

South Sudan



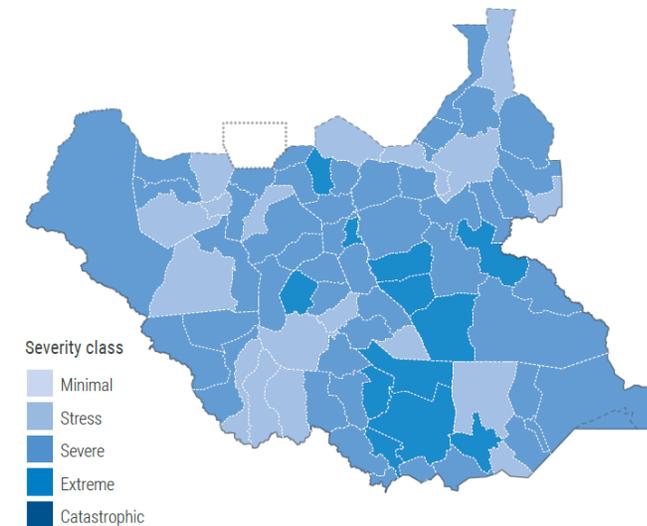
1. REPORT SUMMARY

The Protection Cluster in South Sudan with support of the Global Protection Cluster is presenting the Protection Analysis Update (PAU), which is intended to be a regular quarterly document. It follows a process, initiated by the Global Protection Cluster, being a part of the global Protection Analytical Framework (PAF), endorsed in April 2021. The objective of this report is to present an analysis of the protection situation in South Sudan in the first quarter of 2022, providing a snapshot of factors and situations, affecting the protection situation in South Sudan. It acknowledges the role of the Revitalized Peace Agreement and an earlier 2017 cessation of hostilities agreement in de-escalation of large-scale political violence and bringing most parties to the conflict into dialogue thus creating relative conditions for humanitarian, peace, and development actors to assist the people of South Sudan.

Recent conflicts in Tambura, Abyei, Unity State and other areas coupled with climatic shocks such as the unprecedented flooding in Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile states as well as the economic shocks resulting from Covid-19 have only served to reverse many of these gains and hampered efforts by humanitarian actors. However, successive analyses and reports continue to highlight intercommunal violence rising sharply over the past year and, in many cases, has been directly fuelled by national political actors as an extension of political tensions and disputes.

Concerns on serious human rights violations committed against civilian populations, including unlawful killings, attacks on civilians, gender and conflict-related sexual violence, limited access to basic services, and destruction/looting of humanitarian and civilian infrastructure, as witnessed in Unity state and the Abyei Administrative Area, continue to put in peril the safety, security, and livelihoods of displaced people. This

SEVERITY OF NEEDS



SEVERITY OF NEEDS



notwithstanding, recent affirmations by national authorities on their commitment to the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement

Protection actors working in the country estimate the severity of protection needs to be Extreme in nearly a quarter of the South Sudan Counties with over a half having severe needs and being vulnerable to further shocks.

for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) portends an opportunity for positive developments and institutional strengthening ahead of the planned 2023 national elections.

Methodology

This analysis has been developed by the Global Protection Cluster. The South Sudan Protection Cluster conducted a collaborative and

consultative process involving desk review of data and reports from various sources, such as Protection Monitoring reports, updates from child protection, GBV, mine action partners, as well as OHCHR reports, UNSC Resolutions, and Inter-agency multi-sectoral reports. Other sources are: UNMISS, OCHA Situation Reports, HNO/HRP, Famine Early Warning Systems data, UN Human Rights Council reports, World Bank's South Sudan Economic Monitor report and IGAD's ACAPS reports.

Limitations

The Protection Cluster set a challenging aim, introducing the PAU in South Sudan, as it's an extremely difficult task to identify the full scope and impact of protection risks, due to the challenges in conducting regular protection assessments. Access restrictions, insecurity, and rapidly changing protection dynamics hinder the capacity of human rights and humanitarian actors to fully monitor all risks and incidents. Thus, this report may not capture all the most recent events and trends in the first quarter of 2022.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

South Sudan's operational context remains challenging, with at least one-third of its population unable to return to their homes, in one of the largest displacement and humanitarian crises compounded by floods, cycles of violence, and the slow implementation of peace.¹

Whereas the R-ARCSS executed by parties to the conflict has resulted in a relative reduction of widespread conflict as well as a civil war that began in 2013 its slow implementation and attendant impediments

coupled with unprecedented floods and cycles of violence in several states have exacerbated political tensions and humanitarian needs.²

Nationally, the absence of attractive alternatives and the benefits of projecting an outward commitment to peace has preserved the peace agreement and created some space for incremental progress.³ The Transitional National Legislative Assembly was reconstituted in September 2021; the Public Financial Management Oversight Committee has brought some transparency to opaque public finances, and the training of some forces has been completed in anticipation of a unified national army.

The Peace agreement which came into effect on the 22nd of February 2020 with the establishment of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) has been noted in the Final Report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan, as "rather than breaking the violent cycle of elite political bargaining in South Sudan, has become part of it with almost every component of the peace agreement now hostage to the political calculations of the country's military and security elites, who use a combination of violence, misappropriated public resources and patronage to pursue their narrow interests".⁴ Progress made in implementing the R-ARCSS has been noted by the UN Panel of Experts as "largely procedural and bureaucratic."⁵

The threat of the peace process unravelling constantly looms since the signing off of the peace agreement, and the general environment is characterized by increasing intercommunal violence and attacks as recently witnessed in the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA), Unity State, Upper Nile as well as in Tambura in 2021 where at least 440 civilians

¹ <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2022/1/11/do-not-forget-aiding-and-protecting-civilians-in-south-sudan>

² The R-ARCSS agreement was signed between the government side - the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), the main opposition (South Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition – SPLM/A-IO), the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA), Former Detainees (FD), and Other Opposition Parties (OPP)

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2577 (2021)

⁵ *ibid.*

were killed, 18 injured, and 74 abducted during clashes between warring groups.⁶ A decade-long accruing of grievances after years of civil war intensified tensions among ethnic groups which, in a governance apparatus with weak control on local areas, are unpredictable and prone to quick escalations. The UN peacekeeping mission in the country (UNMISS), recently renewed for another year, has changed its approach to increasing security challenges.⁷ Large-scale camps meant to protect civilians have been replaced with a more flexible response, starting with scaling back personnel in fall 2020.

Years of conflict have generated a cycle of displacement, which contributes to fuelling local tensions and disputes. Approximately 2 million people are internally displaced (including 37,000 in PoC sites⁸), 1.78 million are returnees⁹ and 507,000 are spontaneous refugee returnees¹⁰. In addition, South Sudan hosts an estimated 336,000 refugees (mainly from the Republic of Sudan) and 4,360 asylum-seekers (mainly from Eritrea, Burundi, and Ethiopia)¹¹

Notwithstanding these challenges, the recent agreement between President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar, on the creation of a unified armed forces command is envisaged to positively contribute to a stabilization of the political landscape ahead of the elections planned in 2023. However, the fragmentation of opposition groups, combined with persistent ceasefire violations and widespread subnational violence, continues to undermine the core tenets of the peace agreement and may undermine efforts to address food insecurity, displacement, vulnerability to climate shocks, and lack of services and violence.

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/attacks-civilians-tambura-county-june-september-2021>

⁷ The Security Council adopted the resolution 2625 (2022), deciding that “UNMISS’s mandate is designed to advance the three-year strategic vision defined in resolution 2567 (2021) to prevent a return to civil war in South Sudan, to build durable peace at the local and national levels, and to support inclusive and accountable governance and free, fair, and peaceful elections in accordance with the Revitalised Agreement;”

⁸ As of September 2021

Instability and insecurity fuelled by ethnic rivalries

In South Sudan, instability fuelled by ethnic and inter-communal rivalries continues to be recorded. As noted by the UNSC, “fragmentation of national security and elite political competition has created fertile ground for intense subnational violence across much of the interior of South Sudan, including in Jonglei, Warrap, Western Equatoria and Unity States. While often framed as intercommunal and criminal, much of the violence was shaped by political contests at the local and national levels.” Even though their historic rivalry has shaped the political landscape, the interrelation amongst communities with the wide variety of other ethnic and linguistic groups and traditions in the countries is what fuels intercommunal and inter-tribal tensions and conflicts at the level of communities. Similarly, tensions over political representation and land rights between elite members of various communities continue to play out through sporadic violence and abuses.

Agro-pastoralism remains the main livelihood system in rural areas of the country, involving both livestock rearing and crop production, a household’s financial capital is held in the form of livestock. Moreover, traditional social support systems in South Sudan are based on livestock

⁹ DTM Round 11

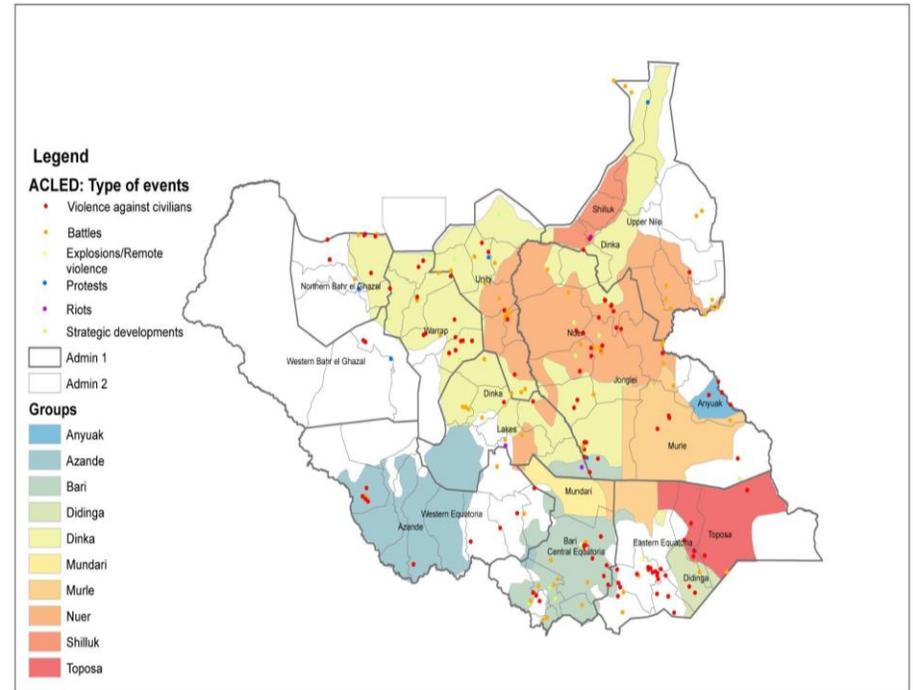
¹⁰ UNHCR and GoSS, January 2022

¹¹ UNHCR and Sudan is difficult to quantify but has huge significance in communities facing crises such as protracted conflict and market failures.^{11a} GoSS, March 2022

transactions. In particular, the use of livestock as bride wealth creates social networks, with reciprocal assistance in times of hardship.

Whereas agro-pastoralism from a mainstream economic perspective is associated with the ownership of at least three Tropical Livestock Units (TLU) per capita, equivalent to about four cattle or 30 sheep or goats per person, South Sudan’s Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring indicators assess the average livestock ownership in South Sudan in the recent past at only to 0.87 TLUs per capita. This low level of livestock ownership is broadly consistent with the recent categorization of 6.83 million people (55% of the population) in South Sudan as severely food insecure (Integrated Phase Classification 3, 4 and 5). An estimated 55,000 people were classified in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Fangak, Canal Pigi, and Uror counties in Jonglei State; Pibor County in Greater Pibor Administration Area; Tambura County in Western Equatoria State; and Leer and Mayendit counties in Unity State.¹²

The cattle culture mixes with traditional rivalries, exposing families to the most direct forms of daily and continuous violence. Raiding cattle, burning villages and shelters, kidnapping children for recruitment and girls for forced marriages, are some of the most common hallmarks of inter-tribal violence. Consequently, endemic cattle raiding creates dynamics that are easily cooped by the military and political objectives and quickly mobilise along ethnic lines significantly exacerbating the political conflict and posing threats to civilian wellbeing.¹³ Fighting factions (both signatories and non-signatories of the peace agreement) at the state and county levels recur and lead to forced recruitment, including the recruitment of children - a gross human rights violation against civilians and further runs counter to the parties’ commitments under Article 2.1.8. of the R-ARCSS.



Weak national infrastructure, governance, and systems to cope with the impact of natural hazards and multi covariate shocks. The prominence of local leaders and dynamics challenge structural responses

Upon the 2011 independence, the hopes of South Sudan state-building were tied to oil revenues. However, the fall of oil prices in 2013 and the deflation of the South Sudanese pound compounded by climate-induced shocks, disrupted these hopes and brought an upsurge of war and conflict. This, in turn, led to a reduction in confidence of external

¹² <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1155527/?iso3=SSD>

¹³ Wild et al. Journal of International Humanitarian Action (2018) 3:2

parties, further draining the necessary support to build a functional and peaceful society. In recent months, the armed attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine has resulted in an international crisis which is currently at the centre of international community aid and political efforts; the spill-over effects of the crisis (e.g. reduction of wheat exports from the Black Sea basin) together with the reduction of political and negotiation space for other crisis, may have negative effects in terms of funding and resources to South Sudan.

With approximately 80% of the total population living in rural areas and most resources (human and financial) concentrated around the capital Juba, the challenges to building viable local government services are insurmountable.¹⁴ The lack of (and misappropriation of existing) economic and financial resources exacerbates these structural barriers and renders local government unable to ensure access to services and provide security and safety. According to the Corruption Perception Index, South Sudan ranks last among 180 countries monitored and its public sector is perceived as highly corrupt¹⁵.

Government expenditure on health services amounts to only 6.04% of the GDP.¹⁶ An estimated 43% of counties have one primary healthcare centre per 15,000 people while 30% of counties have one primary healthcare centre per 50,000 people. Similarly, 1,095 schools remain damaged due to flooding or conflict, resulting in insufficient and inadequate facilities. The value of the damage caused directly by the floods is estimated at US\$ 671 million, according to an analysis based on a World Bank Global Rapid Post Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE). The most severely impacted states in terms of damages are Jonglei (US\$

256.4 million) and Unity (US\$ 117.8 million), which together account for more than half of total damages, followed by Warrap (US\$ 94.2 million) and Upper Nile (US\$ 64.8 million).

The effects of the lack of availability and accessibility of services are compounded by the overall inability of the population to afford related costs. Around 82% of the population is poor¹⁷. Livelihoods are seriously deteriorated by conflict and climate shocks that could further lead to increased tensions between farmers and pastoralists.¹⁸ It is also estimated that floods killed or displaced more than four million livestock (cattle, sheep, goats). Infrastructure-related damages are estimated to stand at US\$ 125.4, or 18.7 per cent of the total. In total, 3,464 km of primary, secondary, and tertiary roads were affected by floods, severely disrupting accessibility, connectivity, and the delivery of much needed humanitarian aid to flood-affected areas. Seventy health facilities have been affected by the floods, with 20 storage facilities reportedly damaged. In addition, extensive flood damage has been reported to water, sanitation, and hygiene-related community infrastructure, including boreholes and water points

The delivery of social services and infrastructure has been affected by these concurrent shocks, resulting in extremely low levels of access, particularly outside urban areas. With IDPs among the most severely affected, a large proportion of people in this group do not have adequate access to safe water and sanitation infrastructure and face

¹⁴ HNO, 2022

¹⁵ Additional information [here](#) (Accessed in May 2022)

¹⁶ World Health Organization Global Health Expenditure database (apps.who.int/nha/database). The data was retrieved on January 30, 2022. Level of current health expenditure expressed as a percentage of GDP. Estimates of current health expenditures include healthcare goods and

services consumed during each year. This indicator does not include capital health expenditures such as buildings, machinery, IT and stocks of vaccines for emergency or outbreaks. For more visualization see generally;

https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?locations=SS&name_desc=true

¹⁷ Based on the \$1.90 purchasing power parity poverty line, World Bank, 2022

¹⁸ [ICPA, Seasonal forecast, March to May 2022](#)

barriers in accessing healthcare services. Food insecurity is particularly high among IDP populations, with only 17 % of households in the Juba IDP facilities and 40% in Bentiu recording an acceptable food consumption score. In the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, the violence has destroyed critical infrastructure, including boreholes (often the only source of water), schools, markets, and shelters, and the loss of livestock as a result of raiding. These developments have negatively impacted livelihoods and jobs and resulted in sustained high levels of household vulnerability.¹⁹

A significant proportion of IDPs do not have adequate access to safe water and sanitation infrastructure and healthcare services, with a high level of food insecurity. For example, in Bentiu IDP Camp, only 20 per cent of households have access to safe and timely water supply; while nearly one of the households in Juba IDP camp (49%) must travel for more than one hour to collect water. While access to healthcare services is high across IDP sites, the limited availability of medicines and discrimination have been cited as significant constraints on healthcare service delivery among the IDP population.²⁰ Nationwide infrastructure and communication are poor, despite a budget allocation equivalent to 10.3% of GDP (SSP 230.4 billion) in the 2021-22 fiscal years. River transport on the White Nile, particularly between the ports of Juba, Bor and Malakal, is the main communication and trade channel. The remaining road network is among the least developed worldwide, with an estimated 2% of the around 17.000 km of network paved. The majority of roads are inaccessible during the rainy season, and almost all the major long-distance trade routes are subject to predation, in the form of checkpoints, taxes and attacks.

Between 2020 and 2021, 319 checkpoints, of which 253 (79%) roadblocks and 66 (21%) river checkpoints, have been mapped by IPIS.

Most of the checkpoints along overland routes are controlled by the government and civil authorities, while more than half of the river routes are controlled by the SPLM-IO. The number of checkpoints has



nearly doubled while checkpoint taxes have increased 300% since 2011, making it among the most expensive and insecure transport in the world. A barge between Bor and Renk could pass up to 33 checkpoints and pay up to 10.000 USD, while a truck between Juba and Bentiu could pass up to 80 checkpoints and pay up to 3.000 USD²¹.

Against this backdrop, local community leaders are the only decision-makers in the majority of the country. They are major players both in ensuring security and safety and in the power-sharing balance amongst the major ethnic and political factions.

¹⁹ World Bank. 2022. South Sudan Economic Monitor: Towards a Jobs Agenda. Fifth Edition, February 2022. World Bank.

²⁰ Ibid, at 20

²¹ IPIS, 2022

Situation of women and girls is impacted by a multitude of normative, demographic, cultural and conflict-related factors.

The situation of women and girls in South Sudan is daunting: conflict-related sexual violence is widespread and systematic and it is seen as a form to disrupt the fabric of communities, lack of accountability is exacerbated by the ongoing conflict while the erosion of socio-economic conditions plunges women and girls to resort to harmful practices, cultural and ethnic norms, including the kidnapping of young girls for early marriage, intimate partner violence (an estimated 51% of women and girls²²) and the general lack of voice and power of women and girls are major drivers of vulnerability. The situation is worsened by the overall weakness of the institutions. Acknowledging the progress made by the Government in 2020 when it launched a specialized court to deal with sexual and gender-based violence in Juba with support from international partners, courts in South Sudan are generally chronically under-resourced, as are the police and prosecutors as well as the prisons. The absence of effective State judicial infrastructure in most parts of the country, and this under-resourcing where institutions are present, in part contribute to human rights concerns within the judicial system.²³

Whereas South Sudan is a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the country is yet to ratify, implement and make use of regional and normative frameworks on gender equality such as the Maputo Protocol.²⁴ On the same note, South Sudan has not made use of various continental and regional instruments and mechanisms such

²² HNO, 2022

²³ See A/HRC/40/CRP.1 paras. 961-984 and A/HRC/49/CRP.4 paras 178-184

²⁴ <https://www.maputoprotocol.up.ac.za/>

²⁵ A/HRC/49/CRP.4

as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, the ACHPR Study on Human Rights and Conflict, and the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP)²⁵.

The decade-long conflict has been having an additional devastating impact on women and girls. On one hand, the conflict has left many female-headed households (around 80% of the displaced households are female-headed²⁶), thereby increasing their general vulnerability to the worst effects of harmful cultural and tribal gender norms. On the other, the conflict has been increasing sexual violence, with around 65% of women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime²⁷.

3. PRIORITY PROTECTION RISKS

RISK 1: Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings and Attacks on civilian infrastructure

The people of South Sudan continued to be impacted by violence throughout 2021 and during the first quarter of 2022. According to HNO data, at least 1,042 civilians were killed between July 2020 and June 2021, and according to UNMISS Human Rights Division (HRD), 982 violent incidents²⁸ have affected at least 3,414 civilians (75% men, 14% women, 11% children) during January and December 2021. Between February and the beginning of April 2022, 147 civilians have been affected by violent incidents.

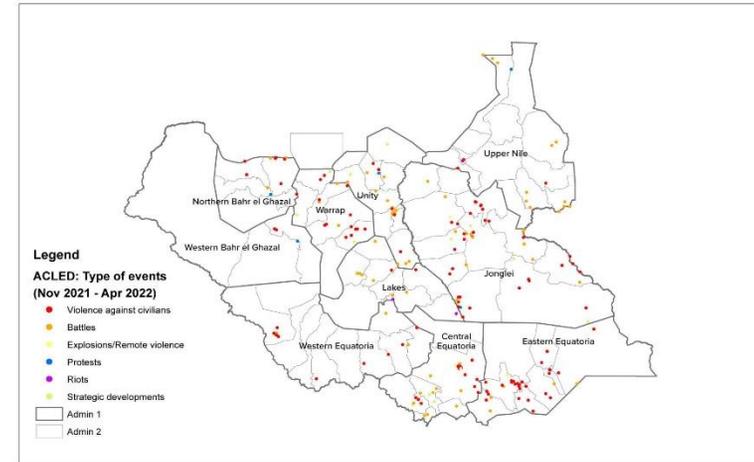
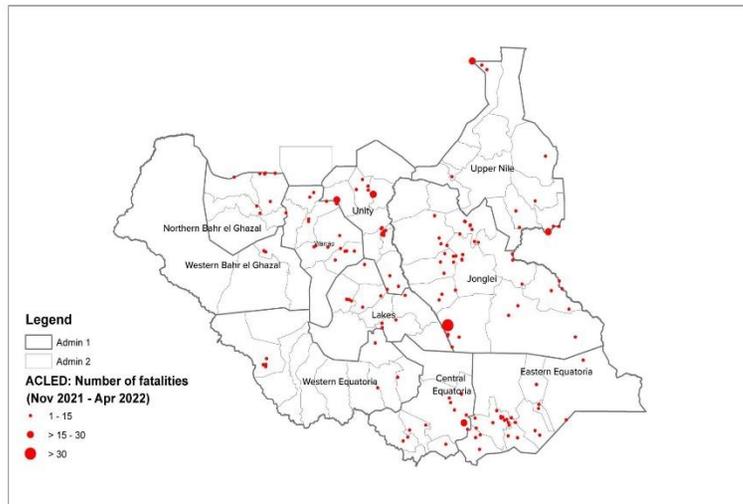
Continuous insecurity situation, compounded by armed clashes results in civilian casualties caused by sub-national violence and community-

²⁶ Buchanan, E., 2019. No Simple Solutions: Women, displacement and durable solutions in South Sudan.

²⁷ HNO, 2022

²⁸ *Subjected to one of the four major types of individual harm (killing, injury, abduction and conflict-related sexual violence)*, HNO 2022.

based militias. The states of Western and Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Unity have recorded the most incidences of conflict. Reports indicate that in Tambura, the recent conflict has displaced more than 90,000 people while OCHA reports indicate that an estimated 100,000 people have been affected, including 70,000 displaced, by fighting in the Abyei Administrative Area since inter-communal clashes broke out on 10 February 2022, with an escalation of incidents in March.



Random attacks by armed cattle keepers and cattle raids continue unabated and affect both remote areas and main routes, making killing, injury, rape, abduction, looting and destruction of housing and property almost the normality for vulnerable families and communities. Violent clashes between farming communities and cattle herders continue, the latest in March 2022 displacing more than 14,000 people. Cattle raiding, originally regulated by cultural authorities, has been militarized and weaponized since the 1990s by political elites to advance their interests.²⁹ Local inter-communal tensions in origin are increasingly becoming part of the national conflict dynamics.

Children are often subject to grave child rights violations, being exposed to sexual violence, recruitment, hazardous or worst forms of child labour and continuous psychological and physical abuse. In addition, according to UNMAS, an estimated 17.9 km² are contaminated by Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), including cluster munitions and land

²⁹ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/following-conflict-between-farmers-and-herders-magwi-unmiss-steps-patrols>

mines blocking fertile agricultural land mainly in southern Greater Equatoria.

Internally displaced people (IDPs) may additionally face a particular risk of recruitment. This is due to reduced social protection and coping mechanisms, and a lack of economic, educational, or other opportunities caused by displacement. Recent incidents demonstrate that forced recruitment continues to be a common practice of armed militias and groups. Over the past months in Tambura, incidents of recruitment and forced recruitment were reported in several areas, linked to the escalation in attacks against civilians. In January 2022, two incidents of forced recruitment were reported in Yei. In Bentiu, protection partners reported forced recruitment of youth in Bentiu IDP sites and Rubkona town. Until the Security Arrangements are established, ongoing forced recruitment and all related abuse and violence will likely continue. The surge in recruitment continues despite the signing of a Comprehensive Action Plan by the Government to put an end to the six grave child rights violations. Children separated from their families are particularly at risk and may be targeted for recruitment. The families of those forced recruitment may face protection risks associated with the recruitment, including reduced income, mental and psychological distress, and reduced social links.

According to the IOM Mobility Tracking, in November 2021, the total displaced population of South Sudan was estimated at 2,017,236 individuals, while returnees were estimated at 1,782,803 individuals³⁰, 28,440 in December alone (HNO 2022). The refugee population continues to return to South Sudan, even though the overall situation in South Sudan is not conducive for safe and dignified return (UNHCR position in 2019, supported by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in August 2019 states that mass returns or relocations are not possible due

³⁰ This figure represents the cumulative number of returnees since 2018.

to conflicted and localized violence). Nevertheless, UNHCR and the GoSS recorded a major spike in Spontaneous Refugees Returns in the last quarter of 2021 with a sharp decline in January 2022, bringing the total recorded returns in South Sudan to 507,000.

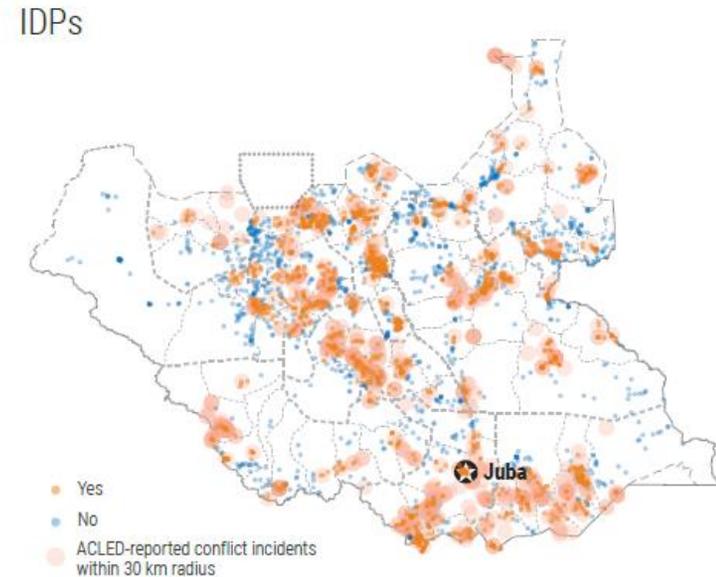


Figure 1 - People's proximity to conflict events, HNO 2022

The high levels of movement, displacement and secondary displacement increase the exposure of the civilian population to attacks and violence. The probability and frequency of a South Sudanese family being subject to violence and a wide scale of human rights violations is furtherly increased by the impacts of natural shocks and the combined vulnerability and lack of capacities to withstand them. Erratic rainfalls, making 2021 the third consecutive year of massive flooding, have been

widely affecting areas that do not count with efficient water management approaches and systems such as de-silting or boundary clearance.

Violence continues to have devastating effects on both livelihood resources and social infrastructure, and the access to minimum basic services, such as education, health, WASH, and protection support to victims. Illustratively, children's access to schools is severely limited by incidents in and around education facilities, as well as destruction or occupation of facilities.

Continued attacks on civilians have further exacerbated food insecurity. In the lean season projection period of April to July 2022, an estimated 7.74 million people (62.7% of the population) will likely face high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), with 87,000 people likely to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Fangak, Canal/Pigi and Ayod counties in Jonglei State; Pibor County in Greater Pibor Administrative Area; Cueibet and Rumbek North counties in Lakes State; and Leer and Mayendit counties in Unity State. During this period, an estimated 2.9 million people are likely to face Emergency conditions (IPC Phase 4).³¹

In 2021, 560 schools were damaged due to flooding, 535 due to conflict and 1292 schools were closed for unspecified reasons. School closure, inaccessibility and spontaneous dropouts increase risks, particularly for girls. Early marriage and pregnancy are reported to increase during school closures.

RISK 2: Gender and conflict-related sexual violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse.

According to the GBV IMS in South Sudan, a total of 7550 cases have been reported in 2021, and more than 2000 cases in the first quarter of

2022. These numbers are the tip of the iceberg. Conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls is widespread and systematic throughout South Sudan. Ongoing conflict across the country, including in the Equatorias, has created a perilous situation of great insecurity for women and girls, exacerbated by a lack of accountability for sexual and gender-based violence.

As noted by the OCHR, widespread rape and sexual violence in armed conflict, while complex, can be attributed to a patriarchal society, and is reflected in the inferior status of women maintained by the State and its institutions, creating conditions in which these violations thrive. Sexual violence in South Sudan has been instrumentalized as a “reward” and entitlement for youth and men participating in the conflict. It serves as a means of building ethnic solidarity to mete out retribution against perceived enemies; the objective being to inflict maximum disruption and the destruction of the fabric of communities, including through their constant displacement. This scourge has had the most profound impact on victims, their families and communities.³²

Incidents occurred in remote areas expose victims of violence or survivors of sexual assault to little or no access to health services. Children are particularly vulnerable and often exposed to serious risks, due to the compounded erosion of economic and livelihood capacities of families, family separation or the killing of the caregiver or both parents during the fighting. According to the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+), including Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), a total of 30,441 cases have been registered by the end of 2021 (17% increase compared to 2020). During the first quarter of 2022, a total of 2,236 (1,122 girls, 1,114 boys) have already been registered including 639 Unaccompanied and Separated Children (309 girls, 330 boys). The risk of sexual exploitation and abuse further increases, given the generalized recruitment of children in local

³¹ <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1155527/?iso3=SSD>

³² <https://bit.ly/3wmJAXA>

defence armed groups. According to the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), 68 (53 boys, 15 girls) verified cases have been recorded between January and March 2022. This practice raises particular concern since forced recruitment continues to be a common practice of armed militia and groups, as mentioned above.

A combination of cultural and tribal gender norms and identities, compounded by combatants' (and communities') adaptation to violence and patterns of aggression, create an environment conducive to conflict-related and gender-based violence. The lack of accountability, together with the weakness of statutory and customary systems both in family law and access to justice fuel the incessant violent and abusive practices affecting specifically women, girls, and children.

Customary systems are perceived to favour the preservation of the family image, rather than individual rights, and the courts covering marriage, divorce, childcare, and property rights, are mostly man-dominated and patriarchal. Some feeble signs of progress have been recorded in 2021, such as the inclusion of women representatives in the Abyei Administrative area or the first interactive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of the Discrimination Against Women and the launch of the Joint Committee to implement the action plan for the armed forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

These moments are however too short in addressing the fast-pacing escalation of violence and abuse in all South Sudan states. The UNMISS mandate, recently renewed, includes specifically the reporting on violations and abuses against women and children and asks for an acceleration of the implementation of new mechanisms.

RISK 3: Denial of resources, opportunities, and services.

The lack or loss of livelihood impacting all South Sudan states exacerbates existing protection risks while hindering families and individual capacities to cope with the worst impact of both man-made and natural threats and shocks affecting South Sudan.

Chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, driven by climate shocks and asset depletion due to prolonged tensions, conflict and displacement are steeply increasing against the backdrop of a structural lack of appropriate governmental response, access to services and challenges to humanitarian assistance.

Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Jonglei states have been the most affected in terms of crop and livestock production. The UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) indicated that 65,107 hectares of land were damaged, with an estimated loss of 37,624 tonnes of grain in the flood-affected areas.

The cultivated area is slowly increasing compared to 2019, but it is still far from pre-conflict levels. Between February and March 2022 55% of the population faced high acute food insecurity (around 6.83 million people), 2.37 of which were in emergency conditions and 55.000 in catastrophic conditions³³. In Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, and Lakes states more than half of the population have been food insecure between February and March 2022.

³³ HNO 2022

Returnees

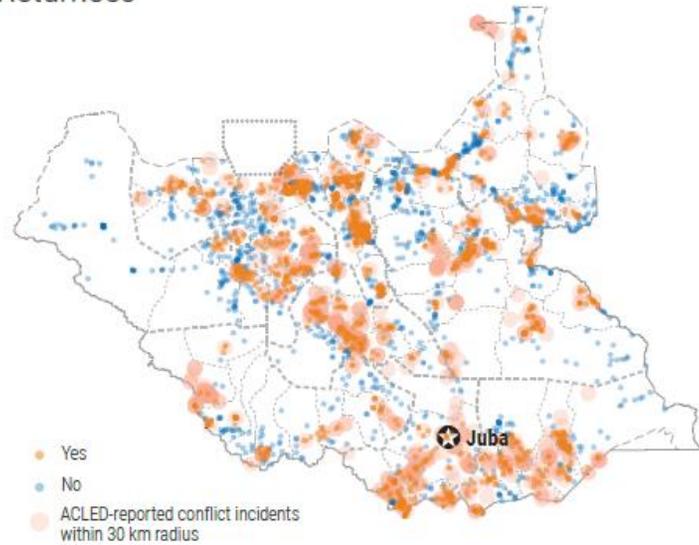


Figure 2 - People's proximity to conflict events, HNO 2022

The civilian population has no certainty of finding opportunities in their locale and thus resorts to transhumance as a strategy of coping. However, insecurity, lack of basic services and house, land and property disputes prevent families from freely choosing safe strategies to address their dramatic situation. About 82% of the population in South Sudan is poor³⁴. Government expenditures on health, education, water and sanitation, and agriculture and rural development are still poor and poverty levels are expected to remain extremely high. The nationwide poor communication and transportation infrastructure, together with the combination of checkpoints, raids, taxes, and bribes make

³⁴ “[...] based on the \$1.90 2011 purchasing power parity poverty line”, World Bank, March 2022

movement very costly, and insecure and additionally erodes families’ poor livelihood and belongings.

Families may not report forced recruitment incidents to the authorities or protection actors, either due to not trusting the officials or because of not being aware of the reporting mechanisms. Children previously recruited and released may not be accepted back in their communities. Children who are reintegrated may face stigma and rejection from others. This can create extreme psychological distress and children may resort to negative coping mechanisms. Those who refuse the recruitment may be asked for large sums of money and may be further persecuted by the groups.

State authorities and apparatus are very weak to ensure minimum needs, let alone the general well-being and security of South Sudanese families. Humanitarian assistance is at times the sole resource and response capacity available to families, yet it is constantly challenged and impeded. Between January and December 2021, 591 reported humanitarian access incidents were recorded³⁵, five aid workers lost their lives while delivering assistance, and 322 were located due to insecurity and incidents.

INCIDENT TREND

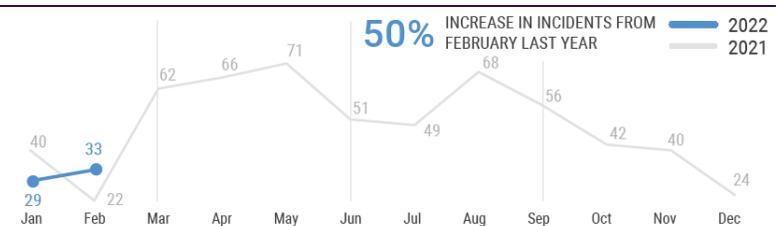


Figure 3 - South Sudan Access Snapshot OCHA, February 2022

In February 2022, 33 incidents related to humanitarian access constraints were reported, 13 involving violence against humanitarian

³⁵ HNO, 2022

personnel and assets (two-thirds of which were in Central Equatoria, Upper Nile and Unity states). Eight incidents linked to bureaucratic impediments were reported, including illegal taxation, attempted extortion, and denial of access at checkpoints. The Humanitarian Coordinator has condemned the continued violence affecting the safety of civilians and humanitarian workers on the 16th of February. Thirty-eight incidents related to humanitarian access constraints were reported in March 2022, of which 25 involved violence or threats against humanitarian personnel and assets.³⁶

Humanitarian access is thus seriously compromised, and humanitarian assistance is often challenged or impeded. Violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, operational interference, warehouses and facilities targeted, humanitarian supplies looted, thefts, including from women/girls centres and medical facilities and ambushes, are constant and increasing as witnessed in the recent conflict in Unity state.

ACCESS INCIDENTS

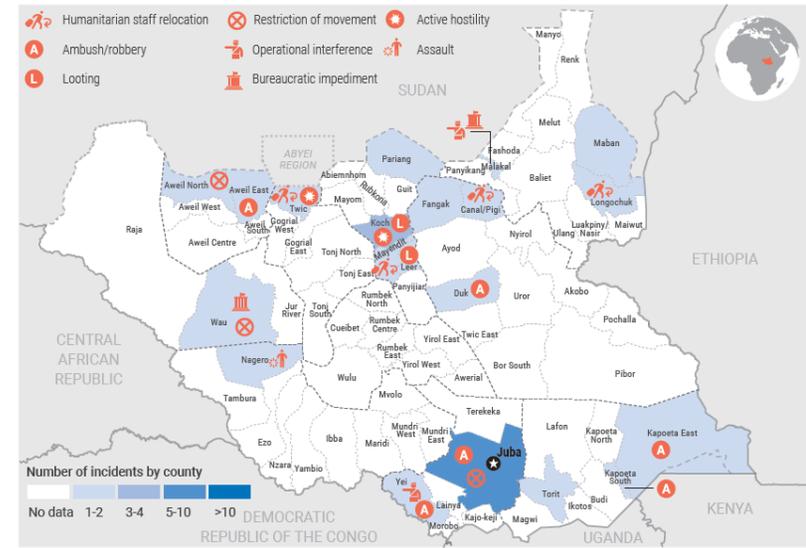


Figure 4 - South Sudan Access Snapshot OCHA, February 2022

Notwithstanding the dialogue between the humanitarian leadership, the governmental authorities and the parties to the conflict, this direct interference is denying the often only resource and services to the South Sudanese civilian population.

³⁶ [March Humanitarian Access Snapshot](#)

4. RESPONSE

4.1 Operation context including access issues

According to the 2021 Humanitarian Response in Review, South Sudan continued to be confronted by a series of interconnected shocks, such as conflict, persistent and unprecedented flooding, inflation, and COVID-19, which severely impacted the most vulnerable, particularly women, children, the elderly, and people with special needs. Insecurity due to conflict and flooding led to increasing internal and cross-border population movements requiring humanitarian support, further straining already limited resources, livelihoods, and services, and exacerbating protection risks. Sub-national violence and conflicts flared, resulting in population displacement, looting and destruction of property, and disruption of services however complicated these efforts and created access challenges. More than 8.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection services with ongoing violence in Abyei and other states expected to worsen the context.

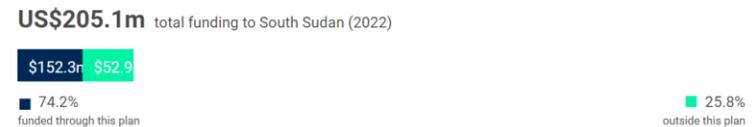
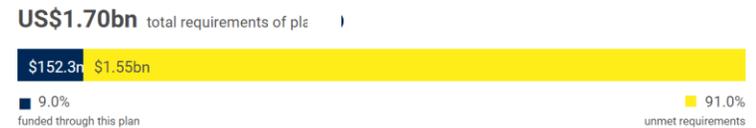
4.2 Population reached and the response provided

In 2021, 91 Protection Cluster South Sudan members reported* reaching IDP, Returnees and Host Community members with 2.1 M protection services. Out of those, 71 agencies and non-governmental actors provided support to vulnerable people within the framework of HRP and reached an estimated 1.8 M people. Protection awareness-raising activities counted for 45% of services provided by Protection Cluster members, while some 25% of services targeted individuals to mitigate their vulnerabilities. A reported 30% of protection assistances were other specific protection actions, including, for the most part, training and capacity building services for people of concern or communal or governmental authorities.

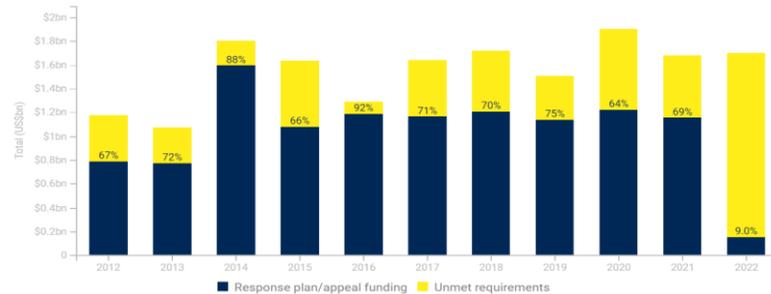
4.3 Funding data

In 2021, within the HRP framework, Protection Cluster South Sudan planned to reach 2.57 million people with protection services with a response plan of 99 M USD. PC HRP members reached to up to 70% of their target population (overall, all cluster members, together with other funding resources, reached 82% of the HRP target), with HRP allocation of 53% of requested funding. It must be noted that, while it appears the level of reach (70%) has exceeded the level of funding (53%), this is linked to the low unit cost of awareness-raising activities, therefore, the lack of access and funding for more complex (costly) actions needs to be factored in and taken into consideration for better understanding of the overall ratio.

Snapshot response plan and appeal 2022



Response plans/appeals trends



5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

RISK 1: Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings and Attacks on civilian infrastructure

- The GoSS to **re-establish/strengthen** the National Action Plan for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR). This includes strengthening effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms of breaches of the Armed Forces Code of Conduct and Discipline and establishing clear accountability mechanisms.
- Parties to the conflict to **allow**, following international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, the **rapid, safe and unhindered access** of relief personnel, equipment and supplies, and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, to all those in need throughout South Sudan as recommended by the UNSC
- GoSS to **engage** with local communities to update them on progress for the establishment of Security Arrangements provisions of the R-ARCSS and to develop two-way feedback mechanisms using Age, Gender and Disability (AGD) sensitive approaches.
- Humanitarian and peacebuilding actors to **strengthen protection monitoring, analysis advocacy efforts** with the government and relevant groups, highlighting the relevant humanitarian and human

rights instruments provisions that outlaw forced recruitment and recruitment of children. This includes also reinforcing ceasefire monitoring, verification, and reporting, enabling accountability, and ensuring de-escalation.

- Humanitarian and peacebuilding actors to support the GoSS in **establishing an environment and structures to ensure access to justice mechanisms** including those community-based.
- Child protection actors, in coordination with relevant government authorities, to **map and support programs** for the prevention of recruitment as well as for the release, demobilization and reintegration of children.
- Donors and humanitarian leadership to **support mine action partners** (including UNMAS, international and national partners) to (i) Undertake assessment missions and to conduct clearance of ERW as well as react to community reports; (ii) Conduct explosive ordnance risk education to affected communities, paying specific attention to IDPs and returnees (as they may be unfamiliar with the terrain) as well as boys and girls as they make up a large percentage of victims of ERW-related accidents.

RISK 2: Gender and conflict-related sexual violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse.

- Humanitarian leadership and actors should consider strengthening temporary GBV response teams within IDPs areas and create more awareness in communities on child protection and GBV related issues at the community level
- The GoSS to **consider** ratifying the Maputo Protocol and take steps to implement the recommendations and provisions provided by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, the ACHPR Study on Human Rights and Conflict, and the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP). In doing so, the Government to ensure that measures taken to address sexual and gender-based

violence include special police units and related investigations and prosecutions dedicated to sexual and gender-based violence are being scaled up. Other measures include ‘provision of fair trial and due process safeguards in court proceedings, including the protection of women victims and witnesses from reprisals before the ordinary courts’ as recommended by CEDAW³⁷

- The HCT, Protection Cluster and partners to (i) **advocate for the ratification** of the Maputo protocol and the recommendations of continental and regional mechanisms; (ii) **consider capacity building** and structural support to relevant actors (including the Specialized Courts) and authorities.

RISK 3: Denial of resources, opportunities and services.

- HCT, Protection Cluster, UNMISS and Humanitarian partners to strengthen coordination in protection monitoring to produce a **timely and evidence-based analysis** of protection risk and violations faced by population concern to inform effective programming and advocacy.
- Protection sector and partners to **establish systematic Complaint Response Mechanisms (CRM)** & Community Based Protection Networks (CBPN) to address protection risks and resulting needs in the IDPs sites.
- Donors and the humanitarian leadership should redouble efforts to **engage State and County authorities** to ensure safety, security and dignified conditions of passage through formal and informal checkpoints along terrestrial and river routes as well as the removal of bureaucratic and other impediments to access.
- The Government of South Sudan and all parties to ongoing conflicts to **ensure the protection of civilians**, including humanitarian staff and premises and abide by R-ARCSS

³⁷ CEDAW/C/SSD/CO/1, para. 29