

Sudan Rapid Market Access Survey May 2023

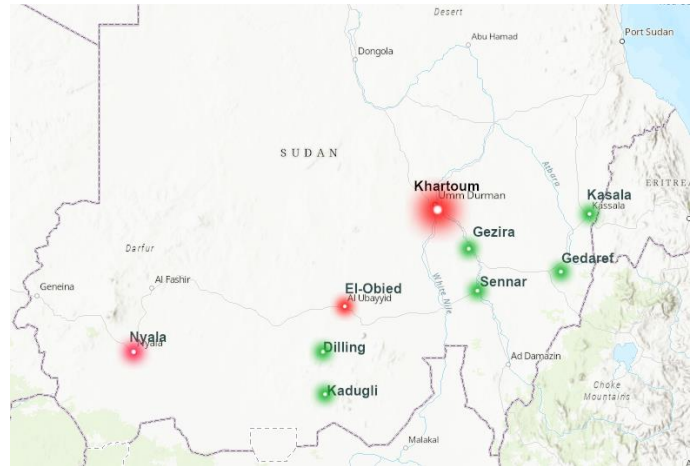
Summary of Findings

May 8th 2023

A rapid market access survey was conducted by Mercy Corps team members during the first week of May 2023 in nine locations across Sudan through interviews with community members and traders. The map shows survey locations, with areas of active highlighting marked in red and other areas marked in green.

Market Functionality:

There have been a range of impacts on markets depending on the stability of the area and proximity to Khartoum. In general markets are open; in some areas, neighborhood shops have closed because of insecurity or lack of goods. Universally, prices have increased dramatically for staple goods and there are particular shortages of imported goods such as wheat flour, oil, and tomato paste. In **Nyala City, South Darfur**, an individual noted that commodities are available in central markets and scarcer in localized markets and one trader reported the price of sugar has increased 250%. Supplies of many commodities are limited and there are concerns that once local stocks are used up, they will not be resupplied because of the disruption in transport networks, the closure of factories, and the general lack of cash to pay for new stocks. A trader in **Gezira** noted that supply chains in Sudan are highly centralized with Khartoum as the locus. Traders in **Kadugli** do not expect any resupplies until the road between Kadugli and El-Obeid is reopened while traders in **Dilling, South Kordofan**, report incidents of looting of goods on the road from El Obeid to Dilling. At the same time, a trader in **Gedarif** said local vegetables are cheap and widely available because transporters cannot move them to Khartoum. Community retailers are struggling to get supplies from wholesale markets due to lack of goods and high transportation costs. Several said they are rationing the amount they will sell to individuals. In more insecure areas, such as **Khartoum** and **South Darfur**, traders report general looting and violence and say they have reduced operating hours to compensate, in particular closing down earlier because looting increases at night. An interviewee said only 40% of shops in one of Khartoum's main markets are open.



Ability to Access Cash & Buy Goods:

Banks are open in the more stable areas but have limited cash. In **Khartoum** and **South Darfur** they are closed and some have reportedly been burned. Prior to the conflict, individuals in towns and urban areas reported using mobile apps to make payments. Those apps have been helpful to pay for goods in the early days of the conflict when mobile networks and the internet are working sufficiently. These networks have been spotty and vary greatly by location. In **Dilling** people also reported challenges adding mobile credit. More rural communities reported using only cash. But in communities where people cannot work, they are running out of both cash and money in their apps. In **Dilling** people said they were borrowing money to buy goods, while in **Kadugli** individuals reported trust within the community has decreased so they are less likely to borrow from each other.

Transportation & Population Movements:

For individuals and households, the increase in fuel prices and transportation costs has hindered both daily life and the ability of people to move out of insecure areas. Increases in transportation costs vary by location, with interviewees reporting between 50% and 300% for local bus and tuk tuk fares. People say they cannot work and do not have access to money beyond the cash they have on hand. Some are worried what they will do when their current food supplies are consumed. In some cases, households may need to travel farther than usual to access commodities, while also facing increased transportation costs. In the more unstable areas, interviewees say it is unsafe for women and children to be on the streets because of looting and violence. Individuals in **Gedarif, Gezira, Sennar, and North and South Kordofan** reported inflows of displaced people, either temporarily as they move towards borders or permanently. A group in the Fashoda community near El-Obied reported that people who left for Khartoum in 1983 have now returned. In **Nyala City**, people were reported to be moving within the city to safer neighborhoods. Individuals in Kadugli said these inflows of people have strained local resources. The most stable area appears to be **Kassala**, near the Eritrean border. Residents and host families said displaced people needed shelter, medicine and basic goods, and money to move and/or repay transportation costs. One displaced woman said she could not buy any food in the market until she paid off the truck that brought her and her family from Khartoum to Gedarif. Another individual said, “I witnessed some wars before, but this is the most difficult war I experienced in my life in **Nyala City**.”