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Bachelor's Degree in Politics: Philosophy and Economics

International Relations

Humanitarian Response to the Sudan Conflict:
Addressing the Emergency

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Academic Year 2024/2025

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Abstract

Sudan's civil war, which began two years ago, in April 2023, has substantially aggravated humanitarian challenges at national, regional, and international levels. This thesis examines how internal dynamics in the political and military sphere have shaped the current conflict, which resulted in widespread humanitarian challenges such as mass displacement, food insecurity, health concerns, and gender-based violence, while spilling over into neighboring countries and altering global migration patterns. Using a structured approach, the thesis introduces firstly an excursus on the history of the region to underline the key events that led to the current conflict, followed by an examination of regional and international humanitarian responses, focusing on the role of IOM Egypt, with interviews of IOM mission officers. Document analysis of primary and secondary data, including reports, databases, first-hand interviews, and policy frameworks, emphasizes the prominence of the role of international organizations in crisis management. Therefore, findings underline the intersections of conflict and international aid, exhibiting how consequences cause a rippling effect in terms of long-term stability and humanitarian needs.

Introduction

Sudan is a country located in northeastern Africa, with a population of approximately 50 million people as of 2024. The most populated and largest city is Khartoum, the capital, which is also the political hub. Sudan borders the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, and, due to such geographical location, it has traditionally been a transit gateway for people on the move from the Horn and East Africa, as well as from Sub-Saharan regions. The territory is rich in resources, and the economy of the country depends on agriculture, pastoral livestock, and most importantly, on oil exports and gold¹.

The population of the country is characterized by immense diversity with various ethnic groups, and is home to numerous languages and accents, with the main widespread language being Arabic. The religious population was divided between Muslims and Christians, marking a division mostly regional, with the North being predominantly Muslim and the South Christian. This dynamic, however, changed in 2011, as the country split into Sudan and South Sudan. The majority of the Christian population is now in South Sudan, with approximately 97% of nationals in Sudan being Muslim².

The history of the nation is complicated and packed with tension and instability. The turbulent past began with the independence in 1956, after the termination of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, which established a period of unsolved tensions and divisions. Due to the diversity of the population, there have always been internal divisions between the North and the South. The North, mostly inhabited by Arabs and Muslims, has always faced dominance politically and increased wealth, while the South, characterized by African and Christian populations, encountered underdevelopment and marginalization. The multiple conflicts lived by the nation can be dated to the innate differences, which stem from disparities that fuel resentment.

¹ Wikipedia Contributors (2019). *Sudan*. [online] Wikipedia.

² Ibidem

In fact, the country faced two civil wars, the first from 1955 to 1972, which experienced the period of independence and instability given by the newfound self-determination and self-governance of the country, while the second from 1983 to 2005, which endured the Darfur conflict, a dispute between rebels and the militia, a horrible conflict ultimately condemned internationally as a genocide against non-Arab populations. This exhibits the impact of ethnic tensions and disputes over representation and resource control, which play a role in preventing the nation from developing. In 2011, after years of North-South tensions and clashes, South Sudan seceded, forming a new country separate from the innate differences that had created issues. However, the stability was short-lived, as new challenges arose, such as disputes over the demarcation of borders, but most specifically the resource sharing, as South Sudan was richer in resources, but the North was more powerful in terms of managing the revenues.

Throughout its history, Sudan has faced persistent political shifts, by witnessing changes in alliances, changes in military and political factions, and changes in power struggles. After its independence, the relevant and prominent political parties were constantly undermined by military interventions, where a series of military coups disrupted the establishment of democratic institutions to instead seek power through armed conflicts. This left the political sphere highly fragmented and unstable. Economically, the country withstood great challenges, despite its fertile land and abundance of natural resources like oil, minerals, and gold. This is given mainly by the secession of South Sudan, which specifically resulted in a loss of oil revenues and left the country in unemployment and poverty. The country, after decades of dire humanitarian situations, suffers from food insecurity, lack of healthcare and education systems, and displacement of people.

Since April 2023, the historical Sudanese complexity and cultural diversity have steeped the country in another rampant civil war, which has taken the lives of thousands of people and displaced over 12 million people. The conflict broke out in the early hours of the 15th of April between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). The SAF, the Sudanese military, is led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, whereas the RSF, a paramilitary group, is led by General Mohamed Hamda Dagalo, more commonly known as “Hemedti”, and the two opposing groups are battling over the control of the

state and its resources, highlighting the long history of political instability within the nation. The breakout of the conflict was long coming, as a result of the aforementioned tensions and instabilities that have built up over time.

From the humanitarian viewpoint, the brutal conflict has led to catastrophic health concerns, specifically famine, diseases, gender-based violence, torture, and arbitrary killings. Above all, the issues of displacement and migration greatly affect not only the people of Sudan but also neighboring countries and, possibly in the near future, the European Union, as well as a result of the movement of migratory flows escaping from war. Twelve million people have been internally displaced, with an estimated 3.5 million people already having crossed the borders to reach safety. The main countries refugees flee to are Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, and Libya, with an increasing number of people aiming for Mediterranean routes, which constitute an issue for migration impact in Europe, specifically Italy and Greece.

The EU's involvement in migration management has been increasingly implicated in externalization, which is the policy according to which the EU aims to prevent migration by outsourcing border controls to non-EU states. The EU ultimately aims to shift responsibility to keep migration flows outside of its borders in origin and transit areas such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, which causes further concerns of regional instability. The Sudanese conflict, therefore, constitutes pressing concerns not only for its people from the humanitarian standpoint but also for neighboring countries due to increasing migration pressure, considering the duality of the EU's policies regarding, on one hand, the establishment of legal migration routes between the Horn of Africa and Europe, while on the other hand, placing stricter measures of border control.

A crucial aspect of the ongoing crisis is the involvement of international organizations in terms of providing aid. Due to the migration and displacement crisis, a few of the most important IOs are the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These organizations provide specific displacement tracking, shelter, migration management, legal aid, and registration

through collaborating with local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other IOs, who all strive to provide funds and find alternatives for those who can no longer safely live in their home place. Particularly, IOM Egypt, as one of the countries home to most Sudanese refugees, places significant focus on technical cooperation on migration management, migration health and emergency, and post-crisis migration management, as well as attending to refugees and migrants upon their arrival in Egypt. Beyond IOs, multilateral and bilateral efforts from the European Union, United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, and the United States, mostly with funding for regional projects, contribute to addressing immediate needs, however, they focus on short-term needs rather than long-term stability goals.

This thesis seeks to explore the multifaceted impacts of Sudan's crisis through the lens of internal power struggles and their exacerbation of humanitarian challenges. The primary research question guiding this inquiry is: *How has the Sudanese crisis, shaped by internal power struggles, exacerbated humanitarian challenges regionally and internationally?* To address this question, the study examines the dynamics of the Sudanese civil war, including the historical development of the country and the humanitarian challenges that stem from the conflict, analyzing the response from international organizations in terms of aid. By contextualizing Sudan's current conflict within its historical trajectory and analyzing the interplay between internal dynamics and external responses, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Sudanese crisis and its far-reaching implications.

Beginning with the first chapter, a historical overview of the nation is provided to briefly mention how today's geopolitical situation was influenced by internal power struggles in the country, given by a series of unstable political and social influences. By examining the key events that shaped the country, such as the prolonged civil wars and inconsistent ruling systems, the roots of Sudan's fragility begin to be highlighted, setting the ground to understand what the origins of the current conflict are.

Secondly, the subsequent chapter will unpack the humanitarian dimension of the conflict through an analysis of reports from international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR.

The reports collect data and provide insights regarding the displacement crisis, which, as a result, gives rise to a series of humanitarian challenges, such as food insecurity, healthcare collapse, and civilian violence. Additionally, in order to provide insights on how the crisis has exerted an effect on humanitarian issues, an analysis of interviews from officers of the IOM mission to Egypt will be used to paint the broader picture for future consequences and future implications, with direct testimonies from workers involved with refugees and migrants on a daily basis.

Lastly, the third chapter will address the research question directly, delving into the migration issues that have emerged from the conflict. Sudan is not the only country currently influenced by migration, but the neighboring countries and even Europe are facing influxes of people fleeing from their homes. Global migration dynamics are impacted throughout, with countries experiencing challenges when it comes to providing access to humanitarian aid and addressing security, which stem from the irregular routes the migrants engage in. A comprehensive analysis, taking into consideration the history and current issues, will explore the multifaceted challenges of the nation and the broader humanitarian response from the international community, emphasizing the interplay between the past and the future.

Chapter 1 - Historical Context of the Conflict

1.1 Sudan's Independence

1.1.1 Independence from Anglo-Egyptian Condominium

January 1, 1956, marks the day when the first African territory administered by Britain was granted independence after World War II. This milestone marked the end of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, a joint British-Egyptian colonial administration established under the Treaty of 1899, paving the way for Sudan's transition to self-governance, a heightened sense of nationalism, and its pursuit of self-determination³. The establishment of the Condominium entailed an office of governor-general, appointed under British recommendation by the khedive of Egypt, a title derived from a Persian term for "lord" or "ruler"⁴. Although the governing role was theoretically shared, Britain had full control over Sudan, and the key figures, including governors and officials serving the Egyptian army, were customarily British.

The shared governance derived from the complicated legal and diplomatic issues that originated with Britain's conquest of the nation: on the one hand, Britain aimed to safeguard its imperial interests, while on the other hand, the Egyptian treasury bore the financial burden while significantly outnumbering British soldiers⁵. As a result, Sudan obtained joint sovereignty and separate political status to avoid Britain ceding Sudan fully to Egypt. The North and the South of the country responded differently to the joint rule. While the North faced modern improvements and a more pacific nature, the South faced resistance, which led to efforts to maintain peace and stability rather than striving for modernization⁶. The road to modernization was overall slow-moving. The country was heavily dependent on Egypt since the taxes were light, therefore, the government did not possess enough funds to emphasize development. A few services, including railways, telegraphs, and steamer services, advanced, which aimed to set the backbone for Sudan's economy – a cotton growing scheme.

³ Johnson, D. H. (2016). *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars: Old Wars and New Wars* (Expanded 3rd Edition). In *Cambridge University Press*. Boydell & Brewer.

⁴ McKenna, A. (n.d.). *Anglo-Egyptian Condominium* | *British-Egyptian history*. Encyclopedia Britannica.

⁵ Collins, R. (n.d.). *History of Sudan - The Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium* | *Britannica*.

⁶ Ibidem

The Sudanese population, disdained by the British and unanchored from their own traditions, customs, and religion, began fostering a sense of growing nationalism as a result of Egyptian encouragement upon raising Sudan's future status. As World War I broke out, Britain overshadowed Egypt's rule in Sudan by supporting the anti-Turkish and anti-Egyptian leader of the Ansar sect, Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi⁷. The posthumous son of Muhammad Ahmad, self-proclaimed Mahdi, who led the revolution in Sudan against the Turco-Egyptian and British rule in order to promote Islamic revival, set the foundations for future nationalistic movements. The diminished influence was further accentuated by the expulsion of all Egyptian soldiers in 1924, leaving the control of the internal administration entirely to Britain. Until the end of World War II, re-negotiations on behalf of Egypt took place, re-establishing the sovereignty over the nation⁸. Britain, however, objected and took into consideration the possibility of invoking the principle of self-determination to nurture sentiments of independence and counter Egypt's claims. This competition between the colonizing countries pushed towards nationalistic sentiments, with the country beginning to shape its political and cultural identity, however, there was no solid agenda.

The nationalist movement lacked mass participation, rather, it entailed fragmented beliefs and internal debates. The question of self-determination came after the diverging ideologies of Pan-Arab nationalism versus Sudanese nationalism: it was unclear whether nationalism meant a union with Egypt or growing apart towards a distinct ideology of Sudanese identity⁹. In the late 1930s, Sudanese elites established the Graduates' General Congress, which became the delegation to push for nationalism¹⁰. At first, the organization dealt with matters of educational and social activities, but sought support from Egypt to officially become the voice of Sudanese nationalism. Upon refusal of recognition, the Congress split into differing factions: a moderate majority, willing to work with the government, and a radical minority, which, under the leadership of Ismail al-Azhari, turned to Egypt for support¹¹. Ismail al-Azhari was instrumental in his

⁷ Johnson, D. H. (2016). *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars: Old Wars and New Wars* (Expanded 3rd Edition). In *Cambridge University Press*. Boydell & Brewer.

⁸ Ibidem

⁹ Ibidem

¹⁰ el Din Sabr, M. (n.d.). *Sudan - Nationalism, Independence, Unity* | *Britannica*.

¹¹ Ibidem

country's reaching independence, and in 1943, the first political party in Sudan was established, the *Ashiqqa* (Brothers), which would later be reformed as the National Unionist Party. As a response, the moderate majority formed the *Ummah* (Nation) Party under the influence of Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi. The religious elites hindered democratic participation by dominating the political sphere for decades and creating rivalry between the two sides¹².

Following the aspirations on behalf of the Sudanese citizens to participate in government decisions, Britain established an advisory council for the North, composed of 28 representatives and the governor-general, which later became a legislative council to include representation from the South of the country¹³. This allowed a change in policies of segregation between the Christian and Muslim populations. In 1952, a new Egyptian government gained power after the overthrow of King Faruq, which altered the political sphere by encouraging the principle of self-governance as well, while pushing to maintain Egyptian and North-Sudanese relations and create a union to reduce British influence¹⁴. The turning point came in 1953 when the Egyptian government granted self-governance for Sudan and self-determination within three years upon signing an agreement with Britain¹⁵. Elections followed soon after to establish a representative parliament, supported by Ismail al-Azhari with the slogan “Unity of the Nile Valley”, opposed by the *Ummah* Party. Al-Azhari was able to secure victory, and after altering his own campaign, which supported a union with Egypt that would impose unrest in the South, he declared Sudan independent on January 1, 1956.

1.1.2 North-South Tensions

The colonial period, in a way, separated Sudan. On the one hand, the North entailed Muslim Arab-speaking citizens, while on the other, the South was predominantly inhabited by Christian and African citizens¹⁶. The multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual nation naturally brought tensions. The historical roots of the tensions arise mainly due to two interpretations: 1) the divisions between the North and the South of the

¹² Ibidem

¹³ Ibidem

¹⁴ Collins, R. (n.d.). *History of Sudan - The Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium* | Britannica.

¹⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶ Searcy, K. (2019, June 10). *Sudan in Crisis* | Origins. Origins.

country depend on the century-long exploitations from the richer, ‘Arab’ North towards the slave-raided ‘African’ South; and 2) Imperialist meddling artificially split Sudan, which can be perceived as both ‘African’ and ‘Arab’, imposing no natural or historical division between the two regions¹⁷. Britain’s colonial “divide-and-rule”, or *divide et impera*, ideals segregated the South. The economic and social development was slow, modernization and liberalization were not a priority, and educational and health services were in the hands of Christian missionaries. The North, under Egyptian co-existence, placed power and authority into the hands of the people while inflicting a sense of distrust and conflict towards the different ethnicities¹⁸. The independence, instead of uniting the country, led to further division, leading to large-scale cultural, political, and social armed conflicts.

1.2 Overview of Sudan’s Civil Wars

1.2.1 First Civil War (1955-1972)

The tensions of Sudan’s differences ultimately culminated in the First Civil War in 1955. By unifying against the North, the South sought more self-governance after feeling disempowered. The breaking point arrived when southern Sudanese soldiers mutinied against the central government in Khartoum, the capital¹⁹. Throughout the 17-year period of war, the South sought autonomy and political representation, while the North attempted to maintain control over the territorial resources.

The conflict originated on August 18, when British Colonial soldiers from the South, the Equatoria Corps, were tasked with dispersing a crowd of protesters in the town of Torit (now part of South Sudan). The protesters, however, were sympathetic towards the soldiers, which led to the central government in Khartoum replacing them with troops from the North. This sparked outrage, and upon uniting, the southern soldiers killed 336 northerners. As a result, attention was brought to what had happened, inspiring similar revolts throughout Sudan and leading to a series of guerrilla wars since the South lacked

¹⁷ Johnson, D. H. (2016). *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars: Old Wars and New Wars* (Expanded 3rd Edition). In *Cambridge University Press*. Boydell & Brewer.

¹⁸ Searcy, K. (2019, June 10). *Sudan in Crisis | Origins*. Origins.

¹⁹ Sudanese American Physicians Association. (2023, December 7). *Sudan Civil War: A Deep Dive into History and Implications*. SAPA-USA

the appropriate resources to launch major attacks²⁰. As the fighting advanced, the southern Sudanese rebels divided into two groups. On the one hand, there was the Sudan African National Union (SANU), which was formed and led by William Deng, who was part of the Dinka ethnic group, while on the other hand, there was the Anya Nya, which was founded and led by Joseph Lagu, who was part of the Mahdi group²¹.

Overall, the war took the lives of around 500,000 civilians, mostly southerners, and came to a halt upon the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement²². A dialogue with the Sudanese central government proposed regional autonomy in order to end the hostilities taking place. The southern province would not cease to be separated *into Al-Istiwaiyyah* (Equatoria), *Bahr al-Ghazal*, and *Ali al-Nil* (Upper Nile). A separate legislature and executive body would manage the area's affairs, and the southern soldiers would be integrated into the central government's army and police²³. Although briefly, the South had achieved a sense of freedom and autonomy it so desperately sought, allowing it to manage its own internal affairs. The agreement was able to bring a period of relative peace, although the underlying causes of the tensions between the opposing factions failed to be addressed entirely.

1.2.2 Military Coup Era and Dictatorship (1969-1985)

Amidst the First Civil War, Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri, in 1969, led a successful coup d'état against the government of Ismail al-Azhari²⁴. The Colonel took advantage of the unstable and ineffective government to swiftly and bloodlessly overthrow the civilian regime. Under revolutionary ideals, he vowed to rebuild the nation, shaken by bloodshed and tensions. Firstly, Nimeiri proposed socialist-oriented economic policies and pan-Arab ties with Libya, Egypt, and Syria, however, the reforms sparked ideological differences with Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, and Nimeiri eventually turned to align with the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat²⁵. This change of alliance resulted in Sudan expelling

²⁰ Sudanese American Physicians Association. (2023, December 7). *Sudan Civil War: A Deep Dive into History and Implications*. SAPA-USA

²¹ Ibidem

²² el Din Sabr, M., & Collins, R. O. (n.d.). *Sudan - The Addis Ababa Agreement*. Encyclopedia Britannica

²³ Ibidem

²⁴ Joffe, L. (2009, June 4). *Obituary: Jaafar Nimeiri*. The Guardian; The Guardian

²⁵ Ibidem

Soviet military advisers and instead turned towards becoming a recipient of United States aid. Nimeiri's regime consisted of dissolving the parliament and banning political parties, to name himself commander-in-chief, as he aimed at modernizing the country and increasing authoritarianism. His reign was not stable, and multiple coup attempts took place, including a brief three-day communist rule in 1971 led by Babikr Awadallah, a short-lived Sudanese prime minister²⁶. Despite his initial ideals, Nimeiri's administration failed to stabilize the economy, and debt, hyperinflation, and famine spread around the country, while his controversial decisions shaped the social sphere.

Although Nimeiri was successful in ending the First Civil War by signing the Addis Ababa Agreement, the peace was short-lived, as the ruler's social policies brought unrest once again to the country. In fact, in 1983, the President introduced the Islamic Sharia laws, also known as the September Laws, which are traditions based on the scriptures of Islam²⁷. The laws entailed obsolescent and crude punishments, such as amputating the limbs of thieves, public flogging, or disposing into the Nile alcohol worth large amounts of money, and if anyone was caught consuming it, they would be punished by numerous lashes. This is particularly significant for the South, predominantly Christian, which was forced to live the same punishment as the northern Muslims, civilians.

Therefore, upon imposing the Sharia Laws and dissolving the southern government, annulling its autonomy, Nimeiri struck and prompted the start of the Second Civil War amongst an already fragile population. In 1985, the ruler Nimeiri was deposed after revolts, strikes, and dissent from the population, and his place was assumed by General Suwar al-Bhahab. Nimeiri, after being exiled to Egypt, was able to return to Sudan in 1999 due to an amnesty, where he tried to re-enter the political sphere by participating in the elections against Omar al-Bashir and lost²⁸. Although his legacy was extremely controversial, his death in 2009 was met with large crowds who attended his funeral and reflected on the years of his governance.

²⁶ Ibidem

²⁷ Ibidem

²⁸ Ibidem

1.2.3 Second Civil War (1983-2005)

Hostilities sparked once again after Nimeiri's ruling period shook political, economic, and social factors. A new key player emerged, the Sudan's People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), which arose from South Sudanese rebels led by John Garang²⁹. A series of key factors led to the outbreak of the second war, including a) ethnic differences, b) resource allocation, c) Sharia Law, d) marginalization, and e) armed rebellion³⁰. Once again, the religious and cultural divisions between the northern Muslims and southern Christians fueled friction, exacerbated by the fact that the southern regions were richer in resources but exploited by the northerners, which deepened the sense of underrepresentation, and with the imposition of Islamic laws, it all culminated in the SPLA/M escalating into a full, violent, civil war.

The ousting of the President in 1985 led to the rescinding of the 1983 decree he had previously put in place, as well as overturning past decisions with the attempt to reconcile the North and the South, followed by negotiations between the new central government, led by Sadiq al-Mahdi, and SPLA/M³¹. A few years later, in 1988, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), alongside the SPLA/M, agreed on a ceasefire and peace plan, as well as the cessation of military pacts with other countries, namely Egypt and Libya. Although the central government approved the plan, fighting continued in the 1990s as oil came into the picture and further shook the situation³². Oil was discovered in 1978; however, it wasn't until 1999 that it began being exported. This meant that the North had to fight to maintain control, while the South, where the oil was located, had to fight for recognition³³. While oil was supposed to bring great revenue both to the North and the South, it brought great disruptions to the economy. Agriculture took a step back from being the primary source of revenue, and Sudan started needing to import resources, which was expensive, and the exports were now the principal objective and main cause of war.

²⁹ Momodu, S. (2018, December 23). *Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005)*. BlackPast.

³⁰ Sudanese American Physicians Association. (2023, December 7). *Sudan Civil War: A Deep Dive into History and Implications*. SAPA-USA

³¹ Momodu, S. (2018, December 23). *Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005)*. BlackPast.

³² Ottaway, M., & El-Sadany, M. (2012). *SUDAN: From CoNFLICT To CoNFLICT*.

³³ Ibidem

The talks for peace to end the Civil War that was ongoing for two decades began after the agreement in Kenya in 2002, the Machakos Protocol. Negotiations and peace talks continued until 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed by the SPLA/M and the National Congress Party (NCP)³⁴. The agreement granted autonomy to the southern regions, and negotiations were facilitated by a number of countries, including the United Kingdom, Norway, the United States, Italy, and the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD). The accord aimed to delineate a fair sharing system of both power and oil revenue between the North and the South, representing a series of conflicts that started before the country's independence, throughout the First Civil War, the numerous coup d'états, and extensive fighting, which brought atrocities and immeasurable human rights violations, culminating with the requirement of holding a referendum for the people of the South of Sudan by the sixth year after the agreement was signed³⁵.

1.2.4 Darfur Conflict (2003-2004)

In 2003, yet another conflict broke out. Darfur, a region in the west of Sudan, bordering Chad, was inhabited mainly by black 'Africans', which posed as a target for the central government due to ethnic differences. In February, two rebel groups from Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), launched an attack against the Khartoum government by accusing oppression on their behalf, and as a response the government mobilized an Arab militia, the *Janjaweed*, 'devils on horseback', to stop the rebellion, which caused enormous humanitarian issues under the viewpoint of international law³⁶. The *Janjaweed* implemented inhumane tactics such as the 'scorched earth', which entailed a bombing campaign, and the air raids were followed by entering into villages and systematically murdering non-Arab civilians, looting, and accounts of gender-based violence³⁷. In the meantime, a large number of civilians began fleeing, leading to approximately 2,7 million displacements.

³⁴ Ottaway, M., & Hamzawy, A. (2011, January 4). *The Comprehensive Peace Agreement*. Carnegieendowment.org.

³⁵ Ibidem

³⁶ Holocaust Memorial Day Trust | *Life before the Genocide*. (2025). Hmd.org.uk.

³⁷ Ottaway, M., & El-Sadany, M. (2012). *SUDAN: From CoNFLICT To CoNFLICT*.

A peacekeeping mission entered into force upon the signing of the Abuja Peace Agreement in 2006 by the SPLM/A and Khartoum, which entailed a first step towards ending the violence. The mission was deployed by the African Union, to be later replaced by the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)³⁸. The international response to the conflict included economic sanctions on behalf of the United States, which had been in place since 1997, and between 2009 and 2010, the International Criminal Court (ICC) charged President al-Bashir with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide for the atrocities that took place³⁹.

In 2011, the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur was signed by Khartoum and the Liberation and Justice Movement, forming an alliance of ten rebel groups, with the aim of compensating the victims through funds, as well as more regional authority in terms of governance and power-sharing agreements⁴⁰. Darfur, however, continued to face violence, and not all parties signed the agreement, including the JEM, as the negotiated policies were not sufficient. In 2012, through UNAMID, the parties sat down once again to discuss and negotiate, and the result was the establishment of new states in Darfur. The new terms of the Doha Agreement now included Central Darfur, derived from West Darfur, East Darfur, derived from South Darfur, and North Darfur, which stayed as it was before⁴¹. Unfortunately, the implementation of the accord did not halt violence, and accounts of skirmishes between rebel groups still took place, counting around 300,000 deaths, alongside deteriorating humanitarian issues of internal displacement, kidnapping of international aid workers, and influxes of weapons and arms⁴².

1.2.5 Secession of South Sudan (2011)

2011 marked the year the youngest country in the world was born. As a result of a highly favored referendum, which originated from the CPA of 2005, Sudan split into two - Sudan and South Sudan. This secession marked a new era for vital ethnic and religious unity. The division of Sudan was bound to the destabilizing repercussions that arose from the numerous conflicts that plagued the country, finally ensuring the southerners the right to

³⁸ Ibidem

³⁹ International Criminal Court. (2019). *Darfur, Sudan*. Icc-Cpi.int

⁴⁰ Ottaway, M., & El-Sadany, M. (2012). *SUDAN: From CoNFLICT To CoNFLICT*.

⁴¹ Ibidem

⁴² Ibidem

self-determination. Despite the pride and the hope of having achieved independence, the two countries were bound to experience challenges, specifically from an economic point of view. Sudan's economy had always been highly dependent on oil, which was found in the South, and the division of the two nations, which entailed separate political, social, and economic regimes, would result in vulnerable disruptions. On the one hand, South Sudan possessed oil, but on the other hand, the major infrastructures (roads, electricity, sewers) were in Sudan, hindering the growth of the economy, and in addition, South Sudan lacked educated, trained workers, with a literacy rate of only 27%⁴³.

Another unresolved theme that caused issues upon the secession was the unclear demarcation of the borders. It was not exact where the North-South Sudan border would be, as the Technical Border Commission, which was tasked to demarcate the boundary within six months of the secession, never did so⁴⁴. The reason behind the neglect essentially stems from the fact that, from the national viewpoint, it was not relevant, however, the disputes were more pertinent to the local populations.

Overall, the secession of South Sudan marked a common goal towards centuries of wanting independence and wanting a separate entity to the North, however, the political and social sphere was far from being stable, with rudimentary health and education institutions. Despite the difficulties, the referendum to obtain independence reached an overwhelming 99% of positive votes, underlining the nationalistic need for self-governance and administration that arose from years of conflict and wars, which is the only consistency that ties the extremely different countries.

1.2.6 Omar al-Bashir Regime (1989-2019)

For 30 years, former military officer and politician Omar al-Bashir, who rose to power by leading a revolt to overthrow the elected government, ruled as Sudan's head of state until he was ousted through a coup d'état⁴⁵. Al-Bashir was able to rise to power through his military career, which began as he joined the army following his studies to fight

⁴³ Stephens, A. (2011, September). *FrontLines July/August 2017 | Archive - U.S. Agency for International Development*. 2012-2017.Usaid.gov

⁴⁴ Ottaway, M., & El-Sadany, M. (2012). *SUDAN: From CoNFLICT To CoNFLICT*

⁴⁵ Ingham, K. (2019). Omar al-Bashir | Biography & Facts. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

alongside Egypt against Israel, and advanced as he took a leading role with the SPLM/A in fighting rebels in the South of the country. He established an authoritarian, corrupt regime with military dominance, suppressing civil liberties.

Al-Bashir's rule solidified in 1989 when he led a coup against the country's government and proceeded to dissolve parliament, ban political parties, and implement measures of control on the press, where he emphasized the Islamification of the country⁴⁶. He was renamed as president in 1993 and confirmed his position once more in 1996 through elections, once again in 2000, and so forth, until 2019, when he was successfully removed from power. The elections were fraudulent, characterized by suppressing the opposition, manipulation, and corruption; either he was the only candidate, or the opposition would boycott the elections. Throughout his ruling regime, al-Bashir faced numerous conflicts and violence, and one of the sole instances of trying to rekindle peace and settle the disputes between the North and the South took place with the signing of the CPA, which took place due to international pressures.

Al-Bashir's rule took a turn with the Darfur conflict, where the *Janjaweed* he had established committed humanitarian crimes against the rebels who had started the revolt. Alongside the brutalities inflicted on the civilians, the President stopped international organizations from providing aid, which included food and medical supplies, and withstood UNAMID forces. As a result, in 2009, the prosecutor for the ICC issued an arrest warrant, the first arrest warrant for a sitting president, on the charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and, the following year, alleged genocide. The charge of genocide included the systemic killings of members of ethnic groups, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and inflicting physical destruction; the charge of crimes against humanity included murder, extermination, rape, torture, and forcible transfer; lastly, the charge of war crimes included attacks on civilians and pillaging towns⁴⁷.

In December 2018, al-Bashir began facing challenges to his rule, as political discontent, given by years of economic decline, autocratic governance, and brutal incidents of

⁴⁶ Ibidem

⁴⁷ BBC. (2019, August 14). Omar al-Bashir: Sudan's ousted president. *BBC News*.

violence, broke out in frustrated protests. Over time, the gatherings became larger and larger until they turned into large-scale marches against the government⁴⁸. By April, as al-Bashir still had no intentions of stepping down, protesters marched into the headquarters of the capital and stayed there for days. People were met with resistance and violence from the military, but kept their ground until, on the 11th, the head of state was overthrown and placed under arrest⁴⁹.

1.2.7 Military Coup (2021)

Following the ousting of al-Bashir in 2019, a transitional civilian government was established. It was, however, short-lived, as the year 2021 saw yet another coup d'état. Sudan has a history of military coups, counting about thirty-five of them: seventeen were impeded before they took place, twelve failed, and six were successful⁵⁰. Regime changes occur almost always by military coups in Sudan since the internalized governance system expects a militarized structure. In fact, the power of the military stems from their position as entrepreneurs in economic sectors. 80% of the resources are in the hands of the military, which allows competition in terms of power with the central government. From the political viewpoint, the military justifies obtaining power by framing the promise of democracy as a pretext to overthrow the ruler abusing his powers, which initially garners support from the public⁵¹. Despite the narrative, the democratic promises are hardly kept, instead, the perpetuating cycle of military and authoritarian rule is presented once again.

Behind the 2021 overthrow stood Sudan's general Adel Fattah al-Burhan, general of the Sudanese Armed Forces. The coup began with arrests of civilian members who took part in the transitional council, including the country's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who refused to give support for the coup⁵². The general took control of the state institutions and suspended the elements of the transitional government upon announcing a state of emergency, which sparked discontent among the Sudanese people, who had actively supported the transition, socially harming the nation. Economically, the coup led to issues

⁴⁸ Searcy, K. (2019, June 10). *Sudan in Crisis | Origins*. Origins.

⁴⁹ Ingham, K. (2019). Omar al-Bashir | Biography & Facts. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

⁵⁰ Ayferam, G. (2023, August 17). *Sudan's Conflict in the Shadow of Coups and Military Rule*. Carnegieendowment.org.

⁵¹ Ibidem

⁵² *Timeline: Sudan Unrest Post 2021 Coup*. (2023, April 15). Voice of America

in terms of international assistance, freezing assets and efforts to aid the country, and disrupting the economy once more. The African Union suspended Sudan, the United States stopped providing aid, and the European Union and the United Nations condemned the coup, requesting civilian-led governance. In terms of the political realm, conflict broke out once again, with fighting to establish the ruling position between the military and the paramilitary⁵³.

The importance of this coup stems from the political, social, and economic crisis it brought, contributing to a sense of already heightened uncertainty. General al-Burhan claimed that the coup was necessary to stop a civil war, and he promised fair and inclusive elections in 2023; however, that same year, the power struggle escalated, giving birth to yet another violent outbreak, still ongoing, between al-Burhan and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

1.3 Ongoing Conflict

In order to understand the foundation of today's ongoing crisis between the military and the paramilitary, it is crucial to examine Sudan's historical trajectory. Each event has contributed to a change in the political, social, and economic sphere, afflicted by years of instability and division, and each milestone, characterized by interconnected occurrences, has over time created conditions for the conflict. Collectively, these events have shaped the internal power struggles, marked by rooted structural issues with governance, power, and most of all, identity.

Starting from independence in 1956, instead of marking a new beginning for the Sudanese people, the groundwork for future tensions was laid. The end of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium rushed the transition to self-governance, which brought unresolved disparities and imbalances in terms of power between the Arab-Muslim North, which dominated the African-Christian South. The differences, engrained in ethnic, cultural, and religious divisions, were further amplified by the first and second civil wars, which, spanning over multiple decades, brought devastating results in terms of death,

⁵³ Gavin, M. (2022, October 24). *Sudan's Coup: One Year Later*. Council on Foreign

displacement, and a halt to development while further bringing mistrust between the regions.

The precedent was resolving political conflicts with military mechanisms, which entrenched doubts and underscored political resolutions. The coups would dismantle the governments led by civilians who sought democracy and reinforced authoritarian ruling methods, such as in the cases of Jaafar Nimeiri in 1969, Omar al-Bashir in 1989, and General Adel Fattah al-Burhan in 2021. The Darfur conflict, later condemned as a genocide by the ICC, further exposed the levels of inequality and marginalization, as well as the brutality enrooted in the government, which had no trouble in issuing a militia like the *Janjaweed* to fight rebels and suppress dissenting opinions. The humanitarian crisis deepened incredibly, but so did the uncertainty within the central government.

The secession of South Sudan in 2011, which was supposed to yet again be a solution for the North-South tensions, brought additional challenges, which resulted in the loss of oil revenues for Sudan and border conflicts due to unclear demarcation. The two countries were left weak on an economic level and politically divided, destabilizing the power balance. In the meantime, al-Bashir's harsh rule, imposition of Sharia law, and corrupt governance polarized the nation further. Therefore, the current conflict may be described as the culmination of years of unresolved issues: systemic weaknesses, power struggles, and grievances. Yet again, a fractured state is being pulled by opposing forces to be governed, prioritizing militarization and the fight for power over the well-being and needs of the population. Sudan remains in conflict with no clear resolution, and instability continues to soar over the country.

1.3.1 Clashes between Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces

On April 15, 2023, fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Sudan's military, led by General Adel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as 'Hemedti'. The RSF has its origins in the *Janjaweed* militia of Darfur, renamed in 2013, while the SAF has been in charge of Sudan's national defense since 1956⁵⁴. The fighting started in the

⁵⁴ Tobin, J. (2024, September 6). *Civil war in Sudan: Is there a path to peace?* House of Lords Library.

capital, Khartoum, with both sides blaming each other for the initiation of hostilities, where a series of explosions and gunfire kickstarted the conflict, and quickly moved to other areas of the nation, mainly Jazeera, Kordofan (North) and much of Darfur (North, South, West)⁵⁵. Both sides aim to consolidate power for both political and economic interests, with the RSF placing a specific interest in leading Sudan's gold mines.

One of the most imminent causes for the outbreak of the war between the SAF and RSF originated in the 2022 Framework Agreement, according to which Sudan aimed to transition towards a democratic and civilian rule after an exhaustive period of military command⁵⁶. One of the key points that paved the way for the democratic government was a plan to integrate the military and paramilitary. The unified structure consisted of a single command to ensure single accountability and prevent further competition. The unification, however, meant that the RSF, and therefore Hemedti, would lose power and be under the control of al-Burhan, posing a threat to his autonomy. The two leaders never came to an agreement, as negotiations would entail the loss of power of one of the two, while the aim was to retain dominance after a period of transition.

From the humanitarian viewpoint, the crisis, with the use of weaponry, airstrikes, and urban combat in densely populated areas, has led to significant issues, including casualties, displacement, food insecurity, widespread famine, the collapse of healthcare systems, diseases like cholera, polio and malaria spreading, and the collapse of the education system, with children being left without access to schools. 12 million people are currently internally displaced, with another 3,5 million having crossed the border to seek refuge in neighboring countries: South Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya⁵⁷. The situation begins to take a toll on the neighboring countries as well, which already experience limited resources and are struggling to accommodate the migrants and refugees who flee. There have been numerous failures in trying to broker ceasefires, and the developments of the conflict continue to bring devastating costs and challenges.

⁵⁵ Hussein, M. (2024, November 14). *Visualising the war in Sudan: Conflict, control and displacement*. Al Jazeera

⁵⁶ Framework Agreement. (2022).

⁵⁷ Sudan | Displacement Tracking Matrix. (n.d.). Iom.int.

Chapter 2 – INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL RESPONSE

The war in Sudan, since its outbreak in April 2023, has become the largest and most devastating displacement, humanitarian, and protection crises in the world today in quantitative terms, affecting around 75% of the population, involving extreme levels of violence and human rights violations against civilians.

The fighting between the SAF and RSF is characterized by a series of military strategies and tactics, which involve urban combat, such as street fighting, ambushes, and sniper attacks in heavily and densely populated areas⁵⁸. While the RSF aims to seize and hold strategic positions in order to control financial resources, the SAF focuses on regaining control over military and government infrastructures, conquered by the RSF at the beginning of the clashes. In order to engage in the aforementioned tactics, the military and paramilitary inevitably exploit the civilians, leading to destructive consequences for the population, such as the imposition of blockades, which restrict access to food, water, and medical supplies, causing numerous humanitarian issues.

As a result, two-thirds of the population are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, with prices soaring, rendering basic goods inaccessible⁵⁹. The critical humanitarian issues that require aid include mass displacement, water and sanitation, food insecurity, healthcare systems, and pervasive gender-based violence. International organizations play a central role in terms of intervention, dealing with specific issues to create long-term and short-term plans. The focal point is providing displacement tracking and shelter, food, healthcare, and basic needs, each through the support of global donors. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are the two of the agencies most involved in terms of providing aid and assistance to migrants and refugees, not only by implementing direct aid programs but also by partnering both with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other UN agencies to maximize specific efforts. Organizations and agencies therefore

⁵⁸ McGregor, A. (2023, May 26). *Sudan's Fratricidal Conflict: An Assessment of SAF and RSF Strategies and Tactics*. Jamestown.org.

⁵⁹ Lennon, C. (2025, February 15). *Sudan, "the most devastating humanitarian and displacement crises in the world."* UN News.

work together to coordinate international and regional efforts, which are crucial to help the population in need and restore some sort of stability for the community, as well as aiming to rebuild a sustainable and viable future.

In order to address the humanitarian challenges, coordinated responses from international organizations are needed, as they play pivotal roles in providing aid and assistance, ranging from direct support to forging partnerships with other agencies to expand the effect. Within the broader efforts to tackle the critical issues, Egypt emerges as a key player, becoming a regional hub for support in managing migratory flows and providing targeted relief services to the displaced community. The IOM Egypt case study provides a deeper understanding of the pressing challenges and achievements of humanitarian interventions by illustrating the various approaches used to address the situation. This overarching approach aims to underscore the complexity of the crisis and highlight the eminent importance of delivering effective aid.

2.1 Data Collection - Humanitarian Issues

2.1.1 Displacement

The displacement crisis is the most troubling of the humanitarian issues that have arisen out of the ongoing conflict. By the end of 2024, approximately 30% of Sudan's total population, around 12 million people, were forced to abandon their homes and flee to seek shelter. Out of those 12 million people, around 3.5 million crossed the border to reach safety in other neighboring countries. The majority of the displaced persons are minors, 54% of them female and 46% male, and almost all faced traumatic journeys with nothing more than essential items and a few clothes on their backs. The camps for refugees have limited access to food and water, and diseases as a result of poor hygiene and lack of access to resources are rampant⁶⁰. Around 31% of the IDPs come from Khartoum, the capital city, 18% originate from the North Darfur area, around 15% from the South Darfur area, and 10% from the Aj Jazirah area. Sudan in the past had already

⁶⁰ IOM. (2025). *Sudan and Neighbouring Countries: End of Year Report 2024*.

faced displacement crises; in fact, 29% of the IDPs experienced displacement prior to the current conflict⁶¹.

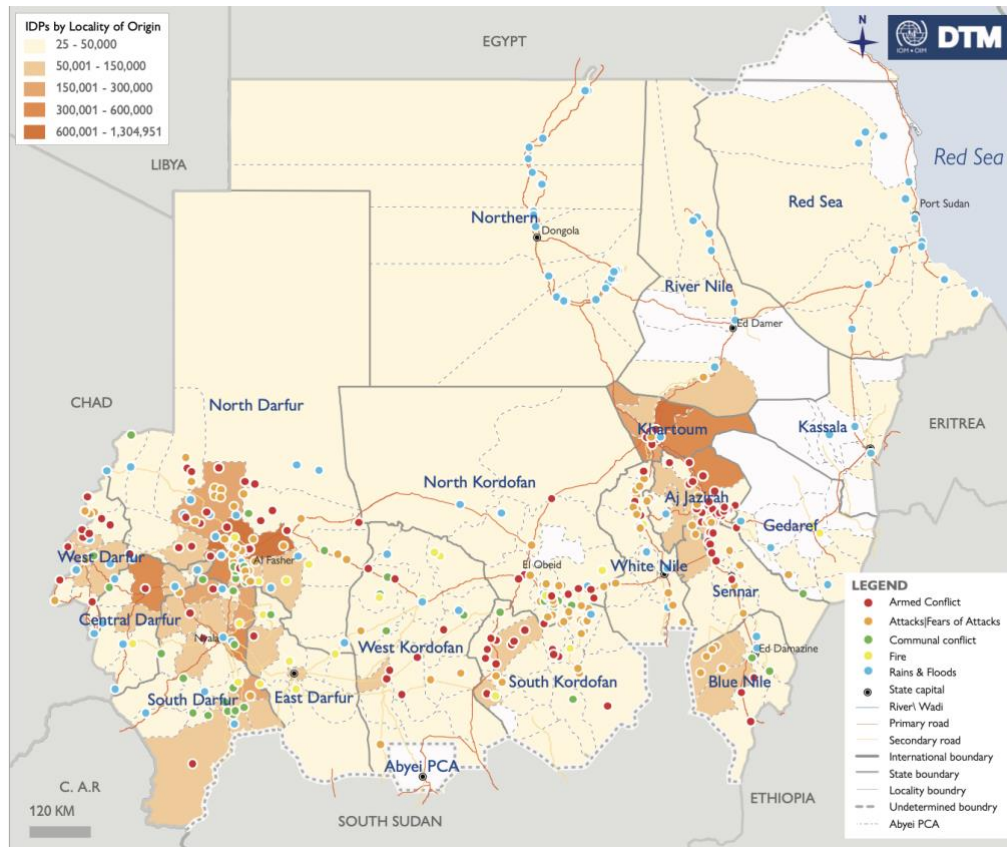


Figure 2.1. Source IOM - Localities of Origin and Locations of Incidents Reported by DTM Flash Alerts, 15 April 2023 - 31 January 2025.

The IDPs are displaced across all 18 states of the country, specifically in 185 localities and over 10,000 distinct places. The location types include urban neighborhoods, camps in urban areas, rural villages, and camps in rural areas. In order to seek shelter, 49% of IDPs turn mainly to host families and communities, 17% stay in camps, 17% stay either in informal settlements or open areas, 9% remain in public buildings such as schools, 6% rent private accommodations, and 2% improvise their own shelters in critical conditions⁶².

⁶¹ IOM. (2025, February 5). *IOM | Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) | Sudan Mobility Update (15)* Publication Date: 5 February 2025 - Sudan. ReliefWeb.

⁶² Ibidem

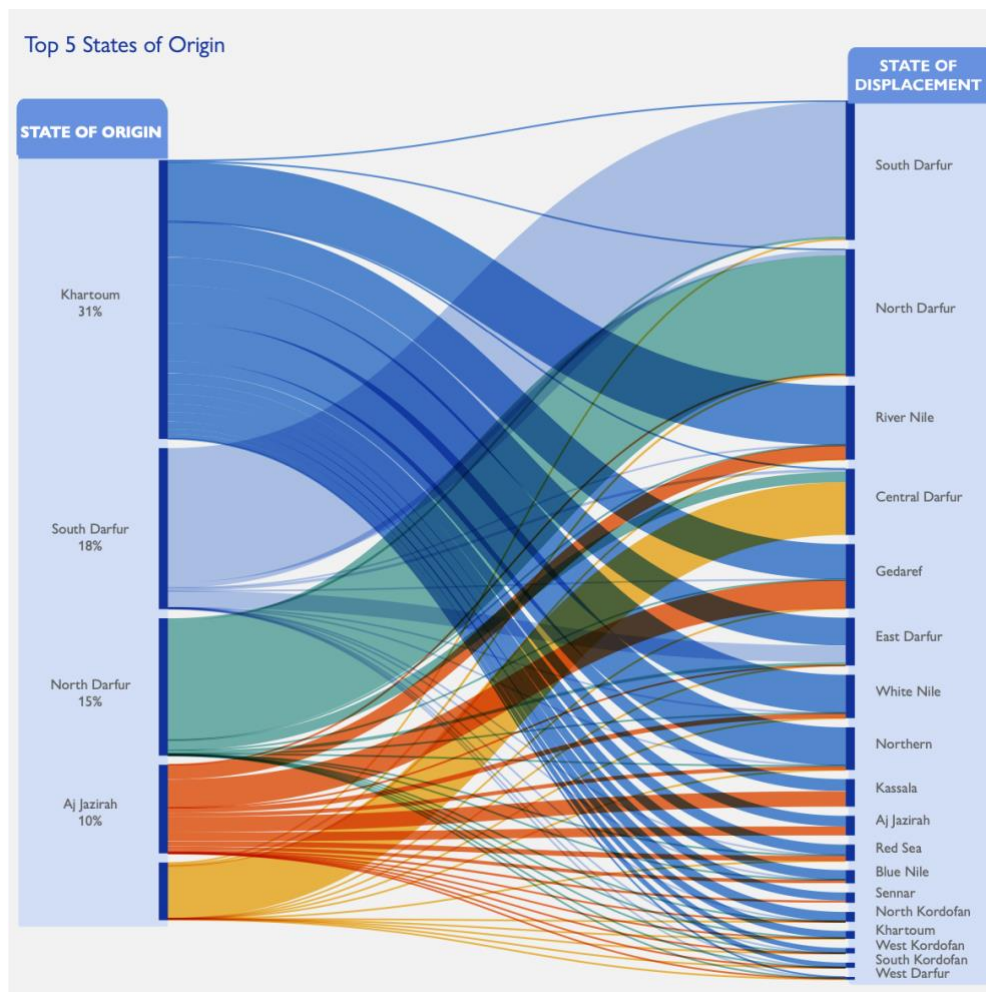


Figure 2.2. Source IOM - Displacement Pathways in Sudan from Top 5 States of Origin

2.1.2 Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)

Before the conflict started, Sudan already had an extremely dysfunctional water supply system, with around 26% of the system being inoperative. 11 million citizens did not have access to basic water services, and about 27 million citizens did not have access to basic sanitation services⁶³. Since the outbreak of the war, the situation has worsened significantly, posing a serious threat to the health and safety of the population. Resource shortages have destroyed the community due to the lack of maintenance, and the few functioning systems only aim to provide emergency and temporary fixes. Hygiene items, soaps, and hygiene products for women are scarce, and the influxes of people overwhelm the limited sources available.

⁶³ OCHA. (2024, December 31). 3.8. *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) | Humanitarian Action*. Humanitarianaction.info.

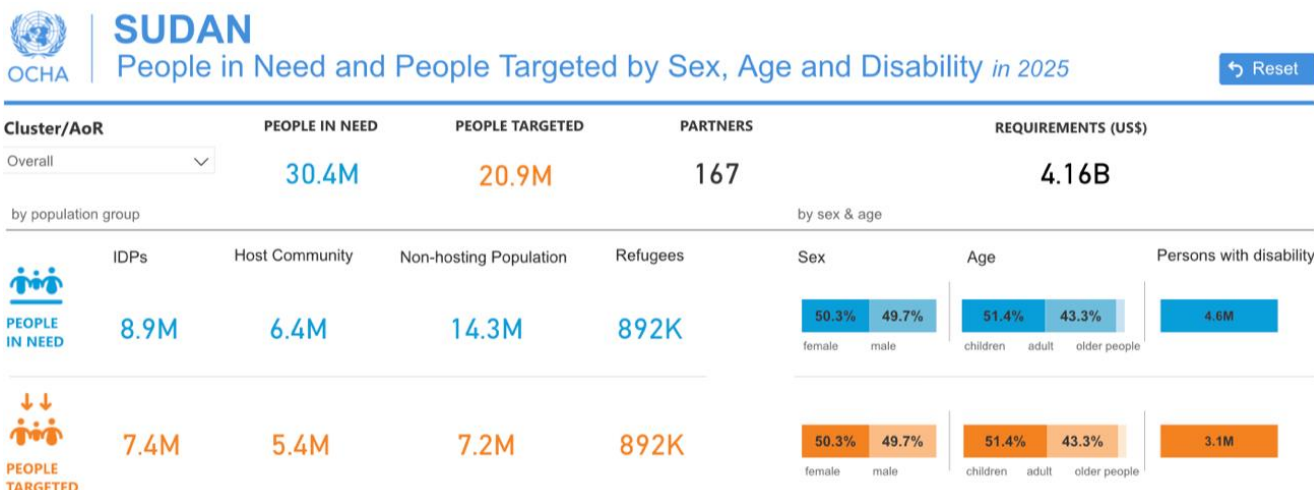


Figure 2.3. Source OCHA – People in Need of WASH assistance

The impact of WASH falls upon the damage to the infrastructures, the unsafe sources of water, the sanitation, and the lack of resources⁶⁴. The destruction of the infrastructures is a direct consequence of the armed conflict that has been taking place; the destructive military strategies have destroyed not only the water pumping stations but also the water treatment plants. Power outages are also an issue, as water relies on electricity to function, which poses a problem even when fighting decreases, limiting access to bottled water. Due to the lack of safe drinking water, citizens have turned to hazardous sources, such as the Blue Nile, one of the major tributaries along with the White Nile, which converge in Khartoum to form the Nile, despite it being an extremely polluted river⁶⁵. Lastly, with the great influxes of IDPs, the demand for water in shelters and camps exceeds the resources available, and the lack of sanitation in high-movement places also increases the risk of the transmission of waterborne diseases.

2.1.3 Famine and Food Security

FAO, WFP, and UNICEF have declared the hunger situation in Sudan “the worst hunger crisis in recent history”, with around 25 million people facing acute food insecurity levels⁶⁶. Famine demonstrates a total collapse of social, economic, and political structures, a collapse of resources essential for survival. In total, according to the

⁶⁴ Kordofan. (2023). *SUDAN Impact of the current conflict on WASH needs*. Acaps.org.

⁶⁵ Ibidem

⁶⁶ UNICEF. (2024, December 24). *Food and nutrition crisis deepens across Sudan as famine identified in additional areas*. Unicef.org

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the standard tool that determines the levels of food insecurity, famine, and malnutrition, through the Famine Review Committee (FRC), at least 8 million people are classified as a phase 4 – emergency – and 638,000 are in phase 5 – catastrophe – alongside 16 million people in phase 3 – crisis. The crisis phase includes food gaps or having to rely on strategies to obtain food, the emergency phase means severe malnutrition, and lastly, phase 5 involves famine with starvation, death, and extreme malnutrition⁶⁷. More specifically, a phase 5 case of IPC includes: at least 20% of households lack food, 30% of children suffer acute malnutrition, the rate of malnutrition-related death is of either two people or four children every 10,000 people on a daily basis⁶⁸.

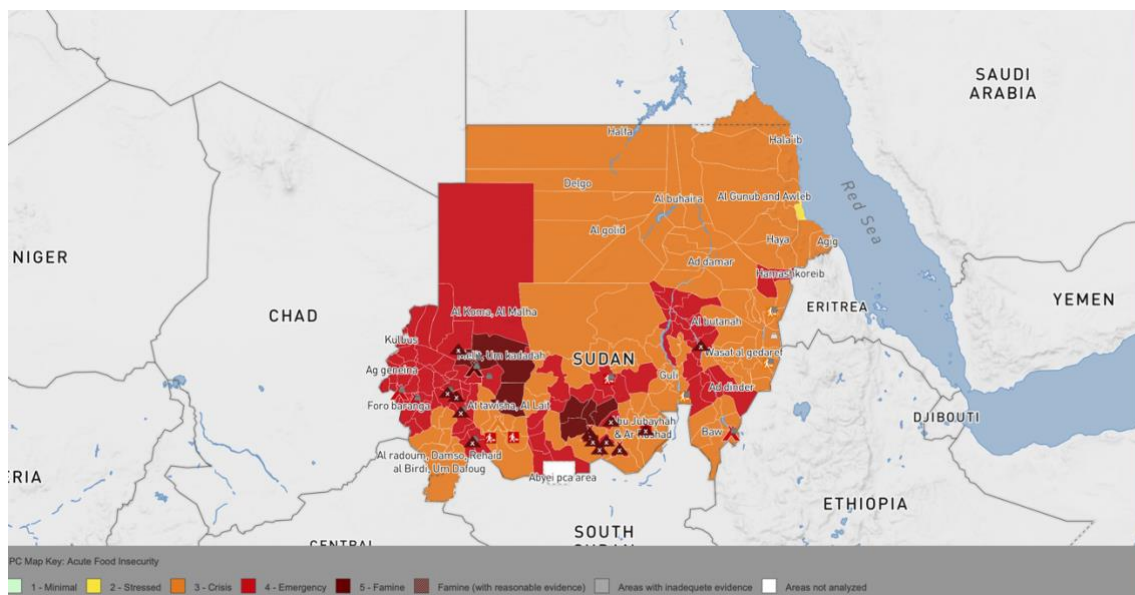


Figure 2.4 Source FRC – Sudan Food Insecurity December 2024

The conflict has destroyed the country’s agricultural activities and disrupted infrastructure, inflating the prices of resources or making sources not available altogether. Children and women, specifically pregnant or breastfeeding women, are the most impacted and the most vulnerable, as well as most likely to be living in overcrowded places, hindering their health even more.

⁶⁷ Mishra, V. (2024, December 24). *Sudan’s worsening famine: Conflict puts millions at risk*. UN News

⁶⁸ Swanson, Z., Kirschenbaum, A., & Welsh, C. (2024, September 11). *Conflict, Hunger, and Famine in Sudan*. Csis.org

2.1.4 Health Crisis

As of the beginning of 2025, Sudan is facing a health crisis of colossal proportions, with more than half of the population, 30.5 million people (16 million of those are children), requiring aid⁶⁹. Due to the disruptions of basic health services, such as disease monitoring, vaccination, and rapid response teams, disease outbreaks have been plaguing the country. The diseases and discomforts that pose a risk the most, which could result in levels of excess mortality and morbidity are the following: malnutrition, trauma and injury, cholera and acute watery diarrhea (AWD), dengue, malaria, measles, mental health conditions, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), acute respiratory tract infections (ARTI), and chronic infectious diseases⁷⁰.

One of the most critical issues is malnutrition, and Sudan is one of the countries globally that suffers the most – 30 out of 38 regions exceed the World Health Organization's threshold of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). Cholera and AWD follow, specifically after the outbreak of the war, since the country faces inadequate access to clean water, as well as the issues of flooding, overcrowding, and the common practice of defecating out in the open. The influxes of people continue to favor the spreading of diseases. Critical levels are also reached by diseases that are vector-borne, hence arising from infections passed by blood-feeding animals (such as mosquitoes and fleas). Vaccination is inadequate to stop the diseases, and there is an overall low level of immunity, specifically since a large number of cases occur in hard-to-reach areas. The majority of the deaths are however, caused by NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension, and chronic diseases, since medical supplies are unable to reach people in need. Moreover, mental health diseases are becoming more widespread, with people facing cases of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as the continuous insecurity greatly limits access to mental health services⁷¹.

As time passes and the conflict continues to spread through the country, diseases and health concerns follow. Sudan faces high rates of child mortality, maternal mortality, and the overall life expectancy has faced a decline since 2019. Most of the states, at least 11

⁶⁹ WHO. (2025). Sudan Conflict and Complex Emergency. In *World Health Organization*.

⁷⁰ Ibidem

⁷¹ Ibidem

out of 18, face daily outbreaks of multiple diseases, which add to further pressure both nationally and internationally.

Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA)				
This is the third WHO PHSA on the Sudan crisis. This updates the September 2024 version.				
Typologies of emergency	Main health threats	WHO grade	Security level (UNDSS) ¹	INFORM (2025) ²
 Conflict	• Malnutrition • Trauma and injury • Cholera and acute watery diarrhoea • Dengue • Malaria • Measles • Non-communicable diseases • Mental health • Protection (including gender-based violence)	Grade 3 (IASC System-Wide Scale-Up activated)	High (5/6): Khartoum Substantial (4/6): North Kordofan, Northern, River Nile, Port Sudan (Red Sea), Kassala, Gedaref, Al Jazirah, White Nile, Sennar, North Darfur, Central Darfur, East Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan, South Darfur, West Darfur. Moderate (3/6): Blue Nile	Risk Index (0-10): 7.4 (Very High) Global Ranking (1-191 countries): 8
 Food Security				
 Displacement				
 Epidemics				

Figure 2.5. Source WHO – Sudan Conflict and Complex Emergency Situation Analysis

2.1.5 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence is defined by UNHCR as an umbrella term describing a perpetrated act of “violence committed against a person because of his or her sex or gender. It is forcing another person to do something against his or her will through violence, coercion, threats, deception, cultural expectations, or economic means”⁷². Since the outbreak of the conflict, cases of GBV violence have increased by 100% according to UN Women. By the end of 2023, 6 million women were at risk, but by the end of 2024, the number more than doubled, marking around 13 million women at risk⁷³. Sexual exploitation, abuse, intimate partner violence, and trafficking are issues that continue to increase as the crisis progresses in time.

⁷² UNHCR. (n.d.). *WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE*. UNHCR.

⁷³ WHO. (2025). Sudan Conflict and Complex Emergency. In *World Health Organization*.

There is a continuous deterioration in terms of security measures due to desperation. Placing their children's needs above their own, women are far more vulnerable when engaged in their roles as caregivers: the need to provide food and the need to protect children from any harm lead to their own destruction. The conflict is perpetrated both by the armed groups as a way to destabilize communities and demonstrate power, but also in shelters, communities, and IDP sites, essentially demonstrating that no place is safe for women⁷⁴.

2.2 Data Analysis - Humanitarian Response

With regard to the unprecedented challenges faced by the population of Sudan in terms of humanitarian issues, the role of international organizations in terms of humanitarian response is pivotal.

2.2.1 International Organizations: Reports and Databases

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), established in 1951 and recently affiliated with the United Nations, is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration. IOM partners and collaborates with UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and OCHA to provide assistance to migrants and promote cooperation on migration issues⁷⁵. IOM's mission in Sudan provides aid through displacement tracking, shelter and non-food items, water, sanitation and hygiene, health and nutrition, transition and recovery, and a rapid response fund.

Concomitantly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has managed crises since 1950, providing the right to seek asylum, find safe refuge, and protect internally displaced and stateless people, to ensure that those who flee violence, persecution, or war in their home are able to build a future. UNHCR's mission involves providing shelter, clean water, healthcare, education, site management, unrestricted and uninterrupted access at borders, protective environments, equitable access to basic needs, and direct development funding⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ UNICEF. (2025, March 4). *Sudan's child rape and sexual violence crisis*. Unicef.org.

⁷⁵ IOM. (n.d.). *Mission*. International Organization for Migration.

⁷⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). *The UN Refugee Agency*. Unhcr.org.

In addressing the crisis, both agencies play a crucial role. Most importantly, both, in their own ways, provide a registration system for migrants and refugees. On one hand, IOM provides a Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which collects data in terms of movements, considering detailed reports of IDPs – a system to track movements, vulnerabilities, and needs. Through the data collection, future strategies regarding development, coordination, and response plans can be adapted⁷⁷. On the other hand, UNHCR registers refugees, which takes place upon request of a migrant to become an asylum seeker. This distinction between the tracking of migrants and refugees also leads to a distinction in numbers between the two agencies. IOM tracks 12.3 IDPs while UNHCR tracks 12.8 forcibly displaced people.

IOM focuses on managing the mobility dimension of the crisis, while UNHCR centers its efforts on the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers. While IOM delivers essential and non-essential items and provides support to ensure safety, UNHCR provides registration, legal assistance, and the safeguarding of rights. Despite the different specific approaches, the two organizations often partner up to ensure both effective aid while meeting the urgent needs of the migrants and refugees. For instance, the Regional Refugee Response plan (RRP) is an inter-agency yearly plan between IOM, UNHCR, and other institutions that addresses the areas that require support in terms of response to protect countries in crisis. The plan includes coordination, programming, advocacy, and fundraising in order to support the government of the country in need, as well as providing support to the community⁷⁸.

Specific to the Sudanese crisis, the RRP aids in terms of assistance at points of entry, health and psychosocial support, protection services, livelihood support, reintegration and voluntary return, coordination and advocacy, data collection and research⁷⁹. Preliminary assistance ensures registration and identification of migrants, as well as providing basic needs upon arrival. Health support includes both medical services and mental health care to address the traumatic journey experienced. Protection services focus on GBV response

⁷⁷ IOM. (n.d.). *Mission*. International Organization for Migration.

⁷⁸ Panetta, L., & Gupta, G.-M. (2024). *REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN GUIDANCE RRP 2025 General Guidance REFUGEE RESPONSE PLANS 2025 GUIDANCE NOTE*

⁷⁹ Ibidem

and support for vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, and disabled persons. Livelihood support manages economic inclusion, financial aid, and access to education. Reintegration and voluntary return programs facilitate conditions for displaced individuals who either wish to return or wish to settle in another country. Lastly, coordination, advocacy, and data collection establish government partnerships and agency collaborations as well as population and migration flow tracking⁸⁰.

Another example of an inter-agency plan is the Sudan and Neighboring Countries Crisis Response Plan (CRP), which aims to protect those affected by the crisis. The vision includes saving lives and protecting people on the move, which is the most immediate form of aid, driving solutions to displacement, which ensures providing recovery and resilience in case of reintegration, and facilitating pathways for regular migration, which ensures legal ways to cross the border if needed. The aim is to expand from direct assistance to an economic recovery plan, hence not only providing cash but a plan for livelihood⁸¹.

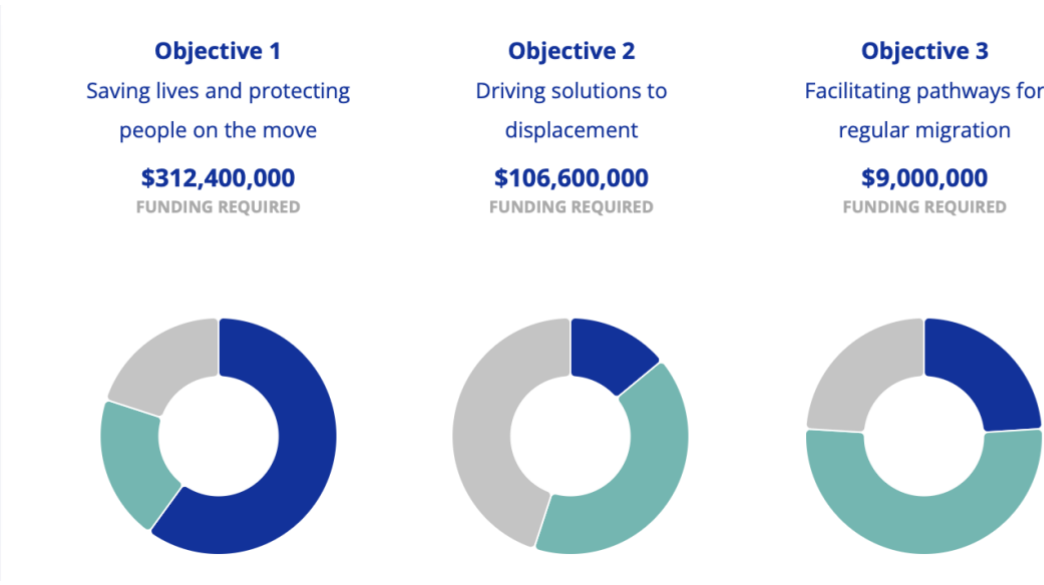


Figure 2.6 – Source IOM. Funding required for long term outcomes

Therefore, in their own different ways, yet collaborating, both IOM and UNHCR strive to adapt their strategies to the evolving crisis in Sudan, aiming to aid the displaced communities.

⁸⁰ Ibidem

⁸¹ IOM. (2025). *Sudan and Neighbouring Countries Crisis Response Plan 2025 | Global Crisis Response Platform*. Iom.int.

2.2.2 Multilateral and Bilateral Aid

The humanitarian crisis goes beyond the main organizations that specifically focus on managing and assisting migrants and refugees, encompassing bilateral and multilateral aid to establish support. The international response is often based on contributions from organizations or other countries. For instance, the EU is one of the largest contributors, having committed around a total of \$900 million between the European Commission and a pledge from a number of EU States⁸². Similarly, the largest donor for food assistance, WASH support, and health and protection services has been the United States, even if the January 2025 executive order of the new US administration froze all foreign aid to align operations with the national interests⁸³. A few of the Gulf States, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, have also demonstrated their support, contributing with donations focused on refugee support. Other countries such as Canada, Japan, and the Republic of Korea have also supported Sudan, focusing on specific issues at times when funding was extremely needed. Lastly, the neighboring countries (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda), through collective efforts, each focus on helping as much as they can, despite facing their own challenges and their own influxes of migrants straining their stability.

Despite the numerous efforts, aiming for long-term stability remains a challenge, and most actions aim to provide immediate relief. International and local NGOs focus on addressing urgent needs, partnering with agencies to develop initiatives and coordinate efforts among international actors, governments, and civil societies.

2.3 Case Study: Egypt's Role in Crisis Response

IOM's mission in Egypt plays a predominant role in terms of crisis management and response. Egypt's importance stems from its geographical position, being both a country of transit for migrants and refugees, but also a destination. Through targeted programs, IOM is able to coordinate humanitarian assistance by providing support to displaced

⁸² *EU commits €896 million in total humanitarian and development funding for Sudan.* (2024, April 15). European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

⁸³ *United States Provides Nearly \$200 Million in Additional Humanitarian Assistance for the People of Sudan - Sudan.* (2024, December 19). ReliefWeb.

populations and managing migratory routes. IOM Egypt engages in a dual approach to ensure both individual and systemic aspects of the migration crisis. On the one hand, strategic response plans are designed to tackle generalized issues that arise, while on the other hand, direct and personalized assistance is provided to migrants who approach the office, guaranteeing support for urgent needs.

2.3.1 Interviews with officers of the IOM mission to Egypt

For the scope of this thesis, I personally conducted interviews in January 2025 with officers of the IOM mission to Egypt, located in Cairo, specifically in the Zamalek district, to provide clarity and further depth regarding Egypt's role in terms of assistance. The officers interviewed hold pivotal positions within the organization, including a Senior Migrant Protection Assistant of the Protection Unit, a Programme Assistant-Direct Assistance of the Protection Unit, a Project Officer-Sudan Emergency Response of the Protection Unit, and a Project Officer-Joint Platform of the Protection Unit. The interviews focus on specific projects carried out by the officers, highlighting both the strategies employed but also the challenges faced, including pressing gaps in humanitarian assistance, the plans to address them, and notable success stories. The first-hand accounts aim to provide insights and in-depth analysis on the role of Egypt in terms of humanitarian response to the Sudan crisis.

Programme Assistant – Direct Assistance of the Protection Unit Statement

As part of Egypt's efforts to address the humanitarian issues involved, described in the previous paragraphs, as explained by the Programme Assistant-Direct Assistance, the Response Unit was established in April 2023, as the war broke out. The project aims to provide life-saving assistance to the Sudanese citizens who are affected by the crisis. It works by providing direct assistance, and the different types of assistance include multiple-purpose assistance cash, department protection, and providing and conducting screenings based on vulnerability levels (which can be high, medium, or low, depending on the type of individual and the help needed). The levels of vulnerability are assessed by the amount and type of assistance needed, including cash, dignity kits, and hygiene kits. The related activities are implemented in Cairo, Aswan, and Alexandria and are carried out mainly under a partnership with CARITAS.

It is crucial to highlight that the Response Unit is an IOM initiative implemented under the Africa Regional Migration Program (ARMP), funded by the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and designed to build the capacity of governments to effectively adopt, manage, and sustain immigration systems, laws, policies, and practices that promote well-managed, regular forms of migration, while also trying to reduce migrant vulnerabilities. As mentioned above, on his first day in office, President Trump signed an Executive Order that placed on hold for 90 days all USAID and State Department programs of foreign assistance. All programs would be examined during these ninety days in order to determine whether to discontinue, maintain, or modify them in order to better suit US priorities. This decision impacted 20,000 activities across all sectors, including combating global hunger, disease, and human rights violations, totaling USD 44 billion.

After the review, the ARMP was canceled, forcing IOM to make impossible choices over which life-saving initiatives to suspend or maintain. IOM - as well as other organizations affected by the same lack of available funds, such as UNHCR – has been obliged to call on all donors (including governments, private companies, and individuals) to urgently support migrants, refugees, and displaced people around the world who are already suffering the devastating impact of reduced funding and support.

The IOM Egypt official added that the process of assisting migrants and refugees directly through IOM offices in Egypt is done through applications. The application process is divided between the registration and assistance process:

“The registration team takes applications through different channels like hotlines, emails, or community leaders reaching out. People can receive information through WhatsApp groups and ask about their concerns through emails. Physically, people can approach us at the gates here in order to obtain registration. Since walk-ins are so busy, we provide an online registration link as an easier approach. After the registration has taken place, the direct assistance team comes in. Initially, the modality for the assistance was starting with manual registration, obtaining the information, and reaching back out, however, it was extremely time-consuming, and we decided to implement online registration.”

Therefore, migrants, upon their arrival in Egypt, can obtain assistance after being registered as migrants in the IOM tracking system. Being registered, however, lacks the legal implication of the immigrant status – they will continue to be illegal, but they will have access to assistance if needed. The type of assistance provided includes medical, education, legal, pocket money, housing, dignity kits, clothes, food vouchers, and external referral to UNHCR. The duration of the assistance ranges from 1-6 months, depending on the vulnerability level, and people can ask for re-assistance once the period is over.



Figure 2.7 – Visual Representation of Migrants and Refugees Waiting to be Assessed Outside IOM Office in Egypt.

Cash-based assistance varies depending on family size, only housing allowance is fixed. There are 3 modalities to provide cash. Firstly, people can request and be provided with cash directly from the office. This is usually for higher vulnerability levels. Secondly, through a service provider, an online platform. An SMS is sent with a one-time password (OTP) number, and once received, people go to the office and receive the money. Lastly, IOM provides pre-paid cards that people can simply use at their disposal. Speaking about encountered concerns, the Programme Assistant highlighted:

“We need to host awareness sessions to lower expectations regarding this process. It takes time. It takes more than 3 months, and we have more than 100,000 refugees registered and waiting. This is also because people have found ways to register multiple

times, for instance, they get a new phone number and register again, which leads to a huge problem and even longer waiting lists.”

In terms of documentation, IOM accepts passports or any official ID. When people approach the office with no documents, meaning they possibly entered Egypt irregularly or by smuggling, extra care in terms of assessments of vulnerability levels is taken, and if assigned high levels, the approval and registration to begin the assistance is fast-tracked. This is also the case for people with disabilities or pregnant women, and essentially, based on urgency, the process is prioritized.

Project Officer – Joint Platform of the Protection Unit Statement

When interviewed, the Project Officer-Joint Platform explained that the Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt (JPMR) is an initiative launched in 2021 by the Government of Egypt and the United Nations in order to support the increasing influx of migrants and enable services in a host country to help a host community. The aim is to assess institutional capacities, carry out a common situational analysis of migrants/refugees/persons in need, and map resources and funding needed⁸⁴. The IOM officer stated that *“the significance of the JPMR is in its idea of flagship, it is a program unique in its own. The importance lies in the relationship between the Government and the UN in the creation of a joint effort to create a group impact”*. Funded mainly by the EU, the program entails action through interlinked views in two main sectors, education and health, with the Government supporting the infrastructure component for both sectors to support the increasing demands of the migrant and host communities. The education sector mainly entails the renovation of public schools, whereas the health sector mainly concentrates on providing supplies for hospitals.

The focus is on migrant and refugee-dense population areas, with capacity-building interventions in both sectors. The cross-cutting focus aims to increase capacity-building scales for officials under the Ministries of Health and Education to be able to react to migrants’ and refugees’ needs and implement procedures needed to grant basic strategies. In addition, a protection dimension is included, not only focusing on hard components

⁸⁴ *Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt Common Situational Analysis Education and Health Services for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt*. (2022).

but also ensuring the environment is protected. In terms of education, IOM provides support for unaccompanied children on the move, and the support includes education grants and non-financial support. In terms of health, on the other hand, the protection from IOM includes mental health aid, GBV intervention, and management. Lastly, the main element IOM is excelling in is social cohesion. It is a program to ensure that communities are brought together to interact, in order to surpass cultural differences and prejudices: *“It brings together out-of-the-box and unique ideas to bring awareness to the differences between cultures.”*

Specifically in terms of Sudanese migrants, there is a community center held in Alexandria, where IDPs receive healthcare services and skills training. Considering the limited resources, the initiative excels, as it is able to provide Egyptian doctors, philanthropists, and volunteers. The community, but more specifically practitioners and front liners, benefit from enhanced refurbishment and equipment, reiterating the shared responsibility and Egypt’s efforts.

Senior Migrant Protection Assistant of the Protection Unit Statement

The most pressing humanitarian gaps include, first and foremost, funding, then the delays caused by the emergency and lack of adequate preparation. Funding is an issue in terms of partnerships, and it causes IOM to rely on donors. According to the IOM Senior Migrant Protection Assistance officer, *“the lack of funding not only has repercussions on the Sudanese community but also on the Egyptian community”*. Egypt is a country of transit for a number of migrants, other than Sudanese refugees, and the increasing influxes result in instability. In economic terms, the demand is too high and the resources available are too limited. The regional, political, and economic situation from a humanitarian perspective led to minimal availability compared to the high demand on the ground. *“We have a limited time for the frame of emergency projects, as they are designed to be immediate action and not long-term solutions.”* The emergency department is new, requires capacity training, and updated assessment on the ground. In response to my question: *“how do you react to a situation without having the background knowledge necessary?”*, the IOM Assistant highlighted that protection concerns, registration, and screenings require approval from the Government, which is slow-moving, and added: *“I*

have to personally wait for more than 4 weeks to get approval to go to the border when there are people already stranded for months. I have seen with my own eyes refugees die due to medical issues such as diabetes because they require medication, but cannot be reached due to Governmental constraints. It is heartbreaking.”

Project Officer – Sudan Emergency Response of the Protection Unit Statement

The Project Officer for Sudan Emergency Response stated that IOM ensures the safety and protection of Sudanese refugees and migrants during their displacement process through a series of protection measures. Firstly, IOM offers awareness sessions to migrants, to explain in detail their rights, and provide legal support and safety. *“Migrants are told where they can go and which numbers to call based on their needs. The awareness aspect ensures safety and dignity.”* Additionally, IOM provides interventions, for instance, in terms of victims of human trafficking, through the filing of police reports and coordination with beneficiaries.

Despite the heart-wrenching and burdensome humanitarian issues, the response from IOM Egypt has brought a number of success stories regarding the safety and hope of the migrants. *“They name unborn children based on our names.”* Outstanding practices can be found in all fields covered: education, finance, and medicine. *“We get appreciation letters from migrants and children saying they are thankful. They make videos saying we saved their lives.”* The Officer emphasized that the refugees and migrants are very resilient. They ask for help, and if they don’t receive it, they get aggressive to stand up for themselves. The fact that they understand their rights and fight until they are able to receive help demonstrates the immense effort on behalf of the organizations.

Conclusively, all interviewees were keen to underline that the multifaceted humanitarian challenges that arise from the ongoing war, including displacement, food insecurity, healthcare concerns, and gender-based violence, are being targeted with strategic plans to ensure aid for the communities facing urgent needs. It is crucial to have global interconnectedness, which provides donors, partnerships, and support, in order to address the crisis comprehensively, through assistance from the different international actors dealing with the migration framework.

The interviews not only illustrate the complex humanitarian interventions carried out by IOM but also analyze Egypt's practical role in the crisis, which ranges from immediate responses such as cash assistance and health interventions to long-term approaches, such as social cohesion programs. This demonstrates a balance in programs, essential when it comes to tackling an unpredictable crisis and underlining the importance Egypt serves by navigating both the sphere of regional instability and domestic resource constraints. The need for sustainable funding and international coordination amongst actors is highlighted, which connects the exploration of theoretical frameworks of humanitarian responses to real-world practices to offer a comprehensive overview of the conflict and its challenges.

Chapter 3 – Implications of the Crisis

In times of crisis, regardless of their nature, whether triggered by conflicts, economic collapses, or natural disasters, international organizations are crucial to provide immediate and coordinated responses to avoid escalation. The term international organization, following the International Law Commission, refers to an intergovernmental and an international treaty between sovereign states, which establishes specific tasks to attend to a specific issue, held together by a formal agreement. The problem-solving capacity of an IO is given by its structure, which usually comprises a collective mechanism aimed at adopting decisions and a secretariat to implement such decisions, where its legal status intertwines with the member states adhering to the IO. Depending on its role, status, and history, an IO may function either as a platform, forum, or agent. Under the role of platform, it assumes the role of a stage where MS can display their positions, as a forum, it tables certain issues through the domination of MS and their power relations, and as an agent, it becomes effectively a power player. The roles and functions shift based on the type of assistance needed, whether anticipating, preventing, or solving a crisis is required⁸⁵.

The organizations range from intergovernmental bodies, such as the United Nations and the various specialized agencies, to non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières, and regional entities, which focus on specific areas. They operate in a framework that intersects humanitarian needs and resource constraints, humanitarian needs and political considerations, and humanitarian needs and state sovereignty, shaping global interventions and cooperation strategies. IO performances alternate between the rules and procedures that enable actions, the decision-making products, the results, and the contribution to solving the large-scale issue⁸⁶.

From a theoretical viewpoint, under the lens of International Relations, power plays a critical role in the formation and execution of IOs. Power, often defined as the ability to

⁸⁵ Olsson, E. K., & Verbeek, B. (2013, January 1). *International Organizations and Crisis Management*. ResearchGate.

⁸⁶ Yf Reykers. (2024). Evaluating crisis response speed of international organisations: why it matters and how to achieve it. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–26.

coerce or influence others' behaviors, promotes collective actions at the international level and may be compulsory, institutional, or structural, depending on which of the major International Relations theories one references⁸⁷. From the realist perspective, IOs portray compulsory power, which constrains the political and strategic interests of the powerful states, the liberal viewpoint utilizes institutional power to instead highlight the development of the regimes and their effects, advocating for cooperation and global governance, while the constructivism approach portrays structural power, tackling the meaning and normative impact of the humanitarian discourse. IOs depict a mix of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks depending on the approaches used to navigate the geopolitical challenges and structural causes.

International Organizations operating in the MENA region specifically focus on providing aid to areas characterized by conflict and socio-political instability, hence, their efforts include addressing the root causes of the crisis and facilitating access to essential services affected. In a conflict-driven nation like Sudan, the efforts must go beyond immediate relief strategies, however, the operational efforts are hindered by limitations on funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political barriers, which prevent urgent interventions.

The broader implications of the crisis in Sudan emphasize the fact that the issue is no longer confined to the region. The lack of stability generated by the conflict is expanding, beginning to affect neighboring countries and rippling towards a larger geopolitical area. The growing migration crisis perfectly depicts this, where the lack of adequate resources despite the IOs' extensive efforts exacerbates the issue even further. This situation demonstrates the interconnectedness between humanitarian challenges and the repercussions of Sudan's conflict, which is starting to affect European countries in terms of migration management, resource allocation, and international cooperation.

⁸⁷ Payne, R. A., & Samhat, N. H. (2018). International Organizations and Power. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*

3.1 Regional Security and Stability

3.1.1 Migratory Routes from Sudan – Impact on Neighboring Countries

As previously stated, the dire humanitarian conditions that stem from the conflict have resulted in a colossal displacement crisis, with 12 million people, including refugees, returnees, and third-country nationals, fleeing their homes to seek refuge. Of these individuals, an estimated 70% were Sudanese nationals, while 30% were foreign nationals or returnees, taking into consideration that a percentage of citizens were already displaced in the past due to the Darfur conflict. The proportion of Sudanese versus non-Sudanese nationals varies by country: for example, an estimated 99% of individuals who crossed into Egypt were reportedly Sudanese nationals; by contrast, an estimated 77% of individuals who crossed into South Sudan were non-Sudanese nationals, primarily South Sudanese nationals⁸⁸.

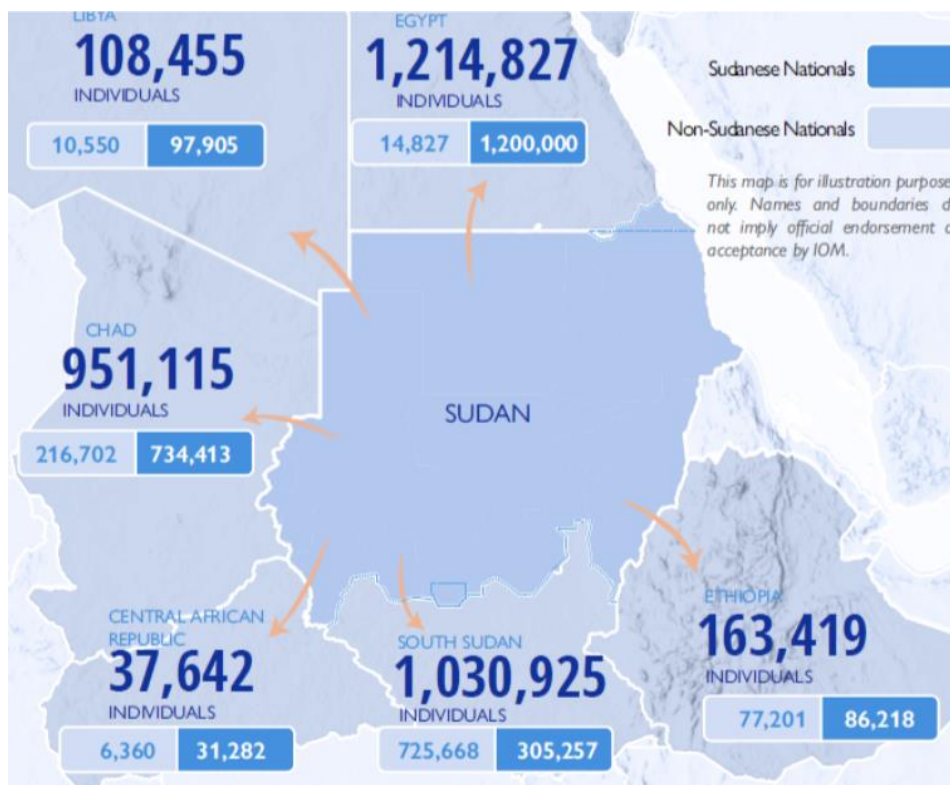


Figure 3.1 – Source IOM. Cross-Border Movements from Sudan to Neighboring Countries Since April 2023

⁸⁸ IOM. (n.d.). *Sudan Crisis: Displacement in Sudan and Mixed Cross-Border Movement Overview | Displacement Tracking Matrix*. Dtm.iom.int.

Due to high mobility and the fluidity of the situation, these numbers may not capture all movements and could be subject to underreporting, for instance, figures provided by UNHCR during the same period slightly differ:⁸⁹

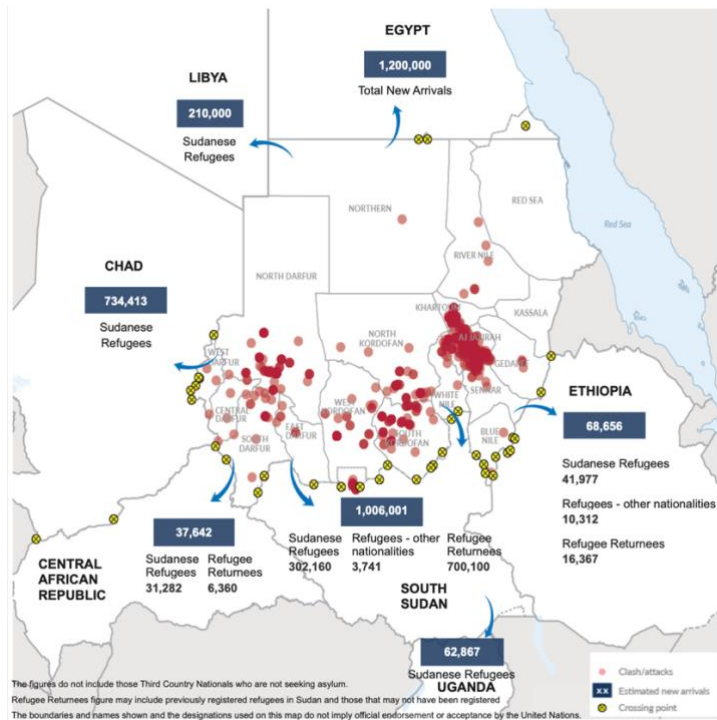


Figure 3.2 – Source UNHCR. Cross-Border Movements from Sudan to Neighboring Countries Since April 2023

Considering the uncertainty and unpredictability of the conflict, it is crucial to establish “safe” areas for the migrants, as the crisis evolves and shifts. Humanitarian partners have therefore collaborated to scale up the response across neighboring countries, and seven refugee-hosting countries (Central African Republic, Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Libya, and Egypt) have contributed to providing aid, despite facing their own issues and challenges, including diminished access to food, scarcity of resources, lack of access to essential services, and severe inflation. The countries, together with external partners, have established a 2025 Regional Refugee Response Plan, which aims at serving 5 million refugees, returnees, and third-country nationals over a 12-month period⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ Jan. (2025). *Sudan Situation Map Weekly Regional Update - 27 Jan 2025*. UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP).

⁹⁰ UNHCR. (2025, February 4). *Sudan Emergency Regional Refugee Response Plan, January-December 2025 - Sudan*. ReliefWeb.

The Central African Republic faces one of the highest poverty rates in the world as well as insecurity and logistical challenges; however, it offers legal protection through identity and travel documents. In 2025, the country will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to around 50,000 Sudanese refugees, of whom 20,000 are new arrivals, and around 2500 are returning nationals⁹¹.

Chad is among the largest refugee-hosting countries and provides reception to over 710,000 refugees and around 240,000 Chadian returnees who have crossed into Chad since April 2023. Despite withstanding complex development and peace challenges, the country prioritizes the construction of refugee sites and supplies aid through three steps, starting with a response to urgent needs at the border, followed by relocation to settlements, and finally promoting livelihood and inclusion by granting the same rights as Chadian nationals⁹².

South Sudan, one of the poorest countries in the world, has faced great impacts regarding the disruption of trade and severe inflation, as well as climate change, which increases flooding and poses health risks. Despite its challenges, the country offers asylum to those in need and aims to expand infrastructures and improve access to basic services, supporting around 1,000,000 refugees, of whom around 700,000 are South Sudanese returnees⁹³.

Ethiopia applies an open-door policy, which grants access to the territory to those fronting conflict in neighboring countries and is currently hosting around one million refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan. Since April 2023, around 70,000 individuals have crossed into Ethiopia seeking protection. The country promotes inclusion into national systems, and social cohesion, and ensures equitable access to needs and services such as education, healthcare, and employment. Although facing security matters of its own, Ethiopia is set on strengthening its role as a host community through cooperation and development⁹⁴.

⁹¹ Ibidem

⁹² Ibidem

⁹³ Ibidem

⁹⁴ Ibidem

Uganda, currently facing health emergencies, is still extremely generous in terms of its refugee policies and is already home to almost 1.7 million refugees, mostly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. The country, since April 2023, has provided settlements rather than refugee camps for around 62,000 refugees and has open policies that include freedom of movement, employment, and equitable access to national services⁹⁵.

Libya and Egypt, considered “middle-income countries” not only welcome refugees and asylum-seekers but also constitute countries of transit for migrants wishing to continue their journey elsewhere. Egypt is a country of extreme importance, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, and Libya is facing an increasing number of arrivals, which exacerbates challenges in terms of severe risks of exploitation and basic rights, and poses a threat to irregular migratory routes⁹⁶.

The Regional Refugee Response Plan demonstrates a comprehensive strategy to address the humanitarian crisis and includes coordination efforts from 111 partners, including UN agencies, NGOs, and neighboring countries, which, although facing their own extreme issues, still place a collective effort to provide protection and assistance to those in need. The aid aims to underscore the severity of the crisis and tackle urgent needs for international support to alleviate the suffering of not only the refugees and migrants but also to support the generosity of the countries providing help in all ways they can.

3.2 Global Migration Dynamics

3.2.1 Migratory Risk towards the European Union

It is undeniable that data continues to increase at an alarming rate as fighting and displacement continue, and the figures depict a potentially explosive situation, also in terms of irregular migratory flows towards Europe. With particular regard to the latter, it is crucial to highlight that Sudan lies along historical and contemporary migration routes and has traditionally presented a complex and diverse migration profile as a source,

⁹⁵ UNHCR. (2025, February 4). *Sudan Emergency Regional Refugee Response Plan, January-December 2025 - Sudan*. ReliefWeb.

⁹⁶ Ibidem

transit, and destination country at the center of these migration routes. Therefore, the country has always been influenced by the high level of mixed migration flows⁹⁷ within its borders, with migrants originating both from the country itself and, mainly, from the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea) on their way to North Africa, Europe, and beyond.

Therefore, due to its location and inadequate border control systems, particularly along its East and Northwest borders, Sudan has been, and remains, a major crossroads for hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants, driven by the search for better financial and economic opportunities, as the main push factor. Misinformation and lack of awareness about the risks of irregular migration were at least partly responsible for fueling smuggling through Sudan, and migrants have often experienced severe infringements of their basic human rights at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. Sudan has always lacked, and even more now due to the ongoing conflict, appropriate migration-related policies to implement good migration governance or technical capacity to effectively address growing national and regional migration management challenges. The main routes historically followed by migrants are northward to Egypt and north-westbound to Libya, followed as a third option by the west route to Chad and then north heading for the Mediterranean coasts⁹⁸. Libya has therefore become another highly targeted location for migrants, intending to reach Europe.

⁹⁷ Mixed migration is defined by IOM as follows: *“The principal characteristics of mixed migration flows include the irregular nature of and the multiplicity of factors driving such movements, and the differentiated needs and profiles of the persons involved. Mixed flows have been defined as ‘complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrant’. Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow.”*

⁹⁸ European Union External Action. (2018). *EU actions on Migration in Sudan* | EEAS. www.eeas.europa.eu.



Figure 3.3 – Source. Routes to Mediterranean Coasts from Sudan

To give a general overview of the phenomenon, the following table provides some figures regarding the migrant arrivals by sea to the Italian coast in the last ten years, mainly done through the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), one of the most active migration routes that connects North Africa to Southern Europe. The figures highlight the number of Sudanese nationals who irregularly landed as well as the number of Eritrean nationals, the latter due to the circumstance that, according to anecdotal evidence, mostly have transited through Sudan as part of their onward journey to Europe⁹⁹:

⁹⁹ Ministero dell'Interno. (2025). *Dati e statistiche*. Ministero Dell'Interno.

YEAR	SUDANESE MIGRANTS ARRIVED IN ITALY BY SEA	ERITREAN MIGRANTS ARRIVED IN ITALY BY SEA	TOTAL NUMBER OF MIGRANTS ARRIVED IN ITALY BY SEA
2014	3,139	34,329	170,100
2015	8,932	38,791	153,842
2016	9,327	20,718	181,436
2017	6,221	7,052	119,369
2018	1,619	3,320	23,370
2019	446	236	11,471
2020	1,125	643	34,154
2021	2,027	2,328	67,477
2022	1,058	2,101	105,129
2023	5,834	4,207	157,652
2024	2,137	2,130	66,317

Figure 3.4 – Source Italian Ministry of Interior. Number of Migrants Arrived in Italy by Sea 2014-2024

As mentioned above, the route Sudan-Egypt has traditionally been largely used by people on the move from the Horn of Africa. For instance, the movements of Sudanese migrants to Egypt date back to the nineteenth century when Sudan was part of Egypt under the British colonial protectorate. Until 1995, Sudanese nationals enjoyed visa-free entry into Egypt and many of the same rights as Egyptian nationals (e.g., right of employment, residence, free access to health and education, and the right to own property)¹⁰⁰. Although many restrictive measures put in place by the Egyptian government since the 1995 assassination attempt on pro-tempore Egyptian President Mubarak (allegedly by Sudanese Islamists), Egypt continues to be considered the preferred destination for Sudanese migrants, and hosts now about 4 million of them (with refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR Egypt being, until April 2023, about 55.000 and, since the onset of the conflict, increased more than tenfold to about 631,000)¹⁰¹.

Then, the departure by boat from the Egyptian north coasts was the ideal choice for migrants trying to irregularly reach Europe, and, until Autumn 2016, thousands of people - mostly Egyptians, Eritreans, and Sudanese - have migrated via the route shown above. Following the considerable strides in managing migrations made by the Egyptian

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR. (2023). *UNHCR Web Archive*. Unhcr.org.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR . (2025, January). *Documents & Reports - UNHCR Egypt*.

authorities in terms of legislative improvements¹⁰² and implementation of effective countermeasures, irregular flows by sea from Egypt to Europe have almost completely stopped, as seen below¹⁰³.

YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Migrants Landed	9,215	15,238	11,114	12,766	79	0	4	0	454	0	0	0

Figure 3.5 – Source Italian Ministry of Interior. Migrants Departed From Egypt

However, those seeking to leave have found other routes, and Sudanese migration routes have therefore evolved and become more diverse, mainly shifting towards Libya.

Currently, the majority of Sudanese coming to Libya are arriving in Alkufra, a largely desertic and sparsely populated area, and also a hub for migrants traveling from or transiting through Sudan or Chad on their way to Libyan coasts¹⁰⁴.

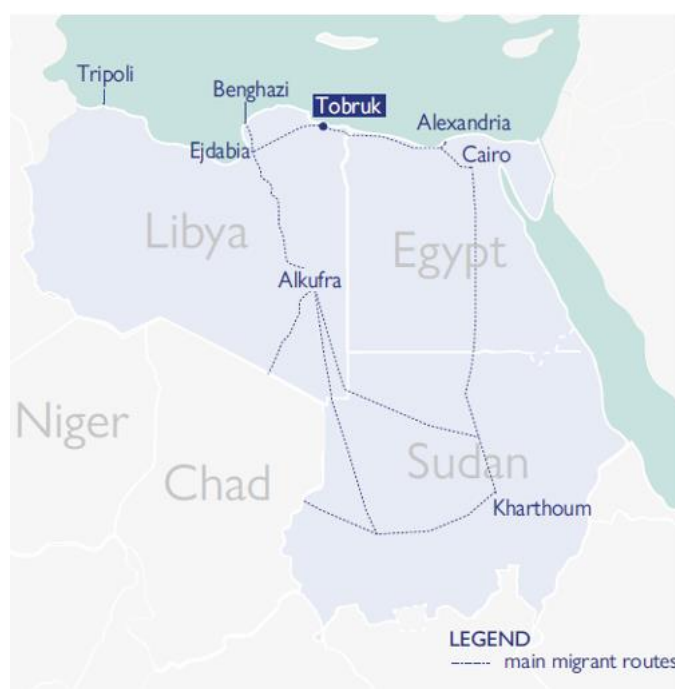


Figure 3.6 – Source IOM. Main Migrant Routes from Sudan to Egypt and Libya

¹⁰² In 2016 Egypt issued law n.82 regarding “Combating Illegal Migration and Smuggling of Migrants”, which now criminalizes smuggling and trafficking, actions which were not recognized by the Egyptian penal code before.

¹⁰³ Ministero dell’Interno. (2025). *Dati e statistiche*. Ministero Dell’Interno.

¹⁰⁴ To a lesser extent, Sudanese nationals arriving in Libya follow the land route from Egypt through the desert areas surrounding Sallum/Emasaed, the Egyptian-Libyan land border crossing point on the Mediterranean shores.

Due to the irregular nature of entry, it remains challenging to provide an accurate number of Sudanese refugees, and, given the highly fluid situation, the figures are likely to change and increase from one week to the next. UN organizations - present in Alkufra to provide lifesaving assistance to refugees in support of the local authorities and host communities - contribute to drawing up estimates on the number of migrants who have arrived. The assistance includes strengthening access to healthcare, improving living conditions through the distribution of relief supplies, and supporting access to documentation provided by local authorities to improve freedom of movement and protection.

UNHCR calculates that over 240,000 Sudanese refugees have arrived in Libya since April 2023, including approximately 42,500 individuals who were registered post-conflict, bringing the total number of Sudanese registered by UNHCR at its registration center in Tripoli to around 62,200, averaging 400 to 500 new arrivals per day¹⁰⁵.

During the period between November-December 2024, IOM Libya's Displacement Tracking Matrix program also observed the continued arrival of Sudanese nationals in Alkufra and other locations in eastern Libya due to the ongoing conflict in their country of origin. The report shows that, out of about 824,000 migrants identified by DTM as living in Libya, 81% are nationals from four neighboring countries: Sudan (about 241,000, meaning 29% out of the total), Niger (about 187,000, meaning 23%), Egypt (about 163,000 - 20%), and Chad (about 81,000 - 10%)¹⁰⁶.

It is crucial to highlight that the number of Sudanese reported to be living in Libya was 207,000 according to IOM DTM for the period August-October 2024, witnessing a dramatic increase in the number of arrivals¹⁰⁷. The DTM report also outlines the different routes taken by migrants and the percentage of migrants who use these routes, as well as the average cost of each route and the means of transportation used. As to the Sudanese nationals:

¹⁰⁵ UNHCR. (2025, February 9). *Sudanese Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Libya*. UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP).

¹⁰⁶ IOM. (2025, April 2). *Migrant Report Key Findings 55 (November - December 2024) | Displacement Tracking Matrix*. Iom.int.

¹⁰⁷ IOM. (2025). *Migrant Report Key Findings 54 (August - October 2024) | Displacement Tracking Matrix*. Iom.int

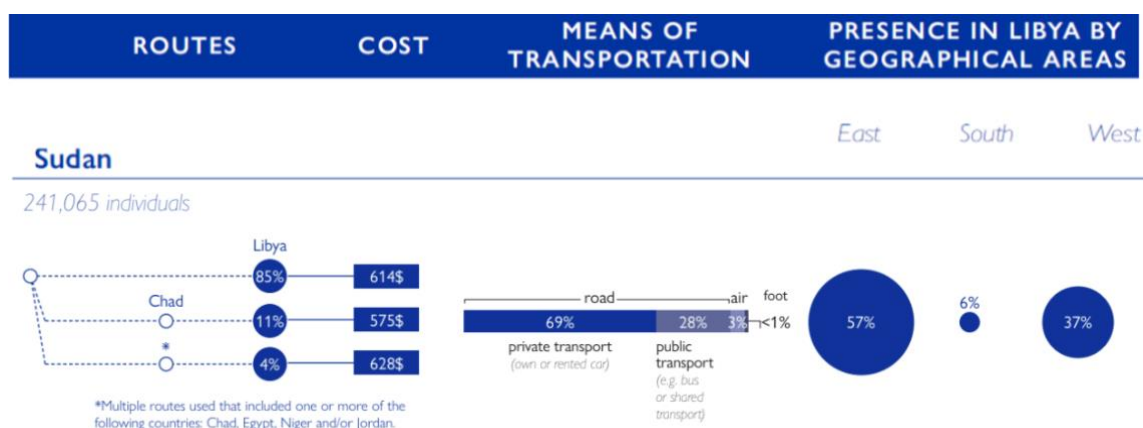


Figure 3.7 – Source IOM. Routes taken by Sudanese Migrants from Sudan to Libya

The continued arrival of Sudanese people has significantly strained health, WASH, shelter, and food systems in Alkufra/eastern Libya area, creating concerns about reception. The harsh conditions faced by refugees and host communities in Alkufra, the increased cost of living due to disrupted supply chains, and the substandard living conditions have therefore represented, and represent, a strong reason for the Sudanese migrants to move north toward coastal cities.

An assessment was conducted by IOM in April 2024 on the situation of Sudanese nationals in the Libyan municipality of Tobruk (a town on Mediterranean shores about 150 km away from the Libyan/Egyptian border), verifying that most were coming directly from Alkufra and a minority traveling from Egypt¹⁰⁸. According to the report, the Sudanese population in Tobruk had increased significantly since the onset of the conflict and almost doubled (about 2,300 people in April 2024 compared to February 2024). Even if, according to key informants and interviews, most Sudanese individuals reported their intention to stay in Tobruk (or to a lesser degree to relocate to Benghazi and Tripoli), the lack of access to essential services, job opportunities, legal assistance, and accommodation constituted, and continue to constitute, substantial push factors to cross the Mediterranean, and more and more from the eastern rather than the traditional western part of the Libyan coast.

¹⁰⁸ IOM. (2024). *Tobruk Rapid Needs Assessment*. IOM.

This trend skyrockets as a consequence of certain decisions taken by the Libyan authority, such as the order issued on 5 January 2025 by the Ministry of Interior/Anti-illegal immigration agency of the Libyan government in charge, calling on the owners of companies, factories, and shops to settle and legalize the conditions of their expatriate workers before the end of January 2025, and not to employ any of them without official documents¹⁰⁹.



Figure 3.8 - Source Libyan Today. Order of Libyan Government in Charge to Legalize Conditions of Foreign Workers

Thus, a new route has progressively become popular with smuggling gangs in the past months: more and more migrant boats are setting off from the Tobruk area to reach the Greek islands of Gavdos and Crete, turned now into a gateway.

¹⁰⁹ Amgad. (2025, January 21). *Libya sets deadline for “undocumented” Sudanese refugees* - Dabanga Radio TV Online. Dabanga Radio TV Online; Radio Dabanga.



Figure 3.9 – Source IOM. Route from Tobruk to Greece

The non-profit organization Refugee Support Aegean collected figures on migrant arrivals in Crete and Gavdos in 2024, cross-checking data from official announcements by the Hellenic Coast Guard, local authorities, and reports in local and national media. According to this data, about 5,200 migrants - mostly Egyptian, Syrian, and Sudanese - arrived in Crete and Gavdos in 2024 across 103 landing events, departing from the Libyan coast, and specifically the Tobruk area, which is approximately 180 nautical miles away from southern Crete¹¹⁰. On 24 January 2025, InfoMigrants¹¹¹ reported that during the preceding week, more than 200 migrants (mainly from Bangladesh, Egypt, and Sudan) have arrived on the Greek island of Crete and neighboring Gavdos from the Libyan coast¹¹².

¹¹⁰ RSA. (2025, January 30). *Crete - Gavdos: Sixfold increase in refugee arrivals in 2024 - Lack of organised first reception and accommodation infrastructure* - R.S.A.

¹¹¹ InfoMigrants is a collaboration led by three major European media sources: France Médias Monde (France 24, Radio France Internationale, Monte Carlo Doualiya), the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle, and the Italian press agency ANSA. InfoMigrants is co-financed by the European Union.

¹¹² InfoMigrants. (2025, January 24). *Greece: More than 200 migrants arrive on Crete in last week*. InfoMigrants.

According to the UNHCR operational data portal, which collected data from the Greek Government, 1,575 Sudanese arrived by sea to Greece in 2024 (presumably from Libyan shores), and, from January 1st to February 16th 2025, the arrival of 973 migrants to Crete has been recorded¹¹³.

Finally, the data related to the top ten nationalities that irregularly arrived by sea in Italy in 2025 - even if the first two positions are by far taken by Bangladesh and Pakistan - include Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese nationals, likely departed from Libya after having transited through Sudan¹¹⁴.

Arrivals by Boat in Italy in 2025 (as of April 8, 2025)

NATIONALITY	NUMBER
Bangladesh	4,155
Pakistan	1,454
Syria	883
Egypt	1,109
Eritrea	785
Ethiopia	450
Algeria	166
Tunisia	241
Sudan	489
Afghanistan	105
Others	1,158
TOTAL	10,995

Figure 3.10 – Source Italian Ministry of Interior. Migrant Arrivals in Italy

Assessments, reports, and the collected data therefore suggest that mixed cross-border flows are likely to continue over the coming months and that displacements should be marked by high protection risks, including smuggling and trafficking in persons. The

¹¹³ UNHCR. (2024). *Situation Europe Sea Arrivals*. Unhcr.org. Operational Data Portal (ODP).

¹¹⁴ Ministero dell'Interno. (2025). *Dati e statistiche*. Ministero Dell'Interno.

protracted lack of basic services and continued need of humanitarian and protection assistance is a critical element that constitutes an ever-increasing cause of movements of people fleeing the ongoing civil war in Sudan and looking for better and safer opportunities.

It is therefore clear that the migration dynamics triggered by the conflict in Sudan constitute a problem not only for neighboring countries but have also extended far beyond the region, towards Europe, intensifying humanitarian needs. The regional instability is highlighted by the evolving and diversified migratory routes, which have shifted from Egypt to Libya, including the emergence of the Tobruk-Greece corridor. The fragile transit states lack adequate protection services, and the migrants stranded deepen the humanitarian crisis. Libya has now taken and reiterated its major role as a launching point towards Europe, depicting how the Sudanese conflict is far from strictly regional, and generates a ripple effect that reaches the shores of Europe. The illegal and irregular migratory routes are driven by social, economic, and political conflicts, and the situation constitutes a pressing issue both regionally and internationally, resulting in displacement, which requires multilateral and international responses on behalf of organizations in terms of humanitarian aid and solutions for stability.

3.2.1 EU Policy Documents

The European Union, considering the growing migration challenges, has developed a series of comprehensive policies and agreements to manage both migration and asylum, which aspires to balance responsibility-sharing among member states while maintaining collaborations with non-EU actors open and upholding human rights.

In November 2015, after the explosion in terms of migration arrivals from North Africa as a consequence of political instability and, particularly, as a side-effect of the Arab Spring, a Summit on Migration took place in Valletta, Malta. European and African Heads of State and Governments gathered around the objective of strengthening cooperation between the two continents. In order to create a spirit of solidarity, partnership, and shared responsibility, the adoption of two texts took place: a political declaration and the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP). The declaration highlighted the

concern of the participants, the States, and organizations, in terms of the humanitarian consequences of irregular migration, as well as portraying the commitment towards improving and managing migratory routes. The JVAP, concretely laid down five priority domains to enhance migration governance between Europe and Africa, becoming the regional framework to address migration policy by focusing on strategic partnerships towards a collective prosperous migratory situation:¹¹⁵



Figure 3.10 – Source Joint Valletta Action Plan. Main Objectives

The Valletta Summit on Migration also saw the launch of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), through the signature of the Constitutive Agreement by the European Commission, 25 EU Member States, Norway, and Switzerland. The EUTF saw the implementation of programs in 26 partner countries across Sahel and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa, and North Africa, amounting to EUR 5 billion in total. The activities under the EUTF covered different spheres, including broadening economic and employment opportunities, resilience projects aimed at improving food security, migration management in terms of providing security for local communities and refugees, and governance and security, including conflict-prevention systems. In December 2020, the Constitutive Agreement for the EUTF for Africa was amended to extend the end date of

¹¹⁵ *Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) - European Commission. (n.d.). Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu.*

the Trust Fund to December 31, 2021, therefore, since January 1, 2022, the EUTF for Africa is not funding any new programs. Nonetheless, programs approved before this date will continue being implemented until December 31, 2025¹¹⁶.

As of September 2024, the EU has introduced a Pact on Migration and Asylum, which establishes a unified approach to migration management. The adoption of the new rules on migration policies, upon entering into force, will enter into application in 2026. The four pillars of this legislative package include secure external borders, fast and efficient procedures, effective systems of solidarity and responsibility, and embedding migration in international partnerships¹¹⁷. The first pillar entails robust pre-entry screenings, standardizing procedures to ensure identification, a border and return procedure for applicants not eligible for international protection, and crisis regulation, which provides operational support in emergency situations. The second pillar entails clear asylum rules, stating the responsibility of Member States to handle applications, guarantee people's rights, and ensure adequate conditions, requiring obligations of beneficiaries and preventing abuses, as well as consequences of non-compliance. The third pillar covers the new framework to ensure the receipt of solidarity, operational and financial support, clearer rules in terms of responsibility, and preventing secondary movements of migrants. The last pillar focuses on preventing irregular departures, fighting against smuggling, and developing legal migration pathways¹¹⁸.

This framework demonstrates the EU's strategy in terms of migration management by collaborating both amongst MS and other transit countries. Collateral initiatives were implemented to develop fact-based migration policies and share good practices. As an example of regional dialogues put in place to tackle the root causes of irregular migratory routes, combat human trafficking and smuggling, and promote legal and orderly pathways, the Khartoum Process was launched in November 2014, in Rome, Italy, which acts as a platform made for political cooperation amongst the countries along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁶ *European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa)*. (2015). Migration and Home Affairs.

¹¹⁷ European Commission. (2024, May 21). *Pact on Migration and Asylum*. European Commission.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*

¹¹⁹ *Khartoum Process | Official Website*. (2024). Khartoum Process.

As per the launching of the Rome Declaration, and considering its area of focus, the Khartoum Process has expanded its scope to address concerns within the same domains of the JVAP, functioning as a suitable mechanism to monitor the implementation of the policies, as a result of the ever-changing nature of the challenges and realities of migration. The political sphere of the Khartoum Process includes Steering Committee Meetings and Senior Official Meetings, whereas the technical sphere involves Thematic Meetings, Thematic Workshops, and Training. On April 9, 2025, a Ministerial Conference took place in Cairo, Egypt, marking the tenth anniversary of the Khartoum Process¹²⁰. The event reflected on the achievements, highlights, and statistical insights of the past decade and explored the future direction of the Dialogue. A key outcome was the adoption of the Cairo Ministerial Declaration and the Cairo Action Plan, which will serve as strategic guidelines for the years ahead. Shown below is an extract of the Cairo Action Plan, to demonstrate the main points discussed and priorities set for the upcoming years:

Cairo Action Plan

The Khartoum Process Partners agree on the following approaches and cross-cutting priorities to be mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the Cairo Ministerial Declaration, in order to further promote a holistic approach in the governance of migration and forced displacement:

- **A regional and whole-of-route approach:** the identification, formulation and implementation of actions will take into account local and regional specificities. In addition, the Khartoum Process Partners will take into account migration and forced displacement patterns and trends along the whole routes, from countries of origin, transit and destination;
- **An inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach:** the Partners will apply a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and seek to involve all relevant actors as well as relevant international organisations, to ensure coordinated and orderly management of all dimensions of migration and forced displacement;
- **A human rights-based approach:** the implemented actions will contribute to fully respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights and dignity of all people, including migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced persons as well as victims of trafficking in human beings, particularly those in vulnerable situations;
- **Racism, discrimination and xenophobia:** particular attention will be paid to the fight against racism, discrimination and xenophobia all along the route, and to promoting a balanced and a fact-based narrative on migration and diasporas, while recognising that regular migrants and diaspora contribute to the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination;
- **Inclusive and sensitive approach for groups in vulnerable situations:** Particular attention will be paid to the issues of gender and the protection of groups in vulnerable situations, including women at risk and children;

Figure 3.11 – Source Khartoum Process. Cairo Action Plan Major Points Discussed

¹²⁰ *Egypt chairs Second Ministerial Meeting of the Khartoum Process on Wednesday - Foreign Affairs - Egypt.* (2025, April 8). Ahram Online .

In terms of European cooperation on migration in Sudan, there is a human rights approach at the heart of the EU interventions. Cooperation is based on three primary goals: issuing durable provisions for migrants, refugees, and IDPs, upgrading community resilience, and tackling human trafficking and smuggling networks. No direct funding is provided to the Government of Sudan¹²¹, yet projects are funded through either international organizations or NGOs. Sudan reflects both the JVAP and Khartoum Process, as the EU has established a High-Level Dialogue on Migration. The initiatives on behalf of the EU include access to healthcare, education, and food security, as well as direct regional programs and projects on addressing migration governance¹²². Through the targeted interventions, the EU is able to address core issues of irregular migration while balancing humanitarian needs.

This chapter portrays the far-reaching consequences of the migration crisis originating from the Sudanese conflict, affecting not only the nation but neighboring countries as well, and recently, regions beyond Africa. Europe finds itself amid the migratory flows, where the neighboring countries of Sudan act as a transit hub for migrants and refugees seeking better humanitarian conditions in the EU. The fragile humanitarian challenges, therefore, amplify regional instability, and both the EU and the MENA region find themselves collaborating to implement migration policies and collective frameworks to address the crisis at its roots. In order to properly handle one of the most pressing crises globally, the humanitarian response must balance between short-term urgent needs and long-term stability, requiring cross-border cooperation, consistent funding, and comprehensive policies.

¹²¹ Starting in 2015 and 2016 and convinced of the RSF's effectiveness as a paramilitary force, the Sudanese government designated the RSF as Sudan's primary force tasked with patrolling Sudanese borders to interdict migrants' movement. The RSF mainly assumed this function at borders with Libya and Chad, being then accused of having become a central player in the migration business, controlling border crossings and extorting money from migration facilitators and migrants. Recalling the policy carried out in the last decade by the European Union based on cooperating with non-European actors to control migration far from European shores, the EU consolidated its cooperation with the government of Sudan in the area of development, humanitarian aid and the control of migratory flows from and through Sudan. In this framework, activists and researchers accused the EU of "hiding" the impact of its funding to the Sudanese government, considering that, within this partnership, the RSF was positioned to receive, at least indirectly, financial benefits for its controversial action of reducing the flows of migrants from Sudan to Europe.

¹²² European Union External Action. (2018). *EU actions on Migration in Sudan* | EEAS.

Conclusion

The central inquiry addressed in this thesis is: “How has the Sudanese crisis, shaped by internal power struggles, exacerbated humanitarian challenges regionally and internationally?”, seeking to unravel the intricacy of Sudan’s ongoing conflict and its far-reaching implications. This research question critically explores the intersection of humanitarian challenges stemming from internal political dynamics and their resulting global implications, with a focus on the humanitarian responses to these issues.

The origins of the current crisis arise from the nation’s tempestuous past. Sudan’s independence from the Anglo-Egyptian condominium and the historical North-South tensions created cultural differences that remain still to this day, followed by civil wars and internal conflicts, which exemplify a state fractured by internal divisions. The socio-political landscape further compounded the situation, afflicted by prolonged military coups and authoritarian regimes. These historical fissures establish the perfect unstable environment for groups like the RSF and SAF to rise to power, where the perpetuating cycles of precariousness and vulnerability continue to keep the nation and its population in a state of crisis.

Approximately 70% of the population currently requires urgent assistance. The conflict has aggravated an already alarming humanitarian situation, where challenges are staggering: mass displacement, severe food scarcity affecting 25 million people, inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene services, escalating health epidemics, and a 100% increase in gender-based violence. These issues, alongside swamping the nation, are surging into neighboring countries: the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, and Uganda are straining their meager resources and infrastructures to provide aid, despite facing their own daunting challenges.

Responding to the current crisis has been a crucial objective of international organizations, and response measures such as displacement tracking and capacity-building programs provide both direct assistance and aim to find long-term solutions to address the needs of refugees and migrants. Egypt, due to its geographical position, plays

a pivotal role in addressing the crisis by serving as both a destination and transit country. Through partnerships with other countries, host governments, and international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR, the nation coordinates humanitarian assistance and manages migratory routes, taking an approach that encompasses both providing direct assistance upon arrival to refugees and migrants and also helping navigate the complexities of displacement and migration. Alongside the main UN bodies, non-governmental organizations, associations, and regional agencies partnered to approach the crisis, focusing on tackling specific areas. The organizations, however, encountered issues and logistical challenges due to the extreme funding needed and political barriers that hindered the initiatives. Particularly, there is a lack of global action in terms of coordinated responses to tackle the roots of the issues, where instead of ensuring sustainable solutions, responses aim to tackle immediate emergencies.

It is crucial to underline that, due to the dynamic aspect of the conflict, the numbers are constantly evolving and continuing to prove my initial thesis regarding the exacerbation of humanitarian challenges. Given the rapid pace of change, the statistics shift daily, and it is impractical to track real-time updates. However, the overarching trend highlights a steady escalation in the severity of the conflict. This thesis, written within the period from January 2025 to May 2025, has evidenced this progression; since the beginning, the number of displaced persons has changed from 11,3 million to 12,7 million, as given by the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix and the UNHCR Operational Data Portal.

The future of the population of Sudan remains uncertain. People, although eager to return home, encounter unsafe and unsustainable conditions, making integration extremely burdensome. Hunger, violence, and fear persist, and after two years of war, marked on April 15, 2025, peace is farther than imagined. As time passes, more groups are becoming involved in the conflict, which entails a more complex peace deal that needs to address multiple interests. The war is continuing to shift, from fighting for the faction's political demands to fighting for the protection of and maintenance of civilian communities¹²³. The SAF has recently regained control of the capital, and Darfur continues to be the region most largely controlled by the paramilitary, the RSF, intensifying the battlefield.

¹²³ Holleis, J. (2025, April 13). *After 2 years of war, Sudan no closer to peace*. Dw.com; Deutsche Welle

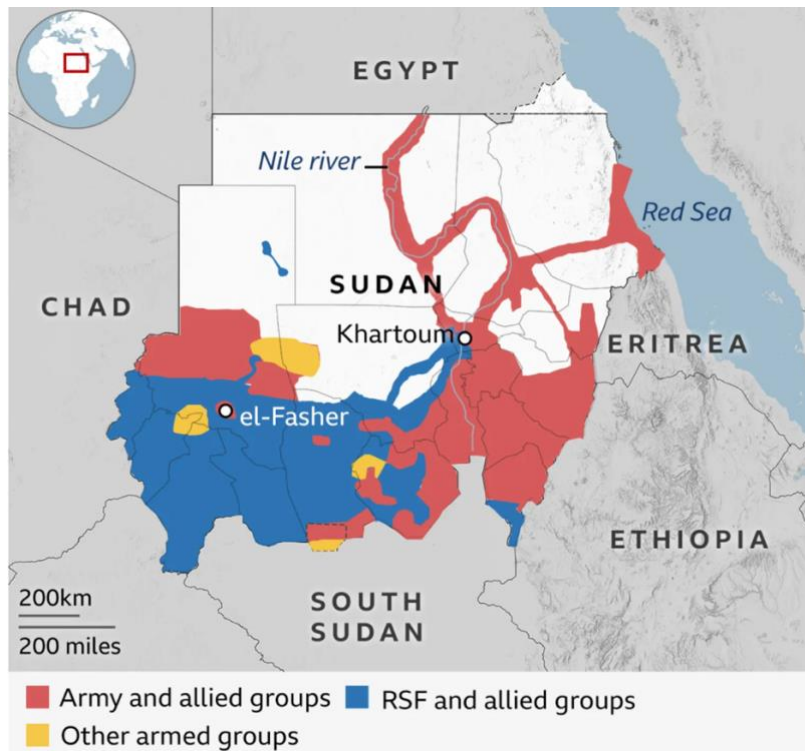


Figure 4.1 – Source BBC. Military Control Over Sudan by Different Factions

To conclusively answer the research question, the Sudanese crisis, as a result of entrenched internal power struggles, has exacerbated humanitarian challenges by causing mass displacement and migration, which strained international aid systems and, in turn, destabilized regional security and transformed a national conflict into a widespread global crisis. International organizations such as IOM and UNHCR have mobilized significant resources, and the European Union has implemented comprehensive strategies to address the matters arising from the crisis; both their responses highlight achievements and challenges. While critical support to displaced populations and host communities has been provided, including emergency shelter, food security measures, and legal protection, gaps in funding, coordination, and long-term sustainability remain pressing issues. In a crisis of this complexity, the attempt to address underlying issues and regional stability must meet the urgent humanitarian demands. Drawing from these efforts, it is crucial to underscore the necessity for continuous adaptation and enhanced cooperation among international actors to mitigate the profound and far-reaching effects of the Sudanese conflict and avert such crises in the future.

Acronyms

AU – African Union
ARTI – Acute Respiratory Tract Infection
ARMP – Africa Regional Migration Program
AWD – Acute Watery Diarrhea
CMR – Central Mediterranean Route
CPA – Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRP – Crisis Response Plan
DTM – Displacement Tracking Matrix
DUP – Democratic Unionist Party
EU – European Union
EUTF – The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
FRC – Famine Review Committee
GAM – Global Acute Malnutrition
JEM – Justice and Equality Movement
JPMR – Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt
JVAP – Joint Valletta Action Plan
ICC – International Criminal Court
IDP – Internally Displaced People
IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority of Development
IO – International Organizations
IOM – International Organization for Migration
IPC – Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MENA – Middle East and North Africa
MS – Member States
NCP – National Congress Party
NCD – Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OTP – One-Time Password
PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RRP – Regional Refugee Response Plan
RSF – Rapid Support Forces

SAF – Sudanese Armed Forces
SANU – Sudan African National Union
SLM/A – Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A – Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army
SSLM – Southern Sudan Liberation Movement
UN – United Nations
UNAMID – United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

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