

Situation Overview: Central and Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan

April - June 2018

REACH An initiative of
IMPACT Initiatives
ACTED and UNOSAT

Introduction

Continued insecurity along roads and a lack of adequate access to food across South Sudan's greenbelt region in Central and Eastern Equatoria States have caused humanitarian needs to worsen over the second quarter of 2018. Many areas in these states are largely inaccessible to humanitarian actors due to insecurity. As a result, only limited information is available on the humanitarian situation outside of a few large towns and displacement sites.

In order to fill these information gaps and improve the humanitarian response, REACH began collecting monthly data on hard-to-reach areas in the Greater Equatoria region from January 2017 through interviews with Key Informants (KIs). Between April and June 2018, data was collected through phone call interviews with KIs residing across the Greater Equatoria region and who had direct knowledge of the situation in a hard-to-reach settlement as

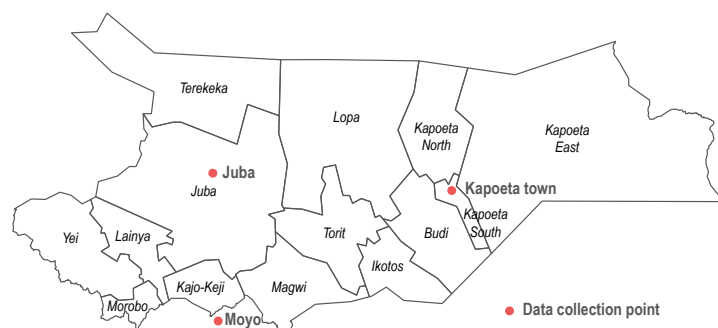
Figure 1: KIs interviewed in each REACH base covering Central and Eastern Equatoria States

	Juba	Kapoeta	Moyo
Phone	186 KIs		52 KIs
In person		155 KIs	

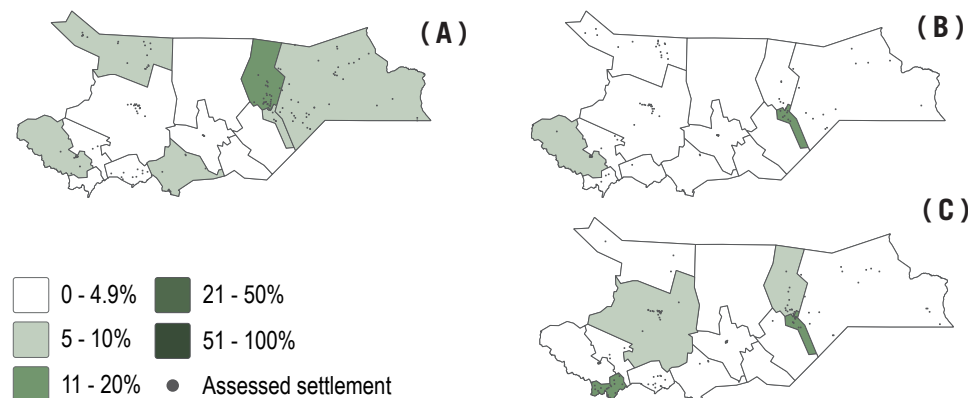
well as through direct in-person KI interviews in Kapoeta town, Kapoeta South County.

From April to June 2018, REACH interviewed 393 KIs that had knowledge about 377 different settlements: 195 settlements in all six counties of Central Equatoria State and 182 settlements in six out of eight counties of Eastern Equatoria State (Figure 1). Primary data collection was also complemented by interviews with humanitarian partners based in Kapoeta town. Findings were triangulated with secondary data, including other assessments conducted by REACH in Central and Eastern Equatoria States over the reporting period.

Map 1: Counties in Central and Eastern Equatoria States, June 2018



Map 2: REACH assessment coverage of Central and Eastern Equatoria States, April (A), May (B) and June 2018 (C)



This Situation Overview provides a summary of displacement trends in addition to access to food and other basic services for both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities across Central and Eastern Equatoria States from April to June 2018. The following analysis will summarize trends for the two states overall and zoom into specific counties where REACH was able to assess over 5% of the total settlements for a given month (Map 2).

Population Movement and Displacement

Following the first quarter of 2018 characterized by relative calm in many areas of the Greater Equatoria region, a deterioration of insecurity and humanitarian access was noted in and around Yei and Kajo-Keji towns in Central

Equatoria State and Magwi and Torit Counties in Eastern Equatoria State during the second quarter.¹ In addition to general insecurity, several incidents targeted aid workers specifically, including security incidents in Tali, Terekeka County, and outside of Yei town, Yei County.² These incidents have further limited humanitarian access to many areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria States, many of which are only accessible by road.

On top of persisting insecurity across the area, the onset of the rainy season made mobility more difficult due to poor road infrastructure, further limiting the ability of humanitarians to access isolated populations.

Among REACH KIs who reported being new arrivals to Kapoeta town in June, insecurity was reported by a majority (60%) of KIs as the main push factor, followed by lack of food

1. An analysis of the incidents repertoriated by ACLED data on political violence in South Sudan suggests a higher volume of incidents of conflict than over the previous quarter ; ADRA. ADRA mourns loss of staff killed in South Sudan. 28 April 2018.

2. OCHA. South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot. June 2018.

METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria, REACH uses primary data provided by KIs living in or who have recent information about various settlements across the two states, or “Areas of Knowledge” (AoK).

Information for this Situation Overview was collected through phone calls conducted out of Juba and Moyo with KIs who were in the settlements of interest direct in-person interviews, and supplemented with face to face interviews with KIs who had newly arrived to Kapoeta Town. Participants reached through phone calls were selected through a snowball sampling technique, where each KI was asked to name two additional people who could be interviewed.

A standardised survey tool was used that comprised questions on displacement trends, population needs and access to basic services.

After data collection was completed, all data was aggregated at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal response. A “no consensus” answer was given and the answers were not included in reporting. Descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis were then used to analyse the data.

(13%). The presence of food distributions was reported as the main pull factor for 22% of the KIs who had been displaced to areas in Central or Eastern Equatoria, followed by 16% reporting the presence of health services and 16% citing the presence of education services.

Central Equatoria State

New displacement

Following displacement patterns from the previous quarter, Central Equatoria State saw localized armed clashes which caused small scale displacement. In Lainya County, civilians were reportedly displaced toward Lainya town in June due to insecurity. Insecurity in Yei County also led to displacement of civilians toward Yei town.³ Similar patterns of civilian displacement to Yei town had been noted in an assessment of Yei town conducted by REACH in March 2018.⁴ Insecurity likely pushed some civilians to cross the border into the Democratic Republic of Congo or to hide into the bush around Lasu, in addition to limiting access to the area for humanitarian partners based in Yei town.⁵ An attack on a peacekeeping convoy on the Yei-Lasu road occurred in June, putting a temporary halt to humanitarian movements in the southwestern portion of Yei County.⁶

KIs reported that major incidents of cattle raidings in April had led civilians from Kajo-Keji to move into Ugandan refugee settlements in search of safety. Until April, Kajo-Keji pastoralists accounted for much of the civilian population that remained inside the county out of fear that they would not be able to keep their animals in the refugee settlements.

Returns from Uganda

Following on trends from the previous quarter, KIs continued to report increasing numbers of returning South Sudanese from refugee settlements in Uganda. REACH KIs continued to report returns of people who were staying in

Uganda as refugees toward areas of Lainya, which were deemed to be increasingly stable.

While a mix of permanent returns and daily cross border movements were reported to be on the rise in Kajo-Keji County during the first quarter of 2018, continued clashes between armed actors and harassment by security personnel have deterred members of the local community from returning from Uganda refugee settlements over the second quarter.⁷

Eastern Equatoria State

Returns from Uganda

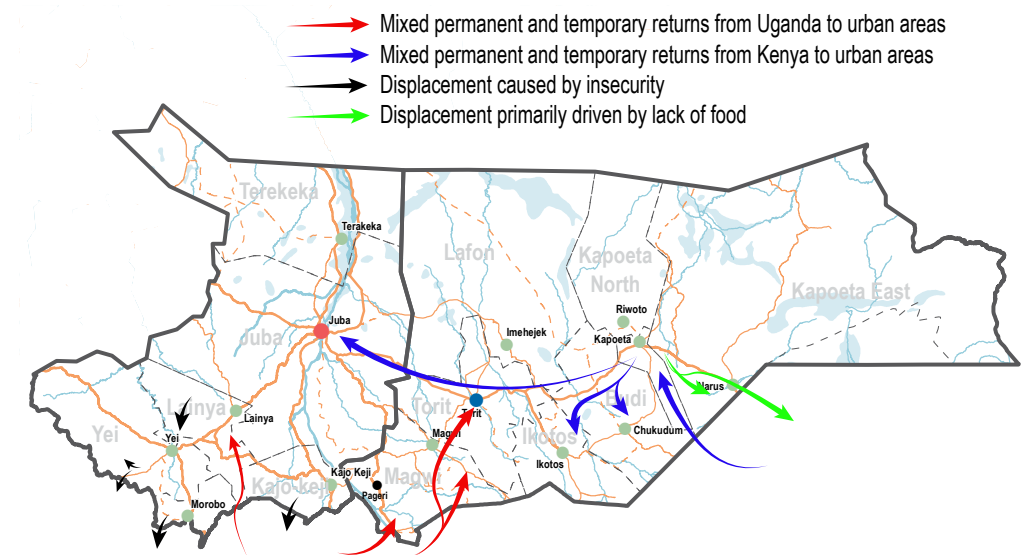
REACH KIs also reported returns toward Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria. However, insecurity was reported in Magwi County (Pageri area) in mid-June 2018, which likely slowed down the influx of returnees toward the end of the second quarter of the year.⁸

Returns from Kenya

Based on REACH Kapoeta Town Road Monitoring for April and May, more households passing through Kapoeta town reported that they were coming back from Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya than those who reported to be heading toward Kakuma.⁹ In June, the trend reversed, as outbound households outnumbered returns from Kakuma.¹⁰ KIs suggested that this shift may be explained by a decrease in pull factors to South Sudan following a peak of returns at the beginning of the cultivation cycle in April/May. A total of 1,847 South Sudanese were registered as refugees in Kakuma during the second quarter of 2018.¹¹

While safety on roads reportedly significantly improved in the second quarter of 2018 in the Greater Kapoeta area, perceived insecurity

Map 3: Displacement patterns across Central and Eastern Equatoria, April - June 2018



3. OCHA. Humanitarian Snapshot. June 2018.

4. REACH, Yei Displacement Brief, March 2018.

5. Yei Humanitarian Coordination Forum, Meeting Minutes, 4 July 2018.

6. UNMISS. UNMISS condemns killing of peacekeeper in armed

convoy attack. 26 June 2018.

7. ACLED. Political Violence and Protest Data - South Sudan. March - June 2018.

8. Ibid.

9. REACH. Kapoeta Town Road Monitoring. May 2018 and REACH Kapoeta Town Road Monitoring, June 2018.

10. Ibid

of rural areas and roads of Eastern Equatoria State continued to prevent IDPs displaced in main towns from returning to their settlements of origin in rural areas. For example, KIs reported that areas around Torit had become increasingly insecure over the assessment period, with reports of violence against farmers and the destruction of crops. These incidents have reportedly prevented some farmers who reside primarily in Torit town from accessing their cultivation lands in surrounding rural areas.

Situation in Assessed Settlements

Food security and Livelihoods

Environmental and conflict shocks have led to a gradual decrease in agricultural output during the last cultivation cycle, leading to an early start to the lean season in most areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria States during this quarter.¹² In a context of high market dependency, armed clashes and general insecurity along major roads have restricted supply, leading to a rise in consumer prices, further limiting access to food.¹³ Accordingly, 61% of assessed settlements reported that access to food was inadequate in June.

Among assessed settlements that reported inadequate access to food, 42% reported that this led to severe hunger in their area. In addition, 37% of all assessed settlements reported that most residents of their settlement were eating one meal a day or less, further evidence of low food consumption in a large portion of Eastern and Central Equatoria.

Figure 2: Percentage of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food, June 2018



Subsistence agriculture was reported to be the most prevalent source of livelihoods in the assessed settlements of Eastern and Central Equatoria in June (79% of assessed settlements), immediately followed by casual labour (61%) and livestock rearing (58%). While some areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria began to harvest in June, environmental shocks reportedly limited agricultural outputs. Therefore, even where cultivation was reported to be taking place, populations remained market dependent over the period.

Reported levels of access to markets varied widely in June, depending on the geographic area. Out of the 58% of assessed settlements that reported access to a market in June, most were concentrated in Central Equatoria. The settlements that reported a lack of access to a market were concentrated in the Greater Kapoeta area. Even where access to a market was reported to be high, it did not appear to translate into adequate access to food, likely due to high market prices.

As an evidence of food insecurity, assessed settlements reported relying on various strategies to cope with a lack of access to food. However, compared to settlements assessed

in other regions in the country, on the whole the strategies were less severe, suggesting that there remain alternative livelihoods when typical livelihoods have been depleted in Central and Eastern Equatoria. Accordingly, less severe coping strategies were the most widely reported in June, with 82% of assessed settlements reporting that households were coping by choosing to eat less expensive food and 69% of assessed settlements reporting that households were reducing the size of meal portions. A smaller portion of assessed settlements reported that households were relying on more severe coping strategies such as staying entire days without eating (10% of assessed settlements) and adults not eating so that children can eat (15% of assessed settlements).

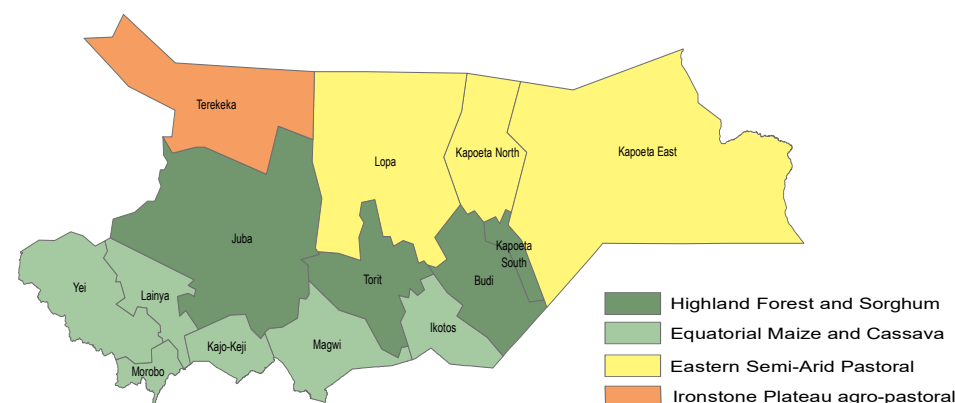
Southern Central Equatoria

Reports of inadequate access to food were high in the southern part of Central Equatoria State, where repeated displacement in the

early stages of the cultivation cycle prevented farmers from planting at a large scale earlier this year. Disruption of cultivation by displacement was the most frequently cited reason explaining the lack of adequate access to food across Central and Eastern Equatoria States in June (33% of assessed settlements), and most of the settlements reporting this reason were concentrated in counties bordering refugee settlements in Uganda (Kajo-Keji, Morobo and Magwi Counties).

In spite of continued insecurity and displacement, assessed settlements located in the 'Green belt' area of South Sudan (Yei, Morobo, Lainya, Kajo-Keji Counties), in Central Equatoria State, reported cultivation as their main source of food. Small scale cultivation was reportedly taking place in areas away from active conflict zones in Kajo-Keji and Morobo Counties in spite of the continued insecurity. However, KIs from Kajo-Keji reported that the scale of agricultural

Map 4: Dominant livelihood zone per county¹⁴



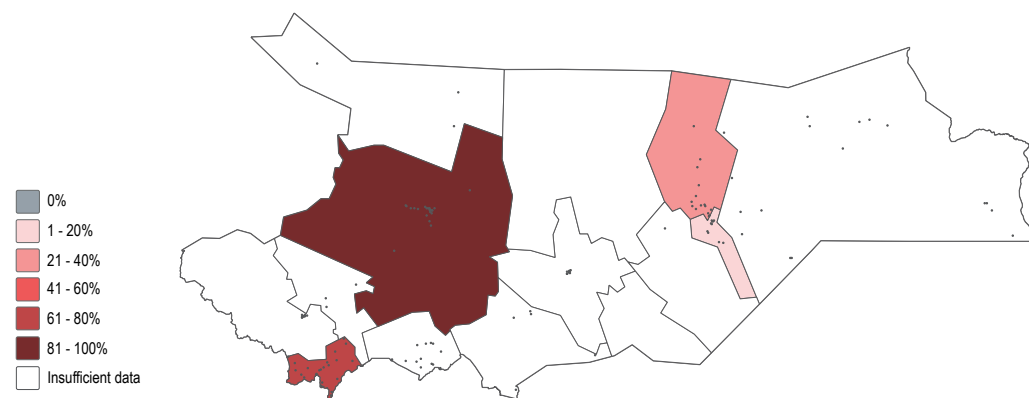
11. UNHCR Sub Office Kakuma. New Arrival Registration Trends 2018. 1 July 2018.

12. WFP. South Sudan mVAM Bulletin #6: April 2018 ; Lean season is the gap in access to food between the exhaustion of food stocks and the beginning of the following harvest.

13. Ibid.

14. Livelihood zones do not follow county boundaries. For an exact representation and for narrative descriptions, see FEWSNET. Livelihood zones and descriptions. August 2013.

Map 5: Percentage of assessed settlements in Central and Eastern Equatoria States reporting inadequate access to food, June 2018



production for the first growing season, for which harvest typically begins in June, was severely limited by continued armed clashes along the border, a dry spell and destruction of crops by the fall armyworm. Moreover, 45% of assessed settlements reported that they lacked agricultural inputs in June, a large proportion of which were concentrated in Morobo and Kajo-Keji Counties. As a result, large proportions of the population of these areas reportedly relied almost entirely on wild cassava during the period.

While proximity to the Ugandan border appears to favour access to small markets and basic commodities for settlements in southern Central Equatoria, most assessed settlements that reported physical access to markets in that area in June also reported inadequate access to food. This suggests that residents of these areas lacked the income generating activities that would have allowed them to afford goods at the market.

The high prevalence of casual labour as a

source of livelihood, which was especially reported in settlements located in agricultural areas of Central Equatoria State, suggests that many households have looked for income generating activities in order to cope with increased market dependence during the lean season.

The most prevalent coping strategy reported in the assessed settlements of southern Central Equatoria was sending family members to refugee settlements in Uganda in order to access food assistance, more noticeably in settlements assessed in Kajo-Keji County.

Greater Kapoeta area

The settlements assessed in the Greater Kapoeta area fared comparatively better than those in southern Central Equatoria in June, which is likely attributable to an increase in availability of livestock products. With the early onset of rains in May, cattle keepers begun to return to their settlements from remote grazing areas. Contrary to southern Central Equatoria,

the pastoralist communities of the Greater Kapoeta area typically experience their lean season much earlier in the year, from January to April, and by June livestock products tend to be available.¹⁵ Accordingly, in June, the majority of settlements assessed in Kapoeta North County (53%) reported that their main source of food in their area was livestock.

Among settlements that reported inadequate access to food in the Greater Kapoeta area in June, main reasons cited were lack of land (100% of assessed settlements in Kapoeta South County) and high market prices (60% of assessed settlements in Kapoeta North County).

Market dependency for main staples was still high in June, as the agro-pastoralists of the semi-arid areas of Eastern Equatoria usually harvest only once a year, around August. Access to market was reported to be especially poor in the rural areas of the Greater Kapoeta area, which are isolated from major market supply routes and trade hubs due to poor physical infrastructure. Only a few markets exist in Kapoeta, Narus, Lotien and Riwoto towns, which are all located in the western portion of the Greater Kapoeta area. To access market commodities, residents of Kapoeta East County and the northern portion of Kapoeta North County typically have to send members of their community to travel to the livestock market in Kapoeta town by foot with animals, a journey which can take up to two weeks during the peak of the rainy season, and which is often impossible to undertake given the deterioration of road conditions following heavy rainfall.

Juba metropolitan area

Due to continued macroeconomic decline, food prices have become increasingly prohibitive in and around Juba. As such, inadequate access to food was widely reported in spite of reported access to markets in all assessed settlements. Among the 86% of assessed settlements that reported inadequate access to food in June, 28% attributed it to high food prices. Beyond the issue of high food prices, KIs also attributed inadequate access to food to the inhibition of traditional livelihoods. Accordingly, 50% of settlements assessed in and around Juba town reported that the lack of access to food was primarily due to the lack of land to cultivate. Casual labour was reported to be the most prevalent livelihood activity among assessed settlements of Juba County in June (48%), and only 14% of assessed settlements reported that households were engaging in subsistence agriculture.

The lack of adequate access to food led households in many assessed settlements of the Juba metropolitan area to adopt very severe coping strategies in June, such as skipping meals for entire days (38% of settlements assessed in Juba County), or adults not eating so that children can eat (24%).

Protection

Following almost two years of intense localized fighting characterized by unpredictable shifts from one area to the next in most of Central Equatoria and parts of Eastern Equatoria, a large portion of the population living in the assessed settlements appear wary that armed clashed could be re-ignited at any time. While

15. Ibid.

very few assessed settlements reported that they never feel safe in June (5% of all assessed settlements, mostly concentrated in southern Central Equatoria), almost half of assessed settlements (48%) reported that most people felt safe only some of the time.

In June, 13% of assessed settlements reported that there had been an incident of conflict that had either resulted in the death of a civilian or damaged property over the previous month. Moreover, 19% of assessed settlements reported that incidents of looting had taken place in their area over the previous month. Continued insecurity in parts of the Equatorias continue to affect perceptions of safety among a large part of the population.

The main protection concern reported by assessed settlements for both men and women in June was looting (21% and 19% of assessed settlements respectively). However, among women this concern was immediately followed by sexual violence (also 19%) and domestic violence (11%) whereas among men, the second and third most frequently cited primary concerns were harassment to disclose information (16% of assessed settlements) and killing or injury by someone from a different community (10%). In this

Figure 3: Reported incidents during which civilians were killed or property damaged, June 2018



last case, most settlements reporting this protection concern as the primary concern among men were located in urban areas in and around the capital Juba, where violent crime is rife.¹⁶

Shelter

In June 2018, the majority (61%) of assessed settlements reported that most of the host community was living in tukuls, and an additional 23% reported that most people from the host community were living in rakoobas, a structure typically less permanent than a tukul. Proportionally more assessed assessments reported that IDPs were living in more precarious structures such as rakoobas, improvised shelters, tents or abandoned buildings (48% of assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly present), suggesting higher vulnerability to natural occurrences such as heavy rains or flooding and potentially the need for NFIs such as plastic sheeting and blankets. Incidentally, blankets were reported as the top need in terms of non-food items (NFIs) among IDPs in assessed settlements where IDPs were reported to be present.

Moreover, 18% of the assessed settlements that reported an IDP presence also reported that at least some IDPs living within their settlement were sleeping in the open, which typically is a consequence of sudden onset displacement or destruction of shelters. Shelter destruction was reported in 7% of all settlements assessed by REACH in June, most of which were in conflict-affected Lainya and Yei County, where humanitarian access is limited.

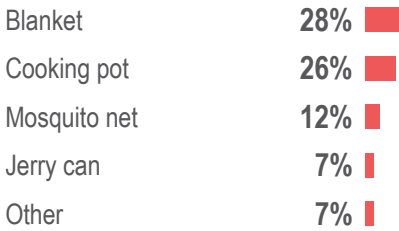
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Increased rainfall throughout the quarter raised the risk of incidence of waterborne diseases, and brought along the concern of a potential re-emergence of cholera, which has been officially contained since February.¹⁷ As of the end of June, no new cholera cases had been confirmed in South Sudan. Moreover, assessed settlements of some parts of Central and Eastern Equatoria tend to report comparatively better access to improved water sources than the average in the country. In other parts of the region, however, such as the Greater Kapoeta area, lack of access to appropriate WASH infrastructure and persistent negative WASH behaviours leave people vulnerable to waterborne diseases moving toward the late rainy season.

In June 2018, 84% of assessed settlements reported the presence of at least one borehole, among which 80% reported that at least one of the boreholes was functioning properly. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of assessed settlements reported that it took people on average between 30 minutes to an hour to reach the water point, collect water and return home, yet another 18% of assessed settlements reported that it took people between an hour to half a day. Most of these settlements were in Morobo County and in areas peripheral to Juba town.

In addition to distance from the nearest borehole, reliable access to clean water was also reported to be impeded by a perception of insecurity as 31% of settlements assessed in June reported that some people had not

Figure 4: Main NFI needs of IDPs in assessed settlements where IDPs were reported to be present, June 2018



been able to access their preferred water point because they feared for their safety during the month prior to data collection, with a concentration of such settlements in both the extreme southern portion of Central Equatoria (Kajo-Keji and Morobo Counties) and the Greater Kapoeta area, areas that are affected by armed clashes and cattle raiding/road robberies respectively.

Regular use of latrines was reported to be low in June across assessed settlements of Eastern Equatoria, with 28% of assessed settlements reporting that no one uses latrines, with a high concentration of those settlements in the rural parts of the Greater Kapoeta area – mostly Kapoeta East and Kapoeta North Counties. Conversely, only 8% of all assessed settlements reported that the whole population of the settlement was using latrines – all of which were in Juba or Yei County. Among the 92% of assessed settlements where at least some people were reported to not be using latrines, 50% reported that the main factor explaining this was the lack of latrine infrastructures. In addition, 22% of those assessed settlements reported that latrines

16. ACLED. Political Violence and Protest Data - South Sudan. March - June 2018.
17. Republic of South Sudan (Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management).

Figure 5: Access to a functioning borehole, June 2018



were not being used for cultural reasons, suggesting that barriers to hygiene behaviours go beyond the lack of physical infrastructure.

Health

Sixty-five percent (65%) of the settlements assessed in June in Central and Eastern Equatoria States reported that health care services were accessible. Among those, 38% reported that the nearest healthcare facilities providing services were under a thirty minutes' walk. Nevertheless, a quarter (25%) of assessed settlements with access to services reported that they had to travel between an hour to half a day, 6% reported having to travel for half a day and 2% reported having to travel

for a full day – all three cases suggest higher vulnerability among small children, elderly people and people with disabilities living in the settlement and for those unable to walk long distances to access services.

Among assessed settlements that reported that health services were not accessible, 41% reported that they never had health facilities within reach from their settlement to begin with and another 25% reported that there were physical facilities available but that medical personnel were not present. The settlements that reported the lack of personnel to be the main reason to explain lack of access to health services were concentrated in southern Central Equatoria. According to South Sudanese KIs living in refugee settlements in Uganda, this trend is likely still attributable to the displacement of the trained medical personnel toward refugee settlements in Uganda or displacement sites over the past few years.

Map 6: Percentage of assessed settlements in Central and Eastern Equatoria States reporting adequate access to health care services, June 2018

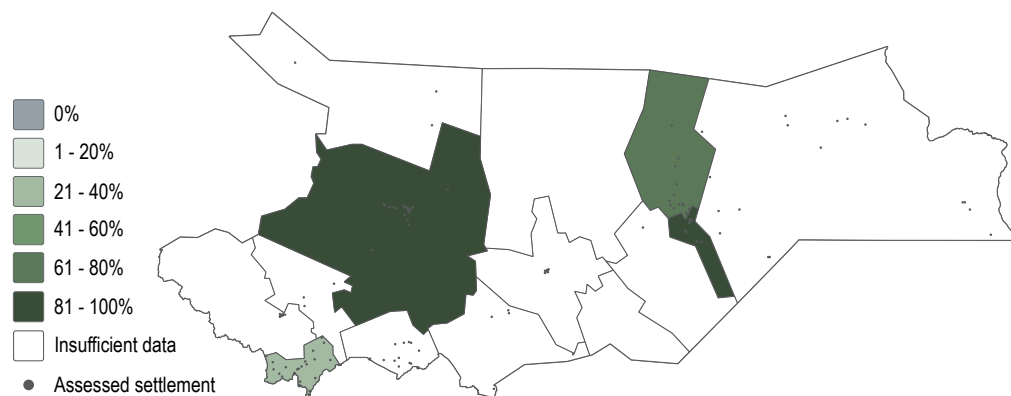


Figure 6: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting primary health issues, June 2018.



With the onset of the rainy season during the second quarter of 2018, the most frequently cited primary health problem among assessed settlements in June was malaria (46% of assessed settlements), followed by typhoid (10%). Accordingly, malaria was also reported to be the main cause of the deaths that occurred within the month prior to data collection in June, in 45% of assessed settlements. When asked to report which health care items were needed in their settlements, 82% of assessed settlements reported that malaria drugs were needed – malaria drugs remained by far the most needed health care item over the period. The vast majority of assessed settlements nonetheless reported that no particular increase in mortality had taken place in their area within the previous month (86%), and those who did report an increase in mortality were concentrated in southern Central Equatoria (Yei, Lainya Counties). This likely reflects that these two counties saw renewed clashes and insecurity in the second half of the reporting period.

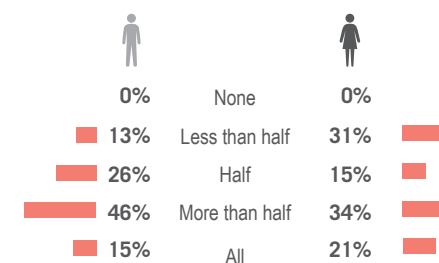
Education

Fifty-two percent (52%) of assessed settlements reported that educational services were accessible from their settlement in June. Access to education services was reported to

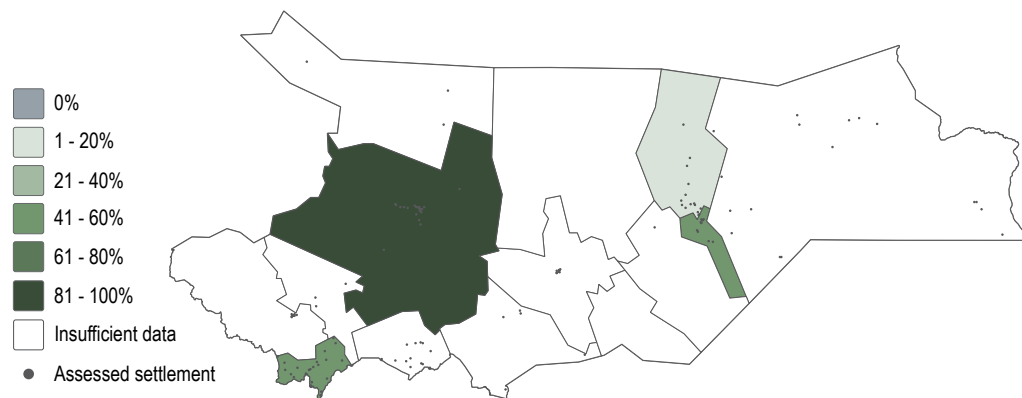
be especially low among assessed settlements of Kapoeta North County (13%). The Greater Kapoeta area regularly reports low levels of access to education. Very few assessed settlements reported access to educational services in April and May as well.

Contrary to the past quarters, reported attendance rates were not much higher among boys than among girls in assessed settlements, with 46% of assessed settlements reporting that over half of the boys were attending school in June, 34% reporting the same for girls and respectively 15% and 21% reporting that all boys or girls were attending school. In assessed settlements that reported that some children were not attending school in spite of education services being accessible, the main reason provided to explain why children were out of school were fees for both boys (44% of assessed settlements) and girls (32% of assessed settlements). For girls, the second reason most frequently cited by assessed settlements was the lack of school supplies (13% of assessed settlements), whereas for

Figure 7: Reported proportion of 6-17 year old girls and 6-17 year old boys attending school in assessed settlements where education services are reported to be accessible, June 2018.



Map 7: Percentage of assessed settlements in Central and Eastern Equatoria States reporting adequate access to education services, June 2018.



boys, the second most cited reason was the need to support agricultural work (15%).

Among the 46% settlements that reported that education services were not accessible from their settlement in June, the most cited reason was that facilities were never present to begin with (35% of assessed settlements) followed by the absence of teachers (17%) and distance to the nearest education facility providing services (15%).¹⁸

Conclusion

Entering in their lean season, areas located in agricultural zones of Central and Eastern Equatoria States were found to be facing very serious obstacles limiting the ability of households to access enough food. However, access to food was found to be relatively better in pastoralist areas, where livestock products began to be available in June. Both States however remain vulnerable to food insecurity due to several years of cumulative shocks. In the case of the former, continued insecurity

will likely lead to insufficient cereal production in the upcoming harvests. In the case of the latter, consecutive years of dry spells have discouraged agricultural activities and have put pressure on livestock herds as households are forced to sell numerous animals in order to meet basic food consumption needs.

Localized armed clashes and uncertainty regarding armed group whereabouts continued to make delivery of assistance especially challenging in various areas of Central and Eastern Equatoria. Nevertheless, access to basic services such as education, health and clean water remained relatively constant over the second quarter of 2018. However, this could change over the next quarter as seasonal rains accumulate and make roads less accessible.

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

For more information, you can write to our in-country office: southsudan@reach-initiative.org or to our global office: geneva@reach-initiative.org.

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18. 52% of assessed settlements reported that education services were accessible, 46% reported that the services were not accessible, and 2% reported that they did not know whether services were accessible