

Global supply chain disruptions, a collapsed health system and conflict drive hunger, malnutrition In South Sudan

Juba, South Sudan, April 30, 2026 - Across South Sudan, families are reaching a breaking point as conflict, displacement, global supply chain disruptions and the collapse of essential services in some parts of the country are fueling a rapidly worsening humanitarian crisis. The [latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#) analysis warns that 7.8 million people, nearly 55 per cent of South Sudan's population are facing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) between April and July 2026. This is an increase from 7.7 million people recorded in the same period in 2025, confirming that hunger continues to spiral at dangerously high levels across the country.

73,000 people are facing Catastrophic (IPC Phase 5) hunger across parts of Greater Jonglei and Upper Nile states, where starvation, rising mortality risk and livelihood collapse are already underway. 2.5 million people are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), experiencing severe food gaps and acute malnutrition, while 5.3 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) are relying on unsustainable coping strategies to survive. Behind the alarming food security outlook in Greater Jonglei is a collapsing health system, overwhelmed by hunger and conflict. In Akobo County, which has been identified by the IPC as at risk of famine due to conflict, displacement, restricted humanitarian access and the breakdown of essential services, all 15 health facilities have been destroyed in the conflict.

During a recent assessment of Akobo County Hospital, the county's only referral facility, conducted after CARE staff and partners returned to the area following weeks of evacuation due to violence, CARE South Sudan Humanitarian Manager, Chandiga Kennedy, witnessed the scale of destruction.

"When I walked into Akobo Hospital, it had been stripped of everything, beds gone, supplies looted. It was a devastating sight," said Kennedy. "Patients who had returned were lying on the cold floor waiting to be treated: some weak, some in pain, all waiting for care. It was heartbreaking, yet you could still see people's determination to return to what they know and begin rebuilding their lives, despite everything they have endured."

Since 6 March, 2026, more than 200,000 people have been displaced from Akobo County, and are now scattered across Jonglei State and Tiergo, Ethiopia. This crisis is being further exacerbated by rising global energy prices linked to conflict in the Middle East, which are driving up food and transport costs, worsening hunger, and constraining access to health services as fuel-dependent clinics struggle with higher operating and supply costs.

Malnutrition is no longer a standalone emergency. As health services fail and immunisation and treatment capacity declines, preventable illnesses such as malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections are going untreated, directly driving higher rates of acute malnutrition and increasing the risk of death, particularly among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. The IPC report also estimates that 2.2 million children aged 6-59 months now require treatment for acute malnutrition, alongside 1.2 million pregnant and breastfeeding women in need of nutrition support.

"The IPC report confirms what we are witnessing. Hunger is accelerating the collapse of an already fragile health system, and it is women and children who are paying the highest price," says James Akai, CARE South

Sudan Country Director. “Pregnant women are left with no access to medical care, no safe place to give birth, no support when complications arise. Meanwhile families are skipping meals and acute malnutrition is rising at alarming speed.”

CARE and its local partners are already recording rising cases of malaria, diarrheal disease and acute respiratory infections, while cholera has been reported in parts of Greater Jonglei State, signaling a rapidly worsening public health emergency. Cholera has already been reported in five counties across the Greater Upper Nile region, which borders Greater Jonglei.

As health services and basic infrastructure continue to deteriorate, women and children face overlapping risks to their health and nutrition, alongside rising exposure to sexual abuse and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). CARE and its partners have received reports of pregnant women delivering at home without skilled assistance, exposing mothers and newborns to life-threatening complications. Women and girls are also left without access to lifesaving care following illness, injury or sexual violence.

The destruction of health facilities, combined with disrupted markets, farming activities and basic services, is compounding hardship and rapidly eroding already fragile lives. Restoring health services and replenishing medical supplies is an immediate priority.

“You cannot treat hunger without functioning health services,” stressed Akai. “Therapeutic food means very little if there are no clinics, no trained staff, no medicines and no safe access. If the health system continues to collapse, lives will be lost not only from lack of food, but from entirely preventable and treatable conditions.”

CARE, working closely with humanitarian partners and national and local authorities, including the Ministry of Health, is responding to urgent needs in Greater Jonglei by supporting food, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and care services where access allows. However, continued insecurity, access barriers, and severe funding shortfalls are limiting the scale of the response.

The organization and its partners are calling on donors to immediately increase both the volume and quality of funding for the response to enable organizations that are best placed, including local and women-led organizations, to rapidly and effectively reach people in need. Swift action is needed to rehabilitate the 15 destroyed health facilities in Akobo, replace looted medical supplies, scale up treatment for rising malnutrition and restore safe maternal health and protection services before more lives are lost to entirely preventable causes.

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