

# SKBN COORDINATION UNIT

# HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

March 2018

- The 2017 harvest, although better than last year, has not improved overall food security in the conflict areas.
- Joint assessment in March to Wadaka Payam, Blue Nile, revealed displaced people rely on roots to survive and lack basic services.

## FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

The Food Security Monitoring Unit reports that “with the harvest nearly complete and severe food insecurity reaching record lows, households have been able to restock food supplies. It is noteworthy that only a small percentage of households have food stocks sufficient to last four months or more to May, far short of the end of the lean season in August. Looking ahead through the end of the lean season, even though the 2017 harvest was stronger than the poor harvests of 2015 and 2016, stocks still fall far short of needs in all three monitored areas. It is likely that as households deplete food stocks and sorghum prices rise in the

coming months, food insecurity will begin to climb again”<sup>1</sup>

The Food for Peace (FFP) fact sheet of USAID for Sudan (4 April 2018) reports that food security among IDPs in opposition-controlled areas of South Kordofan is expected to deteriorate from Crisis (IPC 3) to Emergency (IPC 4) levels between June and September. That can result in high acute malnutrition and excess mortality.

As a matter of fact, food shortage in South Kordofan is one of the main drivers for the displacement of people to the refugee camps in South Sudan. In the Yida refugee settlement, UNHCR reported 1,269 new arrivals (684 women, 585 men), in its South Sudan Update 1-15 March, which represents a 132% increase against the same period last year when 545 new arrivals were registered.

The two main reasons from interviews with new arrivals are said to be severe food insecurity in Nuba and an increase in schooling fees that prompt families to send their children to benefit from education opportunities in the Ajuong Thok and Pamir refugee camps in northern Unity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Quarterly Report March 2018 accessed at <https://fsmu.org/reports/>

CU monitors report that these new arrivals are mainly coming from Western Kadugli, part of Thobo and Umdorrein County.

### South Kordofan

The Food Security Monitoring Unit reports that “in the Central Region, severe food insecurity rates hit record lows as a result of a harvest stronger than the two preceding years”.<sup>2</sup>

The heavy rains in 2017 washed away farms in the valley areas and eroded farms in the hilly areas, compromising soil fertility in already over-cultivated land. Many traditional farmers were unable to cultivate due to insecurity and flood-related difficulties in the heavy black cotton soil. Most who managed to cultivate planted only limited areas. The above factors were compounded by pest infestation in some counties, especially Thobo and Western Kadugli, further reducing production both in traditional and mechanized farming.

FSMU Reports that “food insecurity in the Western Jebel Region did not change between October and January 2018 even though the 2017 harvest was better than the previous two years. Localized shortfalls resulted in an uneven accumulation of food stocks between counties. Although sorghum prices are within the usual range for this time of year, the increase from December to January suggests a concern about availability as prices should

Activity / Month	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Field Preparation												
Planting												
Harvest (near farm)				Extended Lean Season- 2018			Historic Lean Season					
Harvest (far farm)												

decrease at this time of year. Households indicated their food stock levels will fall short of the end of the lean season. With the recent uptick in prices, it is likely prices will continue to climb in the coming months”.<sup>3</sup>

### Blue Nile

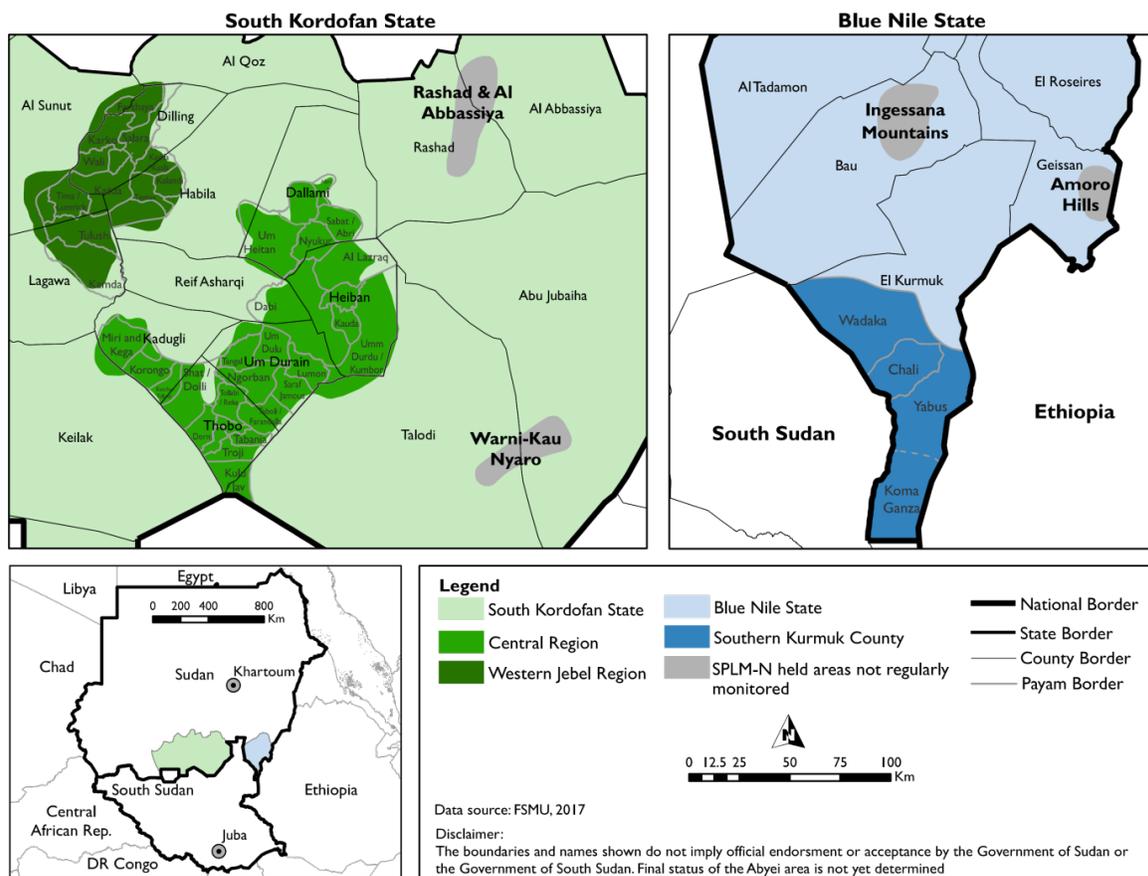
Traditionally in Blue Nile, the lean season starts in June until July, while in August people should start consuming the near farms harvest. Similar to South Kordofan, however, the lean season will start soon for a significant amount of people, as food stocks are almost exhausted. Moreover, staple grains’ prices and availability are not steady between the four functioning weekly markets in Blue Nile. Maize was only available in one market in March and wheat in none. The price for sorghum, the most important staple in the area, increased at three of

<sup>2</sup> Quarterly Report March 2018 accessed at <https://fsmu.org/reports/>

<sup>3</sup> Quarterly Report March 2018 accessed at <https://fsmu.org/reports/>

the four markets while sim-sim was still available in three of the four weekly markets at an increased price to February, reducing peoples' ability to purchase it. This is perceived to be because of a border closure between Sudan and Ethiopia due to conflict in the neighboring country.

With the planting season ahead, land is being prepared in the three payams awaiting regular rain. While three rounds of heavy rains were reported in the last week of March, it's not enough to start planting. Moreover, there is a lack of variety seeds for this season like short and long-term sorghum, sim-sim, lobia, groundnuts, and vegetables seeds, that is affecting people's diets while markets are poorly functioning and livelihood opportunities are limited.



## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

### South Kordofan

There were no major disease outbreaks reported by the local Secretariat of Health in this period. After reports of two child deaths early March suspected to be due to meningitis, no further cases were reported. However, access to healthcare remains a serious challenge for the population.

In March an HIV/AIDS campaign was organized by the Secretariat of Health in coordination with all the health actors targeting youth and schools in all counties.

In support of the two functional clinics and fifteen health units, the one existing rural hospital in the Western Jebels for an estimated population of 300,000 started a mobile clinic to go into villages with no access to basic health services.

### Blue Nile

The health situation in Blue Nile is particularly critical. The number of functioning clinics is reported to be 4 in Wadaka Payam, 7 in Chali Alfil Payam, and 9 in Yabus Payam. However, there is a lack of medicines and trained staff. More so, there is no referral system for bringing patients out to Maban where the only regional hospital exists.

Lately, with the influx of IDPs into Wadaka Payam after the February clashes, there is further stress on the health facilities in this area.

The Koma Ganza communities in Eshkab, Dogabile, Gosha and Dering are cut off from health services when the Yabus River floods during rainy season. The Secretary of Health reported an estimated 15 cases of leprosy in Komo Ganza recently.

## **ANIMAL HEALTH**

### South Kordofan and Blue Nile

Reports from CU monitors suggest there are no major outbreaks of disease or other new issues in this period. Over 4,000 heads of livestock were treated by the Secretariat of Animal Health in various counties in the central region with support of a local partner, while the treatment in the Western Jebel region is ongoing. Dilling County in the Western Jebels is currently experiencing a shortage of water which leads to inevitable sharing of water sources.

## **WASH**

### South Kordofan

Water problems are reported in all the counties. Water in the rivers and the shallow hand-dug wells is drying up which forces animals and people to share the same water sources. Hand pumps are reported to break more

frequently in the dry season due to increased use, with 599 broken hand pumps recorded. Umdorein and Dilling County are especially affected, with high livestock populations and minimal water sources.

The water committee in the region reports that 120 or more hand pumps are needed.

### Blue Nile

Reports of nine boreholes damaged during recent clashes in February that is further stretching the limited water resources in the area.

## EDUCATION

### South Kordofan

Most of the 250 registered schools are functioning, but at greatly reduced capacity. With only limited support to schools in the Central Region, in the Western Jebels the local communities and parent teacher associations (PTAs) take the lead on mobilizing support, building and managing schools. While schools are inadequately supported with materials, a successful chalk making project by a local initiative was reported in early 2018 in the Central Region.

### Blue Nile

Conflict and insecurity in 2017 prevented students from sitting for exams. It also led to a decline in the number of students enrolling in 2018, as is shown in the table below for the three payams (Wadaka, Chali Alfil and Yabus Payams) and for the isolated areas in Zozok (Keli Payam) and Amora in Gessian County. According to the Secretariat of Education, the major needs identified in this sector are better trained teachers, more text books and school materials, and increased student attendance.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Nr of students 2018</u>	<u>Nr of students 2017</u>
<u>Yabus Payam</u>	4139	6222
<u>Wadaka Payam</u>	2053	2027
<u>Chali Alfil Payam</u>	4099	2915
<u>Isolated area (Zozok &amp; Amora)</u>	3936	5161
<b>Total</b>	<b>14227</b>	<b>16325</b>



*Figure 1 A primary school classroom in Gessis*

**The Coordination Unit commissioned an Education Assessment for South Kordofan in 2017 and the final report will be available for distribution in April 2018. Please contact the CU for a copy.**

## **PROTECTION AND SECURITY SITUATION**

The president of Sudan extended the unilateral cease-fire declared in the operations areas for another three months, until June 30, 2018. The SPLM-N unilateral ceasefire is holding until end of May 2018.

### South Kordofan

Relative calm continues in Southern Kordofan despite some reports of looting that created tension in the area, as briefly described here 2<sup>nd</sup> March: Meri Payam in Western Kadugli County, 87 heads of cattle looted allegedly by militias and taken to Karasana. 18<sup>th</sup> March: Umdurdu Payam in Heiban County, 20 heads of cattle looted, and a 30-year-old man was injured allegedly by militias. An incident was also reported in Dabi Payam in Heiban County, with 11 houses burnt down.

### Blue Nile

Following internal SPLA-N clashes in February, Malik Agar announced a unilateral cessation of hostilities in Blue Nile State on March 3<sup>rd</sup> with the rival faction led by Abdel Aziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N Hilu). Security is reported to be calm since then and free movement of IDPs are reported. The large numbers of displaced after these clashes in February remains in need of protection, humanitarian aid and food assistance.

The areas affected by clashes in February were Tanfona, Alsama-Aradeba, Marmaton, Goz-Bagar, Goz-Aljamamat, Patig, Goz Adam Abdulati, Goz-Arab, Goz-Kordalla, Sharsharo and Tokush. A joint assessment conducted in mid-March by the SRRA, CU and most partners, revealed that over 12,000 people are displaced by the fighting. Most IDPs have resettled in Gesis, Wadaka- Aljebel, Jebel-Lebo, Jebel-Jero, Goz-Abu-rassin, Balila-centre and Sammari. The nearest functional markets are Balila and Mayak; approximately 2 hours walking distance.

Despite the relative calm in the past month, the security situation in Blue Nile is extremely precarious and that affects access and therefore also partners' operational planning for 2018. Urgent efforts are needed to bring a permanent end to this conflict and to ensure safe access of humanitarian assistance to all areas in Blue Nile in 2018.

\*\*