

# Humanitarian Situation Monitoring

## Central and Eastern Equatoria States - South Sudan April - September 2020

**REACH** Informing more effective humanitarian action

### Introduction

The second (Q2) and third (Q3) quarter of 2020, were largely defined by restricted cross-border and inter-state movement as a COVID-19 preventive measure, climatic changes, and pockets of insecurity, as well as continuing currency depreciation and rising prices on the market. These developments have likely continued to drive humanitarian needs across Central Equatoria State (CES) and Eastern Equatoria State (EES).

As insufficient regular assessments are conducted in these regions due to access and resource constraints, limited accurate information is available to humanitarian actors to inform their response. To inform humanitarian actors, 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. This Situation Overview uses this data to analyse changes in observed humanitarian needs across CES and EES in the second and third quarter of 2020.

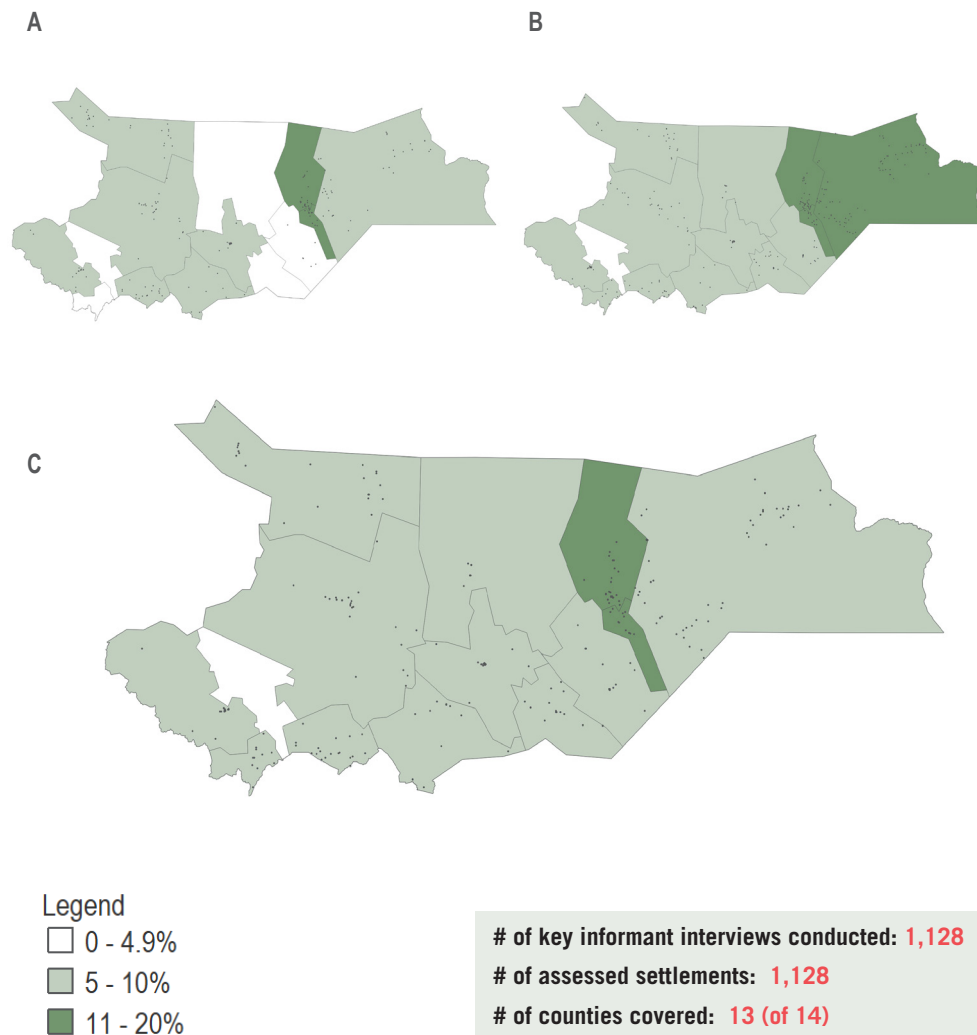
### Methodology

To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria States, REACH conducts interviews with key informants (KIs) 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 Kapoeta Town covering EES and remotely by phone call from Juba covering CES, between April and September 2020.

In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted on a monthly basis 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 was found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting.

Only counties with interview coverage of at least 5% of all settlements in a given month were included in the analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month may vary. In order to reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, over time analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam<sup>2</sup> coverage over the reporting period. More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK ToRs](#).

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of the CES and EES, April (A), June (B) and September (C) 2020



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

2. Payam is the administrative unit below the county-level.

## Key Findings



**Displacement:** Q2 and Q3 were characterised by limited cross-border and inter-state movement following the closure of the South Sudan border at the end of March and inter-state borders at the end of April, to prevent the spread of COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> Restrictions impacted people's daily and seasonal movement and their ability to access livelihood activities, including markets and farm land for cultivation, likely deteriorating the food security situation. During Q2 and Q3, displacement was reported in Terekeka, Juba and Lafon counties reportedly due to flooding and Kajo Keji, Juba and Yei, Morobo and Lainya counties due to insecurity and a reported lack of access to food and water.



**Food Security and Livelihoods:** AoK findings indicate that the food security situation remained precarious during Q2 and Q3, with the vast majority of assessed settlements in both states reportedly experiencing inadequate access to food (91% in CES and 99% in EES in September) and a high proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported hunger was severe (52% in CES, 68% in EES), with slight improvements in Yei and Magwi counties in September, following the first season harvest. The depletion of food stocks early in the lean season as well as flooding, localised insecurity, and limited access by road, and the continuing currency depreciation and high prices on the market, likely contributed to increased levels of food insecurity throughout Q2 and Q3.<sup>4</sup>

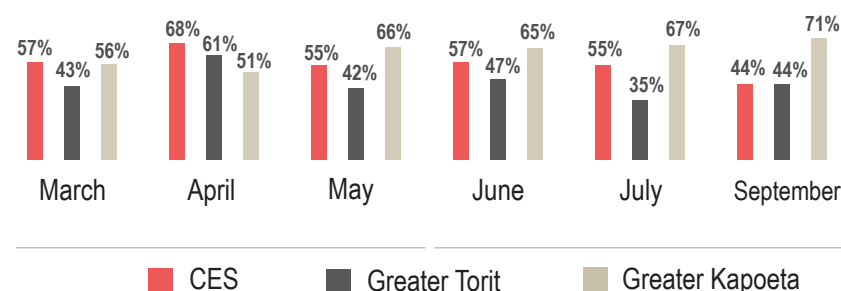


**Protection:** The protection situation continued to vary by county during Q2 and Q3. In Kajo Keji County, the proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly did not feel safe increased significantly from 6% in April to 74% in September and remained high in Juba County (87% in September), likely as a result of insecurity between May and September, reportedly impeding people's ability to access their preferred marketplace and water points.<sup>5,6</sup> In EES, particularly high protection concerns were reported in Budi and Lafon counties, also reflected in the proportion of settlements reportedly not able to access their preferred marketplace or water point because they feared for their safety (38% in Lafon County and 29% in Budi County in September).



**Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** The proportion of assessed settlements where the presence of a functioning borehole was reported decreased slightly in CES between April (89%) and September (71%), most notably in Terekeka County, potentially indicating that some boreholes were damaged or inaccessible due to flooding, while remaining stable in EES in Q2 and Q3 (86% in September). The proportion of settlements where most people reportedly washed their hands with soap increased between March and September (from 17% to 36% in CES and 5% to 22% in EES), but nevertheless

Figure 1: Proportion of KIs reporting inadequate access to food and experiencing severe hunger, in Q2 and Q3



remained low across both states, of particular concern given the necessary mitigation measures against COVID-19.



**Health:** In both CES and EES, malaria was reportedly the main health problem in September (73% of assessed settlements in CES and 43% in EES), similar to previous months in Q2 and Q3. While the number of COVID-19 cases in South Sudan remained difficult to estimate, some reports suggest the COVID-19 response has had a negative effect on access to health services for other prevalent diseases.<sup>7</sup> Kapoeta North, Kapoeta South, and Budi counties had the highest proportion of settlements where KIs reported most people had not heard about COVID-19 (17%, 13%, and 7%, respectively), presumably because settlements in these counties are relatively remote and therefore more difficult to reach with risk communication and awareness campaigns, particularly during the rainy season (April to October) when movements and network coverage were further limited.



**Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI):** Overall, findings suggested that access to reliable shelter has remained relatively stable in EES and CES throughout Q2 and Q3, particularly for host communities. Nevertheless, access to reliable shelter during Q2 and Q3 was impacted by the rainy season and associated flooding, particularly in Lafon, Kapoeta East, Juba and Terekeka counties. In addition, the proportion of settlements where KIs reported that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) were living in less solid shelter types (rakoobas, tents, or abandoned structures) was high in September in Kajo Keji (67%), Terekeka (80%) and Lafon (50%) counties.



**Education:** Schools were closed during Q2 and Q3, as part of the COVID-19 related preventive measures. Some initial reports suggest that school closures have had a negative effect on children, and likely has led to a rise in abuse, child marriages and teen pregnancies.<sup>8</sup>

3. IOM – DTM COVID-19 Preparedness & Response: Mobility Update 15 (27 July – 9 August 2020).

4. REACH, October 2020. [South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative](#).

5. IOM – DTM, 4 September, 2020. [Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report](#).

6. OCHA, September 2020. [South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot](#).

7. ACAPS - August 2020 - [ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES IN SOUTH SUDAN: SCENARIOS](#).

8. UNICEF and UNESCO, 23 September 2020. [UNICEF and UNESCO welcome the decision to reopen schools in South Sudan](#).

## Population Movement and Displacement

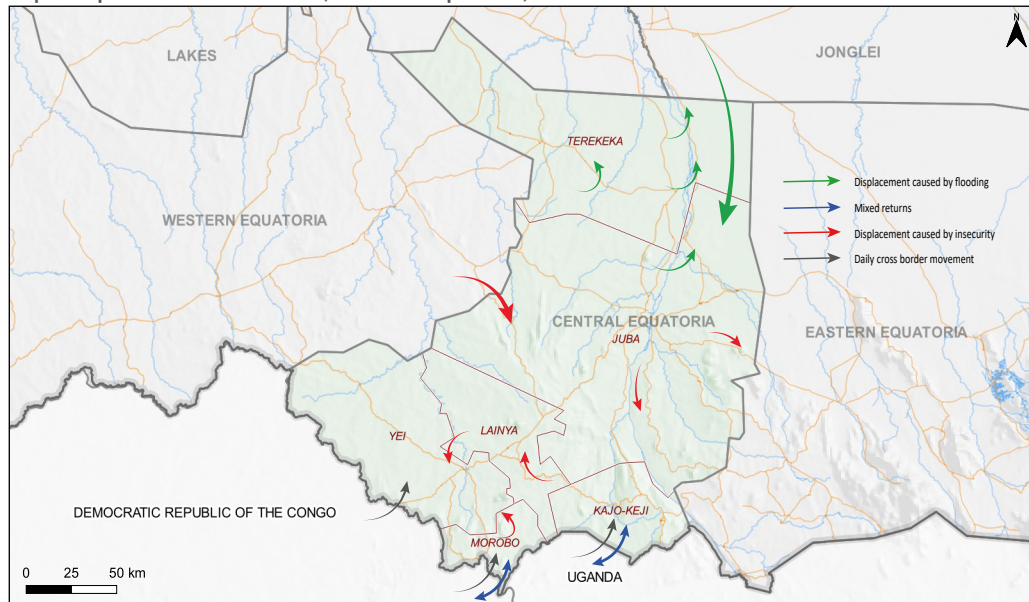
### Central Equatoria

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, cross-border and inter-state movement were limited following the closure of the land borders and airport for personal travel at the end of March.<sup>9</sup> While informal movements continued, these restrictions reduced the overall numbers of refugee returns, as well as curtailed normal daily and seasonal movements.<sup>10</sup> In addition, movement restrictions limited access to livelihood activities, including markets, farm land for cultivation, and interrupted access to grazing, likely leading to a deterioration in the food security situation.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of movement restrictions, a number of mainly small and some large-scale displacements were reported throughout Q2 and Q3 in Terekeka and Juba counties reportedly due to flooding, and in Juba and Yei, Morobo and Lainya counties due to insecurity and lack of access to food and water.<sup>12,13</sup>

### Displacement

Reported displacement fluctuated throughout Q2 and Q3 in CES, and varied per county. In between a quarter and a third of assessed settlements in CES, half or more than half of the population had reportedly displaced from their settlement in the 30 days prior in May and June (31% and 22% respectively). In a particularly high proportion of assessed settlements in Yei County (78%), displacement of half or more of the population was reported in May, while in June, a particularly

Map 2: Population movement CES, March to September, 2020



high proportion of settlements reporting this level of displacement were found in Kajo Keji County (73%). In Yei County, conflict-induced displacement had been observed on several occasions in May, following armed clashes in the area.<sup>14</sup> Correspondingly, the most frequently reported reasons for displacement in Yei County in May were conflict (89%), followed by fleeing COVID-19 (11%). In Kajo Keji County, conflict was the main reason for people to leave their settlement, reported by all KIs in June. Pockets of insecurity in April and May reportedly also contributed to displacement in Lainya, Juba and Morobo counties in these months.<sup>14,15</sup>

In July, the proportion of assessed settlements in CES where KIs reported displacement dropped to 6%, except for Morobo County, where the proportion of settlements reporting this remained high (50%). Whilst relative stability and no displacement inducing conflict was reported in most counties in CES in June and July, the high proportion of assessed settlements in Morobo County where KIs reported displacement, could potentially be the result of clashes in the area in June, that might have further driven displacement in the area.<sup>16,17</sup> Correspondingly, in all assessed settlements in Morobo County conflict was reportedly the main reason for displacement in 30 days prior to July.

Displacement was reported in an increasing proportion of settlements between June (10%) and September (55%), reportedly largely due to flooding and inter-communal conflict in the area. In September, flooding was reported as the main reason in 92% of assessed settlements, corresponding with secondary reports of displacements from the Terekeka lowlands in August as a result of flooding.<sup>18</sup> In the same month, flooding reportedly led to displacement in Juba County.<sup>19</sup> Terekeka and Juba counties were also recipients of a large influx of IDPs from Jonglei State during Q3, and reportedly experienced seasonal movement of cattle keepers from other states. The cumulative effects of flooding and resultant displacement, reduced access to food, influx of IDPs, and seasonal cattle movement have led to rising tensions in these counties, and have added pressure on local resources and services.<sup>20</sup>

Displacements throughout Q2 and Q3 were highly localised, with IDPs mainly displaced within their county of origin; for example, all KIs in Juba, Morobo, Yei and Terekeka counties who reported displacement from their settlement in September reported that people had moved elsewhere in the same county. With insecurity and flooding likely having had a direct impact on access to food and services in the relevant counties, localised displacement may have caused additional pressure on already low availability of food and services in host communities (see next section).<sup>21</sup>

### Refugee and IDP returns

In Q2, the reported presence of refugee returnees remained relatively low, presumably impacted by border closures and COVID-19 movement restrictions (refugee returns were reported in 19% and 26% of assessed settlements in April and June). This increased in Q3 from 36% of assessed settlements in CES where the presence of refugee returnees was reported in July, to 95% in

9. IOM – DTM COVID-19 Preparedness & Response: Mobility Update 15 (27 July – 9 August 2020)

10. IOM – DTM COVID-19 Preparedness & Response: Mobility Update 14 (13-26 July 2020)

11. UNFAO. 21 October 2020. Urgent need to strengthen food systems as COVID-19 drives up numbers of hungry people in South Sudan.

12. IOM – DTM Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

13. OCHA. September 2020. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot.

14. OCHA. May 2020. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot.

15. IOM – DTM Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

16. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot June 2020

17. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot July 2020

18. IOM – DTM Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

19. IOM – DTM Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

20. CSRF. October 2020. Conflict Sensitivity Analysis: Considerations for the Humanitarian Response in Mangalla



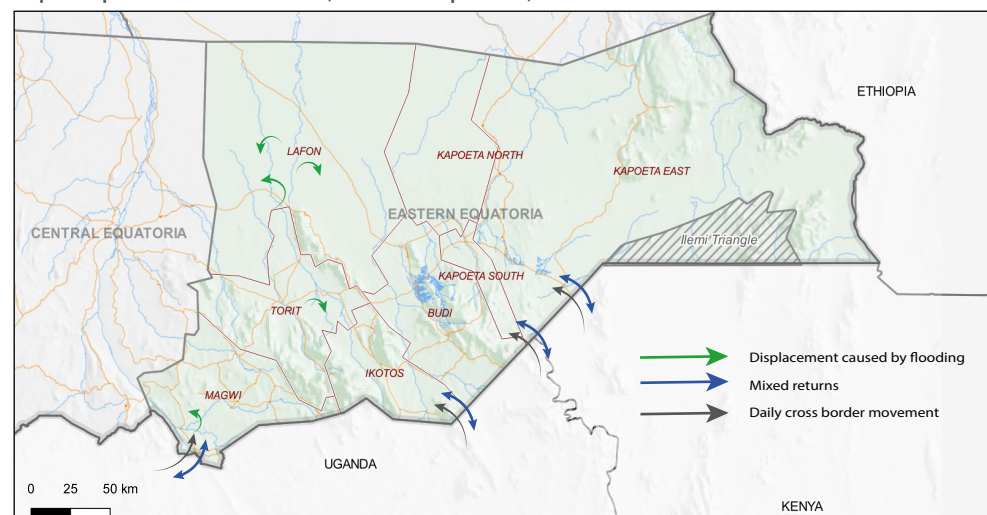
September. While no official announcements were made, easing cross-border restrictions for personal travel in August and September may have contributed to an increase in refugee returns, particularly to Kajo Keji and Morobo counties. Lack of access to food in Ugandan refugee camps and rising tensions, as well as insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) may also have contributed to this increase.<sup>22,23</sup> Refugee returnees in Morobo County were reportedly mainly in need of food assistance, with limited access to basic services.<sup>24</sup> With an already high proportion of settlements reportedly experiencing inadequate access to food in Kajo Keji County (see food security and livelihoods section), the availability of food and services likely were further strained with the arrival of refugee returnees; in 33% of assessed settlements in September, KIs reported that the arrival of IDPs or returnees had a negative impact on the ability to access enough food.

Similar to refugee returns, reported IDP returnee presence remained low throughout Q2 (11% of assessed settlements in April and 13% in June), however, increased slightly towards the end of Q3 to 26% in September. A steady increase was reported in Juba County (22% in March to 43% of KIs in September) and Kajo Keji County (7% in March to 58% in September), while the reported presence of an IDP returnee population decreased in Terekeka County (43% of assessed settlements in March to 9% in September), potentially as flooded areas became less accessible. The reported reasons for IDPs returning varied across the state, with the main reported reasons for return being lack of food and insecurity (killing, looting etc.).

## Eastern Equatoria

Similar to CES, Q2 and Q3 appeared to be characterised by limited cross-border and inter-state

Map 3: Population movement EES, March to September, 2020



movement in EES. Whilst the seasonal movement of cattle keepers was observed in EES, likely further intensified by flooding in Jonglei State and to some extent in Lafon County,<sup>25</sup> regular movement of refugees coming from and going to refugee camps in Kenya slowed down, and inter-state movement became more difficult until the end of Q3.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, access to remote areas such as the state's eastern border became limited due to the rain and deteriorating road conditions.

## Displacement

In contrast with CES, reported displacement remained low in EES throughout Q2 and Q3; for example, only in 5% of assessed settlements KIs reported half or more of the population had left their settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection in September. Nevertheless, in Lafon County, the proportion of settlements where half or more of the population reportedly had left their settlement in the 30 days prior was relatively high in May (20%) and higher in September (63%), likely as a result of flooding.<sup>27</sup>

## Refugee and IDP returns

The proportion of assessed settlements in EES where presence of refugee returnees was reported remained low and stable in Q2 and Q3 (17% of KIs in April and 23% in September), except for Magwi County, where the reported presence of refugee returnees was high throughout this period (92% in September). Correspondingly, Magwi County reportedly experienced an influx of relatively large numbers of returnees in 2020.<sup>28</sup> Even though there was only a slight increase in assessed settlements reporting refugee returns in Budi County between June (14%) and September (29%), potentially due to the data collection methodology used<sup>29</sup>, an influx of refugee returns from Kenya and Uganda into Budi County was observed by humanitarian partners in September. Refugee returns were reportedly facing limited access to basic services, and some level of hostility due to shortage of food.<sup>30</sup>

Similar to the presence of refugee returnees, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported presence of IDP returnees in EES remained low during Q2 and Q3, consistent with Q1. However, in Magwi County, similarly to refugee returns, there was an increase in the proportion of settlements where KIs reported IDP returnee presence between April (11%) and May (44%) further increasing to 58% in September. In addition, in Budi County, the proportion of settlements where IDP returnee presence was reported had increased from 0% in July to 23% in September. These two counties were also the main reported recipients of refugee returns in Q2 and Q3, which has likely put additional pressure on local resources and services. Reported reasons for the presence of IDP returnees varied across county, with most recent IDP returnees in Magwi County reportedly leaving their former settlements for perceived access to security (100% of assessed settlements in September), and access to food (50%) or proximity to family (50%) in Budi County.

21. FEWSNET. August 2020. South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update

22. UN news. December 2020. Uganda: UN food assistance programme hit as COVID-19 dries up funding

23. Eyeradio. May 2020. Hundreds of Congolese flee into S.Sudan

24. Initial Rapid Needs Assessment (IRNA) June 26 2020 Morobo County: Lujulo and Wudabi Payam

25. Needs Analysis Working Group. 20200824 minutes and flooding slides

26. REACH. May 2020. Kapoeta Port and Road Monitoring factsheet.

27. Needs Analysis Working Group. 20200824 minutes and flooding slides

28. EES Humanitarian Coordination Forum Meeting Minutes (24 September 2020)

29. Due to the methodology of AoK, the geographical concentration of IDP returnees in urban centres might cause that an increase in IDP returnees will not directly be reflected in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP returnee presence.

30. Codaidd. Call for an Emergences Support for Mass Returnee In Budi County (Chukudum HQ).



## Food Security and Livelihoods

The cumulative effects of depletion of food stocks earlier into the lean season<sup>31</sup> as well as disruption to the harvest by flooding, localised insecurity, and limited access by road, likely contributed to increased levels of food insecurity in CES and EES throughout Q2 and Q3.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the continuing currency depreciation and high prices of goods in the market, appear to have decreased households' purchasing power, especially in urban areas as well as other areas that are largely dependent on markets to access food.<sup>33</sup> As such, in a high proportion of settlements in CES, KIs reported inadequate access to food between March (89%) and September (91%), peaking in the month of May (99%), as food stocks became depleted and households were increasingly reliant on markets to access food.<sup>34</sup> In EES, the proportion of settlements reportedly experiencing inadequate access to food remained high throughout the entire period of March (99%) to September (99%). Correspondingly, food stocks were predicted to be exhausted in EES by February or March 2020, due to production deficits following flooding, pest infestations and insecurity, whilst access to livestock decreased due to usual cattle migration.<sup>35</sup> However, while IPC projections for the Greater Equatoria region for May to July indicated marginal improvements in food security due to the first harvest and availability of wild foods as well as increased market access, the latter was limited due to COVID-19 related cross-border and inter-state movement restrictions, negatively impacting the flow of goods, which also contributed to rising prices.<sup>36</sup>

### Central Equatoria

Adequate access to food remained reportedly low across much of CES during Q2 and Q3, particularly in Juba, Morobo, Kajo-Keji, and Terekeka counties, with 2% of assessed settlements in these counties reportedly facing inadequate access to food in April and 1% in July, further reflected by IPC projections forecasting that, from May to July 2020, access to food would deteriorate as these counties entered the lean season.<sup>37</sup> Corresponding to the lean season projections, in July

Figure 4: Inadequate access to food reported by KIs in CES in Q2 and Q3, by County

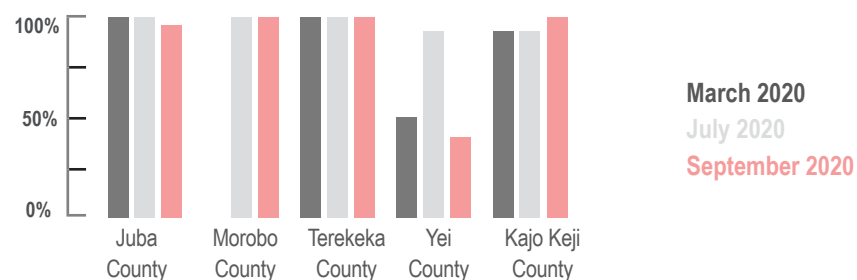


Figure 2: Top 5 reported livelihood activities in September 2020

	Juba County	Morobo County	Terekeka County	Yei County	Kajo Keji County	Total
Crops for sustenance	70%	100%	82%	100%	100%	88%
Charcoal making	74%	64%	41%	93%	68%	67%
Casual labour	57%	55%	5%	100%	74%	54%
Livestock	4%	36%	95%	93%	26%	50%
Fishing	17%	27%	82%	0%	32%	34%

the highest proportion of settlements in these counties reportedly experienced inadequate access to food because the previous harvest was depleted (29%). While pre-COVID IPC projections suggested that physical access to markets would likely increase due to relative stability in the state, COVID-19 related movement restrictions likely affected people's ability to physically access markets, or their land for cultivation (e.g. residents in Ugandan refugee camps), while limited flow of goods likely contributed to rising prices. The price of the Multi-Sector Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (MSSMEB) reportedly increased for example with 64% in Juba town between September 2019 and September 2020, and with 17% between August and September 2020.<sup>38</sup> High prices in the market were reportedly the main reason for inadequate access to food in September, reported in almost a quarter of settlements in CES, particularly in urban areas (40% of assessed settlements in Yei and 30% in Juba). In addition, urban areas experienced higher unemployment and rising market prices, which disproportionately affected daily labourers' wages in the informal sector and therefore particularly affected the urban poor.<sup>39</sup>

In September, the proportion of assessed settlements in CES where access to adequate quantities of food was reported also remained low (9%), suggesting that the first-season harvest (July and August) did not have an immediate impact on the reported access to food in the assessed settlements. Nevertheless, while hunger was reported to be 'severe' in 66% of assessed settlements in Juba, Kajo-Keji, Morobo and Terekeka counties in July, this decreased to 49% in September, suggesting that the first season harvest did increase households' level of access to food to some extent. In addition, in Yei County, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported adequate access to food increased from 7% in July to 40% in September, presumably due to the higher availability of cultivated food compared to the other counties.

In September, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported hunger to be the 'worst

31. Household food stocks normally run out during the hunger gap in May-August.

32. IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis for January-April 2020

33. IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis for January-April 2020

34. FEWSNET. Poor macroeconomic conditions and COVID-19 to escalate Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes by mid-2020

35. Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) October 2019. Food Security Outlook

36. WFP- VAM. South Sudan – weekly market prices. Second Week July 2020

37. IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis for January-April 2020

38. REACH. October 2020. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative.

39. WFP- VAM. South Sudan – weekly market prices. Second Week July 2020

it could be', was relatively high in Juba (13%), Kajo Keji (11%) and Morobo counties (9%), which may signal pockets of more severe food insecurity as a result of flooding, localised insecurity, and high market prices.

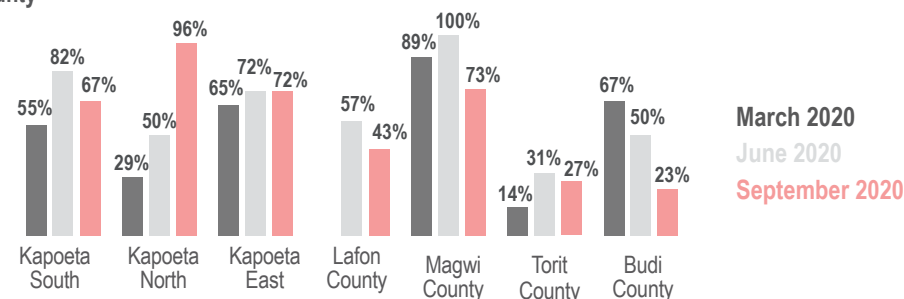
In April, in more than half of the settlements (56%) in Kajo Keji, KIs reported inadequate access to food due to a lack of safety (e.g. insecurity impeding their access to farmland or markets), reported in a similar proportion of settlements in May and June. Insecurity in the region likely affected the main planting season in a number of counties, as well as first-season harvests, access to markets, and trade flows.<sup>40</sup> Subsequently, due to heavy rains, lowlands reportedly flooded in Terekeka County in July and August, destroying farmland and a large proportion of crops in a number of payams, before farmers were able harvest.<sup>41,42</sup> Furthermore, Juba County reportedly experienced above average rains in July and August, and flooding was reported in Gondokoro Payam.<sup>43</sup> Correspondingly, the main reasons for why access to food was deemed inadequate for some people were 'flooding' and 'too much rain', reported in a particularly high proportion of settlements in Terekeka (73%) and Juba counties (21%).

## Eastern Equatoria

In almost all assessed settlements in EES (99%) inadequate access to food was reported in March, which remained consistently high through to September. In Greater Kapoeta,<sup>44</sup> all assessed settlements reportedly experienced inadequate access to food in every month from March to September, except for Budi County, where a small increase was reported in adequate access to food in September (7% of assessed settlements), likely due to the first season harvest. Of assessed settlements in EES where inadequate access to food was reported, 50% reportedly experienced hunger to be severe in March, rising to 60% in June and 62% in September. Between March and June, the most commonly reported reason for why some people in the assessed settlements were deemed facing inadequate access to food was lack of rain (34% and 38% of assessed settlements respectively), which likely affected the yields of the previous harvest, leading to depletion of food stocks earlier into the lean season.

The relatively high proportion of assessed settlements in Greater Kapoeta where severe hunger and inadequate access to food was reported throughout Q2 (50% in March to 65% in June), corresponded with IPC projections for EES early in the lean season, with Kapoeta North and Kapoeta South counties classified as phase 4 (emergency) for acute food insecurity in this period.<sup>45</sup> In Greater Kapoeta the proportion of settlements reportedly experiencing inadequate access to food and severe hunger further increased in September (71%). In Magwi County, however, in a slightly higher proportion of settlements reportedly experienced adequate access to food in July (20%), likely due to the higher availability of cultivated food across the greenbelt region and the

**Figure 5: Proportion KIs reporting inadequate access to food and experiencing severe hunger in Q2 and Q3 by County**



first season harvest cycle. Nevertheless, of assessed settlements where KIs reported inadequate access to food in July (80%), the proportion of settlements reportedly experiencing severe hunger remained high in Magwi County (75%), potentially due to the impact of locust swarms on harvest yields that damaged approximately 60% of the county's cropfields according to FEWSNET.<sup>46</sup> With almost half of assessed settlements in Magwi County (42%) where the market was reportedly the main source of food, the depreciation of the currency and rising market prices may have largely reduced households' purchasing power, hence further limiting households' access to new produce. In addition, the main border crossing, Elegu Town, reportedly flooded under heavy rains, likely delaying cargo movements into South Sudan.<sup>47</sup>

Reported reasons for inadequate access to food varied per county; flooding, the previous harvest being exhausted, and crops being destroyed by pests were among the most frequently reported reasons. In September, crops being destroyed by flooding was the main reason for inadequate access to food reported in the highest proportion of settlements, especially in Lafon (100%), Ikotos (60%), and Magwi counties (34%). Although no large scale displacement was reported in Lafon County this season, heavy rains and flooding likely affected harvest yields, as well as access to markets and farmland, and reportedly damaged shelters (see shelter/NFI section). According to FEWSNET, heavy rain caused damage to groundnut and sesame crops in Lafon County, as well as Magwi and Ikotos counties.<sup>48</sup>

## Coping strategies

Indicative of inadequate access to food, almost all assessed settlements in CES and EES reportedly employed coping strategies in Q2 and Q3 (100% in CES, and 99% in EES in September). Following sustained levels of food insecurity towards the end of the lean season, the use of severe coping strategies<sup>49</sup> was reportedly high in June in Terekeka County (14% of assessed settlements) and in September in Juba and Kajo Keji counties (22% and 11% respectively). In EES, the use of severe

40. FEWSNET. October 2020. Key messages October 2020

41. Needs Analysis Working Group. 20200824 minutes and flooding slides

42. FEWSNET SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Outlook June 2020 to January 2021

43. SSCBS. Gondokoro reportage. October 2020

44. Greater Kapoeta includes Kapoeta South, Kapoeta North, Kapoeta East and Budi

45. IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY AND ACUTE MALNUTRITION ANALYSIS FOR JANUARY - APRIL 2020

46. FEWSNET. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are widespread at the July/August peak of the lean season.

47. Tamuzaj Radio. November 2020. Floods displace 400 households in Nimule

48. FEWSNET. October 2020. South Sudan Key Messages.

49. The severe coping strategy included here is 'skipping meals for entire days'.



copied strategies spiked in assessed settlements between July (0%) and September (24%), and was especially high in Budi (79%), Kapoeta South (57%), Kapoeta East (32%) and Lafon (25%) counties, which, in the case of Budi County could be linked to the increase in reported IDP returnee presence in this period, causing additional pressure on the availability of food.

In terms of severe livelihood coping strategies, displacement to camps as a strategy to deal with lack of food was reported in assessed settlements throughout Q2 and Q3 in Juba (17% in April), Morobo (17% in July), with an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported displacement as a livelihood coping strategies in Kajo Keji County from 7% in June to 21% in September. The latter corresponds with the main reason for displacement provided in September (in 50% of assessed settlements access to food was reportedly the main reason of displacement in Kajo Keji), and aligns with the high reported needs of host community and returnees in Kajo Keji County. In addition, this apparent increase in the use of displacement as a livelihood coping strategy could be linked to the softening of cross-border movement restrictions in August. Other severe livelihood strategies, such as begging, remained stable in CES (21% in April, 26% in September), with the highest proportion of assessed settlements (48%) where this was reported as a livelihood coping strategy in September being located in Juba County.

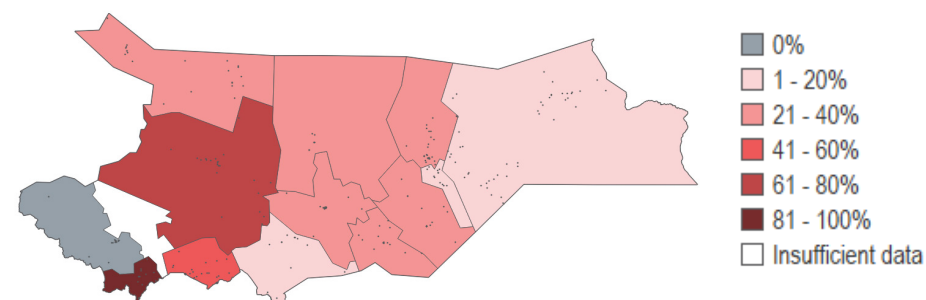
## Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reporting the presence of a functioning borehole slightly decreased in CES and remained stable in EES between March and September. During the same period, handwashing with soap reportedly increased but remained low across both states, which is particularly concerning given COVID-19.

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of a functioning borehole remained stable in EES between March and September 2020 (87% and 86%), except for Budi County where it increased from 47% in March to 64% in September. Nevertheless, the proportion of settlements reportedly using unprotected water sources as the main source of drinking water increased between April (10%) and September (36%) in Budi County. A reason for this may be the limited access to protected water sources due to largely impassable roads during the rainy season. Similar to Budi County, the proportion of settlements reportedly using the river as the main source of drinking water was high in Lafon County (38% of KIs in September), potentially because other water sources were not accessible due to safety reasons (see protection section).

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of a functioning borehole decreased in CES between March (91%) and September (71%), most notably in Terekeka County (from 96% to 68%), potentially indicating that some boreholes were damaged or inaccessible

**Figure 6: Proportion of settlements where KIs reported unprotected water sources as the main source of drinking water, per county, September 2020**



due to flooding.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, compared to other counties, the proportion of settlements where KIs reported the presence of functional boreholes in Morobo County was overall lower (18% in September), likely influenced by protracted instability in the area, and delayed maintenance of wash infrastructure.<sup>51</sup> Correspondingly, unprotected water sources (river, well and swamp) as the main source of drinking water were reportedly used in a high proportion of settlements in Morobo County in September (91%), compared to Kajo Keji (53%), Juba (30%) and Terekeka (28%). In Yei, all assessed settlements reportedly used a borehole as the main source of drinking water in September.

During Q2 and Q3, the proportion of settlements where KIs reported most people commonly wash their hands with soap remained low, similarly to Q1. However, in CES hand washing with soap appears to have increased, being reportedly common practice in 17% of assessed settlements in March and 42% in April, remaining relatively high into September (36%). Similarly, the proportion of settlements in EES where KIs reported most people using soap increased from 5% in March to 25% in April, remaining stable until September (22%). Following the recent developments and spread of COVID-19 in South Sudan, the increase in reporting of the usage of soap could potentially be an outcome of a number of risk communication and awareness campaigns launched by the Government and NGOs since the outbreak in South Sudan in March.<sup>52</sup> A possible reason for the nevertheless low proportion of settlements where people reportedly use soap might be the relatively high price of soap in comparison to households' average income.<sup>53</sup> The proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly use soap was particularly low in September in Kapoeta North (0%) and Kapoeta East counties (9%), which in addition to relatively high price of soap in comparison to households' average income, could also be affected by limited market access due to impassable roads during the rainy season.<sup>54</sup>

50. Needs Analysis Working Group. 20200824 minutes and flooding slides

51. Morobo County was not assessed in April.

52. South Sudan Ministry of Health. June 8-14, 2020. COVID-19 WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT.

53. REACH. October 2020. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative.

54. United Nations Peace Keeping. 10 August 2020. Eastern Equatoria Governor visits near-inaccessible areas on UNMISS helicopter, urges communities to embrace peace. Last accessed 15.11.2020

Health

In the beginning of April 2020, the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in South Sudan, and several preventive measures were implemented as well as awareness campaigns launched.<sup>55</sup> In the majority of assessed settlements throughout Q2 and Q3, KIs reported that most people had heard about COVID-19. By September, the largest proportions of settlements where most people reportedly had not heard about COVID-19 were in Kapoeta North (17%), Kapoeta South (13%) and Budi counties (7%), presumably because some settlements in these counties are relatively remote and therefore more difficult to reach with risk communication and awareness campaigns, particularly during the rainy season (April to October) when movements and network coverage was further limited.

While the number of COVID-19 cases in South Sudan remained difficult to estimate, some evidence suggests that the secondary outcomes of the pandemic have already had a negative effect on access to health care in the past few months. For instance, attendance of pregnant women for antenatal care has reduced presumably due to the fear of COVID-19, and health programmes such as the Ebola control program were suspended.<sup>56,57,58</sup> Overall, the focus on COVID-19, could negatively impact the attention and availability of health services for other diseases, including malaria. In both CES and EES, malaria was reportedly the main health problem during Q2 and Q3 (73% of assessed settlements in CES and 43% in EES in September). Other common health problems across the two states were reportedly cough (10% of assessed settlements), diarrheal diseases (3%) and malnutrition (3%). Fever (presumably including Malaria) was the main reported perceived cause of death in CES (28% September), with natural death being the most frequently reported perceived cause of death in EES (29%).<sup>59</sup>

In CES and EES, the majority of settlements reportedly had access to a Primary Health Care Unit (PHCU) or Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) as their nearest functional health facility within walking distance (84% and 90% of assessed settlements). KIs from a small proportion of settlements (5%) in Kajo Keji County reported that there was no access to any type health facility within walking distance, all of whom reported that there had never been any facilities in the area. In September, the highest proportion of assessed settlements in CES accessing health care services by foot would reportedly take one hour to half a day for most people in the settlement (44%), while in the highest proportion of settlements in EES, most people travelling to a health facility by foot would reportedly take 30 minutes to one hour (35%).

Protection

In the majority of assessed settlements in EES most people reportedly felt safe most of the time in Q2 and Q3 (78% in September), even though trends varied across the different counties. In more than half of settlements in CES, KIs reported most people felt safe most of the time (58% in September), which was relatively low compared to the first quarter of 2020 (70% in March).

Figure 7: Top 3 most commonly reported protection concerns in assessed settlements in September in CES and EES, 2020:

Girls

1

Early/forced marriage

44%

2

Harrasment

3%

3

Family seperation

2%

Boys

1

Early/forced marriage

19%

2

Looting/criminality

3%

3

Violence between neighbours

3%

In Juba County, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported believing most people did not feel safe remained stable and high (83% in March, 87% in September), while in Kajo Keji County an increase in reports of unsafety was observed between July (20% of assessed settlements) and September (74%). In this period, 18% of KIs in Morobo and Terekeka also reported most people did not feel safe in their settlement. As mentioned, these counties all reportedly experienced some level of insecurity, or inter-communal tensions in the case of Terekeka County, in the months of May to September, which likely contributed to the increase in proportion of settlements where most people were reportedly feeling unsafe. In addition, this insecurity likely impacted access to markets and water points; in 26% of assessed settlements in Juba County, KIs reported some people were unable to access their preferred marketplace because they feared for their safety in September, followed by 18% in Terekeka, 11% in Kajo Keji and 9% in Morobo counties. Similarly, in Juba county, in 22% of assessed settlements some people were reportedly not able to access their preferred water point for the same reason.<sup>60,61,62</sup>

In EES, protection concerns were reported in a particularly high proportion of assessed settlements in Budi and Lafon counties. In 64% of assessed settlements in Budi County, KIs reported in September that most people did not feel safe most of the time, followed by 63% of assessed settlements in Lafon County, also reflected in the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported people are generally unable to access their preferred marketplace because of safety concerns (38% in Lafon County and 29% in Budi County). Inter-communal tensions and cattle raiding may have been a contributing factor in these counties in Q2 and Q3 to people's feeling

55. 20200902 IOM DTM SSD COVID-19 Mobility Update 15 for 27 July - 9 August 2020\_0  
56. Tamuzaj 27 JUL 2020 Pregnant women in Torit 'miss out on antenatal care' amid COVID-19 fears.  
57. 20200902 IOM DTM SSD COVID-19 Mobility Update 15 for 27 July - 9 August 2020\_0  
58. ACAPS - August 2020 - ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES IN SOUTH SUDAN: SCENARIOS  
59. As KIs were only asked to report symptoms, fever could include malaria.  
60. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot May 2020

61. IOM – DTM Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September  
62. CSRF. October 2020. Conflict Sensitivity Analysis: Considerations for the Humanitarian Response in Mangalla



of safety: In 14% of assessed settlements in Lafon County, KIs reported cattle raiding to be the main safety concern for men in September. These concerns also possibly influenced settlements' access to water; in 25% of assessed settlements in Lafon County, KIs reported that some people were not able to access their preferred water point because they feared for their safety.



### Shelter/ NFI

Reported access to reliable shelter throughout EES and CES remained relatively stable, especially for host community members. In the majority of assessed settlements host communities reportedly lived in solid structures such as tukuls or other permanent shelter in September (79% of assessed settlements in CES and 97% in EES). Nevertheless, access to reliable shelter during Q2 and Q3 was largely impacted by the rainy season, and flooding particularly in Lafon, Kapoeta East, Juba and Terekeka counties.<sup>63</sup> The highest proportion of assessed settlement where the majority of the host community was reportedly living in less solid shelter<sup>64</sup> was in Juba County (35% in September), increased from 21% in April. Similarly, this proportion increased in Terekeka County between May (0% of assessed settlements) and September (14%), potentially due to flooding that occurred in this period.<sup>65</sup> According to KIs, fighting has also caused shelter damage in Q2 and Q3, particularly in Yei County between June (75% of assessed settlements) and September (67%) and in September in Kajo Keji (32%) and Morobo counties (27%), corresponding with the reported insecurity in this period (see population movement section).

Additionally, among assessed settlements where the presence of IDPs was reported (62%), the proportion of settlements where IDPs were reportedly living in less solid shelter types (e.g. rakoobas, tents, or abandoned structures) was high in September in Kajo Keji (67%), Terekeka (80%) and Lafon (50%) counties.<sup>66</sup> While Kajo Keji County has been characterised by high shelter needs in the last few years, in Terekeka and Lafon counties it could be a result of a new influx of IDPs (in Terekeka County), and flood-induced displacement and shelter damage.<sup>67</sup>

### NFI and assistance needs

The proportion of assessed settlements where humanitarian assistance reportedly has been accessed in the 6 months prior to data collection remained stable in CES (29% in September), and increased in EES from 50% in March to 78% in September. The delivery of assistance was likely impeded during Q2 and Q3, due to the deteriorating road access throughout the rainy season as well as an increase in road insecurity along major supply routes in CES and EES.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, the proportion of settlements where reportedly most people felt like the assistance available to them was the type of assistance they most needed, increased from 21% in March to 79% in June and 89% in September.<sup>69</sup>

The type of assistance reportedly most needed throughout Q2 and Q3 was food, reported in 45% and 39% of assessed settlements in CES and EES in September. Other types of assistance reported as most needed were health and shelter/NFI in CES and WASH in EES. Flooding and conflict induced displacement in CES and EES likely influenced NFI needs for IDPs, and the most urgent needs of recently displaced population due to flooding in Terekeka included food, water, shelter, sanitation and protection.<sup>70</sup>



### Education

Following school closures in April as part of the nation-wide COVID-19 related preventive measures, no school attendance was reported between April and September. While school attendance was generally low in previous quarters, in particular in EES, some initial evidence suggests that school closures have had a negative effect on children, and likely led to a rise in abuse, child marriages and teen pregnancies (especially among girls).<sup>71</sup>

## Conclusion

Findings indicate that the food security situation across both states deteriorated and remained precarious during Q2 and Q3, in particular in Greater Kapoeta, Lafon, Terekeka, Morobo, and Kajo-Keji counties, with marginal improvements in Yei and Magwi counties following the first season harvest. While the harvest season has now commenced in most counties, shortages in food availability and high market prices, affected by heavy rains and flooding as well as localized insecurity, will continue to affect humanitarian needs. Furthermore, low access to WASH infrastructure in Lafon, Budi and Morobo counties and health facilities in Kajo Keji County seemingly continued to expose local communities to a high risk of waterborne diseases and likely increased their vulnerability to COVID-19.

### 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).

63. FEWSNET. October 2020. <https://fews.net/east-africa/south-sudan/key-message-update/october-2020>

64. Less solid shelter includes rakoobas and improvised structures

65. Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

66. Sample size below 10 KIs per county.

67. Needs Analysis Working Group. 20200824 minutes and flooding slides

68. FEWSNET. October 2020. <https://fews.net/east-africa/south-sudan/key-message-update/october-2020>

69. Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

70. This is a subset of assessed settlements where assistance reportedly has been received in the 6 months prior to the interview.

71. UNICEF and UNESCO. 23 September 2020. UNICEF and UNESCO welcome the decision to reopen schools in South Sudan