Humanitarian Situation Monitoring Central Equatoria State - South Sudan October - December 2020



Introduction

The last quarter (Q4) of 2020 was characterised by increased cross-border movement, internal displacement driven by insecurity, regional food insecurity, and climatic changes affecting access to basic services, such as clean drinking water and solid shelter structures. In addition, the COVID-19 outbreak continued to negatively impact access to basic services, increasing the vulnerability of people living in Central Equatoria State (CES) and their need of humanitarian assistance.

As insufficient regular assessments are conducted across the region due to access and resource constraints, limited accurate information is available to humanitarian actors to inform their response. To inform humanitarian actors, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015. Data is collected on a monthly basis through interviews with key informants with knowledge of a settlement. This Situation Overview uses this data to analyse changes in observed humanitarian needs across CES in Q4 of 2020.

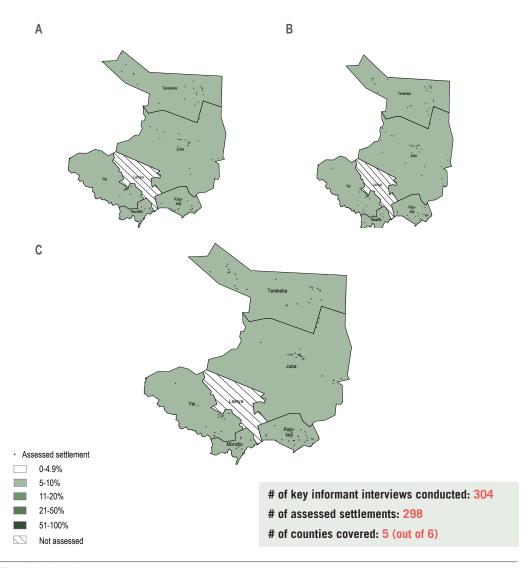
Methodology

To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of CES, 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). Information for this report was collected from KIs remotely by phone call from Juba covering CES, between October and December 2020.

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 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 reporting period. More details of the methodology can be found in the <u>AoK ToRs</u>.

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of the CES, October (A), November (B) and December (C) 2020:



^{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

Situation Overview: Central Equatoria State October - December 2020

Key Findings



Displacement: Reported displacement in Q4 was largely driven by sub-national conflict pushing IDPs to migrate to other payams, primarily within their county of origin. This was a notable change from September where displacement was largely driven by flooding. 3,4 Likely due to the ease in cross-border movement in July, refugee returnees reportedly continued to return from Uganda in the majority of assessed settlements in Juba and Yei counties. 5 Reported presence of IDP returnees varied between counties with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where this was reported in Juba (58%) and Morobo (44%) counties in December. Nevertheless, compared to September, the presence of refugee and IDP returnees was largely reported to have a small or positive impact on people's access to food in host communities, potentially reflecting a reported increase in access to food in December.



Food Security and Livelihoods: With the onset of the harvest season, reported adequate access to food broadly increased across CES between Q4 and Q3 (reported in 9% of assessed settlements in September to 34% in December), but varied between counties. The lowest proportion of assessed settlements with reported adequate access to food was in Terekeka County in December (4%), indicating a prolonged period of inadequate access to food since September (0%). Limited access to food was reportedly driven by flooding, insecurity, reduced crops production and COVID-19 related movement restrictions. Likely reflecting the increase in assessed settlements where food was reportedly accessible, the proportion of assessed settlements where hunger was reported as severe decreased from 44% in September to 26% in December. However, reported level of hunger varied between counties, particularly in Morobo County, where in December, hunger reportedly was "the worst it can be" in 20% of assessed settlements. With the harvest season at the beginning of Q4, it was expected that access to food would have increased more.



Protection: Potentially related to increased insecurity across CES between Q3 and Q4, the proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly felt safe most of the time slightly decreased from September (56%) to December (45%). Correspondingly, the proportion of assessed settlements where at least one incident of conflict killing a civilian had reportedly taken place increased from 3% in September to 16% in December. In addition, restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose a great risk to especially women and girls. Potentially linked to the effects of implemented restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the proportion of assessed settlements where sexual violence was reported as the main protection concern among women increased in Morobo County from none in September to around a third in December (33%).



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): The reported presence of a functional borehole remained stable across CES from September (reported in 71% of assessed settlements) to December (63%) but varied between counties. Reports of access to a functional borehole were least common in Terekeka county (decrease from 68% in September to 42% in December), potentially due continued inaccessibility or damage of boreholes due to flooding. Correspondingly, most people reportedly used an unprotected water source⁹ as their main water source in around half of assessed settlements in Terekeka (58%) and Morobo counties (56%). Additionally, although use of soap when washing hands seemingly remained stable across CES since April (42%), KIs in none of the assessed settlements in Terekeka reported this in December.



Health: Despite a decrease from September (73%), malaria remained the most common perceived health problem reported in the highest proportion of assessed settlements in December (49%). Additionally, typhoid reported as the most common perceived health problem increased between Q3 and Q4 (from 0% assessed settlements in September to 21% in December). Temporary closure of schools did not only limit children's access to education, but also their access to school feeding programs, increasing the risk of malnutrition among children.¹⁰



Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI): Across all counties in CES, the proportion of assessed settlements where access to solid shelter structures was reported decreased from September to December for both IDPs and host community members, likely due to flooding and heavy rainfall during the rainy season. ¹² The proportion of assessed settlements where host community members reportedly lived in less solid structures were particularly high in Morobo (increasing from 50% in September to 78% in December) and Terekeka counties (increasing from 0% in September to 48% in December) potentially due to presence of IDPs in Morobo County and floodwaters damaging shelter in Terekeka County. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused additional delays in flooding response increasing the need for access to solid shelters. ¹³



Education: After schools closed in March 2020 as a COVID-19 preventive measure, senior classes were able to resume in October, which likely explains the increase in assessed settlements where access to educational services was reported from September (23%) to December (60%). However, reported access to educational service was relatively low in December compared to before the schools closed in February 2020 (reported in 79% of assessed settlements). Being out of school for a longer period has shown to increase the risk of drop-out particularly among girls, continued closure of school could therefore be a great risk, especially for girls. ¹⁵



- 3. OCHA, December 2020, South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot
- 4. IOM DTM. 4 September, 2020. Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report..
- IOM Displacement tracking matrix, South Sudan. Flow monitoring registry. Trends in crossborder return flows and impact of COVID-19 restrictions, February – December 2020.
- 6. IPC South Sudan. Consolidated findings from the IPC technical working group and external reviews
- . ACLED, South Sudan, Central Equatoria
- 8 Humanitarian Needs Overview South Sudan January 200
- 9. Unprotected water sources includes rivers, swamps, wells and water yards.
- Humanitarian Needs Overview, South Sudan, January 202
- 11. Solid shelters include: Tukul and permanent shelters. Less solid shelters include: Rabooka, improvised shelters and tens.
- 12 FEWSNET. October 2020.
- 13. OCHA. December 2020. South Sudan: Flooding Situation Report, Inte
- 14.UNICEF and UNESCO. 23 September 2020. UNICEF and UNESCO welcome the decision to reopen schools in South Sudan.
- 15. Humanitarian Needs Overview, South Sudan. January 2021



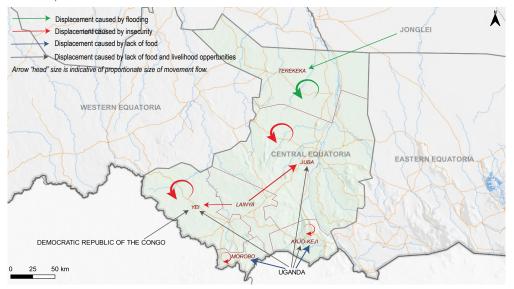
Population Movement and Displacement

Displacement

Reported displacement of host community members varied notably between counties in December. In assessed settlements in Kajo Keji, Morobo and Terekeka counties, in between approximately 20% and 25% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that half or more than half of the host community members had displaced from the settlements in the 30 days prior to the data collection. In Terekeka County, conflict-induced displacement was observed in December, with 25,000 IDPs being displaced in Juba County due to sub-national violence. To Correspondingly, the main reason for displacement reported in the majority of assessed settlements in Terekeka County in December was conflict (86%), increasing from none in September. However, aligned with expected seasonal changes, the proportion of assessed settlements where flooding reportedly was the main reason for displacement in Terekeka County decreased from 92% in September to 14% in December.

Likely due to insecurity in Kajo Keji County in December, displacing people in the border areas with Uganda, the proportion of assessed settlements where conflict reportedly was the main reason for displacement increased from 25% in September to 85% in December in Kajo Keji County.¹⁸

Map 2: Population movement and cause of displacement for most recent displacement, CES, October to December, 2020.



In Morobo County in September and December, conflict was reported in all (100%) assessed settlements as the main reason for displacement, indicating the continued impact of insecurity on people living in assessed settlements in the southern counties of CES.

In comparison to the aforementioned counties, reported displacement in Juba County was low (in 13% of assessed settlements half or more than half of the population reportedly consisted of IDPs) and notably lower in Yei County, where no displacement was reported in December. ¹⁹ Likely in line with an increased access to food with the onset of the harvest season at the beginning of Q4, lack of food reported as the main reason for displacement decreased from being reported in half of assessed settlements in Juba and Kajo Keji counties in September to none in December. ²⁰ The relatively low reported displacement in Yei County could be due to lower insecurity compared to the other counties and generally better access to food.

Similar to Q3, displacement in December was appeared highly localised, with IDPs mainly displaced within their county of origin; in all assessed settlements in Kajo Keji, Terekeka, Morobo counties, where displacement was reported, KIs reported that people moved elsewhere in the same county. Juba County was the only county with reported displacement outside the county, with KIs from 15% of assessed settlements reporting displacement to Yei County in December.

Refugee returns

Overall, reporting on the presence of refugee returnees remained consistent between Q3 and Q4 (42% in September, 48% in December), but varied between counties. The proportion of assessed settlements with reported refugee returnees increased in Juba and Yei counties, from 35% to 55% and 27% to 60%, respectively. This increase was likely due to an ease in cross-border movement in July.²¹ In addition to this, the increase in reporting on refugee returnee presence in Yuba and Yei counties might be related to limited assistance in refugee camps in Uganda.²² Correspondingly, KIs in all assessed settlements in Juba County and in 67% of assessed settlments Yei County reported refugees returned from Uganda. Additionally, in December, lack of food emerged as a new reported push factor for returnees in 33% of assessed settlements in Juba County.

Reports of refugee returnee presence decreased but remained high in Kajo Keji (from 95% in September to 76% December) and Morobo counties (from 73% in September to 44% in December). In December, in all assessed settlements in Morobo County, refugee returnees reportedly returned due to lack of food in the area of displacement. Although slightly lower, in the highest proportion of assessed settlements in Kajo Keji County (31%) refugees reportedly also returned due to lack of food, a decrease from 60% in September.

Despite the commonly reported presence of refugee returnees, the reported presence of refugee returnees, reportedly did not have a negative impact on access to food in most counties. In

- Data not available for September as the indicator changed.
- 17. OCHA. December 2020. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot.
- 18. OCHA, December 2020, South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot.
- 19. Indicator not available for September.
- 20. FEWSTNET. Food Security Outlook. October 2020. Seasonal Calendar

- 21. IOM Displacement tracking matrix, South Sudan, Flow monitoring registry. Trends in cross-border return flows and impact of COVID-19 restrictions, February December 2020.
- 22. UN news, December 2020, Uganda: UN food assistance programme hit as COVID-19 dries up funding.

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

December, in 50% of assessed settlements in Kajo Keji County where presence of IDPs or retunees was reported, KIs reported that the arrival of refugee and IDP returnees had a positive impact on the ability to access enough food for most people in the settlements, potentially as they may have contributed preparing land for cultivation. In Morobo County, the arrival of refugee and IDP returnees reportedly only had a small (negative) impact on access to food in more than half of the assessed settlements (60%). This could be because IDPs and refugees contributed to cultivation activities and therefore the availability of food.

IDP returns

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDP returnees increased steadily throughout Q4 (from 13% in October to 31% in December) but remained similar to Q3 (26% in September). Nevertheless, a great variation between counties was observed throughout Q4. In assessed settlements in Morobo County, the reported presence of IDP returnees increased from being reported in none of assessed settlements September to almost half (44%) in December, likewise in Terekeka County, where this increased from around 10% to around a quarter (27%). With already limited access to food reported in Terekeka County throughout Q4 (see FSL section), localised displacement may have caused additional pressure on already scarce resources.

In Morobo and Kajo Keji counties, violence and insecurity were reported as the main push factors for IDPs to return in all assessed settlements in December (100%).²³ Similarly, in Juba and Terekeka counties, localised violence and insecurity were reported as the main reason IDPs returned in around half of assessed settlements in December (67% and 50% of assessed settlements, respectively). These findings could reflect increased localised insecurity in Kajo Keji and conflict-induced displacement in Terekeka in December.²⁴

Food Security and Livelihoods

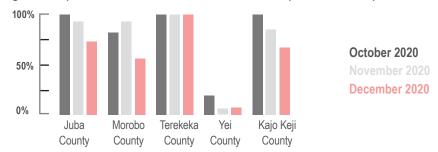
Food security

Indicative of an overall increased availability of food, reporting of adequate access to food increased between Q4 and Q3 (9% in September to 34% in December). However, despite this increase, inadequate access to food was still reported in more than half of assessed settlements (66%) Additionally, a great variation was observed between the counties; most notably in Terekeka County, where reporting of adequate access to food remained low to non-existent in December (4%), similar to September (0%). In the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) conducted in October/November, Terekeka County was classified as being in phase 4 and in phase 3 in the projected period (from

December 2020 to March 2021) with the assumption that the harvest would improve the situation.²⁵ While access to food may have improved in other counties in line with the harvest, that was not necessary the case in Terekeka County. Linked with severe events of flooding in Terekeka County in Q3 and Q4, floodwaters washing away crops was reported as the main reason for inadequate access to food in Terekeka County in October (55%).26

Likely linked to the reportedly low access to food in Terekeka County, the proportion of assessed settlements where most people on average ate only one meal per day increased from 68% in September to 88% in December. As a potential consequence, in 50% of assessed settlements, KIs reported malnutrition among children being worse compared to December 2019, a notable increase from 19% in September. The continued decrease in access to and intake of food reported by KIs in Terekeka County could be a cumulative effect of reoccurring flooding, destroying and limiting access to land and cultivation since June 2020.27 Additionally, because Terekeka County is located in an area with documented cattle migration routes, displacements from Jonglei in early 2020 likely increased tensions in the areas fuelling existing land disputes, and potentially preventing people from farming.^{28,29} Based on these findings, and with the expectation that access to food will continue to diminish moving further into the lean season, Terekeka County remains an area of concern and should be monitored closely.

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements where inadequate food was reported in Q4, by county:



Findings suggest that access to food increased in all other counties between Q3 and Q4, but remained low, except in Yei County where reported access to food was notably high throughout Q4. The proportion of assessed settlements where adequate access to food was reported increased in Kajo Keji (from 0% in September to 28% in December), Juba (from 4% to 33%), and Morobo (from 9% to 44%) counties, which likely was linked to the harvest season in the beginning of Q4. The continuation of limited access to food being reported may be due to cumulative effects of prolonged years of asset depletion and loss of livelihood due to flooding, insecurity, population displacement, reduced crop production and the effects of COVID-19 movement restrictions driving limited access to basic services.³⁰ In Yei County, reports of access to food were notably more common compared

^{23.} No IDP returnees reported in September

^{24.} OCHA. December 2020. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot.

^{25.} IPC South Sudan. Consolidated findings from the IPC technical working group and external reviews.

^{26.} IOM - DTM Central Equatoria State Event Tracking Report. Publication date: 4 September

^{27.} REACH. October 2020. Situation Overview

^{28.} OCHA. January 2020. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot

^{29.} REACH. December 2020. South Sudan Map of seasonal cattle grazing and migration.

^{31.} FEWSNET. 2018. South Sudan. Livelihood zone map and descriptions for the republic of South Sudan (updated).

to the other counties and increased from 67% of assessed settlements in September to 93% in December. As Yei County is located in what is known as the greenbelt region, people from assessed settlements there may have a higer yield from cultivation and therefore increased food stocks lasting longer into the lean season.³¹

Flooding and too much rain were reportedly the main reason for inadequate access to food in October, reported in a quarter (25%) of assessed settlements across all counties. The main reason reported for inadequate access to food in December varied, with crops destroyed by pests being reported in 18% of assessed settlements, high prices in 16%, and livestock feeding on crops in 14%. Corresponding to an increase in stable food prices in Juba from September to December, high prices was in particular reported in assessed settlements in Juba County (41%) whereas livestock feeding on farms was reported as the main reason for inadequate access to food in Yei County (40%).³²

With an increase in assessed settlements where access to food was reported in all counties in Q4 (except Terekaka), the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported hunger being severe likewise decreased from 44% in September to 26% in December across all counties. In addition, in around half of assessed settlements (54%) most people reportedly ate only one meal per day in December, a decrease from 67% in September.

Despite the apparent increase in adequate access to food in Morobo County, hunger was reported as 'the worst it can be' in 20% of assessed settlements in December, an increase from 10% in September. With an increase in assessed settlements with reported access to food, the increase in the proportion of assessed settlements where hunger was reported as "the worst it can be" is of great concern and could indicate pockets of food insecurity potentially due to increased conflict induced displacement; reporting on incidents of conflict killing a civilian reportedly increased in Morobo County from 0% in September to 11% in December.

Corresponding to the apparent increase in access to food, the proportion of assessed settlements with KIs reporting that people in the settlements were eating wild food, decreased from 89%

Figure 2: Number of meals consumed per day, by % of assessed settlements per county (December 2020):

,	Juba	Morobo	Terekeka County	Yei County	Kajo Keji County	Total
Less than one	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
One	66%	44%	88%	7%	35%	55%
Two	31%	56%	12%	93%	65%	44%

in September to 45% in December.³³ Nevertheless, the proportion of assessed settlements where people reportedly were eating wild food remained high in Morobo, Juba and Kajo Keji counties in December (100%, 53% and 57%, respectively). Since consumption of wild foods as a supplementary food is relatively normal in CES this it not necessarily a concern, rather it may be considered the norm.

Figure 3: Coping strategies to cope with lack of access to food used within 30 day prior to the data collection, reported by KIs in assessed settlements in December 2020, by county:

	Juba County	Morobo County	Terekeka County	Yei County	Kajo Keji County	Total
Less expensive food	94%	100%	62%	73%	57%	76%
Limit meal size	72%	11%	85%	60%	33%	60%
Reduce meals eaten per day	75%	22%	69%	60%	38%	59%
Only children eating	0%	11%	38%	0%	5%	12%
Skip days without eating	3%	22%	12%	0%	5%	7%

Coping strategies

Despite findings suggesting improved access to food, a wide range of coping strategies apparently applied within the 30 days prior to data colleciton, were reportedly employed across all counties in Q4, suggesting low availability of food. Limiting meal sizes (reported in 60% of assessed settlements) and consuming less expensive food (76%) were the coping strategies reportedly used in the majority of assessed settlements in December. Similar to Q3, the proportion of assessed settlements were use of severe coping strategies, such as skipping entire days without eating, were reported was generally low (7% in December), but increased in Morobo County (0% in September to 22% in December), which potentially could be linked the increase in reporting of hunger being "the worst it can be".

Similar to Q3, severe livelihood coping strategies included consuming seeds meant for farming (reported in 30% of assessed settlements in September, 29% in December), particularly in Kajo Keji and Terekeka counties, where this coping strategy was reportedly used in around half of assessed settlements (48% and 50%, respectively). Consuming seeds meant for farming could have negative consequences for access to food in the future and is indicative of the tough decisions that houldholds needs to make, between short-term and longer-term access to food. Another severe coping strategy reportedly used in December was begging, reporting of which increased in Terekeka County from 0% in September to 15% in December, corresponding with the reportedly low access to food in Terekeka County.

^{33. &}quot;Don't know" was reported in 28% of assessed settlements in December.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of a functional borehole remained stable from September (71%) to December (63%), but varied between counties. Although assessed settlements reporting the presence of a functional borehole increased notably in assessed settlements in Morobo County (from 18% in September to 56% in December), likely due to increased access during the dry season, it decreased in Terekeka (from 68% in September to 42% in December) and Yei counties (from 100% in September to 80% in December), potentially indicating that some boreholes continued being inaccessible or damaged due to flooding.

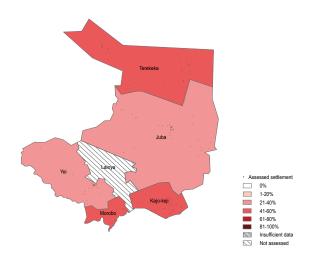
Corresponding to the seemingly limited access to functional boreholes in Terekeka County, an unimproved water source³⁴ was reported as the main source of water in 58% of assessed settlements in December (increasing from 32% in September). The proportion of assessed settlements where unimproved sources were reported as the main water sources also increased in Yei county from none in September to 27% in December. Indicating an improved access to water, the proportion of assessed settlements where an unimproved water source was reported as the main water source, decreased in Morobo, Juba and Kajo Keji counties from September (91%, 61% and 53%, respectively) to December (56%, 25% and 48%, respectively). A reliance on unimproved water sources could have contributed to the similarly high proportion of assessed settlements where malaria was reported as the main perceived health concern in September (73%) and December (49%), as standing water is a common breeding site for vector-borne diseases such as malaria.

Potentially indicating an increased access to drinking water, the proportion of assessed settlements where it reportedly took under 30 min to reach, access and return from people's preferred water source, increased from 35% in September to 61% in December. In line with this, the proportion of assessed settlements where it reportedly took people one hour to half a day to access their preferred water source decreased from 29% in September to only 5% in December. Although these findings could suggest an increased access to drinking water, these findings could be an outcome of the reported low access to boreholes making people rely on unprotected water sources closer to their home. Long distance to water sources could influence the quantity of water used in a household, which could lead to less water available for hand-washing and other hygiene practices. Additionally, the availability and quality of water have shown to shape how households prepare food, and influence the nutrition status of the family.35

Reported use of soap when washing hands remained stable in December (36%) compared to September (36%). Despite a drop in November (28%), the reported use of soap when washing hands has been relatively stable since April (42%). This could potentially be an outcome of the risk communication and awareness campaigns launched by the Government and NGOs since March

2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19.36 Nevertheless, the proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly used soap was particular concerning in Terekeka County in December, where KIs in none of the assessed settlements reported that most people used soap when washing hands. A possible reason for the generally low reported use of soap might be limited access to functional markets, poor road conditions (which was reported as a barrier to market access in 58% of assessed settlements), high prices of soap or because of de-prioritisation of hygiene items as access to food were more pressing.

Map 3: Proportion of settlements where KIs reported unprotected water sources as the main source of drinking water, per county, December 2020.





At the end of December, a total of 3,209 COVID-19 cases were confirmed in South Sudan, with 75% of cases being from CES.³⁷ With a continued increase in confirmed cases, the Government of South Sudan has continued its risk communication campaigns throughout the state.³⁸ Likely due to the effort of these campaigns, most people had reportedly heard about COVID-19 in all assessed settlements in December (similar to September), and most people reportedly had knowledge about how to protect themselves and prevent the spread of the virus in almost all assessed settlements (97% in December).

Findings suggest that, despite the seemingly widespread knowledge about COVID-19, behaviours adapted to prevent the spread of COVID-19 decreased between Q3 and Q4. The proportion of assessed settlements where avoiding crowds as a preventative measure reportedly was used decreased from 54% in September to 28% in December, notably in Yei County (from 100% in

^{34.} Rivers, swaps, water yards and wells

^{35.} Humanitarian Needs Overview, South Sudan. January 2021.

^{36.} South Sudan Ministry of Health, 7th -13th December 2020, Weekly situation report.

^{37.} South Sudan Ministry of Health. 7th -13th December 2020. Weekly situation report.

^{38.} South Sudan Ministry of Health. 7th -13th December 2020. Weekly situation report.

September to 13% in December). Additionally, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people avoided handshaking slightly decreased from 43% in September to 33% in December, notably in Morobo and Yei counties (from 73% and 100% in September to 44% and 20% in December, respectively). With reported increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, the apparent decrease in the use of preventative measures could be a great concern, especially in Yei County, where reported preventative behaviours was remarkably low in December compared to September.³⁹

COVID-19 has, since its onset, placed an increased demand for health services, supplies and health professionals. Combined with stigmatisation of health workers working with COVID-19 patients, fear of contracting COVID-19 at health facilities, the COVID-19 outbreak has likely negatively affected access to health facilities. Low access to health care services might have led to delays in seeking health care, which could have influenced the prevalence of otherwise treatable diseases, such as malaria. Despite a decrease in malaria reported as the main perceived health problem from September (73%) to December (49%), malaria remained the most commonly reported main perceived health problem, followed by typhoid, reporting of which increased from 0% in Q3 to 4% in Q4. Because typhoid is a waterborne disease, the apparent increase in typhoid as the main health problem could be linked to the relatively high proportion of assessed settlements where unprotected water sources were reported as the main water source (see WASH section).

While in September, cough had not been reported as a main health problem in any of the assessed settlements, KIs from 16% of assessed settlements reported cough to be a main health problem in December. Although confirmed cases of COVID-19 in hard-to-reach settlements of CES are difficult to estimate, and since cough could be related to other prevalent respiratory diseases, the increase in cough reported as the main perceived health concern could be of concern and should be monitored closely as a continued increase could indicate a local COVID-19 outbreak.

Protection

Possibly linked to increased insecurity across CES from September to December, insecurity seemingly continued to impact most people's feeling of safety across CES, however, with noted differences between counties.⁴⁰ Across CES, in less than half of assessed settlements (45%) in December most people reportedly felt safe most of the time, which was a slight decrease from to September (56%). In Juba County, this proportion was notably lower in December (25%), however, increasing from September (13%). In Kajo Keji County, the proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly felt safe remained stable from September (26%) to December (33%). The stable but low proportion of assessed settlements where people reportedly felt safe

most of the time likely reflects continued tension and insecurity.⁴¹

In contrast to Juba and Kajo Keji counties, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people felt safe most of the time decreased notably in Morobo and Terekeka counties, from 82% of assessed settlements in both counties in September to 56% and 42% in December, respectively. This decrease could be due to a parallel increase in the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported an incident of looting where most property was stolen from one or more households (increase from 0% in both counties in September to approximately 30% in December). In addition, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported at least one incident of conflict killing a civilian in the 30 day prior to the data collection also increased in Morobo County (from 0% in September to 11% in December).

The relatively low proportion of assessed settlements where most people reportedly felt safe is likely to have affected access to markets and therefore access to food and livelihoods. The proportion of assessed settlements where unsafe roads reportedly were a barrier to accessing markets, increased from 7% in September to 21% in December across CES. In addition, the proportion of assessed settlements where conflict related activities and inter-communal violence along the road reportedly were a barrier for most people to access markets particularly increased in Terekeka from 0% in September to 15% in December. With reported limited access to food in Terekeka County, limited access to markets could be an additional pressure to an already precarious food security situation.

COVID-19 restrictions continue to pose a great risk, especially to women and girls including increased risk of domestic violence, exploitation, and child labour.^{42,43} Potentially reflecting this, the proportion of assessed settlements in Yei County where domestic violence was reported as the main protection concern among women increased from 27% in September to 47% in December. Likewise, in Morobo County where sexual violence reported as the main protection concern among women increased from 0% in September to 33% in December.

Figure 4: Top 3 most commonly reported protection concerns in assessed settlements in CES in December 2020:

Girls		Boys		
1 Early/forced marriage	47%	1 Illegal substance/alcohol	32%	
2 Harassment	9%	abuse	400/	
3 Illegal substance/alcohol	6%	2 Looting/criminality	13%	
abuse		3 Early/forced marriage	3%	



^{39.} Service Delivery Cluster, Republic of South Sudan, The Vice President. February 2021.

^{40.} ACLED. South Sudan, Central Equatoria

^{41.} ACLED. South Sudan, Central Equatoria

^{42.} Humanitarian Needs Overview, South Sudan, January 2021.

^{43.} Support Peace Initiative Development Organization, Child Abuses during COVID-19 lock down in Equatoria (CES, EES, WES) assessment report 2020



Shelter/NFI

Reported access to solid shelters decreased between Q3 and Q4 for both host community members and IDPs. The proportion of assessed settlements where community members reportedly lived in solid shelter structures⁴⁴ decreased from 79% in September to 59% in December. The highest proportion of assessed settlements where the majority of the host community members reportedly lived in a less solid shelter structure⁴⁵ was in Morobo County in December (78%), increasing from 27% in September, likely due to a parallel increase in reported IDP returnees, increasing the pressure on already scarce resources.

In Terekeka County, the proportion of assessed settlements where less solid structures were reportedly used increased from 0% in September to 48% in December. Access to solid shelters in Terekeka County has been impacted by flooding and heavy rainfall since the onset of the rainy season, which could have contributed to the reported increase in people living in less solid shelters in Terekeka County. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed flooding response, leaving people in need of access to solid shelter structures and NFIs to repair.

Among settlements where the presence of IDPs was reported in December (47%), the reported proportion of IDPs that were living in less solid shelters was half or more than half (of the total population) in the majority of assessed settlements in Terekeka (80%), Juba (79%), Morobo (60%), and Kajo Keji (50%) counties. While Kajo Keji County has been characterised by high shelter needs in the past years, the high proportion of assessed settlements where shelter needs were reported in Juba, Morobo, and Terekaka County could be a result of the increase in influx of IDPs (Juba and Morobo County) and flood-induced shelter damage, especially in Terekeka County. 48,49

NFIs and assistance needed

Indicating continued inadequate access to food, the type of assistance reportedly most needed in December was food (reported in 34% of assessed settlements), shelter/NFIs (23%) and health care services (12%). Despite the reportedly low access to food in Terekeka County, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported food to be the main assistance needed decreased from 89% in September to 54% in December. Instead, the proportion of settlements where health and livelihoods assistance was reported as a priority need increased from 0% in September to 12% and 11% in December, respectively. This indicates how needs are often interlinked, for example, insufficient access to food increases risk of malnutrition and other health complications due to a weakened immune system. In contrast to the rest of CES, shelter/NFI needs were reported as a priority need in the majority of assessed settlements in Morobo (78%), an increase from 13% in September, which could reflect the reported limited access to solid shelter structures during this period.



Education

After schools closed in March 2020, as a COVID-19 preventive measure, senior classes were resumed in October, which likely explains the increase in reports of access to educational services from September (reported in 23% of assessed settlements) to December (60%).⁵⁰ Despite this increase, reported access to educational services in December was still relatively low, compared to reported access to educational services prior to March (79% of assessed settlements reported access to educational services in February).

Corresponding, within the settlements where no access to educational services was reported, the main reasons reported for lack of access to educational services in December was that appropriate classes were not open (35%) and COVID-19 restrictions (29%). In addition, flooding has in some areas prevented schools from opening, which is increasing the risk of drop-outs, particularly among girls. ^{51,52} Being out of school is known to increase the risk of teenage pregnancies and early marriage. ⁵³ Continued closure of the schools may therefore be of great concern, especially for girls. In addition, closure of schools does not only to limit children's access to education, but also their access to school feeding programs increasing the risk of malnutrition among children. ⁵⁴

Conclusion

The findings presented in this situation overview illustrate how Terekeka and Morobo counties face high intersectoral needs, largely driven by issues in accessing food, despite the expected increase in food availability from September following the harvest season. Additionally, due to flooding, increased insecurity and delayed emergency response, assessed settlements in Terekeka counties reportedly continued to face limited access to basic services, such as solid shelter structures and WASH infrastructures, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and likely vulnerability to COVID-19 transmission. The findings from Terekeka and Morrobo counties are in stark contrast to Juba, Kajo Keji, and Yei counties where findings suggest that intersectoral needs remained relatively stable or improved, likely driven by increased access to food.

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).

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