FLASH UPDATE  (27 Aug 2020)

SUDAN: Violence in Eastern Sudan - Kassala and Red Sea - Flash Update No. 2

HIGHLIGHTS

- Recent intercommunal clashes in different localities of Kassala and Red Sea states have driven displacement, and caused loss of lives and damages to houses, markets and other key infrastructure.

- The tensions between members of different tribes led the Kassala's Government to declare a State of Emergency, restricting all movements.

- In Red Sea, the restrictions of movements imposed on 10 August continue, with a curfew from 2000 to 1800 hours.

- The violence and the movement restrictions pose significant challenges to humanitarians to assist people affected, including the newly displaced families.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Tensions have increased over the past few days in Kassala State and could escalate into more violence, following intercommunal clashes reported in the region over the appointment of the new civilian Wali (Governor) on 22 July. Fighting has reportedly left around 15 people dead, according to media reports, although the Government confirmed two deaths, as of 26 August. A State of Emergency was declared from 26 to 28 August, restricting all movements, including of humanitarian workers. Security forces have been deployed to prevent further violence, according to media reports.

Despite the restrictions, a protest was organized today 27 August, reportedly against the nomination of the Governor. Videos and pictures posted on social media and carried by local news outlets show large groups of people arriving in the State's capital city from Kassala Rural locality. Clashes between opposite groups have been reported from humanitarians in the field and other local sources, including possible shooting in the local market. Today's protest might have been triggered by other large demonstration organized yesterday, 26 August, where over 6,000 people marched along the streets of Kassala Town, calling for the Governor to assume his role in the State.

Meanwhile, groups are also taking to the streets of Port Sudan and other villages in the Red Sea State, to show solidarity with the group supporting the new Wali of Kassala State. Humanitarians on the ground informed about clashes that have reportedly left an unconfirmed number of people dead in Sinkat locality, at the outskirts of Kassala town, on 27 August. The road connecting Sawakin locality to Port Sudan has reportedly been blocked, hampering access of workers to the port. Humanitarian actors have been advised by the Government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) to be vigilant and minimize movements. Local sources reported that most of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that were recently deployed in Port Sudan to curb the intercommunal violence that erupted on 8 August, moved to Kassala Town on 26 August in anticipation of the demonstrations called in the city.

Earlier this month, fighting between different tribes in Port Sudan led to the displacement of hundreds of people, and left dozens dead and more than 100 injured. Humanitarians finalized a needs assessment on 26 August are responding to the needs of people displaced.
The increasing violence and clashes in both Kassala and Red Sea States are driving humanitarian needs. Health services are stretched while responding to the injured. The displaced population is in need of water, sanitation and hygiene services, as shelter and protection services. The insecurity and related containment measures are impacting humanitarian response, including the movement of aid workers. In Red Sea, there are concerns that the incidents might affect operations on Sudan's only port, negatively impacting the country's supply chain for essential commodities and humanitarian supplies.

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