

Health facilities struggle with depleted stocks and aid blocked by bureaucratic impediments after 100 days of war in Sudan.

Members of the Sudan INGO Forum urge Sudanese Authorities and Global Leaders to unblock the bureaucratic, security and funding constraints that prevent humanitarian actors from adequately addressing needs.

Civilians across Sudan have been subjected to 100 days of war. Since fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted in Khartoum and other key cities on 15 April 2023, Sudan's pre-existing humanitarian crisis has become a full-blown catastrophe. Approximately 24.7 million people, half the country's population, are estimated to need humanitarian assistance. At least 3.3 million people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety, including 2.6 million displaced inside the country. Despite various ceasefire initiatives, the conflict has expanded rather than abated, spreading across the states of Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile where it has worryingly taken on an increasingly intercommunal dimension. Thousands of people have been killed and tens of thousands have been injured as a result of the fighting. Many more face starvation and are gravely at risk due to lack of medical care – especially the most vulnerable (e.g. the elderly and persons with disability) who continue to be trapped in conflict zones unable to access food, water, electricity, medicine and medical treatment due to fears for their safety and security, proliferation of check-points, increasing abductions and arbitrary detention of civilians and the rising cost of transportation.

Humanitarian organisations continue to work tirelessly to aid and protect those in need. Members of the Sudan INGO Forum are present and operating across all 18 States of Sudan. In the last 100 days INGOs have provided humanitarian assistance to close to **2 million people**. This includes the provision of life-saving health and nutrition services to at least **half a million people** in Red Sea State, Kassala, Gedaref, Al Jazira, River Nile, White Nile, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, West Kordofan, East Darfur, South Darfur, North Darfur, West Darfur and Central Darfur, through hundreds of health facilities supported by NGOs. In addition, INGOs have provide Water, Hygiene and Sanitation support to **300,000 people**, including providing clean drinking water to 40,000 people in Geneina, West Darfur. INGOs collectively have distributed food to over **300,000 people** in Central Darfur, Gedaref, South Darfur and South Kordofan and increasingly are exploring mechanisms to provide shelter and cash assistance to the millions of displaced people in Eastern and Northern Sudan.

In addition, these numbers do not account for the continued efforts of local and national NGOs, community initiatives and other local responders who have been at the forefront of the humanitarian efforts over the last 100 days and, without whom, thousands of people would have been unable to flee to safety or receive assistance.

However, **these achievements are grossly insufficient compared to the scale of needs. More must be done.**

Humanitarian actors are hampered in their efforts to sufficiently scale up their response by a host of bureaucratic and administrative challenges that impede the movement of aid workers and critical supplies both into and throughout the country, as well as persistent insecurity, disregard for international humanitarian law and the protection of aid workers and a lack of sufficient and flexible humanitarian funding.

Currently over **110 INGO aid workers are prevented from deploying to Sudan** to support the humanitarian response whilst their visa approval remain pending – many since the outbreak of the conflict, severely impeding the collective ability of the humanitarian system to provide vital and timely assistance to people across Sudan. The situation is further aggravated by the lack of a clear system through which INGOs can access expedited visas, as well as significant challenges in renewing residency permits or extending their visas. Within Sudan, aid efforts are hampered by internal movement restrictions for international and national staff as well as supplies and complicated government approval processes at the State Level that severely delay the delivery of assistance.

Meanwhile, looting and attacks against humanitarian offices, supplies and aid workers continue – with **at least 17 aid workers killed over the last 3 months** – as well as attempts by both parties to the conflict to instrumentalise the delivery of aid. Finally, despite pledging 1.5 billion USD towards the humanitarian response in Sudan and the surrounding region – disbursement of critical humanitarian financing has been dangerously slow and support to local initiatives hampered by donor red-tape – further undermining NGOs and other humanitarian actors' ability to adapt to the scale of the current crisis.

Sudan is on the brink of collapse and the efforts of aid actors remain unsustainable and insufficient in the current operational environment. NGOs across Darfur have already sounded the alarm that **at least 60 operational NGO-supported health facilities are likely to run out of critical medical supplies in the next 2 weeks** – further reducing the number of people receiving life-saving assistance. Unless these challenges are urgently addressed NGOs and other humanitarian actors will be unable to address the unprecedented new and pre-existing needs across Sudan.

The urgency of the situation cannot be overstated. World leaders must act now to prevent the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation and end the suffering of people in Sudan. The Sudan INGO Forum calls for the following:

1. **Expedition of visas to all aid personnel and a moratorium on bureaucratic and administrative impediments:** Sudanese Authorities should translate their commitments to facilitate humanitarian access into action and expedite the issuance of all currently pending visas, issue clear guidance on visa application procedures for humanitarian organisations, grant allowances for aid workers to utilise all ports of entry to ensure that aid workers and supplies are able to reach areas of greatest need quickly and the removal of internal travel restrictions. Governments of neighbouring countries, UN member states and regional bodies must work with the Sudanese authorities to support the removal of these bureaucratic obstacles to the delivery of life-saving assistance.
2. **Respect for international humanitarian law including the protection of aid workers, supplies and assets:** The continuing attacks on the civilian population, including abduction and detention of civilians, and attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, such as water treatment plants, hospitals, schools and civilian residences must end immediately. In addition, conflict parties must safeguard humanitarian personnel and assets and ensure that humanitarian actors are able to implement their activities without fear of attack or undue interference. All parties must ensure that their troops comply with international humanitarian law. The various initiatives led by regional bodies, neighbouring countries and other UN member states to bring about a cessation of hostilities must also address these critical protection issues and continue to remind the parties to the conflict of their obligations under international law.
3. **Urgently release much needed flexible humanitarian funding:** Despite positive indications at the recent pledging conference on the 19 June 2023, little more than 23% of the required funding for the humanitarian appeal in Sudan has been received to date. Additional new funding must be delivered as soon as possible to enable humanitarian actors to scale-up and adapt their response according to the new needs. Donors must also provide sufficient flexibility to organisations to adapt to the current operational challenges and provide support to local and national actors including community-led initiatives who are providing critical frontline response.