



Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: Addressing the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of conflict in Sudan

Student Officer: Narmeen Lodhi

Position: Head Chair

Introduction

Sudan has faced political instability, conflict, and humanitarian crises since 1955. Protracted violence has very great socio-economic and environmental impacts, affecting millions both in Sudan and in its neighboring regions. Today, conflicts, civil wars, ethnic tensions, and intercommunal violence continue to displace millions, impoverished people, and degrade the environment. This paper shall therefore focus on some major issues emanating from these conflicts and particularly address the socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and further address the role of the international actors in mitigation of these issues.

Definition of Key Terms

Socioeconomic Impacts

This term refers to the social and economic consequences of conflict, which can include issues like poverty, unemployment, displacement, and the disruption of education and healthcare systems.

Environmental Impacts

These are the negative effects that human activities and conflict have on the natural environment, including problems like deforestation, desertification, and pollution.

Displacement

This describes the forced relocation of people from their homes, often as a result of violence, persecution, or natural disasters.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

These are individuals who have been compelled to leave their homes but still remain within the borders of their own country.

Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

This is a paramilitary group in Sudan that has been significantly involved in recent conflicts.

Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

This 2005 agreement was designed to bring an end to the Second Sudanese Civil War and to create a framework for governance and resource sharing.

UNAMID

This refers to the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur, which was established to help stabilize the Darfur region.

UNITAMS

This is the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, created to assist Sudan in its transition to democracy.

Background Information

An Overview of Historical Context

Sudan has witnessed deep-rooted ethnic, political, and religious rivalries that have been a trigger for civil wars, coup and political instability. The most significant of these struggles were the Sudanese Civil Wars which occurred between the years of 1955 and 1972, and from 1983 to 2005, whose main rivalries were between the northern government and southern insurgents. These struggles consequently led to the separation of South Sudan in 2011. Following the separation, Sudan kept experiencing internal conflicts post-secession, which included areas like the Darfur region, the Blue Nile, and the South Kordofan.

According to reports, the Darfur conflict erupted in 2003, and it has been one of the lethal in which government forces, militia groups, and rebel movements have lost their citizens en masse at the hands of murder, forced relocation of populations, and widespread violation of

human rights. Aside from the above-mentioned the escalation of ethnic violence and disorder in the law, as well as the environmental destruction, the conflict in Darfur became a veritable source of complex humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, the coincident economic recession, which has come as a very serious burden to an already troubled country that lost oil revenues following South Sudan's birth, has deepened suffering in that country.

The other issues include rising levels of ethnic violence and lawlessness, together with degradation of the environment, thus creating a complex humanitarian crisis in the region of Darfur. Coupled with the present internal economic decline, which worsened after South Sudan's independence by loss of oil revenues, all formed another problem in the already troubled country.

Socio-economic Effects

Years of unending conflicts have brought suffering to the economy of Sudan. The loss of life, together with the vandalized infrastructures critical to vital functions, and perhaps more the serious displacements that occurred, have all taken a toll on extant economic vulnerabilities. Most affected hence were key sectors like agriculture and trade, hence millions of people access nothing in critical supplies. Again, conflict has knocked the country's developmental chances and made it reliant on humanitarian support.

Displacement issues

At the moment, Sudan is having a lot of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. More than 2.5 million Sudanese citizens are internally displaced, while millions of them seek refuge in adjacent countries, including Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan.

The health and education sectors have suffered immensely as a result of conflict because it has totally destroyed the crucial infrastructures in public health-hospitals-and primary and secondary schools and transportation networks, making access difficult for communities.

Public health needs are most cumbersome in the country, coupled with poor educational access for the country's youth.

Poverty

Like the aforementioned downside, poverty has grown tremendously due to the protracted violence and insecurity conditions, bringing the incidence above 60% in the country, with more

than 60% of all its populace living under the poverty level. Its economy has had to grapple with destruction through livelihoods, especially at agriculture, cutting off the self-sustaining capabilities of the whole population.

Environmental Effects

Like in all aspects of conflict reality in Sudan, the environmental effects of armed conflict are most severe around conflict zones, such as in Darfur. Infrastructure destruction, large displacements of the population, and the use of scorched-earth by armed militia or other groups have seriously damaged the environment as follows:

- Deforestation : Armed groups using timber for shelter and firewood considerably deforested a few areas, giving rise to increased environmental degradation.
- Soil Degradation and Water Scarcity: Disrupted agriculture because of conflict; some areas having soil degraded through excessive use or through acts of violence. Also, destruction of water infrastructures and pollution of water sources led to increased scarcity in clean water.
- Loss of Biodiversity: Areas suffering from a long time of conflict are so much further reduced in biodiversity because of environmental degradation, poaching, and wildlife displacement.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Sudan Government Affairs

The Sudanese state has undergone several regimes. The most recent is that of the now ousted Omar al-Bashir, who ruled from 1989 until in 2019 when his regime was ousted. Thus, Sudan became an arena for internal conflict and turmoil where such regimes have been constantly accused for human rights abuses when both government forces and affiliated militias commit a series of violations against civilians in the Darfur region.

Rebel Group

Armed factions in Sudan are also one of the important actors in the ongoing conflict, especially in regions like Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. These include the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the Sudan People's

Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). These have fought against the government to advocate for self-determination, fair resource allocation, and the end of the discriminatory practices.

African Union (AU)

The main peacekeeping organization in Sudan has been the AU in establishing the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2007. It has hosted several negotiations between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups.

United Nations (UN)

The UN has been involved in Sudan because it has many peacekeeping and humanitarian operations aimed at mitigating the humanitarian crisis in the country. In fact, during the civil war, UNMIS maintained its relevance, having contributed to the peace agreement of 2005. Also, important peacekeeping operations were conducted in Darfur under UN mandate, especially UNAMID, even though its mandate and problems persist.

International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court has issued several arrest warrants for some of the most recognized Sudanese nationals including the former president Omar al-Bashir on charges for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in relation to the conflict in Darfur. Such allegations are thus important components in any diplomatic communications made regarding Sudan as far as international relations are concerned.

Other International Donors and NGOs

Humanitarian assistance is being extended to various populations affected by armed conflict by international humanitarian organizations, including the Red Cross and the World Food Programme (WFP) or Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). Some of the countries which include the United States, European Union, and the United Kingdom have taken a course through peace negotiations and the imposition of sanctions to pressure the Sudanese government into stopping hostilities.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
January 1 1956	Sudan achieves independence from the joint British-Egyptian rule
May 16, 1983	Second Sudanese Civil War commences, mainly between the central government and southern rebels.
February 26, 2003	Conflict erupts in Darfur, leading to allegations of genocide and widespread displacement.
July 9, 2011	South Sudan becomes an independent nation following a referendum.
December 15, 2013	Renewed violence in South Sudan spills over into Sudan.
April 11, 2019	Omar al-Bashir is removed from power after months of protests; Sudan begins a transitional government.
April 15, 2023	Violence escalates between rival factions of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), worsening socioeconomic and environmental conditions.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- **UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan):** Created in 2005 to support the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
- **UNAMID (United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur):** Active from 2007 to 2020, focused on stabilizing the Darfur region.
- **UNITAMS (United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan):** Established in 2020 to assist Sudan's transition to democracy.
- Provision of humanitarian aid to millions of displaced individuals through the **World Food Programme (WFP)** and **UNHCR**.

- Environmental recovery programs, including reforestation and water management, through **UNEP**.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Successes:

- Reduction in large-scale violence in Darfur post-UNAMID deployment. This was successful as it helped in ways such as deterring attacks on villages and camps by armed groups, it also helped with facilitating peace processes between the government, rebel groups and citizens in order to address the root causes of conflict.
- Establishment of South Sudan as an independent nation, addressing part of the civil conflict. This was successful as it allowed South Sudan to address its own developmental priorities without interference. It's independence also allowed them to claim majority of oil fields to provide more jobs and use the revenue made to address the socio economic issues

Failures:

- Insufficient implementation of agreements, such as the Doha Document. This was a failure as it lacked inclusivity and failed to address the drivers of conflict in South Sudan. The document was too focused on the Sudanese government and rebel groups due to the Darfur crisis while South Sudan was already an independent country. The document lacked applicability to South Sudan's issues.
- Challenges in transitioning to a stable democracy post-2019. This was due to the lack of cohesion in the nation due to years of civil war and also many armed groups not fully being disbanded yet. Government institutions also had issues with corruption and was unable to function independently halting the progress towards a democratic governance
- Ongoing socioeconomic inequality and environmental degradation, leading to recurring conflicts. 98% of South Sudan's annual operating budget comes from oil. This benefits elites in the capital, Juba, while rural areas continue to struggle. Their hyper focused reliance on oil hinders the nation's ability to progress and provide more opportunities for their people. Their issues with lack of water and arable land has also lead to violence among groups as they compete for essential resources.

Possible Solutions

Socioeconomic Interventions

Improve the education system and vocational training of the displaced people.

Environmental Rehabilitation

The following strategies should be put in place in the implementation of large scale reforestation and land restoration:

Improve the management of transboundary water resources in order to reduce the conflicts.

Political and Legal Frameworks

This will help in the encouragement of meaningful dialogue between all the affected parties to ensure that all voices are well heard.

Improve the mechanisms of accountability to try and arrest perpetrators of war aid crimes and the development of corruption projects.

Reducing oil dependency

Invest in non-oil sectors to benefit more rural areas and create more jobs such as fishing, agriculture and construction

Addressing corruption

Help progress towards a democratic government by building trust within the country by establishing anti-corruption mechanisms

Guiding Questions

1. How is your delegation affected by this?
2. How can your delegation balance immediate humanitarian aid with long-term development goals?
3. What lessons from other conflict zones can be applied to Sudan to ensure sustainable peace and help prevent the risk of the situation getting worse?

4. What sanctions and other measures can be implemented and how can they effectively be used to influence positive outcomes without worsening humanitarian conditions?
5. How can accountability for war crimes and human rights violations be implemented and strengthened in Sudan?

Bibliography

United Nations Development Programme:

<https://www.undp.org/sudan/publications/socioeconomic-impact-armed-conflict-sudanese-urban-households>

Final Evaluation Report on the Sudan Country Programme:

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/about-us/evaluation/Evaluation_the_Sudan_Country_Programme_Sudan_CO.pdf

United Nations in Sudan discussing the socio-economic impact

<https://sudan.un.org/en/283343-socio-economic-impact-armed-conflict-sudanese-urban-households-evidence-national-urban> :

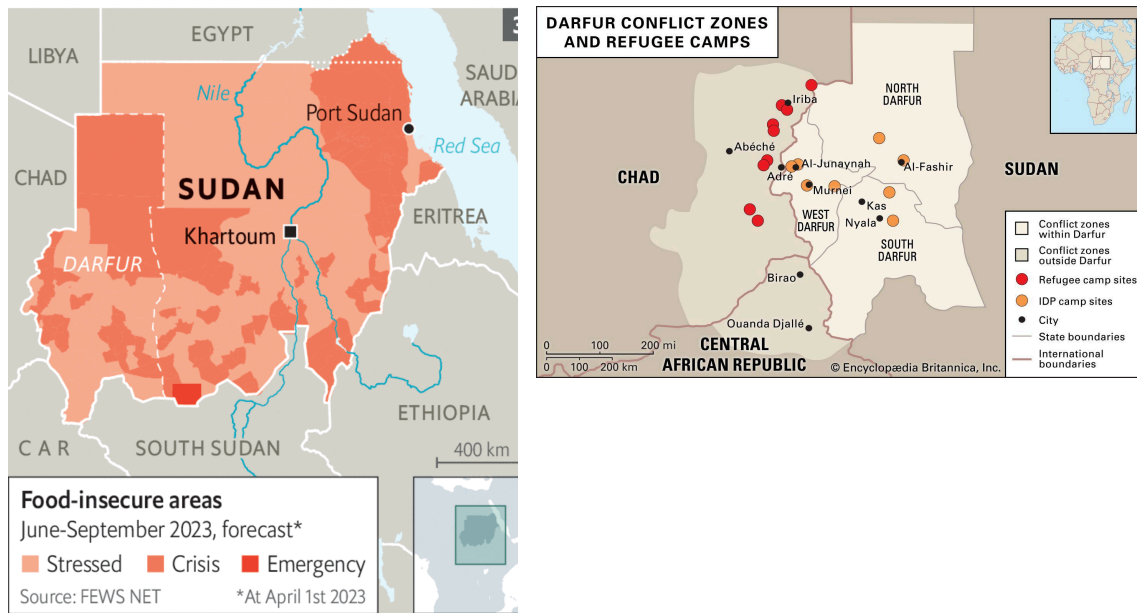
Current situation in Sudan by the day: <https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-crisis-in-sudan/>

Appendix or Appendices

I . Key Statistics

- Displacement: Over 4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of 2023.
- Economic Impact: Conflict has reduced Sudan's GDP growth by approximately 3% annually.

II . Map of Conflict Zones:



III. UN Missions Overview

Mission	Mandate	Budget	Outcomes
UNMIS	Support Comprehensive Peace Agreement	\$1 billion (2005)	Played a role in South Sudan's independence; however, it had a limited effect on long-term stability.
UNAMID	Stabilize Darfur and protect civilians	\$1.5 billion annually	Played a role in South Sudan's independence; however, it had a limited effect on long-term stability.
UNITAMS	Support Sudan's democratic transition	\$150 million annually	Played a role in South Sudan's independence; however, it had a limited effect on long-term stability.

IV. Appendix D: Impact of Sanctions on Sudan

- **Economic Effects:** Sanctions have significantly reduced Sudan's ability to engage in international trade, exacerbating economic challenges.
- **Humanitarian Effects:** While aimed at targeting specific entities, sanctions have sometimes inadvertently affected civilian populations through restrictions on essential goods.
- **Political Effects:** Pressure from sanctions has influenced some policy changes but has also led to entrenchment of hardline positions in some cases.

V . Appendix E: Key Active Humanitarian Organizations in Sudan:

Organization	Focus Areas	Key Contributors
UNHCR	Refugee displacement and assistance	Established camps for refugees fleeing the conflict
World Food Programme	Food security and nutrition	Provides emergency food to millions of displaced citizens
International Red Cross	Healthcare and emergency relief	Delivered critical medical aid and facilitated access to healthcare in conflict zones