

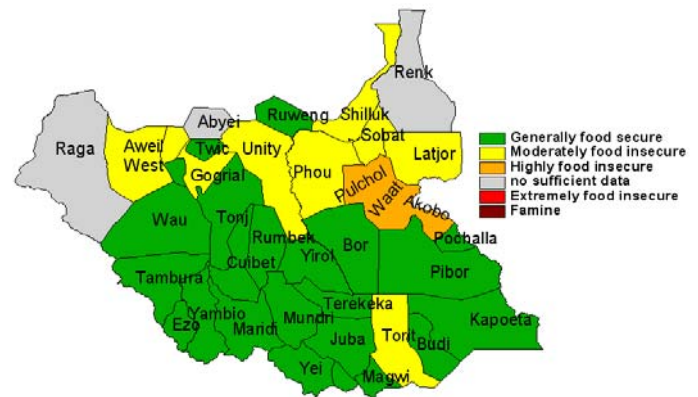
SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Update

With inputs from OXFAM, CONCERN, SC-UK, and HARD

October 2007

- Early maturing crops, such as sorghum, maize, groundnuts, sesame and legumes, have been harvested in both unimodal and bimodal livelihood zones. Despite these harvests, food shortages are expected to affect some areas, particularly those affected by floods, including parts of the Eastern Flood Plains, Nile-Sobat, and Western Flood Plains livelihood zones (Figure 1). These floods, which are receding as rainfall decreases, are estimated to have affected between 50,000 and 200,000 people.
- The World Food Programme's Annual Livelihoods and Needs Assessment (ANLA) and the Food and Agricultural Organization's Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) have concluded. These assessments, the results of which will be released in late 2007 or early 2008, will help establish the magnitude of flood impacts, as well as crop harvests and losses.

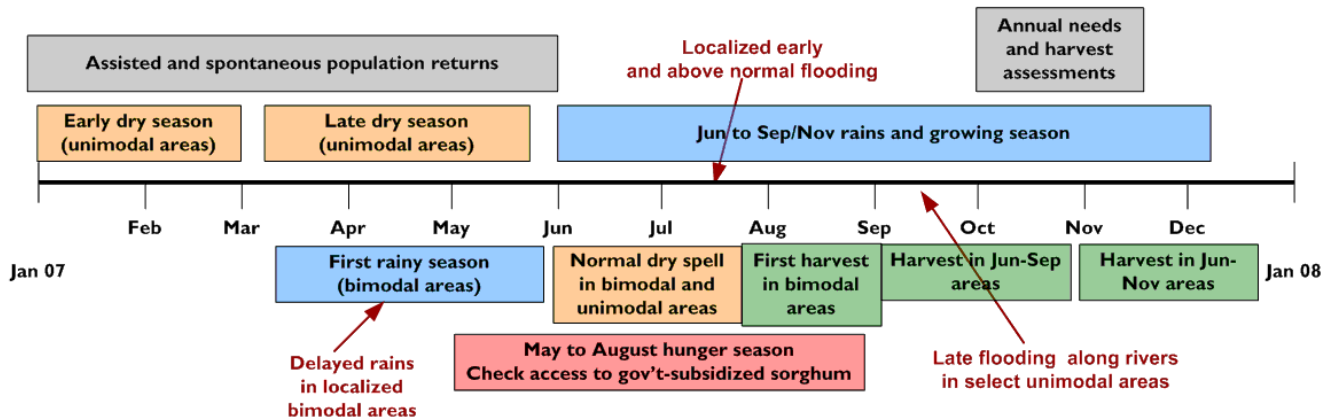
Figure 1. Current estimated food security conditions, October to December 2007



Source: FEWS NET

- A measles outbreak that killed over 800 children was reported in Nanyangachor, Kapoeta County. The disease was also reported in: Yiroi, Wuror County, Padak, and Bor (Jonglei). While measles is endemic in these areas, the level of mortality resulting from this outbreak is especially high.
- Cattle rustling between Murle and Dinka groups left eight people dead in Bor county. The anticipated forced disarmament of the Murle in Pibor County appears to be on hold, following the withdrawal of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) from the Government of National Unity (GoNU). The Murles' arms strengthen their ability to attack their neighbors, thus restricting the opportunity for other tribes to graze their livestock freely.
- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the north, as well as refugees from Uganda, continue to return to South Sudan. About 21,000 IDPs from Northern Sudan arrived in Koch County in Upper Nile in October, following the assisted return of 400 IDPs to Shambe from Khartoum. An organized repatriation of 416 Southern Sudanese refugees from Uganda has also been carried out in the last seven weeks.
- Critical factors to monitor in November and December include:
 - 1) Status of harvests in bimodal and unimodal cropping areas,
 - 2) Performance of second season crops in bimodal areas,
 - 3) Evolving impacts of the 2007 flooding on food access,
 - 4) Flood recession progress and the emergence of post-flood livelihoods opportunities,
 - 5) Civil insecurity and livestock-related conflicts,
 - 6) Status of North-South population returns, the upcoming census, and their impacts,
 - 7) Continued availability and impact of GoSS-subsidized sorghum,
 - 8) Spread of and containment activities for the measles outbreak in Kapoeta County.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Progress of seasonal rains

Most of southern Sudan has experienced heavy rainfall since April. Although rains started late in some areas, this did not have a major effect on crop growth, and good first-season harvests have been reported in bimodal areas (Figure 2). Quick-maturing crops such as maize and sorghum in unimodal areas have also been harvested. Late-maturing sorghum is still in the fields in both bimodal and unimodal zones. Most crops planted in the unimodal lowlands of Western, Eastern and Sobat livelihood zones were submerged in the flooding. Late-maturing sorghum was the most affected.

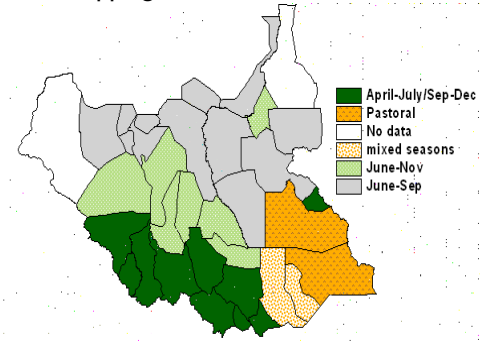
While heavy rains have allowed for good harvests in some areas, those that fell in early July in parts of the Nile-Sobat zone (Unity State) and the Eastern Flood Plains (Upper Nile and Jonglei states) caused early flooding. Usually floods occur in August or September (Figure 3).

While the rainy season is coming to an end in most unimodal areas, the northern part of the Iron Stone Plateau is still receiving heavy rains. These rains are expected to continue until mid-November, compelling households to prematurely harvest late-maturing sorghum to minimize destruction of the crop by floods. Some flood-affected areas may experience a significant reduction of crop harvests that may cause food shortages between October and December. However, the flooding is also expected to have positive impacts in early 2008, when increased fishing and milk and flood-recessional agriculture will be possible.

Western Flood Plains Zone

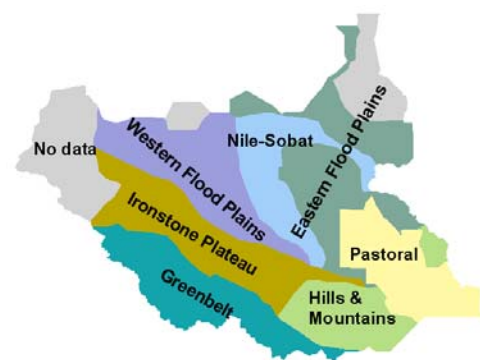
The main factor affecting food security in the Western Flood Plains is the floods that started in mid-July. In particular, in Aweil West, other Aweil counties and Gogrial counties (Northern Bahr el Gazal State) (Figure 4), moderate food insecurity

Figure 2. Cropping seasons in southern Sudan



1. April-July and September-December season (Bimodal)
2. Pastoral – Limited single-season areas
3. June-September – single season (Unimodal)
4. June-November – single season (Unimodal)
5. Mixed seasons – Areas with two seasons in highlands and one season in lowlands

Figure 3. Livelihoods zones in southern Sudan



Source, Figures 2-3: FEWS NET

has emerged due to late flooding that affected lowland crops before they could be harvested. However, some households in these areas also rely on production from highland farms, and this production is expected to ameliorate the impact of some of the lowland crop losses. Although rains are gradually decreasing in most areas of this zone, standing waters continue to impede movement, affecting trade and access to basic health services.

Villages along the Lol River were also severely hit by flooding. Villages further away from the river have also been affected, due to increased water levels in swamps and river tributaries. The areas most affected by the flooding are located in Yirol. Crop losses in these areas, particularly in Awerial, in the southern part of the livelihood zone, were significant. Rainfall has, however, decreased in Yirol West and East and part of Lakes State in September, reducing flooding in some areas.

Sorghum production in Gogrial County has been greatly affected by flooding. The crop harvest was below average in upland farms and general crop failure is anticipated in lowland areas. Twenty-five percent of the total population in these areas, particularly in Toch North, Toch West, Toch East, and Nyang Payam, is at risk of food insecurity.

In spite of the poor crop performance in these areas, livestock conditions remain average, with floods allowing for sufficient pasture and water to sustain animals. Livestock products are expected to continue contributing significantly to the food needs of populations in this zone, especially among the middle and better off socioeconomic groups. Milk accessibility among poorer households is expected to remain low. A total of 2,725 children (mostly from poor households and returnees families) in these areas are currently enrolled in WFP-supported supplementary feeding programs in an effort to keep malnutrition rates low. A survey conducted by Action against Hunger in this zone in February 2007 indicated global acute malnutrition rates of 19 percent. Aside from inadequate food intake and disease; some traditional beliefs also play a negative role in malnutrition. For example, attribution of a disease to an evil spirit may lead caregivers to believe a child cannot be helped, and they will not take the child to receive medical attention.

Market prices in Akon and Tonj are lower than normal. Sorghum prices have decrease by about 50 percent this month compared to same time last year, due, in part, to the GoSS's subsidized sales of the commodity in major towns. Sorghum prices still remain above average in villages, however, as road access to village markets has been disrupted by flooding. Livestock prices have also decreased by 50 percent. Of the few animals for sale at Akon market, all but one were emaciated, indicating that stock owners were getting rid of unwanted animals. Food aid distributions by WFP and other humanitarian organizations have also contributed significantly to meeting the local populations' food needs in these areas.

In Lakes state, crop carryover from last year's harvest has run out for the 40 percent of the population who constitute the poorer socioeconomic groups. These groups now rely on milk, labor and petty trade, supplemented by relief food, to meet their food needs. Harvesting of groundnuts has started in these areas, with good yields being reported thus far. Sorghum is now the main source of carbohydrates and it, too, is readily available at low prices in the major markets of Rumbek and Cueibet. Sorghum sourced from northern Sudan by the GoSS is also available on local markets at a subsidized price.

At the end of September, the humanitarian organization ADRA reported the arrival of 400 assisted returnees from Khartoum at Shambe, Unity County. About half have moved to their final destinations in Bor and Juba. A joint assessment of the remaining population, mostly destined for Lakes State, was not undertaken due to access limitations caused by floods.

Despite erratic rainfall, which is likely to lead to harvests that are below expectations, food security in Aweil West is stable. Sorghum and groundnut harvests continue, but sorghum prices remain at the same levels as during the hunger season.

Figure 4. Counties of southern Sudan



Sources: FEWS NET

Short-cycle sorghum and simsim harvests have been completed, while long-cycle sorghum will be harvested between December and January.

In Yirol, crop performance is not uniform due to the disproportionate distribution of rains, necessitating replanting of some groundnut crops in parts of Awerial. Parts of Yirol East and West also experienced poor crop performance due to pest infestations such as stem bores. Prices of food commodities are increasing steadily, due mainly to a lack of road access caused by flooding between Yirol and Rumbek.

Based on information received from CONCERN, a humanitarian organization working in Aweil West and North counties, early-maturing sorghum is reported to have done well despite the little rain received, especially in those areas not affected by floods. However, long-cycle varieties that are still at their hard dough stage (grain filling at 70 to 80 percent) are currently being harvested to rescue them from floods. This will decrease the quality and quantity of the total grain yield. Farmers are presently consuming freshly-harvested crops like maize, groundnut, green gram, vegetables and greens. However, there is a concern that lack of road access coupled with poor harvest in some of these areas might affect food security between January and March 2008.

Food prices rose slightly following Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) staff receiving three months arrears, allowing them to buy scarce food commodities and increasing demand. However, harvesting of early-planted crops, and improved road networks in areas not affected by floods have enabled traders to continue to bring consumer goods into the market from Northern Sudan and other neighboring counties to meet consumer demand.

Livestock conditions, particularly for small ruminants, were reported as bad, and there is a high mortality rate of shoats within the two counties due to an unknown disease. Cases of foot rot, which is a direct result of flooding, and diarrhoea, which might be attributed to diet, worms or consumption of contaminated water, were also reported as major problems in small ruminants. In spite of this, milk supplies and prices remain stable in all the local markets of Aweil West/North, and livestock prices have increased slightly this month due to increased demand from new SPLA purchases. SPLA salaries are now being paid on a monthly basis, thus strengthening their purchasing power.

Nile Sobat Rivers Zone

Flooding that started in mid-July submerged crops, displaced people and disrupted market access in many areas in the Nile Sobat zone. The effect of these floods on crops yield is expected to reduce food availability and increase food insecurity. In Unity, Phou, and Shilluk counties, for example, moderate food insecurity has emerged due to reduced crop production caused by the early flooding. In Koch County, yields for one of the main cash crops, tobacco, are reported to be below last year. Floods also disrupted other livelihoods, such as fishing, as inputs such as nets and boats were washed away. Due to the immediate negative impacts of the floods, localized food insecurity may persist in these areas through December 2007, with the potential for improvement starting in January 2008, when receding floods waters will allow for improved market access (from the drying out of roads) and above-normal access to water plants and fish. As flood recession has begun, those with fishing gear are now fishing in the deeper parts of the rivers and standing water. The peak fishing season is between January and May. Currently, households in this zone rely on maize and sorghum for consumption. These cereals are supplemented by fish, milk and grain from local markets that are well supplied by traders from northern Sudan.

Normal dry season movements in search of labor have begun, with able-bodied people moving to urban areas like Bentiu, Rier town and northern towns like Khartoum, in search of employment and other basic needs. Returns of displaced persons to Koch County continued in October, with more people returning this month than in September. The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission noted that 21,000 spontaneous returnees arrived in Koch County in October. High rates of malnutrition are reported among the returnee's children.

Current sorghum and livestock prices are 20 to 25 percent higher than same time last year in Koch County, indicating high demand for and low supplies of these commodities from floods, which have limited cereal harvests and livestock movements. Increased availability of cash in the local economy, as more government officials and SPLA soldiers get salaries, has also contributed to higher prices this year. Purchased grain has historically contributed up to 20 percent of the

annual food basket for poor households. Current sources of cash used to purchase grain include employment in oil fields, sale of livestock and fish and petty trade. Though prices for grain are higher this year than last year, physical access to grain and other commodities has significantly improved in the region during the last two years as a result of better road access between this zone and Bentiu and Khartoum in northern Sudan.

Eastern Flood Plains

The Eastern Flood Plains Zone encountered similar flooding as that of the Nile-Sobat Rivers Zone. Early flooding affected Ayod, Akobo, Pulchol, Waat, and Walgak counties (former Bieh County) in Jonglei State, areas along the Sobat River (Abuong area), as well as Renk and Longuchok counties in Upper Nile State. The impact of the floods on food security will differ depending on the area, but in parts of Pulchol, Waat, and Akobo, moderate to high levels of food insecurity are likely due to a combination of floods, chronic poor market access due to inadequate infrastructure and inter-clan tensions, particularly between the Murle and neighboring ethnic groups. In Renk, on the other hand, the impact of the floods may be less significant, as sorghum stocks from 2006 harvests are still available. These remaining stocks caused a drop in sorghum prices by up to 50 percent following the harvest, and resulted in a reduction of areas planted during the 2007 harvest cycle.

Hostilities continue in eastern parts of Jonglei State. In early August, numerous attacks and counterattacks between the Murle of Pibor County in the pastoral zone and the Lou Nuer in Akobo and Walgak caused displacement. Recent cases of child abduction have also led to the closure of some schools in Jonglei state. Fifteen children have been abducted in the last two months, causing eight village schools around Bor town to close. The long-awaited forced disarmament of the Murle in Pibor County appears to be postponed given the overriding political tension between the GoSS and the GoNU.

Hills-Mountains Zone

Following crop harvests from the first season in July and August), food security is generally stable in the Hill-Mountains Zone. Good harvests from the first season crops were reported at the areas bordering Uganda, particularly in Kajokeji County. Crops being consumed now are early-maturing maize, sorghum, groundnuts, and sesame. Traditionally, second-season harvests start as early as November in some areas, further improving food security. In some parts of the zone, stocks from the first-season harvest could last until the second-season harvest that is expected around January 2008.

Population movements continue to increase in this zone, with number of returnees coming through the Nimule corridor increasing daily. Between October 21 and 27, UNHCR assisted the return of 416 Sudanese refugees to Southern Sudan, 409 of which came to Eastern and central Equatoria. With the end of the rainy season in the next few weeks, UNHCR plans to increase the pace of repatriation, with some 22,000 refugees expected to return to southeastern Sudan between October and December 2007. It is anticipated that the returnees will return to Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Blue Nile. Competition over scarce resources, including land, water and food is expected to increase with these returns.

Pastoral Zone

Constant rainfall in the Pastoral Zone since April has allowed for above-average pastures conditions, and the community living in this zone is expected to be food secure for the next two months. However, in spite of ongoing disarmament efforts in the area, cattle raid-related insecurity caused by the Murle tribe in this zone on their neighbors in the Hills-Mountains and the Eastern Flood Plains Zones continue.

A measles outbreak was reported in Nanyangachor Kapoeta East County. Official reports indicate 821 children have died of the disease and another 2500 have been affected. Nanyangachor is about 450 km northeast of Kapoeta, an area where road conditions are bad, particularly during the wet season. Catholic Diocese of Torit runs a health programme in the area, but may not have the capacity to address the entire caseload. As such, the intervention of other health agencies is needed.

Ironstone Plateau Zone

Food security in the Ironstone Plateau Zone is generally stable following an early onset of rains that resulted in an early harvest of short-cycle crops such as sorghum, pumpkin, okra, eggplant and other vegetables. Rains are expected to continue until the first or second week of November. However, some parts of region remain dry during the second week of October. This dryness is not likely to have a negative impact on crops growth, as long-cycle sorghum crops are maturing and require less precipitation.

Livestock prices are decreasing compared to previous months, and this downward trend is expected to continue as restocking activities end. These low livestock prices are compelling traders to sell their animals in the form of meat in Wau town, where profits are higher. Other commodity prices such as sugar and cooking oil have also decreased in Wau town compared to previous months. In rural areas, food prices remain the same as in previous months due to lack of access. Food security in this zone is expected to remain stable for the coming dry season.