

SKBN Coordination Unit

Humanitarian Update

APRIL 2021



One of the water points in Blue Nile (April 2021)

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Food security continues to deteriorate in the Two Areas

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Preparation of farms for the next planting season continued across localities of Southern Kurmuk in response to early food shortages. Around 25 per cent of farmers already planted their fields in April. Primary crops grown included vegetables (okra) and maize. Unfortunately, by reporting time, seed distribution had not yet been conducted, which affected farmers in terms of varieties that could be planted (A total of **10,565** households were targeted for seed distribution 2021).

According to CU County Coordinators, most households in the region have exhausted their food stocks, with approximately less than one percent (<1 per cent) having food stock remains. As a result, markets and rations from refugee camps are the two primary sources of food for around 90 per cent of households (though only around 5 per cent of them can afford to buy from the market). Food shortages were due to a previous poor harvest exacerbated by high food prices, below-average household purchasing power, and an influx of returnees. As a result, by way of example, Wadaka payam (with the highest number of livestock herders), selling livestock was one of the coping strategies alongside traditional gold mining. Other communities dealt with the situation by selling poles, bamboo, and grass as sources of income. Severe hunger was witnessed in Hillat Jadid/Khor Hassan, Moguf, and Oss. Hilla Jadid/Khor Hassan in Yabus payam, in added part due to a presence of returnees (over **200** households were registered in April) from both Ethiopia and South Sudan. In Komo Ganza, wild tubers locally known as "amjogo" are also food for communities.

Meanwhile, **9000** households (*5199 led by males and 3801 led by females*) were targeted for food distribution. However, as this report was being compiled, pre-positioning had not yet been done.

Major crossline markets were fully operational (Yabus Bala, Moguf, Balila and Mayak). However, in April, market prices of food items (particularly sorghum, the staple for most households) and non-food items across most markets monitored remained high primarily due to transportation costs and a high demand from returnees. For example, in Moguf market, a malwa of sorghum rose from 50 Ethiopian Birr in March to 70 Ethiopian Birr in April. Similarly, fuel prices have increased, and according to the [FSMU March Report](#) "high fuel prices in Southern Kurmuk County are likely to have a knock-on effect on other products in the coming months, leading to increased levels of hunger in the future."

Highlights

Two positive Covid-19 cases registered in South Kordofan

Primary schools have reopened, but lack of qualified teachers and learning materials affect the quality of education

Food security continues to deteriorate as food prices peak

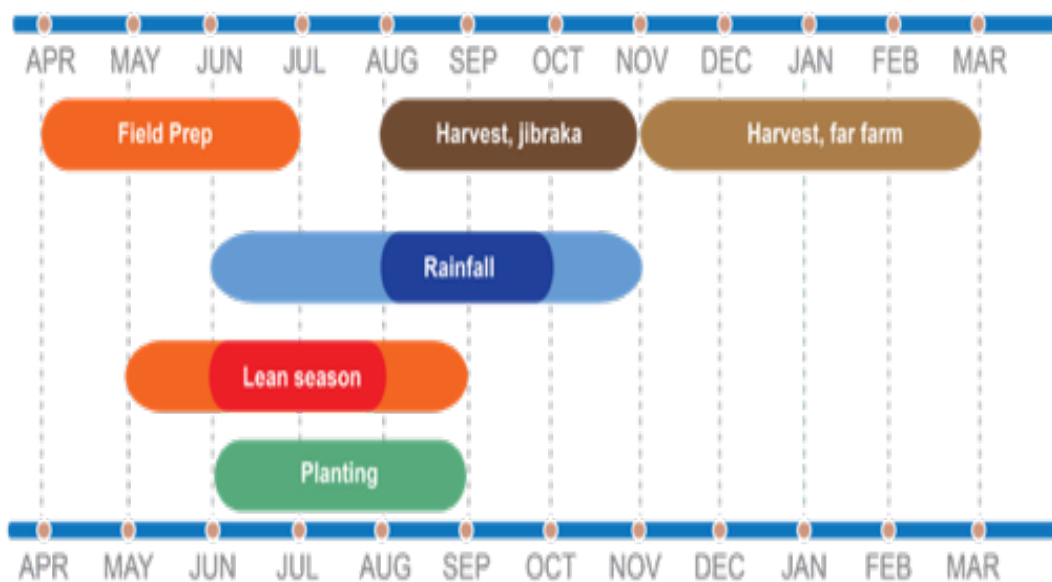
South Kordofan

Land preparations on both traditional and mechanized farms continued in crop-producing areas of South Kordofan. However, a lack of seeds, garden tools, and machinery was reported.

On the other hand, in Dallami, Heiban, and Um-durain Counties, 18 per cent of households depended on markets as a food source. This fact is attributed primarily to previous insufficient crop production and a high number of returnees (**286** households in Talodi and **214** in Dallami were registered in April). As a result, food prices (sorghum, cowpeas, sesame, and groundnuts) have been pushed well above market prices. As a result, the population is in dire need of food aid intervention.

Western Jebel

One of the implementing partners is carrying out a seven-month post-harvest awareness in Dilling, Habilla, and Lagawa counties to minimize harvest losses and achieve food security among communities.



Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and the Blue Nile

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Total number of clinically positive cases: 2

The Secretariat of Health (SoH) with implementing partners continue to respond to the pandemic:

Measures taken include the following:

- Awareness in the clinics is ongoing
- An isolation center in one of the hospitals has been finalized
- WFP provided 28 sacks of sorghum to the checkpoints for feeding
- SoH, in collaboration with WFP, conducted Covid-19 training in 90 schools across South Kordofan
- Training on surveillance, data collection, and management is ongoing
- Training on IPC measures was conducted in Thobo, W. Kadguli, Dalami, and Um Durain
- Soap, thermometers, stationeries, and other items were distributed at checkpoints.

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 to transport samples to neighbouring countries, 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 broader 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; and
- More funding in the health and WASH sectors across the region to meet the substantial existing gaps.

EDUCATION

Education in Blue Nile still a challenge

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk)

Primary schools resumed on April 1, 2021, and were fully operational despite the existing gaps. As a result of WFP's school feeding initiative (currently supporting 12 schools out of 47), schools registered a higher student attendance. However, communities struggle to keep schools running. The education sector in Blue Nile registered a lack of trained teachers, teachers' incentives, learning materials, school feeding, and the absence of secondary school as their major challenges. Without a secondary school in the area, students have to go to either refugee camps in South Sudan or Ethiopia for their secondary education. Education is one of the top priorities for the people of the Two Areas and consistently one of the main reasons for leaving the areas for neighboring countries.

Western Jebel

Out of 67 primary schools in the area, 56 are operational with an enrollment of **15,000** pupils. 90 per cent of these schools are run by communities and struggle to keep them functioning.

A two-week training targeting 80 primary school teachers on teachers' code of conduct, teaching methodology, child protection and gender mainstreaming in education was conducted by one of the partners in Western Jebel.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Shortage of essential drugs at community- based health centres

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Due to a low number of health facilities, lack of trained staff, essential drugs and facility to handle emergency cases in the region, access to high quality services has been affected, forcing the patients to cover long distances (often requiring over two days walk) to reach the closest hospital in Maban, South Sudan. This situation is always challenging and occasionally devastating for people, particularly during the rainy season.

Western Jebel

The health sector in the region is so fragile that it requires both emergency and long-term interventions. The list of needs remains long and includes chain facilities and limited vaccine intervention.

WASH

Unsafe drinking water for thousands in the Two Areas

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Shortage of clean water remains a challenge, and communities continue to share unsafe water points with animals, exposing them to water-borne diseases like acute watery diarrhea. Although **1500** households were reached with soap, water purifying tablets, water buckets, and six boreholes were rehabilitated (two in Komo Ganza, two in Yabus, and two in Wadaka payams) in April. However, this is not adequate to meet the demand. On the other hand, over **300** households have no access to latrines, increasing the risk of sanitation-related diseases, especially cholera.

A total of **200** girls participated in Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Training in Gesis, Wadaka Payam, and five Water Management Committees were trained (two in Komo Ganza and three in Wadaka payams).

South Kordofan

There are 40 boreholes in Um Durain county (seven in Undulu, four in Lomon, ten in Tangal, seven in Nogorban, and twelve in Saraf-jamous payams) that need immediate repair. Access to safer drinking water remains a significant challenge in the areas and communities continue to depend on unsafe water, making them prone to water-borne diseases.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Lack of essential drugs in the Two Areas affects livestock keeping

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Due to a lack of intervention by local authorities to provide drugs, a deterioration of livestock's health has been reported. Southern Kurmuk has no actors on the ground to train Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) and to conduct animal vaccinations especially for those communities whose livelihood depends on livestock for food, income and transport are most affected.

Western Jebel

The Secretariat of Animal Health continues to report a lack of drugs for livestock. Drugs are available in crossline markets but too costly for households.

PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY

Although the overall security situation remained normal, cattle theft remained high in April

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

A total of **70** households from South Sudan and **120** from Ethiopia were received in Yabus payam. Movements were due to tension in Maban, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

South Kordofan

April 18 30 cattle were looted by cattle raiders from Lazrak payam, Heiban County
 April 26 13 heads of cattle were looted in Dongiri village, Lazrak payam, Heiban County
 April 06 12 cattle were looted from Kumbur payam at Kalkada village, Heiban County
 April 09 2 people were killed during a cattle raid in Dallami payam, Dallami County
 April 22 Gradud village was burnt down reportedly by Arabs cattle raiders resulting into a displacement of 43 households to Dallami town.

A total of **214** households of returnees were registered in Dallami County

A total of **286** households were received in Talodi County

Western Jebel

April 25, 99 heads of cattle were looted from Kunekara village, Karko payam, Dilling County, reportedly by a SAF-aligned militia group.

April 17, 15 heads of cattle were looted at gunpoint in Adlan village, Alfarsahya payam, Dilling County.

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