

CONTENTS

Current Weather Hazards..... 2

Food and Livelihood Security 2-3

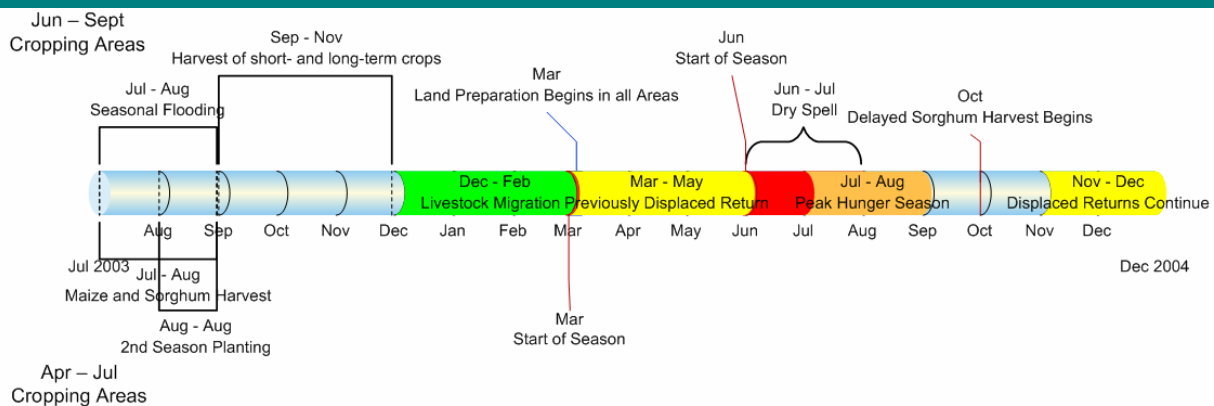
Special Focus: Bor County 4

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Though improved rains since the end of July could benefit crops in some areas, the dry spell has affected the performance of early maize and vegetable crops that are critical for bridging food shortages between August and September, while households await the sorghum harvest. As a result, the hunger season will be extended by up to one month, until late September. There is also the possibility of reduced yields, particularly in the highland areas. However, final yields of the main sorghum crop will be determined by rainfall performance in August. Overall, immediate food security improvements in most areas are pegged to the main sorghum harvest that is now expected in October.

Currently, insecurity, existing vulnerability (chronic food insecurity) and ongoing population returns in many parts of southern Sudan pose a more serious threat to food security than the June-July drought.

SEASONAL TIMELINE

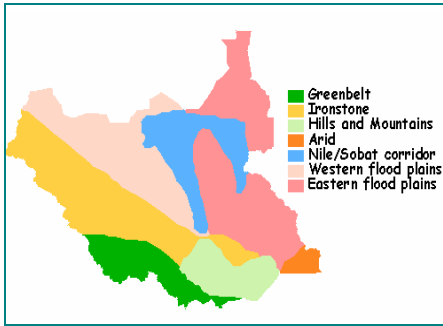


CURRENT HAZARD SUMMARY

- Increased rainfall could improve performance of the June – September crops that had been negatively affected by reduced rains in June and July, but up to a month’s delay of the main sorghum harvest may be expected. The risk of a reduced crop harvest is likely in areas that have been severely affected by the drought.
- Increased population returns from northern to southern Sudan are likely to exacerbate the deteriorating food security situation already threatened by delayed or reduced crop harvests. Arguably, some of the returning populations are unlikely to cope with potentially impending hardships, and will return to northern Sudan.
- The current food aid pipeline is inadequate to alleviate anticipated food shortages in the next four months. WFP projects a shortfall of slightly over 55,000 MT of food between now and December. This requires urgent donor attention.
- Increased delivery of humanitarian aid in the Dafur region of northern Sudan has started negatively impacting the flow of humanitarian assistance to southern Sudan at a time when food insecurity there could potentially become widespread. It is imperative that humanitarian needs for both northern and southern Sudan receive a quick and comprehensive review followed by relevant responses to ensure that needs in some areas are not compromised.

FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

The traditional hunger season is expected to extend until late September, given the likelihood of a delayed harvest. This applies to all except the Greenbelt, Arid, and Hills and Mountains Zones. Currently, green leafy vegetables, milk, relief food and fish are the main foods being consumed in many of these areas. These food sources are insufficient to meet energy requirements until October when sorghum will be harvested. Meanwhile, food aid delivery is constrained by a poor food pipeline which may persist until the end of this year.



The ongoing July – August first season harvest has started to improve food security in parts of the Hills and Mountains Zone, where sorghum and small quantities of maize are now being consumed. The Greenbelt typically remains food secure with carryover of last year’s harvest and the ongoing harvest. In addition, the second season has started in these two zones, with harvests due in December -January.

In the Arid Zone, sorghum has failed in the few areas where it is grown. Despite this, food insecurity will be determined more by availability of pasture and water, migration, and exchange relations with other communities rather than own crop performance. Apart from relief food, the main food sources are meat, milk and blood.

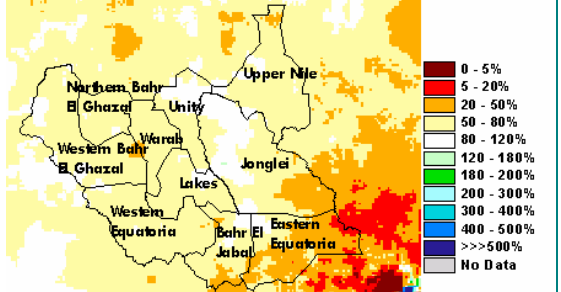
CURRENT HAZARDS

RAINFALL: June-August 2004

Rainfall anomalies in June and most of July negatively affected the performance of the June – September crops, mainly sorghum and maize. Although rains have improved since the end of July and are now mitigating earlier dryness, there is uncertainty as to how well crops in affected areas will recover. Although Figure 2 illustrates that significant rainfall deficits persisted in the southeastern parts of the region towards mid August, this was a considerable improvement given that these parts had only received up to 20 percent of normal rains by end of July.

The improved rains are expected to further enhance vegetation and pasture conditions critical in supporting livestock during the January – April dry season. Apart from isolated but controlled foot and mouth disease among cattle, current pasture and livestock conditions are fair in most areas.

Figure 2: Percent of Normal Rainfall: June 1 – August 10, 2004



Interpretation of the current hazard in the context of the most recent drought year: comparison between 2004 and 2000

In 2000, the most recent comparable year, a similar dryness occurred from June to August, but was concentrated in the northern and central parts of the western half of the region (Figure 3). Overall, the performance of maize was poor, and that of sorghum was marginally better. Sorghum harvests in lowlands were better than in highlands, as is typical of a drought year.

Figure 3: Percent of normal rainfall: June 1-August 10, 2000

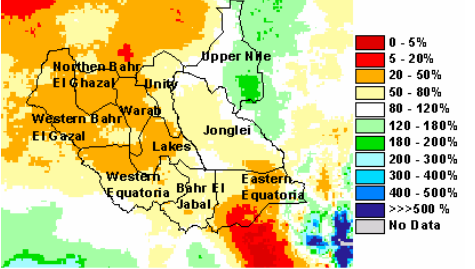


Figure 4: Comparison between June 1-August 10, 2004 and 2000

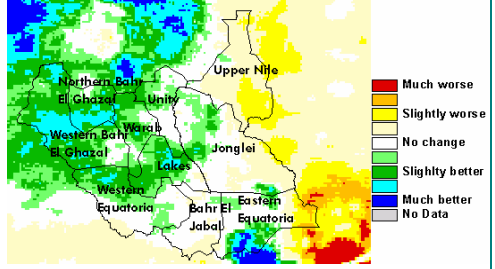


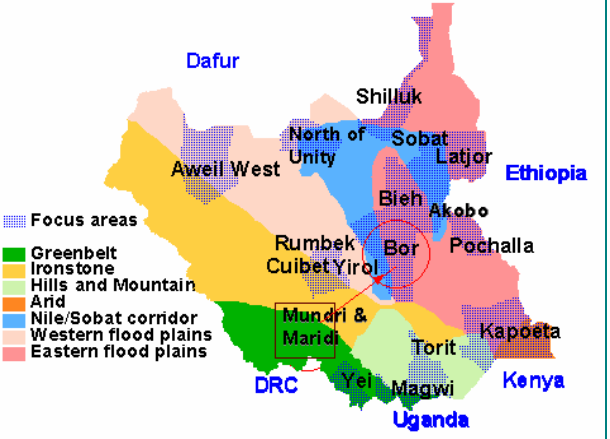
Figure 4 illustrates that conditions for June – August 2004 are better than 2000, implying chances of a better harvest. However, the harvest may still be below average.

FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY

Food Security by Livelihood Zones

As mentioned above, improved rains during August are likely to mitigate poor crop performance, but there are chances that crops in some areas may not fully recover from the impact of the June – July dryness. Reports received from various field stations in early August point to a mixed crop performance. Crop performance in lowland and swampy areas was fair and those in highland areas were poor. With increased rains in August, crops in unaffected lowlands may mature before annual flooding occurs in August, while those in highlands and other area are likely to delay due to the impact of earlier dryness and replanting.

Generally, food security is more threatened by the insecurity and returns, rather than the June – July dry spell or a likely reduced harvest. Of much concern is the increased attention to needs in the Dafur region in northern Sudan which has started affecting the humanitarian response capacity in the south. There are growing fears that the Dafur crisis could increasingly overshadow the highly fragile situation in southern Sudan and seriously undermine the capacity to respond should the long awaited population returns suddenly occur.



Source: Food Economies of Southern Sudan by SC-UK/WFP

Eastern Flood Plain Zone: Akobo, Bieh and Pochalla

Highly food insecure Akobo is now calm following the signing of the peace agreement between various warring factions. This has allowed humanitarian agencies to respond to food and non food needs of some of the 30,000 affected people. However, some areas remain inaccessible due to heavy rains. Meanwhile, the situation remains fluid in Bieh due to persisting local political and ethnic differences. In Pochalla, the first season maize performed poorly due to low rainfall, but sorghum was able to resist the dry spell.

Improved security in some areas of Shilluk has allowed some displaced households to return home and agencies to send in much needed food and non food items. However, some areas are still inaccessible due to insecurity. The proportion of households that has managed to cultivate during this season can not be verified.

Western Flood Plains Zone: Bahr El Gazal and Lakes

The Western Flood Plains Zone is currently faced with a mixed situation ranging from high food insecurity to relatively stable conditions. This scenario is likely to persist in the next four months given a combination of factors, such as more population returns, isolated pockets of ethnic tensions and the anticipated delayed or reduced harvest. Of much concern is the Aweil West/North area, which is now reported as increasingly food insecure due to returnee influx. The threat of increased population return is expected to persist into 2005.

Meanwhile, tension caused by inter-ethnic fighting from April to June in the Lakes region (Yirol, Rumbek and Cuibet) has diminished, allowing people to resettle. Food and non food interventions have been conducted for 15,000 affected people. More interventions are planned for an additional 23,000 affected people. However, in Yirol County, there are still isolated points of tension which have recently hampered food distributions.

Nile and Sobat Zone: Bor and North of Unity

Mixed food security conditions are anticipated in the highly resilient Nile and Sobat Zone. There is a potential for deterioration in the southern part of the zone (Bor County) due to recent bird attacks on sorghum. This is likely to be exacerbated by the anticipated arrival of people moving from Mundri and Maridi with their cattle.

Though crops in the central areas of this zone are reported to be poor, the area is stable when interpreted in a drought year context.

Persistent insecurity and the presence of foot and mouth disease among livestock may signify a problematic year ahead for some households residing in the extreme north of this zone (north of Unity State).

Arid Zone: Kapoeta

The Arid Zone, which mainly comprises Eastern Equatoria's Kapoeta area, has experienced consecutive drought for the last five years. The area is predominantly pastoral with a few sorghum growing pockets. Although the impact on households of the five-year drought in this zone has not been assessed, food security dynamics in this region suggest high resilience due to coping mechanisms that include migration for pasture and water, trade and exchange of livestock and grain, cattle raiding, and hunting and gathering practices. Similar to the past five years, households in this zone may be expected to cope, but a lack of information on coping mechanisms reinforces the urgent need to update food security baselines for this area.

Hills and Mountain Zone: Torit

Food security is improving in some parts of the Hills and Mountains Zone as a result of the first season sorghum and maize harvest, which started in August. However, some isolated pockets are expected to be more food insecure due to a maize failure, continued attacks by the Ugandan-based Lords Resistance Army (LRA) and populations returning from Ugandan refugee camps. The most recent LRA attacks occurred in early August displacing unknown number of people in southern and western parts of Torit County. The latest reports from northern Uganda indicate potential for increased hostilities from LRA due to the surrendering of some LRA soldiers to the Ugandan government forces and increased movement of LRA soldiers searching for food and other supplies. Areas of Magwi and Torit face increased attacks especially with the presence of the ongoing harvest. At the same time, intensified alliance between the Equatoria Defense Force and the SPLA against the LRA in the region would certainly result in increased targeting of civilians by the LRA.

Greenbelt Zone: Kajokeji

Food security in the Greenbelt Zone is relatively stable following the ongoing first season harvest. However, more people (about 14,000) have returned from Uganda to Kajokeji County (situated between Magwi and Yei) as a result of increased attacks by the LRA. This follows earlier population returns from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Yei in recent months.

The ongoing harvest is facilitating the returnee's access to kinship support, and sale of labor and petty trade and is expected to last for a few months. Temporary food aid support is expected to help bridge anticipated food gaps and settlement efforts until the second season harvest starts in December. Some of these returnees cultivated during the first season, and more are expected to cultivate during the August – December second season.

Ironstone Plateau Zone

Apart from the dry spell and a few returnees, there are no other factors significantly affecting food security in the Ironstone plateau zone

** Please refer to the Southern Sudan July Monthly Report for a full description of the livelihood zones.*

SPECIAL FOCUS: Returnees to Bor County (Nile & Sobat Zone)

In 1991, Bor County experienced serious insecurity that resulted in the displacement of many households and the loss of cattle. Most households fled to the Equatoria Region, Uganda, Kenya and as far as Ethiopia. Some of those who fled to Equatoria were able to take their cattle. Currently, an estimated 30 percent of the total population of Bor County is living outside the county and it is anticipated that some will return after the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) sign a final peace agreement. However, households who fled to Equatoria (Mundri and Maridi Counties) with cattle are not waiting for the peace agreement to be signed to return home. This is because of increased hostility between the Bor people and the agricultural host community caused by the destruction of host community crops year after year by Bor community cattle. Until April 2004, the Bor community had resisted the demand by the host community to leave the area and return to their homes. Currently, about 15-20,000 people are reported to be moving with many cattle (an unconfirmed estimate of 1,500,000, which seems unlikely).

Conditions to which they are returning are challenging and complex as follows:

- Bor County neighbors the Murle pastoralists of Pibor and Lou agro-pastoralists of Bieh who are traditionally known for raiding cattle. The increase and presence of much coveted cattle could trigger a new wave of violence between Bor and their neighbors. This scenario is highly likely given that the Bor returnees are reportedly well armed to defend against the Murle and the Lou, and also because the Murle are reputed to break peace agreements with their neighbors, particularly where cattle is concerned.
- A sudden and large increase in the number of cattle in Bor County will certainly stress access to pasture, and could trigger tensions over grazing rights, given that people in Bor have actively been restocking their herds for the last five years.
- Current livestock health programs are not adequate to accommodate large cattle increases which may trigger fierce competition for available veterinary services.
- Crops in better performing areas, located in the southern part of the county, have suffered from bird attacks this year which may undermine grain availability and affordability particularly for non livestock owning households among the settled community.
- The returnee households will have to start new settlements after a 13 year absence.

Peace reconciliation activities in areas of Mundri and Maridi and peace building activities in Bor and the neighboring areas are being initiated. Though this is commendable, it is not clear how the large numbers of cattle (if indeed they are 1,500,000 cattle) will be settled.