According to reports received, humanitarian access to people in need improved between January and March 2021, partly due to a decrease in the intensity of sub-national violence, particularly in Jonglei. A total of 124 reported access incidents took place in the first quarter, a 27 per cent decrease from 170 reported during the same period in 2020. Yet, the humanitarian environment remains challenging with a resurgence of armed conflict in Central Equatoria, an increase in looting of supplies and sustained sub-national violence in Greater Tonj.

Twenty-eight aid workers had to be relocated from Fangak, Maban and Tonj North, of those 20 required relocation in Tonj North due to insecurity, impacting humanitarian assistance to people. Attacks on clearly marked humanitarian vehicles continued. Twenty-four ambushes were reported along major supply routes, causing injury to personnel, damage to assets and hindering the delivery of aid. Ambushes were reported in Central Equatoria, Greater Pibor Administrative Area and Greater Tonj.

Attacks on humanitarian facilities and looting of supplies by criminals, community members and armed youth groups continued, particularly in Pibor and Greater Tonj. A total of 13 looting incidents were recorded in the first quarter of 2021, compared to 16 in the same period last year. In January, armed youth looted and ambushed trucks in Tonj North carrying over 42 metric tons of food supplies intended for highly food-insecure people. These incidences affected the delivery of humanitarian assistance to thousands of people in Kajo-keji, Kapoeta East, Lainya, Morobo, Pibor, Tonj East and Tonj North.

Humanitarians continued to experience frequent operational interference and bureaucratic impediments, with threats of expulsion and assets being confiscated. Local authorities in various locations continued to demand involvement in NGO staff recruitment processes. In Renk, humanitarian activities resumed after more than five months following extensive negotiations with youth on local hiring. Similar issues and negotiations are ongoing in Kapoeta South and Panyijiar.

Flooding restricted physical access to people in need in Akobo, Ayod, Duk, Twic East and some parts of Pibor impacting delivery and pre-positioning of critical humanitarian supplies. In Akobo, roads were impassable even during the dry season, affecting 30,000 people, many of whom are already facing high levels of food insecurity.

Humanitarian access concerns humanitarian actors’ ability to reach populations affected by crisis, as well as an affected population’s ability to access humanitarian assistance and services.

Creation date: 16 April 2021 | Sources: OCHA, humanitarian partners | Feedback: accessreporting@un.org, ochasouthsudan@un.org | unocha/south-sudan | reliefweb.int/country/ssd | southsudan.humanitarianresponse.info | @OCHASouthSudan | #NotATarget
The 27 per cent decrease in the number of overall incidents reported compared to the same period last year is partly attributed to the decline in sub-national violence, particularly in Pibor. The sharp rise in incidents from February to March is attributed to a spike in sub-national violence in Tonj, the resurgence of armed clashes in parts of Central Equatoria and the increase in ambushes in Eastern Equatoria.