

UNHCR EGYPT
SUDAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE
25 May 2023



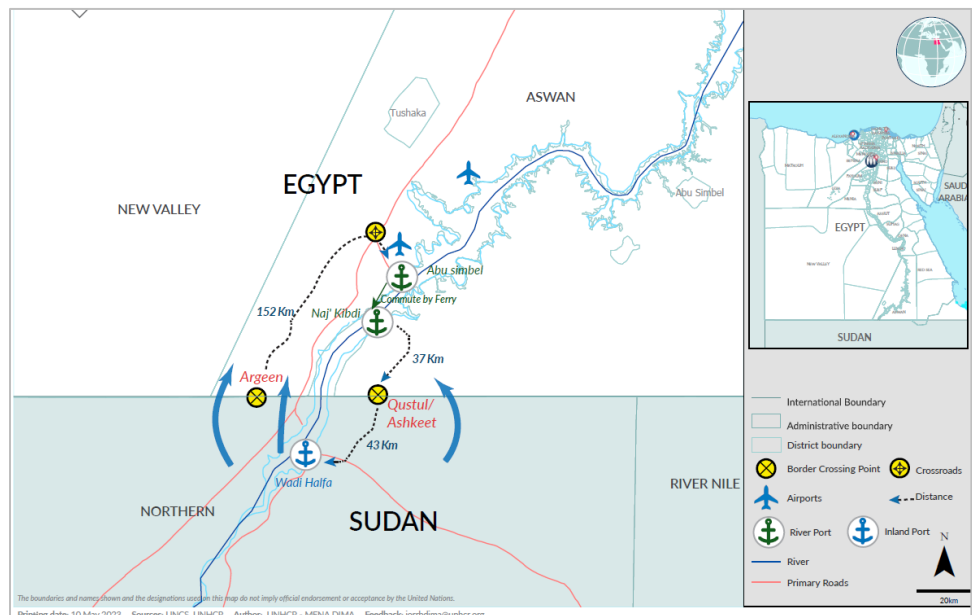
UNHCR partner the Egyptian Red Crescent is distributing water, food and hygiene items at the Qustol border. ©UNHCR/Christine Beshay

 **145,000**

Sudanese have entered Egypt from Sudan via the two official border crossings, Argeen and Qustol, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
As of 24 May

 **\$25.2 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements for the **Sudan emergency response** in Egypt.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Printing date: 10 May 2023 Sources: UNCS, UNHCR Author: UNHCR - MENA DIMA Feedback: jorbdim@unhcr.org

OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS

- The scale and magnitude of displacement within Sudan and into neighbouring countries has continued to increase since the conflict erupted in Khartoum, Sudan, in mid-April 2023, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The current fighting has led over 150,500 individuals to cross into Egypt to seek safety, including some **145,000** Sudanese and **5,565** third-country nationals.
- During the League of Arab States Summit, a ceasefire agreement was [signed](#) between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The signatories agreed on a seven-day short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements effective from the evening of 22 May.
- The Government of Egypt has been providing protection and humanitarian relief to those in need and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has reiterated its commitment to keeping the border open and to not implementing an encampment policy. The MFA has also highlighted the support required for host communities across Egypt, who are receiving the large number of recent arrivals.
- While Egypt is applying the Four Freedoms Agreement for Sudanese, some people fleeing are unable to meet the entry requirements and therefore need a visa to cross to Egypt despite their need for international protection. UNHCR has emphasized that Sudanese fleeing in the wake of hostilities need international protection.
- The MFA initial clearance granted for UN staff to be at the two entry points at the border is currently valid for one month. UNHCR continues to coordinate future plans with the MFA, which has assured UNHCR rolling access to each crossing point. UNHCR continues to advocate for the formalization of its presence in Aswan. This remains crucial for the assessment and provision of an adequate response, which includes the need for registration and data collection to enable proper planning and the provision of assistance.
- UNHCR Egypt signed a partnership agreement with the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC), the only NGO authorized by the Egyptian Government to work at the border. The purpose of the partnership is to address humanitarian needs of Sudanese refugees and other nationalities crossing the borders through Qustol and Argeen borders.
- The [Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) was launched on 17 May and seeks \$470.4 million to support refugees, returnees and host communities in the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. In Egypt, the plan seeks \$114 million to assist 350,000 refugees and 8,000 third-country nationals. UNHCR's [supplementary appeal for the Sudan emergency](#) seeks \$253.9 million, including **\$25.2 million** for Egypt, aimed at supporting government-led efforts to address the protection and urgent needs of refugees.

UNHCR Emergency Response

UNHCR is strengthening engagement and coordination with partners in the south and border areas, establishing mechanisms for the coordination of the interagency response on the ground. As such, UNHCR continues to engage local authorities and community-based organizations to assess the needs and scope of the response.

A UNHCR team visited the Qustol border crossing on 20 May and met with local authorities, who showed cooperation and willingness to collaborate. According to the ERC and local authorities, Qustol receives a high number of daily arrivals due to its proximity to Wadi Halfa. This is the town on the Sudanese side where visas can be obtained through the Egyptian Consulate. New arrivals can be profiled in two groups: one from Om Durman and Bahri cities (north of Khartoum), considered wealthier given the cost of the journey; and another from Khartoum, presenting higher vulnerabilities. Local authorities showed interest and commitment to collaborate on a project aiming at building local

humanitarian actors' capacity on refugee protection and assistance. UNHCR will follow up with the head of land border crossings and ports in Cairo for the implementation of this project. The mission also observed long waiting periods for new arrivals due to limited availability of ferry transportation from Qustol to Abu Simbel.

Sector highlights

Protection

UNHCR has noted a significant increase in the number of vulnerable Sudanese individuals seeking refuge in Egypt. Most of these new arrivals are women, children, and elderly individuals who have depleted their resources while fleeing Sudan. They face pressing needs for nutrition, healthcare, and shelter. Recent reports indicate that many children exhibit signs of trauma. Almost all newly arrived individuals require assistance to travel from the border area to Aswan, and subsequently to Cairo. In the long term, crucial priorities highlighted by UNHCR include education and family reunification. Sudanese community leaders have cautioned UNHCR to anticipate a continuous influx of arrivals.

UNHCR continues to meet with newly arrived Sudanese in Aswan and Cairo. On 18 May, UNHCR visited a local motel in Aswan serving as a shelter to new arrivals for 5-7 nights before moving to Cairo. During the visit, a Sudanese mother from Khartoum mentioned that her journey to Wadi Halfa took three days, with an additional day at the border where passengers could not leave the crowded bus at night. UNHCR also visited a temporary shelter managed by a Sudanese community school accommodating arrivals for 48 hours. Sudanese families staying at the shelter reported their intention to travel to Cairo and other major cities, quoting better access to livelihood opportunities. Many of them shared that they had no choice but to sell their personal belongings and assets, in order to cover the costs of their journey from Sudan to Egypt.

On 19 May, UNHCR and the US State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) conducted field visits to recently arrived Sudanese families at a community-based shelter in Aswan. The families shared the various challenges they encountered along the way, including the extensive travel time and the significant influx of people attempting to cross the borders from Sudan. Families raised concerns about the education of their children and the intention to settle in Cairo.

A capacity building session was conducted at the Safe Women Clinic, located in the Badr Youth Center in Aswan on 23 May. The training focused on enhancing the knowledge of 12 caseworkers who operate within the Women Friendly Space at the center. The Women Friendly Space provides case management, psychosocial support, vocational training, and various activities for women of different nationalities, including Sudanese nationals.



UNHCR and other UN agencies jointly moderate a focus group discussion to assess the needs of Sudanese who have crossed to Egypt. ©UNHCR/Christine Beshay



Registration

Over **7,000** individuals seeking international protection have approached UNHCR Egypt for registration, the vast majority being Sudanese nationals, since 18 April. The figures are double pre-crisis numbers. All asylum-seekers have been given registration appointments and UNHCR has scaled up registration capacity to respond to the demand.

Almost all new arrivals in Cairo interviewed by UNHCR had family members or strong community links in Cairo, and a few already had flats rented through their family or friends. All new arrivals indicated that they were planning to stay in Cairo for the time being.



Core relief items

The resources allocated under the newly signed ERC agreement will assist some 350,000 persons anticipated to cross the borders in the next months.

An amount was also allocated to cover the transportation cost of vulnerable people from the borders to Aswan and other cities. Through the partnership, the ERC will also distribute 150,000 hygiene kits, 75,000 sanitary materials, and 3.2 million water bottles at the two border crossings. Due to the high temperatures, UNHCR provided refrigeration equipment to store the items. Meanwhile, provision of medical assistance including medical consultations, medications for persons with chronic conditions and first aid support will be provided through the ERC.

UNHCR is scaling up its assistance with the upcoming delivery of four rub halls, 15 family tents, 100 mattresses, 2,000 floor mats, 5,000 blankets, and more sanitary packs. UNHCR will also provide material support to the border authorities. UNHCR Egypt procured 95 benches to be delivered to ERC to expand the waiting area at the border points.

Main needs and gaps

The situation on the Sudanese side of the border is reportedly concerning, as conditions continue to deteriorate. The Egyptian authorities have taken the necessary measures to expedite the entry process, although the large numbers of new arrivals remain a challenge in terms of processing capacity. UNHCR's observations also indicate that conditions at the Sudanese side of the border are rapidly deteriorating due to lack of water, food, WASH facilities, and speculation on the higher costs of the buses from Sudan to Egypt, all resulting in people being held for long periods of time in dire conditions. The ERC reported an increase in medical cases arriving at the border due to the failure of the health system in Sudan. To that end, the Ministry of Health and Population has deployed equipped ambulances to the border to assist with health care.

Financial information

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to its operation in Egypt, including in response to the Sudan situation. Ongoing support is critical to help families rebuild their lives. UNHCR is urgently appealing for **\$151.4 million** to support its response, including to the emergency across Egypt, of which only 8.7% is currently funded.

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