

Situation Overview: Unity State, South Sudan

May 2016

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

Introduction

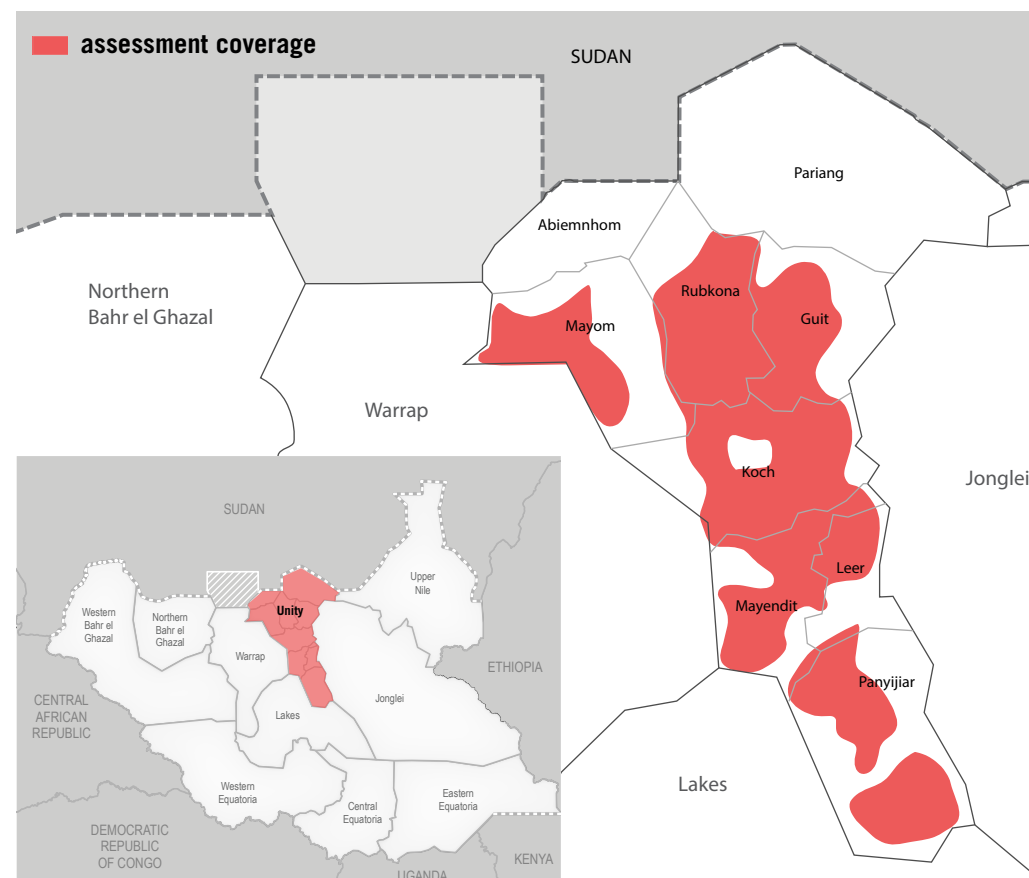
Unity State hosted over half a million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of May 2016¹ – more than any other state in South Sudan. The majority of these IDPs reside in dispersed locations, often hosted by non-displaced communities, while 95,991 individuals stay in Bentiu Protection of Civilian (PoC) site, the only formal site in Unity State.²

Due to ongoing violence and instability, the vast majority of IDPs and local communities lack adequate access to food, livelihood opportunities, and/or basic services. A dramatic reduction in levels of violence in 2016 saw many IDPs return to their homelands or relocate to other areas within the state that they believe will offer better opportunities to meet their needs. Although humanitarian actors have responded to the increased levels of security and changing displacement patterns by widening the scope of assistance offered outside the PoC, there remains a strong need for further assistance to prevent local communities from being driven to further displacement.

To inform the response of humanitarians working outside formal settlement sites, REACH is conducting an assessment of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan, for which monthly data collection on communities across the Greater Upper Nile region will be conducted throughout the course of a year. As part of

this assessment, REACH assessed 75 of 83 communities in seven of nine counties in Unity State from 5-31 May. This exercise included 587 key Informants (KIs): 255 in Bentiu PoC, 94 in Bentiu Town, and 238 in Juba PoC. Fifty percent (50%) of KIs had received recent information about communities in one of the following counties: Guit, Koch, Leer, Mayendit, Mayom, Panyijiar, and Rubkona. A further 291 KIs were new arrivals and therefore had up-to-date information about the community that they had been displaced from. All findings have been triangulated using focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted at selected sites outside of the PoC, secondary data, and REACH's previous assessments of hard-to-reach areas of Unity State.

The following document provides an update to key findings from April 2016 regarding displacement dynamics and humanitarian conditions in the assessed communities across Unity State. The first section examines displacement trends across Unity State. The second examines the current situation of IDPs and non-displaced communities currently living in each community, with regards to access to food and the functionality of basic services, including water, sanitation, health, and education.



Map 1: Unity State location and assessment coverage

1. IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, <http://www.iomsouthsudan.org/tracking/dtm>
2. Ibid
3. REACH Situation Overview of Unity State, February 2016, March 2016, and April 2016



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas, this study uses primary data provided by key informants (KIs) who receive regular information from some place outside of their current displacement site, usually their pre-displacement location or “area of origin”.

Information for this study was collected from KIs in Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site and Bentiu Town, Unity State, as well as Juba PoC during May 2016.

A two-stage methodology was employed, beginning with the identification of KIs and participatory mapping, followed by in-depth interviews with selected participants to understand the current situation in places outside of Bentiu PoC that they received regular information from.

Each participant was matched with a geographic area about which s/he could provide information. During the second stage, KI interviews were conducted with selected participants. A standardised survey was used to collect information about the situation and needs of the remaining host community and any displaced persons residing there. Not all KIs had to respond to each question, so the number of responding communities often varied between indicators.

After data collection finished, all data was examined at the community level, and communities were assigned the modal response, from which descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were used to analyse the data.

Key findings

Findings from May show an increase in the number of IDPs arriving in areas across Unity State, as well as an increase in the number of returnees to their local communities. However, the majority of returned local community members and IDPs were reported not to be planning to stay in their current location permanently, with most planning to return to the PoC in the coming months to receive aid. IDPs and returned local community were reportedly staying with family members in a larger proportion of communities than in April. However, there has been an increase in the proportion of communities reporting land disputes, indicating that the increasingly dispersed presence of IDPs and returned local community may be straining the cultivation capacities of communities.

A similar proportion of communities reported access to adequate amounts of food compared to April. However, there has been a rise in communities reporting aid as their main

Figure 1: Reported push factors for leaving pre-displacement location

Bold text denotes that a majority of respondents reported the reason

Push Factors

- 1. Security**
- 2. Health**
- 3. Food**
4. Education
5. Aid

Figure 2: Proportion of KIs reporting pull factors for choosing current displacement site during the 2015-16 dry season *The darker the colour, the more commonly reported*

	First Reason	Second Reason	Third Reason
Security	73%	4%	4%
Food Access	7%	28%	46%
Health access	8%	48%	19%
Aid	12%	3%	20%
Join Family	0%	0%	5%
Education access	0%	6%	4%
Water access	0%	12%	2%
Other	0%	0%	0%

source of food and a decrease in the proportion of communities reporting cultivation. This may be further evidence that despite the onset of the growing season, communities’ capacity to supply sufficient food without assistance is limited.

Reported access to basic services has improved substantially since April. However, when triangulated with cluster reports of basic service provision, it is unlikely that this is a permanent increase since many health and education programs are considered temporary and/or vulnerable to changes in context. Furthermore, safe drinking water and health facilities are often over an hour from most homes, indicating that distance may be a limiting factor to regular access. Therefore, in order to encourage the resumption of pre-crisis lives there is a continued need for basic service provision across most communities.

Population Movement and Displacement

Push factors for leaving pre-crisis locations

The push factors that drove IDPs to leave their precrisis home or previous displacement site closely reflect the pull factors that led to the selection of the community to which they have been displaced. Insecurity was reported as the primary reason for displacement (89%) and security was reported as the primary factor that led them to choose their current displacement site (84%). After security, access to food and healthcare were reported to be the second and third most influential factors in decisions on when and where to move.

These findings correspond directly with the push and pull factors dictating the displacement patterns of IDPs in Bentiu PoC and Bentiu Town. A recent IOM report expands on these findings, reporting that IDPs leaving Bentiu PoC are taking advantage of the improved

security situation in Unity State to cultivate land, check on family and possessions that remain in their precrisis homelands, and collect supplementary food.⁴ These findings are congruent with the results of FGDs conducted by REACH, which identified cultivation as the primary objective of many of the IDPs leaving the PoC and arriving in “catchment areas” in Rubkona and Guit counties. Catchment areas are places without a permanent humanitarian presence that can be easily accessed by both humanitarians and their beneficiaries.

Key displacement trends

Map 2 highlights the displacement movements of IDPs residing in Bentiu PoC, Bentiu Town, and Juba PoC during May 2016. It is important to note that the number of IDPs interviewed in each location determines the detail of displacement information for each location. These findings indicate that the vast majority of IDPs within Bentiu PoC have come from

Rubkona or neighbouring counties. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the IDPs were residing in other displacement sites before arriving in the PoC, whilst 46% came directly from their precrisis home to the PoC.

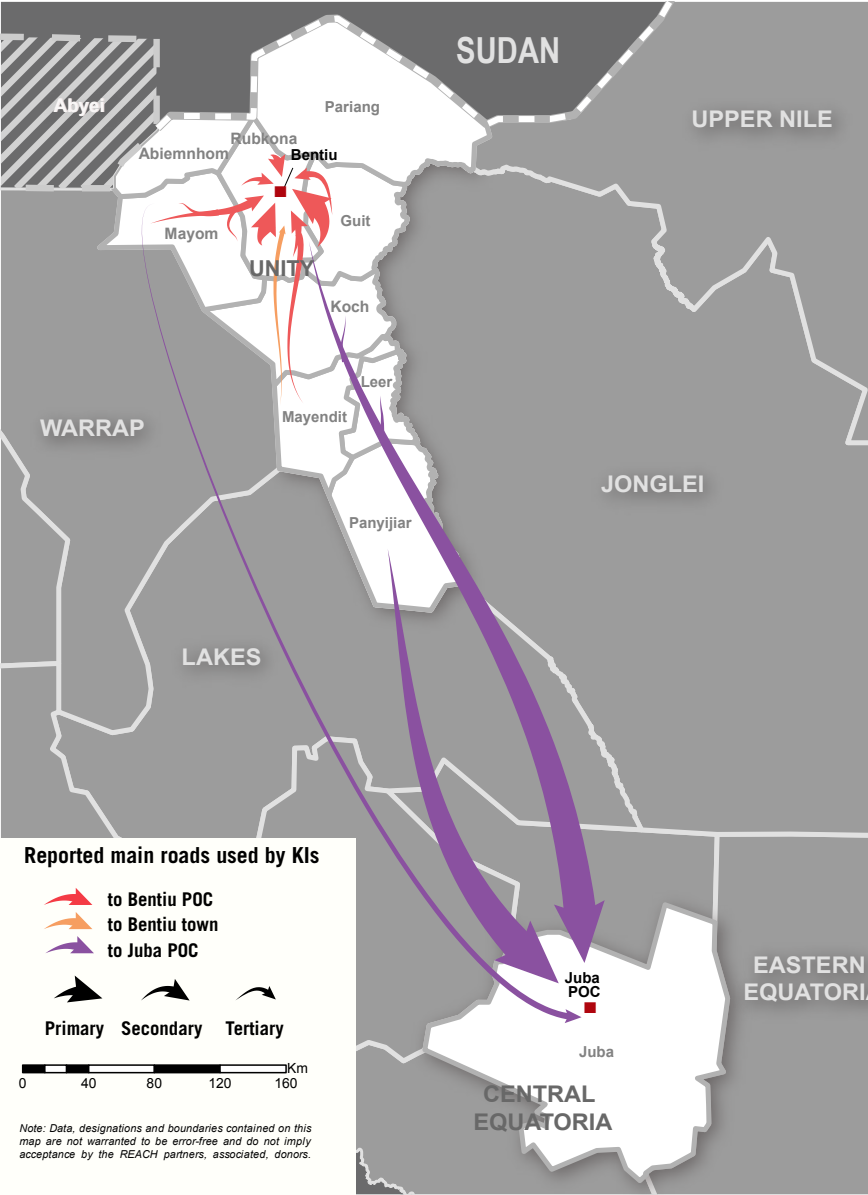
Overall, the proportion of new arrivals to the PoC has decreased significantly in recent months, with the number of departures exceeding the number of arrivals. As a result, the PoC population has declined from 115,041 in March to 95,996 in May, with net increases in population only occurring during periods of food distribution.

A large proportion of these departures from the PoC were reported to be temporary, with IDPs planning to return after cultivating. According to FGDs conducted by REACH and the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, the primary reasons that IDPs plan to return to the camp are the need for food assistance and high levels of uncertainty about the suitability of

Table 1: Proportion of KIs reported displacement by season/county
Displacement time aggregated as: Dry Season: Jan - Apr and Wet season: May - Oct, End of the year (Dry Season): Nov-Dec. Highest proportions for each county have been highlighted.

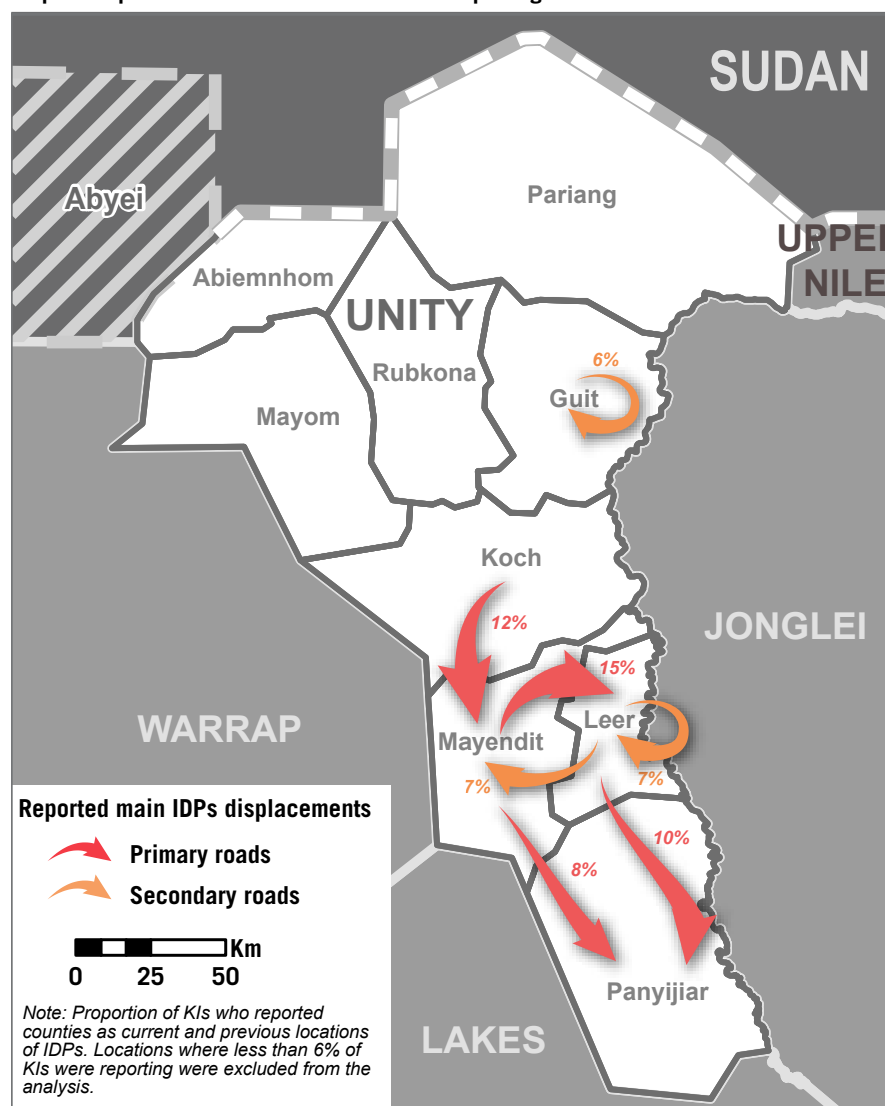
County	2013			2014			2015			2016	
	End	Dry	Wet	End	Dry	Wet	End	Dry	Wet	End	Dry
Guit	0%	38%	16%	4%	24%	11%	7%	0%			
Koch	0%	8%	2%	5%	10%	5%	36%	34%			
Leer	5%	12%	2%	17%	19%	3%	12%	29%			
Mayendit	0%	26%	4%	17%	9%	4%	30%	9%			
Mayom	0%	27%	12%	3%	20%	22%	8%	8%			
Panyijiar	0%	12%	0%	4%	56%	0%	16%	12%			
Rubkona	0%	61%	15%	0%	4%	9%	4%	7%			

Map 2: Main displacement routes to data collection sites



4. Ibid

Map 3: Displacement trends to communities reporting IDPs



their pre-crisis homes for permanent return. In particular, there is a strong perception that the security situation will worsen again at some point, and that basic service provision in most communities is not sufficient to meet their basic needs.

Bentiu Town, on the other hand, has seen a large influx of IDPs in recent months. The population registered in Bentiu Town has increased from 1,181 in December 2015 to 29,911 in May 2016. Only 8% of those registered by IOM in Bentiu Town are from the town, and 3,305 are people who have changed their registration from Bentiu PoC to Bentiu Town. It is likely that this large increase in the population is due to the resumption of NGO activities in the area. Many of these new IDPs are reportedly from Mayom and other parts of Rubkona.

For those communities reporting IDPs, the survey asked about the areas of origin of these displaced families. Map 3 provides an overview of the latest displacement movements of IDPs and clearly shows that the majority of reported displacement is to communities either within the same county or to a neighbouring counties in Unity State.

Situation in Communities

Demographic profile

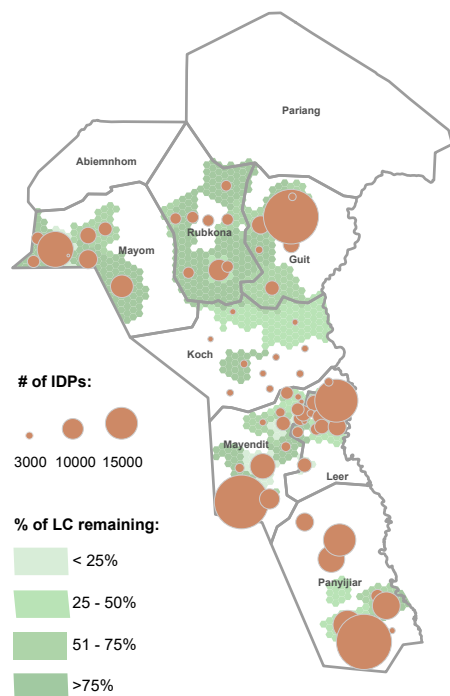
Remaining population in assessed communities

As in April, KIIs in all communities reported that at least some members of the host community have remained. However, 65 of 69 (94%) assessed communities reported that there had been a decrease in original population since the beginning of the crisis due to displacement, with 44 (74%) communities reporting that 50%-75% of the population has left. These findings indicate that although there has been an increase of returned local community to pre-crisis locations or homelands, this movement remains minimal in comparison to the proportion of people who fled their homes in the two years following the onset of the crisis.

Thirty-nine of sixty-four (61%) communities reported that most of the remaining host community are living in their own homes, whilst 11 (17%) and 12 (18%) reported that most are living nearby in the bush and in other people's homes, respectively. This represents a rise in the proportion of local community reported to be living in their own homes since April, which may reflect that the improved security situation is leading to the resumption of more normal lives.

Nevertheless, it appears that trust in current levels of security and capacity to meet basic needs remains low, with 32 (49%) communities reporting that at least some of the local

Map 4: Reported non-displaced host community and IDP population



IDP population in assessed communities

KIs in 52 of 67 (78%) communities reported the presence of IDPs, which is a substantial increase since April 2016, when only 18 of 65 (29%) communities reported IDPs. This increase may be due to IDPs leaving Bentiu PoC and informal displacement sites to seek land to cultivate in areas that are not their pre-crisis homes, resulting in an increasingly dispersed IDP population. Panyijiar continues to be the county hosting the largest reported proportion of IDPs. There have also been large increases in the number of IDPs hosted in Mayendit, Leer, and Guit.

Twenty-eight of forty-five (62%) communities reported that IDPs were living with relatives, whilst 7 (16%) were reported to be living with the local community, indicating that the majority of IDPs chose locations where they have family ties.

The most common factor identified by IDPs as the most important reason for choosing to reside in the community was reported to be security (57% of communities), followed by the location being their home (49% of communities). Proximity to family and access to sufficient amounts of food was the most frequently cited second most important reason for IDPs choosing that community.

Twenty-seven of forty-four (61%) communities with IDPs reported that the displaced families were not planning to stay in the area permanently. All of these 27 communities reported that IDPs were planning to leave to a

PoC site. As for those temporarily leaving the PoC, this may be influenced by mistrust in the likelihood of long-term stability and a predicted need for food aid from the PoC following the end of the cultivation season.

Returned local community

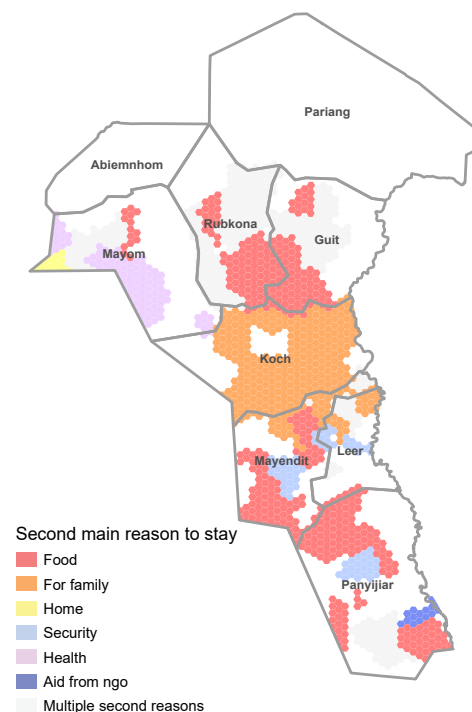
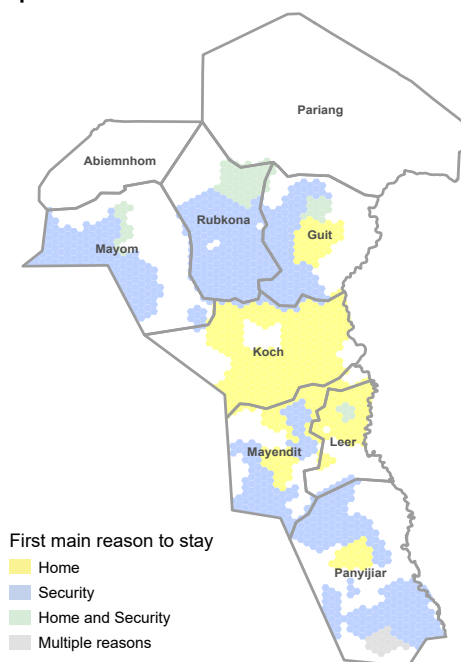
Forty-one of sixty-eight communities (60%) reported returned local community members, which highlights an increasing trend in returned host community since March and April, when approximately a quarter (19 of 70) and half (31 of 56) of communities reported this, respectively. However, 28 of 41

communities (68%) reported that the return was only temporary.

KIs in 39 of 68 (57%) communities reported disputes over land ownership in the community area compared to 12 of 57 (21%) communities in April. An increase in land disputes may be due to augmented numbers of IDPs and returned local community members looking for land to cultivate during the planting season.

The largest numbers of returned local community members were reported in Mayom and Mayendit. This is a slight shift since April when Leer, western Mayom, and Guit were

Map 5: First (left) and second (right) most important reasons for IDPs choosing their current displacement site



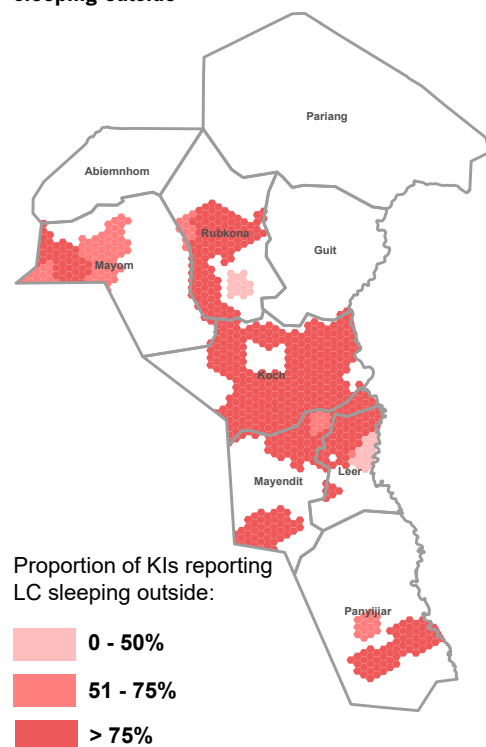
population is planning to leave in the next three months. Nineteen of thirty-one (61%) communities reported that between 50% and 75% of the population is planning to leave, and 7 (23%) communities reported that 25% to 50% is planning to leave. KIs in 10 (36%) of these communities reported that planned departures are driven by a lack of food, 9 (32%) by a shortage of humanitarian aid, and 8 (29%) by insecurity. In all communities where the local community are intending to leave they were reported to be planning to go to a PoC site.

reported to be hosting the largest numbers.

Shelter

All communities reported that the local community, IDPs, and returned local community were using Rakooba/Tukuls as at least one of their main shelter types. However, many are still living in temporary shelters. Twenty-eight of sixty communities (47%) reported that collective centres are the second most popular forms of shelter in use. In 17 out of 42 (40%) communities, collective centres such as community buildings were the

Map 6: Reported proportion of host community sleeping outside



second most used shelters in use by returned host community and 13 out of 42 (31%) of communities reported that collective centres were the second most used shelters by IDPs.

Fifty of sixty-one (82%) communities reported that less than a quarter of the local community was living outside with no shelter. In comparison, 31 of 48 (65%) reported that less than 25% of IDPs were living outside, and 28 of 39 communities (72%) reported that less than 25% of returned local community was living outside. This finding indicates that IDPs and returned host community members continue to live in worse shelter conditions than the non-displaced local community.

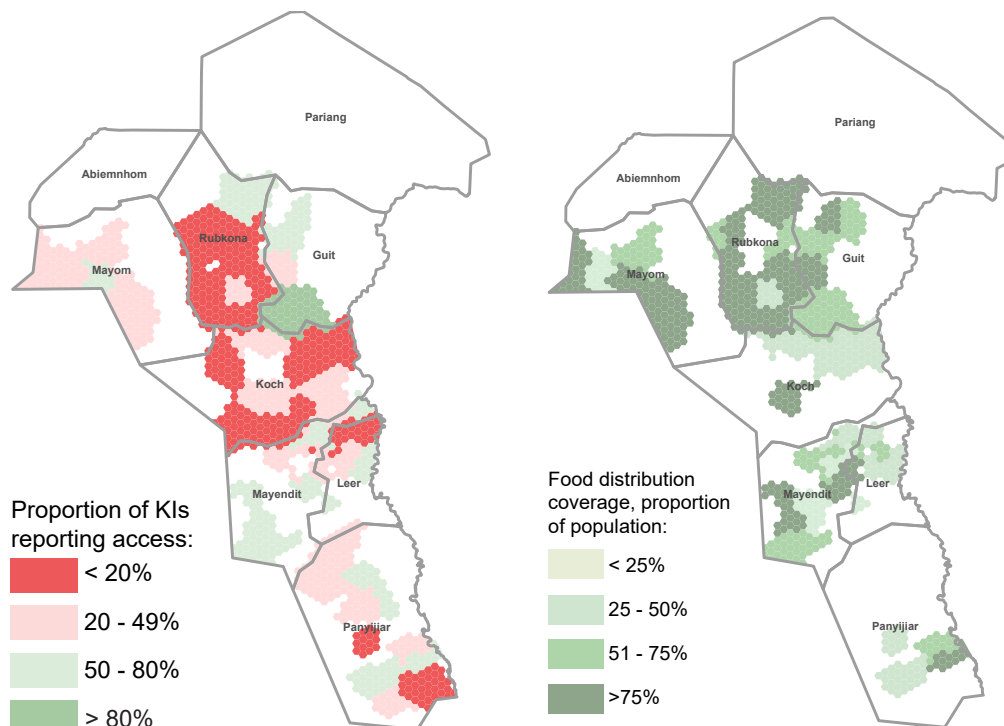
KIs in 26 of 44 (59%) communities with IDPs reported that 25% to 50% of the host community were sharing shelter with IDPs, 10 (22%) reported that 50% to 75% were sharing, and 7 (15%) reported that less than a quarter were sharing. Similar proportions of the host community were reported to be sharing shelter with returned local community members.

Most people were reportedly using mosquito nets, with 29 of 67 (43%) communities reporting that over 75% of people were using mosquito nets, and only one reporting that less than 25% of people were using them. However, the average number of people sharing each mosquito net is still four, indicating a continued need for more mosquito nets across Unity State.

Access to Food

Twenty-nine of sixty-seven (43%) communities

Map 7: Reported access to adequate amounts of food (left) and proportion of communities reported to have received food distributions (right).

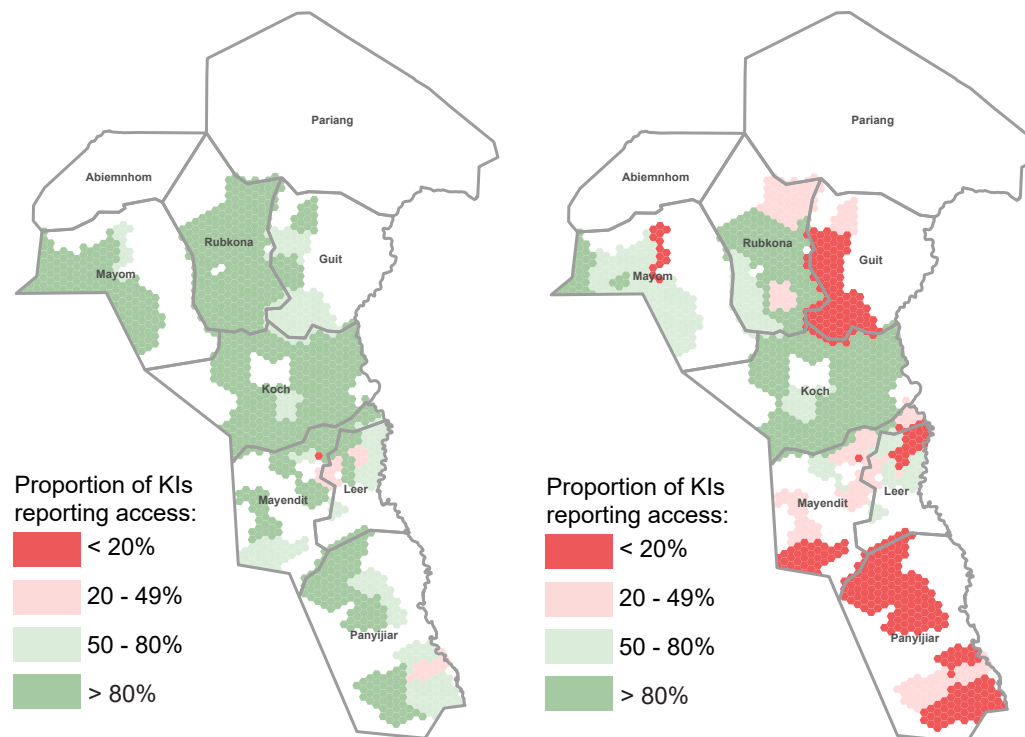


reported that they have access to adequate amounts of food, the same proportion as in April 2016. Proportions were about the same for communities with IDPs and those without.

KIs in 58 of 69 (83%) communities indicated their main source of food is from aid distributions, and 8 (12%) said it is from cultivation. This is a significant increase in reliance on food distributions since April when 65% of communities cited food distributions as their main source of food. This may be due to an increase in food aid over recent months, with 53 of 59 (90%) of communities reporting

that they had received food distributions since the beginning of the crisis, compared to 62% (37 of 60 communities assessed) in April. Furthermore, 48 of 51 (94%) communities that had received food distributions reported that the last distribution was within a month prior to data collection, compared to only 5 of 41 (12%) communities in April. This finding is consistent with WFP food distribution data, which reports reaching 6 of the 7 assessed counties over the May/April period. Rubkona and Mayom reported the highest proportions of people being reached by food aid distributions.

Map 8: Reported access to land (left) and agricultural inputs (right)



Further reasons for an increased reliance on food aid may be influxes of returned local community and IDPs straining the capacity of local communities to cultivate enough food for each family, as well as inflation, which in the absence of a substantial improvement in livelihood opportunities reduces households' purchasing power.⁵

Livelihoods

KIs in 34 of 66 (52%) communities reported being aware of salaried/skilled positions in their community, which is a substantial increase from the 14 of 58 (24%) communities that

reported this in April. Similarly, there has been an increase in communities reporting market seller/business jobs from 18 of 58 (31%) in April to 42 of 63 (66%) in May. An increase in skilled labour and business opportunities since April may partly be a result of the increased scope of NGO activities across Unity State providing job opportunities for locals. Although this is a positive improvement, it is important to note that such jobs are highly dependent on international funding, and when possible the development of more sustainable livelihood opportunities should be prioritized.

KIs reported land being available for cultivation in 62 of 67 (93%) of communities, which indicates a continuation of the trend of increasing availability of land since April, when 32 of 63 (51%) of communities reported access to land for cultivation. This increase has corresponded with an increase in agricultural inputs, from 12 of 57 (21%) communities in April to 35 of 66 communities (53%) in May. According to clusters, there have been distributions of agricultural inputs in both central/northern and southern counties, which include items such as crop kits, vegetable kits, and fishing nets. However, further assistance need to be provided in order for households to be able to fully take advantage of the increased accessibility of land.

Water and Sanitation

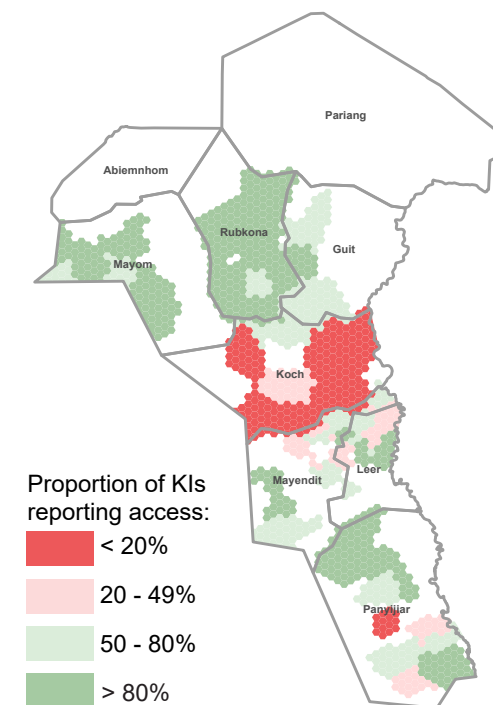
Forty-eight of sixty-seven (72%) communities reported access to safe drinking water, which is a substantial increase since April when only 7 of 58 (12%) communities reported access to clean drinking water. This increase is likely to be attributable to an improved security situation across the state as well as ongoing efforts by UNICEF to repair boreholes and implement temporary safe water supplies in areas without access to safe water. Overall, 47 of 48 (98%) communities reported boreholes as their main source of water, compared to 22 of 25 (88%) communities in April.

However, for communities with access to safe water, the reported distance to the source was relatively far away, and twenty-eight of forty-seven (60%) communities reported having to

walk over 30 minutes to the closest safe water source compared to 5 of 14 (36%) in April. FGDs conducted in the PoC in April found that households often do not use safe water source if they are more than a 20 minute walk away. Therefore, if the majority of households are far from the sources, increased access to safe water does not necessarily lead to increased usage.

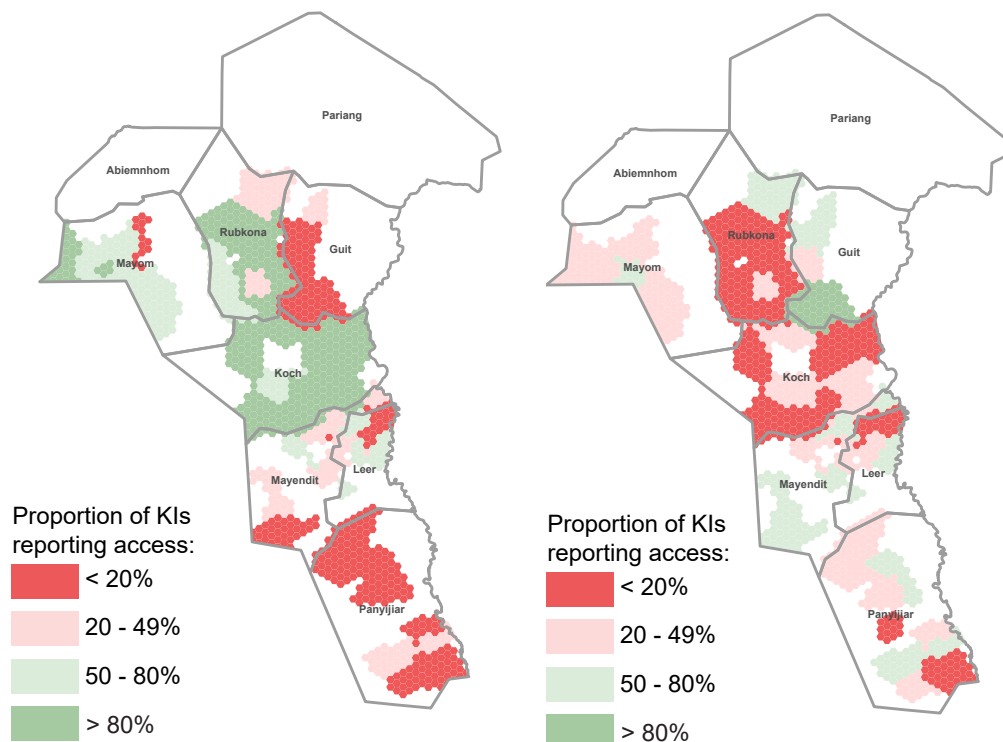
Continued limited access to safe drinking water across Unity State is largely due to damaged boreholes. Similarly, 32 out of 64 (50%) communities reported that 25% to 50% of the water sources were totally damaged,

Map 9: Reported access to safe drinking water



5. WFP, Special Working Paper on Devaluation of South Sudan Pound: Short-term Food Security Implications

Map 10: Reported access to healthcare (left) and education (right)



while only 5 (23%) reported that less than 25% were damaged. Eight (12%) reported that more than half of all boreholes had been destroyed.

Health

As with other services, there was a substantial increase in the proportion of communities reporting access to health care. In May, 32 out of 65 (49%) responding communities reported that they had access to health care, compared to 4 out of 62 (6%) communities in April. Nevertheless, high levels of damage to

health facilities were reported. Forty (62%) communities reported that 25% to 50% of health facilities were totally damaged, 11 (17%) reported that less than 25% were totally damaged, and 8 (13%) reported that 50% to 75% were totally damaged. Given the high levels of reported damage to health facilities and the fact that very few health facilities were established or re-opened during the April/May reporting period, this finding could represent an increased awareness of the scope of health and nutrition partners' outreach programs and mobile clinics, which largely target specific

conditions or illnesses.

Furthermore, distance from the nearest health care centre limits access to available health care programs for large proportions of each community. Of the 32 communities that reported access to health care, 10 (31%) reported an average walk of 30 minutes to the nearest health care facility, and a further 22 (69%) reported an average walk of more than one hour.

Education

A notable improvement in access to education was reported in May. KIIs in 17 of 66 (26%) communities reported that education is available now, compared to 5 of 63 (8%) communities in April. Overall, KIIs in 26% of communities reported that they had access to primary education, 8% have access to secondary education, 1% Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs), and 1% vocational training.

Communities in Guit, Mayendit and Leer reported the lowest proportion of access to schools whereas Rubkona and Mayom had the highest. These findings are congruent with data collected by the South Sudan Education Cluster during the first quarter of 2016, which found Mayom to have 36 functioning schools, 35 of which are primary schools, and Boaw, Koch and Bentiu Town in Rubkona to also have functioning schools.⁶ However, a large proportion of schools were reported to be outside (under trees), and will therefore likely be affected by the rainy season. Additionally, teacher attendance rates are often low as

salaries are not always paid on time, and there is a severe shortage of school materials across the state. Therefore, although the push from NGOs and voluntary teachers has marginally improved access to schooling in recent months, there is still a need for the re-establishment of schools and the acquisition of school infrastructure and materials.

KIIs in 10 of 17 (59%) communities with access to education reported that less than 25% of girls aged 6-11 years were attending school, and 7 (41%) reported that 25% to 50% were attending school. For boys aged 6-11 years, 12 of 17 (71%) of communities with access to education reported that 25% to 50% were attending school, 3 (18%) reported that 50% to 75% were attending school, and 1 (6%), less than 25%. Therefore, although there has been a substantial improvement in the proportion of communities with access to schools, the majority of primary school-aged children continue to not receive education. The main reasons cited for children not attending school were a need to work and insecurity. This finding indicates that the scope of education in Unity State is highly dependent on the improvement of livelihood opportunities in the area and continuing stabilisation of the security situation.

Protection

KIIs in 23 of 66 (35%) communities reported the presence of police/protection personnel. The most frequently cited types of police/protection services present were military (8 communities) or police (10 communities).

6. South Sudan Education Cluster, Mayom County Initial Rapid Needs Assessment, May 2016

IDP relations with the local community were reported to be very good by the vast majority of responding communities with IDPs (12 of 14). However, the remaining two communities reported relations to be poor.

Although there has been an improvement in security over recent months, threats from different communities continue to be the primary protection concern. KIs in 53 of 65 (81%) communities reported attacks from another community as the main protection concern for men, and 28 of 61 (45%) reported harassment from members of a different community as the main protection concern for women.

KIs in 54 of 65 (86%) communities reported that there are at least some children involved in the conflict, and 55 of 62 (89%) communities reported the presence of unaccompanied children.

Table 2: Main protection threats faced by men (left) and women (right)

	April		May	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Attack, from member of different community	88%	16%	82%	6%
Attack, from member of same community	7%	7%	3%	11%
Harrassment, different community	5%	62%	8%	45%
Harrassment, same community	0%	5%	8%	18%
Collecting water	0%	0%	0%	2%
Collecting firewood	0%	0%	0%	6%
Domestic violence	18%	0%	0%	8%
Other	0%	0%	0%	2%
Don't Know	0%	0%	0%	2%

Conclusion

In response to improved levels of security across Unity State, there continues to be a shift in displacement trends. IDPs are increasingly moving from Bentiu PoC and other informal displacement sites to their respective homelands, communities with relatives, or areas where they believe they can better meet their basic needs or at least take advantage of the planting season. FGDs and secondary sources have reported that a desire to cultivate crops and check on personal assets has driven this increased movement during the wet season.

The continued improvement in the security situation and coinciding planting season has corresponded with a greater dispersal of IDPs to communities across the state. Whilst in April 2016 only 18 communities (29%) were reportedly hosting IDPs, in May 52 (78%)

reported the same. In part, this increase may be due to the departure of almost 20,000 individuals from Bentiu PoC.

Similarly, the proportion of communities hosting returned local community has increased. This increase of movement into local communities across the state is likely to strain the capacity of the population to provide for themselves. Indeed, despite the increase in communities reporting land availability, this month saw a sharp rise in the proportion of communities reporting land disputes from 21% in April to 57% in May. This finding indicates that although security is improving overall access to land for cultivation, the amount of land available does not meet the requirements of the population in each community.

There has been a reported improvement in access to many basic services, including safe drinking water, education, and health facilities. However, given that there have been only limited reports of permanent re-establishment of basic services, this improvement is likely due to an increase in temporary basic service solutions such as health and nutrition outreach programs and voluntary education provision. Overall access to basic services remains limited, with populations in the majority of communities reportedly having to walk over 30 minutes to the nearest safe drinking water source and over an hour to the nearest health centre.

The lack of food and health services continues to be a key driver for displacement to the PoC. Most communities reported that they

expect at least some of the local population, IDPs, and returned local community to leave within the next 3 months in order to return to the PoC. Therefore, further increases in the scope of food and basic services assistance would be likely to reduce the incidence of re-displacement among IDPs and local communities.

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.