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Sudan, War in Sudan

**Political Causes of Starvation in Sudan**

Living a life where one is not in a constant state of war is something the people of Sudan cannot say. A country where soldiers are not killing the women and children in their community, depriving them of healthy and nutritious foods, and bombing their homes, schools, and hospitals are all things Sudanese people can only imagine. The main issue is tackling systemic political issues; causing thousands of families in Sudan to go hungry. Ongoing starvation and malnutrition can be resolved by an end to their civil war and aid from foreign countries.

With a population of forty-nine million, Sudan is mainly land-locked, except for the Red Sea which is connected to Sudan’s northeastern coastline. Sudan is a geographically flat and featureless plain with 84.2% of the land being permanent pasture. The north is dominated by desert. The climate is mainly hot and dry with arid deserts. Its main water source is the Nile River which runs straight through Sudan then splits mid-way into the Blue and White Nile River (“Sudan”). Sudan’s main economic sector is agriculture, making up 80% of its economy. Its major crops consist of sugar cane, sorghum, whole grains, and milk from both cow and goat. Sudan’s main industries include oil and cotton ginning (“Sudan”). Environmentally, Sudan is dealing with many water issues such as water pollution, inadequate supplies of portable water, and scarcity of water. This has contributed to the country’s periodic droughts which is leading it into desertification and deforestation (“Sudan”).

An average Sudanese family consist of around seven people. This is because of their total fertility rate, which is 4.54, which has dropped from their first census; seven children per woman. The fall in TFR is contributed to improvements in education and participation in labor forces. Sudan has an 2.71% national population increase rate. With all these mouths to feed it puts immense pressure on Sudan’s already weak agricultural sector. An average Sudanese meal consist of a large communal tray served with meat, salads, and sauce dishes. These meals are made up of ingredients like vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and meat. In the workforce, the gender balance is moderately fair although women are seen more prevalent in rural areas working physical labor such as farmers. While men are migrating to urban areas in search of work that contribute to the industry and service sectors of Sudan’s economy.

Sudan’s current problem is the hunger crisis looming over them. Their current civil war. The cause of Sudan’s civil war is between the RSF and SAF who are fighting in Sudan. The SAF or the Sudan Armed Forces are the military forces of Sudan run by current commander-in-chief General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan. The Rapid Support Force also known as the RSF is a paramilitary group run by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. Originally, The RSF was a militia that fought in the 2000s conflict in western region of Sudan, Darfur. During this time, the RSF were being used by al-Bashir who created the RSF, to help the army eliminate the rebellion wreaking havoc over Darfur. Over time the militia racked up accusations of genocide, war crimes, and many other crimes against humanity (AlJazeera). By 2015 the Human Rights Watch considered them as “men with no mercy” (Al Jazeera).

The cause of tension between the army and pro-democracy groups are the attempts to demand the RSF’s integration back into regular forces. However, the RSF have denied and resisted because they would lose their power. Both al-Burhan and Dagalo have also been debating over who would be the commander-in-chief of the Sudanese military during the integration period. The RSF thinks that with commander-in-chief they should also be the civilian head of state, which the SAF is declining (AlJazeera). Although the issue mainly lies with the RSF, the SAF and RSF have both been accused of ransacking homes, and ethnic cleansing (CNN).

Challenges Sudan is facing are the obstacles being put up by both warring parties. One example would be the attempts at humanitarian assistance has been halted because authorities completely revoked permission from truck convoys coming in from Chad. These convoys trucks have been bringing in food, medical assistance, and other necessities that the people in Darfur have no access too. Since August of 2023 they have been able to assist over one million people and had the WFP plans to upscale their support.

This civil war crisis in Sudan is causing both local and global impacts. The main local impact caused by the civil war is the hunger crisis. Currently in Sudan up to eighteen million people are facing food insecurity, this makes up one third of Sudan’s population. Studies have shown around 220,00 children could die in the upcoming month from malnutrition (INDIATV). The other local impact of this war is human rights being violated. Such as the ethnic cleanse towards the Masalit people who are in the capitol of West Darfur. The ethnic cleanse is being ran by the RSF however, there have been reports of the SAF supporting these acts of ethnic cleansing. Another violation is what CNN calls ‘Stomach-churning findings’, such as evidence stating girls as young as fourteen are being raped, RSF snipers are targeting young children and pregnant woman. As well as the lootings of schools, hospitals, markets, and even humanitarian assets. Which are being destroyed and bombed by the two warring parties (CNN).

The biggest global impact caused by this civil war is the refugee crisis that boomed with the start of this war. Up to eight million people have been forced to flee. However, only 1.5 million refugees have poured into neighboring countries. The main countries include Egypt, Chad, and South Sudan. With a flood of hundreds of thousands of people coming into their borders, these countries are entering their breaking points. Not only are they lacking the proper medical necessities, but they are also lacking food. Seven million people in South Sudan and three million people in Chad are facing dire hunger. This is caused by the inaccessibility to humanitarian assistance (INDIATV). Not only is this refugee crisis worsening Chad and South Sudan’s already declining food security, but it is also bringing unwanted conflict to these countries’ borders. For instance, Chad has been avoiding bullets while generously letting people into their country. Around 140 thousand Chadian migrant workers have had to flee back to Chad due to the conflict.

Civil war impacts food insecurity in several ways. Civil war impacts food insecurity both directly and indirectly. Directly would be how it effects the day to day lives of people in or near Sudan, while indirectly would be the effects this Civil war has on people outside of the country. The first way this Civil war is indirectly affecting the people of Sudan is the fact that nothing is being exported out of the country. So, countries like the UAE and China which make up to 43% and 16% of export partners are not getting such goods like gold, crude petroleum, oil seeds, ground nuts, and cotton imported into their countries. (Economy). In turn, Sudan is unable to receive goods like raw sugar, wheat, refined petroleum, garments, and jewelry from China or the UAE which make up 22% and 20% of Sudan’s top two of five import partners. (Economy). To put these terms into Sudan’s state of food insecurity, the percentage of people who work in the industry and service sector are unable to make money and fund their families because most of their jobs rely on these imports and exports. With no money, theirs no way they can feed themselves or their families. Leaving millions of children, adults, and elders hungry and starved. This can only furthermore downward the slope of the mental well-being on the people in and outside of Sudan. This leads me to my next example which has to do with the mental affects the civil war leaves on the people of Sudan and outside of Sudan. Which takes me back to my indirect and direct terminology. Indirectly, the people outside of Sudan must deal with the constant remittance they must send back because of the conditions back home. With the conditions back home, they unable to go and visit family and have the daily reminder that people at home are going day-to-day with no clean water, no healthy food, and the constant fear that they could be killed, raped or even tortured just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This leaves a tremendous toll on a person’s mental health, causing feelings of guilt because of the luxury we have that those in Sudan do not. That luxury is going home safely, school safely, and work safely. On the other hand, the direct effects would be the people in Sudan not receiving remittance and having to fend for themselves when it comes to making money. Even though they have no way of income because the ways they originally got paid no longer exist. However, physically, civil war tremendously effects food insecurity. Since Sudan’s main economic sector is agriculture (80%) (CIA). That means their income came from commercial farming while their food also came from subsistence farming. The main issue we are looking at now is the destruction caused to these acres of arable land used for said farming. Leaving everlasting chemicals which harm the soil making it no longer fertile and undetonated bombs causing the land they step on to be uncertain. Not only will the land around them be affected but will the people of Sudan as well. Health issues from malnutrition such as a weakened immune system, inflammation persist long after recovery and children dying even after treatment. (Malnutrition).

So far there are different aid efforts in Sudan. From the Middle East Qatar has distributed up to twenty-five tons of aid including medical vehicles and shelter supplies to Sudan’s Port. The Turkish Embassy has dispatched food aid to starving Muslims without an Iftar meal during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The UN has set response plans coordinating with the OCHA. This plan consists of the need for $1.4 billion to reach 2.7 million people in up to five countries all neighboring Sudan. The main issue these humanitarian efforts run into is the ability to reach areas where they cannot access because of the obstacles being put up. Another issue about creating a solution is the awareness behind it. If people are not aware of the situation nothing can be done. With all the political conflicts going in the world such as the current Russia-Ukraine and Palestinian genocide, these issues have overshadowed Sudan. Which has not allowed much coverage on the topic. Knowing how the media works, Sudan will not be talked about until it passes its breaking point. Which was what happened 20 years ago in Darfur.

The first solution is saving Sudan from the inside out. The first step of this solution would be getting the RSF to integrate with the SAF. The main issue between these two is the power imbalance. They both want to run Sudan separately. Although neither armed forces would have the power they originally had. The RSF and the SAF would still be in a position of power. The next step of this solution would be seizing all shipments of foreign weaponry and armory. These militaries only have said weaponry because of this flow of machinery, without it, they’d have to fend for themselves. Finally, to lower the access the military has over Sudan because currently the government is in a state of shutdown. The military is running Sudan. Calming the conflict first before launching a full course humanitarian response would be the best call of action. This would be like putting out a fire on one side of a house, while leaving the thing that started the fire alone. The fire would slowly creep back to where it originally was. Both warring parties have one common goal, and that is to run the military in Sudan, but they do not realize that they cannot run a military in a country that is in ruins. So, instead of a huge rush in aid like transnational organizations such as the UN. We would send in small caravans, trucks, or even personnel with the right training in situations like these. We would do this in a way where the people of Sudan are able to access food, clean water, medical resources, and more remotely. To ensure that the paramilitary and army situation is being put to ease, the people of Sudan are still eating. Another way to go about this solution is working from the outside in. The first step toward this solution is getting authorities in Sudan to allow humanitarian aid to come into the country. Without foreign aid Sudan is at risk of running dry and hungry. While food and medical supplies are coming in, arms would be kept out. The main thing fueling this civil war are the weapons being brought into the country. So, if a policy could be put into place making border checks for weapons that could also bring down the issue and put the country ease.

The main resources needed to implement both solutions are money and people. The money will go into medical aid, such as ambulances and convoy trucks with the proper antibiotics to battle such things like the cholera outbreak. There is also a need for sanitary water and nutritious foods that fit with Sudan’s dietary restrictions. With the population mainly being Muslim, they must abstain from pork. Another crucial resource is shelter. Whether that be tents or makeshift refugee camps, the Sudanese people need homes. Nearly ten million people have gone homeless since the start of this conflict. The people needed are trained army personnel from foreign countries and humanitarian personnel trained to work and aid in war-ridden countries such as Sudan and its neighbors.

Transnational Organizations are going to be the key to making this all work. Such as the UN and OCHA which have partnered up to launch a refugee and humanitarian response plan. The United Nations, also known as the UN, is an international organization who take actions on major world issues and encourage world peace and security (UN). The United Nations Office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (short for OCHA) are the ones who spread awareness. The OCHA inform organizations about countries undergoing a humanitarian crisis and fund organizations with the proper funds needed to achieve their goals (OCHA). Currently, these organizations partnered together to create a humanitarian response call. Together both plans will be set in to help nearly eighteen million people, they just need the authority and money. Which is around $2.7 billion. This will help them to continue fighting the food insecurity in Sudan and neighboring countries that are dealing with millions of cases of malnutrition caused by the conflict in Sudan. With their already running humanitarian aid response, the end to Sudan’s humanitarian issues calls for this plan to happen. The UCHA and UN are completely underfunded. The appeal has been less than halfway funded however they have been able to provide food, clean water, and shelter with the money they did receive from donors. These partner organizations run into another issue, which is the proper authority to run these response teams. So a policy enforced by foreign organizations would be key to implementing said humanitarian aid. The Un and OCHA are the backbone to this solution. So, ensuring they get the money and people needed to fund this solution is mandatory.

The main impact this solution leaves is the chance for the people of Sudan to eat. To expand on that, my solutions focal point is to lighten the load on the current issue in the country. Which is the food crisis that is ever growing in the country because of said civil war. The main reason this war has continued is because of the foreign shipment of weaponry and ammunition. This shows us that if we ever want an end to this war, we must stop and seize shipments of those kinds. Which in turn will allow the war to alleviate. So, then we can send in humanitarian aid in a way where they are remote rather than stationed, we will be able to feed the people of Sudan. We would be doing this in a way where the Sudanese people are able to eat healthy and nutritious foods without having to be in the comfort of their own homes. Since their homes are being ransacked and destroyed by weaponry from the same foreign countries that could step up and help Sudan, rather than help it turn into the failed state into which it is heading. Although this solution may be temporary, it will keep people alive until the war is over with, and they are able to farm once again. Without the people in the country being kept safe and well fed, the country cannot rebuild itself. If we do not stop and feed the people now, the state of Sudan’s food insecurity will ever expand into something bigger than it is now.

In all this has become something different than a civil war; this is Sudanese people being trapped in their own country by people who are power hungry. Sudan does not just need humanitarian aid, Sudan needs sovereignty. Sudan’s main issue is the pettiness between the RSF and the SAF. Which has caused not only a widespread malnutrition problem reaching six countries including Sudan. It is caused human rights violations and refugee crises. However, with the proper foreign aid and end to their civil war, Sudan will be able to stand once again. This solution is bound to work because after all the attempts to aid the country through food and wellness programs, nothing has stopped the actual cause of the issue.

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