

# SKBN Coordination Unit

## Humanitarian Update

February 2021



P8 candidates writing their first exam at Kauda-South Kordofan (February 2021)

### FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

*Staple food prices continued to atypically increase during the harvest period*

#### Blue Nile

Harvesting of durable white sorghum in parts of Chali and Wadaka payams, as well as land preparation, were the two main activities in February. According to CU findings, a poor harvest of durable sorghum was estimated at 25 - 40 per cent of normal yield. This was witnessed in Chali el Fil and Ishkab in Chali and Komo Ganza payams respectively due to drought and pest infestation. As a result, it was predicted that food gaps will open soon. Markets served as the main source of food for all the four payams in February. For instance, in Wadaka and Yabus payams, 80 per cent of households depended on markets, but only 10 per cent had the purchasing power to buy food. In Wadaka Payam, only 6 per cent of households sold food in the market to cope with other needs-this was primarily because only a small proportion engaged in agriculture, and the rest depended on gold mining as their main source of income. On the other hand, households in Chali Payam, depended on the market and food rations from Doro refugee camp as the two main sources of food due to a low harvest. Field reports indicated only 10 per cent of households have food stocks left of which may only sustain them through April 2021.

Market functionality was fully operational across the four main crossline markets (Yabus Bala, Moguf, Balila, and Mayak). However, market prices of essential food and non-food items doubled in Chali which significantly limited poor households' ability to access food. Moreover, white sorghum was scarce in the monitored markets across the Blue Nile. In addition, high levels of taxation affected trade.

#### Highlights

1,913 candidates in South Kordofan and Western Jebels sit for South Sudan Primary Leaving Certificate -2020/2021

The area registered the first COVID-19 case on 2 February 2021

Ongoing harvest of 2020/2021 season continued, but with poor crop yields

Staple food prices continued to increase particularly for sorghum

## **South Kordofan**

Harvesting of sorghum and cowpeas on far farms and mechanized farms continued in crop-producing areas of Thobo, Dallami, Heiban, Um-durain, and Western Kadguli counties. However, around 10 per cent of households in Dallami, Heiban, and Um-Durain Counties reported diminishing stocks and relied on markets to purchase food to cope with the reduced food stocks.

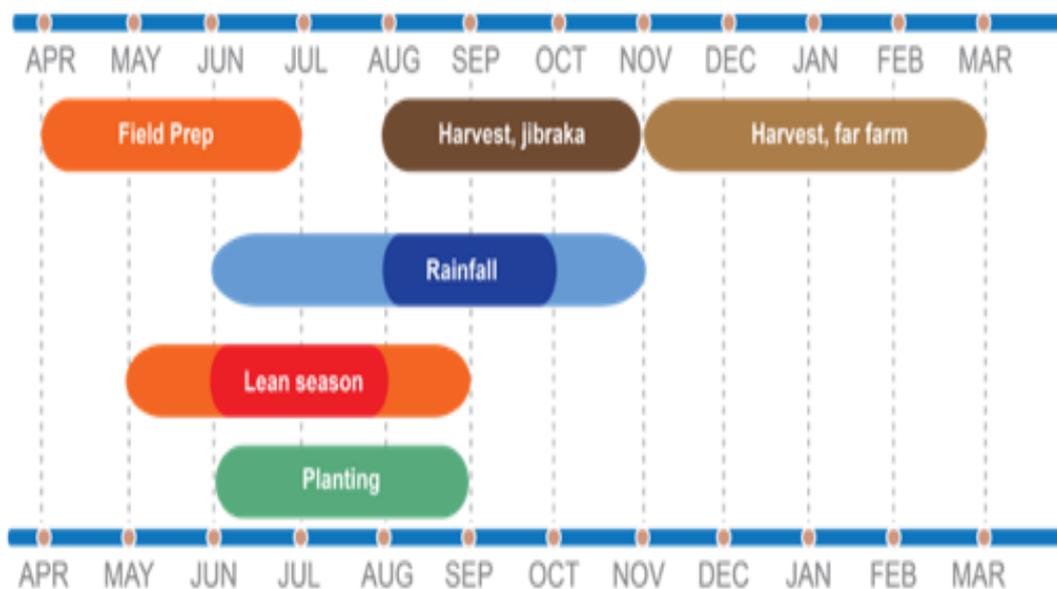
According to field reports, food commodities including sorghum, cowpeas, sesame, and groundnuts are available in local markets, but the prices rose significantly (by 20 per cent) due to high demand, mainly by returnees and IDPs, poor production, and high transportation costs. The most likely scenario is that the area will require a food aid intervention soon.

Overall, livestock (goats/sheep) prices remained stable in February across the area because many households were selling their livestock to buy food (mainly sorghum the staple food) before the onset of the rainy season.

## **Western Jebel**

Threshing activities of sorghum on far farms continued. On the other hand, farmers started preparing for the next planting season. Despite a poor harvest, food security for around 85 per cent of households improved compared to the same time last year. Crop yields were poor primarily due to a dry spell, although in other areas crops were washed away by floods due to heavy rain particularly in Dilling and some parts of Habilla counties.

According to assessment reports, market prices of basic commodities such as sugar, sorghum, and soap increased by between 66.5 to 120 per cent although they were available in the market affecting poor households without purchasing power. The cause for the increase is due to high production costs because of the devaluation of the national currency.



*Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and the Blue Nile*

## COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

### *Awareness continues in the Two Areas despite constraints*

On 2 February 2021, using the available diagnostic methods, the areas registered the first COVID-19 case (South Kordofan). However, due to existing funding gaps, local authorities lack polymerase chain reaction (PCR) Testing Kits- the most accurate and reliable test for diagnosing the COVID-19 virus.

Despite the existing challenges, Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRRA) and Secretariat of Health (SOH) continue to work closely with implementing partners to create awareness.

#### **NEEDS:**

#### **Identified needs and gaps in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Two Areas include:**

- Increase soap, hand washing facilities, and water supply in public settings;
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, specimen containers to transport samples to neighboring countries, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves at facilities as well as stationery;
- Improve communication and timely reporting (e.g. provision of VHF radios and internet support);
- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a wider coverage;
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness in the Two Areas;
- Improve levels of medicines and medical supplies stocks in the SPLM-N controlled areas;
- More funding in the Health and WASH sector across the region to meet the huge existing gaps.

## EDUCATION

### *1,913 Candidates sit for South Sudan Primary Leaving Certificate Examinations*

#### **Blue Nile**

Primary schools are fully operational in the Blue Nile region, despite challenges. With no actors in education, communities continue to keep schools running. Blue Nile region has no secondary schools and the only available primary schools are in need of qualified teachers, teacher incentives, learning materials, school feeding, water, and sanitation. Worth noting, WFP and other implementing partners continue to provide food to selected schools, but this is not enough to meet the total demand.

#### **South Kordofan**

Partners teamed up with local authorities to support South Sudan Primary Leaving Certificate Exams (logistics, dignity kits, per diem for staff, and feeding) that commenced on 8 February 2021. **1,913 (821 females and 1,092 males)** candidates sat their exams at eight centers in both South Kordofan and Western Jebel. However, **73 candidates (52 boys and 21 girls)** did not show up.

#### **Western Jebel**

Primary schools are in recess from 25 February to 15 March 2021. The area registered 44 candidates for the South Sudan Secondary Certificate 2020/2021 that will commence in April.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

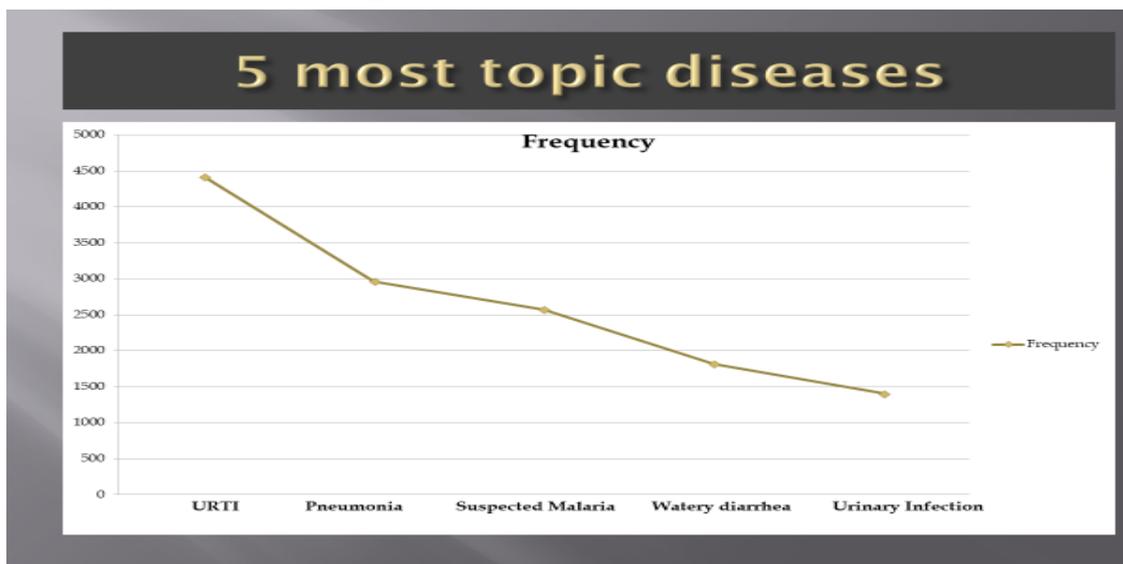
## *Lack of essential drugs in the Two Areas*

### **Blue Nile**

Acute watery diarrhea, Guinea worms, malaria, flu, and cough were reported among communities. Flu and cough cases were reportedly high in Chali Payam.

### **South Kordofan**

According to the Secretariat of Health (SoH) February report, the most common diseases included upper respiratory tract infection, pneumonia, watery diarrhea, suspected malaria, and urinary infections (table below) across the region. The report further indicated that **599** women received folic, **390** women reattendance, and **416** first antenatal visits. Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screening conducted on **392** children under five years, **223** were recorded 115-124mm and **59** at <115mm. Five partners are supporting SoH, but more intervention is needed in drug supply, training, staff salaries, logistics, medical equipment for example cold chain among others.



### **Western Jebels**

Common diseases like malaria and upper respiratory infection, watery diarrhea, intestinal parasites, and anemia among pregnant mothers led to **5** miscarriages. Malnutrition screening on **201** children indicated **149** were in 115mm-124mm and 52 in <115mm. On the other hand, **443** women received folic acid supplements and **295** re-attendance visits. No children were vaccinated in the reporting period.

## **WASH**

### *Unsafe drinking water for thousands in the Two Areas*

### **Blue Nile**

According to the assessment conducted by the Secretariat of Engineering and Water and Minerals, there are 142 boreholes in the areas, but over 30 are non-functional. Balila, Mayak, Goz Magar, and Jebel Halla in Wadaka payam, Aqontayo/Tayat in Yabus payam, and Damo in Komo-Ganza were the most affected with communities drinking from unprotected hand-dug wells locally known as Hafira. In Damo for example, communities walked long distances (over an hour) to get to the Yabus river. As earlier reported sanitation remains a challenge in homes as well as public places particularly in markets and schools.

## ANIMAL HEALTH

### *Limited access to veterinary medicine*

#### **South Kordofan**

The Secretariat of Animal Health reported malignant pustule (skin rashes and wounds), Anthrax, Pulmonary pustule, diarrhea, and hoof and mouth as the common diseases affecting cattle in Dallami and Heiban counties. These diseases resulted in the death of **80** heads of cattle in Heiban county, (**45** and **35** in Farish and Heiban Payams respectively). The authority advised cattle keepers to obtain veterinary drugs from cross-line markets as an alternative since local authorities remain unable to intervene due to lack of funding.

## PROTECTION, ACCESS, AND SECURITY

### *Livestock theft on the increase*

Cattle raids were common in Wadaka Payam resulting in the theft of over **500** goats and sheep from Fallata nomads. Similarly, in Chali -el Fil village, **25** goats went missing affecting 25 per cent of households dependent on livestock for both income and food.

According to Payam administrators, **73** households of returnees were registered in Thobo A. Most of the returnees are living with relatives. Priority needs for the returnees are food and NFIs (temporary shelters, blankets, cooking utensils) and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene).

On 26 February, **39** heads of cattle were taken by unknown people in Kukunoti village in Kattla Payam, Dilling County (Western Jebel).

*The SKBN CU reports security incidents according to the information received from a variety of sources. This information does not include a comprehensive verification of perpetrators or damages.*

*This monthly update on humanitarian issues in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states is compiled by the SKBN Coordination Unit. With three main functions of information, coordination and advocacy, the SKBNCU strives to put out regular and accurate information on the humanitarian situation of people affected by the conflict since 2011.*

*Please send your comments to [advocacy@skbncu.org](mailto:advocacy@skbncu.org)*

