notable in areas of Greater Upper Nile, Greater Bahr el Ghazal and some parts of Greater Equatoria (FEWS NET, June 2019).

Despite UNHCR’s non-return advisory, in the first 11 months over 92,000 refugees and IDPs returned home (UNHCR, November 2019), encouraged by the perception of improved security, to cultivate their land and increase food production. Poor rule of law and easy access to arms resulted in an increase in violence that continued to displace people (UNHCR, September 2019). In the first six months of 2019, 135,000 people were newly displaced as a result of conflict (IDMC, September 2019).

Cattle raids were a common source of tension, particularly between agropastoralist communities (ACAPS, December 2019). Intercommunal conflict in former Lakes state as well as Kapoeta East, Pibor, Twic and Yei counties, resulted in loss of lives, displacement, disruptions to livelihoods and trade routes (IPC, FEWS NET June 2019). Cattle raiding in Tonj North county in former Warrap and between communities of Rumbek East and Yirol East counties in former Lakes State also led to the loss of lives and livestock (FEWS NET, April 2019).

While a more stable political environment allowed for improved delivery of humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations in 2019 (WFP, UNICEF, FAO, September 2019), movement restrictions, bureaucratic impediments and security threats to humanitarian workers persisted (ACAPS, May 2019).

Economic shocks

The country is facing a protracted macroeconomic crisis. Gross Domestic Product increased in 2019 for the first time since 2014, mainly due to increased oil revenues, but the South Sudanese pound continued to depreciate on the parallel market, and by December the average exchange rate was about 315 SSP/USD, compared to about 240 SSP/USD in December 2018. The difference between the official and the parallel market exchange rates further widened, increasing from about 60 percent in December 2018 to almost 100 percent in December 2019. Inflation, already at high levels owing to insufficient food supplies, high fuel costs and a weak local currency, surged from August–October mainly as a result of trade and market disruptions caused by the widespread floods, and the year-on-year inflation rate was estimated in October 2019 at 170 percent (FAO and WFP, forthcoming).

Real income declined by 70 percent between 2011 and 2019 and food prices have been soaring since 2015, leaving large segments of the population with daunting constraints in accessing food and other basic services. Limited cereal supplies and the lingering impact of conflict on trade and agricultural activities contributed to sorghum, maize and wheat prices being 45–90 percent higher in December 2019 than 2018 in Juba (FAO & WFP, 2020). Based on The Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) indicator, 4 out of the 12 monitored markets reached crisis level in Q3 2019 (WFP, October 2019).