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UK Urged to Prioritise Sudan as Civil War Fuels Humanitarian Collapse

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As Sudan plunges deeper into one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, British lawmakers are being urged to act. Aida Elsayed, Secretary General of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), is appealing to Members of Parliament to ensure Sudan remains a foreign aid priority amid the ongoing civil war that has devastated the nation.

Since April 2023, Sudan has been gripped by violent conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), resulting in over 25 million people facing acute food insecurity and displacing 12 million from their homes. The SRCS, the national affiliate of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, remains one of the few humanitarian organisations still operating inside the country. In interviews, Elsayed described chilling scenes such as bodies dumped in wells in Khartoum, turning water sources toxic and unusable.

Despite a recent £120 million humanitarian pledge from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), aid remains insufficient and difficult to distribute. Critical supplies often get stuck at ports or are looted en route to conflict zones. Human Rights Watch has reported consistent blockades of aid by both warring factions. The SRCS has lost 73 aid vehicles intended to support 7,000 people.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) warns that over half of Sudan's health programs are in jeopardy, with 355 facilities at risk. Simultaneously, the World Food Programme (WFP) faces a £625 million funding gap over the next six months, forcing difficult choices between the quantity of food delivered and the number of people reached.

Agricultural disruption adds another layer to the crisis. Once regarded as the “breadbasket of Africa,” much of Sudan’s farmland is now unsafe, abandoned, or occupied by displaced families. Food production is severely curtailed, and internal transport of available goods is hindered by security threats. “People can’t access their land or obtain seeds. They’re too afraid to farm,” Elsayed noted.

In addition to basic needs, the psychological toll is staggering. Volunteers at SRCS report that sexual violence has become widespread, with even doctors becoming silent victims. One survivor, once a hospital patient, now quietly assists as a volunteer, gradually resuming her medical role.

Child-focused spaces offer rare hope. Children initially draw violent scenes, blood and bodies, but with time, they begin to depict dreams of home and family, reflecting a flicker of optimism amid despair.

Elsayed and her team, many of whom are displaced themselves, continue their work despite immense personal loss. “We don’t make choices. Whatever comes, we use it,” she said. For

now, the focus remains on urgent relief: food, water, and medicine. Long-term rehabilitation will have to wait.