Republic of South Sudan

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National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Bulletin

Key Messages

- South Sudan is facing a serious food security and nutrition crisis with an estimated 4.9 million people facing food insecurity in the country out of which about 100,000 are facing famine in Leer and Mayendit counties. The number of food insecure is expected to rise to 5.5 million during the peak of the lean season.
- One million children are estimated to be acutely malnourished in the country.
- As per the 2016 crop estimates, there is a cereal deficit of 500,000 mt which is likely to have adverse impacts on food security and nutrition as the lean season approaches.
- Hyper-inflation continues to be a major challenge with an annual food inflation rate of 480 percent in February 2017, and the prices are likely to rise further in the lean season.
- According to latest report from OCHA, 1.9 million people are internally displaced while 1.7 million South Sudanese refugees are living in foreign countries.
- Health concerns are widespread with likelihood of high disease prevalence such as cholera, malaria and measles in different parts of the country.
- Drought conditions are likely to affect Greater Kapoeta, Greater Pibor and Upper Nile States.
- Constrained humanitarian access poses challenges to humanitarian assistance, thus affecting some of the most vulnerable populations.
The Quarterly National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Bulletin is produced jointly by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM) of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, with support from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

This update is informed by both secondary and primary data collected during the quarter under review. The data collected and analyzed is guided by agreed and monitored early warning indicators, including food security, population movement and displacements, human diseases and outbreaks, markets and prices, agriculture and livestock, and weather and climate outlook.

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South Sudan is facing a serious humanitarian situation with a number of challenges as summarized below:

Some 100,000 people are estimated to be facing famine (Phase 5 of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC) in Leer and Mayendit counties. In addition, there are a number of counties in former Unity, Northern Bahr Ghazal, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria states projected to be in emergency (Phase 4 of IPC). A total of 5.5 million are projected to be food insecure and in need of assistance during the lean season from May to July 2017.

The nutrition situation remains very serious, with many counties in former Unity, Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria expected to experience a critical or very critical status during the lean season, as per the IPC acute nutrition analysis.

In addition, areas in the south-western part of the country are impacted by the ongoing drought.

Moreover, the health situation is also of significant concern due to widespread prevalence of cholera, measles, malaria, ticks and East Coast Fever.

Furthermore, humanitarian access remains a major challenge in implementing life-saving interventions and critical assessments of the situation in the worst affected areas of the country.
The latest IPC food insecurity analysis, released on 20 February, has led to the declaration of Famine in Leer and Mayendit counties of Greater Unity region, affecting about 100,000 people, owing to protracted violence, insecurity and displacement that has prevented adequate humanitarian access and aid delivery. Across the country, at least 4.9 million (about 42 percent of the population) are estimated to be food insecure (IPC Phases 3, 4, and 5) from February to April 2017. This is over 60 percent higher than the same time in 2016 when about 2.8 million people were severely food insecure. This is projected to increase to 5.5 million people (47 percent of the population) at the height of the 2017 lean season in July. Parts of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Western Bahr el Ghazal and Eastern Equatoria states are also on the brink of catastrophe if access is not granted and assistance does not reach them.

As per the food security and nutrition monitoring system (FSNMS) survey conducted in December 2017, more than two-thirds of the households were found to be food insecure in South Sudan, showing the highest ever food insecurity in the period immediately after the harvest, since FSNMS started in 2010.

Food insecurity is expected to deteriorate significantly from May to July due to early depletion of the limited harvest, lack of access to markets, lack of access to humanitarian assistance, and lack of access to typical food and income in parts of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, and Western Bahr el Ghazal. While Greater Equatoria is not as severely acutely food insecure as Greater Upper Nile, if sporadic conflict continues to disrupt trade and displace households, the number of households needing humanitarian assistance is likely to grow, especially as the lean season is expected to start early in March instead of May across the country.

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**Figure:** Map showing projected IPC phases for May-July 2017 (source: NBS).
OUTLOOK: The number of food insecure people likely to rise to 5.5 million at the height of lean season in 2017

Acute malnutrition remains a major public health emergency in South Sudan. The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) is at or above 15% in many areas. Between November 2016 and January 2017, GAM of above 30% was observed in Leer and Panyijiar while Mayendit had GAM levels of 27.3%. Similarly, a worsening nutrition situation atypical to the post-harvest season is observed in the Greater Equatoria region – particularly in Greater Central Equatoria – a deterioration associated with widespread insecurity, lack of physical access, disruption of the 2016 agricultural season and the ongoing economic crisis. Some areas in the Greater Bahr el Ghazal show unusually higher than usual levels of acute malnutrition expected for the post-harvest season, indicating a worsening situation. Insecurity, displacement, poor access to services, extremely poor diet (in terms of both quality and quantity), low coverage of sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices are underlying the high levels of acute malnutrition.
As the crisis in South Sudan enters its fourth year, the total number of civilians displaced has reached more than 3.5 million people (more than a quarter of the population), with more than 1.9 million displaced internally and over 1.7 million displaced to neighboring countries. A total of 214,979 displaced individuals are seeking protection at the UN protection of civilians (PoC) site. If insecurity is not contained, and humanitarian assistance not delivered to all parts of country currently experiencing conflict, the number of the IDP, Refugees and people seeking protection at the UN protection of civilians are likely to increase.

Most recently, there has been reports of population movement in Wau due to conflict between pastoralists and farmers which led to the displacement of unarmed civilians to rural areas of Umbili and Kuarjina. About 8,275 individuals are thus estimated to have been displaced..

OUTLOOK: More displacements expected in Greater Equatoria and Greater Jonglei due to escalating conflict
Human Disease and Outbreaks

The Ministry of health raised alarm over new cholera outbreak in Jonglei, Yirol East, Mingkaman IDPs and Malakal Town. According to the Situation report number 107 by the Ministry, on summary of cholera cases in South Sudan, as of February 10 2017, a total of 4,935 individual cases were reported in 2017. During the same period, the Ministry reported Malaria as the top cause of morbidity in the country. Meanwhile a total of 74 measles cases were confirmed in Gogrial-East, Wau PoC, Juba, Aweil South and Nzara.

The national task force provides overall coordination of the cholera response at the national level including review of outbreak trends and progress of implementation activities. Sub-national cholera taskforce committees are coordinating the cholera response in Northern and Southern Liech, Yirol East, Mingkaman, Bor, and Malakal Town.

Active transmission is currently limited to Eastern Lakes (Yirol East, Awerial-Mingkaman IDP settlement) and Central Upper Nile (Malakal Town). A new cluster of suspected cholera cases has been reported in Gorwai, Ayod county. Following the confirmation of cholera cases in Malakal town, the cholera taskforce has been activated and the response plan has been updated to guide preparedness and response activities.

OUTLOOK: Widespread cholera and malaria cases are expected during the rainy season in 2017.

![Map showing cholera incidence (cases per 10,000) and case fatality rate (%) as of 17 March 2017 (source: WHO)](image)

Figure: Map showing cholera incidence (cases per 10,000) and case fatality rate (%) as of 17 March 2017 (source: WHO)
The results from the Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) show a concerning situation in terms of cereal production. With a projected population of about 12 million people in mid-2017, the overall cereal deficit in January-December 2017 marketing year is estimated to be about 500,000 metric tonnes, over 30 percent more than the deficit estimated for 2016. The 2016 net cereal production in the traditional sector is estimated to be about 826,000 tonnes, the smallest amount harvested since the start of the conflict. Both harvested areas and yields have declined following the increase in intensity and scale of the conflict which disrupted farming activities, particularly during the second season. Major reductions in cereal production are estimated in Greater Equatoria region and in Western Bahr el Ghazal. Such a high cereal deficit is one of the contributors to high levels of food insecurity and acute malnutrition in the country.

Overall, as per the CFSAM report, livestock conditions were generally good due to adequate pasture and water availability. As during the previous two years, widespread events of cattle raiding and altered marketing/migration routes occurred in all areas of major conflict/insecurity. The results from the FSNMS survey conducted in December 2016 show that livestock ownership has reduced significantly compared to the same time the previous year. While almost two thirds (64 percent) of households owned at least one livestock herd or farm animal during the same time last year, only half (50 percent) of households owned livestock in December 2016. Areas such as Greater Kapoeta in the Eastern Equatoria are of special concern where livestock conditions have been badly affected by the prevailing drought.

Figure: Percentage of households owning livestock in December 2016, compared to November 2015
Markets and Prices

Hyper-inflation continues to be a major challenge in South Sudan. As per the data released by the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (SSNBS), overall annual inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) in South Sudan has been at 425.9 percent in February 2017, while the food inflation has been at 480 percent. Under a normal situation immediately after the harvest period, which is typically in October to November, local cereal production enters markets and pushes commodity prices down. However, this has not been the case during the past three months. Staple prices have continued to rise and, compared to a year ago, there has been a huge surge in commodity prices in different markets across the country. Most notable increase in sorghum prices occurred in Bor (738%), Konyokonyo (587%), Wau (472%) and Lakes (461%). An alarming price rise has been noted recently in Kapoeta.

The depreciation of the local currency and the scarcity of hard currency is considered as one main factor driving this huge surge in prices. In March, the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) was trading at the parallel rate of 124 SSP per USD in Juba, and 130 SSP in Bor against the official government rate of 89 SSP per US Dollar. This is a huge depreciation compared to 32 SSP per USD in March 2016.

In addition, fuel scarcity has continued in most parts of the country despite some recent improvement in supplies in major towns such as Juba and Wau. Fuel scarcity and price increases have also pushed up cereal prices such as that of white sorghum, the main staple in South Sudan for most families.
OUTLOOK: The rise in commodity prices is likely to continue as the lean season starts. This is partly due to scarcity of hard currency for imports, high transportation costs and disruption in market supplies.

Weather and Climate Information

The 45th Greater Horn of Africa consensus Climate Outlook March to May 2017 season over South predicted high likelihood of below normal to near normal rainfall in former Eastern Equatoria State, Pibor, Bor south, Uror, Duk, former Lake, Mundri, Terekeka and Juba. In general, most parts of the greenbelt (Magwi, Kajo-Keji, Yei, Lainya, Yambio, Nzara, Ezo, Tambura, Southern Raja and Wau) are likely to receive above normal-to-normal rainfall during March April and May (MAM). Thus this situation would favor production of short maturing crop varieties (especially sorghum, maize, groundnut, cassava).

Areas in North-Eastern and North-Western Parts of the country i.e. (Former Unity Nile State, Unity State, WS, Northern and North-Western Parts of Western Bahr El Ghazal) are forecast to receive Normal to above rainfall with a chance of heavy fall at places. Thus this situation would favor the early regeneration of pasture and recharge of water source in pastoral areas. And the increased water discharge to Nile River and its tributaries is more likely to increase fish volumes.
The following recommendations have been made based on the analysis of the current situation and the outlook for the next quarter:

- Life-saving humanitarian assistance to populations affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly those under famine, emergency and crisis food security situations as per IPC;
- Allow unhindered humanitarian access to all areas of South Sudan in order to respond to the humanitarian situation;
- Facilitate dialogue and reconciliation in order to address both political and local disputes and minimize population displacement;
- Advise farmers to plant early maturing crop varieties to take advantage of the March-May rain seasons;
- Ensure continuous crop monitoring in order to provide early warnings and timely intervention
- Activate human and livestock disease surveillance systems;
- Embrace good economic practices and diversify the economy in order to arrest hyperinflation;
- Establish and embrace people-centred integrated early warning systems;
- Mainstream disaster risk reduction strategies across economic sectors;

**OUTLOOK:** Drought conditions likely to affect Greater Kapoeta, Greater Pibor and Upper Nile States due to forecasted normal to below normal rainfall