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UPDATE PAPER

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2025! And a special welcome to ECOSOC and UNHRC. My name is Jude Almutawa and I am absolutely over the moon to be your Assistant Director for Session I this year. This is my first year serving as a staff member for NHSMUN. I have been to this conference once before as a delegate, and it was the most memorable experience. I have been a part of Model United Nations for as long as I have known it existed—a great four years. In high school, I founded and ran the MUN club at my school and helped staff conferences in Canada. Participating in MUN has always been something I have loved, so I cannot wait to see everyone's hard work come to life in New York City.

Born in Colorado, I lived there for a whole two weeks before moving to the Middle East for my toddler years before moving yet again to Canada. There, I moved from Edmonton, I like to consider my hometown Edmonton since it is my second favorite city. My favorite is London, UK, where I currently live. I am in the first year of my undergraduate law degree here at King's College London. In high school, I was, and still am, big on science, and I ran the STEM club and loved being involved with scientific research. I have also always loved volunteering and helping out within any community. I have one darling kitten, Valencia, who is a certified polyglot since I always like to switch up what languages I talk to her in. I love a good crime show like Dexter, and I hate anything horror-related. In terms of hobbies, I love singing, especially anything jazz, and I always dig a good karaoke moment. I am always down for a good hotpot socializing moment with friends or reading a book with a nice mug of karak.

I am incredibly excited to meet all of you and see the creativity and passion you bring to the committee. As your Assistant Director, I hope to create a welcoming and dynamic environment where everyone gets to share their ideas, debate, and collaborate to tackle major world issues.

As we prepare for the conference, I encourage you to dive deep into your research, think critically about your country's position, and bring innovative solutions to the table. Think beyond the obvious and challenge yourself to propose innovative, realistic, and impactful solutions. NHSMUN is not just about debate—it is about understanding global perspectives, building friendships, and developing skills that will stay with you long after the conference ends.

If you have any questions or need guidance, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am here to support you every step of the way. Let's make this session not just a productive one but also an enjoyable and unforgettable experience.

Looking forward to meeting you all in NYC!

Best regards,

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Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this year's UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)! My name is Abdulrahman El Dib, but I usually just go by Dib. I will be your assistant director for session II of this year's conference. This is my first time joining the NHSMUN staff and my second time going to NHSMUN. My first time attending was in 2023 as the delegate of New Zealand in the Legal committee.

A little background about me: I was born and raised in Egypt but moved to the US this year and live in Houston, Texas. I am studying at Houston Community College and am hoping to transfer to the University of Houston to study Political Science and International Relations. I am also fluent in Arabic and English and trying to learn Spanish. Outside of school, I am a self-proclaimed sportaholic and will watch almost any sport at any given time, my favorite being Soccer. I am an avid Liverpool supporter. I also support Zamalek in Egypt. My other hobbies include playing video games whenever possible with my friends, watching TV, and listening to music.

That being said, MUN is far and away my favorite thing to do. I have been doing MUN for the past six years, attending almost 20 different conferences as a delegate, staff member, and part of the secretariat! MUN was an avenue through which I made many of my closest friends today, and I did two of my favorite things: debate politics and meet new people. That being said, I recommend attending the conference and focusing on having as much fun as possible and getting to know your fellow delegates. At NHSMUN, you will find many people from many different cultures and backgrounds, and getting to know them and their cultures and learning about them is one of the most enriching experiences you can get at an MUN conference!

Your number one priority at an MUN conference should be having fun, and in my experience, the best way to do that is to be as involved during committee sessions as possible. To do that, you will want to be prepared, and a great tool to do that is through the background guides your directors wrote and this updated paper. In these guides, you will find a holistic explanation of both topics and a focus on the key issues discussed during the conference. I recommend you thoroughly read both booklets and expand on that information as much as possible. After all, you can never be too prepared!

I wish all of you good luck and hope you all enjoy this conference as much as I enjoyed my time as a delegate at NHSMUN. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or your other directors/assistant directors, as we are more than happy to help!

Once again, I wish you all the best and can't wait to meet you at The Big Apple!!

Best Regards,

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UNHRC

NHSMUN 2025



TOPIC A:

UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN DARFUR

Photo Credit: Chansey

Introduction

Since April 15, 2023, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been fighting a gruesome and deadly war for control over Sudan.¹ Since then, daily human rights violations have been committed in Darfur by both the SAF and the RSF. Civilians are being targeted through acts of abuse and sexual violence, especially women and children. As well, there have been indiscriminate bombing of schools, hospitals, water supplies, communication networks, and electric grids.² Alongside such attacks, over 61,000 Sudanese people have died due to both violence and humanitarian causes since April 2023. Some regions have almost 90 percent of deaths unrecorded, suggesting a much larger number of casualties.³ More than 10 million have also been displaced in that same period.⁴ Rampant famine and disease have been a leading cause of deaths, and the limitations on aid coming in by both sides of the conflict have further exacerbated the crisis, with over half of the Sudanese population in dire condition.⁵

Due to the large scale of the humanitarian disaster in Darfur, with the targeting of children and the forced displacement of millions, this has become one of the most pressing human rights issues in the world.⁶ Hence, a ceasefire is an immediate necessity for the survival of millions in Sudan.⁷ The implications of the civil war have also caused major economic and infrastructural damages to Sudan and neighboring countries. Almost every primary economic sector in Sudan has collapsed, including the agricultural and industrial sectors.⁸ The workforce has also been effectively destroyed, with full-time employment dropping by half and over 70 percent of school-aged children not getting an education.⁹ In February, an oil export pipeline was damaged, which halted 90 percent of the country's exports, further affecting the already damaged economy.¹⁰

The large number of Sudanese refugees has also put a strain on neighboring countries' economies, most notably Chad. The last year has seen a rise in both the inflation rate and the poverty rate in Chad, and with nearly a million Sudanese people seeking asylum in Chad, the World Bank predicts that these numbers could rise even further in 2025.¹¹ The growing humanitarian crisis, displacement, escalating civil war, and economic problems caused by the Sudanese crisis have made it one of the world's most urgent issues. The international community must act quickly to address it.¹²

War on Children

The war in Darfur has affected everyone living in Sudan.

1 The Center for Preventive Action, “*Civil war in Sudan*”, CFR, October 3, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/power-struggle-sudan>

2 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “*Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission outlines extensive human rights violations, international crimes, urges protection of civilians*”, Press Release, OHCHR, September 6, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/sudan-un-fact-finding-mission-outlines-extensive-human-rights-violations>.

3 “*Invisible and severe death toll of Sudan conflict revealed*”, London School of Hygiene and tropical medicine, November 13, 2024, <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2024/invisible-and-severe-death-toll-sudan-conflict-revealed>

4 Tapiwa Gomo and Alimbek Tashtankulov, “*7 things you need to know about Sudan's humanitarian crisis*”, UNOCHA, August 15, 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/news/7-things-you-need-know-about-sudans-humanitarian-crisis>.

5 El Ferri, Ezzat. “*Sudan: Intense fighting in Darfur, a crisis for children*”, October 8, 2024. <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2024/10/1155476>

6 International Rescue Committee, “*Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help*”, October 24, 2024. <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-sudan-what-happening-and-how-help>.

7 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “*Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission outlines extensive human rights violations, international crimes, urges protection of civilians*”, Press Release, OHCHR, September 6, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/sudan-un-fact-finding-mission-outlines-extensive-human-rights-violations>

8 Kidane Kiros, “*The Ongoing War in Sudan and Its Implications for The Security and Stability of The Horn of Africa and Beyond*”, Policy Center for the New South, October 12, 2024 <https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/ongoing-war-sudan-and-its-implications-security-and-stability-horn-africa-and-beyond>

9 IFPRI, UNDP, “*The Socioeconomic Impact of Armed Conflict on Sudanese Urban Households*”, November 12, 2024 <https://www.undp.org/sudan/publications/socioeconomic-impact-armed-conflict-sudanese-urban-households>

10 Agence France-Presse, “*IMF raises concerns about effects of Sudan conflict on neighbors*”, VOA, October 25, 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/imf-raises-concerns-about-effects-of-sudan-conflict-on-neighbors/7839070.html>

11 World Bank, “*Chad Overview: Development news, research, data*”, October 7, 2024, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/chad/overview>

12 “*Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help*,” International Rescue Committee.

The lack of basic healthcare, disease, famine, sexual violence, and displacement, with the most vulnerable group in society, the children, being the ones most affected. For the last few months, there have been over 300 violent attacks a month which have resulted in further deaths and injuries among the already at-risk children of Sudan who are already considered the frontline of the conflict.¹³ Between January 7 and 8, 2025, 23 children were killed and nine were injured in an attack.¹⁴ This is only one example of many, where children have been placed at risk because of the ongoing conflict.

For instance, an artillery attack on August 8 injured two children, and another on August 10 targeted a childcare center.¹⁵ Alongside the constant attacks and mass displacement, those in refugee camps are barely surviving with 44 percent of children being severely malnourished.¹⁶ Moreover, 221 witnesses describe children, still alive, being “piled up and shot” by the RSF as they attempted to escape El Geneina. This was all part of a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Sudan’s non-Arab Masalit tribe in West Darfur. Tirana Hassan, the executive director at Human Rights Watch, said: “As the UN security council and governments wake up to the looming disaster in El Fasher, the large-scale atrocities committed in El Geneina should be seen as a reminder of the atrocities that could come in the absence of concerted action.”¹⁷

Reports by UNICEF have shown that the ongoing conflict and its impact on children have gotten significantly worse. In the first few days of October alone, nearly 50,000 people were displaced in Darfur. This adds to the millions that have already been forced to leave their homes due to the

violence. There have also been many instances of airstrikes on densely populated areas such as marketplaces which have resulted in the direct death of children.¹⁸ Kidnappings and mass abducting for ransom also are not uncommon with those abducted put at major risk and usually in unknown and inhumane conditions.¹⁹ One case of such kidnappings is that of Aladdin Abu Harba who was kidnapped from his home by paramilitary forces for a ransom of a million Sudanese pounds or USD 400. After the ransom was paid the forces demanded another million or else they would kill him.²⁰ Besides the direct risks many children face due to the constant attacks, they are also being deprived of their fundamental rights, such as education and healthcare. As of October 7, more than 150 schools and hospitals have been attacked by the militias fighting in the civil war. These attacks have caused disruptions in both education and healthcare. In addition to schools and hospitals, militias have destroyed important infrastructure such as water points and marketplaces. These attacks have further affected the young Sudanese population.²¹ They have impacted the children’s immediate well-being and sense of safety. These attacks also result in the youths’ dreams for the future being effectively ripped away along with basic human rights like the right to education.²²

The constant attacks from hospitals also prevent children from receiving any medical care or accessing routine vaccination, making them even more vulnerable to diseases. For instance, on January 24, 25, a drone strike targeted the last functioning hospital in the capital of North Darfur.²³ At least 70 people were killed in the attack, many of them were patients receiving

13 Diana Oberoi, “Sudan: Children Under Fire as Parts of Country Record Most Violent Month Since February”, Save the Children, September 24, 2024. <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2024-press-releases/sudan-children-under-fire-parts-of-country-record-most-violent-month-since-february>

14 UNICEF, “Children Bear the Brunt of Escalating Conflict and Famine in Sudan,” UNICEF, accessed January 27, 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/statement-children-bear-brunt-conflict-famine-sudan>.

15 Oberoi, “Sudan: Children Under Fire as Parts of Country Record Most Violent Month Since February.”

16 Oberoi, “Sudan: Children Under Fire as Parts of Country Record Most Violent Month Since February.”

17 Mark Townsend, “Children ‘piled up and shot’: new details emerge of ethnic cleansing in Darfur,” The Guardian, May 9, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/09/darfur-atrocities-ethnic-cleansing-human-rights-watch-report-rsf-sudan>.

18 UN News, “Sudan: ‘Children should be safe everywhere’, says UNICEF, as fears grow for El Fasher”, United Nations. October 7, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155436>

19 Oberoi, “Sudan: Children Under Fire as Parts of Country Record Most Violent Month Since February.”

20 CPJ, “Paramilitary group kidnaps, demands ransom for Sudanese journalist”, CPJ, August 29, 2024, <https://cpj.org/2024/08/paramilitary-group-kidnaps-demands-ransom-for-sudanese-journalist/>

21 UN News, “Sudan: ‘Children should be safe everywhere’, says UNICEF, as fears grow for El Fasher”, United Nations. October 7, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155436>

22 Moulid Hujale, “Sudan war robs young people’s hope for the future”, UNHCR, August 14, 2024, <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/stories/education-hold-sudan-war-robs-young-people-s-hope-future>

23 Nimi Princewill, “Airstrike Kills at Least 70 Seeking Care at Last Functioning Hospital in North Darfur Capital as Sudan’s Civil War Rages,” CNN, January 26, 2025, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/26/africa/sudan-hospital-north-darfur-airstrike-70-killed-intl/index.html>.



Children awaiting to receive treatment at a facility in Yiroi in South Sudan

Credit: Lomora Ronald

medical care. The chief of the World Health Organization stated that this attack “comes at a time when access to health care is already severely constrained.”²⁴

The attacks on hospitals worsen the ongoing healthcare crisis. An absolute rise in diseases has also been observed in the region over the past few months, with many outbreaks of polio, malaria, and cholera. Even with millions of vaccines and healthcare supplies being sent by UNICEF and other similar organizations to at-risk areas, such aid often takes weeks or months to reach its desired population. This delay results from blockage by the warring parties, destroyed roads, and poor infrastructure. The result of this is the mass spread of such infectious diseases. The lack of clean water and sanitation also makes most of Darfur a breeding ground for infectious diseases and constant epidemics, which usually affect children the most as they are the weakest and most vulnerable in the affected areas.²⁵ These conditions have also led to an increase in malnutrition. UNICEF estimates that 770,000 children under five throughout Sudan will suffer from the deadliest

form of malnutrition in 2025.²⁶

Needless to say, the psychological effects of such experiences, especially the children, are unfathomable, and the harm they cause effectively scarring them for life, with many suffering from depression.²⁷ Due to the large death toll in the conflict, many children are orphaned and often have to take up responsibilities that they are not fit to have, the least of which is surviving the conflict. Because of the constant attacks, displacements, and bombings, many children in conflict zones suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe anxiety, and stress. These experiences greatly harm their mental development.²⁸ There are millions of cases of children who have had to face such violent conditions in Sudan. One of them is a child named Mahmoud, who was orphaned and displaced twice before he turned 13. Even then, when the fighting started, the orphanage he lived in became surrounded by conflict, and he was displaced again to a destroyed school turned orphanage where he now lives with over 100 orphans.²⁹

Another harrowing account is that of Mohamed, who, at 10

²⁴ Princewill, “Airstrike Kills at Least 70 Seeking Care at Last Functioning Hospital in North Darfur Capital as Sudan’s Civil War Rages.”

²⁵ El Ferri, Ezzat. “Sudan: Intense fighting in Darfur, a crisis for children”.

²⁶ UNICEF, “Children Bear the Brunt of Escalating Conflict and Famine in Sudan.”

²⁷ Ahmed Ali, et.al., “Prevalence of physical and mental health problems among internally displaced persons in White Nile state, Sudan 2023: a cross sectional study”, BMC Public Health, December 18, 2024, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-024-20972-1>

²⁸ SOS Children’s Villages, “The children of Sudan suffer unimaginable difficulties, but their voices are often unheard”, August 21, 2024. <https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/news/voices-of-children-in-sudan-unheard>

²⁹ Lyse Doucet, “Sudan’s ‘invisible crisis’ - where more children are fleeing war than anywhere else”, BBC, November 27, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c170kgr8e00o>

years old, lost his mother, sisters, and many of his friends as a result of the war. Mohamed has also been displaced four times, being on the move for months.³⁰ Waad, 10, is also another case. She lost her father as a result of the war and now has to carry the pain of this loss alongside her siblings for the rest of her life.³¹ These are just a few of the countless children whose lives have been shattered by the ongoing violence. With over five million children affected, Sudan has tragically become one of the worst places in the world to be a child.

There has also been an increased number of indiscriminate sexual violence against women and children, with many of those abducted being sexually abused and an ever-growing number of children born from rape.³² Reports have shown that there have been instances of rape and sexual violence against women as young as eight years old by the Rapid Support Forces and other allied militias.³³ Because there is no one to hold those committing such horrid acts accountable, many are forced to suffer in silence, and the cycle of abuse continues.³⁴

Additionally, since June, climate conditions have negatively affected Darfur and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Heavy rain and widespread flooding in Sudan are compounding the suffering of families and children. This has ultimately contaminated water and deteriorated health facilities, causing a major outbreak of cholera. For instance, floodwaters destroyed the only bridge connecting Central and West Darfur states, with critical humanitarian aid unable to reach over 880,000 internally displaced people sheltering in Central Darfur. This poses a serious concern where children are likely to go for days or even weeks without food and medicine, putting them at increased risk of malnutrition and diseases. Crossing

from one side of the river to the other is hazardous, and those who do it end up risking their lives. The international community must step up and ensure displaced families and children in Darfur have unhindered access to food, medicine, and other humanitarian services.³⁵ Overall, the situation in Darfur goes beyond the region, affecting Sudan and the neighboring countries as a whole. Ending the crisis requires comprehensive efforts and collective action. As members of the UNHRC, I believe it is imperative to stop the conflict and address this acute human suffering. Solutions must target the protection of civilians, especially those who are more vulnerable, like children. Additionally, it is key to immediately cease the targeting of children and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, protect humanitarian workers and assets, and remove all obstacles to effectively delivering humanitarian aid.³⁶

Displacement and Humanitarian Crisis

With over ten million people displaced since the start of the conflict and one-seventh of all internally displaced people in the world being Sudanese, this has become one of the worst refugee crises in the world today.³⁷ Sudan has almost 26 million people in need of humanitarian aid, including the over eight million internally displaced.³⁸ With more than half of the Sudanese population in dire need of humanitarian aid and facing acute hunger, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has labeled Sudan the worst humanitarian and hunger crisis in the world.³⁹

The disaster in Darfur has also been described as the world's largest hunger crisis. It is estimated that 2.5 million

30 UNICEF, "Voices of the displaced", UNICEF, October 10, 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/stories/voices-displaced>

31 UNICEF, "Voices of the displaced"

32 Gomo and Tashtankulov, "7 things you need to know about Sudan's humanitarian crisis."

33 Emma Farge, "Sudan's RSF and allies sexually abused victims from 8-75 years, UN mission says", Reuters, 29 October, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudans-rsf-allies-sexually-abused-victims-8-75-years-un-mission-says-2024-10-29/>

34 Gomo and Tashtankulov, "7 things you need to know about Sudan's humanitarian crisis."

35 "Children and families at risk of being cut off from food, medical supplies as rains cut access to Sudan's Central and West Darfur states," Save the Children, September 13, 2024, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/children-and-families-risk-being-cut-food-medical-supplies-rains-cut-access-sudans-central-and>.

36 "After fleeing violence and famine in Darfur, women and children face severe trauma and hunger," Care, December 17, 2024, <https://www.care.org/media-and-press/after-fleeing-violence-and-famine-in-darfur-women-and-children-face-severe-trauma-and-hunger/>.

37 Gomo and Tashtankulov, "7 things you need to know about Sudan's humanitarian crisis."

38 Gomo and Tashtankulov, "7 things you need to know about Sudan's humanitarian crisis."

39 "Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help," International Rescue Committee.; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Global community to urge action on escalating Sudan crisis at UN General Assembly", OCHA, September 25, 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/news/global-community-urge-action-escalating-sudan-crisis-un-general-assembly>



Offloading USAID wheat at Port Sudan – Bags of USAID-provided wheat are loaded on to trucks for transport to Darfur.

Credit: USAID

people are dying due to the famine from the start of the conflict to September 2024.⁴⁰ This humanitarian disaster has only worsened due to the ongoing conflict and military zones, which have limited aid from coming in and reaching vulnerable communities.⁴¹ The mass displacement of the Sudanese has also greatly affected surrounding countries, with 720,000 Sudanese refugees entering Chad since April 2023, 49,000 of which entered in October 2024. This large increase in incoming refugees has made this the worst refugee crisis in Chadian history and is a major sign of escalating conflict in Darfur.⁴²

The situation in Darfur has become more violent and deadly. In the second week of 2025, there were multiple reports that dozens were brutally killed in ethnically targeted attacks in Al Jazirah state. As the SAF and RSF battle over control of the capital, ethnically motivated attacks on civilians are becoming increasingly common. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented at least 21 deaths in just two attacks on camps in Al Jazirah in 2025.

Nevertheless, it is believed that the actual number of civilians killed is likely to be higher. Additionally, on January 10, 2025, at least eight civilians were killed in an attack on Taiba Camp, and 13 women and one man were abducted. The next day, 13 civilians were killed, including two boys, in an assault on Khamsa Camp. The investigations suggest the Sudan Shield Forces, led by Abu Aqla Keikal, a former RSF commander, led all these attacks. Moreover, the OHCHR received three videos that document scenes of violence, with men in SAF uniforms visibly present. Both the SAF and RSF have targeted African ethnic groups. This has caused more people to flee their homes and worsened the region's humanitarian crisis.⁴³

Alongside the humanitarian nightmare in Darfur, almost all of the infrastructure in Sudan, which was already limited before the start of the war, has been non-functional. Over 70 percent of all healthcare facilities were destroyed, and the rest are facing constant lootings and attacks by the different militias and armed forces in the conflict.⁴⁴ There have been 108 attacks on healthcare facilities, including an attack on the

40 Khair, Khalood, "The World Once Tried to Stop a Genocide in Sudan. Now It Looks Away", Time Magazine. September 4, 2024. <https://time.com/7017127/sudan-darfur-crisis/>

41 "Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help," International Rescue Committee.

42 Beatrice Molinari, "Fleeing and waiting: the path of Sudanese refugees crossing the border into Chad", European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, December 12, 2024, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/stories/fleeing-and-waiting-path-sudanese-refugees-crossing-border-chad_en

43 "Sudan war becomes more deadly as ethnically motivated attacks rise," UN News, January 17, 2025, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1159111>.

44 "Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help," International Rescue Committee.

main hospital in Al-Fashir, a town in western Sudan, which was bombed, leaving nine dead and more than 20 injured.⁴⁵ The casualty included patients of the hospital and their families. Such attacks have been a constant issue throughout the conflict, but especially in recent months due to the large outbreaks of disease in Darfur. An outbreak of measles has resulted in the death of over 1000 children, and an outbreak of cholera has infected 21,000 and killed 600.⁴⁶ These are curable diseases, but the lack of healthcare and the limited aid coming into Sudan has resulted in a high risk of spread and the needless death of hundreds. With over 11 million people urgently needing medical attention, as reported by the WHO, the healthcare crisis in Sudan needs to be addressed as soon as possible.⁴⁷

Another major factor that has further increased the humanitarian disaster is the mass food insecurity that is facing the Sudanese people. Over 30 million people are suffering from malnutrition with nearly a million of them experiencing acute malnutrition and at risk of starvation.⁴⁸ Displacement camps are at significant risk with some camps like the ZamZam camp which houses 500,000 people having severe famine with almost a fifth of the camp struggling to feed themselves.⁴⁹ Famine in such camps as well as across Sudan has been caused by factors such as a limited supply of food and a major surge in prices, which according to the UNHCR resulted in basic food items rising in prices three times or more.⁵⁰ The Council on Foreign Relations has also reported that the fighting has caused disruptions in the harvesting season, the effects of which are compounded by climate change, food is also being weaponized by both sides of the conflict further increasing the scarcity of food in the region as a whole and displacement camps specifically.⁵¹

With such a large-scale disaster the international community has tried to send aid and support to those in dire need of it across Sudan. The US has most recently sent USD 200 million in aid on December 19, 2024. Countries like Japan and South Korea have also pledged millions of dollars towards developing infrastructure and Türkiye sending 8,000 tons of humanitarian aid to port Sudan.⁵² That being said, these donations struggle to reach the target groups. In an interview with Sheldon Yett, the UNICEF representative in Sudan, he explained how moving aid requires permits and permission from both sides of the conflict, with every piece of aid and every movement inside Sudan requiring negotiations. The weather conditions also hinder the movement of aid with rainy seasons often flooding roads resulting in the vehicles carrying aid getting stuck inside rivers and muddy roads.⁵³ That being said, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs have continued to fight towards getting aid to those struggling with over 125 organizations on the ground trying to get aid to those in need. That being said, there is a significant risk of sending aid workers to Sudan. Almost 25 aid workers have been killed since the start of the conflict and even more have been injured, further complicating an already difficult task of giving out aid.⁵⁴

Conclusion

For almost the entire 21st century there has been on-and-off conflict, from civil wars to military coups with the most recent conflict beginning in April 2023, becoming one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world today.⁵⁵ Millions are at risk of dying from famine, disease, and ongoing bombings, making the region one of the deadliest places in the world. The

45 Agence France-Presse, “9 dead in attack on Sudan hospital, WHO says.”

46 UN News, “Sudan: ‘Children should be safe everywhere’, says UNICEF, as fears grow for El Fasher.”

47 World Health Organization, “Sudan Emergency”, WHO Situation Report, December 16, 2024, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/situations/sudan-emergency>

48 “Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help,” International Rescue Committee.

49 “Crisis in Sudan: What is happening and how to help,” International Rescue Committee.

50 UNHCR, “Famine in Sudan: What you need to know about this unfolding crisis”, UNHCR Australia, August 2024, <https://www.unrefugees.org.au/our-stories/famine-in-sudan-what-you-need-to-know-about-this-unfolding-crisis/>

51 Mariel Ferragamo, “Crisis in Sudan: War, Famine, and a Failing Global Response”, CFR, September 19, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/article/crisis-sudan-war-famine-and-failing-global-response>

52 UN Press Release, “Senior UN Official Tells Security Council That ‘Unbearable’ Numbers of Civilians Killed, Injured in Sudan, Urging End to Violence, Funding for Aid”, UN Security Council Press release, December 19, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15947.doc.htm>

53 El Ferri, Ezzat, “Sudan: Intense fighting in Darfur, a crisis for children.”

54 Gomo and Tashtankulov, “7 things you need to know about Sudan’s humanitarian crisis.”

55 Jay Spaulding et al., “Conflict in Darfur”, Britannica Encyclopedia, December 19, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sudan/Conflict-in-Darfur>

war has been filled with human rights abuses, like targeting civilians and blocking aid, creating one of the most urgent human rights crises today.⁵⁶

Tens of thousands of people have fled North Darfur and have sought refuge in the town, overcrowding functioning health clinics. Those who flee do not always make it to another place safe, as many roads are targeted by armed gangs. Children have been particularly affected by this issue. The number of children dying of hunger cannot be estimated, but it is very large. Diseases such as malaria, measles, and whooping cough have also been harming the children of Darfur.⁵⁷ The situation requires urgent humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, many agencies and NGOs have left the El Fasher area because of the lack of security. Additionally, the aid that is being delivered is often burned or disposed of by armed forces.⁵⁸

The international community, specifically the UN Human Rights Council, must protect and find adequate and quick measures to protect the civilians in Darfur from said human rights violations, and to send aid and assistance to the millions suffering in Sudan and all other affected nations. With that in mind, delegates are encouraged to work together towards finding ways to limit the constant human rights violations happening in Sudan and find solutions to ending the famine and the humanitarian crisis affecting the Sudanese people.

56 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “*Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission outlines extensive human rights violations, international crimes, urges protection of civilians*”, Press Release, OHCHR, September 6, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/sudan-un-fact-finding-mission-outlines-extensive-human-rights-violations>.

57 Zeinab Mohammed Salih, “‘We’ve lost everything’: inside a Sudanese town where children die of hunger every day,” *The Guardian*, September 17, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/sep/17/sudan-talawi-el-fasher-north-darfur-children-dying-hunger>.

58 Mohammed Salih, “‘We’ve lost everything’: inside a Sudanese town where children die of hunger every day.”



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TOPIC B: ADDRESSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Photo Credit: MONUSCO Photos

Introduction

The Human Rights Crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continues to grow. Complex political, social, and environmental challenges shape it. This paper provides an overview of these developments and their impacts on human rights in the DRC. Recent developments show new challenges and the efforts to address them. They also show the bad quality of life in the region. Problems like widespread displacement, overcrowding, and health crises need international attention. Significant updates include overcrowding in essential areas, disease outbreaks, and containment, increasing the population's suffering.

According to the 2024 DRC Internal Displacement Report, almost seven million people were internally displaced due to conflict and disease.¹ Conflict is the greatest cause of displacement at 87 percent, leading to the overcrowding of transportation routes and prisons.² Overcrowding is a major consequence of mass displacement in the DRC. Millions of people have been forced into overcrowded camps, prisons, and transport routes.³ This is caused by clashes between government forces and rebel groups which have worsened over time. In these situations, the Congolese people cannot access necessities, and many of their human rights are violated.⁴

Overcrowding and faulty healthcare systems further accelerate the spread of diseases. Currently, the DRC faces severe health challenges with outbreaks of diseases like malaria, mpox, and unidentified illnesses.⁵ These outbreaks create public health emergencies. Disease outbreaks occur when the number of cases of a disease rise far beyond what is considered normal. These epidemics are at the forefront of medical emergencies, along with a lack of access to vaccines. Overcrowding has increased the spread of disease, and the people in the DRC have recently faced continuous waves of different forms of malaria and influenza-like illness.⁶ This has caused death and suffering across the country. Both positive and negative

developments have been found and reported by news outlets.

This paper explores these pressing issues and shares updates from recent news articles. These articles report on the human rights crisis and discuss different matters under key subtopics in the UNHRC background guide. Each update gives new insight into how these problems affect the people of the DRC. Some articles show how these issues are being addressed, while others reveal how the conflict worsens. Overall, it emphasizes the urgency for coordinated global action to solve these challenges and protect the human rights of the Congolese people.

Consequences of Overcrowding

Recent tragedies show the dangers of overcrowding as a direct result of a rise in conflict between rebel fighters and government troops.⁷ These conflicts have displaced many people. Over 230,000 people have been displaced in January 2025 alone.⁸ As a result, people lose their homes and livelihoods and are forced to flee through crowded transportation routes. Overcrowded buses, walkways, and boats create more risks for people trying to escape. This increases the risk of tragedy occurring. The rise in armed conflicts in regions like Minova

1 "DRC – Internal Displacement Report (2024) | Displacement Tracking Matrix," *International Organization for Migration*, accessed December 25, 2024, 4, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/drc-internal-displacement-report-2024>.

2 "DRC – Internal Displacement Report (2024) | Displacement Tracking Matrix," 4.

3 "Escalating violence in eastern DR Congo displaces more than 230,000 since start of year," UNHRC, news release, January 17, 2025, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/escalating-violence-eastern-dr-congo-displaces-more-230-000-start-year>.

4 "More than 230,000 Displaced in DRC since Start of the Year, UN Says," Al Jazeera, January 17, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/17/more-than-230000-displaced-in-drc-since-start-of-the-year-un-says>.

5 "Democratic Republic of the Congo Situation," UNHCR, accessed January 10, 2025, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/democratic-republic-congo-situation>.

6 UNHCR, "Democratic Republic of the Congo Situation."

7 Prosper Heri Ngorora, "At Least 78 Dead and Dozens Missing after Ferry Disaster in DR Congo," *The Guardian*, October 4, 2024, sec. Global development, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/oct/04/many-dead-hundreds-missing-ferry-disaster-lake-kivu-kituku-goma-dr-congo>.

8 Al Jazeera, "More than 230,000 Displaced in DRC since Start of the Year, UN Says."

and between North and South Kivu has placed civilians in danger.⁹

The increase in military conflicts in these regions has pushed people to move to escape through routes such as boats. Boats are then filled beyond capacity. The DRC’s government did rule that boats must carry enough life jackets for customers.¹⁰ However, this is not enforced. One tragic example is a ferry disaster on Lake Kivu. The Guardian reported that the boat was overcrowded, and numerous people died when the boat capsized because of this. A survivor even commented that more people might have survived if lifeboats had been on the ship.¹¹ This incident is the latest of four similar tragedies on Lake Kivu in 2024 alone, all due to overcrowding.¹² This is one of at least four other cases of overcrowded boats toppling over just this year.¹³

Safe transport is essential. Over five million people have been internally displaced due to conflict.¹⁴ Deadly boat accidents are reported to happen often due to overcrowding.¹⁵ News outlets urge the Congolese government to take action to protect the safety of its people. They recommend measures to prevent overcrowding and ensure safer transport routes.¹⁶ Potential solutions include adding more safe travel options, regulating boat capacities, and improving monitoring and enforcement. These steps are important to protecting vulnerable populations as they navigate displacement.

On the other hand, the overcrowding crisis extends to DRC’s

prisons, which are severely overcapacity. They have become hotspots for violence, disease, and human rights abuses.¹⁷ Many prisons are operating way beyond their capacity, resulting in inhumane living conditions and the denial of fundamental rights for inmates. The DRC frequently uses preventative detention as a method to reduce crimes. Recent data shows that many people have been imprisoned for minor offenses.¹⁸

Additionally, law enforcement has unjustly placed 70-90 percent of people in prison for pre-trial detention or unknown reasons.¹⁹ This practice has contributed to the overcrowding within prisons. Once inside, inmates endure horrific conditions with no access to their families or legal representation.²⁰ This unlawful detention and lack of due process highlight the deep flaws in the justice system. Without urgent reform, these conditions will continue to violate the rights and dignity of those detained.

Makala Prison in the DRC is considered infamous for its harsh conditions. It ranks as the 6th most overcrowded prison in the world.²¹ A former inmate in Makala prison described it as “not a prison, but a detention center resembling a concentration camp, where people are sent to die.”²² Such conditions are common in many prisons in the DRC. BBC, Sky News, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations have all commented on the severe human rights violations in the prisons as a result of the overcrowding.²³

With the sheer volume of people, inhumane living conditions

9 “DRC: Civilians Caught in Crossfire in North and South Kivu | MSF,” Medecins Sans Frontieres, May 24, 2024, <https://www.msf.org/drc-civilians-caught-crossfire-north-and-south-kivu>.
 10 Ngorora, “At Least 78 Dead and Dozens Missing after Ferry Disaster in DR Congo.”
 11 Ngorora, “At Least 78 Dead and Dozens Missing after Ferry Disaster in DR Congo.”
 12 “More than 80 People Dead in DR Congo after Boat Capsizes,” Al Jazeera, accessed December 24, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/12/dozens-dead-in-dr-congo-after-boat-capsizes-president-says>.
 13 “More than 80 People Dead in DR Congo after Boat Capsizes.”
 14 “DRC – Internal Displacement Report (2024) | Displacement Tracking Matrix.”, 4.
 15 “More than 80 People Dead in DR Congo after Boat Capsizes”
 16 Ngorora, “At Least 78 Dead and Dozens Missing after Ferry Disaster in DR Congo.”
 17 “Makala Prison: Behind Bars at DR Congo’s Most Notorious Jail,” September 8, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdjwknzy20xo>.
 18 “Makala Prison.”
 19 “Democratic Republic of Congo – The Makala Prison Tragedy of 2 September 2024.”
 20 Sonia Rolley, “UN Rights Chief Deplores Violence in DR Congo Prisons, Says Conditions Getting Worse,” *Reuters*, October 9, 2024, sec. Africa, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-rights-chief-deplores-violence-dr-congo-prisons-says-conditions-getting-worse-2024-10-08/>.
 21 “Makala Prison.”
 22 “Makala Prison.”
 23 “Makala Prison.”; “Democratic Republic of Congo – The Makala Prison Tragedy of 2 September 2024.”; “More than 120 Prisoners Killed during Failed Jailbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo,” Sky News, September 3, 2024, <https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-120-prisoners-killed-during-failed-jailbreak-in-democratic-republic-of-congo-13208828>. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “DRC: Torture prevention mechanism urgently needed amid inhuman prison conditions,” news release, December 11, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/drc-torture-prevention-mechanism-urgently-needed-amid-inhuman-prison>.



MONUSCO staff providing the Central Prison in Tshikapa with new equipment to improve medical care to inmate patients.

Credit: MONUSCO

offer space for abuse and violence between prisoners and guards.²⁴ Overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure make it impossible for guards to prevent violence. The infrastructure for prisons is not enough to support the large volume of inmates. Guards are often overwhelmed by the number of inmates, allowing abuse and violence to thrive. Due to the inadequate protection by guards, many inmates face sexual violence. Women inmates are especially vulnerable. During a fire in the women’s section of Makala prison, the female inmates were removed from their cells and placed in the open courtyard of the male prison without proper protection, resulting in extensive sexual violence over the days they remained there.²⁵

Hence, the lack of space, shortages in guards, and insufficient infrastructure for protecting inmates have led to human rights violations.²⁶ The overcrowding of prisons has only worsened the many violations inmates face each day.²⁷ These inhumane conditions led to prisoners attempting to escape Makala prison. In September 2024, prisoners attempted to escape. As a result, many inmates were crushed, suffocated, or killed by guards who fired shots into the crowd.²⁸

²⁴ “DR Congo.”

²⁵ “DR Congo: Investigate Prison Deaths, Sexual Violence | Human Rights Watch,” Human Rights Watch, September 6, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/06/dr-congo-investigate-prison-deaths-sexual-violence>.

²⁶ UNHRC, “Escalating violence in eastern DR Congo displaces more than 230,000 since start of year.”

²⁷ “DR Congo,” *Human Rights Watch*.

²⁸ “More than 120 Prisoners Killed during Failed Jailbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo.”

²⁹ “Makala Prison.”

Moreover, starvation is a critical issue in DRC prisons. Inmates only receive small amounts of food, and in some prisons, they only receive one small meal a day. Those without outside connections, such as relatives who can bring them food, will end up severely malnourished. This starvation and malnutrition crisis within DRC’s prisons highlights the neglect and lack of resources allocated to the prison system. Overcrowding does not help the situation either. With lots of inmates, food shortages occur and prisoners are unable to eat. However, this is not the case for those who can pay for VIP accommodation in the prisons. Only a select minority can afford this, leaving the majority of inmates to suffer. “Economic inequalities between inmates create a hierarchy. the poorest are abandoned to their fate”, explained an inmate regarding the hierarchical divide between prisoners.²⁹

Malnutrition also weakens inmates’ immune systems, leaving them more susceptible to diseases and other infections, which spread rapidly in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. The lack of medical care worsens these issues. Prisons often lack sufficient medical personnel, medications, or facilities to treat even basic illnesses, let alone the more severe health crises that

arise due to malnutrition and poor hygiene. Inmates suffering from chronic conditions and injuries frequently go untreated. This results in unnecessary suffering and many avoidable deaths.

The human rights violations within DRC prisons have been condemned by international organizations, but no meaningful reform has taken place. The UN Human Rights Office has repeatedly attempted to gain access to Makala prison and intelligence services for the detention center but has been consistently denied.³⁰ Efforts to address these issues have been slowed down by corruption, underfunding, and the broader instability plaguing the country. Advocacy groups have called for increased international pressure on the Congolese government to prioritize prison reform as part of its wider human rights commitments. However, since 2011, the UN Peacekeeping sector has dedicated resources to supporting the DRC's prison issues.³¹ The UN has helped prevent and manage Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks in prisons across the country.³² But more work can still be done to limit overcrowding which is the root of the issue.

Another positive UN contribution is the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). MONUSCO's mission in the DRC is to “enhance prison security, implement legal and institutional reforms within the DRC prison system, and adhere to international standards and practices.”³³ Although MONUSCO has contributed to fulfilling its mandate, the DRC requested the complete withdrawal of the UN organization from South Kivu by the end of 2024. MONUSCO remains committed to fulfilling its mandate in the other regions of the

DRC.³⁴ The UNHRC has made statements that the conditions within the DRC prison system are terrible and there is a need for change to protect inmates.³⁵ Some potential solutions to consider include prison infrastructure development, guard training, staffing increases, and improved food and medical supply chains. These are critical to protecting the human rights of inmates within the DRC.

Public Health Emergencies and Disease Outbreaks

The DRC's health clinics and hospitals are overflowing and lack proper medical infrastructure. This leaves many people without the treatment they need. A lack of space to house patients puts a constant strain on the healthcare system of the DRC.³⁶ This is due to constant inflows of new wounded or ill people from rebel fighting and disease outbreaks. A shortage of medical staff to treat these patients makes the problem worse. There is just one doctor and five nurses and midwives for every ten thousand people in the DRC.³⁷ With the limited number of doctors and nurses to handle the volume of patients, treated patients often receive poor care. Rural and conflict-affected regions face the most significant shortages since resources are focused on urban areas.³⁸ This unequal distribution of resources forces many to rely on under-trained personnel or delay vital treatments.³⁹ An American initiative, USAID, created MOMENTUM to help support the healthcare system in the DRC, which has been considered successful in helping the population.⁴⁰ MOMENTUM has worked with the DRC since 1979 to work with national governments to target specific healthcare issues.⁴¹ MOMENTUM helps train

³⁰ Rolley, “UN Rights Chief Deplores Violence in DR Congo Prisons, Says Conditions Getting Worse.”

³¹ “Justice and Corrections,” United Nations Peacekeeping, accessed January 2, 2025, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/justice-and-corrections>.

³² “Justice and Corrections.”

³³ “Corrections Unit,” MONUSCO, January 19, 2024, <http://monusco.unmissions.org/en/corrections-unit-0>.

³⁴ MONUSCO, “MONUSCO ending its mission in South Kivu after more than 20 Years of Service,” news release, June 25, 2024, https://monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/06_25_pr_bukavu_office_closure_25_june_final_en.pdf.

³⁵ “DRC: Torture prevention mechanism urgently needed amid inhuman prison conditions.”

³⁶ “Massive humanitarian response needed to avoid health catastrophe in DRC,” Medecins Sans Frontieres, March 12, 2024, <https://www.msf.org/massive-humanitarian-response-needed-avoid-health-catastrophe-drc>.

³⁷ “ISSI: Transforming Healthcare in DRC | WONDER Foundation 2025,” February 3, 2020, <https://wonderfoundation.org.uk/issi-transforming-healthcare-in-drc/>.

³⁸ Shin Min Kyung and Tshimbombu Tshibambe N, “Strengthening Healthcare Delivery in the Democratic Republic of Congo through Adequate Nursing Workforce,” *Clinical Journal of Nursing Care and Practice* 8, no. 1 (February 19, 2024): 007–010, <https://doi.org/10.29328/journal.cjncp.1001051>.

³⁹ “Massive Humanitarian Response Needed to Avoid Health Catastrophe in DRC | MSF.”

⁴⁰ “Vision and Mission,” USAID MOMENTUM, accessed January 3, 2025, <https://usaidmomentum.org/about/vision-and-mission/>.

⁴¹ “Vision and Mission.”

medical staff and supplies them with resources and funds to roll out vaccines, contraception, and other critical medical items to address personnel and resource shortages.⁴²

Another pressing issue is the Monkeypox virus (Mpox) epidemic occurring in the DRC. Mpox is a disease caused by the monkeypox virus.⁴³ Symptoms of this disease include rashes, lesions, and pain. Most patients recover within a month, but some infected patients get very ill and may die.⁴⁴ Mpox is transmitted through exchanges of bodily fluids, primarily through sexual transmission. Overcrowded areas have high rates of sexual violence, putting more people at risk of contracting Mpox. This puts more people at risk of developing serious symptoms and possibly dying from the disease.⁴⁵

The government of DRC has donated money to the healthcare system to limit the consequences of the current

Mpox epidemic. Even outside governments, such as the United States of America, have raised funds to strengthen medical infrastructure in the Congo.⁴⁶ These organizations have helped tackle the Mpox epidemic that struck the DRC, which was declared a public health emergency of international concern in August of 2024.⁴⁷ Yet, vaccine rollout for the current mpox spread is considered too slow and inefficient to help the Congolese people. Each person requires two doses of the Mpox vaccine for it to be effective. However, only 500,000 out of 100 million people living in the Congo can be protected against Mpox with the current number of Mpox vaccines in the country.⁴⁸

Mpox is not the only deadly disease that is harming the population. Additionally, occasional Ebola outbreaks remain a recurring issue in the DRC. Ebola is a rare but often fatal virus when not treated. From 2018 to 2022, there were six recorded

42 “The Democratic Republic of the Congo,” USAID MOMENTUM, accessed January 3, 2025, <https://usaidmomentum.org/where-we-work/drc/>.

43 “Mpox Outbreak in DR Congo: What to Know | Doctors Without Borders - USA,” Medecins Sans Frontieres, August 15, 2024, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/mpox-outbreak-dr-congo-what-know>.

44 “Mpox Outbreak in DR Congo.”

45 “Mpox Outbreak in DR Congo.”

46 Patrick Ilunga and The East African, “Democratic Republic of Congo Health System Battles Outbreak after Outbreak,” December 19, 2024, <https://www.zawya.com/en/economy/africa/democratic-republic-of-congo-health-system-battles-outbreak-after-outbreak-cky41moz>.

47 “2024 News Archive: Mpox in Democratic Republic of the Congo Due to Monkeypox Virus Clade I - Health Protection Surveillance Centre,” October 22, 2024, <https://www.hpsc.ie/news/newsarchive/2024newsarchive/title-24516-en.html>.

48 “DRC: Malaria Is Chief Suspect In Mystery Outbreak; Mpox Vaccinations Far Too Slow - Health Policy Watch,” December 20, 2024, <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/drc-malaria-is-chief-suspect-in-mystery-outbreak-mpox-vaccinations-far-too-slow/>.

Medical staff providing a vaccine to a patient in the DRC

Credit: European Commission



Ebola outbreaks across the DRC, the most frequent number of outbreaks for this disease in history.⁴⁹ Without properly monitoring possible Ebola cases, the virus can spread rapidly and affect many others.⁵⁰ The CDC has measures to ensure that this does not occur again in the DRC.⁵¹ This includes disease surveillance and vaccination against the Ebolavirus.⁵² Global and national responses to the Ebola virus offer a great example for tackling other disease outbreaks. Stopping these outbreaks from occurring helps reduce the burden on clinics and hospitals by using preventative measures and quick reactions when disease cases emerge.

Also, tropical diseases are common in the DRC, and a new unidentified illness is straining the healthcare system even further. Patients with symptoms like fever, severe fatigue, and other flu-like symptoms are overwhelming clinics. Medical professionals have been unable to diagnose or treat this illness due to limited resources like diagnostic tools.⁵³ The World Health Organization (WHO) has addressed this unknown disease as having a high risk for affected communities across the DRC.⁵⁴ The WHO considers this illness a moderate national risk but warns to be prepared as the disease spread may worsen across the country.⁵⁵ The WHO recommends that the disease spread and symptoms continue to be heavily monitored and to ensure that there is enough medication to treat patients with symptoms of the mystery disease.⁵⁶ A stronger healthcare infrastructure with enough capacity and resources for care is needed to ensure the Congolese people receive life-saving treatments and vaccines to prevent contracting illnesses.⁵⁷

Short-term solutions are needed to help prevent deaths as a result of the healthcare crisis and disease epidemics in DRC. For instance, the rapid and efficient distribution of

vaccines must be prioritized. Organizations like USAID's MONUMENT have shown that external aid can help address medical staffing and supply shortages within the DRC.⁵⁸ However, short-term measures are not enough. The healthcare system also needs long-term solutions to ensure that hospitals and clinics are prepared for future disease outbreaks. This includes developing sustainable infrastructure for hospitals or emergency clinics, increasing the training and staffing of medical professionals, or addressing some of the key causes of the spread of disease, like overcrowding.

Conclusion

The Democratic Republic of the Congo faces a complex human rights crisis. Overcrowding and health challenges are impacting the lives of millions. Overcrowding in transport systems, displacement camps, and prisons have created inhumane conditions.⁵⁹ This has led to violence, malnutrition, and severe human rights violations. Meanwhile, the healthcare system is burdened and unable to handle outbreaks of diseases like mpox and mysterious new illnesses. The issues have made public health emergencies worse.

Key areas to focus on include overcrowding, healthcare, and international support. To address overcrowding, immediate intervention is needed to improve transport safety, better prison infrastructure, and ensure humane conditions for displaced people and detainees. For healthcare, short-term actions should focus on vaccine rollouts for mpox and containing the unknown disease. Long-term solutions in healthcare infrastructure include medical staff training and disease surveillance to ensure the people of the Congo have their right to health. Finally, in a global approach, international

49 "Ebola Outbreak 2022 - Équateur Province, DRC."

50 CDC, "CDC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Global Health, December 9, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/global-health/countries/drc.html>.

51 CDC, "CDC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

52 CDC, "CDC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

53 Reuters, "Unknown Disease Kills 143 People in South-West DRC, Local Authorities Say," *The Guardian*, December 3, 2024, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/03/unknown-disease-kills-people-south-west-drc-democratic-republic-of-the-congo>.

54 "Undiagnosed Disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo," World Health Organization, December 8, 2024, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2024-DON546>.

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57 Ilunga and African, "Democratic Republic of Congo Health System Battles Outbreak after Outbreak."

58 "The Democratic Republic of the Congo."

59 UNHRC, "Escalating violence in eastern DR Congo displaces more than 230,000 since start of year."

recognition is important for sustained global attention and aid to help the DRC's efforts to tackle these crises effectively. These help ensure the protection of basic human rights. As delegates work on this topic, the focus should be on innovative solutions. It is key to consider the issues that overcrowding and a weak healthcare system have when trying to uphold human rights. Regularly monitoring developments in the DRC is vital to understanding the urgent needs of the Congolese people. Global collaboration, combined with improving existing internal systems, can help address the ongoing challenges and create a path toward stability. Collaboration between governments, international organizations, and NGOs is essential to implement both immediate and sustainable healthcare reforms. By addressing this crisis with urgency, delegates can help save lives and build resilient systems for the people of the DRC.

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