

# How Has Conflict and Internal Political Instability in Sudan Shaped the Economic and Social Outcomes of People in North Central Africa?

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## ABSTRACT

The ongoing Sudanese civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has had profound impacts on the country's economy, services, and community. The crisis has also resulted in a spillover effect, with millions of refugees being displaced into neighboring countries such as Egypt, South Sudan, and Chad. This review presents the history and key findings of the conflict, including the current state of agriculture, health, education, and industry. The ongoing civil war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has deepened long-standing political instability and generated severe economic, social, and humanitarian consequences within Sudan and across North Central Africa. The central objective of this paper is to examine how conflict and internal political instability in Sudan shape economic outcomes, public service provision, and vulnerability both domestically and in neighbouring host states. Drawing on a narrative review of academic literature, policy reports, and humanitarian data, the paper analyses three interconnected themes: food security, public services, and humanitarian impacts. The findings show that conflict-induced disruption of agriculture, health, education, and industry has accelerated economic contraction, weakened state capacity, and intensified food insecurity and gender-based violence. Large-scale displacement has further redistributed these pressures to countries such as Egypt, South Sudan, and Chad, where limited absorptive capacity amplifies regional instability.

**Keywords:** Sudan; Conflict; Agriculture; Education; Health; Displacement

## INTRODUCTION

Since gaining independence from joint British-Egyptian rule in 1956, Sudan has endured decades of conflict and political instability, marked by successive wars and more than 20 attempted military coups.

The recent outbreak of the 2023 civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has displaced millions of people, disrupted services, and devastated the economy. Sudan's history of instability, violence, and conflict lead one to ask the following question: How has conflict and internal political instability in Sudan shaped the economic outcomes of people in North Central Africa? In addressing this question, the paper examines how the current crisis has impacted the region, while also situating these developments within Sudan's long history of political, military, and economic vulnerability.

On April 15, 2023, conflict between Sudan's two

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principal armed factions: the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF broke out (1). The conflict has produced devastating humanitarian consequences, including famine conditions and allegations of genocide in western Darfur (2). Mediation attempts in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have repeatedly failed (3), while international humanitarian assistance has been undermined by political constraints, including recent U.S. aid reductions under the Trump administration (4). This latest war reflects the cumulative effects of decades of unresolved tensions: the centralization of economic power, the militarization of resource competition, and the empowerment of non-state armed actors. Sudan's current displacement crisis is among the largest and fastest-growing in the world, with an estimated 12 million people displaced as of July 2025. Of this number, approximately 7.7 million are internally displaced, while around 4 million have fled the country in search of protection (5). Even before the outbreak of the civil war in 2023, Sudan was already hosting an estimated 3.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) (6). The scale of the current crisis presents urgent challenges not only for Sudan but also for its neighbors, raising economic and political questions that this paper explores: if there are economic origins to the conflict, how the refugee crisis is being handled in Sudan and countries accepting refugees, and how the conflict has affected services and industry in Sudan.

To achieve this, the paper has been split into three themes: food security, public services, and humanitarian impacts. These sections demonstrate the extent to which the conflict has impacted civilians, and the connection between these impacts and Sudan's financial crisis. By evaluating these areas, the priorities required to reconstruct a safe and independent country can be determined.

## **FOOD SECURITY**

The literature reviewed under the theme of food security converges on the finding that Sudan's current famine is not solely the result of climatic stress or market failure, but is driven by conflict induced disruption of agricultural systems, supply chains, and humanitarian access. Across sources, food insecurity emerges as both an outcome and an amplifier of violence, as the destruction of productive capacity, displacement of rural populations, and weaponisation of food and markets interact to undermine livelihoods and access to nutrition. While structural vulnerabilities such as rain

fed dependence and desertification heighten exposure to shocks, the decisive factor across cases is the intensity of conflict and control by armed actors, which determines where famine conditions emerge and continue.

### **Agricultural Disruption and Food Production Decline**

Agriculture remains central to Sudan's economy and food security, particularly following the loss of approximately three quarters of its oil reserves after South Sudan's secession. By 2023, agriculture accounted for 35% of GDP (7), and prior to the conflict, 60% of Sudan's land was agricultural (8), producing key commodities such as gum arabica, sesame, sorghum, cotton, and livestock (7). As most agricultural output is processed and consumed domestically, the sector is highly exposed to internal disruption. Since the outbreak of war, two thirds of food-processing firms have shut down, while financial system collapse and infrastructure damage have forced 47% and 53% of firms respectively to cease operations (9). This has contributed to a GDP contraction from US\$51.67bn in 2022 to US\$31.51bn in 2025, driven largely by declining agricultural and livestock production (10).

Sudan's agricultural resilience is further undermined by structural and environmental vulnerabilities. Approximately 88% of farming relies on traditional rain-fed systems, increasing exposure to drought and climate variability in a predominantly semi-arid country (11). Conflict has intensified these weaknesses, particularly in Darfur and Al Jazirah, where displacement and land abandonment have reduced output (7). The Gezira agricultural scheme, which contains 42% of Sudan's irrigated land and previously supported over two million farmers, has been severely affected by RSF occupation since December 2023 (12). The destruction of irrigation infrastructure, markets, and seed banks, alongside the disruption of winter wheat and sorghum harvests during peak growing periods, has significantly weakened national food production and local resilience (13).

Although conflict intensity in Gezira has declined since early 2024, recovery remains limited. Damaged transport networks, destroyed storage facilities, and fragmented supply chains continue to obstruct the movement of agricultural goods, while RSF and SAF control of over 85% of the economy further complicates logistics (14, 15). Livestock production has also deteriorated due to the loss of vaccine manufacturing and shortages of veterinary pharmaceuticals (16), and despite FAO vaccination efforts reaching 2.8 million animals in 2024 (17), disease risks persist. Overall, agricultural

losses closely reflect conflict intensity, with millet production falling by 19.5%, cotton by 61.3%, and cereal output nearly halving within the first year of war (18).

### **Famine Vulnerability**

By August 2024, famine was first confirmed in the Zamzam IDP camp (19), marking a critical escalation of Sudan's food security crisis. By early 2025, famine conditions had been confirmed in ten locations nationwide (15). An estimated 24.6 million people now face acute food insecurity classified as IPC Phase 3 or above, while 637,000 are experiencing catastrophic hunger at IPC Phase 5 levels (19). Reflecting the scale and severity of the crisis, the United Nations has described Sudan's conflict as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies of the twenty-first century (20).

Food insecurity is most severe in active conflict zones, particularly el-Fasher in western Darfur, one of the bloodiest frontlines of the war. Following the RSF's loss of Khartoum in March 2025, fighting around el-Fasher intensified alongside a prolonged fourteen-month blockade (21). Severe supply restrictions have driven extreme price inflation, with the cost of a single meal rising to the equivalent of what previously covered a week's worth of food, illustrating how conflict-driven market collapse accelerates famine risk (21).

Humanitarian responses have mitigated but not reversed these trends. In 2024, the WFP provided food assistance to over 800,000 people in famine and high-risk areas, including 135,000 residents of the Zamzam IDP camp (22). The FAO distributed more than 5,000 metric tonnes of seeds to 550,000 households (22). However, continued insecurity and mass displacement within Sudan and across its borders have significantly constrained the reach and effectiveness of aid delivery, limiting the capacity of humanitarian interventions to stabilize food security conditions (22).

### **Agricultural Recovery Strategies**

Agroforestry systems integrating trees with staple crops such as sorghum and sesame have emerged as a resilient production strategy in regions including El Dali and El Maznum (10). Over the past decade, these systems have consistently generated higher yields and greater financial returns than monocropping, reflected in their superior net present value and benefit-to-cost ratios. This evidence highlights agroforestry's capacity to enhance both household income and food security, suggesting that supportive policy frameworks could facilitate its wider adoption as part of Sudan's agricultural recovery (10).

Agricultural assistance represents one of the most cost-effective interventions in conflict-affected contexts, enabling households to meet basic needs, sustain food production, and remain on their land. By supporting self-reliance rather than dependency, agricultural aid contributes directly to local recovery processes (17). However, access to quality seeds has emerged as a critical constraint for smallholder farmers, indicating that humanitarian responses should prioritise seed provision to mitigate food insecurity and stabilise production (8).

In the post-conflict recovery phase, longer-term investments in water management and irrigation infrastructure will be essential to counter desertification and climate stress. Emphasising drought-resistant crops such as sorghum and millet can further strengthen resilience, particularly in rain-fed systems. Together, these measures underscore the importance of integrating short-term agricultural assistance with structural reforms to support sustainable food security in Sudan (15).

Collectively, the evidence points to a clear chain in which conflict drives agricultural collapse, accelerates famine, and entrenches prolonged economic contraction, with particularly severe impacts in contested regions such as Darfur and Al Jazirah. Although humanitarian food assistance has alleviated the worst outcomes in some areas, the literature consistently emphasises its limited effectiveness in the absence of secure access and agricultural recovery. At the same time, there is broad agreement that targeted agricultural interventions, including agroforestry, seed provision, and investment in irrigation, provide cost effective means of strengthening resilience and reducing long term food insecurity. A persistent tension nevertheless remains between short term emergency relief and longer term recovery strategies, highlighting the broader implication that sustainable food security in Sudan cannot be achieved without conflict resolution, governance reform, and the protection of agricultural systems during war.

### **PUBLIC SERVICE COLLAPSE AND INFRASTRUCTURE DISRUPTION**

The ongoing civil war in Sudan has profoundly undermined public services, exposing long-standing structural vulnerabilities and generating widespread societal impacts. Across health, education, and industry, conflict has disrupted access, reduced service capacity, and weakened governance mechanisms, with consequences felt at both macro and micro levels. Common patterns emerge across these sectors: pre-

existing underfunding and infrastructure deficits amplify the effects of war; human and technical resource shortages constrain service delivery; and attacks or displacement further destabilize critical systems. While humanitarian interventions and emergency programs attempt to mitigate some of the immediate impacts, their reach is limited by insecurity, logistical challenges, and the scale of systemic collapse.

### **Health System Fragility and Crisis Response**

Sudan's healthcare system was structurally fragile before the war, characterised by underfunding, workforce shortages, and weak coordination. The conflict has pushed the system into collapse, particularly as 95.94% of healthcare was previously financed through out-of-pocket payments, making services increasingly unaffordable amid rising poverty and medicine shortages (23). Although 40 Health Cluster partners aim to provide assistance to 9.4 million people in 2025 at a cost of \$262.3 million (24), delivery capacity remains severely limited. Only 10% of the Ministry of Health's pre-conflict workforce remains active (25), and medical supplies currently meet just 25% of national needs (26). At the same time, fighting has expanded healthcare demand through conflict-related injuries, which humanitarian providers such as MSF struggle to treat due to limited surgical capacity, particularly around el-Fasher and the Zamzam camp (27).

Violence against healthcare infrastructure has further accelerated system breakdown. Between April 2023 and February 2025, 149 attacks on healthcare facilities caused 317 deaths and 273 injuries (24), with attacks tripling after two years of war, including the assault on Al-Mujlad Hospital in West Kordofan that killed over 40 people (28). The pre-war centralisation of medical supplies in Khartoum intensified vulnerability once the capital became a conflict zone (29), leaving only one third of hospitals in crisis areas operational. As access to formal healthcare has declined, displaced populations have increasingly relied on overcrowded camps, where disease transmission risks are heightened (26). These risks are compounded by the collapse of water infrastructure following the suspension of federal water development funding (30) and widespread damage to water systems across 13 states, forcing reliance on unsafe water sources (31).

The interaction of healthcare collapse, unsafe water, and malnutrition has driven a sharp rise in disease. Over 80,000 cholera cases have been confirmed, with flooding during the rainy season likely to worsen transmission

(28). Sudan has also recorded 710,000 malaria cases and 27 fatalities (26), alongside the spread of dengue, Chikungunya, and measles, particularly in children and adolescents, as vaccination coverage has fallen to 50% nationally and around 30% in crisis zones (32) (33). Outbreaks of Rift Valley fever and heightened risks of mpox, Ebola, and Marburg virus further strain an already weak surveillance system (33). Women's health has deteriorated sharply, with 1.1 million pregnant women unable to access adequate maternal care (32), while the use of sexual violence as a war strategy by the RSF likely increases the risk of sexually transmitted infections, though data remains limited (33).

### **Education Disruption and Youth Vulnerability**

Between 2008 and 2018, Sudan's education sector expanded substantially, with 2,800 new schools and one million additional children gaining access to education. Progress was also reflected in increased transitions from primary to secondary education, rising from 251,000 to 336,000 pupils annually (34). However, these gains proved fragile. After 2018, chronic underfunding undermined the sector, with education receiving just 2% of public expenditure in 2023 (34). The outbreak of armed conflict further accelerated system collapse.

Prior to the war, 12.5 million students were enrolled, yet only 3.5 million have since returned to schooling. An additional 6.9 million children who were already out of school before the conflict remain excluded, with some regions in western and southern Sudan now lacking any formal education provision (35). Sudan has become the world's largest child displacement crisis, with over 54% of schools located in crisis zones (35). Teacher displacement and insecurity have further deepened educational inequality. Since 2023, an estimated 180,000 teachers have fled the country, leaving acute shortages in rural and remote areas. While volunteers have attempted to fill gaps, many lack formal training and certification (36). At the same time, the war has increased child recruitment into armed groups, particularly in Darfur and eastern Sudan, with economic desperation driving some families to view recruitment as a survival strategy (35). As a result, over one million secondary school students have reached adulthood without qualifications, increasing reliance on informal and unregulated labour (36). International responses, including UNESCO's Sudan Transitional Education Plan and the Alternative Learning Program, aim to address immediate and long-term needs; however, limited teacher training and high attrition rates constrain their effectiveness (37).

### **Industrial and Economic Contraction**

The Sudanese armed conflict has generated severe economic contraction at both macro and micro levels. Trade, services, and industrial activity have declined sharply (38), with the manufacturing sector losing over 50% of its value (39). Inflationary pressures have intensified, as prices of basic necessities rose by more than 60% in 2024, further eroding household purchasing power (40). These trends reflect the breakdown of productive capacity, supply chains, and market functioning under sustained violence.

The energy sector has been particularly affected. Several oil production blocks, including Block 6 producing approximately 20,000 barrels per day, have shut down, disrupting refining, transport, and downstream industries (41). Although the Heglig oil field remains operational, Sudan's pipeline infrastructure is critical not only for its own exports but also for South Sudan, which derives over 90% of government revenue from oil exported exclusively via Port Sudan (42). Since February 2024, export blockages have reduced South Sudan's oil and gas output by 70%, illustrating how Sudan's conflict generates regional economic spillovers (43). Given Sudan's strategic Red Sea location, prolonged instability also poses risks to trade routes linked to the Suez Canal, with implications for wider international commerce (44).

Sudan's role in global commodity markets has also been undermined. The country supplies nearly 70% of the world's gum arabic, a critical input for food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and printing, yet exports have been severely disrupted, creating global supply risks with limited substitutes (45). Sudan is also a major exporter of agricultural products, gold, and crude oil, with approximately 125,000 barrels per day shipped by Sudan and South Sudan in 2023 (46). Export disruptions have therefore affected key trading partners including the UAE, China, Saudi Arabia, and India (47). Gold, in particular, has become central to the war economy. Control over gold resources shaped both the 2021 coup and the current conflict, with the RSF and SAF dominating production areas and directing largely illicit revenues toward arms purchases rather than national development (48). Although gold exports generated \$1.03 billion in 2023, primarily to the UAE, this extraction has depleted Sudan's long-term wealth while directly financing continued violence (49).

Collectively, the evidence indicates that Sudan's civil war has created a reinforcing cycle of service disruption, economic contraction, and social vulnerability. Health

services have collapsed under attacks and workforce depletion, contributing to widespread disease and mortality; education has been disrupted through school closures, teacher displacement, and child recruitment into armed groups; and industry including energy, oil, and key exports has been crippled, limiting national revenue and regional trade. Across these sectors, short-term humanitarian or emergency interventions provide some relief, but cannot substitute for long-term recovery, resource investment, or structural governance reforms. The broader implication is that sustainable development and social stability in Sudan are inseparable from conflict resolution, protection of public service infrastructure, and rebuilding institutional capacity across multiple sectors.

### **HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS**

The displacement and gender-based violence dimensions of the Sudanese conflict reveal intersecting humanitarian, economic, and protection crises that extend well beyond Sudan's borders. A clear pattern emerges in which large-scale forced displacement concentrates pressure on neighbouring states with limited absorptive capacity, while simultaneously intensifying gendered vulnerabilities among displaced populations. Across host countries, converging evidence points to overstretched services, rising costs of living, and declining humanitarian funding, all of which compound protection risks for women and girls. Together, these dynamics illustrate how displacement is not only a humanitarian emergency but also a driver of structural insecurity, particularly for those already exposed to social and economic marginalization (Table 1).

#### **Regional Displacement Crisis**

The Sudanese conflict has produced one of the largest displacement crises in the world, placing severe pressure on neighbouring states that already face economic and humanitarian constraints. Egypt and South Sudan host the largest numbers of Sudanese refugees, illustrating how large-scale displacement interacts with host-country fragility and capacity limits.

Egypt hosts more than 1.5 million Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers (50). The country maintains an out-of-camp policy that grants refugees access to education, healthcare, and other public services (51), reflecting a long-standing approach to refugee integration in urban settings. UNHCR has expanded cooperation with the Egyptian government to support displaced populations

**Table 1. Conflict and Instability in Sudan: Economic and Social Consequences in North Central Africa.**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Underlying Mechanisms</b>	<b>Economic &amp; Social Outcomes</b>	<b>Regional Spillover Effects</b>
<b>Economic Impacts</b>	Sudan has experienced severe GDP contraction, inflation, and collapse of productive sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, oil, and exports. War economies (gold, arms) now dominate revenue streams.	Conflict-driven destruction of infrastructure; militarisation of resource control; collapse of markets and financial systems; elite capture of commodities.	Rising poverty, loss of livelihoods, informalisation of labour, weakened state revenue, long-term development erosion.	Disruption of oil transit affects South Sudan’s fiscal stability; global supply shocks (e.g. gum arabic); trade insecurity along Red Sea routes.
<b>Food Security</b>	Famine conditions are primarily conflict-induced rather than climate-driven, with widespread IPC Phase 3-5 hunger across Sudan.	Displacement of farmers; destruction of irrigation and storage; blockade of markets and aid; armed control of food systems.	Acute malnutrition, loss of rural livelihoods, increased mortality, reliance on humanitarian assistance.	Increased food insecurity among refugee populations; pressure on host-country food systems and aid capacity.
<b>Public Services: Health</b>	Health system has largely collapsed, with most facilities non-functional in conflict zones and critical shortages of staff and supplies.	Targeted attacks on healthcare; workforce displacement; pre-war underfunding; centralised supply chains disrupted by fighting.	Rising disease outbreaks (cholera, malaria); maternal mortality; untreated injuries; reliance on overstretched humanitarian actors.	Refugee influx strains healthcare services in Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, and Ethiopia.
<b>Public Services: Education</b>	Massive school closures and teacher displacement have reversed prior educational gains, creating a lost generation of learners.	Insecurity; occupation of schools; displacement of teachers and students; chronic underinvestment.	Increased child labour, recruitment into armed groups, long-term skills deficits, intergenerational poverty.	Host states face additional demand for education services with limited funding and capacity.
<b>Humanitarian Displacement</b>	Sudan has become one of the world’s largest displacement crises, with millions internally displaced and fleeing to neighbouring states.	Indiscriminate violence; destruction of civilian areas; economic collapse; lack of protection.	Overcrowded camps, loss of assets, dependency on aid, heightened social vulnerability.	Overstretched services, rising living costs, and political strain in Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, and CAR.
<b>Gender-Based Violence</b>	Gender-based violence has escalated dramatically, including systematic sexual violence used as a weapon of war.	Breakdown of legal and social protection; displacement; economic desperation; militarised violence.	Physical and psychological trauma, increased maternal health risks, child marriage, transactional sex.	Protection gaps persist in refugee-hosting countries, compounding regional humanitarian challenges.
<b>Governance &amp; State Capacity</b>	Conflict has entrenched weak governance, fragmented authority, and reliance on armed actors.	Militarisation of politics; erosion of institutions; exclusionary economic systems.	Inability to deliver services, enforce protection, or pursue sustainable development.	Regional instability as neighbouring states absorb humanitarian and economic shocks.

across Cairo, Alexandria, and other regions, with most refugees concentrated in northern and eastern Egypt (52, 53). However, rising refugee numbers have coincided with worsening domestic economic conditions, increasing vulnerability among both refugees and host communities (54). Inflation reached 38% in 2023, sharply increasing food, utility, and housing costs (55). Refugee inflows contributed to rent increases of up to 500% in Cairo and Giza, though following SAF territorial gains in March 2025, return movements have reduced housing demand and eased rental prices (56). Despite this partial relief, humanitarian assistance has deteriorated due to funding shortages. UNHCR was forced to suspend life-saving medical treatments for over 20,000 refugees after receiving less than 50% of the \$135 million required for operations in Egypt (57, 58). More recently, the Egyptian government has funded train services to Khartoum to facilitate voluntary returns as conditions marginally stabilise in parts of Sudan (59).

South Sudan has received over 1.2 million Sudanese refugees despite ranking among the world's most fragile states on the Fragile States Index (60, 61). The country already faces high child mortality and widespread hunger, limiting its ability to support incoming populations (62). UNHCR data indicates that approximately two thirds of refugee households experience insufficient food consumption, while 65% of adult refugees remain confined to subsistence farming or household labour rather than formal employment (63). Sudan's conflict has further destabilised South Sudan's economy by disrupting oil exports, which account for 50–60% of GDP and rely entirely on pipelines through Sudan to Port Sudan (64, 65). The World Bank projects a 30% economic contraction in FY24/25 if disruptions persist and recommends economic diversification, increased social spending, and structural reform (64, 65). In response, the 2025 South Sudan Country Refugee Response Plan coordinates 48 partners to deliver food, water, healthcare, and shelter to refugees and host communities (66).

Sudanese refugees have also fled to Chad, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic, extending displacement pressures across the region (67). In Chad, over 280,000 refugees are concentrated in overcrowded camps near Adré, overwhelming local capacity despite the presence of UN agencies and NGOs (68, 69). In Ethiopia, Sudanese refugees have been subjected to harassment, violence, and killings by armed groups, prompting international calls for stronger state protection (70). In the Central African Republic, refugees near the

Sudanese border face robbery, movement restrictions, and insecurity, leading UNHCR to introduce community-based protection mechanisms (69). Together, these cases demonstrate how Sudan's displacement crisis generates regional instability by amplifying humanitarian strain, economic stress, and security risks across neighbouring states.

### **Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence in Sudan has intensified sharply as a direct consequence of the conflict. Prior to the outbreak of war in 2023, nearly three million women and girls were already at risk of gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence; by July 2024, this figure had risen to approximately 4.2 million, reflecting the rapid deterioration of protective and social structures (71). Women are disproportionately affected by displacement across all age groups, and the number of individuals exposed to gender-based violence has more than tripled over the past two years, indicating a strong correlation between forced displacement and heightened vulnerability (72, 73).

Economic collapse and acute food insecurity have further exacerbated these risks. Faced with extreme financial hardship and the threat of starvation, some women and girls have turned to transactional sex as a survival strategy, increasing exposure to exploitation and abuse (73). The conflict has also intensified harmful coping mechanisms, including child marriage and female genital mutilation, as families attempt to reduce economic strain and perceived insecurity (74, 75).

Patterns of displacement and militarised violence have created conditions in which sexual violence is systematically used as a tool of war. As women and girls migrate in search of safety, their exposure to sexual violence increases, particularly in contested areas and along displacement routes (75, 76). Throughout the conflict, the Rapid Support Forces have perpetrated widespread sexual violence to exert control over communities, with UNICEF documenting 221 cases of rape against children, 66% of whom were girls, including four survivors aged just one year, underscoring the extreme severity of abuse and the collapse of civilian protection mechanisms (75, 76).

Taken together, the evidence highlights a mutually reinforcing cycle in which displacement, economic fragility, and gender based violence escalate simultaneously. While some stabilisation trends, such as voluntary returns from Egypt and coordinated refugee response frameworks in South Sudan, suggest

limited pathways toward relief, these developments remain fragile and uneven. There are no meaningful contradictions between displacement and protection data; instead, findings consistently demonstrate that insecurity, poverty, and weak institutional capacity converge to intensify risks for women and girls. The broader implication is that without sustained humanitarian funding, cross border coordination, and gender responsive protection mechanisms, displacement will continue to entrench long term instability across the region, transforming an acute humanitarian emergency into a protracted crisis with lasting social and economic consequences.

## CONCLUSION

This narrative review shows that Sudan's recurrent conflict and political instability have generated interconnected economic, social, and humanitarian crises with wide regional spillovers. Across the literature, the 2023 civil war emerges not as an isolated shock but as an intensification of long-standing structural vulnerabilities in governance, service provision, and resource control, accelerating systemic collapse.

Findings across food security, public services, and humanitarian impacts consistently identify conflict as the primary driver of deterioration. Studies converge in showing that famine and agricultural decline are driven less by environmental stress than by violence, displacement, and restricted market and aid access. Parallel mechanisms are evident in health, education, and industry, where infrastructure destruction, workforce displacement, and insecurity undermine state capacity and economic productivity. Despite sectoral differences, the underlying causal pathways are remarkably consistent across sources.

Comparative evidence from refugee-hosting countries highlights shared pressures despite differing national contexts. While policy responses vary, host states uniformly face overstretched services, funding shortfalls, and heightened social vulnerability, indicating that displacement redistributes rather than resolves the costs of conflict. Gender-based violence further emerges across studies as both a consequence and amplifier of economic collapse and weakened protection systems, disproportionately affecting women and girls.

Overall, the literature points to a self-reinforcing cycle in which conflict drives economic contraction, service breakdown, displacement, and social harm. Humanitarian and sector-specific interventions provide

temporary relief but remain insufficient without political resolution, institutional rebuilding, and protection of civilians. The broader implication is that sustainable recovery in Sudan and stability across North Central Africa depend on integrated strategies that address conflict, governance, and long-term economic resilience simultaneously.

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