

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring, Jonglei State

South Sudan April - September 2020

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

Overview

The humanitarian situation across Jonglei State continued to deteriorate between March and September 2020. A range of compounding natural, man-made, and macroeconomic shocks have resulted in mass displacement and have limited access to crops, livestock, and markets. These shocks have simultaneously eroded the capacity of food insecure households to employ coping strategies, exacerbating already widespread, severe, and multisectoral vulnerabilities. The 2020 harvest is unlikely to result in any substantial or long-term improvement in the food security situation and, moving forward, humanitarian food assistance will be essential to offset a continued and widespread deterioration.

To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites, 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). This Situation Overview analyses changes in observed humanitarian needs in Jonglei State between April and September 2020.

Methodology

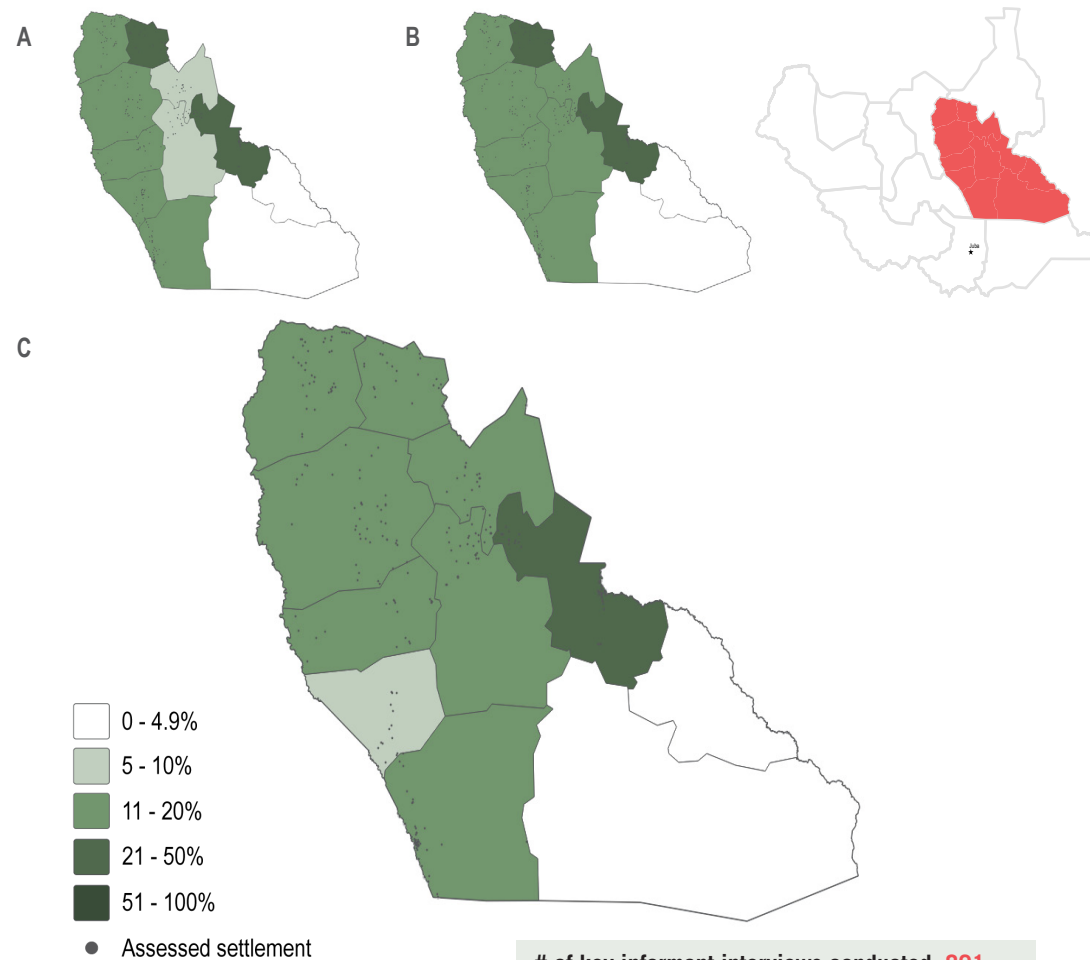
To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Jonglei State, REACH conducts interviews with key informants (KIs) who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or "Area of Knowledge" (AoK). These interviews were conducted with KIs in the Bor Protection of Civilian (PoC) site, Bor Town, and Akobo Town throughout the reporting period. Findings should be considered indicative only of the situation in assessed settlements.

In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted on a monthly basis 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 was found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting.

Only counties with interview coverage of at least 5% of all settlements¹ in a given month were included in the analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month may 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 payam² coverage over the period. Quantitative findings were triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary sources. FGDs with people displaced from hard-to-reach areas in Jonglei State took place throughout April - September 2020.

More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK ToRs](#).

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Jonglei State in April (A), June (B) and September (C) 2020



1. To calculate the percentage of AoK coverage, the total number of settlements per county is based on OCHA settlement lists in addition to new settlements mapped by KIs reached each month.

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

Key Findings



Displacement: The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs remained high between March (60%) and September (48%). Reflective of continued sub-national violence, insecurity remained the main reported push factor for IDPs in assessed settlements across Jonglei State between March and September (37% of assessed settlements in September). Atypical seasonal flooding, beginning in June, also resulted in widespread displacement. The counties flanking the River Nile (Fangak, Ayod, Duk, Twic East, and Bor South) were affected most severely, particularly towards the end of the reporting period, resulting in mass population movement to the Jonglei Ridge, Bor Town, Mangalla (Central Equatoria State), and Mingkaman (Lakes State).



Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL): The FSL situation across Jonglei State remained extremely poor throughout the reporting period, with adequate access to food being reported in just 54% of assessed settlements in September (49% in March). Given the extent to which compounding shocks have limited access to traditional livelihoods, income generating activities, coping strategies, and markets, a deeper deterioration of the FSL situation has likely been offset, to some extent, by humanitarian food assistance (HFA). Moving forward, the 2020 harvest season is unlikely to substantially improve access to food and sustained and widespread access to HFA will likely be essential to preventing very severe levels of acute food insecurity until the next harvest.



Health and Nutrition: High reported levels of food insecurity combined with high disease prevalence, limited access to clean water and functional healthcare services, and low dietary diversity and quality have negatively affected the nutritional status of populations across Jonglei State. This is evidenced by SMART surveys conducted in Duk³ and Ayod⁴ counties in April, which found Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of 22% and 31% respectively.

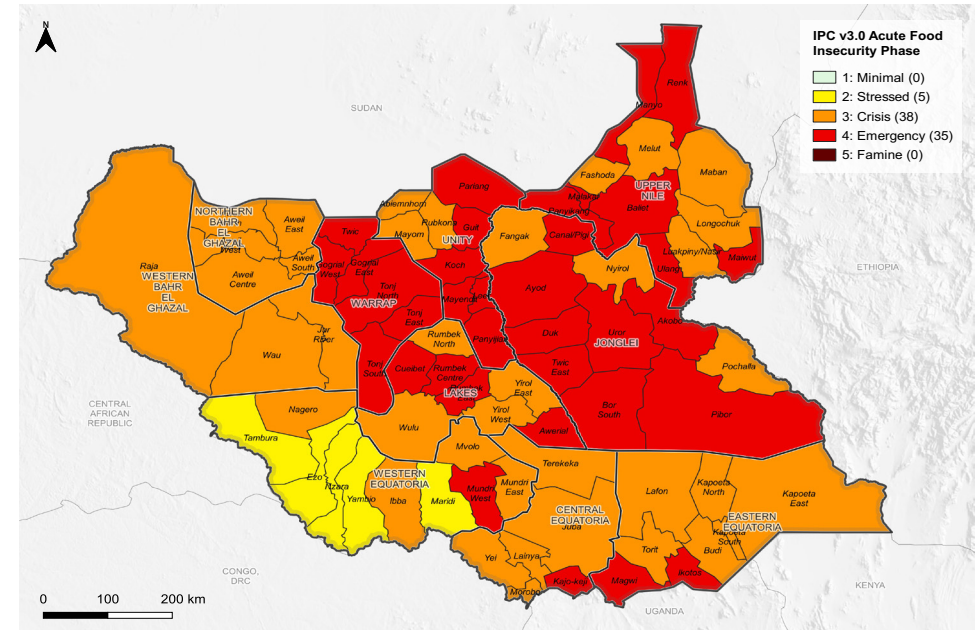


Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Reported latrine usage remained low but stable throughout the reporting period. Despite a reported widespread awareness of COVID-19 protection and prevention measures, most people were reportedly washing their hands with soap in just 25% of assessed settlements, likely a consequence of access barriers to clean water.



Protection: The protection situation varied across Jonglei State throughout the reporting period, before stabilising with most people reportedly feeling safe most of the time in September (90% of assessed settlements), likely due to seasonal flooding that limited movement and reduced the risk of attacks, ambushes and abductions. Reporting of

Map 2: FEWS NET food security outcomes, September 2020.⁵



early marriage as the main protection concern for girls in September was very high in Duk (79% of assessed settlements), Twic East (43%), and Bor South (40%) counties, possibly a consequence of the recent FSL shocks which have caused widespread livelihood collapse and increased the need to access livestock through dowry.



Education: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of South Sudan closed all schools and universities on the 20th March. Across Jonglei State, girls typically have lower access to education than boys and pre-existing gender-based vulnerabilities are likely to be further exacerbated by the widespread deterioration in the food security situation. A traditional over-reliance on women and girls to provide food for the household may further limit the ability of girls to return to school, despite the phased reopening of education facilities from the 5th October.



Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI): Access to reliable shelter seemingly varied by population group: IDPs were reported to live in less solid structures, such as rakoobas or improvised shelters in 73% of assessed settlements (35% in March), while host communities reportedly mainly used solid structures for shelter (87%). A reported deterioration in IDP shelter conditions could be a consequence of intercommunal violence and flooding, which have resulted in large-scale population movement and widespread shelter destruction.

3. Action Against Hunger. Duk County SMART Survey. April 2020.
 4. Action Against Hunger. Ayod County SMART Survey. April 2020.
 5. FEWS NET. [South Sudan. Food Security Outlook](#). September 2020.

Population Movement and Displacement

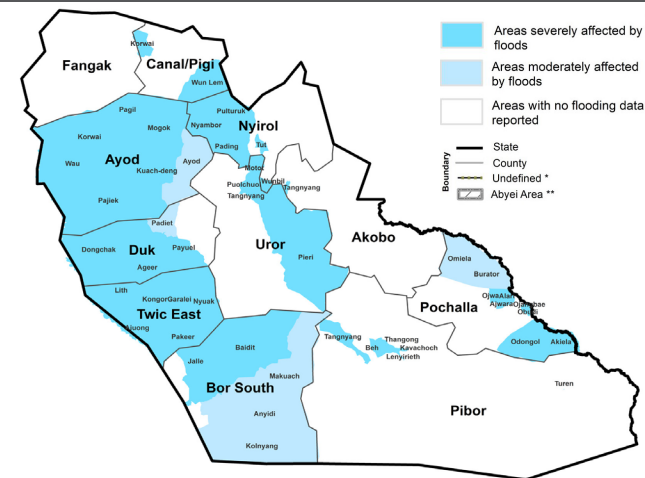
The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs remained high between March (60%) and September (48%). In 37% of assessed settlements, insecurity (which includes killing, rape, fighting, and looting), was reported as the main push factor for IDPs, consistent with findings from March. This is likely a consequence of a continued intensification of sub-national violence. Atypical seasonal flooding, beginning in June, also resulted in widespread displacement, particularly towards the end of the reporting period, with flooding being reported as the main IDP push factor in 32% of assessed settlements in September. Reporting was especially high in assessed settlements in Twic East (100%), Ayod (100%) and Duk (50%) counties.

On the 16th of May, attacks in the areas of Pieri, Yuai and Mwo Tot, in Uror County, displaced around 37,000 people and prevented scheduled General Food Distributions from taking place in Moto, Karam, and Pieri.⁶ FGD participants displaced from Uror in the wake of the attack in May reported that displacement had prevented many households from undertaking agricultural activities,⁷ limiting access to cultivated produce, and likely further increasing the dependence of acutely food insecure households on HFA.

Clashes in Pibor also resulted in widespread displacement, livelihood collapse and disruptions to the delivery of HFA throughout the reporting period. According to PLAN International, around 34,000 individuals (11,443 households) were registered at the United Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Adjacent Area (AA) and several spontaneous displacement sites throughout Pibor Town in early August.⁸ Many people from Pibor Town, Gumuruk, Lekuangole, and Verthet/Durren were also displaced to IDP camps in Labrab, remote villages South East of Pibor town and rural areas as far as Marowa Hills and Boma.⁹ Nearly all households displaced to Pibor Town were reported to have returned to Lekuangole and Gumruk by the end of the August,¹⁰ despite reports that these areas had sustained significant damage.¹¹

Since June, flooding, caused by atypical rainfall, runoff from surrounding highlands and the overflow of major rivers, caused mass displacement, particularly from low lying and riverine areas in the counties of Fangak, Ayod, Duk, Twic East, and Bor South.¹² According to FGD participants, as much as 60-70% of the population in Duk¹³ and Twic East¹⁴ counties, and almost all of the population in Jalle and Baidit payams¹⁵ (Bor South county), had displaced to Bor town, Mangalla or Mingkaman town, at the time of data collection. Many of those who did not displace to the south were vulnerable households that did not have plastic sheeting to carry food or goods for the journey and/or household members with specific needs and reduced mobility, such as children and elderly. These populations were largely displaced to areas along the Jonglei Canal, such as Panyagor (Twic East County), and Duk Padiet, Puktap, and Panaru (Duk County). With decreased access to food following a year's worth of shocks and livelihood disruptions, HFA was commonly reported as a key factor in

Map 3. FAO map of the flood affected areas in Jonglei State between June and August 2020. Counties along the eastern bank of the River Nile have been severely affected by excess rain and poor dykes. Flooding has resulted in mass population movement.¹⁷



determining where people displaced, alongside access to dry high ground and safety.¹⁶

Self-reported returns

The presence of refugee returnees was reported in 51% of assessed settlements across Jonglei in September, up from 34% in March. Reporting remained particularly high in Uror (100% of assessed settlements), Nyirol (100%), and Akobo (71%) counties. REACH Port and Road Monitoring (PRM) in Akobo Town tracks the movement of South Sudanese households travelling to, and returning from Ethiopia. The number of recorded inbound individuals increased slightly between March (317)¹⁸ and September (350).¹⁹ Consistent with PRM findings from March, the primary reported pull factor for returnees in September was rejoining family and home (reported in 61% of assessed settlements).²⁰ This finding is supported by AoK data from September (refugee returnees reporting family/home as the main pull factor was reported in 32% of assessed settlements).

Continued inbound population movements may place additional pressure on already limited sources of food. Returnees, (both IDP and refugee), reportedly had a negative impact on the ability of most people to access enough food in 90% of the assessed settlements in which the presence of returnees was reported, in September (41% in March). For example, FGD participants displaced from Akobo East reported that 2020 flooding had left many households without food stocks and that most returnees were not registered for food distributions and were therefore dependent on family and host community members.²¹ The pressure that inbound population movement has seemingly placed on access to food appears to have been compounded by the reported inability of many households to collect wild food, hunt, cut poles and collect firewood due to insecurity in rural areas.²² In the coming months, the evolution of conflict in the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia, and the potential for clashes to result in renewed calls for greater regional autonomy across the country,²³ may result in potentially widespread insecurity, possibly resulting in refugees returning to South Sudan.

6. Nonviolent Peaceforce. Intercommunal clashes in Jonglei State. May 2020.

7. FGD with participants displaced from Uror to Akobo Town, May 2020.

8. IOM. Pibor UNMISS Adjacent Area Flow Monitoring Summary, August 2020.

9. ICWG. IRNA Lekuangole, Gumuruk, Verthet/Doren, Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA). September 2020.

10. IOM. Pibor UNMISS Adjacent Area Flow Monitoring Summary. August 2020.

11. ICWG. IRNA Lekuangole, Gumuruk, Verthet/Doren, Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA). September 2020.

12. FAO. Flood Impact Assessment in Jonglei. August 2020.

13. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, September 2020.

14. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

15. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town, September 2020.

16. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Panyagor, September 2020.

17. FAO. Flood Impact Assessment in Jonglei. August 2020.

18. REACH Port and Road Monitoring, Akobo, March 2020.

19. REACH Port and Road Monitoring, Akobo, September 2020.

20. REACH Port and Road Monitoring, Akobo, March 2020.

21. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo to Akobo Town, May 2020.

Food Security and Livelihoods

The FSL situation across Jonglei State remained extremely poor throughout the reporting period, with adequate access to food being reported in just 54% of assessed settlements in September (49% in March). All counties of Jonglei State except Pochalla, Nyirol and Fangak, were experiencing Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (Phase 4) in September, according to projections from the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC).²⁴ Given the extent to which compounding shocks have limited access to traditional livelihoods, income generating activities, coping strategies and markets, a deeper deterioration of the FSL situation throughout the reporting period has likely been offset, to an extent, by humanitarian food assistance. Moving forward, the 2020 harvest season is unlikely to substantially improve access to food and sustained access to HFA will likely be essential to preventing very severe levels of acute food insecurity, (see HFA section).

Access to crops

This year's flooding has spread beyond the traditionally flood-prone areas in Jonglei, resulting in damage to crops and livestock, much higher than in previous years.²⁵ According to a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) assessment in August, about 45% of the total cereal area of Jonglei State was damaged by flooding.²⁶ This likely explains why the main reason for most people reportedly not having adequate access to food in assessed settlements in September, was that flooding had destroyed crops (24% in March). Reporting was particularly high in assessed settlements in Ayod (89%), Fangak (62%), and Twic East (57%) counties. The failure of the harvest in these counties likely explains why, in September, most people reportedly consumed just one meal per day in assessed settlements in Ayod (75%), Fangak (77%), and Twic East (71%), (39% across Jonglei State). FGD participants displaced from Ayod County reported that consuming one meal per day and skipping full days were commonly employed strategies in September, despite entering into the harvest season.²⁷

Map 4: Reported adequate access to food for most people in assessed settlements in i) April, ii) June, iii) September 2020.

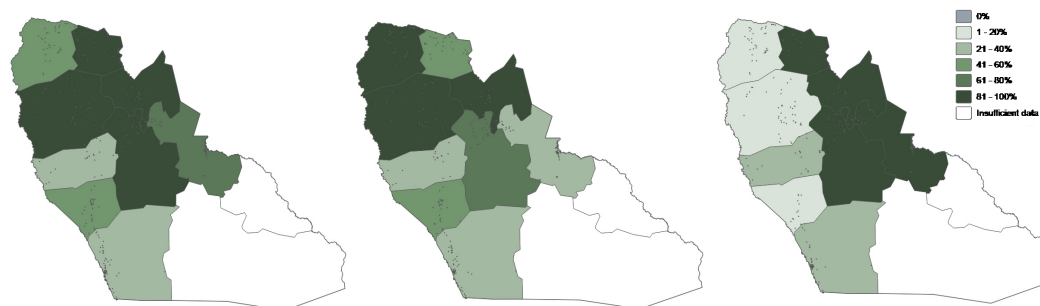
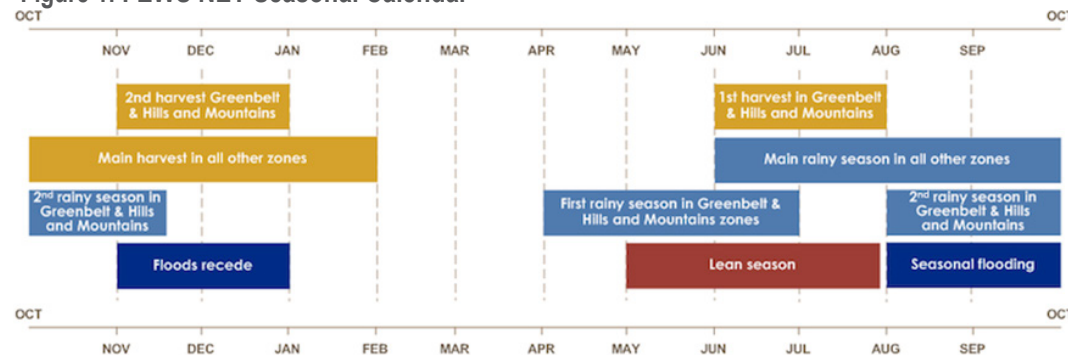


Figure 1: FEWS NET Seasonal Calendar²⁸



Moving forward, access to food stocks across Jonglei is likely remain atypically, possibly until the next harvest, likely bringing forward the onset of the 2021 lean season from March to as early as December 2020 in some of the most severely flood-affected areas where people have been unable to harvest, particularly along the River Nile.

Access to livestock

Barriers to livestock access caused by the 2019 flooding have been further exacerbated throughout the reporting period by a series of compounding shocks. According to SMART survey data collected in Duk in April, 40% of sampled households reported owning any livestock, however, 96% of livestock owners reported that, over the past year, the number of livestock owned had decreased (86% reported that this was due to illness, likely a consequence of flooding).²⁹ These findings were mirrored by SMART survey data collected in Ayod in the same month.³⁰ Since June, pastures have become waterlogged, again increasing the risk of animal deaths due to starvation and disease, as flooding has created conditions conducive for the outbreak of Rift Valley fever, pneumonia, foot rot, increased worm burden, anthrax, black quarter, trypanosomiasis and hemorrhagic septicemia,³¹ compounding existing livestock access barriers. This likely explains why disease outbreaks, which resulted in livestock death, reportedly occurred in 54% of assessed settlements across Jonglei in September (43% in March). Reporting was particularly high in assessed settlements in Fangak (97%) and Ayod (95%) counties.

Access to livestock appears to be particularly low in the flood affected counties of Greater Bor. Most people reportedly did not own any livestock in assessed settlements in Twic East (79%), Bor South (46%), and Duk (26%) counties. This aligns with FAO findings that suggest that around 72% of the livestock population in Twic East, Duk, Bor South, and Canal Pigi counties were affected by the floods. An estimated 6,000 heads of cattle, 36,000 goats, and 5,400 sheep are reported to have died in June and July, representing 5% percent of the affected livestock population in the four counties.³²

22. *ibid.*

23. Al Jazeera. *What is happening in Ethiopia's Tigray region?* November 2020.

24. FEWS NET. *South Sudan*. September 2020.

25. FAO. *Flood Impact Assessment in Jonglei*. August 2020.

26. *ibid.*

27. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC, September 2020.

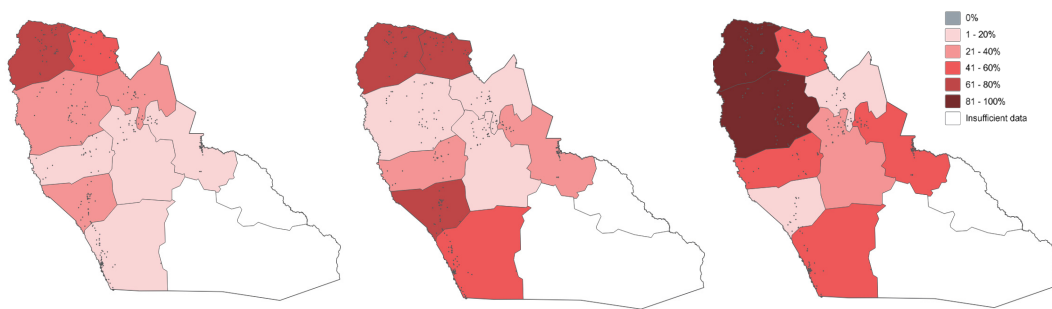
28. FEWS NET. *South Sudan Seasonal Calendar*. September 2020.

29. Action Against Hunger. *Duk County SMART Survey*. April 2020.

30. Action Against Hunger. *Ayod County SMART Survey*. April 2020.

31. FAO. *Flood Impact Assessment in Jonglei*. August 2020.

Map 5: Reported occurrence of a disease outbreak which resulted in livestock death in assessed settlements in i) April, ii) June, iii) September 2020.



The effects of flooding on livestock are likely to be felt most severely by poorer households that typically do not own cattle, but instead depend chickens, goats and sheep, which, according to FGD participants displaced from Greater Bor, were often the first to drown.^{33,34,35}

Access to markets

Market access appeared to remain stable between March and September. In 65% of the assessed settlements KIs reported that most people faced a challenge in accessing a marketplace in September. The primary reported physical access barriers were distance (55% of assessed settlements where market access was reported), flooding on the way to the market (44%), and poor road conditions (36%). Worryingly, in the month prior to data collection, people from assessed settlements in Duk (39%) and Twic East (29%) counties, reportedly could not access their preferred marketplace due to safety concerns.

Throughout the reporting period, continuous and compounding price shocks have substantially decreased financial market access across Jonglei. In March and April, COVID-19 movement restrictions resulted in supply shortages and often forced traders to employ additional middle-men to receive foodstuffs at the border.³⁶ From May to July a series of attacks and ambushes along the Bor-Juba road resulted in many drivers reportedly refusing to travel, or increasing prices, resulting in a seasonal, but atypically early shift towards the use of river transportation to mitigate the increasing insecurity.³⁷ Roads from Juba to Bor and onwards to markets in Duk, Twic East, and Ayod counties, which are largely dependent on goods from Marol market, became impassable with heavy flooding in June which persisted throughout the reporting period.³⁸ In response to flooding, traders in remote areas, inaccessible via the Nile, Pibor and Sobat rivers, shifted to transporting goods by plane, further increasing transportation costs. Supply bottlenecks have been compounded by a rapid deterioration in the South Sudanese Pound (SSP), which continued to lose its purchasing power relative to the United States Dollar (USD), especially towards the end of the reporting period. In the last week of

September, the SSP was being exchanged at 520/USD on the parallel market in Juba, representing a depreciation of 42% as compared to August.³⁹ These compounding shocks have resulted in atypical price increases, further limiting already minimal financial market access.

Widespread livelihood collapse has reportedly altered the way in which most households access markets. Typically, during the lean season, households would liquidate a cow and purchase staple goods, such as sorghum, maize, rice, and beans on the market in quantities of 25kg to 50kg, returning infrequently to purchase perishable items such as onions and tomatoes.⁴⁰ Lack of access to cattle and other income generating opportunities has diminished financial market access and reportedly increased the frequency of which many extremely food insecure households access markets, with most people reportedly obtaining very small amounts of cash through the sale of firewood and purchasing small quantities of foodstuffs more regularly.^{41,42}

Moving forward, the financial ability of food insecure households to access market goods is likely to decrease even further. For example, traders in Marol market in Bor Town reported that, in a normal year, prices can go for around 5 months without increasing, however, given the volatility of the SSP, prices are increased on an almost daily basis, sometimes twice a day.⁴³ Financial barriers to market access are likely to further compound the failure of the harvest and widespread cattle death and disease, deepening the need for widespread HFA.

Humanitarian food assistance (HFA)

Humanitarian food assistance was reported as the main source of food for most people in 34% of assessed settlements in September (13% in March). Reporting this was particularly high in Uror (93%), Nyirol (75%), and Akobo (67%) counties, whereas reporting remained extremely low across the rest of the state. The extent of livelihood collapse across Jonglei is likely to result in an increased and widespread need for HFA, throughout the traditional 2020 harvest period, right until to the 2021 harvest. The need for an urgent upscale in HFA is particularly acute in Pibor as, in the semi-arid pastoral livelihood zone in which Pibor is situated, the lean season typically runs from January until April, much earlier than across the rest of the state.⁴⁴

Insecurity has severely limited humanitarian access to a range of highly food insecure areas, particularly Pibor, Duk, Twic East, and Uror counties. Humanitarians have been killed in each of these counties throughout the reporting period, resulting in NGOs withdrawing staff and temporarily suspending activities. Typical of the rainy season, flooding has limited humanitarian access, however, the severity of the flooding has reportedly resulted in a widespread spoilage of prepositioned food stocks in Duk, Twic East, and Bor South counties according to FGD participants^{45,46,47} Insecurity and flooding have also posed barriers to beneficiaries reaching distribution points. FGD participants displaced from Duk Payuel reported that beneficiaries had to travel to distribution points in groups accompanied by armed men to avoid ambushes.⁴⁸ People who were unable to keep pace with the

32. *ibid.*

33. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, September 2020.

34. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

35. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town, September 2020.

36. FGD with market traders in Bor South, September 2020.

37. *ibid.*

38. FGD with market traders in Duk Padiet, September 2020.

39. VAM. South Sudan Market Situation Update. September 2020.

40. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

41. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, September 2020.

42. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

43. FGD with market traders in Bor South, September 2020.

44. FEWS NET. [South Sudan Livelihood Zones and Descriptions](#). August 2013.

45. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, September 2020.

46. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

47. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town, September 2020.

48. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

group, or who were not informed of the distribution by the chief were often unable to access HFA.⁴⁹

Although reported access to HFA did improve between March and September, reported utilisation of HFA by IDPs was low, especially for those displaced by flooding. FGD participants displaced to Bor Town from Duk, Twic East and Baidit and Jalle Payams of Bor South County, consistently reported that households were forced to leave behind food stocks and instead use available plastic sheets to float vulnerable family members, particularly elderly and children, to their displacement location. Foodstuffs that some households attempted to bring were reportedly spoiled by the water.^{50,51,52}

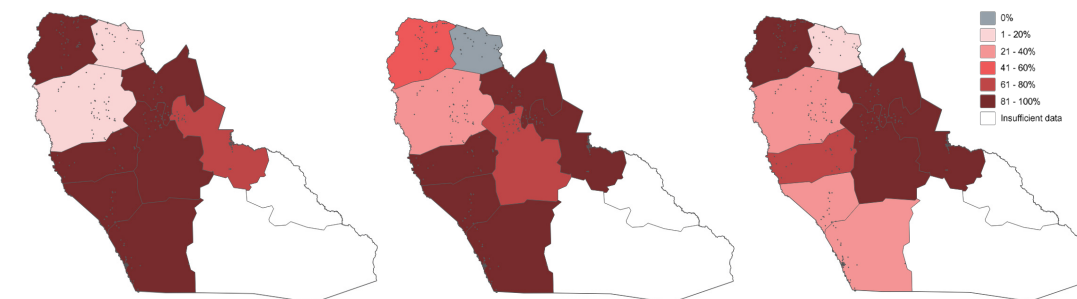
Coping strategies

Reflective of the deteriorating FSL situation, people across Jonglei State continued to adopt a range of coping strategies throughout the reporting period. In September, livelihood or food consumption coping strategies were reportedly employed in 83% and 58% of assessed settlements respectively (73% and 63% in March), while qualitative findings from assessments conducted in Bor South, Duk, and Twic East counties suggest that there has been a widespread deterioration in coping capacity, particularly for vulnerable groups such as elderly, single (particularly female) headed households, people with disabilities, as well as pregnant and lactating women.⁵³

Consistent with the previous reporting period, the most frequently reported food consumption coping strategies were limiting portion sizes (59% of assessed settlements), reducing the number of meals eaten in a day (49%), and consuming less expensive food (36%). Food consumption coping strategies were reportedly implemented in conjunction with livelihood coping strategies, in all assessed settlements in Duk, Twic East, and Bor South counties in September. The most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies were borrowing food (70% of assessed settlements) and borrowing money (67%) in September (69% and 58% respectively in March). Most people in Duk, Twic East, and Bor South counties are typically able to access crops, such as maize and sorghum, livestock, milk and fish. However, given the compounding shocks that have been experienced, resulting in widespread livelihood collapse, most people are only able to access food through begging, fishing, collecting wild foods such as date palms and moringa leaves, and collecting firewood to sell on the market, with most people reportedly consuming just one meal per day.⁵⁴

The risks incurred while implementing coping strategies that involve leaving the settlement appear to have increased substantially throughout the reporting period. FGD participants displaced from Nyirol⁵⁵ and Uror⁵⁶ counties reported that, since the mid-May attack in Pieri, insecurity has limited the ability of food insecure households to engage in coping strategies, with many people fearing ambush, abduction, and death when leaving the settlement. These risks have been compounded further by flooding. FGD participants, displaced from the settlements of Panaru to along the Jonglei canal, reported that women had to wrap mattresses in plastic sheets to provide a float to collect wild foods in previously deserted settlements, up to three hours away, in the areas of Buongjok,

Map 6: Reporting of i) borrowing food, ii) borrowing money, iii) selling more livestock than in previous years, in assessed settlements in September 2020.



Panajak, Padiou, Amiel, and Dorok.⁵⁷ Single-headed households and people without productive family members were reportedly unable to implement this coping strategy and instead collected a limited variety of wild foods along the canal and begged from relatives.⁵⁸

Asset depleting coping strategies continued to be implemented throughout the reporting period, raising concerns about the ability of vulnerable households to withstand future shocks. Across Jonglei State, people reportedly sold more livestock than in previous years in order to access food in 59% of assessed settlements in September (32% in March). Reporting was particularly high in Fangak (92%), Nyirol (88%), Uror (83%) and Akobo (82%) counties. This is concerning given the extent to which compounding shocks have limited access to livestock across the state, and, while liquidating livestock is a strategy which is typically employed during the lean season, the continued use of this strategy into September is likely reflective of the widespread harvest failure, further eroding coping capacity.

Health and Nutrition

High reported levels of food insecurity combined with high disease prevalence, limited access to clean water and functional healthcare services, and low dietary diversity and quality have negatively affected the nutritional status of populations across Jonglei State.⁵⁹ This is evidenced by SMART surveys conducted in April by Action Against Hunger in Ayod and Duk Counties respectively. The global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of children in Ayod was estimated at 31%, above the 'Extremely Critical' threshold,⁶⁰ while, in Duk, GAM was estimated at 22%.⁶¹ Although detailed SMART survey data was only published on Duk and Ayod during the reporting period, the widespread reported effects of flooding and insecurity on access to crops, cattle and functional markets across Jonglei

49. *ibid.*

50. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, September 2020.

51. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, September 2020.

52. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town, September 2020.

53. *ibid.*

54. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, July 2020.

55. FGD with participants displaced from Nyirol to Akobo Town, May 2020.

56. FGD with participants displaced from Uror to Akobo Town, June 2020.

57. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Jonglei Canal, October 2020.

58. *ibid.*

59. FEWS NET. [South Sudan. Food Security Outlook](#). July 2020.

60. Action Against Hunger. Ayod County SMART Survey. April 2020.

61. Action Against Hunger. Duk County SMART Survey. April 2020.

State suggests that SMART survey findings may be reflective widespread deterioration in the nutrition situation.

In September, malaria was reported as the most common health problem for people in 67% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State, up from 37% in March. Although the reported presence of a functional primary healthcare facility within walking distance from the settlement increased between March (68% of assessed settlements) and September (89%), FGD participants displaced from Duk County, reported that, while there were health facilities in Duk Padiet, many people were reliant on traditional herbal medicines to treat malaria, diarrhoea and typhoid, due to a reported lack of medication and healthcare workers at the facility.⁶²

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

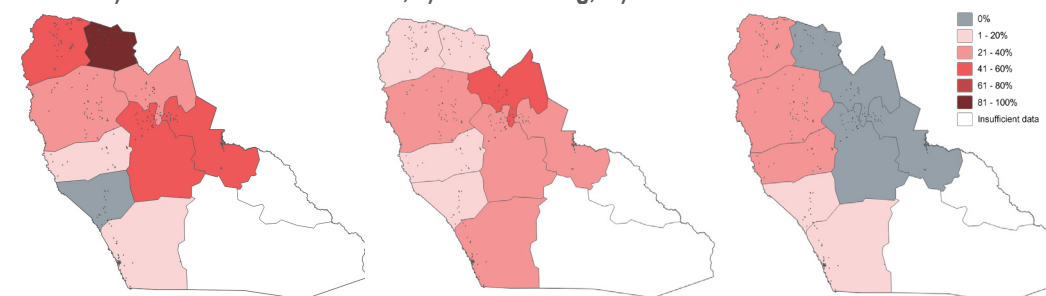
Reported latrine usage remained low but stable throughout the reporting period, in 49% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State no people were reportedly using latrines in September (53% in March). Reporting was particularly high in assessed settlements in Canal/Pigi (88%), Fangak (79%), Twic East (71%), and Ayod (68%) counties. The primary reported reasons for people not using latrines were that there were none available (35% of assessed settlements), that latrines were overcrowded (24%), and for cultural reasons (12%). For example, FGD participants displaced from Wangulei in Twic East reported that there were no pit latrines in the settlement due to a lack of construction materials, reportedly forcing people to defecate in bush areas.⁶³

Boreholes were reported as the main source of drinking water in 70% of assessed settlements in September, consistent with findings from March. However, as in March, there were reportedly no functional boreholes in any assessed settlements in Canal/Pigi County in September, which likely led to a continued reliance on rivers (71% of assessed settlements), and swamps (21%) as the main sources of drinking water.

A reported presence of boreholes did not guarantee widespread access to clean water. For example, despite the reported presence of a functional borehole within all assessed settlements in Nyirol County, FGD participants reported that, due to overcrowding, it could take women from the settlement of Wechker around three hours to collect water.⁶⁴

Furthermore, despite it being reported in 92% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State that most people were aware of how to protect themselves from the spread of COVID-19, most people reportedly washed their hands with soap in just 25% of assessed settlements in September, unchanged between reporting periods, which is likely a consequence of access barriers to clean water.

Map 7: In assessed settlements in September most people were reportedly not using latrines because i) there were none available, ii) overcrowding, iii) cultural reasons



Protection

The protection situation varied across Jonglei State throughout the reporting period, before stabilising with most people reportedly feeling safe most of the time in September (90% of assessed settlements compared to 79% in March), likely due to seasonal flooding that limited movement and reduced the risk of attacks, ambushes and abductions.

Between March and July, increases in reporting that most people did not feel safe most of the time were registered in assessed settlements in Twic East County (17% to 69%), while reporting remained high in Duk County (53% to 63%) during the same period. This is likely a consequence of sub-national violence and retaliatory cattle raids that resulted in widespread insecurity throughout the Greater Bor and Greater Akobo regions. This likely explains why an event of conflict which resulted in the death of a civilian was reported in 28% of assessed settlements in Twic East county, and 50% of assessed settlements in Duk County in July.

Women and girls reportedly faced protection concerns in 49% and 39% of assessed settlements, respectively, in September, compared to 33% of men and 22% of boys, which is consistent with findings from March. Early marriage was reported as the main protection concern for girls in 18% of assessed settlements in September. This was considerably higher in Duk (79%), Twic East (43%), and Bor South (40%) counties, possibly due to recent livelihood collapse in these areas, which might have in turn increased the need to access livestock through dowry.

Findings suggest that women continued to face protection concerns both inside and outside the home. In 21% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State, domestic violence was reported as the main protection concern for women in September (25% in March). Existing inequalities, such as the unequal and gendered distribution of chores and responsibilities, have been compounded by insecurity throughout the reporting period. Typically, women across Jonglei are responsible for collecting water and wild foods, which many food insecure households rely upon, especially during

62. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, June 2020.

63. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, May 2020.

64. FGD with participants displaced from Nyirol to Akobo Town, May 2020.

65. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, June 2020.

the lean season, to fill increasingly large food consumption gaps.⁶⁵ According to FGD participants, displaced from the settlements of Nyandit, Kony, and Leer in Akobo East, wild food collection has put women in rural forest areas at high risk of abduction.⁶⁶ In addition, FGD participants displaced from both Duk⁶⁷ and Twic East⁶⁸ reported that women and girls face a high risk of sexual violence, harassment, abduction, and death outside of the settlement, especially during the evenings.

Education

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of South Sudan closed all schools and universities on the 20th March, limiting social gatherings. Schools have, for the most part, remained closed throughout the reporting period, likely explaining why, in 76% of assessed settlements, there were reportedly no functional education facilities within walking distance in September (14% in March). Across Jonglei State, girls typically appear to have lower access to education than boys; of the assessed settlements in which the presence of education facilities within walking distance was reported in March, prior to the school closures, half or more of boys were reportedly attending school in 73% of assessed settlements, while the same was reported for girls in just 46% of assessed settlements. Pre-existing gender-based vulnerabilities are likely to be compounded further by school closures. For example, during the 2014 Ebola school closures in Sierra Leone, girls of school age faced an increased risk of physical and sexual abuse and out-of-wedlock pregnancy, limiting the ability of girls to return to education once schools reopened.⁶⁹ These risks are likely to be exacerbated across Jonglei State by the widespread deterioration in the food security situation. The traditional over reliance on women and girls to provide food for the household may further limit the ability of girls to return to school, despite the phased reopening of education facilities from the 5th October.

Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI)

IDPs reportedly continued to live in less permanent shelter types in comparison with members of the host community. In 87% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State, most host community members were reportedly living in tukuls in September. In comparison, in assessed settlements with IDPs, 73% of IDPs were living in either rakoobas or improvised shelters in September (35% in March).

A reported deterioration in IDP shelter conditions could be a consequence of sub-national violence and flooding which have resulted in widespread population movement and shelter destruction. For example, clashes in Pieri and the surrounding areas in mid-May reportedly resulted in the destruction of around 2800 tukuls across 30 settlements,⁷⁰ likely explaining why, in June, fighting had reportedly resulted in shelter destruction in 38% of assessed settlements in Uror County (0% in March). Flooding

also limited access to shelter. In September, flooding reportedly caused people in the settlement to seek shelter outside their homestead in 39% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State. Reporting was particularly high in the counties of Twic East, (100%), Fangak (97%), Bor South (56%), Ayod (48%), and Duk (33%), situated along the River Nile, likely due to the combination of heavy rainfall and dyke failure.

Flooding and insecurity also limited access to NFIs. Of the assessed settlements with IDPs, mosquito nets (31%) and plastic sheets (19%) were reported as the main IDP NFI needs in September. A continued lack of mosquito nets may partly explain why, in 67% of assessed settlements across Jonglei State, malaria was reported as the main health concern for people in their settlement, up from 37% in March.

Conclusion

Findings suggest that the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate in assessed settlements across Jonglei state throughout the reporting period, due to a range of compounding natural, man-made and macroeconomic shocks which resulted in mass displacement and limited access to crops, livestock, and markets. These shocks have simultaneously eroded the capacity of food insecure households to employ coping strategies, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The 2020 harvest is unlikely to result in any substantial improvement in the food security situation and, moving forward, humanitarian food assistance will likely be essential to offset a continued and widespread deterioration.

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).

66. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo to Akobo Town, June 2020.

67. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town, June 2020.

68. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town, May 2020.

69. UNDP. [Assessing Sexual and Gender Based Violence during the Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone](#). October 2015.

70. Nonviolent Peaceforce. Intercommunal clashes in Jonglei State. May 2020.