

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring, Lakes State

South Sudan April - September 2020

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

Overview

The combination of high levels of flooding, economic shocks and the peak of the lean season have resulted in high humanitarian needs in Lakes State. These needs have manifested predominantly through displacement, forced changes to livelihoods, high reported levels of malaria and gendered protection concerns across the state. With limited humanitarian access in the region, information gaps exist on the severity of these needs and the locations of vulnerable populations.

To inform humanitarian actors working outside formal settlement sites, REACH has conducted assessments of hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan since December 2015. Data is collected on a monthly basis through interviews with key informants with knowledge of a settlements and triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs). This Situation Overview uses this data to analyse changes in observed humanitarian needs across Lakes State in the second and third quarters (April-September) of 2020.

Methodology

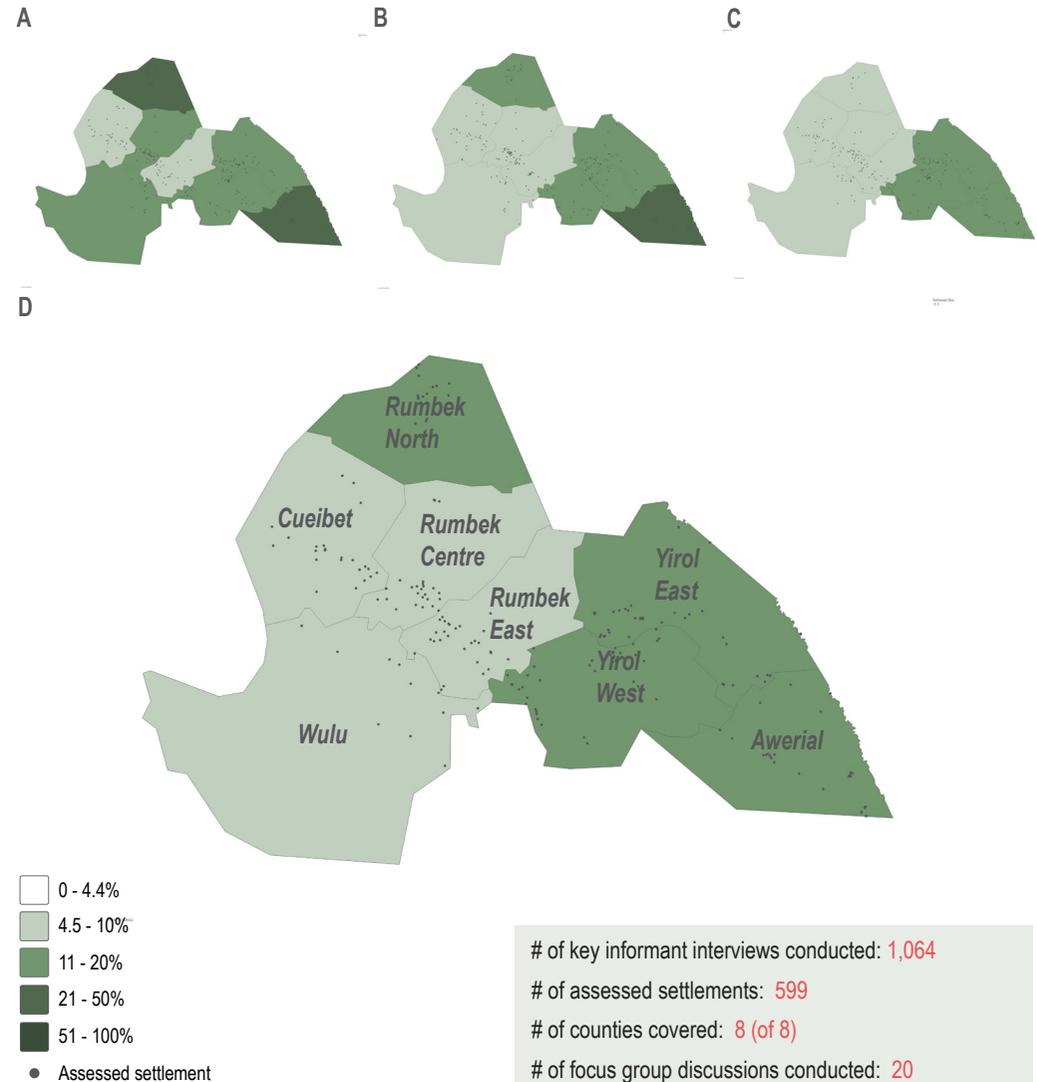
To provide an indicative overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Lakes State, REACH conducts interviews with key informants (KIs) who have recently arrived from, recently visited, or receive regular information from a settlement or "Area of Knowledge" (AoK). These interviews were conducted in collective centres and through phone calling throughout the reporting period. Findings should be considered indicative only of the situation in assessed settlements.

In-depth interviews on humanitarian needs were conducted on a monthly basis using a structured survey tool. After data collection was completed, all data was aggregated at settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal or most credible response. When no consensus was found for a settlement, that settlement was not included in reporting.

Only counties with interview coverage of at least 5% of all settlements in a given month were included in the analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month may 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 payam² coverage over the period. Quantitative findings were triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary sources. FGDs with people displaced from hard-to-reach areas in Lakes State took place throughout June - October 2020.

More details of the methodology can be found in the [AoK ToRs](#).

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage of Lakes State, March (A), June (B), July (C) and September (D) 2020.³



1. To calculate the percentage of AoK coverage, the total number of settlements per county is based on OCHA settlement lists in addition to new settlements mapped by KIs reached each month.

2. Payam is the administrative unit below the county-level.

3. The main comparative reporting months were between March and September, but July and June were also sometimes used as comparative months for reasons of seasonality (July being the peak of the lean season in Lakes) and because certain indicators were not present in the March AoK tool but were incorporated in the subsequent months where June is the primary reporting month for the third quarter of 2020 (along with September).

Key Findings



Displacement: Population movement and displacement in Lakes were reportedly driven by flooding in September, most notably between Twic East (Jonglei State) and Awerial (Mingkaman). In September, KIs in 28% of assessed settlements reported that at least one member of the original population of a settlement had left in the month prior to data collection. Of these, there was a 58 percentage point increase in flooding reportedly acting as the main reason for these population movements since March (61% in September). While of the assessed settlements where KIs reported IDPs were present in Awerial in September (14%, unchanged since March), 75% reported that these IDPs came from Twic East in Jonglei State. This constitutes a 75 percentage point increase since March, likely indicative of increased flooding driving displaced populations in Jonglei to higher ground and areas not affected by flooding across the White Nile in Mingkaman (Awerial).



Food Security and Livelihoods: Inadequate access to food in Lakes was reportedly driven by the lack of harvested food stocks available during the lean season, severe flooding, and economic shocks linked to the depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) in September. Of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people did not have adequate access to food in September (79%); 19% reported that this was due to the previous harvest being exhausted (0% in March), 19% reported that this was because crops had been destroyed or did not attain ideal growth because of flooding (unchanged since March), while 9% reported that this was because prices were too high to buy food (unchanged since March, see figure 1).



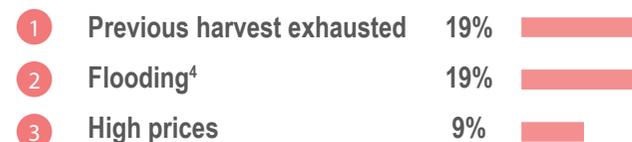
Protection: Protection concerns reportedly remained high across Lakes in September, particularly in Cueibet. According to KIs in almost all (92%) assessed settlements in September, most people reportedly did not feel safe most of the time (unchanged since March). While in more than half (54%) of assessed settlements in Cueibet, KIs reported that there had been at least one conflict incident in which a civilian had been killed in the month prior to data collection (unchanged since March).



Health: High levels of malaria and low access to medication across Lakes reportedly drove health needs in September. Likely indicative of the arrival of the wet season and high levels of flooding, malaria remained the most commonly reported health problem in assessed settlements in September (65% in September, unchanged since March). While consequently, the primary reported barrier to accessing healthcare at the nearest functional healthcare facility in assessed settlements in Lakes, was reportedly that there were no medicines available (74% in September, unchanged since June).

Figure 1: Top three reported drivers of inadequate access to food in Lakes, September 2020.

75% of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people did not have adequate access to food across Lakes in September 2020.



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Findings suggest that, in September, the WASH conditions in Awerial were worse than in other county in Lakes. KIs in only 38% of assessed settlements in Awerial reported that most people used boreholes as their main source of drinking water (73% in March). Instead, people reportedly used surface water from a river in 31% of assessed settlements (4% in March), from a pond (21%, unchanged), or a swamp (7%, unchanged), as their main source of drinking water. Raising concerns when taken in conjunction with the high number of IDPs seen moving from Jonglei to Awerial who will likely have preexisting vulnerabilities.



Shelter/ Non Food Items (NFI): Flooding reportedly had a large impact on shelter needs in Lakes in September, particularly for IDPs. There was a 31 percentage point increase since March in the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that there had been any flooding that made people leave their home and sleep elsewhere in the month prior to data collection (34% in September). This might be reflected in the increase in the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the priority NFI need for IDPs to be plastic sheeting (42% in September, up from 13% in March), a commodity that is commonly used to construct shelters.



Education: Education services remained reportedly unavailable in Lakes in September following the continuation of school closures in March 2020. In all (100%) assessed settlements in Lakes in September, there were no reported education services available that people could walk to from their settlement (27% in March).

4. Flooding here referring to the proportion of KIs across Lakes reporting that they did not have adequate access to food because crops had been destroyed by flooding (17%) or that crops did not achieve ideal growth because of flooding (2%).

Population Movement and Displacement

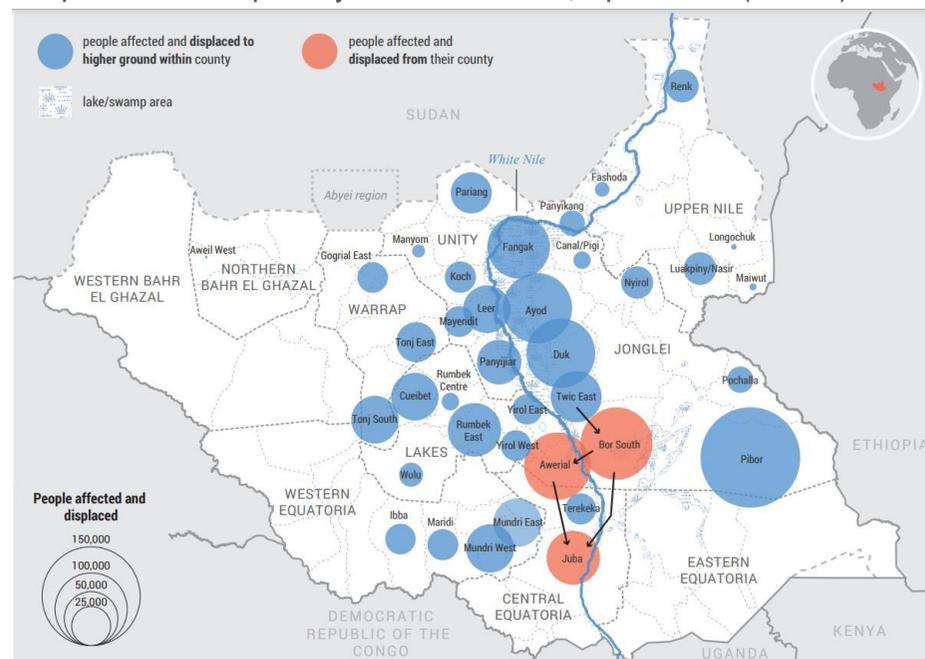
In September, in those assessed settlements where the presence of IDPs had been reported (25%, unchanged since March), KIs also reported insecurity (57%) and flooding (26%) as the primary push factors for internal displacement in Lakes. This constitutes a 26 percentage point increase in flooding and a 35 percentage point decrease in insecurity as reported push factors (0% and 92%, respectively, in March). This shift in push factors for internal displacement from insecurity to flooding is likely indicative of the typical seasonal reduction in conflict during the wet season across South Sudan and the very high levels of flooding seen across the Sudd this year.⁵ Whereby in early September, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that approximately 221,000 individuals were affected by flooding in Lakes State, the second most affected state in South Sudan following Jonglei.⁶

The effects of flooding in driving population movement across Lakes in September, was also seen in the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported any members of the original population of a settlement leaving in the month prior to data collection (28% in September). Whereby there was a 58 percentage point increase in flooding being the most commonly reported main reason for these population movements since March (61% in September). Of note, in July this same answer was only reported by KIs in 9% of assessed settlements (unchanged since March), likely indicative of the flooding not becoming severe enough to drive population movement until August or September. Indeed, this was also seen in the FGD data across Lakes during the reporting period; whereby in FGDs conducted between June and July, participants did not report flooding as a driver of displacement, while in FGDs conducted between September and October, flooding was reportedly the primary driver of displacement.⁷

In September, KIs in over half (66%) of the assessed settlements where IDPs were reportedly present, reported that the majority of IDPs had arrived from another settlement within the same county, similar to March. This is likely indicative of micro-movements of shorter distance and duration that are the most common form of population movement in response to most drivers across South Sudan.⁸ Indeed, this was also reported by FGD participants across Lakes from June to October, whereby those displaced by flooding reported moving to either highlands or population centres (such as towns or Payam centres) because of pull factors related to accessing alternate livelihoods (such as casual labour) and food sources (primarily bought food from markets, food support from relatives and humanitarian food assistance [HFA]).⁹

However, there were two main exceptions to these intra-county displacements. In Awerial, KIs in 75% of assessed settlements with reported IDP presence reported that IDPs had come from Twic East (0% in March), and in Rumbek Centre, IDPs reportedly mostly came from Rumbek North in 58% of assessed settlements where IDPs were present (10% in March). This reported population

Map 2: People affected and displaced by floods in South Sudan, September 2020 (UNOCHA).¹⁰



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of Abyei area is not yet determined.

movement from Rumbek North to Rumbek Centre was also evident elsewhere in the AoK data. KIs in 67% of assessed settlements in Rumbek North that reported that any of the original population had left their settlement in the month prior to data collection, also reported that most of these people were reportedly going to Rumbek Centre. The primary reported driver of these displacements from Rumbek North and Twic East appeared to be flooding, as KIs in 100% of assessed settlements with IDP presence in Awerial attributed IDP influx to the flooding (0% in March), and in Rumbek Centre this proportion was 67% (0% in March).

The displacement routes between the above-mentioned counties follow similar routes to previous displacements seen between Rumbek North and Rumbek Centre in March of 2020 (following inter-communal clashes near Amok in Rumbek North),¹¹ and between counties in western Jonglei and Mingkaman from Duk, Twic East and Bor South is of particular note, as it reportedly involved approximately 50,000 individuals.¹² According to a nutrition and FSL assessment conducted in Mingkaman in October 2020, 15%+ of newly arrived IDPs have Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) based on Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) that suggest that the situation is possibly critical*, with 66% having poor food consumption scores, and there being an increased number of reported

5. South Sudan's Devastating Floods. Sudd Institute, 23 November 2020.
 6. South Sudan Flooding Snapshot. OCHA, 3 September 2020.
 7. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. June - October 2020.
 8. South Sudan Population Movement Baseline Report. REACH, September 2020.
 9. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. June - October 2020.

10. UNOCHA, South Sudan Flooding Snapshot, 21 October 2020. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/south_sudan_flooding_snapshot_4.pdf
 11. Lakes State Event Tracking Report, Rumbek North County. IOM, 26 March 2020.
 12. Mingkaman Spontaneous Settlement Population Count. REACH, January 2016.
 13. Mingkaman IDP Assessment Preliminary Results. WFP and REACH, October 2020.

*In South Sudan, GAM measured from MUAC is generally lower than the true prevalence of GAM. While this GAM might seem low, it is likely indicative of a more serious situation. The GAM by MUAC of around 5-6% is moderately high and likely indicative of a "Serious" malnutrition situation by IPC standards (P3). A GAM by MUAC around 10% or more is likely indicative of a "Critical" malnutrition situation by IPC standards (P4).

Upper Respiratory Tract Infections, malaria, and watery diarrhoeal diseases in children as well as pregnant and elderly people in the primary healthcare centre (PHCC). Such findings might raise concerns about longer-term food security, health, and nutrition outcomes for displaced individuals in Mingkaman.¹⁴



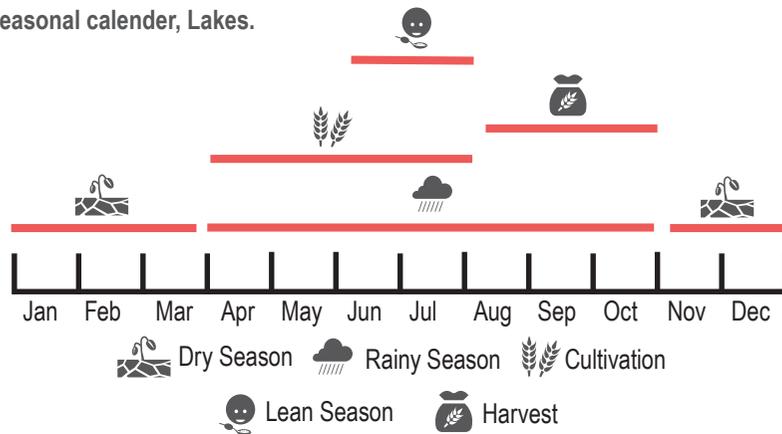
Food Security and Livelihoods

In September, KIs in only 21% of assessed settlements in Lakes reported having adequate access to food, a figure that remained low and unchanged since March 2020. KIs in those settlements where most people reportedly did not have enough access to food (79% in September) commonly attributed this to exhaustion of the previous harvest (in 19% of assessed settlements without adequate access to food, 0% in March), crops having been destroyed or damaged due to flooding (19%, unchanged since March), and prices being too high for food to be bought (9%, unchanged, see figure 1). These drivers of inadequate access to food are likely indicative of the following three factors that were encompassed within the reporting period of this report, and that will serve as the primary thematic points of analysis: 1) the peak of the lean season, when cultivated food stocks are normally at their lowest;¹⁵ 2) high levels of flooding which resulted in population movement and a poor crop-yield in many flood-affected areas;¹⁶ 3) and the stark depreciation of the SSP, which drove up prices across markets in South Sudan.¹⁷

The Lean Season

Across Lakes, in September, the most commonly reported primary sources of food were cultivation (in 59% of assessed settlements), purchase (14%), livestock rearing (5%) and fishing (5%), unchanged since March. This high reported reliance on cultivated crops as a source of food likely means that a large proportion of the population of Lakes are susceptible to the seasonal trends related to the crop cycle (see figure 2), most notably in relation to the lean season. The lean season

Figure 2: Seasonal calendar, Lakes.



constitutes the period between harvests when cultivated food stocks are normally at their lowest in the calendar year, the peak of which in Lakes is usually in July.¹⁸ However, following a reportedly poor harvest across South Sudan in 2018 and delayed rains followed by flooding in 2019, the lean season of 2020 was predicted to come far earlier than normal in South Sudan in 2020,¹⁹ whereby FEWS NET projected that sustained HFA beyond initially planned levels was required to save lives and protect livelihoods during the lean season and post-harvest periods in order to prevent Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in many areas through September.²⁰

Indeed, findings suggest that access to HFA increased throughout Lakes during the reporting period; the proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access of HFA grew from 21% in March to 71% in July (the latter being the peak of the lean season), and was 50% in September. Despite this reportedly increased support from HFA, the proportion of assessed settlements with KIs who reported inadequate access to food leading to severe levels of hunger (with limited options to cope with the reduced access to food), remained unchanged between March and July (39% in July), then decreased by 13 percentage points from July to September (26% in September), likely indicative of the end of the lean season and accessibility of harvested crops.

Adequate access to harvested crops is in large part determined by access to land, tools and seeds during the crop cultivation cycle. In assessed settlements in September, access to land remained reportedly high (88% in September, unchanged from the previous reporting period), while adequate access to seeds (39% in September) and tools (56%) remained comparatively low (unchanged since March). Of note, reported access to tools and seeds continued to be particularly poor in Rumbek North (13% and 29% in September, 0% respectively in March). This apparent relatively poor access to seeds and tools (particularly considering the higher access to land) was corroborated by FGD participants from across Lakes; whereby, in the case of tools, ploughs are often shared between different households or communities during planting season.²¹ However many participants (primarily from western Lakes) highlighted that ploughs require the use of bulls, and because of the fear of cattle raiding, people are reportedly less willing to risk bringing a bull out to farmlands where they are more isolated and vulnerable to potential cattle theft.²² Moreover, though access to land was relatively high across Lakes in September, according to FGD participants from across Lakes, one of the primary barriers to accessing farmland was insecurity; a factor that will likely increase in severity during the dry season perhaps leading to decreased access to land over the coming months.²³

Flooding

Findings indicate that flooding also drove inadequate access to food across Lakes in September. In 24% of assessed settlements, last season's harvest was reportedly worse than the previous harvest (unchanged since March). In the majority of those settlements (75%), KIs reported that the main reason for this was flooding, which presented a notable increase since March (32%, see figure 3). The reported effects of flooding in driving poor harvest outputs was also seen in relation to changes

14. Mingkaman IDP Assessment Preliminary Results. WFP and REACH, October 2020.
 15. [Western Lakes Population Movement. Food Security and Livelihoods Profile. REACH, July 2019.](#)
 16. South Sudan's Devastating Floods. Sudd Institute, 23 November 2020.
 17. Market Update: Depreciation of South Sudanese Pound (SSP). WFP, 30 September 2020.
 18. [Western Lakes Population Movement. Food Security and Livelihoods Profile. REACH, July 2019.](#)

19. After floods, an early 'lean season' awaits South Sudan. The New Humanitarian, 11 December 2019.
 20. South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update. FEWS NET, August 2020.
 21. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. June - October 2020.
 22. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.
 23. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. June - October 2020.

to livelihood coping strategies (LCSs) in September. Of assessed settlements where a decreased ability to engage in LCSs was reported (27%, unchanged since June), 67% attributed this to climatic factors, a 40 percentage point increase since June (27% in June, see figure 4). Of note, KIs in 100% of assessed settlements in Awerial and in 88% of assessed settlements in Yirol East reported particularly high attributions to climatic factors in driving decreased ability to engage in LCSs (56% and 50% in June respectively). This is likely because these are counties that border the White Nile and are therefore more likely to experience flooding.

Indeed, this decreased reported access to LCSs was also seen in the qualitative data. FGD participants from across Lakes reported a higher reliance for flood-affected populations on a narrower selection of LSCs than would be commonly available at that time of year; specifically: family support networks (both nutritional and monetary support), wild food collection and casual labor.²⁴ This is likely indicative of there being higher needs compared to comparatively less available LCSs, especially in population centres, which might bring safety and access to markets, but may also bring increased competition for livelihoods. Indeed, these LCSs were reportedly less effective than usual because of the broader effects of shocks across the country and the depreciation of the SSP lessening the capacity for familial support; insecurity preventing access to wild food further away from populated areas; and high supply of casual labor driving down the cost of labor.²⁵

According to FGD participants from across Lakes, flooding also reportedly affected cattle migration routes and decreased access to cattle because cattle-camps had largely moved to highlands to avoid floodwaters.²⁶ Indeed, cattle ownership was reported in a higher proportion of assessed settlements (73% in September, unchanged since March) than access to cattle (46%, unchanged since March). Of note, in 41% of assessed settlements in September, KIs reported the sale of more livestock than is normal for this time of year (unchanged since March), a practice that can be indicative of a lack of LCS options and severe food insecurity, because, according to FGD participants across Lakes, the sale of cattle to buy food is used as a last resort because of the ingrained cultural and fiscal value of cattle in communities across Lakes.²⁷

Depreciation of the SSP and high market prices*

Bought food served as the second most reported source of food in assessed settlements across Lakes in September (14%, unchanged since March), while prices being too high to buy food consequently served as a major reported barrier to adequate access to food (9% in September, see figure 1). This combination is likely indicative of the trend in micro-movements to population centres (outlined in the population movement section) leading to a higher reliance on bought foods from markets, along with a depreciation of the SSP leading to a deterioration of purchasing power.²⁸ This will likely have increased effects on food security in counties such as Rumbek Centre, where in nearly three quarters (73%) of assessed settlements in July, KIs reported a reliance on bought food

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements in Lakes where KIs reported a worse growing season compared to the last one due to floods, in March and September 2020

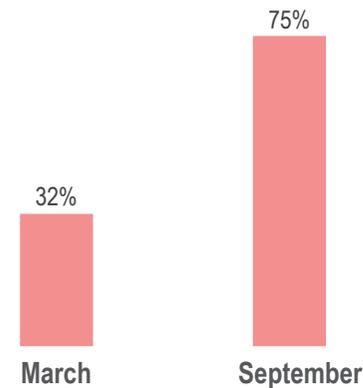
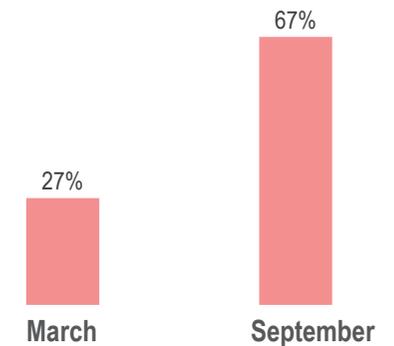


Figure 4: Proportion of assessed settlements in Lakes where KIs attributed a change in LCSs due to climatic factors, in March and September



as their main source of food, which consequently decreased to 30% in September (51% in March), likely indicative of the beginning of access to harvested crops.

In assessed settlements in July, access to any functional market remained reportedly high across Lakes (95%, unchanged since March). However, in 25% of assessed settlements in Rumbek North, KIs reported that most people could not access any functional market in their settlement/county (unchanged since March). In half of those settlements, KIs reported that the nearest functional market was located in Rumbek Centre instead. This means that people were crossing into another county in order to access a functional market; a movement that was corroborated by FGD participants from Rumbek North in September and October and that likely presents further protection concerns and risks to already vulnerable populations.²⁹

The main reported barrier to market access in assessed settlements in Lakes was related to distance, whereby KIs in 45% of assessed settlements reported that the preferred market was too far (45% in July, unchanged since March), while, in 60% of assessed settlements it reportedly took more than one hour to reach a functioning marketplace from the settlement (unchanged since March). In 80% of assessed settlements in July, the main reported barrier at the marketplace was that some items were too expensive or that most people could not afford to buy them (unchanged since March). This effect of high prices and low purchasing power driving low market access was corroborated by FGD participants across Lakes, who also reported that this may exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, particularly among single-headed households and IDP populations with a high reliance on bought food.³⁰

24. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

25. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

26. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

27. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

*In this section the July data will sometimes serve as the main reporting month as the September data was not available for all indicators

28. Market Update: Depreciation of South Sudanese Pound (SSP). WFP, 30 September 2020.

29. FGD Rumbek North (mixed), FSL Shocks, September 2020; FGD Rumbek North (females), FSL Shocks, October 2020.

30. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.



In October, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) warned that severe flooding and multiple other emergencies were leading to increased needs for medical care, in addition to a sharp rise in malaria cases and fears of other disease outbreaks across South Sudan.³¹ Indeed, in Lakes, Malaria remained the most commonly reported health problem in assessed settlements in September (65% of assessed settlements in September, unchanged since March), while the main reported cause of mortality was fever (31% in September, unchanged since June). This is likely indicative of the wet season (April to October) and increased levels of flooding across Lakes that contribute to stagnant pools of water where Anopheles mosquitoes (carrying the parasite causing malaria infections) can breed and multiply.³²

In September, in 84% of assessed settlements across Lakes, KIs reported that PHCCs continued to be the nearest functional primary healthcare facilities that people could walk to from their settlements (unchanged since June). Though, the time it reportedly took to access healthcare services remained below the recommended sphere standard*, with it taking a full day in 22% of assessed settlements, one hour to half a day in 30%, 30 minutes to 1 hour in 25%, while in only 7% it reportedly took less than 30 minutes. In 3% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that it took multiple days to reach any healthcare facility (see figure 5). Indeed, these long time-periods taken to access healthcare could be indicative of long distances between settlements and healthcare facilities, whereby KIs in 28% of assessed settlements in Lakes reported that their nearest functional healthcare facility being too far as their main barrier to accessing healthcare (unchanged since June).

Though distance remained a central barrier to accessing primary healthcare, the primary reported barrier to accessing healthcare at the nearest functional healthcare facility for KIs in assessed settlements across Lakes, was reportedly that there were no medicines available (74% in

September, unchanged since June). Cueibet (96% in September) and Rumbek North (100%) had particularly high proportions of assessed settlements with KIs reporting this (79% and 80% in June). This reported lack of medicines at functional healthcare facilities in Rumbek North may be indicative of the poor road access between Rumbek Town and Rumbek North (the only main road linking Rumbek North with the rest of Lakes state, a major supply route) throughout the wet season, where roads were inaccessible due to poor road conditions likely caused by flooding.³³

Moreover, findings suggest that the health situation in Rumbek North was particularly severe compared to the other counties in Lakes. For instance, in Rumbek North, KIs in 36% of assessed settlements reported it taking a full day to access healthcare services by foot; while it was also commonly reported that there had been no visits from health teams in the 6 months prior to data collection (56%). In all of those settlements where access to a PHC had been reported, KIs reported that the PHC had not been stocked with the right medicine. Moreover, in 29% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that most people had moved due to disease in the community (up from 10% in June). These proportions were, compared to the other counties in Lakes, the highest most commonly reported values on a county level in September. This is likely indicative of the severity of health needs in Rumbek North, perhaps related to the impact of flooding seen in Rumbek North in other sectors of this report related to population movement and food security.

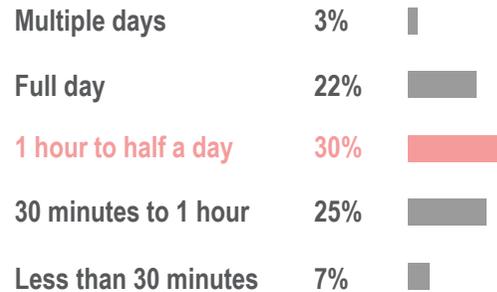
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Access to Water Sources

The reported presence of any functional borehole in assessed settlements across Lakes remained unchanged since March (78% in September). This was corroborated by the proportion of KIs in assessed settlements that reported that boreholes served as their main source of drinking water (77%, unchanged since March), though of note, KIs in only 38% of assessed settlements in Awerial reported that most people used boreholes as their main source of drinking water (73% in March). Instead, 31% reported drinking water from a river (4% in March), 21% reported drinking water from a pond (unchanged since March), and 7% reported drinking water from a swamp as their main source of drinking water (unchanged since March). This higher reliance on unimproved water sources** in Awerial, is of particular concern when taken in conjunction with the high number of IDPs seen moving from Jonglei to Awerial through the wet season, many of whom (according to a recent nutrition and FSL assessment) already reported increased rates of sickness among children, who may therefore be particularly vulnerable to waterborne diseases.³⁴

In half (48%) of the assessed settlements in Lakes, it reportedly took 30 minutes or more for most people to reach, access, and return from their preferred water source with water to the settlement in September (78% in March). Of note, KIs in 42% of assessed settlements in Cueibet reported that

Figure 5: Reported time taken to access healthcare services by foot in assessed settlements in Lakes in September.



31. South Sudan: Severe flooding increases health risks amid multiple emergencies. MSF, 22 October 2020.
 32. Malaria season: Rain and flooding are causing malaria surges. UNICEF, 27 September 2020.
 *>=80% of population that can access primary healthcare within one hour's walk from dwellings.

33. South Sudan: Physical Access Constraints Map. Logistics Cluster and WFP, March - September 2020.
 **unimproved referring to a "dug well, unprotected spring, cart with small tank/drum, tanker truck, and surface water (river, dam, lake, pond, stream, canal, irrigation channels), bottled water". WHO
 34. Mingkaman IDP Assessment Preliminary Results. WFP and REACH, October 2020.

at least one person had not been able to access their preferred water point because they feared for their safety in their respective settlement. This is likely indicative of the deteriorating levels of security seen in Cueibet since June, which even led to the death of an NGO worker in late June.³⁵

Sanitation

In assessed settlements across Lakes, latrine usage remained reportedly low, with KIs in 65% of assessed settlements reporting that no one had access to any latrines in September (unchanged since March). Of assessed settlements with reportedly reported low or no access to latrines, KIs in 75% of assessed settlements reported that this was because there were none available (unchanged since March). FGD participants from eastern Lakes in June and July highlighted that there was a large discrepancy between populated and rural areas, whereby latrines were only reportedly accessible in populated areas (likely because the increased proximity of households provides less space for open defecation), though some also attributed the lack of latrines to a lack of knowledge of how to construct them or to concerns that the user may fall in.³⁶ Moreover, reported ineffective hand-washing procedures remained prevalent in assessed settlements in Lakes in September, with KIs in only 28% of assessed settlements reporting that people wash their hands with both soap and water, while people in 11% reportedly do not wash their hands at all (all unchanged since March). This is perhaps indicative of the decreased purchasing power outlined in the FSL section, whereby some FGD participants in September and October reported not buying NFIs at the market because prices were too high.³⁷

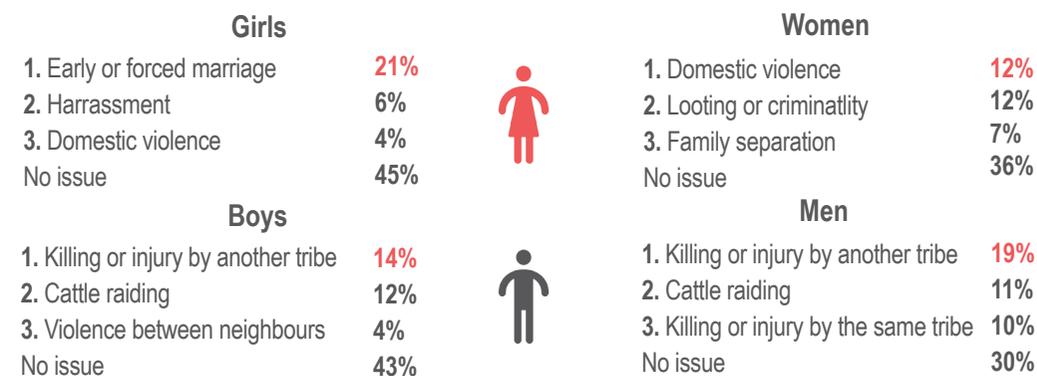
Protection

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Human Rights Division have reported that between July and September approximately 1,200 civilians were individually affected by violence across South Sudan, only 6% of whom were in Lakes; which (across South Sudan) constitutes 62% fewer incidents and a 25% decrease in civilians affected by violence as compared to the period between April and June.³⁸ Despite this, the proportion of KIs in assessed settlements in Lakes that reported that most people did not feel safe most of the time remained relatively high in September (69% of assessed settlements, unchanged since March), likely indicative of the persistence of structural drivers of protection concerns. Of note, reported protection concerns were particularly high in Cueibet, whereby KIs in 92% of assessed settlements in Cueibet reported that most people did not feel safe most of the time (unchanged since March), while in 54% of assessed settlements there had reportedly been at least one conflict incident in which a civilian had been killed in the month prior to data collection. (unchanged since March). This is likely indicative of the relative severity of insecurity (here primarily related to revenge killings) in Cueibet in the latter months of the reporting period, largely stemming from cycles of revenge killing among different communities in Western Lakes.³⁹

In assessed settlements in Lakes, reported safety concerns were largely gendered, with the main reported safety concerns for men (18 or older) in September being: killing or injury by another tribe (19% of assessed settlements, 45% in March), cattle raiding (11%, unchanged since March), and killing or injury by the same tribe (10%, unchanged since March). While for boys (under 18), the main reported safety concerns in assessed settlements in September were: killing or injury by another tribe (14% of assessed settlements, 30% in March), cattle raiding (12%, unchanged since March) and violence between neighbours (4%, unchanged since March, see figure 6). FGD participants from eastern Lakes (particularly Yirol East and West) reiterated cattle raiding as the primary protection concern for males, particularly in the areas bordering Mvolo, Rumbek East and Unity State.⁴⁰ While across western Lakes FGD participants reported that the main protection concern for males was being targeted in inter/intra communal violence, particularly revenge killings.⁴¹

The main reported safety concerns for women (18 or older) in assessed settlements in September were: domestic violence (12% of assessed settlements, unchanged since March), looting or criminality (12%, 26% in March), and violence between neighbors (7%, unchanged since March). While for girls (under 18), the main safety concerns in September were: early or forced marriage (21% of assessed settlements, unchanged since March), harassment (6%, unchanged since March), and domestic violence (4%, unchanged since March, see figure 6). FGD participants from across Lakes highlighted that women were the primary targets of sexual or gender based violence, and that they were most at risk while performing livelihoods that required them to move far from populated areas, such as firewood collection, meaning that women reportedly often travel in larger groups to avoid being targeted.⁴²

Figure 6: Top-three most commonly reported protection concerns in Lakes according to KIs in assessed settlements in September.



35. South Sudan Crisis Fact Sheet. USAID, July 24 2020.

36. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. June - July 2020.

37. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

38. Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians. UNMISS HRD, July - September 2020.

39. Cueibet County, Lakes State https://www.csrfsouthsudan.org/county_profile/cueibet/. CSRF.

40. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

41. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

42. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

Though there was a strong gendered theme running through the quantitative data, the qualitative FGD data from western Lakes indicated that long-term insecurity was perhaps having broader effects in driving changes in relation to the gendered nature of this insecurity and to certain livelihoods. According to FGD participants from Cueibet, Rumbek East and Rumbek Centre, there have been several instances of women being targeted in revenge killings; a practice that is according to FGD participants, very uncommon in Lakes, where men are predominately both the perpetrators and targets of revenge killings and cattle raiding.⁴³ This is likely indicative of an increase in the severity and intensity of such revenge killings, as has been seen in elsewhere in this report in relation to Cueibet. The coping mechanisms that are employed to deal with these reportedly high levels of grass-root conflict, is that men reportedly tend to avoid being isolated, which can happen when they are farming or engaging in other livelihoods activities, meaning that women are reportedly increasingly taking on the burden of crop cultivation and farming, while men reportedly prefer to stay in populous areas (such as markets, which would traditionally be the area where women go to buy food). According to FGD participants, this could lead to increasingly inefficient crop cultivation as women are expected to keep fulfilling multiple other roles related to child care and household chores.⁴⁴ In addition, this may also drive changes to gendered roles in the household, positioning women increasingly as providers.

Education

All schools were closed in South Sudan on the 20th of March 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19.⁴⁵ COVID-19 school closure appeared to be reflected by AoK data; throughout the reporting period, KIs in all assessed settlements reported that there were no education services available that people could walk to from the settlement (27% in March). United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has reported that distance learning programmes broadcasted on the radio have attempted to mitigate the gap in education created by school closures.⁴⁶ However, even with the advent of schools re-opening for P8 and Senior 4 students (referring to students in the last year of their primary and secondary education) across South Sudan on October 5th, cluster level assessments have highlighted that hundreds of schools have been affected by flooding across South Sudan, perhaps leading to delays in children returning to education in areas particularly prone to flooding in Lakes, such as along the White Nile in Yiro East and Awerial.⁴⁷

Shelter

In September, in almost all (94%) assessed settlements across Lakes, the main reported shelter type used by local communities continued to be predominantly tukuls (unchanged since March). Comparatively, KIs in 74% of assessed settlements that reported the presence of IDPs, also

reported that IDPs in these settlements used tukuls as their main shelter type (53% in March), while 26% reported the use of rakoobas (unchanged since March). This relatively higher reliance on rakoobas by IDPs could be indicative of the short-term shelters that IDPs may first make when arriving to a new community before building a more permanent shelter (if possible) or moving back to their area of origin. Indeed, in assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs, there was a 30 percentage point increase in the main NFI reportedly needed by IDPs being plastic sheeting (42% of assessed settlements in September), a commodity commonly used to construct shelters.

Flooding also reportedly had an impact on shelter needs, whereby there was a 31 percentage point increase in the proportion of assessed settlements across Lakes where KIs reported that there was any flooding which made people leave their home and sleep somewhere else in the month prior to data collection (34% in September). Indeed, flood-affected IDPs based in Mingkaman (displaced from western Jonglei) have reportedly had a high reliance on the host community and communities previously displaced to Mingkaman, who have acted as a comprehensive coping mechanism by supporting those displaced with both food and shelter.⁴⁸ These coping strategies that work through communal care networks were corroborated by FGD participants from western Lakes who highlighted that displaced populations often rely on relatives to support their shelter needs, perhaps acting as a pull factor for displaced households, and likely making households without access to family networks particularly vulnerable.⁴⁹

Conclusion

In the second and third quarters of 2020, humanitarian needs in Lakes seemed to be predominantly driven by flooding, economic shocks and the peak of the lean season. These drivers contributed to both intra- and inter-state displacement, widespread inadequate access to food, health-related needs pertaining to malaria, poor access to improved water sources (mainly in Awerial), largely gendered protection concerns, and relatively poor shelter conditions for IDPs across Lakes State. This will likely increase the vulnerability of affected populations across the state, who may therefore be more susceptible to shocks (primarily related to insecurity) moving into the dry season.

About REACH Initiative

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

43. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

44. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.

45. South Sudan closes schools, universities amid coronavirus fears. Radio Tamazuj, 20 March 2020.

46. South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 150. UNICEF, October 2020.

47. South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 150. UNICEF, October 2020.

48. Mingkaman IDP Assessment Preliminary Results. WFP and REACH, October 2020.

49. Lakes State Qualitative Saturation Grid, Quarters 2 and 3. September - October 2020.