**Sudanese in distress**

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In Sudan, the conflict between the Sudanese Army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continues. There are more than 100,000 people fleeing Sudan to neighbouring countries and more than 300,000 currently internally displaced. If a lasting truce is not in place soon, these numbers will only continue to increase. Humanitarian and religious organizations globally must step up their efforts to support the Sudanese people and bring a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

As thousands of Sudanese people flee hundreds of miles from Khartoum to reach the eastern port, hoping to ride a ship which will take them to safety, while others take treacherous journeys towards Chad, Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, and Libya, many are still trapped in the conflict area. Continuous shelling combined with shortages of food, drinking water, and medicine among other essential materials have left the people of the Republic of Sudan in a state of complete disarray.

Ms Ahmed, a peace builder who works in a civil society organization that American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) partners with in Sudan said that she is heartbroken that the conflict has destroyed everything that the people of Sudan have been building for years.

“Chaos and loss have been a daily aspect of our lives. My family and I are internally displaced like many other Sudanese people. We had to leave Khartoum and move to a different city to find safety. Many families are now living in one room with other families as there is shortage of space to live,” said Ms Ahmed. She and her family were forced to pack their entire lives into few small bags which they could carry on foot and by bus in the areas where buses were still running. She is just one of many in this situation.

An earlier three-day cease-fire allowed thousands of foreign nationals to evacuate. However, the people of Sudan are left to fend for themselves. Ms Kura, a Sudanese woman who works with another of AFSC’s partners in Sudan, is stuck in her house in Khartoum. She is afraid of even sleeping or going out to seek medical care. “Who is going to save us from this situation?” she asks.

The people of Sudan deserve to live in a peaceful environment which is free of conflict and where their rights are respected. The situation calls for negotiations involving all parties. For negotiations to work, international cooperation and attention is necessary. The United Nations, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa can play a key role in creating conditions for ending the conflict and ensuring that refugees and internally displaced people can meet their basic human needs. There is need for a permanent ceasefire agreement between the parties involved.

AFSC is raising money to provide food, medical supplies, hygiene kits, and other necessities for those displaced by violence. It is critical that religious and humanitarian organizations like ours step up our efforts to support the Sudanese people and to insist on a humanitarian corridor to provide necessary supplies and psychosocial support. We need to speak in unity for respecting human rights, including civic participation, and an end to all hostilities. Only with a united effort will peace be attained — and sustainable.

The impact of this mass exodus from Sudan will have lasting effects in the country, and in the greater Horn of Africa and other neighbouring countries. Some of these countries, including Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, remain high on the Fragile states Index. However, should the violence and displacement in Sudan be stopped, the conflict resolution will have positive ripple effects for the region.

The situation in Sudan should demand our attention not only for the sake of international stability, but because so many lives are at stake. The world has shown in our reaction to conflict in Ukraine that we can sustain interest in the well-being of people who live far away from us. The Sudanese deserve the same sustained attention.

Excerpted: ‘Have We Turned Away From the People of Sudan?’

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