Humanitarian Situation Overview

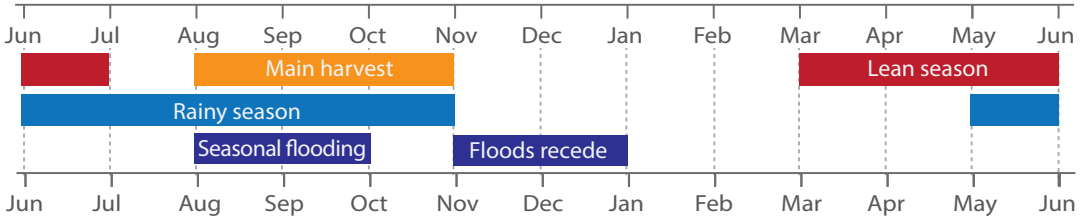
Jonglei State | South Sudan

January - March 2022

CONTEXT

Jonglei is the largest of South Sudan's ten states both in terms of population and area. Its population predominately comprises agro-pastoralist groups that migrate seasonally to access water and pasture.[1] Since independence (2011), communities across the state have experienced a series of manmade, climactic, and economic shocks involving national and subnational violence, atypical flooding, and rampant inflation that have eroded the viability of traditional food and livelihood activities, and left over three-hundred thousand people internally displaced and most of the population food insecure.[2] A national peace agreement[3] signed in 2018 greatly reduced major fighting across the country, yet cyclical intercommunal violence remains pervasive. Between 2019 and 2021, consecutive years of atypically high rainfall and flooding inundated settlements across the state and displaced tens of thousands.[4] Jonglei is vast, and virtually non-existent public infrastructure, most notably roads, continues to hinder movement and humanitarian access, especially during the rainy season. In recent years, Jonglei has experienced prolonged spells of severe food insecurity, including a famine-likely classification in Pibor (2020-2021),[5] and crisis-or-worse food insecurity across the state on an ongoing basis. To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since 2015. Data is collected on a monthly basis through interviews with key informants (KIs) with knowledge of settlements and triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary data. This Situation Overview uses this data to analyse changes in the humanitarian situation in Jonglei State over the first quarter of 2022.

Figure 1: Jonglei seasonal caldendar



KEY FINDINGS

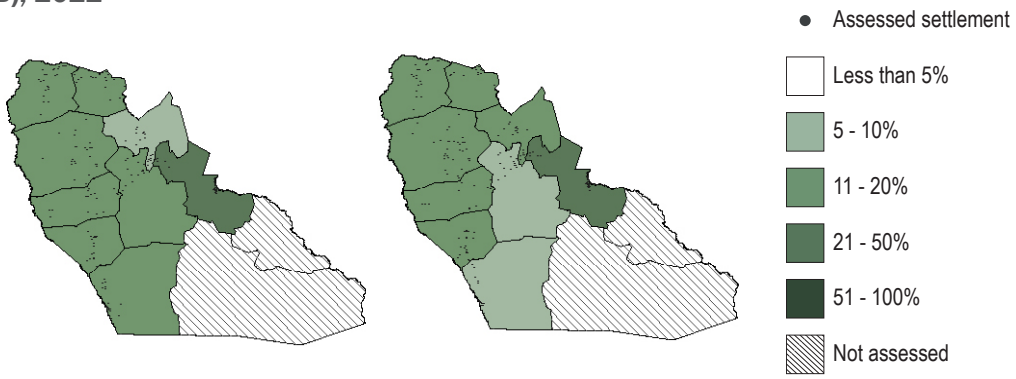
- **Needs in Q1 appeared most severe in counties whose flood levels had not yet fully receded by March, namely Fangak, Canal/Pigi, and Ayod** (see map on page 3)**,** as well as parts of Greater Bor west of the Jonglei Canal. Persistent flooding there greatly reduced communities' ability to practice foundational livelihood activities, mainly the cultivation of crops and the rearing of livestock, which, in turn, restricted access to vital food sources. Findings suggest access to both land and cattle was particularly low in Fangak and Twic East.
- **Findings suggest that water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions remained extremely poor in much of state, but particularly in Fangak and Canal/Pigi,** where very few people reportedly had access to latrines or boreholes, and are reportedly drinking from open water sources.
- Findings indicate that conflict and insecurity remained key drivers of needs through Q1, particularly in less flood affected areas such as Greater Akobo. **A seasonal surge in violent incidents likely made Jonglei the most violent state in South Sudan over the reporting period.**[6] Revenge killings and attacks, and cattle raiding remained the two most commonly reported forms of incidents. Findings suggest that communities in Nyirol and Uror were most affected by movement restrictions as a result of insecurity, which in turn affected normal livelihood activities and access to basic services.
- Findings suggest that communities across Jonglei, particularly those in flood affected areas, **continued to employ a range of harmful or unsustainable coping strategies** in order to mitigate consumption gaps. These included borrowing money or food, liquidating productive assets, migrating, and consuming wild foods known to cause sickness. **Wild foods (foraging and hunting) as well as fishing were found to be key sources of food in Fangak and Canal/Pigi,** where findings indicate an atypically high reliance on these sources for this time of the year. In addition, communities across the sate appeared to have remained highly dependent on humanitarian assistance, including humanitarian food assistance (HFA), in order to meet their basic needs.

1. "Security Responses in Jonglei State in the Aftermath of Inter-Ethnic Violence," Saferworld, February 2021, available online here
2. For recent displacement figures see: IOM DTM Mobility Tracking, Baseline Locations Dataset, Round 12, available online here; for information on food security see: "South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for February - March 2022 and Projections for April - July 2022" Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), March 2022, available online here
3. "Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan," September 2018, available online here
4. "South Sudan - Flood Frequency 2019-2021", REACH, January 2022, available online here
5. "IPC Famine Review: Conclusions and Recommendations for Pibor County - South Sudan - IPC Analysis," IPC, November 2020, available online here
6. South Sudan Dataset on Political Violence, ACLED, January to March 2022, available for download here

METHODOLOGY

To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Jonglei State, REACH conducts interviews with key informants (KIs) who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or "area of knowledge" (AoK). This situation overview is based on interviews conducted with KIs in the Bor Protection of Civilian (PoC) site, Bor Town, and Akobo Town between January and March 2022. In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted on a monthly basis using a structured survey tool. After data collection was completed, data was aggregated at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal or most credible response for each indicator. When consensus could not be determined, that settlement was omitted from 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 each month may vary. In order to reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, longitudinal analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam coverage over the period. Findings were triangulated and contextualized using secondary sources. For additional details on methodology, refer to the AoK ToR on the REACH repository. **Findings are not statistically generalisable, and should be considered indicative of the situation in assessed settlements only.**

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Jonglei State in January (A), and March (B), 2022



SHOCKS AND DRIVERS OF NEEDS

Emergency conditions in Jonglei were driven by a range of manmade, climactic, and economic factors between January and March, including persistent flooding, endemic insecurity, and unstable markets. Shocks and stressors continued to drive displacement across the state, which contributed to the atypical corralling of communities into smaller spaces, further disrupting livelihoods, and putting greater stress on available resources.

FLOODING

Findings suggest that flooding remained a primary driver of needs across Jonglei between January and March, months after the 2021 rainy season, (which ends roughly in October). Counties in the North and West of the state, on the Eastern and Southern banks of the Nile, were found to be most affected at the end of Q1, namely Fangak, Ayod, Canal/Pigi, and parts of Greater Bor west of the Jonglei Canal, where standing flood water was widely reported. In March, KIs in 100% of settlements in Fangak, 86% in Canal/Pigi, and 80% in Ayod reported that flood waters had not yet fully receded, which is largely corroborated by remote sensing (see map 2).

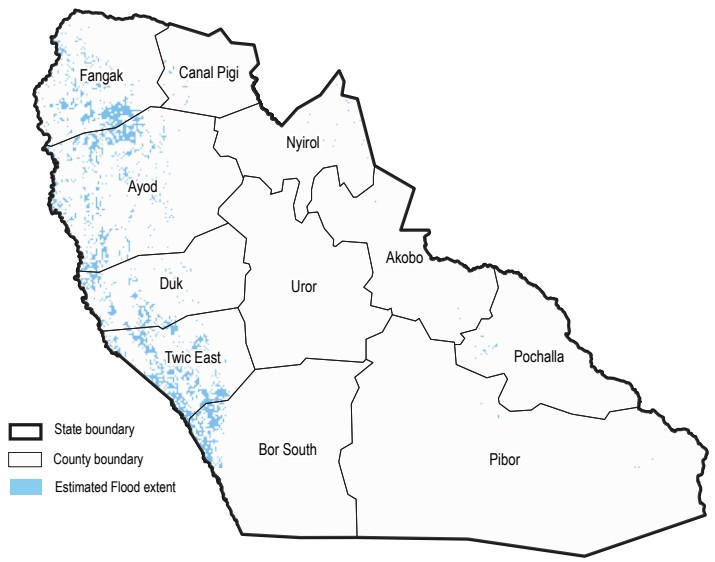
Flooding drove needs through Q1 in part by eroding the viability of foundational food and livelihood sources, chiefly agriculture and livestock rearing.[7] In Canal/Pigi, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that flooding had negatively impacted livelihood activities rose from 38% to 100% between December and March, while remaining at 100% in Fangak and Ayod through the quarter. Thirty-four percent of assessed settlements where KIs reported inadequate access to food in March (57% of assessed settlements) cited flooding or too much rain as the primary factor. This was reported most frequently in Ayod (100%), Canal/Pigi (71%), and Fangak (59%).

Furthermore, findings suggest flooding drove needs by damaging or destroying critical infrastructure. In March, shelters in 86% of settlements in Canal/Pigi had reportedly been damaged by flooding, while secondary sources report the large-scale destruction of WASH infrastructure following the 2020 rainy season.[8]

7. For a full descriptions of Jonglei's livelihood zones see: "Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan," FEWS NET, June 2020, available online here
8. "South Sudan WASH Severity Classification," May 2021, page 2, available online here

Findings suggest that flooding continued to drive displacement late into Q1. In March, in assessed settlements where displacement from the settlement had reportedly occured in the month prior to data collection (42%), flooding remained the most reported push factor (32%), particularly in Ayod, Fangak, Canal/ Pigi, and Twic East. Receding flood levels in parts of Greater Bor enabled the return of some households to their area of origin, including to rural areas of Bor South, Twic East, and Duk.[9] Many of these households had moved to camps or informal sites in Bor Town, Lakes States, and Central Equatoria following flooding in 2020.

Map 2: Approximate flood extent, March 2022

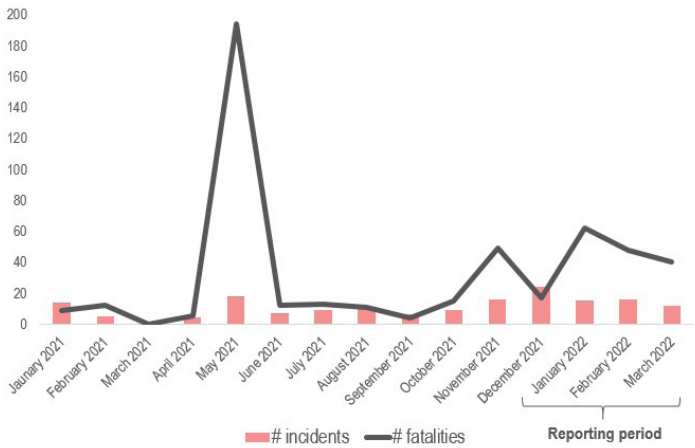


Flooding also reportedly prevented people from moving to meet their basic needs through Q1. In March, KIs in 32% of assessed settlements reported that flooding had prevented some people from travelling to access food, water, or livelihoods, which was reported in 100% of settlements in Ayod and Fangak, 62% in Canal/ Pigi, and 38% in Twic East. It also likely hindered humanitarian access through the quarter, especially in locations not directly adjacent to the Nile (which allows some access by boat), or along main roads.[10]

CONFLICT & INSECURITY

Conflict and insecurity remained a key driver of needs throughout the reporting period, and likely worsened since previous quarter. Between January and March, violence in Jonglei was substantially higher than the national average measured in both number of incidents (roughly two times higher) and number of fatalities (roughly three times higher).[11] Insecurity also continued to drive displacement through the quarter. IOM-DTM recorded the displacement of at least 16,065 people due to localised conflict between January and March in Uror, Bor South, and Pibor,[12] and conflict was the most reported push factor (33%) in assessed settlements in Greater Akobo where the displacement of some residents had reportedly occured in the month prior to data collection in March (33%).

Figure 2: Violent incidents vs fatalities in Jonglei, January 2021 - March 2022, source: ACLED



Throughout Q1, findings suggest that violent events primarily involved revenge killings or attacks, or the raiding of cattle, and disproportionately occurred in Uror, Nyirol, Bor South, Ayod, and Pibor.[13] In March, KIs in 56% of assessed settlements in Uror and 39% in Nyirol reported that the area was affected by revenge killings, and in 25% and 11%, respectively, were reportedly affected by cattle raiding. Eighteen of 43 incidents recorded by ACLED between

9. INGO CCCM project documents show a population decrease from nearly 85,000 individuals (roughly 10,500 households) residing across 4 informal camps in Bor Town in November, to nearly 19,000 (roughly 3,150 households) at the end of Q1, with community leadership indicating that many households had returned home following the receding of flood levels.
10. OCHA Humanitarian Updates, March 2022; Historical examples of disrupted humanitarian access in flooded areas of Jonglei are numerous, see for example: "Canal-Pigi County Rapid Assessment," REACH, October 2021, available online here or; "Drowned Land: Hunger Stalks South Sudan's Flooded Villages," The Guardian, March 2021, available online here
11. South Sudan Dataset on Political Violence, ACLED, January to March 2022, available for download here; ACLED compiles data on "political violence." ACLED data is compiled using open sources and is not exhaustive. Rather, for the purposes of this situation overview, it should be considered indicative of conflict trends.
12. "Event Tracking: Displacement and Return," IOM DTM, January to March 2022, dashboard available online here
13. South Sudan Dataset on Political Violence, ACLED, January to March 2022, available for download here

January and March involved clashes between pastoralists or the raiding of cattle, and 50% of these incidents occurred in either Uror or Nyirol counties.[14] **Both direct violence and the threat of violence likely drove needs through the quarter by increasing the risk associated with travelling to more remote areas**, including for cultivation or grazing, as well as with accessing basic services, such as at water points and markets.

ECONOMIC SHOCKS & MARKET DYSFUNCTION

Findings suggest that high prices and limited market functionality continued to inhibit access to food and non-food items across Jonglei throughout Q1. High prices were most likely to have affected markets in Greater Bor, particularly in Twic East and Duk, and in Fangak, which are supplied mainly by Juba via Bor, and are therefore more susceptible to disruptions in road or river access (typically due to flooding or insecurity), which appears to have occurred for much of the quarter.[15]

Reflective of poor economic conditions, the price of some staple cereals increased between January and March, brought on in part by shocks to global markets following the war in Ukraine, as well as by low production in 2021.[16] Further, Jonglei is projected to again be the largest net deficit cereal producing state in the country in 2022, **which will likely continue to adversely affect the price of staples at least throughout the subsequent quarter.**[17]

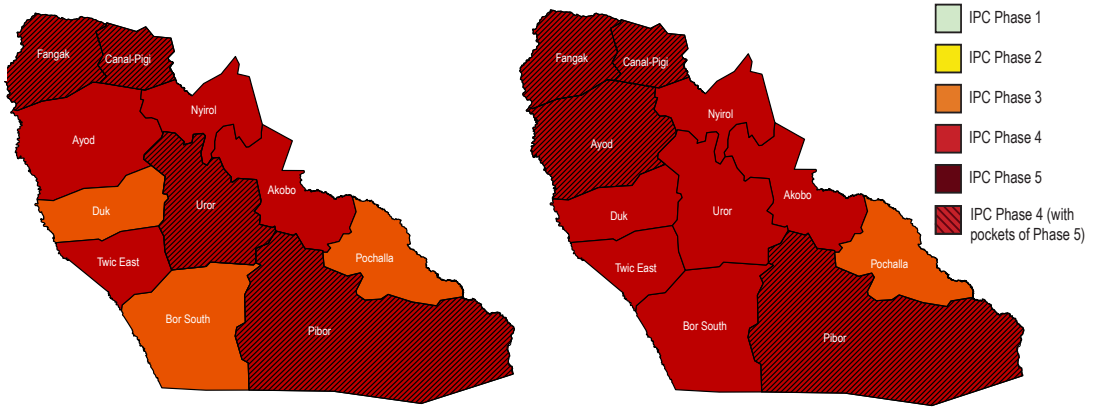
ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES

Access to food remained a key concern for communities across Jonglei through Q1. Primary and secondary sources suggest that **food security was extraordinarily poor throughout the reporting period and is likely to deteriorate into the lean season** (beginning in May and peaking in July-August).[18] Findings indicate that areas of highest concern include Fangak, Canal/Pigi, Ayod, and Twic East, which largely aligns with the March 2022 IPC analysis.

The March 2022 IPC found that 1,470,000 people in Jonglei (72% of the population), were experiencing crisis-or-worse (P3+) food insecurity between February and March, including 42,000 people facing catastrophic (P5, or famine-like) food insecurity in Pibor, Fangak, Canal/Pigi, and Uror counties.[19] Mirroring country-wide trends, the situation in Jonglei is projected to deteriorate between April and July 2022, with the number of people facing catastrophic food insecurity growing to 67,000 across Pibor, Fangak, Canal/Pigi, and Ayod counties, and the total proportion of people facing crisis-or-worse food insecurity reaching 78%.[20] Such levels of food insecurity signaled by the March 2022 IPC were exceptional, even for the state's historically poor standards.

Findings suggest that, throughout Q1, food insecurity was driven mainly by the erosion of foundational food and livelihood sources, primarily the cultivation of crops and the rearing of livestock. The overall proportion of assessed settlements where most people were reportedly consuming their own agricultural produce as a main food source dropped sharply from 35% of settlements in December to 12% of settlements in January, which is likely a result of decreased production, and suggests an **atypically early onset of the lean season**

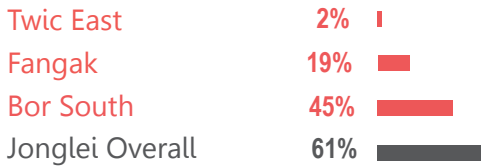
Maps 3 and 4: IPC classifications for the a) current period (February to March, 2022) and b) the projected period (April to July, 2022), source: South Sudan IPC, March 2022



14. Ibid.
15. South Sudan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative, March 2022, available online here
16. "Market and Trade Update," World Food Program (WFP), March 2022
17. "Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan," FEWS NET, June 2020, available online here; most of Greater Bor and Greater Akobo fall within livelihood zone S06.
18. FAO/WFP, 2021 Crop and Food Security Assessment Special Report, South Sudan, available online here
19. "South Sudan IPC Key Messages," April 2022, Integrated Phase Classiciation (IPC), available online here
20. Ibid.

(which normally begins around May). While overall reported consumption of livestock products remained stable between December (49%) and March (49%), it was consistently low in Ayod (0% in March), Twic East (2%), Canal/Pigi (14%), and Fangak (19%), where keeping livestock is less viable due to widespread inundation. **Reported access to cattle remained atypically low in parts of Jonglei through Q1, particularly in Twic East, Fangak, and Bor South.** In March, KIs in just 2%, 19%, and 45% of assessed settlements throughout these three counties, respectively, reported that most people owned cattle in the prior month, compared to the state average of 61%. One assessment concluded that Jonglei suffered the greatest damages to pastoralist livelihoods of any state in South Sudan as a result of the 2021 flooding, with more than two-hundred thousand heads of cattle perished by drowning, starvation, or water-borne livestock disease.[21] Decreased access to cattle in flood affected areas means both poorer access to key nutritional components such as milk, meat, and blood, as well as decreased resilience to future shocks. Cattle are among the most vital assets owned across Jonglei's livelihood zones, serving as a resource reserve for times of severe food scarcity, at which time they can be liquidated for cash or food, or consumed.[22]

Figure 3: % of assessed settlements where KIs reported most people owned cattle in the prior month, March 2022



Market conditions remained poor throughout the reporting period, likely restricting access to food and non-food items. Despite high reported physical access to markets (by walking) in March (99% of assessed settlements), people in 51% of assessed settlements reportedly faced difficultly visiting (travelling to) markets, and people in 88% of assessed settlements reportedly faced challenges at the marketplace. Physical access challenges were most commonly reported in Twic East (85%), Duk (80%), Ayod (79%), Canal/Pigi (67%), and Fangak (45%), and were most commonly attributed to poor road quality, distance, and lack of transportation options. In March, the most commonly reported issues faced at markets were that some items were too expensive (83% of assessed settlements), that some items were unavailable (77%), and that the quality of some items was poor (57%), which are reflective of supply bottlenecks caused by poor road access and/or insecurity along routes.

Markets remain a critical lean season source of food for communities across Jonglei, particularly in Greater Bor and Greater Akobo, which increasingly rely on market purchases throughout the lean season as food stocks exhaust (normally beginning of May).[23] Further, it is likely that markets have become increasingly central to food security, considering the consecutive years of poor harvests and recent large-scale livestock loss. Given the projected deteriorated access to traditional food sources, as well as widespread liquidation of productive assets (such as cattle, tools, and fishing nets, see section "Coping and Mitigation" section), it is likely that markets will remain atypically central to food security through the subsequent quarter, and thus that poor market conditions will increasingly drive food consumption gaps, particularly for worse-off households with fewer assets, and those without access to alternative food sources, such as fishing or foraging.

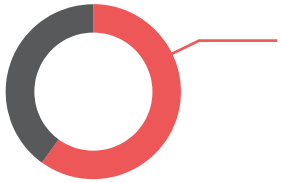
Findings suggest that WASH conditions remained extremely poor across the state in Q1, particularly in Fangak and Canal/Pigi. There, as in other flood-affected areas, consecutive years of flooding damaged or destroyed much of the counties' WASH infrastructure, including water points (primarily boreholes) and latrines.[24] In March, for instance, KIs in no assessed settlements in Fangak, and 10% in Canal/Pigi reported the presence of at least one functional borehole, which was far below the state average (76%). In these two counties, poor access to a protected water source increases the risk of the spread for water-borne diseases. In all assessed settlements (100%) in Canal/Pigi and Fangak where a lack of access to functional boreholes was reported in March (96%), people were reportedly relying on an open water source.

Throughout Q1, reported access to latrines remained substantially worse than access to boreholes at the state-level, which is consistent with previous

21. FAO/WFP, 2021 Crop and Food Security Assessment Special Report, South Sudan, available online here
22. "Livestock and Livelihoods in South Sudan," UK Institute of Development Studies, December 2018, available online here
23. "Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan," FEWS NET, June 2020, available online here; most of Greater Bor and Greater Akobo fall within livelihood zone S06.
24. "South Sudan - Flood Frequency 2019-2021", REACH, January 2022, available online here

trends. In March, KIs in just 8% of assessed settlements reported that half or more people were using a latrine, and KIs in 56% of settlements reported that no one was using a latrine. In Fangak, Canal/Pigi, and Ayod, low latrine use was likely tried to low latrine availability. In March, KIs in 90% of assessed settlements in Canal/Pigi, 90% in Fangak, and 61% in Ayod reported that people were not using latrines because none existed there. It is likely that in the absence of latrines, open defecation is widely practiced, heightening the risk of spread for water-borne diseases caused by fecal contamination.[25] This, in turn, is likely to further exacerbate the already emergency levels of food insecurity and acute malnutrition.[26]

Figure 4: % of assessed settlements where KIs reported no latrine use, March 2022



In March, KIs in **60%** of assessed settlements reported that nobody was using a latrine there.

In addition, the risk of severe health outcomes and loss of life was likely exacerbated by limited access to healthcare through Q1. While KIs in roughly 80-90% of assessed settlements reported access (by walking) to some type of health care facility in each month of the reporting period, people in 75% of these settlements reportedly faced challenges seeking services there. The most commonly reported barriers related to capacity issues, including lack of medicine or drugs (71% of assessed settlements in March), overcrowding (51%), and too few healthcare staff (49%). Reported access to a healthcare facility was notably worse in Twic East in March, where KIs in 35% of settlements reported that there was no facility accessible by walking.

Inadequate access to food, poor WASH conditions, and inconsistent access to medical care likely fueled alarming rates of malnutrition across the state throughout Q1. The March 2022 IPC found that the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate among children 6-59 months old was 73% between February and March, including 15% with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM).[27] Reported access to feeding programmes was unchanged from the previous quarter (50% of assessed settlements reported in March), although access reportedly remained lowest in Twic East (2% of assessed settlements in March), Duk (6%), Canal/Pigi (19%), and Ayod (27%), and was highest in Greater Akobo. The lack of access to nutrition services reported in Canal/Pigi and Ayod is particularly problematic given the pockets of P5 food insecurity projected to occur there between April and July.[28]

COPING & ADAPTATION

Reflective of the poor reported access to food, livelihoods and basic services between January and March, as well the prolonged stress put on communities' coping capacity and resilience, **the overall proportion of assessed settlements that engaged in negative coping strategies appears to have increased between December and March.** Furthermore, findings suggest the resort to crisis and extreme coping strategies was particularly prevalent in flood-affected counties, including Fangak, Canal/Pigi, and parts of Greater Bor.

BORROWING AND ASSET LIQUIDATION

The most commonly reported food-based coping strategy used in March was borrowing food or money or purchasing on credit, reflecting an increase since December. The overall proportion of assessed settlements where the use of borrowing was reported increased from 53% in December to 75% in March 2022, driven by large increases in Fangak, Uror, and Nyriol, while remaining at 100% of assessed settlements in Greater Bor.

The reported increase of borrowing as a coping strategy is likely linked to low production and widespread asset liquidation. For instance, the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported people were selling or slaughtering more livestock than normal increased by 26% across Greater Akobo (to 46%), and 29% in Canal/Pigi (to 33%) between December and March and was stable but substantial in Bor South (40% in March) and Duk (43%). Further, KIs in 27% of settlements assessed in March reported that people were selling productive assets such as fishing nets or tools, particularly in Canal/Pigi (67%) and Greater Bor (29%). The spike in borrowing reported so early in the seasonal calendar (prior to the typical lean season) is another indication that food stocks were

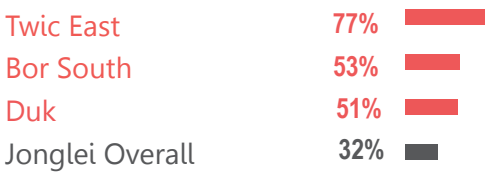
25. "South Sudan WASH Severity Classification," May 2021, page 2, available online here
26. "South Sudan IPC Key Messages," April 2022, Integrated Phase Classiciation (IPC), available online here
27. Ibid; 73% is far above the WHO emergency GAM threshold of 15%.
28. Ibid.

exhausted atypically early in many assessed settlements (in normal times, one's own production could be consumed until April at the earliest and July at the latest). The widespread use of borrowing may also be an indication that community support mechanisms remain central to coping capacity in many areas (KIs in 13% of assessed settlements reported family/friends as a primary food source in March), which suggests that as availability of food and assets decrease into the lean season and community support capacity reduces, there may be an increase in the use of more extreme strategies.

MIGRATION

Findings indicate that communities across Jonglei continued to migrate to meet basic needs over the reporting period. Findings reveal three general categories of movement used by communities between January and March. First, displacement as a result of a sudden onset shock, such as flooding or a violent event; second, distress migration, most often to a camp, informal site, or urban area, as a result of chronic acute needs such as lack of food, livelihoods, or basic services; and third, migration to cattle or fishing camps to improve access to food.

Figure 3: % of assessed settlements where KIs reported people had displaced to a camp or informal site in order to better access food, in March



Findings suggest that displacement to camps or informal sites, specifically to better access food, was stable but substantial through Q1, and was practiced disproportionately by communities in Greater Bor (61% of assessed settlements in March, compared to the 32% state average). People in Greater Bor move regularly between rural and urban areas, particularly to Bor Town or Panyagor, and to camps in Mingkaman, Awerial County (Lakes State), and Mangalla, Juba County (Central Equatoria State) in order to access assistance and services.[29] Displacement to camps and urban areas is likely to increase in subsequent months as flood levels and needs increase, putting additional stress on available resources there. Further, because mobility is central to coping capacity in Greater Bor, less mobile people, such as older persons or people with movement-restricting disabilities, are likely to be more vulnerable in subsequent months as flooding resumes.

Consistent with the previous quarter, migration to cattle camps or fishing camps to access food remained commonly reported through Q1. In March, KIs in 36% of assessed settlements reported that atypically large numbers of people were moving to cattle or fishing camps to access food. This was reported throughout the state, but most commonly in Ayod (100%), and Greater Akobo (45%).

FORAGING & CONSUMPTION OF WILD FOODS

Findings suggest that the consumption of wild foods remained a widely used means of filling consumption gaps in parts of Jonglei between January and March, primarily in Canal/Pigi, but also in Fangak and Greater Bor. In March, KIs in 67% of assessed settlements in Canal/Pigi reported that people were increasingly gathering wild fruits or leaves due to inadequate access to food, and KIs in 76% of assessed settlements there reported that foraging was a primary food source (an increase of 34 percentage points since December). The same month, KIs in 34% of assessed settlements reported that at least some people were consuming wild leaves or fruits that were known to cause sickness, primarily in Fangak (100%), and Greater Bor (53%). Also in March, KIs in 29% of assessed settlements in Fangak reported that wild foods were included in half or more meals (a substantial proportion, but a drop of 55 percentage points since December). While the consumption of wild foods is typical in Jonglei throughout the seasonal calendar, the consumption of wild foods for most or all meals, as well as increased consumption prior to the lean season or the consumption of wild foods that cause sickness, may be indicative of severe food insecurity. [30]

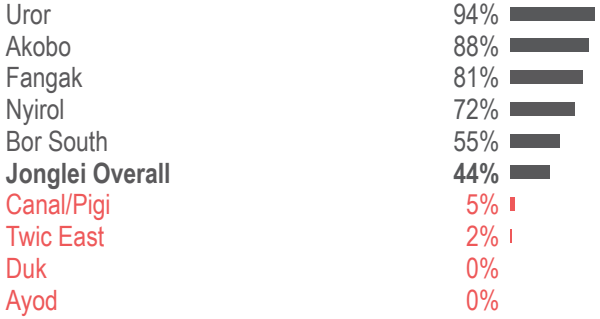
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Findings suggest that communities across Jonglei widely used humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs through Q1, and that access to some forms of assistance may have increased over the reporting period. The proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access to at least one form of assistance increased 10 percentage points between December and February (from 64%

29. For more information on movement dynamics throughout Greater Bor, see the "Port and Road Monitoring" factsheets produced by REACH, or IOM DTM round 11 displacement data
30. For more information on foraging and the consumption of wild foods as a coping strategy see: "Everything Except the Soil: Understanding Wild Food Consumption During the Lean Season in South Sudan," Oxfam, October 2017, available online here

to 74%), the most common of which was HFA (53% in March), followed by cash and/or vouchers (19%), health services (18%), and nutrition services (15%). **Further, KIs in 44% of assessed settlements reported HFA as a primary food source in March (an increase of 21 percentage points since December),** the third most commonly reported primary food source overall after livestock and markets that month.[31] This increase may be reflective of increased humanitarian access as a result of receding flood levels in Greater Akobo and Greater Bor, including the increased ability of people to move to access distribution points. Given the high dependence on food assistance suggested by findings, cuts to HFA, which are expected to take place in the subsequent quarter,[32] may push households across Jonglei into extreme or catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

Figure 5: In March, % of assessed settlements where KIs reported HFA as a primary food source:



RATIONING

Findings suggest that rationing-based coping strategies remained stable but widespread through Q1. In assessed settlements where inadequate access to food had been reported in March (57%), people were reportedly reducing portion sizes (46%), reducing the number of daily meals (31%), or restricting adult consumption (25%), which is consistent with the previous quarter. In Canal/Pigi, people in 10% of assessed settlements were reportedly going entire days without eating in March, which may be reflective of particularly poor food availibility there. The use of ration-based strategies so early in the seasonal calendar is likely indicative of low agricultural production and poor access to means of filling consumption gaps with alternative food sources, signaling overall decreased resilience for much of the population.[33]

CONCLUSION

Food security, malnutrition, limited access to healthcare, and poor WASH conditions likely constituted the most significant threats to wellbeing over the reporting period, with the most severe conditions appearing in Fangak, Ayod, Canal/Pigi, and some parts of Greater Bor west of the Jonglei Canal. Flooding and insecurity continued to impair communities' ability to practice foundational livelihood activities, primarily agriculture and the keeping of livestock, which in turn likely drove limited access to food, increased consumption gaps, and emergency rates of acute malnutrition. Overall, findings suggest communities were commonly relying on HFA and traditionally supplemental food sources like foraging and hunting, as well as the use of negative coping strategies to manage consumption gaps.

Needs are projected to worsen in the subsequent quarter as flooding is forcasted to resume, movement barriers will likely increase, and HFA is projected to be cut at the beginning of the lean season. This is likely to trigger increased use of extreme coping strategies, including asset liquidation, rationing, and distress migration to camps or other population dense areas where services and the distribution of aid are often centralised.

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).

31. For this indicator, KIs were asked to provide up to three main food sources consumed by people in the area of knowledge.
32. Rumors around funding cuts began circulating in South Sudan beginning 2021 and were then confirmed by several agencies and clusters in the first and second month of 2022. For instance, the logistics cluster announced a 50% budget cut in February, with cuts to food assistance expected to follow.
33. For more information on historical shocks and coping capacity in South Sudan, see: "Now the Forest is Blocked: Shocks and Access to Food", REACH, March 2018, available online here