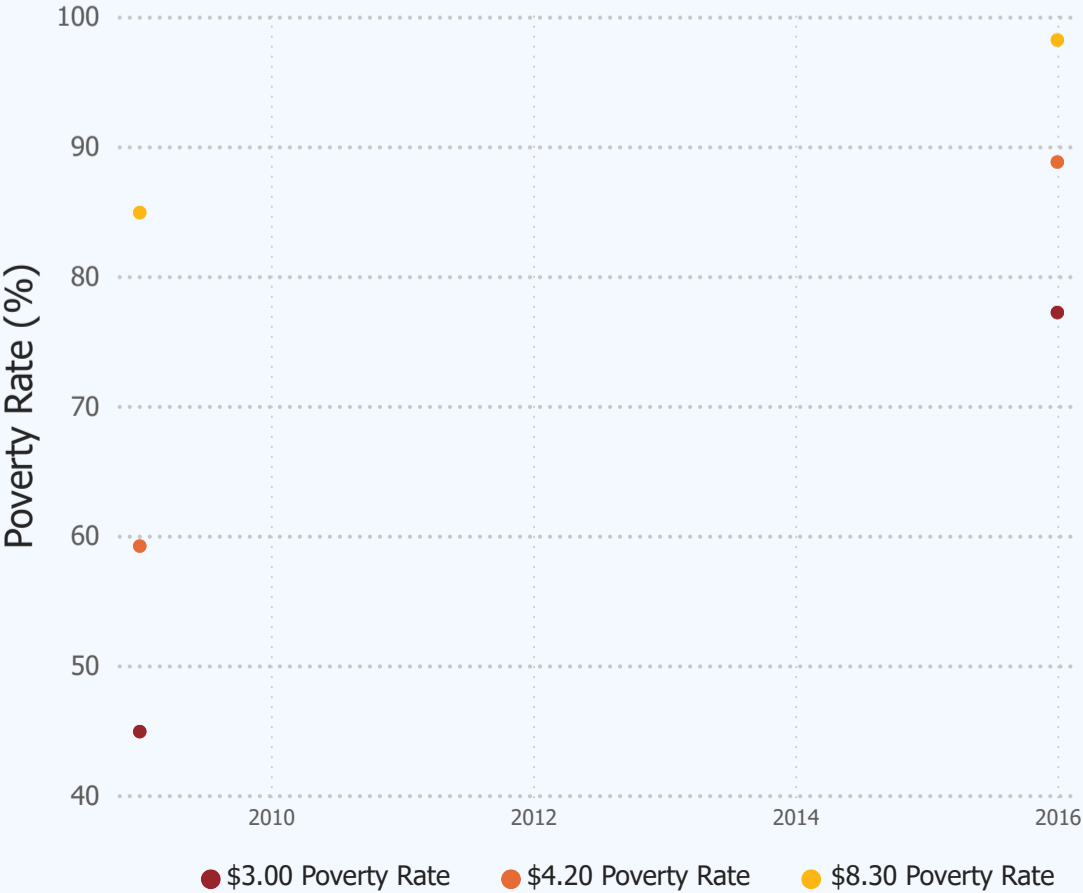# Poverty & Equity Brief

October 2025

SOUTH SUDAN

Projections based on the 2016 Household Survey, suggest that in 2025, around 91 percent of the population in South Sudan lives with less than US$3 a day, making the country one of the poorest in the world. Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has encountered severe economic difficulties and repeated conflicts, which have led to widespread poverty. From 2011 to 2024, the nation's real per capita economic output declined by 8.4 percent annually, leading to a significant deterioration in household living standards.

The near absence of public service delivery has also resulted in exceptionally high multidimensional poverty, with 93 percent of the population experiencing deprivation across education, access to services, asset ownership, and quality housing in 2022. Food insecurity is widespread, with over half of the population classified as acutely food insecure according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). A June 2024 household phone survey found that 60 percent of South Sudanese report insufficient food consumption. The prevalence varies by educational attainment, with 57 percent among households headed by individuals holding a bachelor's degree, compared to 62 percent among those with no formal education.
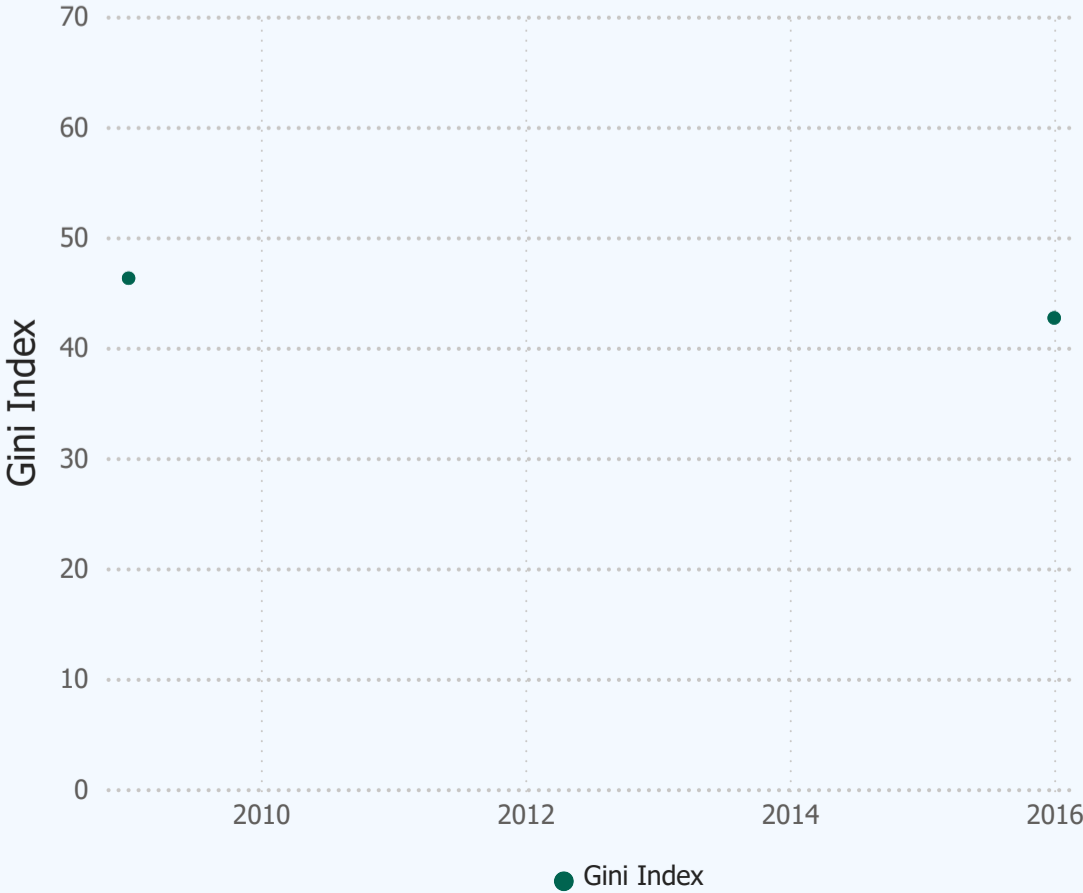
Nowcasts suggests that poverty has steadily increased since 2016 and is currently close to universal, due to the disruption in oil exports caused by the conflict in neighboring Sudan and the ensuing depreciation and inflation. The average inflation rate has jumped from 18 percent in 2023 to 183 percent in 2025, making basic items unaffordable for many. Since April 2023, more than one million refugees, mostly Sudanese nationals and South Sudanese returnees, have entered South Sudan, straining the already limited resources of host communities and the government. Additionally, in 2024, South Sudan experienced its worst flooding since gaining independence, affecting over a million people and displacing over a third of those affected.

$3.00 Poverty Rate 2016	$8.30 Poverty Rate 2016	Gini Index 2016	Prosperity Gap 2016
77.2%	98.2%	42.7	23.4

Poverty Rate

Inequality

Poverty at Different Lines

Poverty Line	Number of Poor (Thousands)	Rate (%)	Year
National Poverty Line	9,107.4	82.3	2016
International Poverty Line ($3.00/day)	8,359.5	77.2	2016
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line ($4.20/day)	9,617.6	88.8	2016
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line ($8.30/day)	10,637.1	98.2	2016
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		87.5	2016

Group and Multidimensional Poverty

Poverty by Group	Poverty Rate (%)
Urban population	54.4
Rural population	79.7
Males	76.1
Females	76.9
0 to 14 years old	80.4
15 to 64 years old	72.9
65 and older	61.3
Without education (16+)	79.9
Primary education (16+)	62.3
Secondary education (16+)	57.7
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	43.4

Multidimensional Poverty Components	(% of Pop.)
Daily income less than US$3.00 per person	76.5
At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	62.2
No adult has completed primary education	39.3
No access to limited-standard drinking water	13.9
No access to limited-standard sanitation	88.1
No access to electricity	N/A

Note:
N/A denotes a missing/removed value, while N/A* refers to a value which was removed due to having fewer than 30 observations.
The rates in the Poverty by Group table above are shown at the $3.00 international line.
Data for the Poverty by Group table is derived from a 2016 survey and data for the Multidimensional Poverty Components table is derived from a 2016 survey.

Poverty Data & Methodology

The only nationally representative household budget survey in South Sudan was conducted in 2009, before South Sudan's independence in 2011. This was the National Baseline Household Survey (NBHS) 2009, which was conducted by the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE). Since then, poverty has been tracked through a series of High Frequency Surveys using the rapid consumption monitoring methodology. This initiative, which was implemented through a collaboration between the National Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank, started on a pilot basis covering only the 4 largest urban centers. In 2015, it was extended to rural and urban areas across 6 states, and in 2016-2017 it included 7 states. The data from the 2016-17 round is the source of the international numbers published in this brief.

Harmonization

The numbers presented in this brief are based on the SSAPOV database. SSAPOV is a database of harmonized nationally representative household surveys managed by Sub-Saharan Team for Statistical Development. It contains more than 100 surveys covering 45 out of the 48 countries in the SSA region. The three countries not covered in the database are Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, and Somalia. Terms of use of the data adhere to agreements with the original data producers. The poverty rate reported in the MPM differs from that in the main table because households missing all other MPM deprivation indicators are excluded from the MPM calculation, resulting in a different analytic sample.