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## **The Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan: The Distorted Educational System**

Ali Awadallah Saeed<sup>1, 5, 6\*</sup>, Eman Kheir<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Omer A. Gibreel<sup>3</sup>, Samah Elnour Khalifa<sup>5</sup>, Maha Yahia Suliman<sup>5</sup>, Sawsan M.Almekkawi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Department of Pharmacology, Pharmacy Program, Napata College, <sup>2</sup> Eman Ahmed A. Kheir, Department of periodontology, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Surgery, Centre for Professional Development, National University-Sudan, <sup>3</sup> Accounting & Management Information Systems Department, College of Business Administration, Gulf University for Science & Technology. <sup>4</sup> Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, National University-Sudan, <sup>5</sup> Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Pharmacy, National University- Sudan, <sup>6</sup> Mycetoma Research Center, Khartoum, Sudan

**\*Corresponding author:** Ali Awadallah Saeed, Department of Pharmacology, Pharmacy Program, Napata College, Khartoum, Sudan.

E-mail: [alimhsd@gmail.com](mailto:alimhsd@gmail.com) , ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3524-4825>

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** On 15 April 2023, Battles initially broke out in the capital city, Khartoum, after the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia, which used to be under the command of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), rebelled. During such a disaster, Sudanese people are expected to reconsider their life priorities, with education coming down after safety and food supply. This, in turn, will result negatively in children's learning outcomes with probable deterioration and or reduction in educational achievement. A report released by

the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research on 28 August 2023 stated that the vandalism affected all 104 higher education and scientific research institutions in Khartoum and several other states.

**Methodology:** This commentary relies on reports from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, along with recent journal articles discussing the consequences of ongoing conflicts. Personal observations as staff in universities contribute to the insights, and data from the students and colleges illuminate the struggles faced by them.

**Results:**

The war resulted in the widespread destruction of educational infrastructure, leaving more than 600,000 higher education students uncertain about their academic future. The universities started searching for solutions to overcome the catastrophe and find ways to support their students and staff.

**Conclusions:**

The conflict in Sudan disproportionately impacts education, causing disruptions in whole educational process in Sudan. Urgent international intervention is needed to cease the conflict and ensure the safety of higher education and scientific research institutions facilities, and support will be needed for the students, higher education staff and researchers.

**Keywords:** Distorted Educational System, Sudan, Electronic learning

**Introduction:**

Sudan –The north-eastern zone of Africa- is a rich country known for several types of wealth, such as agricultural, animal, and mining wealth. Unfortunately, the country has suffered from dictatorship, division, political instability, civil war, and others for decades. The ongoing war is the worst in history as it turned Sudan into a humanitarian crisis zone. On 15 April 2023, Battles initially broke out in the capital city, Khartoum, after the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia, which used to be under the command of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), rebelled. Rapidly, the war exploded throughout the country, with both sides contesting to control critical locations, including airports, army bases, and entry points. It's intensively focused in Khartoum, and that Saturday morning changed the lives of millions of people. The ugly war caused even more suffering with the standoff of vital services such as water supply and electricity. Soon, the situation worsens, with the catastrophe

extending to the health, environment, and others. (1)

**Higher education and scientific research institutions in Khartoum and several other states in wartime in Sudan:**

Education is one of the areas radically affected by the war in school as in higher education. During such a disaster, Sudanese people are expected to reconsider their life priorities, with education coming down after safety and food supply. This, in turn, will result negatively in children's learning outcomes with probable deterioration and or reduction in educational achievement. It is predicted that military operations might harm the quality of learning and the psychological state of students and staff. (2)

A report released by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research on 28 August 2023 stated that the vandalism affected all higher education and scientific research institutions in Khartoum and several other states. These institutions (104) were totally or partially impacted; they

include governmental and private higher education institutions, research centers, the National Fund for Student Welfare, and the Ministry's presidency, which was damaged by a fire on several floors and a large number of offices burned. (3) The war resulted in the widespread destruction of educational infrastructure, leaving approximately 600,000 higher education students uncertain about their academic future. (4). The destruction then extended to other educational institution in other states e.g. North Kordofan, Darfur states, River Nile states (6) and on 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 Gazera state.

#### **Hope and tribulations:**

Despite the hurdles, there have been sporadic experiences with e-learning in Sudan, particularly during the political instability that began in 2018. The universities started searching for solutions to overcome the catastrophe and find ways to support their students and staff. For education, educational internet technologies used during the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in different countries have become attractive solutions in such situations. For the success of such a model, logistics such as a steady network,

trained students and staff, and motivation are mandatory tools. (5) Electronic learning might be easier and more practical for soft sciences than others, which need practical training. Still, even this option is retarded by the weak internet connection and lack of experience of staff and students for certain universities that did not use it before.

On 4 February 2024, Net blackout and communication shutdown reported in Sudan which exacerbating an already human rights crisis and catastrophic humanitarian beside educational process started by many universities.

#### **Conclusion remarks:**

The war resulted in the widespread destruction of educational infrastructure, leaving more than 600,000 higher education students uncertain about their academic future. The universities started searching for solutions to overcome the catastrophe and find ways to support their students and staff.

The conflict in Sudan disproportionately impacts education, causing disruptions in whole educational process in Sudan. Urgent international intervention is needed to cease the conflict and ensure the safety of higher education and

scientific research institutions facilities, and support will be needed for the students, higher education staff and researchers.

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### Availability of data and materials:

Not applicable

### Competing interests:

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

### Author contributions:

- Ali Awadallah Saeed: Conceptualization
- Ali Awadallah Saeed, Eman Kheir, Dr. Omer Gibreel, and Sawsanm M.Almekkawi

participated in the data collection.

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