

SUDAN Food Security Outlook Update

September 2011

Food insecurity likely to increase following poor harvests and ongoing insecurity

- Although rainfall in August and September has been better than the poor rainfall during June and July, crops are still at the vegetative growth stage, when they would typically be at flowering stage by this time. Full crop ripening will require continued rainfall through October, but the forecast is for below-normal rainfall. Hence, crop production is likely to be significantly below normal this season.
- The size of the food insecure population in Sudan has increased from 4.0 million people in August to 4.5 million in September. This is due to the recent fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. Food security has deteriorated from no acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels.
- Access to food in markets is hindered by insecurity; high inflation due to sharp increase of food prices; local currency devaluation; and reduced supplies to remote markets due to recent heavy rains. High food prices are likely to reduce food diversity intake by poor households in both rural and urban settings.

Updated food security outlook through December 2011

Rains started more than 30 days late in the east and central areas of Sudan, and there were prolonged dry spells in Blue Nile, Sennar, and South Kordofan during the critical planting season (June/July). Although rains improved in terms of total precipitation and distribution in August to mid-September, the total cumulative rainfall received in east and central Sudan was far below average. Due to the poor start of the rains and insecurity in many parts of Sudan, the total area planted this year is projected to be less than 70 percent of average. Planted crops are still at vegetative growth stage and will require continued rainfall through October to fully ripen. IRI and ECMWF forecasts call for below-normal rains during September/October in the main cropping belt of Sudan. Thus, there is a high risk of additional rainfall shortages toward the end of the season that could further negatively affect crop production.

September typically marks the end of the lean season. Access to markets has been hindered by numerous factors including ongoing insecurity in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur; reduced supply to remote areas by heavy rains; the high inflation rate (from 17.6 percent in July to 21.1 percent in August – mainly due to the sharp increase in food prices); and local currency devaluation (driven by the shortage of hard currency from the losses of oil income after separation from South Sudan). The August inflation rate is the highest in the last five years.

The rapid sharp increase in prices of foods and other essential commodities is of concern in both urban and rural areas of Sudan, and particularly in conflict-affected areas of Darfur, Abeyi, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, where humanitarian

This report provides an update to the July 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security outcomes in 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.

FEWS NET Sudan (Khartoum)
APT. 03/04 Nifeidy Building street
39, Khartoum 2
Tel: 249 901 235 196
sudan@fews.net

FEWS NET Washington
1717 H St NW
Washington DC 20006
info@fews.net

FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity. The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, September 2011

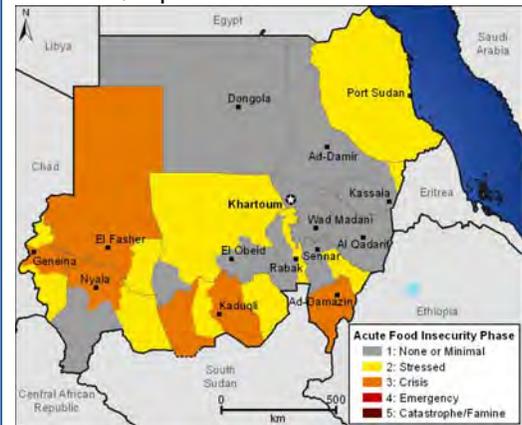
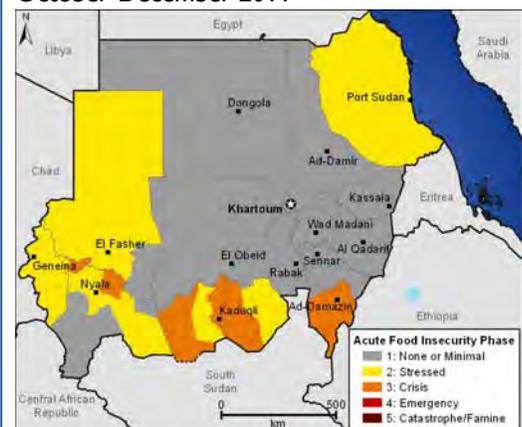


Figure 2. Estimated food security outcomes, October-December 2011



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

assistance during the critical hunger season is inadequate due to lack of access. High prices are also likely to affect food diversity intake by poor households, particularly for protein. In Khartoum, there is a growing campaign to boycott meat consumption due to sharp increases in meat prices.

As of September, about 4.5 million people in Sudan are estimated to be food insecure. This represents a 10-15 percent increase over last month, largely due to new displacement in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Current food insecurity conditions are likely to persist until the harvest in October. Food security improvements after the harvest will be modest due to the projected poor harvest, the high rate of inflation/currency devaluation, and continued fighting in Blue Nile, South Kordofan and some parts of Darfur.

A recent agreement was reached between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan to open 10 trading points at the border to allow trade flows to resume. However, the government of South Sudan recently announced its intention to close the border between South Sudan and Sudan beginning in December 2011 to prevent nomadic cattle herders from grazing their animals in South Sudan. Seasonal grazing of cattle is the only means of survival for over five million head of cattle in Sudan. Closure of the border would have disastrous consequences for the livelihoods of nomadic cattle herders.

Blue Nile State

The fighting between the SAF and SPLM-N in Blue Nile State has spread to all six localities (Ed Damazine, El Roseires, Geissan, Bau, Tadamon and Kurmuk), affecting an estimated 500,000 people. The majority is now judged to be at Crisis levels of food insecurity. The precise number of displaced people and their destination is not known yet due to restricted movement. However, UNHCR reported that about 15,000 – 20,000 refugees from Geissan and Kurmuk localities arrived in Ethiopia. Of these, 2,700 refugees voluntarily moved to Sherkole refugee camp in Benishangul Gumuz region of western Ethiopia. In addition, some refugees from Blue Nile have crossed into South Sudan. To date, about 776 refugees were reported in Renk and 1,200 refugees in Bounq/Maban County. More people are likely to be displaced as fighting continues.

When the SAF took full control of Ed Damazine town shortly after the conflict erupted, most IDPs from Ed Damazine and El Roseires towns returned home. The market of Ed Damazine is gradually resuming normal trade activities. The Government of Sudan (GoS), in collaboration with the Sudanese Red Crescent, has taken the lead in providing humanitarian assistance to affected populations in SAF-controlled areas. The Humanitarian Aid Commission informed international humanitarian organizations that they may resume activities in Blue Nile State, but only with national staff.

The fighting has disturbed the already poor agricultural conditions in Blue Nile state. Semi-mechanized production in the state is an important source of grain for both Sudan (5-10 percent of national cereal production and 10-15 percent of total semi-mechanized cereal production in Sudan) and South Sudan (about 50,000 MT from Blue Nile State alone on an annual basis before separation).

The semi-mechanized agricultural sector of Blue Nile state is also an important source of seasonal income (June-February) for laborers from all over Sudan and South Sudan. The eruption of violence mid-season is likely to affect laborers who depend on this income. A shortage of labor during the critical weeding period will further exacerbate the projected below-average performance of 2011 agricultural season in Blue Nile state.

Ongoing fighting could disrupt the seasonal movement of *Bagara* cattle herders (Lahawein, Kenana, Falata, and Rufa'a), who normally graze with their animals in Blue Nile state at this time of year. By July/August, cattle herders tend to move from South Sudan to Blue Nile and Senar states to avoid the heavy rains in the south. However, due to insecurity after the separation of South Sudan, these cattle herders faced difficulties grazing in the South and moved northward earlier (June/July). It is reported that some deviated from the routine animal migratory routes due to recent insecurity in Blue Nile State, which is likely to increase crop destruction by animals and lead to disputes between farmers and cattle herders.

While there was no acute food insecurity in Blue Nile state in August, the fighting in the state has led to deterioration in food security outcomes to Stressed and Crisis levels in September. Many of the affected people lost assets/food stocks, abandoned their farms, and fled their home villages. The prevailing insecurity restricted seasonal movement and reduced opportunities for agricultural labor. Food security conditions are not likely to improve if fighting continues and access by humanitarian agencies is denied. Continued fighting and reduced access to farms would have significant impacts on food security, as agriculture and agriculture-related activities are the backbone of the local economy.

South Kordofan

In South Kordofan, the fighting between SAF and SPLA-N that began in early June has affected the livelihoods of about 230,000-250,000 people, who are now estimated to be at Crisis levels of food insecurity. These areas faced no acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) prior to the fighting. The health and nutritional status of the displaced population is reportedly deteriorating. UNHCR reported that 8,500 refugees from South Kordofan arrived in Unity state of South Sudan. The precise size of the IDP/refugee population is unknown due to restricted movement of humanitarian agencies, particularly in SPLA-N controlled areas. The main areas of concern are Kawouda, Heban and Talodi, due to poor access to these areas because of insecurity and heavy rains. The GoS has insisted that humanitarian assistance be channeled through national NGOs and the Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC).

In normal years, South Kordofan contributes up to 13 percent and 5.4 percent of national sorghum and millet production respectively. The continued fighting in South Kordofan will negatively affect seasonal migrant labor opportunities from other parts of Sudan and endanger the livelihood strategies of people living in the area. Stressed and Crisis levels of food insecurity are expected to remain through December.

Darfur

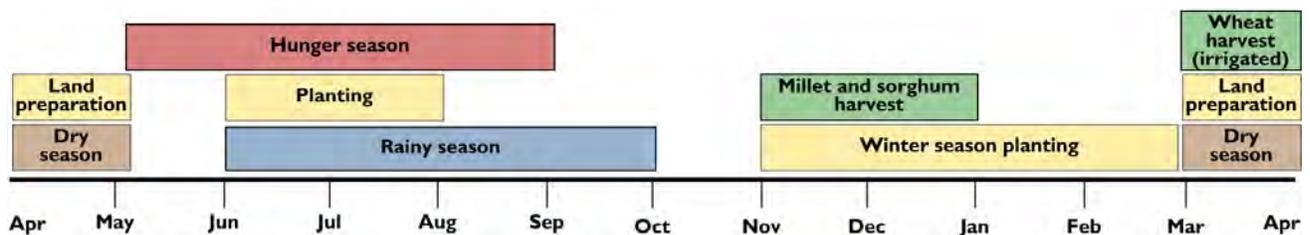
In Darfur, UNAMID reported a 70 percent decline of violent incidents in recent months. However, the security situation is still tense, due to a recent alliance between some factions of Darfur rebels (the Sudan Liberation Movement-Mini Minawi - SLM-MM and Sudan Liberation Movement-Abdulwahid - SLM-AW) and the SPLA-N. The move by the Justice and Equity Movement (JEM) leader from Libya to Darfur has increased fears and tension in Darfur. Nonetheless, some IDPs in all three Darfur states have reportedly started seasonal returns to their areas of origin for the cultivation season (June – October) and/or have leased land in areas adjacent to their camps. There is growing concern that the projected poor harvest in some parts of North Darfur state might cause new displacement of returnees and residents unless humanitarian assistance is provided in their return/home villages.

A recent inter-agency needs assessment carried out in West and South Darfur states estimated the number of returnees from refugee camps in Darfur and Chad at 25,000 and 17,718 households, respectively. Access to agricultural labor opportunities is likely to increase due to a relatively improved security situation, and an increase in area cultivated is expected in most parts of Darfur. WFP has initiated seasonal food distribution to drought-affected residents of Darfur during the peak lean season, and the food/milling voucher system in some IDP locations continues.

Cereal prices in Darfur continued to increase in August/September. In El Fasher market (North Darfur), cereal prices rose by 3 percent, 17 percent and 24 percent for millet, sorghum and wheat, respectively. Sorghum and millet prices are 114 percent and 79 percent above the five-year averages, respectively. Similar prices increases are reported in West and South Darfur states. Cereal prices are likely to remain high in Darfur due to poor performance of the current agricultural season in some parts of Darfur, especially North Darfur.

The majority of the two million IDPs in Darfur will continue to face a food consumption deficit through October and remain in Crisis, due to sharp increases in the price of essential food commodities. About 50 percent of residents and host communities in drought-affected areas who have limited or no livestock holdings will continue to face deficits through October and remain Stressed until the harvest.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET