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Sudan



Figure 1 ©UNHCR/ Isadora Schuler Zoni (Khor Ajwal IDP site, White Nile)

1. REPORT SUMMARY

More than a year on since the 25 October 2021 coup d'état, the protection environment in Sudan remains in flux. In the last several months, Sudan has experienced factional fighting, criminality, inter-communal violence, intertribal conflict, large-scale displacement, human rights violations, hyperinflation, and flooding. While the Sudanese Bar Association develops a new Sudanese Constitution, alliances among elites in Khartoum and the peripheries are being cemented and combined with inadequate security provision, the result is attacks on civilians, conflict, inter-communal violence and new internal displacement. Meanwhile, solutions for those in protracted displacement remain elusive. The latest figures indicate that Sudan hosts 3.7 Million IDPs and there are an additional 1,000,000 IDP returnees.¹

Simultaneously, mediations to restore civilian rule and the political transition that started in 2019 have only recently made any headway. On 05 December 2022, the military and political parties signed a Political Framework Agreement allowing a civilian-led transition towards elections.² Opposition to the framework has come from pro-democratic resistance committees, Islamist coalitions and armed groups such as the Sudanese Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid.

This Protection Analysis Update analyses priority protection risks within this context since June 2022 and provides recommendations. The protection risks observed, by the Protection Sector, stem from the Government of Sudan's failure to provide protection to civilians and enable its citizens in the conflict affected areas to enjoy national protection. The protection risks are: attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings and attacks on civilian infrastructure; gender-based

violence; and theft, extortion, eviction or destruction of personal property.

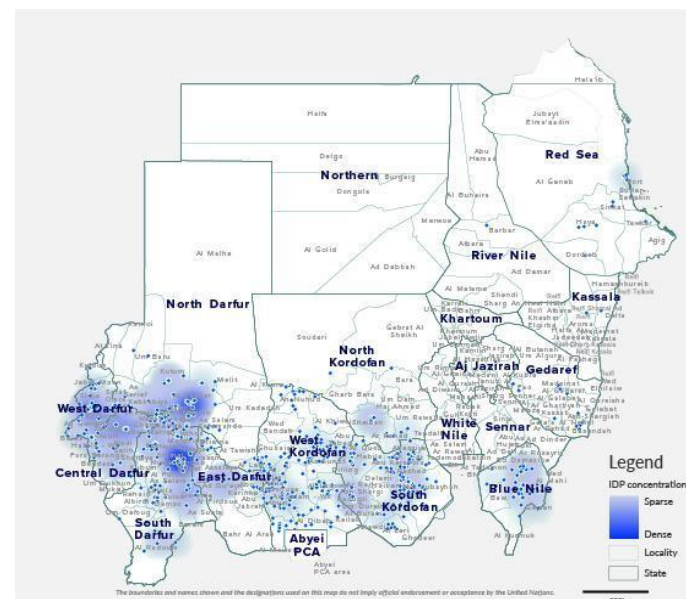


Figure 1 IDP concentrations in Sudan

Methodology

The Protection Analytical Framework guides this Protection Analysis Update. This update was developed through a desk review of primary and secondary data from published and unpublished protection monitoring, sector analysis, protection advocacy briefs and flash updates, assessments, and reports produced by other agencies.

Limitations

Humanitarian access issues and the limited capacity of protection actors create informational and data gaps on protection trends and concerns. Strong protection analysis is lacking in many humanitarian

¹ [Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 \(November 2022\) - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

² [Protests as Sudan military, parties sign initial transition deal | News | Al Jazeera](#)

needs assessments. Humanitarian actors have yet to have consistent access to at least 76 localities in eight states.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

With the military takeover in 2021, Sudan's transitional period ended and a new political crisis began that has had profound implications on the country's prospects. While political efforts to resolve the crisis continue, an alarming confluence of challenges and shocks faces Sudan's population. These challenges include attacks against civilians, criminality, the government defaulting on its responsibility to protect civilians, flooding, dry spells, climate change, hyperinflation, economic degradation and a lack of durable solutions.

Access to services across the country has been curtailed due to political instability and the significant economic decline. Major sources of international funds have been suspended since the coup. Where the impact on gaps in services to the local population is detrimental, access to services for displaced communities is severely curtailed.

Civilians across Sudan continue to be impacted by significant levels of protection and security incidents that have caused displacement, deaths, injuries, abductions and gender-based violence (GBV). Some of these incidents are related to the agricultural season and the parallel competition over land and resources. Incidents in the peripheries of Sudan coincide with a convergence of political uncertainties in Khartoum, pre-election tensions, anxiety over the drafting of a new Sudanese constitution and fears of losing prosecutorial immunity. It appears conflicts between new elites in Khartoum and old foes are being played out in the peripheries.³

During this reporting period, these issues have led to internal displacement in Darfur, Blue Nile and West Kordofan.

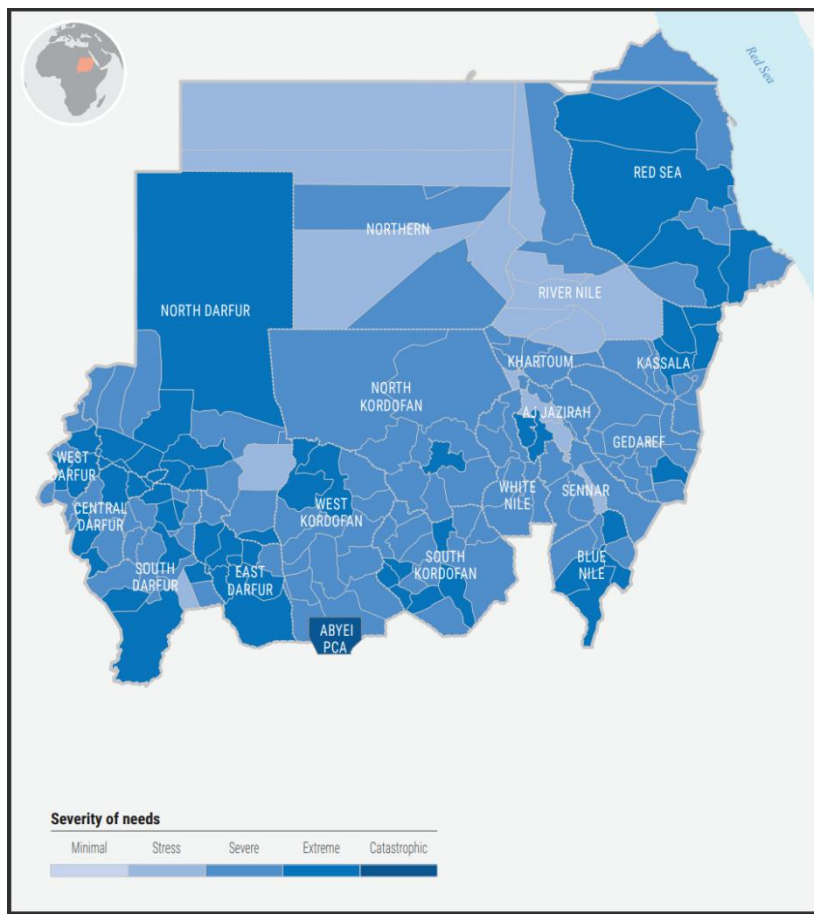
In Darfur, there are three important concerns. First, key elements of the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) related to the protection of civilians did not go ahead as planned. Security arrangements, specifically the forces meant to fill the security void that UNAMID's departure left, have yet to be deployed. The security vacuum created by UNAMID's departure is still felt in the region, most recently in North Darfur and Central Darfur.

Second, the security sector reform anticipated during the transition did not occur. The role of the divided government forces, both regular and paramilitary, is ambiguous. All actors are slow to react to conflict and protect civilians, and some are accused of directly taking part in attacks in Darfur and beyond including on protestors in Khartoum. Accountability of armed actors for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law remains elusive. Tension is now increasing among JPA signatories, non-JPA signatories, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Third, rule of law in Darfur is stifled and there is a culture of impunity, which results in heightened criminality, leading to numerous incidents such as GBV, thievery, cattle rustling, crop destruction and attacks on civilians during both planting and cultivation. The agricultural season which started in June also demonstrates the weaknesses in the current security sector to protect civilians. During their mission, UNAMID invested in crop protection committees, which now receive limited support from humanitarian actors. The ability of these committees to prevent and respond to conflict over resources is limited. Alone, they cannot be expected to remedy the culture of impunity and access to justice in Darfur.

³ [The Spoilers of Darfur. Sudan's protracted political crisis and the intensifying violence in Darfur are closely connected \(swp-berlin.org\)](https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/the-spoilers-of-darfur-sudan-s-protracted-political-crisis-and-the-intensifying-violence-in-darfur-are-closely-connected)

HNO 2023 Severity level, Sudan



In the case of the Two Areas⁴, the Juba Peace Agreement helped on the surface to reduce conflict and improve humanitarian access to some areas in Blue Nile state up until recently. Intertribal conflict and tension among armed actors are noticeably increasing. Since July

2022, over 127,961⁵ persons, primarily from the Hausa ethnic group have been displaced due to intertribal conflict in Blue Nile. The displacement is also linked to the perceived alterity of the Hausa in Blue Nile. Recently in West Kordofan, conflict in Lagawa locality escalated between Misseriya and Nuba tribesmen after a land ownership dispute. According to IOM DTM, the conflict displaced 20,884 persons with an unknown number to SPLM-N-controlled areas. The RSF and former Popular Defense Forces (PDF) are accused by many people of taking part in the conflict, including the looting and burning of houses in Lagawa town. Simultaneously, the army accused the SPLM-N of shelling the area. SPLM-N Al Hilu have denied involvement.⁶

Furthermore, 349,000 people have been affected by seasonal rains and flash floods, damaging 48,250 homes and destroying a further 25,860 according to the Humanitarian Aid Commission.⁷ The most flood-affected states in Sudan are South Darfur, Gedaref, Central Darfur, White Nile and Kassala.

Access challenges

The severe levels of insecurity and violence impede humanitarian access throughout Darfur and the Two Areas. Protection actors have reported restrictions on access to persons of concern in Blue Nile, South and West Kordofan, where explosive ordinances also prevent access to IDPs. Humanitarian actors also have challenges accessing IDPs in areas under the control of both factions of SPLM-N and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction (SLA/AW) controlled areas as well in Darfur. Across the country, humanitarian assistance is impacted by an array of bureaucratic and administrative impediments that considerably restrict and slow down the response. There are also significant areas out of range of the

⁴ SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states

⁵ [EET_Ar Rusayris_BN_009 \(iom.int\)](https://www.iom.int/news/eet-ar-rusayris-bn-009)

⁶ [Sudan army accuses SPLM-N of shelling West Kordofan | Radio Dabanga \(dabangasudan.org\)](https://dabangasudan.org/)

⁷ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/card/2EhxM6wJ1a/>

telecommunication networks and electricity, which makes it difficult to obtain information.

3. PRIORITY PROTECTION RISKS

1. Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings and attacks on civilian infrastructure

Though the National Plan for Protection of Civilians (NPPOC) and the JPA were celebrated political accomplishments, authorities have failed to implement them. Since their endorsement, authorities have been unable and seemingly unwilling to provide protection to civilians. Violations of criminal law and human rights and international humanitarian law are observed throughout the country without consequences to the perpetrators. Factional fighting and conflict between various armed groups threaten civilians, especially in Darfur. Civilians are often attacked due to their imputed affiliation and are displaced. Attacks on civilians and unlawful killing also took place during intertribal conflict, often triggered by criminality or stemming from competition over resources. All of these scenarios result in forced displacement.

Armed clashes between SLA/AW and SLA-Hasabo Faction broke out in Central Darfur in the Kori area on 17 October 2022.⁸ Conflict between SLA-Ghadura faction and SLA-Mubarak Al Douk Faction started on 20 November in Shamal Jabal Marrah locality. SLA/AW alleged that RSF elements, along with SLA/AW splinter groups and SLM-Transitional Council (SLM-TC) carried out attacks in SLA/AW Territory. SLM/AW threatened to end the unilateral cessation of hostilities. SLM-TC (JPA signatory) has denied involvement in the fighting. According to OCHA, at least 13 civilians have been killed and 5600 persons displaced.⁹ In South Darfur state, continued factional fighting between the SLA/AW and the SLA/Zanoon-faction has

displaced a total of 190 families since June 2022 have remained displaced around Mershing town from Jawa, Korny, Korbal and Mara villages of Jebel Marra. Factional fighting in 2023 will likely continue to be a significant protection concern.

On 15 August 2022, attacks against several villages in the Mulagat area of Kutum locality, North Darfur took place, allegedly involving hundreds of armed men from the Arab Mahariya tribe. Various reports suggest the attacks were a retaliation for two other killings committed by unknown suspects. Several villages were reportedly burnt and destroyed, and initial reports suggested between 2,000 to 2,500 individuals (some are Fur) were displaced to surrounding areas. Authorities launched a significant security response to stabilize the security situation, with the deployment of large numbers of RSF forces and small numbers of Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and one Sudan Police Force (SPF) vehicle. High-level State officials also traveled to the area to engage in negotiations to end the hostilities. When the tension calmed down, allegedly, the RSF compensated IDPs and they returned home.

The limited presence of Police and other Government law enforcement agencies in IDP locations has also contributed to the proliferation of weapons in the communities and increased the presence of armed elements among the civilian populations. In South Kordofan, for instance, these armed elements are tribal-based, and they use force to solve disputes.

Since July, Blue Nile State has produced significant new internal displacement due to intertribal conflict. IOM DTM estimates that over 127,961 persons have been displaced, 469 have been injured

⁸ [Conflicting reports about attacks in Darfur's Jebel Marra area - Sudan Tribune](#)

⁹ [Sudan: Conflict in Shamal Jabal Marrah, Central Darfur, Flash Update No. 01 \(24 November 2022\) \[EN/AR\] - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

and 359 persons killed.¹⁰ Limited services are available to IDPs in displacement areas and sites lack security. As a coping mechanism, some IDPs, mainly Hausa women and children, have sought onward movement to protect themselves using familial and tribal networks. So far onward movement was recorded to Sennar (33,547), Gezira (5,626), White Nile (17,241), Gedaref (3,382), Khartoum, and other states.¹¹

In West Kordofan, according to IOM DTM intertribal violence triggered by disputes over land ownership between the Misseriya and Nuba tribes in Al Lagowa locality displaced an estimated 20,884 IDPs (3,449 households) to West Kordofan, South Kordofan and North Kordofan states.

In Central Darfur state, on 9 November 2022, intertribal clashes took place between the Misseriya and Awlad Rasheed (part of the Rezeqat Tribe) in the Bendasi locality. The conflict then allegedly expanded to Tuktuka village in Wadi Salih locality. In an attempt to resolve the conflict, members of the community and the Peace and Reconciliation Committee, were tasked by the Native Administration to mediate the conflict. Reportedly, the two tribes attacked the committee resulting in injuries to 17 committee members, destruction of crops, burning 16 shops in Juguma El Garbiya market, and looting of cattle. The government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that the conflict displaced an estimated 15,000 people.¹² New IDPs have joined protracted caseloads in gathering IDP sites. The majority of the displaced are children, women, and the elderly.

In West Darfur, on 6 June, violence erupted between arab nomads and the Gimir tribe in the Haraza village, Kulbus locality due to

disputes over ownership and access to agricultural land. A total of 25 villages were reportedly partially or fully burnt.¹³ In addition, some villages in Jebel Moon, Sirba, and Kreinik localities were also affected by the violence, with reports of some areas of Central Darfur and Saraf Omra locality in North Darfur also being impacted by violence. Over 100 people were killed, with numerous injuries and reportedly large-scale destruction of civilian property, including homes and looting of livestock. IOM DTM reported that 17,295 individuals had been displaced due to the conflict.¹⁴

2- Gender-based violence

According to Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment 2022, approximately 80 % of respondents have heard about cases of violence against women or girls. More than 50 % of households have at least one member who has experienced signs of psychological distress one month prior to the data collection. More than 50% of the respondents are not aware of the availability of any support services for women.

Lack of access to quality specialised lifesaving GBV services remains a challenge. Clinical management of rape and psycho-social support, legal aid, case management and referral mechanisms are unavailable in over 69 % of localities in Sudan. Currently, 78% of GBV services are provided by government service providers. The suspension by the international community of partnerships with government entities continues and it will significantly impact life-saving GBV service provision. In addition, there are increased challenges related to referral and GBV service provision in conflict-affected states due to

¹⁰ [Sudan | Situation Reports \(unocha.org\)](https://unocha.org/sudan/situation-reports)

¹¹ [EET_Ar Rusayris_BN_009 \(iom.int\)](https://www.iom.int/news/eet-ar-rusayris-bn-009)

¹² [Sudan: Conflict in Bendasi locality, Central Darfur, Flash Update No. 01 \(16 November 2022\) \[EN/AR\] - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

¹³ [IOM DTM Sudan, Emergency Event Tracking Report - Kulbus \(Haraza\), West Darfur \(Update 001\) \(20 June 2022\)](#)

¹⁴ [OCHA Sudan, Conflict in Kulbus locality, West Darfur. Flash Update No. 01 \(14 June 2022\)](#)

heightened security, restricted movement and interruption of transportation.

Even if GBV services are accessible to survivors, impunity is a major issue. Authorities have an aversion and inability to protect civilians; likewise, most GBV incidents are not prosecuted. Access to justice for GBV survivors is limited due to lack of legal aid, shortages of female police officers, as well as community distrust of formal legal mechanisms. In addition, there are credible reports of state actors engaging in such crimes. The continued presence of armed actors forces many IDPs, especially women and girls, to limit their movement outside of camps and settlements, where security is more stable and predictable. There has been increased challenge of referral and GBV service provision in conflict affected states due to heightened security, restricted movement and interruption of transportation.

Coinciding with the increased attacks of civilians in September, Community-based protection networks observed an increase in GBV incidents often coinciding with farming activities and the opening of markets. For instance, in West Darfur, key informants reported one GBV incident affecting 8 women and four girls while they returned home after tending to their agricultural lands. During the same month in North Darfur, a group of IDP women were attacked near ZamZam IDP camp in a farming area, and one of the women was allegedly abducted. At least three other GBV incidents against IDP women and girls were reported in North Darfur in September. In October, several attempted rape incidents were recorded in Kass locality, South Darfur, while IDP women and girls were farming and

travelling to and from their farms. During one incident, perpetrators were tried and fined by a local court.

3- Theft, extortion, eviction or destruction of personal property

Inadequate security provision by the Government combined with the absence of rule of law and general culture of impunity has many consequences. There is rampant criminality and banditry. Majority of protection incidents in Darfur involve crime for instance: robbery, killing, GBV, property destruction, shooting and physical assault of IDPs. Rarely are these incidents investigated and prosecuted before a court of law. Another consequence is intercommunal violence that also sometimes follow an incident of crime.

In 2022, competition over resources and inter-communal violence often resulted in the destruction of personal property, including farms and cattle theft¹⁵, raising concerns over food insecurity and livelihoods. Other shocks like dry spells and hyperinflation have reduced income-generating activities and subsequent access to food. Agriculture is the main livelihood activity for the majority of IDPs and IDP returnees.

Theft and destruction of personal property are also linked to housing, land and property issues that fuel inter-communal violence. Climate change and environmental degradation continue to push nomadic pastoralists and their livestock towards greener, more fertile areas leading to disputes related to the destruction of crops by livestock, the expansion of farms, the blocking of nomadic corridors by farmers, and tensions over access to water points. An emerging pattern of

¹⁵ Flooding in 2022 also destroyed 4800 heads of livestock and affected about 5,100 hectares of farmland.¹⁵ According to the recent IPC analysis in September, up to 11.7 million people are in a crisis (IPC Phase 3 or worse)

levels of food insecurity.¹⁵ Though those figures are predicted to decrease due to the harvest.

‘settled nomads’ who require land for livelihood collides with the customary land tenure system, which prioritises land ownership and usage based on tribal affiliations. This collision and tension over resources can erupt in intertribal conflict and inter-communal violence, causing death and injury to civilians and simultaneously provoking theft, extortion, eviction and destruction of personal property.

In September and October, farm destruction was observed in West Darfur, North Darfur and South Darfur. Allegedly, more than 1500 cases of alleged farm destruction have been reported to the police in ZamZam IDP camp, North Darfur. In the forthcoming harvest period, the Sector expects an increasing number of crop destruction incidents during the return of herders with their livestock, from the northern corridor towards the south.

In West Darfur, civilian casualties occurred in the last quarter of 2022 as a result of crop-related incidents between farmers and pastoralists. In Sirba locality, tension was reported between herders and Erenga tribe due to release of livestock in farmlands ahead of the harvest season. Violence, physical assault, GBV, intimidation, crop destruction have been reported in El Geneina, Beida and Kreinik localities. On 25 November 2022, the confrontation between Arab and Masalit tribes triggered by the killing of seven camels around Masteri, Beida locality led to the migration of more than 500 camels to Anjemi and Makada areas of El Geneina, causing the destruction of farms and spreading fears of physical assault among the population.

In South Darfur, crop destruction affected IDP returnees’ ability to engage in agriculture. Due to the seasonal migration of camels by nomads, multiple incidents destroyed crops in Mershing locality belonging to IDP returnees in October. Police and security forces assessed the losses incurred during these incidents and camel owners

were fined. In Central Darfur, the factional fighting in North Jebel Marra in November could cause 32,000 individuals to lose their harvest because insecurity restricts their freedom of movement. Others have already lost their farms when burned down during the fighting.

In Blue Nile, the displacement of the Hausa is akin to eviction through violence. For IDPs and other vulnerable residents, the intertribal conflict has resulted in a loss of income from agricultural labor, theft of property, and reduced access to food from either the harvest or markets. Secondary occupation has been reported in the affected localities. Additionally, much of the Hausa rent land in Blue Nile for farming, their security of tenure is at risk due to unpaid rent. Their displacement also has increased the cost of living for the non-displaced as the Hausa are significant contributors to food production in Blue Nile.

As recently as 10 December 2022, unknown gunmen stole at least 170 sheep in Abu Zabad locality of West Kordofan where Hamar and associated sub-tribes reside. While members of this Hamar group traced their livestock, unknown armed men ambushed them resulting in the death 22 individuals.

Ambush following livestock theft leads to the death of at least 22 in Abu Zabad locality, West Kordofan: On 10 December, in Abu Zabad locality, unknown gunmen looted 170 sheep from Abu Jafala village that is inhabited by a group of Hamar and its associated tribes such as Al-Quraan, Hamar Al-Bashariya and Hamer-Al-Jakhisat tribes. While tracing back their animals through the border with As Sunut locality, the sheep owners were ambushed leading to the killing of 22 individuals according to UNDSS. The livestock owners have accused the Misseriya of looting the animals and killing Hamar tribes.

This theft and destruction make IDPs, returnees and other vulnerable persons at risk of food insecurity. The Food Security and Livelihoods Sector found that food-insecure residents in Sudan cope by focusing on immediate food needs and depleting their assets. Some also cut their health and education expenditures and are unable to create or invest in livelihood assets. Some cope by eating borrowed food or borrowing money to purchase food and reducing the number of meals eaten in a day.¹⁶ Livelihood-based coping strategies, such as stress strategies indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks due to a current reduction in resources or increase in debts (e.g. buying food on credit or spending savings). Another strategy is the selling of their last remaining female animals, prompting an irreversible loss of livelihoods.

4. RESPONSE

- In response to these protection concerns and access challenges, protection actors have reinforced relationships with community-based protection networks and community leaders to conduct community-level protection monitoring. In combination with protection monitoring, community-based protection networks often identify persons with specific protection needs including GBV, CP and GP cases that protection actors assist through ongoing projects and referrals to other actors in the field.
- Protection monitoring activities, needs assessments and protection responses to displacement situations and emergencies are ongoing.
- During the Agricultural Season, partners engaged in protection monitoring to identify needs and protection incidents associated with the various phases of this season.

This is in coordination with OCHA and FAO on crop protection activities.

- Publication of Protection of Civilians Advocacy Briefs and flash updates to concerned stakeholders in the international community for programmatic and advocacy intervention.
- The Protection Sector has been actively engaged in advocacy efforts at multiple levels such as the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), A-ISCG, UNITAMs, state-level authorities and the authorities at the National Level.
- Focus on community engagement for GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response through seeking community solutions to address issues of stigma and negative social norms. This includes support to community-based protection networks as first line responders and links between vulnerable community members and available services.
- Availability of quality care for survivors: through comprehensive GBV service provision including case management, Psycho-social Support, Clinical Management of Rape (CMR), Community-based Protection Networks (CBPN) and provision of dignity kits in a timely manner utilizing the prepositioned stock
- Marginalized and at-risk groups are incorporated in GBV prevention and response: this includes women without male guardians such as widowers, divorcees, and young girls between the age of puberty and marriage; and people with disabilities.
- Continue strengthening coordination mechanism at sub-national level, strengthening GBV referral pathways and

¹⁶ [Sudan Food Security and Livelihood Sector Technical Presentation - 31 January 2022 | Food Security Cluster \(fscluster.org\)](#)

build capacity of GBV actors on specialized service provision, as well as non-GBV actors on GBV risk mitigation

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The GoS must recommit to the NPPOC. The GoS at the national and state level should develop specific activities to implement the NPPOC, reestablish the state-level POC committees and develop state-level POC plans. The GoS and UN Agencies should organise a joint workshop on NPPOC implementation as soon as possible.
- The United Nations and donors need to place protection of civilians and the urgency of progress on protection in Sudan within their dialogues with the authorities.
- The Humanitarian Country Team must start taking seriously their responsibility for the centrality of protection within the humanitarian response. They should have an overarching goal to provide protection that those in need that they serve.
- The international community, in collaboration with the Protection Sector, must continue to support members of community based-protection structures at locality level, in IDP camps or settlements and within IDP returnee communities, with regular capacity development and communications to obtain accurate and timely feedback about their protection situation and possible measures to mitigate protection risks.
- In 2022, the Protection Sector is only 17.1% funded as of December. In support of the previous three recommendations, donors need to fund robust protection monitoring systems that allow for the identification of protection issues, persons with specific needs and referrals to partners.
- During the agricultural season the protection of farms, crops and individuals engaged in agricultural activities, is key. Federal, State and local authorities should take steps to

ensure the protection of farms, civilians engaged in farming activities and migratory routes during the harvest season, in particular through the proactive deployment of legitimate, well-trained and community-accepted forces to hotspot locations (including areas hosting IDPs and IDP returnees) to prevent instances of crop destruction and attacks against farmers, especially women, and to enforce (local) laws and decisions related to the agricultural season including regarding demarcation of and encroachment unto migratory routes, the release of livestock and the protection of farms, and the strengthening of civilian crop protection mechanisms. Where instances of violence occur, forces should be deployed in a timely and sustained manner.

- Authorities must provide a more protective legal framework for GBV against women, children and other vulnerable population. Policies and plans take adequate steps to address GBV by establishing effective law enforcement mechanisms and procedures, including relevant criminal laws. GBV Case Managers and service
- GBV Case Managers, Community based Protection Network and GBV service providers need to ensure that the GBV survivors, including female farmers, of available services including legal services. If the survivor consent to receive legal services and have the case investigated, the perpetrators should be prosecuted, and victims should be compensated, in accordance with relevant Sudan's legal obligations under international law
- Strengthening the rule of law remains critical to address criminality and impunity, which are often triggers for further larger-scale violence. Civilian law enforcement capacity (Sudanese Police Force) must be enhanced to respond to incidents, carry out investigations/hold perpetrators to account and engage in proactive community-based policing.