



South Sudan Action Network
on Small Arms

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Press Release

SSANSA CALLS FOR TWO IMMEDIATE DIALOGUES TO RESOLVE ONGOING CONFLICTS IN JONGLEI

(JUBA, August 20, 2013) – Lou Nuer and Murle tribesmen involved in inter-communal violence should cease hostilities and begin immediate dialogue, SSANSA said today. SSANSA further condemns all acts of violence as a means of solving inter-communal disputes. The repeated failure of both the South Sudan Army and UNMISS peace keeping force to protect unarmed civilians from hostilities demonstrates that more efforts needs to be directed to preventing the cycle of violence rather than focussing exclusively or more on the mitigation of the impacts.

In the past few weeks, large scale inter-communal violence resumed between the Lou Nuer and the Murle tribesmen in Pibor when over 6000 gun wielding youth from Lou Nuer youth marched to Murle settlements in Pibor County. This latest attacks left over 400 people dead on each side, some over 300 wounded and further displacements besides the already tens of thousands of people forced to flee their homes due to fighting between rebels and government forces in the county.

Speaking to some youth injured in the violence, SSANSA established that the latest attack by the Lou Nuer in Pibor was revenge to earlier attacks believed to be carried out by armed groups belonging to the Murle tribe. Yet, the fighting between the government and fighters loyal to David Yau Yau has already left many families in Murle settlements of Pibor to flee their homes. SSANSA's concern is, the violence is increasingly intertwining with the hostilities of the rebel group led by David Yau Yau which is purely political. This makes the already poor security situation worse, tribal rivalries entrenched and efforts to address the conflict even more complex.

"It is high time the Lou Nuer and Murle communities involved in continuous violence against each other came to terms with the fact that "an eye for an eye" is an irrelevant and costly attempt that will not solve their conflicts. Both communities can bear witnesses to their own actions that revenge only breeds more revenge. Only dialogue can find genuine solutions to their disputes." Said, **Geoffrey L. Duke, National Coordinator of SSANSA.**

Although in lesser scale, related attacks continue in Jonglei State. The attack of August 8, 2013 in Twic East's Pakeer Payam left 9 men dead and 5 injured, further leaving over 9000 heads of cattle lost, was carried out by members of the Murle tribe. Whether criminal, political or revenge for the latest inter-communal attack, these attacks illustrates the continuation of a cycle of tribal-related violence in the state. We are concerned that the continuation further promotes human rights violations and risks worsening the humanitarian situation in the state.

"The human right violations, humanitarian situation and the resultant human suffering are indeed appalling. However, the priority here is clear; the indispensable need to end the violence. This is essential for prevention of further violation of human rights, providing the context for restoration of the rule of law and provision of the badly needed humanitarian support to the tens of thousands of people in need in Jonglei state." Said by **Mr. Lony Ruot of Standard Action Liaison Focus (SALF), a member of SSANSA operating in Jonglei State.**

SSANSA therefore wants to make the following recommendations:

1. We call on religious leaders and UNMISS to offer an opportunity to facilitate an **immediate peace dialogue between the Lou Nuer and the Murle including the Dinka tribesmen involved in the conflict.** We are aware that the National Peace and Reconciliation committee has a wider national mandate, but urge the committee to direct urgent priority efforts to resolving the conflict between the Lou Nuer and the Murle, to particularly prevent the awful cycle of violence.
2. We further call for an immediate dialogue between the government of South Sudan and rebel leader David Yau Yau. We would like to remind both parties that the current military approach to reform and violent reactions are not only costly for civilians caught in between but cannot achieve sustainable solutions to the problem the parties seek to solve. We further call on religious leaders to take the lead in brokering the dialogue and UNMISS and other international community to provide the support needed to facilitate the proposed community dialogues.
3. We urge the government to put in place a transitional justice mechanism to prevent the parties involved from resorting to revenge, justified as a means of justice and to bring the perpetrators of violence (independent of their affiliation) to justice without delay.

For more information

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South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA) is a nation-wide network of civil society organizations from across the 10 states of South Sudan working to reduce and prevent gun violence in South Sudan. The network was formed to facilitate civil society actions to make communities safer from gun violence by preventing and reducing the illicit proliferation and misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons in South Sudan. (<http://ssansa.org>)