Humanitarian Situation Monitoring Central Equatoria State - South Sudan April - August 2021



Introduction

The April to August period of 2021 was largely characterised by restricted movement, pockets of insecurity, and rising prices on the market across Central Equatoria State (CES). Findings suggest that host communities and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were commonly relying on severe coping mechanisms in Terekeka and Kajo Keji counties. These strategies were likely deployed due to sustained levels of food insecurity towards the end of the lean season, further compounding already difficult WASH-related challenges. These developments have likely continued to drive humanitarian needs across CES.

To inform humanitarian actors, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas of South Sudan since 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 uses this data to analyse changes in observed humanitarian needs across CES from April to August in 2021.

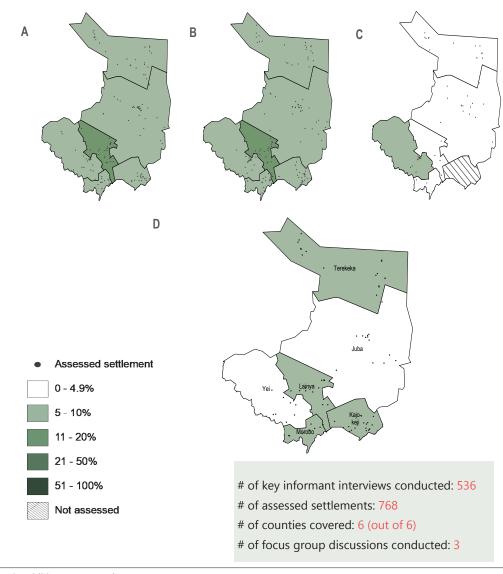
Methodology

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 key informants remotely by phone call from Juba covering CES, between April and August 2021.

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.¹ Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each County each month may vary.² 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 payam³ coverage over the reporting period. **Due to insufficient coverage, July and August data for Juba county is not included in the analysis. Similarly, barring Yei, data for the other counties is not included.** More details of the methodology can be found in the AoK ToRs.⁴

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of the CES, April (A), June (B), July (C) and August (D) 2021:



^{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.} July and August data not available for Juba County due to insufficient coverage.

^{3.} Payam is the administrative unit below the county-level.

^{4.} All findings are indicative rather than statistically generalisable.

Key Findings:

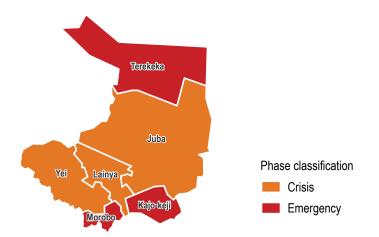


Displacement: Findings suggest that reported displacement in April and August was largely driven by sub-national conflict pushing internally displaced persons (IDPs) to migrate to other areas, primarily within their county of origin. Meanwhile, the movement of IDP and returnees declined in the majority of assessed settlements in Kajo Keji, Lainya and Terekeka counties. It was reported that widespread conflict across the state limited livelihood-related population movement, impeding access to market and farmland for cultivation, potentially having an adverse effect on the food security situation.



Food Security and Livelihoods: Findings suggest that reported depletion of previous harvest, high market prices and breakdown of supply chains severely limited access to food during the reporting period. In addition, the continuing currency depreciation and high prices of goods in the market appear to have decreased households' purchasing power. As such, in a high proportion of settlements in CES, KIs reported inadequate access to food between April (91%) and August (84%), peaking in the month of May (97%). The inadequate access to food may be related to depletion of food stocks that made households more reliant on markets to access food.⁵ AoK findings suggest that communities in a large proportion of assessed settlements in Terekeka county were facing significant food security challenges as KIs in none of the assessed settlements reported having enough access to food (compared to 15% in April).

Map 2: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Situation Projection Map, Central Equatoria, April to July 2021.⁶





Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): AoK findings indicate that, likely due to construction of new boreholes across these counties, access to boreholes and protected water sources seems to have increased across the reporting period. In August, the propotion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that most people were able to access water from protected water sources, increased from April (56%) to August (68%). However, the proportion of settlements in which most people washed their hands with soap remained low in August (18%, consistent with April).



Health: Findings suggest that, while access to healthcare facilities remained stable for the reporting period, distance, lack of access to medicine and lack of healthcare staff across CES likely impacted people's ability to access medical facilities, care and appropriate medicine. KIs in 39% of assessed settlements reported that it took people at least half a day of walking to reach the nearest health facility.



Protection: Findings suggest that due to localised conflict and violence, the protection concerns continued to vary across CES. In Juba County, KIs in only 29% of assessed settlements (in June) reported that people felt safe most of the time. Feelings of insecurity in Juba County appeared to be driven by land and property issues, with KIs in 41% of assessed settlements reporting concerns over land grabbing. In Lainya and Morobo County, feeling of security appeared to have decreased as well, which might triangulate with an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements in these counties where incidents of violence within identity groups was reported. Women's main safety concern was conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which, findings suggest, remained prevalent and consistent throughout the reporting period.



Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI): Findings indicate that while access to reliable shelter increased in CES throughout the reporting period for host communities, access to reliable shelter for returnees during the same period was impacted by conflicts, particularly in Kajo Keji and Lainya counties. Similar to returnees, the proportion of settlements where KIs reported that IDPs were living in less solid shelter types (rakoobas, tents, or abandoned structures) was high in August in Lainya (KIs in 37% of assessed settlements).



Education: Overall, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access to an educational facility increased across CES (from 60% of assessed settlements in December 2020 to 70% in June 2021). However, findings suggest that the access was limited to Junior classes. KIs in less than 30% of assessed settlements reported that children had been enrolled into the senior classes. Among the settlements were school enrollments were low, inability to pay school fees was reported as the main concern, effecting the enrollment of both boys and girls.⁹



- 5. IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis for December 2020-March 2021.
- IPC. Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis. October 2020- July 2021.
- 7. REACH. South Sudan Displacement Crisis Protection, Assessment of Hard-to-Reach Areas in South Sudan (June 2021).

- 8. REACH. South Sudan Displacement Crisis Protection, Assessment of Hard-to-Reach Areas in South Sudan (August 2021).
- 9. Radio Tamazuj. Poor pay, Insecurity affecting education in South Sudan.

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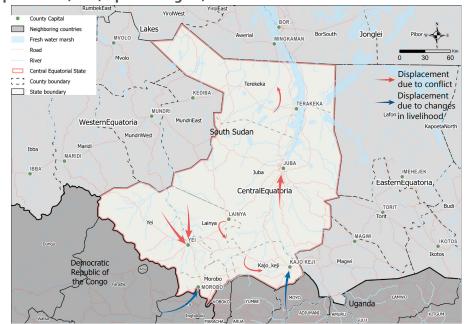
Population Movement and Displacement

Displacement

Findings indicate that across assessed counties in CES, the reporting period was characterised by sub-national conflict-induced displacement. The proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported presence of IDPs remained consistent between April (KIs in 33% of assessed settlements) and August (46%) across CES with conflict emerging as the primary push factor.

In Lainya and Yei counties, sporadic incidents of displacement were reportedly largely driven by sub-national conflict. In April, KIs in 25% of assessed settlements in Lainya and 57% of assessed settlements in Yei reported that the main reason for displacement was conflict. Similarly, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reported that approximately 2,850 people were displaced to Yei town from the border areas between Lainya and Yei counties due to armed clashes between organised groups and state security forces in April. Due to recurring incidents of violence, the high volume of displacement of IDPs has disrupted livelihood activities across Lainya county and may affect the precarious food security situation in the county. 11

Map 3: Population movement and cause of displacement for most recent displacement, CES, April to August, 2021.



Correspondingly, KIs in assessed settlements across Terekeka (15%), Lainya (21%) and Yei (38%) counties, in April, reported that half or more than half of the host community members had displaced from the settlements within the 30 days prior to the data collection.

Similarly, concerns over security likely drove displacement in Juba County, putting a strain on already stretched resources. In Juba county, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported localised displacement, remained consistent (KIs in 14% of assessed settlements in April to 12% in June). The findings might triangulate with reported fighting between cattle keepers and host communities, which displaced approximately 10,000 people to Juba town.¹²

The cumulative effects of flooding in neighbouring states, deteriorated security situation due to seasonal cattle movement and the resulting displacement, have added pressure on local resources and services.¹³

IDP and Refugee movement

The proportion of assessed settlements where the arrival of IDP and refugee returnees was reported varied across assessed counties in CES, with notable declines across Kajo Keji, Lainya and Terekeka counties. In August, KIs in 38% of assessed settlements reported the presence of IDP and/or refugee returnees throughout CES (consistent with April). While nationwide findings remained consistent, the proportion of assessed settlements in Kajo Keji with reported IDP and/or returnee refugee presence declined sharply from 100% in April to 38% in August. This reduction might have been related to restrictions on movement within Kajo Keji county. If Similar declines were found in Lainya and Terekeka counties, where the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs and/or refugee returnees reduced from 48% to 17% and 46% to 21%, respectively, between April and August. This decline may be related to reported clashes between armed groups and security agencies in Lainya and roadside ambushes in Terekeka.

Aok findings suggest that, despite a reduction in reported displacement in Lainya County, presence of IDPs and refugee returnees was perceived to have a large negative impact on the ability to access food for most people across the assessed settlements. In the proportion of assessed settlements where presence of IDPs had been reported (15% in August), KIs in 40% of assessed settlements reported a perceived large negative impact on access to food due to the arrival of IDP or refugee returnees. This negative sentiment may be indicative of the large response gap that persisted in Lainya County's food assistance programme throughout the reporting period. Likely related to an ease in cross-border movement in April from the Democratic Republic of Congo that allowed voluntary return of IDP and refugee returnees, KIs in 67% of assessed settlements in Morobo county reported the presence of IDP and refugee returnees, increasing from April (KIs in 31% of assessed settlements).

^{10.} UNOCHA. South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot (April 2021).

^{11.} Radio Tamazuj. Lainya County: IDPs receive humanitarian assistance.

^{12.} UNOCHA. South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot (August 2021).

^{13.} IOM-DTM. Event Tracking Summary (January-June 2021).

^{14.} UNOCHA. South Sudan: Quarterly Humanitarian Snapshot (July-September 2021).

^{15.} UNOCHA. South Sudan: Quarterly Humanitarian Snapshot (April-June 2021).

^{16.} Food Security Cluster Response Gap Analysis

^{17.} IOM. Displacement Tracking Matrix: Flow Monitoring Registry - April 2021

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On the contrary, reported incidents of conflict within Kajo Keji seemed to affect the movement of IDP and refugee returnees from neighbouring countries. In August, KIs in none of the assessed settlements reported cross-border movement of IDP and refugee returnees to and from Kajo Keji, decreasing from April (KIs in 95% of assesed settlements). In contrast, there was an increase in reported intra-county displacement across assessed settlements in Kajo Keji for the same period (from KIs in none of the assessed settlements in April to KIs in 65% of assesed settlements in August), which might be related to armed clashes between security forces and organised armed groups.¹⁸



Food Security and Livelihoods

Findings indicate that reported depletion of previous harvest, high market prices and breakdown of supply chain severely limited access to food during the reporting period.¹⁹ In addition, the continuing currency depreciation and high prices of goods in the market, appear to have decreased households' purchasing power.²⁰ As such, access to food was reported to be inadequate in a high proportion of assessed settlements in April (91%) and August (84%). The proportion of assessed settlements where inadequate access was reported peaked in May (97%), when food stocks had depleted and communities were entering the lean season.21

Similarly in June, findings indicate that food insecurity was driven by crop destruction due to pests, disruptions in rain patterns and high food prices across the region, which have been increasing in CES since 2019.²² In the proportion of assessed settlements where some people were unable to access enough food (99%), the most commonly reported reasons were depletion of stocks (23%), lack of rain (17%), crops destruction due to pest and high prices (13%, each).

Findings suggest that adequate access to food in Terekeka county was severely affected by depletion of food stocks. In line with the concurring lean season (April-August), the most commonly reported reasons for lack of food in assessed settlements in Terekeka were lack of rain (39% of assessed settlements) and a depletion of stocks (61%) in August. Terekeka County is located in an area with documented cattle migration and displacements routes from Jonglei state that likely increased tensions in the areas fuelling existing land disputes, and potentially preventing people from farming.²³ Additionally, FGD participants Juba and Terekeka counties cited insecurity on the roads as a cause of food shortage, as traders reportedly feared transporting goods to certain locations within Terekeka.24

Likely linked to the reportedly low access to food in Terekeka county, the proportion of assessed settlements where most people reported severe hunger increased from April (KIs in 30% of assessed settlements) to August (83%). Furthermore, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people were on average eating one

meal per day increased from April (81%) to August (100%). The continued decrease in access to and intake of food reported by KIs in Terekeka County could be a cumulative effect of depletion of harvest stocks, degraded road conditions and high food prices that have affected market access and functionality since October 2020.²⁵

Findings indicate that access to food increased in Lainya and Morobo counties, which might be related to the reported increase in cultivation of crops. The proportion of assessed settlements in which access to food was reported, increased in Lainya county (from KIs in 4% of assessed settlements in April to 14% in August) and Morobo county (from none to 11%). In line with reported increased in access to food in Lainya and Morobo counties, the proportion of assessed settlements where cultivation as a food source was reported increased from April (85% and 67%, respectively) to August (100% and 79%). As these counties are located in what is known as the greenbelt region, people from assessed settlements there may have benefitted from a higher yield from cultivation in the first-season harvest (July and August).²⁶ For the same period in the previous year, reported insecurity in the region likely negatively affected the main planting season in a number of counties, as well as first-season harvests, access to markets, and trade flows.²⁷

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements where inadequate access to food was reported. June 2021:

orted, Julie 202	Juba	Kajo Keji	Lainya	Morobo	Terekeka	Yei
Lack of rain	21%	42%	0%	43%	4%	0%
Depletion of food stock	15%	29%	4%	21%	0%	11%
High prices	26%	0%	13%	0%	4%	26%

Market access

AoK findings suggest that people in CES commonly experienced barriers and challenges in accessing markets. This finding seems to be backed by the relatively low proportion of assessed settlements (28%) where people could reportedly not reach the nearest marketplace in less than one hour. The proportion of assessed settlements in which access to market was reported seems to have decreased slightly since June 2020, when KIs in 39% of assessed settlements reported that people were able to access the marketplace in less than one hour.

^{18.} USAID. Factsheet: South Sudan Complex Emergency (July 2021).

^{19.} IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis for December 2020-March 2021.

^{20.} REACH. Joint Market Monitoring Initiative. October 2021.

^{21.} IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis for December 2020-March 2021.

^{22.} REACH. April 2020. Situation Overview.

^{23.} WHO. South Sudan: Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report. July 2021.

^{24.} FGDs with participants from Juba and Terekeka. June 2021.

^{25.} REACH. October 2020. Situation Overview.

^{26.} FEWSNET. South Sudan. Livelihood zone map and descriptions for the republic of South Sudan 2018 (updated).

Reported access to markets and subsequent access to food remained stable but low across assessed settlements in Terekeka county. Kls in none of the assessed settlements reported access to enough food in August, which might be related to reported increase in incidents of violence along the road.²⁸ FGD participants from Terekeka County in June reported that sub-national conflict had caused a near total cut-off of some communities within the county, as traders and vehicles stopped moving along the roads.²⁹ With reported limited access to food in Terekeka, the reported limited access to markets could be an additional pressure to an already precarious food security situation.

Coping Strategies

Regardless of the reported increase in access to food, a wide range of coping strategies were reportedly employed across all counties from April to August. The proportion of assessed settlements in which Kls reported on severe livelihood coping strategies such as borrowing money to purchase food reportedly increased from April (42%) to August (64%). In Terekeka and Kajo Keji counties, the proportion of assessed settlements in which this coping strategy was reported in August, remained high (83% and 91%, respectively).

Figure 2: Coping strategies reported by KIs in assessed settlements by County, June 2021³⁰

21,	Juba	кајо Кејі	Lainya	Morobo	Terekeka	Yei
Consume less expensive food	97%	79%	65%	93%	92%	89%
Limit meal size	53%	88%	91%	50%	30%	79%
Reduce meals eaten per day	56%	79 %	91%	100%	83%	58%

Similarly, more severe coping strategies such as limiting meal sizes (KIs in 63% of assessed settlements in April and KIs in 52% of assessed settlements in August) and consuming less expensive food (76% in April and 81% in August) were among the most commonly reported strategies. In Kajo-Keji county, the proportion of assessed settlements in which

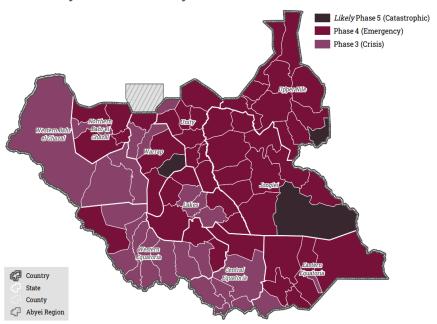
people reportedly skipped entire days without eating rose from 0% in April to 24% in August, likely corresponding to the relatively high proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported perceiving hunger to be "the worst it can be" in August (12%).

H

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Findings suggest that presence of a functioning borehole in assessed settlements increased in CES from April to August. Furthermore, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that most people do not wash hands decreased but remained significant across assessed counties in CES. This is particularly concerning given that hand-washing is an important measure in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Map 4: WASH Severity Classification, May 2021.31



Water

Findings suggest that, with the exception of Juba county, presence of a functional borehole increased in all the assessed counties across CES. The proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported the presence of a functional borehole increased from April (65%) to August (88%) which might be related to construction of new boreholes.³²

- 27. REACH. April 2020. Situation Overview.
- 28. UK Aid, East Africa Research Fund. South Sudan: Youth, violence and livelihoods. June 2021.
- 29. FGDs with participants from Juba and Terekeka. June 2021.
- 30. For Terekeka, average of April-August period reported (exclusing June) is reported due to data inconsistencies.

- 31. REACH, UNICEF and Global WASH Cluster.
- 32. IOM. South Sudan Crisis Response Plan 2020-2021.
- 33. IOM DTM WFP. IDP Site Multi-Sector Needs Vulnerabilities COVID-19 Impact (FSNMS plus)-
- 34. Islamic Relief Worldwide. Analysing and documenting learning from South Sudan Integrated Emergency Response in Western Bahr El-Ghazal and Central Equatoria.

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Similarly, a considerable increase in the presence of functional boreholes was noted in Kajo Keji (from KIs in 71% of assessed settlements in April, to KIs in 94% of assessed settlements in August), Morobo (38% to 67%) and Terekeka (59% to 89%).³³

Construction of these boreholes is crucial from a gendered protection standpoint as women in South Sudan are most commonly responsible for collecting water for the household, and are likely to travel long distances while facing risks of gender based violence.³⁴ Likewise, long distance to prefered water sources could influence the quantity of water used in a household, which in turn could lead to less water available for handwashing 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

Indicative of a state-wide increase in access to improved water sources, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access to boreholes as the main source of drinking water increased from April (48%) to August (71%). In line with increased access to improved water sources, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people relied on an unprotected water source as the main water source, decreased in Kajo Keji, Lainya and Morobo counties from April (KIs in 28% of assessed settlements, 38% of assessed settlements and 92% of assessed settlements, respectively) to August (18%, 14% and 78%, respectively).

Findings suggest that while state-wide access to preferred water sources remained consistent, it varied across assessed counties in CES. In Kajo Keji and Morobo counties, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access to a preferred water source decreased from April (90% and 69%, respectively) to August (59% and 56%). On the contrary, in Yei county, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported on access to preferred water source increased from April (62%) to July (93%).³⁶ The increase in Yei county is consistent with the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that safety concerns over access to preferred water points decreased, from April (33%) to July (20%).

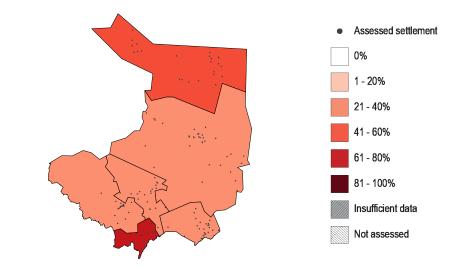
Hygiene

The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that people do not wash hands decreased from April (28%) to August (15%). This increase in reported usage of soap might be related to a number of risk communication and awareness campaigns launched by the Government and NGOs since the outbreak of COVID-19 in South Sudan.³⁷

In Kajo Keji and Terekeka counties, none of the KIs in assessed settlements reported that most people used soap when washing hands (consistent across the reporting period).

The low reporting on use of soaps might have been related to the state-wide price rise of soap in comparison to households' average income.³⁸ Other reasons for the low reported use of soap might be related to limited access to functional markets due to poor road conditions, as indicated in the market section.

Map 5: Proportion of settlements where KIs reported unprotected water sources as the main source of drinking water, per county, June 2021:





Findings indicate that, while access to primary health care facilities remained stable across the proportion of assessed counties in CES from April (80%) to August (84%), it decreased in Juba and Morobo county. In Juba county, the proportion of assessed setItements in which KIs reported access to primary healthcare facilities decreased from April (83%) to June (74%). Similarly, in Morobo county, access to primary healthcare facilities appeared to have decreased from being reported in 85% of assessed setItements in April to 67% in August. Meanwhile, in Morobo county, the proportion of assessed setItements in which KIs reported access to a private clinic increased from April (none) to August (11%). Similarly, in Juba county, the proportion of assessed setItements where KIs reported access to a hospital increased from April to June (none to 10%).

AoK findings suggest that, likely due to a parallel decrease in humanitarian assistance, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access to a functional healthcare facilities decreased in Kajo Keji county. In August, KIs in none of the assessed settlements



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

^{36.} Data not available for August due to insufficient coverage.

^{37.} South Sudan Ministry of Health. COVID-19 WEEKLY SITUATION Report. South Sudan Well Rehab Program

^{38.} REACH. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) (1–7 April 2021).

^{39.} UN OCHA. Humanitarian Response Plan. March 2021.

^{40.} Radio Tamazuj. Kajo Keji hospitals suffer neglect.

^{41.} Radio Tamazuj. Feature: South Sudan's poor struggle to access healthcare. October 2021.

^{42.} South Sudan Medical Journal. Healthcare workers killed in South Sudan. August 2021.

^{43.} REACH. South Sudan Displacement Crisis - Protection, Assessment of Hard to Reach Areas in South Sudan (June 2021).

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reported access to a functional healthcare facility through mobile rapid response teams in Kajo Keji county, decreasing from April (19%). This reported decline might be related to gaps in humanitarian funding that may have led to reduced provision of life-saving services across the county.³⁹

Indicative of declining access, the proportion of assessed settlements where people could reportedly reach primary healthcare facilities within 30 minutes also decreased in Kajo Keji county. In August, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that it took up to half a day to access a healthcare facility, increased from April (10%) to August (40%). The decrease in access might be related to pockets of violence across the county that reportedly damaged the public health infrastructure.⁴⁰

In August, in those settlements in Morobo and Terekeka where barriers to healthcare were reported (89% and 94%, respectively), lack of access to medicine and limited presence of healthcare staff emerged as the most prominent barriers. In both Moroboro and Terekeka counties, the proportion of assesed settlements in which KIs reported that there were not enough medicines available, increased from April (77% and 65%, respectively) to August (89%, each). Availability of medicines is a reported problem throughout South Sudan, with even basic medications such as paracetamol and treatments for malaria being absent at times.⁴¹ In Lainya county, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported lack of healthcare staff as a barrier remained high in August (57%, consistent with April). The might be related to reported low pay and security concerns, which seemingly affected health workers.⁴²

Protection

Findings suggest that protection concerns and insecurity have persisted in assessed counties across CES.⁴³ Additionally, conflict-related SGBV appears to have remained prevalent and unchanged throughout the reporting period as the main safety concern for women.

In Lainya and Morobo county, the main safety concern for men in the reporting period was communal violence.⁴⁴ In both the counties, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that most men did not feel safe due to incidents of violence, increased from April (none of the assessed settlements, respectively) to August (21% and 11%, respectively).

Findings from Juba county indicate that incidents of violence due to housing, land, and property issues decreased most people's feeling of safety. In June, KIs in 71% of assessed settlements reported that most people did not feel safe most of the time.⁴⁵ This reported low sense of safety in Juba may be attributed to a high proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported concerns over land grabbing (41%), that may have led

to feeling of insecurity across the county. These protection incidents may have affected the aid agencies' ability to respond to rapidly escalating humanitarian needs.⁴⁶

Women's main safety concern was SGBV, which remained prevalent and consistent throughout the reporting period across assessed counties. The proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that the primary safety concern for women was SGBV remained high in August (consistent with April). In addition to hindering women's participation to the peace process, sexual violence may also be contributing to increased inter-community violence.⁴⁷

Meanwhile in Kajo Keji county, perhaps due to reported improvement in inter-community relations, protection and insecurity concerns decreased for the reporting period.⁴⁸ The proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported that most people felt safe most of the time, increased from April (29%) to August (59%).

Figure 3: Main reported protection concern for women, men, boys, and girls in CES in June 2021:

Women		Men			
1 SGBV	33%	1 Criminality/looting	25%		
2 Criminality/looting	20%	2 Harassment to disclose information	219		
3 Family separation	18%	3 Alcohol/substance abuse	139		
Girls		Boys			
1 SGBV	13%	1 Alcohol/substance abuse	15%		
2 Family separation	13%	2 Family separation	9%		
3 Harassment to disclose information	9%	3 Criminality/looting	8%		



Shelter/ NFI

Findings suggest that while access to solid shelter⁴⁹ seemed to have remained stable CES, IDPs and returnees continued to live in less solid structures.⁵⁰ the proportion assessed settlements in which KIs reported access to solid shelters for the host community members, remained stable between April (85%) and August (95%). Yet, the proportion assessed settlements in which KIs reported that majority of the host community members reportedly lived in a less solid shelter structure was considerable in Juba county (27% in June, consisten with April) where this might be related to an increase in IDP returnees, contributing to the pressure on already scarce habitable living spaces.⁵¹

- 44. United States Institute of Peace. Conflict and Crisis in South Sudan's Equatoria. April 2021.
- 45. Juba Monitor. Land grabbing, cattle-related incidents remains major challenge in CES, says Governor Adil.
- 46. REACH. South Sudan Displacement Crisis Protection, Assessment of Hard-to-Reach Areas in South Sudan (August 2021).

- 47. Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Sexual Violence in Conflict.
- 48. Juba Monitor. Community Peace dialogue begins in South Sudan.
- 49. Solid shelter structures refers to tukuls and permanent shelters.
- 50. Less solid shelter structures referres to robookas, improviseds shelters, tents and abandoned structures.
- 51. CSRF. Juba County. Central Equatoria.

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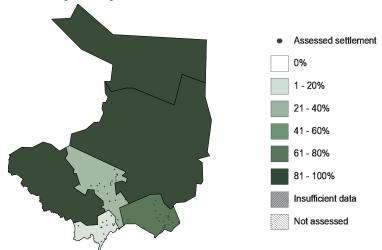
In those assessed settlements where returnees were reportedly present in Kajo Keji (71%) and Lainya (21%) counties, returnees were reported to be living in less solid structures in 19% and 16%, respectively. Correspondingly, in Lainya county, the assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly present (79%), IDPs were reported to be living in less solid structures in 21%. While Kajo Keji county has been characterised by high shelter needs in the last few years, the high shelter needs reported in Lainya might be related to the armed conflict that displaced some 3,000 people to Yei Town, increasing the shelter needs of the IDPs that may require a considerable scale-up in humanitarian support.^{52 53}



Education

Findings indicate that despite a state-wide increase in the proportion of assessed settlementswhere access to education was reported, access remained low in Lainya and Morobo, likely related to conflict and natural disaster. Furthermore, high school fees appears to have contributed to continued low enrollment of both boys and girls across CES.

Map 6: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported children's access to educational services by County, June 2021:



Potentially linked with the nation-wide reopening of schools following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported access to educational services, increased from April (33%) to June (70%).⁵⁴ Despite this increase, the proportion of assessed settlements in which KIs reported access to educational services in June was still low in Lainya and Morobo counties (35% and 7% respectively). Limited low access to education services in Lainya and Morobo counties

might be related to damaged infrastructure due to conflict and disaster.⁵⁵

Due to reported spread of fighting and violence across Morobo county, most of the schools were vandalised by having their roofs removed and walls destroyed, prompting over 5,000 school pupils in various primary and nursery schools across the county to seek education through outdoor classrooms.⁵⁶ Similarly, damages to the school infrastructure were reported in Lainya county due to storm during the past rainy season.⁵⁷ These damages may not only limit children's access to education, but also limit their access to school feeding programmes, which may increase the risk of malnutrition among children.⁵⁸

Despite a state-wide increase in access to educational services across the proportion of assessed settlements, school attendance remained low. In June, KIs in only 50% of assessed settlements reported that half or more than half the children were enrolled in school. Among the proportion of assessed settlements where reported enrollment was low, KIs reported that inability to pay school fees was among the main concern that effected both boys and girls (40% and 28% respectively). According to a joint statement by UNICEF and UNESCO, being out of school is known to increase the risk of teenage pregnancies and early marriage in South Sudan.⁵⁹ Thus, continued low enrolment in schools may therefore be of great concern, especially for girls.

Conclusion

Findings indicate that the food security situation across CES remained precarious during the reporting period, particularly in Terekeka county, with marginal improvements in Lainya and Morobo counties following the reduction in food prices. However, high market prices, shortages in food availability and localised insecurity, will likely continue to affect humanitarian needs into the second harvest season (November-January). Furthermore, low access to WASH infrastructure and healthcare facilities in Kajo Keji County illustrate how the county is facing high intersectoral needs that continued to expose local communities to a high risk of waterborne diseases and likely increased their vulnerability to COVID-19.

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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