

South Kordofan State, Sudan

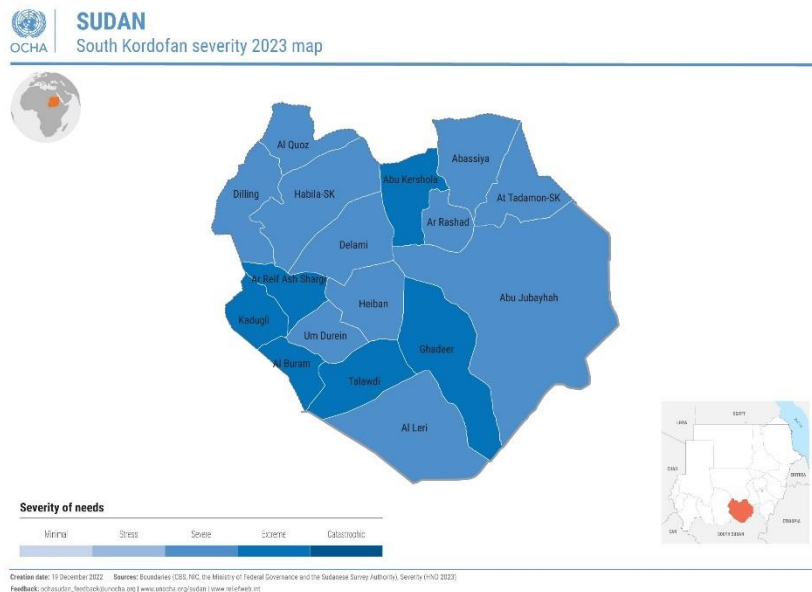


1. REPORT SUMMARY

Over 2022, the State of South Kordofan (and parts of West Kordofan) is experiencing multi-causal shocks, including increased criminality, economic degradation, flooding, political instability, generalised violence, displacement and protracted armed conflict. The ending of the unilateral ceasefire between SPLM-N Al Hilu and the Government of Sudan on 31 December 2021 and the continued impacts of the 25 October 2021 military coup are factors which have contributed to increased risks to civilians across the State, including for IDPs, returnees, refugees and host communities. The State hosts over 250,000 IDPs and another 129,960 IDP Returnees, while an unknown number of IDPs and returnees reside in SPLM-N-controlled areas.

Unfortunately, humanitarian partners, protection in particular did not have regular access to most of the affected localities. Therefore, protection partners participated in the interagency needs assessment missions, conducted protection monitoring by presence and remotely, discussed identified protection concerns at the PWG and other sectoral meetings, assisted the most vulnerable individuals through ongoing projects, referrals, advocacy and follow up with the local authorities. Protection Sector also advocated for creation of a state level Protection of Civilians Committee. However, this recommendation is not yet considered by the national and state level authorities.

This Protection Analysis Update explores the protection environment from June 2022. The main protection risks include attacks on civilians, conflict and forced displacement; impediments and restrictions to access resources, opportunities, services, documentation and justice; explosive remnants of war; gender-based violence; and child protection.



Methodology

The Protection Analytical Framework guides this Protection Analysis Update. This update was developed through a desk review of primary and secondary data from assessments, 2020 HRP Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, protection of civilians advocacy briefs, flash updates, sector analysis, protection monitoring reports and academic research.

Limitations

Humanitarian access issues create informational and data gaps on protection concerns. Humanitarian actors have yet to have consistent access to 16 hotspot localities of South Kordofan and four localities of West Kordofan state. Key information gaps include the consequences of missing civil documentation and information on housing, land and property issues at the community level as well as issuance of early

The protection environment is further impacted due to the low capacity of State Authorities and the large-scale presence of armed groups.



warning messages, protection of civilians advocacy briefs and flash updates.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

People in Need

According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Round five, South Kordofan hosts 245,353 internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹ Of the 245,353 IDPs, 46,680 were displaced in 2021. Most IDPs were displaced between 2011-2017 due to fighting between government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). IDPs primarily reside with host communities. DTM also reports that there are 129,960 permanent IDP Returnees in the state.

On October 10, recent tension in Lagawa locality and Lagawa town of West Kordofan escalated to tribal conflict between Misseriya and Nuba tribe members after a land ownership dispute at Jangaro village, approximately three kilometres east of Lagawa town. The conflict caused the displacement of over 65,000 people, according to the inter-agency assessment conducted in October and November 2022. In South Kordofan, Kadugli hosts 7,789 IDPs, while Dilling locality has another 3,528 individuals. Another 2,197 individuals fled to El Fula, 7 328 individuals to Keilak and 20,613 within Lagawa localities in West Kordofan state and 23,950 individuals, mainly Nuba tribe members, displaced to the SPLM-N controlled areas.

¹ [Sudan — Mobility Tracking - Round Five | Displacement \(iom.int\)](#)

² Reportedly, Al Buram; Umm Durein; Huiban (covering Kauda areas as well) are under the full control of SPLM-N; Dellami, Kadugli, Habila; Dilling and Abassiya localities of South Kordofan and Al Sunut and Lagawa localities of

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Protection Environment, Security Situation and Access

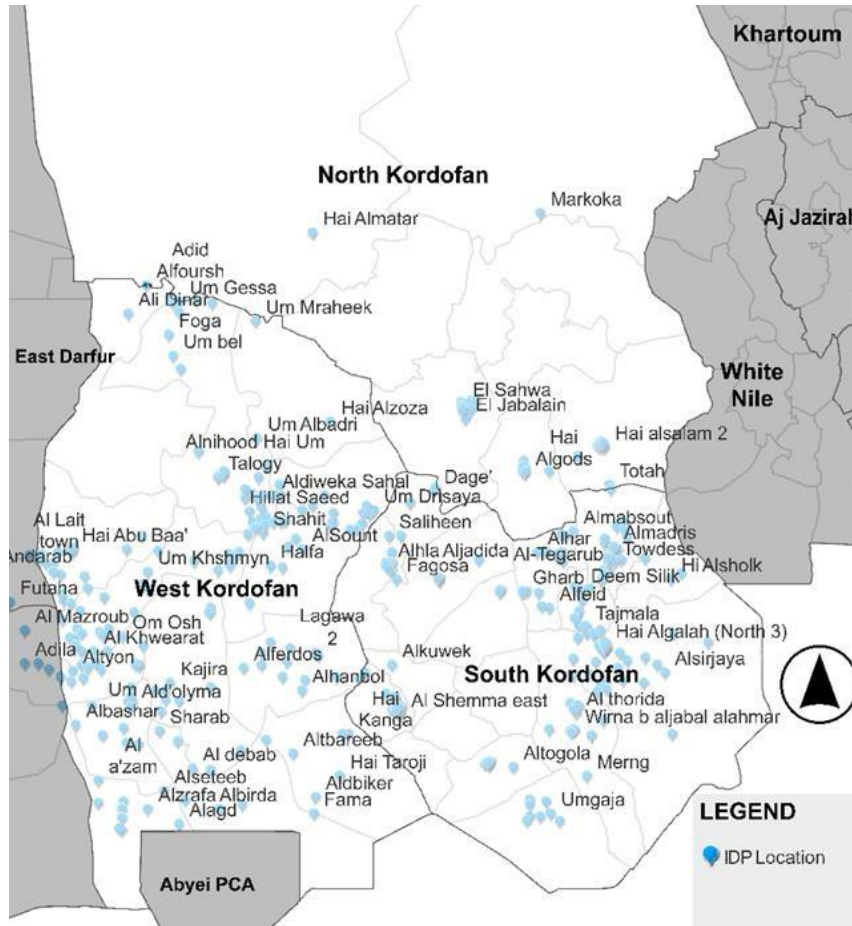
South Kordofan state has been the site of armed conflict between the Government of Sudan and SPLM-AI Hilu for over a decade. The latter controls a multitude of localities in the state. SPLM-N split into two factions in 2017, those aligning with Malik Agar and those who follow Abdelaziz Al Hilu. Since their split, the factions also clash in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. SPLM-N -AI Hilu have yet to participate in the Juba peace process, but they did sign in 2021 a "declaration of principles" with the government of Sudan. The document outlines priorities, including the unification of armed forces and the right to freedom of religion. However, the legal status of these Principles is unclear.

After the 25 October 2021 military take-over, the SPLM-N Al Hilu faction indicated its rejection of the military-led Government, committed support to the Resistance Committees and refused to renew its unilateral ceasefire with the government of Sudan, which expired on 31 Dec 2021. Currently, only three out of the 17 localities in South Kordofan are fully accessible to humanitarian actors, which reduces the space for the Protection Sector to implement activities.² It is currently not possible for aid organisations based in Sudan to independently assess the needs of people in SPLM-N-controlled areas. There is limited freedom of movement between SPLM-N and Government controlled areas except for peace markets, where SPLM-N and Government allow people from both controlled regions to trade and purchase commodities. The widespread presence of explosive ordinances also restricts humanitarian access.

West Kordofan are partially controlled by GoS and SPLM-N. The later localities are also contaminated by the presence of land mines, UXOs and presence of armed individuals and groups.

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elements among the civilian populations. These armed elements are tribal-based, and they use force to solve disputes. Predictably, there is an overall absence of the rule of law and access to justice.

At the micro-level, inter-tribal conflicts in South Kordofan are often fueled by competition over resources such as water, land, gold mines and energy. The gold mines are particularly lucrative. Competition over control of this resource across Sudan involves actors with political and economic ambitions beyond South Kordofan. Moreover, Inter-tribal conflicts affecting the State are not insular. At the Macro-level, the political insecurity in Khartoum intensifies competition in the peripheries, while the Juba Peace Agreement has shifted the balance of power in Khartoum and elsewhere.³

Safety and security remain critical concerns for IDPs and returnees in South Kordofan. The Protection Sector defines hotspots as areas that experience recurrent incidents of intercommunal violence and factional fighting and have armed elements, UXOs and landmines. These factors create an environment with more potential for violence and conflict. In South Kordofan, there are 37 hot spot areas located in 9 localities: Habila, Abu Kershola, Al Leri, Al Rashad, Dilling, Ghadeer, Heiban, Abu Jubayhah and Abassiya. Either state or non-state actors wholly or partially control these localities. Localities such as Heiban, Umm Durein and Al Buram are entirely controlled by SPLMN-Al Hilu and are believed to be contaminated by the presence of land mines and UXOs.

The limited presence of Police and other Government law enforcement agencies in IDP locations has also contributed to the proliferation of small weapons in the communities and increased the presence of armed

³ [The spoilers of Darfur - German Institute for International and Security Affairs \(SWP\) \(swp-berlin.org\)](https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/the-spoilers-of-darfur)



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3. PRIORITY PROTECTION RISKS

1- Attacks on Civilians, other unlawful killings and attacks on civilian infrastructure⁴

The Protection Sector has recorded approximately 110 Protection incidents in South Kordofan during 2022. These include the 55 attacks against civilians, abduction of civilians and enforced disappearance during armed conflict. These incidents have resulted in the killing of at least 114 individuals and injuries to 82 individuals.

Competition over resources, especially how land should be allocated and used, remain a crucial driver of conflict in South Kordofan.⁵ These tensions often fall upon tribal lines. For instance, in Abu Kershola locality, recurrent clashes between Arab tribes and farmers during farming and harvest season results in attacks on civilians and death. The armament of tribes also contributes to continued land conflicts, as conflicts are often resolved through violent force instead of mediation. Political affiliation also fuels tribal conflict between tribes associated with SPLM-N, primarily “African” tribes and those tribes related to the previous regime. The fall of Bashir’s government has facilitated changes in the political allegiances of his former allies, some connecting with the SPLM/A-N. However, the Hawazma community, notably, have continued their political opposition to SPLM-N. They have concerns over potentially being left out of the political processes and thus have come into conflict with the Nuba, Kenana, Kawahla and Longon since 2019.⁶

⁴ This section also covers risks related to unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement

⁵ [RVI 2022.03.30 Sudan Rapid Response 3 Two Areas.pdf \(riftvalley.net\)](#)

⁶ [RVI 2022.03.30 Sudan Rapid Response 3 Two Areas.pdf \(riftvalley.net\)](#)

⁷ [Sudan: Conflict in Abu Jubayhah locality, South Kordofan. Flash Update, No. 01 \(14 June 2022\) \[EN/AR\] - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

When conflict erupts, and civilians are attacked, often the villages are burned and property looted. Those displaced are often unable or unwilling to return to their area of origin because their areas of origin remain outside of government control. The consequences of these attacks on civilians and conflict have resulted in multiple displacements of civilians within and around South Kordofan State. Conflict also results in the loss of property and livelihoods, given the reliance on goat, sheep and cattle production as a source of income in the state. The animals are either lost or stolen. Once displaced, there is a lack of physical protection for the IDPs and the host communities.

Following the robbery of a vehicle travelling to Al Daqj village on 5 June 2022, clashes between members from the Kenana and Hawazma tribes broke out in Abu Jubayhah locality along the eastern corridor of South Kordofan State. In retaliation, members of the Kenana tribe attacked Awlad Gabosh village near Abu Jubayhah Town.⁷ This escalated further with members of the Hawazma tribe burning down Daqj village. Consequently, an estimated 15,150 individuals from both tribes and other groups were displaced in the state, and 406 homes were burnt.⁸ According to IOM, at least 32 individuals were killed, and 57 individuals sustained injuries.⁹

To cope and prevent further property loss, the heads of households were reported to have returned to their locations of origin to guard their homes in Abu Jubayhah locality during the night. They would return to

⁸ [Intercommunal conflict – Abu Jubayhah, eastern corridor of South Kordofan State Rapid Needs Assessment | Assessment & Analysis Knowledge Management Platform \(hpc.tools\)](#)

⁹ [IOM Sudan - Displacement Tracking Matrix, Emergency Event Tracking: Abu Jubayhah \(Abu Jubayhah Town\), South Kordofan: 20 June 2022 - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)



their displaced families during the day.¹⁰ Later in 2022, leaders of the Kenana and the Hawazma tribes signed an agreement of peaceful coexistence. Despite the peace agreement between the two tribes, their internal communal conflicts are still recurrent, which deters the displaced population from returning to their area of origin.

South Kordofan also hosts IDPs from recent clashes in West Kordofan. On October 10, in Lagawa locality of West Kordofan, tensions escalated between Misseriya and Nuba tribe members after a land ownership dispute at Jangaro village. According to IOM DTM, the conflict displaced 20,884 civilians (3,449 households), of which 29% are in Kadugli, and 15% are in Dilling locality in South Kordofan.¹¹ All of the IDPs in Dilling said they intended to travel onward as they did not feel comfortable and safe. Many have expressed interest in going to North Kordofan. In Kadugli, many expressed to humanitarian actors that they intended to stay put until the end of the conflict. However, some mentioned that bad conditions, including limited access to basic services, could cause them to leave. Finally, a few said they would return home, one of whom explained that she had no choice because she was running out of money and the support provided was minimal. Many IDPs mentioned their need for medicine and safer places to live, especially those living adjacent to the Kadugli bus station.

For the protracted displaced population, the long-term displacement has eroded coping mechanisms, significantly weakened resilience, and heightened vulnerabilities leading to worsening coping mechanisms in

¹⁰ [IOM Sudan - Displacement Tracking Matrix, Emergency Event Tracking: Abu Jubayhah \(Abu Jubayhah Town\), South Kordofan: 20 June 2022 - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

¹¹ [Sudan - Emergency Event Tracking Report - Al Lagowa \(Al Lagowa Town\), West Kordofan \(Update 002\) | DTM \(iom.int\)](#)

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South Kordofan. On top of this, protracted IDP caseloads risk secondary displacement due to conflict and flooding.

2- Impediments and or restrictions to access to documentation, remedies and justice

The limited humanitarian access and access to basic services in the current locations of the displacement will impact IDP protection if not improved. New IDPs including displaced to SPLM-N controlled areas need to be absorbed into the existing services that are already under severe strain, their protection concerns, and the most vulnerable families/individuals identified and interventions made. Due to the Military Coup, the overall security situation became tense, major sources of international funds are gone and civil servants are not being paid on time. In May 2022, South Kordofan authorities stopped working in protest.¹² This created challenges for proper coordination with other line ministries to complete a rapid needs assessment in Abu Jubayhah in June 2022.¹³ Due to lack of regular access, conflict affected population in some localities even did not have access to food assistance for several months. Reportedly food items were also not available in the local market. This situation would not allow any efforts of the authorities to create structures and provide remedy.

There are significant gaps in health facilities within the state, mainly due to insecurity and occupation of land by the SPLM-N and lack of state investment in the health sector in South Kordofan. During the 2022

¹² [Sudan's trade union leaders predict increase in strikes | Radio Dabanga \(dabangasudan.org\)](#)

¹³ [Intercommunal conflict – Abu Jubayhah, eastern corridor of South Kordofan State Rapid Needs Assessment | Assessment & Analysis Knowledge Management Platform \(hpc.tools\)](#)

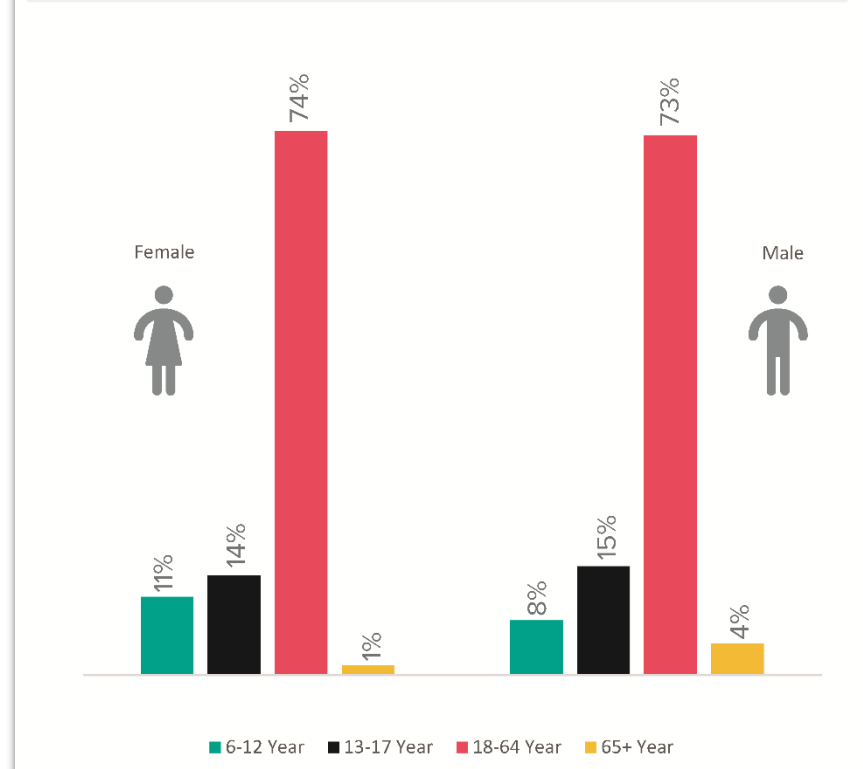
Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) led by IOM for the 2023 Humanitarian Programme Cycle, 90% of households reported barriers to obtaining healthcare. Some of the main reported reasons were: the cost of services and medicine being too high/cannot afford to pay, lack of drugs at the health facility, and overcrowded health facility. 29% of households reported that it would take over an hour by foot to reach health facilities.

Farming is the most common livelihood before displacement. Most IDPs do not have access to farmland in displacement areas. If they do have access, it is a risk for women. In Abu Kershola locality, women mentioned that they face threats and physical abuse in farming areas from some community members and occasionally members of armed groups. Furthermore, the limited presence of civil society, Government and UN agencies in the IDP hosting areas has negatively affected humanitarian response and provision of services.

The MSNA found in South Darfur that 46% of IDP HH reported that some members do not have at least one type of civil documentation at the time of data collection. 30% of households have housing, land and property issues reporting that rules and processes on housing and land are clear, the threat of eviction/harassment by landlords, inheritance issues and disputed ownership.

Incidents of violence, child labour and GBV are regularly reported, especially in the gold mining areas along the Eastern corridor. There is a high prevalence of child labour and exposure to exploitation and abuse due to increased vulnerability, ineffective assistance, and lack of social safety nets. During the MSNA, 14% of females and 15% of males between 13 and 17 years old in the households are contributing to an activity or work in return for an income. Furthermore, 10.65% of households reported that girls between the ages of 6-12 contributed or

Household members reported being involved in any work or activity in return for an income



worked in return for payment; for boys between the same ages, 7% of households reported this.

The most affected people by this conflict are women, children, girls, persons with disabilities and elderly persons and those with chronic sickness. According to the Education Director in Abu Kershola locality, the number of out-of-school IDP children is 915 (417 boys and 498 girls). School dropout is 3,067 (1850 boys and 1217 girls), as a result of



different reasons such as failure of families to pay school fees due to poor economic situations, lack of awareness about the importance of education, and many children are engaged in child labour to support their families as evidenced by the MSNA.

Economic degradation, lack of opportunity, and lack of basic services are coped with in various ways. These include onward movement, emigration from urban areas, and child labour. Onward movement is often motivated by a lack of livelihoods and security. Hyperinflation has caused civilians to move from urban to rural areas.

3- Presence of mines and other Explosive Ordnance

South Kordofan has the highest contamination rate with Explosive Ordnance (EO) in Sudan due to long-lasting armed conflicts. Explosive ordnance kills, inhibits the delivery of humanitarian aid, and prevents civilians' safe movement and access to services and resources. Therefore explosive ordnance blocks or delays recovery from conflict. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and children are most vulnerable to the threat posed by the presence of landmines and ERW.

In South Kordofan states, EOs continue threatening people's lives, including local populations, IDPs and Returnees. A total of 752 people were reported to be either killed or injured by EO, including one man injured in 2022 in South Kordofan state. About 246 locations remaining contaminated with the EOs covering an area of 28.7 million square meters in South Kordofan state are registered in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) and are awaiting survey and clearance operations. Ordinary people are moving between these

¹⁴ concerned child protection risks includes child, early or forced marriage, forced recruitment and recruitment of children in armed forces and groups,

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localities and peace markets operational in the border areas controlled by GoS and SPLM-N.

4- Child Protection risks¹⁴

In Abu Jubayhah, Abbassya and Al Rashad, community focal points and relevant authorities observed that IDP children had experienced various issues during displacement, including psychosocial distress, limited access to basic resources and a lack of a safe environment. They are also at risk of violent attacks and increased risk of exploitation, including child labour.

Adolescent girls and younger children, as well as girls with intellectual disabilities, are most at risk for sexual abuse. Long distances to fetch water and firewood exacerbate the threat to girls, and boys for sexual abuse and other CP violations, including abduction and trafficking.

Recently, from the assessment of the IDPs from Lagawa who settled in Kadugli and Dilling, there are no available child-friendly activities for children, and children are not engaged in any recreational activities. Coping mechanisms include early marriage and transactional sex of vulnerable children, especially in gold mining areas.

Many unaccompanied and separated children are exposed to labour exploitation by their caregivers in Sudan. The lack of food and other basic services raises this protection risk and the likelihood of exploitation of adult IDPs. Children who drop out of school often leads to negative coping mechanisms. Some children are not receiving care but are providing care to their families by begging, working, and

forced family and child separation, psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress



exposing them to drug abuse and theft. The latest and recent violence caused child and family separation. The situation of IDP children who are residing in SPLM-N controlled areas is not clear as the protection actors do not have access to these areas.

5- Gender based violence

Women and girls in South Kordofan have struggled with GBV since childhood, which is inherent to the community’s customs, traditions, and social norms. The positioning of men in power increases their ability later to exploit those norms.

Domestic violence is widespread. It remains invisible mainly because it lacks reporting mechanisms, data collection, policies, and programs. FGM is one of the most important customs and traditions still being practised on most girls when they are not even over seven years old (more in secrecy since the transitional Government outlawed it in 2020). Arab tribes in South Kordofan are famous for the “pharaonic” circumcision.

There is a generally poor understanding of GBV in South Kordofan, which contributes to the under-reporting of GBV cases. Reporting or talking about GBV is rare in the community. In general, it is considered a greater crime than the act of rape or abuse itself. Women are afraid to share their experiences because of social stigma. Women want to be spared stigmatisation; therefore, they don’t seek help (most don’t even know they can). Many women do not have information about sexual reproductive health, including contraception and the prevention of STDs. Also, in South Kordofan, there is no GBV-integrated service provision. GBV survivors can only go to Kadugli Hospital (in the capital) to receive health care in critical cases. Most women and girls cannot access health services independently as they don’t control their finances

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and need male family members and permission for mobility. Using (Form 8) for Rape cases exposes women to more risks as the service providers are unaware of the survivor-centred approach and GBV principles.

Most people are not informed/sensitised about them, especially in rural areas. The 2022 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment demonstrates this. It found that 60% of households were not aware of any services or programs available in their community for women and girls. Other families reported awareness raising on reducing exposure to violence against women (23%), counselling and group support services (17%), and 12% provision of menstrual hygiene management were the most reported available services. The last reported services were safety and security services (for example, by police) for women and girls that sustained violence was reported by only 1% of households, and only 4 % of households reported the existence of legal counselling and aid services for women and girls that sustained violence.

4. RESPONSE

The chart below provides some figures on provided assistance by all sectors to the IDPs and returnees in South Kordofan state:

South Kordofan/ localities	Overall PIN	Overall Target	Overall reached Q4
	897038	740554	821,014
Abassiya	77098	55072	55,213
Abu Jubayhah	106020	98017	103,756
Abu Kershola	72337	61580	46,053
Al Buram	59313	45989	0
Al Leri	35708	35613	51,906
Al Quoz	27727	11597	29,198



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Ar Rashad	31293	31125	56,809
Ar Reif Ash Shargi	22484	16944	46,716
At Tadamon - SK	22145	10033	16,526
Delami	32567	21413	63,330
Dilling	81003	62841	74,824
Ghadeer	23417	21878	33,892
Habila - SK	29190	21364	61,061
Heiban	84065	64090	0
Kadugli	124490	124490	148,410
Talawdi	36953	36953	33,148
Um Durein	31228	21555	173

As for the funding situation, the financial requirement for general protection and protection AoRs HRP 2022 was USD 161.9 million, however, only USD 27.7 million (17.1%) was provided for the whole country.¹⁵

Protection partners prioritised strengthening the protection environment through capacity building, including legal workshops and awareness-raising for communities. Partners established or supported community-based support structures and ensured linkages and integration within existing community-based structures, including in Abu Jubayhah, El Rashad, Kadugli, Al Kewuk, and Abu Kershola. Protection monitoring was a priority and linked to service provision at the individual, household and community levels. Partners also implemented community-based protection projects to promote peaceful coexistence between IDPs and host communities. A total of

53,593 individual IDPs and IDP returnees benefited from the interventions.

Since 2002, Mine Action has supported the release of 52 million square meters for productive use in South Kordofan state, including 53,269 square meters in 2022 as of September. About 27,448 mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), and 346,273 small arms ammunition have been destroyed in South Kordofan. The responses provided in 2022 so far include the deployment of four Multitask Teams (MTTs) and 1 Manual Clearance Team (MCT) to implement land release operations, including survey and clearance of EO-contaminated land in South Kordofan. In addition, 5 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) teams were deployed to raise awareness about the threat and to support the affected populations to mitigate the risk of EOs. The assistance was also provided to 30 victims of EOs in South Kordofan state. The GBV AOR has distributed dignity kits and sanitary pads, which improved survivors' access to GBV prevention and response services, establishing\updating the GBV referral Pathways and provisioned case management services to GBV survivors.

5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Protection Sector recommends the following actions:

- The Protection Sector also calls on the authorities in South Kordofan to prioritise the physical protection of the civilian population and ensure their continued access to food, livelihoods and essential services, including by providing humanitarian access, while taking appropriate measures to enable the safe return of IDPs.

¹⁵ <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1068/summary>



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- Government to take measures to secure population movement and humanitarian access, for instance, on Abu Jubayhah - El Leri - Talawdi road and Gadeer and Rashad localities.
- The Government should initiate immediate, impartial investigations into armed actors, including its paramilitaries, accused of injuring and killing civilians, destroying and looting civilian property, and other violations of IHL/IHRL.
- Where the Government has control in South Kordofan, they need to strengthen the rule of law and enable a protective environment by enhancing the capacity of Sudanese Police and other actors relevant to the delivery of justice to reduce criminality and address the culture of impunity, which is often a trigger for further larger-scale violence, remains critical.
- Mine Action actors must continue clearing lands from the EO contamination and raising awareness about mitigating the threat of the EOs in South Kordofan.
- Humanitarian actors, the Government and Donors need to prioritise specialised protection responses such as psychosocial support, legal assistance and replacement of civil documentation.
- Given the significant territorial control of SPLM-N Al-Hilu, the Sector urges cooperation between relevant parties to facilitate the issuance of civil documentation in these areas.