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SUDAN: More Refugees Will Likely Shift from Regional Havens to European Routes

Summary: As Darfur remains a civil war hotspot between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Sudanese refugees will likely continue to concentrate in neighboring states, particularly Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan, in the near term. However, deteriorating humanitarian conditions and limited host-country capacity will likely drive a growing minority to pursue secondary migration routes toward North Africa and Europe.

Background: Fighting between the SAF and the RSF since April 2023 has produced one of the world's largest displacement crises. "Nearly 13 million people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety (as of April 2025)," according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Refugees have primarily relocated into neighboring countries due to geographic proximity and limited resources, with the largest concentrations in Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan, according to The Operational Data Portal. Additional flows have reached Ethiopia, Libya, and Uganda. Host countries face severe economic and infrastructural constraints, limiting their ability to help large refugee populations. "Neighboring countries hosting the majority of Sudanese refugees – particularly Chad, Egypt and South Sudan – are at breaking point. Arrivals from Darfur into Chad continue, while South Sudan struggles to support Sudanese refugees," according to UNHCR. Many refugees reside in overcrowded camps or informal urban settlements, where access to food, healthcare, and employment remains limited. As a result, many refugees are making the dangerous northern move to Europe. "These movements are not driven by choice or convenience but as a response to the lack of prospects for peace, and unmet needs in Sudan and across borders," according to UNHCR.

Humanitarian Displacement Drivers Intensifying: Prolonged armed conflict in Sudan is increasingly forcing civilians to evacuate to neighboring countries, as conditions inside the country will likely deteriorate beyond survivability. "Since the violence broke out on 15 April 2023, civilians have faced bombings, attacks, sexual violence, hunger, and disease outbreaks," according to UNHCR. Sustained reporting of infrastructure collapse and restricted humanitarian access indicates that displacement flows continue to accelerate as basic services become increasingly unavailable in conflict-affected areas. This trajectory suggests that cross-border migration is evolving from a reactive measure to a prolonged regional stability challenge.

Rising Strain in Host-Countries: Host-country limitations will likely increase pressure for onward migration as overcrowding, economic strain, and tightening entry policies reduce

refugees’ ability to remain in primary destinations such as Chad, South Sudan, and Egypt.

“Dwindling assistance and limited opportunities across all host countries leave many with impossible choices,” according to UNHCR. These constraints indicate that movement patterns will likely not remain localized, with secondary migration flows likely to increase as conditions in host countries deteriorate.

This pattern raises the risk of broader regional instability, as

strained host nations will likely face compounding economic and social pressures alongside rising humanitarian demands.

Access to Protection in Europe: Access to asylum protections, humanitarian assistance, and economic opportunities will likely attract a growing minority of Sudanese refugees to Europe. Although facing newly implemented anti-smuggling laws are making it increasingly difficult to reach European Union countries, these barriers will likely not outweigh persistent push factors and will likely instead incentivize the use of irregular migration networks to reach European destinations. “In 2014, the EU announced that it was launching the ‘Khartoum Process’, an initiative that strengthened cooperation between the EU and East African nations to counter irregular migration,” according to *Al Jazeera*.

Outlook and Implications: Sudanese refugee flows will likely continue to concentrate in neighboring states in the near term while increasingly shifting toward European routes as conditions deteriorate across both the origin and host environments. Irregular migration networks

New Arrivals by Countries featured in the refugee response

Country	Data Date	Refugee returnees	Sudanese refugees/asylum seekers	Total New Arrivals	Individually Registered Refugees
Chad	April 10, 2026		919,187	919,187	899,351
South Sudan	April 10, 2026	873,763	439,366	1,313,129	280,229
Egypt	January 31, 2025			1,500,000	834,438
Libya*	April 10, 2026		554,937	554,937	75,336
Uganda	April 10, 2026		88,269	88,269	88,269
Ethiopia	November 30, 2025	21,393	45,118	66,511	45,118
CAR	March 3, 2026	6,911	35,048	41,959	32,395

*This figure is an estimate of the number of new arrivals (registered and un-registered) who would be assisted under the RRP. The new arrivals figures are generally based on numbers counted around border crossings, whereas registered refugees have gone through an individual registration process and reflects post 15 April 2023 figures.

Figure 1: Sudanese refugees are primarily fleeing to neighboring countries, likely causing worsening strain in those countries (Source: UNHCR).

will likely become more established and adaptive in response to sustained demand and restrictive migration controls. Regional systems will likely arise under growing strain, raising the risk of localized instability in their ability to manage prolonged displacement. Over time, these dynamics will likely transform Sudanese displacement from a primarily regional humanitarian crisis into a more persistent transregional migration challenge.

[Ava Bailey]

SOUTH KOREA: Defense Preparedness Will Likely Reduce, Not Prevent, Missile Impact

Summary: Seoul's current defense system will likely reduce the impact of a Pyongyang missile but not fully eliminate the threat. In response to Pyongyang's aggressive missile launches, Seoul has invested in strengthening the Three-Axis system. However, Seoul's constraints in interceptions and response times could reduce overall effectiveness. Mutual military development and high tensions on the peninsula are contributing to high tensions and extremely limited communications, which likely increase the probability of accidental escalation.

Background: On 7 April, 8 April, and 9 April, Pyongyang carried out a three-day long weapons test. Pyongyang tested short-range ballistic missiles, carbon fiber dummy bombs dispersion tests, and cluster bomb warhead, according to USNI News. Seoul and Japan both reported seeing the short-range ballistic missiles launched on Wednesday and landing in the Sea of Japan.



Figure 2: Pyongyang tests new cluster-bomb missiles (Source: Reuters)

Seoul's military radars detected a missile launched near Pyongyang that later disappeared, indicating the launch failed. Military experts have explained how Pyongyang has observed key weapons in the Iran War and Ukraine War and incorporating it into its military deterrence, according to *The New York Times*. Pyongyang has also supplied Moscow with soldiers and weapons in exchange for weapon technology. In response, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung has expressed regret over recent drone invasions in Pyongyang in hopes to reduce tension. Seoul has also increased its missile monitoring over the North while maintaining its current deterrence strategy.

Seoul's Deterrence Strategy: Seoul's deterrence strategy will likely be effective in response if Pyongyang chooses to escalate. After Pyongyang's fifth missile launch in 2016, Seoul designed a Three-Axis system. The first axis, known as the kill chain, functions as a preemptive strike

against Pyongyang's military assets if there's signs of a missile attack on Seoul. Then, the second axis, the Korea Air and Missile Defense, will intercept launched missiles using a multi-layered missile defense system, according to Council on Foreign Relations. The last axis implemented, labeled Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation, involves striking Pyongyang leadership if the Pyongyang strikes South Korea. Seoul has continuously updated and funded the system for the last decade, likely significantly strengthening its missile response capabilities. Currently, Seoul has increased the amount 22.3 percent from last year and expects to spend 8.9 trillion won, according to *The Korea Herald*. This investment will improve its ability to respond across many stages of conflict. However, this system will likely not eliminate the threat of a missile strike, instead likely leading to increased aggression from Pyongyang.

Constraints on Missile Defense Effectiveness: Despite Seoul's investments in missile defense, its interception capabilities will likely be limited in a conflict. Seoul's defense system is likely capable of detecting incoming threats, but some constraints include the limited time for interception, saturation of systems by masses artillery and dependence on intelligence assets, according to *The Korean Herald*. New North Korean technological advancements will likely reduce Seoul's ability to track missiles, predict their trajectories, and intercept them. If Seoul cannot resolve the constraints, it will likely face high risk of damage.

Risk of Escalation and Instability: Regardless of Seoul's efforts to strengthen its deterrence and military capabilities, tensions will likely remain high on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang will likely perceive these efforts as hostility and increase advanced missile testing. Since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has expressed his hostile stance towards the South, tensions have persisted and Pyongyang has ignored any communication from Seoul, according to Impact International. This lack of communication will likely increase Seoul's uncertainty during the increase of military activity. Kim continues to advance in nuclear weapons and has intensified the expansion of its military since 2019, while Seoul has worked closely with allies and increased its military operations in case of escalation. As a result, instability has quickly risen on the peninsula and will likely remain as both continue to develop their militaries. Even if neither intends to initiate conflict, citizens and economies likely remain vulnerable to possible conflicts.

Outlook and Implications: Seoul's current defense systems will likely reduce the impact of a Pyongyang strike but will likely not eliminate the threat. Further, Seoul's military development

will likely increase political aggression from Pyongyang rather than achieve deterrence. Bilateral military expansion and lack of communication almost certainly maintains high tensions, reduces both countries' long-term stability, and increases the likelihood of accidental escalation.

[McKenzie Koliba]

COLOMBIA: Tensions With Ecuador Likely to Escalate After Ambassador's Recall

Summary: Following years of trade and border disputes, Quito has recalled its ambassador to Colombia. This will likely worsen economic relations between the two countries. Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa likely initiated recent tensions in retaliation over comments made by President Gustavo Petro regarding the imprisonment of Colombian citizen, Former Vice President of Ecuador Jorge Glas.

Background: On 4 April 2024, Ecuadorian police and military forcibly entered the Mexican Embassy in Quito to arrest Glas. Quito claimed it had the right to arrest Glas for his crimes committed in Ecuador. Critics claim that Quito violated international law, such as the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations treaty, which protects embassies and consulates from military and law enforcement actions without prior consent, according to *Al-Jazeera*. The following day, Mexico City broke diplomatic relations with Quito, recalling all diplomatic personnel immediately back to Mexico and filing a case against Ecuador at the International Court of Justice. On 26 July 2025, Quito deported hundreds of Colombian citizens without a formal protocol to ensure the safe and orderly transfer of the detainees, in line with their human rights, according to the Colombian Foreign Ministry. Quito asserts that the removals followed legal protocols, with Ecuador's Foreign Ministry stating it informed Bogotá about the deportation process starting on 8 July, according to Reuters. However, Mayor Amilcar Pantoja of Ipiales, a border town, contradicted this by stating that Quito gave no prior notice before sending detainees across the binational bridge. On 1 February, Quito placed a 30% security tax on imports from Colombia, with Noboa stating that Quito implemented the tax due to drug-trafficking groups on the border, according to Latin America Reports. Bogotá responded by placing a 30% tariff on electricity supplies imported from Ecuador. Tariffs by both countries then increased to 50% as of 1 March, following a failure to reach an agreement.

Glas Political Timeline: Petro's statements regarding Glas' treatment will likely lead to Colombia suing Ecuador over human rights violations. Glas was a two-time vice president of Ecuador, under President Rafael Correa and President Lenin Moreno. On 3 August 2017, Moreno stripped Glas of his duties amid corruption allegations, according to Reuters. On 13 December 2017, Glas received a sentence to six years in prison for corruption after receiving \$13.5 million in bribes, according to the BBC. The courts granted Glas conditional release on 10

April 2022, with his legal team arguing that he had served enough of his sentence in combination with his health issues. As Ecuadorian authorities sought to arrest Glas again on new corruption charges, Glas entered the Mexican Embassy in Quito on 17 December 2023, seeking political asylum. Petro denounced the arrest as political persecution, according to ColombiaOne. Bogotá granted Glas Colombian citizenship in September 2025, likely in retaliation for Quito's previous return of detainees without notification.

Economic Instability Gives Guerrilla Groups Upper Hand: The economic instability caused by a tariff war will likely give drug-trafficking groups the upper-hand with coca crop farmers. Colombian imports accounted for 4.1% of Ecuadorian energy consumption in 2024, representing an important stopgap for Ecuador,

which heavily relies on hydroelectric power, causing energy shortages in the dry season, according to Latin America Reports. In 2024, Ecuador faced blackouts for up to 14 hours a day during a drought, aggravated by limited Colombian exports. Bogotá's electricity tariff will likely cause extensive power shortages in Ecuador.

Ecuadorians will likely pay a higher

price for medicine, sugar, vehicles, and coffee while Colombians will pay a higher price for wood panels, canned fish, frozen seafood, palm oil and rice. On 9 April, Quito announced that it will raise tariffs against Colombia to 100%, according to Reuters. Diplomatic tensions between the two countries will likely encourage farmers to maintain, or return, to farming coca as a stable income source. Colombian guerrilla groups sell cocaine and unrefined coca paste across the Ecuadorian border, who in return move chemical precursors to produce cocaine back across the border, according to International Crisis Group.

Outlook and Implications: Ecuadorian Ambassador to Colombia Arturo Felix Wong's recall will likely lead to further deterioration of diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries. Petro will most likely maintain his stance on returning Glas to Colombia, further

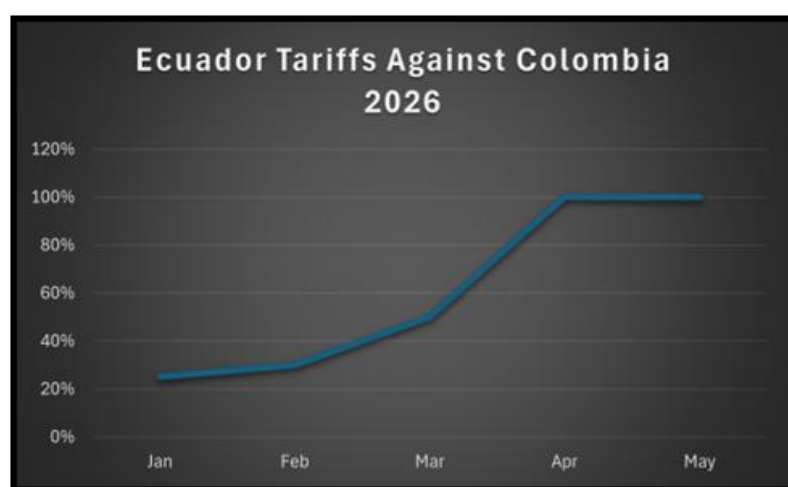


Figure 3: Quito has drastically increased tariffs on Colombian exports over the past year, with 100% tariffs to begin on 1 May (Source: Reuters).

straining relations between Petro and Noboa. With Petro and Noboa's personal relationship likely to remain tense, and the two countries' diplomatic relations likely to mirror such tensions, guerrilla groups will benefit from trade wars between the two countries, encouraging farmers to grow coca crop as a stable income for their households.

[Lola McEwen]

ARGENTINA: Law Reforms Likely Increase Mining Investment Despite Opposition

Summary: Buenos Aires lawmakers approved changes to glacier protection laws, which will likely increase foreign investment. The reforms will likely help produce more copper, lithium, gold, and silver. Environmental protesters argue that the reforms threaten glaciers and water supplies and will affect local communities.

Background: Buenos Aires recently approved changes to glacier protection laws to allow more mining activity near glaciers and periglacial areas in the Andes Mountains.

President Javier Milei supported the changes to increase foreign investment and export revenue from copper, lithium, gold, and silver mining. Argentina is one of the largest producers of lithium, which is important to global tech and green energy sectors, according to *Al Jazeera*. The original legislation, known as the “glaciers law,” passed in 2010. The law prohibited mining and oil drilling on

nearly 17,000 glaciers and other periglacial areas that supply water to millions of people, according to *Climate Home News*. Scientists argue that glaciers are natural water reserves and should have more protection, as many communities and ecosystems rely on them. There are almost 17,000 glaciers in Argentina, many of which supply water to western provinces, as farms depend on glacial melt for irrigation and livestock. Glaciers in the northwestern regions shrunk by around 17% over the last 10 years.

Increased Mining Investment: The changes to the glacier law will likely increase mining investment across the country. The previous law delayed mining projects like El Pachon, Los Azules, Agua Rica, and Josemaria because they were located near glaciers, according to *Climate Change News*. With fewer restrictions, mining companies will likely invest more in copper and lithium projects in the western part of the country. The mining sector estimates the new mining regulations could bring in over \$30 billion over the next decade. In February, Vicuña Corp



Figure 4: Environmental protesters in Buenos Aires (Source: The Guardian).

announced an \$18 billion deal for gold, copper, and silver projects in the San Juan province. This will likely increase exports and jobs in western Argentina.

Environmental Opposition: Environmental groups and scientists will likely continue opposing the glacier law changes because they believe mining close to glaciers could threaten the freshwater and ecosystems that depend on it. Environmental groups argue that the new laws could harm drinking water for around 7 million people who depend on Andean water sources. In Buenos Aires, environmental groups are protesting and carrying signs stating that the reforms are dangerous and harmful. Greenpeace and the Environment and Natural Resources Foundation are putting together a public class-action lawsuit claiming that the law contains flaws and that the government is ignoring the public's concerns.

Outlook and Implications: Buenos Aires will likely continue attracting foreign investment and larger exports of copper, lithium, gold, and silver as glacier mining projects move forward. However, environmental groups and local communities will likely continue opposing the law. If more mining projects are created near glaciers, protests, lawsuits, and other conflicts will probably increase. While the mining projects may improve economic growth and create jobs, they will also likely increase the division between the citizens and the government.

[Catalina Kokenge]

IRAN: Iran's Expanding Conflict Is Likely Deepening Middle East Fragmentation

Summary: Iran's expanding conflict is likely accelerating the fragmentation of its tenuous state alliances across the Middle East. Tehran's economic coercion, interference in regional trade routes, and direct targeting of neighboring states will almost certainly push Gulf governments away from partnership with Iran and toward deeper reliance on U.S. security guarantees.

Background: From October 2019 to February 2022, Gulf states pursued a cautious policy of coexistence with Iran to reduce conflict after years of proxy warfare and their protect economic interests. Riyadh and Tehran restored diplomatic relations, reopened embassies, and initiated limited security talks, signaling an attempt to stabilize ties. These renewed relations declined since October 2025, as Iran resumed proxy operations and weapons transfers across the region, to reassert regional influence after sanctions deepened and its oil revenues declined, reigniting mistrust and forcing Gulf states to reassess their security posture. Since the start of the Iran War, Tehran has retaliated for U.S. and Israeli strikes by launching coordinated missile and drone attacks across Gulf civilian infrastructure. On 17 March, Iran targeted civilian airports, ports, and hotels in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. These attacks provoked widespread condemnation. Washington expanded joint air-defense exercises with Gulf partners and Jerusalem increased intelligence sharing on Iranian missile networks, signaling a shift toward coordinated deterrence rather than isolated national defense.

Iranian Strategy: Tehran is likely pursuing a pressure strategy that aims to exhaust its neighbors politically and economically, hoping they will demand that Washington end the conflict. Yet each escalation likely only hardens regional resistance. Gulf states no longer react defensively; they actively counter Iran's attacks through joint air-defense drills, intelligence sharing, and expanded U.S. basing agreements, consolidating rather



Figure 5: Tehran's strategy, which has included striking several Gulf countries and interfering with shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, is almost certainly eroding its own diplomatic and security ties alongside the regional economy (Source: BBC).

than eroding Washington's influence in the region. Tehran's approach is likely eroding the regional interdependence on which it previously relied for security guarantees and economic partners.

Regional Economic Fragmentation: Tehran's interference in the Strait of Hormuz during the U.S.–Iran conflict is almost certainly intensifying instability, particularly for Kuwait City, Doha, Qatar, Riyadh, and Abu Dhabi, all of which depend on the strait to move oil and commercial goods to international markets. When Tehran threatens the waterway, vessels halt their routes and anchor in nearby ports, creating immediate economic disruption. Because each of Iran's neighbors physically borders and relies on the strait for exports, they absorb the brunt of this pressure. Tehran's manipulation of the Strait of Hormuz disrupts regional trade and forces Gulf states to reassess their long-term energy strategies. As oil exports stall and maritime insurance costs surge, governments such as Riyadh and Abu Dhabi are accelerating restructuring efforts and investing in overland pipelines through Jordan and the Red Sea to bypass Iranian choke points. This shift weakens Tehran's leverage over regional energy flows.

Outlook and Implications: With regional alliances fracturing under the pressure of Tehran's expanding conflict, Gulf states will likely continue deepening cooperation with one another and may pursue more formalized security arrangements with Washington. This trajectory leaves Tehran increasingly isolated and vulnerable to losing what remains of its regional partnerships, making a broader shift in Middle Eastern power dynamics highly likely.

[Gunnar Blackmun]

About GSIS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's (ERAU) Bachelor of Science in Global Security & Intelligence Studies (GSIS) degree program at our Prescott Campus blends both academic and professional studies to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement. The program provides students with a sound foundation in the liberal arts, including international relations, foreign languages and cultures, international law, foreign policy, political and military history, and other essential topics.

About EE

Eagle Eye Intelligence (EE) is an intelligence and research organization led by the students of the GSIS program at ERAU in Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Philip E. Jones founded EE and Embry-Riddle's GSIS program in 2002, following a career with the Central Intelligence Agency and consulting work in international development and global security. Currently, Professor Dale R. Avery, a former career intelligence analyst, serves as EE's faculty advisor.

EE strives to provide actionable intelligence and analysis to its customers during the academic year. We are driven by a number of goals – continuous development, nonpartisanship, interdisciplinary studies, global awareness, and professionalism.

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Christina Muchow, a Senior in the GSIS program, currently serves as EE's Editor in Chief. For questions or comments, contact the team at editorsee@gmail.com or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 498, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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