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2.4. Humanitarian and health personnel

For background information, see section 2.2. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

Humanitarian and aid workers face targeting by both the SAF and the RSF, and their allied militias,300 including violent attacks, sexual assault, and barriers to renew their registration.301 They also face allegations of collusion with warring parties, derogatory remarks, and accusations of fueling the conflict.302 Healthcare workers are routinely intimidated and arbitrarily detained by both parties due to the nature of their work and female healthcare workers are targeted with sexual violence as a punishment for their activities.303

☐ (a) Aid workers

For background information, see section 2.2.1. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

Sources indicated that humanitarian and aid workers continued to be targeted by both the SAF and the RSF, and their allied militias.304 Freedom House indicated that humanitarian organisations face obstacles in Sudan, including violent attacks, sexual assault, and barriers to renew their registration.305 Similarly, Insecurity Insight306 indicated that both local and international humanitarian organisations face 'significant dangers' both on the ground and online, including allegations of collusion with warring parties, derogatory remarks, and accusations of fuelling the conflict.307 According to the same source, in areas controlled by the SAF, aid workers are derogatorily labelled as 'Janjaweed', 'paid traitors', 'liars', 'evil', 'criminals', and 'spies and followers of the RSF', and accused of selectively evacuating wounded RSF combatants over those from the SAF.308 In areas controlled by the RSF, aid organisations are accused of 'feeding on Sudan's conflicts'.309

Humanitarian Outcomes, an international research group providing research and policy advice for humanitarian aid agencies and donor governments,310 indicated that local humanitarian actors such as community-led kitchens, 'lack access to security risk management resources to prepare for and protect themselves in interactions with armed actors' and that 'security capacities for the coordinated humanitarian response are weak overall, due to the lack of operational presence in the most severely affected regions, like Darfur and Kordofan'.311 According to confidential sources cited by the Dutch COI report on Sudan, even though RSF was apparently more cooperative with humanitarian organisations, aid workers did not necessarily felt safe in these areas, with instances of extortion of aid workers at checkpoints being conducted 'regularly'. 312

International aid workers and humanitarian organisations face bureaucratic restrictions to obtain visas.313 For example, the Dutch COI report on Sudan quoted a source stating that a foreign aid worker was denied a visa and entry into Sudan and labeled as a 'threat to the state' for having previously contacted an RSF commander.314 The RSF introduced administrative 'impediments' to humanitarian organisations, including mandatory registration and mandatory approval of travel permits for humanitarian personnel and supplies.315 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) indicated that, in September 2024, international NGOs and UN agencies requested 202 and 136 visas, respectively, of which 13 and 81 visas were approved. 316

Additionally, the UN FFM for the Sudan indicated that, according to representatives of humanitarian organisations, 'the RSF recently introduced a mandatory list of vendors from whom humanitarian organizations must procure goods and services if they procure them locally – a move that would endanger the neutrality of humanitarian operations and organizations'.317 As of 19 November 2024, 168 organisations were operating in the country, including national NGOs (54 %), international NGOs (36 %), UN agencies (8 %), and the Red Cross (2 %).318 For additional information, see section 1.3.1 of the Sudan: Security situation report.

Sources indicated that looting and attacks against UN agencies and other organisations delivering aid, continued.319 The International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicated that '[h]umanitarian and protection conditions in Sudan are among the worst in the world'.320 UNOCHA reported that between April 2023 and August 2024, 22 Sudanese aid workers have been killed and 34 injured while on duty.321 UNOCHA indicated that between January and September 2024, humanitarian organisations reported 73 incidents related to humanitarian operations, including operational interference (36 % of cases), violence against humanitarian personnel (27 %), and bureaucratic impediments (26 %).322 Humanitarian Outcomes indicated that between January and October 2024, 24 aid workers were killed in Sudan.323

Instances of targeting of aid workers and humanitarian organisations, as reported by sources, include:

- On 3 December 2024, the Committee for Justice (CFJ) reported the killing of a humanitarian activist by the RSF in Wad Gudat, Al Jazirah.324
- In August 2024, three staff from an international organisation operating in South Kordofan were detained by 'armed actors', and one staff was injured in South Kordofan when unknown assailants killed one civilian and injured three others.325

- On 2 May 2024, gunmen attacked a humanitarian convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in South Darfur, killing two drivers and injuring three staff. The team was returning from an assessment of the humanitarian situation in Layba.326

☐ (b) Healthcare personnel

For background information, see section 2.2.2. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

Human Rights Watch reported that local responders, including doctors, nurses, emergency care responders, and volunteers have been intimidated and arbitrarily detained by both parties because of their work, including providing medical assistance to victims of sexual violence.327 Female healthcare workers have been targeted with sexual violence as a punishment for their activities.328 Perpetrators reportedly told female victims that they knew about their activities and that they were looking for them specifically.329 UNICEF Sudan's Chief of Health indicated that due to fear for their safety and the lack of protection, healthcare workers are unable to access healthcare facilities in 'many places', and that many have not been paid either.330 The World Health Organization (WHO) indicated that between April 2023 and 18 November 2024, 52 attacks against healthcare personnel were reported.331

Among incidents of targeting of healthcare facilities and/or personnel, as reported by sources, include:

- On 30 December 2024, a clinic was burned down along with a market and a mosque in Wad Rawah, Al Jazirah state, and a number of pharmacies were looted during an attack by an unnamed actor.332
- On 29 October 2024, the Sudan Doctors Network (SDN) reported that the RSF conducted an attack on the Wad El Fadl area, Al Jazirah state, looting an unspecified number of health facilities, beating doctors, and expelling patients

from the Wad El Fadl Hospital.333
- On 26 October 2024, the Sudan Tribune reported that the RSF carried out a retaliatory attack against eastern Al Jazirah state after one of its commanders defected to the military, including the rape of 37 women, 3 of whom were medical personnel at Rufaa Hospital.334
- On 25 October 2024, SDN reported that members of the RSF carried out an 'extensive looting' in Tamboul City, Al Jazirah state, including the Tamboul Hospital and pharmacies, assaulting medical staff and forcing them at gunpoint to treat injured members of the RSF.335
- On 17 October 2024, SDN reported that the RSF looted medicines and medical equipment from the Ramila Health Centre, in Dinder City, Sinnar state.336
- On 10 July 2024, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) indicated that it had to evacuate its team from the Turkish Hospital, Khartoum, due to a series of violent incidents against its staff, including a violent incident on 17 and 18 June 2024 when gunmen brought in wounded combatants and intimidated the staff with gunshots into their rooms.337
- In June 2024, two armed men arrested an MSF employee inside the Turkish Hospital and took him to an undisclosed location where he was 'severely beaten'. 338

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