UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION OFFICE AFRICA

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

CALL TO ACTION

The Sudan conflict is the world's fastest growing displacement crisis. It is also one of the largest protection crises facing the world today. An estimated 10.4 million people have been forcibly displaced since April 2023, including close to 8 million displaced internally and over 2.2 million refugees, asylum seekers and returnees who have crossed Sudan's borders into neighbouring countries.[1] Sudan now has the largest number of internally displaced people globally – nearly 11 million including those who were displaced before the current conflict.[2] Without a resolution to the crisis, many hundreds of thousands more people will be forced to flee, in search of safety and basic assistance. UNHCR and its partners estimate that the number of refugees, returnees, third country nationals and host community affected could reach 3.3 million by the end of 2024.[3] If the crisis continues, peace and stability across the region will be at stake.

Regional ramifications of the Sudanese emergency are extensive – particularly in Chad, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Uganda. Each of these countries is grappling with an influx of refugees and returnees fleeing the devastating conflict. To put this in perspective, Chad – already among the major refugee-hosting countries globally – received more refugees in the first six months of the crisis than it had in the past 20 years. African economic development will be set back by the Sudan crisis and its regional implications unless action is taken by both humanitarian and development partners to support displaced and host communities and build community resilience to ensure that areas affected by conflict and fragility are not left behind.

At the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, a Call to Action was made to development partners to respond to the Sudan regional crisis. The Call to Action identified the following 4 priority interventions:

1. Development actors are invited to leverage greater technical and financial capacity to support the planning of integrated settlement approaches, by bolstering national public systems in areas that have been impacted by the Sudan crisis, thereby facilitating the inclusion of refugees to access such services. Supporting an inclusion agenda from the onset of the crisis can help prevent the establishment of unsustainable parallel systems of assistance.
2. Development actors can support host governments with data and planning to facilitate the inclusion of displaced people in sectors such as education, health, justice, social welfare and civil registration, as well as on budget support to cover recurrent costs, such as teacher and health worker salaries.
3. Development actors and the private sector are encouraged to leverage their comparative advantages in creating market and employment opportunities to avoid dependence on humanitarian aid and promote self-reliance. Joint advocacy for the removal of policy and other barriers is a key priority to allow for economic inclusion.
4. Development actors are invited to review their portfolios of interventions to include returnee populations to ensure that returnees can access services and live self-sufficiently. Stronger engagement is needed on issues that are crucial for voluntary and safe return such as the scaling up of public services, livelihoods and economic opportunities, and access to justice.

Responding to this Call to Action will advance a global public good, that of the welfare of refugees and their host communities, as well as the foundation for eventual rebuilding in Sudan. Such investments will prevent further fragility in displacement-affected areas in the East and Horn of Africa and help anticipate potential drivers of conflict and further displacement by strengthening national systems, stabilizing local economies, and contributing to peaceful coexistence in the region.

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[1] UNHCR, Situation Sudan situation (unhcr.org)

[2] IOM, Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix, 23 July 2024.

[3] UNHCR, Sudan Emergency, Regional Refugee Response Plan January – December 2024, Mid-Term Update, June 2024.