



Policy brief

‘Everything is Possible under the Sun’ Discussing Security Promotion in South Sudan

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This policy brief summarizes responses from discussions the authors organized in cooperation with the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA) in Yambio (WES), Torit (EES) and Juba. The discussions related to the report *Security Promotion Seen from Below: Experiences in South Sudan* (2011),¹ which is based on eight weeks of field research in Jonglei,² Western Equatoria State (WES) and Eastern Equatoria State (EES) in March and April 2011. The report focuses on the dynamics between community security and security promotion initiatives, such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control. The point of departure for the research was the local security context. What are the security problems people face in the communities; what security actors are there available; and to what extent are these actors able and willing to deal with the security issues faced by communities? From these perspectives the research looks at the interventions taking place, investigating their contribution to the improvement of security at the grassroots level.

The goals of the meetings and discussions were to verify the analysis and discuss the report, as well as to broaden discussions into the future. Several individual meetings were held with government officials, the DDR Commission, the Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (CSAC) Bureau, religious leaders, community members, NGOs, etc. A general presentation of the report followed by a discussion on its analysis and comprehensiveness was held in each location. This policy brief aims to do justice to the issues raised during the discussions and can be seen as an addendum to the original report. The most recurring and salient local views brought forward during these discussions are presented below by the authors.

Issues of cattle raiding

As it is difficult in various regions of South Sudan to sustain in livelihoods other than through pastoralism, cattle has great economic as well as cultural value. With little functional irrigation, fertile land remains difficult to use for agriculture, and lacking roads not only prevent effective security

¹ Willems, R. and H. Rouw (2010) [Security Promotion Seen from Below: Experiences in South Sudan](#). The Hague: Working Group on Community Security and Community-based DDR in Fragile States, Peace, Security and Development Network.

The full report containing a more in-depth discussion of the topics, more background on the working group ‘community security and DDR in fragile states’, as well as other reports published by the working group, can be found on: <http://www.psdnetwork.nl/>.

² Due to bad road conditions and time limitations it was unfortunately not possible to visit Jonglei state

provision but also hamper economic trade. Raiding of cattle is often linked to dowry practices, but is also undertaken for the high economic gains. According to local respondents the cattle raids are sometimes connected to politicians and army commanders, who work together with cattle raiders for economic gain. Furthermore, there is a circular and reactive character to violent cattle raiding conflicts, with all sides taking revenge after being raided. Breaking this cycle of violence therefore requires a long-term approach addressing the several aspects that allow for this violence to continue. Among the approaches raised are providing alternatives to cattle raiding through education, training on the job, judicial reforms, alternative income generation, and peace conferences that include all involved actors, besides community policing and more professional security actors.

Dealing with pastoralist clashes

Peace conferences to bring the different competing tribes together to resolve their issues are seen as a necessary to reduce the violent aspect of cattle raiding. However, such peace conferences are to involve not only the chiefs and other elites, but also the youth and cattle keepers involved in the raiding itself. Practical follow-up³ is needed in order to ensure continuing commitment to the resolutions that are drawn up at the end of such conferences. During a meeting the set-up of anti-raiding commissions was proposed, in which communities are organized not only to address issues after raids, but also to work towards the prevention of them. While in the past raiding often took place in the dry season when the terrain is more accessible, the difficulties for security forces to move during the rainy season has led to a shift of the raiding to this period as raiders cannot easily be pursued⁴. The use of helicopters to monitor and deter cattle raiders was among the propositions in Torit to contribute to more security and as a deterrence for cattle raiding.

Development and Security

Apart from addressing the conflict and enhancing monitoring and protection, development is required on several terrains. Road development to enable the movement of security forces and economic trade is vital, as well as water management to allow for agricultural development and limiting the competition over scarce water for cattle during the dry season. Education is also important, although it should not be expected that the building of primary and secondary schools will quickly result in less interest for pastoralism or raiding. Education however is a broad concept which can be applied from guidance from parents and chiefs to formal and internationally accredited education. The cultural significance of cattle and the necessity to acquire dowry for marriage are sometimes cause for little enthusiasm to trade a life in the cattle camps for school. The provision of contextually relevant vocational training that allows youth to directly benefit economically is an important addition to tackle this problem.

Youth

Vocational training could furthermore help improve opportunities for disenfranchised youth in general. Hampered by a lack of education, high levels of unemployment and a sense of being left out of politics – at the level of the community, as well as the state and national levels – these youth can (and do) pose a serious threat to internal stability. Education, ranging from vocational training to academic training, was said to diminish disenfranchisement and aid the social fabric needed for conflict resilience. Nonetheless, since disenfranchisement is not a unilateral phenomenon, it should not be overlooked that all in the community have a role to play in connecting with the youth. Beyond

³ Both in terms of follow-up meetings and continued dialogue among all relevant actors and action towards conflict sensitive development needs such as infrastructure, water management, education etc.

⁴ See for example the raids in Jonglei for August 2011 in which 600 people were killed. <http://www.sudantribune.com/Jonglei-governor-sacks-Pibor,40644> (visited November 7, 2011)

the community it is vital that the new Republic of South Sudan (RoSS) makes serious work of including the youth in participatory politics, both at the local and the national level.

Psychosocial issues

Psychosocial support and reconciliation initiatives are needed, specifically for communities and ex-combatants that have been severely affected by violence. If unaddressed, psychosocial issues will continue to contribute to violence in households (gender-based violence) violence within, between and among communities. It is however pivotal that these initiatives are connected to contextual needs as not every community and former combatant is actually traumatized to the same degree or in the same fashion.

Information sharing

Sharing of information is very limited among the various actors in South Sudan, even when they are working on the same issues. The state retains information based on security reasons, NGOs do not share for fear of (financial) competition with others, local communities are hesitant to share their information as they hardly get anything in return⁵ and information is generally sent up the chain of command but does not come back to the ground. In one instance, a programme assessment could be shared with us, but the manager's only colleague at state level did not have access to this assessment. This lack of sharing of information creates two problems. First, people are limited in the tasks they are expected to fulfill as they do not have accurate information. Second, when particular individuals or groups only have access to small parts of the available information, the parts that are unknown tend to be filled with rumors. It goes without saying that security provision remains elusive when accurate information is unavailable.

Security actor's behavior

The behavior of the formal security providers is a serious issue, with many of them unmotivated, unskilled and underequipped. The suspected complicity of some policeman in crimes and cattle raids (by themselves or through the letting of their uniform and weapon), as well as drunken behavior furthermore reflects on the force as a whole. Training and material support are necessary, but should not be given without increasing oversight and strict enforcement of punishment in case of misbehavior⁶. It was also mentioned that the centralized command structure of the police is problematic, as the police are to report to the Juba level, leaving little room for the state governments to intervene. The SPLA meanwhile cannot be seen as a coherent national army and is rather occupied with national security than with day-to-day security issues for citizens.⁷ Oftentimes the distinction between police and army is made along the line of police providing security for communities whereas the army provides national security. The problem is neither of them function in these capacities and the effects are felt by local communities on a daily basis. One improvement suggested by several is setting up commissions comprising of both security personnel and civil society actors. These commissions then would be tasked with oversight, bringing more understanding for each other's circumstances and perceptions and report to both local communities and central command.

⁵ In terms of finances, in kind assistance or even being able to access the information after it has been analyzed.

⁶ It is worth mentioning here that police training in EES was said to consist of crowd control and VIP protection, implicitly indicating the population is seen as the enemy rather than the ones that need protection.

⁷ This priority on national security is seen by many as a realistic priority setting although it warrants skepticism from local civilians who do feel their security is not taken seriously by the government.

Another element that has shaped the behavior of the security organs especially among the lower ranks is the lack of clarity on accountability (who they should be accountable to). This exists both in the army and the police force. While the security actors' performance is to be evaluated by the civilians, as they are the people that should be served, they often act from the position of absolute power. This has created situations of "Them vs. Us" in the relationship between the civilians and the security organs. The lower ranks in security providers seem unaware about this notion and end up handling civilians in careless manners involving mistreatment, the use of threats and the actual use of violence.

Decentralizing CSAC and DDR

Donor support for the CSAC Bureau and the DDR Commission remains largely focused on the national level, while attention at the state levels is highly necessary. State levels tend to be understaffed and underequipped. Problematic is also the underutilized input of staff at the state levels to adjust the programmes to the particular contextual requirements on the ground. In general, this lack of input can be attributed to a number of issues, among which a lack of resources to distribute to the state levels, insufficient room for change allowed by the national level, and a lack of initiatives at the state level.

DDR revision

In the second phase of the DDR programme, the SPLA is expected to be more involved and assume a stronger role in the process. While international organizations try to push human security promotion as a priority for DDR, in reality the programme seems to be about army professionalization. The aim is to demobilize 150.000 ex-combatants, of which 80.000 are to come from the SPLA and 70.000 from wildlife protection, the police and fire department. Demobilization is unlikely to lead to a significant reduction in SPLA troops as rebel groups are still expected to be incorporated when new agreements are signed and new soldiers continue to be recruited. Wildlife and police have shown limited interest in the programme and have been largely absent from discussions on the new phase. As the benefits of a continued salary for many outweigh the benefits obtained by participation, and participants will largely be involuntarily selected, problems with frustrated demobilized forces can be expected. Moreover, frustrations and problems can be expected from ex-combatants that went through the first phase, and received fewer benefits than participants of the second phase are expected to receive.

Bilateral support or 'come and handle your funds'⁸

Support through multilateral organizations is useful, but has a number of downsides. Such organizations tend to be cost-inefficient (and are specifically perceived this way by many South Sudanese), with large sums necessary for overhead costs. Also, participating donors have less political clout to adjust the spending of funds to the particular and often dynamic needs of the recipient country. Bureaucracies associated with multilateral support often limit the ability to intervene in genuine conflict issues that at times arise unexpectedly. Also, when a programme of a multilateral organization fails, individual donors are limited in their options to transform the programme approach accordingly. Therefore, besides multilateral support, bilateral support should not be shunned. Moreover, such bilateral support must be accompanied by technical and political support on the ground, conditions on funding and proper verification of funds reaching their intended outcomes.

Conclusion remarks

The message in the title "Everything is possible under the sun" relates to the notion that security promotion can (and should) entail a wide range of initiatives that go beyond narrow conceptions of DDR and SSR. The scope of security promotion should include civil society, local governance

⁸ Specifically within the CSAC bureau this wish for donor engagement was voiced.

structures, central government, politicians, church leaders, armed personnel and the international community, all participating in creative and contextually appropriate approaches. South Sudanese expectations are very high for socioeconomic transformations like infrastructural development and basic service delivery which both need and create security. A key priority from independence should therefore be to benefit citizens of the Republic of South Sudan with effective and equitable security promotion. Nursing existing and creating new connections between all citizens, armed personnel and governments in South Sudan remains pivotal to foster social cohesion and conflict resilience. The issues highlighted in the research indicate a yawning gap between security expectations and current security promotion. Nonetheless, the propositions emerging from the discussions and recommendations in the report set a reasonable basis for improvement.