

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring, Jonglei State

South Sudan October - December 2020

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

Overview

Humanitarian needs remained high across Jonglei state in the fourth quarter of 2020. The existing humanitarian crisis was exacerbated even further by a series of compounding shocks, including, insecurity, continued widespread flooding, a deteriorating macro-economic situation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Improvements in the food security situation, usually associated with the harvest in this time of the year, have not been materialised, which likely points to an increase in humanitarian needs in Jonglei State at the start of 2021.

To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlements, 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). This Situation Overview analyses changes in observed humanitarian needs in Jonglei State between October and December 2020.

Methodology

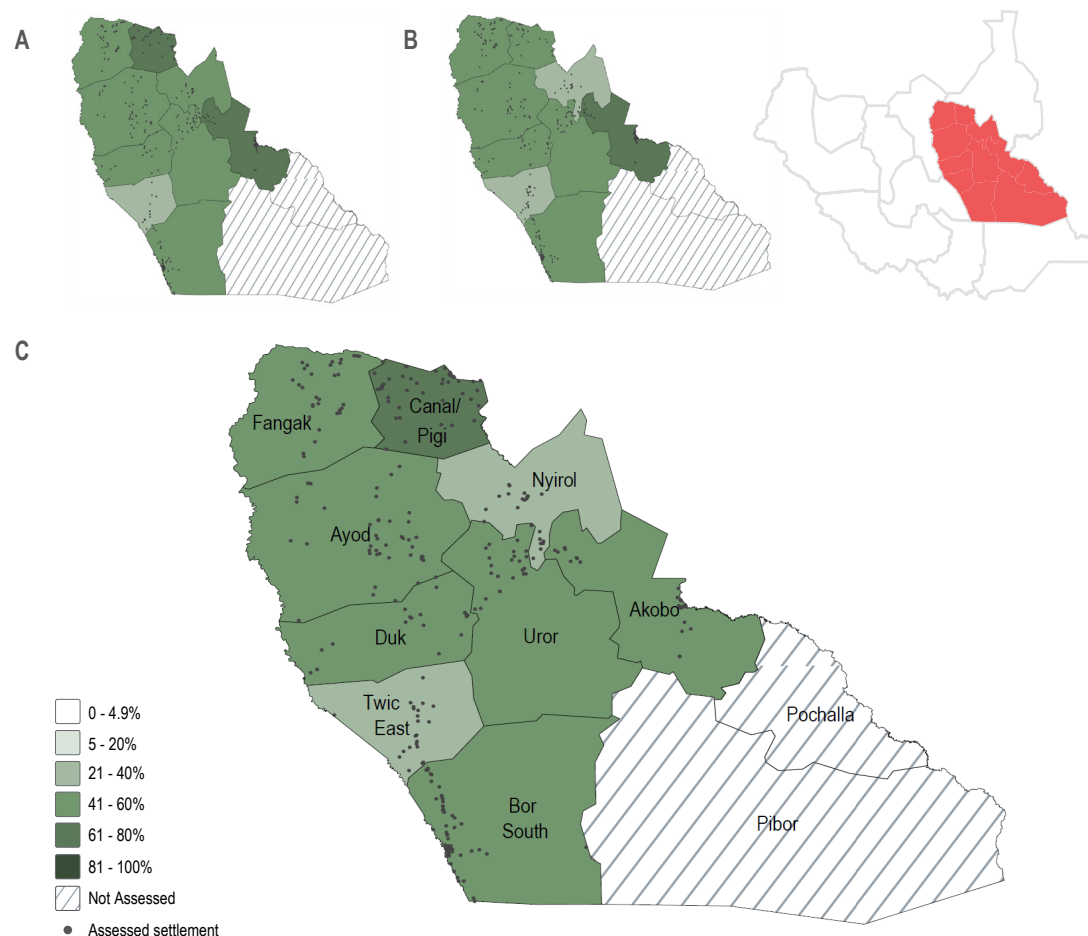
To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Jonglei State, REACH conducts interviews with key informants (KIs) who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or "Area of Knowledge" (AoK). These interviews were conducted with KIs in the former Bor Protection of Civilian (PoC) site, Bor Town, and Akobo Town throughout the reporting period. Findings should be considered indicative only of the situation in assessed settlements.

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 settlements¹ 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 payam² coverage over the period. Quantitative findings were triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary sources. FGDs with people displaced from hard-to-reach areas in Jonglei State took place throughout October - December 2020.

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

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Jonglei State in October (A), November (B), and December (C) 2020



of key informant interviews conducted: **901**

of assessed settlements: **514**

of counties covered: **9 (of 11)**

of focus group discussions conducted: **33**

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: The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs remained high but stable between September (48%) and December (39%). Lack of food was reported as the main push factor for IDPs in only 2% of assessed settlements with IDP presence in September, increasing sharply towards the end of the fourth quarter to almost half (43%) in December. Alongside the lack of food, flooding was reported as the main push factor in 36% of assessed settlements with IDP presence in December. Finally, sub-national violence continued to cause widespread displacement, resulting in large-scale disruptions of livelihoods.



Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL): KIs in only a quarter (27%) of assessed settlements reported that most people had adequate access to food in December, suggesting a decline in the overall food security situation when compared with over half (54%) in September. In 33% of the assessed settlements where people were reportedly unable to access enough food (73%), KIs reported severe hunger in the settlement, compared to 13% in September. Moving forward, it is likely that the failure to harvest, compounded with widespread cattle death, limited access to markets, and reduced coping capacity will deepen the need for Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA).



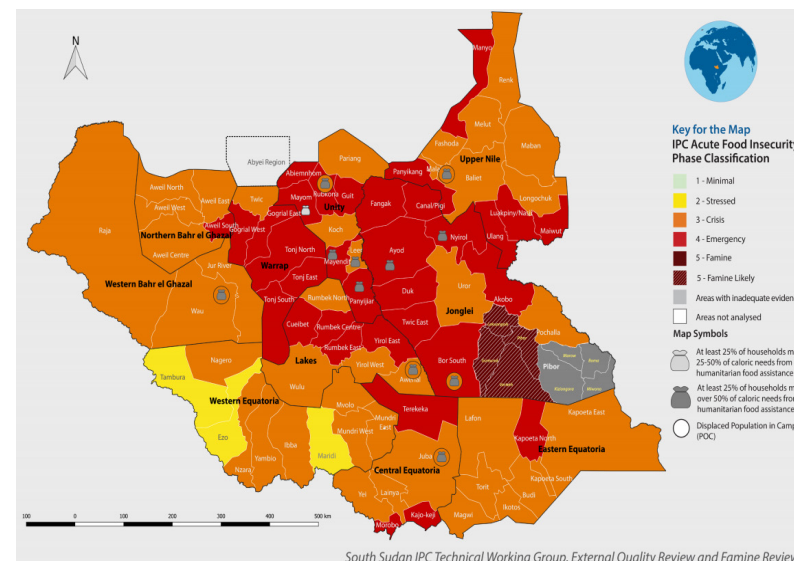
Health and Nutrition: Findings suggest that compounding shocks throughout the reporting period have had severe consequences for the nutritional and health status of populations across Jonglei State. In December, reports of malnutrition in children being worse compared to the same time last year (2019), increased sharply to 66% of assessed settlements, compared to 18% in September. Based on the IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN) analysis for November 2020 to March 2021, all counties in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) are in IPC AMN Phase 4 (critical) except for Twic East and Pochalla which are in IPC AMN Phase 3 (serious) and 389,051 children are affected by acute malnutrition and in need of treatment.³ Malaria reportedly remained the most common health problem in assessed settlements in December (41%).



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Latrine usage remained low but constant with KIs in nearly half (45% in December) of assessed settlements reporting no people were using latrines, suggesting widespread open defecation across much of the State. Limited access to existing clean water sources and sanitation facilities was reportedly a cause of waterborne diseases, such as typhoid and diarrheal diseases.



Protection: Findings suggest that the protection situation remained stable throughout the reporting period with most people reportedly feeling safe most of the time in December



Map 2: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity Situation Map for October-November 2020, South Sudan.⁴

(90% of assessed settlements), which is consistent with findings in September. This is likely related to reduced mobility due to extraordinary flooding, reducing the risk of attacks, ambushes, and abductions. Findings indicate that women continue to face a wide range of protection concerns. Consistent with September, in 22% of assessed settlements, KIs reported domestic violence as a main protection concern for women in December. According to the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), girls and women in Bor South and Duk expressed that they were facing gender-based violence.^{5,6}



Education: Schools have started reopening in phases, beginning with Primary 8 and Senior 4 in the first week of October 2020, although, schools have mostly remained closed in South Sudan, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷ According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the closure of schools has increased exposure to gender-based violence for girls (including early marriage) in South Sudan.⁸ In addition, the widespread deterioration of the food security situation across Jonglei state and the related burden on women and girls to provide food for the household will likely further limit the ability of girls to return to school.



Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI): Across Jonglei State, the proportion of assessed settlements where host communities reportedly live in more permanent shelter types declined. In December, in 68% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that host communities lived in more permanent shelter types compared to 87% in September. The apparent worsening in shelter conditions, for host communities, is likely a consequence of flooding and sub-national violence. In stark contrast to host communities, KIs reported that most IDPs in assessed settlements continued to live in less permanent shelter types in December (75%).

3. IPC. [South Sudan TWG Key Messages Oct 2020-July 2021](#), December 2020.

4. IPC. [South Sudan TWG Key Messages Oct 2020-July 2021](#), December 2020.

5. DRC. Rapid Protection Assessment Report. Duk Padiet Town, Duk County. December 2020.

6. DRC. Rapid Protection Assessment Report. Abiidoor, Bor County. September 2020.

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

8. UNICEF. [Empty Seats](#), February 2021.

Population Movement and Displacement

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs remained high but stable between September (48%) and December (39%). Reporting on this was particularly high in Canal Pigi (67%), Akobo (59%), and Bor South (50%) counties in December. In those settlements where IDP presence was reported (39%), KIs commonly identified lack of food (43%), flooding (36%) and insecurity (11%) as the main push factors for IDPs in December.

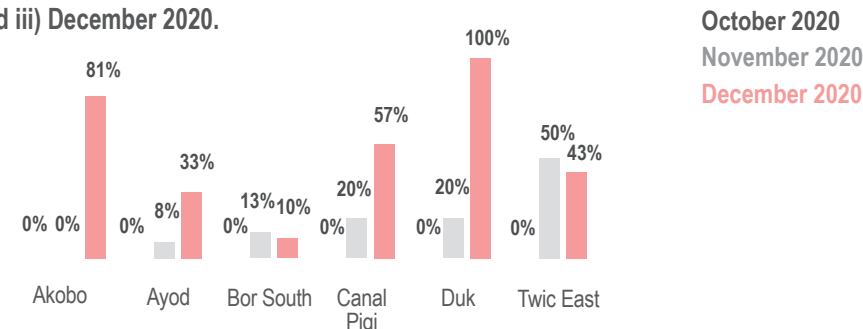
Lack of food was reported as the main push factor for IDPs in 2% of assessed settlements with IDP presence (48%) in September, increasing sharply towards the end of the fourth quarter to almost half (43%) in December. This may be related to flood waters receding towards the end of the reporting period, which allowed movement towards food and other resources. Displacement caused by the lack of food is likely a consequence of the destruction of crops and general livelihood collapse in many parts of Jonglei State caused by flooding.

Findings suggest that alongside a lack of food, flooding, characterised by atypically high water volumes and rains outside the normal time period, continued to cause widespread displacement. Reflective of this, flooding was reported as the main push factor in 36% of assessed settlements with IDP presence in December. Across Jonglei State, heavy rainfall caused flooding of the Nile, Pibor, Sobat and Lol rivers as well as other rivers and lowland areas of Jonglei.⁹ In line with this, reporting of flooding as a main push factor was particularly high in assessed settlements with IDP presence in Ayod (58%), Twic East (57%), and Bor South (52%) counties in December. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), over 10,000 individuals were displaced within Akobo county due to flooding of Akobo Lau and Ajwara rivers.¹⁰ In addition, a temporary site for flood displaced populations from Jonglei state was set up in Mangalla, in August 2020. In early November, according to the World Food Programme (WFP), over 17,000 individuals were registered as IDPs in Mangalla (Central Equatoria State).¹¹ The vast majority of these individuals were displaced from Bor South, Twic East and Duk counties.

Participants of FGDs in Akobo¹², Fangak¹³, and Nyirol¹⁴ counties reported that flooding has led to mass displacement of people to higher grounds within their own settlement or to higher grounds in neighbouring settlements throughout the reporting period. Most severely affected by flooding are those households who are unable to move due to reduced mobility of vulnerable members in households and a lack of financial means.^{15, 16} The severity of flooding was further reported by FGD participants from Twic East¹⁷ and Ayod¹⁸ counties, in October and November, respectively, comparing the flooding in 2020 to widespread displacement and livelihood collapse caused by excessive flooding that took place in the 1960s.

Finally, sub-national violence seems to have continued to cause widespread displacement,

Figure 1. Proportion of assessed settlements where lack of food was reported as the main IDP push factor in settlements where IDP presence was reported (39%) in i) October, ii) November, and iii) December 2020.



resulting in large-scale disruptions of livelihoods and impeding access to essential services (e.g. health and education). According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), sub-national violence displaced an estimated 157,000 people in Bor South, Duk, Nyirol, Twic East, and Uror counties throughout 2020.¹⁹ Although reporting of insecurity as the main IDP push factor decreased significantly from 37% of assessed settlements with IDP presence in September, to 11% of assessed settlements with IDP presence, in December, insecurity continued to cause displacement in many parts of Jonglei State. In line with this, FGD participants displaced within Akobo²⁰ and Bor South²¹ counties in November reported that sub-national violence forced displacement to densely populated towns, which impeded access to income-generating activities and consequently led to further livelihood collapse. Recurring events of sub-national violence have additionally triggered mass displacement in parts of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA).²²

Self-reported returns

The presence of refugee returnees was reported in 42% of assessed settlements across Jonglei in December, down from 51% in September. Reporting was particularly high in assessed settlements in Akobo (93%), Uror (84%), Fangak (82%), and Nyirol (82%) counties, in December. REACH Port and Monitoring (PRM) in Akobo Town tracks the movement of South Sudanese households travelling to, and returning from Ethiopia, predominantly to refugee camps in the Gambella region. The number of recorded inbound individuals fell from 350²³, in September, to 246²⁴, in December. The primary recorded pull factor for returnees remained rejoining family and home, which is consistent with AoK data from December 2020.

9. OCHA. [South Sudan: Flooding Situation Report](#). December 2020.

10. IOM. [DTM: Akobo county Jonglei State Event Tracking](#). October 2020.

11. IOM. [DTM: Mangala Rapid Flow Monitoring](#). October 2020.

12. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo East to Akobo Town. November 2020.

13. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. November 2020.

14. FGD with participants displaced from Nyirol to Bor PoC. December 2020.

15. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. November 2020.

16. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC. November 2020.

17. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

18. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC. November 2020.

19. OCHA. [Jonglei and GPAA: Humanitarian Update](#). December 2020.

20. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Akobo Town. November 2020.

21. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town. November 2020.

22. OCHA. [Jonglei and GPAA: Humanitarian Update](#). December 2020.

23. [REACH Port and Road Monitoring, Akobo, September 2020](#).

24. [REACH Port and Road Monitoring, Akobo, December 2020](#).



Food Security and Livelihoods

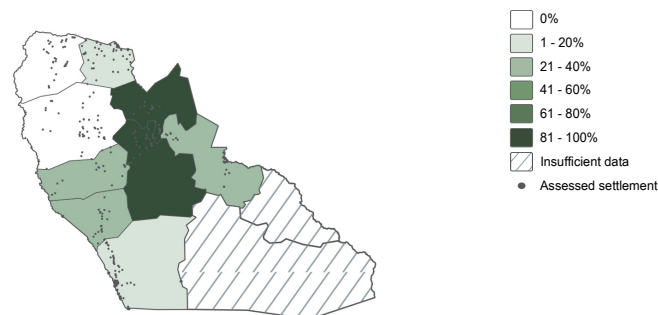
KIs in only a quarter (27%) of assessed settlements reported that most people had adequate access to food in December, suggesting a decline in the overall food security situation when compared with over half (54%) in September. Out of the 73% of assessed settlements in which people were reportedly unable to access enough food, KIs reported severe hunger in 33% of assessed settlements in December, compared to 13% in September. Likely, expected improvements in access to food with the October and November harvest have not been realised due to flooding destroying crops, which consequently worsened the FSL situation. Exceptionally high floods across the state have reportedly submerged farmlands and pasturelands and disrupted access to markets and livestock while limiting delivery of humanitarian food assistance. In addition, compounding macro-economic shocks have likely deteriorated the FSL situation even further.²⁵

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), suggest that all counties were experiencing Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (Phase 4) throughout the reporting period, except for Pochalla and Uror counties, which were in Crisis levels of acute food insecurity (Phase 3).²⁶ Additionally, according to the IPC, findings from Gumuruk, Pibor, Lekuangle, and Verteth payams in the Greater Pibor and Administrative Area (GPAA) suggests that Famine Likely (Phase 5) levels of food insecurity were faced in October and November 2020 in GPAA mainly caused by sub-national violence and flooding.^{27,28} Moving forward, the food security situation is likely to worsen considering the provision of humanitarian services has been constrained by both physical and security access barriers.

Access to crops

Across Jonglei State, exceptionally high levels of rainfall and flooding limited harvest yields throughout the reporting period. This likely explains why the main reason some people could not access enough

Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements where adequate access to food for most people was reported in reported in December 2020.



food was the destruction of crops due to flooding, according to KIs in 43% of assessed settlements in December (compared to 27% in September) and this was particularly commonly reported in Fangak (94%), Canal Pigi (88%), and Akobo (74%) counties. FGD participants from these counties^{29,30}, as well as other counties^{31,32,33} across Jonglei State, reported that flooding severely impacted harvests or prevented any harvest from occurring at all. This likely explains why, in December, KIs in 51% of assessed settlements reported that most people consumed only one meal per day, compared to 39% in September.

The lean season may start as early as January 2021, instead of March, as access to food is likely to remain extraordinarily low as people across Jonglei State, especially along the Nile River were unable to harvest due to the floods.³⁴ Reflective of this, FGD participants displaced from Akobo³⁵ county reported that their food stock will likely be exhausted before January. Moreover, most households were reported to have lost their agricultural inputs and tools, which will likely reduce crop yields for the coming season.^{36,37}

Access to livestock

Findings suggest that the FSL situation has deteriorated even further due to barriers in access to livestock associated with continued flooding, as well as incidents of cattle raiding, throughout the reporting period. According to a crop and food security rapid assessment conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in December 2020, 711,400 heads of livestock were affected and 48,000 perished due to flooding.³⁸ Potentially reflective of this, KIs reported that most people did not own any cattle in assessed settlements in Twic East (73%), Bor South (37%) and Canal Pigi (26%) counties. Furthermore, findings of FAO in August suggested that around 72% of the livestock population were affected by floods in Twic East, Duk, Bor South and Canal Pigi counties.³⁹

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), as of August 2020, atypical migration patterns and livestock deaths and vector-borne disease and diminished availability of pastures were consequences of the flooding.⁴⁰ Moreover, there were reports of livestock migration from Twic East and Bor South counties to Central Equatoria and Lakes corresponding with reports of livestock death and migration throughout the reporting period by FGD participants displaced from Twic East⁴¹ and Bor South⁴² counties. The implications of flooding are likely more severe for households that do not own cattle, but instead are dependent on other smaller livestock (e.g. goats and sheep) as these are often the first to drown and provide less financial gain.⁴³ Additionally, FGD participants displaced from Duk⁴⁴ and Twic East⁴⁵ counties reported losing substantial amounts of cattle through insecurity.

Access to markets

Access to markets appears to have remained stable, as KIs in 68% of assessed settlements reported

25. USAID. [South Sudan Crisis Factsheet #11](#), September 2020.

26. IPC. [South Sudan TWG Key Messages Oct 2020-July 2021](#), December 2020.

27. OCHA. [Jonglei and Greater Pibor Administrative Area: Humanitarian Update](#), December 2020.

28. IPC. [South Sudan Combined IPC Results 2020Oct 2021July](#), December 2020.

29. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. December 2020.

30. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo East to Akobo Town. November 2020.

31. FGD with participants displaced from Nyirol to Akobo Town. December 2020.

32. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. November 2020.

33. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town. November 2020.

34. The New Humanitarian. [After floods, an early 'lean season' awaits South Sudan](#), December 2020.

35. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Akobo Town. November 2020.

36. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo East to Akobo Town. November 2020.

37. FGD with participants displaced from Nyirol to Akobo Town. December 2020.

38. FAO. [In 2020 South Sudan's planted areas expand despite floods](#), January. 2021.

39. FAO. [Flood Impact Assessment in Jonglei](#), August 2020.

40. FEWS NET. [South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update](#), August 2020

that most people faced barriers in accessing a marketplace in December (compared to 65% in September). Out of the 68% of assessed settlements where KIs reported challenges in accessing a marketplace in December, the main physical barriers were flooding (67%), poor road conditions (58%), and distance to marketplace (55%). Reporting of challenges in access to markets was particularly high in assessed settlements in Twic East (100%), Canal Pigi (95%), and Bor South (93%) counties in December. Additionally, reporting of safety concerns, likely related to sub-national violence, as a barrier to access markets, was particularly high in assessed settlements in Duk (53%), Akobo (48%) and Twic East (45%) counties in December.

Moreover, the worsening macro-economic situation and the related devaluation of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) has substantially decreased purchasing power, as well as leading to price shocks and therefore, likely constrained access to markets.⁴⁶ In addition, due to COVID-19 and the associated mobility restrictions, the flow and delivery of supplies and services has been disrupted.⁴⁷ According to FGD participants displaced from Ayod⁴⁸ and Fangak⁴⁹ counties shocks in food prices are a major constraint to accessing the market. FGD participants displaced from Twic East⁵⁰ county estimated that the price of staple goods such as a bag of sorghum (50kg) increased by 33%⁵¹ between August and October 2020 in Twic East county. Vulnerable population groups, such as elderly and single-headed households, are likely disproportionately affected by these price shocks as their ability to access financial resources through income-generating activities is more limited.

Typically, households liquidate a cow or engage in casual labour in order to purchase staple goods, however, the substantial loss of livestock due to flooding and disease has reportedly impeded access to markets.⁵² Moreover, FGD participants displaced from Bor South⁵³ county reported that other income generating activities (e.g. selling poles, grass and charcoal) were also disrupted by flooding, which constrained access to markets even further.

Considering the continued limited access to cattle and other income generating activities throughout the reporting period, it is likely that the financial ability of food insecure households to access market goods will decrease even further, in the near future. At the same time, prices of staple goods are likely to increase due to compounding shocks and therefore, in light of this and the expected early start of the lean season, households will likely rely more heavily on Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) in the coming period.

Humanitarian food assistance (HFA)

The proportion of assessed settlements where HFA was reported as the main source of food for most people decreased from 34% in September to 19% in December. This reported trend is likely not due to a decline in need for HFA, but instead is related to disruptions in humanitarian service delivery due to limited access. This explains why KIs reported that the main reason most recently arrived IDPs chose to travel to a new settlement in December was access to humanitarian services

in 31% of assessed settlements, up from 8% in September.

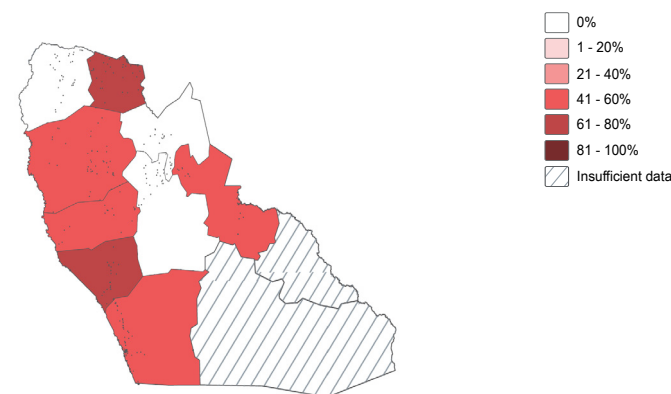
It is likely that insecurity across a range of severely food insecure parts of Jonglei and GPAA has reduced the humanitarian footprint and consequently led to a decrease in access to HFA. Reflective of this, according to OCHA, attacks of unidentified armed men in Pibor town has led to killings of humanitarian workers, which resulted in relocation.⁵⁴ In Duk⁵⁵ county there were reports of armed men accompanying women to distribution sites to secure the way to distribution points as insecurity (including killing, abduction and ambushes) remained a persistent threat.

Additionally, flooding resulted in a decline in physical accessibility with poor road conditions and flooded airstrips.⁵⁶ For instance, the main supply route from Bor to Pibor was cut off due to rainfall leading to poor road conditions.⁵⁷ FGD participants displaced from Fangak⁵⁸ county reported that declines in physical accessibility have led to disruptions in food distribution as humanitarian organisations were unable to reach distribution points. These reported access barriers of flooding and sub-national violence as well as COVID-19 restrictions and other compounding (macro-economic) shocks and its resulting collapse of livelihoods across Jonglei State is likely to increase reliance on HFA. This is particularly the case in GPAA, where the Inter-Agency Assessment Mission reported high numbers of flood- and insecurity-affected populations.⁵⁹

Coping strategies

Findings suggest that, across Jonglei State, people increasingly adopted a range of coping strategies which is likely a reflection of the worsening FSL situation. In December, KIs in the majority of assessed settlements reported livelihood (97%) or food (79%) coping strategies, which is an increase from 83% and 58%, respectively, in September. However, FGDs conducted in Akobo⁶⁰, Ayod⁶¹, and Fangak⁶² counties indicate that the capacity to employ asset depleting coping strategies has been exhausted

Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlement where KIs reported “only children eating” was used as a food consumption coping strategy in December 2020.



41. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. November 2020.

42. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town. November 2020.

43. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town. November 2020.

44. Ibid.

45. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. November 2020.

46. USAID. [South Sudan Crisis Factsheet #11](#). September 2020.

47. Ibid.

48. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC. November 2020.

49. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. November 2020.

50. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

51. This refers to a price increase from 15,000SSP to 20,000SSP.

52. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. November 2020.

53. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town. November 2020.

54. OCHA. [Jonglei and GPAA: Humanitarian Update](#). December 2020.

55. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town. September 2020.

56. OCHA. [Jonglei and GPAA: Humanitarian Update](#). December 2020.

57. Ibid.

58. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. November 2020.

in many parts of Jonglei State, which is likely why people have turned to coping strategies that are considered more severe.

The most frequently reported food consumption coping strategies in assessed settlements, in December, were limiting meal size (75%), reducing number of meals (65%), and consuming less expensive food (45%) (compared to 59%, 49%, and 36%, respectively, in September). This shows that a significantly higher proportion of KIs were reporting the employment of coping strategies in assessed settlements compared to the previous reporting period, which likely points to a deterioration of the FSL situation.

Aside from an increase in the employment of coping strategies, the proportion of assessed settlements that employed more severe coping strategies, such as only children eating increased substantially to 41% in December (from 29% in September). Reporting was particularly high in assessed settlements in Canal Pigi (69%), Twic East (64%), and Akobo (56%) counties, in December. FGD participants displaced from Twic East⁶³ county reported food consumption patterns have worsened compared to the same period in the previous year (2019), with people only eating one time a day, instead of three times a day (in the previous year).

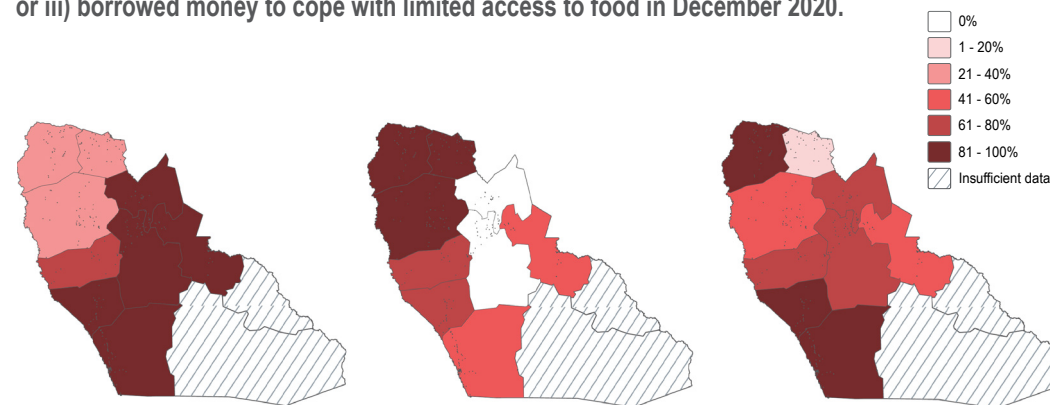
Food consumption coping strategies were reportedly employed in conjunction with livelihood coping strategies, in all assessed settlements in Duk, Fangak, and Twic East counties in December. The most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies, in assessed settlements, were borrowing food (64%), fishing (63%), and borrowing money (63%) in December. FGD participants displaced from Fangak⁶⁴ county reported that the frequency of borrowing livestock was higher this year compared to other years. Moreover, FGD participants displaced from Twic East⁶⁵ county reported various coping strategies, such as livestock selling, wild food collection, and firewood and charcoal making were impeded by flooding.

In December, KIs in 58% of assessed settlements reported that people were selling livestock as a coping strategy, consistent with findings in September (59%). Reporting of this strategy was particularly high in assessed settlements in Urur (100%), Nyirol (95%), and Fangak (94%) counties in December. Selling livestock is a strategy typically employed during the lean season as opposed to the harvest season in the final quarter of the year. Thus, the continued implementation of these asset depleting coping strategies and the decline in coping capacity in the last quarter of 2020, raises concerns as to what coping strategies could possibly be implemented in the projected early start of the lean season in 2021.

Health and Nutrition

Findings suggest that compounding shocks throughout the reporting period have had severe consequences for the nutritional and health status of populations across Jonglei State. This is

Map 5: Proportion of assessed settlements where people reportedly i) borrowed food, ii) fished, or iii) borrowed money to cope with limited access to food in December 2020.



likely why in December, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported malnutrition in children being worse compared to the same time last year (2019), increased sharply to 66% of assessed settlements, compared to 18% in September. Reporting was particularly high in assessed settlements in Fangak (100%), Canal Pigi (88%), and Ayod (88%) counties, in December. Based on the IPC AMN analysis for November 2020 to March 2021, all counties in Jonglei and the GPAA are in IPC AMN Phase 4 (critical) except for Twic East and Pochalla counties, which are in IPC AMN Phase 3 (serious) and 389,051 children are affected by acute malnutrition and in need of treatment.⁶⁶ The IPC AMN classification indicates that the situation is progressively deteriorating, and morbidity levels and individual food consumption gaps are likely to increase with increasing levels of acute malnutrition.⁶⁷

In addition, standing water caused by flooding created favourable conditions for mosquito breeding, which is likely the reason that malaria remained the most common perceived health problem reported in 41% of assessed settlements in December, as compared to 67% in September. The decreasing trend in reporting of malaria as the main perceived health problem may be related to less favourable conditions for mosquito breeding associated with flood waters partly receding in parts of Jonglei State in the final fourth quarter of 2020. In addition, other common health problems reported in assessed settlements in December were typhoid (15%) and diarrheal diseases (13%).

The presence of a functional primary healthcare facility within walking distance from the settlement remained high but stable (88% of assessed settlements in December as compared to 89% of assessed settlements in September). However, FGD participants from Twic East⁶⁸ county reported a lack of medication and financial resources to purchase medication as well as a lack of staff in healthcare facilities. As an alternative to primary healthcare facilities, people therefore reportedly resorted to traditional herbal medicine.⁶⁹ As mentioned in the FSL section, access to resources

59. OCHA. [Jonglei and GPAA: Humanitarian Update](#). December 2020.

60. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo East to Akobo Town. December 2020.

61. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC. December 2020.

62. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. December 2020.

63. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

64. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor PoC. November 2020.

65. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

66. IPC. [South Sudan TWG Key Messages Oct 2020-July 2021](#). December 2020.

67. IPC. [Technical Manual Version 3.0](#). April 2019.

68. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

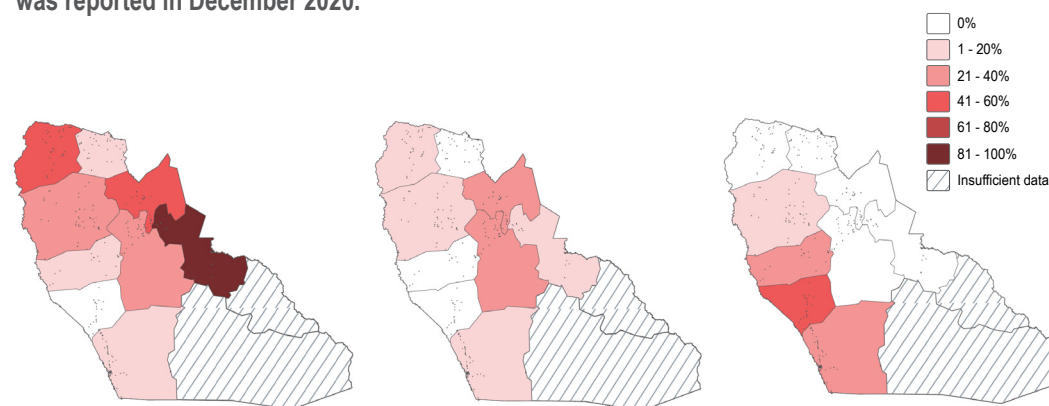
69. Ibid.

has been impeded by the devaluation of the SSP and the resulting reduction in purchasing power. Therefore, the health status of populations across Jonglei state will likely worsen as the lack of financial resources to access adequate healthcare will increase, and the dependency on coping strategies such as reducing essential non-food expenditures, like health, might increase.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Across Jonglei state, findings suggest that latrine usage remained low but consistent with KIs in nearly half (45% in December) of assessed settlements reporting no people were using latrines, suggesting widespread open defecation across the State. In December, reporting of no latrine usage was particularly high in assessed settlements in Fangak (79%), Ayod (75%), and Twic East (73%) counties. In stark contrast to September, KIs in only 12% of assessed settlements in Canal Pigi county reported no latrine use in December (88% in September). In assessed settlements where KIs reported no latrine usage (45%), the main reasons were that there were none available (34%), that they were overcrowded (17%), and that they were damaged (17%) in December. According to FGD participants from Akobo⁷⁰, Duk⁷¹, and Twic East⁷² counties, latrines have been submerged in water due to flooding and people were therefore forced to resort to open defecation.

Map 6: Proportion of assessed settlements where most people were reportedly not using latrines because of i) unavailability, ii) overcrowding, iii) damage in settlements where no latrine usage was reported in December 2020.



Similar to latrine usage, FGD participants displaced from Twic East⁷³ and Akobo⁷⁴ counties mentioned that boreholes are not functioning or are not accessible due to flooding. Reflective of this, KIs in around half of assessed settlements reported that boreholes were used as the main source of drinking water in assessed settlements in December (52%) down from 70% in September. During

this period, there were particularly notable declines found in assessed settlements in Ayod (95% to 50%), Duk (74% to 29%), and Bor South (84% to 67%) counties. In addition, in an FGD with participants displaced from Panyagor in Twic East⁷⁵ county it was reported that sub-national violence has led to increased barriers to accessing boreholes across county lines.

Limited access to existing clean water sources and sanitation facilities was reported as a cause of waterborne diseases in several FGDs. In FGDs with participants displaced from Nyirol⁷⁶ and Twic East⁷⁷ counties, cases of diarrhea and typhoid were mentioned as a direct consequence of restrictions to accessing clean water sources and sanitation facilities. As mentioned in the Health and Nutrition section, in December, common health problems reported in assessed settlements were typhoid (15%) and diarrheal diseases (13%).

Moreover, in December, KIs in 96% of assessed settlements reported that most people were aware of how to protect themselves from the spread of COVID-19. However reporting on the use of soap to wash hands remained consistently low between September (25%) and December (21%), likely pointing to barriers in access to clean water and soap. It is noteworthy that in December, in 44% of assessed settlements in Akobo county, most people reportedly had not heard of COVID-19, although in 79% of assessed settlements in Akobo county, most people did reportedly hear about how to protect themselves from the spread of COVID-19.

Protection

Findings suggest that the protection situation remained stable throughout the reporting period with most people reportedly feeling safe most of the time in December (90% of assessed settlements), which is consistent with findings in September. This is likely related to reduced mobility due to severe flooding, reducing the risk of attacks, ambushes and abductions.

In contrast, reports of people not feeling safe were significantly higher in Duk county with people reportedly feeling unsafe in 41% of assessed settlements in December, compared to 32% of assessed settlements in September. Male FGD participants displaced from Duk⁷⁸ county expressed security concerns related to cattle raiding, corresponding to KIs in 24% of assessed settlements in Duk reporting cattle raiding as a main protection concern for men in December. Moreover, according to an assessment conducted by the DRC in December, people described feeling unsafe in Duk Padiet and expressed particular concerns related to cattle raiding.⁷⁹

The proportion of assessed settlements where protection concerns for women, men, and boys were reported remained stable between September (49%, 34%, and 22% respectively) and December (50%, 34%, and 21% respectively). Consistent with September, in 22% of assessed settlements, KIs reported domestic violence as a main protection concern for women in December. This was considerably higher in Bor South (42%), Twic East (41%) and Duk (31%) counties for December. Protection concerns for

70. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo East to Akobo Town. November 2020.

71. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town. November 2020.

72. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

73. Ibid.

74. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Akobo Town. December 2020.

75. FGD with participants displaced from Panyagor, Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

76. FGD with participants displaced from Nyirol to Akobo Town. December 2020.

77. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor Town. October 2020.

78. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor Town. November 2020.

79. DRC. Protection Needs Overview. Duk Padiet Payam and Jonglei Canal, Duk County. December 2020.

80. DRC. Rapid Protection Assessment Report. Abiidoor, Bor County. September 2020.

81. DRC. Rapid Protection Assessment Report. Duk Padiet Town, Duk County. December 2020.

girls reportedly declined slightly from being reported in 39% of assessed settlements in September to being reported in 29% of assessed settlements in December. The main protection concern remained early marriage as reported by KIs in 10% of assessed settlements, compared to 18% in September. Alongside early marriage and domestic violence, according to the DRC, girls and women in Bor South and Duk expressed that they were facing gender-based violence.^{80,81}

Education

Schools have started reopening in phases, beginning with Primary 8 and Senior 4, in the first week of October 2020, although, schools have mostly remained closed in South Sudan as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸² The continued closure of schools likely explains why, in December, KIs in 81% of assessed settlements reported that no functional education facilities were available within walking distance, consistent with findings from September (76%).

A joint report published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UNICEF and World Bank found that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased inequality and widened achievement gaps.⁸³ Therefore, pre-existing gender inequalities are likely to be further exacerbated by the closures of schools. According to UNICEF, the closure of schools has increased exposure to gender-based violence for girls (including early marriage and rape) in South Sudan.⁸⁴ This will likely lead to higher drop-out rates amongst girls considering the increased number of pregnancies associated with gender-based violence. In addition, the widespread deterioration of the food security situation across Jonglei state and the related burden on women and girls to provide food for the household will likely further limit the ability of girls to return to school.

Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI)

Across Jonglei State, the proportion of assessed settlements where host communities live in more permanent shelter types declined. However, host communities continued to live in more permanent shelter types compared to IDPs throughout the reporting period. In 68% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that most host community members were living in tukuls⁸⁵ in December (87% in September) while in 13% of assessed settlements, KIs reported IDPs were living in tukuls (18% in September). In stark contrast to host communities, KIs reported that most IDPs in assessed settlements, instead were living in rakoobas⁸⁶, tents or improvised shelters in December (75%) (74% in September).

The apparent worsening in shelter conditions, for both host communities and IDPs is likely a consequence of flooding and insecurity. In December, KIs in 67% of assessed settlements reported that flooding caused people to seek shelter outside their homestead, up from 39% of assessed settlements in September. According to participants of FGDs, across Jonglei state^{87,88,89,90}, flooding destroyed shelters and people either sleep outside or in a temporary shelter. In December, reporting

of shelters destroyed or partially destroyed due to insecurity was particularly high in Akobo county (41% of assessed settlements) and Ayod county (20% of assessed settlements) compared to September (0% of assessed settlements in both counties). Reflective of this, in November, FGD participants displaced from Ayod⁹¹ county reported that events of sub-national violence left shelters as well as NFIs destroyed.

In assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly present, the main IDP NFI needs reported in December were mosquito nets (30%) and plastic sheets (23%), consistent with findings in September. Similar to the previous reporting period, the continued lack of mosquito nets may explain why malaria was reportedly the main perceived health concern in 41% of assessed settlements in December. Moreover, the price of NFIs is another barrier to accessing NFIs according to FGD participants displaced from Ayod.⁹²

Conclusion

Findings suggest that the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate in assessed settlements across Jonglei state throughout the reporting period due to a range of compounding natural, man-made and macroeconomic shocks, which resulted in mass displacement and limited access to crops, livestock, and markets and caused overall livelihood collapse. Across Jonglei State, the counties lying along the Nile river, including Bor South, Twic East, Ayod and Fangak, as well as the lowland areas of the GPAA where Lotilla and Pibor river flow, seemingly were more severely affected by flooding and its implications on a range of sectors including food security, nutrition, health and WASH. Findings indicate that flooding, as well as insecurity, in many parts of Jonglei State, have simultaneously eroded the capacity of food insecure households to employ coping strategies and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. The 2020 harvest seems to have not resulted in any substantial improvement in the food security situation and, moving forward, humanitarian food assistance will likely be essential to offset a continued and widespread deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

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).

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

83. UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank. [What have we learnt?](#) October 2020.

84. UNICEF. [Empty Seats](#). February 2021.

85. Here tukul refers to a cone-shaped mud hut with a thatched roof.

86. Here rakooba refers to a boat made from a tree.

87. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor Town. November 2020.

88. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC. November 2020.

89. FGD with participants displaced from Akobo East to Akobo Town. December 2020.

90. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Akobo Town. November 2020.

91. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor PoC. November 2020.

92. Ibid.