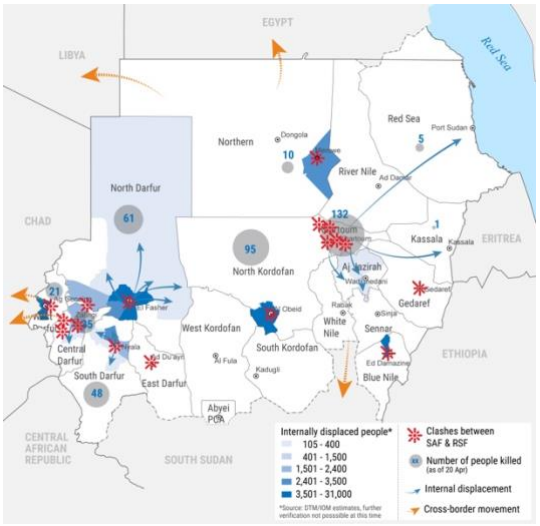
Sudan: Clashes between SAF and RSF
Flash Update No. 5
23 April 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continued on 23 April for a ninth consecutive day.
- At least 427 people have been killed and over 3,700 injured due to the conflict.
- Prices of essential items are sharply increasing due to shortages.
- At least 11 health facilities have been attacked and many are no longer functional in Khartoum and Darfur States.
- Civilians are fleeing areas affected by fighting, including to Chad, Egypt and South Sudan.
- Several humanitarian organizations have evacuated or relocated their staff from locations where operations are not currently feasible, but efforts are ongoing to respond wherever and whenever feasible.



SITUATION OVERVIEW

Despite renewed calls for a ceasefire, especially for Eid al-Fitr, clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that erupted on 15 April 2023 continued on 23 April, with unverified reports indicating clashes intensified in Bahri and Omdurman on 22 April. At least 427 people have been killed nationwide, and more than 3,700 people are injured, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 21 April.

Acute shortages of food, water, medicines and fuel, and limited access to communications and electricity, continue to be reported. Prices of essential items, as well as transport, when and where available, are sharply increasing. WHO has verified 11 attacks on health-care facilities since the start of the fighting. The remaining facilities in Khartoum and Darfur states are stretched beyond capacity and nearly non-functional due to staff fatigue and lack of supplies.

Displacement of civilians has been reported in Khartoum, Northern, Blue Nile, North Kordofan, North Darfur, West Darfur and South Darfur states, and cross-border movements from Sudan to Chad, Egypt and South Sudan have been observed.

At least 238 South Sudanese people have returned from Sudan to South Sudan through Renk, according to IOM's DTM, although this figure is expected to rise in the days ahead. There are also unconfirmed reports of cross-border movement through Northern State to Egypt.

In North Darfur, about 3,500 to 3,750 people (700 to 750 households) have reportedly been displaced from multiple villages across Tawila locality fleeing their areas in fear of insecurity. Those displaced are currently seeking shelter in the Rwanda and Dali camps for displaced people in Tawila locality, according to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Additionally, clashes between SAF and RSF on 21 April in Al Fasher town, caused more displacement.

In Aj Jazirah State, from 21 April 2023, about 500 to 750 people (100 to 150 households) were reportedly displaced following clashes in Albageer East, Benuie, Al-Mahali, and En Nuba villages across Al Kamlin locality. Those who fled took shelter in the locations of Al-Zuobier Mohamed Salih, Al Sinaat, and Atlas schools as well as Dar Al Salam Mosque in Dar Al Salam town within the same locality, according to IOM's DTM.

In Blue Nile, inter-communal clashes reportedly erupted between Hausa and Funj communities in Village 8 of Geisan locality on 21 April, leading to nine deaths and four injuries. Between 4,000 and 4,500 people have reportedly been displaced from the village to Al-Gassam neighbourhood in Ed Damazine town. However, there have been preliminary reports of modest returns to Village 8, according to IOM's DTM.

There are also preliminary reports of at least 300 people fleeing from Khartoum arriving in Gedaref State, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), who were trying to gather supplies before continuing to Port Sudan. Those arriving reportedly said that nowhere was safe in Khartoum any longer and that lack of food and exorbitant fuel prices were adding to people's challenges.

Reports of sexual and gender-based violence are surfacing and UN Women has called on all parties to ensure that no woman or girl is affected by these crimes, and on all actors to spare no effort to mitigate the increased risk. There must be no impunity and every instance of sexual and gender-based violence must be investigated and prosecuted without exception.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The conflict has forced humanitarians to halt operations in multiple areas and, on 23 April, evacuations of humanitarian personnel were undertaken from multiple locations. Two humanitarian agencies—the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)—have suspended their programmes in Sudan following killings of their staff members.

Partners are, however, striving to deliver whenever and wherever feasible and a humanitarian leadership team will remain in Sudan to oversee operations. On 22 April, WHO and partners distributed fuel to one of the main hospitals in Khartoum, with more distributions planned for 23 April. Trauma kits are also planned to be distributed in Aj Jazirah State on 23 April, from the warehouse in Port Sudan, and to Khartoum once the situation allows. WHO is ready to deploy additional emergency medical supplies, such as blood bags, trauma and emergency health kits to meet the urgent health needs, as previously pre-positioned supplies have been rapidly consumed due to the heavy trauma load.

In the meantime, there have been additional reports of looting of humanitarian supplies and warehouses, and humanitarian leadership and partners continue to urgently call on all parties to respect and not attack humanitarian personnel and assets. In addition to other agencies previously reported, the fighting has affected UNHCR offices and staff residences in Khartoum and Darfur, including stray bullets, mortars and looting.

Intensive advocacy continues for the protection of civilians, with humanitarian leadership calling for humanitarian pauses and cessation of hostilities to allow civilians to move to safety, replenish their supplies and access basic services.

BACKGROUND ON HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN SUDAN

Before the conflict erupted, humanitarian needs across Sudan had reached record levels, with 15.8 million people—about a third of the total population—requiring humanitarian assistance, according to the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). This is 1.5 million more people in need of humanitarian assistance than in 2022, the highest since 2011. About 4 million children under age 5 and pregnant and lactating women (PLW)—a quarter of the people in need of assistance—will be malnourished and need lifesaving nutrition services in 2023. Prior to the current conflict, humanitarian organizations aimed to reach 12.5 million of the most vulnerable nationwide with some form of humanitarian assistance. However, under-resourcing was a major constraint, with the Humanitarian Response Plan just 13.5 per cent funded.