

Food security outcomes deteriorate following early start of the lean season in urban areas of Greater Equatoria.

Key points:



Poor food consumption persists in Torit and Juba



Overall, there is high market dependence, particularly in Kapoeta South where all households reported depending on markets for their food needs



Informal and unreliable sources constitute the main sources of income for most households, 55% reported decrease in income compared to the same time last year.



Situation Update

Despite seasonal improvement resulting from the harvest, food security situation has deteriorated significantly compared to the same time last year. Only 61% of the 2018 national cereal needs are met by the harvest. The total production in 2017 has been estimated at 674,000 tonnes, about 7.5 percent below 2016 and 14 percent lower than the last five-year average creating a cereal deficit of 483,000 tonnes. The worsening food insecurity is primarily driven by continued conflict and displacements, which have contributed to the reduced crop production, disruptions to pastoralist livelihoods and persistent macroeconomic deterioration. Livelihoods have been further eroded by climatic shocks, such as prolonged dry spells and flooding, and pest infestations (e.g. fall army worm).

January 2018 IPC results indicated that an estimated 57% of the population are facing Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) acute food insecurity, and require assistance. This proportion is projected to increase to 63% during the height of the lean season in May-July.

¹FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to South Sudan, March 2018.

²South Sudan January IPC Key Messages, February 2018



Poor food consumption persists in Torit and Juba

As the lean season progresses, food insecurity deteriorates in Torit and Juba, where access to normal livelihood activities has been disrupted by insecurity, inconsistently low income and continuous currency devaluation resulting in reduced purchasing power and subsequently leading to inadequate food consumption. In Torit, about of 77 percent of respondent households were found to be having poor to borderline food consumption while in Juba, 97 percent reported eating 1 meal per day as they have already depleted the assets that used to be sources of income to earn basic food.

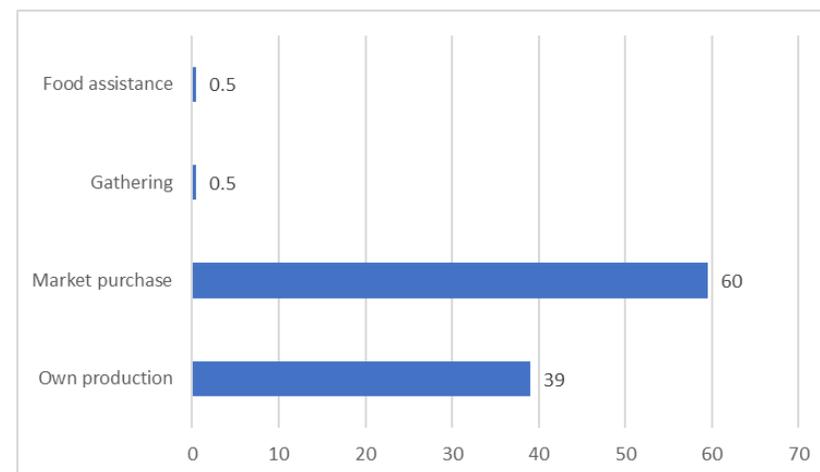


High market dependence in Kapoeta South

Overall, surveyed households in all counties reported concerns over high market prices for basic food commodities. In Kapoeta South, all respondent households depend on the market as the sole food source due to poor harvest as a result of dry spell. In addition, the population in Kapoeta South are pastorals and heavily rely on the market for cereals purchase using the income obtained from the sale of livestock.

High market prices across all surveyed locations is limiting food access for households. 59 percent of respondent households reported lack of food of any kind during at least one day of the week prior to the survey. 61 percent of respondent households had gone to sleep hungry and 42 percent had spent at least the whole day and night without food during the same period. Given the diminishing purchasing power resulting from low income, constantly increasing market prices and inadequate supply, access to food from markets will remain severely limited. Consequently, households will be compelled to use irreversible coping mechanisms that will likely undermine their future resilience.

Fig 1: Main sources of food



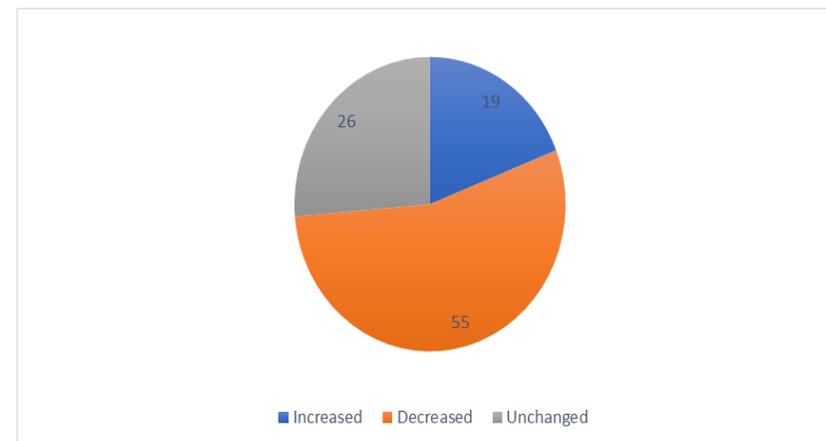
Source: mVAM, February to March 2018



Decreased income levels among households

The South Sudanese Pound continues to depreciate against the hard currency which is having a direct impact on the salary of many civil servants given the inconsistent payments. The majority (55 percent) of the surveyed households reported that their purchasing power has decreased as compared to the same time last year due to the continuing local currency devaluation. The main source of income was derived from the “others” category which mainly consists of informal and unreliable sources, such as brewing of alcohol, sale of firewood and petty trade. Thus, 55 percent of households reported decrease in income compared to the same time last year, while 26 percent reported no change and only 19% indicated an increase in income.

Fig 2: Household income compared to one year ago



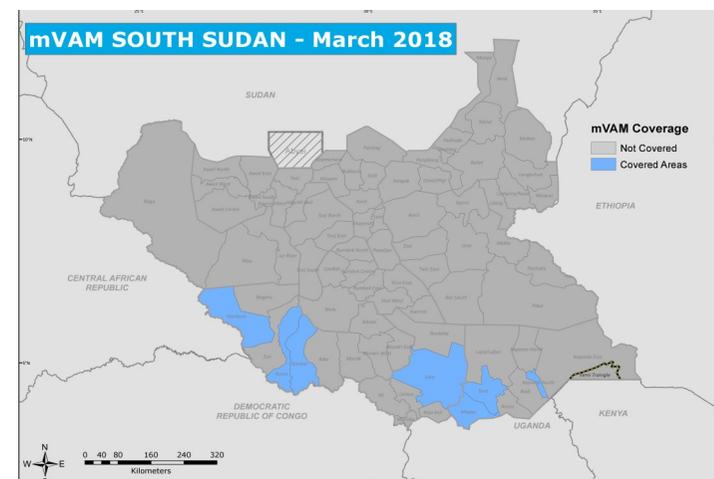
Source: mVAM, February 2018

Methodology

The sixth round of mVAM food security monitoring surveys were conducted through live call interviews from WFP's in-house call centre during February - March 2018. A random sample of 206 households were reached in seven counties (Tambura, Nzara, Yambio, Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta South and Juba-Munuki), mostly representing urban areas in the Greater Equatoria region, with around 30 completed surveys per county. Calls covered all mobile phone operators. The surveys were conducted in English, Arabic and other vernacular languages. Participants were selected from a database of household phone numbers collected by WFP. Given network constraints, a snowball sampling approach was used to reach a larger sample size, with households recruiting other households to participate.

Respondents were asked questions on food consumption, negative coping behaviours, hunger scale and demographic information as well as an open-ended question about food security in their community. Responses are likely to be biased toward better-off households living in urban areas where there is adequate mobile phone coverage and better access to electricity and phone-charging services. Conflict and insecurity have made some areas inaccessible by telephone. This introduces an element of bias in the survey that we account for when interpreting the data. This bulletin reports indicative patterns and trends rather than precise estimates.

Map 1: Surveyed counties, February to March 2018



Source: mVAM, February to March 2018

