**KEY MESSAGES**

- **During the 2020 lean season, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes are widespread in South Sudan.** The severity and scale of acute food insecurity are high across the country, driven by the loss of productive assets linked to conflict, poor macroeconomic conditions, and large-scale crop and livestock losses during the 2019 floods. At this time of year, the relative importance of food purchased from markets to household food access is seasonally high. However, local currency depreciation and low market supply levels are driving high staple food prices amid seasonal and atypical declines in food and income sources. Escalating inter-communal conflict in Warrap, Lakes, and Jonglei is also interfering with households’ ability to engage in productive livelihood activities. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) persists in areas most significantly affected by recent or recurrent shocks, especially in Jonglei, Lakes, Warrap, and Upper Nile.

- **Although most COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in May,** the overall demand for labor and services remains below normal levels. In urban areas, the decline in daily income coupled with high food prices is likely driving an increase in the number of food insecure households. In rural areas and Protection of Civilian sites, where the known spread of COVID-19 remains low, the direct and indirect impacts on rural households’ health or food security are still low. However, the population’s vulnerability to the health and food security impacts of COVID-19 is very high, based on existing high acute malnutrition prevalence, poor access to health services and WASH infrastructure, and levels of chronic or other illnesses.

- **At the peak of the lean season in July/August,** the magnitude and severity of acute food insecurity are expected to increase as household food access becomes increasingly constrained by rising, high food prices. Food insecurity will be most severe in Jonglei, Lakes, Warrap, and Upper Nile, where inter-communal conflict is likely to persist in the near-term and where a forecast of above-average rainfall in eastern South Sudan poses a high risk of flooding. Based on low food availability, high food prices, and limited livelihoods coping options, many households will be extremely vulnerable to disruptions in access to markets, food assistance, or other food and income sources. Under these conditions, Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is possible among some households in localized areas in the 2020 lean season. While efforts to distribute double distributions of food assistance to 2.8 million people is underway in June, the effects of insecurity, operational challenges due to COVID-19, and/or seasonal deterioration in road access could delay or impede deliveries.

- **During the post-harvest period,** food security is expected to marginally improve to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in most areas. Based on a forecast of favorable rainfall in western South Sudan but offset by poor access to seeds, 2020 harvests are likely to be similar to or lower than last year. Most rural households with access to arable land are expected to harvest several months of stocks, while milk, fish, and wild food availability will be seasonally high. However, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is expected to persist in conflict-affected or flood-prone areas of Jonglei, Warrap, Upper Nile, and Lakes, where crop and livestock production prospects are most likely to remain below normal. In the event that the scale of flooding in 2020 is severe in Jonglei or Upper Nile and temporarily prevents households from accessing food sources, it is possible that some households could experience Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) during the post-harvest period.

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1 Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is when a household group has an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after the full employment of coping strategies. This can occur in the case of a localized situation, or if there is a time-lag between food insecurity, acute malnutrition, and mortality.
**The risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) has declined, but Famine (IPC Phase 5) remains possible in worst-case scenario**

Although Famine (IPC Phase 5) could be possible under a worst-case scenario in which there is a resurgence of political conflict in South Sudan, recent events are driving a decline in the risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) in 2020 compared to 2014-2019. While levels of inter-communal conflict are higher in 2020 than 2019, levels of political conflict have remained low since the signing of the 2018 peace agreement and formation of the unity government in February 2020. Based on patterns of conflict in South Sudan and past trends of acute food insecurity, tactics used in the political conflict led to rapid deterioration in food security outcomes in cases where household movement and humanitarian access were significantly restricted. Communities were cut off from food sources for a prolonged time, leading to excess mortality from hunger. Due to the volatile nature of the political conflict, areas of highest concern could shift quickly and unpredictably. In contrast, inter-communal conflict patterns are characterized by hit-and-run attacks with periodic, temporary disruptions to household movement and humanitarian access. While the impact on food security can be severe for affected households, the scale and timing of the attacks have not cut off large communities from food sources for a prolonged time.

Nevertheless, food security outcomes remain severe in the border regions of Lakes and Warrap states and in Jonglei and northern Unity states, where inter-communal conflict is driven by competition over land and grazing resources, cattle raids, and associated retaliation. In these areas, households have very low coping capacity due to the prolonged erosion of productive assets linked to conflict, poor macroeconomic conditions, and large-scale crop and livestock losses caused by the 2019 floods. Recent FSNMS and SMART surveys and field assessments conducted in late 2019 and early 2020 indicate that active conflict and the fear of conflict are interfering with households’ ability to engage in productive livelihood activities. Further, severe flooding in low-lying, wetland areas – particularly in Jonglei and Upper Nile – can temporarily cut households off from food sources as observed in 2019, though water or airborne delivery of food assistance remains possible. As a result, small proportions of at-risk households – characterized by a lack of productive assets or social networks to access support and heavy reliance on food assistance – can quickly deteriorate to Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in the event of recurrent shocks or in between food assistance distribution cycles. Data collected in Akobo, Ayod, and Duk suggest the proportion of households who experienced Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) due to these drivers is well below 20 percent at the county level.

At the July/August peak of the 2020 lean season, more than 55 percent of the population will likely experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes even after the delivery of food assistance. Although the unity government reached an agreement on the selection of state governors in June, inter-communal conflict will most likely persist in the near term. A forecast of above-average rainfall in eastern South Sudan is also anticipated to lead to a consecutive year of flood-induced crop and livestock losses in low-lying areas where existing food insecurity is already severe. Based on low household food availability, high food prices, and limited livelihoods coping options, many households will be extremely vulnerable to disrupted access to food assistance and markets resulting from conflict, floods, or the direct or indirect impacts of COVID-19. Under these conditions, Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is possible among at-risk households during the 2020 lean season; in the event of severe flooding, Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) could also be possible during the post-harvest period based on trends observed in late 2019/early 2020. However, because of the periodic, localized scale of inter-communal conflict and given that large-scale populations have not been cut off for extended periods of time since 2017/18, there is a declining likelihood that at least 20 percent of the population in a given area would sustain an extreme lack of food accompanied by extreme acute malnutrition and excess mortality due to hunger, indicative of Famine (IPC Phase 5).

**Figure 1.** Political conflict events, inter-communal conflict events, and fatalities in South Sudan, January 2013 – June 2020

Source: data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

**Conflict and displacement:** Implementation of the 2018 peace agreement continues to move forward gradually. On June 17, President Kiir and Vice President Machar reached an agreement on the selection of governors for the country’s 10 states, a key benchmark for the peace process. However, the third party to the agreement, the South Sudan Opposition Alliance, is yet to confirm the agreement on the selection of governors. Several security challenges still need to be resolved, including the unification of the national army and a resolution to political conflict between the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) and hold-out opposition groups in Central Equatoria. In Lainya, Yei, Morobo, and Kajo-Keji counties of Central Equatoria, the conflict has displaced more than 17,000 people since January. Meanwhile, intercommunal conflict – which has been driven by cattle raids, access to grazing land and water, and retaliation for earlier attacks and enabled by the recent absence of state governors – has escalated in parts of Warrap, Lakes, and Jonglei. At least 60,000 people were displaced in these areas in early 2020. Additionally, armed youth activity in Twic county of Warrap and Mayom county of Unity state displaced 10,000 people and resulted in significant loss of life, and looting of 20,000 cattle in late May to early June.

According to IOM, at least 1.6 million South Sudanese are internally displaced based on data collected from January to March under the round 8 displacement and mobility tracking matrix. The population of internally displaced people (IDP) declined 4 percent compared to late 2019, attributed to the return of flood-affected IDP, closure of some IDP sites, and data cleaning. The largest IDP populations are in Unity, Warrap, and Upper Nile; however, round 8 does not capture displacement from April to June. According to UNHCR, a further 2.25 million people remain displaced in neighboring countries as of May. UNHCR has recorded 53,848 refugee returns in 2020, nearly half of whom returned to Central Equatoria. An average of 4,250 returns have been recorded monthly since March. However, UNHCR notes the data may reflect retroactive updates on pre-COVID-19 returns in Maiwut of Upper Nile and Magwi of Eastern Equatoria. Returns through May 2020 exceed 50 percent of total returns in 2019 but are lower than previously expected due to COVID-19-related border closures.

**Macroeconomic conditions:** Low export earnings relative to demand for imported goods continue to drive local currency depreciation, which in turn continue to cause the price of essential food and non-food commodities to rise. South Sudan’s oil export earnings, which account for 97 percent of its export revenue, are being affected by the collapse of global crude oil prices at a time when peace deal implementation, infrastructure investments, and the COVID-19 pandemic response are stretching government resources. Although global crude oil prices are gradually recovering, prices remain well below previously budgeted oil prices of 50 USD/barrel. Under the OPEC+ agreement signed in April, South Sudan is obligated to cut national oil output by 23 percent of its October 2018 volumes—which were 120,000-130,000 barrels per day (bpd)—for a period of time. Reflecting low foreign exchange reserves and an overvaluation of the official exchange rate, the gap between the official and parallel market exchange rates widened from 82 percent in June 2019 to 93 percent in June 2020. In June, the SSP is trading at 315 SSP/USD on the parallel market and about 163 SSP/USD on the official market. However, the rate of inflation has declined from 54 percent in February 2020 to 40 percent in April and remains below the rate of inflation in April 2019 (52 percent), according to the National Bureau of Statistics.
COVID-19: Rising COVID-19 cases continue to threaten the health of the South Sudanese people, while enhanced health screenings at the border and previous movement restrictions continue to indirectly affect pre-existing food insecurity. Since confirmation of the first case on April 5th, 2,006 cases have been confirmed by the Ministry of Health as of June 30th, with an 18.9 percent positive test rate and observed case-fatality ratio of 1.8 percent. Most known cases are located within Juba. However, due to low per capita testing, contact tracing challenges, and a testing backlog, the total case incidence is likely higher than known. Although the Ministry of Health and WHO advocate various preventive measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, adherence to these measures is very low among the public. To date, the known spread of COVID-19 in rural areas and Protection of Civilian sites remains very low, resulting in few known, direct impacts to rural households’ health or food security. However, the population’s vulnerability to the direct health impacts of COVID-19 is very high, based on existing high acute malnutrition prevalence, poor access to health services and WASH infrastructure, and existing levels of chronic or other illnesses. In addition, poor households are very vulnerable to the direct impacts of COVID-19 on food security, as infected households may face limited ability to engage in productive livelihood activities while sick or quarantined.

Previously, the indirect impacts of COVID-19 via movement restrictions to limit the spread of the virus drove a high risk of deterioration in acute food security outcomes. However, in early May, the government lifted most movement restrictions to permit people to resume income-earning activities. The lifting of restrictions is facilitating the gradual recovery of business activity in urban areas, but overall business activity and demand for labor and services remains below normal levels. As a result, income from daily casual labor and petty trade – which are key income sources for poor, urban households – remains atypically low. Key preventive measures that remain in place include the closure of land borders and mandatory COVID-19 testing of truck drivers transporting cargo at formal border crossing points. These preventive measures, combined with existing, long-term macroeconomic issues, are likely contributing to high staple food prices in some markets.

Markets and trade: In June, markets and trade routes are operational in all state capitals and most rural areas. However, supply levels and performance vary, driven by periodic disruptions from conflict and insecurity, seasonal deterioration in feeder road conditions, and high transportation costs indirectly associated with COVID-19 restriction measures and longer clearance times at border entry points (Figure 2). Specifically, insecurity and inter-communal conflict in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity, Lakes, Warrap, and Upper Nile periodically disrupt trade flows and market functioning in some rural areas. Since the start of the main season rains in late May/early June, localized, heavy rainfall damaged some segments of the western and eastern road corridors. In addition, measures in response to COVID-19 slowed down cross-border trade flows from source markets and domestic trade flows from market hubs, placing additional pressure on the local supply in key reference markets and rural markets. For example, quarterly import volumes of sorghum grain from Sudan were 93 percent below the 2018-2019 average from April to June; however, monthly import volumes from May to June increased by 19-28 percent, exhibiting some recovery. Similarly, import volumes of sorghum from Uganda via the Nimule cross-border entry point sharply declined between the first and second quarters of 2020, but have now stabilized. From April to June 2020, quarterly import volumes were four percent higher than the same period of 2019.

The depreciation of the value of the SSP and inflation of essential commodities, low market supply levels, and impacts of inter-communal violence and COVID-19 screening procedures on trade flows are all contributing to rising staple food prices amid declining food and income sources. Long-term inflation is the main driver of high food prices, though some atypical prices increases occurred in some markets from March to May, likely due to the slowdown in cross-border and domestic trade flows on market supply. Based on price data collected in May in reference markets across the country and available in the CLiMIS portal, the retail price of a malwa (3.5 kg) of white sorghum grain ranged from 45 to 66 percent above the five-year average in Torit (Central Equatoria) and Rumbek Centre (Lakes) and was approximately 135 percent above the five-year average in Wau (Western Bahr el Ghazal), Aweil Centre (Northern Bahr el Ghazal), and Juba. After the onset of COVID-19, prices in Wau, Aweil Centre, and Juba rose by 5-33 percent from April to May, resulting in prices 30-115 percent
above last year in May. On the other hand, there are preliminary indications that a decline in effective demand due to lower household purchasing power in urban areas and/or recent large-scale humanitarian food assistance distributions could be stabilizing or driving short-term price declines in some markets. In Rumbek Centre, prices are stable compared to April as well as May 2019. In Torit, prices are 25 percent below April as well as May 2019.

Lower labor demand in urban areas due to the economic impacts of recent COVID-19 movement restrictions, coupled with high food prices, is driving a decline in household purchasing power in some urban areas – particularly in Juba and smaller towns such as Wau and Yei. Some businesses do not have the capital to re-open, while the public is unable to patronize businesses at previous levels. Combined with high staple food prices, purchasing power among labor-dependent households has declined since March. The terms of trade for a kilogram (kg) of sorghum against the casual labor daily wage from March to mid-June is 12-58 percent below the same time last year in Wau and Juba (Figure 3). In Juba, the quantity of sorghum that a household could buy with a day’s wage sharply declined from 12 kg in March to 5 kg in May. While 5 kg is sufficient to cover one day of minimum kilocalorie needs for an average household of seven, the number of days a poor household may find work per week varies.

Agricultural production: Cumulative March to May rainfall in bimodal Greater Equatoria ranged from average to above average, which broadly supported good cropping conditions but led to some flash flood events. In late May, flash floods in parts of Terekeka and Juba of Central Equatoria destroyed roads, homes, and household property. Crop damage was also reported, though the scale of damage has not yet been assessed. Similarly, flash floods in Bor Town in early June destroyed homes and displaced an estimated 54,000 people. By June, households that planted on time are now consuming green leafy vegetables and beginning to harvest first season maize. However, despite large-scale seed distributions by FAO to at least 90,000 farmers in Greater Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal, key informants report that many farmers in Kapoeta and Yei counties faced difficulty accessing seeds during the planting season. A slowdown in agricultural input supply flows from Uganda led to atypically high seed prices after the onset of COVID-19.

In unimodal areas that are dependent on main season rainfall from June to September, the start of season ranged from early to timely. In the east, rainfall in June ranges from average to 150 percent above average. In the west, early-season rainfall is 70-95 percent of normal; however, cumulative rainfall amounts are sufficient to support crop water requirements according to satellite-derived crop modeling data (Figure 4). According to field reports and key informants, households have completed land preparation. However, many face difficulty accessing seeds due to delayed seed distributions in remote villages, localized insecurity, and inter-communal fighting. Despite these challenges, planting has begun in Greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr el Ghazal. In areas where households planted maize crops, remote-sensing data indicates maize crops are now in the reproductive stage, particularly in Ikwoto, Magwi, Nzara, Yambio, and some areas of Pochalla. In contrast, in the rest of the areas where maize was planted, remote-sensing data shows crops are still in their vegetative stage.

According to key informants, desert locusts are still present in Magwi, Torit, Lopa/Lafon, Budi, and Ikotos of Eastern Equatoria and recently spread to Kapoeta North county of Eastern Equatoria. In Kapeota East, desert locust swarms previously spotted in May have reportedly migrated back into Kenya, while swarms spotted in Renk of Upper Nile have reportedly migrated onward to Sudan. An FAO-led assessment of crop damage caused by desert locust in bimodal cropping areas is underway in Eastern Equatoria. County agriculture departments report crop damage ranges from moderate to severe, while damage in Magwi and Lopa is very low. As of late June, desert locusts have not been reported in any other states, though the likelihood that swarms current in Kenya will transit through eastern South Sudan toward breeding areas in Sudan is imminent, according to FAO’s Desert Locust Watch. Although 87 percent of the FAO’s appeal for the desert locust response in South Sudan has been obtained, operational capacity is limited by heavy rainfall and intercommunal conflict. Other challenges include COVID-19 social distancing guidelines for training local staff in surveillance and monitoring activities.
and quarantine guidelines for international pilots who to carry out the aerial control response.

**Livestock production:** Following above-average rainfall and floods in 2019 and rainfall from March to June 2020, pasture and browse conditions generally range from average to above average and key informants report livestock body conditions generally range from fair to good. However, according to the satellite-derived Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), negative vegetation anomalies are present in northern areas of Greater Bahr el Ghazal due to early-season rainfall deficits. In Greater Equatoria, while FAO’s assessment of desert locust damage is still ongoing, positive NDVI anomalies in locust-infested areas suggest recent rainfall has likely led to regeneration of pasture. At this time of year, livestock are gradually leaving dry season grazing areas to return to homesteads, but insecurity and cattle raids are disrupting these activities in parts of Jonglei, Warrap, and Lakes. Additionally, anecdotal information from key informants suggests atypically high livestock disease incidence and death is still occurring in Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, and Warrap. After the 2019 floods, livestock were weak during the dry season and are still recovering with the recent onset of the rainy season.

**Humanitarian food assistance:** Given persistently low food and income sources among more than half of the national population, food assistance continues to be critical to mitigating food consumption gaps at the household level and preventing more extreme food security outcomes at the county level. However, COVID-19, insecurity, and the onset of the main rainfall season present challenges to humanitarian operational capacity, logistics, and access. While WFP has successfully prepositioned 75 percent of planned food assistance to areas that will be inaccessible during the rainy season, the closure of the Sudan-South Sudan border at Aweil and Bentiu crossing points due to insecurity is causing delays in the arrival of cargo from Sudan. In some conflict-affected areas, conflict may temporarily delay access or delivery of assistance. In April and May, WFP distribution reports show that 2.06 million and 1.23 million people, respectively, received food assistance each month. On the national level, recipients received a full ration on average; however, this is driven by double distributions to areas of high concern. Areas experiencing the highest risk of severe food insecurity were prioritized, including Akobo and Duk, where approximately 25-30 percent of the population received food assistance in April/May, and Ayod, where 25-50 percent of the population received monthly food assistance distributions from March to May.

**Current outcomes**

After an early start to the lean season in February, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes are widespread in June. Driven by the loss of productive assets from conflict, poor macroeconomic conditions, and crop and livestock losses during the 2019 floods and exacerbated by the indirect impacts of COVID-19, the severity and scale of acute food insecurity remains high. Most households currently purchase most of their food from the market, yet their access to food is increasingly constrained by low purchasing power. As a result, many poor households are reliant on food assistance and/or the use of crisis or emergency coping strategies to mitigate widening food consumption gaps. Acute food insecurity, coupled with a seasonal increase in water-borne disease incidence and the reduced operational capacity of partners to deliver nutrition, WASH, and health services in the context of COVID-19, is likely driving deterioration in acute malnutrition. During the post-harvest period in January, 48 counties were already classified as ‘Serious’ (GAM WHZ 10.0-14.9 percent) or ‘Critical’ (GAM WHZ 15-29.9 percent). Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are most likely in 31 counties across the country, including but not limited to parts of Jonglei, Warrap, Lakes, and Upper Nile states. In areas where large-scale food assistance is likely preventing more severe acute food insecurity, Crisis! (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are most likely. Populations with the highest risk of food insecurity include rural households with no livestock who face difficulty in accessing physical markets, food assistance, or fishing grounds due to conflict or seasonal access constraints; IDP and newly returned refugee populations; and poor, urban households with few diversified income sources. Conversely, food insecurity is less severe in parts of Western Equatoria and Lakes, due to the start of the first season harvest, low levels of conflict, and relatively better market functioning.

In Jonglei, Lakes, and Warrap, food insecurity outcomes are among the most severe in the country due to high levels of inter-communal conflict that have reduced households’ capacity to engage in productive livelihood activities or recover from the 2019 floods. In April, SMART survey data collected by Action Against Hunger in Ayod and Duk in Jonglei showed most households face food consumption gaps and poor dietary quality while using negative livelihood coping strategies, which is indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4). In Ayod, pockets of at-risk households reported severe hunger (HHS of 5-6) indicative of Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). Despite large-scale food assistance reaching up to 50 percent of the Ayod population, a combination of high disease prevalence two weeks prior to data collection, low access to water and nutrition services, and low dietary diversity and quality drove up the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) to 30.9 percent (CI: 25.8-36.6), which is above the Extremely Critical threshold (GAM weight-for-height z-score (WHZ) ≥30 percent). In Duk, the SMART survey data indicated a ‘Critical’ level of GAM (WHZ) of 21.9 percent (CI: 17.7-26.8).

Conflict, amid high food prices and seasonally low food availability, is also a main driver of Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes.
in eastern Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, and Unity. In Upper Nile, localized political conflict and cattle raids limit household physical access to market, fishing grounds, and wild food gatherings. For instance, armed activity in Maiwut in early May disrupted trade flows from Gambella of Ethiopia, the principal source market. In parts of Central Equatoria, field reports and key informant information indicate that political conflict between the government forces and hold-out groups continues to displace households, disrupt first-season crop management, trade flows, and market functioning, and limit household movement in search of food and income sources. In addition, high proportions of newly returned IDP or refugees in Central Equatoria are at-risk of food consumption gaps as they re-establish their livelihoods and re-connect to social support.

In other areas, the indirect impacts of COVID-19 and the localized damage from desert locust have exacerbated pre-existing food insecurity. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, where floods occurred in 2019, many households lost the opportunity to earn seasonal casual labor income in Sudan due to COVID-19-related border closures, which occurred during the peak annual migration period of January to May. Lower demand for livestock sales due to the absence of cross-border Arab traders in northern areas is also contributing to lower household income. In several urban centers such as Juba, Wau, and Yei, the loss or reduction of key income sources during and in the aftermath of recent COVID-19 movement restrictions is contributing to elevated food insecurity among poor urban households. In Kajo-Keji county, border closures have prevented recent refugee returnees from accessing markets and assistance in neighboring Uganda. In parts of Eastern Equatoria, first season crop losses from desert locusts have affected household food access in the lean season.

National Assumptions

The most likely scenario from June 2020 to January 2021 is based on the following national-level assumptions:

- Based on recent trends, levels of political conflict are expected to be similar to 2019 while levels of intercommunal conflict are expected to be higher than 2019. Political conflict is of highest concern in parts of Central Equatoria and Upper Nile. Localized intercommunal conflict and insecurity are anticipated to be highest in parts of Jonglei, Lakes, Warrap, Unity, and Eastern Equatoria, though community and government-led peace and mediation efforts are ongoing.

- Based on available information from the Ministry of Health and leading local and international health experts, including the WHO, the number of COVID-19 cases is likely to rise in the near term due to both the spread of the virus and increased testing. Available modeling projections from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine indicate daily case incidence may peak between August and September, though new cases are likely throughout the projection period.

- While most movement restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19 have already been lifted, the remaining movement restrictions are assumed to remain in place through at least September. However, the severity of restrictions may vary by location – such as in hotspot areas like Juba – depending on the daily case incidence trajectory.

- Based on the assumption that land borders will likely remain closed through at least September, the monthly flow of spontaneous refugee returns is likely to be similar to or lower than levels observed in May 2020. Some returns are anticipated given that unofficial border crossing points remain relatively porous.

- Based on South Sudan’s commitment to reduce oil production by 30,000 bpd per the OPEC+ agreement and the likelihood of low global crude oil prices through late 2020, the loss of export revenue is projected to contribute to growth in the budget deficit in FY2020/21. Low foreign exchange reserves and low capacity to service existing debt are expected to lead to continued depreciation of the SSP on the parallel market. However, the World Bank’s June 2020 forecast predicts inflation in FY2021 will be lower than the preceding year.

- Based on the expiration of most COVID-19 movement restrictions, lower levels of conflict, and persistently poor macroeconomic conditions, the World Bank forecasts that private consumption expenditure is most likely to slightly contract (-1.5 percent) in FY2021 relative to the preceding year. Since household labor income in urban areas is primarily associated with consumption expenditure, it is anticipated that household income from daily casual labor and petty trade in urban centers – such as Juba, Wau, Bor, Torit, Yei, Rumbek, and Aweil – will largely recover compared to the March-May 2020 period and will be slightly lower than last year.

- Based on cross-border trade monitoring data from January to March and recent trends in weekly cross-border trade volumes since April, cross-border trade flows from Uganda will most likely be similar to 2019 while trade flows from Sudan will most likely be lower than 2019. Assuming that health screening measures remain in place throughout the scenario period, quarterly variations in trade flows are likely given the associated slowdown in cargo movements.

- Based on current trends, domestic trade flows are most likely to remain below normal levels through at least September due to reduced trader activity to avoid the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission and/or respond to lower consumer
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Demand. Above-average rainfall is also likely to drive a seasonal decline in trading activity. Areas most likely to experience local market supply shortages include Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

- Retail staple food prices are most likely to rise and remain above the recent five-year average in many markets, especially outside of Juba, based on local currency depreciation and likely fluctuations in the parallel exchange rate; high transportation costs, including formal and informal taxes along routes; and anticipated variations in trade flows. On the other hand, steeper price hikes may be mitigated by food aid distributions and declining consumer demand in some urban areas such as Torit and Rumbek Centre. Based on FEWS NET’s integrated price projections, the retail price of white sorghum in Bor South, Wau, and Juba is projected to range from 45 to 180 percent above the five-year average and up to 65 percent above prices observed in 2019, peaking in September. In Aweil, prices are projected to range from 10 to 65 percent above the five-year average, while ranging from 32 percent below to 16 percent above 2019 prices.

- Based on the NOAA/CPC NMME, ECMWF C3S, GHACOF55, and ICPAC forecasts, cumulative rainfall from June to September is most likely to be above average in eastern South Sudan and average in western South Sudan. Based on the rainfall forecast, current river catchment levels and above-average soil moisture, there is an elevated risk of flooding in low-lying, flood-prone areas along the Nile River and in the Pibor-Akobo-Sobat river basin in Jonglei.

- In unimodal areas of Greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr el Ghazal, area planted in 2020 is likely to be lower than 2019. Household access to agricultural inputs is expected to be lower in 2020 than 2019 due to the impact of border closures, high food prices, and intercommunal conflict on the market supply of imported seeds and on household expenditures. Additionally, humanitarian seed distributions may be lower than planned due to operational constraints associated with localized insecurity, COVID-19, and seasonal deterioration in road conditions, though interstate flights have resumed.

- Based on current desert locust presence, the short-term rainfall and wind forecasts, and the FAO Desert Locust Watch and ICPAC forecasts, there is a threat of further desert locust spread from northwestern Kenya into eastern South Sudan through late June/early July. However, the locusts are expected to migrate onward to summer breeding areas in Sudan. Control operational capacity is expected to be limited by COVID-19 flight and quarantine restrictions, heavy rainfall, and intercommunal conflict in infested areas. As a result of these factors, damage to crops and pasture from desert locust is anticipated to be broadly limited to Eastern Equatoria, where damage will range from mild to severe across counties.

- Based on lower levels of conflict but reduced area planted in bimodal areas in 2020, coupled with damage from desert locust in Eastern Equatoria, the first season harvest in 2020 is most likely to be similar to or lower than 2019. Crop losses from desert locust will be highest in Eastern Equatoria. However, some bimodal areas, including Eastern Equatoria, also benefit from main season harvest in September/October. Due to lower area planted, intercommunal conflict, and crop losses in flood-prone areas, the main season harvest is expected to be similar to or lower than 2019.

- Based on the rainfall forecast and levels of conflict, household access to natural food sources such as fish and wild foods is broadly expected to follow seasonal trends. Fish availability is expected to reach a seasonal peak by October, while wild foods will be available from throughout the scenario period at varying levels depending on the species. However, access to these food sources may be periodically disrupted or limited in areas affected by insecurity and/or flooding.

- As livestock return near to wet-season grazing areas near homesteads beginning in June/July, milk availability is expected to generally increase from June to November/December. However, access will vary at the household level depending on livestock holdings. Due to the Sudan-South Sudan border closure, however, income from livestock sales is expected to be below-normal since large-scale livestock sales at auction markets in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, and Warrap states – typically involving Arab traders/buyers – are currently suspended. In urban areas, however, income from livestock sales is likely to recover following the lifting of interstate movement restrictions.

- According to WFP, double distributions of food assistance in June and July, targeting 2.8 million people, is ongoing. Based on the May-July operational plan, an average 26 percent of the country population monthly will receive assistance equivalent to an average 37 percent of their monthly kilocalorie needs. While distributions are so far proceeding as planned, a WFP analysis of the potential impact of COVID-19 on food assistance delivery showed that operational capacity to procure or distribute assistance may be lower this period due to more time spent on planning, beneficiary management, and social distancing at distribution points. WFP’s August-to-January operational plan is not available.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

From June to September, food security is expected to deteriorate even further across South Sudan as food prices seasonally rise at the peak of the lean season in July/August, especially in flood-prone and conflict-affected areas where access to markets or food assistance will likely be periodically disrupted. Many households in rural areas will face large consumption...
gaps, though access to planned assistance and seasonal increases in milk and wild food availability is likely to alleviate or prevent deterioration in some counties. In urban areas, high food prices and below-normal daily income may drive an increase in the number of households experiencing acute food insecurity. At the peak of the lean season, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected to expand to 37 counties. Areas of great concern include Jonglei, Lakes, Warrap, and Upper Nile and parts of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria, and Central Equatoria. In some areas where outcomes are already severe and household coping capacity has been eroded due to the 2019 floods and/or recent conflict – such as in Ayod, Akobo, and Duk of Jonglei or Ulang, Nasir, Maiwut, and Longochuk of Upper Nile – it is likely that some of the most at-risk households could experience Catastrophic (IPC Phase 5) outcomes at the peak of the lean season, especially in the event of a consecutive season of large-scale floods in 2020. At-risk households are most likely to include residential or displaced households who do not own livestock, have limited or no access to arable land, and have limited to no access to a functioning market or food assistance. During this period, when the daily case incidence of COVID-19 is expected to peak, close monitoring of the direct impacts of COVID-19 in areas vulnerable to COVID-19 entry and spread – such as counties in border regions and counties with higher population density – is needed.

From October to January, food security is expected to marginally improve during the post-harvest period in areas where harvest prospects are favorable due to the forecast of average rainfall, particularly in western South Sudan. Based on the expectation that households who plant will have harvest stocks similar to somewhat below last year, own production is likely to provide at least three-to-five months of food from September/October to January/February. Additionally, other food sources such as fish, wild foods, and milk will seasonally be at their highest points, though overall access will vary depending on the level of local insecurity and household livestock holdings. Seasonal food availability, along with the anticipated, gradual recovery of household income from casual labor, is expected to lead to improvement Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes in rural and urban areas in many counties. However, most households will likely continue to face at least slight to moderate food consumption gaps over time. However, in conflict-affected and flood-prone areas of Jonglei, Warrap, Upper Nile, and Lakes, where crop and livestock production prospects are most likely to be below normal, most poor households are expected to continue to have large food consumption gaps or will rely on emergency coping strategies during the harvesting period. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected in 12 counties, and while improvement to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is anticipated at the area level in other counties, some households will still likely experience Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes on the household level. In the event that the scale of flooding in 2020 is similar to 2019, some households will be cut off from accessing markets or will be displaced with limited or reduced livelihood coping options; based on patterns observed in 2019, such households could deteriorate to Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) even during the post-harvest period.

Events that Might Change the Outlook
Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Impact on food security outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern and eastern South Sudan</td>
<td>Expansion of desert locust infestation</td>
<td>In the event of erratic rainfall performance or a change in wind patterns that enables the spread of desert locust within South Sudan, more widespread damage to vegetation and unimodal crop losses would be likely. In affected areas, crop losses would lead to earlier depletion of own-produced household food stocks and larger food consumption gaps. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) would be possible in affected areas in the post-harvest period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonglei, Lakes, Warrap, and Unity</td>
<td>Lower levels of intercommunal conflict and livestock raids</td>
<td>In the event that intercommunal violence and cattle raiding events decline in the short- to medium-term, agricultural production, trade flows and market functioning, and food assistance delivery would likely improve. While the interaction with seasonal factors would play a role, improved security would most likely enable gradual improvements in food availability and access for many households. Improvement from Emergency (IPC Phase 4) to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) would be possible in the post-harvest period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Non-adherence to peace deal implementation, leading to an uptick in conflict</td>
<td>A resurgence of political conflict would restrict household movement, disrupt access to food and income sources, cause displacement, and impede food assistance. More widespread Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes would be expected and at-risk households, who are already facing severe outcomes, would be more likely to deteriorate to Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). In the event that at least 20 percent of the population were cut off from accessing food sources for a prolonged period of time, Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Average rainfall with normal distribution from June to September</td>
<td>In the event of average, normally-distributed rainfall, only typical, seasonal flooding would be likely in flood-prone areas. Consequently, the scale of crop and livestock losses would be minimal, permitting better post-harvest outcomes. Improvement from Emergency (IPC Phase 4) to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes would be possible, though outcomes would also depend on levels of conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AREAS OF CONCERN

Jonglei state: Akobo, Ayod, Duk, and Pibor Counties (Figure 5)

Current Situation

Across Jonglei, household food availability and access are atypically low due to the impacts of unprecedented flooding in late 2019 after years of asset losses during the 2013-2020 conflict. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes have existed in most counties since January, and household survey data collected in late 2019 and early 2020 indicated some of the most vulnerable households have likely experienced Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in parts of Akobo, Ayod, and Duk. High levels of inter-communal conflict in 2020 and fear of retaliatory attacks in Pibor, Akobo, and Duk are further disrupting and/or restricting access to agricultural cultivation, livestock production, trade activity, and access to markets, wild food sources, and humanitarian distribution points.

In 2020, inter-communal conflict has escalated in several areas of Jonglei, but especially between the Lou Nuer of Akobo and Murle of Pibor. Relative calm has been maintained in Ayod. Most significantly, violence in the greater Pibor area in February and March resulted in the large-scale displacement of up to 9,000 people, most of whom remain displaced at the UNMISS Protection of Civilians Area site in Pibor town as of May. Recent retaliatory attacks carried out by Murle in mid-May led to the loss of 240 lives – including the deaths of at least three aid workers – and affected more than 23,000 people in the Pieri area of Uror. Although relative calm has returned to Akobo West since March, the threat of retaliatory attacks remains high. Additionally, the frequency of cattle-raiding events is high in Duk, where key informants report at least one-to-three events per month. Due to previous and recent conflict, the IDP population rose from 196,055 people in November 2019 to 207,154 people as of March 2020 in Jonglei, an increase of 6 percent, and given additional displacement in April and May, the IDP population is now likely higher.

In June, poor households are primarily purchasing food from the market. Most households exhausted their own-produced food stocks by February/March, while fish and wild food availability is still seasonally low at the start of the rainfall season. In all four counties, the threat of inter-communal violence in localized areas threatens access to distant areas used for fishing, hunting, and gathering. At the same time, households are earning below-normal income from sales of livestock and natural food products and face high food prices due to a combination of seasonal factors, crop and livestock losses from floods or conflict, and macroeconomic shocks. In Akobo, some households have seasonally migrated to trading centers in Akobo Town; they are likely to return to their homesteads for the agricultural season. In Duk, however, household movement to towns is motivated by fear of intercommunal attacks. Some households have temporarily settled in Payuel, Poktapp, and Padiet towns to earn income from petty trade and casual labor.

Typically, livestock production constitutes one of the most important food and income sources for poor pastoral and agropastoral households in this area. With an early onset of the main 2020 rainfall season occurring in late April/early May, livestock are gradually returning to wet-season grazing areas near homesteads. However, livestock body conditions and milk production are still generally poor due to the destruction of dry season pastures by flooding in late 2019, restricted access to dry season grazing areas because of conflict and raids, and higher disease incidence after the floods. According to key informants, livestock mortality has consequently increased in cattle camps. Normally, 10-12 animals die per month at this time of year in each cattle camp. However, key informants reported up to 40-50 livestock deaths were occurring monthly in various cattle camps in Duk in preceding months. Above-average rainfall from late April to late June is gradually improving pasture and water availability, which raises prospects for seasonal improvements in livestock conditions on the one hand, but conversely raises the risk of death and water-borne disease due to the higher likelihood of flooding.

Due to poor livestock health and cumulative livestock losses due to conflict and the 2019 floods, household income from livestock sales is well below normal. According to available price data from CLIMIS, a medium-size bull in Akobo could only be sold for 60,000 SSP in May compared to 100,000 SSP in mid-2019, representing a 40 percent decline. FSNMS R25 data collected in late 2019 also suggest livestock ownership has declined compared to 2013 and July 2019. SMART survey data collected in April 2020 in Ayod and Duk suggest that livestock herd sizes have further declined from late 2019 to early 2020.
In Ayod, the percentage of households that own livestock declined from 59 percent in December to 37 percent in April. Key informants also report livestock losses in Pibor due to the inter-communal conflict in March and poor livestock health.

Retail staple food prices are rising, driven by long-term currency depreciation, the anticipation of seasonal deterioration in physical road conditions, periodic disruptions due to conflict, and slowdowns in trade flows and speculative pricing related to COVID-19. Although price data collection is irregular, the available price data in CLiMIS shows that the retail price of a *malwa* (3.5 kg) of white sorghum rose by up to 21 percent from April to May 2020 and is well above the five-year average in Akobo, Duk, and Pibor. Markets are generally operational across the counties of concern, but local market supply levels vary between markets. While some markets remain thin, key informant reports that local market supply is high in markets where traders pre-stocked in anticipation of a possible total lockdown and in advance of the rainy season. Most main trading routes are still seasonally passable, though Bor-Akobo and Pib-Akobo land routes are reportedly closed due to heightened insecurity, while trade flows from Sudan via the Nile River are irregular and in lower volumes due to the effects of border closure. The number of traders operating in some markets of Akobo and Pibor has declined in early 2020 due to periodic road ambushes and escalation in inter-communal violence.

May and June marked the start of main season agricultural activities among the 65-95 percent of households who have access to arable land. Given favorable rainfall performance to date, land preparation and planting of sorghum and other staple food crops ranges from early to timely in Akobo, Duk, and Pibor. Key informants reported a slight delay in rainfall onset and planting in Ayod, though this is not likely to notably affect production prospects. In some swampy areas, households who planted seasonal vegetables in April are already consuming some stocks, while maize planted in May is still in the emergence stage. However, inter-communal conflict in mid-May between the Lou Nuer and Murle communities in the Akobo-Pibor-Uror area, which coincided with planting and driving displacement, is restricting cultivation near homesteads due to the threat of attack. Despite the favorable start of season, however, many households who source their seeds and tools from aid agencies or markets are lacking sufficient seeds to plant due to the recent inter-communal violence and COVID-19 related movement restrictions. For instance, in Duk, only 6,000 households have received seeds, while partners in some of the counties of concern are yet to receive seeds from FAO for onward distribution to farmers.

WFP and partners continue to provide food assistance in the recent months, mostly targeting the displaced and most vulnerable households classified in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Akobo West, Ayod, and Duk in January. In mid-May, WFP reported reaching 103,000 people in Ayod, Akobo West, and Duk counties of Jonglei State with a two-month distribution. WFP reports reaching 17,500 people in Haat, Wan Marchar, Maar, and Normanyang of Ayod and 23,553 people in Walgak, Boung, and Kaikuny, of Akobo in April. In Pibor, partner reports indicate that 78,723 people received food assistance in March and April 2020, though this was not confirmed by WFP distribution data. In Duk, 52,000 people received food assistance in May, including conditional food assistance through food for assets for 2,000 households in Poktap.

Food security outcome indicator data from FSNMS R25, conducted in late 2019 during the post-harvest period, showed that more than 20 percent of households in Akobo, Ayod, Duk, and Pibor were experiencing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes. Among this population, some households in parts of Akobo, Duk, and Ayod – those who reported a lack of access to land, livestock, or fish – reported large food consumption gaps and exhaustion of coping strategies indicative of Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). SMART survey data collected by Action Against Hunger in April 2020 in Ayod and Duk suggest the risk of severe food insecurity remains high, but stabilized or mitigated by food assistance. Although SMART survey data was not collected in Akobo or Pibor, the total depletion of food stocks, low levels of livestock ownership in Pibor, recent large-scale displacement, seasonally low access to milk and wild foods, below-normal income from livestock sales, and low level of food assistance suggest Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are most likely.

In Duk, more than 75 percent of households reported moderate hunger (Household Hunger Score (HHS) of 2-3), reflecting food consumption gaps indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3), while approximately 45 percent of households reported a poor Food Consumption Score (FCS) and all households reported a low Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), indicative of poor dietary quality. However, nearly 70 percent of households reporting use of an emergency livelihoods coping strategy within the 30 days preceding the survey. WFP distribution reports show that food assistance in March, prior to the survey, only reached 19 percent of households with a 60 percent ration. By May, food distribution scaled up to reach approximately 27 percent of the population with a double ration. Based on the scale of households using emergency coping strategies to mitigate food consumption gaps, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is most likely even in the presence of food assistance. However, given that no households reported severe hunger associated with an HHS of 5-6, food assistance has likely played a critical role in preventing pockets of households from experiencing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). The SMART survey identified a GAM WHZ prevalence of 21.9 percent (CI: 17.7-26.8) and SAM prevalence of 4.4 percent (CI: 2.7-7.2) among children in the surveyed population, reflecting a Critical (15-29.9 percent) level of acute malnutrition. However, the Crude Death Rate (CDR)
and Under-five Death Rate (USDR) were within normal ranges at 0.47 (CI: 0.25-0.89) and 0.00 (CI: 0.00), respectively.

In Ayod, nearly 90 percent of households reported moderate hunger (HHS of 2-3), reflecting food consumption gaps indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3), and approximately 65-70 percent of households reported a poor FCS and low HDDS, indicative of poor dietary quality. At the same time, 90 percent of households confirmed receipt of food assistance within the 90 days prior to the survey, corroborating WFP distribution reports. In May, WFP provided another round of double distributions to more than 25 percent of the population. While livelihoods coping score data was not collected, the available data suggests that as of May/June, large-scale food assistance is most likely preventing large food consumption gaps for most of the population, which suggests Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes are most likely. However, the SMART survey data also revealed that up to five percent of the population were experiencing severe hunger characterized by an HHS of 5-6, suggesting that small pockets of households in Ayod remain may be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). The local population is extremely dependent on food assistance as well as family support/sharing of assistance for their primary food sources, and households who lack resources to engage in livelihood activities, are overly reliant on sales of natural resources or petty trade, lack social networks to access additional support or gifts, and/or have high household dependency ratios can rapidly deteriorate in between food assistance distribution cycles or if affected by an idiosyncratic shock, such as illness.

Further, SMART survey data collected in Ayod identified a GAM WHZ prevalence of 30.9 percent (CI: 25.8-36.6), reflecting an Extremely Critical level of acute malnutrition, with a SAM WHZ prevalence of 4 percent (CI: 2.8-6.7). The CDR was elevated at 0.91 (CI: 0.63-1.32) while the USDR was within the normal range at 0.70 (CI: 0.27-1.80), which households attributed to illness or violence. Based on the lesser severity of food security outcomes, the deterioration to Extremely Critical acute malnutrition is likely driven by atypically high disease prevalence (60 percent), such as diarrhea, and difficult access to drinking water, which 62 percent of households reported takes more than two hours to collect. Lack of water treatment, poor infant and young child feeding practices, and very low vaccination and deworming coverage are also drivers.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions, the most likely outcomes in Akobo, Ayod, Duk, and Pibor counties of Jonglei state are based on the following assumptions:

- Based on the above-average rainfall forecast, historical frequency of flooding along the Pibor-Akobo-Sobat River basin and Nile River basin, and expanding wetland extent, a high to very high risk of flooding is expected through September.
- Based on recent trends and reports of armed group activity, intercommunal conflict is expected to persist throughout the scenario period in all four counties, but especially in Pibor. The level of conflict from June to September may be somewhat lower than January to May, due to heavy rainfall, and higher during the October to January dry season.
- While livestock body conditions and productivity are broadly expected to improve to above-normal levels due to the impact of rainfall on rangeland resource availability, flooding in river catchment areas is likely to cause livestock loss from drowning or water-borne disease. Additionally, intra-household access to milk may vary if some households choose to keep livestock in grazing areas that are distant from homesteads due to fear of losing them to cattle raiders.
- Income from sales of livestock, milk, fish, and charcoal and firewood will likely remain below normal. Floods and/or conflict may periodically suspend or limit household access to markets or typical fishing grounds or gathering areas.
- Trade flows, market functioning, and physical access to markets will most likely remain below normal through at least October due to seasonal deterioration in road infrastructure and periodic insecurity, limiting market supply and contributing to high food prices. Although trade flows will likely seasonally improve after October, health screening procedures are likely to continue to cause variation in cross-border supply flows from Sudan and Ethiopia.
- Given that the recent surge in inter-communal violence and displacement has disrupted household access to fields, area planted in 2020 is most likely to be lower than 2019 – when 1,078-8,512 hectares were planted with cereal – in Akobo, Duk and Pibor. Combined with crop losses from anticipated floods, the 2020 harvest will likely be below 2019.
- A seasonal scale-up of HFA in all the counties of concern in June and July, where 27-33 percent of the county population in Akobo and Duk will be reached with food assistance, is expected to meet 41 percent of their daily kilocalorie needs. Planned HFA levels are high in Pibor and Ayod, where 28-47 percent of the county population will be reached, meeting 41 percent of their daily kilocalorie needs. Food assistance plans from August to January are unavailable.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

From June to September, food security is expected to further deteriorate in all counties of concern as the lean season progresses towards its peak in July/August. Many households are expected to face large consumption gaps during this
period, though access to planned assistance and natural food sources such as milk and wild leafy vegetables would mitigate the worsening of food consumption gaps. Although market dependence is highest and this time of the year, access to foods through market sources or assistance will periodically be disrupted to expectation for above-normal flooding and high food prices. At the peak of the lean season, the households most at risk of extreme acute food insecurity are likely to include the newly displaced households with no livestock or limited to no access to a functioning market or assistance. For instance, during the November/December 2019 FSNMS r25, 38-58 percent of households in Duk, Ayod, and Akobo reported no livestock ownership, and it is anticipated that further livestock losses are likely in 2020 due to anticipation of cattle raiding and flooding, which will push some households to adopt emergency livelihood coping strategies such as using local court system or traveling to nearby areas in search of food and income as they face large consumption gaps. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is expected in Ayod, Duk, Akobo, and Pibor. It is possible that some households may deteriorate to Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) given impacts of flooding in 2019 and anticipation of above-normal flooding in 2020, likely to cut off some pockets of households from accessing nearby markets, distribution sites or natural food sources.

From October 2020 to January 2021, short-term improvement in food security is expected especially among household who planted as dry harvest from 2020/19 production season becomes available. In addition to fish availability and consumption will increase as river water levels recede. Milk will be available and accessible to households who own livestock. Other natural food sources such as wild foods and game meat will be seasonally available, though access will be periodically disrupted with the expectation of continued inter-communal conflict and violence, notably in Akobo, Pibor, and Duk, and to a lesser extent in Ayod. However, based on past trends, own-produced food stocks in flood years are likely to last less than four months. As a result, even households that planted are most likely to experience larger food consumption gaps once again by December/January. Among households who are displaced or do not harvest due to inter-communal conflict during planting season in May/June or experience large-scale crop losses from anticipated flooding in 2020 – and especially those who do not own livestock and face challenges in physical market access – Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is likely to be sustained. It is likely that some of these households will adopt emergency livelihood coping strategies, including the use of local courts system to get food and incomes or migration to nearby areas with food assistance will remain possible coping options for households during this time. As a result, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is likely in all the counties of concern. In the event of large-scale flooding similar to 2020, Catastrophic (IPC Phase 5) outcomes could be possible even during the post-harvest period.

Warrap and Lakes states: Tonj East, Tonj South, Cueibet and Rumbek North counties (Figure 6)

Current Situation

In 2020, inter- and intra-communal conflict in the border region of Cueibet and Rumbek North counties in Lakes and Tonj East and South counties in Warrap has escalated to the highest levels observed since 2014, according to conflict data collected by ACLED. Driven by competition over land and grazing resources, cattle raids, and retaliation, and exacerbated by the power vacuum created by the absence of state governors, active conflict and the fear of conflict is interfering with households’ typical livelihood activities and eroding their coping capacity. Attacks and raids between numerous rival communities in several areas – including but not limited to Ananaak, Wunlit, Pariang Lau, Palang payams of Tonji East; Manyangok, Tonj and Majakot payams of Tonj South; Agangrial, Alangtit, and Ngap payams of Cueibet; and Malueth payams of Rumbek North – have caused loss of life, loss of productive assets, and household displacement. According to IOM’s DTM round 8 data, the number of the internally displaced in the four counties of concern increased from 129,467 people in November 2019 to 146,275 people in March 2020, representing a 13 percent increase due to the escalation in inter-communal violence. The highest displacements are recorded in Tonj East and Tonj South of Warrap.

Due to the frequency of conflict events and ever-present threat of attack, most households are either avoiding traditional livelihood activities to varying degrees due to protection concerns or are unable to engage in these activities because they have been displaced from their homesteads. Most households exhausted own-produced food stocks by February/March and the availability of wild foods, including fruit, green leaves, and fish, is still seasonally low at the start of the main rainfall season. During the ongoing lean season, households typically rely on income from livestock production, supplemented by income from trading or casual labor, to purchase food from the market. Milk and livestock products from cattle kept near homesteads also provide a critical source of food. However, the unprecedented level of conflict is prompting households to keep an atypically low number of lactating cattle at the homestead, according to a recent REACH assessment conducted in Tiap Tiap Boma and Cuei Cok of Cueibet and Rumbek North. In addition, conflict restricts cattle movement and access to grazing areas, which contributes to overgrazing in accessible pastures. Additionally, households are avoiding insecure routes they would normally use to access markets for trade, casual labor, or food purchases. Although wild foods are seasonally low, these trends are contributing to high competition over wild foods in accessible areas, according to key informants. In Cueibet and Rumbek North, conflict and insecurity are further constraining hunting, fishing, and gathering activities.
Agricultural cultivation for the main season harvest is also restricted in distant fields, especially in Tonj South and East.

Among households that own livestock, the availability of milk and other livestock products remains not only seasonally low in June, but also atypically low because of the impact of conflict on livestock holdings, access to grazing areas, and migration. Based on the analysis of household responses from FSNMS r24 and r25, livestock ownership declined in Tonj East and Tonj South by 11 percent from December 2018 to 2019. In Rumbek North, livestock holdings declined by 12 percent from July to December 2019. Conversely, livestock ownership in Cueibet has stayed stable during this period. Currently, most livestock remain in dry season grazing areas or cattle camps far from homesteads, according to key informants in Tonj South, Tonj East, and Cueibet. Combined with household decision-making to protect more lactating cattle in cattle camps, children are either spending longer time in cattle camps or have to be brought milk from long distances, according to a REACH assessment conducted in Cueibet and Rumbek North. In Rumbek North, many households are also reportedly opting to reside close to cattle camps so that they can maintain their access to milk. Still, the quantity is insufficient for consumption due to large loss of cattle through intercommunal conflict or armed robberies. With the timely onset of the main rainfall season in April/May, pasture availability is gradually improving and broadly ranges from normal to above-normal levels, which is likely to prompt wet season migration in July. However, remote sensing imagery suggests below-normal pasture availability in parts of Tonj East, likely due to poor rainfall distribution in April and/or effects of overgrazing.

During the lean season, the relative importance of food purchases to household food consumption is seasonally high. However, high food prices, seasonally low livestock prices, and local currency depreciation are reducing household purchasing power. While key informants report that rural markets are functioning normally in Cueibet and Tonj South, market functionality is reportedly very thin in Rumbek North and Tonj East due to insecurity along trading routes from major source markets in Rumbek Centre and Wau. Although price data is not regularly collected in these areas, spot price observations reported by key informants in Tonj South market indicate that the price of a *malwa* (3.5 kg) of local or imported sorghum grain rose by 6-7 percent from the second to third weeks of May. In Cueibet, the price of a *malwa* of maize grain and sorghum each rose by 30 percent from April to May. Similar trends are observed in Rumbek Centre and Wau, which serve as hub markets for this area, where the price of a *malwa* of white sorghum grain rose by 4-7 percent from April to May and ranges up to 30 percent above May 2019. As a result, the livestock-to-cereal terms of trade has declined by 10-23 percent, based on livestock price data collected in Tonj South, Cueibet, and Rumbek North on the CLiMIS portal. In May, the sale of a goat could purchase 53-100 kg of sorghum in these markets.

April marked the start of main season agricultural activities. Last year, 65-97 percent of households reported access to arable land; however, access to land and cultivation is being disrupted in conflict-affected areas this year, especially in Tonj East and South. Adequate rainfall performance, according to satellite-derived data and key informant reports, has supported farmers to prepare their fields and begin to plant some crops. Yet a multi-agency assessment conducted in April found that 18,338 households (36 percent of the population) in Manyang Ngok, Wanael, and Tonj *payams* in Tonj South and in Ananatak and Wunlit *payams* of Tonj East reportedly missed the opportunity to plant on time due to conflict, while approximately 1,200 households who had prepared land for planting were forced to abandoned their fields. In addition, about 200 displaced households have reportedly lost reserved seeds due to conflict. As a result, area planted in in these two counties is likely below normal in the 2020 agricultural season. In Cueibet, key informant information indicated that 15,000 beneficiaries targeted for seeds were provided tools and assorted seeds by FAO and partners to boost production.

Humanitarian food assistance continues to play a pivotal role in mitigating the severity of acute food insecurity. In May, WFP distributed a full ration of food assistance to 47 percent of the county population in Rumbek North and an 80 percent ration to 25 percent of the population of Cueibet, according to WFP distribution reports. Additionally, key informant information and a multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted in mid-May 2020 confirmed that WFP and partners distributed a 30-day ration to 15,000 individuals in Tonj South and Tonj East in early May, reaching 10-15 percent of the population per county.

The last household survey conducted in the counties of concern was conducted in late 2019. Food security outcome indicator showed that a high proportion of households in Tonj South, Tonj East, and Cueibet were experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or...
Worse outcomes, while at least 20 percent of the population in Rumbek North were likely experiencing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes. Given the complete exhaustion of food stocks at the household level, reduced access to food due to rising food prices, and low access to milk, and based on the large-scale displacement and loss of productive assets that has occurred since January, Tonj East and Tonj South have most likely deteriorated to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in June. Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) is likely in Rumbek North due to the restriction to market access by insecurity along trade routes, while more severe deterioration is mitigated by food assistance. In Cueibet, where many households are still own livestock and have access to markets, it is likely that more than 20 percent of households are using crisis strategies to mitigate food consumption gaps. In the presence of significant food assistance, Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) is likely occurring.

**Assumptions**

In addition to the national-level assumptions, the most likely outcomes in Tonj East and South of Warrap and in Cueibet and Rumbek North of Lakes are based on the following assumptions:

- Based on recent trends in Tonj South, Tonj East, and Cueibet, intercommunal conflict is most likely to persist during the rainfall season as some cattle and herders return close to homesteads. Conversely, and as supported by IOM tracking data round 8, intercommunal conflict is likely to be lower than last year in Rumbek North.

- Based on the average rainfall forecast in western South Sudan, seasonal flash floods may be likely through September in low-lying areas. While they may cause some crop damage, rainfall is expected to be favorable for crop yields. However, area planted may be lower or similar to 2019 due to intercommunal violence and low access to farm inputs. As a result, the September/October harvest is expected to be similar to or lower than 2019.

- Active conflict or the fear of being attacked is expected to impede household access to milk, wild foods, and fish, especially in Tonj East, Tonj South, and Rumbek North. Intra-household access to milk may also vary if some households choose to keep livestock in grazing areas that are distant from homesteads due to fear of losing them to cattle raiders.

- Based on FEWS NET’s integrated price analysis for Rumbek Centre and Wau hub markets, the retail price of white sorghum is expected to be 12-29 percent above last year and 32-57 percent above the five-year average through January. Insecurity along main trade routes, seasonal deterioration in feeder road conditions, high cost of transportation due to illegal payment at numerous checkpoints and multiple taxation, and local currency depreciation are the main drivers. The price is projected to range between 581-717 SSP/3.5kg from June to August, before seasonally declining from 714 to 515 SSP/malwa through January 2021 with the arrival of harvest and availability of other food sources.

- Based on available operation plans, WFP and partners plan to reach 27-52 percent of the population in Cueibet and Rumbek North with 43-51 percent of their kilocalorie needs monthly in June and July. In Tonj East and Tonj South, WFP plans to reach 20-29 percent of the population with 34 percent of their kilocalorie needs monthly in June and July. Information on planned, funded, and likely food assistance from August to January is unavailable.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

From June to September, food security is expected to deteriorate due to low food availability, reduced livestock sales, and rising staple food prices. Although some livestock owning households will likely have some access to milk for consumption, complemented with wild foods, many poor and recently displaced households – especially in Tonj East and South – are expected to face large food consumption gaps. In Tonj South and Cueibet, despite functioning markets, expected disruption to market supply and high food prices coupled with low household purchasing power will likely limit household access to food. In Tonj East and Rumbek North, where trade flow and market disruption are expected due to insecurity and poor feeder road conditions, food access is likely to be more severely limited. With the expectation of large food consumption gaps, as well as increased morbidity and reduced access to health and nutrition services in all areas, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes and deterioration within Serious (GAM WHZ 10-14.9 percent) levels of acute malnutrition are likely in Tonj South, Tonj East, and Rumbek North with varying magnitude of the population. Planned and likely food assistance and availability of wild foods are expected to mitigate the scale of the population in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Tonj South, Tonj East, and Rumbek North, where there was increased vulnerability due to intercommunal conflict and loss of livestock assets. In Cueibet, higher livestock holdings and use of crisis coping strategies are expected to prevent large food gaps, and Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes are most likely through September.

From October to January, the food security situation is expected to seasonally but marginally improve due to the arrival of the new harvest and increased availability of other food sources, including livestock products, fish, and wild foods. The increase in food availability is expected to moderate the severity of acute food insecurity in all four counties. However, displaced households who lost their assets in recent intra- and inter-communal conflict in Tonj East and Tonj South and
missed the opportunity to plant or were forced to abandon their fields will have a meagre harvest. In Tonj East and Tonj South, the magnitude of the population who is expected have a low harvest is expected to drive Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes even in the post-harvest period. In Rumbek North and Cueibet, improvement to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is anticipated, but some households who lack access to land or chose not to cultivate in distant fields out of fear of conflict are likely to sustain Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes at the household level.

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 🌐 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 🌐 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020

Projected food security outcomes, October 2020 to January 2021

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.

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2 The mapping protocol for the June to September 2020 period has been applied based on WFP’s June-July 2020 operational plan. Information on planned, funded, and likely food assistance in August and September is not yet available.