

Addressing Human Trafficking, Kidnapping and Smuggling of Persons in Sudan

MID-YEAR REPORT
JANUARY-JUNE 2017



Sudan is at the centre of the East African migration route towards North Africa and Europe. Over the past decade, hundreds of irregular migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees have been transiting through Sudan every month, with some choosing to seek asylum in the country. Those on the move are mostly young Eritrean Tigrinya speakers from urban areas, but they also include Ethiopians, Somalis, South Sudanese and Syrians. Exit visa requirements from Eritrea, socio-economic challenges and protection concerns within Sudan, are often cited as reasons for moving on. They are also compelled to rely on smugglers to arrange their travel in order to seek safety in Eastern Sudan refugee camps or to move elsewhere in Sudan and beyond. Persons traveling from other countries usually also rely on smugglers to facilitate their entry into Sudan. Such irregular movements expose these persons to various forms of exploitation, which often end up in human trafficking. Sudanese nationals are exposed to similar risks when seeking opportunities abroad.

In response to the Government of Sudan's (GoS) call for support to address the high incidence of kidnappings and trafficking in Eastern Sudan, UNHCR and IOM initiated joint activities to improve security in refugee camps and identify victims of trafficking (VOTs) in need of assistance and support. In 2013 the GoS endorsed the Joint UNHCR-IOM Strategy to Address Human Trafficking, People Smuggling and Kidnapping in Sudan, which was joined in 2015 by UNFPA, UNICEF and UNODC.

In light of the prevailing trends, the 2015-2017 strategy foresees five strategic objectives:

- A. Enhancing security and mitigating risks
- B. Strengthening protection responses for trafficking victims
- C. Building national capacity
- D. Identifying solutions and alternatives
- E. Enhancing cooperation

This report summarizes the activities of the five partner agencies during the first half of 2017 aimed at achieving the objectives of the 2015-2017 Joint Strategy.

Enhancing Security and Mitigating Risks

In the first half of 2017, UNHCR worked to enhance security and mitigate risks by conducting awareness raising activities in the Shagarab camps. UNHCR held three focus group discussions that targeted males (15 participants, ages 18-35), minors (70 participants, 38 female and 32 male) and new arrivals (5 participants, 4 female and 1 male), to raise awareness of the risks of onward movement and the dangers associated with human trafficking. To promote the safety of asylum seekers upon entry into Sudan and at reception centres, UNHCR facilitated the transportation of 46 new asylum-seekers, who were also VOTs, from the Wad Sharifey reception centre to Shagarab camps. Security at Wad Sharifey reception centre was improved by increasing the number of police officers on site. UNHCR, together with the Sudanese Organization for Development (SOD) who are UNHCR's contracted lawyers, the Special Prosecutor for Combating Human Trafficking and Smuggling, and the Judge of the Special Court for Combating Human Trafficking and Smuggling, agreed to introduce witness protection measures for

VOTs testifying in anti-trafficking cases. This includes the establishment of a separate testimony room, connected to the courtroom through a microphone, speakers and video system, to maintain the privacy of the testifying VOTs, avoid re-traumatization by facing the perpetrator, and ensure the safety of the witnesses. In an attempt to maintain camp security and improve safety in the urban centres, complaint and suggestion boxes were introduced in order to improve feedback from persons of concern (POCs).

Victim Identification, Protection and Rehabilitation



UNHCR continuously works to improve victim identification and referral, by conducting regular screening to identify VOTs and protection interviews to determine special protection and security needs, as well as to provide VOTs with the required services. Survivors benefited by receiving referrals to a variety of services including livelihood activities, health, psychosocial services and resettlement. UNHCR provided 106 VOTs (37 males, 61 females, 4 girls and 4 boys) with psychosocial support and counseling, and 119 VOTs (52 males, 54 females, 4 girls, 9 boys) received direct assistance in the form of food, medical assistance, psychosocial support and legal aid. In addition, UNHCR conducted Best Interest Determinations (BIDs) through a joint BID panel for 15 VOTs (9 girls, 7 boys) who were unaccompanied and separated children.

IOM's Migration Resources and Response Centre (MRRC) Khartoum mobile response team provided direct assistance to 620 apprehended migrants (259 males, 313 females, 25 girls, 23 boys) in the form of medical check-ups, and food and non-food items. In addition, 861 beneficiaries (new and follow-up cases; 338 males, 376 females, 72 girls, 75 boys) received medical assistance and 77 beneficiaries (21 males, 45 females, 4 girls, 7 boys) received psychosocial support.

Building National Capacity

UNODC, IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF continued to work with national authorities by conducting training activities and workshops and providing for capacity-building support in a range of areas from effectively investigating and prosecuting trafficking crimes to providing psychosocial support to VOTs. In the first half of 2017, the UN Agencies conducted a total of 19 training activities and workshops and built the capacity of 567 individuals.



UNHCR Protection and Anti-Trafficking Workshop, Girba, Sudan

UNHCR trained 30 UNHCR protection staff in two training activities to increase their capacity to identify trafficking and protection cases and make referrals to the counter-trafficking unit, livelihoods assistance, health services and other durable solutions, including resettlement. UNHCR also trained 47 Government officials who included security agents, community leaders, and COR officers in Girba and another 45 Government officials in Gallabat to build their capacity to combat trafficking.

As part of IOM's work with the National Committee for Combatting Human Trafficking (NCCT), two workshops were conducted with 35 senior NCCT members to support the development of a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. The outcome of these two workshops was a National Action Plan which is set to be launched in November 2017. IOM has been working with the GoS to improve the capacity of the criminal justice system to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking in persons. IOM worked closely with key Government stakeholders, particularly the Judicial and Legal Sciences Institute, to develop and deliver training on the effective investigation and prosecution of trafficking crimes. A national curriculum on investigating and prosecuting trafficking was developed and a group of trainers from within the criminal justice system were trained as trainers. The curriculum is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of police, prosecutors and judges on trafficking legislation and in applying protection principles during the investigation and prosecution phases.



IOM third Basic Level Documents Security and Examination Training, Khartoum, Sudan

In addition, IOM has been working with the Judicial and Legal Sciences Institute to develop a technical working group charged with monitoring the implementation of the Combatting Human Trafficking Act and other trafficking-related laws specifically with the aim of advocating for the non-criminalization of smuggled migrants and victims of trafficking. IOM also conducted a Training of Trainers for 16 immigration officers; provided three basic level training courses on Document Security and Fraud Detection to 65 immigration officers from the Passport and Civil Registration

Corporation (PCRC) of the Ministry of Interior; delivered training for 58 front-line migration officers (non-commissioned officers) on the usage of first and second inspection equipment; held a curriculum development workshop exploring the implementation of anti-trafficking and smuggling laws involving 30 judges, prosecutors and police officers; trained 20 judges, prosecutors and police officers as trainers on investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases; trained 16 judges, prosecutors and police officers on investigating & prosecuting trafficking cases; trained 30 participants (including the Special Prosecutor on Anti-Trafficking, members of the Bar Association in Kassala and Gedaref, and the Ministry of Justice) on anti-trafficking and smuggling; and conducted a workshop for 10 National NGOs on anti-trafficking and smuggling and VoT assistance, reaching 20 participants, including representatives of NCCT.

UNODC trained 30 law enforcement officers to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Sudan, and trained 23 Sudanese Prosecutors to prosecute cases of human trafficking.

UNICEF trained 30 investigating officers, 30 receptionists/reporters and 27 social work service providers from Family and Child Protection Unit (FCPU) Kassala, to increase their capacity to combat trafficking and support VOTs. In addition UNICEF trained 15 social workers from the Ministry for Social Affairs on psychosocial support to increase their capacity to support VOTs.

Identifying Solutions and Alternatives

UN Agencies continue to work to identify ways to protect and support VOTs and other vulnerable POCs. UNHCR actively worked to provide protection and services to VOTs and other vulnerable POCs, through providing Safe House accommodation to 87 vulnerable POCs including psychosocial support, legal counselling, health services and social activities. These POCs included VOTs waiting to testify in court who would otherwise have been detained (17 males, 29 females, 24 girls, 17 boys), two unaccompanied boys who were supported with voluntary repatriation to their country of origin, and six unaccompanied girls who were reunified with their families. Moreover 17 VOT cases (10 males, 7 females) were eligible for resettlement.



UNICEF Life Skills Education Programme, Kassala, Sudan

Apart from activities targeted as part of the Counter-Trafficking activities, UNHCR also promoted rural livelihood activities from which VOTs and other vulnerable POCs could benefit. Through UNHCR's livelihood activities 210 households (170 men and 40 women) were supported with agricultural production subsidies to access land and other inputs; 155 beneficiaries (55 men and 100 women) were supported with livestock production; 40 households (women) were supported with home gardening and 21 beneficiaries (10 men and 11 women) were supported with agro-forestry activities; agriculture and livestock extension services were provided by the Ministry of Agriculture to 365 farmers and

pastoralists. Moreover, 1,500 women were provided with life skills training including basic and essential functional literacy/numeracy skills; 921 women were trained on income-generating skills such as food processing, tailoring and embroidery; 1,500 women were trained in basic financial management through Village Saving and Lending Group schemes; and 200 beneficiaries received vocational training in mobile maintenance, advanced food processing, perfumes and cosmetics, car mechanics and advanced printing. Upon graduation, the refugees were provided with certification and start-up kits to begin their own businesses.

In the first two quarters of 2017, IOM facilitated voluntary returns for 209 stranded migrants (90 males, 63 females, 30 girls, 26 boys) from Sudan to their countries of origin. UNICEF provided services to vulnerable POCs including vocational training to 510 adolescents (266 males, 244 females) in general electronics, mobile phone maintenance, food processing, hairdressing, henna art, motorcycle maintenance, perfume making, handcrafts, pastry making and sewing. Upon graduation, they were also provided with certification and start-up kits to begin their own businesses.

Enhancing Cooperation

UN Agencies continued to work to enhance cooperation with state, national and international actors. With the *Joint Strategy Addressing Human Trafficking, Kidnapping and Smuggling of Persons in Sudan (2015-2017)* running out at the end of this year, a *Working Group on Counter-Trafficking and Mixed Migration* was established, which will continue the work initiated through the Joint Strategy and will ensure the continuation of inter-Agency cooperation. Members of this Working Group include IOM and UNHCR, who both serve as co-chairs, UNODC, UNICEF, UNFPA, IFRC and GIZ-BMM. The Working Group held two meetings on 3 and 24 August and will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis. NCCT will be the key Government counterpart to this group.

UNHCR conducted a coordination meeting with relevant state actors in February 2017 and, in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR), established a State Level Committee to Combat Human Trafficking in Kassala State. UNICEF increased their efforts to work for the protection of women and children affected by trafficking and migration by reaching out and making contact with both UNICEF Ethiopia and UNICEF Eritrea, working towards formal cooperation on cross-border trafficking and migration issues. IOM worked with key Government counterparts in the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior to improve coordination of training programmes on trafficking involving the criminal justice system. IOM worked with both Ministries to advocate for joint training.

Advocacy and Awareness-Raising

UNHCR highlighted the risks associated with irregular movement by conducting information and awareness-raising sessions through focus group discussions at the Reception Centre in Shagarab I camp, and by distributing 300 posters and other information, education and communication (IEC) materials. As part of the “Telling the Real Story” (TRS) Project, UNHCR conducted 16 special audio/visual sessions targeting males,

females and minors who have recently arrived in East Sudan highlighting the experience other people have had during their dangerous journey towards Europe. A total of 1,995 POCs (975 males, 351 females, 374 girls and 295 boys) attended the TRS sessions. In order to raise awareness on the risks associated with irregular migration, an IOM-produced play "Boats of Death" was staged in front of 150 individuals (75 males, 75 females) in Khartoum during a youth conference. Also in Khartoum, 94 migrants (59 males, 35 females) attended community outreach and awareness-raising sessions at IOM's MRRC.

Research

IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR initiated studies in order to better understand the issues associated with human trafficking in Sudan. In February, IOM published a study,¹ *"Migrants in Sudan: Pilot study on migrants' motivations, intentions and decision-making in Khartoum."* This study focuses on the changing migration flow dynamics in the region, and identifies trends related to migration towards and through Sudan. UNICEF conducted a baseline survey using a modified S3M Methodology to assess the potential impact of migration on host communities. Survey results are expected by the end of September 2017.

¹ Source: <https://sudan.iom.int/migrants-sudan-2017>