

SUDAN – A YEAR OF WAR

Background



On the morning of April 15th, we found ourselves unexpectedly confronted with a situation for which we were not prepared – the outbreak of war. We had to swiftly restructure and adapt. At the onset of the war, **35 SIHA Staff** were based in Sudan, with our largest office located in Khartoum, and other staff located across the country in Blue Nile, West Darfur, South Darfur, North Darfur, and Kassala. Shortly after the 15th, Khartoum, West Darfur, and South Darfur became the first central battleground zones, and this meant that SIHA completely lost access to our offices and the majority of our Sudan-based staff lost access to their own homes.

Over the past year, SIHA has heavily utilized its resources and non-restricted resources to address the crisis in Sudan. During this time, there was a significant gap on the ground in terms of available protection for women and girls, as well as the capacity to respond to the SGBV crisis exacerbated by the conflict. Additionally, women faced other crises, including property looting, financial resource depletion, intimidation and terrorizing tactics, enslavement, abduction, exposure to aerial bombardments, and various other violations, including arbitrary detention.

Our Impact

In the face of this crisis, our priorities necessitated the restructuring of our operations to focus on the following issues:

- Immediate support for women human rights defenders and organizations and women on the frontlines who were collaborating with us to respond to the crisis.
- Invest in women's organizational resilience and their capacity to reinstate themselves and collective care
- Invest in amplifying women's voices to speak on the impact of the war on women and girls and their visions for peace, recovery, and justice
- Immediate support for women and girls residing in areas that had been occupied by the RSF in the early hours of the war.
- Provide response support to survivors of SGBV including assistance to receive psychosocial and medical support
- Secure the safety of our staff, members, and partners across Sudan, ensuring they had the capacity to move to safer locations.

None of these results could have been achieved without close collaboration with our network of women's and human rights defenders and activists on the ground in Sudan.

Our Impact in Numbers



241 women human rights defenders **relocated** due to threats on their life and safety within Sudan.



84 survivors of SGBV **assisted** to receive medical, psychosocial, and/or relocation services



2,553 dignity kits were provided to women and girls in displacement camps / shelters to address the urgent need for menstrual health products. Dignity kits contain underwear, menstrual pads, scarves, soap, and slippers [These are the top items requested by displaced women and girls].



SIHA has extended support to **1 hospital in Khartoum** and **4 mobile clinics** that provide SRHR services.



3 women's shelters constructed. 1 shelter was constructed within a displacement camp in Chad in collaboration with a network of social workers from El Geneina. SIHA has supported regular healing sessions in this shelter for the displaced women and girls in the camp to help them process their trauma and move toward healing. Another 2 shelters were constructed in Kassala where there is a very high internally displaced population.



SIHA Collaborated with FIDA-Uganda to extend counselling and legal aid to women refugees exposed to sexual violence and harassment in the host country.



SIHA has consistently worked to ensure that women are able to be part of the emergency room platforms and are able to access resources and food. As a result of the support SIHA extended to key partners on the ground, especially the emergency room groups which established community kitchens, a total of **2,370 people received food assistance**.

29 women-led and youth groups received support from SIHA to continue their work responding to the crisis in Sudan. This support has included:

- Subgrants
- Needs assessments
- Coordination assistance
- Consultation meetings
- Collective healing session

Through this support, SIHA seeks to assist these key grassroots initiatives to maintain their resilience and enable civil society to function despite the extreme barriers the war poses.

Advocacy



Photographer: Faiz Abubakar

As an advocacy organization, keeping the dire needs of the Sudanese people, especially women and girls, has been an integral part of our work at SIHA since the war broke out.

30 publications on the evolution of the women's and human rights situation in Sudan.

1 Feminist Peace & Solidarity Conference convened, in which activists, stakeholders, and frontline service providers came together to stand in solidarity with Sudan and demand peace. The conference hosted over 100 attendees, including over 60 participants from Sudan. **Read the report here.**

2 campaigns launched to raise awareness and galvanize support for women and girls:

#PadsForPeace – raising awareness & addressing menstrual health needs.
SudanMissingGirlsAndWomenBack – sounding the alarm & directing witnesses/survivors to actors who can provide support.

SIHA regularly provided our mailing list of over 2,400 subscribers with key updates from the ground.

SIHA has participated in other high-level advocacy platforms including **1 briefing of the United Nations Security Council**, highlighting the dire situation of women and girls in Sudan during ongoing crisis.

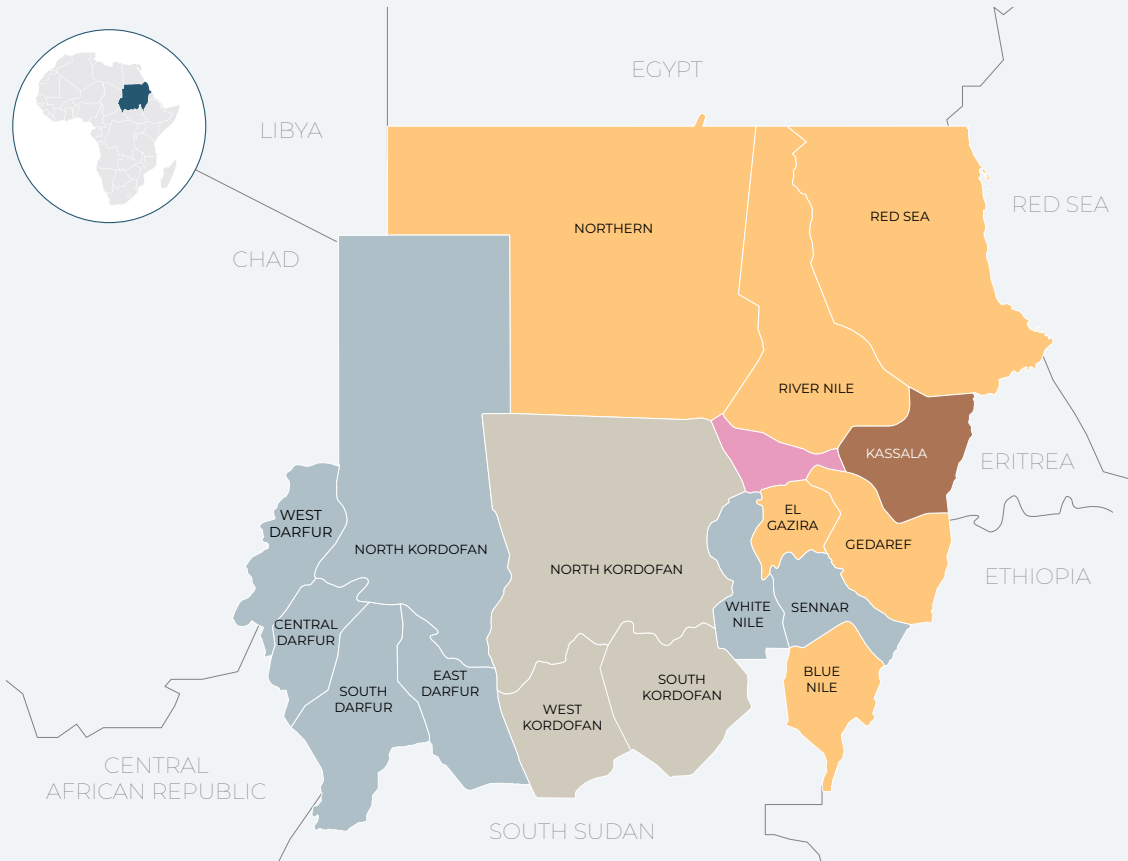
Sponsored 3 delegations to engage in high-level policy and advocacy platforms hosted by the Commission on the Status of Women, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Union. **Watch a panel featuring some of the delegates here.**

We collaborated with mainstream media outlets including writing op-eds and giving televised or radio interviews on a regular basis to highlight the situation of women and girls in Sudan.

As we know very well the toll this work takes on those at the frontline, we have also provided collective care sessions inside Sudan in Kassala, South Kordofan, Port Sudan, El Gezira, Blue Nile, North Kordofan for women leaders and grassroots women groups across Sudan to structure across our engagement

SIHA continues to constantly monitor the political narrative and trends in relation to the status of women and SGBV and collaborate with our partners to counter the actions of discrimination, to ensure that women's needs and voices are at the center in any future processes toward peace and transition.

Facts & Figures



Starting date: April 15 2023



16,000 deaths have been recorded, however many more have yet to be documented with an estimated **10,000-15,000 killed in El Geneina alone.**



26,000+ injuries documented as of January.



12.8 million people face a critical lack of food access with another **4.9 million people facing a severe lack of food access, associated with excess rates of mortality.**



8.2 million displaced, 6.5 million of those internally displaced.



993 people have disappeared (96 women; 897 men) according to the Sudanese Group for Victims of Enforced Disappearance. Through open-source data, primarily social media, SIHA has recorded another 15 disappearance cases, which we are working to confirm, resulting in an estimated total of **1,112 disappeared people, 119 of them women/girls.**

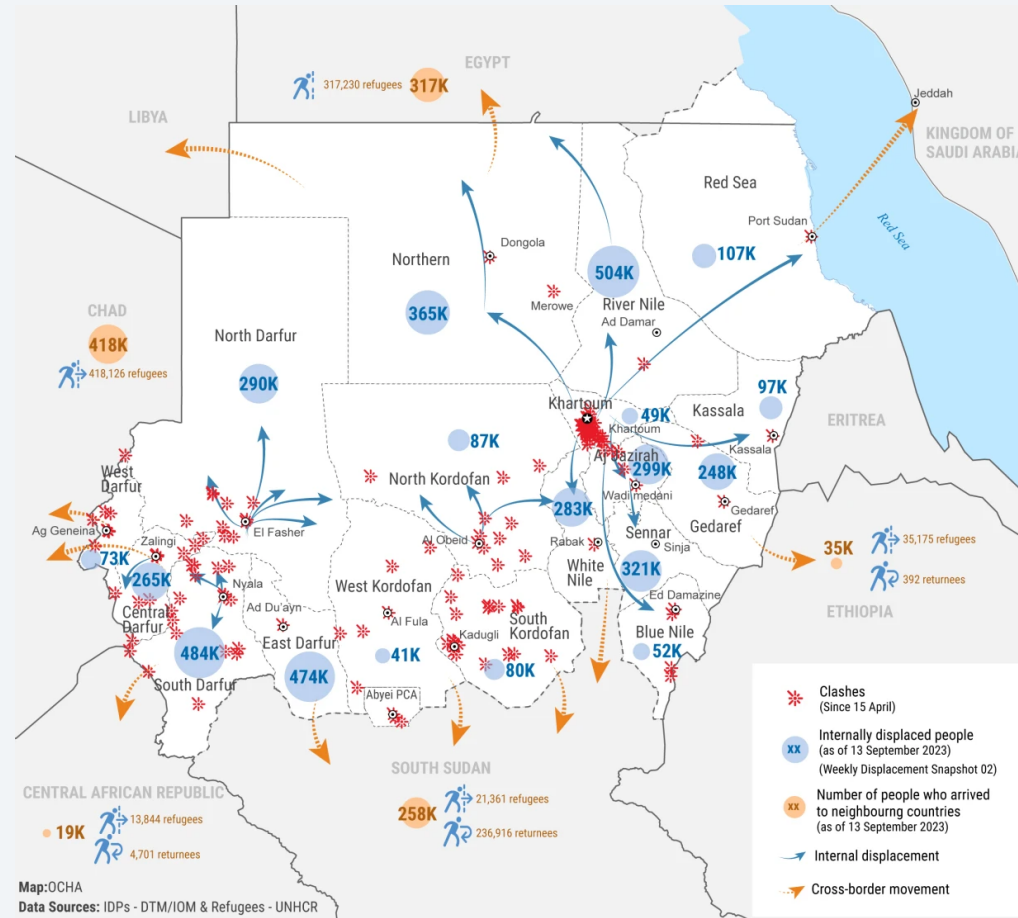


65% of the population cannot access healthcare.

By October 2023, an estimated **6.5 million children** in Sudan could not attend school as a result of the conflict, bringing the estimated total number of **children out of school in Sudan to 19 million.**

Displacement

Sudan may be one of the largest-scale refugee crises facing the world at this moment with over **8 million people having fled their homes**, and in some cases, people are facing cycles of displacement, where they must flee again and again in search of safety from the expanding zones of active conflict.



Source: <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/card/7FzAaVRKxy/>

Health Sector

60 ATTACKS
60 attacks on health facilities reported

6 AMBULANCES ATTACKED
Ambulances are being targeted as well, on the 14th of August 2023 6 ambulances were attacked by armed forces in Khartoum

200 VIOLATIONS
200 cases of violations against medical staff recorded



3.1M RISK CHOLERA
More than 3.1 million people are estimated to be at risk of Cholera

38 KILLED
38 healthcare workers have been killed, 4 have been abducted, and 9 more have gone missing

30 NEWBORNS DIED
An estimated 30 newborns died in a single hospital in East Darfur due to complications arising from electricity blackouts and lack of oxygen supplies.

70% NON-FUNCTIONING
70% of hospitals and medical centers are non-functioning, and intermittent electricity blackouts in many other hospitals consistently places the lives of patients in danger.

Source: <https://conflictandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13031-024-00581-w>

Impact on Women & Girls

More than **4.2 million women and children** are at risk of GBV



SIHA has documented 172 cases of sexual violence against women and girls ranging in age from 4-year-old to 60-year-old survivors – as staggering as this number may be, our experience on the ground indicates that it is a tiny fraction of the true number of sexual violence cases that have resulted from the current war. For example, we recorded another 63 cases of sexual violence early in the war, but as we were being displaced ourselves during this time, and lost access to our office, we lost contact with these 63 survivors before we could fully document their cases - this would bring the total cases we have received to **235 cases of sexual violence.**

High prevalence of sexual violence, combined with the compromised health sector and high security risks associated with traveling have led to high rates of unplanned and dangerous pregnancies.

An estimated **230,000 children, pregnant women, and new mothers are at imminent risk of death** from hunger in the few months

Survivors speak out despite the pain



"After [they raped us] they told us "Enough, we're going. Those of you who want to leave, leave. If you want to stay, stay. We were completely shattered. I blacked out for a while, then after we awoke, we went out on the first street we found with a shop, and we asked him "where are we?" We didn't know the area well, since we lived in a different area and only fled there because our area had lots of shooting."

فبعدها قالوا لنا خلاص نحن ماشين، إنتو كان عايزين تمشوا أمشوا، كان عايزين تقعدوا أقعدوا. فنحن كنا منهارين شديد، أنا أغمى علي لفترة من الزمن، بعدها بفترة حتى وعينا، طلعتنا على أول شارع لاقانا بتاع دكان وسألناهو نحن وين لأنو نحن ما بنعرف المنطقة كويس، نحن أصلاً ما من سكان المنطقة دي بس نحن نزحنا ليها لأنو منطقتنا كان فيها ضرب



"They dragged me until I was between two beds on a blanket I put out for when there were shooting or someone went downstairs, then they beat me and slapped me, calling me "dirty girl" because I had wet myself."

، قاموا جروني، أنا كنت بين السريرين فارشة البطانية لمن يكون في ضرب أو حاجة بنزل تحت. فبس، جروني كان بدوا يضربوا فيني ويكفتوا فيني «يا نجسة» تقريباً عشان بلت



"They shot their weapons, but they didn't find anything to take from us since we didn't have gold or money. Then they raped my daughters. They screamed with all their might, and their brother couldn't hold himself back. I told him if you don't stay back, they will shoot you."

وضربوا سلاحهم دا، وما لقوا أصلاً حاجة عندنا عشان مثلاً يشيلوها لا عندنا ذهب لا عندنا قروش، المهم، اغتصبوا بناتي الاتنين، بصرخوا بكل حسنه، وأخوهم ما قادر ماسكاهو أنا قلت ليهو لو مرقت بيرصوك



We are grateful to our donors, partners, and the many **individual donations** that have been sent in from around the world, which have allowed us to respond to this crisis in Sudan while continuing our advocacy work amplifying the voices of the women and girls directly impacted by this war.

Strategic Initiative
for Women in the
Horn of Africa



SIHA Network