

## **From Externalization to Humanitarian Aid: Reforming EU Policies to Address Sudan's Crisis**

The ongoing conflict in Sudan has plunged the country into one of the most severe humanitarian crises witnessed globally. With an estimated 14,000 lives lost and a staggering 8.1 million people displaced, including 6.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 1.8 million refugees, the situation is dire, as reported by the United Nations. The turmoil has particularly affected regions like Darfur, Kordofan, and Al Gezira, where communities face acute food insecurity, with 17.7 million Sudanese people, representing 37% of the population, struggling to meet their basic dietary needs.

Despite the challenges, civil society organizations and community sources have intermittently reported on the humanitarian tragedies unfolding across Sudan. In Darfur and South Kordofan, the lack of access to food has resulted in deaths, especially among vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. Moreover, the cessation of humanitarian convoys to Darfur and the blockage of vital routes in South Kordofan have compounded the crisis, leaving many without essential aid.

The withdrawal of humanitarian organizations from Sudan has left vulnerable populations even more exposed. In IDP camps like Hassa Hissa in Central Darfur, the absence of food assistance has led to a rise in malnutrition-related deaths. Although local initiatives have attempted to fill the gap, limited resources have hindered their effectiveness, underscoring the urgent need for international support.

Tragically, the humanitarian situation shows no signs of improvement, with civilians in Darfur and Kordofan bearing the brunt of food insecurity and disease outbreaks. The escalating crisis has forced many families to flee their homes, seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Chad, Central Africa, Uganda, and Libya. However, the lack of assistance in refugee camps has driven some, particularly youth, to embark on perilous journeys to Europe in search of safety.

Beyond the immediate humanitarian concerns, the conflict in Sudan has far-reaching security implications for the region. The ethnicization of the conflict, coupled with increasing banditry and transnational criminality, poses a significant threat to stability. Additionally, the Niger withdrawal of multinational joint forces from the Lake Chad Basin and the potential crisis facing the Chad government exacerbate security challenges, potentially impacting neighboring countries from Mali to the Red Sea.

In the face of these mounting challenges, the European Union (EU) must take decisive action. Mere financial aid to authoritarian regimes is insufficient to address the root causes of the crisis. The EU's approach to managing [migration through externalization](#), including significant funds allocated to various countries and initiatives such as [as the 2023 €127 million deal with Tunisia, and \\$2 billion to Egypt](#) to curb migration should be reassessed.

Critics, including researchers and MEPs, have raised concerns about the [lack of transparency](#) and the diverse sources of funding in the EU's externalization policies. Funds spread across different EU funds make it difficult to discern the exact purposes and impacts of the spending. Moreover, there are calls for stringent oversight to ensure that the money doesn't inadvertently support abusive practices, such as the EU's support for entities like the Libyan

Coast Guard, which has been [accused of human rights violations and involvement in crimes against humanity.](#)

Instead of financing authoritarian figures and bolstering border controls, resources should be redirected towards bolstering humanitarian efforts in Sudan and Chad, encouraging people to remain in their home regions, and mitigating the risk of further destabilization. At the very least, the EU must take responsibility and nominate an EU envoy to oversee this process, ensuring accountability and effective allocation of resources.

The EU's inaction in addressing these critical issues risks exacerbating the chaos spreading throughout the region. It is imperative that policymakers and the public engage actively in finding sustainable solutions to the pressing challenges facing Sudan and its neighbors. By prioritizing humanitarian assistance and redirecting resources, the EU can play a pivotal role in alleviating the suffering of millions caught in the crossfire of conflict and insecurity.