

# Humanitarian Situation Monitoring, Jonglei State

South Sudan January - March 2021

## Overview

Humanitarian needs remained high across Jonglei State in the first quarter of 2021. An early depletion of food stocks, limited access to livestock and increasing market prices resulted in widespread food insecurity. Moreover, although flood waters partly receded, flooding, as well as insecurity, continued to affect populations in Jonglei State across county lines. Moving forward, the existing humanitarian crisis will likely be exacerbated further by flooding expected with the start of the rainy season and the disruption of cultivation and regular employment of lean season coping strategies, across Jonglei State.

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 January and March 2021.

## Methodology

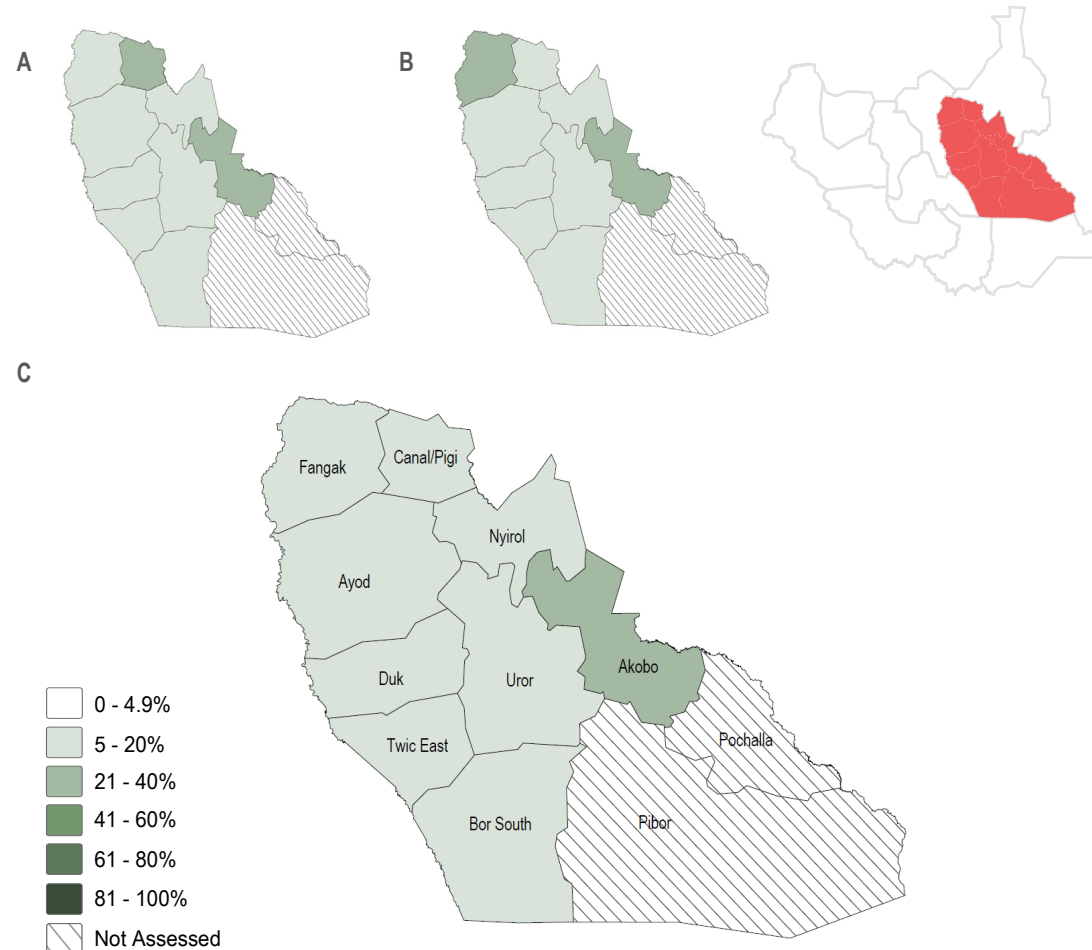
To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Jonglei State, REACH conducts interviews with key informants (KIs) who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or "Area of Knowledge" (AoK). These interviews were conducted with KIs in Bor Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camp, 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 settlements<sup>1</sup> in a given month were included in the analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month may vary. In order to reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, over time analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam<sup>2</sup> coverage throughout the analysis 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 January - March 2021.

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

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Jonglei State in January (A), February (B), and March (C) 2021



**# of key informant interviews conducted: 963**  
**# of assessed settlements: 534**  
**# of counties covered: 9 (of 11)**  
**# of focus group discussions conducted: 20**

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 December (39%) and March (35%). In stark contrast to the previous reporting period, 'lack of food' was reported as a main push factor for IDPs in only 15% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence in March, compared to 43% in December. Alongside a lack of food, flooding remained one of the main reported push factors for IDPs in settlements with reported IDP presence, although the proportion of settlements where flooding was a reported push factor decreased slightly from 36% in December to 21%, in March. In addition to a lack of food and flooding, insecurity was reported by KIs in 10% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence, in March.



**Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL):** KIs in nearly half (42%) of assessed settlements reported that most people had adequate access to food in March, suggesting an improvement of the overall food security situation, compared to December 2020 (27%). In March, in assessed settlements where KIs reported people were unable to access enough food, the main reported reasons remained flooding, in 23% of assessed settlements, and exhaustion of stocks from previous harvest in 14% of assessed settlements (compared to 43% and 4% in December, respectively). Reflective of this, in March, in 68% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that people had received food assistance in the three months prior to data collection. Despite there having been some improvements of the FSL situation in the first quarter of 2021, the situation is likely to worsen with the start of the lean season, as well as anticipated flooding causing cattle to be further away from homesteads, removing normal mitigation strategies during the lean season.<sup>3</sup>



**Health and Nutrition:** Despite KIs in 97% of assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functional primary healthcare facility within walking distance in March, findings from other sections suggest that high levels of food insecurity and limited access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure combined with high disease prevalence have negatively affected the health and nutritional status of populations across Jonglei State. Based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Malnutrition (AMN) analysis for November 2020 to March 2021, all counties in Jonglei State 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).<sup>4</sup>



**Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** Findings suggest that WASH needs remained high across Jonglei state. The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that no people were using latrines rose from 45% in December, to 56% in March, which

suggests widespread open defecation across much of the State. Throughout the reporting period, FGD participants displaced from across Jonglei State mentioned that limited access to clean water sources and sanitation facilities appeared to cause waterborne diseases, such as typhoid and diarrhoeal diseases.<sup>5</sup>



**Protection:** Findings suggest that the protection situation across Jonglei State remained stable, with KIs in 86% of assessed settlements reporting that most people felt safe most of the time in March, compared to 90% in December. The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported any protection concerns for women (50%) and girls (49%) remained higher than the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported protection concerns for men (35%) and boys (33%) in March. Consistent with the previous reporting period, the main reported protection concern for girls remained early marriage in 21% of assessed settlements, in March, compared to 10% of assessed settlements in December. Findings from FGDs with IDPs residing in Bor IDP camp as well as informal IDP sites indicate that IDPs seemed to be facing a wide range of protection concerns within the camps.<sup>6</sup>



**Education:** Across Jonglei State, schools have started reopening in phases, beginning with Primary 8 and Senior 4 in the first week of October 2020.<sup>7</sup> However, due to a surge in COVID-19 cases in February, all pre-schools, secondary schools and universities were closed again, except classes scheduled for exams.<sup>8</sup> Schools partly reopening in first quarter of 2021 likely explains why, in March, KIs in 56% of assessed settlements reported that no functional education facilities were available within walking distance, compared to 81% in December 2020. Education access was more commonly reported for boys between the ages of 6-17 than for girls of the same age range.



**Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI):** Across Jonglei State, findings suggest that IDPs continued to live in less permanent shelter types in comparison with members of the host community across Jonglei State. In March, in 75% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that the most common shelter type used by host community members was tukuls.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, in only 9% of assessed settlements, KIs reported IDPs were using tukuls as the most common shelter type (compared to 13% in December). IDPs were instead reportedly living in rakoobas<sup>10</sup>(59%), improvised shelters (22%), or tents (4%) in March (compared to 37%, 24% and 14% respectively in December). The apparent deterioration in IDP shelter conditions could be a consequence of sub-national violence and flooding resulting in widespread population movement and shelter destruction. Alongside shelter destruction, flooding has also reportedly destroyed or washed away NFIs from populations across Jonglei State.<sup>11</sup>

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

4. Ibid.

5. FGDs with participants displaced from across Jonglei State. January, February March 2021.

6. FGDs with participants residing in Bor IDP camp. January and February 2021.

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

8. AA. [South Sudan imposes lockdown as COVID cases surge](#), February 2021.

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

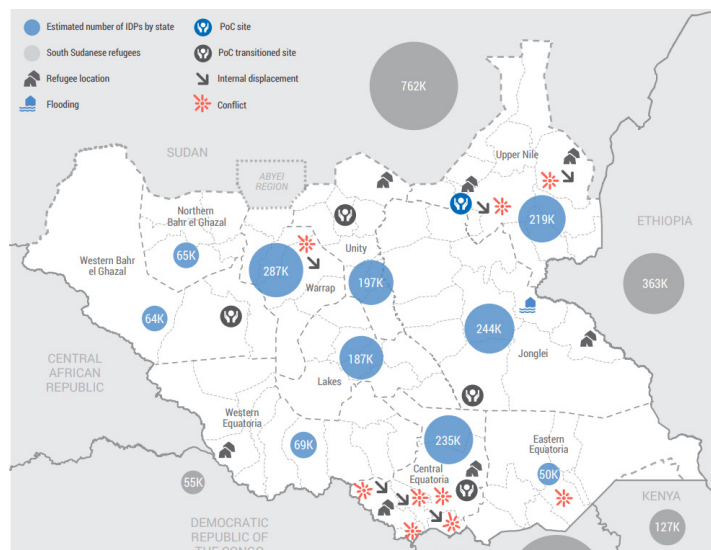
10. Here rakooba refers to a boat made from a tree.

11. FGDs with participants displaced across Jonglei State. January, February, March 2021.

## Population Movement and Displacement

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs remained high but stable between December (39%) and March (35%). In stark contrast to the previous reporting period, 'lack of food' was reported as a main push factor for IDPs in only 15% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence in March, compared to 43% in December. Alongside a lack of food, flooding remained one of the main reported push factors for IDPs in settlements with reported IDP presence, although the proportion of assessed settlements where flooding was a reported push factor decreased slightly from 36% in December to 21% in March. In addition to a lack of food and flooding, insecurity was reported by KIs in 10% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence, in March.

Map 2: Displacement in South Sudan.<sup>12</sup>



### Food-driven displacement

In settlements with reported IDP presence, displacement caused by the lack of food remained one of the main reported push factors for IDPs. However, likely due to flood waters receding, which allowed access to food sources in many parts of Jonglei State, there was a considerable decline of reporting of lack of food as the main push factor for IDPs throughout Q1. Counties where reporting of displacement due to a lack of food remained high included Twic East (100%), Uror (67%), and Nyirol (33%) counties. Reflective of this, FGD participants displaced from Twic East<sup>13</sup> county expressed that thousands of people in Twic East county were displaced to higher grounds or to parts of Bor South county and Equatoria due to flooding.

### Flood-driven displacement

Alongside a lack of food, flooding remained a main reported push factor in 21% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence in March. Reporting of displacement due to flooding in settlements with IDP presence was significantly higher in Ayod (80%) and Canal Pigi (40%) counties. In March, FGD participants displaced from Ayod county mentioned that flooding had destroyed shelters and displaced most households.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in the same FGD, as well as in FGDs in Twic East<sup>15</sup> and Fangak<sup>16</sup> counties, participants mentioned that flooding also led to a lack of access to food and people therefore decided to leave their settlements, indicating that flood and food-driven displacement are closely linked across different parts of Jonglei State. According to FGD participants displaced from Twic East<sup>17</sup> county, people who are most severely affected by these shocks were older persons, single-headed households and people with a disability, as they were unable to make a displacement due to lack of financial resources.

### Insecurity-driven displacement

Finally, reporting of insecurity as a main push factor for IDPs in settlements with IDP presence remained high with KIs in 10% of assessed settlements reporting insecurity as a main push factor for IDPs in March (compared to 11% in December). Reporting on insecurity as a main push factor for IDPs spiked in February, to KIs in 20% of assessed settlements, likely due to increased internal mobility as a result of flood waters receding. Displacement due to insecurity was especially high in Duk, Fangak and Canal Pigi counties with KIs in 100%, 100% and 60%, of assessed settlements, respectively, reporting insecurity had driven displacement in March. This is likely due to consecutive incidents of sub-national violence in the beginning of 2021.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, insecurity, combined with flooding in the first quarter of 2021 led to mass displacement from Alali payam in Akobo county to Ethiopia.<sup>19</sup>

### Self-reported returns

Reporting of the presence of refugee returnees remained stable with KIs in nearly half (45%) of assessed settlements, across Jonglei State, in March, reporting the presence of refugee returnees (42% in December). Reporting of the presence of refugee returns was particularly high in assessed settlements in Ayod (100%), Fangak (93%), and Nyirol (88%) counties. The REACH Port and Road Monitoring (PRM) data in Akobo Town tracks the movement of South Sudanese households travelling to, and returning from Ethiopia, predominantly to refugee camps in the Gambella region. According to PRM data, the number of recorded inbound individuals increased from 246<sup>20</sup>, in December, to 334<sup>21</sup> in March. According to PRM data, the primary recorded pull factor for returnees, in March, remained rejoining family and home. In addition to rejoining family and home, reporting of access to income generating activities was a primary reported pull factor by KIs in 27% of assessed settlements, according to AoK data from March 2021.

12. OCHA. [South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot](#), March 2021.

13. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.

14. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

15. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.

16. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

17. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.

18. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021.

19. Inter-Agency Assessment mission. [IRNA Report: Alali Payam, Akobo East](#), February 2021.

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

21. [REACH Port and Road Monitoring, Akobo, March 2021](#).



## Food Security and Livelihoods

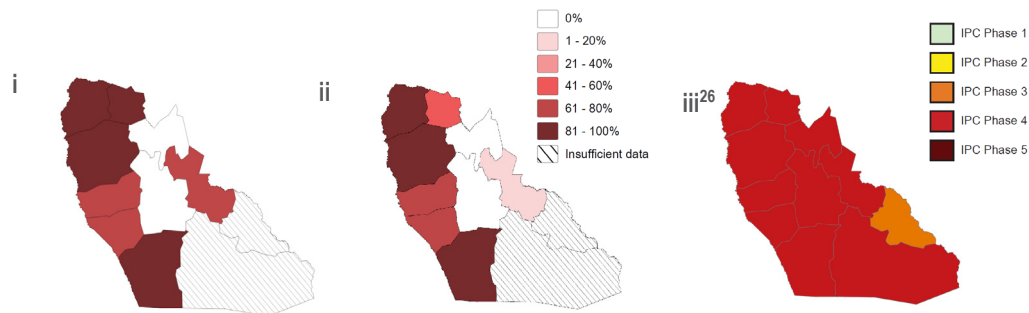
KIs in nearly half (42%) of assessed settlements reported that most people had adequate access to food in March, suggesting an improvement of the overall food security situation, compared to December 2020 (27%). This is likely a result of flood waters receding compared to the previous reporting period, allowing people to engage in livelihood activities. In March, in those households where KIs reported people were unable to access enough food, the main reported reasons remained flooding, in 23% of assessed settlements, and exhaustion of stocks from previous harvest in 14% of assessed settlements. However, reporting of inadequate access to food remained high. Likely reflective of this, in March, in 68% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that people had received food assistance in the three months prior to data collection. Despite there having been some improvements of the FSL situation in the first quarter of 2021, the situation is expected to deteriorate due to the early start of the lean season, which typically falls between March and August, and anticipated flooding, likely leading to irregular cattle movements to further from the homesteads, in turn removing normal mitigation strategies during the lean season.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, according to estimates of the IPC, between December 2020 and March 2021, parts of Pibor county were classified in Famine Likely (IPC Phase 5) levels of food insecurity and all other counties were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity, except for Pochalla County, which was classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity.<sup>23,24</sup>

### Access to crops

Across Jonglei State, exceptionally high levels of rainfall and flooding limited harvest yields in the last months of 2020.<sup>25</sup> Reflective of this, in March, 23% of assessed settlements where people were

**Map 3: Comparison between the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people were not able to access enough food in the month prior to data collection in i) December 2020 and ii) March 2021 and iii) IPC projections between December 2020 and March 2021 in Jonglei State**



reportedly not able to access enough food (58% of assessed settlements), KIs reported that this was due to flooding destroying crops. In addition to flooding-induced damages, harvest exhaustion was another commonly reported reason for inadequate access to food, reported by KIs in 14% of assessed settlements where inadequate access was reported in March. Reporting of not having enough food due to the previous harvest being exhausted was particularly high in Canal Pigi (85% of assessed settlements with insufficient access to food), Bor South (29%), and Duk (13%) counties. Furthermore, KIs in 81% of assessed settlements reported that most people did not have access to any land for cultivation in March, compared to 57% in December. As the cultivation season has started but populations across Jonglei State are unable to cultivate due to flooding, it is likely that the FSL situation will deteriorate further in the coming months.

In FGDs with participants displaced from Duk<sup>27</sup> and Twic East<sup>28</sup> counties, participants expressed that people were not able to harvest any crops at all due to flooding. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), above average rainfall was recorded in the first quarter of 2021, across Jonglei State.<sup>29</sup> In line with this, in FGDs with participants displaced from across Jonglei state,<sup>30,31,32</sup> participants mentioned that they were not planning to cultivate in the coming season either because flood has limited access to land for cultivation or because they feared their crops would be destroyed with the coming rainy season. Moving forward, expected flooding as well as possible increases in locust swarms<sup>33</sup> has the potential to severely limit harvest yields and will likely increase the dependency on humanitarian food assistance or asset depleting coping strategies for many households across Jonglei State.

### Access to livestock

In March, KIs in 50% of assessed settlements across Jonglei state reported the occurrence of disease outbreaks that resulted in livestock death. Reflective of this, FGD participants displaced from Ayod<sup>34</sup>, Fangak<sup>35</sup>, and Twic East<sup>36</sup> counties commonly reported that flooding had resulted in widespread livestock malnutrition and death due to an increase in water-borne diseases and limited availability of grazing pastures. In addition, in March, KIs in 28% of assessed settlements reported that most people did not own any cattle. Reporting of no cattle ownership was particularly high in Twic East (97%), while it was also commonly reported in assessed settlements in Bor South (28%) and Canal Pigi (24%) counties. This is likely also a result of flooding in these counties and the use of livestock-depleting coping strategies throughout the reporting period.

In addition, FGD participants displaced from Fangak<sup>37</sup> and Duk<sup>38</sup> counties mentioned that flooding had led to physical accessibility challenges as livestock had been displaced to higher grounds further away from settlements. Alongside flooding and the related physical barriers impeding access to livestock, access to livestock was impeded by cattle raiding in parts of Jonglei state. For example, according to FGD participants displaced from Duk<sup>39</sup> county, several dozens of cattle were raided in late January. Therefore, considering the access barriers caused by flooding, cattle raiding and

22. IPC. [South Sudan TWG Key Messages Oct 2020-July 2021](#). December 2020.  
 23. Ibid.  
 24. IPC. [Technical Manual V 3.0](#). 2019.  
 25. REACH. [Humanitarian Situation Monitoring, Jonglei State](#), December 2020.  
 26. IPC. [South Sudan TWG Key Messages Oct 2020-July 2021](#). December 2020.  
 27. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021

28. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.  
 29. FAO. [South Sudan: Dekadal Weather Update](#). February 2021.  
 30. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.  
 31. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.  
 32. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021.  
 33. FAO. [South Sudan: Dekadal Weather Update](#). February 2021.

34. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.  
 35. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.  
 36. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.  
 37. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.  
 38. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021.  
 39. Ibid.

the fact that people in many parts of Jonglei State employed livestock depleting coping strategies, compounded with the start of the rainy season, it is likely that access to livestock will deteriorate further moving forward.

## Access to markets

Access to markets appears to have remained relatively low but stable as, in March, KIs in 76% of assessed settlements with reported market presence (91%) reported there being access barriers (68% in December). Unusual for this time of year, flooding remained one of the primary physical access barriers to markets reported by KIs in 38% of assessed settlements with reported market presence, in March. Alongside flooding, other reported main physical barriers were distance to the markets (53%) and poor road conditions (41%), in March. According to FGD participants displaced from Twic East<sup>40</sup> county, flooding limited supply routes, reduced the number of traders, and destroyed market goods. This has likely led to an increase in prices of market goods. Reflective of this, KIs in 81% of assessed settlements reported high prices among the main barriers to accessing markets. Similarly, FGD participants displaced from across Jonglei State<sup>41,42,43,44</sup> mentioned that prices had increased throughout the reporting period.

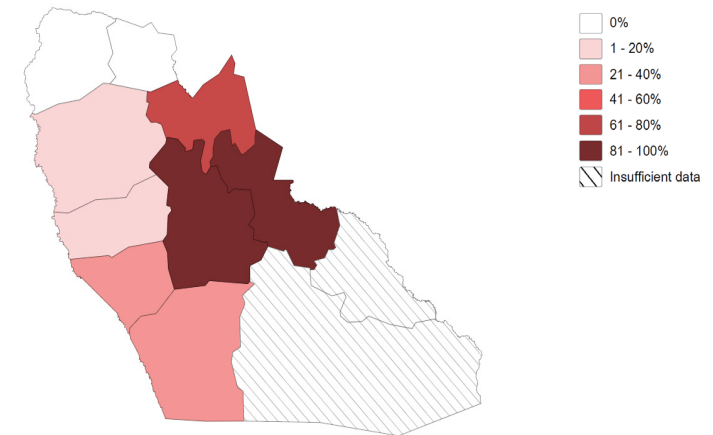
In addition, the reported insecurities faced by truck drivers on the Juba-Nimule highway have likely limited the flow of goods and led to further price increases.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the ongoing events in Tigray region of Ethiopia have led to inflation of the Ethiopian Birr and resulting price increases of goods imported from Ethiopia, which has likely driven an increase of market prices in Jonglei State, such as in Akobo county, throughout the reporting period.<sup>46</sup>

Across Jonglei State, the premature exhaustion of food stocks combined with limited access to cattle indicate an increased dependence on markets to access food. However, the common reporting of access barriers in assessed settlements across Jonglei could indicate higher-than-usual reliance on other food sources, which might be reflected by the relatively high proportions of assessed settlements where people reportedly relied on food assistance (34% of assessed settlements in March) and fishing (19%). Moving forward, limited access to markets and the start of the seasonal rainfall in May could result in a deterioration of the food security situation across Jonglei State in the months following data collection.

## Humanitarian food assistance (HFA)

The negative effects of flooding on access to food appear to have brought forward the onset of the lean season as early as January this year (lean season typically falls between March and August).<sup>47</sup> Reflective of this, findings suggest that the dependency on HFA has increased throughout the reporting period. Indeed, KIs in 34% of assessed settlements reported that the main food source for most people was HFA in March, up from 19% in December. Reporting of HFA as the main food source for most people was particularly high in assessed settlements in Urur (96%), Akobo

**Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported HFA as a main source of food for most people in the settlement in March 2021**



(81%), and Nyirol (73%) counties in March. In addition, in March, KIs in 68% of assessed settlements reported that people had received some type of food assistance (i.e. general food distribution, food for work or cash for work) in the three months prior to data collection (compared to 56% of assessed settlements in December).

Despite the fact that HFA was the most commonly reported main food source in assessed settlements in March, FGD participants displaced from across Jonglei State mentioned facing a wide range of barriers in accessing HFA. For instance, FGD participants displaced from Twic East<sup>48</sup> county mentioned that flooding impeded access to HFA as people had to use canoes to go to distribution sites. FGD participants displaced from Duk<sup>49</sup> county mentioned that people faced security threats on the way to distribution points in March, such as abductions and killings. In addition FGD participants displaced from Twic East<sup>50</sup> county mentioned that distribution often did not suffice for all households, as many households were not registered for HFA. Furthermore, findings from a rapid assessment in Pibor county conducted by REACH in February 2021 demonstrate that logistical, physical, and communication barriers limited the access of the most vulnerable to food assistance.<sup>51</sup> Moving forward, seasonal rainfall expected in the beginning of May could further limit the delivery of HFA, which will likely result in a worsening of the FSL situation across Jonglei State.<sup>52</sup>

## Coping strategies

Likely reflective of the high levels of food insecurity across Jonglei State, people reportedly continued to adopt a range of coping strategies. In March, KIs in 92% and 70% of assessed settlements reported that people were employing livelihood or food-based consumption coping strategies, respectively,

40. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.

41. Ibid.

42. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021.

43. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

44. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

45. The EastAfrican. [South Sudan pays the price for highway attacks](#). April 2021.

46. The Economist. [The war in Tigray is taking a frightful human toll](#). April 2021.

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

48. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.

49. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021.

50. FGD with participants displaced from Twic East to Bor town. March 2021.

51. REACH. [Western Pibor Rapid Assessment](#). February 2021.

52. FAO. [South Sudan: Dekadal Weather Update](#). February 2021.

compared to 97% and 79% in December

In March, the most frequently reported food consumption coping strategies in assessed settlements were limiting meal size (63%), consuming less expensive food (47%), and reducing the number of meals (37%). This may be a consequence of depleting household food stocks and supply chain disruptions, which have limited the availability of market goods, pushing up prices (see Markets section). Food consumption coping strategies were found to be employed in conjunction with livelihood coping strategies in Ayod, Bor South, Duk, Fangak and Twic East counties in March. Consistent with findings in December, the most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies were borrowing money (67%), borrowing food (65%), and fishing (58%) in March.

In addition to these typical food consumption and livelihood coping strategies, people reportedly continued to adopt more severe and asset depleting coping strategies, such as only children eating (25% of assessed settlements) and selling household assets (16% of assessed settlements) in March. FDG participants displaced from Ayod<sup>53</sup> county mentioned that people skipped meals for an entire day or only let the children in the household eat. Moreover, FGD participants from Fangak<sup>54</sup> county mentioned that people were selling assets such as beds and chairs in order to gain access to financial resources.

Moving forward, as access to crops, livestock, markets, and HFA is likely to be impeded further with the start of the rainy season, people across Jonglei State may increasingly adopt more severe and asset depleting coping strategies, pointing to a deterioration in the overall FSL situation.

## Health and Nutrition

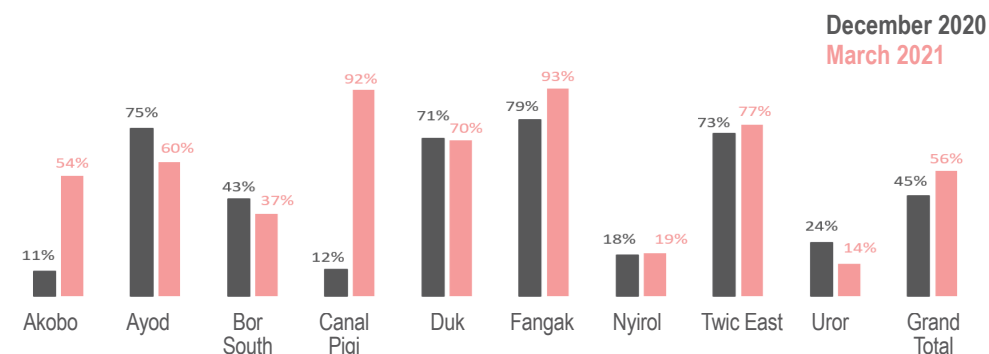
Despite KIs in 97% of assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functional primary healthcare facility within walking distance in March, findings from other sections suggest that high levels of food insecurity and limited access to WASH infrastructure combined with high perceived disease prevalence have negatively affected the health and nutritional status of populations across Jonglei State. This is compounded by physical barriers faced when trying to access healthcare facilities. Findings from FGDs with participants displaced from Fangak<sup>55</sup> county highlighted physical access barriers, as facilities were reportedly only accessible by boat in March.

Based on the IPC AMN analysis for November 2020 to March 2021, all counties in Jonglei State and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) were classified in IPC AMN Phase 4 (critical) except for Twic East and Pochalla which were classified in IPC AMN Phase 3 (serious).<sup>56</sup>

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Findings suggest that WASH needs remained high across Jonglei state. The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that no people were using latrines rose from 45% in December to 56% in March, which suggests widespread open defecation across much of the State. Notable increases in the proportions of settlements where this was reported were found in Akobo in Akobo (11% to 54%), Canal/Pigi (12% to 92%), and Fangak (79% to 93%) counties. In March, in those settlements where no one was reportedly using latrines, the main reasons were that there were no latrines available (42%), that latrines were overcrowded (20%) (and people therefore preferred not using the latrines), and because of cultural norms (10%). Moreover, FGD participants displaced within Akobo<sup>57</sup> county reported perceiving that people continued to practice open defecation when latrines were available due to a general lack of health and sanitation-related awareness.

**Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that no one in the settlement used latrines in December 2020 and March 2021**



In contrast to latrine usage, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of boreholes increased from December (59%) to March (72%). Reflective of this, in 69% of assessed settlements, boreholes were reported as the main source of drinking water. Reported presence of boreholes, however, does not guarantee widespread access to clean water. FGD participants displaced within Akobo<sup>58</sup> county mentioned that boreholes were available but that there were not enough to sustain all households' primary water needs. People therefore reportedly resorted to drinking from rivers, which likely increased vulnerability to waterborne diseases (e.g. typhoid, diarrhoea). Across Jonglei State, in over half of assessed settlements (57%) KIs reported that most people washed their hands either with soap and water (21%) or only water (36%) in March. In Akobo county, however, in 88% of assessed settlements, KIs reported most people were not washing their hands at all in March, which is likely a result of limited access to water and soap.

53. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

54. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

55. Ibid.

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

57. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Akobo town. March 2021.

58. Ibid.

## Protection

Findings suggest that the protection situation across Jonglei State remained stable, with KIs in 86% of assessed settlements reporting that most people felt safe most of the time in March, compared to 90% in December. However, between December and March, reporting of people not feeling safe rose considerably in assessed settlements in Duk (41% to 48%), Fangak (9% to 36%), and Uror (0% to 21%) counties likely due to a seasonal spike in sub-national violence. Reflective of this, FGD participants displaced within Duk<sup>59</sup> county mentioned that people in Duk county faced protection concerns such as killings and abductions in early January.

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported any protection concerns for women (50%) and girls (49%) remained higher than the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported protection concerns for men (35%) and boys (33%) in March. Consistent with the previous reporting period, the main reported protection concern for girls remained early marriage in 21% of assessed settlements, in March, compared to 10% of assessed settlements in December. There were particularly large increases of reporting of early marriage as a main protection concern in Duk (47% to 74%), Twic East (14% to 45%), and Bor South (18% to 48%) counties between December and March. This may be a result of continued livelihood collapse in these counties due to last year's flooding, which might have increased the need to access livestock through dowry. Across Jonglei State, KIs continued to report on domestic violence as the main protection concern for women in March (22% of assessed settlements), which was particularly commonly reported in Ayod (40%), Twic East (45%), Bor South (41%) and Duk (35%).

In September 2020, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reported protection concerns had been expressed by IDPs in the Bor IDP camp due to transition of Bor PoC into an IDP camp and the subsequent withdrawal of the UN Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS) forces from the site.<sup>60</sup> According to local media, insecurity and sub-national violence continued to pose threats in the transitioned IDP camp.<sup>61</sup>

## Education

Across Jonglei State, schools started reopening in phases, beginning with Primary 8 and Senior 4 in the first week of October 2020.<sup>62</sup> However, due to a surge in COVID-19 cases in February, all pre-schools, secondary schools and universities were closed again, except classes scheduled for exams.<sup>63</sup> Schools partly reopening in first quarter of 2021 likely explains why, in March, KIs in 56% of assessed settlements reported that no functional education facilities were available within walking distance, compared to 81% in December 2020. Reporting of no available education facilities within walking distance remained particularly high in assessed settlements in Ayod (100%), Duk (100%), Twic East

(100%), Canal Pigi (96%), and Bor South (93%) counties in March. In assessed settlements where KIs reported no functional education facilities within walking distance were available, in addition to COVID-19 impeding access to education services (67% of assessed settlements in March), another reported reason was that no facilities were available (18% of assessed settlements in March), which may be a consequence of flooding.

Education access was more commonly reported for boys between the ages of 6-17 than for girls of the same age range. KIs in 68% of assessed settlements from where education facilities were reportedly accessible reported that half or more of the community's boys were attending school, while the same was reported for girls in just 39% of assessed settlements. In March, the primary reported reason for girls not attending school was early marriage (in 42% of assessed settlements) and the need to work at home (22%) which is consistent findings from December 2020. This is in line with early marriage being reported as the main protection concern for girls by KIs in 21% of assessed settlements in March (see Protection section).

## Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI)

Findings suggest that IDPs continued to live in less permanent shelter types in comparison with members of the host community across Jonglei State. In March, in 75% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that the most common shelter type used by host community members was tukuls<sup>64</sup>. In contrast, in only 9% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that tukuls were the most common shelter type among IDPs (compared to 13% in December). IDPs were instead reportedly mainly living in rakoobas (59% of assessed settlements), improvised shelters (22%), or tents (4%) in March compared to 37%, 24% and 14%, respectively in December.

The apparent deterioration in IDP shelter conditions could be a consequence of sub-national violence and flooding resulting in widespread population movement and shelter destruction. In line with this, FGD participants displaced from Bor South<sup>65</sup> and Akobo<sup>66</sup> counties, mentioned that shelters were destroyed by flooding and people were forced to sleep with relatives or in public buildings. In addition, FGD participants displaced from Fangak<sup>67</sup> county mentioned that people were unable to rebuild their shelters as many parts of Fangak county were still flooded and people reportedly lack the financial resources to rebuild their shelters, considering they had limited access to income-generating activities.

Alongside shelter destruction, flooding has also reportedly destroyed or washed away NFIs from populations across county lines. FGD participants displaced from across Jonglei State<sup>68,69,70</sup> mentioned that their tools and seeds, fishing equipment, and mosquito nets had been destroyed or washed away by flooding. Despite the increased need for NFIs due to flooding, KIs in the majority of assessed settlements (62%) reported that there had not been any distribution of NFIs in the three

59. FGD with participants displaced from Duk to Bor town. March 2021.

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

61. Ibid.

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

63. AA. [South Sudan imposes lockdown as COVID cases surge](#). February 2021.

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

65. FGD with participants displaced from Bor South to Bor town. January 2021.

66. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Akobo town. March 2021.

67. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. January 2021.

68. FGD with participants displaced from Fangak to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

69. FGD with participants displaced from Ayod to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

70. FGD with participants displaced within Akobo to Bor IDP camp. March 2021.

months prior to data collection. Furthermore, in assessed settlements where IDP presence was reported in March, the main IDP NFI needs reported were plastic sheets (32%), mosquito nets (18%) and blankets (12%). Across of Jonglei State, the risk of malaria will likely remain high with reporting of mosquito nets as a main IDP NFI need, in addition to standing water caused by flooding creating favourable conditions for mosquito breeding.

### Conclusion

Findings suggest that humanitarian needs in Jonglei State remained high throughout the reporting period. Flooding, as well as a lack of food and insecurity, continued to cause widespread displacement across the State. In addition, the impact of flooding on access to food stocks, livestock and functioning markets, combined with the early onset of the lean season in January 2021 has resulted in high levels of food insecurity across the State. Against this backdrop, food insecurity, WASH, health, nutrition, and protection needs remained high across county lines. Humanitarian needs were particularly high in parts of Fangak, Twic East, Akobo counties, and GPAA as these areas were more severely affected by flooding and insecurity. Moving forward, humanitarian access is likely to deteriorate while humanitarian needs are likely to increase with the onset of the rainy season (in May), which may cause a further erosion of the living conditions in settlements across Jonglei State.

#### 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).