

Research Report

Security Council

Addressing the famine in Sudan

Introduction

Famine is a human tragedy of the highest order — one that threatens millions of lives and exacerbates regional instability and global security. The protracted situation in Sudan has resulted in a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis, characterized by high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, especially in areas where conflict is happening.

The famine in Sudan is closely linked to decades of armed conflicts, political instability, climate change impacts and economic inequality. This has compounded the risk for millions whose lives are now, women, children and displaced people. Meanwhile, agricultural production has been disrupted, critical infrastructure destroyed and humanitarian access restricted, exacerbating one of the greatest famines in world history which threatens both the stability of Sudan and international peace.

Pursuant to its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council acknowledges that responding to famine in Sudan is first and foremost a humanitarian issue but also one fundamentally linked to conflict prevention and resolution. In this report, the Council lays out detailed assessments of its findings on what happened, where response mechanisms have fallen short and actionable recommendations to reduce the crisis as well as avoid recurrences of such moments in history.

Definitions of Key Terms

Acute food Insecurity

A situation in which populations face food deprivation that threatens their lives or livelihoods, regardless of the causes, context or duration

Ceasefire

A temporary suspension of fighting. Usually a method to rebuild crucial infrastructure or replenish on essential needs

Famine

An extreme scarcity of food or other consumable products

Malnutrition

A condition resulting from insufficient intake of essential nutrients, proteins or other vitamins, leading to health problems

Non Governmental Organization (NGOs)

A non-profit organization that operates independently of any government, typically one whose purpose is to address a social or political issue

General Overview

The famine in Sudan is one of the consequences of the current Sudanese civil war. Prior to this, there were two other famines, in 1993 and in 1998. The general overview will consist of several parts, addressing the history and the current situation respectfully.

Ongoing Sudan Civil War

Sudan in itself is a very ethnically diverse nation, having suffered from a noticeable amount of ethnic, religious and resourceful conflicts and conquests from foreign parties. In 1821, Sudan was conquered by Egypt, which ended in 1881 by Muhammad Ahmad due to a religious war. One of his ideals was to create an Islamic and National nation, which is still one of the fundamental principles of the official Sudanese government, being a nation with Islam as its major religion. Sudan became a British colony in 1899, due to it being a part of Egypt, which was colonized by the British Empire, until it gained its independence in 1956. Following its independence, there have been 19 military coup attempts, the most out of any African nation. Because of this, Sudan is mostly ruled by a military dictatorship, with short intervals of parliamentary democracies.

The current Sudanese civil war is between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and other Sudanese politicians with their own factions. Essentially two military forces against one another. The Security Council must be alarmed at any point of time, since the sieges within the civil war may have rapid developments. There have been attempts to halt these engagements, such as the Treaty of Jeddah on the 6th of May 2023. These attempts have ultimately been neglected and therefore failed to bring a ceasefire between the involved parties. Because of the conflicts, civilians have often been displaced or taken refuge in neighboring countries, including the Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan.

Famine

The Sudanese famine is caused by the displacements of civilians in the aforementioned paragraph. Approximately 25.6 million Sudanese civilians are suffering from acute food insecurity, according to the World Food Organization, 3.6 million of which are children. That means that more than half of the entire Sudanese population is suffering from malnutrition and other diseases which are a consequence of a lack of sufficient food supplies. These numbers are growing by the minute, since there are still military operations ongoing in the country. Because of this, civilians move to other locations, abandoning their farms and other agricultural contributing locations as a direct consequence. This leads to crops being insufficiently taken care of with them dying from drought because of the lack of water and the extreme weather conditions of the Sahara desert.

However, the minister of agriculture, Abubakr El Bishri, denied that there is an ongoing famine in the country and that any supplies surpassing the Sudanese borders are for illegally transported weapons and equipment, suspecting that nations are supporting Sudanese parties in the civil war. Because of this, humanitarian aid is being underfunded by the Sudanese government, which is at the cost of millions of civilians.

The RSF forces are also actively burning crops, looting warehouses and restricting border access to any foreign aid services, which RSF forces denied, blaming the Sudanese military for restricting aid, according to a United States envoy to Sudan. There is still instability within the ranks of the RSF, therefore the instability within the organization is on a measurable level, which makes statements made by those forces less trustworthy and more uncertain.

Foreign Aid

There are many parties contributing to rebuilding Sudan as what it used to be, including the agricultural sector. The United States, for example, has given more than \$315 million to Sudan and neighboring countries taking refugees. There are also many Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) taking action, such as collecting donations, to help organizations such as the Red Cross, and UNICEF undertake action in regions where famine is at its highest. Due to these actions, the international community is slowly, but surely getting closer to solving this crisis, but the Sudanese government has yet to find a way to compromise past conflicts and entertain future endeavours for the upcoming years.

Major Parties Involved

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

The Sudanese Armed Forces is the official military of Sudan. They are currently undergoing a civil war between several parties, in which they are the current government being represented at international events. The SAF was involved in many historical wars, including World War Two, and the other Sudanese Civil Wars. The military tactics used by the SAF are usually the main reason why many civilians are taking refuge in other places, mostly neighbouring countries.

Rapid Support Forces (RAF)

The Rapid Support Forces used to be controlled by the official Sudanese government, but they soon turned into a paramilitary branch with its goal to gain control over Sudan. The RSF forces are being alleged of several actions that are increasing the amount of famine across the entire nation as mentioned in the General Overview. Because of this, many organizations across the international community condemn the RAF forces for their alleged actions.

Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N)

The SPLA-N is the army of the movement that is derived from the former South Sudanese independence movement, followed by the 2011 independence vote. The SPLA-N operates mainly in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions, fighting against the Sudanese government. Their presence exacerbates insecurity, making agricultural activities dangerous and displacing farmers.

Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM)

The SLM is similar to the SPLA-N, with its only difference being formed in Darfur instead of being derived from the South Sudanese independence movement. It shares the same goals and have the same presence as the RAF and SPLA-N, but they are still opposed to the rest.

World Food Programme (WFP)

The WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing basic necessities in places where food is scarce and urgent. The organization is actively helping Sudanese civilians in areas that are being defined with a famine. They are, however, still facing challenges, since there is still ongoing violence within the region.

United States of America

The United States has donated the most amount of financial needs to the Sudanese government with the hopes of decreasing the famine rate across the entire nation.

Timeline of Key Events

Pre-2011

- 2003-2005: The Darfur conflict begins, leading to widespread violence, displacement, and food insecurity. The conflict causes significant disruption to agricultural activities in the region.
- 2011: South Sudan gained independence from Sudan, resulting in the loss of oil revenue for Sudan and contributing to economic instability.

2012

- February 2012: Fighting between government forces and the SPLA-N intensifies in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, leading to increased displacement and food shortages.

2013

- December 2013: Political turmoil in South Sudan spills over into violence, leading to further instability in the region and affecting food security in border areas.

2014

- 2014: The United Nations declares a humanitarian emergency in Sudan, citing severe food insecurity in various regions, particularly in Darfur and South Kordofan.

2016

- June 2016: The WFP reports that over 4.5 million people are in need of food assistance in Sudan, with malnutrition rates rising significantly among vulnerable populations, particularly children.

2017

- April 2017: The UN warns that nearly 5 million people face severe food insecurity in Sudan, exacerbated by conflict, displacement, and economic challenges.

2018

Security Council

- 2018: An increase in violence in Darfur and Kordofan leads to a significant rise in the number of displaced people, further straining humanitarian resources and food availability.

2019

- April 2019: Protests against President Omar al-Bashir lead to his ousting. The political upheaval results in temporary hopes for humanitarian improvement but does not immediately resolve the ongoing conflicts.
- October 2019: The transitional government in Sudan, formed after al-Bashir's removal, begins to address humanitarian issues but struggles with ongoing conflict and economic challenges.

2020

- April 2020: The COVID-19 pandemic complicates humanitarian efforts in Sudan, leading to increased food insecurity as economic conditions worsen and access to aid becomes more challenging.
- October 2020: The UN estimates that around 9.6 million people face severe food insecurity, marking one of the highest levels of need in recent years.

2021

- July 2021: Armed clashes between SAF and RSF escalate, particularly in Darfur, resulting in increased displacement and further disruptions to agriculture and humanitarian access.
- December 2021: Following a military coup in October, humanitarian conditions deteriorate. The UN reports that approximately 14 million people (one-third of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance.

2022

- February 2022: The UN declares a "humanitarian catastrophe" in parts of Sudan, with 8 million people suffering from acute food insecurity, marking a critical point in the famine crisis.
- August 2022: The WFP warns that 18 million people are projected to face acute food insecurity, with millions in need of emergency assistance as the situation worsens.

2023

- March 2023: Renewed conflict in Darfur leads to a significant increase in displacement and further food shortages, with humanitarian access severely restricted.
- August 2023: The UN and other humanitarian organizations call for urgent international assistance as reports indicate that up to 20 million people are facing crisis levels of food insecurity, with many at risk of famine.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issues

There have been several attempts to solve the civil war, since it's the main cause of the famine in the first place. There have been numerous attempts for ceasefires to be implemented, but they have been neglected every time there is an agreement by one of the parties in the civil war. Throughout history, there have been many documents and previous agreements, which have stopped previous civil wars and have led to the independence of South Sudan. This issue, on the other hand, is one of the most complex challenges the world currently faces and therefore there have not been many concrete solutions to the issue.

In 2020 the Juba Peace Agreement was signed between the Sudanese transitional government and several rebel groups, but the challenges of the implementation of this agreement have persisted, making no impact on the issue as a whole. However, the WFP is currently sending aid, along with many other organizations for the famine to not continue spreading to other parts of Sudan or possibly refugee camps in neighbouring nations.

Possible Solutions

The Security Council has some really difficult negotiations to conduct in order to satisfy the needs of every party. There have been attempts to implement a ceasefire, but they have all been neglected. Creating a more concrete resolution on a ceasefire would be the only option for the conflict to get closer to ending.

Another viable, but risky option is to have a peacekeeping force sent to Sudanese territory. This must be thought about very carefully, however, since a peacekeeping force would be open to rebel violence and possibly more casualties overall. Creating a task force or peacekeeping force with specified conditions, instructions and education is necessary for the situation to not escalate any further. If this is thought of well, the situation in Sudan can suddenly become a whole lot more stable.

Bibliography

De Waal, A. (2024, August 25). *Sudan war: Famine rages as peace talks fall short yet again.*

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c623levzxnjo>

Famine confirmed in Sudan's North Darfur, confirming UN agencies worst fears. (n.d.).

unicef.org.

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/famine-confirmed-sudans-north-darfur-confirming-un-agencies-worst-fears>

Famine in Sudan: WFP calls for unfettered access to hunger hotspots to save lives | World Food Programme. (2024, August 1). UN World Food Programme (WFP).

<https://www.wfp.org/stories/famine-sudan-wfp-calls-unfettered-access-hunger-hotspots-save-lives>

Hunger in Sudan: How (and why) hundreds of thousands are facing famine. (2023, September 27). <https://concernusa.org/news/hunger-in-sudan/>

Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. (2024, April 15). *Threat of food crisis in Sudan: potentially the biggest famine in decades.* News Item | Government.nl.

<https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2024/04/15/threat-of-food-crisis-in-sudan-potentially-the-biggest-famine-in-decades>

Sudan faces one of the worst famines in decades, warn UN experts. (n.d.). ohchr.org.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/sudan-faces-one-worst-famines-decades-warn-un-experts>

SUDAN: Rapid deterioration leaves 25.6M people in high levels of acute food insecurity, 14 areas at risk of Famine | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. (n.d).

<https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-104/en/>

The Economist. (2024, August 29). Anarchy in Sudan has spawned the world's worst famine in 40 years. *The Economist*.

https://www.economist.com/briefing/2024/08/29/anarchy-in-sudan-has-spawned-the-worlds-worst-famine-in-40-years?utm_medium=cpc.adword.pd&utm_source=google&ppccampaignID=18151738051&ppcadID=&utm_campaign=a.22brand_pmax&utm_content=conversion.direct-response.anonymous&gad_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAADf4AbY9uqmUoDqd7hx1xxOEXQ2uR&gclid=CjwKCAiA3ZC6BhBaEiwAeqfvypJSOnuTXPRw1dD8LHvHYJmsWzxNuzlrAbmEn7YLHa0mnA65dBLYpxoCp8IQAvD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds