

SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Update

February 2008

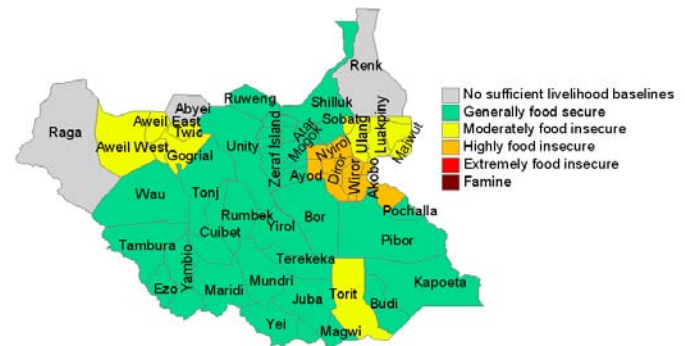
- Food security is expected to remain stable between January and April for the majority of households across all livelihood zones (Figure 1). However, pockets of moderate to high flood-related food insecurity are expected in the Eastern Flood Plains livelihood zone, including Waat, Diror, Wuror, Akobo, Luakpiny, and Maiwut counties. Other pockets of moderate food insecurity caused by chronic-structural food production deficits are also expected in most counties in the northern Western Flood Plains livelihood zone, including Aweil East, West and South, Gogrial and parts of Twic counties as well as Torit in the Hills and Mountains Zone (Figure 2). This is likely to persist until the next crop harvests due between July and September. Food shortages will likely be addressed through food aid. WFP, the lead food aid agency, is currently concluding its needs assessment.

Figure 1. Livelihoods zones in southern Sudan



Source: FEWS NET

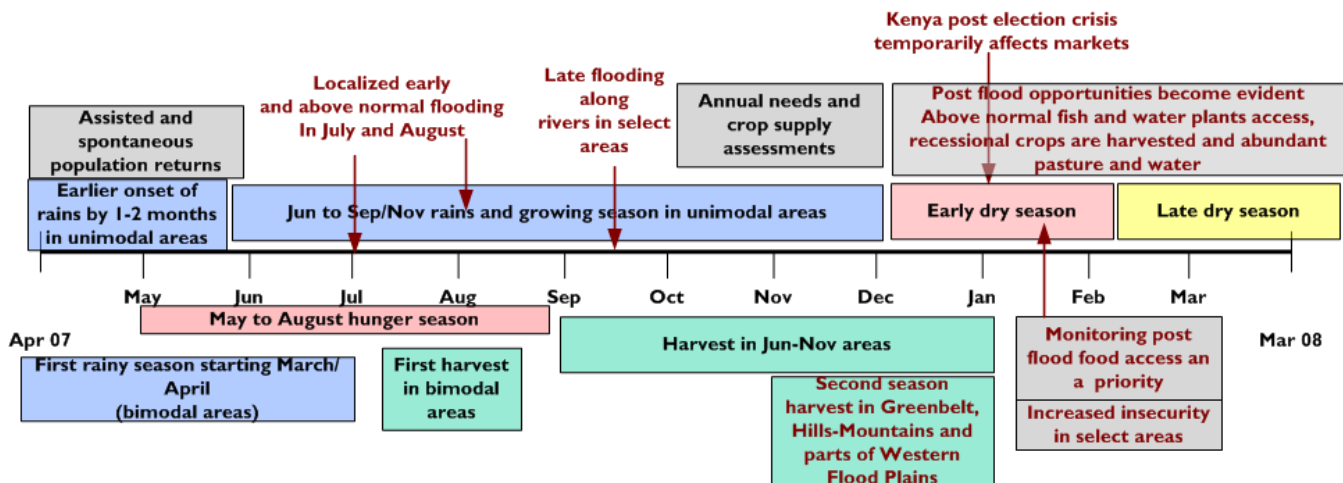
Figure 2. Current estimated food security conditions, January-April 2008



Source: FEWS NET

- Flood-induced food shortages in some areas of Unity, North/South Bor, Zeraf, old Fangak and Ayod counties that started around September-October are now easing as a result of flood water recession from December to February. This has facilitated a significant increase in fish and water plants access, compensating for flood induced shortfalls of sorghum, which is typically consumed during the dry season.
- As of November 2007, close to 550,000 people were adversely affected by floods, though resultant benefits of flood recession may have significantly reduced this number. However, the total number of food insecure people will likely increase between now and July due to chronic and structural food insecurity in areas such as Northern Bahr El Gazal. This is compounded by increased civil insecurity in other locations, including the January conflict between Misseriya nomads and SPLA forces, which has affected 16,000 people and disrupted trade between northern and southern Sudan in Aweil East County; insecurity due to the presence of LRA and other armed groups in Kajokeji, Lainya, Juba and Magwi counties; and insecurity in Khorfulus/Atar County. The full impact of insecurity in these locations has not been established.
- Peace initiatives in areas of Bor, Terekeka, Budi and Kapoeta counties prone to inter ethnic conflict and cattle raiding signal a more peaceful dry season characterized by easy access to better grazing and trade.
- The negative impact of Kenya's post election conflict was temporarily felt in markets located in the southern half of Southern Sudan including Juba, Yei and Rumbek. Here, prices of imported food and non food commodities increased as a result of fuel shortages caused by the Kenya crisis. This crisis remains a threat to performance of these markets if it persists.

Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Seasonal progress

Dry season livestock and population movements are now in progress as the season enters its second month and water diminishes near home settlements. As is typical of this season, people and livestock are moving from homesteads to dry season grazing areas in lowlands where water and pasture are more abundant. Pasture and water performance is expected to be good as a result of last year's good rains and flooding. Sufficient pasture and water often signifies less movement and conflict over water and pasture.

Second season crop harvests have just been completed in the Greenbelt and Hills and Mountains Zones and the results are pending. Crop assessments conducted in November 2007 indicated average to above average performance in those areas. Overall, access to food during this year's dry season is likely to be average except for areas where insecurity has recently emerged and disrupted dry season activities.

Fear of the spread of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) from northern to southern Sudan that started in White Nile, Sinnar and Gazeera during mid-October last year has now abated, following significant reductions in the number of infections between December and January. The RVF outbreak was triggered by extensive flooding during 2007 in central and southeastern parts of Sudan.

As the January – April dry season progresses and first season rains approach, critical factors to monitor from now through June 2008 include:

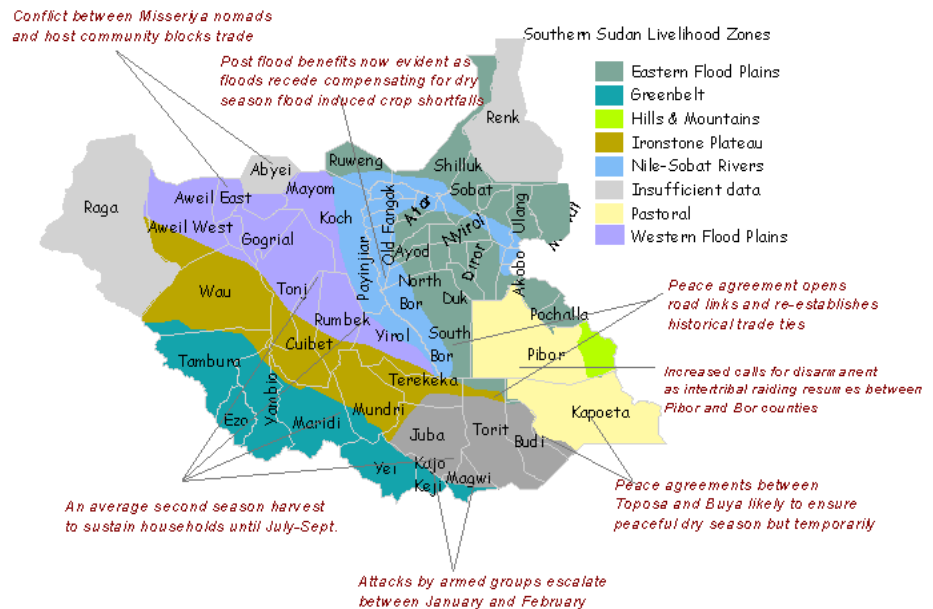
- Status of carry over crop harvests
- Levels of post flood access to off-farm food sources such as fish and water plant
- Extent and performance of recessional agriculture
- Livestock, fish and grain market activities, including the impact of Kenya's post election crisis on southern Sudan markets
- Progress of normal dry season livestock and population movements
- Civil-insecurity and livestock-related conflicts
- The status of the north-south population returns and levels of integration
- Influence of the forthcoming April 2008 census on January-April (dry season) population returns
- Land preparation, access to seeds and onset of March-April/May-June rains in relevant areas

Analysis by livelihood zone

Western Flood Plains Zone (Agro-pastoralism, wild foods/fish gathering and labor)

As is normal this time of year, households in the northern parts of this zone (Aweil East, Aweil West, Gogrial and Twic counties) are relying on last year's groundnut and sorghum harvest, supplemented by wild foods, milk and fish. Crop stocks for the majority of poor or low producing households are expected to last until March 2008. However, households affected by clashes between southern Sudan security forces and migratory nomads (commonly known as Misseriya) along the border between north and south Sudan are already facing acute food shortages. In late December these clashes left tens of people dead and up to 16,000 remain displaced in Aweil East County. The conflict has

Figure 3. Map highlighting recent events in each livelihood zone



Source: FEWS NET

resulted in the closure of the main Meriam-Aweil road, the main supply route linking north Sudan and the Northern Bahr El Gazal State. Traders are reported as trying to establish an alternative route, most likely through Abyei County; however latest updates indicate that the Misseriya nomads have attacked it. Continued fighting will have a significant negative impact on markets and trade along the north-south border, as over 70-80 percent of commodities in this area are sourced from northern Sudan. Meanwhile, tensions between the host population and the nomads remain high and are likely to remain so until existing north-south border disputes are resolved.

The main long term sorghum harvest has just been completed in the southern parts of this zone which is comprised of the Lakes State, namely Cuibet, Rumbek and Yirol Counties. The 2007 Crop Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) has projected crop surpluses in these three counties, which indicates that most households will be food secure until the next harvest of short-term crops in September. However, markets in this area depend in part on imports from Kenya and Uganda and the January crisis in Kenya paralyzed the transport of commodities, such as food and fuel, from these two countries.

Nile-Sobat Rivers Zone (Agro-pastoralism, fisheries and wild foods)

The benefits of last year's early and above normal flooding, which affected crop performance and caused food shortages between October and December in select areas, are now evident as the floods recede. The benefits of recessionary flooding include fish and water plant (water lily) increases, favorable pasture replenishment rates and associated milk increases, and water availability near homesteads and in dry season livestock grazing areas. Flood recession also facilitates ratooning of sorghum in select areas.

A 30 percent increase in fish and water plants often occurs following above normal flooding, and usually compensates for any flood related shortfalls in crop stocks that are consumed during the dry season (January-April). This pattern is expected during this year's dry season. Updates from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in North Bor County indicate that floods started receding in December, a month earlier than expected, resulting in exponential fish increases. High yields of wild food (calory-rich water lily) are also anticipated, though actual yields have not yet been reported. Floods have also started

receding in northern parts of this zone (Leer, Koch, Payinjiar, Old Fangak, Ayod and Shilluk counties) and similar fish and water lily increases are expected.

Prospects for ratooning of last year's sorghum stalks in ratoon conducive areas such as Nyal (Payinjiar County), Haat, Nyandin (Old Fangak County), Ayod County), Akobo, Nyirol, Maiwut and Luakpiny Counties and performance of tobacco in various areas has not been established. Where recessional crops occur, they can amount to a minimum of one month's food for practicing households, while tobacco earns significant cash that is used to purchase grain. Given this significance, close monitoring of recessional crop and tobacco areas is a priority.

Households in this Zone increasingly prefer to sell their livestock for cash rather than exchange the animals for grain or other items as was previously common. This is attributed to improved trade between northern and southern Sudan since the January 2005 peace treaty and increasing livestock prices. A livestock price increase implies higher purchasing power in terms of grain and other food and non food essentials for the majority, as most households own livestock.

Historical tribal and cattle raiding conflict between Bor County Dinka agro-pastoralists and Pibor County Murle pastoralists continues to persist and has intensified over the years due to increased illegal ownership of arms. This year conflict forced some households to move their animals to dry season grazing earlier than normal. In the long-term, the conflict has curtailed potentially lucrative livestock and grain trade between the two communities. Meanwhile, decades of hostility that existed between Bor County Dinka agropastoralists and the neighboring Mundari agropastoralists of Terekeka County has ceased as of late, following a peace deal made between the two in January 2008. This has resulted in opening of road links and reestablishment of trade between the two communities. However, prices of key food commodities are reportedly high in Bor town due to a high number of households that have recently returned from Kenya and northern Sudan. These households prefer to settle in the town instead of proceeding to their rural homes.

Fighting between security forces in Khorfulus/Atar County is reported to have displaced close to 700 households by early February. However, these estimates are still being investigated and the cause of the fighting is not yet known. The fighting could disrupt dry season food access activities, such as wild food, fish and market access as it did around the same time last year following civil insecurity in Khorfulus and neighboring Old Fangak County.

Eastern Flood Plains (Agro-pastoralism, and wild foods)

Food insecurity is expected to continue for poor households in this zone due to flood induced crop losses during 2007. Impact of these reductions will be more evident in the eastern part of the zone (Waat, Nyirol, and Diror) which has less access to markets and cash income opportunities. Although post flood recessional agriculture is expected in select areas, the extent and performance of production is yet to be established.

Hills-Mountains (Mostly agriculture and labor, and pastoralism in select areas)

The 2008 second season harvest of sorghum, simsim and other crops has just been completed in many parts of this zone, namely Juba, Kajojeji, Magwi, Budi and parts of Torit, and results are pending. Crop assessments from November indicated that crops were doing well and, if progress was sustained, the resultant harvest should support households through the dry season. This will be supplemented by cassava starting May-June. However, due to main cropping season production shortfalls last year, some households in Torit County have been food insecure starting December 2007.

Kenya's January post election crisis temporarily resulted in the doubling and tripling of fuel prices which in turn pushed up other commodity prices by an average of 25 percent. This is slowly beginning to ease following political negotiations and return of calm to Kenya. However, Kenya's crisis remains a threat to Juba market, as it is reliant on imports from Kenya and Uganda. Kenya's crisis has prompted the Southern Sudan transportation authorities to consider diversifying the transportation system by increasing the use of barges to ferry goods via the Nile River.

A number of peace building meetings have been conducted by communities in cattle raiding prone areas, namely Toposa of Kapoeta County and Buya of Budi County as well as Didinga of Budi County and the neighboring Karamajong of Uganda. These meetings signal a more peaceful dry season this year. However, it is too early to tell whether recent activities signify

a lasting solution. Cattle raiding has had a negative impact on food security and development by hampering the establishment of formal lucrative markets and informal trade between communities as well as improvement of roads along potential trade routes.

Increased insecurity has occurred elsewhere in the zone, especially in Kajokeji, Lainya, Juba and Magwi counties. Insecurity in Kajokeji took place between end of January and beginning of February when the Ugandan Lords Resistance Army (LRA) is suspected to have killed four people and abducted 40 others. Other unconfirmed reports suggest that the LRA may have killed close to 140 people. Similar LRA attacks occurred around January last year killing 35 people, burning and looting trucks. This severely disrupted trade across the Sudan-Uganda border, and also forced tight screening of movement by security forces across the Uganda-Sudan border. A similar trend is occurring this year. In addition, parts of Lainya, Juba and Magwi counties have been experiencing insecurity caused by unknown groups of armed militia since mid January. In Lainya County alone, over 3,500 people had been displaced by mid February. These households are now relying on food aid and non food items from humanitarian agencies.

Peace talks resumed in February 2008 between LRA and the Ugandan Government in an effort to end years of conflict that has seriously affected northern Uganda and neighboring areas of Southern Sudan (mostly in this zone). While hopes are high that talks will end successfully by the February 2008 deadline, recent events including increased attacks signal a potential delay. Negative impacts of LRA attacks in Southern Sudan include impeded development of potentially lucrative cross border trade and exchange between communities, abandonment of high potential agricultural areas, disrupted humanitarian and development activities and failure of displaced households to return from Uganda.

Pastoral Zone (Livestock dependant)

Last year's above-average vegetation and pasture conditions and a good cropping year for the 35-45 percent of households who typically cultivate will facilitate stable food security conditions in this zone (Kapoeta and Pibor counties) if cattle conflicts and access to grazing remain at normal levels.

Recurrent inter tribal cattle raiding is the biggest constraint to stable food access as it severely limits potentially lucrative exchange and trade between agro-pastoralists and pastoralists. Peace agreements made between Toposa of Kapoeta County in this zone and Buya of Budi County in the neighboring Hills and Mountain Zone in January may grant access to good grazing to both during this dry season. However, this is likely to be temporary given that past agreements have been repeatedly broken. Access to markets and livestock-grain exchange sources and mechanisms are most critical to monitor at this time as these determine food security of pastoral households.

Ironstone Plateau Zone (Mostly agricultural and wild foods gathering)

An above average harvest of long cycle sorghum that started in November/December and completed in January signals stable food security conditions until the next harvest of crops in September across many parts of this zone, particularly in Wau and Raja Counties. In addition, last year's above normal rainfall has resulted in increased fish access in select areas starting in September 2007 and expected to last until February. Meanwhile, concerns are emerging over the likelihood of insecurity disrupting the forthcoming April census due to the presence of armed civilians in the County. Presence of arms is difficult to control as the area borders conflict afflicted Dafur to the north.

Last year's good sorghum harvest will ensure household food security until the next harvest in Terekeka County further south. A peace agreement made in January 2008 that has ended historical hostilities between Mundari of Terekeka and the neighboring Dinka of Bor County has re-opened road links between the two counties and re-established trade activities between the two.

Greenbelt (Agricultural)

As is typical in this zone, the second season crop harvest was above average, ensuring that households are food secure until the onset of the next first season harvest due around July-August. The main challenge facing households in this zone are long standing and include a lack of access to markets for crop surpluses due to extremely poor road conditions. This results

in extremely high post harvest losses of as much as 30 percent. Introduction of a common currency starting January last year has made cash readily accessible compared to previous years when currencies from neighboring countries and the United States Dollar were used. As a result households have started to diversify their cash earning opportunities to include charcoal and brick making, timber logging and construction among others. This could compromise surplus production in the long term. While sustaining and even increasing agricultural production in this zone is crucial, it must be combined with improvements to road systems that link to crop deficit areas located in the Hills and Mountains, Western Flood Plains and the Nile-Sobat River Zones. In addition, the impact of Kenya's post election crisis is reported to have caused increased commodity prices. The price of fuel temporarily tripled pushing up the price of all other goods.