

# Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, South Sudan

July - September 2018

**REACH** An initiative of  
IMPACT Initiatives  
ACTED and UNOSAT

## Introduction

Upper Nile State (UNS) saw localised fighting, reported dry spells and increasing rates of returns in the third quarter of 2018, which exacerbated food insecurity, water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) and WASH-related health challenges, in turn raising protection concerns. Conflict in Maban County as well as residual tensions in southeastern UNS and the western bank, coupled with the reported dry spells, hindered cultivation across the state. Poor harvests coincided with increasing returns, stressing limited available resources at the peak of the lean season. Data on needs in UNS is required to inform the humanitarian response. However, information gaps exist due to regional variation 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

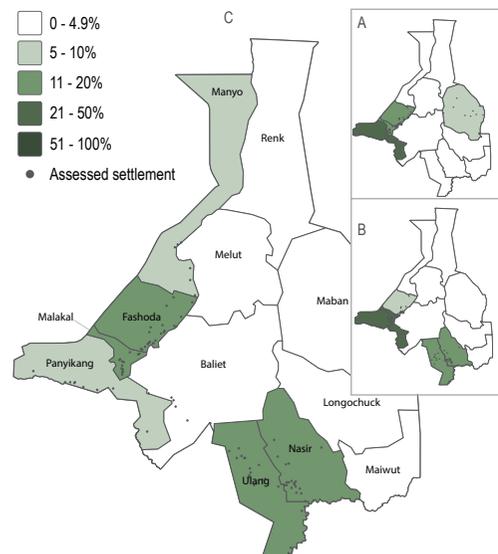
# of key informant interviews conducted: **458**

# of assessed settlements: **184**

# of counties covered: **7 (of 12)**

# of focus group discussions conducted: **4**

**Map 1: Assessment coverage in UNS in July (A), August (B) and September 2018 (C)**



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.

The REACH team covered Panyikang, Malakal and Fashoda counties from July to September. Coverage of the western bank included Manyo County in September. Security challenges in the Maban and Akobo (in neighbouring Jonglei State) bases limited data collection: Maban County was only covered in July, while Ulang

and Nasir counties were only covered in August and September. No primary data is presently available on central UNS (Map 1).

In the third quarter of 2018, REACH interviewed 458 key informants (KIs) from 184 settlements in 7 counties of UNS. This data was supplemented with four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with new arrivals on displacement, migration, food security and protection in Tonga in Panyikang County, Zero Bus Station in Renk County and two in the Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site. Primary data was supplemented with secondary information and past REACH assessments.

This situation overview (SO) evaluates changes in observed humanitarian needs across UNS in the third 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 three geographic zones in UNS: the western bank (Panyikang, Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo counties), the Maban region (Maban County) and southeastern UNS (Nasir and Ulang counties).

## METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the situation in largely inaccessible areas of Upper Nile State, REACH uses primary data provided by 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 Akobo, in neighbouring Jonglei State as well as in the Malakal PoC site and Maban in Upper Nile in July, August and September 2018.

In-depth interviews were conducted over the first three weeks of each month. The standardised survey tool includes 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 the 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 settlements for a given month were included in analysis. Due to access and operational constraints, the specific settlements assessed within each county each month vary. Thus, some changes over time reported in this situation overview might be due to variations in coverage.

# Population Movement and Displacement

## Insecurity-driven displacement

Despite no active fighting in these areas of UNS in the third quarter, insecurity-related displacement continued in southeastern UNS and Panyikang County. While the rainy season stemmed potential migration from Akobo in neighbouring Jonglei State, displacement between Ulang and Nasir counties continued in this quarter. Almost three-quarters (72%) of assessed settlements in southeastern UNS reported the presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs), marking no substantial change since June.<sup>1</sup> Further, of assessed settlements in Nasir County with IDPs in September, 46% reported that the most recent IDPs had arrived in the last three months, with the largest portion arriving from Ulang County (27%). In Panyikang County, people were reported leaving Tonga to relocate to Liri in Sudan in August due to perceptions of mounting tension in the area.<sup>2</sup> Such sustained forms of displacement suggest pervasive fear of insecurity across parts of UNS.

## Food, water and service-driven displacement

In the third quarter, service access-motivated movement and displacement appeared to have increased across UNS, particularly in the western bank. In August, populations reportedly left Tonga in Panyikang County to relocate to New Fangak and Diel in Jonglei State, locations perceived by IDPs to have

better food security and access to hospitals and schools.<sup>3</sup> Correspondingly, in September, 11% of assessed settlements in Panyikang County reported no remaining host community members. In addition, with increasing water shortages in Aburoc, as many as 4,400 IDPs reportedly moved from Aburoc to Kodok, Lul and Wau Shilluk in Fashoda and Malakal counties by late September.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in August, flooding in Baliet County displaced 500 people

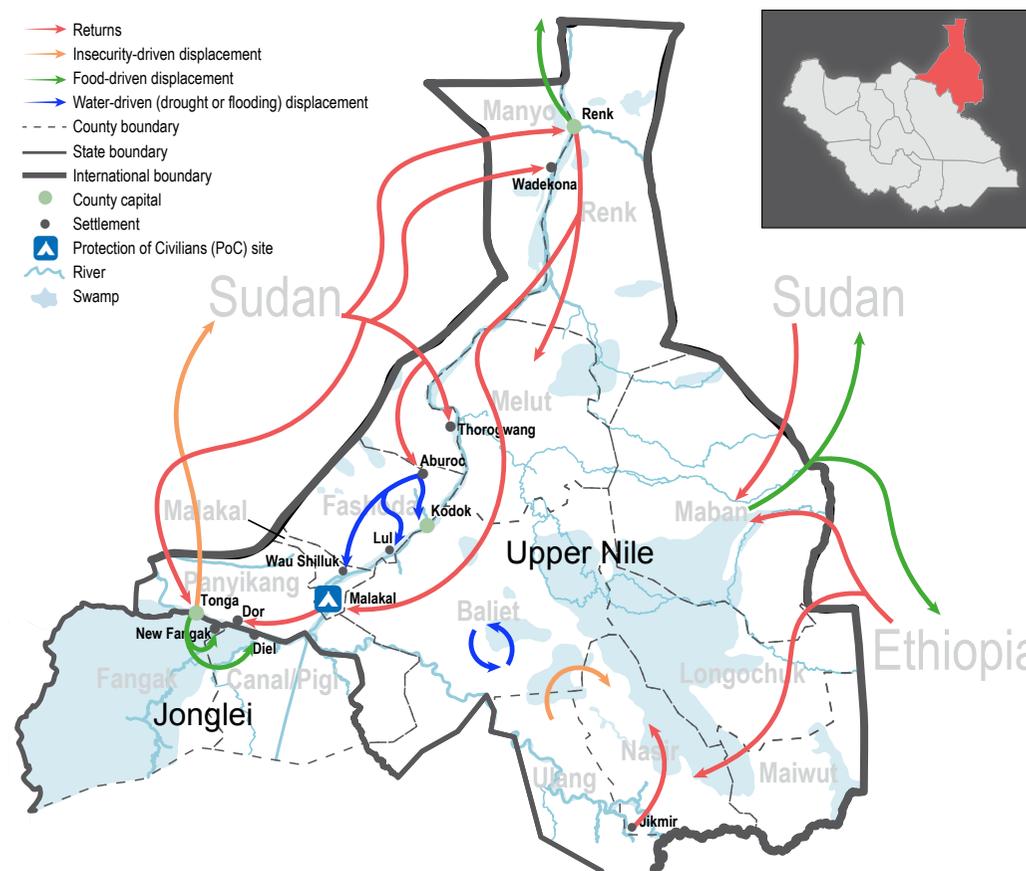
within Baliet, largely in search of shelter.<sup>5</sup> Flooding abated by September and most IDPs reportedly returned.

## Returns

UNS saw an increase in assessed settlements reporting returnees<sup>6</sup> in this quarter: 57% reported returnees in June as compared with 70% by September.<sup>7</sup> Reports of returns in assessed settlements were especially high

in the western bank (89% in September) and Maban County (70% in July). In Maban, returns reportedly arrived from Ethiopia and Sudan following temporary displacement earlier that month due to late rains and minimal harvest.<sup>8</sup> Initial qualitative findings suggest that in the western bank as well as Ulang and Nasir counties, returns were largely motivated by optimism following the signing of the Peace Agreements and, for returns from Sudan, poor humanitarian conditions in the refugee camps.<sup>9</sup> By August, some individuals returned to Tonga from Liri in Sudan, even as others travelled from Tonga to Liri. Many of these returnees reportedly continued on to Diel and New Fangak due to food insecurity.<sup>10</sup> Panyikang County also evidenced some returns to Dor from other settlements in the county and Malakal PoC site.<sup>11</sup> However, Dor was previously uninhabited and thus likely more food insecure, so returnees may similarly proceed to other settlements. Further, 50% of assessed settlements in Manyo County in September reported returnees arriving within the last three months, the highest across all UNS counties. Partners report that several thousand returnees arrived in Thorogwang and Wadekona settlements by September.<sup>12</sup> Reports of increased returns to the western bank also coincided with the rumoured closure of Khartoum's Jebel Aulia camp in September.<sup>13</sup> Returnees to Ulang and Nasir counties were registered from Matar in Ethiopia and Jikmir in Nasir.<sup>14</sup> REACH port and road monitoring in Renk Town tracks returns and IDP movement between Renk and Sudan. Data from this activity suggested concurrent returns from

Map 2: Displacement and migration into and out of UNS, July-September 2018



1. REACH, [Situation Overview: Upper Nile State, April-June 2018](#).

2. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, September 2018.

3. Ibid.

4. DRC, Aburoc, Wau Shilluk, Lul and Kodok: Context Snapshot, October 2018.

5. Reported by Baliet authorities to an Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG).

6. REACH assessed IDP and refugee returns under the same indicator. Qualitative

data then facilitates distinguishing between the two groups of returns.

7. For all June/September and August/September comparisons, Manyo County data has been excluded for consistent coverage in trend analysis.

8. Reported by humanitarian actors, September 2018.

9. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, September

2018.

10. Ibid.

11. Reported by humanitarian actors, October 2018.

12. Reported by humanitarian partners in an ICWG in Malakal.

13. According to FGD participants interviewed in Renk, October 2018.

14. Reported by humanitarian actors, September 2018.

Sudan to Renk, Melut County and Malakal PoC site.<sup>15</sup> By September, average daily permanent returns to South Sudan exceeded permanent exits, though not all entry points to Renk were monitored systematically. However, movement scale remained limited with only an average of ten individuals entering and four exiting per day. Further, despite optimism, returnees to all locations were largely partial families, where children were left in refugee camps in Sudan, due to trepidation over the longevity of the Peace Agreements.<sup>16</sup>

Movement scale was reportedly limited due to obstacles at border entry sites. Reported increased tension at the Panyikang border with Sudan between armed actors stymied potential migration or returns.<sup>17</sup> The border closure between Sudan and South Sudan beginning in March 2018 further hampered movement.<sup>18</sup> As a result, returnees increasingly crossed at informal border entry sites, such as through Aburoc or across the River Nile in Renk.<sup>19</sup>

## Situation in Assessed Settlements

### Food security and livelihoods (FSL)

Food insecurity and limited livelihood opportunities presented continued challenges across assessed settlements of UNS in the third quarter, the height of the region's lean season. Although cultivation was the most frequently cited livelihood activity (by 33% of assessed UNS settlements), a large share (30%) of assessed settlements reported insufficient access to agricultural inputs. KIs highlight that

settlements were merely making do as best as possible with limited resources, resorting to sharing tools and seeds.<sup>20</sup> Reported drought in parts of the western bank, Melut and Maban further constricted cultivation in this quarter.<sup>21</sup> As a result, with cyclical food distribution occurring at a time when many households' ability to feed themselves through own production was limited, UNS saw increasing reliance on food assistance with 30% of assessed settlements reporting humanitarian assistance as their primary source of food in September as compared with 19% in August.

Despite severe food insecurity and malnutrition,<sup>22</sup> assessed counties of UNS

saw slight improvement in FSL in this period. With the exception of those in Maban County, assessed settlements evidenced declining self-reported hunger: In September 42% and 28% of assessed settlements in the western bank and southeastern UNS reported inadequate access to food as compared with 94% (July) and 42% (August), respectively, earlier in the quarter. Aligned with the projections of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), this suggested improvement was largely attributable to the onset of the harvest season.<sup>23</sup> Another indicator that food security may have improved is that the proportion of assessed settlements in UNS reporting market access increased from

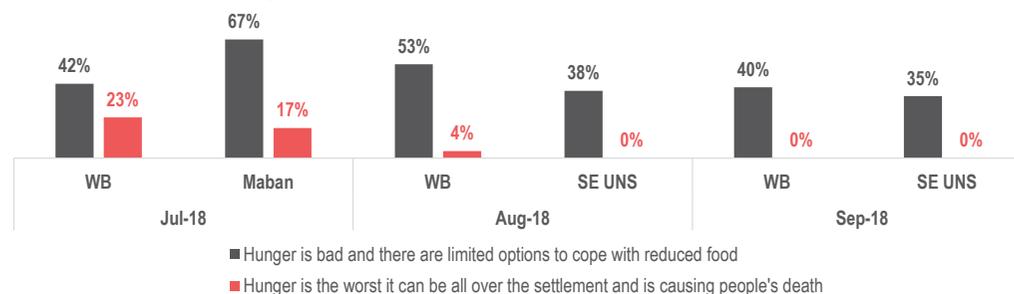
56% in June to 80% by September. Similarly, the proportion of assessed UNS settlements reporting cereal price inflation decreased from 60% in August to 47% by September. In addition, in the western bank, of those settlements with inadequate access to food, a smaller proportion of settlements reported severe or worst hunger: 65% of assessed settlements reported severe or worst hunger in July as compared with 40% by September (Figure 1).

However, returnees and insecurity (ongoing or feared) pose challenges to food security across the state. Returnees were registered across UNS, particularly to areas with minimal preexisting services and food security including southeastern UNS, Panyikang and Maban counties. Such population inflows likely diluted available humanitarian food assistance, resulting in a spike in self-reported rates of hunger in this quarter (Figure 1). For example, in the absence of population fixing, food rations in Tonga in Panyikang County reportedly failed to account for population increases, exacerbating food insecurity in the area (Figure 2).<sup>24</sup> Similar patterns were observed in Ulang and Nasir counties, where returnees reportedly strained available food assistance.<sup>25</sup>

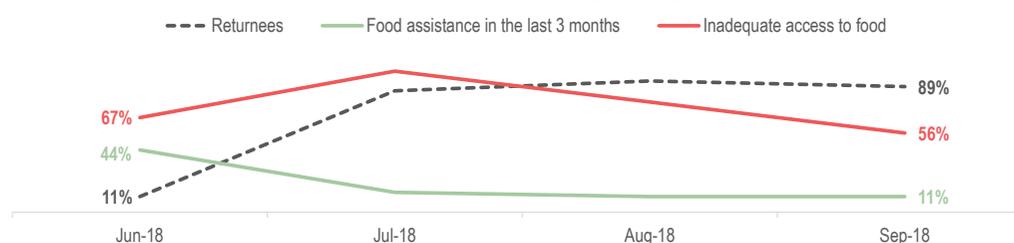
### Southeastern UNS (Ulang and Nasir counties)

Food security and livelihoods in southeastern UNS were increasingly limited by the third quarter of 2018, largely due to security-driven concerns. Statewide, reliance on food assistance appeared to be highest in Ulang and Nasir counties, with 53% of assessed

**Figure 1: Proportion of assessed UNS settlements self-reporting levels of hunger in the western bank (WB), Maban County and southeastern (SE) UNS**



**Figure 2: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food versus presence of returnees and provision of food assistance, Panyikang County**



15. REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, September 2018](#).

16. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC and Tonga, September 2018; REACH, [Port and Road Monitoring: Renk, September 2018](#).

17. Reported by Tonga authorities, September 2018.

18. According to FGD participants interviewed in Renk, October 2018.

19. Ibid.

20. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, October 2018.

21. Reported by humanitarian partners, September 2018.

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

23. Ibid.

24. According to FGD participants interviewed in Tonga, September 2018.

25. Reported by humanitarian actors, September 2018.

southeastern UNS settlements reporting food assistance as their primary source of food in September. Nevertheless, the largest share (58%) of assessed southeastern UNS settlements without enough food in September reported the stopping of regular food distributions as the primary cause of hunger. Since food distributions were ongoing to Ulang and Nasir counties throughout the quarter,<sup>26</sup> such data likely reflects an inability to reach sites of food distribution due to fear of insecurity. Relatedly, the proportion of assessed settlement experiencing hunger who attributed hunger to a lack of safety in accessing land for cultivation increased from 15% in August to 25% by September. If settlements are unable to access land, this will limit harvests which will in turn limit access to food. While no clashes were evidenced in Ulang and Nasir counties in the third quarter, such mounting concerns may suggest fear of criminality or impending renewed violence.

Although access to food appeared to have increased in the third quarter, assessed settlements of Ulang and Nasir counties

**Figure 3: Food insecurity coping mechanisms reported in assessed settlements, Maban County**



increasingly reported employing coping mechanisms including households begging (from 16% in August to 30% in September), selling more livestock than usual (from 52% in August to 93% in September) and slaughtering more livestock than usual (from 29% in August to 53% in September) during times of hunger. Such coping mechanisms are likely to reduce future livelihoods activities and limit resilience.

### Maban (Maban County)

Drought, conflict and livestock depletion may have limited food security and livelihood opportunities across Maban County in this quarter. Fighting was likely a cause and consequence of evidenced food insecurity in this quarter. In July, fighting in Beneshowa and movements of armed groups in western Maban coincided with the harvest season.<sup>25</sup> As a result, 50% of assessed settlements in July experiencing hunger attributed food insecurity to a lack of safety in accessing land for cultivation. Consequently, assessed settlements increasingly employed severe coping mechanisms (Figure 3).

The Mabanese region may have also seen diminishing cattle ownership with 60% of assessed settlements reporting that the majority of people owned cattle in July compared with 82% in May. This decline is likely, in part, attributable to increased reported rates of disease outbreak: 60% of assessed settlements reported an outbreak of disease among livestock in July as compared with 25% in May. Such declining cattle ownership likely results in less access to milk and meat

products which will in turn impact nutrition and food security in the area.

Severe coping mechanisms employed in this period may reduce future harvest yields and limit livelihood activities, thus hampering resilience. In July, 20% and 30% of assessed Mabanese settlements reported consuming seeds and selling livestock, respectively, in times of hunger. With increasingly limited cultivation and livestock-rearing, tensions over allocation of resources to the Mabanese host community culminated with riots in Bunj at the end of July.<sup>27</sup> Antagonism with Sudanese merchants at that time concurrently stymied trade with the area.<sup>28</sup>

### Central UNS (Renk and Melut counties)<sup>29</sup>

While central UNS typically experiences less food insecurity than other areas of UNS due to the buffer of the oil industry and international trade, the border closure and drought limited food security in this quarter. Robust trade between Renk County and Sudan bolsters markets in the area. However, Renk County is thus susceptible to market shocks based on the economy of Sudan.<sup>30</sup> Increasing inflation in Sudan coupled with the rise of smuggling following the Sudan-South Sudan border closure resulted in increased market prices in Renk and Melut counties.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, drought in Melut County shrunk domestic supply of food.<sup>32</sup>

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

Food insecurity and malnutrition remained poor in the western bank in this quarter, particularly

in Panyikang County. The IPC classified the majority of the region as Phase 4 ('Emergency'), with some populations expected to be in IPC Phase 5 ('Humanitarian Catastrophe') from September until December 2018.<sup>33</sup> While improvement was predicted in subsequent quarters, limited domestic cultivation and humanitarian food assistance in Panyikang County have entrenched the county's reliance on trade with Sudan. However, traders' mobility may be increasingly hampered due to movement of armed actors at the border,<sup>34</sup> which could further threaten food security.

Increasing returns may strain resources even in areas of the western bank currently less affected by food insecurity. In Manyo County, food security is historically better than in other western bank counties in part due to Sudanese herders' seasonal cattle migration to the county. While herders do not let locals use cattle, they do augment local access to meat and dairy products, supporting nutrition in the area. However, high rates of return to Manyo County reported by humanitarian partners likely diluted available resources, which may have caused the lower-than-anticipated animal product consumption in September: 50% and 33% of assessed settlements reported that meat and dairy, respectively, were not regularly eaten.

### Protection

Sustained fear of insecurity across assessed areas of UNS exacerbated protection concerns in the third quarter (Map 3). Over a third (34%) of assessed UNS settlements in September reported that most people did not feel safe

26. WFP, Weekly IRRM Plans, July-September 2018.

27. Reported by humanitarian partners in an ICWG in Malakal, August 2018.

28. Reported by humanitarian actors, July 2018.

29. This section is not based on AoK quantitative data as we do not presently collect data on this region.

30. REACH, Regional Displacement of South Sudanese, May 2018.

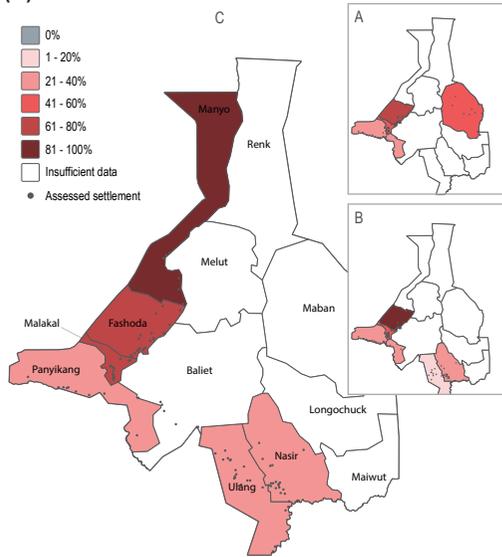
31. According to FGD participants interviewed in Renk, October 2018.

32. Ibid.

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

34. Reported by Tonga authorities, September 2018.

**Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting most people feel unsafe most of the time in July (A), August (B) and September 2018 (C)**



and inter-communal violence.<sup>35</sup> As such, 65% of assessed Nasir and Ulang county settlements in September reported people do not feel safe. In addition, 33% of assessed southeastern UNS settlements reported an incident resulting in civilian death, the highest across assessed counties of UNS. Thus, security and inter-communal violence remain priority concerns for southeastern UNS.

### Maban (Maban County)

Maban demonstrated increasing protection concerns due to competition over limited resources. In July, 20% of assessed settlements reported an incident resulting in civilian death, as compared with 0% in May. In addition, 20% reported a case of looting, comparable to the 12% reported in May. Conflict in Beneshowa and unrest in Doro refugee camp and Bunj were sparked by inter and intra-communal

competition over land and humanitarian resources.<sup>36</sup> Correspondingly, by July, 20% and 14% of assessed Mabanese settlements reported a land dispute and poor relations between IDPs and the local community, respectively. Such conflict may have been exacerbated by the lean season where resources were more limited, heightening competition between communities.

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

Pervasive fear of insecurity in the western bank negatively influenced household decision-making related to accessing life-saving services. In Aburoc, despite water shortages and resulting likely increases in gendered protection concerns, some household heads refuse to leave for fear of armed actors in their settlements-of-origin.<sup>37</sup> Further, despite acute

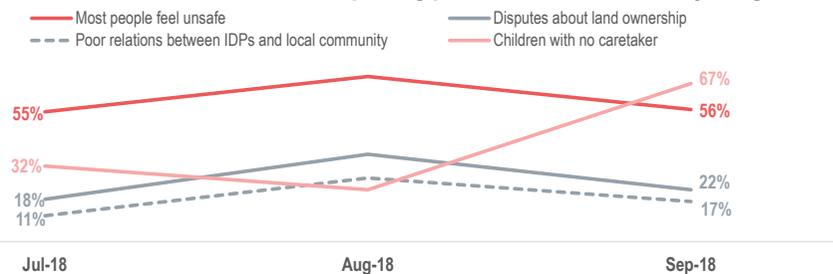
hunger across Panyikang County, households express fear of relocation to Malakal PoC site due to insecurity en route.<sup>38</sup> Concerns of renewed violence may not be unfounded, as cattle raids such as seen in Ogod in Malakal,<sup>39</sup> could catalyze intra-communal fighting in already tense areas.

In Panyikang County, specifically, protection concerns mounted in August (Figure 5) and may be partly attributable to returns reported during that time. At the peak of the lean season, returnees and host communities were reported as increasingly competing for limited resources, such as water and food, in the absence of humanitarian services.<sup>40</sup> In August, 37% of assessed Panyikang County settlements reported a land dispute while 27% of those with IDPs observed poor relations between IDPs and the host community. Correspondingly, in August, 60% of assessed Panyikang County settlements reported most residents did not feel safe. Thus, strained resources in light of reported returns coupled with people's inability to relocate within UNS due to perceived insecurity may have resulted in the displacement to Sudan reported during this same period. At the same time, Panyikang County saw an increase in assessed settlements reporting the presence of unaccompanied minors (32% in July to 67% in September). Further research would be needed to establish whether this may be driven by a sudden onset of displacement due to deteriorating humanitarian conditions worsened by population inflows.

**Figure 4: Most cited protection concerns for men and women (18 years and older) in assessed UNS settlements, September 2018**



**Figure 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting protection concerns, Panyikang County**



most of the time. The primary protection concerns in the third quarter demonstrated little change from the second quarter, with assessed settlements majorly citing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and family separation for women, and inter-communal violence and cattle raids for men (Figure 4). However, the proportion of assessed settlements reporting fear of forced recruitment as a primary protection concern for men declined to 3% in September from 24% in June.

### Southeastern UNS (Ulang and Nasir counties)

While Ulang and Nasir counties saw no large scale conflict, there were some isolated incidents of insecurity including a cattle raid

35. Rapid Inter-Agency Joint Assessment in Greater Nasir, September 2018.

36. Reported by humanitarian partners, October 2018.

37. Protection Cluster, Aburoc Mission Report, September 2018.

38. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site and Tonga, September 2018.

39. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site, October 2018.

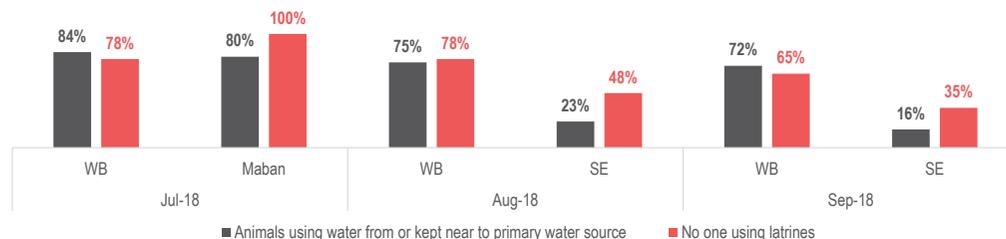
40. According to FGD participants interviewed in Malakal PoC site and Tonga, September 2018.

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

WASH indicators demonstrated an improvement in Malakal, Nasir and Ulang counties, while those in Panyikang and Maban counties evidenced a marked decline, largely related to real or perceived insecurity. In addition, challenges of water access were both a cause (drought) and a consequence (insecurity) of increased protection concerns.

Assessed areas of UNS saw minimal change in water sourcing between the second and third quarters. The western bank continued to have limited access to boreholes and source water primarily from unprotected sources: 96% of assessed western bank settlements reported no access to a borehole by September, comparable to 92% in June. As a result, in September, the majority (78%) of assessed western bank settlements fetched water from rivers. However, in Malakal County, settlements reported increasingly mainly using tap stands: 47% of assessed settlements in Malakal County cited tap stands as their primary water source in September as compared with 0% in June. In contrast, the majority (65%) of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements continued to report boreholes as their primary water source as of September. Like in the second quarter, assessed Mabanese settlements reported a combination of boreholes (30%) and unprotected bodies of water (50%) as their major water sources in July. Despite variation in quality of water sources across the state, by September, almost three-quarters (71%) of assessed UNS settlements could access their

**Figure 6: Proportion of assessed UNS settlements reporting water contamination risks in the western bank (WB), Maban County and southeastern (SE) UNS**



primary water source in one hour or less.

Drought limited water access in some settlements in the state. In Aburoc in Fashoda County, limited rains coupled with a low water table have resulted in water shortages in this period as residents accessed 10.7 liters per person per day (L/p/d) by September, below the 15 liter threshold for emergencies.<sup>41</sup> Water consumption in Aburoc is anticipated to decline to between 3.9 and 6 L/p/d by the end of the year.<sup>42</sup> Limited water access in Aburoc was linked to declining hygiene practices and increased incidents of water borne diseases.<sup>43</sup> Kor Adar in Melut County experienced similar acute water shortages in this period due to drought.<sup>44</sup> Increased concerns of protection incidents such as SGBV may arise in subsequent quarters as women have to travel longer distances, including at night, to fetch water and water shortages can amplify tensions within families (for more information, see REACH's [Aburoc Water Shortage: Context and Surge Capacity Analysis](#)).

Real or perceived insecurity continued to present challenges to water accessed in some assessed areas of UNS this quarter. In Maban

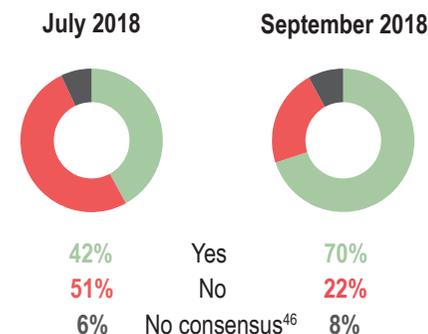
County, water is both a primary driver and site of conflict between communities.<sup>45</sup> In light of such historic competition over resources and increased tension between communities across Maban in this period, 40% of assessed Mabanese settlements reported they were unable to access their preferred water point due to insecurity in July as compared with 19% in May. In addition, in Panyikang County, with movements of armed actors coupled with anxieties over future clashes, 67% of assessed settlements reported that they were unable to access their preferred water source due to insecurity, a marked increase from 11% in June.

Livestock rearing practices also presented obstacles to sourcing safe water in this quarter. The majority (80% and 72%) of assessed Mabanese (July) and western bank (September) settlements, respectively, reported animals drinking from or kept near to water points, including 100% in Manyo and Panyikang counties (Figure 6). Such practices heighten risk of water contamination, especially in the western bank and Maban County where a larger share of residents source water from unprotected sources.

Sanitation practices demonstrated an improvement in this quarter: 51% of assessed UNS settlements reported that no one used latrines in September, an improvement from 68% in August (Figure 6). Statewide, the largest share (42%) of assessed settlements reporting open defecation in September attributed this to a lack of latrine facilities.

Access to health services among assessed UNS settlements may have also improved throughout this quarter: 70% of assessed UNS settlements had access to health services as of September, as compared with 42% in July (Figure 7). However, strong regional differences existed, with only 22% of assessed settlements accessing to health services in Panyikang County as of September, with 43% of assessed settlements without access to health services citing insecurity as the primary reason. As seen in the trends of other protection-related indicators in the county, this represented a marked increase in perceived insecurity in Panyikang County since June when no

**Figure 7: Access to health services in assessed UNS settlements**



41. WASH Cluster, Ensuring the Centrality of Protection in WASH Programming in Aburoc, September 2018.

42. Ibid.

43. Reported by humanitarian partners in an ICWG in Malakal, September 2018.

44. Reported by humanitarian actors, September 2018.

45. REACH, [South Sudan: Enhancing Peaceful Co-existence and Resilience in Maban County](#), April 2017.

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

assessed settlements attributed inaccessibility of health facilities to insecurity. Further, in Maban County, of assessed settlements accessing health services, 25% reported that they were a full day's walk away in July.

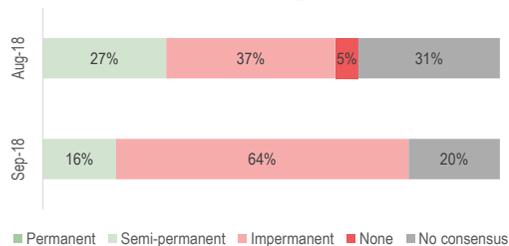
Across assessed areas of UNS, the largest share of assessed settlements reported malaria or fevers (26%) and water borne diseases (13%) as the primary health concerns in September. Both malaria and waterborne diseases were likely linked to limited WASH infrastructure in the assessed regions. In addition, higher reported concerns of malaria are also likely related to the rainy season which lasted the duration of this quarter and thus led to increased stagnant water and mosquito breeding grounds.

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

Across assessed counties of UNS, IDPs inhabited less permanent shelters than their host community counterparts. Assessed settlements increasingly reported host communities living in tukuls: 79% of host communities were reported living in tukuls by September as compared with 66% in June. In Malakal County, 42% of assessed settlements with host community members reported them living in permanent shelters,<sup>47</sup> an improvement from June when the largest share (33%) lived in rakoobas. In comparison, the largest portion (31%) of assessed UNS settlements with IDPs continued to report IDPs living in rakoobas by September.

Shelter standards continued to be poorer and possibilities for construction more limited in southeastern UNS<sup>48</sup> than in the western

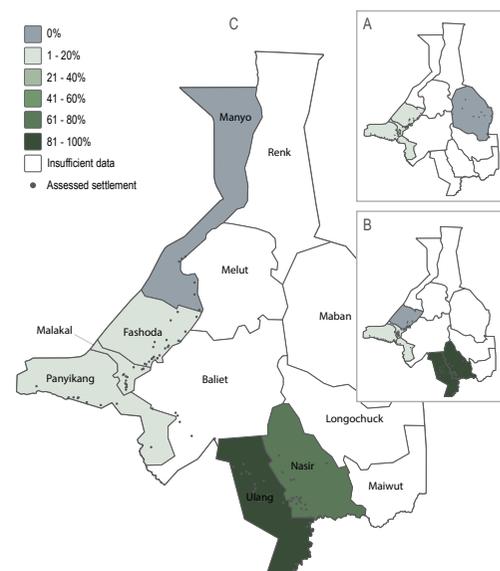
**Figure 8: Primary IDP shelter type of assessed settlements with IDPs, Ulang and Nasir counties**



bank and Maban County. In Ulang and Nasir counties, the share of IDPs primarily accommodated in impermanent structures such as tents, improvised shelters and abandoned and community buildings spiked in this quarter (Figure 8): 64% of assessed settlements with IDPs reported IDPs living in impermanent structures by September as compared with 37% in August. No assessed settlements in the western bank from July to September and only 14% of those from Maban in July reported any IDPs living in the open without shelter. In comparison, in September, 71% of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements with IDPs reported IDPs living in the open without any shelter. Moreover, 100%, 60% and 23% of assessed southeastern UNS settlements reported that plastic sheeting, rope and poles were not available in September. Such limited access to shelter materials needed to construct semi-permanent structures such as rakoobas will likely result in IDPs continually living without shelter or in sub-standard structures in Ulang and Nasir counties.

The primary NFI needs reported by assessed UNS settlements in September remained plastic sheeting (21%) and mosquito nets

**Map 4: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting an NFI distribution occurred in the last three months in July (A), August (B) and September 2018 (C)**



(18%). Increasing priority of assessed Ulang and Nasir county settlements on accessing mosquito nets over shelter-related NFIs is likely attributable to the rainy season which is typically marked by more widespread malaria outbreaks. In Panyikang County, assessed settlements more commonly reported need of soap (50%), likely linked to limited WASH infrastructure in the area.

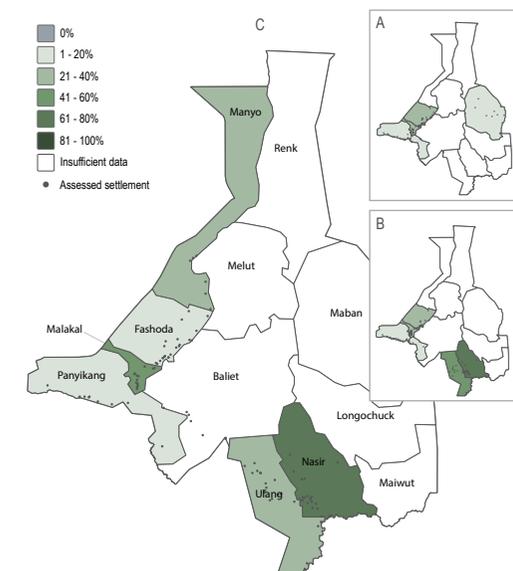
Nevertheless, access to NFIs appeared to be higher in Ulang and Nasir counties than in Maban County and the western bank (Map 4): 85% of assessed settlements in southeastern UNS reported an NFI distribution had occurred in the last three months compared with only 6% of those in the western bank and none of those

in Maban County. With the reported arrival of returnees to these areas, this may demonstrate an upcoming need.

### Education

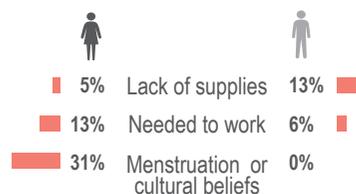
Education trends varied across assessed counties of UNS, with a greater proportion of assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir counties reporting access to education services than those in the western bank and Maban County (Map 5). Over half (53%) of assessed southeastern UNS settlements reported education services were available in September, comparable to 61% in August. Maban County, which had already limited education access, evidenced a decline in

**Map 5: Proportion of assessed settlements reporting access to education services in July (A), August (B) and September 2018 (C)**



47. Permanent shelters are those constructed with durable materials such as bricks, concrete and iron sheeting, while semi-permanent shelters are those made with semi-durable materials such as mud, poles and tarpaulin (tukuls and rakoobas), and impermanent shelters are those made with temporary, non-durable materials intended for short-term stay (tents, improvised shelters and community and abandoned buildings).  
48. Rapid Inter-Agency Joint Assessment in Greater Nasir, September 2018.

**Figure 9: Primary reason reported for lack of school attendance for girls and boys, September 2018**



assessed settlements reporting available education services from 47% in May to 20% by July. Access to education may be lower in the western bank than in other areas of the state, with only 31% of assessed settlements in the western bank reporting education services by September. The primary barriers reported across all assessed UNS settlements without access to education services in September were that teachers had been displaced (26%), educational facilities were destroyed during conflict (13%) and facilities were too distant (13%). Such obstacles reflect the legacies of conflict in UNS which continue to impede service access.

Gendered barriers to education were frequently reported across most counties. Access to education was increasingly gendered in southeastern UNS where 86% of assessed settlements in September with access to education services reported that half or more of boys attended school while 86% reported that half or fewer of girls attended school. The primary reported obstacles to girls' attendance across UNS were related to labour and cultural practices (Figure 9).

## Conclusion

UNS saw some small-scale fighting in Maban County, as well as statewide drought and reported increasing returns, which resulted in increasing humanitarian needs, particularly in Maban County and the western bank.

Perceived insecurity spurred some small-scale displacement from Panyikang County to Sudan and from Ulang to Nasir County. Drought induced some displacement from Fashoda County while flooding resulted in internal displacement within Baliet County. Food insecurity in Panyikang County influenced some migration into neighbouring Jonglei State. On the other hand, with increased optimism following the Peace Agreements coupled with reportedly poor conditions in Sudanese refugee camps, UNS saw returns to Panyikang, Fashoda, Manyo, Renk, Melut, Maban and Nasir counties. These returns appear to have strained host community coping capacity and available humanitarian resources.

While assessed settlements of the western bank had the lowest food security of all areas of the state, FSL trends improved in this quarter with more cultivation and declining self-reported rates of hunger. In comparison, assessed settlements in Maban County and southeastern UNS saw a deterioration of FSL indicators due to drought and fear of insecurity. Returns to already food insecure areas and employment of severe coping mechanisms are likely to impede long-term food security across the state.

Protection concerns across assessed

settlements of UNS still largely hinged on SGBV for women and community conflict (including cattle raiding) for men. No looting or civilian deaths in conflict were reported in assessed settlements of the western bank in this quarter, while those reported in southeastern UNS remained high perhaps due to the legacies of conflict in the absence of active fighting. In Maban, violence increased between communities in this quarter resulting in heightened protection concerns. Nevertheless, reported concerns of forced recruitment declined across assessed areas of UNS from the second quarter, suggesting that the fear of large-scale insecurity is slowly subsiding.

Access to water and health services improved in assessed settlements of southeastern UNS and Malakal County with the majority of assessed settlements accessing water from protected sources. In comparison, Mabanese and western bank assessed settlements continued to source water from rivers. Further, water access from sources shared with livestock and widespread open defecation heighten risk for outbreak of waterborne diseases at unprotected sources in Maban and the western bank. In the western bank, drought together with dependence on water from the Nile, strained water access. Likely linked to limited WASH infrastructure and open water sources, the primary self-reported health concerns 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 largely occupied impermanent structures while in the western bank, the majority inhabited semi-permanent shelters. Assessed settlements in Ulang and Nasir continued also increasingly reported IDPs living in the open without any shelter. Primary NFI needs across assessed settlements of UNS continued to be plastic sheeting and mosquito nets.

Finally, education services remained the most accessible in assessed settlements of Ulang and Nasir counties. In contrast, education access was low in assessed areas of Maban and the western bank, where infrastructure had been reportedly destroyed by conflict. Gender disparities in access to education – with boys attending school more regularly than girls – remained a challenge across assessed areas of the state.

### 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. For more information, you can write to our in-country office: [southsudan@reach-initiative.org](mailto:southsudan@reach-initiative.org) or to our global office: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org).

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