

Mother's Strength: Surviving the War in Sudan

The Day Everything Changed

"My name is Fatima, I'm 53 years old and a mother of four. My life changed forever on April 15, 2023, when the sound of war reached our home in Arkawit, Khartoum. Heavy artillery shells fell around us. One struck my house — killing my only son. He was my only boy... I had raised him to protect his sisters. Losing him shattered something deep inside me, but I told myself, 'This is God's will.' I still had my daughters to protect."

With nowhere safe in Khartoum, Fatima and her three daughters fled to Omdurman. But after just one week, the sounds of heavy artillery returned. They began a dangerous escape—on foot.

"We walked for nine hours. Then, a kind truck driver let us ride with his sheep. The animals kicked us, but we had no choice."

Tragedy on the Road

After reaching Bara and finding no support, the family pressed on — nine more days through hunger and exhaustion until they reached Al-Dibibat. There, Fatima's daughters worked in the market to earn money. But tragedy struck again: her eldest daughter was kidnapped. "I chased the car, screaming her name... but they were gone."

In Abu Zabad, they faced yet another threat. Armed men demanded money or one of her daughters. **"My middle daughter offered herself. I refused. I said, 'Take me, not her.' A car approached and scared them away."** The driver took them to the East Darfur border, from where they walked again — surviving only on water and leaves — until they reached Ed Daein after seven days.

First Signs of Hope

In Gerida IDP Camp, the family was welcomed by other displaced people. But resources were limited. **"We had no food, no water, no shelter. After three days, the same driver who helped us came back. He saw how weak we were and called for help."**

Thanks to **African Relief Committee**, a CCCM Cluster partner, Fatima and her daughters received emergency aid, temporary shelter, and dignity kits.



Another Heartbreak

Soon after, her youngest daughter — only 14 — revealed she was pregnant. **"I accepted it with pain, but trusted in God."** When she went into labour, the doctors said she needed a cesarean section. Fatima had no money. **"I sat outside, praying, helpless."** The African Relief Committee stepped in again and covered the surgery, but her daughter did not survive. **"I lost her, too. Just one daughter left now. I could barely breathe."**

Rebuilding Life

Fatima fell into depression. Hunger, illness, and hopelessness set in. But she forced herself to fight on — washing clothes to earn what little she could. “Every time I scrubbed a shirt, memories of my children flooded my mind. But I kept going.”

When her health failed, and she and her daughter went three days without food, CCCM Cluster partners, including CARE International, World Vision, and IOM-USAID, returned to the site. They provided urgent medical care, food, and shelter. Fatima received cash-based assistance, which she used to start a small grocery shop in the camp.

“Now, I stand on my own feet. I have a roof, a little shop, and my last daughter by my side. Thanks to those who helped us when we had no one.”

“I’m deeply grateful to the African Relief Committee, IOM-USAID, for their support in providing Emergency Shelter and grateful to the American people for their support of the IDPs through the shelter. Their compassion has given me a chance to rebuild my life, honour the memories of my children, and look forward to a future with resilience and hope.”

The Role of CCCM Cluster

At every stage of Fatima’s displacement — from registration, emergency shelter, protection referral, and service coordination to economic recovery — the CCCM Cluster and its partners played a critical role in providing safety, dignity, and hope. Their efforts supported Fatima not just in surviving, but in rebuilding.

“This help saved our lives,” Fatima says. “I will never forget it. May God bless the people who stood by us when we had nothing.”



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