

Prayer Briefing *Greater Horn of Africa*

Sudan · South Sudan · Ethiopia · Somalia 2026-02-22

204.1 million people

For three millennia, the peoples of the Horn have calibrated their lives to water and movement. Dinka herders walk cattle between South Sudan's seasonal floodplains. Somali pastoralists move camels along corridors that predate every border drawn through them. The Nile's annual flood pulse, now held behind dams, once dictated planting across a thousand kilometres of Sudan's breadbasket. These are not impoverished peoples — they are civilizations that mastered the art of living with scarcity. This week, 47.4 million of them cannot feed themselves. Ten million Sudanese have been driven from their homes, and on the first day of Ramadan a drone struck a water collection point in West Kordofan, killing children who had come to fetch water. In Somalia, the UN World Food Programme says its emergency food assistance is "at imminent risk of grinding to a halt." Gold leaves Darfur for Dubai, oil leaves South Sudan for Beijing, charcoal leaves Somalia for the Gulf — and 16.2 million displaced people move in the opposite direction, toward water sources already used beyond their limit. The crisis is not scarcity. It is the organised removal of wealth from a region whose people are then blamed for being poor.

6.7K killed	16.2M displaced	47.4M food insecure	1/4 overdrawing water
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How Life Circulates

Cross-Border Cattle Corridors

- Dinka and Nuer pastoralists move hundreds of thousands of cattle between South Sudan's Jonglei floodplains and Ethiopia's Omo lowlands following bimodal rains, providing protein for millions across three countries.
- Escalating conflict in Jonglei — now at Flash Update No. 9 — has severed the primary corridor, with WFP scrambling to feed those displaced from the grazing lands they depend on.

Nile-Fed Irrigation (Gezira)

- The Gezira scheme once made Sudan a breadbasket — tenant farmers growing sorghum and wheat on Blue Nile canal water across 880,000 hectares, the largest irrigation scheme in Africa.
- With Sudan drawing 119% of its renewable water supply and zero rainfall this month, the canals that sustained Gezira are contested infrastructure — their control determines who eats.

What Is Being Taken

Gold from Darfur travels through RSF-controlled supply chains to Port Sudan and on to UAE refineries, funding the militia whose violence has created the world's largest displacement crisis. South Sudan's crude oil moves through the Greater Nile Pipeline to Port Sudan, operated by Chinese-led consortia, while the Nuer and Shilluk communities displaced from oil-producing areas in Unity and Upper Nile see none of the revenue. Gum arabic — harvested by women in Kordofan for the global food industry, used in every can of Coca-Cola — cannot be collected when harvesters have been displaced by the same conflict the gold finances. Somalia's Acacia forests are cut for charcoal, shipped from Kismayo to Gulf states by networks taxed by Al-Shabaab, destroying the rangeland that pastoral livelihoods require. Livestock exports through Berbera and Bosaso feed Gulf demand while 4.4 million Somalis face food crisis. In every case, the resource leaves; the cost stays.

This Week

Feb 20 — A drone strike hit a water collection point in Umm Rusum village, West Kordofan, on the first day of Ramadan, killing at least 18 people including children. MSF reports both SAF and RSF drone attacks are targeting schools, markets, healthcare facilities, and water sources across Sudan.

Pray: For the families of Umm Rusum who came to fetch water and found death — and for every water point, school, and market still being bombed across Sudan.

Feb 20 — WFP warns that life-saving emergency food and nutrition assistance in Somalia is 'at imminent risk of grinding to a halt' without immediate new funding. Failed Deyr and harsh Jilaal have left 4.61M affected, 171 boreholes non-functional, rivers drying up.

Pray: For WFP's warning to be heard before it becomes obituary — that the 4.4 million Somalis in food crisis are not abandoned as the world's attention moves elsewhere.

Feb 20 — Spiralling conflict in Jonglei State has reached Flash Update No. 9. WFP is scaling up emergency response. IOM tracked displacements from January through mid-February. Tom Fletcher arrived in Juba for a five-day mission on the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Pray: For those fleeing Jonglei — that WFP's emergency scale-up reaches them, that safe ground exists, and that Tom Fletcher's visit produces political will, not just attention.

Seeds of Hope

In Amhara's North Wollo, where drought and conflict converged, ICRC reports families "can finally stop worrying about our next meal" — a fragile recovery built by farmers who replanted despite displacement and loss. Across the Horn, community protection networks persist in the teeth of power — the RSF's territorial control in Darfur, Al-Shabaab's taxation of charcoal routes in southern Somalia, military elites who've captured South Sudan's oil wealth. Pastoral early warning systems predate any humanitarian architecture, women's market networks redistribute food through kinship, seed-saving practices preserve sorghum varieties adapted to exactly these conditions. That communities continue to share, plant, and move is not a footnote to the crisis; it is the primary evidence that another arrangement is possible.

For Prayer

For Umm Rusum...

For the families of Umm Rusum village in West Kordofan, where a drone struck the water collection point on the first day of Ramadan, killing at least 18 people including children who had come to fetch water. For every water point, school, and market still being targeted across Sudan.

For the 47.4 million hungry...

For the 47.4 million people across the Horn who cannot feed themselves during Ramadan — and especially for Somalia, where WFP warns that emergency food assistance is "at imminent risk of grinding to a halt." That this warning is heard before it becomes obituary.

For Sudan's 10 million displaced...

For the 10 million displaced in Sudan — the world's largest displacement crisis. For those in Darfur, where gold beneath their land funds the weapons pointed at them. That the wealth of their soil might one day serve those who live on it.

For Somalia's dry boreholes...

For the communities in Mudug's Jariiban District, where drought this week displaced 7,170 people from rural villages. For the 171 non-functional boreholes across Somalia — each one a community that has lost its water. That the rains come, and that someone repairs the pumps.

For Amhara's fragile recovery...

For the farmers in North Wollo, Amhara, who replanted after displacement and conflict and can say "we can finally stop worrying about our next meal." That this fragile recovery holds, and spreads to the 16.8 million Ethiopians still in food crisis.

For Tom Fletcher's visit...

For Tom Fletcher's five-day visit to the region — that it produces political will, not just attention. For every humanitarian worker operating in the Horn, where dozens have been killed in the past year. That their courage is matched by the resources they need.

For the pastoral networks...

For the pastoral early warning systems, the women's market networks, the seed-saving traditions that persist across the Horn despite every force arrayed against them. That these structures — older than every armed group, every pipeline, every border — survive to rebuild what is being destroyed.

On the first day of Ramadan — a month defined by the willing surrender of food and water — a drone struck a water point in West Kordofan, killing children who had come to fill containers. The fast was not voluntary.

Psalm 107 (Thanksgiving)

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.*

*Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe.*

As you read this briefing on Greater Horn of Africa, consider: *What does it mean to share a world with people whose water, food, and safety are determined by decisions made far from where they live? — Where do you see resistance and hope in this data — and what does it ask of you?*