SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. Two days later, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Khartoum, Sudan. Since then, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) in Sudan has reported more than 3,800 cases with 1,272 recovered and 262 deaths (as of 31 May). COVID-19 has now spread to all of Sudan’s 18 states with majority of cases located in the capital, Khartoum.

Sudan has had to take a series of strict preventative measures in order to contain and reduce the spread of the virus. To this effect, on 16 March, the Transitional Government of Sudan declared a nationwide health emergency and introduced mitigation measures, including closure of all airports, sea ports and land crossings (with exception of scheduled flights of goods and humanitarian supplies), closure of schools and universities, banning of public gatherings, restrictions on inter-state public transportation and imposed a countrywide curfew to limit the movement of people. Khartoum state has been under a full lockdown in effect since 18 April.

Despite these stringent containment measures, the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise dramatically, and new cases are reported daily in Sudan.

IOM, along with other United Nations (UN) agencies and humanitarian partners have joined the government’s efforts to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in Sudan.
SNAPSHOT OF IOM SUDAN RESPONSE

Tracking Mobility Impacts

IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has developed a mobility restriction dashboard to consolidate and visualise data on the locations, status and different restrictions at 11 land border crossing points, two airports and one blue border crossing point in Sudan. DTM tracks and monitors in-country migration trends and displacement in order to understand mobility dynamics within and between certain areas, which in turn helps to inform public health preparedness and response strategies. As of 21 May, DTM has issued five mobility restriction updates. The IOM DTM Sudan COVID-19 Mobility Restriction Dashboard is updated weekly and can be accessed here.

DTM has also been monitoring IDP camps in Darfur, including impediments to camp access, impact of COVID-19 on IDPs and stranded IDPs affected by mobility restrictions. As of 21 May, key informants reported a total of 635 IDP students studying in Khartoum, 10 students in South Darfur and eight students in Northern State who are currently stranded and unable to return to IDP camps across North, South and West Darfur. An additional 150 IDP gold miners working in Northern State and seven working in South Darfur are also reportedly unable to return to Shadad IDP Camp in North Darfur and Geraida IDP Camp in South Darfur.

Sudan Mobility Restriction Dashboard #5
IOM is working closely and coordinating with relevant, government, national and international partners to support the COVID-19 response in Sudan, and to ensure migrants and displaced populations, especially those marginalised or in situations of vulnerability are included in response planning.

IOM has supported the development of the Sudan COVID-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP), a UN joint initiative built around eight pillars to reinforce inter-agency collaboration and support the Government of Sudan’s efforts in preparing and responding to the pandemic.

IOM is working with key partners and community-based networks to ensure migrants and mobile populations have access to timely, context-specific and correct public health information.

Public health and prevention messaging on COVID-19 was translated in Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo, Hausa, and Somali, covering main languages spoken by migrants in Sudan and disseminated through SMS to 1,112 migrants.

IOM conducted seven COVID-19 awareness raising sessions and provided personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, hand sanitiser, and disinfectant spray) to reach 410 individuals in the Ethiopian and Eritrean community safehouses, Nigerian and Somali migrant communities, Aliens Unit and Counter Trafficking Unit of the Ministry of Interior, and the Omdurman quarantine facility.

IOM’s Rapid Response Fund (RRF), through its implementing partner Concern Worldwide, conducted 20 awareness sessions on COVID-19 for recent IDPs in Ag Geneina, West Darfur. Mobile megaphones were used to reach 2,700 persons, and 1,347 COVID-19 information, education and communication (IEC) materials were distributed during the awareness sessions.

IOM is a member in the following COVID-19 working groups composed of key partners/pillar leads set up to oversee and lead coordination, monitoring and reporting of the response: Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Disease Surveillance, Infection Prevention Control (IPC), and Case Management and Continuity of Essential Services pillars. IOM serves as a co-lead with WHO on the, Points of Entry (PoE) Pillar Working Group. In addition, IOM together with UNHCR, established the IDPs COVID-19 Camp Coordination Task Force to ensure effective multi-sector coordination of COVID-19 preparedness and response in IDP camps and settlements.
IOM continues to support national efforts in implementing infection prevention and control (IPC) measures. IOM established 20 portable handwashing facilities to support the Khartoum State Ministry of Health (SMoH) and the Khartoum State Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) COVID-19 sensitisation and disinfection campaigns across seven localities in Khartoum, targeting homeless children and youth. Five of the handwashing facilities were installed in the Omdurman quarantine facility.

IOM is working with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) in Um Dafoug, South Darfur and Deain, East Darfur to disseminate IPC guidance and messages for home and community care providers in local languages and adopted relevant communication channels to all target groups (IDPs, refugees and host community members). 550 copies of IEC materials were provided to South Darfur and 550 copies to East Darfur.

IOM supported the SMOH in Ag Geneina, West Darfur with provision of soap (3,096 bars), 1,210 copies of COVID-19 IEC materials, hand sanitiser and 20 plastic barrels for hand washing stations to assist 16,000 IDPs, refugees and host community members.

IOM provided the SMOH in Khartoum with PPE comprising of 150 protective bodysuits for doctors and medical personnel, 100 boxes of N95 facemasks, gloves, protective goggles, 2,000 bottles of hand sanitiser, two large disinfection pumps for sterilising public spaces, as well as 1,500 awareness leaflets to be distributed in public spaces including market places, bus stations, and streets across Khartoum.

IOM assisted the SMOH in As Salam, West Kordofan with provision of soaps (1,800 bars), 3,000 copies of IEC materials and 14 chlorine buckets to assist 16,000 IDPs, refugees and host community members.

IOM’s Rapid Response Fund, through its implementing partner Concern Worldwide established 20 portable handwashing stands in 10 temporary gathering sites in Ag Geneina, West Darfur; assisting an estimated 5,000 IDPs.
IOM is providing and supporting the rehabilitation of WASH facilities in health facilities and isolation centres. Working closely with the private sector, IOM secured a donation of 20 air conditioners (AC) with 24 capacity units and 11 HEPA filters, and donated two generators to be installed in Jabra hospital (designated hospital to receive and isolate those infected with COVID-19) to improve the ventilation of the hospital.

Before the start of the rehabilitation works, IOM’s medical team carried out a training for seven workers and distributed PPE materials to ensure the safety of the workers, medical team and patients at Jabra hospital. IOM continues to liaise with the SMoH to ensure that front-line workers are covered under the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and that safe PPE protocols are being followed. Handover of the site was completed on 23 May.

IOM is committed to ensuring the protection of migrants, displaced persons and other vulnerable populations remains at the centre of its COVID-19 response. Through IOM’s Migrant Resource and Response Centre (MRRC) in Khartoum and Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Gedaref, IOM continues to provide direct assistance to vulnerable migrants including health assistance, psychosocial support (PSS) and provision of food and non-food items (NFIs).

The MRRC has been providing individual phone counselling services to ensure continued services is available to vulnerable migrants in need of support. Phone counselling services are available in six languages and include psychosocial support (PSS), medical counselling and follow up, assisted voluntary return (AVR) counselling for those who are stranded, unable and/or unwilling to stay in the country, and awareness sessions on COVID-19 that include mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and information on the general situation and current restrictions. A phone counselling guide for frontline workers and language assistants was developed.

To date, 302 migrants have been reached through phone counselling, 132 were supported with PSS counselling, 70 were assisted with medical counselling and 19 were provided with prescription support.

IOM has provided medicine to 105 migrants staying at the Ethiopian community safe house. Medication includes antibiotics, analgesia, medicine for hypertension, diabetes and multi vitamins. 100 supplementing milk formula containers were provided to 32 lactating mothers.

Emergency food support has reached 200 migrants in Gedaref and 992 migrants in Khartoum (Ethiopian, Eritrean, Filipinos, Somalis, Nigerian and Nigerien communities). Food bags include flour, lentils, sugar and oil.

Support to children and youth stranded in religious schools (Khalwas) in Khartoum and Gedaref is underway. 184 unaccompanied migrant children are stranded across 19 schools in Khartoum, and 54 youth are stranded across six schools in Gedaref. IOM has so far provided two schools in Khartoum with PPE materials, hygiene-kits, and conducted COVID-19 awareness raising sessions to 106 children and youth.

IOM is closely coordinating food support and migrant protection activities with the relevant UN agencies and international organisations through the Mixed Migration Thematic Working Group (TWG) platform to avoid duplication of assistance and ensure complementarity in the COVID-19 response.