



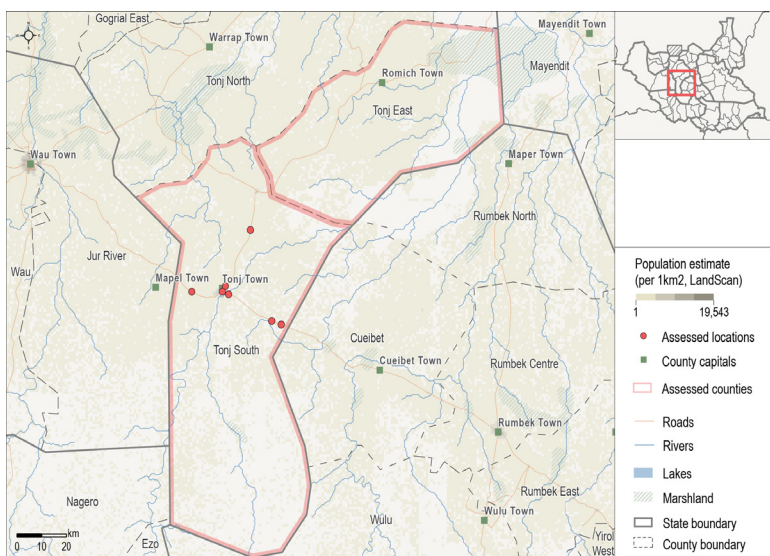
Tonj South & East Rapid Assessment

Warrap State, South Sudan, September 2021

Key Findings

- Throughout 2021, insecurity and flooding have simultaneously driven large-scale displacement and prevented vulnerable populations, particularly in the Greater Luachjang region of Tonj East, from undertaking displacement journeys to access food and services. Greater Luachjang communities have reportedly been unable to displace to the north, east or south due to tensions with communities in the neighbouring counties of Tonj North, Mayendit (Unity State), and Rumbek North (Lakes State). Vulnerable groups also reportedly face substantial challenges displacing to the west, as this involves travelling through insecure areas where internally displaced persons (IDPs) have reportedly been robbed and killed. Barriers to movement in Tonj East have been further compounded by flooding, which has, according to focus group discussion (FGD) participants, prevented almost all movement out of Greater Luachjang.
- Insecurity has reportedly prevented many households in Tonj East from cultivating. Households in Tonj East that have been able to cultivate have largely done so in close proximity to their homestead, and according to FGD participants, harvested food stocks are expected to be exhausted as early as November/December 2021. As such, communities in the east of Tonj East are likely to continue to experience atypically severe, widespread and prolonged food consumption gaps unless humanitarian access improves in the near term.
- Access to livestock has been atypically low throughout the 2021 lean season, during which reliance on cattle is generally highest. Widespread insecurity has reportedly resulted in cattle raiding, particularly in Tonj East, and a change in cattle migration routes resulting in cattle migrating away from the homestead. Access to cattle is unlikely to improve in the near to medium term, leaving highly vulnerable groups without access to livestock products and cash.
- Access to humanitarian services is likely to decrease further in the near-term. Throughout 2021, the caseload, ration size and duration of humanitarian food assistance (HFA) in Tonj South and Tonj East increased, however, the centralisation of distribution points from May onwards has meant that vulnerable populations have had to travel atypically long distances to access food distributions. According to humanitarian service providers, no further food assistance is planned post September. Continued provision of HFA will play a crucial role in reducing atypically severe food consumption gaps throughout the 'harvest' period, which usually runs from September until November, and the post harvest period.
- According to humanitarian service providers, the provision of health and nutrition services has improved since May, however, persistent insecurity has limited the ability of service providers to transport medical supplies, particularly into, and through, the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East. Service providers reported that all supplies for these communities are being moved through Wunlit, a settlement far south of the main road, causing substantial delays. Insecurity has reportedly deterred humanitarian service providers from transporting large shipments to minimise the risk of looting. Access to health and nutrition services is expected to decrease in the near term, as temporary facilities close at the end of September.
- Findings suggest that community level coping capacity has been negatively affected by an erosion of livelihoods, and a consequent lack of assets redistribute. Mass displacement to populated areas has placed substantial pressure on host community reserves and IDPs displaced to Tonj Town consistently reported that host community members have been encouraging them to return to their settlements.

Map 1: Tonj South and East assessment coverage map



Introduction: Vulnerability and acute events

Persistent and overlapping organised violence throughout 2020 increased the scale, scope, and complexity of civilian needs in greater Tonj, resulting in hundreds of casualties, the displacement of tens of thousands of people, widespread loss of livestock, disruption to agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, and the destruction of civilian property and humanitarian facilities and assets.¹ By August 2020, communities in greater Tonj were hit by a second round of unprecedented and devastating floods. The cumulative effects of conflict and flooding left Tonj North, South, and East facing Emergency (Phase 4) levels of food insecurity according to the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) – with five to ten percent of the population projected to face Catastrophic (Phase 5) levels of food insecurity until July 2021.²

Since the IPC workshop in November 2020, the 2021 dry season saw increased raids by armed cattle keepers from Unity and Lakes



Table 1: Names given to recent years, according to FGD participants from across Tonj South and Tonj East

2021	Ruon Riak Pan – The year of war (Tonj East)
	Ruon Chokyar – The year where the drought spoiled crops (Tonj South)
	Ruon Abur – The year of flood (Tonj South)
1998	Ruon Makrup - The year of famine (Tonj South and Tonj East)

states into Tonj East, particularly into the Greater Luachjang area which shares borders with both.³ Assessment findings suggest that tensions between communities within Tonj East have also increased, particularly between the Greater Luachjang in the east, and Greater Ananatak in the west, reportedly limiting displacement options for vulnerable populations in the former, disrupting the flow of humanitarian food assistance, and according to humanitarian service providers, limiting the ability of humanitarian partners operating in the Greater Luachjang area to restock lifesaving health and nutrition facilities. While the destruction of livelihoods has often been a by-product of conflict, in the ongoing cycles of violence in greater Tonj, the destruction and stripping of livelihoods and livelihood assets appears to have become increasingly deliberate.⁴ Since April 2021, the security situation within Tonj south has improved, although populations in Manyangok have continued to face challenges in accessing HFA. Drought in the months of May and June was reportedly followed by heavy rains and flooding from July. Since July, flooding has reportedly resulted in mass displacement in both Tonj South and Tonj East, while simultaneously limiting movement, especially for populations in Greater Luachjang, Tonj East.

Communities from Tonj South and Tonj East have named the years of 1998 and 2021; a practice that is typically shaped by extreme events. FGD participants from Tonj South and Tonj East both refer to 1998 as 'Ruon Makrup', which translates to 'The year of famine' (see Table 1). FGD participants from Tonj South simultaneously refer to 2021 as both the year where the drought spoiled crops, and the year of the flood, reflective of the extreme climatic shocks that have affected the country since 2019. Communities from Tonj South reported that, while there has not yet been a period of 'makrup' since 1998, they expect the food security and livelihoods (FSL) situation to deteriorate substantially in 2022. Due to the intensification of tensions between communities within and neighbouring Tonj East, FGD participants from the area are referring to 2021 as the year of war.

In light of these recent shocks, REACH and Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) conducted a joint rapid assessment in Tonj South (Map 1), with the objectives of i) gaining a snapshot of current humanitarian needs and gaps, ii)

Methodology

The assessment comprised two main qualitative methodological components: focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Data collection took place between the 16th and 22nd September. During this period, a total of 14 FGDs were conducted with host community members and IDPs in Tonj Town, Mabior Yar, Chuolagol, and Alur, in Tonj South County. The FGD component consisted of two thematic areas: i) shocks as they relate to food security and livelihoods, and ii) susceptibility to famine conditions. Separate FGDs were held for men and women, and participants were grouped by location of origin. In addition, a total of seven KIIs were conducted with community chiefs and health and nutrition service providers. The KII component consisted of one thematic tool, targeted towards understanding health and nutrition service provision and access.

Additionally, the team conducted informal, semi-structured interviews with local NGOs, authority officials and community representatives. Qualitative FGD and KII assessment tools were triangulated with interactive proportional piling exercises, which involved piling 100 beans in front of the respondent, who was then asked to divide them into piles, attributing indicative values to questions on population movement and challenges facing the communities, based on the respondents' perception.

The assessment findings are indicative of the situation at the time of data collection, and are not statistically representative of the area's population.

identifying variations in needs between different geographic areas and population groups, iii) understanding the impacts of years of cumulative shocks on the ability of households to engage in traditional livelihood activities, and iv) understanding the effect of shocks on the ability of traditional institutions to redistribute community assets and to protect the most vulnerable.

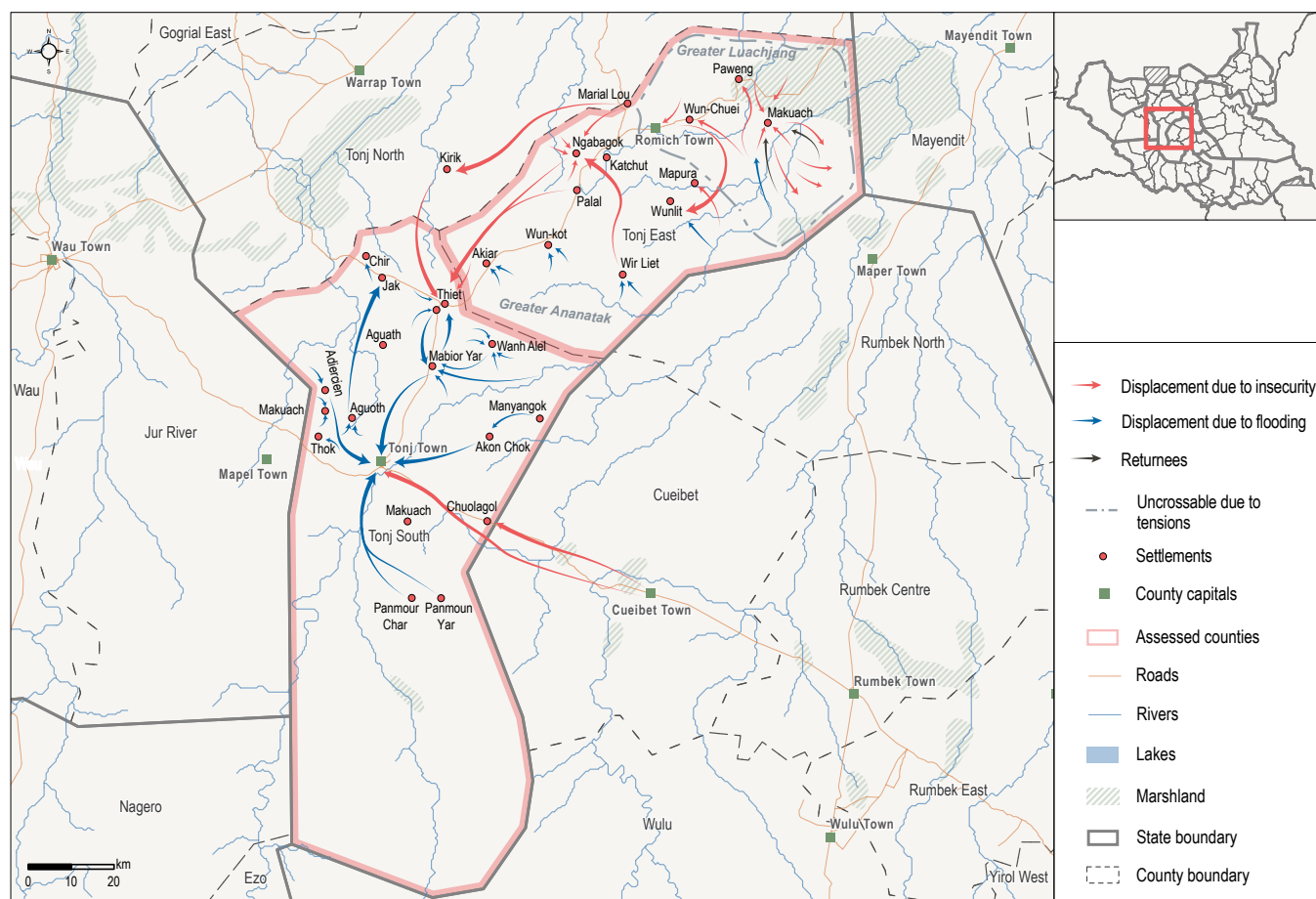
Population movement

According to FGD participants, populations in the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East (in the east of Tonj East County, bordering Tonj North, Mayendit and Rumbek North counties) face considerable barriers to movement (see 'uncrossable due to tensions' in Map 2). Barriers to movement are primarily a consequence of insecurity and flooding, both of which have simultaneously limited humanitarian service provision in the area, further compounding the vulnerability of isolated populations that are increasingly unable to make displacement journeys.

- Historically, cross-border violence between the Greater Luachjang of Tonj East, and communities from Mayendit County in Unity State, has occurred regularly.⁵ Violence typically increases during the dry season (November to May),

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Map 2: Population movement as reported by KIs in Tonj South



as both groups migrate with their cattle towards the swampy areas along the state border, and decreases in the rainy season (May – November), as cattle typically return to the homestead for grazing, and flooding limits movement.⁶ In March 2021, clashes between communities in Greater Ananatak (in western and central Tonj East) and Greater Luachjang (in the east of Tonj East) reportedly resulted in widespread movement of Luachjang communities towards the borders with Unity and Lakes states. This movement reportedly resulted in a spike in cross-border raids that reportedly forced most of the IDPs back inland, away from these border areas.

- Tensions between communities in the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East, and communities from Rumbek North, Lakes State, also escalated throughout the 2021 dry season.⁷ Attacks along the border with Rumbek North in March resulted in a sequence of cyclical raids that also resulted in populations in close proximity to the state borders moving back inland, towards larger, populated settlements, which were deemed to be more secure.⁸
- Throughout 2021, tensions between communities in Tonj North and the Greater Luachjang community of Tonj East also intensified, culminating in an attack in Marial Lou in July, which, according to FGD participants, resulted in widespread

displacement. Insecurity reportedly meant that affected populations in close proximity to Marial Lou could not displace to the north. As such, in the wake of the attacks in July, most people from Tonj East reportedly displaced within Tonj East county, often moving southward to larger settlements such as Romich, and to settlements in the east of the county.

- Populations from Greater Luachjang also reportedly faced substantial challenges when displacing to the west, through Tonj East, and into Tonj South, as IDPs must pass through Greater Ananatak territory in the centre and west of the county. Nevertheless, according to FGD participants, this is the only displacement option for people inside Greater Luachjang. In August 2020, flooding in Greater Luachjang forced cattle keepers to move inland, away from the state borders, and into Greater Ananatak, causing tensions over access to grazing land.⁹ Violence between cattle keepers from these communities resulted in at least seventy casualties, and reconciliation efforts in both November 2020 and January 2021 were interrupted by spikes in clashes and raids.¹⁰ In February and March, cyclical violence was exacerbated by a blockade on the movement of goods and of humanitarian supplies into Greater Luachjang by neighbouring communities in Tonj North and Tonj South (see Humanitarian Food Assistance section).



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This blockade was likely partly responsible for an uptick in Luachjang attacks into neighbouring communities in Katcuat, Ngabagok, Marial Lou, and Akop to obtain food and livestock.¹¹ Since the clashes in Marial Lou, this blockade has reportedly been reinstated, limiting population movement.

- According to FGD participants displaced from Greater Luachjang, since the blockade was reinstated in July, IDPs from Greater Luachjang have been unable to move along the road between Romich and Ngabagok due to insecurity. As such, from July, IDPs have reportedly diverted far south to Wunlit, re-joining the main road to Tonj South in Ngabagok. Between Ngabagok and Thiet, IDPs from Greater Luachjang are reportedly being attacked and robbed, and many IDPs move at night because it is reportedly too dangerous to do so in the day. Due to these reported movement barriers, most of the vulnerable groups in Greater Luachjang, particularly older persons, female headed households and persons with disabilities, have reportedly been unable to displace to Tonj South.
- In addition to insecurity, flooding has further compounded the existing movement barriers faced by vulnerable communities in Greater Luachjang. Since August, communities in the south of Greater Luachjang have reportedly been pushed to the north, settling in the highland areas of Makuach, Mapura and Paweng. Flooding has reportedly cut off movement between Romich, Wunlit, and Ngabagok, although FGD participants reported that some people are still attempting this journey at night, particularly younger men that are able to swim.
- Assessment findings suggest that the security situation in Tonj South has improved markedly between April and September, and according to FGD participants, the main driver of movement throughout the year, and particularly since July, has been flooding. Large populations from the east of the county have reportedly been displaced to Thiet, Mabior Yar and Tonj Town, and to the main road that connects these towns. Longstanding tensions over access to grazing land between communities in Manyangok and communities in Thiet, Yar, Jak and Wathalel have continued to act as a barrier to displacement, with most IDPs from Manyangok displacing to Tonj Town.

Food availability and access

Cultivation

Insecurity has reportedly resulted in widespread displacement which has prevented many households in Tonj East from cultivating. Households in Tonj East that have been able to cultivate have largely done so in close proximity to their homestead, and according to FGD participants, harvested food stocks are expected to be exhausted as early as November/December 2021, six months earlier than normal. Communities in the east of Tonj East are likely to experience atypically severe, widespread and prolonged food

consumption gaps unless humanitarian access improves. In Tonj South, flooding has reportedly posed the main barrier to cultivated foodstuffs, with heavy rains in July reportedly destroying crops and displacing people, particularly from the north east of the county, to larger towns. For populations that were able to cultivate in Tonj South, FGD participants reportedly expect food stocks to be exhausted by March 2022, three months earlier than usual.

- Widespread and persistent insecurity and flooding had a drastic effect on cultivation within Greater Tonj throughout 2020, as many people had their crops stolen, were unable to cultivate, cultivated early and were subsequently displaced, or did not cultivate at all. According to food security and nutrition monitoring system (FSNMS) data from August 2020, residents of assessed communities in Tonj South reported that between 70-90% of the 2020 sorghum harvest was lost due to flooding.¹² Atypically low access to harvested food stocks in 2020 has reportedly been compounded by a second year of atypically poor production, likely increasing food consumption gaps for vulnerable households in Tonj South and Tonj East.
- Throughout 2021, flooding and insecurity have continued to limit access to land and harvested food stocks for populations in Tonj South and Tonj East. Many IDPs in Tonj East were displaced from their land either prior to, or during, the planting period. According to FGD participants displaced from Romich, Tonj East, to Tonj Town, Tonj South, insecurity has limited access to land in displacement locations due to overcrowding and a reported inability of people to move outside of the settlement to access extended land, away from the homestead, due to insecurity. Furthermore, even within larger towns in Greater Luachjang, insecurity has reportedly altered cultivation habits, with host community members preferring to cultivate groundnuts instead of taller crops, such as maize and sorghum, which reportedly provide cover for ambushers. Sorghum and maize typically provide the majority of most households' food stocks throughout the year, as such, a movement towards harvesting groundnuts, is likely to impact longer term food security.
- Moreover, since July, flooding in the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East has further limited access to cultivated foodstuffs, reportedly destroying crops and resulting in further displacement, placing additional pressure on very limited host community food stocks in displacement locations in both Tonj South and Tonj East. Moving forward, host community food stocks are likely to be exhausted atypically early, and this could lead to further tensions between IDPs and host community members (see Social networks and access to food section).
- Insecurity has not posed a major barrier to cultivation in Tonj South throughout 2021, and unlike in Tonj East, FGD participants reported that most people were able to plant crops in April and May as they would in a normal year. However,



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FGD participants reported that a two-month drought between May and June was followed by extremely heavy rainfall in July (see Table 1), causing the Ibba river to burst its banks, resulting in widespread flooding, particularly in the north and east of the county. According to FGD participants, flooding has destroyed crops and resulted in widespread displacement (see Population Movement section).

- For populations that were able to cultivate in Tonj South, FGD participants reported expecting food stocks to be exhausted by March 2022, three months earlier than usual, while harvested food stocks in Tonj East are expected to be exhausted as early as November/December 2021.¹³ Moving forward, isolated populations in Tonj East are unlikely to experience any substantial or long-term improvement in the food security situation. Limited access to harvested food stocks, a seasonal reduction in the provision of humanitarian food assistance (see Humanitarian food assistance section), a reduction in the provision of health and nutrition services (see Health and nutrition service provision and access section), and movement barriers that are reportedly preventing vulnerable households to displace to access food and services, converge to suggest that the food security situation in Tonj East will continue to deteriorate.

Livestock

Access to livestock has been atypically low throughout the 2021 lean season, during which reliance on cattle is generally highest in Tonj South and Tonj East.¹⁴ Widespread insecurity has reportedly resulted in cattle raiding, particularly in the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East, and flooding has resulted in a change in cattle migration patterns across Greater Tonj, resulting in cattle, particularly in Tonj South, migrating away from the homestead. Access to cattle is unlikely to improve in the near to medium term, leaving highly vulnerable groups without access to livestock products and cash.

- Throughout 2020, conflict-related restrictions on the freedom of movement had considerable implications for pastoralist communities in Tonj South and Tonj East. Displacement and conflict resulted in cattle being kept atypically close to the homestead in the dry season and prevented livestock from using their typical migration paths to access grazing pasture and water, reportedly resulting in a notable increase in cattle morbidity and mortality.¹⁵
- Throughout 2021, increased cattle morbidity and mortality in Tonj East has reportedly been further compounded by increasing raids along the borders with Unity and Lakes States and widespread insecurity within Tonj East County. FGD participants reported that most people in Greater Luachjang do not have access to cattle, and that the market for cattle has contracted substantially. Some people reportedly have access to goats, however, FGD participants consistently reported

that people are slaughtering remaining livestock as a coping strategy to access food. This is concerning as slaughtering livestock further limits access to productive assets and will likely erode capacity to deal with future shocks.

- Assessment findings suggests that cattle ownership is comparatively higher in Tonj South, compared to Tonj East, however, flooding has altered cattle migration routes, meaning that cattle have reportedly migrated away from the settlement to highland areas. As such, according to FGD participants, access to cattle in Tonj South is atypically low. Access to cattle is unlikely to improve in the near to medium term, leaving highly vulnerable groups without access to livestock products and cash.

Fishing

Despite close proximity to water sources, vulnerable populations in Tonj South and Tonj East face barriers to fishing, particularly, a lack of hooks and nets, limited financial capacity to purchase fishing materials, and the presence of wild animals, particularly snakes. FGD participants reported that a lack of healthcare services had also limited reliance on fishing, due to a reported inability to seek medical treatment for snakebites.

- According to FGD participants displaced from the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East, most people in the area were not fishing despite close proximity to seasonal wetlands and the Agar and Hutkur rivers. FGD participants reported that fishing is often heavily relied upon prior to the main harvest (September to November). However, this year, despite limited access to crops and cattle, widespread displacement and shelter destruction has reportedly severely limited access to hooks and nets and, as such, reliance on fishing is atypically low. FGD participants reported that nets and hooks are too expensive to purchase in the market, and the reported presence of crocodiles and snakes, combined with atypically low access to health services, has also limited the ability of food insecure households to engage in fishing. FGD participants in Tonj South reported that, due to these barriers, reliance on fishing is unlikely to increase even if access to food continues to worsen.

Wild foods

As a result of widespread livelihood collapse and atypically low access to harvested food stocks and livestock, reliance on wild foods has increased substantially, particularly in Tonj East. Reliance on wild foods will likely remain very high in the near and medium term, and this is likely to result in sickness, particularly amongst younger children, which may be exacerbated by a reported lack of health and nutrition services (see Health and nutrition service provision and access section).

- Consumption of wild foods is common throughout the year in Greater Tonj, however, relative reliance on wild foods typically



increases during the lean season, when harvested food stocks are exhausted.¹⁶ Throughout 2020, access to wild foods was significantly affected by flooding and conflict, which limited movement beyond settlements, and by inundation which reportedly led to roots and tubers such as acuech rotting in the ground.¹⁷

- Findings indicate that wild foods have been introduced into the diets of children at a much younger age than usual. According to FGD participants displaced from Tonj East, bout and kaech leaves are both being consumed in Tonj East for the first time since the 1998 famine, reflective of the current period of food insecurity. These leaves are reportedly only consumed in times of acute food shortages due to their bitter taste which can reportedly cause sickness.
- Utilisation of wild foods appears to be particularly low. FGD participants displaced from Tonj East commonly reported that consumption has resulted in sickness and diarrhoea, particularly amongst children and older persons. Atypical reliance on wild foods that reportedly result in sickness has likely been compounded further by a lack of health and nutrition services.

Markets and financial access to food

Insecurity and livelihood collapse have meant that access to seasonal income generating activities, such as cropping, has been atypically low throughout the cultivation period, limiting financial access to markets, particularly for poorer households.

- According to FGD participants, Romich market (Tanj East) was reportedly attacked and destroyed in March. While some traders returned to Romich, most traders reportedly fled with their remaining stocks to Makuach and Mapara. Insecurity and flooding has reportedly meant that traders displaced to these locations are unable to restock from Juba, Wau and Tanj Town, and FGD participants reported that, in the near term, market goods are likely to be exhausted. This is concerning given that, during the height of the lean season, prior to the main harvest, people often rely heavily on markets to access food.
- Poor road conditions have reportedly limited the movement of market goods across both Tanj South and Tanj East. FGD participants from Thiet and Mabior Yar (Tanj South) reported that markets in the area were minimally functional. In Mabior Yar there were reportedly no staples in the market, and the available goods were very expensive.
- According to FGD participants, financial access to markets has decreased for most people, particularly in Tanj East. In the lean season, most people reportedly access cash by brewing local alcohol, cutting grass for thatching, collecting firewood and making charcoal.¹⁸ According to FGD participants, insecurity

and flooding have limited the ability of people to engage in such activities, which often involve leaving the settlement.

- FGD participants reported that the market for agricultural labour, a common income generating activity undertaken by poorer households during the harvest season,¹⁹ has contracted substantially due to the lack of cultivated land. Young, able-bodied men and women from Thiet and Mabior Yar were reportedly able to migrate to Tanj Town to engage in these activities, and to access markets, however older persons and vulnerable groups have often been unable to access cash or market goods.

Social networks and access to food

Findings suggest that community level coping capacity has been negatively affected by a continued erosion of livelihoods, and a consequent lack of assets within the community to redistribute. Mass displacement to populated areas has placed substantial pressure on host community reserves, and, once food stocks become exhausted, sharing within communities is likely to decrease, affecting the poorest households most substantially.

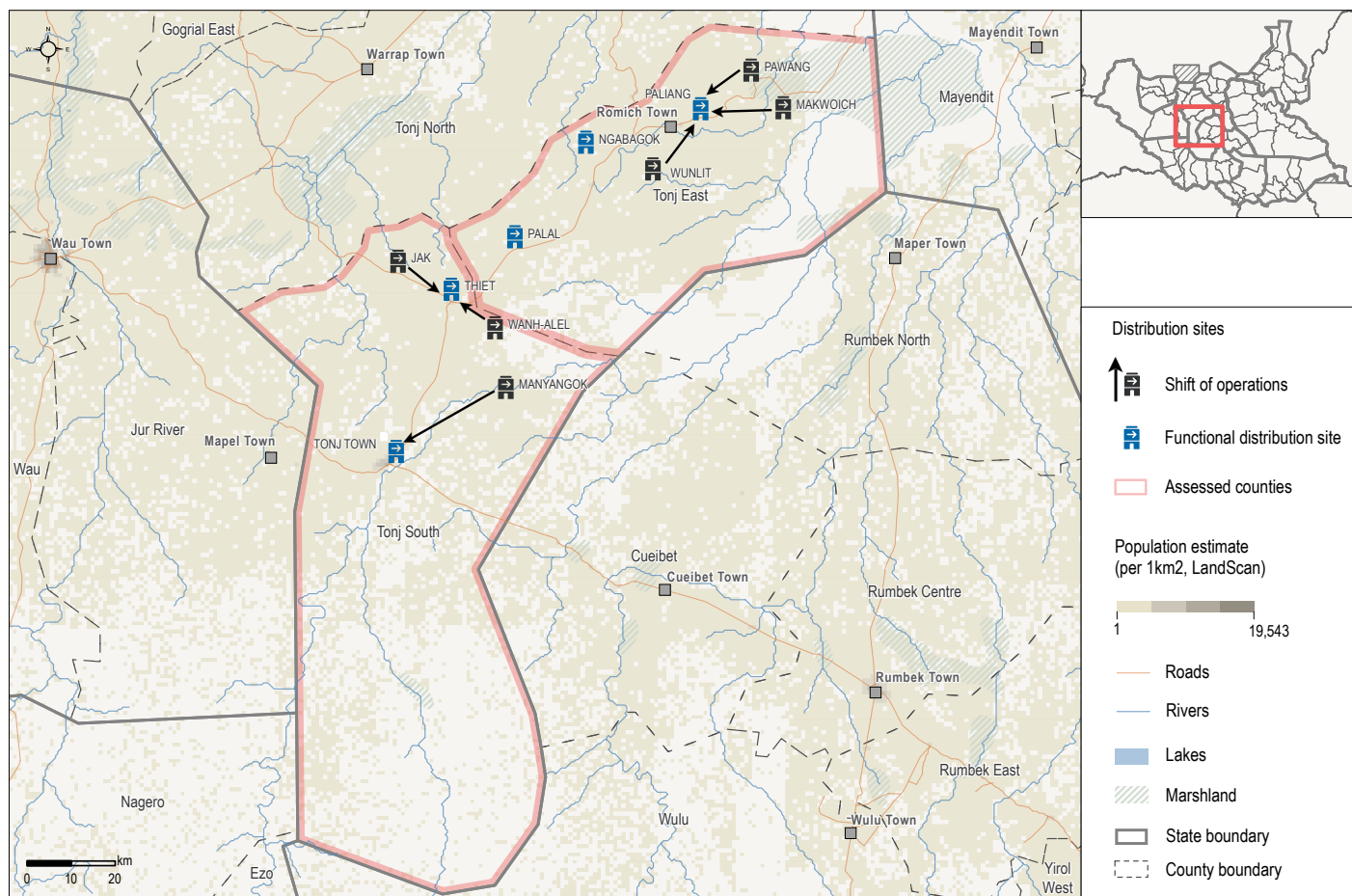
- Some able-bodied IDPs displaced to Tanj Town are reportedly accessing food and cash through cropping, however, cropping opportunities that are already limited due to the reported lack of cultivated land, are likely to decrease in the near term, when the harvest is completed in November. Consequently, some IDPs displaced from Thiet to Tanj Town reported that they intend to return to their previous community once this income generating activity is no longer available, due to a lack of alternative sources of income and food.
- IDPs displaced from Tanj East to Tanj Town reported that, when they began to arrive in July 2021, host community members were very welcoming. Host community members reportedly provided IDPs with accommodation, food, cooking utensils, and other non-food items (NFIs), such as mosquito nets. However, according to FGD participants, the relationship with the host community has become increasingly strained over time, reportedly due to the continued pressure on host community resources. IDPs displaced from Greater Luachjang in Tanj East consistently reported that host community members were encouraging them to return to their displacement locations.
- Community coping capacity appears to be under substantial pressure in the Greater Tanj region. One chief displaced to Tanj town from Marial Lou (Tanj North) reported that, to pre-emptively mitigate potential tensions with host communities, particularly related to the sharing of limiting resources, he divided IDPs from his community to different settlements, namely Akop and Kirik in Tanj North, and to Thiet and Tanj town in Tanj South.



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Map 3: HFA distribution sites as reported by service providers in Tonj South, as of September 2021



Humanitarian food assistance (HFA)

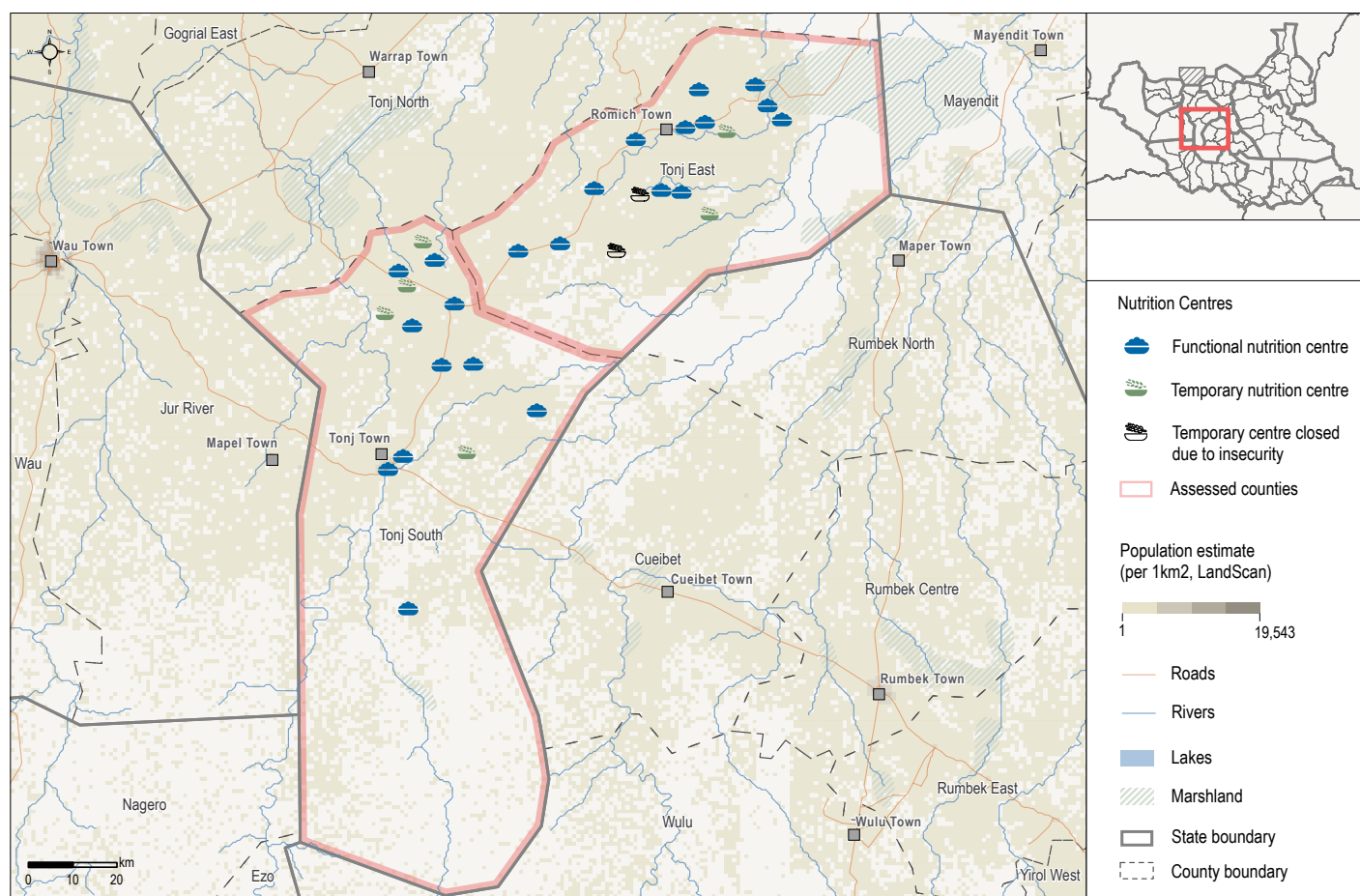
According to humanitarian service providers, the caseload, ration size and duration of humanitarian food assistance in Tonj South and Tonj East were increased throughout 2021. However, findings suggest that barriers to accessing HFA have remained, particularly in the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East. Service providers reported that, post September, no further food assistance has been planned. Provision of, and improved access to, HFA after September 2021, and throughout the 'harvest' season period, will play a crucial role in reducing severe food consumption gaps for vulnerable populations who have minimal access to traditional livelihood activities.

- Throughout 2021, insecurity limited the provision of HFA, particularly in the Greater Luachjang area of Tonj East. In January 2021, neighbouring communities effectively implemented a blockade to the Greater Luachjang area, severely limiting movement of goods, services and people.²⁰ During this period, five WFP trucks on the way to Romich were stopped and looted on 27th January.²¹ An increase in raids from armed groups from Unity and Lakes states into Tonj East has greatly impacted the ability of communities in Greater Luachjang to access food. This resulted in a spike

in retaliatory raids into Kachuut, Ngabagok, Marial Lou, and Akop. This increase in violence caused widespread insecurity and prevented WFP convoys from accessing the Paliang warehouse in Tonj East throughout February.²² According to humanitarian service providers, insecurity has continued to affect the delivery of HFA, an increasingly important source of food, and in July 2021, distributions across Tonj East were delayed due to clashes in Marial Lou, Tonj North.

- According to humanitarian service providers, distribution sites in Wunlit, Paweng, and Makuach Tonj East County, become inaccessible during the rainy season (May to November), and, during this period, distributions for these sites are moved to Paliang. Service providers reported that long distances and persistent insecurity have posed substantial challenges for vulnerable beneficiaries, particularly older persons, persons with disabilities, and female headed households, travelling to Paliang. Wunlit and Paweng are an estimated five hours walking from Paliang, and since July, barriers posed by distance and insecurity have been compounded by flooding, which has further limited movement (see Population Movement section). Barriers to HFA are particularly concerning given the lack of cultivated land, limited access to cattle, widespread inability to engage in fishing, and reported over reliance on wild foods.

Map 4: Nutrition centre presence as reported by service providers in Tonj South, as of September 2021



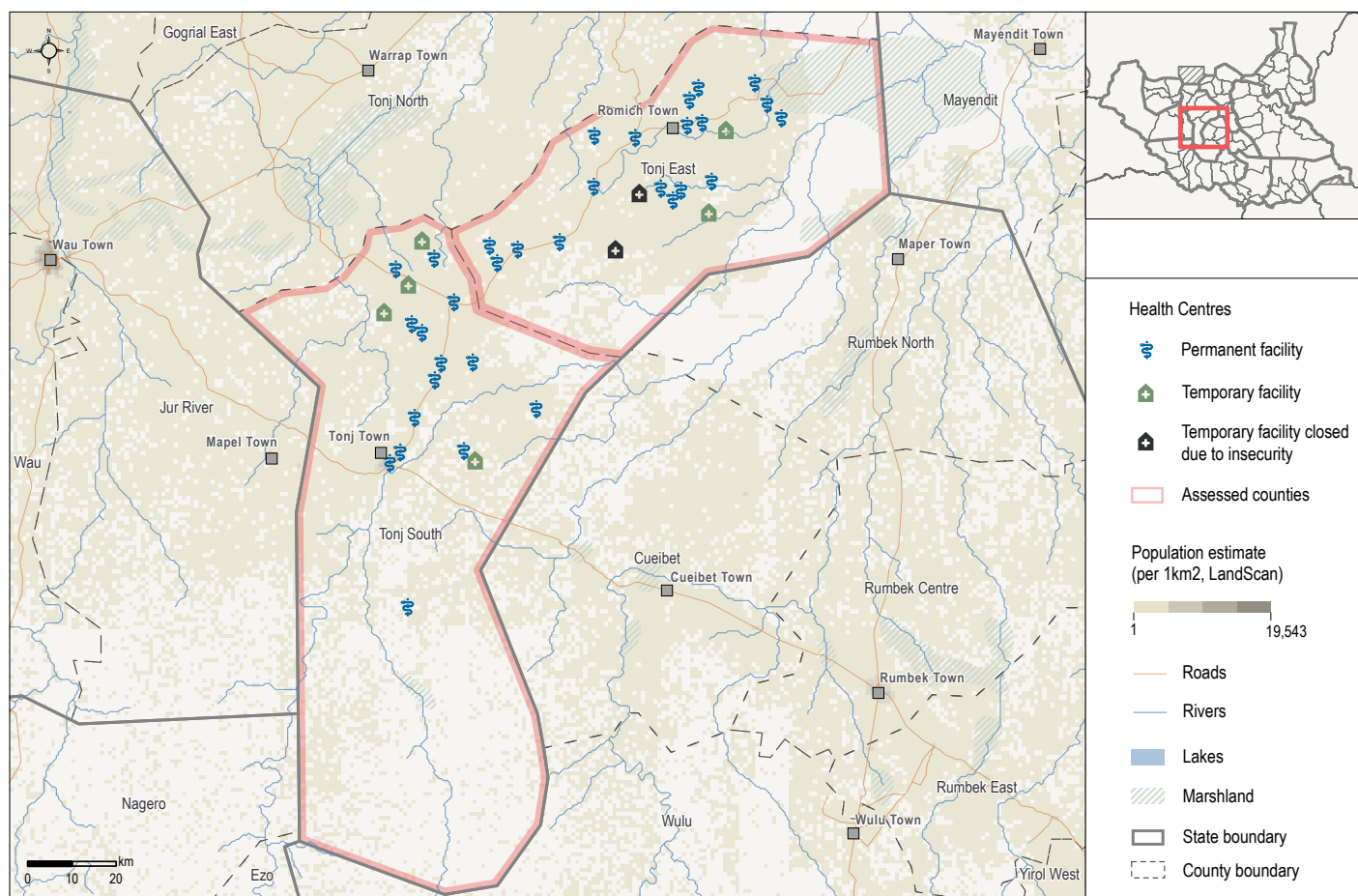
- Throughout 2020, insecurity, distance and flooding have also limited access to HFA in Tonj South. Violence in Tonj South affected WFP's ability to reach distribution points in 2020 and, in August 2020, flooding exacerbated access constraints.²³ As a consequence, most distributions were conducted from the warehouses in Thiet and Tonj South. Communities in Manyangok were particularly affected, and were completely excluded from food assistance throughout 2020.²⁴
- Barriers to HFA in Tonj South have persisted throughout 2021. According to humanitarian service providers, August and September distributions for Wan-Alel and Jak were moved to Thiet, and distributions for populations in Manyangok were moved to Tonj Town. Service providers reported that, due to the distance, beneficiaries from Jak often stay overnight in Thiet. While tensions between communities in Manyangok, on the one hand, and communities in Wathalel, Yar, Jak and Thiet, on the other, have reportedly decreased throughout 2021, insecurity has persisted and has reportedly continued to limit movement. According to FGD participants, flooding has further limited movement from the eastern part of Tonj South.

Health and nutrition service provision and access

According to humanitarian service providers, the provision of health and nutrition services has improved in Tonj South and Tonj East since May 2021, likely due to the establishment of temporary health and nutrition services, with funding until the end of September 2021. However, persisting insecurity in Tonj East and flooding in Tonj South have reportedly resulted in substantial supply challenges which have, in turn, limited the functionality of health and nutrition services, particularly in Tonj East. Access to health and nutrition services is expected to decrease in the near term, as temporary facilities are projected to close.

- Since the July attacks in Marial Lou, insecurity between Kachuat and Romich has increased, and the road connecting these areas has, according to humanitarian service providers and FGD participants, become inaccessible.²⁵ The blockade on movement between Greater Ananatak and Greater Luachjang, that limited humanitarian access in early 2021 (see Humanitarian Food Assistance), was reportedly reinstated in July.²⁶ One humanitarian service provider reported that armed groups stopped and looted a vehicle bound for Romich carrying nutrition supplies in July. As such, health and nutrition service

Map 5: Healthcare presence as reported by service providers in Tonj South, as of September 2021



providers reported that all supplies for communities in Greater Luachjang are being moved through Wunlit, a settlement far south of the main road, causing substantial delays.

- Insecurity has reportedly deterred service providers from transporting large shipments of supplies to minimise the risk of looting. As such, one service provider reported that medical supplies are usually transported from Tonj Town to facilities in Greater Luachjang every three weeks to reduce risk, however, stocks are often exhausted early. A referral system between facilities is in place, however, distance, insecurity and flooding limit movement to access services for vulnerable populations in Tonj East.
- According to one humanitarian service provider, eight temporary integrated health and nutrition facilities were established in Tonj South and Tonj East in May 2021. Within the month of August, two temporary health and nutrition facilities established in Medar and Panyiel (Tonj East) were both closed due to access constraints caused by insecurity, and a resultant inability of service providers to restock.
- Findings suggest that, since July, the cycle of retaliatory attacks between communities in Tonj North and Tonj East has placed additional pressure on health and nutrition facilities

in close proximity with the county border. According to one humanitarian service provider, while many people have been displaced to Mariik and Magan, facilities in these places are particularly hard to supply, leaving vulnerable people unable to receive treatment.

- According to humanitarian service providers, supply challenges posed by high levels of insecurity have been further compounded by seasonal rains. Most medical supplies for Tonj East are sent by road from Tonj Town. Humanitarian service providers reported that cars and trucks were unable to make this journey due to poor road conditions, as such, from August onwards, service providers attempted to move medical supplies using tractors. Tractors reportedly broke down, and porters were employed to carry the supplies to the facilities. Continued rains have meant that service providers rely on motorbikes to transport medical supplies to Tonj East. However, motorbikes are only able to transport around ten cartons of nutrition supplements, and are very expensive, with a trip from Tonj Town to Romich costing around \$100.
- According to humanitarian service providers, without additional funding, temporary health and nutrition services will stop operating at the end of September, leaving highly vulnerable

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populations in hard-to-reach areas without access to key, lifesaving services.

Conclusion

Assessment findings suggest that compounding shocks and stressors have resulted in widespread livelihood disruptions throughout Tonj South and a near complete collapse in livelihoods and atypically severe food consumption gaps in Tonj East, particularly in the Greater Luachjang area in the eastern side of the county. Moving forward, isolated populations in Tonj East are unlikely to experience any substantial or long-term improvement in the food security situation, as most people have reportedly been unable to harvest, and yields for those that have harvested are expected to be atypically low. Limited access to harvested food stocks, a seasonal reduction in the provision of humanitarian food assistance, and health and nutrition services, and movement barriers that are reportedly preventing vulnerable households to displace to access food and services, converge to suggest that the food security situation in Tonj East will continue to deteriorate. As such, the continued delivery of humanitarian services throughout the harvest season, particularly health and nutrition services and HFA, will be essential to prevent food consumption deficit from manifesting in critical malnutrition and excess mortality.

Endnotes

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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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