



South Sudan Action Network
on Small Arms

TWIC EAST DIALOGUE

SECURITY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS | TWIC EAST DIALOGUE April 29, 2013 | Panyagor – Twic East, Jonglei State | South Sudan

Summary Report

This is a summary report of a one day community security meeting under the theme “**Security is everyone’s business:** - Improving state - Civil Society relation for enhanced Community Security.” The meeting was conducted on the 29th April 2013 at the Women Association Conference hall, Panyagor in Twic East County of Jonglei state. It was convened and facilitated by South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA). The meeting was as an interactive forum for stakeholders with the role to protect civilians (protectors) and community members as recipients of protection (the protected) to discuss critical community security challenges and jointly identify trajectories for addressing threats to improve security of citizens. It involved information sharing with the objective of understanding the roles of the various actors in community security, including community members in civilian protection. The Twic East meeting is part of a series of community security meetings that was launched in February 2013 at the State capital Bor. The Bor conference recommended a roll out of the meeting to the county levels. These meetings seek to build trust, accountability and promote cordial partnerships between communities and security providers with the aim of enhancing community security.

The meeting was attended by 31 representatives drawn from various civil society and security sector and county government institutions. Participants particularly included the County’s Executive Director, representatives of South Sudan Police Service, the South Sudan Army, Head of Primary Health Care, youth and women representatives, chiefs and teachers¹.

This report presents the summary of the issues that emerged during the first forum held in Twic East.

Opening Remarks

The meeting was officially opened by the Acting Commissioner (the county executive director) who in his opening remarks appreciated SSANSA for having selected their county to mark the beginning of the roll out of community security dialogues in Jonglei state. He assured the organizers and participants that the government is doing their best to address all

¹ See Annex one for list of participants

security issues. The commissioner encouraged the participants to freely share their views and experiences about the security in the county as it is necessary to make the best choices in responding to security needs, given limited resources and capabilities. He stressed that the organized forces are seriously pursuing criminal groups whose activities are a critical destabilizing factor in the county.

Overview of Security concerns

The meeting discussed the local and current threats to security in the county and attempted to generate possible solutions to address the challenges. The issues included both gaps in protection and threats exerted by various actors of insecurity including non-state armed groups and criminal groups around the county. Particularly, participants have identified and attributed security threats in the county to the following issues.

- Threats posed by rebel militia groups loyal to David Yauyau².
- Raids from Murle youth who have not been disarmed.
- Failure of the police and army to provide security to civilians under imminent threats and retrieve lost livestock in the aftermath of raids.
- Excessive consumption of alcoholic among local youth held to be contributing to the promotion of violence and lawlessness.
- Poverty resulting from laziness, causing robberies and other unlawful means of acquisition of wealth.
- Poor roads and bridges limiting access of security forces.
- Lack of transport logistics undermining the mobility of security forces.
- Insufficient training of the organize forces
- Political and ethnic conflicts at both State and National Government revolving around perceived high level of tribalism and nepotism.
- Police leave duty stations but continue to earn salaries. This makes the police force unreliable.
- High illiteracy level coupled with limited training opportunities for alternative skill development for livelihoods contributes to poverty, further promoting theft including cattle raiding.

Emerging issues from the civil society

As noted above, one of the key security concerns was cattle raiding, which often end up with loss of both cattle and lives. This is believed to be mostly perpetuated by youth from the neighboring Murle settlements of Pibor County. The role of both prevention and recovery of raided cattle were until the recent past was being held by the local youth of the county. The youth informally complemented the efforts of the regular forces. But after disarmament, the youth became unable to do so, mainly because the cattle raiders are armed. Most of the current security concerns revolved around how to fill this gap created by disarmament, though throughout the deliberations, emphasis slanted to mainly how to strengthen the formal law enforcement capability.

² David Yauyau rebelled against South Sudan's ruling party - the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) after elections - in April 2010 when, as an independent candidate, he lost his campaign to represent the Gumuruk-Boma constituency in Pibor County at the Jonglei State Assembly. In 2011 Yauyau joined the SPLA but rebelled again in April 2012. For more information, see: Sudan Tribune <<http://www.sudantribune.com/+David-Yauyau-David-Yau-Yau,1247-+>> [Accessed April 2013]

Communities are of the view that, the police are sometimes undedicated to protect civilians, in the sense that they do not pursue cattle raiders with the passion, the local youth did when they had guns. Partly attributing the lack of dedication to weak police personnel due to old age, community members asserted that if the police officers do not have the energy to run after cattle raiders without cars, let the mandate be tossed over back to the youth by rearming them.

“The young people would be able to run without cars but the old men cannot run. Guns have been taken, so they cannot run after the cattle raiders” **said a youth participant**

The above assertion of the youth representative was backed by similar sentiments from fellow youth representatives, therefore attempting to illustrate the strong or growing sense of better community protection capability among the youth than what the regular forces could be offering to their county at the moment. Participants called for a careful and honest capability assessment within the government. And that, where there are bigger constraints in being able to respond effectively to the security priorities of communities, it is necessary to consider forming strategic synergies with the informal complementary support being suggested by the local youth.

“Since the disarmament is done, more cattle have been taken, more people are being killed, the government should bring more police and more army, if not they should bring back our guns.” **said a youth leader**

Participants mainly from the civil society side complain that they are not able to differentiate between the ‘usual’ Murle raiders and the forces loyal to rebel leader David Yau Yau. This was mainly associated with the similarity in the nature of hostilities in their community by the Murle tribesmen. It is also coupled with the fact that the forces of Yau Yau are predominantly from the Murle tribe. But a major dilemma lies in establishing some of the intentions that lies in some of the cattle raids.

“...if you have a gun, they kill you and take away your gun. Even if you do not have arms, they kill you...” **said a chief**

The vulnerability believed to be as a result of the civilians disarmament is pegged onto non-uniform disarmament. There was a widespread feeling among communities that their neighbors were not equally disarmed as their county. This notion was attached to the persisting attacks from neighboring communities. Therefore, they called for a continuation of disarmament in all counties until communities are not capable of attacking neighbors. However, majority of the participants believe that the Murle youth are responsible for all the attacks in their county.

It also emerged that, due to the insecurity in the villages, many community members are displaced from their homes and took refuge at the county headquarter (Panyagor). This has severe implication on access to water as the populations seek to share the limited available sources of water in panyagor. Participants stressed that their communities at these centers need more sources of drinking water as a short term measure, as initiatives to make their villages secure continue.

Participants also expressed the need to widen opportunities for livelihood in their community by developing farming. This would reduce reliance on cattle as the only means of survival. They stated that this can be done by providing for them farming tools and seeds. And that, despite the insecurity in areas further from the centers where populations are concentrated, farming can take place around the centers which are relatively secure.

SSANSA was asked to help with the provision of farming tools and seeds. However, the SSANSA facilitators indicated that SSANSA is not directly working on issues related with practical help to communities for widening livelihood but can direct the recommendation to relevant organizations within the network and partners.

As a transitory measure, participants also expressed that, if there is no funds for extensive road construction projects, the government should mobilize communities to open up roads. They stressed that local capacities can be used but needs to be organized by government, which would further need supply of tools.

Views on community policing

On the police, the participants appreciated the fact that

Noting that most of the police deployed in the county are of old age – whose performance have been below the expectations of citizens – participants urged the government to improve security in the county by deploying strong young police men and women who have the physical ability to protect the citizens and their belongings.

Participants were aware about the plan of the government to improve security through community policing program. Some participants (mainly the youth) expressed willingness to join as volunteers in the community policing scheme to protect their community.

Insecurity, Women and Children

The women feel the insecurity situation in the county is impacting far more negatively on women and in an unwarranted scale. This is mainly because they consider that they are not perpetrators of any of the violence with any of their neighboring communities.

“We are helpless, our children are being abducted. it takes you months to carry the child; you try to bring up the child. At the end of the day, somebody takes away your child. It pains us so much...they even kill us, but we have never gone to raid. We don't even have cattle. We don't understand. The government should do something about these abductors.” **said a women representative**

Government briefing on roles and ongoing community security initiatives

Representing the county commissioner as the highest civil government authority, the Payam Administrator shared with participants of the forum, government plans and challenges of community security in the county. The main issues in the briefing included the following.

- The government is trying as much within its capacity to pursue rebels and criminal groups to secure not only the county but the entire state and country.
- The government is planning to fill the protection gaps created by disarming the youth – who were the prime custodians of security in the county – by installing community

police in the county. The representative indicated that the county government is already identifying the youth to be incorporated into the community Police. However, he stressed that this can only be made operational if concrete steps are taken from the higher levels of government because it involves arming these groups and also providing some training for them.

- The acting commissioner indicated that their main challenges to providing security are, inadequate number of police in the county, Lack of roads to patrol and limited mobility logistics. This was further elaborated by the police captain present in the meeting.

“We do not have vehicles to run after the cattle raiders. We have only one car..As we talk, our car broke down, you can see it outside there...[showing participants]...but also the roads are very poor. The raiders mostly come from where there are no roads, vehicles cannot move there, so it hard for the police to pursue them.” **said a police representative at the forum**

- The government also affirmed that the police force is not efficient because there is a good number of old officers who hold operations role but, but mostly sit around doing nothing.

Protectors/security providers known to the participants

The participants have identified the following groups as the security providers with certain levels of responsibility to provide protection to them.

- The South Sudan Army, (also known as the SPLA)³.
- The South Sudan Police Services
- Local Youth from the Twic East community
- United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

However, participants also reiterated that the youth cannot currently contribute meaningfully because their arms have been collected in the recent disarmament. They believe that increasing the number of army and able bodied police would help improve community security. On the other hand, while government representatives were more aware of the role of UNMISS, community representatives were generally unaware of what UNMISS can offer in terms of community security. But a few of the participants were able to identify them as a protection provider. There is no UNMISS local presence in the county, but government representatives reported that UNMISS representatives sporadically visit the county.

Sources of Weapons

³ The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is the former guerrilla fighters founded in 1983, also the protagonist during the civil war that led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Following the independence of South Sudan in 2011, the SPLA became the regular army of the New Republic of South Sudan.

The participants identified the main source of weapons to be from some members of organized forces supplying the black market. But participants stressed that this can mainly be attributed to the often delayed salary of the organized forces. While tightening the security of government stockpiles is necessary, participants indicated that a keen attention needs to be given to timely pay for salaries of security forces.

The other source of weapons to the communities is believed to be from David Yau Yau. Participants argued that a good number of Murle youth joined Yau Yau not only to evade disarmament in the ongoing civilian disarmament campaign in the state but also acquire more arms.

Summary of recommendations

The following are summary of recommendations collated from the emerging issues discussed above.

- The government should conduct further and proper disarmament exercise in all the counties of Jonglei state, and put in place laws to ban illegal possession of arms by civilians.
- Government should deploy more able and strong police and army to protect the people.
- Community policing should be implemented to complement government efforts in security provision. Youth of the community are ready to enroll as community police, therefore government should expedite the establishment and make operational the community policing scheme.
- Government should make road construction not only a development priority but also a security priority. Community members are ready to be mobilized to make roads up to the level their capacity can allow. The government should therefore facilitate the mobilization and provide tools for construction of roads.
- The government should pursue militia groups, arrest and subject them to strong justice measures to discourage new uprisings.
- NGOs should help with fishing nets, farming tools and seeds to widen community opportunities for alternative livelihood.
- Civil society organizations should sensitize the communities about available developmental programs for alternative livelihoods and reduction of poverty.
- Religious leaders should preach the message of peace and reconciliation.
- More schools should be constructed in the county and the payams.

Closing remarks by the Paramount Chief

The meeting was closed by the Paramount Chief of Twic East. In his closing remarks, he highlighted the following key points;

- Vote of thanks to the participants for their cooperation in attending the meeting and freely expressing their concerns.
- He expressed that the people of Jonglei State in general are crying for peace because since signing of the comprehensive peace the state remained in continues conflicts and killings of thousands of innocent civilians.

- He assured the participants that, there should be no worry because there are already indicators of peace as some numbers of rebel groups have responded positively in Upper Nile State to the amnesty offered by President Kiir. The hope is that David Yau Yau will also do the same, by laying down arms.
- On the other hand, the Paramount Chief urged the participants to inform the entire communities to continue praying for peace and reconciliation among themselves.
- Finally, he thanked SSANSA for organizing the workshop and placed an urge to continue with sensitizing communities on security issues in the county, specifically by organizing such security forums.

SOUTH SUDAN ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS (SSANSA)