

Situation Overview: Unity State, South Sudan

May 2017

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

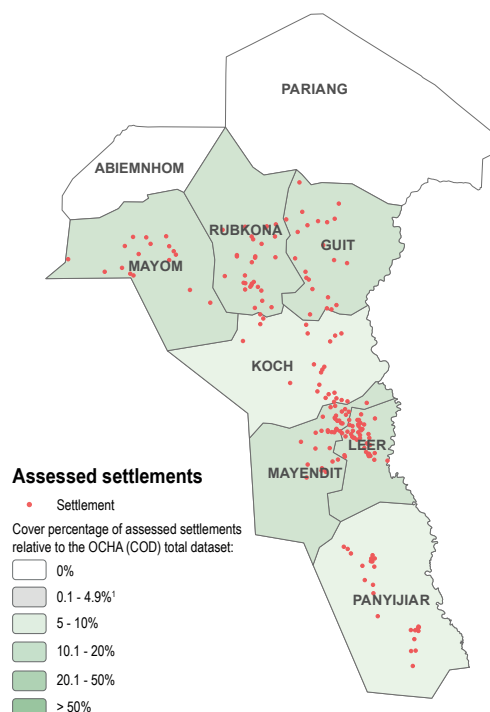
Introduction

Displacement trends, population needs and humanitarian access have all been negatively affected by the insecurity resulting from the ongoing conflict in Unity State, which began in July 2016.

To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites, REACH is conducting assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015. The data is being collected through interviews on a monthly basis from communities across the Greater Upper Nile region, Greater Equatoria region and Western Bahr el Ghazal.

Between 17 and 30 May 2017, REACH interviewed a total of 349 Key Informants (KIs) from 197 settlements situated in 7 of the 9 counties in Unity State. In the Bentiu Protection of Civilians site (Bentiu PoC), 307 KIs were interviewed, and 42 were interviewed in Nyal. The findings were triangulated through four focus group discussions (FGDs), secondary data and previous REACH assessments of hard-to-reach areas of Unity State.

Since 91% of the respondents interviewed had arrived at their formal displacement site within the last 30 days, they had up-to-date information about the village of former residence. This information, therefore, provides an accurate understanding of



Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Unity State, May 2017

the current displacement and population dynamics. The remaining 9% had recent information about certain villages through contact with someone (usually a relative) that is currently living there.

This Situation Overview focuses on changes in humanitarian needs observed since early 2017. The first section analyses displacement

trends in May, and the second section evaluates the population dynamics in the assessed communities, as well as access to food and basic services for both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and local communities.

Population Movement and Displacement

Main displacement towards Bentiu PoC and Panyijjar continued during the month of May, but seemed to have slightly decreased over the course of the previous months. This may be indicative of slight improvements in the security and the upscale in food distributions, which improved food security situation in some central Unity state counties. Despite apparent improvements, the security situation in Unity

Figure 1: Top three reasons reported by new arrivals for leaving previous location, May 2017¹

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Insecurity | 68% |
| 2. Lack of food | 49% |
| 3. Lack of health services | 47% |



Figure 2: Top three reasons reported by new arrivals for coming to their current location, May 2017¹

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Security | 65% |
| 2. Access to healthcare | 53% |
| 3. Access to food | 51% |



State remains highly volatile at the time of writing.

In Bentiu PoC, the number of new arrivals (people entering the PoC with luggage and intention to stay) decreased from 2,180 new arrivals in March to 774 in May.² Similarly, in Panyijjar, which is traditionally a common destination for IDPs fleeing conflict in southern Unity State, REACH port monitoring³ observed a decline in new arrivals from 2,520 in March, down to 761 in April and 972 in May.⁴ These numbers suggest, that less people are being displaced which might be indicative of slight improvements in security situation in parts of Unity State and the upscale in food distributions in counties of central Unity State since March.

Overall, Bentiu PoC population has seen a decrease in numbers since March, indicative of return movements. As a continuation of the trend beginning in March, the number of people counted by IOM head count suggests a decline in numbers of people permanently living inside the PoC. In May 117,046 have been counted as compared to 121,225 in March,⁵ which represents a decline of 4,179 inhabitants over the course of 2 months. This trend is likely attributable to the beginning of the cultivation season during which people return to their settlements to prepare the land for cultivation for the planting season,

1 Respondents could choose more than one option.

2 IOM, Bentiu PoC Site Profile, May 2017 and March 2017.

3. REACH, Nyal Port Monitoring, May 2017.

4. These are indicative trends; REACH does not record all arrivals and departures.

5. IOM, Bentiu PoC Population Count records March and May 2017



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METHODOLOGY

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

Information for this report was collected from key informants in the Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site and Nyal in Unity State throughout May 2017.

The first phase of the assessment methodology comprised a participatory mapping exercise to map the relevant settlements in Unity 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, that settlement was not included in reporting. Descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were then used to analyse the data.

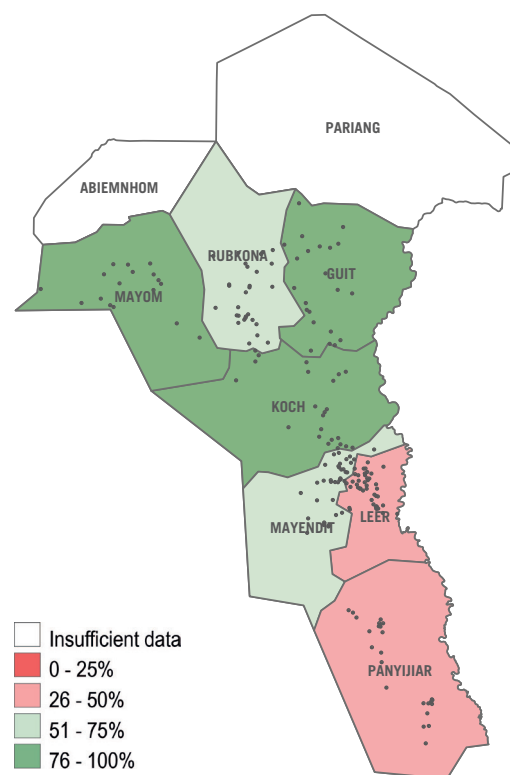
It must be noted that this represents **a change in methodology as of December 2016**, as REACH previously analysed data at the community level. This means that **this report is not directly comparable with Situation Overviews from before December 2016**.

despite pronounced insecurity in the area. The vast majority of those leaving the PoC (mainly in Rubkona and Guit) are female,⁶ unlike in demographic profile of those leaving Nyal where gender distribution is more even. This is likely attributable to ongoing forced recruitment in the north of Unity State, which reportedly prevents many males from leaving the PoC.

New arrivals to Bentiu PoC were mostly from Leer and Mayom⁷, which is likely attributable to volatile security situation in Leer and rapid deterioration in food security and security in Mayom. In Nyal, most of the new arrivals came from conflict-affected Leer (56%) and Mayendit (41%),⁸ which is consistent with previous months.

Insecurity remains the largest push factor for displacement in May, as cited by 68% of new arrivals. Such high proportions of new arrivals citing insecurity as main reason to leave their previous location suggests that large parts of Unity State remain highly volatile and populations fear upsurge in violence. As has been the case in previous months, second most prevalent push factor has been food insecurity, cited by 49%.

Although access to food has been mentioned as one of the most important pull factors to come to Bentiu PoC, access to food to new arrivals remained limited (the last registration of new arrivals to access food distributions and other services in Bentiu PoC took place in July 2016). Approximately 6,700 unregistered individuals are estimated to be living inside the PoC, most of which arrived at the end of 2016



Map 2: Proportion of settlements reporting an IDP presence, May 2017

and early 2017.⁹ Despite this limited access to food for new arrivals, FGDs conducted in Bentiu PoC suggest that many of them prefer to stay inside the PoC, due to insecurity in their home county and perceived physical protection inside the PoC. However, in the absence of access to food distributions, those displaced families that do not have a support network (usually family members) inside the PoC to share food rations might see themselves forced to return to insecure areas of Unity State. Regular registrations of new residents would facilitate

access to food distribution in case of renewed displacements.

However, not all displaced people are able or willing to undertake the risky journey to formal displacement sites. Indicative of increase in internal displacement, in Leer and in Mayendit the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence has increased from 39% of assessed settlements in April to 49% in May. FGD participants described that the road towards formal displacement sites is high risk; incidents of lootings and killings along the way are a common occurrence. Many people, often the most vulnerable and their caregivers, might therefore flee to other settlements in the same county or hide in the bushes or swamps, with minimal to no access to basic services, hoping for an improvement in the security situation and a quick return to their settlements. Regular patrols along main displacement routes could help reduce the risk of lootings and attacks along the way and ensure safer passage to displacement sites.

Situation in Assessed Communities

Demographic profile

Remaining population in assessed villages

Of the settlements assessed in May, 9% reported that the entire population had left the area. Of those settlements reporting that at least some of the population still remained there, 58% reported a population decrease of 50% or more, suggesting that depopulation

6. IOM, Bentiu DTM records May 2017.

7 IOM, Bentiu PoC Site Profile, May 2017.

8. REACH, Nyal Port Monitoring, May 2017.

9. Bentiu ICWG, Advocacy paper- Biometric Registration of Unregistered IDPs in the Bentiu PoC site, May 2017.

remains pronounced in Unity State.

The majority of assessed settlements (78%) with still some population remaining reported that most of the local community continued to live in their own home, while 17% reported that the majority were living in another home in the same village. Comparable to the previous two months (March and April), still 5% of assessed settlements reported that the majority of people in the settlement were living in the bush, which however represented an improvement since the beginning of the year, when 16% and 23% reported the same in January and February, respectively. In May, all of these settlements reporting majority of the remaining population to be living in the bush are located in conflict-affected Leer and Mayendit. This is consistent with FGDs conducted with new arrivals from conflict-affected areas of Unity State, which indicated that remaining population's first response to approaching fighting is to flee to the bush or to the swamp. They often remain there for several days until security situation improves before returning to the settlements or, in case of continuous insecurity, before moving to a more permanent displacement location.

IDP population in assessed villages

Of the settlements assessed, 39% reported the presence of IDPs in their settlement of knowledge in May, which is comparable to the previous months (31% in April and 33% in March). The highest proportion of IDP presence, as illustrated by Map 2, had been reported in Panyijiar, as well as Leer and Mayendit, reflective of ongoing displacement of

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence, May 2017



39% of assessed settlements reported IDP presence

local populations within central Unity State or from central Unity State down to comparatively more stable Panyijiar.

The gender distribution of the IDP population in assessed settlements was unbalanced. Of the assessed settlements reporting an IDP presence, 63% also reported that the majority or entirety of the IDP population was female. This uneven gender balance of IDP communities is most likely a direct result of the conflict, as many men and boys have been recruited by armed actors operating in Unity State. Women in FGDs undertaken in Bentiu PoC explained that the burden on female heads of household of sole caregivers and breadwinners weighs heavy, especially when displacement has led to the breakdown of support structures, which are usually provided by family and community.

Food security

The food security situation in May has remained similar to April, with 54% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food (compared to 57% the preceding month). This indicates that the up-scale in food distributions through rapid response missions, which followed the declaration of localized famine in February, is successfully preventing a relapse

into previous lower proportions of 45% in March and 39% in February.

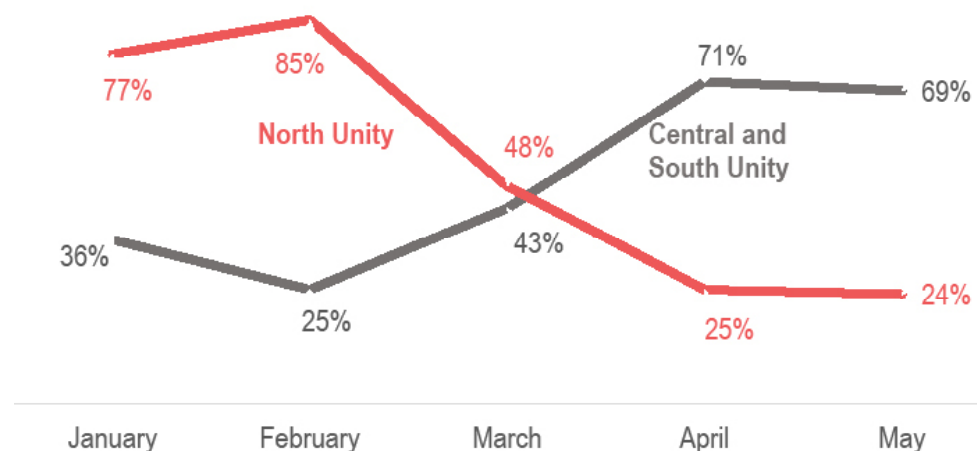
Although the proportion of settlements indicating adequate access to food suggests an improvement in food security situation in Unity State since February, it must be noted that there are notable differences between developments in central and south of Unity State (Koch, Mayendit, Leer and Panyijiar), as opposed to the north of Unity State (Mayom, Rubkona, Guit). In the central and southern part of Unity State, as shown by Figure 4, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food continuously increased since February, from 25% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access up to 69% in May. This increase in food availability is most likely

a direct result of the large upscale in food in humanitarian assistance in Leer and Mayendit during the month of May.¹⁰

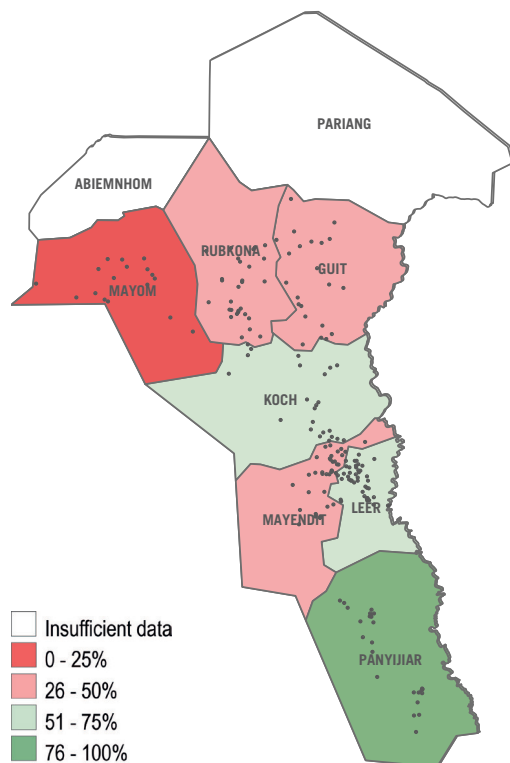
Unlike in central and south of Unity State, the food security situation in the north of Unity State seemed to have deteriorated rapidly since February, with far less assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in April (25%) and May (24%), compared to the months before (e.g. February at 85%). This is likely attributable to the depletion of already low food stocks aggravated by the continuation of the lean season, during which crops are not yet ready for harvest, while food distribution amounts might have not been upscaled accordingly.

Of those population reporting insufficient

Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food, North vs. Central and South Unity State, Jan-May 2017



10 WFP, RRM update, May 2017.



Map 3: Proportion of settlements reporting adequate access to food, May 2017

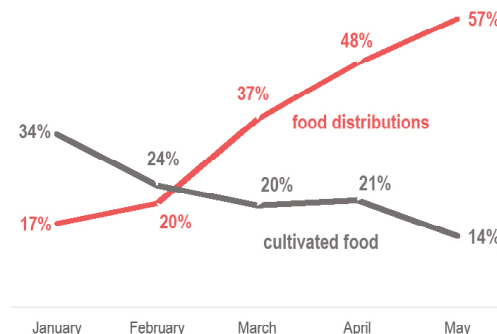
access to food, insecurity continues to be the most prevalent reason for this. Thirty-nine per cent of those settlements reported that their crops had been destroyed by fighting, while 18% indicated it was too unsafe to access the land. As indicated by FGD participants the outbreak of heavy fighting in July 2016 disrupted cultivation activities in large areas of Unity State. According to the Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission, the nationwide harvest outputs in 2016 have been 10% below the output in 2015, mainly due to outbreak

of fighting in July 2016, which interrupted cultivation activities and led to large-scale displacement of farmers.¹¹ Another 30% reported that natural disaster (flooding) had destroyed harvests during the previous planting season. Natural disaster as main cause for low cultivation levels in 2016 had been most prevalent in Mayom, where consistently over 85% of assessed settlements cited this as main reason since the beginning of the year (86% in May). Lower than average food stock levels are consequently a leading cause for severe food insecurity in Unity State in 2017.

As illustrated by Figure 5, the majority of assessed settlements (57%) reported food distributions as primary food source in May. This was the highest proportion ever recorded by AoK data, indicative of increasing reliance on humanitarian food aid assistance for subsistence. At the same time, cultivated food has been cited by a continuously decreasing proportion of assessed settlements as reported primary food source since the beginning of the year (14% in May). This is likely attributable to the rapid depletion of cultivated food stock during the lean season.

As reliance on food aid increased, safe access to and from food distribution sites remained a key concern. To access distribution sites people (mostly women) often walk several hours up to several days. FGD participants in Bentiu PoC, described that lootings along the way or attacks on villages directly after food distributions are common, which deprives families of their

Figure 5: Primary food source per proportion of assessed settlements, Jan-May 2017



necessary food ration for the month. As long as safety and stability is not restored in Unity State, these practices will further undermine humanitarian efforts to provide lifesaving aid.

All settlements reported that most people were using a number of concerning food consumption related strategies to cope with the lack of food, including eating wild foods such as water lilies and khodra (29%), reducing the number of meals per day (64%), and skipping all meals a day entirely (20%). FGDs on current coping strategies, which have been conducted at the end of April, disclosed that coping strategies related to increase of resource capacity like

Figure 6: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting lack of agricultural inputs, May 2017



57% of assessed settlements reported lack of agricultural inputs

selling assets or livestock are completely eroded, thus further impacting the populations' food security situation.

The food security situation is likely to deteriorate throughout the next weeks and months as the lean season continues. Therefore, food assistance, especially in northern Unity State, where the situation seems to be rapidly deteriorating, would need to be maintained and, ideally, scaled-up¹².

Livelihoods

Although 82% of assessed settlements reportedly have access to land, lack of agricultural inputs in more than half of the assessed settlements (57%) is hampering sustainable livelihoods activities. This is supported by a recent rapid market assessment in Koch, Rubkona and Guit, during which lack of agricultural inputs, lack of access to land due to insecurity and birds/pests have been identified as main constraints to crop production.¹³ Such high percentages of settlements reporting a lack of agricultural inputs are particularly worrisome, as the rainy season - traditionally the season for cultivation - usually starts around May.

Low cultivation levels caused by conflict and flooding in 2016 have been one of the main causes for extreme food insecurity in Unity State in early 2017. Therefore, targeted seeds and tools distributions to stable high-land pockets during this year's cultivation season would be of crucial importance to ensure higher cultivation levels, which will be the basis of food security for the next lean season. It must be

11 FAO/WFP, Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to South Sudan, May 2017.

12 For more information on the food security situation in Unity State, please refer to REACH, Situation Overview: Unity State, April 2017 and REACH, Situation Overview:

Unity State, March 2017.

13 DRC, Rapid Market Assessment Report to investigate the feasibility of cash based interventions in Guit, Koch and Rubkona Counties, April 2017.

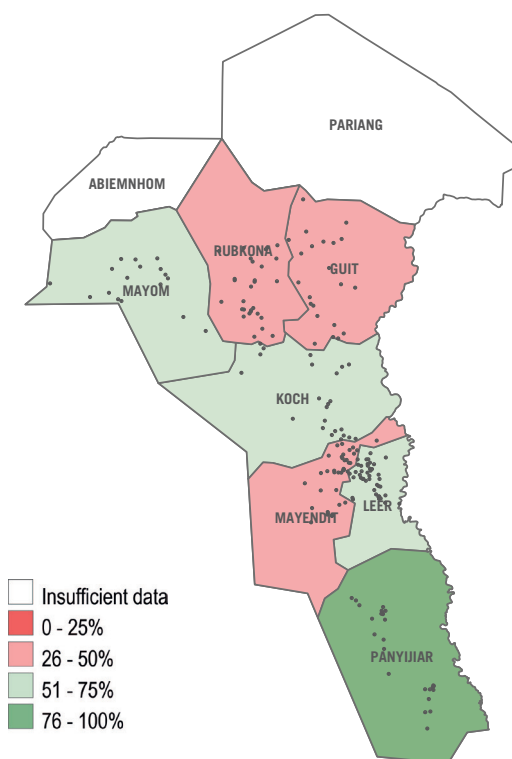
noted however, that livelihoods interventions, are strongly dependent on the security context.

Protection

The security situation in Unity State remained volatile during the month of May, due to presence of armed elements in central Unity State and forced recruitment in the northern part. This is likely the reason for the low levels of assessed settlements (39%) reporting perceived physical protection was available. This is comparable to April (37%) and represented a steady deterioration in perceived security since February (46%) and January (63%).

For men, injury and killing has been cited as main protection concern in 57% of assessed settlements. As a likely reflection of volatile security situation in central Unity State, killing and injury appeared to be most prevalent in Leer and Mayendit, where 84% (Mayendit) and 93% (Leer) of assessed settlements reported this as main security concern. Second most common risk for men appeared to be forced recruitment which has been reported by 27% of assessed settlements, predominantly in Guit, Rubkona, Koch and Mayom. A recent assessment undertaken by the Danish Refugee Council on the protection situation in Mankien in Mayom county, suggested that idleness of young men, due to lack of income generating activities as well as education, is a contributing, making them an easy target for recruitment.¹⁴

For women, the main security concern continued to be sexual violence, as has been



Map 4: Proportion of settlements reporting access to safe water, May 2017

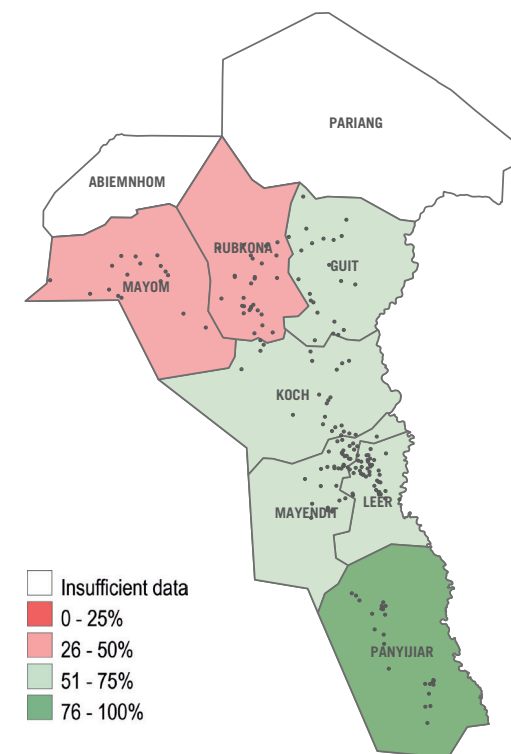
reported by 32% of assessed settlements, followed by killing and injury (12%). Women explained that exposure to sexual violence was highest during firewood collection, during travels to General Food Distributions (FGDs) and during general looting attacks on villages by armed actors. In light of this situation, specialized psychosocial support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as specialized clinical assistance, remains of key importance. Most likely perpetrator for all of these security concerns, as has been reported

by over 80% of assessed villages, are armed groups. GFD participants described that it has become increasingly difficult to ascribe a political affiliation to many of the experienced security incidents. Especially cattle raiding, lootings and sexual violence were reportedly often undertaken by so called “youth of unknown affiliation”, who are often operating solely for self-benefit. Addressing security threats that come from groups with no political affiliation might be particularly challenging for humanitarian and human rights actors, as traditional forms of advocacy and leverage that are used with organised armed groups may not have the same effect on unorganised armed groups.

Water and Sanitation

Access to safe drinking water remained low in May. Only 57% of assessed settlements reported access to clean water (usually a borehole), a proportion comparable to previous months (e.g. 58% in February). Of these settlements, the vast majority (98%) were able to walk to the water source, fetch the water and walk back within one hour or less.

Access to safe drinking water has been reported lowest in Rubkona, Guit and Mayendit, compared to the other counties in Unity State. In May, only one third (33%) of assessed settlements in both counties reported access to safe drinking water, a proportion that has been consistently low since the beginning of the year (February: 32 % in Guit and 33% in Rubkona). Mayendit, on the other hand, saw a



Map 5: Proportion of settlements reporting access to health services, May 2017

sharp decrease from 79% in February to 39% in May. In the absence of safe drinking water, people resorted to drinking water directly from the river, while in areas located far from the riverside, it was common to construct hand-dug wells during the dry season, as has been reported by FGDs. These forms of untreated sources of water may often be contaminated with bacteria or parasites, and lead to severe sickness and death.

Further, open defecation continued to be reported

14. DRC, Protection Assessment Report, Mankien, Mayom County, May 2017.

Figure 7: Most commonly reported health concerns in assessed settlements, May 2017

1	Malaria	86%
2	Typhoid	34%
3	Pneumonia	34%
4	Diarrhea	29%
5	Cholera	22%

as a common practice in most of the assessed villages; only 12% of assessed settlements reported that a part of the community was using latrines. FGD participants reported that people tended to defecate into the water when close to rivers or areas inside swamps, which subsequently led to the contamination of their only drinking water source.

The reparation and construction of safe water sources, with particular focus on Rubkona and Guit, where access to safe drinking water has continuously been reported lowest, remain thus of key importance in terms of WASH interventions. Better hygiene practices should be promoted in whole of Unity State, as numbers of latrine usage were generally low.

Health

Access to health services in Unity State remained low in May, with 58% of assessed settlements reporting access. This appears to be a gradual improvement from the 44% reported in March and 52% in April. These slight increases might be indicative of improvements in the security situation, allowing for safer movement and subsequently easier access to

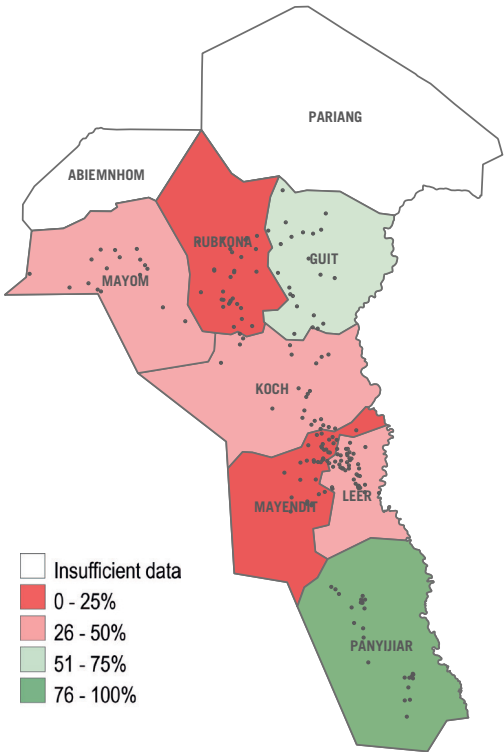
services. Of the assessed settlements reporting access to health services, 67% reported that the health facility could be reached by walking for one hour or less.

Of those reporting no access to health services, half of assessed settlements cited the direct or indirect impact of the ongoing conflict as the most important reason. Conflict-related factors include insecurity, facilities destroyed by violence, and the abandonment of facilities by medical staff. Thirty-eight per cent reported that no health facility had ever existed in their area, while lack of medication has been cited by the remaining 12%.

As illustrated by Figure 7, malaria was identified as among the three main health concerns by 86% of the assessed settlements, followed by typhoid and pneumonia (34%). Given that common diseases like malaria are anticipated to spread during the rainy season, there is a need for provision of insectised mosquito nets and repellents, as well as curative strategies, such as upscaling of medical services and supplying essential medicines. Top needed medications identified by KIs include malaria medication, followed by treatment of diarrhea (ORS), paracetamol and nutritional supplements

Education

Although still low, access to education improved, with 40% of assessed settlements reporting access to education in May, compared to 29% in April. Partners operating in Unity State reported that 17 new learning spaces have been opened



Map 6: Proportion of settlements reporting access to education services, May 2017

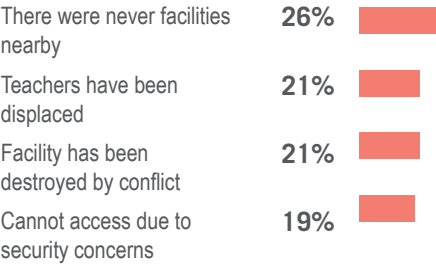
in Guit in March and also, in other counties of Unity State, assistance to other education facilities has been scaled up, which is likely a reason for these improvements.

In the absence of functioning public education system in Unity State, education was regularly provided or supported by established NGOs operating in the area. In settlements that are hard to reach for service providers, however, education was sometimes provided

by community volunteers, who often teach the children under a tree in the village or a makeshift rakooba, as has been reported during FGDs. Access to teaching materials reportedly presented a major challenge to these improvised learning spaces. Where education service providers are not able to reach with formal services and where appropriate, the provision of basic teaching material and stationary to improvised learning spaces would enhance these improvised learning spaces.

Education rates have been recorded lowest in Mayendit, with only 10% of assessed settlements reporting access to education, followed by Rubkona at 22% and Mayom at 29%, as shown by Map 6. Most cited reasons for absence of education services in these counties has been reportedly lack of facilities or facilities that were too far away, as well as conflict-related reasons, including destruction of learning facilities during conflict, flight of teachers and general insecurity which prevented students from attending school (see Figure 7). FGDs with participants from northern Unity State suggested that many of the voluntary teachers were forced to flee their settlements because of suggested intensive forced recruitment activities (see protection section) and decrease in food security. Another reason for the limited reported access to education in northern counties of Unity State are the nomadic movements. These movements are related to grazing and search for water as well as displacement due to insecurity of food insecurity, and often led families away from

Figure 7: Four main reason that education is not accessible, May 2017

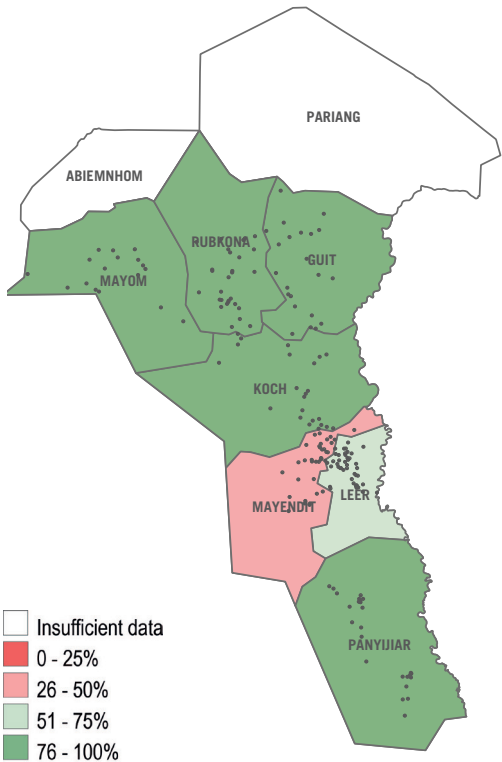


established services during the dry season.

Reported attendance rates suggest that far more boys attended school than girls. The vast majority (93%) of assessed settlements (of those reporting access to education), reported that half of the boys aged 6 to17 or more attend school. On the contrary, only 36% of assessed settlements reported the same for girls of the same age. According to an FGD undertaken with parents of school aged girls, one reason for low attendance rates for girls in rural areas is the belief that school could have a bad influence on young girls. Further, a main reason mentioned for girl’s drop-out has been early marriage and early pregnancy. To target these issues, efforts made to empower girls and women could be directed towards sensitization campaigns and incentives to parents.

Shelter

Shelter conditions reportedly continued to improve for local communities compared to previous months. The reported proportion of permanent tukuls as primary shelter type increased continuously from 43% of assessed



Map 7: Proportion of settlements reporting tukuls as the primary shelter type for the local community, May 2017

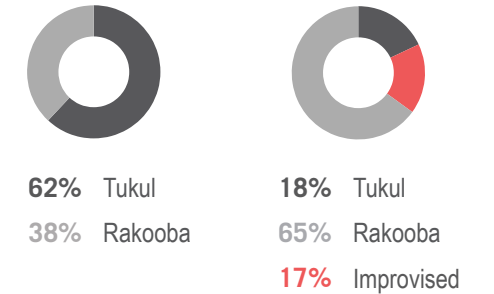
settlements in February up to 62% in May. Tukuls outnumbered the rakooba as most cited primary shelter type, of which the proportion of assessed settlements decreased from 54% in February to 38% in May. The best shelter conditions for local community appeared to be in the comparatively more stable areas of Unity State, such as Mayom, Panyijiar, Rubkona, Guit and parts of Koch, as illustrated by Map 7.

Lowest proportion of assessed settlements

reporting permanent tukul as primary shelter type has been in Leer (15%) and Mayendit (35%), indicative of comparatively less stable shelter conditions in these counties. One main reason for such low proportions of tukuls as primary shelter type might be severe shelter destruction by fighting, which has been cited by high proportions of assessed settlements in these counties; in May, 40% of assessed settlements reported shelter destruction during the last month (49% in April, 64% in March). FGD respondents explained that armed groups regularly attack and loot villages during which shelters are burned down. **It might be unsurprising therefore, that lack of shelter had been the second most cited push factor after insecurity for people from Mayendit and Leer to leave their previous location, as cited by 58% of new arrivals in Nyal.**¹⁵ These findings indicate, that shelter needs of local communities remain a priority concern, especially in central Unity State.

Similar to local communities shelter conditions, developments in IDPs shelter

Figure 8: Main shelter type local community (left) and IDP community (right), May 2017



conditions seem to vary between counties, suggesting generally better shelter conditions in comparatively more stable northern counties (Mayom, Guit and Rubkona) and Panyijiar than in central Unity State. Overall, 65% of assessed villages reported rakooba as primary shelter type, followed by tukul in 18% of assessed settlements. However, a worrying high proportion (17%) of assessed settlements, all located in Leer and Mayendit, reported improvised shelter as the primary shelter type.

These findings are a strong indication that shelter needs for IDPs, especially in central Unity State remain high.

Conclusion

Displacement trends, population needs and access to services in Unity State appeared to have improved over the past few months. This was likely thanks to a relative improvement in the security situation in parts of the state after March, and an upscale in humanitarian assistance to locations outside formal displacement sites since then. Nevertheless, overall access to services in Unity State was still low.

Food security continued to be the main humanitarian challenge in May, despite relative improvements since the upscale in food assistance in February. Especially in northern Unity State (Mayom, Guit and Rubkona), access seemed to have rapidly deteriorated throughout the previous months, as the lean season continued and food stocks

15 REACH, Nyal Port Monitoring, May 2017.

were depleted. In order to address and counter the fast deterioration in food security in the north of Unity State, assistance would need to be upscaled. In addition, this would help to prevent a relapse to previous conditions in central and south of Unity State.

The planting season started in May and lack of agricultural inputs remained a key concern for small-scale farmers. In order to support sustainable livelihoods, seed and tools distributions in stable highland areas could prevent low cultivation levels of last year, which have been among the main reasons for extreme food insecurity in 2017. Additionally, the provision of fishing kits for areas located in near rivers or in the swamp could contribute to ensuring these distributions support livelihoods activities during the lean season. Continuously, low proportions of assessed settlements reported access to safe drinking water. The reconstruction and construction of boreholes should be prioritised, especially in Guit and Rubkona, where access has been reported lowest.

Shelter needs especially in central Unity State continued to be pronounced, and were among the main push factors forcing people from Leer and Mayendit to leave their previous location, as recorded by REACH port monitoring in Nyal. With the advent of the rainy season, the provision of sufficient shelter material could help assure the protection of populations against harsh weather conditions.

Although still very low, access to education seems to have slightly improved, likely due to

extension of activities by education actors in Unity. Work to stem and reverse the impact of long-term food insecurity on conflict-affected populations will require a sustained and large-scale effort to address the basic needs found in Unity State.

About REACH Initiative

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