

SKBN Coordination Unit

Humanitarian Update

January 2021



Freshly harvested white sorghum in Mofu, Wadaka Payam, Blue Nile (Jan 2021)

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Staple food prices continued to atypically increase during the harvest period

Blue Nile

The 2020/21 harvest of white sorghum from far farms continued as of January across crop-producing areas. The harvests of sesame and groundnuts are completed. However, crop yields are reportedly lower than usual primarily due to pest infestations and drought as well as heavy rains in some parts of the Two Areas. As a result, field reports indicate a serious food shortage and hunger by the lean season (June-July 2021). Of the more than 70 per cent households with depleted food stocks, 35 per cent were able to depend on markets, whereas the other 35 per cent relied on food rations from the camp in Maban (South Sudan) as an alternative source of food. Food shortages were experienced in Komo Ganza, Wadaka and Yabus Payams. On the other hand, a relatively good harvest was reported in Belatuma, Benamo/Aqontayo, Aleile and Tsunda (Yabus), Soda and Beeh (Chali), Gosha (Komo Ganza).

Market functionality was moderate across crossline markets of Yabus Bala, Moguf and Mayak in January, given the relatively small number of Ethiopian traders present, as a result of tensions with communities due to illegal Ethiopian miners along border areas.

Despite the ongoing harvest, retail prices of the main locally produced staples i.e. sorghum remained high across most main production and consumption markets. The increase in sorghum prices is impacted by low production. Similarly, prices of salt, soap and gold increased as well as livestock (goats/sheep) in Balila and Mayak markets (Wadaka Payam). The main reason for the increase in livestock prices was the high demand for meat in Maban (South Sudan). The extremely high food prices and below-average household purchasing power will continue driving above-average assistance needs through the lean season (June July 2021).

A continued depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound has resulted in its being rejected in the crossline markets which has complicated trade complicated the terms of trade.

Highlights

Ongoing harvest of 2020/2021 season continues but with poor crop yields

Covid-19 awareness campaigns continue in the Two Areas despite huge funding gaps

Staple food prices continued to increase particularly for sorghum

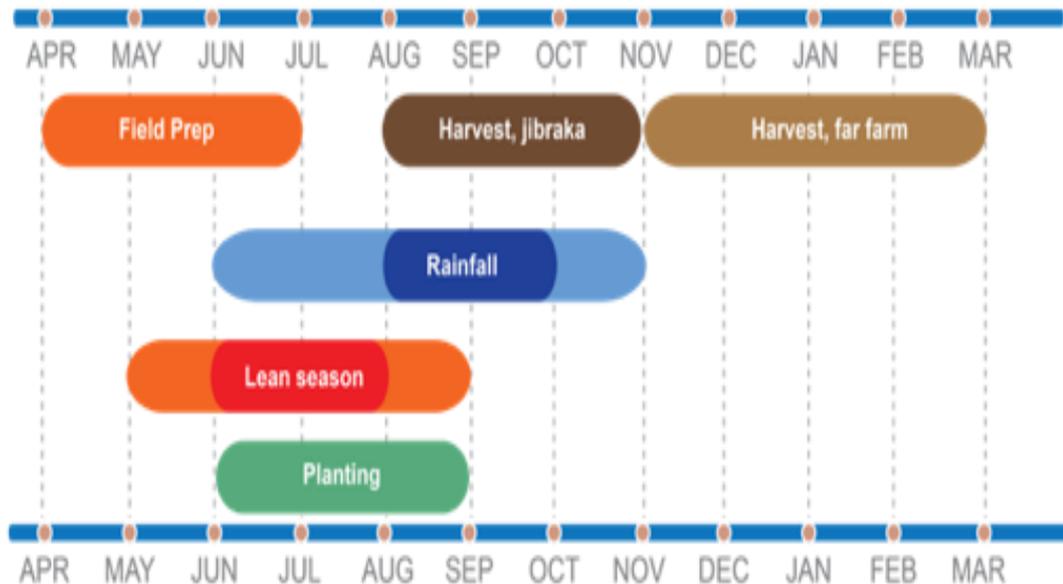
South Kordofan

Harvesting has been fully underway in Dellami and Thobo counties, while threshing continued in Heiban, Um Durain and Western Kadguli. Harvesting on mechanized farms is not yet occurring. Food access improved due to new crop yields, but this favorable development is not expected to last. Although food commodities are available in the markets, prices are still very high due to a low production and high demand from returnees. This is a clear indication that food gaps will open very soon.

Despite decades of isolation, a recent survey found that the food security situation in the so-called isolated areas was broadly comparable to the other, more accessible areas within Central Region and Southern Kurmuk County, with all areas in IPC Phase 3 (acute food and livelihood crisis). [FSMU Report](#)

Western Jebel

Sorghum harvest in the far farms continued and household food access from own production had improved despite a poor crop harvest. Reports from the field team indicated that food prices had increased particularly for sorghum by about 37.5 per cent.



Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and the Blue Nile

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Awareness continues in the Two Areas despite constraints

Despite huge funding gaps regarding COVID-19 response, the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA) and Secretariat of Health (SOH) continue to work closely with implementing partners in COVID-19 response operation across the region.

NEEDS:

Identified needs and gaps in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Two Areas include:

- Increase soap, hand washing facilities, and water supply in public settings;
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, specimen containers, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves at facilities as well as stationery;
- Improve communication and timely reporting (e.g. provision of VHF radios and internet support);
- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a wider coverage;
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness in the Two Areas;
- Improve levels of medicines and medical supplies stocks in the SPLM-N controlled areas;
- More funding in the Health and WASH sector across the region to meet the huge existing gaps.

EDUCATION

Schools continue operating despite huge funding gaps particularly in Blue Nile

Blue Nile

The area hosts 47 primary schools (no secondary school in the region) with a total number of **14,551 (M 8540 and F 6011)** and **210** teachers. WFP and implementing partners continue to provide food to schools- 184 bags of sorghum were distributed to 12 schools in Yabus with the exception of Gondolo- Komo Ganza and Wadaka which will receive later in February 2021. In addition, the schools received scholastic items including stationery (one exercise book per child) and playing kits among other items.

South Kordofan

On 12-16 January, over 200 participants from the Two Areas attended a conference organized by the Secretariat of Education in collaboration with implementing partners. Discussion topics included; educational curriculum development, enacting of laws that enhance local language development, encouragement of the spirit of nationalism and loyalty among students.

Western Jebel

The area has **64** primary schools functioning with an enrollment of **20,895 (10,945 boys and 9,950 girls)** pupils and a total of **865 (346 female students and 519 male)** in the **3** secondary schools. However, education challenges- the need to scale up school feeding, the lack of teacher incentives, lack of trained teachers and the lack of learning materials remain unaddressed.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Lack of essential drugs in the Two Areas

Blue Nile

As of January, **23** health centers received drugs from some implementing partners. However, these drugs are likely not to last a month given the known demand. It is worth noting that two PHCUs will be opened soon in Belatuma and Samari by one of the partners.

According to a report from two PHCUs in Yabus kubri and Yabus Balla, an average of **48** Pneumonia/LRTI cases in adults, **76** tooth aches in adults, **45** and **35** cases of malaria in children and adults respectively were recorded weekly. Also, a huge gap still exists regarding maternal health services for instance, women wait long hours before receiving antenatal care.

South Kordofan

Diarrhea and cough were the most common diseases registered among children particularly in Thobo County which resulted in 46 children deaths in January. According to the County Health Director, there are no drugs in the Secretariat of Health supported centers due to lack of drug supply from the Secretariat.

Western Jebels

Common diseases like malaria, upper respiratory infection, acute watery diarrhea, meningitis (one case) and anemia in pregnant mothers (five cases) were recorded in the only available hospital. Additionally, the nutrition situation in Western Jebel is worrisome— out of **196** MUAC (Measurement Upper Arm Circumference) screening. **48** were 115mm-124mm and **162** were <115mm most of these cases were reportedly coming from Wali Payam (Dilling County). On the other hand, **561** received antenatal care and **526** received folic treatment.

WASH

Unsafe drinking water for thousands in the Two Areas

Blue Nile

Water scarcity was witnessed in most parts of Blue Nile (Balila and Mofu, Wadaka payam, Damo and Hilla Jadid in Komo Ganza and Benamo/Aqontayo with Hilla Jadid in Yabus payam being the most affected. Communities continue to drink from unsafe water sources with their livestock. As a result, cough and diarrhea were highly common among communities. According to the assessment conducted by SoEng (Secretariat of Engineering) a total of **142** bore holes need urgent repairs to scale up water access.

Poor hygiene practices were also observed in Komo Ganza and parts of Wadaka payam. Open defecation is highly practiced with only **500** families out of over **3000** households having latrines. Awareness raising on hygiene and sanitation is highly recommended.

South Kordofan



A hand dug well shared with livestock-South Kordofan (Jan 2021)

There are 36 broken boreholes in Um durain County that need urgent repairs.

Western Jebel

Between October 2020 and January 2021, **65** boreholes (Lagawa 23, Dilling 20, Habila 10, Heiban 11 and Kualib 1) were rehabilitated by one of the implementing partners. Also **5** tool kits were distributed to the Water Management Committees in the region. However, **39** water yards need urgent rehabilitation to scale up water availability for both livestock and humans especially in Sillara, Alfrshaya and Karko payam Payam (Dilling County).

ANIMAL HEALTH

Limited access to veterinary medicine

South Kordofan

Common diseases like malignant pustule (skin rashes and wounds), anthrax, pulmonary pustule, diarrhea, foot and mouth disease were reported in Dellami, Heiban, Um durain, and Thobo Counties. Also lack of rain made it difficult for herders to reach water and grazing areas.

Western Jebel

The livestock sector plays a critical role in the economy, a source of food for the region's population. However, animal health services are limited and diseases leading to high mortality rate. There is a strong need to scale up veterinary drugs and vaccination, and more adequately trained human resources.

PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY

Jan 30, 2021: Tensions ensued along Ethiopian and Blue Nile borders near Yabus Bala due to illegal Ethiopian miners along the border, which affected market functionality in Moguf and Yabus Bala in January.

Jan 2021: 400 sheep were raided in Wadaka Payam.

According to Payam administrators over 1000 returnees were registered (1600 Thobo and 350 in Dallami) in January.

30 Jan 2021: 85 heads of cattle were reportedly raided from Julud (Dilling County) by armed gunmen.

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.
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