



We Matter, Too: Addressing the Urgent Needs of Sudanese Displaced Women

Executive Summary

- The escalating conflict in Sudan has displaced over 11.5 million people, with women and children comprising the majority of the displaced.
- Displacement has intensified gender-based violence (GBV), lack of access to health care, and limited humanitarian aid for female refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- Despite international resolutions and humanitarian interventions, gaps remain in addressing the complex and intersecting needs of women and girls affected by the crisis.
- Culturally sensitive, gender-inclusive policies and actions are needed that emphasise empowerment, protection and resilience-building among displaced Sudanese women and girls.

Policy Recommendations

Addressing the urgent needs of displaced Sudanese women and girls necessitates a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that emphasises their safety, dignity, and empowerment.

International Community

- Mobilise humanitarian funding and advocacy to respond to gender-specific needs of women in displacement contexts.
- Mobilise resources to expand inclusive access to quality healthcare, education, and psychosocial support for displaced women and girls.

UN Agencies and Humanitarian Actors

- Establish safe spaces for women and expand the provision of mobile health clinics to deliver life-saving aid and essential services.
- Collaborate with local organisations to provide trauma-informed mental health services tailored for survivors of GBV, especially in refugee and IDP camps.

Local and National Governments

- Reform policies to combat harmful cultural norms, such as forced marriage, and stigma associated with experiencing and reporting GBV.
- Integrate displaced populations into national social protection systems to ensure access to basic services.

Faith-Based and Community Leaders

- Engage community and faith actors to promote inclusive narratives that advocate for the dignity and protection of displaced women and girls, while addressing structural inequalities, such as patriarchy, and encouraging grassroots peacebuilding efforts during sermons at places of worship.

About the Research

This study aims to better understand the challenges of displaced Sudanese women

and girls and to emphasise their unmet needs. The briefing calls for comprehensive policy approaches to promote the inclusion of displaced women in humanitarian action using evidence-based research to meet both urgent needs and sustainable development objectives.

Historical and Political Context

Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has been plagued by cycles of civil war, ethnic conflict, and political instability. Key drivers include:

- Unequal distribution of resources and power among ethnic and regional groups.
- Systemic gender inequalities exacerbated by patriarchal norms reinforced in times of conflict.
- Ongoing violence between government forces and armed opposition groups, including the Darfur conflict and more recent clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

As of [January 2025](#), over **11.5 million people** have been displaced, including **8.8 million IDPs** and **3.4 million refugees** who have fled to neighbouring countries. Sudan currently has the [greatest internal displacement rate globally](#), exceeding Syria's 7.2 million. A significant number of women and children [flee](#) to countries such as Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt, seeking safety amid malnutrition and urgent healthcare needs.

These women often travel in groups for safety; however, some are compelled to go alone (despite cultural restrictions on female mobility and reliance on male relatives for 'security' and travel companionship), increasing their vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and

abuse. They face heightened risks of sexual abuse, harassment, and exploitation, particularly in transit and refugee camps.

These dynamics have created one of the world's most protracted displacement crises, leaving millions of Sudanese vulnerable to violence, poverty, and inadequate humanitarian support.

The research findings intend to inform governments, humanitarian organisations, and community leaders in developing collaborative and culturally sensitive interventions.

Methods

This policy brief is based on desk-based analysis of secondary data. An extensive review of academic literature and humanitarian reports concentrated on the displacement of Sudanese, gender-based violence, and psychosocial support frameworks. Additionally, narratives of refugee and internally displaced Sudanese women were sourced from credible news outlets, complementing the dataset with diverse perspectives and lived experiences.

Gendered Impacts of Displacement

The current displacement crisis in Sudan reveals severe gender-specific effects, especially on women and girls. These effects are grounded by existing inequalities intensified by conflict and displacement.

Women and girls encounter [increased risks of gender-based violence](#) during displacement, including sexual violence, trafficking, intimate partner abuse, financial vulnerability, and loss of agency.

The [livelihoods](#) of women, frequently reliant on informal economies, are disrupted during displacement, compelling them into exploitative financial pursuits involving low wages, unsafe working environments, and long work hours.

[Access to health care](#) is critically restricted, adversely affecting maternal and reproductive health. Mental health issues emerge from exposure to violence, suffering gender-based violence, and handling familial obligations, resulting in an increased prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety.

[Changes in gender roles](#) are significant, as displacement alters traditional gender norms, leading to **double or even triple burdens** – balancing care work, earning livelihoods, and managing trauma –while navigating displacement's instability. Women disproportionately assume the task of caregiving for children, the elderly, and the ill, which constrains their capacity to work or study. They also often act as community leaders and activists, establishing informal networks to provide mutual support in camps and settlements.

Victims of violence encounter [stigma](#) that exacerbates their isolation, resulting in social marginalisation and [coerced marriages](#). Girls face disproportionate disruptions in education, resulting in coerced dropouts and underage marriages, which undermines their recovery and reintegration into their communities.

The susceptibility of women to violence and abuse during transit and displacement is a significant concern, as many are compelled to flee either individually or in groups, rendering them [vulnerable to exploitation](#) at checkpoints or during their

journey. Cultural traditions frequently restrict women from traveling unaccompanied by male relatives, thereby complicating their ability to escape dangerous situations.

Link to the full report:

<https://cmsny.org/we-matter-too-addressing-urgent-needs-female-sudanese-refugees-displaced-persons/>

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