The issue of Sudan:

Sudan, officially the Republic of Sudan, is a federal republic located in north-eastern Africa. The state has a total area of 1, 861, 484 sq. kilometres, making it the 35th largest country in terms of size. It is bordered by Egypt to the north, the Red Sea to the northeast, Eritrea and Ethiopia to the east, South Sudan to the south, the Central African Republic to the southwest, Chad to the west, and Libya to the northwest. The power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted into a large-scale conflict in April 2023 and has been driving humanitarian needs in the country ever since. Unfortunately, there is no end in sight.

People:
Before the conflict, Sudan was already experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis. Long-term political instability and economic pressures meant that 15.8 million people were in need of humanitarian aid. The conflict has only exacerbated these conditions, leaving almost 25 million people — more than half of Sudan’s population — in need.  Amidst mass displacement and reports of mass killings, humanitarian access has been severely curtailed, making it extremely hard for aid to reach vulnerable communities. The crisis is expected to deteriorate through 2024, driving further displacement and increasing risks across the region.

Conflict between the SAF and RSF erupted on April 15, 2023. While fighting has been chiefly concentrated in the country’s capital, Khartoum, the conflict has impacted other regions of the country. In Darfur, mass killings and displacement have led to reports of ethnic cleansing. Over 12,000 people have been killed, with about 5.9 million displaced within the country, making it the largest internal displacement crisis globally. More than 7.2 million people have fled their homes, taking refuge inside and outside the country, with children representing about half of the people displaced. Sudan is now the country with the largest number of displaced people and the largest child displacement crisis in the world. Expansion of the conflict into Sudan’s “breadbasket", Al Jazirah state, has displaced more than 500,000 people and has exacerbated the country’s food crisis. Meanwhile, the looting of businesses, markets and humanitarian aid warehouses will further contribute to food shortages.

While the conflict in Sudan continues to spread, humanitarian access has become more limited. Intense violence and movement restrictions on humanitarian actors have prevented the delivery of aid, especially in the south of Sudan where needs are highest. ACAPS has rated the constraints on humanitarian access in Sudan as extreme (5 out of 5). As the conflict continues in the face of floundering diplomatic efforts, humanitarian needs will continue to rise–and the ability to meet them will fall.

Health:
The conflict in Sudan has decimated the country’s public infrastructure, including the health system. The health care system is suffering from an acute lack of staff, funding and medical supplies in addition to repeated attacks, looting and occupation of medical facilities and hospitals. More than 70 percent of health facilities in conflict-affected regions of Sudan are inoperable or closed.  The displacement of civilians has placed an additional strain on health care resources, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. An outbreak of measles has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 children across Sudan. The country is also grappling with a severe cholera outbreak, with the number of suspected cases surpassing 8,500 in December 2023, having increased by 94% over the past month. With high rates of malnutrition, a debilitated health system and low levels of immunisation, disease outbreaks will continue to have catastrophic impacts, particularly for children.

Economic:
Prior to the outbreak of conflict, Sudan’s economy was marred by rampant inflation and shortages of essential goods, leading to protests across the country. Now, conflict has worsened the economic crisis. Nearly half of Sudan’s population is unemployed while the Sudanese pound has lost at least 50 percent of its value. In Khartoum, factories, banks, shops and markets have been looted or damaged, further reducing the population’s access to goods, services and cash. Meanwhile, rampant inflation is set to persist in 2024, even in the unlikely scenario of a lasting ceasefire. Children are at particular risk in Sudan. At least 10,400 schools in conflict-affected areas are shuttered, leaving an estimated 19 million children without education and at risk of abuse or exploitation.

Food insecurity
Sudan is facing extreme levels of food insecurity, with 17.7 million people—37% of the population—experiencing crisis (IPC 3) or worse levels. At crisis levels of food insecurity, families adopt negative coping strategies, like selling their possessions or marrying off their children, to secure enough food to meet their basic needs. At more extreme levels of food insecurity, hunger and starvation are a daily occurrence.

The displacement stemming from Sudan’s conflict is driving labor shortages throughout the country. The cost of fuel is rising, impacting agricultural production, while high food prices and low purchasing power are driving increased humanitarian needs. Shortcomings in Sudan’s harvest season could push food prices even higher.

Displacement
The conflict in Sudan has already led to extreme levels of displacement, both internally and across Sudan’s borders. The vast majority of those displaced by the current conflict, 5.9 million, remain in Sudan and live with host communities. That brings the total number of those internally displaced in Sudan to more than 9.6 million, the largest internal displacement crisis in the world. Meanwhile, over 1.4 million people—mostly women and children—have fled Sudan to neighbouring countries, including 484,000 that have arrived in Chad.  Sudan’s neighbours are now facing both a growing refugee crisis and risk of active conflict spilling over their borders. There is significant potential for the crisis in Sudan to develop into a regional one that engulfs multiple countries and drives catastrophic levels of need.

Points to consider:
- Does your country currently provide aid to Sudan?
- How can diplomatic settlements be achieved?
- Is your country responding to the influx of Sudanese refugees?
- How can the humanitarian impacts be reduced?
- How do we manage the impending food insecurity crisis?

Useful Links:

<https://imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/sudan/>
<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15409.doc.htm>
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwif5rWf_fCDAxWKX0EAHTZ4BZkQFnoECCQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unhcr.org%2Fnews%2Fstories%2Ffive-things-know-about-crisis-sudan&usg=AOvVaw2esA740S1zY0tN_s9HkJeb&opi=89978449>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/where/sudan/>
<https://sudan.un.org/en/258147-un-human-rights-expert-sudan-calls-urgent-action-dismal-human-rights-situation-conflict>