

# Humanitarian Situation Monitoring

## Western Equatoria State - South Sudan January - March 2021

**REACH** Informing more effective humanitarian action

### Overview

With the lean season (June to August) approaching, pockets of insecurity in parts of Western Equatoria State (WES), natural hazards such as wild fire, impact of COVID-19 restrictions, and high prices of basic commodities, could increase humanitarian needs across WES in quarter one of 2021.<sup>1,2,3</sup> This is further reflected in limited access to food and apparent common feelings of insecurity among communities in Nagero County, which remains of great concern during the first months of 2021. Additionally, the lack of medications and few health workers at facilities could increase disease prevalence and reduce level of treatment.

Information remains critical for an informed humanitarian response, especially while COVID-19 related restrictions, logistic and security constraints have negatively impacted humanitarian access to many areas across the state. To inform humanitarian actors, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015. Data is collected on a monthly basis through interviews with key informants (KIs) with knowledge of a settlement and triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary data. This Situation Overview analyses changes in observed humanitarian needs in WES in quarter one of 2021.

### Methodology

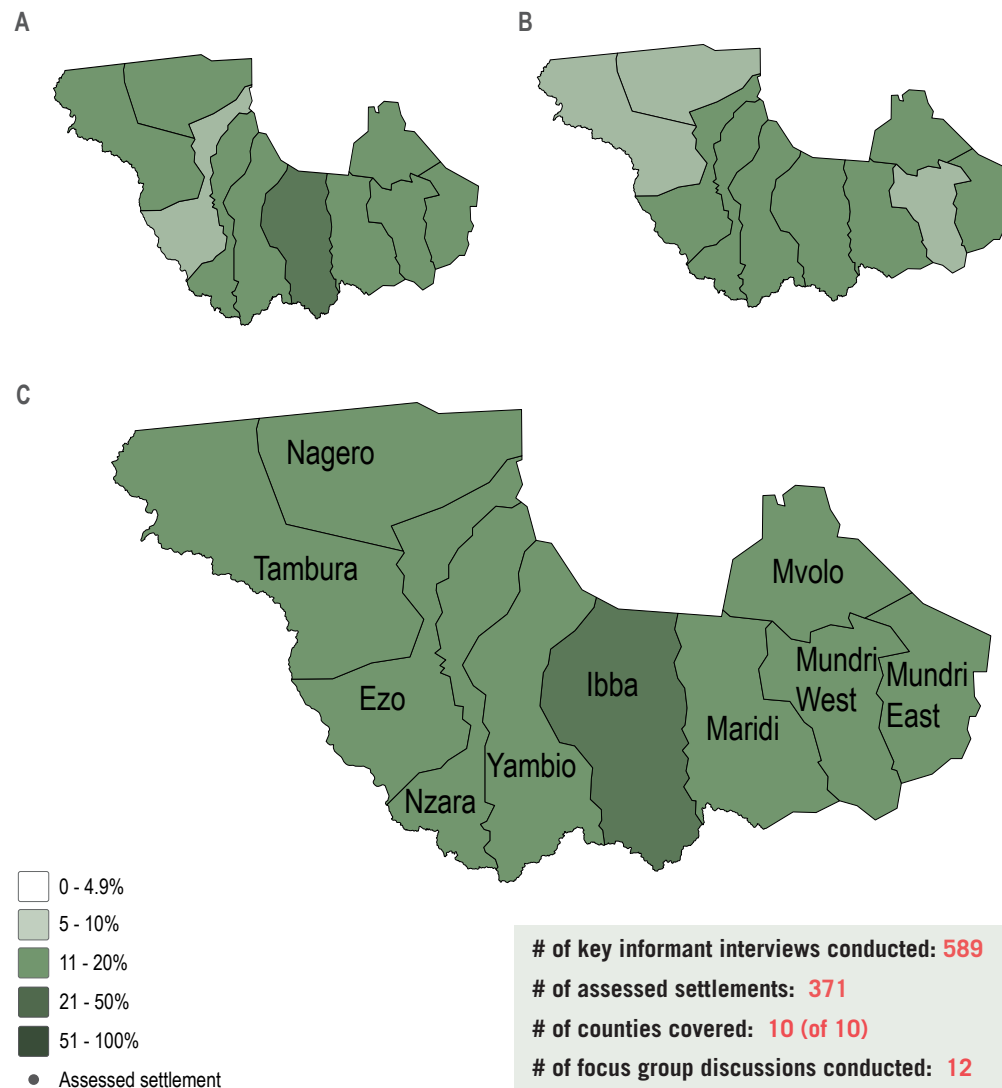
To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of WES, REACH uses primary data from KIs who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or “Area of Knowledge” (AoK). Information for this report was collected from KIs in Yambio and Maridi towns in WES between January and March 2021.

In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted throughout the month using a structured survey tool. After data collection was completed, all data was aggregated at 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 a given month were included in analysis.<sup>4</sup> Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month vary. In order 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<sup>5</sup> coverage throughout the period of analysis.

Quantitative findings were triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) with male and female local community members from all ten counties of WES and secondary sources. More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK ToRs](#).

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of the WES region, January (A), February (B) and March (C) 2021



1. Eye Radio. COVID-19 impedes progress towards gender equality. 9 March 2021. [Link](#)

2. Radio Tamazuj. Maridi wildfire victims in need of help. 18 March 2021. [Link](#)

3. REACH. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) 7-14 January 2021. [Link](#)

4. 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 reached each month.

5. Payam is the administrative unit below the county-level.

## Key Findings



**Displacement:** The proportion of assessed settlements where presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs) was reported increased from 51% of assessed settlements in March compared to 39% in December. The reported internal displacements were primarily localized and likely driven by wild fire and pockets of insecurity.<sup>6,7</sup> Based on reports from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), presence of refugees in WES increased between December (10,617) and March (11,106).<sup>8</sup>



**Food Security and Livelihoods:** The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people had adequate access to food remained stable between quarter four of 2020 and quarter one of 2021 across WES, except for Nagero County, where findings suggest access to adequate food had decreased. Overall, KIs in 92% of assessed settlements in March and in 90% in December reported that most people had access to adequate food. In contrast, KIs in all the assessed settlements in Nagero County reported hunger as severe and KIs in the majority of assessed settlements (83%) reported that some people were skipping entire days without food during the 30 days prior to the data collection.<sup>9</sup> The reported inadequate access to food in Nagero County could deteriorate during lean season with poor road conditions to markets.



**Protection:** Potentially linked to pockets of insecurity in some of the WES counties, people's feeling of safety seemingly decreased in quarter one of 2021 compared to quarter four of 2020 (reported in 84% of assessed settlements in March and 92% in December). The proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly felt safe was notably lower in Tambura (27%) and Nagero (33%) compared to the other counties in WES.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, domestic violence continued to be the most reported protection concern for women reported by KIs in 62% of assessed settlements in March, marking an increase compared to December (47%).

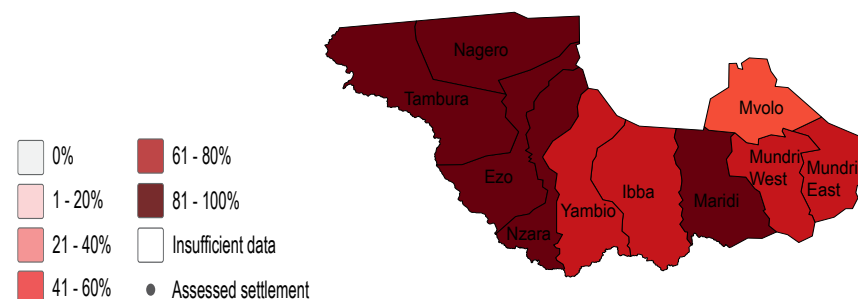


**Health:** Despite the apparent good access to a health facility, KIs in almost half (46%) of assessed settlements reported that it took people one hour to half a day to reach the health care facility. Longer time spent to access a health care facility could likely influence household decision making in seeking timely treatment and opt for local herbs which are readily available.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, a lack of medication, health care workers at the facility, and ambulances were the most commonly reported barriers to accessing health care services in the assessed settlements.



**Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** Although presence of a functional borehole appeared to have remained high and stable in both quarter one of 2021 and quarter four of 2020 (reported in 64% of assessed settlements in March and 67% in December), the proportions of assessed settlements where KIs reported well or river were the main water sources, remained high as well; 58% and 17%, respectively. The use of an unimproved water sources poses a risk of water borne diseases for households in the settlements.

**Map 2: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported unprotected water sources as the main drinking water source in March 2021**



**Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFIs):** Reports on access to tukuls and permanent houses remained stable for the host community in quarter one of 2021. In March, KIs in 97% of assessed settlements reported tukuls or other permanent structures as the main shelter type for host community, similar to December (reported in 98% of assessed settlements). While access to permanent housing appeared to have remained common among host communities, IDPs, and IDP returnees in March, the proportion of assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly living in rakoobas<sup>12</sup> or other temporary structures had slightly increased from 23% in December to 33% in March.



**Education:** Findings suggest that school going children had limited access to educational services due to lack of candidate classes (reported in 64% of assessed settlements) and COVID-19 restrictions (25%). Despite reopening of schools for candidate classes, KIs in 100% of assessed settlements in March reported that less than half of girls were attending schools. The most commonly reported reasons were closure of schools due to COVID-19 (reported in 59% of assessed settlements) and early pregnancies (25%).<sup>13</sup>

6. REACH FGD with participants from Tambura County 16 March 2021.

7. UN News. Violence in South Sudan engulfs country. 19 February 2021. [Link](#)

8. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 31 March 2021. [Link](#)

9. REACH FGD with participants from Nagero County 21 January 2021.

10. Radio Tamazuj. Boda-boda rider killed in Tambura. 10 March 2021. [Link](#)

11. Radio Tamazuj. Mvolo calm after long periods of insecurity. 12 January 2021. [Link](#)

12. Rakoobas are temporary shelters made from straw.

13. UNICEF Press release. UNICEF and UNESCO welcome the decision to reopen schools in South Sudan. 21 September 2020. [Link](#)

### Population Movement and Displacement

In quarter one of 2021, potentially linked to shelter destruction due to wild fires and pockets of insecurity, reports of the presence of IDPs increased slightly between the two quarters.<sup>14</sup> In addition, cross border movements seemed to be prevalent in some WES counties closer to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR) borders, as findings from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) suggest an increase in refugee presence in March.

#### Internal Displacement and Returns

The proportion of assessed settlements where IDP presence was reported increased from 39% in December to 51% in March. The presence of IDPs was notably commonly reported in assessed settlements in Mvolo (79%), Tambura (64%), and Nzara (62%) counties, which might be due to insecurity in Tambura County and destruction of shelters by wild fire in Mvolo and Nzara counties.<sup>15</sup> This reported insecurity in Tambura County was highlighted as a reason for displacement by FGD participants who described that people were leaving some settlements in Tambura County due to insecurity.<sup>16, 17</sup> However, across all counties, the most commonly reported reasons for IDPs leaving their previous settlements were lack of work opportunities (reported in 52% of assessed settlements) and lack of health care services (30%). For a small proportion of assessed settlements (14%), insecurity was the main reason for displacement. Additionally, findings suggest that displacement of IDPs was primarily localized within the same county. Subsequently, the localized displacement and apparent increase in reported presence of IDPs could likely have negative effects on resources for the host communities, particularly adding pressure on the availability of food in counties like Tambura (inadequate access to food was reported in 14% of assessed settlements) and Mvolo (11%).

Reports on the presence of IDP returnees remained stable between quarter four of 2020 and quarter one of 2021 (reported in 45% of assessed settlements in December and 51% in March). Reported presence of IDP returnees increased in Maridi (reported in 25% of assessed settlements in December and 68% in March) County where KIs in half of assessed settlements reported that most returnees had arrived in the three months prior to data collection (50%). This might be related to stability as peace negotiations with armed actors in WES seem to hold.<sup>18</sup> Potentially linked to land preparation and planting season approaching, reported pull factors for returns were mainly access to land for cultivation (reported in 54% of assessed settlements) and income (14%). As reported returns seem to be significant, disputes over resources might happen as secondary occupation of houses of displaced households is common in WES. Consistent with the reported presence of IDP returnees (reported in 83% of assessed settlements), KIs in 17% of assessed

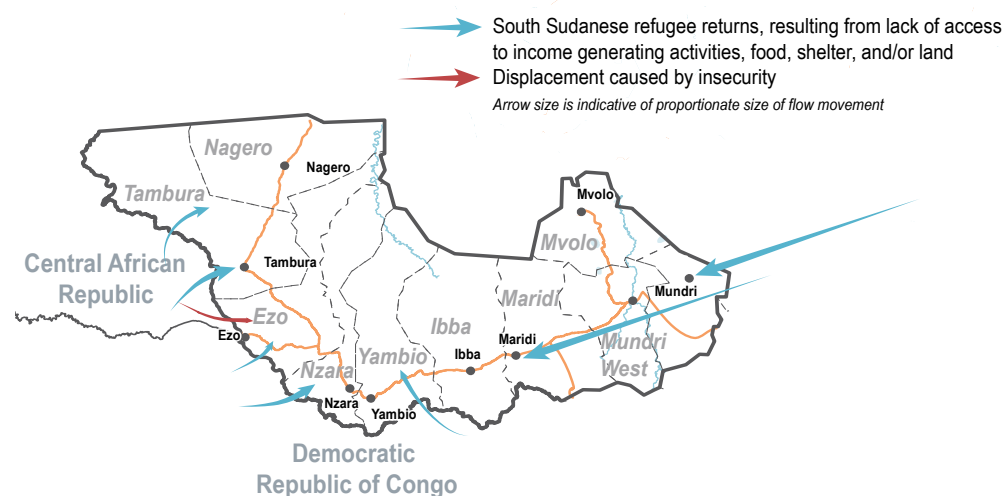
settlements in Nagero County reported inadequate access to food as a result of new arrivals, and competition over access to food could aggregate tensions between population groups.

#### Cross-border movements

In March, reports of the presence of refugee returnees remained stable compared to December (reported in 26% of assessed settlements in March and 24% in December). Furthermore, in 64% and 23% of assessed settlements with reported presence of refugee returnees, KIs reported DRC and CAR as the main countries of return, respectively. In the assessed settlements where KIs reported presence of refugee returnees, the reported push factors for returns were mainly lack of food (reported in 33% of assessed settlements), lack of access to land for cultivation (31%), and lack of shelters (15%). FGD participants that had recently returned from Imvepi Refugee Camp in Northwestern Uganda reported the situation to be worsening due to reduction in food rations and that most of them decided to return for cultivation.<sup>19</sup> During an FGD with refugee returnees in Maridi County, participants reported travelling through Nimule, Juba and Mundri Towns to Maridi County facing a number of common challenges on the route, such as lack of transport fare, lack of food, water and shelter materials.

According to the UNHCR, reported presence of refugees in WES increased between December (10,617) and March (11,106). The reported increase in the number of refugees could likely be due to political instability and armed conflict in CAR.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, refugees have been residing in Makpandu Refugee Camp (Yambio County), Ezo Town, Naandi and Andari (Ezo County), Source Yubu and Tambura Town (Tambura County), and Maridi Town (Maridi County).<sup>21</sup>

Map 3: Population movement in WES as reported by KIs, January to March 2021



14. REACH FGD with participants from Tambura County 16 March 2021.

15. Radio Tamazuj. Wildfire razes homes in Nzara County. 3 March 2021. [Link](#)

16. REACH FGD with participants from Tambura County 16 March 2021.

17. UN News. Violence in South Sudan engulfs country. 19 February 2021. [Link](#)

18. Eye Radio. Government and SSOMA ink document that concerns every life. 12 March 2021. [Link](#)

19. REACH FGD with participants from Maridi County 15 February 2021.

20. The New Humanitarian. In Central African Republic, disputed polls spark a rebel offensive. 18 January 2021. [Link](#)

21. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 31 March 2021. [Link](#)

Food Security and Livelihoods

In quarter one of 2021, reports on access to enough food in WES remained similar to quarter four of 2020 (reported in 92% of assessed settlements in March and 90% in December). The relatively high proportion of assessed settlements where access to enough food was reported is likely a result of fairly good harvest, improved access to markets, and increased engagement in livelihood activities during dry season. This was confirmed by FGD participants from Yambio County who described that most people had access to food because of a good harvest allowing them to stock more food.<sup>22</sup> Overall, KIs in 8% of assessed settlements reported inadequate access to food in March with the most commonly reported reasons for lack of access to food being single parent households<sup>23</sup> (reported in 23% of assessed settlements where inadequate access to food was reported), insufficient labour (20%), and crops being destroyed by pests (12%). Unlike other counties in WES, inadequate access to food reportedly increased notably between December and March in Nagero County (see page 5).

In March, the most commonly reported sources of food across the state were cultivation, fishing, and markets, however, this varied per county. While KIs in the majority (84%) of assessed settlements reported cultivation as the main source of food across WES, particularly in Ibba (100%), Maridi (100%), Mundri East (100%), Ezo (96%), and Nzara (96%) counties, KIs in 67% of assessed settlements in Nagero County reported market and in 89% of assessed settlements in Mvolo County KIs reported fishing as the main sources of food in March. Fishing reported as the main source of food in Mvolo County is likely due to presence of rivers and streams, which was also confirmed by FGD participant from Mvolo County who reported fishing to be the main livelihood activity in the early months of the year.<sup>24</sup>

Potentially due to seasonal weather changes in March, findings suggest people were engaged in varieties of livelihood activities such as casual labour (reported in 88% of assessed settlements), hunting (59%), rearing livestock (56%), crops for sustenance (51%), and fishing (46%).

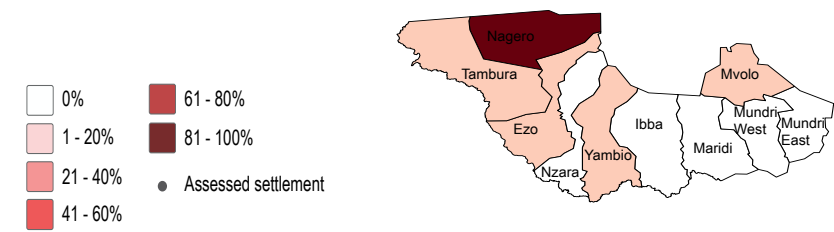
Despite the seemingly relatively good access to food reported in March across WES, KIs reported that most people in their settlements employed various coping strategies to cope with lack of access to food, including consumption of less expensive food (reported in 93% of assessed settlements) and reducing meal size (60%). The reported use of various coping strategies could be due to less successful harvests and economic hardship, which makes households unable to build reserves and have abundant food access further into the lean season (June to August).

In March, across WES, in all assessed settlements most people reportedly had access to a functional market that they could walk to (reported in 100% of assessed settlements), similar to December (96%). The high proportion of assessed settlements with reported access to markets is presumably because the reporting period was in the dry season, when roads are generally in better condition, enabling easier movement. Nevertheless, KIs in 9% of assessed settlements in Tambura County reported safety concerns as a barrier for most people to accessing their preferred market, which could be a result of ethnic divisions and fear of revenge killings on the road to the market.<sup>25</sup>

In most parts of WES, the main source of food is cultivation, reportedly having led to a successful harvest as a result of improved security in the area.<sup>26</sup> However, inadequate access to seeds was reported in Nagero (reported in 83% of assessed settlements), Ezo (74%), and Yambio (59%) counties, which may have an effect on the upcoming planting season (April to June) this year, and in the long term on the food security situation in these counties.

As rearing livestock is a common livelihood activity in Greater Mundri,<sup>27</sup> reports on ownership of cattle remained stable between December and March in Mundri East (reported in 42% of assessed settlements and 53% respectively) and Mundri West (reported in 10% of assessed settlements and 14% respectively) counties. On the contrary, in Mvolo County, the proportion of assessed settlements where cattle ownership was reported decreased considerably from 89% in December to 47% in March. This decrease might be related to continued cattle raids in Mvolo County as cattle presence attracts raiders from the neighbouring counties and causes insecurity.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, reports on access to cattle in Mvolo County decreased in March from 78% of assessed settlements in December to 47% in March. This decrease could be due to cattle owners moving further away because of insecurity and weather changes as pasture and streams dry up and force pastoralists to move away to far distances to search for pasture and water. The decrease in reported access to and ownership of cattle in Mvolo County could be a great concern as most households rely on cattle for dairy and as source of income to support their families.

Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements in WES where KIs reported inadequate access to food, March 2021



22. REACH FGD with participants from Yambio County 5 February 2021.  
23. Household which has one or more dependent children without the presence and support of an adult partner and cannot cultivate.  
24. REACH FGD with participants from Mvolo County 16 March 2021.  
25. Radio Tamazuj. Boda-boda rider killed in Tambura. 10 March 2021. [Link](#)  
26. Eye Radio. Government and SSOMA ink document that concerns every life. 12 March 2021. [Link](#)  
27. Greater Mundri consist of Mvolo, Mundri East and Mundri West counties.  
28. Radio Tamazuj. Mvolo calm after long periods of insecurity. 12 January 2021. [Link](#)



Areas of concern

Nagero County

In Nagero County, reports on inadequate access to food increased notably from 50% of assessed settlements in December to 83% in March. The most commonly reported reasons for inadequate access to food in Nagero County in March was that access to humanitarian aid decreased (reported in 50% of assessed settlements where inadequate access to food was reported) and crops having been destroyed by pests (33%). The relatively common reporting of inadequate access to food in Nagero County is consistent with the October 2020 Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) projections, in which Nagero County was classified in phase 3 (crisis) acute food insecurity.<sup>29</sup> Potentially linked to low access of food in Nagero County, KIs in all the assessed settlements reported hunger as severe (reported in 100% of assessed settlements). The reported severe hunger in Nagero County was confirmed by FGD participants, who described the food security situation as dire and likely to become more challenging.<sup>30</sup> Inadequate access to food is likely the result of multiple shocks, including a poor harvest due to last year's reduced rainfall in the planting season and flooding in quarter three of 2020 as indicated in the IPC report for South Sudan, October 2020 update.

Reflective of changes in access to food, while cultivation was reported as the main source of food in most of assessed settlements in WES, KIs in 67% of assessed settlements in Nagero County reported market as the main source of food in March. With markets being the main source of food, access to food could potentially change during lean season (July/August), as road conditions will likely deteriorate and supply of goods to markets becomes more difficult, likely affecting market prices and households' purchasing power.

Nagero County stood out on the reported use of extreme coping strategies. KIs in the majority (83%) of assessed settlements reported that some people were skipping entire days without food during the 30 days prior to the data collection, and in 50% of assessed settlements KIs reported that adults were not eating so that children could eat. Likewise, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people only ate one meal per day increased from 17% in December to 83% in December. Reported use of unsustainable coping strategies such as begging for food increased from 33% of assessed settlements in December to 50% in March. This increase could likely affect food security in Nagero County as most households seem struggle to cope with the continued limited access to food.

The reports on extreme coping strategies and the apparent decrease in meals consumed per day in Nagero County indicate a deterioration of access to food in the county, which could be of great concern entering the lean season (June to August).

Protection

Findings suggest a slight deterioration in feelings of safety between quarter one of 2021 and quarter four of 2020, with the proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly felt safe most of the time having decreased from 92% in December to 84% in March 2021. The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people felt safe most of the time was notably lower for Tambura (27%) and Nagero (33%) counties compared to other counties of WES. This is likely due to inter-communal tensions and revenge killings in Tambura County, which FGD participants from Tambura described as a concern for most people in the area.<sup>31, 32</sup> Likely reflective of insecurity in quarter one in Tambura County, KIs in 14% of assessed settlements reported incidents of looting in March, which could be challenging for affected communities already dealing with economic hardship.

Top three most commonly reported main protection concerns for women, men, boys, and girls in assessed settlements in WES, March 2021

Women	Men
1 Domestic violence62%	1 Alcohol use54%
2 Sexual violence14%	2 Fighting between neighbours23%
3 Fighting between neighbours4%	3 Killing/injury within same tribe2%

Girls	Boys
1 Early marriage81%	1 Child neglect25%
2 Domestic violence5%	2 Early marriage15%
3 Alcohol use1%	3 Fighting between neighbours14%

Across WES, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported domestic violence as the main protection concern for women increased between December (47%) and March (62%). Reported domestic violence was particularly high in eastern counties<sup>33</sup> where it was reported as the main protection concern among women in all assessed settlements in March. Subsequently, early marriage and domestic violence were reported as the main protection concerns for girls, reported by KIs in 81% and 5% of assessed settlements, respectively. Early marriage and domestic violence among girls could potentially be a result of closure of schools due to COVID-19 restrictions, which has shown to increase the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and early marriage.<sup>34</sup>

29. IPC. South Sudan IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis, October 2020 update  
30. REACH FGD with participants from Nagero County 21 January 2021.  
31. REACH FGD with participants from Tambura County 16 March 2021.  
32. Violence in South Sudan engulfs country. UN News. 19 February 2021. [Link](#)  
33. Eastern counties of WES consist of Ibba, Maridi, Mvolo, Mundri East and Mundri West.  
34. Radio Tamazuj. Teenage girls with unexpected pregnancies during COVID-19 lockdown hope to resume learning. 21 September 2020. [Link](#)

In March, the most commonly reported main protection concerns for men in the assessed settlements were alcohol usage and fighting between neighbours, which were reported by KIs in 54% and 23% of assessed settlements, respectively. Potentially due to economic hardship and closure of schools because of COVID-19 restrictions, the primarily reported protection concern for boys were child neglect (reported in 25% of assessed settlements), early marriage (15%), and fighting between neighbours (14%). Participants from the WES rule of law meeting reported a perceived increase in teenage pregnancies and early marriage as a concern in the communities.<sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> The reported child neglect could likely encourage recruitment into armed groups and increase number of crimes committed by minors.<sup>37</sup>

Reports on dispute over land ownership increased slightly in March, with KIs in 37% of assessed settlements reporting dispute over land ownership compared to 21% of assessed settlements in December. The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported dispute over land was comparatively high in Nzara (reported in 54% of assessed settlements in March), Yambio (50%), and Mundri West (48%). The apparent increase could be as a result of increased returns and could pose a concern as there are more returns expected in the next months.

## Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

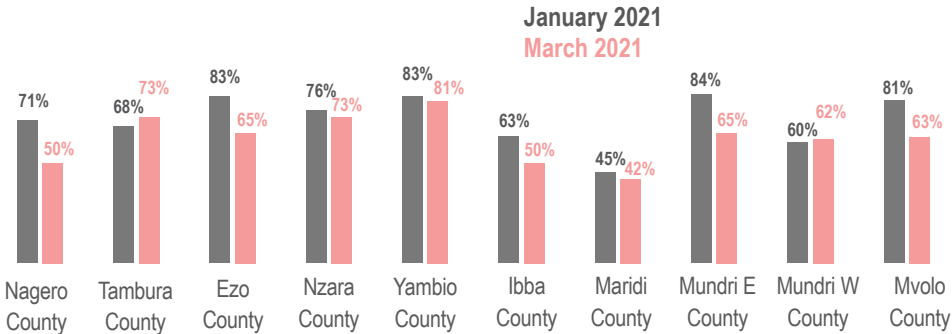
Reports of the presence of a functional borehole remained stable throughout quarter one of 2021. KIs in 64% of assessed settlements in March reported presence of a functional borehole compared to 67% in December. Reported presence of boreholes was relatively high in the western counties of WES with an exception of Nagero County (50%).<sup>38</sup> Despite reported presence of a functional borehole, the use of an unimproved water source was high in March with KIs in more than a half (58%) and 17% of assessed settlements reporting a well and river as the main water source, respectively. The reported use of a well as the main water source was notably high in Nagero (reported in 100% of assessed settlement), Ezo (96%), Nzara (85%), and Tambura (77%) counties. In addition, reported use of a river was relatively high in Ibba (reported in 55% of assessed settlements) and Maridi (42%) counties compared to other WES counties. The notably high proportion of assessed settlements where the use of unimproved water sources was reported may be due to proximity to these water sources, which are generally available and usually take less time for most people to reach. However, the use of an unimproved water sources poses a risk of water borne diseases for households in the settlements. In addition, findings suggest that it took one hour to half a day for people in more than a third (33%) of assessed settlements to access, collect water, and return from their preferred water source. Longer time spent to access water could be due to dry season (January to March) when most water sources have dried up, forcing people to walk a longer distance to collect water, which may have had negative effect on livelihood

activities and water utilization.<sup>39</sup>

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people had access to and used latrines decreased in quarter one of 2021 compared to quarter four of 2020. In March, in 45% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that more than half of the people in the settlement had access to latrines, compared to 59% in December. This decrease could be a result of change in livelihood activities during dry season where people likely spent more time outside their homes. In addition, the proportion of assessed settlement where less than a half of the people in the settlement reportedly had access to a latrine was relatively high in assessed settlements in Nagero County (83%), where WASH infrastructure had largely been damaged during the conflict in 2018 and had not fully been rehabilitated yet.<sup>40</sup> Across WES, the most commonly reported reasons for inadequate access and use of latrines were that the latrines were not available (reported in 65% of assessed settlements) and that the latrines being dirty (23%). Low use of latrines may increase the risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and diarrheal diseases.

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported use of soap for washing hands remained stable and relatively low between quarter four of 2020 and quarter one of 2021 (reported in 21% of assessed settlements in March and 26% in December). Potentially linked to high price of imported goods in the market, KIs in 52% of assessed settlements reported that most people were washing hands with water only, whereas KIs in 16% of assessed settlements reported that people in the settlements do not wash their hands at all.<sup>41</sup> The high proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that people were not washing hands with soap could be at risk of transmission of diarrhea pathogens and other infectious diseases, and could especially be a concern given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Proportion of assessed settlements in WES where KIs reported the presence of a functional borehole, January - March 2021:



35. WES, Minutes of Rule of Law meeting 21 January 2021.  
36. Eye Radio. COVID-19 impedes progress towards gender equality. 9 March 2021. [Link](#)  
37. CMMB. Youngest casualties of war, more child soldiers to be released in South Sudan, November 2019. [Link](#).  
38. Western counties of WES consist of Yambio, Nzara, Ezo, Tambura and Nagero.  
39. OCHA. South Sudan. Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2021. [Link](#).  
40. OCHA. South Sudan. Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2021. [Link](#).

41. REACH. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) 7-14 January 2021. [Link](#)



## Health

Findings from March suggest that access to a health care facility remained relatively stable between quarter four of 2020 and quarter one of 2021. KIs in 86% of assessed settlements in March and in 78% in December reported that people had a functional primary health care facility they could walk to and return from within one day. Similarly, reports of access to a hospital remained stable but relatively low, with KIs in 11% of assessed settlements reporting this in March compared to 17% in December.

Despite the apparent availability of a health facility within walking distance, KIs in almost half (46%) of assessed settlements reported that it took people one hour to half a day to reach the health care facility. The long time spent to access a health care facility could influence household decisions on seeking timely treatment and opt for local herbal treatment, which are likely more easily accessible.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, lack of medication (reported in 89% of assessed settlements), lack of health care workers at the facility (54%) and ambulances (27%) were the most commonly reported barriers to accessing health care services in March.

Long distances to health facilities, limited infrastructure, and a lack of mosquito nets (reported in 10% of assessed settlements) could increase the risk and impact of morbidity among affected communities in these hard-to-reach settlements.



## Shelter/ NFI

Reports on access to tukuls and permanent houses remained stable for host community in quarter one of 2021. In March, KIs in 97% of assessed settlements reported tukuls or other permanent structures as the main shelter type for host communities, similar to December (reported in 98% of assessed settlements). While access to permanent housing appeared to have remained common among host communities, IDPs, and IDP returnees in March, the proportion of assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly living in rakoobas<sup>43</sup> or other temporary structures had slightly increased from 23% in December to 33% in March. The use of rakoobas as the main shelter type may be of concern with the expected heavy rains in the next months.<sup>44</sup>

In March, KIs in 18% of assessed settlements reported the presence of shelters that had been destroyed by fighting, likely related to the ongoing insecurity in Tambura County.<sup>45</sup> This could be a challenge to rebuilding the destroyed shelters as grass used for shelters has likely been burnt in bush fires during the dry season.

Similar to quarter four of 2020, among the assessed settlements where KIs reported presence of

IDPs in March, cooking pots (reported in 45% of assessed settlements) and blankets (26%) were reported as the most commonly needed NFIs.



## Education

In quarter one of 2021, KIs in a relatively low proportion of assessed settlements reported that most children had access to educational services compared to quarter 4 of 2020 (reported in 38% in March and 56% in December). Even though, on the 5th of October 2020, schools resumed for candidate classes (primary eight and senior four) the majority of school going children (primary one to seven and senior one to three) have not gone back to school.<sup>46</sup> Findings suggest that children had low access to educational services due to lack of candidate classes (reported in 64% of assessed settlements in March) and COVID-19 restrictions (25%). Potentially as a result of this, KIs in more than half of assessed settlements (57%) in March reported that less than half of girls were attending schools, with the most commonly reported reasons being school closures due to COVID-19 (59%) and early pregnancies (25%).

## Conclusion

The findings presented in this situation overview indicate a potential deterioration of the food security situation in Nagero County, where KIs in the majority of settlements reported the use of extreme coping strategies. With the continuation of the rainy season, this could exacerbate as roads to markets may become impassable due to heavy rain and flooding. Despite the widespread presence of functional boreholes, the proportion of assessed settlements where unimproved water sources were used remained relatively high in quarter one of 2021, which poses a risk of water borne diseases.

### About REACH Initiative

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).

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42. Radio Tamazuj. Mvolo calm after long periods of insecurity. 12 January 2021. [Link](#)

43. Rakoobas are temporary shelters made from straw.

44. UNFAO. Season/weather update. NAWG Meeting. 02 March 2021.

45. Radio Tamazuj. Boda-boda rider killed in Tambura. 10 March 2021. [Link](#)

46. UNICEF Press release. UNICEF and UNESCO welcome the decision to reopen schools in South Sudan. 21 September 2020. [Link](#)