

SKBN Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update

September 2018

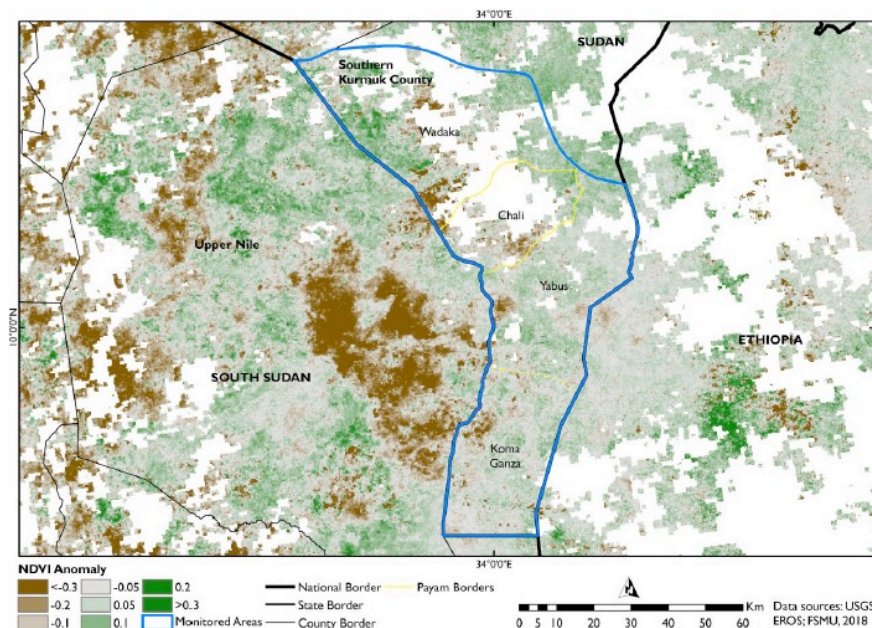
FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Below-average rains threaten food security in 2019

Families in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Western Jebels are being forced to replant their farms as consequence of the poor rainfall during the growing season. Although Central and Western Jebel registered above-average rains in late July, the rainfall decreased considerably in August. Southern Kurmuk County was the only region where the precipitations remained above-average in August.

Over the second dekad of August, Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) showed poorly vegetated zones across the three areas monitored, with notable below-average pockets.

According the last [FSMU quarterly report](#), the coming months will be crucial and show if crops planted (and replanted) were able to withstand below-average rains.

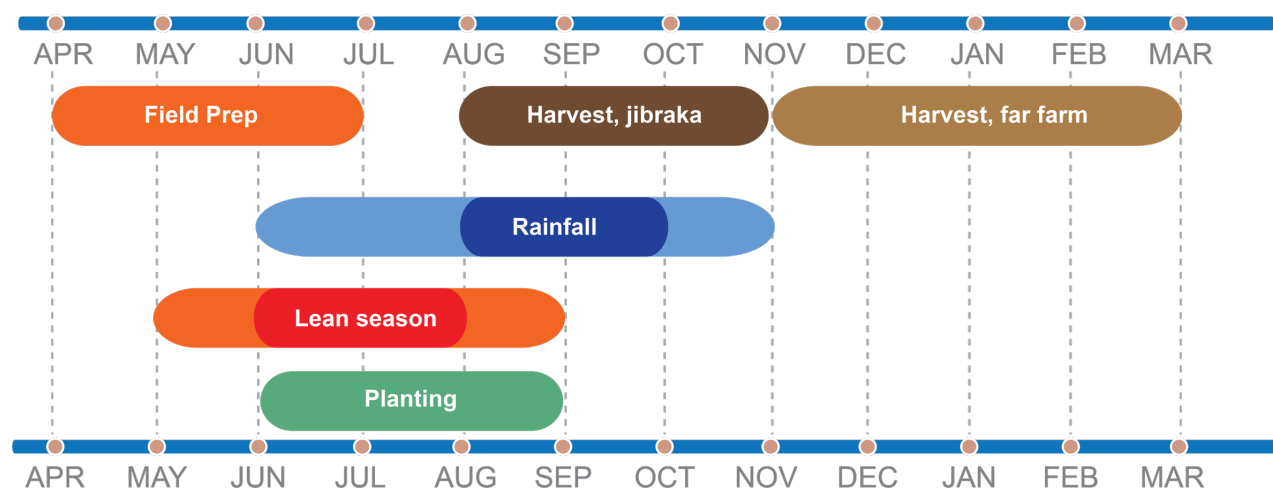


Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), second dekad of August 2018, Southern Kurmuk County



Highlights

- Record prices for sorghum in Wadaka, Blue Nile.
- The lean season of 2019 is likely to be early which means a worse food security situation for 2019 in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.
- Livestock disease outbreaks affect BN and could spread to Sudan and South Sudan.
- Primary schools restart in October.



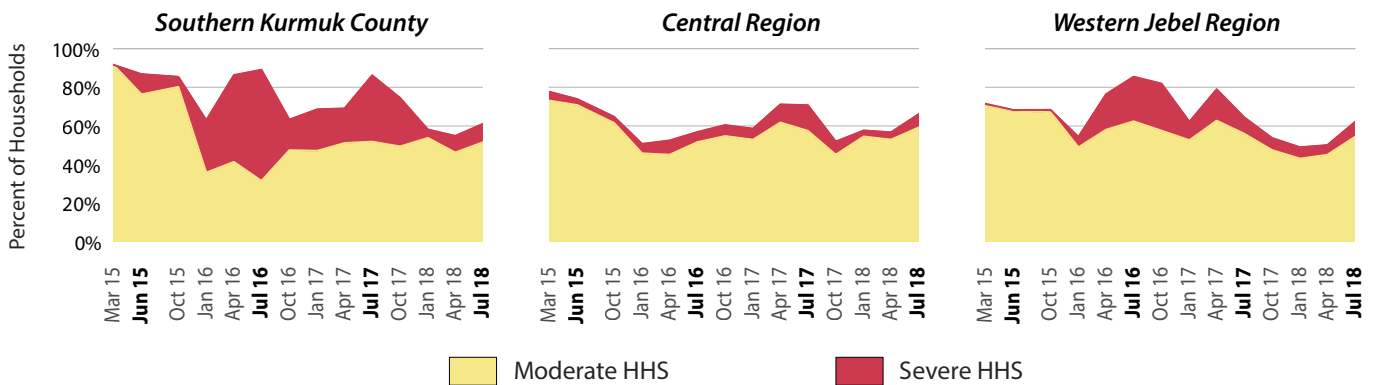
Seasonal calendar South Kordofan and Blue Nile

The jibraka (farm adjacent to the house) harvest started in August, and according to the latest [FSMU market brief](#), it increased the number of vegetable traders and availability of food in the markets. This could help to ease food insecurity at the height of the lean season. This is even more important considering that over the last months, sorghum markets remained scarce - as families await the start of the far farm harvest in November – and prices remained high, with a striking surge in Western Jebel markets. Additionally, with the limited access to markets due to seasonal rains and the food stocks from the 2017 harvest exhausted, households were forced to pay higher prices to feed their families.

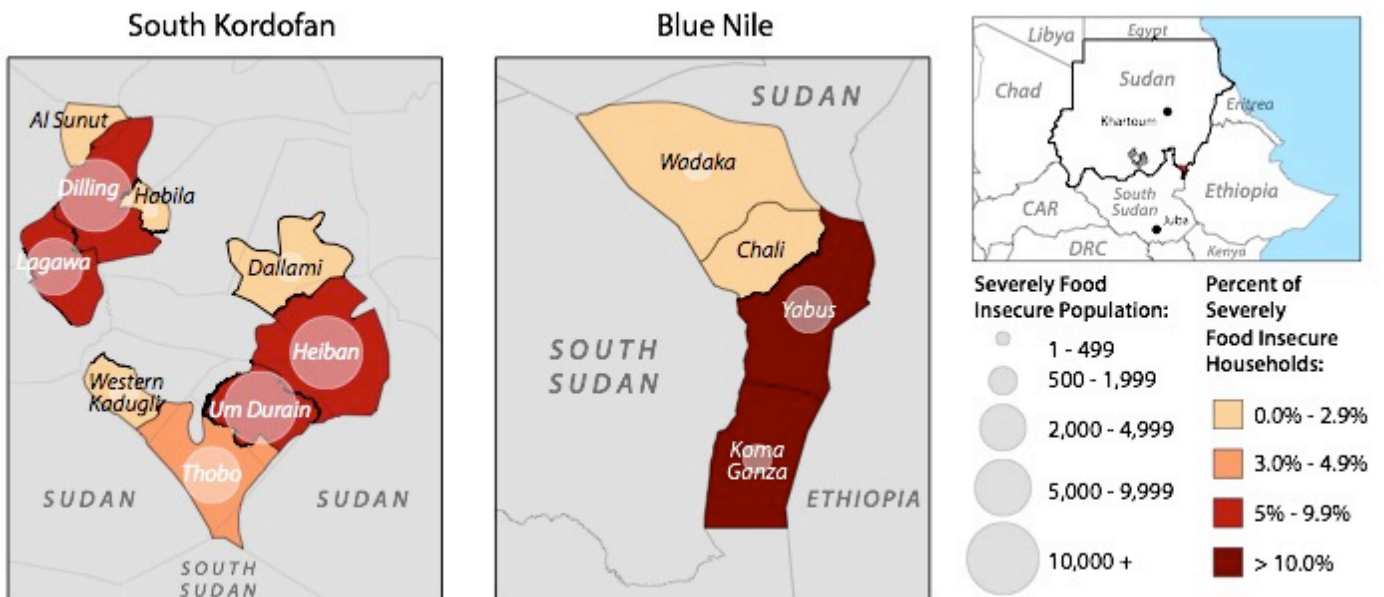
The food security conditions faced by families living in the northern and southern households of Southern Kurmuk County, Blue Nile, are different. In the north, sorghum prices skyrocketed in Wadaka to unseasonably high – even record – levels. Despite the high prices, traders were reportedly reluctant to bring goods to Wadaka markets as they saw little chance at profit due to high transportation costs, and taxes. This may limit availability of goods in the coming months. This echoes Coordination Unit monitors' observation that in Wadaka and Yabus payam most people depend on buying food from the market and that there is insufficient food commodities and variance available for purchasing. Reliance on gold mining has been observed, especially in the areas of greater Yabus, Abengaro and Balila.

A low harvest rate has been observed in Komo-Ganza and local communities started consuming their main crop of peanuts before fully grown. It was reported that food security situation and nutrition is still poor but could improve during October when families will collect their own farm production. The situation is still worse if compared with neighbouring payams.

Market functionality is impaired by access constraints, resulting in high prices and reduced buying power across the whole county.



Severely and moderate food insecure households, all monitored areas, July 2018 - Source FSMU Quarterly Report May-July 2018



Severely food insecure households and population in need, July 2018 - Source FSMU Quarterly Report May-July 2018

According to the [FSMU latest quarterly report May-July 2018](#), the differences between male and female-headed households emerged in July. It is the first time the gap is observed since FSMU began reporting on gender in March 2017. Across the three monitored areas, female-headed households were more severely food insecure (10 per cent) than their male counterparts (6 per cent). Female-headed households also consumed a less diverse diet, had lower far farm access and a smaller share of food stocks.

Under the current seasonal trends for movements, the numbers of people crossing from South Sudan has decreased in September to 625 new arrivals, less than half of the number of arrivals in September 2017. The main reasons reported for movements are still availability of food, education, access to medical services and employment opportunities.

HEALTH

Lack of trained medical staff remains a critical concern

Large areas of both Blue Nile and South Kordofan are underserved with clinics and trained medical staff. Coupled with poor infrastructure, road access in rainy season and limited stocks of medical supplies prepositioned for outbreaks, the Two Areas are especially vulnerable to any sudden disease outbreaks and epidemics within, and in the region.

One example of the risks is the recent outbreak of Chikungunya in Kassala State, in August, that is still being monitored. Although this is a not life-threatening disease, according to WHO, if combined with other fevers such as dengue it can lead to death. The lack of trained health works hinders the response and support the affected people.

In Blue Nile, the health services are in a worse state. With no reproductive health services, no referral system and limited health skill capacity, there are regular emergency cases, especially related to complicated pregnancy and delivery reported on.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Continued livestock deaths in Blue Nile

The prevalence of animal deaths across all four monitored payams in Southern Kurmuk County remained high for the second month in a row. With no community veterinary services available in the County and without its usual vaccine support, diseases could spread into neighbouring areas of South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia. The economic effect on communities would be critical. To date, no disease outbreak has been reported in the monitored areas of Western Jebels and South Kordofan.

WASH

Rainy season increases risk of water-related diseases

Since the beginning of the rains, adequate water sources have been reported from all monitored areas, except for Dellami County in South Kordofan.

Despite the benefits of a good rainy season, the amount of stagnant water surfaces, exacerbated by poor hygiene practises increase the risk of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), cholera and other water-related diseases.

EDUCATION

Primary schools to re-open in October

Children are registering for the new primary school year in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Over 2,000 children were coached for the primary leaving exam in November across centres in South Kordofan, refugee camps in South Sudan and, for the first time, also in Western Jebels.

SECURITY AND PROTECTION

September marks seven years since the war broke out in Blue Nile

On the [2nd of September 2011 fighting started in Blue Nile](#), less than three months after war broke out between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-N) in Southern Kordofan (6th June 2011), drawing on similar grievances and tensions that had driven the previous civil war and that had been left unresolved by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Remaining pockets of conflict

Although the overall security situation remained within its normal limits, some incidents were reported in September from both Areas

In South Kordofan, on September 29, at Umdurdo village, Kumbur payam, at least six cattle were reportedly robbed. They are suspected to be taken to government held area of Umduhalib. On September 20, a trader was killed in Western Jebels, impacting freedom of movement in the region.

Ethnic conflict in western Ethiopia led to another incident last month, when thousands reportedly fled after [gunmen killed four local officials](#) during a visit to neighbouring Oromia region at the border with Benishangul-Gumuz. Fighting between rival ethnic groups in western Ethiopia has displaced 70,000 people and, according to UN agencies, nearly one million people have been displaced in southern Ethiopia since clashes erupted in April. While this incident hasn't had a direct effect on Blue Nile this time, insecurity in the western part of Ethiopia has impacted weekly markets in the past.

** This monthly update on humanitarian issues in the Two Areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan is compiled by the SKBNCU. 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 coordination@skbncu.org*