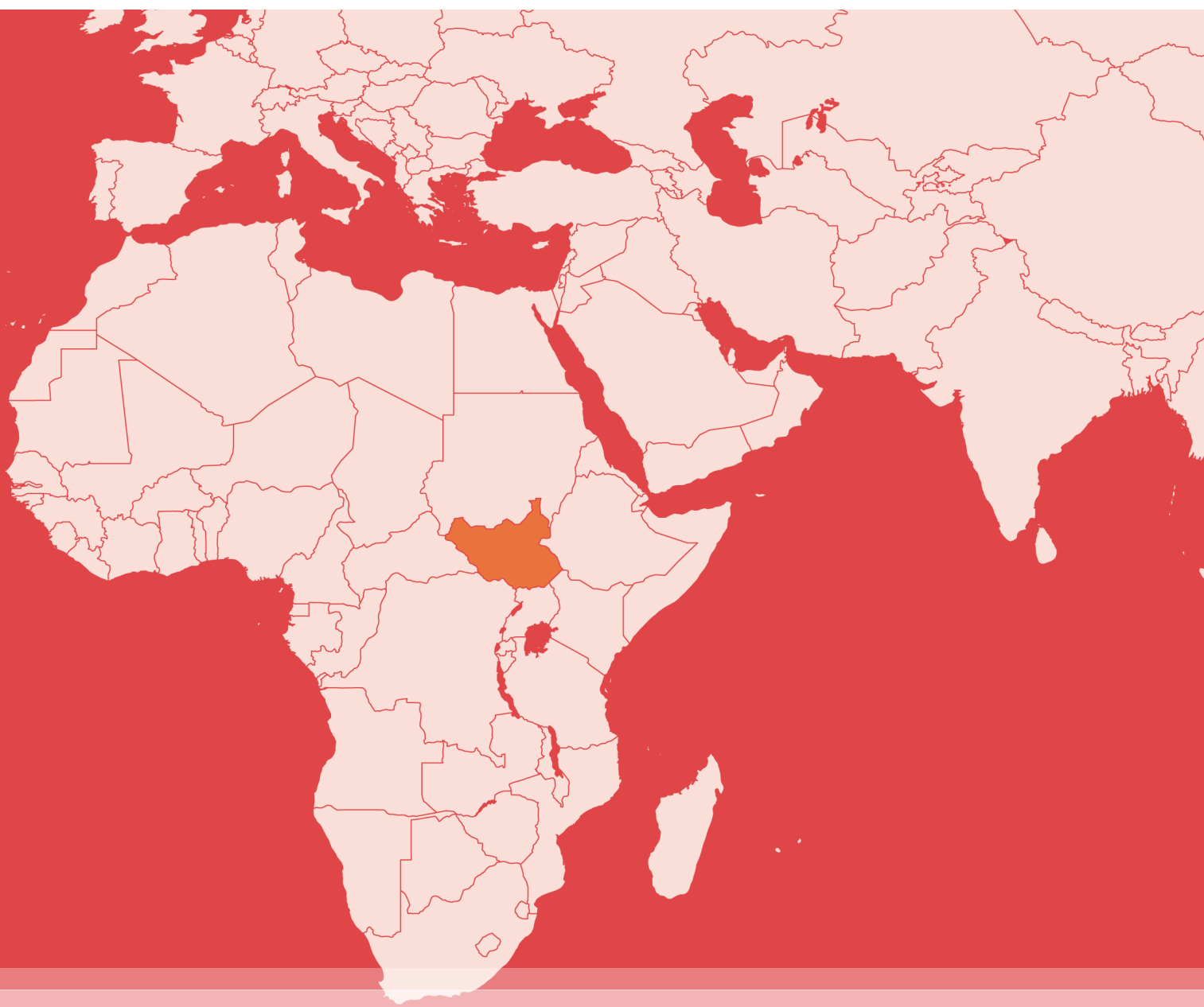


HPG commissioned report

Independent Review of the IPC South Sudan

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September 2021





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Contents

Acknowledgements / 3

List of boxes, tables and figures / 6

Acronyms / 7

Executive summary / 9

1 Introduction / 14

- 1.1 Background to the Review / 14
 - 1.2 Objectives / 14
 - 1.3 Approach, methods and constraints / 15
-

2 Brief History of the IPC / 17

- 2.1 The IPC globally / 17
 - 2.2 The IPC in South Sudan / 18
-

3 The 2020 IPC analysis process: what happened / 22

- 3.1 Introduction / 22
 - 3.2 The context / 22
 - 3.3 IPC analysis workshop / 22
 - 3.4 Launch of Real-Time Quality Review process / 24
 - 3.5 Famine Review Committee / 25
 - 3.6 Communication of the FRC and RTQR reports / 25
 - 3.7 Release of two different IPC analyses / 25
-

4 What worked in the 2020 IPC analysis, and factors that contributed to a breakdown in consensus / 30

- 4.1 Introduction / 30
 - 4.2 What worked in the 2020 IPC analysis / 30
 - 4.3 Factors that contributed to breakdown in consensus / 31
 - 4.4 Consequences for consensus-building / 36
-

5 Consequences of consensus on the IPC analysis breaking down / 37

- 5.1 Consequences for South Sudan / 37
- 5.2 Consequences for the IPC globally / 39

6 Concluding reflections on the design of the IPC model / 40

7 The way forward: recommendations / 41

7.1 Introduction / 41

7.2 Recommendations for implementing the IPC in South Sudan in 2021 / 42

7.3 Proposed approach for implementing recommendations for the 2021 IPC Process in South Sudan / 43

7.4 Recommendations for the medium to longer term / 44

7.5 Proposed approach for implementing medium to longer-term recommendations / 49

References / 51

Appendix 1 Purpose and membership of the Reference Group / 52

Appendix 2 List of key informants interviewed / 54

List of boxes, tables and figures

Boxes

- Box 1** Members of the TWG in South Sudan in 2020 / 19
- Box 2** Recent history of IPC analysis processes in South Sudan / 20
- Box 3** Applying red lines to consensus-building / 46

Tables

- Table 1** Summary of recommendations, timelines and recommended leads / 12
- Table 2** Comparison of population estimates in different IPC phases: ‘current’ acute food insecurity: October to November 2020 / 28
- Table 3** Comparison of population estimates in different IPC phases: projections of acute food insecurity December 2020 to March 2021 / 28
- Table 4** Comparison of population estimates in different IPC phases: projections of acute food insecurity April to July 2021 / 29

Figures

- Figure 1** History of the IPC / 18
- Figure 2** Current organisational model of the IPC in South Sudan / 19
- Figure 3** Key dates in the IPC analysis timeline / 23
- Figure 4** Acute food insecurity, October–November 2020: consolidated TWG, RTQR and FRC analysis released by IPC GSU / 26
- Figure 5** IPC acute food insecurity situation map, October–November 2020: TWG analysis only, released by GoSS / 27
- Figure 6** Proposed adapted IPC model for South Sudan / 48

Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
AFI	IPC Acute Food Insecurity scale
AMN	IPC Acute Malnutrition Scale
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFI	IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Scale
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
ERF	Early Response Financing
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FEWS NET	the Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FRC	IPC Famine Review Committee
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (Somalia)
FSNMS	Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GSC	IPC Global Steering Committee
GSP	IPC Global Strategic Programme
GSU	Global Support Unit
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISS	IPC Information Support System
MoAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (South Sudan)
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics (South Sudan)
NGO	non-governmental organisation

OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
RTQR	Real Time Quality Review
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SICA	Central American Integration System
SSHF	South Sudan Humanitarian Fund
TWG	IPC Technical Working Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSG	Secretary-General of the United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

The October/November 2020 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis process in South Sudan broke down when the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) was unable to reach technical consensus on the severity of food insecurity in six critical counties. In response, and following a request from the Government of South Sudan (GoSS), the three IPC resource partners – United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK FCDO) and the European Union (EU) – commissioned this Independent Review. The Review's primary purpose is to support the restoration of effective functioning and credibility of the IPC in South Sudan. It documents what happened, analyses the reasons for the breakdown in consensus, and recommends the way forward.

The Review was carried out by a team from HPG/ODI, drawing on a wide range of documentation, interviews with over 70 key informants and a consultation process with six key stakeholder groups on the preliminary findings and way forward, accompanied by a Reference Group comprising the main IPC stakeholder groups in South Sudan. As Covid-19 travel restrictions prevented travel to South Sudan, the Review was carried out remotely.

The IPC has become increasingly influential in South Sudan in informing decisions about humanitarian resource mobilisation at global level, and the geographical targeting of humanitarian resources at national level. As its profile has risen, so the stakes in reaching consensus have intensified. The IPC was introduced into South Sudan in 2007. For at least the last six years the IPC analysis process in South Sudan has been challenging, particularly when there are indications of high levels of acute food insecurity. There is thus a history to the contentious 2020 experience, and relationships within the TWG were already strained before the process began.

International agencies had been warning of deteriorating food security in South Sudan for some months before the October/November 2020 IPC analysis, due to a combination of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict and severe flooding in parts of the country. The IPC analysis process began at national level in late October, online, and was attended by over 100 participants. By mid-November, it had become clear that technical consensus could not be reached for six counties in terms of the estimated number of people in Phase 5 (Catastrophe). In line with IPC Protocols, a Real Time Quality Review (RTQR) was requested by the TWG and carried out by technical experts from the IPC's Global Partners. Their findings confirmed that some indicators for Pibor county exceeded IPC Phase 5 Famine thresholds. Convening the Famine Review Committee (FRC) was automatically triggered, again in accordance with IPC Protocols. Both processes had access to newly available data: additional information about Humanitarian Food Assistance plans for the RTQR, and nutrition data from Pibor county for the FRC. In accordance with the IPC Famine Guidance Note, the FRC disaggregated their analysis for Pibor county, concluding a 'Famine Likely' classification for four payams in western Pibor, and 'Risk of Famine' for two payams in eastern Pibor. There followed a period of rapid and intense communication

between the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) and the TWG when the RTQR and FRC findings were presented to the TWG in Juba. Both reports were published on the global IPC website in mid-December, in line with IPC protocols and as agreed by the IPC Global Steering Committee (GSC). This was denounced by the GoSS as lacking government consent. A week later, the GoSS released an IPC analysis for South Sudan which included the IPC classification for 73 counties where there had been consensus, and data for six counties where there had not been consensus. A few days later, with IPC GSC consent, the GSU published a consolidated IPC analysis with the same classification for the 73 counties, but a different analysis for the six counties according to the FRC and RTQR's classifications and population estimates. Phase 5 and 'Famine Likely' appeared on the map published through the IPC Global Strategic Programme (GSP) as a global IPC information product, but not on the GoSS's map.

Some aspects of the 2020 IPC analysis process worked well, including much of the IPC analysis at state level. A number of factors contributed to the breakdown in consensus, including:

- (1) The **challenging context** of the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions that affected data gathering and required the IPC analysis to be conducted online.
- (2) Issues with the **data feeding into the IPC analysis**, including implications of the time lag between data collection and analysis, the late availability of nutrition data, confusion about how to take planned humanitarian assistance into account, and whether ground-truthing was desirable or possible.
- (3) Issues associated with **roles and responsibilities** in the IPC analysis process, including chairing of the process, which was experienced as divisive and controlling, the incompatibility of the GSU playing a technical support/quality control function while also facilitating the IPC analysis process, and lack of leadership and coherence in how different parts of the United Nations (UN) system engaged with the breakdown of consensus.
- (4) Different perspectives on the **quality review processes**, and therefore different levels of acceptance of the RTQR and FRC findings.
- (5) **Institutional relationships and positions**, with some IPC partners prioritising preservation of the IPC as a global 'gold standard' and others prioritising 'institutionalisation' of the IPC by embedding the process in government institutions and encouraging national collective ownership; failure to take up IPC resource partners' offer to intervene, and lack of process to do so; and international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) playing a low-key role, limiting their potential to contribute.

The combination of pre-existing lack of trust, difficult institutional relationships, lack of neutral leadership, unclear roles and responsibilities, a lack of willingness to listen respectfully and make revisions based on evidence and lack of agreement on the wider priorities of the IPC process created an environment in which consensus-building became impossible.

Although the humanitarian response in South Sudan in 2020/2021 is widely regarded as too little too late, this is due to a combination of factors, of which lack of clarity from the IPC on the severity of food insecurity is just one. Indeed, some donors made additional resources available in response to the ‘Famine Likely’ classification. While the global reputation of the IPC as the ‘gold standard’ on food insecurity remains strong, the breakdown in the 2020 IPC process in South Sudan has cast doubt over how the IPC should be managed in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

The 2020 IPC analysis process in South Sudan has revealed fundamental design flaws in the IPC model. First and foremost, the model breaks down when the twin objectives of the GSP conflict: maintaining the integrity of an independent and objective IPC analysis with the global partnership as custodian, and institutionalising the IPC as a locally owned, government-led process. Second, although the IPC analysis is predominantly a technical process, failure to provide checks or balances to protect against political compromise implicitly implies that information on food security is ‘neutral’ and will be approached apolitically, contrary to documented evidence from multiple countries. Third, as the IPC has become increasingly influential, nationally, regionally and globally, the model has not been updated to keep pace, in terms of governance structures and management arrangements. Fourth, while the technical protocols of the IPC analysis process are clearly articulated, with well-defined quality control processes, the roles and conditions required for consensus-building are not. The future of the IPC in South Sudan and as a global ‘gold standard’ depends on addressing each of these issues. If these fundamental flaws are not addressed immediately, the 2021 IPC analysis process will face the same challenges as 2020, with a high likelihood that consensus will once again break down and the model could be broken beyond repair.

Table 1 summarises the Review’s recommendations, including the timeframe in which actions should be taken and which IPC stakeholder should take the lead. The first set of recommendations is for immediate implementation, related to the IPC process in South Sudan in 2021. The second set is for the medium to longer term, for which implementation should begin from November 2021.

Table 1 Summary of recommendations, timelines and recommended leads

Number	Recommendation	Timeframe	Recommended lead ¹
Recommendations for implementing the IPC in South Sudan in 2021			
Approach	Form '2021 Task Force' made up of representatives of GoSS, IPC GSU, IPC Resource Partners, 2–3 UN Agencies, 2–3 NGOs	Immediate	Resource partners, GoSS, FAO
1	Ensure a clear distinction between the IPC analysis of available evidence and the separate processes for gathering data	Immediate	Resource partners, and GoSS at Under-Secretary level
2	Ensure a clear distinction and separation of the chairing, facilitation and quality assurance roles throughout the IPC process	Immediate	IPC GSC, GSU
3	Appoint independent oversight of the IPC 2021 process	Immediate	2021 Task Force supported by resource partners and GoSS
4	Establish a mechanism for participants in the process to register concerns confidentially	Immediate	2021 Task Force
5	In the event of a lack of consensus or a potential phase 5 classification, agree the timetable for the quality assurance process and its possible outcomes before any action is taken	Immediate	TWG Co-Chairs, GSU
Recommendations for the medium to longer term (Approaches 1 to 3 are all required to carry out recommendations 6 to 10 below)			
Approach 1	A multi-stakeholder task force to be set up at national level	By November 2021	GoSS, FAO Juba, resource partners
Approach 2	A multi-stakeholder task force to be set up at global level	By December 2021	IPC GSC, GSU
Approach 3	A coordination/support team to be established to support the implementation of the recommendations	By December 2021	Resource partners, GoSS, FAO, WFP, UNICEF, OCHA
6	Adapt the IPC model in South Sudan as a pilot to address the recurrent and fundamental flaws and contradictions in the IPC model overall and develop a mechanism for monitoring the pilot	January 2022– January 2024	National and global multi-stakeholder task forces
	Carry out review of pilot process	Commission in September 2023, so review finalised by end-2023	Resource partners

¹ Names in this column are the **lead** agencies; they will work with others to achieve their objectives.

Table 1 Summary of recommendations, timelines and recommended leads (continued)

Number	Recommendation	Timeframe	Recommended lead ¹
Recommendations for implementing the IPC in South Sudan in 2021			
7	Protect the space for the IPC technical analysis process in South Sudan to be carried out free from political and institutional influence		
	i) Elevate the governance of the IPC at national level (i.e. two co-chairs) to a higher level of seniority than is currently the case	By January 2022	National multi-stakeholder task force
	ii) Strengthen the management of the IPC process in-country	January 2022	GoSS, FAO, GSU
	iii) Reinforce oversight of the IPC with clear accountability	March–April 2022	Resource partners and GSU
8	Establish clear protocols and quality control mechanisms for building technical consensus in the IPC analysis	November 2021–February 2022	GSU
	Clearly define and distinguish roles and responsibilities in the IPC analysis process at national and global levels		
	i) Chair of the IPC analysis process to be held by two senior representatives from government and the international community	March–April 2022	GoSS, Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator office, Resource partners
	ii) Facilitator of the national IPC analysis process to be selected by the GSU from a pool of independent, experienced and skilled facilitators trained to IPC 3 level	July–August 2022	GSU
10	iii) Responsibility for quality assurance to be clearly assigned	July–August 2022	GSU
	Reinforce and protect the integrity of the IPC as a global standard with clear and effective measures, by promoting the independent authority of the GSP as custodian of the IPC	January 2022–January 2024	IPC GSC, Resource partners

¹ Names in this column are the **lead** agencies; they will work with others to achieve their objectives.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Review

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has become the ‘gold standard’ for providing a snapshot of the severity of food insecurity at national and sub-national levels in a growing number of countries. The IPC is particularly valued as a collective analysis of acute food insecurity, carrying greater authority than any single agency analysis. However, recent experience of the IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) scale in South Sudan demonstrates the challenges associated with building consensus through the IPC analytical process in a conflict-affected fragile context. In the October/November 2020 IPC analysis, no technical consensus could be reached on the severity of food insecurity in six critical counties,¹ although technical consensus was reached for the other 73 counties. With the publication of two differing IPC analyses for South Sudan, the IPC process effectively broke down.

This Review was financed and supported by the three IPC resource partners, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the European Union (EU),² following a request in February 2021 from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UNSG) Special Representative for technical and financial assistance to conduct an independent technical review of the IPC process.

1.2 Objectives

The overall goal of the Review is to restore the effective functioning of the IPC process in South Sudan, and thus the credibility of the IPC as the key source of food security analysis and information in South Sudan, informing and guiding humanitarian decision-making by a range of different actors.

The specific objectives of the Review are:

1. To provide an independent assessment of the IPC process that was carried out in South Sudan in October–November 2020, documenting key steps in the process in terms of what worked and how consensus broke down, in order to contribute to a shared understanding among IPC stakeholders of what happened (Chapter 3).
2. To identify and analyse the factors that contributed to the breakdown in consensus and resulted in two different IPC analyses being released, and some of the consequences (Chapter 4).

1 The counties are Akobo and Pibor (Jonglei State and Pibor Administrative Area), Aweil South (Northern Bahr el Ghazal State) and Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South (Warrap State).

2 The three resource partners formed a Management Group, comprising their Juba-based representatives and a headquarters representative from the funding agency, that has met regularly with the Independent Review Team to monitor progress and provide logistical support to the team as required.

3. Drawing on the input of a wide range of stakeholders, to recommend how to strengthen the quality, effectiveness and transparency of future IPC processes in South Sudan, and thus to ensure the future credibility of the AFI in South Sudan and globally (Chapter 6).

It should be noted that the Review was *not* commissioned to re-analyse or re-evaluate the data presented during the 2020 IPC process in South Sudan.

1.3 Approach, methods and constraints

A team from the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI, an independent policy think tank based in London, was appointed to carry out the review. HPG/ODI has not played any part in the South Sudan IPC process and has a track record in successfully carrying out other such independent reviews, which are regarded as objective and credible.

A Reference Group for the Independent Review was established as a forum for representatives of the main IPC stakeholder groups in South Sudan and key stakeholder groups at the global level to engage with the Independent Review Team throughout the review process, and to play an advisory role. This was also intended to foster broad ownership of the review and take-up of its findings and recommendations. See Appendix 1 for a description of the purpose of the Reference Group and its membership.

The ODI/HPG team adopted the following methodology:

1. **Review of a wide range of documentation**, published and unpublished, related to the IPC in South Sudan historically as well as in 2020, and to the wider global context. Over 80 documents were reviewed, including IPC analyses, previous evaluations and ‘lessons learned’ reports, academic articles and agency reports.
2. **Listening to and reviewing recordings of the 2020 IPC analysis process in South Sudan, at national level.**
3. **Interviews with over 70 key informants**, drawn from the following IPC stakeholder groups: members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) in Juba, Under-Secretaries or Directors-General of participating government ministries, heads of UN agencies and heads of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (national and international) in Juba, staff of IPC resource partners (at Juba, regional and headquarters levels), members of the GSU and members of the GSC, individuals involved in IPC quality control mechanisms, and key users of the IPC at national and global levels. See Appendix 2 for a list of key informants interviewed.³ The team invested time and effort in contacting all stakeholders in the IPC process. Most participating bodies and agencies were cooperative and open to being interviewed.

3 The following criteria were used in selecting interviewees: coverage of all stakeholder groups, from technical to senior management level, and at both country office and headquarters levels for key organisations. Access to government officials was facilitated by resource partner representatives at the Juba level. International and national NGO interviewees were selected to include organisations heavily involved in the IPC analysis and those with a greater distance from the process who may be users of its outputs.

4. An **iterative process of analysis**, based on the interviews and the documentation review.
5. **Presentation of the preliminary findings to six key stakeholder groups**, for their feedback and discussion, and for their input into the way forward. The six groups consulted were: GoSS, IPC resource partners, the Reference Group for the Independent Review, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the NGO Forum and the GSC.

In carrying out the Review, constraints arose from the need for the team to work remotely as Covid-19 travel restrictions prevented travel to South Sudan. Reconstructing the narrative of events under these conditions has been challenging, but creative use by all participants of multiple platforms has addressed this constraint.

2 Brief history of the IPC

2.1 The IPC globally

The AFI was first developed and implemented in Somalia in 2004, by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). As the profile of the IPC expanded beyond Somalia, an IPC Global Partnership was formed in 2007, comprising 12 major food security organisations. In 2014 the Global Partnership launched the GSP with the aim of supporting and promoting the adoption of the IPC as the global standard for analysis of food insecurity. The Global Strategic Unit (since renamed the Global Support Unit (GSU)) was established to implement the GSP, to respond to the increasing demand for the IPC worldwide and to support the IPC as an international global standard. By 2018 the Global Partnership had expanded to 15 member organisations, comprising three UN agencies,⁴ four international NGOs,⁵ the Global Food Security and Global Nutrition clusters, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, and four regional inter-governmental authorities.⁶ Each member has a seat on the GSC, which is responsible for strategically guiding and positioning the IPC globally.

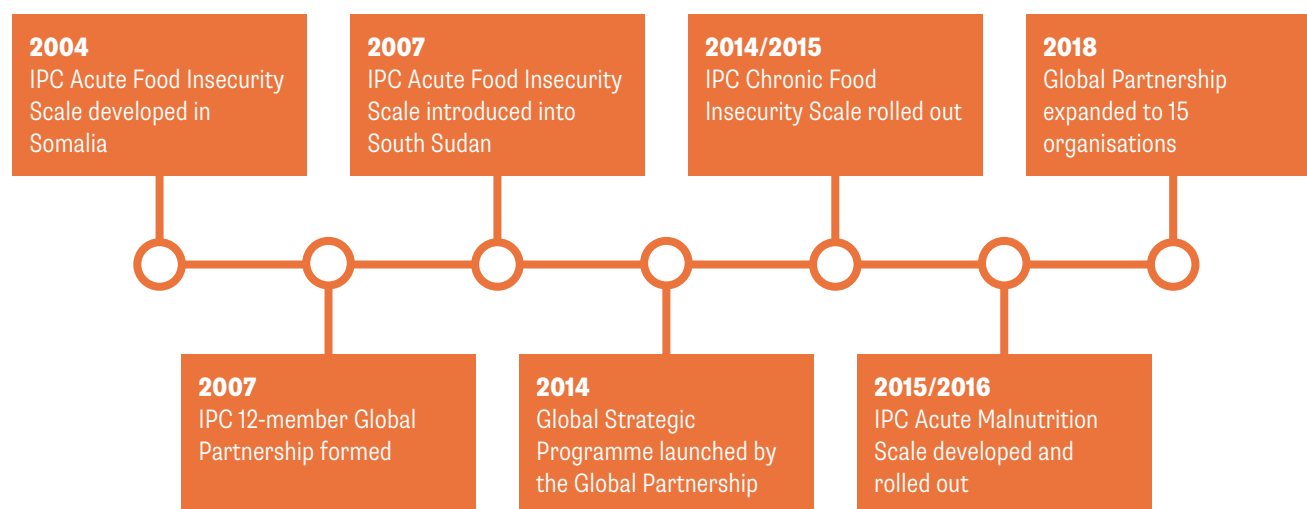
To complement the AFI, the Acute Malnutrition Scale (AMN) was developed under the GSP and rolled out in 2015/2016. South Sudan was one of the earliest adopters of the AMN. In 2014/2015, the GSP also rolled out the Chronic Food Insecurity Scale (CFI), although this has been less widely adopted and has not yet been introduced in South Sudan. By 2020 over 50 countries had actively engaged in the IPC, 38 of them in Africa. See Figure 1 for a timeline of the history of the IPC.

4 FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

5 Action Contre la Faim (ACF), CARE, Oxfam and Save the Children.

6 Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) (West Africa), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD, East and Central Africa), Central American Integration System (SICA, Central America) and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Figure 1 History of the IPC



There have been two independent evaluations of the GSP: the mid-term review in 2016/2017, and a final evaluation in 2018/2019 (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2017; FAO, 2019). The IPC in South Sudan was a case study for both. These evaluations captured the growing influence of the IPC. They also highlighted common and enduring challenges, including:

1. Challenges in building and achieving consensus during the analysis process, a factor that has impacted the quality of the AFI scale, especially where political compromise affects the results.
2. Data gaps that may affect the quality of the AFI analyses, including lack of data on mortality, nutrition and displacement, and the absence of data from 'hard to reach' areas.
3. The inappropriateness of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to 'institutionalisation' of the IPC, across countries. This has been interpreted as ownership of the IPC at country level by embedding IPC processes in government institutions, but has been problematic in conflict-affected, fragile countries and where governance structures are weak.

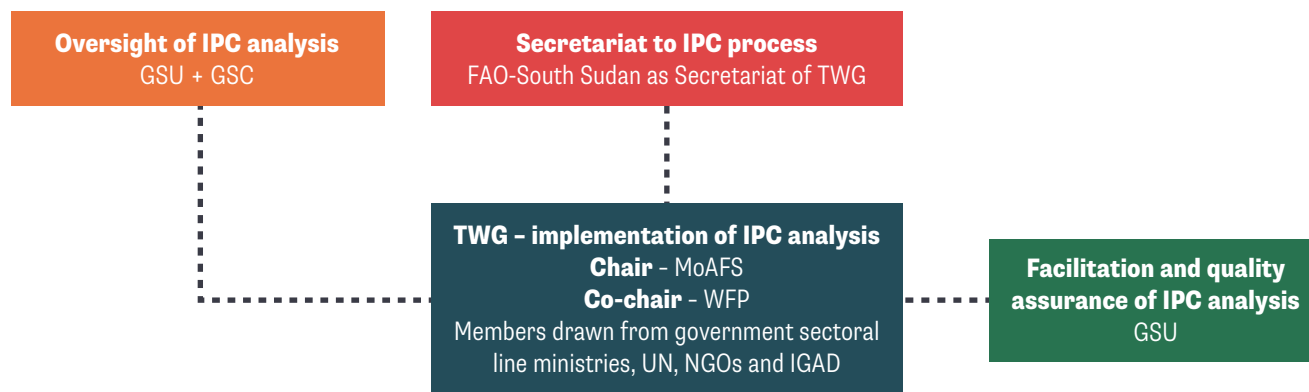
The three principal funders of the GSP are the FCDO, the EU and USAID.

2.2 The IPC in South Sudan

The IPC was first introduced into South Sudan in 2007 through the Livelihoods Analysis Forum facilitated by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The TWG was originally co-chaired by the NBS and the Ministry of Agriculture. While the IPC continues to be hosted by the NBS, in 2018 co-chairing shifted to the MoAFS and a representative of the TWG drawn from the international community. The chairing arrangement is in line with the objective of the GSP, to 'institutionalise' the IPC by embedding it in government. The international Co-chair position is currently held by a staff member from the WFP.

Box 1 shows the members of the TWG in 2020. Figure 2 shows the current organisational model of the IPC in South Sudan.

Figure 2 Current organisational model of the IPC in South Sudan



Box 1 Members of the TWG in South Sudan in 2020

- Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security – Chair
- World Food Programme (WFP) – Co-Chair
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – Secretariat of the IPC
- Ministry of Health
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
- Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)
- Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster
- The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)
- REACH
- Save the Children
- Oxfam
- CARE
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

The AFI analysis was originally to be carried out four times per year in South Sudan: two full analyses and two updates. Problems with data collection, particularly access, meant the frequency was reduced to three IPC analyses per year. This has since become two: one full analysis in the last half of the year, and one update around May (see Box 2). Most of these challenges relate to achieving consensus when the data indicates classification at the higher end of the AFI scale, Phase 4 and above, with political approval from GoSS. In response to the challenges of achieving consensus in 2018, two ‘lessons learned’ workshops were convened for members of the TWG, one in Kenya in May and one in Juba in August. As a result, in early 2019 the TWG drew up ‘Rules of Engagement’ for the IPC TWG in South Sudan. This document was referred to by a number of respondents in the review, but it was felt that it had not had a significant impact, in part due to the lack of a mechanism to hold TWG members accountable to the ‘Rules of Engagement’.

Box 2 Recent history of IPC analysis processes in South Sudan

- 2014 and 2015: Concerns of localised famine in South Sudan but data available to the TWG and to Emergency Review Committee were inadequate to be conclusive.
- 2016: GoSS did not endorse the IPC analysis, so it could not be used officially.
- 2017: FEWS NET and other members of the TWG could not reach agreement on whether the projected classifications of five counties should be IPC Phase 3 or 4, resulting in two IPC analyses being released.
- 2017: IPC analysis classified counties in Greater Unity State as experiencing ‘Famine’ or ‘Famine Likely’. Although the IPC analysis was released by the NBS, this proved highly contentious at higher political levels within GoSS.
- 2018: May–June IPC analysis was not released by GoSS. The September analysis was released only after considerable tension between government and other members of the TWG.
- 2020: Technical consensus broke down over IPC classification for six counties. Real Time Quality Review (RTQR) and Famine Review Committee (FRC) findings rejected by some members of TWG, resulting in two different IPC analyses being released.

Sources: Buchanan-Smith et al. (2017); Maxwell et al. (2018); FAO (2019).

There is thus a history to the 2020 experience. Conducting the IPC analysis in previous years has often been fraught, and had already tested relationships within the TWG and between participating agencies in Juba.

Meanwhile, the IPC has become increasingly influential in informing decisions about humanitarian resource mobilisation at global level, and the geographical allocation and targeting of humanitarian resources within South Sudan. It is a key source of information for the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). It is widely used, indeed relied upon, by bilateral donors in their decision-making about humanitarian relief resources. The World Bank uses

FEWS NET's IPC-compatible analyses for releasing Early Response Financing (ERF), but also takes the IPC analysis into account to understand the absolute numbers of people in each IPC level and because of its consensus-based approach which is seen to add robustness. As the profile of the IPC has increased, so the stakes in reaching consensus have also become higher, contributing to the pressurised nature of the analysis process.

3 The 2020 IPC analysis process: what happened

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a factual overview of what happened during the IPC analysis process in November and December 2020, as well as contextual background. Analysis of achievements and challenges is provided in Chapter 4.

3.2 The context

While the challenges of reaching technical consensus on the IPC analysis in South Sudan in 2020 had been encountered before, undertaking the process during a global pandemic, with its associated restrictions on face-to-face meetings and workshops, was new. Much of the analysis was therefore done remotely, through online Zoom workshops.

Concerns about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on food insecurity and humanitarian need in South Sudan triggered a wave of warnings from international agencies, beginning in April 2020.⁷ Repeated outbreaks of conflict and communal violence in Jonglei and the Greater Administrative Pibor Area in 2020⁸ from February onwards intensified the warnings, for example from WFP and FAO, and from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).⁹ Severe flooding in July and August exacerbated the situation. In mid-August the GoSS declared a state of emergency in Jonglei State and Greater Pibor Administrative Area, with IGAD's backing. In September 2020, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, declared South Sudan to be at risk of conflict-induced famine and extreme food insecurity, noting that 'famine-like conditions are reported in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area' (Lowcock, 2020).

3.3 IPC analysis workshop

It was against this backdrop that the IPC analysis process began at national level in October 2020. (See Figure 3, which shows key dates in the IPC analysis timeline.) In advance of the analysis workshop, all data from the state-level analysis teams was entered into the IPC Information Support System (ISS), and a three-day IPC Level 1 training was completed. Both were supported by the GSU. The analysis

7 For example, in the Global Report on Food Crises (Food Security Information Network, 2020), and from Save the Children (2020).

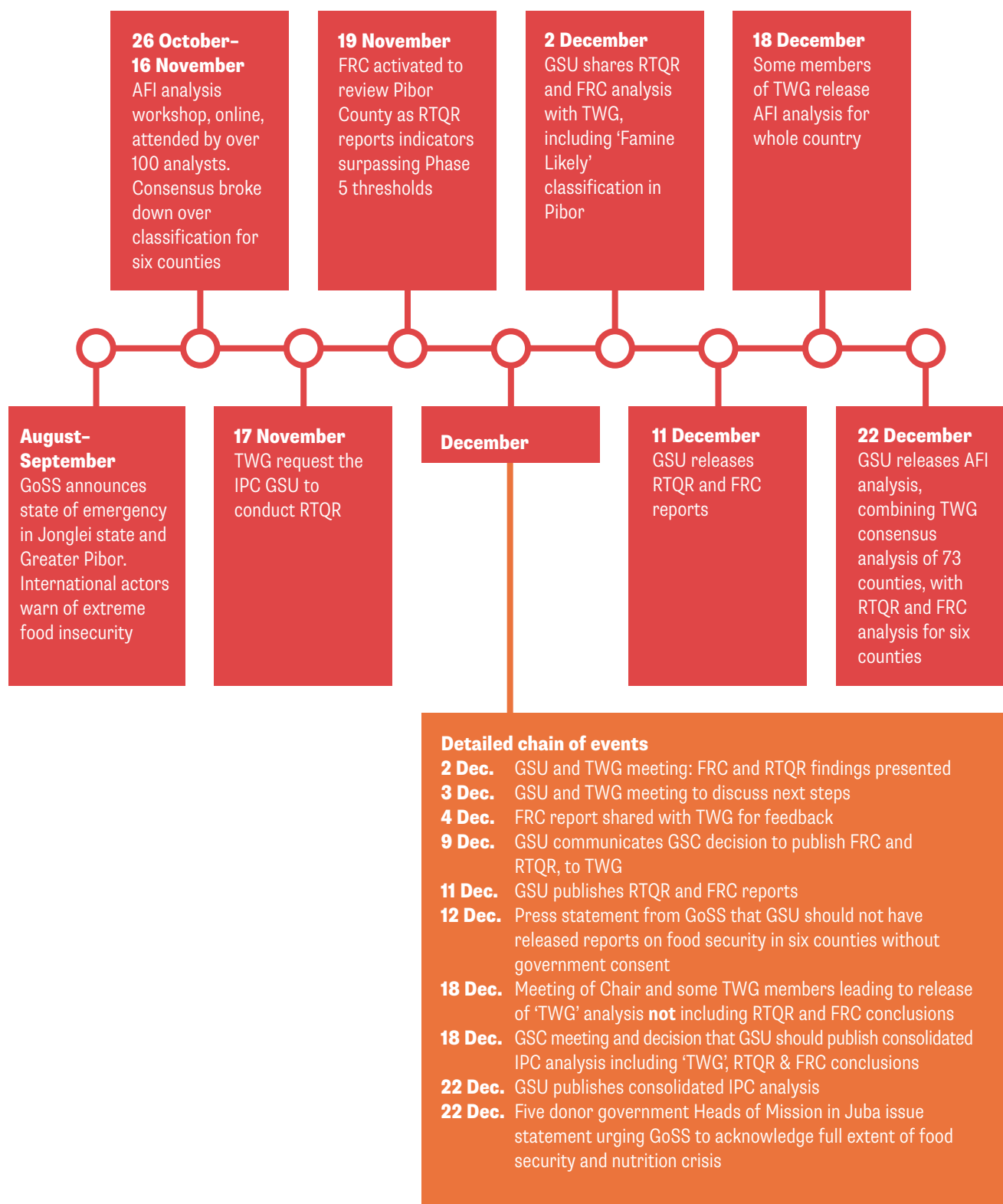
8 See, for example, UNMISS (2020) and The New Humanitarian (2020).

9 WFP and FAO warned that recurring violence in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area is 'crippling the food security and livelihoods of growing numbers of people' (WFP and FAO, 2020). ICRC warned that 'violence, floods leave thousands homeless and at-risk of malnutrition and disease' in Jonglei and Pibor (ICRC, 2020).

23 HPG commissioned report

workshop was officially launched in the last week of October, presided over by the TWG Chair from the MoAFS. When he was absent, the Co-Chair from WFP stepped in. The GSU IPC Regional Coordinator for East and Central Africa played the role of facilitation.

Figure 3 Key dates in the IPC analysis timeline



State-level teams had already collated their data and analysis. This was presented to the vetting process managed by the TWG at national level. For 73 counties in South Sudan there appeared to be broad technical consensus over the IPC classification and projections. However, by mid-November, after three weeks of deliberation, it became clear that technical consensus within the TWG¹⁰ could not be reached for six counties in terms of the estimated number of people in Phase 5 (Catastrophe). These counties were Akobo, Aweil South, Pibor, Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South. For most of these counties the state-level teams had been asked to re-examine their data in the vetting process, but this had not changed their conclusions.

3.4 Launch of Real-Time Quality Review process

According to IPC Protocols, when technical consensus cannot be reached a RTQR can be requested by the TWG, or the analysis teams or IPC partners can communicate directly with the GSU regarding their major concerns.¹¹ On 17 November the Chair of the TWG wrote to the GSU Programme Manager noting that there had been a breakdown in technical consensus for population estimates in Phase 5 for six counties, and requesting an RTQR. This was carried out during the latter half of November by a technical team of seven food security technical experts from the IPC's Global Partners, supported by two IPC acute malnutrition experts. The RTQR team reviewed the analysis worksheets and available evidence for the six counties. They also received additional information about humanitarian food assistance plans. Their analysis confirmed a likelihood of populations in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) in Akobo, Aweil South, Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South. This had been one point of contention within the TWG. Within a couple of days of reviewing the data, the RTQR team also confirmed that some indicators from Pibor county surpassed IPC Phase 5 thresholds, the second point of contention within the TWG. In line with IPC Protocols, convening the FRC was automatically triggered.¹²

10 Technical consensus is collective agreement within the TWG on the classification of a particular area based on analysis of the data submitted.

11 See Protocol 4.2 in the IPC Technical Manual 3.0 (www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/manual/IPC_Technical_Manual_3_Final.pdf).

12 In this case the Special Additional Protocols for IPC Famine Classification in the IPC Technical Manual 3.0.

3.5 Famine Review Committee

The five-member FRC,¹³ chaired by the GSU Programme Manager, reviewed the data and analysis for Pibor county. In accordance with the IPC Famine Guidance Note,¹⁴ they disaggregated their analysis for four payams in the western part of the county (estimated to contain around three-quarters of Pibor's population) from four payams in the eastern part of the county. They also accessed additional outcome evidence on nutrition in Pibor county, which had become available since the IPC analysis workshop in late October/early November. On this basis, and supported by additional interviews, they concluded that food security data in Pibor was presenting an alarming picture, although there were major gaps in the nutrition data. They concluded a classification of 'Famine Likely' for the four payams in western Pibor, for which data was more readily available. For the four payams in eastern Pibor, they concluded that 'essential pieces of evidence' were missing to be able to make a famine classification, but two of the four payams qualified for an IPC 'Risk of Famine' statement.

3.6 Communication of the FRC and RTQR reports

There followed a period of rapid and intense communication between the GSU and the TWG, as indicated in Figure 3. In early December, the RTQR and FRC findings were presented to all members of the TWG in South Sudan, so the FRC could answer questions or address concerns about their analysis. Afterwards, the RTQR and FRC reports were shared in full with TWG members. On 11 December, as per IPC protocols and as agreed by the GSC, the GSU published both the RTQR and FRC reports on their website. On the following day, the Under-Secretary of the MoAFS issued a press statement denouncing the GSU's release of the two reports without government consent. Heads of UN agencies in Juba participating in the IPC were called to a meeting at the Ministry that week.

3.7 Release of two different IPC analyses

A week later, on 18 December, a meeting was held between the Chair of the TWG and some, but not all, TWG members, following which the GoSS released an IPC analysis for South Sudan which included the IPC classification for 73 counties where there had been consensus, and data for six counties where there had not been consensus. The analysis concluded that 24,000 people were 'currently' in Phase 5 (Catastrophe) in Pibor county and Tonj North county. However, the numbers were low enough that

13 Daniel Maxwell, Henry J. Leir, Professor in Food Security, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Feinstein Int'l Center – Tufts University; Nicholas Haan, Faculty Chair, Global Grand Challenges, Singularity University; Oleg Bilukha, Associate Director of Science Emergency Response and Recovery Branch, Centre for Global Health/CDC; Peter Hailey, Director, Centre for Humanitarian Change; and Andrew Seal, Associate Professor in International Nutrition, Centre for Climate Change, Migration, Conflict, and Health, University College London – Institute for Global Health

14 This guidance note is intended to reveal where there may be pockets of higher severity food insecurity where famine conditions are present. It allows disaggregation to population sub-groups or areas where at least 10,000 people can be classified in 'Famine' or 'Famine Likely' if the minimum evidence parameters are met for those sub-groups or areas.

Phase 5 did not appear on the coloured IPC map (see Figures 4 and 5). The projections predicted this number would fall to 11,000 between December 2020 and March 2021, and rise again to 31,000 between April and July 2021: see Tables 2 to 4. The majority of TWG members had not endorsed this analysis.

Figure 4 Acute food insecurity, October–November 2020: consolidated TWG, RTQR and FRC analysis released by IPC GSU

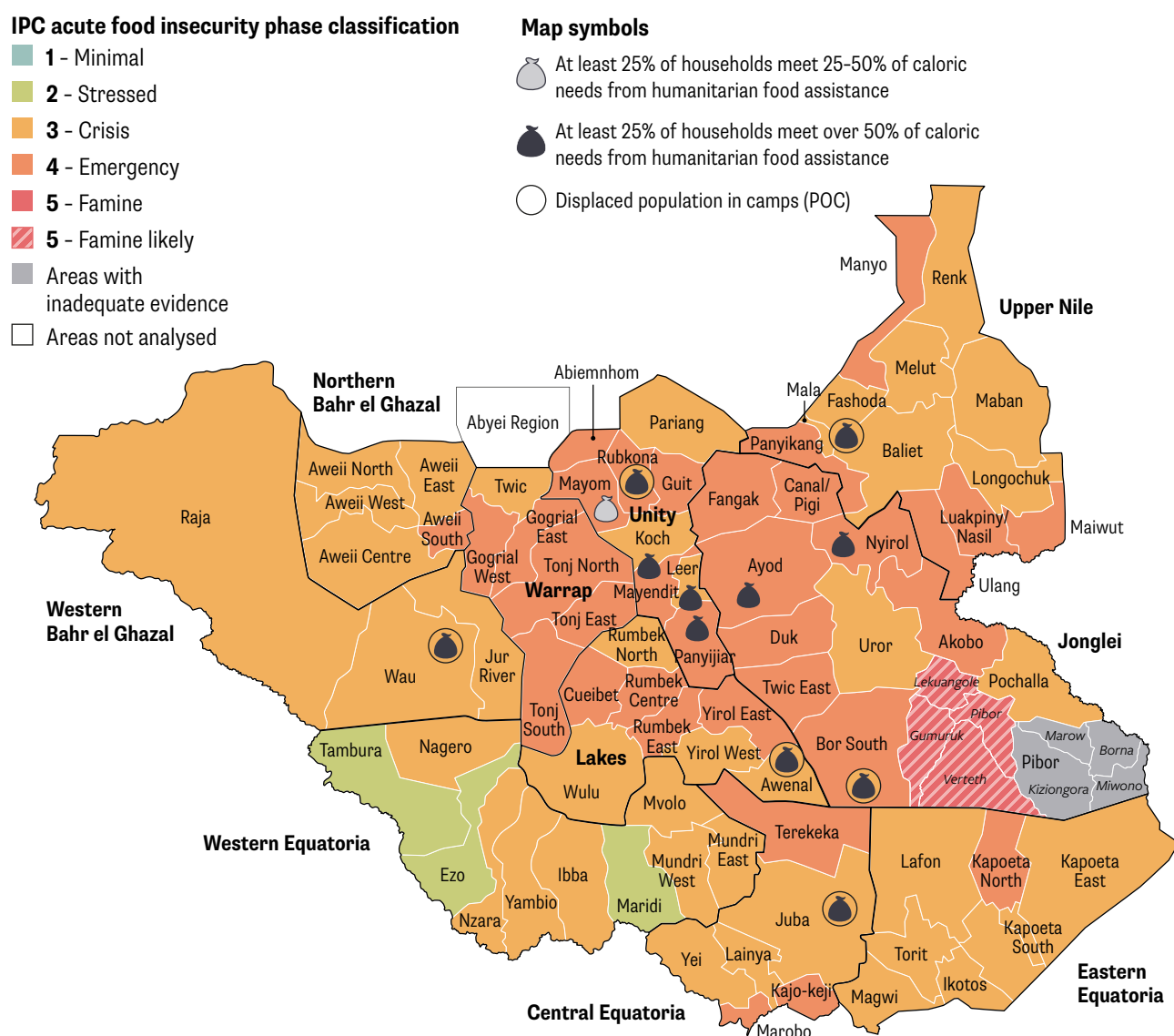


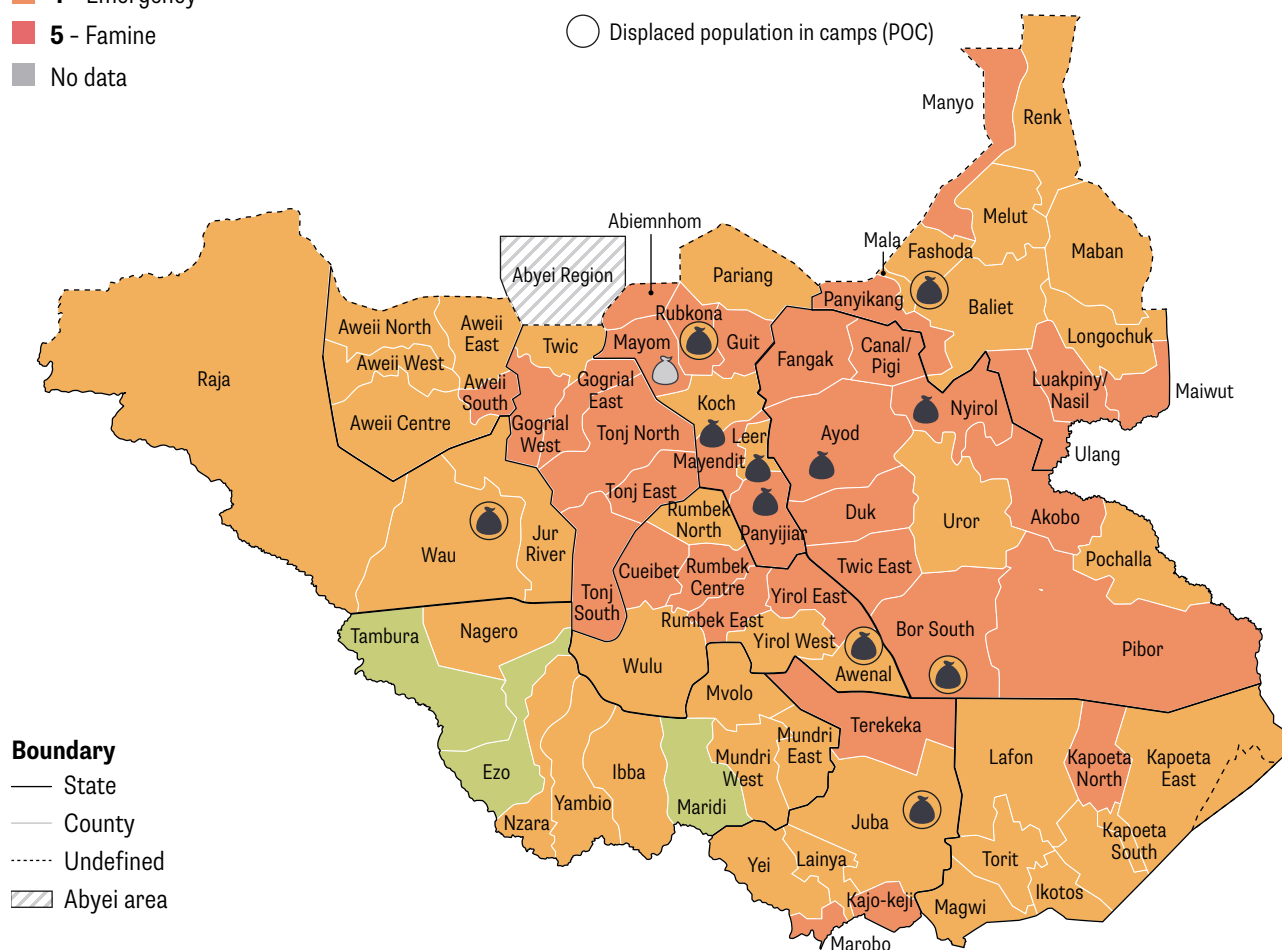
Figure 5 IPC acute food insecurity situation map, October–November 2020: TWG analysis only, released by GoSS

IPC acute food insecurity phase classification

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- No data

Map symbols

- At least 25% of households meet 25–50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
- At least 25% of households meet over 50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
- Displaced population in camps (POC)



Note: the boundaries and names and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations/FAO. Use at your own risk.

In response, also on 18 December, the GSC agreed that the GSU should publish a consolidated IPC analysis, containing the same classification for the 73 counties where there had been consensus, but with the FRC and RTQR's classification and population estimates for the six counties where the TWG in South Sudan had not reached consensus. This consolidated analysis was published on the GSU website, alongside the TWG's analysis, on 22 December. It showed 92,000 people 'currently' in Phase 5 (Catastrophe), predicting a steady rise to over 100,000 over the next six months, and 'Famine Likely' in the four payams in western Pibor (see Tables 2 to 4). The numbers were sufficiently high that this showed up as Phase 5 (Famine Likely) on the map.

Table 2 Comparison of population estimates in different IPC phases: 'current' acute food insecurity: October to November 2020

IPC phase classification	IPC analysis released by GoSS	Consolidated findings from IPC TWG and external reviews, released by GSU
Phase 5	24,000	92,000 (with 'Famine Likely' classification for some areas)
Phase 4	2,102,000	2,039,000
Phase 3	4,222,000	4,170,000
Phase 2	3,602,000	3,596,000
Phase 1	2,110,000	2,105,000

Table 3 Comparison of population estimates in different IPC phases: projections of acute food insecurity December 2020 to March 2021

IPC phase classification	IPC analysis released by GoSS	Consolidated findings from IPC TWG and external reviews, released by GSU
Phase 5	11,000	105,000
Phase 4	1,785,000	1,728,000
Phase 3	4,024,000	3,935,000
Phase 2	3,873,000	3,866,000
Phase 1	2,368,000	2,369,000

Table 4 Comparison of population estimates in different IPC phases: projections of acute food insecurity April to July 2021

IPC phase classification	IPC analysis released by GoSS	Consolidated findings from IPC TWG and external reviews, released by GSU
Phase 5	11,000	105,000
Phase 4	1,785,000	1,728,000
Phase 3	4,024,000	3,935,000
Phase 2	3,873,000	3,866,000
Phase 1	2,368,000	2,369,000

Source: IPC South Sudan Alert December 2020 (www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-31/en/)

Also on 22 December, the Heads of Mission of the IPC resource partners in Juba, plus Norway and the Netherlands, issued a joint statement calling on the GoSS ‘to acknowledge the full extent of the food insecurity and nutrition crisis in South Sudan as identified during the IPC process’ (US Embassy Juba, 2020).

4 What worked in the 2020 IPC analysis, and factors that contributed to a breakdown in consensus

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief description of what worked during the 2020 IPC analysis, and then analyses the range of factors that contributed to the breakdown in consensus, related to context, data, roles and responsibilities, quality review processes and institutional relationships and positions. It concludes with a summary of the Review Team's views on why consensus ultimately proved impossible.

4.2 What worked in the 2020 IPC analysis

There are four points to highlight:

1. Food security data collection still went ahead, albeit delayed, through the implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS) in August, despite the challenging context created by the global pandemic. The national IPC analysis process also went ahead, but took place predominantly on Zoom because of Covid regulations. (This adaptation to online working was repeated across a number of countries conducting IPC analyses in 2020.)
2. The IPC analysis at state level generally appears to have worked well, according to key informant interviews. This state-level analysis involved local government officers, national NGOs and representatives of international organisations. IPC protocols were observed, and the analysis was approached from a technical perspective. Where there were technical disagreements these were resolved through additional data collection or state-level ground-truthing, for example in Aweil South. It has been suggested that, in some states, there was a reluctance by some participants to highlight situations which were close to IPC Phase 5, and that this resulted in some degree of self-censorship. This has been difficult to verify.
3. As described in Chapter 3, aspects of the external quality control process were undertaken according to IPC protocols, specifically the request for and implementation of the RTQR when technical consensus broke down, and the convening of the FRC when the RTQR found that some indicators crossed the threshold for Phase 5 Famine.
4. Some respondents cited the consensus on 73 counties as a success. However, others more closely involved in the analysis have suggested that, despite the eventual agreement on these results consensus was not strong, and some participants still had concerns that some of the classifications agreed were lower than they should have been. As these concerns were of a lesser order than those related to the six contested counties, organisations decided not to raise them, believing it wiser to focus on what they believed to be more important issues.

4.3 Factors that contributed to breakdown in consensus

4.3.1 The 2020 context

2020 presented a working environment challenging by any standards, with the Covid-19 pandemic having an impact on working practices across the world. Conducting the IPC analysis almost exclusively online using Zoom was a new way of working, and many participants found it difficult to adjust. This was exacerbated by poor internet connectivity in many locations across the country. On occasion there were up to 100 people trying to dial in to a fragile Zoom link, which meant that sharing opinions and discussing differences openly and constructively was extremely difficult. On the positive side, remote working allowed more people to be involved in the discussions than would have been the case when they were conducted face-to-face. Some participants felt less intimidated working remotely.

Covid-19 restrictions had an impact on the quality and quantity of data gathering, although it is beyond the scope of this Review to establish the extent or implications of this. Travel restrictions limited teams' plans, reducing the number of locations they could visit and delaying their arrival. Collection methods also had to be amended to fit Covid-19 protocols, especially for nutrition data collection, which requires close contact. For example, rather than trained enumerators taking mid-upper-arm circumference (MUAC) measurements, these were taken by mothers while enumerators observed from several metres' distance.

The limitations imposed by Covid-19 contributed to the cancellation of the regular IPC mid-season update in May 2020, which would normally have been a staging post in understanding how the food security and nutrition situation had changed between annual processes.

Participants in the IPC process faced other constraints in addition to the impact of Covid-19. Abnormally heavy rains between July and December damaged infrastructure and meant that data-gathering teams were unable to travel to many flooded areas. This led to less data being gathered in key areas and greater pressure being placed on the information that was available.

4.3.2 Data gathering and use

Data gathering and quality

One of the principles underpinning the IPC process is that it is not a data-gathering exercise; it is instead an analysis process based on data taken from existing sources. However, the nature and quality of the data which is fed into the analysis is crucial. In South Sudan the IPC analysis is based on a number of data sources, including REACH multi-sector assessments, FEWS NET agroclimatology data and price projections, SMART surveys and regular monitoring data from national and international NGOs. There are mixed views on the data used for the 2020 process. These were expressed by various participants as technical judgements. However, during this review some respondents suggested that these opinions were motivated by what different stakeholders wanted to see in the conclusions of the process. Wider plurality of data sources could have eased some of the tensions within the data-gathering process, as

this would have provided a greater body of information to draw on. Indeed, the 2019 evaluation of the GSP recommended that high quality qualitative data be given equal weight to large-scale quantitative surveys which tend to dominate in IPC analyses, in South Sudan and elsewhere.¹⁵

The key source of food security data in South Sudan is the FSNMS, coordinated by the WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) team.¹⁶ Information gathered by other agencies is also incorporated into the process. The FSNMS has been regarded as a strong source of data for some years. In 2020 there was a significant time lag between FSNMS data being collected at the height of the lean season in August and the IPC analysis being undertaken in October and November. This led to different views on whether the data was still valid. Some felt that harvests during the intervening period would mean that conditions had improved, but others understood that some communities had been unable to plant and so their circumstances had deteriorated. In some areas, additional data was collected while the analysis process was underway, and this fed into the conclusions of the RTQR and FRC. Nevertheless, different interpretations of the impact of the time lag between FSNMS data collection and the IPC analysis contributed significantly to the breakdown in consensus.

Nutrition data submitted to the IPC analysis suffered from the reverse issue in that much of it was not available at the beginning of the process and it arrived during October and November. This was due to a combination of late collection and difficulties with methodology, and meant that the Nutrition Information Working Group was unable to meet to review the data before the IPC process began, as they would usually have done. In addition, the validity of some of the data was challenged on the basis that it had not been collected in line with recognised standards. Nutrition data is particularly important when a Phase 5 classification is possible, and so the impact of these issues was significant.

Challenges to the population estimates used in the analysis led to delays prior to the vetting process. These estimates are prepared by the Population Working Group and data sets are publicly available. After pushback from the GoSS on figures for parts of Jonglei and northern Bahr el Gazal, the population model was run again but arrived at the same original findings.

Humanitarian assistance

The IPC manual includes protocols for how humanitarian assistance should be taken into account during analysis, focusing on making provision for assistance which is planned for delivery or is likely to be provided. The protocols are clear that the process cannot validate the provision or impact of assistance. Confusion about how to take humanitarian assistance into account in the AFI analysis was not new in South Sudan,¹⁷ and in 2020 there were differences of opinion on which figures relating to assistance should be used to inform the analysis, and thus the impact that humanitarian intervention was having.

¹⁵ FAO (2019)

¹⁶ In 2020 the WFP VAM coordinated the FSNMS process as it has done since its inception. In 2021 the Chair of the IPC TWG has taken on a leadership role in the FSNMS.

¹⁷ See FAO (2019)

Ground-truthing

Ground-truthing (the verification of analytical conclusions by visiting affected locations) proved a contentious topic. Although there is general agreement that it can be helpful, there were arguments around whether ground-truthing exercises could be carried out in a way that was neutral and credible. Ground-truthing is particularly difficult in South Sudan, where conditions mean that there are often ‘pockets’ of people in neighbouring areas in very different circumstances.

Nevertheless, within state-level analyses there were occasions when sending teams to verify analysis proved helpful and indeed confirmed a patchwork of different conditions. This shed light on difficult decisions and enabled the group to reach a reasonable level of consensus.

At national level, however, different views on ground-truthing proved extremely divisive. Arguments focused on areas which were potentially classified in Phase 5. In the eyes of some it could have provided verification or contradiction of draft conclusions, while for others the limited examination provided by authority-managed, brief visits to easily accessible areas would not be a credible means of confirming or overturning conclusions reached by detailed analysis. The motivation of those proposing visits was also challenged. In the end no such expedition was carried out.

4.3.3 Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities within the IPC process are set out in the Technical Manual Version 3.0.¹⁸ However, how they are fulfilled is dependent on the understanding and conduct of those involved. In the case of South Sudan in 2020, the way different stakeholders conducted themselves often worked against the likelihood of achieving consensus.

The role of the Chair of the TWG is to provide leadership to the IPC process at national level. However, the chairing function in 2020 was experienced by many participants as divisive and controlling. The Chair was also reported to go beyond his remit by playing an active technical facilitation role. The Chair is a senior post-holder in a line ministry, the MoAFS, which has a significant interest in both the inputs to the process and its outcome, and this undermines his neutrality, and/or perceptions of neutrality. The style of the Chair was also widely felt to be inappropriate for the group in terms of the use of abusive language, and threatening treatment of some TWG participants. This is confirmed by recordings of the meeting. This style was mirrored by other government actors in the process. The amount of time allowed for discussion of issues where consensus was difficult to achieve was too short. One example which was mentioned frequently is that the final IPC analysis report which the GoSS proposed to publish on behalf of the TWG, in December 2020, was given only 15 minutes for discussion.

The GSU has a dual role: to provide technical support and facilitation for the IPC analysis process, and quality assurance oversight for the process as a whole. It is extremely difficult to carry out these two functions in parallel, as facilitation requires an impartial and objective approach, while quality assurance

18 See www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/manual/IPC_Technical_Manual_3_Final.pdf.

means applying judgement. As it became apparent that consensus was not being achieved, the GSU representative was placed in a position of challenging the Chair and other participants, which further exacerbated the situation.

The role of UN agencies in the IPC process is complex. They host the GSU, lead data gathering, act as Secretariat of the IPC in-country, play a significant role in the analysis and are key users of the final output. When consensus broke down, the key UN agencies and UN system leaders played very different roles. Some senior leaders intervened directly in the process with the objective of ensuring that technical standards were met; others sought to broker compromise among different actors in the process, while some took the view that the IPC is a technical process in which they have no role to play and declined to engage. These different approaches played against each other and caused further confusion and conflict.

The IPC overall is governed by the GSC. The GSC, composed of senior global officers representing the 15 IPC partner organisations, is responsible for strategically guiding and positioning the IPC globally. In the face of a seemingly intractable breakdown of consensus in South Sudan, the GSC intervened and agreed that the GSU should publish the RTQR, the FRC Report and the TWG report as the Consolidated Findings from the South Sudan IPC TWG and External Reviews. This resulted in the availability of documents which the GSC felt were technically accurate and protected the integrity of the IPC. In some cases this decision contradicted GSC members' positions in Juba, adding to confusion. It was also perceived by GoSS as undermining their ownership of the IPC.

This was the point at which the choice between maintaining a globally recognised 'gold standard' or prioritising the view of a national government became a stark one. The decision of the GSC was taken after significant discussion and has set an important but challenging precedent.

Despite the difficulties arising from how roles and responsibilities were discharged in 2020, it should be noted that the majority of organisations and individuals in the process contributed to constructive discussions and analysis and demonstrated commitment to achieving consensus.

4.3.4 Quality review processes

Several actors in the TWG, including the GoSS, disagreed with the RTQR conclusion that the number of people in Phases 4 and 5 in six counties was significantly higher than the TWG's figure. This led to the publication of a TWG report on 18 December which differed from the RTQR published on 11 December.

There were different levels of support for the conclusions of the FRC within the TWG, and in some cases they felt that their judgement was being questioned. The FRC had access to new data, which the TWG had not seen, gathered from a recent vaccination campaign. FRC members were confident that this data was valid, and used it in their analysis, although the data had not been approved for use by

the GoSS, which caused further tension. Splitting the payams within Pibor into two groups, concluding with a ‘Famine Likely’ classification for the payams for which they had the soundest data, also caused friction, although it was in line with IPC protocols as described above.

When the FRC presented their conclusions to the TWG they were respected by most participants and, had the analysis process been handled differently, it is possible that consensus could have been achieved. However, the GoSS refused to accept the FRC report. The FAO country office attempted to broker a compromise which would lead to a single TWG report, although this would have been at odds with the FRC conclusions.

The publication of two different IPC analyses, as described above, was the final confirmation of the breakdown in consensus. The view of the GSC was that it was essential for the credibility of the IPC process to publish the RTQR and FRC reports and to ensure that humanitarian decision-makers had access to information which they believed was correct and maintained the integrity of the IPC.

4.3.5 Institutional relationships and positions

The IPC is primarily a means of providing a snapshot of the severity of food insecurity at national and sub-national levels. It has become a ‘gold standard’ for doing so through setting high technical standards and ways of working. The GSP of the IPC includes an objective to ‘institutionalise’ the IPC by embedding its processes in government institutions and encouraging collective ownership at national level. These two aspects of the IPC may sometimes be at odds with each other. Institutionalisation takes time, often requires compromise in the medium term and may not be appropriate in conflict-affected countries. As with all long-term goals there are compromises and trade-offs between the short and long term.

In South Sudan in 2020, key international agencies prioritised either meeting the ‘gold standard’ or the ‘institutionalisation’ objective, which led them to adopt very different approaches to the IPC process as a whole, and consensus-building in particular. For example, WFP prioritised independent technical standards, while FAO in Juba focused on institutional relationships. Some were prepared to compromise to secure agreement, while others were not.

Throughout the IPC process, the GoSS’s position was that the number of people, if any at all, in IPC Phase 5 was much lower than the analysis suggested. This was supported by some government analysts’ interpretation of the data and assertions that conflict was not a significant factor. This interpretation was not shared by other analysts in the TWG and was a key contributor to the breakdown in consensus.

FAO, WFP and UNICEF are global partners in the IPC and key players in the process in South Sudan. In 2020 they adopted very different positions on the IPC analysis and the breakdown in consensus. In some cases, people from the same UN agency expressed different views in their headquarters and in Juba. On several occasions, these conflicting views were expressed publicly, appearing to deliberately

undermine each other. UNICEF in Juba challenged the nutritional analysis while their headquarters colleagues did not. The lack of a single, coherent UN position on the IPC process and outputs contributed to and underlined the breakdown in consensus.

The IPC's three resource partners – USAID, FCDO and the EU – all have a significant interest in the IPC and a commitment to ensuring its efficient and effective implementation. They do not have a formal role within the process, although they have fielded representatives to observe the IPC analysis process in previous years. The resource partners were aware of the difficulties within the 2020 process and the impact that this could have. Their position on the periphery of the discussion, and the lack of any real means to effect change, meant that they were unable to bring positive influence to bear. Nevertheless, they approached various actors and offered support to resolve some of the arguments and challenges, but this offer was not taken up by senior UN leadership.

The national and international NGO community has always been a significant group within the IPC process. These agencies contribute data and understanding of the situation on the ground and are active participants in the analysis at state and national levels. In 2020, although NGOs participated at a technical level, throughout they seem to have played a relatively low-key role in the interpretation, analysis and communication of the data. In some cases, this was related to the tone of the analysis workshop, perceived intimidation and fear of repercussions for their overall position in South Sudan, but it meant that key IPC partners contributed less to the IPC analysis than they have done in the past.¹⁹

4.4 Consequences for consensus-building

The combination of the above factors meant that consensus-building was impossible in the IPC process in South Sudan in 2020. The review team concludes that there was:

- an absence of pre-existing good faith. This had been largely undermined by a history of previous disagreements and difficulties;
- lack of neutral leadership – the style of leadership did not allow space and time for all opinions to be expressed and taken into account without judgement;
- no clear definition of roles and responsibilities. Even when the structure of the process was clear, different interpretations led to confusion;
- lack of willingness to listen and revise views based on evidence in a respectful environment; and
- lack of agreement on the priorities within the wider IPC process, whether it was to deliver a process that complied with the global 'gold standard', or to build national ownership.

¹⁹ There is also an ongoing discussion at the global level about how international NGO members of the GSP could be better resourced to play a more active role. Resource constraints are a barrier to NGOs making staff members available for an IPC analysis process that takes place over a number of weeks.

5 Consequences of consensus on the IPC analysis breaking down

5.1 Consequences for South Sudan

5.1.1 Humanitarian response

The primary purpose of the IPC analysis in South Sudan is to provide accurate and timely information to inform humanitarian decision-making. Operational agencies already have contextual information as a result of their presence on the ground and they need to plan in medium- to long-term timeframes. The classification of specific areas in IPC Phase 4 or 5 does not usually provide radically new information or immediately trigger large quantities of resources which would otherwise not be available. However, the IPC is used by decision-makers and is an important voice in understanding and planning for trends in humanitarian assistance.

There is general agreement that the humanitarian response in South Sudan in 2020 and 2021 was lacklustre, and the overall judgement is that it was too little, too late. A key question for this Review is whether the lack of consensus within the TWG in South Sudan in 2020 contributed directly to this gap in the quality of response. The answer is, broadly speaking, no. The quality of the response was the result of a much wider combination of factors. The results of the RTQR and the FRC were available to and respected by most decision-makers in mid-December, and they confirmed what many organisations already knew. However, the concerted view of donors and large operational agencies is that the time taken to complete the IPC analysis contributed to delays in the response. Key actors were unable to reference the IPC classifications in their communications, and the contradictory analyses undermined efforts to communicate and advocate clearly about the severity of food insecurity in South Sudan. There are different views on the impact the absence of clear communications had on the response. Some individuals and agencies feel that it would have made little difference, while others see it as a key missing link in the chain between situation assessment and scaled-up action.

Nevertheless, more resources were made available by some donors in response to the 'Famine Likely' classification. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) accessed a further €33 million, and in July 2021 the EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships decided to reallocate €20 million under the EU Trust Fund for emergencies in Africa to address famine risks in IPC 4 and 5 locations in South Sudan. FCDO made available £10 million from the food crisis reserve, most of which was to be used in priority counties. The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) made a third reserve allocation of \$13 million in December 2020, and a further allocation of \$10 million was made from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in April 2021. The SSHF made a \$50 million first standard allocation in June 2021, with \$28.5 million of this allocated to IPC 4 and 5 areas (these funds were only disbursed in August 2021). Most of these resources were targeted in support of areas classified as having people in IPC Phases 4 and 5. Several NGOs reported that, despite these allocations,

it was difficult both to access funds and to raise interest in South Sudan among donors. They attributed this to a number of factors, including lack of clarity on the severity of the situation, which would normally have been provided by the IPC.

5.1.2 The independence of the IPC process

The decision by the GSC to agree to the GSU publishing the RTQR, the FRC Report and the Consolidated Findings of the TWG and External Reviews, in contradiction to the government's view, arguably safeguarded the independence of the IPC process and its integrity as a global standard. This decision made available the analysis and classifications agreed through the recognised IPC quality assurance process.

However, the absence of government authorisation of the reports issued by the GSU, and the subsequent publication of a TWG report by the GoSS, has demonstrated the depth of the breakdown in consensus. It leaves unresolved the issues which led to the publication of the two analyses, and it remains unclear whether this was the result of genuine technical disagreement or politicisation of the process. In the Review Team's judgement, it was a combination of both. Some analysts in South Sudan have continued to question the 'Famine Likely' classification in western Pibor because of lack of visible evidence of famine at the end of 2020 and into 2021. Others have cited indicators of extreme food insecurity, which led them to conclude that 'Famine Likely' conditions would persist through 2021. It has also been reported that discussion in the IPC analysis workshop of evidence of Phase 5 was closed down prematurely because it did not fit the narrative that South Sudan was 'now at peace'. These factors, combined with the tension and broken relationships within the TWG, meant that a single, independent analysis was an impossible outcome.

5.1.3 Implications for 2021

The breakdown in consensus and publication of two analyses in 2020 has undoubtedly had grave implications for the conduct of the 2021 IPC process in South Sudan. There has been a significant breakdown in trust among participants, and there are grave reservations as to how functional working relationships may be re-established to ensure a credible process. This goes not only for relationships between the GoSS and international actors, but also among some UN agencies. Some of these fractured relationships are a result of institutional positions, but some relate to individual personalities.

If trust is to be rebuilt and lead to a credible process in 2021, it is important that all parties recognise their role in the breakdown in consensus, and are prepared to make changes to personnel, approaches and behaviour. To enable the 2021 process to run smoothly, there must be clarification of roles and responsibilities, reaffirmation of the Rules of Engagement for the IPC in South Sudan, agreed in 2019, and procedures to hold participating agencies to account. The latter is particularly important given the failure of the Rules of Engagement to lead to a conducive working environment for the IPC thus far. More thought needs to be given to how the process will be run, requiring some level of senior independent oversight. Proposals for how this may be achieved are set out in the recommendations of this Review.

5.2 Consequences for the IPC globally

The IPC as an analytical process is still widely respected, and its reputation as the ‘gold standard’ for providing a snapshot of food insecurity at national and sub-national levels remains strong. Respondents involved in this Review were unanimous that they wish the IPC to continue playing the role that it has grown into in recent years. Some decision-makers, especially at the global level, were very clear about how they depend upon a credible and functioning IPC process, and the breakdown in consensus in South Sudan in 2020 has caused considerable concern. Indeed, the history of the IPC in South Sudan over the last few years, combined with recent experiences in other conflict-affected and fragile states, has begun to cast doubt over how the IPC should be managed in such contexts.

6 Concluding reflections on the design of the IPC model

There is widespread acknowledgement that the IPC process in South Sudan is broken as a result of the bruising and contentious 2020 experience. This chapter reflects on and summarises some fundamental design flaws in the IPC model, thrown into sharp relief by the 2020 breakdown of the process in South Sudan, the culmination of a number of years of disputed and combative IPC analysis processes.

First, the conflicting objectives in the GSP of maintaining the integrity of an independent and objective IPC analysis, and institutionalising the IPC as a locally owned, government-led process have long been apparent.²⁰ This is at the heart of the breakdown in the 2020 South Sudan IPC analysis process, whereby national government claimed ownership of the analysis process, yet stakeholders of the GSP saw the global partnership as the custodian of a global standard. When these two positions became incompatible, as in the 2020 analysis, the model broke down.

Second, although the IPC analysis is predominantly a technical process, the model of establishing the IPC at national level implicitly assumes that information on food security is ‘neutral’ and approached apolitically. This is evident from how the objective of institutionalisation has been approached, embedding it in government institutions without any particular checks or balances apart from technical quality review protocols. There is a large body of research and evidence documenting how food security information can be highly political, and that information is power. Some of that research and evidence relates directly to South Sudan, demonstrating how evidence is part of the political domain in conflict-related crises.²¹ This has implications for the IPC model. Rather than assuming away political interest and influence, how can the space for a technical IPC analysis process be protected, as free as possible from political compromise?

Third, as the IPC has become increasingly influential, nationally, regionally and globally, the model has not been updated to keep pace. The GSC and the GSU have developed an iterative learning process for keeping the technical aspects of the IPC under review, as demonstrated by the revisions to the Technical Manual. But the governance structures and management arrangements key to promoting the integrity of the IPC have been left behind. Without addressing this dimension, the hard-earned reputation of the IPC is likely to be eroded by increasingly frequent challenges in difficult and complex environments.

Fourth, and relatedly, while the technical protocols of the IPC analysis process are clearly articulated, with well-defined quality control processes and roles, the roles and conditions required for consensus-building are not.

The future of the IPC, as a global ‘gold standard’ and as a valued means of reaching a single analysis of food insecurity in South Sudan, depends on addressing each of these issues.

20 Buchanan-Smith et al. (2017); FAO (2019)

21 See Maxwell et al. (2018)

7 The way forward: recommendations

7.1 Introduction

One of the objectives of this Independent Review is to recommend how to strengthen and ensure the quality, effectiveness and transparency of future IPC processes in South Sudan and globally. This is crucial to ensure the future credibility of the IPC. A number of commentators have described this as a ‘reset’ of the IPC in South Sudan.

The stakes in resetting the IPC are high. If it fails as a model and as an approach for analysing food insecurity, the implications are serious: for the mobilisation and allocation of humanitarian resources, for early response financing (for example through the World Bank), and for longer-term investment to address chronic food insecurity. Failure to address the issues around the IPC in South Sudan has wider implications for the IPC as a whole. South Sudan presents one of the world’s deepest and most protracted crises; if the IPC doesn’t work here then it has implications for the process more broadly. It is likely that similar situations will arise in other contexts where government is party to the conflict, for example Ethiopia. The IPC is also a key example of the state of coordination among key actors in the international community. It is an opportunity for key players to come together and work towards common objectives. If, as happened in South Sudan in 2020, they are unable to do so, this is a key indicator of deeper issues among humanitarian agencies.

The 2020 IPC analysis process reached a tipping point, not only in the breakdown of consensus but also in the breakdown of relationships and trust between participating organisations. If some of the fundamental flaws in the IPC model and in the process are not addressed immediately, the 2021 IPC analysis process will face the same challenges, with a high likelihood that consensus will once again break down, and the model could be broken beyond repair.

The following recommendations are in two parts. The first set of recommendations has been developed to enable the 2021 IPC analysis process to proceed as quickly and smoothly as possible, and to avoid the breakdown experienced in 2020. The second set of recommendations provides a way forward for the medium to longer term. Both sets of recommendations are accompanied by a clear plan and process to ensure implementation. This will require a redoubling of institutional effort from all stakeholder parties, at both national and global levels. This means support and engagement at a senior level, as well as dedicated investment from the IPC resource partners.

7.2 Recommendations for implementing the IPC in South Sudan in 2021

The 2021 IPC process is an important opportunity to rebuild trust and functioning working relationships, and to deliver a single, agreed analysis. The following actions are recommended for immediate application to address some of the most striking issues from 2020 and ensure, as far as possible, a fair and credible process in 2021. These recommendations are aligned with those proposed for the medium to long term, and in some cases will provide a sound platform for their implementation.

R1 Ensure a clear distinction between the IPC analysis and the processes for gathering data

The IPC process does not involve data-gathering, although it is dependent on the timely availability of independent, good-quality data. It is essential that the TWG focuses on its core business, which is to analyse and classify food security and malnutrition conditions as accurately as possible.

A clear timetable should be agreed between data-gathering organisations and the IPC Co-Chairs and Chairs of the relevant working groups for the submission of data for the analysis process. Disagreement on this point threatens to derail the 2021 process, and so it is essential that it is resolved.

R2 Ensure that there is clear definition and separation of the chairing, facilitation and quality assurance roles throughout the IPC process

In order to ensure a clear distinction between these important functions, the GSC should, drawing on the 2019 Rules of Engagement and after consulting with the GoSS:

- Clarify what is expected of the roles of the Co-Chairs and Facilitator of the TWG, and how they differ from providing quality assurance. In particular, specific tasks may be allocated to each Co-Chair role to ensure balance of responsibilities.
- Assign separate individuals for the facilitation and quality assurance roles. If possible, they should both be based in Juba for the duration of the IPC analysis and vetting process.

R3 Appoint independent oversight of the IPC 2021 process

For 2021 two senior individuals should be appointed to work together to provide oversight of the IPC process in South Sudan. These will not be full-time roles, and their primary purpose is to promote trust among stakeholders and act as an ‘elder’ to the process.

They will oversee the conduct of the process of the IPC but play no role in the technical discussions. Their role is to act as a point of contact and, if necessary, a mediator among those involved. They will be supported by one or more of the IPC resource partners in South Sudan. It is important that such individuals have the trust of as many participants as possible. They do not need to be trained analysts, but they need to have experience of running multi-agency initiatives and processes.

Options for fulfilling the IPC oversight role include:

- A representative of a regional organisation
- A representative of a non-participating UN agency
- A representative of a non-participating international organisation
- A representative of a resource partner.

Two senior individuals could be drawn from any of those stakeholder groups.

R4 Establish a mechanism for participants in the process to register concerns confidentially

The GSC, supported by resource partners, should establish a confidential mechanism for participants to register concerns about the conduct of the IPC process. The recipients of concerns should be the two individuals appointed to provide oversight (Recommendation 3 above). It will be their judgement as to how to handle any concerns raised and they will not be accountable for any issues being addressed; this will rest with the organisation involved in any concern, or with the Co-chairs of the IPC at national level.

R5 In the event of a lack of consensus or a potential Phase 5 classification, agree the timetable for the quality assurance process and its possible outcomes before any action is taken

In the event of lack of consensus or potential phase 5 classification, it is important that all those involved in the IPC process are clear what will happen next, and when they will be invited to contribute or comment.

If the IPC quality assurance process is initiated, a clear timetable for the presentation and discussion of its findings and the publication of its results should be agreed and shared by the GSC before it begins. This should apply to both the RTQR and the FRC.

7.3 Proposed approach for implementing recommendations for the 2021 IPC Process in South Sudan

Recognising the need the immediate recommendations to be implemented before the 2021 IPC process in South Sudan begins, and respecting the importance of collective ownership of these actions, it is proposed that a small 2021 task force be established to agree and oversee preparations for the process. This should be made up of representatives from:

- The GoSS
- Two UN agencies
- Two NGOs (national and international)
- Resource partners
- IPC GSU.

Task force members should be senior representatives at a country level who are not directly involved in the IPC technical analysis. The task force will be supported by a two-person secretariat, a coordinator and an administrator.

7.4 Recommendations for the medium to longer term

7.4.1 Basic premise

While the IPC analysis at national level is ‘owned’ by those organisations participating in the TWG in South Sudan, the IPC is also a global standard. The IPC analysis process should not be allowed to proceed at any cost, and must be held to account as a global standard. As a last resort, the integrity of the IPC must be protected if it is to remain credible and trusted, nationally and internationally.

R6 Adapt the IPC model in South Sudan to address the recurrent and fundamental flaws and contradictions in the IPC model

This adaptation should be rolled out as a two-year pilot to inform the future development of the IPC in other conflict-affected and fragile states, closely monitored and adapted over that two-year period. The challenges of achieving a technically driven consensual IPC analysis in a country where conflict is one of the key drivers of food insecurity are not unique to South Sudan, although the particular dynamics and the way consensus-building plays out or is disrupted are context-specific. The recommendations below should therefore be implemented and tested in the South Sudan context, and the learning applied to adapting the IPC model in other conflict-affected contexts. This pilot approach should be monitored on an ongoing basis, and done in tandem with gathering information on lessons learned in other countries with similar challenges arising from fragility and conflict.

A review should be carried out after two years to assess if the pilot has been successful. If it is judged not to have been, then the GSC will assess whether continuation of the IPC in South Sudan is viable. Indicators of success for this review will need to be developed as part of the commissioning process. However, it is anticipated that implementation and change in line with these recommendations will be at the heart of this, together with analysis of the number of times that the red lines have been crossed, as set out in Box 3.

R7 Protect the space for the IPC technical analysis process in South Sudan to be carried out free from political and institutional influence

Recognising the inherently political nature of food security information, ways of protecting the space to ensure the IPC process is driven by technical data analysed by qualified and experienced technicians must be applied. This requires strengthening the governance arrangements of the IPC to protect the neutrality of the technical analysis process, and adapting how it is managed and held to account, as follows:

1. Elevate the governance of the IPC at national level (i.e. two co-Chairs) to a higher level of seniority than is currently the case

Joint governance, between government and the international community, must be elevated to a level commensurate with the significance and influence of the IPC, and to ensure political considerations and interests are discussed and negotiated at a higher level than by technicians during the analysis process, as is the case at present. On the government side this means elevating governance to a department or office that plays a convening role and is not a sectoral line ministry (e.g. NBS, which used to play the key convening role in the IPC, or the Office of the President). On the international side this means elevating governance to the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. The Co-Chairs will be guardians of the process of the analysis, and as such do not require a technical background or training. This recommendation will require significant diplomatic effort to implement, and consistent monitoring by resource partners and the IPC SC, with clear definition of sanctions if the revised structure does not deliver the required results.

2. Strengthen the management of the IPC process in-country

As Secretariat of the IPC TWG, FAO manages the process in-country. In accordance with the multi-partner nature of the IPC, and to ensure it is not overly identified with one UN agency, a sub-committee should be formed at national level, comprising members of the GSC (including IGAD as the regional body, plus representatives of UN agencies and NGOs). This sub-committee should be charged with overall management of the IPC process in South Sudan, including responsibility for organising the analysis workshops, logistics and financial management.

3. Reinforce oversight of the IPC with clear accountability

This means:

- IPC resource partners should assign at least one senior official, fully conversant with the IPC process, to be present as an observer during the entire IPC analysis process at national level, with the authority to raise any concerns about the process to the in-country IPC governance level to the GSU and/or to all resource partners, depending on the seriousness of the concern.
- The GSU should assign a member of their quality control team to be present as an observer during the entire IPC analysis process at national level, with the authority to raise the alarm if red lines are crossed, both in terms of technical analysis and the consensus-building process (see Figure 6).

R8 Establish clear protocols and quality-control mechanisms for building technical consensus in the IPC analysis

Consensus-building is the essence of the IPC analysis process. Clear processes and protocols for consensus-building during an IPC analysis process must be developed, to complement the existing technical IPC protocols. These protocols should include quality control, and checks and sanctions if the protocols are breached:

1. The GSU should be tasked with developing protocols for consensus-building, in consultation with key IPC stakeholders in South Sudan, and with input from global stakeholders, and to identify red lines that, if crossed, would trigger quality-control action.
2. If the red lines are crossed irrevocably the IPC analysis process should be stopped and alternative ways found to assess food insecurity. This could include using FSNMS and other food insecurity data to inform the HNO and HRP, and the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) cluster conducting a partial and compatible IPC analysis process for geographical areas where food insecurity is regarded as particularly severe.
3. There should be a confidential and anonymous mechanism for individuals to raise concerns about how the IPC process is being conducted, for example if they are subjected to attempts to block their participation, or subjected to threatening behaviour. In developing the mechanism, it will be helpful to draw upon similar initiatives.²²
4. Dedicated training on consensus-building should be offered to key participants in the IPC process, with reference to the Rules of Engagement.

Box 3 illustrates what some of the red lines would look like, how concerns about red lines being breached would be raised, and who takes action when the red lines are breached, including stopping the IPC process if this is regarded as irrevocably compromising the integrity of the IPC process.

Box 3 Applying red lines to consensus-building

Essential processes in consensus-building include:

- Plurality of participation in the IPC analysis process, so all major stakeholder groups are present and actively engaged
- Data feeding into the IPC analysis is shared in the interests of transparency
- The analysis is based on evidence not opinions, and follows IPC technical protocols, e.g. on convergence of evidence
- All participants in the process have equal opportunity to contribute and express their views
- If they are not followed or respected then this constitutes crossing a 'red line'.

²² For example, the Core Humanitarian Standard Complaints Mechanism and the various safeguarding reporting mechanisms which have been developed within organisations.

It should require two TWG members, or the two oversight observers, to signal that one or more red lines have been crossed. In the first instance this should be raised with the Co-Chairs of the IPC to address and resolve. If this does not achieve resolution, it should be taken to the GSU and GSC, who will make the final decision on whether the integrity of the IPC analysis process has been irrevocably compromised and therefore should be terminated.

R9 Clearly define and distinguish roles and responsibilities in the IPC analysis process, at national and global levels

At national level the following roles must be clearly defined and distinguished from each other, as follows:

1. **Chair of the IPC analysis process, to be held by two senior representatives, from government and from the international community respectively, as described above, with the following functions:**
 - initiating and launching each IPC analysis process
 - ensuring that all TWG members attend a workshop on consensus-building and the Rules of Engagement before the analysis process begins, and are requested and required to sign up to the Rules of Engagement and respect of IPC protocols at the beginning of each IPC analysis process
 - overseeing the analysis process, addressing issues and challenges as they arise
 - receiving the completed IPC analysis from the TWG, and releasing it promptly
2. **Facilitator of the national IPC analysis process, to be selected by the GSU from a pool of independent, experienced and skilled facilitators, trained to IPC Level 3.**

It is recognised that the limited number of people with IPC Level 3 training may make this practically challenging initially, but enforcing the basic principle of division of responsibilities is critical to the effective working of the IPC process. This role would carry out the following functions:

 - clarifying the ground-rules for building consensus for all participating analysts
 - ensuring neutrality and adherence to IPC protocols
 - facilitating the process from data collation, through vetting to the final analysis, ensuring there is equal opportunity for analysts to express their views through balanced and meaningful contributions, adequate time for technical debates, and for reaching conclusions.²³
3. **Responsibility for quality assurance.**

Technical quality assurance to be overseen by a member of the GSU monitoring the IPC analysis process to ensure it is:

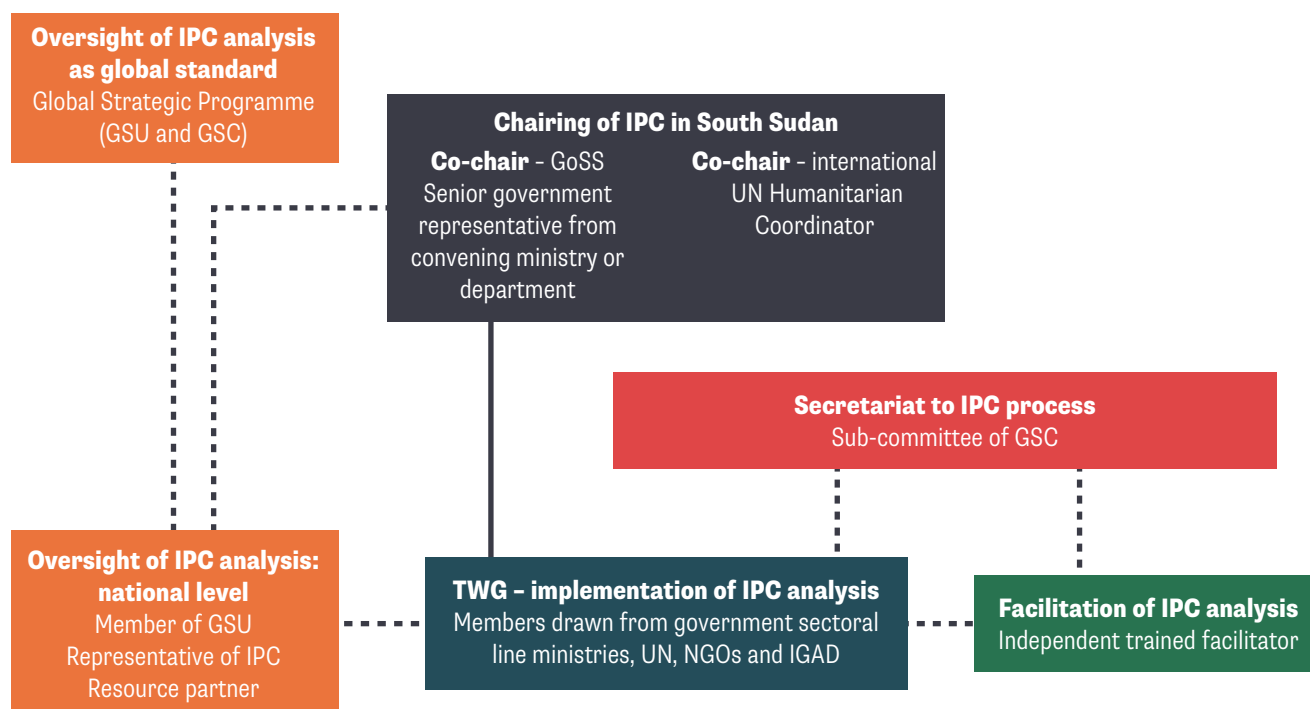
 - Following current protocols for triggering an RTQR, whereby any member of the TWG can request an RTQR when consensus breaks down

23 This draws on the South Sudan IPC TWG Rules of Engagement of 21 January 2019.

- Following current protocols for triggering the FRC process whereby the FRC is convened whenever indicators cross thresholds for Phase 5 Famine (NB. If this does not happen automatically as per IPC protocols, the GSU member can provide the trigger)
- Following protocols on issues of process, especially consensus-building. See Box 3 on how this should be managed

Figure 6 presents the proposed adapted IPC model for South Sudan.

Figure 6 Proposed adapted IPC model for South Sudan



R10 Reinforce and protect the integrity of the IPC as a global standard with clear and effective measures

If the IPC is to maintain and develop the status and influence it carries as the global ‘gold standard’ for analysing food insecurity, then ways of ensuring and protecting the integrity of the IPC process must be clarified and bolstered and the GSU must be able to draw on the support of the international humanitarian community to apply these. Actions are as follows:

- The independent authority of the GSP²⁴ as custodian of the IPC must be promoted, accepted and boosted. This in turn requires the following:
 - The GSU must be independent from, and perceived as independent of, any single partner agency in the GSP.
 - The GSP and its quality-control processes must adequately reflect the multi-stakeholder partnership of the IPC in terms of representation and engagement of different stakeholder groups in those processes, for example the active engagement of regional bodies and NGOs as well as UN partners.
 - The regional presence of the GSU must be boosted, including the regional resources and networks it draws upon (e.g. to be part of the FRC) to boost its credibility as custodian of the IPC.
 - Within the international humanitarian community, the GSU must have the seniority, status and resources to perform this custodian role.

7.5 Proposed approach for implementing medium to longer-term recommendations

Although the IPC is a multi-stakeholder initiative, responsibility must be clearly assigned to implement the recommendations of this review. Thus, the following approach is proposed. The multi-stakeholder task force at national level is also an opportunity to rebuild trust and relationships as an adapted IPC model is developed.

1. A multi-stakeholder task force be set up at national level

Membership to include senior representatives (at a more senior level than TWG representatives) from:

- IPC resource partners
- UN agencies
- NGOs
- GoSS

24 This refers specifically to the two key structures of the GSP: the GSU and the GSC.

With the clearly defined task of following through on the recommendations that apply to national level:

2. A multi-stakeholder task force be set up at global level

Membership to include representatives from:

- GSC
- GSU
- IPC resource partners (headquarters level)

With the clearly defined task of following through on recommendations targeted at global level.

3. A coordination/support team be established to support implementation of the recommendations

The Review Team recommends that:

- This should be a task- and time-defined team of two people, one of whom should be senior, to be based in South Sudan, funded and recruited by IPC resource partners.
- The team's role will be to support both task forces and ensure coordination between them.
- There should be dedicated support to the team for coordination and administration purposes.

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25 While over 80 documents were consulted during the review, these are the documents referenced in the report.

Appendix 1 Purpose and membership of the Reference Group

The Reference Group was established as a voluntary body to play an advisory role for the independent review. Its overall purpose was to provide a forum for representatives of the main IPC stakeholder groups in South Sudan (and some key stakeholder groups at the global level) to engage with the Independent Review Team throughout the review process, and thus to foster broad ownership of the review and take-up of its findings and recommendations. However, the Reference Group did not have sign-off authority on the review.

Specifically, the Reference Group aimed to:

1. Ensure that key IPC stakeholders provide strategic advice, guidance and assistance to the Independent Review Team so that the approach, analysis and recommendations adequately considered key stakeholder perspectives.
2. Enable the Independent Review Team to share with this broad stakeholder group the proposed approach to the review and the preliminary findings and analysis.
3. Encourage key informants from within the main stakeholder groups to participate in the review, thus ensuring fair and adequate opportunity for divergent opinions to be included.

The Reference Group met at three critical milestones in the review process: to discuss the proposed approach to the review; for presentation and discussion of the review's preliminary findings; and for presentation of the review's final analysis and recommendations.

Organisations were invited to join the Reference Group on the basis of representing key IPC stakeholder groups at country and/or global levels, and having the ability to field a senior representative from that organisation with a high-level contextual understanding of food security analysis in South Sudan, but who was not directly involved in the technical IPC analysis process in the last quarter of 2020.

Membership is listed below:

- Luka Awata, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Government of South Sudan
- Julius Sebit, National Bureau of Statistics, Government of South Sudan
- Benjamin Hart, Impact Relief & Development
- Soro Mike, Support for Peace and Education Development Program
- Daniel Mwaka, Youth Empowerment Organisation
- McDonald Homer, USAID
- Helen Lewis, FCDO
- Alessandro Rossi, EU Delegation
- Eric-Alain Ategbo, UNICEF
- Ernesto Gonzalez, WFP
- Felix Dzuzrumi, FAO
- Laura Byaruhanga, MedAir
- Aine Fay, Concern Worldwide
- Janardhan Rao, Mercy Corps
- José Lopez, IPC Global Support Unit

Appendix 2 List of key informants interviewed

Government of South Sudan

- John Ogoto Kanisio, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- John Pangech, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- Luka Awata, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- James Lual Garang, Ministry of Health
- Gatwech Kulang, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
- Augustino Atillio, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries

UN agencies

- Meshak Malo, FAO
- *Luca Russo, FAO
- Alemu Manni, FAO
- Nicholas Kerandi, FAO
- Andrea Suley, UNICEF
- *Megan Gayford, UNICEF
- Eric Alain Ategbo, UNICEF
- Joseph Senesie, UNICEF
- Kiross Tefera Abebe, UNICEF
- Stephen O'Malley, UNOCHA
- Mohamed Halake, UNOCHA
- Annette Hearn, UNOCHA
- Matthew Hollingworth, WFP
- Hsiaowei Lee, WFP
- Lia Pozzi, WFP
- John Vuga, WFP
- Arif Husein, WFP (former member of GSC)
- Job Gichuki, WFP
- Fabian Ndenzako, WHO

INGOs

- Gezahegn Semeles, ACF
- *Hassan Ali Ahmed, ACF
- Noah Silvester, CARE
- Patrick Andama, CARE
- Mohamed Ali, IMC
- Caroline Sekewya, IRC
- Biruk Kebede, MercyCorps
- Janardhan Rao, MercyCorps
- Sirak Mehari Woldemichael, NRC
- *Emily Farr, Oxfam
- Adil Al-Mahi, Oxfam
- Alex Wani Yoele, Oxfam
- Katie Rickard, REACH
- Ella Blom, REACH
- Gezahegn Eshete, Save the Children
- Yengi Emmanuel, Save the Children

National NGOs

- Richard Teny, Coalition for Humanity
- Soro Mike Hakim, Support for Peace and Education Development Program (SPEDP)
- Ben Hart, Youth Organisation

FEWS NET

- Antazio Drabe Kenyi Gulli
- James Mark Guma
- Joseph Waweru
- Nancy Mutunga

Famine Review Committee

- Dan Maxwell, Feinstein International Center
- Nicholas Hahn, Singularity University
- Peter Hailey, Centre for Humanitarian Change
- Andrew Seal, UCL Institute for Global Health

IPC GSU

- Jose Lopez
- Belihu Negesse
- Sophie Chotard
- Kamau Wanjohi (former GSU)

International donors

- Jeremiah Carew, USAID
- Alefia Merchant, USAID
- McDonald Homer, USAID
- Shannon Wilson, USAID
- Heather Blackwell, ECHO
- Wim Van den Brouke, EU
- Manuel Ancilotti, EEAS
- Maria Bernadez Ercilla, ECHO
- Giampiero Muci, ECHO
- Emma Massey, FCDO
- Samuel Carpenter, FCDO
- Helen Lewis, FCDO
- Nick Dyer, FCDO
- Francois Landiech, SIDA
- Jenny Hill, Global Affairs Canada
- James Jackson, Global Affairs Canada

Multilateral organisations

- Zachary Carmichael, World Bank
- Melissa Williams, World Bank

Clusters

- Alistair Short, Food Security cluster
- Qutub Alam, Nutrition cluster
- Komborero Chirenda, Nutrition cluster
- Naema Hirad, Nutrition cluster

*Indicates member of the GSC.



The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) is one of the world's leading teams of independent researchers and communications professionals working on humanitarian issues. It is dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice through a combination of high-quality analysis, dialogue and debate.

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