the number facing acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) almost doubled, indicating increasingly severe food access constraints for market-dependent urban households.

**FACTORS DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY**

**Economic shocks**

The economic crisis worsened in 2019 despite the efforts of the transitional government and its cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in implementing reforms to foster a recovery.

With expenditure remaining high on social and military spending, and oil export earnings stagnating, the Government faced limited scope for new borrowing, so monetized the deficit by printing money (EIU, January 2020). Year-on-year inflation increased from 43.6 percent in January to 60.7 percent in November (Central Bank of Sudan, November 2019).

As a result of these macroeconomic factors, and with traders reportedly hoarding their agricultural produce, regarded as a more reliable form of savings compared to the weakening local currency, food prices reached exceptionally high levels (IPC, September 2019 and OCHA, January 2020).

Some 58 percent of households were estimated to be unable to afford the local food basket (WFP, 2019). Increasing food prices were the immediate cause of demonstrations that started in December 2018 (WB, April 2019).

**Weather extremes**

The June–September rains were erratically distributed with early onset of seasonal rains in May and adequate precipitation in June benefitting planting, but prolonged dry spells in July resulted in crop wilting, requiring multiple replanting. Exceptionally abundant late season rains from August–October, benefitted crop development, but triggered floods in 15 out of 18 states (OCHA, January 2020), affecting about 420 000 people (OCHA, November 2019), increasing the prevalence of human and livestock waterborne diseases and causing substantial crop losses.

Severe infestations of birds, rodents and insects (sorghum midge and locusts) further affected crop yields. Production of cereals in 2019 is estimated at about 5.9 million tons, 33 percent down from the 2018 bumper output and 14 percent below the average of the previous five years.

**Conflict/insecurity**

Security forces attempted to repress the widespread protests that resulted in more than 100 people killed, and several hundred injured (OCHA, January 2020). The Government