

# One Conflict, Four Crises: Sudan's Humanitarian Landscape After Three Years of War

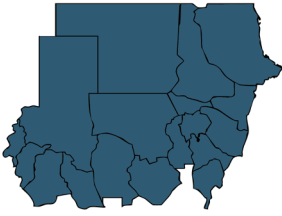
15th of April 2026 | Sudan

## Key messages

- **Three years of war have created several distinct sub-crises across Sudan**, from an acute humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur and Kordofan, to fragile recovery in the central corridor, emerging threats in the southern states, and growing cumulative strain on the eastern corridor. Across all four contexts, the diversity of drivers, needs, and recovery pathways makes differentiated, **locally-led area-based evidence and programming** essential.
- At a moment when **shifting frontlines, an early lean season, and the approaching rainy season are converging** to deepen needs, the humanitarian response remains critically underfunded and overstretched. In this context, **sub-national near-real time monitoring**, meaningful interpretation of fragmented data, and adaptive prioritization are more essential than ever to ensure effective and tailored response programming.
- **Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan are at the epicenter of Sudan's humanitarian catastrophe**, facing widespread emergency-level food insecurity, catastrophic malnutrition, and collapsed health and WASH systems. As seasonality is set to worsen condition, coordinated **emergency response** based on updated and granular data is required.
- **Khartoum, Al Jazirah and Sennar are in a fragile transition toward early recovery.** However, returns are accelerating faster than the restoration of infrastructure, services, and economic conditions. This imbalance creates a credible **risk of slow-onset deterioration**. Sustained investment in **reconstruction and economic recovery** is needed, informed by granular evidence that captures local economic conditions, livelihood recovery pathways, and evolving risks.
- **Blue Nile has recently emerged as a rapidly escalating conflict front** with a credible risk of catastrophe-level food insecurity, further complicated by cross-border dynamics. **White Nile is simultaneously reaching a breaking point**, with successive displacement waves overwhelming an overstretched hosting system and driving severe overcrowding and the deterioration of sanitation conditions. Both situations demand **anticipatory monitoring** before needs become acute.
- **The Eastern States and Nile Corridor host Sudan's primary import gateway and its agricultural breadbasket**, both under growing pressure from displacement, climate variability, and insecurity, with cascading consequences for the whole country. The **diversity of livelihood systems** across the corridor requires approaches sensitive to local heterogeneity.

Map 1: Sudan's four crisis





## National overview

**33.7 million** people in Sudan are expected to need humanitarian assistance in 2026, **the largest people in need figure in the world**<sup>11</sup>

**3.7 million** people have **returned** to their areas of origin as of early 2026<sup>12</sup>

**Average food prices** nationally are at around **400%** higher than pre-war levels<sup>13</sup>

**124,418** cumulative **cholera** cases recorded since July 2024<sup>14</sup>

Since the outbreak of armed conflict in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Sudan has been engulfed in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. Fighting has progressively expanded beyond the initial battlegrounds of Khartoum to engulf Greater Darfur, Greater Kordofan, Al Jazirah, and most recently renewed in Blue Nile state, eroding institutional capacity, dismantling essential services, **unleashing an unprecedented protection crisis** and devastating livelihoods across the country.

By early 2026, over 9.1 million people remained internally displaced, down from a peak of 11.5 million in January 2025 largely due to partial returns to eastern and central Sudan<sup>1</sup>. An additional 4.5 million had been forced across borders into Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, and beyond, making this the **largest displacement crisis in the world**<sup>2</sup>.

**Acute food insecurity is widespread**, with an estimated 29 million people currently in need of humanitarian food assistance<sup>3</sup> and a **credible risk of renewed Famine** in the most conflict-affected areas of Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan<sup>4</sup>.

**Three years into the war there is a growing risk of regional spillover effects** with severe consequences already felt way beyond Sudan's borders. **Chad**, which has received over 1.2 million people fleeing Sudan<sup>5</sup>, faces growing instability that risks triggering reverse displacement into already saturated western Sudan. **Growing insecurity along the eastern corridor** intersects with broader **Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan** tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam<sup>6</sup>. In **South Sudan**, over 1.3 million arrivals since April 2023 are adding pressure on a country already grappling with its own displacement crisis and internal volatility<sup>7</sup>.

**The outlook is expected to worsen as an early lean season**<sup>8</sup> converges with **the onset of the rainy season from June**, which will further constrain access and increase disease transmission risks, especially in overcrowded displacement

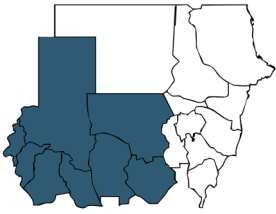
sites. **Intensifying climate variability**, with alternating drought and flooding signals across key agricultural regions, adds a further structural layer of pressure<sup>9</sup>. This outlook unfolds against a backdrop of severe **underfunding and attacks on critical humanitarian infrastructure**<sup>10</sup>.

**Three years of war have not affected Sudan evenly**. While the conflict originated in Khartoum and rapidly engulfed Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan, its reach and consequences have played out very differently across the country.

**The result has been the development of several distinct sub-crises typologies** across the country: an **acute humanitarian catastrophe** in the conflict epicenters of the west, a **fragile and uneven transition toward recovery** in the stabilizing areas of the central corridor; **emerging and rapidly escalating risks** in the southern states; and **growing cumulative strain** on the eastern corridor that has largely absorbed the war's secondary consequences and remains critical for the whole country's food access.

**Each sub-crisis not only presents different humanitarian conditions but also demands a different response logic and a different information architecture** to support it. However, the current information and data network in Sudan reflects a complex and uneven landscape of partnerships, information exchange and operational linkages. This is characterized by pockets of intense siloed information generation, surrounded by isolated clusters of data. This fragmentation limits the speed and consistency with which information travels across actors. **An area-based data architecture** will provide a structured means to harmonize existing coordination efforts, bridge isolated clusters and enable tailored and context-sensitive programming.

**Through the review of primary and secondary data sources, this brief provides a high-level overview of each crisis typology**. This brief is the third in a series examining Sudan's humanitarian crisis, following assessments published at [100 days](#) and [two years](#) into the conflict.



## Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan: an extremely acute humanitarian crisis

### What happened in the last three years?

**Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan entered the April 2023 crisis as Sudan's most structurally vulnerable regions**, with poverty rates four to five times higher than in Khartoum, over 1.9 million people already displaced from prior conflict cycles in North Darfur alone, and worsening food insecurity<sup>15</sup>. Both regions have since been among the most severely affected by the conflict, a combination that has created the conditions for one of the most acute humanitarian crises globally<sup>16</sup>.

### In Darfur, conflict expanded rapidly in the aftermath of the April 2023 outbreak.

Al Fasher - the last SAF-controlled capital of Greater Darfur - was placed under siege for more than 18 months, before falling in October 2025 amid widespread reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law<sup>17</sup>. Since then, conflict has expanded to the northwestern localities, reaching the border with **Chad** and raising concerns for a regional expansion of the fighting<sup>18</sup>. By early 2026, the Darfur region accounted for nearly 62% of Sudan's 9.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs)<sup>19</sup>.

**Since 2025, Greater Kordofan has become the war's new battleground** due to its strategic importance as Sudan's main logistics corridor and gateway to Khartoum<sup>20</sup>. As in Darfur, **siege tactics** and the restriction of movement have emerged as defining features, with large urban centers blockaded and populations cut off from food, supplies, and humanitarian assistance for extended periods<sup>21</sup>. As a result, the region has experienced successive waves of displacement, though the full scale remains difficult to verify given severe access and reporting constraints<sup>22</sup>.

### What is the current situation?

**Three years of conflict have produced a humanitarian situation with few parallels globally.** A **severe protection crisis** has emerged across both regions, characterised by **widespread grave violations against civilians** - including conflict-related sexual violence, forced recruitment, and family

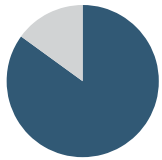
separation - with women, girls, and children disproportionately affected<sup>23</sup>.

**Food insecurity at Emergency level or above is now widespread across both regions<sup>24</sup>.** While famine thresholds are no longer being met in Kadugli and Dilling following the breaking of sieges in early 2026, FEWS NET notes this reflects a technical shift rather than a substantive improvement, and a **credible risk of renewed Famine** persists in parts of South Kordofan and northwestern North Darfur<sup>25</sup>. These outcomes are driven by displacement severing livelihoods, conflict fragmenting supply chains, and siege tactics cutting populations off from food and assistance<sup>26</sup>.

**While markets have remained operational in most cases, IMPACT's Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) data shows that they are structurally fragile.** Price spikes are driven primarily by conflict and access constraints rather than seasonality, and **supply is heavily dependent on national and cross-border routes**, meaning that any disruptions to transport corridors are translated rapidly into price increases and availability gaps<sup>27</sup>. In a context of high inflation and limited purchasing power, **households have exhausted most of their coping capacity**, resorting to selling assets, depleting savings and reducing health expenditures to meet basic food needs<sup>28</sup>.

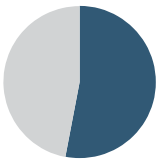
**The collapse of health systems and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure further aggravates the public health crisis.** Inadequate food intake, elevated disease burden and widespread unmet health needs interact, driving Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates far above the WHO emergency thresholds of 15% in multiple localities<sup>29</sup>.

**This dynamic is further amplified by the displacement crisis itself**, with both regions absorbing large numbers of IDPs. Displacement sites are characterized by overcrowding and the near-total absence of sanitation and health services. This creates **conditions favorable to the rapid transmission of diseases** such as cholera,



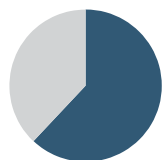
85%

of vendors in both Darfur and Greater Kordofan **depend on national and cross-border sourcing**<sup>37</sup>



53%

Global Acute Malnutrition (Weight-for-Height Z-score) rates in **Um Baru** (WHO emergency threshold: 15%)<sup>38</sup>



62%

of Sudan's 9.3 million internally displaced people **are in Greater Darfur**<sup>39</sup>

measles or dengue, which in turn worsen malnutrition outcomes even further<sup>30</sup>.

### **What to expect in the coming months?**

**The trajectory for the coming months is of serious concern**, as conflict dynamics, global and regional geopolitical tensions, and seasonal patterns are set to converge in ways that will likely deepen both needs and access constraints. Siege reimposition in Kordofan remains a credible risk, while in Darfur continued offensives are expected to sustain large-scale displacement into already highly saturated reception areas<sup>31</sup>.

**These conflict dynamics coincide with the seasonal calendar at a critical time:** food stocks, already atypically depleted, are expected to be exhausted earlier than typical, with the lean season now assessed as likely to start as early as April 2026 and peak between July and September<sup>32</sup>.

**The risks are compounded by growing uncertainty about agricultural input availability in the context of regional and global geopolitical and economic instability.** With the planting season approaching, any disruption to the supply chains on which the agricultural systems of Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan depend will have critical implications on food security and livelihoods in the coming months. **Pastoral systems face parallel stress**, with livestock migration routes disrupted by insecurity, herds are now concentrated in atypical areas at elevated risk of inadequate grazing disease outbreaks<sup>33</sup>.

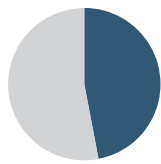
**From June, the onset of the rainy season will add a further layer of stress.** Intensifying climate variability, documented across both regions in the form of alternating flood events and erratic rainfall patterns, increases the uncertainty

around this critical window<sup>34</sup>. Above-average rainfall and potential flooding would accelerate waterborne disease transmission in overcrowded displacement sites where WASH conditions are already critically inadequate, a dynamic illustrated by Tawila's 2025 cholera outbreak<sup>35</sup>. **Road deteriorations** could simultaneously degrade supply routes at precisely the moment market stocks reach seasonal lows and prices peak, narrowing the already limited window for humanitarian operations<sup>36</sup>.

### **What are the implications?**

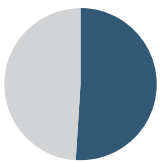
**Sustaining humanitarian operations in this environment remains difficult:** active frontlines, movement restrictions, attacks on critical infrastructure and degraded telecommunications severely constrain the response, which is chronically underfunded. **The ability to detect changes and adapt programmatic priorities in near-real time is essential** to ensure that prioritization decisions can keep pace with a highly volatile situation. This requires information systems that consolidate dispersed monitoring data into a shared sub-national operational picture.

**Considering that needs and drivers differ quite significantly in different areas and localities - from siege-induced supply - chain disruptions to lack of sanitation facilities in displacement sites - a granular localized area-based coordination and information structure is required to capture this heterogeneity. Local actors are at the forefront of the response across Darfur and Kordofan,** maintaining operational presence where international access is constrained or largely absent. **Their meaningful integration** into coordination, evidence generation, and decision-making is a critical prerequisite for an effective response.



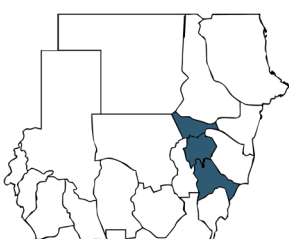
**47%**

of interviewed households in **Kadugli** reported **sharing sanitation facilities with an average of 30 households**<sup>40</sup>



**51%**

of interviewed households in **Tawila** reported **barriers to essential health services**<sup>41</sup>



## **Khartoum, Al Jazirah and Sennar States: a fragile early recovery amid large-scale population returns**

### **What happened in the last three years?**

**Khartoum was the epicenter of the April 2023 conflict outbreak and bore the full weight of the initial shock.**

**Approximately 3.7 million people fled** as urban warfare caused widespread destruction of infrastructure and essential services<sup>42</sup>. The metropolitan area remained an **active frontline for nearly two years**,

with key districts contested for their industrial infrastructure and southern access routes. The capital was retaken in March 2025, and the SAF formally returned in January 2026, creating a strong pull factor for displaced populations to return<sup>43</sup>. As of January 2026, **more than 1.6 million people had returned to their areas of origin in Khartoum**<sup>44</sup>.

**Al Jazirah State, immediately south of Khartoum and home to the Gezira irrigation scheme, historically Sudan's largest irrigated agricultural area, was drawn into the conflict when the RSF seized its capital, Wad Madani, in December 2023.** The fall of the city, which had been serving as a primary humanitarian, trade, and medical hub, triggered the immediate displacement of over half a million people and the suspension of all humanitarian operations in the state<sup>45</sup>. The expansion of conflict directly disrupted the Gezira scheme, with wheat cultivation reaching only 45% of its targeted area by December 2023<sup>46</sup>. Most of Al Jazirah was subsequently recaptured by the SAF in late 2024, but the disruption to agricultural production and supply chains has not been fully reversed<sup>47</sup>.

**Sennar State**, which lies to the south-east of Al Jazirah along the Blue Nile, was drawn into direct conflict by mid-2024, displacing over 150,000 people before its capital Sinja was recaptured by the SAF in late 2024<sup>48</sup>. **Return movements have since accelerated**, but returnees are arriving into infrastructure heavily damaged during the fighting, with services severely overstretched<sup>49</sup>.

### **What is the current situation?**

**Across all three states, the humanitarian and development picture is increasingly intertwined.** The region is transitioning - unevenly and fragilely - from acute crisis toward early recovery, but the pace of return is outpacing the restoration of economic and social conditions.

**Returnees arriving to Khartoum find a city still in the early stages of reconstruction** - estimated to cost around \$350m - with entire neighborhoods still without water, electricity or functioning services<sup>50</sup>. Of the 120 hospitals damaged

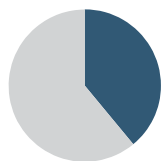
during the conflict, over 40 had partially resumed operations by December 2025, with local efforts ongoing to restore the remaining health facilities<sup>51</sup>.

**Markets have reopened and are generally accessible, but remain structurally fragile:** pre-war, Khartoum households sourced almost all their food through markets rather than own production, making them acutely exposed to price shocks<sup>52</sup>.

**Despite a seasonal decline in food prices in early 2026, the national Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) remains 8% higher than a year earlier**, with some Khartoum localities recording MEB values up to 23% above the national median and affordability scores among the lowest nationally<sup>53</sup>. This is translated into severely **constrained purchasing power** among a population whose income-earning opportunities are lagging well behind the pace of returns. Food security in Khartoum is classified at Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with FEWS NET projecting these conditions to persist through the lean season amid continued high prices and limited income-earning opportunities<sup>54</sup>.

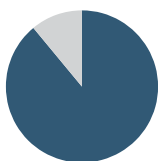
**The scale of destruction of Khartoum's water infrastructure has created conditions for serious and persistent public health risks.** Only a fraction of the city's water treatment stations have been partially restored, leaving the returning population heavily dependent on costly tanker deliveries or contaminated Nile water<sup>55</sup>. Community consultations conducted across Khartoum in late 2025 confirmed that lack of nearby clean water sources and the high cost of water and sanitation services remain the most frequently reported WASH challenges<sup>56</sup>. While **the national cholera outbreak was declared over in March 2026**, the underlying conditions that drove it - i.e. broken water infrastructure, destroyed sanitation systems, and rapid population influx - remain largely unaddressed, creating a high risk for new outbreaks<sup>57</sup>.

As in Khartoum, **Al Jazirah and Sennar are experiencing accelerating return movements into conditions that remain far from adequate.** Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist across both states,



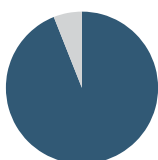
**39%**

of people who were **originally displaced from Khartoum had returned** as of January 2026<sup>69</sup>



**89%**

of people who have returned to Khartoum **have returned to urban neighborhoods**<sup>70</sup>

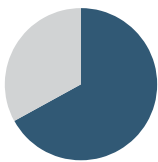


**94%**

of all **nationwide deaths from Hepatitis E** are recorded in **Al Jazirah state**<sup>71</sup>

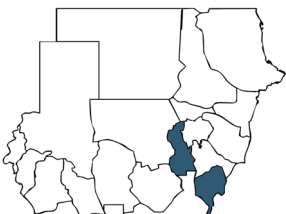
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average **market affordability score** of the Khartoum state localities assessed by the JMMI in January 2026<sup>66</sup>



67%

of the participants of the HNRP community consultations in Khartoum mentioned **access to safe drinking water as their greatest WASH need**<sup>87</sup>



## The southern states: displacement pressures and an emerging conflict front

### What happened in the last three years?

**White Nile and Blue Nile States have been affected by the war through two distinct but converging dynamics:** mass displacement inflows from conflict zones elsewhere in Sudan, and increasingly direct

with poor households continuing to face constrained food access amid **limited income-earning opportunities**, high prices, and low purchasing power<sup>58</sup>. What distinguishes Al Jazirah is the fate of the **Gezira scheme**, Sudan's most important irrigated agricultural area. Wheat production is recovering partially but remains below average due to **input shortages and limited access to agricultural finance**<sup>59</sup>. A Hepatitis E outbreak concentrated predominantly in Al Jazirah, which accounts for **69% of national cases, adds a serious public health dimension to an already fragile recovery**<sup>60</sup>.

### What to expect in the coming months?

**The outlook for all three states remains uncertain and will depend on factors that remain highly unpredictable**, including the course of the wider war and the approach of the rainy season. The relative stability that has allowed returns and fragile recovery remains contingent on continued absence of direct fighting.

**Active fighting in Greater Kordofan** is disrupting key commercial corridors linking Khartoum to North Kordofan, with direct **consequences for supply chains and food prices in Khartoum**<sup>61</sup>, while the drone strike on Sinja in January 2026 signals a potential geographic expansion of the conflict into previously stable areas of the central corridor<sup>62</sup>. Even in this context, return movements are expected to continue accelerating, with over **six million returnees projected nationally in 2026**, a figure which is likely to outpace the required restoration of services and infrastructure, which is expected to continue<sup>63</sup>.

**The onset of the rainy season is likely to add a further layer of pressure.** Disease

prevalence, already high given the state of water and sanitation infrastructure, is expected to increase with seasonal rains, and conflict-damaged drainage systems across the city raise the risk of flooding in areas where returnees have settled<sup>64</sup>. At the same time, the **Gezira scheme** - which relies on an extensive network of irrigation canals that are acutely vulnerable to flood damage<sup>65</sup> - was affected by the extreme wet conditions and widespread flooding that struck much of Sudan in 2024<sup>66</sup>.

**Intensifying climate variability<sup>67</sup> poses a direct threat to the scheme's infrastructure** at a moment when its partial wheat recovery is particularly fragile. In addition, FEWS NET projects that poor households across the central corridor will continue to face **constrained food access through 2026**, with income-earning opportunities remaining limited and food prices significantly above average into the lean season<sup>68</sup>.

### What are the implications?

With returns accelerating faster than the restoration of infrastructure, services, and economic conditions, **sustained investment in economic recovery and livelihoods** is needed alongside ongoing infrastructure reconstruction efforts.

Effective early recovery programming requires **area-based evidence that considers economic structures, livelihood dynamics, and social conditions** to identify viable recovery pathways and target interventions where they are most needed. In the absence of such recovery, **there is a credible risk of slow-onset deterioration**. Systematic monitoring of returnee conditions will be essential to detect this deterioration before it becomes acute.

conflict within their own borders. **White Nile**, which already hosted the largest South Sudanese refugee population of any Sudanese state before the war<sup>72</sup>, received large inflows of Sudanese IDPs from Khartoum and Al Jazirah from 2023 onward, far exceeding its pre-existing absorption

capacity<sup>73</sup>.

**Blue Nile had experienced intermittent conflict since 2011**, leaving it with some of the highest pre-war food insecurity in the country and significant pre-existing displacement<sup>74</sup>. **The onset of the April 2023 war further destabilized the state**, with ongoing insecurity disrupting agricultural livelihoods and compounding an already severe humanitarian situation.

### *What is the current situation?*

**IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) conditions are widespread across both states**, by a combination of **hosting pressure, reduced access to income-earning opportunities, and, in Blue Nile, active conflict**<sup>75</sup>. In White Nile, successive displacement waves have pushed an already overstretched system well beyond its limits, with overcrowding at displacement sites driving significant sanitation concerns<sup>76</sup>. **Unseasonal livestock concentrations** from herders unable to follow traditional migration routes through conflict-affected Darfur and Kordofan are adding further pressure on already strained land resources<sup>77</sup>.

**In Blue Nile, active conflict is driving displacement from rural areas toward main towns**, with agricultural livelihoods severely disrupted and humanitarian access increasingly constrained. **Al-Kurmuk and Geisan localities** are already at Emergency level (IPC Phase 4), the most acute food security outcomes in the region outside Darfur and Kordofan<sup>78</sup>. In January 2026, **Blue Nile recorded the highest food MEB nationwide** followed by White Nile<sup>79</sup>.

### *What to expect in the coming months?*

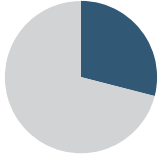
**Blue Nile re-emerged as a new active**

**front in early 2026**, following an offensive entering via South Sudan in late January and sustained fighting along the **South Sudan and Ethiopian borders** throughout February<sup>80</sup>. If fighting reaches major urban centers, FEWS NET identifies a credible scenario in which food insecurity outcomes expand to **Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) across the state**<sup>81</sup>. Displacement toward Ad-Damazine, the state capital, and other towns is already underway, increasing pressure on urban services<sup>82</sup>. The strategic importance of the contested **Al-Kurmuk border crossing** - a potential supply line from Ethiopia - means conflict in Blue Nile has supply-chain implications well beyond the state. **Climate risks compound the agricultural outlook:** northern Blue Nile recorded drier-than-normal conditions in 2025, adding pressure on rain-fed livelihoods already severely disrupted by conflict<sup>83</sup>.

**In White Nile, displacement inflows are expected to continue**, adding further pressure to a system already at its limits<sup>84</sup>. Recent drone strikes signal that the state may no longer be insulated from direct conflict<sup>85</sup>. With the rainy season approaching, disease risks including cholera and malaria are expected to increase across both states, particularly in overcrowded displacement sites.

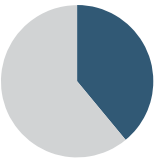
### *What are the implications?*

**Both situations risk being under-prioritized:** White Nile because deterioration is gradual, Blue Nile because the front is still emerging. **Anticipatory monitoring** will be essential to detect change before needs reach acute level.



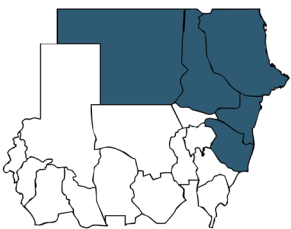
**29%**

of IDPs households in **White Nile** were staying at **gathering sites or open areas** as of January 2026<sup>107</sup>



**39%**

of the **interviewed vendors in Blue Nile** reported **limited to no availability of most of the assessed food items** in January 2026<sup>108</sup>



## **The eastern states and the central corridor: a critical region under growing strain**

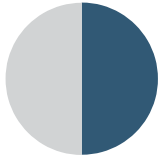
### *What happened in the last three years?*

**The Eastern States and the Nile Corridor** - encompassing Gedaref, Kassala, Red Sea, River Nile, and Northern State - **stretch from Sudan's main port on the Red Sea**

**through the country's breadbasket.** While largely spared from ground fighting, the region has been heavily affected by the war's secondary consequences. From April 2023, Port Sudan, in the Red Sea State, became the primary functioning

international humanitarian entry point and the *de facto* capital, concentrating UN operations and Sudan’s commercial import gateway<sup>88</sup>.

income<sup>97</sup>, against the backdrop of a fourth consecutive **disrupted agricultural season marked by fertilizer, seed, and credit shortages<sup>98</sup>**.



50%

of Sudan’s **sorghum production** originates from Gedaref<sup>109</sup>

**Gedaref State, which produces the bulk of Sudan’s sorghum and sesame**, became a destination for displacement from conflict epicenters across the country, hosting over 226,000 IDPs by January 2026, the vast majority originally displaced from Khartoum and Al Jazirah<sup>89</sup>. **Northern State and River Nile**, though more stable, **have absorbed some of the largest IDP populations in the country**: Northern State hosted nearly 480,000 IDPs and River Nile close to 400,000 as of January 2026<sup>90</sup>. These states have served as **critical transit corridors** and receiving areas throughout the conflict and are now under growing strain<sup>91</sup>.

**This compounds an already fragile agricultural base. Gedaref** falls within Sudan’s rain-fed semi-mechanized zone and shows recurring drought signals and vegetation decline, with rainfall fluctuations and occasional flooding affecting sorghum, sesame and sunflower production<sup>99</sup>. In **Kassala**, pastoral disruption, irrigation scheme underperformance, insecurity, and large hosting caseloads add further pressure to an agricultural system already strained before the war<sup>100</sup>. **Port Sudan** continues to function as the **main entry point for both humanitarian supplies and commercial imports**, including virtually all of Sudan’s imported wheat. The concentration of these functions in one location creates significant operational vulnerability.

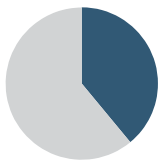


50%

of Sudan’s **croplands show a significant decrease in vegetation greenness** compared to 2022<sup>111</sup>

**In addition, traditional pastoral migration routes collapsed** as herders from Darfur and Kordofan, unable to move through conflict-affected territory, concentrated in the Al-Butana grazing areas of **Gedaref and Kassala**, leading to over-grazing and increasing the risk of farmer-herder clashes<sup>92</sup>. **Drone strikes on key infrastructure disrupted power and water supplies across Kassala and Gadaref States<sup>93</sup>**, compounding pre-existing pressures on the Halfa irrigation scheme where conflict-related disruption and lack of maintenance were already affecting agricultural productivity<sup>94</sup>.

In **Northern State and River Nile**, growing IDP populations are placing increasing pressure on basic services and income-generating activities<sup>101</sup>. Food security outcomes in both states are currently at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the post-harvest period, with the winter wheat harvest in March/April expected to provide temporary relief before conditions are projected to deteriorate toward Crisis (IPC Phase 3) at the onset of the lean season as household stocks deplete and income-earning opportunities remain limited<sup>102</sup>.



39%

of interviewed vendors in **Kassala** in January 2026 reported **financial challenges** limiting travelling to their market or buying the goods they sell<sup>110</sup>

**The perception that the eastern corridor was insulated from direct conflict was shattered in May 2025**, when drone strikes hit Port Sudan and Kassala for the first time, suspending humanitarian flights and exposing Sudan’s primary import gateway to direct threat<sup>95</sup>.

**What to expect in the coming months?**

**Several pressures are expected to converge in the coming months, though conditions across the eastern corridor remain comparatively more stable than in the conflict epicenters.** The 2026 wheat harvest in irrigated schemes of Kassala, River Nile, and Northern State is projected to be below average due to input shortages and limited agricultural finance, bringing only temporary relief before the lean season<sup>103</sup>.

**What is the current situation?**

**Food security conditions across the region range from Stressed (IPC 2) in the more productive areas of Gedaref to Crisis (IPC 3) more broadly**, driven by the accumulated effects of displacement, livelihood disruption, and infrastructure strain<sup>96</sup>. In **Gedaref**, large-scale IDP absorption is compressing the labor market and household food access for poor families who depend on agricultural wages for approximately 70% of their

**In the rain-fed semi-mechanised areas of Gedaref, recurring drought signals, rainfall fluctuations, and occasional flooding will continue to compound conflict-driven disruptions to sorghum,**

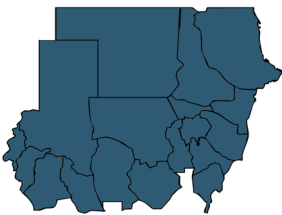
sesame and sunflower production, threatening the output of Sudan's primary food-surplus state at a time when national cereal supply is already critically strained<sup>104</sup>.

**From June, the rainy season could constrain road-based supply movements along the Port Sudan–Gedaref–Khartoum axis**, that is, the main route through which food commodities reach the rest of the country, compounding seasonal price increases during the lean season. In addition, cholera and malaria transmission are expected to increase in overcrowded displacement sites as the rains approach, with Gedaref, Kassala and River Nile among the states historically affected<sup>105</sup>. Regional

tensions with Ethiopia and Eritrea add further uncertainty to the corridor's stability.

### **What are the implications?**

**The diversity of livelihood systems across the corridor**<sup>106</sup> - from rain-fed semi-mechanized agriculture in Gedaref, to irrigated schemes in Kassala and along the Nile, to agropastoral and pastoral zones in Red Sea and parts of Kassala - means that **cumulative shocks are interacting differently across areas**. Effective **livelihoods and development programming** in this corridor will require granular, localized livelihood-sensitive approaches that capture this heterogeneity.



## Conclusion

**Three years into this conflict, Sudan's humanitarian crisis remains one of the most severe and underfunded in the world.** Yet, responding effectively to Sudan's humanitarian crisis requires more than resources alone. It requires the **recognition and agility to understand and respond to distinct regional challenges**, each with its own logic, trajectory, and implications for programming and evidence. **Granular, area-based evidence** - locally grounded and capable of keeping pace with a rapidly evolving situation - remains a

critical foundation for a more effective and sustainable response.

**Local actors have a particularly important role to play:** their proximity to affected communities, understanding of local dynamics, and their unique operational access make them essential partners in both evidence generation and programming. It is time to integrate local responders and initiatives more systematically in response activities and structures.

## ABOUT IMPACT

Founded in 2010 and headquartered in Geneva, IMPACT Initiatives is a leading applied research organization and the largest independent provider of data in crisis-affected contexts. Through our initiatives we enable humanitarian and other aid actors to make better, evidence-based decisions by delivering timely, relevant, and methodologically rigorous data and analysis. Our extensive presence across crisis-contexts allows us to collect data directly from crisis-affected people wherever needed, including among the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach.

## IMPACT IN SUDAN

In Sudan, IMPACT is focused on three core objectives: **1) Informing evidence-based strategic planning and prioritization of the response at national level**, including through analytical support to identify the number of people in need ahead of the humanitarian planning cycle, sectoral needs assessments, flood risk analyses, and its Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) tracking price evolution across the country; **2) Strengthening subnational decision-making in the context of the acute humanitarian crisis** in the Greater Darfurs and Kordofans through developing the information system for the Area Based Coordination (ABC); and **3) Supporting localized, sustainable and adaptive programming to enable early recovery** through livelihood assessments, climate analyses and a cross-cutting localization strategy aimed at integrating local responders into key information and decision processes.

Most of IMPACT's products and briefs, if not [publicly available](#), can be received upon request.

## Endnotes

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