

# SUDAN FLASH UPDATE

## TORRENTIAL RAINS AND RECORD FLOODING

### Over 170,000 Sudanese and refugees receive UNHCR relief material after deadly floods

UAE sponsored flight from UNHCR's regional warehouse flies in blankets, sleeping mats and plastic sheets for flood affected Sudanese neighbourhoods, IDPs and refugees in urgent need of shelter.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

UNHCR relief material underway to flood survivors in 12 States.

950 truckloads of soap delivered to keep COVID-19 in check.

Polio kills first IDP child in Darfur.

*UNHCR's first airlift for flood survivors in Sudan arrived from UAE in early September. More help is needed. ©IHC*



## Helping the Sudanese people

On 4 September, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, flew 100 metric tons of relief material from our warehouse at the International Humanitarian City, Dubai, into Sudan, including 16,000 blankets, 16,000 plastic sheets against the elements and nearly 6,000 sleeping mats, funded by **Sudan Humanitarian Fund** (SHF).

As stocks of shelter material were depleting, UNHCR had called for international airlifts to help bring in more relief fast. The government of the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE) swiftly donated the airlift that will speed up UNHCR's distribution of much-needed shelter material across Sudan.

UNHCR, in coordination with Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) and Commissioner for Refugees (COR), is rolling out the material support which mainly goes to the local population and IDPs, but also to refugees. Flood survivors will benefit in 12 States, especially **White Nile**, the **Kordofan States** and **Darfur**. Combined with existing stocks, the distribution of non-food-items (NFIs) currently underway will reach some 170,000 men, women and children in the course of September - the majority of whom Sudanese families, including IDPs.

This comes after weeks of torrential rains in some parts of the country and the bursting of the banks of the Nile in Blue Nile, Sennar and Khartoum States. In the capital Khartoum, the river Nile reached its highest level in 100

years - over 17 meters. Sudan declared a state of emergency for three months. Some 100 people across the country lost their lives, thousands lost their homes.

An estimated 85,000 internally displaced (IDPs) and 40,000 refugees along with thousands of their Sudanese neighbours have been affected, particularly in East Sudan, White Nile, Darfur and Khartoum, many in urgent need of shelter and other emergency assistance. Rains have been particularly heavy in North Darfur, leaving an estimated 35,000 IDPs, locals and refugees in need of help.

## 14 refugees missing, 1 dead

UNHCR assessment missions met communities in the larger Khartoum where a total of 14 South Sudanese refugees went missing after flash floods hit their houses and one little girl drowned. A boat mission reached an area at the Nile's devastated banks some 15 kilometers outside the capital where South Sudanese refugees live alongside their Sudanese neighbours. The men in the area lost their jobs as brickmakers in the aftermath of the disastrous events. Hygiene levels have plummeted following the **collapse of latrines** during the flooding which left people no other choice than open defecation.



*One home out of thousands damaged by heavy rains in West Kordofan. ©UNHCR/Mohammed Elhaj*

The mission learned from community leaders about the tragic disappearance of eight refugees. The six adults and two children were sleeping when the powerful flash floods from the river reached their homes, and they were never seen again. The muddy waters made 100 other refugees and their Sudanese neighbours homeless in the area. The refugees request to be given a dry and safe piece of land to move away from the riverbank. In a similar incident at Al Gadisya, 12 kilometers outside Khartoum, two South Sudanese refugee families – four adults and two children - were swept away at night and are missing. In Khartoum's "**Open Areas**", slums on the outskirts of the capital, an **18-month-old** refugee girl tragically drowned as latrines collapsed under the heavy rains.

**Preparedness** activities before the rains in White Nile made sure refugees were not unprepared: UNHCR and partners have distributed **plastic sheeting to over 68,500 refugees and hosts**, most of it already before the floods. More support was provided throughout August, including NFIs such as buckets and plastic sheeting, including in East Darfur to 4,600 Sudanese and to some 100 IDPs in El Neem camp.

## Adapting to COVID-19

Hygiene levels have been plummeting in the aftermath of the flooding in several places, as latrines and water points had been destroyed. To reduce additional COVID-19 risks, UNHCR is including jerry cans in NFI kits, including in the larger Khartoum, where access to clean water and hand-washing facilities were problematic even before the floods.

Since the beginning of 2020, UNHCR delivered **3.8 Million pieces of soap** to displaced and host communities. Had they all been delivered at once, on trucks of 10 metric tons, the convoy would be 1.1-kilometer-long – 950 trucks. In recent weeks, UNHCR worked with NGO partners, including CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development), SIDO (Sub-Saharan International Development Organization) and Plan International in White Nile camps (Jourie, Alagaya and Dabat Bosin), to distribute soap to 112,000 refugees and locals. Soap distributions also took place in North Darfur, South and West Kordofan.

As part of its ongoing COVID-19 prevention and response, in early September, UNHCR flew in nearly **200 boxes of medical supplies** from gloves to drugs to be distributed with partners across Sudan.

UNHCR collaborated with the renowned Johns-Hopkins University to develop a model for the transmission of COVID-19 in refugee camps reflecting the low or modest physical distancing possible in such a crowded setting. One of the first findings was that full physical distancing in the camps could reduce infections by 21 to 45% in the event of an outbreak depending on the degree of those measures. The model is helping UNHCR to better plan COVID preparedness and response in the different field locations in support of the responsible health authorities.



*UNHCR and partners during a distribution to flood survivors  
©UNHCR*

So far, **no major outbreak** of COVID-19 in refugee camps in Sudan has been reported.

In preparation of the school start end-September and to reduce the pandemic's toll on refugee education, UNHCR and its partners as well as health and education authorities have already moved all quarantine centres out of school buildings which are being disinfected for a **safe return to school**.

To mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic on refugee households across Khartoum, UNHCR provided an **emergency cash** assistance since mid-July to support urban refugees not targeted by other assistance programmes. ATM cards have been distributed to some 26,000 people so far with a one-time assistance of 3,000 Sudanese Pounds.

## Polio creeping in

In West Darfur, an IDP child passed away after contracting polio. There have also been reports about a few other people who contracted the virus in East Darfur, including a refugee child in Kario Camp. Coordination is ongoing between partners and the Ministry of Health to accelerate the polio vaccination campaign for under 5-year-old children with two types of oral poliovirus vaccine. Preparations are underway with WHO for a potential country-wide vaccination campaign with all three polio strains, to which UNHCR plans to contribute logistical support.

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