

↕ Sudan Crisis: Cross-Border Assessment

Situation Overview: West Darfur

7 July 2023

Chad

KEY MESSAGES

- Findings suggest that the conflict since 15 April has resulted in increased protection risks to civilians across West Darfur- households fleeing these risks face violence, theft and checkpoint fees during their journey.
- Findings suggest that households which have displaced to Chad have been able to do so because of their proximity to the border. In contrast, they reported that the ability of the remaining population to displace is hindered by insecurity and imposed road closures.
- Findings indicate that populations remaining in West Darfur, who were already suffering from pre-existing food insecurity, are resorting to negative coping strategies such as consuming seeds for the next season to compensate for a lack of food. Meanwhile, conflict has reportedly destroyed crops and livestock.
- Populations remaining in West Darfur also suffer from reduced access to water and are reportedly engaging in negative strategies, such as consuming less water and drinking surface water, to cope. Coupled with reduced functionality of basic services, including healthcare facilities, this points to a concerning public health setting.

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Conflict erupted in Sudan on the 15th of April 2023, leading to displacement of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese nationals into neighbouring countries. The conflict, subsequent displacement, and anticipated macroeconomic consequences are exacerbating the already severe humanitarian situation in Sudan and its neighbouring countries.

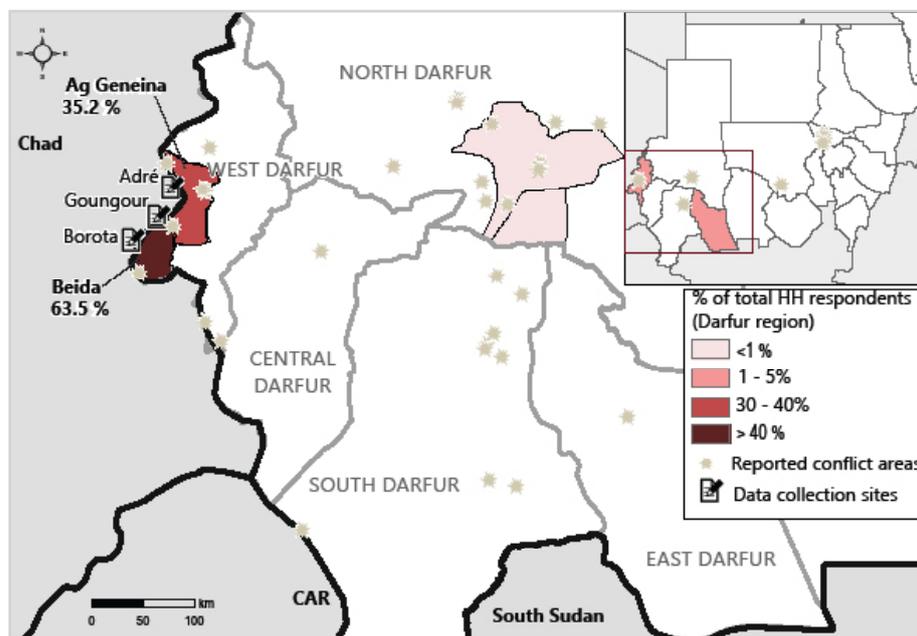
Given the rapidly changing humanitarian context, REACH conducted a cross-border monitoring assessment to provide humanitarian actors with up-to-date information on the extent of humanitarian needs in conflict-affected parts of Sudan and among recent arrivals in neighbouring countries. This situation overview presents indicative findings on the humanitarian situation of households who crossed the border into Chad, and of the remaining population in their areas of origin (AoO) in Sudan. Additional data and analysis from the cross-border and other assessments on the Sudan Crisis can be accessed via the [Sudan Crisis Thread](#).

94% of households interviewed reported coming from Beida and Ag Geneina localities in West Darfur State. Findings presented in this overview therefore refer to the situation in West Darfur.

Map 1: Reported localities of origin in Sudan

Reported localities of origin of households interviewed for the cross-border assessment

(conflict data source: [ACLED](#))



ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

REACH enumerators conducted structured household interviews with refugees and returnees entering Chad at relevant border crossing points and in reception centers between 19-22 June, 2023.

In total, 406 households were interviewed, 100 of whom reported people remained in their area of origin and that they perceived themselves as having recent knowledge (within the last 30 days) of the situation there. These respondents were selected as key informants (KIs) and were asked questions about the impact of the conflict on access to basic needs and services, protection, displacement and livelihoods in their area of origin since the start of the conflict. Findings are indicative and cannot be generalised with a known level of precision. Given the volatile nature of the erupting conflict, the situation in areas of origin might have changed since KIs' departure from their community. Where possible, findings should be triangulated with new information. For more information on the methodology, please refer to page 7.

HOUSEHOLD RESPONSES: SUDANESE REFUGEES IN CHAD

KEY MESSAGES - Household Responses

- Active conflict was the primary reason for displacement cited by interviewed households from Ag Geneina and Beida localities of West Darfur. The majority have fled on foot, and some have experienced theft, violence and demands for bribes during their journey.
- Findings suggest the displaced population contains individuals with vulnerabilities: 405 of households include a pregnant or nursing woman, and 11% confirmed that at least one of their children is now unaccompanied.
- Only 4% of children are reportedly attending school since being displaced.
- Households reported that their priority needs are food, shelter and NFIs: while in-kind assistance is preferred, several households reported a preference for multi-purpose cash.
- Before the conflict, assessed households were most commonly reliant on unstable sources of income. Following the onset of the conflict, the % of households reporting having no sources of income rose from 9% (pre-conflict) to 32% (after 15 April).

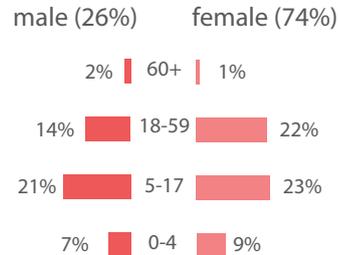
DEMOGRAPHICS

Respondent nationality: 100% Sudanese

Average household size: 6*

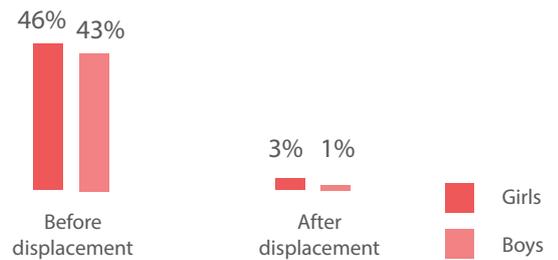
*Includes only household members who were currently travelling together

% of individuals in interviewed households



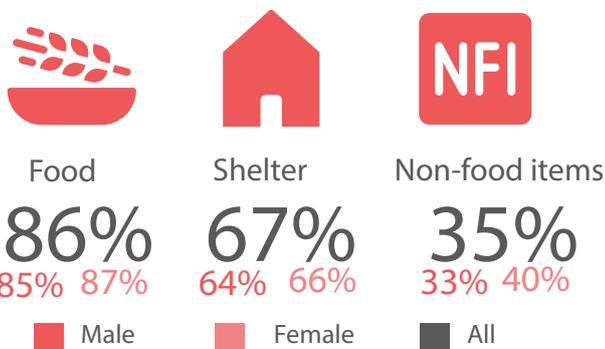
40% of households reported travelling with a pregnant or nursing woman

% of girls and boys (aged 5-17) attending school before and after displacement



PRIORITY NEEDS & ASSISTANCE PREFERENCES

Top 3 most reported priority needs, by % of interviewed households

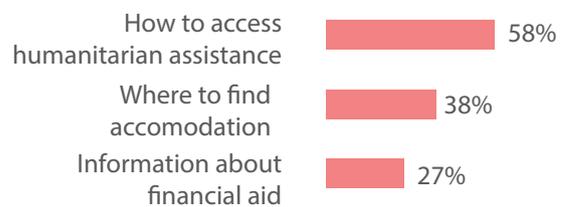


Among those households who reported NFIs as one of their three most urgent needs, the most reported types of NFIs listed were mattresses/sleeping mats (96%), floor mats (42%), and cooking utensils (37%).

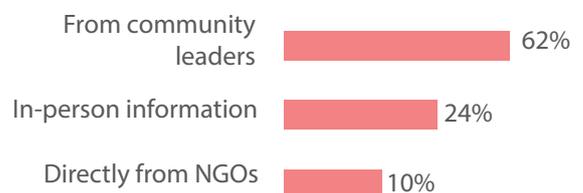
Top 3 most preferred modalities of assistance

1. In-kind (67%)
2. Multi-purpose cash (49%)
3. Service delivery (10%)

Most reported main information needs, by % of interviewed households



Most reported preferred ways of receiving information, by % of interviewed households



DISPLACEMENT JOURNEYS & PROTECTION CONCERNS

45%

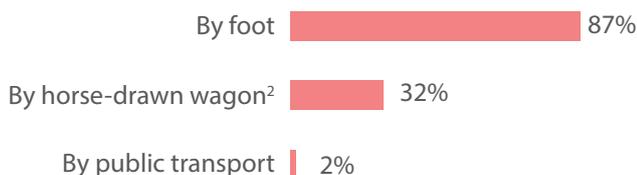
of respondents reported having been separated from at least one household member.

(This includes household members who stayed behind in the AoO and those who have been separated since displacement.)

11%

of respondents reported children in their household had been separated from both parents.¹

Most reported modes of transportation used to travel to border crossing point



61%

of all households reported having faced difficulties travelling to and/or entering Chad. Difficulties were reported by 79% of respondents from Ag Geneina locality, and by 54% of those from Beida.

66% of households reported having had to pay informal road or checkpoint taxation in Sudan while traveling.

33% of all households (34% of females and 30% of males) reported being subjected to violence in Sudan while traveling

Among those respondents, top 3 most reported difficulties faced travelling to and/or entering Chad³

Difficulty (% of all respondents)	Respondents from Beida (n=208)	Respondents from Ag Geneina (n=199)
Asked for bribes (61%)	56%	69%
Looting of property by armed actors (43%)	37%	51%
Victim of violence (33%)	28%	40%
Transport (13%)	13%	11%

In addition, some households reported difficulties due to a lack of documentation (11%) or having been subjected to discrimination due to race or ethnicity (6%).

¹UNICEF warns that children are being displaced, injured and killed amid fighting in Sudan, and media report that numbers of unaccompanied children crossing into Chad are increasing.

²The majority of HHs who arrived by horse-drawn wagon were interviewed in Goungour informal site and had been displaced from Beida locality.

³ Respondents could select up to three options.

⁴ The majority of households from Beida locality were from Misterei of Kango Haraza towns.

⁵ While respondents were not asked to specify where they crossed the border, field observations indicate that they crossed very close to the location in which they were interviewed. The map on page 1 shows the locations of data collection.

DISPLACEMENT & INTENTIONS

Top 3 most reported settlements of origin

1. Beida locality⁴, West Darfur State (63%)
2. Ag Geneina, West Darfur State (35%)
3. Al Fasher, North Darfur (1%)

Top 3 most reported push factors

1. Active conflict in settlement of origin (96%)
2. Loss of livelihoods (12%)
3. Concern about imminent arrival of conflict (2%)

88%

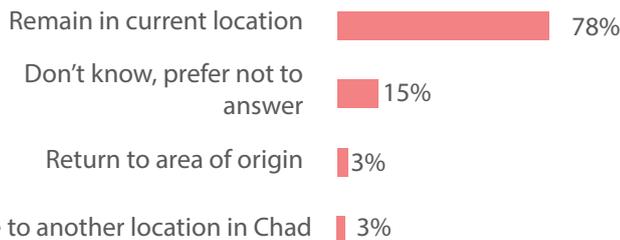
of households reported displacing to Chad because it was the closest country to their settlement.

84%

of households reported choosing the border crossing they used because it was the most direct route to the border⁵

These results suggest that households' primary concern was to leave their areas of origin as quickly as possible, highlighting the severity of the situation they left behind.

Most reported intentions for the month following data collection



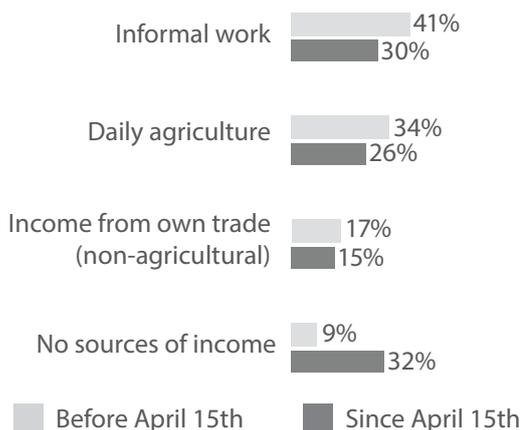
Households commonly reported intending to stay in an informal site (54%), move to a planned camp (33%) or stay with relatives (8%).

50%

of households reported that they are expecting members of their extended family to join them from Sudan.

ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS

Most common source of income reported by household, prior to, and after the start of the conflict



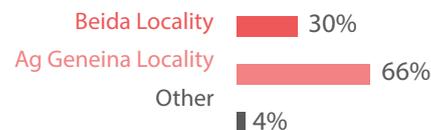
KEY INFORMANTS: REMAINING POPULATION IN WEST DARFUR

KEY MESSAGES - KI Responses

- KI responses and secondary sources suggest that the conflict since 15 April has aggravated protection risks to civilians across West Darfur, including the risk of robbery, killing, kidnapping and violence, including sexual violence. Findings suggest that some of the remaining population is unable to move to safety due to insecurity and road closures.
- Top reasons cited by KIs for a lack of food among remaining populations in their AoO included all stocks having been consumed, the destruction of crops, or a lack of money to buy food, pointing to a fragile food security situation likely to worsen with continued conflict and persisting access issues.
- Findings suggest that the rising price of basic goods, including food items, has been aggravated by the conflict. Furthermore, the majority of KIs reported that staples such as sorghum are completely unavailable in their AoO.
- KI results suggest that water access in West Darfur has worsened since the onset of the conflict. Coupled with reduced access to healthcare facilities, the impact of a lack of access to water sets the conditions for increased prevalence of communicable diseases and reduced services to treat them.
- Continued disruptions to electricity and internet services (in addition to the persistence of active conflict) hinder access to information on the humanitarian situation in West Darfur, particularly those localities which are further from the Chadian border.

KI SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS*

Localities of origin of KIs (n=100)



The majority of KIs from Beida locality reported coming from the towns of Misterei and Kango Haraza, which are both close to the Chadian border. Findings from Beida are therefore indicative of the situation in these border towns, but their applicability to rural areas farther from the border is limited.

*For more information about the selection of key informants, see the Methodology Section on p8.

DISPLACEMENT

Displacement and Security Context in West Darfur before 15 April 2023:

- Increasing [inter-communal conflict since 2019](#), including reports of attacks against civilians and [destruction of property](#).
- Almost [500,000 internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#) in West Darfur state, with approximately [95,000 displaced throughout 2022](#) due to conflict and, to a lesser extent, flooding.
- [Increasing protection concerns](#) including increasing gender-based and sexual violence.

KI reports indicate that parts of the remaining population are trapped: 61% of KIs reported that there were people remaining in their AoO who had been planning to leave but had been unable to due to insecurity, as well as to road closures. Additionally, in Beida, a noticeable proportion of KIs cited physical impairment (being too weak to travel or having a physical disability) as a barrier to movement.

*Respondents selected "Too weak to travel or physical disabilities preventing travel"
 **Establishment of checkpoints included in ACLED dataset as non-violent conflict event.

Top 3 reported movement barriers in the area of origin:

Ag Geneina	Beida
1.Road closures (70%)	1.Road closures (67%)
2.Safety/ security (67%)	2.Safety/ security (67%)
3.Discrimination (8%)	3.Physical impairment* (13%)

7 KIs also reported that the remaining population is unable to afford checkpoint fees.

These reported movement barriers are in line with other reports: the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project ([ACLED**](#)) has reported the establishment of checkpoints in West Darfur, while Médecins Sans Frontières ([MSF](#)) and [media](#) reports have cited killing of and sexual violence against civilians fleeing Ag Geneina.

Furthermore, the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) has documented tensions and conflict in localities in West Darfur state further from the border, such as Kereneik, ForoBaranga and Habila, indicating that civilian populations beyond Beida and Ag Geneina are also likely experiencing insecurity.

As of 27 June

2,152,936

people [are estimated to be displaced](#) inside Sudan

644,861

people are [estimated to have displaced](#) to neighbouring countries, an estimated **180,683** of which [crossed the border](#) into Chad.

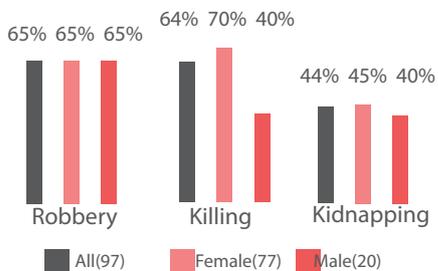
(IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Situation Report 10)

SAFETY & SECURITY*

Killings and robberies

Although intercommunal conflict was [already occurring](#) in West Darfur, increasingly from 2019 until 2023, 97% of KIs reported that the remaining population in their AoO face increased safety or security concerns since 15 April.

Top 3 security risks in AoO, reported by KIs:



While 54 of 77 female KIs reported that being killed was a principle risk in their AoO, only 8 of 20 male KIs reported this. Additionally, 3 male KIs reported that being recruited by an armed group was a primary risk in their AoO: this was not reported by female KIs.

The reported risk of robbery and killing reflects [ACLED](#) data and United Nations ([UN](#)) reports of lootings and attacks on civilians, as well as the [killing of the governor of West Darfur on 14 June](#). Other mentioned security risks included that of explosive devices (12% of KIs), with 3 KIs citing discrimination as a primary security risk. However, the latter could be underreported given the sensitivity of the issue.

Gender based violence

Before 15 April, [increasing gender-based and sexual violence](#) was reported in West Darfur.

Since the start of the current conflict on 15 April, anecdotal reports ([MSE](#), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#))) have documented sexual violence across Sudan during the current conflict. 2 KIs (from Beida) reported that sexual violence was a primary security concern for remaining populations in their AoO. Sexual violence or harassment is expected to be under-reported due to the sensitivity of the issue.

*For detailed analysis of the conflict and security dynamics in Darfur, see reports by [Crisis Group](#) and [ACLED](#).

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

Access to food

92% of KIs reported that access to food has worsened in their AoO.

67 of 100 KIs reported that the level of hunger is leading to exhaustion* among remaining populations. UNICEF has also called attention to [increasing malnutrition](#) rates among children.

Reported reasons for lack of food in AoO:

Reason for lack of food in AoO (total % of KI)	KIs from Beida (n=30)	KIs from Ag Geneina (n=66)
All stocks have been consumed (76%)	63%	80%
Crops have been destroyed (38%)	37%	39%
Lack of money (26%)	43%	17%

72% of KIs reported that the main source of food for the remaining population in their AoO is their own cultivation, with 8% also reporting humanitarian assistance. The latter may be low due to [access constraints](#) and widespread [looting](#) of humanitarian assistance.

Almost half of KIs reported that the remaining population has consumed stock meant for the next season, or harvested crops which are not yet

ready. In light of the [upcoming lean season](#), this suggests hunger will further escalate in the coming months, in addition to having worrying implications for the harvest season later in the year.

Other reported coping mechanisms were borrowing food or money (38 KIs) or gathering wild food (8 KIs, most from Beida).

Livelihoods

98% of KIs reported that the conflict has negatively impacted livelihoods in their AoO

Most reported impact of conflict on livelihoods in the AoO



Agriculture: 88% of KIs reported that agriculture is one of the main sources of income in their AoO. These KIs were asked about agriculture in their AoO. Of note, in [2022](#) this sector was already experiencing the negative impacts of conflict and lack of essential farming supplies, resulting in reduced crop yield compared to previous

Food Security and Livelihoods Context in West Darfur before 15 April 2023:

- [32% of the state population](#) was in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above, with beida and ag-geneina localities in IPC phase 4 during the lean seasons (June-Sept 2022).
- The [cost of living](#), including [food prices](#), was generally increasing across the country, as was the cost of agricultural [production](#).
- Unstable sources of income, such as informal labor and agricultural day labour were cited by the majority of displaced households as pre-conflict sources of livelihoods (see Household-level results).
- 42% of the state population was in need of humanitarian aid ([Norwegian Refugee Council](#)).

harvest (which begins in [November](#)). An additional 5 KIs (from Beida and from Ag Geneina localities) reported that there will be no planting at all in their AoO.

Livestock:

Livestock also appears to have been negatively impacted by the conflict, particularly in Beida locality. According to [pre-April 15 reports](#), conflict and inability to move livestock affected livelihoods in West Darfur.

*Respondents selected one of three options to indicate the severity of hunger for most people who had insufficient food in their AoO: from reduced energy levels, to exhaustion, to deaths among this part of the population.

In Ag Geneina, 14/66 KIs reported that livestock is a principle income source in their AoO, and were asked about livestock in their AoO since the 15 April. These 14 KIs reported that after 15 April, livestock has been looted (11 KIs) or killed (6 KIs). KIs also reported that there is a lack of water (3 KIs) and food (3 KIs) for livestock in Ag Geneina locality.

Among KIs from Beida, 9/30 reported that livestock is a principle income source in their AoO. These KIs only reported direct conflict-related shocks to livestock: looting (8 KIs) and killing (3 KIs) of livestock and lack of access to pastures (2 KIs) as a result of the conflict.

Markets

Availability of Core Food Items: While prices for basic goods were already rising before the conflict in 2023, KI reports echoed [media reports](#) that road blockages have led to reduced availability and increasing prices of basic goods.

96% of KIs report that food prices have increased since 15 April in their AoO, and 89% report that prices of NFIs have also increased. Of note, accessibility to Sorghum, one of the main staples in the Sudanese diet, has significantly reduced, with many KIs reporting that it is completely unavailable.

Reported availability of basic goods in the AoO:

Product	%KIs who reported reduced availability only in AoO**	%KIs who reported zero availability in AoO
Sorghum	13%	80%
Onions	24%	58%
Tomato paste	27%	42%
Cow meat	18%	42%
Vegetable oil	20%	44%
Sugar	24%	64%
Body soap	27%	27%
Charcoal	9%	11%
Clean drinking water	2%	4%

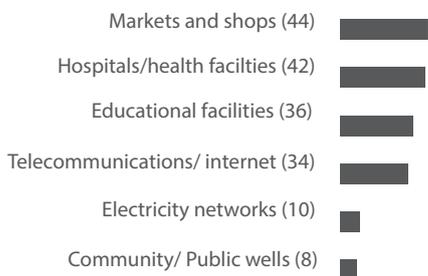
** Some KIs selected "reduced availability" and "zero availability" for the same product. In these cases, their response has been counted as "zero availability"

BASIC SERVICES

Access to basic services

76% of KIs reported that at least one basic service was unavailable in their AoO since the beginning of the conflict.

Number of KIs reporting basic services are no longer available since 15 April in their AoO:*



Reported reasons for lack of basic services in the AoO:**

Reason for lack of basic services in AoO (total # of KI)	KIs from Beida (23 KIs)	KIs from Ag Geneina (51 KIs)
Complete destruction (43/74)	16 KIs	29 KIs
Closed due to insecurity (36/74)	7 KIs	27 KIs
Severely damaged (15/74)	5 KIs	10 KIs

7 KIs also mentioned that basic services were occupied by armed groups.

These findings echo reports of [communications blackouts](#), and [attacks on hospitals](#) and [other basic services](#).

Access to water and health services

According to [OCHA](#), in March 2023 two thirds of the West Darfur population had access to improved drinking water. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) now warns of the risk of increasing [water scarcity](#) in Darfur.

91% KIs reported that access to water has further decreased in their AoO since 15 April.

According to KIs, the main coping strategies used by remaining populations were reducing water consumption (65% KIs), and using surface water for drinking (26% KIs) or other purposes (10% KIs).

The remaining population in West Darfur are reducing water consumption for the following activities:

1. Bathing (65%)
2. Drinking (27%)
3. Laundry (19%)

While KIs were not specifically asked what barriers to access to water were in the assessment, KIs have reported elsewhere that movement around their settlement of origin is restricted by insecurity. This reflects [MSF reports](#) of insecurity preventing households from collecting water.

Access to Basic Services and Water Context in West Darfur before 15 April 2023:

- According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2023 (pre-conflict version) [902,000 individuals](#) were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022.
- [67.5% of the state population](#) had access to improved drinking water.
- According to the [health cluster](#), there were 3 partner-supported hospitals in West Darfur in 2022, as well as 73 family care centres.
- [Humanitarian aid](#) was under pressure from funding and access constraints.
- 1,198 homes were destroyed and 3,989 homes were damaged by [rains and flooding](#) in in the state in 2022.

In light of the reported worsening access to water and employment of coping strategies such as bathing less, the destruction of health facilities cited above by KIs is of particular concern. Considering reports, although limited, of [Dengue fever](#) and one case of [Polio](#) in 2022 in West Darfur, a prolonged lack of access to health facilities or to sufficient amounts of water could lead to severe public health outcomes.

*Respondents could select multiple options.

** Respondents couldselect up to three options.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

Time of data collection: 19-22 June 2023

In the absence of a comprehensive needs assessment on the situation in Sudan and neighbouring countries, the assessment consisted of two components to cover, as best as possible, the situation in areas of origin in Sudan as well as the situation of recent arrivals in Chad.

The first component consisted of a structured household survey with returnees and refugees crossing the Sudan-Chad border. In total, 406 households were interviewed about their current situation and movement intentions for this first round of data collection.

For the second component, household survey interviewees were asked to act as a key informant (KI) and report on behalf of their community in their settlement of origin about the situation. Respondents were selected for the KI component if they 1) reported that there were still people living in their settlement of origin and 2) confirmed that they had been present in, or in contact with, their AoO in the last 30 days. In total, enumerators interviewed 100 KIs among those households. All interviews were conducted by trained enumerators in informal sites and in reception centres close to the Sudanese border.

Due to the purposive sampling, findings for both components are not generalisable with a known level of precision and should be considered indicative only. As more information becomes available, it is recommended to triangulate findings with updated information where possible.

KIs were interviewed in late-June and asked to report on changes to their AoO since the 15th April, 2023. While this recall period is relatively long (more than two months before data collection in Chad), it is expected that respondents who were in contact with their AoO in the last 30 days will report the most recent information they know or have received.

For more information on the sampling tools and methods used, please refer to the Research Terms of Reference (ToR) and the Data Analysis Plan (DAP), which will be made available [here](#).

News, data, analysis and outputs from other assessments on the Sudan conflict will be made available on the [Sudan Crisis Thread](#) on the REACH [website](#).

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

Annexe: informal sites on the Chad-Sudan border

Remote sensing data

Informal sites in Ouaddai:



According to IOM, there are XX sites in the province of Ouaddai, hosting displaced households from Chad. UNHCR aims to relocate these informal settlements to formal sites further from the border, however the approaching rainy season, and the constant influx of displaced households from the Darfur region, suggest that there will continue to be displaced populations close to the border in coming months.

This map (left) shows the sites for which REACH was able to obtain satellite data. Borota, Adré and Goungour (cross-border data collection sites) as well as Labane Dafak, Midjiguelta and Koufroun.

REACH was further able to use rainfall predictions to estimate the flood risk to each of these sites in the rainy season.

Borota

Pre-conflict (exact date)

Post-conflict (exact date)

Narrative observational information here.

Koufroun, Midjiguelta, and Labane Dafak:

Pre-conflict (exact date)

Post-conflict (exact date)

Narrative observational information here.

Goungour

Pre-conflict (exact date)

Post-conflict (exact date)

Narrative observational information here.

Adré

Pre-conflict (exact date)

Post-conflict (exact date)

Narrative observational information here.

Flood risk across all sites:

Secondary data here?