

World cannot continue to turn blind eye to Sudan as man-made famine is confirmed in Darfur camp.

August 2, 2024, Port Sudan - The recently published report by the Famine Review Committee has confirmed our worst fears: a man-made famine has taken hold of one of Darfur's largest displacement sites: Zamzam camp near Al Fasher, the besieged capital of North Darfur. Over recent months, conflict spiralled in the state and drove an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people fleeing to Zamzam, bringing the total population of the camp to over half a million. The camp's residents are now trapped in deprivation, unable to leave, farm or access food. Critically, they have been deprived from the aid they so desperately need.

Over 25 million people across Sudan are now facing severe acute food insecurity, with over 8.5 million people in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and 755,000 in IPC Phase 5. The humanitarian community has been warning for months that people, especially children, are dying due to hunger-related causes across Sudan, including in Zamzam. The confirmation of famine conditions in Zamzam camp only scratches the surface of a much broader catastrophe. Across Darfur, Kordofan, Khartoum, Al Jazira, our teams and local responders report stories of children dying of malnutrition, mothers barely surviving on one meal a day, eating boiled leaves and a handful of cereals. In Kalma camp, South Darfur, NGOs reported that 1 in every 4 children under 5 was acutely malnourished with some health facilities in the state reporting that between 4 to 5 children die each day from malnutrition related causes. In Central Darfur, in some areas over 90% of children under 5 suffer from acute malnutrition. The situation in Zamzam is the only one that the IPC could independently verify, but the lack of data hides the true extent of this crisis. If nothing changes, countless other communities across Sudan will starve to death amidst the world's indifference.

The conduct of the conflict parties is largely responsible for this historical crisis. Over the past 15 months of unabated conflict, blatant violations of international humanitarian law such as the shattering of essential infrastructure, the destruction of means of livelihood, and widespread obstructions of the delivery of humanitarian assistance have led to mass-scale starvation. Across entire areas of Khartoum, Al Jazira, Kordofan and Darfur, communities are receiving only a trickle of assistance due to conflict parties' refusal to allow aid at the scale and speed that is needed, through the appropriate corridors, and with the necessary safety guarantees. Complex approval processes mean that life saving food and nutrition commodities can take months to reach those most in need as medical supplies have been actively blocked from entering El Fasher by the warring parties.

At the same time, the international community has been unbearably slow to prevent a tragedy we knew was coming for months. The general apathy towards the suffering of the people of Sudan and lack of urgency in the humanitarian response have only exacerbated the situation. Seven months into the year the response has not even received a third of funding required to address the population's urgent needs and efficient modalities such as cash programming and support to local responders are still not receiving the investments necessary to bring the response to the scale required by the colossal needs

It is our collective responsibility to bring an end to this crisis. We call for the urgent roll out of the recommendations made by the Famine Review Committee, and emphasise;

To conflict parties

- All parties to the conflict must strictly adhere to their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. This includes ceasing all attacks against civilian objects necessary to food production and to people's livelihood - including the looting of agricultural assets and markets - to preserve the means of survival for affected populations.

- Re-instate non-objection to the use of the Adre crossing as it is the shortest and most reliable route to deliver humanitarian aid effectively to the areas worst affected by the crisis.
- Create and maintain humanitarian corridors into Khartoum, Al Jazira, Kordofan and Darfur to ensure continuous, unhindered and safe delivery of aid.
- Introduce emergency measures that ease bureaucratic and administrative procedures for the period of the famine response – including the removal of all restrictions on the transfer of medical supplies, food and nutrition commodities and replacement of cumbersome permits and project-level agreements.
- Ensure commercial supplies of basic items, including medical supplies, through improved safety along key routes and trading areas.

To country-based humanitarian community

- Prioritize funding disbursements to cash programming (e.g. Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance and Group Cash Transfers), as this modality quickly addresses food and other basic needs in the worst affected and hard-to-reach areas.
- Enhance UN coordination efforts to scale up the cash response. Promote and facilitate meaningful partnerships between UN agencies and key cash actors in Sudan for increased complementarity and efficiency of the response.
- Increase funding to local actors including Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs), women-led organisations and women first responders through channels that allow rapid disbursements and ensure their meaningful inclusion and leadership in the response,
- Implement a gender-responsive multi-sectoral response to the famine, including programming for sexual and reproductive health, protection and gender-based violence, given the disproportionate impact of the conflict on women and girls

To diplomats and donors

- Reconvene the international community at the earliest possible opportunity to scale-up efforts to bring about an end to the hostilities, address barriers to scaling up humanitarian response and push for collective action by the UN Security Council under UNSC Resolution 2417.
- Accelerate coordinated diplomatic efforts to push for unfettered humanitarian access using all crossline and cross-border routes from Chad and South Sudan – particularly the Adre crossing.
- Increase the access of mutual aid initiatives and other local responders to flexible and predictable funding through the removal of burdensome compliance processes and ensuring transparency in the amounts of funding delivered in support of local actors.
- Ensure that pledges made in Paris are dispersed urgently, prioritising funding to those with a functional presence in areas of highest needs to halt famine conditions and prevent deterioration across many other areas of Sudan.