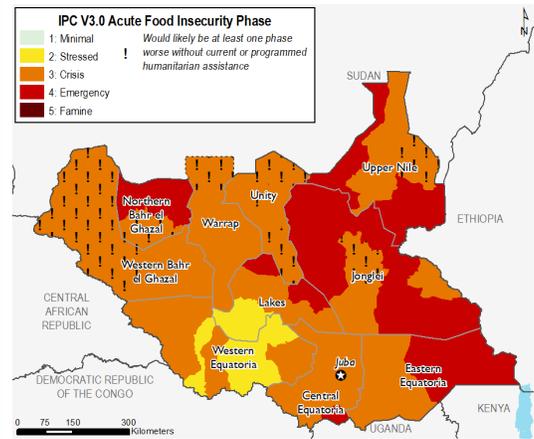


Poor macroeconomic conditions and coronavirus escalate Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes by mid-2020

KEY MESSAGES

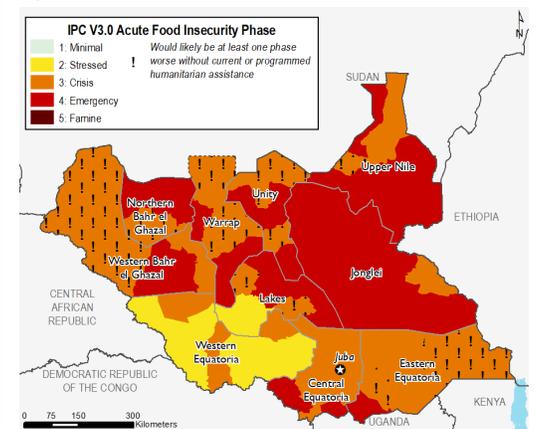
- In early 2020, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes were already pervasive as a result of household asset erosion during the conflict, complete depletion of 2019/20 cereal stocks, and poor macroeconomic conditions. In April, measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, an uptick in intercommunal conflict, and an increased likelihood of desert locust damage to crops are expected to increase the magnitude and severity of acute food insecurity within South Sudan by mid-2020. After accounting for planned humanitarian food assistance, FEWS NET anticipates that the population still in need of humanitarian food assistance from June to September 2020 will exceed previous projections of 6.48 million people. The total population in need of food assistance will likely be similar to or higher than in 2019.
- From April to September, household access to food is anticipated to become increasingly constrained due to current and anticipated declines in household purchasing power. The impacts of movement restrictions due to COVID-19 and a likely decline in oil export earnings are expected to exacerbate prevailing poor macroeconomic conditions, with negative consequences for market-dependent households during the ongoing lean season. In key reference markets in Bor South, Wau, and Juba, the retail price of white sorghum will likely be 54-180 percent above the five-year average.
- Food insecurity will be most severe in Jonglei, Upper Nile, Lakes, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states and in parts of Greater Equatoria. Populations at the greatest risk of food insecurity include rural households with no livestock who face difficulty in accessing physical markets, food assistance, or fish due to insecurity or seasonal access constraints; newly returned IDPs and refugees; and poor, urban market-dependent households with few diversified income sources. Some households in Akobo and Duk of Jonglei are likely still in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), which is associated with an extreme lack of food even after exhausting potential coping strategies. Based on declining access to food and income sources through the July/August peak of the lean season, it is possible that additional vulnerable households could also deteriorate to Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), especially in areas affected by seasonal floods or insecurity.
- Humanitarian food assistance will remain critical to preventing more extreme outcomes. However, the monthly number of beneficiaries reached ranges from 1 to 2 million on average, remaining below the total population in need. Available distribution data on actual and planned beneficiaries in early 2020 indicate Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes are most likely in parts of Greater Bahr el Ghazal as well as in parts of Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Eastern Equatoria. In April, WFP is targeting more than 2 million people with two-month food distributions and pre-positioning supplies prior to the rainfall season, but there are concerns that the indirect effects of COVID-19 could slow down implementation and delivery.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2020



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020

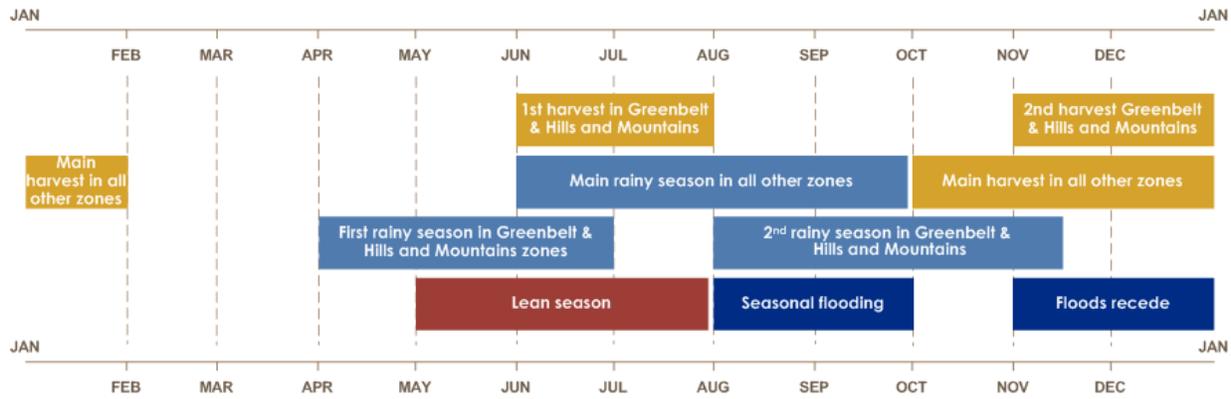


Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

- While movement restrictions related to COVID-19 do not currently restrict physical access to markets, household access to food and income sources will likely be affected to varying degrees as long as the restrictions remain in place. In the event that a resurgence of political conflict or more severe movement restrictions prevent populations from accessing food sources or restrict humanitarian access for a prolonged period, Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be possible in South Sudan. Urgent humanitarian assistance beyond currently planned levels will be required to save lives and protect livelihoods and prevent further occurrence of more extreme food insecurity outcomes.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

CURRENT SITUATION

As of April 30th, South Sudan's Ministry of Health has confirmed 35 cases of COVID-19 in South Sudan, concentrated within Juba and in neighboring Torit county. To limit the spread of COVID-19 within the country, the Government of South Sudan is implementing movement restrictions, including the suspension of interstate flights and interstate border crossings, and social distancing that has compelled the closure of many businesses in non-food sectors. In a context where more than 50 percent of the population is already facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes, the measures taken to suppress its spread run the risk of disrupting livelihood activities, delaying access to food assistance, and placing additional strain on poor households' abilities to buy food and non-food essential needs, especially among displaced and urban communities.

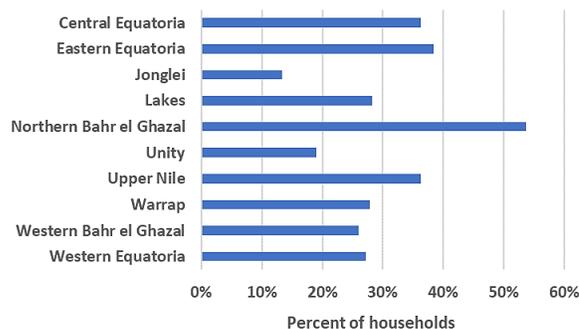
Of the highest concern are internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites and other settlement sites, where camp management services exist. Efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are reportedly limiting households' ability to move in and out of the sites to access food and income sources. A report from IOM and others indicate that the security forces and/or community leaders at several PoC sites, including in Juba, Bentiu, Bor, Rubkona, and Malakal, have at least temporarily restricted visits and limited new arrivals to the site. According to UNHCR, this has presented challenges and concern for reduced humanitarian access and delivery of food assistance, though negotiations to secure access for assistance activities is ongoing. UNHCR and WFP also report challenges in supply chain bottlenecks, including food assistance, and movement of humanitarian workers. In addition, restrictions on human movement at all official international and interstate border entry points has reduced the return of South Sudanese refugees and IDPs to their places of origin. In March, UNHCR recorded only 2,984 spontaneous refugee returns, an 89 percent reduction in the number of spontaneously returned refugees in January. As of April 17, 2.2 million and 1.6 million people are still externally and internally displaced, respectively.

Poor, urban households are also of great concern, based on their dependence on markets for food and reliance on daily casual labor income to fund food purchases. According to the 2008 census, 17 percent of South Sudan's population live in urban areas; estimates of the urban population are now around 25 percent. According to data collected by WFP, nearly 1 in 2 households in Juba spend roughly two-thirds of their monthly income on food, making them highly vulnerable to a reduction in household income or to market shocks. As a result of COVID-19 related restrictions on non-food businesses and social gathering, many urban poor who depend on daily casual labor income in the informal sector or on income from small-scale businesses, including tea shops, salons, hardware shops, and *boda bodas*, are facing a sudden loss of daily income. This is most pronounced in urban areas such as Juba, Torit, Yambio, Wau, Aweil, Bor, Rumbek, Malakal, and Yei, where most poor, urban market-dependent households live and earn a living through engagement in informal sectors.

Currently, rural livelihood activities have not been significantly affected by current movement restrictions. However, there is concern that the suspension of interstate travel could impede typical population movements in search of food and income

sources, especially during the ongoing lean season. Presently, most poor rural households have already depleted their 2019/20 food stocks and are increasingly reliant on market purchases. Data from the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey collected in the 2019 lean season indicate that household dependence on markets as their primary source of cereals or grains ranges from 10 to 55 percent on the state level and can exceed 70 percent on the county level (Figure 1). An overall decline in economic activity due to reductions in casual labor and petty trade could further constrain already low income-earning opportunities, while interstate movement restrictions could impede physical market access or gathering of wild foods. Most poor households are already unable to purchase sufficient quantities of food due to high food prices and limited daily income sources, resulting in food consumption gaps or consumption or livelihood-based coping strategies indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse, while wild food availability is seasonally at its lowest point.

Figure 1. Percent of households by state, on average, that reported food purchased from the market as their main source of cereals/grains in the lean season of 2019



Source: Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey, Round 24, July/August 2019

Conflict and insecurity: Political conflict remains relatively low following the formation of the unity government, but localized, intercommunal conflict and cattle raids continue to periodically disrupt livelihoods and access to food. In March, there were reports of violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement between the government and hold-out groups in Central Equatoria, which likely disrupted first-season planting, trade flows, and food assistance delivery. From January to March, intercommunal conflict escalated in parts of Jonglei, Warrap, and Lakes and caused loss of life, loss of household assets, and disruptions to trade flows and food assistance delivery, including the displacement of at least 6,000 people in **Pibor of Jonglei**. In April, there is heightened concern for intercommunal violence in **Tonj East of Warrap**, where government forces have been deployed to diffuse tensions. There are also fears of a return to full-scale fighting in eastern Upper Nile state following clashes between armed groups in **Maiwut** in early April. Finally, despite a peaceful resolution of conflict between the Dinka Ngok and Misseriye communities of Abyei in January, intercommunal violence re-emerged in April, marked by the destruction of houses and loss of lives and livestock. The violence in Abyei will likely place additional pressure on local market supply, given already reduced levels of informal trading activity occurring from Sudan through Amiet market of Abyei to South Sudan. Armed clashes were reported in parts of Lainya, Yei, Morobo and Kajo-Keji in late April, displacing an **estimated 3,000 people** to Yei town and disrupting first-season cultivation.

Markets and trade: In the context of a protracted macroeconomic crisis caused by low export earnings, inflation, and local currency depreciation, the **sharp decline in the global crude oil price** to a historic low in April threatens to lead to further deterioration in macroeconomic conditions and household purchasing power. Given that oil exports account for approximately 90 percent of government revenue and 95 percent of total exports, a reduction in oil export earnings poses a risk of hard currency shortages and more severe local currency depreciation as well as a decline in revenue to finance imports, peace deal implementation, and infrastructure projects. South Sudan, which is currently producing **185,000 barrels per day (bpd)**, has also joined the **OPEC+ agreement to cut oil production** to a combined 9.7 million bpd per day in an effort to stabilize the oil market, though it is not yet clear to what extent South Sudan will cut its own production, if at all. Already, there are reports that implementation of security arrangements under the peace deal **could be delayed due to the redirection of limited funds to the COVID-19 response**. The South Sudanese Pound (SSP), after slightly gaining some value and stability against the USD in February, has started to weaken against US Dollar in the market, trading at 290 SSP per US Dollar (USD) on the parallel market and about 162 SSP/USD on the official market in mid-April.

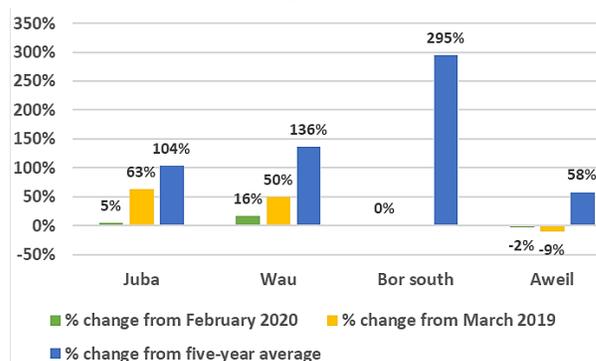
The fall in the oil price and implementation of movement restrictions in response to COVID-19 present a risk to South Sudan's market supply of staple foods, given its dependence on cereal imports to fill the estimated national cereal deficit of 482,500 tons in 2020. There is high concern that hard currency shortages could affect financing of essential imports, while short-term trade monitoring data suggest movement restrictions related to COVID-19 have delayed trade flows to and reduced market functioning within Juba. The governments of Uganda, Sudan, and South Sudan have exempted cross-border trade in food, fuel, and medical supplies from border closure restrictions, while food markets and street vendors within South Sudan remain broadly operational. However, cross-border trade monitoring data collected by FEWS NET and other sources at Nimule, Kaya, Warawar, and Gok Machar border crossing points indicated a decline in the volume of trade of some staple commodities from the week of March 2nd to the week of April 6th. Imports of maize grain and maize flour from Uganda through Nimule declined by 51 percent and 8 percent, respectively, while imports of beans from Uganda through Kaya declined by 42 percent.

Imports of sorghum from Sudan through Warawar declined by a steep 74 percent. Although imports of wheat flour remained fairly stable from Sudan through Warawar, wheat flour from Sudan through Gok Machar declined by 12 percent. In addition, market functionality – measured in terms of the number of traders in operation – has noticeably declined in Juba markets, broadly attributed to the indirect impact of COVID-19. In other markets, market functionality is reportedly relatively normal for the dry season period, though localized insecurity continues to disrupt trade flows from Kaya to Yei of Central Equatoria.

Food prices within South Sudan were already projected to rise based on the prevailing macroeconomic crisis and large national cereal deficit, and panic buying in response to the implementation of COVID-19 movement restrictions may be exacerbating the increase in staple food prices in the short-term

in several key reference markets. Any additional increase in staple food prices has a significant negative impact on purchasing power of poor rural and urban households during the ongoing lean season, but especially among poor, urban households who are simultaneously experiencing a reduction in daily income or assistance from relatives as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. In March, analysis of market price data from the South Sudan Crop and Livestock Information System (CLiMIS) show that the retail price of a *malwa* (3.5 kg) of white sorghum increased by up to 16 percent from February to March 2020 and was 50-63 percent above March 2019 and 104-295 percent above the five-year average in Juba, Wau, and Bor South (Figure 2). In Aweil, prices are 58 percent above the five-year average but are stable or below prices recorded in February and March 2019, which is attributed to higher access to food assistance distributions and potentially informal trade flows from Sudan. The retail price of a *malwa* of white maize grain, a common sorghum substitute, similarly ranged from 4 to 11 percent above February 2019, 48-72 percent above March 2019, and 89-190 percent above the five-year average in Juba and Wau. Whereas in other reference markets such as Bor South, Rumbek Central and Aweil, the price of maize remains similar to February due to distribution of food aid.

Figure 2. Percent change in the price of a *malwa* (3.5 kg) of sorghum in March 2020 compared to February 2020, March 2019, and the five-year average in key reference markets*



Source: data from CLiMIS
*March 2019 data is unavailable for Bor South

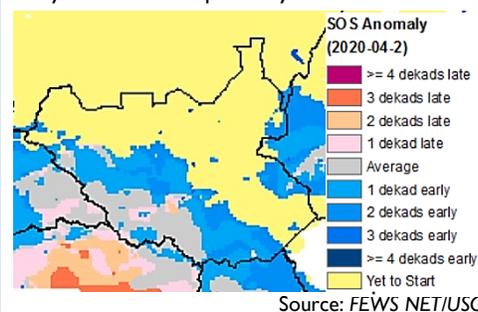
Agricultural production: Bimodal agricultural production is now underway in Greater Equatoria, and preliminary reports from key informants indicate that desert locusts are damaging first season crops particularly in Eastern Equatoria. Satellite-derived data indicate an early to timely start of the March to May rains in bimodal areas, with the exception of parts of Mundri, Yambio, and Ezo counties of Western Equatoria where the onset of rain was about 10 days late (Figure 3). Average to above-average rainfall supported generally timely planting of first season maize, cowpea, groundnut, sorghum, and vegetable crops, and remote sensing data indicate crops currently range from the emergence to vegetative stages. Meanwhile, the rainfall season is not yet established in unimodal areas of Greater Upper Nile, Greater Bahr el Ghazal, and the Kapoeta counties of Eastern Equatoria state, where the main rainfall season typically begins in mid-May or early June.

The entry of several swarms of young to mature locusts into southeastern South Sudan in March/April pose a significant threat to the bimodal harvest. The primary areas of concern for desert locust presence include Magwi, Torit, Lopa/Lafon, Budi, and Ikotos counties of Eastern Equatoria. According to county-level agricultural departments and FAO field monitoring staff, desert locusts damaged an estimated 10 percent of crops planted in Magwi county and 10 percent of crops in Lopa/Lafon, affecting an estimated 6,550 households who cultivated only 0.42 hectares in Magwi (1 acre) and 0.12 hectares (0.3 acre) in Lopa/Lafon on average. In addition, key informants report that desert locusts are consuming pasture in Rumbek East, Rumbek Centre, and Wulu counties of Lakes state. Meanwhile, key informants have confirmed that desert locusts are not currently present in Upper Nile or Jonglei states; locusts previously sighted in these areas are assumed to have moved onward to southwestern Ethiopia. Based on information available from FAO's desert locust watch and the GoRSS Desert Locust High-level Committee, little to no control operations occurred in March but ground control operations partially began in Eastern Equatoria in April. Plans for aerial spraying in April were delayed due to the mandatory 14-day quarantine for the incoming, foreign pilot as well as difficulties procuring supplies associated with freight shipping delays due to COVID-19.

Humanitarian food assistance: According to available information, WFP is adapting its food distribution plan to implement two-month food distribution cycles in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, while also working to pre-position food supplies in advance of the upcoming main rainfall season. Humanitarian cargo movement is exempted from current movement restrictions, including the suspension of interstate flights, though there is concern for supply chain bottlenecks

and reduced operational capacity to distribute food assistance given the impacts of local and global movement restrictions on WFP personnel and its cooperating partners. In February, approximately 1.08 million people received food assistance with general food distribution and food for asset programs. The distribution report for March is not available yet, but WFP's [April Situation Report](#) stated that more than 800,000 beneficiaries had received two-month food distributions across 25 locations, including in all refugee camps and PoC sites. Further, distributions are ongoing to 1.4 million beneficiaries across 26 locations and planned for a further 1.1 million beneficiaries in 38 locations throughout April. The number of beneficiaries reached remains below more than 6.01 million people previously projected to be in need in April, but food assistance remains critical to prevent more extreme food gaps at the household and area level.

Figure 3. Anomaly in the onset of the bimodal rainfall season, April 2020. Areas where rainfall has yet to start are primarily unimodal.



Current food security outcomes: Based on the January 2020 IPC acute analysis, 6.01 million people were projected to be facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes in April. However, the food insecure population is likely higher than previously anticipated due to the impact of movement restrictions to contain COVID-19 on casual labor and other income sources among poor urban households and access to food and income sources among IDP populations in PoC and displacement sites. An increase in the food insecure population is most likely Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are widespread during the lean season, as most households have depleted own-produced food stocks from the 2019/20 harvests and have low purchasing power, while the availability of fish, wild foods, and game is seasonally at their lowest levels. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are present in areas where the loss of crops during the 2019 floods, localized insecurity and intercommunal conflict, or very poor household purchasing power is driving reduced coping capacity or large food gaps.

Areas of greatest concern include Akobo, Duk, Ayod, Nyirol, and Pibor of Jonglei; Cueibet, Rumbek North, Rumbek Centre, and Yirol East of Lakes; and Maban, Maiwut, Nasir, Longochuk, and Ulang of Upper Nile, where Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes have persisted since January and humanitarian assistance levels and market access remained lower than the total needs. In Akobo and Duk of Jonglei, there is continued concern that some households who did not harvest and do not own livestock could be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). In other areas of high concern where food assistance has reached at least 25 percent of the population with at least 25 percent of their daily kilocalorie needs, including in eight counties in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and Greater Upper Nile regions, food assistance is likely mitigating more extreme outcomes, resulting in Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!). Stressed (IPC Phase 2) are present in six counties in Western Equatoria and Lakes, due to relatively better 2019/20 harvests and seasonally better access to food and income sources.

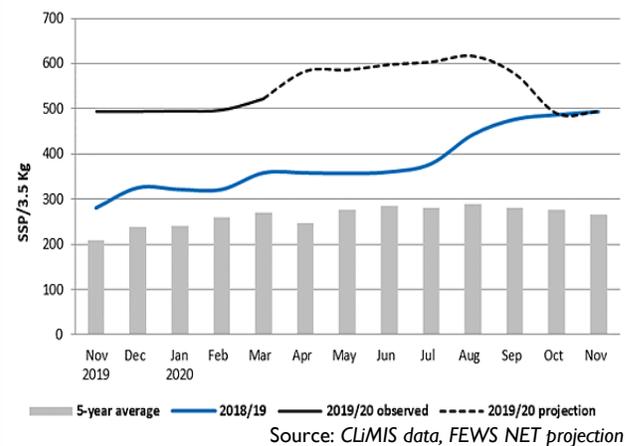
UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Revisions to the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the [South Sudan Food Security Outlook for February to September 2020](#) include:

- Despite a high level of uncertainty, it is most likely that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue throughout the projection period and the number of cases in South Sudan will increase. Current movement restrictions are assumed to remain in place through at least July. It is possible that the restrictions will continue through September with varying severity.
- Based on international and interstate border closure restrictions within South Sudan to limit the movement of people, the number of spontaneous refugee and IDP returnees is likely to be much lower than previously anticipated. However, some movement is still anticipated given that unofficial border crossing points remain relatively porous.
- Based on the falling global oil price and additional economic impacts from COVID-19 on investment flows and remittances, hard currency inflows are expected to be lower than previously anticipated. Although oil production is expected to increase from 185,000 bpd to 200,000 bpd by September 2020, driven by additional production from Tharjith oil well, revenue from this production will likely be offset by low oil prices. Based on the expectation of low oil revenue and high demands for public financing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, macroeconomic conditions are expected to deteriorate further during the outlook period. The availability of foreign currency for imported food and other essential commodities is likely to be low, with negative implications for market supply and rising staple food prices. The exchange rate of South Sudan Pound (SSP) to US dollar is also likely to depreciate further and is expected to trade in the range of 280-300 SSP per USD on the parallel market and around 163 SSP per USD on the official market.

- Based on recent cross-border trade monitoring data and prevailing exemptions for essential cargo from movement restrictions, it is anticipated that delays in food commodity flows from Uganda and Sudan are most likely to be short-term. Cross-border trade volumes from April to September are expected to be similar to or lower than last quarter. However, anomalous trader behavior could lead to irregular domestic trade flows and local market supply. For example, anecdotal reports suggest an increase in trading activity in Bor South to pre-stock before the main rainfall season and to prepare for the potential of more severe movement restrictions. On the other hand, based on the reduction of traders in Juba observed in April, traders may reduce their activity to avoid the likelihood of transmission or respond to declining consumer demand if household purchasing power declines during the course of the pandemic. Areas of greatest concern for local cereal shortages are Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, where the local cereal deficit is highest.

Figure 4. Observed and projected price (SSP) of a *malwa* (3.5 kg) of sorghum in Juba, Nov. 2019 – Nov. 2020 compared to the previous year and five-year average



- Based on FEWS NET's integrated price projections, the retail price of white sorghum in Bor South, Wau, and Juba will likely be 10-50 percent above last year and 54-180 percent above the five-year average through September. In Aweil, prices are expected to be 10-60 percent above the five-year average, but may dynamically range from 30 percent below to 20 percent above 2019 prices. High food prices will likely be driven by multiple factors, including inflation, the indirect impacts of COVID-19 movement restrictions on market supply, high transportation costs, and seasonal deterioration in road conditions. On the other hand, steeper price hikes may be mitigated by the relative increase in cross-border trade flows compared to 2019 and an anticipated decline in consumer demand resulting from below-normal household income in urban areas and reduction in projected refugee returnee flows.
- Due to movement restrictions and mandatory business closures in non-food sectors, household income from casual labor and petty trade is expected to be below normal, especially in urban areas such as Juba, Wau, Bor, Torit, Yei, Rumbek, and Aweil. Coupled with high food prices, household purchasing power is expected to decline through September.
- Area planted in 2020 is now likely to be lower than 2019 for both the bimodal and unimodal production seasons, based on the likelihood of reduced household access to agricultural inputs and likelihood that fewer refugee returnees will return during the planting period. Since COVID-19 movement restrictions coincide with the 2020 agricultural season, it is assumed that delays in cross-border trade flows will reduce the availability of imported seeds on the market. It is also assumed that humanitarian seed distributions will be lower than planned due to operational constraints.
- Based on the presence of swarms in Greater Eatoria during the emergent and vegetative stages of maize and sorghum crops, damage from desert locusts to crops to date, and FAO's forecast that more swarms could arrive from Kenya, bimodal crop production losses are expected to be significant. Although donors have given \$5.9 million of the \$8.4 million required for the desert locust response and the government and FAO are most likely to implement control measures, COVID-19 movement restrictions are expected to impede operational capacity and slow the procurement of pesticides.
- As a result of reduced area planted and damage from desert locusts, the bimodal first season harvest in June/July is expected to be below 2019.
- Based on social gathering restrictions and restrictions on interstate movement in addition to previously anticipated hazards including insecurity and seasonal flooding, household access to natural food sources such as fish and wild foods is likely to be irregular or below normal. For example, fishing grounds can be subject to over-crowding and may be regulated by local authorities. Further, household movement to distant areas may be more limited than usual.
- Rural household income from livestock sales is expected to be somewhat lower than previously anticipated, based on restrictions in interstate movement and social gathering that may limit livestock keepers from driving their livestock for sales in urban centers or auction markets. However, intrastate and village-based livestock trade or auction markets are likely to remain functional, despite measures aimed to avoid over-crowding to curb spread of COVID-19.
- Although WFP is pre-positioning supplies and planned to scale up food assistance during the lean season, reaching an average 26 percent of the country population monthly with an average 37 percent of their kilocalorie needs from May

to July, WFP anticipates that the total number of beneficiaries reached will likely be lower than previously planned. According to a WFP analysis of the potential impact of COVID-19 on food assistance delivery and FEWS NET's conversations with WFP staff, WFP anticipates that overall operational capacity to procure or distribute food assistance will somewhat decline this period, while more time will be spent in planning and beneficiary management to implement two-month distributions and ensure social distancing at distribution points to minimize the risk of transmission.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2020

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, FEWS NET and partners anticipated the population still in need of humanitarian food assistance at the July/August peak of the 2020 lean season would be approximately 6.48 million people, similar to the population still in need of food assistance at the peak of the 2019 lean season. However, the likelihood of worsening household purchasing power associated with the impacts of COVID-19 and deteriorating macroeconomic conditions, combined with the likelihood of bimodal crop losses caused by desert locust, are now anticipated to drive more widespread Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes and an increase in the population in need at the peak of the 2020 lean season compared to 2019. Household food consumption gaps or depletion of livelihood assets were already indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes in most areas, driven by the early exhaustion of household food stocks from the main 2019/20 harvest in northern regions and the second season harvest in Greater Equatoria around February/March 2020. Now, the anticipated decline in household purchasing power due to reduced casual labor or petty trade income resulting from COVID-19 movement restrictions and potential for faster depreciation of the SSP is likely to drive an increase in the severity and magnitude of the food insecure population.

From April to May, food security outcomes are expected to deteriorate. Given that the pandemic coincides with the lean season period, displaced households and poor urban and rural households are highly vulnerable to any increase in staple food prices or reductions in their ability to access humanitarian food assistance. In urban areas, reductions in daily labor income are likely to drive a sharper increase in the Crisis (IPC Phase 3) population as well as an increase in the Emergency (IPC Phase 4) population, given higher market dependence and less diverse food sources. Among IDP and rural households, the availability of natural food sources such as fish and wild foods and the availability of livestock products at the homestead will be at their lowest levels through May, as livestock are in distant, dry season grazing areas. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is anticipated in 22 counties, including in Jonglei, Lakes, Upper Nile, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Eastern and Central Equatoria.

Food insecurity will reach its apex during the June to September period, with peak food assistance needs anticipated in July and August prior to main harvest. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected in 37 counties across the country, with the exception of Western Equatoria. Although the onset of the main rainy season promotes peak livestock productivity and regenerates wild food availability, seasonal floods typically lead to poorer physical market access and contribute to high food prices. The impacts of movement restrictions related to COVID-19 on trade flows, household income, and market access are anticipated to worsen food access during this period. Further, the likelihood that poor households will have reduced capacity to purchase seeds or access seed distributions from humanitarian partners poses a risk of delays or a decline in area planted for the 2020/21 main crop production season, while the likelihood of desert locust damage to bimodal crops poses a risk to crop yields. Food availability and access are most likely to improve after the green harvests begin in August/September.

While the areas of greatest concern remain similar to previous projections, the populations of the highest concern include not only refugee returnees, IDP households, and rural households, but also poor, urban, market-dependent households who earn low wages and are at risk of food consumption gaps. Specifically, the population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in urban centers such as Juba is expected to be atypically high. Although the scale up of planned, funded, and likely food assistance in some counties is expected to somewhat mitigate the occurrence of more severe outcomes and result in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!), it is expected that a slowdown in assistance deliveries due to periodic, localized insecurity, or constraints to humanitarian capacity will contribute to more widespread Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes. In rural areas where the Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) population already comprises most of the population, there is heightened concern that some communities could remain in or deteriorate to Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) due to the impact of multiple shocks on reduced engagement in livelihood activities, including in Akobo and Duk of Jonglei. During the lean season period, past trends indicate that acute malnutrition will likely deteriorate to 'Critical' levels (GAM 15.0-29.9 percent) in some counties due to low food and milk intake as well as a seasonal rise in disease incidence such as acute watery diarrhea, fever, and malaria as the June to September rainy season progresses.

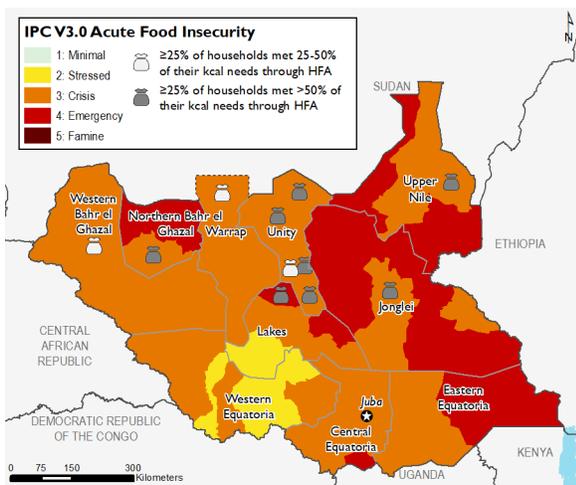
As food security outcomes are anticipated to be most severe at the peak of the lean season, it is possible that some of the most vulnerable households – including rural households with no livestock assets who face difficulty accessing physical markets, food assistance, or fish due to insecurity and seasonal access constraints; as well as newly returned IDPs and

refugees and urban poor vulnerable market-dependent households – could face significant food consumption gaps and be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). In the event that COVID-19 containment measures persist through September, and the peace deal is not implemented, leading to a resurgence of conflict prevents populations from moving in search of food sources or restricts humanitarian access for a prolonged period of time, Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be possible in South Sudan. Urgent humanitarian assistance beyond currently planned levels will be required to save lives and protect livelihoods and prevent further occurrence of more extreme food security outcomes.

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

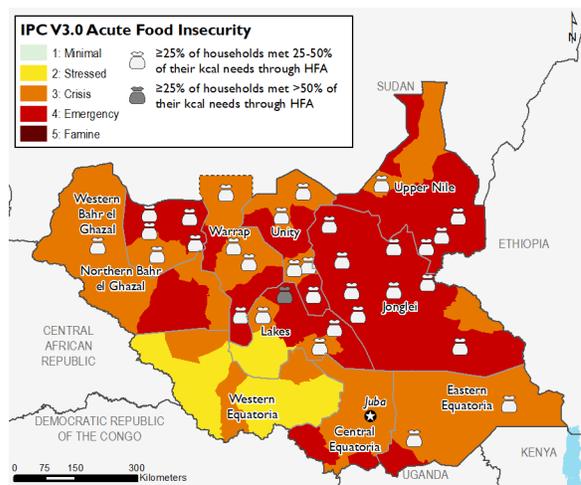
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. ☺ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). ☹ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2020



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).