed (OCHA 25/04/2024). On 5 and 13 March, the MFA issued two notes verbales: the first outlined the travel route from Port Sudan to El Fasher through Atbara and Ad Dabbah, and the second permitted the special entry of a maximum of 60 trucks from Adré into West Darfur (KII 05/05/2024; OCHA 20/03/2024). The status of personnel movements was missing from the two notes, however, as the MFA directives only permitted the movement of cargo (KII 05/05/2024). In response, the UN submitted a note verbale on 31 March requesting personnel movement, but, by 2 May, it was still yet to receive a response (KII 02/05/2024).

The growing influence of SAF military intelligence on HAC operations has resulted in a more cumbersome approval process for permits and led to delays in the deployment and delivery of humanitarian assistance (KII 05/04/2024). At the same time, in an attempt to consolidate influence over aid in areas under its control, the RSF established an alternative aid coordination platform on 11 August 2023, called Sudan Aid Relief and Humanitarian Operations (SARHO) (USAID 18/08/2023; Insecurity Insight 21/09/2023). In areas controlled by the RSF, such as the Greater Darfur region and parts of Khartoum, SARHO is poised to take over HAC processes, piling on more directives for humanitarian organisations, including new registration and submission of travel permit requests to SARHO, further undermining humanitarian access (OCHA 15/05/2024; Insecurity Insight 21/09/2023). The SAF and RSF have both increasingly interfered with humanitarian operations, including by demanding to be

included in procurement processes and attempting to influence aid worker recruitment processes and lists of those in need (OCHA 15/05/2024; KII 05/04/2024). Such interferences have raised concerns around potential aid diversion by both the RSF and SAF (OCHA 15/05/2024).

THE SUBREGIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONTEXT

Given the scale and complexity of the war in Sudan, much of the country's population continues to grapple with the inadequate response to the scale of need (IRC 12/04/2024). Despite a general upward trend in humanitarian needs throughout the country, the anticipated level of humanitarian assistance varies markedly according to the accessibility of the populations in need (OCHA 21/12/2023). The severity and intensity of the conflict in various regions, coupled with the type of armed group in control, continue to affect the level of humanitarian needs and access. For this reason, this report focuses on a subregional analysis of access in areas of active conflict.

Pillar one: people's access to humanitarian aid

Khartoum state

Clashes between the SAF and RSF in Khartoum state and specific cities – including Bahri, Khartoum city, and Omdurman – have continued since the war broke out in April 2023 (ACLED 16/02/2024). Armed confrontations have led to the damage of major infrastructure in Khartoum city, such as roads, healthcare institutions, and banks, inhibiting the population from accessing services (OHCHR 11/05/2023; ICRC 05/05/2023). Around 100,000 people in Khartoum state received no humanitarian assistance between March–April 2024 (OCHA 05/06/2024). Khartoum city is a major urban centre and, as the RSF and SAF continue to use heavy weaponry such as aerial bombardments and mortar shells, civilians are inevitably caught in the crossfire (ACLED 14/04/2024; DRC 04/04/2024). In February 2024, a widespread communication and internet blackout, including in Khartoum city, cut off millions from accessing communication services (Islamic Relief 01/03/2024). Consequently, services reliant on communication services – such as money transfers and access to cash-based programming – were disrupted (TNH 04/03/2024). Khartoum International Airport has remained closed since 15 April 2023, and the Sudanese Civil Air Authority's subsequent decision to close Sudanese airspace resulted in limited transport options for people and goods in and out of Khartoum state (Xinhua 16/08/2023).

Aj Jazirah state

Aj Jazirah was previously a hub for humanitarian organisations, as IDPs displaced from across the country – particularly Khartoum – settled in the state (OCHA 18/12/2023; IOM 04/01/2024). By 15 April 2024, however, an estimated 626,345 people had been displaced from Aj Jazirah to other states, including Kassala and Gedaref, as a result of the war (IOM 15/04/2024; MSF 15/01/2024). Despite the scale of displacement, people's movement to areas perceived as safer has been constrained by a state-wide curfew between 18:00–06:00hrs imposed by state entities since 15 December 2023 (OCHA 18/12/2023). A severe fuel shortage is also compounding people's lack of access to services and further depriving them of the ability to move (Firstpost 06/03/2024). As for the population displaced internally within Aj Jazirah, access to basic services – such as healthcare, food, water, and other resources – is constrained because of limited humanitarian assistance (IOM 29/02/2024). During the RSF incursion in December 2023, civilians were blocked from leaving Aj Jazirah, and in some cases were forced to return (Protection Cluster 25/12/2023). At the same time, roads out of Al Hasahisa, Tambul, and Wad Madani have been blocked, resulting in a lack of freedom of movement for civilians (Protection Cluster 25/12/2023).

Greater Kordofan region

In North Kordofan, much of the population has been deprived of humanitarian assistance and access to services as a result of armed confrontations (IOM 30/04/2024). Since 2023, North Kordofan's El Obeid city has intermittently experienced siege-like conditions, affecting the movement of people and goods in the state (Radio Dabanga 29/04/2024). On 19 May, the RSF announced its control over Um Rawaba locality. During the takeover, the RSF laid a siege to Er Rahmaniya village, north of Um Rawaba, depriving the population of services and assistance (Radio Dabanga 20/05/2024). Persistent clashes between the SAF and RSF continue to disrupt trade and access to services in the state (ST 07/12/2023; IOM 30/04/2024). Two transnational roads traverse North Kordofan, linking Khartoum to states in the west of the country. Violence in Khartoum and North Kordofan hinder the safe passage of people and humanitarian assistance, as these roads are commonly used by the RSF as supply lines (ST 28/03/2024).

The war and limited access to humanitarian aid are causing South Kordofan to experience elevated humanitarian needs (OCHA 22/08/2023). Diminishing food stocks and medical resources, alongside a continuing internet and communications blackout, have limited people's ability to access services (OCHA 25/08/2023; REACH 29/04/2024). An assessment of priority needs in South Kordofan identified food and health as the most urgent needs (REACH 29/04/2024). As Sudan's health sector has collapsed, limited access to reproductive healthcare has posed a challenge, particularly for women and girls who have been sexually assaulted (allegedly) by the RSF (SIHA Network 22/03/2024).

Greater Darfur region

Humanitarian needs in Greater Darfur are high as a result of multiple crises, including conflict, food insecurity, displacement, protection, and a worsening healthcare situation. By 5 June, around 608,500 people in the Greater Darfur region had received no humanitarian assistance (OCHA 05/06/2024). Prior to late March, people in Greater Darfur had no access to humanitarian assistance for months (WFP 05/04/2024). Similarly, by 19 September 2023, an assessment revealed that West Darfur had not received any form of assistance in the month prior to the assessment (REACH 23/11/2023).

Alongside limited assistance, continuing clashes between the SAF and RSF in North Darfur, particularly in El Fasher, continue to pose challenges to people's access to humanitarian assistance and services (OCHA/UNRC 15/05/2024; IOM 06/06/2024). Up until 23 May, only El Fasher's South Hospital remained functional. Patient numbers at South Hospital were increasing, however, as a result of violence in the city, but the hospital only had ten days' worth of medical supplies available at the time (OCHA 23/05/2024). Prior to the escalation of violence in May 2024, between the SAF, RSF, and allied militias, El Fasher already had 800,000 IDPs displaced from across the five states of Darfur and beyond (UNSG 15/05/2024).

Conflict-induced primary, secondary, and tertiary displacement in El Fasher away from residential areas, reception centres, and camps such as Zamzam and Abou Shouk IDP camps has been heightened by violence between the SAF and RSF (UNSG 13/05/2024; IGAD 15/05/2024). This is amid increasing food insecurity and disease, which are also not being adequately addressed (OCHA/UNRC 15/05/2024; CARE 15/05/2024).

Pillar two: humanitarian responders' access to people in need

Khartoum state

In Khartoum state, the SAF continues to deny humanitarian assistance in areas under RSF control, such as Khartoum city (KII 12/05/2024). The SAF's imposition of travel permits for both aid workers and supplies into Khartoum stands as a barrier to aid organisations delivering assistance to the state (MSF 14/11/2023). On 2 October 2023, the SAF banned MSF from bringing surgical kits into Khartoum on the pretext that RSF combatants should not benefit from medical interventions (MSF 14/11/2023). Consequently, civilians with conflict-related injuries or in need of surgery for other reasons – including maternity-related surgery – have been deprived of medical assistance (MSF 14/11/2023). The SAF has also imposed strict procedures for the movement of personnel and supplies, as well as delayed permits for aid workers and supplies; the RSF, likewise, in their areas of control, are increasingly imposing the receipt of letters prior to aid deliveries, occasionally requesting detailed operation plans, by humanitarian organisations operating in Khartoum (KII 12/05/2024). Such demands imply direct RSF interference in humanitarian programmes.

Greater Kordofan region

Despite humanitarian responders' readiness to deliver assistance in the Greater Kordofan region, aid delivery has been convoluted by the SAF's lack of commitment to allow both the crossline and cross-border movement of aid into the region (KII 12/05/2024; OCHA 15/05/2024). By 2 February, 31 trucks meant to deliver WFP food to Greater Kordofan and the White Nile and Aj Jazirah states had yet to be granted permission, remaining parked for three months (WFP 02/02/2024).

Similar challenges are faced by humanitarian organisations in South Kordofan. The presence of multiple armed groups claiming authority over various parts of the state has further complicated humanitarian access in the region (ACLED 15/03/2024). Such groups have imposed blockades and checkpoints on key roads in order to extort payment (REACH 29/04/2024). Aid in South and West Kordofan is made possible through cross-border aid movements from South Sudan through the Jaur border crossing point and Panakuach border checkpoint, but the SAF has only allowed aid to flow into White Nile state, which is under SAF control, through these crossing points (IMMAP 22/11/2023). On 4 May, the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement North/Abdulaziz Al Hilu (SPLM-N/AH) and the SAF reached an understanding to facilitate the delivery of aid into South Kordofan areas under SPLM-N/AH control, such as the Nuba mountains (ST 04/05/2024; Radio Dabanga 05/05/2024). On 21 May, however, accusations by both parties followed the breakdown of talks aimed at reaching an agreement around the delivery of humanitarian assistance (Sudan War Monitor 22/05/2024).

Greater Darfur region

Hurdles imposed by the SAF and its aligned institutions have delayed and obstructed aid in the Greater Darfur region, persistently hindering access (MSF 08/02/2024). Even though the RSF maintains control of the Darfur states, its attempts to coordinate aid have been complicated by the fact that the UN only recognises the SAF as the country's decision-making authority, including for areas under RSF control (ICG 23/05/2024; TNH 29/06/2023; ACLED 12/01/2024). Decisions around aid coordination and negotiations with officials are deliberated and determined in Port Sudan, where SAF leadership is based.

The SAF has denied cross-border aid delivery from Adré, Chad to Sudan, revoking permission on 6 February (WFP 03/05/2024; Reuters 27/02/2024). As stipulated by the SAF, all aid operations through Adré remain suspended. On 13 March, however, a note verbale issued by the MFA did allow 60 trucks (2,423MT) of aid in from Adré (OCHA 25/03/2024; KII 05/05/2024). Humanitarian organisations, including UN organisations, have called on MFA officials and the SAF to allow more cross-border aid delivery through Adré, as there is a lot of pre-positioned aid cargo there, but the SAF has not agreed (KII 05/05/2024). The MFA's suspension of the Adré crossing point is seen as a deliberate attempt to deny aid to RSF-controlled parts of Greater Darfur, where, by February, only minimal humanitarian assistance was arriving (Reuters 27/02/2024; Govt. US 23/02/2024).

Instead, the SAF prefers the El Tina checkpoint, as that area of North Darfur is controlled by allied militias. By 5 May, 23 trucks containing 911MT of cargo had arrived in the Darfur region through the El Tina crossing point since the MFA's approval of that route through a note verbale on 5 March. A further 21 trucks (1,024MT) were delayed by worsening insecurity along the El Tina-El Fasher route, while four trucks (104MT) had been delayed by the refusal of permits by SAF-aligned officials (KII 05/05/2024). The road network between El Tina and the other Darfur states is, however, unsuitable for delivering aid, as it is costly in terms of fuel consumption and ridden with insecurity, leading to further delays, and will be impassable during the upcoming rainy season (KII 02/05/2024; FEWS NET 20/03/2024).

A further challenge to the delivery of aid through El Tina is the lack of availability of trucks with the capacity to move aid cargo at the desired volume (KII 05/05/2024). The MFA indicated that the RSF was using the Adré border crossing as its supply line, but reports have suggested that the revocation was partly a ploy to deny legitimising RSF activities in the Greater Darfur region through the facilitation of aid (VOA 03/05/2024 and 25/02/2024; KII 02/05/2025). The UN and several humanitarian organisations have repeatedly called on both the SAF and RSF to facilitate unhindered access throughout Sudan, including the use of the Adré crossing point (UNSG 15/04/2024).

Interference by SAF officials has also impeded crossline aid delivery into the Greater Darfur region from Port Sudan. Between April–May, 13 trucks (475MT) headed to Greater Darfur were delayed by SAF officials at Ad Dabbah on the northern route. The SAF officials demanded updated travel permits before allowing the trucks to proceed to El Fasher (KII 05/05/2024). Similarly, in March, 22 trucks (976MT) headed to El Fasher and Nyala were delayed in Port Sudan because of HAC permit delays. By 5 May, only 15 trucks (559MT) had arrived to El Fasher IDP camps (Zamzam, Abou Shouk and Dar Al Salam) and East Darfur (KII 05/05/2024).

Aid access is still very much politicised and instrumentalised by Sudan's warring parties. Given the severity of the humanitarian situation and the limited delivery of humanitarian assistance in the Greater Darfur region, further aggravated by political obstructions, perceptions around principled, neutral, and impartial humanitarian assistance are being challenged (KII 01/05/2024; TNH 06/10/2023).

Increasingly, politically driven interferences in the Greater Darfur region – such as denying access to RSF-controlled areas, roadblocks, and checkpoints – pose significant hinderances to humanitarian organisations' access to people in need (USAID 13/02/2024; Protection Cluster 15/04/2024). On the other hand, the RSF has set up an impounding yard in Mellit town – situated on the outskirts of El Fasher – to inspect aid delivery trucks and convoys going into El Fasher, introducing more delays and red tape (KII 05/04/2024; KII 02/05/2024). At the Barsa checkpoint in North Darfur, impounded trucks are required to pay SDG 500,000 (more than USD 300) per day for parking and are sometimes held in RSF yards for up to 14 days (KII 15/04/2024). Still, before the RSF took over Mellit, SAF officials had directed all aid convoys going into the Greater Darfur region from El Tina to take a 600km detour to Mellit and El Fasher instead of distributing directly to other Darfur states (ST 14/04/2024; KII 05/05/2024).

Pillar three: security and physical constraints

Khartoum state

Continued armed violence in Khartoum has led to a cascade of security and logistical challenges for aid organisations and workers. Armed violence by warring parties and the lack of safe humanitarian corridors for aid operations continue to be a hinderance (ICRC 10/12/2023). In 2023, three ceasefires were negotiated between the SAF and RSF, on 4 May, 11 May, and 18 June, to allow the passage of aid and movement of people to safer areas (AJ 17/06/2023). On all occasions, however, neither party observed the truce (OCHA 28/05/2023). Aid workers, including community-led response groups, continue to face threats from the insecurity, as they are targeted by both the RSF and SAF (HRW 12/04/2024; AJ 26/11/2023). On 26 April, an aid worker associated with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was killed while working in Khartoum, an indication of how security has deteriorated in the state (IFRC 26/04/2024). Continued SAF and RSF military operations in Khartoum since the war began have led to a continuous state of violence and destruction in the state. With no SAF or RSF commitment to facilitate the safe passage of aid workers and assistance in Khartoum, few aid organisations continue to operate in the capital. In public spaces such as hospitals, armed groups have occupied medical facilities or openly displayed their weapons, leading to occasional misfires and the injuring of civilians and hospital staff (KII 01/05/2024).

Aj Jazirah state

Intensified conflict between the SAF, RSF, and allied forces in Aj Jazirah since 15 December 2023 has resulted in the shrinking of humanitarian space (IRC 16/12/2023). Aid organisations stationed in Aj Jazirah prior to the violence spilling over were forced to suspend operations and relocate staff as insecurity worsened (OCHA 16/12/2023). On 5 June 2024, the RSF targeted the village of Wad al Noura with shells, killing more than 100 civilians (AJ 06/06/2024). Prior to the war's expansion into Aj Jazirah, there were 57 humanitarian organisations operating in the state (OCHA 18/12/2023). By 24 March, only seven organisations remained (OCHA 24/03/2024). This represents an almost 90% decline in humanitarian organisations at a time when needs are increasing exponentially (UN News 03/02/2024). Humanitarian assets, such as a WFP warehouse containing 2,500MT of food, were also looted after the RSF gained control of the state (WFP 28/12/2023).

Greater Kordofan region

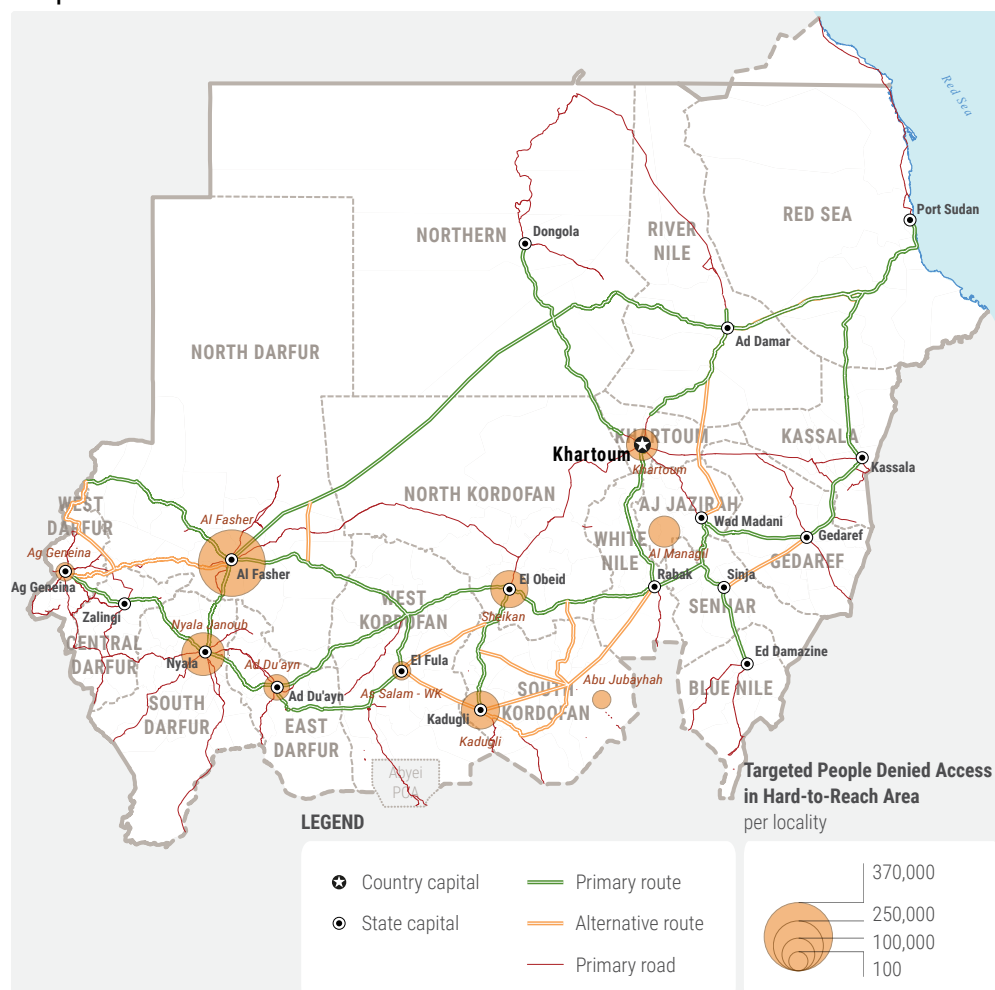
Key towns in the Greater Kordofan region – including Dilling and Kadugli in South Kordofan, El Obeid and Um Rawaba in North Kordofan, and Babanusa in West Kordofan – are experiencing active violence, as the RSF and SAF contest control of these areas (ACLED 11/08/2023). An assessment of conflict-affected towns in South Kordofan identified insecurity as the main barrier to access (REACH 29/04/2024). By 1 September 2023, stray bullets hitting humanitarian compounds in Kadugli had been reported (OCHA 22/08/2023; STC 01/09/2023). While no aid worker injuries were recorded, humanitarian organisations subsequently limited their activities in light of the prevailing security situation (STC 01/09/2023; OCHA 22/08/2023). In Babanusa, West Kordofan, by 6 May 2024, the SAF had intensified its aerial bombardment of RSF positions and the RSF had carried out retaliatory attacks, shelling SAF military headquarters. Both the RSF and SAF continue to shelter within civilian populations, aggravating the risk to civilians (Sudan War Monitor 06/05/2024). In view of the limited humanitarian assistance, South Kordofan's susceptibility to flooding, and projected above-average rainfall, needs are likely to increase with continued constraint to humanitarian access (Mercy Corps 20/03/2024; FEWS NET 30/07/2021).

Greater Darfur region

The widespread use of violence – especially in conflict hotspots such as Nyala in South Darfur, El Geneina in West Darfur, and El Fasher in North Darfur more recently – has been an obstacle to aid access in the Greater Darfur region (OCHA 12/05/2024; ACLED 01/12/2023). Frequent use of explosives and armed violence has posed a threat to the safety of both aid workers and the population. On 25 May, El Fasher's South Hospital was hit by mortar fire, killing two patients and injuring eight others. On 8 June, the RSF stormed South Hospital, shooting indiscriminately, looting, and even stealing an ambulance (MSF X 10/06/2024; UN News 10/06/2024). On 19 May, the Saudi Maternity Hospital was also hit, revealing a pattern of the targeting of medical facilities in El Fasher (MSF 28/05/2024). Up until 28 May, around 145 people had lost their lives as a result of injuries sustained during SAF-RSF confrontations in El Fasher (MSF 28/05/2024). Criminal gang elements and allied militia groups without a clear command structure also continue to perpetrate attacks on populations, including physical assaults, looting, and killings. Humanitarian workers have also sustained injuries and death. On 2 May, two aid workers with the International Committee of the Red Cross were killed in South Darfur and others injured in the course of their work (ICRC 02/05/2025). In yet another case of indiscriminate bombardment by the warring parties, an MSF staff member was killed on 25 May by a shell (MSF 28/05/2024; Protection Cluster 15/04/2024).

ANNEX

Map 2. Access routes



Source: OCHA (05/06/2024)