

Joint donor statement on Humanitarian Access in Sudan by the UK, USAID, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland, Canada and the European Commissioner for Crisis Management

The people of Sudan are experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. 25 million people, half of Sudan's population, are in urgent need of assistance. Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has forced approximately 11 million from their homes, fleeing horrific violence and severe hunger since the outbreak of conflict 18 months ago. Women and girls are facing severe protection risks, including widespread sexual violence and other grave human rights violations.

In August, famine conditions were confirmed in Zamzam camp for internally displaced people – home to over 500,000 people. This marks the third official famine determination in the 21st century. On 9 October, in addition to the ongoing risk of famine in areas of greater Darfur, we were alerted that urban and rural areas of South Kordofan are now at elevated risk of famine due to continuing conflict and siege-like conditions.

The conflict between SAF and RSF and the two sides' systematic obstruction of local and international humanitarian efforts is at the root of this famine. The war has driven civilians from their homes – uprooting them from their livelihoods. People have been increasingly forced into harmful coping strategies and are more at risk of being trafficked. It has damaged agricultural production and disrupted trade flows and market functionality, resulting in a severe deterioration in the production of and access to food.

In Darfur, only a fraction of the aid needed to feed 7 million acutely food insecure people has been allowed in since August. Untold numbers of people have already died, and many more will die as a result. An immediate and coordinated scale-up of assistance, together with full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to populations in need, is urgently required to mitigate the large-scale loss of life. We condemn that, despite the overwhelming urgency, both SAF and RSF persist in obstructing the humanitarian response.

In addition, bureaucratic impediments by both the Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission and the Sudan Agency for Relief and Humanitarian Operations continue to impede the delivery of assistance at the necessary scale. The Sudanese authorities must recognize that it is essential to work in partnership with humanitarian actors in Sudan, allowing them to address the most urgent needs independently and unhindered. Bureaucratic obstacles that are primarily designed to obstruct the delivery of aid, such as delays in issuing visas and travel permits, will continue to prevent life-saving support to the

most vulnerable communities – including those seeking safety from the RSF's assault on El Fasher in Northern Darfur. The recent treatment of the inter-agency Mission in Darfur is unacceptable and underlines this pattern of obstructive behaviour. The UN and partners must be able to engage with all parties to the conflict to ensure that lifesaving aid reaches people in urgent need wherever they are.

The parties have a duty to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel. In practice, this means the removal of all arbitrary restrictions on the Adre border crossing from Chad, including the 3-month time limit, opening of all possible cross-border routes without impediment, and agreeing on routes for humanitarian aid across conflict lines. In this regard, we recall the clear commitment of Chairman of the Sovereign Council, General Al-Burhan, to alleviate and remove all obstacles facing humanitarian actions.

We welcome the fulfilment of the humanitarian pledges made during the Paris Conference for Sudan and neighbouring countries on 15 April and recent progress of the Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) group in improving cross-border and crossline access. We call on the SAF and the RSF to engage and to deliver on their existing commitments and obligations for the sake of the Sudanese people.

Last month, world leaders gathered at the UN General Assembly called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and urgent action in support of Sudan. This is needed now more than ever, with the escalation of the hostilities causing displacement, destruction and death.