

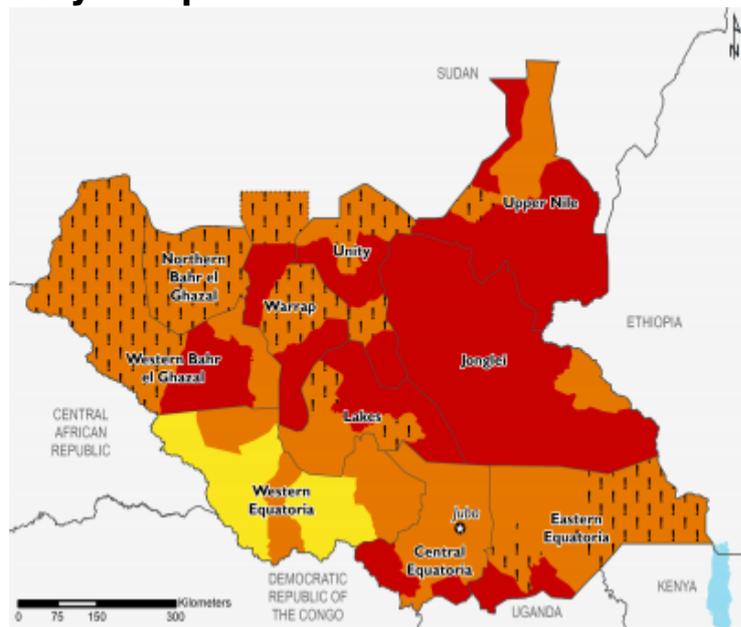
East Africa

South Sudan

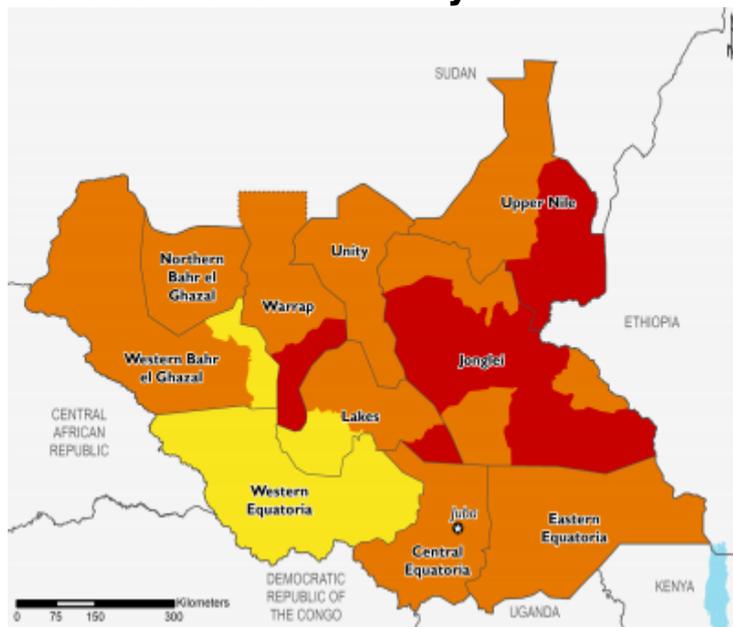
Key Message Update

Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are widespread at the July/August peak of the lean season

July - September 2020



October 2020 - January 2021



IPC v3.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase

- 1: Minimal
- 2: Stressed
- 3: Crisis
- 4: Emergency
- 5: Famine

! *Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance*

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.

July 2020

Key Messages:

The scale and severity of acute food insecurity continue to rise at the July/August peak of the lean season in South Sudan. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are widespread, indicating that a high proportion of the population is experiencing either large food consumption gaps or engaging in severe coping strategies in an attempt to mitigate food consumption gaps. Escalating inter-communal conflict and recent economic shocks associated with COVID-19 and lower oil revenue, underpinned by deficit crop production, persistently poor macroeconomic conditions, and the protracted political conflict, continue to limit household food and income sources.

The need for sustained, large-scale humanitarian food assistance remains high across the country. Food insecurity is most severe in conflict-affected areas of Jonglei, Lakes, and Warrap, as well as in parts of Upper Nile, Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria, and Central Equatoria. FEWS NET anticipates that Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is likely in areas of highest concern during the lean season, especially in parts of Jonglei and Upper Nile where outcomes are already severe and household coping capacity has been eroded due to the 2019 floods and/or recent conflict. In these areas, there are pockets of at-risk households with few productive assets and limited to no access to a functioning market who can experience rapid deterioration in acute food insecurity in between food assistance distribution cycles.

Levels of inter-communal conflict remain high in the border region of Warrap and Lakes and in Twic East, Duk, and Pibor of Jonglei. Of greatest concern is Pibor, where conflict caused large-scale displacement, disrupted food assistance delivery, and led humanitarians to evacuate. According to OCHA, 60,850 people have been internally displaced within Pibor since June. Additionally, an IRNA conducted in June confirmed 37,200 people were displaced from Uror to Nyirol and Akobo West. Key informants report looting of prepositioned food assistance in Gumuruk, Lekuangle, and Verteth payams in Pibor, while women, children, and the elderly fled to distant areas with limited or no access to markets or food assistance. Conflict during the main season rains, at a time when planting should be ongoing and access to livestock products should be seasonally increasing, raises the likelihood that food security outcomes will remain atypically severe during the post-harvest period. Urgent and sustained food assistance in the lean season and post-harvest periods is needed to save lives.

As of July 31, the Ministry of Health has confirmed 2,322 COVID-19 cases in South Sudan, with a case fatality rate of 1.98 percent. Most confirmed cases are in Juba and Eastern Equatoria state, though cases in rural areas are likely higher than known due to limited testing. While movement restrictions have not been re-instated within South Sudan, domestic trade flows and business activity remain below normal. In urban areas, poor households' income from daily casual labor and petty trade remains atypically low. Food security partners in Upper Nile, Unity, Warrap, and Western Bahr el Ghazal also report that preventive measures continue to slow down their ability to deliver planned assistance, including distribution of agricultural inputs, in-kind food, and livestock vaccinations and treatment. Externally, Ethiopia tightened enforcement of cross-border movement restrictions at the Akobo-Gambella border due to rising COVID-19 cases among refugees in Gambella. Key informants reported in late July that South Sudanese refugees fleeing inter-communal conflict are still crossing informally into Ethiopia, but the situation requires continued monitoring.

Local currency depreciation, dependence on food imports, and increased transportation costs during the rainy season are driving high and rising food prices, despite improvements in cross-border trade compared to last year. Based on FEWS NET's weekly cross-border monitoring data, trade volumes of sorghum from Uganda to South Sudan in the second quarter of 2020 were 9 percent above the first quarter of 2020 and 45 percent above the second quarter of 2019. Trade volumes of sorghum from Sudan to South Sudan dropped sharply by 68 percent from the first to second quarter of 2020, but were 18 percent higher than the second quarter of 2019. Nevertheless, available market price data show the retail price of a *malwa* (3.5 kg) of white sorghum in June ranged from 57 to 115 percent above June 2019 in key reference markets such as Juba, Wau, Aweil. Although prices were similar or lower than June 2019 in Rumbek Centre and Torit, prices were 74-88 percent above the five-year average. Sorghum prices are likely to rise further until the main harvest begins in September. However, food assistance and first-season harvests in Greater Equatoria will likely stabilize food prices in nearby markets like Juba and Torit.

According to WFP reports, WFP planned to reach 2.8 million people with double-ration distributions and 1 million people with a single ration in the June/July distribution cycle. Humanitarian food assistance remains critical to preventing more extreme food security outcomes at the county level. As of July 10, WFP had also prepositioned 83 percent of planned assistance for a six-month period in areas that are typically inaccessible during the rainy season. Due to multiple shocks, including needs associated with COVID-19, the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) allocated 1.8 million USD to the Food Security and Livelihood Cluster to target 273,000 beneficiaries, particularly in urban settings or locations hosting IDPs or newly returned refugees, where the risk of spreading of COVID-19 and its direct or indirect impacts are highest.

In bimodal Greater Equatoria, the June/July first-season maize harvest is underway. Overall, the harvest is expected to be lower than 2019, but similar to the recent five-year average due to lower access to seeds that reduced planted area and damage from desert locusts in parts of Magwi and Torit of Eastern

Equatoria. An impact assessment conducted by FAO in June found a varying degree of locust incidence and damage. In Magwi, desert locust damaged over 60 percent of assessed crop fields, while in Torit, only 12 percent of assessed crop fields were damaged. In Ikotos, there was no noticeable damage on crops. Available information from FAO indicates that the desert locust threat will persist in August, as swarms in northwestern Kenya are expected to migrate northwards through eastern South Sudan to summer breeding areas in Sudan.

- June to September main rainfall season is 5-45 percent above average across most of eastern South Sudan and 5-30 percent below average in northwestern, southwestern, and northeastern South Sudan. In Fashoda and Manyo of Upper Nile State, the rainfall deficits forced some farmers to replant their sorghum crops. In the rest of the country, despite excess and deficit amounts compared to average, cumulative rainfall is broadly supporting normal crop development in unimodal rainfall areas. Based on lower access to seeds this season due to high seed costs linked to COVID-19, and ongoing inter-communal conflict and flooding in some areas, the main season harvest is likely to be lower than 2019, though similar to the recent five-year average.

Given the prevailing forecast of above-average rainfall in eastern South Sudan, close monitoring of flood incidents remains critical. As of late July, short periods of high-intensity rain have resulted in a seasonal overflow of the Nile River in low-lying, flood-prone areas of Bor, Duk, and Twic East in Jonglei. The floods displaced approximately 1,800 households in Bor South and submerged crops in Duk. The NOAA/NCEP Global Ensemble Forecast System shows a sustained likelihood of heavy rainfall through August 10, 2020, in eastern South Sudan. Although the scale of flooding is lower in 2020 compared to 2019 so far, a consecutive year of flood-induced crop and livestock losses in low-lying areas along the Nile River and Pibor-Akobo-Sobat basin would exacerbate existing food insecurity into the post-harvest period. Additionally, the risk of Rift Valley Fever in July 2020 is high, especially for eastern South Sudan, which would affect both livestock and human health.

Region Contact Information:

Email: southsudan@fews.net

<https://fews.net/east-africa/south-sudan/key-message-update/july-2020>

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