April 2017

Introduction

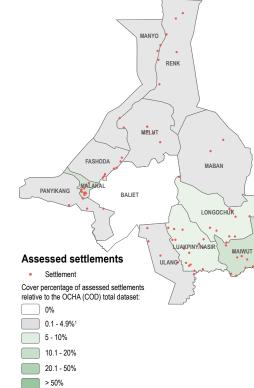
Following the clashes around Wau Shilluk in February and March 2017¹, fighting in Upper Nile State intensified throughout April. Conflict in the hotspots of Tonga, Panyikang County, and Kodok, Fashoda County, towards the end of the month have caused widespread displacement, with many IDPs fleeing Upper Nile State west and northwards into Sudan. The ongoing instability along the western bank of the Nile has further exacerbated the already poor humanitarian conditions, most notably in relation to access to food and protection services. During April, there has been a notable decline in the cultivation capacity of assessed settlements, largely as a result of conflict over the past few months.

To inform the response of humanitarian actors working outside of formal settlement sites, REACH has been conducting an ongoing assessment of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since 2015, for which data on settlements across Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal region is collected on a monthly basis.

In April 2017, REACH interviewed 115 Key Informants (KIs) from 83 settlements in 11 of the 12 counties in Upper Nile State. Ninetynine percent of the KIs interviewed had arrived in their displacement location in April or March, and therefore had up-to-date information about the village from which they had been displaced, in order to ensure an accurate understanding of current displacement and population dynamics. Other respondents had recent information about a certain village through contact with someone (usually a relative) that is currently living there. Findings have been triangulated using focus group discussions (FGDs), secondary data, and previous REACH assessments of hard-toreach areas of Upper Nile State.

This Situation Overview focuses on changes observed since the March Situation Overview² for Upper Nile State. The first section analyses displacement trends throughout April. The second section outlines the population dynamics in the assessed communities, as well as access to food and basic services for both IDP and non-displaced communities.

As illustrated by map 1, Fashoda, Maban, Manyo, Melut, Panyikang, Renk and Ulang Counties all had less than 5% settlement coverage and have therefore not been analysed at the county level. However, data from these counties has been included in statelevel analysis. Given the limited coverage, much of the conclusions drawn here relate primarily to the south-eastern part of the state. As fighting was less intense in these counties - Longochuk, Nasir and Maiwut - than in other parts of the state, most notably Panyikang, Fashoda and Manyo, in April, it is likely that data given in this Situation Overview presents a more optimistic picture than the reality.



Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Upper Nile State, April 2017

Population Movement and Displacement

Against the backdrop of renewed fighting along the western bank of the Nile, large numbers of South Sudanese were reported to have crossed into Sudan during April 2017, with the highest numbers coming from Upper Nile State. UNHCR reported that approximately 10,000 South Sudanese fled to Sudan in the first two weeks of April alone³. An additional 20,000 South Sudanese refugees, mainly women and children, reportedly crossed the border to Sudan between 29 April and 6 May⁴. This is on top of the 35,000, the majority from Upper Nile State, who had already arrived in 2017⁵. Although serious fighting took place in March, no major clashes were reported to have taken place in the south-eastern counties of Nasir, Maiwut and Longochuk during April, which has likely resulted in fewer new displacements in April.

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In a reflection of the ongoing conflict in Upper Nile, 72% of KIs reported insecurity as their primary push factor for displacement (73% in March). Lack of health services (34%) and lack of food (30%) were also displacement drivers in April, however, to a lower extent than in March (50% and 63%, respectively). Pull factors to new displacement locations broadly mirrored push factors; **68% of KIs reported security** as a reason for travelling to their current location, whilst 40% and 31%

1. For further information see REACH SSD. Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, March 2017.

2. Ibid

3. Radio Tamazuj. UNHCR: Sudan hosts quarter of South Sudanese refugees. 2 May 2017.

4.USAID. South Sudan Crisis. Fact Sheet #7. 9 May 2017.

5. Sudan Tribune. Over 300,000 S. Sudanese refugees in Sudan: UNHCR. 20 March 2017.

METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Upper Nile State, REACH uses primary data provided by key informants who have recently arrived, or receive regular information, from their predisplacement location or "Area of Knowledge". Information for this report was collected from key informants in Renk County, Upper Nile,

Akobo in Jonglei State, and Juba Protection of Civilians (PoC) site throughout April 2017.

The first phase of the assessment methodology comprised a participatory mapping exercise to map the relevant settlements in Upper Nile State. In-depth interviews were then conducted with selected participants using a standardised survey tool comprising questions on displacement trends, population needs, and access to basic services.

After data collection was completed, all data was examined at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal response. When no consensus could be found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting. Descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were then used to analyse the data.

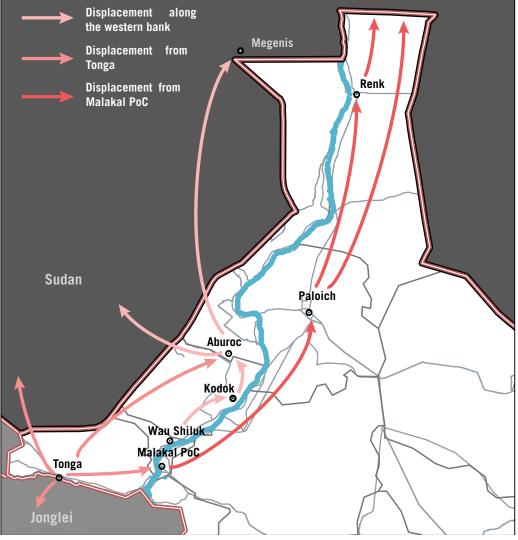
Please note that REACH is in the process of establishing sustained data collection in Upper Nile State. As a result, the current coverage is limited. The conclusions drawn are therefore indicative of likely trends in the state. cited access to healthcare services and food respectively.

Displacement from Tonga

In the last week of April, clashes took place in Tonga, Panyikang County. At the time of writing, small numbers of people were reported to have fled northeast to Malakal PoC and Aburoc. Of those who did attempt the 150km journey from Tonga to Aburoc, approximately 10 people were reported to have died of starvation and dehydration along the route⁶. However, it is likely that the greater proportion of those who had left had fled northwards into Sudan, or southwards to Fangak in Jonglei State. There was very limited humanitarian access to Panyikang County in April due to the ongoing insecurity, so exact figures on the displaced population are unknown.

Displacement along the western bank

Conflict in Kodok, Fashoda County, towards the end of April resulted in the displacement of approximately 25,000 towards Aburoc⁷, also in Fashoda County. Many of the IDPs in Kodok had previously been displaced from Wau Shilluk in January and February 2017 following fighting on the western bank. By the last week of April, between 35,000 and 50,000⁸ IDPs were estimated to be sheltering in the temporary camp of Aburoc, although an increasing number were also reported to have begun crossing the border into Sudan. According to UN officials KIs, at the end of April trucks allegedly sponsored by local authorities began transporting IDPs from Aburoc to Megenis, on the Sudanese border.



Map 2: Displacement patterns in Upper Nile, April 2017

During the fighting at the end of April, humanitarian organisations were evacuated from Kodok and Aburoc and several key assets, mainly vehicles, were reportedly looted. Although agencies began to return to Aburoc in early May, ongoing instability in the area and the failure to recover the looted assets, continued to hamper access⁹. Should this continue, this



may raise serious concerns about the ability of the humanitarian community to provide for the highly vulnerable population living in Aburoc.

Displacement from Malakal PoC

Movement out of Malakal PoC, in Malakal, continued throughout April, with an estimated 1,491 individuals (354 households) leaving the camp over the month¹⁰. Whilst these figures are slightly less than the 1,856 individuals (382 households) reported to have left the PoC in March, they remain indicative of an ongoing trend of movement northwards, as reported in the March Situation Overview, which is likely to continue until the rainy season starts in earnest and the road to Renk and Sudan becomes inaccessible. The vast majority (93%) of those leaving the camp reported that they intend to travel to Sudan, although 4% gave Renk as their final intended destination.

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) data indicates that the most commonly reported reason for leaving the camp was to rejoin family members in Sudan, followed by dissatisfaction with the lack of available services in the PoC¹¹. However, as April progressed, a higher proportion of people reported fear of insecurity as the primary reason for leaving the camp; this is likely reflective of the intensification of fighting along the western bank in the latter part of the month, which has caused increased fear amongst residents that the camp may also be attacked.

Early April Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data suggests an increase in people entering Renk, with the majority from Paloich and Juba¹².

Situation in Assessed Communities

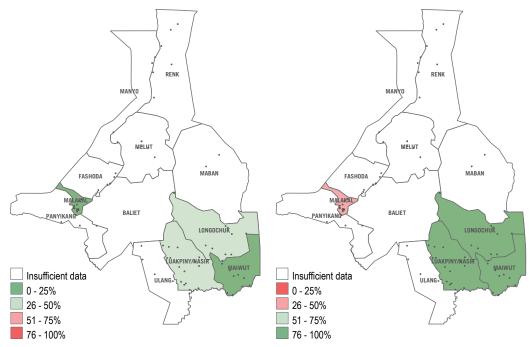
Demographic profile

IDP population in assessed villages

As in March, a low proportion (28%) of settlements reported the presence of IDPs in April, which may again reflect ongoing cross-border movement out of Upper Nile State: both northwards to Sudan from locations on the western bank of the Nile, eastwards to Ethiopia from settlements in Maiwut, Longochuk, and Nasir, and southwards into Jonglei from settlements in Panyikang (notably Tonga) and Ulang. However, whilst the majority of assessed settlements reported that there were no IDPs living there, the proportion reporting this has dropped from 85% in March to 69% in April, indicating a higher concentration of IDP presence across a smaller geographical area. This suggests a more volatile security environment with IDPs concentrated in small pockets considered as safe in the assessed counties, and that IDPs have left the area due to insecurity.

Local community population in assessed villages

In another indication of the increasing impact of conflict in Upper Nile, the proportion of settlements reporting the presence of local community members has also dropped slightly from 92% in March to 81% in April. In areas witnessing ongoing and sustained insecurity, proportions of remaining local community are



Map 2: Proportion of settlements reporting presence of IDPs, April 2017

lower; for example, only 27% of assessed settlements in Malakal reported local community living there, as opposed to Nasir, Longochuk and Maiwut, in which the local community was reported present in all assessed settlements (100%). This could be reflective of the length of time that settlements have experienced insecurity for, with Malakal County being one of the most conflict-affected areas of Upper Nile since fighting first broke out in December 2013. Both the intensity and the length of the insecurity have likely resulted in the majority of the local community fleeing the area.

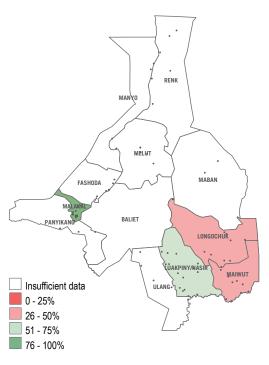
Map 3: Proportion of settlements reporting presence of local community, April 2017

Conversely, areas such as Longochuk, have experienced shorter periods of fighting, over a more recent time period, meaning that a higher proportion of the local community still remains. Of the assessed settlements which reported the local community is still present in most settlements, the majority (75%) are reportedly still living in their own homes, suggesting more stable security conditions in these areas.

Food security

Just over half (54%) of all assessed settlements reported having adequate





Map 4: Proportion of settlements reporting adequate access to food, April 2017

access to food in April 2017, which is similar to March (56%). The highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting sufficient access to food were in Malakal County (79% of settlements), which is likely due to the concentration of humanitarian agencies in this county, whilst the county with the lowest proportion of settlements reporting sufficient access to food was Manyo County; as indicated by 3/3 assessed settlements. Whilst the small number of responses in Manyo (the settlement coverage was 3/75) limits the accuracy of this finding, the reported lack of access to

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In another reflection of the negative impact of insecurity on food access, reliance on cultivated food appears to have dropped significantly over the last month. Only 16% of assessed settlements reported cultivation as their primary source of food in April, compared to 45% in March. Although regular seasonal changes, as the dry season enters its final weeks, are likely in part responsible for this decrease, sustained insecurity in Upper Nile may also be a contributing factor to the reduced ability to cultivate. As an illustration to this, two of the top three reported reasons for lack of access to food were conflict related in April: 65% reported that it was unsafe to cultivate and 54% reported that their crops had been destroyed by fighting.

Further evidence of the reduced ability to cultivate was reflected in the change in primary food source; the most common source in April was food purchased with cash, reported by 21% of assessed settlements (6% in March). The increased reliance on bought food is particularly concerning given the deteriorating economic context in South Sudan, which has simultaneously led to the decrease of the value of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) and to an increase in prices of goods. The South Sudan National Bureau of

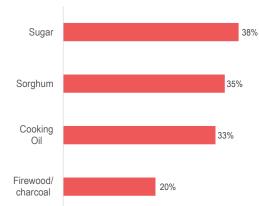


Figure 1: Proportion of settlements reporting market price increases by types of goods in the last month, April 2017

Statistics (SSNBS) estimated that between April 2016 and April 2017, the consumer price index (CPI)¹³ increased by 272.6%¹⁴, largely due to rising prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages. The increasing CPI is reflected by REACH data; as figure 1 indicates, between one third and one fifth of all assessed settlements reported that market prices of key staples had increased in the last month¹⁵.

Finally, assessed settlements reported an increased reliance on alternative sources of food, such as fishing or gathering for wild fruit, in April, as reported by 16% of assessed settlements for both sources. This corresponds to an increase from 8% and 6% respectively. Such increase is again an indication of the population's reduced capacity to cultivate. However, FGDs in April revealed that the fighting along the western bank of the Nile had prevented widespread fishing activities

due to fears of insecurity. This suggests that, although there has been a rise in the proportion of settlements relying on fishing, overall access to this source of food has decreased in the past few months.

The combination of a reduced ability to cultivate, increasing market prices and reduced access to traditional alternative sources of food in the lean season, has contributed to a situation of protracted food insecurity across most areas in Upper Nile State. Forty-three percent of assessed settlements reported hunger and/or malnutrition as the attributed cause of death in April, which indicates little change from the 44% reported in March. In addition, 33% of assessed settlements reported regularly employing at least one strategy to cope with a lack of food (48% in March). As in March, relying on less expensive, lower quality food (reported by 50% of assessed settlements), reducing the number of meals eaten per day (reported by 40%) and adults skipping meals so children can eat (35%) were three of the most commonly reported coping strategies in April. Similarly to the previous month's indication of the severity of food insecurity, 28% of assessed settlements reported eating only one meal per day (27% in March) and just 5% reported eating three meals per day (7% in March).

Although these strategies that relate directly to household consumption are broadly indicative of moderate food insecurity, selling livestock, a coping mechanism which suggests emergency levels of food insecurity, was cited by 35% of assessed settlements, compared to 47% in

13. The CPI is monthly data on alterations to prices consumers pay for a set fixture of goods and services.

14. SSNBS. Consumer Price Index for April 2017.

15. Roughly two thirds of assessed settlements reported that market prices had remained the same as the previous month, possibly indicating disparity in the responsiveness of traders to fluctuating market prices.

March. The decision to sell livestock, which is both a direct source of food and livelihood, as well as being of significant cultural value in pastoralist communities, indicates the continuing stress on resources.

Food insecurity has been exacerbated by the intensification of conflict in Upper Nile over the last six months. The ongoing instability in the state as the rainy season approaches will further reduce the ability of settlements to cultivate and provide food for themselves. Therefore, without substantial humanitarian assistance, it is highly likely that the already precarious food security situation will continue to deteriorate in the coming months.

Livelihoods

Just under half (47%) of all assessed settlements reported having access to land in April, in comparison to 81% reporting the same in March. This decrease, supported by the data on food security, suggest that ongoing insecurity continues to hamper crop cultivation. Similarly,



■ Yes 52% ■ No 47% ■ Don't know 1%

Figure 3: Percentage of settlements reporting access to a functioning market, April 2017

only 49% of assessed settlements reported subsistence farming as the primary livelihood activity, while 43% reported growing crops to sell. Again, this suggests that the ongoing insecurity in the state is reducing the capacity to cultivate, which in turn is contributing to a worsening of the food security situation.

Over half (51%) of assessed settlements reported no access to a functioning market, a slight decrease to the 54% reported in March. With a limited capacity to cultivate as mentioned above, this lack of access to markets may imply that households will become increasingly dependent on food assistance. The potential increase in reliance on humanitarian assistance is particularly problematic given that 36% of assessed settlements reported a lack of food as a result of food distributions being discontinued in April.

Protection

The primary protection concerns in April related directly to the ongoing instability in Upper Nile, as in previous months. Sexual violence (20%) remained the most prevalent concern for females, killing/injury from someone from another community (42%) for males, and family separation (26%) for children. Conflict was the second most common attributed cause of death after malaria, reported by just under half (45%) of assessed settlements¹⁶. Additionally, as figure 4 illustrates, the proportion of settlements reporting killing/injury by another community as a protection concern for men, women and children increased between March and April. This suggests that insecurity

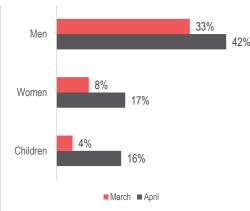
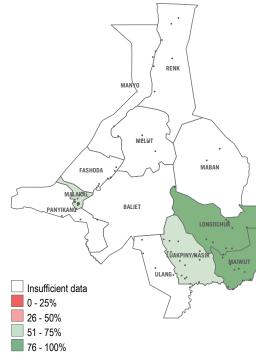


Figure 4: Proportion of men, women and children, reporting killing or injury by another community as a protection concern in March and April 2017

as a protection concern has increased in the assessed locations over the last month as fighting intensified in the state.

Sixty-one percent of settlements further indicated that the most likely perpetrators of any type of violence against women were members of armed groups. These figures are consistent with the continuous allegations of rape by armed actors since the beginning of conflict¹⁷.

Despite the indications of increased violence, 73% of assessed settlements reported the availability of protection services in April, slightly more than 70% in March. Among the ones reporting access to protection services, local authority actors (such as chiefs) and local community actors were the most commonly reported sources of protection, cited by 75% and 65% of assessed settlements respectively, whilst only 20% of settlements reported receiving protection from NGOs or the UN. The



Map 5: Proportion of settlements reporting tukuls as IDP primary shelter type, April 2017

reliance on informal structures for protection potentially reflects the lack of effective formal protection actors in the assessed counties.

Shelter

In a possible indication of stagnating displacement rates in the south-eastern counties of Upper Nile, there was a notable improvement in the shelter conditions of IDPs in April. Whilst only 11% of settlements reported tukuls, a semi-permanent shelter, as the primary shelter type for IDPs in March, indicating the high prevalence of a recently displaced population, 67% of assessed settlements



reported the same in April. In addition, only 16% of settlements reported IDPs living in tents and 5% in improvised shelters. This may suggest that the populations displaced in March have been able to construct more permanent shelters in the last month, which in turn implies that IDPs displaced in February and March have not been further displaced since then.

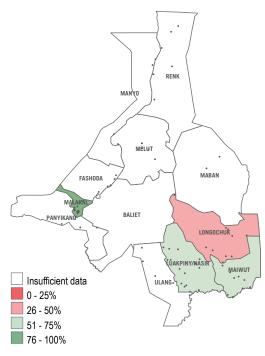
A lower proportion of settlements reported shelters being destroyed in April (44%) than in March (61%). Eighty-four percent of the local community were reportedly living in tukuls and 46% indicated that less than 50% of the local community were living in improvised shelters or community buildings. This is, however, more likely a reflection of REACH data coverage, which predominantly covered the south-eastern counties, rather than an indication of state-wide trends. Given the intensity of flighting along the western bank of the Nile throughout April, the incidence of shelter destruction may have been higher, particularly in the counties of Panyikang and Fashoda.

Health

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Healthcare facilities were reportedly accessible in 43% of assessed settlements. Of these settlements, as in March, Malakal had the highest reported number, standing at 80% for both March and April. Longochuk had a reported coverage of 40% of assessed settlements, a decrease from March (77%). Luakpiny/Nasir had 62% coverage, slightly less than 70% from March and Maiwut (56%) documented a slight increase (50% in March). In settlements where healthcare is not

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Map 6: Proportion of settlements reporting access to healthcare facilities, April 2017

longer accessible, this was often due to conflict; 27% reported that insecurity was preventing them from accessing existing facilities, and 27% said that the facilities had been destroyed by fighting. This is broadly reflective of national trends in access to healthcare; the Health Cluster recently reported that over 50% of healthcare facilities were non-functional due to ongoing insecurity¹⁸. However, the most commonly reported reason for lack of access to healthcare was that the facilities had never been present in the area, reported by 60% of assessed settlements. As humanitarian

partners have become central healthcare actors¹⁹, this may be a reflection of the limited humanitarian presence in the assessed counties, particularly Longochuk where 83% of assessed settlements reported that healthcare facilities had never been there.

Aside from insecurity, healthcare services have been negatively impacted by the declining economic context in South Sudan. A lack of salary payment and government funding for healthcare facilities²⁰ has resulted in a decline in both healthworkers and medication; 73% of assessed settlements reported that they were unable to access healthcare facilities because there were no staff to run them, and 41% mentioned a shortage of medicine as a reason for lack of access. As previously mentioned, lack of access to health services was the second biggest reason for displacement in April, reported by 34% of KIs.

Malaria was the most commonly reported health problem in April, mentioned by 81% of assessed settlements (54% in March) and the most common attributed cause of death, as reported by 78% of settlements²¹. Eighty-six percent of settlements reported that malaria drugs were amongst the most needed healthcare items. This is particularly concerning given that the incidence of malaria is likely to rise substantially with the rainy season approaching.

There were no new confirmed cases of cholera in Upper Nile in April. However, humanitarian agencies should remain vigilant against the rapid spread of the disease throughout the rainy season, particularly in areas with a high population density and limited access to clean water, such as Aburoc.

Similarly to March (54%), 51% of all assessed settlements reported malnutrition as a health concern, again indicating widespread food insecurity. Additionally, two thirds (57%) of assessed settlements reported that feeding programmes which provide nutritional supplements were not available in their locality, suggesting a need for targeted nutrition programming to respond to malnutrition.

WASH

Eighty-four percent of assessed settlements reported having access to safe drinking water (91% in March). In addition, 44% cited a borehole as the main source of water (83% in March) and 25% receiving water via donkey cart. Just over half of assessed settlements indicated that the nearest water source was less than an hour away by foot.

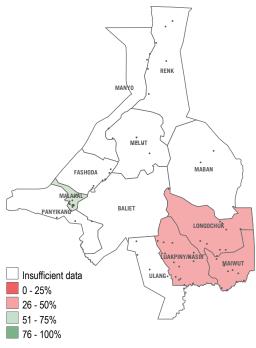
As in March, latrine usage in April was reportedly extremely low, with only 15% of settlements reporting that at least half the population uses them (4% in March), and 34% of all assessed settlements reporting no latrine usage at all (54% in March). The prevalence of open defecation and the potential it has to contaminate drinking water sources is particularly problematic given the March outbreak of cholera in Malakal, and is likely to contribute to a rise in the number of confirmed cases as the rainy season approaches. Where possible, rapid response interventions to provide cholera vaccinations should be prioritised before the rainy season.

18. South Sudan Health Cluster. Bulletin #3. 31 March 2017.

19. World Health Organisationn. South Sudan: Access and Itilizationn of Health Services, February 2017.

20. South Sudan Health Cluster Bulletin # 4 30 April 2017

21. Rank the three most common causes of death



Map 7: Proportion of settlements reporting access to education facilities, April 2017 Education

Access to education services remained low in April, with just over half (51%) of all assessed settlements reporting a lack of access to these facilities, similar to March. Similar to healthcare, the primary reason why education services were not available was that they had never existed in the area - reported by 33% of assessed settlements. The other most commonly identified reasons for lack of functioning schools were conflict-related, with 28% of assessed settlements reported that facilities had been destroyed by fighting, and 18% said that teachers had been displaced and were no longer working at the existing facilities. Should insecurity in Upper Nile continue, it is likely that access to educational services will further decline.

The most commonly reported reason for children not attending school was high school fees, cited by 58% of assessed settlements. This is likely a reflection of the deteriorating economic context in South Sudan, highlighted in the food security section. The high inflation rate makes spending on non-household items such as school fees challenging for many families. Additionally, similarly to healthcare services, the economic crisis has had a negative impact on the payment of teachers salaries over the past year²², which has caused a high number of teachers to leave the profession. A report from the South Sudan Education Cluster in November 2016 found that 31% fewer teachers were registered at the end of the 2016 school year than at its start²³. Areas where this is a concern, payment of teacher salaries or incentives should be considered as a possible intervention to counteract teacher absenteeism.

Conclusion

The escalation of conflict along the western bank in April has caused widespread displacement and limited humanitarian access to some settlement areas, such as Kodok and Aburoc. However, alongside the immediate impact of fighting, sustained insecurity over the last six months across much of Upper Nile State has had a cumulative effect on the capacity of communities to provide food for

themselves. Reliance on cultivated food has dropped over the last month, only 16% of assessed settlements reported cultivation as their primary source of food in April, compared to 45% in March. Additionally, insecurity has reduced access to the Nile River notably for fishing and foraging wild plants growing nearby, further reducing the available sources of food. Should insecurity continue into the beginning of the rainy season, when widespread crop planting usually begins, the ability of communities to provide for themselves in the coming months may be severely inhibited. Against the backdrop of continued conflict in Upper Nile food security remains the priority humanitarian need.

In addition to food, ongoing conflict has limited access to basic healthcare services, with under half (43%) of all assessed settlements reporting that they were able to access health facilities. Malaria was reported as the biggest attributed cause of death by 78% of settlements in April. This may be particularly problematic with the approaching rainy season and the increasing risk of the spread of diseases, such as cholera and malaria. Areas with high population density, such as the Aburoc IDP settlement, should be targeted for a cholera and malaria response as a preventative measure.

Protection concerns relating to conflict have increased between March and April. Killing and injury by another community was reported as a key concern for men, women and children by an growing proportion of settlements this month. This is likely to remain an ongoing issue should fighting continue, and may result in higher numbers of people being displaced internally in Upper Nile, and externally to Jonglei State or Sudan in the coming months.

In many parts of Upper Nile State, it remains difficult to fill information gaps on the access to basic services. REACH is working to expand data collection in the coming months to help humanitarian actors build a more nuanced picture of the dynamics and population needs found in Upper Nile State.

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