



### **The 2025 Sudan Humanitarian and Refugee Response Plans: A Renewed Challenge to the Donor Community**

On 17th February 2025, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr. Tom Fletcher and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Filippo Grandi [jointly launched](#) the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Sudan and the 2025 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan respectively. The two [plans](#) appeal to the donor community for a combined amount of US\$6 billion to assist about 26 million people inside the country and those who crossed Sudan's international borders as refugees and asylum seekers, especially in neighbouring countries – Egypt, Chad, South Sudan, Uganda, Libya, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic etc. The 2025 funding appeal surpasses last year's estimates by one-third, which explains the gravity of the crisis and the increase in the humanitarian needs.

The 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Sudan (HNRP) targets to assist about 21 million vulnerable civilians and to provide them with life-saving aid and protection, including food, medical supplies, potable water and sanitation, shelter and psychosocial service etc. HNRP requires US\$4.2 billion in funding, which makes it one of the largest UN-coordinated humanitarian response plans in the developing world, providing relief and atonement to the highest number of vulnerable people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance this year.

The 2025 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) prioritizes the delivery of life-saving aid and protection, including emergency shelters, clean water, relocation from border areas to safer locations, psychosocial support, healthcare and education to Sudanese refugees. RRP also aims to help the host countries to strengthen national services and implement programmes to help bring stability. The RRP requires US\$1.8 billion in funding to support about 4.8 million Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers currently exiled in Sudan's neighbouring countries.

### **Background and Justification**

Since 15th April 2023, and due to the destructive armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their allied armed militia groups, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan is aggravating by the day and millions of civilians are currently facing precarious living conditions, including rampant food insecurity and hunger, subpar healthcare, widespread illnesses and poor sanitation and shelter. Characterised as the world's worst humanitarian crisis in terms of population displacement and hunger, yet relief efforts are critically hampered, and humanitarian aid agencies face immense challenges in accessing the

affected areas either because of lack of funding to provide relief material or because of military operations and insecurity or due to criminal activities, including attacks against relief workers. It is noteworthy to single out the bureaucratic and administrative measures imposed by the putschist military authority on the delivery of food and relief material to certain areas of the country as one of the main reasons that hinder smooth, adequate and timely delivery of humanitarian relief to some of the most famine-affected areas and needy populations in Sudan.

The latest [report](#) of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee (FRC) issued on 24 December 2024, depicts a grim reality that a deadly famine exists in five areas of Sudan. The IPC/FRC report is categorical that it “... *finds Famine in at least five areas of Sudan for which reliable data exists, and projects Famine in five additional areas between December 2024 and May 2025. Risk of Famine in the projection period is confirmed in seventeen additional areas.*” Around 25 million or half of Sudan’s population risks facing high levels of acute food insecurity, described by IPC as crisis level conditions or worse, in other words, a food insecurity situation amounting to starvation

The situation of Sudanese refugees in neighbouring African countries is utterly disturbing. While these countries welcomed millions of those fleeing for safety, however, Sudanese refugees often live in harsh conditions. They lack some of the basic daily needs, security and a dignified life in almost all the countries of their exile. It is indeed appreciated that the arrival of growing numbers of Sudanese refugees in foreign countries create serious challenges to the host governments and communities where local resources and services are already overstretched. In addition to the security concerns and economic burdens on the host countries, problems of other types concerning the presence of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers are also emerging, adding to the existing complexities.

In this respect we draw attention to the study issued by the World Organization against Torture and the Libyan Anti-Torture Network in November 2024 entitled “[Forcibly Displaced Sudanese Trapped with Their Hopes at North African Borders](#)” which revealed that Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries notably in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia are particularly vulnerable to serious abuses and infringements of their human rights under national and international law. Despite their status as protected persons under the Refugee Convention (1951), they endure arbitrary arrests and detention, money extortion, human trafficking, torture and ill-treatment, gender-based violence and racial discrimination. The study showed that 40% of [surveyed](#) Sudanese refugees experienced racial discrimination and xenophobia in host nations and that in Egypt 59% reportedly have seen incidents of arbitrary deportation in 2024. Whereas in Libya some 100,200 Sudanese refugees are held in harsh detention conditions or facing money extortion.

### **High-Level Humanitarian Conference for the People of Sudan**

The launch of HNRP and RRP had been preceded by the [High-Level Humanitarian Conference for the People of Sudan](#) which was held in Addis Ababa on 14th February 2025. This important event was organized within the context of the 38th ordinary session of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government. This well-attended high-level financial pledging event is yet another philanthropist initiative of the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) toward the people of Sudan inside the country and abroad. The event was hosted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and co-sponsored by the AU Commission and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Several African Heads of State and Government and top officials, including the UN Secretary-General addressed the Conference.

The High-Level Conference, which is meant to mobilize regional and global financial support to address Sudan's catastrophic humanitarian crisis, kickstarts a series of similar fundraising initiatives to be held this year. High-level speakers sent a unified call to the parties to the conflict to observe a humanitarian ceasefire, nonetheless, during the month of Ramadan, which is a significant reminder to the warmongers in the country to end the ongoing fighting and its tragic consequences on civilians. In his introductory remarks to the High-Level Conference, the UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres reminded the audience that: "*Sudan is in the grip of a crisis of staggering scale and brutality.*" He warned the world that the crisis in Sudan "... is increasingly spilling over into the wider region" and therefore it "*demands sustained and urgent attention – from the African Union and the broader international community.*"

In his statement to the High-Level Conference Sheikh Shakhboot Bin Nahyan Al Nahyan, UAE's Minister of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and convenor of the event, described the crisis in Sudan as the "*world's gravest humanitarian catastrophes*" that demands not just the world's attention, but its "*immediate and collective action.*" He urged the warring parties to honour the sacred month of Ramadan by "*implementing a humanitarian ceasefire to ensure the safe, urgent, and unhindered access of essential humanitarian aid to those most in need, in particular children, the elderly and women.*" He further announced the UAE pledge to provide an additional amount of US\$200 million in humanitarian aid to Sudan in 2025. This latest contribution brings the UAE's support to humanitarian work in Sudan to about US\$3.5 billion in the last decade alone thus placing it among the most credible, generous and top individual country donors to Sudan.

## **Conclusion and Findings:**

Sudan is the scene of mayhem and humanitarian cataclysm beyond imagination. At least one-third of Sudan's population is uprooted and displaced while more than its half is hungry and in urgent need of food and basic humanitarian aid. The HNRP 2025 and RRP 2025 are the lifelines to millions of vulnerable people inside Sudan and in neighbouring countries, especially women and children. However, the implementation of Sudan humanitarian and refugee response plans 2025, above all, securing the necessary financial resources therefore is a renewed challenge to the regional and international donor communities. Global donor fatigue is spelled out in the drastic reduction in funding of humanitarian aid by government institutions in donor countries on the one hand, while the needs for humanitarian interventions due to man made catastrophes increase on the other. The huge humanitarian crisis in Sudan is the best example of a long-running and growing human tragedy at a time of shrinking donor funding, which leaves a heavy human toll in terms of the loss of thousands of innocent lives due to preventable death.

Experience in recent years showed that Sudan-bound life-saving relief operations are largely neglected and [underfunded](#) by the donor community. An appeal for increased support to Sudan issued on 3 December 2024 by ACT Alliance and Caritas Internationalis – two leading networks of Christian faith-based organisations – decried the weak attention accorded to the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Sudan and deplored the "*chronically underfunded*" response plans. The [Sudan Humanitarian Response Dashboard](#) (November 2024) issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) shows that by 30 November 2024, the Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024, seeking US\$2.7 billion, was only 62.3% funded. It is also noticed that most funding received towards the end of the year thus leaving a huge gap at times of extreme need, especially during the leap agricultural seasons. With the political changes in the United States of America, global humanitarian funding is expected to diminish significantly.

## Recommendations:

1. The international donor community as well as individual countries and organizations are called upon to prioritize payment of the financial pledges they make toward Sudan and expeditiously meet such commitment. They are further encouraged to provide adequate and timely funding for Sudan-bound humanitarian work. The Sudanese people, victims of many years of atrocious acts and suffering inside Sudan and abroad, deserve the generous support of all peace-loving people.
2. The warring parties in Sudan, notably the *de facto* military authority, must allow humanitarian agencies and relief workers unfettered and safe access to the needy communities and guarantee timely, adequate and sustained inflow of relief material into famine-stricken areas. They should remove all administrative and security impediments that hinder the smooth functioning of relief operations, including by lifting visa restrictions on international relief workers and authorizing the delivery of relief material through airdrop.
3. The warring parties should meet their legal obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law to protect civilians and facilitate their access to food and other necessities. They should allow public and private entities as well as Sudanese civil society groups and relief organizations, to deliver food and other basic needs available in the local market and ensure even distribution of donated relief material available in Sudanese seaports to the neediest populations and regions.
4. African States, especially members of the AU's Peace and Security Council, are called upon to take stoic and action-oriented measures, including the deployment of peacekeepers to protect civilians, avert famine and halt the humanitarian tragedy and mayhem unfolding in the country.
5. Concerned Sudanese and Sudan-focused regional and international groups and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to establish a civil society platform for policy advocacy to propose new funding strategies and solutions and to follow up, remind and put pressure on donor countries to fulfill their funding commitment to humanitarian work in Sudan.

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