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2024

A YEAR IN REVIEW



A Sudanese displaced family sits at the entrance of their tent at an IDP gathering site in Kassala State, eastern Sudan. Photo: © UNHCR/S. Fadlallah

OVERVIEW

In 2024, the conflict in Sudan intensified and spread to more states resulting in further forced displacement and deepening the humanitarian crisis. The socio-economic situation in the country steadily declined, inflation rose, the currency lost in value and basic commodities were in short supply. Overall, the protection situation deteriorated sharply in 2024 while basic services like education and health care did not function optimally, and agricultural production and supply chains collapsed. The financial and banking systems faced severe disruptions, and cash shortage hampered daily transactions, complicating humanitarian operations. Unfortunately, several efforts by the international community and regional organisations to negotiate a settlement were unsuccessful to bring about an end to hostilities between the parties to the conflict.

The year started with renewed clashes in White Nile, Darfur, Kordofan and Khartoum States. In late January, the Adre border crossing – one of two entry points from Chad for inter-agency cross-border operations – was closed for the movement of humanitarian assistance, supplies and personnel. This closure prevented the humanitarian community from scaling up assistance and addressing the critical and growing needs of people in the Darfur and Kordofan States. In February, there was a nation-wide communications blackout lasting about six weeks, making communication with conflict-affected communities, forcibly displaced people, partners and staff challenging.



An Ethiopian refugee family completes registration in Village 8 in Al Fashaga, Gedaref State and shows their identity document. Photo: UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

On the one-year mark of the conflict on 15 April, an International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and Neighbouring Countries co-hosted by France, Germany and the European Union was held in Paris, France where more than 2 billion Euro were pledged by international donors to support civilian populations in Sudan and those who sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Also in April 2024, following escalating tensions since the start of the year, the siege of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur and seat of the regional Darfur government, began, causing further displacement within Sudan, towards neighbouring Chad and towards other countries. Aerial bombardments, indiscriminate shelling and the targeting of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and displacement sites resulted in deaths of civilians and humanitarian workers. This has further led to intermittent and permanent withdrawal of some humanitarian organisations working in the affected area.

In June 2024, the conflict spread towards Sennar State, cutting off road access from Port Sudan to White Nile and Blue Nile States and triggering significant displacement into neighbouring Gedaref and Kassala States. Displacement into the East continued into July following multiple attacks in Sennar State. In late July, vast areas of Kassala State were inundated by heavy rainfall, affecting recently arrived forcibly displaced people and leading to their emergency relocation from low-lying gathering sites. Many other areas in Sudan were also affected by the higher than usual annual rainfall. Roads became impassable and infrastructure like bridges collapsed, making access to people in need even more challenging. Cholera and other communicable disease outbreaks were declared in many areas of the country as a result.

In July 2024, the authorities issued directives to remove all foreign nationals from Sudan on grounds of alleged participation in the conflict. This led to the rounding up of groups of people including registered refugees and asylum-seekers. Advocacy with the authorities, in particular the Commission of Refugees and security agencies on the principles of non-refoulement and the civilian character of asylum resulted in procedures to allow for screening and separation of refugees and asylum-seekers.



Nasreldin and his nephew Abbas (centre) were displaced from eastern Al Jazirah State to Alsalamabi gathering site in Gedaref State in October 2024 hosted in. Photo: UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

In August, famine conditions were declared in Zamzam IDP camp in North Darfur with an estimated 26 million people at risk of famine in Darfur, Kordofan, Al Jazirah and Khartoum States. Also in August, the Adre border crossing point with Chad and Sudan was re-opened on a three-month rolling basis enabling humanitarian supplies, assistance and accompanying personnel to cross into Sudan to reach some of the most vulnerable and at-risk people in Sudan. However, impassable roads, damaged infrastructure, insecurity along routes and other bureaucratic impediments made the timely delivery of assistance to these hard-to-reach areas challenging.

Mid-October, fighting escalated in the eastern localities of Al Jazirah State with a reported 400,000 people displaced to neighbouring Gedaref, Kassala and River Nile States. Grave violations of International Humanitarian Law were reported including the indiscriminate killing of civilians and violence against women, children and older people. Initial assessments showed a high level of trauma and psychological distress among the forcibly displaced who have witnessed atrocities. Civilians were reportedly denied safe passage out of conflict areas and many people fled on foot, without any personal belongings, including civil documentation.

In November, the situation in Sennar State stabilised and road access to Blue Nile and White Nile States was restored, enabling humanitarian assistance to reach forcibly displaced people after several months. It was also observed that internally displaced people began returning to areas of origin in Sennar and Al Jazirah States from November onwards, although conditions of safety could not be guaranteed. To this end the Protection Cluster issued an “Aide Memoire: Protection Principles Related to IDP Durable Solutions including Returns to Areas of Origin or Habitual Residence” to guide authorities and the humanitarian community on minimum conditions and principles.

By the end of 2024, some 9 million people including about 265,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were forcibly displaced since April 2023 within Sudan. Another approximately 3 million people were already internally displaced prior to the start of the conflict. Over 3.2 million have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. By year-end, Sudan hosted close to 840,000 refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, with some 11,700 people seeking international protection newly registered.

The Office aligned itself to the changing dynamics, with a permanent presence in seven states, complemented by regular field missions and cross-border operations from Chad and South Sudan. Remote monitoring was in place in hard-to-reach areas to ensure a continued presence and oversight.

KEY FIGURES

In 2024, UNHCR provided protection services and assistance to over **837,000** refugees and asylum-seekers and over **650,000** internally displaced and host communities.



240,675 people received various **protection services**



89,965 identity documents were issued



1,756 people underwent **refugee status determination** procedures



767 refugees departed on **resettlement or complementary pathway solutions**



16,301 forcibly displaced people received **legal aid** services



37,065 people benefitted from **specialised prevention of violence** programmes



1.2 million health care **consultations** took place in refugee camp health centres



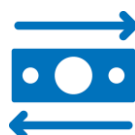
710,300 people had access to **potable water** in refugee camps



461,900 people received **non-food items**



41,520 households received **shelter** support



150,859 people received **cash assistance** for various purposes



23,736 people received
livelihoods support



22,684 children and
mothers benefitted from
supplementary nutrition
programmes



34 multi-purpose
community centres
functioning



60,419 refugee children
and young adults
benefitted from education
support and scholarships



Refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in Kassala State are temporarily accommodated at the Shagarab Reception Centre awaiting refugee status determination procedures. Photo: UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

IMPACT AREAS



Attaining favourable protection environments

Sudan is the fourth-largest refugee-hosting nation in Africa and despite the conflict, the country has maintained an open-door policy for people seeking international protection. By year-end, some **840,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were hosted in Sudan**. The majority refugees and asylum-seekers are from South Sudan (73.2%), followed by Eritreans (15.8%), and Ethiopians (8.3%).

Due to the conflict and negative perception of foreigners, the protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers was challenging during 2024. Increased advocacy with the authorities on the civilian character of asylum, refugee rights and non-refoulement principles resulted in a 70% decline in the number of arrests, detentions and deportations from the first to the second half of the year. Freedom of movement of refugees and asylum-seekers was limited with curfews, emergency laws and encampment policies in place.

Refugee status determination procedures took place for **1,756 asylum-seekers** in 2024 and over **750 refugees departed on resettlement** or complementary pathways. Over **16,300 forcibly displaced people received legal aid services**, like representation and counselling. Authorities and other stakeholders were trained on refugee protection and referrals.

During the year, **34 multi-purpose community centres** were operational providing a wide range of protection services and assistance to surrounding communities. Through these centres and community protection networks, access to protection and assistance was expanded throughout the country, serving refugees, IDPs and vulnerable host communities.



Realizing rights in safe environments

During the year, **23,736 displaced people** received livelihood support to engage in agricultural production, start-up businesses and join village savings and loan groups enabling financial and economic inclusion. Women reported increased self-confidence and empowerment. Some USD 5.4 million in **multi-purpose cash reached to close to 105,500 people**, a 31% increase from 2023 enhancing financial autonomy and enabling them to meet essential needs. Another 45,000 people benefitted from sector-specific cash assistance.



Following waves of violence in Sennar and Al Jazirah States, over a million people fled to the eastern states of Gedaref and Kassala where UNHCR and partners mobilized to provide emergency shelters. Photo: UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

Close to **462,000 vulnerable forcibly displaced people** (approximately 92,400 households) **received non-food item kits across Sudan**. The kits included sleeping mats, blankets, jerry cans, mosquito nets, plastic sheets, kitchen sets, and solar lamps. UNHCR and partners provided **shelter assistance to some 208,000 people** in Sudan. Flood mitigation measures, such as desilting canals and repairing footbridges protected communities from displacement due to flooding.

Over 1.2 million outpatient consultations were conducted for refugees and host communities at 39 UNHCR-supported primary health care facilities. Close to 22,700 children and mothers benefitted from supplementary nutrition programmes. Although investments in school repairs and teacher incentives were made, refugee school enrolment dropped to 16% from 21% in 2023. Overall, more than **710,300 people had access to potable water and sanitation services** and benefitted from hygiene promotion activities and hygiene kit distributions, reducing public health risks.



A South Sudanese refugee receives medical attention at the Al Redis 2 refugee camp clinic supported by UNHCR in White Nile State. Photo: UNHCR/Alejandra Romo



Empowering communities and achieving gender equality

During 2024, UNHCR **established and supported 14 organizations led by forcibly displaced people** empowering communities to provide complementary protection, referrals and emergency responses. Informal savings mechanisms empowered communities, mostly women, towards self-reliance and financial independence. Community-based informal savings mechanisms also enabled social cohesion and created safe spaces to raise awareness on gender specific themes. Inclusion of host community members helped alleviate tensions over scarce resources, reducing competition, promoting integration and strengthening communities' resilience.

In Sudan, violence against women and girls is under-reported because survivors do not access services due to fear of stigma, retaliation, and insecurity. This also affects their ability to receive timely support. The most common types of violence reported in the case management system were physical assault, intimate partner violence, early marriage and psychological abuse. During the year, UNHCR and its partners strengthened life-saving, survivor-centred response services addressing health, psychosocial support, legal assistance and made referrals to service providers.



Youth peacebuilders from Khor Al-Waral and Al-Jameya refugee camps and Al-Debaiba and Asola host communities, organized a friendly football tournament strengthening relationships. Photo: Youth Peacebuilders

Two-way communication with forcibly displaced people was strengthened, including by using community-based protection networks, outreach volunteers and **34 multi-purpose community centres** across Sudan. Displaced people were provided with updated information on available services and counselled on protection concerns. Complaint and feedback channels were in place and accessible to forcibly displaced and host communities.



Securing solutions

During the year, **767 refugees departed on resettlement or complementary pathway solutions**. However, the conflict prevented forcibly displaced people from achieving durable solutions within the country, with the number of displaced increasing throughout the year. Unfortunately, the situation in refugees' countries of origin also did not improve and non-return advisories were in place. Nevertheless, some refugees chose to return voluntarily and spontaneously albeit under adverse conditions, and although UNHCR did not facilitate these returns, the Office provided information to refugees and asylum-seekers on return conditions and counselled those wishing to return. Cross-border coordination and information sharing meetings with neighbouring countries took place regularly to update on the return conditions, analyse trends and develop common messages to enable this information sharing.

During the year, the national Durable Solutions Working Group co-chaired by UNHCR and UNDP was re-vitalized. UNHCR strengthened its engagement with partners which support solutions, economic self-reliance, inclusion and stabilization. In relatively stable states livelihood and other economic inclusion programmes were implemented directly benefitting 23,736 people.



Magda harvests ground nuts in Saraf Saaed forest in Gedaref State in November 2024. Her family was supported by UNHCR and the Forests National Corporation (FNC) in an agroforestry project Photo: UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

Special thanks to our donors including of unrestricted and regional funds in 2024

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Rahwa (centre) is a refugee from Ethiopia who volunteers at one of the child-friendly spaces in Um Rakuba camp. At the centre, she teaches the refugee children traditional songs and dance, allowing them to connect with their Ethiopian roots and socialize with each other. Photo: UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

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