



GIEWS Update

South Sudan

Famine declared in parts of the country

Highlights:

- After three years of conflict and macro-economic collapse, over 100 000 people are facing starvation
- About 5 million people, over 40 percent of the population, are estimated to be severely food insecure
- Granting unrestricted humanitarian access is crucial to prevent further escalation of famine

On 20 February 2017, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, famine conditions are affecting parts of former Unity State, with a caseload of over 100 000 people in IPC category 5 (“Catastrophe”) in former Leer and Mayendit counties. In addition, there is an elevated risk that famine is occurring also in Koch County, but it cannot be confirmed due to limited available evidence, while in former Panyijiar County famine has been avoided so far only thanks to adequate humanitarian assistance. These catastrophic levels of food insecurity are due to severely disrupted agriculture, loss of livestock, destruction of household assets and a near total reliance on fishing and gathering of wild foods for most of the population, which has resulted in an extreme lack of food, increasing destitution and a heightened possibility of death from starvation. The protracted conflict and economic crisis had a dismal effect on households’ coping capacity, undermining all their resilience mechanisms.

Famine has been declared on available evidence, including Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates higher than 30 percent, excessive livelihood asset

loss, insufficient dietary diversity and access and budget constraints for planned humanitarian delivery. Although mortality rates for under 5 years of age could not be confirmed by direct measurement due to inaccessibility, the results from the Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screening on under-5 children, a good predictor for imminent mortality, indicate that recorded unprecedented levels of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) are consistent with famine conditions. Overall, in former Leer and Mayendit counties, indicators point at an IPC category 5 (“Catastrophe”) for over 20 percent of the population.

Food insecurity has now reached unprecedented levels of magnitude and severity, as most vulnerable households exhausted their coping mechanisms and the conflict has spread to previously unaffected areas since July 2016. Between February and April 2017, about 4.9 million people, over 40 percent of total population, were estimated to be severely food insecure. This is about 30 percent higher than the 3.8 million caseload in January 2017, the highest level of post-harvest food insecurity since the conflict erupted at the end of 2013, with an increase of about

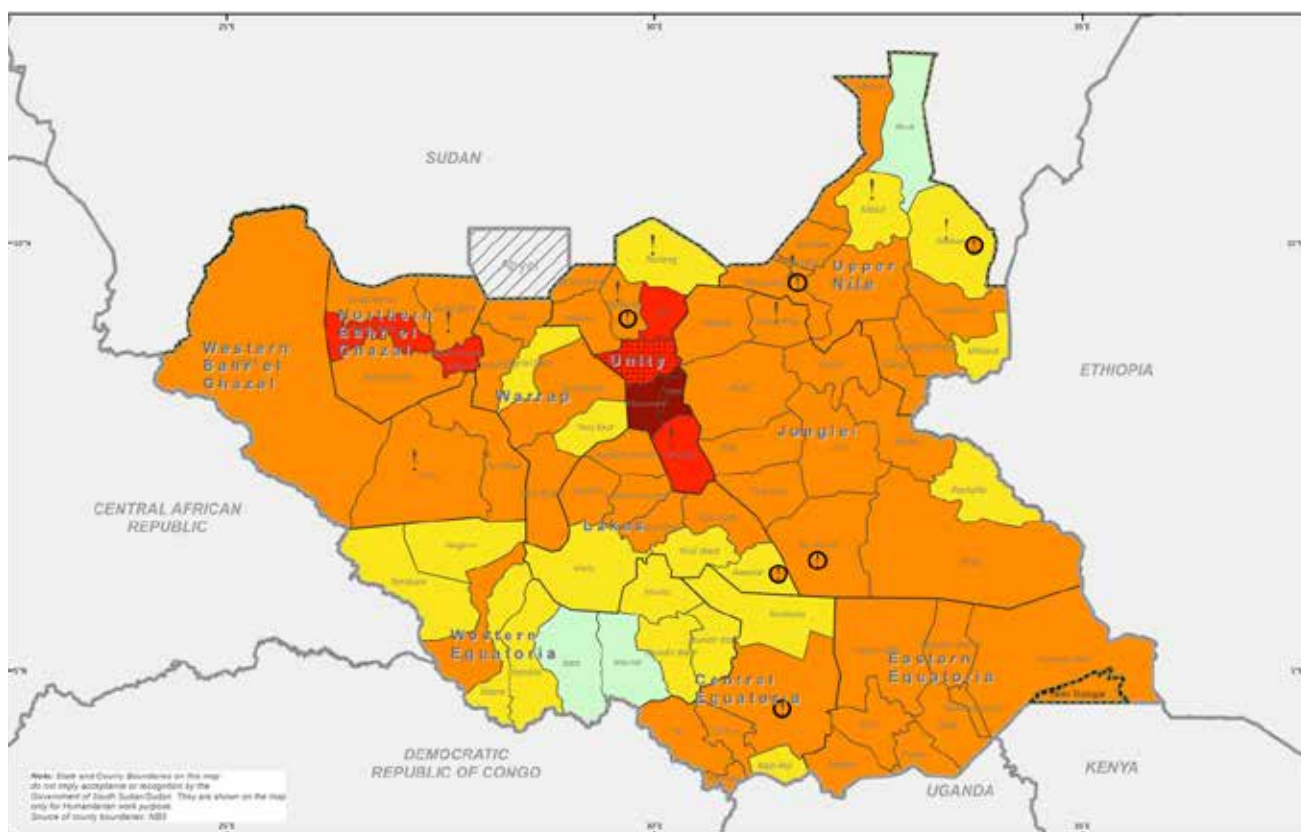
15 percent from April 2016. The overall caseload is projected to reach a record level of 5.5 million people at the peak of the lean season in July, with 1 million people risking to face famine condition, if humanitarian assistance fails to be timely delivered.

Although most severely food insecure people are concentrated in Greater Upper Nile, food security conditions have dramatically deteriorated in several regions. The spread of the conflict in 2016 in Greater Equatoria Region, which includes the country's most productive cropping areas, led to a 40 percent year-on-year reduction in production due to displacements, disruption of agricultural activities, with abandonment of fields and loss of standing crops. The cereal surplus traditionally recorded in former Central and Western Equatoria states turned into a significant deficit in 2016. The food insecure population sharply increased also in former

Northern Bahr el Ghazal state due to the reduced harvest, disruption of trade flows, high prices and reduced households' purchasing power. Only former Warrap State showed some improvement in terms of food security due to continued stability, livestock availability and good crop production in some areas.

Humanitarian interventions have been massive and timely in 2016, but it is of paramount importance that they are scaled up in the face of mounting food insecurity across the country. Before the start of the rainy season in April/May 2017, it is crucial to pre-position and deliver humanitarian assistance to reverse the current situation and prevent drastic increases in food insecurity through the lean season. The granting of humanitarian access remains a major challenge in implementing life-saving interventions and performing further assessments of the situation in the most affected areas.

South Sudan - IPC Classification
(February-April 2017, projection)



Source: IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

For further information:

<http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-detail-forms/ipcinfo-news-detail/en/c/471308/>

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/471297/>

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