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## War Economy & Economic Impact

**The Economic and Poverty  
Implications for Sudan If the  
Conflict Continues Through 2025**

## What Are the Economic and Poverty Implications for Sudan If the Conflict Continues Through 2025?

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(Original version submitted August 2024; final version accepted May 2025)

**ABSTRACT** The ongoing conflict in Sudan, which began in April 2023, has triggered severe economic contractions, exacerbating poverty and unemployment while disrupting key sectors of the economy. This study employs an updated economywide database to assess the economic impact of a continued conflict through the end of 2025 under two scenarios of extreme and moderate contractions in the overall GDP. Our findings indicate that by the end of 2025, Sudan's GDP would decline by 42% under the extreme scenario and 32% under the moderate scenario. The agrifood system would be particularly affected, with its GDP contracting by 33.6% and employment halving under the extreme scenario. Household incomes decline across all quintiles, with rural populations and women experiencing the sharpest losses. The national poverty rate is projected to rise by 19 percentage points under the extreme scenario, further deepening socioeconomic vulnerabilities. To mitigate the widespread adverse impacts of the conflict on the Sudanese economy, policies and interventions should prioritize the restoration of economic productivity, support the agrifood system and employment recovery strategies, and ensure that social protection measures are accessible to all households facing increased deprivation.

**KEYWORDS:** Sudan conflict; economic impact; poverty; employment; agrifood system

### 1. Introduction

On April 15, 2023, armed conflict broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), intensifying the power struggle for control over Sudan. This continuing conflict has not only led to significant displacement of the population but also has caused extensive damage to Sudan's already fragile productive infrastructure. Escalating hostilities and a deteriorating security landscape have displaced over 30 per cent of the Sudanese population as of the end of 2024 (IOM (UN Migration), 2025). As of March 3rd 2025, almost

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<sup>2</sup>Current affiliation: International Economic Relations Center- Institute of National Planning, Egypt. Supplementary Materials are available for this article which can be accessed via the online version of this journal available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2025.2510642>.

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## The Effects of Sudan's Armed Conflict on Economy and Health: A Perspective

Esraa Mahadi Ali Mohamed, Don-Eliseo Lucero-Priso

January 2025

This paper identifies 15 key channels through which the war has damaged Sudan's economy and health system, from inflation and agricultural disruption to the collapse of banking and health infrastructure. The authors emphasise how these failures intersect with increased mortality and malnutrition, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. They call for urgent international intervention to stop the war and support civil society coordination, stressing that justice,

This study projects that if the conflict continues, Sudan's GDP could shrink by up to 42% in extreme scenario or 32% under a more moderate scenario. It also forecasts major negative effects on employment, income, and household welfare, particularly in rural areas and for already marginalised groups. The analysis is useful for showing the deep economic stakes of continued conflict.

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### The Effects of Sudan's Armed Conflict on Economy and Health: A Perspective

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#### ABSTRACT

Sudan's economy has been greatly affected by the armed conflict through 15 different channels at both micro and macro levels. The requested fund to save live of sudanese population is 2.6 billion US\$ from which only 33% was allocated. The humanitarian crisis in Sudan has led to contraction in economy and thus agriculture, health, water supply, education, and banking which all resulted in increased mortality and morbidity rates, food insecurity, violation in human rights and inflation. There is a rising humanitarian need for assistance, in addition to urgent interventions to stop war and cease fire. International law must be enforced through international organizations, the voice of Sudanese civil society must be coordinated if not united, and several measures must be taken after the conflict resolved to address the impacts of conflict.

#### 1 | Background

Armed conflict is affecting Sudan's economy at both macro and micro levels through 15 different channels including: and imports and exports (agriculture), production, industries (mining and construction), services (public and private), and also the foreign financial transactions for households [1]. Sudan's economy has been declined as a result of armed conflict as the growth forecast went downward by 12.5% which when compared to Syria and Yemen (5% per year); this percent seemed to be very alarming [2].

The 2023 Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) illustrated that the required fund to cover the lifesaving needs for 18.1 million population is US\$2.6 billion, from which only 33.4% (US \$866.2 million) has been allocated by November 15th [3]. The Sudan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to lower by 48% by the end of this year, from which the economical losses are estimated to be US \$15 billion. The impact of war on national economy and individual sectors will result in increase of poverty by around 1.8 million people to reach 39.3 million in

total. The total loss of jobs was 5.2 million from which 2.7 million were in services sector. The economic activity has been disrupted in Khartoum and other states of Sudan due to the violent conflict [4].

The humanitarian crisis and economic contraction resulted from the armed conflict have greatly affected populations' lives. Millions of people have been forced to flee their homes and escape from the risks, threats, and violence. There is an increased prevalence of communicable diseases and lack of access to clean water and health services, malnutrition as a result from the disrupted food chains and food insecurity, human rights violations and sexual violence, inflation and reduced income, destruction of banking systems, and disruption of the education systems since the schools have been destroyed and teachers have been enforced to displace. The number of people killed in Sudan's armed conflict is at least 15,500, and some estimates stated that not less than 150,000. Measles outbreaks killed over 1000 child, and cholera outbreaks threaten lives of 11,000 as a result of low immunization coverage [5]. There were also confirmed cases of dengue fever [6].

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1 of 4

conflict recovery.

# Health, WASH & Environmental Risks



Pollution and ecological risk assessment of heavy metals in anthropogenically-affected soils of Sudan: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Magboul M.S. Siddig<sup>a,b,c,\*</sup>, Stephen B. Asabere<sup>a</sup>, Abdullah S. Al-Farraj<sup>c</sup>, Eric C. Brevik<sup>d</sup>, Daniela Sauer<sup>a</sup>

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## ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:**  
 Developing countries  
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 Soil contamination indices

## ABSTRACT

Soil is a sink for environmental hazardous materials including heavy metals (HMs). Developing countries face enormous environmental problems, including HMs in soils that reduce biodiversity and create serious human health risks. Thus, it is important to determine and track status of soil HM concentrations in different anthropogenic land uses (LUs) in such countries to support critical environmental management decisions. Due to the absence of soil HM information for anthropogenically-affected soils across Sudan, this study conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 76 publications produced between 1996 and 2024 that reported on soil HM values in Sudan. Our work focused on 10 HMs (As, Cd, Co, Cr, Cu, Hg, Mn, Ni, Pb, and Zn) and 9 LUs (urban agricultural, industrial, roadside, tannery, waste dump, rural agricultural, coastal sediments, gold mining, and river sediments). The objective was to investigate HM levels and assess the potential ecological risks posed by soil HMs in the aforementioned LUs across the entire country. The averages for all HMs in all LUs combined exceeded their corresponding average common range (ACR) in soils, with Cd, Cr, Cu, Hg, Ni, and Pb surpassing their WHO/FAO limits. The averages for Cd and Hg in urban agricultural were ~158 and 340 times their ACRs and ~3 and 10 times the WHO/FAO limits, respectively. The averages for Cd, Cu, Hg, and Pb (gold mining) were 122, 21, 407, and 24 times, for Pb (industrial) 89 times, and for Cr (tannery) 20 times higher than the ACRs. The average FI, CF, IE, and I<sub>geo</sub> pollution indices indicated anthropogenic sources for all HMs except Mn in all LUs. The averages for single ecological risk (ER) for all HMs indicated low risks, whereas the potential ecological risk index (PERI) suggested considerable risk. The average PERI values were waste dump > industrial > gold mining > rural agricultural > river sediments > urban agricultural > roadside > tannery > coastal sediments. Industrial, gold mining and waste dump had extreme ecological risk values (PERI >900), with Cd and Hg contributing >70 % of the total PERI for waste dump and gold mining. Findings from this review and meta-analysis provide useful information on pollution levels and ecological risk posed by HMs on a national scale. We strongly recommend establishing national HM background concentrations for better understanding of HM pollution levels, taking into account the lithology and soil parent materials across the country. This can help guide future research priorities for soils in Sudan, specifically pollution control, management strategies and human health risk assessment.

## 1. Introduction

Soil is a sink for many environmental hazardous materials including heavy metals (HMs) (Xia et al., 2020). Soil pollution caused by HMs has drawn worldwide attention in recent decades because of its potential

impact on human health (Brevik et al., 2020). Preventing or remediating soil pollution is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goal 2 "zero hunger", as HM pollution can negatively affect food quality and yield, goal 3 "good health and well-being", and goal 15 "life on land" (Briassoulis, 2022; Lai et al.,

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## Pollution and Ecological Risk Assessment of Heavy Metals in Anthropogenically-Affected Soils of Sudan: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Magboul M.S. Siddig, Stephen B. Asabere, Abdullah S. Al-Farraj, Eric C. Brevik, Daniela Sauer

January 2025

This study compiles data from 76 publications over nearly three decades to assess heavy metal contamination in Sudanese soils. The findings reveal significant pollution, especially in urban, industrial, and mining areas, posing serious risks to food safety, biodiversity, and human health. By establishing a national-level baseline, the paper offers a foundation for future environmental policy, including remediation priorities, pollution control strategies, and human health risk assessments.

## Burden of Infectious Diseases in Sudan

Priya Venkatesan

November 2024

Conflict-driven displacement, collapsing health systems, and poor sanitation have triggered widespread

paper offers a multi-disease overview, showing how the spread of infection is directly linked to war-related disruptions to clean water, vaccination programmes, and disease surveillance. It underscores that Sudan's infectious disease crisis is not incidental, it's a predictable consequence of sustained systemic collapse.

### Burden of infectious diseases in Sudan

Aug 27, 2024, marked 500 days of violent conflict and civil war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, rival factions of the military government. Since then, the situation has only worsened: by Sept 16, more than an estimated 23,015 people had been killed, including a substantial number of civilians, and as of Oct 16 more than 11.3 million people had been displaced, with over 2.3 million fleeing to neighbouring countries, including Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia. The war has also caused severe food and water shortages and led to the collapse of health care, sanitation, and essential services, triggering a major and worsening humanitarian crisis. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noted at a press conference in September that an estimated 70-80% of health facilities were not fully functioning, and that the "Sudanese are suffering through a perfect storm of crises".

One of the major crises resulting from the conflict has been the alarming rise in multiple life-threatening infectious diseases in the region. Outbreaks of cholera, dengue fever, malaria, measles, poliomyelitis (polio), and rubella have all been reported, stemming from the destruction of the health and sanitation infrastructures, severe flooding, and a significant decline in vaccination rates and vector control measures during the ongoing conflict; national vaccination coverage has decreased to 50% (around 30% in active conflict zones), and an estimated 3-4 million children younger than 5 years are thought to be at risk from epidemic diseases. On Aug 12, a cholera outbreak was formally declared by Sudan's Ministry of Health and WHO following a wave of cases; as of Oct 1, around 17 600 cases of cholera had been confirmed, along with 546 associated deaths—a case fatality rate of over 3%. Earlier in 2024, a new emergence of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) was reported, having been detected in six wastewater samples in Port Sudan. Although vaccination campaigns against both cholera and polio are ongoing, they are hampered by security concerns and a lack of access.

The situation might be worsening still, as outbreaks of other infectious diseases such as Rift Valley fever and chikungunya have also been noted in Sudan. Additionally, outbreaks of infectious diseases endemic to Sudan are starting to be reported in surrounding countries where displaced refugees have fled. Cases of acute watery diarrhoea and hepatitis E have been noted in South Sudan, Chad, and Central African Republic, and the cVDPV2 strains noted in Sudan have been linked to strains detected in Egypt, South Sudan, and Yemen, highlighting the risk of pathogens spreading across borders. Ayman Ahmed (Institute of Endemic Diseases, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, Sudan) commented to *The Lancet Microbe*: "Several vector, food, and water-borne diseases like malaria, dengue, chikungunya, Rift Valley fever, and cholera are outbreaking in Sudan, influenced by the war-induced displacement, climate change, and severe collapse of health system. Currently, Sudan [is] at risk of emergence of mpox, Marburg virus [disease], and Ebola [disease], while exporting some of the locally endemic and highly fatal diseases to other countries, considering the high dynamics of animal and human populations between the affected countries and Sudan enhances the risk of introducing these outbreaks in the country, particularly [at] the surveillance system in Sudan is not operating [well] enough to detect them".

Huge increases in vaccination coverage against cholera, polio, measles, malaria, and other diseases, and increased disease surveillance and diagnostic capacity, are therefore urgently required. Tedros noted to the press that a scale-up in "disease surveillance...vaccination coverage...and a massive increase in finances from the international community to scale up the response" were needed. Ahmed added: "The biggest challenge for delivering vaccinations is the current structure and focus of [the] Ministry of Health, which seem to prioritise propaganda and visibility activities over delivering health care and public health services. [The] Ministry of Health should lead the development of a national health strategy that prioritises strengthening global health security rather than the current role as implementer for international donors according to their interest, which doesn't align with local urgent need".

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 For more on poliovirus in Sudan see <https://www.who.int/news/item/2024-10-01-sudan-2024>

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## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in a Conflict Area: A Cross-Sectional Study in South Kordofan, Sudan

Altea Perico  
 January 2025

WASH conditions across 33 villages in South Kordofan reveal widespread contamination of water sources, poor sanitation practices, and uneven hygiene behaviours. The conflict has severely disrupted infrastructure and access, leaving communities without safe water or the means to manage it effectively.



Pollution and ecological risk assessment of heavy metals in anthropogenically-affected soils of Sudan: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Magboul M.S. Siddig<sup>a,b,c</sup>, Stephen B. Ababere<sup>a</sup>, Abdullah S. Al-Farraj<sup>c</sup>, Eric C. Brevik<sup>d</sup>, Daniela Sauer<sup>a</sup>

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#### ARTICLE INFO

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#### ABSTRACT

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#### 1. Introduction

Soil is a sink for many environmental hazardous materials including heavy metals (HMs) (Siddig et al., 2023). Soil pollution caused by HMs has drawn worldwide attention in recent decades because of its potential

impact on human health (Brevik et al., 2020). Preventing or remedialting soil pollution is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goal 2 "zero hunger", as HM pollution can negatively affect food quality and yield, goal 3 "good health and well-being", and goal 15 "life on land" (Biswasulu, 2022; Lai et al.,

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# Protection & Education

Who Protects the Children and Women of Sudan?

*Lamia Mahmood, Maysoon Dahab, Nafisa Bedi, Zulfqar A Bhutta*

**August 2025**

Drawing on UN data, peer-reviewed research, and humanitarian reports, this article documents grave violations against women and children, including sexual violence, child recruitment, and attacks on schools and hospitals. It highlights how the conflict has stripped away basic protections, leaving survivors traumatised and underserved. The authors call for a coordinated response that centres child protection and gender inclusion across humanitarian planning, stressing that failure to act now could jeopardise an entire generation's well-being and future.

## Who protects the children and women of Sudan?

Georgie D Dominguez, Naeha Sharma, Lamia Mahmood, Maysoon Dahab, Nafisa Bedi, Zulfqar A Bhutta

Since April 15, 2023, civil war in Sudan has created a rapidly escalating humanitarian emergency, with more than 30.4 million people requiring assistance. This Health Policy synthesises emerging evidence on the conflict's particular impact on children and women and focuses on grave violations against children in times of war, including killing and maiming, recruitment of children, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access. Drawing from peer-reviewed studies, UN reports, and humanitarian field data, we highlight the scale and severity of these violations and the urgent need for a coordinated, child-centred, and gender-centred humanitarian response to ensure long-term recovery and accountability. Without an immediate end to violence, this conflict threatens the survival, development, and dignity of an entire generation in Sudan.

### Introduction

Sudan is no stranger to conflict. A prolonged conflict in Darfur that began in February, 2003 and morphed into a bloody civil war culminated in the separation of South Sudan on July 9, 2011. Although conditions were somewhat stable initially, following a military coup on Oct 25, 2021, unrest and political conflict between factions culminated in an open outbreak of armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15, 2023, and an unprecedented humanitarian and population displacement crisis followed.<sup>1</sup> The origin of the conflict is multifactorial and rooted in longstanding political instability (pans),<sup>2,3</sup> and the repercussions extend beyond Sudan's borders and threaten regional stability across east and north Africa.

Despite multiple international mediation attempts, durable conflict resolution remains elusive. The most recent ceasefire negotiations, in August, 2024, held under the auspices of the USA, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UN, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, failed due to the absence of both primary belligerents. Subsequent peace initiatives have lacked coordination and cohesion.<sup>4</sup>

In February, 2025, the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs—aligned with the SAF and supported by various international stakeholders—announced plans for a democratic transition. In response, the RSF and its allies proposed an alternative constitutional framework for parallel governance in regions under RSF control. Concurrently, the Democratic Civilian Coalition for the Revolutionary Forces (Stimoud), under the leadership of former Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok, declared its intention to establish an independent political roadmap.<sup>5,6</sup>

The African Union and its partners have continued to host inter-Sudanese political dialogue, engaging warring factions, local leaders, and civic actors in pursuit of a ceasefire<sup>7</sup>; however, the pathway to peace remains unclear. Meanwhile, the numbers of civilian deaths and displacements continue to rise, and women and children are disproportionately affected due to their heightened vulnerability in conflict-affected settings.

This Health Policy aims to collate available evidence on grave violations committed against children and women during the current Sudanese Civil War. The aim

is to inform actionable recommendations for humanitarian response to secure immediate physical and mental wellbeing and long-term development and peace in Sudan.

### Methods

#### Search strategy and selection criteria

For this Health Policy, we used a narrative review method, grounded in a structured search of grey literature, to collate available evidence on grave violations committed against children and women during the current Sudanese Civil War. Due to the volatile situation and constantly changing nature of the violence in Sudan, we expected the most recent and up-to-date information to be found in humanitarian literature as opposed to peer-reviewed

#### Key messages

- The dearth of quantitative data on the total number of children and women killed or harmed in the ongoing Sudanese conflict reveals crucial gaps in information and reporting in such contexts
- Available evidence reveals the widespread exposure of women and children to grave violations and traumatic displacement experiences that have led to direct and indirect health impacts and require immediate action
- Safeguarding women and children's health requires an immediate ceasefire, the provision of relief supplies, comprehensive medical and protection services, and greater advocacy to meet humanitarian funding needs
- To achieve long-term development and peace in Sudan, national and international actors must support the rebuilding of justice systems to enforce accountability, restore health systems to ameliorate the long-term harms of conflict, and establish robust monitoring and reporting systems to fill key information gaps
- Given the growing evidence of atrocities and consequences for children and families, world leaders should convene a pragmatic summit with key stakeholders to explore amendments to existing UN resolutions and international humanitarian laws, in order to ensure stronger protections and actions for children and women affected by armed conflict



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## Migration, Borders & Aid Politics

### Foreign Aid, Identities and Interests: Qatar and the UAE in Sudan

*Federico Donel and Altea Perico*

**November 2024**

Aid flows from Qatar and the UAE have shifted over three distinct political periods in Sudan: 2014–17, 2017–19, and post-2019. The analysis argues that these shifts reflect more than humanitarian concerns, they reveal deeper Gulf rivalries, security interests, and ideological agendas. Using a realist-constructivist lens, the paper

RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS [Check for updates](#)**Foreign Aid, Identities and Interests: Qatar and the UAE in Sudan**Federico Donelli <sup>a</sup> and Altea Pericoli <sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup>Università degli Studi di Trieste; <sup>b</sup>Lund University**ABSTRACT**

The entanglement of domestic and geopolitical dynamics with the evolution of the aid strategies of the Gulf States is particularly evident in the Horn of Africa (HOA), where the regional competition for exercising influence has affected the modalities of humanitarian and development interventions. A comparison of the foreign aid given by Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Sudan in the context of its political and humanitarian crisis during three different periods (2014-17; 2017-19; and post-2019) allows a better understanding of these dynamics. By adopting a neoclassical realist and constructivist approach, it highlights similarities and differences in the domestic factors at play, including the ideological and security dimension, in both donor and recipient countries, as well as their overlapping with the regional and international spheres, which determine aid strategies in terms of the geographical, channel and sectoral allocation of aid resources.

**KEYWORDS**

humanitarian aid; Qatar; United Arab Emirates; Sudan

In the post-Arab Spring era, there has been a significant increase in political and security interactions between Gulf and East African states. The expansion of the Middle East's geopolitical influence has transformed the Horn of Africa (HOA) into a new arena for competition among external actors. Existing research in this field has focused on security and political issues (Verhoeven 2018; Huliaras and Kalantzakos 2017; Mason and Mabon 2022), rather than on Gulf states' interventions as donors in this region.

Among the HOA countries, Sudan and Somalia have experienced the highest level of interaction with Middle Eastern states over the past 15 years. Sudan represents a case of prolonged humanitarian emergency caused by multiple crises where international and Gulf donors have operated following and developing their strategies and approaches. Against this background, this study addresses two research questions: *What are the main differences between Qatari and United Arab Emirates (UAE) approaches to foreign aid in Sudan, and what is the entanglement of transnational, domestic and international factors that have influenced their strategies?* To address these questions, this article uses the framework of neoclassical realism. Neoclassical realism is an approach to foreign policy analysis that seeks to understand international politics by taking into

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factions, and shape Sudan's political trajectory, raising critical questions about the role of donor politics in fragile states.

## Localisation & Recovery Models

### Empowering Communities: Self-Reliance Pilot in Khartoum

*Gersan Vasquez, Mohammed Elmurtada and  
Tenzin Manell*

June 2025

A self-reliance programme targeting 25 displaced women in Karari shows early success in boosting income, skills, and resilience. With a mix of small grants, mentorship, and business training, the pilot demonstrates how gender-sensitive, locally-led recovery initiatives can support long-term stability.



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