

SOUTHERN SUDAN Food Security Outlook Update

February 2010

Food shortages start earlier than normal

Key Messages

- Food security conditions are expected to deteriorate between February–March in the Eastern Flood Plains (eastern parts of Jonglei and Upper Nile states) and Western Flood Plains (Northern Bahr El Gazal, and northern parts of Warrap) as food stocks are depleted earlier than normal (Figure 1). Last year’s poor rains and resultant below-normal water levels not only reduced crop harvests but have also reduced access to important off-farm food sources (such as fish and wild foods).
- Food security conditions in eastern parts of Jonglei and Upper Nile states, Northern Bahr El Gazal, and northern parts of Warrap are likely to deteriorate further during April–June when an earlier than normal peak hunger season is anticipated to begin in many more areas than normal (Figure 2). Since August 2009, food insecure conditions have persisted in Eastern Equatoria (Hills and Mountains and Pastoral zones). Food insecurity in all these areas will continue until harvests in July and September 2010.
- Extension of the 2009 high conflict levels and cattle raiding into the dry season (up to the end of April) could severely affect land preparations for the 2010 growing season, especially in Jonglei, the Warrap-Unity States border, and Lakes where conflict is ongoing.

Updated food security outlook through June 2010

Consumption of harvested crops of sorghum, maize, and groundnuts, which dominated the November 2009–January 2010 months, is rapidly declining as stocks at the household level dwindle as projected. This marks the start of increased food insecurity, especially in the highland areas located in Northern Bahr El Gazal and northern parts of Warrap, Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Eastern Equatoria (Figure 1). Due to last year’s poor rainfall and resultant below-normal water levels, off-farm food sources of wild foods and fish, whose peak consumption is during January–March, are in significantly reduced quantities, pointing to earlier than normal food shortages by two months. Subsequently, these food shortages translate to further deterioration during April–June, implying that the hunger season will be more severe than normal in areas illustrated in Figure 2.

The February–June outlook is based on assumptions that 1) last year’s poor harvests would run out during January–February among poor households; 2) intra-clan, tribal, and cattle raiding conflicts will persist, especially in the eastern half of Southern Sudan, particularly between Murle pastoralists (Pibor) and Nuer of Akobo, Wuror, Diror and Waat Counties; 3)

Figure 1. Estimated food security conditions, February–March 2010

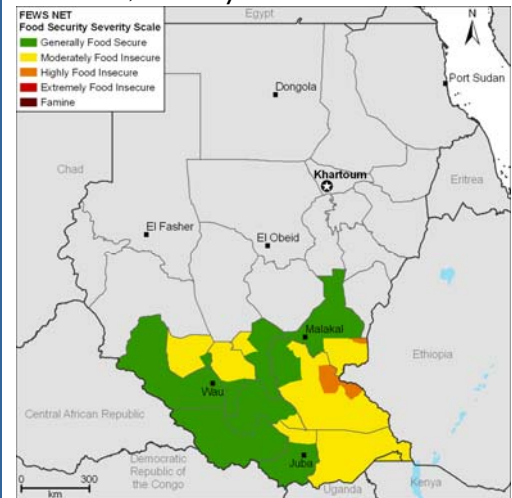
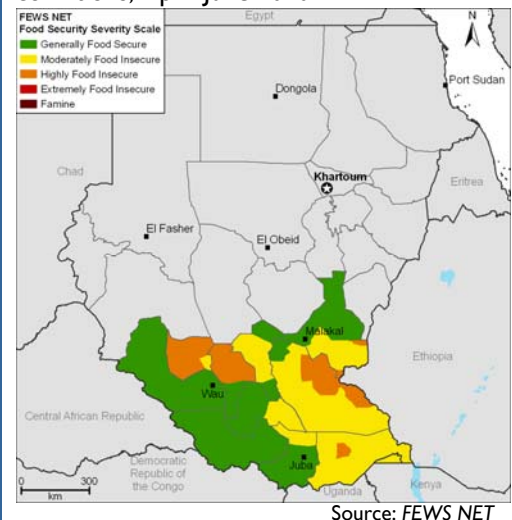


Figure 2. Estimated food security conditions, April–June 2010



For more information on FEWS NET’s Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

This report provides an update to the January 2010 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions through June 2010. The next Outlook report will be released in April and will cover the April to September 2010 period.

conflict and cattle raiding along the Unity/Warrap/ Lakes border could potentially escalate to pre-1999 levels; and 4) food distributions will take place through at least June 2010 based on indications that the food pipeline will remain until that time. The first two assumptions have remained valid since October 2009. Although the fourth assumption, that food distributions will continue through at least June 2010, remains valid, the continued conflicts post a serious threat to food aid delivery, and may compromise the delivery of this food aid.

Food insecurity has persisted in the eastern parts of **Eastern Flood Plain's Jonglei State** since April 2009 due to escalated conflict, which severely affected cultivation last year; poor 2009 crop harvests; and reduced access to fish, wild foods, and potentially milk due to poor pastures. In addition, tensions persist between different ethnic and tribal groups, namely: Nuer (Jikany, Gawaar and Lou), Dinka, and Murle, which could further reduce access to livestock products. The most affected areas include Akobo, Nyirol, Waat, and Walgak. As a result, up to 30 percent of the population remains highly food insecure through June-September. Parts of the Upper Nile State that experienced a poor harvest are beginning to experience food insecurity, which will persist through June.

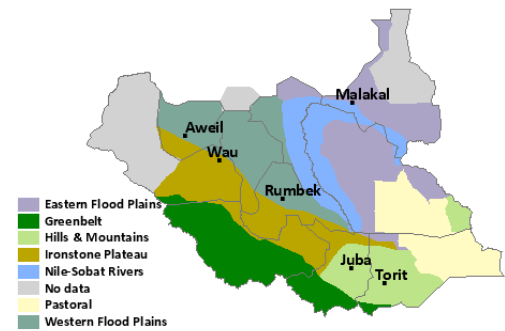
Highland populations in the northern parts of **Western Flood Plains Zone** (Northern Bahr El Gazal and northern parts of Warrap) remain affected by last year's problematic rains in the form of subsequent poor harvests of short-cycle sorghum and groundnuts which have started to run out around this time. This year's food shortages are a combination of erratic rainfall that reduced yields in highlands; low water levels significantly reducing availability and access to fish; and chronic food insecurity. The latest threat is cattle raiding along the Dinka-Nuer border that runs along Unity, Warrap and Lakes State. Latest updates on Warrap indicate that 30,000 cattle have been stolen in the first week of January. These raids mark a return to events similar to the pre-peace period, characterized by cattle looting and displacements that necessitated signing of the historic Wunliet Peace conference in 1998. Generally, poor households in the northern parts of this zone will remain highly food insecure through June-September due to the negative impacts of rains on crops, fish, wild foods, and chronic food insecurity rooted in loss of assets, kinship and productive household members during the 21-year war.

Conditions in the **Nile-Sobat Zone** are generally stable, especially in **Unity State's** northern areas due to last year's reasonable harvests, as confirmed by Norwegian Peoples' Aid (NPA) December harvest assessment. However, anticipated returnees and conflict are increasingly threatening this stability, especially in Abiemnom and Mayom counties where conflict is ongoing between Misseriya nomads from Southern Kordofan and the host population over an arms agreement violation by the nomads. Food insecurity is expected to continue in pockets further south, namely, northern parts of Bor due to the impact of episodic conflict between Lou Nuer and Dinka, and in Awerial, due to conflict with Mundari of neighboring Terekeka County. Recent conflict between the Shilluk and Dinka tribes over land and boundaries that have now displaced 1,000 people and affected another 5,000 people hosting them in Atar and Canal areas means that these populations will continue being food insecure. Latest updates from WFP on Malakal suggest a 30 percent increase in sorghum prices during January-February 2010 because some traders are reluctant to bring in food supplies due to uncertainty over safety during pre-election or immediate post-election conflicts. Election-related conflicts could constrain grain available for purchase and push up prices further.

Food insecurity in **Hills and Mountain's Eastern Equatoria State** has persisted since August 2009 due to an extremely poor harvest crop performance in the single season cropping areas. The single season areas are the most affected by the cumulative negative impact of two consecutive poor seasons (2008 and 2009), namely large parts of Torit and Budi. They are estimated to have received only 30 percent of a typical year's harvest last year. Generally, this is expected to negatively affect 30-50 percent of the population during January – June 2010. In areas like Magwi where the second season slightly improved food security conditions, some pockets are still at risk due to the high number of returnees that have settled in the area. Households displaced by tribal conflict between Mundari and Bari in Central Equatoria will also be food insecure through June and July when the next harvest is expected.

In the southern parts of the **Pastoral (Arid) Zone**, crop failure in select crop-growing areas of Kapoeta County combined with a severe reduction of livestock products, namely milk and ghee, compounded by lack of return of livestock to

Figure 3. Southern Sudan livelihood zones



Source : FEWS NET

homesteads due to poor pasture and water conditions since 2008 increased food insecurity starting in August last year. As a result, demand for grain has increased, resulting in a doubling of livestock sales compared to 2006-2008. Recovery of pasture, water, livestock products and return of cattle to homesteads is not expected until rains become fully established around June. Increased conflict between the Toposa and the Buya in January threatens pasture availability for Toposa livestock. In addition to conflict, similar conditions also affected Pibor County situated further north.

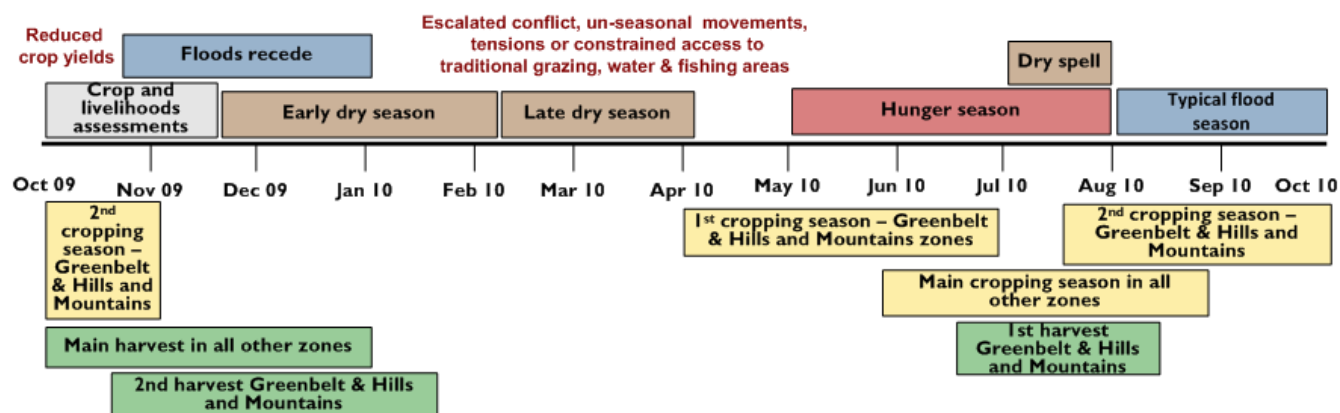
Latest updates from OXFAM Intermon located in **Ironstone Plateau's** Wau County suggest that households received 50-75 percent of the normal long cycle sorghum harvest, which implies that there will be increased reliance on root crops and wild foods such as cassava, wild yams, shea butter, dome palm and honey to supplement the grain shortages which will be most evident around May – June. Any shortages unmet by own sources are likely to be sufficiently met by food aid. However, isolated pockets of food insecurity will persist in Terekeka and Wull/Mvolo areas due to tribal conflict compounded by displacement and poor harvests.

Table 1 lists some of the assumptions for the January- June 2010 outlook and how they have progressed as the dry season advances. Some of the assumptions date back to October – December 2009 and remain valid to date.

Table 1. Review of January – June outlook assumptions

January – June assumptions	Progress of these assumptions to date
Conflict will persist in the eastern half of Southern Sudan, especially between Murle Pastoralists (Pibor) and Nuer of Akobo, Wuror, Diror and Waat Counties).	This assumption has remained valid since October 2009. Insecurity involving cattle raiding has continued into February 2010. Escalated raiding has extended to Bor County, Lakes, Warrap and Unity.
Escalated conflict and cattle raiding along the Unity/Warrap/Lakes border and conflict between Misseriya nomads and their hosts could disrupt stable food security conditions in Unity State.	No assessment based evidence of deteriorating food security conditions attributed to the border/ Misseriya conflicts in Unity but increasing conflict has potential to affect food security if prolonged.
2009 crop harvests might not necessarily mitigate food insecurity in the conflict areas in the Eastern Flood Plains.	This assumption remains valid to date.
Crop harvests in the June-September crop growing areas might run out in February instead of April onwards.	This is consistent with the latest reports on Jonglei and Northern Bahr El Gazal.
A poor second season in select Hills and Mountain areas and potentially limited food imports from Uganda due to reportedly reduced production in parts of Uganda this year.	An improved second season harvest confirmed in Kajokeji and parts of Magwi, implying better food security conditions than assumed. However, single season cropping areas remain food insecure throughout February-June. A Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry/FEWS NET market study mission in Eastern Equatoria during November-December found that markets were well supplied with maize, maize flour, sorghum and beans from Uganda. This is expected to continue as long as security is sustained and food export policy conditions in Uganda do not change.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET