

Situation Overview: Jonglei State, South Sudan

June 2017

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Introduction

In June, displacement trends and humanitarian needs within Jonglei increased, as the presence of armed groups and intercommunal conflicts continued to negatively impact populations' capacity to meet their primary needs and access basic services. Only 28% of assessed settlements reported adequate access to food and cholera cases continued to spread across Jonglei.

REACH has conducted an assessment of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015 to inform the response of humanitarian actors working outside of formal settlement sites. This settlement data is collected across the Greater Upper Nile region on a monthly basis. Between 8 and 27 June, REACH interviewed 775 Key Informants (KIs) displaced from 297 settlements in 8 of the 11 counties in Jonglei State.

In order to ensure a good understanding of current displacement trends and humanitarian conditions in settlements from which displacement took place, new arrivals, representing 39% of KIs, were specifically targeted. The remainder of the KIs interviewed (61%) reported having been in the settlement or having had regular contact with someone from the settlement within the last month.

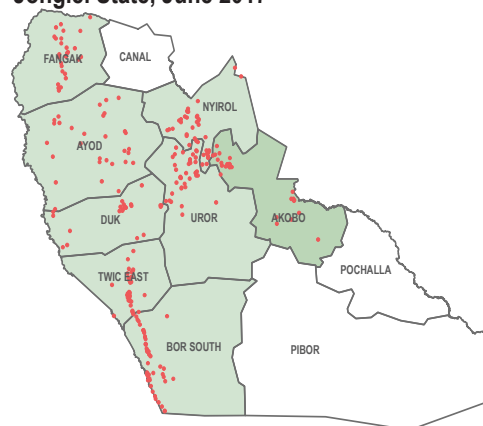
In June, data from KI interviews were triangulated with seven Focus Group

Discussions (FGDs). These included: a) two FGDs with new arrivals from the Equatorias in Bor Town, b) four FGDs with new arrivals from Greater Akobo in Akobo Town and Bor PoC site, and c) one FGD with new arrivals from Ayod in Bor PoC site. FGDs also involved a participatory mapping exercise to understand the routes that new arrivals took in coming to their respective arrival destinations. Informing further analysis on food security trends across the state, six Coping Strategy FGDs were conducted, including: a) four FGDs with new arrivals from Greater Akobo in Akobo Town and Bor PoC site, b) one FGD with new arrivals from Fangak in Akobo Town and c) one FGD with KIs from Twic East in Mingkaman. In addition, two Livelihoods FGDs were conducted with KIs from Twic East in Mingkaman, as well as with new arrivals from Akobo in Akobo Town.

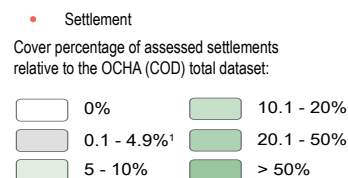
In June, REACH also conducted a Food Security and Livelihoods rapid assessment in Ayod County, assessing 80 randomly sampled households (HHs) and conducting five FGDs. All this information is included in the data used for this overview.

This Situation Overview provides an update to key findings from the May Situation Overview for Jonglei State.¹ The first section analyses displacement and population movement in Jonglei State in June, and the second section evaluates access to food and basic services for both IDP (internally displaced

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Jonglei State, June 2017



Assessed settlements



persons) and non-displaced communities.

Population Movement and Displacement

In June, intercommunal violence and the aftermath of military offensives continued to cause displacement. Despite the May 2017 peace agreement, incidents of killing and abduction continued to occur between the Bor and Pibor communities.² In Greater Akobo (Nyirol, Uror and Akobo Counties) and Ayod,

military offensives from February to April³ severely disrupted livelihoods and access to basic services. As the rainy season progressed in June, these large-scale offensives halted but the threat of insecurity remained in Greater Akobo, with roads still passable and armed actors still present.

Indicative of the persistent insecurity in Jonglei, de-population across the state remained high. Over two-thirds (69%) of assessed settlements in June reported that local community presence decreased by half or more. However, in Greater Akobo, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting that half or more of the local community had left decreased slightly from 83% in May to 69% in June. While this remained high, the decrease is likely attributable to the cessation of large-scale offensives and the increased humanitarian assistance to the region since the beginning of May.⁴

Depopulation was also high in the Bor South-Duk corridor (Bor South, Duk and Twic East Counties). In Twic East, 98% of assessed settlements reported that half or more of the local population had left, while in Bor South the proportion was 74% and in Duk 65%. The high levels of displacement in the region might be due to localised insecurity.

The following sections provide a more detailed overview of displacement within, from and to

1 REACH South Sudan: Situation Overview, May 2017.

2 Radio Tamazuj: UNMISS chief meets Jonglei governor over peace with Murle tribe, 9 June 2017.

3 OCHA South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshots, February, March and April 2017.

4 OCHA South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot, 28 June 2017.



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METHODOLOGY

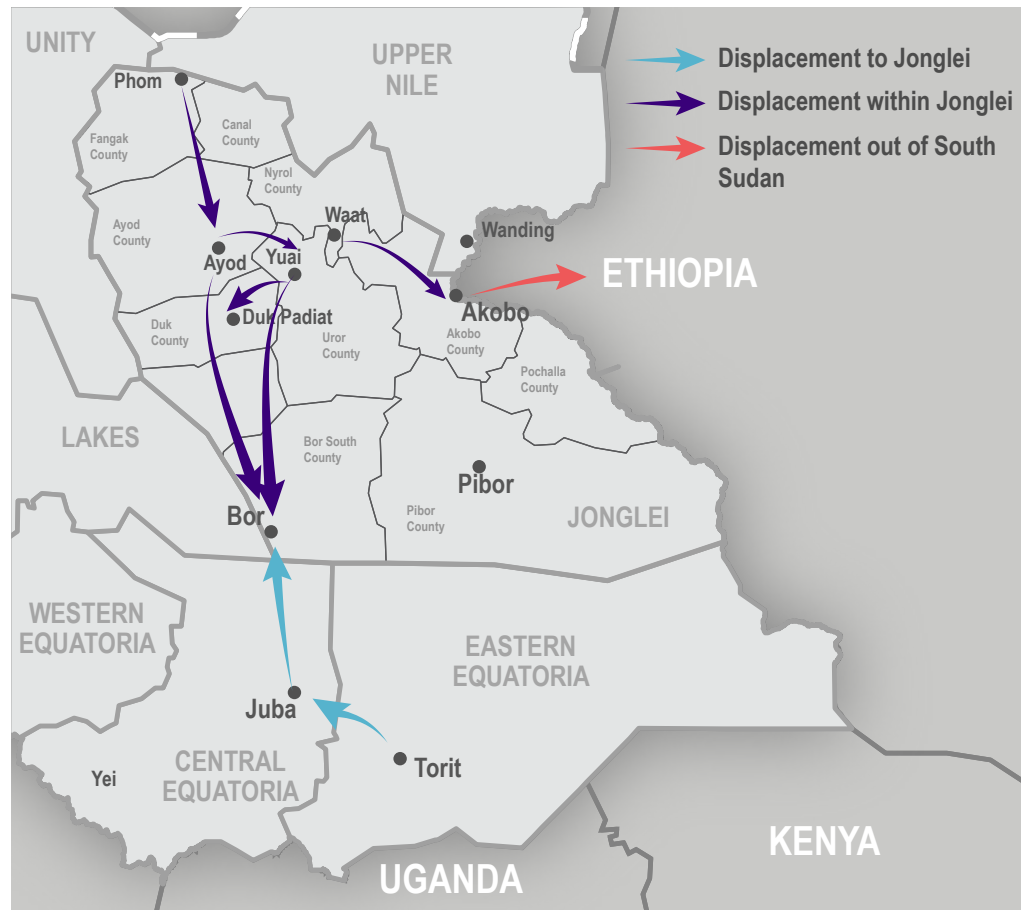
To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Jonglei State, REACH uses primary data provided by key informants who have recently arrived or received regular information from their pre-displacement location or “Area of Knowledge”.

Information for this report was collected from key informants in the Mingkaman Spontaneous Settlement, Bor and Juba Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites, Bor Town, Akobo, as well as in Nyal, throughout June 2017.

The first phase of the assessment methodology comprised a participatory mapping exercise to map the relevant settlements in Jonglei State. In-depth interviews were then conducted with selected participants, using a standardised survey tool comprising questions on displacement trends, population needs and access to basic services.

After data collection was completed, all data was examined at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal response. When no consensus could be found for a settlement, it was not included in reporting. Descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were then used to analyse the data.

It must be noted that this represents a **change in methodology as of December 2016**, as REACH previously analysed data at the community level. This means that **this report is not directly comparable with Situation Overviews from before December 2016**.



Map 2: Displacement Overview Jonglei State, June 2017

Jonglei in June, yet it is likely that recorded movement does not reflect the full extent of ongoing displacement.

Displacement within Jonglei

Displacement from Greater Akobo and Fangak to Akobo Town

In June, Akobo County continued to receive populations who had fled Yuai and Waat after offensives in February and April, respectively.

An average of 71 individuals per day arrived by road to Akobo Town in June, slightly lower than 93 in May⁵. Moreover, the presence of IDPs in Akobo County was extremely high, reported by 81% of assessed settlements. The majority of these IDPs came from Greater Akobo, but the REACH team in Akobo Town also recorded new arrivals in June from Phom Town, Fangak, for the first time.

IDPs arriving from Greater Akobo continued

to cite limited access to food, ongoing conflict and limited access to healthcare as the main reasons for leaving their place of origin, as seen in Figure 1.

However, the influx of new arrivals strained food and water resources at key displacement destinations in Uror and Akobo West. Populations increased rapidly in transit sites such as Buong, which at the start of June had 12,928 verified IDPs, almost doubling its population.⁶ As a result of this overcrowding, FGD participants from Uror reported having to leave their first destination, Pieri, for Wechjol in order to obtain food from another food distribution. The strain on resources, therefore, encouraged further displacement as many IDPs moved between transit sites and towards Akobo Town.

Not all IDPs in Greater Akobo travelled to these larger transit destinations. FGD participants reported that many remained in remote locations with limited access to humanitarian services. The need for IDPs to collect firewood and gather wild foods put them at further risk of intercommunal attacks.

FGD participants from Fangak likewise reported that a lack of access to food was the

Figure 1: Top reported reasons new arrivals are leaving settlements in Greater Akobo, June 2017



⁵ Based on 559 KI interviews conducted by REACH road monitoring teams in Akobo Town.

⁶ OCHA South Sudan, Buong ICRM Report, May 2017.

⁷ ACTED South Sudan: BOR MTT Assessment, June 2017

primary reason for their displacement. IDPs reportedly walked from Phom Town to Ayod, then proceeded to Pathai in Uror and finally to Akobo Town. The decision of these households to walk such long distance highlights the severe humanitarian situation throughout much of Northern Jonglei.

Displacement from Greater Akobo and Ayod to Bor Souh- Duk Corridor

In addition to displacement within Greater Akobo, many IDPs from Uror and Ayod arrived in Duk. The county saw a sharp increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDP presence, from 3% in May to 61% in June.

Some of these IDPs chose to continue on to the Bor PoC site, where 144 new arrivals were recorded in June. Of these individuals,

46% were from Uror and 11% from Ayod.⁸ The journey to the Bor PoC site was reportedly dangerous. FGD participants travelled from Uror site via Pathai and Karam. On multiple occasions they reportedly hid in the bush to avoid attack, thereby limiting their access to food and water.

Displacement out of Jonglei

REACH Port Monitoring in Akobo Town found that displacement from Jonglei to bordering Ethiopia through Akobo Port sharply increased in June. Net outflows of South Sudanese to Ethiopia more than doubled, from an average of 52 individuals per day in May to an average of 114 individuals per day in June (see Figure 2).⁹ KIs suggested that much of this outflow may be IDPs from Greater Akobo who were transiting through Akobo Town.

Reflective of the high levels of food insecurity and conflict in Greater Akobo, a lack of access to food and educational services as well as personal and conflict-related insecurity were the main reported reasons for leaving to Ethiopia.

Displacement to Jonglei

Displacement from Ethiopia to Akobo Town

The number of South Sudanese recorded permanently leaving Ethiopia increased from an average of 22 individuals per day in May to an average of 58 individuals per day in June.¹⁰ A third of individuals indicated that they were returning home to live with their family, whilst other reasons provided for arriving included the lack of work opportunities (21%) or ration cards (15%) in Gambella. The high rates of movement both in and out of Akobo Town may strain the resources of host communities on both sides of the border.

Displacement from the Equatorias to Jonglei

In June, IDPs originally from Jonglei who had been residing in the Equatorias since 2013 continued to arrive in Bor Town. Insecurity and limited access to food in the Equatorias appear to be the main reasons for this movement. FGD participants arriving from Torit reported fleeing due to intense insecurity and lack of access to food. FGD participants

arriving from Juba similarly cited a lack of resources and the rise of insecurity within the city as the primary reasons for leaving.

FGD participants from both locations reported travelling by bus from Juba to Bor Town. Movement along the Juba-Bor road was reportedly challenging due to the risk of ambush, high transport costs and bad road conditions during the rainy season.

Situation in Assessed Settlements

Food Security and Livelihoods

Access to food in Jonglei was extremely low in June. Only 28% of assessed settlements reported adequate access to food in June, similar to 31% in May. Reflective of the high levels of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition was reportedly a leading cause of death in June, reported by 23% of assessed settlements, second only to conflict (28%).

This shortage of food is likely linked to the low levels of food production reported during the lean season. Despite FGD participants reporting that agro-pastoralism was typically the main livelihood source in Jonglei, less than half (46%) of assessed settlements reported growing crops for sustenance in June and just over half (56%) reported livestock-keeping as a livelihood activity.

As a result, for the vast majority of settlements, agricultural produce does not appear to have been sufficient to sustain populations, with only 24% of assessed settlements reporting agriculture as their main source of food. This

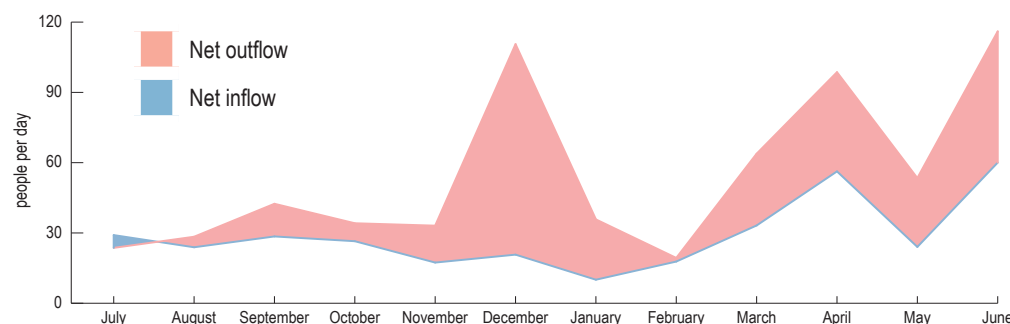
IDPs in Mingkaman Informal Settlement

In June, IDPs from Abuyung, Lakes State, arrived in Mingkaman Informal Settlement in Awerial County due to insecurity caused by intercommunal fighting near Mingkaman.

FGD participants indicated that they had moved to Mingkaman in the hope of better security conditions and obtaining humanitarian assistance, having fled their home without any essential items.

Conversely, the number of returnees arriving in Mingkaman from Ugandan refugee settlements reportedly decreased in June, which may be linked to restricted access of movement in Central Equatoria.⁹

Figure 2: Average daily number of individuals permanently leaving and permanently returning to Jonglei via Akobo Town; July 2016 to June 2017.



8 ACTED South Sudan: BOR MTT Assessment, June 2017

9 REACH: South Sudan Displacement Crisis – Akobo Port and Road Monitoring, June 2017.

10 Ibid.

is similar to the six monthly average of 22%, suggesting a continued shortage of agricultural produce during the dry season. Settlements reported relying instead on humanitarian assistance (29%), purchasing food (18%), or borrowing from friends and family (10%), which suggests low levels of self-sufficiency throughout Jonglei.

The low levels of food production are more than typical lean season patterns. Although much of the food shortage is likely explained by agricultural cycles as food stocks from the 2016 harvest run low, the insecurity in Jonglei has likely exacerbated food insecurity. The most common primary reason for lack of food was an insecure cultivation environment, reported by 40% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food. This was followed by fighting destroying crops (19%). The disruption to agriculture suggests that food shortages may continue into the upcoming harvest season.

Bor South, Twic East and Duk

Food access across the Bor South-Duk Corridor was severely low in June. In Twic East, 0% of assessed settlements reported adequate access to food, a sharp fall from 28% in May. Similarly in Bor South, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food fell steeply from 41% to 6%. Only in Duk did adequate access to food rise slightly, from 28% of assessed settlements in May to 40% in June.

The low levels of food access were likely due to insecurity disrupting both cultivation and trade. Across the corridor, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting cultivation as

the main source of food was just 7%. With most settlements unable to produce enough food, households turned to markets. Purchasing was the most common primary source of food, reported by 40% of assessed settlements in the Bor South-Duk corridor. However, purchasing food became increasingly difficult due to high prices in June. Road closures, caused by cattle raiding and ambushes along the Juba-Bor roads, were frequent, leading to reduced trade flows and higher commodity prices in the region.¹¹

Greater Akobo

Access to food in Greater Akobo remained stable but low in June, with 42% of assessed settlements reporting access to food, similar to 33% in May. This proportion is considerably lower than 80% in January, before the eruption of conflict in the region. Correspondingly, the destruction of crops due to conflict was the most common primary reason for a lack of food, reported by 40% of assessed settlements in the region. The conflict also limited access to food indirectly, as FGD participants reported that many IDPs sought refuge from the violence in the bush, where they could neither cultivate, nor access food assistance.

The only county to see a considerable increase in access to food was Akobo County, where the proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food rose from 42% in May to 79% in June. The improvement is likely due to the increase in food assistance reported by humanitarian partner KIs. Supporting these accounts, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to food

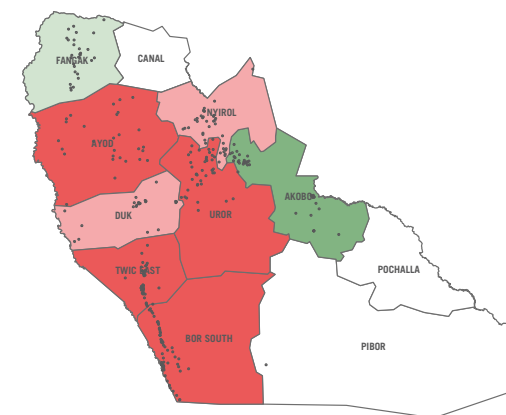
assistance, rose from 41% in May to 76% in June.

Whilst some improvements occurred due to humanitarian interventions in Greater Akobo, **food needs are likely to remain high in the region** due to the continued presence of armed groups and intercommunal violence in Uror and Nyirol counties.

Ayod and Fangak

Settlements in Ayod experienced severe levels of food insecurity in June. **Only 15% of assessed settlements reported adequate access to food in Ayod**, similar to 17% reported in May. Moreover, the REACH Ayod Rapid Assessment found evidence of high food insecurity in Haat, Gorwai and Pagil. According to the assessment, key drivers of the lack of food included: 1) floods, which occurred in 2016, destroying crops and spreading livestock diseases 2) little to no market access to purchase cereals, agricultural tools or NFIs (Non Food Items) and 3) limited access to humanitarian assistance. For more information, see the REACH Ayod Rapid Assessment.¹²

Conversely, assessed settlements in Fangak reported an **increase in adequate access to food from 19% in May to 72% in June**, continuing the pattern of fluctuating food access since January. The variation may be due to bi-monthly food distribution cycles. Indicative of the high reliance on food assistance in Fangak, 68% of assessed settlements identified food assistance as their main source of food. This raises concerns about the population's capacity to be self-reliant, should the assistance stop.



Map 3: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food, June 2017

Coping Strategies

In response to the severe food shortages in June, assessed settlements reported using a wide range of coping strategies. Borrowing food was the most common coping strategy, reported by 37% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food. This demonstrates the importance of social networks for absorbing shocks to livelihoods in Jonglei. However, FGD participants reported that displacement has disrupted social networks in many parts of Jonglei and widespread food insecurity means that many households no longer have resources to share.

Thus, many settlements were forced to adopt more severe coping strategies by reducing their consumption. Over one-third (36%) of

¹¹ FEWS NET, SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Outlook, June 2017 – January 2018.

¹² REACH South Sudan: Ayod Food Security and Livelihoods Report, June 2017.

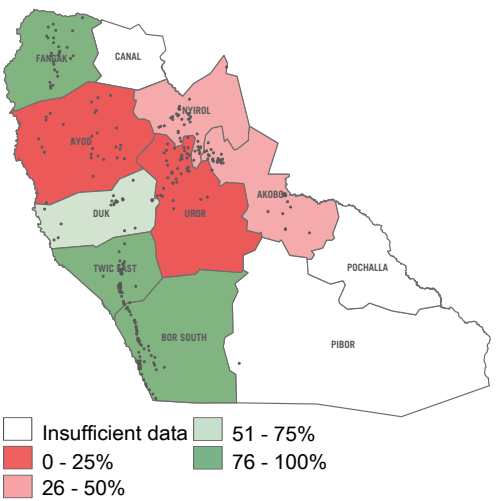
assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reported reducing the number of meals consumed in a day and 31% reported limiting the size of their meals. A further 23% reported only allowing children to eat at meal times. In addition, 30% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reported eating less expensive food, which is often lower quality or containing less nutrition, thereby often reducing their nutritional intake.

Residents in settlements facing particularly severe food insecurity reported risking their health and personal security in order to meet immediate food needs. Forgoing meals for whole days was reported by 18% of assessed settlements. In Ayod, 78% of assessed HHs reported resorting to foraging wild foods as their main source of food, which likely contributed to the reported increase of gastrointestinal issues in the state.¹³ Moreover, in Akobo Town, FGD participants explained that in order to obtain resources to buy food women often collected firewood to sell, which increased the risk of physical attack and sexual violence.

Health and WASH

The conflict has restricted access to basic services as well as food. Throughout Jonglei the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to health facilities was low at 65%, but the lowest proportions were in conflict-affected Northern Jonglei, as seen in Map 4. In Ayod and Greater Akobo, the proportion was just 34%. Of these settlements, 29% reported the primary reason for the lack of healthcare was a lack of staff. A further 17% reported insecurity to be the

Map 4: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare, June 2017



primary reason, followed by conflict destroying the facilities (14%) and a lack of medication (14%). This suggests that the conflict has both directly and indirectly disrupted healthcare as health professional fled insecurity and trade routes for medication were cut off.

The limited access to healthcare is particularly concerning given the poor WASH conditions throughout Jonglei. Over two-thirds (67%) of assessed settlements reported that no residents were using latrines, with the highest proportion along the Bor South-Fangak Corridor (77%), indicating a high risk of contracting waterborne diseases.

The combination of low healthcare access and poor sanitation in Jonglei has precipitated the spread of cholera. In addition to counties along the Nile, cholera cases were also detected in Urur and Nyirol, with confirmed cases in

Lankien.¹⁴ Medicin Sans Frontiers (MSF) reported that suspected cases of cholera were increasing amongst IDPs living in the bush near Pieri, Urur.¹⁵

Protection

In June, the security situation across Jonglei remained tense. Similar to May, 62% of assessed settlements reported that men felt unsafe all the time, and 32% reported the same for women (Figure 3). Much of this perceived insecurity appears to be linked to intercommunal violence. The main protection concern facing both men and women across the state was being killed or injured by members of another community, reported by 77% of assessed settlements for men and by 41% of assessed settlements for women in June.

Cattle raiding was the second most common protection concern for men, the same as in May. This was particularly prevalent in Akobo and Nyirol (both 20%). KIs in Akobo reported that seasonal movements of cattle as well as the movement of IDPs and their herds increased the risk of attack.

For women, sexual violence continued to be a crucial protection concern in June, reported as the main concern by 30% of assessed settlements in Jonglei, similar to 28% in May. Sexual violence appeared to be particularly high in counties hosting IDPs from Greater Akobo. In Duk, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting sexual violence as the main protection concern for women increased rapidly from 8% in May to 60% in June. This corresponds with the increase in IDPs from

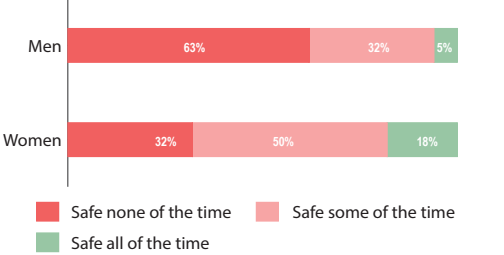
Urur discussed in the displacement section of this SO. Similarly, sexual violence remained high in Greater Akobo itself, reported as the main protection concern by 54% of assessed settlements in June, similar to 51% in May. The heightened risk may be due to threats facing displaced women, many of whom are vulnerable to attack whilst fetching water and searching for firewood and wild foods.¹⁶

Similar to previous months, the most commonly reported child protection concern was abduction, as cited by 58% of assessed settlements. This protection concern was most notably raised along the Bor South-Duk Corridor where child abductions and cattle raiding are associated with intercommunal conflict. In Greater Akobo family separation was also a pressing concern, reported by 27% of assessed settlements. FGD participants reported that children are frequently become lost when fleeing attacks on their settlements.

Shelter

In June, 59% of assessed settlements across Greater Akobo reported shelter damage due to

Figure 3: Percentage of settlements assessed reporting feeling of safety by gender and period of day, June 2017



13 REACH South Sudan: Ayod Food Security and Livelihoods Report, June 2017.

14 Unicef South Sudan: Cholera Situation Report, June 2017.

15 MSF Press Release. South Sudan: Thousands at Risk of Cholera and Malnutrition, June 2017.

16 Intersos Interlocutor: Rapid Mission: Assessment Report from Wechjal, June 2017.

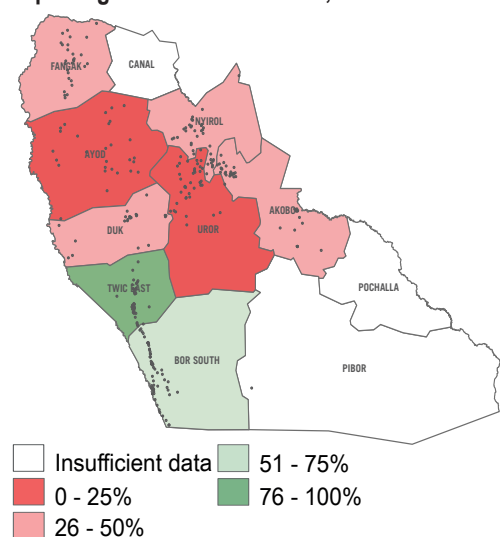
conflict, similar to 51% in May. Shelter damage was most common in Uror County (86%), where the conflict originated in February 2017 and has continued to be the most intense. For further information, please see the May 2017 Jonglei Situation Overview.¹⁷

As displacement continued, especially in Greater Akobo, assessed settlements with IDP presence reported that 50% or more of the local community was sharing shelters. Plastic sheeting provisions by NGOs were only reported by 5% of assessed settlements, indicating a need for temporary shelter materials. The low provision of shelter materials may have negatively impact the ability of local communities to absorb IDP shelter needs.

Education

Access to education in Jonglei remained low

Map 5: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting access to education, June 2017



but stable, with 47% of assessed settlements reporting access to education services, similar to 49% in May.

Access to education was reportedly lowest in the conflict-affected regions of Ayod, Nyirol and Uror, reported by only 21% of assessed settlements. Of the settlements without access, 31% reported the primary reason for no access to be insecurity, further highlighting the disruption to services caused by the conflict in Northern Jonglei.

In Akobo County, however, access to education increased from 30% of assessed settlements in May to 50% in June. This may be linked to education programmes having been resumed in June by humanitarian partners operating in Akobo. In addition, FGD participants in Akobo reported that since June free access to education was provided for children of IDPs.

Although the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education was higher in the Bor South-Duk corridor (71%), this did not translate into greater attendance of girls. Only 12% of assessed settlements reported that half or more of girls were attending school, compared to 63% for boys.

Conclusion

With the ongoing presence of armed troops and passable roads in June, insecurity remained high in Northern Jonglei. As a result, displacement from Greater Akobo continued. The high levels of displacement, coupled with lack of humanitarian access, have increased population needs considerably since conflict

erupted in the region in February and April.

Many of the IDPs fleeing the conflict stayed in remote locations in Uror, negatively affecting their access to services. Others stayed in transit locations such as Lankien, Nyirol and Buong, or travelled to Akobo Town, placing further strain on resources available to both IDP and local communities alike.

The conflict and resulting displacement, combined with high levels of intercommunal violence throughout the state, have severely disrupted agriculture. This has led to high levels of food insecurity across Jonglei as food stocks from the 2016 harvest ran low. The Bor South-Duk corridor saw particularly low levels of access to food, as intercommunal violence disrupted agriculture and insecurity on the Bor-Juba road disrupted restricted trade flows.

Access to basic services has also deteriorated in the wake of the recent insecurity. In the conflict-affected counties of Ayod and Greater Akobo, displacement and the destruction of facilities have reduced access to healthcare and education. The lack of healthcare, in particular, has facilitated the spread of diseases such as cholera.

Overall, humanitarian needs, particularly healthcare and protection, appeared highest amongst recently displaced populations in conflict-affected Ayod and Greater Akobo. However, high levels of food insecurity, against a backdrop of widespread intercommunal violence, suggest that June was a month of high needs for populations throughout most of Jonglei.

About REACH Initiative

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information, you can write to our in-country office: southsudan@reach-initiative.org or to our global office: geneva@reach-initiative.org.

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¹⁷ REACH: Situation Overview Jonglei State, May 2017.