

# Situation Overview: Unity State, South Sudan

April - June 2019

**REACH** An initiative of  
IMPACT Initiatives  
ACTED and UNOSAT

## Introduction

In the second quarter of 2019, Unity State continued to host large numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in an environment of heightened food insecurity, localised conflict and restricted access to basic services. Up-to-date information on the severity of needs in remote locations is scarce and difficult to collect, creating challenges for effective programming and response.

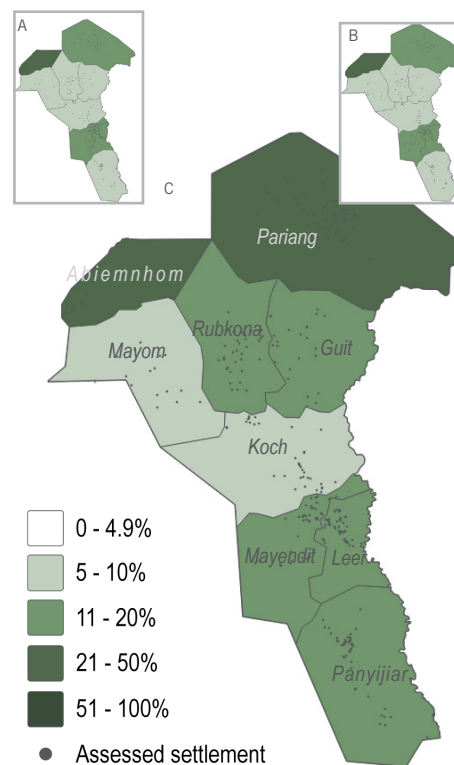
To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015. Data is collected on a monthly basis through interviews with key informants (KIs) with knowledge of a settlement and triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs). This Situation Overview uses this data to analyse changes in observed humanitarian needs across Unity State in the second quarter of 2019.

## Key Findings

- **Displacement** remained high, although the percentage of assessed settlements reporting presence of any IDPs decreased from 69% in April to 58% in June. Spontaneous IDP and refugee returns remained high; by June 2019, 62% of assessed settlements reported presence of IDP returns and 36% of refugee returns.

- Despite slight improvements in **food security and livelihoods (FSL)**, at the end of the quarter, 38% of assessed settlements still reported most people were unable to access enough food. Central and Southern Unity were particularly impacted by limited access to food, likely due to recent returns and flooding.
- **Protection** concerns decreased compared to the previous quarter. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting people felt safe increased from 48% in March to 65% in June, with most significant improvements reported in Leer and Mayendit.
- **Shelter** needs remained high for many displaced populations as 64% of assessed settlements continued to report most IDPs lived in rakoobas<sup>2</sup>. By June 2019, Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar were the only counties reporting any IDPs still living in the open.
- **WASH** needs remained high. In June, 18% of assessed settlements reported obtaining drinking water through unimproved sources; 23% did not have access to latrines; and only 8% reported .
- Barriers to accessing **health** facilities persisted. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting it took a full day to travel to the nearest health facility increased from 1% in January to 13% in

**Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Unity State, April (A), May (B) and June 2019 (C)**



# of key informant interviews conducted: **799**  
# of assessed settlements: **482**  
# of counties covered: **9 (of 9)**  
# of focus group discussions conducted: **4**

## METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Unity State, REACH uses primary data from key informants (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 Bentiu PoC site, Nyal Town and Jamjang Town in Unity State in April, May and June 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> in a given month were included in 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 payam coverage over the period.

Quantitative findings were triangulated with FGDs and secondary sources.

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

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. A rakooba is a type of makeshift housing built using plastic sheeting, wood poles and elephant grass

June 2019, likely due to the start of the rainy season.

- **Education** services were unavailable in a quarter of assessed settlements. Long distance and poor infrastructure were reportedly the main reasons for not being able to access education.

## Population Movement and Displacement

During the assessed period, the population of Unity State remained highly mobile. Conflict-related displacement occurred, but was mainly small-scale and associated with localised conflicts. Overall, the relative stability and absence of large-conflict incidents in the second quarter allowed larger numbers of people to travel in search of food and livelihood alternatives, or tentatively return to pre-displacement locations.

FGD participants confirmed spontaneous returns have become increasingly frequent, although remain challenging and time-consuming because of long distances and poor transportation infrastructure, worsened by the rainy season. Furthermore, participants reported a continued perception of insecurity in the state, but remained cautiously optimistic about conditions for permanent returns<sup>3</sup>.

### Internal displacement trends

Unity continued to host an estimate of more than 290,000 IDPs<sup>4</sup>, but KI responses suggest that

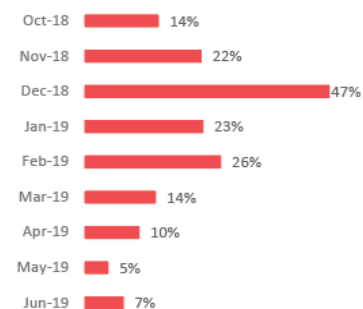
the geographic distribution of IDPs across the State may have slightly decreased during the assessed period. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of any IDPs declined from 69% in April to 58% in June 2019, with Guit reporting the largest decrease from 80% to 42% in the same period.

Furthermore, recent incidents of large-scale displacement have continued to decline compared to last year. In December 2018, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting that a large-scale displacement occurred in the past three months was 47%, but by June 2019 this proportion had declined to 7% (See Figure 1). Meanwhile, the proportion of assessed settlements with IDPs reporting the most recent IDPs arrived within the last three months decreased from 16% in March to 6% in June 2019.

Despite these positive developments, new cases of internal displacement continued in some parts of Unity, mainly as a result of inter-communal clashes<sup>5</sup>. At the end of the quarter, the two counties with the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting most recent large-scale displacements occurred within the past three months were Panyijiar (33%) and Mayom (100%).

According to KIs, the majority of recently displaced IDPs travelled within their counties, possibly due to the localised nature of the violence affecting Unity. Meanwhile, AoK data suggests that, in cases when inter-county displacement occurred, movement routes were reportedly Koch to Guit; Leer and Mayendit to Panyijiar; and Rubkona to Guit.

**Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting most recent large-scale displacement occurred in the last three months, by month of reporting**



Overall, these changes in displacement trends were reflected in the proportion of IDPs versus the total population in settlements with IDP presence. In January, 23% of assessed settlements reported IDPs were more than half of the population, but this percentage declined to 2% in June 2019. These percentages varied significantly in Leer from 50% to 2% and Mayendit from 39% to 3% in the same period. The decrease in incidents of recent large-scale displacement and sustained rate of returns may explain the reported reduction in the proportion of IDPs versus the entire population in the assessed settlements.

### Continued inflow of returnees

#### IDP returns

During the second quarter, more than half of assessed settlements from Unity State reported the presence of IDPs who returned after being displaced in other parts of the country. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting

any IDP returns increased from 62% to 72% between April and May, but stabilised at 62% by the end of the quarter. In June, over 70% of assessed settlements from Central and most parts of Northern Unity, with the exceptions of Abiemnhom and Pariang, reported the arrival of returnees. For Leer and Mayendit the percentages of assessed settlements reporting returns were as high as 94% and 98% respectively.

Furthermore, reports of IDP returns within the past three months have considerably increased during the current quarter. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting recent returnees arrived within that timeframe increased from 24% in January to 48% in June (See Map 2). By the end of the quarter, counties with the largest proportion of assessed settlements reporting recent IDP returns were Guit (59%), Koch (59%), Mayendit (59%) and Leer (58%).

The reduction in the intensity of the large-scale conflict since September 2018 has persuaded some IDPs to return to their original settlements. Nevertheless, FGD participants explained that some of these returns are partial, initially led by the head of household who would travel first to inspect the general situation, with the entire family following if the conditions are deemed ideal for return<sup>6</sup>.

According to these same FGD participants, the return trip to Leer and Mayendit from Nyal, where IDPs from Central Unity reside, can be costly and reportedly takes more than two days on foot during the dry season, and four days in a canoe during the wet season<sup>6</sup>.

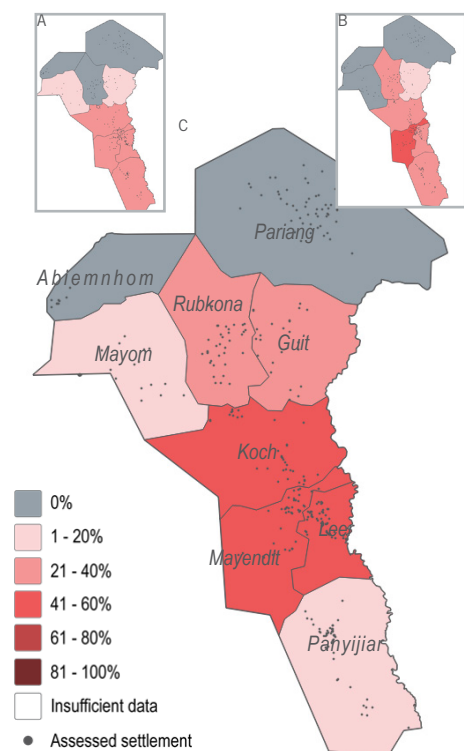
3 FGDs. Bentiu and Nyal, June 2019

4. International Organisation for Migration, "Mobility Tracking - Displacement Tracking Matrix", May 2019

5. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot". May 2019

6. FGD Nyal, June 2019

**Map 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP returnees within the last three months, April (A), May (B) and June 2019 (C)**



### Refugee returns

Similar to IDP returns, spontaneous refugee returns have continued to increase since February 2019, and remained high and stable during the assessed period. Between January and June 2019 the proportion of assessed settlements state-wide reporting refugee returns increased from 14% to 36% (See Figure 2). By June, 54% of assessed settlements from Leer, 54% from Panyijiar, 58% in Mayendit, and 75% from Mayom reported refugee returns.

At the end of the quarter, the proportion of assessed settlements with refugee returns reporting their country of former asylum was Sudan increased from 75% in March to 87% in May to fall back to 83% in June 2019. The increase in refugee returns originating from Sudan coincided with the political instability that affected the country in the first half of the year.

In June alone, UNHCR reported that 17,288 individuals returned from Sudan to Unity State through Panakuach/Pantou and Hegleich border points in Northern Unity<sup>7</sup>. According to this same report, some of these arrivals came into the Bentiu PoC, while others continued their journey to various parts of Rubkona and Central Unity.

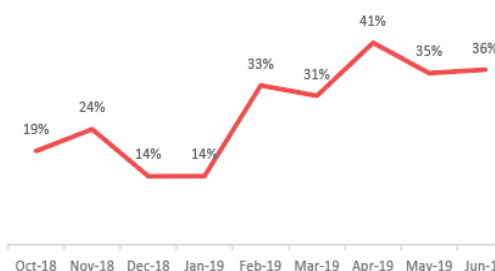
## Situation in Assessed Settlements

### Food security and livelihoods (FSL)

During the assessed period, access to food remained low. At the end of the quarter, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people did not have access to enough food was 38% state-wide. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), between May-July 2019, 69% of the population of Unity was at risk of facing food insecurity at crisis levels (IPC Phase 3)<sup>8</sup>.

Food insecurity in Unity is deeply rooted in conflict-related and economic factors. Since 2013, the outbreak of the large-scale conflict

**Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting refugees returned to Unity State, October 2018- June 2019**



disrupted livelihoods and decimated food production and markets across Unity, leaving the majority of the population highly vulnerable to shocks and food shortages<sup>9</sup>. In this context, recent arrivals constitute an additional shock that puts increasing strain on the communities' ability to obtain enough food.

In June 2019, the most commonly reported reason for why people could not access enough food was new arrivals, which was reported to be the primary reason by almost half (46%) of assessed settlements. This is consistent with the trend of returns discussed in the population movement section and information from FGD participants who reported having to share their limited food supply with recently returned friends and relatives<sup>10</sup>.

As a result of this and other localised shocks, as in the previous quarter, the population of Unity remained heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic food needs. By June, 59% of assessed settlements reported most people obtained their food primarily from humanitarian assistance, 28% through cultivation, and 7% from markets. The pre-

positioning of food between January-May 2019 and improved security allowed humanitarian organisations to continue food distributions, despite poor road conditions resulting from the rainy season<sup>11</sup>.

### Northern Unity

Overall, assessed settlements from Northern Unity reported slightly better access to food compared to Central and Southern Unity (See Map 3), possibly due to the proximity of trading routes with Sudan, better humanitarian access, and more stable security conditions, which allowed people to move in search of food and engage in livelihood activities.

Reported access to food remained stable in most of Northern Unity, with only Mayom and Rubkona showing considerable increase compared to the previous quarter. In June, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people had access to enough food in the last month was 67% in Abiemnhom, 76% in Pariang and 71% in Guit. Meanwhile, between April and June the proportion of assessed settlements reporting enough access to food increased from 55% to 69% in Rubkona, and from 46% to 69% in Mayom.

The reported improvement in access to food in parts of Northern Unity also caused a decline in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting severe hunger. Reports of severe hunger in assessed settlements with inadequate access to food decreased from 29% in March to 0% in June in Guit; 30% to 18% in Rubkona; and 40% to 0% in Mayom.

7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Situation Update: Spontaneous Refugee Returnees from Sudan". June - July 2019

8. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. "IPC Acute Food Insecurity & Acute Malnutrition Analysis". June 2019

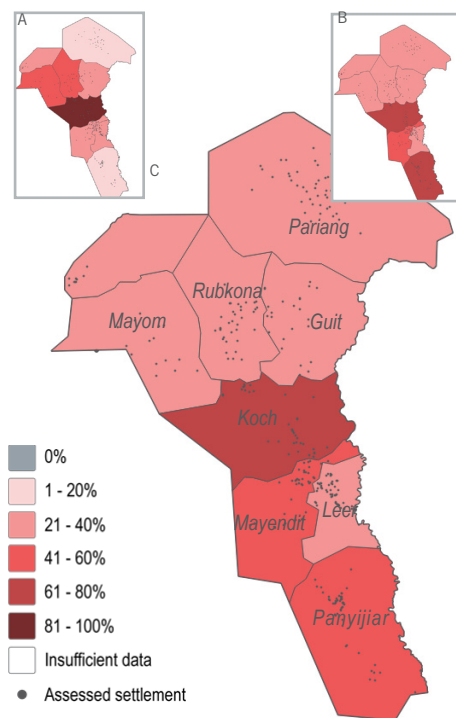
9. Famine Early Warning Systems Network. "Trends in Acute Food Insecurity, 2013-2018". December 2018.

10. FGD Nyal, July 2019

11. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "South Sudan Situation Report". May 2019



**Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food, April (A), May (B) and June 2019 (C)**



In Mayom, access to food may have increased due to targeted food distributions and increased cultivation. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting humanitarian assistance was the main source of food increased from 13% in March to 31% in June 2019 and was combined with one of the highest proportions of assessed settlements reporting cultivation as the main food source, which reached 69% in June 2019.

Likely as a result of the slightly improved access to food, consumption coping strategies reduced in Rubkona and Mayom. In Rubkona, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting people reduced the number of meals to cope with the lack of food decreased from 64% in April to 43% in June 2019. Similarly, in Mayom that decrease was from 62% to 38% in the same period.

### Central and Southern Unity

Between April and June 2019, large areas of Central and Southern Unity remained food insecure. Compared to the past quarter, the only assessed county reporting a slight increase in access to food was Koch, from 14% of assessed settlements in April reporting adequate access to food to 37% in June 2019. Humanitarian food and nutrition assistance delivered in remote areas of Koch in early June may explain this reported improvement<sup>13</sup>.

Access to food in Panyijiar deteriorated considerably during the assessed period. The proportion of assessed settlements from this county that reported enough access to food decreased from 97% in April to 46% in

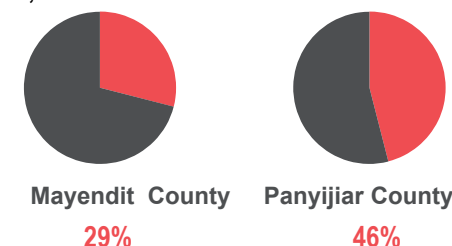
June 2019. Among assessed settlements with inadequate access to food, reports of hunger being severe increased from 0% in April to 58% in June.

To cope with the food gap, communities from Panyijiar reportedly limited their number of meals and applied other coping strategies. By June, 35% of assessed settlements reported most people consumed only one meal per day. Furthermore, the proportion of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reporting any people made food last longer by only feeding children increased from 3% in April to 48% in June 2019.

This drastic reduction in access to food in Panyijiar is reportedly due to gaps between food distributions and the influx of new arrivals. By June, 35% of assessed settlements from Panyijiar reported people could not access enough food in the last month because food distributions had stopped, and 46% due to new arrivals (See Figure 3).

FGD participants reported that returnees often arrive in need of assistance, and family or the broader community share with them some of the food received through quarterly humanitarian distributions. As a result, food that is supposed to last until the next distribution generally lasts shorter after it has been shared with returnees and new IDP arrivals<sup>14</sup>. These same FGD participants also reported that flooding at the end of the quarter destroyed cultivated areas, leaving the communities without the possibility of growing their own food, and increasing their reliance on humanitarian food assistance.

**Figure 3: Assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reporting new arrivals was the main reason people could not access enough food, June 2019**



For Mayendit, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting enough access to food decreased from 70% in April to 58% in June 2019. The most commonly reported reason for lack of access to enough food was new arrivals. The proportion of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reporting new arrivals as the main reason for most people could not access enough food in Mayendit increased from 8% in April to 29% in June 2019.

Another factor reportedly causing inadequate access to food in Mayendit was the short growing season, which affected the harvest outputs and further reduced the local food stock that is traditionally low at this time of the year. The proportion of assessed settlements from Mayendit reporting people were unable to access enough food because of the short growing season increased from 8% in March to 24% in June 2019.

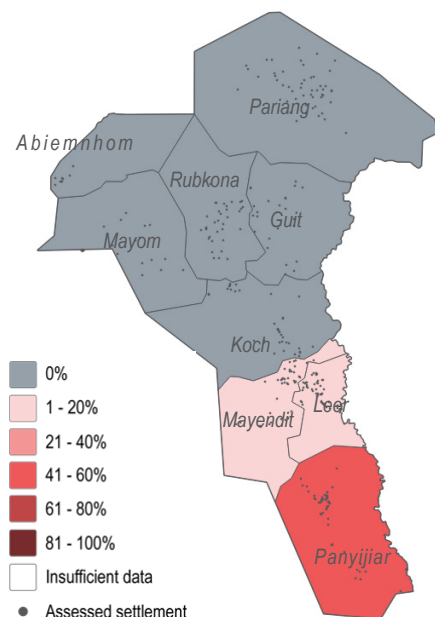
Additionally, safety concerns had an impact on access to food. The proportion of assessed settlements from Mayendit without access to food stating safety concerns as main reason increased from 8% in April to 18% in June 2019.

12. FGD Bentiu, July 2019

13. World Food Programme. "South Sudan Situation Report # 247". June 2019.

14. FGD Nyal, July 2019

**Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people ate less than two meals per day on average, June 2019**



In this context of growing food insecurity, people from Mayendit tried to make up the shortfall through alternative sources of food. For example, reports of fishing more than normal for this time of the year in assessed settlements without adequate access to food increased from 45% in April to 68% in June.

However, this was not always enough to meet food needs, and an increasing proportion of settlements from Mayendit reported people coped by reducing the average number of meals consumed per day. The proportion of assessed settlements from Mayendit without

adequate access to food reporting most people ate less than two meals a day increased from 3% in April to 13% in June 2019 (See Map 4).

## Protection

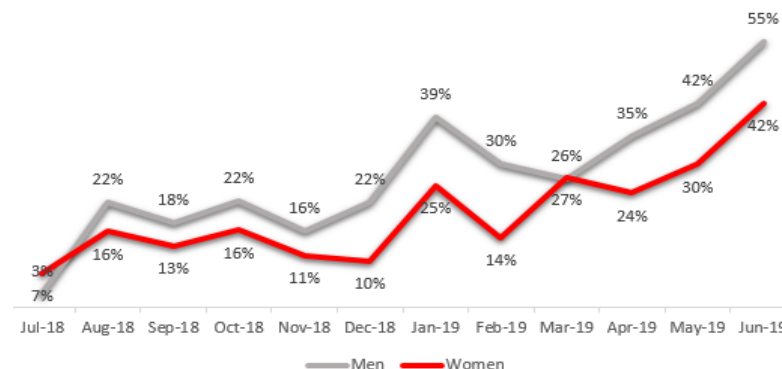
Hard-to-reach settlements in Unity have reportedly experienced slight improvements in protection indicators during the second quarter. Signs of this improvement include a larger proportion of remote settlements reporting most people felt safe, combined with higher percentages indicating no main protection concerns affecting their communities.

In line with these findings, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people felt safe increased state-wide from 48% in March to 65% in June 2019. This improvement was more pronounced in Leer and Mayendit, counties in which the increase during the same period was from 14% to 58% and 32% to 53% respectively. Both counties had experienced insecurity in the second quarter of 2018<sup>15</sup>, and the increase in reports of safety may be a natural consequence of the more stable environment in the current context.

Reflective of this positive trend, at the end of the quarter Unity also had the highest proportion of assessed settlements in the past 18 months without gender-specific protection concerns (See Figure 4). In June, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting no protection issues in the last month was 55% for men and 42% for women.

KIs also reported a decline in violent deaths and looting, although percentages remained

**Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlement reporting no main protection concerns for men and women in the last month, July 2018 - June 2019**



high. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting violent incidents in which at least one civilian was killed slightly decreased from 20% in April to 11% in June 2019. By June, the county with the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting incidents in which at least one civilian was killed was Koch at 31%.

Similarly, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting any incidents of property looting in the last month declined from 40% in March to 27% in June 2019. By the end of the quarter, reported incidents of property looting remained high in Guit (63%), Koch (57%), Rubkona (49%) and Mayendit (40%)

Nevertheless, the population of Unity continued to experience incidents of violence and serious protection issues. In Abiemnhom, Leer, Mayom, Panyijar, and Rubkona localised fighting and inter-communal violence triggered small-scale internal displacement<sup>16</sup>. Revenge killings and cattle raiding incidents persisted, and drove most of the protection concerns for men and boys. In June, the main protection concerns

for men were looting (13%), killing and injuries within the same tribe (9%) and cattle raids (8%). Meanwhile, domestic violence remained the most commonly reported main protection concern for women. 34% of assessed settlements in June reported this as the main safety concern for women. In the past 12 months, domestic violence has replaced sexual violence as the most commonly reported main protection concern for women. This trend might partially be driven by a decline in the intensity of the conflict across Unity.

## Shelter and Non-food Items (NFIs)

Between April and June 2019, the shelter situation for IDPs and host communities slightly improved compared to the previous quarter, although a large proportion of the population continued to live in rakoobas and improvised shelters.

The percentage of assessed settlements reporting host communities lived in tukuls<sup>17</sup> increased from 62% in March to 78% in June

15. REACH. "Situation Overview: Unity State April - June 2018"

16. For more details see the population movement section

17. A tukul is a more permanent and resistant type of housing than rakoobas, built with mud, grass, wooden poles and a conical roof

2019. Counties with the lowest proportion of assessed settlements where host communities lived in tukuls were Leer and Mayendit, with 27% and 45% respectively. Last year both counties experienced considerable shelter damage because of conflict; however, none of the assessed settlements reported this type of destruction in May or June 2019.

At the end of the quarter, 68% of assessed settlements with IDPs reported most IDPs continued to live in rakoobas. Furthermore, the proportion of assessed settlements with IDPs where IDPs lived in improvised shelters remained below 10% state-wide. Counties with the largest proportion of assessed settlements with IDPs where IDPs reportedly lived in improvised shelter in June 2019 were Mayendit (20%), Leer (8%), and Panyijiar (6%) (See Figure 5). These were also the only counties that reported any IDPs still living in the open during the assessed period. 7% of assessed settlements with IDPs from Leer, 6% from Mayendit, and 2% from Panyijiar indicated most IDPs lived in the open.

**Figure 5: Counties where IDPs use temporary housing structures, percentage of assessed settlements, June 2019.**



As in the previous reporting period, plastic sheets and mosquito nets were the main NFIs reportedly needed by IDPs. In June, 34% of assessed settlements with IDPs reported

plastic sheets and 27% mosquito nets as the most needed NFIs. The proportion of assessed settlements with IDPs reporting plastic sheets as the most needed NFI increased from 10% in March to 27% in June 2019, in parallel with the start of the rainy season. Furthermore, FGD participants in Panyijiar reported the urgent need for additional mosquito nets, given the high-risk of malaria during the rainy season and the lack of recent NFI distributions<sup>18</sup>.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

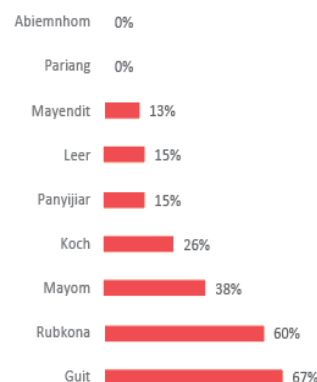
### Water

During the period covered in this situation overview, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting boreholes as the main source of drinking water has remained relatively stable from 75% in March to 73% in June 2019. At the end of the quarter, the two counties with the lowest proportion of assessed settlements reporting people accessed drinking water through boreholes were Guit and Rubkona with 33% and 29% respectively. Both of these counties also reported a high proportion of non-functional boreholes. The proportion of assessed settlements with broken boreholes was 18% in Guit and 15% in Koch.

Access to safe drinking water remained a significant challenge for a large proportion of the population from Unity State. In June, 18% of assessed settlements state-wide reported the main source of drinking water for most people were unimproved sources (ponds, rivers and swamps), with the highest

proportion of assessed settlements accessing these water sources reportedly in Rubkona and Guit (See Figure 6). Between April and June, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting rivers as main source of drinking water increased in Guit from 33% to 50% and from 41% to 51% in Rubkona.

**Figure 6: Proportion of assessed settlements in which main source of drinking water were unimproved water sources, June 2019**



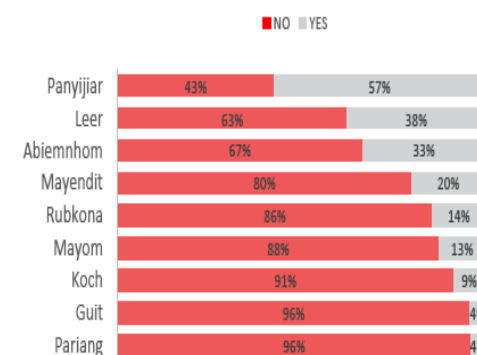
Despite security improvements compared to 2018, safety concerns continued to restrict the ability of some people to access their preferred water points. State-wide, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting some people were unable to access their preferred water point because of security concerns increased from 5% in March to 19% in June 2019. In that period, the largest increases were reported in Leer from 3% to 27%; Mayendit from 9% to 35%; and Panyijiar from 3% to 60%. These changes coincided with reports of cattle raiding and revenge killings occurring in these three counties during the second quarter<sup>19</sup>.

## Sanitation

Open defecation remained a common practice, as large proportions of the population did not have access to improved sanitation facilities. State-wide, latrine usage was low, but relatively stable, compared to the previous quarter. By June, only 23% of assessed settlements reported people were using latrines. Furthermore, 54% of assessed settlements with presence of latrines reported less than half of people used them.

By June, counties with the lowest proportion of assessed settlements reporting latrine usage were Guit (4%), Koch (9%), and Pariang (4%) (See Figure 7). FGD participants reported that latrines are not being used because they have never been installed or the ones that exist need to be repaired<sup>20</sup>. Participants from Panyijiar also reported that flooding destroyed some latrines, forcing people to defecate in the bush.

**Figure 7: Proportion of assessed settlements where any people used latrines in the last month, June 2019**



18. FGDs Nyal, July 2019

19. For more details see the protection section

20. FGDs. Bentiu and Nyal, June -July 2019



## Hygiene

Hand-washing using soap remained uncommon across Unity State. In June, only 8% of assessed settlements reported people used water and soap to wash their hands, while 79% reported most people only use water or do not wash their hands. State-wide, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting people only used water to wash their hands increased from 49% in March to 65% in June, and was reported by 100% of KIs in Pariang and Abiemnhom in June.

According to a recent WASH needs assessment, soap is scarce in most rural areas of Pariang and Abiemnhom, and when available it is expensive and communities prefer to use them for other purposes, such as washing clothes<sup>21</sup>. Meanwhile, the proportion of assessed settlements where people reportedly do not wash their hands is particularly high in Panyijiar, where percentages increased from 32% in March to 50% in June 2019.

The poor WASH conditions described above continued to increase the risk of contracting water-borne diseases, which remained among the most commonly reported health problems affecting the population of Unity.

## Health

Access to health services remained at similar levels compared to the previous quarter. Between April and June 2019, 96% of assessed settlements consistently reported the presence of health services within walking distance.

However, in assessed settlements with access to healthcare, the reported time required to reach health facilities on foot has continued to increase since the start of the year. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people took a full day or more to reach, access, and return from the nearest health facility increased from 1% in January to 15% in June 2019. (See Figure 8). The time required to access health services is likely to increase with the start of the rainy season, and its negative impact on road conditions and transportation services.

Inadequate health infrastructure and geographic barriers to access existing health services continued to cause gaps in health coverage across the state. In June, among assessed settlements without reported access to health services, the main reasons included that health facilities were never there or were too distant. For some remote communities, health facilities that were within reach in the dry season became inaccessible due to heavy rains. In the assessed period, the destruction of health facilities due to conflict, which was a major factor affecting the availability of health services in 2018, was only reported by one settlement from Guit without access to health care.

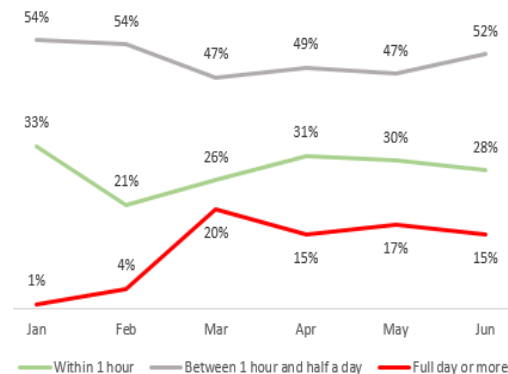
Malaria remained the most commonly reported health problem across Unity. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting malaria as the main health problem increased state-wide from 48% in March to 63% in June 2019. Guit, Koch, Leer, and Panyijiar reported the most significant increase in the proportion of

assessed settlements reporting malaria as main health problem. Between March and June, the proportion increased from 17% to 63% in Guit; 47% to 69% in Koch; 24% to 46% in Leer; and 50% to 67% in Panyijiar. These increases coincided with the start of this year's rains and flooding incidents affecting large parts of Unity.

The second most commonly reported health problems were waterborne diseases, reflective of the poor sanitation and hygiene conditions reported in the WASH section, but no significant variations occurred during the reporting period. By June, 11% of assessed settlements across the state reported diarrhoea was the main health problem affecting their communities.

Between March and June, the only counties with an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements where diarrhoea was the main health problem were Leer and Mayom, from 5% to 17% and 0% to 19% respectively. In June, reports of cholera as main health concern were also high in Mayom (13%).

**Figure 8: Length of time it takes to access health care services, proportion of assessed settlements, January - June 2019**



As in the previous quarter, malaria appeared to have caused the majority of deaths during the assessed period. Across Unity, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting malaria was the main cause of death increased from 31% in March to 44% in June 2019. FGD participants reported that cases of malaria have gone up in their communities as a result of the rainy season, and continue to cause high levels of mortality due to barriers to prevent, detect, and treat the disease<sup>22</sup>.

## Education

In the second quarter, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education services remained similar to the previous reporting period. By June, 72% of assessed settlements state-wide reported the presence of any education services people could reach on foot, which may suggest that a quarter of the population did not have access (See Map 5).

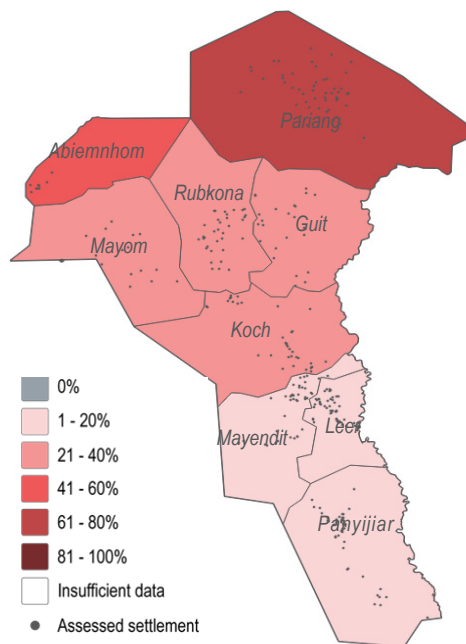
At the county level, reported access to education improved in Koch from 28% in January to 71% in June 2019. This positive trend is likely due to the relative stabilisation of the county, less conflict-related destruction of schools, and joint efforts from humanitarian agencies and education authorities to rehabilitate facilities and support the return of school-age children to their studies. In June 2018, 50% of assessed settlements had reported schools had been destroyed due to conflict, but this percentage remained below 10% between January - June 2019.

21. Inter-agency WASH Needs Assessment, Pariang and Abiemnhom, January 2019

22. FGDs. Nyal, July 2019

Overall, barriers to access education continued to be mainly structural, and related to inadequate infrastructure and resources to meet the demand for educational services. In 56% of assessed settlements without access to education the main reported reason was that facilities were too distant and 34% reported that there were no education facilities. By the end of the quarter, the start of the rainy season also posed additional challenges for children to reach educational services.

**Map 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting education services were unavailable, June 2019**



Other less commonly reported barriers to access education were gender-specific, and deeply connected with economic and cultural dynamics. In June, 9% of assessed settlements where any 6-17 years old boys were not attending school reported that the main reason was the need for boys to work outside of their homes, in line with the traditional involvement of young males in agriculture and livestock activities.

Meanwhile, in 11% of assessed settlements state-wide where any 6-17 years old girls were not attending school, the main reason was that girls needed to work at home. In Mayom, particularly high proportions of assessed settlements reported cultural reasons and early pregnancies as the reasons girls did not attend school. In this county 50% of assessed settlements in April reported that girls did not attend school because they are not supposed to, followed by 33% due to early marriage.

## Conclusion

During the second quarter, the humanitarian emergency in Unity State showed slight signs of improvement, although needs remained high due to the legacy of conflict, the economic crisis, and structural barriers for the population to access food and basic services. The start of the rainy season added challenges for transportation and access to services, which are likely to worsen in the next quarter as heavy rains continue.

Access to food was inadequate across the State, and was especially low in areas of

Central and Southern Unity. Koch, Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar reported the highest proportion of assessed settlements without enough access to food, and new arrivals as the main reason for the lack of enough food. In this context, humanitarian assistance was again instrumental in feeding the population, as it was reportedly the main source of food in more than half of the assessed settlements.

Water-borne diseases and malaria remained major health problems across the State, due to poor WASH conditions and insufficient prevention strategies. Furthermore, the health infrastructure remained inadequate for communities to access prompt and quality health assistance, and to effectively treat medical conditions like malaria.

### 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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