Chapter 3 | Major food crises in 2022 | South Sudan

South Sudan

Acute food insecurity overview 2021

7.19M people were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in April–July 2021

60% of the analysed population was in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above)

3.14M people were in Stressed (IPC Phase 2)

The analysis covers 100% of the country’s total population of 12.1 million people.


National population

80% Rural

20% Urban

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

Source: South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group, December 2020.

Following a breakdown in consensus among South Sudan IPC TWG members, which led to the activation of an external Quality Review and Famine Review, an IPC report was published at country level on 11 December 2020, which reflects different findings from those above regarding the estimation of populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Akobo, Aweil South, Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South counties and no Famine Likely classification in some payams of Pibor.

Numbers of people in IPC Phase 2 or above, 2015–2022

In April–July 2021 the analysis in Jonglei and Pibor administrative area does not include the population from four payams (Maruwa, Boma, Kizongora and Miwono) due to lack of data. Datasets from all analysis rounds between 2016 and 2022 are provided (see Appendix 1, table A16, page 258).


The number of people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) was higher in 2021 than in May–July 2017, when two counties in Greater Unity were classified in Famine (IPC Phase 5) and 90 000 people were facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) (IPC, January 2017). In May–July 2019, 7 million people were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), including 21 000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). The subsequent decrease to 6.5 million by May–July 2020 was largely due to humanitarian interventions (IPC, February 2020).

Acute food insecurity trends

Numbers have risen since 2020.

The number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) increased from 6.5 million in May–July 2020 to 7.2 million by April–July 2021 with 108 000 projected to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Pibor, Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Warrap counties (IPC, February 2020 and December 2020). This 2021 estimate is the highest number for South Sudan in the GRFC’s existence, driven by the protracted conflict, economic crisis, high food prices, socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and unprecedented flooding.

The number of people in Famine Likely (IPC Phase 5) while Kizongora and Maruwa payams in the eastern part of Pibor were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and at ‘Risk of Famine’. The majority of counties (45) were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

At least 25% of households meet 25–50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance

At least 25% of households meet over 50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance

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1 Gumuruk, Pibor, Lekuangole, and Verteth.