

Situation in Darfur spiraling into humanitarian calamity as Sudan conflict hits two-month mark

*Statement by Martin Griffiths,
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator*

(New York, 15 June 2023) As the conflict in Sudan enters its third month, the humanitarian situation across the country continues to deteriorate.

Some 1.7 million people are now internally displaced while close to half a million people have sought refuge outside Sudan. Hundreds of civilians have been killed and thousands have been injured. Looting of medical and humanitarian assets continues on a massive scale. Farmers are unable to reach their land, which further raises the risk of food insecurity. And there has been a spike in reports of gender-based violence.

I am particularly worried about conditions in Darfur where people are trapped in a living nightmare: Babies dying in hospitals where there were being treated; children and mothers suffering from severe malnutrition; camps for displaced persons burned to the ground; girls raped; schools closed; and families eating leaves to survive.

Hospitals and water facilities have come under attack. Humanitarian warehouses and offices have been ransacked. Aid workers have been killed.

Inter-communal violence is also spreading, threatening to reignite the ethnic tensions that stoked the deadly conflict there 20 years ago. Reports of ethnic killings which claimed the lives of hundreds of people in the besieged town of El Geneina alone, though unconfirmed, should spur the world into action.

Humanitarian partners, including local organizations, have been doing their utmost to deliver aid, replenish stocks of life-saving supplies such as food and medicine, and provide water and nutrition services. However, the violence is hampering their efforts.

Under the rules of war, and the Declaration of Commitments that they both signed, parties to the conflict must refrain from attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure and must take constant care to spare them throughout their military operations.

We urge the parties to allow those seeking to flee to do so safely and voluntarily.

We also urge them and those with influence to ensure the movement of humanitarian supplies and personnel from other parts of Sudan – and from neighbouring countries – to Darfur where close to 9 million people need assistance.

Darfur is rapidly spiraling into a humanitarian calamity. The world cannot allow this to happen. Not again.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

In New York: Eri Kaneko, kaneko@un.org, +1 917 208 8910

In Geneva: Jens Laerke, laerke@un.org, +41 79 472 9750

OCHA press releases are available at www.unocha.org or www.reliefweb.int