

Position Paper: The Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan - A Call for Urgent and Principled Action

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1. Overview of the Crisis: Scale and Nature

Since April 2023, Sudan has faced one of the world's most devastating humanitarian crises. The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has resulted in over **12 million people displaced**, with more than **half of the population facing acute food insecurity**. The violence is characterized by widespread atrocities, including ethnically targeted killings, starvation, and the systematic use of **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** as a weapon of war.

The conflict is a regionalized struggle for power and resources, with devastating consequences for civilians. Humanitarian access is severely hampered by bureaucratic impediments from all warring parties, leaving civilians in Darfur, Kordofan, and Khartoum trapped and unprotected. A principled and proactive approach is urgently needed to push for unhindered access.

2. Critical Humanitarian Challenges

A. Protection Failure and SGBV

The conflict has led to a profound protection failure, particularly for women and children. The explosion of SGBV is a direct result of the armed conflict, requiring

immediate and specialized attention. Accountability for these crimes is non-negotiable to deter further atrocities and provide justice for victims.

B. Refugee Support and Resilience

Millions have fled, including many who have reached the Netherlands. As Executive Director of the SRO, I observe daily that Sudanese refugees are trapped in asylum centers without legal status, unable to work or support their families. This forced idleness deepens trauma and dependency.

The ability for refugees to work is a vital humanitarian lifeline. One person with a job in Europe can support a family of three or four in Sudan, providing a critical source of aid and reducing dependency on international assistance. Local Sudanese civil society and grassroots organizations, like SRO, are filling critical gaps but are severely under-resourced.

3. Key Recommendations for the Dutch Government

The Dutch government and Parliament must prioritize the protection of civilians and take immediate, effective political action.

Area	Recommendation	Rationale
1. Immediate Aid & Access	Rapidly increase urgent humanitarian aid (food, water, medical care) and ensure the establishment of safe corridors and emergency operations.	The situation is urgent; effective political choices can save lives. A principled approach is needed to overcome access difficulties imposed by all warring parties.
2. Protection & Accountability	Demand and support accountability for war crimes, especially SGBV. Ensure sufficient resources for the Fact-Finding Mission and support an official referral of RSF leaders to the International Criminal Court (ICC) .	Accountability is crucial to deter further atrocities and provide justice for victims.
3. Refugee Policy	Ensure safe routes and fast-track asylum procedures for Sudanese refugees, using the procedures for Ukrainian refugees as a comparable example. Allow Sudanese refugees to work to support their families in Sudan.	Providing the right to work is a cost-effective, empowering, and vital form of humanitarian aid for families both in the Netherlands and in Sudan.
4. Long-Term Response	Advocate for long-term, multi-annual, un-earmarked, and flexible funding for development combined with humanitarian interventions, focusing on the crucial role of local organizations and host communities.	Short-term, ad-hoc funding is insufficient for the protracted nature of the crisis and the need to build resilience.

Conclusion

The crisis in Sudan is a human-made catastrophe that continues to unfold in silence. The Netherlands—through its moral standing and humanitarian tradition—can help change that trajectory. By focusing on protection, access, and meaningful inclusion of Sudanese voices, Dutch leadership can contribute to saving lives and restoring hope.

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(Note: This paper is based on information provided by the Sudanese Refugee Organisation (SRO) and publicly available reports from the UN, ICC, and Human Rights Watch.)