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Women return home with bundles of reeds which they harvested from the floodwater, in the village of Tong during the 2023 floods in South Sudan. They have spent three hours swimming and partially floating on the reeds that they have collected. At this point the group will split, those who do not live in Tong will continue to float on the waters to the village of Rubkona, a journey that will take another hour or so. The women collect reeds to build their houses and to sell. The reeds are now the main source of income as most people have lost their cattle to the flooding .



PROTECTION CLUSTER SOUTH SUDAN
FLOOD PROTECTION GUIDANCE, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN
July 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Sudan is a country prone to severe flooding, which in turn often has a devastating impact, causing mid or long-term displacement and uprooting of communities, exposure to protection, livelihood, and health risks as well as inter-communal conflicts.

Floods destroy homes, limit access to healthcare, water, and sanitation, and isolate communities. Flooding disrupts essential services, including those provided by humanitarian actors, and worsens existing and already high protection risks in the country. Apart from resident communities directly affected by the rising waters, communities of returnees and internally displaced people (IDPs) are especially vulnerable to risks brought about by secondary displacement.

Among those risks, in a flood scenario, the Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) are especially concerned with risks affecting men, women, girls, and boys (such as gender-based violence, family separations, negative psychosocial impacts, restriction of movement, and destruction of property and livelihood opportunities). Exposure to unexploded ordnance and support mechanisms for the affected population especially, the elderly and/or people with disabilities. In some areas of the country are very real threats to the security and safety of people displaced due to floods in South Sudan.

Each year, South Sudan experiences significant flooding in various locations. However, according to the [South Sudan Flood preparedness and Response plan](#), the 2024 flood season is predicted to be one of the worst in the last 100 years. The areas likely to be affected by floods are home to over **3.3 million people**, many of whom have already been affected by conflict or previous floods. Many are returnees and refugees seeking permanent or provisional safety in those locations upon fleeing the Sudan Crisis (and many are yet to arrive).

Based on a worst-case scenario developed by the Government of South Sudan (GoSSD) and the Humanitarian Country Team that considers the flooding extent to be 10% larger than the one experienced in the 2022 flooding and a joint inter-sectorial approach to preparedness and mitigation in two phases, the Protection Cluster and AoRs developed a Flood preparedness and protection response plan targeting 1.6 M people and requiring support of an estimated 37.8 M USD across the country. The plan envisages pre-flooding mitigation measures among communities, life-saving assistance for displaced people, and community-based protection services and mechanisms for identifying, referring, and managing the most vulnerable people.

In flood preparedness and response, the Government of South Sudan (GoSSD) leads efforts, with humanitarian actors providing support. Communities are encouraged to take ownership of response activities and care for all members, fostering self-reliance. In developing this plan, we have considered contextual understanding, including conflict dynamics, to inform prioritization and targeting. This includes evaluating both population numbers and risk locations. Furthermore, the plan emphasizes complementarity and collaboration with other actors, interventions, communities, and the Government of South Sudan. This collaborative approach ensures a coordinated, effective, and sustainable response, enhancing protection and support for the most vulnerable populations.

PLAN TIMEFRAME

The timeframe for the South Sudan Flood Preparedness and Response Plan extends from June to December 2024, aligning with the primary rainy season in South Sudan, which spans June, July, August, and September. These months constitute 70% of the annual rainfall, with seasonal flooding typically occurring from July to October. The plan incorporates predictions from the IGAD Climate Prediction & Applications Centre (ICPAC), which forecasts wetter-than-normal conditions during this period, particularly in the eastern regions. Additionally, significant releases of water from Lake Victoria into the Nile at the Jinja dam by the Ugandan Government are expected to reach South Sudan within three months, potentially causing peak flooding around September. Establishing a clear timeframe and predicting the flood's occurrence will enhance community sensitization efforts, including pre-positioning supplies and implementing other preparedness activities, thereby mitigating the floods' impact on vulnerable populations.

GUIDANCE ON PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Even in the absence of flooding, Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, and parts of the Sudd wetland are home to some of the most vulnerable populations in South Sudan, already significantly impacted by conflict, economic crises, and previous floods. The anticipated floods will likely worsen the situation for these communities and individuals, further limiting access to basic services, increasing loss of shelter and essential resources, and heightening the risk of displacement, which will in turn escalate existing protection and conflict risks.

As many shelters are destroyed by floods, people will seek alternatives in places such as schools and abandoned buildings or will be living out in the open, creating potential tensions with host communities. Some of the most vulnerable persons may be unable to move due to physical or mental disabilities and a lack of resources, posing serious threats to their lives.

These vulnerable populations already face significant housing, land, and property (HLP) challenges, which are likely to be exacerbated by the expected floods. With limited land dispute resolution mechanisms, disputes over land ownership, unclear property rights, and home destruction are likely to leave these populations with insecure housing or land tenure. The floods are expected to cause widespread home destruction, particularly in low-lying areas and informal settlements. As affected populations move to higher grounds for safety, competition for land and natural resources is likely to increase, leading to heightened communal tension, violence or new conflicts, and further displacements. Many residential structures, often made of mud and thatch, are ill-equipped to withstand flooding and are likely to be damaged, leaving people homeless. Overcrowded and under-resourced displacement camps and settlements will also suffer, further deteriorating living conditions for displaced people.

Floods will inundate agricultural land, destroying crops and rendering agricultural fields unusable. The loss of farmland will have severe implications for food security and livelihoods, as many South Sudanese rely on subsistence farming. The destruction of crops and disruption of agricultural activities will lead to increased hunger and economic instability potentially leading to increase health risks, such as the spread of waterborne diseases like cholera and malaria, due to stagnant water and poor sanitation.

Flooding can also lead to various negative coping strategies, including child labor, begging, and discrimination in food allocation within families. It can result in early and forced marriages, substance abuse, and increased vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation for women, girls, and other vulnerable

individuals. The flood conditions create an environment where gender-based violence thrives, increasing the risk of rape, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and other forms of GBV for women and girls. Furthermore, flood-related consequences for men and boys include psychological stress, alcohol abuse, snake bites, wild animal attacks, injuries, drowning, and even death. Additionally, there may be a rise in crime and gang violence. Displacement caused by natural disasters can also give rise to housing, land, and property-related issues, even when the displacement is over a short distance.

Community and Authority Engagement

It is crucial to emphasize the leadership role of authorities and the active participation of communities. The Government of South Sudan (GoSSD) leads the flood response efforts, with humanitarian actors providing technical and operational support -when possible- to ensure a coordinated and effective response. Communities are encouraged to take ownership of mitigation and response activities and ensuring the well-being of all members. By empowering local authorities and communities, we aim to create a more resilient and self-reliant response framework, enhancing protection and support for the most vulnerable populations.

Protection principles

While developing and implementing a humanitarian response to the floods, protection and humanitarian actors should endeavor to:

- Avoid causing harm through assistance activities and prioritize the safety and dignity of the affected populations.
- Ensure meaningful and equitable access to assistance for persons in need by making separate arrangements for vulnerable individuals and groups.
- Be aware of the accountability to affected populations, placing them at the center of humanitarian action.
- Promote participation and empowerment of affected communities and align Vulnerability Criteria with Community Understanding.¹
- Use an Intersectional lens.²

Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs)

Identified persons with specific needs and particular risks and vulnerabilities who may approach the protection desks or may be identified by staff working in other sectors. The main profiles for identification are:

- Unaccompanied or separated children.
- Unaccompanied Elderly people.
- Pregnant/lactating women.
- Female and Child Head of Household.
- Persons with intellectual disability and chronically ill individuals.

¹ This means that the criteria you use to identify vulnerable groups should reflect how the local community understands and defines vulnerability. Local communities may have specific insights into who is most at risk based on their cultural, social, and economic context. By aligning with their understanding, your plan will be more culturally sensitive and likely more effective, as it incorporates the local perspective on who needs the most help.

² An intersectional lens considers how various factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status, and other identities intersect to create unique experiences of vulnerability. For example, women and children might face different types of risks and discrimination compared to men, and within these groups, those with disabilities or from minority ethnic backgrounds might be even more vulnerable. Using an intersectional approach ensures that the plan addresses these compounded vulnerabilities rather than viewing them in isolation.

- Persons, particularly children, and women living with disabilities.
- Members of marginalized groups.
- Households with older women and/or young children
- Other individuals/groups at risk.
- Persons including women, men, girls, and boys at risk of losing their HLP rights.
- Persons including women, men, girls, and boys whose HLP rights have been violated.

When identifying and targeting individuals and communities, it is essential to use an intersectional lens, recognizing that not everyone within these profiles is equally vulnerable during a crisis. Some individuals may have supportive families, strong social status, or kinship networks that mitigate their risks. The assessment of vulnerability should consider these factors to ensure that those most in need receive appropriate support.

Needs for Protection Interventions

Types of envisaged needs for support include but are not limited to:

- Mitigation of violence or discrimination against vulnerable groups including women and children.
- Mitigation of psychosocial distress because of the shock.
- Mitigation of loss or damage to civil documentation.
- Mitigation of risks for physical safety and security including from explosive hazards.
- Activities intended to mitigate the breakdown of social fabric and cohesion.
- Implementation of a comprehensive case management system and referrals with specialized services including cash and voucher assistance for women, children, GBV survivors, and other people with specific needs.
- Family tracing and reunification.
- Provision of protective NFIs.
- Prevention of loss of dignity due to loss of key clothing items.
- Prevention of inter-community violence relating to the availability of resources loss.
- Protection risk monitoring.
- Mapping potential high ground and how to deal with potential land related disputes.
- Community engagement with potential host communities.
- Community sensitization for likely affected populations including on HLP rights.
- Strengthen local authority capacities including Payam Land Council and County Land Authorities on conflict resolution and prevention including Collaborative Dispute Resolution (CDR) of HLP disputes.
- Collaborating with development actors for example dyke construction, resilience, and livelihood programming.
- Provide capacity building to humanitarian partners on integration of HLP in their inter-sectoral response.
- Negotiate access to land for farming and for settlement/residential purposes including supporting access to shelter.
- Mapping of HLP actors.
- Capacity building of local authorities and partners on legal frameworks relating to HLP.
- Support legal identity documentation to access to strengthen HLP rights.
- Facilitate security of tenure documentation.
- Coordinating more with peacebuilding actors for example joint context and conflict analysis.

- Strengthening community led climate early warning and information sharing, including identifying and training community flood watch groups.
- GBV awareness raising about risk factors for GBV and available responses and promoting timely reporting.
- Procurement, prepositioning and provision of dignity kits.
- Provide livelihood opportunities such as income generating activities, fuel efficient stoves and conduct safety audit as part of GBV risk mitigation interventions.
- Conducting GBV service mapping and ensuring availability of updated and functional GBV referral pathways.
- Provide capacity building to non-GBV humanitarian workers on integration of GBV in their sectoral response.
- Provide individual and group Psychosocial support including reactional activities.
- Provision of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) to displaced populations.
- Mine action assessments, survey and clearance of land designated for the resettlement of people fleeing the flooding at the request of relevant authorities.
- Verification of identified safe locations with known contaminated areas.

Protection Risk Monitoring

Encourage monitoring and reporting on protection-related risks in flood-affected areas and take steps to ensure the most vulnerable and affected groups have meaningful access to humanitarian assistance and protection services, in line with protection mainstreaming principles. This involves strengthening community structures to enable them to identify and report flood-related risks effectively. Additionally, it is crucial to monitor changes in context and emerging conflict risks associated with flood response, using this understanding to adapt the response accordingly.

Protection Mainstreaming

To ensure a meaningful application of the above principles, the checklist below can help humanitarian actors **streamline protection** in their endeavors:

- [Engage directly with communities, through committee's representative of gender, age, and diversity.](#)
- Ensure targeting of humanitarian assistance is done in line with humanitarian principles by identifying the most vulnerable and potentially invisible individuals and communities, irrespective of status or membership in a minority group. Include context and conflict analysis around flood-related risks to ensure that assistance is appropriately targeted, and that potential sources of tension or conflict are identified and mitigated.
- Communicate the reasons for any differences in distribution or services across community lines clearly with the flood-affected population, resident communities, authorities, and all other stakeholders.
- Take measures to identify the potential humanitarian needs of resident communities.
- Identify and map potential risks related to interventions, community dynamics, individual vulnerabilities, and risks for humanitarian partners.
- Involve appropriately trained male and female staff with skills and experience throughout the whole assessment and assistance delivery process.
- Ensure all humanitarian actor's staff are aware of available protection services, including GBV, child protection, HLP, MA, PSEA, etc., and how to provide a referral safely and appropriately.

- Ensure that important information (e.g., about cash transfer explanations or distribution timings and locations, forecasts, and warning) reaches and is understood by the people who need it, including the most vulnerable. Consider the gender differences in literacy, access to information, communication technology and restrictions on mobility.
- Adjust the timing and location of food distributions according to consultations with both genders and people with disability, ensuring safety and meaningful access.
- Choose distribution locations that are easily reachable for all those affected, away from security hazards as well as accessible for different social groups.³
- Design registration or distribution locations so that all individuals can access them safely and with dignity, with specific arrangements for women and children, persons with disability and in line with cultural sensitivity.
- Schedule registration and distribution during the day (and not at night).
- Ensure measures are in place to distribute supplies to vulnerable individuals (prioritize) and those unable to travel to distribution points, such as older people or persons with disabilities.
- Identify existing coping mechanisms and community-based protection mechanisms and ensure any intervention is built on and/or reinforces these.
- Train staff involved in assessments, assistance, distributions, and reconstruction activities on a Code of Conduct (Fraud, Child Safeguarding, Gender, PSEA, Feedback, and reporting Mechanism/AAP, etc.) agreement and make sure all staff sign the Code before implementing activities.

Outreach and Referrals

- Ensure a safe referral mechanism is established for persons in need of protection and other sectoral assistance using inter-sectoral mechanisms to refer affected persons to appropriate services including but not limited to: Persons with Disabilities, Psychosocial Support and Mental Health, Legal Assistance and Physical Safety & Security, e.g., Safe Shelter, WGFS
- Provide multi-sectoral integrated services through the establishment of mobile protection teams including GBV outreach teams to respond to the needs in IDP settings and resident communities.
- Provide mobile MHPSS services at the hub level to respond to the needs of flood affected IDPs.
- Provide cash for protection assistance for facilitating the referral and response.⁴

PLANNED PROTECTION CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

Pre-Flood Indicators

To meaningfully respond in the **pre-flood period** to the anticipated plight of flood-displaced people, the Protection Cluster plans to reach people at risk of GBV, children and their caregivers, people likely to lose homes and people with various other degrees of protecting vulnerability with targeted information and awareness-raising activities while providing risk-mitigation interventions and strengthening referral mechanisms. **The protection cluster will share with all its partners the joint ICCG messaging developed by the CCCM cluster, the communicating with communities working group, and the government.**

³ Ensure that the distribution plan takes into account potential distribution effects, such as providing undue advantage to those living closer to selected distribution areas. Consider setting up additional distribution points or providing additional support to ensure equitable access for individuals living in remote or hard-to-reach areas.

⁴ When implementing cash assistance, consider the conflict sensitivity lens, particularly regarding how cash interventions might strengthen or undermine local markets, the perception of support by the host community, and related conflict dynamics. Ensure that cash assistance is designed and monitored in a way that mitigates potential negative impacts and enhances positive outcomes for both the affected and host communities.

AoR	INDICATOR
Protection	# of women, men, girls, and boys with protection concerns or specific needs reached with protection awareness raising messaging
GBV	# Awareness-raising sessions conducted with women, men, boys, and girls on GBV risks, available response services, and timely reporting
GBV	# of dignity kits procured and prepositioned as part of the flood preparedness
GBV	# of women, and girls supported with GBV risk mitigation interventions (Income generating activities, fuel-efficient stoves, integration of GBV by other clusters and humanitarian actors)
GBV	# of non-GBV humanitarian workers trained on GBV integration in their sectoral response
GBV	# counties with functional GBV referral pathway
CP	Awareness sessions conducted with Children and caregivers
CP	Child Protection referral Pathways updated
HLP	# of women, men, girls, and boys reached through HLP awareness-raising and outreach activities

Response Phase Indicators

During the **response phase**, the Protection Cluster plans to continue with awareness-raising activities to ensure the availability of information on key services to affected people. Cluster partners will focus on strengthening the identification of people with special needs and referral mechanisms, case management, and other individual assistance including those that are cash-for-protection based or directed at family reunification. Considering the likelihood of mid-term displacement and formation of various types of community settlements and/or hybrid communities living with the resident population, the cluster partner will also engage in community-based protection activities such as WGFS, MHPSS, HLP dispute resolution mechanisms, and EORE.

AoR	INDICATOR
Protection	# of women, men, girls, and boys with protection concerns or specific needs, identified and referred through static or mobile means
Protection	# of women, men, girls, and boys reached with protection interventions intended for durable solutions (other than CP, HLP, and GBV) including legal aid, access to documentation, reintegration, and other protection support that can also be cash-based).
Protection	# of KI Interviews, at Payam level, covered by the Protection Monitoring System
GBV	# Awareness-raising sessions conducted with women, men, boys and girls on GBV risks, available response services, and timely reporting
GBV	# of women and adolescent girls who received dignity kits
GBV	# women, men, boys, and girls supported with specialized GBV response services (GBV case management, referrals, legal aid, safe houses & WGFS programming)
GBV	# Women, men, boys, and girls are supported with individual and group Psychosocial support including recreational activities
GBV	# of men, women, girls, and boys supported with cash and voucher assistance
CP	Children, adolescents, and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
CP	# of children who have received case management services (also through cash-based initiatives).

PROTECTION CLUSTER SOUTH SUDAN

FLOOD PROTECTION GUIDANCE, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

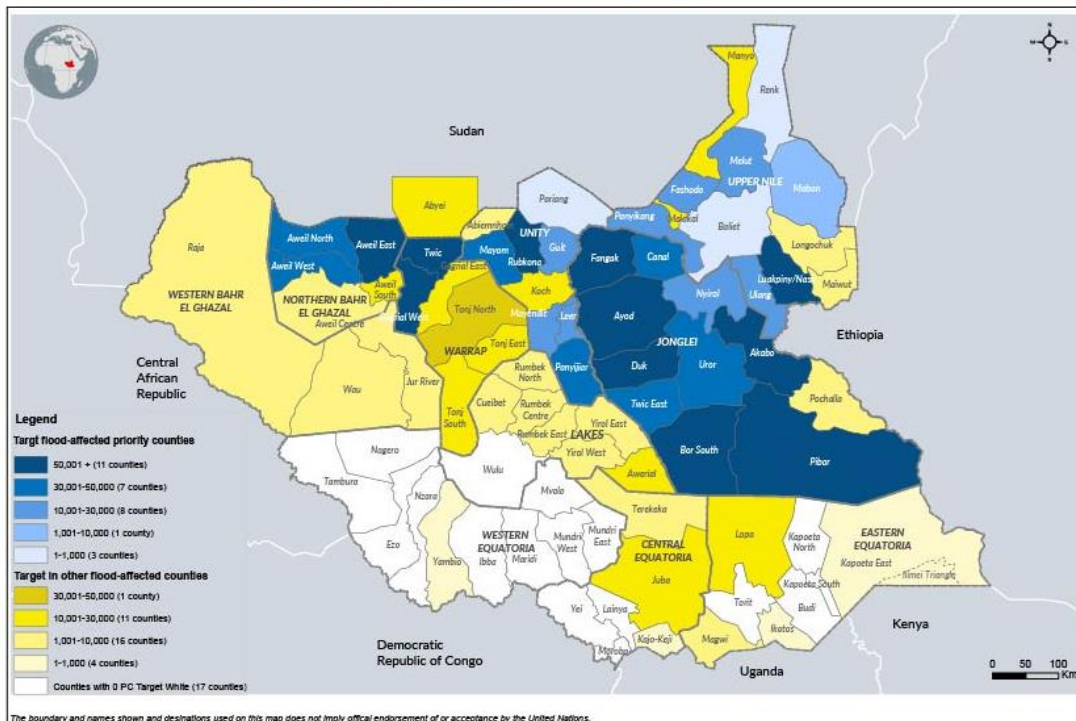
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CP	Unaccompanied and Separated children who have received family tracing and reunification services
CP	Awareness sessions conducted with Children and caregivers
HLP	# of women, men, girls, and boys supported with HLP legal counselling and aid
HLP	# of women, men, girls, and boys reached through HLP awareness-raising and outreach activities
HLP	# of dispute resolution mechanisms strengthened or established
MA	# of boys, girls, men, and women who received EOORE
MA	Square meters area released

Detailed Indicators, Targets, and Cost disaggregation is available at the [LINK](#).

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

While the Flood Preparedness and Protection Response Plan envisages the need for support across all 78 counties and the Abyei Administrative Area, the current understanding of priority and high likelihood of severe flood impact on the South Sudanese people by the GoSSD and the humanitarian actors focuses on 24 counties in Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, and Warrap states.



The map visually represents areas in white that not covered by the plan, areas in yellow that are estimated to be affected but not prioritized by the overall country-level flood response plan, while areas in blue represent affected areas that are prioritized. **Color variations represent the size of the targeted population and do not imply further prioritization.** Of note is the fact that flood response will be undertaken by the Refugee Response in areas of Maban, Aweil East, Renk, and Pariang thus also contributing to the overall delivery of protection services to affected people, but not included in this cluster-level plan.

TARGETS AND COST ESTIMATE

Full country coverage	Target	Cost Estimate	Prioritized counties coverage	Target	Cost Estimate
Protection	424,496	3,081,651 \$	Protection	333,914	2,343,144 \$
GBV	231,796	9,987,835	GBV	181,253	7,728,789 \$
Child Protection	280,144	17,579,127 \$	Child Protection	240,491	15,070,239 \$
HLP	502,343	4,429,916 \$	HLP	392,435	3,410,700 \$
Mine Action	248,472	4,856,438 \$	Mine Action	194,039	2,817,725 \$
TOTAL:	1,687,251	39,934,967 \$	TOTAL:	1,342,132	31,370,624 \$

Field PROTECTION CLUSTER PARTNER IN THE FIELD:

To see the list of active protection partners per state (5Ws) please visit the dedicated page of the PC 5W dashboard on the following [LINK](#).

SUBNATIONAL PROTECTION CLUSTER FOCAL POINTS:

To see the list of Subnational cluster focal points in the field, please visit the following [LINK](#).

ANNEX:

[GBV AoR Floor Preparedness and Response Plan](#)

[HLP AoR Flood Preparedness and Response Plan](#)

[CP AoR Flood Preparedness and Response Plan](#)



To register as a cluster member focal point or register e-mail on the distribution list please visit [PC SSD Contact Collection tool](#). For updates, reports, and assessments please visit [South Sudan | Global Protection Cluster](#). For the latest data on the delivery of protection services in SSD please visit [SSD Protection Cluster 5W for 2024](#). For the latest data and trends on the protection environment in SSD please visit [SSD Protection Monitoring v2](#).