



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

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WFP News Video: South Sudan Can't Catch a Break From Hunger-This Time It's Locusts

Shot: 3March2020, 26-27Feb2020

Magwi/Nyal/Juba, South Sudan

TRT: 2:19

SHOTLIST:

:00-:20

Vast swarms of desert locusts are devouring crops and threatening food supplies and livelihoods in South Sudan. Magwi is one of the counties struck by the deadly locust swarm in Eastern Equatoria state. Farmers have resorted to setting fires and making noise in attempts to ward off the locusts. But they fear prolonged locust invasion as eggs hatch from the first wave. Within weeks they are expected to turn into adults and begin consuming their weight- that is roughly two grams every day.

Magwi, South Sudan

Shot: 3March20

:20-:28

SOT Lotok Joseph Okuera, Chairman Magwi Farmers group (English):

“Some people, they even started hiding their children inside their house, because they think that these things may even eat their children”

Magwi, South Sudan

Shot: 3March20

:28-:39

Various locusts

Magwi, South Sudan

Shot: 3March20

:39-1:00

SOT Thomas Odong, Farmer(Jubas Arabic)

“I started chasing them they were not leaving. They filled the whole of this compound even behind the house they are there. Even on the mangos they are there. We survive on pawpaw, mangoes, avocados but now if all these fruits are destroyed by the locusts how will I live?”

Magwi, South Sudan

Shot: 3March20

1:00-1:09

Locusts in stripped fruit trees



Magwi, South Sudan
Shot: 3March20

1:09-1:22

SOT Lotok Joseph Okuera, Chairman Magwi Farmers group (English):

“We are worried allot because this year if the government or NGO’s fail to help us to destroy these things we will really be in big problem of hunger”

Magwi, South Sudan
Shot: 3March20

1:22-1:27

Chicken eating locust
Magwi, South Sudan
Shot: 3March20

1:27-1:58

Matthew Hollingworth, Country Director WFP South Sudan (English)

“For the first time, we are seeing potential for peace to bring prosperity and what happens? We see an invasion of locusts.

Really, 2020 is going to be an incredible difficult year. What we see today in South Sudan is 55% of the population in crisis food security levels or worse. There is not one other country in the world where that many of the population are facing this level of food insecurity.”

Juba, South Sudan
Shot: 26Feb20

1:58-2:20

WFP Helo airlift of food to people displaced by fighting
Nyal, South Sudan
Shot: 18Feb20

ENDS

- **A wave of desert locusts in East Africa is now forming more swarms in parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, putting at risk the main crop harvest in May and June, and threatening the food security of smallholder farmers.**
 - The desert locust is considered the most dangerous migratory pest in the world. The current upsurge, which started in 2019, is the worst in 25 years in Ethiopia and Somalia, and the worst in 70 years in Kenya.



- FAO said in February that swarms have now spread to Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- **In South Sudan, desert locusts have affected four counties in Eastern Equatoria region since arriving in mid-February.** Although the swarms are small compared to those in countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya, they could continue to spread unless they are controlled.
- The first swarm to enter South Sudan near the Ugandan border in late February was looking for suitable ground to lay eggs. Hatchlings have since been sighted. It takes about two weeks for the eggs to hatch and then juvenile hoppers develop over the next 30 or 40 days.
- A typical locust swarm can consist of 150 million locusts per km². A one km² swarm has the capacity to consume the equivalent in crops to feed 35 000 people. Locust swarms can move quickly, covering 100-150 km a day, spreading quickly and complicating control measures. The locusts pose severe risks to agriculture, livelihoods and food security in South Sudan, where 6 million people, more than half the entire population, are estimated in Crisis food insecurity.
- **While the situation is evolving, impacts on food security have not yet been felt on a large scale,** the regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group said in mid-February. In cropping areas, losses were limited as most crops were already harvested or were mature when swarms passed through. In pastoral areas, rangeland resources were well above average, which has offset the effects of locust damage.
- **The March-April start of the long rains, coinciding with regeneration of rangeland and planting, enables the new wave of locusts to breed and spread.** They could affect the 2020 main and secondary harvest seasons and potentially spread further in the Rift Valley, and other areas.
- Under a worst-case scenario - which is not considered likely - **locusts could cause below-average 2020 harvests and major pasture losses in arid and semi-arid regions.** Lower food stocks and pasture, reduced income and rising food prices would likely drive farmers and pastoralists deeper into hunger.
- **Analyses of historical locust events show that locust-related losses do not often cause below-average national crop production. It is assumed 2020 national**



production levels will not be significantly affected in most countries. Losses of agricultural production in locust-hit areas tend to be localized but significant for those affected, and can raise food insecurity, particularly with multiple shocks and high vulnerability.

- **More than 13 million people across East Africa already suffer from severe food insecurity, according to an [IPC alert](#). But not all are yet in the path of the locusts.**
 - The 13 million includes 9.7 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Another 3.2 million people in Uganda and South Sudan could be affected.
 - Assessments are ongoing to determine how the locust upsurge is exacerbating food insecurity in affected areas.

- **It will be vastly more cost-effective to support the prevention and control efforts of Governments and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to tackle locusts now than to help people after their crops had been ruined.**
 - WFP has estimated the cost of responding to the impact of locusts on food security alone to be at least 15 times higher than the cost of preventing the spread now.
 - WFP is not directly part of locust control operations - which are led by FAO – but has provided some vehicles to governments in the region for monitoring the swarms. WFP is taking part in assessment missions, which should start reporting at the end of March. WFP stands ready to meet additional humanitarian needs if required.

 - **IMPACT:**

CONTEXT:

- The locust outbreak follows a tough year in humanitarian terms for the region. A lot of locust-affected communities have not only been hit by climate shocks like floods and droughts – they're also being affected by violent conflict – including a decades-long conflict in Somalia, and inter-communal violence and displacement in Ethiopia. With each of these shocks people are pushed deeper into crisis.

- The locust upsurge originated from uncontrolled swarms in the Arabian Peninsula that crossed into the Horn of Africa in June 2019 and spread quickly through the region due to



favourable climatic and vegetative conditions because of above-average rains from October to December.

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For more information please contact (email address: firstname.lastname@wfp.org):

Tomson Phiri, WFP/Juba, Mob. +211 922 465 247

Peter Smerdon, WFP/Nairobi, Mob. +254 707 722 104

Frances Kennedy, WFP/ Rome, Tel. +39 06 6513 3725, Mob. +39 346 7600 806

Bettina Luescher, WFP/Geneva/Berlin, Mob. +49 160 992 617 30

Jane Howard, WFP/London, Tel. +44 (0) 20 3857 7413, Mob. +44 796 8008 474

Steve Taravella, WFP/Washington, Tel. +1 202 653 1149, Mob. +1 202 770 5993