



South Sudan Action Network
on Small Arms

SECURITY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS | DUK DIALOGUE May 2013| Mareng – Duk County, Jonglei State | South Sudan

SUMMARY REPORT

South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA) has organized a one day community security meeting in Duk County of Jonglei State on May 1, 2013 at the County Headquarters. The Duk meeting is the third in a series of community dialogues on security under the theme “**Security is Everyone’s Business**” that SSANSA has convened in Jonglei State. The First meeting was conducted at the State capital – Bor in February 2013, followed by the Twic East dialogue in April 2013. This series of community meetings are based on the consideration that as recipients of community security challenges and also hosts to some perpetrators of insecurity, communities are well placed to both defining the form of protection needed to address challenges to their security and playing an active role in facilitating efforts to protect them. The forums essentially acts as a platform for protectors and the protected to dialogue on community security concerns, and jointly formulate means of addressing challenges to community security. It also involves sharing information to understand the roles each stakeholder can or plays in protection and how efforts by the various stakeholders can be coordinated to enhance community security. The forums seek to nurture trust, promote accountability and partnerships between the providers of security and communities with the aim of enhancing community security.

The meeting was attended by 25 participants drawn from the county government, security sector, youth and women representatives, community chiefs and elders¹.

OPENING REMARKS

The meeting was officially opened by the county’s commissioner, honorable Elijah Monynom. In his opening, remarks, Hon. Elijah acknowledged that insecurity is one of the biggest challenges to progress in Duk County and that addressing it should collectively be made a priority. He noted the importance of involving all major actors like the community members, civil society organizations, government and the international community in the collective action. Mr.elijah emphasized that the local community has a big role to play in securing the county, therefore calling for active and sustained participation on community security issues.

He classified the conflicts in Duk County as mainly political and/or ethnic. According to him, political conflicts has soo much to do with the loss of seats in the 2010 general elections while most of the conflicts Duk county is suffering is tribal in nature, even if different people may want to see it with their respective lenses.

¹ See Annex 1 for list of Participants.

The County Commissioner has attributed big challenges of insecurity to among others poor roads and lack of logistics for mobility for law security forces, poverty and laziness of some members of the communities. He called on the participants to exhaust the list and come up with practical solutions that the various actors can embark on, to improve security. He reminded the participants not to forget to discuss elaborately the roles community members can play beyond the meeting to enhance the security of the people of Duk County.

SUMMARY OF EMERGING ISSUES

- Cattle raiders and some unknown armed groups mainly suspected to be from the Murle tribe emerges to be the main security concern for the county.
- Ongoing rebellion of David yau Yau and his forces does not only pose direct threats to security but also facilitates arms proliferation among civilians.
- High ranking government officials and politicians at national and state levels are believed to be orchestrating communal violence at the local levels.
- The thick forests in the county provide a favorable hiding ground for criminals and makes difficult efforts of combating criminals.
- Relationship between regular forces and civilians is not cordial. This undermines effective information sharing which is necessary for law enforcement.
- Lack of good roads and bridges as well as logistics to facilitate movement of security forces.
- Idleness, excessive drinking of alcoholic and unemployment among youth group facilitates crimes and social disorders.

Community security and Women

Women representatives perceive the security challenges in the county to be very immense and that if actions are not taken, it would force them to leave the county and move to the state capital for safety. Further concerns from the women indicate that much as the biggest security concern in the county is associated with cattle and guns, it is clearly beyond these initial scopes.

“In Duk padiet, early this month, one of the ladies was farming in the morning,...they came and raped her and killed her. This woman did not even have a gun. We are tired of these lives..May be we move to Bor, because there is some protection there.” **Women representative in Duk County**

On perpetrators of the major security challenges underlined by the meeting, participants widely believe that those responsible belong to the Murle tribe. Participants indicated that their community has signed a peace pact in 2010 with their other neighbors, and since then did not pose or receive security threats from their neighbors. This assertion was further illustrated by a chief and a youth leader in attendance.

“Between 2006 – 2009 there was problem between Duk (dinka), Uror (Lou nuer), Akobo (Lou nuer and Nyirol (Lou nuer). We do not have any problems with these neighbors after the peace agreement in 2010.” **Said a chief**

“You hear a person is killed or cattle taken. Every day, there is problem here. We believe that the Murle are our only enemies.” **Youth leader**

COMMISSIONER’S BRIEFING

- The commissioner stressed that government cannot protect the communities up to their houses and so community members should be active stakeholders in take care of some security challenges.
- He indicated that making consistent follow ups on the emerging issues are necessary with the state government. He emphasized that the participants should enlighten the rest of the population of Duk communities especially youth to leave laziness and get involved in eradicating poverty, hunger as factors that contribute to insecurity.
- He informed the attendants that Duk County has an estimated population of over 110,000 people and this need hard work to deliver basic services, but he particularly indicated that 90 police men cannot protect this huge population.
- On the other hand, He indicated that the county authorities in partnership with the regular police department of Duk County have provided training to some youth who were nominated from among the community members to constitute the County’s community police unit. That, these newly recruited and trained youth are waiting for armament by the government. He indicated that once operational, this unit would complement the work of the regular police services.

“The youth are ready but they are waiting for the implementation. We have trained the youth but we need the guns. We are waiting for the higher government to address that. Community members should be ready to contribute for their feeding?” **County Commissioner, Duk County**

POLICE BRIEFING

The police representative present in the meeting attested to the challenges his institution is facing in providing protection to civilians. His emphasis was mainly on the issue of presence and the ability to police the entire county with adequate coverage – relating to few police personnel. At the same time, he underscored that the police department in the county suffers from physical operational capacity that is attributed to having a significant number of old officers. He also confirmed that there are indeed some policemen who are deployed to work in Duk County but have left the county and are living in Bor. He stressed that the young and active youth should help with the task of protection of civilians.

“The young people are not in the police. They should be recruited. [Complaining old people are weak] the police in the county are only 90. And

some of them are hanging in Bor, and to make matters worse, they are still getting their salaries” **Police Representative**

SECURITY PROVIDERS IN THE COUNTY KNOWN TO PARTICIPANTS

The participants are aware that the following groups are the security providers in the county,
- And briefly provided their view of each actor.

- **National army (SPLA)** – Very helpful to the security context and sustained presence is necessary but often lacks the necessary logistics including food. Therefore communities emphasized that if government cannot provide food for them, community members can contribute some of their cattle to help keep the forces operational, instead of attempting to acquire by force.
- **Police (SSPS)** – The view on the police is a key factor for law enforcement and believed to be more relevant to address most of the insecurity concerns in the county. However, their presence in the county is not proportional to the threats. Also, that the number of old officers is high yet, these old officers often do not help in retrieving their raided cattle due to physical weakness².
- **Youth from Duk County** - The youth from Duk are seen as important custodians of security in their communities. Unlike their counterparts, regular forces, the youth are believed to be able to operate even under limited logistics, for instance to penetrate the bushes on foot to pursue cattle raiders, while the army would often fail to do so if there are no cars. The local youth are believed to have undoubted will and energy to protect their community.
- **The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)** – Participants identified UNMISS as a relevant protection actor. But were clearly unaware of what UNMISS can locally offer in terms of community security. Thus understood the role of UNMISS as a channel to link national security concerns with the UN Security Council as a body that makes critical decision on security issues. However, majority of the participants indicated not knowing their roles well.

EMERGING ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants identified the following course of actions as measures to be taken to address the current and emerging security challenges in the county;

- Freedom of movement is restricted, mainly due to fear of gun attacks from youth from neighboring community who are believed to be hiding in the nearby forests whenever scheming for cattle raids. From 4pm to 7am communities fear to move freely near to the surrounding forests due to the fear of attacks. Communities believe that the thick forests in the county provide a favorable hiding ground for criminals and makes difficult efforts of combating criminals.

² Cattle raiding emerged as the biggest threat to security in the county.

- The government should increase the number of the regular police from 90 to a reasonable number. However, they should be recruited locally so as to avoid leaving their duty stations (Duk County) to live at the state capital – Bor. Furthermore, the county government should liaise with state government to ensure members of the police who have left their duty stations in Duk County should be replaced with able bodied youth who have both energy and commitment to protect local civilians.
- On the other hand, as a response to the small number of police and part of a broader community police scheme announced by the Inspector General of Police, the Duk community has welcomed the idea of community police. Consequently, contributed some 200 youth to serve as community police. These youth have received some basic training already. Communities are ready to continue supporting them to complement efforts of regular police in securing the county.
- To avoid clashes at water points, there is need to construct more water reservoirs. The government should provide security forces to guard the water points constructed.
- Joint administration should be established at the central locations of the counties where the different communities can participate together in rendering expected services.
- Participants indicated that government should consider bringing basic services closer to the people. It was suggested that, Health facilities and schools should be constructed in a location that is easily accessible by all counties. Preferably at Ganiet. Ganiet is centrally located and several counties can have easy access to it compared to Bor³. This would draw the various communities to begin interaction with each other socially and peacefully and help reduce the violence against neighbors.
- The communities should cooperate among themselves and with security providers by sharing necessary information pertaining insecurity so as to facilitate joint efforts to combat insecurity in the county.
- Government should put in place strong laws to ban illegal civilian possession of guns and conduct equal disarmament in all the counties of Jonglei state.
- The government and organizations like SSANSA should lobby the development partners to construct good roads within the state to link up the different counties and payams for easy movements of security forces.
- Peace and Reconciliation conferences/seminars should be organized to bring peace between Duk community, including other neighbors and the Murle/
- Civil Society Organizations should continue to sensitize the communities up to the levels of Payams and bomas on change of attitudes and mindset of the people towards peaceful coexistence.

³ Bor is the capital of Jonglei State. Due to poor road infrastructures, it is not connected to many counties of the State, yet most of the services needed at the county levels are located in Bor.

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