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3.1.2. Poverty

Approximately 38 % of the Sudanese population was estimated to be living in poverty before 2023, compared to 70% in April 2026.[672](#)

Based on data from 2023, Sudan ranked 176 out of 193 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index, and is considered 'low human development'.[673](#) Government revenues declined from 10% of the GDP in 2022 to below 5% in 2024, restricting the provision of essential services, while extreme poverty increased from 23% to 59% over the same period.[674](#) According to UNDP, 'nearly 6.9 million additional Sudanese were pushed into extreme poverty in 2023 alone' 'as a direct consequence of the fighting.' UNDP indicated in April 2026 that the per capita income levels in Sudan showed a 30-year regression while extreme poverty had reached levels exceeded those recorded at any point in the 1980s.[675](#)

Following the outbreak of the war, many reportedly lost their livelihoods and sources of income, resulting in increased unemployment and poverty, in the absence of government or private support. In the last years, social safety nets in Sudan have reportedly been largely absent or non-functional, as the limited state-funded welfare initiatives in place, including the retirement fund and the Zakat Chamber,[676](#) have stopped operating since the beginning of the conflict.[677](#)

In January 2025, UNHCR noted that the conflict had posed numerous and significant challenges for both refugees and their host communities in Sudan, resulting in a high dependency on assistance and aid from humanitarian actors.[678](#) In many areas, ERRs and soup kitchens were the only functioning safety net after the collapse of government services and limited access for aid agencies.[679](#) In Khartoum state, 7 ERRs were set up since the beginning of the war and they were 'running 42 neighbourhood health clinics and communal kitchens, 11 functioning public hospitals and coordinating with local markets, pharmacies, grocery stores, electric, water and telecommunications companies.'[680](#)

The fourth round of the Sudan World Bank Welfare Monitoring Survey, covering the period from May to July 2025, found that households 'increasingly rely on negative coping strategies' to manage food shortages and income shocks, including reducing spending on health and education, selling assets, and withdrawing children from school.[681](#) Reducing expenditure on essential non-food items like healthcare and education was the most common coping strategy, particularly among refugees (76 %). Notably, most refugees did not resort to selling household assets as they had too few assets to begin with.[682](#) Another source reported data indicating that expenditure on food and beverage represented nearly 53 % of individual income. Housing, transport, and healthcare costs reportedly resulted in a 17 % financial shortfall for the average person, placing them below the poverty line.[683](#)

With the exchange rate at 3 700 SDG per USD as of March 2026, a family required around 900 000 SDG per month just for essentials.[684](#) UNDP indicated in April 2026 a poverty line of about four USD a day, while at least a quarter of the population is reportedly surviving on less than half that.[685](#)

Sources further reported that vulnerable groups, including widows and elderly, were among those most reliant on charity kitchens for access to food assistance. [686](#)

The February 2026 market overview by the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI), based on data collected through interviews with 1 694 vendors across Sudan, found that the median cost of food items in the national Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) increased by 9% from 214 039 SDG [approximately EUR 65] in January 2026 to 238 369 SDG [approximately EUR 75] in February 2026, with the highest cost recorded in Um Bada district of Khartoum (318 761 SDG) [approximately EUR 100]. In Khartoum, prices increased by 10 % compared with January 2026. The rise was driven by higher prices for several food items, notably onions (+25 %), sorghum (+18 %), sugar (+15 %), vegetable oil (+8 %), cow meat (+7 %), milk (+4 %), and goat meat (+2 %).[687](#) In Khartoum, the Kalakla Al-Laffa and Jebel Awlia markets reportedly resumed their activities as of March 2026 with basic food commodities and prices 20 – 30 % higher compared to neighbouring states.[688](#)

Khartoum districts						
Price of items as of February 2026	Jebel Awlia	Um Bada	Bahri	Karrari	Omdurman	Khartoum
Sorghum		2000	1142.9	714.3		
Onions	1000	857.1	1142.9	514.3		571.4
Veg oil	8000	7500	7500	8000	8000	8000
Milk	3000	3600	3000	3000	3000	
Cow meat	20000	21000	19000	22000	28000	24000
Goat meat		29000			35000	
Tomato					1500	
Sugar	3200	3300	3500	3300	4000	4000
Gas cylinder	33000				65000	60000
Gas refill	66000	68000	60000	60000	65000	75000
Water container	3000			3333.3		
Water supply	12.5			20.1	25	
Body soap	1000	1363.6	1500	1500	1000	1500
Tooth paste	1000	1587.3	1000	1587.3	1000	1000
Toothbrush ad	500	500	1000	500	500	500
Laundry soap	1000	1111.1	1000	1176.5	1000	1000
Liquid dish soap	2500	2500	1714.3	2769.2	2500	3500
Sanitary pads	2500	2500	4000	3000	3500	2500

Table 1: Median price of items in Khartoum districts (including food, household and hygiene items) as provided by REACH Sudan, JMMI, analysis tables, 5-14 February 2026. Results from calculating the median price of each monitored item per district (locality). The unit is Sudanese Pounds (SDG).[689](#)

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“Zakat” is the term for charitable alms that Muslims are expected to pay as a religious duty as one of the five pillars of Islam, paid to specific groups under particular conditions. The Zakat Chamber in Sudan is an organisation responsible for the collection and distribution of Zakat. For additional info see: Arab Reform Initiative, A Critical Study of the Role of Zakat in Social Protection in Sudan from 1980 to 2021, 6 September 2024, [url](#)

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