

# Rapid Needs Assessment: Twic County

March 2023 | South Sudan



## KEY MESSAGES

### Population movement

- Throughout 2022, **recurring conflict shocks beginning in February drove the displacement of at least 36,000 people to informal internally displaced persons (IDP) sites within Twic County.**<sup>1</sup>
- According to focus group discussions (FGD) conducted with displaced participants, and key informant interviews (KIIs) with service providers, local stakeholders and community leaders, **conflict shocks occurring in January and February 2023 may have displaced an additional 7,000 to over 10,000 people to these sites**, estimates which require further verification.<sup>2</sup>

### Food security and livelihoods

- Assessment findings suggest that **shocks and consequent displacement in Twic since February 2022 have resulted in the total or near-total disruption of livelihoods activities for IDPs in assessment locations.** FGD participants in all 6 assessment locations widely reported that shocks and displacement had disrupted their ability to practice the livelihoods activities they had relied on in their locations of origin, including cultivation, pastoralism, and sale of goods to generate cash.
- Since displacement, the number of food sources available to IDPs has reportedly diminished significantly. **FGD participants in all groups conducted with IDPs on food security and livelihoods reported relying primarily on wild foods, and consuming foods which are making people sick.** Findings suggest that reliance on such foods will likely not be enough to fill consumption gaps currently or in the near-term, particularly as **participants in most groups reported that even wild foods are likely to exhaust prior to the onset of the lean season in April 2023**, with few alternative avenues for obtaining food during this period.
- FGD participants reported that **choice of displacement location was broadly driven by two considerations: physical safety and availability of food.** Findings from some discussions indicated that **at least some IDPs were being forced to make consequential choices between their physical and food security.** Participants in several FGDs conducted raised concerns regarding safety and security in their IDP site. However, moving to other IDP sites perceived to be safer was reportedly not considered a viable option. **These participants reported concerns that the larger populations in such camps would result in a further tightening of their already limited access to food**, due to higher demand for similarly scarce food sources.

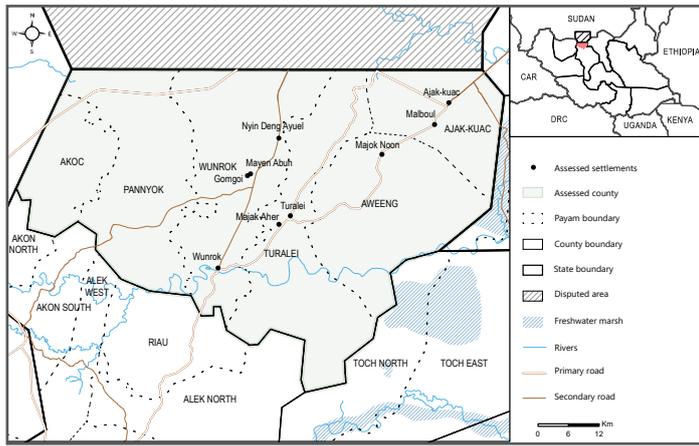
### Acute malnutrition

- Rapid middle-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screenings, conducted by GOAL, a nutrition partner operating in Twic working jointly with REACH on this assessment, with IDPs in assessment locations, suggest that **23.66% of screened children across Nyin Deng Ayuel, Ajak Kuac, Majok Noon, and Majak Aher IDP sites were experiencing proxy Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) as determined by MUAC. In Nyin Deng Ayuel, the most populous IDP site in the county, 28.01% of screened children were identified as proxy GAM.**
- 28.72% and 20.61% of screened pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in Nyin Deng Ayuel and Majok Noon IDP sites respectively were identified as proxy GAM.**
- As proxy GAM by MUAC cannot directly inform as to whether the cause of malnutrition is related to health or food security, due to different aggravating and mitigating factors for food security and nutrition outcomes, further assessment is necessary to develop a more accurate picture of the acute malnutrition situation in the county.<sup>3</sup>

### Humanitarian assistance

- Half-ration<sup>4</sup> general food distributions are reportedly planned to occur monthly from February-August 2023 for just over three quarters of the people estimated to need assistance during the lean season. Additionally, food assistance for assets (FFA) interventions are reportedly planned for March-August 2023 for the remaining quarter of the population estimated to need assistance during the lean season. Together, this assistance should help mitigate some of the consumption gaps reported by FGD participants during data collection. **However, the reported total or near-total disruption of livelihoods opportunities and engagement, means that additional assistance is likely required to avoid exacerbation of current levels of acute food insecurity and assist populations to adequately meet consumption needs.**

Map 1: Assessment Coverage



## CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Since February 2022, multiple and continuing conflict shocks have driven the displacement of at least 36,000 people to informal internally displaced persons (IDP) sites within Twic County.<sup>1</sup> Such displacement-catalyzing shocks reportedly occurred at least in February, October, and December 2022, and then again in January and February 2023.<sup>2</sup> Further exacerbating needs for recent IDPs are reports that conflict shocks have expanded in territory impacted since December 2022, and that property, productive assets, and homes have been increasingly targeted, which has reportedly had material consequences for the food security of displaced populations.<sup>4</sup>

Shocks and displacement have occurred in the context of a poor food security situation in Twic. In March 2022, using data collected in September–November 2021 prior to initial shocks in the county, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysts estimated that 94,647 people were in Phase 4 (emergency-level) food insecurity, making up 35% of the population.<sup>5</sup> In the most recent IPC analysis in October 2022, prior to shocks and displacement occurring in December 2022, January and February 2023, analysts estimated that 81,280 people were experiencing Phase 4 food insecurity, making up 30% of the population.<sup>6</sup> For the projection periods, IPC analysis estimated the situation would further deteriorate, with 94,826, or 35% of people experiencing Phase 4 in the post-harvest period (December 2022–March 2023) and 108,373 or 40% of people experiencing Phase 4 during the 2023 lean season (April–July 2023).<sup>7</sup>

IPC analysis for projections rested on assumptions that the conflict driving shocks in Twic would likely continue. During this period, conflict reportedly expanded in the area, further driving displacement from the northern part of the county, which may have further exacerbated food security needs.<sup>8</sup>

Projection period	December 2022–March 2023	April–July 2023
Population in P4	94,826	108,373
% of total population in P4	35%	40%

## METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

Primary data collection took place between the 23rd of February and 2nd of March in Nyin Deng Ayuel, Gomgoi, Ajak Kuac, Majok Noon, and Majak Aher IDP camps in Twic County. Additional data collection was conducted from the 16th of February to the 3rd of March remotely, and in Turalei, Wunrok, and Mayen Abun in Twic County. Camps were chosen because they comprised the three most populous camps in the county, and the two camps closest to the restricted-movement zone, which may increase residents' vulnerability.

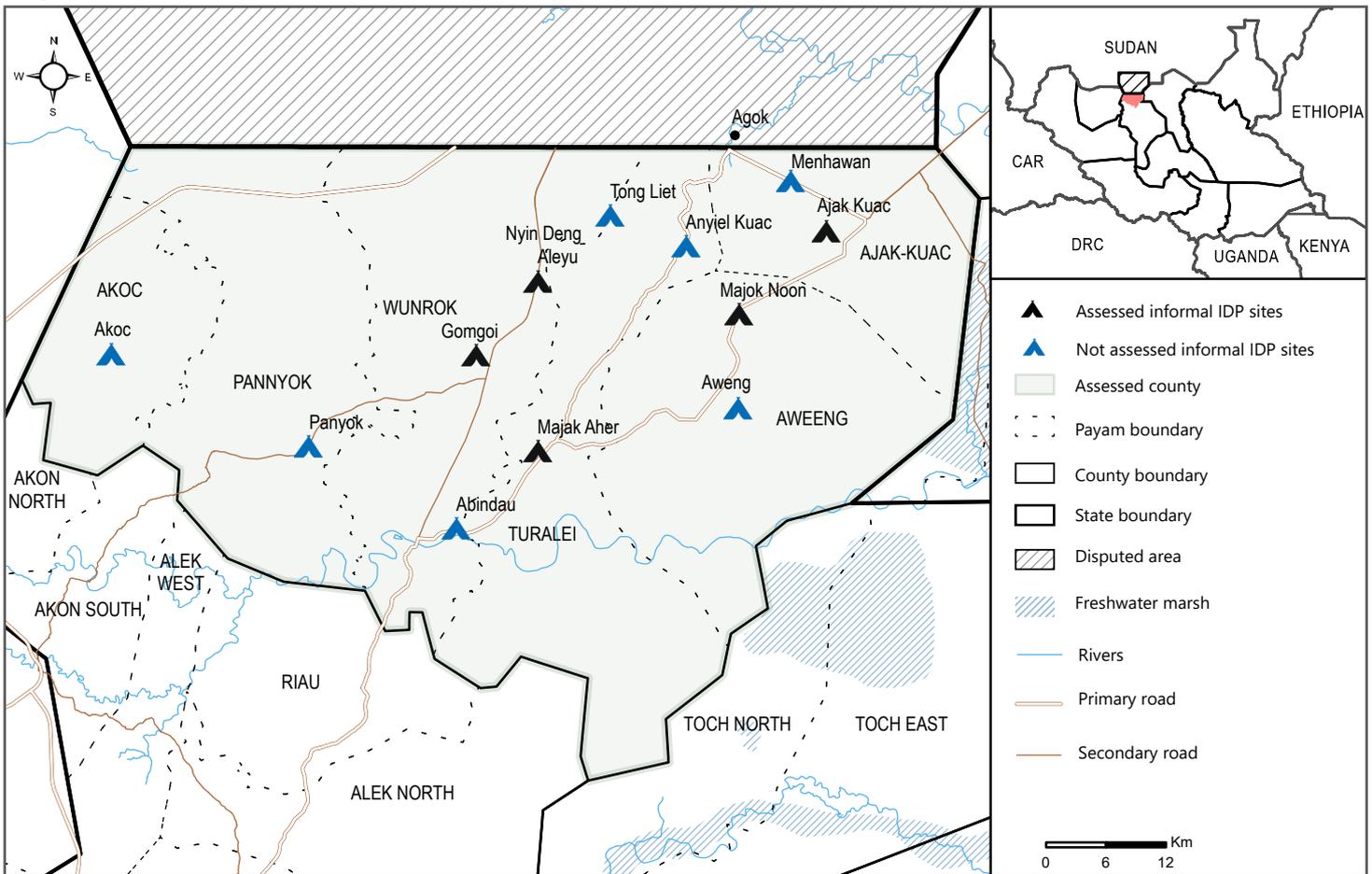
Data was collected via 56 focus group discussions (FGDs), 55 with IDPs and 1 with host community participants. FGDs focused on population movement (30), food security and livelihoods (FSL) (23), and accountability to affected populations and conflict sensitivity (AAP/CS) (3). For FGDs conducted on population movement, 16 of 30 FGDs were conducted with IDPs who had displaced in January or February 2023 and the remaining 14 were conducted with IDPs who had displaced at some point during 2022. For FGDs conducted on FSL and AAP/CS, date of displacement was not a selection criteria, though approximately participants in approximately half of the FGDs had displaced at some point in 2022, and half in 2023. There was no notable difference in experience reported between these groups. Notably, data collection focused exclusively on conditions in displacement sites and as such, findings cannot speak to host community situations.

Semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with the HFA provider for Twic County, along with 5 health and/or nutrition providers operating in the county. Four informal KIIs were also conducted with service providers, local stakeholders and community leaders operating in Twic to develop a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of shocks, displacement and needs.

The assessment was conducted jointly with GOAL, a nutrition partner operating in Twic, which conducted rapid middle-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screenings on 1,389 children between 6 and 59 months, and 539 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in assessment locations. GOAL used an exhaustive approach to determine a proxy global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate. Height was used as a proxy for age in children and PLW self-reported as pregnant or lactating. These rates are included in these assessment findings and should be considered as proxies, as MUAC measurements are more sensitive for younger children (under 2 years of age) and will likely not detect older children that are malnourished according to the weight for height (WHZ) acute malnutrition criteria. According to the food security cluster handbook, previous survey data on methodologies for measuring malnutrition suggests GAM by MUAC is typically the lower than GAM by WHZ. This means findings may under-represent true GAM. Further assessment is required to verify findings.<sup>8</sup>

Assessment findings are not statistically generalisable and should be considered **indicative** of the situation at the time of data collection.

Map 2: Restricted-movement zone, as of March 2023



To gain an indicative snapshot of humanitarian needs in the county following these shocks and displacement, REACH, in partnership with GOAL, a nutrition service provider operating in Twic County, conducted a rapid assessment on shocks and displacement, and their impacts on access to livelihoods opportunities and food in Twic County.

## POPULATION MOVEMENT

**Repeated and ongoing conflict-shocks in Twic County and in the bordering Abyei Administrative Area (AAA), beginning in February 2022 and continuing through to the time of data collection in February and March 2023, have driven the displacement of more than 36,000 individuals to informal IDP camp sites throughout Twic County.**<sup>1</sup> FGDs conducted with IDPs in six such sites, along with discussions with service provider KIs, local stakeholders and community leaders, indicated that as recently as January and February 2023, conflict-shocks drove the displacement of a further 7,000 to over 10,000 people, an estimate which requires further verification.<sup>2</sup>

**IDPs were reportedly unable to return to their areas of origin as the shocks which displaced them were ongoing at the time of data collection.** According to FGD participants and service provider KIs operating in the county, these shocks have seemingly created an area in which mobility is restricted in the county. This area extends south from the border of Abyei, between the two axes which travel from Twic to the AAA, until Ajak Kuac

payam on the eastern edge, and an area north of Nyin Deng Ayuel IDP camp on the western edge. According to service provider KIs, few if any service providers are able to operate in this area, and according to FGD participants, few if any civilians remain there.

**Findings indicate that insecurity-based mobility restrictions which impacted livelihoods likely began for many people residing throughout this area in February 2022 even if people were not yet forced to displace.** In 15 of 29 FGDs conducted with IDPs on population movement, participants reported that mobility restrictions began in February 2022. In 5 further FGDs, participants reported that restrictions began in October 2022, suggesting an expansion of the area in which people experienced mobility restrictions throughout the February-October 2022 period. These restrictions likely had consequences for the ability of then-remaining populations to engage in livelihoods activities – limiting the space in which participants could take their cattle for pasture safely, or access to gardens and farms farther away from the homestead, and to displace if need be.

**In December 2022, and January and February 2023, the locations impacted by shocks reportedly expanded. As a result, people who had previously had their livelihoods impacted by mobility restrictions were forced to displace, leading to total or near-total displacement from these areas.** In 28 of 29 FGDs conducted with IDPs on population movement, participants reported total or near total displacement from their areas of origin, resulting in the reported

widespread desertion of the area in which mobility was reportedly restricted by the time of data collection in February and March 2023.

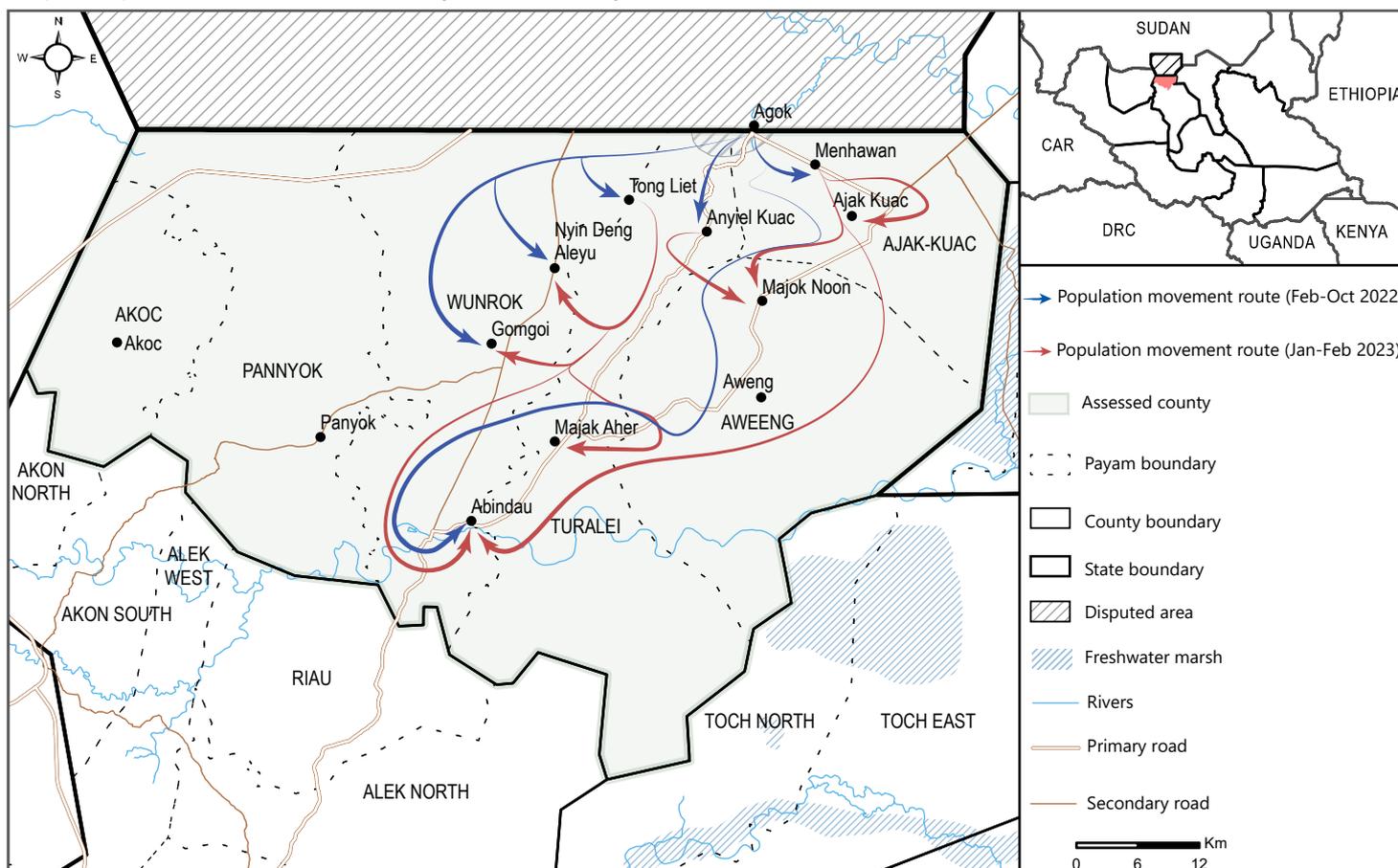
**Assessment findings, corroborated by displacement data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), indicate that displacement between February and December 2022 occurred to at least 10 informal IDP sites throughout Twic County.**<sup>1</sup> In January and February 2023, at least two of these sites which bordered the restricted-movement zone (Menhawan and Tong Liet) were reportedly attacked, and IDPs residing in these sites (over 2,000 according to IOM) again displaced to other camps in Twic, according to FGD participants with direct knowledge of events, and which was corroborated by service provider KIs.<sup>2</sup>

**At the time of data collection in late-February and early-March 2023, at least 32,000 IDPs remained displaced in the remaining 8 camps to which conflict-affected people reportedly displaced in Twic.**<sup>3</sup> REACH conducted FGDs in 6 of these camps, chosen because they comprised the three most populous camps in the county, and the three camps closest to the area in which mobility was reportedly restricted, which may increase residents' vulnerability.

Discussions revealed two primary, though for many participants, not coinciding, reasons for choice of displacement location: availability of wild foods and physical safety.

**Physical safety in particular was reported as a pull**

Map 3: Population movement, February 2022-February 2023



**factor.** In 7 of 9 population movement FGDs conducted in Nyin Deng Ayuel and Gomgoi IDP camps, and in 5 of 6 population movement FGDs conducted in Majak Aher camp, all three of which are in the vicinity of security forces, safety and the presence of protective forces were identified as a primary reason for displacing to those particular locations.

**Conversely, participants in some FGDs raised concerns regarding safety and security in their IDP site.** However, moving to other IDP sites perceived to be safer was reportedly not considered a viable option. **These participants reported concerns that the larger populations in such camps would result in a further tightening of their already limited access to food,** due to higher demand for similarly scarce food sources.

**These findings suggest that in some cases food security rather than physical safety, food security is a paramount concern for IDPs in camps throughout Twic.** Regardless of the time of displacement, displaced FGD participants in 29 of 30 FGDs reported that shocks and displacement had resulted in the disruption of livelihoods activities, or loss of assets or property. These disruptions and losses reportedly resulted in severely limited access to food for people once displaced (see disruption of livelihoods and access to food sections).

**For people displaced since December 2022, data from FGD discussions suggest shocks may have also resulted in the destruction of homes and assets in locations of origin,** a finding corroborated by a service provider KI who reported that the mode of shocks has changed in the past

two months, with violence increasingly targeting houses and assets.<sup>1</sup> In 15 of 30 FGDs conducted with people displaced between December 2022 and February 2023, participants reported the destruction of their homes or assets during the shocks which drove their displacement. **These findings suggest that even if conditions allowed for returns, many IDPs would have few assets to return to, which will likely reduce the chance of successful reintegration of self-sustaining livelihoods practices upon travel back to locations of origin.**

## DISRUPTION OF LIVELIHOODS

**Assessment findings suggest that shocks and consequent displacement in Twic since February 2022 have severely limited livelihoods opportunities and activities for IDPs in the county.** FGD participants in all 6 assessment locations widely reported that shocks and displacement had disrupted their ability to practice the livelihoods activities they had relied on in their locations of origin, including cultivation, pastoralism, and sale of goods to generate cash.

**Participants in nearly all FGDs conducted with displaced people on food security and livelihoods (20 of 22 discussions) reported that both shocks and displacement had disrupted their ability to cultivate.** For participants in 5 of 22 FGDs, the conflict-shocks which spurred their displacement had also interrupted their cultivation cycle, leaving them without harvested food stocks to rely on during the December 2022–March 2023 post-harvest period. For participants in other FGDs, shocks had resulted in the loss of assets necessary for cultivation, and displacement had resulted in little space for them to successfully cultivate. Participants in 20 of 22 FGDs reported that a lack of tools, seeds, or cultivation space, or some combination of the three, had rendered cultivation in IDP camps impossible. Participants in 8 of 22 FGDs reported that even were such items available, the lack of food access in camps meant that most people would not have the energy to cultivate.

**Compounding these impediments to cultivation, which were reportedly driven by the conflict-shocks which catalyzed displacement, were reports that flooding in 2022 had also acted as a spoiler to successful cultivation during the previous cultivation cycle.** Participants in 11 of 22 FGDs conducted with displaced people reported that floods had disrupted cultivation cycles, whether prior to displacement in areas of origin, or during attempts to cultivate once in the camps. REACH Area of Knowledge (AoK) data corroborates this finding: KIs in 62% of assessed settlements in Twic reported that flooding was a shock impacting livelihoods in the post-harvest period in November 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**Conflict shocks and associated movement restrictions likely served to limit pasture space for displaced populations' cattle herds prior to displacement, and reportedly resulted in the total loss of livestock owned by many IDPs once displaced.** Participants in 14 of 22 FGDs conducted with IDPs on food security and

livelihoods reported that during the conflict-shocks which resulted in their displacement, all cattle and other livestock had been taken. This removal reportedly left IDPs with no cattle or other livestock to rely on once displaced; for consumption coping through the use of milk, or for livelihoods coping, through asset-of-last resort liquidation.

**Participants in over half of the FGDs conducted with displaced people on food security and livelihoods reported that shocks, displacement, or both, had disrupted their ability to engage in cash-generating activities as a livelihoods mechanism.** Reported reasons why ranged, but collectively fell into two primary categories: loss of assets (both productive, like tools, and general, like stored harvest), and few opportunities for successful collection and sale of items such as thatched grass, firewood, or water. The loss of productive assets likely has impacted IDPs' ability to produce goods for sale. The loss of general assets, such as stored harvest or livestock, likely impacted IDPs' ability to sell already-owned goods.

While participants in 5 of 22 FGDs reported attempting to engage in cash-generating livelihoods attempting to engage in cash-generating livelihoods activities, such as collecting and selling firewood or water from water points, thatching grass, or brewing alcohol for sale, participants in these groups reported that perceived insecurity outside camps, the presence of too many sellers of such items, and the low cash-value of such items, meant these livelihoods approaches were not successful in helping them meet consumption gaps. Instead, **participants in all these groups reported relying primarily on wild foods, rather than market-purchased foods obtained using cash-generating activities.**

**Wild food collection, which participants in all 22 FGDs conducted with displaced people on food security and livelihoods reported relying on nearly exclusively, is seemingly the primary livelihoods mechanism for IDPs in the sites assessed in Twic.** Notwithstanding its primacy, participants in 7 of 22 FGDs reported that movement, either for wild food collection, or for item-for-sale collection, or generally, outside camps was unsafe, suggesting that **at least some IDPs were making high risk journeys to access food, and engage in sale-of-collected-items livelihoods activities.**

## ACCESS TO FOOD

**Shocks, displacement, and residence in camps has reportedly greatly diminished displaced people's access to food in assessed sites.** The reported large-scale disruption of previously practiced livelihoods activities, and widespread loss of productive assets which might be used to cultivate, or sold to purchase food, has seemingly resulted in the total or near total reduction of pathways via which IDPs in assessed locations might obtain food.

In all 11 FGDs in which participants were asked about their primary food sources prior to displacement, participants reported having relied primarily on cultivated sorghum.

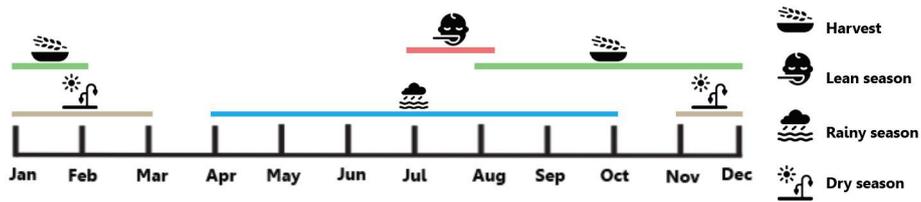
Other reported sources of food used prior to displacement included market-purchased items, including meat and fish (8 of 11 and 6 of 11 FGDs in which this question was asked respectively). Additionally, participants in 6 FGDs reported augmenting their diets with self-caught fish, and in 5 FGDs with some wild foods. These findings are corroborated by reporting from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).<sup>1</sup>

**Since displacement, the number of food sources available to IDPs has reportedly diminished significantly. FGD participants in all 22 groups conducted with IDPs reported relying primarily on wild foods; atypical despite wild foods usually making up one component of people’s diets in this livelihoods zone.**<sup>2</sup> According to participants in all groups, this includes consuming foods which are making people sick, including cowhides and cows which have died of disease (reported in 7 groups), lallop leaves, and excessive consumption of water lilies and tamarind (reported in 9 groups each). These foods are reportedly consumed all or most days, by everyone in the community, including children and older persons (reported in 14 groups). **Findings suggest that**

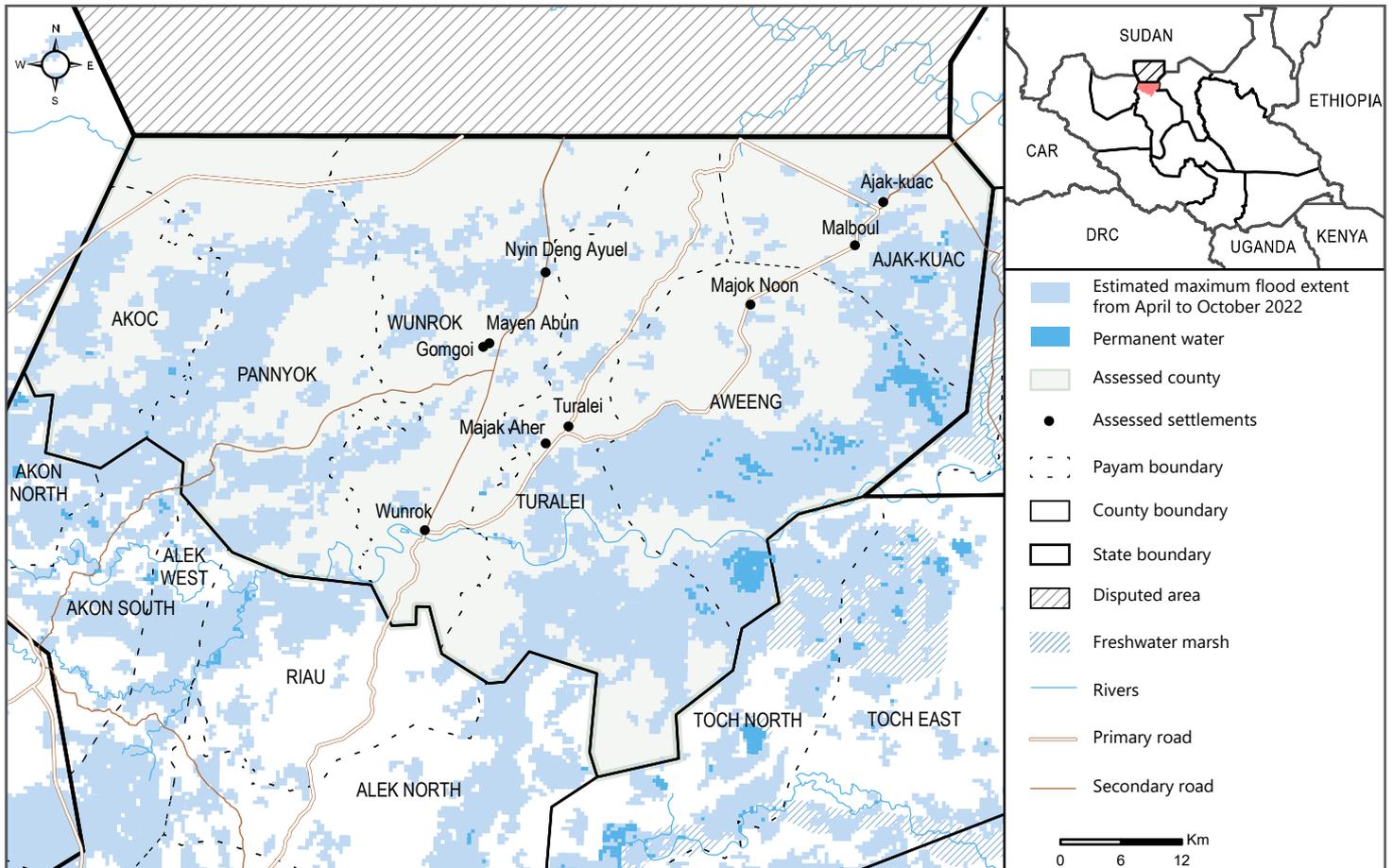
**reliance on such foods is likely not enough to meet consumption gaps, particularly as participants in most groups reported that even wild foods are likely to exhaust prior to the onset of the lean season in April 2023.**<sup>3</sup>

**Food donated by, or begged from, the host community, also may not a viable option for IDPs, because of reported disruptions to host communities’ own livelihoods activities.** The use of begging as a livelihoods coping mechanism was reported in 10 of 22 FGDs conducted with displaced people on FSL, and the presence of relatives in or near an IDP site was reported as a pull factor in 11 of 30 FGDs conducted with displaced people on population movement, which may suggest IDPs planned to rely on their relatives for food access. However, in 3 of 22 FGDs with IDPs on FSL, participants explained that flooding shocks had disrupted host communities’ cultivation cycles in 2022, leading to small or non-existent harvests. This finding is corroborated by REACH’s shocks monitoring index (SMI): from September 2022 onwards, during the harvest period, flooding impacts in Twic County were classified as high or very high.<sup>4</sup> According to REACH

Figure 1: Seasonal calendar, Twic County. Source: FEWS NET<sup>5</sup>



Map 4: Flood extent, April-October 2022. Source: UNOSAT



Area of Knowledge (AoK) data, in November, during the post-harvest period, KIIs in 62% of assessed settlements in the county reported that flooding was a shock impacting livelihoods.<sup>1</sup> As a result, in 1 group, FGD participants explained that host communities had been unable or unwilling to share food, reportedly reducing access to begging or reliance on relatives as an option for obtaining food.

**The consequence of consumption-coping-only access to food has seemingly been the development of a lean season for IDPs in Twic artificially extended by shocks and displacement beyond the April-July period.** Limited ability to engage in previously practiced livelihoods activities has reportedly resulted in extremely limited access to food, and few alternative pathways for obtaining it not only during the April-September lean season period, but throughout most of the year.

## COPING

**Disrupted livelihoods and subsequently limited modalities for accessing food have reportedly resulted in the emergence and use of negative consumption and livelihoods coping strategies in assessed locations in Twic.**

In 14 of 22 FGDs conducted on FSL with IDPs, **participants reported perceiving that either that no one or nearly no one in the camps had been able to adapt their livelihoods practices since displacement**, or that the only way to adapt was through the collection and sale of items like firewood or thatching grass, or through the provision of aid to IDPs. While participants in some of these groups reported the use of item-collection-and-sale as an adaptation approach, it is unlikely that such activities have helped IDPs successfully meet consumption needs. Participants in 10 of 22 groups reported either that insecurity or flooding was impacting their ability to collect items for sale, that there are too many sellers and not enough buyers for such items, that cash generated from sales is too small to purchase enough food, or some combination of the three.

Similar barriers were reported for wild food collection. Participants in 7 of 22 FGDs reported that movement, either for wild food collection, or for item-for-sale collection, or generally, outside camps was unsafe, suggesting that **at least some IDPs were making high risk journeys to access food, and engage in sale-of-collected-items livelihoods activities.**

**Likely further limiting livelihoods adaptation is reportedly low asset ownership by IDPs.** Participants in 7 of 22 FGDs conducted on FSL reported that they had no assets of last resort to liquidate for money to purchase food. In 2 groups, participants reported that they had sold their clothes – their only remaining property – for money to purchase food. **Participants in 14 of 22 FGDs reported that all their cattle and livestock had been taken by attackers during shocks, leaving them**

**without these assets to liquidate once in camps. The reported loss of assets has also seemingly impacted consumption coping strategies.** Without cattle, IDPs cannot rely on milk to mitigate consumption gaps, as is common in the Northwestern Flood Plain Sorghum and Cattle livelihoods zone in which Twic County lies.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, participants in some FGDs conducted with IDPs on population movement reported staying in camps perceived to be unsafe – closer to the area where mobility is reportedly restricted – because food availability and access was better. In 4 of 8 FGDs conducted in these sites, participants reported that they would not move to a safer location due to a perception that larger populations in those sites would further reduce their already limited access to food, due to the higher demand for similarly scarce food sources. These findings suggest that **proximity to insecurity itself may be being used as a livelihoods coping strategy, with some IDPs putting themselves at greater risk of physical harm to increase their access to food.**

As a result of limited livelihoods adaptation opportunities, IDPs in assessed locations are seemingly relying primarily on negative consumption coping mechanisms in attempts to close consumption gaps. In 12 of 22 FGDs on FSL conducted with displaced people, participants reported that adults were skipping meals so children could eat, or that people were going days without eating, or reducing the number of meals eaten per day, or some combination of the three. In 1 group, participants reported that children, as well as adults, were going days without eating. As discussed previously, **participants in all FGDs conducted on FSL with IDPs reported the consumption of wild foods which are making people sick, an indicator that severe consumption needs may have been unmet at the time of data collection.**

## ACUTE MALNUTRITION

**Shocks, displacement, disruptions to livelihoods, subsequently limited access to food, and few available avenues for adaptation have likely had significant consequences for displaced peoples' food security and nutrition status, which was estimated in October 2022 to be IPC Phase 4, critical, for the October-November 2022 periods and December 2022-July 2023 periods.**<sup>2</sup>

As part of this assessment, GOAL, a nutrition partner operating in Twic conducted rapid MUAC screenings on 1,389 displaced children between 6 and 59 months, and 539 displaced pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in assessment locations. GOAL used an exhaustive approach to determine a proxy<sup>3</sup> global acute malnutrition rate (GAM) for these locations to provide an indicative picture of the acute malnutrition situation amongst IDPs in assessed locations. Height was used as a proxy for age in children and PLW self-reported. This proxy data should be considered indicative and it should be noted that results are more sensitive in children under 2 years old and may not detect malnutrition in older children who are malnourished by the WHZ criteria.<sup>4</sup> According to the

Children 6-59 months	Nyin Deng Ayuel	Ajak Kuac	Majok Noon	Majak Aher	Total
Total screened:	639	177	253	320	1389
SAM:	15	7	9	12	43
SAM %:	2.35%	3.95%	3.56%	3.75%	3.10%
MAM:	164	25	49	70	308
MAM %:	25.67%	14.12%	19.37%	21.88%	22.17%
GAM:	179	32	58	82	351
GAM %:	28.01%	18.08%	22.92%	25.63%	23.66%

(The above table outlines the total number of children between the ages of 6 and 59 months screened; the number of children determined to be severely acutely malnourished (SAM) and the percentage of the total; the number of children determined to be moderately acutely malnourished (MAM) and the percentage of the total; the number of children determined to be globally acutely malnourished (GAM), which is the total of children in SAM and MAM, and the percentage GAM of the total.)

food security cluster handbook, previous survey data on methodologies for measuring malnutrition suggests GAM by MUAC is typically the lower than GAM by WHZ. This means findings may under-represent true GAM. Further assessment is required to verify findings.<sup>1</sup>

Findings suggest that a significant number screened children in Nyin Deng Ayuel, Ajak Kuac, Majok Noon, and Majak Aher IDP sites were experiencing acute malnutrition at the time of data collection, with **23.66% of children screened across these sites identified as GAM. In Nyin Deng Ayuel, the most populous IDP site in the county, 28.01% of screened children were identified as proxy GAM.**

Findings also suggest that a significant number of PLW in Nyin Deng Ayuel and Majok Noon, Ajak Kuac and Majak Aher IDP sites were experiencing acute malnutrition at the time of data collection. **Taken together, 21.15% of PLW screened across these sites were identified as GAM.** Such acute malnutrition scores may suggest widespread morbidity and/or that very large individual food consumption gaps exist.<sup>2</sup>

PLW	Nyin Deng Ayuel	Ajak Kuac	Majok Noon	Majak Aher	Total
Total screened:	188	83	165	103	539
MUAC < 23 cm	54	11	34	15	114
MUAC < 23 cm %:	28.72%	13.25%	20.61%	14.56%	21.15%

(The above table outlines the total number of self-reported PLW screened; the number of PLW with a MUAC of less than 23cm, and the percentage.)

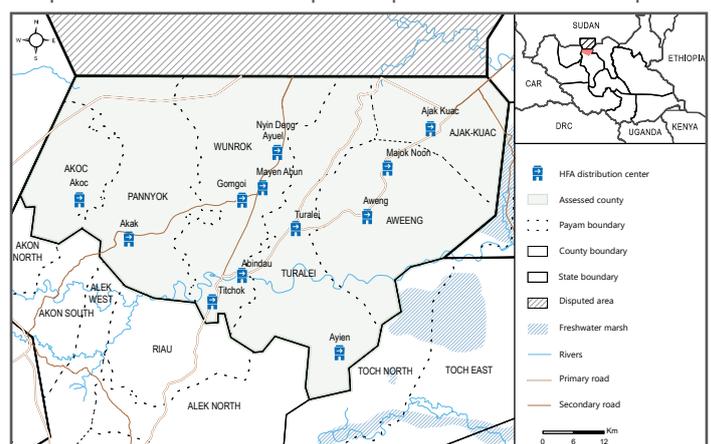
affected populations were re-directed to Majok Noon. In February 2022, following the first round of internal displacement in Twic, three additional distribution points were created in Abindau, Gomgoi and Nyin Deng Ayuel IDP sites to serve the populations there from February until December.

In 2023, half-ration general food distributions are reportedly planned to occur monthly from February-August 2023 for just over three quarters of the people estimated to need assistance during the lean season. Additionally, food assistance for assets (FFA) interventions are reportedly planned for March-August 2023 for the remaining quarter of the population estimated to need assistance during the lean season. Together, this assistance should help mitigate some of the consumption gaps reported by FGD participants during data collection.

**However, the reported total or near-total disruption of livelihoods opportunities and engagement, means that additional assistance is likely required to avoid exacerbation of current levels of acute food insecurity and assist populations to adequately meet consumption needs.**

Potentially compounding this problem were reports from a second service provider working in food security and livelihoods in Twic, who noted that disruptions to registrations, like the conflict shocks which have driven displacement, may prevent full registration if registration teams cannot safely access affected areas.<sup>3</sup> Such a shock occurred during data collection, disrupting one such registration. **Should the conflict shocks which have occurred on a regular basis since February 2022 continue, they may impact vulnerable populations**

Map 5: Food distribution points planned for 2023 response



## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

### Humanitarian Assistance (HFA)

According to the general food distribution (GFD) service provider KI interviewed in Twic, in 2022, humanitarian food assistance was provided at 9 food distribution points (FDPs) monthly from January-August, with a ration of cereals, pulses, salt and oil distributed for 6 household members meant to last 15 days. In two of these sites, Akoc and Akak, flooding disrupted distributions in January and February 2022, and affected populations were re-directed to AbeeK, which served as a temporary FDP. In July and August, flooding disrupted distributions in Ajak Kuac, and

**not only by displacing them, but by preventing their registration with service providers, impeding their eligibility for critical humanitarian assistance.**

### Health & nutrition

According to health and nutrition service provider KIs operating in Twic, shocks and displacement have impacted the provision of health and nutrition services in the county, though mostly not through direct impacts to facilities themselves.

**All 5 providers operating in the county reported that the conflict-shocks which have driven displacement since February 2022 have also negatively affected service provision, whether through inability to work in certain areas due to insecurity, like Ajak Kuac payam, or through the inability to resupply sites regularly due to flooding or insecurity.** Two of 5 providers reported that displacement had acted as a shock impacting their programming: for these providers, the expansion of populations present in catchment areas, due to IDP arrivals, reportedly resulted in stressed drug supply.

Providers in 3 of 5 KIs reported that shocks have also impacted affected populations' health seeking behavior. These KIs reported that populations in certain areas were afraid to travel to access health or nutrition facilities due to insecurity-related concerns. Combined with reports in 3 KIs that insecurity-related concerns have also either shut down facilities, or caused the suspension of operations for brief periods of time, **findings suggest that continued conflict-related shocks, real or perceived, were affecting the provision of health and nutrition services in Twic.**

KIs suggested that the total or near-total disruption to livelihoods and limited food access reported in FGDs focused on FSL and population movement also reportedly had an impact on the provision of nutrition services in Twic. **One service provider KI reported that failed cultivation in 2022 and subsequent lack of stored harvest during the 2022-2023 post-harvest period has led to severe hunger, and the reliance of households on nutrition supplements as a food source for entire households.**

## CONCLUSION

Conflict shocks beginning in February 2022 and continuing on through the time of data collection in February and March 2023 have driven the displacement of at least 36,000 people to informal IDP camps throughout Twic County. **Shocks have reportedly expanded in area, and may represent a break in the assumptions on which IPC projection analysis for the 2022-2023 post-harvest and 2023 lean season periods were predicated.**

The effects of shocks and displacement reportedly has resulted in total or near-total livelihoods disruptions for

IDPs and severely limited their access to food. Assessment findings suggest that displaced people were engaging in extreme coping mechanisms to mitigate consumption gaps, including the widely reported consumption of wild foods, and foods which are making people sick. Some IDPs were also reportedly remaining in, or traveling to highly insecure areas for better access to food – suggesting a forced choice between physical and food security.

Despite utilization of such coping mechanisms, IDPs in FGDs conducted on FSL widely reported a continued inability to adapt livelihoods successfully access sufficient food. In this context of total or near-total livelihoods disruptions, findings indicate that planned humanitarian interventions, such as food distributions, while helpful, may not be adequate to help vulnerable populations meet consumption needs.

**As the lean season moves closer, reported exhaustion of currently relied-on wild foods and the absence of newly-available wild foods may preclude IDPs' use of the primary reported food source. Reported absence of land to cultivate, or tools and seeds to cultivate with will also likely result in a non-productive lean season, resulting in little or no yields during the harvest period. While the provision of cash might allow IDP access to market-purchased food, further information is needed to ensure potential deconfliction with host communities, and continued market functionality in the event of an influx of humanitarian provided cash.**

Finally, additional nutrition assessments may provide a fuller view of the acute malnutrition situation in the county, not just among IDPs, and would likely be helpful during future IPC classifications.

### ABOUT REACH

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).

## ENDNOTES

### PAGE 1

<sup>1</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED). Dashboard, available [here](#); IOM displacement data; Coordinated Assessments. "[IRNA: Twic County.](#)" 20 September 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with a stakeholder KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with FGD participants in IDP sites throughout Twic County.

<sup>3</sup> Food Security Cluster Indicator Handbook, available [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Food rations are budgeted for 15 days for 5 household members.

### PAGE 2

<sup>1</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; ACLED Dashboard; IOM displacement data; Coordinated Assessments. "[IRNA: Twic County.](#)" 20 September 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with a stakeholder KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with FGD participants in IDP sites throughout Twic County; ACLED Dashboard.

<sup>3</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with FGD participants in IDP sites throughout Twic County.

<sup>4</sup> IPC. "[South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for February - March 2022 and Projections for April - July 2022.](#)" 9 April 2022.

<sup>5</sup> IPC. "[South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.](#)" 3 November 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> IPC projection data. October 2022.

<sup>8</sup> "Proxy Global acute malnutrition (GAM) by MUAC is the prevalence, or proportion, of children ages 6-59 months in a given population considered severely acutely malnourished (SAM) or moderately acutely malnourished (MAM) based on their mid-upper arm circumference measurements." Food Security Cluster Indicator Handbook, available [here](#).

### PAGE 3

<sup>1</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; ACLED Dashboard; IOM displacement data; Coordinated Assessments. "[IRNA: Twic County.](#)" 20 September 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with a stakeholder KI operating in Twic County; Discussions with FGD participants in IDP sites throughout Twic County.

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<sup>1</sup> IOM displacement data. December 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County; IOM displacement data. December 2022.

<sup>3</sup> IOM displacement data. December 2022.

### PAGE 5

<sup>1</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County.

<sup>2</sup> More details on the Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology can be found in the [AoK Terms of References](#).

### PAGE 6

<sup>1</sup> FEWS NET. "[Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan.](#)" 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County.

<sup>4</sup> REACH. "Shocks Monitoring Index: Flooding in Twic County, 2022."

<sup>5</sup> Due to an increase climatic shocks since 2019, the FEWS NET seasonal calendar may no longer accurately reflect seasonal patterns in South Sudan.

### PAGE 7

<sup>1</sup> More details on the Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology can be found in the [AoK Terms of References](#).

<sup>2</sup> IPC. "[South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation October - November 2022 and Projections for December 2022 - March 2023 and April - July 2023.](#)" 3 November 2022.

<sup>3</sup> FEWS NET. "[Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for South Sudan.](#)" 2018.

<sup>4</sup> "Proxy Global acute malnutrition (GAM) by MUAC is the prevalence, or proportion, of children ages 6-59 months in a given population considered severely acutely malnourished (SAM) or moderately acutely malnourished (MAM) based on their mid-upper arm circumference measurements." Food Security Cluster Indicator Handbook, available [here](#).

### PAGE 8

<sup>1</sup> Food Security Cluster Indicator Handbook, available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> IPC Acute Malnutrition Reference Table, available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Discussions with a service provider KI operating in Twic County.