

SKBN COORDINATION UNIT HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

February 2018

- Clashes in Blue Nile between the two SPLM-N factions. Reports have been received of clashes on 17, 22 and 29 February with displacement of at least 500 households.
- A substantial food gap is predicted in the Two Areas with projections for the coming lean season suggesting food stock will only last through April in South Kordofan and through March in Blue Nile.
- Food commodity prices shot up in WJ, SK
- Access to clean drinking water remains a huge challenge in Blue Nile, especially in the areas of Komo Ganza and western parts of Wadaka.

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

South Kordofan

The Food Security Monitoring Unit (FSMU) January 2018 household survey results indicate that severe food insecurity declined across the monitored areas from October to January as main season crops were harvested. Over the same period, however, key informants continued to report localized crop shortfalls and estimated that many households will be unable to feed themselves through the lean season.¹ With the following early harvest beginning in August, this will create at least a 3-month food gap.

Of most concern is the comparatively deficient agricultural performance of Heiban county, with the most dense concentration of IDPs in the area who often lack access to any kind of harvest. The Coordination Unit (CU) has verified substantial amounts of crop failure in this area due to poor climactic conditions and higher rates of fungal and insect-related crop damages, though specific harvest figures are not yet fully known. With the crops in this region performing comparatively more poorly, it is likely that the normal community support to the IDPs will be insufficient. More analysis is needed on this community and what prospects they face in 2018.

From the perspective of crop storage, the 2017 harvest appears to have surpassed the poor 2015 and 2016 seasons. By its end this January, 61 percent of households had at least some food stocks compared with 52 percent last year, mostly due to gains in the Central Region. Overall, the ability of households in the Western Jebel Region to build stocks was about the same as last year, though with marked variation by county. Key informants, however, continued to report that the 2017 harvest fell below previous years in some places due to

¹ January 2018 FSMU Brief: Household Hunger Scale Accessed at <https://fsmu.org/reports/>

rainfall anomalies and the impact of local conflicts on farm access throughout the growing season. Looking ahead through the end of the lean season in August, even though the 2017 harvest presented a stronger showing than the 2015 and 2016 seasons, stocks still fall far short of needs in all three monitored areas.²

CU monitors report that in the Western Jebels area basic food commodities are still available, but prices have gone up two to three times for key food items and fuel.

Blue Nile

Blue Nile faces numerous challenges to food security in 2018. The conflict, which spanned the region and displaced thousands, will certainly lead to poor food security in the coming lean season. Due to the conflict in May to August 2017 a very important time for cultivation was missed, followed by flooding in August which impacted near and far farms. The recent round of clashes in February lead to another, ongoing round of displacement and triggered the disappearance of some food commodities from weekly markets, as the ability of traders from different directions to bring commodities was greatly diminished.

In Doro camp, the UNHCR protection team received 231 individuals (85 households) as new arrivals from Blue Nile State. The displacement was linked to reports of armed clashes between Uduk and Ingassana SPLA-N forces in Jafar Dida, approximately 10-15km north of Doro camp.³ This is most likely the approximate 100 HH reported through the CU mechanism to have fled from Chali Alfil payam.

In Doro refugee camp, UNHCR screened 222 individuals (men, women and children) pending registration. They fled from Belatuma village⁴ in Sudan's Blue Nile region.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

South Kordofan

There were no major disease outbreaks reported in South Kordofan by the local Secretariat of Health in the month of February. However, access to healthcare remains a serious challenge for the population. Access to trained medical staff is significantly limited for most of the population and more medical capacity is sorely needed to address the needs of nearly a million people in the region.

Pediatric care, in particular, is substantially lacking throughout the region. As reported in August of 2017, access to basic pediatric medicines or Nutrition commodity was only 22% for the Central Region and 0% for the Western Jebels area. The CU has found no evidence of any changes to these metrics over the last 6 months and anticipates the child population still faces substantial disadvantages in its access to health care.

² FSMU January 2018 Brief: Household Food Stocks Accessed at <https://fsmu.org/reports/>

³ UNHCR SSD Operational Update No 04 - 16-28 February 2018.pdf

Blue Nile

There are mixed reports this month on the functioning of health clinics in Blue Nile, but reports suggest that more than 21 are functioning, with a report from the Secretary of Health of a leprosy outbreak in the Komo Ganza area. Komo Ganza and Wadaka payams, cut off during rainy season, still report a shortage of drugs. Access to drugs and qualified clinicians remains the main reason reported by clinics for not being able to see patients. Tribal tensions along the Sudan-South Sudan border make it difficult for more serious cases to access the only regional hospital, in the Maban refugee camps, which has reported an increase of cases after the recent clashes.

ANIMAL HEALTH

South Kordofan and Blue Nile

Reports from CU monitors suggest there are no major breakouts of disease or other new livestock issues in this period in the Two Areas. Typically, October through March are the best months for grazing animals, a trend that does not seem to have been disrupted this year. No quantitative assessment of the impact of the conflict on livestock has been undertaken to date, so it is unknown how much this important livelihood has been affected. There is no known assistance in terms of animal health delivered in Blue Nile while in Southern Kordofan it is limited to a few small-scale interventions. This will put herds at elevated risk of disease and death in the coming rainy season.

WASH

South Kordofan

The population continues to move to reliance on shallow hand-dug wells for water as the dry season continues. These sources are often shared by humans and animals and are at a high risk of contamination. In some areas of Dilling County in Western Jebels, there is currently no ground water, with most of the boreholes in need of repair. Due to a lack of infrastructure and supplies, water-borne illness still threatens communities without sufficient access to healthcare. More boreholes or treated water distribution centers are badly needed.

Blue Nile

Access to clean drinking water remains a huge challenge in Blue Nile, especially in the areas of Komo Ganza and western parts of Wadaka. The areas of Komo Ganza do not have any reported functioning boreholes while the recent clashes led to higher stress on water sources elsewhere.

EDUCATION

South Kordofan

Education generally is progressing as normal with most schools currently functioning, though at greatly reduced capacity. There remains little support to this important sector and classes often take place without the support of trained teachers, sufficient school supplies or classroom buildings.

There are families with 5 to 10 children in school and each child's school fees amount to around 2,500 SSP, in addition to other school-related requirements. Given that families depend highly on agricultural production for their economic well-being, the less than adequate output of the last agricultural season means most of the pupils will remain out of the schools as their families are unable to meet the schools' financial requirements.

Blue Nile

Education in the Blue Nile continues to be severely compromised due to insecurity, lack of resources and the endurance of the humanitarian crisis. Schools were reported to have been closed in Wadaka due to the insecurity in the area brought about on by the clashes reported in February. Primary schools are reported to be open in Chali Alfil and Yabus, but not all are functioning.

PROTECTION AND SECURITY SITUATION

South Kordofan

Relative calm continues in Southern Kordofan. A few cases of cattle raiding were reported, which are seen as related to typical southwards dry season movements by nomads. All counties reported that farmers and cattle herders have access to their farms.

Blue Nile

The tensions reported in the January Humanitarian Update between the two SPLM-N factions did result in ground fighting on 17th February in the areas of Tunfona, Marmaton, Goz Bagar, Aljamamat and Alfug. People were displaced again and fled to areas south⁴ with reports coming in of new registrations in Doro refugee camps (see also section under Food Security and Agriculture). There is currently a joint assessment underway with initial figures reported of up to 500 households displaced. The situation is described as dire with houses burnt, property looted and little to no access to food, water, shelter and health services.

This insecurity will affect thousands of IDPs who depend on Baliala and Mayak weekly markets, with traders providing essential commodities from Maban and Moguf. This conflict is also reported to have blocked refugees' movements from Maban to Wadaka, particularly those who work in gold mines in Balila.

As reported in January, no high-level mediation has yet taken place and there are very few ongoing grassroots initiatives. Urgent efforts are needed to bring a permanent end to this conflict and to ensure safe access of humanitarian assistance to all areas.

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⁴ Names of actual areas withheld