



International Medical Corps' senior management team visits an informal settlement for Sudanese refugees in Kufra.

Since mid-April 2023, the conflict in Sudan has led to the displacement of more than 11 million people, with more than 2 million crossing into neighboring countries to find safety. Thousands of displaced people have taken shelter in Kufra, a remote and sparsely populated area located in southeastern Libya. According to UNHCR, Libya now hosts an estimated 210,000 Sudanese refugees. Without proper registration and tracking in place it is difficult to determine how this has increased over the last two months; however, the influx continues at a steady rate, with approximately 400 to 500 people arriving in informal camps daily.

International Medical Corps' team in Kufra continues to monitor the evolving humanitarian needs of Sudanese refugees, which go beyond health assistance. From December 21 to 25, our senior management team in Libya conducted a field visit to Kufra. During the visit, the team met with key stakeholders, including the Kufra Mayor, the Director of the Kufra Emergency Cell, the Manager of the Refugee Admission Health Center and the Manager of the Water and Sanitation Company. These stakeholders highlighted that the needs are growing increasingly critical, heavily straining national resources and affecting the host community across various humanitarian sectors. They identified several priorities, including a need to:

- expand the number of mobile health teams, with more medical doctors and community health workers to address healthcare gaps in Kufra;
- extend coverage to additional informal settlements and prioritize health facilities, which are experiencing critical staff shortages;
- exhibit greater flexibility in deploying health teams, to adapt to challenging conditions; and
- address urgent water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs, including waste management, water sources and sanitation improvements.

Ongoing coordination with the municipality and crisis committee remains vital to align the response with local needs and plans.

FAST FACTS

- The conflict in Sudan has displaced more than 11 million people, including more than 2 million who have sought refuge in neighboring countries, with 210,000 arriving in Libya.
- Ensuring that displaced communities receive timely assistance is crucial. There is a need to provide access to healthcare, mental health support, food, shelter and essential household items.

OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps was the first global humanitarian organization in Libya when the conflict began in 2011, and has since been providing critical health, nutrition, protection, mental health and psychosocial support, and water, sanitation and hygiene services.

OUR RESPONSE

- In Kufra, our medical team has conducted 16,635 consultations and distributed essential medical supplies and consumables in informal settlements and the city's primary hospital.

Our team also engaged with settlement owners and Sudanese representatives, who acknowledged the significant impact of International Medical Corps' health teams in ensuring access to essential services and who expressed their appreciation for the support they've received. They also emphasized that there is still a need to expand services to meet the increasing needs of the population generally. These include a need to:

- increase the frequency of health team visits and expand services to additional settlements, with a focus on providing health consultations and medications;
- facilitating patient referrals to secondary health centers by providing ambulance support, to address transportation barriers;
- address environmental concerns related to solid waste accumulation, which impacts surrounding communities and strains the resources of the national sanitation company; and
- develop treatment plans for infectious diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B and C, and tuberculosis, which remain unaddressed in many cases.

Living conditions for Sudanese refugees are worsening due to the continued influx of newly arrived families, the winter season and the limited space available in settlements. Overcrowding severely restricts movement between shelters and compromises ventilation, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. Smaller settlements house 27 families, while larger ones accommodate at least 250 families, each with five to seven members. Limited services and economic hardship drive some to theft, due to high food and transportation costs in Kufra. Health issues are rising, especially among vulnerable groups like children, women and older people with chronic illnesses. Women lack reproductive health services, including antenatal care and hygiene education. Children do not have access to routine immunizations but instead rely on occasional vaccination campaigns, leaving them at risk of preventable diseases. Older people struggle with untreated chronic conditions such as diabetic foot, needing consistent care.

The buildup of solid waste around settlements poses a serious environmental hazard to the entire city. National authorities lack the capacity to manage the growing volume of waste, highlighting the urgent need support. Additionally, there are not an adequate number of WASH facilities, such as latrines, at the settlement locations. Some settlements have only one shared toilet for men and women, while others have paid toilets, costing 20 cents per use. There is a lack of a continuous water sources, hygiene materials and proper wastewater management, with some locations accumulating wastewater ponds. National services are strained due to capacity shortages and the increasing number of newly arrived refugees. Combined with overcrowding, this has led to a deterioration in host community acceptance. According to the Mayor, the municipal council has received complaints about the rising number of refugees on the streets and about fears over crime, public health risks and the overall strain on city services.

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps has been collaborating closely with local authorities since June 2024 to deliver critical humanitarian assistance to both Sudanese refugees and host communities in and around Kufra. We provide key services—including healthcare, mental health support and protection—daily at Alshaheed Atia Hospital, the Refugees Admission Health Center and six informal settlements. So far, we have conducted approximately 16,635 health consultations, with 3,932 consultations conducted in December alone. This recent increase reflects the growing demand and the rising number of newly arrived refugees. We have also facilitated a total of 204 patient referrals to secondary health centers, including seven referrals made during the last month. This has ensured that patients in need of specialized care have access to appropriate medical attention.

International Medical Corps' community health workers have continued to conduct health awareness sessions reaching Sudanese refugees. These sessions such key topics as hygiene practices, nutrition, chronic disease prevention and maternal health, helping communities adopt healthier behaviors and mitigate preventable health risks. We have conducted 96 sessions so far, benefiting 1,716 refugees and host community members. In December, International Medical Corps donated a range of essential medical supplies and consumables to Alshaheed Atia Hospital and the Refugees Admission and Treatment Health Center, with the support of the Kufra Emergency Cell, to enhance their capacity to address the growing healthcare needs of both the host community and Sudanese refugees. The donation included 82 medical items—including 13 pieces of diagnostic equipment, such as ECG machines, patient monitors and admission beds—increasing the bed capacity of local health facilities. The remaining items consisted of medical consumables. This donation is expected to benefit approximately 45,000 people.