

North Darfur, Sudan

Food Security Monitoring, February 2015



World Food Programme

Executive Summary

- Fighting between government forces and rebel factions continued since December 2014 in East Jebel Marra and Dar Zaghawa resulting in a large influx of IDPs into Tawila, Shangil Tobayi and Zamzam camps in Fasher town. In February, tribal conflict erupted in Mellit locality, between the Berti and Zayadiya, and Sayah administration unit was severely affected.
- The food security situation of sampled households in IDP camps and in Resident communities had deteriorated in February 2015 compared to the FSMS rounds in November 2014, May 2014 and November 2013. The food security situation of households in the Mixed communities of Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra had improved since November 2014. Residents were found to be the most food insecure group, followed by IDPs. The Mixed communities were substantially better off. Female headed households tended to be substantially more food insecure compared to male headed households. The difference in the prevalence between the two groups were 20 percentage points for IDPs, 6 percentage points among Residents, and 36 percentage points among households in Mixed communities.
- In response to the good performance of the 2014/2015 agricultural season, the price of sorghum had dropped in El Fasher market in February 2015 compared to last year; cereal prices typically exhibit a downward trend at this time of the year, following the harvest. However, the price remained significantly above the five-year average.
- The cost of a local food basket (LFB) was 4.38 SDG per person per day, an increase of 8 percent over November 2014 prices. The locally produced food items prices decreased early in the harvest season (November 2014), however, the trend did not last due to the escalation of violence and upsurge in displacement in some rural areas.
- In February 2015, about half of the IDP households had acceptable food consumption, which is slightly lower than in November 2014. Food consumption was similar for resident communities, and had not changed compared to the previous round. Food consumption was found to be far better among the Mixed communities, where 84 percent of households had acceptable food consumption compared to November 2014 and November 2013.

Security

Fighting between government forces and rebel factions continued in East Jebel Marra in January and in Dar Zaghawa in February, resulting in new influx of IDPs. The fighting and displacement had implications for the harvest, as farms and food stocks were abandoned or destroyed in affected areas. Animal rearing causes seasonally normal levels of crop destruction.

The recent violence followed upon a recent history of displacement, including in early 2013, when the entire population of El Seraif Beni Hussein locality was displaced to El Seraif town, and in June 2014 in Korma admin unit. The population of western Fasher rural had been continually on the move since April 2014.

The military operation called “Decisive Summer” was launched in East Jebel Marra in December 2014 and caused widespread displacement to Tawila, Fasher camps and Shangil Tobayi in 2015. In January, areas in north Kutum were under attack by the Rapid Support Force (RSF). The attacks coincided with extensive looting of livestock and valuable household assets. Households from villages in the south and east of Umbaro locality were displaced to Umbaro town. In February, tribal conflict erupted in Mellit locality, between the Berti and Zayadiya; especially Sayah admin unit was severely affected.

Livelihoods

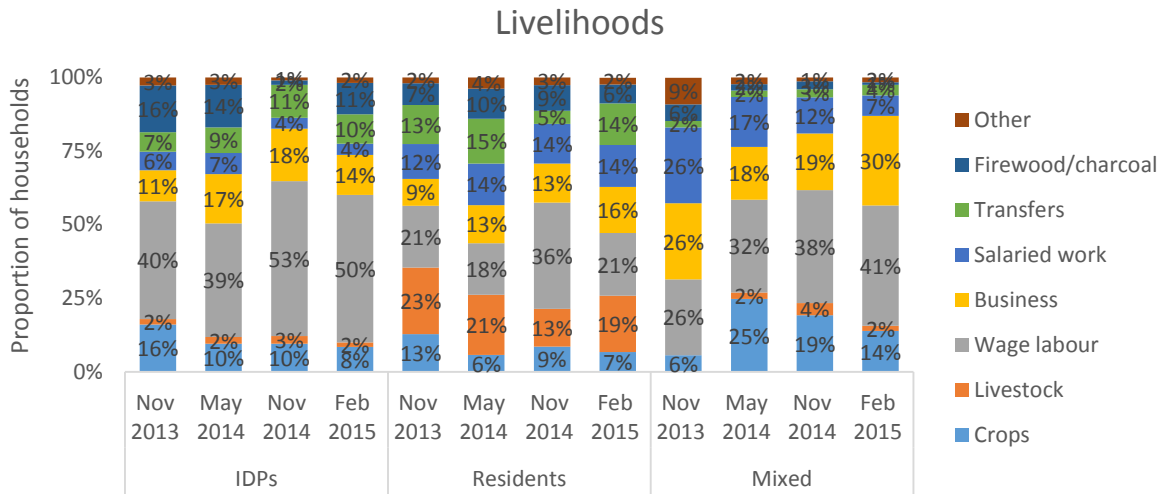
All community types reported in the February 2015 and November 2014 rounds that the wage labour was one of most important livelihoods. Among IDPs, wage labour constituted the main livelihood for half the sample. Other important livelihoods for the IDPs were small business (14 percent of households), firewood/charcoal (11 percent) and transfers (10 percent).

Households in Resident communities appeared to have access to a more diverse set of livelihood activities, compared to IDPs, such as livestock rearing, small business, and transfers (remittances, gifts etc.). In February 2015, the contribution of livestock, transfer and small business had increased compared to November 2014. However the proportion of households engaged primarily in wage labour and sale of crops had slightly decreased over the same period.

Mixed communities of Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra also had relatively more choices of livelihoods compared to camp IDPs. The Mixed communities could still produce irrigated crops in the winter season, including onion, potato and a variety of other vegetables, using water from shallow hand-dug wells. The most frequently reported livelihood for Mixed communities in February 2015 was wage labour (41 percent of households) followed by small business (30 percent).

A Description of the Sample

The regular 25 sentinel sites were visited as planned. A total of 760 households were interviewed. The average household size was 6.5 persons. Forty-two percent of the households were headed by a female. The sample was composed of IDPs in camps (45 percent), IDPs outside camps (9 percent), residents (42 percent) and returnees (4 percent). Fifty-six percent of the surveyed heads of household were illiterate, 29 percent had primary education and 15 percent had secondary education or above.

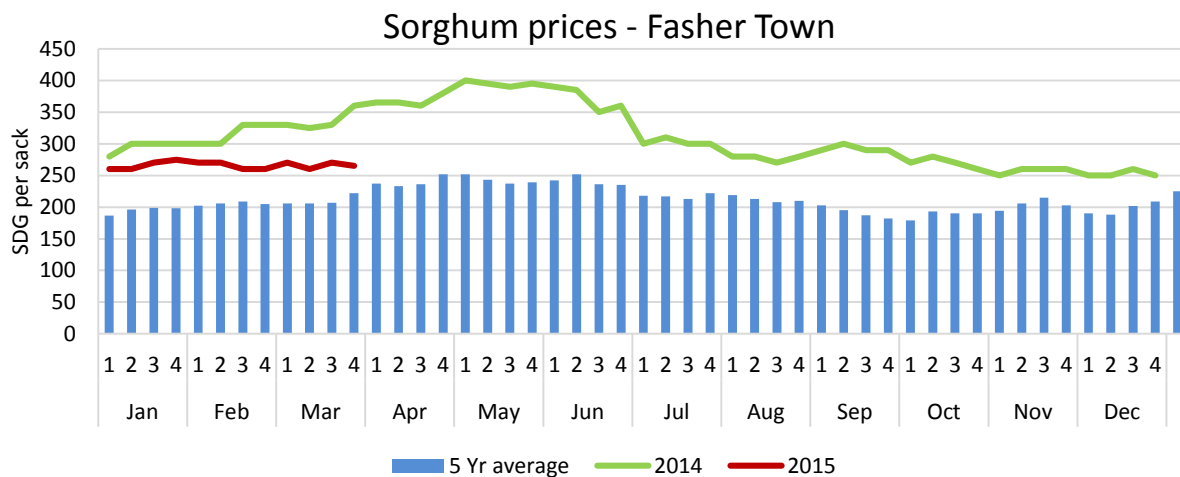


Markets and Prices

In response to the good performance of the 2014/2015 agricultural season, sorghum prices dropped in El Fasher market in February 2015. Cereal prices typically exhibit a downward trend at this time of the year, following the harvest season. However the price of sorghum remained significantly above the five-year average.

Even though the agricultural season was good in most parts of the state, large-scale displacement and insecurity limited area cultivated as many farmers were forced to skip the season.

The increase in supply from the new harvest was expected to keep sorghum prices stable during the first quarter of 2015. However the escalation of violence in January resulted in destruction of crops in the fields and increased crop loss, especially in the western part of El Fasher rural, Korma and Tawilla.



Purchasing Power

The purchasing power of households was determined by comparing household income with the cost of a local food basket (LFB). The cost of local food basket was 4.38 SDG per person per day, an increase by 8 percent compared to last November. The increase in the LFB is attributed to the increase in prices of non-locally produced items such oil. Sugar and onion due increase cost of transportation.

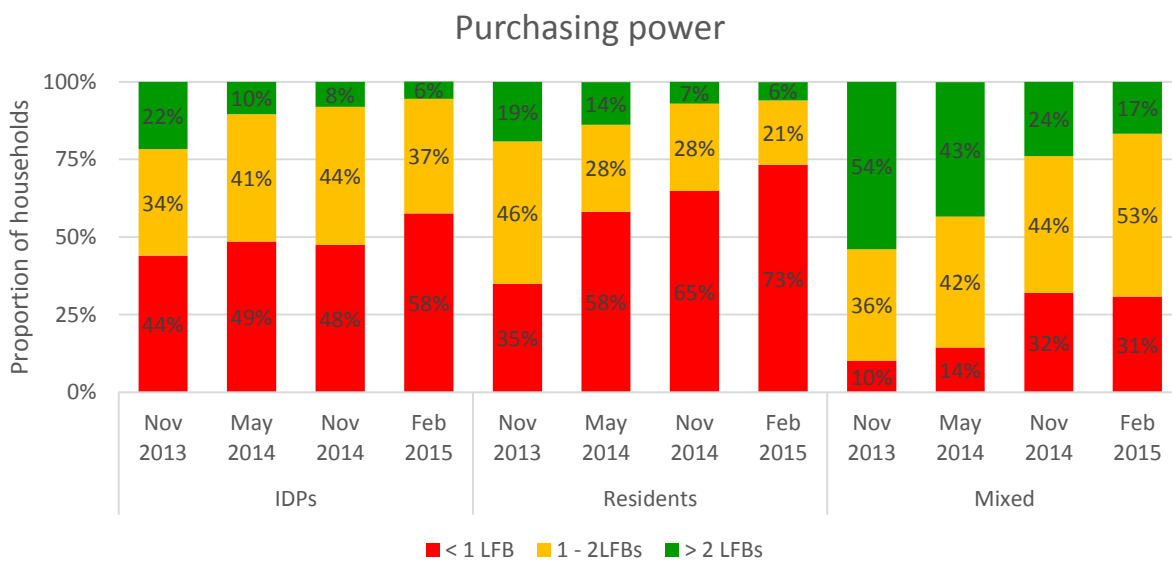
The proportion of IDP households who could not afford the cost of even one LFB increased to 58 percent compared to 48 percent in November 2014.

Affected by increased prices, disruption in livelihoods and market connectivity due to insecurity, the resident communities were found to have the poorest purchasing power on record. Among the sampled resident communities, 73 percent of the households could afford the cost of the food basket.

Within the Mixed communities, the proportion of households who could not afford the cost of the LFB was 31 percent – considerably smaller compared to IDPs in camps and residents – and remained similar to the last round of November 2014. However, the percentage had increased substantially compared to November 2013 and May 2014.

The Local Food Basket (LFB)

The LFB consisted of nine food items: cereals (sorghum), milk, dry vegetables, cooking oil, goat meat, cow meat, onions and sugar. The amount of each food item was computed so as to minimize the cost of the basket, while meeting the minimum requirements of 2,100 kilocalories per person per day. Households were classified as having poor purchasing power (households that could not afford the cost of one LFB), borderline purchasing power (households that could afford between one and two baskets) and acceptable purchasing power (households that could afford more than two baskets).



Household Expenditures

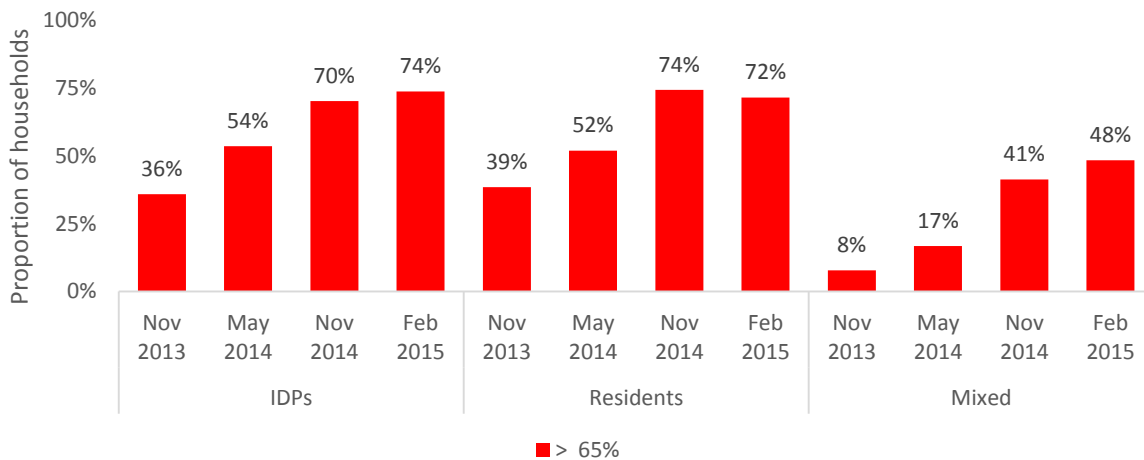
Seventy-two percent of household monthly expenditure was for food. This is a significant increase compared to 48 percent in the last round of November 2014. The increase was due to the rise in the price of many food items, however, the escalation of violence, resulting in displacement, abandonment or destruction of crops and increase cost of transport counted were the main reason behind the hike in the prices.

In this round, 74 percent of surveyed households in IDP camps and 72 percent in resident communities allocate more than 65 percent of their monthly expenditure for food, compared to only 48 percent of households in Mixed communities. For both the IDP and resident communities the proportion of expenditure spent on food in this round remained similar to that of November 2014, but far above that of May 2014 and November 2013.

Proportion of Monthly Expenditure for Food

The size of the proportion of total monthly household expenditure that is spent on food is used as a proxy indicator for economic stress (and, to a lesser degree, household food production). A large proportion of food expenditure is often associated with increased economic stress. As households are forced to prioritize immediate short-term food needs over important longer-term investments in health care, education or livelihood inputs when faced with loss of income or increased prices.

Share of monthly expenditure for food



Food consumption

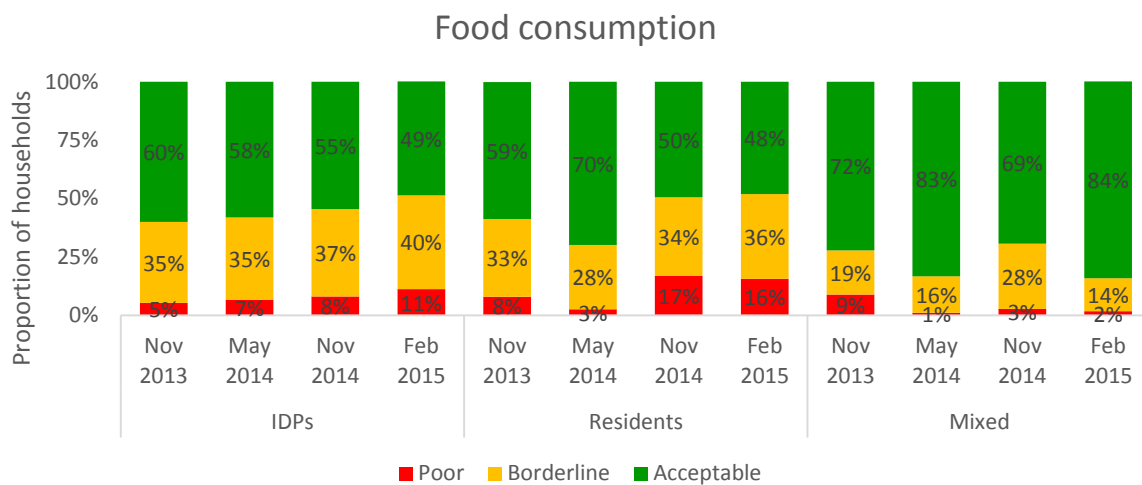
Crop production this season was far better than last season, yet increased conflict and widespread displacement during the harvest period, from December 2014 to February 2015, had implications for the size of the harvest, as populations of many rural areas was displaced into towns and IDPs camps.

In February 2015, about half of the camp IDP households had acceptable food consumption. The proportion of households with acceptable food consumption had deteriorated at a slow but steady pace since November 2013 (in the last four rounds of data collection).

For households in the Resident communities, food consumption remained similar to that reported in the previous round of November 2014: nearly 50 percent of households had acceptable food consumption. However, food consumption had deteriorated substantially compared to November 2013 and May 2014.

Food consumption had improved and was adequate among households in Mixed communities: 84 percent of these households had acceptable food consumption. As in previous rounds, Mixed communities stood out as having far better food consumption compared to IDPs in camps and Residents.

A large proportion of households in IDP camps and Mixed communities were receiving food assistance in the form of vouchers, which allowed them to access a more diverse range of food items. For all community types the proportion of households with poor food consumption remained similar to November 2014.



Perception of Food Access

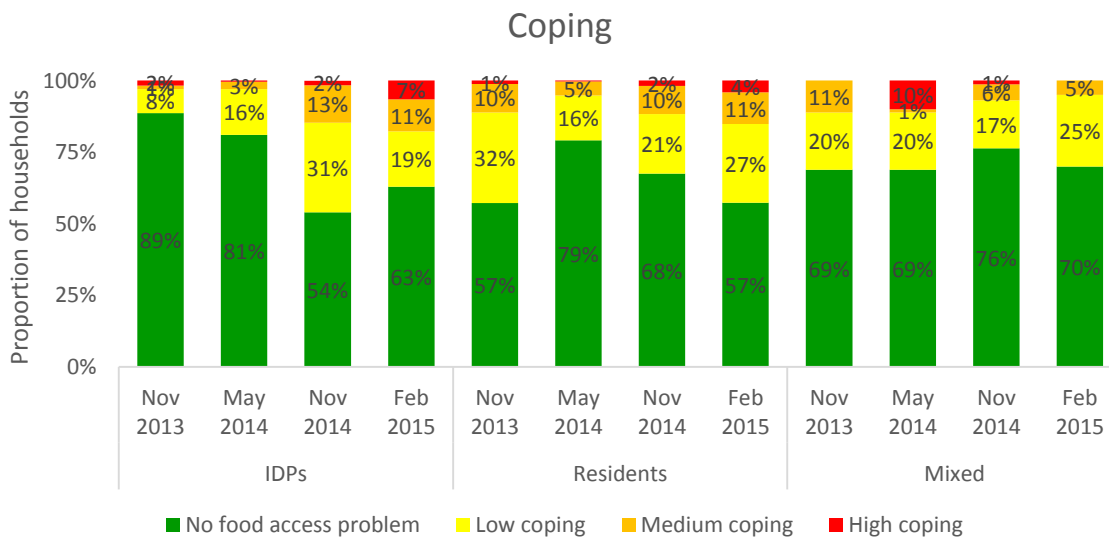
A greater proportion of resident (42 percent) households perceived themselves to have food access problems in the previous week, compared to households in IDP communities (37 percent), while the corresponding proportion among Mixed communities were smaller still (30 percent).

In a display of improvement, the proportion of households in IDP camps that had faced food access problems had decreased moderately compared to November 2014. The corresponding percentage among households in Resident communities had increased by 11 percentage points over the same period. Within the Mixed communities, the proportion of households who had faced food shortage remained similar to that of May 2014 and November 2013, while slightly increased compared to November 2014.

Households across community types employed mostly coping strategies of low severity, such as relying on less preferred or less expensive foods, relying on help from relatives and borrowing food.

Perception of Food Access

Households were asked if there were times in the one week prior to data collection when they did not have enough food (or money to buy food). If they experienced such situations, they asked what strategies they employed to cope with the shortage. Depending on the severity of the coping mechanisms used by households, they were classified as "not experiencing any food access problems", "low coping", "medium coping" and, for the households employing coping strategies that were very damaging to short or long-term food security, "high coping".



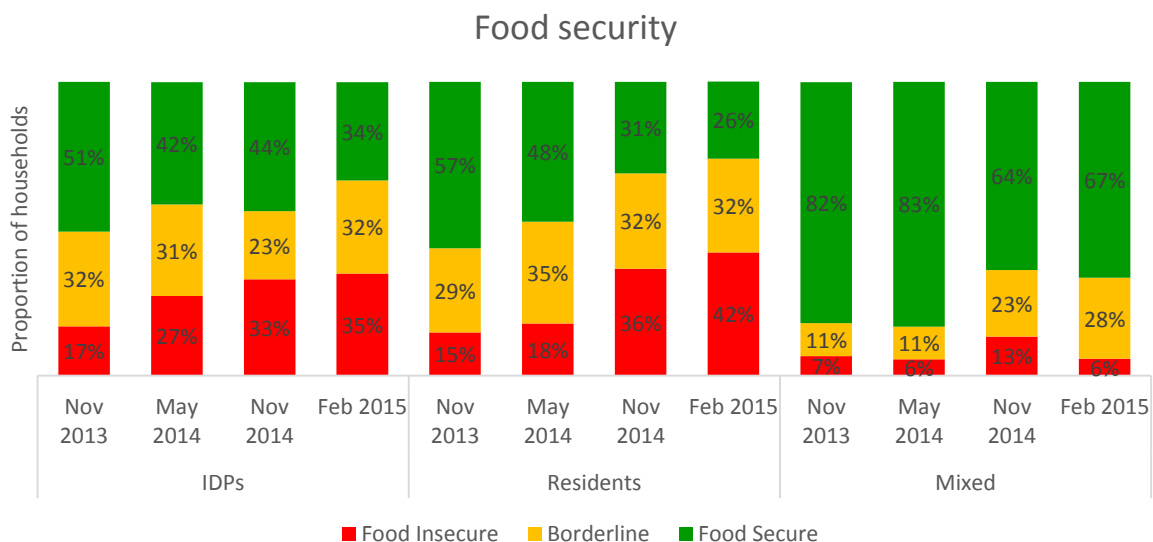
Food Security

The post-harvest assessment of the 2014/15 agricultural season revealed a typical level of crop production in North Darfur. The overall cereal deficit at the state level was estimated at 60,000 MT.

In February 2015, the food security situation of sampled camp IDPs had deteriorated moderately compared to the previous three rounds: November 2014, May 2014 and November 2013. Only one-third of households were classified as food secure in February 2015, compared to more than two-fifths in the two preceding rounds on May and November 2014, while in November 2013 slightly more than half of the households were food secure. Food security among sampled IDPs in North Darfur had deteriorated continuously during the previous 14 month period.

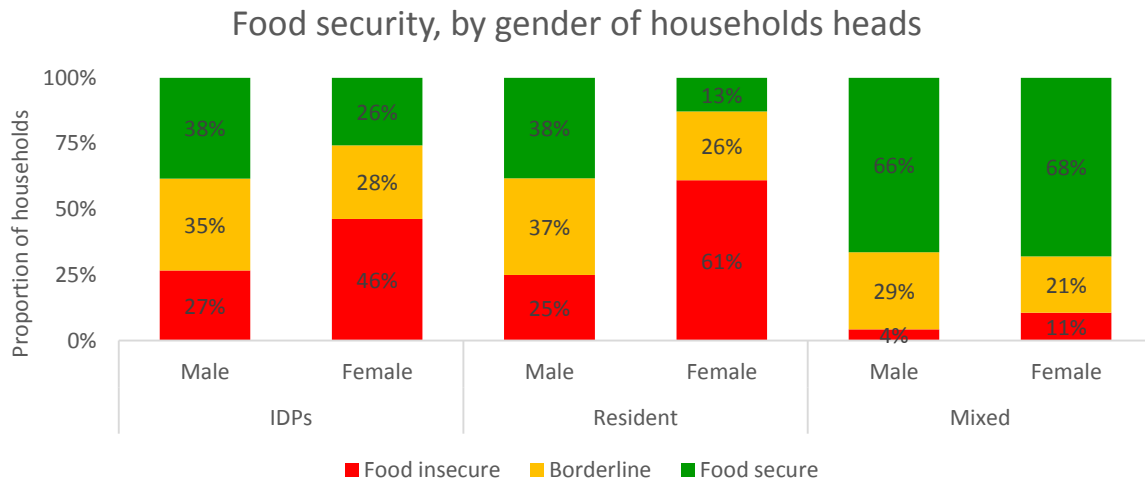
Similar to the camp IDPs, the Resident communities' food security situation had declined steadily during the previous 14 months: While in February 2015, only 26 percent of households were food secure, the corresponding percentages was 57 percent in November 2013, 48 percent in May 2014, and 31 percent in November 2014. The reduction in the proportion of food secure households had caused the proportion of food insecure households to increase, while surprisingly the proportion of households who was in the borderline category had remained stable. Residents were found to be the most food insecure group, followed by IDPs.

As per previous rounds, the food security of households in the Mixed communities remained better than the other two groups. In this round 67 percent of the households were food secure while only 5 percent were food insecure. The situation in the Mixed community areas of Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra had remained largely stable and calm since February 2014, when temporary displacement occurred in Saraf Omra town due to tribal conflict.



Gender Analysis

Female headed households were found to be more food insecure compared to male headed households. The difference between male and female headed was particularly pronounced among IDP and Resident communities where female headed households were twice as likely to be food insecure. The very large difference in food security conditions between the two groups results in sex of head of household being a principal predictor of food insecurity.

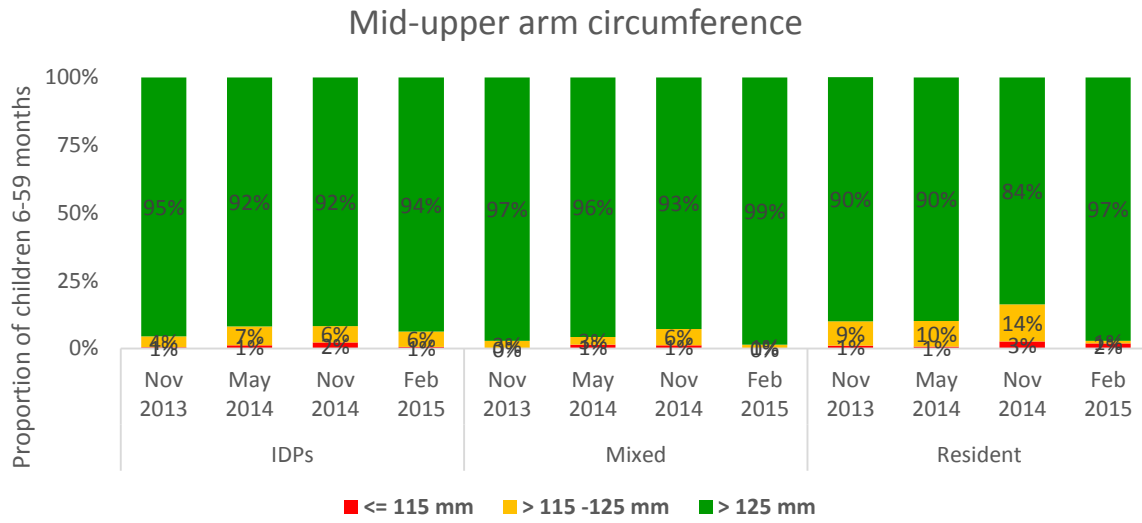


The educational level of heads of household positively correlated with food insecurity. The proportion of food insecure households was 38 percent for households headed by non-educated, and 32 percent and 14 percent for households headed by heads who had completed primary and secondary school, respectively.

Child Nutrition

The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of children aged 6-59 months in surveyed households was measured in 351 child and classified as very low (below 115 mm was 3 child, a proxy indicator for severe acute malnutrition), moderately low (between 115 and 125 mm were 12 child, a proxy indicator for moderate acute malnutrition) and normal (above 125 mm was 336 child).

Comparing with previous rounds, a reduction in the proportion of children with low MUAC was seen among children in all three community groups. The improvement was especially pronounced among resident communities. The three community groups had a similar proportion of children with very low MUAC in this round (1 percent).

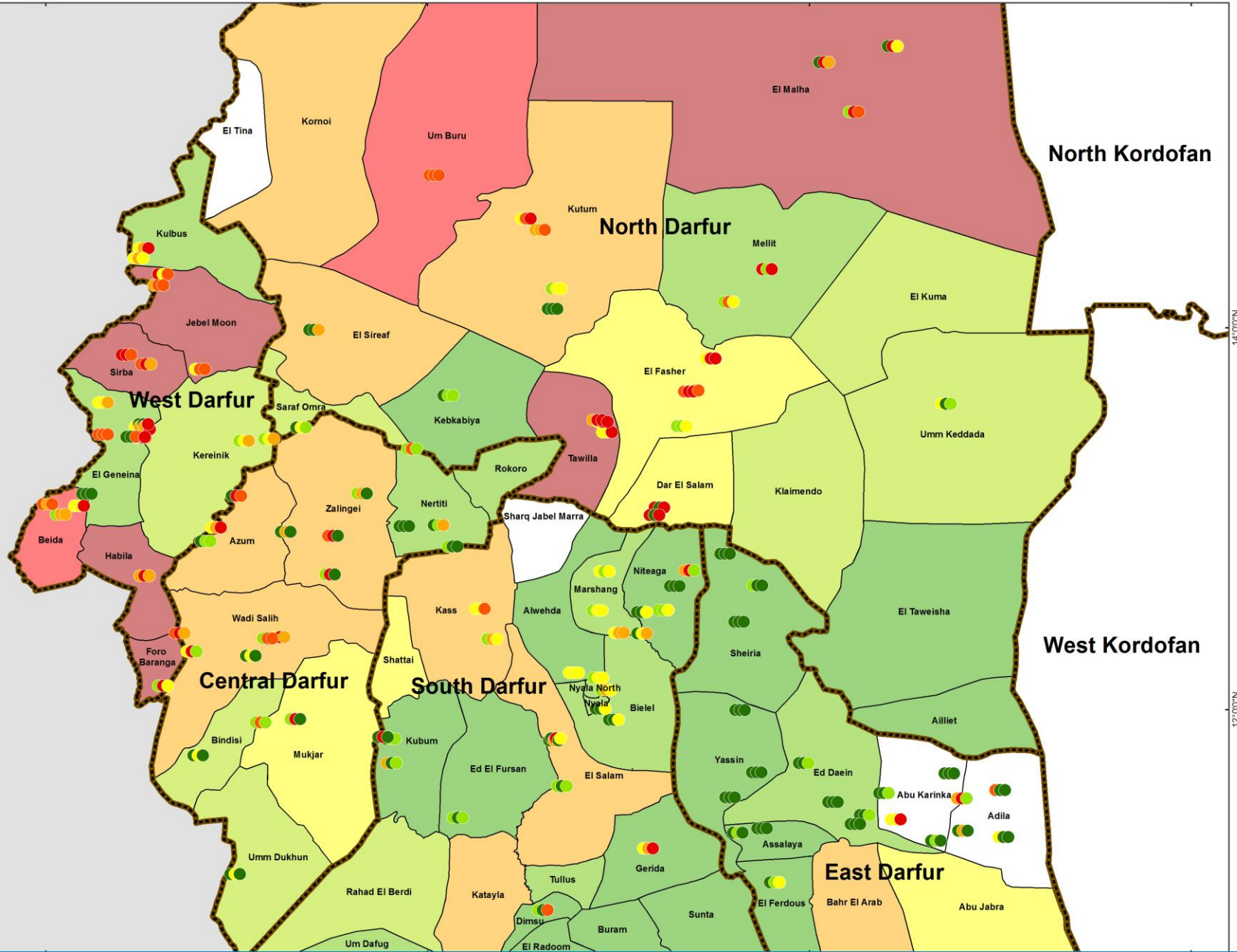


Darfur

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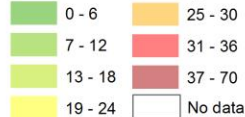


22°00'E 24°00'E 26°00'E 28°00'E



14°00'N 12°00'N

Food insecure households (percent)



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Data Sources: IMWG, WFP CO Sudan

The boundaries and names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



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Contact:

Website: www.wfp.org

Reference Number:
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