

FEBRUARY - MAY 2026



Strengthening Protection Systems Amid Sudan's Escalating Crisis

Introduction: Escalating Humanitarian Needs in Sudan

Sudan continues to face one of the world's most severe humanitarian emergencies as armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) enters another devastating phase. Between *February and May 2026*, violence intensified across several regions, worsening civilian suffering, deepening food insecurity, and placing extraordinary pressure on humanitarian actors and local protection systems.

The conflict has evolved beyond conventional military confrontation into a complex crisis involving territorial fragmentation, attacks on civilian infrastructure, mass displacement, and increasing regional instability. Communities already affected by years of conflict and economic collapse continue to face deteriorating living conditions, limited access to healthcare and education, and heightened risks of exploitation and abuse.

Women, children, internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, and marginalized communities remain among the most vulnerable populations. Access to humanitarian assistance continues to minimize due to insecurity, damaged infrastructure, bureaucratic restrictions, and attacks on aid operations.

Against this backdrop, Roots&Transition remains committed to supporting locally led protection responses and strengthening community-based systems capable of responding to evolving protection risks.

Escalation of Armed Conflict

The humanitarian and security situation in Sudan continued to deteriorate throughout the reporting period. Armed confrontations between the SAF and RSF intensified across strategic regions, particularly in **Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile State, White Nile State and areas surrounding Khartoum.**

Several locations became focal points of military escalation:

- El-Fasher;
- Kadugli;
- El-Obeid;
- Kurmuk;
- Blue Nile border areas.

The conflict increasingly affected civilian populations through:

- Airstrikes and artillery shelling in populated areas;
- Destruction of civilian infrastructure;
- Attacks on healthcare facilities and markets;
- Restrictions on humanitarian movement;
- Forced displacement;
- Heightened protection risks for women and children.

In **February 2026**, reports indicated that the SAF managed to break the prolonged siege of Kadugli in South Kordofan after nearly two years of encirclement. Meanwhile, RSF offensives intensified in parts of Darfur and North Kordofan, contributing to further displacement and insecurity¹.

Military fragmentation and shifting alliances among armed groups have continued to complicate conflict dynamics, making humanitarian access increasingly unpredictable.



¹ <https://amaniafrica-ct.org/briefing-on-the-situation-in-sudan-12feb2026/>.

Persistent Humanitarian Crisis and Food Insecurity

Sudan Remains One of the World's Largest Humanitarian Emergencies

The humanitarian situation in Sudan continued to worsen dramatically between *February and May 2026*.

According to recent humanitarian assessments:

- Approximately **19.5 million** people are experiencing acute hunger;
- More than **40% of the population** faces severe food insecurity;
- Around **825,000 children** are projected to suffer severe acute malnutrition in 2026;
- Several areas in **Darfur** and **Kordofan** remain at risk of famine conditions;
- **Millions** continue to lack reliable access to healthcare, safe drinking water, and sanitation services.

The crisis has been driven by multiple overlapping factors:

- Ongoing armed conflict;
- Disruption of agricultural production;
- Inflation and economic collapse;
- Restricted humanitarian access;
- Destruction of infrastructure;
- Large-scale displacement.

Humanitarian organizations continue to face severe operational constraints. Aid delivery has been hindered by:

- Insecurity along transport routes;
- Administrative and bureaucratic restrictions;
- Attacks on aid convoys and warehouses;
- Fuel shortages;
- Communication disruptions;
- Active fighting in key access corridors².

The **approaching rainy season** is expected to worsen logistical constraints and further reduce humanitarian access to remote communities.

Repeated disease outbreaks, including cholera and malaria, have also contributed to deteriorating public health conditions, particularly among displaced populations and children³.

Displacement and Regional Impact

A Crisis Beyond Borders

As conflict continues to spread across Sudan, millions of civilians remain caught in an escalating displacement crisis that is reshaping communities both inside the country and across the wider region. Families continue to flee violence, insecurity, and collapsing living conditions, often leaving behind homes, livelihoods, and support networks in search of safety.

The humanitarian impact remains staggering:

- **Over 13 million people displaced** across Sudan;
- **More than 4.5 million refugees** fleeing to neighboring countries;
- Continued population movements toward: Chad; South Sudan; Ethiopia; and Egypt.

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/almost-20-million-people-sudan-still-face-acute-hunger-monitors-say-2026-05-14/>.

³ <https://www.who.int/news/item/14-04-2026-after-three-years-of-conflict--sudan-faces-a-deeper-health-crisis>.

The crisis is also **placing increasing pressure on neighboring countries** and border communities already struggling with limited resources and fragile humanitarian systems.

Regional tensions further intensified during the reporting period:

- **Chad** temporarily closed sections of its border with Sudan following incidents of cross-border violence;
- **Concerns continued to grow regarding:**
 - spillover effects of the conflict;
 - armed group movements across border regions;
 - the broader destabilization of already fragile neighboring areas⁴.



Roots & Transition Activities: Strengthening Protection Capacity and Coordination

Between **February** and **May 2026**, Roots&Transition, with the financial support of the European Union through the European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships (EU INTPA) under Contract Reference CSO-LA/2024/459-053, continued implementing activities aimed at strengthening protection programming, improving coordination systems, and supporting Sudanese civil society organizations operating in displacement and emergency settings.

A major milestone during this reporting period was the organization of a three-day workshop on **Protection, Protection Mainstreaming, and Protection of Civilians in Emergencies**, held from *09-11 February 2026* in Port Sudan. The workshop brought together CSO representatives and humanitarian actors from Kassala States as well as project officers of the 6 States to strengthen technical knowledge, operational readiness, and coordination capacities in protection response.

The workshop focused on several core thematic areas, including:

- Protection principles and legal frameworks;
- Gender-based violence (GBV) and trafficking-related risks;
- Protection mainstreaming across humanitarian sectors;
- Safe and ethical data management;
- Protection risk analysis;
- Protection of Civilians (PoC) in emergencies;
- Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP);
- Referral pathways and coordination systems;
- Scenario-based protection response planning.

Interactive methodologies, group exercises, case studies, and simulation activities enabled participants to apply protection concepts directly to real humanitarian contexts in Sudan.



Key workshop outcomes included:

- Strengthened understanding of protection principles and survivor-centered approaches;
- Increased operational readiness in Information Management (IM) tools and referral mapping;
- Improved understanding of protection mainstreaming across humanitarian sectors;
- Enhanced coordination and collaboration between participating CSOs;
- Increased confidence in applying protection frameworks within emergency settings.

Participants also emphasized the practical relevance of the workshop content to their daily operational realities and highlighted the value of continued mentoring and peer-learning opportunities.

⁴ <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d355/d3556479>.

Information Management and Coordination Support

During this reporting period, the **Information Management (IM) team** at Roots & Transition strengthened coordination and data systems across all CSOs participating in the anti-trafficking project.

Key initiatives implemented included:

- Conducting one-to-one meetings with each CSO to clarify implementation plans and refresh understanding of Outcome 4 indicators and means of verification;
- Supporting CSOs in exploring collaboration opportunities with organizations specialized in case identification;
- Establishing a joint workplan system linking Roots & Transition and CSO project managers for real-time tracking of implementation progress and internal monitoring;
- Developing a 3Ws map (“Who Does What Where”) to support CSOs in positioning themselves within the cluster system and avoiding duplication of activities;
- Creating a service mapping tool to identify state-level service providers aligned with Outcome 4 indicators, improving referral pathways and coordination mechanisms.

Together, these initiatives contributed to:

- Enhanced data visibility;
- Improved coordination among participating organizations;
- Strengthened partnerships and referral systems;
- Increased effectiveness of CSO interventions under the project.

R&T and CSOs Operational Presence in Sudan - 2026

