

## **The issue of the humanitarian crisis in Sudan**

### **Conflict:**

2023 has seen the eruption of a power struggle between the Sudanese armed forces (SAF) and the Rapid support forces, two main factions of the country's military regime, which has erupted into a large-scale conflict as of April 2023.

The SAF are mainly loyal to Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burham, the country's de facto ruler whilst the paramilitaries of the RAF align themselves with Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti) who is a former warlord in the region. The power struggle has its roots in the years before a 2019 uprising that ousted the dictatorial ruler Omar Al-Bashir, who built up formidable security forces that he deliberately set against one another. When an effort to transition to a democratic civilian-led government faltered after Bashir's fall, an eventual showdown appeared inevitable, with diplomats in Khartoum warning in early 2022 that they feared such an outbreak of violence. This went on to escalate in April 2022.

### **Humanitarian crisis:**

Before the conflict, Sudan was already experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis and long-term political instability meant that over 15.8 million people were in need of humanitarian aid, a number which the conflict has only exacerbated to a staggering 25 million people, more than half of the country's population. 8 million people have been forced to flee their homes as of April 2023, making Sudan one of the world's largest displacement crises.

Amid this conflict, humanitarian access has been severely limited, making it impossible for aid to reach vulnerable communities and the country faces the near collapse of their healthcare system.

Whilst the fighting has been mostly concentrated in the country's capital, Khartoum, the conflict has also escalated in other areas. In Darfur, mass killings have led to reports of ethnic cleansing and over 14,000 people have been killed. Meanwhile, the looting of businesses, markets and humanitarian aid warehouses are further contributing to the shortages of food and basic necessities.

### **Healthcare system:**

The conflict has decimated the country's public infrastructure, including hospitals. As a result, the healthcare services is suffering from an acute lack of staff, funding and medical supplies as a result of repeated attacks and looting. More than 70% of health facilities in conflict-affected region of Sudan are inoperable or closed.

An outbreak of measles has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 children across the country, whilst the number of cholera cases has surpassed 10,700.

The International Rescue Committee's Emergency watchlist has determined that Sudan tops the list of deteriorating humanitarian crisis due to escalating conflict, mass displacement, an economic crisis and the near collapse of their healthcare system.

**Points to consider:**

- How will you work to reduce civilian casualties as a result of the armed conflict?
- How will you address the mass displacement of civilians?
- How will you make healthcare more accessible for marginalised communities in Sudan?
- The looting of resources and humanitarian aid
- Diplomatic efforts

**Useful links:**

<https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/fighting-sudan-what-you-need-know-about-crisis>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/27/sudan-conflict-why-is-there-fighting-what-is-at-stake>

