

# Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #11

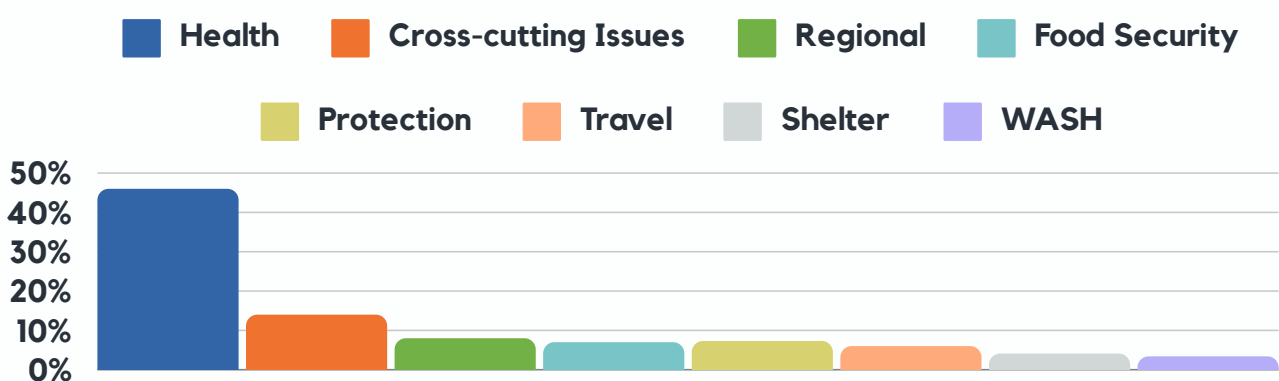


5 DECEMBER 2024

## INTRODUCTION

Between 21 August and 13 October 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), WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Reddit. In this edition of the Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update, we look at information needs and misinformation about ready-to-use therapeutic food. The report highlights a shift toward non-traditional and high-risk foods amid the ongoing food crisis. The Flash Update also explores perceptions of humanitarian aid, and rumors about aid being sold in markets. Additionally, we explore how social media serves as a powerful tool for mutual aid and the barriers volunteers in conflict areas face in continuing to provide food support.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY THEME



*Health and WASH challenges highlight struggles such as hygiene in sewage-contaminated areas and raising funds for medical supplies, while protection underscore the broader impact on civilians such as people going missing while being forcibly displaced.*

## MISTRUST IN THERAPEUTIC FOOD SUPPLIED BY HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES

In Sudan, amidst a deepening humanitarian and food crisis, misinformation and mistrust about ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTFs), which are crucial for treating malnourished children, may potentially impact access to this lifesaving treatment. For instance, a post written by a user claiming to be a doctor circulated in a private women's group on Facebook stating that RUTFs contain hydrogenated palm oil and could cause heart issues and cancer. In the post they encouraged caregivers not to use RUTF, fostering mistrust and hesitancy. The spread of misinformation in this case is reflected in individual reactions on Facebook, where some openly reject these supplements, expressing fears about safety. Despite some humanitarian organizations clarifying that RUTFs are effective in treating malnutrition amongst children, there is still a need for wider dissemination of information online and among displaced communities living in shelter centers and displacement camps, to provide more information on proper use of RUTFs and provide assurances the treatment is safe.

"#Organizations\_Spreading\_Diseases\_in\_Sudan!

... Imagine my dear citizen organizations in Sudan are distributing disease in the form of a nutritional supplement for children...Am I exaggerating? No I swear I am not exaggerating .. This nutritional supplement contains (hydrogenated palm oil).. It's unbelievable that you come to save me from hunger and then make me sick with hydrogenated palm oils...The supplement is made in South Africa and is based on peanuts .. Don't we have peanuts here? No thank God we have peanuts, there's war and everything but we have peanuts .. We haven't run out to that extent...They distract us with a few vitamins in the nutritional supplement and then boldly write hydrogenated palm oil...Never use this supplement unless you are in a situation where you are about to die from hunger and are dying and have nothing else..."

**Man, 26-35, Facebook**

“As soon as we were displaced they distributed it to us immediately I threw it on the roof of the house I swear I won’t give my children something I’m not sure of its source no matter how tempting it looks and thank God for the culture and education that made us aware ♥”

**Woman, Facebook**

“Guys I’m asking about the children’s meal that is being distributed with the relief items ..is it medically safe and if anyone knows what does it consist of?? Because I heard from an unconfirmed source that it causes cancer may God protect us all”

**Facebook, AlThawra - Khartoum**

“The doctor said it’s very bad for children with malnutrition not to mention a healthy child the proportion of hydrogenated oils in it is high”

**Woman, Facebook**

Social media posts have surfaced pointing towards RUTF supplies being sold in local markets rather than provided freely to those in need, raising concerns about mismanagement and exploitation and indicating a likely root cause of the spread of misinformation about therapeutic foods. This situation underlines the need for transparent tracking and clear communication about RUTF availability by humanitarian and health agencies, to ensure interventions addressing malnutrition are not compromised by misinformation that runs the risk of decreasing access for vulnerable people.

“I need this children's meal for malnourished orphan twins”

**Woman, Facebook**

“I am buying it from the market for my children and even I eat it it tastes good 😂😂😂”

**Woman, Facebook**

Moreover, other relief supplies have also come under scrutiny. For instance, questions about a cooking oil’s potential harm due to its unpleasant smell, contributing further to the distrust in provided aid. Clear information about the composition and benefits of RUTF and food aid in general is crucial to counter misinformation and enhance aid effectiveness.

Aid organizations should use open communication, community forums, and social media to build trust and ensure that communities are well-informed on the nutritional benefits.

“...This oil has been coming in the relief supplies and most of you know it , but it has such a bad smell that can’t be described and it feels like there’s fish inside it 🙄 ... the displaced people in schools and other places have to deal with it so to reduce the smell before using it they boil it with a piece of dakwa (peanut butter) or lemon and surprisingly the smell actually decreases 🙄 Our people are really resilient 🙄 and live despite the circumstances ❤️❤️ ...If it has any harm let us know and we will try to inform the authorities to help the people 🙄”

**Woman, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

The crisis is compounded by the dire food scarcity that drives families in regions like North Darfur and South Kordofan to resort to desperate measures. In North Darfur, a post described how families use “ambas” -a byproduct of oilseed pressing not typically intended for human consumption- as a meal. In South Kordofan, the tragic deaths of five siblings from poisoning after consuming “Ben Balash,” a wild plant used as a last resort, underscore the severe shortages and the dangers of unverified emergency food options.

“A famine looms on the horizon ❤️  
What you see here my dear is Amba (leftovers from peanut oil extraction) used by some families to feed their children 🙄🙄 ...#Note: They bring the Amba from the press then they dry and pound it in a mortar until it turns into fine flour and they heat the water until it boils and use it to make a porridge to stave off hunger”

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Abu Shouk - North Darfur**

“Reports from AlDalang city confirm an increase in the rate of malnutrition among children due to the siege imposed by ... and deaths have also increased especially in the recent period despite the initiatives and soup kitchens (Takaya)...”

**Man, 36-45, Facebook, AlDalang - South Kordofan**

“Death of 5 siblings after eating a meal of grass in AlDalang ... the children showed symptoms of poisoning after eating a meal believed to be derived from a local wild plant known as "Ben Balash", which residents resort to as a food substitute due to food shortages ... #Sudania24 | #Country\_on\_Screen”

**Sudania24 TV Channel, Facebook, AlDalang - South Kordofan**

Furthermore, in Khartoum, volunteers operating soup kitchens face a set of challenges, such as scarcity in essentials like firewood and clean water, coupled with personal health issues among volunteers like malaria and typhoid, which hamper their capacity to assist. Posts shared on Facebook and X highlight these struggles, showing how rising food prices and decreased donations further threaten these vital operations, underscoring a cascading series of obstacles that hinder effective aid distribution.

“We started with two meals fava beans or lentils for breakfast and for lunch stew with okra or pumpkin or beans....now it's down to just one meal at ten AM to cover the timing of both meals ....lentils or beans. The reason besides the high cost is that most of the youth are suffering from malaria or typhoid or eye infections or dysentery or all of them together 😞”

**Man, X**

“ ▪ Mygoma Kitchen Block 4

◆ Thursday 5 September 2024

With the grace of God breakfast has been prepared consisting of 5 large pots of lentils...the support was provided by the East Nile Emergency Room...the expected number of beneficiaries is 400 families.

The challenges:

Are illustrated in scarcity and high cost of firewood

Lack of water (only available for purchase)

Illnesses affecting some volunteers (malaria, fever) ...”

**Facebook, Sharg AlNeel - Khartoum**

## THE SALE OF AID SUPPLIES

One of the most significant challenges confronting humanitarian organizations in their efforts to provide assistance to those in need is the theft of aid and the obstruction of its entry into different parts of the country, like Kebkabiya, North Darfur. Individuals on social media also mentioned theft of aid convoys near Um Andrabah in North Kordofan.

“Youth for Darfur Organization “Mashad” condemned ... obstruction ... of the arrival of a shipment of humanitarian aid to civilians affected by the war in the Kebkabiya area of North Darfur State.

The organization called on the international community to intervene to stop the obstruction...of humanitarian aid shipments to civilians affected by the war...”

**Facebook, Kebkabiya - North Darfur**

Since the outbreak of the conflict, Internews analysts have observed a reliance on peer information sharing and financial support / mutual aid. Recently, there has been a notable increase in awareness of both international and Sudanese organizations that provide assistance, with several social media posts in public Facebook groups, and private women groups seeking information about their locations, contact numbers, and registration place and procedure and what kinds of support they provide for various groups, such as pregnant and lactating women, orphans, and widows. Humanitarian organizations should share information about their humanitarian services, locations and contact information so that people seeking support can reach them.

“Peace be upon you.. I am asking about the refugee organizations in AlGirba where specifically???”

**Woman, Facebook, Khasham  
AlGirba - Kassala**

“Guys I am asking about how and when the Red Crescent registers the displaced  
Are they working every day?  
And what aid do they provide”

**Facebook, Kassala**

Some individuals have raised complaints about humanitarian aid being sold in markets. Comments on a social media post addressing the issue of relief sale in Kassala reflected a variety of perspectives. Some of the comments noted that the need for cash compels people to sell the assistance they obtain, while one individual expressed the necessity of implementing stringent oversight to prevent traders from engaging in the sale and purchase of relief items.

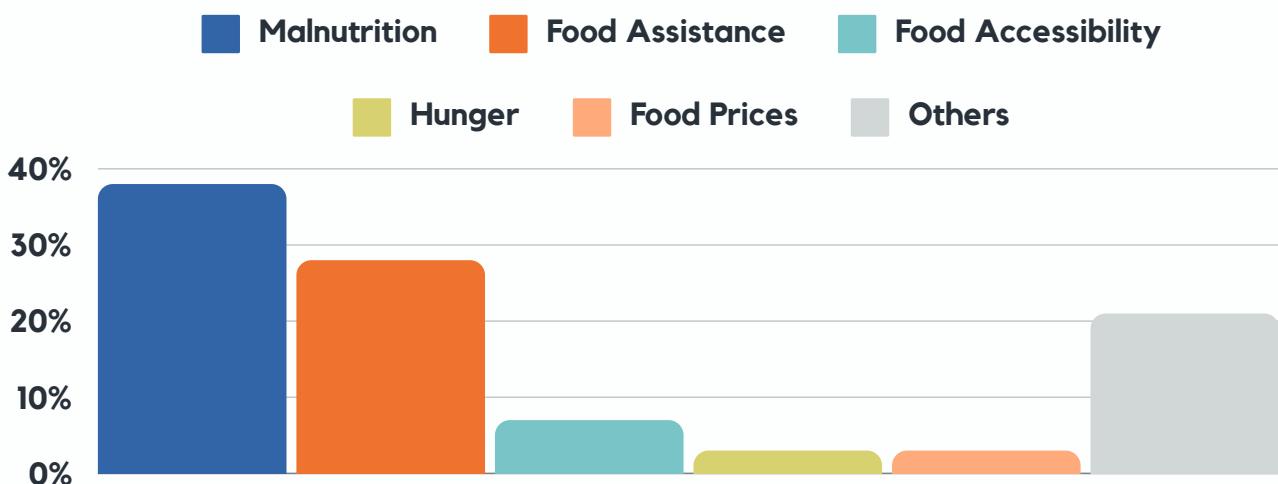
“The aid reaches citizens through national organizations and is not connected to the government so when a citizen needs money they sell it in the market I've bought WFP aid sorghum in Jebel Awliya from citizens before and we used it as feed for cows.”

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Jebel Awliya - Khartoum**

“And here in Omdurman they keep deceiving us telling us to come here and come there and in the end they just gave us cards until now we haven't received anything from them their so-called aid is just cards I swear since this war started we in Omdurman haven't seen any aid we only hear about it unfortunately”

**Man, 36-45, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

## BREAKDOWN OF FOOD SECURITY POSTS



*Food prices highlight the struggle for essential provisions of food during the ongoing crisis. Other challenges include community efforts such as Takaya initiatives providing meals despite challenges such as fuel shortages and water scarcity, in addition to concerns about food aid mismanagement.*



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Social listening analysis indicates conflict in Sinja, Sennar has forced people to flee to safer areas, and that during this urgent movement, individuals are searching online for information about their loved ones, including children, whom they've lost contact with. People turn to social media to share missing people's details, like name, last known location, and a picture, in hopes of finding any information about them.

"Peace be upon you my people and loved ones we lost communication with my sister since the attack on Sinja she is with her husband and beautiful daughters they are from Wad Madani AlKariba neighborhood her name ... and her daughters are ... if you've seen her please call ..."

**Woman, Facebook, Wad Madani - AlGezira**

"Peace be upon you...I'm asking about the missing children after the Sinja attack, is there an entity responsible for them? How many are they? Where are they now? Or any children who have lost their families"

**Woman, 46-60, Facebook, Sinja - Sennar**

"This boy is with our brother...in AlMuglad, if anyone knows his family contact us on WhatsApp..."

**Facebook, AlMuglad - West Kordofan**

As individuals seek information regarding their missing loved ones, instances of fraud and scams continue to surface, with certain individuals alleging they possess information about missing persons, and they demand money. One of the members of the public Facebook group مفقود MISSING established in 2019, cautioned the group's over 389 K members in a post containing a screenshot of conversations with two alleged scammers. Internews previous Flash Update (#8) also highlighted risks families face in finding trustworthy information about their missing loved ones. This highlights the pressing need for reliable sources of information and organizations that can assist in cases of missing persons to counter the circulation of fraudulent activities.



“Guys these two people are liars be careful with them and don’t give them any money they said they need money...because my brother he said is detained in Soba...and they are lying be cautious everyone May God help us find what we’re looking for”

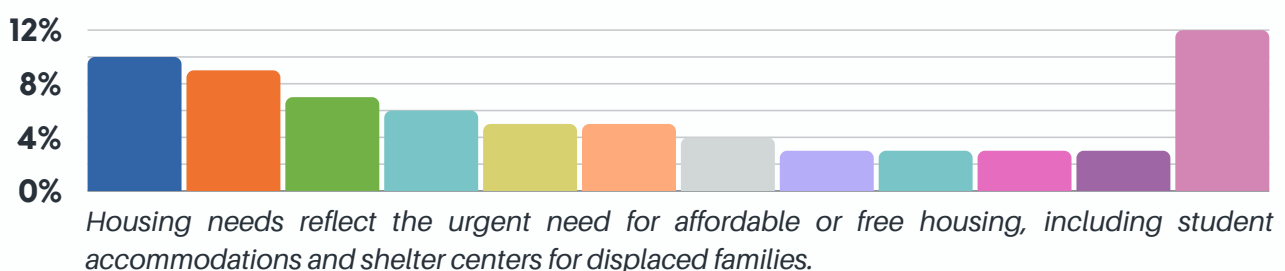
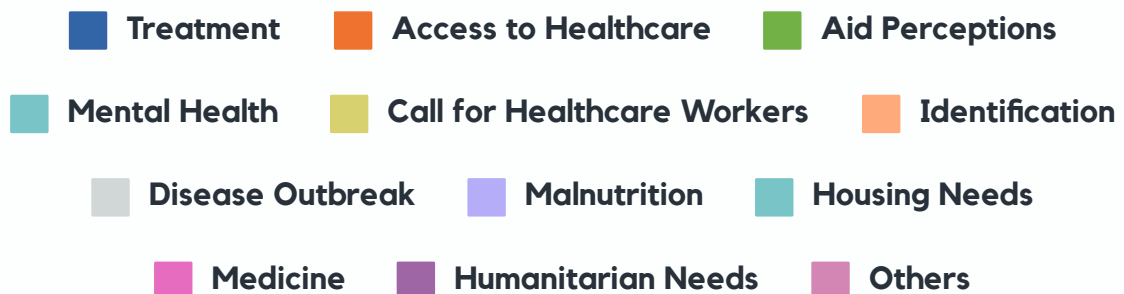
**Woman, Facebook, Soba - Khartoum**

Information about managing the remnants of conflict is crucial for safeguarding civilians, particularly in areas affected by conflict. Engaging with these remnants without proper understanding poses significant dangers, including the potential for severe injury or fatality. For example, a post shared on Facebook highlighted the need for financial support for a child who lost both hands because of an unexploded ordinance. Concerned organizations and entities should disseminate information about the various types of war remnants and advise people on cautionary measures.

“A 13-year-old child in Umm Dukhun...lost both his hands due to war remnants (a grenade exploded while he was playing not knowing what it was)...To get prosthetic limbs we need him to leave the village The cost for his travel with his mother and father is 650 thousand...”

**Woman, 26-35, X, Um Dukhun - Central Darfur**

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY KEY ISSUES



## SAFE PASSAGE

The need for affordable and safe shelter remains high for displaced people and those looking to flee a conflict area for a safe haven. With many having lost their sources of income, there is a pressing need for affordable housing and cash support to assist with rent payments. Moreover, families whose homes have been damaged during the rainy season are looking for tents. Despite the end of the season in the majority of Sudan, there are still damaged homes that require maintenance and repair.

“We need a house in Omdurman urgently it can be in AlThawarat or it can be in a safe area for a family consisting of 7 people, and they are in Khartoum currently and the situation is very bad tonight a shell fell near them and the most important thing the house must be for free guys this is for a needy family I swear”

**Woman, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

“Need No. 2

A family in need for a house or apartment to safeguard God willing

And according to what they said they are staying in the street...so they need a place to stay in...”

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

Social media posts have highlighted people's desire for information regarding open and safe routes for travel between various states, as well as inquiries about bus availability and tickets. One individual voiced concern about potential challenges he may encounter while traveling from Khartoum. The necessity for financial assistance to facilitate the evacuation of individuals from unsafe locations continues to be an urgent need.

“ ● Evacuation need for a family in need for you

Details in the picture ...”

**Man, X, Shambat - Khartoum**

“Hello I am asking about the buses to Omdurman are operational”

**Woman, Facebook, Atbara - River Nile**

“○○ If there is someone who is living in Khartoum AlTayif, and he wants to leave... will there be any problems with the matter?!”

**Woman, 26-35, X, AlTayif - Khartoum**

## SEARCHING FOR DOCTORS AND HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Internews social listening analysis illustrates that individuals are facing various health problems in different parts of the country, often turning to traditional remedies due to limited access to healthcare and financial difficulties. Individuals are seeking help online for conditions like burns, dysentery, eye pain, and malaria, and responders regularly refer to recommend home-made remedies such as tea, gum kohl, and herbs.

“Please what is a treatment for eye pain urgently I'm suffering”

**Woman, Facebook**

“Tea water with a pinch of salt the gum kohl is a good discovery that removes all the dirt from your eyes”

**Woman, Facebook**

“Girls I am in a lot of distress [for] a treatment for dysentery I've tried everything and nothing worked 🙄🙄

🙄🙄”

**Woman, Facebook**

“Baobab with custard and the most important thing is a solution of water with salt and sugar”

**Woman, Facebook**

Common regional health concerns in Sudan, such as malaria and dengue fever, are discussed on social media spaces. People rely on community knowledge for advice and support, reflecting both challenges and resourcefulness in dealing with health issues during the ongoing crisis. Access to healthcare is hampered by insecurity, attacks on healthcare facilities, lack of medicines, and displacement of healthcare workers. For instance, individuals in various locations around the country cited shortages in malaria medication while an increase in infections was being reported.

Social media posts highlight the resourcefulness of people in addressing their health needs and supporting one another during the ongoing crisis. In the absence of reliable healthcare infrastructure, individuals share practical advice, such as proper hygiene practices using specific soaps to prevent infections from contaminated water in addition to sharing homemade herbal remedies to manage chronic diseases.

Communities mobilize to raise funds through online appeals and gather donations for life-saving items like mosquito nets and medicines to combat malaria outbreaks. Those with medical knowledge, such as nurses and doctors, offer their guidance online.

“Peace be upon you I would like to ask if there are any doctors in the group about the new malaria pills called. Dahab how do I use them because the doctor told me to take 4pills a day. And the pharmacist wrote 3pills a day and thank you”

**Woman, Facebook**

“How many days does dengue fever last my bones are being crushed help me”

**Woman, Facebook**

“A distress call from the people of Kalakla AlQubba who are dying of malaria and dengue fever if anyone knows of organizations that provide medications and IVs contact me with them urgently”

**X, AlKalakla - Khartoum**

“...I'm asking what foods are appropriate for a person affected by dengue fever what he should and shouldn't eat and what are the things he should avoid”

**Facebook**

Social media posts highlight the dire effects of conflict on medical resources, health infrastructure, and specialized care across various regions in Sudan. Individuals are seeking information about diagnostic imaging services such as electroencephalogram (EGG), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and ultrasounds. People are also seeking information about specialists, such as pediatrics, orthopedics, and internal medicine in various locations such as AlGedaref, Atbara, and Port Sudan, highlighting the struggle to find facilities equipped with the necessary diagnostic tools and healthcare professionals.

“Personal need !!

We have a large family [in] Sharg AlNeel who have been infected by a disease similar to dengue fever that has infected 4 of them and they are currently lying at home and going to the center to get IVs and they return home over and over again and as you know also there is a lack of diagnostic equipment...”

**Man, 26-35, Facebook, Sharg AlNeel - Khartoum**

"May the peace mercy and blessings of God be upon you Everyone where can I find a pediatrician in ALThawra"

**Man, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

Peace be upon you. I am asking if there is an MRI machine in AlGedaref?"

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

"...I am from White Nile I am asking about the closest city geographically to me that has an MRI where is it and what are the prices, please"

**Man, 19-25, Facebook - White Nile**

"I'm asking does Berber Hospital have an ophthalmology department"

**Woman, Facebook, Berber - River Nile**

Many seek information on the availability and cost of diagnostic tests, such as thyroid gland tests and autism screenings, while others seek specific services such as midwives to support pregnant women, hearing aids and medical equipment for people with special needs, especially in rural or conflict-affected areas.

"Peace be upon you I am asking about an autism center here in AlGedaref And where?"

**Woman, Facebook, AlGedaref**

"Peace be upon you I want help from you guys I'm looking for a midwife urgently"

**Facebook, AlGedaref**

"I need a hospital in Omdurman for hearing loss that has medical hearing aids"

**Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

"Hey girls I'm asking about a center or hospital for fitting a prosthetic limb"

**Woman, Facebook**

The ongoing conflict continues to create significant barriers for individuals to access psychosocial support. Many are searching for mental health specialists across various cities, such as Omdurman, Kassala, Atbara, Shendi, and Dongola, while others specifically request online support, highlighting both physical barriers to accessing care – such as checkpoints or living in a conflict area – as well as a scarcity of mental health professionals nearby.

Several individuals appealed for free-of-charge and affordable sessions, pointing to financial challenges as a major barrier to obtaining mental healthcare. Others searched for their doctors who they lost contact with following the outbreak of conflict.

“I want an online male/female doctor for free or those who are conducting free sessions in Dongola”

**Man, Facebook, Dongola - Northern**

“May the peace and mercy and blessings of God be upon you

I need a psychiatrist in Shendi or one that works online !?”

**Woman, Facebook, Shendi - River Nile**

“Peace be upon you and God’s mercy

I urgently need a way to contact Doctor [x]...may God reward you

I was her patient before the war at Al-Sharif Hospital in Buri

And now I am in Omdurman

Update : Since the response was definitive that there is no way to contact Doctor [x] at all I need another psychiatrist to guide me

This is the medication I was taking with her but it is currently unavailable in Omdurman or other states

I am in dire need for it...I need a doctor to show me the available alternative...Is it available in Omdurman Atbara Shendi Port Sudan or any other state

May God reward you”

**Man, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum**

## REGIONAL CHALLENGES THAT DISPLACED FACE

Social media posts indicate disrupted governmental services are making it difficult to obtain essential documents like national IDs and passports, which are necessary for people fleeing the conflict and crossing borders, and for accessing refugee services in neighboring countries. The lack of these documents hinders mobility and affects the basic rights and future opportunities of those displaced by the conflict.

“Peace be upon you I am asking we are coming to Egypt by smuggling and we don’t have original identification documents only copies will this cause us any problem my greetings”

**Man, Facebook, Egypt**

“I am asking about birth certificates did the papers come from Port Sudan or not? I paid the fees and they said there is no stamped paper...”

**Man, 46-60 Facebook, Port Sudan - Red Sea**

Sudanese refugees face challenges in accessing humanitarian aid, with some reporting delays in receiving relief payments in Uganda. Additionally, refugees are vulnerable to exploitation; for instance, on Facebook a post solicited fees in exchange for registering Sudanese refugees in Egypt with the WFP support program, which - when accessed directly through WFP - is free-of-charge. These examples underscore the need for accessible, trustworthy information about refugee relief programs and registration processes, that recognizes and counters disinformation about fee-based aid or registrations.

“I can register you for the World Food Program all you need to do is send me the documents and proof of identity and the commission’s card and the number of family members for a nominal fee...”

**Facebook, Egypt**

“I am asking about the UNICEF money it has been more than a month since I received it should I register is there anyone like this or is there a problem returning to the camp?”

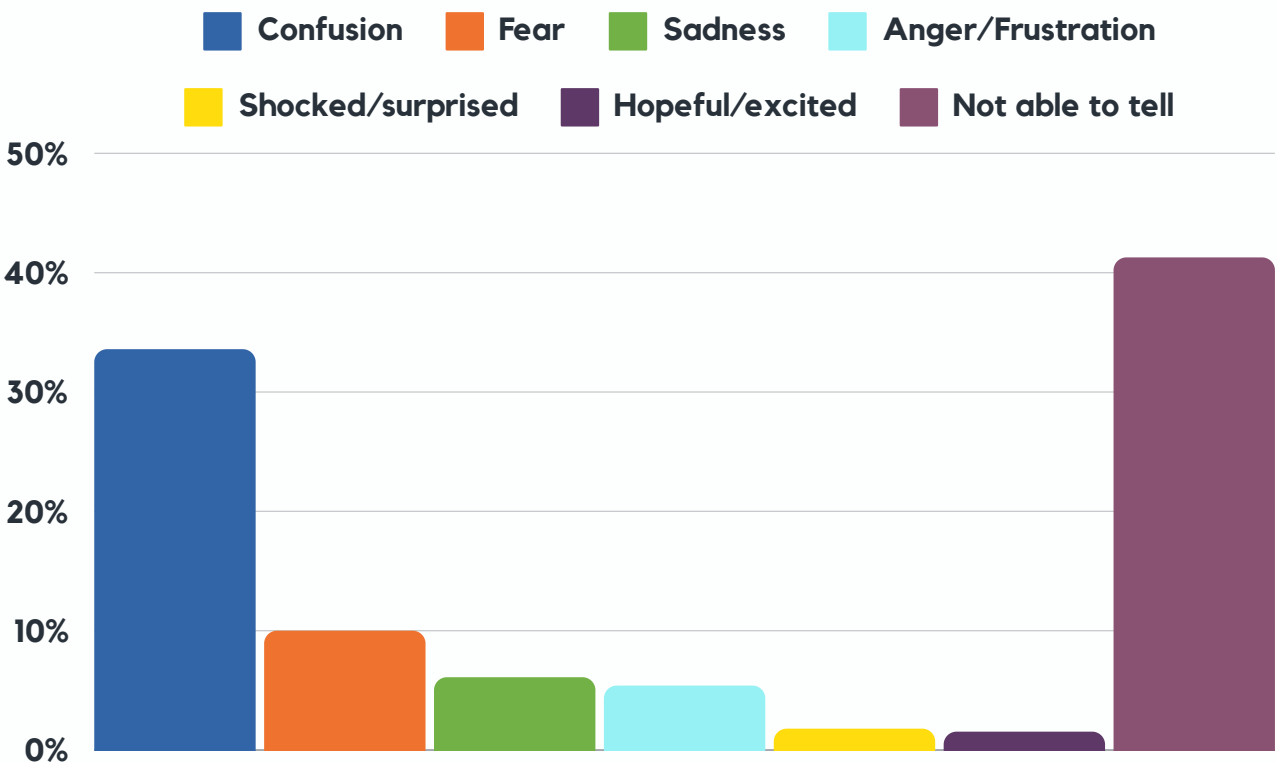
**Facebook, Uganda**



# SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

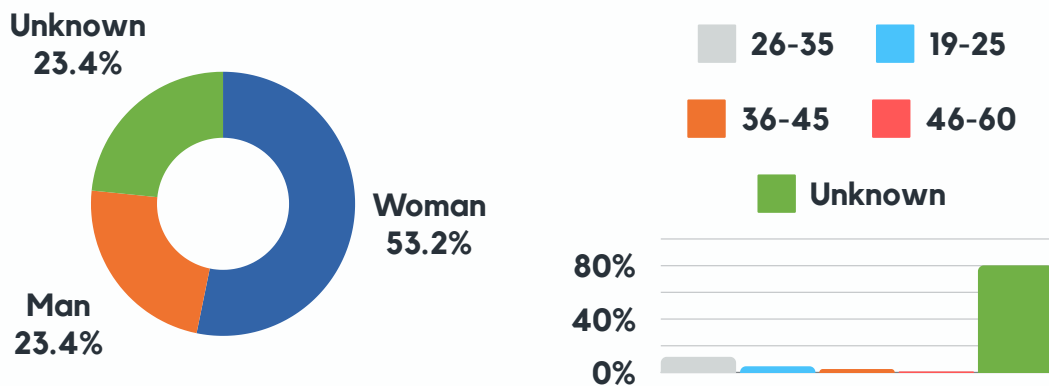
Sentiment analysis helps us understand the feelings expressed behind a text or image shared in online communities. In this period of social listening, we observed four dominant sentiments: confusion, fear, sadness, and anger/frustration. Confusion stems from individuals seeking basic information about available services in their areas or other states, such as medical services. Posts shared by families not being able to connect with their loved ones in North Kordofan and Khartoum due to lack of network exude fear, in addition to health risks such as fears about the spread of dengue fever or a potential outbreak of Mpox. Sadness is expressed primarily over dire living conditions, the fate of missing loved ones, and a lack of basic necessities, such as shelter. Lastly, Anger/frustration reflects the struggles of displacement and accessing food.

## SENTIMENT ANALYSIS



This chart represents the emotions expressed in 390 social media posts, collected from 21 August to 13 October 2024.

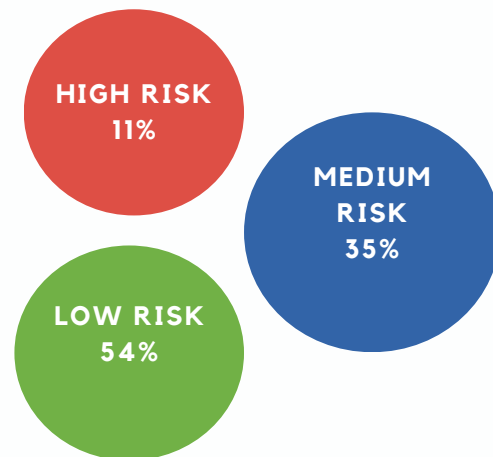
## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY AGE AND GENDER



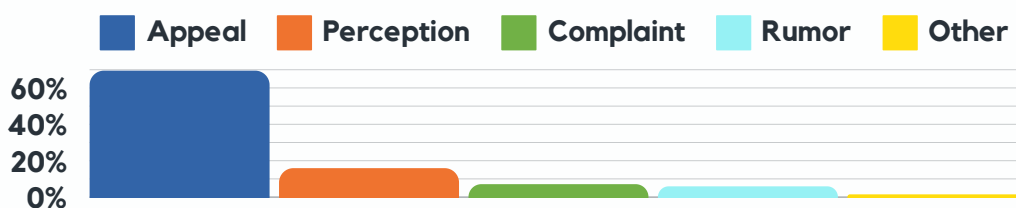
Out of the 53 percent of posts shared by women, mental health represents 6 percent of their posts, it stands as a critical issue, with women reaching out for psychological support, often requesting free or low-cost online therapy or counseling. The depicted demographic information may not accurately reflect the demographics of those who hold these concerns, as some individuals rely on those with internet connectivity to share their concerns.

## POSTS BY RISK LEVEL

High risk posts underscore the critical situation for those in dire need. For example, a post about displaced families in Kassala state reports humiliation and deprivation in shelter centers, with aid being partially withheld. Another post highlighting allegations against organizations for distributing harmful nutritional supplements spark debates about safety.



## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY TYPE



This is the breakdown of 390 social media posts by type of data. Appeals represent individuals seeking guidance on relief supplies, medical specialists, road access, and cash support for displaced families. While perceptions reflect community observations ranging from identifying symptoms of malaria to sharing local remedies and navigating legal travel procedures.

## 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).