

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Author: [Viktor Mikhin](#)

30.04.2024

Sudan is on the brink of a terrible humanitarian catastrophe



Sudan is fast becoming the world's worst humanitarian tragedy, according to many politicians and diplomats, and the recent famine and displacement are just the tip of the iceberg. More than a year of war in Sudan has led to a wave of extreme violence, resulting in widespread death, disease and the destruction of cities, towns and villages.

Essence and history of the conflict

The situation is exacerbated by the constant escalation of hostilities and the mobilisation of the populations of the warring parties – the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. The conflict is constantly escalating, with numerous armed movements, tribal militias, political and ideological groups gradually joining the hostilities. Weapons are being distributed to the civilian population, further exacerbating the scale and intensity of the conflict. The effects of the war are now clearly visible throughout Sudan and beyond its borders, with regional and international actors supporting the various factions for their own interests.

The humanitarian crisis in Sudan exacerbates the already complex challenges of delivering aid, as both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces insist on enforcing certain routes, which are rejected by the opposing faction. The crisis is further exacerbated by widespread crimes and atrocities committed against civilians on ethnic, tribal, regional and political grounds, including murder, rape, displacement, theft and destruction of property, bombings and attacks on service providers. In this context, the failure of the international community to stop the brutal war in Sudan, to put pressure on the warring parties or to respond effectively to the global humanitarian tragedy is a matter of grave concern. Despite the enormous loss of life, widespread destruction, horrific massacres and daily crimes and violations, international intervention remains inadequate. [UN reports warn](#) that 18 million Sudanese are at risk of starvation, 70 per cent of health facilities are inaccessible and eight million people have been displaced, including 1.7 million outside Sudan. Sudan's cereal production has fallen by 64 per cent in the past year, leading to a staggering 73 per cent increase in food prices.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported that Sudan is facing the world's largest child displacement crisis, with 14 million Sudanese children in urgent need of life-saving assistance in a range of critical areas, including health, nutrition, education and water. More than 3.5 million children have been forcibly displaced since the start of the war. Some 7.4 million children lack access to safe drinking water, more than three million children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition, and 19 million are out of school.

Humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur

Sarah Mustafa, a Sudanese activist from Darfur (a region in western Sudan, an area of inter-ethnic conflict), believes that women, children, the elderly and people with chronic illnesses are in catastrophic conditions in displaced persons camps and shelters. More than five million people in the area are on the brink of starvation, a consequence of both the war-induced deterioration of the agricultural season and insufficient rainfall. The people of Darfur, especially women, have borne the brunt of the war since 2002, she said, calling on international and regional organisations to prioritise the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need.

International organisations have also called on the conflicting parties to establish safe humanitarian corridors to facilitate the delivery of aid, with obstruction of aid delivery resulting in numerous deaths in the camps. Continued international and Sudanese warnings of a dire humanitarian crisis have gone unheeded by the conflicting parties. Instead of heeding these warnings, they persist in pursuing a military solution, which after a year of continuous

fighting seems increasingly untenable. The Sudanese Armed Forces are preparing for an escalation of hostilities following the involvement of factions in Darfur that have joined the army. Mobilisations are underway, with strong reinforcements being sent to the capital Khartoum and Gezira State, according to local journalists.

For its part, the Rapid Support Forces have declared themselves to be in a state of permanent readiness to defend themselves and resist attacks by the Sudanese armed forces and allied groups. This means that the war will continue unabated, leading to more humanitarian disasters. Khaled Omar, leader of the Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Taqaddum), warned of the devastating consequences of the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the looming threat of famine. Amid growing divisions exacerbated by the current crisis, there is an urgent need for unity, he said, highlighting the plight of Sudanese refugees and displaced people. The Taqaddum leader also highlighted the collapse of basic services such as health and education, as well as the obstruction of humanitarian access and the inadequate response of the international community.

[Adel Sayed Ahmed, a Sudanese writer and political analyst](#), blames the United Nations for the humanitarian tragedy in Sudan. He argues that the weakness of UN mechanisms to deliver food and medicine to the Sudanese people is the main cause of this tragedy. The Sudanese writer criticised the UN's decision to distribute aid to both sides of the conflict, saying that the UN Security Council should prioritise the lives of millions of Sudanese facing starvation. He called on the UN to mobilise resources related to international humanitarian law, implement a ceasefire and establish safe humanitarian corridors.

Unsuccessful policies of the UN and its bodies

The United Nations has warned that Sudan is facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent history after nearly a year of war. Fighting between the army, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, has killed tens of thousands of people since April last year as the threat of famine looms amid international inaction. “By all indicators – because of the sheer scale of humanitarian needs, the number of displaced people and the famine – Sudan is one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent times,” [said Edem Wosornu](#), Director of Operations at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

“A humanitarian travesty is taking place in Sudan under the cover of international inattention and inaction,” Wosornu told the UN Security Council on behalf of OCHA chief Martin Griffiths. “Simply put, we are failing the people of Sudan,” she added, describing the desperation of the population. According to the UN, more than eight million people have

been displaced by the conflict. But other, more comprehensive figures put the number of displaced people in the country at least 10 million, mostly the elderly, women and children.

In early March, the Security Council called for an immediate ceasefire for the duration of Ramadan and for improved humanitarian access. However, due to intransigence and disagreements between the warring parties, a ceasefire has not been reached. More than 18 million Sudanese are facing severe food shortages – 10 million more than this time last year – while 730,000 Sudanese children are estimated to be severely malnourished.

[Martin Griffiths](#) warned the UN Security Council that “almost the entire population of Sudan could face catastrophic food shortages in parts of the country in the coming months”. Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director of the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP), also said: “If we are to prevent Sudan from becoming the world’s largest hunger crisis, coordinated efforts and joint diplomacy are urgent and critical. [He warned](#) that there was a “high risk” of mass starvation in the country in May, when the agricultural season begins. Indeed, all this was known before, but all the UN and its influential bodies have done is state the facts. And how can one expect anything useful from those UN officials who unconditionally fulfil the will of the West, first and foremost the US, to consolidate its influence in this country?

It is clear that such a complex situation requires urgent action by the international community, Sudan’s allies, neighbouring countries and all Sudanese parties to rapidly deliver life-saving assistance to the millions of people affected by this conflict. It also requires significant donor funding and the consolidation of international and regional efforts to help Sudan and its leaders find a political solution to this crisis and end the war. The country is in urgent need of peace, which can only be achieved through a cessation of hostilities by the warring parties. It is also vital that all parties refrain from using hunger as a weapon of war and commit to opening safe corridors for the delivery of humanitarian aid. Only with such a policy can we hope to resolve the deep humanitarian crisis in Sudan sooner rather than later.

29.04.2024

Victor MIKHIN, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, especially for online magazine “[New Eastern Outlook](#)”