

## Sudan – a humanitarian emergency in the blind spot of the world

Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations discussed the situation in Sudan in its meeting in Geneva 24.-25. September.

**The Council on Ecumenical and International Relations urges the Norwegian government to:**

- 1. Increase funding of humanitarian and long-term aid to Sudan**
- 2. Use its diplomatic influence to promote humanitarian access and protection of civilians**
- 3. Work for immediate ceasefire and a peaceful political solution**

***They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.***

***Isaiah 2:4***

Sudan is experiencing an enormous humanitarian emergency. More than 26 million people - half of the country's population – are suffering from critical hunger and in need of humanitarian assistance. Right now, there is hardly any food available, and there is a very limited possibility to reach people with emergency relief. More than ten million people have been forced to flee their homes <sup>1</sup>.

Even though the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that Sudan is becoming the world's worst famine, the crisis does not get the attention it deserves. Humanitarian assistance is far from sufficient, and international humanitarian access is very limited.

As always in situations of war and conflict, women and children are particularly severely affected. Sexualized and gender-based violence is widespread, and it is crucial to improve the documentation of violations and war crimes, and to include the needs of women and children in humanitarian response. <sup>2</sup>

The horrors of war and the suffering it creates, violates the God-given and inalienable rights of the human family. Church leaders in Sudan now ask their sisters and brothers in faith across the world to stand together with them in prayer and struggle for peace and human rights. Solidarity with the people of Sudan and contributing to proper response to the crisis, is a part of our church's mission.

Church of Norway has worked with the churches in Sudan over many years. Through our development organisation Norwegian Church Aid we are on the ground and get first hand day-to-day information about the situation. The Catholic Church's development organisation Caritas and Norwegian Church Aid have reorganised their work to enable local actors to continue their work in areas where international organisations don't have access. We ask for more flexible funding for these local actors, who today get a very small share of humanitarian funds.

The government of Norway has had a central role in the work for peace in Sudan. As part of the Sudan troika along with the UK and the US, Norway is a trusted and influential partner who can contribute to placing Sudan on top of the global agenda. There is a need for alliances that secure

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<sup>1</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-mobility-overview-2-bi-monthly-report-july-august-2024>

<sup>2</sup> The situation of women and children is emphasised in a statement from the World Council of Churches' Executive Committee from June 11, 2024: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-ecumenical-solidarity-with-sudan>

coordination of peace initiatives so that different initiatives don't undermine each other but create progress.

Sudan has its own long history of welcoming neighbours fleeing from wars and crises, most recently under the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia, when thousands sought refuge in Sudan. It is high time that the world's eyes turn to Sudan and its terrible ongoing emergency.