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LIVES

Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA)

Summary Report, Q1 2020



Introduction

The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) Q1 2020 was conducted from November 2010 to February 2020 against the ongoing backdrop of economic instability and persistent chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. The survey was conducted in all 18 states aiming to reevaluate the food security situation of the population, assess risk factors that contribute to food insecurity and highlight vulnerable geographical areas and groups. This information on vulnerability is expected to allow well informed decision making process for programme design and targeting purposes, as well as provide evidence for programme expansion. CFSVA also acts as a major data source for Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

A total of 35,500 households' interviews were completed in 179 localities distributed among the all states. The findings were aimed to be representative of the households at the locality level. The survey design followed a two-stage stratified cluster sample methodology, in which the samples were stratified by the states and localities. Within each locality, 13 locations were randomly chosen as the primary sampling units (PSU) and 16 households were sampled within each location (PSU).

The questionnaire included information at household level on demographics, housing, assets, basic services, livelihoods, expenditures, coping strategies and food consumption. Additional information was collected on women food consumption, child health and feeding practices as well as awareness of nutrition related messages.

The team would like to thank State Ministries of Production and Economic Resources for the field data collection across Sudan. We would also like to thank Food Security Technical Secretariat (FSTS), FEWSNET, USAID, and FAO for their role in data collection in the additional 5 states.

Food Security

In this report, food insecurity is determined by WFP corporate indicator, Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI). Central to the approach is an explicit classification of households into four descriptive groups: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure. It combines a suite of food security indicators into a summary indicator. The indicators include food consumption score (FCS), food expenditure share for economic vulnerability, and livelihood coping strategies to assess asset depletion.

According to CARI, 29 percent of the resident households in all 18 states of Sudan are classified as food insecure. Among the food insecure, 26 percent of households were moderately food insecure and 3 percent of household were severely food insecure. Moderate food insecurity is characterized by significant consumption gaps, or marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with the aid of irreversible coping strategies. Households that are severely food insecure often have extreme food consumption gaps or have suffered significant loss of livelihood assets that will eventually lead to food consumption gaps.

On state level, highest prevalence of food insecurity was observed in the Darfurs, North and South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. West Darfur had the highest food insecurity level of 54 percent of the households, followed by North Kordofan with 49 percent, Central Darfur with 47 percent, South Kordofan with 41 percent, North Darfur with 39 percent, Blue Nile with 37 percent.



Figure 1. Prevalence of Food Insecurity by State

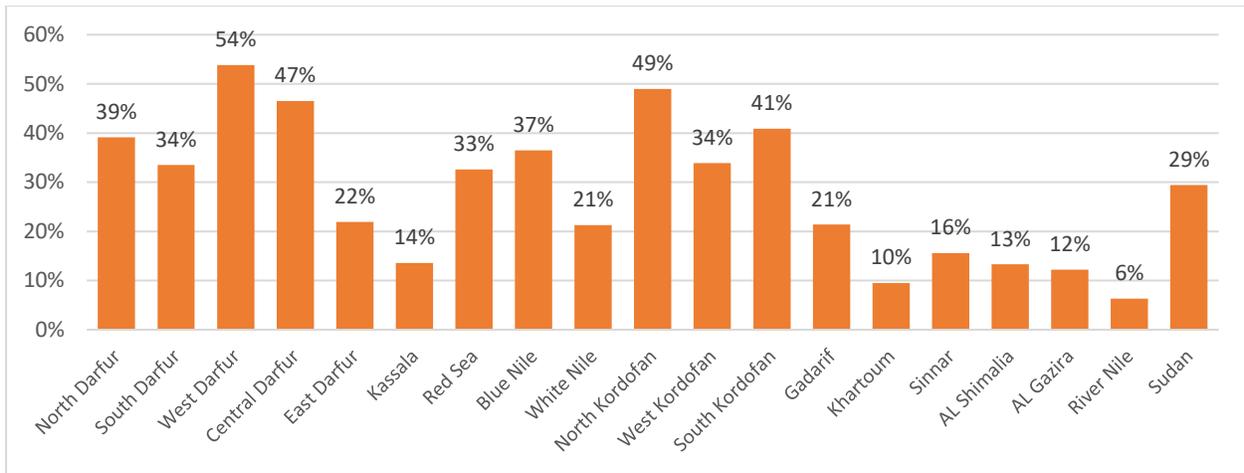


Figure 2. Food Security Map of Sudan

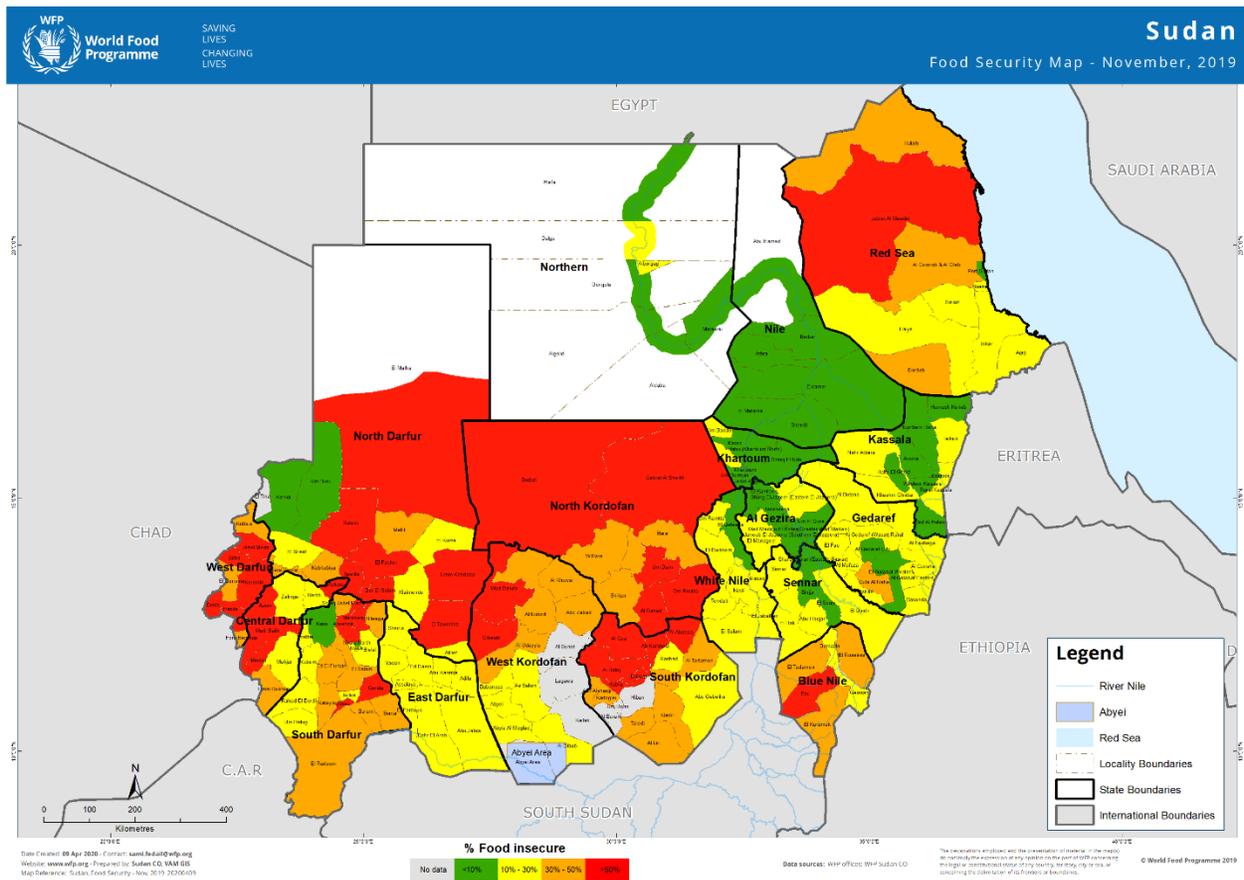


Table below is the list of localities with the highest prevalence of food insecurity.



Figure 3. Level of Food Insecurity by Locality

State	Locality	CARI Food Insecure	severely food insecure
Central Darfur	North Jabel Marra (Rokero)	87%	25%
North Darfur	Tawila	72%	15%
Central Darfur	Central Jabel Marra (Golo)	72%	14%
West Darfur	Kerenik	68%	4%
West Darfur	Jebel Moon	66%	19%
West Darfur	Sirba	65%	4%
North Darfur	El Tewiasha	63%	13%
North Darfur	Kutum	60%	14%
South Darfur	EL Wihda	58%	4%
South Kordofan	Dallami	57%	12%
North Kordofan	Al rahad	56%	10%
South Darfur	Gerida	56%	17%
West Darfur	Bida	55%	10%
Blue Nile	Bau	55%	11%
North Kordofan	Gabrat Al Sheikh	53%	8%
South Kordofan	Abukrshola	53%	13%
North Kordofan	Om Rwaba	53%	8%
North Darfur	Malha	52%	7%
West Darfur	Habila	52%	7%
Red Sea	Gabit-Elmadien	52%	6%
North Kordofan	Sodari	51%	5%
West Kordofan	Gibeish	50%	8%

Households headed by female have much higher prevalence of food insecurity with 44 percent of the female headed households being food insecure, as opposed to 33 percent of the male headed households.

Profile of Food Insecure Population

Socio-economic factors:

- Households headed by women were more likely to be food insecure than households headed by men.

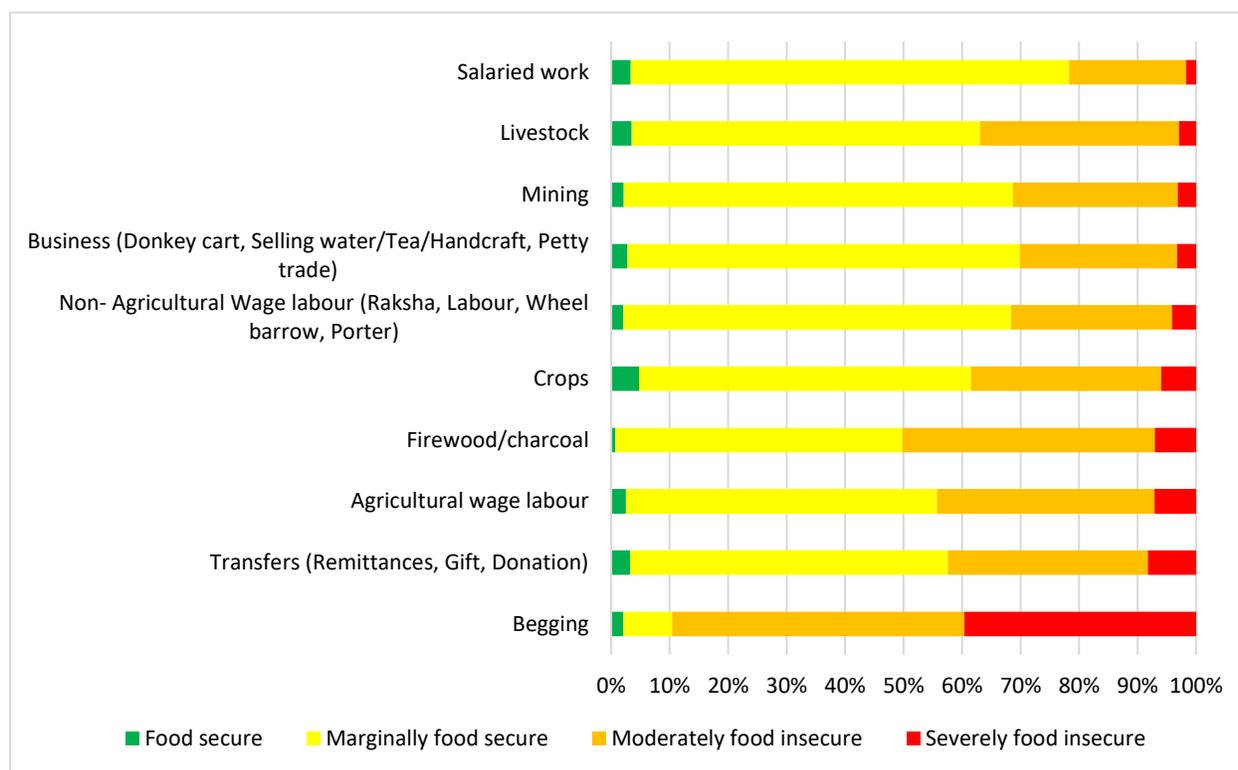


- Households that owned more physical assets were highly likely to be food secure compared to households with less of them.
- Education level of head of households had a positive association with food security, with highly educated households more likely to be food secure.

Livelihoods activities:

- Households that engaged in more sustainable and high return livelihood activities such as business and salaried work were the most food secure. 78 percent of the households with salaried work and 70 percent of the households with business as main income was food secure. This was followed by households engaging in traditional mining activities, crop production, and animal husbandry.
- Households with begging, firewood collection, informal transfers such as remittances, informal labour, agricultural wage labour as main source of income were the most vulnerable group.

Figure 4. Prevalence of Food Insecurity by Livelihood Type



Adequacy of Food Consumption

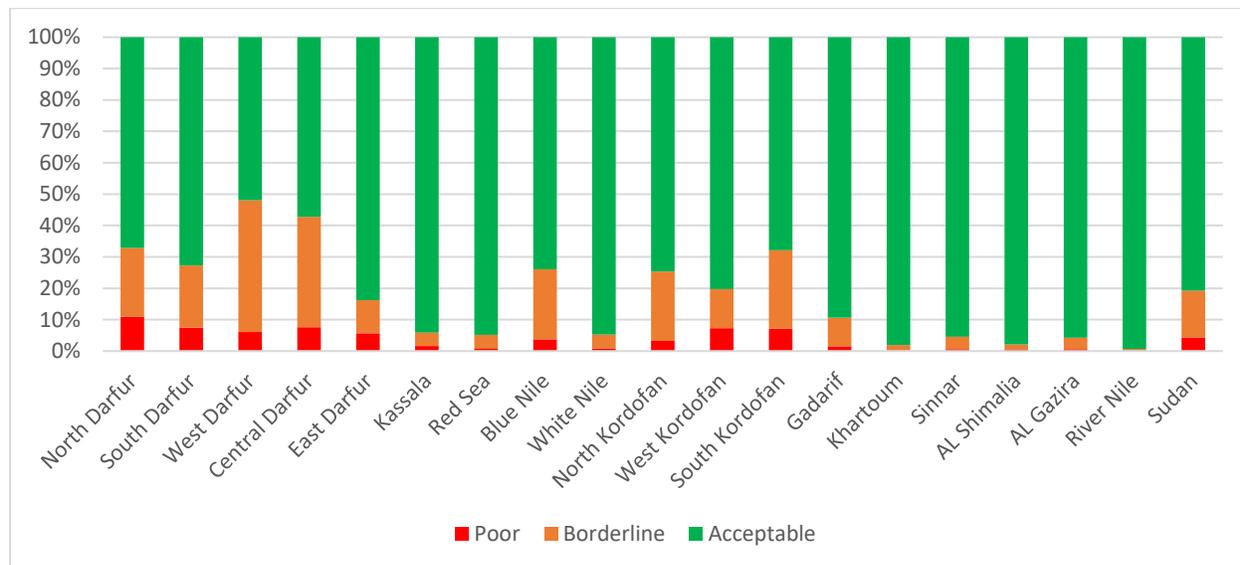
The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a composite indicator that takes into account the quantity and diversity of food groups consumed at a household level a week prior to the survey to create a score for each household. It is a proxy of households’ food access and a core WFP indicator used to classify households into different food consumption groups (poor consumption, borderline consumption, and acceptable consumption).

In Sudan, 81 percent of the households had acceptable food consumption. 15 percent had borderline food consumption and 4 percent had poor food consumption. North Darfur had the highest prevalence



of households with poor food consumption (11 percent), followed by South Darfur (8 percent), and Central Darfur (8 percent). Outside Darfur, West and South Kordofan had the highest prevalence of poor food consumption of 7 percent.

Figure 5. Food Consumption Group by State



Sources of Food

The sources of food varied by the commodity. About one-third of the households obtained cereals through their own production in Q1 2020. The similar proportion of households obtained milk and dairy products from their own production. More than 82 percent of households bought the rest of the foods including pulses, meat, vegetables, fruits, oil, and sugar from markets. This highlights the importance of markets in maintaining adequate and diverse food consumption for households.

Figure 6. Food Groups and Sources

	OWN PRODUCTION	MARKET (CASH)	MARKET (CREDIT)	OTHER
CEREAL	28%	64%	4%	4%
PULSES	7%	82%	6%	5%
MILK AND DAIRY	28%	65%	4%	4%
MEAT FISH EGG	1%	93%	2%	4%
VEGETABLES	2%	91%	4%	3%
FRUITS	3%	91%	3%	4%
OIL	7%	83%	7%	3%
SUGAR	0%	89%	8%	3%

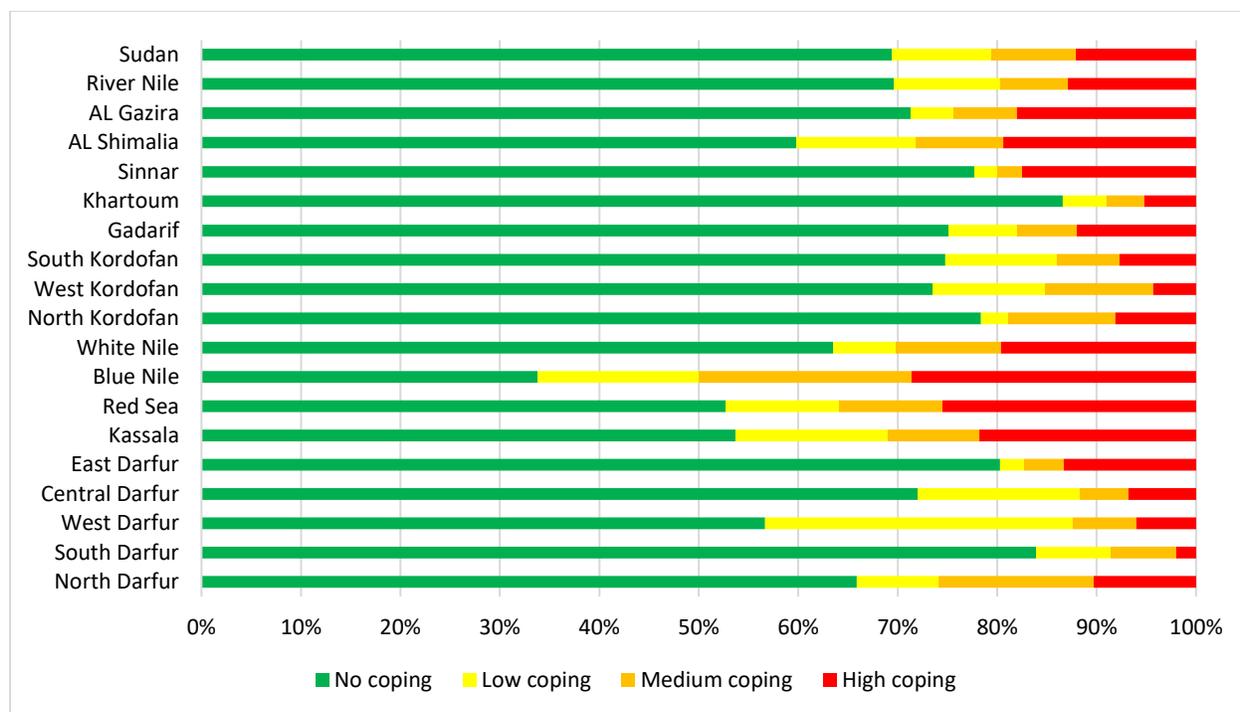


Vulnerability to Food Security

The households in Sudan have faced economic shocks that have exacerbated the already fragile economic situation. The degree of vulnerability caused by the shocks is measured by the negative coping strategies adopted by the households. The coping strategies were further divided into food and livelihood based coping strategies.

Overall, more than one-third of the surveyed households had to adopt food based coping mechanism to maintain minimum food consumption levels. Among them, 12 percent of households employed severe food-based coping mechanisms. The food-based coping strategies included eating less preferred food, borrowing money to buy food, limiting portion sizes, reducing the number of meals, and reducing adult consumption favoring smaller children.

Figure 7. Prevalence of Food based Negative Coping Strategies by State



In the Blue Nile state, 66 percent of the surveyed households adopted food based coping strategy, the highest among the 18 surveyed states. This was followed by the Red Sea at 47 percent. The adoption of severe coping mechanisms was also highest in Blue Nile state at 29 percent.

Figure 8. Most Common Food based Coping Strategies

FOOD BASED COPING STRATEGIES	PERCENTAGE
RELY ON LESS PREFERRED AND LESS EXPENSIVE FOOD	28%
EAT BORROWED FOOD OR BORROW MONEY TO BUY FOOD	18%
REDUCE NUMBER OF MEALS PER DAY	18%



LIMIT PORTION SIZE OF MEALS	16%
RELY ON HELP FROM FRIENDS AND RELATIVES	12%
RESTRICT CONSUMPTION OF ADULTS TO FEED CHILDREN	9%

The most common food based coping strategy was to rely on less preferred or less expensive food, with 28 percent of total households resorting to the negative coping strategy. It was then followed by eating borrowed food or borrowing money to buy food (18 percent) and reducing number of meals per day (18 percent).

Additionally, 51 percent of the households had to resort to livelihood based coping strategies, most prevalent of which was spending their savings on food, employed by 22 percent of households. 14 percent of households were forced to cut down on medical expenses, and 13 percent had to sell their last remaining female animals causing an irreversible loss of livelihoods.

Figure 9. Most Common Livelihood based Coping Strategies

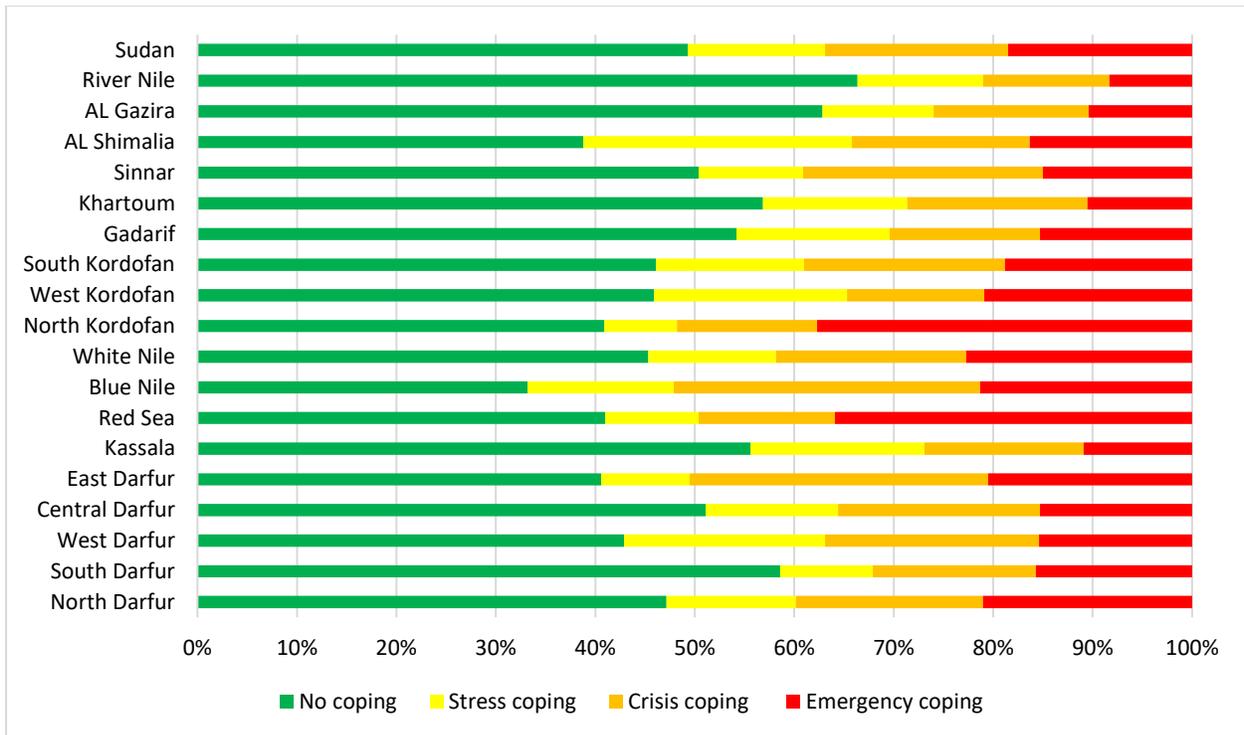
LIVELIHOOD COPING	PERCENTAGE
SPENT SAVINGS	22%
REDUCED NON FOOD EXPENSES	14%
SOLD LAST FEMALE ANIMAL	13%
SOLD MORE ANIMALS THAN USUAL	11%
SOLD HOUSEHOLD ASSETS	7%
WITHDREW CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL	7%
SOLD PRODUCTIVE ASSETS	5%
BORROWED MONEY FROM FORMAL LENDER	5%
SOLD HOUSE OR LAND	3%
BEGGED	2%

Based on their severity, livelihood based coping strategies are classified into stress, crisis, and emergency strategies. Overall, 19 percent of households adopted emergency coping, 18 percent adopted crisis coping strategies, and 14 percent adopted stress coping strategies.

67 percent of the households in the Blue Nile adopted livelihood based coping strategy, the highest in Sudan. This was followed by 61 percent of households in Al Shimalia. The highest proportion of households adopting the emergency coping mechanisms were found in North Kordofan at 38 percent.



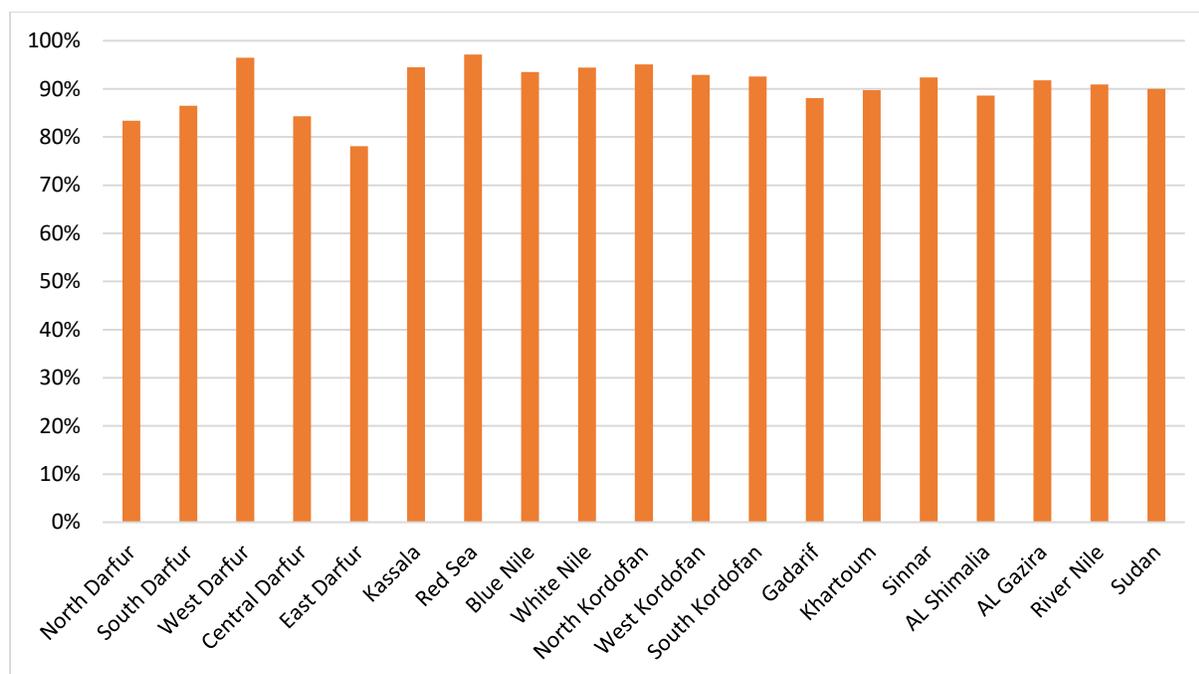
Figure 10. Prevalence of Livelihood based Negative Coping Strategies by State



Economic Vulnerability

The CARI console sheds more light on the major driving forces behind household level food insecurity. Across the surveyed population, economic vulnerability remained one of the major reasons behind household food insecurity. Economic vulnerability is measured by expenditure share of food out of total expenditure. This indicator is based on the premise that the greater the importance of food within a household’s overall budget (relative to other consumed items/services) the more economically vulnerable the household. If food expenditure share is less than 50 percent, the household is considered to be economically better off, while more than 65 percent is considered to be economically vulnerable.

Figure 11. Prevalence of Economic Vulnerability by State



90 percent of the Sudanese resident households are spending more than 65 percent of their expenditure on food and thus are economically vulnerable. The highest economic vulnerability was observed in West Darfur and Red Sea state with 97 percent of the households spending more than 65 percent on food.

While such a disproportionate amount of expenditure on food prevented the widening of the food gap, it also added more risk factors to an already fragile economic situation and thus exposed them to future food insecurity and degradation of their overall well-being. Households were forced to cut on their health and education expenditures and were unable to create or invest in livelihood assets as highlighted by the adoption of livelihood based coping mechanisms.

Possible Impact of COVID-19

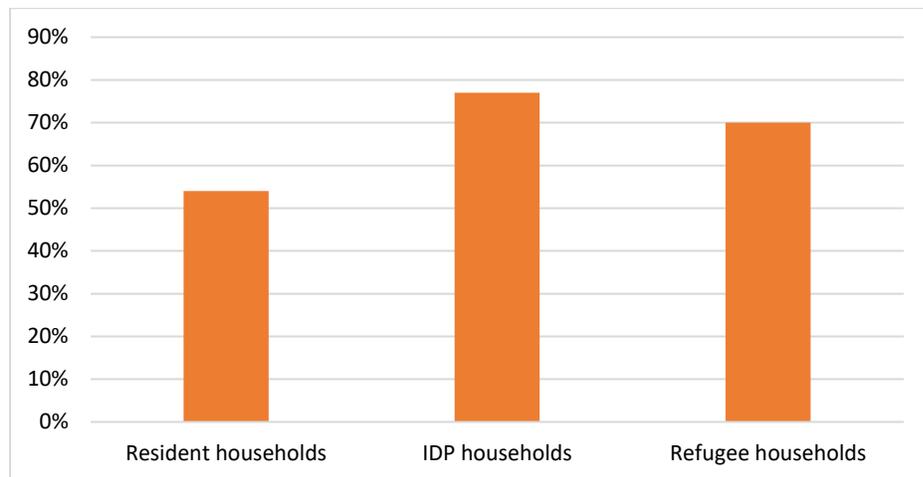
COVID-19 is affecting food insecurity in terms of both scale and severity. WFP expects that around 2 million additional people are *at risk of* food insecurity due to COVID-19 across Sudan. With containment measures, limited income, and disruption of the food supply chain, people with unsustainable livelihood such as informal sector workers will be most affected by COVID-19. 2 million are the people whose main income are unsustainable livelihood who are currently marginally food secure based on CARI corporate indicator. This marginally food secure group are at risk of being tipped over to either moderately or severely food insecure group if no measures are taken.

Increase in food commodity prices will bring down the purchasing power, eroding food security further. According to WFP monthly market monitor, sorghum price is hitting record high every month due to inflation, below average harvest, high production costs already without the COVID-19 impact. Inflation has hit 81.6 percent in March 2020. Food availability is concerning with upcoming lean season and trade restrictions. For example, Russia, the largest exporter of wheat to Sudan, has banned grain exports until July.



According to the CFSVA findings, 54 percent of the resident households cannot afford to buy healthy meal daily without depleting their assets. For IDP and refugee households, the figure is around 75 percent.

Figure 12. Prevalence of Households that cannot afford healthy food basket



Traditional coping mechanisms such as diversifying income sources and taking children out of school may be no longer available. Coping strategies expected to increase include compromising on food intake terms of quality and quantity, distress sales at unfavourable terms of trade, borrowing money and buying food and other essential commodities on credit.

The findings suggest that food insecurity will be increased further without measures in place to contain the impact of COVID-19.

Below are the profile of the most vulnerable households to COVID-19:

- Female / elderly / child led households
- Households with many elderly and children
- Households with disabled persons
- Households with casual work or informal work as the main income source
- Households in areas under lockdown or official movement restrictions
- Households in densely populated urban poor such as slums

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, in Sudan, 29 percent of the households were food insecure. Increased economic vulnerability induced by the economic downturn remained the major contributing factor. 90 percent of the households spent 65 percent on food, limiting their ability to create or invest in livelihood assets. More than one-third of the households had to adopt food based coping strategies to maintain minimum food consumption levels. Additionally, more than half of resident households had to resort to livelihood based coping strategies, depleting their assets. 19 percent of households have inadequate food consumption, even with the high levels of coping strategies. 44 percent of households headed by women were found to be food insecure compared to 33 percent of households headed by men.



With the current COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of lean season, the food security situation is expected to worsen throughout the coming months at least until the next harvest season.

To mitigate the high level of food insecurity, following recommendations are necessary.

- Continue with existing lifesaving food or cash assistance programmes as people who are already food insecure will be the most affected.
- Scale-up of existing programmes covering additional geographic areas or additional households in need of assistance including resident population.
- As schools are closed due to containment measures, redirect the resources from school meals programmes to take-home rations/cash-based transfers.
- Livelihood support programmes such as Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) to be changed to unconditional assistance.