

Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #13

16 FEBRUARY 2025

INTRODUCTION

Between 1 December 2024 and 22 January 2025, Internews with its partner Y-Peer Sudan collected and listened to community feedback, perceptions, rumors, and concerns shared by people affected by conflict and displacement in Sudan. During this time, Internews analysts continued regular online social listening. This Flash Update is based on the analysis of 252 social media posts and 702 comments shared during face-to-face listening groups held in AlGedaref, Central Darfur, North Kordofan, and Northern states. In this edition, we explore the barriers facing children and young adults in accessing education, and displaced families' need for support to return to their homes. We also look at the mental health impacts of the conflict on children and adults, how limited access to healthcare is worsening people's condition, and the challenges pregnant women face in finding delivery support. We address people's expressions of need for essentials for survival, such as food, clean drinking water, dignified shelter, and access to the internet. In this report, we examine increasing gaps in the humanitarian response. Relief efforts are further impacted since the US President issued a "Stop Work order" on USAID-funded projects which impacts millions of Sudanese's access to essential services, such as healthcare and cash assistance.



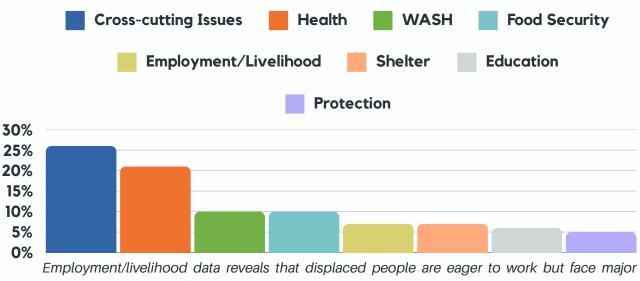
STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE WITH LIMITED SUPPORT

Overall desperation and frustration regarding lack of humanitarian assistance was expressed during most of the **192** listening groups held by Y-Peer in AlGedaref, Central Darfur, Northern, and North Kordofan states since the start of face-to-face listening activities in November 2024.

Many displaced individuals cited that they hadn't received aid in months, with some sharing the last time they received assistance was last Ramadan (March/April 2024). Displaced people living with host families felt particularly neglected, such as this woman living in West AlObeid camps:

"...these homes are full of displaced people and people in need. I went to the commission to register, and they told me that I should be living in a camp...in the end we are displaced people we have no control over anything. The war brought us here and we were forced to come suddenly"

ANALYZING COMMUNITY COMMENTS BY THEME



Employment/livelihood data reveals that displaced people are eager to work but face major barriers such as lack of capital, training, and job opportunities. In addition, many are skilled in trades such soap-making, baking, and handicrafts but cannot afford the materials to start therefore they require cash support.



The previous <u>Internews Humanitarian Flash Update (#12)</u> looked at complaints and concerns displaced individuals had about aid distribution processes and listening group data collected in the past two months across four states indicates that displaced people feel aid access has worsened. They cite ongoing gaps in information regarding expected humanitarian support and frustrations with registering for aid distributions and then hearing no updates from humanitarians or authorities. These complaints were also shared by individuals who registered multiple times, including in AlGedaref, Central Darfur, Northern, and North Kordofan states.

"My name has been registered three times, and they haven't given me a single penny. The person handling the computer says my name appears too many times and tells me I'm being foolish and wasted my time. I hope this issue gets fixed."

Woman, 25-35, South AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan

Some displaced individuals complained that they were mistreated by supervisors, or not dealt with in a respectful manner by registration staff or shelter center supervisors. While several displaced individuals have expressed that they have little hope in receiving any support, some continue to seek information about organizations in their area that can potentially offer assistance.

FOOD INSECURITY AND EMERGENCY FOOD PROVISION

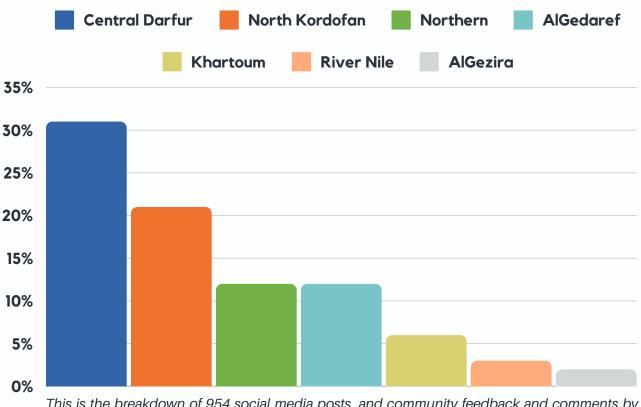
The demand for food assistance and nutritional services persists across Sudan, with <u>famine</u> confirmed in parts of the country, including North Darfur and the western Nuba mountains. In Zalengei, Central Darfur, listening group participants spoke of not being able to farm, and therefore needing food relief.



In Rufiadah Center, a gathering site for displaced people in Zailngei, a man between ages 46 and 60 shared: "...we haven't had vegetables in a month". On social media, emergency response rooms and volunteers running community kitchens in Omdurman, Kassala, and Shendi appealed for donations to continue to provide daily meals to both conflict-affected and displaced people.

"Every month the kitchens and needs increase due to the daily displacement to safe areas, unfortunately we cannot cover a large number because we are limited by the contributions we collect, this month as much as possible we want to try to keep the working kitchens from stopping..." **Man, 26 to 35, X, Omdurman - Khartoum**

GEOGRAPHICAL BREAKDOWN



This is the breakdown of 954 social media posts, and community feedback and comments by states. Central Darfur represents the biggest portion of the data at 31% followed by North Kordofan at 21%.



To cope with the food crisis, displaced people living in AlGedaref and North Kordofan shared during listening groups that they 'borrow' food supplies from the neighborhood shop on credit and pay off their debt once they have cash (it usually takes months for them to be able to pay it back). In previous <u>Flash Updates</u>, Internews analysts captured other high-risk coping mechanisms like eating grass and non-traditional plants, including toxic plants that reportedly resulted in deaths in the Nuba Mountains. A child between ages 11 and 14, living in North AlObeid Camps shares her experience with hunger:

"I'm fine, but I don't have clothes for going out or home. We go to school but often we don't have money for breakfast, so we go and come back without eating and sometimes the food at home isn't enough because there are so many of us, the house is crowded, and we stop eating before we're full and just drink water."

"As they told you these services have been suspended for a year, and we are not working, we start to borrow from this shop owner, we all have accounts with him. Yes, sometimes after 4 months, the WFP bread people come to us and bring us money to pay off the shop's debt. If it hadn't come to us now, we wouldn't know where to get money to pay off the debt."

Woman, 26-35, Ismail Khalil School, AlGedaref - AlGedaref

According to social media posts and comments shared during listening groups, there are continued cases of ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) used for treating malnutrition among children (provided as part of humanitarian aid) being sold in markets for profit. Numerous individuals have shared they were forced to buy RUTF from the market because it wasn't accessible to them in health centers. A Sudanese aid worker in North Darfur cautioned on social media that the misuse of RUTF was affecting the supply of this much-needed treatment in famine-affected areas.



"We get the nutrition meal from the market. In the center, there is no opportunity except for certain people. I went there before but couldn't find any opportunity, all of it was [standing] in lines, and there was nothing." **Woman, 19-25, East AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan**

Displaced people who participated in listening groups in Zalingei requested specific foods, such as meat, lentils and fava beans. These comments indicate the need for humanitarian services to consider people's preferences in specific areas, in emergency food provision.

At this time of the year, families are preparing for the holy month of Ramadan, but for many displaced people this will be another Ramadan they're fasting outside of their homes struggling to make ends meet. A couple of individuals expressed their need for cash support to help purchase food supplies in preparation for the holy month.

"We need a Ramadan food package containing sugar, oil, chickpeas, lentils, salt, spices, juice, dates, and custard." Woman, 26-35, Rufaidah Center, Zalingei - Central Darfur

PROTECTION CONCERNS

The conflict continues to impact civilian lives and property such as health facilities and homes. Rumors about conflict reaching new areas are stressful and instill a sense of insecurity in both displaced and host communities. In Zalingei, Central Darfur participants of listening groups continue to highlight the need for support services for survivors of gender-based violence.

Families are also looking for information about missing loved ones and detained relatives. They often turn to social media in hopes of finding some information about the whereabouts and well-being of their loved ones.



A few social media posts referred to unaccompanied children including those found along the Sudan-Egypt border, with appeals to help reunite them with their families.

Individuals continue to seek information about safe routes to flee from conflict areas and return to their homes. Conversations in listening groups and online indicate many people want to return to their homes – sometimes because they have heard it is safe to do so, but also in cases where they know it is risky to return due to lack of humanitarian support.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

The ongoing conflict has severely disrupted education at both school and university levels, displacing families, impacting infrastructure, and converting schools in safe areas into shelters for the displaced. Displaced children often remain at home due to financial constraints, lack of documentation, and overcrowded classrooms. Some children participating in listening groups whose parents managed to enroll them in schools complained of discrimination, harassment, and exclusion.

In AlGedaref, the financial burden of education has worsened by the introduction of fees in schools that were previously supported by organizations that covered education costs for displaced people. Recent discussions in listening groups reveal that one of the most pressing issues is the rising cost of university fees, which has forced many students to drop out as they cannot afford tuition, transportation, and living expenses.

"I study at AlNilein and they opened a university for us in Atbara. I didn't even have breakfast, for me to travel to Atbara it [would] cost me 500 thousand. plus living expenses in Atbara is high. So I decided to stop studying" **Man, 26-35, AlObeid, West AlObeid Camps – North Kordofan**



"An organization paid the state for the education of displaced people so they could study for free and currently all the children are studying with fees and no one has been exempted from the fees"

Woman, 19-25, Suakin, AlGedaref - AlGedaref

Moreover, shelter centers for displaced people lack schools, leaving children without formal education. Parents have struggled to enroll their children in existing schools, often facing rejection from the school or being required to use intermediaries for admission.

"Our children in the schools are not given chairs, and the ones who are late aren't allowed to enter the schools. When we go to the Ministry [of Education] and ask to enroll them, they refuse unless we use intermediaries. The problem is that the school principals won't accept our children. Every time we go to different schools, they say the number of students is full. Even if they accept them, they don't provide them with chairs or books. We have to buy the chairs and books for them. We are really struggling with education" Woman, 36-45, AlDaraja AlTalta, Dongola - Northern

The conflict and prior closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic have caused significant learning loss, setting students back academically and making it difficult to re-enter the education system. With such limited resources, listening group participants say families are turning to alternative learning methods such as Khalawi (traditional Islamic schooling) to provide some form of education, especially for women and children in shelter centers.

Without access to schools, the risk of children (especially girls and adolescent women) being pushed into early marriage as a coping mechanism for economic hardships increases. A woman between ages 46 and 60 living in AlObeid West Camps sheds light on this issue: "Because of the closure of universities, our daughters will get married and then when the universities open, they will tell them there is no going to university and they'll waste their future".



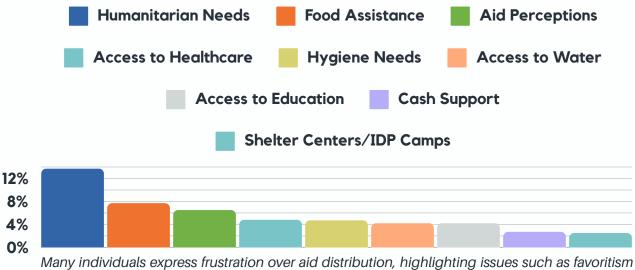
INTERNET IS A MEANS FOR SURVIVAL

Continued disruptions to telecommunication services have left many people unable to contact their families or access critical information. Network outages in some areas, including areas in AlGezira and Khartoum state, have cut off all means of digital/phone communication, preventing individuals from contacting loved ones, verifying their safety and accessing aid. Many families are desperately searching for missing relatives and friends, but with no way to reach them, they remain in distress. Some individuals have been out of contact since the start of the war, with no updates on their whereabouts or wellbeing.

"Peace be upon everyone I'm asking about AlShorouq neighborhood Zidan gas station . My sister...is there with her two daughters and a son. I haven't heard from her since the beginning of the war. If anyone knows her, please reassure me about her"

Woman, Facebook, Bahri - Khartoum

ANALYZING COMMUNITY COMMENTS BY SUBTHEMES



Many individuals express trustration over aid distribution, highlighting issues such as favoritism and organizations not keeping their promises, as some report being repeatedly registered without receiving assistance, while others say aid is being handed to those who do not need it or is being sold in markets.



The breakdown of telecommunication networks has created significant safety risks. People are unsure of the situation in different cities and neighborhoods, and questions such as "Is the network working?" and "What's happening in Khartoum/Omdurman?" are common, reflecting widespread uncertainty. The situation is worsened by the continuing effects of conflict on internet infrastructure, coupled with power cuts, in some areas disabling alternative internet services like Starlink, further limiting access.

"...I'm asking about the city of AlHasahisa what's happening there we lost contact with the people especially in the village of Tayba AlSheikh AlQurashi ..If anyone has any information please let us know" **Man, 26-35, Facebook, AlHasahisa -AlGezira** "Omdurman situation

Does anyone know what's the actual situation in Omdurman? Do people there have electricity, internet,water etc? Today I've seen a lot of posts saying some of these utilities returned and others said they're still all cut off"

Reddit, AlThawra - Khartoum

"There's no news because [they]...withdrew and took Starlink" Man, 19-25, Facebook, AlHasahisa - AlGezira

Since the beginning of the conflict, Sudanese people have turned to online platforms and social media as a way to seek, access, and share information that they are otherwise cut off from. These digital networks, at times, serve as lifelines, helping people share updates about missing loved ones, gather security information (for example, about safe access), and organize financial assistance for essentials such as food and medicine. For many, bank transfers from relatives abroad are a crucial source of survival, but when the network is down, they are completely cut off from this support.

"They bring [back] the network because we completely depend on our people abroad. They send us money whether in other states or outside Sudan. When the network is cut off we are cut off too."

Woman, 26-35, North AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan



DOCUMENTATION AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

In Sudan, documentation barriers further complicate daily life, particularly for women who gave birth at home and are unable to obtain birth certificates. This leaves many children who were delivered in their homes without access to essential services.

"I went to get a birth certificate, and they told me I needed to bring a hospital certificate. I told them I gave birth at home, and there were no hospitals at that time. They insisted on the certificate..."

Woman, 26-35, Musab Ibn Umair Center A, Dongola - Northern

The ongoing conflict has created significant documentation challenges for those who have fled to neighboring countries. In Egypt, confusion about obtaining legal status for Sudanese refugees and their ability to move around, leaves many displaced individuals uncertain about their status.

People are looking for information regarding asylum, residency permits, and whether new visa requirements apply to those who are planning on traveling. Sudanese in Egypt are also seeking voluntary return options but struggle to find clear information on safe travel options.

"What are the effects of Egypt's new refugee law on Sudanese people in Egypt? Especially the new arrivals"

X - Egypt

"Peace be upon you.. I am asking about the Ethiopian visa... I am going by land crossing the border.. Do you need a visa.. or do I need to get it online?" **Man, Facebook - Ethiopia** "Peace be upon you, I am in Cairo and want to return to Sudan, are there any voluntary return buses to Sudan? And where can I find them...I don't want to return through smu****g. Can I get details and the location"

Woman, Facebook, Cairo - Egypt



Families that fled in a frenzy to safer areas have left behind their documentation and are struggling to retrieve new identification documents, due to lack of funds and essential documents.

"We left without taking anything with us we need identification papers to move around we have lost everything and have no money to get passports or national IDs which are very expensive. If possible, provide us with identification papers for free"

Woman, 19-25, East AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan

SAFE MOVEMENT AND VOLUNTARY RETURN

People in and outside of Sudan shared on social media a number of questions and inquiries about voluntary return to Sennar, and other places in Sudan, such as the contact numbers and place of registration and the availability of buses. In listening groups, individuals expressed their desire to return to their homes, with some citing they can't afford the costs of the journey.

Social media users have been calling for financial support to help evacuate families in AlGezira state, some families have been forced to leave their homes. Young people are also at risk of being pushed into recruitment to fight in the conflict.

"••• #Need...A young boy and his uncle are diabetic and have a wound in his leg we want to get them out of the ... area because....they will come tomorrow to recruit young men...The fee per [bus] seat is 350 thousand per person..."

Woman, 26-35, Twitter

Community listening data indicates that in AlObeid, drivers face a lot of challenges while working, such as looting, closed roads, and frequent payments at checkpoints which result in income loss.

SEEKING LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT



Unemployment has surged since the start of the conflict (<u>reliefweb source</u>), with limited opportunities for work or increased barriers to being self-sufficient. Many displaced individuals are requesting skill development and training in areas such as computer programs to increase their chances of being employed. Women are also seeking dedicated vocational training centers to learn handicraft industries, such as bread and perfume making to enable them to generate income.

"Teaching young people to use computer programs in order to raise their capabilities and find jobs and self-employment opportunities" Man, 19-25, Umm AlQura School, Zalingei - Central Darfur "We need you to provide workshops for productive projects for our daughters in other centers, they provided them in some centers."

Woman, 36-45, Abker Jibril, AlGedaref - AlGedaref

HEALTH

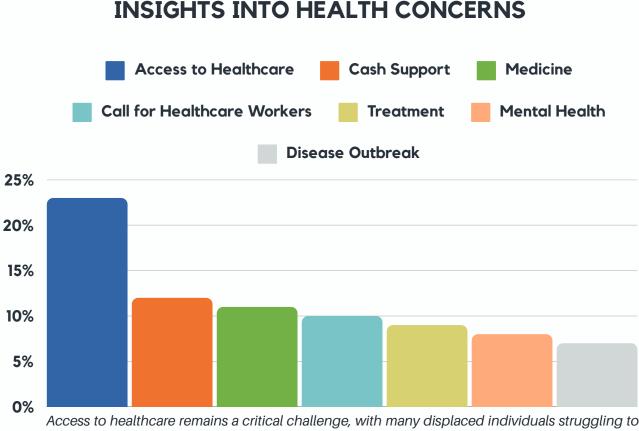
Face-to-face community listening groups reveal a number of challenges and needs for women in general, and pregnant and lactating women in particular, such as the cost of delivery, lack of support, need for midwifes and painkillers. A midwife living in AlSaleem Dormitory in Northern state, said she provides urgent delivery support to women in the shelter center, due to the considerable distance to the hospital. As a solution to these challenges, women are asking for health centers, nutritional support, and contraceptive pills.

Recently in Khartoum, Janoub AlHezam Emergency Room reported on their Facebook page that hundreds of women are at risk of death due to the cessation of cesarean operations at Bashair Hospital after <u>Médecins Sans</u> <u>Frontières</u> suspended its health services in the hospital.



"I gave birth two weeks ago... this midwife they brought her to me and she came and birthed me quickly. I could not go to the hospital or the center, but this midwife does not give birth for free, she wants money...and I am a mother and I have children and I need food and I am breastfeeding" **Woman, 26-35, Ismail Khalil School, AlGedaref - AlGedaref**

Women between ages 26 and 45 in AlObied, North Kordofan raised complaints about vaccine availability for infants and children. A woman living in East AlObeid Camps, sheds light on this critical health gap: "My son is about to turn two, but he hasn't finished his vaccinations because I couldn't find a [vaccination] place...".



Access to healthcare remains a critical challenge, with many displaced individuals struggling to obtain essential medicines, treatments, and emergency care. With some expressing their need for free medication for those with chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Other have also reported that clinics providing free services have shut down.



Displaced people continue to seek mental health services as we discussed in the <u>Humanitarian Flash Update #12</u>. Some shared how the absence of medication and financial resources for treatment are affecting people suffering from mental health conditions, and leading to harmful practices, such as locking up or tying people with mental health illnesses.

"I have a son with mental illness and the medication is unavailable here and we can't afford to buy the medication"

Man, 46-60, AlMuhaffzeen, Zalingei - Central Darfur

"We have a mentally ill patient and her kids are not responsible for her. She has one boy but he is also mentally ill he's in their hometown. Now there are no pills to take and she cannot go to the center and we don't even have money for taxi. Since she came they have been saying that they will take her but no one did. She used to take pills that would calm her down but now we have her locked in a room"

Woman, 26-35, North AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan

Children are especially vulnerable and have expressed their concerns and experiences with conflict and displacement, including its effects on their mental health and well-being. Loud sounds and airplanes were especially triggering for children. Young people need psychosocial support services and activities like sports and art that can have a calming effect and bring them joy.

"I didn't go to school because I'm afraid that if fighting starts I'd be in school and would feel frightened, shaking, crying, and running in the street. That's why it's better for me to stay at home until the war stops."

Adolescent Female, 15-18, South AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan



Community feedback and comments indicates a continued need for medicines and financial support to cover the costs of surgeries, treatments, medical supplies and doctor consultations. There were also inquiries and questions about who could provide aid in the health sector.

"...I need an organization or an entity or a doctor to donate free sessions and medication...My condition has worsened to the point where I either sleep all day or can't sleep at all and eat excessively..." Woman, Facebook

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

Community feedback from Northen and South Kordofan states indicates increasingly high costs of housing, with many IDPs living with their extended families and others are hosted by people who are already hosted by the local community. A woman in AlObeid described the situation by saying:

"Housing is a problem for us; we are hosted, and there are lots of people. [Even] with your money you won't find anything. We are hosted by people that are also being hosted ..."

Woman, 46-60, North AlObeid Camps, AlObeid - North Kordofan

Displaced people living in shelter centers, displacement camps, and with host families, endure crowded and uncomfortable conditions with little privacy. Crammed living spaces were reported in AlSaleem Dormitory in AlGedaref, with 23 IDPs families housed in one room called the ward, separated only by cardboard partitions.



The lack of proper shelter resulted in a child's death due to cold weather exposure. In response, an urgent appeal on Facebook collected donations to help build a shelter (*rakooba*) for the affected family.

Housing challenges are also faced by university students. Many are are forced to travel to different states in order to take exams, with some turning to social media in search of housing during the exams period.

"Personal need...We need a house to rent in Atbara. We are young men in university and we have exams...If anyone knows something, let me know and it will be in your good deeds"

Man, 19-25, Facebook, Atbara - River Nile

Displaced people living in schools in AlGedaref continue to share their concerns about a potential move to distant camps, away from communities they have established. Listening group participants are calling for humanitarian organizations or authorities to establish new camps in nearby vacant spaces. A man living in Suakin camp sheds light on this:

"People here have integrated into the community as a solution to the housing problem, so instead of moving far away, the solution is to set up the camps in empty spaces near our centers because we are used to the neighborhood and the area we live in."

Man, 26-35, Suakin, AlGedaref - AlGedaref

Community participants in listening groups held in Zalingei advocated for women and children specific centers, including designated play areas equipped with games. The community also appealed for non-food items, like clothes, shoes, kitchen tools, and fans. Across the four states, there was a demand for winter clothes, blankets, and heaters to help stay warm during the cold season.



WASH CHALLENGES

Water plays a crucial role in daily life, yet water shortages have been reported in Central Darfur, South Kordofan, and AlGedaref, where people with limited to no income are forced to buy water to survive. Similar shortages were also observed in Omdurman.

"#Omdurman is thirsty \$ This is just a small part of the water queue...people have left the guns and shelling behind because it doesn't matter much anymore as everyone is running to the water queue to quench their thirst and their children's thirst \$...#Save Omdurman from dying of thirst \$" Woman, Facebook, Omdurman - Khartoum

Community listening groups participants and social media users are calling for the provision of water tanks and barrels. In AlGedaref, Central Darfur, Northern, and North Kordofan people report salt-contamination in water. Humanitarian organizations should communicate clear guidelines on treating salty water, for safe consumption. Poor sewage management in overcrowded shelters has been reported in AlSaleem Dormitory A, and in Musab Ibn Umair Center B in Dongola, these conditions are not only inhumane but may lead to disease outbreaks.

"We have an environmental problem; it's unhealthy, full of dirt, and the water from the well and toilets has brought flies and worms, causing us diseases and allergies....".

Woman, 36-45, Musab Ibn Umair Center B, Dongola - Northern

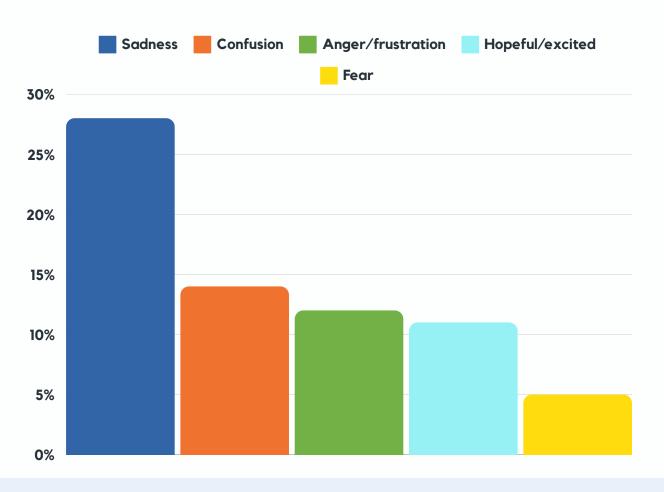
BREAKDOWN OF LISTENING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

40% 0%				
	Displaced	Host Community	Unknown	

This is an analysis of 702 community comments and feedback by type of participant collected from 1 December 2024 to January 22, 2025. Listening group participants from the host community shared that they were facing various challenges due to the high cost of living, in addition to limited access to education and basic services. Many expressed the need for income-generating opportunities, such as opening small shops or accessing capital to support their families.

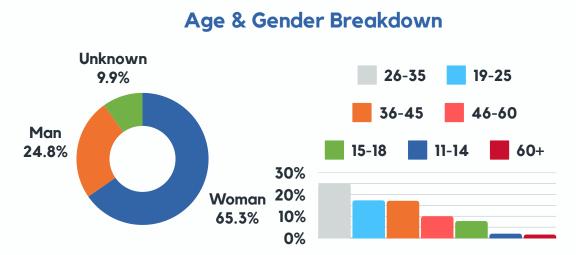


SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

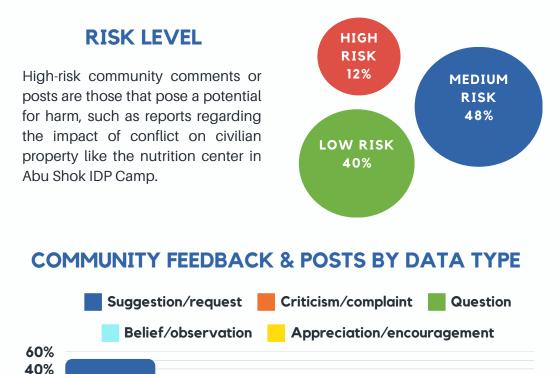


Sentiment analysis helps us understand the emotions behind text, images, and feedback shared. The most prominent emotion expressed within the sadness followed confusion, data was by anger/frustration, hopeful/excited, and fear. Sadness is shown in comments about severe hardships such as the lack of healthcare services, families struggling with food shortages, and displaced individuals living in unsafe conditions. Anger/frustration is expressed in comments criticizing inefficiency in the delivery of aid and the lack of support from humanitarian organizations to IDPs. People are hopeful for income-generating projects, education support, and healthcare improvements. Fear is expressed in concerns over safety, lack of shelter, and potential health risks.





This is the age and gender breakdown of 954 posts and community comments collected between 1 December 2024 and 22 January 2025. Displaced individuals ages 60+ are facing unique challenges, including limited access to healthcare, financial struggles due to low pensions, and difficulties in receiving aid. Several older individuals expressed concerns about the inability to work post-retirement, while others reported that they're being overlooked in aid distribution efforts.





20%

How can Community Listening contribute to Accountability?

Internews' timely community 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 face-to-face listening groups, and understanding their priorities allows people affected by conflict to influence and shape the humanitarian response to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to needs that are voiced. Online social listening and face-to-face listening groups are one way to ensure accountable humanitarian support is being provided.

Internews Methodology

Internews' analysts gather feedback, concerns, and rumors posted on social media and shared during listening groups by individuals affected by conflict and displacement in Sudan. The example posts and community feedback featured in this report are representative of the most common concerns seen across the community listening activities. Community comments and posts are 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.



h h h H2H Network Humanitarian Action Support

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