

# Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #8



10 JUNE 2024

## INTRODUCTION

Between **21 February** and **13 April** 2024, Internews collected **390 comments, perceptions, and rumors** in **Arabic** and **English** shared by people affected by conflict in Sudan on social media platforms, including **Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Reddit**. In this edition of the Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update, we look at perceptions of humanitarian aid, and how the communication blackout and intermittent connectivity in various parts of the country is affecting individuals' access to information.

## TOP SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS, 21 FEBRUARY TO 13 APRIL 2024

1. The ongoing communication blackout in various parts of the country affects people's access to healthcare, food support, cash, and critical information.
2. Some individuals express skepticism and frustration toward international aid efforts, questioning the effectiveness and distribution of assistance.
3. Individuals look for mental health services online.
4. Family members search for information about missing loved ones and detainees

40

Posts collected from  
private accounts/  
groups

350

Posts collected from  
public accounts/  
pages/groups

## AID PERCEPTIONS

In the comments section of social media posts about humanitarian aid, individuals share their perspectives on aid provided by humanitarian organizations and states. Several individuals wondered where aid is being distributed in Sudan and if it reaches the people who need it, others said they only see it on paper. The following comments are in reaction to a Facebook post about food distribution in a shelter center in AlDamar, River Nile:

“People, the people in conflict areas can't find something to eat, why do you distribute the food in safe areas?”

**Facebook**

“May God reward you well for helping our people and our country. The question here is whether this aid actually reaches those who deserve it. This is the important question here”

**Man, Facebook**

These recurring perceptions imply a need for humanitarians to share more information regarding the rationale for aid distributions and selected areas and populations. Enhancing openness about the allocation of assistance can help foster trust in humanitarian responders.

Social media users also reacted to the US State Department's comments regarding delivering humanitarian supplies via Chad. The majority were in opposition to aid entering Sudan via certain routes. The opposition likely stems from a combination of factors, like the perceived engagement of states within the conflict. Some individuals perceive aid as driven by diplomacy and interests, rather than solely humanitarian concerns.

“...There will be something else inside it other than aid”

**Woman, 19-25, TikTok**

“We don't want any aid except through Port Sudan port”

**Woman, TikTok**

These comments highlight doubts about humanitarian aid and selected routes and indicate a level of distrust in aid operations and their impartiality. Humanitarians should be more transparent about challenges to aid delivery. The source of aid can also influence perceptions. Some social media users suspected that assistance was driven by geopolitical interests in the region. For some social media users, this prompts questions about whether aid to Sudan is genuine or if it serves broader political or strategic objectives.

Some also voiced skepticism and frustration regarding the UNSC resolution 2724 on Sudan, which called for the cessation of hostilities during the holy month of Ramadan, and for the parties to the conflict to engage in dialogue for peace. Individuals online argued that the resolution would not bring about any real change. These critics call for tangible and effective solutions to address Sudan's challenges. Social media listening can be one of the tools for ensuring accountability among humanitarian efforts and enabling individuals affected by conflict to engage and influence UN-led processes aimed at easing civilian suffering.

"Just ink on paper...on the ground, nothing will be implemented"

**Man, 36 - 45, Twitter**

"Expresses, Urges, Repeats, Stresses He made us hate our lives, we want tangible things, the citizen is tired."

**Man, Twitter**

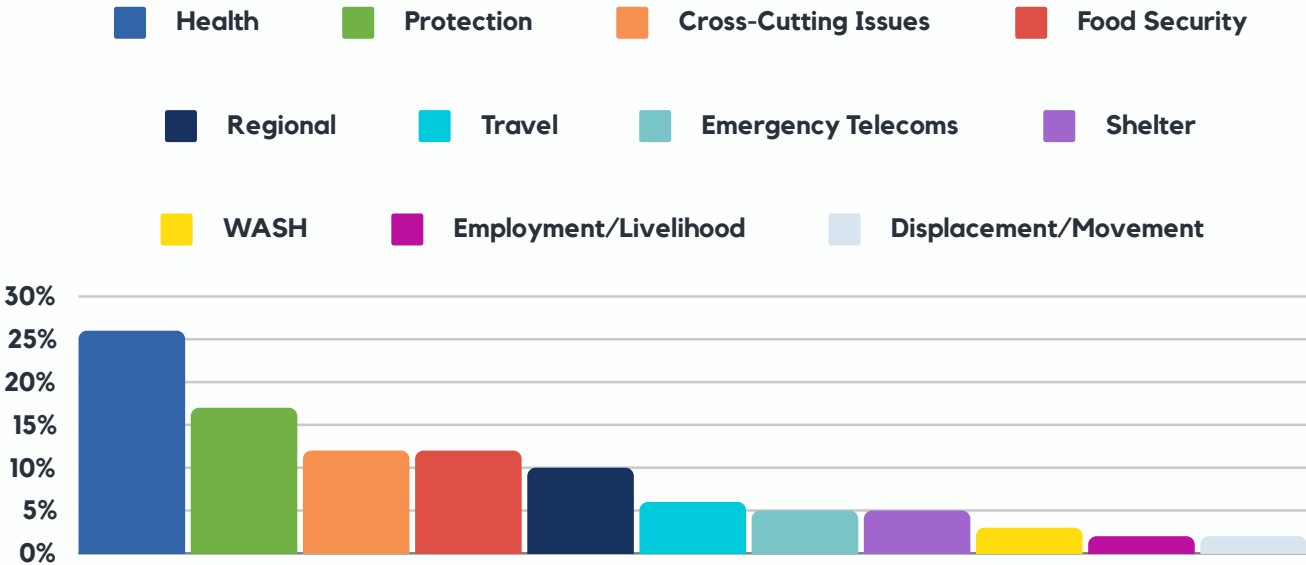
## **TELECOMMUNICATION BLACKOUT IMPACTS FOOD SECURITY**

Social media users highlight a series of humanitarian consequences across various regions in the country due to a communication blackout and intermittent connectivity. The blackout has not only hindered the flow of vital information but also disrupted essential services, such as the closure of community kitchens due to their inability to receive donations through mobile applications.

The breakdown of communication networks in areas like Bahri in Khartoum state has resulted in increased insecurity, with reports of armed gangs exploiting the situation. The below post from the Bahri Emergency Response Room on Facebook highlights the effects of the blackout on the people of Bahri:

“...In conjunction with the disruption of communication networks and the internet in Sudan, the city of Bahri has recently witnessed an unprecedented security breakdown by armed gangs committing crimes of murder, threats, and theft in the homes of citizens who have not left Bahri since last April. These thefts specifically target food items that are in severe scarcity due to the siege imposed on them. In the absence of information and media silence about the violence and the significant psychological impact of these acts on citizens, fear, anxiety, and the imminent death that surrounds them have become prominent. It is no longer death from diseases or stray bullets, but now dangerous individuals who can exchange their lives for their sustenance...”

## BREAKDOWN OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY THEME



Protection posts highlights the vulnerability of specific groups, including women and children who are affected by forced displacement, and lack of access to essential services like healthcare and food assistance.

The blackout has also left families in distress, unable to communicate with their loved ones. Individuals are resorting to different measures, including seeking assistance through social media platforms and reaching out to diaspora communities for help in locating family members. Occasionally, these types of posts prompt a response from others. Some share updates about the situation in the area based on information they obtained during conversations with loved ones living in or near the area.

“My father in ALObeid has been out of touch for two weeks and our minds are consumed with worry if anyone knows someone with Starlink in ALObeid or any way to communicate with someone in ALObeid or can help in any way please let me know thank you in advance”

**Man, 26-35, Twitter**

“I am asking about news from AlHasahisa is there someone who has come from there or someone there who is using Starlink[?] We have our family there and we want to know their news...”

**Man, Facebook**

“In order to get cash through Bankak, people travel 300 kilometers east for the internet and come back!!!! In order to reassure our families, we send a paper letter with a bus  
#Save\_AlGezira”

**Woman, 19-25, Twitter, AlGezira**

In addition, emergency response rooms are appealing to both local and international organizations, including the United Nations, for urgent intervention to restore communication services and provide humanitarian aid. Some are emphasizing the need to keep telecommunication infrastructure out of the conflict to ensure the safety and well-being of civilians as it hinders access to critical information and services, like safe movement and accessible roads.

“...We previously warned as the Emergency Room in Bahri about the consequences of internet and network disruptions and appealed to the responsible authorities to restore them, emphasizing their importance to citizens as a source of income for all residents of Khartoum, as all bank transfers are done through the internet. Therefore, once again, we urge all local, regional, and international organizations to intervene in restoring internet and communication services to all cities in Sudan...”

**Bahri Emergency Response Room, Facebook**

“...We appeal to the United Nations organizations, including the World Food Program, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the Red Cross, and other humanitarian organizations, to intervene urgently to provide humanitarian assistance and food to the civilians trapped in Omdurman...We also renew our appeal for the protection of civilians and to pressure the warring parties to keep the communications sector out of the scope of conflicts...”

**Ombada Emergency Room, Facebook**

Despite the challenges, there are attempts to find alternative means of communication, such as utilizing radio programs to relay messages and seeking assistance from individuals with access to satellite internet services, such as Starlink.

“...I have a simple idea for you we have a program on AlDamazine Radio that reaches Sennar and Singa as well. We can read your messages on the program you can send your messages in private either written or as a voice recording...”

**Man, 26-35, Facebook**

The blackout has also affected the work of the Department of Unidentified Persons in AlNaw Hospital in Omdurman which is responsible for the shrouding and preparation of bodies:

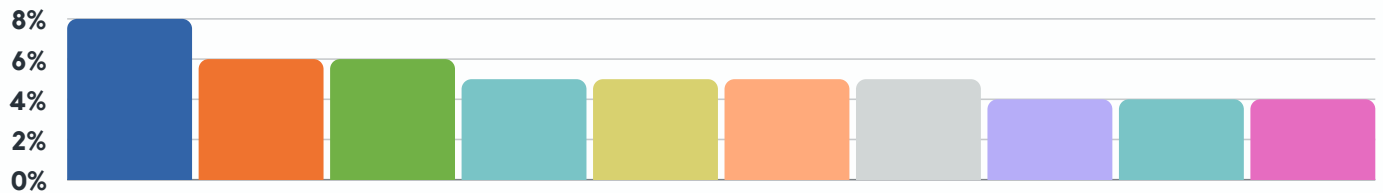
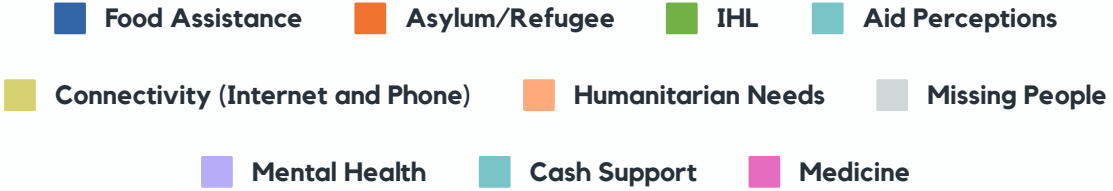
“...During the period of internet outage and the scarce capabilities in the Department of Unidentified Persons(shrouding and preparing bodies)all the shrouds in the department were consumed and it is currently suffering from a severe crisis in preparing the materials noting that we have lost contact with the Ambassadors of Charity organization which is based in Shendi which was supporting the department with all preparation materials and quantities of up to 800 shrouds...”

Moreover, women are facing a heightened risk due to conflict. The blackout exaggerates these risks by impeding women’s access to information and support services. In addition, shortages of sanitary pads and financial assistance further compound the challenges faced by women and girls.

“...One of the most affected groups is women, we now express our grave concern over the impact of the internet blackout in Sudan on girls and their safety which is considered a threat to the lives and dignity of women. Some of the most important of these impacts are...the internet outage is causing a shortage of sanitary pads and financial assistance for emergency rooms, as bank transfers have stopped and there is a complete lack of funds needed to help women and girls at such critical times. We currently have an urgent need for more than 150,000 sanitary pads in the Bahri Women's Emergency Room...”

**Bahri Emergency Response Room, Women’s Office, Facebook**

### KEY SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



Food Assistance emerges as the most prevalent issue. Those in besieged areas are especially vulnerable, where access to food supplies is more difficult. Some highlighted food shortages in IDP camps and shelter centers, and called on host communities to share their resources to help cover some of these needs.

The blackout has also fostered an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, compelling people, specifically in AlGezira state, to refrain from seeking medical care or participating in their daily activities due to escalating cases of continuous violence and other security concerns.

“Obtaining the internet has become very difficult the important thing is that we ask you to pray for quick relief and people I swear to God are now afraid to go to hospitals and markets...and forced conscription we go out to transfer through Bankak and to tell you about what’s going on. I swear we are now crossing very long distances thank God 🙏  
#save\_algezira\_state”

**Man, 25-35, Twitter, AlGezira**

One of the most pressing consequences of the communication blackout is the exacerbation of food insecurity across affected regions. The blackout has disrupted communal kitchens and food aid efforts, leaving hundreds of thousands of civilians, including children, women, and older people at risk of hunger.

“Appeal for the elderly home in Nyala the need to buy food supplies, the required amount is 250 thousand pounds for the entire month the account number xxxx I hope whoever can helps and send the statement DM 🙏”

**Woman, 26-35, Twitter**

In areas like Omdurman, AlAylafun, and Jebal Awliya, the suspension of the activities of communal kitchens due to the inability of volunteers to operate without reliable communication has resulted in severe food shortages. These kitchens serve as a lifeline for vulnerable populations, providing them with daily meals. Without access to communication networks, volunteers are unable to coordinate food distribution efforts effectively, leaving many families without access to nutritious meals.



"...Today we are suffering from a serious humanitarian crisis due to the cessation of a large number of Takaya and community kitchens that used to provide food to the people in need. The reason behind this sudden halt is the interruption of communications networks and the internet which was considered the primary means of providing services and sending donations through banking applications, despite the return of communications networks and the internet to some states Khartoum remain without access till now and still suffers from complete isolation and disruption of services. These joint community kitchens in several areas have completely stopped, causing a food crisis that could lead to a real disaster, as there are 300 joint community kitchens within Khartoum State..."

**Khartoum State Emergency Response Room, Facebook**

"Hunger forces displaced people in Darfur camps to rely on locusts and tree leaves for food"

**Twitter**

"Two children died of hunger in Khartoum and hundreds of kitchens stopped due to a communication outage"

**Twitter**

"🔴Appeal from Babanusa emergency room the danger of famine and thirst threatens the lives of the displaced #it\_must\_stop"

**Man, Twitter**

"...The kitchens ran from October 12th until December 15th with the intensification of the siege to the area the emergency room distributed food supplies to some areas and targeted the families that had been displaced from the area with a number exceeding 150 families and as the displacement continued the [emergency] room continued to operate kitchens through some supporters until support arrived from the Sharg AlNeel Emergency Room. The interruption of communication networks and the internet in Al'Aylafun is the reason for the kitchens to stop at intermittent periods..."

**Sharg AlNeel Community Kitchens , Facebook**

## FINDING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT ONLINE

Conflict and displacement have had a devastating impact on individuals' lives. A study published in the International Journal of Social Psychiatry conducted in Khartoum investigated mental health issues and highlighted the urgent need for proper support and interventions in conflict-affected regions (Mohammed et al. 2024). Relying on social media listening, Internews has identified appeals for mental health services from Sudanese individuals across Sudan, Egypt, and Uganda. This trend underscores the conflict's profound psychological toll on the civilian population.

"I want a psychiatrist or a hospital in Port Sudan"

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

"Hello I am looking for psychiatrists, online or in Uganda, Kampala..."

**Man, Facebook, Kampala - Uganda**

"Peace upon you, I am in Egypt and I need a psychiatrist ... If you know a Sudanese doctor here, please let me know Guys ..."

**Woman, Facebook, Egypt**

Lack of medical care in conflict areas is leading some individuals to turn to social media for mental health consultations, and support for mental health illnesses like depression.

"People who have depression and stopped taking the medicine are you able to live your life normally? there is no medicine in our region ... I have no other choice but to stop taking medications"

**Man, 26-35, Facebook**

●● From the dm

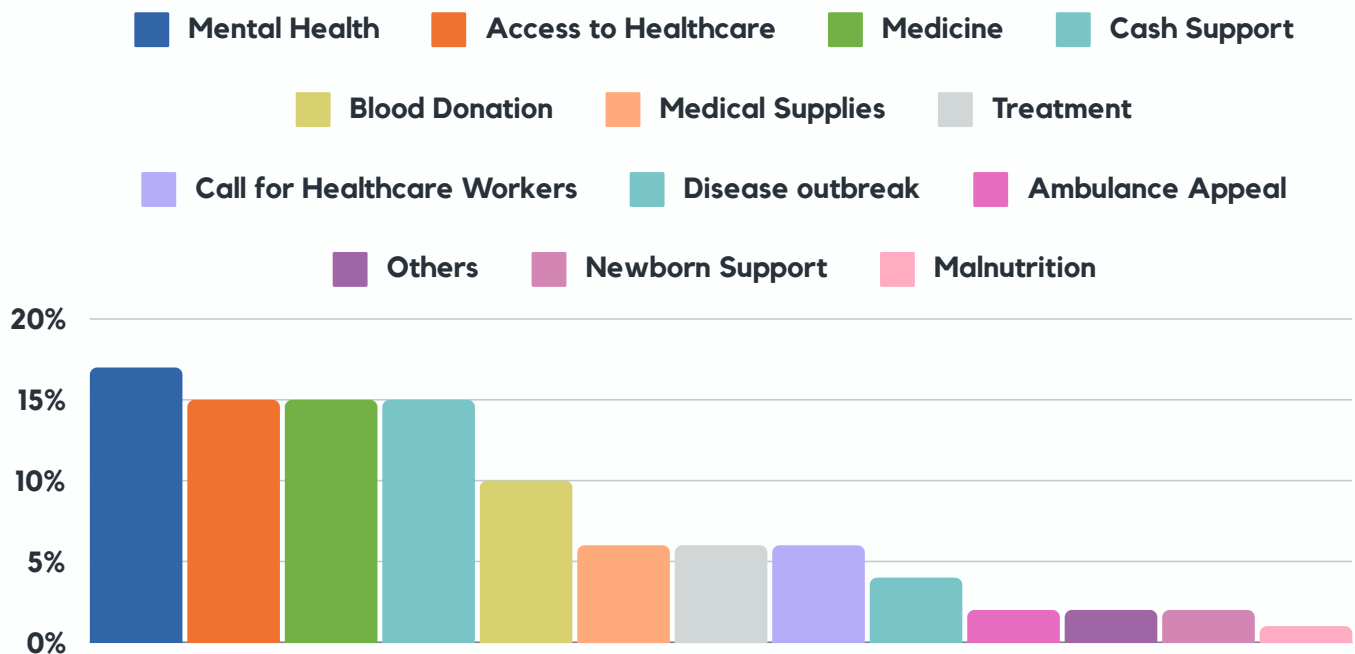
I want you to post a medical consultation for a friend is it okay for him to take antidepressants? And what type can he take? .. He is in Khartoum he has no way of seeing a doctor of course #rt"

**Man, 26-35, Twitter**

The dire situation in conflict-affected areas is also pushing some individuals to the brink of despair, as evidenced by a tweet revealing suicidal thoughts. Another tweet underscores the distressing impact of siege and scarcity of food on mental well-being. Limited or no access to mental health support and information has pushed some individuals to go online to seek information about how to identify mental health conditions and support a family member enduring mental illness.

“I need any Fatwa that makes suicide permissible because of what's been happening to us”  
**Woman, Twitter**

## KEY HEALTH POSTS



Appeals for cash support to cover the costs of medicine and other treatments continue to be shared online. Those with chronic diseases continue to search for information on where to find specific drugs, like insulin and blood pressure medication. Some posts highlighted cases of malnutrition among children in Darfur, due to food shortages and lack of medication.

Internews analysts noted a high level of engagement with posts seeking mental health and counseling services. The Sudanese Anxiety Support Group established in 2018 with over 82K members, is an interactive private Facebook group encouraging discussions about mental health and a community-centered approach. In this group, posts seeking psychological support receive high engagement.

For example, when individuals ask for psychiatrists, others often tag doctors or doctors organically respond to the post. On the other hand, on Twitter, people may share the contact information of specialists or direct people toward an organization, clinic, or grassroots initiative like Egyptian Red Crescent, Ahfad Trauma Center, and Bahri Emergency Response Room.

"Peace be upon you, we were in AlFatehab until last week, there's famine...we finally left to AlThawrat. My mother went into a mental state where she stocked up on as much food as she could, she says we need to eat two meals only and the meal is one plate. We had many fights about this between me and her and I told her "I did not flee famine just to live in another". Anyway, food is being distributed in the area for free out of goodwill, because they know the hard conditions people are going through. My mother has become obsessed with food, we carry pots every morning and she takes me and my sister to get big portions, and she goes there in the morning, noon, and the afternoon and if I'm late she panics "Where is the plate? Where is the plate??? Where is the plate?????? quickly we are late!!!" .... This behavior is not normal, what could this be? PTSD? obsessive-compulsive disorder? and what's the solution?"

**Woman, Twitter**

## INFORMATION NEEDS ABOUT ASYLUM AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

The need for information about asylum and refugee procedures persists on social media. Before deciding to leave Sudan, many are exploring ways to rebuild their lives elsewhere. Social media posts reveal an interest in learning about countries that might have eased visa procedures for those impacted by the conflict. Education emerges as a potential pathway for rebuilding lives and investing in a brighter future.

"Countries Allowing Sudanese Refugees In? I was curious which countries were friendly regarding visas/refugee status for Sudanese refugees. I heard that Uganda is one of those countries, but I would appreciate more options. Even if those countries would require purchasing property etc or other conditions."

**Reddit**

"Peace be upon you, I am a student who wants to apply to a university here in Cairo. I am asking if I can apply before I get the yellow card and if that's even related

Please note that I have taken an appointment to get the card, but it is long after the application deadline"

**Facebook, Cairo - Egypt**

Sudanese face new challenges upon reaching their destination. In Egypt, for example, they navigate the asylum seeker process to obtain legal residency. A crucial document is what many refer to as the "yellow card," granting legal stay and refugee status. However, information gaps exist regarding its privileges, such as accessing education and receiving cash transfers.

"How are you beautiful women I'm asking if you know universities that offer scholarships or countries that offer visas to those affected by war.!"

**Woman, 26-35, Facebook**

"... I wonder if the yellow card can be used as a residence permit? If I have a child who is at school age are they accepting the children in schools with it? If there is no residency."

**Woman, Facebook, Egypt**

"Is it possible to receive a transfer via Western Union using the yellow UNHCR card Any experiences?"

**Woman, Facebook, Egypt**

Adding to the confusion is the lack of clarity on how to close a UNHCR application if it's no longer needed. Moreover, social media discussions extend beyond legalities in Egypt, with individuals seeking work opportunities and accessing available humanitarian assistance through these platforms.

"The file is registered under my name and it includes my brothers and my mother I traveled how can they close the file??"

**Man, Facebook, Egypt**

"Guys, are there Sudanese schools ... If yes I want a job, not necessarily a school maybe at a kindergarten or nursery"

**Facebook, Egypt**

**🚨** Urgent need

I'm asking if a person has applied for asylum in Egypt and received the UNHCR card, but has not yet applied for residency, can I close the file?..."

**Woman, 26-35, Twitter, Egypt**

"I am asking about the IOM if they provide assistance to someone who has surgery or if it's a waste of time if they do provides [assistance] what are the procedures and how long does it take and it's easy? If anyone has experience"

**Woman, Facebook, Egypt**

Another destination for individuals and families fleeing conflict in Sudan is Uganda, where they face challenges with a new language, culture, and life. Here too, clear information is critical. Internews documented questions from social media about the asylum application process, with confusion surrounding specific steps like an "attestation" and its role in UNHCR refugee registration.

"Peace be upon you what is this attestation?"


+How long does it take to get it?"

**Man, 19-25, Facebook, Uganda**

"Okay and when will the card be ready

+Does the attestation mean am registered as a refugee in unHr"

**Man, 19-25, Facebook, Uganda**

A public Facebook group named "سوداني في يوغندا"  "Sudanese in Uganda with 121k members was created in late December 2023. The group aims to assist Sudanese who want to travel to Uganda and those living there. The group also reflects the need for support services.

"Peace upon you I am asking about the organization that runs a free course for refugees and the organization that provide housing for 3 months."

**Woman, Facebook, Uganda**

"Guys in terms of livelihood and education is Uganda or Rwanda better"

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Uganda**

Individuals searching for a safe place to relocate can fall prey to online misinformation. For example, in the Facebook group Sudanese in Uganda, some shared false information about resettlement to Canada and Europe from Uganda. Although some members countered these rumors, such misinformation creates confusion that may lead to misguided decisions.

"... Regarding the camp that was opened in Uganda are there any people went to Canada or is it just talk"

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Uganda**

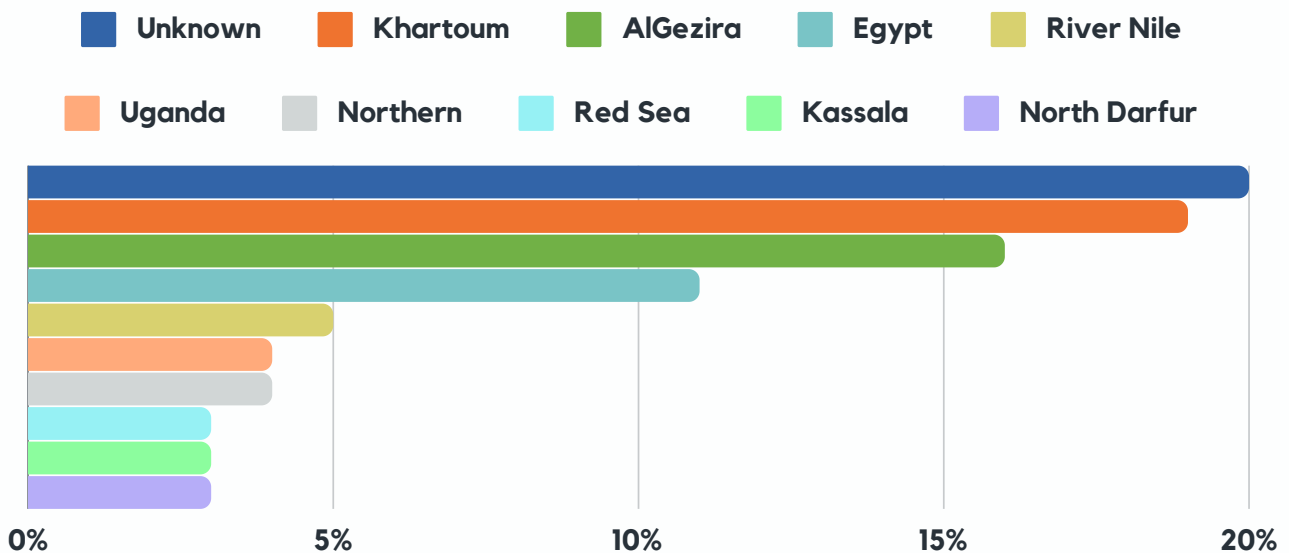
"Oh, people are annoying us, every time they tell you that they are coming to Uganda to go to Europe some people are being fooled , there is no resettlement no Canada or anywhere else just staying here."

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Uganda**

## THE SEARCH FOR SHELTER AND WATER CONTINUES

The conflict in Sudan has forced millions of people to flee their homes in search of safety and better lives in other states. There is an increased demand for housing as a result of displacement, leading many individuals to utilize social media to find homes and apartments in safer cities, such as AlGedaref, Atbara, Kassala, and Shendi. As countless displaced people have lost their jobs and sources of income, there is a growing need for information about organizations that offer cash support to help reduce the burden on internally displaced people and Sudanese refugees who cannot afford to pay rent. Some individuals were looking for information about shelter centers that accommodate displaced people in Atbara and Shendi in River Nile State.

### SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



This is the geographical breakdown of 390 social media posts collected between 21 February and 13 April, 2024. Most of the social media data comes from the reflected states, however there are other states not represented in the chart. Intermittent connectivity and an internet blackout in some areas, like West Darfur, impede social media activity.



“○ Is there a school or dormitory in Atbara that weclomes displaced people will they accept one displaced person?”

**Man, Twitter, Atbara**

Due to the ongoing conflict, many schools and university dormitories are being used as shelter centers. However, lack of sufficient aid coupled with a high number of displaced people has prompted social media appeals aiming to collect support and highlight the challenges faced by these shelter centers. Adequate food and water are two of the main needs. Many of these shelter centers struggle to cover these needs, so appeals have been made to encourage neighbors and residents of neighboring areas to offer support.

“○ Need

...8 years old and suffers from kidney failure

The residence is in Khartoum after the events they were displaced to Madani and after the attack in Madani they are now in AlGedaref and are undergoing dialysis in AlGedaref and living in a shelter center and they sleep on the ground the mother just wants to buy a bed for her sick daughter...”

**Man, 19-25, Facebook, AlGedaref**

Social media posts have also addressed local and international organizations asking them to intervene and provide aid to shelter centers in North Darfur. The official spokesman for the **Coordination of Displaced Persons and Refugees in Darfur**, Adam Rijal reported:

“-More than one million children in displacement camps suffer from acute malnutrition and about six million displaced people urgently need food

- The conditions in the displacement camps have reached the stage of first-degree famine due to malnutrition scarcity of basic food supplies, and the collapse of the health situation

#Aljazeera\_Sudan”

Those returning to Khartoum after a period of displacement have also noted a shortage in water supplies, which has a dire impact in continuation of dialysis sessions for people with kidney failure.

“...We Came back to Khartoum and came back to suffering. My God improve the situation. We in Al-Azhari square 12 we suffer from a lack of water and are unable to buy anything. We fasted for 10 days without electricity and water.

We need money to bring gasoline for a generator...”

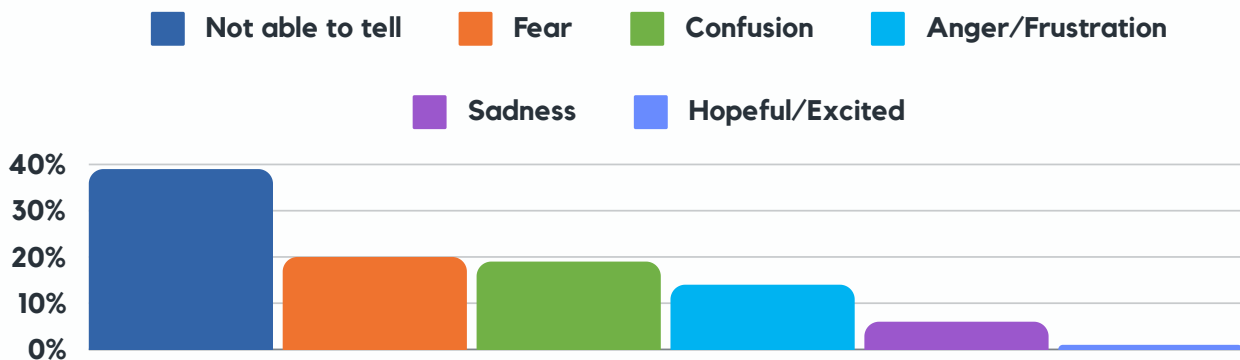
**Twitter, AlAzhari - Khartoum**

“The water outage crisis doubles the suffering of kidney patients in the Bashayer Center: an appeal for support and solidarity.

Kidney patients in Genoub AlHezam, and in South Khartoum as a whole, suffer from the high prices of dialysis at the center the price of dialysis at the center has reached (15) thousand pounds, added to this suffering is the continuous water outage for two consecutive weeks, so patients are forced to bear the costs for transporting water to the center by a truck...”

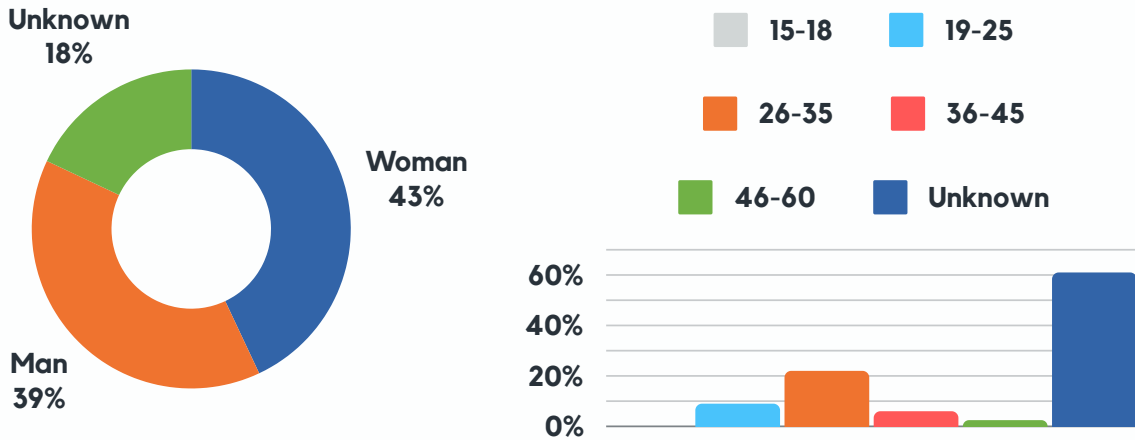
**Facebook, Bashayer Center - Khartoum**

### SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY SENTIMENT ANALYSIS



Social media posts reflect confusion and uncertainty among individuals seeking information about administrative procedures, travel, and healthcare in Sudan and neighboring countries. Others expressed frustration over the allocation of aid to safe areas rather than conflict-affected regions.

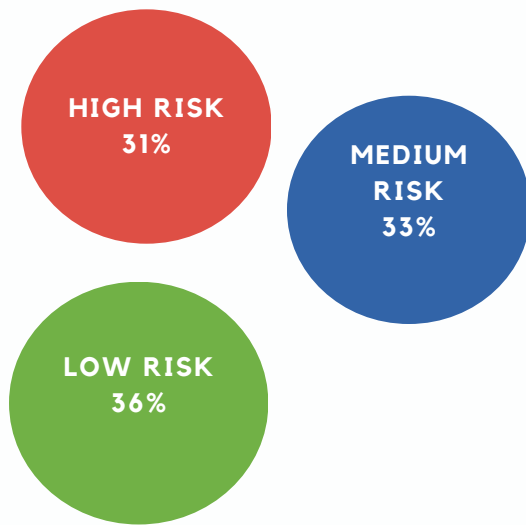
## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY AGE AND GENDER



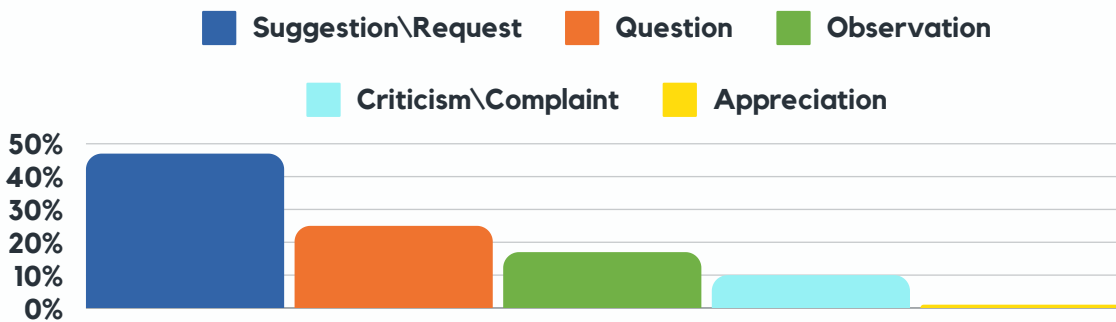
Although these charts illustrate the age and gender of those sharing social media posts, it may not accurately reflect the demographics of those who hold these concerns as some individuals rely on those with access to internet to share their question or information need.

## POSTS BY RISK LEVEL

High risk posts are those that express a potential for harm. For example, water shortages in Jenoub AlHezam in Khartoum state, are affecting access to dialysis for those with kidney failure.



## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY TYPE



Some of the key requests include the establishment of safe corridors to deliver food and medicine to areas in urgent need.

## 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, concerns, and rumors 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).