Introduction

Continued conflict, displacement and environmental shocks negatively impacted access to food and restricted the ability for communities to meet basic needs in Greater Bahr el Ghazal (GBeG) between July and September 2018. Waves of displacement in Western Bahr el Ghazal (WBeG) and flooding in Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBeG), WBeG and Greater Tonj area (GTA) threatened overall food security in the region.

REACH has been assessing hard-to-reach areas in WBeG since April 2017, NBeG since March 2018 and GTA since January 2018. The data was collected through key informant interviews on a monthly basis from settlements in Jur River, Wau, and Raja counties in WBeG State; Aweil North, East, South, Centre and West counties in NBeG State; and Tonj North, South and East counties in Warrap State.

In the third quarter of 2018, REACH interviewed 1,009 key informants (KIs) across 742 settlements in 11 counties in the GBeG region. To ensure an up to date understanding of current displacement dynamics and humanitarian conditions in settlements across WBeG State, NBeG State and GTA, REACH interviewed KIs who were either new arrivals or in contact with an individual from the assessed settlement within the last month.

To triangulate the findings, REACH conducted 5 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): 2 Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) FGDs and 3 Gaps Analysis FGDs. Throughout the quarter, 5 key informants from humanitarian organisations were also consulted. The findings were additionally supplemented with secondary data and past REACH assessments of hard-to-reach areas.

This situation overview evaluates changes in humanitarian needs and displacement dynamics across the GBeG region from July to September 2018. The first section analyses displacement and population movement and the second section focuses on access to food and basic services for both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and local populations in assessed settlements in the GBeG region.

Population Movement and Displacement

Ongoing conflict, food insecurity and environmental shocks triggered population movement and displacement in the GBeG region between July and September 2018. An escalation of inter-communal violence in GTA and continued insecurity in Wau and Jur River counties in WBeG State resulted in waves of forced displacement. Meanwhile, flooding and seasonal decreases in access to food in NBeG State caused migration to urban centres. The proportion of assessed settlements in WBeG and NBeG states reporting the presence of IDPs increased during the assessment period, whereas GTA saw a decrease in assessed settlements reporting IDPs living in the community, from 60% to 4.9%.

Figure 1: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDPs present in settlements, WBeG and GTA (Sept 2018), NBeG (Aug 2018)
**METHODOLOGY**

To provide an overview of the situation in hard-to-reach areas of Western Bahr el Ghazal (WBeG) State, Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBeG) State, and the Greater Tonj area in Warrap State, REACH used primary data provided by key informants who have recently arrived, or receive regular information, from a location or “Area of Knowledge” (AoK). Information for this report was collected from key informants in the Wau PoC site, the five collective centers in Wau town, Aweil town, and through remote phone calling to key informants in Warrap State in July, August and September 2018.

In-depth interviews were conducted with selected participants using a standardised survey tool comprising questions on displacement trends, population needs, and access to basic services. After data collection was completed, all data was examined at the settlement level, and settlements were assigned the modal response. When KIs reporting on the same settlement reported differing answers for an indicator and there was no consensus across the majority of KIs, then the responses were deleted to maintain data quality and reported as no consensus (NC). When KIs reported not knowing an answer or preferring not to answer, this was also reported as NC. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and geospatial analysis.

Due to operational constraints that can impact coverage each month, some of the reported changes in this overview may be due to the variations in coverage. Data reflects findings from July to September 2018 for WBeG State and Greater Tonj Area, with the exception of Tonj North County, which is not covered or reported in the July data presented in this overview. Data reflects findings from July and August 2018 in NBeG State.

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**Displacement from the Greater Baggari area, Wau County, WBeG State**

Insecurity in the Greater Bagarri area of Wau County, WBeG State was ongoing through July and August and reignited at the end of September, causing forced displacement to remote areas southwest of Wau Town (Maps 2 and 3). The proportion of assessed settlements in Wau County reporting the presence of IDPs more than doubled from 21% in July to 47% in September, with 77% of assessed settlements in Wau County reporting the IDPs were either from within Wau County or from neighbouring Jur River County, which was also affected by the insecurity. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting local community members were living in another person’s home within the community also increased from 4% in July to 20% in August, reflective of increased displacement from shelters within settlements due to conflict. The insecurity restricted humanitarian access to the area until early September, leaving an estimated 20,000 individuals without access to food or essential services.

**Displacement in NBeG State**

In NBeG, there was a considerable increase in the proportion of assessed settlements reporting the presence of IDPs in July and August. During the lean season, from June-August, HHs in rural areas with limited access to food seasonally migrate to urban centres like Aweil Town in search of casual labour and resources. Aweil Centre and Aweil West counties, the two counties between which Aweil Town sits, had the largest proportions of assessed settlements reporting IDPs living in the local communities at 67% and 61%, respectively, in August. A key informant from a humanitarian organisation in Aweil Town reported there has been an increase in seasonal distress migration during the 2018 lean season from years past given the heightening food insecurity.

**Displacement in Raja County, WBeG State**

Raja County, WBeG State also saw a spike in reported displacement during the quarter.
In September 2018, 71% of assessed settlements in WBeG State reported not having adequate access to food, consistent with the June figure (77%). With the ongoing conflict and displacement in the Greater Bagarri area and Jur River County preventing a full harvest as well as the compounded effects of multiple missed harvests and perceived insecurity in Raja County, WBeG State food security remained acute state-wide. Armed clashes in the Greater Bagarri area reportedly destroyed the majority of crops on the most heavily cultivated land in the area between June and August (dark green area on Map 3). In September, 26% of assessed settlements in Wau County reported it was unsafe to access land for cultivation in September and consequently only 16% reported that most people in the community sourced their food from cultivation, which is seasonally low given September is traditionally harvest season for the western groundnuts, sesame and sorghum livelihood zone.

Regional Displacement due to Flooding

Heavy rains and subsequent flooding across the GBeG region also reportedly displaced populations between July and September. The flooding primarily affected northwestern NBeG State and northern Raja County. In Aweil North County, where it rained 51mm more than the long-term mean (LTM) in the first dekad of August, 19% of assessed settlements cited that flooding had caused people to leave their homes in August. Spells of heavy rains in GTA also caused flooding. In Tonj North, 39% of assessed settlements reported HHs had to leave their homes due to the flooding in September.

Situation in Assessed Settlements

Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL)

With the onset of the lean season in June, food security continued to be strained between July and September 2018 in the GBeG region. While reported access to food decreased in assessed settlements in NBeG State over the quarter, it reportedly remained consistent in WBeG State and showed signs of some improvement in GTA with the short-maturing crop harvest. However, despite the seasonal increase in access to food from the harvest by the end of the quarter in some areas, the FSL situation remained critical overall. The September Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) suggested WBeG State, NBeG State and Warrap State all had over 50% of their populations in either Crisis or above in September 2018.

Western Bahr el Ghazal State

In August and September, escalations in insecurity between armed youth groups in the GTA led to reported displacement in Tonj North and East counties. These clashes follow several months of similar outbreaks of violence in the area. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the assessed settlements in Tonj East with IDPs reported that most IDPs had arrived within the last three months and 52% in Tonj North reported IDPs had arrived within the last 6 months. Despite these episodes of fighting, the overall proportion of assessed settlements reporting IDPs decreased during the third quarter in GTA, which could be attributable to outflow of households temporarily in Tonj.

Displacement in Greater Tonj Area, Warrap State

In August and September, conflicts in the Greater Tonj Area, displaced households in search of access to food. Casual labour and resources in September had turned to distress migration in search of employment. Participants from Raja County reported HHs rising food insecurity in the county. FGD quarter, this is likely a consequence of the conflict in April 2017.

3% of assessed settlements reported the presence of IDPs in July, increasing to 38% in September. Ninety-one percent (91%) of assessed settlements in Raja County reported half or less of the host community remained in the settlement. Given that there was no reported active conflict during the quarter, this is likely a consequence of the rising food insecurity in the county. FGD participants from Raja County reported HHs had turned to distress migration in search of casual labour and resources in September to mitigate their lack of access to food.
The ongoing conflict also limited IDP’s ability to access Wau market or traditionally relied on livelihoods, in addition to restricting humanitarian access from June up to early September 2018. In the absence of humanitarian food assistance (HFA), food security was negatively impacted in the area. The September 2018 IPC projected 1,000 individuals in the Greater Bagarri area to be in Catastrophe (Phase 5) in September. In Raja County, only 6% of assessed settlements reported having adequate access to food in September 2018. FGD participants reported that HHs are relying heavily on wild foods given missed harvests, loss of livelihoods and perceived insecurity preventing cultivation. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of assessed settlements in Raja County reported that wild foods made up half or more of their main meals and 24% reported people were consuming wild foods that made them sick.

Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements consuming wild foods that made them sick.

The limited access to food in WBeG resulted in an increasing proportion of assessed settlements in Western Bahr el Ghazal State reportedly relying on consumption-based coping mechanisms, specifically limiting meal size and consuming less expensive food (Figure 2). Additionally, with the onset of the lean season, wild food consumption was also reportedly heavily relied on in assessed settlements in WBeG during the third quarter of 2018.

Northern Bahr el Ghazal State

Environmental impacts and low market supply negatively impacted food access in NBeG State during the third quarter. Only 5% of assessed settlements in NBeG State reported having access to enough food in August 2018. August is also typically the end of the lean season, contributing to the low reported access to food. The majority of assessed settlements in NBeG State reported environmental factors as the primary reason for the lack of adequate access to food in July (57%) and August (77%).

Continuing infestations of fall army worm during the quarter and a lack of rain in May and June, the planting and growing season, followed by heavy rains and flooding in August and September, the early harvest season, impacted cultivation and will likely increase food insecurity in the coming months. The flooding also reportedly restricted fishing in assessed settlements given the overflown rivers. Fishing is a key food source when households have exhausted their crops in the lean season.

Given that cultivation was limited in 2018, assessed settlements instead reported relying heavily on purchasing food (Figure 3). However, according to FGD participants in Aweil West County, disruptions to trade on the border between South Sudan and Sudan reportedly decreased access to food in the markets in Aweil Town. This caused low supply in markets and major price increases, which is concerning given nearly half (48%) of assessed settlements in NBeG State reported relying on purchasing their food as the principle food source in August, which increased from 36% reporting market reliance in June.

Due to the lack of access to food in NBeG State, many individuals reportedly migrated to Aweil Town for casual labour or to start small businesses and petty trade to send money back to their families during the quarter. Aweil North and South counties saw an increase in assessed settlements reporting receiving remittances as a livelihood source; the proportion of assessed settlements reporting this rose from 10% and 15% in Aweil North and South counties, respectively, in June to 33% and 29% in August.

Aweil East and West counties each saw a decline of over 15 percentage points in the proportion of assessed settlements that reported owning cattle between June and August 2018. Cattle is traditionally one of the primary livelihood activities in NBeG State but with the growing food insecurity, more households have reportedly been selling their cattle to access food. The proportion of assessed settlements reporting excess livestock sales as a livelihoods coping mechanism increased from 24% to 44% from June to September 2018. For more information, see the REACH Greater Bahr el Ghazal Situation Overview, April-June 2018.

Greater Tonj area

Access to food in the Greater Tonj area reportedly increased during the third quarter; 18% of assessed settlements reported having access to enough food in June, which increased to 54% in September 2018. This may be attributable to the harvest in September as well as the increase

10. IPC, South Sudan Key IPC Findings, September 2018 - March 2019, September 2018
11. Environmental factors include: crops destroyed by floods, crops destroyed by pests, lack of rain and a short growing season
12. Reported by a key informant from NBeG State.
13. Reported by FGD participants from NBeG State.
in reported HFA received in September in GTA. While 9% and 25% of assessed settlements in Tonj North and South counties, respectively, reported accessing HFA in June, 61% and 64% reported accessing HFA in September 2018.

Ongoing outbreaks of inter-communal conflict continued to heavily impact access to food; 32% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food in GTA reported their crops were destroyed by fighting in September, and in Tonj East County, 70% of assessed settlements with inadequate access to food reported that fighting had destroyed their crops. This is particularly concerning given that the primary reported source of food in GTA during the quarter was consistently cultivation, reported by 71% of assessed settlements in September. In Tonj East County, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting livestock sales as a coping mechanism increased from 11% to 67% between June and September 2018, which is concerning given the high reliance on livestock as a livelihood in the area.

**Protection**

Insecurity in WBeG State and episodes of inter-communal violence across GTA have resulted in reported protection concerns in the GBeG region from July to September 2018. Ninety-one percent (91%) of assessed settlements in Wau County, WBeG State reported they did not feel safe most of the time in September and in August 15% of assessed settlements reported an incident of conflict had killed a civilian. Looting was the main reported safety concern for both men and women in assessed settlements in Wau County.

Perceived insecurity reportedly increased in assessed settlements in GTA over the third quarter. The proportion of assessed settlements that reported most people do not feel safe most of the time rose from 17% in July in Tonj East and South counties to 67% in September and 83% of assessed settlements reported gathering wild food as a key livelihood-based coping mechanism.

Livestock continued to be one of the most common livelihood sources in GTA, reported by 92% of assessed settlements and all assessed settlements reported owning cattle at the end of the third quarter. However, likely due to the food insecurity, assessed settlements reported relying on excess livestock sales during the third quarter. In Tonj East, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting livestock sales as a coping mechanism increased from 11% to 67% between June and September 2018, which is concerning given the high reliance on livestock as a livelihood in the area.

**Livestock**

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**Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)**

Shelter conditions declined in Wau County, Tonj East County and NBeG State due to conflict and flooding during the third quarter of 2018. In Wau County, WBeG State, 15% of assessed settlements reported half or more than half of their shelters in their community were destroyed or partially destroyed from the fighting in August, which was an increase from 0% reported in July.14 Conflict also reportedly caused shelter damage in GTA between July and August 2018. The

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14. OCHA, Multi-sector Fact Finding Report on Flood Effected areas of Awiel South, September 2018

*July figure omitted for GTA and September figure omitted for NBeG given lack of full area coverage in those months.
15. While no assessed settlements in Wau County reported shelter damage in July, this is likely reflective of the developments in June, pre-outbreak of conflict, given that the recall period for KIIs is 1 month.

16. Reported in coordination meeting by partners in Aweil Town, NBeG State.

17. Unprotected water sources include: donkey carts, ponds, wells, rivers and swamps.

18. WFP, World Food Programme, Dataviz: South Sudan, July-September 2018

The ongoing conflict, flooding, and displacement during the third quarter resulted in reported need for NFIs for IDPs in assessed settlements. Plastic sheets and mosquito nets were consistently the most commonly reported needed items in the GBeG region during the assessment period. In WBeG and NBeG in August, 55% and 57% of assessed settlements with IDPs, respectively, reported IDPs most needed plastic sheets. This is concerning given August is the wet season and plastic sheets provide essential protection from the rains and potential health issues.

**Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**

In the third quarter, reported presence of functional boreholes in assessed settlements improved in GTA from 88% to 100%, though reportedly declined in WBeG and NBeG states. The proportion of assessed settlements in NBeG State that reported any functioning boreholes in their community dropped from 57% to 45% between June and August 2018 and in WBeG State it decreased from 53% to 43% between July and September 2018.

Access to clean water was reportedly most limited in Wau County, WBeG State and Aweil Centre and West counties, NBeG State where 32%, 44% and 48% of assessed settlements, respectively, reported there were no functioning boreholes in the settlement. In Aweil Centre County, 61% of assessed settlements reported relying on unprotected water sources and 44% reported that it took people from an hour to half of a day to collect water. In Wau County, 78% of assessed settlements reported using an unprotected water source (Map 7), which can have negative implications on sanitation and health.

Over 80% of assessed settlements in Tonj East (83%) and Jur River (89%) counties reported that individuals were not using latrines in September and 88% reported the same in NBeG State in August. Compounding the sanitation concerns of open defecation, a consistently large proportion of assessed settlements also reported only using water to wash their hands in the GBeG region in August: 44% in GTA, 40% in WBeG State and 39% in NBeG State.

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to health services was lowest in Tonj East County, Jur River County and Aweil Centre County in August, where 38%, 21% and 33% of assessed settlements reported there were no functioning health care services accessible by foot, respectively.

In WBeG State, an increasing proportion of assessed settlements reported that distance was the main reason for lack of access to health care services, reported by 27% of assessed settlements in June and rising to 40% in September, which may be attributable to the ongoing displacement in Wau and Jur River counties through the third quarter. In NBeG State, 84% of assessed settlements without access to health services reported that health care services were unavailable because they were either not adequately staffed or not supplied with sufficient drugs, which may be resultant of impassable roads from the heavy flooding.

In Tonj East County the proportion of assessed settlements reporting SGBV as primary protection concern for girls, August 2018

**Map 6: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting SGBV as primary protection concern for girls, August 2018**

**Map 7: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting using an unprotected water source, August 2018**

**Figure 8: Primary reported health concerns in the GBeG region, August 2018**

- **WBeG**: Malaria 18%, Diarrhoea 7%, Typhoid 15%, Malnutrition 6%
- **NBeG**: Malaria 20%, Diarrhoea 12%, Typhoid 11%, Malnutrition 6%
- **GTA**: Malaria 24%, Diarrhoea 14%, Typhoid 16%, Malnutrition 22%

**Figure 7: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting presence of a functioning borehole in the settlement, WBeG and GTA in September 2018, NBeG in August 2018**

- **Western Bahr el Ghazal**: 43%
- **Northern Bahr el Ghazal**: 45%
- **Greater Tonj area**: 100%
settlements reporting malnutrition as the main health problem in the community increased from 17% in July to 42% in September 2018, which may be a consequence of the negative impacts of the lean season and the inter-communal violence in the area.

**Education**

The proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education services remained consistent in assessed settlements in WBeG State and GTA over the third quarter, with 69% of assessed settlements reporting access in WBeG and 100% in GTA in September. In NBeG State the proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education dropped from 89% to 74% between the end of the last quarter and August 2018 (Figure 9), reportedly due to there never being facilities (41%) or facilities being too distant (28%).

![Figure 9: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education and attendance of half or more girls (F) and boys (M) in assessed settlements, June (solid) and September (striped) in GTA and WBeG and June (solid) and August (striped) in NBeG](image)

Reported school attendance rates for female students declined in assessed settlements in WBeG, NBeG and GTA between the second and third quarters of 2018 (Figure 9). School fees and the need to work in the household were reported as the main barriers to attendance for girls in both August and September in all three areas. The low attendance may also be reflective of girls participating in seasonal harvest work. Economic barriers remained a consistently reported issue that reportedly impeded female school attendance rates. See REACH GBeG Situation Overview, April to June 2018 for more information on this. Assessed settlements in GTA reported that a lack of supplies was a primary reason for girls not attending school in September.

Male school attendance reportedly increased in assessed settlements in GTA area; 75% of assessed settlements reported that half or more boys attended school in June, increasing to 96% in September.

**Conclusion**

Ongoing conflict in WBeG State and Greater Tonj area and food insecurity and flooding in NBeG State caused an increase in reported displacement and further decline in access to food and basic services between July and September 2018 in much of the GBeG region.

Displacement and environmental shocks have resulted in minimal yields of early-maturing crops, and the lack of humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas in WBeG State has caused an increasing reliance on severe coping strategies such as consumption of wild foods that are known to make people sick and excess sales of livestock. With the onset of the dry season, the ability of populations to rely on key coping strategies, such as wild foods, will diminish.

The recent surge in inter-communal clashes in GTA led to increasing reported shelter damage and restricted access to food and basic services, particularly in Tonj East County. The confluence of a heavy reliance on cultivation as a primary food source with high reports of crop destruction from conflict will likely result in early exhaustion of crop yields, leading to more acute food insecurity in GTA in the coming months.

Access to clean water reportedly declined in WBeG and NBeG States during the third quarter. The erratic rains and flooding in parts of the region negatively impacted access to WASH and health services. With the heavy rains, there was an increase in malaria reported as a health concern in areas heavily affected by flooding, such as Aweil North and West counties and Tonj North County.

While the harvest season may increase access to food region-wide, the combined impacts of continued displacement, armed clashes, environmental shocks, increased reported looting and consecutive poor harvests will likely result in the continued deterioration of food security and the ability for HHs to meet basic needs in the region.

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**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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