

Situation Overview: Jonglei State, South Sudan

July and August 2017

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Introduction

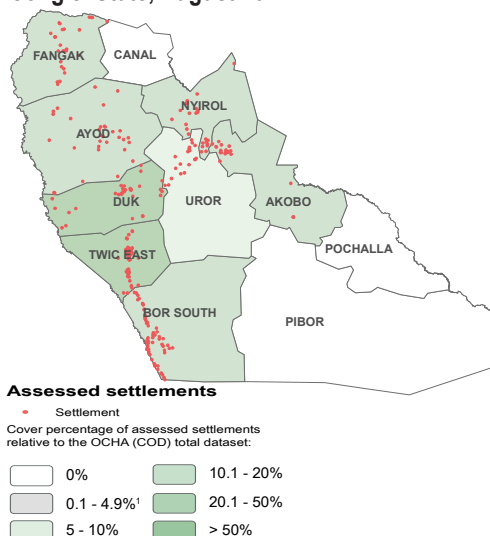
Displacement trends, humanitarian access and population needs in Jonglei continued to be negatively affected by violent conflict during July and August. Humanitarian needs continued to rise with reduced rainfall in June, tensions between armed groups, and intercommunal violence negatively affecting populations' ability to meet their basic needs.

REACH has been conducting assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015, to inform the response of humanitarian actors working outside of formal settlement sites. This settlement data is collected across the Greater Upper Nile region on a monthly basis. Between 6 and 26 July and 4 and 23 August, REACH interviewed 1,398 Key Informants (KIs) with knowledge of humanitarian needs in 351 settlements in 8 of the 11 counties in Jonglei State.

In order to ensure an understanding of current displacement trends and humanitarian conditions in settlements from which displacement took place, new arrivals, representing 38% of KIs, were specifically targeted. The remainder of the KIs interviewed (62%) reported having been in the settlement or having had regular contact with someone from the settlement within the last month.

In August and July, displacement data from KI interviews were triangulated with 25 Focus

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage in Jonglei State, August 2017



Group Discussions (FGDs) typically ranging from 5 to 8 participants. These involved 14 participatory mapping exercises to understand the routes that IDPs took and included:

- Eight FGDs with new arrivals from Greater Akobo (Akobo, Nyirol and Uror) in Akobo Town and Bor Protection of Civilian (PoC) site.
- One FGD with new arrivals from Ayod in Bor PoC site.
- Two FGDs with new arrivals from Uganda in Mingkaman.
- Two FGDs with new arrivals from the Equatorias and one with new arrivals from

Bor South in Bor Town.

Informing further analysis on food security trends across the state, REACH conducted 14 Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) FGDs with new arrivals and people who had recent contact with the relevant settlement, including:

- Five FGD for Greater Akobo in Akobo Town.
- One FGD for Fangak, Uror and Ayod respectively in Bor PoC site.
- Six FGDs for Bor South-Duk Corridor in Bor Town and Mingkaman.

This Situation Overview provides an update to key findings from the June Situation Overview¹ and the July Food Security and Livelihoods County Profiles for Jonglei.² The first section analyses displacement and population movement in Jonglei between July and August, and the second section evaluates access to food and basic services for both IDP and non-displaced communities.

Population Movement and Displacement

Conflict continued to drive displacement in Jonglei throughout July and August. Although the arrival of heavy rainfall has prevented an upsurge of conflict, as seen in February and April,³ the presence of armed actors has persisted and intercommunal conflicts

continued to occur.

Reflective of the continued insecurity, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting depopulation remained high. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of assessed settlements in August and 77% in July reported that half or more of the local community had left over the last month, which may be linked to general low access to services and localised insecurity.

Similarly, in August 38% of assessed settlements in Jonglei reported the presence of IDPs, similar to June (42%). During August the presence of IDPs were particularly reported by assessed settlements in Fangak (100%) and Greater Akobo (81%). In Greater Akobo this could be attributed to the continued presence of armed forces and population movements to locations where humanitarian assistance is available.

Displacement within Jonglei

Movement from Northern Jonglei has slowed down during the rainy season. The number of new arrivals to key IDP receiving locations such as Akobo Town and Bor PoC site from parts of Uror and Nyirol, has decreased as poor road conditions and insecurity between destinations restricted movements. FGD participants reported that many IDPs in Northern Jonglei are staying in remote locations with limited access to basic services and humanitarian

1 REACH South Sudan, Jonglei Situation Overview, June 2017.

2 REACH South Sudan, [Jonglei County Profiles](#), August 2017.

3 UNOCHA South Sudan, [Humanitarian Snapshot](#), August 2017 and South Sudan [Humanitarian Snapshot](#), July 2017. Based on absence of reported 'hot spots' in Greater Akobo.



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METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Jonglei State, REACH uses primary data provided by key informants who have recently arrived, or receive regular information, from their pre-displacement location or “Area of Knowledge”.

Information for this overview was collected from key informants in the Mingkaman Spontaneous Settlement, Bor and Juba Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites, Bor Town, Akobo, as well as in Nyal, throughout July and August 2017.

The first phase of the assessment methodology comprised a participatory mapping exercise to map the relevant settlements in Jonglei 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, it was not included in reporting. Descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were then used to analyse the data.

It must be noted that this represents a **change in methodology as of December 2016**, as REACH previously analysed data at the community level. This means that **this report is not directly comparable with Situation Overviews from before December 2016**.

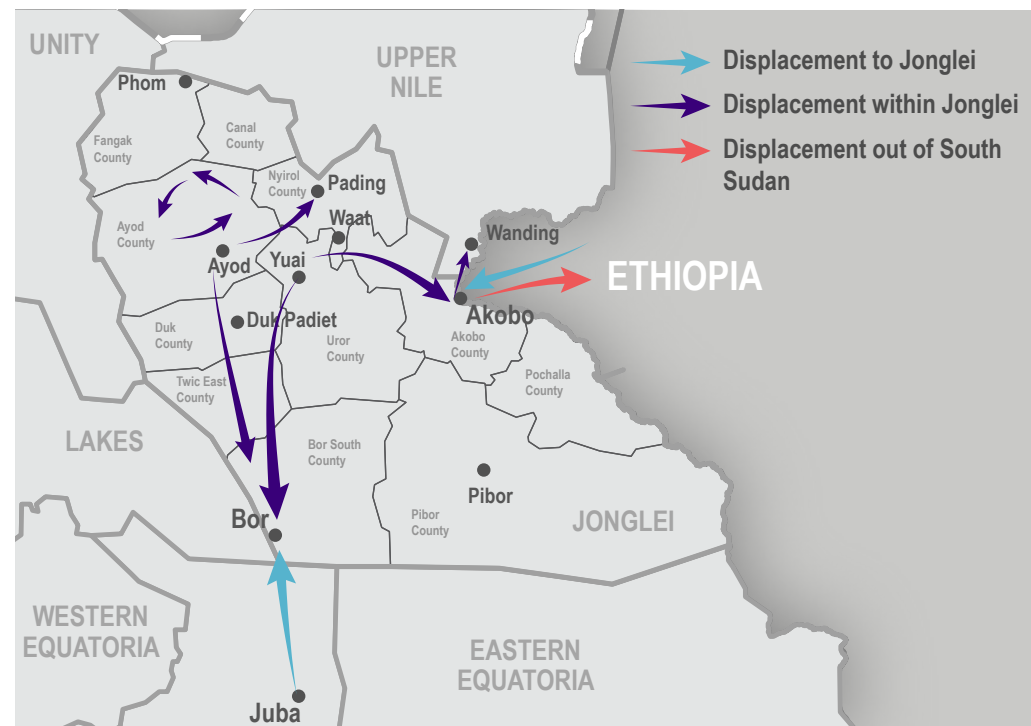
assistance because they are unable to travel long distances to reach displacement sites. In Uror, FGD participants reported that IDPs were living in the bush, which was also reported by assessed settlements in Uror during July (9%) and August (7%).

In Ayod, internal displacement is high. Of the IDP hosting settlements (24%) in August, 60% hosted IDPs from within the county. In addition, populations also moved from Ayod to Duk Padiet in Duk and Pading in Nyiröl. Given the restrictions on humanitarian access in Ayod and Uror, many of these IDPs are likely highly vulnerable to malnutrition and health concerns.

Displacement out of Jonglei

Similar to displacement within Jonglei, movement out of Jonglei also slowed down during the rainy season. In July and August, the average number of people leaving Akobo for Ethiopia by boat decreased considerably from an average of 114 individuals per day in June to on average 27 individuals per day in July and 22 individuals per day in August.⁴ This decrease in departures from Akobo to Ethiopia may be attributed to the provision

Map 2: Displacement Overview Jonglei State, July and August 2017



of humanitarian assistance in Akobo Town, combined with refugee registration not taking place in Gambella, in Ethiopia, during July and August. This was supported by FGD

participants in Akobo Town reporting that IDPs do not have the financial resources to leave to Ethiopia, while others planned to stay in the town until conflict in South Sudan ends.

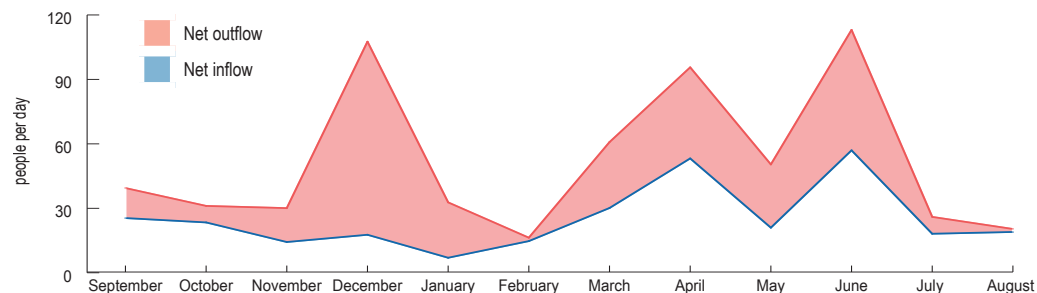
During July and August, there was continued movement from Akobo Town toward Wanding in Upper Nile. KIs leaving for Wanding reported that it was a less costly way of travelling to Ethiopia.

Returns to Jonglei

Movement from Ethiopia to Akobo

During July and August, arrivals from Ethiopian refugee camps to Akobo have decreased, from

Figure 1: Average monthly movement trends of people permanently leaving (red) and people permanently returning (blue) per day from September 2016 to August 2017.



an average of 58 individuals per day in June to on average 21 individuals per day in August. Similar to previous months, returning home to be with family (19%) and a lack of work (19%) were the two most common reasons reported by those returning to South Sudan.⁵

Movement from Juba to Bor South

Some IDPs originally from Bor South continued to return to Jonglei from parts of the Equatorias, predominantly Juba. According to FGD participants, many of these IDPs were now returning due to crime-related insecurity and high prices in Juba. FGD participants coming from outside of Juba reported conflict and a lack of humanitarian assistance as the primary push factors.

Situation in Assessed Communities

Food Security and Livelihoods

In August, access to food remained low across the state. Only 40% of assessed settlements in July and 35% in August reported adequate access to food, which nevertheless constitutes a slight improvement from June (28%). Moreover, access to food varied between counties as steady improvements in the Bor South-Duk corridor contrasted with decreasing access in Greater Akobo, Ayod and Fangak.

Bor South-Duk Corridor

Food access has risen steadily in the Bor South-Duk corridor, which can be attributed to the arrival of the green harvest.⁶ The proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate

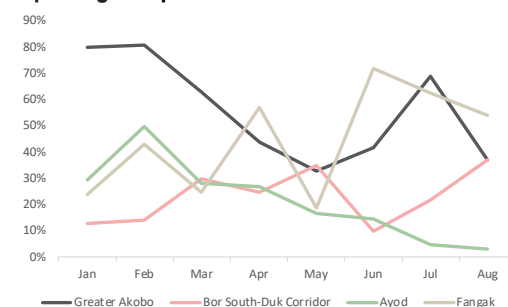
access to food has increased from 10% in June, to 22% in July, and 37% in August. Reflective of this, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting cultivation as their main food source increased in Bor South from 13% in July to 29% in August, and in Twic East from 0% in July to 23% in August. In Duk, however, cultivation was only reported as a main food source by 5% of assessed settlements in August.

The effects of the harvest season can also be seen in the increase in agricultural activity across all three counties. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting growing crops for sustenance has increased from 24% in June to 68% in August. Assessed settlements further reported an increase in access to agricultural inputs, from 19% in June to 71% in August.

However, despite the improvements, adequate access to food remained low. This is likely due to insecurity in the region as 67% of the settlements with inadequate access to food reported an unsafe cultivation environment as the primary reason.

Moreover, while markets remained the main

Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in 2017



source of food in all three counties during August, reported by 34% of assessed settlements, households' purchasing power has decreased. Deteriorating security conditions on the main supply road from Juba have restricted the flow of goods and increased prices. Without improvements in road access or reductions in prices, it is unclear how sustainable recent increases in food access will be.

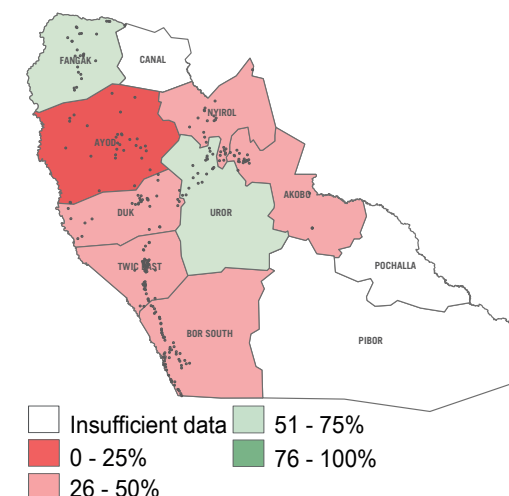
Greater Akobo

In Greater Akobo, where the green harvest was yet to arrive in August,⁷ conflict and delayed rains caused access to food to fall once again. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food dropped from 69% in July to 37% in August.

The decline in assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food was particularly steep in Akobo County, where the proportion of assessed settlements with adequate access to food fell from 93% in July to 29% in August. The decrease can be partly attributed to reduced humanitarian assistance, with over half (54%) of assessed settlements reporting humanitarian assistance to be their main source of food in Akobo in July compared to 11% in August. Correspondingly, the proportion of assessed settlements that received food assistance fell from 78% in July to 41% in August, which could be due to delays in scheduled food distributions by humanitarian partners.⁸

The apparent decrease in food access may also be partly attributable to the closure of Akobo Town market in response to conflict between communities. The proportion of assessed

Map 3: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food, August 2017



settlements reporting market access in Akobo fell from 63% in July to 33% in August.

The dependency on food assistance and markets rather than own production will likely continue throughout Greater Akobo, as many households were displaced during the planting season. For those who were able to cultivate, humanitarian actors reported that due to reduced rains and fall armyworm attacking maize crops, below average yields are expected.

Ayod

Access to food continued to decrease in Ayod, from 15% assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in June, to only 5% in July and 3% in August. Assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reported that natural destruction of crops (85%), an

5 Ibid.

6 FEWSNET, [South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update](#), August 2017.

7 Ibid.

8 WFP, [IRRM Update as of 14 August 2017](#).

unsafe cultivation environment (61%) and high commodity prices (41%) were the top three reasons for inadequate access to food. FGD participants reported that high levels of conflict in the county, combined with reduced rainfall in May and June, prevented seeds from germinating. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to seeds and other agricultural inputs in Ayod was just 23% in August, which was considerably lower than any other assessed county in Jonglei.

Fangak

While more assessed settlements reported adequate access to food in Fangak, the proportion still declined, from 72% in June to 54% in August. The most frequent reasons reported by assessed settlements with inadequate access to food were crops being destroyed by fighting (30%) and a short growing season (30%).

Coping Strategies

With low levels of adequate access to food reported across all counties, assessed settlements that encountered food consumption gaps reportedly adopted various resource and consumption-based coping strategies. Resource-based coping strategies, such as buying less expensive food, borrowing food, and selling livestock were used by, respectively, 44%, 33% and 22% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food. The sale of livestock may be regarded as a short-term coping strategy as it may lead to a depletion of household assets. FGD participants also reported that reliance on wild foods, such as

thou leaves, was common in Northern Jonglei. Many households in Jonglei also resorted to consumption-based coping strategies, such as limiting meal sizes, which was reported as a coping strategy by 34% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food.

Reflective of the sharp decrease in access to food, severe consumption coping strategies were particularly common in Greater Akobo, where 63% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reported reducing the number of meals eaten in a day, and 55% reported only letting children eat.

The prevalence of severe coping strategies and the persistence of low levels of adequate food access throughout Jonglei suggest that many populations had difficulties meeting their immediate food needs.

Protection

Violence continued to constitute protection concerns for populations in Jonglei during July and August. In August, the highest reported threat to both men and women was being killed or injured by people from outside the

Figure 3: Perceived security reported in assessed settlements, August 2017



community. This was reported as the primary security concern for men by 74% of assessed settlements, and 51% for women. According to KIs, Nyirol and Akobo were particularly affected by violent conflict during August.

Sexual violence remained a crucial protection concern in Jonglei, particularly in Greater Akobo. Fifty-five percent (55%) of assessed settlements in the region reported sexual violence as the primary safety concern for women in August, similar to 61% reported in July.

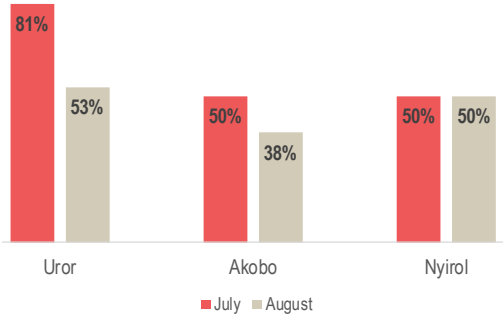
Forty-four percent (44%) of assessed settlements reported that children never felt safe in August, similar to 52% in June. Abduction was the primary safety concern, as reported by 58% of assessed settlements. This was particularly pressing along the Bor South-Duk corridor, where 87% of assessed settlements indicated it as the main concern. This is likely due to the prevalence of cattle raids, during which children are reportedly at risk of abduction.

Shelter

Across Jonglei, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting shelter damage in July (20%) and August (12%) fell compared to June (26%). Much of this decrease may be explained by the reduction of large-scale conflict in Greater Akobo, where the proportion of assessed settlements reporting shelter damage decreased from 61% in July to 47% in August.

The proportion of assessed settlements with IDP presence reporting that those IDPs were

Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting shelter damage in the past month

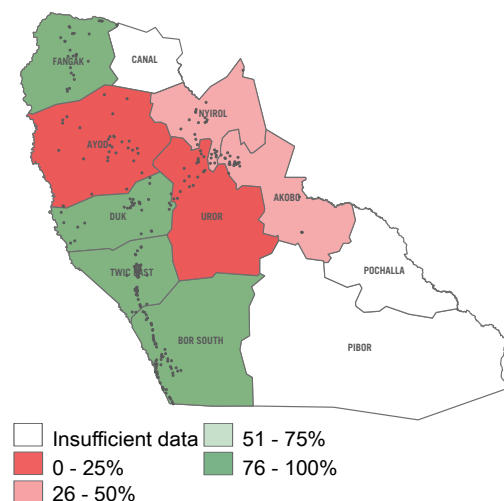


staying in tukuls rose from 37% in June to 43% in July and 57% in August in Jonglei. This may be reflective of the reduced movement of IDPs as tukuls are typically more permanent structures. In Ayod, in contrast, improvised structures remained the main shelter type for IDPs, reported by all IDP hosting settlements that were assessed in August. New arrivals in Bor PoC site from Ayod reported that IDPs in Ayod were provided with materials to build temporary shelters. This suggests low capacity of local populations to absorb IDPs' shelter needs. FGD participants further reported that many of these IDPs are at risk of contracting illnesses from exposure to heavy rainfall as the plastic sheets used to protect their shelters have worn thin.

Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

In July and August the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare was 66% and 71% respectively, similar to 65% in June. The reported proportions were lowest in Greater Akobo (25%) and Ayod (23%). Likely

Map 4: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare, August 2017



linked to conflict, assessed settlements in Greater Akobo reported insecurity (39%) and a lack of drugs (21%) as the main reasons for low levels of healthcare access, while assessed settlements in Ayod reported a lack of staff (47%) and destruction of facilities (21%) as the main reasons.

The limited access to healthcare is particularly concerning given that malaria has increased in the rainy season, overtaking conflict to become the most frequently cited leading cause of death, reported by 31% of assessed settlements. Displacement has left many IDPs more vulnerable to the disease as FGD participants reported lacking mosquito nets during long journeys on foot.

Since mid-June, there has been a decrease in confirmed incidents of cholera, with no confirmed cases found in the final week of August.⁹ This follows from over 2,500 cases

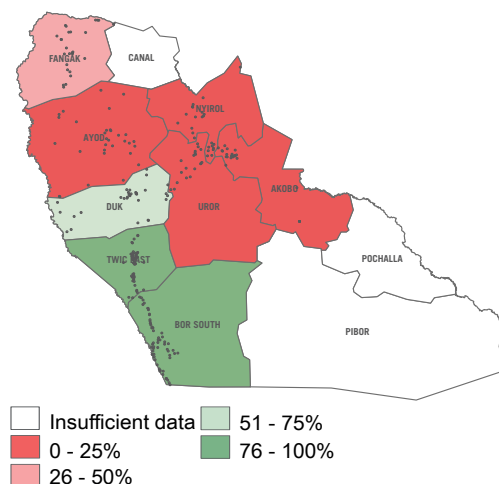
being declared in Ayod in May. Moreover, 83% of assessed settlements reported access to clean water in August, reducing the risk of further outbreaks.

However, in Fangak and Ayod, access to clean water was much lower, reported by 28% and 54% of assessed settlements respectively. In addition, these counties had the highest reported rates of open defecation, with an average of 95% of assessed settlements in August reporting that no residents used latrines. This is distinctly higher than the overall proportion for Jonglei (69%). The combination of unclean water sources and poor sanitation increased the risk of waterborne diseases.

Education

In August, 51% of assessed settlements reported access to education services, similar to June (47%). In conflict-affected Nyirol and Uror, access to education was

Map 5: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting access to education, August 2017



reportedly lowest, with 5% and 6% of assessed settlements reporting access respectively. The main barriers to education were insecurity (37%) and no available educational facilities (27%) as reported by assessed settlements with no access to education.

Of the settlements with access to education, the proportion reporting that over half of boys were attending school regularly increased from 43% in June, to 67% in August. The increase could be attributed to boys staying in settlements during the wet season due to cattle grazing nearby. However, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting that more than half of girls were attending school remained extremely low at 5% in August, similar to previous months.

Conclusion

In July and August population movement has slowed across Jonglei, but insecurity continued to disrupt livelihoods and access to services. Many IDPs remained in remote locations, in particular in Uror and Nyirol Counties. Those IDPs who have reached displacement sites in Greater Akobo were reported to face food shortages. Many depend on humanitarian assistance as displacement, limited resources, and reduced rains in June disrupted cultivation.

High levels of food insecurity persisted throughout Jonglei, despite slight improvements due to the first crop harvest in the Bor South-Duk corridor. There was a continued need for humanitarian assistance, particularly in Ayod, where access to food was extremely low.

WASH concerns appeared to be most pressing in Ayod and Fangak, as compared to other

counties. Limited access to clean water and latrines exposed populations to the risk of further outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

Given the probability of continued population movements after the rainy season, the need for portable Non-Food Items (NFIs), such as mosquito nets, remains high. These may help counter the rising rates of malaria and are particularly urgent in Greater Akobo and Ayod, where access to health care is reportedly lower.

Humanitarian needs seem to be most severe in conflict-affected Greater Akobo, especially with rising dependency on humanitarian assistance and prevalence of IDPs in remote locations. Ensuring humanitarian access to assist conflict-affected populations, both in the immediate and in the long-term, will be critical in responding to population needs in Jonglei.

About REACH Initiative

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

For more information, you can write to our in-country office: southsudan@reach-initiative.org or to our global office: geneva@reach-initiative.org.

Visit www.reach-initiative.org and follow us @REACH_info.

⁹ WHO, [IDSR Epidemiological Update W35](#), 28 August - 3 September 2017.