STATE PROFILE | KASSALA

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KEY FACTS

26,018 children under-five are severely acutely malnourished

281,813 school-aged children are out-of-school

Only **two thirds** of people have access to safe water, and

one fifth to basic sanitation

Only **70 per cent** of births are registered, leaving 30 per cent of new-borns without a birth certificate

SITUATION IN KASSALA

Demography[1]

Kassala's state has 2.8 million inhabitants, and the annual population growth rate is about 2.8 per cent. The average household size has 5.5 people. There are 1,271,780 children (aged 0-18) and 25,338 youth (aged 19-24). The majority of the people do not enjoy their full rights; most have significant humanitarian and development needs. The major ethnic groups are the Hadandwa, Bani Amir, Nuba, Shukria, Iahwain, Fallata and the Hawsa.

Refugees: 124,511

Due to man-made and natural crises in the horn of Africa, many people fled to Sudan with the majority staying in the border states, like Kassala. Tens of thousands of refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia currently live in Kassala state. They are hosted in four refugee camps (Washerfi, El Girba, kilo 26 camp, and Shargab) and around 61 per cent of refugees live in urban areas competing with host communities over scarce resources. Migration has a serious impact on children, especially when it comes to violence and human trafficking.

Host communities: 1,000,000

More than one million people share their communities with refugees. The additional burden on the already overstretched social services make these communities extra vulnerable.

1 HNO 2022

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Geography

Kassala state is located in eastern Sudan and lies between latitudes 14.45 and 17.15 north and longitudes 34.40 and 37 east. It has international borders with Ethiopia and Eritrea in the east, and national borders with Red Sea state in the north, River Nile state and Khartoum states in the north-west and Gedaref state in the south-west. The total area of the state is 52,949 square kilometres, which represent 2.25 per cent of the total area of Sudan with population density of 47.6 persons per square kilometer. Administratively, Kassala state is divided into eleven localities (Atbara River, Hamashkoreeb, Kassala Town, New Halfa, North Delta, Rural Aroma, Rural Kassala, Seteet, Wad El Helew, West Kassala, Telkok). The capital of the state is Kassala, with a population of 420,166, representing 16.7 per cent of the state's population.

Climate

As many parts of Sudan, the climate in Kassala is semi-tropical. The rainfall rate ranges between 104 millimeters in Kassala city, and 300 millimeters at Wad el Helew locality. Early projections suggest that 2020 rains will be normal to above normal. The landscape can be characterised as semi-desert and dry savanna, dominated by plants of holeyat grass-covered lands form, which form 90 per cent of animal/livestock food. Temperatures range between 26.2 and 44.5 degrees Celsius in summer, and 16.8 to 33.5 degrees Celsius in winter.

Almost every year, Kassala state is struck by natural disasters, including floods, droughts and subsequent desertification. In addition, acute and chronic food insecurity continues to threaten people's lives and livelihoods and is driving population movement and environmental deterioration. Decreased rainfall and subsequent droughts affect the groundwater storage and recharge and food security for more than 1,020,230 people living in four localities in the northern parts of the state. In addition, in 2019 over 13,992 people were affected by floods.

Economy

The mainstay of Kassala's economy is agriculture and livestock. Agriculture is in general rain-fed (38 per cent of arable land). The total arable land is 5.3 million feddan[2], of which around two million feddan is used for growing cash crops like sesame, wheat, beans, and cotton, as well as the citrus fruits for which the state is famous. The exploited land represents only around one third of the arable land in the state. Major agricultural schemes in the state are located in Halfa, El Gash, Seteet and Kahoat areas.

Kassala state considered as one of the richest states when it comes to livestock. There are around 8.7 million heads of cattle in the state, besides 2,000 tons of fish annually. The number of poultry is estimated at one million heads. Despite the political instability and the COVID-19 pandemic, the gross public revenue in Kassala state increased to SDG 6.3 million in 2020 (compared to SDG 2.1 million in 2019). In addition, Kassala state succeeded to attract SDG 5.1 million foreign aid (compared to SDG 1.5 million in 2019).

2 Feddan is a unit of area used in Egypt, Sudan, Syria and Oman. It is more or less equal to 4,200 square meters.

HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Continued Population Movement

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Sudan stands prominently at the crossroads of the large, complex and constantly evolving Horn of Africa migration route. Kassala receives high numbers of refugees from neighbouring Ethiopia and Eritrea. Most migrants on the move are young and adolescent Eritrean Tigrinya speakers. Children and adolescent migrants - whether accompanied by relatives or not - are recognised as part of today's global and mixed migration flows and raise grave protection concerns due to their exposure to serious risks including trafficking, smuggling, abuse, violence or exploitation.

The capital, Khartoum, and the eastern states of Gedaref, Kassala and Red Sea are among the regions most affected by the migration flows heading to Europe through Egypt and Libya. Sudan is also a country of origin for migration due to high poverty, unemployment, conflict and insecurity. Sudan has fallen from a Tier Two Watch List country in 2015 to a Tier Three country according to the United States Department of the 2016 Trafficking in Persons annual report which stated that the Government of Sudan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.

In Kassala, there are four refugee camps, however 61 per cent of refugees live in out-of-camp settings with host communities. Sustaining services to refugees in camps and responding to the needs of a steadily growing number of refugees in host communities in the border localities will continue to strain the capacities of the local communities and government authority and this will require additional recourses and coordination between all stakeholders.

Chronic Malnutrition

Kassala state has one of the country's worst social indicators, especially for malnutrition (as per S3M-II data). Global wasting stands at ten per cent which is considered as critical as per WHO thresholds. Three out of eleven localities have emergency threshold malnutrition, while four localities show serious-levels of malnutrition. Hamashkoreib locality shows the highest prevalence of global, moderate and severe malnutrition, around a quarter of children under-five in this locality are malnourished.

Besides nutrition, also other social indicators show poor outcomes. For example, measles coverage for children under-one year of age is 27 per cent, and almost half of the state's population practices open defecation due to a lack of sanitation facilities as well as social norms. Around 78 per cent of the school-aged children in the state have access to education, with the highest enrollment rate being recorded in Kassala Town (96 per cent), while the lowest rate was in Hamashkoreib (37 per cent) where especially girls are left-out of education due to harmful social norms. The prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) is 40 per cent. The resilience approach is considered as the most effective approach to addressing the root causes of vulnerability of disadvantaged groups and communities.

Conflict and Climate Change

Social cohesion in Kassala state is very fragile, with frequent tribal tension. UNICEF's peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive programming is essential in supporting services that contribute to social cohesion and resilience, empowering young people to lead development and play key roles of change in their communities. Besides, conflict and social tension, climate change is also a big concern in Kassala state as it exposes the population to frequent droughts and floods, which affect food security and general health and well-being.

KEY RESULTS IN 2021

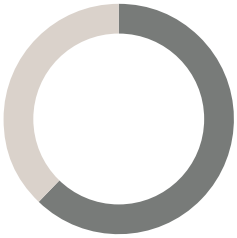
Unicef budget for Kassala:

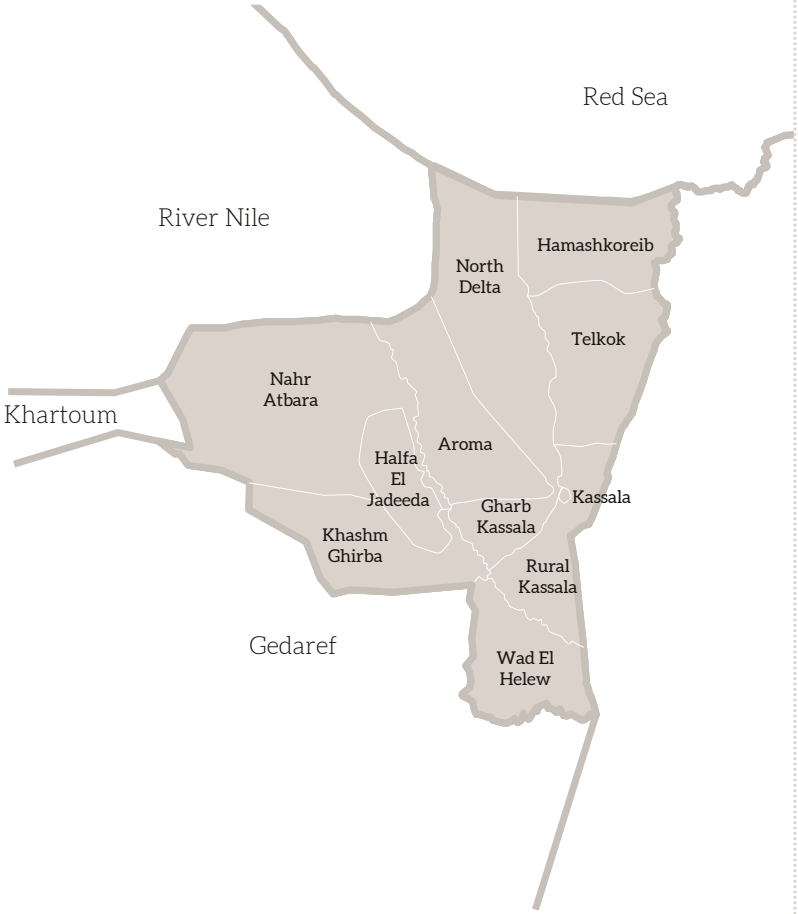
USD 9,997,320

as of 1 April 2022

Funds received ▶ 65%

Funding gap ▶ 35%





18,541 severely acutely malnourished children (10,222 girls and 8,319 boys) were treated.

34,569 children under-one year of age were reached with measles vaccination.

24,231 girls and boy's under-five years of age received integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) services.

51 communities were declared open defecation free (ODF), and 227,302 people were reached with sanitation facilities.

5,126 out-of-school children accessed formal or non-formal education.

969 children benefitted from legal and social services, including prevention and response to gender-based violence, through the family and child protection units.

8,234 children in humanitarian situations benefitting from psychosocial support.