Better Migration Management (BMM) in Sudan

Context and objective

Due to its geographic location, Sudan has always been a major transit and destination country for migrants on all migration routes and is a well-known host for large flows of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The country hosts approximately 1.2 million migrants (UN, 2019). The majority are South Sudanese refugees. Most of them who transit through Sudan are Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis, and South Sudanese. Often out of necessity, many travel irregularly, meaning without a visa or valid papers. That makes them vulnerable and increases their risk of experiencing economic exploitation, physical abuse and sexual assault during their journey. Victims of trafficking and child migrants in particular need appropriate support and protection.

In 2016, the European Union and Germany established the Better Migration Management (BMM) programme to improve migration management in the Horn of Africa. It aims to curb trafficking and smuggling of migrants within and from the region as well as strengthens migrants’ rights to protection. Activities were implemented in four interlinked areas: Policy harmonisation and regional cooperation, capacity building, protection, and awareness raising. Its geographical focus in Sudan is on the regions of Khartoum, El Gedaref, Kassala, Northern State, and River Nile State.

Achievements

Regarding inter-institutional coordination on migration, BMM supported and strengthened the

Results of phase 1 (2016-2019)

- **54,831** migrants, potential migrants, and host community members involved in outreach activities
- **2,800** government and civil society representatives engaged in workshops, trainings, or other events. **13** government institutions and **23** civil society actors supported
- **51** measures for **1,078** governmental and non-governmental actors in the area of capacity building implemented
- **524** vulnerable migrants assisted. Thereof, **290** women and **106** children

National Committee to Combat Trafficking (NCCT) to counter human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and address victims’ needs more efficiently. BMM also supported the set-up of state based committees on migration management in five federal states. This has resulted in better cooperation on issues related to anti-trafficking and migration. Moreover, with the support of the project, Sudan ratified the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). BMM also supported the Government facilitating meetings on the "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration".
The project also promoted regional collaboration such as the bilateral cooperation between Sudan and Ethiopia to enhance the situation of Ethiopian seasonal workers. Due to a lack of regulations they are vulnerable to be exploited and mistreated. BMM supported the implementation of a comprehensive action plan aiming at improving services (entry, employment law, health insurance) at official crossing-points and promoting regular migration.

BMM strengthened the capacities of government officials and representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) through training courses, study trips, and thematic workshops to facilitate safe and legal migration. Around 300 police officers, prosecutors, and immigration officers were trained on the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking and smuggling cases. BMM conducted trainings for relevant government officials on integrated border management, document security, and fraud detection. In addition, border officers, police officers and representatives of CSOs (first responders) have been trained to refer vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking to appropriate shelters and service providers for legal aid, medical and psychosocial support. 240 of them also received first aid courses to provide medical care for migrants who are often in poor health.

The project has also expanded services and protection for migrants. More than 335 governmental officials, members of CSOs, social workers, and lawyers have been trained to provide health, psychosocial care, and legal advice to migrants in Sudan. BMM advised the Government on how to establish an improved migrant referral system in El Gedaref with structured assistance and services to migrants, such as medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and translation.

524 migrants and victims of trafficking were assisted through medical aid, psychological support, and legal advice in El Gedaref, Kassala, and Khartoum. Furthermore, the project mapped around 40 governmental and non-governmental protection and assistance services for victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants. The information gathered has since been made available online as a referral resource for first responders.

The project has run awareness campaigns to inform potential migrants about legal migration opportunities and alternatives to illegal migration and other livelihood options. A special emphasis was put on raising awareness on the situation of domestic workers. Many of them have immigrated irregularly and are therefore vulnerable to human rights violations such as overwork, sexual abuses, and exploitation.

Given the complex and country-specific situation, conflict sensitivity on implementation and special procurement principles to exclude the usage of equipment for security or military matters was applied at all times whilst simultaneously maintaining the highest international human rights standards. The in-country BMM staff monitor closely the implementation of activities in accordance to the specially developed guidelines as set out in the Sudan Concept and Procurement Principles documents. BMM monitors in particular the recipients of each capacity development measure to ensure that only representatives of law enforcement agencies, immigration, and customs are supported.

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**First aid measures for migrants**

‘Migrants cross very long distances through the desert. They face numerous challenges on their journey, often being dehydrated, bitten by scorpions or snakes, injured, infected, or hurt by smugglers or human traffickers. First responders on the borders have to be trained to provide immediate assistance. We did a theoretical lesson and a practical, realistic simulation in the field. We even had a professional make-up specialist who showed the participants how snakebites and bone fractures look like. That way, we raised awareness on such injuries and how to respond to them. First aid increases safety and helps to save lives.’

*Sami Adam is the manager of the Northern State branch of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society and organised the trainings.*