

UNHCR EGYPT
SUDAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE

15 June 2023

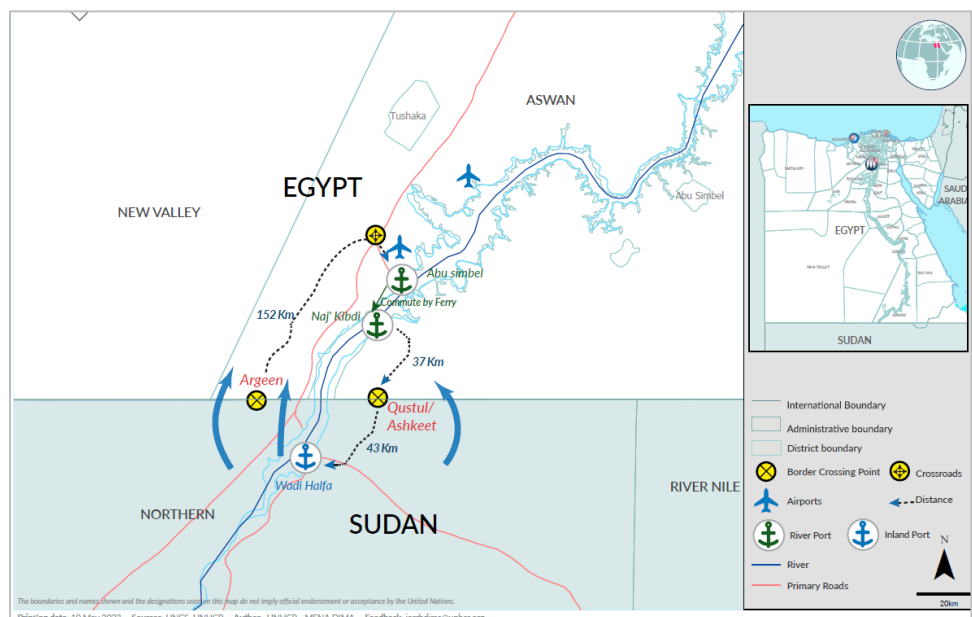


210,000

Sudanese have entered Egypt from Sudan via the two official border crossings, Argeen and Qustol, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
As of 15 June


\$25.2 million

UNHCR's financial requirements for the Sudan emergency response in Egypt.



OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS

- More than 210,000 Sudanese have fled their country for Egypt since the beginning of the crisis, according to the latest figures from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The number of refugees passing through the Egyptian border from Sudan has dropped significantly since the imposition of new restrictions (details below). From 10 June, anyone wishing to enter Egypt, irrespective of age and gender, must have an Egyptian entry visa. UNHCR teams at the main crossings at Argeen and Qustol have confirmed a drop from thousands to the low hundreds. Most new arrivals are men who have obtained visas in either Wadi Halfa or Port Sudan.
- Prior to the new restrictions, people had rushed to the border to cross in time while making the difficult decision to leave family members behind. Some reportedly abandoned their buses waiting to enter Egypt in an attempt to enter quicker on foot. The crowds behind the border gate and inside the buffer zone include those with serious medical needs and incomplete documentation. UNHCR and its partner the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) succeeded in facilitating serious medical cases for entry but only for those with the correct documentation.
- On 7 June, Egyptian media [reported](#) - and later confirmed to UNHCR - that the Cabinet had advanced a new draft law on asylum-seekers providing a larger role for the state in the management of refugee affairs (details below).

Draft asylum law

On 7 June, some media outlets reported that the Cabinet had advanced a draft new asylum law which has not yet entered into force. While few details of the law are currently available, it was noted that it would require all asylum-seekers to register directly with the Government. UNHCR has not yet seen the text of the draft law but according to preliminary information available, it would increase state involvement in the management of asylum affairs through the establishment of a 'Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs' within three months of enforcing the law. Moreover, as per the draft, the Committee will also work in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cooperate with UNHCR as well as other concerned international organizations to ensure the provision of support and assistance to refugees in the country.

The MoU signed between Egypt and UNHCR in 1954 currently codifies Egypt's delegation of responsibility for registration and refugee status determination activities to UNHCR. UNHCR currently also provides asylum-seekers and refugees with the necessary documents through which they can get a six-month-long renewable residency permit from the government. It is early to determine the exact role and interplay with UNHCR as the draft law remains inaccessible. UNHCR stands ready to support the Government in setting up and implementing a domestic asylum framework in line with international standards.

New admission procedures

Thousands remain waiting for the processing of their visas at the Egyptian consulate in Wadi Halfa, Sudan, many with acute medical and shelter needs. In addition to what was reported in the last update on new admission procedures, entry visas shall be machine-readable and the working hours in Quostol and Argeen have been restored to 9 AM-5 PM and 9 AM- 9 PM, respectively. Sudanese expired passports that have been extended for six-month validity by the Sudanese authority are no longer accepted. The same for the children added to the passports of their parents. As UNHCR understands, the Sudanese Embassy is not renewing the passports currently due to the conflict in Khartoum (rather they extend their validity). This decision would mean that once passports expire, Sudanese risk having difficulty renewing their residence in Egypt. In terms of impact, UNHCR anticipates that this decision would affect Sudanese who have been and are residing in Egypt before the conflict as well as the new arrivals. This in turn would potentially increase the demand for registration with UNHCR for documentation purposes.

Sector highlights

UNHCR continues to strengthen its engagement and coordination leadership with partners in Cairo as well as in the south and border areas, while continuing to engage local authorities and community-based organizations to assess the needs and scope of the response. Two technical inter-sector working groups (ISWG), one in Aswan and one in Cairo, continue to meet on a weekly basis to report any issue that needs the attention of the inter-agency working group.

Protection

In Cairo, needs continue to rise among new arrivals from Sudan. UNHCR community outreach among the Sudanese community shows that many new arrivals are struggling more to meet their basic needs including housing and food. A fourfold increase in rent in popular areas among the Sudanese community has led to an 80% increase in people approaching UNHCR with housing needs since the onset of the crisis. To assist, UNHCR continues to expedite the roll-out of cash support to new arrivals. Some 951 individuals registered with UNHCR have now received one-time emergency cash support. An additional 2,557 individuals will receive the same amount of assistance in the coming days. 913 newly arrived Sudanese individuals who are not registered with UNHCR have also been assisted with emergency assistance. A further 1,090 individuals have been identified to receive similar assistance shortly. The total number of new arrivals assisted with cash so far is 1,864.

A UNHCR protection team met with Sudanese community leaders in Aswan on 12 June to gather latest information on difficulties faced by new arrivals. Issues reported included exploitation, inability to access residency and its knock-on effect on acquiring a SIM card, lack of recreational activities, and Sudanese children traumatized by their experience fleeing Sudan. UNHCR is working to establish volunteer community networks in Aswan to share information and relay important information on services available to new arrivals.

UNHCR is supporting new Sudanese arrivals in completing their disrupted primary education by paying the exams fees directly to the schools. The Embassy of Sudan has reduced the fees for new arrivals from \$130 to \$60 per student. The exams are scheduled to take place between 19 and 24 June for 88 children registered in the two Aswan Sudanese community schools, and approximately 320 registered in community schools in Cairo.

Registration

UNHCR has now registered 6,221 individuals out of 18,724 new arrivals from Sudan who have approached the office since the start of the crisis. Almost 90% are Sudanese nationals mostly originating from Khartoum. Egyptian security officials express appreciation for UNHCR's expedited registration efforts. The officials also thanked UNHCR for working with the authorities to help reduce the growing crowds outside the 6 October City office, where non-Syrian nationalities register. The recent accelerated opening of a new refugee reception area in 6 October has helped to significantly reduce crowds as well as tensions with residents. UNHCR acknowledged the authorities' efforts and briefed the officials on plans to further increase registration capacity, including through the identification of new registration premises.



A single mother of three arrived in Egypt from Khartoum less than a month ago after seeing her neighbors being attacked and robbed. "I lost my husband due to Covid-19 in 2020 and have been raising our children alone since then. When the rebels started attacking homes, I was terrified and jumped on the first bus to Egypt." She is now being registered with UNHCR in Cairo. ©UNHCR/Pedro Costa Gomes



Core relief items

UNHCR completed the installation of two rub halls in Qustol border crossing. The structures will help UNHCR and its partner the ERC scale up their activities, operationalize information desks, and deliver psychosocial support services, among others. A third rub hall has been installed in zone are between the two borders to serve as a space for asylum-seekers to rest due to the long waiting hours prior to admission. In addition, UNHCR has delivered 456,640 water bottles, 87,000 hygiene kits, and 80,000 sanitary napkins to new arrivals, and nine commercial fridges, 15 family tents, 4 rubhalls, 50 office chairs, 30 tablets, and 213 waiting benches to partner ERC.

Main needs and gaps

The situation on the Sudanese side of the border is reportedly concerning, as conditions continue to deteriorate. The Egyptian authorities continue to take the necessary measures to expedite the entry process, although the large numbers of new arrivals remain a challenge in terms of processing capacity. UNHCR observations also indicate that conditions at the Sudanese side of the border continue to deteriorate due to lack of water, food, WASH facilities, and speculation on the higher costs of the buses from Sudan to Egypt, all resulting in people being held for long periods of time in dire conditions.

Financial information

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to its operation in Egypt, including in response to the Sudan situation. Ongoing support is critical to help families rebuild their lives. UNHCR is urgently appealing for **\$151.4 million** to support its response, including to the emergency across Egypt, with little contributions received to date.

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CONTACT: UNHCR Public Information and External Relations Unit – arecapi@unhcr.org

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