

Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

No time to lose as famine stalks millions in Sudan amid intense fighting and access denials

28 May 2024

NEW YORK/GENEVA/ROME/WASHINGTON – Time is running out for millions of people in Sudan who are at imminent risk of famine, displaced from their lands, living under bombardments, and cut off from humanitarian assistance.

With the conflict now in its second year, 18 million people are acutely hungry, including 3.6 million children who are acutely malnourished, and famine is quickly closing in on millions of people in Darfur, Kordofan, Al Jazirah and Khartoum.

Sudan is home to the largest number of internally displaced people at more than 9 million. A further 2 million people have escaped to neighbouring countries.

Horrific attacks against civilians – including sexual violence – as well as hospitals and schools are multiplying.

In Al Fasher, more than 800,000 civilians are bracing for an imminent large-scale attack, which would unleash catastrophic humanitarian consequences both in the city and across Darfur.

Despite the tremendous needs, aid workers continue to face systematic obstructions and deliberate denials of access by parties to the conflict. Movements across conflict lines to parts of Khartoum, Darfur, Al Jazirah and Kordofan have been all but cut off since mid-December. The closure of the Adre border crossing in February – our main route into eastern Sudan from Chad – means that limited assistance is trickling into Darfur.

In March and April of this year, nearly 860,000 people were denied humanitarian aid in Kordofan, Darfur and Khartoum states. Deliberate hindrances to humanitarian assistance that leave the civilian population without the essentials to survive violate international humanitarian law.

Extreme hunger is unfolding, and the outlook for food production in 2024 is bleak. We have a rapidly shrinking window to get seeds to farmers before the main planting season ends and the rainy season begins. If we act in time, people – especially those in inaccessible areas – will be able to produce food locally and avert food shortages in the next six months. Without immediate action, people will go hungry and be forced to move in search of food, shelter and protection.

Let us be clear: If we are prevented from providing aid rapidly and at scale, people will die.

Without an immediate and major step change, we will face a nightmarish scenario: A famine will take hold in large parts of the country. More people will flee to neighbouring countries in search of sustenance and safety. More children will succumb to disease and malnutrition. Women and girls, already bearing the brunt of the conflict, will face even greater suffering and dangers.

To prevent these worst-case scenarios, we, the IASC Principals, urgently request the parties to the conflict to do the following:

1. Take immediate measures to protect civilians, including by refraining from directing attacks against them, allowing them to leave for safer areas, and ending sexual violence.
2. Facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access through all possible crossline and cross-border routes to allow civilians to receive humanitarian aid.
3. Immediately cease all acts denying, obstructing and interfering with, or politicizing humanitarian action.
4. Simplify and expedite administrative and bureaucratic procedures related to the delivery of humanitarian aid.
5. De-escalate the situation in Al Fasher and adopt a nationwide ceasefire.
6. Stop human rights violations and hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes.

We are also concerned by the limited support from donors. Nearly five months into the year – and six weeks after the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and its Neighbours in Paris on 15 April – we've received just 15 per cent of the \$2.7 billion we need.

Donors must urgently disburse pledges made at last month's conference in Paris and fast-track additional funding for the humanitarian appeal. With a famine on the horizon, we must deliver much more life-saving aid now, including seeds for farmers before the planting season ends.

The clock is ticking. The choice is clear.

Signatories:

- Mr. Martin Griffiths, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Ms. Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, Secretary General, **CARE International**
- Dr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**)
- Mr. Jamie Munn, Executive Director, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (**ICVA**)
- Ms. Amy E. Pope, Director General, International Organization for Migration (**IOM**)
- Mr. Tom Hart, President and Chief Executive Officer, InterAction
- Ms. Tjada D'Oyen McKenna, Chief Executive Officer, **Mercy Corps**
- Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**)
- Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (**SR on HR of IDPs**)
- Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**)
- Ms. Janti Soeripto, President and Chief Executive Officer, **Save the Children**
- Mr. Michal Mlynár, Executive Director a.i., United Nations Human Settlement Programme (**UN-Habitat**)
- Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**)
- Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**)

- Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director, UN Children's Fund (**UNICEF**)
- Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, **UN Women**
- Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, World Food Programme (**WFP**)
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (**WHO**)
- Mr. Andrew Morley, President and the Chief Executive Officer, **World Vision International**