SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Outlook Update — August 2011

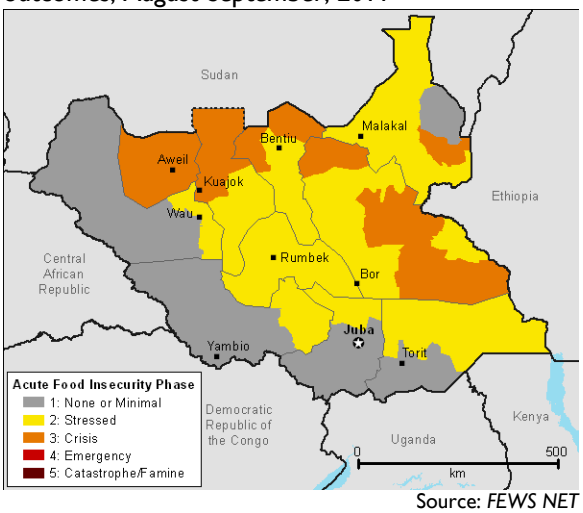
Cropping season progress and prospects are mixed

- During August-September, most of the population in South Sudan is expected to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) of food insecurity are concentrated in eastern Jonglei and pockets along the South Sudan–Sudan border, particularly in Warrap, Unity, and Northern Bahr El Gazal States. A combination of insecurity, displacement, and food prices elevated due to restricted trade between Sudan and South Sudan are key contributing factors.

- Since January, inter-tribal and other armed conflicts have displaced over 300,000 people, mostly in Warrap, Jonglei, Lakes, and Unity States. These IDPs and the 330,000 people who have returned to South Sudan since October 2010 will continue to exert pressure on household and market food stocks and community support mechanisms during the lean season (July - September). Most IDPs and returnees have not cultivated for the June-September cropping season.

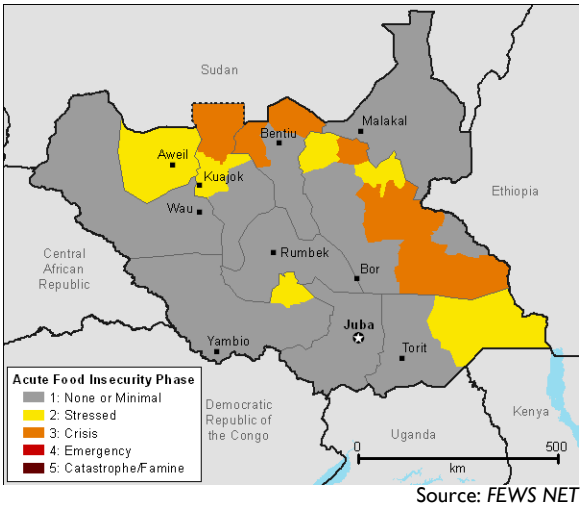
- A recent rapid mid-season crop assessment indicates mixed crop performance countrywide, with the exception of Western and Central Equatoria, where conditions are average. October harvests, even if they are below-average, will likely mitigate current food insecurity during the October to December period (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, August-September, 2011



Source: *FEWS NET*

Figure 2. Most likely food security outcomes, October–December, 2011



Source: *FEWS NET*

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

Updated food security outlook through December 2011

Current food insecurity conditions range between Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) for up to 1.5 million people. **Stressed food insecurity is defined as a situation in which households experience short-term instability and food consumption is reduced, but households do not engage in irreversible coping strategies. Crisis food insecurity is defined as households experiencing short-term instability that results in losses of assets and/or significant food consumption deficits.** Currently in South Sudan, Stressed households are facing typical lean season shortages. In the western and northern parts of Upper Nile (Renk, Manyo and Melut), where the Stressed conditions are unusual for this time of year, food insecurity is driven by the pressures of increasing population returns. Crisis conditions in areas along the Sudan - South Sudan border are due to a combination of the pressures of IDP and returnee populations, and above-average staple food prices caused by trade restrictions.

Food insecurity is expected to improve with sorghum harvests in October. However, a combination of sustained trade restrictions through June 2012, high prices, and continued population returns and existing displaced populations are

This report provides an update to the July 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions in South Sudan from July through December 2011. The next Outlook report will be released in October and will cover the October 2011 through March 2012 period.

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expected to constrain food insecurity. Recently returned and displaced populations, both of whom missed the June – September cropping season due to insecurity, are expected to remain food insecure even after the October harvest.

The recent mid-season crop assessment points to mixed crop performance countrywide due to dry spells during June/July, with the possibility of harvests delayed by one month in some areas. However, average harvests are expected in Western and Central Equatoria, where the first season crop is being harvested. Although the GHA COF seasonal forecast for South Sudan projected a high probability of normal to above-normal rainfall for July to September, July rainfall was below normal.

Restricted trade between Sudan and South Sudan has led to prices higher than last year and the five-year average. Informal trade continues but is severely constrained by instability in Abeyi and ongoing insecurity in South Kordofan. These areas include two of the five major trade routes to South Sudan. Prices have remained most volatile in Malakal, partly due to the departure of the main traders from Sudan. Since May, prices have increased in all other key markets, such as Aweil and Wau. Resumption of government-subsidized grain programs that were implemented from 2006-2009 could help stabilize grain prices. However, estimating their likely impact or performance is difficult due to lack of data for sufficient analysis.

Decreased trade with Sudan could be compensated for by increased sorghum production in the mechanized farms of Renk (Upper Nile State). However, production this year in Renk has been affected by a lack of quality inputs, especially seed; high fuel prices that increased cultivation costs; and the departure of 70 percent of farmers, who were northerners. Future production could be boosted by crop protection and agricultural extension services, proper storage facilities, and an environment that supports the remaining and new farmers in 2012.

Nile – Sobat Livelihood Zone (Unity, Bor, Ayod, Fangak, Fashoda, Malakal, Panyikang)

Food insecurity in this livelihood zone is Stressed for most counties of Unity and Upper Nile. However, Crisis conditions in Mayom, Abiemnom, Ruweng, and Fangak counties are mostly due to the insecurity that caused significant population displacements earlier in the year. About 5-10 percent (over 7,500) of the Mayom population is currently displaced into Rubkona and Abiemnom. Also, a significant proportion of the remaining Mayom population (roughly 20-25 percent) did not cultivate this year due to insecurity and fear of land mines planted during the fighting. Abiemnom hosts over 4,700 displaced people from Abyei, and Ruweng hosts more than 5,300 refugees from Kordofan. The displaced and refugee populations are equivalent to 27 and 6 percent for Abiemnom and Ruweng populations, respectively. IDPs have not been able to access non-crop or farm food sources, and are either relying on food aid or food from host populations. Food insecurity in these areas is further exacerbated by impassable roads during the rainy season, low grain supplies on markets, and the disruption of large livestock sales to Sudan due to the trade restrictions. Though harvests are expected to help mitigate the crisis conditions, food insecurity will persist for a segment of the population, especially in areas where people have failed to cultivate.

Rubkona, Bentiu, Koch, Mayendit, Panyikang, Malakal, Renk and Manyo areas face less food insecurity than previously projected due to decreased tensions along the Sudan and South Sudan border, ongoing informal trade, and carryover household grain stocks. Apart from informal trade, traders in these areas now source commodities such as maize flour from as far as Juba and transport it down the Nile to the ports of Adok, Bentiu, and Malakal. Traders also source grain from farmers in Renk and transport it via river to Malakal, Bentiu and possibly further south to Adok. Previously, Unity relied on road transportation through Kordofan State, which is now very insecure.

The crop assessment indicates generally average conditions in early August in the areas covered. Ruweng, Abiemnom and Mayom, Fangak and Ayod were not assessed. In Unity, a dry spell occurred in some areas in June/July, causing multiple replanting of crops and a reduced area under cultivation. However, increased rains during the end of July and early August led to recovery of crops and additional planting.

Western Flood Plains Zone (Aweil East, West, North, South, Center, Twic, Gogrial East, Gogrial West and Kuajok, Tonj East, Tonj South and Lakes State)

Food insecurity in all counties of Aweil is at Crisis levels due to a combination of lean-season shortages, reduced market grain supplies, increased prices, and increased demand for food due to the addition of over 65,000 returnees in these counties. Returnees rely on WFP food aid, supplemented by market purchases using available cash left after return. The original residents rely on either carryover stocks or grain purchased with proceeds of sales of livestock, wet season vegetables, and livestock products. Crisis food security levels are anticipated to reduce to Stress levels around October with

the main sorghum harvest, but only for host populations. Currently, crop performance in these locations is mixed; conditions were generally average in the lowlands but the June/July dry spell stressed plants in the highlands. There is a likely harvest delay in the crop-stressed areas, especially in Aweil East County.

Similarly, in Twic, Gogrial East and West counties, food insecurity is the outcome of the typical lean season shortages; increased prices caused by trade restrictions; and increased demand due to the presence of the returnees plus more than 100,000 IDPs from Abyei during April-May. A WFP assessment of IDPs from Abyei in June found that households relied heavily on kinship support, based on their traditional relationships with the local population. While a similar assessment in Abyei in April showed that 45 percent of the residents had livestock, in June only 20 percent retained livestock after displacement. Rapid crop assessments in August indicate that crop conditions in these areas were average, having withstood the June/July dry spell. Maize and groundnuts were flowering, while sorghum was at vegetative stage. However, few of the displaced households were able to cultivate, especially in Twic County, leaving them reliant on the host populations. This situation will continue to threaten food security even after the harvest.

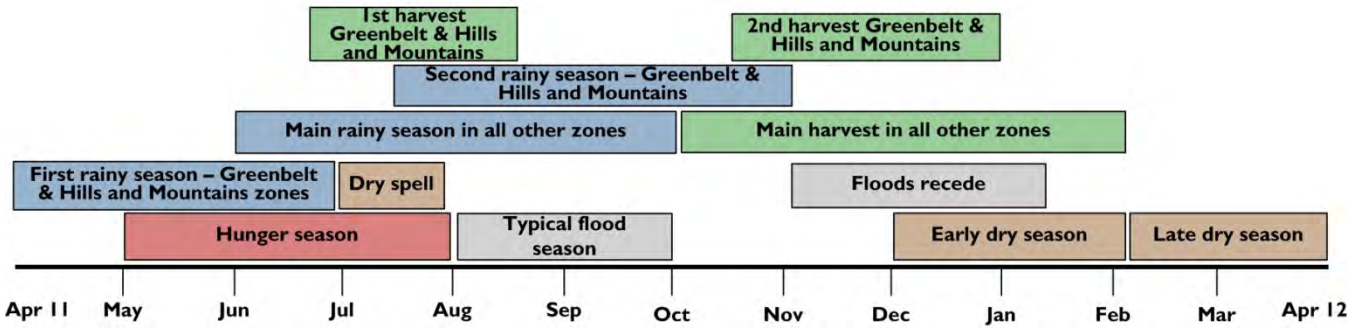
Inter-ethnic/tribal cattle raiding activities concentrated in Tonj East, North, South and Lakes State displaced people and negatively impacted cultivation in some pockets this year. However, food security is projected to remain Stressed until early maturing crops are ready for consumption around October. The August crop assessments found a 50 percent decline in area cultivated this year, and below-average crop conditions, especially in Rumbek East and Yirol West counties. However, the stressed crops, especially sorghum, can recover if rains increase by mid-August.

Eastern Flood Plains Zone (Khorfulus, Wuror, Akobo, Longuchok, Ayod, Luakpiny, Maiwut)
Violent and persistent cattle-raiding between Wuror/Akobo counties and the neighboring Pibor County continues to sustain food insecurity in the three areas. Cattle raiding activities by Pibor County pastoralists on Uror County in mid-August have displaced over 26,000 people and killed over 300 others. Specific impacts on food security conditions are difficult to establish. However, Crisis conditions are projected, given the high frequency and violent nature of looting and destruction of homes and assets using sophisticated weapons; repeated displacements; and below-average rainfall. In addition, access to livestock is reduced due to the delayed return of most cattle from long-distant grazing areas due to poor rains and the theft of some livestock. As these counties were not covered by the rapid assessment, crop conditions are unknown.

In Longuchok, the concentration of up to 7,000 returnees (equivalent to about 10 percent of the local population), who arrived earlier this year, has increased competition for available food at a time when food is scarce. In Khorfulus County, militia insecurity displaced 15,000 people (15 percent of the population) into Ayod soon after the referendum, and last year's harvest stocks were burnt. Although the area is now calm, the peak period for hunting and gathering of foods that are stored for consumption during the lean season was disrupted by fighting. These factors pushed most households to crisis levels. Part of the 15,000 people who had been displaced to Ayod reportedly began to return to Khorfulus in mid-July, implying that they missed cultivating this year. Though October harvests are expected to mitigate food insecurity, current crop conditions were not established during the August mid-season crop assessments.

Earlier Crisis levels of food insecurity in Luakpiny County have been reduced to Stressed levels, because the number of returnees are insignificant and are unlikely to have significant negative impacts on the local population.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



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