



Sudan, Three Years on: NGOs Call for Intensified Action as the World's Largest Displacement Crisis Grows.

Three years into the brutal war in Sudan, tens of thousands of children, women, and men have been killed, starved, and maimed in what is today the world's largest and fastest-growing displacement crisis. With the humanitarian catastrophe in Sudan and its impacts across the region showing no signs of abating, NGOs working across the region are alarmed at the insufficient funding response and diplomatic attention that this conflict and the consequent regional crisis is receiving.

The last three years have seen **multiple and dramatic spillover effects in neighbouring countries**. These include **massive displacement, disease outbreaks, collapse of cross-border trade, food price inflation, security and protection threats, heightened intercommunal tension, and the overspill of conflict**. What is happening in Sudan must be considered and addressed as a regional crisis, and addressed accordingly.

To date, almost 4.5 million people have fled to neighbouring countries since April 2023, and the figures continue to increase, month-on-month. Arriving caseloads consistently exhibit **emergency levels of malnutrition, as well as war wounds and protection abuses** sustained en route. In several countries – Central Africa Republic, Chad, South Sudan - refugees are hosted in the poorest and most insecure regions of the country, without documentation and unable to access services or livelihood opportunities. The different caseloads are:

- **Egypt** is the largest host of Sudanese refugees in the region, having received over 1.5 million Sudanese nationals since the conflict began.
- **Chad** hosts over 917,000 refugees, plus almost 390,000 Chadian returnees from Sudan. Over the past year, Chad has received more refugees than during the previous two decades combined; over the past five months the majority have settled in the remote Ennedi Est province, which has the lowest humanitarian presence and funding in eastern Chad.
- **South Sudan** has received over 1.3 million people, of whom over 865,000 are returnees, and over 435,000 Sudanese. An additional 320,000 arrivals are projected by the end of 2026. Main reception points and transit centres are operating far beyond their intended capacity, with mounting pressure on water, health, education and protection services.
- **Libya**: UNHCR estimates that there are almost 555,000 refugees, though other credible estimates are as high as 750,000 due to large uncounted caseloads in Kufra district.
- **Central Africa Republic**: UNHCR are reporting a caseload of almost 42,000 (comprising over 35,000 Sudanese, and almost 7,000 returnees): almost 13,000 are living in hard-to-reach areas in Vakaga prefecture, characterised by deteriorating security issues following the reduced presence of MINUSCA (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR).

- **Ethiopia:** UNHCR are reporting an influx of over 66,000 (comprising over 45,000 Sudanese and over 21,000 returnees), but registration is stalled, and UNHCR and partner presence is highly constrained in border areas of Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz and Tigray.
- **Uganda:** UNHCR have reported the official registration of over 90,000 Sudanese refugees. However, the decision to remove prima facie refugee status in 2026 has raised concerns over increased vulnerability.

The influx of refugees and returnees has overwhelmed transit centres, refugee camps and settlement sites and heightened tensions with host communities across the region. Some of the **transit centres** are operating at up to 400% of capacity. Many **refugee camps and sites** have insufficient services to address the scale of the needs - as food and cash distributions have been drastically cut. And as **host communities** face rising food prices and competition over access to health and education services, land and other resources, their vulnerability heightens, raising tensions and the risk of violence.

Beyond the statistics, many face harrowing hardships.

As they flee from conflict, and while in transit, Sudanese men, women and children continue to face numerous protection violations and risks such as **human trafficking and smuggling**-related abuses; **kidnapping, ransom & extortion** - especially in desert corridors; **sexual violence** in transit where women and girls face rape and coercion; **family separation & child exploitation** with unaccompanied minors at heightened risk of trafficking and abuse; **death and physical abuse** through exposure to violence and dehydration.

Reports over the last three years reveal that limited funding for protection services in refugee hosting areas also exposes displaced populations to ongoing severe protection risks, including child labour and early marriage, gender-based violence, intercommunal violence, trafficking of women and girls, child soldier recruitment, and exposure to armed group violence in insecure border regions.

High and increasing levels of food and nutrition insecurity in neighbouring countries are **further threatened by donor funding cuts, resulting in drastic reductions to the size and regularity of food distributions in Chad, South Sudan and Uganda**. Without further funding, in-country food stocks and cash programmes will face serious shortfalls in Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda, from June.

The crisis has also contributed to **cross-border disease transmission**, notably a surge in **cholera** following the main displacement routes into **Chad** and **South Sudan**. In addition, severe disruption of health services and interruption of routine immunization programmes have also led to an increase in the spread of vaccine preventable diseases such as measles and diphtheria. Meanwhile cuts to water, sanitation and hygiene programmes have led to the spread of other preventable diseases such as hepatitis, malaria and dengue.

In most neighbouring countries (**CAR, Chad, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan**), just as in Sudan itself, humanitarian **access is hampered** by travel restrictions to remote border areas, poor road infrastructure and diminished airbridge capacities, exacerbated by the approaching rainy season.

Of further concern, there are **increasing incidents and risks of spillover of the conflict into neighbouring countries**, posing a significant risk for **regional destabilization**: These incidents include incursions of warring parties, establishment of military training camps, and movement of military personnel and supplies through neighbouring countries.

Neighbouring countries already faced **pre-existing and underfunded humanitarian crises** - crises which are further exacerbated by the Sudan conflict. A broader funding response, concomitant to the **humanitarian needs in these different countries** is urgently required.

In light of the above, and as Ministers, Donors and Aid Agencies gather in Berlin on 15 April, the 3-year mark of the war, **we urge Donors to:**

1. Develop a **coherent regional approach and response** to the different under-funded crises across the region, ensuring funding proportionate to the humanitarian needs - especially in the marginalised peripheral areas bordering Sudan.
2. Fully **finance the regional displacement crisis**. The Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan was only 25% funded at the end of 2025, and additional **flexible funding** is required in 2026. Neighbouring countries, and local host communities who have opened their borders to people fleeing Sudan must be financially supported in their hosting of displaced populations.
3. **Increase the proportion of overall funding channelled directly on a bilateral basis to INGOs and Local Actors**, who have stronger operational presence and robust partnerships in hard-to-reach areas. Alternatively, give preference to **NGO-led pooled funds** and **NGO consortia**, as well as **NGO-managed pipelines** for critical humanitarian supplies; provide such **humanitarian funding on a multi-year and flexible basis**. **Promote and fund flexible, area-based, trans-border programming on a multi-year basis**, addressing the enormous and unmet humanitarian needs in adjoining areas of neighbouring countries, allowing a more proportionate, equitable and coherent response.
4. Undertake **collective humanitarian diplomacy** to **urge governments to keep their borders open** for those fleeing the violence in Sudan, and **towards parties to the conflict, to guarantee humanitarian space, and safe and unfettered humanitarian access for aid actors, including for cross-border movements of staff and supplies**.
5. Undertake **high-level and collectively diplomatic engagement with actors engaged in fuelling the conflict in Sudan to desist from doing so with immediate effect**.

The Inter-Agency Working Group is a consortium of NGOs with regional presence and programmes across Eastern and Central Africa working to strengthen humanitarian and sustainable development outcomes across the region, through enhanced coordination, advocacy, technical expertise and active challenging of the broader aid community.