



# SUDAN CRISIS

## SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OVERVIEW

January 2025

## Executive Summary

**The Sudan conflict is the fastest growing displacement and protection crisis facing the world today.** Prior to April 2023, Sudan was the second largest host of refugees in Africa, hosting 1.13 million mostly South Sudanese, as well as Eritrean, Ethiopian and other refugees, as well as having one of the largest populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) globally. Since the outbreak of the current war, the number of refugees has fallen to 0.90 million, as many have returned abruptly to South Sudan, while the total number of internally displaced Sudanese has risen from 3.55 million in 2022 to 10.54 in 2024, and some 2.49 million Sudanese have sought safety in neighbouring countries.

**In Sudan, IDPs and refugees face economic devastation, food insecurity and the threat of violence.** IDPs are spread across more than 9,000 sites nationally – 60% in urban areas – with the largest numbers in North Darfur (1.02 million), Gedaref (1.00 million) and River Nile (0.84 million) states.<sup>1</sup> One-third of IDP households originate from Khartoum and more than half of IDPs are children under 18-years (53%). Refugees live primarily in 23 refugee camps, the majority of which are in White Nile, Gedaref and Kassala states. Those previously in Khartoum have largely relocated, either internally or by returning to South Sudan. Many IDPs and refugees face food insecurity: overall, the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for Sudan estimates that 45% of the population falls into phase 3 or 4 of need.

**Within neighbouring countries, new Sudanese arrivals add in many cases to significant existing refugee populations.** In Chad, Sudanese now make up 86% of all refugees and asylum-seekers, up from 68% in 2022, many of whom arrived following violence in Darfur in 2004.<sup>2</sup> In Egypt, new arrivals from Sudan – both those claiming asylum and arriving on visas or other means – are significant and add to already sizable populations of refugees from Sudan, Syria and elsewhere. In South Sudan, the number of Sudanese refugees has nearly doubled, alongside more than 600,000 South Sudanese who have returned home in adverse circumstances. Uganda and Ethiopia have seen relatively fewer new arrivals from Sudan, but already host sizeable refugee populations, while in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Libya, Sudanese have arrived to join a relatively smaller number of existing refugees.

**The sociodemographic and economic characteristics of registered Sudanese refugees vary by location and time.** UNHCR proGres registration records for over 1.8 million registered refugees across the seven main hosting countries in the region provide an overview of the population over time, and across countries.<sup>3</sup>

► **Demographics: Women and children make up 79% of the registered Sudanese refugee population overall.** The proportion is highest in Chad (87%) and the Central African Republic (86%) and lowest in Libya and Ethiopia, where adult men make up 43% and 37% of the registered refugee population. The refugee population includes approximately 657,463 school-age children (ages 5-17) – 36% of the overall population – underscoring a significant need for educational support across host countries.

► **Education: 25% of registered Sudanese refugees have (only) attended primary school and 26% have at least some level of secondary or university education, while 41% have no recorded form of education.** Overall, higher levels of education are observed in Egypt, Libya and Uganda and lower levels in Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan.

<sup>1</sup> IOM, DTM Sudan Mobility Update (October 2024)

<sup>2</sup> Based on most recent UNHCR Population Statistics (mid-year 2024) and UNHCR Data Portal.

<sup>3</sup> Data for demographics, occupation and education presented here are based on UNHCR proGres records for approximately 1,840,775 registered Sudanese across the 7 main hosting countries in the region: Central African Republic (26,435); Chad (769,673); Egypt (511,115); Ethiopia (55,979); Libya (40,210); South Sudan (380,583); Uganda (56,780). Registration procedures may vary across hosting countries in terms of coverage of individual fields.

Compared to Sudanese refugees residing in countries of asylum pre-2023, those that arrived since the beginning of the crisis generally have higher levels of education: levels of upper secondary or higher education are around 28%, compared to 8% among the pre-existing Sudanese refugee population. Between 2023 and 2024, the share of those arriving with upper secondary and university schooling rose from 23% to 39%.

► **Occupation:** Available data on occupation indicate a mix of backgrounds, including agricultural, skilled and semi-skilled workers, as well as large numbers of students and unemployed. Occupation is not systemically covered by UNHCR registration across the seven countries of asylum during the emergency phase of the crisis. However, what information exists shows large numbers of students, unemployed and semi-skilled individuals. Country studies and assessments paint a more detailed picture: many refugees, including those with higher levels of education, are bringing skills and resources that contribute to local labour markets.

**The different profiles of the population in turn have implications for policy and programming, while also influencing the accompanying challenges – and opportunities – for host communities.**

The context across hosting communities also varies dramatically from settlements in isolated and impoverished regions of Chad, where new Sudanese refugees join old refugee populations who fled previously from Darfur, and South Sudan, which already hosted Sudanese refugees mainly from Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, to those landing in Greater Cairo, Kampala and other urbanized areas.

► **Access to basic services:** The rapid increase in population has strained services, particularly in Chad, Egypt and South Sudan. In Chad, health centres are operating at over 150% capacity, with WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities experiencing shortages that affect both refugees and local populations. South Sudan has also faced similar challenges, with healthcare facilities seeing a 30% increase in patient load and limited medical supplies, exacerbating the fragile humanitarian situation. In Egypt, the demand for educational services has surged due to the arrival of approximately 120,000 Sudanese children of school age, leading to overcrowded classrooms and straining existing educational resources.

**In response, governments in the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda have embraced or reinforced integrated settlement approaches, which seek to expand services for both refugees and host communities.** Settlement profiles can help to direct and guide investments, and have so far been developed in Ura, Ethiopia and Farchana, Chad, while tools developed in South Sudan seek to identify and measure the absorption capacity of services in both refugee hosting and return areas to inform development action. In Egypt, discussions are ongoing about the educational needs of Sudanese children. Overall, these integrated settlement and inclusion approaches highlight a shift towards sustainable responses to the refugee crisis. By expanding shared services and infrastructure, host countries are working to improve conditions for both refugees and local communities, fostering social cohesion, and reducing tensions over limited resources.

► **Skilled labour:** Country profiles show that many Sudanese, especially those displaced from Khartoum, bring training, skills and educational backgrounds that strengthen local labour markets and offer potential benefits to local communities. In Libya and Egypt, refugees are contributing to sectors such as healthcare, construction, information technology, and education, which helps mitigate labour gaps. Additionally, there are reports of increasing number of professionals setting up businesses in Juba and Kampala, driving local economic growth and creating jobs for both refugees and host communities. This entrepreneurial trend among skilled refugees underscores their potential to positively impact host economies, particularly if supported through targeted programs like access to finance, recognition of qualifications, and work permits.

► **Onward movement:** The majority of Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia and South Sudan have said they intend to return to Sudan once the war ends. According to surveys carried out by the Mixed Migration Center in Ethiopia and South Sudan, few Sudanese refugees intend to move onwards at this point – 9% in Addis Ababa and 18% in Juba – and around 90% say they would return to Sudan once the war has ended.<sup>4 5</sup>

**Refugees and migrants (i.e. non-Sudanese) remaining in Sudan are prepared to move to another country (up to 45%).** Among refugees and migrants currently residing in Sudan, up to 45% of these state their preference to leave Sudan. Among them, Egypt and Libya are the most common destinations, as they are perceived to offer better economic opportunities, relative stability, and greater chances for integration or transit to Europe.

**The Country Socioeconomic Profiles highlight key contextual issues around access to services, economic impact and data and evidence that support longer-term responses.** The format includes a country context section followed by socioeconomic characteristics of displacement, based on UNHCR registration records and relevant surveys and studies.

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<sup>4</sup> Mixed Migration Center (May 2024)

<sup>5</sup> Mixed Migration Center (August 2024)

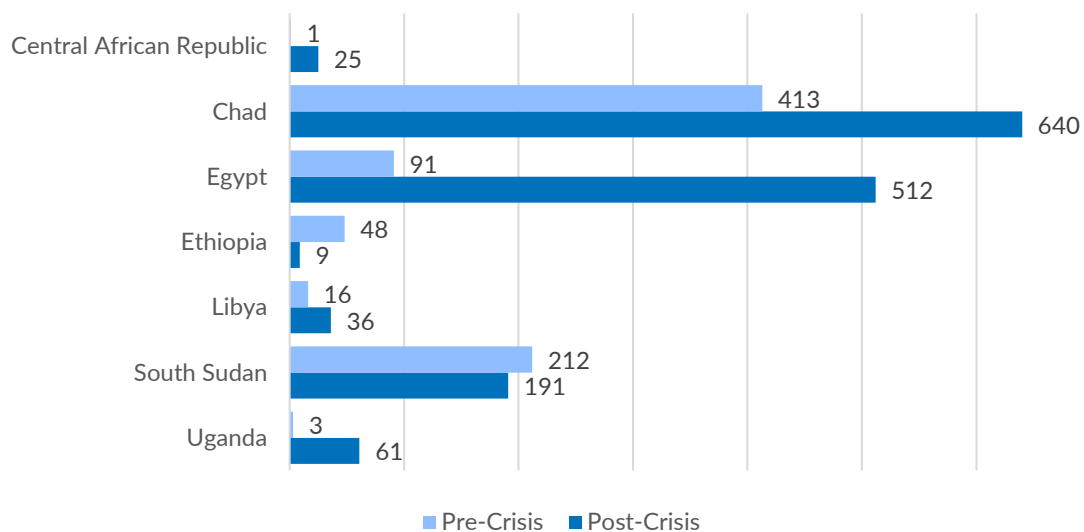
## Overview

**The Sudan conflict is the fastest growing displacement and protection crisis facing the world today.** Since the start of the war in mid-April 2023, large numbers of civilians have been forced to flee, including people who were already internally displaced and refugees from other countries who had sought safety in Sudan, many for a decade or more. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled into neighbouring countries or returned home in adverse circumstances, including significant numbers to South Sudan.

**Today, nearly 30.4 million people, a staggering 64 per cent of the total 47.5 million population, require humanitarian assistance due to worsening economic conditions, severe food insecurity, and deteriorating health and nutrition, particularly among children under-five years and pregnant women (HRP 2025).** The conflict has severely disrupted essential services such as healthcare, education, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Critical facilities and transportation infrastructure have been destroyed, with catastrophic economic consequences.

**Socioeconomic data on displaced populations and host communities is critical for addressing the consequences of this crisis, as well as laying the foundation for any eventual recovery.** The figures and analysis below present population profiles for displaced persons within and outside of Sudan, before and after April 2023, based on UNHCR registration data. They also identify and summarize other relevant datasets, studies and other useful tools for response and development planning.

Figure 1: Registered individuals (in thousands) by Country of Asylum (October 2024)<sup>6</sup>



Source: UNHCR registration data

**Before April 2023, Sudan was the second largest host of refugees in Africa, hosting 1.13 million mostly South Sudanese refugees, as well as having one of the largest populations of internally**

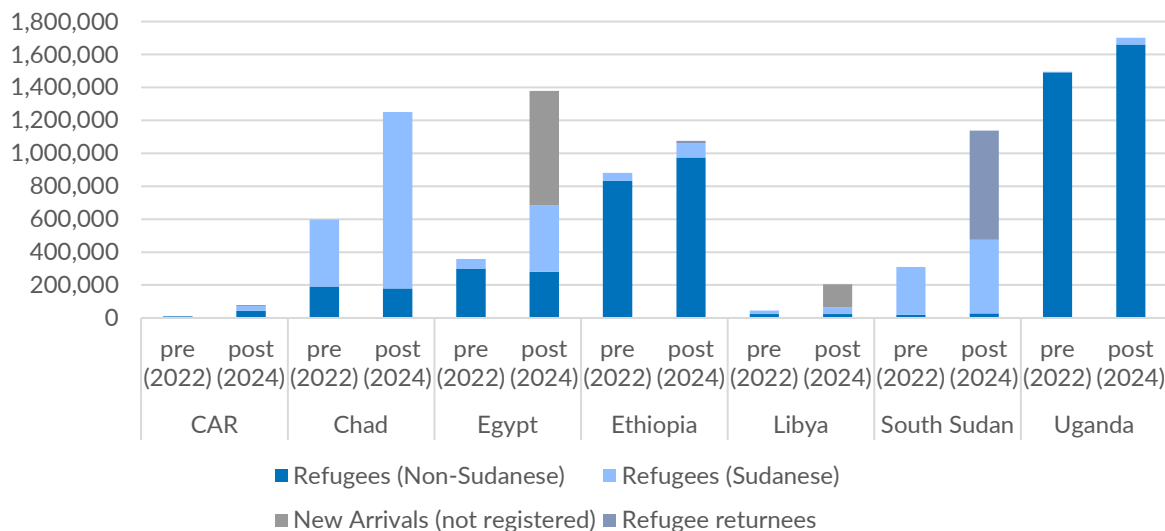
<sup>6</sup> At the time of analysis in October 2024, there were approximately 1.8 million Sudanese refugees individually registered with UNHCR across the 7 countries out of 2.34 million Sudanese refugees overall. In Central African Republic, Chad, South Sudan and Uganda, this includes most of the new arrivals. In Egypt and Libya, fewer than half of the Sudanese who entered the country – 1.2 million in Egypt, 180,000 in Libya – had registered. The share of new arrivals who are registered was also lower in Ethiopia. Between October-December 2024, the number of refugees increased to 2.49 million and 418,000 more individuals have been registered, including 283,000 in Chad and 92,000 in Egypt (UNHCR Operational Data Portal).



**displaced persons (IDPs).** Today, the number of refugees has fallen to 0.90 million, as many have returned abruptly to South Sudan. Meanwhile, the total number of internally displaced Sudanese has risen from 3.55 million in 2022 to 10.54 in 2024.<sup>7</sup>

**Within countries of asylum, the number of displaced persons has risen in all instances, adding in many cases to significant existing refugee populations.** In Chad, Sudanese now make up 86% of all refugees and asylum-seekers, up from 68% in 2022, many of whom arrived following violence in Darfur in 2004.<sup>8</sup> In Egypt, new arrivals from Sudan – both those claiming asylum and arriving on visas or other means – are significant and add to already sizable populations of refugees from Sudan, Syria and elsewhere. In South Sudan, the number of Sudanese refugees has nearly doubled, alongside more than 600,000 South Sudanese who have returned home in adverse circumstances. Uganda and Ethiopia have seen relatively fewer new arrivals from Sudan, but already host sizeable refugee populations, while in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Libya, Sudanese have arrived to join a relatively smaller number of existing refugees.

Figure 2: Comparative population trends, countries of asylum (pre-crisis 2022/post-crisis 2024)<sup>9</sup>



Source: UNHCR Population Statistics

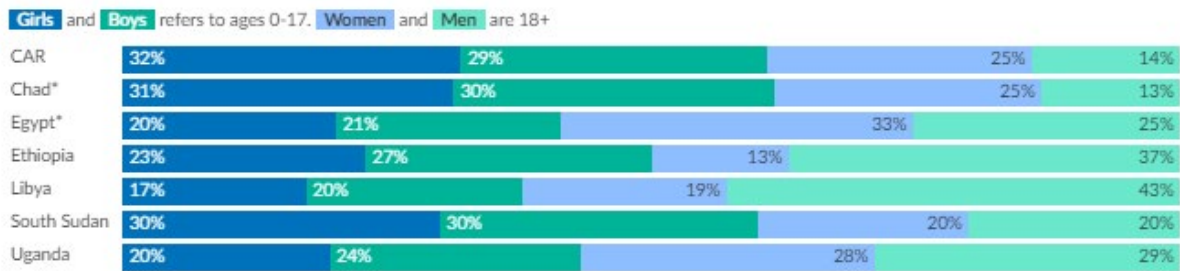
## Socioeconomic Characteristics of Displacement

**The sociodemographic and economic characteristics of these populations also vary by location, requiring different programmatic and policy responses.** Overall, the majority of new arrivals to countries of asylum are women and children. In CAR, Chad and South Sudan, more than 80% of new arrivals are women and children, along with more than 70% in Egypt and Uganda. The lowest shares of women and children, though still significant, are found in Ethiopia (63%) and Libya (57%). Overall, there are estimated 657,463 Sudanese children of school age across the countries of asylum:

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Sudan Situation (2024).

<sup>8</sup> Based on most recent UNHCR Population Statistics (mid-year 2024)

<sup>9</sup> New arrivals to Egypt include Sudanese arriving on visa or other non-asylum means.

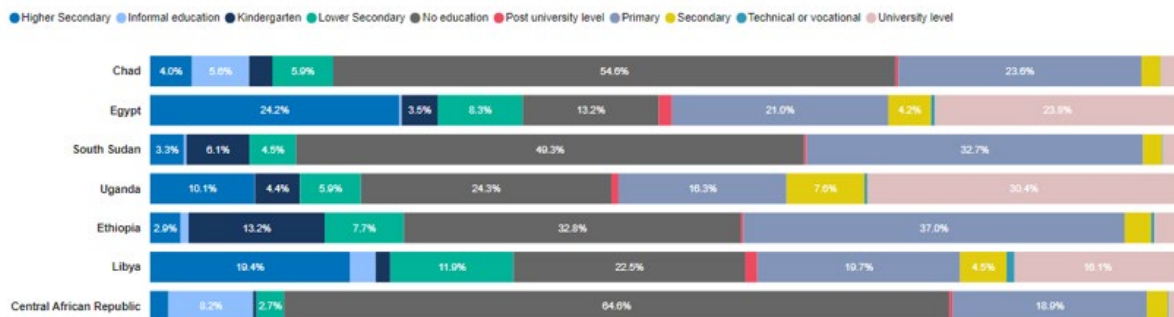
**Figure 3 : Demographic breakdown of new arrivals, countries of asylum**


\*age/sex breakdown only available for those registered by UNHCR.

Source: UNHCR, IOM & Governments (as of May 2024) • [Get the data](#) • [Download image](#)

Source: UNHCR, IOM and Government (as of May 2024)

**The levels of education for Sudanese refugees also vary by country of asylum, with higher levels of education observed in Egypt, Libya and Uganda and lower levels in Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan.** Overall, 41% of Sudanese refugees are registered as having no education, 25% as completing primary school and 26% with at least some secondary or university education. The lowest rates of education are observed in Chad (56% with no recorded education) and CAR (65%), followed by South Sudan (49%) and Ethiopia (33%). In contrast, Egypt hosts a significant number of more educated refugees, with 36% of those registered having some form of secondary school and 26% university level experience. Uganda and Libya also see a mix of educational levels, with notable percentages of refugees holding university degrees.

**Figure 4: Education level by countries of asylum**


Source: UNHCR registration data

**Trends in educational attainment have also evolved within countries of asylum compared to the earlier Sudanese refugee populations, as well as between those who arrived 2023 and 2024.** Compared to Sudanese refugees residing in countries of asylum pre-2023, those that arrived since the beginning of the crisis generally have higher levels of education: levels of upper secondary or higher education are around 28%, compared to 8% among the pre-existing Sudanese refugee population. Between 2023 and 2024, the share of those arriving with upper secondary and university schooling rose from 23% to 39% indicating significant loss of human capital in Sudan.

Figure 5: Education level of Sudanese refugees by country of asylum, pre- April 2023/post-April 2023

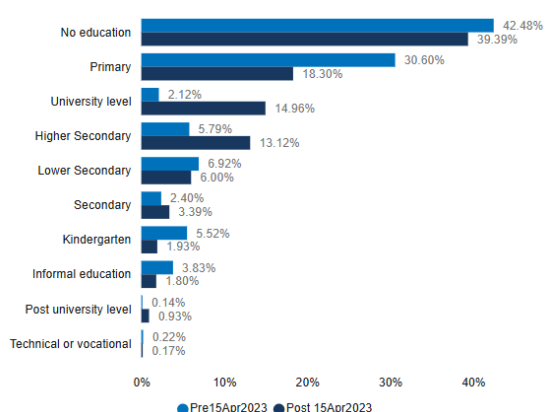
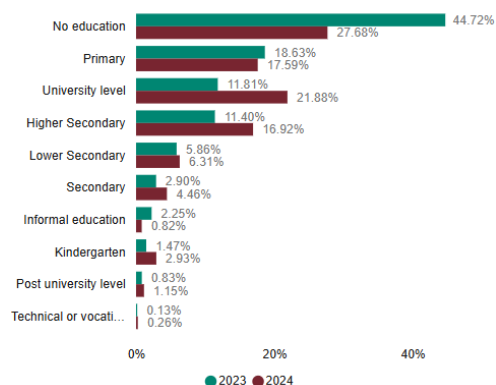


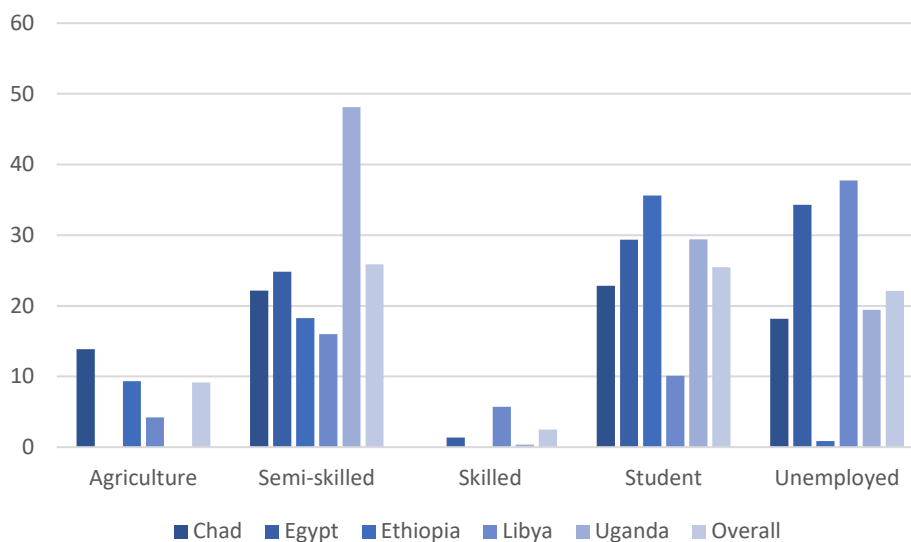
Figure 6: Education level of Sudanese refugees by country of asylum, 2023/2024



Source: UNHCR registration data

**Occupation is not systemically covered by UNHCR registration across the seven countries of asylum, however, the data that are available indicate a mix of backgrounds, including agricultural, skilled and semi-skilled workers, as well as large numbers of students and unemployed.** During the emergency phase, UNHCR registration may not collect information on occupation or, when it does, will focus on current occupation status rather than previous occupation.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the data that do exist show a diverse population. More than half of incoming refugees are students or unemployed. Smaller shares are recorded in skilled occupations, however, many others with higher levels of skill – including many of the more education population groups discussed above – may be considered as unemployed.

Figure 7: Occupation by country of asylum, overall



Source: UNHCR registration data

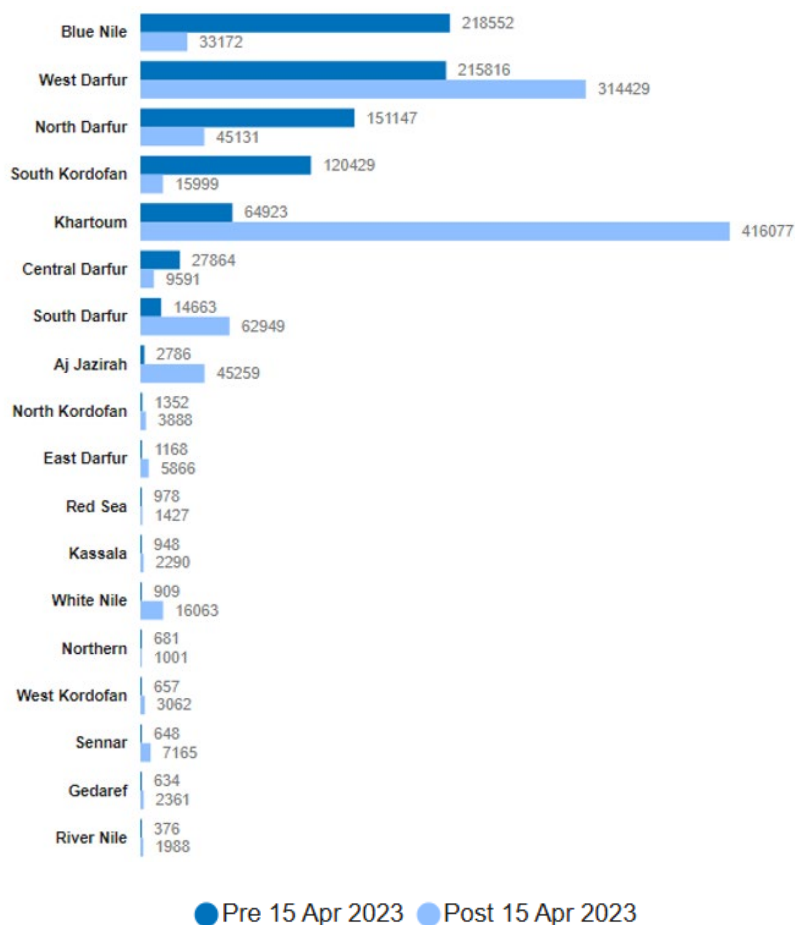
<sup>10</sup> Currently, around 75% of registered refugees from Sudan have a recorded occupation, however 70% of these are students, unemployed or “other” occupations. Following the emergency phase, occupation data is generally collected more systematically.



**Country-specific survey efforts detailed in the country briefs linked to below provide more detailed information on occupation.** For example, in Renk, South Sudan, socioeconomic profiles comparing refugees and returnees shows that refugees have a more substantial reliance on agriculture (10.9%) compared to returnees (3.4%), and they were more engaged in business activities (13.9% versus 5.2%). Both returnees and refugees experience high unemployment, with 46.83% of refugees and 43.15% of returnees actively seeking jobs.

**Relatedly, the largest number of recent Sudanese refugees came from Khartoum and West Darfur regions.** These are followed by South Darfur, North Darfur and Aj Jazirah states. Before April 2023, the largest Sudanese refugee populations were from Blue Nile, West and North Darfur.

Figure 8: Location of origin, within Sudan



Source: UNHCR registration data

## Country Briefs

Country briefs provide additional insights on the socioeconomic characteristics of displacement and displaced populations in Sudan and countries of asylum, as well as summaries of recent data collection, surveys and analytical work related to displacement.

- [Sudan](#)
- [Central African Republic](#)
- [Chad](#)
- [Egypt](#)

- [Ethiopia](#)
- [Libya](#)
- [South Sudan](#)
- [Uganda](#)

## Additional Resources

- UNHCR Operational Data Portal – the latest displacement figures and documents
  - [Sudan Situation](#)
  - Countries of asylum: [Central African Republic](#), [Chad](#), [Egypt](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Libya](#), [South Sudan](#), [Uganda](#)
- UNHCR Microdata Library
  - [Microdata.unhcr.org](https://microdata.unhcr.org)
- Response Plans
  - [2024 Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan](#)
  - [2024 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Progress Report \(May - August 2024\)](#)
  - [2025 Sudan Regional Refugee Response - At a Glance](#)