

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

April- June 2019

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

## Introduction

In the second quarter of 2019, the humanitarian crisis in Central and Eastern Equatoria States continued. Many areas in the region are largely unassessed by humanitarian actors due to access and resource constraints. As a result, only limited information is available on the humanitarian situation outside of a few large towns and displacement sites.

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 Central and Eastern Equatoria States in the second quarter of 2019.

## Key Findings

- **Cross-border displacement** due to food insecurity and drought continued this quarter. However, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) reduced slightly from 48% to 35% between March and June, partly associated with a widely reported improved security situation in Central Equatoria.<sup>3 4</sup>

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Central and Eastern Equatoria States, April (A), May (B) and June 2019 (C).



- **Access to food** remained low, with only 11% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food. Localised insecurity, drought, the high prices of staples, and the onset of the lean season for parts of the region have further stretched the resources of already stressed households. Despite this, there were slight improvements in Yei River County, and also in Greater Kapoeta<sup>5</sup> where 2 counties were upgraded from IPC Phase 4 (emergency) to IPC phase 3 (crisis) in the May 2019 IPC update.<sup>6</sup>
- Perceived **protection** improved across the region, in particular around Yei River County, in-line with a generally improved security situation. However, localised intercommunal violence and cattle raiding in the pastoral areas of Greater Kapoeta and Terekeka continued to have a negative impact on

humanitarian needs and access to services.

- Access to durable **shelter** varied by population. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting host community use of permanent structures for shelter remained high, but 28% of assessed settlements with IDPs reported the main shelter type for IDPs to be temporary forms of shelter.<sup>7</sup>
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and health** needs remained high, particularly in Greater Kapoeta, where poor access to latrines, safe boreholes and health facilities combined to increase the risk of waterborne

**# of key informant interviews conducted: 541**  
**# of assessed settlements: 499**  
**# of counties covered: 9/14**  
**# of focus group discussions conducted: 3**

## METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria States, 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 directly from key informants in Kapoeta town, and remotely with phone call interviews from Juba 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 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 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 "Payam" refers to the administrative unit below the county level.

3 All counties assessed in June 2019 met the 70% threshold for trend analysis with March 2019. Three counties assessed in quarter 2 did not meet 5% coverage in the

first two months of quarter 1 (Budi, Juba, and Kapoeta East), and have not been included in quarter trend analysis.

4 Situation in South Sudan - Report of the Secretary-General, 24th June 2019 (S/2019/491)

5 Greater Kapoeta consists of Budi, Kapoeta North, Kapoeta South, and Kapoeta East counties.

6 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity & Acute Malnutrition Analysis, 14th June 2019

7 Temporary forms of shelter include tent, rakooba, improvised shelter, and abandoned buildings.

disease.

- Access to **education** services remained consistent with the previous quarter, at 65% of assessed settlements. High fees were reported as a major barrier for both boys' and girls' attendance, consistent with reported reduced availability of cash for non-food expenditure due to increases in market prices.

## Population Movement and Displacement

Since September 2018, there has been a general increase in refugee returns to South Sudan, with a particular increase recorded since February of this year.<sup>8 9</sup> In Central and Eastern Equatoria States, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting refugee returns in June was 24%, comparable with March (25%) despite the onset of the rainy season and associated limited mobility due to poor road infrastructure.<sup>10</sup>

Only 21% of assessed settlements reported IDP returnees in June, similar to 30% in March.

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence, June 2019

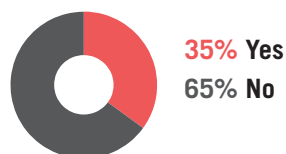
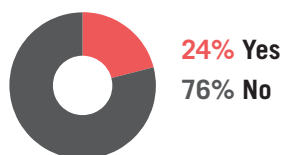
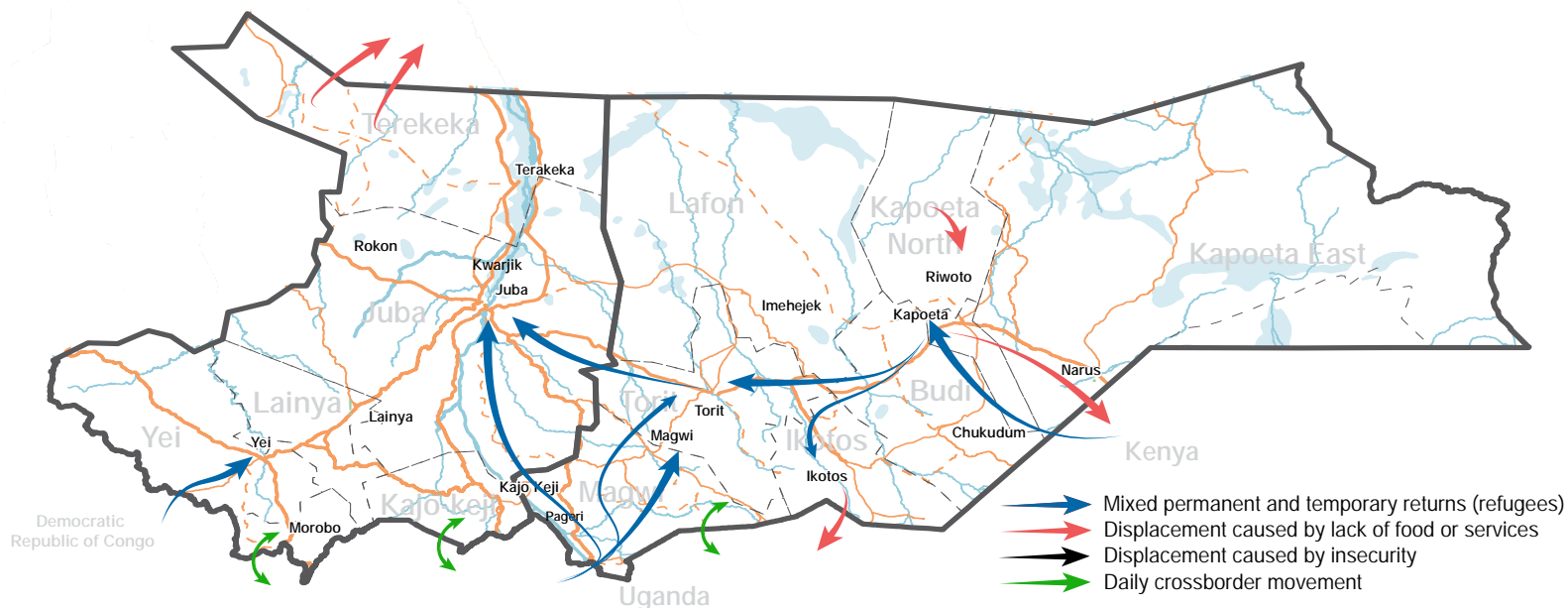


Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting refugee returnee presence, June 2019



Map 2: Displacement patterns across Central and Eastern Equatoria States, April - June 2019.



However, between April and June, reported IDP returns were considerably higher in the maize and sorghum producing counties of the agricultural belt,<sup>11</sup> with 55% of assessed settlements reporting IDP returns in April at the peak of the cultivation season, compared to 20% in June. This suggests IDPs have been temporarily returning to cultivate their land before moving back to host communities where food might be more accessible during the lean season, indicating cautious optimism about the security situation and perhaps foreshadowing an increase in permanent returns once the harvests come in next quarter.

Consistent with a relatively calmer security situation across parts of the region, there was a slight decrease in the proportion of assessed

settlements reporting the presence of IDPs during the second quarter of 2019, at 35% for June, down from 48% in March. Internal displacements were reportedly caused by persistent food insecurity and an associated spike in intercommunal fighting and cattle raiding in Terekeka County and some areas of Greater Kapoeta and Torit County.

### Central Equatoria

Central Equatoria saw an overall reduction in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence over the quarter, from 73% in March to 43% in June, consistent with a generally improved security situation. Levels of self-reported returns into the state remained low, with the majority of households assessed crossing the border from the Democratic

Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda into Central Equatoria reporting they intended to stay short-term, to buy goods, access services, and visit family members.<sup>12</sup> Persistent food insecurity continued to prompt outflows from Central Equatoria to Uganda and the DRC, and caused an internal displacement of people from Terekeka County into Awerial County in late June 2019.<sup>13</sup>

In the previous quarter, displacement was reported from Yei River County into the DRC following a spike in insecurity.<sup>14</sup> Secondary data indicates a small number of violations against civilians continued in Yei into April, but overall the proportion of assessed settlements in Yei reporting incidents of fatal conflict reduced to 0% throughout this quarter, and

8 REACH South Sudan Cross-border Population Movement Dynamics Brief, April 2019

9 UNHCR Overview of Spontaneous Refugee Returns, 31st May 2019.

10 During this quarter and last quarter REACH did not achieve data coverage for Morobo, a primary destination for those returning from Uganda and DRC.

11 Budi, Juba, Magwi, Torit, and Yei counties

12 IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Registry, 12th July 2019

13 FGD Dor, Awerial County, July 2019

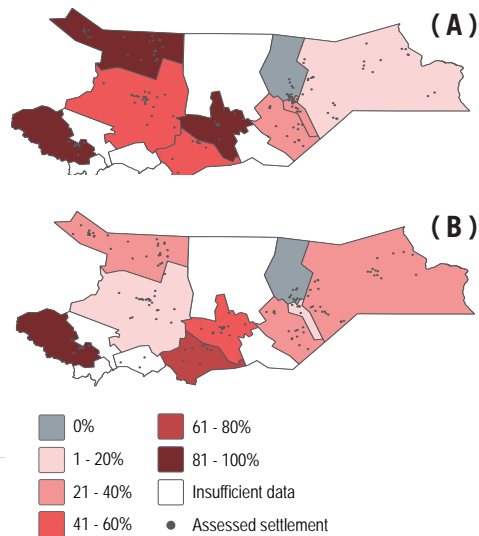
14 UNHCR, Thousands fleeing new violence in South Sudan, 12th February 2019.

no new displacements out of the county were reported.<sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup> However, many people are still displaced from Yei, likely waiting to assess whether it is safe to return; in June 2019, 80% of assessed settlements in Yei reported only half or less-than-half of host community residents remained, a reduction from March 2019 (94% of assessed settlements) but still indicative of high levels of displacement in the county.

### Eastern Equatoria

In Kapoeta town, where REACH monitors cross-border movement between South Sudan and refugee settlements in Kenya, inflows slightly surpassed outflows, continuing the trend from the previous two quarters.<sup>17</sup> The highest concentration of refugee returnees were reported in the Greater Torit area, with 100% of assessed settlements in Magwi

Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence, March (A) and June 2019 (B).



and 91% in Torit reporting recently returned refugees in June.<sup>18</sup> All assessed households crossing into South Sudan through Kapoeta town in June arrived from Kakuma refugee camp or Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, and 84% intended to stay for more than 6 months, with proximity to family reportedly the main pull factor.<sup>19</sup> This is a considerable increase from the 13% of households that reported their intention to stay longer than 6 months in December 2018, and demonstrates a continued cautious optimism surrounding the security situation; FGD participants reported that the security situation was perceived to have improved, making returning an option.<sup>20</sup>

Despite this, outflows from Eastern Equatoria to refugee settlements in Kenya continued in this quarter, with 100% of assessed households leaving South Sudan for Kenya through Kapoeta town in June reporting Kakuma refugee camp or Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement as their intended destination; 59% of these households reported their primary push factor to be a shortage of food.<sup>21</sup> In June, FGD participants from the Greater Torit area reported that a combination of repeated low harvests due to poor rain, and an increase in cattle raiding and violence due to lack of resources was prompting movement back to Kenya.<sup>22</sup>

In Greater Kapoeta, intercommunal violence throughout May and June likely contributed to the continued presence of IDPs, with 29% of assessed settlements reporting the presence of IDPs in June (31% in March). In Kapoeta East, intercommunal violence in May<sup>23</sup> led to an increase in the proportion

of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence, from 4% in March to 23% in June. Low rainfall and poor access to services in conjunction with intercommunal violence also caused displacement in this quarter; in May, approximately 5,700 people were reportedly displaced from Lopet and Kassangor to Mogos, all in Kapoeta East, due to lack of access to water, and the loss of livelihoods through cattle raiding.<sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup>

### Situation in Assessed Settlements

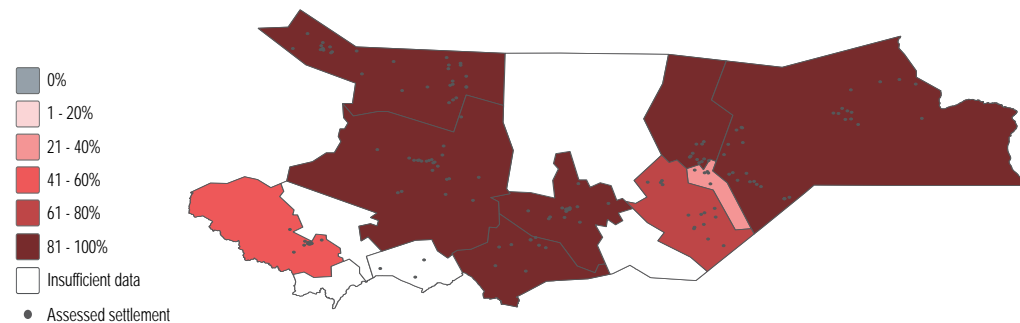
#### Food security and livelihoods (FSL)

Overall, food security remained consistently low, but showed some signs of slight improvement in Yei and Greater Kapoeta. The majority (89%) of assessed settlements in Central and Eastern Equatoria reported inadequate access to food in June (95% in March), rising to 100% of assessed settlements in Greater Torit, Terekeka, and Juba, and 94% in Kapoeta East. This is consistent with the May 2019 IPC update, which categorised all counties in Central and Eastern Equatoria in Phase 3 (crisis), with

Kapoeta East in Phase 4 (emergency) along with pockets of populations in Phase 4 across Central Equatoria and Greater Torit. However, no deterioration in access to food was found overall between March and June, and slight improvements were observed, with 50% of assessed settlements reporting severe hunger in June, a reduction from 70% in March. In addition, positive changes were reported in Yei County between March and June, and a slight improvement in access to food in Greater Kapoeta was reported during the same period.

This quarter was characterised by continued poor climatic conditions for cultivation, with the delayed onset of seasonal rains across much of Central and Eastern Equatoria combining with quick depletion of stocks from the low 2018 harvest to cause continued food insecurity.<sup>26</sup> Lack of rain remained the most commonly reported reason for inadequate access to food in June 2019, reported by 57% of assessed settlements that reported inadequate access to food. Despite 91% of assessed settlements reporting access to enough land for cultivation in June, low rainfall and a short growing season reportedly stunted the growth of crops across

Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food, June 2019



15 ACLED South Sudan Conflict data, downloaded 24/07/19

16 UNMISS Conflict-Related Violations and Abuses in Central Equatoria, 3rd July 2019.

17 REACH Cross-border population movement factsheet, Kapoeta Road Monitoring, June 2019.

18 In this analysis, Greater Torit consists of Magwi and Torit counties

19 REACH Cross-border population movement factsheet, June 2019.

20 FGD Kapoeta town, June 2019

21 REACH Cross-border population movement factsheet, May 2019.

22 FGD Kapoeta town, June 2019

23 UNOCHA South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot, June 2019.

24 UNOCHA South Sudan Situation report, 31st May 2019.

25 Nonviolent Peaceforce assessment report- Mogos, 27th- 31st May 2019

26 GIEWS Country Brief, 1st August 2019

**Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food, June 2019**



the second quarter of 2019, raising concerns about future access to food when the harvests come in.<sup>27</sup> In the agricultural zones of Magwi and Torit, 100% of assessed settlements reported inadequate access to food, the same proportion of assessed settlements that reported this in March 2019; in a region where the lean season typically does not start until June, this may indicate early depletion of food stocks and persistent food insecurity.

Market dependency was high across the region in the second quarter of 2019. Casual labour was reported to be the most prevalent livelihood source in June (75% of assessed settlements, up from 51% in March), followed by livestock rearing (67%), charcoal making (64%) and subsistence agriculture (63%). An equal proportion of assessed settlements reported cultivation and markets as their main sources of food in June (33% for both); whilst some areas typically access the first green harvest in June, environmental shocks have likely increased reliance on markets across much of the region.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the prevalence of casual labour and charcoal making are likely to be income generating activities to support continued market dependence.

The reliance on markets for many households

may be a further driver of food insecurity. The high price of staples, partly due to rapid depletion of 2018 cereal stocks, has reduced the affordability of food,<sup>29</sup> with 92% of assessed settlements reporting high prices in the market as a major barrier to access. Forty-six percent (46%) of assessed settlements reported price increases in cereals had had a large impact on food access in June. This was particularly high in Terekeka (97%) and Magwi (89%), where purchasing of staples is common at this time of year, indicating the increased vulnerability of poorer households in these regions.<sup>30</sup> FGD participants reported that poor harvests in Eastern Equatoria have driven up staple prices and contributed to an increase in intercommunal violence and cattle raiding, causing displacement and further weakening the fragile livelihoods of households.<sup>31</sup>

### Coping strategies

Indicative of generally low food access across the region, 100% of assessed settlements reported the use of at least one coping strategy to make food last longer. However, reported strategies remained less severe than observed across the rest of the country, which may indicate that some households in Central and Eastern Equatoria are able to access alternative, if less

**Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting coping strategies, June 2019**



preferable, livelihood sources when typical patterns are disrupted, such as casual labour and charcoal making, as discussed in the previous section. The most commonly reported coping strategies in June were reducing the number of meals (92% of assessed settlements) and eating less expensive food (89%). Smaller proportions of assessed settlements reported the use of extreme coping mechanisms, with these concentrated in counties in which food access was reportedly particularly poor; 73% of assessed settlements in Kapoeta North and 89% of assessed settlements in Magwi reported adults not eating so that children could eat, and 22% of assessed settlements in Magwi reported people going entire days without eating.

Of particular concern is the proportion of assessed settlements in pastoral areas reporting selling more livestock than is normal at this time of year. Between 86% and 95% of assessed settlements reported selling livestock as a coping mechanism in the pastoral counties of Terekeka, and Kapoeta East, North, and South, likely reducing household resilience and ultimately increasing the likelihood of cattle raiding and associated violence. This is particularly concerning this year, as livestock prices tend to fall during years with reduced rainfall, increasing pressure on household resources.<sup>32</sup> For more details on the problems that can arise from over-reliance on livestock sales, see the below section on Terekeka.

### Terekeka County

The effect of persistent food insecurity on livelihoods and coping mechanisms in Terekeka

is illustrated by the displacement of people from Tali and Tindilo Payams into Awerial County at the end of June 2019. This is similar to reports from September 2018, when households were reportedly displaced from Tali towards Awerial in search of food distributions after poor rains reduced the harvest yields.<sup>33</sup> The fact that this displacement occurred earlier in 2019 suggests even lower green crop yields, and less ability to rely on traditional coping mechanisms such as livestock sales. FGD participants displaced to Awerial this year reported that multiple poor cultivation seasons caused by low rainfall had forced them to sell cattle in previous years, depletion of which meant they had no access to this coping mechanism this year.<sup>34</sup> Not only did this negatively impact food security, but limited access to cattle in Terekeka also reportedly prompted a rise in opportunistic cattle raiding,<sup>35</sup> and associated protection concerns, with an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people did not feel safe from 13% in March to 31% in June.

Use of alternative coping mechanisms remained high in Terekeka in June, including reducing food consumption (97% of assessed settlements), consuming wild foods (94%), and limiting the size of meals (88%). Whilst wild foods typically form a supplementary part of diets in Terekeka between April and July,<sup>36</sup> patterns of wild food consumption in June are indicative of severe food insecurity; of the assessed settlements reporting consuming wild food, 76% of assessed settlements reported doing so for half or more than half of all meals, and 69% of assessed settlements reported that

27 FGD Kapoeta town, June 2019

28 GIEWS Country Brief, 1st August 2019

29 FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet, July 2019

30 FEWS NET Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions, August 2018

31 FGD Kapoeta town, June 2019

32 FEWS NET Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions, August 2018

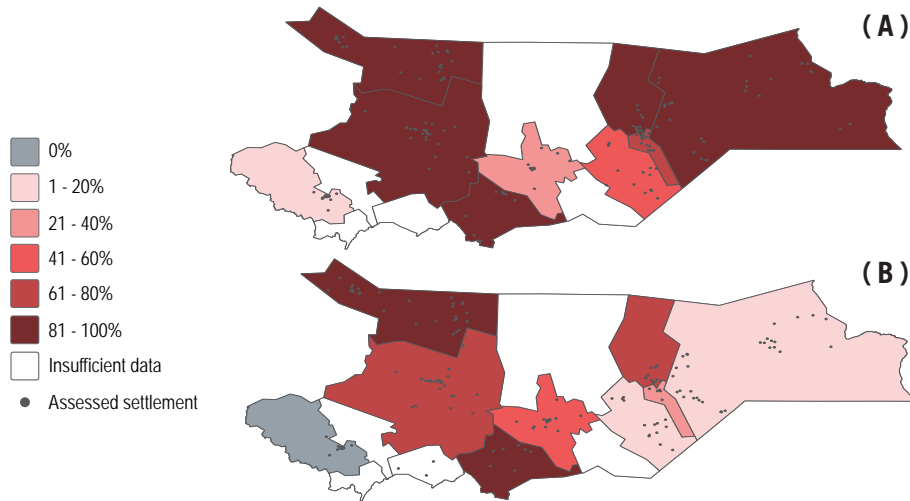
33 REACH Situation Overview, CES and EES, September-December 2018

34 FGD Dor, Awerial County, July 2019

35 *ibid*

36 FEWS NET Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions, August 2018

Map 5: Proportion of assessed settlements that reported inadequate access to food reporting hunger is severe or the worst ever, March (A), and June 2019 (B)



this was making people sick. FGD participants reported that there were fewer wild foods available this year due to increased demand, meaning people had to resort to less favourable foods.<sup>37</sup>

### Yei River County

Food security in Yei River appeared to have improved between March and June 2019. Forty-seven percent (47%) of assessed settlements in Yei reported adequate access to food in June, compared with 6% in March, and 73% of assessed settlements reported eating two meals a day in June, up from 33% in March. This relative change in Yei is likely a result of reduced incidents of conflict in the area from April,<sup>38</sup> allowing people to access land for cultivation and harvesting of green crops in June; in March, only 6% of assessed settlements reported most people had access

to land in Yei, which had improved to 83% by June. It is important to note, however, that the food security situation in more remote settlements may be different; due to access and network constraints, most of the AoK sample is from areas closer to Yei town.

### Greater Kapoeta Area

In the Greater Kapoeta area, access to food appeared to improve slightly; the proportion of assessed settlements reporting severe hunger fell considerably from 77% in March to 26% in June. In addition, the May IPC update upgraded Budi and Kapoeta North from Phase 4 (emergency) to Phase 3 (crisis), whilst Kapoeta East remained in Phase 4. The lean season tends to start earlier in the year in the pastoralist communities of Greater Kapoeta (January-April), and slight improvement is therefore likely attributable to the annual return

of herders and livestock to homestead areas between April and May, improving access to milk, blood, and meat. A reported increase in access to humanitarian food assistance has also likely improved access to food; in June, 69% of assessed settlements reported accessing food assistance over the last 3 months, a marked increase from the 3% that reported the same in March.

Nonetheless, a combination of lack of rain and poor access to markets in the semi-arid areas of Greater Kapoeta<sup>39</sup> limited the impact of increased access to livestock and aid. Whilst all assessed settlements reported market access, only 4% of assessed settlements reported these markets were accessible within one hour. Forty-nine percent (49%) of assessed settlements reported the journey took multiple days, and access was particularly low in Kapoeta East (71% of assessed settlements), where residents reportedly have to travel on foot to Kapoeta town, which can take up to two weeks during the rainy season.

### Protection

The improved security situation across parts of the region since September continued in the second quarter of 2019, with 81% of assessed settlements reporting most people felt safe most of the time in June 2019, compared to 55% of assessed settlements in September 2018.

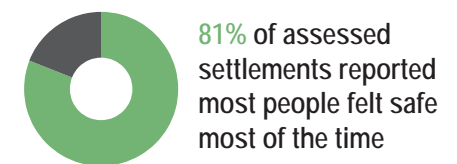
In previous quarters, Yei County did not follow the general trend of reduced insecurity, and reported serious protection concerns. However, the protection situation in Yei appeared to have improved in June, with 93% of assessed

settlements reporting most people felt safe most of the time (56% in March), and no assessed settlements reporting an incident in which a civilian was killed (28% in March). This is consistent with a widely reported reduction of insecurity from late-April in the Yei area, following the onset of the rainy season.<sup>40</sup>

Reflective of the relatively improved security situation, in most parts of Central and Eastern Equatoria, protection concerns were centred on issues within the community rather than large-scale or intercommunal violence. The most commonly reported primary protection concern in assessed settlements in June was domestic violence for women (40% of assessed settlements), and early marriage for girls (38%), continuing trends observed in previous quarters. Forty-one percent (41%) of assessed settlements reported men faced no protection concerns in June, reflecting the relatively improved security situation, whilst for boys, violence between neighbours was the primary reported concern (12% of assessed settlements).

However, in Greater Kapoeta and Terekeka cattle raiding remained an issue for men and boys, correlating with FSL findings that resource

Figure 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people feel safe most of the time, June 2019



37 FGD Dor, Aweril Counry, July 2019

38 UNMISS Conflict-Related Violations and Abuses in Central Equatoria, 3rd July 2019.

39 The semi-arid areas of Greater Kapoeta are Kapoeta North, South and East counties, excluding Budi County which is sorghum producing

40 Situation in South Sudan - Report of the Secretary-General, 24th June 2019 (S/2019/491)

scarcity has contributed to increased violence in these regions. For men, the primary reported protection concern was cattle raiding (15% of assessed settlements), with particularly high proportions of assessed settlements reporting this in Kapoeta East, Terekeka, and Kapoeta North (35%, 25%, and 18% respectively). For boys, forced recruitment remained the primary protection concern in the pastoral Kapoeta East County (39% of assessed settlements), and in Budi County (36%), where cattle raiding is common in the highlands.<sup>41</sup> Key Informants (KIs) in Greater Kapoeta reported people did not feel safe to leave their settlements for fear of abduction and forced recruitment into cattle raiding groups.<sup>42</sup>

### Shelter

Positive trends continued this quarter in terms of access to shelter. Ninety-two percent (92%) of assessed settlements reported host communities were living in tukuls or permanent structures, and only 5% of assessed settlements reported host community living in rakoobas, with 1% in tents and none in improvised shelters.

The shelter situation for IDPs was less positive than for host communities. In assessed settlements reporting IDP presence, whilst the majority (56%) reported IDPs were living in tukuls, 12% of assessed settlements reported the main shelter type for IDPs was rakooba, and 16% reported IDPs were living in temporary structures such as tents, and abandoned buildings.

Improvements in the security situation in the second quarter of 2019, as discussed in the

protection section, are further demonstrated by 93% of assessed settlements reporting no shelters were destroyed by fighting in the last month.

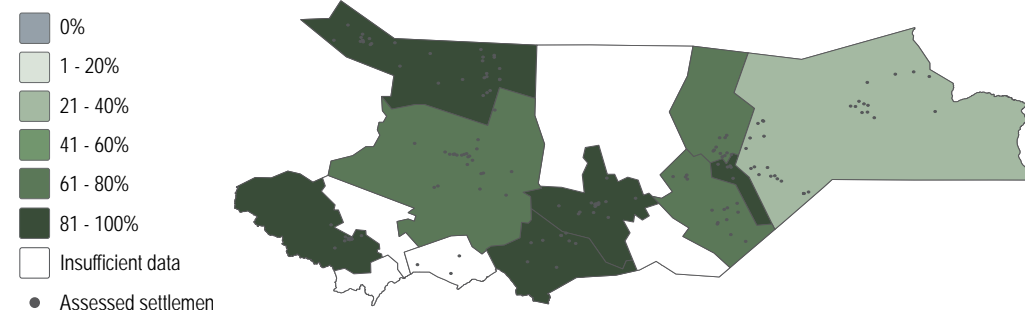
### Health and Nutrition

Access to health care remained low but stable throughout the reporting period, with 73% of assessed settlements reporting health care services within walking distance in June. In 52% of assessed settlements, there were reportedly either no health care services accessible, or they were more than one hour walk away, suggesting that the existing health infrastructure may not adequately serve vulnerable populations incapable of travelling long distances when unwell.

Of the 27% of assessed settlements reporting no access to health services, 74% reported that facilities were either too far or not there at all, rising to 100% in Kapoeta North, Budi, and Torit. A further 19% of assessed settlements reported a lack of drugs and staff, implying that for some communities buildings exist but no health care services are provided.

Consistent with previous quarters, malaria remained the main reported cause of death (48% of assessed settlements). In Greater Kapoeta, much higher proportions of assessed settlements (between 80%-86%) reported malaria as the main cause of deaths compared to other areas. Alongside this, higher proportions of assessed settlements in the Greater Kapoeta area reported half or more than half of children and elderly were malnourished. These factors combined with low immediate access to health

Map 6: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to health services, June 2019



facilities in the area (only 41% of assessed settlements in Greter Kapoeta reported access to health care within one hour) are likely to be producing poor health outcomes for people in these parts of Eastern Equatoria.

### Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Access to improved sources of water remained relatively high across Central and Eastern Equatoria, with 85% of assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functioning borehole in June. Despite this, only 66% of assessed settlements reported that residents used a borehole as their main source of drinking water in June, with 24% of assessed settlements reporting the river as their main source of drinking water in, compared to 11% in April, a negative development across the quarter. This increase is possibly a result of safety concerns; river as the main drinking source was highly reported in Budi (57% of assessed settlements), Kapoeta South (40%) and Kapoeta East (35%), counties in which higher proportions of assessed settlements reported safety concerns limiting access to their preferred water point

(21%, 60% and 35% respectively). Incidents of cattle raiding, driven by lack of access to resources, may have reduced the perception of safe access to preferred water points for these communities, in particular because women and children are commonly the ones to collect water.

The risk of waterborne disease remained relatively high, with 38% of assessed settlements reporting that no people were using latrines in June. However, these risks were mostly concentrated in pastoral areas of Greater Kapoeta and Terekeka, where, as has been reported in previous quarters, Budi, and Kapoeta South, East, and North counties had the highest proportions of assessed settlements reporting no latrine use in June, at 79%, 81%, 100% and 100% respectively. The most commonly reported reason for not using latrines amongst assessed settlements in these counties was that none were available, likely attributable to the less-permanent nature of many pastoral settlements in these counties, and associated low infrastructural development.

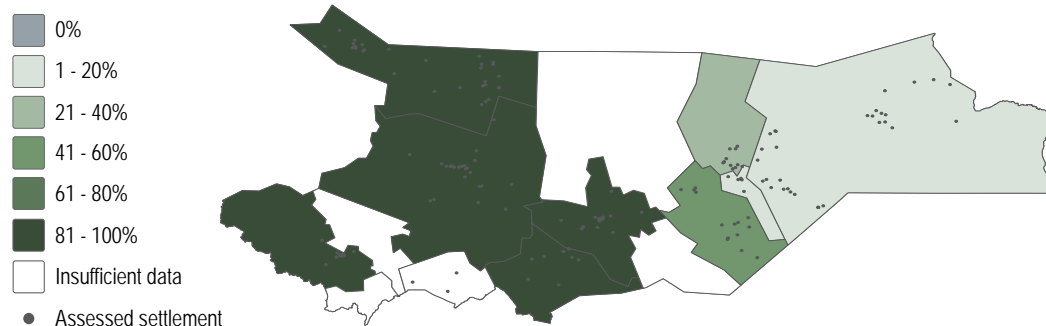
The risk of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) increased in this quarter, as the disease continued to spread in the DRC, including one case reported on the 30th of June in Ariwara, 70km from the Kaya border crossing in Yei.<sup>43</sup> In the context of this threat, it is concerning that only 23% of assessed settlements across the region reported washing their hands with soap in June. However, in Yei, a high-risk location for EVD,<sup>44</sup> 53% of assessed settlements reported most people washing hands with soap in June, and none reported most people were not washing hands at all. In addition, 100% of assessed settlements in Yei reported receiving an Ebola messaging campaign in the last 6 months, compared to 50% of assessed settlements across the rest of the region.

## Education

Access to education remained similar to last quarter. In June, 65% of assessed settlements reported access to education services within walking distance, a figure which has remained consistent since September, before which access was reported in 35% of assessed settlements. Of the assessed settlements which reported no access in June 2019, the primary reported reasons were distance, and a lack of facilities and teachers (44%, 24% and 22% respectively), indicating that investment in education remains low, despite an improvement in physical access possibly due to a reduction in conflict.

Reported proportions of enrolled students remained low, but were comparable between boys and girls. Fifty-four percent (54%) of assessed settlements with access to education

Map 7: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education services, June 2019.



services reported that only half or less than half of boys 6-17 years of age were regularly attending school in June, similar to March, and 58% of settlements reported that half or less of girls in the same age range were attending, a slight improvement from the 72% reporting this in March.

Consistent with findings from education studies on South Sudan, the reported biggest barrier to regular attendance for both boys and girls was fees, at 19% of assessed settlements for girls, and 20% for boys in June.<sup>45</sup> Fees for the second term were due in most schools in early-June, and, as discussed in the FSL section, high prices for staples this quarter has likely led to reduced availability of cash for non-food expenditure.

Poor facilities and a lack of teachers can increase the impact of high fees as a barrier to attendance, as cash-limited families do not see the benefits in raising comparably large amounts of money for low educational value.<sup>46</sup> This is especially the case for pastoral families at this time of year, as they tend not to have

access to cash and need children to assist with returning livestock; this is consistent with 100% of assessed settlements in Kapoeta North, East and South reporting less than half of boys attended school in June, and 100% of assessed settlements in the same counties reporting less than half or half of girls attended.

## Conclusion

The general reduction in conflict-related incidents and associated insecurity across Central and Eastern Equatoria in the last 10 months has contributed to slightly improved access to services across much of the region. Lower perceptions of protection threats, continued returns of IDPs and refugees, and a small reduction in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence suggest a cautious optimism, although the low level of returnees to Yei indicates that people remain wary about the likelihood of future insecurity.

Nonetheless, persistent poor food security across the region continues to impact many. Following long periods of food insecurity,

it is likely that many households have low resilience, and are unable to apply successful coping strategies when they experience shocks. Reports that households in Terekeka County have already depleted livelihood assets prior to the onset of the lean season in June demonstrate this ongoing disruption to livelihoods.

Needs remain high across much of the region, with pockets of severe needs in pastoral areas of Greater Kapoeta and Terekeka County, where poor access to WASH infrastructure and health facilities has increased the risk of waterborne disease. Overall, recovery from conflict will require a long period of security and continued investment.

### 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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