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SOUTH SUDAN IS APPROACHING A TIPPING POINT: WITHOUT TIMELY DONOR ACTION, MILLIONS RISK SLIDING DEEPER INTO ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY



7.8 million people
in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse
acute food insecurity



2.5 million people
in Emergency (IPC Phase 4)



73,000 people
in Catastrophe IPC Phase 5), with
IPC Phase 5 outcomes in Akobo,
Nyirol, Fangak, Uror, Luakpiny/Nasir,
and Ulang

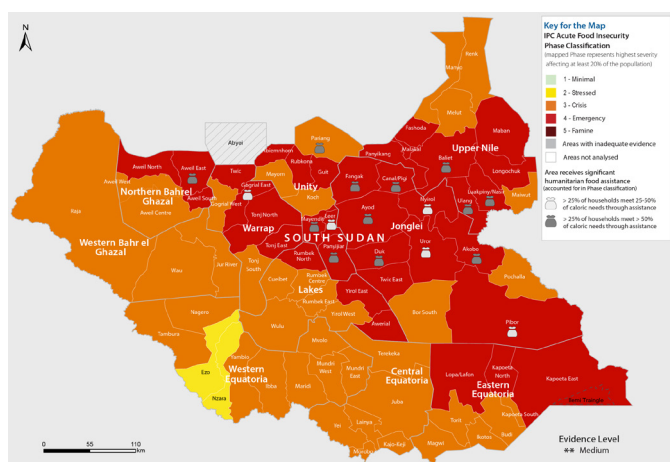


5.1 million people
at risk of being
unassisted

South Sudan is facing a rapidly worsening food security crisis that demands urgent donor attention. The IPC April–July 2026 projection shows **7.8 million** people, or **55 percent** of the population, in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse, an increase of around 280,000 people compared to the September 2025 lean season projection.

Risk of Famine, under a realistic worst-case scenario, has been identified in Akobo, Nyirol, Luakpiny/Nasir, and Ulang, where conflict, displacement, access constraints, market collapse, failed production, and breakdowns in health and nutrition services are driving extreme need.

Projection Update Acute Food Insecurity | April - July 2026



Deterioration is wide-ranging, affecting Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, Warrap, Western Bahr el Ghazal, and parts of Central and Western Equatoria, driven by escalating conflict, mass displacement, shrinking humanitarian access, flooding, limited market functioning and production shocks.

Compounding the crisis, four consecutive years of severe flooding have destroyed crops, livestock and critical infrastructure.

Since April 2023, South Sudan has received over 700,000 returnees and refugees from Sudan, with more than 70 percent settling in already vulnerable areas, placing extraordinary strain on limited resources and services.

The response is not keeping pace with the scale of need. Limited resources have forced programming to concentrate on populations already in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), areas at risk of Famine, and selected IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) hotspots. As a result, millions of people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) are receiving limited, irregular, or no support at all, despite the fact that more than **5.3 million** people are already facing food consumption gaps and rapid erosion of livelihoods.

In South Sudan, households in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) can deteriorate into Emergency within a single lean season if support does not arrive in time. Crisis is the last line of defense before families face far more severe hunger, asset loss, displacement, and heightened mortality risk. Timely assistance is therefore not only lifesaving but also cost-effective: it prevents further deterioration, reduces future response costs, and protects the resilience that communities need to recover.

At the same time, support for populations already in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) must be urgently expanded and sustained. Current assistance is not only too limited in coverage, but often insufficient in intensity, with many highly vulnerable households unreached and others receiving reduced rations or short-duration support.

Donor investment is therefore needed on two fronts: to scale up early action for populations in IPC Phase 3

(Crisis), and to ensure adequate, sustained and full-ration assistance for those already facing life-threatening conditions. Without this balanced approach, early gains will be undermined and the overall humanitarian burden will continue to grow.

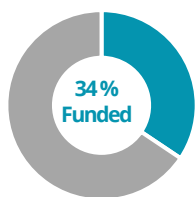
The crisis is also being accelerated by a deepening collapse in livelihoods. Households are exhausting food stocks earlier each year, while insecurity, flooding, disrupted transport routes, and fuel price shocks are fragmenting markets and reducing access to essential goods. Livelihoods are being eroded through livestock losses, constrained fishing, abandoned cultivation, and rapid depletion of household assets. Families are increasingly forced into harmful coping strategies, including distress livestock sales, consumption of seed stocks, reduced meals, and displacement. Without urgent investment in livelihood protection and restoration, food assistance alone will not be enough to halt further deterioration.

Supporting populations in IPC Phase 3 now is a smart humanitarian investment. Early assistance helps prevent escalation into Emergency and Catastrophe, protects livelihoods and local food systems, and stabilizes nutrition, especially for children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. When action is delayed until Emergency conditions take hold, needs deepen, recovery becomes more difficult, and the cost in both lives and resources rises sharply.



For donors, this is a critical opportunity to avert a much deeper crisis. In 2026, the FSL Cluster requires approximately **USD 410 million**, even before the latest displacement and worsening food insecurity trends.

2026 HNRP FUNDING STATUS



410 million USD

Funding Requirement

141 million USD

Funding Received

269 million USD

Funding Gap

Source: FTS UNOCHA, as of 22 June 2026

This shortfall is unfolding at the height of the lean season, when vulnerable households are most exposed. Without immediate, flexible, and scaled-up donor investment, the response will remain far below what is needed, and more families will be pushed into Emergency and worse outcomes in the months ahead.

The FSL Cluster urgently calls on donors to act earlier, fund at greater scale, and invest in prevention alongside life-saving response. This means expanding food and cash assistance for populations facing IPC Phase 4 and Phase 5 outcomes, while simultaneously protecting and restoring livelihoods for households in IPC Phase 3 and above through timely provision of agricultural inputs, livestock and fisheries support, and climate-resilient recovery interventions.

Donors should also help bridge the gap between humanitarian and early recovery financing through flexible, multi-year support that enables sustained, conflict-sensitive programming and strengthens community resilience before conditions worsen further.

While Jonglei and Upper Nile require immediate and urgent attention, worsening Crisis outcomes in Warrap, Unity, Western Bahr el Ghazal, and Greater Equatoria must not be overlooked. Today's Crisis counties can quickly become tomorrow's Emergency counties if early action is delayed.

Finally, stability and peace in South Sudan remain central to achieving meaningful outcomes. Without peace, humanitarian and recovery efforts will continue to be undermined, leaving millions trapped in cycles of crisis.

"South Sudan is approaching a critical tipping point. Humanitarian needs are rising faster than the current response, operational access is shrinking, and household resilience continues to erode. If support continues to arrive only after Emergency conditions have taken hold, the system will remain trapped in a costly cycle of reacting to crisis rather than preventing it. Timely donor action now can help change that trajectory."

