

Bursting at the seams:

the impact of war and displacement on Sudan's Eastern cities



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Acknowledgements

This report was completed in partnership with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 12 local non-governmental organisations, and with the Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission.

Our local NGO partners:

1. Building Resilience Development Organization (BRDO)
2. United Peace Organization (UPO)
3. CAFA Development Organization (CAFA)
4. Sudan Peace and Development Organization (SPDO)
5. African Vision for Development Organization (AVDO)
6. Raira Organization for Awareness and Development
7. Rural Community Development Organisation - RCDO
8. Eshragat Organization for Development & Women Empowerment (EOD)
9. AHBAB Humanitarian Aid Organization
10. Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO)
11. Sudan Agwa Organization
12. Al Nahda Organization for peace and Development (NOPD)

Introduction



Tasbih stands next to her home in Al Hourri camp. Mohammed Abdulmajid/NRC

Sudan has been grappling with one of the largest displacement crises in the world, driven by conflict, natural disasters, and economic instability. As of 6 November 2024, an estimated 11.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been recorded by the International Organisation of Migration’s (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)^[1]. Of these, 75 per cent have been displaced since the onset of the conflict in Sudan on 15 April 2023. In total, 30 per cent of the population in Sudan was displaced from over 9,600 locations in 18 states across the country. The top states of origin among IDPs were Khartoum, followed by South Darfur, North Darfur and Gedaref, with some exceptions. For instance, in Blue Nile, Central Darfur and North Darfur, primary displacements occurred within the same state, followed by Khartoum^[1]. Almost 50 per cent of IDP households stay with host families, making it the most dominant form of shelter followed by camps (20 per cent of IDP households)^[1].

This displacement has far-reaching implications for not just displaced populations but also host communities, disrupting livelihoods, limiting access to essential services, and straining relations between displaced populations and host communities. To better understand how displacement has affected the needs of both displaced and non-displaced communities in northern and eastern Sudan namely in six states – Northern, Gederaf, Kassala, White Nile, Blue Nile and Red Sea – the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) conducted a joint assessment with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). This assessment includes the use of various methods such as household surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs) and market assessments to provide insights into various clusters within the affected communities.

This summary report highlights key findings on persistent needs currently experienced by over 8,600 households (both IDP and host community households) across six states and recommends main programme interventions to address urgent needs of the urban displacement and promote resilience. The survey was carried out between August - September 2024. The states included in the survey are Red Sea, Kassala, Gedaref, Northern, White Nile, and Blue Nile.

The full version of this report will be published in **February 2025**.

1 International Organisation of Migration’s (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Sudan Mobility Overview (3) <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/sudan-mobility-overview-3?close=true>

Overall findings

The findings outline that the impact of displacement is not limited to just those displaced. There is a clear spillover to host communities in the broadest sense, meaning not only families physically hosting IDPs in their homes, but also the wider residents in a state hosting IDPs, including local market actors and the urban landscape.

Family level

At the family level, the impact is striking. Almost all IDPs and most host communities are now struggling to meet basic needs for their families or even feed themselves:

- 87 per cent of IDP households and 74 per cent of host families now struggle to meet basic needs.
- 70 per cent of IDP and 56 per cent of host community families reported the inability to purchase sufficient food for their family, primarily because of a lack of household income and secondarily because of increased prices.
- 33 per cent of IDPs live with two other households in one room while 36 per cent share less than one room per household.
- 14 per cent of IDPs and 8 per cent of host families have no latrines where they live.



As conflict reached Sennar, over 151,000 people fled to neighbouring states, including Gedaref. Faiz Abubakr/NRC

On average, across the six states, the needs differed across IDP and host community households.

- For IDPs, higher percentages of IDP households reported critical needs in education (75 per cent vs 61 per cent for host households), livelihoods (63 per cent vs 46 per cent for host households) and health (63 per cent vs 40 per cent for host households).
- For host community, a higher proportion of them reported severe to critical needs for food (80 per cent vs 54 per cent) and shelter (69 per cent vs 58 per cent). This can be explained by:
 - 92 per cent of host community households are currently not receiving any food assistance. This is in comparison to 76 per cent of IDP households.
 - More households in the host community report having to pay for their food (86 per cent) compared with IDPs (66 per cent).
 - A larger proportion of host community households (49 per cent) report unaffordable food prices, (compared with 40 per cent of IDPs), and lower quality of food (43 per cent for hosts, and 33 per cent for IDPs).

- This shows that while humanitarian aid has somewhat addressed the food needs of IDPs, the response has not yet adapted to adequately support host communities, whose food needs remain largely unmet.
- The difference between IDP and host community households is also reflected at state level. For instance, in Gedaref, shelter was the sector where the highest proportion of IDP households (70 per cent) reported severe to critical needs. However, food insecurity was the most important need for host communities, as 92 per cent of them reported severe to critical needs when it comes to accessing food.

Market level and other key infrastructure

Across the six states surveyed, most of the infrastructure in urban and peri-urban areas where IDPs have fled to is found to be overstretched. Local market systems remain resilient: 98 per cent of both IDP and host community households report market accessibility, with most describing markets as functional, stable, and stocked with key commodities. However, severe economic fragility—driven by low purchasing power among displaced and host communities—has eroded the resilience of an otherwise well-educated population affected by urban displacement in eastern and northern Sudan

Water systems, electrical grid systems, health facilities, and other critical infrastructure supporting people, commerce and business are now stretched far beyond their original capacity. Already fragile before the war, this infrastructure urgently requires support, repair and general maintenance. Eastern towns are overwhelmed, grappling with severe congestion.



Children who have been displaced eating a meal at a gathering site in Gedaref. Faiz Abubakr/NRC

This report identifies the top clusters requiring urgent action, notably in livelihoods, health, food and water security and shelter. Under these clusters, specific considerations are provided to sub-clusters. There is a significant difference between IDP and host community households reporting severity in needs in the above clusters, with food insecurity being an important concern amongst host communities. In all other clusters, IDP households reported slightly higher needs than host communities, though some variations exist at state-level.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to addressing the most urgent needs of both IDP and host community households. Some actions may respond to multiple needs at once and require a better understanding of the drivers behind urgent needs. The report also highlights that displacement does not just affect IDPs and can have impacts on host communities, regardless of whether they are hosting IDPs or merely living in the same areas as IDPs. As such, responses to tackle internal displacement can have wide reaching impacts on affected communities in general, and avoid further negative impacts of displacement.



A school turned displacement site in the heart of Port Sudan. This camp is home to 800 families who fled violence in Khartoum. Ahmed Elsir/NRC

Typical family portrait in the east

The average IDP family



The average host community family



Female-headed
household with children under 18



Female-headed
household with children under 18

Few or no working members
even among the educated



Few working members
Educated individuals earn
but insufficient to cover needs

Collective shelters
or host homes. Face overcrowding
and lack of privacy



Own homes
often hosting one or two families.
Face overcrowding and rising living costs

No free access
and physical and mental health declining



Moderate access
to healthcare services

Share pit latrines
and have inadequate access
to clean water for basic needs



Household pit latrines
and have adequate paid access to clean water

Lack essentials
like blankets, cooking utensils,
and water containers



Lack essentials
like blankets, cooking utensils,
and water containers

Do not attend school
and faced 1-2 years of disruption



Do not attend school
and faced 1-2 years of disruption

Feel as safe
or safer than before displacement, and
participate in community activities



Feel unsafe
and fear social exclusion or tension

Comparative analysis: conditions of worst-off vs. best-off families

The humanitarian needs in eastern Sudan (Gedaref, White Nile, Blue Nile, Northern, Kassala, and Red Sea states) reveal a sobering reality: even under the best circumstances, displaced and host families face significant hardship, and under the worst, they endure extreme deprivation and vulnerability. In the best-case scenario, displaced families and their hosts manage to secure food, but their access is fragile and inconsistent. IDPs may scrape together two modest meals a day, often lacking nutritional diversity, with heavy reliance on aid, foraging, or unstable community assistance. Host families depend on bartering, limited production, and social networks to make ends meet. Shelter remains precarious, with IDP families living in overcrowded collective shelters or aid-dependent temporary arrangements, while host families rely on their homes, which provide stability but are not immune to economic or social pressures.

In the worst-case scenario, the situation deteriorates sharply. IDP and host families may only manage one irregular meal per day, with severe undernourishment and hunger taking a toll on health and survival. Housing conditions are dire: displaced families are confined to insecure, expensive temporary homes or overcrowded collective shelters with no prospect of permanence, while host families risk losing their housing stability due to economic or social shifts. Across both scenarios, households are locked in cycles of dependency and vulnerability, with limited agency to break free from the precarious conditions imposed by displacement

Worst-off families

Best-off families

Livelihood



- No one is working, the family is completely relying on aid solidarity for 56 per cent of IDPs, 24 per cent of host families.

- At least two people are working, but this represents only 8 per cent of IDPs, 20 per cent of host families.

Food



- No regular meal or just one meal a day for 13 per cent of IDPs, 37 per cent of host families.
- No food assistance in the past six months - 76 per cent of IDPs, 92 per cent of host families.

- Three regular meals, but this is only the case for 37 per cent of IDPs, 15 per cent of host families.
- Food assistance in the past six months, but this represents only 23 per cent of IDPs and 6 per cent of host families.

Healthcare



- Critical healthcare shortage. This represents 65 per cent of IDPs and 41 per cent of host families.

- Moderate access to healthcare. This represents 34 per cent of IDPs and 58 per cent of host families.
- Even in the best case scenario, no one reports adequate access to healthcare.

Worst-off families

Best-off families

Water and Sanitation



- No latrine at all where they live, for 14 per cent of IDPs and 8 per cent of host families.
- Significant access barriers to water and sanitation, particularly because they must share it with many families.
- Latrines are not regularly desludged and waste is not regularly collected, with no hand washing facilities for 32 per cent of IDPs and 25 per cent of host families.
- Not have enough water to wash, cook for 14 per cent of IDPs and 17 per cent of host families.

- Less overcrowding and regular waste collection for 25 per cent of IDPs and 35 per cent of host families.
- Moderate levels of water security, enabling cooking and washing for 74 per cent of IDPs and 71 per cent of host families.
- Available latrines (which sometimes must be shared) for 86 per cent of IDPs and 91 per cent of host families.

Shelter



- High level of overcrowding and limited privacy, this is the case for 59 per cent of IDPs and 35 per cent of host families.
- 33 per cent of IDPs live with two other households in one room while 36 per cent share less than one room per household.
- Lack of blankets, cooking tools, or hygiene supplies for 91 per cent of IDPs, 34 per cent of host families.

- The shelter remains crowded but only moderately for 14 per cent of IDPs who have one household per room and 40 per cent of host families.
- They have blankets, bedding, cooking sets, and other items, but this only applies for 9 per cent of IDPs, 16 per cent of host families.

Education



- Children are out of school: this represents 75 per cent of IDPs and 61 per cent of host families.

- Children attend school, but this is only for 25 per cent of IDPs and 39 per cent of host families.

Sectoral findings

Livelihoods

	IDP	Host community
Only one household member works	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)
No one is working at all in the household	Majority (50-75%)	Rare (0-25%)
Insufficient resources to cover needs.	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)	Majority (50-75%)
Unemployed graduate	Frequent (25-50%)	Rare (0-25%)

Of the sample

 Rare (0-25%)	 Majority (50-75%)
 Frequent (25-50%)	 Overwhelming majority (75-100%)



90 per cent of IDP households and 78 per cent of host community households either have no work or only one household member is currently earning. Complete unemployment was found in 56 per cent of IDP and 24 per cent of host community households. The proportion of households with no working member exceeds households with at least one working member across all states except Red Sea state, particularly in IDP households.

87 per cent of IDPs and 74 per cent of host community households reported insufficient resources to meet their current needs. In all states, between 75 per cent (Northern) and 94 per cent (Blue and White Nile) of IDP households reported insufficient needs. The level of unmet needs amongst host community households range between 52 per cent (Red Sea) and 93 per cent (Blue Nile). Compared with host communities, IDPs struggle much more with insufficient resources, except in Blue Nile.

While education levels among displaced respondents are relatively high, the mismatch between education and employment opportunities is stark. For instance, unemployment is particularly severe among educated IDPs – 48 per cent with tertiary education and 68 per cent with postgraduate degrees lost jobs following displacement, with 40 per cent remaining unemployed in Blue Nile. In contrast, most host community respondents with higher education continue to earn an income, underscoring the need for targeted livelihood interventions that leverage the skills of educated IDPs.

Based on the above, it is vital to support back-to-work programmes in the country, allowing for better skills matching for highly qualified individuals. This can be done by developing job-matching programmes and creating targeted employment initiatives in sectors with labour shortages.

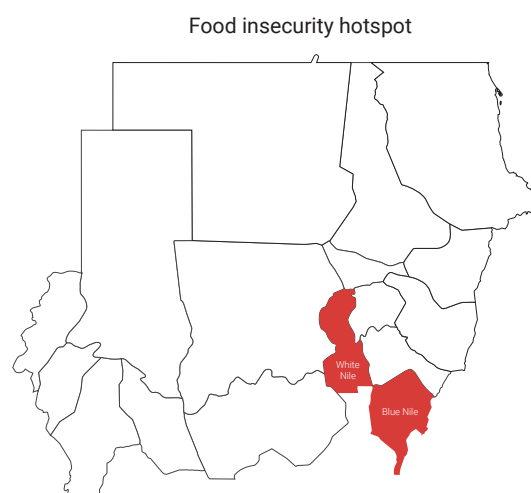
Donor and humanitarian partners should focus on expanding cash assistance and microfinance programmes to allow households to meet immediate needs while building sustainable livelihoods. Promoting community-led savings and credit schemes can further help to build sustainability by reducing reliance on humanitarian aid. This cannot be done in isolation and would require close partnership with local authorities to develop inclusive economic policies that integrate unemployed displaced and non-displaced populations into the workforce.

Food Security

	IDP	Host community
Inability to access food	Majority (50-75%)	Majority (50-75%)
See lack of income and food prices as a barrier	Frequent (25-50%)	Frequent (25-50%)
Lack of food assistance	Majority (50-75%)	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)

Of the sample

 Rare (0-25%)	 Majority (50-75%)
 Frequent (25-50%)	 Overwhelming majority (75-100%)



70 per cent of IDP and 56 per cent of host community families reported inability to purchase sufficient food for their family across all states, with a higher proportion of IDP households reporting challenges compared to host community households.

- There are wide variations across states for IDP households with high proportions of IDP households reporting inability in Blue Nile (89 per cent), White Nile (77 per cent) and Kassala (73 per cent) and the lowest proportions reported in Red Sea (45 per cent).
- For host community households, the state with the highest proportions of families indicating heightened levels of food insecurity is Blue Nile at 85 per cent. The other states reported significantly lower ranges between 23 per cent and 58 per cent.

However, it is much rarer for host families to have three meals a day (15 per cent) than for IDP families (37 per cent) and host community report higher food needs. Unpacking these results, the assessment found that:

- 92 per cent of host community households are currently not receiving any food assistance. This is in comparison to 76 per cent of IDP households.
- The highest proportion of host community households reporting no food assistance was in Gedaref (97 per cent versus 79 per cent for IDPs), followed by Kassala (95 per cent versus 72 per cent for IDPs) and White Nile (92 per cent versus 71 per cent for IDPs).
- More host community households report paying their food (86 per cent) compared with IDPs (66 per cent). The variations across states remain primarily for IDP households, with Red Sea and Kassala states having the highest proportion of IDPs purchasing food. For host community households, the highest proportions of families purchasing food was in Blue Nile and Northern states.
- A larger proportion of host communities (49 per cent) report unaffordable food prices, (compared with 40 per cent of IDPs), and lower quality of food (43 per cent for host community households, and 33 per cent for IDPs).

All combined, these factors may explain the additional pressures host community households experience, worsening their overall food insecurity.

Lack of income or resources is reported as the primary barrier behind food insecurity in all states according to 72 per cent of IDP households, followed by increased price of food items (reported by 55 per cent of IDP households). Similarly, 57 per cent of host community households reported lack of income or resources as the primary barrier behind food insecurity in all states, closely followed by cost of food at 56 per cent.

The assessment shows that while humanitarian aid is trying to address the food needs of IDPs, the response has not yet adapted to adequately support host communities, whose food needs remain largely unmet. It's also important to note that the situation for IDPs would likely be far worse without the support they have received so far. Efforts to address food gaps must go beyond in-kind assistance for IDPs and focus on comprehensive strategies, such as strengthening food production and market systems to stabilise prices and support livelihoods.

Ensuring that increasing number of households do not fall under critical levels of food insecurity will require enabling livelihood opportunities so that households can be self-sufficient in accessing food and reducing their reliance on food assistance. Collaboration with local authorities to enhance food affordability is one way humanitarian agencies can support in alleviating food insecurity across Sudan.

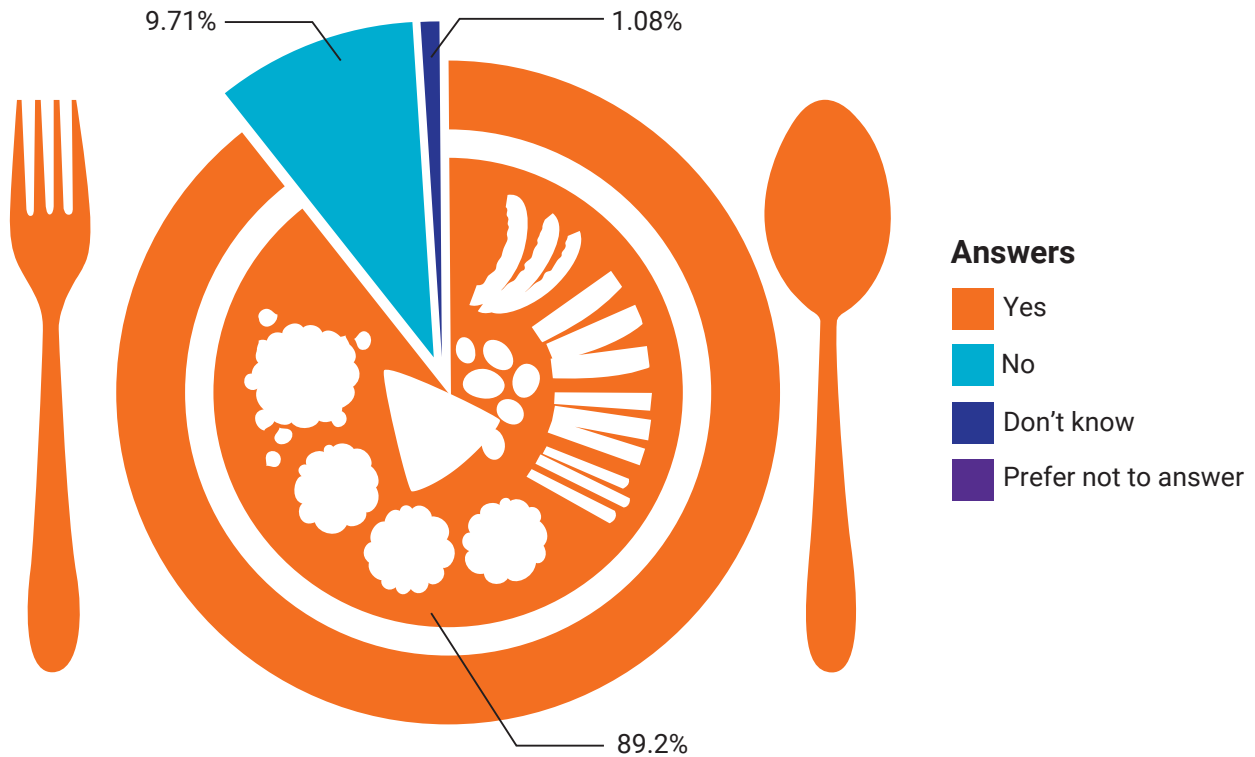


Anwar and his family live in a displacement camp in Port Sudan. Ahmed Elsir/NRC

The food paradox

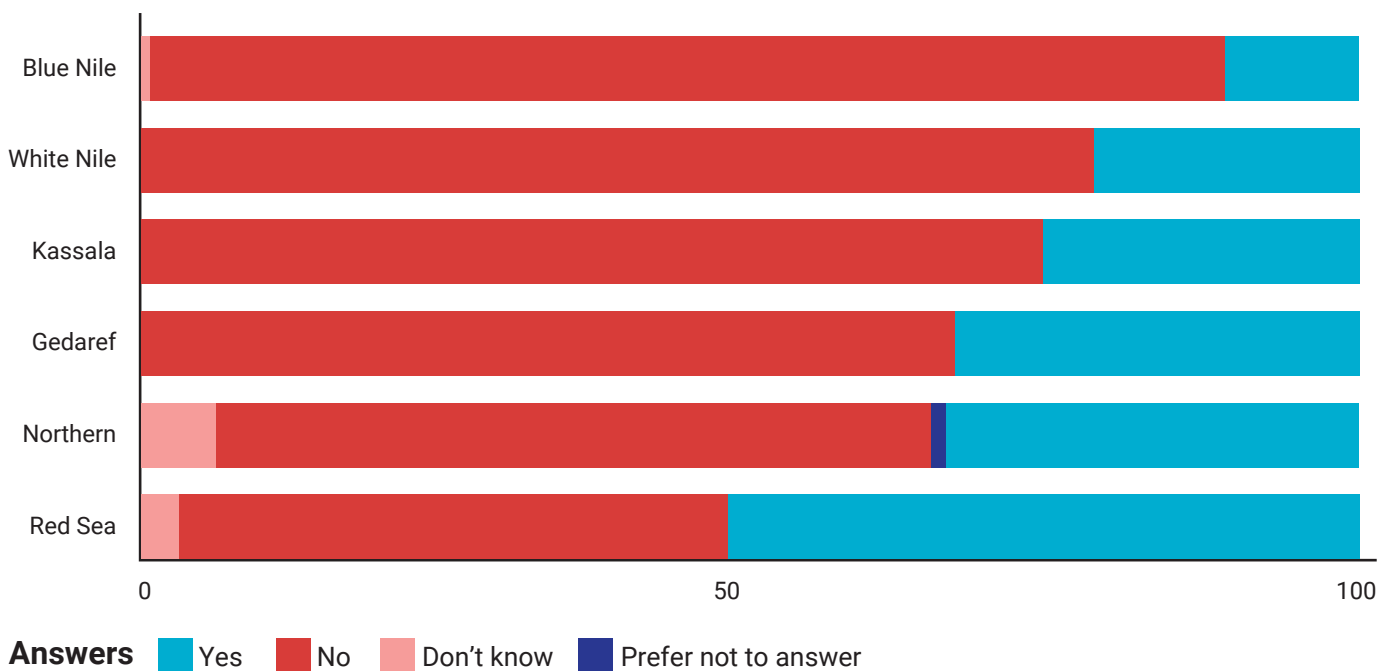
There is food in the markets

Is your local market stocked with food for long-term consumption and other essential commodities?

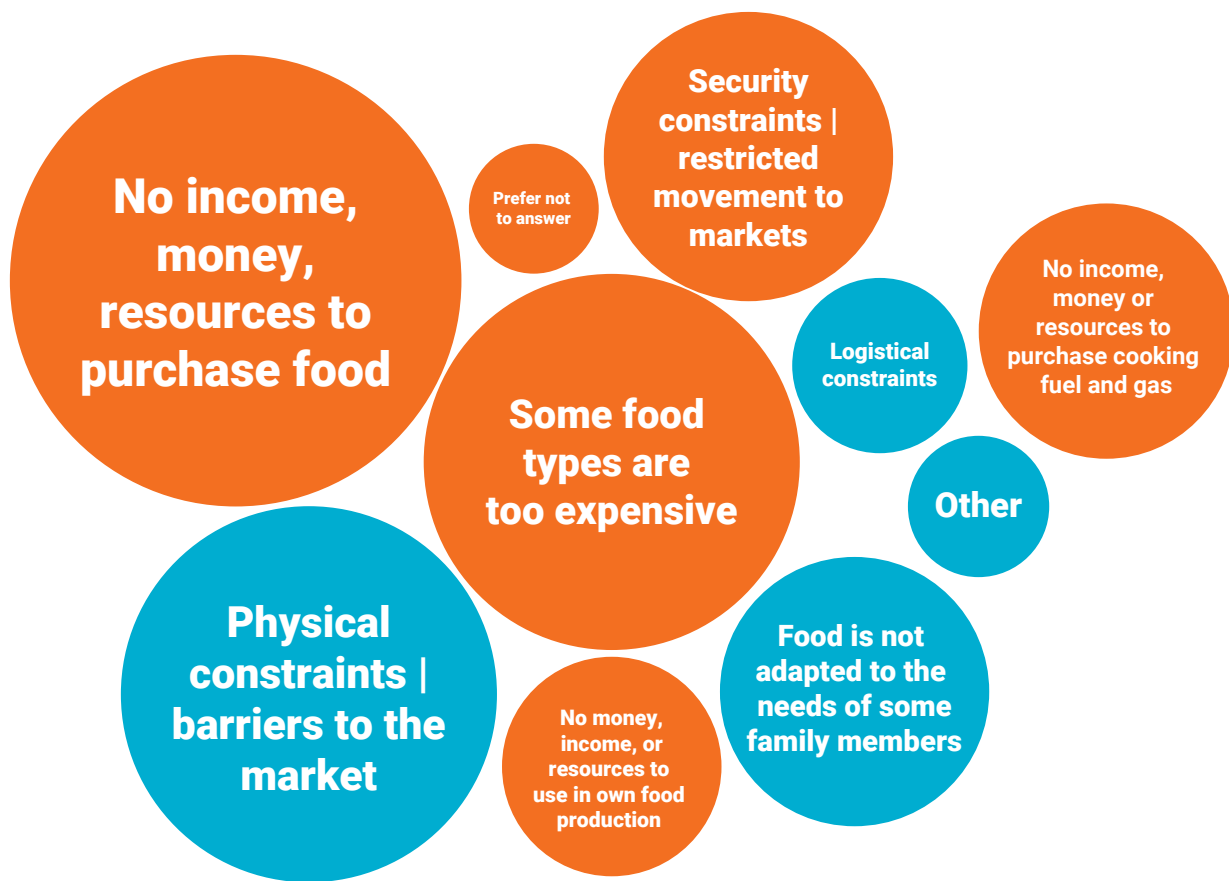


Yet both IDPs and host families overwhelmingly report not accessing food.

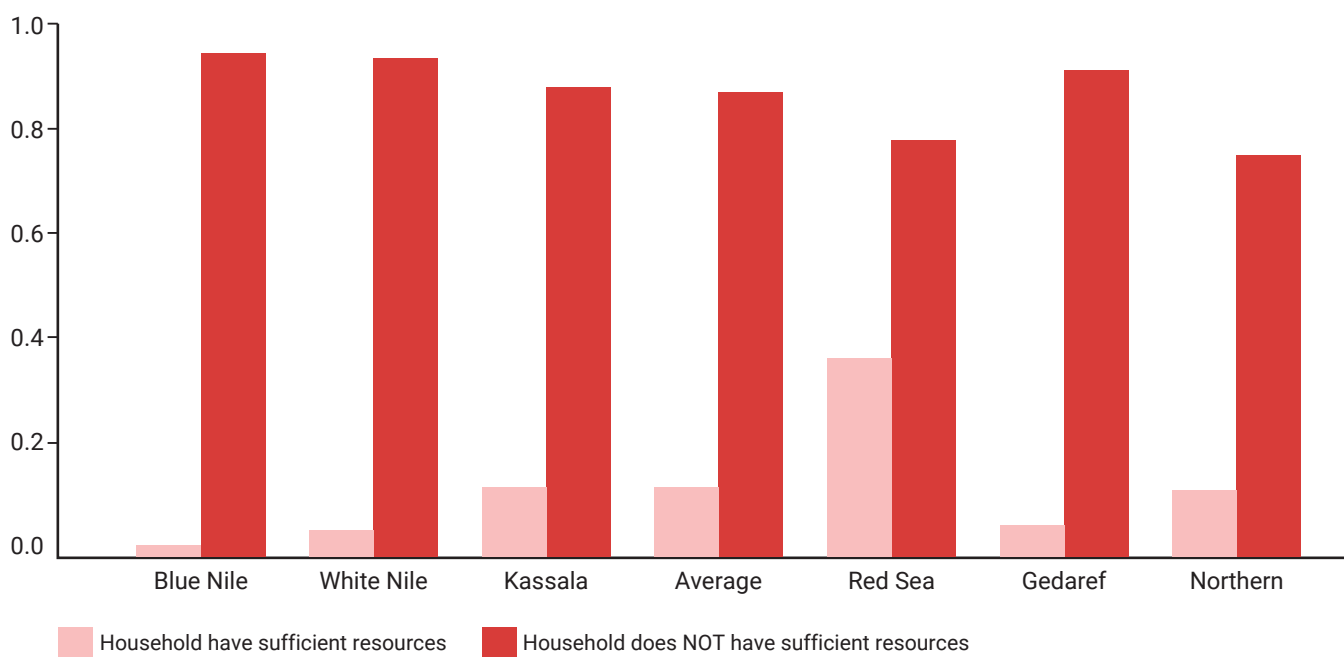
Is your household able to access enough food now?



What are your main reason for not having access to food?



Financial sufficiency



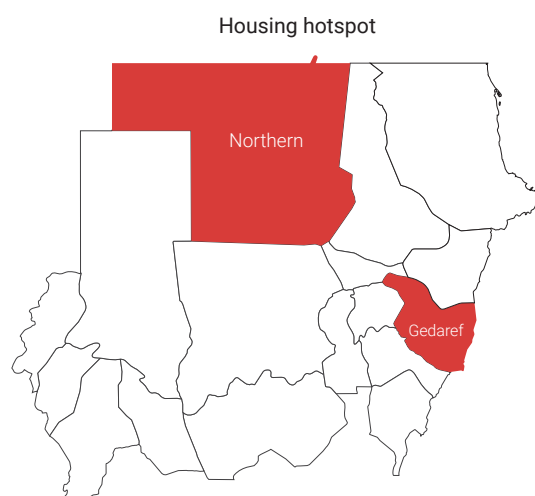
Housing

(includes non-food items and energy access)

	IDP	Host community
Own the home they live in now	Rare (0-25%)	Majority (50-75%)
High level of overcrowding and limited privacy	Majority (50-75%)	Frequent (25-50%)
In urgent need of home items (cooking sets, blankets, buckets)	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)	Frequent (25-50%)
Difficulties in accessing non-food items	Majority (50-75%)	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)
Face high costs in fuel	Majority (50-75%)	Majority (50-75%)

Of the sample

Rare (0-25%)	Majority (50-75%)
Frequent (25-50%)	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)



44 per cent of IDP households live in shelters (collective, formal or camps set up by authorities), with higher-than-average proportions reported in White Nile (69 per cent) and Kassala (62 per cent). 63 per cent of host community households own their homes, with higher-than-average proportions reported in Kassala (67 per cent) and White Nile (66 per cent).

42 per cent of IDP households and 26 per cent of host community households reported lower levels of satisfaction with their current housing conditions, with the highest proportions (40 per cent) reported in Kassala by host community households in particular.

62 per cent of IDP households reported that their primary reason behind lower housing satisfaction was decreased privacy, followed by overcrowding (46 per cent). For host community households, a majority (53 per cent) reported higher costs of housing as the primary reason behind reduced satisfaction, followed by decreased privacy (40 per cent). Most host community families reported to be hosting between one and two IDP households in limited spaces.

91 per cent of IDPs and 34 per cent of host community households reported being in urgent need of non-food items (NFIs). For host community households, the state reporting the highest levels of need is Northern at 66 per cent. 98 per cent of IDP and 94 per cent of non IDP households indicated that general household support items such as cooking sets, blankets and buckets were most urgently needed as opposed to household shelter or construction items such as toolkits.

60 per cent of IDPs and 90 per cent of host community households reported difficulties in accessing essential home items. Access challenges vary from state to state with the highest proportions of IDPs (80 per cent) and host community (96 per cent) households in Red Sea and the lowest proportions for IDP households in White Nile (47 per cent) and the lowest proportions for host communities in Northern (81 per cent).

51 per cent of IDP and 60 per cent of host community households reported that high costs were the main barrier to accessing primary energy sources, with higher than average proportion reported in Gedaref (75 per cent) and Red Sea (71 per cent) for IDP households, and Blue Nile (79 per cent), Gedaref (67 per cent) and Northern (65 per cent) for host community households.

As a result, the following recommendations could help to improve overcrowding and privacy issues: increase access to NFIs and more reliable energy sources. Firstly, developing housing policies that reduce overcrowding in collective and informal shelters can help to address overcrowding and enhance privacy. This can be done through collaboration with local communities. Secondly, addressing distribution gaps in

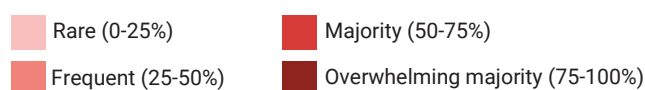
accessing non-food items can help target critical needs in this area. By improving coordination with community leaders, distribution gaps can be addressed. Finally, introducing renewable energy solutions, such as solar cooking systems or affordable electric stoves, particularly in urban areas like Northern state, can significantly enhance access to sustainable energy. Partnering with local vendors to provide energy sources at affordable prices can reduce reliance on informal and unsustainable supply chains.

Water

(includes security and access)

	IDP	Host community
Inability to access water	Majority (50-75%)	Majority (50-75%)
Barrier facing sanitation	Frequent (25-50%)	Rare (0-25%)
Barrier to accessing or using handwashing-facilities	Majority (50-75%)	Rare (0-25%)
Have communal pit latrines	Frequent (25-50%)	Rare (0-25%)

Of the sample



41 per cent of IDP households and 38 per cent of host community households currently face difficulties in accessing safe drinking water in all states, particularly in Red Sea, where the highest proportions of both IDPs (83 per cent) and host community households (64 per cent) were recorded.

40 per cent of IDP households and 41 per cent of host community households reported high levels of water insecurity due to insufficient water supply, which indicates how overburdened the infrastructure is. 47 per cent of IDP households reported paying to access water compared to 71 per cent of host community households. Red Sea state was the state reporting highest proportions of both IDP and host community households paying to access water.

34 per cent of IDP households reported not having access to or using hand washing facilities, with the highest proportions coming from Northern state. Only 19 per cent of host community households reported a lack of handwashing facilities, with the highest proportions coming from Northern state as well. 13 per cent of IDP households and 9 per cent of host community households reported no available latrines in their current shelters, particularly in Blue and White Nile states.

35 per cent of IDP households and 7 per cent of host community households only have communal pit latrines available. Out of those accessing community pit latrines, the biggest challenge faced by both groups (60 per cent) is the insufficiency of toilets for both men and women.

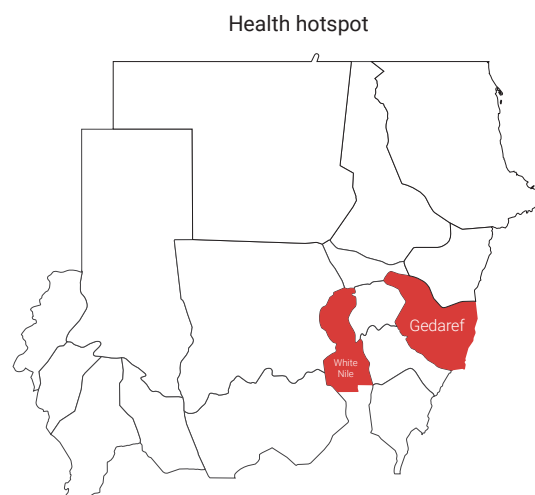
Based on the above, recommendations could include enhancing the affordability and accessibility of water and improving sanitation systems. Partnering with local suppliers to provide WASH items such as soap, water storage containers and cleaning kits as well as and ensuring consistent distribution to states like Red Sea and White Nile, can help address this challenge.

Health

	IDP	Host community
Deterioration of health	Majority (50-75%)	Majority (50-75%)
Deterioration of mental health	Majority (50-75%)	Rare (0-25%)
Health degradation caused by lack of food	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)
No free access to healthcare	Majority (50-75%)	Majority (50-75%)

Of the sample

 Rare (0-25%)	 Majority (50-75%)
 Frequent (25-50%)	 Overwhelming majority (75-100%)



40 per cent of IDP households and 28 per cent of host community households reported a deterioration of current physical health outcomes. Only 1 per cent of IDP households and 2 per cent of host community households reported improvement. There is no significant difference between the states in terms of worse outcomes reported by both IDP and host community households.

30 per cent of IDP households and 19 per cent of host community households reported a deterioration of current mental health outcomes. This contrasts with 16 per cent of IDP households and 20 per cent of host community households who reported improvement. There is no significant difference between the states. Red Sea is the only state with higher proportions of households reporting improvement in mental health and the lowest proportions of households reporting deterioration for both mental and physical health outcomes.

79 per cent of IDP households and 74 per cent of host community households attributed limited access to food as the most important reason behind worsening health outcomes. Blue Nile state stands out in this regard with 87 per cent of IDP households and 97 per cent of host community households reporting less access to food.

Additionally, many households also point to less access to healthcare services as a second most important factor behind deteriorating health care. Most respondents (95 per cent of IDP and 94 per cent of host community households) mention the increased cost of healthcare to be the primary reason behind reduced access. Between 96 and 98 per cent of IDP households in Gedaref, Northern and Red Sea reported high cost of healthcare whereas for host communities, the highest proportions varying between 95 and 98 per cent were reported in Blue Nile, Northern and White Nile.

Based on the above, it is vital to expand access to healthcare services including mental and psychosocial support, especially in remote areas. This can be done through collaborative efforts with local communities and aid agencies. In addition, prioritising healthcare access particularly amongst vulnerable groups could help to alleviate critical healthcare needs in a coherent manner.

Education

	IDP	Host community
Children are not attending school	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)	Majority (50-75%)
Children have had their education interrupted	Overwhelming majority (75-100%)	Majority (50-75%)
Dissatisfied by current education	Frequent (25-50%)	Frequent (25-50%)

Of the sample

■ Rare (0-25%)	■ Majority (50-75%)
■ Frequent (25-50%)	■ Overwhelming majority (75-100%)



75 per cent of IDP and 61 per cent of host community households reported that their school-aged children in all states are currently not attending school, with the highest levels reported in White Nile for both IDP (95 per cent) and host community (98 per cent) households. 88 per cent of IDP households reported breaks in their children's education because of displacement, with high levels reported in all states excluding Northern (76 per cent of IDP households reported school breaks) with highest proportions reported in White Nile (73 per cent of IDP households).

39 per cent of IDP and 36 per cent of host community households reported lower satisfaction with their children's current education, largely due to financial barriers, with many displaced families unable to cover school costs.

Based on the above, recommendations could include minimising learning disruptions by developing catch-up education programmes for children who have experienced extended school breaks, prioritising those with gaps of over a year. Donor governments and aid agencies can support by partnering with local organisations to support community outreach initiatives raising awareness on the importance of education and encouraging return to school.



Children in a classroom in Al Geneina. Hanan Edrus/NRC

Safety and social cohesion

	IDP	Host community
Feel more at risk	Rare (0-25%)	Rare (0-25%)
Feel they are now in stable and safe condition	Majority (50-75%)	Rare (0-25%)

Of the sample

	Rare (0-25%)		Majority (50-75%)
	Frequent (25-50%)		Overwhelming majority (75-100%)

17 per cent of IDP households and 14 per cent of host community households currently report feeling less safe in all states. The primary reason behind feeling unsafe had to do with poorer housing conditions, as reported by 86 per cent of IDP and 68 per cent of host community households, notably in Blue Nile and Gedaref states as reported by host community households.

Gender plays a big part in the perceived safety of people. 53 per cent of IDP and 58 per cent of host families consider that women are more at risk when outside their current home, and 51 per cent of IDP and 62 per cent of host families saw girls as particularly unsafe.

Two per cent of IDP households and one per cent of host community households reported bad or strained relations between IDPs and local communities host community. Trust levels are also relatively modest amongst IDP and host community households with an average of 35 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

Based on the above, action should focus on strengthening trust and community engagement. This can include activities like regular dialogue forums, community integration activities and enhanced awareness of existing support structures. Initiatives that promote these efforts should be done in collaboration with local authorities and local community groups. Improving housing conditions, including overcrowding, to reduce exposure to environmental hazards, tensions and security risk should be prioritised in states with poor housing conditions. Additionally, supporting programmes to bring essential services closer to vulnerable populations can reduce risks associated with accessing basic services.

Recommendations

A programme design shift

- Explore urban, area-based programming: Implement neighbourhood-level interventions that integrate host communities alongside IDPs, rather than focusing solely on individual or household-level programmes. Prioritise areas with the most urgent needs to improve conditions for both groups.
- Design action-based urban response plans: Support these plans with participatory governance that seeks to enhance community engagement and self-reliance programmes. This can be done through community-led initiatives, guided by a community action plan that is collectively appraised.
- Incorporate community-driven risk assessments: Ensure urban response planning includes protection measure for vulnerable groups (women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities) within participatory governance frameworks.
- Expand research on urban displacement: Map needs and capacities, not only of families but also infrastructure, services, and the private sector. This should include analysing the power dynamics among diverse stakeholders, including local governance and community structure.

Revitalised livelihood and support market-based approach

- Enhance market accessibility and capacity: Create market support programmes, in collaboration with local authorities and private sector to inject liquidity, rehabilitate infrastructure (e.g., warehousing, cold chains) and implement regulatory reforms to support economic recovery during the crisis.
- Promote market-oriented livelihood programming: Focus on urban informal economies by targeting sectors aligned with critical needs, such as food production, housing rehabilitation, and safe water supply, to maximise impact. Support investments in food systems to reduce aid dependency and ensure protection-sensitive markets that provide equitable access for displaced and host communities.
- Scale up cash-based interventions: Expand programmes like cash-for-food or cash-for-work to address the high reliance on cash and reduce barriers caused by insufficient income.

Protection centered approach to housing

- Reconstruct and rehabilitate infrastructure: Prioritise facilities hosting IDPs, ensuring they are accessible, inclusive, and designed to mitigate overcrowding, exploitation, and gender-based violence.
- Support tenure agreements: Complement infrastructure support with formal agreements between displaced communities and landowner to ensure housing security.
- Strengthen urban community engagement: Invest in urban community and stakeholder engagement capacities, ensuring inclusion of minority and vulnerable groups.

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Appendix

Market assessment

98 per cent of IDP and host community households reported that markets can be accessed safely following displacement, with almost all households reporting such in Northern and White Nile states.

77 per cent of IDP and 83 per cent of host community households reported that functional markets were currently in walking distance with 88 per cent of IDP and 89 per cent of host community households reporting sufficient stock of food and other products.

The need for robust market support interventions is critical to preventing further economic deterioration and dependency on humanitarian aid. In-kind assistance, while valuable in certain emergencies, should be carefully weighed against the risks sidelining local market actors, compounding the challenges they face, and delaying long-term recovery.

Without targeted support, the local economy risks further deterioration, undermining recovery and increasing dependency on aid. Prioritising investments in market-based programming is key as local markets, while strained, remain functional, accessible, and capable of contributing to the recovery process if adequately supported in many cases. Programming should aim at improving market accessibility and enhancing market capacity in collaboration with local authorities, and business communities and market actors, who can pave business enabling environments and support through structural developments. Despite challenges impacting product availability, many traders are eager to improve quality standards with external support. Infrastructure limitations hinder scale-up, but inter-business cooperation remains strong, showcasing traders' willingness and potential to contribute.

Market-based programming can also address liquidity challenges by engaging local traders and suppliers, providing them with financial and technical support to rebuild supply chains and meet increased demand.

This approach not only restores market functionality but also stimulates local economic activity, benefiting both host and displaced populations. Strengthening markets ensures that humanitarian assistance contributes to economic resilience, paving the way for sustainable recovery and reducing dependency on external aid.

Methodology

Data was collected through household surveys covering five key areas: livelihoods, health, education, housing, and security. The surveys were conducted using KoboToolbox, enabling quick data collection and updates. A systematic random sampling method was used, with adjustments like random walk and respondent-driven sampling when household lists were unavailable. Efforts were made to ensure gender balance, though resource and access challenges sometimes affected representativeness.

Final sample distribution per state is as follows:

State	Total IDP households	Total host community households	Total households
Blue Nile	853	329	1,182
Gedaref	1,058	783	1,841
Kassala	838	577	1,415
Northern	1,136	702	1,838
Red Sea	622	404	1,026
White Nile	842	480	1,322
Total	5,349	3,275	8,624



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