

SOUTH SUDAN PROTECTION CLUSTER AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY END OF YEAR REPORT 2024

February 2025

BACKGROUND

2024 marked yet another year of challenges faced by the people of South Sudan, characterized by ever-growing humanitarian needs and pronounced protection risks. Economic degradation in the country, climate shocks, conflict and displacement shaped a series of turbulent, lasting and aggravating humanitarian challenges.

Inter-communal conflicts and general seasonal insecurities continued to challenge the people of South Sudan including the capacity of over **2 million** internally displaced people (IDPs) to find (re)integration solutions and returnee communities yet to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

About **1.4 million people were affected by flooding in 44 counties** and the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA), causing more than **379,000 individuals** displaced in **22 counties** and the AAA.

South Sudan received some **530,000 people fleeing the conflict in Sudan**, bringing the total to over a million people seeking safety in the country since mid-2023. Over 70% of those returning are South Sudanese nationals.

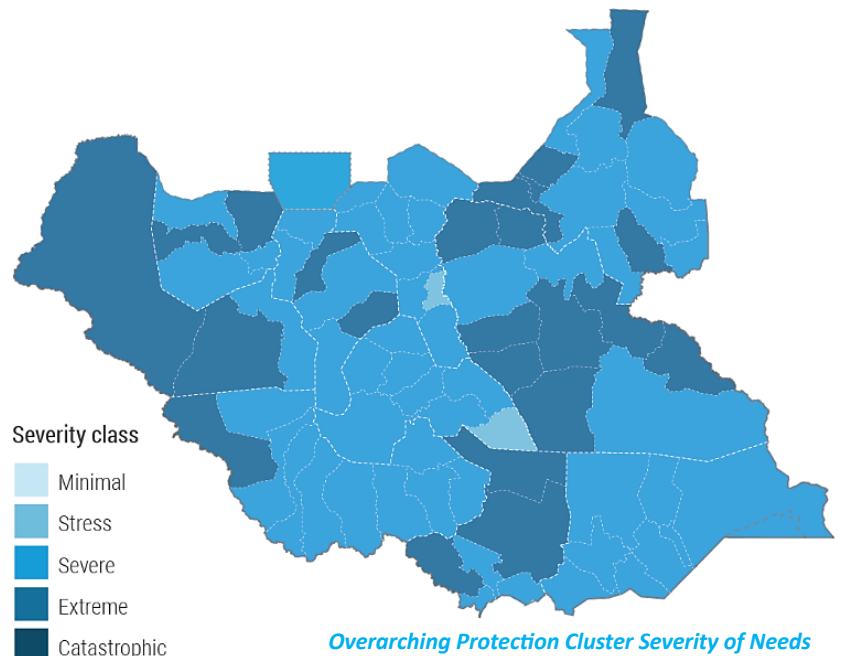
With severe economic crisis resulting in rampant inflation, the situation was further exacerbated by the sharp drop in oil revenues, making food and basic goods imports more expensive. The government's capacity to ensure a robust protection environment for the population was further weakened.

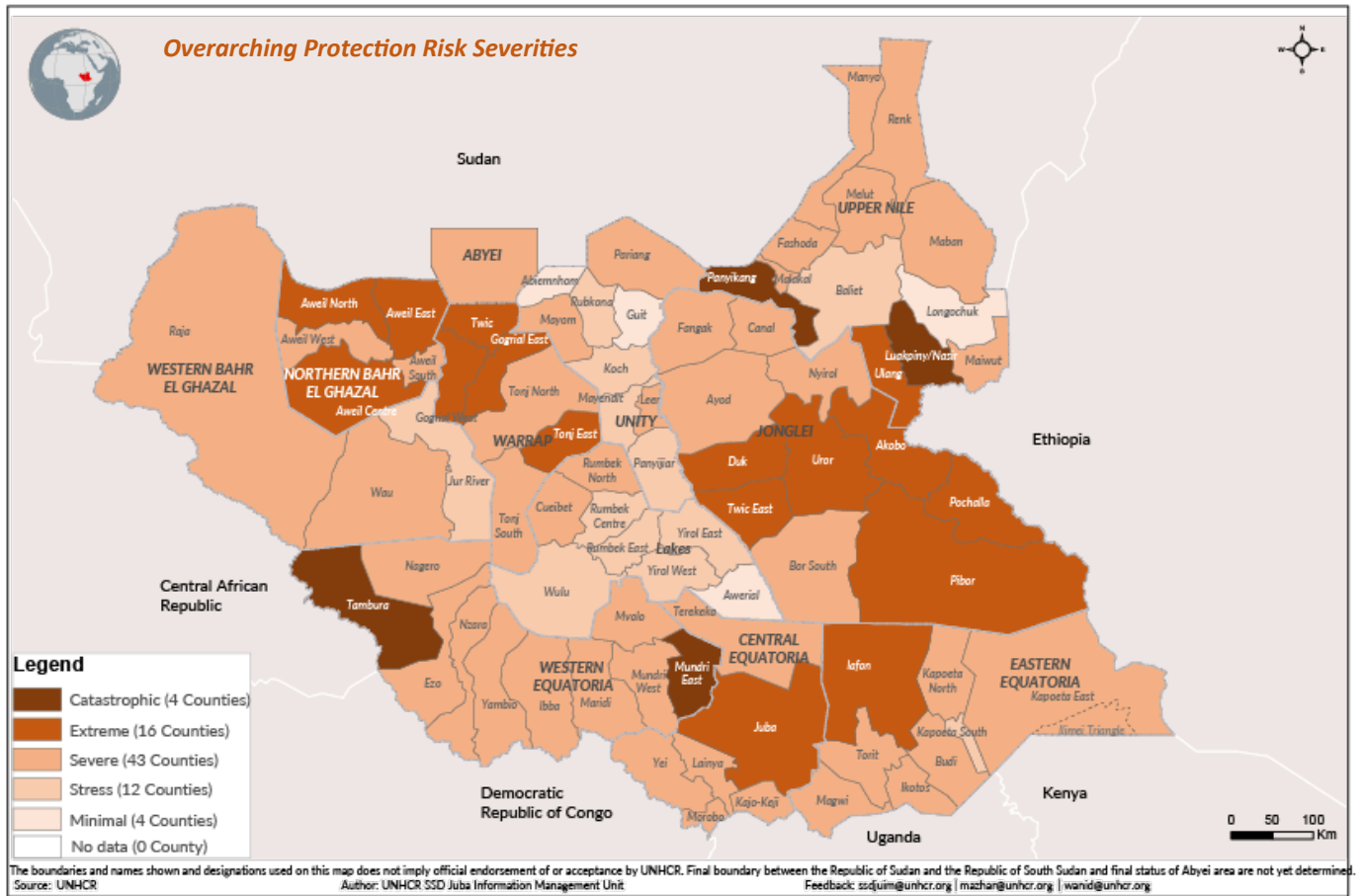
2024 PROTECTION RISK PREVELANCE

The top five most severe protection risks in South Sudan in 2024 were:

- Gender-Based Violence,
- Theft, Extortion, Forced Eviction or Destruction of Personal Property,
- Child, Early or Forced Marriage and Family Separation,
- Discrimination and Stigmatization, Denial of Resources, Opportunities, Services and/or Humanitarian Access
- Attacks on Civilians and Other Unlawful Killings, and Attacks on Civilian Objects

Out of a population of 11.29 million, approx. 9.18 million people in South Sudan are affected by climate-related shocks (such as floods and droughts), poverty and forced displacement. This means that approximately 81% of the population (IDPs, returnees and residents) are exposed to at least one of the top five protection risks. Further analysis shows that 98% of returnees (840K people) are the most protection risk-exposed population group, followed by IDPs at 81% (1,58M).





PC AND AoR ACHIEVEMENTS

Protection

In 2024, the Protection Cluster sought to actively strengthen its partnerships with development and peacekeeping actors parallel in coordinating responses in humanitarian emergencies, according to the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus principle. In line with the promotion of integrated approach to humanitarian response and localization, the Protection Cluster promoted national NGO synergies under consortiums as well as coordinated activities with other clusters and the ERRM consortium. In addition, several capacity building activities were conducted across the country on protection principles, coordination and protection risk analysis, as well as a five-day Protection Cluster and AoR stock-taking exercise and retreat that brought together coordinators from across the country.

A major component of the Protection Cluster activities in South Sudan was the implementation of the Protection Risk Monitoring System. Successfully embarking in 2022, with concurrent global efforts by the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and the Areas of Responsibility to streamline the Protection Analytical Framework across all aspects of cluster work - including risk assessment, needs assessment, advocacy, programming, coordination, and overall harmonization - the Protection Cluster and the AoRs in South Sudan initiated a transformation process in January 2024 through its PROMO working group. This transformation process, undertaken in close collaboration with the GPC and global and national AoRs, and supported by UNHCR/ECHO, DRC, and USAID (MELS), marked significant achievements. For more information on the PRMS roll out and implementation please click [here](#).

Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR)

In 2024, the CP AoR emphasized the importance of localization and successfully engaged 44 organizations—including UN agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs—to align with its strategy and response plan. Through these efforts, the CP AoR, in collaboration with its 55 implementing local organizations, established an operational footprint in 49 counties across 10 states and three administrative areas. Seven counties were prioritized to ensure that at least two CP AoR members remained active. The highest presence was recorded in Juba and Rubkona (six organizations each), followed by Akobo (five), Malakal (four), Renk (three), Mayendit (three), and Uror (three).

Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR)

In 2024, in line with its strategic objective, the GBV AoR prioritized GBV in emergency programming, focusing on prevention, risk mitigation, and response for vulnerable populations, especially women and girls. Site-specific GBV service mapping was conducted with partners, and informed revision of GBV SOPs and improved referral pathways across four states and three administrative areas connected survivors to life-saving services. The 2024 5Ws report documented 237,545 individuals receiving GBV services across 74 counties. The GBV AoR also contributed to the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), informing GBViE programming and resource requirement of USD 27.5 million. The HNRP identified 2.75 million people in need, with a severity classification highlighting urgent needs (23 counties at Severity 4, 53 at Severity 3). The 2024-2025 GBV AoR Strategy was also finalized and shared with over 200 partners, guiding GBV emergency programming.

A mid-year progress review against 2024 HNRP targets using 5W data triggered the AoRs to adjust work plans according to the fluid and turbulent protection landscape in South Sudan. The GBV AoR engaged with donors, advocating for GBViE resource allocation, and made presentations to key coordination platforms and groups, including the DSRSG/HC/RC, advocating for GBViE and CRSV prioritization. The GBV AoR also actively participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign. Through a consultative workshop, GBV AoR Flood Preparedness and Response Plan was developed. Capacity building included training of 111 individuals on GBV case management and creating 20 resource persons who received ToTs. Partners also received training on GBV integration and ethical media reporting. Field-level coordination was strengthened through regular meetings with state coordinators and county focal points. Demonstrating a commitment to localization, Women for Change (a WLO) was selected through a competitive process, and a WLO GBV AoR co-coordinator was recruited at the national level.

Housing Land and Property Area of Responsibility (HLP AoR)

The HLP AoR has actively engaged with stakeholders that include Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Government institutions, UN agencies, INGOs, NNGOs, Academia, and research firms on key discussions related to Housing land and property. This was through round table dialogues in Wau, Juba, Kajokeji and Renk. Through these efforts, the HLP AoR has strong coordination and collaboration of partners at the state level by having active technical working groups in Western Bahr El Ghazal, Central Equatoria state, and Unity. The HLP AoR in 2024 developed 3 strategic documents to guide its partners and ease coordination these include the HLP AoR strategy and Its action plan, HLP AoR advocacy strategy and Its action plan and security of tenure guidelines that have been used as guidance to strengthen coordination amongst HLP Partners, HLP programming and cross-country advocacy.

Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR)

The Mine Action AoR strengthened its efforts to address crosscutting issues to enhance mine action programming and align it with broader humanitarian, gender, and protection priorities. UNMAS, in collaboration with DanChurchAid (DCA), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), organized a workshop to empower women in mine

action. This workshop focused on enhancing leadership skills for female deminers and promoting gender equality and diversity inclusion in the mine action sector in a male-dominated field. It also collaborated with IOM to deliver two Psychological First Aid (PFA) training sessions, equipping mine action personnel with trauma recognition and referral skills to support colleagues and communities.

PROTECTION CLUSTER AND AoR PARTNER ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2024, **110 Protection Cluster members** reported to the joint 5W information-sharing platform. According to data received, and within the context of response to the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, the following were key achievements:

1.28 M people-centered services and assistance were provided. 15% of those services and assistances were with regard to the cluster contribution to the mitigation of GBV risks, 31% about mitigation of risks faced by children, 3.4% about EORE training, 2.1% in support of people seeking HLP solutions and 49% relative to mitigation of remaining protection risks and needs. **Overall, approximately 60% of the 2024 HNRP cluster population target was reached.**

During 2024, protection cluster partners were also active in providing assistance to South Sudanese communities and authorities in:

- Communication and information provision to reinforce people's capacities and strategies by conducting more than **4,900 awareness-raising and information-sharing activities**.
- Capacity strengthening and institutionalized support to reinforce the protection environment by conducting **training for 616 government and NGOs staff**, by **strengthening or establishing 458 community-based protection structures** of various types and by conducting **260 other protection-relevant activities** such as availability of WGFS, peace-building activities, etc.
- Identification, monitoring, and analysis of protection risks and needs by conducting **2,655 Key Informant Interviews across the country** and participating meaningfully in monthly PROMO meetings and publications.

SUDAN CRISIS RESPONSE

In addition to the abovementioned achievements and targets reached, within the context of the response to the Sudan Crisis, in the northern counties of South Sudan, Protection Cluster members reached the following results:

- **104,931 arriving people from Sudan were monitored** as a contribution to the overall UNHCR-IOM inter-agency coordination and government border monitoring efforts
- Over **15,000** people with special needs were identified and referred through static or mobile means
- Over **100,000** people received information on the availability of protection services in transit and at destination points
- Over **78,000** children, adolescents, and caregivers accessed community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- Close to **4,000** children received case management services
- **258** UASC received family tracing and reunification services
- **364** women and girls were supported with GBV case management
- Over **10,000** people were supported with PSS activities
- Over **6,600** women received dignity kits

Cluster partners have reached a cumulative people-centered targeted assistance of **73%** towards the plans for 2024, including the Sudan Crisis response, taking into consideration geographical and thematic changes throughout the year due to floods, influx dynamics, economic crisis, worsening protection risk environment, and other shocks. From a funding perspective, out of **120 million USD sought by protection partners**, FTS records some **84 million USD in funding received** for protection activities (including inter-agency coordination mechanisms whose full needs were not reflected in the 120 million USD required). The overall ratio between funding and goals reached is favorable towards cluster members' investments in the mitigation of protection risks in South Sudan.

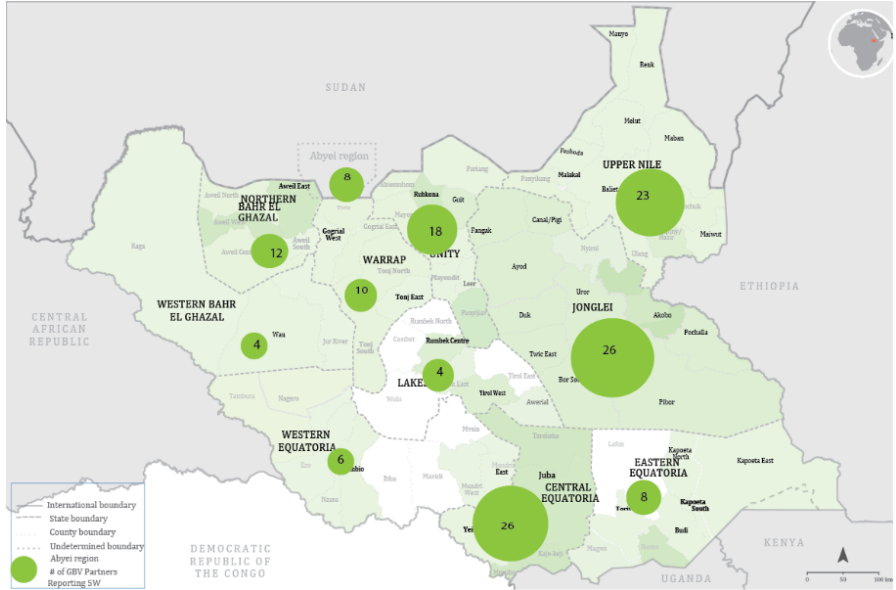
AOR DETAILED HIGHLIGHTS

Gender-based Violence AoR

Supporting GBV service delivery In 2024, **70 GBV AoR** partners reported to the 5Ws. Out of the 79 counties in South Sudan, at least one GBV partner provided services in **74** counties. Central Equatoria, Jonglei, and Upper Nile have the highest concentration of partners.

In terms of services, a total of **237,545** GBV prevention, risk mitigation, and response services were provided to women, men, boys, and girls in the 74 counties. It is important to recall that there is often underreporting on 5W's by GBV partners.

Most of the services were concentrated in the GBV AoR HNRP priority 1 and 2 locations including Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Central Equatoria states. In addition, more than **96 thousand** returnees from Sudan received GBV awareness raising, individual and group psychosocial support, GBV case management, dignity kits and cash assistance in Renk, Aweil and Abyei.



GBV AoR partners secured **49% (17,941,420¹ USD)** of the funding required to implement core GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation activities and targets identified in the 2024 HNRP. In addition, GBV service mapping across four states and three administrative areas, conducted in collaboration with GBV partners, informed revision of GBV SOPs and referral pathways.

Informing Strategic Decision Making – GBV AoR input to the Inter-Sectoral Needs Assessment and expert survey on core GBV response services contributed and informed the 2025 HNRP GBV AoR section, identifying 2.75 million people in need of GBV interventions and highlighting urgent needs (23 counties at Severity 4, 53 at Severity 3) and resource requirement of USD 27.5 million for GBViE programming in 2025. GBV safety audits were also conducted in six locations, and IRNA participation informed programming as well as resource allocation for GBV programming.

Planning and Implementing Strategies: The 2024-2025 GBV AoR Strategy, finalized and shared with 200+ partners, informs and guides partners on GBV in emergency programming. Similarly, the prioritization and tier classification of counties was carried out through a consultative process, based on the 2024 HNRP and severity classification and active participation of partners.

Monitoring and Evaluation – A mid-year GBV AoR retreat reviewed the progress against 2024 HNRP targets using reports generated from 5W data. The national GBV AoR Coordination team also reviewed its 2024 work plan, and adjusted it based on achievements and progress made.

Advocacy – The GBV AoR engaged with donors, advocating for GBViE resource allocation. In addition, presentations on GBV were made to the MARA Working Group, ICCG, and UNMISS SGBV taskforce which was attended by both DSRSGs. During these meetings, the GBV AoR advocated for GBViE and CRSV. The GBV AoR also actively participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign both at the national and state level.

¹ South Sudan FTS / <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/1157/summary>

Preparedness and Contingency Planning – A Flood Preparedness and Response Plan was developed through a consultative workshop with GBV partners enhancing GBV preparedness for the massive flooding in 2024. The capacity-building efforts included training 111 individuals (67 male, 44 female) on GBV case management and resulting in the formation of 20 resource persons who attended the GBV Case Management ToTs. GBV partners also received training on GBV integration in other sectoral responses and ethical media reporting.

Decentralized GBV AoR Coordination and Localization - Field-level coordination was strengthened through regular meetings and capacity-building training of state-level GBV coordinators and county focal points. To promote localization, Women For Change (a Woman Led Organization) was selected through a competitive process, and a WLO GBV AoR co-coordinator was recruited and joined the national-level GBV AoR Coordination team.

GBV AoR Coordination and Partnership - The national GBV AoR coordination carried out its regular bi-weekly GBV AoR coordination meeting throughout 2024 that established enhanced partnership and coordination among different GBV partners. Based on the profile analysis of GBV partners who registered on the regular GBV AoR mailing list in 2024, there were at least 91 national NGOs, 49 women-led organizations, 40 international NGOs, 8 UN AFPs/UNMISS, 8 donors, 2 Red Cross/Red Crescent, 3 cluster coordination, and 2 government ministries.

Child Protection AoR

The CP AoR reached a total of **381,065 individuals — 93% of whom were children**. (192,191 boys, 162,732 girls, 11,737 men, 14,405 women, and 2,851 persons with disabilities). A total of **84,375 individuals** directly affected by the Sudan Crisis received support.

The CP AoR delivered a comprehensive package of lifesaving child protection interventions, including case management, family tracing and reunification, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). 330,332 children (54% boys) and 26,142 adults and caregivers (55% women) benefited from community-based MHPSS services in child-friendly spaces and through mobile teams. 23,422 children (43% girls) received case management support, including cash-based initiatives. 1,169 unaccompanied and separated children (673 boys, 496 girls) were successfully reunified with their primary caregivers. 3,252 awareness-raising sessions were conducted, engaging caregivers and children on topics such as preventing family separation, identifying and responding to abuse, and promoting positive parenting practices. 2,659 individuals (35% of the yearly target), including 1,078 men and 1,581 women, were trained in child protection in emergencies to strengthen local protection systems.

Up-to-date referral pathways and service mapping were established in 44 counties, supporting cross-cluster coordination and ensuring access to child protection services.

In terms of reach per state, the Greater Bahr El Ghazal region recorded the highest number of individuals reached, reflecting a strong presence of CP AoR members. In contrast, Western Equatoria, the Abyei Administrative Area, and Lakes State had some of the lowest reach, highlighting opportunities for increased CP AoR engagement in the next cycle. Regarding periodic trends, the third quarter stood out significantly due to the flood response, reaching 35% (136,300) of the total individuals, followed by the second quarter.

Housing Land and Property AoR

In 2024, the HLP AoR developed four strategic documents aimed at enhancing capacity building and coordination among HLP actors:

1. HLP AoR Strategy and Action Plan – Strengthened coordination, collaboration, and operational efficiency among HLP AoR coordinators at both the national and state levels, including HLP Technical Working Groups.
2. HLP AoR Advocacy Strategy and Action Plan – Focused on advocacy for HLP issues and resource mobilization to support HLP interventions.
3. Security of Tenure Guidelines – Provided technical guidance and coherence for HLP partners conducting due diligence when implementing tenure security interventions.
4. HLP Documentary – Showcased the current HLP situation and highlighted the ongoing work of HLP partners in addressing critical housing, land, and property issues.

HLP in Emergencies: HLP integration in life-saving emergency responses, such as flood responses, was prioritized, ensuring access to land through negotiations with relevant stakeholders and land dispute resolution efforts contributed to conflict mitigation and social cohesion—a critical component of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus.

Additionally, the HLP AoR conducted HLP training sessions for especially HLP partners covering HLP rights programming and HLP tools. On the other hand, the HLP partners reached **18,324** through HLP rights awareness and outreach services, 2,012 through legal counseling, and legal assistance (cash and non-cash support). 47 alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation and negotiation were established or strengthened. A total of **414** individuals, were reached through complementary training on HLP.

HLP Response to the Sudan Crisis: The HLP AoR played a crucial role in responding to the Sudan crisis, helping returnees and refugees at border entry points in Upper Nile and Northern Bahr El Ghazal. Similar HLP responses were carried out in Kajokeji (Ugandan border), Tambura (DRC border), and Akobo (Ethiopian border), where large numbers of returnees required urgent HLP support. Referral pathways and service mapping were updated across 38 counties to improve access to HLP services.

HLP AoR's Contribution to National Land Policy: The HLP AoR was a key contributor to the draft National Land Policy, currently in its final stage at the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. By actively participating in the Land Reform Unit, the AoR provided technical expertise to shape high level HLP-related policy developments. It is anticipated that the adoption of this policy would be instrumental in securing HLP rights, including women's land rights, and initiation of laws such as the Succession Act, Land Titles Act, and Community Land Act.

Mine Action AoR

MA AoR is pivotal in the 'Triple Nexus' approach, which aims to align humanitarian, development, and peace efforts to address the diverse needs of girls, boys, women, and men across South Sudan. As such, mine action functions as a critical enabler for integrated nexus approaches, both through integrated programming and by providing safe and secure access and working environments for other actors.

Survey and Clearance: In 2024, mine action AoR partners surveyed, cleared, and released **11.5 million square meters of land**, creating safer environments for communities across South Sudan. These initiatives allowed local communities to move freely, supported the voluntary return and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees, and provided access to essential services and infrastructure. The clearance of land also supported the resumption of critical development activities. A total of 5,507 Explosive Ordnances (EO) were removed or destroyed, making 573 agricultural areas, 38 health clinics, 105 water sources, 11 schools, and 29 market areas safe for community use.

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE): AoR partners provided EORE to **425,507 civilians** nationwide, including 128,780 girls, 147,347 boys, 80,583 women and 68,797 men. The AoR also responded to the urgent needs of more than **60,000 people** displaced by the conflict in Sudan, delivering emergency EORE to refugees and returnees, and by surveying, clearing, and releasing land for the establishment of camp and transit sites, and resettlement areas in collaboration with – including, but not limited to – IOM and UNHCR.



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