

Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, South Sudan

January - March 2019

REACH An initiative of
IMPACT Initiatives,
ACTED and UNOSAT

Introduction

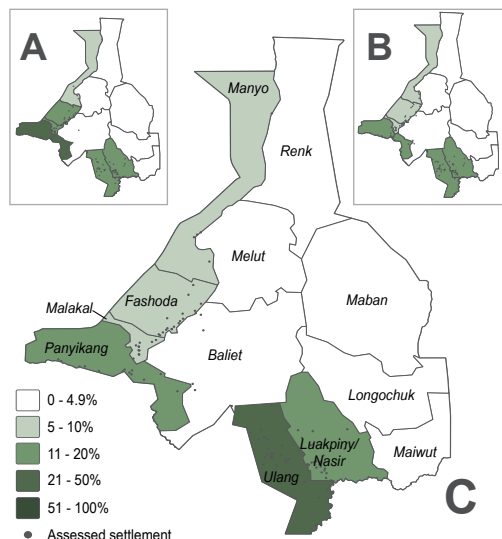
In the first quarter of 2019, Upper Nile State (UNS) saw population inflows from neighbouring Sudan and Ethiopia combined with localised insecurity in parts of the state. Data on needs in UNS is required to inform the humanitarian response. However, information gaps exist due to different regional dynamics and limited access throughout much of the state.

To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015. Data is collected on a monthly basis through interviews with key informants with knowledge of a settlement and triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs). This Situation Overview uses this data to analyse changes in observed humanitarian needs across UNS in the first quarter of 2019. Primary data was triangulated with secondary information and past REACH assessments.

The REACH team consistently covered Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda, Manyo, Ulang and Nasir counties from January to March of 2019 (Map 1). Information by sector is

of key informant interviews conducted: **408**
of assessed settlements: **188**
of counties covered: **6 (of 12)**
of focus group discussions conducted: **8**

Map 1: Assessment coverage in UNS in January (A), February (B) and March 2019 (C)



often presented across two geographic zones in UNS: the western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties) and southeastern UNS (Nasir and Ulang counties).

Key Findings

Internal **displacement** continued in UNS throughout the quarter, with a large majority of assessed settlements reporting the current presence of IDPs in March (80%). The proportion of assessed settlements reporting **IDP returns** increased, from 50% in December, to 77% in March; as did the proportion reporting

refugee returns, from 56% to 72%.

The population movements seen in the first quarter may exacerbate the high **food security and livelihoods (FSL)** needs across UNS. Poor rains and a shortened growing season in the last quarter of 2018¹ combined with high market prices² in the first quarter has resulted in the proportion of assessed western bank settlements reporting adequate access to food falling from 29% in December to just 17% in March. As a result, many settlements reported relying on displacement camps or other coping strategies to meet their needs.

In addition, **protection** concerns persisted, largely centred on SGBV for women and intra-communal violence for men across assessed areas of UNS. Meanwhile, assessed settlements in parts of the western bank reported increased concerns for the forced recruitment of boys and intra-communal violence for men in quarter one.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) needs remained high, particularly in western bank counties, with 81% of those assessed settlements in March reporting their main source of water to be rivers. Likewise, only 19% of assessed settlements reported residents used latrines, which has increased the risk of waterborne diseases. Of assessed western bank settlements in March, 26% reported a waterborne disease as the most common

METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Upper Nile State (UNS), REACH uses primary data from key informants who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or "Area of Knowledge" (AoK). Information for this report was collected from key informants in Malakal PoC site in Upper Nile State in January, February and March 2019.

In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted throughout the month using a structured survey tool. After data collection was completed, all data was aggregated at settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal or most credible response. When no consensus could be found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting.

Only counties with interview coverage of at least 5% of all settlements³ in a given month were included in analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month vary. In order to reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, over time analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam⁴ coverage over the period.

Quantitative findings were triangulated with FGDs and secondary sources.

More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK](#) ToRs.

1. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, January 2019.

2. DRC, Tonga Rapid Assessment Report, February 2019 and primary reports from key informants interviews

3. To calculate the percentage of AoK coverage, the total number of settlements per county is based on OCHA settlement lists in addition to new settlements mapped by KIs reached each month.

4. Payams are the administrative unit at the sub-county level in South Sudan.

cause of death.

The most commonly reported **health** problem across assessed UNS settlements was malaria (42% in March), corresponding with poor **shelter** conditions and a lack of mosquito nets. Of assessed settlements in southeastern UNS with IDPs, 76% reported some IDPs sleeping in the open and 28% reported mosquito nets as the most needed **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**.

On the other hand, the proportion of assessed settlements across UNS reporting access to **education** increased from 25% in December, to 43% in March. This may be due to increased mobility discussed in the next section.

Population Movement and Displacement

In the first quarter of 2019, relatively improved security following localised confidence-building measures⁵ between armed actors across parts of UNS, coupled with seasonal road passability during the dry season, contributed to enabling an apparent continuation of population movements seen at the end of 2018 (Map 2). In addition, cross-border movement appeared to be driven by an array of push and pull factors as outlined in subsequent sections.

Self-reported refugee returns from Sudan

Movement continued from the White Nile and South Kordofan regions of Sudan toward central UNS and the western Bank in this quarter. Of western Bank settlements assessed in March, 47% reported refugee returns in the previous three months. REACH port and road

monitoring in Renk Town tracks population flows between and through Renk and Sudan (primarily from Khartoum and White Nile region refugee camps)⁶. Data from this activity suggests an increase in inflows via Renk town

in December, with a peak of an average of 41 individuals per day recorded entering South Sudan. This corresponded to an increase in the proportion of assessed western bank settlements reporting refugee returns over the

first quarter, from 45% in December, to 75% by March. Of those settlements reporting refugee returns, in March 53% reported the most recent arrivals had arrived in the last three months, as compared with 12% in December.

However, inbound movements through Renk Town in the first quarter of persons intended to stay for more than six months then continued, albeit at a declining rate, with an average of 21 per day in February⁷ (compared with 41 in December). Population movements were likely reduced by political unrest in Sudan beginning in late 2018 and the formal closure of the border crossing in mid-March, with inflows expected to resume at higher levels should movement restrictions loosen in coming months.⁸

Many of the return movements from Sudan appeared to be largely driven by high humanitarian needs in the refugee camps. Return movements to the area around Kaka in Manyo County from refugee camps in White Nile and South Kordofan regions of Sudan were reportedly pushed by the deterioration of living conditions inside the camps including food security and protection concerns⁹. Similarly, returnees to Tonga from the South Kordofan region reported increasingly poor conditions in refugee camps including an acute lack of food and shelter as major reasons for their return.¹⁰ Inflows to South Sudan through Renk town in February primarily reported lack of shelter (33%), distance from family members (26%), and lack of health services (13%) as push factors for leaving Sudan.¹¹

The same inflows primarily reported Malakal

Map 2: Movement into, out of, and within UNS, January-March 2019



5. Reported by humanitarian partners, December 2018.

6. REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, February 2019](#).

7. Idem. Numbers are indicative only and do not capture all movements as not all entry points into Renk are monitored systematically.

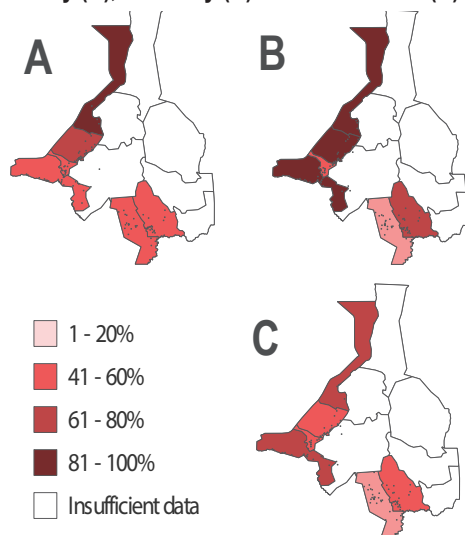
8. Reported by Humanitarian Partners, April 2019.

9. ICWG, Assessment Report: Kaka and Akurwa, Manyo County, February 2019.

10. DRC, Tonga Rapid Assessment Report, February 2019.

11. REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, February 2019](#).

Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting the arrival of IDP or refugee returns in the previous three months in: January (A), February (B) and March 2019 (C)



PoC site (51%) as well as Renk, Melut and Fashoda counties as their final destinations, with the largest shares reporting their principle motivations being the perceived availability of food (33%) and family reunification (31%).¹¹ Of particular concern to the vulnerability of returning populations is that as of January, Fashoda and Panyikang counties were already classified in IPC Phase 4 ('Emergency'), with populations in Phase 5 ('Catasrophe') in Panyikang.¹² While no assessed settlement in the western bank reported new arrivals as a barrier to food access in the fourth quarter of 2018, by March proportions of those assessed settlements in Fashoda County (13%), Manyo County (30%), and Malakal County (60%)

reported new arrivals as the main reason people could not access enough food.

Further, inflows from Sudan in the first quarter remained primarily partial families, with respondents reporting that they anticipated evaluating security and service conditions over the first quarter before making the decision about whether to bring the rest of their families.¹³ In Manyo and Panyikang counties, the increased presence of different armed actors reportedly dissuaded movement to some areas.¹⁴

Self-reported returns to Southeastern UNS

Beginning in December 2018, and despite localised insecurity in Nasir County in that month, southeastern UNS saw spontaneous returns from neighbouring Ethiopia into Ulang, Nasir, Maiwut and Longochuk counties. Assessments by humanitarian partners¹⁵ and primary data collected¹⁶ in the first quarter confirmed initial reports¹⁷ suggesting the inflow was partly driven by insecurity in refugee camps in the Gambella region and challenges accessing food there, with most returnees reportedly moving back to their places of origin.

The main entry points for returns from Ethiopia were identified as Burebiey (for Nasir County), Jekow, and Pagak (for Maiwut County).¹⁸ A smaller share of returns to Greater Longochuk came from Sudan, reportedly motivated by perceptions of improved security and access to markets in Mathiang town.¹⁶

Of concern to the vulnerability of returning populations is that of January, Maiwut County was projected to be in IPC Phase 4 from

February through July 2019, indicating very high levels of food insecurity.¹⁵ At the same time, Ulang and Nasir counties were projected Phase 4 from May to July, with Longochuk County projected Phase 3.¹²

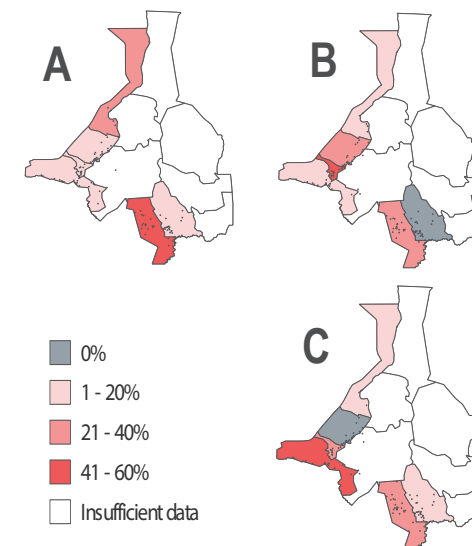
Many people returning to Longochuk County were reportedly arriving at their destinations without food.¹⁶ Moreover, assessments by humanitarian partners in the first quarter in Maiwut and Nasir counties report that food assistance was a primary need, and therefore reliance of returnees on host community support is putting considerable strain on the already limited resources of these communities.²⁰

Internal Movements

Meanwhile, Mathiang town also saw increasing IDP returns from Nasir, other parts of Longochuk, Melut, Malakal PoC site and Maban.¹⁶ The majority of IDP returnees reportedly began arriving to Longochuk County in February, once travel routes had finally dried and therefore became more easily passable.¹⁶ These former IDPs have reportedly returned to their settlements of origin, with many motivated by deteriorating conditions and community relations²¹ in their sites of displacement and perceptions of improved food access in Mathiang Town due to recent market expansion.¹⁶

According to primary data for the whole of the western bank, 53% of settlements assessed in March reported IDP returns in the previous three months. Overall, reporting from assessed settlements was consistent with FGD reports

Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting arrival of IDPs in the last 3 months: January (A), February (B) and March 2019 (C)



of a surge in IDP return movements across the western bank in the period of December to January, reportedly motivated in part by improved market access and intentions to cultivate.²² However, movement to eastern Panyikang County reportedly remained limited due to concerns over possible land disputes.²²

According to primary data, both Panyikang County in the western bank and Ulang County in southeastern UNS experienced IDP arrivals in the first quarter. In March, of assessed settlements in Panyikang County, 54% reported the arrival or IDPs in the previous 3 months, with the most recent arrivals reportedly coming from Fashoda County (36%), Fangak County in Jonglei State (18%), and other areas of Panyikang County (18%).

11. REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, February 2019](#).

12. IPC, [South Sudan Key Messages](#), January 2019.

13. According to returnee FGD participants interviewed by REACH, Dec. 2018.

14. DRC, Kaka Rapid Assessment Report, January 2019.

15. OCHA, Detailed Report from IRNA to Mandeng, Nasir County, March 2019.

16. According to host and refugee returnee FGD participants interviewed by

REACH in Mathiang town, March 2019.

17. ECHO Daily Flash, Ethiopia -Inter-communal fighting in South Sudanese refugee camps, 21 January 2019.

18. IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Event Tracking: Influx from Gambella to multiple locations in the vicinity of Maiwut and Nasir, February 2019.

19. IPC, Acute Food Insecurity & Malnutrition Analysis for Jan-July, Feb. 2019.

20. OCHA, Detailed Report from IRNA to Mandeng, Nasir County, March 2019

21. UNHCR, Melut Mission Report, February 2019; According to IDP returnee FGD participants interviewed by REACH in Longochuk county, March 2019

22. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, Dec. 2018.

While the fourth quarter of 2018 saw displacement in Ulang and Nasir counties associated with some insecurity in Nasir County in late December,²³ primary data suggested that displacement from these counties abated in the first quarter. Of assessed settlement in March, only 5% of those in Nasir County reported IDP arrivals in the preceding 3 months, while 38% in Ulang County reported the arrival of IDPs in that timeframe, with most (60%) of those coming from Nyirol County in Jonglei State.

Situation in Assessed Settlements

Food security and livelihoods (FSL)

Despite harvests in the previous quarter, food insecurity and limited livelihoods opportunities remained challenges across assessed UNS counties in the first quarter of 2019. Primary data suggested stable, but partly assistance-reliant, access to food in Ulang and Nasir counties, some deterioration in access to food in Fashoda and Manyo counties and continually limited access to food in Panyikang County as well as a possible early-onset lean season across the western bank.

Across all assessed UNS settlements, 36% reported sufficient access to food in March, comparable to 42% in December. The severity of hunger may have been relatively stable as no assessed UNS settlements with inadequate access to food reported that hunger was the worst it could be any time in this quarter. Corresponding to these findings of low access to food across many of the assessed areas of

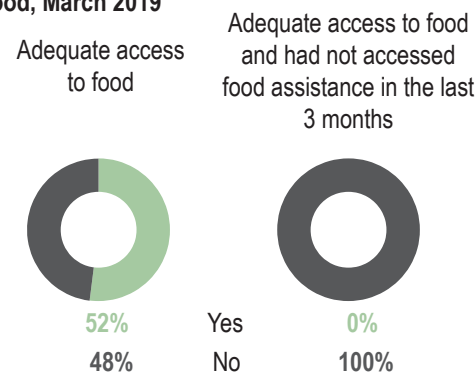
UNS, several counties were projected by IPC to be classified in Phase 4 'Emergency' for the period of April and May, including parts of the western bank (Panyikang, Fashoda, and Manyo counties), and southeastern UNS (Nasir and Longochuk counties).²⁴

The largest shares of all assessed UNS settlements with inadequate access to food attributed their hunger to: high prices (16%), unsafe access to land (14%) and the stopping of food distributions (10%), though the reasons for reliance on food aid varied by region.

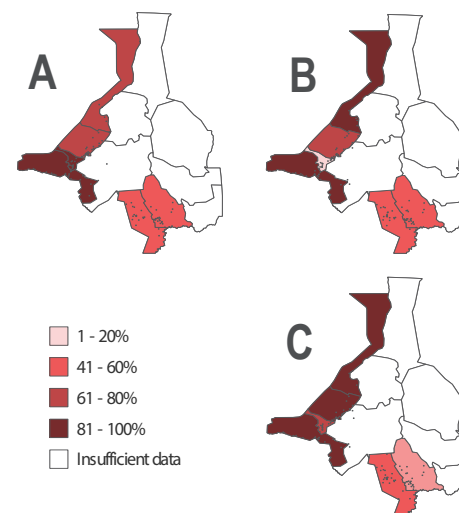
Southeastern UNS (Ulang & Nasir counties)

Access to food in assessed counties of southeastern UNS was higher and more stable than in the western bank, though this may reflect the impact of humanitarian food assistance programmes. More than half (52%) of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported adequate access to food in March, with these figures remaining consistent

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed SE UNS settlements reporting adequate access to food, March 2019



Map 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food in: January (A), February (B) and March 2019 (C)



over the first quarter.

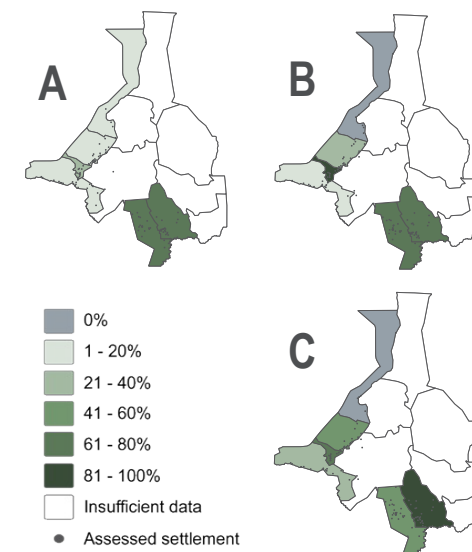
Improved access to food was likely, in part, attributable to food assistance (Figure 1). By March, 73% of assessed Ulang and Nasir County settlements reported accessing food assistance in the last three months, the highest of assessed UNS counties outside of Malakal County (also 73% in March). However, all assessed settlements with adequate access to food also reported receiving food assistance in the last three months and no settlement without assistance reported adequate access to food.

The primary reasons reported by assessed settlements in Ulang with inadequate access to food in March were that it was unsafe to access land (62%) and the stopping of food distributions (38%). Similarly for Nasir County but in different

proportions, the reasons were the stopping of food distributions (67%) and unsafe access to land (33%). These reports show reliance on humanitarian assistance likely attributable to years of conflict disrupting agriculture. IDP returns may have further limited access to food in some settlements, as throughout the first quarter, all assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reporting IDP returns or arrivals in the previous three months reported that this had a small impact on access to food.

Likely as a result of the limited access to food, a high proportion of assessed settlements in UNS reported severe food consumption and livelihood coping strategies. In March, the

Map 6: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting having received food assistance in the last 3 months in: January (A), February (B) and March 2019 (C)

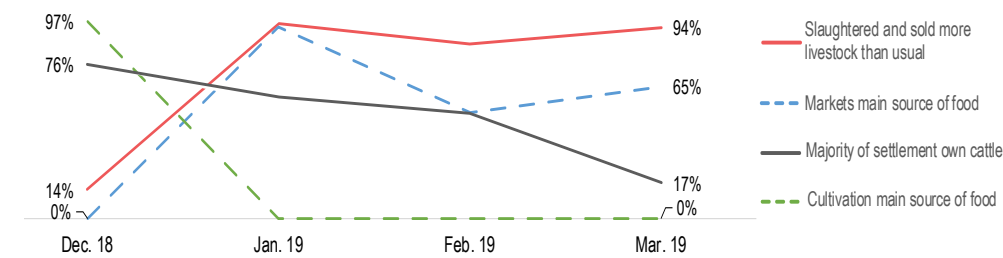


proportion of assessed settlements reporting that households ate less than three meals per day (20%) was the highest across assessed UNS counties. In March, assessed Ulang and Nasir counties had the highest proportion of assessed settlements reporting severe coping mechanisms during times of hunger including going days without eating (43%), only children eating (43%), begging for food (46%, up from 14% over the fourth quarter), sending family members to displacement camps (46%, up from 17% over the fourth quarter), and selling more livestock than usual (100%). These figures were similar to those reported over the fourth quarter of 2018, with the exception of family members begging and being sent to displacement camps (both 46% in March, compared with 19% and 0% in December). Such severe coping mechanisms may further limit future food security independent of humanitarian assistance by reducing assets and eroding resilience.

Western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties)

Access to food varied across the western bank in the first quarter: demonstrating signs of deterioration in Fashoda and Manyo counties, consistently very low access in Panyikang County and continued reliance on food assistance in Malakal County. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food in Panyikang was consistently very low, reported by just 4% of assessed settlements in March. In Fashoda and Malakal counties, the proportion of assessed

Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting food sources and coping strategies in Fashoda and Manyo counties



settlements reporting adequate access to food remained similar between January (18%) and March (24%), though there was a considerable improvement in February (37% for Fashoda and 92% for Malakal County). Such variation in access to food may have been attributable to differences in food assistance coverage.

Across settlements assessed in the western bank in March, the largest reported barrier to accessing food were high market prices (42%, up from 22% in December), in contrast to poor rains and growing season reported in the previous quarter (amid secondary reports of a poor harvest in southern Manyo County as a result of poor rains).²⁵

In January, assessed settlements in Fashoda and Manyo counties reported the main source of food transitioned from cultivation (97% of assessed settlements at its peak in December) to markets (65%), livestock (22%), and food assistance (13%) by March (Fig. 2). Furthermore, reports over the first quarter of slaughtering and selling more livestock than usual, a shift towards markets, and a decrease in cattle ownership may be indicative of an early

onset lean season in Manyo and Fashoda. This may have been exacerbated by reportedly high rates of livestock disease outbreaks in Fashoda County rising from 29% of assessed settlements reporting in December to 83% in March.

During lean season, normally running from May to August after most households' own crops have been consumed, western bank populations rely on dairy and other animal products, so selling more cattle than usual in the first quarter may reduce households' ability to adopt coping mechanisms further into the lean season.²⁶ Moreover, for Fashoda and Manyo (and to a lesser extent Panyikang) where large proportions of assessed settlements reported markets as a principle source of food and high prices as a barrier (lack of access due to reportedly high prices rose from 41% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food in December to 52% in March), prices are expected to rise in coming months due to logistical constraints brought by the onset of the rainy season.²⁷

Meanwhile, reports from Malakal County of

cultivation as the main source of food spiked in January (69% of assessed settlements), after which the reported main sources of food diversified for February and March, with the predominant sources reported being food assistance (45%) and fishing (20%). Of assessed settlements in Malakal which reported inadequate access to food in March, the most commonly cited reason was that it was unsafe to access land (26%).

In Panyikang County, the primary source of food reported by assessed settlements shifted from predominantly markets (73%) in December to cultivation (38%), fishing (31%), and livestock (15%) in March. Similarly, and in line with cultivation as the main source of food in Panyikang over the same period, lack of rain as the main reported factor grew from 25% of assessed Panyikang County settlements with inadequate access to food in January to 46%

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting severe coping mechanisms, Panyikang County

	Sending family to cattle camps	Skipping meals	Eating <2 meals per day	Eating wild food
Dec-18	0%	7%	20%	80%
Jan-19	5%	15%	25%	95%
Feb-19	6%	24%	31%	63%
Mar-19	38%	58%	54%	54%

25. ICWG, Assessment Report: Kaka and Akurwa, Manyo County. February 2019. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, January 2019.

26. FEWSNET, Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for the Republic of South Sudan (Updated). August 2018.

27. ICWG, Assessment Report: Kaka and Akurwa, Manyo County. February 2019; DRC, Tonga Rapid Assessment Report, February, 2019.

by March, while reports of high prices grew from 5% to 25% over this period, reflective of poor harvests and a subsequent shift towards markets as a source of food.

Meanwhile, consumption-based coping mechanisms were increasingly reported over this period including reducing the number of meals, skipping meals, and sending family members to cattle camps (Figure 3). While reported consumption of wild foods increased in the western bank over the first quarter, from 60% of assessed settlements in January to 88% by March, consumption of wild foods in Panyikang County reportedly decreased from 95% in January to 54% by March, which may indicate the partial exhaustion of this coping strategy.

The consistently very high reports of insufficient food access and reports of increasingly severe coping strategies indicate very high FSL needs, in line with Panyikang’s IPC classification as Phase 4 ‘Emergency’ in March (with some populations in Phase 5 as of January).²⁸

Protection

Fear of insecurity across assessed areas of UNS continued to drive protection concerns in the first quarter. The proportion of assessed UNS settlements reporting most people did not feel safe most of the time was comparable to that in the previous quarter: 45% in March versus 44% in December.

The primary protection concerns in the first quarter demonstrated little change from the third and fourth quarters,²⁹ with assessed settlements

majorly reporting sexual and domestic violence and family separation for women, and both intra³⁰ and inter-communal violence and cattle raids for men (Figure 4). The proportion of assessed settlements reporting sexual violence as the main protection concern fell over the first quarter (15% in March as compared with 29% in December). Over the same period, the increase in reported intra-communal violence reported as the main protection concern for men in the fourth quarter (28% of assessed settlements in December) lessened slightly.

Southeastern UNS (Ulang and Nasir)

Protection concerns in assessed Ulang and Nasir County settlements concentrated on inter-communal violence: 43% of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported a conflict resulting in the death of at least one civilian in March, comparable to 40% in December. Cattle raiding is most common in the dry season with cattle migrating further from settlements toward grazing areas, which may contribute to inter-communal violence. Reports of inter-communal violence as the main protection concern for men were particularly high in Ulang County (30% of assessed settlements in March versus 7% for Nasir). Similarly, of assessed settlements in Ulang

and Nasir counties in March, 73% of those in Ulang reported that the majority of people did not feel safe, while the same was reported by 46% in Nasir. Further, likely corresponding with the continued displacement, a large share (74%) of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported the presence of unaccompanied minors in March.

Western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties)

In comparison, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting crime as a protection concern reduced. The spike in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting incidents of looting observed in the festive season of quarter four largely subsided in the first quarter, falling to 9% of in March, compared with 26% in December. As in the previous quarter, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting such incidents was higher in Malakal County than in other areas of the western bank. This may be attributable to the concentration of the population around Malakal town and PoC site, as well as increased economic pressures on its residents to support newly arrived family members from elsewhere in UNS and Sudan.³² While no settlement in Fashoda or Manyo counties had reported the forced recruitment of

Figure 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting forced recruitment as the primary protection concern for boys (under 18 years)

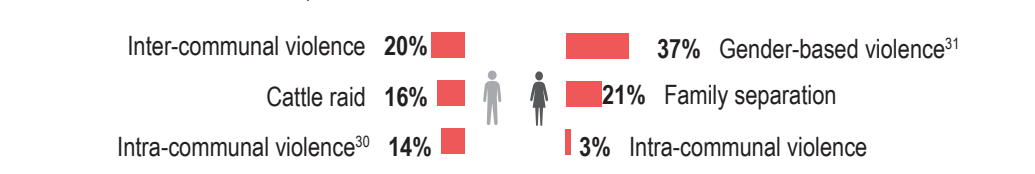
	Panyikang	Malakal	Fashoda	Manyo
Dec-18	60%	7%	0%	0%
Jan-19	5%	0%	23%	67%
Feb-19	0%	0%	26%	17%
Mar-19	0%	23%	33%	40%

boys as a main concern in December, by March 35% of assessed settlements in these counties were reporting it as the major concern. Reports of forced recruitment as the primary protection concern rose across western bank counties with the exception of Panyikang, from near-zero in December, to 23% for Malakal County, 33% for Fashoda County, and 40% for Manyo County by March (Figure 5).

Conversely, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting forced recruitment as the main protection concern for boys (younger than 18 years) in Panyikang County decreased sharply in the first quarter: no assessed settlements reported forced recruitment as the primary protection concern for boys in March, from 60% in December.

In Manyo and Fashoda counties, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting main protection concerns associated with violence for men (over 18 years) more than doubled

Figure 4: Most cited protection concerns for men and women (18 years and older) in assessed UNS settlements, March 2019



28. IPC, Acute Food Insecurity & Malnutrition Analysis for Jan-July, February 2019.
 29. REACH, *Situational Overview, Upper Nile State, October - December 2018*.
 30. Intra-communal violence represents the aggregation of two response options: killing or injury from a member of the same tribe and violence between neighbours.
 31. Gender-based violence represents the aggregation of two response options: domestic violence and sexual violence
 32. According to FGD participants in Malakal PoC site, January 2019.

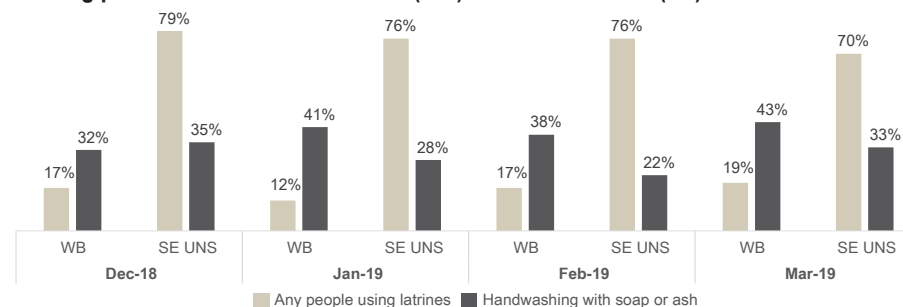
over the first quarter, increasing from 7% for inter-communal violence and 14% for intra-communal violence in December to 17% and 43%, respectively in March. In Fashoda County in particular, reports from assessed settlements of violence from neighbours as the main safety concern for men were up from 9% in December to a consistent 37 to 39% over the first quarter. This may be reflective of dry season tensions and at least partially attributable to reported returns to these areas in the previous months and associated competition for resources.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Health

WASH and health indicators demonstrated little change between the fourth and first quarters, with WASH needs remaining high.

In the western bank, access to clean water was consistently the worst of assessed areas of UNS, with the largest proportion of assessed settlements reporting sourcing water primarily from unprotected sources: only 2% of assessed western bank settlements reported access to a functional borehole by March, while most (81%) fetched water primarily from rivers. Low reported access to protected water sources is especially concerning given reportedly poor sanitation practices across the area: with only 19% of assessed western bank settlements reported anyone using latrines in March (Figure 6). In March, the main causes of premature death reported in assessed western bank settlements were malaria (reported by 45% of assessed settlements), typhoid (24%), and cholera or diarrhoea (12%) with transmission of

Figure 6: Proportion of assessed UNS settlements reporting any latrine use and hygienic handwashing practices in the western bank (WB) and southeastern (SE) UNS



the latter two waterborne diseases likely largely attributable to poor WASH infrastructure and practices.

In southeastern UNS, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to improved water sources was higher though continually restricted due to insecurity in many assessed settlements. The largest portion (46%) of assessed Ulang and Nasir County settlements continued to report boreholes as their primary water source in March, slightly down from 58% in December. However, 46% of assessed Ulang and Nasir County settlements in March reported that people could not access their preferred water point due to fears of insecurity, a slight increase from 33% in December and reflective of protection concerns outlined in the previous section. Sanitation practices were also better among assessed southeastern settlements: where 70% reported people using latrines in March, comparable to 79% in December.

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare improved in the

western bank over the first quarter, from 72% in December, to 85% in March. Meanwhile, reported access to healthcare remained stable in Ulang and Nasir counties over the same period (Figure 7). Although the largest share (42%) of assessed UNS settlements continued to report malaria or fever as their primary health problem by March (down from 55% in December), waterborne diseases and malnutrition continued to present challenges in parts the state. Over the first quarter, 23% of assessed settlements in the western bank reported waterborne diseases as their primary health problem in February, similar to 20% in December. This may reflect continued challenges with accessing water from unprotected sources, especially in counties reporting population growth due to inflows.

In addition, in March 22% of assessed settlements in Manyo and Fashoda counties reported an unspecified skin disease as their primary health problem, while 9% reported chicken pox as their primary concern. The previous month, 8% of assessed settlements in

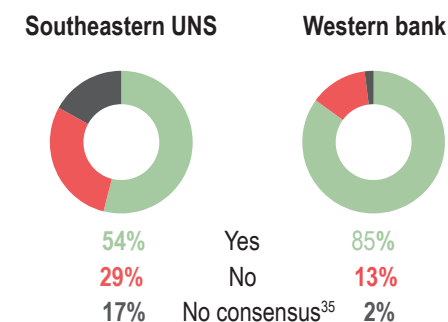
these counties reported measles as their main health problem. These reports are particularly concerning given the ongoing measles outbreak.³³

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

Assessed areas of UNS saw limited change in shelter and NFI needs between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. Across assessed counties of UNS, IDPs inhabited less permanent shelters than their host community counterparts. Assessed settlements continued to report host community members living in tukuls.³⁴ The vast majority of assessed settlements (85%) reported that tukuls were the main shelter type for the host community in March. In comparison, the largest portion (33%) of assessed UNS settlements with IDPs in March continued to report IDPs living in rakoobas.

IDPs in southeastern UNS reportedly faced worse shelter conditions than those in the western bank, perhaps reflecting continued pendular displacement between Ulang and

Figure 7: Access to health services in assessed UNS settlements, March 2019

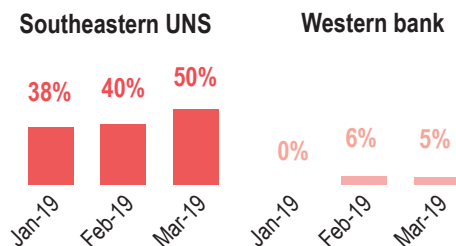


33. MEDAIR, Press Release: Measles outbreak in South Sudan not yet under control. 16 April 2019.

34. Although tukuls and rakoobas are both categorised as semi-permanent shelters, tukuls are shelters constructed with mud bricks and a grass thatch roof while rakoobas are made from poles and plastic tarpaulin, thus considered to be the more vulnerable of the two shelter types.

35. "No consensus" stands for settlements where multiple key informants were surveyed but no consensus was found for the respective indicator

Figure 8: Proportion of assessed UNS settlements with IDPs reporting IDPs living in the open without shelter



Nasir counties resulting in more transitional, impermanent shelter accommodations. In March, half of assessed Ulang and Nasir County settlements with IDPs reported their living in the open without any form of shelter, in comparison to only 5% of assessed western bank settlements. However, such reports were confined to Malakal County (Figure 8). Fashoda saw an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements with IDPs reporting their living in more permanent shelters. Likewise, 80% of assessed Panyikang County settlements with IDPs reported their accommodation primarily in semi-permanent structures in March, an increase from 40% in December. This may indicate a slowing rate of arrivals to these areas as arrivals gradually establish themselves in more permanent structures, combined with returns to areas with relative access to shelter.

Access to NFIs distributions across assessed areas of UNS appears greater in the southeast than in the western bank: by March, with the exception of Malakal County, only 16% of assessed settlements in UNS reported an NFI distribution had occurred in the last

three months compared with 68% of those in Ulang and Nasir counties. Across assessed UNS counties, the largest share of assessed settlements with IDPs reported plastic sheets (38%), mosquito nets (35%) and buckets (10%) as their primary NFI needs by March.

Education

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education services in UNS increased, but remained relatively low in the first quarter: Only 45% and 41% of assessed western bank and southeastern UNS settlements, respectively, reported access to education services in March (up from 19% and 33% in December), with increases likely due to improved dry season accessibility and the return to work of teachers following the harvest and festive seasons.

Across assessed areas of UNS, the proportion of assessed settlements without access to education services which reported that schools had been repurposed rose from 21% in December to 34% in March (with reports from settlements in Manyo and Fashoda rising from 0% to 43%). This may indicate that returning and displaced populations in some settlements may be using the schools for shelter. Access continued to be especially gendered in the southeast, where all assessed settlements in December with access to education services reported that half or more of boys attended school, while only 43% reported this of girls. For more information on education needs, see the previous overview.³⁶

Conclusion

In the first quarter of 2019, assessed areas of UNS saw a continuation of population movement and food access dynamics reported in quarter four of 2018, resulting in continually high humanitarian needs in assessed settlements, particularly those in Fashoda, Panyikang, Ulang and Nasir counties.

Continued returns from Sudan to the western bank were driven mainly by poor conditions in refugee settlements in Sudan, along with family reunification intentions and cautious optimism with regards to potential security improvements. Movement dynamics in the southeast remain less well understood, but returns from Gambella area refugee camps in Ethiopia were at least partially attributable to insecurity there.

Food insecurity and limited livelihoods options remained severe challenges across assessed UNS counties. Assessed settlements in Fashoda and Manyo counties likely saw a deterioration in access to food in this quarter due to poor harvests in the previous quarter and high market prices in the first three months of the year. Food security in assessed settlements of southeastern UNS was likely largely reliant on humanitarian assistance. Severe coping mechanisms reportedly employed across assessed counties of the state could impede future food security throughout the lean season.

Protection concerns across assessed settlements of UNS largely centred on SGBV for women and intra-communal conflict for men, with increased concerns regarding forced recruitment in Fashoda and Manyo counties. Meanwhile, access to water and health services remained low in assessed UNS settlements during the dry season. Across assessed settlements of the western bank, dependence on water from the Nile coupled with poor hygiene and sanitation practices may increase propensity for a waterborne disease outbreak. In southeastern UNS, IDPs primarily inhabited impermanent structures while in the western bank, the majority were accommodated in semi-permanent shelters. Assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties continued to report some IDPs living in the open without any shelter.

About REACH

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.

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