“Why Lie? This Support Stopped Six Months Ago”

Tracking Aid Narratives on Social Media: Recent Observations from Sudan

July 2026

This briefing by Insecurity Insight analyses public social media activity from **01 - 17 July 2026** in Sudan

Understanding how aid actors are portrayed online is important because social media narratives can shape public trust, community acceptance, operational access and staff safety. By monitoring how humanitarian organisations are discussed, this briefing aims to identify emerging concerns and support communication, programming and security management.

Sudan’s ongoing conflict, which began in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has developed into one of the world’s largest humanitarian and displacement crises. In 2026, 33.7 million people require humanitarian assistance, while nearly 19.5 million face acute food insecurity. Continued violence, displacement and access constraints affect both humanitarian operations and the communities they support.

The ongoing conflict has also severely disrupted Sudan’s media landscape, with an estimated 90% of media houses destroyed, journalists displaced or operating in exile, and independent reporting capacity sharply reduced. As a result, public discourse is increasingly shaped through social media and external broadcast channels, but overall online activity remains uneven and limited by connectivity constraints. Within this wider information environment, the briefing focuses specifically on how humanitarian organisations are portrayed on public social media and what these narratives may indicate about trust, acceptance and humanitarian space.

Since the previous edition on 08 March 2026, social media posts highlighted humanitarian activities across Sudan, including UNICEF and Global Fund-supported malaria prevention in North Darfur, education initiatives involving UNICEF and humanitarian partners, and health and protection services for children, women and families supported by UNICEF, the World Bank and local organisations.

Between 1 and 17 July 2026, monitoring identified 147 publicly available posts: 27.9% on Facebook (41 posts) and 72.1% on X (106 posts). Together, they generated 640 comments. The 147 posts reached 2,442,789 social media users. The briefing examines acceptance and criticism towards aid actors is expressed on social media. The content is selected based on predefined lists of UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs and civil society organisations and general keywords related to humanitarian and development assistance in Sudan.

147	11	640	2,442,789
Public posts	**Posts with comments**	**Comments analysed**	**Estimated reach**
provisional	X ≥15 / FB ≥15	manually reviewed	X + Facebook (prov.)

This edition covers

- WFP: Reported suspension of cash assistance drives criticism
- LNGO and UNICEF: E-learning centres attract support and requests for wider access

This analysis draws only on publicly accessible content and posts with identifiable Sudan-based IP addresses, meaning that discussions taking place in private groups, closed networks, encrypted messaging platforms, or from users masking their location are not captured and may reflect different dynamics. Public sentiment towards the aid sector continues to develop over time, shaped by personal experience, exposure to selective narratives, and evolving conflict dynamics.

Disclaimer: This is a long-term initiative to monitor social media perceptions of the aid sector in Sudan. Feedback on format or content is welcomed at **info@insecurityinsight.org**

ANALYSIS OF KEY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Between 1 and 17 July 2026, three public X accounts published five posts that raised allegations or concerns about humanitarian actors.

Media account alleging UN involvement in military operations

Between 1 and 2 July, a verified X media account associated with a multilingual digital periodical published three posts. The publication produces content in Arabic, English and French, including news reports, interviews, articles and visual material, with a strong focus on alleged violations attributed to the RSF. Publicly available information does not clearly identify its ownership, editorial team, funding or verification procedures.

Together, the three posts reached 1,398 social media users and received no comments. They alleged that vehicles bearing UN markings were being used in military operations alongside the RSF. The posts presented the reported appearance of these vehicles as evidence that the UN had abandoned neutrality and was directly supporting violence against civilians. They used terms including “partnership”, “extermination” and “international conspiracy”, presenting the allegations as established facts. The dataset does not provide evidence verifying these claims.

The posts appeared shortly after a 26 June UN Security Council briefing on escalating drone attacks, humanitarian access constraints and risks to civilians in El Obeid, and a 30 June warning by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator about escalating violence in North Kordofan. This places them within a period of heightened international attention to Sudan and humanitarian access, but does not establish that their timing was coordinated or linked to a broader strategy.

Individual accounts raising concerns about humanitarian actors

Two unchecked individual X accounts published one post each. In 17 July, an account, with around 7,000 followers, questioned why WFP had acknowledged aid convoys reaching South Kordofan but had not condemned reported RSF drone attacks on the Kosti–El Obeid road. The post reached 622 social media users and received no comments.

On 1 July, a second account, with fewer than 100 followers, alleged that the UN was fighting alongside the RSF in Kulbus. The post reached four social media users and repeated an allegation that also appeared in posts by the media account.

→ The two posts raised concerns about perceived inconsistency in humanitarian communication and alleged UN involvement with an armed actor. The evidence is limited to two posts, including one with very low reach.

What this tells us

Four of the five critical posts alleged that UN vehicles or assets supported the RSF; three came from the same media account. The remaining post questioned a UN agency’s response to reported convoy attacks.

Key Takeaways:

WFP: Reported suspension of cash assistance drives criticism

On 16 July 2026, WFP's official X account published one post about cash assistance supported by European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). The post presented the assistance as helping food-insecure families meet their food needs while supporting local traders. It reached 2,181 social media users and generated 22 comments, including 95.5% critical towards WFP and ECHO (21 comments).

Critical comments emphasised that cash assistance had stopped in February or had not been received since then. Several referred to North Darfur, while others said that requests had gone unanswered. The comments focused on access to assistance and reported experiences of non-receipt rather than broader allegations about WFP or the UN. A small number referred to a suspension of around six months. Few comments used identical or near-identical wording. As the discussion was limited to one post and fewer than 30 comments, the findings should not be treated as representative of wider reactions.

> ***"Why lie? This support stopped six months ago"*** *(comment written in English)*

What this tells us

The discussion appears to reflect dissatisfaction with insufficient or interrupted cash assistance rather than an effort to challenge WFP or the UN. The comments did not clearly extend the anti-UN allegations identified in the account analysis.

Sadagat and UNICEF: E-learning centres attract support and requests for wider access

Between 3 and 17 July 2026, two Facebook posts by Sadagat LNGO highlighted UNICEF-supported e-learning centres in North Kordofan and Northern State. The posts covered the opening of 17 centres in North Kordofan and the progress of an existing centre in Northern State. The posts reached 12,980 social media users and generated 156 comments.

Support and requests for wider access: Recurring comments asked for similar centres in other areas, while others requested education support, asked about centre locations or expressed interest in volunteering. One isolated comment questioned whether the equipment shown would remain after filming.

> ***"We also need your support in education. Could you help us?"***
> *("نحن زاتو محتاجيين لدعمكم في التعليم لو بتقدرو تساعدونا؟")*

What this tells us:

The comments showed interest in wider access to e-learning centres and opportunities to participate. Questions about locations and volunteering also indicated a need for clearer practical information. The single critical comment was isolated and did not reflect the wider discussion.

The table reflects the subset of posts with identifiable regional IP addresses, which provides an indicative - but partial - picture of where online discussions are most active, as location data can be obscured by VPN use.

STATE / AREA	NUMBER OF POSTS
Khartoum	184
Red Sea	40
Al Jazirah	8
Northern	7
Al Qadarif	5
River Nile	5
Blue Nile	3
Southern Darfur	2
Southern Kordofan	2
Kassala	1
Shamal Kurdofan	1
Sinnar	1

The social media monitoring platform identified 147 posts originating from Sudan using aid related keywords, of which this table includes only the smaller subset with identifiable regional IP addresses. Source: *Insecurity Insight / Topics (Powered by Radarly)*

Other resources

Public online narratives are reshaping the operating environment of the aid sector in the Sahel. *The Shrinking Humanitarian Space on Social Media in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger* focuses on the risks and harms posed by harmful public narratives that frame aid as illegitimate, politicised or foreign controlled. These narratives are steadily shrinking the humanitarian space. As online and offline threats increasingly converge, the report argues that safeguarding digital legitimacy is no longer optional - it is essential to the continuation of principled, neutral, and effective humanitarian action. In English and French. For regular updates on the Sahel see here.

Explosive weapons are being increasingly used in conflict, causing severe harm to civilians and critical health infrastructure. Insecurity Insight has documented 3,075 incidents in which hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies were damaged or destroyed by explosive weapons between 1 January 2016 and 4 November 2025. This report examines cases of hospital attacks in Gaza, Myanmar, Sudan, and Ukraine between October 2024 and October 2025, analysing social media posts and comments and how these discussions contributed to harmful content that helped to undermine the humanitarian space. The Saudi Maternity Hospital attack in Sudan was framed not as a standalone violation of the protection of medical facilities, but as part of a broader narrative of alleged genocide and systematic violence against civilians. This framing shifts the focus away from the conduct of hostilities and the special protection of hospitals towards denunciations of mass atrocity crimes and perceived failures of the international community to respond. For regular updates see here.

Humanitarian action in the DRC is increasingly shaped by public digital narratives that the aid sector cannot afford to ignore. The distorted nature of some online discussions about aid can at times feel shocking or uncomfortable. While they may be dismissed as expressing the views of marginal voices, their growing reach and impact make it essential to understand the motivation behind them. *The Humanitarian Space on Social Media: Learning from Social Media Narratives in the DRC* shares findings from social media sentiment monitoring in the DRC, with the intention of helping aid organisations to better understand and track emerging narratives and shifts in sentiment. By monitoring online discourse on the humanitarian space that go beyond the brand name of individual aid agencies, aid actors can anticipate local attitudes, build community acceptance and adapt to a rapidly evolving operational environment. In English and French. For regular updates see here.

Data Use and Privacy Disclaimer

This report includes analysis of publicly available social media content collected from open platforms. All data has been anonymised to remove or obscure identifying details, and no content from closed groups was used. The analysis was conducted in the public interest and in line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), under a legitimate interest basis. The purpose of this analysis is to support humanitarian dialogue, inform policy, protect aid workers and those they help, and contribute to public interest research. This document is published by Insecurity Insight - a Humanitarian to Humanitarian (H2H) organisation committed to the Humanitarian Principles. Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

We welcome questions and feedback. Share what you're observing both on the ground and online. Your insights help us keep the analysis accurate and up-to-date. Email: **info@insecurityinsight.org**. Join our efforts to protect humanitarian space. Subscribe to our **Social Media Monitoring** mailing list. Find more resources at the **Social Media Monitoring** website. **Help support our work by sharing this resource. Please copy and paste this link: https://bit.ly/01-17Jul2026SDNSMMBrief**

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