



## Compounding Crises in South Sudan Conflict, Flooding and Displacement

Catholic Relief Services and our partners are prioritizing emergency response efforts in counties most vulnerable to flooding and conflict, and participating in coordination efforts at the county, state and national levels.



Nyajima Joh and her son visit a CRS-supported mobile medical unit in Ayod county in Jonglei state. High food prices mean families living at or below poverty levels have less access to lifesaving health and nutrition services and other basics. *Photo by Achuoth Deng for CRS*

### Overview

South Sudan, the world’s youngest country, is now ranked the third most fragile state in the world<sup>1</sup> as compounded crises are putting millions of lives at risk. Since the country’s independence in 2011, its people have endured continuous conflict, climate-driven crises and large-scale displacement. Consecutive years of extreme flooding have led to major displacement and loss of land and assets.

At least 9 million people in South Sudan—75% of the population—need some form of humanitarian assistance. For more than a decade, the South Sudanese have faced escalating humanitarian needs, and the erosion of resilience capacities and development. The humanitarian situation is exacerbated by an influx of more than 700,000 returnees and refugees from neighboring Sudan due to the ongoing war, and increasing numbers of returnees from Ethiopia due to a spike in violence there.

# 7.1 million

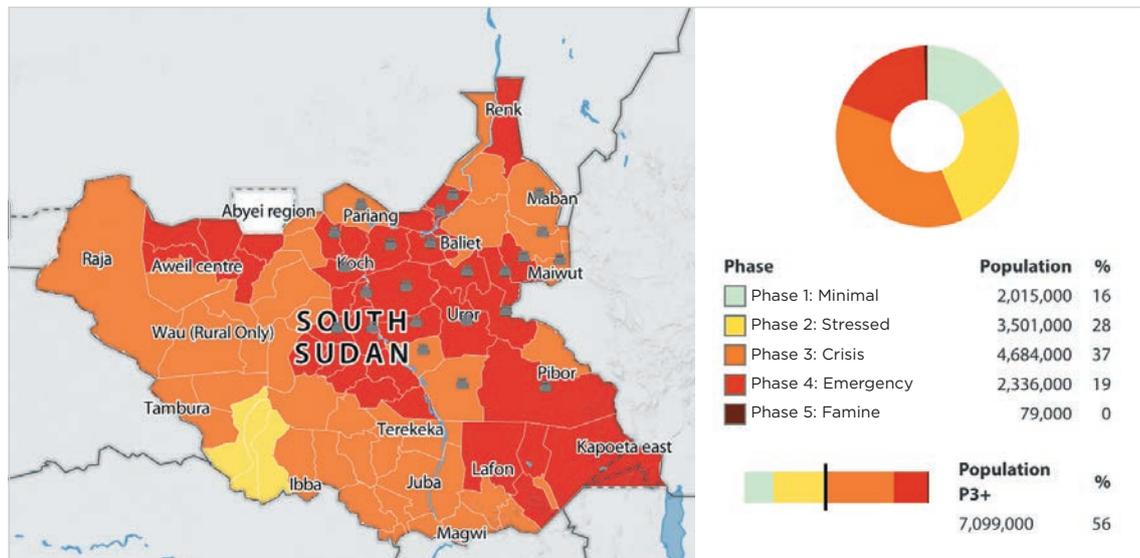
PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING A LEVEL OF FOOD DEPRIVATION THAT PUTS THEIR LIVES OR LIVELIHOODS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

1. [World Bank Fragile States Index](#).



Families are liquidating their assets to cope, and facing starvation, critical levels of acute malnutrition, destitution and even death.

### South Sudan Projected Food Insecurity: April to July 2024



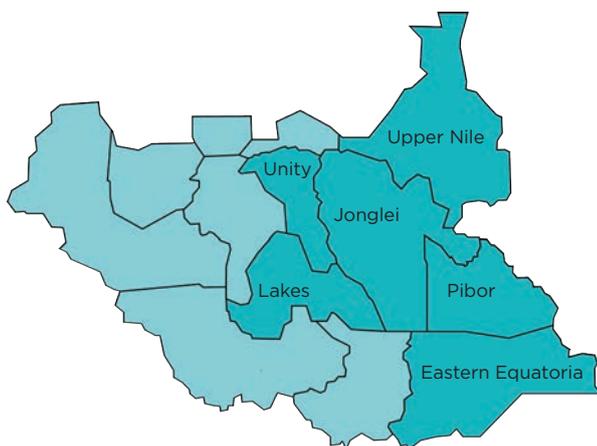
Source: IPC. [South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - November 2023 and Projections for December 2023 - March 2024 and for April - July 2024.](#)

The response by CRS and our partners extends our programming taking place across South Sudan, including food assistance, livelihoods recovery, comprehensive water, sanitation and hygiene efforts, health and nutrition services, and support for market-based responses.

Of great concern are levels of hunger. An estimated 7.1 million people—59% of South Sudan’s population—are experiencing a level of food deprivation that puts their lives or livelihoods in immediate danger. Of this number, 2.34 million people face emergency food insecurity conditions. Families are liquidating their assets to cope, and facing starvation, critical levels of acute malnutrition, destitution and even death.

In Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, and in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area of Jonglei state—as well as among returnees—there are catastrophic levels of food insecurity. There is now the possibility of similar levels in the northeastern Upper Nile region.

#### South Sudan States Where CRS and Our Partners Are Active



#### Compounding Issues

##### Macroeconomic crisis

The South Sudanese pound has severely depreciated, losing half its value between January and March, and 95% of its value from the year earlier.

Prices of food and other essential items have risen dramatically just as the currency is plummeting. Families living at or below poverty levels have been less able to afford food, water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, health and nutrition services and other basics. With high prices and scarcity has come rising malnutrition, illness and death.

In February, a critical oil pipeline, which exports roughly two thirds of South Sudan’s crude oil, ruptured in Sudan. Crude oil exports make up more than 85% of South Sudan’s revenue but the pipeline may not be repairable amid Sudan’s civil war.

# 9 million

AT LEAST 9 MILLION PEOPLE IN SOUTH SUDAN—75% OF THE POPULATION—NEED SOME FORM OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Consecutive years of extreme flooding in South Sudan have led to major displacement and loss of land and assets. *Photo by CRS staff*



**Concerns are high that the elections will disrupt humanitarian assistance and basic services, increase conflict, and result in further displacement and loss of life.**

### Political uncertainty

South Sudan's first elections are slated for December, but there are significant logistical and financial challenges to carrying them out.

The United Nations, African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the United States and other governments have expressed support for elections, while advocating for the Government of South Sudan to take the steps needed to conduct free, fair and credible elections.

Concerns are high that the elections will disrupt humanitarian assistance and basic services, increase conflict, and result in further displacement and loss of life.

### Flooding

South Sudan is the country second-most vulnerable to climate change.<sup>2</sup> The recurrence and severity of floods have reshaped livelihood systems, compounding the impacts of emergencies, conflict and displacement. About 75% of the population lives in areas exposed to moderate or severe flooding. Between 2019 and 2022, four consecutive years of extreme flooding affected 3.2 million people, with waters having yet to recede in some areas. Above-average rainfall is predicted across much of East Africa in the second half of 2024, and is likely to trigger widespread displacement and loss of life in already vulnerable areas—from the high-density displacement areas in the Upper Nile to the more rural areas in Jonglei state. Up to 3.3 million people may be affected by flooding this year.<sup>3</sup>

### CRS and Partner Response

CRS is participating in coordination efforts at the county, state and national levels. With our local partners, we are prioritizing emergency response efforts in the counties of the Greater Jonglei region that are most vulnerable to flooding and conflict. These include Ayod, Duk, Twic East, Uror, Akobo and the semi-autonomous Greater Pibor Administrative Area. CRS is also working

in partnership with Caritas diocesan organizations and local partners in other affected areas of the country. In particular, CRS is coordinating with Caritas Malakal, which serves Upper Nile state and parts of Unity state, which are highly susceptible to flooding, have received large numbers of returnees, and are vulnerable to conflict.

2. [EU INFORM index](#).

3. [South Sudan Flood Preparedness and Response Plan](#).



Photo by CRS staff

CRS is leveraging its logistics network and experience, and using road, water and air transport to deliver supplies and staff—even to very remote areas.



CRS water and sanitation staff hand over borehole equipment to a community in Ayod county. CRS has been supporting the rehabilitation of boreholes for safe and clean water.

Photo by Achuoth Deng for CRS.

## Priorities for CRS and partner support

- **Emergency food:** In partnership with the World Food Program, CRS is distributing food rations to affected communities as well as returnees and internally displaced people. CRS is also providing food through school feeding programs.
- **Cash assistance:** Where assessments deem markets to be functioning and safely accessible, CRS supports the use of multipurpose cash assistance, which helps families and communities buy food and essential living items in local markets.
- **Livelihoods support:** To increase food production in vulnerable areas of Jonglei and Lakes states, CRS and our partners are helping communities form agriculture, fishing and livestock groups, and are distributing vegetable seed kits to farmers, fishing kits to fishery groups, and tools to agriculture groups.
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** CRS and our partners are repairing and constructing water systems, including dikes, drainage channels, boreholes and water pans. We are also providing access to clean water, as well as hygiene kits and information on preventing illness.

## CRS in South Sudan

CRS has active field bases in the counties of Akobo, Ayod, Bor South, Duk and Pibor in Jonglei state; Budi and Kapoeta North in Eastern Equatoria state; and Rumbek East in Lakes state. We also have 13 active warehouses across Ayod, Duk and Pibor counties. CRS has the capacity for rapid emergency programs in all areas of Jonglei, such as Uror and Twic East, where field bases can be quickly re-established.

The response by CRS and our partners to this crisis is an extension of programming taking place across South Sudan, including food assistance, livelihoods recovery, comprehensive water, sanitation and hygiene efforts, provision of health and nutrition services, and support for market-based responses. CRS continues to work with partners and communities to adapt assistance to meet the evolving needs. We are leveraging our logistics network and experience, and using road, water and air transport to deliver supplies and staff—even to very remote areas.

- **Social cohesion:** CRS is working with communities on activities to build trust among diverse groups. CRS works with the South Sudan Council of Churches to nurture relationships with government representatives, and religious and community leaders.

## Market-based response

CRS and our partners work with and through existing market systems to provide people facing acute food insecurity with food, nutrition and access to basic items and WASH, such as through the provision of cash or vouchers, or by providing market support. In the medium to long term, we intentionally support markets to be inclusive, conflict-sensitive, resilient and able to reach the last mile with affordable, nutritious foods. We also provide access to seeds, tools, materials and other resources needed for climate-resilient agricultural production. Prioritizing market systems development approaches in the longer-term aims to ensure that food systems continue to serve the most vulnerable people in future economic crises.

CRS coordinates with local Caritas partners including Caritas Malakal, the Caritas Diocese of Rumbek, Caritas Torit, Caritas Juba and Caritas South Sudan. CRS has experienced local staff, and builds on strong relationships with local authorities and established trust with local communities. This has allowed us to sustain emergency programming through previous periods of conflict and flooding, and we are confident of our potential to access even hard-to-reach areas with quality programming as soon as safety is established.

## HOW TO HELP

- Donate online: [support.crs.org/donate/global-food-crisis](https://support.crs.org/donate/global-food-crisis)
- Donate by phone: 1-877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check: Food crisis, Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 5200, Harlan, IA 515930700

