

Press release
For immediate release
21 May 2026

UNOPS and the Government of Italy sign €4.5 million agreement to expand life-saving dialysis services in Eastern Sudan

Collaborative initiative focuses on building resilient healthcare infrastructure, enhancing essential dialysis capacity, and supporting vulnerable populations in Kassala State.

- **Expanding Care:** Tackles eastern Sudan's healthcare crisis by expanding vital dialysis services for vulnerable host communities, refugees, and displaced populations.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Prioritizes long-term resilience through a new dialysis extension, solar energy integration, and the procurement of life-saving equipment and vehicles.
- **Strategic Coordination:** Ensures equitable access and local ownership through unified collaboration between UNOPS, AICS, and the State Ministry of Health.

Today, UNOPS and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) officially signed a €4.5 million agreement to launch Phase VI of the Kassala Health Citadel development. The 36-month initiative, titled "*Promoting Healthcare Services for Dialysis Patients*," will drastically expand and modernize renal care access for vulnerable populations in Kassala State.

Sudan is currently navigating a severe humanitarian crisis, with ongoing conflict leaving 70% to 80% of healthcare facilities non-operational across affected regions. Kassala State, which hosts millions of residents alongside over 108,000 refugees and a growing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), has experienced a massive surge in demand for specialized medical treatments.

Currently, the dialysis centre at the Kassala Health Citadel operates at only 40% of the actual need. Dedicated healthcare staff work extended shifts for over +20 hours/ day.

Through this new €4.5 million contribution from AICS, UNOPS will address these critical gaps by executing a comprehensive infrastructure and procurement strategy. Key project deliverables include:

- Infrastructure Expansion: Constructing a new extension to the existing dialysis centre to accommodate additional dialysis units and relieve severe overcrowding.
- Specialized Care Units: Building a new emergency unit and a dedicated isolation area to safely treat infectious patients.
- Medical Equipment: Procuring and installing six new dialysis machines, which includes portable water systems specifically designated for emergency and isolated patients.
- Operational Support: Providing essential transport vehicles, including a minibus and a pickup truck, to facilitate facility operations, supply transport, and emergency case logistics.

This agreement marks the sixth phase of a highly successful, long-standing partnership between the Government of Italy and UNOPS aimed at transforming the Kassala Health Citadel into a premier healthcare hub. Since 2017, this collaboration has successfully delivered the master plan design, rehabilitated the Diagnostic Center and Blood Bank, and advanced the construction of a new General Surgery Unit.

“Italy remains firmly committed to supporting the Sudanese people during this challenging period by investing in essential services that directly improve lives and strengthen local resilience,” said **H. E. Michele Tommasi, Ambassador of Italy to Sudan**. “Through our partnership with UNOPS and the Kassala State Ministry of Health, we are contributing to expand access to critical dialysis care for the most vulnerable communities, while reinforcing healthcare infrastructure that will continue serving the population in the years ahead. This initiative reflects Italy’s broader commitment to humanitarian assistance, sustainable development, and solidarity with Sudan.”

“Amid a protracted humanitarian crisis that continues to place immense pressure on Sudan’s healthcare system, ensuring access to life-saving services remains a collective responsibility,” said **Michele Morana, Head of the AICS Addis Ababa Office**, responsible for Sudan. “Through this partnership with UNOPS and the Kassala State Ministry of Health, Italy is contributing to strengthen essential dialysis services while investing in resilient healthcare infrastructure capable of serving host communities, refugees, and displaced populations alike. This initiative reflects our long-term commitment to supporting Sudan’s health sector through coordinated, locally anchored interventions.”

Ms. Worknesh Mekonnen, Director of the UNOPS Horn of Africa Multi-Country Office and Representative to the African Union, on her part added: “We are deeply grateful to the Government of Italy and AICS for their steadfast partnership and generous contribution. This project goes beyond infrastructure, it is a life-saving intervention that will bring dignity, hope, and critical dialysis care to thousands of vulnerable people in eastern Sudan. Together, we are building resilient, inclusive health systems that leave no one behind”.

The Phase VI project directly supports Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and prioritizes Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI). The newly designed facility will incorporate universal access standards for persons with disabilities and feature dedicated, dignified spaces for women, including separate dialysis areas, rest zones, and facilities.

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About AICS

The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) is the public agency responsible for promoting international development, poverty reduction, and humanitarian assistance on behalf of the Italian Government.

About UNOPS

UNOPS offers practical solutions across peace and security, humanitarian and development operations. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners, such as the European Union and its Member States, to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement across the world. Read more: www.unops.org.