

STATE PROFILE | SOUTH DARFUR

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KEY FACTS



68,352 children under-five years suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).



60 per cent of girls aged 6-11 years are at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation (FGM), especially in the rural area



315,980 school-aged children are out-of-school, (an increase from 2020 due to an increased number of internally displaced persons and newly-arrived refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR)).

SITUATION IN SOUTH DARFUR

Demography¹

The population of South Darfur state is slightly more than 3.6 million people and therefore the most populous of the Darfur states and the state with the most internally displaced persons (IDPs). There are 1.7 million children (aged 0-18) and 631,696 youth (aged 18-24) in South Darfur. The vast majority of the population do not enjoy their full rights and most have significant humanitarian and development needs. The major ethnic groups are the Fur, Rizeigat, Zaghawa, Fallata and the Habaniya.

Refugees: 69,617

After the separation of South Sudan and the subsequent civil war, many people fled to Sudan with the majority staying in the border regions.

IDPs: 687,325

Conflict, floods and drought have displaced communities. Currently, more than half a million internally displaced persons have found shelter in South Darfur. These women, men, girls and boys lack access to basic social services.

Returnees: 159,837

With changing conflict zones and shifting front lines, thousands of people decided to return to their location of origin. However, security is tenuous, and returnees often lack access to basic services in their communities, with infrastructure being destroyed or neglected in hard-to-reach or abandoned areas.

Host communities: 1,000,000

More than one million people of the local population living in areas hosting refugees, IDPs or returnees. The additional burden on the already overstretched social services make these communities extra vulnerable.



¹ HNO 2022

Geography

South Darfur is situated in the southwest of Sudan and has 21 localities. It borders the states of Central, East and North Darfur, as well as South Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR). South Darfur covers 81,000 square kilometers (the size of United Arab Emirates), with a population density of 27 persons per square kilometer. However, 20 per cent of the population lives in IDP camps/ host communities, where the average density is 13,000 persons per square kilometer. The landscape is characterised by lowlands to the south, rising to 791 meters above sea level in the Jebel Marra (mountainous region) to the north. The state is traversed by myriads of wadis (rivers) that render road travel impossible during the rainy season from July to September. The capital of the state is Nyala, which is the second largest city of Sudan (after the joined cities of Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North) with 834,000 inhabitants.

Climate

Many parts of Sudan - including Darfur - continue to face disaster, including cyclical flooding, drought and desertification. In addition, acute and chronic food insecurity continues to threaten people's lives and livelihoods, and is driven by prolonged conflict, environmental deterioration and disasters. As long ago as 2007, research carried out by the UN Environment Programme found that - with rainfall down by up to 30 per cent over 40 years and the Sahara advancing by well over a mile every year - tensions in Sahel and specifically Darfur were increasing between farmers and herders over disappearing pasture and evaporating water holes. In 2021, Sudan floods affected the lives of nearly 314,500 people across 14 states, including South Darfur. Compared to a previous five-year average (2015-2019), in 2021, the number of flood-affected people increased by 54 per cent. Thousands of hectares of crops were damaged in the middle of the agricultural season, compromising the harvest and the food security of thousands of families.

Economy

The main stay of South Darfur's economy is agriculture and livestock. Agriculture is rain fed - and with most of the land arable - produces good yields of sorghum and millet for local consumption and export to other states. Cash crops include ground nuts, sesame, kerkadeh (hibiscus), beans and watermelon. The Jebel Marra mountains are known for their citrus fruits. Along with livestock (pastoralist make up 10 to 15 per cent of the South Darfur population), agriculture has been the state's main exports, as well as the base for much of Nyala's manufacturing industry, for example the processing of oil from groundnuts and sesame and the production of agricultural tools.

HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Continued Population Movement

Years of armed conflict between the former regime and armed groups, as well as intercommunal violence, are the main cause of displacement in South Darfur. As of late 2021, about 687,325 internally displaced persons (IDP) in 10 camps remain in need of continued assistance. Competition between farmers and pastoralists over scarce resources continues to increase tensions and in 2021 resulted in further displacement. Conflict has a serious impact on children and their communities, and there are an increasing number of female-headed households. A number of South Sudanese refugees (31,849 individuals) also live in the state, fleeing conflict and food insecurity. They are hosted in seven camps in Al Radoum, Nyala, Beliel, As Salam, Buram, Katayla and Damso localities. As of December 2021, 22,223 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) have crossed the border and found shelter in the Al Radoum and Um Dafoug areas, in the southern part of the state. As is the case in other parts of Darfur, overall security in the state remains precarious as people grapple with poverty and rampant inflation while the government seeks to implement the rule of law more consistently, not least given the departure of the UN peacekeeping force, UNAMID.

While as noted above, IDPs - and to a lesser degree refugees - represent a high proportion of the population of South Darfur, and patterns of movement continue to change. Despite the worsening situation in CAR, refugees have not fled to Sudan but instead have largely travelled to South Sudan and the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC). Meanwhile, in 2021 continued skirmishes between tribes, notably in Gereida and Mershing localities, resulted in further localised displacement - warranting humanitarian assistance and further peacebuilding efforts. In the meantime, with increasing access to Jebel Marra and investment in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, there is growing hope for local settlement or the return of IDPs. While maintaining services for refugees and IDPs, as well as supporting services for returning IDPs, will continue to require significant resources, identifying durable and sustainable solutions - as set out in the Juba Peace Agreement - will require a system-wide approach that also tackles the underlying drivers to these long years of conflict.

Access to Jebel Marra and Linking Humanitarian and Development Issues

In partnership with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF has been at the forefront of working with the government, the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) and other stakeholders to increase access and assistance to the Jebel Marra region. For example, since 2020 UNICEF has undertaken multiple missions to Gorlanbang, Tarantonga, Feina and Kiri (not visited by most agencies since 2009, but services have now begun to reach these highly underserved populations). Moving forward will not only require additional resources but also a coordinated effort by UNITAMS, UN agencies and partners across the three Darfur states bordering the region. Furthermore, given the dearth of services in Jebel Marra, there is an opportunity to provide humanitarian support in such a way to begin to rebuild systems. For example, in South Jebel Marra, UNICEF and its partners have been able to identify health, education and child protection workers trained before 2012, and in collaboration with the SLA and government, have supported their travel to, and refresher training in, Nyala. In addition, UNICEF has provided assistance to strengthen health, education, water and protection systems and to support youth and women's groups, including as part of mitigation measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Conflict, Peacebuilding and Climate Change

Conflict - both at the national level as well as the locality and community level - is arguably one of the greatest bottlenecks to sustainable development in South Darfur. While, for instance, some IDP communities continue to return to Jebel Marra on a seasonal basis to farm their lands, a lasting return will not happen without the strengthening of conditions for what has been described as a 'safe return'. This includes, but is not limited to, durable solution for the displaced, strengthened governance - including access to services - and a culture of peace and respect for rights. As part of an inter-agency peacebuilding programme funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and focused on durable solutions, rule of law, social service delivery and local peacebuilding, UNICEF is supporting communities in Gereida locality with the provision of WASH, education and child protection services.

As part of these interventions, UNICEF is promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between different tribes, including through building community capacities in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as encouraging inclusive decision-making with women, youth and nomadic communities, in particular. Building on the experiences from the PBF programme, UNICEF is scaling up its work on social cohesion and resilience strengthening. Including in partnership with WFP, several initiatives will contribute to strengthening resilience capacities of individuals and communities, as well as the institutions and systems that provide services to them. This will take place through coordinated interventions, delivery and support of livelihoods and basic services and strengthening systems and institutions, with focus on equality, accountability and inclusion.

KEY RESULTS IN 2021

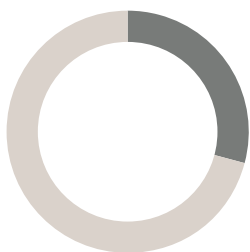
Unicef budget for South Darfur:

USD 8,283,305

as of 1 April 2022

Funds received ► **29%**

Funding gap ► **71%**



38,213 severely acutely malnourished children (SAM) (under five) were treated.

177,825 bed nets (long-lasting insecticidal nets) were distributed across South Darfur. These nets will keep mothers and children safe from malaria infection.

125,806 children were reached with polio vaccinations, and **77,689** children received the first dose of measles vaccinations.

12,842 people (**6,549** women and **6,293** men) gained access to basic sanitation services.

6,744 people (**3,087** women and **3,657** men) in humanitarian situations gained access to appropriate sanitation facilities and living in environments free of open defecation.

34,500 people (**17,595** women and **16,905** men) gained access to a basic sustainable drinking water source.

27,639 people (**14,351** women and **13,288** men) received teaching and learning materials and support for school construction and rehabilitation (including school furniture).

19,460 children (**10,321** girls and **9,139** boys) were newly registered in schools through extensive enrollment campaigns.

1,512 teachers (**824** women and **688** men) directly benefited from trainings on education in emergencies, life skills and the accelerated learning programme (ALP).

975 unaccompanied and separated children (**167** girls and **808** boys) were identified and reunified with their families or placed in alternative family care.

371 children (**317** girls and **54** boys) experiencing gender-based violence (GBV) were supported with response and prevention measures.

37,922 people were reached through awareness raising activities on the prevention of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child marriage and COVID-19.

2,349 children (**1,040** girls and **1,309** boys) benefited from referrals to services, including education, legal and medical.