

Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, South Sudan

October - December 2018

REACH An initiative of
IMPACT Initiatives,
ACTED and UNOSAT

Introduction

In the fourth quarter of 2018, Upper Nile State (UNS) saw localised insecurity in Nasir County and population inflows from neighbouring Sudan and Ethiopia amplified by the onset of the dry season. Insecurity and reported returns may have also perpetuated food insecurity, limited access to protected water sources and sub-standard internally displaced persons' (IDPs') shelter conditions. Data on needs in UNS is required to inform the humanitarian response. However, information gaps exist due to different regional dynamics and limited access throughout much of the state.

REACH has been assessing hard-to-reach areas of South Sudan since December 2015 in order to inform the response of humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites. Data is collected on a monthly basis through key informant interviews from settlements across the region. To ensure information provided on settlements was current, REACH interviewed KIs who were either new arrivals from the assessed settlement or had contacted an individual from there within the last month.

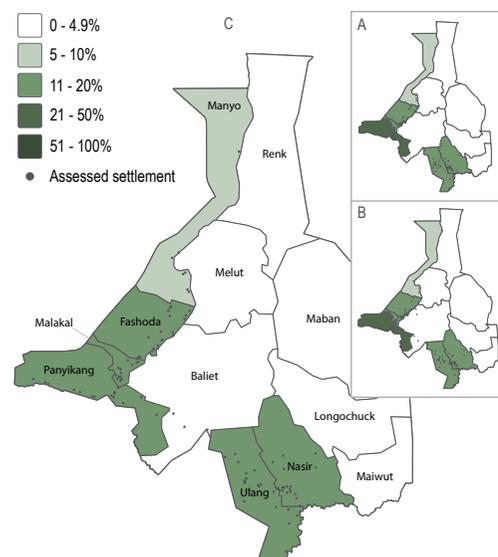
of key informant interviews conducted: **490**

of assessed settlements: **188**

of counties covered: **6 (of 12)**

of focus group discussions conducted: **13**

Map 1: Assessment coverage in UNS in October (A), November (B) and December 2018 (C)



The REACH team consistently covered Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda, Manyo, Ulang and Nasir counties from October to December 2018 (Map 1).

In the fourth quarter of 2018, REACH interviewed 490 key informants (KIs) from 188 settlements in six counties of UNS. This data was supplemented with thirteen focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with new arrivals from Fashoda, Manyo, Malakal and Panyikang counties in Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site on displacement, food

security, education, nutrition and protection in their previous settlements-of-residence. Primary data was triangulated with secondary information and past REACH assessments.

This situation overview (SO) evaluates changes in observed humanitarian needs across UNS in the fourth quarter of 2018. The first section analyses displacement and population movement to and from the area, while the second section disaggregates trends on access to food and basic services, including sections on food security and livelihoods (FSL); protection; WASH and health; shelter and non-food items (NFIs); and education.

Information is presented across two geographic zones in UNS: the western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties) and southeastern UNS (Nasir and Ulang counties).

Population Movement and Displacement

Improved security and family reunification-driven movement

In the fourth quarter of 2018, localised confidence-building measures implemented by armed actors across parts of UNS supporting free movement,¹ coupled with seasonal road passability during the dry season, contributed to an apparent increase of population movements toward family reunification (Map 2). However,

METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Upper Nile State, REACH uses primary data from key informants who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a location or "Area of Knowledge" (AoK). Information for this report was collected from key informants in Malakal PoC site in Upper Nile as well as in Akobo, in neighbouring Jonglei State, in October, November and December 2018.

In-depth interviews were conducted over the first three weeks of each month. The standardised survey tool included questions on displacement trends, population needs, food security and livelihoods, and access to basic services. After data collection was completed, all data was aggregated at settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal response. When no consensus could be found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting.

Data was analyzed at the county level using descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis. Only counties with interview coverage of at least 5% of all settlements² in a given month were included in analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month vary. In order to reduce the likelihood that variations in data are attributable to coverage differences, over time analyses were only conducted for counties with at least 70% consistent payam³ coverage over the period.

1. Reported by UNMISS and humanitarian partners to an Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG) in Malakal, December 2018; WFP, First River Convoy in Five Years, October 2018.
2. To calculate the percentage of AoK coverage, the total number of settlements per county is based on OCHA settlement lists in addition to new settlements mapped by KIs reached each month.
3. Payams are the administrative unit at the sub-county level in South Sudan.

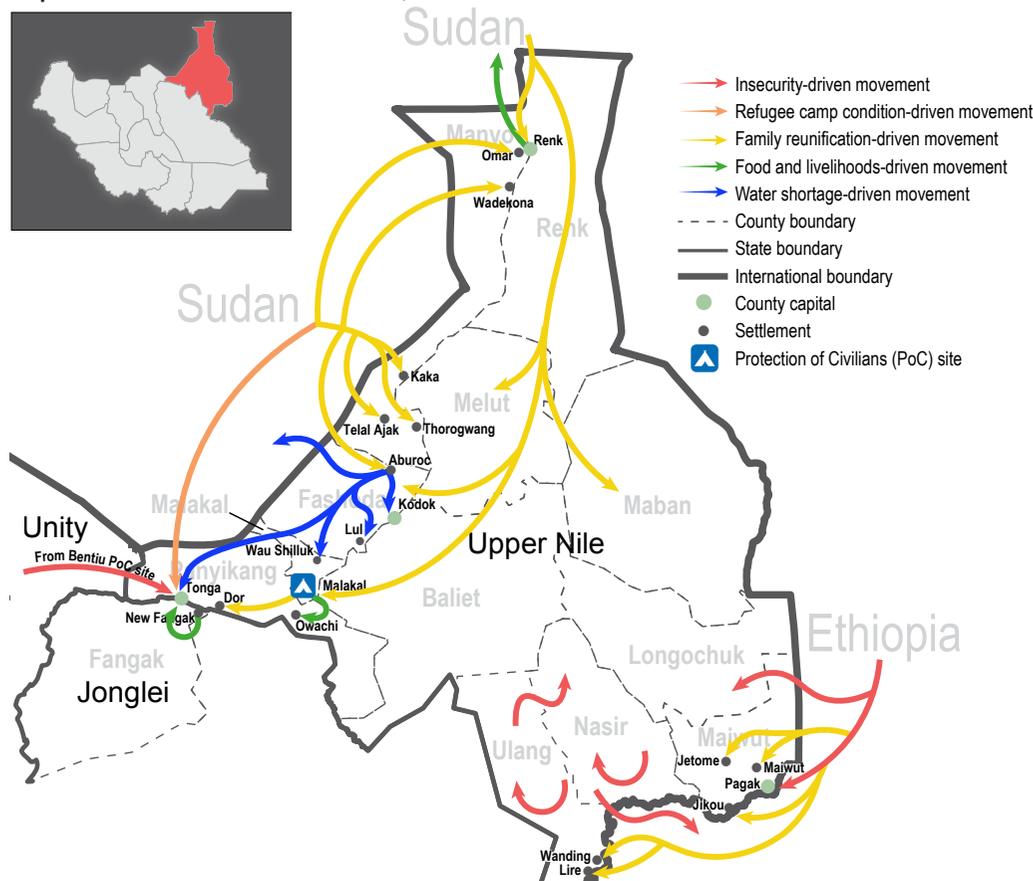
cross-border movement appears to be mixed and driven by an array of push and pull factors as outlined in subsequent sections.

Parts of southeastern UNS saw increasing movement into settlements outside of primary population centres. During this period, humanitarian partners have noted self-reported spontaneous returns from neighbouring Ethiopia into Ulang, Maiwut and Longochuk counties. Whilst initial information suggests that this inflow back into South Sudan may also be partly driven by insecurity in refugee camps in Gambella, more data is needed to better understand these movement dynamics, including their scale. Of concern to returnees' vulnerability is that all three counties have been classified as IPC Phase 4 ('Emergency') as of September 2018,⁴ indicating very high levels of food insecurity.

Movement continued from the White Nile region of Sudan toward central UNS and the western bank in this quarter. REACH port and road monitoring in Renk Town tracks population flows between and through Renk and Sudan. Data from this activity suggests a net population inflow as opposed to a net outflow over the fourth quarter, with an average of 37 individuals entering South Sudan versus one individual exiting per day (with the intention to permanently stay) in December, though not all entry points to Renk are monitored systematically.⁵ Inflows to South Sudan via Renk town primarily reported Melut, Maban and Fashoda counties as well as to Malakal PoC site as their final destinations, with the largest

share reporting their primary motivation being family reunification (28% in December).⁶ This movement was likely augmented by the return of seasonal labourers who completed the sim sim and sorghum harvests in Sudan in late December.⁷ Some additional cross-border movement may have been due to push factors such as poor conditions in refugee camps in Sudan, see 'food, water and service-driven movement' section for more details.

Map 2: Movement into and out of UNS, October-December 2018



Aburoc in Fashoda County reportedly also saw some new arrivals from South Kordofan in this period (940 individuals between November and December).⁸ Some households returning by way of Malakal PoC site and Aburoc may have merely used them as family reunification hubs before select, largely able-bodied male, household members proceeded to settlements-of-origin to assess security and available services.⁹

Food, water and service-driven movement

In the fourth quarter, movement to access services continued in UNS (Map 2). Primary data suggested that displacement was higher in Fashoda County: In December, 14% of assessed settlements reported a large-scale displacement out of the settlement in the last three months. Most of this movement from Fashoda County settlements was likely to other areas of the county as, of assessed Fashoda County settlements with IDPs who had arrived in the last three months, the largest share (67%) reported that these IDPs had relocated from other settlements within Fashoda County. Reflectively, due to continued water shortage, 378 individuals were displaced out of Aburoc in Fashoda County between November and December to Lul and Kodok (Fashoda County), Wau Shilluk and Malakal PoC site (Malakal County) and to Sudan.¹⁰ In addition to the water challenges in Aburoc, Fashoda County saw declining access to food in this period (0% of assessed Fashoda County settlements reported adequate access to food in December as compared with 29% in October), which may have further contributed to evidenced displacement. For more details see the food, security, and livelihoods section of this SO.

Food insecurity and livelihoods also motivated outflows from UNS in the fourth quarter. Data from REACH Renk port and road monitoring demonstrated that 32% of households leaving South Sudan through Renk in December were motivated by a lack of food or jobs in their previous settlements.¹¹

4. IPC, South Sudan Key Findings: September 2018-March 2019, September 2018.

5. REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, December 2018](#).

6. Ibid.

7. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, November 2018.

8. DRC, CCCM Aburoc data, November-December 2018.

9. Ibid; According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, December 2018.

10. DRC, CCCM Aburoc data, November-December 2018.

11. REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, December 2018](#).

Although some population inflows from Sudan were encouraged by a pull factor (family reunification), others may have been more strongly motivated by a push factor (poor living conditions). In particular, movement from the South Kordofan region of Sudan to the western bank was reportedly amplified due to increasingly poor conditions in refugee camps.¹² Arriving households primarily cited disease outbreaks, self-reportedly high mortality and limited water resources in these camps as the chief reason for their return.¹³

Nevertheless, some IDP returns to Panyikang County were also observed, reportedly due to improved market access and intentions to cultivate.¹⁴ Namely, previously displaced populations reportedly returned from New Fangak in neighbouring Jonglei State to Tonga and from Malakal PoC site to Dor and Owachi.¹⁵ Reflective of increased IDP returnee presence, 40% of assessed settlements in Panyikang County reported the return of former IDPs in the last three months as of December. However, movement to eastern Panyikang County reportedly remained limited due to anticipated concerns over land disputes.¹⁶

Insecurity-driven movement

Despite some positive developments in security and access across UNS in this period, some counties continued to see movement motivated by real or perceived insecurity both within and outside South Sudan (Map 2).

Likely attributable to sustained tensions in this area, culminating with some insecurity

in Nasir County in late December,¹⁷ primary data suggested continued displacement in Ulang and Nasir counties in the fourth quarter: in December, 26% of assessed settlements with IDPs reported that the most recent IDPs had arrived in the last three months. This displacement largely manifested as internal movements between and within the two counties (50% and 20% of assessed Ulang County settlements with IDPs who had arrived in the last three months reported that these IDPs came from Nasir County and other settlements in Ulang County, respectively) in addition to some outflows to Ethiopia through Jikmir in Nasir County.¹⁸ However, the scale of such movement was likely limited as no assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported a large-scale displacement out of the settlement between October and December 2018.

Some households also reportedly came to UNS due to insecurity elsewhere. Several hundred IDP returns arrived in Tonga in Panyikang County from Bentiu PoC site in neighbouring Unity State due to reported intercommunal violence and heightened criminality.¹⁹ According to humanitarian partners, some spontaneous returns were also registered from Ethiopia to Maiwut and Longochuk counties, movement which may have been spurred by increasing tensions between South Sudanese and Anyuak host communities in Ethiopia, including a December cattle raid.²⁰ However, the longevity of the these households' residence in Longochuk and Maiwut counties may be impacted by continued projected food insecurity.²¹

Finally, despite localised confidence-building efforts, household decisions about where and how long to settle back in South Sudan were reportedly partially attributable to security considerations. In Manyo and Panyikang counties, the increased presence of different armed actors reportedly dissuaded movement to settlements outside of major population centres.²² Further, inflows from Sudan remained primarily partial families, with respondents reporting that they anticipated evaluating security and service conditions over the next three months before making the decision about whether to bring the rest of their families.²³

Situation in Assessed Settlements

Food security and livelihoods (FSL)

Despite expected post-harvest improvements, food insecurity and limited livelihoods opportunities remained challenges across assessed UNS counties in the fourth quarter of 2018. Primary data suggested stable, but assistance-dependent, access to food in Ulang and Nasir counties, some deterioration in access to food in Fashoda and Manyo counties and continually limited access to food in Panyikang County. However, the severity of hunger may have been relatively stable as no assessed UNS settlements with inadequate access to food reported that hunger was the worst it could be any time in this quarter. The largest share of all assessed UNS settlements with inadequate access to food attributed their hunger to the stopping of food distributions

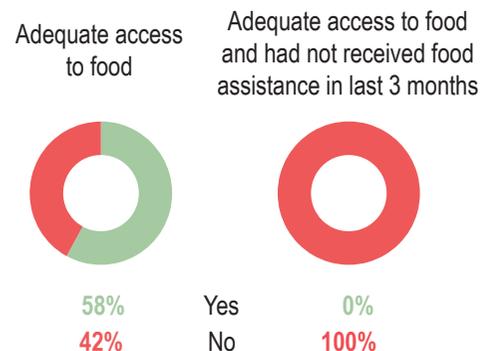
(30%), though the reasons for reliance on food aid varied by region.

Southeastern UNS (Ulang and Nasir counties)

Access to food in assessed counties of southeastern UNS was higher and more stable than in the western bank, though may reflect the impact of humanitarian food assistance programmes. Over half (58%) of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported adequate access to food in December as compared with 46% in October.

Improved access to food was likely, in part, attributable to food assistance (Figure 1). By December, 63% of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements reported accessing food assistance in the last three months, the highest of assessed UNS counties outside of Malakal County (93% in December). However, all assessed settlements with adequate access to food also reported receiving food assistance in

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed SE UNS settlements reporting adequate access to food, December 2018



12. DRC, Tonga and Panyikang Protection Factsheet, December 2018.

13. Ibid.

14. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, December 2018.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Reported by humanitarian partners, December 2018.

18. UNHCR, Humanitarian Situation Report, November 2018.

19. DRC, Tonga and Panyikang Protection Factsheet, December 2018.

20. REACH, Port and Road Monitoring: Akobo, [October](#), [November](#) and December 2018.

21. IPC, South Sudan Key Findings: September 2018-March 2019, September

2018.

22. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, December 2018; REACH, Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, [November](#) and [December 2018](#).

23. REACH, Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, [September-December 2018](#); According to FGD participants interviewed in December 2018.

the last three months and no settlement without assistance reported adequate access to food. The primary reasons reported by assessed settlements with inadequate access to food by December remained that it was unsafe to access land (50%) and the stopping of food distributions (39%). This likely reflects that people are unable to access land to cultivate due to insecurity, the same insecurity that may be restricting access to the food assistance needed since cultivation was limited.

As a result, needs remained high in assessed southeastern settlements without access to food, the vast majority of which were not benefitting from food aid. Nearly all (94%) of assessed southeastern UNS settlements without access to food assistance reported that households ate one meal or less per day in December, the highest across assessed UNS counties. In December, assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements without access to food assistance also reported the highest rates of severe coping mechanisms during times of hunger including going days without eating (94%), only children eating (94%), sending family to displacement camps (31%) and selling more livestock than usual (100%). Such severe coping mechanisms may further limit future aid-independent food security.

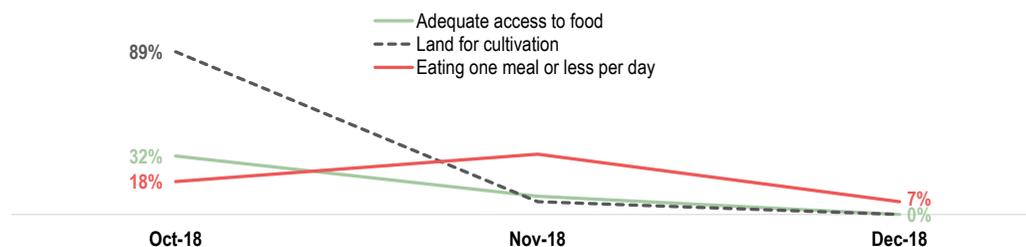
Western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties)

Restricted food production coupled with limited food assistance continued throughout the western bank in this quarter. At the same time, assessed settlements across the western bank

increasingly reported eating wild foods as a part of a main meal (from 43% in October to 67% in December), likely representing seasonal increased dependence during the dry season when wild foods are both more available and other food sources are less so. Access to food varied across the western bank in the fourth quarter: demonstrating signs of deterioration in Fashoda and Manyo counties, slight improvement but continually low in Panyikang County and slight improvement but continually high in Malakal County. Such variation in access to food may have been attributable to differences in reported food assistance coverage amidst cultivation challenges.

Food security in Fashoda and Manyo counties likely deteriorated in the fourth quarter of 2018 (Figures 2 and 3). The proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food declined from 29% and 43% in October to 0% and 0% by December, respectively. In counties that are largely dependent on cultivation for livelihoods and food (97% of assessed settlements in Fashoda and Manyo counties in December reported cultivation as their primary source of food), such evidenced

Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food and frequency of meals versus land for cultivation, Manyo and Fashoda counties



declines in access to food may have resulted from dry spells which, in turn, minimised the harvests during this period:²⁴ of assessed settlements in Manyo and Fashoda counties reporting inadequate access to food in December, the primary reported reasons were lack of rain which reduced the harvest (52%) and the cultivation period was too short (34%). In addition, no assessed settlements in Manyo and Fashoda counties reported access to land for cultivation in December, a sharp decline from 89% in October, which may have resulted from increased population inflows primarily to urban centres, perceptions of insecurity outside of densely populated areas and the dry spells which degraded the land that was accessible.²⁵

As a result, of assessed Fashoda County settlements in December reporting inadequate access to food, 100% described hunger as severe, with limited options to cope with reduced food access. FGD participants reported that in Manyo County, food availability in this period remained stable in settlements between Thorogwang and Kaka while that in settlements between Kaka and Wadekona settlements was more limited (Map 2). At the same time, food

assistance remained limited in these counties as, in December, 90% of assessed settlements in Fashoda and Manyo counties reported they had not accessed food assistance in the last three months.²⁶

Food security remained a primary concern in Panyikang County despite slight improvements in this quarter due to some cultivation and increased access to markets. The proportion of assessed Panyikang County settlements self-reporting access to enough food over the quarter remained relatively stable: 30% in October as compared with 40% by December. Some cultivation did occur in Panyikang County during the harvest period as 93% of assessed settlements in December reported access to land for cultivation and 87% reported cultivating crops for sustenance, the highest across UNS after Malakal County. At the same time, access to markets also increased: 100% of assessed Panyikang County settlements reported availability of a functional market in

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting severe coping mechanisms, Fashoda County

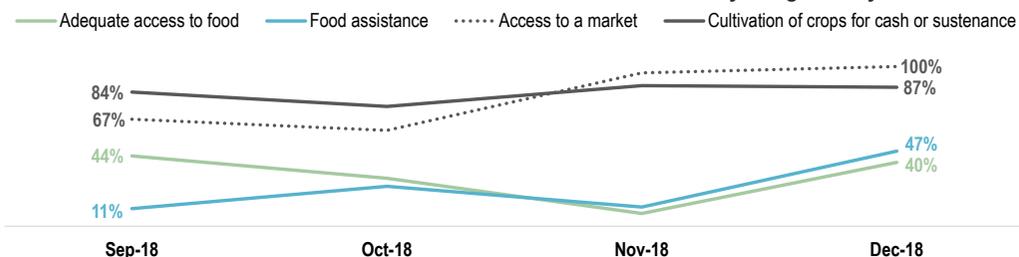
	Skipping meals	Eating wild foods	Only letting children eat	Slaughtering more livestock
Sept-18	14%	9%	0%	29%
Oct-18	43%	52%	24%	43%
Nov-18	32%	16%	4%	0%
Dec-18	9%	45%	0%	0%

24. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, October and December 2018.

25. Ibid.

26. AoK data mirrors WFP distribution schedules from this period which included no food distribution sites in Manyo County and only select ones in Fashoda County: WFP, IRRM Weekly Updates, October-December 2018.

Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food versus access to markets, food assistance in the last three months and cultivation, Panyikang County



walking distance in December as compared with 60% in October. The expansion of markets was reportedly linked with free river movement from Tonga to Malakal Town following reports of improved access.²⁷ Such improved market access may have also been a pull factor as FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site reported some households returning in order to cultivate and sell goods in Panyikang County.

Nevertheless, long-term food security may be stymied by a small harvest and thus market-dependent economy in Panyikang County (Figure 4). The largest share (73%) of assessed Panyikang County settlements in December reported that food was primarily bought with cash. This could suggest that despite some farmers' planting crops, harvests were limited. However, this reliance on markets is driving food insecurity for many settlements. The primary reported reason for hunger among assessed Panyikang County settlements reporting inadequate access to food was that food prices were too high (88%). Thus, harvests may struggle to last through the lean season resulting in only further increasing

market prices for food.

Moreover, demonstrated improvement in access to food may be partially attributable to the increased proportion of assessed Panyikang County settlements reporting receiving food assistance in the last three months (from 11% in September to 47% by December). The increased river access may have increased access to food assistance as well as markets in both Tonga and Malakal PoC site.²⁸

Further, livestock-rearing and thus access to animal food sources may have decreased in Panyikang and Fashoda counties in this quarter. In December, 100% and 60% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food in Panyikang and Fashoda counties, respectively, reported that a livestock disease outbreak had a significant impact on ability to access enough food. This is likely reflected in that 54% of assessed settlements in Panyikang and Fashoda counties did not regularly consume dairy or milk in December. Further, 38% of assessed Panyikang and Fashoda county settlements reported selling more livestock than usual in December. During the dry season, running from October

until March, western bank populations largely depend on dairy and other animal products,²⁹ so such patterns exacerbated by severe coping mechanisms may impact future FSL of these counties. Given current and future strains, reported inflows to Panyikang County were still assessing food security before determining the longevity of their stay.³⁰

In comparison, access to food in Malakal County improved, perhaps resulting from increased food assistance: 79% of assessed Malakal County settlements reported adequate access to food while, correspondingly, 93% reported access to food assistance in the last three months in December, as compared with 55% and 59%, respectively, in October.

Protection

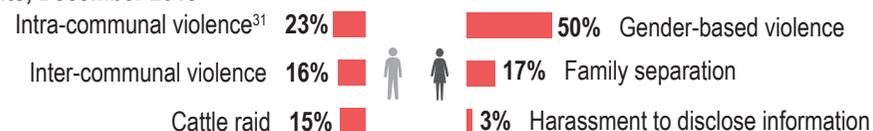
Fear of insecurity across assessed areas of UNS continued to drive protection concerns in the fourth quarter. The proportion of assessed UNS settlements reporting most people did not feel safe most of the time was comparable to that in the third quarter: 44% in December versus 34% in September. However, general perceptions of insecurity may not reflect consistent fears of political conflict but rather of heightened criminality-related violence around the festive season. The primary protection concerns in

the fourth quarter demonstrated little change from the second and third quarters,³² with assessed settlements majorly reporting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and family separation for women, and intra-communal violence and cattle raids for men (Figure 5). The spike in concerns of intra-communal violence (reported by 23% of assessed UNS settlements reported killing within the tribe or violence between neighbours in December as compared with only 7% in September) may be attributable to increasing rates of spontaneous returns which may spark land disputes, while continued concerns of cattle raids follow seasonal trends of cattle grazing at the onset of the dry season. Further research is needed to better understand this emerging trend, especially in light of persistently high levels of inter-communal violence in other parts of South Sudan.

Southeastern UNS (Ulang and Nasir counties)

Protection concerns in assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements concentrated on violent crime: 40% of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported a conflict resulting in the death of at least one civilian in December, comparable to 50% in October. Such indicators likely reflect sustained tensions

Figure 5: Most cited protection concerns for men and women (18 years and older) in assessed UNS settlements, December 2018



27. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, December 2018; Reported by humanitarian and UNMISS partners at an ICWG meeting in Malakal, November 2018.
 28. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, December 2018.
 29. FEWSNET, Livelihoods Zones for the Republic of South Sudan, August 2018; According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, January 2019.

30. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, December 2018.
 31. Intra-communal violence represents the aggregation of two response options: killing or injury from a member of the same tribe and violence between neighbours.
 32. REACH, [Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, April-June 2018](#); REACH, [Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, July-September 2018](#).

across southeastern UNS that mounted with localised insecurity in Nasir County. Cattle raiding is most common in the dry season with cattle migrating further from settlements toward grazing areas, which in turn may spark inter-communal violence. As the dry season will continue through the first quarter of 2019, cattle raiding and inter-communal violence are likely to remain primary protection concerns. Further, likely corresponding with the continued displacement, a large share (81%) of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reported the presence of unaccompanied minors by December.

Western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties)

In comparison, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting crime as a protection concern was higher in the western bank. Likely as a result of increased financial demands during the festive season, 15% of assessed western bank settlements reported an incident of looting in December. Crime spiked sharply in Malakal County where 64% of assessed settlements reported an incident of looting in December as compared with 24% in October. This may be attributable to the urbanisation of the county's population, centralised near to Malakal Town and the PoC site, as well as increased economic pressures on its residents to support family members newly arriving to the county from other settlements in UNS and Sudan.³³ Malakal also saw a spike in reported suicides in December due to similar economic pressures.³⁴

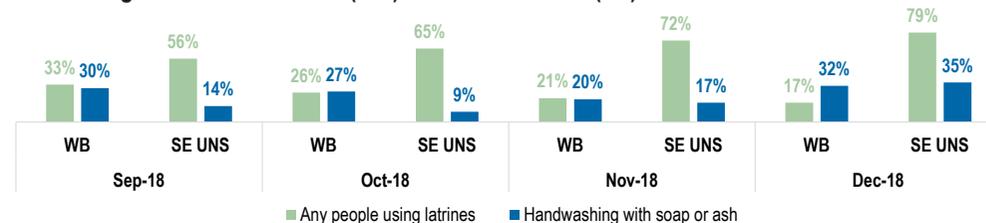
Reflective of contextual developments, concerns of forced recruitment for boys in Panyikang County increased: 60% of assessed settlements reported forced recruitment as the primary protection concern for boys (younger than 18 years), an increase from 5% in October.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Health

WASH and health indicators demonstrated little change between the third and fourth quarters of 2018, with WASH needs remaining high.

In the western bank, access to clean water was consistently the worst of assessed areas of UNS, with the largest proportion of assessed settlements sourcing water primarily from unprotected sources: only 3% of assessed western bank settlements reported access to a functional borehole by December, while the largest portion (78%) fetched water primarily from rivers. Nevertheless, assessed settlements in Malakal and Fashoda counties increasingly sourced water from more protected sources including 14% of assessed Fashoda County and 36% of assessed Malakal County settlements sourcing water from boreholes or tap stands in December as compared with 4% and 0%, respectively, in July. Moreover, in Fashoda County, the onset of the dry season and some reliance on seasonal water sources may have contributed to the increasing distance walked in order to fetch water: in December, 14% of assessed Fashoda County settlements reported that water sources were not available in both the dry and rainy seasons. Reflectively, 19% of assessed Fashoda County settlements

Figure 6: Proportion of assessed UNS settlements reporting any latrine use and proper handwashing in the western bank (WB) and southeastern (SE) UNS



reported walking half a day or longer in order to access their preferred water source in December as compared with 0% in September. Relatedly, Aburoc in Fashoda County, still faced acute water shortage in this quarter and a hydrogeological survey found that potential for deep borehole drilling was limited.³⁵ Although water trucking will continue through the dry season, small-scale displacement will likely continue due to such challenges with sustainable, year-round water access.³⁶

No access in Manyo and Panyikang counties and only limited access in Malakal and Fashoda counties to protected water sources is especially concerning given reported poor sanitation practices across in the area: 17% of assessed western bank settlements reported anyone using latrines in December, marking a decline from 33% in September (Figure 6).

In southeastern UNS, access to improved water sources was higher though continually restricted due to insecurity. The majority (58%) of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements continued to report boreholes as their primary water source in December, comparable to 65% in September. However, 33% of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements reported

that people could not access their preferred water point due to conflict, comparable to 39% in August.

Sanitation practices were also better among assessed southeastern UNS settlements: 79% of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements reported people using latrines in December, an improvement from 56% in September. Humanitarian partners report that this increase may be attributable to inflows from refugee camps in Ethiopia where populations were better educated on proper sanitation practices.

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to healthcare remained stable across assessed UNS counties between the third and fourth quarters (Figure 7). The majority (65%) of assessed UNS settlements reported that they could access healthcare services by December, comparable to 70% in September. However, healthcare may have improved in Panyikang County where all assessed settlements reported the accessibility of healthcare services in December as compared with only 45% in October. Nevertheless, a large share (20%) of assessed Panyikang County settlements with access to healthcare

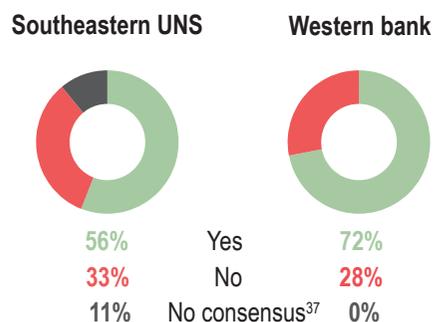
33. According to FGD participants in Malakal PoC site, January 2019.

34. Reported by humanitarian partners to an ICWG in Malakal, December 2018.

35. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Aburoc: Hydrogeological and Geophysical Investigation Report, November 2018; The ICRC is a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization that operates outside the United Nations cluster approach. It is not funded by nor is accountable to the cluster system.

36. REACH, [Aburoc Water Shortage: Context and Surge Capacity Analysis](#), November 2018.

Figure 7: Access to health services in assessed UNS settlements, December 2018



in December reported having to walk a full day to reach these services. Such indicators likely reflects the positive impact of expanded humanitarian healthcare service provision in Tonga but continually limited mobile services outside of the urban centre.³⁸

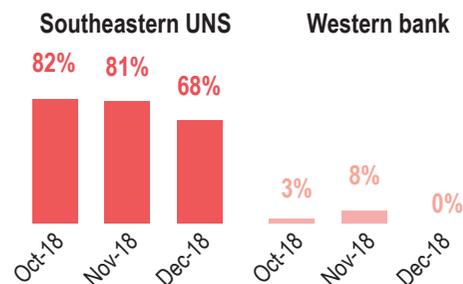
Although the largest share (55%) of assessed UNS settlements continued to report malaria or fever as their primary health concern by December, waterborne diseases and malnutrition may have increasingly presented challenges in parts the state. A large share (26% and 21%) of assessed Panyikang and Malakal county settlements, respectively, reported a waterborne illness as their primary health issue in December. This may reflect continued challenges with accessing water from unprotected sources, especially in counties evidencing some population growth due to inflows. Further, in Ulang County, 22% of assessed settlements reported malnutrition as their primary health concern in December, perhaps reflecting coinciding population movements at the onset of the dry season.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

UNS saw limited change in shelter and NFI needs between the second and fourth quarters. Across assessed counties of UNS, IDPs inhabited less permanent shelters than their host community counterparts. Assessed settlements continued to report host community members living in tukuls:³⁹ 79% of host communities were reported primarily living in tukuls by December. In comparison, the largest portion (34%) of assessed UNS settlements with IDPs continued to report IDPs living in rakoobas by December.

IDPs in southeastern UNS reportedly faced worse shelter conditions than those in the western bank, perhaps reflecting continued pendular displacement between Ulang and Nasir counties resulting in more transitional, impermanent shelter accommodations. The majority (68%) of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements with IDPs reported IDPs living in the open without any form of shelter. In comparison, no assessed settlements in

Figure 8: Proportion of assessed UNS settlements with IDPs reporting IDPs living in the open without shelter



the western bank with IDPs reported that they lived in the open without shelter by December (Figure 8).

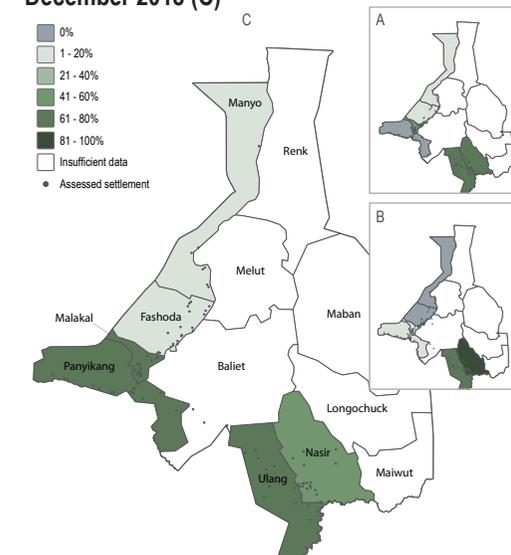
However, perhaps attributable to increased population movements, in this quarter, Panyikang County saw an increase in the proportion of assessed settlements with IDPs reporting IDPs living in impermanent shelters: 22% of Panyikang County settlements with IDPs reported IDPs primarily accommodated in impermanent structures in December, an increase from 0% in November.

Nevertheless, access to NFIs distributions appeared to remain higher in Ulang and Nasir counties than in the western bank (Map 3): in December, 69% of assessed settlements in southeastern UNS reported an NFI distribution had occurred in the last three months compared with only 19% of those in the western bank. Across all assessed UNS counties, the largest share of assessed settlements with IDPs reported blankets (33%), plastic sheets (14%) and cooking pots (14%) as their primary NFI needs by December.

Education

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education services in UNS remained low in the fourth quarter: only 33% and 19% of assessed western bank and southeastern UNS settlements, respectively, reported access to education services in December. In southeastern UNS, in particular, this may indicate inaccessibility of such services due to heightened tensions: in December, 25%

Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting an NFI distribution occurred in the last three months in October (A), November (B) and December 2018 (C)



of assessed Nasir County settlements without access to educational services reported that this resulted from insecurity. In comparison, in the western bank, the primary obstacles to education were legacies of previous fighting: 29% and 21% of assessed western bank settlements reported that education services were inaccessible in December because facilities were destroyed during conflict and teachers had been displaced, respectively. As a result, FGD participants reported that access to education services in the western bank remained largely limited to urban centres.

Gendered barriers to education were reported across most UNS counties (Figure 9). Access to education continued to be especially

37. "No consensus" stands for settlements where multiple key informants were surveyed but no consensus was found for the respective indicator.

38. OCHA, South Sudan: Operational Presence 3Ws, November 2018.

39. Although tukuls and rakoobas are both categorised as semi-permanent shelters, tukuls are shelters constructed with mud bricks and a grass thatch roof while rakoobas are made from poles and plastic tarpaulin, thus considered to be the more vulnerable of the two shelter types.

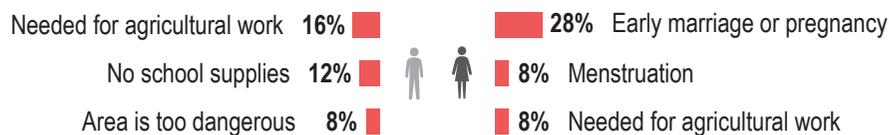
gendered in southeastern UNS where all assessed settlements in December with access to education services reported that half or more of boys attended school while only 43% reported half or more of girls attended school. The primary reported obstacles to girls' attendance across UNS were increasingly entwined with protection challenges: 20% and 8% of assessed UNS settlements with half or less of girls attending school reported that their primary barrier was early marriage or pregnancy, respectively.

Conclusion

In the fourth quarter, UNS saw changed population and food access dynamics which, in turn, resulted in increasing humanitarian needs in assessed settlements, particularly those in Fashoda, Ulang and Nasir counties.

Localised insecurity augmented seasonal small-scale displacement within Nasir and Ulang counties as well as from Ethiopia to Maiwut, Longochuk and Ulang counties. Water shortage coupled with declining access to food induced some displacement from and within Fashoda County. Some former IDP populations also returned to Panyikang County in order to access markets and to cultivate. Finally, this quarter saw a mix of inflows of households reportedly returning from Sudan and Ethiopia to counties in Upper Nile: along the western bank this was mainly driven by poor conditions in refugee settlements in Sudan, along with family reunification intentions and cautious optimism with regards to potential security improvements.

Figure 9: Most cited barriers to education for boys and girls in UNS of assessed settlements reporting half or less of boys or girls attend school, December 2018



Movement dynamics in southeastern Upper Nile remain less well understood and require further research. Due to trepidation over security as well as access to food and services, movement was largely evidenced to humanitarian hubs or urban centres and reportedly as partial families.

Food insecurity and limited livelihoods options remained severe challenges across assessed UNS counties. Assessed settlements in Fashoda and Manyo counties likely saw a deterioration in access to food in this quarter due to dry spells and increasingly limited access to land for cultivation. In Panyikang County, reportedly some successful harvests and expanded markets coupled with increased access to humanitarian assistance may have contributed to a slight, if short-term, improvement in FSL. Food security in assessed settlements of southeastern UNS was likely largely dependent on humanitarian assistance, access to which may have been limited due to some conflict and displacement this quarter. Severe coping mechanisms reportedly employed across assessed counties of the state could impede future food security come the lean season.

Protection concerns across assessed settlements of UNS still largely centred on

SGBV for women and intra-community conflict for men. Southeastern UNS reportedly saw some cases of conflict resulting in civilian deaths, likely resulting from sustained tensions in the region coupled with seasonal cattle raids, while looting cases surged in the western bank, perhaps linked to economic strains during the festive season.

Access to water and health services likely declined in assessed UNS settlements with the onset of the dry season. Seasonal water sources likely constricted water availability in Fashoda County while conflict reportedly limited assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements' access to preferred water points. Across assessed settlement of the western bank, dependence on water from the Nile coupled with poor hygiene and sanitation practices may increase propensity for a waterborne disease outbreak. Likely linked to limited WASH infrastructure and unimproved water sources, the primary reported health problems across assessed regions of UNS were malaria and waterborne diseases.

Across assessed settlements in UNS, the majority of host community members lived in tukuls. In comparison, in southeastern UNS, IDPs primarily inhabited impermanent structures

while in the western bank, the majority were accommodated in semi-permanent shelters. Assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties continued to report some IDPs living in the open without any shelter.

Finally, education access remained low across assessed UNS counties in this quarter. Services were reportedly limited due to insecurity in southeastern UNS and infrastructure degradation in the western bank. Gender disparities in access to education – with boys attending school more regularly than girls – remained a challenge and were increasingly driven by child protection concerns.

About REACH

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

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