

SKBN COORDINATION UNIT HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

April 2018

- People still streaming across border to refugee camps in South Sudan. 70% are children.
- Little relief for displaced by conflict in Wadaka, Blue Nile.
- UN Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan visited Yida and met with partners.

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Despite a better harvest, food security remains at risk in South Kordofan for the rest of this season. Pest infestations, and low soil fertility were further compounded by floods in 2017, reducing productivity in some counties. In Thobo and Western Kadugli, food insecurity levels are on the rise and the CU is monitoring the situation,

As a matter of fact, food insecurity continues to push people across the border to the refugee camps in Northern Unity state in South Sudan. Cumulatively, new arrivals are more than double than the same period last year, with over 3,000 people arriving from Thobo (Boram) county, almost 2,000 people from Um

Dorein county and almost 900 people from Heiban. CU monitors reported pockets of food insecurity in those locations and that people are gathering at local authority offices daily looking for assistance. Local authorities are spearheading a rapid assessment to these areas to identify the most vulnerable groups to prioritise humanitarian assistance. From interviews with the new arrivals access to education, alongside food security, is the other main reason prompting families to move, or to send their children to benefit from education opportunities in the Ajuong Thok and Pamir refugee camps in Northern Unity. More than 70% of these new arrivals, in fact, are children.

CU monitors report that shortage of fuel in Sudan has further affected food security in the Western Jebels and in the northern counties of Southern Kordofan where, as a result, crossline trading has reduced. The price per liter of diesel reached 75 SDG while that of petrol is 125 SDG, when available. Sorghum prices have risen by 20 % in Delami County in the last month, which is approximately 25% higher (adjusted for inflation) than the seasonal average. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that fuel shortages across Sudan worsened at the

end of March, affecting response logistics to South Sudan refugees, and anticipates on additional shortages in the coming months.¹ Those trends were confirmed by FEWSNET that reported: “fuel shortages across most parts of Sudan has worsened towards end of March beginning of April 2018, coinciding with the continued high inflation and local currency depreciation following the macro-economic changes in Sudan during January and February 2018”.²

In Blue Nile food security is more volatile than in South Kordofan since the conflict has reduced the availability of farming land. In the Koma Ganza areas, south of Yabus, due to a poor harvest season, food stocks are reported to be already consumed and, according to CU monitors, people started eating the roots of trees. An estimated 8,000 people live in the area, according to population figures of 2016. In Wadaka, where the CU reported last month that people were eating roots to survive, an emergency food distribution to 9000 IDPs in around six villages³, has brought short term relief but more assistance is needed. Those communities had been displaced by fighting in February 2018 and were unable to plant.

Staple grains’ prices and availability remain unstable between the four functioning weekly markets in Blue Nile with prices of food items lower in markets closer to the border with Ethiopia where trading is common. Frontline markets are not functioning in Blue Nile.

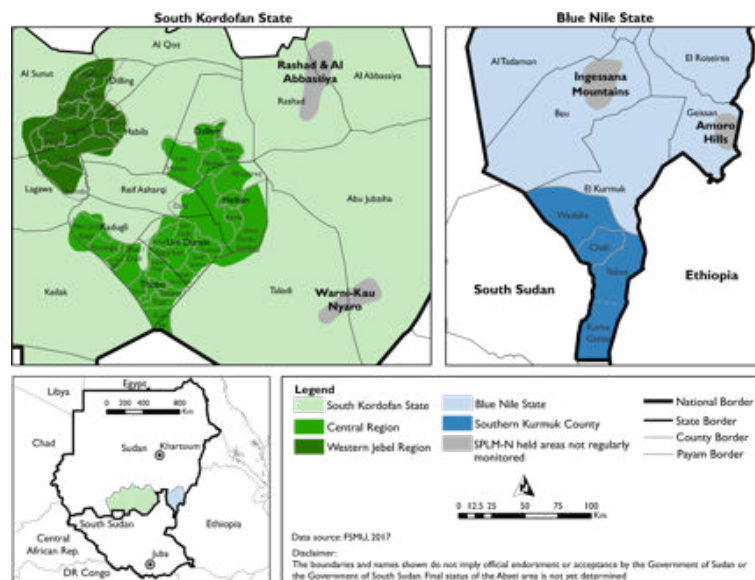


Figure 1: SPLM/A-N controlled areas, from FSMU 2017

¹ OCHA_Sudan_Humanitarian_Bulletin_Issue_08_(16_-_29_April_2018)

² SUDAN_Food_Security_Outlook_Update_April2018_final

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/food-aid-feeds-thousands-blue-nile>

HEALTH

With the rainy season approaching, the Komo Ganza communities in Blue Nile, will be cut off from health services. As the floods in August 2017 swept away the footbridge, engineering support is urgently needed to rebuild the bridge and restore access of these communities to basic services.



Figure 2 Wooden footbridge swept aside, August 2017

In the Western Jebels of Southern Kordofan, health services are extremely poor, and the Secretariat of Health has very limited access to the area. With only one humanitarian partner active in the area, qualified medical personnel, medical equipment and supplies are desperately needed. Consistently, people have been seen crossing the frontline seeking for health services in other parts of Sudan, exposing them to protection risks.

ANIMAL HEALTH

In Southern Kordofan, the Secretariat of Animal Health with the support of a local partner is conducting treatment of livestock in all counties with exception of Rashad, Al Abassiya, Kau Nyaro and Warni that remain inaccessible. Despite the community based veterinary services provided, there is still a shortfall reported of essential drugs and vaccines. More support to the sector is needed, also to prevent the spreading of diseases into the rest of Sudan.

Increasingly, cattle raiding is threatening the main livelihood for many communities in the Western Jebels, and it creates local insecurity and fear among the population. In early April, there were reports of insecurity as cattle was stolen allegedly by militias in Lagawa County. These incidents also impact grazing patterns of cattle herders,

affecting access to pastures and water. At the same time, burning of available pastures, allegedly by militias, decreases the available grazing land, possibly leading to further insecurity. Local peacebuilding and peace education activities can reduce the risk of those conflicts to expand, while at the same time increasing the potential for livelihood opportunities to grow across the frontlines.

In Blue Nile Wadaka payam, a highly needed vaccination campaign to livestock took place by a humanitarian partner. The main livestock diseases identified during the exercise, were foot and mouth disease (FMD), black quarter, hemorrhagic septicemia (HS), brucellosis, trypanosomiasis, gut worms and mange. Most of these are highly infectious and have the potential to affect communities in Maban area in South Sudan and to the rest of Sudan, while diseases like brucellosis can also be transmitted to humans. In the area around Tanfona, livestock is affected by reduced available grazing pastures due to seasonal scarcity of water as well as by the internal conflict. Overall, diseases, limited water and insecurity are affecting the main livelihood for pastoralist communities living in the area, further reducing their coping mechanisms.

WASH

Access to drinking water remains a challenge in all counties in Southern Kordofan. Over a third of boreholes in Western Jebels are reported to be broken. Spare parts are desperately needed. Open wells are unprotected and pose safety challenges to especially children and livestock.

In Blue Nile Wadaka payam, the main sources of drinking and cooking water are shallow unprotected wells, that are also shared with livestock. Wadaka payam suffers chronic problems in terms of WASH, worse than any other payam in Kurmuk county. With only one humanitarian partner active in the vital WASH sector in Blue Nile, there are ongoing needs to prevent outbreak of diseases in the coming rainy season.

EDUCATION

Where conflict and insecurity in Blue Nile prevented students from sitting for exams in 2017, students will sit for primary exams in May and June. The school year will resume in October 2018. Schools in Blue Nile remain community led, with no external support to the sector.

Support to education remains a top priority in South Kordofan, and one of the main reasons for unaccompanied children to flee the area towards the refugee camps in South Sudan. The top three needs in Southern Kordofan are teaching and learning materials, teacher training and construction of classrooms.



Figure 3: Primary school in Dalami county

The Coordination Unit released the Education Assessment for South Kordofan. Please contact us for a copy.

UN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN VISIT YIDA REFUGEE CAMP

The UN SE, Nicholas Haysom, visited the Yida Refugee Camp in April 2018. The visit presented an opportunity for the refugee community, humanitarian partners and Civil Society organisations to exchange information with him on the humanitarian needs and constraints. The SE updated the partners on the political process and prospect for peace. It was an extremely fruitful meeting and an eye opener for all. The question of the closure of Yida refugee camp, and ongoing humanitarian consequences for its residents, was also addressed. The problem of reduced water and health services is particularly pressing.

PROTECTION

The International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action celebrated annually on 4 April left no achievements to celebrate in the Two Areas where no counties have been declared mine free yet. Schools are standing empty as it's unsafe to use and unexploded ordnance and bombs are still left unattended, only cordoned off by the communities with sticks and grass.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) constitute a serious threat to the safety, health, and lives of people. It hinders social and economic development and the ability of aid organizations to deliver humanitarian services.

SECURITY

Relative calm continues in Southern Kordofan while in Blue Nile some fighting has reportedly occurred between the SPLM/A-N Malik Agar (MA) and the Government. As per statements of Ahmed Omda - commander of SPLA-N (MA) faction-, SAF and RSF attacked SPLA-N (MA) on 25 and 28 April in two locations in the Ingessana Mountains in Bau locality. Those areas are north of the SPLM-N controlled areas in Kurmuk county, and not connected. The SPLM-N had a contingent of troops there since 2013, called 4th Front, that remained under the control of SPLA-N (MA) after the internal SPLA-N split of 2017. SPLA-N (MA) claims to have repulsed the attacks and pushed GoS troops back to the Abugaren hills and to Damazin. The Government has not officially commented on the events.

While dynamics of the fighting are unconfirmed, difference sources have confirmed that some fighting took place, with likely humanitarian consequences. According to the SPLA-N (MA) humanitarian wing, an estimated 8,000 people are affected, in 13 locations (Soda, Alkogob, Taga Kilgo, Khorjedad, Jebiban, Gabaniit, Kodurbell, Midilik, Kamerol, Fagoluk, Kumreek, Khoreldahab). According to CU estimates from last year, a fewer number of people were left in the areas under the SPLA-N controlled areas in Bau locality. No humanitarian agency has had access to those areas since 2011 and an assessment is urgently required to verify displacement figures in the conflict affected areas and their needs.

Ultimately, these events show the fragility of the unilateral Cessation of Hostilities declared by all parties, reflect the militarization of the area and seriously affect the possibility of the IDPs and refugees to safely return to their home areas.

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