

SKBN Coordination Unit

Humanitarian Update

July 2020



A woman reading a COVID-19 poster in Kauda, South Kordofan (June 2020)

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Household food stocks remain low

Blue Nile

Harvesting of crops including fresh maize, lemons, chilies, cucumber and okra on Jibraka (near farms) continues and short-term sorghum, beans, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, yams and cassava will be harvested soon, and the cultivation of faraway farms also commenced. While it was reported that pests, such as millipedes and birds, affected crops mainly in Komo Ganza farmers have no pesticides to control pests.

Food security is moderate across Blue Nile except for Deran, Gondolo, Ishkab, Hilajadit and Madit villages in Komo Ganza Payam compared to the same time last year. This is due to depleted food stock levels and few households can afford to buy food from the markets. As such, communities especially those in Hilla Jadid, Ishkab and Kafe villages, depended on wild yams, locally known as amjongo, wild vegetables and bamboo roots. The area has registered a dramatic increase in food consumption gaps compared to the same time last year.

A successful seed distribution was conducted in Chali, Komo Ganza and Yabus payams with the exception of Wadaka, which could not be reached due to inaccessible roads as a result of the rainy season. As a result, only **50 per cent of 10,565** households previously targeted were catered for.

Food items were scarce due to partial functionality of markets as a result of COVID-19 containment measures coupled with inaccessible roads especially in Wadaka payam. This resulted into high prices for the available food items from cross-borders of Ethiopia and South Sudan. For instance, in Balila Market the price of beans rose from 1000 SSP in June to 1500 SSP in July and in Mayak market, salt rose from 200 SSP to 400 SSP. Sorghum, a staple food item, was scarce in the monitored markets. This is worrisome because few households have food stocks left. Which is likely to increase hunger levels in the region.

Highlights

COVID-19: Awareness remains low across the region

Markets remain partially functional leading to increased food prices

Food distribution takes place in Chali, Koma Ganza and Yabus Payams

Primary 8 and Senior 4 candidate classes resume lessons

New clashes in Kadugli and Habila Counties lead to more displacements

Animal prices in Wadaka markets of Balila and Mayak doubled, for instance, the price of a goat rose from 15,000 SSP to 25,000 SSP in July compared to the same time last year. The increase in prices of livestock was due to the absence of Fellata nomads who had migrated northwards. Coffee and onions were not available in the four monitored markets Balila, Mayak, Moguf and Yubus Bala. Fuel shortages were experienced in Mayak and Balila markets, resulting into higher prices. For instance, in a litre rose from 700 SSP to 1000 SSP.

South Kordofan

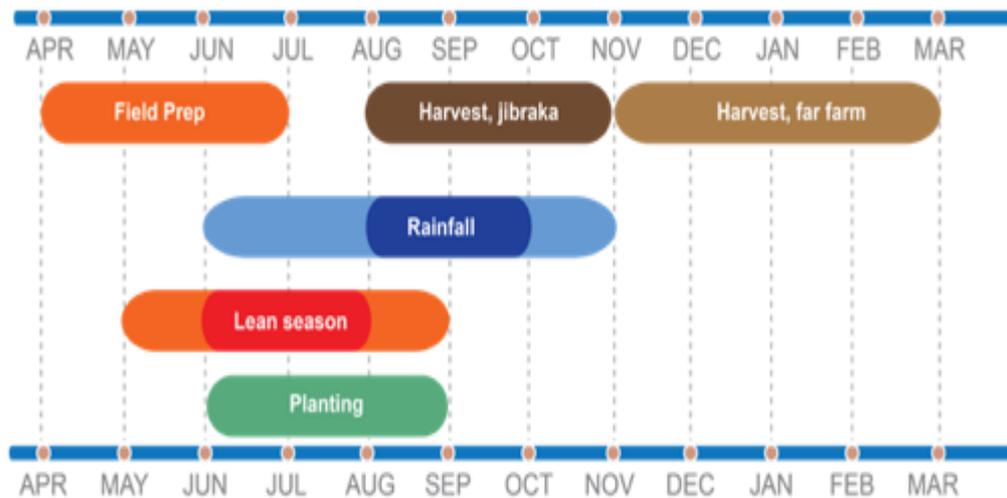
Poor rainfall distribution affected crop production in Hieban, Dallami, Um Durain and Western Kadugli counties, forcing farmers to replant their crops. In Thobo county, rainfall distribution was even and farmers continued to weed their crops. As earlier reported in June, most households have run out of food stocks as prices of food commodities continue to rise due to COVID-19 related restrictions, making it a challenge for the most vulnerable and low-income households to afford food items from local markets.

In addition, continued clashes in Kadugli have led to a large influx of IDPs – over 45 households, into Um Durain and Thobo, which increased the demand for food, hence high prices of essential commodities. This was witnessed in Delami, Heiban and Um Durain.

Western Jebel

Planting of sorghum, maize, groundnuts and sim sim on the faraway farms continues across Western Jebel. To improve food security, the Secretariat of Agriculture identified two extensive farms in Lagawa and Dilling Counties to grow more food. However, support in terms of tractors and seeds is needed to support local authorities in this initiative.

Over 80% households are food insecure and depended on the markets as an alternative source of food. Increasing displacements due to clashes in Lagawa and Habila and a high inflation rate that pushed food prices up, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, are the main causes of the food insecurity across the region. COVID-19-related measures significantly decreased commodity movement, market function and cross-line trade while compromising livelihoods, daily labor opportunities and reducing families purchasing power and food access for the vulnerable population. Prices of basic commodities were higher than the same time last year. Sorghum was unavailable in most markets of Western Jebel and the price of soap continues to rise due to its demand as a result of COVID-19. For instance, in July a piece of soap rose to 25 SDG from 23 SDG in June.



Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and Blue Nile

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Awareness still low despite continued preparedness

Although there are no official COVID-19 figures in the monitored areas under the SPLM-N control, local authorities have stepped up measures to contain the spread of the virus across the region: Awareness and messaging are ongoing, and printing of more IEC materials has been initiated, hand washing stations have been established at points of entry into the Two Areas, isolation centers have been established, and 14 days quarantine of new arrivals is being implemented. Despite the increase in risk communication and messaging, awareness of the pandemic across the region remains low.

NEEDS:

- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a large wider coverage;
- Furniture and equipment in planned isolation centers throughout the region;
- Soap, hand washing facilities and increased water supply in crowded settings;
- Strengthening of screening and quarantine facilities at points of entry especially in Blue Nile;
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves
- Improving food availability and temporary shelters for new arrivals quarantined at points of entry
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness and transportation of humanitarian supplies;
- Improvement and scaling up of isolation centers especially in Western Jebel and Blue Nile.

GAPS:

- Delay of medical supplies across the Two Areas due to COVID-19 restriction measures and poor road network due to the rainy season;
- Low levels of stock of medicines and medical supplies in the SPLM-N controlled areas;

- Funding in health and WASH sector at points of entry;

EDUCATION

Candidate classes resume lessons

Primary Eight and Senior Four candidate classes resumed lessons, in preparation for the final South Sudan National Examinations. However, the education sector in the Two Areas faces lack of trained teachers, school supplies and learning materials, feeding and teacher incentives.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Lack of essential drugs to meet the demand

Blue Nile

Across the region, clinics lack essential medicines due to funding gaps. This is challenging for the clinics to respond to the high demand for services. For instance, 453 cases of malaria were reported in Yabus Kubri and facilities do not have the capacity to handle such numbers. Communities don't have medical services within two hours of their home, so they must travel for two to six hours to access medical care.

South Kordofan

According to the Secretariat of Health, malaria, diarrhea, coughing and STDs have been registered across South Kordofan. The increase in malaria cases is due to the onset of the rains. Some clinical facilities have been equipped with drugs, however, these are not enough to meet the high demand exacerbated by the influx of returnees, IDPs and people coming from government-controlled areas who find services in SPLM-N controlled areas affordable.

Western Jebels

The Secretariat of Health registered diseases like malaria and skin infections mainly in children. Clinics have reported lack of drugs.

No immunization exercise has taken place since last year due to funding gaps.

WASH

Increased risk of waterborne diseases in the rainy season

Blue Nile

Most families do not have access to clean drinking water. Some of the hand-dug wells, especially in Soda in Chali Payam, have collapsed due to the rainy season. While some boreholes were repaired in Beeh by locally trained technicians, they are not enough to meet the demand for clean drinking water. More boreholes are needed in Damo, Dereng, Madid and Ishkab in Komo Ganza and Belatuma in Yabus. Also, the population lacks access to basic sanitation and practices open defecation, which could lead to spread of diseases such as typhoid and diarrhea during the rainy season.

South Kordofan

Water availability increased with the onset of the rains, which has eased the pressure on the limited number of water points. Some broken boreholes were repaired in Kauda and Gidel Heiban county to aid accessibility to clean safe drinking water. However, broken boreholes in counties like Dallami and Thobo need urgent repair and the construction of latrines to promote hygiene and sanitation continues in villages where households practice open defecation.

Western Jebel

The Secretariat of Water and Engineering plans to improve water points for communities especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Limited access to veterinary medicine

Blue Nile

Animal deaths were reported in Wadaka payam. This has affected these communities who depend on livestock as their source of income. Cough, pneumonia and hoof fungal diseases were the most common diseases in July. Poor animal health resulted into poor quality of meat and milk. The situation is likely to worsen due to the rainy season exacerbated by the lack of vaccination for livestock since last year due to funding gaps. Also, closure of markets due to COVID-19 has affected supply of drugs in markets as an alternative for those households which could afford.

South Kordofan

Lack of veterinary drugs due to lack of funding is exacerbated by the closure of markets, (another source of veterinary medicine) due to COVID-19 containment measures. In Thobo county, for example, skin rash in livestock has been reported. There is urgent need in this sector especially in the rainy season which results into more disease which are a major threat to livestock.

Western Jebel

Cattle raiding is on the increase in recent months. This has made it difficult for livestock to walk long distances in search of pasture and water.

PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY***Displacements in South Kordofan and Western Jebel continued*****Blue Nile**

As usual, there is an influx of returnees from Maban, South Sudan for cultivation purposes. However, these movements have been affected by COVID-19 containment measures that require they must quarantine for 14 days at the points of entry.

30 returnees from Ethiopian camps of Benashangul, Gumuz, Gure shambolo, Tongo, Tsore and Sherkolle, were registered at Yabus Bala check point and quarantined for two weeks. They are in dire need of emergency shelters, food, urgent need for drinking water and latrines.

1500 and 250 returnees were registered in Wadaka and Yabus payams respectively. Their main reason of coming back is to work in the gold mines.

South Kordofan

18 July: Two farmers were reportedly killed, and their cattle raided in Dallami Payam. These incidents have created fear among farmers, who are now afraid to attend to their faraway farms.

9 July: 29 people were killed, property destroyed, and unknown numbers of livestock looted following a recent escalation in violence between Angolo and Shatt communities. Families have been displaced to neighboring Damam, Dorni and Tulabi.

Around 283,000 including women and children were registered in Kadugli following clashes in Rashad. The distribution of NFIs is ongoing, but it is not enough to meet the demand. More intervention is needed for both IDPs, returnees and host communities.

Western Jebel

10 July: In Lagawa county, 4 children were reportedly killed and one wounded by the Missiriya from Al-bataya.

560 returnees were registered in Dilling while 424 were registered in Lagawa from different parts of Sudan. Please note that some of them have left their family members behind. As assessed by the local authorities, these returnees are urgently in need of food, shelter, seeds, farming tools and mosquito nets.

The SKBN CU reports security incidents according to the information received from a variety of sources. This information does not include a comprehensive verification of perpetrators or damages.

This monthly update on humanitarian issues in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states is compiled by the SKBN Coordination Unit. With three main functions of information, coordination and advocacy, the SKBNCU strives to put out regular and accurate information on the humanitarian situation of people affected by the conflict since 2011.

Please send your comments to advocacy@skbncu.org

