

16 October 2023 — The war that broke out in Sudan 6 months ago has plunged the country into a complex humanitarian crisis. The conflict has pushed an already vulnerable population deeper into food insecurity, heightened exposure to diseases and threats to personal safety and security, and reduced access to health care. More than 5.8 million people have had to flee for their lives, abandoning their homes and livelihoods to step into the unknown. Moving may lessen the risks from firearms but other imminent risks await, like disease outbreaks, shortages of food and safe drinking water, and a heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV), especially for women and girls.

WHO is supporting 21 mobile clinics in 8 states across Sudan to provide essential medical services as the armed conflict leaves an estimated 4.4 million people at risk of gender-based violence

When the parents of 7-year-old Fatma* left their home to take the family to settle in a site for internally displaced people, in a state far from their place of residence,* they thought they were protecting the family from threats. They were totally unprepared for what happened to their young daughter at the site: she was subjected to, and survived, GBV.

Fatma's family sought assistance at a WHO-supported mobile clinic operating in the area when their daughter complained of pain while urinating. Fatma presented with clinical symptoms of urinary tract infection, which was later diagnosed as a sexually transmitted infection. The medical team was able to provide immediate medical assistance and connect Fatma to additional specialized health services and psychosocial support for survivors of GBV to address both her physical and psychological well-being.

Although deeply saddened by what their daughter had had to endure, Fatma's family are immensely grateful that prompt health care was available and that she will receive follow-up care. "I can only thank Allah and you good people for helping my precious Fatma and stopping her pain," said her mother, Halima,* speaking to the medical team.

WHO support for 21 mobile clinics and counting

