

SKBN Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update

June 2020



People queuing at a food distribution centre in Yabus, Blue Nile State

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Food stocks low

Blue Nile

Cultivation continues for staples including short duration sorghum, maize, beans, and groundnuts on the jibraka farms (near farms). Heavy rainfall in some localities has damaged seedlings which will increase serious risk of food insecurity in many parts of Blue Nile. This increases the vulnerability of people already facing increasing hunger due to a previous poor harvest and closure of markets due to COVID-19 containment measures.

Food stock levels across the region are lower compared to the same time last year with many households already food insecure. Markets and food aid are seasonally the alternative sources of food. However, due to COVID-19 related restrictions, cross-border markets are only partially functional resulting in inadequate supply of food items which leads to higher prices, especially for sorghum. The most severely affected communities are in Komo Ganza and Yabus payams which depend mainly on markets. Food insecurity in Chali payam was moderate. Some households have now registered no food stocks left and depended on the few still available markets, food aid and wild roots.

A food aid distribution was conducted across all localities in June with the exception of Moguf which could not be reached due to a poor road network during the rainy season.

Highlights:

COVID-19: Authorities increase preparedness and response

Increased food prices amidst Covid-19 containment measures

Food distribution takes place in Yabus, Blue Nile

Both primary and secondary schools remain closed

New clashes in Kadugli and Lagawa County in South Kordofan

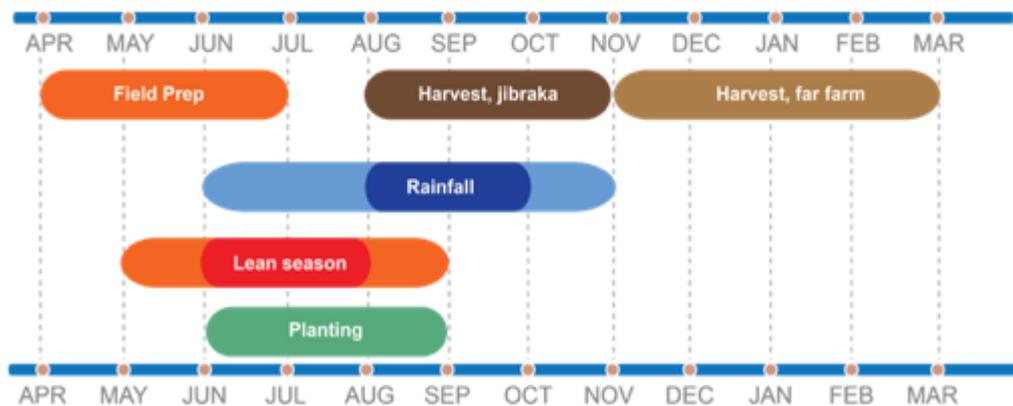
Prices were higher compared to the same time in 2019, which has affected the purchasing power of poor households. Sorghum prices, as well as soap prices increased from 15ETB (Ethiopian Birr) a piece in May to 20 ETB in June, a clear sign that its demand has increased due to COVID-19 awareness messaging of hand washing. Cattle were not available Moguf and Yabus markets creating scarcity of meat and dairy products due to migration of Fellata nomads northwards.

South Kordofan

From May to June 2020 the region registered more than **2000** returnees from Sudan and South Sudan due to the deteriorating security situation in both countries and lack of basic services as a result of COVID-19 measures. Household dependence on coping strategies has increased compared to the same time last year where the harvest was good.

Western Jebel

Cultivation of short duration crops like maize, ground nuts, cowpeas, hibiscus, and cucumber are ongoing. The area received favorable rainfall until the end of June. Severe hunger has been registered and households have already exhausted their food stocks. The main source of food for communities in this part of the region is sale of livestock but, with the closure of some crossline markets, they were unable to sell their animals in order to buy food especially sorghum. Also, recent clashes in Lagawa are bringing about unpredictable conditions that could put the already food insecure communities at risk, especially if they are unable to access their farms and markets.



Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and Blue Nile

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Authorities continue preparedness

The Secretariat of Health (SoH) continues to enforce measures to contain the spread of the virus. These containment measures, however, have additional challenges to delivery of effective and timely assistance to the affected people and communities. Despite risk communication and messaging as well as integrating food security and WASH in the response to prevent disease outbreak including COVID-19, awareness of the pandemic remains low across the Two Areas.

Needs:

- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a large percentage
- Strengthening of screening and quarantine facilities at points of entry into the Two Areas
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves
- Improving food availability and temporary shelters for new arrivals quarantined at points of entry
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness and transportation of humanitarian supplies

EDUCATION

Schools remain closed due to COVID-19 pandemic

Assignments have been prepared and sent to final year secondary students and preparations and consultations by authorities to reopen schools is ongoing.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Inadequate drug supply to meet increased demand

Blue Nile

As earlier reported, the region continues to register cases of diarrhea, skin diseases, and cough. Lack of drugs in most health care units was reported and people have to walk distances to access medical care. These access gaps are a critical impediment in the fight against diseases like malaria as well as people's general well-being and survival from other health risks. The health sector in the Two Areas still experiences huge gaps exacerbated by funding gaps.

South Kordofan

Local clinics have reported being overwhelmed by high migration of returnees and IDPs from Kadugli. Access to trained medical staff and drug supply is highly limited for the population.

Communities are walking long distances in search of medical care. More medical capacity is sorely needed to address the needs of over a million people in SPLM-N areas of South Kordofan.

Western Jebels

Malaria, skin infections and pneumonia were the main diseases reported. Malaria cases increased due to the rainy season (which creates more pools of water which increase the number of mosquitoes), exacerbated by lack of drug supply and limited number of trained health workers in the region. The fragile health care system is unable to handle the number of cases. Moreover, immunization has not taken place since the beginning of the year due to lack of funding.

WASH

The rainy season has started, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases

Blue Nile

Access to safe drinking water remains a challenge. Humans and animals continue to share water sources, and poor health and sanitation is reported throughout the region. Communities are not digging family latrines, and there are no proper hand washing facilities near latrines and communities continue drinking unsafe surface water. Distribution of chlorine and water filters is ongoing.

South Kordofan

Lack of access to clean water remains a significant issue. Parts of Heiban county have no access to clean water due to a limited number of boreholes to meet the demand. With drinkable water being scarce, waterborne illnesses threaten people in the absence of adequate health care.

Western Jebel

Safe clean drinking water for both livestock and humans is insufficient and just as in previous years there remains an urgent need for drilling more boreholes to cater for the households which share from the same water sources with animals. Limited access to safe water and sanitation services, on top of poor hygiene conditions, could trigger health emergencies.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Limited access to drugs affects livestock keeping

Blue Nile

Cough and diarrhea in livestock were registered mainly in Komo Ganza and Yabus payams. Lack of veterinary drugs and veterinary professionals are among the major challenges facing livestock keeping in Blue Nile region. Vaccination is urgently needed to safeguard livestock, a vital part of communities' food security.

South Kordofan

The livestock sector, which contributes heavily to the food security basket, has not been supported since the start of the year. Livestock owners have relied on crossline markets for drug supply, but, with COVID-19, all the crossline markets are only allowed to bring in food and emergencies. Livestock will suffer from various diseases at the beginning of the rainy season and require vaccination. Without access to vaccines, many livestock and thus livelihoods could be affected. Intervention in this sector is crucially needed.

Western Jebel

Cattle raiding is on the increase, making it difficult for livestock to access better pasture and water. On the other hand, the Secretariat of Agriculture has reported lack of veterinary drugs since the beginning of the year due to funding gaps.

PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY***Continued displaced increase of movement into the Two Areas*****Blue Nile**

At least 22 people from Gure Tongo camps in Ethiopia were received at Yabus Balla entry point, among them two children.

02 June: There was a cattle raid in Magar village, Wadaka payam allegedly by the Missiriya.

South Kordofan

Over 1500 households have reportedly fled their homes in Western Kadugli and taken refuge in Um Durain and Thobo county following a recent escalation in violence between communities and the Missiriya.

Emergency shelter and non-food items are vital as people are living out in the open area and the raining season has started. The urgent needs are for plastic sheets, jerry cans, plastic mat, blankets, cooking sets, clothes among others. There is urgent need for drinking water and latrines. A general hygiene promotion campaign needs to be carried out as well as the distribution of soap and jerry cans. There is an urgent need for general food distributions as well.

Western Jebel

11 June: 12 heads of cattle were taken from Subai village of Alfrashaya Payam Dilling county, reportedly by armed men from Al-farshaya town in Government-controlled areas.

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*

