

International Geneva and the African crises

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

Africa's crises, whether humanitarian, health-related or political, are dealt with in part in Geneva. The High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and dozens of non-governmental organisations conduct from there the operations and negotiations relating to the conflicts in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes and Sudan, to epidemics and to population displacements.¹ Donor conferences, peace negotiations and human rights monitoring mechanisms are held at the Palais des Nations, where the African delegations are among the most active.

For the financial centre, this activity has several effects. It generates flows: the organisations finance their African operations through payments that Geneva's banks execute, in countries where the sanctions described in Part H complicate access to financial services. It produces information: banks and commodity traders follow the African crises through the same sources as the organisations. It creates obligations: a financial centre that houses the organisations responsible for caring for and protecting African populations is judged by the standard of its relations with the regimes and companies that exploit them. Part H showed that this contradiction lies at the heart of the criticism directed at Geneva's commodity trading.

1 Notes

1. ICRC, “Sudan” (icrc.org): war entering its fourth year in April 2026; seven hospitals supported (nearly 155,000 emergency consultations and 27,000 surgical admissions), 33 health facilities supported (310,000 patients suffering from cholera, dengue, malaria and malnutrition), cash assistance to 428,000 displaced persons and returnees, 62,000 families helped to restore contact; ICRC, budget cuts 2023-2025 (see Part F); SDC, “Pays d’intervention de la DDC” (SDC countries of operation) (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Rwanda: humanitarian aid, development and peace). ↩

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/geneva-international-geneva-and-the-african-crises