

## HUMANITARIAN UPDATE – March 2016

South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan

Produced by the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit <sup>1</sup>

### Overview

The government's dry season offensive has begun in the Two Areas during the reporting period, later than expected (last year's offensive started as early as December). Ground fighting, aerial bombardment and shelling has provoked significant internal displacements and increased humanitarian needs throughout the two states, against a backdrop of already severe food insecurity.

The most affected areas are Kurmuk county in Blue Nile, with 14 aerial bombardments and at least 96 bombs, and Heiban and Dalami counties in South Kordofan, where 146 bombs were dropped in 30 separate incidents.<sup>2</sup> In the state, long range shelling from both sides was also recorded, mostly in Heiban and Kadugli counties where most of the offensive was concentrated.<sup>3</sup>

**As a result of the attacks, at least six (6) deaths were confirmed by humanitarian monitors, of which 2 were children, and twenty four (24) injured, including 6 children, in South Kordofan. Three (3) people were injured, one of them a 9 month old baby, in Blue Nile.**<sup>4</sup> A number of animals were also killed, affecting an important source of livelihood for the population. At last count, at least **12,893 new IDPs** were recorded by humanitarian monitors in South Kordofan.

The humanitarian impact of the conflict continues to put pressure on an already exhausted population, more so for the newly and previously internally displaced. Coping mechanisms are significantly constrained, as insecurity has hindered trading and income generating opportunities. While in a normal situation food stocks would run out in August, in most payams, food stocks are quickly being depleted, according to humanitarian monitors. In parts of Habila, As-Sunut and Kao-Warni-Nyaro, in South Kordofan and parts of Chali Al-Fil, Wadaka and Yabus payams in Blue Nile, food stocks have already run out. **According to CU monitors, at least 173,000 IDPs are severely food insecure in the Two Areas and an additional 210,000 are at risk in the coming months.**

**It is essential that humanitarian assistance (cash, food, medicine, seeds) reaches these communities ahead of the rainy season (May/June) when road accessibility becomes limited.**

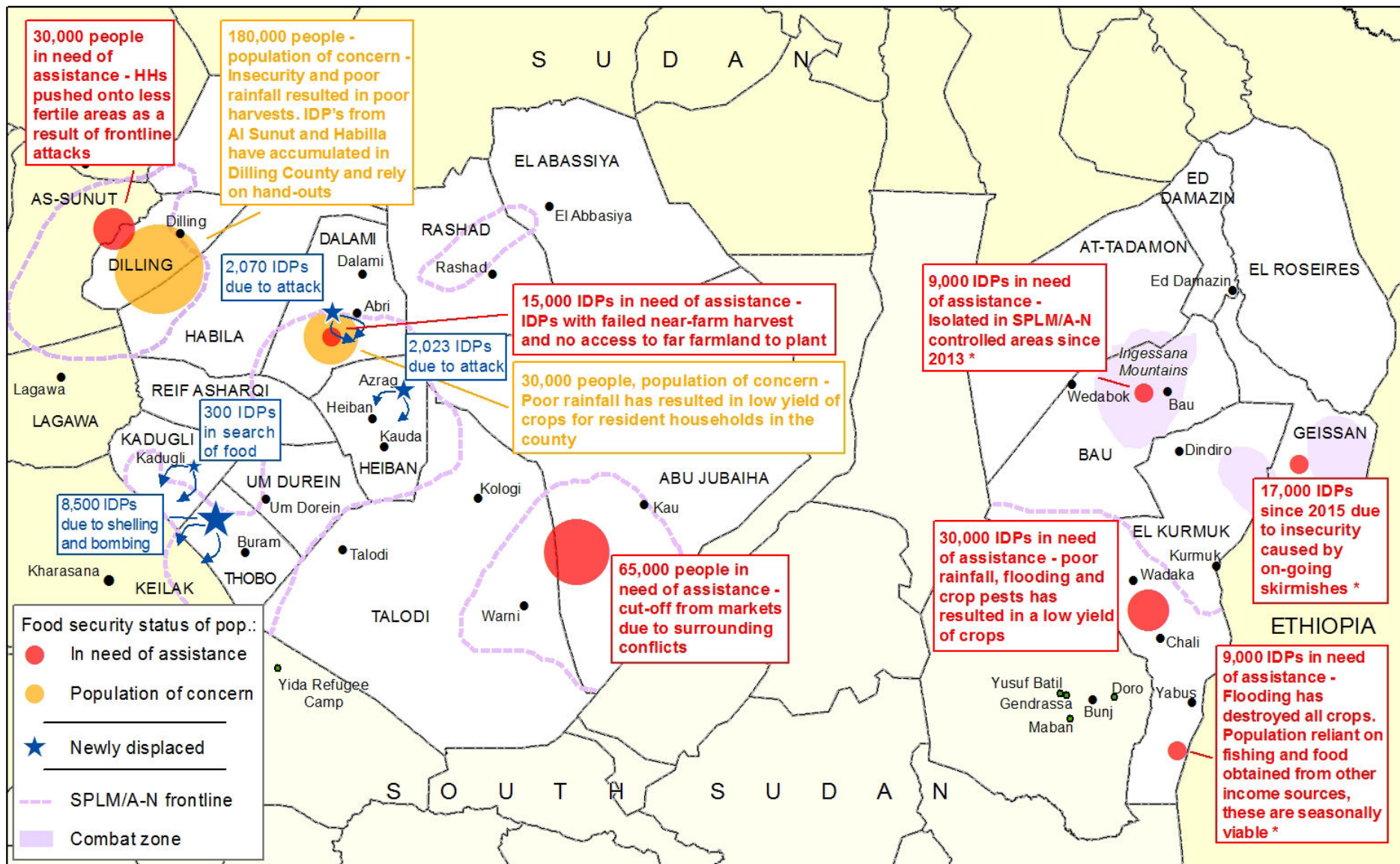
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<sup>1</sup> The SKBN CU works with local civil society organisations and international humanitarian actors to share credible information on humanitarian needs in the two conflict-affected states. In this update, the main sources of information are civilians involved in local humanitarian monitoring and protection activities, local civil administration representatives, and the reporting of other civil society organizations. The CU trained monitoring unit can operate only in the SPLA/M-N controlled areas. Lack of access to GoS controlled areas represents a limitation to achieve a comprehensive statewide analysis of the needs of the population in the Two Areas. The security incidents reported are based on information gathered through the CU monitors and the National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation (NHRMO), and triangulated. For more information the NHRMO reports are available at [Sudan Consortium](#)

<sup>2</sup> For further information please refer to [Sudan Consortium](#)

<sup>3</sup> Radio Dabanga, '[Population of South Kordofan victims of both sides](#)', 27 March 2016 ; '[Civilians killed in heavy shelling, bombing in South Kordofan](#)', 5 April 2016 ; and '[One killed, two injured as fighting continues in Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#)', 29 March 2016

<sup>4</sup> For further information please refer to [Sudan Consortium](#)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map are not authoritative. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of Abyei area is not yet determined. Final locality boundaries for the Kordofan States not verified. / Sources: Admin boundaries; OCHA; Food insecure areas; FSMU: January and February 2016 monthly bulletins (\* source: CU and humanitarian monitors on the ground) SPLM/A-N frontlines and combat zones; Small Arms Survey, Conflict in the Two Areas, Jan 16 / Map produced by SKBNCU (Apr 16)

## South Kordofan

FSMU reports further depletion of food stocks, particularly in Dalami, due to poor harvests.<sup>5</sup> The situation in this area has been further exacerbated by the intensified offensive carried out by SAF between 5-9 March and 24-29 March, 2016. During this 11 days, Dalami was bombed 5 times, and received long range shelling another 5 times, as well as a ground-attack that caused the displacement of 345 households (an estimated 2,070 people), as their homes were burned down during the attack. A further 2,023 people moved to the caves after a ground attack and long range shelling on Azrag and Heiban payams (south and south-east of Dalami). The humanitarian conditions for these people are critical, with no access to food or water.

The heavy aerial bombardment across the state caused further material loss and deterioration of the food security situation. Twenty-nine (29) houses were destroyed, 3 fields, at least 30 mango trees, 15 guava trees and a vegetable garden were set on fire. Additionally, 40 cows and 13 sheep were killed, a key livelihood for the population living in these areas. FSMU monthly reporting indicates an additional displacement of 8,500 people from Thobo (Boram A) due to shelling and bombing, and another 300 people from Kadugli displaced in search of food.<sup>6</sup>

In the Western Jebels, FSMU reports that income from crop production continues to decline, while income from begging and livestock increases to the extent it can.<sup>7</sup> As previously mentioned by the CU, the situation is of particular concern in As-Sunut, in the far west, where there have already been reports of malnourished children.<sup>8</sup> CU monitors who have been able to visit the payam have been taking photos (Fig 1).



Figure 1: Child from As-Sunut. Photo taken on 30 March 2016

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<sup>5</sup> FSMU: Monthly Bulletin, February 2016

<sup>6</sup> FSMU monthly tables (March 2016)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

## Blue Nile

The food security situation has been deteriorating in the past two months for the **estimated 107,000 IDPs living in the SPLM/A-N controlled areas in the state.**<sup>9</sup> The recent fighting has only exacerbated an already untenable situation.

Food stocks have already run out in some areas due to a poor harvest, leaving an estimated **39,000 IDPs severely food insecure (36% of the estimated population in SPLM/A-N areas).**<sup>10</sup> Reports from Chali Al-fil, Wadaka payams, and Koma Ganza area in Yabus payam, mention a high percentage of people resorting to gathering of wild roots, locally called *Aum Jago* and *Ashtea*. Even then, FSMU monthly reports note very low vegetation left in these areas.<sup>11</sup> **These peoples' coping mechanisms are extremely limited, and they are in need of immediate assistance.**

If people are able to plant, **the next short-term sorghum harvest is expected only 4 to 5 months from now, in September/October.** Moreover, the ongoing preparation for the fields is affected by the new wave of aerial bombardments. **88 bombs were dropped across the state in March 2016, a 700% increase from last month.** FSMU reports that income from crop and livestock production, labour and mining declined significantly in March, while income from trading increased to the extent it can (see Fig. 2 below).<sup>12</sup>

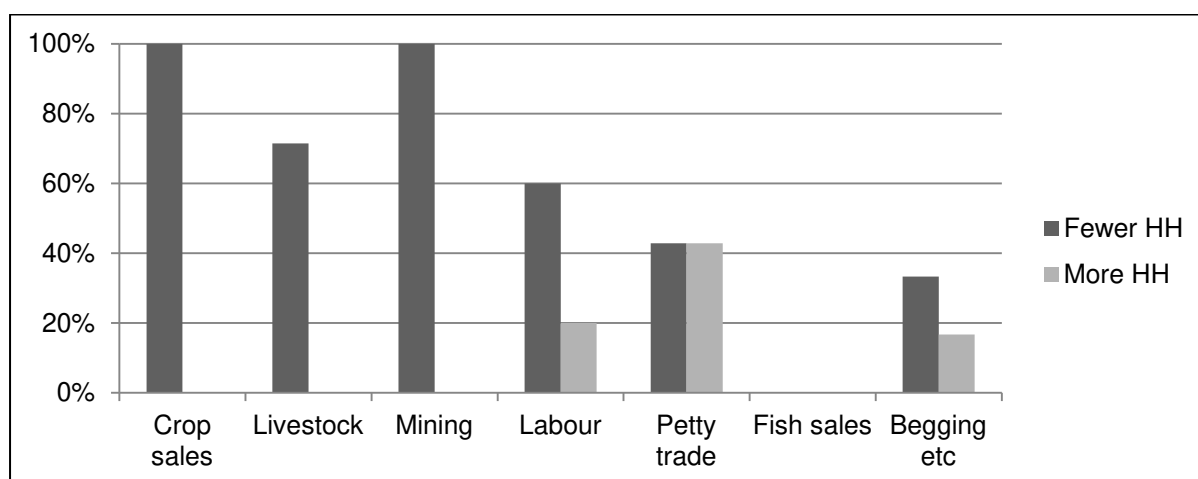


Figure 2: Households in March 2016 reportedly engaging in different income-earning activities (compared to February 2016)<sup>13</sup>

As a result of a poor harvest, food availability in the four markets in Kurmuk county is limited. The average price of sorghum rose from 17 South Sudanese Pound (SSP) to 20 SSP, with peaks of 26 SSP in Yabus area, a significant increase from last year.<sup>14</sup> This is also due to the high inflation of the SSP and resistance from Ethiopian traders to accept SSP, given the instability of this currency (see Fig. 3).

<sup>9</sup> An estimated 81,000 IDPs live within the SPLM/A-N frontline in Kurmuk and southern Bau payam, while 17,000 are believed to be in SPLM/A-N areas in southern Geissan county and around 9,000 in the Ingessana Mountains in Bau county in villages occupied by the SPLM/A-N. The CU continues to have no access to Government held areas to assess the number of IDPs and people in need of assistance.

<sup>10</sup> See also SKBNCU Humanitarian updates, January and February 2016

<sup>11</sup> FSMU Monthly Tables, March 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> SKBNCU Humanitarian update, Table I, February 2015

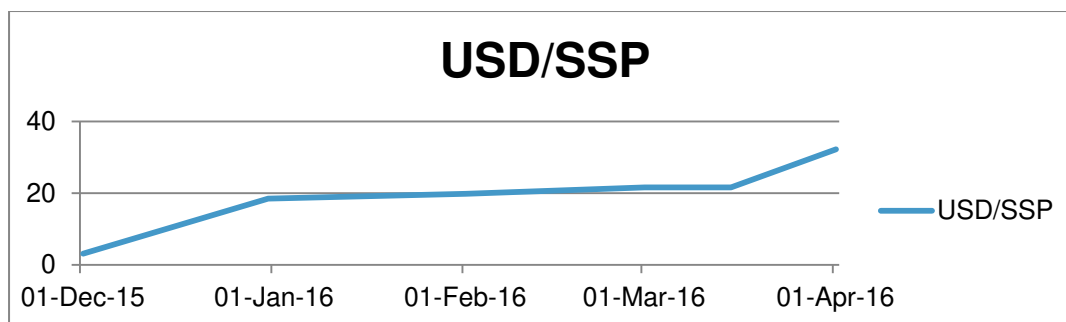


Figure 3: UN reported USD to SSP exchange rates<sup>15</sup>

The humanitarian situation of **an additional estimated 26,000 IDPs** living in SPLM/ A-N areas in Geissan and in the Ingessana Mountains in Bau county, is considered extremely dire, as reported by a small number of people who were able to reach Kurmuk payam and/or the refugee camps in Maban in the past months. **These areas are currently inaccessible for the CU monitors due to high levels of insecurity.**

The humanitarian situation of the over 20,000 IDPs displaced by the conflict from the Ingessana Mountains to the outskirts of the capital Ed Damazin and El Rosaires continues to be critical, and new protection incidents were reported.<sup>16</sup> Information on the ground indicates that assistance reached the people in these areas in the past months, but the CU had no access to any verifiable reporting.

As previously mentioned by the CU, the western parts of Wadaka payams are experiencing limited access to water, as the dry season continues.<sup>17</sup> Out of five (5) boreholes available, two (2) are broken and require repairs. Women in those areas have to walk an average of 5-6 hours to fetch water. These women tell stories of how they walk long distances without any food, and with the constant fear of attacks, since Antonov engines are heard on a daily basis. **One woman was killed by an aerial bombing as she returned home from fetching water from Gisis, in Wadaka payam.** Without any alternative, boreholes are used both for human and animal consumption, increasing the risk of health issues for people.<sup>18</sup>

### Humanitarian negotiations on the Two Areas

Strategic consultations were held in Addis Ababa under the African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP) during 18-21 March 2016 between the government of Sudan and the SPLM-N and other opposition forces. The consultation resulted in a road map for the resolution of the conflict in the Two Areas and Darfur, and the participation of opposition forces in the National Dialogue in Khartoum. While President Mbeki and the Government delegation signed the road map, the SPLM-N and the other armed and non-armed opposition refused to sign and to join the current dialogue, claiming bias of the mediation.<sup>19</sup> The SPLM-N had asked the AUHIP to open a separate humanitarian track ahead of 18-21 March consultations, to allow humanitarian access to civilians in the Two Areas, but this was not discussed during the meeting.

<sup>15</sup> Treasury – UN Operational Rates of Exchange, accessed on 15 April 2016

<sup>16</sup> Radio Tamazuj, Displaced in Damazin accuse Rapid Support Force of attacks, 1 April 2016

<sup>17</sup> SKBNCU Humanitarian Update – February 2016

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Sudan Tribune, Sudanese opposition sticks to demand for inclusive pre-dialogue meeting: Arman, 21 March 2016; Sudan, AUHIP sign Roadmap Agreement, but opposition declines, 22 March 2016