



CLIMATE-FRAGILITY RISK FACTSHEET

SUDAN

*Most Sudanese depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and are hence directly impacted by climate change. At the same time, Sudan's political and security situations are precarious: for most of its time since independence, the country has experienced conflict and violence. The term 'climate war' has often been used to draw a direct causal link between climate change and conflict. In reality, these conflicts are far more complex, which can be traced back to a history of **regional marginalisation, ethno-occupational tensions, and failures in governance.***

3 CLIMATE FRAGILITY RISKS

Three ways in which climate change interacts with and contributes to conflict and fragility in Sudan are:

1 Risk 1: Increased competition over distribution, use of and access to natural resources can result in conflict.

A shrinking natural resource base - due to a combination of climate impacts, environmental degradation and a growing population - can heighten competition and tensions between communities, especially between farmers and pastoralists. These conflicts are often intertwined with tribal and ethnical tensions, which have frequently been used by the central government and armed groups as a political tool to garner support and recruitment, and to conduct ethnically motivated violence. Issues surrounding land tenure rights, livestock routes, and contested customary and formal institutions are other notable factors behind these conflict dynamics.

2 Risk 2: Displacement and loss of livelihoods due to climate change and conflict can lead to maladaptation and more tensions and conflict.

The loss of livelihoods, migration and displacement, driven both by climate change and conflict, can lead to different risk dynamics that further undermine the resilience of communities. Climate and conflict impacts on agriculture may push farmers and herders to adapt by expanding or changing resource use, often intensively and unsustainably. People are also compelled to take up other unsustainable livelihood strategies, such as charcoal production and artisanal gold mining. Migration and displacement, especially rural-urban migration, could compound pressure on natural resources and services in receiving areas.

3 Risk 3: Inadequate responses to environmental degradation, climate change and conflict can undermine government legitimacy and capacity.

If the government fails to respond to and adequately address the interlinked risks of environmental degradation, climate change and conflict, it could undermine its own legitimacy and capacity, as well as those of traditional authorities. At the same time, this failure could provide an opportunity for armed groups to capitalise on public grievances to strengthen their legitimacy and increase their support base and activities on the ground. Thus, these impacts can fuel the very mechanisms that have played a key role in Sudan's past conflicts.

CLIMATE CONTEXT

Sudan's climatic conditions are diverse but dominated by arid and semi-arid ecosystems. Historically, temperatures have been on the rise, accompanied by an increase in the likelihood of droughts. Rainfall levels vary from north to south, with patterns varying across regions depending on the season. The frequency of flooding events has risen in the past, although less predictably than droughts.

Climate change is projected to affect Sudan in a number of ways, including:



0.5-3 °C increase in average annual temperature by 2050



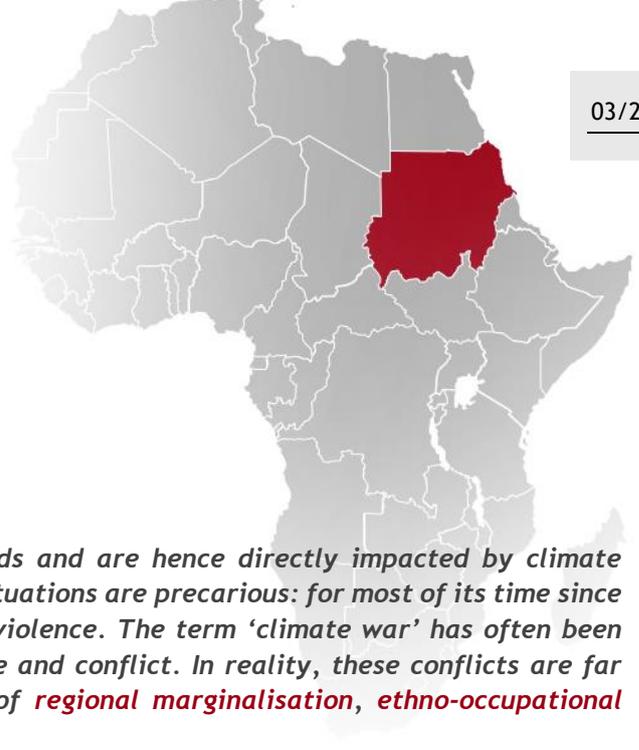
Increased intensity and duration of droughts and heatwaves



Increased desertification and southward expansion of Sahara Desert



Increased variability and unpredictability in seasonal rains





Sudan's heavy reliance on agriculture leaves its people highly vulnerable to the interlinked impacts of climate change and conflict, with women being particularly more vulnerable given highly gendered roles relating to natural resources.

ENTRY POINTS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE FRAGILITY RISKS

In general, there are two broad but interlinked levels of entry points for addressing climate-fragility risks in Sudan. The first level is to **improve capacities to cope and adapt to climate and environmental change**, particularly with regard to water and land management, and in providing agricultural support. The second level is to **improve the management of the knock-on effects of climate and environmental change**, particularly livelihood and governance challenges.

Although specific needs vary locally and will need to be assessed in partnership with local stakeholders, specific entry points for addressing climate-fragility risks include:

- 1 **Water management:** this includes improving water infrastructure, water governance, and research and monitoring of water availability, especially groundwater.
- 2 **Land management, rehabilitation, and ecosystem restoration:** this includes reforestation, protection of forests and rangelands, reclamation of degraded land, and supporting REDD+ activities and local community forestry programmes.
- 3 **Agricultural support:** this includes applied research, agricultural extension services, training, and veterinary support.
- 4 **Community stabilisation and peacebuilding:** this includes livestock route demarcation, joint management of water infrastructure, and supporting peace committees and community-level conflict resolution mechanisms.
- 5 **Livelihood support:** this includes vocational trainings (especially for youth), financial support (e.g. micro-loans, cash transfers, and feed provision), and improving the marketing of agricultural commodities.
- 6 **Governance:** this includes land tenure rules and access rights, strengthening federal level commitment to investments into productive sectors, access to climate information and early warning systems, and strengthening environmental knowledge, capacity, and governance structures at the local, state, and federal levels.

Efforts in building livelihood resilience in Sudan need to be buttressed by broader **governance improvements**. Moreover, all interventions should be deliberately leveraged to bring communities together, and they need to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, for example **women and youth**, are empowered.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTS

- Major sources of livelihoods include farming and pastoralism, both of which are highly dependent on rainfall patterns.
- Poverty is uneven across states and the urban-rural divide, with poverty rates being higher in rural areas than in cities.
- Sudan's economic situation, together with the conflicts and instability that persist in various parts of the country, has meant that many Sudanese rely on international humanitarian aid.

POLITICS & SECURITY

The conflict landscape in Sudan is complex and multi-dimensional. Many conflicts arise from group loyalties and identities based on ethnic, tribal or occupational lines, all of which are often interlinked as groups splinter and realign. In addition, they are often linked to natural resources such as water and land. Underlying many of these conflicts, however, are the struggles over marginalisation and power distribution between the central government in Khartoum and its peripheries. The political situation remains fragile, threatened by continuing political instability and military interference in civilian matters.

FURTHER READING

- Foong, Adrian; Pohl, Benjamin and Rüttinger, Lukas (2020). Climate-Fragility Risk Brief: Sudan (full version).

LEGAL NOTICE

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The **Climate Security Expert Network**, which comprises some 30 international experts, supports the **Group of Friends on Climate and Security** and the **Climate Security Mechanism of the UN** system by synthesising scientific knowledge and expertise, advising on entry points for building resilience to climate-security risks, and helping to strengthen a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate-related security risks.
www.climate-security-expert-network.org

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