

Protection concerns and movement intentions of refugees and migrants displaced by the Sudan conflict

This infographic examines the journeys of more than 200 refugees and migrants who were in Sudan when the conflict broke-out in April 2023. Using a longitudinal research design, which involved conducting follow-up interviews approximately six months after an initial baseline interview, the data provide insights into how refugees and migrants' movement intentions, aspirations, and their exposure to abuse and hardships changed over time against the backdrop of conflict.

METHODOLOGY

LOCATION IN SUDAN AT TIME OF BASELINE INTERVIEW:

Gedaref (8), Kassala (9), Khartoum (2), Port Sudan (197), Qarya 8 Camp (1), Shagarab Refugee Camp (11), Singaterib (1), Wad Madani (2)

COUNTRY AT TIME OF FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW:

Central African Republic (CAR) (1), Chad (3), Egypt (43), Eritrea (3), Ethiopia (5), Kenya (3), Libya (27), South Sudan (15), Sudan (124), Uganda (7)

DATA COLLECTION PERIOD: Baseline interview: Oct – Dec 2023; March – May 2024. Follow-up interview: May 2024; Sep – Oct 2024

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION: Phone surveys

SAMPLE: 231 refugees and migrants

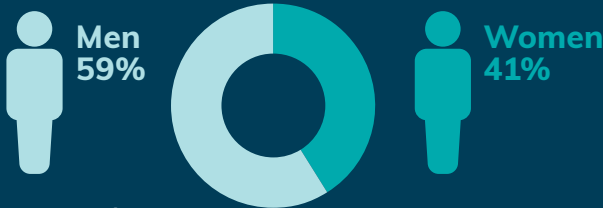
This infographic is based on data collected from 231 respondents who were successfully reached with the follow-up survey out of 414 respondents interviewed at baseline, representing a 56% call back success rate. It is possible that individuals who were not reached during the follow-up were unavailable because they had moved onward.⁹ As a result, the percentage of those moving onward is likely an underestimate.

Key findings

- Before the war, Sudan was the second-largest host country of refugees and asylum seekers in Africa, with over 1.1 million largely from neighboring countries, but also from Syria and Yemen.¹ Sudan was also a main transit country for people from East and the Horn of Africa moving along the Central Mediterranean Route.
- As of January 2025, approximately 8.8 million have been displaced internally within Sudan, while 3.3 million have sought refuge in neighboring countries.² Both cross border and IDP displacements increased at a high rate.³
- Border regions in Chad and South Sudan are facing acute humanitarian crises and struggling to meet the basic protection and assistance needs of the newly displaced.⁴
- Visa requirements for Sudanese in Egypt have hampered many from entering the country and seeking asylum. Those unable to meet visa requirements may resort to using smugglers' services to cross the border, risking their lives.⁵ In Ethiopia's Amhara region, the insecurity in the region has contributed to a number of Sudanese having to flee.⁶
- Reports of various human rights violations including those committed against refugees continue to emerge according to the UN's Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan.⁷ In addition, incidents of sexual and gender-based violence across the country are widespread and 6.7 million people are at risk, particularly women, girls and other highly vulnerable groups.⁸

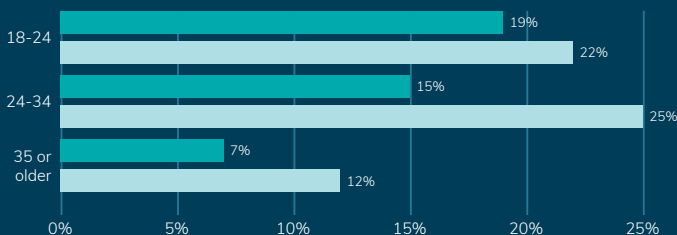
Respondents profiles (n=231)

Gender

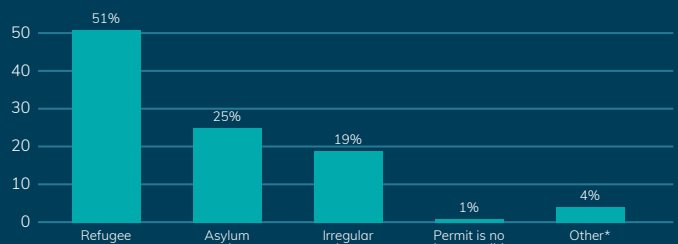


23% were traveling or living with children in their care

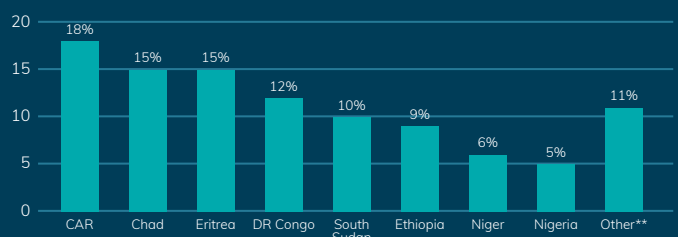
Age



Legal status (data at follow-up)



Nationality



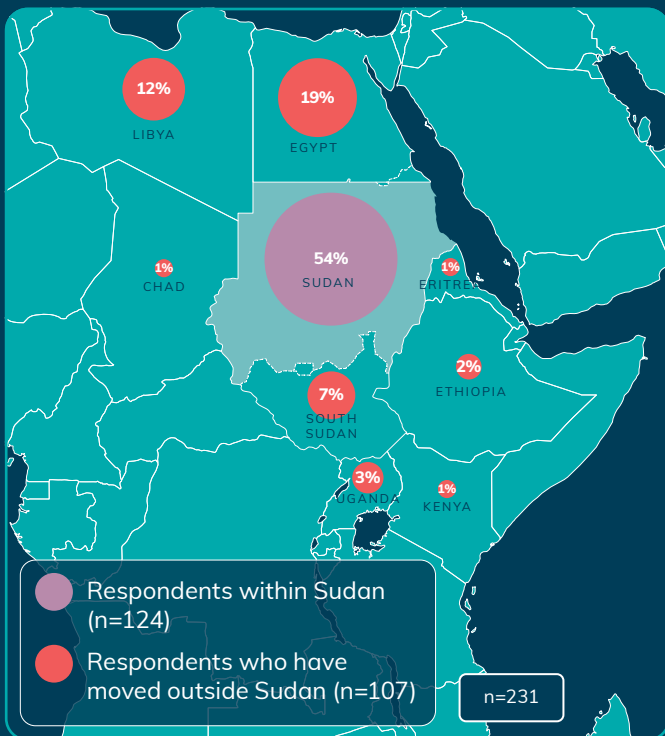
Note: The 4Mi sample is purposive. Data presented in this snapshot cannot be considered representative of the full population. *Other legal statuses include regular migrants, temporary and permanent residents. **Other nationalities include 9 Cameroonians, 6 Burundians, 2 Somalis, 2 Sierra Leoneans, 2 Liberians, 1 Burkinabe, 1 Beninois, 1 Malian, 1 Ivorian, and 1 Guinean.

1. UNHCR (March 2023). [Operational Data Portal](#)
 2. UNHCR (January 2025). [Sudan Emergency: Population movements from Sudan](#).
 3. MMC (April 2024). [Quarterly Mixed Migration Update](#).
 4. Relief International (October 2024). [Sudan Regional Emergency: Millions of People Plunged into Crisis](#).

5. Ayin Network (July 2024). [The struggles of Sudanese migrants crossing into Egypt](#).
 6. Migration.info (May 2024). [Sudanese Refugees' Struggle in Amhara Region Camps](#).
 7. OHCHR (September 2024). [Sudan UN Fact-Finding Mission](#).
 8. UN WOMEN (April 2024). [A year of suffering for Sudanese women and girls](#).
 9. UNHCR (n.d.). [Master glossary of terms: onward movement](#).

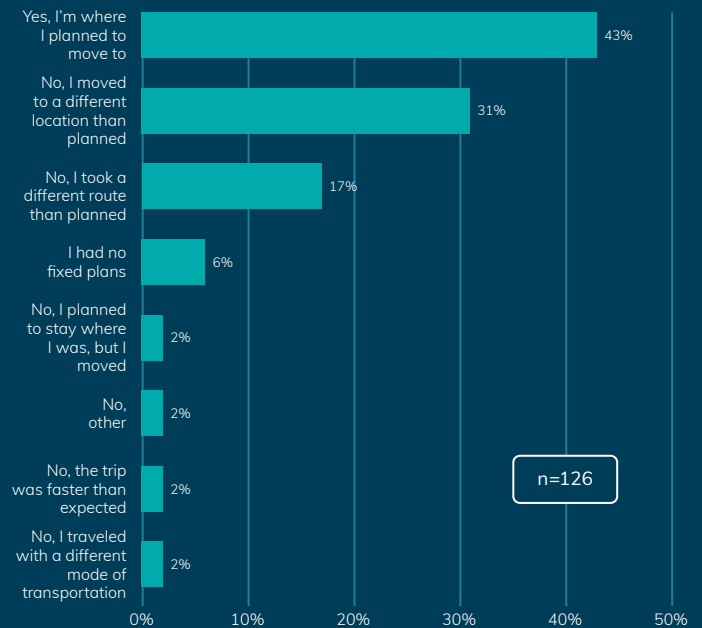
Tracking movements six months after the baseline

What country are you in right now? (data from follow-up)



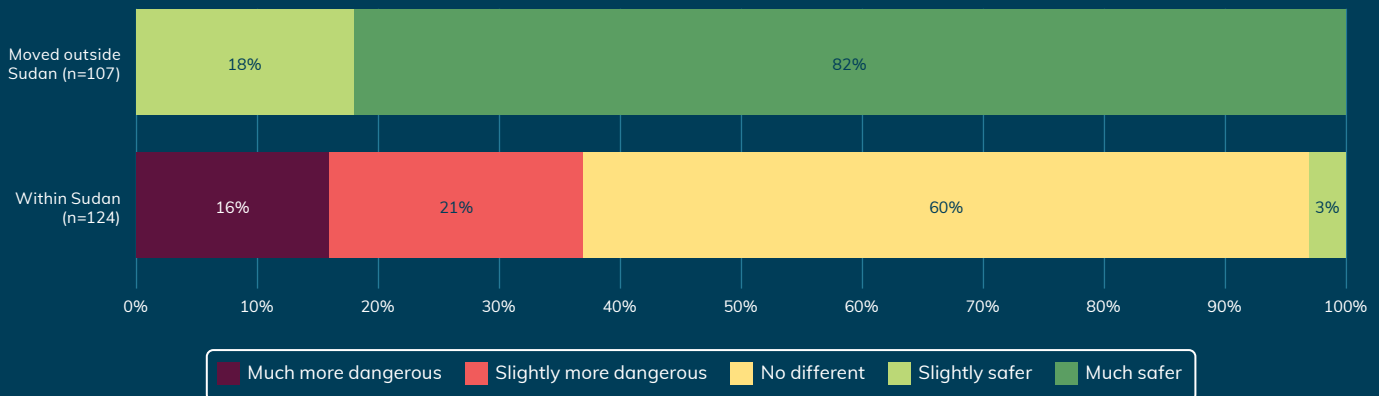
Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNHCR and MMC.

Among respondents who had moved: Has your journey gone according to plan? (data from follow-up)



Out of the 124 respondents within Sudan, 85% (105) had not moved from their location of interview since baseline while 15% (19) had moved to a different location within Sudan. When combining those who moved within Sudan (19) with those who moved outside (107), the total number who moved is 126.

Describe your situation since we last spoke as more safe or more dangerous? (data from follow-up)



Key findings

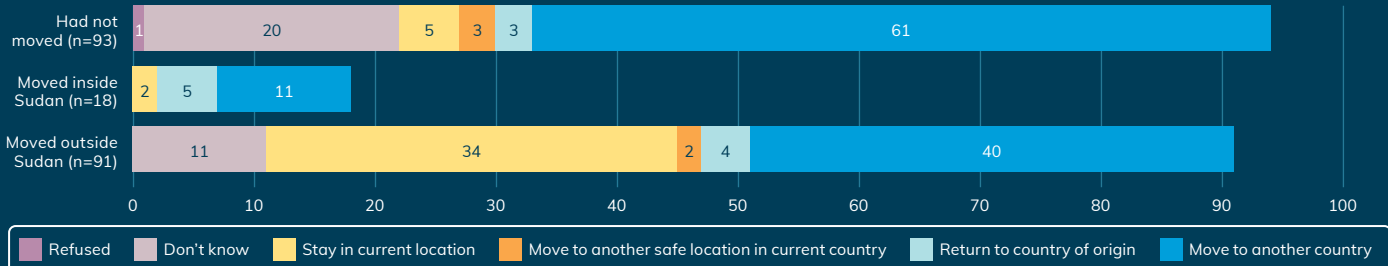
- Just under half (46%) of respondents moved onward from Sudan, while 54% had remained in the country.
- Respondents' movements were mainly to neighbouring countries and align with the overall displacement patterns of Sudanese and third country nationals fleeing the conflict, as reported by UNHCR.¹⁰ Moreover, they align with the short-term onward movement intentions reported by non-Sudanese respondents interviewed by MMC in Eastern Sudan in early 2024.¹¹
- Most (58%) of the respondents who had planned to leave Sudan three months after baseline interview did so, but their actual trajectories were often different from their initial plans. Just 18% reached the country they had cited initially as a destination and 40% moved to a different destination country. Notably, Egypt, Libya, and South Sudan were the top countries for both groups. This shift in movement plans highlights the dynamic nature of displacement and the importance of ongoing monitoring.
- All respondents in the follow-up survey who had engaged in onward movement reported their situation as safer compared to 3% of those who remained in Sudan. Over a third (37%) of refugees and migrants in Sudan said that their situation had become more dangerous, suggesting they are also likely to have higher protection needs.

10. UNHCR (December 2024). [Operational Data Portal](#).

11. MMC- UNHCR (August 2024). [Movements, experiences and aspirations of refugees and migrants in Eastern Sudan during the Sudan War in 2024](#).

Looking ahead: Movement intentions in the next three months

What are your movement intentions within the next 3 months?¹²



Access to information and reliability (data from follow-up)

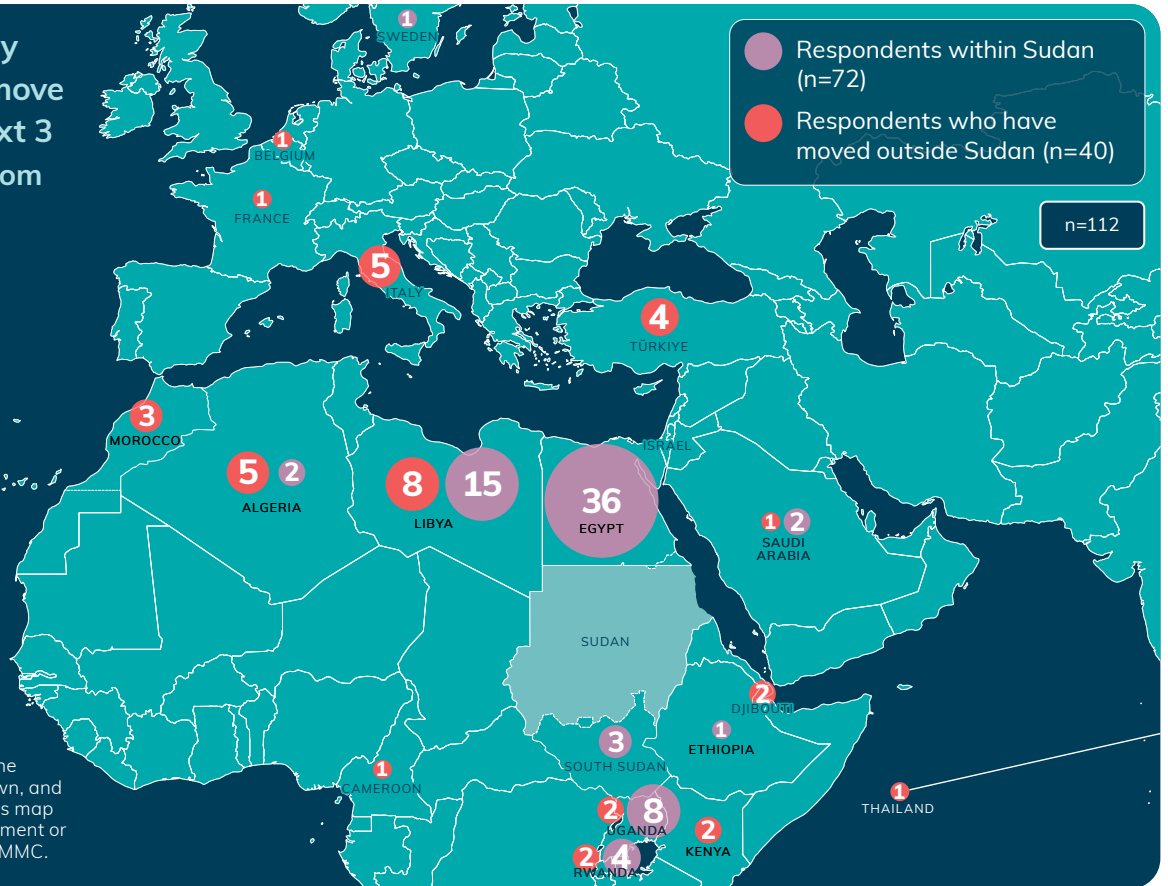


60% received information from online social networks on the policies and restrictions to enter their intended destination countries



40% reported smugglers were the most reliable source of information during the period between the baseline and follow-up interview

To which country do you plan to move to within the next 3 months? (data from follow-up)



Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNHCR and MMC.

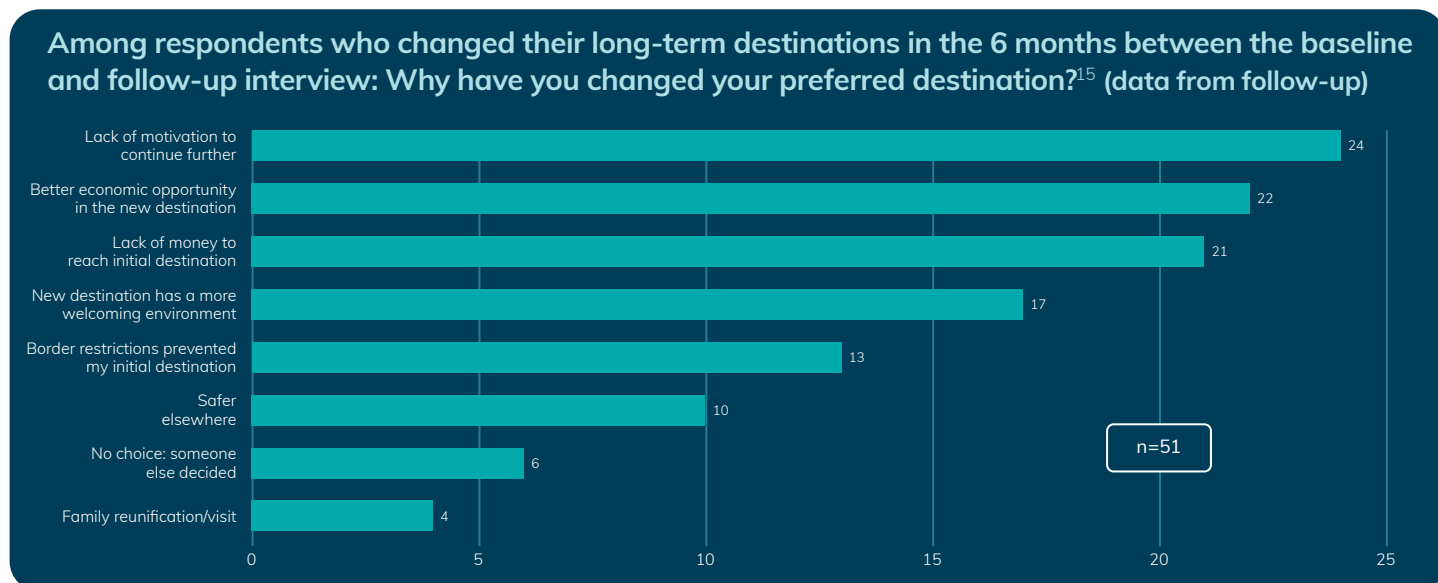
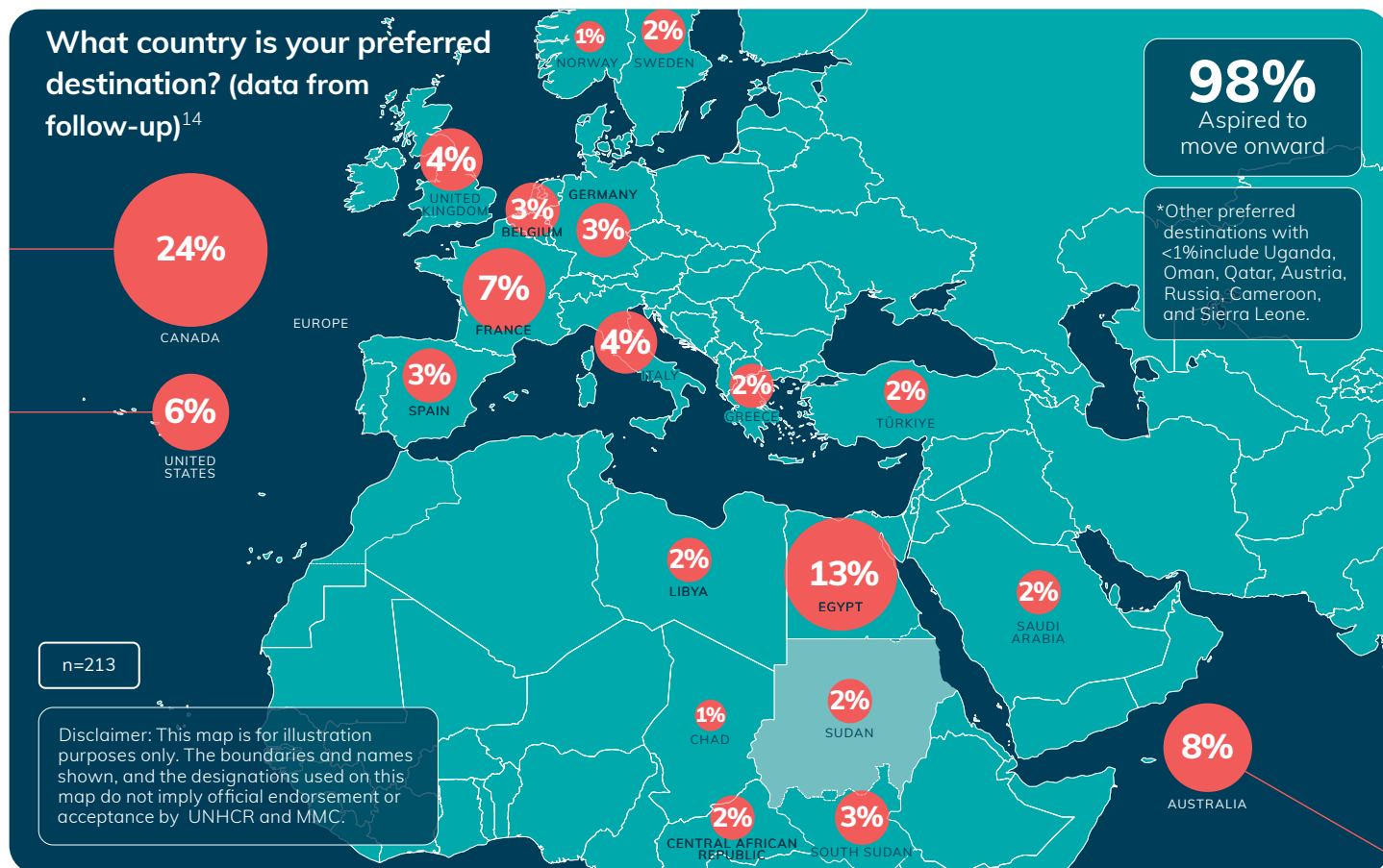
Key findings

- Over half (56%) of respondents in the follow-up interview planned to move to another country within three months. Those who remained in Sudan at the time of the follow-up interview expressed the desire to move to neighbouring countries, mainly to Egypt and Libya, whereas those who had already moved onward were looking to reach countries farther afield, largely in other parts of North Africa and Europe.¹³
- 20% of respondents in the follow-up interview planned to remain in their current location. Most of those not planning to move were already outside Sudan (34/41), mainly in Egypt (15) and Libya (10). For respondents still in Sudan, just 6% (7/111) planned to remain.
- 15% said they didn't know their movement intention within 3 months; most of these respondents (20/31) were still in Sudan.
- Only 6% (8 in Sudan, 2 in Egypt and 2 in South Sudan) cited an intention to return to their country of origin in the follow-up interview, suggesting that at present, return is perceived by most as an undesirable option. Their nationalities are South Sudanese (5), Central African (3), Nigerian (1), Sierra Leonean (1), Chadian (1), and Liberian (1).

12. 29 respondents (13%) were not in Sudan when the conflict broke out in April 2023 and thus did not answer questions which were part of a specific module on MMC's 4Mi survey about the impacts of the conflict in Sudan.

13. Respondents in Egypt who planned to move onward, were aiming for Libya (5/13), Turkey (3), Israel (1), Algeria (1), and Morocco (1). Respondents in Libya were aiming for Italy (5/11), Algeria (3), Morocco (2), and Saudi Arabia (1).

Looking ahead: Long-term movement aspirations



Key findings

- A large variation exists in onward movement decision-making: short-term destinations are mainly neighbouring countries like Egypt and Libya, reflecting more practical plans vis-à-vis cost and accessibility, with only 15% citing destinations outside Africa. For long-term intentions, over 75% target destinations beyond Africa, possibly because such movements are more aspirational or indicative of resettlement goals rather than immediate onward movement. In addition, the data suggest that refugee and migrant respondents do not perceive Egypt and Libya as places of long-term settlement. This stands in stark contrast to reports of Sudanese refugees in Egypt having the intention to remain in the country for the foreseeable future.¹⁶
- In the long term, almost all respondents (98%) aspired to move onward.
- During the follow-up interview, 75% of respondents reported that their intended destination remained the same as from the baseline survey, while 22% indicated it had changed. Among those who reported that their destination had changed (n=51), the largest group (14) indicated Egypt as their new preferred destination.
- The primary reason for changing destination was a lack of motivation to continue further (24 out of 51) followed by better economic opportunities (22).

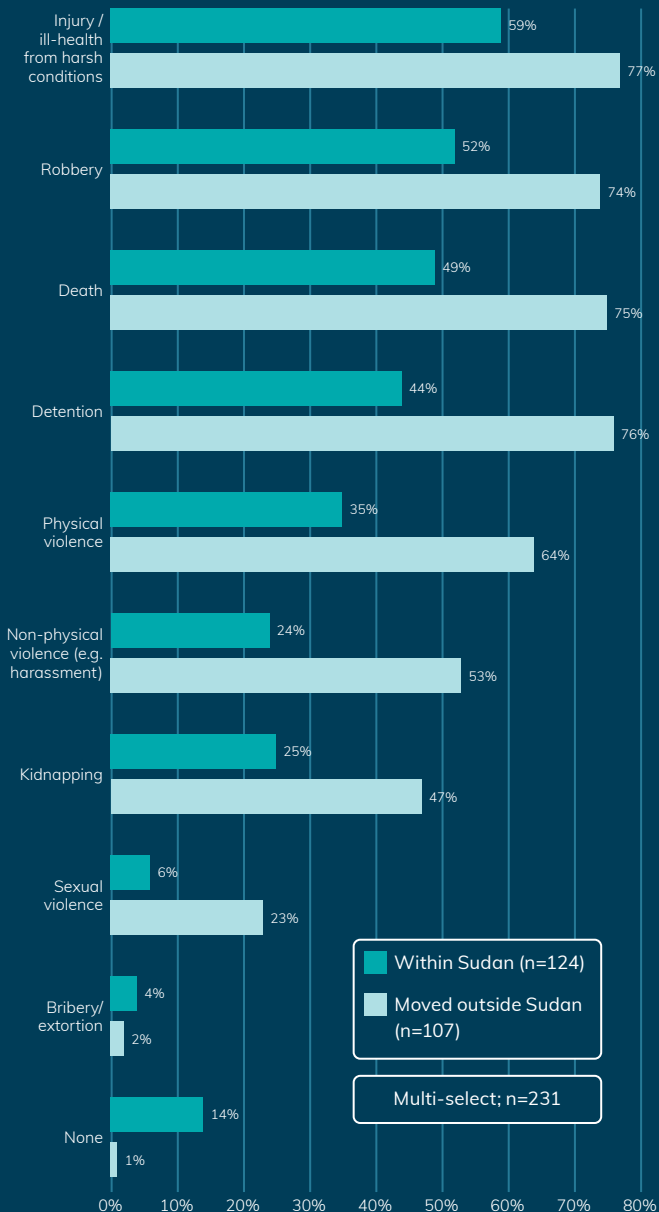
14. Ten were unsure of their intended destination, and 8 (4 in Egypt and 4 in Sudan) had already reached their preferred destination; hence, 18 responses are not included in the map.

15. This question was only asked to respondents who had changed their intended long-term destination in the last 6 months since the baseline interview.

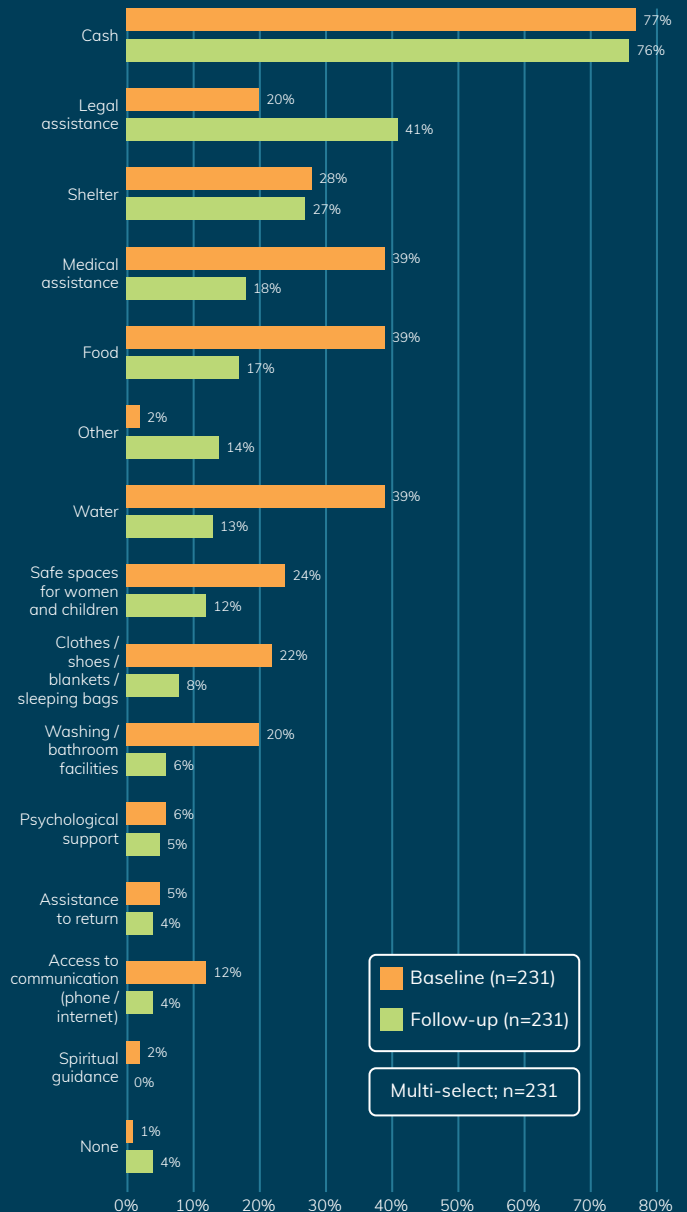
16. Insights from key informant interviews carried out by MMC in 2024.

Current challenges and assistance needs of respondents

Did you witness or experience abuse or hardship since the start of conflict? (data from follow-up)



What kind of assistance do you need? (data from baseline and follow-up)



Key findings

- The vast majority of respondents (91%) experienced or witnessed abuse and hardship since the outbreak of the conflict and most reported multiple abuses, highlighting the largescale protection concerns of refugees and migrants impacted by the conflict.
- Individuals who moved outside Sudan reported higher rates of protection incidents across nearly all categories as compared to those within Sudan in the follow-up interview. It is possible that for those respondents who moved onward, they experienced protection incidents while fleeing the country, highlighting how, due to the lack of safe pathways, many are forced to put themselves in significant danger before reaching some level of safety. In addition, all respondents who remained within Sudan are in locations in the east which have been less directly exposed to the fighting. More research is needed to examine the differences between these two groups.
- 64% of respondents had received assistance since the baseline interview; however, the assistance needs remain high (95%).
- Cash assistance (76%) remains the most pressing need among all respondents, both those in and outside Sudan. For those who have moved outside Sudan (n=107), their assistance needs (except for cash and legal assistance) have notably decreased. This finding from the follow-up interview suggests that leaving Sudan helped to alleviate some of respondents' immediate needs.
- The growing demand for legal assistance (from 20% at the baseline to 41% in the follow-up) suggests that respondents are facing possible challenges related to access to asylum, residency, resettlement, etc. Visa requirements including entry restrictions and delayed processing in Egypt (the short-term intended destination for 33% of respondents as reported in the follow-up interview) may have hindered many from seeking asylum, leaving them vulnerable.
- Overall, the need for basic necessities like medical assistance, food, water, and safe spaces for women and children decreased, suggesting that respondents feel their more pressing concerns lie elsewhere, such as securing legal status to rebuild their lives.



4Mi data collection

4Mi is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed movements and the protection risks for people on the move. 4Mi field enumerators are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North Africa, and West Africa.

Note that the sampling approach means that the findings derived from the surveyed sample provide rich insights, but the figures cannot be used to make inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at: www.mixedmigration.org/4mi



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