

# Situation Overview: Central and Eastern Equatoria States, South Sudan

January - March 2020

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

## Introduction

In the first quarter of 2020, the humanitarian situation in Central Equatoria State (CES) and Eastern Equatoria State (EES) remained critical. As these regions are largely unassessed due to access and resource constraints, limited accurate information is available to humanitarian actors to inform their 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 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 EES and CES in the first quarter of 2020.

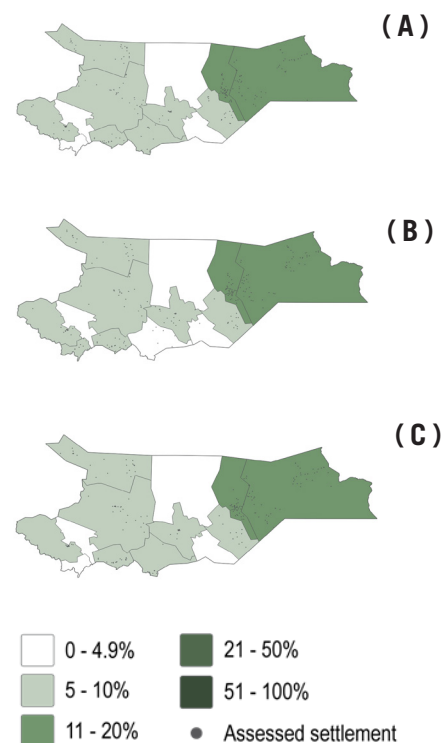
## Key Findings

- Findings indicate that the **food security** situation in EES and CES remained precarious during the first quarter of 2020, with the vast majority of assessed settlements in both states reporting inadequate access to food. Food security reportedly worsened in Juba County with an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting hunger was 'the worst it could

be between December 2019 (4%) and March 2020 (17%).

- More than half (58%) of assessed settlements in CES reported the presence of **internally displaced persons (IDPs)** in March 2020, similar to December 2019. However, between January and March, there was an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence in Yei, Terekeka and Kajo-Keji counties, likely due to harvest stocks being depleted towards the end of Q1 and varying levels of insecurity in the region.
- In regard to **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functional borehole increased in EES and remained consistent in CES throughout Q1. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting hand washing with soap remained low in both states.
- The proportion of assessed settlements in EES reporting most children were **attending school** increased from 51% in December 2020 to 84% in March, likely due to the return of children herding cattle to their homestead towards the end of the first quarter.
- The **protection** situation continued

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of the CES and EES states, January (A), February (B) and March 2020 (C)



# of key informant interviews conducted: **651**

# of assessed settlements: **447**

# of states covered: **2**

# of counties covered out of 14: **10**

# of focus group discussions (FGD) conducted: **2**

# of key informant interviews (KIs) conducted: **2**

## METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of EES, REACH uses primary data from key informants 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 key informants in **Kapoeta Town covering EES and remotely by phone call from Juba, covering CES in January, February and March 2020.**

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 vary. In order to reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, over time analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam<sup>2</sup> coverage over the period.

Quantitative findings were triangulated with FGDs with a selection of male and female participants and secondary sources. More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK ToRs](#).

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> "Payam" refers to the administrative unit below the county level.

to vary by county during Q1, with particularly high protection concerns in Juba and Kapoeta North counties. The majority of assessed settlements in both states reported that most people felt safe in December (93% in EES and 72% in CES), however, this decreased in EES from 93% to 66% between January and March.

## Population Movement and Displacement

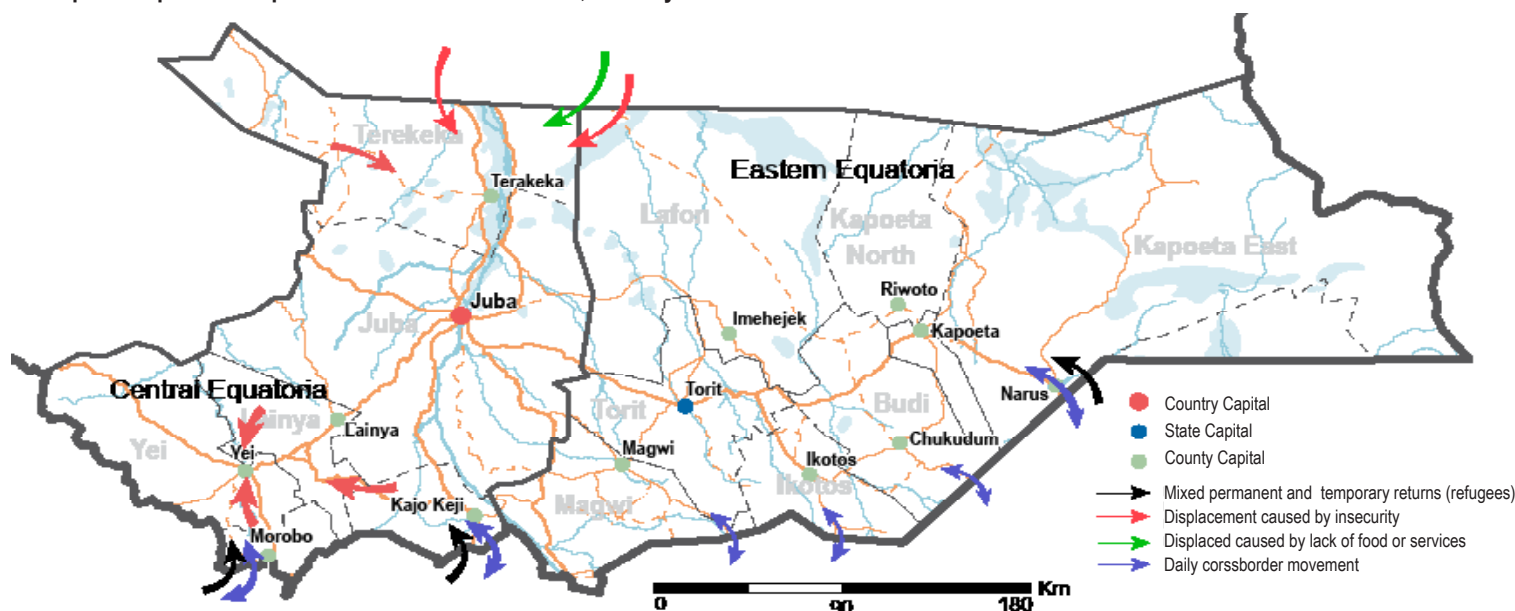
Overall, reports of large-scale displacement<sup>3</sup> remained low throughout Q1 of 2020. However, reported rates of smaller scale population movements fluctuated throughout the first three months of 2020, indicating the fluidity of population movements in both states due to changing dynamics of insecurity and varying levels of access to food in area of origin and displacement.

### Displacement

#### Central Equatoria

More than half (58%) of assessed settlements in CES reported the presence of IDPs in March 2020, similar to December 2019. However, there was a particular increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting this between January and March in Yei (75% to 100%), Kajo-Keji (63% to 80%) and Terekeka (22% to 38%) counties. In the previous quarter (Q4), a similar increase in reported IDP presence was observed in Yei County (78% to 100% between October and December). Fluctuating IDP presence could indicate temporary displacement due to varying levels of access to food and services,

Map 2: Displacement patterns across CES and EES, January - March 2020



and insecurity. In the first quarter of 2020, the increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence was likely due to harvest stocks being depleted towards the end of Q1 (see food security section) and varying levels of insecurity in the region.<sup>4</sup> Several clashes were reported towards the end of the quarter that reportedly caused displacement,<sup>5</sup> likely pushing more IDPs into Yei County. In Terekeka, Yei and Kajo-Keji counties, the most frequently reported reason for displacement was insecurity (killing, rape, fighting, looting).

In Juba County, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence in March was low compared to December, 2019 (39% versus 55%). The decrease in reported IDP presence could be a result of a reduction in violence since February 2020. However, while

most fighting halted in the region, levels of insecurity due to tensions between armed actors remain high in some areas.<sup>6</sup> In Juba County, the three most frequently reported reasons for displacement were being far from family (34%), insecurity (21%) and seasonal movement (17%).

The majority of assessed settlements across CES reported most IDPs were displaced within their county of origin, indicating that insecurity and access to food and services likely was highly localised.

#### Eastern Equatoria

In EES, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of IDPs remained low in March (12%), and similar to December 2019 (5%).

In March in Greater Torit,<sup>7</sup> the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of IDPs was high compared to Greater Kapoeta<sup>8</sup> (64% versus 2%) and there was an increase in proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence in Greater Torit from 24% in December to 63% in March. Intercommunal violence and inadequate access to food and services in county of origin were likely a driving factor for IDP movement during Q1.

### IDP Returns

#### Central Equatoria

While the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of IDP returnees remained stable in CES, there was an increase in Terekeka County, from 5% in December to 43% in March. Terekeka was identified as one of

3 Large scale displacement is defined by the Needs Analysis Working Group as more than 5,000 individuals being forced to leave their area of origin.

4 OCHA and Humanitarian Country Team and partners. January - March 2020 Monitoring Review South Sudan. Issued, May 2020.

5 Crisis Group. Tracking Conflict Worldwide - South Sudan. Last accessed 4 June 2020.

6 Ibid.

7 Greater Kapoeta includes Kapoeta South, Kapoeta East, Kapoeta North and Budi counties. All counties were assessed in all three months.

8 Greater Torit includes Torit, Magwi, Ikotos, Lafon Counties. Only Torit and Magwi Counties were assessed.

the counties with the highest level of returnees in 2019 in the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), along with the highest levels of needs in the host community, particularly related to shelter.<sup>9</sup> The fluctuating proportion of settlements reporting the presence of IDP returnees could indicate temporary returns and secondary displacement due to lack of services state-wide; the four most frequently reported push factors for IDPs to return were access to land (27% of assessed settlements), security (21%), to go home (14%) and access to humanitarian assistance (13%).

### Eastern Equatoria

The proportion of assessed settlements in EES reporting the presence of IDP returnees in March was 9%, consistent with December 2019. However, in Magwi County there was a decrease in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP returnee presence between January (50%) and March (13%). In the last quarter of 2019, findings showed a similar trend with the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP returnee presence decreasing from 43% in September to 13% in December, indicating that levels of reported returns fluctuated across months. Similar trends were reflected in reports of IDP returnee presence in Torit County.

Reported reasons for the presence of IDP returnees were mostly seasonal and based on the level of access to services in area of displacement and origin, with most recent IDP returnees reportedly leaving their former settlements for security (45% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence),

access to shelter (23%), access to land (8%) and access to food (8%). This could explain fluctuations in IDP returnee presence and potentially indicates that returns may be temporary.

### Refugee Returns

#### Central Equatoria

In CES, half of assessed settlements reported refugee returnee presence in March (55%), with high proportions in Yei (100%), Kajo-Keji (87%) and Juba (59%). In January, there were reports of a high number of refugee returnees in Kajo-Keji County, most of whom were reportedly in need of food assistance.<sup>9,10</sup>

Despite shifting dynamics and expected reduction of violence in CES in the beginning of 2020, no further increase in refugee returnee presence was reported during Q1. While the proportion of assessed settlements reporting refugee returnee presence increased between June and September 2019 (7% to 49%), this proportion has since then remained consistent throughout Q4 of 2019 and Q1 of 2020. This could indicate an increase in the geographical concentration of returnees,<sup>11</sup> or signify protracted displacement due to high needs in the area of return.

The latter was likely the case in Kajo-Keji County; while some humanitarian agencies moved from Uganda to this county, following the recent return of refugees to this area, lack of funding has been slowing down the scale-up of the response and high needs seem to have continued.<sup>12</sup>

### Eastern Equatoria

As with IDP returnees, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting refugee returnee presence in EES remained low during Q1, except for Torit and Magwi counties, where 93% and 88% of assessed settlements reported refugee returnee presence in March, consistent with the previous quarter.

## Situation in Assessed Settlements

### Food Security and Livelihoods

Food security was reportedly precarious in EES and CES during the first quarter of 2020. The vast majority of assessed settlements reported facing inadequate access to food (96%), and approximately half of these settlements (54%) reported this hunger was severe in March.<sup>13</sup> In EES, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting hunger was severe remained high (52%) in March, whilst in CES there was an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements in Juba County reporting hunger as 'the worst it could be'.

### Eastern Equatoria

In EES, 99% of assessed settlements reported that most people were unable to access enough food in March. This proportion

**Figure 2: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food in EES, March 2020**



remained consistent during the first three months of 2020 and was similar across all counties, marking an increase compared to Q4, when 75% of assessed settlements reported most people were unable to access enough food. This increase might have been due to the depletion of stocks of stored food remaining from last year's harvest

Of the assessed settlements that reported inadequate access to food, the proportion that reported hunger was severe remained relatively high and stable between December (48%) and March (52%). The proportion of assessed settlements reportedly facing inadequate food and experiencing severe hunger in March was high in Magwi County (100%) and Greater Kapoeta (54%), particularly when compared to Torit County (14%).

The high proportion of assessed settlements reporting severe hunger and inadequate access to food corresponds with IPC projections for Eastern Equatoria, with the majority facing 'crisis' levels of acute food insecurity (IPC phase 3) between February and April, with Kapoeta North and Kapoeta South counties likely being in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) during Q1.<sup>14</sup> According to FEWS Net, food stocks were predicted to be exhausted by February or March, due to production deficits following flooding, pest infestations and insecurity, whilst usual cattle migration meant access to livestock would decrease.<sup>15</sup>

In March, the most frequently reported reasons for inadequate access to food in EES were lack of rain (38% of assessed settlements), high market prices (19%) and flooding (13%);

9 Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET). Food Security Outlook.

10 Due to the methodology of AoK, the geographical concentration of IDPs in urban centres might lead to a reduction in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence without an associated reduction in overall IDP numbers.

11 Ibid.

12 USAID and OCHA. April 17, 2020. South Sudan - Crisis - Factsheet 6

13 Severe hunger is defined as 'limited options to cope with the reduced access to food'

14 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). January 2020. IPC Acute Food Insecurity and acute Malnutrition Analysis.

15 Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) October 2019. Food Security Outlook

16 FAO. GIEWS Crop Prospects and Food Situation No. 2, July 2019: Quarterly Global Report. Accessed 20 May, 2020.

17 FAO. November, 2019. Flood Impact on Crops & Livestock - South Sudan



lack of rain was particularly highly reported in Budi (62% of assessed settlements) and Kapoeta East (58%) counties, whilst in Magwi and Torit counties, 50% and 21% of assessed settlements respectively reported pests as the main reason. While lack of rain may have referred to the delayed onset of the rainy season in 2019,<sup>16</sup> flooding likely referred to the extreme seasonal flooding in the second half of 2019, which affected last year's harvest and, hence, the availability of current food stocks.<sup>17</sup>

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions for inter-state and cross-border movement were enforced across South Sudan from mid-March 2020, impacting people's access to markets and supply of goods (and thus market prices), in turn likely particularly affecting settlements that were dependent on livelihood activities linked to trade. While, state-wide, the reported dependence on markets for livelihood activities was relatively low in March (11% of assessed settlements), in Torit County this was reportedly much higher at 71% of assessed settlements. In addition, 75% of assessed settlements in Magwi County and 19% of settlements in Torit County reported the market as the main source of food, likely increasing the vulnerability to food insecurity in these settlements as long as movement restrictions are in place.<sup>18</sup>

A locust swarm observed in EES in February 2020 will likely further impact future food availability.<sup>19</sup> If locusts have laid eggs, future swarms might further drive food insecurity in counties that are typically highly agriculturally dependent, such as Torit, Magwi, and Budi

**Figure 3: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food in CES, March 2020**



counties. Overall, with the lean season starting, shortages in food availability and high staple prices, food security could deteriorate in the coming months.

### Central Equatoria

Reported adequate access to food remained low across much of CES, and remained substantially better in Yei County. In March, inadequate access to food was reported by 91% of assessed settlements, consistent with previous months, indicating low harvest stocks. In March, the proportion of assessed settlements in Yei County reporting that most people were able to access enough food was higher (46%), compared to Juba (0%), Terekeka (0%) and Kajo-Keji counties (7%); this is likely due to the higher availability of stored cultivated food across the green-belt region. Nevertheless, in Yei county, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in March (46%) was considerably lower compared to October 2019, when 78% of assessed settlements reported this. While declining food access is expected towards the start of the lean season in May or June, FEWS NET projections similarly described an earlier start of the lean season this year due to limited food stocks and increasing food prices.<sup>20</sup>

Of assessed settlements that reported inadequate access to food in Kajo-Keji, Juba and Terekeka counties in March, 63% reported hunger was severe. Correspondingly, Juba and Terekeka counties were predicted to face food consumption gaps and be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) while Kajo-Keji County was projected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in March likely due to additional pressure of refugee returns on food availability.<sup>22</sup>

The 2019 harvest was reportedly below average in CES, due to insecurity, flooding and the incidences of fall armyworm (FAW).<sup>23</sup> Correspondingly, assessed settlements reported the main reasons for inadequate access to food in March 2020 were: Crops being destroyed due to flooding or affected by too much rain during the rainy season (28%), pests having destroyed crops (16%), or the presence of new arrivals (11%). This was consistent with IPC analysis for the first quarter of 2020, which reported that harvests would become exhausted and food prices in the markets would increase.<sup>24</sup>

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting hunger to be "the worst it can be" increased from 4% in December to 17% in March in Juba County. In Juba County, the increase may be a result of rising food prices and therefore declining purchasing power, affecting mainly low income households.<sup>25</sup>

In Juba County, a relatively high proportion of assessed settlements reported their main livelihood activity was linked to the market (24%), compared to other counties in CES. This suggests an increased level of vulnerability to food insecurity, due to COVID-19 related

restrictions for inter-state and cross-border movement. Movement restrictions and reduced market access could also influence livelihood activities such as crops for cash - a frequently reported activity in Yei County (93%) - and fishing, which was reported by approximately half of assessed settlements in Terekaka County (48%), involving fish being sold on markets to generate income.

### Coping Strategies

Indicative of inadequate access to food, almost all assessed settlements in CES and EES reported employing coping strategies in the first quarter of 2020.

### Eastern Equatoria

The majority of assessed settlements in EES reported using coping strategies to deal with inadequate access to food in March (98%). Coping strategies reported by the highest proportion of assessed settlements were limiting portion sizes (74%), buying less expensive food (73%) and reducing the number of meals per day (67%), whilst 8% reported adults skipping meals for children to eat in March, particularly in Magwi County (75%). Aligned with a high proportion of settlements in Magwi County reportedly

**Figure 4: Most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies, EES, March 2020**



18 IOM - DTM South Sudan: COVID-19 Preparedness: Mobility Update Week I (23–29 March 2020)

19 CHA and Humanitarian Country Team and partners. January - March 2020 Monitoring Review South Sudan. Issued, May 2020.

20 Famine Early Warning System. February - September 2020. Food Security Outlook, Food assistance needs remain high and Catastrophic (IPC Phase 5) outcomes are possible in 2020

21 This is a subset of settlements reportedly facing inadequate access to food.

22 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). January-July 2020. South Sudan Key Messages

23 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). August 2019. South Sudan Key Messages

24 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). January-July 2020. South Sudan Key Messages

25 Famine Early Warning System. February - September 2020. Food Security Outlook, Food assistance needs remain high and Catastrophic (IPC Phase 5) outcomes are possible in 2020

experiencing severe hunger due to inadequate access to food in March (100%), this indicates stressed food consumption, potentially due to low harvest yields in 2019 as a result of inconsistent rainfall and pests.

In addition, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting borrowing money as a livelihood coping strategy increased in Magwi County from 13% in December to 38% in March, likely due to the increasing consumption gap and aggravated by rising market prices. This corresponded with the reported increase in market dependency in these counties; while only 13% of assessed settlements in Magwi County reported the market as their main source of food in December, 75% of assessed settlements reported this in March, potentially causing an additional level of vulnerability to food insecurity, due to COVID-19 related preventative measures that are likely limiting market accessibility.

### Central Equatoria

In CES, all assessed settlements reported using at least one coping strategy to deal with inadequate access to food during the first quarter of the year, aligned with reportedly low access to food during this period.

The use of severe coping strategies remained low across CES, except in Kajo-Keji County, where, in March 2020, 'adults skipping meals for children to eat' was reported by 73% of assessed settlements, and 'skipping meals for entire days' by 7%. The latter was also reported by 9% of assessed settlements in Juba County. The reported use of severe coping strategies corresponded with the relatively

high proportion of assessed settlements that reported hunger as "the worst it could be" in these counties, and indicates reduced access to alternative livelihood opportunities.

When facing food shortages, livelihood coping mechanisms that were reportedly used in March included gathering firewood (55%) and wild foods (61%) and borrowing food (41%). Begging was reported by a particularly high proportion of assessed settlements in Yei and Juba counties (57% and 54% respectively), which was notably higher compared to December (33% and 8%), potentially reflective of increasing food prices and diminishing food availability in this quarter.

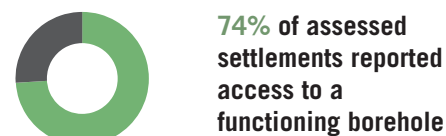
In Kajo-Keji and Juba counties, displacement to camps as a strategy to deal with lack of food was reported by 53% and 35% of assessed settlements, respectively, in March, with an increase in Kajo-Keji County from 7% in December. This corresponds with data from September 2019, which suggests that returns were often temporary during the cultivation and harvesting season, with people moving back and forth from IDP or refugee camps depending on access to food and services in areas of displacement and origin.<sup>26</sup>

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functioning borehole increased in EES and remained stable in CES between January and March 2020, while handwashing with soap remained reportedly low across both states, which is particularly concerning given COVID-19.

While the proportion of assessed settlements

**Figure 5: Reported access to a functional borehole in EES, March 2020**



reporting the presence of a functioning borehole declined in EES between September and December 2019, likely due to flooding, access to functional boreholes reportedly increased slightly from 61% in January to 74% in March,<sup>27</sup> possibly indicating that some boreholes were repaired in the first three months of 2020. The biggest increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functioning borehole between January and March was in Budi County from 19% to 54%.<sup>28</sup> Correspondingly, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting unprotected water sources (river, well and swamp) as the main source of drinking water dropped in Budi County from 71% to 38% between January and March 2020.

In CES, the proportion of assessed settlements that reported access to functioning boreholes varied between counties. The proportion of settlements reporting access to functioning boreholes decreased in Terekeka County from 85% to 57% between January and March. On the other hand, findings suggest that access to functioning boreholes increased in Kajo-Keji County, as 87% of assessed settlements reported access to a functioning borehole in March, compared to 69% in January.

The considerably high proportion of assessed

settlements reporting only having access to unprotected water sources in March might have contributed to the similarly high proportion of settlements in Juba, Terekaka and Kajo-Keji counties reporting that the drinking water perceivably caused sickness (45%). Correspondingly, waterborne diseases were the second most common reported health problem in these counties (see health section). One of the potential factors impacting the quality of drinking water and contributing to the prevalence of waterborn diseases could be livestock sharing the main drinking water source, which was reported by 59% of assessed settlements in Juba, Terekeka and Kajo-Keji counties.

In EES, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting livestock sharing the same water sources with humans in March was particularly high in Kapoeta East (87%), Budi (85%) and Kapoeta South counties (82%). This proportion was likely higher in Greater Kapoeta as keeping livestock is more common in these counties. However, despite the high proportion of assessed settlements reporting sharing drinking water with livestock, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting that the main source of drinking water perceivably caused sickness was lower in EES compared to CES and remained stable between December (16%) and March (15%).

### Handwashing and COVID-19

Hand washing with soap remained reportedly low during the first quarter, similar to Q4. The majority of assessed settlements reported using only water in March (89%), with only 5%

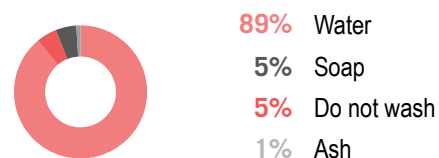
26 REACH. July-September 2019. Situation Overview: Central Equatoria State, South Sudan

27 REACH. October-December 2019. Situation Overview: Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan

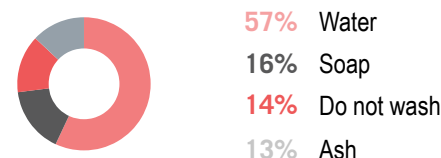
28 This is a subset of settlements that reported the presence of a borehole (functional and non-functional)



**Figure 6: Percentage of assessed settlements in EES reporting most common hand washing practices, March 2020**



**Figure 7: Figure 6: Percentage of assessed settlements in CES reporting most common hand washing practices, March 2020**



of assessed settlements reporting using soap. Reported usage of soap was particularly low in Kapoeta North and Kapoeta East counties (0% of assessed settlements in March). Similarly, the proportion of assessed settlements that reported the use of soap remained low in CES in March. Only approximately half of assessed settlements (57%) reported washing hands with water in March, and 16% of settlements reported washing hands with soap, which was particularly low in Terekeka County (4%). A likely reason for the low proportion of assessed settlements using soap might be the relatively high price of soap in comparison to households' average income.

Given recent developments and spread of the COVID-19 virus, the use of water only or not washing at all will not only facilitate the proliferation of waterborne diseases, but could also increase settlements' vulnerability to the

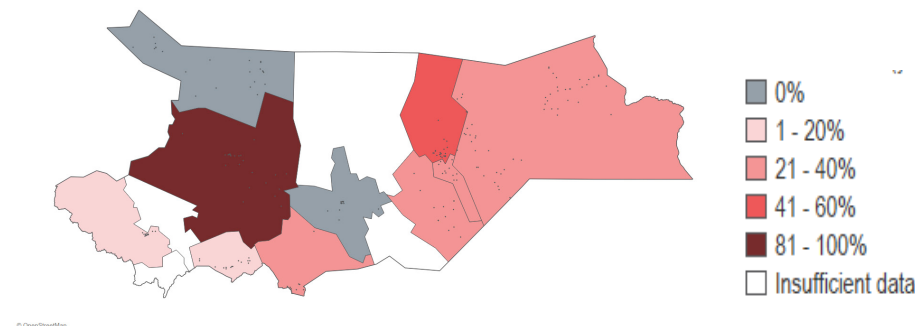
COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>29</sup>

## Health

In both CES and EES, malaria was reportedly the main health problem during Q1 (51% and 36% in March respectively), unchanged from Q4.<sup>30</sup> Waterborne diseases were the second most commonly reported health problem in CES in March (24% of assessed settlements), particularly in Juba County, while lung diseases were the second most commonly reported health problem in EES (26%). In March, a WHO-led assessment identified two cases of yellow fever in Kajo-Keji County.<sup>31</sup> With a WHO estimated immunity of the population of 0%, settlements in Kajo-Keji could be vulnerable for the spread of this disease.

Access to hospitals appeared to remain low in March in EES (25% of assessed settlements) and less than half of assessed settlements in CES reportedly had access to a hospital (41%). The highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting no access to any health care facility at walking distance was in Juba County (26%). FGD participants from Juba reported that many people would likely refrain from seeking treatment<sup>32</sup> if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, due to the distance to healthcare facilities.<sup>33</sup> FGD participants further indicated these long distances reduced access for general, non-COVID-19 related healthcare. Key informants in EES highlighted that this especially affected the elderly, as they would not be able to cover long distances by foot.<sup>34</sup> A participatory mapping exercise with these key informants showed that residents would move to urban hubs or larger rural settlements to seek health care, through routes that were

**Map 3: Proportion of settlements reporting most people not feeling safe most of the time, March 2020**



considered safe. The route between Torit and Kapoeta town was reportedly commonly avoided because of insecurity.

## Protection

The majority of assessed settlements in EES and CES reported that most people felt safe most of the time in January (93% and 72% respectively). However, in EES this proportion decreased between December and March from 93% to 66% of assessed settlements. The protection situation continued to vary by county this quarter, with particularly high protection concerns in Kapoeta North County. In Kapoeta North County, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting people felt safe decreased from 100% in December to 48% March. This could be the result of ongoing insecurity on the main roads connecting Kapoeta, Naurus and Torit towns, and incidents of cattle raiding in the area;<sup>35</sup> February and March are often characterised by a seasonal increase in cattle raiding.<sup>36</sup>

In CES, the proportion of assessed settlements that reported people feeling unsafe was on average higher in Juba County

(81%) compared to other counties in the state in Q1. In both Yei and Juba counties, 5% of assessed settlements reported that there had been incidents of conflict killing a civilian in the 30 days prior to data collection in March. In Yei County this could be due to continuing clashes and insecurity. In Juba County, the high proportion of assessed settlements reporting feeling unsafe could be the result of criminality in urban areas or due to incidents of property looting, reported by a relatively high proportion of assessed settlements in Juba County in the first quarter of 2020 (53%). In EES, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting incidents of conflict killing a civilian were highest in Budi County (13% in March), and likely a result of communal violence and cattle raiding incidents.

Domestic violence was the most commonly reported concern for both women (54% of assessed settlements in CES and 73% in EES) and men (34% of assessed settlements in CES and 58% in EES).<sup>37</sup> Other common protection concerns were family separation, harassment (for women), cattle raiding and looting.

29 WHO. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. Last accessed 5 May 2020.

30 This is a subset of settlements that reported to have at main health problem in the settlement at the time of the interview.

31 WHO. 18 April 2020. Yellow fever – Republic of South Sudan. Disease Outbreak News.

32 'Treatment' was explained to KIs as 'going to the clinic for testing and/or to receive respiratory support'.

33 FGD on Health Seeking Behaviour and Population Movement - Male participants, Juba. 9 March, 2020

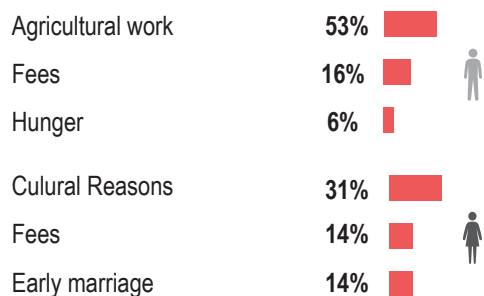
34 Key informant interview. Health seeking Behaviour and population movement, covering Greater Kapoeta and Greater Torit (two key informant interviews were held, as focus group discussions were suspended due to COVID-19 related regulations).

35 OCHA. South Sudan: Quarterly Humanitarian Access Snapshot (January to March 2020) and USAID and DCHA South Sudan Crisis Fachsteet (round 6)

36 UN FAO. LIVESTOCK UPDATE | January - March 2020.

37 Domestic violence in this context entails abuse within the home, and therefore also includes violence from male relatives towards younger men.

**Figure 8: Primary reported reasons for lack of school attendance for girls and boys in assessed settlements of EES, March 2020**



## Education

In EES, consistent with the previous quarter, access to education services within walking distance continued to be reported by a higher proportion of assessed settlements in Greater Torit (91%) than Greater Kapoeta (26%). Access seems to have been particularly poor in Kapoeta East and Kapoeta South counties, suggesting that, despite government programming,<sup>38</sup> these mainly pastoralist counties remain characterised by reportedly low levels of access to education services potentially as a result or residu of inter-communal violence as well as low economic prosperity.<sup>39</sup>

In Budi and Kapoeta North counties, a considerable uptick in reported access to education was observed between January and March from 29% of assessed settlements to 77% and from 19% to 61% respectively, aligned with the start of the academic year in February,<sup>40</sup> and potentially due to recent school feeding education programmes in the region.

Besides being aligned with the academic

year, the increase in attendance was likely seasonal. While half of assessed settlements reported that none of the girls and boys at school-going age<sup>41</sup> were attending school in December 2020 (49% for girls and boys) this proportion declined to 16% of assessed settlements for both boys and girls in March. Again, this change was especially visible in Greater Kapoeta (59% to 22%). This decline in reported attendance was likely due to the return of children herding cattle to their homestead towards the end of the first quarter. Despite these marked declines, overall attendance remained stable but low, with the majority of assessed settlements in Kapoeta North, Kapoeta East and Budi counties reporting less than half of girls were attending school in March (79%, 56% and 50% of assessed settlements respectively).

In CES, a much higher proportion of assessed settlements (87% in March) reported having access to education services within walking distance. Furthermore, in assessed settlements where education services were reportedly available, 70% reported that half or more than half of school-aged girls were attending school in the 30 days prior to data collection, and 86% of assessed settlements reported that half or more than half of the school-aged boys were attending school.<sup>42</sup> Only 4% of assessed settlements in CES reported that none of the girls in this age range were attending school.

The most commonly reported reason for girls not attending education was cultural reasons in EES and school fees in CES. The most frequently reported reasons for boys not

attending school were fees and the need to work, which in CES was especially the case in Terekeka County, indicating a perceived importance and immediate need of labour to improve food security versus potential benefits of school attendance in the long term.<sup>43</sup>

## Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Access to reliable shelter throughout EES and CES seemingly remained relatively stable, especially for host community members. The majority of assessed settlements reported living in solid structures such as tukuls or other permanent shelter in March (93% of assessed settlements in CES and 100% in EES). The highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting that the majority of the host community was living in the less-solid rakoobas was in Juba County (22%), increased from 0% in December.

In Kajo-Keji County, reported shelter conditions seemingly improved for both host and IDP communities during Q1. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting that the majority of the host community lived in tents or abandoned housing decreased from 60% in December 2019 to 0% in March 2020. Additionally, among settlements reporting the presence of IDPs, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting that IDPs were living in less solid shelter types (rakoobas, tents, or abandoned structures) decreased from 73% to 33% during the same period. As a county characterised with high shelter needs in the last few years, this apparent improvement of shelter conditions could potentially be the result of a shelter and NFI focused response in Kajo-Keji.<sup>44,45</sup>

Reported NFI needs across EES and CES remained stable, with 50% and 30% of assessed settlements with IDPs reported IDPs needed mosquito nets in March, followed by plastic sheets (13% and 28% respectively) and cooking pots (19% and 21% respectively).

## Conclusion

Findings indicate that food insecurity persisted across both states during Q1, in particular in Greater Kapoeta, Juba, Terekeka, and Kajo-Keji counties. With the lean season starting, shortages in food availability and high staple prices could further drive up humanitarian needs. Furthermore, low access to WASH infrastructure and health facilities continues to expose settlements to waterborne diseases and increased their vulnerability to COVID-19.

### 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. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and All REACH 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).

Visit [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org)

38 Government of the Republic of South Sudan. The General Strategic Education Plan. 2017-2020.

39 OCHA. 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview - South Sudan.

40 UNICEF South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report - January 2020

41 School-going age is considered between 6 and 17 years old.

42 Ibid.

43 This is a subset of settlements reporting none or less than half of the girls were attending school

44 Shelter Cluster & Titit foundation. April, 2019. NFI and Emergency Shelter Assessment.

45 SPEDP. March, 2020. CBI End of Project Report. Emergency Shelter and NFI programme