



Darfur's Healthcare System in Crisis

The Hidden Cost of Conflict

The war in Sudan has brought unparalleled damage to Darfur's healthcare infrastructure, leaving communities without vital medical services in a region already burdened by decades of conflict and neglect. The armed violence between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023 to date has ravaged hospitals scattered healthcare workers and ignited preventable disease outbreaks. This crisis exposes the heavy toll of conflict on the health and lives of Darfur's population, underscoring an urgent need for humanitarian intervention.

Over 80% of Darfur's hospitals are non-functional, while others, like the Turkish Hospital and Nyala Teaching Hospital in South Darfur, have been severely damaged. In West Darfur, 12 hospitals now lie in ruins, and 14 primary healthcare Centers in North Darfur have shut down, cutting off access to vital care for thousands. This isn't just an infrastructure crisis it's a life-threatening blow to millions relying on these services.

Darfur's health workforce has shrunk drastically, only 1,500 of 5,000 healthcare professionals have remained. With many killed and others displaced, those who have stayed work under dangerous conditions with very few supplies. They are struggling to meet demands, often with minimal support or protection, turning critical and specialized care into a scarce resource.

As healthcare systems crumble, preventable diseases are spreading unchecked. Measles, once controlled by vaccines, has surged, infecting over 3,200 people, mostly young children. Vaccination rates have plummeted below 30%, creating fertile ground for outbreaks. Cholera cases are also rising, with over 10,000 suspected cases reported. In Zamzam IDP camp alone, 897 cases have been recorded, surpassing WHO's emergency threshold, while ongoing outbreaks affect 288 overcrowded IDP settlements across Darfur.

With health services down and food shortages increasing, malnutrition rates have reached critical levels. All Darfur states now report Global Acute Malnutrition rates exceeding 15%, signaling a crisis. An estimated 180,000 children urgently need treatment for severe malnutrition, with a 42% increase in cases since the conflict's onset. Without immediate nutritional support, the most vulnerable children face heightened mortality risks.

The international response has been insufficient in the face of these overwhelming needs. Of the \$2.7 billion required for Sudan's health response, only 32% of funding has been received,

and over half of planned health interventions have been canceled due to security concerns. Humanitarian agencies reported severe access constraints, and 78% face significant challenges in delivering aid, putting additional strain on the already overextended healthcare system.

Darfur's healthcare crisis reflects not only the cost of war but a profound violation of humanitarian principles. Hospitals lie abandoned, disease runs rampant, and children are malnourished, all while medical staff grapple with an impossible task. Without swift and substantial intervention, Darfur risks losing the remnants of a healthcare system built over decades. The time to act is now—for every day of inaction brings more preventable suffering to those trapped in this crisis.

The Way Forward: Priorities for Action

Reversing Darfur's healthcare collapse demands urgent action and international solidarity. The following steps are essential:

1. **End** the arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, torture, and/or enforced disappearance of healthcare workers, volunteers, emergency rooms, and patients and respect their rights guaranteed under treaties ratified by Sudan.
2. **Compliance and Respect** for obligations under International human rights and humanitarian laws by Sudanese authorities.
3. **Protect** healthcare infrastructure by establishing neutral zones around functioning medical facilities to shield them from conflict.
4. **Support** healthcare workers and provide emergency resources and safety measures for displaced and active medical staff.
5. **Enable** humanitarian access that ensures the opening of safe corridors for the delivery of aid and medical supplies.
6. **Mobilize** Resources through launching immediate funding appeals and advocate for comprehensive support from international donors.

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