

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION MONITORING

Greater Bahr el Ghazal

May-October 2022 | South Sudan



CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Between May and October 2022, communities in Greater Bahr el Ghazal faced various shocks and stressors, including recurring conflict, violence, climatic shocks, and limited public service infrastructure.¹ Compounding the stresses experienced during the lean season (May-August), an estimated 538,000 people in the region were affected by floods as of October, potentially impacting 29% and 45% of cropland in Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states respectively.² Conflict events impacting civilians also spiked in locations throughout Greater Bahr el Ghazal between May and October, driving displacement and likely further exacerbating stressors affecting communities throughout the region.³

Displacement and the presence of displaced people continued to be a significant dynamic in the region, with internally displaced persons (IDPs) making up more than 10% of the population of Greater Bahr el Ghazal as of June 2022.⁴

Such shocks and stressors drove the escalation of humanitarian needs throughout Greater Bahr el Ghazal. The number of People in Need (PIN) increased by more than 7% in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Western Bahr el Ghazal and Lakes between the end of 2021 and the end of 2022, with 2.74 million out of the region's estimated 4 million people classified as PIN.⁵ Between April and July 2022, an estimated 2.51 million in Greater Bahr el Ghazal people faced crisis-level (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3) or worse levels of food insecurity, representing more than 60% of the region's total population.⁶ In Warrap, estimated to be the worst affected state in the region, that number was projected to be more than 70%.⁷

To support humanitarian actors' understanding of the complex dynamics of vulnerability, shocks, needs, and coping capacities in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, REACH has been monitoring the humanitarian situation in hard-to-reach areas since 2015. This situation overview is built on an analysis of monthly data that was collected by REACH enumerators through structured key informant interviews conducted with key informants (KIs) knowledgeable about a hard-to-reach settlement throughout the country in May-October 2022. Where possible, findings were triangulated with secondary sources.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Rising prices, driven by supply chain disruptions within South Sudan and exacerbated by inflation and other macroeconomic factors, have likely impacted the ability of some communities to adequately access food** in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, where findings indicate that people in more than half of assessed settlements reportedly rely on cash purchases as a primary food acquisition mechanism.⁸ In the context of high levels of market reliance, it appears such economic shocks can considerably impact communities' access to food and other basic needs, particularly in light of the continued food insecurity despite the harvests.
- Countrywide changes in aid funding may have further impacted access to food and healthcare for already vulnerable communities in Greater Bahr el Ghazal.⁹ In line with this, KIs from assessed settlements across the region reported changes to humanitarian aid as a key factor contributing to a loss of livelihoods.
- Continued **seasonal and spontaneous conflict in areas of the region – primarily in Warrap – has driven displacement and seemingly impacted food security and livelihoods**, with little to indicate an abatement of such cycles.¹⁰
- Findings suggest that, **despite the harvests of staple crops at the end of the reporting period, food insecurity stressors persisted in areas of Greater Bahr el Ghazal affected by flooding, or by the dual shocks of flooding and conflict**. These findings were most notable in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap, the states reportedly most affected by such shocks.¹¹
- Despite high levels of reported access to healthcare facilities, KIs in nearly all assessed settlements reported people facing challenges accessing healthcare. In most of these settlements, KIs reported that medicine shortages were the most significant barrier to healthcare access. This dynamic was most notable in Lakes State.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

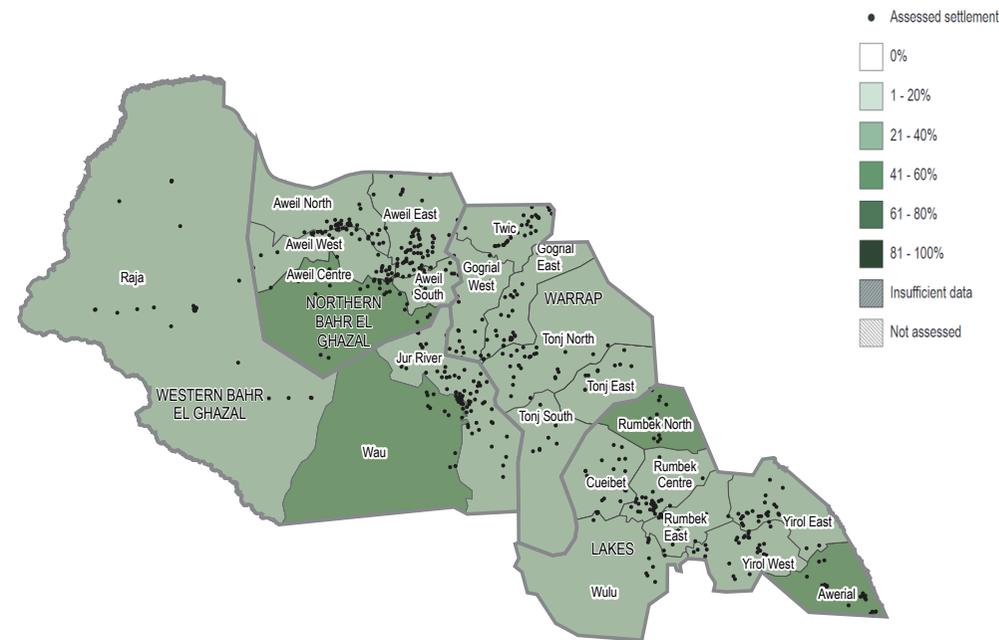
To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas, REACH uses primary data from key informants (KIs) who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or “Area of Knowledge” (AoK). Information for this report was collected from KIs interviewed throughout the country in May-October 2022. In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted using a structured survey tool. After data collection was completed, all data was aggregated at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal or most credible response. When no consensus could be found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting. Only counties with interview coverage of at least 5% of all settlements in each assessed month were included in analysis.¹ Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month vary. To reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, over time analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam coverage throughout the period of analysis.² Findings are not generalisable and should be considered indicative of the situation in assessed hard-to-reach areas between May and October 2022, unless specified otherwise. More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK Terms of Reference](#).

Shocks & stressors

In May 2022, an estimated 2.75 million people in Greater Bahr el Ghazal were classified as PiN.³ IPC analysis estimated that 2.51 million people in the region were facing crisis-level (IPC Phase 3) or higher food insecurity.⁴ These numbers suggest that the seasonal, recurring, and unique shocks which occurred between May and October – flooding, conflict, price increases, and displacement – likely substantially increased needs in some areas of the region. This occurred as humanitarian assistance, which can be used to adapt to and cope with shocks, decreased, potentially compounding existing vulnerability.⁵

In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the state in the region most affected by flooding, IPC analysis estimated the highest proportion of population in the region facing crisis-level (IPC Phase 3) or higher food insecurity, at 62% in October.⁶ In Warrap, which experienced the most conflict-related shocks in the region, 57% of the population was estimated to be facing such food insecurity during the same period.⁷ REACH AoK findings suggest that in the month prior to the end of the reporting period in October, livelihoods-impacting shocks affected 63% assessed of settlements in Warrap, 56% of assessed settlements in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, 44% of assessed settlements in Lakes and 15% of settlements in Western Bahr el Ghazal. In those settlements, flash flooding

Map 1: Assessment coverage



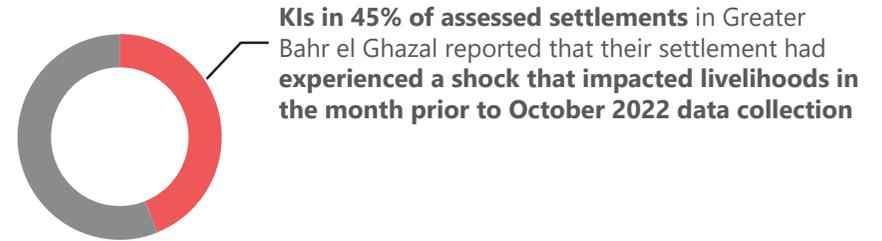
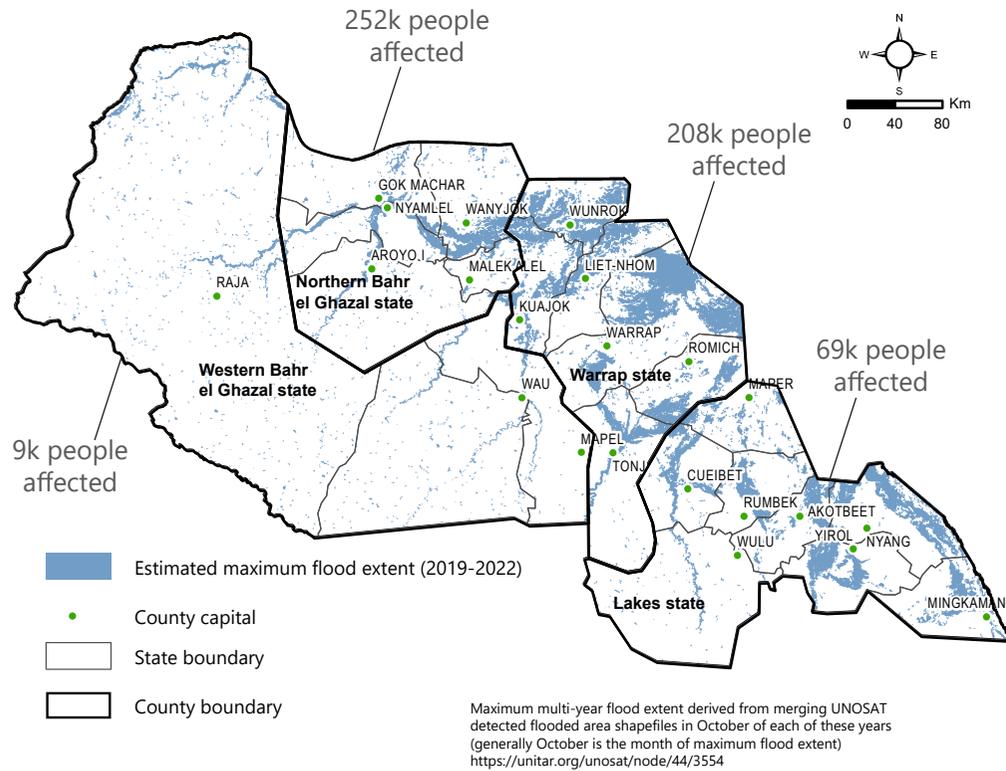
and rising prices were the most reported types of shocks experienced.

Persistent & flash flooding

In May 2022, sitting floodwater from the 2021 rainy season remained in a few parts of Greater Bahr el Ghazal, comprising 556 km², primarily in Lakes State.⁸ Despite a below-average level of rainfall between May and June (the beginning of the 2022 rainy season), by the end of the reporting period in October, flooding was estimated to have impacted more than half a million people in Greater Bahr el Ghazal.⁹ This represents a more than 500% increase from the number of people impacted by flooding in the region at the same time in 2021.¹⁰

In October 2022, Northern Bahr el Ghazal was the state most impacted by flooding, both in the region and in the country, with an estimated 252,000 people affected.¹¹ In October 2022 AoK for the state, KIs in more than half of assessed settlements (56%) reported the occurrence of a shock which impacted livelihoods in the 30 days prior to data collection. KIs in the vast majority (93%) of those settlements reported this shock had been persistent or flash flooding.

Map 2: Estimated flooding extent in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, 2019-2022 and people affected per state as of 10 October 2022¹



reporting, price increases were the second most commonly reported shock impacting livelihoods in Greater Bahr el Ghazal. In those settlements in which KIs reported the occurrence of a shock in the 30 days previous to October data collection which impacted livelihoods, (56% of assessed settlements in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, 44% in Lakes, 63% in Warrap, and 15% in Western Bahr el Ghazal) price increase shocks were reported in Western Bahr el Ghazal (20% of those assessed settlements), Warrap (11%), and Lakes (24%).

While prices seem to have increased, the value of South Sudanese Pound (SSP) against the United States Dollar (USD) has decreased.⁴ Such inflation, in addition to itself contributing to price increases, likely compounds the shock of price increases for communities by diminishing purchasing power. During the reporting period, the SSP-USD exchange rate increased from 430.1 SSP to 1 USD, to 614.7 SSP to 1 USD, with the pound losing 43% of its value in the six-month period.⁵

Diminished purchasing power and increased prices likely impacted food security in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, where findings indicate more than half the population relies on cash purchases as a primary food acquisition modality. In October 2022, KIs in 54% of assessed settlements in Warrap reported that most people in their community acquired food through cash purchases. This proportion was even higher in Northern Bahr el Ghazal (57%), Lakes (59%), and Western Bahr el Ghazal (71%).⁶ Of those settlements

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements in October 2022 in which KIs reported that MOST people in their settlement were able to access a marketplace by walking (99% in Northern Bahr el Ghazal; 95% in Lakes; 98% in Warrap; 100% in Western Bahr el Ghazal), but where item expense was a challenge faced at the market

Flooding shocks were also reported in Lakes, Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal: Floods were reported as a main livelihoods shock in 48%, 62%, and 25% of assessed settlements in Lakes, Warrap, and Western Bahr el Ghazal where such shocks had been reported (44%, 63%, and 15% of assessed settlements respectively).

Such flooding has significant impacts to lives and livelihoods, causing displacement, disrupting livelihoods activities, and limiting movement – which hinders both affected communities’ access to services and humanitarian access to areas of operation. During the May-October 2022 period, flooding reportedly displaced more than 80,000 people in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, the most affected state in the country.²

Rising prices

From May to October 2022, the continuing impacts of the war in Ukraine, worsening macroeconomic conditions, supply-chain-impacting climatic events, and inflation among other factors, drove an increase in prices across South Sudan.³ In line with this

	WARRAP	WESTERN BAHR EL GHAZAL	N. BAHR EL GHAZAL	LAKES
SOME ITEMS TOO EXPENSIVE	56%	62%	68%	88%

in the region where KIs reported market access (98%), items being too expensive was reported as the primary challenge faced at the market in all four states. Consistent with these findings, ClIMIS aggregates of data on market prices during the reporting period show that prices for staples such as maize and sorghum increased by an average of 30.5% and 25.5% respectively, between May and October 2022 across the region.¹ Data from the REACH South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI), which monitors the presence of staples and their prices in markets throughout South Sudan, suggests that price increases for some staples were even more severe, with sorghum costing an average of 21% more across the region between May and October 2022 and maize costing 89% more.²

Continued conflict

While REACH AoK data did not reflect conflict as a widely reported type of shock for settlements in Greater Bahr el Ghazal between May and October 2022, other sources suggest that localized and sub-national conflict continued to drive needs in the region. In Warrap in particular, conflict in Greater Tonj and Twic likely impacted lives and livelihoods, driving displacement in both Twic and Greater Tonj and having potentially serious implications for food security in Greater Tonj.³ In Twic, where conflict dynamics rest in part on an interaction between political developments regarding the status of the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA), underlying vulnerabilities of affected communities and inter-communal dynamics, violence has seemingly had impacts for food security. Conflict events have reportedly resulted in the destruction of property and land – which can have consequences for communities' ability to rely on traditional livelihoods mechanisms to sustain themselves.⁴

In Greater Tonj, where conflict in late 2021 hindered populations' access to services and service providers' access to vulnerable populations, conflict during the reporting period generally occurred on the same timeline it has since 2019: spiking at the beginning and end of the May to mid-November rainy season, as reductions in floodwater allow for cattle keeper mobility while cattle camps are still in close proximity to each other and to settlements.⁵

Such continued incidences of violence have implications for food security outcomes in the region. In June 2022, FEWS NET projected that should inter-communal violence escalate in Greater Tonj, the consequent displacement and disruption to livelihoods activities and market functionality would increase the probability of Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, with pockets of Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).⁶ While a brief spike in conflict in June did not induce Phase 5 pockets in the October IPC analysis, populations in Greater Tonj nonetheless were estimated to be experiencing Phase 4 food insecurity in the current and both projection periods for that analysis.⁷

ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS & SERVICES

Continued food insecurity despite harvests

AoK findings and IPC outcome data indicate that food security outcomes in Greater Bahr el Ghazal remained poor in October 2022, when food needs are traditionally mitigated after the beginning of the September to November harvests of sorghum and other cereals.⁸

In May 2022, which is the beginning of, or the period immediately prior to, the lean season for most settlements in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, food security outcomes were expectedly poor in the region, with IPC Phase 4 outcomes projected for April-July in 16 of the region's 22 counties, during the March 2022 IPC analysis.⁹ While the October 2022 IPC analysis suggests outcomes improved across much of the region, as expected due to the beginning of the harvest period, counties most affected by conflict and flooding – notably in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap – continued to face emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes between October and November 2022.¹⁰

AoK findings suggest that for those settlements in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap where most people had reportedly been unable to access enough food in October 2022 (54% and 61% respectively), the primary reason was flooding. While AoK findings between May and October 2022 do not reflect the impact of conflict on the ability of communities to engage in food-insecurity mitigating livelihood activities, areas which were most affected by conflict also were among the areas classified by the IPC as experiencing the worst food security outcomes.¹¹



34%: Proportion of assessed settlements in Greater Bahr el Ghazal where KIs reported MOST people were able to access enough food in May 2022



41%: Proportion of assessed settlements in Greater Bahr el Ghazal where KIs reported MOST people were able to access enough food in October 2022

Flooding- and conflict-related shocks which occurred at the end of the reporting period likely interrupted or diminished communities' harvest ability, resulting in continued high levels of food insecurity even after the end of the lean season.

The impact of these shocks on cultivation for food security is underscored by KI responses on questions about normal year livelihoods activities. In both Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap, across the May-October 2022 period, KIs in nearly all assessed settlements (>98%) reported that in a normal year, most people in their

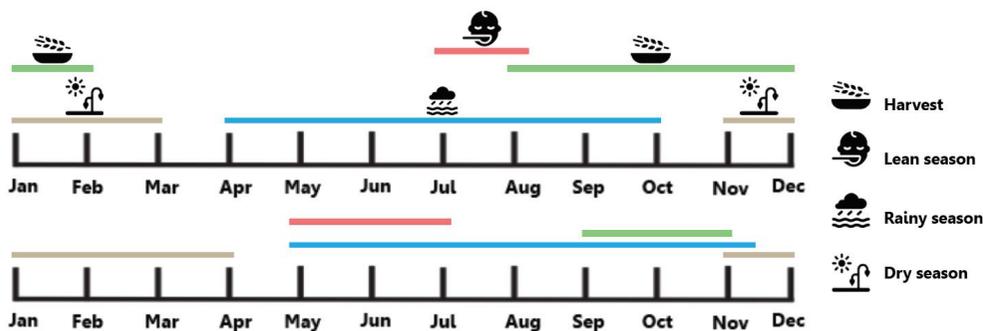
settlement would engage in cultivation. However, during October data collection, when September-November harvests should result in food availability in agricultural communities, KIs in only 74% and 49% of assessed settlements in Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal respectively, reported that most people in their community were accessing food via cultivation.

Purchased food & market access

Findings indicate that from May to October, most assessed settlements in Greater Bahr el Ghazal (averaging 67% of assessed settlements per month throughout the reporting period) relied on markets most during the lean season (July-September), with a significant proportion of assessed settlements in each state continuing to do so after the September-November harvests (averaging 51% of assessed settlements). Data from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) suggests that such continued reliance on market-purchases for food is atypical for Greater Bahr el Ghazal livelihoods zones, at least since 2018.¹

In this context of relative market reliance, economic shocks may have had potentially significant impacts on communities’ ability to access food via market purchases, which would be of particular importance given the continued food insecurity in Greater Bahr el Ghazal despite harvests. Throughout Greater Bahr el Ghazal across the May-October 2022 period, KIs in 71% of assessed settlements reported that people in their settlement experienced challenges at the marketplace due to items being too expensive or being unaffordable, making expense the most reported marketplace challenge. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal in particular, the percentage of assessed settlements with KIs reporting item expense as a marketplace challenge rose significantly in July, the height of the lean season.² This suggests that at least in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the expense of items, perhaps coupled with rising prices, was most significant for communities at the moment when they most needed to rely on the market as a coping mechanism.

Figure 2: Seasonal calendar, Greater Bahr el Ghazal³

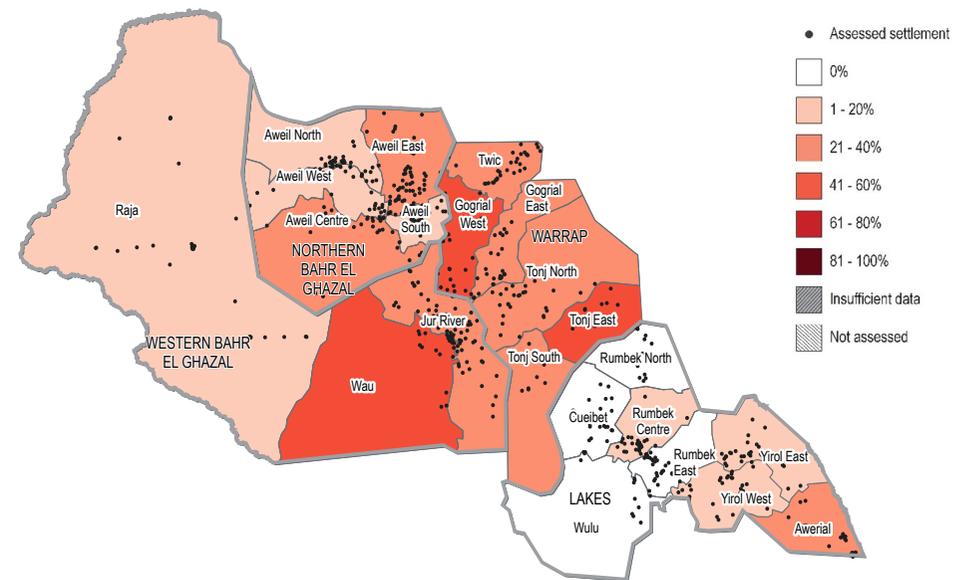


Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Flooding- and conflict-related shocks may have also resulted in decreased access to services not directly related to food security. In Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal, KIs in nearly half of assessed settlements (43% and 48% respectively), reported that there were no functional boreholes present in their settlement.

Moreover, KIs in assessed settlements across Greater Bahr el Ghazal reported poor latrine usage in their communities. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, KIs in 93% of assessed settlements reported that less than half or none of the people in their community had used latrines in the month prior to October 2022 data collection. In Lakes, this number was 84%, in Warrap 76% and in Western Bahr el Ghazal 49%.

Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements where most people relied on an unimproved water source per county



Generally, latrine use seems to have been least commonly reported in assessed settlements in areas most affected by flooding, in line with research in other humanitarian response contexts highlighting the impact of floodwaters on sanitation infrastructure.⁴

Further in line with this, findings from ad-hoc assessments conducted by REACH in South Sudan in quarters 3 and 4 of 2022 triangulate secondary sources that report

that poor sanitation, coupled with sitting floodwater, contributes to increased disease risk while simultaneously limiting access and supply options for healthcare providers in flood-affected areas.¹ For instance, albeit anecdotal, focus group discussion participants in Jur River reported perceiving that open defecation in floodwaters had led to people in their communities falling ill. In Rumbek East, a REACH assessment on the presence and functionality of health and nutrition centers found that, during the June-September rainy season, and until the time of data collection in November 2022, flooding had prevented re-supply to 8 of the county's 14 health centers.²

Protection

Conflict-related shocks also may have resulted in increased protection concerns for affected populations in Greater Bahr el Ghazal. In Warrap, which saw the most conflict-related shocks, KIs in more than half of assessed settlements throughout the May-October 2022 period reported that most people did not feel safe.³ In Lakes and Northern Bahr el Ghazal on the other hand, KIs in most settlements reported that most people did feel safe throughout the same period. In Western Bahr el Ghazal, KIs in approximately half of assessed settlements reported that most people felt safe throughout the May-October 2022 period. While no major conflict-related shocks were recorded in Western Bahr el Ghazal during the period, findings suggest that sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV) and family separation may have driven protection concerns there. During October data collection, KIs in 20% of assessed settlements across Western Bahr el Ghazal reported SGBV as the main safety concern for women in the settlement. In Jur River county, that number rose to 34%, the highest reported in any county during that month.

Protection concerns may have had consequences for assessed settlements' humanitarian situation more broadly. In Warrap, which had the highest proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that most people did not feel safe in October, KIs in 35% of assessed settlements reported that people in their settlement could not access their preferred water point because they feared for their safety. This compares to 12% of assessed settlements in Lakes State, 2% of assessed settlements in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and 3% of assessed settlements in Western Bahr el Ghazal during that same month. Similarly in Warrap, for assessed settlements in which KIs reported that people faced challenges visiting the market in October (61%), in a significant number those assessed settlements, these challenges were reported to be protection-related. In these assessed settlements, KIs in 23% reported that conflict or intercommunal violence posed a challenge faced in traveling to the marketplace; KIs in 30% of assessed settlements reported criminality; and KIs in 8% of assessed settlements reported sexual violence or harrasment as a challenge. Comparatively, while data from other states in Greater Bahr el Ghazal shows a similar

proportion of assessed settlements with KIs reporting that people faced challenges visiting the market in October (with the exception of Western Bahr el Ghazal, with KIs reporting this in 26% of assessed settlements), the proportion of these settlements in which KIs reported those challenges were protection-related was negligible.

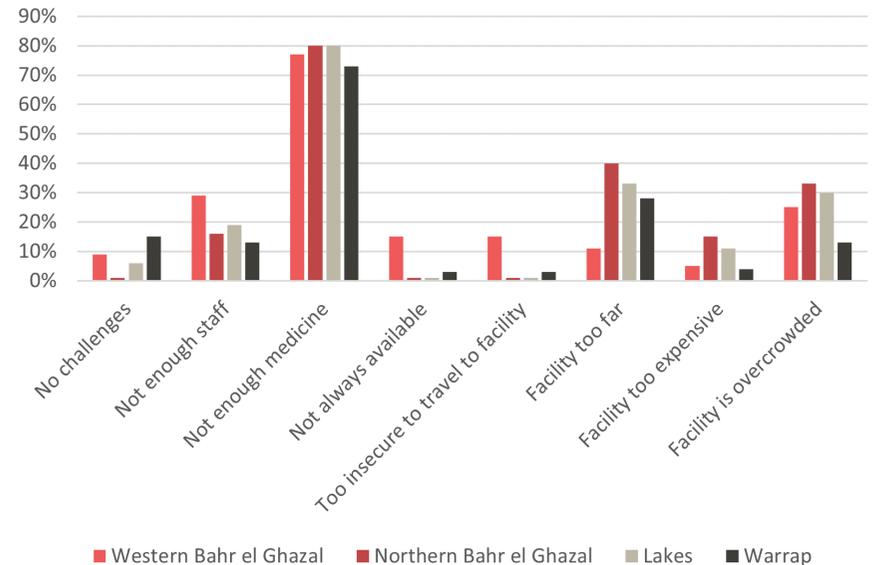
35%

Proportion of assessed settlements in Warrap in October where KIs reported that any people were unable to access their preferred water point because they feared for their safety.

Access to facilities, limited access to healthcare

The proportion of assessed settlements without access to healthcare and nutrition facilities was negligible (reported in less than 1% of assessed settlements between May-October 2022). However, barriers to healthcare access were widely reported throughout the reporting period. In October, KIs in an average of only 6% of assessed settlements across the region reported that there were no barriers to accessing healthcare at their local facility during the previous month, down from an average of 14% in May. In October, insufficient medicine was the most reported access barrier, reported in more than one-third of assessed settlements where barriers to healthcare had been reported.

Figure 3: Most commonly reported challenges at health facilities, by state, October 2022



Changes in humanitarian funding and barriers to re-supply such as flooding may have exacerbated limited access to medicine during the reporting period. While floodwaters will likely recede towards the end of 2022 with the onset of the dry season, the impacts of changes in humanitarian funding levels are likely to continue to affect healthcare access. For example, in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, funding changes have resulted in a significant decrease in services at Aweil State Hospital, which provides the only hospital services in a state of 1.2 million people.¹ In Rumbek East, a REACH assessment in November 2022 (but which reflected on changes to service provision throughout 2022, including during the May-October 2022 period) found that changes in funding have resulted in the disruption in the functionality of 7 of 21 healthcare facilities in the county, according to a service provider KI. The same KI reported that an additional 8 facilities went without re-supply during the rainy season due to flood-driven access constraints.²

COPING & ADAPTATION

Reflecting the existing vulnerabilities experienced by some communities in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, and the interplay between those vulnerabilities and shocks which occurred between May and October 2022, findings suggest that many communities in the region commonly resorted to various harmful coping mechanisms to meet needs

Figure 3: Most commonly reported consumption coping strategies, by state, October 2022

	WARRAP	WESTERN BAHR EL GHAZAL	N. BAHR EL GHAZAL	LAKES
Rely on less preferred, less expensive food	37%	30%	71%	39%
Limit portion sizes at mealtimes	56%	56%	72%	61%
Reduce number of meals eaten in a day	65%	49%	82%	71%
Collecting wild food	37%	17%	5%	36%
Skip entire days without eating	12%	22%	4%	23%
Adults do not eat so children can eat	13%	42%	4%	27%

and access basic services.

In October 2022, the use of consumption-based coping strategies by most people in the settlement was reported in all settlements (100%) where food access was reportedly inadequate (an average of 58% of settlements across the region). Throughout the May-October 2022 period, KIs in the majority of those settlements across the region reported that most people in their communities were limiting portion size at mealtimes, and/or reducing the number of meals eaten per day. Reduction of the number of meals consumed per day was most reported by KIs in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, in 82% of assessed settlements where inadequate access to food had been reported (54%) in October. In Lakes and Warrap in October, in a significant proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate food access (56% and 61% respectively), KIs in 36% and 37% of assessed settlements respectively reported that most people were mitigating food consumption gaps using wild foods. By itself, consumption of wild foods is not necessarily indicative of negative consumption coping. However, it can serve as an inference point which can indicate very poor food access when people are consuming wild foods known to make them sick. To this end, AoK data indicates that wild food consumption may be more indicative of a worse food security situation in Warrap than in Lakes. In October, KIs in 26% of assessed settlements in Warrap reported that people in their settlement had eaten wild foods which made them sick in the previous month. In Lakes, this proportion of assessed settlements was 10%.

Areas experiencing compounded shocks may see more harmful coping mechanisms, or increased vulnerability driving erosive coping. In Warrap, which experienced a combination of flooding- and conflict-related shocks, findings suggest that people may have resorted to displacement as a coping mechanism. In July 2022, KIs in 32% of assessed settlements reported that at least some proportion of the settlement’s population had been displaced in the previous month, with a lack of food being the primary reported reason for displacement.

Changes in humanitarian assistance

As the war in Ukraine, global macroeconomic conditions, and increased humanitarian needs in contexts around the world, among other factors, limit the amount of funding available for the South Sudan response, diminished access to humanitarian assistance has seemingly become a factor affecting livelihoods in the country given the heavy reliance of affected communities on humanitarian assistance.³ In line with this, AoK findings indicate that changes to, or loss of, access to humanitarian assistance have increasingly affected communities in the assessed locations between May and October 2022. Indeed, while loss of assistance was reported as a factor with consequences for the ability to engage in livelihoods in zero assessed settlements in May, KIs in 14% of assessed settlements reported this in October (40% of assessed settlements which reportedly experienced a shock in Western Bahr el Ghazal (63% of assessed

settlements); 10% in Lakes (44% of assessed settlements); and 5% in Warrap (63% of assessed settlements)).

In Western Bahr el Ghazal for instance, where funding gaps, coupled with the state's relative food security, resulted in the reduction of food aid; changes in humanitarian assistance was particularly commonly reported as a factor impacting livelihoods in assessed settlements in the month prior to data collection.¹ In settlements where KIs reported the occurrence of a factor negatively impacting livelihoods in the 30 days prior to data collection, the percentage of settlements in which KIs reported that the factor was related to changes in assistance increased from 0% in May, to 19% in June, 28% in July and 40% in October 2022.

The negative impact of changes in aid on livelihoods was not as commonly reported in the other three states in the region. However, secondary source reporting and discussions with service provider key informants suggest that such changes are a factor impacting livelihoods in locations throughout the region and country.²



0%: Proportion of assessed settlements in Western Bahr el Ghazal where KIs reported that changes in humanitarian assistance was a factor negatively impacting livelihoods in May 2022.



40%: Proportion of assessed settlements in Western Bahr el Ghazal where KIs reported that changes in humanitarian assistance was a factor negatively impacting livelihoods in October 2022.

CONCLUSION

Findings suggest that a fourth year of persistent and flash flooding, rising prices driven by both macroeconomic and factors internal to South Sudan, changes in humanitarian aid, and both seasonal and spontaneous endemic violence and conflict continued to drive food security and livelihoods needs in Greater Bahr el Ghazal during the May-October 2022 reporting period.

These drivers interacted to spur needs throughout the region, but were seemingly most impactful in Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, where the combination of flooding and conflict, or the presence of large-scale flooding, drove needs which findings suggest were largely unmitigated by the September-November harvests. Compounding these needs were reported challenges accessing healthcare due to drug shortages even when communities could access healthcare facilities, indicating that

access to healthcare sites cannot be used as a proxy for access to healthcare. Findings indicate that underlying vulnerability, compounded by the shocks and stressors experienced during the reporting period, likely resulted in community employment of harmful or erosive coping mechanisms such as reduction in the number of meals eaten per day or distress migration – driven at least in some areas of Warrap by a reported lack of access to food.

In the coming period, the dry season may bring with it potential risks for the region, as well as factors which may mitigate needs. Increased mobility for organized and non-organized armed actors will plausibly drive needs, particularly in areas of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap where harvests seemingly did not effectively mitigate food insecurity. On the other hand, the probable receding of floodwaters accompanying the dry season may ease supply routes which could have favourable effects on access to food in market-dependent areas, which findings suggest concerns a considerable share of settlements in the region.

Altogether, findings from the May-October 2022 period suggest that if South Sudan enters a fifth year of “atypical” climatic shocks in 2023 in the form of significant floods of the sort which have occurred since 2019, and if seasonal cycles of conflict continue to affect communities throughout Greater Bahr el Ghazal, traditional livelihoods mechanisms alone may not sufficiently mitigate food security needs. Hazards such as conflict, flooding and rising prices have seemingly contributed to significant underlying vulnerability in some communities throughout the region, potentially exacerbated by changes to aid funding, which reporting suggests was a factor which negatively influenced some peoples’ ability to engage in livelihoods activities. These factors may have influenced poor food security outcomes despite harvests, and difficulty using cash purchases to cope, due to inflation and the expense of market items. These factors have reportedly also impacted affected populations’ ability to access services, with impacts for WASH, protection as a result of shocks, and health, due to limited medicine stores, despite access to healthcare facilities.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative 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. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

ENDNOTES

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- ¹ OCHA. [“Humanitarian Needs Overview South Sudan: 2022.”](#) February 2022. 6.
- ² OCHA. [“South Sudan Flooding Snapshot No. 2.”](#) 11 October 2022; UNOSAT. [“Preliminary imagery analysis \(4-8 October 2022\).”](#) 10 October 2022.
- ³ Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED). Dashboard, available [here](#); CCCM Cluster. [“South Sudan Monthly Sitrep – September 2022.”](#) 18 October 2022.
- ⁴ IOM. “South Sudan Population Estimates.” 2022; IOM. “Displacement Tracking Matrix – Round 11.” 3 June 2022.
- ⁵ OCHA. [“Humanitarian Needs Overview South Sudan: 2022.”](#) February 2022. 48-50; OCHA. [“Humanitarian Needs Overview South Sudan: 2023”](#) November 2022. 36; total population calculated using IPC findings; Note: the methodological approach used to calculate the intersectoral PiN for 2023 and 2022 differed. In 2023, the PiN was calculated using the JIAF 2.0 methodology, while JIAF 1 scenario B was used in 2022.
- ⁶ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for February - March 2022 and Projections for April - July 2022.”](#) 9 April 2022.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ FEWS NET. [“South Sudan Food Security Outlook – June 2022 to January 2023.”](#) June 2022. 1
- ⁹ Ibid., 4; discussions with a service provider key informant.
- ¹⁰ Radio Tamazuj. [“Over 1000 displaced in Abyei as SSPDF deploys.”](#) 15 October 2022; Sudan Tribune. [“Tonj community urge peaceful measures after deadly clashes.”](#) 29 June 2022; REACH. [“Tonj South and Tonj East rapid assessment”](#) September 2021; Joshua Craze. [“And Everything Became War.”](#) 30. December 2022.
- ¹¹ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.”](#) 3 November 2022.

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- ¹ To calculate the percentage of AoK coverage, the total number of settlements per county is based on OCHA settlement lists in addition to new settlements mapped by KIs each month.
- ² Payam is the administrative unit below the county level.
- ³ OCHA. [“Humanitarian Needs Overview South Sudan: 2022.”](#) February 2022. 48-50.
- ⁴ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for February - March 2022 and Projections for April - July 2022.”](#) 9 April 2022.
- ⁵ Discussions with a service provider key informant.
- ⁶ OCHA. [“South Sudan Flooding Snapshot No. 2.”](#) 11 October 2022; IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.”](#) 3 November 2022.
- ⁷ Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED). Dashboard, available [here](#); OCHA. [“South Sudan Flooding Snapshot No. 2.”](#) 11 October 2022; IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute](#)

[Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.”](#) 3 November 2022.

- ⁸ UNOSAT. [“Preliminary imagery analysis \(14-18 April\).”](#) 20 May 2022.
- ⁹ OCHA. [“South Sudan Flooding Snapshot No. 2.”](#) 11 October 2022
- ¹⁰ Ibid.

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- ¹ OCHA. [“South Sudan Flooding Snapshot No. 2.”](#) 11 October 2022.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ FEWS NET. [“South Sudan: Food Security Outlook Update.”](#) August 2022. 4.
- ⁴ CliMIS South Sudan. [“Exchange Rate.”](#) Source: FAO. Accessed 14 December 2022.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ KIs were asked to report up to 3 main food sources.

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- ¹ KIs were asked to report up to 3 main food sources. CliMIS South Sudan. [“Market Prices.”](#) Source: MAFS, WFP, CONCERN WORLDWIDE, AECI, FEWS NET, ACTED, AVSI, IRC, NPAID, NBS. Accessed 14 December 2022.
- ² REACH. “JMMI price monitoring – Greater Bahr el Ghazal (May-October 2022).” 2022.
- ³ Radio Tamazuj. [“Over 1000 displaced in Abyei as SSPDF deploys.”](#) 15 October 2022; Sudan Tribune. [“Tonj community urge peaceful measures after deadly clashes.”](#) 29 June 2022; REACH. [“Tonj South and Tonj East rapid assessment”](#) September 2021; Joshua Craze. [“And Everything Became War.”](#) 30. December 2022.
- ⁴ UNMISS. [“UNMISS strongly condemns deadly fresh violence between Dinka Ngok and Dinka Twic youth groups along border of Abyei and Warrap State.”](#) 14 October 2022; Internal.
- ⁵ FEWS NET. [“Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan.”](#) 2018; Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED). Dashboard, available [here](#).
- ⁶ FEWS NET. [“South Sudan Food Security Outlook – June 2022 to January 2023.”](#) June 2022. 10.
- ⁷ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.”](#) 3 November 2022.
- ⁸ FEWS NET. [“Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan.”](#) 2018.
- ⁹ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for February - March 2022 and Projections for April - July 2022.”](#) 9 April 2022.
- ¹⁰ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.”](#) 3 November 2022.
- ¹¹ Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED). Dashboard, available [here](#); IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.”](#) 3 November 2022.

ENDNOTES (CONTINUED)

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¹ FEWS NET. [“Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan.”](#) 2018.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. Note: Greater Bahr el Ghazal contains 3 overlapping livelihoods zones: Western plains groundnuts, sesame, sorghum; Western floodplain sorghum and cattle; and Ironstone plateau agro-pastoral. The seasonal tables referenced approximately comprise these zones.

⁴ iDE. [“Linking climate vulnerability to latrine functionality and FSM in rural Cambodia.”](#) 2020. 3.

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¹ iDE. [“Linking climate vulnerability to latrine functionality and FSM in rural Cambodia.”](#) 2020. 3; Rumbek East and Jur River reports planned for publication in March 2023; discussions with a service provider key informant.

² Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED). Dashboard, available [here](#).

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¹ MSF. [“British aid cuts threaten hundreds of healthcare facilities in South Sudan.”](#) 1 June 2022.

² Planned for publication in March 2023.

³ FEWS NET. [“South Sudan: Food Security Outlook Update.”](#) August 2022. 4.

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¹ IPC. [“South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for February - March 2022 and Projections for April - July 2022.”](#) 9 April 2022; discussions with a service provider key informant.

² MSF. [“British aid cuts threaten hundreds of healthcare facilities in South Sudan.”](#) 1 June 2022; discussions with a service provider key informant.