

Beat: News

Conflict and flooding continue to drive Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes

South Sudan ReliefWeb Situation Report

New York City, 17.10.2022, 14:59 Time

ARAC International StratCom - South Sudan Key Message Update: Conflict and flooding continue to drive Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes, September 2022.

Format: Situation Report | Source: FEWS NET | Posted: 16 Oct 2022 | Originally published: 16 Oct 2022

Key Messages:

Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes, with an increasing number of areas in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), are widespread across South Sudan due to the impacts of conflict, flooding, and macroeconomic challenges. In September, the availability and consumption of the first-season harvest in bimodal areas of southern South Sudan and the green harvest in parts of unimodal Greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr el Ghazal regions are somewhat mitigating the scale and severity of acute food insecurity. However, many households still face moderate to extreme food consumption gaps, especially in the areas where the impacts of conflict and/or flooding is severe and humanitarian access is limited.

Fangak, Canal/Pigi, and Ayod counties of Jonglei State; Leer and Mayendit counties of Unity State; and Tonj East and Tonj North counties of Warrap State remain of highest concern, where some populations are likely in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). Available information on assistance delivery in September indicates food assistance has reached populations in Leer and Mayendit. Food assistance was also delivered in Kuernyang and Keew of Fangak, though deliveries remain suspended in Atar 3 and New Fangak. Humanitarians are planning air food drops in Fangak and are working to deliver assistance to Canal/Pigi and Ayod via river.

Despite national government's re-commitment to the peace deal through the graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) in late August, conflict and insecurity continue to threaten lives and livelihoods across South Sudan by displacing populations and disrupting household access to food and income sources. The Upper Nile-northern Jonglei border region remains a conflict hotspot, particularly in Tonga of Panyikang County; New Fangak; and Atar and Diel of Canal/Pigi, where recent conflict displaced 27,000 people and disrupted food assistance delivery and trade flows along the White Nile and Sobat River corridors. Concern remains for further attacks and the expansion of the armed conflict into other areas within the Upper Nile-Jonglei border region if urgent action is not taken to address the root causes of the conflict.

Meanwhile, in Mayom County of northern Unity, rising tensions and security threats – linked to calls to impeach the Unity Governor Joseph Monytil – are worsening the humanitarian operating environment and further interfering with livelihood activities and trade flows. Additionally, Warrap and Lakes states have seen an intensification of conflict between groups in neighboring counties, manifesting in inter-clan violence in September. Attacks by the Dinka Gok and Dinka Agar communities from Cueibet and Rumbek North counties against disarmed communities in Warrap are ongoing, and an increase in violence and cattle raids between the Luachjang Dinka and Rek Dinka communities in Tonj East and Tonj North counties of Warrap are disrupting trade flows and the delivery of food assistance.

The June to September main rainy season has broadly improved in northwestern and northeastern parts of the country, which have now received 95 to 115 percent of normal rainfall. However, areas of Lakes and Unity states; Tonj North and Tonj East counties of Warrap; and the Greater Mundri area, Terekeka County, and all of Eastern Equatoria State in Greater Equatoria Region still exhibit rainfall deficits, amounting to 5 to 30 percent below normal. Despite the rainfall anomalies observed in south-central South Sudan, the water requirement satisfaction index (WRSI) — an indicator of crop performance based on the availability of water required for crop production — shows average to very good growing conditions across South Sudan. This is corroborated by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index, which shows near-normal to above-normal vegetation conditions across the country, except in northwestern Jonglei and north-central Unity, where localized areas still exhibit poor vegetation conditions, likely due to impact of standing floodwaters.

The population affected by flooding in 2022 has risen from 250,000 people in late August to 386,000 people as of September 14. So far, this is notably lower than the estimated 1 million people displaced by flooding in 2020 and 835,000 people in 2021. However,

average to above-average rainfall is forecast to continue through October, likely leading to atypically extensive flooding for the fourth consecutive year and an increase in flood-related humanitarian needs.

Farmers are currently harvesting first-season crops such as maize and groundnuts in Greater Equatoria and some unimodal areas in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, particularly in Lakes and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. Furthermore, field reports and key informants confirm farmers completed second-season planting in Yambio, Ezo, Maridi, Ibba, and Nzara counties of Western Equatoria; Torit and Magwi counties of Eastern Equatoria; and parts of Yei, Morobo, and Lainya counties of Central Equatoria. Second-season maize and groundnut crops are already in the germination and early vegetative stages. Similarly, in Torit, Ikwoto, Budi, and Magwi of Eastern Equatoria and Juba of Central Equatoria, second-season long-maturing sorghum is in the late vegetative stage, while ratoon sorghum in Greater Kapoeta is in the early vegetative stage.

In unimodal areas, farmers completed harvesting short-maturing sorghum in parts of Aweil Centre and Aweil West counties of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Awerial County of Lakes. However, long-maturing sorghum crops vary from the grain formation to harvesting stages across Bor South and Duk counties of Jonglei; Pibor Administrative Area; Rumbek Centre, Cueibet, and Greater Yirol counties of Lakes; and Fashoda County of Upper Nile. Floods have destroyed or submerged crops in several areas, however, including in Cueibet and Rumbek East of Lakes; Mayendit and Leer of Unity; and some parts of Fashoda of Upper Nile. Crop prospects will most likely be below last year in Panyikang of Upper Nile; Fangak and Canal/Pigi of Jonglei; Leer, Mayendit, and Rubkona of Unity; Maban of Upper Nile; Cueibet and Rumbek North of Lakes; Gogrial East of Warrap; and Aweil North, Aweil South, and part of Aweil West of Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

Key informants and field reports confirm livestock body conditions and milk production have improved due to the increased availability of pasture, browse, and water in most pastoral and agropastoral zones. As a result, livestock body conditions are ranging from fair to good. However, in flood-and conflict-affected areas of Greater Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile, livestock conditions are generally poor due to low pasture availability and increased incidence of waterborne diseases. Furthermore, livestock deaths have increased relative to last year in flood-affected areas in Aweil Centre, North, and East of Northern Bahr el Ghazal; Gogrial and Greater Tonj of Warrap; and Twic East and Duk of Jonglei. An inter-agency Initial Needs Assessment conducted in late August across Aweil East reported that 17 cattle and 821 shoats have died from flood-related causes, and unverified cases of Black Quarter, Hemorrhagic Septicemia, and Food Rot diseases have killed over 70 heads of cattle in Aweil North, Aweil East, and Aweil West.

The retail price of a malwa (3.5 kg) of white sorghum rose by 15 to 40 percent from July to August in Aweil, Juba, Wau, reaching from 70 to more than 670 percent above the same period of last year. Price increases are driven by high import costs and depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP), which has lost roughly 55-60 percent of its value since August of last year on both the official and parallel markets. Depreciation, combined with rising fuel prices and disruptions to trade flows and market functioning, are reducing households' financial access to food. Although the cost of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) has declined month-on-month due to the availability of local harvests, it is still approximately 15-130 percent higher than last year, while wages rate increases over the same time period have been minimal.

The scale of humanitarian food assistance is far below the level of corresponding need, with significant funding challenges limiting and slowing overall deliveries. Although WFP's food assistance distribution reports for August is not yet available, weekly updates for the first week of September confirmed a rapid response distribution to 5,210 conflict-affected IDPs from Panyikang, specifically in the Malakal Protection of Civilians site, Obai, and Adidiang. However, WFP reported the loss of approximately 8.3 MT of food in Phom (Fangak), 2.1 MT in Diel (Canal/Pigi), and an additional 0.353 MT in Kurwai (Canal/Pigi) amid escalating conflict from August to September. Due to insecurity in Mayom of Unity and the surrounding areas, the movement of commodities along the Wunrok–Abiemnhom–Mayom–Bentiu supply route remains suspended.

Source: ReliefWeb.int

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21732/conflict-and-flooding-continue-to-drive-crisis-ipc-phase-3-or-worse-outcomes.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619