

## SUDAN Food Security Outlook Update

November 2011

Food security likely to worsen earlier than usual due to insecurity and poor harvest

- As of November, approximately 3.2 million people in Sudan are estimated to be food insecure. Though the 2011/2012 main season harvest is likely to be significantly below average, there will be temporary food security improvements during the harvest period. In parts of Darfur, White Nile, North Kordofan, and Sennar states, minimal (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food insecurity are likely during November/December. However, given high staple food prices and low food stocks, food security will likely deteriorate to Stressed and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels by March.
- In conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, and Abeyi, food insecurity is not likely to improve through the Outlook period. If limits on humanitarian access and food access continue, parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan could reach Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity in early 2012.
- Cereal prices have continued to rise atypically in some areas due to the prolonged lean season and impacts of conflict. Staple food prices are likely to remain above average in the coming months due to high inflation and low food stocks.

### Updated food security outlook through March 2012

The 2011/2012 harvest has just begun, one month later than normal. This harvest represents 90 percent of total area cultivated and provides more than 75 percent of domestic food consumption. Due to the late start of the rains, followed by below-normal rainfall and long dry spells, crops experienced moderate to severe water stress. Consequently, harvest prospects are significantly lower than last year and the five-year average, and an early start to the lean season is expected in March/April instead of May/June. Additional details on the harvest will be available following the annual crop assessment in November.

Poor crop development was exacerbated by intense fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army-N (SPLA-N) in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, which constitute important parts of the country's 'grain basket.' Conflict forced a considerable number of farmers to flee their farms during cultivation. Due to poor rainfall and insecurity, less than 60 percent of normal area was planted, with less than 20 percent planted in some of the most insecure areas. Ongoing fighting is likely to reduce access to agricultural labor opportunities on which many Sudanese and South Sudanese laborers typically depend at this time of year, and to disrupt the ongoing harvest, further reducing yields.

Reduced pasture, browse, and water availability due to the poor rainfall have increased competition over resources. Furthermore, conflict in Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Abeyi has restricted mobility for about 40 million animals of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in eastern and western parts of Sudan, according to the Federal Ministry of Animal

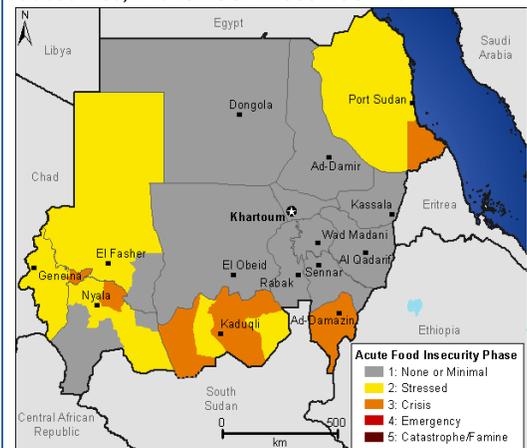
*This report provides an update to the October 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook, which estimated food security outcomes in Sudan through March 2012.*

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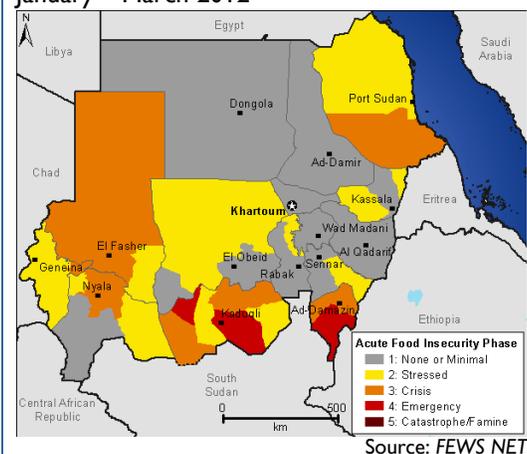
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*FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity. The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.*

**Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, November-December 2011**



**Figure 2. Estimated food security outcomes, January – March 2012**



For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

Resources and Fisheries (MoARF). Grazing in non-typical areas has in turn incited conflict with farmers, as herds cause crop destruction.

Escalated tension along the Sudan-South Sudan border is likely to reduce access to seasonal grazing areas for nomadic herders who typically migrate to South Sudan during the dry season (December to June). The Government of South Sudan has indicated that it will deny access to grazing areas in the south for Sudanese herders, should trade restrictions by Sudan continue. Seasonal migration has already begun as a group of cattle from Blue Nile has entered Upper Nile state, raising the prospect of heightened tensions.

Inflation declined slightly from 20.7 percent in September to 18.9 percent in October, mainly due to a decline in meat prices following a boycotting campaign organized by civil society groups in September, and the seasonal decline in vegetable prices in October. Nonetheless, cereal prices have continued to rise atypically during the harvest in most areas due to the prolonged lean season and conflict in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. In October, sorghum prices increased in most markets, with the exception of Ed Damazin market in Blue Nile, where prices declined due to the distribution of humanitarian assistance and to the reduced outflow of grain from the area. With the exception of Kadugli and Nyala markets, sorghum prices in all markets monitored by FEWS NET are 55 percent to 133 percent above the five-year average, and 10 to 64 percent above last year's prices. Cereal prices are likely to remain high or further increase in the coming months.

FEWS NET estimates that, as of November, over 3.2 million people in Sudan are food insecure. This figure has declined by 20 percent since October, as the harvests provide short-lived food security improvements. In parts of Darfur, White Nile, North Kordofan, and Senar states, harvests will result in minimal (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food insecurity. However, due to high staple food prices and an early start to the lean season, food security in these areas will likely deteriorate to Stressed and Crisis levels by March. In conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, and Abeyi, food insecurity is not likely to improve through the end of the Outlook period. If limits on humanitarian access and food access continue, parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan could reach Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels in early 2012. Such levels involve either extreme food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition or excess mortality, or extreme loss of livelihood assets leading to food consumption gaps.

### **Blue Nile State**

The SAF capture of Kurmuk town (the SPLA-N stronghold over the past 14 years) on November 3 caused a new wave of refugees to pass from Blue Nile state into Ethiopia, and halted border trade with Ethiopia. As of mid-November, an estimated 33,000 refugees from Blue Nile are in Ethiopia, of which about 14,000 people are registered in refugee camps, while the remainder live with host communities. The Government of Sudan recently appealed for Kurmuk residents to return and reported that some people have started returning to the town.

Since the fighting began in September, more than 20,000 people from Blue Nile have fled to Maban County in Upper Nile State (South Sudan), where access by humanitarian agencies is reportedly constrained by insecurity and flooding. 1,317 people from Blue Nile state have also been registered at Kosti way station in White Nile state. Within Blue Nile, the number of IDPs is difficult to verify due to restrictions on access. Most people have fled the newly SAF-controlled areas (e.g. Kurmuk town), but in other areas, such as Dendro, some people have started returning after SAF took full control of the area.

Most of the 400,000 – 500,000 conflict-affected/displaced people in Blue Nile state (out of a total population of about 800,000 people) are estimated to be at Crisis levels of food insecurity due to displacement, loss of assets and food stocks, limited access to seasonal labor opportunities, and no/limited access to humanitarian assistance. In both Blue Nile and South Kordofan, the Government of Sudan (GoS) has restricted humanitarian access to IDPs. Most IDPs have been relying on host communities and/or kinship support from extended family members. Congestion of a large number of IDPs in limited spaces, along with lack of public hygiene and medical services, will increase susceptibility to disease.

A recent assessment of about 9,000 Blue Nile refugees staying with host communities in Kurmuk, Guba, and Sharkole in Ethiopia found that most refugees are unwilling to relocate to refugee camps in Sherkole and Tango, as they prefer to return to their homes if conditions improve. Refugee inflows have heightened demand for food stocks, raising staple food prices by 30-100 percent, and increased pressure on pasture and water, as refugees are coming with significant numbers of livestock. There is also increased competition over income-generating activities such as gold mining and farm labor in these areas of Ethiopia.

**South Kordofan**

At the end of October, about 20,000 refugees from South Kordofan had arrived in Bentiu and Pariang counties of Unity state (South Sudan). Since the intensification of fighting between SAF and SPLA-N in Talodi locality and five other locations in South Kordofan on October 31, civilians have been fleeing from South Kordofan to Unity State at a rate of 400 people per day. More than 35,000 IDPs from South Kordofan are also in Khartoum state, and are mostly hosted by relatives. The current pace of arrivals, limited capacity of humanitarian agencies, prevailing insecurity in Unity due to fighting between South Sudan rebels and SPLA forces, and the high risk of air attacks have reduced the ability of humanitarian agencies to address the refugees’ urgent needs (e.g. food, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter) in Unity.

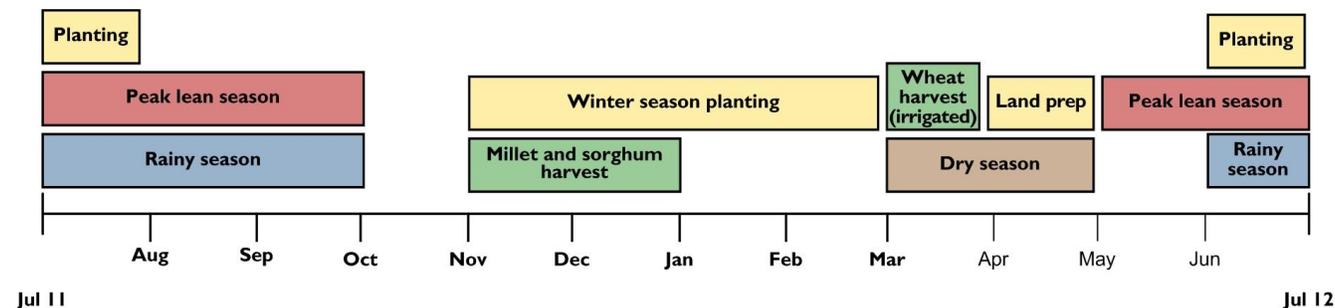
Numerous IDP populations are scattered within South Kordofan (in both SAF and SPLA-N controlled areas) and other neighboring states of Sudan, but their number is unknown due to restrictions on movement by humanitarian organizations, insecurity, and the reluctance of authorities to allow the establishment of IDP camps. The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) has reportedly distributed approximately 500 MT of food to households in Talodi locality, and shelter materials to 7,800 households in various locations in South Kordofan.

IDPs located in the Nuba Mountains (SPLA-N controlled areas) may face the greatest restrictions on access to food, as last year’s food stocks have been destroyed or depleted, and intense aerial bombing in these areas has restricted movement and limited access to markets and income-earning opportunities. In areas less affected by conflict (e.g. some parts of Abu Ghebeiha, Lagawa and Rashad localities), some labor opportunities may be available for IDPs. An estimated 300,000 – 400,000 people face Crisis levels of food insecurity in South Kordofan, which will deteriorate to Emergency levels by early 2012 if fighting continues and restrictions on humanitarian access to IDP populations continue.

**Darfur**

Although the general security situation in Darfur has remained relatively calm through the cultivation season, 500 newly displaced people arrived in El Neem camp in South Darfur due to recent local insecurity and militia attacks in Karoya Laban and Osban Doma in El Tweisha locality (North Darfur State). However, in some parts of Darfur the sudden cessation of rains in October affected crops at flowering stage, while a severe pest infestation caused crop damage, reversing expectations of a good harvest. Animals grazing on arable farms have reportedly caused severe damage to crops in all three Darfur states, further reducing harvest expectations. Some farmers in Garsila, Sirba, Forbaranga and Mornie in West Darfur have expedited crop gathering by harvesting crops day and night, even before ripening is completed. In spite of low cereal harvest expectations, the harvest and income from groundnut sales will bring short-lived improvements in Darfur to Minimal and Stressed levels in November and December. Food security will likely worsen to mostly Crisis levels in early 2012 as the harvest is exhausted.

**Seasonal calendar and critical events**



Source: FEWS NET