

# SKBN Coordination Unit

## Humanitarian Update

December 2021



Displaced South Sudanese Refugees from Gure Shambolo camp, Benishangul Gumuz region, Ethiopia (December 20, 2021)

## FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

*Food security improved in some parts of the Two Areas*

### Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Harvesting on far farms was the main activity in December 2021, with around 85 per cent of the population harvesting long-duration sorghum. In Chali Payam, farmers harvested approximately 10 sacks (50 kg) of long duration sorghum, while in Yabus Payam about 60 per cent of farmers are expected to harvest around 15-30 sacks each because of the fertile soils. The highest prevalence of food insecurity was reported in Komo Ganza, where food portions were reduced. The decline in production was due to a combination of reduced plantings, pests and dry spells. Dry spells in July resulted in crop wilting, requiring multiple replanting. In addition, the security situation in Ethiopia continues to threaten food security in the Blue Nile region with cross-border markets not being fully operational. Eating less preferred food, borrowing money to buy food, limiting portion sizes, reducing of meals, and reducing adult consumption favoring children were some of the coping strategies in Komo Ganza. Households predict that there will be early depletion of food stocks as early as March 2022. Hence there is a need for food relief to start early.

Market assessment reports indicated that prices in December 2021 remained stable (that is, the same as in November 2021) in other parts of Blue Nile. On the contrary, in Wadaka Payam, the price of locally-produced crops increased in most monitored markets because a bigger percentage of the population depends on markets as the source of food. Insecurity and conflict in Ethiopia and devaluation of the Ethiopian *birr* still prevails. Other markets could not be reached due to logistical challenges. Food access constraints for the market are constraining food access for large segments of the population.

### South Kordofan

The harvest of sorghum, sesame and groundnut has been completed in most traditional and mechanized farms. Vegetable (onions, tomatoes, cucumber) growing is ongoing and likely to continue through January 2022. Unfortunately, crop production was reportedly low due to dry spells during early stages of planting, pests, and damage from birds. Only 965,000 traditional feddens were ploughed across South Kordofan. Humanitarian needs remain substantial for the population and returnees, as several are returning to lack of basic services.

## Highlights

Covid-19 cases registered in South Kordofan

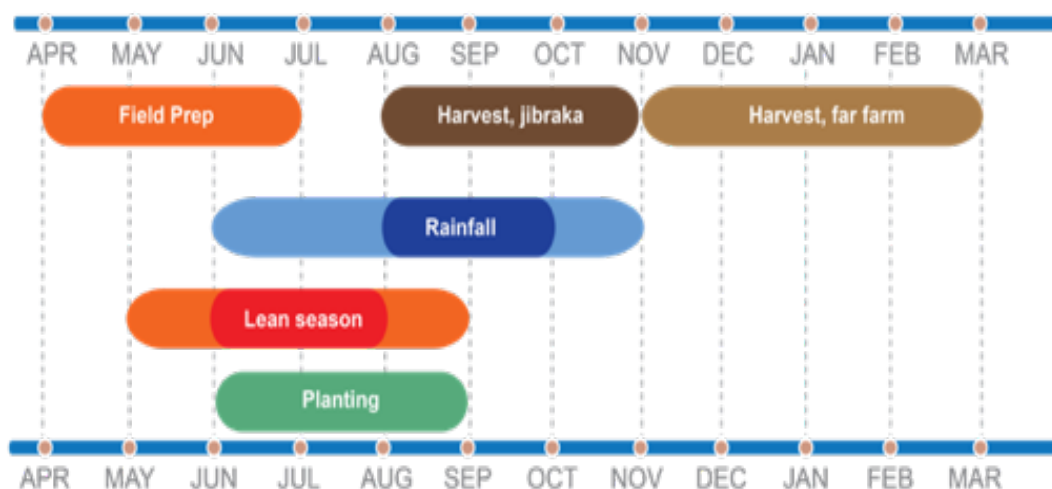
Food security improves in some parts of the Two Areas

Prices of food and non-food items remain high across the Two Areas

### Western Jebels

Plots harvested depended on households’ ability to cultivate in terms of labor and capital availability. Farmers reported that most households produced between 12 and 30 sacks of 50 kg. According to traditional farmers, sorghum yield was at 55 per cent in both Lagawa and Habila Counties, while it was at 45 per cent in Dilling county. On the other hand, in El-Sonut County, the majorly harvested cereal was millet at 40 per cent. Differences in production were due to erratic rain distribution at the beginning of the planting season and insecurity in some areas mainly El Sonut. This had a negative impact on crop establishment and development across the region.

Crops were also made available in the markets and those without sorghum stock could easily purchase from the nearby markets. According to household reports, a total shift in the prices of basic commodities after the recent political developments in Khartoum, the closure of Red Sea port, high fuel prices led to high transport costs to crossline markets and inflation in the country were contributing factors. Furthermore, the area received a high influx of returnees, mainly from Government-controlled areas. Prices of locally grown cereal (sorghum) in December were exceptionally high mainly due to the devaluation of the Sudanese Pound, high production and transportation costs; and the continued influx of returnees. Prices of items remained high, for instance, a kg of wheat flour increased from SDG 550 to 650, a tin of onions from 1500 to 2000 SDG reduced households purchasing power. Increased inter-communal conflicts significantly interrupt market and farming activities. Market interruption led to supply shortages of the most essential goods such as drugs, fuel among others.



*Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and the Blue Nile*

## EDUCATION

*The education sector in the Two Areas continues to face challenges*

### Blue Nile

The education sector in the SPLM-N-controlled areas still faces significant challenges. Common barriers to access education include lack of qualified teachers, lack of national exams (South Sudan exams for candidate classes), teacher incentives, WASH, school feeding, safe learning places. The influx of returnees from neighboring regions adds to this demand. Particular challenges for girls include pregnancy and lack of access to sanitation facilities among others. It is the community's deep desire for education that keeps schools operating despite the challenges involved.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

*Shortage of essential drugs in the Two Areas*

### South Kordofan

The health system in the Two Areas remains worrying, now with a need to urgently respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The area continues to record high numbers of persistent coughing, malaria, diarrhea, chest infections, and skin cases. The only two main hospitals are overwhelmed with a high number of patients. Many children are missing out on immunizations and nutrition that lead to high child mortality. Patients are walking long distances as far as the isolated enclaves of Tolodi, Rashad, and Kua Nyaro to seek medical care. Referrals are still lacking and no cold chain to keep the few available vaccines. In Dallami County, for example, 1,514 malaria patients were registered and 2 deaths, 1,011 were treated of cough and 2 fatalities, 77 cases of malnutrition in children in December alone. With an already weak health system, the COVID-19 pandemic will have devastating effects on the livelihoods and the health of the people of the Two Areas. After the outbreak, it took more than a year for the area to have at least one testing facility, and since then, 162 people have tested positive for the Covid-19 virus, with seven patients fatally infected.

## ANIMAL HEALTH

*Lack of essential drugs in the Two Areas affects livestock keeping*

### Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Livestock constitutes for Blue Nile pastoral communities. Livestock is exchanged for other needs of the family such as staple food, clothes, medicine, or contribution to social events. Keeping animals alive and healthy is vital in a region where most of the population relies on livestock for survival. Poor health conditions and the death of livestock remained high due to the lack of veterinary drugs. People are forced to feed herbs to their sick animals or go to the nearest markets to buy drugs that are too expensive. Additionally, insecurity makes it difficult for herders to reach water and grazing areas.

### South Kordofan

There are approximately 500,000 cows, 700,000 sheep and goats, and 900,000 chickens in Heiban county, but most of these have been affected by black quarter, chronic respiratory disease, and lumpy skin diseases. In Thobo A & B County, for example, approximately 215 cows and 417 goats and sheep died of diseases. In Western Kadugli County a disease called dalof has killed over 800 sheep in Kurungo payam, 420 in Meri, and 350 in Sougli payams. In addition, raids by Messeriya over land and grazing have led to widespread tensions affecting movement of livestock hence affecting rural livelihood prosperity.

## WASH

*Unsafe drinking water for thousands in the Two Areas*

### Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Insufficient funding for WASH operations and maintenance is still one of the main obstacles facing the sustainability of the provision of water in the Two Areas. Households are at risk of contracting any water-related disease increase. The massive lack of water and sanitation infrastructure forces people to rely on unsafe water sources or practice open defecation, in a region already dealing with several health emergencies. Most water facilities are non-functional at any point in time, more than 50 per cent of the population have no access to basic sanitation and around 80 per cent do not have access to basic drinking water services.

### **South Kordofan**

Some communities collect drinking water from unprotected wells as a result of few drinking water points. Most households in South Kordofan don't have latrines and practice open defecation. More water points are urgently needed.

## **PROTECTION, ACCESS, AND SECURITY**

### *Influx of returnees registered in the Two Areas*

### **Blue Nile**

The cause of tensions between Fallata nomads from North Sudan in Chali El-Fil in search of pasture destroyed farms disrupted access to farms and water points.

More than 639 fled into Blue Nile after Gure refugee camp in Ethiopia was attacked by armed men. Refugees arrived in difficult conditions. Most of them are children and women originally from Maban in South Sudan.

### **South Kordofan**

The influx of refugees increased in 2021, with over 30,000 new arrivals mainly in Thobo, Dallami, and Heiban counties bringing the total number of returnees hosted in the SPLM/N-controlled areas to over 40,000 by end of December 2021.

On 20 December 2021: In Tabanya payam, a mine explosion killed a woman.

On 20 December 2021: In the same place, Meserriya nomads burnt the grazing and farming land. As a result, sorghum sheep. In Alubi village, 30 sacks of sorghum, 25 sheep were sent ablaze in Farish village, 18 sacks of sorghum and 193 bundles of house renovating grass got burned.

On 25 December 2021: In Laru village, 14 heads of cows were looted by unknown people.

On 12 December 2021: One child died instantly when he was knocked down by a motorbike.

On 2 December: In Dallami payam, Dallami County an attack by Messeriya raiders led to the death of one farmer. In Tollabi payam, Thobo county, 19 households were destroyed by fire including food and non-food items. These families are in dire need of assistance.

### **Western Jebels**

On 23 December 2021, 3 farmers were reportedly killed on their far farms by raiders. As a result, access to farms was a challenge as several road ambushes became rampant. This affected the proper utilization of the available fertile agricultural land across the counties.

On 7 December 2021: Clashes in the far farms between Meserriya and farmers at Korondo village, Wali payam, Dilling county resulted in life casualties and cattle losses.

*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](mailto:advocacy@skbncu.org)*