

Rising Waters, Endless Struggles: How Much More Can Sudanese Civilians Endure Amidst War?

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Sudan



A man rests after seeing the water damage to his house. (Reuters: Mohamed Nureldin Abdallah)

SUMMARY

Sudan is enduring a severe humanitarian crisis, compounded by ongoing conflict and the devastating effects of climate change. Years of war, including recent clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, have displaced millions, depriving them of food, shelter, and healthcare. Additionally, worsening Nile floods have destroyed homes, infrastructure, and crops, leading to increased disease and famine. Despite their resilience, Sudanese civilians face overwhelming challenges, requiring urgent international aid, peace efforts, and solutions to underlying issues like political instability and climate change.



BACKGROUND

Sudan, a nation already torn by decades of conflict and instability, is now facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. As war rages on, civilians are caught in a dire situation where the horrors of conflict are compounded by the devastating effects of climate change. The rising waters of the Nile, coupled with the relentless violence, have left millions of Sudanese civilians wondering just how much more they can endure.

Sudan's history is marred by war. From the Darfur conflict that erupted in 2003 to the more recent fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the country has rarely seen peace. The ongoing conflict has displaced millions, leaving them without homes, food, or medical care. The civilian population, especially women and children, bears the brunt of the violence. Many are forced to flee their homes, seeking refuge in overcrowded camps that offer little in terms of safety or basic necessities.

Every year between May and October peak flow on the Nile is accompanied by torrential rains, destroying homes, wrecking infrastructure and claiming lives, both directly and through waterborne diseases. The impact is expected to be worse this year after nearly 16 months of fighting that has displaced millions of people into flood zones. In Wadi Halfa, in the north of the country,

near the Egyptian border, "around 3,000 homes and health facilities were severely damaged," according to local authorities. Meanwhile, the UNHCR, the UN's refugee agency, said in a statement that at least 11,000 people, many of them already displaced, have been affected by the heavy rains and flooding.

In 2020, Sudan experienced one of its worst flood seasons in recent history, with over 100,000 homes destroyed and more than 600,000 people affected. The situation has only worsened in the years since, with many areas now experiencing chronic flooding. The combination of war and climate change has created a perfect storm of suffering, where the most basic aspects of life—food, shelter, and safety—are in short supply.

For the average Sudanese civilian, survival is a daily struggle. The war has decimated the economy, leaving many without jobs or income. Inflation has skyrocketed, making it nearly impossible for people to afford basic goods. The healthcare system, already stretched thin, is on the brink of collapse, unable to cope with the influx of war casualties and the rising number of people suffering from diseases like cholera and malaria. And now increased flooding have destroyed crops, homes, and infrastructure. The flooding has also exacerbated the spread of waterborne diseases,



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adding another layer of misery for the already vulnerable population.

A July report on hunger conditions released by the The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, found it likely that parts of North Darfur especially the Zamzam camp, are experiencing “the worst form of hunger” known as IPC Phase 5. The IPC said the famine conditions in Zamzam camp were fueled by the conflict and “severely restricted humanitarian access.” The Norwegian research group ACAPS already predicted the current situation in a report published last June, that stated that “Sudan is anticipating severe humanitarian challenges during the 2024 rainy season, influenced by conflict and environmental factors.”

In the face of such adversity, the resilience of the Sudanese people is remarkable. Communities have banded together to support one another, sharing what little they have. Local and international NGOs are working tirelessly to provide aid, but the scale of the crisis is overwhelming. The question remains: how much more can the Sudanese endure?

The international community has a crucial role to play in alleviating the suffering in Sudan.

Increased humanitarian aid is desperately needed, as is pressure on the warring factions to negotiate a lasting peace. However, aid alone is not enough. Long-term solutions must address the root causes of the conflict, including political instability, economic inequality, and the impacts of climate change.

International efforts should also focus on climate adaptation and resilience, helping Sudan to better manage the impacts of rising waters and other environmental challenges. Investments in infrastructure, early warning systems, and sustainable agriculture could go a long way in mitigating the effects of climate change and ensuring that the Sudanese people have a future beyond mere survival.

The Sudanese civilians are trapped in a cycle of endless struggles, caught between the horrors of war and the rising waters of the Nile. Their resilience in the face of such adversity is inspiring, but it is not enough. The international community must step up its efforts to provide relief, support peace initiatives, and help Sudan adapt to the changing climate. Without urgent action, the question is not just how much more the Sudanese can endure, but how much longer they can survive



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