

Nearly 2 million children in Sudan malnourished: UNICEF

November 22 2015

Some two million Sudanese children under five suffer from malnutrition every year, UNICEF's representative said on Sunday, urging the international community to boost funding to tackle the problem.

Of those two million, nearly 550,000 children have life-threatening severe acute [malnutrition](#), with many of those affected living in the underdeveloped east and conflict-hit Darfur region.

"Over 38 percent of children under the age of five are chronically malnourished across Sudan," said Geert Cappelaere, the representative of the UN children's agency to Sudan.

The number of children under five affected by chronic malnutrition works out at around two million, he told AFP in an interview. This figure includes 550,000 with severe acute malnutrition.

"In terms of numbers, it is an incredibly huge number of children who are affected by malnutrition in Sudan," he said.

The worst affected areas are Red Sea State in eastern Sudan and North Darfur State in the west.

Ethnic insurgents have been battling the Arab-dominated Khartoum government in the western Darfur region since 2003, displacing millions and leaving some 300,000 people dead according to the UN.

Eastern Sudan has suffered from severe underdevelopment and is one of the country's poorest regions.

Mothers stopping breastfeeding too early and high rates of diarrhoea among children because of poor sanitation were behind the high malnutrition rates in the east.

Every year, UNICEF in Sudan treats some 150,000 of the most severely malnourished [children](#).

Cappelaere urged the government and international community to contribute more funds, saying that "billions, not millions" of dollars (euros) are needed to reduce child malnutrition levels.

"We need to continue encouraging the government to invest more in malnutrition but at the same time it will have to be a collective responsibility, the international community will have to step up if it is serious in its commitment to help the Sudanese people," Cappelaere said.

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Citation: Nearly 2 million children in Sudan malnourished: UNICEF (2015, November 22)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-million-children-sudan-malnourished-unicef.html>

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