



**Current food security conditions**

The food insecure population, estimated at 700,000 people, is mostly concentrated in the eastern and northwestern parts of southern Sudan and is comprised of returnees, the chronically food insecure, conflict-affected households, and a few refugees (Figure 2a). These conditions emerged in April and are likely to be sustained through September (Figure 2b) with the exception of Torit County, where conditions are anticipated to improve with onset of the July-August harvest. Improvements can also be expected in LRA affected areas in Maridi, Yambio and Ezo during July-August, though spontaneous LRA attacks remain possible. The presence of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and their heavy reliance on food aid and on the host population, is also anticipated to continue as long as the refugees lack access to land for cultivation.

In general, slightly improvements can be expected in September in the food insecure June/September crop growing areas due to the onset of the “green harvest”. However, these improvements will not be significant until October, when harvests will be concluded.

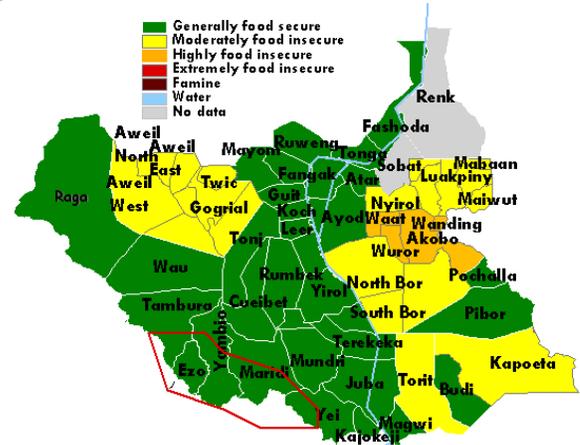
Areas requiring increased attention are where insecurity has escalated in recent months namely; Waat, Nyriol, Akobo, Nasir, Luakpiny, Pibor, Bor, Ezo, Maridi, Yambio, Rumbek, Tonj and Juba. An assessment conducted by NPA in March-April indicates that Nyriol County has been more stable than initially projected, but an intense conflict with Nasir and Luakpiny households in May is likely to negatively affect that stability.

Kapoeta County also requires close monitoring because the April-July season is critical for pasture and water replenishment that is essential for livestock survival during August-September. Current food deficits in Kapoeta are more due to limitations on grain and livestock market access than poor crop production, as the area is predominantly pastoral. Given the unpredictability of rainfall in this area moderate food insecure conditions could persist until September.

**Eastern Flood Plains Livelihood Zone**

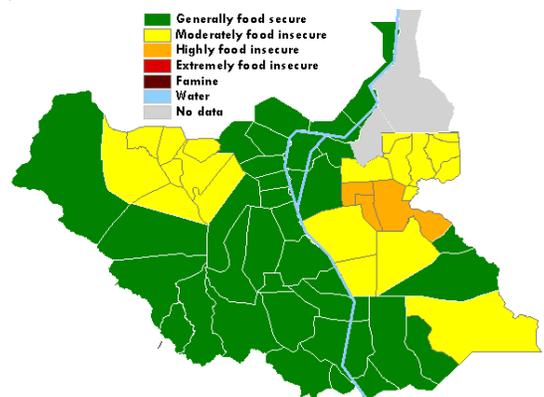
The escalation of chronic inter-clan and inter-tribal cattle raiding conflicts and last year’s crop shortfalls (caused by June-August dryness and floods) are increasingly affecting food security in the Eastern Flood Plains livelihood zone. The insecurity was primarily concentrated in Waat, Wuror, Akobo, and Nyriol, but has now spread northwards to Luakpiny and Nasir, displacing 15-20,000 people. A retaliatory raid in March against the pastoralists of Pibor County in January was one of the worst attacks in recent history, as it resulted to deaths of over 400 people. As anticipated, the pastoralists retaliated in April by raiding Akobo and displacing over 15,000 people. Also, fresh inter-clan fighting erupted between two Nuer clans in May following attacks to avenge killings that occurred in March. This conflict has reportedly killed over 60 people and displaced up to 5,000 others. The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and United Nations Mission (UNMIS) have sent security forces into the area to restore security and facilitate dialogue/reconciliation for one month. There are also reports of a few thousand new returnees, some having arrived from Ethiopia. Meanwhile, bad road conditions, worsened by an earlier than normal onset of rains, are hampering the transport of emergency humanitarian supplies to displaced households.

**Figure 2a.** Most likely food security conditions, May – June 2009



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 2b.** Most likely conditions July– September 2009



Source: FEWS NET

A March-April assessment by Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) in Wuror, Waat and Nyirol counties indicates that cattle raiding conflicts negatively affected the normal dry season migrations which ensure access to sufficient dry season pasture and water sources. Increased fighting during January-April curtailed movement of cattle to traditional grazing areas mostly located along the Sobat river, as well as in Bor and Ayod counties inhabited by Jikany, Dinka-Bor, and Gawaar ethnic groups respectively. This resulted in reduced access to pasture and, in turn, poor livestock body conditions. Motot, Wuror, and Waat are the areas most affected. Given the poor body conditions, the incidence of cattle diseases, such as Hemorrhagic Septicemia (HS) and Caprine Bovine Pleural Pneumonia (CBPP), are reportedly on the rise. Veterinary services are reported to be very inadequate.

Overall, the NPA assessment indicates that Wuror and Waat are food insecure and that Nyirol is better off, as households there have grain stocks sufficient to last through July. This is consistent with FEWS NET's estimation of current food security conditions (Figure 1). Despite the insecurity, the assessment also reported the presence of significant sorghum stocks during March-April, as well as households selling cattle and doing petty trade to raise cash to purchase grain. Given escalating insecurity, it is not clear how well households are continuing to rely in these strategies to supplement current food shortages.

Of most concern is the potential continuation of conflict into the approaching June-September cultivation season. Already, it is possible that the displaced households have been unable to take advantage of the early onset of rains to cultivate. It is essential that close monitoring of recently launched conflict, security and reconciliation initiatives is maintained in order to better inform ongoing humanitarian response.

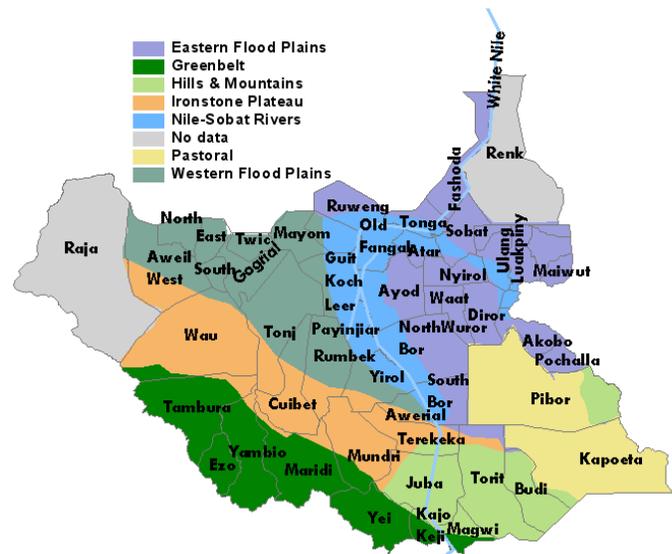
**Western Flood Plains and Ironstone Plateau Livelihood Zones**

In northern parts of this zone, last year's un-seasonal flooding-induced crop shortfalls have led to food insecurity since December among poor households that have little or no livestock. These shortfalls continued through April-May 2009, and have now been compounded by hunger season food shortfalls that will last until October when the main harvest is due. Conditions in the southern parts of this zone have generally remained normal, but they remain threatened by historically unresolved inter-clan/inter-tribal conflict. The latest conflict occurred during April-May between Tonj and Rumbek counties, and has reportedly displaced over 10,000 people.

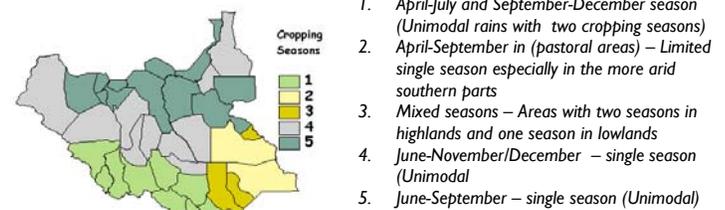
**Greenbelt Livelihood Zone**

The April-July cropping season is now in its second month in this zone. Planting started in as early as March and peaked in April. Farmers have planted sorghum, maize, sesame, and groundnuts. These will be ready for harvest around July-August. Meanwhile, conditions in this zone remain stable but are threatened by continued Lords Resistance Army (LRA) attacks since mid-December. The latest attacks occurred during the first week of May in Yambio, Ezo and Nzara counties. The continuing nature of the attacks has motivated local communities to mobilize defense units. However, this means that young able-bodied men, who represent essential agricultural labor, are being diverted to defense activities at a time when

**Figure 3. South Sudan livelihood zones and counties**



**Figure 4. Cropping seasons across Southern Sudan**



Source: FEWS NET

cultivation is at its peak. There are unconfirmed reports of cultivation being abandoned. In addition, LRA attacks are reported to be driving refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who reside in this zone, from refugee camps. These refugees are already food insecure and are relying on food aid and host community support. There are reports that some refugees have been looking for land to cultivate.

Of most concern is the potential for continued LRA insecurity to disrupt crop production activities during the April-July season. Though this might not necessarily affect the whole zone, it could significantly reduce crop yields in areas where attacks are concentrated, thus, creating food insecurity in a traditional crop surplus zone. While affected residents could cope by strongly relying on kinship support while waiting on the second cropping season harvest, refugee households have more limited options, primarily: supplying agricultural labor for food, relying on food aid support, or a combination of the two.

### **Hills & Mountains Zone**

Similar to the Greenbelt Zone, the April-July cropping season is also progressing in this zone. Current food insecurity caused by last year's crop shortfalls, particularly in the eastern parts (Torit) of this zone, is expected to ease when first cropping season harvests take place in July-August. Rainfall conditions remained normal during April, but declined during most of May, raising concerns of poor crop performance as crops are already in their second month of growth. This is especially a concern in Torit, Juba, and Magwi counties. Of additional concern is the emergence of a potential livelihood conflict between Mundari agro-pastoralists and the more agricultural community group of Bari. The Mundari-Bari tension has been growing over the last two years due to Mundari grazing their cattle on Bari owned farms. Currently, peace talks are underway.

### **Nile-Sobat River Zone**

Food security conditions, especially in the northern parts of the Nile-Sobat River Zone remain stable, largely sustained by last year's carryover crop stocks, supplemented by dried fish caught during the recently concluded fishing season, continued access to water plants, and livestock products. Households here are likely to remain food secure until the next harvest. The latest updates from an assessment conducted by NPA during March-April in Ayod indicates that a majority households still have sufficient crop stocks to last until the next harvest in September-October. NPA also conducted another assessment in Unity State towards end of last year, and found that households there would generally be food secure until the 2009 October harvest.

Further south, pockets of food insecurity are growing, especially in areas where cultivation was below normal last year due to cattle raiding induced conflict with neighboring Murle pastoralists and Nuer agropastoralists. While fish traditionally compensates for crop shortfalls in most parts of this zone, northeastern parts of North Bor are far from major fishing areas. Households in these areas tend to rely more heavily on crops, but yields were poor last year due to insecurity. During early May, affected households in Bor held peace talks with the neighboring Nuer community to resolve the conflict. The two parties agreed to seven resolutions, namely: a comprehensive disarmament, return of looted cattle, consultative sharing of resources (mostly grazing and water), presence of law enforcers, cessation of prevailing hostilities and peaceful approach to future conflicts. While these developments are positive, similar agreements made in 1994, 2004, and 2007 were not respected.

### **Ironstone Plateau**

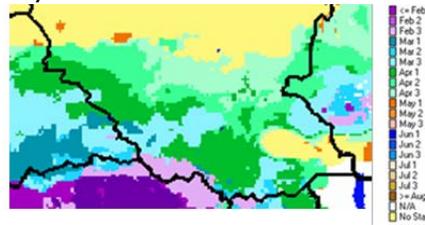
Food security conditions remain stable for most households in the Ironstone Plateau Zone, with isolated food insecure pockets in the northern parts (Jur area) of Wau County. While food insecurity is expected to increase among the affected poor crop producers during the May-July hunger season, these households are expected to cope by increasing the collection of shea butter oil nuts and a variety of wild yams, both of which are currently in season. It is important to note that shea butter performance is sometimes unpredictable, and should this be the case this year, affected households would not be able to fully cover their hunger season food shortfalls. An early onset of the June-November cropping season, predominant in this area, occurred in April, and farmers might take advantage by planting early. However, this is now threatened by above normal dryness during most of May.

## April-July and June-September/November seasonal progress

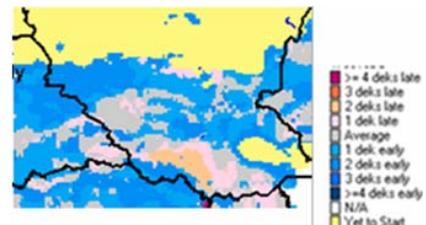
The onset of rains for the April-July crop cropping season, predominant in the Greenbelt and Hills & Mountains Zones was timely. The rains became fully established in early April prompting widespread planting of first season crops in the two zones (Figure 5).

Elsewhere, the onset of rains that were adequate to facilitate cultivation became more evident between the second and the last week of April, raising chances of an earlier than normal start in the June-September/November cropping areas (Figure 6). But dryness during the first three weeks of May could negatively affect early planted crops. Rains in significant pockets of the Pastoral Zone remained inadequate to support sorghum cultivation, though this is not unusual given that crop cultivation is erratic in this zone.

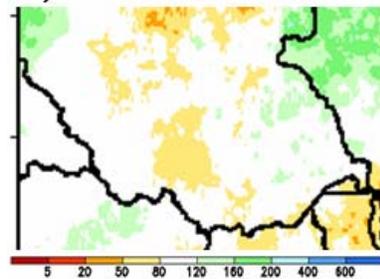
**Figure 5.** Start of season as of 1-10 May, 2009



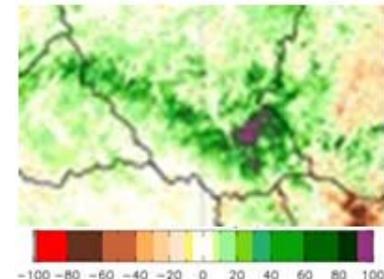
**Figure 6.** Start of season anomalies as of 1-10 May, 2009



**Figure 7.** Percent of normal rainfall March 1- May 13, 2009



**Figure 8.** Vegetation anomalies as of 1-10 May, 2009



WRSI – Water Requirements Satisfaction Index

Sources: Rainfall-NOAA; Start of Season & WRSI – NOAA & USGS; Vegetation - NASA

Figure 7 illustrates areas that have encountered rainfall anomalies since March, with some areas receiving 50-80 percent of normal rains. These anomalies are more relevant to the April-July cropping areas. Though they may not have a significant negative impact on crops in the Greenbelt zone, where average rainfall totals are high, there is concern over their likely impacts in the Hills and Mountains zone. This concern has become more apparent over the last two weeks which have been dry.

During early May, vegetation conditions generally remained above normal with some improvements in the north-central parts (Figure 8). However, vegetation conditions could deteriorate following dryness during the first three weeks of May.

There are reports of poor livestock body conditions especially in the Wuror, Waat and Motot areas of the Eastern Flood plains due to un-seasonal livestock movements caused by increased inter clan and cattle raiding conflicts. The conflicts have limited access to the main dry season pastures and water sources.

## Markets and sorghum prices

Sorghum prices in the key reference markets of Juba, Aweil, and Wau have increased since March. This coincides with the time of year when sorghum grain stocks typically tend to decline significantly. However, it's important to note that April prices illustrate varied conditions across the three markets. Consumers in Juba face the highest sorghum price since 2006, while the Wau price is similar to last year, lower than 2006 but higher than 2007. April prices for Aweil are inconsistent, as they appear to have nearly doubled those of January-March, as well as that of all other markets since 2006. Thus, further investigation of prices in Aweil is necessary. Monitoring of price conditions for Malakal market has been constrained by insecurity since early this year.