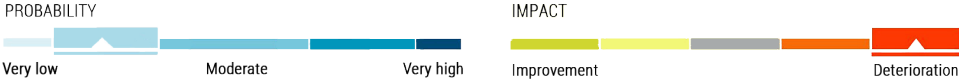


ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES IN SOUTH SUDAN: SCENARIOS

Possible developments affecting the basic needs and access to basic services of South Sudanese over the next 6-12 months

August 2020

Scenario 1 Increasing conflict; escalating disease, including COVID-19; no heavier rains than usual



Usual levels of rainfall during the rainy season result in an above-average harvest with no significant crop loss. However, a lack of progress on governance and peacebuilding, combined with reduced regional economic activity, leads to increased conflict, fuelling further sub-national and local violence as armed groups fight with herders and local populations for control over territory and resources. Meanwhile COVID-19 cases increase, overwhelming already inadequate health services. COVID-19 and Ebola outbreaks coincide in some areas to create a very severe health crisis. Morbidity and mortality from other diseases including malaria also rises sharply, due to the cessation of vaccination campaigns and lack of healthcare capacity.

Scenario 2 Continued insecurity; no major outbreaks of COVID-19 or other diseases; pockets of localised flooding



Insecurity continues but does not deteriorate significantly and, while there is are slightly above average seasonal increases in some diseases, there is no major escalation of COVID-19 cases. Heavier rains than normal create localised flooding across South Sudan which, although categorised as within normal levels, badly affects some pockets, creating displacement, eroding productivity in these areas. Elsewhere an average harvest improves food security into early 2021. Lack of progress in the peace agreement and a failure of state and local governance mechanisms continue to fuel conflict.

Scenario 3 Widespread flooding followed by an increase in conflict; outbreaks of multiple diseases, no increase in COVID-19



Above-average flooding results in widespread loss of pasture and stored grain, flooded farmland, poor animal health, and a destruction of infrastructure – all of which drive displacement. After a temporary lull in violent conflict, the dry season brings increased violence, driving further displacement. Meanwhile COVID-19 containment measures continue to restrict trade and livelihood sources and drive inflation. Food insecurity rises.

Scenario 4 Gradually increasing security; COVID-19 spikes but then reduces; no other disease outbreaks; no heavier rains than usual



Progress on governance structures, disarmament and peacebuilding activities, combined with international assistance to combat COVID-19 result in marginally improved security. A normal rainy season followed by an average harvest result in increased economic activity and significant returns of IDPs and refugees to their place of origin once the spike in COVID-19 cases passes and containment measures are relaxed. While underlying humanitarian needs, particularly food security and protection, are entrenched and will not be overcome quickly, improvements in security and stability and in the local economy are seen, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Many South Sudanese continue to rely on humanitarian assistance to supplement gaps, but in an environment characterised by less fear and volatility.

Introduction

Problem statement

South Sudan has witnessed intermittent civil war and widespread communal and localised violence since gaining independence in 2011. 7.5 million people, 64% of the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Taking into account a range of variables that affect South Sudanese access to basic needs and services, these scenarios consider developments that could have humanitarian consequences and impact on access to basic needs within South Sudan over the coming six to twelve months.

Scenarios for August 2020 – July 2021

These scenarios are not attempts to predict the future. Rather, they describe situations that could occur in the coming 6-12 months and are designed to highlight the possible impacts and humanitarian consequences associated with each scenario. The aim is to support strategic planning, create awareness, and promote preparedness activities for policymakers and others working in South Sudan. The timeframe is until December 2020 although the scenarios may remain valid some months longer. See the Methodology section for more information on how these scenarios were developed.

Limitations

Scenarios can seem to oversimplify an issue as the analysis balances details against broader assumptions. Scenario-building is not an end in itself; it is a process for generating new ideas that should, in turn, lead to changes in project design or decision-making. These scenarios focus primarily on the potential ways in which people are able to access basic needs and services and the resultant impact and humanitarian consequences.

How to use this report

The four scenarios are summarised on page 2. Pages 5–12 provide more detail on the scenarios, including potential humanitarian consequences. Page 13 lists five factors that could compound the humanitarian consequences of any of the scenarios. A brief summary of the current situation in South Sudan, together with a description of the key actors involved is given on pages 11-14. Annexed is a summary of the trigger events that could lead towards the situations described in the scenarios.

For additional information or to comment please email info@acaps.org

How scenarios can be used

Scenarios are a set of different ways that a situation may develop. The aim of scenario building is not to try and accurately predict the future, but rather to understand the range of possible futures and then select a few that result in distinct situations with, usually, differing humanitarian outcomes that can:

- Support strategic planning for agencies and NGOs
- Identify assumptions underlying anticipated needs and related interventions
- Enhance the adaptability and design of detailed assessments
- Influence monitoring and surveillance systems
- Create awareness, provide early warning and promote preparedness activities among stakeholders

For more information on how to build scenarios, please see the ACAPS Technical Brief on Scenario Development in the Methodology section of ACAPS' website.

Methodology

These scenarios were developed in July 2020, over a series of online consultations and workshops with experts working on the South Sudan crisis. More than 40 experts from 17 humanitarian, academic, diplomatic, or policy organisations contributed to these scenarios through participation in one or more of the workshops or bilateral meetings.

Many variables that could cause change were mapped during the workshop. By making assumptions as to how these variables might plausibly change, six scenarios were identified. These scenarios were then expanded and the major impact of each scenario and its humanitarian consequences identified.

All scenarios are mutually exclusive. A list of individual indicators/triggers is given on pages 18-19. It should be noted that a combination, but not necessarily all, of the triggers are required to reach any given scenario.

The estimated caseload for each scenario is an estimate of the additional caseload that could result should that scenario unfold. They are designed to give an order of magnitude only and are based on the current displacement and refugee return trends.

Thank you

These scenarios were produced by ACAPS. ACAPS would like to thank all organisations that provided input to these scenarios: both those that attended the workshops and those that contributed via bilateral meetings.

Current situation

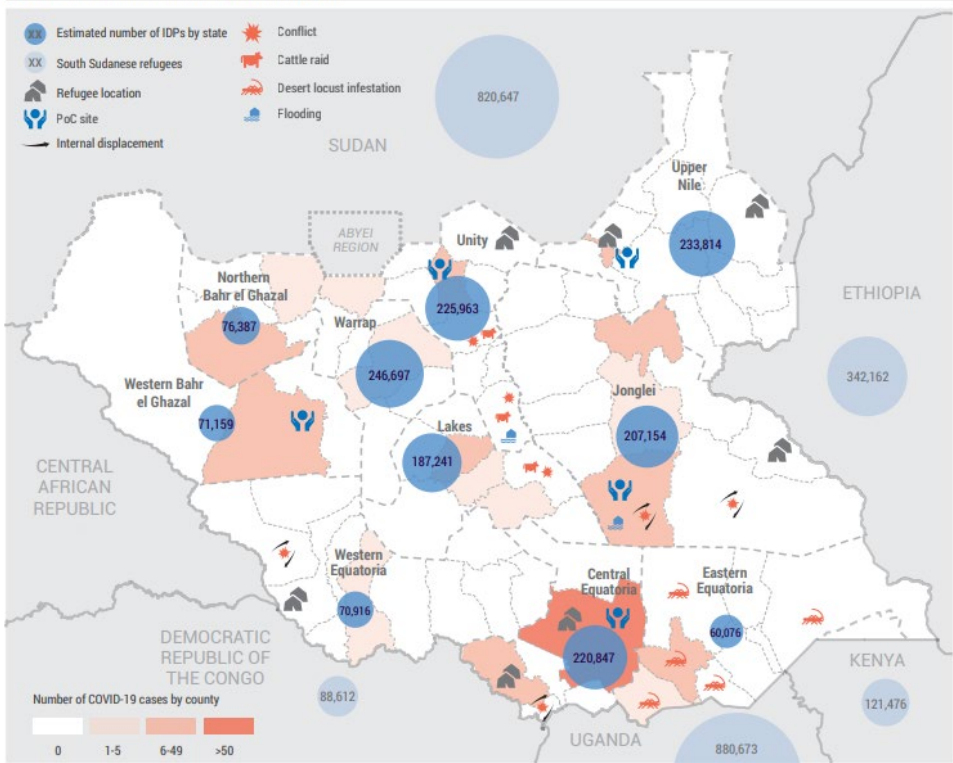
Since independence in 2011, South Sudan has witnessed intermittent civil war and widespread communal and localised violence which has damaged infrastructure, obstructed the state’s ability to provide essential services, and disrupted livelihoods. Prior to independence, war and conflict had persisted in the region for many decades. This has resulted in displacement, loss of livelihoods, severe food insecurity including critical levels of malnutrition, and widespread protection issues including human rights violations and abuse, and killing of civilians. Despite being rich in natural resources and having fertile lands, 80% of South Sudan’s 11.7 million people are income-poor, with 7.5 million in need of humanitarian assistance. Some 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers are currently living in neighbouring countries and 1.6 million remain internally displaced. This protracted, complex humanitarian crisis is driven by a combination of climatic hazards, weak governance, multi-layer conflict, and disease outbreaks including COVID-19.

While recent political developments following the peace agreement have reduced the conflict between the main actors in South Sudan, it has not increased security. 2020 has seen an increase in criminal and localise violence as the proliferation of weapons and the use of cattle raiding by armed groups and political elite has led to cattle raiding becoming another tool of war, often used to fuel ethnic rivalries. The country faces some of the worst living conditions globally: a lack of access to basic services, some of the worst health indicators in the world, and high levels of protection risks and human rights violations. Food insecurity is widespread. Over 83% of South Sudan’s population relies on agricultural activities (farming, herding, fishing) as their primary livelihood and are vulnerable to climatic shocks, specifically heavy rains and flooding: even an average harvest only provides food security for 3-5 months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded problems in South Sudan by reducing remittances, interrupting economic activity and schooling, severely hampering the provision of healthcare via an already-weak health system, and curtailing much humanitarian and preventative health programming. In addition confinement measures have exacerbated protection concerns.

The current situation of widespread food insecurity and poverty is thus a largely result of the interplay of these key variables: politics, climate, specifically weather extremes, conflict at national, sub-national and local levels¹, crime, disease, and poor provision of essential services. In the immediate future South Sudan can be expected to be subject to a convergence of several shocks. The current severely reduced humanitarian access affects not only response but also the collection of quality data. This makes it far more challenging than in previous years to monitor the impact of these current and potential shocks.

DISPLACEMENT AND HOTSPOTS

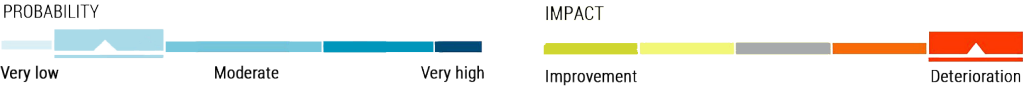


(Source: OCHA 10/07/2020)

- There are many causes of conflict and violence within South Sudan. It is helpful to view three levels of conflict:
 - National Conflict:* A situation of violence involving at least one armed actor engaged in a national civil war, including signatories and non-signatories to a national peace agreement. National civil war refers to armed conflict among armed actors with nationally-oriented objectives, including but not limited to regime change, devolved governance or autonomy, or secession.
 - Sub-national Conflict:* A situation of violence involving armed actors without identified nationally-oriented objectives, but pursuing political agendas beyond limited local issues, such as sub-county areas or groupings of villages, while engaging in violence characterised by multiple indicators of organization and intensity.
 - Localised Conflict:* A situation of violence involving armed actors or groups without identified nationally or sub-nationally oriented objectives beyond limited local issues. Such violence has the potential to match various indicators of severity, but the geographic and social scope remains highly limited and the most salient purpose identified remains local.

Scenarios

1. Increasing conflict; escalating disease, including COVID-19; no heavier rains than usual



Widespread conflict, at national, sub-national, and local levels, intensifies. Jonglei is particularly impacted during the rainy season. The intensity and frequency of violence increases with the dry season.

The economic effects of the pandemic lead to increased levels of criminality and raiding across the country. Reprisal attacks increase in frequency and intensity throughout the dry season.

Neighbouring countries and the diplomatic community are busy addressing their internal COVID-19 political and economic crises and there is reduced pressure on South Sudan to maintain peace. As a result, key milestones of the R-ARCSS are delayed and unmet, particularly those related to security arrangements, including the cantonment and military integration programme.

The SPLA-IO fragments further, creating independent splinter groups and affiliates that continue to use the IO label but no longer accept high command authority. Local economies are significantly impacted as insecurity means communities are unable to pursue livelihoods and protect assets such as cattle.

The national economy is further squeezed by the COVID-19 induced global economic decline, which impacts oil prices, remittances, and aid flows. The cost of imported goods rise, causing inflation, exacerbating the economic crisis which further fuels conflict.

The primary and secondary impacts of COVID-19 leave health centres without staff, medicine, or supplies. The health system no longer functions. Overwhelming stress on the already insufficient health system significantly reduces the population’s health status. Many health facilities are unable to remain open because of sickness of staff and lack of PPE, and there are no locally available treatment options. COVID-19 containment measures and/or fear of COVID-19 deters people from seeking healthcare. A rapid rise in cases of endemic diseases, COVID-19 and, in Western Equatoria, an outbreak of Ebola result in many deaths. Schools remain closed.

The focus on COVID-19 results in less attention on other illnesses, negatively affecting the availability of routine essential health services. Health programmes are suspended or reduced, including the Ebola control programme, leading to an outbreak starting in Western Equatoria and slowly expanding through the country. Outbreaks of other preventable diseases including malaria, measles and cholera rise rapidly, increasing morbidity and mortality.

Possible indicators/triggers

Some or all of the following occur:

- Tensions between the signatories of the peace agreement and within communities rise significantly
- The SPLA-IO fragments
- Conflict spills over from one or more neighbouring countries
- Health provision capacity significantly reduces
- Significant numbers of health staff contract COVID-19
- Ebola control programme stops
- Oil prices continue to decline
- Regional economies contract
- Humanitarian and development funding reduces
- Border closures persist

Estimated additional caseload: up to 500,000 additional people in need. Total 8 million people in need

Geographic areas of most concern

Lakes and Warrap state (localised conflict): Jonglei, namely Greater Pibor Administrative Area (floods and localised conflict): Western Equatoria (Ebola): Central and Eastern Equatoria (where there are areas traditionally controlled by different divisions of the SPLA-IO)

Impact

Delays on the unified peace agreement and lack of command and control resulting from the impact of COVID-19 on senior military and political leadership mean that cantonment sites are not actively managed. Violence continues throughout the rainy season, particularly in Jonglei. With the dry season comes an increase in the intensity and frequency of violence countrywide. The increase in conflict creates high levels of displacement, significant access constraints, and serves to spread disease, including COVID-19.

In rural areas, the violence pushes people to peri-urban areas, while others try to leave congested urban areas and IDP settlements due to high levels of COVID-19 transmission. In rural areas insecurity reduces livelihood opportunities and creates significant nutrition and protection risks. Despite the border closures, people seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

COVID-19 has a particular impact in urban areas. Containment measures, both official and self-imposed, result in loss of most urban livelihood options while conflict prevents income-generating activities, especially for those who depend on selling natural

resources such as firewood, grass, and charcoal. Containment measures also create significant constraints for government and diplomats to conduct business, as travel, face-to-face meetings and large gatherings continue to be restricted. A lack of regional trade due to containment measures pushes up prices for those living in cities and towns. Urban communities face the choice between the relative security of city-living versus the lower COVID-19 rates in their home villages. The number of people in poverty increases; debt levels increase. COVID-19 has a significant impact causing illness and death of influential individuals in South Sudan's formal and informal power structures, disrupting patronage networks and creating power vacuums.

COVID-19 containment measures result in restricted domestic and cross-border trade, affecting daily wages, small traders, herders, and both the formal and informal economy. Coupled with international and regional economic decline (which reduces both national income and availability of foreign exchange), this leads to currency devaluation and high inflation. Import of basic goods and essential medical items is disrupted. Basic service provision declines, and humanitarian access is restricted to main population centres, further driving longer-term displacement as people seek access to lifesaving assistance.

An overall reduction in national income disrupts patronage networks, further contributing to the deterioration of the safety and security situation. All but the most elite security forces (MI, NSS, Presidential Guard) go unpaid, resulting in mass desertions from the SSPDF, SSNPS, Wildlife, Fire Brigade, and Prison Service, further increasing the quantity of weapons in communities.

Delays on the unified peace agreement and lack of command and control due to the impact of COVID-19 on senior military and political leadership mean that cantonment sites are not actively managed.

Humanitarian consequences

The humanitarian impacts over the next 12 months are significant and also pave the way for long-term deterioration of living conditions, security, and health status in South Sudan.

Food security: Food insecurity increases across the country: the number of people living in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above increases and the number of people facing Phase 5 (Famine) increase substantially in conflict-affected areas. Communities unable to harvest crops enter a catastrophic food security situation.

Health: Health needs increase as health provision decreases. Essential health services are disrupted as clinics are unable to open and supplies of basic medical items are interrupted. Conflict-related injuries and trauma, both physical and mental, increase demand for health services, including for survivors of violence and GBV. Malnutrition and food insecurity lead to increased caseloads of endemic diseases (malaria, measles) and cholera and potentially increasing the risk of severe complications of COVID-19, which the health system cannot manage. The risk of a re-emergence of Polio increases as immunisation programmes stall. Response to health emergencies due to displacement or disease outbreak is severely delayed or not possible. Morbidity and mortality increase.

Protection: The movement of combatants in and out of cantonments increases as they resort more on criminal activities as coping strategy due to lack of food and NFIs in the cantonments. This leads to violence, sexual violence, and looting in surrounding communities. The prevalence of landmines and explosive remnants of war, human rights violations, and child recruitment increases. Reprisal killings increase. Adoption of negative coping mechanisms, including early marriage and sexual exploitation, increase as women lose livelihoods and schools remain closed. Family separation increases and children are exposed to protection concerns. School closures lead to increased domestic violence and put girls at risk of early marriage and GBV. Inadequate/non-existent COVID-19 quarantine facilities create further protection risks. As COVID-19 cases increase, the UN reduces the number of peacekeepers and humanitarians working in the the PoC sites, resulting in increased tensions amongst IDPs and between IDPs and humanitarian and peacebuilding actors, who are seen as the ones bringing the virus. Tensions and decreased peacekeepers presence also lead to increased protection concerns within the sites.

Shelter: Shelter and NFI needs increase as displacement increases. Housing, land, and property (HLP) disputes increase.

WASH: Displacement, reduced capacity for WASH infrastructure maintenance, and its destruction during conflict exacerbates WASH needs. Access to and quality of water reduces further, increasing demand at functioning water points and reducing water available at health centres. Market disruptions reduce availability and increase costs of hygiene items. Recommended hygiene practises related to COVID-19 and other health risks are not possible. Open defaecation increases. The risk of spread of disease increases.

Other: Displacement sites become overcrowded and service provision struggles to meet demand.

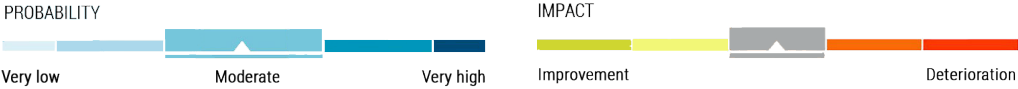
Humanitarian operational environment (operational constraints)

The response is constrained by limited access due to insecurity and COVID-19 while at the same time the global economic downturn sees significant cuts across all humanitarian programming. Delays in the global supply chain lead to shortages of many humanitarian items.

Agencies in South Sudan have significant experience in remote programming and severe access constraints, but the inability to move, even around state capitals, puts an unprecedented strain on humanitarian delivery. Increasing numbers of international staff leave the country reducing capacity and increasing pressure on national staff. Some international NGOs cease operations.

Remote data collection becomes the norm and accountability to the people affected by crisis, including complaints mechanisms, become totally dependent on capacity and skills of national NGOs.

2. Continued insecurity; no major outbreaks of COVID-19 or other diseases; pockets of localised flooding



South Sudan remains less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than countries with greater levels of wealth and global inter-connectedness. A concerted effort to reduce and respond to COVID-19, supported by international funding, sees the number of cases reduce significantly. While other diseases register an increase over normal levels, primarily due to lapsed immunisation programmes, a health response is possible.

With the outbreak under control, COVID-19 measures are relaxed, enabling a resumption of regional and local trade and these economies start to recover. The government receives revenue from oil exports, and humanitarian and development funding remains stable as donors prioritise South Sudan and other countries facing severe humanitarian crises. By January 2021, the inflow of remittances is increasing. Usual rainfall across much of the country result in average harvests, but some areas experience unusually severe flooding and these communities experience significant crop losses.

Conflict at both national, sub-national, and local levels, continues at current levels with no significant changes. Continued disputes over the appointments of governors and county level officials, and dysfunctional policing and justice systems continue to be obstacles to peacebuilding efforts. This continued absence of effective governance and high levels of violence result in some of the worst living conditions globally, a lack of access to basic services, some of the worst health indicators in the world, and high levels of protection risks and human rights violations.

Possible indicators/triggers:

- Minimal or no progress on disarmament, demobilisation, and transitional security arrangements
- No progress on Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues
- Increase in international funding for COVID-19
- Global economy recovers quickly
- Border restrictions are eased increasing flow of goods and commerce

Estimated additional caseload: up to 250,000 additional PiN; total 7.75 million

Geographic areas of most concern

Flood prone areas: Jonglei state (Pibor, Uror), Upper Nile (Maban) and Eastern Equatoria(Lafon and Kaapoeta North and East), Upper Nile (Mayom).

Impact

The security picture across the country remains mixed. Continuing insecurity affects some individuals and areas, resulting in lost assets and displacement. In some areas, the acceptance and influence of the new governor has a stabilising effect, elsewhere it fuels inter-tribal / group tensions exacerbating insecurity.

Increased investment in the health system and the reduction in COVID-19 cases results in significant improvements to healthcare and more timely treatment, though the health system remains fragile and poorly staffed. Most essential health programmes, including immunisation programmes, re-start but in many areas health provision is inadequate.

The resumption of cross-border trading and generally good harvest result in reasonably well-stocked markets and reduced inflation until February 2021. Communities that have been displaced or lost crops due to localised flooding become increasingly reliant on humanitarian assistance.

After the rainy season, humanitarian access to many areas increases, and humanitarian agencies resume full-scale operations, albeit severely constrained by security issues in some areas, such as Jonglei, the Greater Pibor Administrative Areas, Upper Nile, Warrap, and Lakes state due to continued armed clashes. Remote areas across the country continue to be difficult to access owing to poor road and telecommunications infrastructure.

Delays on the unified peace agreement and lack of command and control due to the impact of COVID-19 on senior military and political leadership mean that cantonment sites are not actively managed.

Humanitarian consequences

Food security. Areas with a good harvest see short-term improvements in food security. This is limited to areas less impacted by continued insecurity. Greater Bahr el Ghazal and the Equatorias do not rise above Crisis (IPC-3) food security outcomes.

Health. The previous cessation of immunisation programmes, coupled, in some areas with heavy rains, results in above-average measles and malaria caseloads. Nutritional services for children with severe acute malnutrition and pregnant and lactating women are reduced as mobility of humanitarian responders and people in need decreases. In areas affected by flooding there is an increase in waterborne diseases. Conflict-related injuries and trauma, both physical and mental, continue to strain health services.

Protection. In many areas physical and mental protection remains a primary need and countrywide continued school closures expose children to increased risks.

Shelter. Shelter and NFI needs increase in flooded areas.

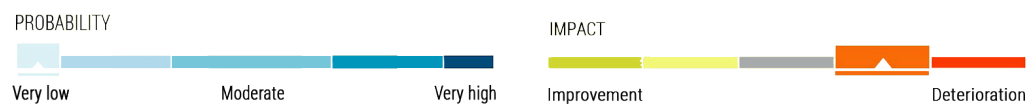
WASH. WASH needs increase, specifically for those in flooded areas, while access to hygiene items reduces due to market interruptions. Flooding contaminates water sources and makes latrines unusable.

Humanitarian operational environment (operational constraints)

Access constraints increase during the rainy season, then return to current levels excepting the more secure areas, where they improve. The global impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt by humanitarian operations interrupting the movement of international staff and goods. Combined with insecurity and flooding, this further reduces the international presence, particularly beyond state capitals.

Remote data collection becomes the norm and accountability to people affected by the crisis, including complaints mechanisms, become totally dependent on the capacity and skills of national NGOs. The localisation agenda takes on increasing importance and a rapid change in pace.

3. Widespread flooding followed by an increase in conflict; outbreaks of multiple diseases, but no significant increase in COVID-19



Significant flooding impacts much of the country including areas not usually flooded, damaging homes and key infrastructure including health centres and forcing many to displace. The wet season lasts longer than usual, extending into December. Dry season pastures remain inundated, livestock morbidity and mortality increases, and livestock are concentrated into fewer available pastures.

The extent of the flooding provides a longer respite in fighting in some areas but the intensity and frequency of violence increase across the country in the dry season. By early 2021 there is widespread, and significantly more intense conflict, at all levels. This is fuelled by a combination of

- the economic effects of the pandemic and the flooding which lead to increased levels of criminality and raiding across the country;
- further fragmentation of SPLA-IO creating independent splinter groups and affiliates that continue to use the IO label but no longer accept high command authority; and
- reduced pressure on South Sudan to maintain peace as neighbouring countries and the diplomatic community are distracted by their internal COVID-19 political and economic crises.

Local economies are significantly impacted by the immediate and longer-term impacts of flooding, including loss of livestock and crops, the deterioration in security which further impedes livelihoods and protecting assets such as cattle, and the reintroduction of COVID-19 containment measures. The national economy is further squeezed by a global economic decline, impacting oil prices, remittances, and aid flows. The cost of imported goods rise, fuelling inflation which further fuels conflict.

Flooding, compounded by the associated displacement, fuels the spread of waterborne and communicable diseases, including malaria, measles, and an outbreak of cholera, increasing morbidity and mortality across the country. The health system is overwhelmed to the degree that a huge proportion of those in need cannot access treatment. Mobile health teams, where available, are unable to access the worst flood-affected areas. In Western Equatoria, an outbreak of Ebola results in many deaths. Due to a continued focus on COVID-19 the resources available for other morbidities reduces, negatively affecting the availability of routine essential health services. Ongoing health programmes are suspended or reduced, including the Ebola control programme, leading to an outbreak in Western Equatoria and slowly expanding through the country.

In areas of significant flooding cattle are moved to new pastures, creating high concentrations of livestock, presenting unique opportunities for high-reward cattle raids and sparking conflict with agriculturalists. More ambitious and more violent raids take place as a result.

Possible indicators/triggers:

- Excessive rainfall
- Increased tensions between the signatories of the peace agreement and within communities
- Conflict spillover from neighbouring countries
- Key milestones of the R-ARCSS are delayed and unmet, particularly those related to security arrangements, including the cantonment and military integration programme
- Health provision capacity significantly reduces
- Reintroduction of COVID-19 containment measures
- Ebola control programme and other preventative health programmes stop
- Oil prices continue to decline
- Regional economies contract as a result of COVID-19
- Humanitarian and development funding reduces
- Border closures persist
- Patronage networks disrupted
- Local governance continues to be ineffective and power vacuums remain

Estimated additional caseload: Over 500,000 additional people in need.
Total of 8 to 8.5 million people in need.

Geographic areas of most concern

Whole country, with Western Equatoria recording Ebola cases.

Impact

Heavy rains and flooding result in widespread loss of pasture, stored grain, farmed land, and livestock, driving short-term displacement. The impact is particularly severe as areas not accustomed to annual flooding are impacted. Flooding destroys critical infrastructure including boreholes and waterpoints, health centres, schools, roads, and homes. Several clinics across the country are flooded and it becomes challenging to restock health centres due both to COVID-19 renewed containment measures and impassable roads. Areas that should provide surplus food for market suffer significant agricultural losses, impacting availability, access, and affordability of food nationwide.

The severity of the rainy season reduces the level of conflict as many armed groups, unable to move easily, use the time to gather and reorganise for more impactful offensives and reprisal attacks as soon as the weather allows. As the dry season approaches, competition for scarce resources fuels raiding and violence, reducing access to essential services and further depleting individual and community resources. Meanwhile, there is an increase of soldiers moving out of cantonments and undertaking raids. General criminality increases as authorities are unable and/or unwilling to control the situation. The increase in conflict creates high levels of displacement, significant access constraints, and serves to spread disease, including COVID-19.

Delays on the unified peace agreement and lack of command and control due to the impact of COVID-19 on senior military and political leadership mean that cantonment sites are not actively managed.

Floods, combined with significant displacement, bring increased levels of waterborne and endemic diseases (malaria, measles). Cholera resurfaces and spreads rapidly across the country.

In rural areas, the violence pushes people into peri-urban areas, while others try to leave congested urban areas and IDP settlements fearing high levels of COVID-19 transmission. In rural areas insecurity reduces livelihood opportunities and creates significant nutrition and protection risks. Despite the border closures, people seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

The severe flooding, increasing insecurity, and COVID-19 containment measures severely challenge the delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially food aid, shelter and NFIs, and hygiene kits.

Humanitarian consequences

Food security: Food insecurity increases significantly; food consumption and diversity fall. Pockets of people experiencing IPC 5 grow and those already at IPC 3 and above rapidly fall into greater levels of food insecurity due to intensification of conflict and widespread flooding. Increasing numbers of households are forced to employ negative coping strategies.

Health: Health needs increase as health provision decreases. Other health services are reduced, such as nutrition services for children and pregnant and lactating women, and disease prevention programmes, including immunisations. Mortality and morbidity increase significantly.

Protection: In addition to the protection issues outlined in scenario 1, displacement from flooding and conflict create additional housing, land, and property issues and other concerns related to the loss of important documentation. Rapid onset flooding results in family separations and heightened physical risks of drowning.

Shelter: Shelter and NFI needs increase significantly as displacement takes place for security and economic reasons as well as the search for dry land. Floods reduce the

locations where displaced people can reside, resulting in very crowded sites, where social distancing to avoid the spread of COVID becomes impossible. Large numbers of people are displaced multiple times in the course of the next 12 months, making efforts to address the needs more challenging.

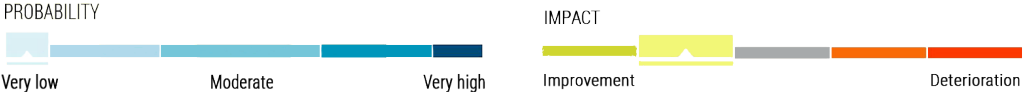
WASH: Displacement, reduced capacity for maintenance of WASH infrastructure, and its destruction during conflict and through floods exacerbates WASH needs. Access to and quality of water reduces further, increasing demand at functioning water points and reducing water available at health centres. Market disruptions reduce availability and increase costs of hygiene items. Recommended hygiene practises related to COVID-19 and other health risks cannot be practised. Open defaecation increases. The risk of spread of disease increases.

Humanitarian operational environment (operational constraints):

Access, even within state capitals, is severely constrained due to insecurity, COVID-19 containment measures, and the physical constraints brought about by the rains and the resultant damage to roads and airstrips after the rain subsides. The global economic downturn sees significant cuts across all humanitarian programming and delays in the global supply chain lead to shortages of many humanitarian items. Increasing numbers of international staff leave the country, reducing capacity and increasing pressure on national staff. Some international NGOs cease operations.

Remote data collection becomes the norm and accountability to people affected by the crisis, including complaints mechanisms, become totally dependent on the capacity and skills of national NGOs. The localisation agenda takes on increasing importance and a rapid change in pace.

4. Gradually increasing security; COVID-19 spikes but then reduces; no other disease outbreaks; no heavier rains than usual



The appointment and popular acceptance of the 10 state governors, improvement of local governance structures, and meeting key milestones of the peace agreement result in increased political stability and a slight improvement in the security situation as disarmament and peace-building activities begin.

An average rainy season with no major flooding results in reasonable harvests across the country and, despite continuing COVID-19-related restrictions at international borders, prices of food and other essential goods see only moderate increases in most markets.

After rising rapidly, the number of COVID-19 cases spikes by October then falls steadily for the remainder of 2020. International funding enables the government to better resource some health centres to treat COVID-19 cases. Other endemic disease caseloads increase only marginally above normal limits throughout 2020 with no outbreaks. By December, most containment measures have been lifted and the local economy begins to recover, strengthened by an increase in remittances.

Progress on governance and the sense of improving security, movement on HLP rights, and a more conducive environment for entrepreneurial activity result in significant IDP and refugee returns who bring increased technical capacities back to the country.

In addition to some international funding specifically for COVID-19, funding for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming remains steady. With no significant external interference (neighbouring countries being busy with their domestic responses) the government moves to take greater control over the development of natural resources and steps to stimulate the local economy.

The underlying humanitarian needs, particularly food security and protection, are entrenched and will not be overcome quickly; however, improvements in security and stability and in the local economy are seen, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Many South Sudanese continue to rely on humanitarian assistance to supplement gaps, but in an environment characterised by less fear and volatility.

Triggers

- Increased collaboration between the signatories of the peace agreement
- Central government authorities prioritise implementation of the peace agreement
- Key deadlines in the R-ARCSS are met
- Increased inclusion in peace processes
- Functioning governance structures at all levels
- HLP framework negotiations begin with buy-in from local leaders
- Global oil prices increase
- Neighbouring countries consumed by their own challenges
- Health provision capacity maintained
- Humanitarian and development funding remain steady
- Borders reopen, easing flow of goods and commerce across borders
- Patronage networks disrupted

Estimated additional caseload: no additional PiN; total remains ~7.5 million.

Geographic areas of most concern

Juba remains the area registering the highest number of COVID-19. Overall, situation improves across the country.

Impact

A good harvest in most areas combined with a reduction in cattle-raiding results in short-term improvements in food security. The slightly improved security situation creates significant improvements in livelihood opportunities in rural areas. With less raiding and an improved economic outlook, livestock sales increase.

Once the COVID-19 threat reduces and rainy season ends, resumption of cross-border livestock trading and the easier importation of commercial goods result in improved market activity while main supply routes become more secure improving the availability of essential goods in most areas.

Initially the primary and secondary impacts of the spike in COVID-19 cases leave health centres without staff, medicine, and supplies. Some health facilities are unable to remain open to due sickness of staff, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), and no locally available treatment options. COVID-19 containment measures and/or fear of COVID-19 deters population from seeking healthcare. As the COVID-9 threat recedes, support to health centres increases and many resume provision of services and treatment of the increased disease caseload. Vaccination campaigns and other preventative health programmes restart.

Increased security, improved access to services, and promise of an improving economy leads to increase IDP and refugee returns resulting in unemployment and increased demand for essential services, but also in a greater pool of skilled workers and new entrepreneurs. Schools restart in early 2021.

Reduction in humanitarian access due to the regular rainy season, COVID-19 containment measures, and fear of increasing COVID transmission increases reliance on and work with local organisations able to take advantage of some of the skilled returnees from abroad. Access improves significantly from November and humanitarian organisations restart many programmes and expand operations as new areas become accessible for the first time from a security perspective. The reliance on South Sudanese staff continues, with many international staff still out of the country.

Humanitarian consequences

Food Security: Local food production increases and access to markets is improved as rural communities feel confident to move around in the more secure environment. With less raiding and an improved economic outlook, livestock sales increase.

The underlying severity of food insecurity implies that, despite improvements, some areas and many households continue to face food and nutrition challenges and remain reliant on humanitarian assistance. Price rises of imported foods impact urban areas but increase demand and appetite for local production.

Health: Despite increased direct support, health facilities struggle with overall caseloads as the COVID-19 caseload spikes. This particularly impacts urban areas where transmission is greatest. Although there is a slight decrease in demand for conflict-related healthcare as peace and stability increase, and the seasonal increase in cases of waterborne and endemic diseases also strains the health system.

Protection: Protection concerns persist, particularly for women and girls, especially in relation to GBV during the height of COVID-19 restrictions. The reduction in conflict brings with it a reduction of some protection concerns, particularly child recruitment and the use of rape and sexual violence as part of the conflict.

Shelter: IDP returns from displacement sites reduce shelter needs in PoCs. Shelter needs increase in places of return where people are looking to establish permanent homes rather than transitional shelters.

WASH: Some improvement in WASH services are seen as WASH infrastructure is rehabilitated as part of COVID-19 measures.

Humanitarian operational environment (operational constraints)

Rains and COVID-19 containment measures restrict access until late 2020, followed by slow improvement because the usual increase in fighting after the rainy season doesn't happen. Most international staff leave South Sudan because of COVID-19 cost cuts or travel restrictions. The reliance on remote programming and the use of local organisations creates opportunities for localisation and sees greater connection between the communities and those working with them.

Compounding factors

Rainy season

In all scenarios, much of South Sudan becomes impassable during the rainy season from July – October and even normal rainfall results in flooding, including the flooding of waterpoints, health centres, education facilities, markets, and homes. This severely restricts the supply of goods to markets and people's access to medical services. Most humanitarian movement ceases and humanitarian operations are limited to local movements.

Disease

Although South Sudan was declared polio free in June 2020, a suspension of polio campaigns and other routine immunisation since March means that the prevalence of many diseases will increase. Outbreaks, particularly of measles can be expected while disruption to the polio immunisation and testing system may result in its re-emergence. There is also a seasonal increase in AWD/cholera and malaria as well as respiratory infections, snakebites, and worm infections. Rift Valley Fever is also at increased prevalence as a result of floods. (scientific American 200520)

Locusts

The Horn of Africa is suffering from the worst desert locust infestation in decades. Desert locusts remain in much of Eastern Equatoria although some swarms have migrated to Kenya. Locusts are present across EES: Magwi, Torit, Lopa/Lafon, Budi, Ikotos and across the three Kapoeta counties. Crop damage in many areas ranges from moderate to severe. Crop and pasture damage is predicted to extend into Jonglei and Upper Nile as locusts migrate north into Sudan. FAO's Desert Locust Watch predicts swarms will transit through eastern South Sudan from Kenya toward their breeding areas in Sudan.

Refugee returns

Over 2 million refugees or asylum seekers currently live in neighbouring countries. Should conditions in one or more of these countries deteriorate significantly, perhaps due to the spread of COVID-19 or prolonged containment measures reducing earning opportunities, many may look to return home. Any significant influx of returnees to South Sudan would put increased stress on essential services, prompt disputes over unresolved HLP issues, increase competition for employment, and likely exacerbate inter-communal violence, leading to repeated internal displacement and adding to the IDP caseload.

Regional conflict

South Sudan borders a number of fragile states, with many hosting significant numbers of South Sudanese refugees. Should the Nile Waters talks fail between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, conflict may erupt between the three countries. A failure of the Sudan transition plan would likely cause the conflict in Blue Nile state in Sudan to spill into Upper Nile state in South Sudan. This would push large numbers of South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia and Sudan to go back to South Sudan, which may destabilise South Sudan further and would exacerbate unemployment, HLP, shelter, and food security issues. Most returnees could be expected to congregate in a few locations including the PoCs.

Current situation

Drivers of the crisis

Conflict and insecurity

The Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed in 2018, has brought a fragile truce and led to the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) in February 2020. After agreeing on the appointment of cabinet ministers and the country's administrative boundaries, in June 2020 the TGoNU reached agreement on the political formula to appoint the 10 state governors; all but one (for Upper Nile) have been appointed although the level of acceptance and support each will receive is not yet clear. Delays in this process created a power vacuum in critical locations including Jonglei, leading to localised violence disrupting lifesaving assistance and COVID-19 response. Implementation of security and political arrangements stated in the peace agreement have also stalled (OHCHR 23/06/2020).

While conflict between the government and main opposition has reduced, localised violence has increased in intensity. Power vacuums make this challenging to address, and escalation of inter-communal violence, often exacerbated by armed forces, has been registered in several counties since the beginning of 2020. Violence and low levels of safety and security have been fuelled by:

- the increasing militarisation of cattle raiding - used as a means of exerting power by armed factions;
- the high prevalence of weapons and an uneven disarmament process - according to an assessment by Small Arms Survey conducted in 2016, there were between 232,000 and 601,000 illicit arms in circulation in the country;
- increasing poverty, forcing people to resort to criminality;
- the fight over land and natural resources/Housing Land and Property (HLP) issues.

A surge in localised violence was registered in Greater Bahr el Ghazal (Lakes, Warrap, and parts of Western Bahr el Ghazal states) and Unity state (Mayom and Rubkona counties) in May 2020. Also in May, clashes broke out in Central and Western Equatoria between government and opposition forces and the National Salvation Front (NAS), violating the Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities signed in Rome in January 2020 between the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA) and the Government.

Over 650 people, including humanitarian workers, have been killed in localised violence so far in 2020. Localised violence is resulting in increased protection concerns including gender-based violence (GBV) and human rights abuses, displacement, and access constraints (ECHO Daily Flash 17/06/2020; ECHO Daily Flash 20/05/2020; OCHA 20/05/2020).

Governance and Rule of Law

In 2011 South Sudan started building its state institutions with the support of customary authorities (community chiefs), who contributed to shaping South Sudanese legislation. Although the outbreak of civil war in 2013 created delays in the creation of strong state institutions and weakened local institutions; customary authorities continued playing an important role in South Sudan's political and justice system.

Today South Sudan still relies on community leaders or chiefs, and on a set of local or tribal rules, to resolve disputes as it did before the creation of the South Sudanese state. Customary courts are recognised and regulated under the Local Government Act of 2009. Customary authorities or chiefdoms do not correspond with specific tribes or ethnic groups but rather with territorial units, often multi-ethnic (Rift Valley Institute 2019).

Customary courts have been weakened by the involvement of the military and the state's heavy bureaucracy. In many rural areas, local chiefs resorted to the military or state armed groups to enforce customary court regulations, in the absence of any other law enforcement apparatus. However, the military has often acted with impunity, undermining the role of customary authorities and contributing to a lack of trust towards both local and state authorities among the population. South Sudan governance and rule of law continues to be characterised by impunity, militarisation of the political and personal space, and personalised rule (Africa Center 28/05/2018).

Since the civil war began in 2013, all parties to the conflict have perpetrated, in times of war and peace, grave human rights violations and abuses, including rape and gang rape, sexual mutilation, and killings. The lack of an adequate legal framework has resulted in impunity and lack of accountability. South Sudan has not yet ratified important human rights instruments, making it more challenging to end the impunity. Political opposition is not tolerated, with an increasing trend since 2013 of arbitrary arrests, detention, and ill-treatment against any form of disagreement with the government. (OHCHR 23/06/2020; OHCHR; HRW 2019)

Socioeconomic situation

The economy has been highly volatile since 2011 due to conflict, climatic shocks, and the collapse in oil prices between 2014 and 2016. In 2014, South Sudan started experiencing intermittent but significant falls in the value of the local currency and high inflation. In 2019 GDP grew again and inflation started to ease. Oil and remittances represent important sources of income for the country. In 2018, oil accounted for over 95% of total exports and over 34% of GDP. Similarly, in 2019 South Sudan received 1.3 billion USD in remittances from the South Sudanese diaspora, accounting for 34% of GDP (ODI 08/06/2020).

There are no available estimates on revenue loss in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 and further declines in the price of oil but the SSP 2 billion (USD 7.7 million) trade deficit is expected to widen (WFP 25/03/2020). The World Bank forecasts a 20% drop in remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. In 2019 remittances of \$1.3 billion accounted for 34% of its GDP, the highest share in the region; those households depending on remittances are expected to be largely affected by the economic effects of COVID-19 movement restrictions in other African countries (ODI 08/06/2020; The World Bank 16/10/2019; UNDP).

South Sudan is an income-poor country and 82% of its population is poor, living on less than the equivalent of USD 1 per day. Economic activities in South Sudan are mostly unpaid agricultural work and pastoralism.

Basic services and Infrastructure

South Sudan is a fragile state, ranking 187 out of 189 countries and territories in the 2018 Human Development Index. Limited availability of and access to basic services, as well as lack of basic infrastructure, have led to protection, education, health, and WASH needs (HNO 2020). Inadequate basic services and infrastructure are the result of protracted conflict and climatic shocks as well as to the inability of the government to manage resources and services. Government spending on public services and infrastructure is very low and so are investments in sectors other than defence and security. South Sudan spends only 2.7% of its GDP on the health sector, compared to an average of 4.9% in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Due to poor infrastructure access to electricity, water and sanitation facilities, and mobile network coverage is low. In 2018, 20% of the population had access to sanitation facilities; 25% had access to electricity, and 30% had access to mobile networks (HNO 2020).

COVID-19 and Government measures

As of 30 July, 2,322 cases of COVID-19 are confirmed and 46 related deaths registered in South Sudan. The most affected area is Central Equatoria state, where Juba, the capital is located. Testing capacity in the country is improving but still low and there is a supply shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical and humanitarian personnel. Overall, the health system in South Sudan has long been inadequate, characterised by poorly equipped facilities and a shortage of health professionals. There are only 24 intensive care beds and 14 ventilators in the country (OHCHR 23/06/2020).

In April, the Government of South Sudan implemented a number of measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing (limitations to public gatherings, school closures, closure of businesses and public services), movement restrictions (curfews, international flight suspensions, border closures), and quarantine and isolation policies.

Most measures were lifted in early and mid-May: government officials announced resumption of domestic, regional, and international flights, re-opening of shops and markets, and internal movement through boda-bodas and rickshaws. Although airspace was reopened, lack of coordination between different government bodies and over-bureaucratisation of movements still causes difficulties and delays in operations. Schools remain closed and land borders are only open to commercial and humanitarian traffic.

COVID-19 containment measures, although lifted, continue to have an impact on livelihoods and on food prices. Movement restrictions have affected humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding operations. The pandemic is severely affecting health service provision and access to health services for non-COVID-19 related assistance.

Linked to COVID-19 confinement measures, cases of sexual and gender-based violence have spiked, including rape, intimate partner violence, beatings, and forced marriage. Further, there are reports of government forces resorting to physical violence and arbitrary arrests against people perceived to have broken curfew and confinement measures (OHCHR 23/06/2020).

Climatic hazards and natural shocks

South Sudan is prone to climatic and natural shocks; droughts, flooding, pests, and epidemics.

The rainy season is normally June-October, with seasonal flooding between August and October/November. In 2019 abnormally seasonal rains impacted large areas of South Sudan, especially northern and eastern areas along rivers, destroying homes and crops, killing livestock, and hampering access to services and aid. Assessment and response were challenged by physical access constraints as a result of the poor infrastructure, specifically the lack of road network and its susceptibility to flooding.

Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, and Upper Nile states are particularly susceptible to flooding when rivers overflow following heavy rains. In May 2020, floods were recorded in Bor South county, Jonglei state as heavy rains damaged a Nile River barrier that normally prevents overflow of water to Bor town. Floods displaced over 12,000 people from Bor town to nearby areas at higher altitudes.

The rainy season puts communities at risk of spread of waterborne disease, including acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), cholera, and vector-borne diseases such as malaria. In July 2019, during the rainy season, malaria accounted for 68% of all illnesses and 72% of deaths reported in health facilities (OCHA 09/08/2019). In 2019, AWD and malaria, as well as pneumonia, accounted for 75% of all child mortality in South Sudan (HNO 2020). The poor health system is often unable to prevent and respond to the high number of cases.

Inadequate WASH infrastructure also contributes to the spread of communicable diseases.

South Sudan is one of several countries affected by the worst desert locust outbreak in decades. Locusts are present across five counties in Eastern Equatoria; the warm wet weather and rainfall increase the risk of the locusts spreading in more areas, damaging crops and posing a risk to food security and livelihoods. Above average wet weather conditions are forecast at least until September 2020 in eastern South Sudan, with high likelihood of flooding in the same areas hit by heavy rains in 2019. Wetter weather conditions are forecast for the western and central areas of the country, with flooding less likely to occur in the west (WFP 30/06/2020; WFP VAM 20/05/2020).

Stakeholders

There are a number of different political and armed groups in South Sudan, many splinter groups of the SPLM/SPLA or SPLA/SPLM-IO. Here we mention the major groups (signatories and non to R-ARCSS), as well as main international stakeholders, that are currently playing a major role in South Sudanese political and security scene.

- **Sudan's People Liberation Army and Sudan's People Liberation Movement (SPLA/SPLM):** The Sudan's People Liberation Movement was created in 1983 by John Garang, a Sudanese politician opposing, from the early 1980s, the increasingly Islamist Sudanese government. In 1983, Garang was sent by the government of Sudan to southern Sudan, in the town of Bor, to put down an uprising by the separatist group of the Anya Nya. Instead, he joined the group and soon formed the SPLM and its armed branch, the SPLA. During the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005) the SPLA fought for an idea a New Sudan as a secular, united, and multi-ethnic state. In 2005, with the death of Garang, Salva Kiir Mayardit (current President of the Republic of South Sudan), became the leader of the SPLM/SPLA. With South Sudan Independence in 2011, the SPLA's political branch, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), become the ruling party and Salva Kiir, became President of South Sudan.
- **Sudan's People Liberation Movement and Sudan's People Liberation Army - in Opposition (SPLM/SPLA-IO):** in late 2013, Riek Machar Teny, Vice President and a senior SPLA commander, was accused by President Kiir of planning a coup, and removed from his position. This led to the formation of the SPLA-IO and to South Sudan civil war, in 2013-2015, which ended with the signature of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS). Conflict broke out between the SPLA and SPLA-IO again in 2016 until the signature of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), in September 2018. Which led to the formation of the TGoNU.

- **South Sudan People Defence Forces (SSDPF):** previously SPLA, it is the army (not integrated) of the government of South Sudan since 2018.
- **South Sudanese Former Detainees (FD),** also known as **G-10:** The FDs or G-10 are a group of ten former SPLM member, arrested in 2014 by the Government of South Sudan (led by Salva Kiir) because accused of planning a coup against the government. Once acquitted, the FD played a role of mediators between the SPLM and SPLM-IO. They are also signatories to the R-ARCSS.
- **South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA):** The SSOA was established in Addis Abeba in February 2018 and regroups the political parties and armed groups opposing the Government of Salva Kiir but are not part, or challenge, the biggest opposition group of the SPLM-IO. The SSOA is also a signatory to the R-ARCSS. Some armed groups that were initially part of the SSOA, the biggest amongst them being the National Army of Salvation, rejected the conditions of the R-ARCSS splitting from the SSOA and forming the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance in 2019.
- **Other Political Parties (OPP):** this name is used to refer to all other political parties, other than the SPLM, SPLAM-IO, FD, and SSOA, signatories of the R-ARCSS.
- **National Army of Salvation (NAS),** also known as the National Salvation Front (NSF): the NAS is led by Thomas Cirillo and it is the biggest armed opposition group after the SPLM-IO. Thomas Cirillo and the NAS also led the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance. They are not signatory to the R-ARCSS but on 14 January 2020 they have signed the Rome Declaration, brokered the Community of Sant'Egidio, as part of the SSOA. The Rome Declaration is a peace declaration and renewed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (last signed in December 2017) between the government of South Sudan, the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA), The SPLM/A-IO, and the National Democratic Movement (NDM) led by Lam Akol. NAS has a significant presence and political support in Central Equatoria State and Western Equatoria State. Unconfirmed reports suggest they may also have some support in Jonglei State and Upper Nile State, but far less than in the Equatorias. Linkages and reported collaboration with Gen. Paul Malong have also been stated, but these have not yet produced any significant developments.
- **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD):** The IGAD is a regional organisation created in 1996 to replace the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). Its member states are Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Its main objectives areas of action: food security and environmental protection; promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs; and economic cooperation and integration. The

IGAD played a major role as peace and political negotiators in South Sudan civil war, as well as during the conflict between the SPLA and Sudan.

(Sources: South Sudan Humanitarian Project 2015; Sudan Tribune 30/01/2020; Gurtong 9/04/2018; Maxwell D., Donnelly P., The Contemporary Humanitarian Landscape: Malaise, Blockages and Game Changers - Case Study: The Violence in South Sudan, December 2013 to Present, 08/2015; Revitalized-Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan, 12/09/2018; VV.AA, The Political Arena in South Sudan: A Political Marketplace Study, 12/2019; IGAD).

Impacts of the crisis

Population movement

Over 1.6 million people are internally displaced in South Sudan and 2.2 million are refugees or asylum seekers in neighbouring countries (REACH 06/2019; IDMC 12/2019; DTM South Sudan). 190,000 IDPs currently reside in congested Protection of Civilian (POC) sites, adjacent to UN Mission in South Sudan bases (UNMISS).

There was a brief spike in refugee and IDP returns following the R-ARCSS signing in 2018. More than 300,000 of those who returned from abroad remain displaced as they were unable to return to their place of origin. Although the security situation has improved since 2018, many areas continue to be affected by localised violence, the activities of armed groups, and cattle raiding. Returnee households or individuals often face protection concerns, challenges in accessing basic services, as well as shelters and NFIs, land and property issues, and lack of job opportunities (UNHCR 10/02/2020; DTM 20/06/2019).

Food security, livelihoods, and malnutrition

According to IPC projections, over May-July 2020, 6.48 million people (55% of the total population) will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and above levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 01/2020). Food insecurity is driven by climatic shocks, conflict, and poor macroeconomic conditions. Food security, together with poor WASH infrastructure, also affects the nutrition status of the population. In 2020, 1.3 million children are projected to be acutely malnourished, with over 292,000 severely malnourished.

Over 83% of South Sudan's population relies on agricultural activities (farming, herding, fishing) as their primary livelihood, as well as small-trade of agricultural products, generally sold in local markets. Normally South Sudan relies on imports of cereals from neighbouring countries whenever the country's crop production is below average (FAO 06/04/2020).

Livestock is particularly important as the main source of food and income (most of the population are pastoralists), as well as a socio-cultural and economic asset that shows social status and prestige. Traditionally, cattle are used as means of payment for

compensation or dowries, and to settle disputes. Being such an important economic asset, cattle raiding has been common in South Sudan among pastoralist communities. Proliferation of weapons and the use of cattle raiding by armed groups and political elite led to cattle raiding becoming another tool of war, often used by parties to the conflict or armed groups to fuel ethnic rivalries (Idris, I. (2018), 'Livestock and Livelihoods in South Sudan, K4D Helpdesk Report 484).

Protection

Widespread violence and human rights abuses have created a protection crisis. Protection risks driven by conflict, poor governance and rule of law, a fragile economy, and the presence of armed groups and armed forces are high across the country. They include gender-based violence and exploitation; child recruitment; forced marriages; arbitrary arrests and detention; housing, property, and land rights violations; criminality; presence of mines and explosive remnants of war; or targeted and indiscriminate killings. Access to protection services is low or non-existent for the large majority of the population and particularly for IDPs and returnees.

According to the South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2020, the people living in 10 counties across the country face severe protection concerns: Aweil East, Awerial, Ayod, Bor South, Juba, Magwi, Panyijar, Rubkona, Tonj North and Yei. People living in areas where localised violence, proxy fighting, and militarised cattle raiding are common are at greatest risk.

Access to services

Access to basic services is challenged by violence, insecurity, physical barriers, a lack of existing services, and most recently COVID-19 containment measures. Obstructions and infrastructure challenges such as bad road networks can further impede access to services, especially during the long rainy season when roads become flooded (UN OCHA 20/11/2019). More than one-third of IDPs live more than 5km from a functioning health facility. Migration for livelihoods, such as to cattle camps, can further distance people from existing services (UN OCHA 20/11/2019). Insecurity stemming from localised clashes, revenge killings, cattle raiding, and armed violence, has hindered the movement of people, and has previously limited access to services and aid, including emergency food provision (UNHCR 06/06/2020; UNHCR 20/05/2020 USAID 17/04/2020). For children, access to education is constrained – only 1 in 4 school-aged children were in school prior to COVID containment measures (UN OCHA 20/11/2019). More children are expected to not return to school following the prolonged school closures for COVID-19. There is a lack of access to adequate social safety nets or protection services, including child protection (UN OCHA 20/11/2019).

Humanitarian access

Humanitarian access remains a challenge in South Sudan. Where access improves this can be attributed to a decrease in clashes, in part due to formation of the transitional government. Clashes have increased in recent months, particularly in Jonglei state (UNHCR 06/06/2020). Restrictions related to the containment of COVID-19, including quarantine and testing requirements, have complicated humanitarian access (UNHCR 06/06/2020). Ongoing looting of humanitarian supplies, targeted attacks on health facilities, violence against aid workers, and ambushes continue to jeopardise humanitarian operations (USAID 17/04/2020; OCHA 18/02/2020). The presence of landmines and improvised explosives poses risks to security of humanitarian staff. Physical obstructions include poor road infrastructure and impassable roads during the rainy season (UNHCR 06/06/2020). Bureaucratic and administrative impediments – at both the state and national level – such as exploitation, imposition of taxes and fees, movement restrictions, and checkpoints create issues for humanitarian access (OCHA 08/05/2020).

Scenarios triggers

Scenario 1 = Increasing conflict; escalating disease, including COVID-19; no heavier rains than usual

Scenario 2 = Continued insecurity; no major outbreaks of COVID-19 or other diseases; pockets of localised flooding

Scenario 3 = Widespread flooding followed by an increase in conflict; outbreaks of multiple diseases, but no significant increase in COVID-19

Scenario 4 = Gradually increasing security; COVID-19 spikes but then reduces; no other disease outbreaks; no heavier rains than usual

| Triggers | Scenarios: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Background information |
|---|------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Access to goods and services is likely to decrease if:</i> | | | | | | |
| Key milestones of the R-ARCSS are delayed and unmet, particularly those related to security arrangements, including the cantonment and military integration programme | | | | Y | | Neighbouring countries, busy addressing their internal political and economic crises related to COVID-19, are distracted and reduce pressure on South Sudan to maintain peace. |
| No progress on Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues | | | Y | | | |
| Local governance proves ineffective | | | | Y | | |
| Tensions between the signatories of the peace agreement and within communities rise significantly | | Y | | Y | | |
| The SPLA-IO fragments | | Y | | | | |
| Conflict spills over from one or more neighbouring countries | | Y | | Y | | Three peace initiatives are ongoing in the immediate region: the Nile Waters talks, Sudan transition and peace talks, and CAR peace processes and elections. |
| Minimal or no progress on disarmament, demobilisation, and transitional security arrangements | | | Y | | | as a diversion tactic, while consolidating power and resources in some areas of the country (mainly oil rich areas) |
| Health provision capacity significantly reduces | | Y | | Y | | |
| Ebola control programme and other preventative health programmes stop | | Y | | Y | | |
| The nationwide routine Expanded program of immunization (EPI) activities and vector control measures (e.g. LLIN distribution) are reduced | | | | | | |
| Reintroduction of COVID-19 containment measures | | | | Y | | |
| Significant numbers of health staff contract COVID-19 | | Y | | | | |
| Excessive rainfall | | | | Y | | |
| Oil prices continue to decline | | Y | | Y | | |
| Regional economies contract | | Y | | Y | | COVID-19 and the global slump in oil prices has already seen the regional economy fall. A projected growth in East Africa's regional economy, of 5% in 2020, has been revised down to between 0.2 to 1.2% since COVID-19. (AfDB 10/07/2020) |
| Humanitarian and development funding reduces | | Y | | Y | | |
| Border closures persist | | Y | | | | |

| Triggers | Scenarios: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Background information |
|---|------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| <i>Access to goods and services is likely to increase if:</i> | | | | | | |
| Central government authorities prioritise implementation of the peace agreement | | | | | | Y |
| Key deadlines in the R-ARCSS are met | | | | | | Y |
| Increased inclusion in peace processes | | | | | | Y |
| Functioning governance structures at all levels | | | | | | Y |
| HLP framework negotiations begin with buy-in from local leaders | | | | | | Y |
| Increase in international funding for COVID-19 | | | Y | | | |
| Health provision capacity maintained | | | | | | Y |
| Global economy recovers quickly | | | Y | | | |
| Global oil prices increase | | | | | | Y |
| Humanitarian and development funding remains steady or increases | | | | | | Y |
| Borders reopen, easing flow of goods and commerce across borders | | Y | Y | Y | | |
| <i>Access to goods and services is may either increase or decrease if:</i> | | | | | | |
| Patronage networks are disrupted | | | | Y | Y | |