

## SKBN Rainy Season Update

July - November, 2016

***In Central Region, South Kordofan a severe decline in food security is imminent due to: a) failure of rains in August impacting the early harvest of sorghum, b) struggling markets due to SSP hyperinflation, and c) increasing numbers of returnees and IDPs due to the closure of the Yida refugee camp and ongoing displacement caused by pre-rainy season advances made by SAF. Blue Nile also faces declines in humanitarian conditions due to increasing localised conflict with Maban communities hosting refugees.***

- Food insecurity due to ongoing conflict is worsening, with particular declines among IDPs and returnee populations, enclaves in the Western Jebels, and Blue Nile. Already in July 2016, severe food insecurity affected 7%, 25% and 54% of households in Central Region, Western Jebels and Blue Nile respectively.
- In South Kordofan, the October-November harvest of short-maturing sorghum has been compromised by poor rains in August and September.
- Continued SAF occupation of the most productive areas in Central Region, Southern Kordofan continues to limit the local population's ability to produce food.
- An increase in IDPs from newly occupied territories and returnees from Yida is resulting in increased pressure on resources in Central Region.
- Enclaves in the Western Jebels of South Kordofan experienced particularly severe food insecurity during the hungry season, but may see some respite with better rains.
- The loss of value of the SSP is affecting the functionality of markets and the availability of goods throughout the region. The closure of the Ethiopian border had a negative effect in Blue Nile.
- Food insecurity in the Blue Nile for those who remained there is catastrophic, but they may experience some reprieve in the coming months as rains have been better there.
- Ongoing tensions surrounding Maban refugee camp is hindering humanitarian access to Blue Nile
- There have been violations of the ceasefire. In addition, due to ongoing harassment by local militias and raiders, freedom of movement is still severely constrained.

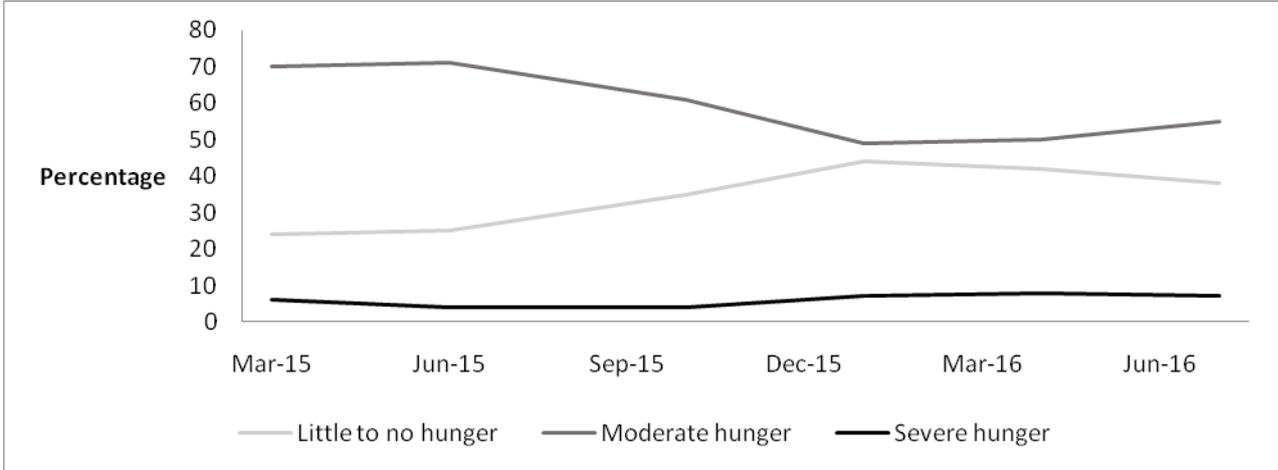
*Please note the quantitative data in this report is extracted from independent food security monitoring by FSMU last published in August. This combined Rainy Season Report seeks to assess trends in quantitative data, complemented by qualitative data collected between July-November to improve our understanding of the humanitarian situation at present.*

- **Food insecurity is worsening with particular declines among IDP and returnee populations and enclaves in South Kordofan.**

According to ongoing food security monitoring in the areas, food insecurity remains pervasive in SPLM-N held areas of Southern Kordofan. Largely due to ongoing war and displacement, severe and moderate food insecurity rates have worsened between April and June 2016 (Figures 1 and 2), with significant differences between resident and IDP/returnee populations. For example in Heiban County, 38 and 7.8 percent IDPs and residents were severely hungry, respectively.

Of note, Um Durain County experienced similar attacks to Heiban. However, having learned from previous attacks, anecdotal information indicates that many ran carrying food stocks or had already placed food stocks in other locations in case of attack. This, in addition to better overall food security (no severe food insecurity) in the County has likely contributed to less difference in the food security status between residents and IDPs, underlining the importance of disseminating local protection strategies.

**Figure 1. Food security trends in Central Region (from Table A3, FSMU July'16)**



- **In South Kordofan, poor rains in August and September have compromised the October-November harvest of short maturing sorghum.**

In both Central and Western Jebel Regions, poor maize production and delayed near-farm harvests meant that households saw little reprieve from the hungry season. To exacerbate existing trends in Central Region, Dallami and Heiban counties, local sources report that “the last rain was on the 30th of July, and we did not receive any rain up to the 20th of September”. Since the July FSMU data collection, poor rainfall in August and September has stunted crop growth, severely compromising the short maturing sorghum harvest in this region. Early harvests may do better slightly better in the Western Jebel Region where rains were better.

- **Continued SAF occupation of the most productive areas in Southern Kordofan is limiting the local population’s ability to produce food.**

As reported in Humanitarian Reports in March 2016, Central Region farmers have had significant limitation in accessing their cultivable land for months as SAF has control of key productive areas of Mardes (Delami), Al Azraq (Heiban) and the area adjacent to Um Serdiba (Um Dorein). Productive pieces of land in the area remain controlled by or in striking range of SAF, putting civilians at high risk during the harvesting period.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harvest of short-maturing varieties is October-November. Harvest of long-maturing varieties is up to January.

- **An increase in IDPs from newly occupied territories and returnees from Yida is resulting in increased pressure on resources.**

The number of IDPs and returnees has increased over 20% from 70 to 86 thousand in Central Region. According to FSMU there are over 103 thousand displaced throughout the two regions.

According to FSMU, 14,434 returnees left the refugee camps in Pariang this August bringing the total number of returnees 27,580. Reporting to Human Rights Monitors, returnees note they have returned to the war torn areas of Southern Kordofan chiefly due to the closure of the Yida Refugee camp and their fear of living in the new Pamir camp. They report they are at risk of being attacked by SPLM-IO<sup>2</sup> and SAF militias operating on the border areas close to the new camps.

As would be expected, IDPs were less likely to plant in Heiban County than residents (66 and 85 percent planted, respectively). IDPs that did not plant (33 percent) noted lack access to land for agricultural activities. Many of the IDPs in Heiban came from more productive areas and were forced onto rocky outcrops by the recent fighting. Having braved insecurity to plant, as mentioned previously, IDPs' small harvest is threatened by poor rainfall in that area. These households are expected to be reliant on sharing with other households until at least August 2017.

- **Enclaves in the Western Jebels of South Kordofan experienced particularly severe food insecurity during the hungry season, but may see some respite with better rains.**

The situation during the hungry season was considerably worse in the Western Jebels. Already as of June, an estimated 27% (55,850 people) were severely food insecure due to the previous season's poor rainfall and failed near-farm harvests. This compares to less than one percent in June 2015 (Figure 2). The situation was not expected to improve until the early harvest in November 2016.

Not surprisingly, displacement during the hungry season increased. According to FSMU surveys, the main reasons for displacement in the Western Jebel Region included:

- searching for food (over 60 percent),
- looking for farmland and work (over 50 percent each), and
- seeking pasture and grazing for livestock (30 percent).

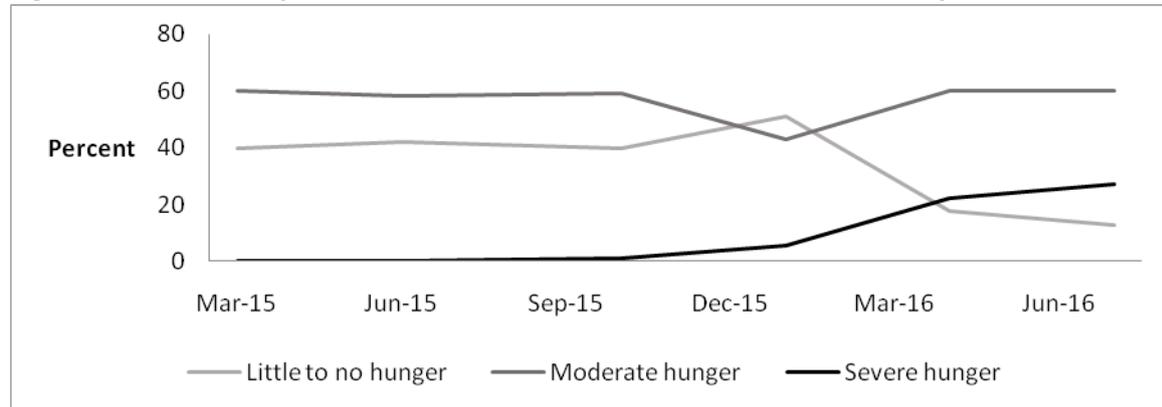
Ground fighting and cattle rustling between small groups continued through July over access to fodder and water. FSMU reported that community-level insecurity was also high, with 85 and 75 percent of households reporting harassment and theft, respectively.

Despite receiving relatively better rains than Central Region, according to FSMU, in the Western Jebels less than 50 percent of households planted short duration sorghum varieties primarily limited by a lack of seeds for planting. Dilling, Lagawa and Habila will likely have the least production.

---

<sup>2</sup> South Sudanese In Opposition forces

**Figure 2: Food security trends in Western Jebels (from Table A4, FSMU July'16)**



- **Food insecurity in the Blue Nile for those who remained inside is catastrophic, but they may experience some reprieve in the coming months as rains have been better there.**

The food security situation in Blue Nile has also deteriorated from April to July 2016, with the total number of severely food insecure increasing from 30,150 in April to 38,845 in July. Currently 54% (40,086 people) of the population is severely food insecure and in immediate need of assistance. Households are driven to dangerous activities to earn money in order to buy food. For example, CU monitors report in Oss Village east-north Yabus Kbori Gold mine, a woman (35 years) and a boy (20 years) lost their lives while they were digging for gold. The woman left 6 children behind.

The situation may have improved, however. Blue Nile benefitted from relatively good rains according to CU monitors. FSMU reported that long duration sorghum varieties were reportedly progressing well and on track for abundant harvests, in the absence of flooding or crop pests. Harvests for near farms produced good quantities of short duration sorghum, beans, pumpkins, groundnuts. This had a lesser effect on food security in Wadaka Payam where people depend on pastoral livelihoods and who were affected by insecurity. Long duration sorghum was growing well at the time of report writing. But, according to CU monitors there are some reports of insect infestation such as black and red ant in addition to flies for those plants which cultivated early.

Anecdotal reports indicate that 9,000 people in the Koma Ganza Region and 26,000 people in Geissan and the Ingessena Hills were still in need. However CU monitors have been unable to reach these areas to confirm. Reports included widespread consumption of seed stocks in July (53 percent of households). This was most common in Chali Payam (three-quarters of households). This practice is a coping strategy with long term consequences, as it reduces the available seed stocks for planting in the next agricultural season. In Wadaka Payam, approximately 40 percent of the households who did not plant were unable to do so because of a lack of seeds (Table 1).

**Table 1: BN Season Progress (CU monitor reports, November 2016)**

Payam	Boma/Village	Area cultivate by individual	Type of crop Cultivated	Type of Pests Affecting Crops	Percentage Report of Success
Yabus	Eshkab, Dogabeli	2-3 Feddan	Sorghum, Sim Sim, Groundnut, Okra, Maize, Beans	Birds, Green Locust, red insect	80% except the maize which failed due to lack of rain from the beginning of plantation
Yabus	Oss, Moguf, YabusGabah	3-4 Fadden for individual	Sorghum, Maize, Sim Sim, Groundnut, beans	Mealfate, Locust Red insect	75%
Chali Alfil Payam	ChaliAlfil	2-3 Fadden	Sorghum, Mazie, Pumkin, Sim Sim, beans	Mealfate, red aunt, Birds, Locust, flies affected the long duration sorghum	70%
Wadaka Payam	Sammari, Mayak, Tunfona	2-3 Fadden	Sorghum, Maize, Sim Sim	Mealfate, red aunt, Locust	60%

- **Hyperinflation of the SSP is detrimentally affecting markets function and the availability of goods. The closure of the Ethiopian border had a negative effect in Blue Nile.**

The SSP has seen severe hyperinflation since June, with the exchange rate per dollar dropping from 45 to 82 SSP at the publication of this report (November 2016). If households were fortunate enough to have savings, the decline in SSP value means their value halved over the period, affecting purchasing capacity for food in the hungry season, education or clothing. CU monitors report that key markets in Central Southern Kordofan have been unusually empty as traders are absent, likely due to the devaluation of the SSP.

Blue Nile markets have also been detrimentally affected by the closure of the Ethiopian border. Blue Nile depends on traders from Ethiopia to Yabus, Bala and, and Moguf markets which supply Balila and Mayak markets with food items. In August and September, the border between Ethiopia and Sudan was closed by authorities, leading local communities to rely on smuggling for consumption of essential food commodities. In addition to border closure, rivers and roads leading to those markets from Moguf and Maban have been impassable, hampering the movement of traders and further compounding currency and goods shortages.

In Wadaka Payam of Blue Nile, households have reportedly withdrawn from crop sales and petty trade as a result of both the falling value of the SSP and reduced movement of traders into the area because of insecurity. This is particularly worrying as FSMU reported in July that already more than a third of Blue Nile households were reporting no source of income.

- **Ongoing tensions surrounding Maban refugee camp is hindering humanitarian access to Blue Nile**

In June 2016, hostilities between the refugee community in Maban Refugee Camp and the Maban host community resulted in the temporary displacement of a reported 7,000 refugees. UNHCR and refugees leaders managed to resolve the problems within Doro camp through peace committees from both sides. As of November, all displaced persons are reported to have returned to the camp, but ongoing tension between host and refugee populations in this area has limited the movement of traders into the State. Roads from Maban to Yabus have been effectively closed due to the conflict started between Mabanese and Udok tribes in Doro Local authorities. As the main route, travel times to Yabus are normally 3 hours. The alternative road is 6 hours of travel with good road conditions.

- **There have been violations of the ceasefire. In addition, due to ongoing harassment by local militias and raiders, freedom of movement is still severely constrained.**

On October 16<sup>th</sup> in direct violation of the ceasefire, shelling in several areas near Kadugli town resulted in a 4 year-old child wounded.<sup>3</sup> According to CU monitors, forces associated with the Government of Sudan continued to pursue and threaten civilians. There have been documented incidents of militias stealing food stocks and other items from households close to front lines.

According to FSMU, harassment by passing raiders continued to affect nearly a fifth of households in Um Durain County (23-49% and 11-37% percent of households in key Central Region counties experiencing harassment and threats, respectively). This has meant that the ceasefire period has not resulted in stability and Southern Kordofan residents have not been able to cross front lines or cultivate near them.

#### **IDPs in SAF-Occupied areas of South Kordofan in dire conditions**

An interagency assessment of IDP's<sup>4</sup> in SAF-occupied areas of South Kordofan indicates that IDPs, whom began arriving in 2014, have experienced multiple periods of displacement since then. The population of largely women and children remain without access to humanitarian aid, "huddled" in isolated IDP camps, reportedly eating one meal per day. Acute malnutrition is at emergency levels. For example a MUAC survey in Higeer IDP settlement measured 16% global acute malnutrition of which 7% is severe (>15% GAM and/or >5% SAM is considered a humanitarian emergency according to the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)).

<sup>3</sup><https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/4-year-old-child-injured-shelling-near-south-kordofan-capital>

<sup>4</sup> Inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessment Report: Abu Kershola, South Kordofan, 16 – 21 Oct. 2016. [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/system/files/documents/files/201610\\_-\\_assessment\\_report\\_-\\_south\\_kordofan\\_-\\_abu\\_kershola\\_0.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/system/files/documents/files/201610_-_assessment_report_-_south_kordofan_-_abu_kershola_0.pdf)