



# Kit - Nesitu Corridor Cattle Migration Brief

Juba County, Central Equatoria State, South Sudan, April 2018

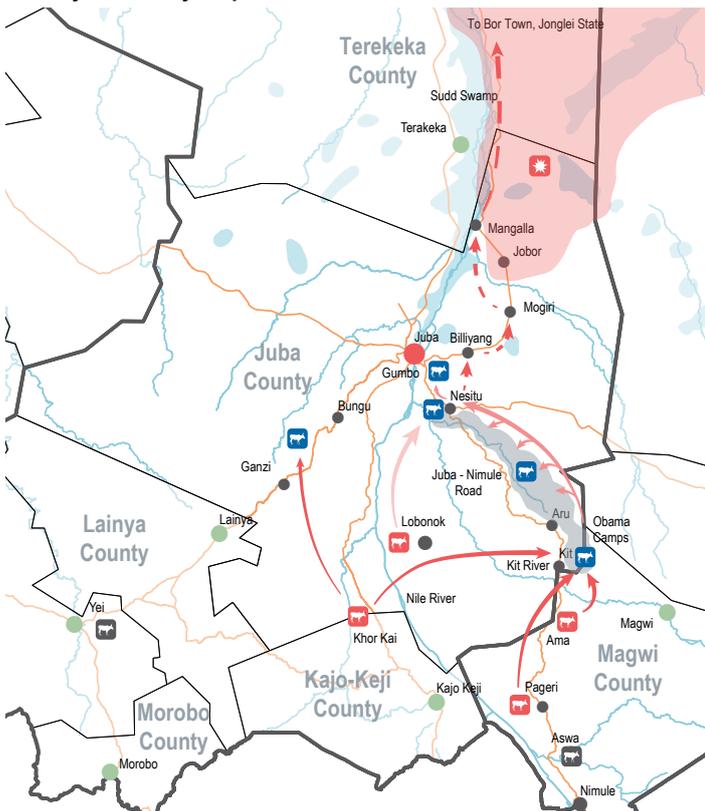
## Introduction

In October 2017, the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) ordered the removal of all cattle from the Greater Equatoria region.<sup>1</sup> In early February 2018, cattle camps in Juba, Kajo-Keji, and Magwi Counties were dissolved and an estimated 200,000 cattle and 60,000 people began to move to Bor South County, Jonglei State.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to reach what are usually extremely remote and difficult to access populations, humanitarian organizations began tracking the movement of the cattle in February 2018. However, by early March, the location of the herds and their progress was unclear, leaving humanitarian actors unsure of how to respond. In order to identify the location of the cattle and facilitate humanitarian response, REACH conducted a participatory mapping exercise at the Livestock Technical Working Group (LTWG) on 6 April 2018. A total of five members of Vétérinaires Sans Frontières - Germany (VSF-G), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and REACH participated in mapping current locations of cattle and intended migration routes, in addition to identifying key catchment areas where humanitarians could respond.

## Key Findings

- According to key informants (KIs), most of the cattle herds are located in **grazing land between Kit and Nesitu villages east of the Juba-Nimule road**; small groups have also moved west to Ganzi and Bungu villages north of the Yei road.
- **KIs noted that the cattle herd has broken into small groups in order to reduce the risks of food insecurity and disease** (for both cattle and humans), but are expected to re-consolidate as the threat of cattle raiding increases north of Mangalla Town.

**Map 1: Cattle migration from Central Equatoria to Bor South County, February - April 2018**



- KIs noted that the vast majority of herds are expected to pass through Nesitu, Biliyang, and Mogiri villages, before consolidating into larger herds in Mangalla; **all four locations are secure and accessible to humanitarian actors from Juba town.**

## Cattle Migration, February - March 2018

Most of the cattle keepers, their herds, and their families arrived in Central Equatoria in 2014 following violence in south-western Jonglei State in early 2014.<sup>3</sup> Since 2014, all of the cattle were reported by KIs to be consolidated into six large cattle camps, located in Yei, Khor Kai, and Lobonok in Central Equatoria, and Ama, Aswa, and Pageri in Eastern Equatoria. While most of the herds have begun migrating back to Bor South County in Jonglei State in February 2018, the Aswa camp was noted by KIs to still be functioning, and that for various reasons, the cattle keepers were unlikely to leave. None of the participants knew the whereabouts of the Yei cattle camp, or whether its members had migrated or not.

### Migration to Kit, February 2018

Migration to Bor South County began in early February 2018, when the Khor Kai cattle camp was disbanded and cattle owners crossed the Nile River to Kit Village on the Juba-Nimule Road. Two large cattle camps, Obama A and Obama B, were established a few hours east along the Kit river. They were joined by cattle from the Pageri and Ama camps, which were disbanded in February as well.

### Migration to Nesitu, March - April 2018

In March 2018, the now consolidated Obama camps herd began to move north toward Juba. LTWG staff noted that the herd in the Obama camps were initially nine separate herds lead by nine chiefs. However, the herds divided themselves during this time into smaller and smaller units, travelling at different speeds along the grazing land between the Juba-Nimule road and the Kit river, reaching as far north as Nesitu village. In a recent assessment, LTWG participants identified eight herds along the Kit - Nesitu corridor, but noted that this was likely only a small sample of the total number of cattle herds in

#### Cattle migration routes, February - April 2018

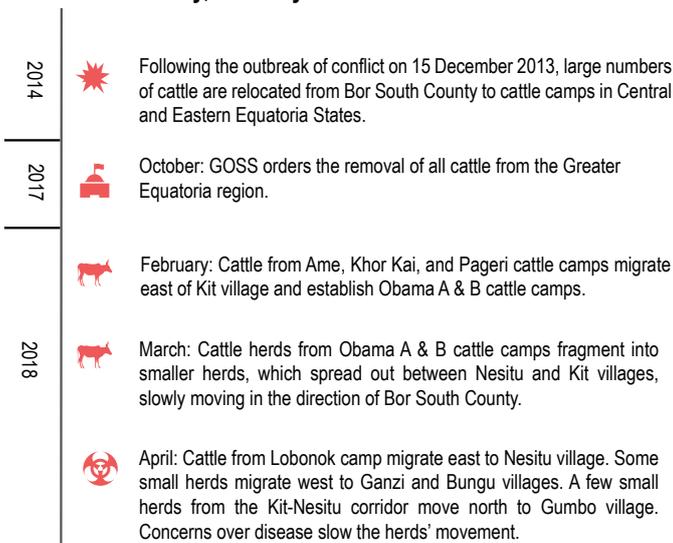
- ➔ Cattle Migration, February 2018
- ➔ Migration toward Nesitu and Gumbo, March 2018
- ➔ Migration to Nesitu, April 2018
- - - Anticipated migration route
- Country capital
- County capital
- Settlement of note

#### Status of Cattle Camps in Central Equatoria, April 2018

- 🐄 Dismantled cattle camp
- 🐄 Cattle camp established during migration
- 🐄 Status of cattle camp unchanged or unknown
- ⊙ Kit - Nesitu cattle migration corridor extent
- ★ Increased risk of cattle raiding

# Kit - Nesitu Corridor Cattle Migration Brief

**Figure 3: Timeline of cattle migration from Central Equatoria to Bor South County, January 2014 - March 2018**



this area.<sup>4</sup> In early April, the Lobonok cattle camp was disbanded, and its members also moved their cattle to Nesitu.

## Population and Service Access

A 2014 UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) study estimated that as many as 250,000 cattle were brought into the Greater Equatoria region. A March 2018 VSF-G study conducted along the Kit-Nesitu corridor estimated that the total population of 200,000 cattle and 60,000 people spread out across all of the cattle camps along the corridor. Many of the people in the camps are considered vulnerable, such as children, pregnant women and elderly. The same VSF-G study estimated that only 54% of the total population of the surveyed camps were adult men protecting cattle; the rest were women, children, and elderly. Although the herd is both diffuse and mobile, participants identified four settlements, Nesitu, Billiyang, Mogiri and Mangalla, that most of the herd would pass through on their way from Central Equatoria to Jonglei State.

## Migration Dynamics

Participants were clear to highlight that the migration was not a seasonal movement. Large amounts of grazing land and water are needed to sustain herds, forcing them to travel along rivers or near swamps. In Juba County and most of southern Central and Eastern Equatoria States, grazing land and water sources are widespread. North of Juba in Terekeka County, the herds must stay close to the banks of the Nile river, where the southern part of the Sudd Swamp acts as a flood plain providing water and grazing land for cattle.

KIs reported that cattle herds traditionally consolidate for security, but prefer to spread out into smaller units in order to mitigate the risk of cattle disease and to reduce competition for grazing land and water for cattle. Most KIs said that the Obama camps herds divided into

**Table 1: Settlements cattle herds are expected to pass, April 2018**

Settlement	Herd reached the area?	
Nesitu village	✓	✓ Yes
Billiyang village	✗	✗ No
Mogiri village	✗	
Mangalla town	✗	

numerous smaller herds because the presence of an armed escort provided by GOSS which allowed them to spread out without fear of being attacked. LTWG members noted that in Nesitu, where many of the cattle herds were reported to be congregating as of April, poor hygiene practices and swamp-like conditions had already raised concerns of cholera and other waterborne illnesses.

## Migration Intentions

Very few cattle are likely to pass through Juba town due to the high presence of East Coast Fever (ECF). KIs believed that many of the herds would consolidate in Nesitu, before bypassing Juba town via Billiyang and Mogiri villages, around the mountains west of Juba Town; cattle keepers reportedly believe that this will keep their herds safe from ECF. From there the herds are expected to travel along the river to Mangalla town, where they will consolidate into larger, more secure units before moving north along the Nile river to Bor South County.

Participants noted that very few cattle keepers were concerned about insecurity south of Mangalla town. The protection of the armed escort and good relations with the cattle-keeping tribes in Terekeka County ensured that the herds were unlikely to be attacked. However, many expressed concerns about potential cattle raiders from Pibor County in Jonglei State who regularly use the roads north of Mangalla town. Tensions between the two communities has led to an increased cattle raiding over the years, with both groups blaming the other for stealing cattle and destroying settlements. A recent REACH assessment in Pibor County noted that cattle keepers from Pibor County often bring cattle from Pibor County to Mangalla town, and have a semi-permanent camp in Jobor; the projected path of the herd will give this settlement a wide berth on its way to Mangalla.<sup>5</sup> Given the expected proximity of the two groups, there is an increase in the likelihood of cattle raiding between the communities.

## Conclusion

The migration of approximately 200,000 cattle and 60,000 people from Central and Eastern Equatoria to Bor South County is still ongoing. Most of the HHs traveling with the herd reportedly felt protected at the time of this assessment, and have spread out along grazing land between Kit and Nesitu villages. The armed escort currently provides enough security to ensure that the herd continues to move, though concerns over cattle disease and insecurity north of Mangalla town have slowed its pace. Though the herd is likely to avoid Juba town, it will likely pass by Nesitu, Billiyang, Mogiri, and Mangalla, which can easily be accessed. Any humanitarian response actors seeking to provide services for people and animals moving with the herd should be able to do so from any of these locations before the herd enters insecure areas north of Mangalla town on its way to Bor South County.

### Endnotes

1. [Humanitarian Security Baseline Assessment, Conflict in Western Equatoria, June 2016](#); Voice of America, [South Sudan President Tells Cattle Keepers in Equatoria to go home, 30 October 2017](#).
2. South Sudan Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster, Large-scale Government Encouraged Cattle Migration Central Equatoria to Bor South, 19 March 2018.
3. United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Livestock Mobility in Greater Equatoria of South Sudan and its Implications for Animal Health and Conflicts, June 2014.
4. VSF-G, Mass Cattle Camp Migration: Assessment II, March 2018.
5. [REACH Pibor County Food Security and Livelihoods Brief, April 2018](#)