

Assessment

Adverse Impact of the Triple Crisis on Food Insecurity and Livelihoods in Sudan

An Analysis of the Food, Energy, and Financial Crises and Their Effects on Resident Populations, Internally Displaced Persons, and Host Communities
– Implications for the SDG Roadmap

January, 2025

The assessment team has grouped the following conclusions into eight categories: General, Needs, Food Crisis, Energy Crisis, Financial Crisis, Impact, Crosscutting, and Coping Mechanism and Resilience.

A. General

1. The three crises constituting the triple crisis were considered among the most important crises facing Sudan, and their causes and effects are closely interrelated. However, **security and political stability were mentioned as key preconditions for effectively addressing the triple crisis.**
2. The Ukraine war and the April 2023 crisis highlighted—even reinforced—the more structural problems caused by the triple crisis regarding the growing dependence on food and energy imports as well as the need for political stability and strong policy development.
3. Although the food crisis is the most urgent of the three crises, the energy crisis is also significant, as higher oil and energy prices impact all economic sectors, including food production, availability, and access.
4. The triple crisis, and even more the April 2023 crisis, coupled with political instability, has severely affected Sudan's economy, reducing tax revenues and hindering the government's ability to create and implement effective policies.

On January 8, 2025, UNICEF and i-APS held a workshop to discuss the report's findings and recommendations. Here are some key testimonies:

Dr. Fatima Mustafa Khalifa

Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, Red Sea University

I commend the efforts put into this report and the discussions during the workshop, particularly on critical topics like financing, livelihoods, and food security. To enhance the study, I would kindly recommend incorporating the food industry in future workshops, as it plays a crucial role in the value added of the agricultural sector considering the substantial potential for local production.



Dr. Siddiq Abdullah Talha

Director of Energy Policy and Planning

Key issues such as food security, energy, water resources, financing, and the livelihoods of internally displaced persons (IDPs) during conflict were thoughtfully addressed during this workshop. The recommendations presented offer a solid foundation for future policymaking and development initiatives. I urge the government to adopt these recommendations to guide Sudan's recovery and development efforts.



Dr. Moussa Abdalla Saeed

Associate Teacher, Faculty of Economics, Red Sea University

This workshop successfully addressed critical issues such as food security and migration. Dividing participants into smaller groups added great value, fostering in-depth discussions and generating actionable recommendations. I am optimistic about seeing similar initiatives in the future and extend my heartfelt gratitude to all contributors and organizers for their efforts led by UNDP and MoFEP.



B. Needs

5.



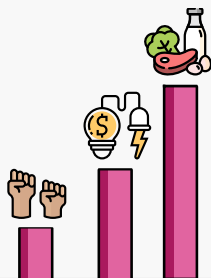
Both the ongoing triple crisis and sudden events, such as the **Ukraine conflict and the April 2023 crisis**, have worsened food security in Sudan by negatively impacting food consumption. While the April 2023 crisis was abrupt and brought additional challenges, including ongoing hostilities and the effective “disappearance” of Khartoum, it reinforced broader shifts in food consumption that also result from long-term crises like the triple crisis.

6.

As a coping mechanism, people are cutting back on more expensive, nutritious foods such as **dairy, meat, fish, fruits, and vegetables**. Initially, they compensate by consuming more dry foods like cereals and, ideally, pulses for protein. However, in cases where fresh produce was already scarce or absent from their diet, this reduction leads to greater reliance on cheap, low-nutrient foods or an overall decrease in food consumption.

7.

Although the April 2023 crisis reduced people's access to their needs, the fundamental nature of those needs did not significantly change from the structural needs initially caused by the triple crisis.



C. Food Crisis

8.

Sudan's growing dependence on food, especially wheat imports, makes it vulnerable to global food price increases, which could be partially offset by import substitution.

9.

The structural increase in food insecurity in Sudan due to the triple and April 2023 crises has reduced access and availability of food at affordable prices.

10.

The short-term food insecurity caused by the April 2023 crisis and the broader triple crisis is primarily driven by limited access to food, stems mainly from high food prices and diminished purchasing power. This situation suggests that cash-based interventions would be the most effective response.

11.



Household food production in rural areas has helped mitigate some of the negative impacts of the triple crisis by making these households less vulnerable to rising food prices.

12.

Farming in Sudan carries high financial risks, prompting an increasing number of rural community members to abandon agricultural livelihoods.

D. Energy Crisis

13.

The triple crisis or energy crisis could encourage a societal switch to cleaner energies. However, since the April 2023 crisis, governmental stimulation programs have been on hold, and the environmental impact has been mainly negative, with communities increasingly using wood and charcoal.

14.



The “disappearance” of Khartoum as a capital created a gap in markets and the processing capacity of agricultural produce, which resulted in excesses and then possible food losses at the state level.

15.

Rising fuel prices and their volatility **hinder agricultural livelihood planning and investment.**

E. Financial Crisis

16. The financial crisis is closely linked to Sudan's growing dependence on food and energy imports, which put pressure on the SDG, especially because hard currency revenues from oil exports have declined over the years.

17. Sudan's growing reliance on imports, coupled with a weak exchange rate, makes it highly vulnerable to sudden price hikes and inflation. This impact has been further exacerbated at the community level by the removal of oil and wheat subsidies.

18.



Persistent high inflation from the financial crisis is eroding community members' purchasing power, as salaries remain stagnant due to government budget constraints and low business productivity. As a result, businesses struggle to pass inflation-driven costs onto customers without jeopardizing their long-term viability.

19. The availability and, hence, the use of financial services is low and limited to banks, while financial services that could encourage business development or reduce the financial risks of farming—for example, insurance, microfinance, and government support mechanisms—are unavailable or are unaffordable.



The workshop held in Port Sudan on January 8, 2025.

F. Impact

20. Food access for the urban population was severely impacted by the nonpayment of government salaries and reduced activity in the private sector.

21. The April 2023 crisis significantly reduced qualitative food intake (perishable and nutrient-rich foods at affordable prices), especially in urban areas, due to the collapse of market supply chains. This drastically reduced the consumption of groceries, especially fresh items like dairy, meat, fruit, and vegetables.

22.



Although rural areas struggled with food consumption and service availability, urban averages mask significant disparities among different urban populations. This also highlights the existence of a highly vulnerable group of urban poor who were severely impacted by the April 2023 crisis.

23. Food availability was negatively affected by underdeveloped interstate supply lines and market trade modalities, which became more apparent in the April 2023 crisis and the related “disappearance” of Khartoum as a centralized hub.

24.



The April 2023 crisis had a profound psychological impact on displaced populations, driven by the war, the stress of displacement, and prolonged stays with relatives. Additionally, respondents in Gedaref reported high incidences of gender-based violence.

G. Crosscutting

Safety concerns

25.




The large influx of IDPs was cited as the most significant impact of the April 2023 crisis and is already contributing to—or is expected to contribute to—social tensions due to competition for livelihood opportunities and rising prices of housing and food.


26. The influx of IDPs puts pressure on communal services and creates significant challenges for both the host communities and the IDPs.

27. Many IDPs stay in shelters unsuited for longer-term stays, which creates significant challenges for both the host communities and the IDPs, exposing them to health and protection risks.

28. Most IDPs in the states come from urban areas and have little to no experience with agriculture, highlighting **the need for non-agricultural livelihood opportunities to help them (temporarily) sustain themselves in their areas of displacement.**

Migration

29.  Migration resulting from the triple crisis mainly occurred for economic reasons, such as unemployment, and follows generic patterns: rural to urban areas, periphery areas to the capital (Khartoum), and, on an international level, from poorer to richer countries (in the Gulf).

30.  The April 2023 crisis reversed domestic migration patterns, as former economic migrants returned to their areas of origin—from the capital to the periphery or from urban to rural areas—due to security concerns and the loss of household income sources.


31. The April 2023 crisis further intensified international migration trends already worsened by the triple crisis, **accelerating the brain drain of skilled workers** leaving Sudan.


32. The April 2023 crisis suddenly turned the three surveyed states from net exporters of domestic migrants into net receivers of domestic migrants. This created massive challenges in terms of accommodating these IDPs in regions that have traditionally been less developed (except Gedaref) and with limited governmental capacity at the state level.



Gender

33. School closures not only disrupt children's education but also **add strain to household dynamics**, with women shouldering the greatest burden.

34.  The prolonged hosting of IDPs, particularly relatives, places additional strain on households, with women bearing the brunt of the burden as they are often at home and expected to accommodate the guests.

35.  Although respondents self-reported that the triple crisis and the April 2023 crisis affected men and women similarly, the data shows that women are more vulnerable due to limited access to livelihood opportunities and sociocultural constraints. Additionally, women and girls face heightened risks of gender-based violence, domestic tensions, and other gender-specific impacts, including forced and early marriage.

H. Coping Mechanism and Resilience

36. Most households rely on a single, non-agricultural income, leaving them highly vulnerable to economic downturns caused by various crises, especially in the absence of social safety nets.

37. Medicines are increasingly imported and, therefore, expensive, **making “saving on health expenses (medicines)” a common coping mechanism** for community members, which **negatively affects their health conditions.**

38. Despite the challenges of the triple crisis and the April 2023 crisis, **most respondents have avoided using the most damaging coping strategies.** However, concerns remain about the sustainability of this situation due to **high needs and the prevalent use of food- and health-related coping strategies.**

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