# Situation Overview: Greater Equatoria, South Sudan

March - June 2017

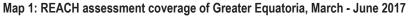


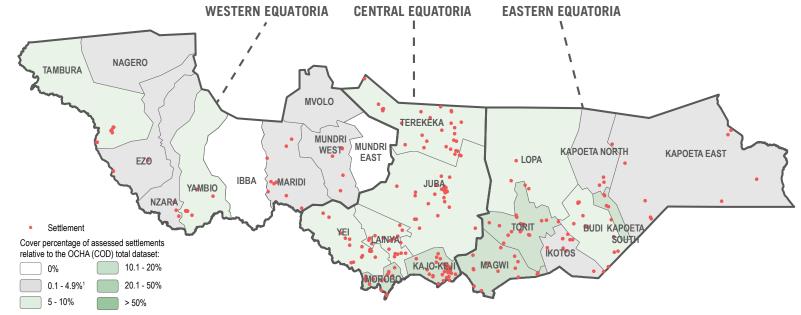
# Introduction

Following the outbreak of violence in Juba in July 2016, the South Sudanese civil war spread from its historic epicentre in Greater Upper Nile to Greater Equatoria (Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria states). Insecurity caused widespread displacement and rendered much of Greater Equatoria largely inaccessible to humanitarian actors. As a result, only limited information is available on the humanitarian situation outside of major displacement sites.

In order to fill information gaps and facilitate humanitarian programming, REACH began collecting data on hard-to-reach areas in Greater Equatoria in January 2017 on a monthly basis. This data was collected primarily through interviews with new arrivals to Juba PoC1 and PoC3 sites (109 Key Informants (KIs) and 210 KIs respectively) and was supplemented by phone calls with 148 KIs residing across Greater Equatoria. Between 15 March and 18 June 2017, REACH interviewed a total of 467 KIs displaced from 233 settlements: 139 settlements in all six counties of Central Equatoria, 59 settlements in all eight counties of Eastern Equatoria and 35 settlements in all eight counties of Western Equatoria.

This Situation Overview provides a summary of key findings across Greater Equatoria aggregated across four months (March to June 2017). The first section analyses displacement and population movement in all three states





of Greater Equatoria, with the second section evaluating access to food and basic services for both IDP and non-displaced communities.

# Population Movement and Displacement

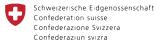
The conflict in Greater Equatoria has driven displacement on a massive scale, with 81% of assessed settlements reporting that at least half of local community members had left. Relatively low reported IDP populations in Central and Eastern Equatoria (23% and 29% of assessed settlements respectively reported the presence of IDPs), indicating that displaced populations

continue to leave the country rather than settle nearby. These findings are supported by the high number of South Sudanese refugees arriving to Uganda, totalling almost 300,000 in the first half of 2017<sup>1</sup>: the largest refugee crisis in Africa in over 20 years<sup>2</sup>.

However, the rate of displacement appears to be gradually slowing. In Uganda, the number of arrivals has gradually decreased since its peak of 85,395 in September 2016<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, settlements across all three states reported the presence of returnees in their communities (57% of assessed communities host returnees), mostly arriving in March 2017 (as reported by

36% of assessed settlements), likely because March signals the start of the rainy season and corresponding cultivation period. This suggests that displacement in the Equatorias peaked in intensity and will remain stable for the next few months, while still remaining at extremely high levels.

Individuals that remain, or have returned to Greater Equatoria, face increasing risks to food security. In Western Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria, the majority of assessed settlements reported that most IDPs resided with local community members (78% and 87% respectively). With only 32% of assessed





<sup>1.</sup> UNHCR. Uganda: Regional Update, South Sudan Situation. 30 June 2017.

<sup>2.</sup> IRIN. The war in Equatoria. 12 July 2017.

<sup>3.</sup> Ugandarefugees.org: IA coordination meeting. 12 May 2017.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Greater Equatoria, REACH uses primary data provided by key informants who are currently living in or have recently arrived from these "Areas of Knowledge".

Information for this report was collected from recent arrivals from Greater Equatoria to Juba Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites and through phone calls to key informants living in the settlements of interest.

The assessment involved in-depth interviews with participants selected through a snowball sampling technique, 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.

This is the first situation overview for Greater Equatoria and as such provides information at the state level and when relevant at the county level.

settlements across Greater Equatoria reporting adequate access to food, IDP presence is likely to strain already stretched resources.

Men and women in Greater Equatoria experienced displacement in different ways. IDPs in Greater Equatoria were predominantly female, with 76% of assessed settlements reporting that over half of IDPs were women. KIs in Juba reported that this was because men had greater security concerns, such as violence from armed actors and forced recruitment. or greater financial responsibilities, such as working in Juba or tending to land or livestock, which kept them apart from family members.

## Western Equatoria

Western Equatoria had the highest rate of returns, with 70% of assessed settlements reporting returnee presence. The need to tend farms during the cultivation season likely drove this movement, given that 87% of assessed settlements reported subsistence farming as a primary source of livelihood. While the higher rate of returns indicated that the security situation in Western Equatoria was perceived to be improving (for more details, please see the Protection section), conflictdriven displacement continued in certain areas. Notably, 28% of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence indicated that IDPs mainly came from Yambio, a county that was recently heavily affected by fighting4.

## Central Equatoria

Displacement in Central Equatoria was also largely caused by conflict. The main source of displacement in the state in recent months was the conflict in Kajo Keji. This county was

the primary place of origin for IDPs in Central Equatoria, with 29% of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence indicating that IDPs had arrived mainly from Kajo Keji. Most (69%) assessed settlements reporting IDP presence indicated that IDPs had arrived in March 2017, confirming multiple recent reports of substantial displacement from the county<sup>5</sup>. According to some estimates, as of April 2017, more than 100.000 residents of the county had fled<sup>6</sup>.

## Eastern Equatoria

Eastern Equatoria was the main area of origin of South Sudanese refugees to Uganda. UNHCR reported that 58% of registered South Sudanese arrivals from 1 January 2017 to 12 April 2017 in Uganda were from Eastern Equatoria<sup>7</sup>. However, Uganda was not the only displacement destination, with 29% of assessed settlements in Eastern Equatoria reporting the presence of IDPs. Thirty-two percent of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence indicated that IDPs mainly came from Torit County and 30% reported that IDPs had arrived in February 2017, confirming reports of armed conflict in the county in January 20178.

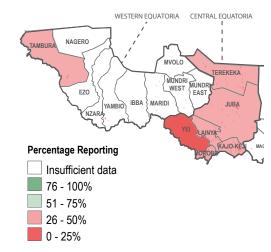
# Situation in Assessed **Settlements**

## Food security and livelihoods

Historically considered South Sudan's breadbasket, Greater Equatoria is now facing severe food insecurity, with less than one third of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food (see Map 2).

Fighting in Greater Equatoria displaced

Map 2: Percentage of settlements in Western and Central reporting adequate access to food, March - June 2017



populations and prevented farmers from safely accessing their land or cultivating crops9. Among settlements reporting inadequate access to food, the most frequently cited reason for inadequate food access was unsafe access to land for cultivation (reported as a primary reason by 30% of settlements), followed by the destruction of crops from fighting (reported as a primary reason by 24% of settlements).

Armed actors on different sides of the conflict have reportedly denied civilians access to food, resulting in food shortages and rising malnutrition rates<sup>10</sup>. Despite the risks, cultivation remains the main source of food in assessed settlements in Greater Equatoria, as reported by 47% of them. This suggests that households are risking their personal safety by going out to farm. Even among households

<sup>4.</sup> New York Times. War consumes South Sudan, a young nation cracking apart. 4 March 2017.

<sup>5.</sup> Vice News. The unwinnable war. 4 July 2017.

<sup>6.</sup> Al Jazeera. Fighting forces 30,000 from homes in South Sudan. 9. UMISS. Press Statement. 23 February 2017. 21 April 2017.

<sup>7.</sup> UNHCR. South Sudan: Regional Overview. 27 April 2017.

<sup>8.</sup> South Sudan News Agency. South Sudan rival forces clash in Eastern Equatoria state, 3 January 2017.

<sup>10.</sup> Amnesty International. If men are caught, they are killed, if

women are caught, they are raped. 4 July 2017.

risking insecurity to cultivate, the resulting harvest is likely to be small. Although three quarters of assessed settlements reported access to land for agriculture, access to agricultural inputs was limited across the three states with only 38% of assessed settlements reporting access to agricultural inputs. This supports FEWSNET warnings that the June to August 2017 first harvest and November to December 2017 second harvest in Greater Equatoria will be below average due to continued fighting and displacement<sup>11</sup>. Thus food security will probably continue to deteriorate in the coming months.

Low levels of cultivation are particularly concerning considering the weakness of markets across Greater Equatoria. The continued economic crisis and insecurity along key trade routes in Greater Equatoria, coupled with the peak of the lean season in June resulted in increased food prices across the region<sup>12</sup>. The prices of staple foods reportedly increased across Equatorian markets from March to June 2017: 90% of assessed settlements reported an increase

in the price of sugar, 71% an increase in the price of cooking oil and 81% an increase in the price of sorghum. As a result of rising prices, only 23% of assessed settlements cited food purchasing as their main food source.

As insecurity increased the need for food assistance in Greater Equatoria, it also restricted humanitarian access<sup>13</sup>. Three-quarters of assessed settlements reported they had not received food assistance in the last three months.

With both markets and humanitarian actors struggling to deliver food to affected populations, the predicted low harvests are likely to have severe consequences on food security across Greater Equatoria.

#### Western Equatoria

#### Access to food and livelihoods

Western Equatoria had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food across Greater Equatoria, with only 23% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food, regardless of source.

Maridi and Yambio counties were worst affected, with just 18% of assessed settlements in each county reporting adequate access to food. Violence in these counties likely contributed to the high levels of inadequate food access. In Maridi, insecurity along the Morobo-Yei-Maridi access route, which re-routed trade from Kaya through the Democratic Republic of Congo to Yambio<sup>14</sup> contributed to the shortage of food. In Yambio, low access to food was likely related to increased fighting in the county over the assessment period, which affected access to land for cultivation and market supply<sup>15</sup>.

Despite these constraints, farming in Western Equatoria continued, with 60% of assessed settlements reporting that cultivation was the main source of food. High levels of reported returns coinciding with the start of the cultivation season suggested that some returnees returned to cultivate. As discussed in the protection section (page 5), this may be due to greater perceptions of safety in the state. However, access to agricultural inputs was as low as in other states (39%) so it is unclear whether increased cultivation will

relieve the strains on food security.

Reported access to markets remained high. Western Equatoria had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to markets (90% reported market access, as opposed to 66% and 70% in Central Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria respectively). Of these settlements, 39% reported that a market was accessible within a 30-minute to one-hour walk. However, utilisation of these markets was as low as in other states, with only one-fifth of assessed settlements citing markets as a main food source. In the long run, access to markets in this state may assist recovery, as populations will be able to source agricultural inputs, such as tools, for cultivation.

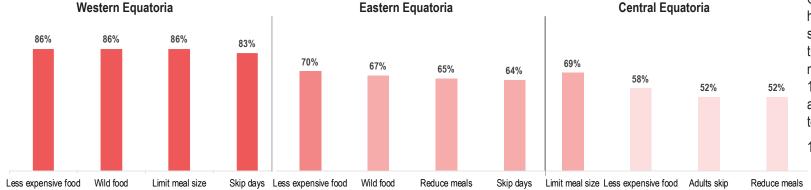
Access to markets and continued cultivation suggest that, although Western Equatoria was the worst affected state in terms of food security, access to food may improve if the security situation stabilises. However, low access to agricultural inputs and high market prices suggest that inadequate access to food will likely persist in the immediate future.

## **Coping Strategies**

Consistent with findings that Western Equatoria had the lowest proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food, they also reported the greatest diversity and magnitude of food coping strategies (Figure 1). In response to the severe food shortages, assessed settlements with inadequate access to food in Western Equatoria reported:

 Changing dietary habits, with 86% reporting consuming less expensive foods and 86% reporting gathering wild

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements in Greater Equatoria reporting negative coping strategies, March - June 2017



<sup>11.</sup> FEWSNET. Food security outlook: extreme food insecurity persists despite the influx of humanitarian assistance. Feb 2017 12. WFP. South Sudan monthly market price monitoring. June 2017.



<sup>13.</sup> OCHA. South Sudan: humanitarian access snapshot. June

<sup>2017.</sup> 

<sup>14.</sup> FEWSNET. Food security outlook: extreme food insecurity persists despite the influx of humanitarian assistance. Feb 2017.

<sup>15.</sup> New York Times. War consumes South Sudan, a young nation cracking apart. 4 March 2017.

foods: and

Rationing available food, with 86% reporting limiting meal sizes, 83% skipping full days without eating and 81% reducing the number of daily meals consumed. More than half (55%) of assessed settlements reported consuming one meal per day.

Assessed settlements in Western Equatoria experienced higher levels of food-related stress than either Central or Eastern Equatoria over the four-month assessment period, with the combined challenges of insecure access to land for cultivation and high market prices. However, market accessibility and continued cultivation may enable a limited recovery if the security situation stabilises.

## Central Equatoria

### Access to Food and Livelihoods

While not as low as in Western Equatoria, adequate access to food in Central Equatoria decreased over the assessment period, from 53% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in March, to 27% reporting adequate access to food in June 2017, reflecting typical lean season patterns (March to July) and anticipated food insecurity<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, 16% of assessed settlements in Central Equatoria perceived hunger to be a leading cause of death.

Insecurity was the primary reported cause of inadequate access to food across Central Equatoria. In Yei County, insecurity along access routes reportedly prevented civilians from accessing food from surrounding rural

areas<sup>17</sup>. This was supported by the fact that the county had the lowest proportion of assessed settlements reporting having adequate access to food in the state for the March to June period (22%). As a consequence of the insecurity, only half of assessed settlements in Yei reported having access to land for cultivation, the lowest in Equatorias.

Clashes between armed groups destroyed agricultural inputs in Morobo, which reported the lowest access to agricultural inputs (16% of assessed settlements) over the four-month period, reflective of displacement and looting following the fighting that swept through the area in April<sup>18</sup>.

Intercommunal violence also disrupted agriculture in Central Equatoria. Forty-one percent of assessed settlements in Terekeka reported that agricultural tools were looted, consistent with cyclical intercommunal rivalries in the area during cattle migration seasons<sup>19</sup>. This is a notable challenge for a county in which 93% of assessed settlements reported the use of subsistence farming as a source of livelihood.

Other sources of livelihood were also disrupted by the fighting in Central Equatoria. Livestock keeping was cited as a livelihood activity in 46% of assessed settlements. In Kajo Keji, this proportion was higher, with 66% of assessed settlements keeping livestock. Considering that a large proportion of the population in Kajo Keji fled due to the conflict<sup>20</sup>, safe access to cattle for cattle keeping settlements likely became more difficult.

## **Coping Strategies**

In Central Equatoria, settlements reported using fewer coping strategies than in Western and Eastern Equatoria, reflective of slightly greater access to food (Figure 1). However, the majority of assessed settlements still reported resorting to severe coping stragies. To make limited food last longer, settlements with inadequate access to food reported limiting meal sizes (69%) and consuming less expensive foods (58%) over the assessment period. In more than half of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food, adults skipped meals so that children could eat (52%).

Although the proportion of assessed settlements reporting having adequate access to food was higher in Central Equatoria (34%) than in Eastern and Western Equatoria, this was still low compared to other states across South Sudan. The worsening security situation and continued disruption of sources of livelihood indicate that access to food will become increasingly limited, exempting a possible boost during the harvest season.

## Eastern Equatoria

#### Access to Food and Livelihoods

A similar proportion of assessed settlements in Eastern Equatoria reported adequate access to food (26%) as in Western Equatoria (23%), with this proportion being even lower in some counties. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting having adequate access to food was lowest in Torit County (12%), supporting the predicted IPC Phase 4 emergency food classification for the County from June to September 2017<sup>21</sup>.

In Magwi, where 93% of assessed settlements reportedly grew crops for sustenance and 63% for sale, only 40% of assessed settlements reported having access to agricultural inputs. A large proportion of assessed settlements in Budi County (93%) also reported subsistence farming as a primary source of livelihood, indicating that ongoing insecurity near this county will continue to disrupt settlements' primary food source.

Despite the insecurity, Eastern Equatoria had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting having access to land for cultivation (81%). However, given the volatile security situation, access to land for cultivation is not guaranteed in the future.

In terms of livestock keeping, Eastern Equatoria had the greatest proportion of settlements reporting livestock keeping as a livelihood activity (62%). Given ongoing insecurity, cattle keeping will likely become more dangerous and difficult, further straining household resources.

## **Coping Strategies**

In response to inadequate access to food, assessed settlements in Eastern Equatoria adopted similar coping strategies to Western Equatoria, but to a slightly lesser extent (Figure 1). Assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reported:

- Changing dietary habits, with 70% reportedly consuming less expensive foods and 67% eating wild foods; and
- 2. Rationing food to make it last longer, with 65% reportedly reducing the number of

Unity State. February 2017



FEWSNET. Food security outlook: extreme food insecurity persists despite the influx of humanitarian assistance. Feb 2017.

<sup>17.</sup> Amnesty International. If men are caught, they are killed, if women are caught, they are raped. 4 July 2017.

<sup>18.</sup> Radio Tamazuj. SPLA-IO rebels claim two areas in Morobo

County. 30 April 2017.

<sup>19.</sup> IOM. DTM South Sudan: Terekeka rapid assessment report. 12 June 2017.

<sup>20.</sup> IRIN. The war in Equatoria. 12 July 2017.

<sup>21.</sup> FEWSNET. A famine (IPC Phase 5) is likely occurring in parts of

meals consumed daily and 64% spending entire days without eating. Across all assessed settlements in Eastern Equatoria, 62% reported eating only one meal per day.

#### **Protection**

Increased presence of armed actors in Greater Equatoria following the outbreak of violence in Juba in July 2016 created extremely high levels of insecurity in the region. Supporting the findings of the livelihood section, 80% of assessed settlements in Western Equatoria, 71% of assessed settlements in Central Equatoria and 69% of assessed settlements in Eastern Equatoria reported that populations felt unsafe at some point every day. Conflict was perceived to be a leading cause of death in 23% of assessed settlements in Central and Eastern Equatoria.

# **Perceptions of Safety**

Although perceptions of safety varied across geographies and demographics, all were quite high. Across Greater Equatoria, perceptions

of safety were lowest for men, with 75% of assessed settlements reporting that men were unsafe at some point every day. Perceptions of safety for women and children were roughly equal, with 63% and 64% of assessed settlements respectively indicating that women and children were unsafe at some point every day.

Trends varied from state to state. In Western Equatoria, assessed settlements perceived children to be at greatest risk, with 79% reporting that children were unsafe at some point each day.

Central Equatoria showed substantial geographic variation in perceptions of safety. In Juba County, half of assessed settlements in June reported that children were safe at all times whereas 90% of settlements in Yei reported fear for children's safety at all times in the same month.

Though findings indicate that although populations are returning to cultivate, the perceived protection concerns are still extremely high, so these findings should not be taken to mean security has returned to the

region.

#### **Protection Concerns**

The threat to men was perceived to come predominantly from other communities, with intercommunal violence being the primary security concern in assessed settlements (33%) followed by forced recruitment (20%) (Figure 2). Looting was reported as a concern for men in assessed settlements in Central and Western Equatoria (16%), while cattle raiding was a protection concern for men in Eastern Equatoria (19%), which was consistent with the high proportion of assessed settlements in the state reporting livestock keeping as a livelihood activity.

Violence from other communities and sexual violence were the primary protection concerns for women, cited by 29% and 23% of assessed settlements respectively across the region (Figure 2). In Central Equatoria, assessed settlements cited looting as an additional protection concern for women (18%), reflecting the ongoing insecurity across the state over the assessment period<sup>22</sup>.

Protection concerns for children in assessed

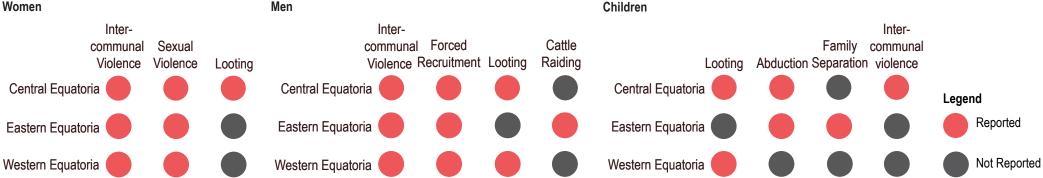
settlements varied by state (Figure 2). In Western Equatoria, looting was the primary protection concern for children (20%). In Central Equatoria too, looting ranked highest amongst protection concerns (20%), but was closely followed by abduction (19%) and being killed by members of other communities. In Eastern Equatoria, abduction was the most common concern (28%), followed by family separation (25%). This is likely due to the mass movement across the border as households flee violence.

Armed actors were perceived as the main perpetrators of violence against men, women and children in all three states.

#### **Sources of Protection**

Most assessed settlements across the region reported that physical protection was available in their area. Local authorities were overwhelmingly reported as the primary provider of physical protection assessed settlements in Central Equatoria (93%), Eastern Equatoria (75%) and Western Equatoria (97%). However, the perceived availability of physical protection did not

Figure 2: Reported protection concerns across Greater Equatoria, March - June 2017 Women Men



appear to translate to improved security given the high levels of perceived risk of violence in assessed settlements.

## Landmines/Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs)

Western Equatoria had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of landmines/UXOs in the area (18%), primarily in areas for firewood collection.

Across the Equatorias, continued displacement to Uganda indicates that populations remain fearful for their safety, and existing protection mechanisms (i.e. the presence of local authorities) do not appear to ensure security. With insecurity rendering the region partially inaccessible to humanitarian actors<sup>23</sup>, it is likely that populations will continue to relocate as a protection mechanism.

#### Shelter

Central Equatoria had the greatest proportion of assessed settlements reporting that shelters in the area had been destroyed by fighting (85%) (Figure 3). These proportions were highest in Lainya (in which 95% of assessedsettlements reported shelter destruction), Kajo Keji (91%), Yei (91%) and Terekeka (90%). This supports recent reports detailing razed villages across Greater Equatoria and in villages in Kajo Keji specifically. In Eastern Equatoria, 56% of assessed settlements reported that shelters

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting shelter destruction



Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare



had been destroyed by fighting, although in Kapoeta South this proportion increased to 83%.

#### Health

Most assessed settlements (85%) in Greater Equatoria reported having access to healthcare (Figure 4) and 58% reported that a healthcare facility was accessible within a 30-minute to one-hour walk. In Eastern Equatoria, assessed communities that reported not having access to healthcare, primary cited the reason of insecurity (67%). In Central Equatoria, 47% of assessed without healthcare reported that these facilities had never existed in their area.

Reflective of findings that 50% or fewer community members had mosquito nets (as reported by two-thirds of assessed settlements), malaria was a primary health concern in 34% of assessed settlements and was perceived to be a leading cause of death in 35% of assessed settlements. Most assessed settlements in the region cited a need for oral rehydration salts (85%), general drugs (95%), nutrition supplements (82%) and first aid supplies (66%). While a high proportion of assessed settlements across Greater Equatoria reported access to healthcare, community perceptions surrounding access to medications and supplies reveal a potentially

Figure 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to safe drinking water



inadequate quality of healthcare.

### **WASH**

Most assessed settlements in Greater Equatoria reported having adequate access to clean drinking water (Figure 5), primarily from boreholes (84%), and indicated that they could walk to a water source, fetch water and walk back within one hour or less (78%). Although in Tambura (Western Equatoria) the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to safe drinking water was particularly low (50%).

While the proportion of assessed settlements with access to potable water was similar across all three states, hygiene practices varied (Figure 6). Western Equatoria reported the highest use of latrines: 44% of assessed settlements reported that more than 50% of the population used latrines. Conversely, in Central and Eastern Equatoria, 50% or more of the population reportedly practiced open defecation (as reported by 74% and 63% of assessed settlements respectively). Hygiene practices in the region impacted health

Figure 6: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting that 50% or more of the population resorted to open defecation



outcomes. In June 2017, UNICEF reported the active transmission of cholera in Kapoeta East and Kapoeta North (Eastern Equatoria) and Juba (Central Equatoria)<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, across all three states typhoid was cited as a primary health concern (10% of assessed settlements).

#### Education

Although most assessed settlements across Greater Equatoria (81%) indicated that education was available, most settlements indicated that 50% or more school-aged children were not enrolled in school (Figure 7). For settlements reporting that education was not available, 30% across Greater Equatoria reported that this was due to the destruction of school infrastructure from fighting. In Eastern Equatoria, the majority of schools in assessed settlements had closed over the assessment period due to insecurity.

The primary reported reasons for non-

Figure 7: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting that 50% or fewer schoolaged children were enrolled in school

Eastern Equatoria Western Equatoria Central Equatoria



23. OCHA. South Sudan: humanitarian access snapshot. June 2017.



attendance in assessed settlements across states were unaffordable school fees (33%), insecurity (26%) and lack of school supplies (16%).

Given the scale of humanitarian needs in the region, education has been deprioritised by humanitarian actors despite research indicating that education provides a valuable protection mechanism for children in conflict<sup>25</sup>.

# **Conclusion**

Greater Equatoria continues to be the source of the largest refugee movement in Africa<sup>26</sup>. The conflict has negatively impacted the humanitarian situation across sectors, particularly food access and protection. Reported access to food across Greater Equatoria decreased over the four-month assessment period, supporting a worrying countrywide trend of decreasing food security. Reported levels of food access were lowest in Western Equatoria.

In terms of protection, REACH findings indicate poor security conditions across Greater Equatoria consistent with media reports<sup>27</sup>. Western Equatoria had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting that residents felt unsafe at some point each day (80%).

In terms of shelter, Central Equatoria had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting shelter destruction. Most assessed settlements in Greater Equatoria reported access to healthcare, although this may not be indicative of quality of service, as most settlements reported a need for medications

and supplies. Similiarly, most assessed settlements had access to potable water but practiced open defecation, leading to greater concern for waterborne illness. Although education was available in 81% of assessed settlements, most reported that 50% or fewer school-aged children attended school regularly.

Although the number of refugees fleeing South Sudan has decreased since February, perceptions of security in settlements and access to food are alarmingly low, and continue to fall in Greater Equatoria, indicating that humanitarian needs will continue to grow.

#### **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.

For more information, you can write to our in-country office: southsudan@ reach-initiative.org or to our global office: geneva@reach-initiative.org.

Visit www.reach-initiative.org and follow us @REACH info.

<sup>25.</sup> Talbot. Working Paper: education in conflict. January 2013.

<sup>26.</sup> IRIN. The war in Equatoria. 12 July 2017.