Analysis of Humanitarian Needs

An estimated 7.7 million people are expected to experience acute food insecurity and worse (IPC 3, 4 and 5) in 2021 according to the latest IPC analysis published in December 2020 (Map 2). This includes 310,000 refugees and asylum seekers who need FSL support in 2021. The number of people in need increased 15 per cent, compared to the 6.7 million people who were acutely food insecure in 2020. The number of counties in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is projected by the peak of the lean season (May to July) to increase 46 as compared to 28 in 2019. The same comparison cannot be made for the 2020 lean season due to the delayed data collection. However, the November 2020 IPC (Map 1) identified, during the harvest period (a time of abundance during normal years) 34 counties in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

The states with the highest number of counties in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), projected at the peak of the 2021 lean season are Jonglei with 11 counties, Upper Nile with 10 counties, five each in Warrap, Unity and Lakes, four in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and three each in Eastern and Central Equatoria. Jonglei has the highest number of people estimated to be in Crisis (IPC 3) or above, with 1.7 illion people (85 per cent), followed by Upper Nile with 1.03 million people (71 per cent).

The counties of greatest food insecurity severity are found in locations where the compounded shocks are exceptionally amplified due to intensified sub-national violence, two consecutive years of widespread flooding, indirect effects of COVID-19, and a protracted macro-economic crisis resulting in record high food price spikes. These multiple shocks have severely impacted people's livelihoods and access to food from markets, livestock and farming.

In the official IPC release, October to November 2020, Pibor and Jong North have pockets of populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) acute food insecurity; the 1st projection December to March this will include Pibor county only; and by the 2nd projection Akobo, Tonj North and Aweil South are anticipated to have pockets of population in catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

Contrary to the IPC official release, the IPC Global Support Unit released two reports from the Famine Review Committee on 11 December 2020. One was a Real Time Quality Review (RTQR) report indicating a likelihood of populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) acute food insecurity in Akobo, Aweil South, Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South showing higher levels of Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) households consistent with the data in the FSNMS+ and the documented contributory factors; and the other was a Famine Review Committee (FRC) report that classified four Payams (Pibor, Likiangole, Gumuruk and Verteth) in Pibor County as ‘Famine Likely’ for the current and extending into the peak of the lean season.

South Sudan’s IPC analysis does not disaggregate people into population groups. The process assesses the overall food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable regardless of their status. Children, people with disability, older persons and women-headed households are identified as the most vulnerable in locations that receive blanket support.

Food security and livelihoods were identified as the most needed forms of assistance for men in 16 per cent of assessed settlements in October 2020. Similarly, food assistance was recognized as the priority need for women, as reported in 23 per cent of assessed settlements, however, livelihoods was the fifth most commonly reported priority need for women. In the case of children, food assistance was the third most frequently identified pressing need (as reported in 14 per cent of assessed settlements), behind education and health.

Households who are in IPC Phase 4 and 5 will need immediate emergency food assistance complemented with emergency livelihood and livestock support across farming, agricultural
and pastoral communities, for the medium- and longer-term to build both absorptive and adaptive capacity. There are extreme levels of food insecurity with exhaustion of emergency level coping strategies. Over the past five years needs have continued to rise, even after the 2018 peace agreement, but resources have not increased. This is resulting in scarce resources being more thinly spread.

Currently, of those receiving food assistance from WFP, 18 per cent receive a 70 per cent ration (which includes the refugees and IDPs in the PoC sites); 64 per cent receive a 50 per cent ration; and 18 per cent receive less than 50 per cent. Prioritization of scarce resources, without commensurate funding, means the ration size will have to be reduced further in 2021 to factor in the 15 per cent increase in those facing acute food insecurity.

In early 2019, humanitarian organizations were able to reach more people with food assistance and livelihood support when insecurity reduced, and access improved. This led to a reduction in the severity of food insecurity. However since mid-2019, South Sudan has experienced two consecutive years of flooding that affected more than 900,000 people in 2019 and over 1 million people in 2020, the arrival of COVID-19 and an upsurge in sub-national violence in 2020 with disruption to the delivery of humanitarian assistance which has erased earlier gains made in food security.

Food and livelihood needs are high among refugee populations. Owing to resource constraints, since 2015, refugees have been receiving 70 per cent of the standard ration size. The food assistance gap translates into inadequate dietary intake for most refugees who have limited access to additional sources of food and livelihood opportunities. The most prominent reasons for the dependence of refugees on food assistance include the lack of safe access to land for own cultivation, limited size and poor fertility of land in and around refugee camps, limited access to seeds, tools and assets, limited income generating opportunities in and around the camps, high inflation rate and rising food cost. The majority—83 per cent—of the refugees in South Sudan are adopting negative coping strategies to fill the food assistance gap including selling of assets, cash borrowings, reducing meal quantities and frequency, and begging.

**Intersectoral Analysis**

The main factors affecting food security are food availability, access, utilization, stability and seasonality. These are influenced by several other sectors. Nutrition has a significant effect on mental and physical growth, education attainment and later, livelihood opportunities. The health of a person will affect their ability to carry out manual livelihood tasks and cover the long distances necessary to herd livestock or collect wild foods and firewood. Water, sanitation and hygiene influences how food is prepared and utilized in the body.
Ease of access to markets and access to health care facilities impact how productive people are, and how prone they are to disease or illness.

Protection concerns such as conflict, displacement and gender-based violence disrupt people's livelihoods and have a very negative effect on food security.

Poverty, food insecurity and lack of livelihood opportunities have forced many families to resort to negative coping strategies and some that are harmful to children such as early/forced marriage and child labor.

Projection of Needs

The magnitude and severity of food insecurity is anticipated to increase and worsen respectively in 2021 compared to 2020. The direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 and related pressure put on markets and the movement of goods; an upsurge in sub-national violence, especially in Jonglei; desert locust invasions in the east of the country; recurring flooding in areas still recovering from the 2019 floods; a protracted macro-economic crisis; higher food prices; and a devaluing local currency are all threatening the food security of people. Other factors that will influence the food security situation include the seasonality of livelihoods, grain stocks, prices, climate, movement of livestock, nutrition status of people, and ongoing conflict.

Monitoring

Through the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System which covers at least 8,532 households, data is collected ahead of the post-harvest and lean season and the needs are analysed. The cluster’s role is to mobilize partners to join the data collection teams especially in hard-to-reach locations and support the capacity building of enumerators. The surveys are analysed by colleagues from WFP, FAO, REACH and FEWSNET to support key products of the IPC analysis: key messages, population tables, and outcome indicators.

The cluster utilizes the Need Analysis Working Group to update on changes in context and new crisis events that impact on food and nutrition security with periodic workshops that provide a situational analysis and scenario building across the Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr el Ghazal.

Indicators

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>SOURCE</th>
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<td>FSNMS+ &amp; IPC analysis</td>
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<td>Food consumption indicators: (4) Food Consumption Scores; Household Hunger Score; Reduced coping strategy indicator; and Household Diet Diversity Score.</td>
<td>FSL</td>
<td>FSNMS+ &amp; WFP expert analysis</td>
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<td>Population reached by cluster objective</td>
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