



Tens of thousands of South Sudanese, including families with small children and vulnerable people, are exposed to a perilous journey back from Sudan, in need of urgent life-saving assistance and re-integration support at their final destinations.

BACKGROUND

To engage in understanding the protection environment inclusively and collaboratively in South Sudan, the Protection Cluster South Sudan (PC) members regularly conduct monitoring activities across the country. These consist of a key informant interview-based [Protection Monitoring System](#) and [qualitative and quantitative reports](#).

The PC also conducts ongoing protection analysis of the crisis environment. This takes the form of regular [Protection Analysis Updates](#), including identifying the top protection risks, groups most affected and in which geographical areas, and key human rights affected by protection incidents and risks.

The analytical conclusions from all PC systems provide an evidence base for programming, advocacy, and dialogue for the purpose of influencing behaviors and policies in support of a more favorable protection environment.

To boost its evidence base, the PC conducted a nation-wide, state-level based risk assessment exercise in August 2023 to gather up-to-date understanding of the protection risk environment and use the collected knowledge to:

- Inform Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) Narrative: The assessment will serve as a critical information source for the narrative of the HRP documents, enabling a well-informed portrayal of protection risks.
- Advocacy and External Representation: The outcomes will provide valuable data for the Global Protection Cluster, aiding donor advocacy and external website content to showcase the severity of protection risks in South Sudan.
- Humanitarian Coordinator's Prioritization: The assessment will offer evidence-based information for the SSD Humanitarian Coordinator's decision-making process, ensuring the centrality of protection in humanitarian endeavors.
- Enhance Desk Review: the assessment will serve as an early desk review of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) severity data, streamlining the process and enhancing the quality of the final reports.

PROTECTION RISK

A protection risk is the actual or potential exposure of the affected population to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. From an operational standpoint, a protection risk identified or monitored by Protection Clusters refers to the intensity and damage or harm resulting from a human activity or a product of human activity affecting an individual or group of individuals. The harm may negatively affect the physical or mental integrity of people, their material safety and/or violate their rights. The human activity may be a direct act, measure, or policy, but it may also include situations of inaction by duty-bearers.

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC), together with the Areas of Responsibility (AoRs), developed a consolidated list of **15 Protection Risks** based on the **Protection Analytical Framework** (PAF). The list includes standard definitions for the Protection Clusters to provide a coherent and consistent outlook of protection risks across operations. The below is the full list of protection risks as defined by the GPC:

1. Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention	2. Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects	3. Child and forced family separation	4. Child, early or forced marriage	5. Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access
6. Disinformation and denial of access to information	7. Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups	8. Gender-based violence	9. Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice	10. Presence of Mine and other explosive ordnance
11. Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress	12. Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property	13. Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment	14. Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices	15. Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement

MONITORING OF PROTECTION RISKS IN SOUTH SUDAN

The Protection Cluster in South Sudan monitors the 15 protection risks and assigns severities on a scale of 1 to 5 (minimal to catastrophic) based on **JIAF 2.0** severity scale description for protection showcased below:

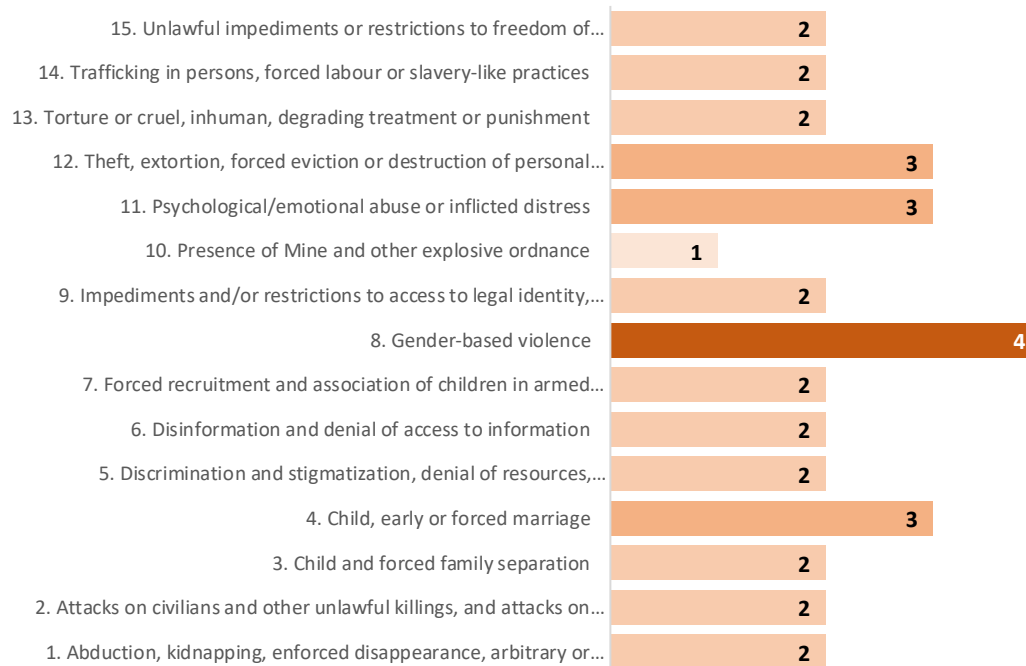
Severity 1 - Minimal	Severity 2 - Stressed	Severity 3 - Severe	Severity 4 - Extreme	Severity 5 - Catastrophic
More than 90% of the population (disaggregated by age and gender) in the area are living in safety, dignity and cannot enjoy their rights without either physical or psychological threat, violence, deprivation, denial of access, or discrimination.	Between 10-20% of the population (disaggregated by age and gender) in the area are not living in safety, dignity and cannot enjoy their rights without either physical or psychological threat, violence, deprivation, denial of access, or discrimination.	Between 21-40% of the population (disaggregated by age and gender) in the area are not living in safety, dignity and cannot enjoy their rights without either physical or psychological threat, violence, deprivation, denial of access, or discrimination. AND EITHER: National services to claim population's rights are established and granted access without discrimination. Humanitarian assistance is limited to support the existing structures to accomplish their mandates and objectives. OR	Between 41 - 50% of the population (disaggregated by age and gender) in the area are not living in safety, dignity and cannot enjoy their rights without either physical or psychological threat, violence, deprivation, denial of access, or discrimination. AND EITHER: National services to claim population's rights are established but deficient/non-functional Humanitarian assistance needs to play an active role in the area and is granted access without discrimination. OR	More than 50% of the population (disaggregated by age and gender) in the area are not living in safety, dignity and cannot enjoy their rights without either physical or psychological threat, violence, deprivation, denial of access, or discrimination. AND EITHER: National services to claim population's rights are not established/non-functional/carrying out discrimination policies. Humanitarian assistance has limited/no presence and impact and cannot be granted access without discrimination. OR

		Access to the area is granted or mostly granted, allowing assistance to reach the population based on needs and without discrimination.	Access to the area is granted in some areas, allowing assistance to reach the population based on needs and without discrimination.	Access is extremely or completely limited to the area and access to the population based on needs and without discrimination is extremely limited or unfeasible.
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The assessment is informed by the collective analyses carried out by each Protection Cluster sub-national (state-level) coordination mechanism, that include AoRs, key operational partners and relevant stakeholders conducting a collective periodical review of the context and risks and jointly agreeing on the severity of each of the 15 standard protection risks at county level and for each of the affected population group (Host Communities, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and Returnees).

OVERALL PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT

Based on information and severity assessments compiled by PC state-level coordination mechanisms and AoRs the below is the severity of the 15 Protection Risks in South Sudan.



Gender-based violence (GBV) is the protection risk with the highest severity (extreme) at national level, either as a physical occurrence lacking safe and dignified address or lacking institutional response and mitigation.

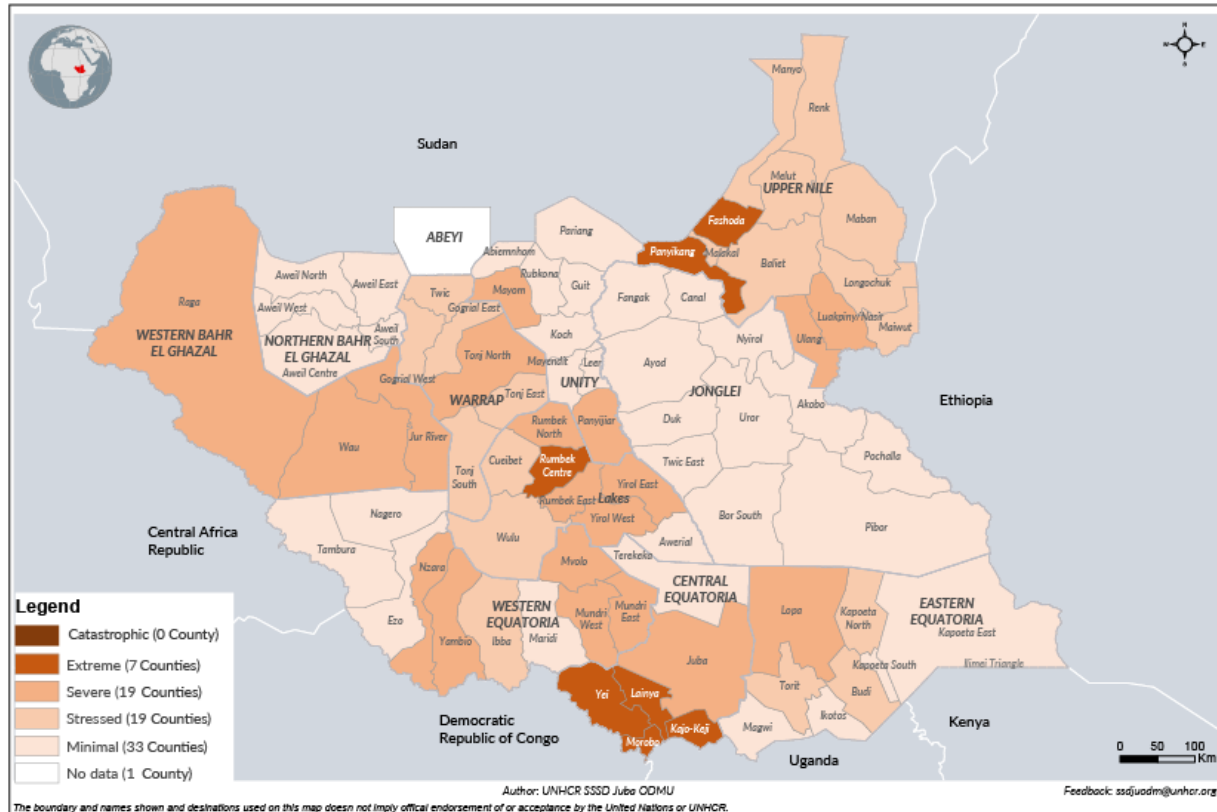
Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property, is a protection risk assessed as severe in South Sudan, often caused by inter-communal conflict or conflict involving non-state armed actors but also rooted in the country's overall lack of institutional mechanisms to address rights of tenure and access to justice.

Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress is also assessed as severe in the country. A decade of insecurities, rampant poverty including lack of food security, weak governance, corruption and heightened need for dignified and meaningful access to rights and justice continue to strain the South Sudanese population's mental health and trigger negative coping mechanisms.

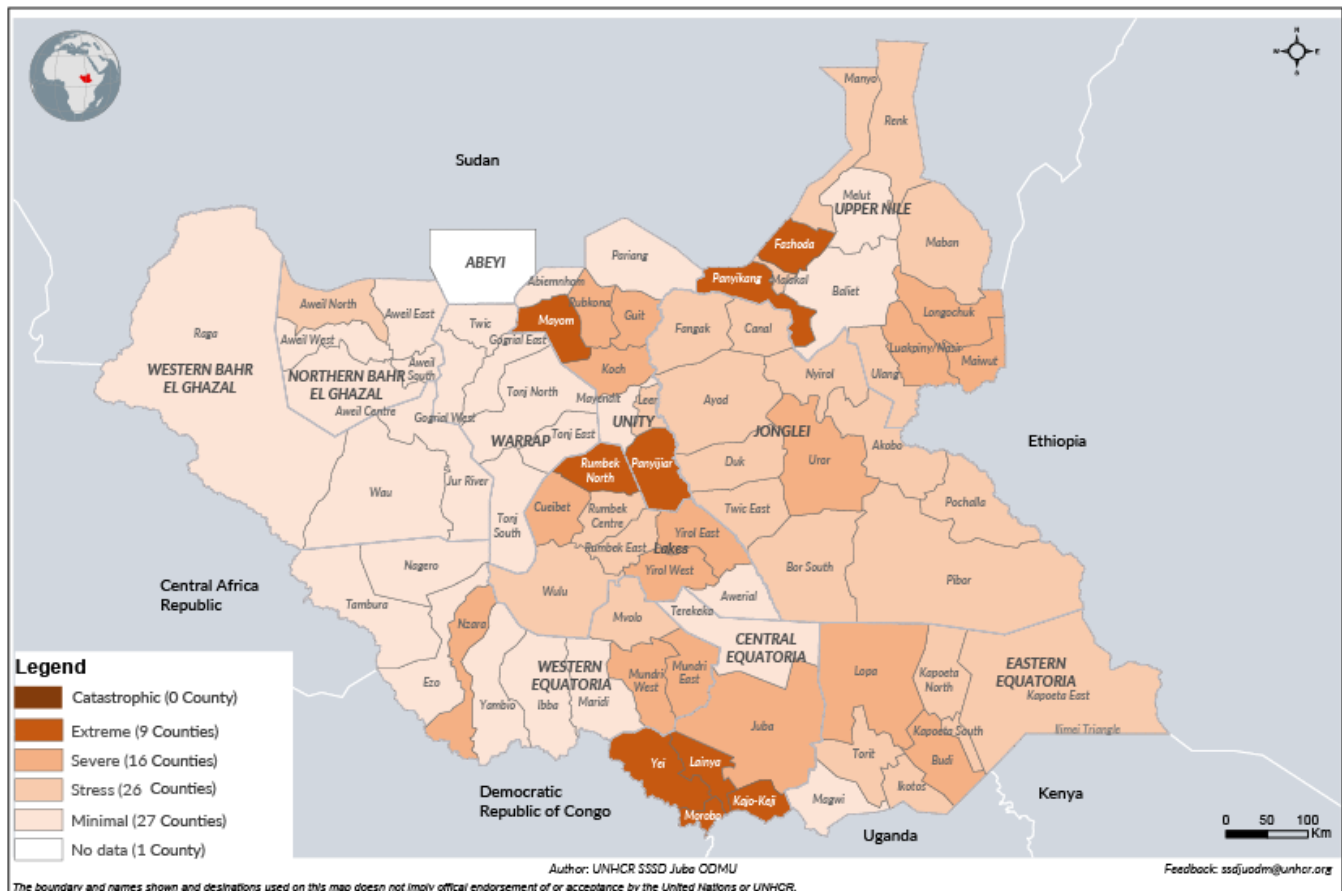
Child, early or forced marriage is a protection risk assessed as severe in the country. For the most part, the occurrence is related to lack of livelihood opportunities and cultural practices but also as a mitigating measure for GBV victims. While more research is needed for in-depth understanding of the root causes, lack of development engagement and governance are substantial drivers of this protection risk.

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT

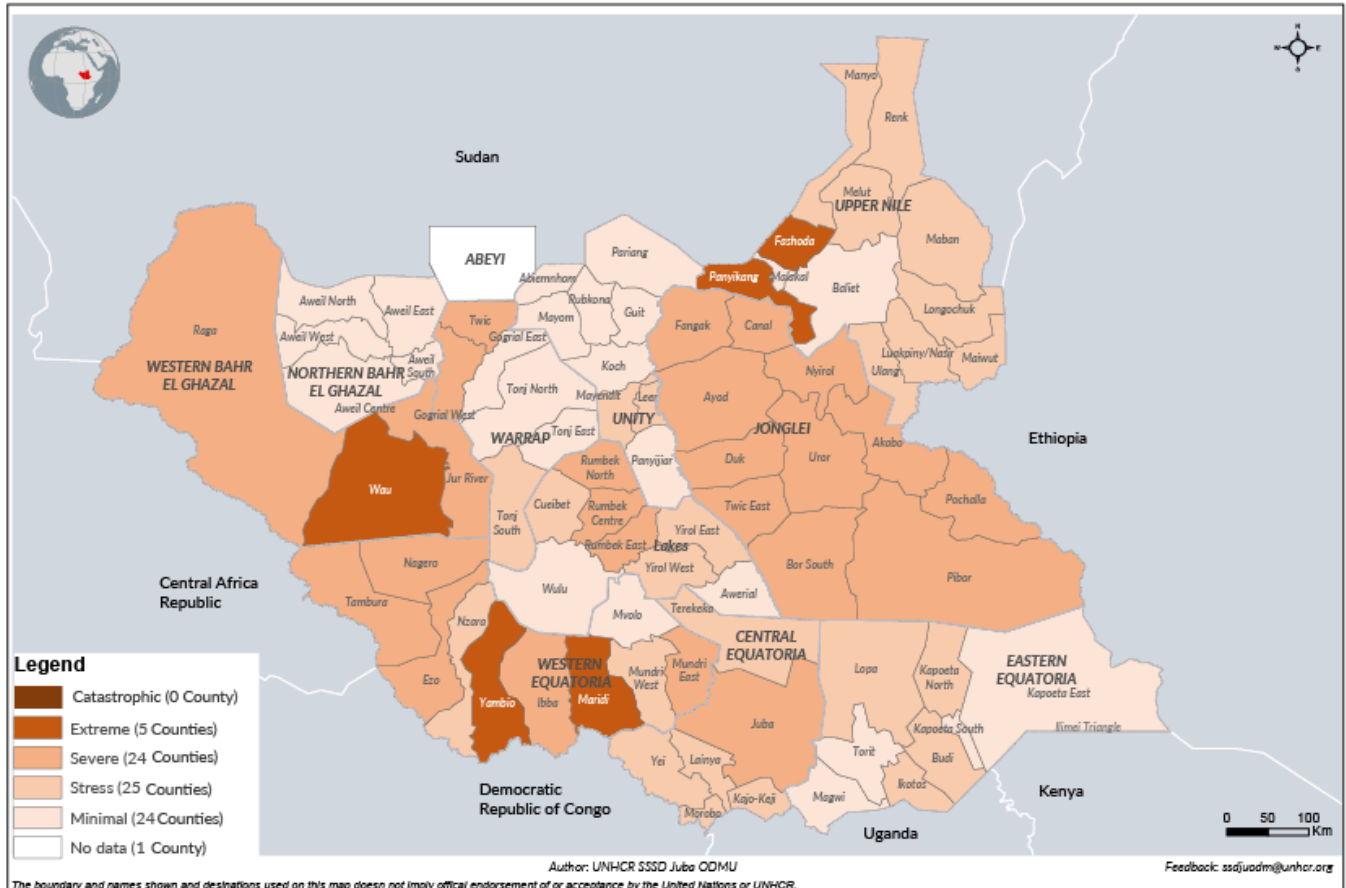
- Sub-national cluster coordination mechanisms and AoRs assessed the following counties to be **extremely** affected by **abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention**.
 - Kajo-keji, Lainya, Morobo and Yei in Central Equatoria.
 - Rumbek Centre in Lakes.
 - Fashoda and Panyikang in Upper Nile.



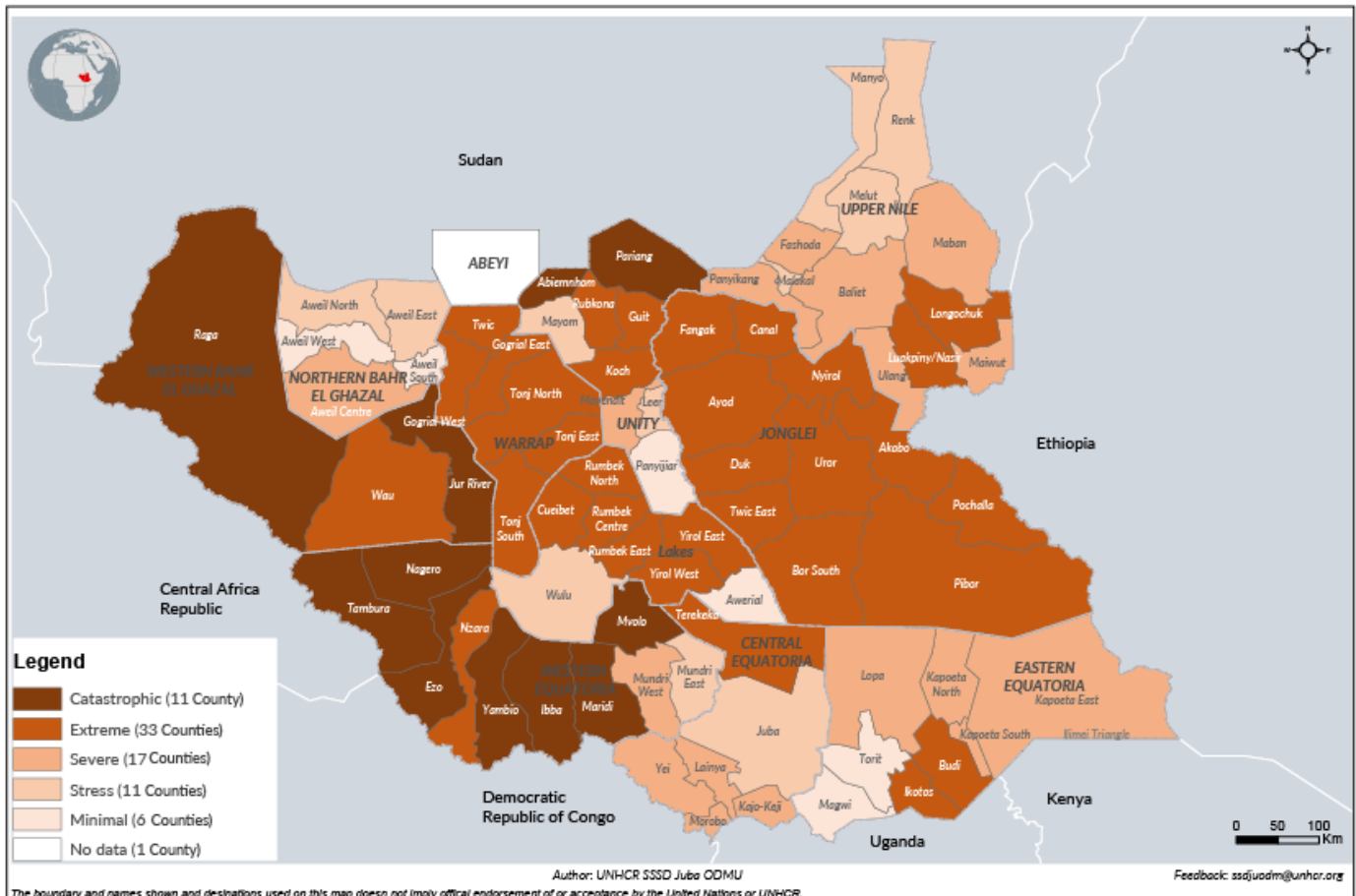
2. The following counties are assessed to be extremely affected by **attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects**.
- Kajo-keji, Lainya, Morobo and Yei in Central Equatoria.
 - Rumbek North in Lakes
 - Mayom and Panyijar in Unity
 - Fashoda and Panyikang in Upper Nile



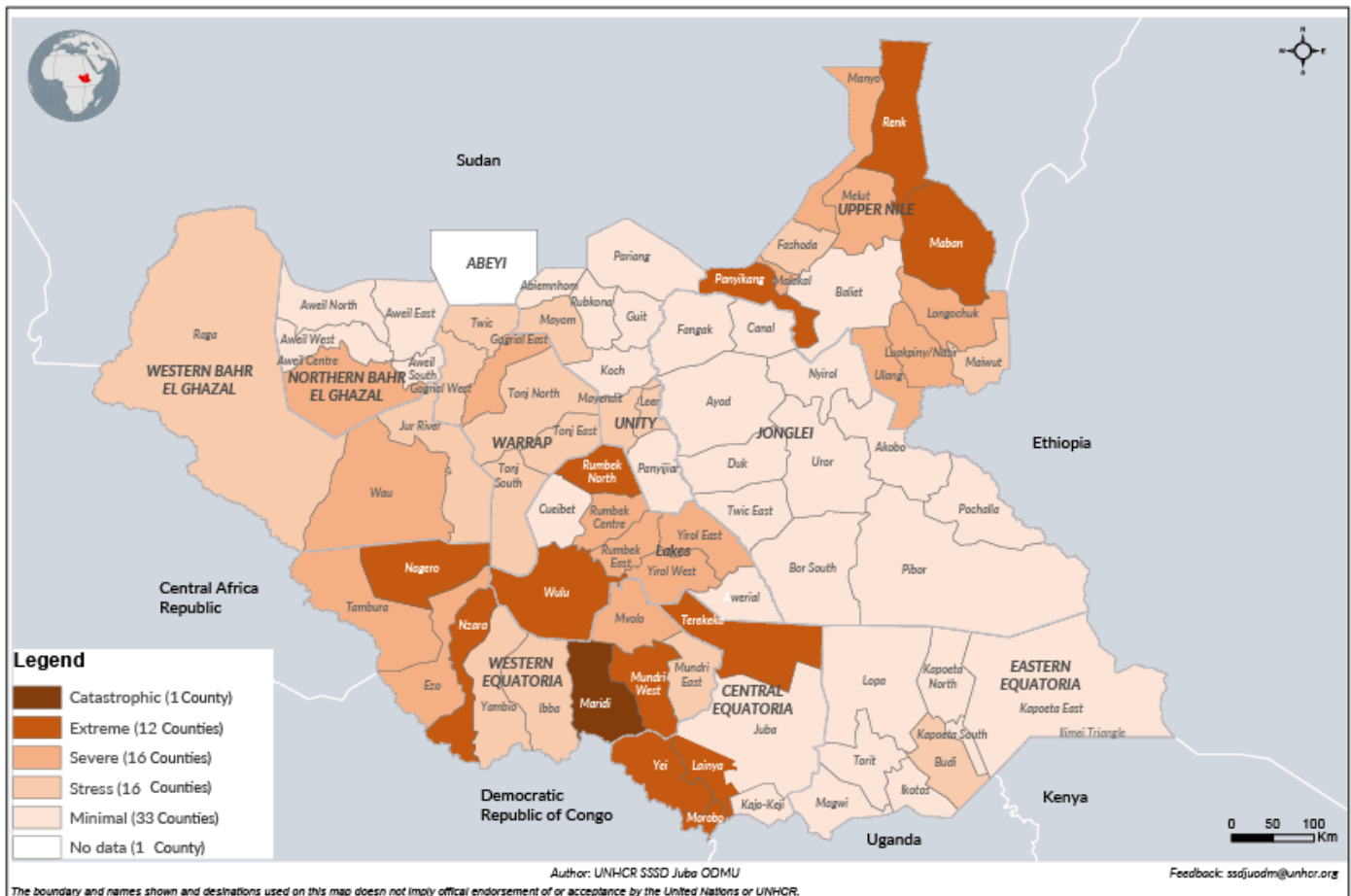
3. The following counties are assessed to be **extremely** affected by **child and forced family separation**.
- Fashoda and Panyikang in Upper Nile
 - Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal
 - Maridi and Yambio in Western Equatoria



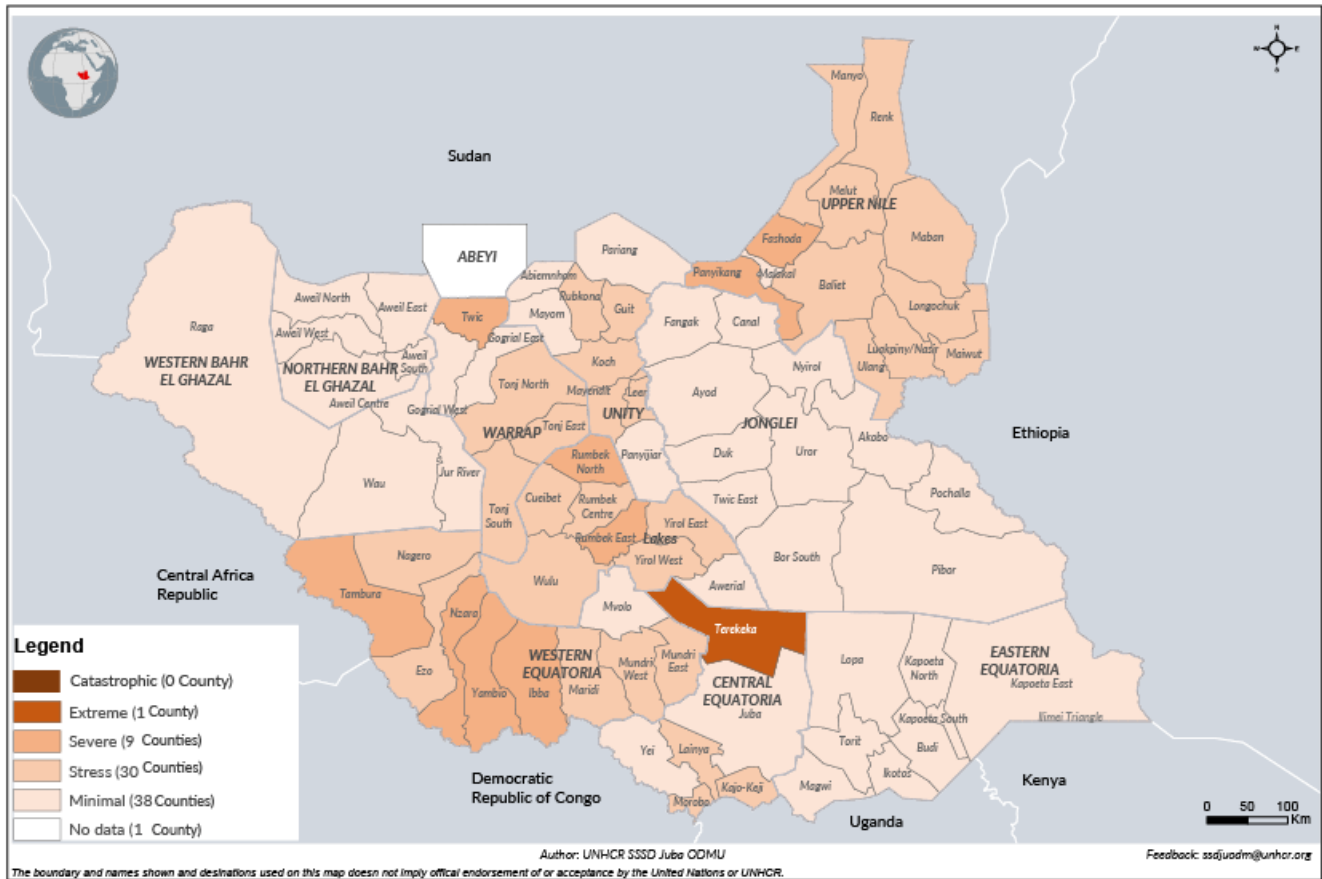
4. The following counties are assessed to be **catastrophically** affected by **child, early or forced marriage**.
- Abiemnjom and Pariang in Unity
 - Jur River and Raja in Western Bahr el Ghazal
 - Ezo, Ibba, Maridi, Mvolo, Nagero, Tambura and Yambio in Western Equatoria



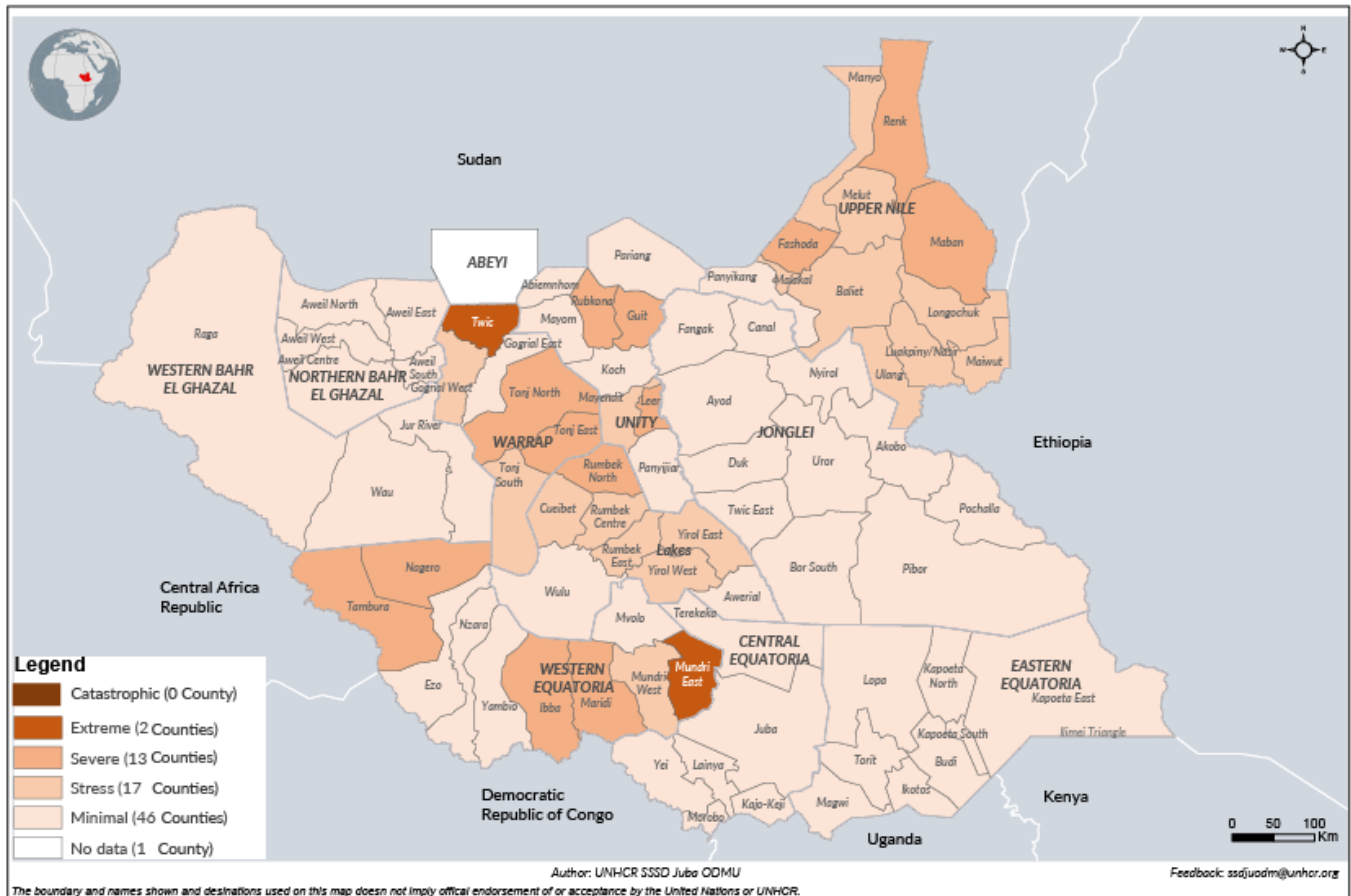
5. The following counties are assessed to be **extremely** or **catastrophically** affected by **discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access**.
- Kajo-keji, Lainya, Morobo and Terekeka in Central Equatoria
 - Rumbek East and Rumber North in Lakes
 - Luakpiny/Nasir, Melut and Panyikang in Upper Nile
 - Ibba, Mundri east, Mvolo and Nagero in Western Equatoria



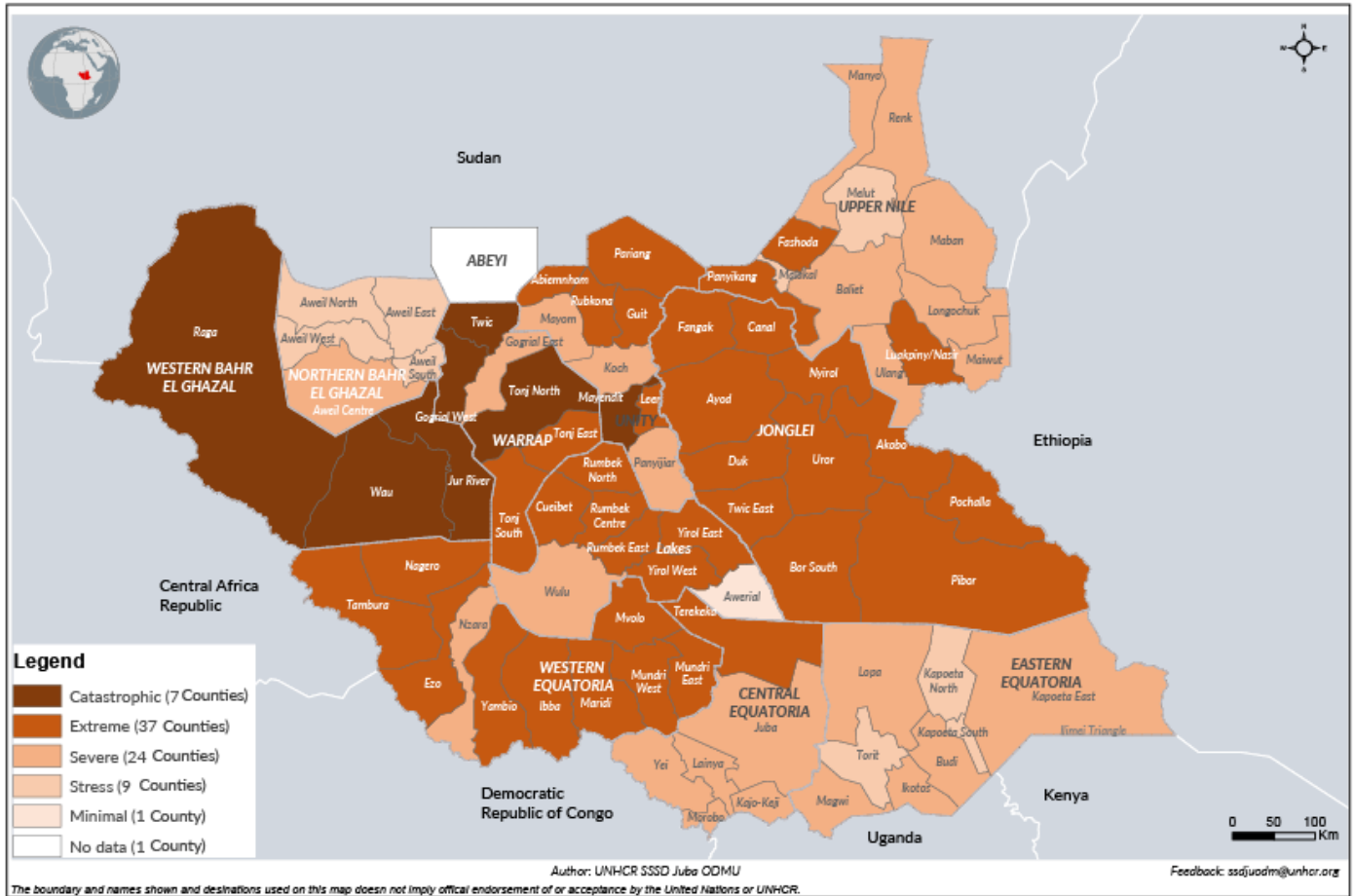
6. The county of Terekeka in Central Equatoria was assessed as county **extremely** affected by **disinformation and denial of access to information**.



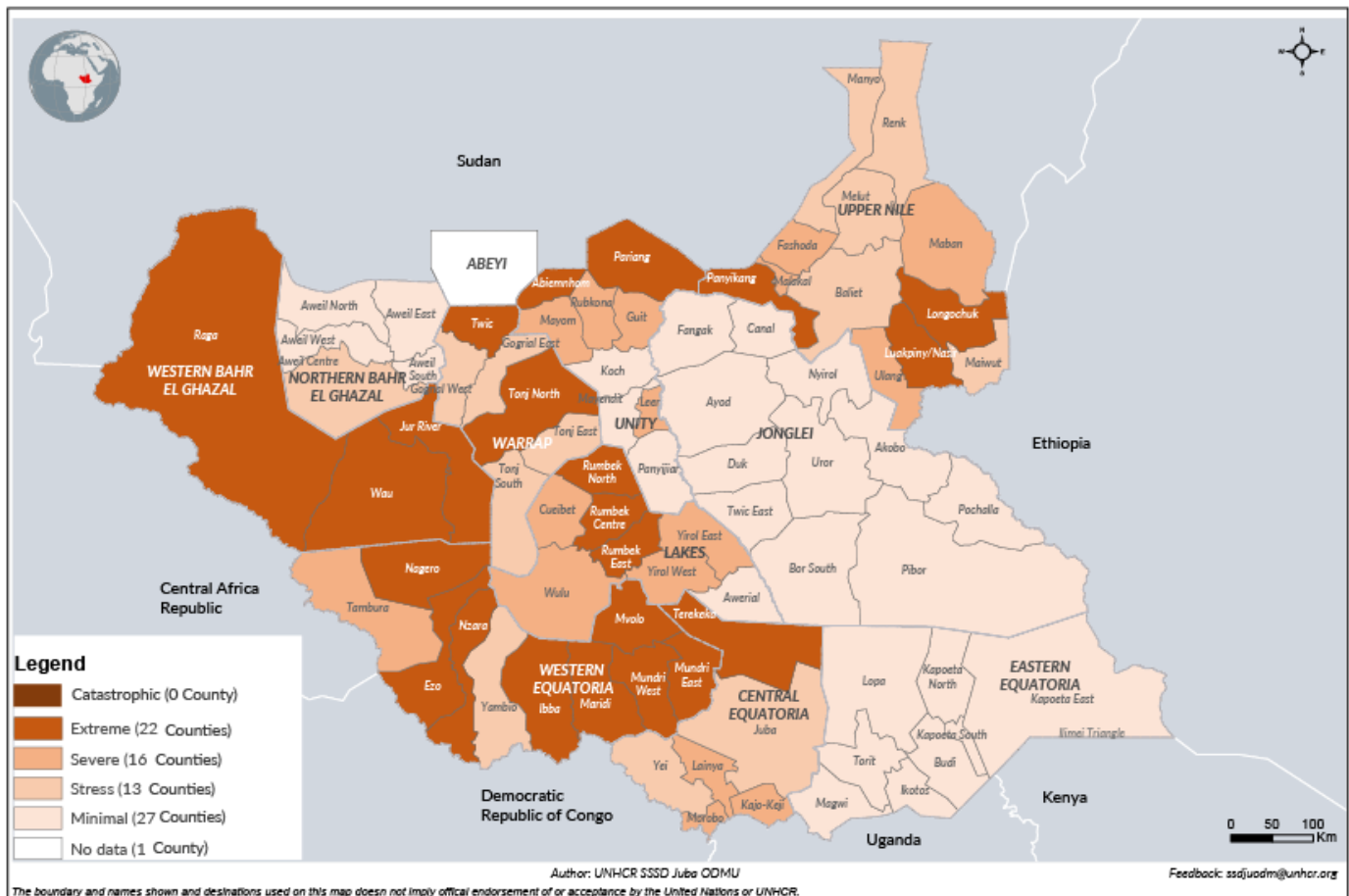
7. **Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups** was assessed to be at **extreme** level in the county of Twic in Warrap and county of Mundri East in Western Equatoria.



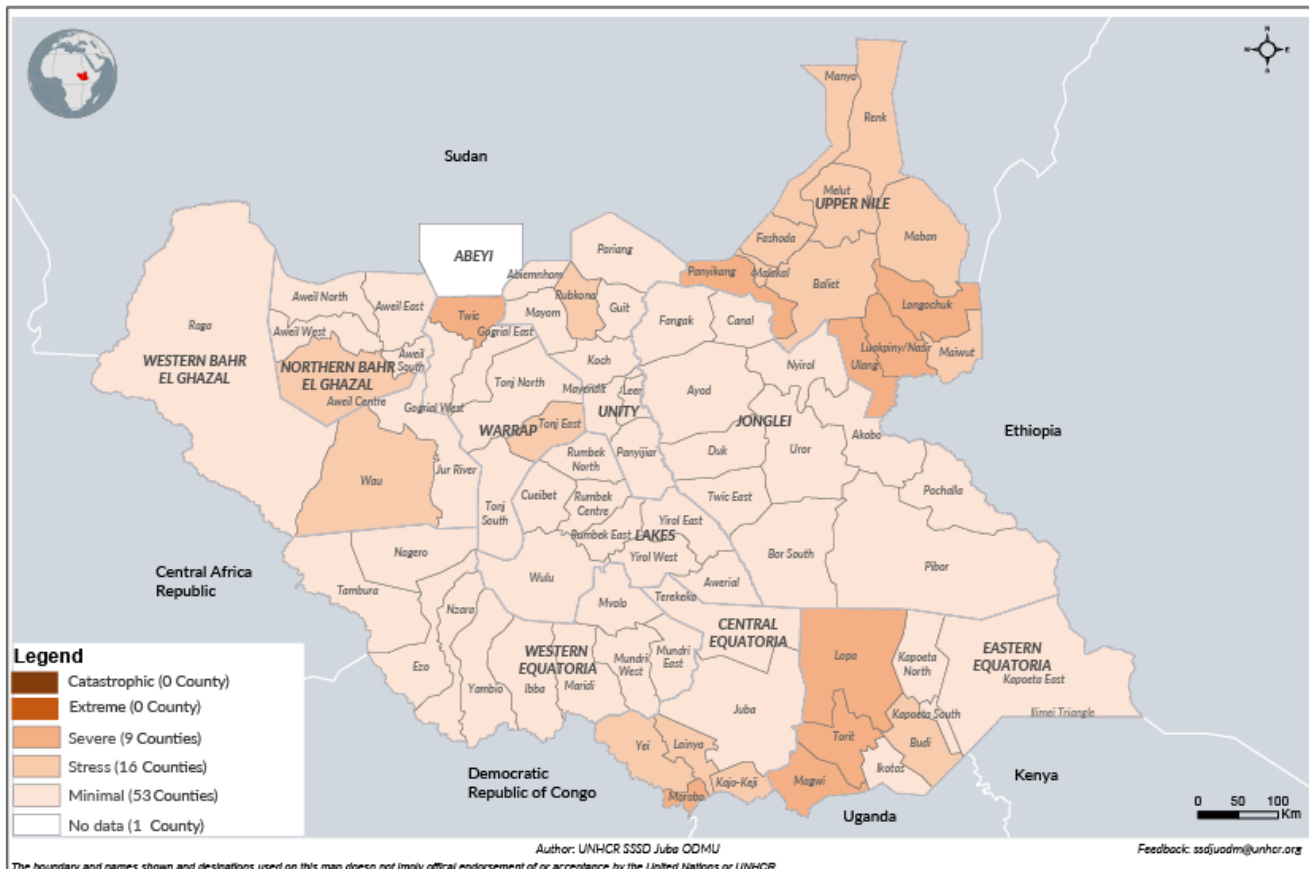
8. **Gender-based violence** was assessed to be at **catastrophic** level in the following areas.
- Mayendit in Unity
 - Gogrial West, Tonj North and Twic in Warrap
 - Jur River, Raja and Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal



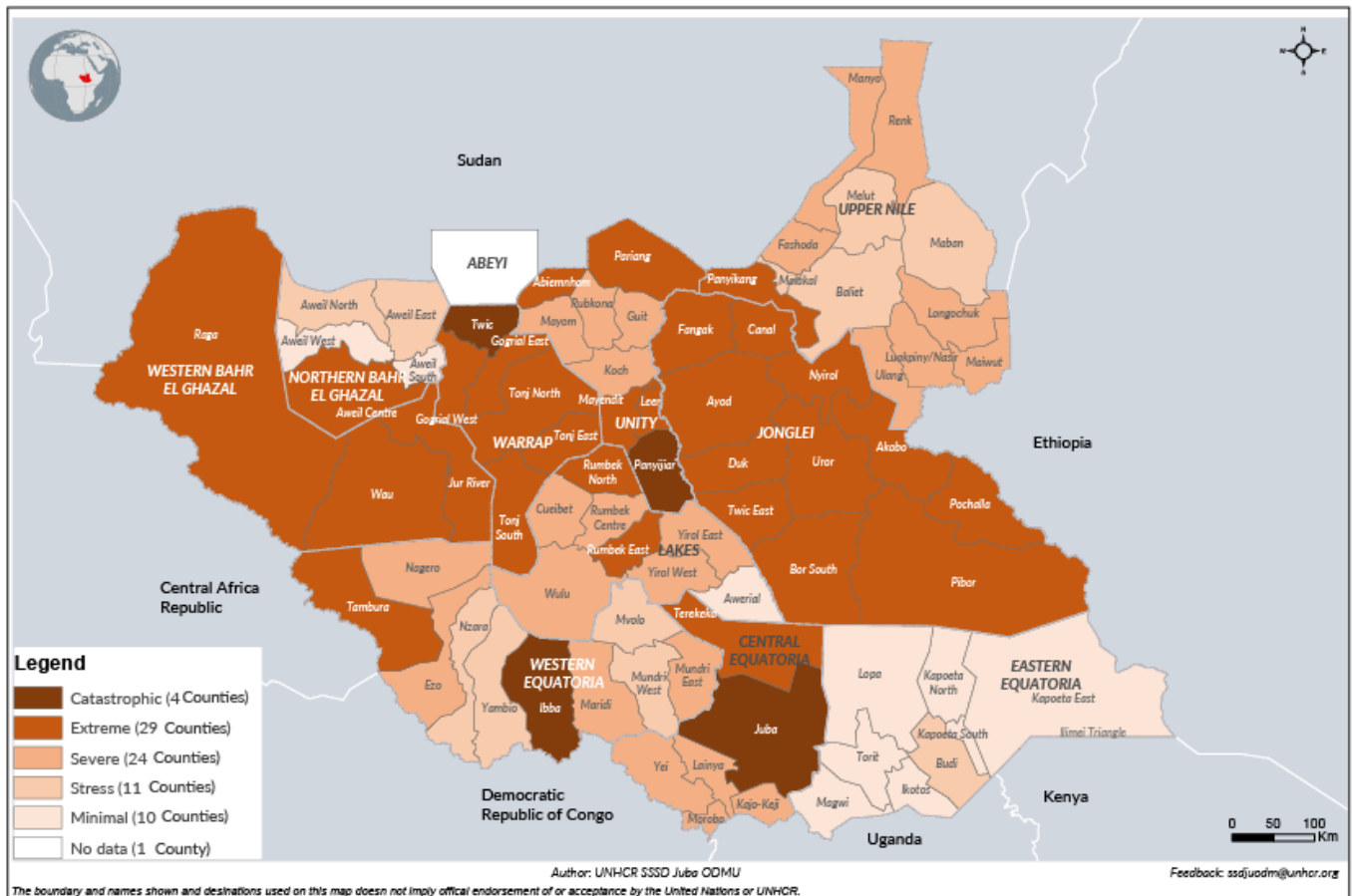
9. The risk of **impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice** was assessed to be **extreme** in the following areas.
- Terekeka in Central Equatoria
 - Rumbek Center, Rumber East and Rumbek North in Lakes
 - Abiemnohom and Pariang in Unity
 - Longochuk, Luakpin/Nasir and Panyikang in Upper Nile
 - Tonj Nort and Twic in Warrap
 - Jur River, Raja and Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal
 - The entirety of Western Equatoria



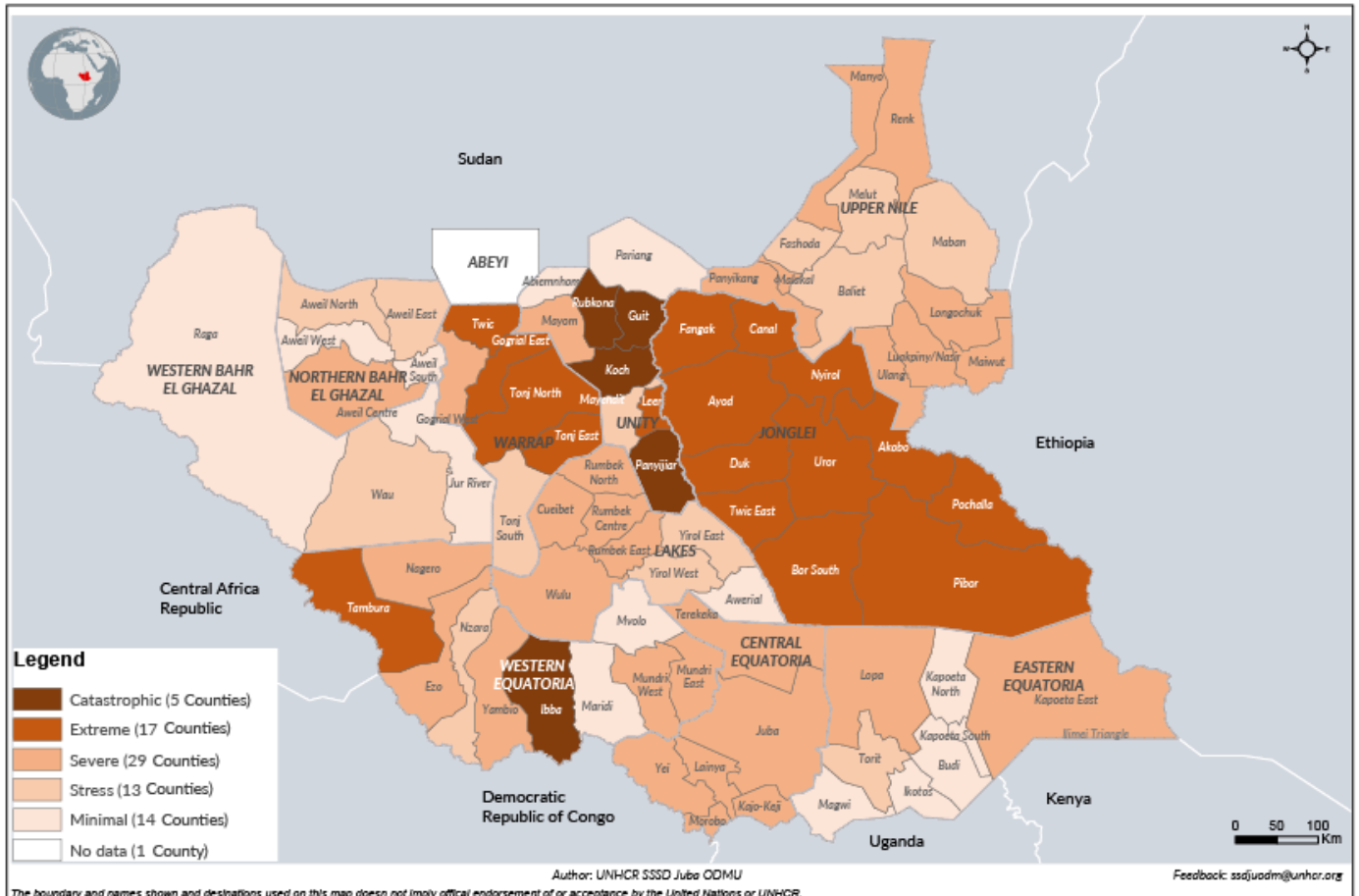
10. The risk from the **presence of Mine and other explosive ordnance** was assessed to be **severe** in the following areas.
- Morobo in Central Equatoria
 - Lafon, Magwi and Torit in Eastern Equatoria
 - Longchuk, Luakpiny/Nasir, Panyikang and Ulang in Upper Nile
 - Twic in Warrap



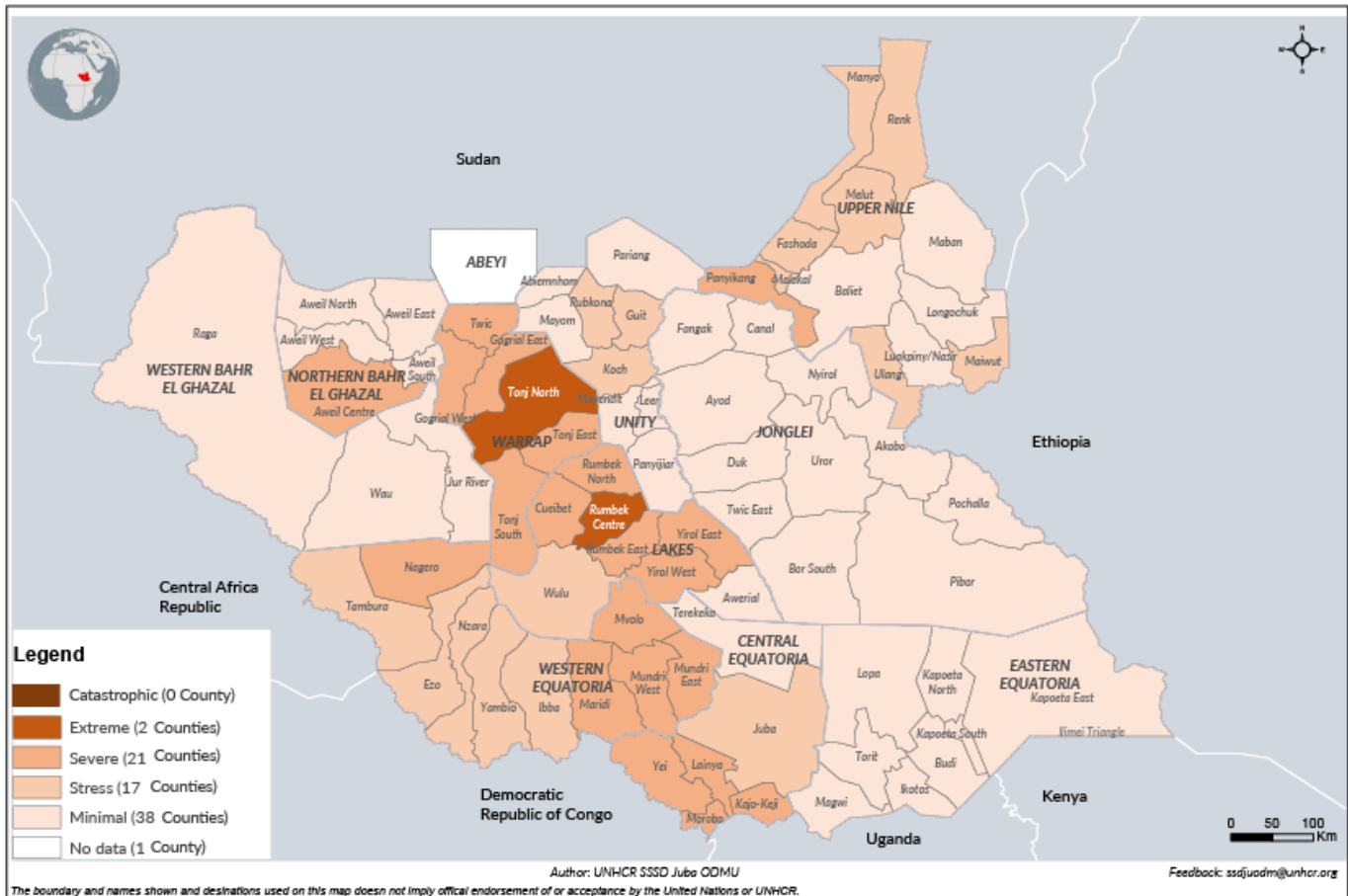
11. **Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress** was assessed to be at **extreme** level in the counties of Juba in Central Equatoria, Panyijar in Unity, Twic in Warrap and Ibba in Western Equatoria.



12. **Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property** was assessed to be at **catastrophic** level in the counties of Guit, Koch, Panyijiar and Rubkona in Unity and Ibba in Western Equatoria.



13. **Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment** was assessed to be at **extreme** level in Rumbek Center in Lakes and Tonj North in Warrap.



14. **Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices** was assessed to be at **catastrophic** level in Jonglei State.

