

Impact of the Sudan Crisis on Chad – March 2026

Chad continues to be one of the countries most heavily affected by the regional impact of the Sudan crisis. Since April 2023, 917,100 Sudanese refugees¹ and 389,755 Chadian returnees² have fled the Sudan conflict and found refuge in Chad. 13,356 new refugees arrived between January and mid-March 2026. One third of the new refugees interviewed by protection actors in early March 2026 said they had been victims of physical attacks during their journey to Chad.³

1. New Arrival Trends - Increased Pressure on Ennedi East

Since the fall of El Fasher in October 2025, over 31,000 refugees have found refuge in Eastern Chad. This has marked a shift in displacement trends from Darfur to Chad. Instead of crossing through Adré, most new crossings have occurred in Tiné or Ennedi East, and 53% of the newly arrived population has settled in Oure Cassoni,⁴ the largest refugee site in Chad with over 110,000 refugees.⁵ Humanitarian needs are acute, particularly in food, shelter, water, sanitation, and medical care, including mental health services. Refugees in Oure Cassoni currently have access to only 7 liters of clean water per person per day for all uses combined. This is less than half the minimal threshold recommended in humanitarian standards of 15 liters per person per day. The camp lacks 11,000 latrines to match the current needs.⁶ The combined lack of latrines and sufficient access to clean water puts refugees and host communities at risk of contracting and spreading waterborne diseases and epidemics such as cholera, especially during the rainy season between June and September.

Oure Cassoni is in a remote area in the Ennedi East province, which has the lowest humanitarian presence⁷ and funding in Eastern Chad. This has been exacerbated by the fact that the province was not prioritized in the 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP). As a result, despite very large gaps, Ennedi East was not eligible for the recent 100 million USD funding envelope from the US government.

Developing cross-border programmatic approaches to monitor and respond to the needs on both side of the Darfur-Chad border could help better understand and adapt our responses to new displacements and needs trends.

2. Funding Cuts and Rising Needs

The rest of Eastern Chad does not fare better. Sudanese refugees arrive in an already poor and vulnerable region affected by a chronic lack of basic services and fragile livelihoods. Mass arrivals put an important additional burden on fragile host communities and threaten social cohesion. Aid for both refugees and host communities was drastically cut in 2025, while needs have continued to grow. The 2025 humanitarian response was only 31% funded, a 46% drop compared to 2024⁸. This has led

¹ [Flash Update #47 New Sudanese Refugee Influx into Chad - Chad | ReliefWeb](#)

² [IOM Chad: Sudan Crisis Response Situation Update No. 62 | February 2026 - Chad | ReliefWeb](#)

³ [Project 21 - Chad: Sudanese emergency - Protection situation of new arrivals \(From \(06 to 12 March 2026\) - Chad | ReliefWeb](#)

⁴ [Document - Flash Update #46 New Sudanese Refugee Influx into Chad](#)

⁵ [Oure Cassoni | Plateforme de coordination de l'urgence](#)

⁶ According to the current monitoring of a WASH INGO working in Oure Cassoni.

⁷ According to OCHA's December 2025 3W there were only 11 operational humanitarian actors combined (INGO, NGNO, UN and ICRC combined) in Ennedi East. In comparison, there are more than four times more INGOs working in Ouaddaï.

⁸ According to the Financial Tracking Service.

humanitarians to make hard choices, such as dividing food assistance by two, shifting from monthly distributions to one every two months.⁹

Despite over 180,000 new refugees fleeing to Chad in 2025, the number of vulnerable people considered in the 2026 HNRP has been decreased from 7 million People in Need (PIN) in 2025 to 4.6 million PIN in 2026. Those 2.4 million people removed from the HNRP have not suddenly become less vulnerable, but humanitarians don't even have the means to address the needs of the remaining 4.6 million.

3. Address the Gaps - Bridge humanitarian, transition and development

Addressing the current crisis requires increasing impact with fewer funds, notably by strengthening NGO-led responses, improving coordination, and effectively linking humanitarian responses with more sustainable support to livelihoods and basic services. Stronger development and NEXUS engagement is crucial to enable vulnerable populations to develop resilience and move beyond cycles of vulnerability and dependency on repeatedly recurring humanitarian assistance.

Major development donors have already started engaging in the East on social safety nets, equitable access to land alongside land restoration for agriculture, benefiting both refugees and host communities. These large-scale and more sustainable approaches are crucial, but they take time to be designed, signed, and implemented and require multiple years to start yielding significant results. It is therefore paramount to maintain agile, rapid, and flexible humanitarian aid, while advancing multi-year, integrated and transitional approaches that bridge first response, early recovery, and longer-term resilience building. Adequate multi-year pooled funding approaches such as those proposed by the Sahel Regional Fund, could support this kind of transitional approach while also better supporting localization.

Support for basic services in a context of continuously evolving needs also requires the right mix and complementarity between rapid humanitarian responses and more sustainable approaches. In the WASH sector, responses in refugee sites aim to develop complete water infrastructure at a sufficient scale to address the needs of refugees. This means digging sufficient boreholes and building enough treatment tanks, water towers, and water distribution networks. Building such large-scale infrastructure and networks takes several months, sometimes over six months, especially in remote areas with difficult access and logistics. In addition, those structures must be continuously adapted to respond to new arrivals. This means rapid and flexible water-trucking responses are still necessary in many areas until more sustainable infrastructure can take over.

4. Humanitarian Access – Between Facilitation and Constraints

The increased number of attacks at the border between Sudan and Chad has pushed the Chadian government to close the border on 23 February. Remaining true to their humanitarian commitment, Chadian authorities have maintained humanitarian access for populations seeking refuge in Chad and for humanitarian cross-border operations into Darfur.

This continued engagement by Chadian authorities is crucial to allow Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees to find asylum in Chad and to allow humanitarian responses into Darfur. Humanitarian access could be further facilitated by simplifying or lifting some key administrative impediments. To travel to the East, each INGO expatriate staff member must request a travel authorization, a two- to three-week administrative process if all goes smoothly. According to a 2018

⁹ [WFP Chad Country Brief, December 2025 - Chad | ReliefWeb](#)

decree establishing the agreement protocol between INGOs and the government, expatriate staff who have a work agreement don't need a travel authorization. Lifting the travel authorization requirement for staff with work agreements would greatly facilitate access to the East for humanitarian and development NGOs, enabling more efficient, integrated, and nexus-oriented responses. A large part of the cross-border response to Darfur is possible by crossing through the Chadian border. There are no specific administrative processes in Chad for staff conducting cross-border responses to Darfur. This leads to some delays and issues as both the visa processes and travel authorization requests are not adapted to those specific cases.

On 2 March, the Chadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up an interministerial committee in charge of taking decisions on these questions of travel authorizations and cross-border processes. This initiative is a key opportunity to further support and facilitate humanitarian responses in Eastern Chad and Darfur.

5. Recommendations

It is essential that the regional impact of the Sudan crisis remains a priority when addressing the Sudan humanitarian crisis. Neighboring countries bear the burden of this impact and play an essential role by receiving refugees and allowing cross-border humanitarian responses. Donors could greatly support the response in Eastern Chad by:

- Including Ennedi East within their priority areas for the refugee response in the East and supporting a scale-up of the response in the region to match new needs trends and address gaps.
- Maintaining humanitarian funding in the East for rapid first responses while increasing complementary flexible multi-year transition funding to support more sustainable services and enable populations move beyond extreme vulnerability.
- Maintaining bilateral humanitarian funding and increasing support directly to operational actors such as national and international NGOs.
- Promoting flexible multi-year and inclusive pool fund mechanisms adapted to building up local humanitarian leadership such as the Sahel Regional Fund.
- Proposing regional programming opportunities covering needs in Darfur and Eastern Chad to improve coordinated responses to cross-border needs, strengthen complementarity, build a better understanding of cross-border needs and displacement dynamics, and establish more accurate early warning and preparedness mechanisms.
- Increasing outreach toward NEXUS and development donors to increase sustainable commitments in the East and advocate for effective coordination to plan the bridge between humanitarian, transition and development approaches, limit gaps, and ensure that no vulnerable populations are left behind.
- Supporting ongoing interministerial dynamics to facilitate humanitarian access in Chad and across borders.