

Hearing on Conflict and Hunger in Sudan
May 22, 2024, 10 am
2247 Rayburn House Office Building

STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

On behalf of iACT and Darfur refugees living in camps across eastern Chad.

Dear Members of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission,

We thank you for holding this very important hearing and shining a light on the critical situation in Sudan and refugee camps in eastern Chad. Since April 2023, 8.6 million people have been displaced, with more than 730,000 crossing into eastern Chad alone. There are now more than 1 million people living as refugees in the camps in eastern Chad because of violence in Sudan. And the reality is resources were already scarce for the refugee community in Chad prior to April 2023, with many reporting they had not received rations since 2019. iACT has seen aid come and go in the region over the years, and we know the international community must respond differently this time. Now is the time to resource the community itself, giving refugees the opportunity to lead.

EASTERN CHAD PRIOR TO APRIL 2023:

- Approximately **387,000 people** from Sudan (and mostly from Darfur) were living as refugees across 12 different refugee camps in eastern Chad.
- In February 2023, the **World Food Program** projected it would only be able to reach **184,663** of the people living in refugee camps in eastern Chad and that it would have to cut off assistance completely in May 2023.

THE SITUATION TODAY IN EASTERN CHAD:

- Sudan is now the [largest child displacement crisis in the world](#).
- [2.9 million people](#) are expected to face acute food insecurity in Chad in the coming months.
- Save the Children is projecting up to [230,000](#) children, pregnant women, and new mothers could die in the coming months due to hunger.

A message from iACT Refugee Programs Director and refugee in eastern Chad since 2004:

The war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has affected all facets of society, forcing millions of Sudanese people to leave their homeland. There is within this crisis what we can call a hidden starvation that harvests many souls, especially among the young children, pregnant women, and the elderly. The SAF and RSF have chosen to use starvation as a weapon of war, attacking and destroying the food storage of the government, individuals, and families.

Many Sudanese participate in the country's economy by producing crops, but forced migration at the hands of the Janjaweed from the villages to the towns over the last two decades has resulted in much lower production. Those who have fled since the beginning of this recent conflict have not found any tracks for farming in Chad, deepening the food shortage.

When the new refugees arrived in Chad, and before they were registered as refugees by UNHCR, they were hosted by the Sudanese community that has been living in the refugee camps for decades. Although the old refugees had no food either because the rations they used to get from UNHCR had stopped, they shared everything. Nowadays, the refugees are struggling to get food and necessities. Some get one meal a day while others have nothing for two days, they are really suffering. And we are on the doorstep of the rainy season, so the situation will get more dire.

Support a robust response to the refugee crisis in Sudan's neighboring countries, including Chad. We urge the US government with its partners and NGOs to provide rapid assistance for food to Sudan and also to refugees in host countries, addressing immediate hunger needs as well as the price of commodities.

Push USAID for flexible funding to allow assistance to flow to local and community-led actors in Chad. We encourage you to look for solutions to remove roadblocks and cumbersome vetting processes so that local and community-led organizations have access to funding.

Center the voices of Darfur refugees in eastern Chad and other displaced Sudanese in your decision-making. We ask that you listen, incorporate community solutions into policy, and support community and refugee-led programming.

Sincerely,

Alfateh Younous Haroun
Refugee Programs Director
Eastern Chad

Sara-Christine Dallain
Executive Director
scd@iact.ngo

iACT resources and partners with Darfuri refugees, amplifies their voices, and creates opportunities for them to thrive. We do this by listening deeply to their needs, then together, we create safe and joyful programs that include preschools, nutrition, soccer academies, employment opportunities, and training, all led by the affected communities themselves.