

# Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #5



4 OCTOBER 2023

## INTRODUCTION

Between **1 August** and **12 September 2023**, Internews collected **282 rumors, perceptions, and comments** in **Arabic** and **English** shared by people affected by conflict in Sudan on social media platforms like **Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp**. In this edition of the Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update, we focus on rumors and information gaps about aid distribution, and travel procedures and documents. We shed light on humanitarian needs, like access to essential medicines, and information on handling unexploded ordnance (UXO). This report also explores how local responders, such as Resistance Committees, Emergency Rooms, and Sudanese organizations are using social media to reflect humanitarian needs and garner support for their activities.

## TOP SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

1. People report they are not receiving aid, and there are rumors that aid is being looted and sold in shops
2. Rumors are circulating about new passport prices, travel procedures, and requirements for a residency permit in Egypt
3. Reports of a food crisis in parts of Khartoum, and food shortages in East Darfur
4. Calls for financial support to help cover food, health, evacuation, and travel expenses

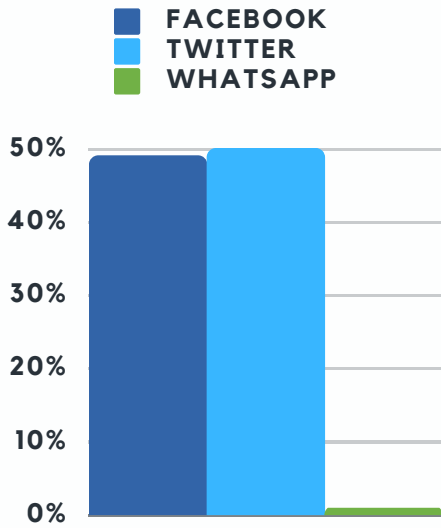
**19**

posts collected from  
private accounts/  
groups

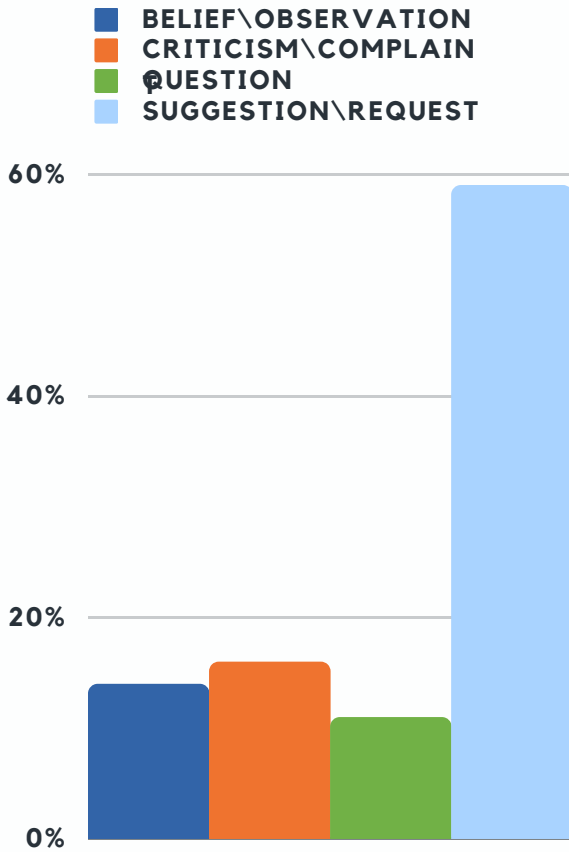
**263**

Posts collected from  
public accounts/  
pages/groups

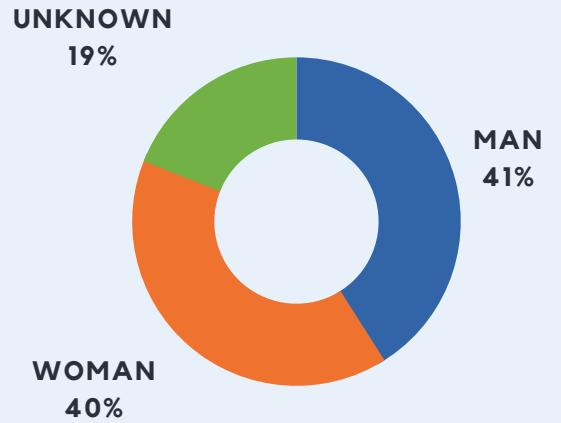
### PLATFORMS



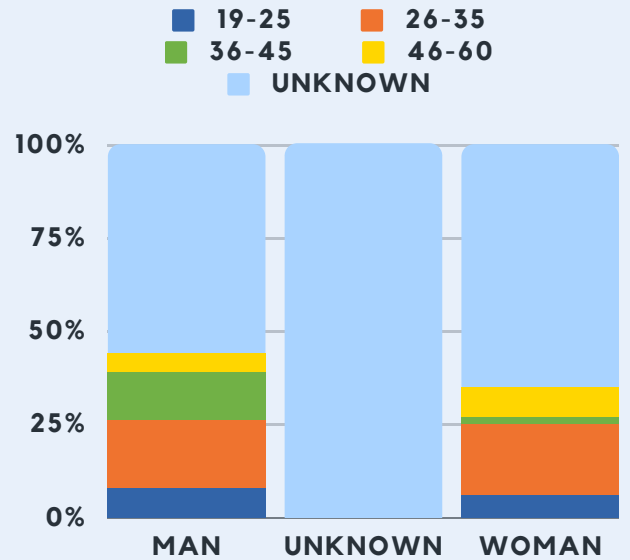
### DATA TYPE



### GENDER



### AGE VS GENDER



Although this chart illustrates the age and gender of those sharing humanitarian needs and complaints on social media, it may not accurately reflect the demographics of those who hold these concerns.

## HUMANITARIAN AND INFORMATION NEEDS

People affected by conflict and displacement continue to use social media to seek support and information from others. About **62% of social media posts** were in the form of appeals for a range of needs, like medicine, and cash assistance for food supplies, rent, and bus tickets for those looking to move from conflict areas to a safe place. Individuals continue to seek updates about the whereabouts of missing loved ones from others.

### TRAVEL PROCEDURES

Individuals on social media are also looking for information about visas and other travel procedures mostly to Egypt, and other countries. Some individuals are looking for safe routes to enter Sudan. For instance, an individual inquired about the possibility of entering Sudan through Eritrea. While some Sudanese individuals in Egypt are looking at the possibility of traveling from there to other countries, such as Turkey. Some individuals are looking for information about the procedures for transferring critically ill family members to Egypt from Sudan. Others inquired about a circulating rumor that Sudanese women and children will no longer require a visa to enter Egypt. Up to date, all Sudanese passport holders require a visa to enter Egypt.

Displaced people in Egypt continue to seek information about the procedures to obtain and renew a residency permit. Rumors are circulating about the length of the permit, whether it lasts up to three or six months. Confusion and misinformation about the required documents and procedures for residency permits are common, with individuals highlighting different procedures on social media. Moreover, the sudden introduction of new requirements can also amplify the level of distress and confusion due to a scarcity of official information regarding these procedures.

## TRAVEL PROCEDURES

“

“If you stay out for more than 6 months, it [the permit] will cancel, otherwise you can enter...”

**Woman, Facebook**

“Good morning, the people who got the residency, [with] passports extended by hand, can we get the residency?!! Or should we renew it [passport] with the sticker?”

**Woman, 19-25, Facebook, Egypt**

“Guys if I want to transfer a cancer patient in a critical situation in the ambulance from Madani to Egypt what are the procedures I hope you can help me”

**Woman, Facebook, Madani, AlGezira**

”

On August 30, 2023, the Sudanese Ministry of Interior announced it had resumed issuing new passports in **Port Sudan, and in the following days, passport centers reopened in other locations, such as AlGedaref, AlGezira, Blue Nile, Northern, River Nile, and Sennar states.** Despite the official announcement of passport prices, individuals on social media have complained about differing prices across passport centers around the country. There is a need for up-to-date information regarding passport fees, to avoid the circulation of rumors and misinformation during this time.

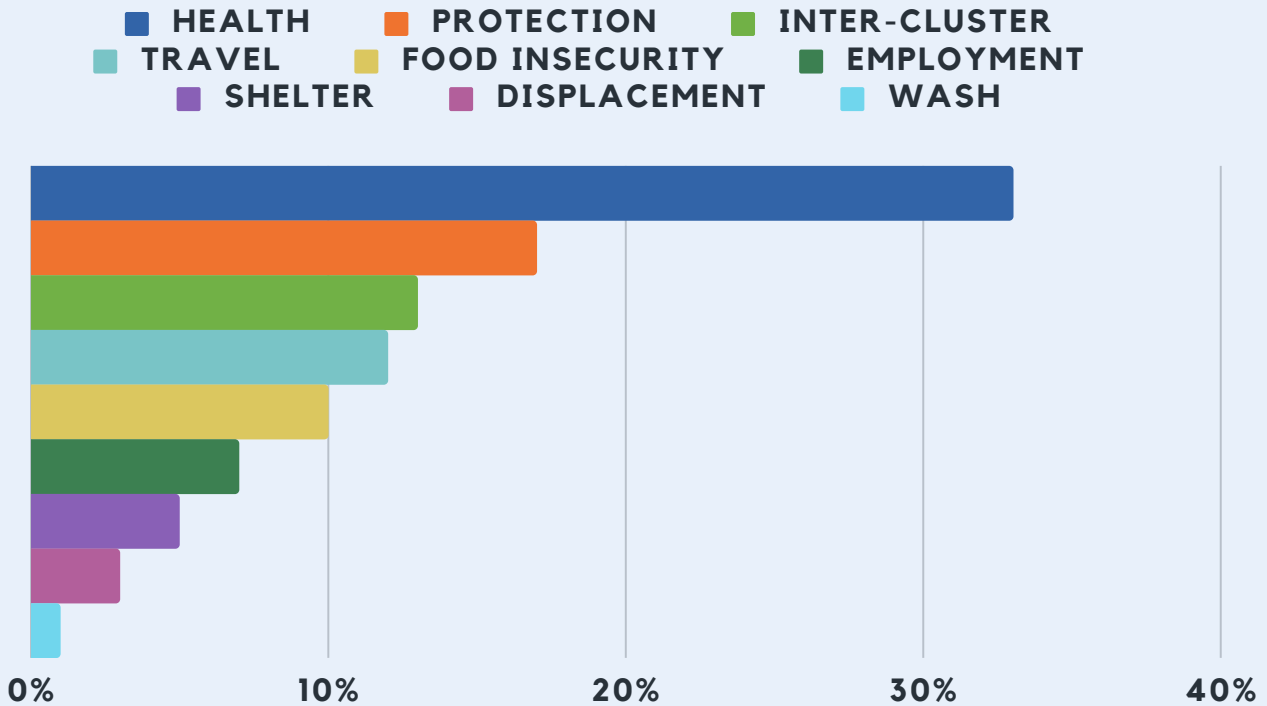
"Update in passport issuance prices 75000 adults and children ..."

**Man, 26-35, Facebook**

"After the success of the media campaign against the high prices of obtaining passports, the government is backing off passport issuance fees for adults 120 thousand and for the young ones 80,000"

**Man, Facebook**

## TOP HUMANITARIAN THEMES



Inter-cluster needs include a range of humanitarian needs, like food, shelter, non-food items, health, and protection support.

### SAFELY HANDLING UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

A woman on Twitter reached out to an influencer: **"...A shellfire fell on the roof of our house. Can you tell us who we can communicate with? # Urgent \_ need"**. Individuals responded to this need by sharing the Sudan Armed Forces' **Balagh App** (تطبيق بلاغ), which people can use to report an emergency in their area. Another individual shared a screenshot explaining how to deal with unexploded ordnance (UXO) and the phone number of a specialist who can help. It is worth noting that the demand for actionable information regarding UXO has been increasing since the conflict started in April 2023. Although a few informational fliers have been developed, these resources are not readily available on social media, and people affected by conflict continue to search for such information.

## SHIPPING MEDICINE FROM OVERSEAS

In August, rumors were circulating on social media that stolen medicines from pharmacies were being sold in Souq Libya in Khartoum. Some social media posts shared images of the alleged medicines. The images appear to be credible, although we cannot verify the precise geographical locations or if the displayed medicines were in fact stolen.

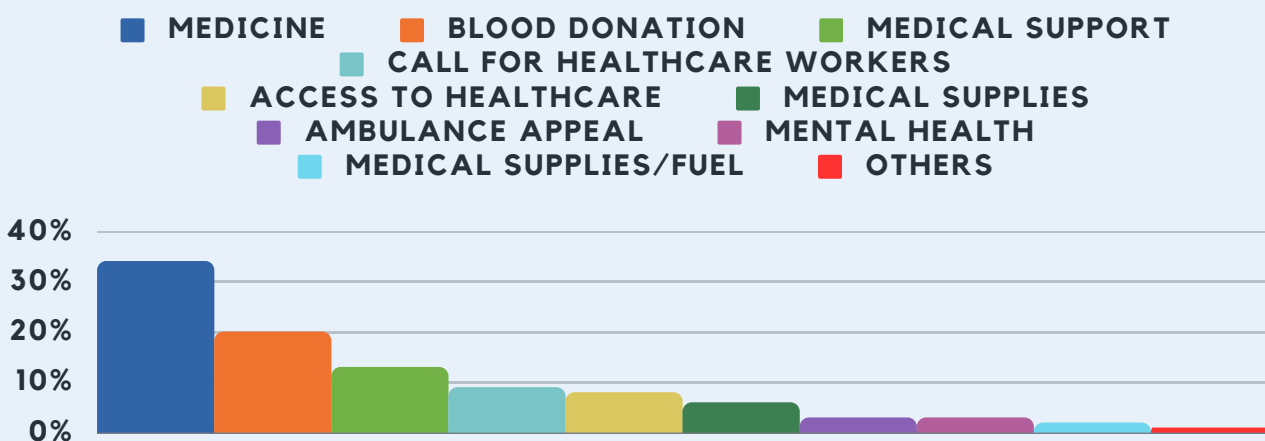
Due to drug shortages in Sudan, people with chronic diseases and critical health conditions are struggling to find medications. Families and friends are looking for alternative ways to provide their loved ones with medicine by shipping it from other countries. Some individuals are looking for more information regarding shipping options, and previous experiences of others.

“...Excuse me, I want to ask if I want to send medicines to Sudan how, if there is someone who’s done it, tell me where to go, or if there are contact numbers of trusted shipping companies...”

**Woman, Facebook**

While many are seeking such solutions, appeals for medicine continue to be the top humanitarian concern since the start of the conflict. Consequently, individual appeals are not a viable solution for the majority.

### BREAKDOWN OF HEALTH CONCERNS



The data under "Medical Supplies/Fuel" includes an urgent plea for fuel for the generator in Umm Ruwaba Teaching Hospital after a power outage disrupted dialysis sessions.

## PERCEPTIONS OF AID

Some social media users expressed frustration over not receiving humanitarian aid. An inquiry posted on Twitter shows that people are searching for information about financial support. People are also seeking information about the registration schedule for cash support in the Red Sea state, reasons for delays, and alternative ways for individuals to access this support while registration is closed. To bridge these information gaps, humanitarians can help by addressing people's concerns, sharing updates on the allocation of aid, specifying prioritized groups and locations, clarifying the distribution process, explaining reasons for delays, and providing a clear timeline for when aid will reach those in need.

“

"There's someone who is asking if there are entities that provide financial aid, if you know any entities or people, mention them..."

**Man, 26-35, Twitter**

"I came last week to register and found that there is no registration until further notice, does anyone know when the registration opens?"

**Woman, Facebook**

"Why do the displaced people of Kassala not have cash support?"

**Woman, Facebook**

"Where is our aid, we did not get it still and we're waiting"

**Man, 26-35 years of age, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

"Where does it go (the aid)"

**Man, Facebook, Port Sudan - Red Sea**

”

## PERCEPTIONS OF AID

There are rumors citing that relief items are being looted, aid is being sold in shops, assistance is being distributed amongst a select few, and relief is not reaching the people who need it the most. These types of posts and rumors highlight the need for better communication between humanitarians and the affected people, as well as the need for dissemination by humanitarians on the available two-way communication channels and plans for establishing. Sharing quality information and responding to people’s questions and concerns are necessary to humanitarians building trust with people affected by conflict and displacement.

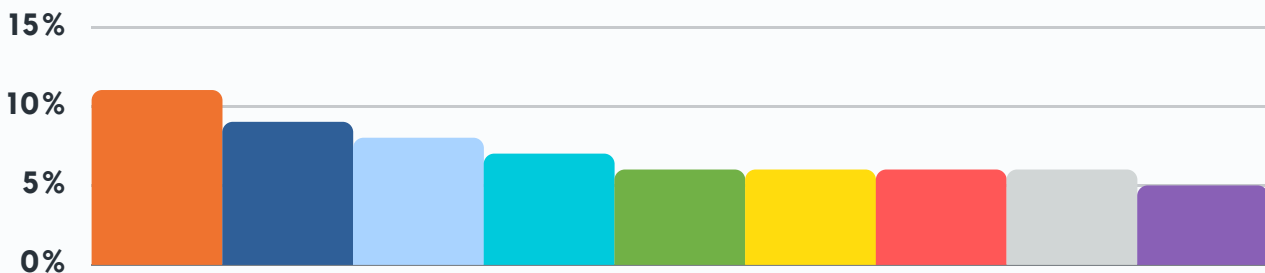
“We did not get the aid but we see it in markets”

**Woman, Facebook**

“Who will receive it, it will be looted before it arrives...”

**Twitter**

### KEY SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



Posts under the "Job Search" category shed light on the urgent need for livelihood support in the wake of the ongoing conflict, as countless individuals find themselves unemployed. Among these posts, a man between the ages of 25 and 35 on Twitter, was looking for help in obtaining a disability-friendly tuk-tuk. His goal is to secure means so that he can provide for his family.



## FOOD INSECURITY

Access to food is critical for survival. Individuals on social media report a food crisis in AlShajara AlHamadab and AlDanagla neighborhoods in Khartoum, where access to food supplies has been affected. A Facebook post cited the Governor of East Darfur: “We have been suffering from a severe food shortage since the start of the conflict”. Moreover, individuals continue to appeal for financial support to purchase food supplies for their own families, or on behalf of other families. It is worth noting that these types of appeals are for families living in various parts of the country.



“From the DM

In need of food supplies, I am the eldest girl in charge of the house, and now there is no work, and my uncle, the one in charge of us, has also died. A shell fell in their house in Nyala. We need food supplies for anyone who can help me, Residence: Umbada 10...”

**Man, 36-45, Twitter, Umbada - Khartoum**

“A very necessary need

A family in Rufaa, for three days, no food or drink, consisting of 7 people whose condition is bad. Whoever can help them... with something small, please contact with me...”

**Facebook, Rifa’a - AlGezira**

“#Food\_Need

Urgent need for financial support: to purchase food supplies.

Number of people: a family of 16

Place of residence: Nyala

Cost: 80 thousand ...”

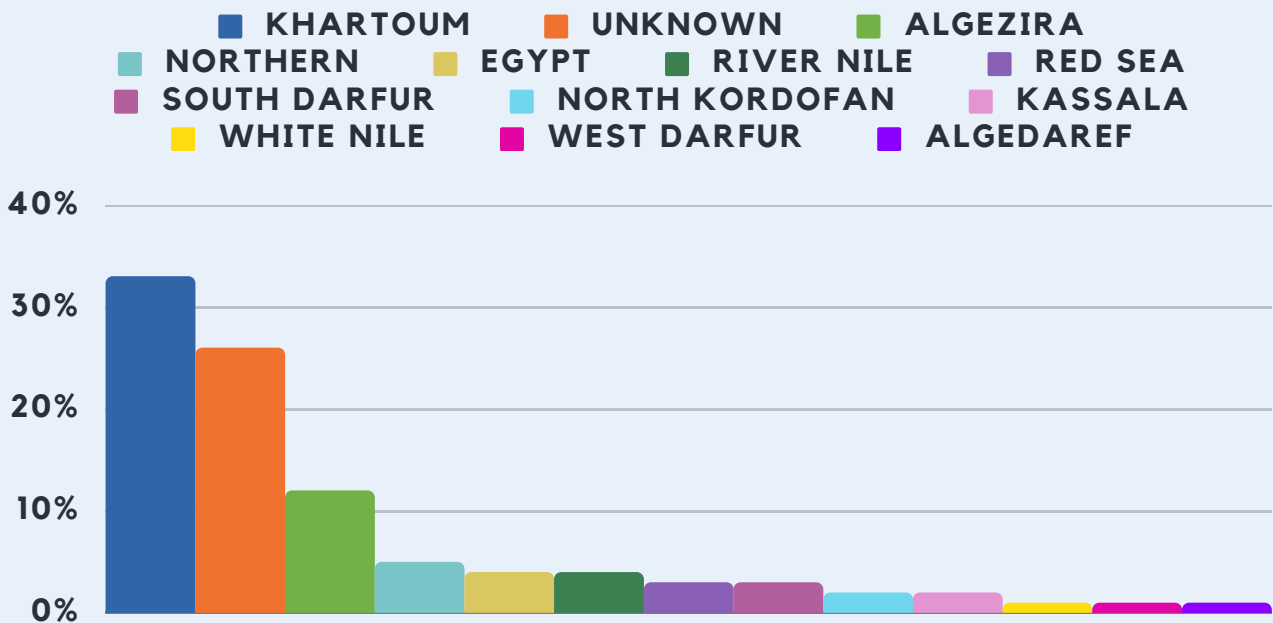
**Woman, 36-45, Twitter, Nyala - South Darfur**



# INCREASING NEED FOR SHELTER

With the displacement of those living in Khartoum to other states, numerous displaced families settled with their relatives and loved ones. As this period of displacement persisted, questions and requests for advice began to appear in private women’s groups. A few displaced women posted about the challenges of living in a shared space and sought information from others on how to navigate these challenges. Some women felt mistreated by their host family or complained of lack of sufficient food. Scarcity of financial resources and the lack of job opportunities limited their ability to contribute. Despite the difficult conditions, some women indicated that they were considering returning to Khartoum. Host families also had concerns about the difficult economic conditions and the rising price of goods. Some noted that they were doing their best to support displaced families but were constrained by limited resources.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



Social media posts from Darfur states are scarce, which is likely due to an internet blackout in certain areas, like AlGeneina, West Darfur.

## DIGITAL SOLUTIONS: SUDANESE LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADDRESS NEEDS

Amidst the ongoing conflict in Sudan, communities have come together in response, demonstrating remarkable resilience and solidarity. The Sudanese organization **كلنا قيم (Kulana Qiyam)**, under the initiative **جوانا أمل (There's hope inside us)** has played an important role in addressing the urgent medical needs of children and families enduring critical health conditions, especially cancer. These types of initiatives serve as a safe haven and provide support to those enduring displacement and conflict in the face of limited healthcare. They ensure that essential aid reaches children suffering from cancer and leverage the reach of Sudanese social media to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and draw attention to urgent medical needs like blood donations. However, to continue supporting people affected by conflict and displacement, these initiatives require a continuous flow of donations and resources. Recently, Kolana Qiyam announced a reduction in food support to Hantoub camp in AlGezira state, due to limited resources.



"#The\_bad\_news

After more than four continuous months, Kolana Qiyam's initiative and their partners are gradually withdrawing from providing food service in Hantoub camp, which contains more than 6,000 displaced people...Kolana Qiyam volunteers, who begin today to provide one meal instead of two meals and call on the state government and all relevant international organizations to fill this great vacuum in this vital service...

#Kulana\_Qiyam

#Food\_Aid"

**Woman, Twitter, AlGezira**



“...Very urgent #Emergency blood need

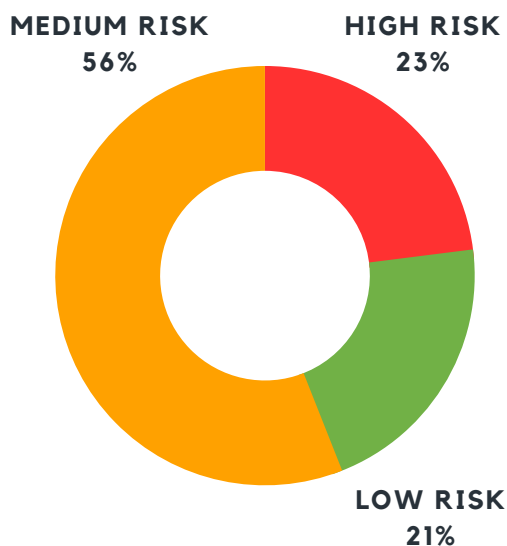
The child... has cancer and suffers from severe complications due to the disease, he is in AlZarra Hospital, and he needs 3 bottles of blood blood type O+ve

Place of donation, Al-Zarra hospital...

#Kolana\_Qiyam #There’s\_Hope\_Inside\_of\_Us”

**Male, Twitter**

### BREAKDOWN OF RISK LEVEL



Internews collected 158 medium-risk posts were recorded, and 66 high-risk posts. It is essential to respond swiftly to high-risk posts as they can cause harm. High-risk threats, such as a post shared by a woman on Twitter citing “...an unexploded ordnance fell on the rooftop of our home can you tell me which authority can I communicate with?”, present an imminent danger to someone's safety, requiring immediate attention. In contrast, Medium-Risk threats may pose a moderate risk to a person's well-being over time but do not present an immediate danger, while low-risk social media posts do not seem to pose any current or long-term risk.

In parallel, **Shari’ Al-Hawadith شارع الحوادث**, a grassroots organization established over a decade ago, now hosts various health initiatives spanning across Sudanese states. These initiatives play a pivotal role in conflict areas by facilitating access to crucial medical supplies and organizing blood donations. By operating in different locations, such as Umm Ruwaba, North Kordofan, and Khartoum, they tailor their services to the immediate needs of specific communities, recognizing the logistical challenges associated with conflict-affected areas.

They also rely on existing hashtags like **#Your\_Share\_Saves\_Others** **#شيرك\_ينقذ\_غيرك** to encourage active community participation, emphasizing the importance of collective efforts in times of crisis. People respond to posts using the hashtag **#Your\_Share\_Saves\_Other** by re-sharing these posts and trying to help.

For example, a woman shared a post on behalf of a woman who was looking for someone to help bury her deceased brother whose body was lying in a conflict area. In response, people shared the contact information for volunteers who are offering dignified burials in cases where bodies have been left in the open or families are unable to bury their loved ones because their bodies lay in inaccessible or hard-to-reach areas.



“Urgent need

We need these medicines very urgently for 2 of our brothers their health condition is very difficult

- The cost reaches 35,000 To donate and contribute Account number...



- Ceftriaxon 500 mg —(1)
- Nexium 40 mg
- Ondesteron 8 mg
- Artesunate 120 mg —(3)... To donate and communicate... - Shari' Al-Hawadith Ummrawaba”

**Ummrawaba Archive, Facebook**

“Urgent need of blood for a patient who will is undergoing a surgery Blood type:

A negative (A-ve) O negative (O-ve )

Phone...

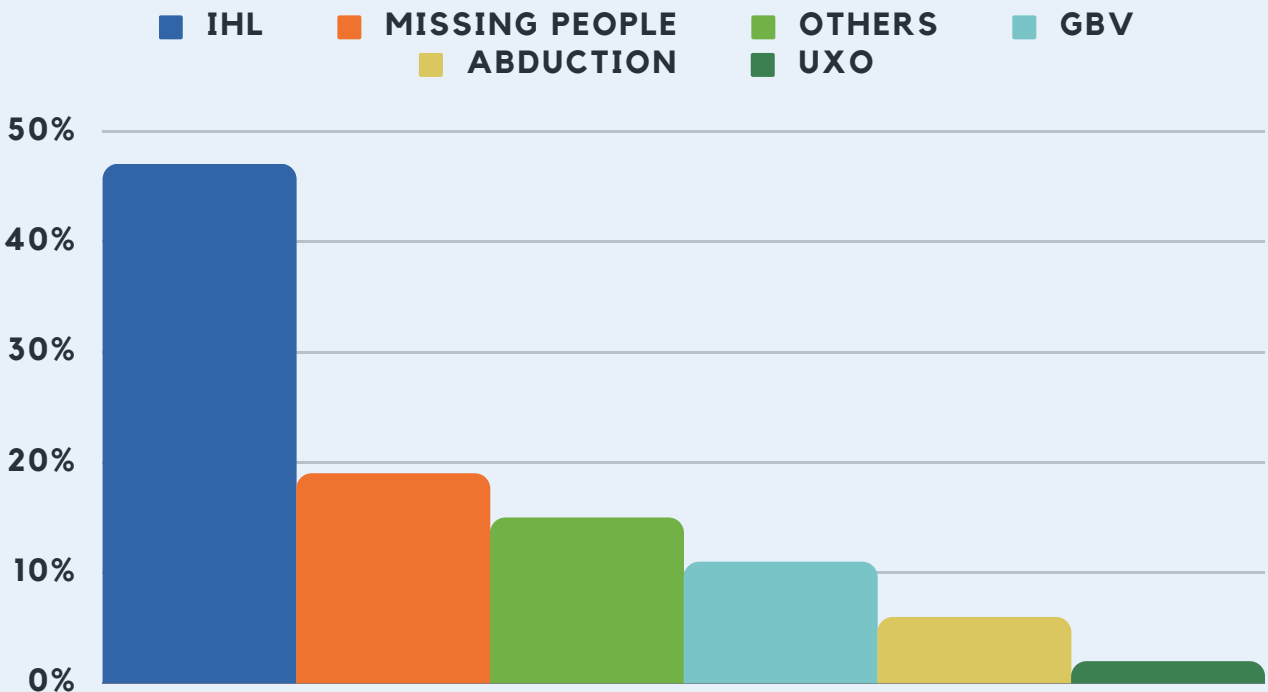
**#Your\_Share\_Saves\_Others**❤️”

**Shari Al-Hawadith Sennar, Facebook**



Campaigns such as **#مفقودين\_السودان** **#Sudan\_Missing** provide a platform for individuals to share information about loved ones who have gone missing during the conflict. This not only fosters a sense of solidarity among those who are facing similar tragedies but also raises awareness on a broader scale in hopes that families will get some information about the whereabouts of their missing loved ones. Between August 1st and September 12th, **273 posts** were shared on Twitter under the hashtag **#Sudan\_Missing**, with an estimated reach of about **2.1 million**. There were **351 engagements** with the posts, with mostly people sharing prayers and resharing the content.

### BREAKDOWN OF PROTECTION CONCERNS



IHL posts highlight the impact of the conflict on civilians and key protection needs. For example, one social media user appeals for support in evacuating three older people - one with mobility challenges and another who is critically ill - from a conflict area to a safe place. Additionally families are looking for information about loved ones who were abducted or detained.

**Emergency Rooms** in conflict areas are serving as central hubs for coordinating various forms of support, from **blood donations to appeals for medical supplies and foodstuffs**. Emergency Rooms are also collaborating with others, such as the **Kassala Emergency Room's partnership with Diawan AlZakat of Kassala**. This amplifies their impact and shows the need for more partnerships. Given the limited humanitarian access within conflict areas, it is imperative to strengthen the response to this humanitarian crisis through partnerships between local responders and humanitarian organizations.



### **"Sharq AlNeel Emergency Room**

- We ask all citizens to go to AlBan Jadeed hospital to donate blood, to meet the need required of all blood types.
- There is a large number of injuries that have reached the emergency room of AlBan Jadeed hospital as a result of the artillery shells incident in the Haj Youssef area, and it is expected that injuries coming to the hospital will increase in the coming hours.
- Donors should go directly to the hospital."

**Woman, Twitter**

**"...Kassala Emergency Room** in cooperation with Diwan AlZakat of Kassala State...Volunteers continue their efforts in packing and distributing food baskets

184 food baskets were distributed to the shelters

143 AlSalam Student Accommodation Center

41 in school gathering centers"

**Woman, Twitter**

**"Ummbada Emergency Room** "urgent need" O- blood for a delivery at JICA Hospital..."

**Woman, Twitter**



**Resistance Committees** are neighborhood groups that represent and serve their communities. Resistance Committees, such as **Janoub ALHizam, Halfyat ALMulook, Nyala, and Aburof** effectively use social media platforms such as **Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp** to engage with their audiences. Through these channels, they not only share information about the humanitarian situation and their response to humanitarian needs in their respective areas, but also engage in broader community empowerment and advocacy efforts. For instance, the Twitter account Sudanese Tweeps Forum boasting nearly half a million followers hosted a Twitter Spaces discussion with ALKalaka Resistance Committee about forcible displacement affecting residents of ALKalakla in Khartoum.



“An important announcement from **Aburof Resistance Committees**

Jinan School announces the opening of doors for all those who have no home from the people of Aburof Al-Dabaghah Al-Qamayer to live in, Jinan School, north of the Nile City Police Department, northwest of the Sarha Cemetery”

**Man, Twitter**

“**Al-Shajara Al-Hamdab** area suffers from an acute shortage of food commodities that almost reaches nothingness due to the closure of shops and the interruption of trade exchange between ALShajara market and the rest of the markets...”

**ALShajara ALHamadab Resistance Committees, Twitter**

**Kolana Qiyam, Shari’ Al-Hawadith, and Resistance Committees** not only use their social media platforms for sharing information, but also to address critical humanitarian information needs, and launch fundraisers that will help address needs on the ground. They go beyond information-sharing and play a vital role in providing medical supplies, coordinating blood donations, distributing food, and extending support to individuals and families facing the harsh realities of conflict and displacement in Sudan.



These local responders harness the power of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp to connect with their communities. They employ these channels not only to announce urgent appeals for blood donations, medications, and other essential items but also to foster a sense of community participation. Individuals respond by helping or sharing valuable information, like creating a collective effort to alleviate some of the hardships people experience. For instance, some of the Resistance Committees reshare posts that were shared with them by families searching for missing loved ones.

**Resistance Committees** also act as credible information sources. They use their social media platforms for accountability purposes, they are transparent about monetary donations and share updates on how the funding has been used to address needs. Some Resistance Committees also use social media to explain why they haven't been able to reach certain areas or address the needs of community members. Social media spaces are also used to highlight the conflict's impact within their communities, for example, the number of houses that have been damaged or the number of casualties. Despite weak communication networks and unreliable access to internet services, these groups persistently share situational updates from their respective areas.

**While the shared updates do not explicitly state whether the information shared is verified and do not mention specific information sources, it's important to consider the context. Members of Resistance Committees are from the affected communities; it is reasonable to assume that they rely on verified information coming from affected people. The appeals they share often originate from the affected community, which contributes to the trust placed in Resistance Committees.**

The extent of influence and follower base may fluctuate, depending on the specific initiative and the platform they use. For instance, Arkaweet Resistance Committee has around **64,000 followers on Facebook** compared to **6,362 followers on Twitter** as of September 21st, 2023.

The majority of the **Resistance Committees' pages and Shari' Al-Hawadith initiatives** maintain an active online presence. They consistently post updates, urgent appeals, and information related to the evolving humanitarian situation. Their commitment to maintaining an active online presence shows their dedication to mobilizing support and responding to the dynamic needs of conflict-affected communities.



**Resistance committees also highlight the challenges in receiving international and regional assistance, their efforts are crucial in keeping residents informed about the evolving situation and in mobilizing support within the community.**

“60 days after the city of El Geneina was invaded and its residents forcibly displaced...

- Weakness in the communication network and complete interruption of internet services.
- The city's displaced persons camps were demolished and destroyed
- Parts of the Abu Dhar camp, the complete demolition and destruction of the Gilani camp (the forests), the Krinding camp and the Hajjaj city camp.
- All the southern and western neighborhoods were looted, even the doors, windows and zinc were not spared...”
- 

“...weak intervention of international and regional organizations...”

**AlGeneina Resistance Committees, Facebook - August 12, 2023**

## How can Social Media listening contribute to Accountability?

Internews' timely social media listening activities can help humanitarian organizations plan and adapt their programs and activities, to ensure they are responding to communities' needs and priorities and identifying harmful misinformation or information gaps. Listening attentively to people's concerns through social media, and understanding their priorities allows people affected by the conflict to influence and shape the humanitarian response to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to needs that are voiced. Social media listening is one way to ensure accountable humanitarian support is being provided.

## Internews Methodology

Internews' analysts gather feedback and concerns posted on social media by individuals affected by conflict and displacement in Sudan. The example posts featured in this report are representative of the most common concerns seen across the data set. All data is collected in the original language and categorized by theme to support analysis that aligns with and supports humanitarian coordination mechanisms and response.

To access the anonymized data set that supports this analysis, please contact Asia Kambal, [akambal@internews.org](mailto:akambal@internews.org).