

Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility: Context Update

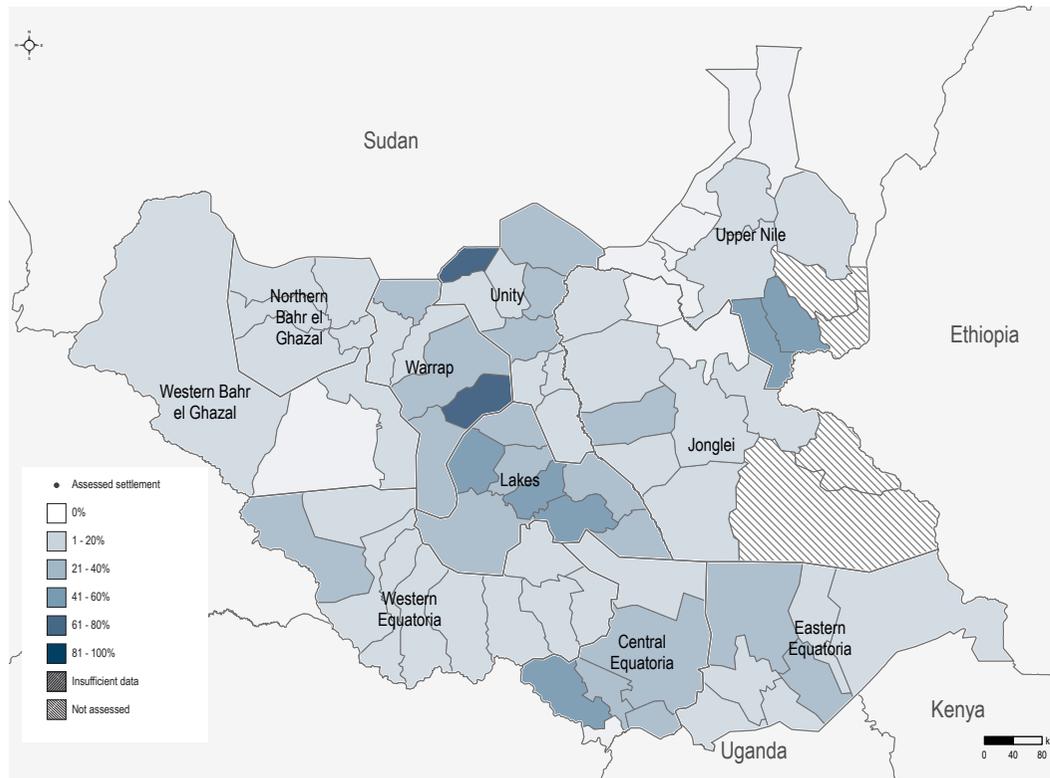
JANUARY–MARCH 2021

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Introduction

This factsheet aims to support a conflict-sensitive approach to decision-making by aid actors and policy makers in South Sudan through an improved understanding of South Sudan's context, conflict dynamics and how aid actors could interact with the context. The analysis by the **Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF)** is based on quantitative data reported by key informants (KIs) at the settlement-level collected by REACH, qualitative data from focus group discussions conducted by REACH and additional qualitative sources.¹ All percentages presented in the factsheet, unless otherwise specified, represent the proportion of assessed settlements for which **KIs** gave a specific response to a question in March 2021. Quantitative data is only provided for counties in which at least 5 percent of settlements have been assessed.² Certain questions are only asked to a subset of KIs, depending on the responses to previous questions. This is why the number of assessed settlements can be lower for certain indicators. All findings presented in this factsheet are **indicative**, rather than **representative**, of the situation in assessed South Sudanese settlements at the time of data collection. For more information on the methodology and limitations, please refer to page 5. Please refer to **CSRF and WFP Guidance Framework** for terminology used for the analysis of organised violence in South Sudan.

Occurrence and impact of conflict: March 2021



For a more general contextual overview of all counties, please refer to the **County Profiles** on the Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility website.

- 1 In January–March 2021, REACH conducted FGDs with participants in Pibor, Malakal, Juba and Terekeka.
- 2 The number of assessed settlements for the counties that meet the 5 percent threshold varies from 7 to 72 per county.
- 3 As per reported data from an NGO in South Sudan that focuses on independently collecting and analysing security incident data for humanitarians.
- 4 Reported protection concerns that are considered to be conflict-related: killing/injury by same tribe, killing/injury by other tribe, abduction, forced recruitment, cattle raid, harassment to disclose information, violence between neighbours.

Throughout January–March 2021, the humanitarian needs, displacement and localized and sub-national violence witnessed in the last quarter have continued in South Sudan. In March 2021, OCHA released its **Humanitarian Response Plan**, which indicated that the country is facing its **highest levels of food insecurity and malnutrition** in 10 years. Food insecurity has potential to drive further displacement and negative coping mechanisms that can contribute to violent conflict as the country enters the lean season from May–August.

In Central Equatoria, tensions and **violence between cattle keepers and farming communities** in Juba, Kajo-Keji, Lainya, Morobo and Yei appear to have resulted in increasing alignment of those communities with organized armed groups in the political conflict in the region. In March, there were ongoing clashes between formal armed groups in Yei, Juba and Lainya, and roadside incidents (on Juba-Lainya, Juba-Yei, Juba-Nimule and Juba-Kajo-Keji roads) including targeted killings and kidnappings that led to the temporary suspension of imports from Kenya and Uganda.³

In Lakes and Warrap States, the localised and sub-national violence witnessed in the previous quarter has continued. In Greater Tonj, violence **displaced an estimated 50,000 individuals** between January–March and impacted humanitarians' ability to reach the most food-insecure areas. In Romic (Tonj East) specifically, local authorities **prevented UNMISS from opening a Temporary Operating Base** in January. The patterns of localized violence among Dinka sub-sections (predominantly Agaar, Gok) in western Lakes State³ have continued despite the establishment of temporary **UNMISS Temporary Operating Base** in November 2020 intended to deter localised violence in Cueibet.

In Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), violence, cattle raiding and revenge attacks between Murle age-sets in Pibor County and GPAA, and incidents of violence between Gawaar Nuer youths in Fangak County particularly spiked in January and March.³ The conflict dynamics in Jonglei/GPAA are elaborated on page 2.

In Upper Nile, violence between armed groups in Baliet/Akoka and Maban in February caused civilian casualties, displacement and disrupted humanitarian services.³ The violence causing three fatalities at the newly-appointed Governor, Budhok Ayang Kur's, reception in March³ highlights the continuing high level of tensions between the Padang Dinka and Shilluk communities that pose a challenge to safe, dignified, voluntary and informed returns from the Malakal PoC site or elsewhere.

This **composite indicator** measures the occurrence and impact of reported conflict in assessed settlements in the month prior to data collection. It represents the percentage of assessed settlements where KIs reported the occurrence and impact of conflict in response to the following indicators, with each indicator carrying the same weight:

-  Incidence of conflict resulting in civilian death
-  Conflict-related events cited as a main protection concern⁴
-  Incidence of shelter damage due to conflict
-  Conflict as a reason for large-scale displacement

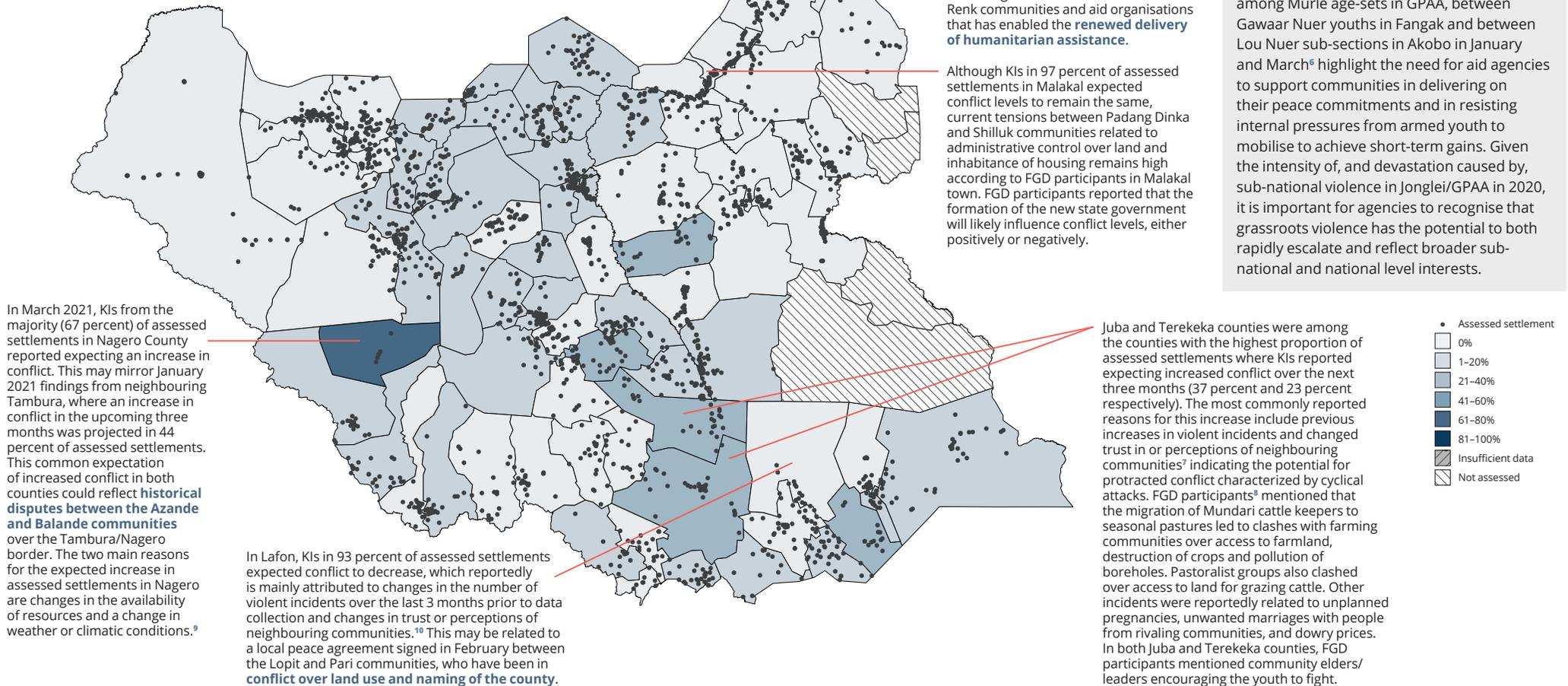
Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility: Future Conflict

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Proportion of REACH assessed settlements where KIs expect conflict to increase in the 1–3 months following data collection⁵

This map represents only the perceptions of relative change in conflict events per county, and thus does not indicate the intensity of conflict events. When asked this question, assessed settlements are required to report only one of three options (conflict will increase; remain the same; decrease).



⁵ Covering period April–June 2021.

⁶ As per reported data from an NGO in South Sudan that focuses on independently collecting and analysing security incident data for humanitarians.

⁷ REACH's definition of 'neighbouring communities' relates to different communities living within one settlement, however the phrase 'neighbouring communities' is used to ensure accessibility in many different languages to reach different respondents across South Sudan. For this reason, it is at the discretion of the KI to decide what constitutes a 'neighbouring community' for him/her.

⁸ Based on Focus Group Discussions conducted by REACH in March 2021.

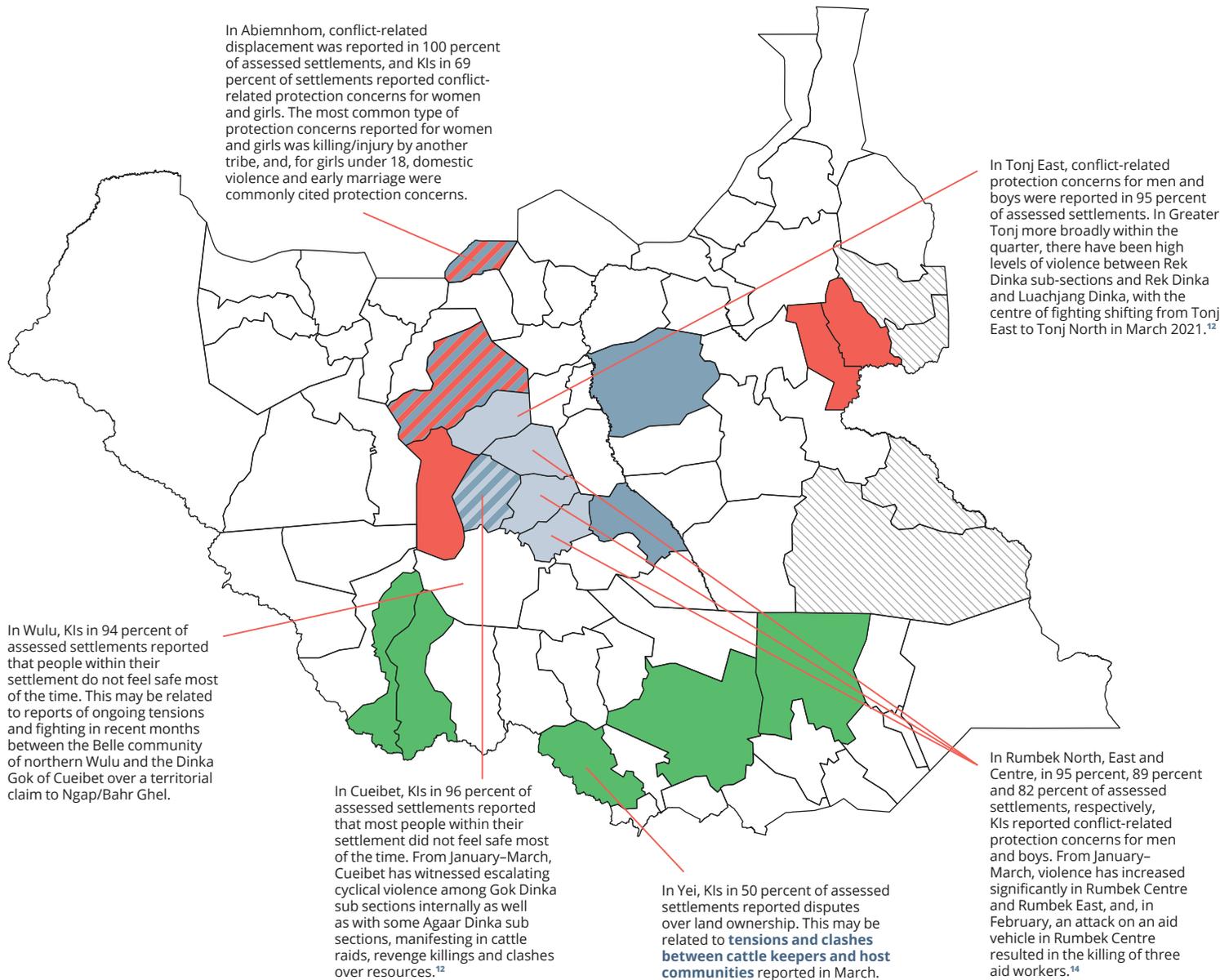
⁹ KIs in 100 percent of assessed settlements where an increase in conflict was expected thought this would be due to changes in the availability of resources, and in 75 percent of those settlements KIs expected it would be due to a change in weather or climatic conditions.

¹⁰ KIs in 90 percent of assessed settlements where a decrease in conflict was expected thought this would be due to a change in the number of violent incidents in the 3 months prior to data collection, and in 44 percent of those settlements KIs expected the decrease would be due to changes in trust or perceptions of neighbouring communities (44 percent).

Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility: Specific types of Conflict

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Perceptions of safety

Proportion of assessed settlements where most people in the community reportedly felt unsafe most of the time.

As in the previous Factsheets, the counties of Cueibet and Rumbek Centre have once again been identified as being among the top 5 counties with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people within their settlements do not feel safe most of the time. This is likely related to violent incidents that are increasing in frequency and fatalities – with an increase in fatalities from ‘battles’ in Lakes State from 28 in October–December 2020 to 75 in January–March 2021.¹¹ Additionally, the spate of incidents of localized violence (predominantly in the form of cattle raiding) between the Ajaar and Atuot communities along the Rumbek East and Yirol West border in February¹² reflects grievances that might escalate other potential conflicts among Dinka sub-sections due to the instability they cause.¹³ (Parenthesis) indicates number of assessed settlements within each county.

Top 5 counties with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported that most people did NOT feel safe most of the time:

Rumbek North (20)	100 percent
Tonj East (42)	98 percent
Rumbek Centre (40)	98 percent
Cueibet (25)	96 percent
Wulu (17)	94 percent

Top 5 counties

- Conflict-related displacement
- Disputes about land ownership
- Conflict-related protection concerns for women and girls
- Conflict-related protection concerns for men and boys
- Insufficient data
- Not assessed
- Assessed counties not among the top 5 counties on the aforementioned indicators

¹¹ ACLED Data Dashboard, South Sudan ‘Lakes State’, accessed 6 May 2021, <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>.

¹² As per reported data from an NGO in South Sudan that focuses on independently collecting and analysing security incident data for humanitarian.

¹³ Violence between section divides within Dinka Ajaar (predominantly between Pakam and Rup, and Rup and Kuei) and between section divides within Dinka Gok has also been a main source of conflict in the quarter.

¹⁴ ECHO Daily Flash, 19 February 2021, <https://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Echo-Flash#/daily-flash-archive/4120>.

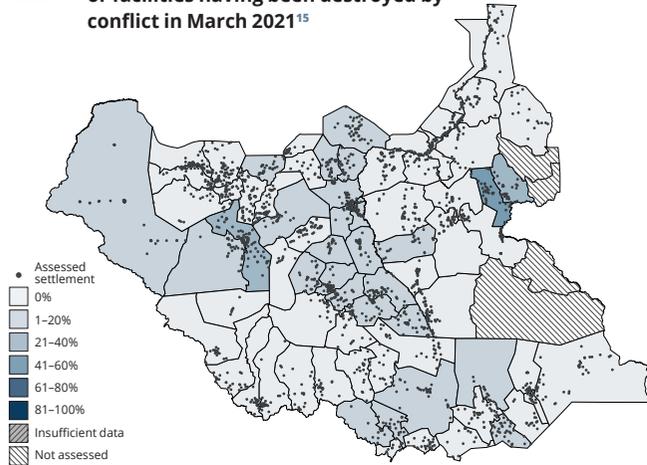
Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility: Sector-Specific Considerations

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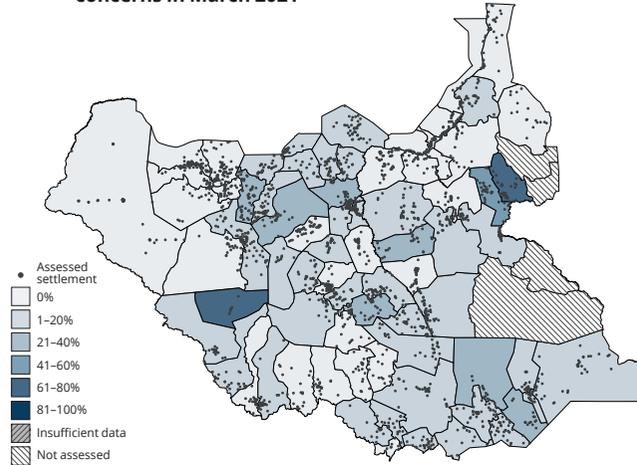
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Impact on access to resources and services

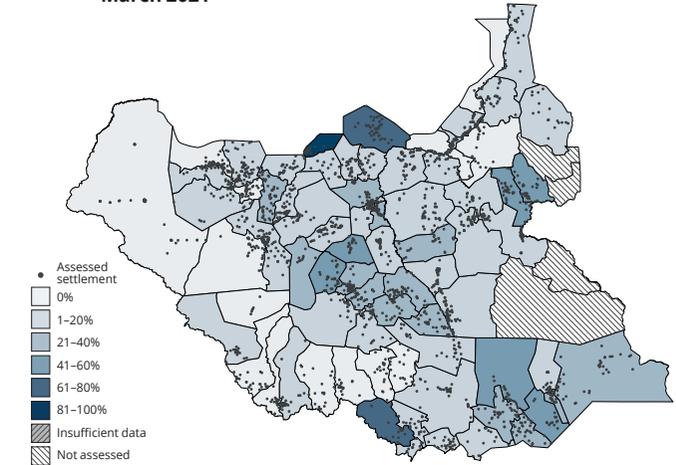
 Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported a lack of access to health services due to security concerns or facilities having been destroyed by conflict in March 2021¹⁵



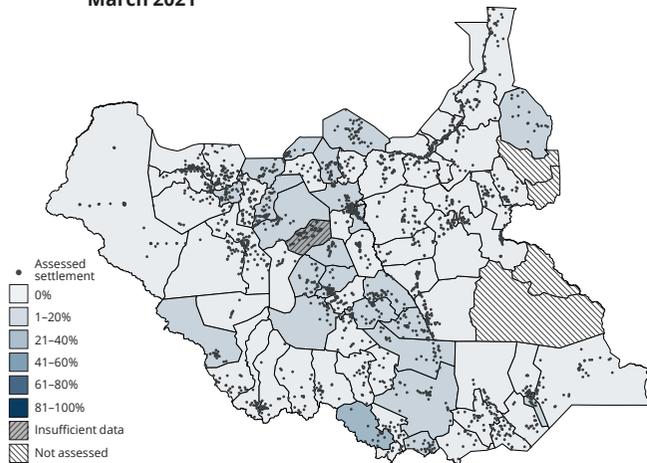
 Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported a lack of access to a preferred waterpoint due to safety concerns in March 2021



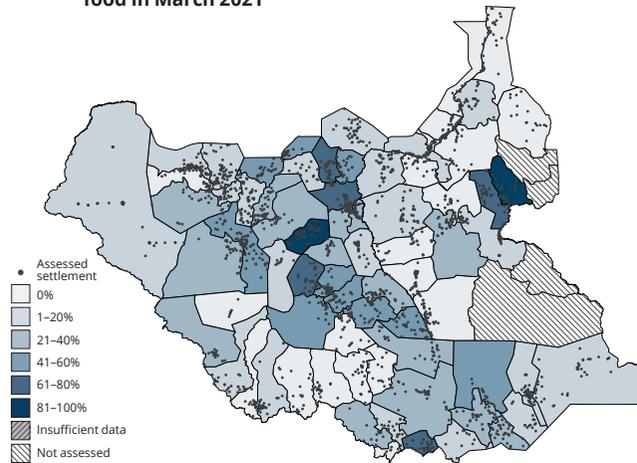
 Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported a lack of access to markets due to safety concerns in March 2021



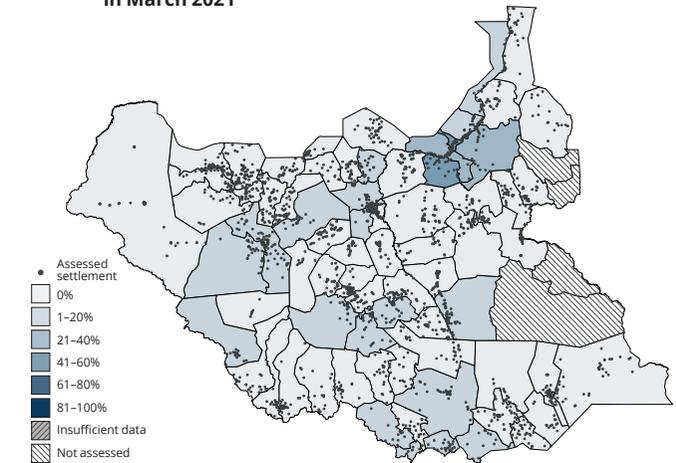
 Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported conflict had led to shelter damage or destruction in March 2021



 Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported conflict or looting have had a large impact on access to food in March 2021



 Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported a lack of access to education due to security concerns in March 2021¹⁶



¹⁵ Responses included to indicate conflict/security concerns as a barrier to accessing health services: area is too insecure to travel to the health facility, health facility itself is too insecure, and facilities were destroyed by fighting.

¹⁶ Responses included to indicate safety concerns as a barrier to education access: insecurity, facility destruction due to conflict, and teachers fleeing due to conflict.

Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility: Conflict Sensitivity Considerations

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Proportion of assessed settlements that had received assistance in the 3 months prior to data collection where KIs reported that the presence and programming of humanitarian and development agencies has had a negative impact on relationships between communities.¹⁷

Top 5 counties with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where a negative impact was reported:¹⁹

1. Wau (72 percent)
2. Terekeka (56 percent)
3. Yirol East (50 percent)
4. Raja (40 percent)
5. Yirol West (38 percent)

Similar to the previous Factsheet, KIs in a high percentage (72 percent) of assessed settlements in Wau county receiving assistance reported that the presence of aid agencies has had negative impact on community relations. This may be related to the Protection of Civilians (PoC) site transition or reported insufficient information sharing by aid agencies, as reported in **CSRF October-December Factsheet**. Similarly, in 40 percent of assessed settlements receiving assistance in Raja, KIs reported a negative impact of aid agencies on community relations, which may reflect broader potential perceptions of marginalization and contestation between communities residing there (Fertit, Baggari and Dinka). Agencies should be mindful of potential conflict sensitivity issues when operating here, given broader potential patterns.

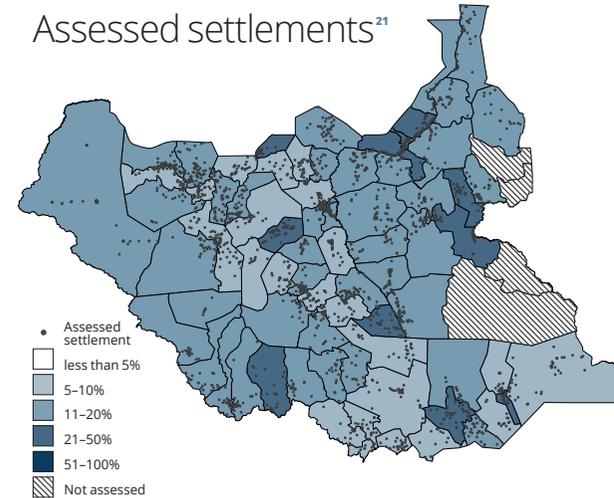
For this map, data is only provided for counties in which (a) at least five percent of settlements have been assessed with the questionnaire as a whole and (b) at least three settlements were assessed for this specific indicator.¹⁸

Among counties in which REACH collected data on the impact of aid agencies' presence and programming, in 23 counties that received assistance 100% of KIs reported that aid agencies had a positive impact. Such responses required further investigation, as they could be due to fear of KIs of the withdrawal of services or social desirability bias.

In Pibor, though data collection was not possible, REACH FGDs conducted in Gumuruk indicated that the distribution of registration tokens – the method by which households gain access to registration sites after targeting – was done through community leaders/elders which could lead to selective distribution within the community. To combat this, FGD participants indicated that humanitarian organisations should provide information on assistance directly to the community. In March 2021, WFP changed the registration approach in Pibor from a targeted approach to a blanket registration process, which reduced the impact of any selective distribution of registration tokens.

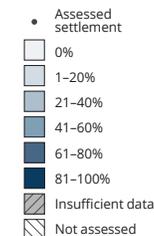
In Yirol East and Yirol West, KIs in 50 and 38 percent of assessed settlements receiving assistance, respectively, reported aid agencies having a negative impact on community relations. An NGO vehicle was targeted in Yirol East in February, which may reflect increasing animosity towards aid agencies in the area.²⁰ Further conflict sensitivity analysis is needed to investigate this response.

In Terekeka, KIs from 56 percent of assessed settlements receiving assistance reported aid agencies negatively impacting community relations, similar to last quarter's Factsheet. According to FGD participants, unequal distribution and targeting of aid have, in some cases, generated a lack of trust and misunderstanding between those who access aid and those who do not. In Mangalla specifically, **CSRF Conflict Sensitivity Analysis** provides recommendations to aid agencies operating there.



Methodology

Through the Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology, REACH remotely monitors needs and access to services across South Sudan. AoK data is collected monthly and through multi-sector interviews with the following typology of KIs: 1) People who recently arrived from hard-to-reach areas, or 2) who have recently been in contact with someone in a hard-to-reach area, or 3) who are located in a hard-to-reach area and were contacted by phone during data collection. Selected KIs are purposively sampled and have knowledge from within the last month about a specific settlement in South Sudan, with data collected at the settlement level. All percentages presented in this factsheet, unless otherwise specified, therefore represent the proportion of assessed settlements with a given response to a question in March 2021. Due to the KI methodology, it has not been possible to collect data in all areas of the country, and findings are indicative, not representative, of the situation in assessed settlements in South Sudan during the data collection period. It has not been possible to collect data in all areas of the country, such as GPAA and parts of Upper Nile State. Supplementary qualitative information was sourced through secondary data, KIs and FGDs conducted throughout February-March 2021. If data collection was not possible or was insufficient (illustrated by diagonal white and grey shading in maps) in counties, this does not imply that conflict events have not recently taken place or that there is no ongoing conflict. The low accessibility of KIs from these areas may sometimes be related to conflict, which can restrict movements of KIs to data collection points.



¹⁷ This data was collected in March 2021, but covers the last 3 months prior to data collection. When asked this question, assessed settlements are only able to provide one response (i.e. very negative; slightly negative; no effect; slightly positive; very positive) – therefore if a positive impact is reported in 100 percent of assessed settlements, KIs in 0 percent reported 'no effect' or either degree of 'negative' impact.

¹⁸ The data presented here is based on a subset of KIs, as the relevant survey question was only asked to KIs who previously indicated having received humanitarian assistance. As the subset is smaller, a more stringent reporting threshold has been used for this indicator.

¹⁹ This is a composite of both reported "slightly negative" and "very negative" (i.e. net negative) impact.

²⁰ As per reported data from an NGO in South Sudan that focuses on independently collecting and analysing security incident data for humanitarians

²¹ The most recent OCHA Common Operational Dataset (COD) released in March 2019 has been used as the reference for settlement names and locations. This coverage map is for March 2021.