

Introduction

This year, the cyclical water shortage in Aburoc in Fashoda County was exacerbated by late rains, causing some minor displacement from the internal displacement camp. Despite sufficient water as of November, due to refugee returns to the western bank including to Aburoc coupled with a lack of immediately-available, sustainable solutions to water supply, Aburoc may again experience water scarcity in the coming months. In order to contribute to mitigating ensuing protection concerns and effectively respond to population increases in settlements-of-relocation, this brief aims to inform humanitarian contingency planning for Aburoc. The first section analyses the context in Aburoc, including the WASH situation, population dynamics and flows and resulting protection concerns. The second section presents the surge capacity analysis, including WASH scenarios as well as service mapping in sites of return.

This report draws on several sources of primary data from REACH collected from September to November 2018: Areas of Knowledge monthly data collection (September), two gender-disaggregated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with new arrivals from Aburoc to Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site (October) and inter-cluster service mapping (November). In addition, this report draws on primary data collected by a number of partners during this same period: the Inter-Cluster Aburoc assessment (September), the Protection Cluster's mission report (September), and the Danish Refugee Council's (DRC's) flow monitoring in Aburoc (November) and western bank context analyses (October). Primary data from partners were based on dozens of FGDs and key informant interviews conducted with household members remaining in Aburoc or who have recently arrived from Aburoc. REACH data was used to fill needed data gaps or to update information already comprehensively collected by partners. Available secondary information was then triangulated with these primary data sources and supplemented with technical inputs and updates from the Upper Nile focal points for the WASH, CCCM and Protection Clusters.

Context

WASH situation

Sustainable provision of water in Aburoc has presented a significant challenge to WASH implementing partners since the establishment of the IDP settlement in 2017. The settlement's 20-kilometer distance from the Nile, collapsible black cotton soil and fluctuating rainfall patterns due to climate change all contribute to inconsistent water levels in the area while lack of preexisting hydrogeological data and poor road conditions further constrict available WASH response options.¹

Although drought in the earlier months of the anticipated 2018 rainy season put severe stress on water supply, late rains increased water access for Aburoc residents by November.² In October, water scarcity reached its zenith with consumption reduced to 6 liters per person per day (L/p/d), below minimum emergency standards.³ However, rains in October permeated top soil, raising the water table and increasing water consumption up to 12 L/p/d by November⁴ which, though still below emergency standards, represents marked improvement from previous

months (Figure 1). Aburoc residents currently source water from a combination of shallow wells, four drilled boreholes, surface water and treatment (SWAT) systems and water transfers from a neighbouring seasonal swap.⁵ With recent rains and the planned construction of new wells with the shallow ground water campaign, surface water is estimated to supply the current caseload for several more months.⁶

Nevertheless, limited long-term options, climate change and increased returnee arrivals may present continued challenges to sustainable water yield in Aburoc. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is currently conducting a full hydrogeological survey in Aburoc, the results of which will determine the feasibility of non-saline, deep borehole drilling. This is the only potential durable solution for water supply within Aburoc as recent attempts to increase the yields of shallow wells and to drill deeper boreholes have failed.7 Additionally, climate change has affected reliability of weather patterns across Upper Nile State and may entrench more dramatic, cyclical water shortage in Aburoc. Moreover, predictions of future water capacity (L/p/d) are based on a stable population in Aburoc. However, such predictions may be inaccurate as the population in Aburoc is actually increasing due to returns, which further strains resources. Due to continued challenges, there still exists a risk that Aburoc residents may experience dire water shortage in the coming months, resulting in further water-driven displacement.

Population dynamics and flows

Changing needs of populations in the western bank are a function of water-driven displacement from Aburoc coupled with refugee returns to the same sites of Aburoc residents' relocation, with both forms of movement stressing host community resources.

Despite known water limitations in Aburoc, the population in Aburoc is increasing, further stressing water resources. Refugees have been increasingly returning to Aburoc, motivated by optimism following the signing of the Peace Agreements,⁸ at an even larger scale than departures: Since June 2018, 2,279 returnees have been registered to Aburoc while only 1,509 people have reportedly left the settlement.⁹ Such patterns of return further strain water resources and will likely contribute to a larger scale of ensuing displacement should water supply return to below the minimum emergency threshold.

Nevertheless, there are some households who are leaving Aburoc due to water shortage. Of the departures from Aburoc, the largest share left in September¹⁰ with the onset of acute water shortage and in May when dwindling water supply was coupled with a reportedly long lag

Figure 1: Liters per person per day (L/p/d) water consumption in Aburoc¹¹



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Aburoc Water Shortage: Context and Surge Capacity Analysis

Figure 2: Aburoc residents' counties-of-origin, June 201812



time between food distributions.¹³ The majority relocated to Kodok and Lul with a smaller share proceeding to Wau Shilluk, Padit and Malakal PoC site.14

Many households who left Aburoc also faced strained resources as relocation sites experienced high numbers of returns as well. Returns corresponding with Aburoc relocations since June are estimated at 6,200 people, including 3,000 arrivals in Lul, 2,000 in Kodok, 1,000 in Wau Shilluk, 200 in Padit and less than 100 to Malakal PoC site (Map 1).¹⁵

Most of the 7,440 internally displaced persons (IDPs) registered in Aburoc as of June originated from other locations including 3,715 from Malakal County (Lelo, Ogod, Wau Shilluk, Pathow and Padit settlements), 2,383 from Panyikang County (Tonga, Nyilwak, Pakang, Dhethim and Panyidwai settlements) and 1,342 from Fashoda County (Lul, Wejrag, Buoth, Agoad, Yuang, Padhiang, Boal, Pabour, Thuluang and Maal settlements) (Figure 2).¹⁶ This represents a mismatch between the settlements from which the majority of people originate and the settlements to which households from Aburoc are relocating.

The evidenced mismatch in settlements-of-origin and the settlementsof-relocation is attributable to households' primary considerations when determining if or where to relocate. Movements from Aburoc beginning in May and June were largely returns to households' settlementsof-origin, namely Kodok, Lul and Wau Shilluk, with the major pull

Figure 3: Pull factors to settlements of relocation, by gender of household decision-maker¹⁸



factors including family and access to services.¹⁹ By July, the majority of residents remaining in Aburoc were from areas outside of these three settlements. As a result, starting in July, movement from Aburoc became less motivated by desires to return to settlements-of-origin and more to move to settlements with the most robust services.²⁰

According to REACH FGD participants' rankings, the primary services of consideration for households when deciding whether and where to move are medical services, regular food assistance, education and reliable water supply (Figure 3). Thus, regardless of location-of-origin, households currently exiting Aburoc are choosing to relocate to big centres such as Kodok and Lul in order to more readily access such services. In addition, cattle herders left Aburoc in some of the first waves of departure, particularly to relocate to Lul, limiting remaining Aburoc residents' access to milk and meat and reportedly reducing nutritional intake.²¹ As a result, new waves of displacement from Aburoc were motivated by desires to relocate not only to urban areas but also to follow the routes of cattle herders who are associated with food security even in the absence of food assistance.²² Many key informants cited that most people would prefer to relocate to Malakal PoC site which has the most readily available services including consistent food distributions.²³ However, the transport costs present the largest barrier to movement from Aburoc to Malakal PoC site. As such, the majority of households preferred to relocate from Aburoc to Kodok and Lul due

Map 1: Water-driven displacement from Aburoc and coinciding returns across the western bank as of November 2018¹⁷



to lower costs and more widely available private employment, which after the next cultivation period, could facilitate some households to proceed on to Malakal PoC site by January 2019.²⁴

With the onset of the dry season and more passable roads together, movements across the western bank including concurrent returns from Sudan and relocations from Aburoc are only likely to increase.

Protection concerns

As Aburoc experiences increasing water scarcity in the coming months as short-term solutions are exhausted, continued perceptions of insecurity in Panyikang County, gender-based violence (GBV), inter-communal tensions and inability of some persons with specific needs (PSNs) to independently move present likely protection challenges.

The primary barrier to relocation among most populations remains Aburoc residents' perceptions of insecurity along the western bank.²⁵ Nevertheless, there are signs that Aburoc residents' perceptions of security may start to improve. There have been no reported clashes in the western bank since the beginning of 2018. Further, REACH data found that in 74% of assessed settlements in Fashoda and Malakal counties people reportedly felt safe most the time by September, the highest of all assessed counties of Upper Nile State.²⁶ Further, FGD participants reported that most households in Aburoc source their information about security and available services in potential sites of return through word-of-mouth.²⁷ As a result, cattle herders, traders and community members who have already left Aburoc but return to collect family members are likely to share such perspectives with remaining residents, influencing residents' own perceptions about the security of the area. Further, when asked to rank the most important considerations for determining if or where to relocate, no REACH FGD participants reported security as a primary consideration.²⁸ Thus, if the primary barrier to relocation is removed, Aburoc will likely see increasing exits.

Returns to Panyikang County are likely to remain limited due to severe food insecurity across the county and continued perceptions of insecurity. REACH data found that, in comparison to in Malakal and Fashoda counties, proportionately fewer (36%) assessed settlements in Panyikang County reported that residents feel safe most of the time as of September.²⁹ Given that perceptions of security inform movement across the western bank, such reported perceptions of insecurity may hamper returns to Panyikang County. Limited returns to the county are also likely to be attributable to emergency food insecurity, including catastrophe food insecurity for some populations, in Panyikang County.³⁰ Nevertheless, returns are less toward counties or settlements-of-origin but rather those perceived to have the best services. Thus, movement -including of former residents of Panyikang County - toward Kodok, Lul, Wau Shilluk and to a lesser degree Padit and Malakal PoC site is likely to increase due to the improved perceptions of security in these areas.

In the interim before households decide to leave and for those households that decide to remain in Aburoc, women and girls are apt to disproportionately bear the burden of traveling growing distances to access increasingly limited water. This is likely to shrink women's availability to participate in livelihoods activities and girls' ability to attend school. Further, due to distance, more women and girls may be collecting and returning with water at night, which puts them at increasing risk of experiencing GBV.³¹ As water points become increasingly distant and men and women have different opinions on the accessibility of these water points, such tensions may amount to increased GBV, including domestic violence.

On the other hand, while at first mostly partial households were exiting Aburoc, by September, households were increasingly moving as whole families.³² Though this speaks to the intensity of water shortage, it also reduces concerns of women and children disproportionately being left behind to cope with limited water and ensuing GBV issues.

Moreover, inter-communal relationships may continue to deteriorate for those residents who remain. Competition over increasingly limited resources, namely water, resulted in the deterioration of community networks in Aburoc. REACH FGD participants reported that previously, including in other times of acute water shortage in Aburoc, they could rely on one another for support.³³ However, by September, community members reported less sharing of water, food and other resources.³⁴ Further, host community members report increasingly resenting the IDP population for straining available water and food resources.³⁵ Such tensions may amount to conflict if water shortage continues. Finally, some Aburoc residents blame humanitarians for their current water shortage due to a lack of communication about viable WASH options and their longevity.³⁶ As such, tensions are likely to abound if water becomes increasingly scarce.

During times of displacement, PSNs are often left behind due to their lack of ready mobility. CCCM registered 452 people with severe physical or mental disabilities by October that would preclude them from independently leaving Aburoc.³⁷ Such persons, should they wish to, would need to be facilitated to leave.

Surge Capacity Analysis

WASH scenarios³⁸

Based on WASH operational capacity and social determinants, including refugee returns, WASH Cluster key informants predict that there are three possible WASH scenarios for Aburoc.³⁹ The scale of resulting displacement, as well as the severity of coping mechanisms employed by Aburoc residents, depend on the elected WASH scenario.

The first scenario includes a combination of short and long-term WASH approaches. From November 2018 until January 2019, Aburoc residents would rely on preexisiting water sources including SWATs, water transfers and open wells. Pending shallow ground water campaigns would increase water yield through newly constructed wells. Once water from these preexisting sources is depleted by January 2019, the humanitarian community would supply water through water trucking. By April 2019, when deep borehole drilling would be completed, water trucking would stop and community members would begin sourcing water from the boreholes which would provide long-term supply to Aburoc residents. While the provision of water up to emergency standards may provide





some pull factor to Aburoc, its effects are likely to be minimal due to limited anticipated change in provided services during this time.

The second scenario is based on no short-term WASH intervention but a long-term one. Like in the first scenario, the community would rely on preexisting water sources together with new wells from the shallow ground water campaign. However, once these sources are exhausted, the humanitarian community would not provide water trucking services in the interim before deep borehole drilling is completed. As a result, the community would see return to below minimum emergency levels of water and increasingly employ severe coping mechanisms including giving water to children first and sometimes only to children, sending children to neighbours for water, going to wells many times per day and spending more time at the wells, not bathing for several days, sharing less water with others and selling extra water to community members in the event there is surplus, as evidenced in previous months of Aburoc's water shortage. Such water precarity is likely to motivate some displacement. Protection and hygiene concerns are also likely to mount with heightened risk of waterborne disease outbreak. Yet, with clear communication about upcoming long-term solutions, the scale of displacement is likely to remain small. By April, the deep borehole drilling would be completed and the community would be able to source water sustainably through the borehole, in turn drawing some small-scale returns to the area.

The last scenario is predicated on a short-term WASH approach but no long-term solution to water shortage. Like in the first two scenarios, the community would rely on preexisting water sources together will new wells from the shallow ground water campaign. Once water is depleted from these sources, the humanitarian community would activate water trucking. However, in this scenario, deep borehole

Figure 4: Aburoc WASH scenario A

Vovember 2018 - January 2019	
February - March 2019	
April 2019 - indefinite	

Water sourced from SWATs, water transfer and existing open wells.	Janu Janu
Water sourced from additional open, shallow wells following shallow ground water campaign.	nber 2018 - Jary 2019
Preexisting water sources are exhausted. Water accessed from water trucking.	February - March 2019
Deep drilling campaign was successful. Water sourced from the deep borehole	
	April 2019 - indefinite

drilling is unfeasible resulting in prolonged water trucking. This intervention may impact community perception of humanitarian commitment in the area and thus perceptions of local employment opportunities. Coupled with increasing water supply to the area, this would create an artificial pull back to Aburoc, further straining available water sources. In the absence of a long-term solution, water trucking would be continued until the rainy season when roads would be impassable. Aburoc residents would see a dramatic decline from emergency water supply levels to below minimum emergency standards due to the lag time between the beginning of rains and the replenishment of the ground water. Residents would experience resulting truncated coping abilities and resilience as well as increased protection and hygiene concerns, including risk of waterborne disease outbreak. Such rapid change may result in community antagonism with humanitarian actors, perceived to have let standards deteriorate. Consequently, a larger number of people - including preexisting residents, those drawn by the prospect of amplified services and employment and refugee returns - would be displaced due to water shortage. This rapid displacement would also likely hamper humanitarian actors' capacity to effectively respond to population influxes in settlements of relocation in a time-sensitive manner.

However, the aforementioned WASH scenarios hinge on several key variables including the longevity of the shallow ground water campaign, appropriateness of water trucking and the viability of deep borehole drilling.

First, all three scenarios are predicated on the availability of water sourced from preexisting water points and new shallow wells from November 2018 until January 2019. However, this timeline is dependent on the degree of success of the shallow ground water campaign. Further, even if water supply is optimized from these sources, ensuing water standards are reliant on a stable, if declining, population in Aburoc. Thus, if refugee

Figure 5: Aburoc WASH scenario B

Water sourced from SWATs, water November 2018 transfer and existing open wells. Water sourced from additional open, shallow wells following shallow ground

Aburoc.





drilling Deep campaign was successful. Water sourced from the deep borehole.

Some households return to Aburoc.

Figure 6: Aburoc WASH scenario C					
November 2018 - January 2019		Water sourced from SWATs, water transfer and existing open wells. Water sourced from additional open, shallow wells following shallow ground water campaign.			
February - March 2019		Preexisting water sources are exhausted. Water accessed from water trucking.			
. April - May 9 2019		Deep drilling campaign was unsuccessful. Water continues to be sourced from water trucking.			
	1	Water trucking creates an artificial pull factor back to Aburoc, further stressing water and resources.			
June 2019	× -	Rainy season begins and roads are no longer passable to continue water trucking. Rains have not yet permeated the water table so water access drops below minimum emergency standards resulting in increased use of source coning mechanisms. Patures			

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son begins and roads are no longer to continue water trucking. Rains yet permeated the water table so ccess drops below minimum emergency standards resulting in increased use of severe coping mechanisms. Returns, IDPs and host community members are displaced.

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returns from Sudan continue to mount, this may stretch their capacity. As a result, if water from these sources is exhausted sooner than expected, short-term strategies would need to be prolonged.

Second, the scenarios are based on humanitarians' decision on whether or not to adopt water trucking. Solidarites International's feasibility study demonstrates the physical feasibility of water trucking in Aburoc during the dry season.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, humanitarian actors may choose to activate or not activate water trucking based on a number of key limitations of the approach. Water trucking is effectively employed as a short-term solution as it prevents acute water shortage and large-scale displacement. However, it is not an efficient long-term strategy due to its high costs, feasibility only during the dry season, creation of an artificial pull factor and construction of community expectations that humanitarians will always cater for water shortages in this way and resulting degradation of community resilience.

Lastly, the only long-term solution, deep borehole drilling, for water supply in Aburoc is contingent on the findings of the ongoing hydrogeological survey. If the results are positive, partners would begin exploring possible sites within Aburoc for drilling and would need to raise funds for the expensive intervention before drilling in advance of the rainy season of 2019. If the results are negative, then humanitarians will either need to extend water trucking as per scenario C or let populations make informed decisions about whether

to leave or stay and activate coping mechanisms. Even if the results are positive and drilling commences, drilling may find saline instead of drinkable water, resulting in those same challenges.

In the interim, there are several key supplemental strategies that partners highlight may work to mitigate displacement, protection issues and sustain positive humanitarian relationships the community. First, strengthening advocacy with affected populations, especially with refugee returns who have not benefited from previous information campaigns, would support community relations in the transparent communication of WASH options and the possibility of water shortage.⁴¹ Second, scale-up of services in identified relocation sites proportionate to population inflows may help prevent an artificial pull factor back to Aburoc.⁴²

Service mapping

With current and predicted future movement to settlements along the western bank, humanitarian services can play a critical role in minimising the negative impact of displacement.

In particular, food security and livelihoods (FSL) and shelter will likely continue to be priority needs. Consistent food assistance remained a top concern for departing households. Further, given the high levels of population movement, in the absence of population fixing, food assistance risks being misallocated. In addition, all REACH FGD participants reported that they intended to relocate away from Aburoc permanently.⁴³ Nevertheless, many relocating households will lack

Figure 7: Partners' self-reported surge capacity for interventions in Aburoc residents' primary sites of relocation⁴⁴

Seator	Settlement of	C	C	Partners able to provide	Activities able to provide to new
Sector	relocation	Current partners	Current activities	surge support	arrivals in surge capacity
	KOOOK	NKDU, HDU, Cardaid Warld	Cash transfers, agriculture and	NKUG, HUG	Fooding livelihood projects each
		Vicion SSLIDA Wor	supplemental feeding market		transfore, coods and tools
		Child Holland	support		
FSI	Lul	World Vision NRDC	Livelihood projects, cash transfers	World Vision NRDC HDC	Food assistance, supplemental
IUL	Lui	HDC	market support		feeding livelihood projects cash
		1100	manor oupport		transfers, seeds and tools
	Wau Shilluk	Cordaid	Livelihood activities	Cordaid	Food assistance, supplemental
					feeding, livelihood projects
-	Kodok	DRC	None	DRC	Shelter materials and NFIs
Shelter/NFI	Lul	DRC	Shelter and NFI materials	DRC	Shelter materials and NFIs
	Wau Shilluk	DRC	Shelter and NFI materials	DRC	Shelter materials and NFIs
	Kodok	World Vision	Water supply, HH latrines, hygiene	World Vision	Water supply, WASH NFIs
	Lat	Marld Misian	promotion, WASH NEIS	Marid Misian	Water events, excitation, WACLINEL
WASH	Lui	world vision	water supply	world vision	hygiene promotion
	Wau Shilluk	None reported		World Vision, Solidarites	Water supply, sanitation, WASH NFIs,
				International	hygiene promotion
	Kodok	None reported		None reported	
Health	Lul	None reported		None reported	
	Wau Shilluk	IMC	Health services	IMC	Health services
	Kodok	World Vision	Training, learning materials,	World Vision	Education services (to a limited
			temporary facilities, teacher		extent)
Education			incentives		
	Lul	None reported		None reported	
	Wau Shilluk	None reported		None reported	
	Kodok	World Vision	OTP and TSFP for severe and	World Vision, IMC	OTP and TSFP for severe and
N - 14			moderate child malnutrition		moderate child malnutrition, meals
Nutrition	1.4	Mana and at a		News and stand	ready-to-eat (MRE)
	LUI		Nu drition of some incom		Nutritional convince
	VVau Shiiluk		Nutritional services		
	ROUOK		General protection, child protection		child protection, psychosocial support
	Lul	DRC	General protection	DRC Non-Violent Peace	General protection, CBV services
Protection	Lui	DINO		Force	General protection, GDV services
	Wau Shilluk	DRC WOCO	General protection, child protection	DRC WOCO Non-Violent	General protection, child protection
	au onmun	2,		Peace Force	psychosocial support, GBV services





accommodation. Even those relocating persons with current shelters may be displaced due to land disputes with returnees as many IDPs along the western bank are living in abandoned shelters, including 82% of assessed settlements in Malakal County with IDPs who reported that IDPs lived in abandoned homes as of September.⁴⁵

Figure 7 highlights partners' self-reported service surge capacity in the primary settlements of relocation. Surge capacity is largest across all sectors in Kodok due to preexisting operations in this location. Nevertheless, with the largest population inflows occurring in Lul, this demonstrates an area for needed scale-up. While FSL, shelter and non-food items (NFIs), WASH and protection partners indicate sufficient surge capacity to meet needs of currently displaced populations, those for health, education and nutrition highlight challenges related to scale-up possibility. Given some displaced FGD participants' self-prioritization of health and education, expanding such services in line with evidenced population growth will be critical to prevent a pull factor to Malakal PoC site. In addition, as Aburoc demonstrates - likely short-term - increasing water supply, access to services such as food, shelter and education may counter the pull factor of water access in Aburoc, thereby reducing movement to Aburoc and the reoccurrence of the same crisis in future years.

Conclusion

With impending water shortage in Aburoc, long-term planning for water provision is critical to minimise protection issues and displacement from the settlement. Humanitarians are faced with three key WASH scenarios based on the longevity of shallow well water availability, appropriateness of water trucking and viability of deep borehole drilling. In the absence of a long-term solution, humanitarian interventions may exacerbate community tensions and degrade resilience. Continued perceptions of insecurity in some settlements-

Endnotes

- 1. WASH Cluster, Ensuring the Centrality of Protection in WASH Programming in Aburoc, September 2018.
- 2. Reported by humanitarian partners in a WASH Cluster meeting in Malakal, November 2018.

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9. DRC, CCCM Aburoc Flow Monitoring, October 2018.

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17. DRC, Aburoc, Kodok and Wau Shilluk: Context Snapshot, October 2018; According to FGD participants interviewed by REACH in Malakal PoC, October 2018.

According to FGD participants interviewed by REACH in Malakal PoC, October 2018.
 According to FGD participants interviewed by REACH in Malakal PoC, October 2018.
 Ibid.

of-origin, GBV, inter-communal tensions and inability of some PSNs to independently move present likely protection challenges in the face of water shortage whether in the short or long-term. Further, expansion of any services in Aburoc is likely to impact perceptions of employment in the area, acting as a pull factor to the settlement. Regardless of the scenario selected, the extent of the challenges described above will likely depend in part on community outreach and expansion of services in identified settlements of relocation proportionate to population inflows. While partners indicate scale-up capacity in Kodok, Lul and Wau Shilluk for FSL, shelter and NFI, WASH and protection, that for health, education and nutrition presents an upcoming challenge.

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Protection Cluster

About REACH

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

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Visit www.reach-initiative.org and follow us @REACH_info.

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- 22. Ibid. 23. Ibid.
- 24. Ibid.
- 25. Protection Cluster, Aburoc Mission Report, September 2018.
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- 31. Protection Cluster, Intentions Survey, September 2018.
- 32. According to FGD participants interviewed by REACH in Malakal PoC, October 2018.
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- 34. According to FGD participants interviewed by REACH in Malakal PoC, October 2018.
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39. According to WASH technical key informant interviewed by REACH in Malakal, November 2018.

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