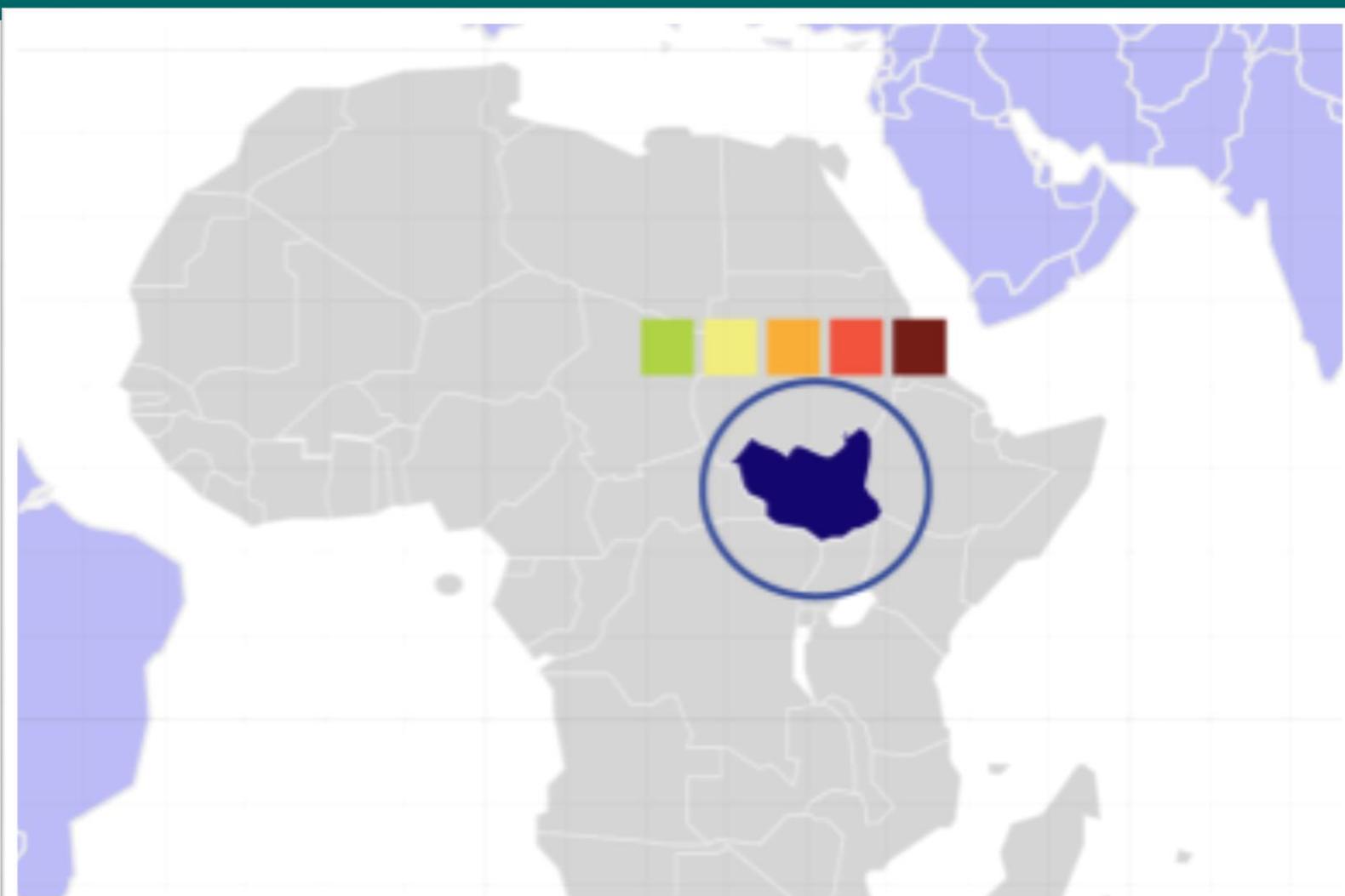




IPC GLOBAL EMERGENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPC ERC) KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IPC ERC Early Activation 23 Oct to 18 December 2015 with the objective to advise South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group on minimal evidence needs for IPC Acute Analysis Update for December 2015 and evidence gathering methods for emergency assessments to be carried out in selected counties in unity identified at risk of famine during the period of Oct – Dec 2015.

Report completed in December 1, 2015 – released in February 10, 2016



IPC Global Partners



*The EC in the global partnership is represented by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission

*The EC in the global partnership is represented by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the teams in South Sudan who sacrificed time and showed personal commitment to make this assessment happen in the middle of trying to respond to a highly complex and ever changing emergency. All involved have made special efforts to build a coherent picture of a complex situation and all have made compromises in the name of collaboration. The result of this work will be key to the lives of the people of South Sudan in their hour of need.

Daniel Maxwell

*Professor and Research Director
Feinstein Int'l Center - Tufts University*

Nicholas Haan

*Faculty Director, Global Grand Challenges
Singularity University*

Oleg Bilukha

*Associate Director of Science
Center for Global Health/CDC*

Peter Hailey

(Independent)

GSU ERC Secretariat & Technical Support:

Cindy Holleman

*Chair of IPC Emergency Review Committee
IPC Global Programme Manager*

Leila Oliveira,

IPC Senior Food Security Officer

The IPC Emergency Review Committee (IPC ERC) was activated upon request by the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) and was coordinated and supported by the IPC Global Support Unit (IPC GSU) and by the IPC Global Steering Committee (IPC SC).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The IPC Global Steering Committee officially called the early activation of a high level expert IPC Emergency Review Committee (ERC) on Friday Oct 23, 2015, upon request by the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group (SSTWG) and IPC Global Partners. This unprecedented early activation of the ERC was considered essential to provide expert technical guidance to the SSTWG in the minimal evidence needed and the design of adequate emergency assessments that would be able to inform an update of the Projected IPC Phase Classification for Unity counties that were assessed at Risk of Famine in the period of Oct – Dec. 2015.

An IPC ERC is normally called as an added real-time validation and quality assurance step to support country IPC Technical Working Groups (TWGs) when there are conditions of extreme food insecurity and there is the potential outcome of an IPC declaration of Famine (Phase 5)¹. The objective of **this South Sudan IPC ERC Early Activation** was specifically to provide technical inputs to the SSTWG on the methodology, sampling and assessment tools to be used in the rapid emergency assessment planned in Unity Counties for November. This was viewed as critical to ensure that the SSTWG would have the necessary data and evidence be able to update the Unity IPC Project Analysis (Sept 2015) for Unity which identified 30,000 people in Phase 5 Catastrophe and identified a Risk of Famine for populations in the IPC Projection period.

The IPC ERC has completed their task of providing technical guidance to the SSTWG on the methods, tools and sampling of their planned Emergency Assessments in Unity. The SSTWG has conducted a Rapid Helicopter Reconnaissance Mission to Unity, however, they have not yet been able to conduct the second component of the ERC recommended and IPC SSTWG planned Rapid Emergency Assessment due to ongoing insecurity. At the time of the conclusion of this report, the SSTWG, had not updated their IPC Projection Analysis for Counties identified at risk of Famine and was still pending the completion of Rapid Emergency Assessment.

This report concludes the closure of this IPC Early Activation of the IPC ERC and provides the final conclusions and recommendations of the early activation of the IPC ERC to the IPC Global Steering Committee and the IPC SSTWG. The IPC ERC will be reactivated upon request by the IPC Global Steering Committee and the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group, as an added real-time validation and quality assurance step to support the IPC SSTWG. The re-activation of the IPC ERC is likely to only occur when new data becomes available to update the IPC Analysis for Unity State.

1. IPC ERC KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ERC is extremely concerned about the severity of the food insecurity situation in the highly affected areas of south-central Unity. The anthropometry results from Sept and Oct reviewed by the ERC are quite consistent indicating a really dire, perhaps borderline famine situation, but with the limited and less than reliable evidence available, cannot inform the magnitude and gravity of the situation.

The ERC recognizes that efforts of government and partners to conduct a rapid reconnaissance, however call attention to **government and partners' agencies to make serious commitments to ensure access to areas most affected for data collection, where inadequate information exists to ascertain – or deny – that a famine is currently occurring or will follow in the next months.** Unless more efforts are urgently made to conduct emergency assessments now, any IPC Analysis update will rely on incomplete – and sometimes contradictory – less than reliable data and will be incapable of concluding on the likelihood of Famine with minimum confidence.

The ERC advised the SS IPC TWG against relying only on a rapid reconnaissance mission to generate reliable evidence to inform potential of famine using IPC Classification System. The ERC highlights repetitively that emergency assessments in areas highly affected by conflict and screening of newly arrivals in POCs are crucial for IPC Acute Analysis and assessment of the likelihood of famine. The ERC has urged for a more strategic and

¹ IPC Emergency Review Committee (ERC) is a global mechanism of the global, regional and national partnership and governance structures. The committee is formed on demand and its activation represents an additional validation step before IPC results are released. The committee is activated as needed to support quality assurance and technical consensus building and is especially important in situations of extreme food insecurity where there is the potential outcome of an IPC declaration of Famine (Phase 5).

http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/templates/ipcinfo/Docs/TORs_IPC_Global_ERC_April_2014.pdf

broad assessment design with 3 components². From the three recommended activities only the reconnaissance mission has been completed. Although the reconnaissance mission is a key component of the assessment design, its main objective was to inform the emergency assessment planning and to support convergence of evidence during IPC Analysis. The findings from the reconnaissance mission should not blur the message that needs to be sent about the severity of the unverified situation, and the need for emergency assessments to produce reliable evidence for a high quality IPC Acute Analysis.

The ERC reiterates that the findings from the reconnaissance mission cannot be used to make overall statements about the severity of the food security situation in highly affected areas of Unity County due to methodological limitations. Although the reconnaissance mission was important, data collected during its implementation are not representative of the highly affected areas due to its purposive sample design and limited access to populations in hiding (who are likely the most affected groups). Furthermore, the small sampling of only 4 sites visited in three counties for a few hours limited the number of households and children assessed. The findings, therefore, should be presented only as qualitative and caution needs to be adhered to in drawing conclusions or inferences.

The ERC acknowledges the extremely dangerous civil insecurity context that the IPC SS TWG is operating within but given the severity of food security situation that is at question, this cannot compromise the humanitarian responsibility that the agencies have to highly affected South Sudanese population. The ERC highlights that the SS government and partners through IPC SS TWG have the responsibility to advocate for humanitarian access to these areas, to highlight the continued risk of famine, to strongly advocate for data collection the minimal evidence that is needed to carry out a high quality IPC Acute Analysis in the next month or two. The ERC adds a note of concern that there “appears” to be a lack of urgency or prioritization placed on effectively assessing the severity of the food security situation in the conflict affected areas and there may not be sufficient high level engagement to gain access to these areas. This calls into question the process work of the SS IPC TWG, the IPC GSU and now by implication the IPC ERC – continuing to circulate draft reports and revising instruments, with little impact or effect.

The main objective of the IPC ERC Early Activation was to provide support to the SSTWG to help ensure that evidence needed to assess the likelihood of famine was dealt pro-actively thus avoiding a situation where conclusions could not be taken in the next IPC analysis. Although the ERC made clear recommendations for a broad strategic assessment design, up to date only one of the three activities have been completed. Unless more evidence is made available, there will be insufficient evidence to allow an update of the IPC analysis or an assessment of likelihood of famine in the next IPC Acute Analysis for areas highly affected by conflict. The IPC SS TWG needs to avoid a similar situation to the one experienced in September 2014 where analysis lacked confidence and thus conclusions were given to decision makers was obscured.

The IPC ERC has completed their task of providing technical guidance to the SSTWG on the methods, tools and sampling of their planned Rapid Emergency Assessment in Unity. The IPC ERC as per the Terms of Reference developed and approved by the IPC Global Steering Committee, should not be seen as a collaborator but rather as an independent expert review committee. *This report concludes the closure of the Early Activation of the IPC ERC and provides the final conclusions and recommendations of the IPC ERC to the IPC Global Steering Committee and the IPC SSTWG.*

² The ERC recommended: (i) exhaustive screening of arrivals in Protection of Civilians sites (POCs), (ii) a reconnaissance mission and (iii) an emergency needs assessment.

2. SUMMARY TABLE OF KEY EVENTS AND OUTCOMES

Below is a summary table of the key events and outcomes related to the Early Activation of the IPC Emergency Review Committee (ERC). The objective of the IPC ERC Early Activation was to provide expert technical guidance to the SSTWG in the design of adequate rapid assessment that would be able to inform an update of the Projected IPC Phase Classification for Unity counties that were assessed at Risk of Famine in the period of Oct – Dec. 2015.

TimeLine and Key Events:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Sept 9-20 | SSTWG conducts an IPC Analysis Workshop in Nimule, South Sudan. For highly affected selected counties in Unity, the IPC Analysis included an added validation step of an external IPC Real Time Quality Review (RTQR) carried out by the IPC GSU. |
| Sept 24 | SSTWG finalize their IPC Analysis for Current (Sept 2015) and Projection (Oct – Dec 2015). The SSTWG IPC Analysis identified 30,000 people in in Unity in Phase 5 Catastrophe in Current period (Sept 2015) and identified highly affected areas in Unity at Risk of Famine in Projection Period (Oct – Dec 2015). The IPC GSU RTQR Review Report (Sept 24, 2016) agreed and confirms SSTWG IPC Analysis households in Phase 5 and risk of famine in the projected period in highly affected areas of Unity. SSTWG and IPC GSU agree on urgent need for rapid emergency assessment to inform real-time update of the IPC Projection Analysis given the area is identified at Risk of Famine in the period of Oct – Dec 2015. |
| Sept 24 to Oct 24 | SSTWG organize debriefings and seek South Sudan Stakeholder Validation and Government endorsement IPC Analysis before release. |
| Sept 30 | IPC GSU convenes the IPC ERC and prepares them for official early activation that will be triggered with SS Government release of IPC Analysis Results. In preparation for early activation ERC members review SSTWG Sept 2015 IPC Analysis and IPC Evidence Templates and IPC GSU RTQR Report for Unity. Given the severity of the nutrition data, the ERC member from the CDC conduct quality checks on primary nutrition data used in analysis. |
| Oct 22 | South Sudan Government officially endorse SSTWG Sept 2015 IPC Analysis indicating 30,000 people in Unity in Phase 5 Catastrophe and Risk of Famine in Unity Country in the period of Oct – Dec 2015. Immediately following the SS Government holds press conference on Results; IPC GSU issues IPC Alert on South Sudan (Oct. 22); WFP, FAO and UNICEF issue a joint Press Release ³ |
| Oct 23 | IPC Global Steering Committee officially Activates the IPC ERC |
| Oct 23 | SSTWG shares with the IPC ERC their Concept Note for Emergency Assessment: Risk of Famine in South-Central Unity warrants immediate mobilization of verification mission (Oct 23); |
| Oct 25 | IPC ERC Guidance to SSTWG: Rapid Assessment in Risk of Famine Countries report finalized and shared with SSTWG and IPC Global Steering Committee. Based on review of SSTWG IPC Analysis and their proposed emergency assessment plan the ERC concludes: that the anthropometry results are quite consistent indicating a really dire, perhaps borderline famine situation; recommend a rapid emergency assessment in four counties at risk of famine is urgently required; to meet the minimum evidence requirements to “ascertain – or –deny” the likely occurrence of famine the SSTWG needs to revise the design of proposed emergency verification |

³ Republic of South Sudan Full Report http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/1_IPC%20South%20Sudan%20-%20September%202015%20-FINAL.pdf; WFP/UNICEF/FAO Joint Press release <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/338209/> IPC Alert, 22 Oct 2015 http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Alert_3_SouthSudan_Crisis_Oct2015.pdf

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | <p>mission, as “a qualitative and observational helicopter reconnaissance, with no sampling frame and a very small sample size will not be able to provide the minimum evidence required”.</p> <p>ERC recommends a two component streamlined purposeful assessment design, which include exhaustive screening of in real time of new arrivals to POC combined with rapid purposeful reconnaissance helicopter assessment; streamlined data collection instruments restricted to core set of indicators and streamlined screening questionnaire; and a sound purposeful sampling strategy.</p> |
| Oct 29 | <p>IPC ERC convenes a teleconference with SSTWG to better understand access constraints and context and discuss the feasibility of a revised assessment approach.</p> |
| Nov 5 | <p>SSTWG finalizes Southern Unity Verification Mission plan including a two component assessment:</p> <p>1.) Reconnaissance Helicopter Assessment and</p> <p>2.) Rapid Assessment in seven sites conducted by enumerators placed in 7 location.</p> <p>Timeline: Reconnaissance Mission Nov 3 - 8; Enumerator Trainings followed by start of Surveillance Rapid Assessment Nov 10.</p> |
| Nov 5-10 | <p>SSTWG encounters logistical and operational problems due to a number of factors including renewed and ongoing insecurity in target areas and protection concerns leading to delayed start of assessment.</p> |
| Nov 10 -13 | <p>SSTWG conducts first component of the Unity Emergency Assessment: the Reconnaissance Helicopter Assessment, but in only four out of seven payams were reached and even in areas reached some populations were in hiding and could not be assessed. Time was limited to four hours per site restricting extent of interviews and number of households assessed. In the first Mission plan 10 payams in two counties were identified for this assessment (Oct 23). Of the four payams assessed in the Nov 5-10 reconnaissance mission, only three of these were from the list of 10 originally identified as assessment sites. As per SSTWG Mission Plan the reconnaissance results were designed to help inform the refinement of the sampling framework and tools for the second component of the assessment: 2.) the Rapid Assessment in seven sites conducted by enumerators placed in 7 location.</p> |
| Nov 14- 16 | <p>SSTWG shares preliminary key findings from helicopter reconnaissance mission with ERC and ERC provides feedback on results to inform refinement of next component of the assessment.</p> <p>The IPC ERC review of these preliminary findings consistently highlighted that this mission was primarily designed to support refinement of sampling framework and tools for the second component of the emergency assessment – the Surveillance based Rapid Emergency Assessment. The ERC cautioned the interpretation of evidence collected during the reconnaissance mission due to small and biased sample selection. The ERC also noted that key conclusions included in the report were contradictory within themselves and also with other evidence and were not substantiated with sufficient evidence.</p> <p>NOTE: The IPC ERC role during this early activation stage is only to provide technical guidance to the SSTWG in the design of adequate rapid assessment that would allow them to update the Projected IPC Phase Classification for unity.</p> |
| Nov 20 | <p>After clearance from the government the SSTWG circulates to partners the Final Report of the Rapid Helicopter Reconnaissance Mission and continues to prepare and update plan for the second component of the Assessment, the Rapid Surveillance Assessment conducted by enumerators placed in 7 location.</p> <p>The SSTWG Final Report of the Helicopter Reconnaissance Mission, “Central and Southern Unity Verification Mission Report” (Nov 20), concludes:</p> <p>Confirms emergency situation still exists in central and southern unity and unable to confirm existence or absence of households in Phase 5 conditions, until wider assessment is completed.</p> <p>Confirms there is no famine in locations visited, though findings indicate a possible risk of further deterioration from January 2016.</p> <p>Households are reliant on water lily and fish, the only available food sources. There is no own production as fighting disrupted farming activities; all sites reported looting and destruction of green harvests; all livestock are looted; there is an absence comprehensive humanitarian assistance; markets are not functioning; and there is very limited kinship support</p> |

| | |
|------------|--|
| | <p>available due to lack of food availability and restricted movements due to insecurity; and were planted but unable to harvest crops due to conflict.</p> <p>Ad hoc MUAC screenings conducted indicate proxy GAM 4.8% to 10% with a note that MUAC based GAM rates are about half those for W/H, therefore data strong suggests that actual Gam rates could be at critical levels.</p> <p>NOTE: The IPC ERC is not a collaborator to the report and does not endorse nor agree with the conclusions of this report.</p> |
| Nov 24 -27 | <p>The Completion of the SSTWG Reconnaissance Mission and the finalization of tools and sampling for follow-up Emergency Assessment ERC marks the end of the early activation stage of the IPC ERC.</p> <p>The IPC ERC reflects on the early activation process and produce a final report on the key conclusions, concerns and recommendations from the Early Activation Process.</p> |
| Dec 1 | <p>CURRENT STATUS of the Rapid Surveillance Assessment conducted by enumerators placed in 7 location: Enumerators are identified and depending on security situation are to be trained and deployed to selected sites. Training and placement of enumerator is to occur with a WFP/ UNICEF RRM response missions to areas. As of Dec 1, no enumerators have been trained and nor has the Rapid Surveillance Assessment begun in any sites.</p> |

NOTE: The SSTWG is undertaking their regularly planned update the full Sept 2015 IPC analysis for the whole of the country (excluding the conflict areas of Unity which is covered in the above special emergency assessments). Data collection is ongoing, through the South Sudan FSNMS with the following timeline:

Training 16 – 19 Nov

Data collection 20 Nov – 3 Dec

Data cleaning and analysis 4 – 11 Dec

SS IPC Analysis Workshop: planned for 14 – 17 Dec in Juba.

Given the delays in the Unity Rapid Emergency (as per table above), the SSTWG current plan is to update the IPC Analysis for Unity, within the larger SS IPC Analysis Workshop. However, if the Rapid Assessment for Unity is delayed further or not undertaken, there will be insufficient evidence to update the IPC Analysis for Unity.

3. ERC DETAILED CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ERC is extremely concerned about the severity of the food insecurity situation in areas highly affected of southern Unity but with the limited, scattered and often less than reliable evidence available, the SSTWG will not be able to determine the severity of the food security situation and the IPC ERC committee will not be able to comment on the magnitude and depth of the situation.

Anthropometry results are quite consistent indicating a really dire, perhaps borderline famine situation. Based on the CDC quality review of the nutrition data used in the SSTWG’s Sept 2015 IPC Analysis and the 4 pieces of nutrition data from Mayendit and Leer collected in September and October, the IPC ERC concludes that there are quite consistent anthropometry results indicating a really dire, perhaps borderline famine situation. Surveys indicating MUAC prevalence in excess of 20% or WH in excess of 50% cannot be taken lightly.

A rapid emergency assessment in the four counties at risk of famine is urgently required to supplement the existing evidence to ascertain – or deny - the likely occurrence of famine, updating the IPC Projection Analysis (Oct-Dec). Although this has been strongly communicated by the ERC to the SSTWG and the IPC Global Steering Committee since Oct 23, to date the government and partners agencies in South Sudan have only managed to carry out a very limited rapid helicopter reconnaissance mission in the affected counties in Unity. It is also alarming that based on the very incomplete and unrepresentative data collected during this reconnaissance mission, the results are being used to communicate essential that the situation is not as severe as the nutrition data in Sept and October indicated.

The IPC ERC recommend to the SSTWG that to meet the minimum evidence required a broader and more strategic assessment design is needed and recommended. In Oct 23, the IPC ERC proposed an assessment design that would increase the chances of securing sufficient evidence to assess the possible occurrence of famine conditions and update the IPC classification, as needed. In the current situation of high insecurity and limited access a Rapid Smart Survey of 250 households, though ideal, may not be feasible. However, a qualitative and observational helicopter reconnaissance rapid assessment similar to the once conducted in July 2015, with no

sampling frame and a very small sample size will not be able to provide the minimum evidence required. Thus, the **IPC ERC recommended the following three consecutive and linked components assessment to the IPC SS TWG during the first stages of the early activation of ERC:**

- **POCs - An exhaustive screening** in real time of new arrivals to inform a **rapid purposeful reconnaissance helicopter assessment** in targeted areas with limited access to supplement,
- **A rapid purposeful reconnaissance helicopter assessment** to allow a better planning and sampling of emergency assessment, provide qualitative evidence to fill in the gaps and triangulate POCs exhaustive screening data as well as identify, train and organize enumerators for the emergency assessment.
- **Emergency Assessment, with sampling to be informed from the reconnaissance mission and** focusing on crucial evidence on malnutrition, mortality and food security. Data collection to be carried out on an on-going basis to allow real-time update of IPC analysis

Special Note on lack of Mortality Data: Due to the current level of civil insecurity and limited humanitarian access, meeting this same strict evidence criterion is very unlikely, especially in terms of CDR. However, if there is sufficient reliable direct evidence for food consumption and nutrition, complemented with some proxy indirect evidence on mortality, such as death recalls, the SSTWG analysis can be corroborated with expert evaluation by the IPC ERC to make a Phase 5 Classification if warranted.

The ERC reiterates that findings from the SS IPC TWG Reconnaissance Mission cannot be used to make overall statements about the severity of the situation.

ERC strongly advised the SSTWG against relying only on a rapid reconnaissance mission to generate reliable evidence to support a potential classification of famine using IPC Classification System and urged for a more strategic and broad assessment design

Data collected during the reconnaissance mission are not representative of areas highly affected of Southern Unity due to its purposive sample design and limited access to populations (likely not including the most affected groups) and only assessing populations that were not in hiding (it is likely that the populations in hiding the most food insecure). Furthermore, the small sampling of only 4 sites visited in three counties for a few hours limited the number of households and children assessed. Therefore, findings should be presented only as qualitative and extreme caution needs to be adhered to in drawing conclusions or inferences

The findings from the reconnaissance mission indicating that the situation is not characteristic of famine in the visited areas and **are significantly better than those made by the IPC TWG for the projection period of October to December 2015** should not blur the messages that need to be sent about the severe (but unverified) situation, the need for emergency assessments to produce reliable evidence and the need for a high quality IPC Acute Analysis. The IPC ERC does not endorse nor support the Final Report of the Reconnaissance Mission which communicated that the situation is not as severe as the IPC analysis and nutrition data in Sept and October indicated based only on incomplete and unrepresentative data collected during the mission. The reconnaissance mission should not make overall statements about the food security situation of the visited areas but rather be consulted when updating IPC Acute Analysis.

The ERC acknowledges the great security difficult that the IPC SS TWG is operating but these cannot compromise the humanitarian responsibility that the agencies have to highly affected South Sudanese population. The ERC highlights that the SS government and partners through IPC SS TWG have the responsibility to highlight the continued risk of famine, strongly advocate for data collection and carry out a high quality IPC Acute Analysis in the next month or two with the minimal evidence needed.

There is an urgent need to carry out the planned emergency assessment in areas highly affected and the continued monitoring system and continuing onto the first quarter of 2016. Emergency assessments should be conducted as planned focusing on key evidence needed to assess famine so that it can inform the IPC Acute Analysis updates. It is imperative that reliable evidence is collected especially after the seemingly contradictory results found within the report of the Reconnaissance Mission as well as with other evidence available. It may require adequate political influence to demand that greater priority be given to getting teams into the affected areas to really find out the severity of the situation. It is clear that there is no authoritative knowledge of the

severity of the situation and if things carry on this slow, we may only find out what is happening once the situation becomes even worse. The SS and global humanitarian community cannot be in a position again and possibly too late of being called in to adjudicate on a situation just because there is not enough information. Late collection and analysis of information is just as much a failure as a late response. It would be unacceptable if by February 2016 we are in the midst of tens of thousands of people dying. The finding from the Reconnaissance mission that “the only way people are surviving at the moment is on flood resources like water lilies and fish and that those resources are going to begin to dry up quickly” needs to be responsibly taken into account in IPC Analysis Update for projection.

The IPC SS TWG needs to urgently update their IPC Acute Analysis for areas highly affected by conflict followed up by an update in early 2016. In particular, it is essential for the TWG to conduct the standard IPC Projection Analysis, including any and all evidence from multiple sources (the assessment, satellites, markets, traders, historic trends, insights on conflict, anthropological insights, etc.) in order to project the most likely scenario into quarter 1 of next year using the IPC Acute Tools. If the analysis can substantiate early warning that famine is most likely to exist in quarter 1, then that should be widely communicated to all stakeholders so that they take responsibility for their respective roles to avert famine. And on the flip-side, if there is not adequate evidence for projecting the most likely scenario as famine, then that language should not be used as it creates confusion and dilutes future messaging on famine. Rather, the existence of Phase 4 (Humanitarian Emergency) is enough to elicit an urgent and comprehensive response.

The IPC SS TWG should request direct technical assistance from partners and IPC GSU high level food security analysts as there is no room for error in the coming analysis and time is running out to potentially avert famine. Furthermore, given the need for ready access to the evidence templates from local and international stakeholders and the high profile nature of this analysis, the ERC strongly recommends that the IPC Information Support System (ISS) be utilized by the TWG.

Government and partners’ agencies in South Sudan should make serious commitments to ensure access to areas most affected for data collection that will provide adequate information to ascertain – or deny – that a famine is currently occurring or will follow in the next months. Unless more efforts are urgently made to conduct emergency assessments now, any IPC Analysis update will rely on incomplete – and sometimes contradictory – less than reliable data and will be incapable of concluding on the likelihood of Famine with minimum confidence.

The ERC was early activated with the main objective to ensure that evidence needed to assess the likelihood of famine was dealt pro-actively thus avoiding a situation where conclusions could not be taken in the next IPC analysis.

The IPC ERC made clear recommendations to the IPC SS TWG on the strategic and broad assessment. The committee believes that with the evidence currently available it is unlikely that the IPC SS TWG and the ERC would be able to conclude with minimum confidence on the current existence or projection of famine.

The IPC SS TWG needs to avoid a similar situation to the one experienced in September 2014 where analysis lacked confidence and thus conclusions given to decision makers were obscured. The IPC Analysis update should refrain from concluding again that there was a risk of famine for the projection period without enough evidence to clearly classify a famine in that projected time and use again obscure language that do not clearly inform necessary actions.

The organization of the IPC SS TWG and data collection systems needs to be evaluated and may benefit from some reorganization to ensure prompt response to the need of urgent data collection. The ERC recommends that the IPC SS TWG start a real time review of how the present data collection system, tools and data availability (including the IPC TWG) can be adapted to the circumstances of SS so that at the very least an indicative IPC classification can be made in good time.

The IPC SS TWG and SS humanitarian agencies needs to evaluate alternative data collection to ensure that minimal evidence is available even in the complex situation like the one seen in SS now. This may require senior technicians to have the skills and tools to challenge assumptions and find alternatives when the situation requires. This time it has been the ERC in a reactionary process who have provided some of this support but given that a

large degree of flexibility will be required for quite some time in SS, now is the time to prepare the tools and processes to support the technical leaders on the field in the most complex times.

The IPC ERC should not be seen as a collaborator but rather as an independent review committee. Its early activation has successfully met its objective and has been terminated. The IPC SS TWG may nevertheless request technical inputs for the regular/periodic monitoring activities for which they recruited enumerators in visited areas from the IPC GSU and humanitarian partners, including members of the IPC ERC if necessary. However, the TWG should not cite the ERC as a collaborator on their report. The IPC SS TWG is recognized to have a strong and capable team and do not require ERC day to day in-depth technical involvement, apart from periodic higher-level general direction/encouragement that they are on the right track.

The IPC ERC early activation is formally closed on 2 December 2015 with warnings that the situation is very worrying but that more evidence will be necessary to confirm – or deny – famine in the next IPC Acute Classification for the highly affected areas of Southern Unity and on-call for its re-activation as needed.