

CHILD PROTECTION

December 2019

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Situation overview

Since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement of the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on 12 September 2018, South Sudan has seen a gradual stabilization of the security situation in some areas previously affected by conflict. However, displacements remain high, with children being those most affected, including through lack of basic safety and security, separation from family, and lack of access to core health and education services.

Regarding the over 200,000 people who remain in Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites focus is shifting to the potential return to their areas of origin or relocation to other areas, raising concerns with regards to their safety, access to livelihoods, as well as water, health services and schooling for children. These concerns contribute to psychosocial distress, especially among adolescents and caregivers, particularly in female heads of households.

Though the extent of gender-based violence (GBV) is unknown, there is a large amount of evidence indicating that GBV is an ongoing risk for women and girls throughout the country.

Despite the signing of the 2018 Peace Agreement and other commitments to the

protection of children's rights by parties to the conflict, reports from the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) shows recruitment of children is still ongoing.

Many partners are new to child protection and require considerable coaching and mentoring to ensure minimum standards of service delivery are maintained. Measures are being taken to ensure that children, as well as caregivers, have more meaningful input into programme design and monitoring.

There is no comprehensive child protection and child justice system in South Sudan. Local capacity to deal with child protection issues is very low and mechanisms for child protection are extremely limited. The absence of a framework for law and order places children in exploitative and abusive environments and the Government is yet to define an effective child protection system to regulate child protection actors and services for the most vulnerable.

While service delivery on Child Protection in Emergencies continues in most parts of the country, significant funding gaps have reduced UNICEF's capacity to respond and coordinate national efforts.

Situation of children (since December 2013)

3,677
incidents of grave violations
against children reported,
affecting over **98,481**¹
children.

UNICEF & partner results

229,973
new children reached with
psychosocial support
services in 2019.

20,834²
(6,219 reunited)
separated/unaccompanied
and missing children
registered since 2013.

79,832
women, men, boys and
girls reached with gender-
based violence prevention
and response services in
2019.

119,474
children and community
members reached with mine
risk education in 2018.

¹ Figures revised after verification of all incidents reported.

² Figure comprises all registered cases, including cases closed.



Critical Child Protection Services

UNICEF continues to provide leadership and technical guidance to the Child Protection (CP) Sub-Cluster at national and state levels, as well as all activated CP working groups, focusing on psychosocial support (PSS), children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG), the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on the six grave child rights violations, and family tracing and reunification (FTR).

Family tracing and reunification: As of March 2019, 20,834 separated, unaccompanied and missing children have been identified and registered for FTR services by child protection actors since December 2013, 98 per cent of which have received support directly from UNICEF. Of those registered, 6,474 children have been reunited with their families.

Release and reintegration: UNICEF and partners continue to advocate for the release of children associated with armed forces and armed groups. Since December 2013, there have been seven formal releases of children from armed forces/groups. Three releases have taken place in the former greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) in Jonglei, where more than 3,300 children have been released from the Cobra Faction and the SPLA-IO. In alignment with the peace agreement signed between the Government of South Sudan and the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM), releases in Western Equatoria State continued to take place in 2019. Since February 2019, a total of 216 children (including 79 girls) have been released and entered into the UNICEF reintegration programme.

Psychosocial support: As of March 2019, UNICEF and partners provided dedicated psychosocial care to 229,973 (128,555 boys and 101,418) children with critical child protection services, including children in schools, communities, and child-friendly spaces, as well as during Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) missions.

Mine Risk Education: In 2019, UNICEF and partners reached 119,474 individuals (40,754 girls, 46,414 boys, 18,745 women and 13,961 men) with life-saving mine risk education messaging living in high risk areas. In addition, in 2018 more than 20 implementing partners went through the mine risk accreditation process with the support of the National Mine Action Authority.

Gender-Based Violence

UNICEF continues to play a leading role in supporting GBV risk mitigation efforts across UNICEF programmes and UNICEF-led clusters. UNICEF and implementing partners reached a total of 79,832 people (21,975 girls; 18,021 boys; 26,779 women; 13,057 men) with GBV prevention (including awareness raising and social norms transformation), response services including individualized case management, psychosocial support, skills building courses, access to women and girls friendly services, risk mitigation information and referrals for other specialized services.

Communities Care: A total of 9,452 beneficiaries (1,992 girls, 1,399 boys, 2,905 women, 3,156 men) were directly reached with messaging on promoting positive social norms. 25 staff (12 women and 13 men) from implementing partners were trained on social norms transformation, GBV risk

mitigation, child marriage. UNICEF conducted a training of trainers (ToT) for 31 (5 female; 26 male) for implementing partners in Jonglei State and Upper Nile State on clinical management of rape (CMR) in August and September 2019.

Systems Building

UNICEF supports the provision of Birth Notification services for children under five in targeted states, and reached since 2014 611,452 children (313,835 boys and 298,617 girls). In 2019, 51,530 children (27,429 girls, 24,101 boys) have had their births notified. Through advocacy and UNICEF's technical support, the Government has shown its commitment to children by signing the Civil Registry Act in 2018 and the Policy on Children without Appropriate Parental Care into law. The former is a critical milestone that will see children being registered and receiving their birth certificates.

UNICEF continues to provide support to the Government in the preparation of its initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is currently under validation process.

With thanks to our generous donors:

SSHF, EU, ECHO, OFDA, USAID, SIDA, Norway, Germany – KFW, US State Department, Canada, Irish and Norwegian National Committee for UNICEF

Funding required in 2019

USD 28,500,000

Funding available in 2019

USD 5,737,442 - 80 % funding gap

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More information on the situation in South Sudan and UNICEF's response, including the latest situation reports, can be found at www.unicef.org/southsudan

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