

South Sudan

MIGRATION PROFILE

*Study on Migration Routes
in the East and Horn of Africa*

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Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (MGSoG)



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1. Introduction

South Sudan borders the Central African Republic to the west, Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and Kenya to the south. South Sudan is the youngest nation in the world, becoming independent only in 2011 following remarkable progress between the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and the referendum and independence process in 2011 (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015). It has, however, struggled with development and security issues ever since. In 2013, following economic disparity from shutting down oil production plants, a civil war emerged, pushing millions of South Sudanese into a humanitarian crisis. War broke as the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement broke into two main factions - Sudan’s People Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan’s People Liberation Army-in Opposition (SPLA-IO) - conflict ensuing between both forces. An internationally mediated peace agreement was achieved in 2015 and a transitional government composed. However, heavy fighting broke out in the capital Juba in July 2016 and is still going on today (RMMS, 2016a).



Source: CIA, 2017.

South Sudan has one of the lowest development levels in the world, with its HDI at 0.418 landing it on position 181 in the global ranking of 188 countries (UNDP, 2016). Its population was estimated at 12.5 million in 2016 (CIA, 2017). Many development indicators such as employment rates are unknown due to the country’s young age and political instability. However, the adult literacy rate is at 32 per cent and its GDP per capita (PPP in 2011) is as low as USD 1,657 (UNDP, 2016; IMF, 2017).

Table 1: South Sudan’s Key Demographic and Development Indicators

Indicator	South Sudan
Total area, in sq km ^a	644,329
Population (2015), in million ^b	12.34
Urban Population (2015), % of total ^c	18.8
Population Growth Rate, annual % ^d	3.5
Ethnic Groups ^a	Dinka 35.8% Nuer 15.6% Other 48.6%
Human Development Index (2015), country rank out of 188 ^e	0.418 181
GDP Based on PPP per Capita, current international dollars per capita ^f	1657.08
Life Expectancy at Birth (2015), years ^e	56.1
Unemployment (2015), % of labour force ^e	n.d.

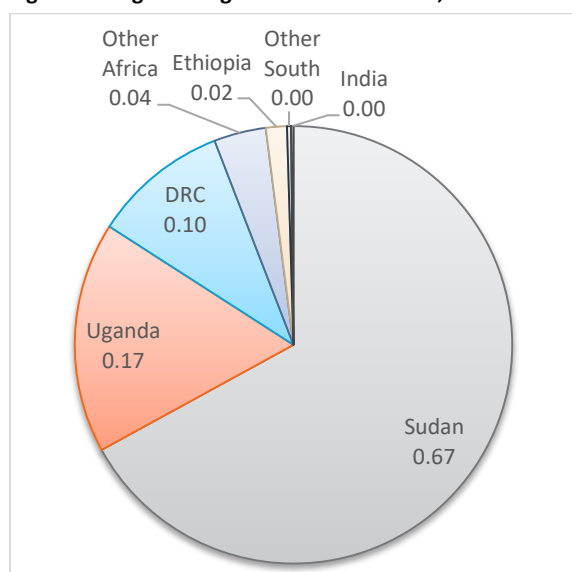
Youth Unemployment (2015), % ages 15-24 ^e	n.d.
Multidimensional Poverty Headcount (2010), % ^e	89.3
Gini Coefficient (2010-2015) ^e	46.3
Foreign Direct Investment (net inflows, 2015), current USD millions ^d	-277.00
Net Official Development Assistance Received (13), current USD millions ^d	1674.83
Personal Remittances Received (2015), current USD millions ^d	n.d.

^a CIA, 2017; ^b UN DESA, 2015b; ^c UN DESA, 2014; ^d World Bank, 2017; ^e UNDP, 2016; ^f IMF, 2017.

Migration wise, South Sudan is an origin and destination country of forced migrants and a transit country for irregular migration routes. The refugee situation in South Sudan has reached unprecedented level, as estimates from May 2017 show that there are close to 1.9 million South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers, coming from both pre and post 2013 (UNHCR, 2017a). Uganda hosts by far the largest number of South Sudanese refugees at, currently, 898,138 (UNHCR, 2017b). Prior to the conflict, as 2013 estimates show, South Sudan's estimated emigration stock was 751,900, demonstrating the impressive escalating features of the conflict (World Bank, 2016). Emigration at 2013, thus before the civil war, had different destinations than current forced displacement trends have. In 2015, according to UN DESA, the emigration stock was 634,613, which must be taken with great caution, as the developing refugee situation demonstrates. The top destinations are Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya as Figure 2 demonstrates (UN DESA, 2015a).

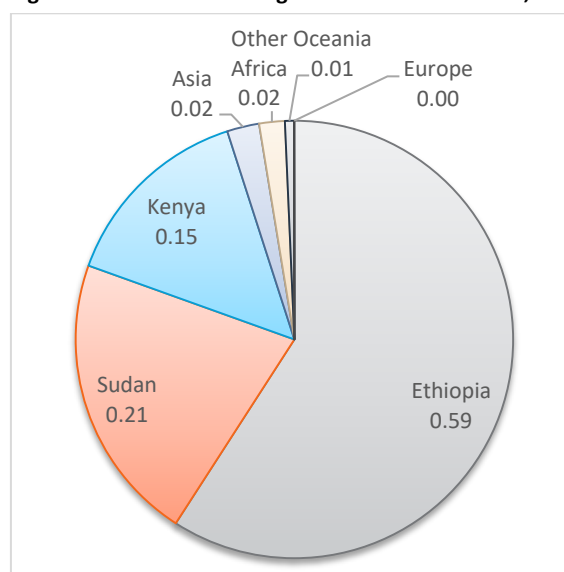
Despite the current conflict, South Sudan is also considered a destination country for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. UN DESA estimates state that as of 2015 the country had a migrant stock of 824,122 (UN DESA, 2015a). Remarkably, after its independence in 2011, hundreds of thousands of displaced South Sudanese returned to the nation and neighbouring countries, like Sudan. Some resettled in urban areas, while many continue to live in a situation of internal displacement (RMMS, 2016a). In 2015, the main origin nations of immigrants were Sudan, Uganda and the DRC as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1: Origin of Migrants in South Sudan, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

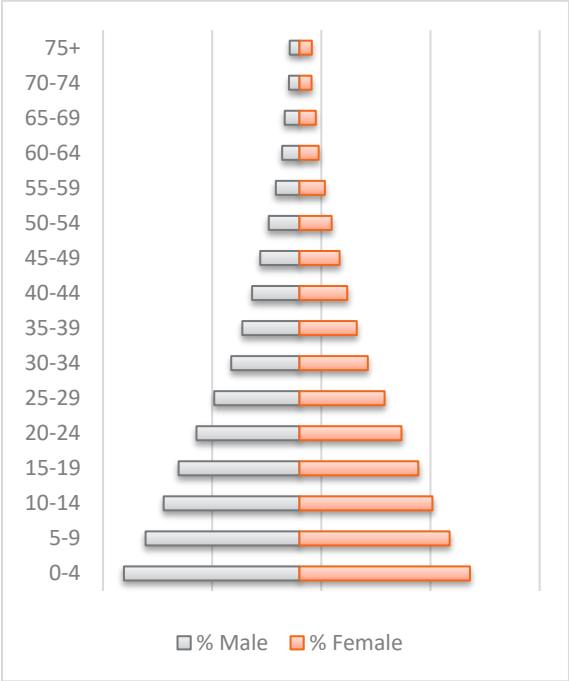
Figure 2: Destination of Migrants from South Sudan, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

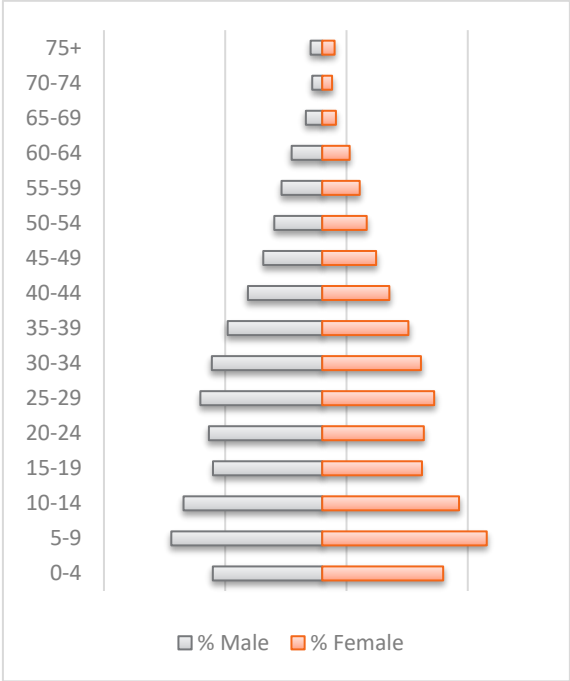
Comparing the population pyramids of the South Sudanese population and the immigrant stock, Figure 3 and 4 respectively, a few differences appear. There are a large number of migrant children (5-9) different from infants (0-4) which shows refugees from neighbouring countries looking for shelter there, who would not have children at camps but rather move when they are already of some age. At the same time, the overall share of adults is higher among the migrants than among the natives (UN DESA, 2015a).

Figure 3: Total Population in South Sudan by Age Group, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

Figure 4: Migrant Stock in South Sudan by Age Group, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

2. Forced Migration/ Displacement

Forced migration is the most important point of analysis of migration trends in South Sudan, as its displacement situation reaches unprecedented levels raising it to a grave humanitarian crisis.

2.1. Refugees in South Sudan

As of July 2016, there were 259,796 refugees and asylum seekers in South Sudan. The majority of refugees come from Sudan, with smaller numbers from the DRC, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic. The presence of these refugees along with the presence of South Sudanese refugees in these nations demonstrates a continuous and bi-directional cross border population displacement between the countries in the region. Most refugee camps in South Sudan are located in the north of the country, due to its proximity to Sudan. Tracking arrivals in these camps, 90 per cent of these were women and children with roughly 10 per cent being unaccompanied minors (RMMS, 2016a).

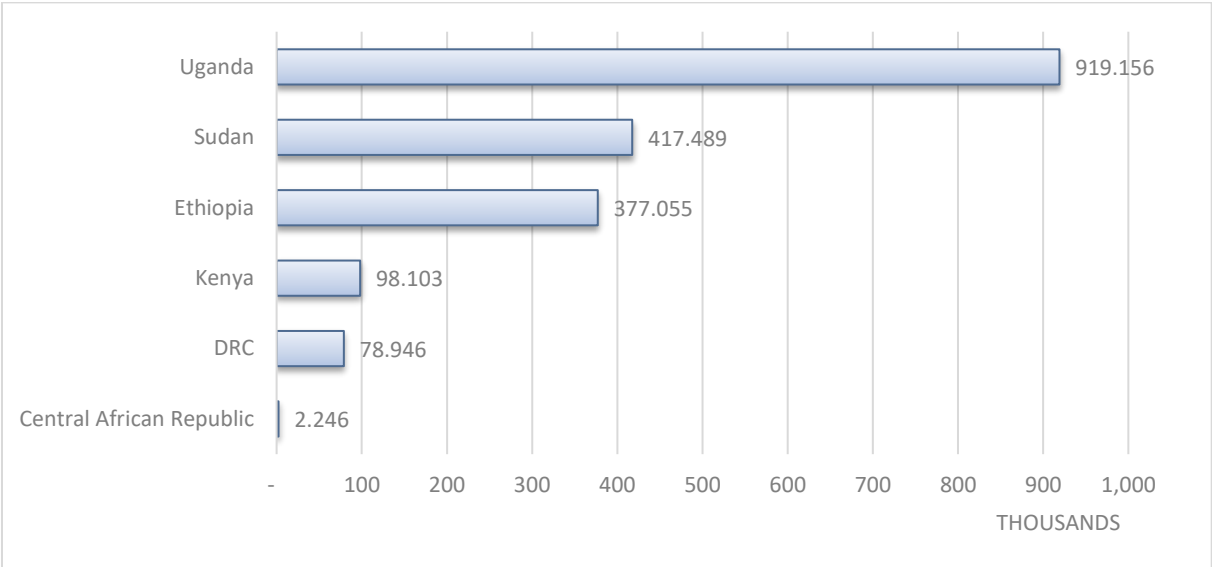
Protracted refugees are also a reality in South Sudan, with an estimate of 35,000 individuals in such a situation. Efforts have been implemented to make them self-sufficient, but land ownership is a highly

contentious issue making this difficult. Reports have also shown resource competition between refugees and host communities, which further disrupts this process (DAI and EuroTrends, 2015).

2.2. Refugees from South Sudan

In light of the continuous civil war, forced migration has become a massive crisis in the country and the region. UNHCR data from late May 2017 shows that there are close to 1.9 million refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan. Before December 2013, there were 114,470 South Sudanese refugees and since then 1,753,400 refugees. Comparing these numbers, one can easily see the magnitude of the impact of the civil war on South Sudanese lives (UNHCR, 2017a). Uganda hosts, by far, the largest contingent of refugees from South Sudan at 919,156 refugees, followed by Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, the DRC and the Central African Republic as Figure 5 demonstrates (UNHCR, 2017c).

Figure 5: Destination Countries of South Sudanese Refugees, 2017



Source: UNHCR, 2017c.

Contrary to many migrants in the region, South Sudanese migrants tend to stay in the region instead of engaging in irregular migration to Europe. The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat identified a few reasons for that. First, the refugees tend to have close ties to South Sudan and prefer to stay in the region in order to possibly return in the future. Second, there is a favourable refugee environment in Uganda as their policy regime is fairly liberal in terms of refugee rights. Third, a general lack of resources tends to discourage refugees from pursuing long distances. Fourth, the demographic profile of South Sudanese refugees shows a majority of women and children as the men tend to stay behind to either fight in the conflict or to tend to material resources. Due to that, women and children are not likely to move to Europe on their own. Fifth, resettlement of refugees mainly to United States, Canada, UK and Australia has been occurring for the past two decades and the possibility of family reunification represent a potential legal channel for migration. This discourages South Sudanese migrants from engaging in irregular channels (RMMS, 2016b).

2.3. Internal Displacement in South Sudan

Displacement is also a problem within South Sudanese borders. Many factors drive this process: the civil war, widespread hunger and malnutrition, an economic crisis driven by devaluing currency and the outbreak of diseases like malaria and cholera. The latter is especially dangerous for victims of malnutrition and poor immunity, like young children and pregnant women (RMMS, 2016a). UNOCHA estimated in February 2017 that there were close to 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Sudan. In comparison, one year before, in February 2016, South Sudan had 1.6 million IDPs, further demonstrating the escalating nature of the humanitarian crisis (UNOCHA, 2017).

UNOCHA studies of the IDP population in 2016 show that 320,000 IDPs lived in spontaneous settlements, 80,000 IDPs in collective centres, close to one million IDPs in host communities and 185,000 people sought refuge in UNMISS Protection of Civilians sites¹. In the latter, the majority of people are children; boys and girls together make up 61 per cent, followed by women at 24 per cent (UNOCHA, 2016). This demographic trend may be due to many men being pulled into the armed forces on both sides of the conflict, whereas women and children are displaced from their communities (RMMS, 2016a).

IDPs are found throughout the country, but are mostly concentrated in the Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity states (UNHCR, 2016b). Camps and settlements are constantly in need of resources and assistance from humanitarian agencies and international organizations; however, access to these locations is made difficult due to a lack of infrastructure, adverse security conditions and heavy rainfalls (UNHCR, 2016a). Limited resources lead to new conflicts between different groups, worsening the larger situation. Dire conditions often lead to secondary displacement of refugees, increasing the gravity of the situation (Marchand, Roosen, Reinold & Siegel, 2016).

3. Regular/ Labour Migration

The literature on migration trends of South Sudan tends to focus on the concerning realities of its displacement crisis, both for IDPs and refugees. Therefore, there is only a slim literature on regular labour migration.

3.1. Immigration

Before the civil war, South Sudan was a destination country for migrant workers from neighbouring countries, even though many of these were irregular migrants. It had a growing demand for goods and services, and its lack of a local industry and a skilled national workforce attracted entrepreneurial migrants from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, the DRC and Sudan. Contributing to this, the oil-driven economic boom attracted migrants who sought better opportunities. This optimism between independence in 2011 and the war outbreak in 2013 encouraged 500,000 to 1.2 million labour migrants to come to South Sudan. However, after 2013 most of these returned home or moved onwards and many who chose to stay were evacuated in 2016 due to the rekindling of

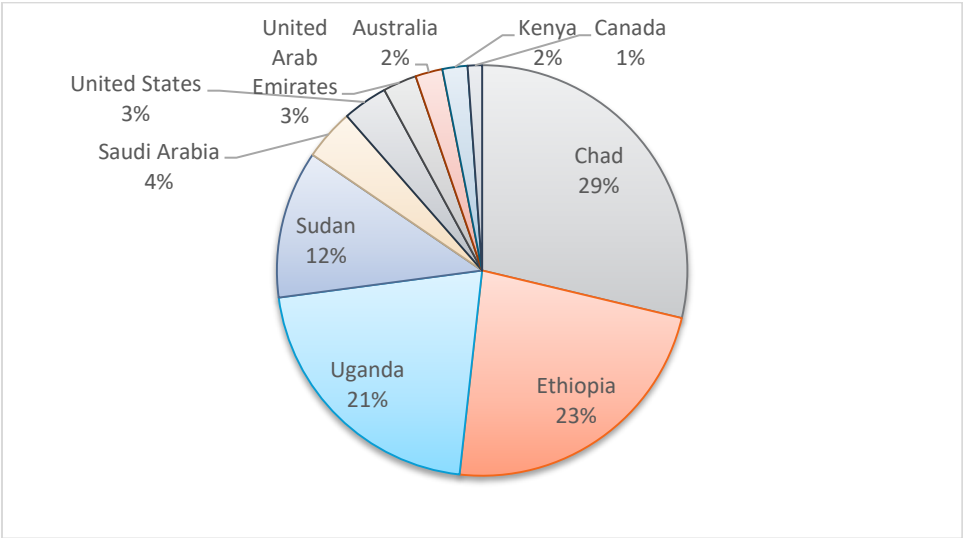
¹ 'Protection of Civilian' sites are IDP protection sites located within existing UN mission premises. They are guaranteed by UN legal status and administration and designed to be exclusively an extreme measure to support people who are unsafe outside an UN compound (Briggs & Monaghan, 2017).

violence, as orchestrated by their origin governments (RMMS, 2016a). Other reports state that Kenyan and Ugandan migrants tend to stay in the country for longer periods of time and send remittances back (DAI and EuroTrends, 2015).

3.2. Emigration

As previously stated, there is little to no literature on labour emigration from South Sudan. Still, it would be irresponsible to assume that this does not exist. Emigration before the civil war had top destinations in the region, like Chad, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan, and a few developed nations, like the United States and Australia (World Bank, 2016). The ten most common destination countries can be seen in Figure 6. It is unlikely that these are all labour migrants, still some of these countries are known for their economic attractiveness and new economic opportunities.

Figure 6: Destination Countries for South Sudanese Migrants, 2013



Source: World Bank, 2013.

4. Internal Migration

As described earlier, internal migration is most often related to forced displacement in the context of South Sudan.

5. Irregular Migration

Reports from 2015 discuss how South Sudan is a destination country for irregular workers, due to its porous borders, weak border management and the perception of economic opportunities compared to dire economic realities in other countries in the region. Government estimates state that there are tens of thousands of irregular migrants, mostly from the DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Somalia. South Sudan is also a transit country for migrants trying to reach Europe or Southern Africa. Most migrants that use it as a transit country are from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia (DAI and EuroTrends, 2015). Yet, this must be taken with care as the civil war is likely to be changing these trends and evidence on this is lacking.

5.1. Human Smuggling

Smuggling networks are used by irregular migrants to reach destinations such as Northern Africa and Europe from South Sudan. These networks most likely changed after the outbreak of civil war, although no information on how they did is available at this point (DAI and EuroTrends, 2015).

5.2. Trafficking in Human Beings

The US Department of State classifies South Sudan on Tier 3, as a source and destination country for men, women and children subjected to human trafficking. Recently, trafficking has become a systematic endeavour with traffickers bringing children into the country, while domestic trafficking has also seen an increase (DAI and EuroTrends, 2015). Women and girls are often sexually abused and subjected to commercial sex acts. Reports show that girls as young as 10 are subjected to sexual trafficking, at times in collusion with corrupt law enforcement officials. Forced marriage is also a problem, often used as a compensation for inter-clan killings. These victims come from Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the DRC and often migrate due to the false promises of legitimate work and are then subjected to sex work. Trafficked children also work in construction, vending, shoe shining, car washing, brick making, delivery cart pulling, and street begging, among others (US Department of State, 2016).

Another major problem relating to human trafficking in South Sudan is the issue of child soldiers. Child soldiers are most commonly abducted from their communities and forced into conflict. Denouncing reports demonstrate that most armed groups active in the conflict have engaged in this practice. The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan of 2015, signed by SPLA and SPLA-IO, determined that the signing parties must be committed to release their child soldier containments as supervised by UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). However, both parties and insurgent armed groups have continued recruiting and retaining child soldiers. UN estimates show that since December 2013, warring parties have recruited 15,000 to 16,000 child soldiers as young as nine years old. Testimonies describe this recruitment as children being held at gun point and forced to fight on front lines. Girls, on the other hand, are often forced into marriages with soldiers and subjected to systematic rape (US Department of State, 2016).

This trend is still present today as only in 2016 UNICEF estimated that more than 650 children have been recruited into armed groups in South Sudan (UNICEF, 2016). Most concerning is that leaked UN memos discuss how the government itself continues to recruit child soldiers even in the face of alleged promises to halt this process (The Associated Press, 2016). Assessing the country's general trends it can be said that organized human trafficking networks and practices operate freely, often protected by official authorities (RMMS, 2016a).

6. Migrants' Vulnerabilities and Protection Issues

The following vulnerabilities and protection needs have been identified for migrants in South Sudan (RMMS, 2016a):

- The key driver of emigration from South Sudan has been the internal conflict that first erupted in 2013. Due to the conflict, large-scale violence, including sexual abuse, abduction, forced labour, and destruction of private property has been widespread. As the conflict renewed in July 2016, people started fleeing to Uganda. However, the groups of migrants were stopped by armed groups who forcibly recruited men and boys. As a result, a large portion (around 85%) of South Sudanese refugees entering Uganda are women and children and therefore face higher risks of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation.
- As for migrants in South Sudanese refugee camps, they face increased challenges due to the recent influx and the following shortage of international humanitarian assistance.
- Female migrant workers from Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Democratic Republic of Congo are often recruited illegally and subjected to forced labor, human trafficking, or forced prostitution.
- A major problem is the situation in detention facilities. Prisons are often overcrowded and underfunded and access to food and water remains low (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Arbitrary arrests of South Sudanese nationals considered as government opponents are common. Similarly widespread is the detention of South Sudanese migrants in neighboring countries, including Ethiopia and Sudan.

7. Relevant National Policies and Stakeholders

South Sudan is a rather young nation which inherited few laws and policies related to migration and which therefore faces many challenges in responding to migration issues. Most activities in the field of migration are organised by international organisations such as IOM. There are efforts by the South Sudanese government to improve border management, through developing infrastructure and providing capacity training for officials (IOM, 2015). In 2012, the Refugee Act was passed, which outlines the country's duties and responsibilities towards refugees (see Table 2).

According to the US Department of State (2016) efforts by the South Sudanese Government to combat human trafficking, including protection of VoTs and prosecution of perpetrators, are not significant and the National Plan Against Trafficking is not adhered to.

Table 2: South Sudan’s Key Migration Legislation and Policy Responses

Policy	Content
Nationality Act, 2003	Provides for matters related to nationality and naturalisation.
Penal Code, 2008	Prohibits human trafficking
Child Act	Protects children, including refugees and internally displaced minors
Passports and Immigration Act, 2011	Provides for matters related to nationality, identification documentation, and immigration including entry, departure, registration and deportation.

Sources: ILO, 2017; Marchand et al., 2016; RMMS, 2016a.

A key player in South Sudan’s migration policy framework is the Directorate of Immigration, Passport, Nationality and Identification. Its mandate encompasses facilitating the legal movement of persons across the country and other nations to foster economic growth. In addition, the Directorate deals with security concerns, which are intertwined with migration issues in South Sudan. An example of such an intention is the desired outcome of raising the percentage of immigration revenue (MFEP, 2011).

Gaps

For the past years, IOM has done continuous trainings with the South Sudanese government and the Directorate of Immigration, Passport, Nationality and Identification to build capacities. Still, the government faces insurmountable challenges (IOM, 2014), which are exacerbated by the ongoing civil war and weak state institutions. South Sudan therefore fails to address migration, to protect vulnerable individuals and to provide basic services (RMMS, 2016a). According to IOM (2015; 2016), South Sudan should strengthen its border management system, improve infrastructure, and capacities of relevant authorities in the field of migration including the police and enhance assistance to IDPs. Moreover, the government is advised to create a partnership with the diaspora (van der Linden, Blaak & Andrew, 2013).

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