



Southern Sudan Food Security Update



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Highlights

- ◆ A number of factors affect food security situation in southern Sudan....
- ◆ Inter-Ethnic Conflict continues to threaten the food security situation....
- ◆ Rainy Season begins in most parts of the southern Sudan....
- ◆ Cereal prices increase in southern Sudan....

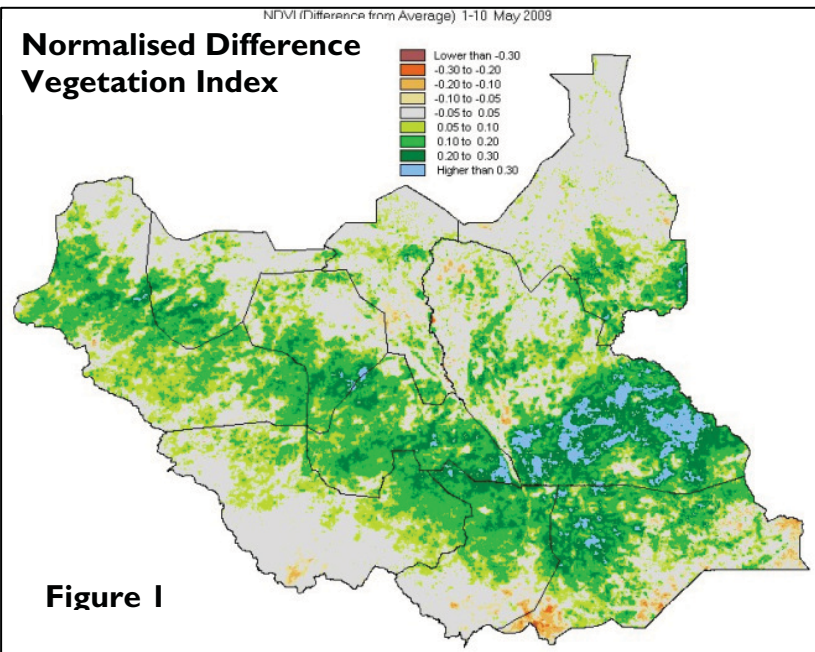
FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

Produced by the Food Security Technical Secretariat of GOSS

Collaborating Government of Southern Sudan Institutions

1. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.
2. Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries
3. Ministry of Health.
4. Southern Sudan Center for Census, Statistics and Evaluation.
5. Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission

The current food security situation in most parts of the southern Sudan may deteriorate as hunger season commences. This will also be exacerbated by a number of associated factors such as increase in market prices and the insecurity resulting from ethnic clashes and LRA insurgency. States that have been affected by ethnic clashes and LRA include Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Western Equatoria. These incidences have greatly affected the livelihoods of many communities, and the effect is even greater on vulnerable households within affected communities. The Food Security situation will continue to deteriorate as a result of the negative impact of the tribal clashes especially in the counties of Akobo and Pibor in Jonglei state. Other residents in the other parts of Jonglei state may have difficulties accessing food. In western and Central Equatoria the IDPs and refugees are at risk of becoming severely food insecure if their current conditions are not addressed. In Unity state the food security situation remained stable during the reporting period but is likely to change as the hunger season starts. In Eastern Equatoria, the water and pasture condition (figure 1) is improving, and the return of cattle that migrated in search of pasture during the dry season has been observed.



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This improvement is expected to contribute to better livestock health and stable livelihoods.

A joint effort of the Government of Southern Sudan with United Nations Organizations and International Non-Governmental Organizations



SIFSIA is a programme funded by the European Commission to build capacity in food security in Southern Sudan

Inter-ethnic conflicts threaten Food Security

hundreds dead and thousands displaced from their homes, and many children abducted (figure 2). In Pibor the fighting in Lekuangole Payam resulted in an estimated 453 people killed and 5,000 displaced to Pibor town while a population of 7,000 is believed to have remained in the Payam. Reports also indicate that about 133 children were missing. In April, two Payams in Akobo came under attacks, namely Nyandit and Deng jock, and about 195 people were estimated to have been killed, over 40 injured, 15,000 to 20,000 people displaced and 10 children abducted.

Properties and infrastructure were also destroyed during these attacks. This displacement and instability may worsen the food security situation of the communities as the hunger season has just started. The conflict may affect cultivation because the conflicts are happening at the time when the communities are expected to be cultivating their fields with the onset of the rains. However, as a measure of intervention, humanitarian agencies have provided assistance to the affected populations. About 42MT of food has been distributed by WFP over the last three months targeting IDPs in Pibor, while UNICEF and IOM shipped 1,291 kits of non-food items (NFIs) to Akobo.

SEASONAL RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

As April-May marks the onset of rainfall, parts of Southern Sudan received substantial amounts of rainfall. The rainfall increases northwards from the south (figure 3). Areas in red colour have received 300-400mm of rainfall while areas in purple have received less than 100mm. During this period, rural communities in most areas are engaged in field activities such as land preparation and planting. Reports also indicate that FAO and implementing partners have started distributing agricultural inputs such as seeds and tools to the farmers. The distribution of agricultural inputs began in Greater Equatoria and is expected to continue to other States of Southern Sudan by this month.

In April, inter-ethnic conflicts erupted in Jonglei State in the Counties of Pibor and Akobo between the Lou Nuer and the Murle leaving

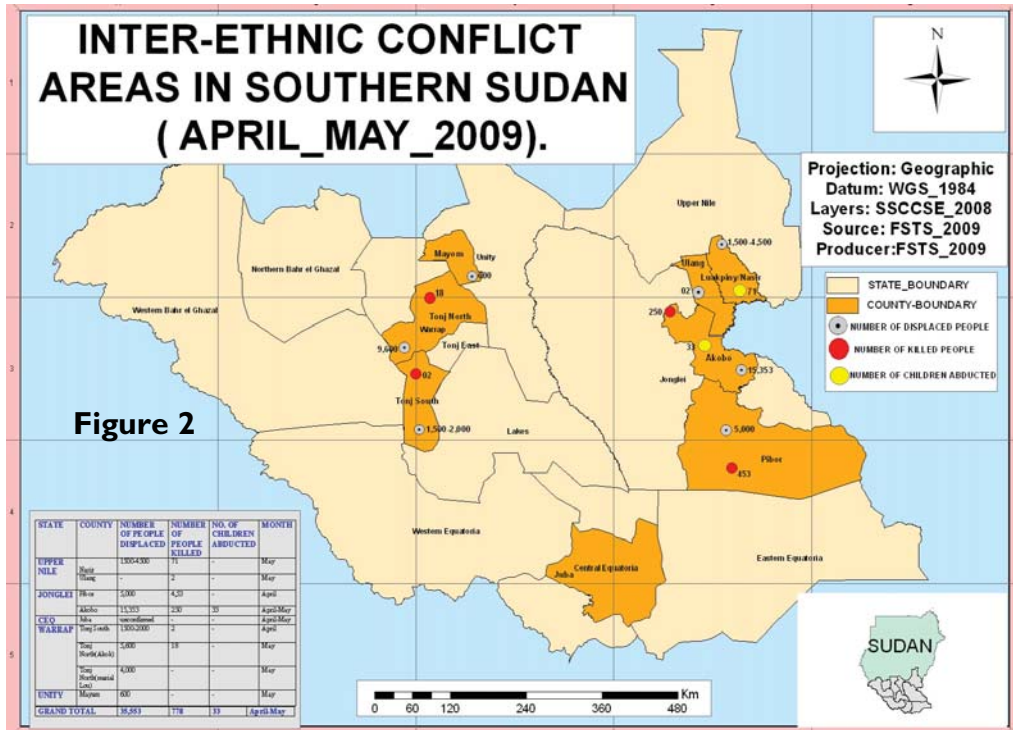


Figure 2

Cumulative rainfall up-to 20 May 2009

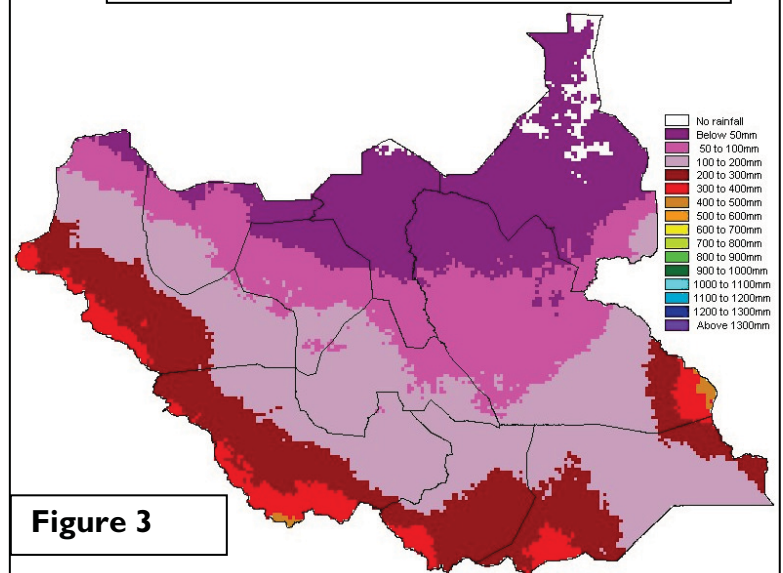


Figure 3

Due to the rainfall received, there are significant vegetation development in the States such as parts of Western Bahr El Ghazal, Jonglei, Warrap, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and Lakes. However, the vegetation development in most parts of Unity, Upper Nile and parts of Northern Bahr El Ghazal states (Figure 1). The vegetation development in Jonglei is so much above average and this good for livestock. However, there are patches in eastern Equatoria that not doing well in terms of vegetation development. This may have implications on pastures which could lead pastoralists to move or stay near the water points and not to return to their homestead to resume farming activities.

MARKET TRENDS

One of the most important pillars of food security indicators is physical and economic access to food by households or communities. Therefore, through comparison of prices, a bigger picture of food security situation in specific locations is extrapolated.

(surplus areas). WFP reported in their April 2009 Food Security and Livelihood Update that cereal commodity prices have generally increased in nearly all markets, however, a significant price decrease was recorded in Aweil.

Figure 5 provides a summary of prices on selected commodities in Juba markets. Prices are believed to have increased due to increased demand and low supply. The latter is attributed to increased tax levied by government at the entry points. Increases in taxation on food commodities, coupled with staple food deficit, as households approach the hunger gap, have affected prices negatively in several states including Eastern Equatoria, Central Equatoria and Jonglei. This means that poorer households will find it increasingly difficult to get access to essential food items because of their low purchasing powers.

In some states (e.g. Western Equatoria) during late last year and early 2009, the government procured essential food commodities and re-sold them at subsidized prices. This alleviated the food insecurity situation. As the rainy season commences, the road infrastructure becomes increasingly difficult to navigate and this results in less movement of food commodities, and with the dawning of the hunger gap, interventions through government and Partners could be the means to improve food access.

Figure 4. Price of Sorghum in Selected Southern Sudan Markets (March 2009)

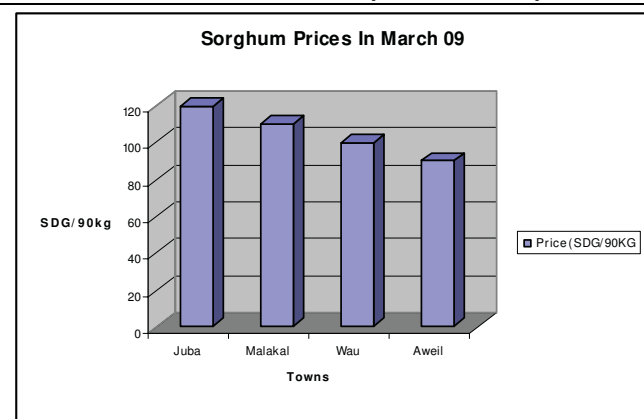
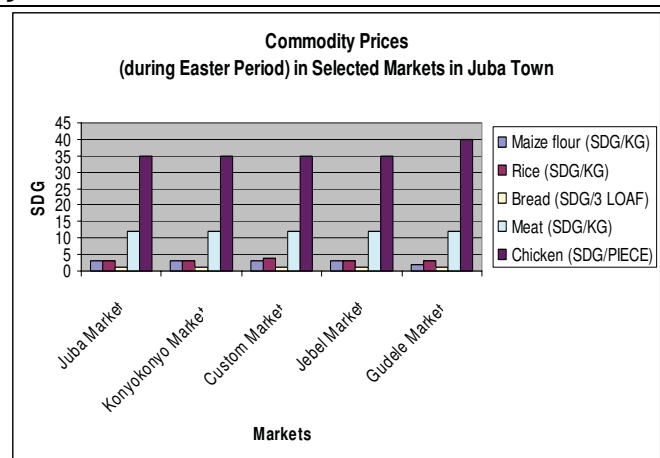


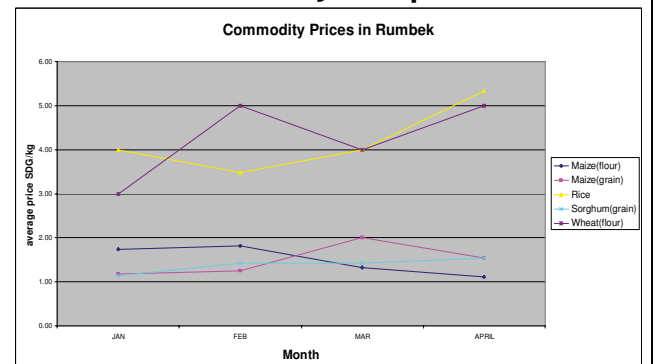
Figure 5: Commodity Prices (during Easter) in Juba



Source of data: Juba Post 16 – 21 April 09; LAF meeting 04/09

Looking at sorghum (staple food in southern Sudan) prices for March 2009, figure 4 shows that households in Juba were paying more for a 90kg of sorghum than those in Aweil. The markets in Aweil and Wau are supplied directly from Khartoum

Figure 6: Selected Commodity Prices in Rumbek Market from Jan - Apr 09



Source of data: SSCSE

In figure 6, we compared price fluctuations for selected commodities in Rumbek market from January to April 09. Whereas prices for maize grain, maize flour and sorghum grains remained relatively

stable, there were notable increases in prices of rice and wheat flour.

Livestock prices were reported to be high in most markets except in Aweil which showed a decrease (WFP). In Juba a local breed cow costs about 1300 SDG/Head while an imported breed costs about 3000 SDG/Head.

TERMS OF TRADE

In food security analysis the concept of Terms of Trade (ToT) examines how much of one product is obtained in exchange for another. The value of livelihood assets normally fluctuates according to household's ability to cope in times of shocks. In the case of southern Sudan, pastoralist and farmers benefit intermittently as the season transits from dry to wet to dry season, pastoralist get better deals when there is plenty of food supply and raw deals in times of scarcity. WFP reported that cereals have become scarce in some markets (e.g. Jonglei State) as hunger period commences. This means that the terms of ToT for sorghum per goat shall tip in favour of grain sellers i.e. less sorghum for one goat.

FOOD SECURITY ANALYSIS BY STATE

NORTHERN BAHR EL GHAZAL STATE

Rainfalls has commenced in the state. This has allowed the cultivation activities to start and an increase of land cleared for cultivation has been observed. The FAO distribution plan for seeds and tools in Northern Bahr el Ghazal is targeting 13,400 returnees, 2,900 IDPs and 3,300 of the host community to be supported with 100 MT of Sorghum, 100 MT of maize and 120 MT of Groundnuts respectively. Meanwhile, 18,500 pieces of Hoes, Machettes and Sickles were also availed, but the actual distribution has yet to start.

The food security situation in the state is stable with a decrease in prices of most of the cereal commodities ranging from 5 to 32% in Aweil's main market. The decrease in prices is due to increased supply of Sorghum and Maize from the north and

Uganda during the period. This is shown as 50kg bag of Maize dropped from 100SDG to 83SDG, 50kg of Fatarita from 180 to 170SDG, and of red sorghum from 117 to 100 SDG respectively. Animal prices vary, with goats showing higher prices than the cows. Female goat price increased from 73 SDG to 103 SDG while that of a bull declined from 1000SDG to 828SDG. Despite the decrease in the prices for cereal commodities, some poor households are still not able to meet their daily food needs as most of them rely on the markets due to the onset of the hunger season and most of them have already exhausted their food stocks and are applying distress coping mechanism.

The livestock conditions are still very poor and their products are in very low supply. An outbreak of *New castle fever* was reported by the VSF-Suisse in Aweil south causing a number of livestock deaths in the area, while lack of adequate veterinary services remains a great challenge to the state.

Fishing practices were observed seriously among the communities who migrate with their cattle to the water points (*Toiches*). Fish was reported to be more available compared to the same time in 2008; this is mainly due to the flooding associated with the above average rainfall received last year 2008. Surplus fish are dried and sold to other areas such as Rumbek and Juba towns. Also 25,590 spontaneous returnees (411 households) were verified in the five Payams of Aweil North and Aweil South during this reporting period.

JONGLEI STATE

Jonglei state has witnessed the worst of inter-tribal fights between the Murle and Lou Nuer during the month of April. An attack on Akobo left at least 195 people dead and over 15,000 people displaced, and many children lost in possible abduction.

An emergency assessment mission conducted by SSRRC and the various agencies indicated critical food shortages in Akobo both for the host community and Internally Displaced Persons. The supply route between Akobo and Nasir was cut off, thus affecting food access. Coping mechanisms (normally fishing and hunting) have been interrupted due to insecurity. Agencies have gone in to give humanitarian assistance in terms of food, water and non-food items. FAO planed to distribute 192 MT

and 48,000 pieces of assorted seeds and tools respectively covering 12,000 farming households.

Rainfall figures recorded in some location within the state showed above normal average i.e. 100 – 150mm. WFP reported that vegetation is not fully regenerated and pasture conditions are still poor. This means that livestock may not have enough pastures.

UNITY STATE

Generally food security situation in Unity State remained stable particularly in the Counties of Leer, Mayom, Panyijar, Koch, Guit, and Rubkona in the month of April, but changes are expected as hunger season is drawing near. According to reports, many young men have been employed in the oil field which supplements their household.

There has been little rainfall received so far and this has delayed in land preparation for seed planting. This delay in rainfall may also contribute to poor livestock condition and health due to lack of good pasture. Livestock represents the main livelihood asset for residents of this state and is the main source of food, though fish forms a major component of their diet.

Because of poor rainfall performance, some household members moved with their cattle to the cattle camps closer to the main rivers, and members of the households who are left behind have no access to livestock products such as milk and meat, and thus are rendered more vulnerable. Fishing is one of the main activities and source of food for households in Unity state. It supplements their food needs where the surpluses are sold to urban markets of Juba, Rumbek, Bentiu, and Rubkona. This activity improves household incomes with which members can access other food items on the markets.

WESTERN EQUATORIA

The Western Equatoria State has normally been the food secure area of southern Sudan over the years. But the state is currently experiencing threats to this stability following the persistent LRA insurgency with recurrent attack in many parts. The LRA activities posed major problems like the instability

and displacement of large numbers of people both internally and from across the Congolese border, which will have severe effects on food production and market activities in the affected areas. Although the cropping season has commenced, the situation remains tense and many parts of the state are still inaccessible to humanitarian operations due to suspected LRA operation. Mvolo County, who were displaced by the inter-tribal conflict were food insecure. As testified by the findings of the assessment, and with the onset of the hunger season, there is a serious need for interventions because the likelihood of good harvest at the end of the season is extremely remote.

In the assessment 10% of the screened children under five years of age measured below the critical MUAC threshold of 11.5 cm among the IDPs in Mvolo county. In response to recommendations of the assessment, food aid was provided. FAO targeted 7,000 households (4,700 returnees, 2000 IDPs and 300 of the host community) to be supported with 42 MT and 7,000 pieces of assorted seeds and tools respectively for the cropping season this year. The distribution is on going in the state.

LAKES STATE

With improved commodity movement during the reporting period, the food security situation in the state generally remained stable. Though this is expected to change with the on-set of rains during which surplus areas become inaccessible, resulting in fewer commodities reaching the markets causing prices to rise. WFP reported that some communities in the state currently rely on wild foods and selling bamboos and grasses to cope as harvests were poor in the last season. Fishing in the *Toic* is strained due to insecurity caused by inter-clan fights earlier in March in the Cueibet area.

As rainfall has started and farmers are engaged in land preparations, FAO planned to serve up to 5,000 farming households with 65MT and 15,000 pieces of assorted seeds and tools respectively. Vegetation has not rejuvenated sufficiently, thus poor pastures are observed. Therefore, livestock conditions have not improved significantly to offer good products for sustainable livelihoods.

CENTRAL EQUATORIA STATE

The state witnessed heightened insecurity during the reporting period. Inter-tribal fightings between the Bari and Mundari threatened the livelihoods of many households around Jebel Lado area. If the situation is not quickly arrested, it may result in many losses of lives and definite food insecurity. This is expected to be aggravated by the lack of production in the generally food basket areas (Yei, Lainya, Kajo Keji) due to insecurity as a result of Lord's Resistant Army (LRA) attacks.

A total of 866 refugees returned to the state during the period (UNHCR). This means increased need for food as the returnees need to be provided with essentials for settlement. FAO planned to distribute 112MT and 21,000 pieces of assorted seeds and tools respectively to 7,000 farming households (distribution has commenced). The rainy season has commenced and farmers in some counties have already started land preparation.

Market prices remained high due to heavy taxes imposed at border points on agricultural produce imported from Uganda and Kenya. This is expected to affect the purchasing powers of poor households; leading to food insecurity. Already, commodities such as sorghum, maize and groundnuts are reported to be scarce in the markets, thus increased demands and higher prices. However, locally produced fruits and vegetables were readily available during the reporting period. Main source of meat in Juba is livestock from Terekeka and Tali, though some Ugandan breeds are also available. In Juba, a bull goes for between 1,500 - 1,600 SDG up from about 1300 SDG/head in Feb/Mar. A goat sells at between 250 – 260 SDG; up from \geq 155 SDG/head.

EASTERN EQUATORIA STATE

The state generally remained at a moderately food insecure phase, with areas around Kapoeta and Lafon inclining towards acute food and livelihood crisis situation. In Lafon area, food insecurity is a result of poor harvest in the last year's season and exhaustion of food stocks, while in Kapoeta shortages are due to limitation of access to markets and poor status of livestock as communities are

mainly pastoralists. High taxation imposed at the border points on agricultural produce resulted in high prices of commodities in most of the main markets in the state. Armed banditry has also been reported on Juba – Torit road impeding commercial activities and delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Rainfalls have resumed in all parts of the state except Kapoeta East which is reported to be dry. Farming households have started land clearance and FAO planned to distribute 288MT and 54,000 pieces assorted seeds and tools to cover 18, 000 farmers.

WESTERN BAHR EL GHAZAL STATE

Western Bhar-El-Gazal State is one of the ten Southern Sudan States which had stable food security situation in the Month of April with small increase in market food prices in Wau. The price of sorghum increases slightly by 1.9%, but there were similar increases in the prices of maize (6.6%) and wheat flour (7.6%), while price rise for millet was insignificant (0.4%). The movement of food commodities from northern Sudan has stabilized the food security situation in the state. However, rainy season will contribute negatively to available commodity prices in the markets with expectation of non price reduction due to difficulties in movement during the period.

It has been reported that a total of 19 spontaneous returnees (8 females, 11males), who came from northern Sudan, were registered and verified, and three months food ration has been given to them.

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