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MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières (Author)

Desperate situation for people fleeing Zamzam camp in Sudan

Following the Rapid Support Forces' (RSF) large-scale [ground offensive](#) on Zamzam camp that started on 11 April, hundreds of thousands of people have joined the communities already [besieged](#) and deprived of lifesaving aid in El Fasher, the neighbouring capital city of North Darfur, [Sudan](#). 25,000 more people reached Tawila, further west, where overwhelmed Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) teams are currently expanding activities to cope with the most pressing medical needs.

We are making an urgent appeal to put an end to the siege and the atrocities, to deliver humanitarian aid, including by airdropping food and medicines to El Fasher if necessary, and to allow those who wish to flee to do so safely.

The RSF and their allied armed groups stormed Zamzam, Sudan's largest displacement camp, which used to host at least 500,000 people near El Fasher, after months of an increasingly tight siege on the area. By 16 April, the camp, by then largely destroyed, was reportedly under RSF control. The majority of people living in Zamzam are believed to have fled to El Fasher, where they remain trapped, out of reach of humanitarian aid and exposed to ongoing attacks and further mass violence.

While MSF teams in Tawila saw over 25,000 people arriving from Zamzam and nearby areas between 12 and 15 April, displaced people are now arriving more sporadically and at great risk for their lives along the way. Our teams set up a health post at the entrance of Tawila to provide the new arrivals with water and immediate nutritional and medical support. We refer critical cases to the local hospital where we have been working since last October. About 1,600 patients so far have required emergency outpatient services, mainly because of severe dehydration.

"We are treating children who were literally dying of thirst on their journeys. We have received so far over 170 people with gunshot and blast injuries and 40 per cent of them are women and girls," says Marion Ramstein, MSF project coordinator in Tawila. "People tell us that many injured and vulnerable people could not make the trip to Tawila and were left behind. Almost everyone we talk to said they lost at least one family member during the attack."

Horrific reports emerge from Zamzam camp, where hundreds of people are estimated to have been killed. Fighters were said to be going door-to-door, shooting people hiding in their homes and burning large parts of the camp. Casualties include eleven staff from the humanitarian organisation Relief International, which was running the only remaining clinic in the camp after [MSF suspended all its activities in Zamzam](#) in February due to escalating violence and blockades.

We urge the RSF and all armed groups in the area to spare and protect civilians and ensure that those who want to flee can do so without further harm. States and diplomatic actors must use their leverage to translate hollow statements into concrete actions. There have been repeated warnings from the UN and many observers about the risks of mass killings and ethnic violence in El Fasher and the surroundings displacement camps, mostly inhabited by people from the non-Arab Zaghawa and Fur ethnic groups, while most of the RSF fighters and their allies originate from Arab tribes.

After two years of a catastrophic war on people met by neglectful indifference, it remains inconceivable to simply resign ourselves to the current collective failure to provide vital assistance where it's most needed.

"A massive humanitarian response is needed, now more urgently than ever. If the roads to El Fasher are blocked, then air operations must be launched to bring food and medicines to the estimated one million people trapped there and being starved," Rasmane Kabore, MSF head of mission in Sudan. "A scaled-up response is also needed in Tawila, where some of the survivors are being received and local capacities are overwhelmed."

MSF and several other actors are launching emergency interventions in Tawila, but much more is needed in terms of water, food, medical care and shelter.

ecoi.net description:

North Darfur: Zamzam camp for displaced persons taken by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 16 April 2025; thousands of Zamzam's inhabitants have escaped to nearby towns or camps; according to reports,

hundreds of civilians, including humanitarian staff, have been killed by RSF fighters

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