ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY OVERVIEW

In May–July 2019, almost 7 million people — representing 61 percent of the population — were facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), the highest number ever recorded in South Sudan. Of these, 21,000 were facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and 1.8 million Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Additionally, 3.2 million were classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and at risk of falling into worse levels of acute food insecurity classification (IPC, June 2019).

The 21,000 people facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) were located in Canal/Pigi (former Jonglei state), Cueibet (former Lakes state), and Panyikang (former Upper Nile State) and were the greatest source of concern in 2019 (IPC, June 2019).

According to the August 2019 IPC analysis conducted before the floods, the acute food insecurity situation was expected to improve in the course of the year as farmers began to harvest, with 6.35 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in August, reducing to 4.54 million (39 percent of the population) in September–December (IPC, September 2019).

Compared with 2018 (IPC, September 2018), the 2019 acute food insecurity peak increased by 15 percent with 894,000 more people classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in 2019 (IPC, June 2019).

South Sudan has 1.46 million IDPs, 13 percent of them living in six UNMISS Protection of Civilians sites (UNHCR, October 2019). It also hosts 290,000 refugees and asylum seekers, chiefly from the Sudan (92 percent) followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (6 percent).

Poor dietary diversity and a high prevalence of negative coping strategies have been observed among refugee populations. Some 71–80 percent of refugee households reported using one or more negative coping strategies to fulfill their food needs. Most of the refugees rely on food assistance and approximately 60 percent of refugee households employ emergency livelihood coping strategies (FSNMS Round 24, September 2019).

FACTORS DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

Conflict/insecurity

Following the beginning of peace talks in mid-2018, and the signing in September 2018 of the R-ARCSS, the number of security incidents, which had already declined by about 30 percent in 2018, further decreased by about 40 percent in 2019 (ACLED, accessed February 2020). Improvements were