



SUDANESE DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Snapshot Report of diaspora engagement
in Sudan 2023

INTRODUCTION

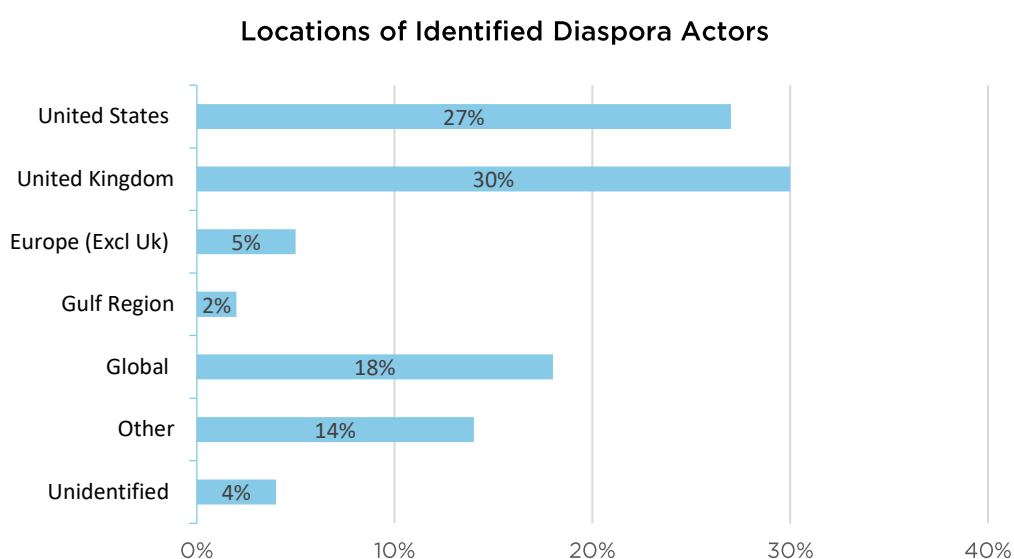
The sudden and devastating outbreak of conflict in Sudan on April 15th between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has since triggered an acute humanitarian crisis across most of the country, particularly in the capital city of Khartoum and the Darfur region. The increasingly difficult operational context on the ground in the most hard-hit areas has hindered – or even halted – necessary flows of humanitarian aid from many international organizations, resulting in the emergence of informal and grassroots support networks. Often spearheaded by local organizations, neighborhood committees, and diaspora groups, these networks have been able to respond to urgent humanitarian needs more rapidly across Sudan.

The Sudanese diaspora – estimated to total at least 4.5 million individuals globally – mobilized in the initial days of the war to share critical information on conflict conditions and, after several weeks, to provide resources to those looking to evacuate Sudan. In recent months, efforts of the diaspora have shifted to fundraising for the delivery of direct humanitarian aid – in coordination with local NGOs – to impacted communities, engaging in political advocacy in their countries of residence, and providing support to the more than 850,000 Sudanese who have fled to neighboring countries.

Although Sudan has long had an active diaspora community, particularly those who mobilized after the country's political turmoil in 2018, many of the diaspora actors engaged in responding to the current conflict are informal networks or groups that rapidly formed in the early weeks of the war. The emergence of these informal networks allowed for the diaspora to more quickly respond to humanitarian requests than more structured organizations. Now, as the conflict becomes prolonged, diaspora networks have begun to coordinate efforts amongst themselves, and to create coalitions with local and international partners to better respond to Sudan's pressing crisis.

OVERVIEW OF DIASPORA ACTORS

In research commissioned by DEMAC to better understand the Sudanese diaspora response to the ongoing crisis, a total of **57 diaspora actors** were identified.¹ The majority of them are based in either the United States (26.8% or n=15) or the United Kingdom (30.4% or n=17). The geographic breakdown of identified diaspora actors is included in Figure 1 below.

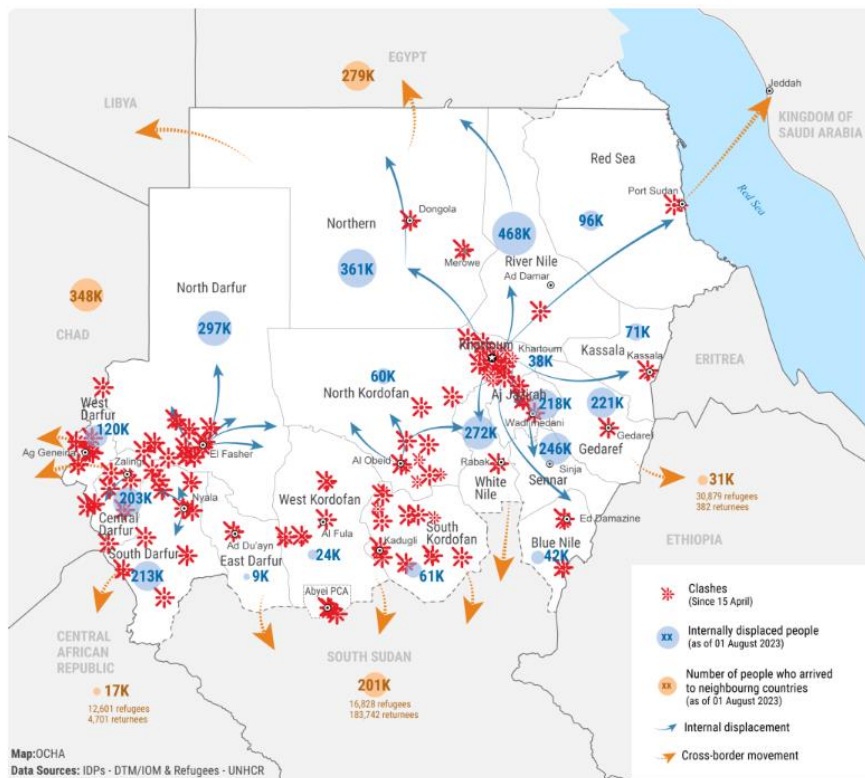


AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The volume of informal diaspora networks that have emerged since the start of the conflict and number of support initiatives that they have undertaken make it challenging to geographically map areas of intervention. However, a large number of diaspora-led or -supported efforts to provide physical aid in Sudan have concentrated delivery in one of several location types:

- 1.) the Khartoum metropolitan area
- 2.) hubs for internally displaced persons (IDPs) (for example, Wad Madani, Gedaref, and Port Sudan); and
- 3.) border regions (for example, Wadi Halfa and Adré).

¹ This only included diaspora actors that had a public, online presence and have been active since April 2023. There are several other informal diaspora groups that formed on private messaging apps or offline that have also responded to the crisis.



Displacement Map

This is likely due to the fact that either many diasporas have connections in the capital city and/or can collaborate with local partners who can operate in more secure locations outside of the major cities. However, a significant number of diaspora initiatives focus on resource/information-sharing, fundraising for mobile cash transfers, or providing pro bono services, such as legal or medical aid, which are not location-specific.

The most common areas of intervention supported by diaspora actors are:



Health

Either medical supplies or pro bono medical services for Sudanese inside Sudan and those who have been displaced to third countries. This also includes fundraising for mobile and emergency health clinics that emerged since the start of the conflict.



Advocacy

Leading or promoting political advocacy activities in their countries of residence including letters to political leaders, rallies or protests, information sessions on ongoing events in Sudan, and mass online campaigns to raise awareness of the conflict.



Information Sharing

Providing information or resources to support Sudanese evacuate the country, find secure lodging, connect with those providing medicine or basic supplies inside the country, and to facilitate mobile cash transfers.



Funding

Collaborating with local partners or organizations to raise funds for and deliver basic food supplies, water, medicine, or items for shelter. This also includes initiatives that have sought to support those inside Sudan, as well as those displaced in third countries, to find employment or livelihoods support.

EXAMPLES OF DIASPORA INITIATIVES

- **Sudan Telemedicine Emergency Program (STEP)** - To address the lack of accessible medical care during the conflict, Sudan's Federal Ministry of Health was supported by international organizations (Avicenna Health Institute, Minnesota Medical Co, and VSee USA) to provide virtual medical care using volunteer physicians from diaspora organizations in over 11 countries globally. Physical support was also provided in cooperation with Osman Digna Hospital (Red Sea) and Alkamleen Hospital (Gezira) in Sudan.
- **Safe Passages Initiative – Sudan** - A diaspora-supported group in Sudan developed the Amen mobile application in the early days of the conflict, which uses crowdsourced data to provide information in real-time on secure transport routes and access to nearby hospitals. The initiative has gained more than 400 volunteers and has raised more than \$20,000 since late April.
- **Home Tax Sudan** - A charity organization led by diaspora in Australia raised more than \$97,000 in donations from April 17th to June 2nd, spending approximately \$90,000 on delivery of material assistance, including food, water, shelter, and medication inside Sudan. The organization has collaborated with local partners Hanabneiho and Cairo/Sudan Aid.
- **Project ECHO** - A project housed out of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and partnering with local organizations and other diaspora organizations, such as the Sudanese American Physicians Association (SAPA), that has provided telemedicine support since the start of the war. Physicians conduct 20-30 telehealth sessions per day and SAPA has raised approximately \$2 million in medical aid in transit from Port Sudan.
- **Jobs4Sudan** - Nas al Sudan is an online, global group of Sudanese diasporas that established a central hub of job postings for individuals inside Sudan or those who have fled to third countries that are now seeking to regain their livelihoods. Started in May 2023, Jobs4Sudan lists job openings, connects Sudanese with professional mentors, and provides services to review CVs and cover letters.

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

The structure and functioning of diaspora actors and networks responding to the crisis in Sudan presents a number of strengths and opportunities for future engagement.

- 1.) **Connections with local communities:** Many diaspora actors either maintain strong connections with their home communities or are able to better communicate with local communities to both understand the needs on the ground and to identify relevant partners for aid delivery.
- 2.) **Understanding of logistical challenges:** Some of the primary operational challenges faced by international organizations in delivering programming or aid inside Sudan are logistical, namely transferring cash or funds and finding basic supplies (such as fuel). Due to their in-depth knowledge and understanding of logistical constraints and alternative methods to, for example, transfer funds to individuals inside Sudan, diaspora networks are able to more quickly and effectively circumvent logistical challenges to delivery.
- 3.) **Strong volunteer networks:** Active community mobilization inside Sudan has allowed diaspora networks to identify and seek support from volunteers across the country to provide transport, deliver material aid, and distribute cash transfers, among other tasks. While international organizations face challenges mobilizing staff due to safety and bureaucratic concerns, diaspora networks rely on large volunteer networks to rapidly respond to humanitarian needs.
- 4.) **Technical expertise:** Many Sudanese diaspora have strong professional backgrounds in essential services, such as healthcare, legal services, and political advocacy. Not only are they better networked with their home communities in Sudan, but they have the technical skills to implement high-need humanitarian programming.

ABOUT THIS SNAPSHOT REPORT

DEMAC has been awarded an activation fund by the H2H Network. Through the ARISE consortium with H2H members Internews and CDAC, DEMAC will contribute to enhancing communication and engagement with conflict-affected communities in Sudan. As a member of this consortium, DEMAC is leading a mapping and Real-Time Review on the Sudanese diaspora humanitarian response to the ongoing crisis in Sudan. This brief is a short snapshot of the initial mapping.

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