**The Current Situation in Sudan**

The MedGlobal team assessed the refugee situation in Sudan at the end of May. Newly arriving refugees, primarily women and children, come daily to Koufroun, Borota, Goungour, and Biski. They currently number over 25,000 people in total and require urgent assistance. Medical care, food, and shelter are pressing needs, with increasing support for education. So far, some help is being provided by IRC and Alert Santé, but this does not begin to meet the needs of all of the refugees. Many people have fled Sudan and are in Koufroun, Adre, and other towns along the Chad/Sudan border. The refugees’ housing crisis is becoming more acute with the onset of the rainy season, which will begin in mid-June. Since many refugees have come from remote villages and smaller towns, existing health conditions that have not yet been treated could become aggravated without proper care, causing chronic issues to become deadly.

The NGO in Farchana is reaching out to the refugees, but they can only stay for a short period due to the lack of security in refugee areas. There are temporary tents for medical assistance with few materials, which are returned to Farchana each evening. The refugees are complaining, asking why these resources that are so needed are not left behind where they can be used for first aid when the NGOs are absent. Some refugees are nurses and doctors who have worked in hospitals in Sudan. If there is an urgent health need during the night, nothing can be done to help them. Having an ambulance to evacuate urgent care cases would be a literal lifesaver.

The mission observed that the need for help for these groups of refugees in Koufroun, Borota, Goungour, and Biski is urgent. A district manager of Koufroun said that the situation is awful and is not improving. The newly arriving refugees in Koufroun are finding meeting their basic needs for living to be very expensive. There needs to be more water for refugees and Chadians in Koufroun.

One representative of a newly arrived group of refugees in Koufroun explained what caused their flight from Sudan. Some bandits killed a prominent businessman in Tondolti and his family and then accused two Arabs, who were taken to the police. The police refused to arrest them. Finally, the women and children of the town stoned the men to death, and then family members of two people who were killed came and attacked them. Afterward, they fled to Chad. The refugees pleaded for help to meet their basic needs, including water, food, and shelter.

MedGlobal began working in Sudan in 2020, implementing an emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis. In 2021, MedGlobal received registration from the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC) and expanded work to include direct healthcare delivery and capacity building for local health facilities and healthcare workers. MedGlobal’s work has comprised four sectors: health, WASH, nutrition, and protection.

**The Situation with Sudan’s Neighbors keeping displaced people inside the country**

The new Sudanese refugee crisis exacerbates an already ongoing crisis due to the high number of displaced people from other countries taking refuge in Sudan, further straining already thin resources. It is expected that 860,000 more refugees will flee from Sudan to outside of the country this year.[[1]](#footnote-0) While many humanitarian organizations are preparing for mass external migration, Sudan’s neighbors are not keen nor prepared to take in arrivals, leaving many that are fleeing with little choice but to remain internally displaced. It is important to note that many of those internally displaced are involuntarily inside of the country due to Sudan’s neighbors lacking the capability to care for the arrivals and the difficulty of fleeing outside the country. Therefore, looking outside of Sudan for solutions to the internally displaced will be unproductive.

Chad, already hosting hundreds of thousands of displaced Sudanese from previous conflicts, is struggling with the new arrivals and the humanitarian situation is urgent.[[2]](#footnote-1) Most refugees who fled to Chad lack basic needs such as food and shelter.[[3]](#footnote-2) Adding to the pressure, the World Food Program plans to halve food rations for refugees in Chad due to a lack of financial aid, and healthcare providers reported that in current refugee sites, acute malnutrition treatment program admissions increased by 65%.[[4]](#footnote-3),[[5]](#footnote-4) With lack of shelter, some refugees reside in the open or under trees, while others make shelters near the border.[[6]](#footnote-5) Hesitancy to help is also taking root in Chad. Food and fuel prices in Eastern Chad have already increased and the price of sorghum doubled due to the conflict, increasing tensions between the local populations and the arrivals. Both impoverished Chadians and Sudanese will face food issues, and already overwhelmed services will fall under more pressure. While authorities have requested assistance to relocate camps away from the border, most existing camps are full and have no resources for new arrivals.[[7]](#footnote-6) The Chadian government is concerned about the security and humanitarian situation within Chad, taking new measures to secure the border, further complicating the situation.[[8]](#footnote-7)

South Sudan, a country with a crisis of its own, has taken in thousands of Sudanese, including 200,000 returnees.[[9]](#footnote-8) The majority of returnees are arriving by boat along the Nile, complicating emergency response logistics.[[10]](#footnote-9) South Sudan is an incredibly turbulent country with its own issues. According to the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan, 9.4 million people in South Sudan are in need of humanitarian assistance, not including refugees and returnees.[[11]](#footnote-10) As a result of the conflict, South Sudan will face economic difficulties, as it is reliant on Sudan for its fuel supplies and 90% of its revenue.[[12]](#footnote-11) This will devastate South Sudan, further diminishing economic opportunities, services, and infrastructure, and increasing food insecurities, putting more strain on the local and arriving population.[[13]](#footnote-12)

Ethiopia, already hosting over one million refugees from other conflicts, is still healing from a long conflict in the Tigray region that ended in November 2022, with the resulting refugee crisis still ongoing.[[14]](#footnote-13) Most of those that have arrived in Ethiopia so far are returnees and foreign nationals seeking international transport.[[15]](#footnote-14) A decrease in funding has hindered Ethiopia’s response, with refugees lacking food, water, sanitation promotion, nutrition, and shelters. Protection services are most critical in Ethiopia, especially regarding family separation, gender-based violence, exploitation, and sexual abuse.[[16]](#footnote-15)

Eritrea expects a much smaller number of refugees due to its brutal authoritarian regime, with most of those arriving being Eritrean returnees.[[17]](#footnote-16) However there are reports of 3,500 Sudanese refugees fleeing to camps near Kassala, a majority-Eritrean town in Sudan at the Eritrean border, being deported to Teseney, Eritrea. Those allegedly deported were turned away from camps due to a lack of food. Allegedly, among those deported, 95 were imprisoned, some of which were activists who stood against the current dictator, Isaias Afwerki.[[18]](#footnote-17) Currently, little information is known about how Eritrea will get involved, but it is speculated that it will likely have minimal involvement with refugees except for Eritrean returnees.

At the two Egyptian border crossings, the humanitarian situation is rough, with delays lasting for days leaving refugees without food, water, or shelter.[[19]](#footnote-18) The Sudanese side of the border has no facilities. While the Egyptian half of the border has the Red Crescent providing medical care and water, the government has not authorized an official response team at the border. The government will likely not allow an open border nor will it be willing to set up camps.[[20]](#footnote-19) These long delays are due to slow processing on Egypt’s side due to the Egyptian government’s new crisis task force to monitor and thoroughly vet arrivals. Although Egypt is better prepared to take refugees, access into the country and asylum procedures pose challenges for many refugees without travel documents, resulting in family separation.[[21]](#footnote-20) All males between 17 and 49 are told to apply for a visa, which is only available at one of the border crossings.[[22]](#footnote-21)

While the situation at Egypt’s border is a humanitarian concern, the situation within Egypt is reported not to be one of a typical “refugee crisis.”[[23]](#footnote-22) There is a lack of people sleeping on the streets and within Egypt, the situation is relatively calm. This is because those fleeing to Egypt are typically well off, as arriving and residing in Egypt can be costly. Some bus owners have reportedly inflated the price for rides to Aswan, Egypt to $100-600. Some of these bus drivers are part of larger scams, dropping off people at other stations and charging them even more money to get to Aswan.[[24]](#footnote-23) In addition, these refugees have to pay for trains, buses, or planes to get to relative’s homes once arriving in Egypt, with some hotels offering discounts to those from Sudan who are passing through. The majority of arrivals have friends or family in Egypt or can afford to move there.[[25]](#footnote-24) While the UN is working on a response team to send to Egypt, the Egyptian government’s lack of cooperation, long delays, and the large wealth gap between individuals will likely cause issues in the foreseeable future.

Sudanese refugees will find difficulties in other neighboring countries as well. While there are hardly any new arrivals in Libya so far, Libyan militia groups are preventing Sudanese migrants from reaching Libya.[[26]](#footnote-25) Human traffickers in Libya are likely to take advantage of the situation, using these refugees for drug and human trafficking into Europe.[[27]](#footnote-26) The UN plans to relocate people away from the dangerous border in the Central African Republic (CAR) to ensure protection, noting a lack of shelter, food, healthcare, and WASH.[[28]](#footnote-27) If this conflict continues, refugees with resources and networks may attempt to continue striving towards North Africa or Europe. Sudanese are often among the top nationalities caught trying to reach Europe and are amongst the top 20 nationalities that arrive in Italy.[[29]](#footnote-28) With the increase in migration, an increase in xenophobia is to be expected. In recent months, xenophobic rhetoric and violence in Tunisia has increased, which may cause further issues for the Sudanese refugees.[[30]](#footnote-29)

Economic issues, due to inflation and the disruption of trade, are already creating problems for the host countries, which could create tensions between refugees and the host populations.[[31]](#footnote-30) With many of Sudan’s neighbors underfunded, over capacity, and experiencing their own crises, any solution proposed to alleviate the internally displaced should not look outwards until these needs and issues are properly addressed.

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