

Sudan Is Starving and Ignored

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While the eyes of the world is focused on the Israeli genocide on Gaza, Sudan is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis as widespread hunger and malnutrition plague the nation. The Sudan starvation crisis emerged as a direct consequence of armed conflict. There is a need for immediate international intervention to stop the starvation of millions in Sudan.

There are more than nine million people across 18 states of Sudan that are facing food shortages that have caused malnutrition and death. More than 800,000 of those are at risk of immediate starvation.

According to an analysis by Save the Children, some 16.4 million children, or three in every four in the country, are now facing 'crisis', 'emergency' or 'catastrophe' levels of hunger - up from 8.3 million just last December.

The United Nations reported that there are more than 10 million people who have been displaced in Sudan since the conflict began in April 2023 and nearly 25 million people are in need of aid, according to the UN.



A screengrab from VOA's Number of Refugees Who Fled Sudan for Chad Double in Week. This is a refugee camp in Chad. (From the Public Domain)

Escalating Conflict and Displacement

The Sudanese conflict started in April 2023 between the Sudanese army under Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo. Sudan's army suggested to the RSF to unite and form one national army, but General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo "Hemedti" refused and started attacking Sudan's army.

Sudan has been bearing the brunt of political instability for decades. Internal conflicts, fueled by ethnic tensions, political power struggles, and resource disparities, have created an environment of violence and insecurity. By 2024, these factors reached a boiling point, resulting in widespread displacement of communities, disruption of agricultural activities, and destruction of vital infrastructure. As a consequence, access to food, clean water, and healthcare services significantly diminished, pushing the nation further down a path of starvation.

The Two Sides of the Conflict of Sudan

General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as "Hemedti", is the leader of RSF. He came to prominence as the deputy leader of a transitional council launched after former strongman Omar al-Bashir was overthrown in 2019. Dagalo was born around 1974 into the Mahariya tribe of the Rizeigat community in Darfur, the nephew of a tribal chief in the camel-trading branch of the Rizeigat. According to human rights groups have accused the Janjaweed of war crimes - including killings, rapes and torture of civilians - throughout the conflict in Darfur.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said doctors and nurses have been killed and wounded, and many health facilities have been damaged by shelling and airstrikes since the conflict broke out in mid-April last year.

The first appearance of the RSF was in 2013 under Dagalo's leadership. It combined elements of the Janjaweed into a new force under the auspices of al-Bashir and his National Intelligence and Security Services.

Abdel Fattah al-Burhan

Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan is known to be a powerful military commander who has for years been a de facto leader of the African nation. Little known before 2019, General al-Burhan rose to power in the tumultuous aftermath of the military-led coup that ousted Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the authoritarian leader who was deposed after popular uprisings in 2019.

Economic Instability and Food Inflation

The Sudanese economy has been marred by mismanagement, corruption, and the effects of economic sanctions, resulting in skyrocketing inflation and a depreciating currency. High food prices have pushed a significant portion of the population into extreme poverty, making it even harder for them to secure adequate nutrition. Basic commodities, including grains and meat, have become unaffordable for the majority of the Sudanese people, pushing them further into the grip of starvation.

According to Sudanese economical experts, the Sudanese pound continues to collapse

against foreign currencies, exacerbating the financial strain on millions of Sudanese who have lost most of their income due to the ongoing conflict. The Sudanese national bank “Bank of Khartoum” offered to buy dollars at 1,860 pounds and sell them at 1,873 pounds while offering the Saudi riyal for purchase at 501.49 pounds and selling it at 505.25 pounds.

Economic expert Mohamed Al-Nayer told the media that while a decline in the national currency is expected during the war, the government’s inaction in addressing the issue is concerning. Al-Nayer urged authorities to implement measures to halt the currency’s deterioration, such as withdrawing large pound denominations from circulation, restricting luxury imports, boosting exports, rationalizing public spending, and increasing revenue. Mohamed Al-Nayer highlighted that 95% of the money supply being held by the public contributes to the imbalance that fuels the parallel currency market, necessitating urgent intervention.

Health Crisis in Sudan

Because of the conflict there is More than 70% of health facilities in conflict-affected regions are inoperable or closed. Disease outbreaks, including measles and cholera, are rampant, with the number of suspected cholera cases surpassing 11,000 as of May 2024.

Food Insecurity

18 million people are experiencing severe levels of acute food insecurity, with 5 million at risk of catastrophic hunger. High rates of malnutrition, a debilitated health system, and low levels of immunization exacerbate the crisis.

The Urgent Need for International Intervention

While the Sudanese government has made efforts to address the growing crisis, the scale and complexity of the situation require immediate international support. The international community must step up efforts to provide humanitarian aid, including food supplies, clean water, and medical resources. Furthermore, long-term investments are crucial to rebuilding Sudan’s agriculture and infrastructure, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and improving climate resilience.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is on the ground, providing vital support through economic empowerment services, health and nutrition programs, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, and protection and empowerment services for women and children.

A Sudanese woman, age 46, who escaped from the conflict said that her and her nine children had to flee their home in Khartoum. Now in Gedaref, they face the challenge of living in temporary housing with limited protection from weather conditions.

Collaborative Efforts and Sustainable Solutions

Sudan’s rival groups have arrived in Geneva after the United Nations invited them to discuss the protection of civilians through possible local ceasefires, UN officials said Thursday. But one side did not show up for the talks on the first day.

The talks come on the back of two UN Security Council resolutions on Sudan passed earlier this year.

“The focus is based on the resolutions: measures to be undertaken to ensure the distribution of humanitarian assistance to all the Sudanese population in need, and options to ensure the protection of civilians across Sudan,” said Mr. Vellucci, the UN envoy to Sudan.

The conflict in Sudan is not something new. For decades they have been suffering conflicts, starvation, political unrest, and climate change challenges, but because of racism many don't care about the suffering of the African people in general, and the Sudanese people.

The 2024 Sudan starvation crisis paints a grim picture of a nation battling multiple fronts—a complex interplay of armed conflict, economic instability, climate change, and shattered infrastructure. The international community must recognize the urgency of the situation and extend immediate support to alleviate the suffering of millions. Empowering the Sudanese people, aiding in agriculture and economic stability, and promoting sustainable practices will be crucial in building a brighter and more resilient future for Sudan. Let us unite in our efforts to combat starvation and ensure that Sudan's citizens are not forgotten.

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