

# Situation Overview: Jonglei State, South Sudan

September 2017

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

## Introduction

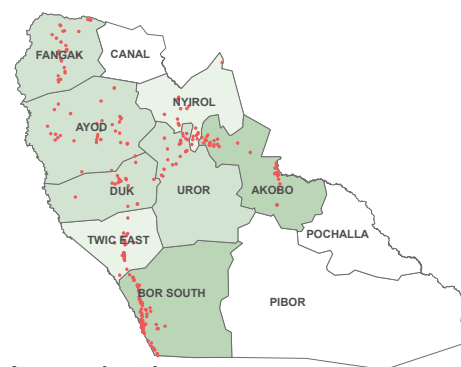
Displacement trends, humanitarian access and population needs continued to be negatively affected by violent conflict during September. Humanitarian needs remained high as tensions between armed groups and delayed rainfall continued to affect populations' ability to meet their primary needs.

REACH has conducted an assessment of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015, to inform the response of humanitarian actors working outside of formal settlement sites. This settlement data is collected across the Greater Upper Nile region on a monthly basis. Between 4 and 22 September, REACH interviewed 623 Key Informants (KIs) with knowledge of humanitarian needs in 266 settlements in 8 of the 11 counties in Jonglei State.

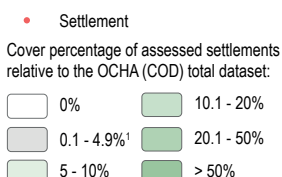
In order to ensure an understanding of current displacement trends and humanitarian conditions in settlements from which displacement took place, new arrivals, representing 31% of KIs, were specifically targeted. The remainder of the KIs interviewed (69%) reported having been in the settlement or having had regular contact with someone from the settlement within the last month.

In September, displacement data from KI interviews were triangulated with seven Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which involved

**Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Jonglei State, September 2017**



### Assessed settlements



participatory mapping exercises to understand the routes that internally displaced persons (IDPs) took. These included: a) four FGDs with new arrivals from Greater Akobo in Akobo Town and Bor PoC site, b) two FGDs with new arrivals from the Equatorias in Bor Town, c) one FGD with new arrivals from Ugandan refugee settlements in Mingkaman.

Informing further analysis on food security trends across the state, REACH also conducted seven Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) FGDs with new arrivals and people who had recent contact with those in relevant settlements, including: a) three Coping

Strategies FGDs for Greater Akobo in Akobo Town, b) one FGD on Livelihoods for Fangak and one for Ayod in Bor PoC site and c) two FGDs on livelihoods in Bor South-Duk corridor, conducted in Bor Town and Mingkaman. All this information is included in the data used for this Situation Overview.

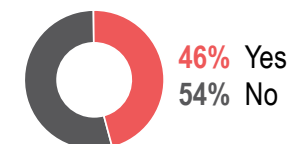
This Situation Overview provides an update to key findings from the July and August Situation Overview.<sup>1</sup> The first section analyses population movement and displacement in Jonglei during September, and the second section evaluates access to food and basic services for both IDP and host communities.

## Population Movement and Displacement

Displacement in Jonglei continued to be primarily driven by insecurity throughout September. Overall, depopulation remained high but stable, with 49% of assessed settlements reporting that half or more of the local community had left, similar to 56% in August. However, in Greater Akobo's Urur and Nyirol Counties, the proportion rose steeply from 57% to 79%.

Reflective of the continued displacement, 46% of assessed settlements across Jonglei reported the presence of IDPs, similar to 38% in August (Figure 1). Newly arrived KIs most

**Figure 1: Percentage of settlements assessed hosting IDPs, September 2017**



frequently (38%) reported insecurity as the main reason for displacement in September, followed by a lack of food (18%) and a lack of health care (13%).

### Displacement within Jonglei

#### Displacement from and within Greater Akobo (Akobo, Nyirol and Urur)

FGD participants reported that the increased displacement in Urur and Nyirol was driven by localised clashes in Walgak in July, as well as renewed clashes in Waat towards the end of September.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the ongoing presence of armed groups continued to disrupt populations and restrict humanitarian access.<sup>3</sup> Another reported push factor was the limited access to services, which have been disrupted by the conflict in Greater Akobo.

However, new arrivals in key IDP receiving locations, such as Akobo Town and Bor PoC site, were low in September compared to previous months. In Akobo County, no assessed settlements reported that IDPs had predominantly arrived in August or September 2017, while in Bor PoC site only 16 new

1 REACH South Sudan: [Situation Overview](#), July and August, 2017.

2 UNOCHA South Sudan: [Humanitarian Snapshot, September](#) 2017.

3 Ibid.



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## METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Jonglei State, REACH uses primary data provided by key informants who have recently arrived, or received regular information, from their pre-displacement location or “Area of Knowledge”.

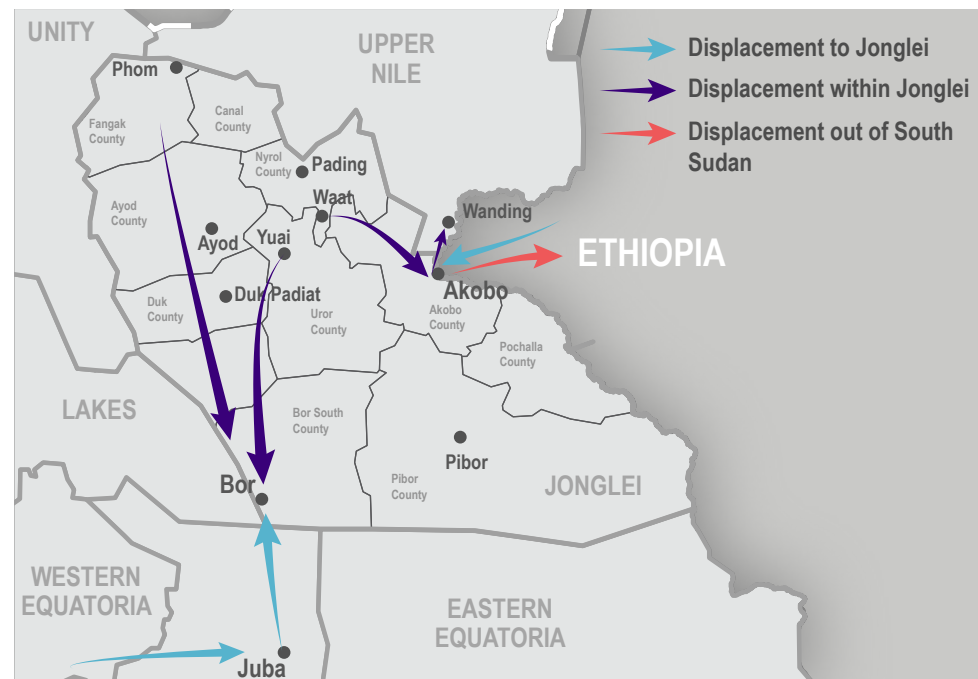
Information for this report was collected from key informants in the Mingkaman Spontaneous Settlement, Bor and Juba Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites, Bor Town, Akobo Town, as well as in Nyal, throughout September 2017.

The first phase of the assessment methodology comprised a participatory mapping exercise to map the relevant settlements in Jonglei State. In-depth interviews were then conducted with selected participants, using a standardised survey tool comprising questions on displacement trends, population needs and access to basic services.

After data collection was completed, all data was examined at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal response. When no consensus could be found for a settlement, it was not included in reporting. Descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were then used to analyse the data.

It must be noted that this represents a **change in methodology as of December 2016**, as REACH previously analysed data at the community level. This means that **this report is not directly comparable with Situation Overviews from before December 2016**.

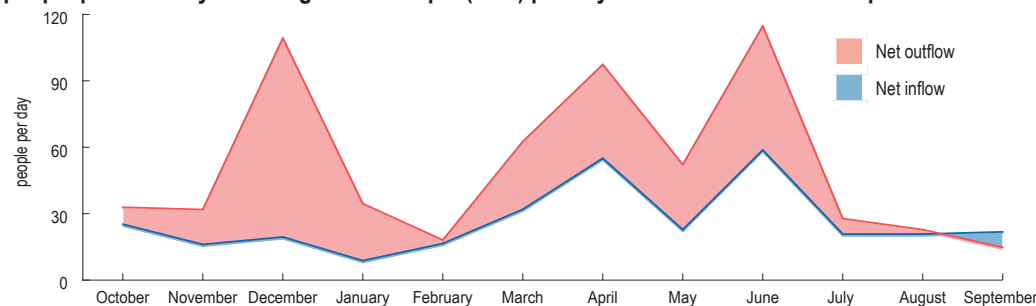
Map 2: Displacement overview Jonglei State, September 2017



arrivals coming from Greater Akobo were recorded in September.<sup>4</sup> Slower movement to these locations is likely attributable to poor road conditions, combined with a lack of transportation and fears of attacks on the road.

**Unable to travel long distances to Akobo Town or Bor PoC site, many IDPs were instead displaced in remote locations in Uror and Nyirol, as reported by FGD participants.** These IDPs faced limited access to basic services and humanitarian assistance.

Figure 2: Average monthly movement trends of people permanently leaving Akobo Town (red) and people permanently returning from Ethiopia (blue) per day from October 2016 to September 2017.



Nyirol, in particular, saw a large increase in the proportion of settlements reporting IDP presence, rising from 64% in August to 95% in September. Of these settlements, 42% reported that IDPs had predominantly arrived in August and September 2017. Insecurity in Uror appears to be the primary driver of this displacement. Sixty-seven percent of assessed settlements with IDPs reported that they came predominantly from Uror, where FGD participants reported displacement due to localised conflict. Participants further reported that many of these IDPs intend to travel to Akobo once travel road conditions improve in the dry season.

### Displacement out of Jonglei

#### Displacement from Akobo Town to Ethiopia

FGD participants reported that many IDPs in Akobo town intended to cross the border to Ethiopia, either by boat from Akobo or via Wanding in Upper Nile. KIs reported that the Wanding route was a less costly.

However, the movement towards Ethiopia has reduced since June. According to REACH Port Monitoring in Akobo Town, the net outflows of South Sudanese permanently leaving to Ethiopia decreased slightly from an average of 22 individuals per day in August to 19 in September (Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

**The main reasons reported by individuals who intended to permanently leave for Ethiopia were a lack of access to food (24%), ongoing conflict (16%) and a lack of education services (14%).<sup>6</sup>**

4 Bor PoC Movement Trend Tracker, September 2017. NB: 6 - 11 September not covered.

5 REACH SSD, Akobo Port Monitoring Factsheet, September 2017.

The low net outflow may be attributable to the high water levels, as observed by REACH Port Monitors. With water levels expected to decrease during the dry season, there will likely be an increase in departures to Ethiopia. Currently, Ethiopia is hosting 416,886 South Sudanese refugees, of whom 12% originally come from Jonglei.<sup>7</sup>

## Movement to Jonglei

### Movement from Ethiopia to Akobo Town

In September, new arrivals from Ethiopian refugee camps to Akobo Town remained low. An average of 20 individuals per day arrived in September, similar to 21 in August. The

### Returned South Sudanese refugees in Mingkaman Informal Settlement

During September, REACH teams in Mingkaman Informal Settlement in Lakes State, witnessed the arrival of several households of South Sudanese refugees returning from refugee settlements in Uganda. The returning populations, who are originally from Jonglei, had left Nyamazi settlement due to the reduction in food rations and perceived worsening relationships with the local community, especially when collecting firewood. As returnees are mostly dependent on relatives or other IDPs from Jonglei for food and shelter whilst in Mingkaman, FGD participants cited access to food, shelter and NFIs as their most immediate needs.

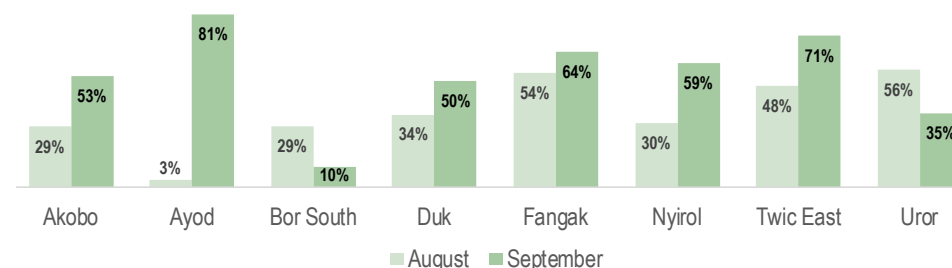
most common reasons reported for returning to South Sudan were to be with family in South Sudan (17%) and personal insecurity in Ethiopia (17%). The vast majority (95%) of those returning reported that they intended to stay in various parts of Akobo County.<sup>8</sup>

### Movement from the Equatorias to Western Jonglei

In September, IDPs originally from Bor South and Twic East continued to return to Jonglei from parts of the Equatorias. Many of these IDPs travelled from Juba. FGD participants mainly reported that they were moving due to crime-related insecurity, high prices and a lack of shelter in Juba.

Some of the new arrivals had first travelled from Maridi in Western Equatoria, transiting through Juba. FGD participants reported that after clashes in Maridi during March, they spent 6 months in Juba with limited access to food and safe drinking water before travelling to Bor Town by commercial vehicles.

**Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in August and September 2017.**



## Situation in Assessed Communities

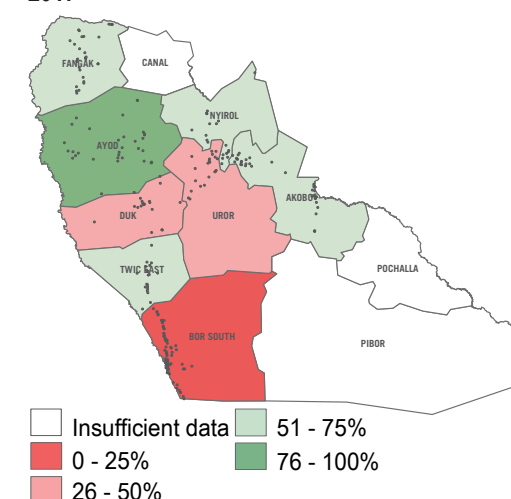
### Food Security and Livelihoods

Access to food in Jonglei remained low in September, with only 43% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access, similar to 35% in August (Map 2). However, despite the general low levels, slight improvements occurred as the proportion rose by more than 10 percentage points in most counties (Figure 3).

This is likely partly due to the consumption of the green harvests.<sup>9</sup> Reflective of the harvest season, agricultural activity increased in September, with 76% of assessed settlements reporting growing crops for sustenance as a livelihood activity, compared to 55% in August.

Correspondingly, the proportion of assessed settlement reporting that residents possessed cattle rose steadily from 68% in June to 96% in September. KIs reported that this increase may be partly due to greater access to food, which may have increased household resources to spend on purchasing cattle.

**Map 2: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food, September 2017**



However, the increased agricultural activity and cattle ownership may only have translated into small increases in self-sufficiency. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting cultivation to be their main food source only increased from 26% in August to 36% in September. At the same time, reliance on humanitarian assistance increased to 30% in September, as compared to 15% in August. This suggests that food insecurity increased for part of the population even during the harvest season.

### Greater Akobo

Adequate access to food increased in Akobo and Nyirol from 30% in August to 55% in September. However, this trend was reversed in Uror, where the proportion fell from 56% in August to 35% in September.

6 Ibid.

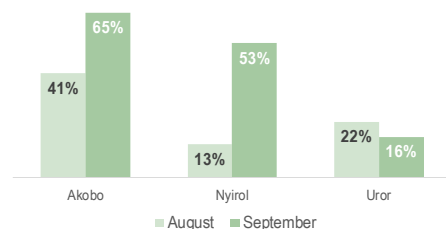
7 UNHCR South Sudan, [Bi-monthly Ethiopia Situational Report](#), 16-30 September 2017.

8 REACH SSD, Akobo Port Monitoring Factsheet, September 2017.

9 FEWSNET, [South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update](#), August 2017.



**Figure 4: Percentage of assessed settlements in Greater Akobo reporting recent food assistance, August to September 2017.**



KIs reported that the increase in Akobo and Nyirol was partly due to the consumption of the maize and vegetable harvests. This is supported by the fact that the proportion of assessed settlements reporting cultivation as their primary source of food rose from 22% in August to 34% in September. Similarly, the proportion in Nyirol rose from 52% to 64%.

However, despite the increase in agricultural activity, the harvest yield alone may not have been high enough to fully explain the improved access to food. Delayed rains in July, the presence of conflict and the loss of maize crops to fall army worm<sup>10</sup> all likely reduced the yield. In Akobo, humanitarian actors also reported high rates of crop destruction due to pests.

Humanitarian assistance also likely contributed to the apparent increase in access to food. The proportion of assessed settlements in Akobo reporting having received food assistance in the past three months rose from 41% in August to 65% in September and in Nyirol the increase was even greater, from 13% to 53% (Figure 4).

Conversely, access to food deteriorated in Uror, with only 35% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access in September

compared to 56% in August. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting cultivation as the primary source of food correspondingly stayed low at 33%, similar to 38% in August.

The most frequently reported primary reason for inadequate access to food in Uror was a lack of rain, reported by 29% of assessed settlements without adequate access to food. With FGD participants also reporting localised conflicts in Uror, it is likely that a combination of conflict and delayed rains have disrupted agriculture in the county.

The insecurity has also hindered humanitarian assistance. As anticipated conflict delayed World Food Programme (WFP) missions,<sup>11</sup> only 16% of assessed settlements in Uror in September reported having received food assistance in the past three months (Figure 4).

#### Bor South-Duk Corridor

September saw diverging trends in access to food in the Bor South-Duk corridor as well. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in Duk rose from 34% in August to 50% in September. Similarly, the proportion rose from 48% to 71% in Twic East. Conversely, food security declined in Bor South, where the proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food fell from 29% in August to 10% in September.

Similar to Akobo and Nyirol, much of this increase may be attributable to increased food from the harvests. Cultivation replaced purchasing as the most commonly reported main food source in the three counties, rising considerably from 16% in August to 53% in

September. However, in contrast to Akobo and Nyirol, households appeared to be less reliant on humanitarian assistance as the proportion of settlements in Duk and Twic East reporting humanitarian assistance as their main food source fell from 21% in September to 0% in August.

In Bor South, where access to food reportedly declined, the majority of assessed settlements without adequate access to food reported the primary reason was an unsafe cultivation environment (55%). KIs reported that this may have been due to the perceived high threat of cattle raids in the area, despite the fact that few large-scale raids actually occurred.

Floods destroying crops was the second most common primary reason, reported by 20% of assessed settlements without adequate access to food. With heavy rains causing the Nile to overflow,<sup>12</sup> 88% of assessed settlements in Bor South reported serious flooding.<sup>13</sup> The floods further limited access to food by spreading livestock diseases, with 92% of assessed settlements in the county reporting an outbreak in September.

#### Greater Fangak (Ayod and Fangak)

In Ayod, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food increased dramatically from 3% in August to 81% in September. However, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting growing crops for sustenance as a livelihood activity was the lowest in Jonglei (45%), suggesting that the harvest alone cannot explain the sudden increase.

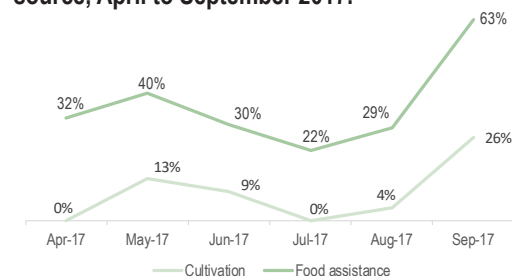
Another possible factor is improved access to humanitarian assistance. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting food assistance as their primary food source rose from 29% in August to 63% in September (Figure 5). Moreover, the long period of severe food insecurity in Ayod may have skewed perceptions of food access, as low levels of food may still be considered 'adequate' by populations that were previously consuming even less.

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food also increased in Fangak, rising slightly from 54% in August to 64% in September. This is likely due to the harvests, as the proportion of assessed settlements reporting cultivation as their primary source of food was higher in September (38%) and August (42%) than in July (25%).

#### Coping Strategies

Reflective of the fact that adequate access to food was still low in Jonglei despite recent improvements, assessed settlements frequently reported moderate and severe

**Figure 5: Percentage of assessed settlements in Ayod reporting cultivation as primary food source, April to September 2017.**



<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> WFP IRRM Update, 28 August 2017.

<sup>12</sup> VOA, [Floods Wash Away Homes in South Sudan](#), September 2017.

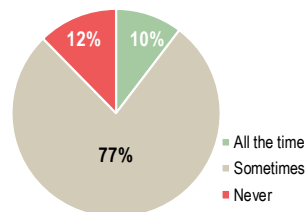
<sup>13</sup> Defined as floods that forced residents to leave their shelters.

coping strategies. Borrowing food, typically from neighbours and relatives, remained the most common livelihood coping strategy, reported by 51% of assessed settlements. This shows the importance of social networks throughout Jonglei. However, borrowing food may also suggest a reliance on humanitarian assistance in many cases. FGD participants from Nyirol, Ayod and Uror explained that this coping strategy is often dependent on food assistance, as relatives in different settlements share food from distributions.

Other common livelihood strategies included borrowing money and gathering wild food, reported by 37% and 35% of assessed settlements, respectively. Consumption of wild foods was particularly high in Uror, where 20% of assessed settlements reported wild foods to be their primary food source. All of these settlements reported that the wild foods consumed were the kind only eaten in emergencies, such as tree leaves.

Further indicative of food shortages, consumption coping strategies to reduce food intake were also common. Sixty-five percent of assessed settlements reported limiting the size of their meals, while 51% reported reducing

**Figure 6: Perceptions of security by proportion of assessed settlements, September 2017.**



the number of meals eaten in a day. In the conflict-affected counties of Greater Akobo and Ayod, the extremely severe coping strategies of skipping meals for entire days was reported by a combined total 37% of assessed settlements across the four counties.

The prevalence of severe and moderately severe coping strategies suggests that food insecurity remains a pressing issue in Jonglei despite the harvest season, particularly in areas affected by conflict.

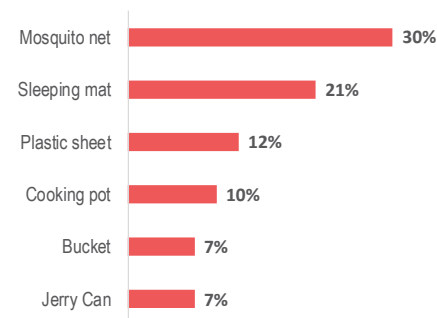
### Protection

High levels of violence were reported throughout Jonglei, with only 10% of assessed settlements reporting the residents felt safe all the time in September (Figure 6). Reflective of the continued violence, killing or injuring by perpetrators from outside the community was reported as the primary protection concern for men by 63% of assessed settlements, and by 36% for women.

Overall in Jonglei, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting conflict as the leading cause of death reduced slightly from 25% in August to 15% in September. This is despite reports of renewed clashes in Nyirol at the end of the month.<sup>14</sup> The decrease may be attributable to heavy rains rendering roads impassable, slowing in turn the conflict's spread to other locations.

However, localised incidents of conflict were extremely high in Greater Akobo, with 84% of assessed settlements in Uror and 81% in Nyirol reporting that either someone was killed or property was damaged in the last month, the

**Figure 7: Primary NFI need for IDPs by proportion of assessed settlements, September 2017.**



highest proportions reported within Jonglei. These counties also had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting looting, at 68% for Uror and 56% for Nyirol. This suggests that localised violence continued even though large-scale conflict was hindered by the rains.

The conflict and resulting displacement in Greater Akobo may have increased the risk of sexual violence, as 47% of settlements reported sexual violence to be the most pressing protection concern for women, similar to 55% in August. This is much higher than the overall proportion for Jonglei, which was at 18% in September.

### Child Protection

Abduction was the most frequently reported protection concern for both girls and boys, reported by 27% and 29% of assessed settlements, respectively. This is reflective of the high rate of cattle raids in Jonglei, during which children are reportedly abducted, as reported by FGD participants.

Clashes between armed forces have likely also

increased protection concerns for children, with 71% of assessed settlements in the conflict-affected areas of Greater Akobo and Ayod reporting the presence of unaccompanied children. KIs explained that unaccompanied children were extremely rare in pre-crisis rural areas as relatives and friends would typically take care of orphans. The reportedly high rate of unaccompanied children, therefore, highlights the extent of disruption the conflict and associated displacement has brought to childcare in Ayod and Greater Akobo.

### Shelter

The conflict in Greater Akobo and Ayod has forced many households to flee suddenly, being displaced without shelter or essential non-food items (NFIs). In Ayod, Nyirol and Uror, many IDPs lacked basic shelter, with an average of 87% of assessed settlements with IDPs reporting that some lacked shelter.

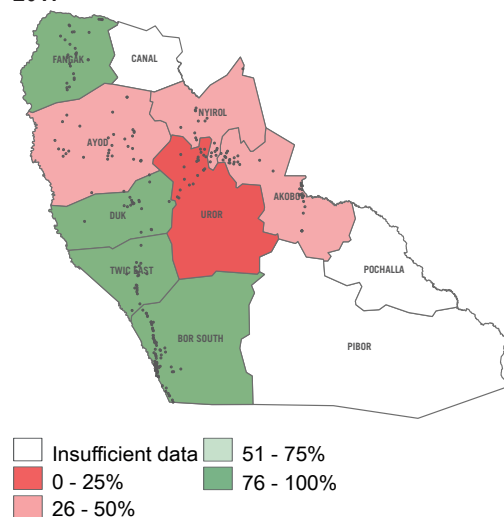
These reports are particularly concerning when coupled with the reported lack of mosquito nets. This was the most frequently reported NFI need across Jonglei, reported by 30% of assessed settlements hosting IDPs (Figure 7). The proportion was particularly high in Uror (60%) and Nyirol (45%).

### Health and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)

Given the insufficient availability of mosquito nets, inadequate shelter conditions and heavy rainfall, cases of malaria remained high in Jonglei in September. Thirty-seven percent of assessed settlements reported Malaria to be

14 UNOCHA, South Sudan: [Humanitarian Snapshot, September 2017](#).

**Map 3: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare, September 2017**



the leading cause of death, reaching 61% in Bor South. The prevalence of the disease in Bor South has likely been exacerbated by forced displacement due to the floods discussed in the livelihoods section of this overview.

The floods in Bor South have also likely increased waterborne diseases. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting typhoid as the second most urgent health concern increased from 7% in August to 39% in September.

The risk of waterborne diseases is also very high in Fangak, where 68% of assessed settlements reported swamps and ponds as their main source of water. This proportion is considerably higher than any other assessed county in Jonglei. Moreover, Fangak has the highest proportion within Jonglei (90%) of assessed settlements reporting that none of the

residents were using latrines.

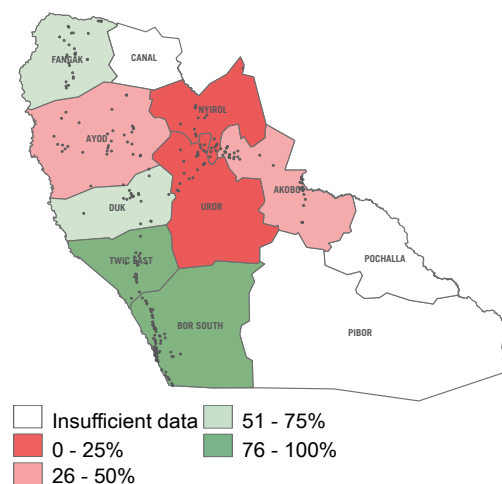
As seen in previous months, access to healthcare was the lowest in Ayod and Greater Akobo (Map 3). Conflict and the resulting displacement are likely the key drivers of this low access. Assessed settlements without access to healthcare in the four counties most frequently reported the primary reason to be a lack of staff (36%), suggesting that healthcare professionals have left to escape the violence.

However, reflective of the decrease in large-scale conflict for most of the month, access to healthcare in Greater Akobo and Ayod rose in these counties from 24% in August to 40% in September.

### Education

Similar to health, the presence of education services was lower in conflict-affected regions

**Map 4: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting access to education, September 2017**



(Map 4), but showed a slight improvement compared to August. The proportion of settlements reporting access to education rose in every assessed county, with Ayod seeing the highest increase from 13% in August to 50% in September.

However, the increase in education services did not translate into increased attendance. Of the settlements that reported access to education services, the proportion reporting that more than half of boys attended school fell from 67% in August to 54% in September. Insufficient resources to pay school fees was the most frequently reported (56%). Moreover, 17% of assessed settlements reported that the primary reason for boys not attending school was the need to work in agriculture. This suggests the decrease may be partly seasonal as boys were reportedly taken out of school to assist with the harvest.

Girls' attendance remained extremely low, with only 6% of assessed settlements reporting that over half of girls attended school regularly. Similar to boys, insufficient resources to pay school fees was the most common primary reason for low attendance, reported by 50% of assessed settlements.

### Conclusion

September saw slight improvements in humanitarian needs in Jonglei, but these improvements were small and geographically uneven. Produce from the ongoing harvest and humanitarian assistance increased access to food, but from a low base. Food insecurity likely worsened for many IDPs and flood-affected

households, while reliance on food assistance increased. Given the prevalence of pests, flooding and insecurity disrupting cultivation, low yields may occur in many settlements, which will negatively affect household food stocks in the coming months.

Humanitarian needs continued to be the most pressing in Ayod and Greater Akobo, where access to education and healthcare was the lowest. Heavy rains slightly increased security by restricting large-scale conflicts, but also left many IDPs stranded in remote locations throughout Ayod and Greater Akobo. Faced with a lack of basic services and shelter, many IDPs are vulnerable to malnutrition and malaria. Given the re-eruption of conflict in Nyirol at the end of September, the small improvements in many sectors risk being reversed.

#### About REACH Initiative

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

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