

SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Outlook

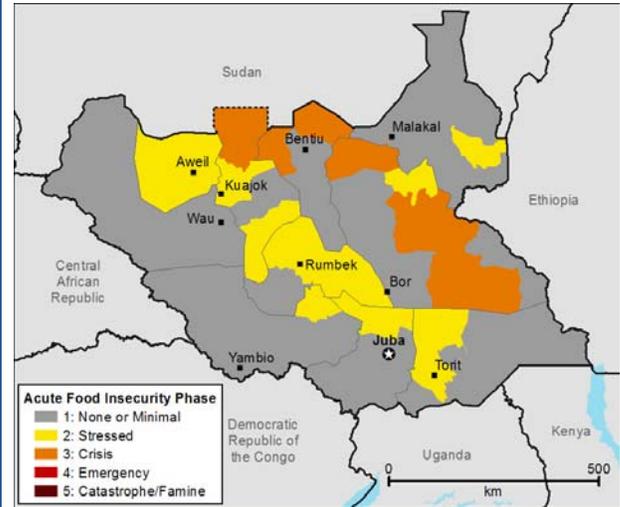
October 2011 to March 2012

Crisis levels of food insecurity likely to continue in border areas

Key messages

- During October, food insecurity will be concentrated in northern pockets of Warrap and Unity, where Crisis (IPC Phase 3) conditions persist due to high IDP and returnee concentrations and insecurity. Similar conditions are likely to persist in northern, southern and eastern parts of Jonglei due to cumulative impacts of cattle raiding, significant displacement, and potentially poor harvests (Figure 1).
- Slight improvements are anticipated in Northern Bahr El Gazal and northern parts of Warrap in October with the incoming sorghum and groundnut harvests. However, these improvements are likely to be temporary due to poor crop performance, increased IDPs and returnees, and trade restrictions. Improvements in Lakes, southern parts of Warrap, northern parts of Central Equatoria (Terekeka), and pockets of Eastern Equatoria are expected in November and December with the long-term sorghum harvests (Figure 2).
- A countrywide rapid crop assessment in August 2011 pointed to mixed conditions, with a significant number of areas experiencing below-average performance due to prolonged dryness in June-July. However, performance is likely to have improved in some areas following improved rains since August. Pockets of below-average production remain possible in Lakes, Warrap, Western Bahr El Gazal, Upper Nile, and Eastern Equatoria. A Crop Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) from October 19 to November 4 will provide a more definitive update on the status of 2011 harvests.
- Trade restrictions between South Sudan and Sudan since May appear to continue despite an agreement to open 10 border points in mid-September. However, South Sudan recently announced its intention to close the border with Sudan beginning in December to restrict herder movements into the south for grazing. Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain when trade may resume.

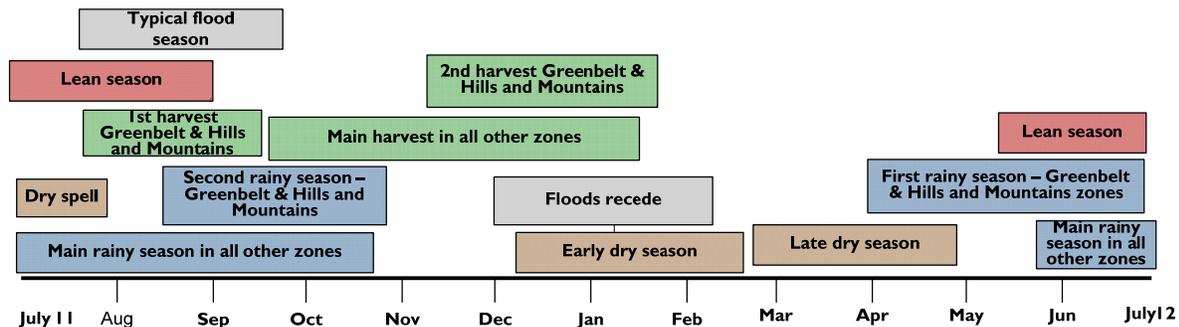
Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, October 2011



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale

Seasonal Calendar



Source: FEWS NET

General food security conditions and key assumptions underlying the October 2011- March 2012 most-likely scenario

Generally, October 2011 to March 2012 food insecurity conditions will likely be mixed, ranging between minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1), to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3). **Minimal food insecurity is defined as a situation in which households do not experience short-term instability and are able to meet basic food needs without negative coping strategies. Stressed food insecurity is defined as a situation in which households experience short-term instability, and food consumption is reduced, but households do not engage in irreversible coping strategies. Crisis food insecurity is defined as households experiencing short-term instability that results in losses of assets and/or significant food consumption deficits.**

The key assumptions underlying the October 2011- March 2012 Outlook are the following:

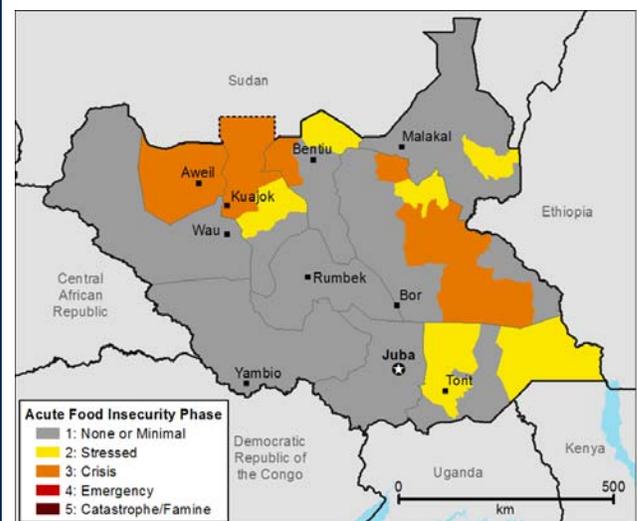
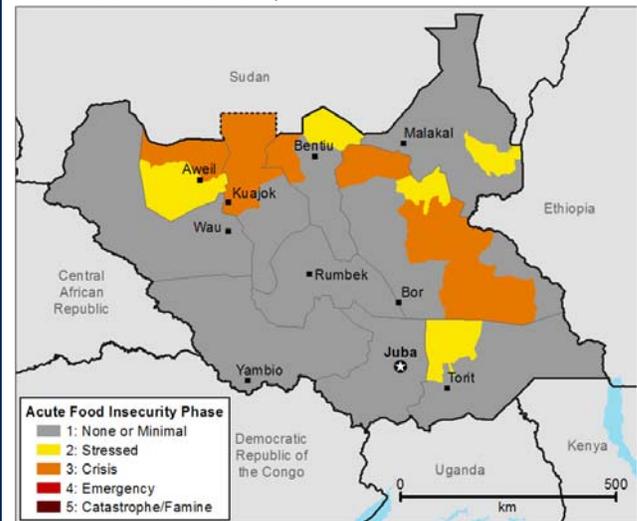
- Trade restrictions by Sudan will continue, causing South Sudan to close the border with Sudan beginning in December with the intention of restricting herder movements into the south for grazing.
- A significant proportion of the population displaced from Abyei will remain displaced in Warrap.
- Improved rainfall since August is likely to improve crop performance in long-term sorghum growing areas that were initially performing below average.

Continued trade restrictions by Sudan has negative implications for market-dependent poor households, especially those in Northern Bahr El Gazal, northern parts of Warrap, and Mayom/Abiemnom areas of Unity. A significant proportion of the population in these areas depends on markets for grain, particularly during a poor harvest year. Significant food gaps in these areas are expected due to: the likely below-average harvest, high concentrations of households that did not cultivate this year, compounded by high prices and possibly reduced income due to loss of livestock trade with Sudan. On average approximately 10,000 head of cattle are typically exported each year from Unity and Upper Nile States of South Sudan to Sudan.

Continued trade restrictions by Sudan are likely to cause South Sudan to restrict Sudanese seasonal herders' access to traditional grazing lands in the south starting in November/December. This has potential to cause tension and disrupt livelihoods along the border.

The assumption that IDPs from Abyei will remain in Warrap is based on the dynamics and security conditions in Abyei. Though some IDPs are reportedly returning, it is unlikely that many more will return given the recent announcement by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) that it will not withdraw from Abyei for the time being. IDPs will continue to rely on food assistance and the host population, increasing pressure on available food sources.

Figure 2. Most likely food security outcomes, November – December, 2011



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale

Despite below-average crop performance in many areas as of early to mid-August, rainfall has significantly improved since then. This outlook assumes that crop conditions in some of the long-term sorghum growing areas have improved since August.

Most Likely Food Security Scenario (October 2011 – March 2012)

Nile Sobat Zone counties of Mayom, Abiemnom, Pariang, Khor Fulus and Fangak

Crisis conditions persist in Mayom, Abiemnom, Pariang (Ruweng), Fangak, and Khorfulus counties, where insecurity has significantly disrupted livelihoods and displaced about 5-10 percent of the Mayom population into Rubkona and Abiemnom. About 20-25 percent of the Mayom population failed to cultivate this year due to insecurity and fear of land mines planted during the fighting. In addition, Abiemnom continues to host a high number of IDPs from Abyei and returnees that are equivalent to over 70 percent of the host population, overwhelming the capacity to support these populations. The insecurity disrupted dry season food access, affecting wild foods and fish sources that are typically stored for consumption during the June to August lean season. Because a significant proportion of households in these areas did not cultivate this year, shortages are anticipated to persist through December. Currently, households rely on kinship ties and share matured harvests, and supplement their diets with livestock products and small quantities of fish.

An additional maize crop is occasionally planted in some parts of Mayom and Abiemnom around October, but this is highly dependent on soil moisture conditions that vary from year to year. This practice has not been assessed in recent years. In addition, there is risk of increased tensions with seasonal migrant herders from Sudan along the border, especially if they attempt to move to graze in South Sudan while trade restrictions remain. The tensions could potentially disrupt dry season food access activities that are critical to compensating for below-average crop harvests.

Compensation of food shortfalls by selling livestock to purchase food in markets seems unlikely, especially if trade restrictions are sustained. There is also potential for increased tensions with the Sudan seasonal herders when they move to graze in South Sudan during November – December. These tensions could disrupt stability in some locations particularly in Abiemnom and Pariang counties. A direct consequence of the trade restrictions is that sorghum prices, a staple food, will remain unseasonably high. Informal trade with Sudan has been impossible due to insecurity in the neighboring Kordofan region, which harbors the main trade routes to this zone. A shift to river transportation has also been complicated by illegal and multiple taxes, especially between Unity and Upper Nile States.

Overall, asset poor and returnee households in areas of concern will remain in Crisis food security levels until March. Pockets of improvement to Stressed levels are likely in Fangak and Pariang, due to likely improved access to fish and other wild foods as flood waters recede. However, the fish might not be sufficient to fully compensate for lack of crop production for households that failed to cultivate. Also, the latest informal updates suggest that militia activities that were the cause of insecurity early this year are still active in the north eastern part of Jonglei areas of Ayod and Fangak. This requires close watch.

Eastern Flood Plains Zone counties of Wuror, Akobo and neighboring Pastoral Zone county of Pibor

Crisis food insecurity levels persist in Wuror, Akobo and Pibor counties due to the impact of violent and destructive cattle raiding since April. The worst raid on Wuror County in mid-August displaced over 27,000 people (representing about 15 percent of the total population in the county) and killed over 600-700 people. Since 2009, frequent and violent cattle raiding has severely affected food security by disrupting long distance livestock and population movements, destroying homes and assets, causing displacement, and endangering exchange and kinship mechanisms that are critical for household food security in these areas. Generally, the immediate response by attacked communities has been retaliatory attacks to recover stolen livestock (traditionally known as effective raiding), which in turn perpetuates insecurity. This is now unlikely due to the presence of security forces and increased surveillance in the area since the end of August. Though in-depth assessments to establish specific impacts on food security conditions have not been conducted, Crisis levels at present are likely.

In addition, Wuror and Akobo received erratic and below-average rainfall this year, which has negatively affected crop performance for households that cultivated. It is also likely that the displaced, who represent 15 percent of the population, after the attack in mid-August, could not tend to their crops during a critical weeding time and could not replant when rains improved. Since crops are critical for ensuring food security at this time, it is unlikely that the current harvest will

significantly improve Crisis conditions between October and December.

Improvements in January through March will depend on security conditions at that time. During this period, typically at least 50 of the population (half of each household) travels long distances to graze cattle and fish, to exchange livestock for grain in areas of Ayod, along the Sobat River, where recessionary cropping and harvests are common during the dry season (December – March). Productive female adults tend to remain behind during this period to source kinship support and collect wild foods, such as desert dates and gum Arabic, that would be consumed during next year's cultivation period. Despite these typical response mechanisms, Crisis conditions are likely to persist due to the following factors:

- Livelihoods of households in the area have been continually disrupted since 2009. Frequent disruption is likely to have cumulative negative effects on livelihoods and food access. Also, tensions with Pibor County remain high despite the presence of security forces.
- Though exact impact and extent of raids and cattle losses remain unknown due to secrecy revolving around livestock wealth, losses are evident for households that are unable to recover their cattle.
- To cope with losses from the expected poor harvest, a greater than normal population (over 70 percent instead of half of the population) is likely to move to distant fishing areas to increase reliance on fish. Those unable to move (the very young, elderly and their care givers) will have much less to rely on given the poor harvest and little or no livestock for those households that have lost them. Those likely to be left are mainly productive female adults, very young children and the elderly. The care givers/women will capitalize on wild food gathering for consumption during next year's cultivation.
- Some of the traditional areas of exchange, especially to the west, in Ayod, might be unstable given indications of armed militia presence.
- Kinship is unlikely to be sufficient to meet shortfalls. In Pibor County, households located in the northern lowlands neighboring Wuror and Akobo are likely to increase their reliance on kin that still own livestock and supplement with hunting and increased wild food collection but these are not likely to be sufficient for households that have lost livestock. However, the highlands of Meiwun and Boma are likely to remain relatively stable, as they are more agriculturally productive and less vulnerable to cattle raiders.

For all affected households in these two zones, it is highly unlikely that coping mechanisms will be sufficient to mitigate food shortfalls, implying that a significant proportion of households will potentially experience significant food consumption gaps (Crisis level) during October 2011 through March 2012.

Western Flood Plains Zone counties of Aweil East, North and South, Gogrial East and West, and Twic County

With the incoming October sorghum harvest, poor households in Northern Bahr El Gazal and northern parts of the zone are currently transitioning from Crisis to Stressed levels. However, due to expected below-average harvests caused by the June – July dryness, and high IDP and returnee concentrations, these improvements are not likely to be sustained beyond November. Crisis conditions are likely to recur during December – January, when harvest stocks run out, and to continue through March. Also, sustained trade restrictions will result in reduced grain availability on markets and heightened prices. The restrictions could also increase tensions with the Sudanese seasonal herders when they move to graze in South Sudan during November – December. These tensions could disrupt stability in some locations along the border, especially in Aweil East, Aweil North and Twic counties.

Similar to some of the Nile River Zone locations, there is risk of increased tensions with the seasonal migrant herders from Sudan along the border, especially if they attempt to graze in South Sudan while Sudan trade restrictions remain effective. Though Crisis food security levels are anticipated to decline to Stressed levels around October with the main sorghum harvest in some areas, the improvement will only be for host populations.

Responses by host households to the production shortfalls are likely to vary by location. Although poor households in Aweil counties are likely to increase reliance on wild food, labor and petty trade to meet needs during January – March, these are unlikely to meet food needs if current trade restrictions and unusually high grain prices continue. Also, increased competition with returnees for petty trade and labor opportunities is highly likely. Poor households in Gogrial and Twic counties are likely to increase reliance on better-off kin, increase movement to fishing areas for more fish and water lily plants, and plant recessionary crops in the moisture-rich dry season grazing areas. For households in the southern parts of Gogrial (Ajiep and Kuajok), harvest labor exchange with the neighboring Jur of Wau County for payment with grain during December – January is likely but depends on the performance of the long term harvest, which is yet to be established.

Despite these response options, asset poor households, returnees, and the IDP population from Abyei will continue to experience significant food consumption gaps. This could exacerbate the chronic multi-faceted malnutrition that is more prevalent during the dry season, or force households to employ irreversible coping strategies. The situation is most critical in Twic County, where there are a large number of IDPs from Abyei, equivalent to 20-30 percent of the total Twic population.

Table 2. Less likely events over the next six months that could change the above scenarios

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Nile – Sobat Zone's (Mayom, Abiemnom, Pariang, Fangak, and Khor Fulus)	Complete lifting of the trade restrictions by the North	This will enable gradual resumption of commodity flows to South Sudan, boosting the local markets food stocks and slowly alleviating high prices. Most households in these locations have livestock which are a key income source they would sell and purchase much needed grain, especially starting in January when road and transportation conditions improve.
Western Flood Plains (Aweil and Gogrial counties)		For households in affected areas of the Western Flood Plains, lifting of trade restrictions would be beneficial to poor households who are reliant on labor and markets to use these strategies to significantly mitigate January – March shortages. This also applies to poor households that are reliant on small livestock for income to purchase grain.
Western Flood Plains (Aweil and Gogrial counties)	Increased food supplies from East Africa	Increased grain supplies from Uganda could partially mitigate market supply shortfalls though not at significantly reduced prices due to high transportation costs. Poor households reliant on labor and markets would be able to significantly mitigate January – March shortages
Gogrial and Twic Counties	Abyei IDPS return to Abyei	Return of Abyei IDPS would significantly reduce pressure on their Twic/Gogrial counties hosts as they are highly reliant on Kinship support