

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	864
Land:	Sudan
Kilde:	OHCHR
Titel:	Sudan faces worsening humanitarian catastrophe as famine and conflict escalate: UN experts
Udgivet:	14. april 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. august 2025



Document #2124416

OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Author)

Sudan faces worsening humanitarian catastrophe as famine and conflict escalate: UN experts

GENEVA – As the conflict in Sudan reaches the two-year mark, UN human rights experts raised alarm that widespread starvation and a distressing surge in acute malnutrition are unfolding.

“Sudan is experiencing the most extreme hunger crisis globally,” the experts said. “Without immediate humanitarian intervention, hundreds of thousands could perish.”

Conflict-related famine, mass displacement and extreme violence and killings continue to devastate millions of people. 24.6 million people – about half the population – are experiencing acute food insecurity, with 638,000 facing catastrophic hunger, a record high.

Children continue to be caught in the relentless crossfire of aerial bombardments and shelling, suffering horrific casualties and enduring grave, lasting harm to their safety, education, and well-being.

The experts noted that the conflict has led to unprecedented displacement, with 8.6 million people internally displaced since the start of the conflict and nearly 4 million forced to flee across borders. Sudan’s displaced population has endured extreme suffering and chronic insecurity in their search for shelter with immense protection needs as the country’s ruinous war is approaching its third year.

“The displacement of farmers who can no longer cultivate their land has contributed to a vicious cycle of agricultural collapse, hunger, and

escalating violence due to competition and scarcity of resources,” the experts said. “As farms are destroyed, food supplies dwindle, pushing more people into famine.”

Sudan’s agricultural sector has suffered catastrophic losses, with two consecutive farming seasons under-utilised due to the conflict. Farmland has been destroyed, supply routes disrupted, and essential agricultural equipment looted. Two thirds of the population depend on agriculture for food and livelihoods and are in urgent need of support with essential resources before the planting seasons starts in June.

“Staple food prices remain exorbitant, with sorghum and wheat flour still over 100 per cent more expensive than in early 2024, putting food out of reach for millions,” the experts said.

The [IPC Famine Review Committee \(FRC\)](#) has confirmed famine in at least five areas, with projections indicating that five more areas will succumb to famine between December 2024 and May 2025. Seventeen other areas remain at high risk.

Recent funding cuts have led to the closure of a large number of emergency food kitchens. With the rainy season approaching, pre-positioning of aid is required. “Access to humanitarian aid has been systematically obstructed, with parties to the conflict deliberately blocking or looting essential supplies including health supplies,” the experts said.

They noted that local emergency responders have been targeted, exacerbating the suffering of already vulnerable groups of the population. “Human rights defenders working towards peace and documenting human rights violations – including sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls - which amounts to sexual slavery – have also been singled out and targeted by both warring parties,” they said.

In addition, the ongoing information blackout suggests that the situation may be far worse than what is currently being reported. “Internet access must be restored to facilitate the flow of information and document human rights violations,” the experts added.

“A climate of fear has gripped the residents of Khartoum, Al-Gazirah and Sennar states” the experts said. Since the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and allied militias have taken effective control of the capital on 26 March 2025, civilians have returned to find their homes destroyed and face severe shortages of water, food, and other basic necessities. We are concerned by reports of reprisal attacks and summary killings and executions by the SAF and their allies, who accuse civilians of collaborating with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Aid cuts have forced UN agencies and civil society organisations to scale

back operations, putting at risk continued assistance to millions of people.

“The international community, including the private sector, must unite in solidarity and increase its attention to the world’s largest humanitarian crisis,” the experts said.

They stressed the importance of alternative, safe aid routes and called on both warring parties to facilitate access to humanitarian assistance.

“Third party support for warring parties prolongs the conflict, fuels further violence and obstructs peace efforts. Ending such support is a crucial international obligation. “Without collective global action, Sudan’s humanitarian catastrophe will only worsen, with devastating consequences for millions of innocent civilians,” the experts said.

[Read the full statement.](#)

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ecoi.net description:

About half of the population is experiencing food insecurity and 638,000 people are living under famine-like conditions

Country:

Sudan

Source:

[OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (Author)

Published:

14 April 2025

Original link:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/sudan-faces-worsening-humanitarian-catastrophe-famine-and-conflict-escalate>

Document type:

Appeal or News Release

Language:

English

Available on ecoi.net since:

12 May 2025

Document ID:

2124416

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

