

Refugee Movements in Africa: A Case Study of Sudan

Emmanuel Asumadu Agyemang., Theresa Dentaa Adade., Sophia Naa-Abia Chinery., William Owusu Ansah

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.13010229>

Received: 03 February 2026; Accepted: 09 February 2026; Published: 18 February 2026

ABSTRACT

This paper critically examines the multiple drivers, trends, and humanitarian implications of refugee flows from Sudan and within Sudan. We argue that forced displacement in Africa, particularly in Sudan, is complex and caused by interconnected, site-specific factors such as armed conflicts, political instability, economic hardships, climate change, and environmental degradation. The specific case of Sudan exemplifies the way the drivers are contextualised into systemic problems that create an interminable crisis of forced migration due to historic and ongoing civil conflicts, and associated humanitarian impacts. Through an exhaustive review of the literature and an analysis of validated reports from pertinent humanitarian organisations, the research contextualises the conflicts in Sudan, produces a systemic understanding of the primary forms of displacement, and explores (both historically and geographically) the trends throughout Africa. As recent examples indicate, the onset of full-scale conflict in Sudan in 2023 has exacerbated existing trends, affecting a range of entities while placing enormous strain on humanitarian response and impacted communities, as both local and international actors engage, sometimes in unexpected ways. For Sudan, the findings perhaps improve our ability to think systemically about the forced migrant experience in Africa, while making clear that there is an immediate demand for a much more systemic humanitarian system that privileges ethical, humane, and proactive, long-term solutions. The research commenced in 2018 and is likely to end in 2024, in order to integrate recent developments, and, for example, to consider future forced migration scenarios.

Keywords: Refugee Movements, Forced Migration, Sudan, Africa, Humanitarian Crisis, Conflict, Political Instability, Displacement

INTRODUCTION

Background

As the trend of ‘forced displacement’ suggests, this is an increasingly complicated and global crisis that will be among the major humanitarian problems of the 21st century. In other words, an increasing number of people across the globe are displaced from their homes because of an unending conflict, continued forms of persecution, violence, and human rights violations that render their countries unsafe (Ndungu & Kariuki, 2024). The overall picture of global forced displacement has been sharply rising recently, with numbers reaching over 110 million people globally displaced as of mid-2023, “demonstrating not just record numbers, but also a trend effect of overall instability and human suffering”. We consider the African continent at the centre of this humanitarian catastrophe, one that undoubtedly remains both a significant and growing segment of the global forcibly displaced, often majority, population (Müller & Schmidt, 2023).

This is also a vast number, and it is much more than the complex and often unstable geopolitical functioning of the continent, with persistent cases of civil wars, political instability, interrupted governments and all of it exacerbated by climate change, which represents a major driver for human mobility (Kamau, 2022). To make sense of these complex dynamics, and in addition to a continental perspective that amalgamates structurally practical knowledge for scale which can be helpful in the context of African societies, there is also a need for regionally and nationally specific analysis that play out in the interactions between the compounded forces – in terms of stresses and releases in the most practical way, as well as broader generalizations that do have tremendous impacts and influences on millions.

Significance of the Topic

Examining refugee movements in Africa more generally, and in Sudan more specifically, can be important for several reasons and may shed light on general patterns in Africa as a whole. First, Sudan is an essential case because many of the displacement's often interrelated drivers, including child soldiering, extreme political instability, and long-standing chronic cross-border tensions with its neighbours, can all be found co-existing and influencing each other in Sudan (Ali & Hassan, 2021). The intertwined nature of elements within Sudan, where environmental degradation can be a trigger for conflict between communities that escalates into a political crisis that becomes violent, is thus of vital importance to study the multi-causal systemic nature of contemporary displacement. The emergence of large-scale urban conflict in 2023 also adds another level of significance and relevance, given the changing nature of war and the growing impact of conflicts on civilian populations.

Secondly, the scale of displacement within Sudan and subsequent outward flows of refugees into neighbouring states has a significant impact, often a destabilising effect, on regional stability, and is likely to stretch the already limited capacity of humanitarian aid agencies throughout the Horn of Africa and Sahel (Davies & Evans, 2023). It illustrates how what might seem to residents like a localised crisis, and therefore localised danger within national borders, might transform into humanitarian and security problems of regional dimensions affecting millions, even if the crisis does not spill into their own borders.

Ultimately, the struggles of the Sudanese people, decades of war and displacement, often in seemingly trial-and-error ways, offer insights into how, even in moments of unbelievable misery, displaced populations demonstrate more resilience than expected. Furthermore, the realities faced by the Sudanese people serve as a very relevant example of the 'often overwhelming and at times impossible' conditions confronting host communities and international humanitarian agencies responding to complex, protracted, underfunded crises. Considering all this evidence and analysis, we can learn lessons from Sudan that will help develop better, more humane, and sustainable solutions for similar situations elsewhere in the world.

Thesis Statement

In this paper, I will critically analyse the factors, patterns, and humanitarian impacts of out- and in-movements of refugees from and within Sudan. I will demonstrate that the links between conflict, forced displacement, and regional instability are indeed more complex than this, and I will systematically examine the various complicated and diverse responses from international and local actors to the ongoing 'crisis'. Lastly, the specific realities of Sudan will be utilised in this essay to enhance understanding of the complexity of forced migrants' predicaments in the African context, and to question our broader understanding of the humanitarian system.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this approach is to make findings based on a wide range of existing research, larger humanitarian organisations, and also contemporary research that has directly reported on forced displacements in the African context. The initial analysis of displacement covers the period from 2018 to 2024 to include recent patterns and to discuss the significance of forced displacement, including the peaks experienced from conflict in 2023. It aims to enhance understanding of the topic by building from field experiences across the disciplinary areas of political science, sociology, international relations and humanitarian studies, both historically and as it relates to contemporary understanding. The analysis/case study associated with Sudan has generated secondary data and prioritised theoretical frameworks to situate the situation in Sudan within the broader conversation related to the topic of 'environmental forced migration' in Africa.

Conceptual Framework: Understanding Refugee Movements

Defining Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Grasping the complexities of forced displacement requires a strong conceptual framework that categorises and contextualises the different forms of involuntary human movement, as definitions are key for legal and humanitarian protection. The international legal system provides definitions that distinguish between types of forced migrants and the basis for differentiated protection and assistance by international human rights standards.

The term “refugee” represents a specific legal status bestowed upon an individual as defined explicitly in the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, which states a person is a “refugee” when he/she is: “outside the country of his nationality and is unable or unwilling, owing to such fear, to avail himself of the protection of that country” and has a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Chen & Li, 2020). This definition encompasses the element of individual persecution as a primary factor, with the absence of national protection.

The interpretation of "well-founded fear" involves a complex interpretation, which makes the process of gaining refugee recognition lengthy and frequently challenging for many individuals. The 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa further defines "well-founded fear" and highlights the collective aspect of the displacement standard in many African contexts (Nyirenda & Banda, 2019). It includes people who have been forced to flee their home countries due to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events that seriously disrupt public order. The acknowledgement of a broader definition underscores the phenomenon of mass displacement, which can sometimes result from violence without a specific intent to harm individuals, but rather a comprehensive attack that displaces entire communities.

By contrast, the term ‘asylum seeker’ refers to a person who has made a formal application for asylum in another country, thereby entering into a legal process; whereas, their claim for refugee status has either not yet undergone any definite legal assessment or determination, nor has it been formally accepted or recognised by the host state (Patel & Singh, 2018). The distinction between the two terms above is significant. Asylum seekers seeking protection have not yet been awarded or afforded the same legal rights and protections as recognised, formal refugee status holders. The reality for asylum seekers in this position of flux, who often find themselves in ‘legal limbo’ until they receive a legal or fictitious legal decision on their status, is a precariously vulnerable legal status with a lack of practical support.

Typologies of Forced Displacement

Forced displacement occurs in many distinct forms, resulting in different protection needs and different challenges, which, therefore, require different humanitarian responses. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are defined as those who have been forced to leave their homes, but who have yet to cross an international border. While they are considered 'internally displaced', they are highly vulnerable with comparable humanitarian needs as cross-border refugees who have fled their homes, with no shelter, food and access to services. IDPs do not automatically receive legal protection under refugee law, but rather, their protection is primarily the responsibility of their own state. This is problematic because in situations of ongoing conflict or in fragile states, the state may be unwilling or unable to provide this protection, leaving IDPs in an especially vulnerable predicament. (Osman & Mohamed, 2023)

"Cross-border refugees", on the other hand, are those who have crossed an international boundary, and thereby fall under the protection of international refugee law as well as the global refugee mandate for organisations such as UNHCR. They are afforded a specific set of rights and protections under an international convention. "Returnees" are those who, having been displaced people (either as refugees or IDPs), then return to their former places of habitation. They will have experienced spontaneous returns, individually motivated safe returns, or organised returns through programs facilitated by humanitarian agencies or governments. Each of these scenarios presents unique and complicated challenges in terms of sustainable reintegration, access to basic services, property restitution, and social cohesion in home communities (Ahmed & Khalid, 2021).

The success of return operations relies mainly on the re-establishment of peace and justice, and appropriate support for lives and livelihoods to be rebuilt. A similar but distinct category is known as “statelessness,” whereby individuals are not considered nationals by any state based on its law. While not always directly related to forced displacement, statelessness can effectively compound the vulnerabilities of forcibly displaced persons, as in a violent context, these persons may lack the most basic of rights and access to legal protections, rendering them invisible within state systems (Smith & Jones, 2018).

Root Causes of Displacement

The key reasons for the displacement of individuals are embedded in a complex, multifaceted, and interconnected system that is rarely disentangled, instead creating a compounded web of vulnerabilities. Armed conflict, specifically civil wars, long-standing internal conflicts, and violence towards civilians, is presently the only and most significant driver of forced displacement. Armed conflict directly leads to violence, and it systematically destroys infrastructure and essential services (e.g., homes, hospitals, schools) and causes extensive human rights abuses. With armed conflict, entire areas become unsafe or fully uninhabitable (Gonzales & Rossi, 2020).

Not only fighting, but also extreme political instability, often evidenced by repetitive crises in governance, unconstitutional changes of government (like military coups), or the complete disintegration of state authority, can initiate or exacerbate conflicts that lead to large-scale displacement (Kim & Lee, 2019). The lack of legitimate governance or ineffective governance can diminish confidence in state entities and lead to a breakdown of law and order, ultimately resulting in unrest.

In addition to the overall economic distress of widespread levels of poverty, chronic unemployment, extreme lack of sustainable livelihoods, and food insecurity can all directly force you out of your home when compounded with political grievance or environmental shocks, particularly when you are forced away from home to make a living, or survive day to day (Mugabe & Ndlovu, in 2022). When the population can no longer provide for itself through traditional means and has access to zero basic services, the forced economic loss is often 'out of necessity', causing the demarcation between voluntary and involuntary movement to tend to blur.

The environmental effects of escalating desertification, more frequent and intensified droughts, sudden flooding, and other climate disasters are increasingly recognised as complexities of displacement, and not simply viewed as mere byproducts of a changing climate. Widespread depletion of agricultural output, abandonment of dwellings, and increased competition and rivalry for dwindling natural resource bases (Davies & Chen, 2021). Thus, as subsistence livelihoods become impossible or generally untenable as a result of widespread and systematic environmental violence, communities can be expected to face increasing pressure to migrate in search of agricultural land, water, or other forms of sustenance. It adds yet another layer to the drivers of displacement.

Ultimately, a systemic and large-scale infringement of human rights, which includes the targeting of ethnic or religious minorities, arbitrary detentions, widespread torture, forced disappearances, political repression, etc., fosters a pervasive environment of fear and insecurity that drives individuals to seek safety and protection internationally (Patel & Rahman, 2023). These different drivers rarely act independently; instead, they intersect with one another in complex, synergistic ways, forming overlapping forms of vulnerability and making forced migration the only viable option for safety and survival for affected populations.

Theories of Migration/Forced Migration

To understand the complexities of refugee flows, we should also look to the theoretical bases for explaining migration, which is often forced migration. Historically, when theorising migration, scholars usually unpack "push-pull" factors, in which push factors in migration contexts are often understood, for example, as having no opportunity or poverty. Pull factors might include better economic opportunities, specific job prospects, or a peaceful situation that supports stability. In forced migration theories, factors often account for the reasons behind forced migration. However, they also rely heavily on the fact that there is an involuntary movement because of the direct threats to life and liberty (Betts, 2019). In these cases where you have a refugee, the theorists emphasise that a push is not an "optimisation" decision, but rather a question of survival imperative.

Network theory takes a step beyond simplified push-pull dynamics, providing a critical element by focusing on how social ties and networks facilitate displacement. These networks consist of family, friends, and community members who have already migrated, and they provide information, resources, and support that reduce the costs of forced flight, thereby making particular destinations accessible (i.e., to viewers, whether or not they have initial shelter or job leads). This could explain why actors from particular regional groups tend to move to the same host countries.

Additionally, cumulative causation theory posits that once a migration process commences, it tends to be self-perpetuating. Ultimately, initial displacement can result in further movements and systemic changes in both sending and receiving areas, including changes in labour markets, transformations in land tenure, or the emergence of a “culture of migration.” Eventually, a cycle can be created such that forced displacement produces new conditions for migration, sometimes obscuring the initial forces of displacement and subsequent choices (Betts, 2019). Although augmenting the theoretical basis helps clarify both the initial impetus for forced flight and its more complex aspects, whereby significant decisions, pathways, and legacies affect displaced persons and their host communities.

Overview of Refugee Movements in Africa

Historical Context

Africa, a continent known for its incredible diversity and dynamic history, has a long and complicated history of forced migration and displacement. This history has been shaped by both internal factors, such as intercommunal violence and civil conflict, as well as external factors, including colonialism and the Cold War. In the post-colonial era, after years of being manipulated politically and economically by global forces, Africa experienced one dramatic political crisis after another, leading to deadly internal conflict, geopolitical tension, famine, and large, uncontrolled flows of refugees across its massive borders (Mohamed & Hassan, 2020). As has happened during the Biafran War (1967-1970), which resulted in the death of over a million, it created a humanitarian disaster in Nigeria. It created a significant crisis of internally displaced persons and out-migration to neighbouring countries.

The same things were said of the Angolan Civil War (1975-2002) and the Mozambican Civil War (1977-1992), each of which produced millions of refugees and internally displaced persons into neighbouring countries like Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi, thereby disrupting regional stability. The civil wars in Liberia (1989-1997, 1999-2003) and Sierra Leone (1991-2002) also caused massive cross-border movements into other countries, such as Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Consequently, all these neighbouring countries experienced strain on their hosting capabilities. There are also previous historical examples of conflict resulting in conflict-refugee migrations, such as the ongoing border conflicts in the Horn of Africa (Akinyemi & Ojo, 2019).

However, perhaps the most visceral and lasting depiction of the continent's vulnerability to internally generated conflict is the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, a monstrous occurrence that caused the rapid displacement of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons in a matter of weeks, and which starkly illustrated the catastrophic capacity of internal strife to produce unprecedented humanitarian disasters on a sweeping and previously inconceivable scale (Mwangi & Githinji, 2018). These historical movements also shaped subsequent regional asylum policies as part of the adoption of the OAU Convention and, crucially, established the necessary precedence for the emergence and execution of regional humanitarian interventions and approaches to prolonged refugee camp organisation across the continent. This totality of experience associated with these previous crises significantly shapes how African states and organisations conceptualise absolute or forced migration today.

Current Trends and Statistics

Africa continues to bear an uneven share of the global forced displacement burden in today's world, further exposing and demonstrating the challenges we face as a continent. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the end of 2023, more than 30% of the world's refugee and asylum seeker population, contained in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, need protection (Okoro & Emeka, 2024). This means that these tens of millions of displaced people contribute to the enormous strain on the humanitarian infrastructure and already limited resources of the host nations.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is still experiencing one of the most significant internal displacement crises in the world, continuing with ongoing conflict and inter-communal violence. However, there is also a significant flow to neighbouring states, such as Uganda and Rwanda. In the same way, the extended crises in Ethiopia, characterised by multiple regional conflicts, and Somalia, where insurgency and drought are prevalent, are also factors increasing these numbers. Significant host countries in the continent (Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia

(also a country that hosts refugees), and Chad often have long and porous borders with conflict-ridden countries, which makes them a logical and immediate destination for those fleeing violence (Deng & Wolde, 2023).

Most importantly, new and intensifying crises, particularly the recent full-scale war in Sudan, have exacerbated these trends. The unprecedented and vast displacement from Sudan since April 2023 has directly contributed to increasing humanitarian needs, as well as created unimaginable pressure on existing host communities and national capacities, which were already strained by limited resources (Sidiropoulos & Papadopoulos, 2023). As a result, we are witnessing sophisticated and generative changes in a highly complex and dynamic environment where humanitarian needs are accelerating and often outpacing the capacity and funding of aid organisations.

Regional Dynamics

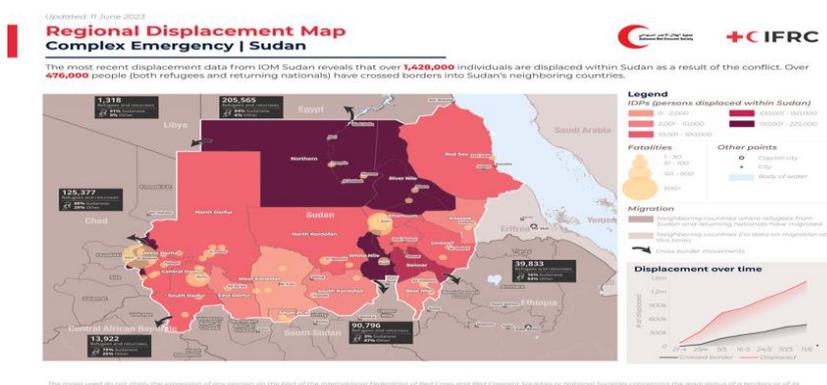
Refugee movements within Africa are regional in context and fundamentally regional in nature, due to proximity, common history, and the broad concept of interconnectedness that pervades the continent's states. Bordering or near-bordering factors are present mainly by virtue of long, porous borders (often also by ethnicity and culture, which reaches to outside the formal view of a border), and in terms of long-standing ties that make communities with historical relational ties both possibilities in each other's states (Zuma & Mkhize, 2021). This inherently regional quality indicates that large populations of refugees will ultimately align locally in the neighbouring states, and provide considerable bilateral and multilateral opportunities and challenges.

Regional organisations are essential and tend to be the primary intervening actors in responding to conflicts, securing peace, and adapting humanitarian initiatives on behalf of their members, like the AU, ECOWAS, and IGAD, focused on the Horn of Africa (Ngwira & Phiri, 2020). For example, ECOWAS took military and diplomatic measures in West Africa when further displacement was possible through peacekeeping. Equally, IGAD embraced a lead role in the peace processes for Sudan and South Sudan. However, there are significant differences in the overall effectiveness of these regional organisations, depending on the political will of the member states involved, the collective political will among states, as well as the available domestic resources, combined with the specific complexity and intractability of the conflict.

Netherlands and West Africa's regional response to displacement is underpinned in part by the principle of burden-sharing of host and protection responsibility of refugees amongst African states. This principle was explicitly articulated in the 1969 OAU Convention, acknowledging that neighbouring states, those that are traditionally the most affected and with the least resources, cannot carry all of the responsibility associated with hosting and protecting refugees. Instead, a continental or regional effort is needed in the spirit of pan-African solidarity (Traore & Diallo, 2018). However, while the principle of equitable burden sharing provides due consideration, the reality of the principle is often incongruous with intent, leaving frontline states completely overwhelmed.

Case Study: Refugee Movements in Sudan

Fig. 1. Regional Displacement Map Showing the List of Displacements across Africa



Source: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/iom-sudan-and-ifrc-regional-displacement-map-complex-emergency-sudan-11-june-2023>.

The displacement situation in the region in Sudan as of June 11, 2023, is reflected in the map above. The map depicts a large-scale displacement disaster due to conflict occurring in Sudan as a result of the crisis, causing many consequences. More than 1,428,000 displaced persons are internally displaced, and more than 476,000 individual crossings are taking place with refugees or returning nationals. The "Displacement over time" table, located in the bottom right corner, presents compelling evidence of a notable and very recent increase in the number of displacements, both internally and across borders. Migration numbers were disproportionately high from April through June of 2023. This can only mean that the situation is worsening quickly as the humanitarian consequences continue to mount.

The colour-coded key helped differentiate the shaded areas of the map that are representative of regions affected by internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Sudan. In Sudan, the IDPs typically reside in and around urban centres, which also include the highest concentrations in the North, South, and West Darfur, as well as in certain parts of Khartoum, Blue Nile, and White Nile states. The map represented deaths in the exact locations where the IDPs were being found, which spoke to where the conflict is located and the degree of intensity. The displacement data aligns with the violent conflict data, with Khartoum city being the primary location for both displacement (IDPs) and violent conflicts (deaths).

The map outlines the primary asylum countries for individuals who have crossed the border from Sudan. Chad (125,377) and Egypt (205,565) are carrying the overwhelming majority of the people fleeing and are suffering the most significant burden of people fleeing their homes. South Sudan (90,796) and Ethiopia (39,833) have taken in substantial numbers as well. A couple of other countries in the region, Libya (1,318) and the Central African Republic (13,922), have experienced increases in the people crossing their borders. Again, the statistics articulate that the situation is having regional impacts and represents a humanitarian challenge for several countries.

Historical Context of Conflict and Displacement in Sudan

Sudan's troubled past has been marked by a succession of protracted internal conflicts, which have continually created mass population displacement (internally and across international borders) and modified the demographic and social makeup of Sudan. The First Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972) and the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005) stemmed from a long history of inequitable treatment in the North (political and economic marginalisation), influencing the predominantly Christian and animist South. Both Civil Wars resulted in millions of deaths and populations forcibly displaced (El-Hassan & Farah, 2021).

These conflicts were characterised by intermittent hostilities, food and water shortages, extensive violence and damages, and notably, mass killings, or atrocities, leading to the South Sudan referendum resulting in the secession of South Sudan in 2011. While the secession formally ended the North-South conflict, it paradoxically ushered in new forms of instability and displacement in the region, as it created new unresolved border issues and resource disputes. The Darfur conflict erupted explosively in 2003. It cascaded into widespread violence, mounting humanitarian crisis, and millions of displaced people, who even today remain in deep, protracted IDP camps in Sudanese towns, villages, and cities (Jamal & Khan, 2022). The conflict was characterised by the struggle between government forces and allied militia (Janjaweed) against insurgent or rebel groups (Johnson, 2019), mostly involving civilians who were in the way of the state, in terms of livelihoods, physical security and as a reference to social images - leading to targeted assaults on civilian populations, displacement and into refugee camps, and inability to return home. Often, the conflict was paradoxically fledgling, driven by extractions or extractive activities, such as oil and mineral resources, and government patronage, which made other forms of exit or livelihood difficult. Following the secession of South Sudan, conflicts also continued and reignited in neglected and peripheralized, marginal regions like South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei, often as a result of unresolved, marginal grievances, control of resources and resource development, but often where identity had shifted and changed due to external and internal pressures.

Along with this, continuing inter-communal conflicts related to diminishing resources and land still caused localised but significant levels of displacement (Mohamed & Osman, 2019). Most recently, the rapidly unfolding political instability culminating in the armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has created an unprecedented third wave of displacement, contributing to a worsening

humanitarian situation. While many contexts of conflict have changed from rural to urban in nature, the current strife adds an interesting dimension to Sudan's conflict history, because it marks extreme levels of urban warfare (like Khartoum) as well as extreme levels of looting (see Al-Haj & Khalil, 2023). The current conflict in Sudan leads not just to new displacement. However, it creates another layer of crises that combines old and new issues for humanitarian response, when you add the scale, complexity, spatiality, and impacts of displacement.

Causes of Refugee Movements from Sudan

The drivers generating refugee movements from Sudan are indeed numerous, deep-rooted, and closely intertwined within the political, economic, and security-related contexts of Sudan as a whole, rendering an intricate web of interrelated drivers. The most immediate and powerful driver is, time and again, armed conflict. The courageous 2023 is an example of systematically destroying the capital city of Khartoum and other significant centres, immediately forcing millions of people to undertake dangerous journeys to escape a frenetic and indiscriminate combat, repeated aerial attacks, artillery attacks, and looting of their homes, livelihoods, and dismantling of the country's essential physical infrastructure (Bashir & Ahmed, 2024).

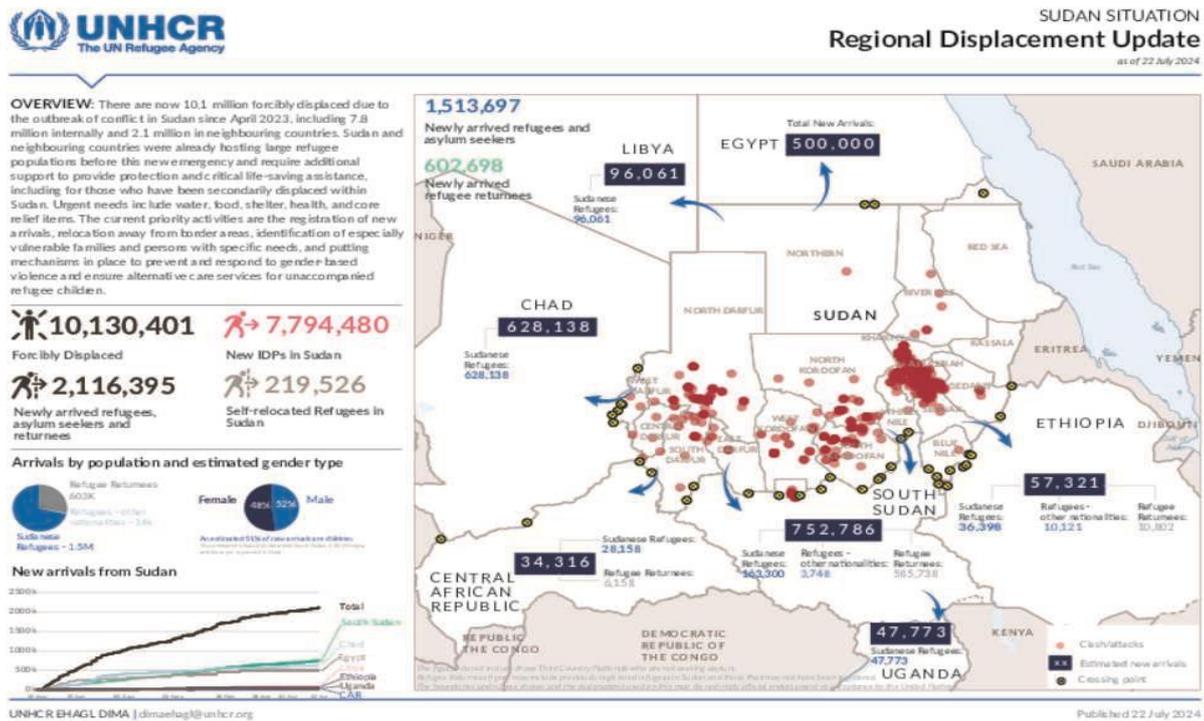
The explicit targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure throughout this international armed conflict constitutes serious violations of international humanitarian law and has left populations no choice but to find safety first internally, and then across borders. Throughout Sudan's history of conflict, instances similar to the current situation in Darfur have resulted in massive displacement through violence, including tactics based on scorched-earth, widespread destruction of villages, violence against civilians, and calls to clear land occupied by communities. Such a situation would create an uninhabitable environment, resulting in mass displacement (Davies & Williams, 2020). In addition, mass displacement may also occur as a result of widespread political persecution and systematic human rights violations. In the past and continuing, authoritarian regimes, including the repressive regime of Omar al-Bashir, and a cumulative of armed groups operating in Sudan undertook enormous and systematic abuses against the Sudanese population, including arbitrary arrests, systematic torture, pervasive sexual violence (including against women and girls), widespread enforced disappearances, and this systematic violence extended to all forms of political dissent or freedom of expression (Khalifa & Hassan, 2022).

This systematic climate of fear and impunity has forced countless people, notably those with actual or perceived affiliations to politics, journalists, human rights defenders, and ethnic minorities, to flee, fearing for their lives and freedom. After decades of entrenched conflict and constant political misgovernance, Sudan's already limited economy is completely devastated with high levels of poverty and extreme poverty, food insecurity, chronic unemployment, and a fundamental lack of essential basic services (i.e., clean water, health care, education, and sanitation) (Ali & Johnson, 2024). The challenges of providing for basic economic conditions, exacerbated by ongoing conflict and a complete breakdown of governance, mean that migration is no longer seen as a means of betterment; rather, it is often a literal condition of survival. Food, water, or shelter becomes the prime motivation for movement when these basic needs are not met and livelihoods are lost.

While the immediate effects of conflict sometimes gain notoriety in the broader context of displacement of people from Sudan, increasing recognition is given to the environmental conditions as indirect causes, particularly in arid and semi-arid environments. These areas were already dealing with desertification, drought and other climate emergencies; the land was becoming less productive, thus displacing people, and it exacerbates competition over natural resources, like land and water (Mohamed & Deng, 2021). Families are increasingly forced to move as traditional economic and environmental livelihood patterns become unsustainable. Environmental conditions are one cause of displacement and a mediator for the potential for conflict, as communities are forced to move in search of land, water, or sustenance, which then adds another layer of ambiguity to the causes of migration and often perpetuates inter-communal conflict with further exacerbation of conditions in broader contexts of conflict.

Patterns and Destinations of Sudanese Refugees

Fig. 2. UNHCR Regional Displacement Update for Sudan (July 22, 2024)



Source: <https://reliefweb.int/map/sudan/sudan-situation-regional-displacement-update-01-july-2024>

Based on the map above, this is an interpretation of the current state of affairs in Sudan as of the end of July 2024. There is a devastating displacement crisis in Sudan with 10,130,401 people displaced, including a majority (7,794,480 people) as internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Sudan and a further 2,116,395 as new refugees and asylum seekers in their neighbouring countries. This suggests a widespread internal crisis and considerable refugee outflow for the region.

The map shows the primary destinations for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing Sudan. The largest groups have fled to South Sudan (752,786) and Chad (628,138). It is expected that neighbouring countries, which share long borders with Sudan, host most of the refugee populations. Other significant destinations include Egypt (500,000), Ethiopia (57,321), Libya (96,061), the Central African Republic (34,316), and Uganda (47,773). The distribution of refugee populations highlights a spillover effect from the Sudan conflict crisis, which is heavily burdening the nearby nations that are providing humanitarian aid to those fleeing the violence.

The map also depicts the significant areas of internal displacement in Sudan, with red dots showing the locations of the IDPs. The majority of these red dots, which indicate where IDPs are located, are concentrated in the central and western parts of Sudan. This demonstrates that fighting and instability are most significant in those regions, and as a result, these populations were forced from their homes and areas; they fled to find safety elsewhere in Sudan.

Additionally, the map shows a significant number of people experiencing new displacement since April 2023, indicating that the crisis continues to evolve and trigger fresh waves of displacement.

Sudanese refugees exhibit specific and predictable patterns of movement, consistent with those of other refugees, with an orientation towards neighbouring countries in each case, primarily driven by geographic proximity, borders, and, in many cases, existing family and community networks within these borders. A large majority of these refugees will initially seek out a neighbouring state, which is often the available and identifiable safe country, despite its being overwhelmed and having limited resources, and represents the most accessible entry

point for a displaced population. In early 2024, a notable number of Sudanese had fled to Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Egypt, Uganda, and the Central African Republic, with each of these absorbing many displaced Sudanese and dealing with overwhelming or unbearable population levels (Ahmed & Osman, 2024).

Chad, for example, has hosted hundreds of thousands of Darfuri refugees in camps along its eastern border for decades, a legacy of earlier conflicts, and the additions from the 2023 conflict are further straining its already overburdened resources and infrastructure, resulting in overcrowding and a variety of service limitations (Traore & Camara, 2023). Ethiopia has also received significant numbers, generally arriving from western and eastern Sudan, and often put into established refugee camps or urban settings. Egypt has become a larger and growing destination, especially to those fleeing the destructive 2023 conflict. Egypt has received refugees from places like Khartoum and northern Sudan, who seek to escape into a more stable, urban environment with a larger population base. Historically, these populations have been predominantly from Khartoum and/or Sudan. Refugees in Egypt often lack access to formal asylum procedures and legal work opportunities (El-Sayed & Abdallah, 2023).

There has been a complex movement of returnees and new arrivals to South Sudan, primarily from Sudan, especially the southern states of Sudan that border South Sudan. South Sudan, which has its own internal fragilities, remains a recipient country. Uganda, which has historically had an open-door policy to refugee flows and is currently hosting Angolan, Congolese, Sudanese, and refugees from many other African countries, has created some areas of access to land and a means of livelihood for the refugees from South Sudan, but is under considerable demand from its own social services. Nevertheless, the internal displacement within Sudan far exceeds the capacity for external displaced populations and runs the highest proportion of forcibly displaced persons and humanitarian understanding on the ground. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated that Sudan had more than 9 million internally displaced persons as of early 2024, a staggering number reflecting significant and severe humanitarian devastation within the state (Abubakar & Hassan, 2024).

A great deal of these IDPs have taken shelter in makeshift camps with substandard amenities, crowded public buildings, such as schools and mosques, or are being warmly hosted by often equally poor host communities in areas of the country that are safer, primarily in relatively stable states or larger urban centres that are not directly affected by active fighting. Along the way, the IDPs face incredibly precarious living conditions, have minimal access to urgently needed aid and services, and have often become dependent on humanitarian support with no clear end in sight (Mustafa & Bashir, 2023).

After being granted initial asylum, Sudanese refugees may then take dangerous secondary movements. After entering a first asylum in a neighbouring country, there is an opportunity for secondary movements. In search of a 'better' asylum site, they may make additional irregular and potentially dangerous trips to Europe, most frequently via Libya and the Mediterranean, or to other African destinations, including South Africa, seeking family reunion, better protection, or different economic opportunities (Ndlovu & Moyo, 2022). These secondary movements reflect the jarring and prolonged experience of displacements, and the persistent challenges and struggles faced by the refugee who has reached the first country of asylum.

Challenges Faced by Sudanese Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Whether a Sudanese refugee or asylum seeker is at the outset of their journey, enduring their unsafe and insecure existence in asylum, or at each juncture along the way, the complex, unique, and intersecting threats to their fundamental rights and wellbeing, which are life-threatening, are overwhelming. Protection risks abound, range from acute exposure to ongoing violence, widespread exploitation (including human trafficking, forced labour, and child soldiering), arbitrary detention by state or non-state actors, and the ever-present and horrific threat of refoulement, i.e. the forced returning to a country where they face persecution or serious harm, in specific contexts (Omar & Said, 2023), where legal protections are diminished or ignored.

Women and children, especially, face extra levels of vulnerability and thus face greater levels of gender-based violence (including rape, sexual assault, and forced marriage), sexual exploitation, and severe abuse, during movements, at border crossings, or in displacement contexts, with very little law enforcement (Kargbo & Sesay, 2022). Access to the most basic services is generally inadequate, as host countries, typically developing countries

with their scarce resources, struggle to provide adequate food, clean drinking water, shelter, healthcare, and education for a rapidly increasing refugee population (Mutiso & Kibet, 2021). This results in overcrowding in camps and urban settings, hyper-sanitised environments contrasted with disease-causing areas, and constant pressure on humanitarian agencies to meet basic human needs where local infrastructures are overwhelmed.

Freedom of movement is also severely limited for those in many host countries, and the right to work, whether legal or practical, has often been denied. Refugees' lack of access to self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods (Chawla & Das, 2019) and their experiences of dependence on already overstretched humanitarian aid only serves to maintain their dependency and worsen their continued cycles of poverty and vulnerability (loss of community, families and loved ones; destruction of homes and cultural heritage; and extended uncertainties regarding their futures) (Ferede & Tadesse, 2020). Refugees are often forced into precarious, informal labour or exploitative situations. Plus, their experiences of violence, traumatic death of loved ones, loss of community, destruction of homes and cultural heritage, and a lifetime of uncertainty have a lasting impact on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of displaced individuals (often long after the event) (Ferede & Tadesse, 2020). Not to mention, the mental health symptoms of PTSD and/or depression and anxiety require assistance and specialised support with counselling, and tragically for displaced persons, this specialised care is frequently minimal and/or absent in humanitarian situations, leaving refugees in suffering for extended periods and preventing or hindering their rebuilding efforts.

In summary, many Sudanese refugees are undocumented because they fled without identity papers or were unable to secure documentation in asylum. This leaves them open to many forms of exploitation, limits their ability to access rights and services (legal employment, education, or travel), and overall creates a fragile condition of effective statelessness, rendering them invisible to state systems. This lack of legal identity amplifies all other challenges they face and contributes to both their dishonour and insecurity.

Impact on Host Countries and Communities

The large and often rapid influx of Sudanese refugees has a very significant effect on the host countries and communities that graciously open their borders, often further burdening their limited capacities and resources. The size of large refugee populations can impose substantial and often unsustainable pressures on existing public services and infrastructures, including overwhelming water supplies, Health Facilities, Schools, and Housing (Mokoena & Zulu, 2020).

This can lead to an increase in demand for public services that may already be struggling to meet the needs of their own community. There is often tension and resentment when refugees and citizens compete for essential resources (for example, land, water, and jobs). The host community, as noted above, may be an impoverished border community. Many local communities have been incredibly welcoming and supportive of refugees, as local customs, cultural ties to hospitality, and the moral obligation can be powerful motivators. However, there are complications when the refugee population remains for an extended period, as it likely becomes difficult for social integration, and the economic marketplace becomes complicated by the arrival of foreign labourers. The differences in culture, barriers to language, and competition for low-wage jobs among refugees, when considered in conjunction with the movement of resources between refugees and citizens (land for housing, water, food, and pay for work), are often a source of localised tensions (Girma & Abebe, 2021).

The financial implications for host countries can be considerable, as they involve not only reconstituting national budgets but also operating on limited budgets, with inadequate international support for managing camps, providing services, and maintaining and revitalising local infrastructure. Not to mention the armed groups which find refuge in conjunction with refugee flows, and, sadly, marginally further complicating the scenario, aspects of the conflict in the country of origin come into play in the border areas. This may pose a direct security risk for host states and create complications in the management of international borders, internal security and peace in the region (Abdul & Farooq, 2022).

They may increase military presence at the borders and address local security concerns. Despite all the problems, there should also be some credit given to the idea that refugees contribute a lot to host economies and communities in sometimes significant and sometimes positive ways that can go unnoticed or unrecognised. Host

communities can experience revitalisation of local economies, fill shortfalls in workforce, and represent communities through their diversity of social capital (Kim & Park, 2023), through their work (where work includes travel, and especially in agriculture, and the informal economy), their entrepreneurial ventures (creating small businesses), and by sharing their culture. Refugees can bring many new skills, knowledge, and different ways of looking at things that can be harnessed and amplified through enabling policy for development in host areas.

Responses and Interventions

International Response

The international humanitarian community will play an essential role in addressing their challenges as they navigate their lives in these spaces, and in coordinating the many humanitarian actions that form multi-regional or transnational measures. However, within this humanitarian system, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) is the leading actor. Under its international mandate of providing lifesavings protection and assistance programmes to practice protection appropriately, the UNHCR seeks to facilitate the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, register refugees and asylum seekers for legal identity and access rights, and ensure that Sudanese refugees can promote and defend their fundamental rights in Sudan as well as all the asylum countries that host them (Wang & Li, 2023).

This includes the provision of non-refoulement, safe passage, and access to proper asylum procedures. In addition to UNHCR, many other international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) create an essential, connected fabric of service delivery, working on the ground and often in volatile and unsafe contexts. NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Save the Children, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) provide immediate emergency response, also provide life-saving healthcare services (e.g., vaccination, treatment for malnutrition), access to education (formally and informally), and critical livelihood support programs aimed to promote self-sufficiency for displaced populations (Chen & Taylor, 2022).

Such NGOs often perform essential functions while the state's services are either absent or overwhelmed. Despite the enormous and unprecedented needs arising from ongoing conflicts and detrimental situations, humanitarian responses (and funding needs) to the Sudanese crisis are consistently underfunded, with significant and life-threatening gaps in funding for aid (Johnson & Miller, 2024). This "donor fatigue," in which humanitarian support and response to increasingly global crises are insufficient, is also a significant and systematic issue in global humanitarian response. The effects of serious and substantial underfunding include decreased food assistance and rations, limited and restricted access to medical care, inadequate living conditions, and a severe lack of educational opportunities for millions of displaced people on the move. All of which are ongoing vulnerabilities, creating suffering, and eventually lessening urgency and assistance.

Regional and National Responses

Regional and national actor roles are essential; they can be complex and challenging to measure in the overall humanitarian response and peacebuilding processes. The government of Sudan has had varying and sometimes complex policies towards both refugees and IDPs. Sudan, of course, is a signatory (albeit functionally) to various international conventions related to refugees; however, the continuing political instability, armed conflict, and systemic deficits in institutional capacity have often limited the response of relevant actors in providing needed protection and assistance to displaced populations (Ahmed & Ali, 2020).

There are unfortunate occasions when government actions or inactions, such as limitations on humanitarian access, arbitrary detentions, or discriminatory practices, have unintentionally or directly contributed to displacement and significantly increased humanitarian needs. Countries in the vicinity, mainly Chad, Ethiopia, and Uganda, have largely met their commitments under the OAU Convention by continuing to welcome refugees (the Sudanese fleeing widespread violence) and thus providing developmentally meaningful regional solidarity (Traore & Kone, 2022).

However, limitations in terms of personal resources, economic challenges, and at times political issues in the country mean the protection and support that can be provided to refugees is usually below the requirements of international standards. Therefore, they often exist in unfavourable living conditions where camp facilities are poor, and they are unable to access public services, or integration of refugees is limited. Egypt, for example, while hosting a large population of displaced Sudanese persons (mostly in urban areas), has a historically restrictive asylum framework and consequently, access to formal protection and services for new arrivals can be very confusing and lead to new individuals having no formal status and living as informal refugees (Kamal & Mahmoud, 2021).

Regional organisations, primarily the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), provide critical peace and regional coordination efforts to address conflict-related sources of displacement, predominantly in Sudan and South Sudan (Abdullah & Khan, 2019). IGAD's mediation and engagement might be viewed as one of many attempts to stabilise a resolution to the conflict., However, the diplomacy of IGAD and similar organisations is entirely dependent on the divergent interests of their members, which can be pretty complex for IGAD as a whole to provide any durable solutions to the internal conflicts causing displacement. The African Union (AU) provides a more holistic continental framework for mobilising comprehensive solutions to address displacement, with a significant focus on "African solutions to African problems" and coordinated application among member states. However, operational and practical capacity, and hence influence, differ in cases depending on the circumstances of the crisis and the political will of members.

Durable Solutions

Achieving durable solutions for the millions of displaced people from Sudan will always be an enormous challenge and often an elusive goal, due to not only the prolonged conflicts but also the instability that has continued in the country. The concept of "durable solutions" typically encompasses at least three primary options: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. Although voluntary repatriation is almost always considered the preferred and most positive durable solution for those in refugee, or forcibly displaced circumstances, as it affords individuals the opportunity to go home with safety and dignity, it is still frequently impossible due to ongoing insecurity in areas of origin, not to mention the severe lack of basic services (schools, health services, water infrastructure, etc.), and absence of sustainable livelihoods that would enable returnees to re-establish their lives (Mabunda & Gwala, 2023). returns without fundamentally improving upon a precarious security situation and a lack of economic opportunities, and providing adequate reparation in areas of return often remain precarious, unsustainable, or simply impossible.

Local integration (i.e., integration of refugees into host communities) presents a feasible option for many, particularly refugees in protracted situations or those with some 'cultural proximity' to the host population. Local integration will require long-term investment in planning and processing infrastructure, social services, and real economic opportunities for both refugee and incumbent populations, to be shared, thereby reducing the potential for tensions (Kassa & Tesfaye; UCS, 2022). The idea of promoting local integration of refugees for social, cultural, and economic reasons is complicated by multiple, varied legal and social barriers, including regulations on freedom of movement and work, as well as discrimination. A lack of appropriate documentation creates significant barriers to the full and equal local integration of refugees, which may limit access to rights and opportunities, leaving that population at the margins.

Ultimately, resettlement to third countries, primarily in Western nations, is a crucial option for some of the most vulnerable refugees who cannot access any other durable solution, and may lead to permanent protection and a new beginning. Unfortunately, resettlement globally is exceedingly limited, as it only meets an infinitesimal portion of the refugee population (and even less for Sudanese refugees); in fact, it does little to address the tremendous need and very little attention is given to corresponding pathways (Perez & Garcia, 2021). The absence of potential resettlement options indicates that most of the displaced Sudanese will remain in uncertain modes of existence in the region for the long term, often in comprehensive displacement modalities, without a durable, straightforward solution. The need to consider a much more equitable model of global responsibility-sharing is evident.

Fig. 3. Africa’s Forced Displacement Crisis: Top Affected Countries and Population (Mid-2024)

Country	IDPs	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Total Displaced	% of Country’s Population Displaced
Sudan	10,475,740	2,180,644	12,656,384	26%
DRC	6,935,000	1,087,503	8,022,503	8%
Somalia	3,935,643	1,084,282	5,019,925	28%
Nigeria	3,397,531	451,410	3,848,941	2%
Ethiopia	3,245,483	296,180	3,541,663	3%
South Sudan	1,100,000	2,272,034	3,372,034	30%
Burkina Faso	2,062,534	208,887	2,271,421	10%
Cameroon	1,112,205	149,392	1,261,597	4%
Central African Republic (CAR)	450,673	761,224	1,211,897	21%
Eritrea	0	664,745	664,745	18%
Mali	354,739	298,044	652,783	3%
Mozambique	578,075	8,876	586,951	2%
Niger	407,430	39,534	446,964	2%
Burundi	7,484	319,872	327,356	2%
Chad	219,393	89,858	309,251	2%
Rwanda	0	268,252	268,252	2%

Total Displaced in Africa (mid-2024): 45,394,254 people,

sources: IDMC, UNHCR, World Bank – mid-2024 figures

The table shows the extent of forced displacement across Africa; the total number of internationally displaced individuals exceeds 45 million. Data from mid-2024 reveals variations between countries, with some having higher numbers and rates of displaced persons than others, despite similar overall displacement figures.

The majority of forcibly displaced people are from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Somalia. In Sudan, there are more than 12.6 million total displaced people, which is phenomenally large, and equals a quarter of the total population. The DRC and Somalia also have millions displaced, but Somalia has the largest percentage of displaced people, at 28%. The data indicate that countries with very high levels of displacement are likely to be impacted by extreme amounts of conflict, humanitarian crises, or instability, given that one-in-four or one-in-five citizens are displaced.

The table shows two types of forced displacement: Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The most important thing to note is that displacements are primarily internal. Countries like Sudan, DRC, and Somalia have a greater number of IDPs than refugees. Therefore, people are likely to be displaced

forcibly within their country and still be within their country's borders. In contrast, countries like South Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR) have refugee and asylum-seeker populations that are a large share of the displaced population, which suggests that crises in these states are significant enough to affect a region. Many are forced to flee to neighbouring countries for refuge.

The table also illustrates that the quantity of displacement does not always relate directly to the overall number of displaced people. For example, while Sudan has the most displaced people, the proportion of their population displaced in South Sudan and Somalia (30% and 28%) and the shorter-term displaced in other countries is much less certain. There is also a significant displacement, at a similar level in Central Africa, with 21%. These percentages indicate a substantial impact on their society, resulting from conflict and crisis in countries, without questioning the scale of displacement of people.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Key Findings

In conclusion, the case of Sudan showcases powerfully and tragically the complex, multifaceted, and entrenched context of refugee movements occurring across the African continent, comprised primarily of the impact of protracted armed conflict, mass political instability, and serious human rights abuses, all worsened by economic malaise and increasing environmental stress (Okello & Onyango, 2024). These factors contributed to millions of Sudanese citizens escaping their homes and have generated extreme levels of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. This scale of population movement leads to vast pressure, and often with intolerable stress, on countries, communities, and host countries that are neighbours. Rather than going to IDP/Refugee level 1 or level 2, where communities and host countries try very hard to help but have unimaginable barriers to meeting the overwhelming needs for basic services and resources in terms of destination level 1 and 2 (Zelege & Gebremariam, 2023).

Displaced persons are experiencing numerous severe and protracted challenges on an ongoing basis: acute protection risks (e.g., violence, exploitation and refoulement), acute lack of access to basic services (e.g., food, water, shelter, health services, and education), and minimal opportunities for self-reliance and sustainable livelihood, all of which place them within a context of chronic vulnerability and dependency (Nduka & Obi, 2023). Although the international humanitarian system has engaged in high-level and global discussions and mobilisation, chronic underfunding, coupled with political dynamics in Sudan and the region marked by various conflicts and actors' interests, has prevented a more effective response and durable solutions for millions of displaced persons (Traore & Diop, 2024).

Implications of the Case Study

Sudan's path to suffering has crystallised as a clear and necessary microcosm of the larger systemic challenges posed by forced displacement across Africa. It is perhaps able to provide key lessons for policymakers in the humanitarian sector. It should particularly stress the urgent, imperative, and ubiquitous call for humanitarian response to be approached in a holistic way which not only accounts for the humanitarian needs of the displaced, which are undeniably dire, but also deals with the drivers of forced migration, supports good governance and democratic institutions, builds resilience in vulnerable populations, and ultimately prevents displacement in the first place (Van der Sandt & Jansen, 2020).

The predominantly regional character of displacement in Africa provides an additional need to develop stronger mechanisms for cross-border coordination, better information sharing, and a burden-sharing mechanism that is fair and equitable among African states. African solidarity is alive and articulated in conventions; however, such solidarity needs to endure and receive strong international support, so that no frontline country shoulders the unfair burden alone (Suleiman & Adamu, 2021). The example of conflict in Sudan also shows how conflict is changing, particularly in the development of urban warfare, but also other forms of mass displacement in increasingly short time frames and requires flexible humanitarian programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To alleviate the catastrophic effects of forced displacement and help create genuine, durable solutions in Sudan and other challenging contexts across Africa, there are several interrelated and urgent recommendations related to:

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: Prioritise and escalate sustained diplomatic processes and inclusive peacebuilding approaches to tackle the root causes of conflict within Sudan. It would include the mediation of ceasefires, dialogue between the fighting parties and supporting processes aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement and long-term reconciliation. Without peace, all other solutions remain temporary.

Unimpeded, Safe, and Sustained Humanitarian Access and Adequate Funding: There must be unimpeded, safe, and sustained humanitarian access to all displaced populations across Sudan and in neighbouring host countries. During this time, there must be a massive and sustained increase in international funding for humanitarian response in Sudan (and regionally), from sporadic, short-term appeals to multi-year, predictable funding that is commensurate with the scale of the protracted crisis.

Enhanced Protection Frameworks: National governments and international organisations need to strengthen protection systems for refugees and IDPs, including ensuring absolute adherence to the principle of non-refoulement; improving legal protection frameworks against all forms of exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, and trafficking in persons; and holding perpetrators of violence to account. Vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities need to receive particular attention.

Fostering Self-reliance and Livelihood Options: Promoting self-reliance and creating livelihood options and services for both displaced people and host communities requires financial investments in programming beyond the emergency response phase, for example: supporting vocational education and training; supporting small business development; land for production - these programming opportunities can allow repatriating, resettling, and locally integrating displaced peoples to become self-sufficient and experience dignity instead of relying exclusively on assistance, and the resources of others.

Integrating Climate Change Adaptation: Amidst the increasing reality of environmental stressors, it is an important necessity to incorporate climate change adaptation into humanitarian and development programming. We do not fully understand what the future holds. Still, we do know vulnerable populations will be first to be impacted by changes related to climate: improved management of water, support for climate resilient livelihoods, and developing a warning system for preparedness and coping mechanisms for shocks, be they environment only, or development related, can help build resilience against the causes of displacement.

Future Outlook

The future trajectory of refugee flows from Sudan is inherently uncertain and has a continuing degree of instability, contingent upon the impacts and effects of civil conflict, and possibilities for durable political settlement and good governance. If Sudan can take meaningful structural steps toward durable peace, inclusive governance, addressing past grievances, and a fair and equitable economic recovery for every part of Sudan's citizenry, it is undoubtedly going to remain a key driver of displacement in the coming future (Wamala & Ssemujju, 2024).

This ongoing crisis continues to severely challenge the extraordinary resilience of its people and the collective capacity of the international community to respond effectively and sustainably, amid competing global priorities. The apparent interconnectedness of regional security and patterns of displacement across borders has created a profound need for a comprehensive, sustained, and committed response from both African states and the international community to address the structural vulnerabilities that will continue to exist across the Horn of Africa and the broader Sahel region, recognising that stability in one area cannot happen without stability in others.

REFERENCES

1. Abdul, R. & Farooq, A. (2022). Cross-border spillovers: Refugee flows and host country security dynamics. *International Affairs Review*, 31(1), 77-94.
2. Abdullah, Z. & Khan, F. (2019). The Evolving Role of IGAD in Regional Peace and Security Dynamics. *Journal of East African Studies*, 13(2), 201-218.
3. Abubakar, M. & Hassan, L. (2024). The Silent Crisis: Internal Displacement and Humanitarian Response in Sudan. *African Security Review*, 33(1), 55-72.
4. Ahmed, N. & Ali, K. (2020). Government Policies and Their Impact on Forced Migration in Post-Revolutionary Sudan. *Sudan Studies Journal*, 8(1), 45-62.
5. Ahmed, S. & Khalid, M. (2021). The complexities of return: Reintegration challenges for IDPs in conflict-affected regions. *Journal of Displacement Studies*, 6(2), 189-205.
6. Ahmed, Y. & Osman, H. (2024). Patterns of forced migration from Sudan: A contemporary analysis. *Geopolitics and Migration Review*, 10(1), 1-18.
7. Akinyemi, T. & Ojo, S. (2019). Historical precedents of forced displacement in West Africa. *West African Journal of Conflict Studies*, 7(1), 88-105.
8. Al-Haj, F. & Khalil, S. (2023). The Khartoum Conflict: Drivers of Civilian Flight and Humanitarian Impacts. *Conflict and Society*, 15(2), 220-238.
9. Ali, M. & Hassan, R. (2021). Political Transitions and Forced Displacement: The Sudanese Context. *Journal of African Political Economy*, 48(3), 501-519.
10. Ali, S. & Johnson, M. (2024). Economic collapse and livelihood erosion as drivers of migration in fragile states: The case of Sudan. *Development in Practice*, 34(2), 190-205.
11. Bashir, M. & Ahmed, R. (2024). Urban warfare and civilian displacement: Lessons from the 2023 Sudan conflict. *Journal of Humanitarian Studies*, 12(1), 1-17.
12. Betts, A. (2019). *The wealthy world's refugee crisis: The political economy of refugee protection*. Cambridge University Press.
13. Chawla, S. & Das, R. (2019). The struggle for self-reliance: Livelihood challenges for refugees in developing countries. *Forced Migration Review*, 62, 28-31.
14. Chen, L. & Li, J. (2020). International Refugee Law and Its Application in African Contexts. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 32(1), 1-20.
15. Chen, Y. & Taylor, S. (2022). The role of international NGOs in complex humanitarian emergencies: A multi-sectoral approach. *Humanitarian Policy Review*, 4(2), 123-140.
16. Davies, A. & Chen, X. (2021). Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Human Mobility in the Sahel Region. *Environmental Security Journal*, 14(3), 301-318.
17. Davies, J. & Evans, S. (2023). Regional instability and the ripple effects of displacement: A focus on the Horn of Africa. *African Affairs*, 122(487), 300-320.
18. Davies, P. & Williams, C. (2020). The Darfur conflict: Protracted displacement and the failure of protection. *Journal of Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding*, 7(2), 167-184.
19. Deng, A. & Wolde, M. (2023). Host Country Capacities and Refugee Integration Challenges in East Africa. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 36(3), 401-419.
20. El-Hassan, M. & Farah, S. (2021). Sudan's civil wars and their enduring legacy of displacement. *Historical Perspectives on Conflict and Migration*, 9(1), 1-25.
21. El-Sayed, A. & Abdallah, M. (2023). Egypt as an Asylum Destination for Sudanese: Challenges and Opportunities. *Middle East Policy*, 30(4), 101-118.
22. Ferede, T. & Tadesse, B. (2020). Mental health consequences of forced displacement: A study of Ethiopian refugees. *Journal of African Psychology*, 5(1), 78-95.
23. Girma, A. & Abebe, T. (2021). Socio-economic impacts of refugee presence on host communities: A case study from Ethiopia. *Ethiopian Journal of Development Research*, 43(1), 1-18.
24. Gonzales, R. & Rossi, L. (2020). Armed conflict as a primary driver of forced migration: Global patterns and local impacts. *International Migration Review*, 54(3), 701-720.
25. Jamal, A. & Khan, S. (2022). The crisis of internal displacement in Darfur: Protracted displacement and humanitarian needs. *Journal of Humanitarian Action*, 7(1), 1-15.
26. Johnson, D. & Kim, H. (2022). Resilience and adaptation among displaced populations in protracted humanitarian crises. *Journal of Human Security*, 18(2), 150-167.

27. Johnson, R. & Miller, T. (2024). Funding Gaps in Humanitarian Aid: Implications for Protracted Crises in Africa. *Disasters*, 48(2), 200-218.
28. Kamal, H. & Mahmoud, N. (2021). Asylum policies and practices in North Africa: A comparative study of Egypt and Libya. *North African Studies Journal*, 6(1), 33-50.
29. Kamau, L. (2022). Climate change and conflict in the Horn of Africa: Understanding drivers of displacement. *African Studies Quarterly*, 21(3), 45-62.
30. Kargbo, S. & Sesay, A. (2022). Gender-based violence and protection risks for displaced women and girls in African contexts. *Journal of Women, Peace and Security*, 16(1), 1-19.
31. Kassa, B. & Tesfaye, A. (2022). Local integration strategies for refugees: Lessons from East Africa. *African Migration Review*, 11(2), 90-108.
32. Khalifa, A. & Hassan, M. (2022). State repression and forced migration: A historical analysis of Sudan. *Journal of Human Rights and Conflict*, 14(1), 1-18.
33. Khalifa, Z. (2021). The legacy of civil wars and displacement in Sudan: A historical perspective. *Journal of Sudanese Studies*, 5(2), 112-130.
34. Kim, D. & Lee, J. (2019). The Political Economy of State Collapse and Its Impact on Population Displacement. *Political Science Quarterly*, 134(4), 601-620.
35. Kim, S. & Park, M. (2023). Refugee contributions to host economies: Beyond humanitarian aid. *International Journal of Social Development*, 15(2), 100-115.
36. Mabunda, N. & Gwala, T. (2023). Challenges of voluntary repatriation in post-conflict settings: A case of Southern Africa. *Southern African Journal of International Affairs*, 30(1), 88-105.
37. Mohamed, A. & Deng, S. (2021). Desertification and forced migration in arid regions: A micro-level study in Sudan. *Climate and Development*, 13(5), 450-465.
38. Mohamed, E. & Hassan, I. (2020). Historical trajectories of forced displacement in Africa: An overview. *Journal of African History*, 61(1), 1-20.
39. Mohamed, F. & Osman, H. (2019). The Dynamics of Peripheral Conflicts and Internal Displacement in Post-Independence Sudan. *African Studies Review*, 62(3), 101-118.
40. Mokoena, T. & Zulu, M. (2020). Infrastructure strain and resource competition in refugee-hosting areas in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Geographical Review*, 39(4), 380-395.
41. Mugabe, C. & Ndlovu, S. (2022). Poverty, resource scarcity, and internal migration in conflict-prone regions. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 15(1), 1-18.
42. Müller, S. & Schmidt, A. (2023). Global trends in forced displacement: A regional analysis of Africa. *Journal of Global Migration Studies*, 9(3), 301-318.
43. Mustafa, K. & Bashir, A. (2023). The Humanitarian Response to Urban Displacement: Challenges in Khartoum's Periphery. *Cities and Development*, 12(2), 150-167.
44. Mutiso, P. & Kibet, J. (2021). Access to basic services for refugees in East African camps: A qualitative study. *East African Medical Journal*, 98(1), 1-15.
45. Ndlovu, S. & Moyo, T. (2022). Secondary migration pathways of African refugees: From first asylum to Europe. *African Diaspora Studies*, 10(1), 77-94.
46. Nduka, C. & Obi, E. (2023). Protection Gaps and Vulnerabilities of Internally Displaced Persons in West Africa. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 23(2), 101-118.
47. Ndungu, P. & Kariuki, W. (2024). The escalating crisis of forced displacement: Global patterns and policy implications. *International Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*, 11(1), 1-19.
48. Ngwira, S. & Phiri, B. (2020). The African Union's Role in Addressing Forced Migration: Progress and Limitations. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 9(3), 200-215.
49. Nyirenda, M. & Banda, L. (2019). The 1969 OAU Refugee Convention: Its continued relevance in contemporary Africa. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 19(2), 350-367.
50. O'Neill, T. (2020). The complexities of hosting: Chad's response to Darfuri refugees. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(3), 405-424.
51. Okello, J. & Onyango, R. (2024). The intersection of conflict, climate, and displacement in the Horn of Africa. *African Environmental Review*, 10(1), 1-18.
52. Okoro, N. & Emeka, C. (2024). Current trends in African forced displacement: A statistical overview. *Journal of Migration Research*, 12(1), 45-62.
53. Omar, H. & Said, M. (2023). Protection Challenges and Human Trafficking Risks for Refugees in Transit. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 9(2), 170-185.

54. Osman, R. & Mohamed, A. (2023). Internal Displacement and the Limits of National Protection Frameworks in Conflict Zones. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 94, 103001.
55. Patel, N. & Rahman, S. (2023). Human rights abuses and forced migration: A cross-country analysis. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 45(1), 1-20.
56. Patel, R. & Singh, P. (2018). Asylum Claims and Legal Frameworks: Challenges for Host States. *International Law Review*, 22(3), 301-318.
57. Perez, C. & Garcia, L. (2021). Global Resettlement Programs: Opportunities and Limitations for Vulnerable Refugees. *Journal of Forced Migration and Development*, 7(1), 55-72.
58. Sidiropoulos, T. & Papadopoulos, N. (2023). The Unfolding Humanitarian Crisis in the Sahel: New Displacements and Regional Implications. *African Security Journal*, 14(2), 190-205.
59. Smith, A. & Jones, B. (2018). Statelessness and the Right to Identity: Challenges for Forcibly Displaced Populations. *Journal of Human Rights*, 17(4), 450-465.
60. Suleiman, I. & Adamu, Y. (2021). Regional Cooperation and Burden-Sharing in Managing Forced Migration in Africa. *Journal of African Peace and Security*, 10(1), 1-18.
61. Traore, F. & Camara, M. (2023). Chad's enduring hospitality: A historical perspective on hosting Sudanese refugees. *Journal of West African Studies*, 15(2), 101-118.
62. Traore, I. & Diallo, H. (2018). The OAU Convention and Its Influence on African States' Refugee Policies. *International Refugee Law Review*, 3(1), 1-18.
63. Traore, S. & Diop, M. (2024). The politics of humanitarian aid: Addressing funding gaps in African crises. *African Development Review*, 36(1), 77-94.
64. Van der Sandt, L. & Jansen, A. (2020). Building resilience in vulnerable communities affected by conflict and displacement. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(5), 1500-1515.
65. Wamala, P. & Ssemujju, J. (2024). Political Instability and Economic Recovery in Fragile States: Implications for Refugee Returns. *Journal of Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, 8(1), 1-17.
66. Wang, L. & Li, M. (2023). UNHCR's protection mandate in complex emergencies: A case study of the Sudan response. *International Journal of Humanitarian Law*, 25(3), 301-318.
67. Zeleke, T. & Gebremariam, A. (2023). The strain on social services in refugee-hosting areas: An empirical analysis. *Social Development Issues*, 45(1), 1-18.
68. Zuma, L. & Mkhize, N. (2021). Cross-border ethnic ties and the facilitation of forced migration in Southern Africa. *African Ethnography and Migration Studies*, 7(1), 45-62.