

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This document provides 10 main questions and answers on the South Sudan IPC analysis results - May 2017 and June-July 2017, followed by key questions and related answers on what IPC is and how food insecurity is measured.

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## 1. How many are in need and where in South Sudan now?

As of June-July 2017, 6 million people are estimated to require urgent action to save lives, protect livelihoods, reduce food consumption gaps and acute malnutrition. Among those, over 4.3 million people are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), nearly 1.7 million people are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), and 45,000 are facing catastrophic conditions (IPC Phase 5) in localized areas of South Sudan, namely: Leer, Koch and Mayendit counties of Unity State (25,000 people) and Ayod county of Jonglei state (20,000 people).

## 2. Which area(s) are of the most food insecure?

Leer county in Unity State continues to be a major area of concern. The county is now classified in IPC Phase 4! and not IPC Phase 5 (Famine), as it was in February 2017. This means that it would be classified in IPC Phase 5 in the absence of humanitarian assistance delivery.

Other areas of high concern include the 20 counties in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) located in the States of Unity, Jonglei, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Eastern and Central Equatoria. In addition, of concern are also the 43 counties are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis).

Overall, over 80% of the counties (64 counties out of 78) are classified IPC Phase 3 Crisis and higher phases.

## 3. What does it mean that Leer county is “on the brink of famine” or “a step away from Famine”?

The classification of Leer in IPC Phase 4! entails that the area would likely be classified in IPC Phase 5 (Famine) in the absence of humanitarian assistance delivery. This is because: (i) a large proportion of the population heavily relies on humanitarian assistance as their main source of food; and (ii) indicators on food consumption, malnutrition and/or mortality show levels that are close to thresholds determining the IPC Famine classification. Therefore, in the absence of humanitarian assistance, those indicators would likely rise above the IPC Famine thresholds.

## 4. How does the situation compare with previous food security/IPC analysis results in South Sudan?

Overall, the food security situation in South Sudan has further deteriorated. The number of people requiring urgent humanitarian assistance has increased by approximately 25%. Specifically, the total number of people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) has increased from approximately 4.9 million as projected in January 2017, to an estimated 6 million in June-July 2017.



Nevertheless, the number of people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) has decreased by more than half from 100,000 to 45,000 (55% decrease).

In Unity, where the food security situation had notably deteriorated in late 2016 - early 2017 and where IPC Phase 5 Famine was declared in localized areas (Leer and Mayendit counties) in February 2017, Famine is no longer occurring. Humanitarian assistance scale-up in recent months has played a major role in stabilizing the situation in Unity state and in preventing further deterioration into IPC Phase 5 (Famine). However, the situation remains catastrophic with 25,000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) compared to 100,000 projected in January 2017; and in Leer County, famine is likely avoided by humanitarian assistance (IPC Phase 4!).

In Jonglei, the situation has rapidly deteriorated due to the spread of the armed conflict. As a result, five counties are facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and an estimated 20,000 people are experiencing Humanitarian Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

Food security and nutrition situation has also deteriorated in other parts of South Sudan: Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Upper Nile and Greater Equatoria.

Even though no county has been classified in Famine (IPC Phase 5) in this IPC update, the situation remains very critical. The reasons for deterioration remain the same and include:

- Armed conflict, which has spread to new areas (Jonglei) and resulted in massive population displacement, disruptions to people’s livelihoods (e.g. agricultural activities) and trade, access to social services and humanitarian assistance.
- Economic crisis (high food prices, reduced household purchasing power).
- Below-average harvests that were exhausted well before the ongoing lean season.

## 5. Is the stabilization/improvement of the food security situation in Unity (and other areas) due to humanitarian assistance?

The significant and sustained provision of multi-sector humanitarian assistance immediately after the Famine declaration in February 2017 has played a major role in stabilizing the situation related to food consumption and nutrition security in Unity state and in preventing further deterioration into IPC Phase 5 Famine. Gains made in previously Famine-affected and Famine-risk counties must not be jeopardized through the reallocation of humanitarian assistance to ongoing and developing acute food insecurity hotspots. This is because the affected populations’ livelihoods are effectively eroded thus leaving them heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance. Should humanitarian assistance be compromised, the areas could easily slip into Famine again.

## 6. Has famine been fully overcome in South Sudan? How far is South Sudan from another famine declaration?

The situation in Central/Southern Unity and parts of Jonglei remains catastrophic. There are still 45,000 people facing famine conditions (IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe) in parts of Unity and Jonglei State and another 30,000 people on the brink of Famine (IPC Phase 4!) in Leer county of Unity State. Also, there are 20 counties in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), which is one-step below Famine on the IPC scale - in Unity, Jonglei, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Eastern and Central Equatoria.

Therefore, another Famine declaration may still occur depending on how the conflict and humanitarian access evolve.

## 7. What is the difference between IPC Phase 5 Famine and IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe?

A geographical area (e.g. county) is attributed and mapped in a specific IPC phase when at least 20 percent of the population in this area is experiencing the conditions related to that IPC phase or higher phases.

If some households in a given area are experiencing catastrophic conditions (i.e. extreme food gaps and significant mortality which is directly attributable to outright starvation or to the interaction of acute malnutrition and disease), these households are classified in IPC Phase 5 "Catastrophe".

If at least 20 percent of the households in a given area are facing IPC Phase 5 "Catastrophe" conditions, this area (e.g. county) is classified and mapped in IPC Phase 5 Famine and a Famine is declared in this area.

Therefore, one requires to have at least 20% of the households experiencing IPC Phase 5 conditions to classify the area in IPC Phase 5 Famine and declare a Famine.

## 8. What is the Emergency Review Committee (IPC ERC) and its role in the South Sudan IPC analysis?

The IPC Emergency Review Committee (ERC) is an independent committee of global food security and nutrition experts who are neutral to the IPC outcome and who have the relevant technical knowledge and experience in the specific crisis context.

The IPC ERC is activated whenever a risk of famine or famine classification is identified in a country as an additional quality assurance and validation step for the IPC conclusions. The



activation of the IPC ERC is also meant to further ensure technical independence of the analysis from potential political influence.

The South Sudan IPC team (IPC Technical Working Group - TWG) requested the activation of the IPC ERC several times in the past few years. Please note that the South Sudan IPC TWG is chaired by Government officials and include food security and nutrition specialists from various government institutions, UN Agencies, international and national NGOs and technical agencies.

The IPC ERC follows a two-step process.

- Step 1: The IPC ERC looks at the application of IPC protocols and interpretation of data, and provides conclusions on the IPC results; and
- Step2: The IPC ERC can make an expert judgment about the situation beyond the application of the IPC protocols.
- Based on these two steps, the ERC shares conclusions on the classification of the most critical areas and provides recommendations to the country IPC TWG for adjustments of the IPC analysis results, if need arises.

The conclusions and recommendations from the IPC ERC review are fed back to the country IPC TWG for their final considerations and decision-making.

- The IPC ERC has an advisory function to country IPC TWG and it is up to the country partners and Government to decide on the final IPC results.
- Any analysis and results are owned and declared by the Government and the country IPC partners.

## 9. Do politics play any part in food security analysis in South Sudan?

IPC was created precisely to supersede potential political interferences through technical neutrality, and, if necessary, to shine a light on the political dimensions (at both national and international levels) that may obfuscate the severity of food insecurity situations.

IPC provides parameters which are based on international standards to analyze the severity of food insecurity from none to famine levels. These parameters have been commonly agreed by all partners and, like in all countries using IPC protocols, have been followed in South Sudan to ascertain the severity of the situation based on these parameters and data available.

This is particularly challenging in countries affected by conflict where some areas are not accessible and quality data are not always available. For this reason, an independent committee of global experts, called the IPC Emergency Review Committee (ERC) was activated several times to support the South Sudan IPC team of food security and nutrition specialists as an additional quality assurance and validation step for the IPC conclusions. The activation of the IPC ERC is also meant to further ensure technical independence of the analysis from potential political influence.



## 10. Which evidence/data was used for the classification in the most severe IPC Phases (IPC Phase 4, IPC Phase 4! and IPC Phase 5)

### Parameters/indicators:

The data which provided the basis for IPC most severe classifications (IPC Phase 4, IPC Phase 4! and IPC Phase 5) included: indicators on household food consumption and changes in livelihood, acute malnutrition and mortality. Data on past and planned food aid delivery was also reviewed to assess the extent to which food aid has contributed to improve or stabilize the situation and how the situation is expected to evolve in the coming months.

### Sources:

This IPC update primarily relied on the findings of a wide range of surveys/assessments recently conducted by various humanitarian stakeholders, i.e. mainly international and national NGOs and UN Agencies operating in various parts of the country.

For the IPC analysis in the counties of Leer, Koch and Panyjar in Unity State and Duk in Jonglei State, the IPC was based on relatively comprehensive evidence thanks to (SMART) surveys conducted at household level, which provided information on food consumption and livelihood change. These surveys were conducted by Action Against Hunger (AAH) in Leer and Duk, World Relief in Koch) and International Medical Committee in Panyjar. These were complemented by data on factors contributing to food insecurity such as food production, access to land, access to markets and market prices which were provided by several agencies, such as REACH.

In Mayendit (Unity State) and Ayod (Jonglei State), the IPC analysis primarily relied on malnutrition and mortality data. In Aweil East (Northern Bahr El Ghazal), data on food consumption and livelihood change provided the basis for the IPC. In these three counties, the analysis also took into account factors contributing to food insecurity.

For Uror and Nyrol counties (Jonglei), nutrition data collected in localized areas was complemented by evidence on key drivers of food insecurity.

## Q&As on what IPC is and how food insecurity is measured with IPC:

### 11. What is the IPC?

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is essentially two things: (1) a standardized scale of food insecurity; and (2) a process for building technical consensus. The IPC standardized scale divides up food insecurity into five Phases, ranging from IPC Phase 1 corresponding to minimal acute food insecurity to IPC Phase 5, corresponding to Famine. Each of these phases has important and distinct implications for where and how best to intervene. The IPC phases are determined by analyzing a wide range of outcomes based on international standards including food consumption levels, livelihoods, malnutrition, and mortality. These are triangulated with



contributing factors such as market prices, income levels, crop and livestock production, rainfall, and many others. The IPC classification is based on a convergence of all of this evidence. The IPC is kind of like a thermometer that tells you the 'temperature' of how bad a food security situation is. But its more than just the temperature – just like water can change states from solid ice to liquid to gas as the temperature rises, the IPC indicates the changing phases of a food insecure situation.

## 12. How is “Acute food insecurity” defined in IPC?

Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition are any manifestation of food insecurity and malnutrition found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration.

## 13. How is the decision made to attribute a specific IPC Phase to a given area?

Countries classify and map acute food insecurity situation within geographical areas - defined according to the national administrative divisions (e.g. provinces, prefectures, counties etc.) or livelihood zones - and the proportion of affected households within those areas. Each area is attributed a food insecurity “Phase” (ranging from IPC Phase 1 corresponding to minimal acute food insecurity to IPC Phase 5, corresponding to Famine).

A geographical area is attributed and mapped in a specific IPC phase when at least 20 percent of the population in the area is experiencing the conditions related to that phase or higher phases.

**IPC Crisis Situation (IPC Phase 3)** occurs when at least 20% of the people in a geographical area are experiencing at least one of the following conditions:

- Limited quantities and diversification of food intake
- Significant reductions in the means of securing the basic necessities of life
- 10-15 % of the population is acutely malnourished
- Mortality starts increasing – up to 1 adult and/or 2 children deaths per day per 10,000 inhabitants due to food gaps

**Emergency Situation (IPC Phase 4)** occurs when at least 20% of the people in a geographical area are experiencing at least one of the following conditions:

- Poor quantities and diversification of food intake, with access to 4 or fewer food groups
- Critical and irreversible loss of means of securing the basic necessities of life
- 15-30 % of the population is acutely malnourished



- Mortality increases up to 2 adults and/or 4 children deaths per day per 10,000 inhabitants due to large food gaps

**Famine Situation (IPC Phase 5)** occurs when at least 20 percent of the population in a geographical area are experiencing the following conditions:

- Poor quantities and diversification of food intake, with access to 4 or fewer food groups
- Critical and irreversible loss of means of securing the basic necessities of life
- 15-30 % of the population is acutely malnourished
- Mortality is up to 2 adults and/or 4 children deaths per day per 10,000 inhabitants due to large food gaps.

IPC famine is a classification based on standards, evidence, and technical consensus. It is up to the analysts working in the national governments, NGOs, UN, and technical agencies such as FEWSNET to make such a declaration using the IPC process.

## 14. What's the difference and/or correlation between "famine" and "malnutrition"? Famine is more serious, isn't?

It is not matter of difference. Malnutrition is one of the core indicators/parameters used to classify a situation as famine.