

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring

Western Equatoria State - South Sudan April - August 2021

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

Overview

The April-August period was characterised by varied access to food across Western Equatoria State (WES)¹. The reported new arrivals from Tambura county and higher prices of goods in the market might have affected the availability of, access to, and utilisation of food in Nagero, Ezo, Nzara, and Yambio counties.² Additionally, increase in reported incidents of conflict and violence in Tambura county might have also contributed to a decline in feelings of safety. This change in perception of safety may have influenced livelihood activities.

Information remains critical for an informed humanitarian response, especially while COVID-19 related restrictions, logistic and security constraints have negatively impacted humanitarian access to many areas across the state. 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 (KIs) with knowledge of a settlement and triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary data. This Situation Overview analyses changes in observed humanitarian needs in WES in quarter two and three of 2021.

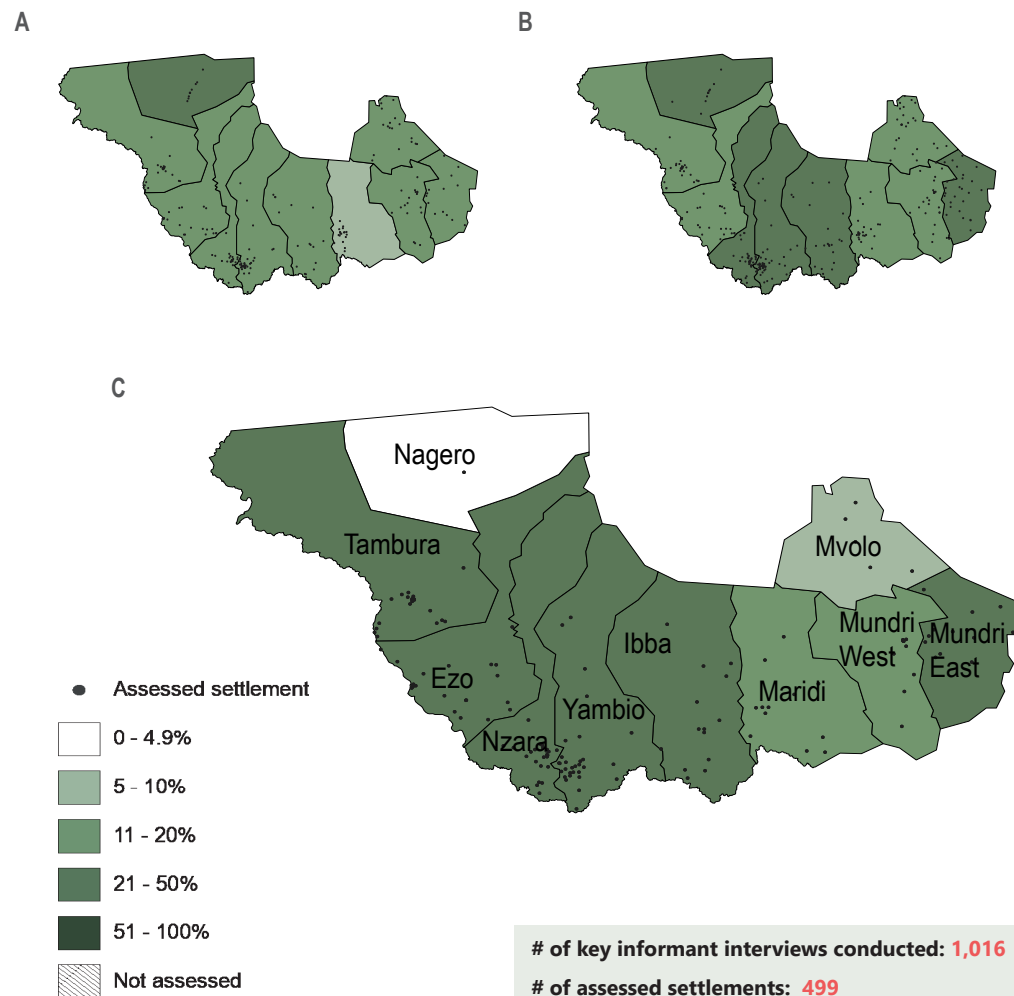
Methodology

To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of WES, REACH uses primary data from 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 KIs in Yambio and Maridi towns in WES between April and August 2021.

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 settlements in a given month were included in analysis.³ 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 throughout the period of analysis.

Quantitative findings were triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) with male and female local community members from all ten counties of WES and secondary sources. More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK ToRs](#).

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of the WES region, April (A), June (B) and August (C) 2021:



of key informant interviews conducted: **1,016**
 # of assessed settlements: **499**
 # of counties covered: **10 (of 10)**
 # of focus group discussions conducted: **4**

1. In August, county coverage for Nagero and Mvolo were not met, therefore won't be reporting on these counties.

2. Radio Tamazuj. Tambura unrest, 80,000 IDPs in dire need of humanitarian assistance. 15 September 2021.

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



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Situation Overview: Western Equatoria State April - August 2021

Key Findings



Displacement: Findings indicate that displacement across WES was characterised by high internal displacement in the western counties of WES.⁵ The high internal displacement might be related to the reported escalation of violence between armed actors, increasing insecurity in Tambura county.⁶ Furthermore, cross border movements were seemingly restricted to some WES counties bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR).⁷ Findings from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)⁸ highlighted an increase in refugee presence, with refugees seemingly having stayed mostly within WES during the reporting period.⁹



Food Security and Livelihoods: Findings suggest that adequate rainfall, access to agricultural tools and land for cultivation seemed to have contributed to adequate food access across most of WES. However, in Tambura county, conflict and insecurity appear to have limited access to farms, supplies, livestock and nearby markets, disrupting access to food.¹⁰ Similarly, severe coping strategies were reported across the assessed settlements in Tambura and Mundri West counties, which might have been driven by displacement, limited access to markets, and seasonal variations in livelihood activities.¹¹ Access to markets across the state also appeared to have remained low in line with reported barriers, such as long distances, poor road conditions and unavailability of some food items.



Protection: Findings indicate that feelings of safety varied across WES. In August, while KIs from 91% of assessed settlements reported most people felt safe most of the time overall, this proportion was considerably lower in Tambura county (33%), in line with tensions. In Ibba, Mundri East, and Mundri West counties, KIs in over 85% of assessed settlements reported sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to be the main protection concern for women.

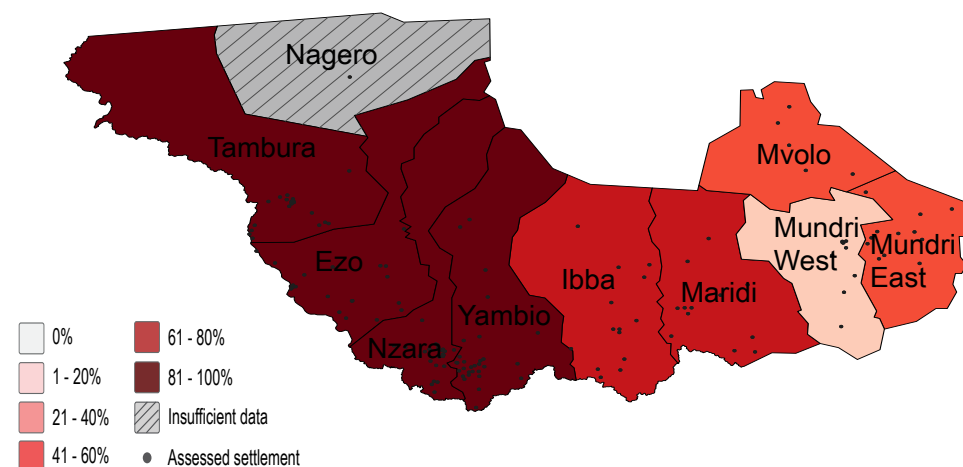


Health: Findings indicate that access to a hospital was low across WES due to barriers such as poor road conditions and long distance. Across the reporting period, less than a quarter of assessed settlements reportedly had access to a hospital (20% in August, consistent with April). KIs in over a third (32%) of assessed settlements reported that it took people more than an hour to reach a health care facility. Similarly, the most prominent barriers to accessing health care services across the proportion of assessed settlements were lack of medication (90%), distance to health facility (24%), and lack of health care workers at the facility (17%).



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Findings suggest that, while access to a functional borehole remained consistent across most of the counties in WES, it increased in Mundri West, Yambio, and Tambura counties. The increased access might be related to seasonal rains and the subsequent increase in ground water level.¹² However, the assessed settlements in which the use of an unprotected water source as the main source of drinking water was reported increased from April (58%) to August (75%).

Map 2: Proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported an unprotected water source as the main drinking water source in August 2021:



Indicative of tensions in Tambura and the neighbouring counties, the proportion of assessed settlements in Tambura county where people reportedly felt unsafe accessing their preferred water sources increased from April (4%) to August (29%).



Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFIs): Findings indicate that, while access to solid structures¹³ remained seemingly stable for the host community and IDPs in WES, access to reliable shelter for returnees appeared to have been limited likely due to conflicts, particularly in Tambura county. In August, returnees were reportedly living in less solid structures in 62% of the assessed settlements where presence of IDPs was reported (28%). The use of less solid structures as the main shelter type could expose the returnees to protection risks.¹⁴



Education: With the resumption of school curriculum, the assessed settlements in which KIs reported that children had access to educational services increased from April (43%) to August (93%). Despite the reported increase, lack of teachers (58%) and insecurity (38%) remained commonly reported challenges that hampered access to educational services across WES. Likewise, inability to pay school fees was reported among the most prominent reasons for low enrolment of both boys and girls.

5. Radio Tamazuj. Tambura unrest, 80,000 IDPs in dire need of humanitarian assistance. 15 September 2021.

6. IOM. South Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix. January to June 2021.

7. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 30 April 2021.

8. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 30 September 2021.

9. IOM. South Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix. 31 August 2021.

10. UNMISS. UNMISS concerns on protection of children amidst conflict in Greater Tambura. 01 September 2021.

11. UNMISS. Peacekeepers escort internally displaced persons fetching water, violence against Tambura women reduced.

September 2021.

12. UNFAO. South Sudan Dekadal weather update. 11-20 February 2021.

13. Solid shelter structures refers to tukuls and permanent shelters.

14. OCHA. South Sudan. Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2021.

Population Movement and Displacement

AoK findings suggest that the reporting period was characterised by relatively high internal displacements in the western half of WES.¹⁵ The common reporting of internal displacement¹⁶ may be linked to escalating violence¹⁷ between armed actors, which has heightened insecurity in Tambura county.¹⁸ Furthermore, findings from the UNHCR suggest an increase in refugee presence with the prevalence of cross border movements in some WES counties closer to DRC and CAR borders.¹⁹

Internal displacements and returns

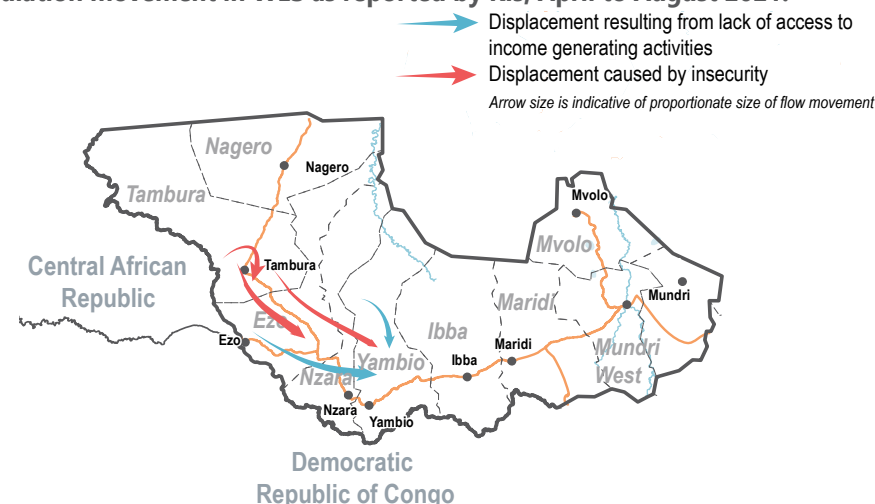
In August, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported presence of IDPs was notably high in Nzara (80%), Tambura (76%), Ezo (75%), and Yambio (46%) counties. This is consistent with findings from the inter-agency report on Tambura county, indicating that IDPs were seeking safety in Ezo, Yambio, and Nzara counties and that their conditions and needs may need to be closely monitored due to high food security needs.²⁰ The high prevalence of IDPs in the western counties may have an adverse effect on access to shelters, health services, food, and livelihood activities, with further negative impact on IDPs' physical and mental health. In addition, IDPs' relatively high reliance on the host communities for food could worsen their food security situation as host communities focus on selling farm produce to provide gifts to their families at the end of year holidays.²¹ Conflict and lack of livelihood activities emerged as the most prominent reasons for displacement, reported in 67% and 28% of assessed settlements, respectively, in August. Conflict was particularly commonly reported in Tambura county (92% of assessed settlements), which was echoed by FGD participants who described that host communities in Tambura county had also been displaced due to insecurity.²²

The proportion of assessed settlement where the presence of returnees²³ was reported was notably high in Ezo (50%), Tambura (48%), and Mundri East (40%) counties in August. In August, in the assessed settlements where presence of IDPs and returnees was reported (28%), a vast majority of the movement was reportedly localised within South Sudan with limited cross-border movements. The localised movement of returnees and IDPs may affect the availability and provisions of basic services such as food, health, and education services as host communities seemingly struggle with the increased pressure on the available resources.²⁴

Cross-border movements

According to UNHCR, reported presence of refugees in WES increased between April (11,150 refugees) and September (11,958 refugees). Refugees were reported to reside in Makpandu Refugee Camp (Yambio county), Ezo Town, Naandi and Andari (Ezo county), Source Yubu and Tambura Town (Tambura county), and Maridi Town (Maridi county).²⁵ The reported increase in the number of refugees could be due to escalation of violence by armed actors along South Sudan's borders with CAR and DRC.²⁶ Moreover, due to likely increase in tensions over scarce resources during the dry season, conflicts along South Sudan's borders with CAR and DRC could escalate and further contribute to refugees moving into South Sudan.

Population movement in WES as reported by KIs, April to August 2021:



Food Security and Livelihoods

In August 2021, in almost all assessed settlements in WES, KIs reported that most people had been able to access adequate quantities of food in the month prior to data collection (96%), with the exception of Tambura county, where adequate access was only reported in 67% of assessed settlements. Findings suggest that adequate rainfall, access to agricultural tools and land for cultivation were the primary reasons for a high and stable access to food across WES. However, in Tambura county, access to food was limited due to the conflict, which may have led to reliance on community members for access to food. The relatively low access to sufficient food in Tambura county could deteriorate as the conflict occurred at the peak of harvest season and may later affect Ezo, Nagero, Nzara and Yambio counties, which might be hosting IDPs from Tambura county.

Access to food

Overall, the proportion of assessed settlements where access to enough food was reported remained stable from April (94%) to August (96%) across WES. The high proportion of settlements with adequate access to food could be due to reliable access to land for cultivation (reported in 98% of assessed settlements in April), adequate rainfall, and agricultural inputs, which may have contributed to a good harvest.²⁷ The relatively high reports on adequate access to food in most of WES is consistent with the October 2020 Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) projections, which forecasted all WES counties (except Nagero county) to be in Phase 2 (stress).²⁸

Findings indicate that, despite stable access to food through cultivation and markets across WES, access to food varied across Ibba, Maridi, Nzara and Tambura counties. In August, the most commonly reported food sources across the proportion of assessed settlements were cultivation (98%), markets (43%), and foraging for wild food (26%). Foraging was particularly commonly reported as a source

15. Radio Tamazuj. Tambura unrest, 80,000 IDPs in dire need of humanitarian assistance. September 2021.

16. IOM. South Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix. January to June 2021.

17. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 30 April 2021.

18. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 30 September 2021.

19. IOM. South Sudan Displacement Tracking Matrix. 31 August 2021.

20. Joint Humanitarian Mission report on Tambura County. 13 July 2021.

21- Eye Radio. Cleric appeals for assistance for W.Equatoria's displaced. 26 June 2021.

22. REACH FGD with participants from Tambura County 04 June 2021.

23. This refers to both IDP and refugee returnees

24. OCHA. South Sudan. Tambura Conflict, flash update No.1, 14 September 2021.

25. UNHCR. South Sudan Refugee Population Statistics. 30 April 2021.

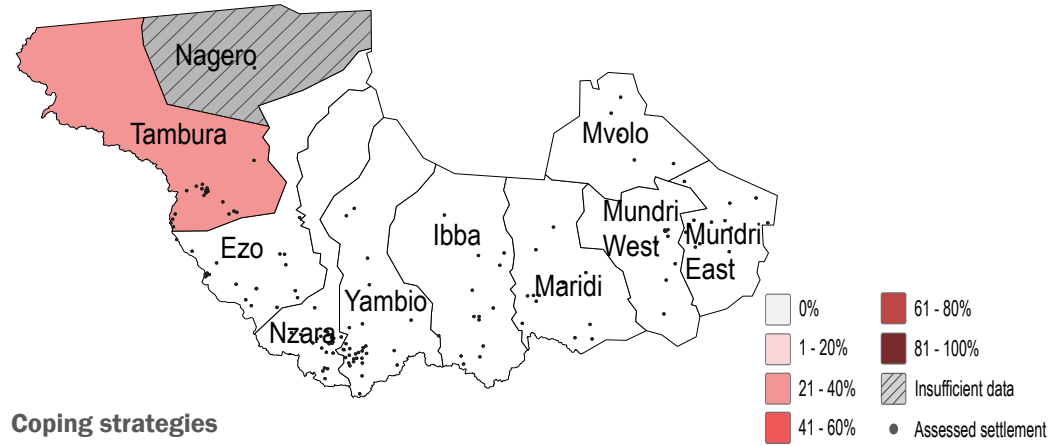
26. ACLED. Surface Tension: 'Communal' Violence and Elite Ambitions in South Sudan. 19 August 2021

27. UNFAO. South Sudan Dekadal weather update. 11-20 February 2021.

28. IPC. South Sudan IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis, October 2020 update.

of food in Ibba (100%) and Maridi (75%) counties. Additionally, in 29% of assessed settlements in Tambura county and 20% of assessed settlements in Nzara county, it was reported that food provided by family and community members was the main source of food. These sources are generally considered to be unsustainable food sources, indicative of an increased vulnerability to food security shocks.²⁹

Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements in WES where KIs reported inadequate access to food, August 2021:



Coping strategies

Potentially as a result of multiple shocks such as displacement, limited access to markets, and reduction of livelihood activities due to insecurity, findings suggest that people employed various coping strategies to cope with the lack of food in most counties of WES. In August, consuming less expensive food (93%), collecting wild food (94%) and reducing number of meals eaten per day (53%), emerged as the most commonly reported coping strategies that most people in the assessed settlements were relying on. The reported reduction in food consumption might contribute to cases of malnutrition among communities in assessed settlements, including breastfeeding mothers, children, and pregnant women, and may result in higher morbidity.³⁰

Despite the adequate access to enough food across WES, findings suggest that people continued to engage in unsustainable livelihood coping strategies to source food such as borrowing money or food (reported in 71% of assessed settlements) and gathering natural resources (57%). The continued deployment of unsustainable coping strategies in the reporting period might be related to unsuccessful harvests and economic hardship faced by communities in the previous quarter.³¹

Livelihood activities

Findings suggest that the main livelihood sources in WES were varied and diverse. In August, crops for sustenance (96%), petty business at the markets (27%), poultry rearing (26%), and casual labour (26%), emerged as the most commonly reported livelihood sources that most people in the assessed settlements engaged in, across WES. The apparent variations in livelihood activities might be related to seasonal variations: with the start of the rainy seasons, communities in assessed

settlements of WES have reportedly increasingly engaged in agricultural activities, which may be related to positive effects on the food security situation of WES. In August, reports of livestock ownership slightly increased in Mundri East county. The proportion of assessed settlements where ownership of livestock was reported increased from April (29%) to August (53%). This might be linked with seasonal weather changes and return of IDPs likely due to availability of pasture and water, encouraging pastoralists to return to the settlements.³²

Access to markets

Findings indicate that despite common reporting of markets being accessible across WES, some communities faced long distances, poor road conditions, and unavailability of certain food items. Similar to the high degree of market access reported in the previous quarter (which is in line with enhanced market access commonly experienced in the dry season),³³ the proportion of assessed settlements with access to markers was high in August (99%, consistent with April).

In August, the proportion of assessed settlements where barriers in accessing the marketplace were reported (42%), long distance (27%), and poor road conditions (45%) were the most commonly reported reasons. In addition to challenges faced to reach marketplaces, challenges faced at marketplaces were reported in almost all assessed settlements (97%). In those settlements, unavailability of some goods (57%) and higher price of goods (85%) were the most commonly reported barriers. These barriers are likely related to poor infrastructure affecting the supply of goods and causing price hikes.³⁴

Area of concern

Tambura county

In comparison to other counties, the proportion of assessed settlements in Tambura county where access to enough food was reported was considerably low (reported in 67% of assessed settlements, consistent with April). Crop destruction due to pests and conflict-led insecurity emerged as the most prominent reasons for inadequate access, reported in 10% and 67% of assessed settlements, respectively, in August.³⁵ The conflict-induced insecurity may have limited access to farms and supplies, destroyed livestock, and hindered access to nearby markets.³⁶ Furthermore, FGD participants cited destruction of crops and plants due to conflict as the primary reason for inadequate access to food in Tambura county.³⁷

Reports of negative impacts of shocks on access to enough food increased across assessed settlements in Tambura county during the reporting period. The proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that arrival of IDPs had a large negative impact on most people's ability to access food increased from April (13%) to August (71%). Similarly, the proportion of assessed settlements where conflict or looting reportedly had a large negative effect on access to food increased from 43% in April to 67% in August 2021.

Indicative of limited access to food in Tambura county, in August, KIs in all assessed settlements where inadequate access to food was reported (33%) reported hunger was "severe" or "worst it can be".³⁸ In line with these reports of severe or extreme hunger, in August, KIs in 25% of assessed settlements reported that people in assessed settlements had relied on coping mechanisms categorised as

29. Radio Tamazuj. Nagero Commissioner in Wau to lobby for aid after 10 children die from hunger. 01 October 2021.

30. Eye Radio. Tambura IDPs in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. 21 July 2021.

31. REACH. Situation Overview. January-March 2021.

32. UNFAO. South Sudan Dekadal weather update. 11-20 February 2021.

33. REACH. Situation Overview. January-March 2021.

34. REACH. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) 1-7 August 2021.

35. UNMISS. UNMISS concerns on protection of children amidst conflict in Greater Tambura. 01 September 2021.

36. UNMISS. Peacekeepers escort internally displaced persons fetching water, violence against Tambura women reduced. 14 September 2021.

37. REACH FGD with participants from Tambura County 07 June 2021.

38. UNMISS. UNMISS concerns on protection of children amidst conflict in Greater Tambura. 01 September 2021.

“extreme” in the thirty days prior to data collection, such as skipping an entire day without food (14%) and adults restricting food consumption so that children can eat (10%).

Protection

Findings indicate that, while people’s feelings of safety seemed to have remained stable across WES, they were comparatively low in Tambura county, likely due to conflict-induced insecurity. KIs in 87% of assessed settlements in April and 90% in August reported that most people felt safe most of the time across WES. Meanwhile in Tambura county, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people felt safe most of the time was notably lower in August (33% of assessed settlements, consistent with April). Feelings of insecurity can negatively affect access to food and livelihoods, as well as physical and mental health.

In Mundri West, Nzara, and Yambio counties, KIs relatively commonly reported housing, land, and property issues. In particular, the issue that there were multiple claims to ownership of land was reported in 45% of assessed settlements in Mundri West, 32% in Yambio, and 28% in Nzara counties (compared to 18% overall). This suggests that conflict and disaster-driven displacement could threaten stability in these counties.³⁹

Top three most commonly reported main protection concerns for women, men, boys, and girls in assessed settlements in WES, August 2021

Women			Men		
1	SGBV	54%	1	Alcohol use	59%
2	Alcohol use	12%	2	Violence within the same group	16%
3	Family separation ⁴⁰	1%	3	Violence between different groups	6%
Girls			Boys		
1	Early marriage	69%	1	Early marriage	43%
2	SGBV	15%	2	Violence within the same group	24%
3	Abduction	1%	3	Abduction	1%

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

While reports on the presence of a functional borehole remained consistent throughout WES, they increased in Mundri West, Yambio and Tambura counties likely due to seasonal factors. The proportion of assessed settlements in WES where functional boreholes were reportedly present remained consistent between April (68%) and August (76%), but rose considerably in Mundri West (from 44% in April to 100% in August), Yambio (83% to 98%), and Tambura counties (72% to 86%). This might be related to seasonal rain that may have contributed to an increase in ground water level.⁴¹

Water

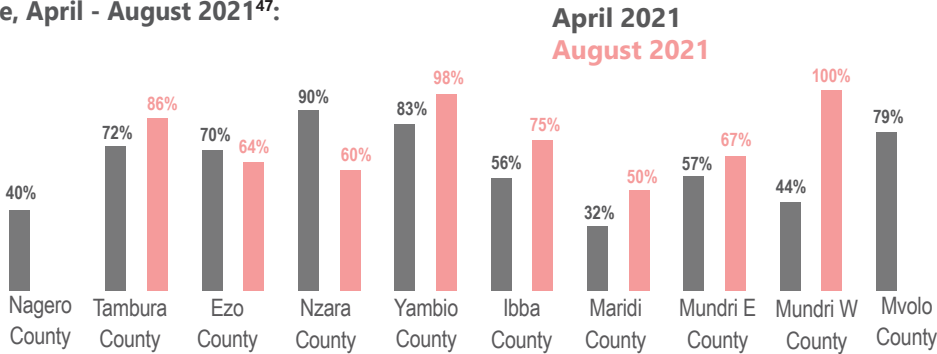
Despite the increase in reports of functional boreholes, in parallel, reports of the use of unprotected water as the primary source also rose from April (58%) to August (75%). Reliance on unimproved water sources might be related to proximity to these water sources, which are generally available and usually take less time for most people to reach.⁴² In August, KIs in 77% assessed settlements reported that most people took at least thirty minutes to access their preferred water source, increasing from April (59%). Considerable reliance on an unprotected water source may also affect the chances of contracting water-borne diseases such as typhoid, cholera, and diarrhoea.⁴³

In Ibba county, the duration to access preferred water sources was notably high during the reporting period. While in April, KIs in 31% of assessed settlements reported that people took at least an hour to access preferred water sources, this percentage increased to 100% in August. The time taken to access water may affect livelihood activities, which may impact water utilisation as well.⁴⁴ Perhaps reflective of the escalation of violence in Ezo and Tambura counties, the proportion of assessed settlement where most people reportedly felt unsafe accessing their preferred water source increased from April (0% in Ezo and 8% in Tambura) to August (11% in Ezo and 29% in Tambura).

Sanitation

In terms of sanitation, contrary to last quarter, the proportion of assessed settlements across WES where inadequate access to latrines was reported was notably high (78%). According to KIs, common barriers to latrine use were damage to latrines, a lack of latrines, and poor sanitary conditions. These are contrary to the findings from the previous quarter, where inadequate access to latrines may have been influenced by changes in livelihood activities during the dry season.⁴⁵ The apparent limited access to latrines could contribute to the prevalence of water borne diseases, affecting morbidity among children and pregnant women.⁴⁶ Similarly, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that people used soap for washing hands remained low in August (30%, consistent with April). Likely linked to high prices of imported goods in the market, KIs in 23% of assessed settlements reported that people washed hands with only water, while KIs in 9% of assessed settlements reported that people in the settlements did not wash their hands at all.

Proportion of assessed settlements in WES where KIs reported the presence of a functional borehole, April - August 2021⁴⁷:



38. In 7 assessed settlements in August, KIs reported that most people did not have access to sufficient food, in 2 of those settlements, hunger was reportedly “worst it can be” and in the remaining 5 it was “severe”.
39. South Sudan protection cluster monthly update, August 2021
40. In addition, KIs in 1% of assessed settlements reported violence between different groups as a protection concern for women in August.
41. UNFAO. South Sudan Dekadal weather update. 11-20 February 2021.
42. REACH. Situation Overview. January-March 2021.
43. UNICEF. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in South Sudan, briefing note. July - September 2021.
44. OCHA. South Sudan. Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2021.
45. REACH. Situation Overview. January-March 2021.
46. OCHA. South Sudan. Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2021.
47. Data for Nagero and Mvolo counties not reported in August due to poor coverage.



Health

The proportion of assessed settlements where access to a hospital was reported remained low across the reporting period (20% in August, consistent with April). In August, potentially linked to poor road conditions and long distance to access healthcare facilities, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that it took at least an hour to reach primary healthcare facilities remained high (34%, consistent with April). Similarly, in August, KIs in assessed settlements where barriers to accessing healthcare were reported (92%) identified lack of medication (90%), distant health facilities (24%) and lack of healthcare workers at the facility (17%) as the main barriers.



Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

Findings suggest that, while access to solid structures⁴⁸ remained consistent for host communities and IDPs, returnees continued to rely on less solid structures.⁴⁹ For the host community, the proportion of assessed settlements where access to solid structures was reported remained consistent from April (97%) to August (93%). Similarly, in the assessed settlements where the presence of IDPs was reported (44%), solid structures were reported as the main shelter type used by the IDPs in August (65%, consistent with April). However, in parallel, the proportion of assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly staying in an open area increased from April (11%) to August (27%). In Tambura county, the proportion of assessed settlements where nearly half of the IDP population was staying in an open area increased from April (13%) to August (67%).

In August, KIs in 62% of assessed settlements where presence of returnees had been reported (28%), reported that returnees were living in less solid structures, which marks an increase since April (32%). In Tambura county, the reported reliance on less solid structures by returnees was particularly high in August (70%), increasing from April (33%). Likely related to this, the proportion of assessed settlements in Tambura county where shelter damage was reported due to fighting increased from April (none) to August (19%).

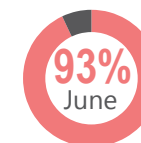
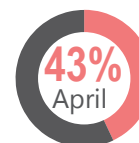


Education

The proportion of settlements in which KIs reported that children had access to educational facilities increased from 43% in April to 93% in June, likely related to the resumption of classes after the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.⁵⁰ Despite the increased access, lack of teachers (58%) and insecurity (38%) were reported as significant challenges that may have affected access to educational services across WES.⁵¹

In line with these barriers, findings suggest that class attendance for boys and girls remained low in June. KIs in only 25% of assessed settlements reported that half or more than half the children were enrolled in school. Potentially due to economic hardship and seasonal changes, inability to pay school fees (58%) and engagement in agricultural activities (15%) emerged as the most commonly reported barriers for boys, whereas reported inability to pay school fees (35%) and early marriages (20%) were commonly reported barriers for girls.

Proportion of assessed settlements in WES where KIs reported access to educational services, April - June 2021:



Conclusion

Overall, findings suggest that adequate rainfall and access to agricultural land and assets contributed to a relatively stable food security situation throughout much of WES in the second and third quarter of 2021. While people reportedly mostly felt safe and access to education appears to have increased, persisting challenges remain, particularly related to access to healthcare and improved water sources. With the effect of the dry season on water levels, access to improved water could decrease significantly in the upcoming quarter.

Findings suggest settlements in Tambura county faced particular challenges; ongoing conflict and insecurity, as well as pests and increasing pressure on resources following displacement appear to have negatively impacted access to food. In all assessed settlements in Tambura where inadequate access to food was reported (33%), KIs reported severe or extreme hunger. In addition, changes in livelihood activities and use of extreme coping strategies remain of concern in Tambura and neighbouring counties, such as Nagero, Ezo, Nzara, and Yambio, which host a large population of the IDPs from Tambura county.

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).

48. Solid shelter structures refers to tukuls and permanent shelters.

49. Less solid shelter structures refers to robookas, improvised shelters, tents and abandoned structures.

50. UNMISS. UNMISS assessment team visits Tambura, Western Equatoria, following recent armed attacks. 19 July 2021.

51. UNICEF Press release. UNICEF and UNESCO welcome the decision to reopen schools in South Sudan. 21 September 2020.

52. Ministry of General Education and Instruction and South Sudan Education Cluster. Education needs assessment South Sudan 2021