

The Sudan

Emergency Livelihood Response Plan

September 2023–August 2024

Restoring and enhancing food production and strengthening agricultural livelihoods to support farming, herding and fishing communities





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Overview

On 15 April 2023, an armed conflict erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in the Sudanese capital Khartoum. Over four months since fighting began, the conflict has since spilled over into the Darfur region and parts of Kordofan and Blue Nile states, reigniting intercommunal violence and causing widespread displacement.

Fighting continues to jeopardize the food security and nutrition of millions of people, worsening a highly fragile ecosystem. The destruction of critical infrastructure, including water systems and communications networks, is having devastating impacts across the Sudan. The use of tanks, artillery and airstrikes is causing the destruction of vital infrastructure, such as housing, telecommunication infrastructure, businesses, hospitals, and banks, while impeding the rehabilitation of, and access to, critical infrastructure and services.¹

Internal displacement has drastically increased, with a very high number of people displaced within and outside the country. There are an estimated 4.4 million people forcibly displaced due to the recent outbreak of conflict in the Sudan and over 1 million had fled to neighbouring countries, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).²

The agriculture sector is being heavily impacted by very high prices and shortages of key inputs, including fuel, seeds and agrochemicals. Migrating labour is significantly constraining planted area and cereal production, contributing to already high production costs, resulting in spiking food prices.¹

The country is experiencing widescale unavailability of livestock vaccines and drugs due to the destruction of the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory in Khartoum, as well as damaged facilities owned by private drug suppliers and manufacturing companies.³

Sexual and gender-based violence has increased significantly since the onset of armed conflict. Women and children face attacks while fleeing conflict areas or sourcing food and water. The lack of safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene services has placed women and girls into a seemingly permanent vulnerable state, making them prone to abuse, attacks or ill health, affecting their ability to recover from crises. This is compounded by food insecurity and malnutrition, contributing to competing crises that no individual or family should have to bear.

Families are facing unimaginable suffering. As the conflict in the Sudan continues with no indication of cessation, the humanitarian situation across the country continues to deteriorate. Conflict-affected areas across the Sudan urgently require a lasting humanitarian pause to enable aid to reach millions of people in dire need. The Sudanese people deserve peace, security, and the utmost respect for the human rights they are entitled to yet have little means of achieving under the current circumstances.



Country context

In recent years, the Sudan has encountered a myriad of multi-faceted shocks, including a turbulent political environment, intercommunal localized violence, increasing food and non-food inflation, dry spells, flooding, and disease outbreaks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the civil unrest in 2020, humanitarian needs significantly increased, while food security decreased in various parts of the country.

Prior to the start of the current conflict, one in four Sudanese were acutely food-insecure, with Kassala, Blue Nile, Central, West and North Darfur states showing the highest prevalence of food insecurity. As violence extends to and intensifies in West and Central Darfur, and parts of Blue Nile states, it is projected that food insecurity will significantly increase; acute food insecurity is expected to extend to other states, including North, West and South Kordofan due to the ever-expanding war zone.

According to the latest Integrated Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification (IPC) analysis,⁶ conflict and economic decline have driven an estimated 20.3 million people across the Sudan – over 42 percent of the country's population – into high levels of acute food insecurity, classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse) between July and September 2023. The most recent projection is nearly double the number of food-insecure people compared with the last IPC analysis conducted in May 2022. Of those facing high levels of acute food insecurity, 14 million people – 29 percent of the population – are in IPC Phase 3, Crisis, and almost 6.3 million people – 13 percent of the population – are experiencing worse conditions in IPC Phase 4, Emergency.

With approximately 1.14 million refugees residing in the country, most of whom are South Sudanese, the Sudan hosts the second largest population of refugees in Africa. Refugees in the Sudan include those originating from other African countries, such as the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia and Eritrea, in addition, to Syrian and Yemeni refugees. The ongoing violence has threatened and will continue to threaten the legal status of these refugees in the Sudan, including women and girls.

Evidence shows that women are often more vulnerable to food insecurity as they continue to face additional risks, barriers and disadvantages due to gender. According to the Rapid Gender Analysis conducted by CARE International, before the crisis 42 percent of female-headed households were food-insecure compared to 31 percent of male-headed households. Even within the same households, high disparities exist between women and men in terms of food intake, with 79 percent of women unable to meet the minimum acceptable diet requirements. Women and girls are the most affected groups in both previous and current conflicts; women and girls are expected to bear a larger brunt of the consequences associated with current threats to the Sudan's agrifood system.

Sectoral context

Agriculture plays a highly significant role in the Sudan's economy. Over two-thirds of the country's population derives its livelihood from agriculture and the sector has the highest potential to increase food security, reduce rural poverty, generate both on- and off-farm employment opportunities, and boost export earnings.

The Sudan has the natural endowments to be an agricultural powerhouse in the region. While a large part of the country is relatively arid, much of it enjoys rainfall sufficient for rainfed agriculture. A significant area of the land is also covered by irrigation. The country has one of the highest ratios of land suitable for agriculture relative to land currently under cultivation. The Sudan's agroecological characteristics are suitable for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops as well as animal husbandry. It has one of the largest livestock herds in Africa with about 110 million head of animals, including cattle, goats, sheep and camels.

Despite its abundant resources, the sector is unable to exploit its productive potential. Agricultural productivity in the Sudan is well below regional and global averages. Productivity challenges in the sector include, *inter alia*, limited skills in modern farming practices and the use of outdated farm technologies and farm management practices, overdependence on rainfed production systems in areas suitable for irrigation, a poorly maintained irrigation and drainage system, inadequate rural infrastructure, barriers to migratory routes for livestock, a rudimentary rural advisory system, weak market linkages, limited access to credit and investment capital, and an increasingly depleted natural resource base.

Climate change poses serious threats to the Sudan's agriculture. The Sudan is among the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change. Increased frequency of droughts and high rainfall variability over the past few decades have already put stress on the country's rainfed agriculture and pastoralist systems, the dominant livelihoods in rural areas. Climate-related events are putting small-scale farmers and livestock herders in the traditional rainfed sector, the landless and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and households without assets most at risk of poverty and acute food insecurity. Women tend to be more vulnerable than men in such crises due to their very limited access to agricultural production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.), as well as land and water.

Mitigating the impact of ongoing conflict on agriculture and addressing the high level of food insecurity requires urgent actions to scale up agricultural production and productivity by providing inputs to small-scale farmers and herding communities to face immediate needs.

These challenges have resulted in a growing crisis of food insecurity and malnutrition in the country, which has been further worsened by the ongoing armed conflict. Mitigating the impact of ongoing conflict on agriculture and addressing the high level of food insecurity requires urgent actions to scale up agricultural production and productivity by providing inputs to small-scale farmers and herding communities to face immediate needs, while continuing efforts to enhance resilience to shocks including climate change and find sustainable solutions to declining agricultural productivity.



Rationale

With limited and stretched resources to meet the critical food security needs of people in the Sudan, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is seeking urgent funding to save livelihoods and contribute to food security and nutrition in support of the humanitarian response. Displacement on a massive scale is putting additional pressure on strained resources, especially in rural areas and host communities, threatening to trigger further food insecurity and conflict due to competition over resources. Emergency livelihood assistance will be scaled up through the most appropriate modality.

FAO is adapting its humanitarian and emergency programming to ensure the continued delivery of assistance where there are already high levels of need, while meeting new needs emerging from the impact of the ongoing conflict. This includes promoting the use of high-quality seed among vulnerable farming households, providing smallholder herding households with essential livestock supplies to continue to protect their livestock assets against contagious diseases, and enhancing the production of animal (including fish) sources of food and income for households and communities. Stabilizing incomes and access to food, as well as preserving ongoing livelihood and food production assistance to the most acutely food-insecure communities, is crucial if FAO is to effectively respond to the crisis in the Sudan.

Response

FAO aims to reach 10.1 million people by distributing emergency seeds, providing livestock, veterinary and fisheries support, and enhancing the adoption of good agricultural practices. FAO's strategic approach addresses the immediate needs of vulnerable people while enhancing recovery and resilience building through livelihood interventions that mitigate the aggravating impacts of the recent conflict.

The FAO Country Office in the Sudan has the comparative advantage of inspiring other partners to adopt livelihood support interventions, creating synergies with partners' livelihoods programmes and projects.

The Emergency Livelihood Response Plan (ELRP) will complement ongoing FAO efforts to respond to the extreme vulnerabilities triggered by the ongoing conflict by supporting small-scale farming, herding and fishing communities operating within agrifood systems.

The ELRP will be implemented by the FAO Country Office in 17 states across the country with a high prevalence of food insecurity, complementing FAO's programming in the Sudan. The proposed plan builds on the recently completed emergency seed distribution campaign, contributing to the cereal needs of 13 to 19 million people for the upcoming 2023 harvest.

High-quality seed

By making high-quality inputs available to vulnerable farming households, FAO can protect the food security and nutrition of vulnerable people through: (i) maximizing crop productivity, (ii) avoiding depletion of productive assets, and (iii) seed diversification.





Vulnerable people who have lost productive assets will be supported through the restocking of animals. An ascertained production of 4-5 litres of milk/day is more than enough to feed two children under 18 years of age, one young child and one mother.

Targeted households will receive certified quality seeds – cowpea, groundnut, millet, okra and sorghum for the 2024 summer season, and chickpea, cucumber, pigeon pea, tomato and watermelon for the 2023 winter season. The distribution of seed will be dictated by the preferences of supported communities and ecozone suitability. Beneficiaries will be trained on the adoption of good agricultural practices, including post-harvest practices and nutrition. Where feasible, extension services from relevant government ministries will provide support.

Livestock and veterinary support

Vulnerable people who have lost productive assets will be supported through the restocking of animals, ensuring an immediate improvement to food security and nutrition and the rapid re-establishment of their economic activities. Vulnerable herders will have an ascertained production of 4–5 litres of milk/day, which is more than enough to feed two children under 18 years of age, one young child and one mother. Ensuring a regular supply of milk throughout the year for any household is achieved through having two successful mating seasons in February and June each year.

Importantly, the ELRP will assist the Government of the Sudan in the intensification of its vaccination coverage against the most prevalent and devastating diseases of sheep, goats and cattle including

peste des petits ruminants, sheep and goat pox, foot-and-mouth disease, Rift Valley fever, black quarter, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and haemorrhagic septicaemia. The control of diseases by vaccination to reduce animal loss is paramount during conflict and war.

Fisheries support

FAO aims to assist 50 000 people (10 000 fishing households) by distributing sustainable fishing inputs (such as fishing boats and gear) and providing training to enhance technical capacity and improve nutrition. This will serve in maintaining functional local economies while ensuring steady access to high protein quality foods.

Cash+ modality

FAO is planning to support the most vulnerable farming and livestock herding households using cash+, which combines both unconditional cash assistance and in-kind support coupled with training during the dry season.

FAO is planning to support the most vulnerable farming and livestock herding households using cash+, which combines both unconditional cash assistance and in-kind support coupled with training during the dry season. The cash component of "cash+" aims to increase the purchasing power of households for three consecutive months, increasing access to nutritious food during times of deteriorated agricultural and food production. Meanwhile, the "plus" component (the provision of agricultural input packages combined with trainings) boosts household food production capacity through the distribution of a variety of agricultural production inputs (such as seeds and tools), and the provision of trainings that improve agricultural and livestock husbandry practices.

During the dry season, spanning from November to May, especially in the later parts of this period, farmers practicing rainfed agriculture face a "hunger gap", the period when the last harvest's food stocks are depleted, and the next harvest is not ready. During this time, many farmers face significant financial challenges, while throughout the season, herding communities struggle with water scarcity, diminishing pastures and weakened animal health, leading to economic strain and a decrease in food consumption patterns.

The transfer value of the cash component will cover the cost of the local food basket (the food portion of the Minimum Expenditure Basket [MEB]), which is currently determined as equivalent to each household receiving USD 30/month. The Sudan MEB is calculated and regularly updated by the World Food Programme (WFP) and is endorsed by the Cash Working Group, of which FAO is an active member. The cash+ package will be designed to be inclusive, catering to the needs of various groups, including women, older individuals, people with disabilities, and other marginalized populations.



Outcomes

The ELRP is designed to meet critical, time-sensitive agricultural deadlines for production and harvest, while responding to the urgent humanitarian needs of farming, herding and fishing communities and other vulnerable populations affected by the crisis. In line with Strategic Objective 1 of the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan – the ELRP will provide timely, multi-cluster, life-saving assistance to crisis-affected people to reduce mortality and morbidity.

Outcome/out	put	Funding required (USD million)
	Outcome 1. Ensure access to diversified food sources through life-saving assistance, increasing household food production and income	107.5
Output 1.1	7.5 million people, including IDPs and refugees (1.5 million vulnerable farming households), provided with emergency agricultural assistance to improve crop production for the 2024 summer and 2023 winter farming seasons	
	 Distribution of certified quality seeds (cowpea, groundnut, millet, okra, sorghum and watermelon) for the 2024 summer season. Distribution of chickpea, cucumber, pigeon pea, tomato and watermelon seeds for the 2023 winter season. Training on improved agronomic and nutritional practices. 	78.3
Output 1.2	75 000 people, focusing on women and children, including IDPs and refugees (15 000 vulnerable herding households), provided with livestock support to restore and improve family access to animal protein sources and income	
	 Procure and distribute good-quality livestock inputs, including animal concentrate feed and mineral licks, to vulnerable herding households. Provision of milking goats to vulnerable households who have lost animal assets. Support to community-based veterinary delivery system and improvement of livestock husbandry practices. 	20
Output 1.3	50 000 people, focusing on women and children, including IDPs and refugees (10 000 vulnerable fishing households), receive sustainable fishing gear and training to enhance the household consumption of high nutritional protein and to increase household income through the sale of surplus fish	9.2
	 Provision of sustainable and appropriate fishing boats and gear, and fish cleaning and processing equipment. Training on improved nutritional practices. 	



Outcome 2.

Timely livestock support through mass vaccination campaigns against transboundary animal diseases

12

Output 2.1

- 2.5 million people, including IDPs and refugees (500 000 vulnerable herding households) receive veterinary support, including vaccination, deworming and treatment services to protect and safeguard livestock against the most devastating epidemic and endemic diseases
- Provision of veterinary vaccinations, drugs and equipment for 6 million small and large livestock.



Outcome 3.

Contributing to timely and quality evidence produced to inform programming and decision-making

3.5

Output 3.1

Assessment of the ongoing conflict's impacts on the agriculture sector at national level through leveraging the Data in Emergencies (DIEM) hub and methods, including remote-sensing, quantitative and qualitative surveys

- Implementation of DIEM monitoring in all states across the Sudan.
- Provision of training and capacity development activities.

Output 3.2

Increased access to timely food security information, including on agricultural livelihood impoverishment, for informed decision-making

- Support to enhance development of technical policy, strategy and guidance formulation at the national level.
- Production and dissemination of timely, credible and accurate acute food security, malnutrition, and agricultural livelihood impoverishment evidence for informed decision-making and action.
- Provision of ongoing support to IPC assessments and analyses.
- Generation of evidence-based knowledge following emergency agricultural livelihood saving and restoring response interventions.

TOTAL REQUIREMENT

123



Implementation arrangements

Institutional framework

The FAO Country Office in the Sudan provides strategic and technical support, as well as leadership. The Country Office maintains a great rapport with other United Nations (UN) agencies, humanitarian and development partners, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government ministries. FAO has extensive experience in implementing and backstopping food security, agricultural, livestock, natural resource management and livelihoods support projects in the Sudan. It has around 150 staff at central and state levels, covering diverse technical backgrounds, whose expertise cuts across emergency, resilience and mid- and long-term development in key areas of agronomy, veterinary, food security and livelihoods, natural resource management, disaster risk management, resilience building, climate change adaptation and development programming.

FAO has field offices in 16 of the 18 states in the Sudan, though, 13 remain functional amidst the ongoing conflict.^a The field offices will closely supervise and monitor the implementation of the livelihood saving and restoring interventions that contribute to saving lives proposed under this response plan. The FAO Country Office in the Sudan is responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of food security and agriculture data, offering direct assistance to development programming and

FAO has field offices in 16 of the 18 states in the Sudan: five Darfur states, three Kordofan states, three eastern Sudan states, Sinnar State, Blue Nile State and White Nile State. Out of the 16 field offices, 13 remain functional amidst the ongoing conflict.

advising the government and partners on planning and policy matters. It has the capacity and ability to deliver efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems and serves as the central figure in liaising with community members and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The FAO Country Office is currently operating from Port Sudan and serves as the representation and head office for all humanitarian, recovery and regular development programme activities in the country. It provides strategic, operational and technical support to its field offices and implementing partners and directly oversees field office operations. The Country Office works closely with the Regional Office for Near East and North Africa in Cairo (Egypt) and FAO headquarters in Rome (Italy), which provides surge, back-up technical support and coordination among the different technical units, as well as support with communications and resource mobilization.

Accountability to affected people

FAO encourages local communities to participate in the implementation of activities and ensure ownership over interventions carried out. For effective participation of the targeted communities' members, FAO assists in the formation of local committees and training of members, fostering a space for local actors to assume an active role in the implementation and monitoring phases across projects.





Risks related to accountability to affected people and gender-based violence are monitored by checking the records and telephone call reports documented by the implementing partners to ensure the beneficiaries' voices and concerns are truly respected and acted upon.

Any complaints about types, varieties and quantities of inputs are captured during FAO monitoring missions. FAO demonstrates continued interest to incorporate beneficiary perspectives related to standard packages of inputs, which have been subject to change every year while accounting for the views of the targeted people.

FAO urges stakeholders to share concerns through open hotlines located across field offices in the country. This system was established to ensure those involved or affected by implemented activities, including implementing partners and beneficiaries, can safely express their opinions about the interventions, allowing for grievances to be filed or concerns to be raised.

Gender equality

Compared to households headed by men, female-headed households are more food-insecure, with 42 percent food-insecure, compared with 31 percent of male-headed households. Food intake is 10 percent lower in female-headed households than in male-headed households and disparities between women and men in terms of food intake exists within the same household.

FAO will prioritize its support to female-headed households through a participatory and gender equitable and inclusive approach, and ensure that proposed assistance is delivered in a safe, accessible, accountable and an inclusive manner.

FAO will prioritize its support to female-headed households through a participatory and gender equitable and inclusive approach. Post-distribution monitoring surveys will inform FAO of beneficiaries' overall experiences and will apply a gender-responsive monitoring mechanism to monitor and report on the positive and negative impacts of FAO's intervention on the different groups of beneficiaries. FAO will ensure that proposed assistance is delivered in a safe, accessible, accountable and an inclusive manner.

Forced displacement

Similarly, given that the targeted states include displaced people in a variety of situations (long-term Sudanese IDPs from prior to the conflict; recent Sudanese IDPs; long-term and recent South Sudanese refugees, some re-displaced from urban areas by conflict; as well as host communities from a variety of ethnic and livelihoods groups), FAO will undertake situational analyses of displacement dynamics (included in context analyses mentioned below), partner with relevant agencies (e.g., UNHCR, with whom FAO has developed a Joint Programmatic Framework) and target interventions accordingly. FAO will take particular care not to exacerbate tensions between displaced people and hosts by targeting aid. Wherever possible (for example, if refugees can access agricultural land), forcibly displaced people will be integrated into activities aimed at host communities to contribute to social cohesion.

Coordination, partnerships and localization

FAO will implement activities in direct collaboration with the Government of the Sudan, including the following ministries: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries, the Ministry of Environment and the State Ministries of Production and Economic.



Resources across 18 states. Importantly, FAO will collaborate with national and international partners, including international and national NGOs, UN agencies, CSOs, private sector, research institutions and several community-based organizations.

As co-leads of the Sudan Food Security and Livelihoods Sector, FAO and WFP closely work with over 68 local and international partners. To achieve this work, ensuring an efficient and well-coordinated needs-based response, FAO closely collaborates with implementing partners, service providers, development partners and both the public and private sectors.

Results-based monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) is a comprehensive approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting that enables FAO to be accountable to stakeholders through information sharing and feedback mechanisms used to guide programme implementation.

The MEAL framework can ensure FAO programmes are evidence-based and responsive to community needs. The framework provides a structured approach to programme management, allowing for the identification of implementation successes, challenges and areas for improvement, as well the ability to use data and feedback to make informed decisions about programme design, implementation and resource allocation.

The key to the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system will be building the capacity of implementing partners, through the provision of training and technical support, to ensure they have the required skills and capacities to generate the required data for related interventions. Emerging information, evidence and experiences from MEAL activities will be useful in facilitating learning in the sector for improved programming and adaptive project management. To reduce costs, increase accuracy and facilitate communication, the monitoring system will use mobile devices for data collection.

FAO will put in place, as much as possible, flexible mechanisms for accountability and monitoring of its programmes, considering the current issues faced in the Sudan, such as the suspension of the telephone network or loss of transport infrastructure. Examples of alternatives might include collaborating on monitoring with partner agencies working in affected areas or local government or community structures if they are functioning and are perceived as trustworthy interlocutors.

Contextual adaptation and relevance

A context analysis is conducted prior to the implementation of emergency interventions to assess power dynamics and potential drivers of conflict between groups, where the provision of humanitarian assistance has the potential to exacerbate underlying tensions.

Acknowledging the rapidly changing context in the Sudan, FAO will prioritize adaptive programming in response to contextual changes, access and security considerations, and beneficiary feedback. A context analysis is conducted prior to the implementation of emergency interventions to assess power dynamics and potential drivers of conflict between groups, where the provision of humanitarian assistance has the potential to exacerbate underlying tensions. The context analysis is a useful tool that includes stakeholder mapping to inform the composition of the beneficiary selection committee, ensuring distribution of assistance is conducted according to vulnerability.

Given context constraints in the Sudan currently render broader quantitative data collection impractical, this exercise will be performed using key informant interviews with local FAO staff, local and international partner organizations, and community members. The analysis will, to the greatest extent possible, consider the views of women, men, youth, members of various ethnic groups, and of different displacement statuses, with protection as the pre-eminent consideration.

Given the ongoing violence and continuing displacement in the country, the protection of beneficiaries is paramount. FAO will work alongside partner organizations to provide referrals to complementary services (e.g. psychosocial or health support to survivors of violence) to vulnerable people – whether or not they are targeted for FAO assistance.

Funding timeline

FAO requires USD 123 million to meet the critical needs of 10.1 million farmers, herders and fishers over the next 12 months.

Priorities		Calendar of funding deadlines and implementation											
Priorities	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Winter cropping season		5											
Livestock and veterinary support			ě	š									
Summer cropping season										\$			
Fishery support					ě	•							
Assessments													

Legend Deadline by which rurining is required the implementation of priority activities Deadline by which funding is required for Procurement and preparatory activities — Funding required year-round Planned implementation timeframe for priority activities

Notes

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Saving livelihoods saves lives

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