

Sudan Regional Crisis

EMERGENCY SITUATION UPDATE
DECEMBER 2023

OVERVIEW

Throughout December 2023, conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) escalated, with the RSF gaining ground and intensifying its offensive towards the east. This expansion led to attacks on several towns in Al Jazira, including Wad Madani – the country’s second-largest city, Al Hasahisa, Elkamleen, Rufaa, Fadasi, and Elguteyna. Confrontations between the SAF and RSF were also observed in West Kordofan, Nyala, South Darfur, and around El Fasher. While the potential expansion of RSF activities to Sennar, Kassala, and Gedaref remains uncertain, the current trajectory suggests the RSF will continue its offensive until it encounters significant resistance. As a result, the stability and safety of these regions remains in question.

Against this backdrop of intensifying conflict, the number of people internally displaced within **SUDAN** has surpassed six million people. The month of December saw an increase of over 600,000 IDPs, primarily driven by new waves of displacement from Al Jazira and other states to Sennar, Blue Nile, Gadaref, Kassala, Atbara, and Port Sudan. Most of Relief International’s staff in Al Jazira state have been relocated to the Blue Nile office.

In neighbouring **SOUTH SUDAN**, over 473,000 arrivals from Sudan were recorded by the end of 2023, with an increase observed towards the end of December due to the situation in Sudan. Of the total arrivals, only 163,000 people have been supported with onward movement from Joda to Renk, Renk to Malakal and Malakal to various states. This is prolonging a growing backlog of people in Renk and Malakal waiting to reach their destinations of choice.

In **CHAD**, the number of arrivals has nearly surpassed half a million, with mainly Sudanese populations seeking refuge in Ouddai, Sila, Wadi Fira, and Ennedi Est provinces. Around 217,000 people have been relocated with support from UNHCR away from border areas to Alacha, Metché, Farchana extension and Touloum refugee sites in Sila, Ouaddai, and Wadi-Fira provinces. However, at least 150,000 refugees still live in makeshift shelters in border areas, particularly in Adré and Ouaddai, with additional resources urgently needed to establish new sites.



Relief International WASH team distributing NFI items to IDPs in Zamzam camp, 19 December 2023



RELIEF INTERNATIONAL'S RESPONSE

SUDAN

Throughout December, Relief International continued to collaborate closely with the State Ministry of Health (SMoH), Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), community members, and other stakeholders. Focus remains on ensuring prompt delivery of primary health, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services to vulnerable groups in North Darfur, Blue Nile, and Al Jazira states. In North Darfur, Relief International remains closely engaged with SMOH on the development of a Cholera response action plan.

In response to the security situation in Al Jazira, Relief International also initiated an emergency response in Sennar state on 31 December. Two mobile clinics were established in Sennar and Singa, delivering emergency assistance for health, nutrition, WASH, and protection to over 86,000 individuals displaced from Wad Madani. Relief International is also actively engaging with the Gender-based Violence (GBV) Working Group in Sennar state, coordinating with UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, and relevant government entities. In addition to expanding operations to Sennar, Relief International is working closely with River Nile and Red Sea authorities to initiate activities to meet immediate needs on the ground. MSNAs are underway in Sennar, River Nile and Red Sea to gain a further understanding of humanitarian needs and enable an evidence based response.

Relief International is supporting 41 health facilities to deliver integrated health, nutrition and WASH services; 31 in North Darfur, six in Blue Nile and four in Al Jazira. During December, Relief International support impacted 64,532 people across the regions (50,577 in North Darfur, 5,484 in Blue Nile, and 8,471 in Al Jazirah), broken down as follows:

- 31,642 patient consultations at Relief International-supported health facilities, covering communicable and non-communicable diseases, injuries, and mental health.
- 2,974 pregnant women attended antenatal clinics and 769 deliveries were attended by skilled attendants.
- 1,996 individuals were screened for

malnutrition.

- 27,151 people received hygiene support, including WASH items, safe water, and hand-washing facilities.

SOUTH SUDAN

Within South Sudan, the situation in Renk remains highly concerning given increasing returnee and Sudanese refugee arrivals. Shelter, health, nutrition, WASH, and food needs remain critically high and unmet. Relief International continues to provide critical integrated health, WASH, and nutrition services across Renk, Melut, and Maban. Key support during December 2023 includes:

- 6,341 outpatient consultations conducted in Renk. Leading causes of morbidity include Acute Respiratory tract infection (ARI), Acute Watery diarrhoea (AWD), and malaria.
- Routine immunizations provided to 1,477 children in Renk.
- Essential sexual and reproductive health services delivered, with 793 pregnant women receiving antenatal care services from experienced midwives and 121 deliveries attended by skilled birth attendants in Renk TC.
- 1,845 children under five (1636 in Renk, 209 in Maban) and 625 pregnant and lactating women (588 in Renk, 37 in Maban) were screened for malnutrition.



Relief International Rapid Response team visit at one of the gathering points in the Sennar State, December 2023



RELIEF INTERNATIONAL'S RESPONSE - CONTINUED

In addition to the above, Relief International continues to conduct disease surveillance at both community and health facilities. Staff are trained in cholera case management and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and rapid response teams have been established to help detect and manage suspected cases. In December, nine (6 Renk, 3 Maban) suspected cholera cases were tested, of which 4 (1 Renk, 3 Maban) were positive. In Renk, the suspected case was sent to Renk Hospital's Cholera Treatment Unit (CTU) supported by MSF, while in Maban, the cases were managed in Gentil and Doro PHCC+ isolation centers. Two samples (1 Renk and 1 Maban) were sent to Juba for confirmation at the National Public Health Laboratory; the results were negative. Oral rehydration points have been established in Renk clinic to manage simple cases of AWD.

Following a number of children with blood in urine reported at Renk emergency clinic, Relief International notified WHO in early December to conduct an investigation. Subsequently WHO deployed a team and eight cases of schistosomiasis were confirmed. Relief International is facilitating the transportation of 2000 Praziquantel tablets donated by South Sudan Ministry of Health to initiate the management of Schistosomiasis in coordination with WHO.

In Maban, measles cases continue to be reported in Doro camps. By the end of December, 289 cases and one death have been reported. To mitigate further escalation, Relief International conducted a measles vaccination campaign in December across four refugee camps. 520 children received Measles vaccinations and Vitamin A supplementation, and 496 children received deworming tablets.

To support service delivery in the expanded Renk Transit Centre, Relief International has received a plot and will start constructing a second clinic in January 2024. Meanwhile, Relief International is supporting the relocation of over 150 arrivals from Renk to Maban, including pre-travel screening of all individuals and allocation of an ambulance and nurse to accompany the convoy.

CHAD

Since gaining official registration in Chad in November, Relief International continues to progress it's cross-border response operations into Sudan. Additional internationally procured medicines and medical supplies have been received in N'djamena and will be transported to North Darfur in January to ensure uninterrupted provision of health services in El Fasher and other areas. Meanwhile, work is ongoing to mobilize funding for activities targeting refugees and host communities within eastern Chad, building on the recently conducted needs assessment.

Relief International completed a multi-sectoral needs assessment (MSNA) in Sila and Ouaddai provinces in November and December 2023. Three camps were assessed in each, Zabout, Djabal, and Gozimir in Sila and Ourang, Metché, and Arkooum in Ouaddai province. The assessment has enabled the identification of key needs across health, nutrition, WASH, food security and livelihoods, cash and protection in order to shape evidence-based proposals and response planning, and highlights equally critical needs among host communities as well as refugees.



Gender-based Violence Working Group in Sennar state, December 2023



RI staff members in Sudan

DONOR MESSAGING

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Additional support is urgently required within Sudan and across the regional response given deteriorations in the security situation and rising internal and cross-border displacement. Emergency funding is required to support cholera preparedness and response in Renk, as well as Onward Transportation Assistance (OTA). Facilitating transportation will reduce the need for shelter, water, and food as well as overcrowding at the various Transit Centres (TCs), bringing associated risks of disease outbreaks.

In areas of Renk and Maban where refugees and returnees will be settled, further resources are needed to scale up the provision of health care services, shelter, WASH facilities, and food. This is critical as most agencies have little or no funding in January 2024. Areas of final destination also continue to lack sufficient focus within the response. In eastern Upper Nile, this situation is worsening due to the influx of returnees from Ethiopia, adding pressure on health services and local markets.

Within Chad, further advocacy is needed to mobilize funding for Sudanese refugee arrivals and Chadian host communities. To ensure efficient and smooth cross-border response operations, efforts must continue to strengthen coordination between UNOCHA and local authorities in both Chad and Sudan.

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