



Population Movement and Food Insecurity

South Sudan Displacement Crisis

Displacement, Returns, and Movement Barriers Impacting Food Security in South Sudan

April-June 2021

Overview

The 2021 lean season (typically May-August) in South Sudan is likely to see increased food insecurity, with [2,521,000 people](#) projected to be in Emergency or Catastrophe Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in April - July. Food insecurity can be exacerbated by the arrival of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees without means of support, and by barriers that [restrict mobility options](#) that could otherwise be used as coping strategies. To better understand potential impacts of movement and mobility restrictions on communities' ability to access enough food in advance of the lean season onset, REACH drew from its April 2021 Area of Knowledge (AoK) monthly

data collection and from focus group discussions (FGDs) on barriers to movement conducted between May 27 - June 15.

Using the AoK methodology, REACH remotely monitors needs and access to services across South Sudan. AoK data is collected monthly and through multi-sector interviews with the following typology of Key Informants (KIs):

- KIs who are newly arrived IDPs who have left a hard-to-reach settlement in the last month
- KIs who have been in contact with someone living in a hard-to-reach settlement, or have been visiting one in the last month

- KIs who are remaining in hard-to-reach settlements, contacted through phone

Selected KIs are purposively sampled and have knowledge from within the last month about a specific settlement in South Sudan, with data collected at the settlement level. Additional details on data aggregation can be found in the [Terms of Reference \(ToRs\)](#).

AoK Assessment Coverage

2,477 Key informants interviewed

1,976 Settlements assessed

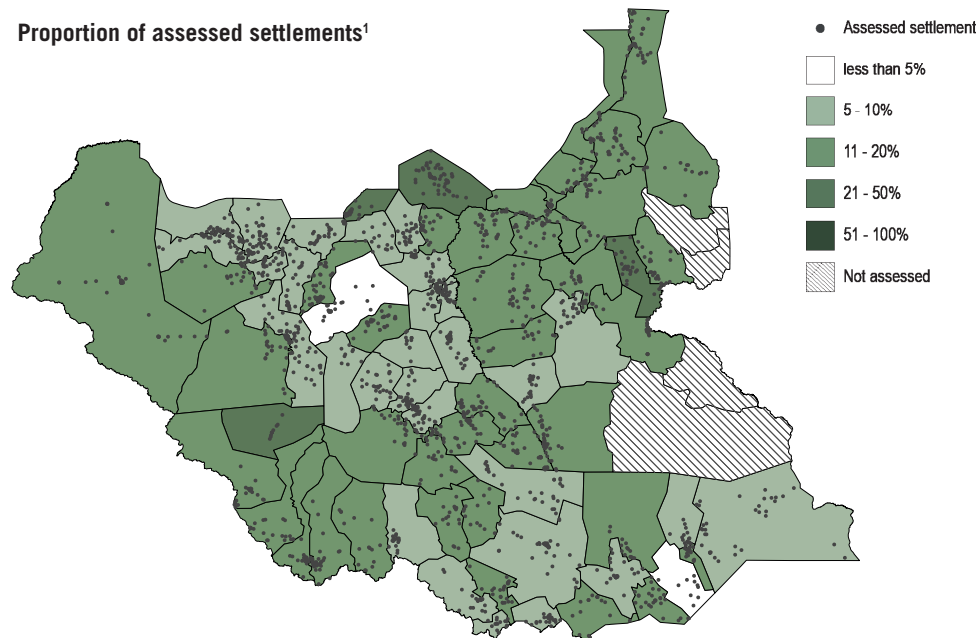
74 Counties assessed

72 Counties with 5% or more coverage¹

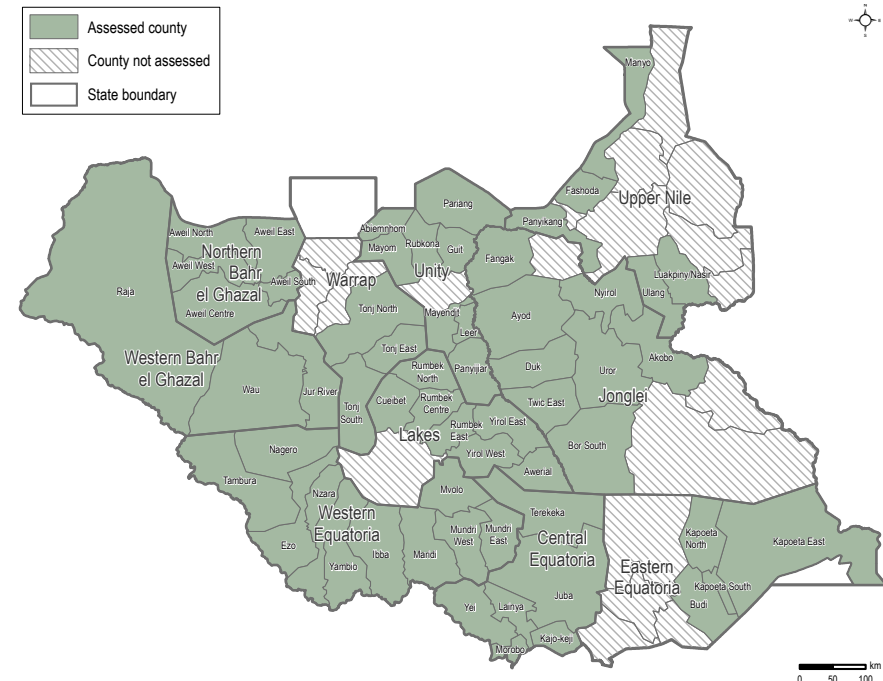
From May 27-June 15, REACH conducted **38 FGDs**, which included participatory mapping exercises, asking about movement barriers for a geographic area (typically a group of 3-5 counties). These FGDs covered **59 counties**, with FGDs for each geographic area disaggregated by gender in most cases. REACH used purposive sampling to select FGD participants who typically resided in and had knowledge of the geographic areas of coverage. The quantitative and qualitative findings presented in this factsheet are **indicative** of broad trends in the areas and period of coverage. The qualitative findings are not necessarily comprehensive, and **neither the AoK nor the FGD findings are statistically generalisable**.

Area of Knowledge assessment coverage (April)

Proportion of assessed settlements¹



Movement barrier FGD coverage (May 27 - June 15)



¹Data is only represented for counties in which at least 5% of settlements have been assessed. The most [recent OCHA Common Operational Dataset \(COD\)](#) released in March 2019 has been used as the reference for settlement names and locations, and for the number of settlements in each county.



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Settlements cut off from movement in most or all directions in IPC Phase 4+ counties²

Tonj East and North³

According to FGD participants, movements for some Tonj East and North settlements at conflict were severely restricted in the three months prior to data collection, including Kirik, Rualbet, Awul, and Akop (Tonj North), and Wunlit and Ngap-agok (Tonj East). Although conflict in Greater Tonj reportedly subsided in May and settlements were no longer cut off as of June, they previously faced great difficulty accessing key markets such as Warrap market. Movements within and out of Tonj East county were reported as especially constrained, which led to hunger-related deaths, according to some FGD participants.

Rumbek North⁴

Settlements in Rumbek North were reportedly cut off from movement into any of the surrounding counties, as ongoing conflict on the border with Cuiet and long-standing tensions with communities in Greater Tonj (Warrap state) and Unity state prevented movement in those directions, and insecurity near Malek cut off travel to Rumbek town. Settlements in the northern tip of the county, such as Malual Manuer, Thonydor, Rorbar, and Majok, faced additional difficulty accessing markets in Maper, as the feeder routes connecting surrounding payams to Maper were destroyed by last year's flooding. As a result of reduced access to other foods, participants said people in those settlements were relying only on livestock and wild food collection.

Rubkona⁵

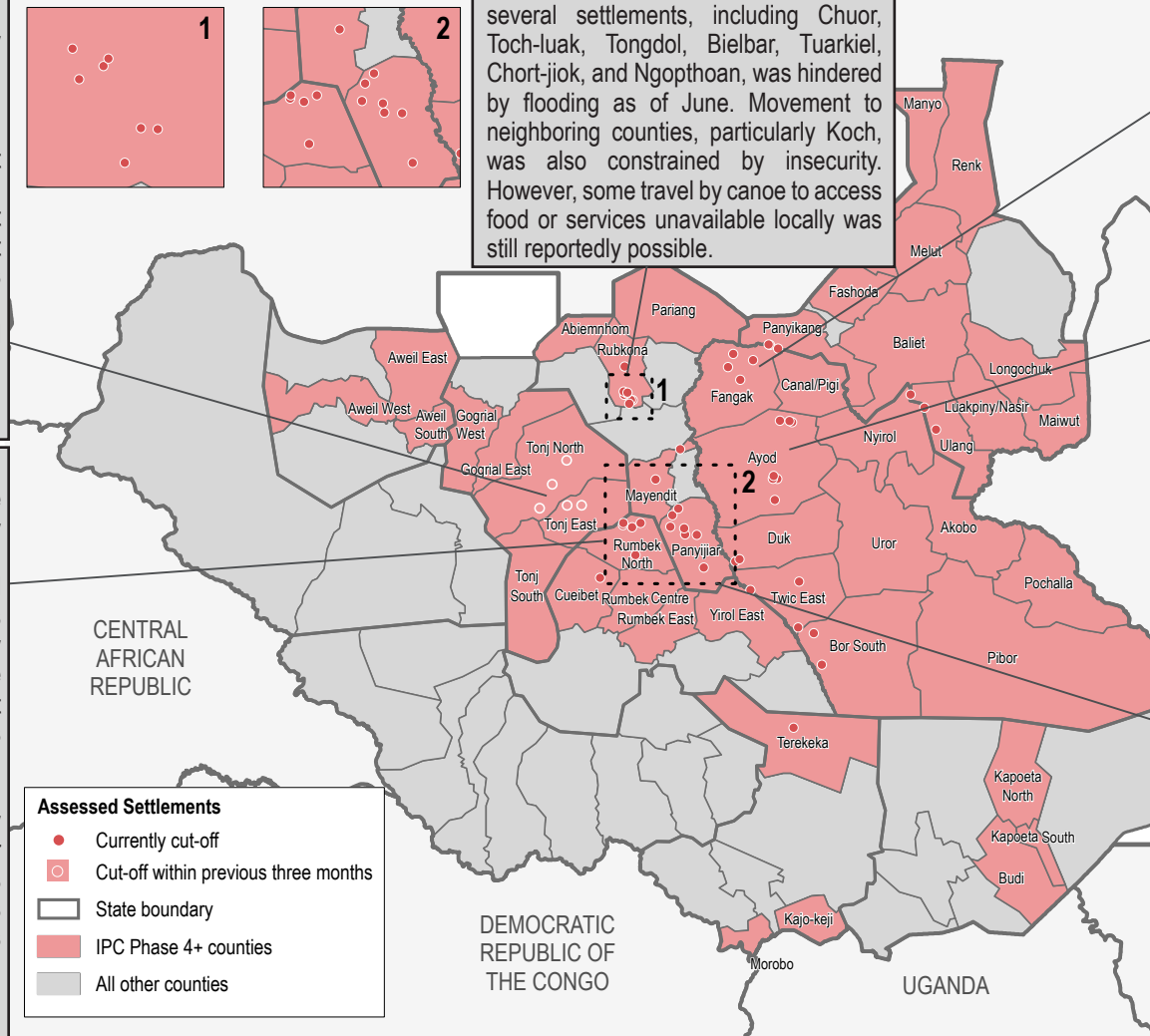
In southern Rubkona, movement out of several settlements, including Chuor, Toch-luak, Tongdol, Bielbar, Tuarkiel, Chort-jio, and Ngopthoan, was hindered by flooding as of June. Movement to neighboring counties, particularly Koch, was also constrained by insecurity. However, some travel by canoe to access food or services unavailable locally was still reportedly possible.

Fangak and Ayod⁶

In Fangak, atypical flooding in early 2021 continued to constrain access to or movement from settlements such as Paguir, Keew, Juaibor, Nyadin, and Kuernyang. Although it was reportedly possible to travel by canoe or by boat for those living near major rivers, FGD participants noted that the level of "lockdown" was very unusual, especially for the time of year, comparing it to the [heavy flooding of 1964](#). Separate REACH findings indicated that flood-affected populations were mainly relying on fish and water lilies.⁷ Meanwhile, in Ayod, flooding had reportedly increased in western Ayod from March to May, while eastward movements were deterred by fears of raids closer to Greater Akobo. People in many parts of Ayod were concentrated in high ground areas still considered fairly secure in the east of the county, such as Pagil, Wechdeng, Thaidhiup, Luakuoth, Woi, Padek, and Nyayin. Participants noted that for these communities, no livestock was available as most had died or had been moved elsewhere previously, suggesting reduced coping options in the area as of June.

Panyijar⁸

FGD participants reported that many areas of Panyijar were still flooded, with settlements such as Marial, Nyaraar, Garbek, Borjani, Gap Mayom, and Burthoiny reportedly cut off from access to health services, livelihoods or food available outside of the settlements due to flooded roads, though travel by canoe was reportedly still an option among those that owned one. People's ability to meet their food needs without travelling elsewhere was further challenged by much of the local cultivation and normally-available wild foods having been destroyed during last year's flooding.



² Among the counties in IPC classification Phase 4 or above, qualitative data collection on cut-off communities was not possible for Renk, Melut, Baliet, Longochuk, Maiwut, Gogrial East, and Gogrial West counties as well as the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

³ REACH, FGDs with IDPs from Greater Tonj, Wau Masna collective site, Wau county, May-June 2021.

⁴ REACH, Western Lakes FGDs, Rumbek town, Rumbek Center county, June 2021.

⁵ REACH, Central Unity FGDs, Bentiu former PoC site, Rubkona county, June 2021.

⁶ REACH, Northern Jonglei FGDs, Bor former PoC site, Bor South county, June 2021.

⁷ REACH, Fangak flooding impact and food insecurity FGDs, Old Fangak, New Fangak, Juaibor, Whichmon, Fangak county, 2-9 June 2021.

⁸ REACH, Southern Unity FGDs, Nyal town, Panyijar county, June 2021.

Although FGD coverage was broader, the scope of the analysis of cut-off communities shown here was narrowed to counties in IPC Phase 4 or 5, given their strategic relevance to the response in advance of the lean season.



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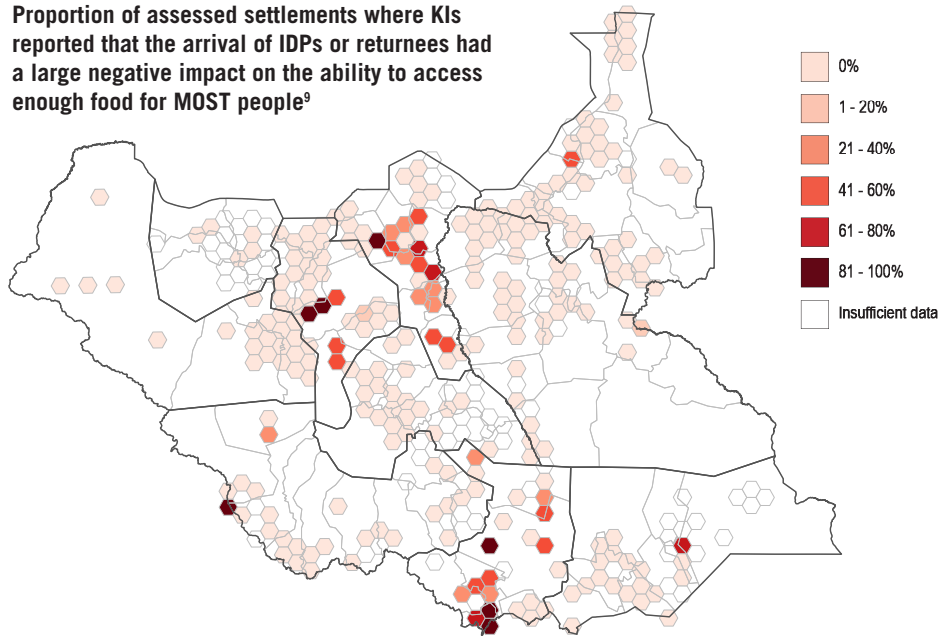
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Arrival impact on food access

Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that the arrival of IDPs or returnees had a large negative impact on the ability to access enough food for MOST people⁹



Given limitations in analyzing data using sub-county administrative boundaries in South Sudan, the country was divided into a 500km² hexagon grid for analytical and display purposes. The distance between the opposite sides of each hexagon represents 15km, approximating one day's walking distance as well as the size of a basic service unit.

Displacement and returns in high-impact counties

In addition to primary data collection, REACH tracks secondary sources on population movement to triangulate primary findings and to track additional movements or drivers that are not well-reflected in AoK data.

- The increased sub-national violence in Greater Tonj continued to displace thousands of people from their homes. According to [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) as of January nearly 19,000 people were reportedly sheltering in Gogrial East county. In March an [estimated 50,000 people](#) were reported as displaced from locations across Greater Tonj, including to other settlements in Greater Tonj. According to REACH FGDs, conflict in Greater Tonj continued throughout April, indicating that conflict likely remained the primary driver of arrivals whose presence stressed community resources.
- Due to recurring fighting between armed forces and cattle keepers and host communities in Lainya county, according to OCHA, an estimated [8,000 people](#) fled attacks by armed cattle keepers in May.
- Since late last year, reports of [increasing insecurity](#) in Terekeka county have caused displacement of people and their livestock to neighboring counties, which may be contributing to the unusual movement to Morobo county. Separately, according to [Radio Tamazuj](#), in April 2021, officials in Kajo-Keji and Morobo counties reported thousands of voluntary returnees from neighboring Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which may also be negatively impacting the ability to access enough food.
- Increased cattle raiding in Koch county early this year could have driven IDPs into Guit county.¹⁰ Spontaneous returns from Sudan also reportedly increased across Unity state, which may contribute to the arrivals in Guit.¹¹

Arrival impact on food access

Top 5 counties with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that arrival of IDPs or returnees had a large negative impact on ability to access enough food for MOST people⁹

Tonj North	84%	<div></div>
Tonj South	44%	<div></div>
Lainya	43%	<div></div>
Morobo	38%	<div></div>
Guit ¹²	33%	<div></div>

IDP presence

In those five counties (see chart on the far left), proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs

IDPs in Tonj North	79%	<div></div>
IDPs in Tonj South	89%	<div></div>
IDPs in Lainya	75%	<div></div>
IDPs in Morobo	38%	<div></div>
IDPs in Guit	58%	<div></div>

Returnee presence

In those five counties (see chart on the far left), proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of returnees (IDP or refugee)

Returnees in Tonj North	68%	<div></div>
Returnees in Tonj South	44%	<div></div>
Returnees in Lainya	48%	<div></div>
Returnees in Morobo	31%	<div></div>
Returnees in Guit	54%	<div></div>

Departure locations¹³

In those five counties (see chart on the far left), main counties of departure for IDPs within the 3 months prior to data collection¹⁴

Tonj North (Tonj North IDPs)	93%	<div></div>
Tonj South (Tonj South IDPs)	100%	<div></div>
Lainya (Lainya IDPs)	86%	<div></div>
Terekeka (Morobo IDPs)	100%	<div></div>
Koch (Guit IDPs) ¹⁵	50%	<div></div>

⁹ Results shown are restricted to assessed settlements where KIs had reported the presence of either IDPs or returnees.

¹⁰ IRINA Report: Jahjah Boma, Jaak Payam, Koch County-Unity State, 24th & 26th February 2021

¹¹ IOM-DTM Preliminary information for Needs Analysis Working Group partners, May 24-June 6 2021.

¹² Arrivals of IDPs or returnees to Panyijar county were also reported by KIs in 33% of assessed settlements to have had a large negative impact on the ability to access enough...

¹³ ...food for most people.

¹⁴ Percentages are given among assessed settlements in each county that reported the presence of the arrival population AND arrivals in the three months prior to data collection.

¹⁵ For all of the top 5 counties where arrivals reportedly had a large negative impact on food, IDPs were more commonly reported to be present than returnees.

¹⁶ IDP arrivals to Guit county were also reported by KIs in 50% of assessed settlements to have come from other settlements within Guit county.