SUDAN Food Security Outlook Update — June 2011

Cultivation likely to be affected by conflict in many areas

- Ongoing trade restrictions from the north since early May and insecurity along major supply routes have caused significant food and fuel shortages, resulting in increased commodity prices in southern Sudan and reduced supplies.

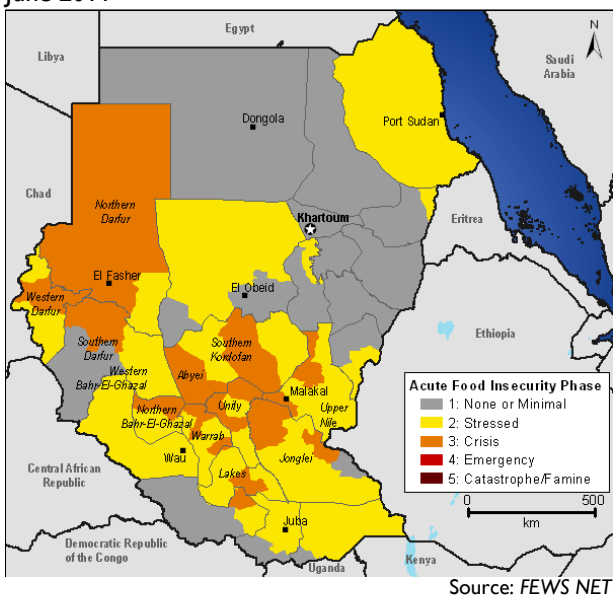
- Inter-tribal and other armed conflicts since January have displaced about 200,000 people, mostly in Warrap, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, and Upper Nile states. Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in South Kordofan State since June 6 has displaced an additional 70,000 people. Displacement and insecurity are likely to impact ongoing cultivation.

Updated food security outlook through September 2011

In **northern Sudan**, it is estimated that approximately four million people are currently food insecure. In Darfur, the majority of the two million IDPs are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 50 percent of the resident/host communities in the drought-affected areas of Darfur are Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Ongoing violence has displaced over 100,000 people from **Abyei** to Warrap, Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. Most of these IDPs are at Crisis levels of food insecurity, though IDPs within the Abyei boundary (notably Agok and villages in proximity), Mayen Abun and Turalei in Twic County, Warrap state, and Abiemnom County in Unity State, are at Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 4). In South Kordofan, more than 300,000 people impacted by the recent fighting between the Sudanese Arm Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) are at Crisis levels of food insecurity. About one million people in North Kordofan, Red Sea, Blue Nile, White Nile and Kassala states are Stressed. Food security is likely to deteriorate over the lean season (May-September) due to reduced food stocks at the household level, the anticipated seasonal rise of food prices, and deteriorating security conditions in many areas (Darfur, South Kordofan, Upper Nile, Unity, Warrap and Jongli states).

In **Darfur**, sporadic violence and new displacement continued, along with restricted movement of humanitarian agencies in South Darfur. The results from the post-harvest nutrition survey by UNICEF and the State Ministry of Health in North Darfur during the harvest (October–December 2011) found that nutritional status was similar to the same time in 2009. This

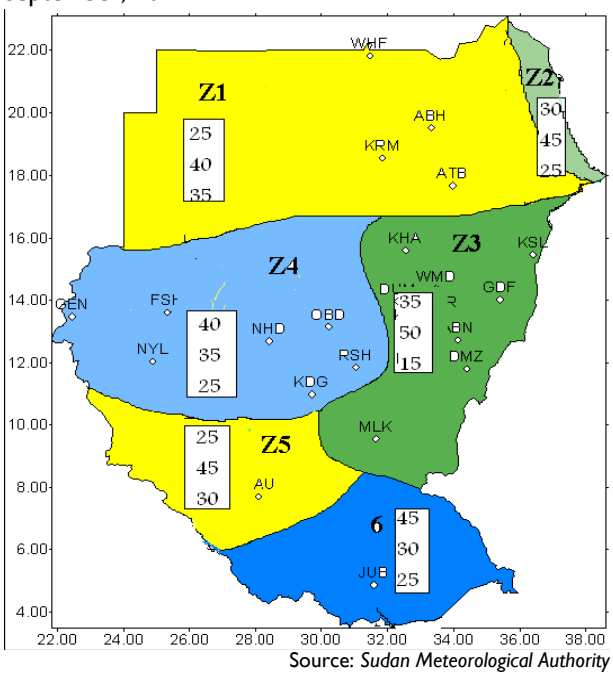
Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, June 2011



Source: *FEWS NET*

For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Figure 2. Sudan Seasonal Rainfall forecast, June - September, 2011



Source: *Sudan Meteorological Authority*

This report provides an update on projected food security in Sudan. The next Outlook report will be released in July and will cover the July-December 2011 period.

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suggests no significant improvement in nutritional status in Darfur. According to the typical trend, nutrition conditions are expected to deteriorate over the lean season.

In **South Kordofan,** security conditions have deteriorated rapidly since the second week of June due to heavy fighting between SAF and SPLA in 11 out of the 19 localities. About 70,000 people fled the fighting in the affected areas and many others are hiding in the mountains as the fighting continues. Some IDPs reached as far as Al Obeid town in North Kordofan (about 300 km north of Kadogli). The health and nutritional status of the displaced population is reportedly deteriorating. Families hosting the displaced are running out of basic needs, and commercial supplies of essential goods to villages in South Kordofan have stopped since the outbreak of the conflict, compounding the effects of the current lean agricultural season. If fighting continues and farmers fail to plant crops by mid-July, there will be major negative impacts on food availability and food security after the harvest, potentially leading to a protracted humanitarian crisis in the area. The violence in South Kordofan is a major setback after five years of peace and stability in the area, and will jeopardize return, integration, and development efforts in the area.

According to the Sudan Meteorological Authorities (SMA), the **seasonal rainfall forecast for June to September** calls for an average rainy season (Figure 2). This would be the second consecutive average to above-average season, which would increase food availability countrywide; however prevailing insecurity could compromise cultivation and harvest in many parts of the country. In the semi-mechanized agricultural areas in Gedaref, Blue Nile, Senar and White Nile, limited access to credit, outbreak of rodents and shortage of seasonal laborers and agricultural inputs (e.g. seeds and tools) may also constrain production. In some areas of southern Sudan, such as the flood-prone state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, very heavy rains are raising concerns of potential damage to crops in the early vegetative stages. The rains are also expected to make roads inaccessible and increase transportation costs, mainly to the border states, thereby reducing access to supplies in these areas.

Since the January referendum, **north-south trade flows** have dropped by almost 40 percent and could further decline with the escalated violence in Abeyi and South Kordofan. Most of the north-south roads in South Kordofan remain closed to commercial traffic. The Kosti - Al Jabalein (White Nile) – Alrenk (Upper Nile) river route re-opened in late May 2011. The Higlig and Bentiu road opened during the first week of June. However, the Al Muglad – Meriam – Wara Wara route, which leads to Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, is still blocked, as is the Kharassana – Goli – Abeyi road. The closure of north-south roads continues to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Abeyi, disrupt the flow of food and fuel supplies, disturb livelihoods and commercial activities in southern Sudan, and reduce the return of southerners.

In the **Western Flood Plains (Unity State)** of southern Sudan, most households have depleted their food reserves, especially with the added pressure of returnee populations. Food prices are also very high due to closure of the border. In April, the price of white grain sorghum in Bentiu town increased by 80–100 percent from April to May, and wheat flour also increased by up to 150 percent from April to May. With the scarcity of goods and increased prices, Adok port is currently the only important access route serving all of the counties in Unity. Conflict and insecurity have constrained access to the northern counties of Mayom, Pariang and Abiemnom, although some commercial vehicles move at high risk. Due to the conflicts with armed militia, nearly 5,000 IDPs have arrived into Mayom, Abiemnon and Rubkona counties.

In **Northern Bahr el Ghazal**, cultivation of early maturing sorghum, okra, and maize has begun. Although most people are relying on market purchases using money from petty trade or labour hire, some also rely on wild foods, which is typical at this time of year. High food prices caused by the border closure have reduced household purchasing power. In Aweil West, East and South, households are reportedly skipping meals due to food shortages. Food commodities in the local markets in Aweil West, East and South are very scarce or absent (especially sorghum, the staple grain), forcing most people to travel to Aweil Centre market to purchase grains at high prices. In Aweil Centre market, the price of sorghum increased by nearly 20 percent, from SDG 1.7/Kg in April to SDG 2/Kg in May, and is still increasing. Similarly, the price of groundnut in Aweil market increased by nearly 200 percent from SDG 1.43/Kg in April to SDG 4.25/Kg in May. The over 50,000 returnees in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state are likely to feel much of the impact of the food shortages and high prices. This may be aggravated if they cannot cultivate either due to lack of land or inputs.

In **Warrap state**, the closure of the border has created acute food shortages in the market, especially for Twic County, which depends entirely on the north. The increased influx of IDPs from Abyei has worsened the food shortages. Of the more than 100,000 people displaced from Abyei, about 70,000 are estimated to be in Warrap state, mainly in Wunrock, Turalei,

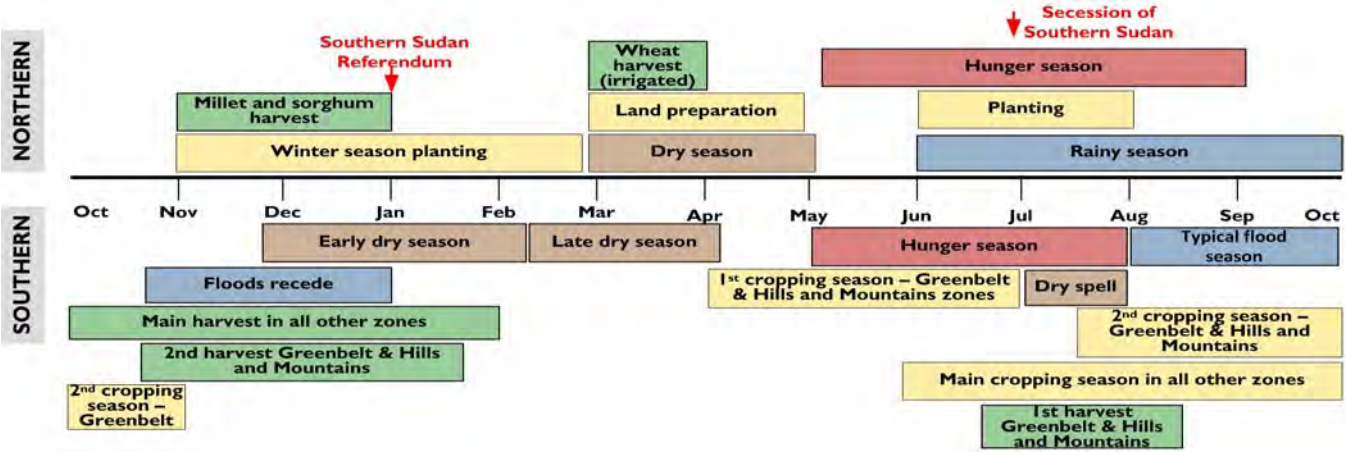
and Mayen Abun counties. Cattle rustling in Tonj East and Gogrial East in Warrap states and Rumbek East in Lakes state has also caused population displacements. Although rains have started, there are some concerns about the potential impact of erratic rains on cultivation. Poor pastures have started to affect milk availability, which had otherwise started to improve. Overall estimates indicate that household food stocks will be exhausted by the end of June. During this period, poor households typically rely more on the consumption of scarce wild foods, while better-off households typically rely on the sale of livestock.

In the **Eastern flood plains and Nile – Sobat zones,** there have been sustained conflicts between rebel militia and the SPLA in Khorfulus in Pigi and Ol Fangak counties (Jonglei State). An estimated 15,000 people in Pigi have sought to be relocated to Ayod County. With high tensions between the feuding Murle and Lou Nuer communities, an estimated 20,000 Nuers have crossed the border into Gambela, Ethiopia with many of their cattle. In Manyo County, conflicts between SAF and SPLA caused the displacement of about 1,700 people to Omar and Wad Akona in Renk County. These conflicts have resulted in abandoned farmland, with implications for the harvest.

In Twic and Duk counties (Jonglei State), generally delayed and low rainfall amounts in Jonglei have resulted in late return of livestock from dry season grazing and delayed the start of cultivation. Most people have prepared land but are waiting for rains to fully establish before planting. The local markets have food shortages of up to 70 percent, due to closure of the northern border. However, in Upper Nile, despite the northern trade blockade, the eastern route via Malakal has eased the transport of fuel across the state in the surrounding areas. In Bor town, sorghum prices increased by over 30 percent in May.

In the **Hills and Mountains zone**, most household food stocks will be exhausted by late June or early July, though early and new harvests will be available in July/August, and current crop conditions are generally good. Most of the poor typically depend on wild foods and labor hire during this period, and over 50 percent depend on market purchases or sale of livestock, mainly by livestock owners in Torit and Budi Counties and greater Kapoeta. Many farmers in the Madi and Acholi corridors now consume cassava to mitigate food deficits, despite the continued inflows of food commodities from Uganda, which tend to be costly for most households. Some local markets, such as Lopa, have run out of sorghum. Lafon market is better stocked but has poor road access. Due to the northern border closure, Juba now receives most supplies from Uganda, which limits supplies that used to go to Torit. Limited supplies from Torit, restricted access, and the Kenyan grain export ban means that towns such as Kapoeta continue to experience high market prices. Increasing food commodity and fuel prices and declining livestock terms of trade put pressure on household economies. Other negative food security factors include recurrent armed banditry/cattle raiding, last year's floods, and poor harvests in areas of Lafon County.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: *FEWS NET*