

Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #9

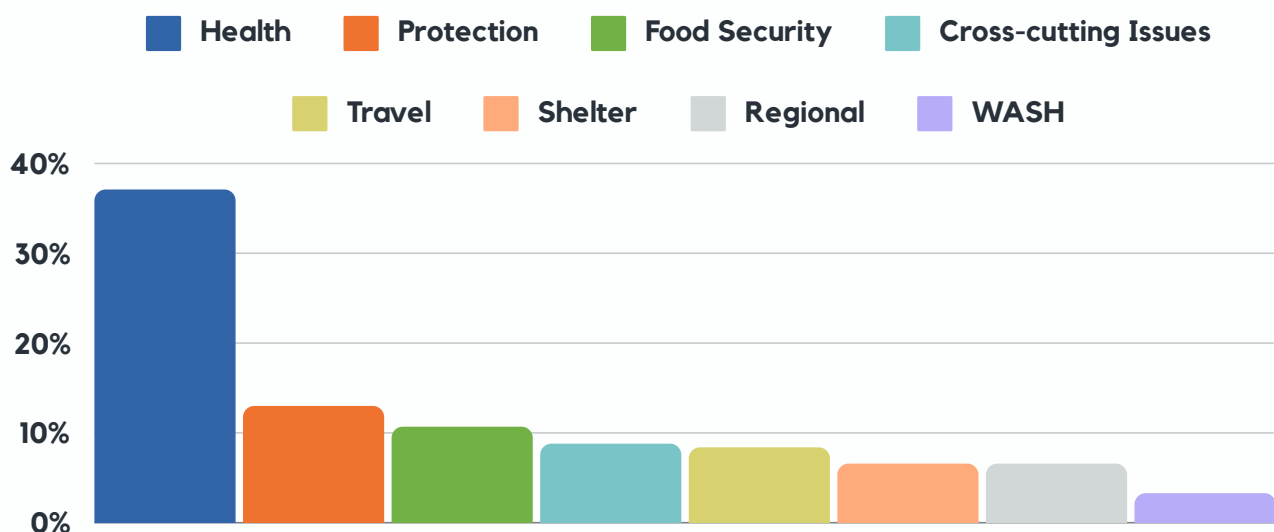


12 AUGUST 2024

INTRODUCTION

Between 14 April and 24 June 2024, Internews collected **608 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), WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Reddit**. Internews analysts collected **91 posts from private accounts and groups, and 517 posts from public accounts, pages, and groups**. In this edition of the Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update, we address treatment rumors and the continuous search for health information. The report explores individuals' concerns about access to food, shelter, and safe movement. We also highlight key protection information needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY THEME



This is the thematic breakdown of 608 social media posts. Appeals for food, health, protection, travel, and shelter represent about 75% of the overall data. *Regional* includes posts looking for information about asylum procedures and refugee rights, as well as assistance opportunities for Sudanese refugees.

PROTECTION

Since the outbreak of the conflict, numerous individuals have been searching for their missing family members. Many turned to online communities on Facebook like “**MISSING مفقود**” and “**الاختفاء القسري والمعتقلين والاسرى في السودان**” (Forced disappearance and detainees and prisoners in Sudan) to share information about missing individuals, including their photographs, names, and the last known locations.

“... The place of disappearance is Shambat
 The date of disappearance was one year
 and two months ago...Whoever has any
 information please help me ...”

Man, Facebook, Shambat - Khartoum

“Is the Red Cross working?
 Phone if possible”

Woman, Facebook

One crucial piece of information that could assist families is knowing the organizations and bodies that can help with family reunification. Some social media users have requested emergency contact numbers for reporting missing persons, while others inquired about organizations that aid in finding missing people, particularly in Khartoum.

Individuals reacted to these questions by providing the contact details for the International Committee of the Red Cross. A few mentioned that it's also feasible to look up the Red Cross' hotline on Google, and others were doubtful about receiving assistance from these organizations. A Reddit user suggested that this query should be shared on Facebook, given its extensive user base and numerous dedicated groups, making it easier to get more information.

Individuals used hashtags like “**#الاختفاء_القسري**” **#forced_disappearance**, “**#الحرية للمعتقلين**” **#FreedomforDetainees** and “**#MISSING مفقود**” to bring more visibility to detainees and missing persons. Some highlighted the mental health effects on families of detainees and missing people, noting that they were unaware of the locations where their loved ones were held. A few mentioned that initially, they were aware of their relatives' locations, but they were later moved to other places.

Consequently, people turned to various methods to learn more about their loved ones, such as seeking out former detainees who had been released. They also sought out local residents for information, for instance some directed inquiries to the communities surrounding the detention centers, like Soba in Khartoum. While some individuals looked into contacting the Red Cross and those with connections to seek their support in facilitating the release of detained loved ones.

“Our brother... a person with special needs has been detained for more than a year they said they saw him in the ... detention centers in Riyadh, we want someone from the Red Cross or someone with connections who can help them get their son out .. the family’s situation is difficult I hope anyone who can help will help us.

#Missing_Sudan”

Man, Twitter

Locating a trustworthy party to assist with detainee issues can lessen the risk of exploitation. A man on social media pointed out that he was blackmailed and deceived while attempting to gather details about his missing family member. Thus, it’s important that reliable information about organizations that can support is widely shared, coupled by risk communication efforts that can help prevent harm.

Women have also encountered numerous difficulties. Since the outbreak of conflict, there have been posts about gender-based violence, along with kidnappings and requests for ransom from families in exchange for their loved one's release. As these occurrences have risen, some appealed for help online, requesting mental health support for survivors, and financial support to help evacuate women and girls at risk.

“Peace be upon you 🙏

○ We have an urgent need for a family in Salha Omdurman. They want to go out because the fighting is severe and the boy has his sister's the girls and mother with him and they are afraid that they will come in at any moment. Now they need to go from AlSalha to AlObeid, and the cost is 800,000. We have 300 ...”

Woman, 26-35, Twitter, Omdurman - Khartoum

SURVIVING WITH SCARCE FOOD

The ongoing conflict in Sudan has worsened food insecurity across the country, and as of 1 August 2024, the [Famine Review Committee](#) confirmed famine in North Darfur. The UN reports millions of people are facing acute food shortages, hunger and malnutrition. Social media posts from various regions, including Darfur and the Nuba Mountains highlight severe food shortages.

“Eating "laloob leaves" is now a norm for... [a] family in Dellami, Nuba Mountains. Impacted by the #SudanCrisis, and poor harvests, they survive on these leaves. Help us reach our fundraising goal to provide basic essentials.”

Twitter, Dellami - South Kordofan

“...Children are suffering from severe malnutrition, due to a lack of food and medicine; amidst the looming threat of famine

The director of Kalma Hospital said that the lives of children are at risk due to high rates of malnutrition and diarrhea the situation is extremely difficult and diseases have spread, affecting the nutrition and immunity of women and children leading to an increase in cases of severe malnutrition. “The nutritional deficiency and situation analysis in Kalma Camp indicate that the situation is critical after aid has almost completely ceased we appeal to all international and local humanitarian organizations to intervene immediately to provide aid and humanitarian assistance...”

Man, 26-35, Facebook, Kalma Camp - South Darfur

Amidst a hunger crisis, individuals are asking critical questions about edible plants and ways to purify water without conventional methods. Social media conversations reveal significant information gaps and an urgent need for actionable information.

“Do you know of any medical study that has been done regarding trees that can be corroded or that can be dried, cooked, or suitable trees for children to eat? Are there plants that sterilize water? Are there trees that are safe to eat in Darfur? Please tell us ways to get out of famine #EyesOnDarfur”

Woman, Twitter

The above post received a few reactions, including this response: “Hello. There is Oxfam’s report on the Bahr el Ghazal famine of 1998 and 2017 and the type of food they used to survive, including plants...”. Oxfam’s report offers a perspective into the survival strategies of communities in Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan providing a valuable link between past emergencies and Sudan’s current crisis. While such reports are invaluable, they often remain underutilized due to a lack of awareness and access.

Another response shared by a woman cites an herbal remedy for purifying water: “They say neem is a natural disinfectant, a small amount, but I am not sure”. Internews analysts note significant concerns being shared online about water safety.

“There is rainwater in the fall and some of the wells are not safe, and need sterilization, there are people who boil [water] to drink, plants if we can know which ones are poisonous and which ones are not poisonous and edible this would be good especially for children”

Woman, Twitter

Another reply to the original post suggests the necessity of specifying the location within Darfur to carry out an urgent assessment. This highlights an information gap in region-specific data regarding food and water resources.

“Which state is one of the states of Darfur?? If I had determined the place, I would be able to conduct an urgent study on it, make urgent recommendations, and communicate with all international and media institutions”

Man, 36-45, Twitter

Some questioned individual decisions to stay rather than flee to safer areas where relief may be more accessible:

“People can go east towards the safe areas where relief can reach them they [can] take cooking utensils and flee why do they wait for death[?] Why is there no displacement movement as long as the situation has reached this point[?]”

Man, Twitter

With some areas becoming increasingly dangerous due to the conflict, individuals need updated information on where and how to relocate safely. Social media listening demonstrates the demand for more information about safe areas, relief distribution locations, and available support for those searching for a haven. **There is a demand for reliable and clear information from trusted sources that can help people make informed decisions on survival strategies, whether it involves staying and adapting or relocating to safer areas.**

“Where are the safe areas? Which relief”

Woman, Twitter

New information needs arise with increasing posts about malnutrition and hunger. Providing communities with straightforward, practical information on recognizing and addressing malnutrition is essential and can help save lives. Community efforts, such as community-run kitchens and shelter centers, are vital lifelines for many. However, the overwhelming needs far exceed the current level of aid and donations offered to community-led relief efforts.

The call for support extends to various humanitarian needs, from food supplies to medical assistance and safe relocation for families in conflict areas. Mobilizing resources and international solidarity is crucial to alleviate suffering and prevent further loss of life.

"Searching for a female/male nutritionist in Omdurman"

Woman, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum

"I am asking about the symptoms of malnutrition for adults"

Facebook

"Loss of appetite and fatigue with minimal effort, lack of concentration, feeling cold etc"

Man, Facebook

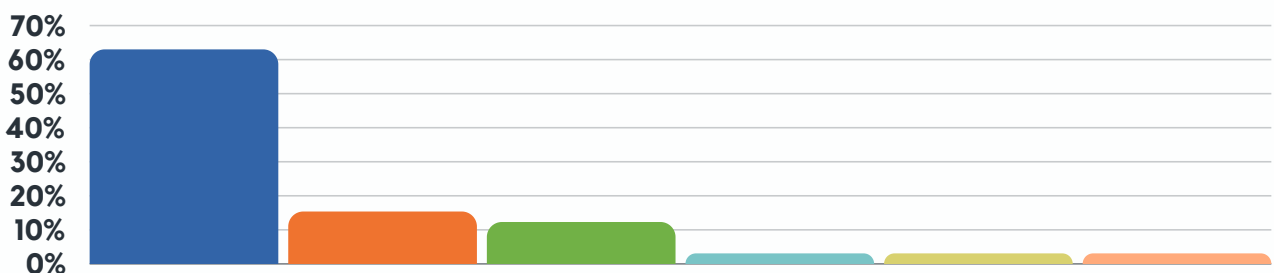
"Needs have not yet been met, and donations are very little. A need for food supplies, a medical need for orphans, a need for a family to leave AlGezira where their place is not safe, a need for rent. Try to donate what you can, one pound can make a difference.

Help me with the tweet, please, please, please

To donate: xxxx..."

Woman, 26-35, Twitter - AlGezira


BREAKDOWN OF FOOD SECURITY POSTS



This chart highlights the increasing demand for food support, and challenges people impacted by conflict and displacement face in accessing food, and at an affordable cost. Social media posts emphasize that diminishing donations for community kitchens are preventing volunteers from providing daily meals to countless families.

SEEKING CONTINUOUS HEALTH SUPPORT

Between 14 April and 24 June 2024, over 40% of collected social media posts focused on health making it among the top concerns for people affected by conflict. This reliance on social media underscores the urgent need for accurate and life-saving health information. One major challenge to accessing healthcare is the targeting of hospitals. The dire health situation in conflict-affected areas has created an urgent need for information about doctors and paramedics. In health clinics like the one in Ombada in Omdurman, there is a call for more doctors to fill the gaps and ensure that essential healthcare services continue.

“  Our people in Ombada AlHara Aloula set up a free clinic and pharmacy for the residents of the neighborhood, but the residents complained greatly about the eyes. They need a doctor who has an optical device and is in Omdurman to come and work for them for two days, but they will sponsor the transportation.. If there is a doctor there please help us”

Man, Twitter, Ombada - Khartoum

“The number of casualties and injuries in AlFashir AlJanoubi Hospital has doubled so far, to more than 67 wounded and 9 martyrs...Doctors and paramedics must hurry and go to the hospital to support the doctors and ease the burden on them...Urgent need for blood. Please support us by donating support..A necessary need for medicines, gauze, and all first aid supplies.”

Woman, Twitter, AlFashir - North Darfur

With limited healthcare options, some turn to social media in search of effective remedies for various maladies. Rumors about treatments for dengue fever, jaundice, and typhoid are thriving online, including food and herbal remedies like fennel, yoghurt, and millet. Beyond these diseases one individual even sought advice for an eye pimple. However, by relying on unverified remedies online, individuals may misguidedly turn to harmful and high-risk treatments, like cauterization.

Given the limited healthcare options in conflict-affected areas, and the risks and challenges associated with movement, it is important for medical humanitarian organizations and local health responders to widely share trustworthy health information that can help reduce harm.

"Recommend a home remedy for typhoid."

Man, Facebook

"Guys, I have a pimple in my eye that has pus. I want a home-based treatment because I don't have a way to go to the hospital."

Facebook

"Guys this dengue fever has made us very tired I swear and body fatigue and vomiting body aches and joint pain and today is the seventh day and still not feeling well what do you do for it?"

Women, Facebook

"Bee honey and cauterization is necessary for the man in treating jaundice"

Woman, 46 to 60, Facebook

"Boil the dried fennel and add sugar to it and drink it cold all day and hope you have a swift recovery"

Woman, Facebook

"The most important thing is pumpkin juice with tamarind or any additive that hides the flavor and taste of the pumpkin"

Woman, Facebook, Sharg AlNeel - Khartoum

Moreover, the scarcity of medical care in places like Wad AlNoura in AlGezira, has left healthcare facilities unable to provide even the most fundamental care. As a result, individuals in conflict-affected Khartoum and AlGezira are seeking information online about operational health facilities elsewhere. The need for ambulances has also become critical, as timely medical transport can mean the difference between life and death in emergency situations.

“There is an urgent need for an ambulance to be permanently nearby to reduce the burden on the citizens of the northern neighborhoods especially the families in the camps.”

Woman, Twitter, Abu Shouk Camp - North Darfur

“From the messages

I am asking about a gastroenterologist in Atbara my father is very very sick we are in Khartoum and we want to travel and to check whether there is one in Atbara or not”

Facebook, Atbara - River Nile

In response to the shortage of healthcare providers, people are looking for information about nursing and first aid courses to empower themselves. Additionally, the psychological toll of the conflict has intensified the search for mental health specialists, especially for women, children, and older people. There is an increasing demand for free-of-charge online mental health support and different types of doctors to help bridge the gaps left by the conflict on local healthcare providers.

“Guys, I am asking about a nursing course”

Woman, Facebook

“Peace upon you

I am asking about an internist and cardiologist that are online”

Facebook

“Peace be upon you

Ladies, I am asking for a nurse in Omdurman who can come to the house for a patient needing to receive IV drips under supervision within close proximity ALThawrat ALQariba ALHitana and ALManara”

Woman, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum

“Peace be upon you, I want a psychologist for a teenager in Kosti who is in dire need


I wish it was free of charge”

Woman, Facebook, Kosti - White Nile

Another challenge the healthcare system is facing is power outages, for example, in hospitals like AlBan Jadeed and Nyala power cuts have disrupted dialysis treatments, putting patients' lives at risk. Meanwhile, there is a post noting a water-borne disease in Burri, along with a mysterious fever in Khartoum. Amid these health emergencies, appeals for blood donations have surged, particularly during periods of intense clashes.

“An appeal from the Nyala Dialysis Center to support it with the necessary support for continued operation and due to the depletion of fuel and intravenous solutions it was decided to reduce dialysis sessions for each patient to one session per week.”

Man, 36-45, Facebook, Nyala - South Darfur

“ The humanitarian situation Massive deaths in Khartoum State due to fever which is not known if it is malaria or not. It has the same symptoms of malaria but it does not appear in the test the deaths reached the point of two or three dying from the same house the water is not clean cases of malnutrition have increased and electricity the network and water are still cut off”

Man, 26-35, Twitter, Khartoum

These compounded health crises highlight the urgent need for coordinated humanitarian efforts to address shortages in medical supplies and personnel, as well as the rehabilitation of health infrastructure. The resilience of the Sudanese people is evident, but without immediate and sustained support, the health implications of the conflict will continue to deepen, leaving the most vulnerable at heightened risk.

INFORMATION NEEDS BEFORE AND DURING DISPLACEMENT

The ongoing conflict in Sudan has led to widespread displacement and severe disruptions in the daily lives of people. Internews analysts note that social media posts illustrate urgent information needs and gaps related to shelter and travel. As people seek safe havens and means to secure their basic needs, they face significant challenges in accessing reliable information about available shelters, housing options, and safe travel routes, especially women, students, and older people.

“Peace be upon you people of Halfa...Is the Egyptian visa available and how long does it take??

We have an elderly woman and her two children who want housing for the visa procedure period and they cannot afford rent, guide us to good [news], good people.”

Man, Facebook, Halfa - Northern

“I'm asking about shelters centers or boarding houses in Kosti.”

Facebook, Kosti - White Nile

“I am asking about a house for rent in Atbara for a displaced family at a reasonable price given the war conditions”

Twitter, Atbara - River Nile

The previous examples show a clear information gap regarding the availability and affordability of housing in different areas in Sudan. There is also a need for updates about organizations that are providing shelter and support services. Similarly, for travel, people face complicated and confusing steps to get security clearances and visas to travel to other countries.

“Peace and God's mercy upon you
I am asking about girls housing in Port Sudan”

Woman, Facebook, Port Sudan - Red Sea

“Guys, I am asking if there is someone who works in the Social [Welfare] of Shendi locality please message me privately. The people who distribute the displaced people??? Whoever is working with them please message me privately”

Woman, Facebook, Shendi - River Nile

“We are asking about the security approval procedures for getting treatment in Egypt .. in boring details, please”

Woman, Facebook

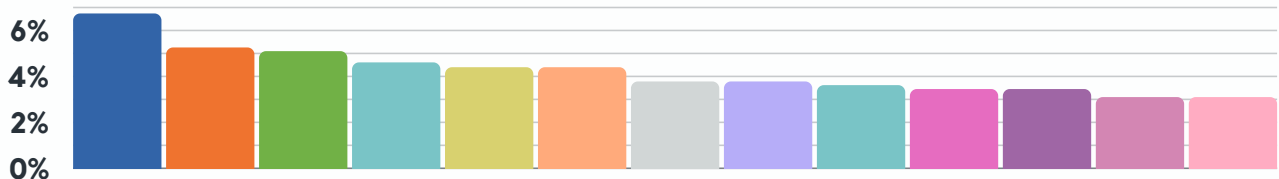
“Peace be upon you I am asking how to apply for a visa for Uganda”

Facebook

“People of Kassala...I want to get a national card. How to get it to Kassala. Thank you in advance...Is it possible to get a passport with the national number and how much”

Facebook, Kassala - Kassala

BREAKDOWN OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY ISSUE

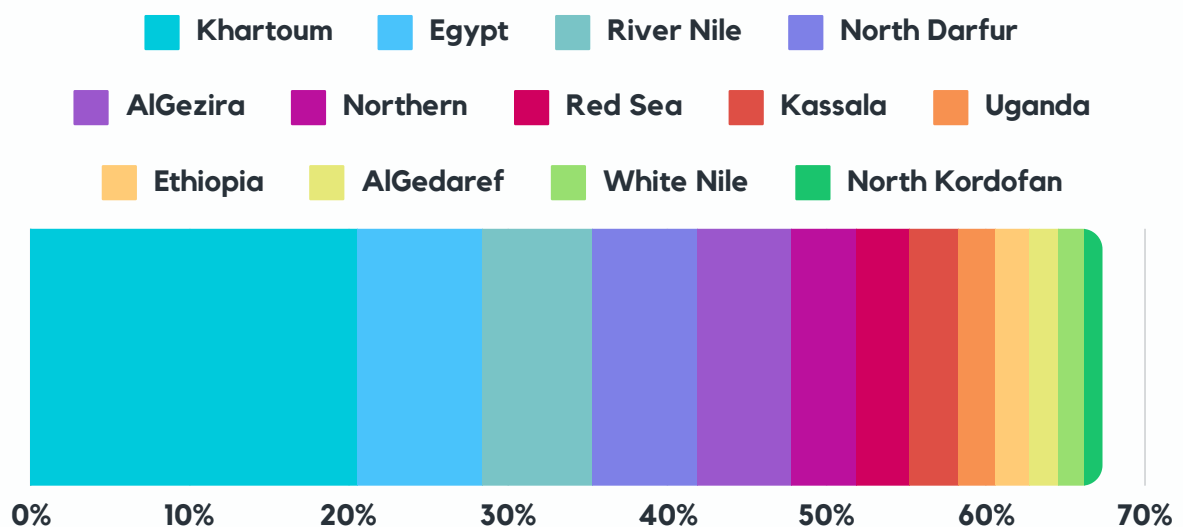


Individuals continue to search for free-of-charge mental health support online, including for displaced people and refugees, like children and older people. There is a demand for information regarding procedures for renewal or replacement of identity documents, like birth certificates, passports, and national numbers.

Individuals are also seeking up-to-date information on safe travel routes and available transportation options and costs. For example, there are questions about whether buses go from Khartoum to Port Sudan, the safety of the roads, and the best way to travel. Another social media post asked about traveling from Khartoum to Shendi, River Nile, including information about checkpoints and inspections. This shows an urgent need for current and accurate information on the availability of travel routes and precautionary measures while on the move.

“Peace and mercy of God
 Are there private cars that travel from Khartoum to Port Sudan or from Shendi to Port Sudan?
 Kindly, how much is the ticket?”
Facebook

BREAKDOWN OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS



Sudanese refugees in Egypt and those considering asylum have questions about asylum procedures, refugee rights, and residency permits. A continued communication blackout in different parts of the country, impacts peoples ability to access and share information.

“Hello I am asking if there is a family that got out from Khartoum or Sharg AlNeel to Port Sudan in these two past days, whether directly or via the Nile River to Port Sudan road.

Can you please confirm whether the buses are operating or not...and if the street is safe!! And the best road to travel! How is the situation in general?
thank you”

Facebook, Sharg Alneel - Khartoum

Social media posts also reveal confusion about the procedures for immigration and asylum. Individuals asked about travel requirements, as well as how to obtain crucial documents like a national identification number. These social media queries show a significant information gap and the need for clear, comprehensive guidance to help displaced individuals navigate the complex process of immigration and asylum.

“Hello ... I'm asking if there are buses that go to Egypt???

My family are going with me. My mother, my father are elderly, and the rest of the family. Do I need to get a passport or is it possible with our national number.

Help me”

Woman, Facebook

“Peace be upon you my sisters, I am asking whether there is a woman who applied for asylum and what were the procedure in Sudan is there an office for the Commission and from other countries how is the procedures if there is anyone that can help us.”

Facebook

“Good evening

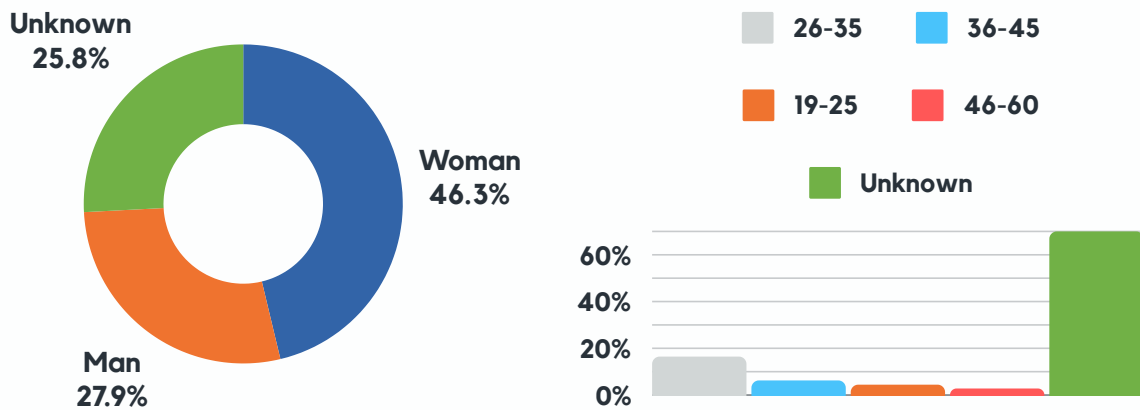
I am asking about traveling to Libya in legal way is there someone who traveled through Ethiopia and what are the procedures”

Woman, Facebook

“Peace be upon you I am displaced from Khartoum and I want to immigrate to Canada and I do not have the ability to travel to another country as a refugee and apply to immigration. Is there a solution to this problem?”

Woman, Facebook

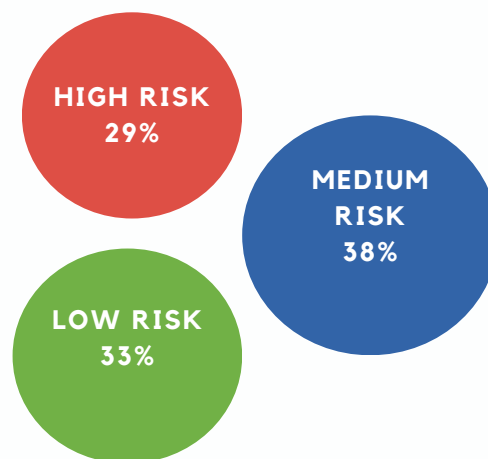
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY AGE AND GENDER



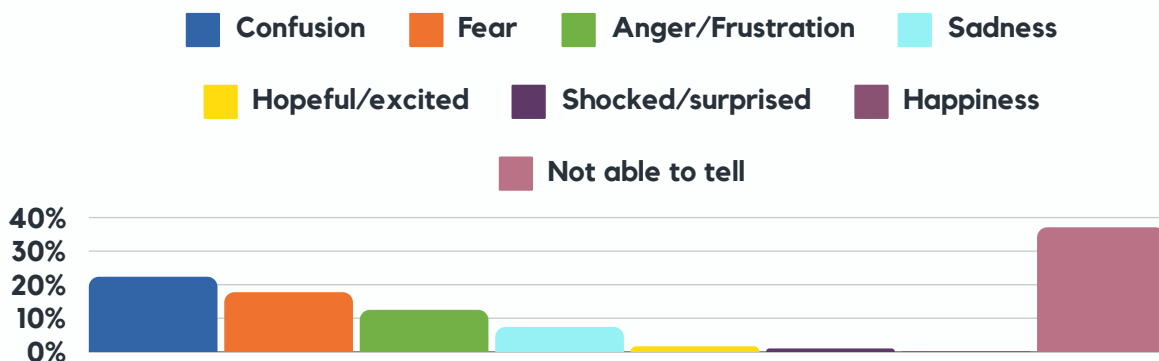
These charts may not accurately reflect the demographics of those who hold these concerns as some individuals rely on those with access to internet to share their concerns.

POSTS BY RISK LEVEL

High risk posts are those that express a potential for harm. For example, fewer donations may potentially result in the closure of community-led soup kitchens and health facilities in Khartoum.



SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY SENTIMENT



Sentiment analysis aids in understanding the emotions behind a text. Posts seeking information about health services, asylum and visa procedures exude confusion. Feelings of anger and frustration were often fueled by a sense of neglect and lack of support, such as posts reporting deaths due to hunger, extended water and power outages, and lack of aid. Fear is expressed in posts about closure of community kitchens at a time when people need food the most, and reports of increasing malnutrition among children in Nertiti, Central Darfur.

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.