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Violent Legacies: Insecurity in Sudan's Central and Eastern Equatoria

By Mareike Schomerus

HM Government

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Danida

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Published in Switzerland by the Small Arms Survey

First published in June 2008

Edited by Emile LeBrun and copy edited by Emily Walmsley

Cartography by MAP*grafix*

Typeset in Optima and Palatino by Richard Jones, Exile: Design & Editorial Services (rick@studioexile.com)

Printed by nbmedia in Geneva, Switzerland

ISBN 2-8288-0096-2

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Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by contributions from the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Survey is grateful for past and current, project-specific support from Australia, Denmark, and New Zealand. Further funding has been provided by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Geneva International Academic Network, and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The Small Arms Survey collaborates with research institutes and NGOs in many countries, including Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Germany, India, Israel, Jordan, Norway, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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The HSBA project is supported by Canada, the UK Government Global Conflict Prevention Pool, the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Acknowledgments

Many people in Sudan gave their time and insights for this report. I am indebted to all of those who took the time to share their knowledge, insights, and experiences with me. I also want to thank Taban Alfred for logistical support and translations in the Equatorias. I am indebted to the reviewers of the paper as well as to Claire Mc Evoy and Emile LeBrun of the Small Arms Survey for their comments and support during the research of this paper.

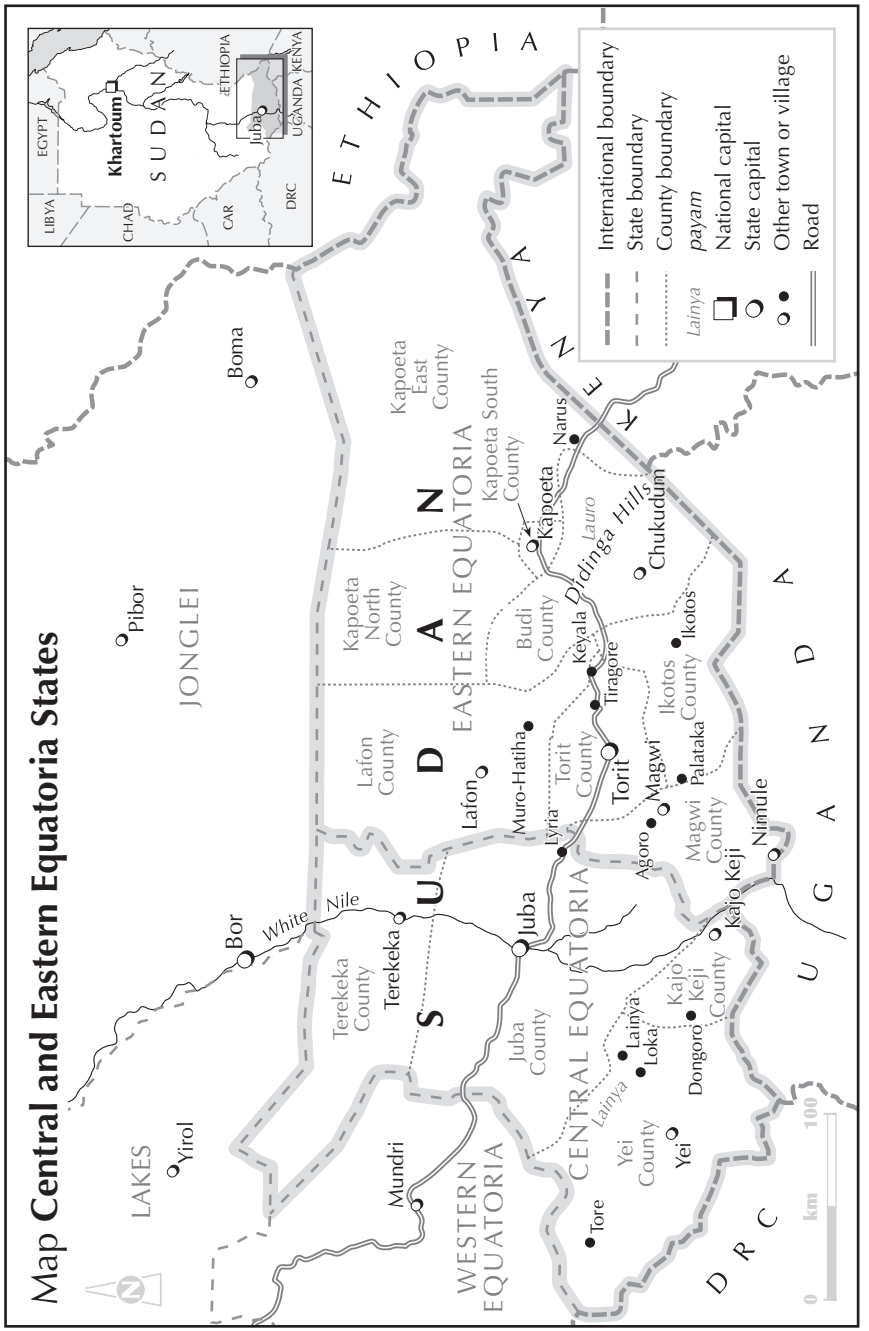
Abstract

Eastern and Central Equatoria States played distinctive roles in the two Sudanese civil wars, the effects of which are still reverberating today. The current widespread insecurity, taking the form of tribal and resource-based conflict, armed group activity, and criminal violence, stems largely from shifting alliances, South–South conflict, and the politicization of armed groups during the second civil war and its aftermath. These challenges, and their implications for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, can only be understood by examining the ethnic, political, and economic history of the Equatorians and their relations with the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army. In doing this, the paper highlights the underlying dynamics of the violence as well as its direct manifestations, both of which must be addressed if human security is to be improved.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CAR	Central African Republic
CES	Central Equatoria State
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CHMT	Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSAC	Community Security and Arms Control
DDR	Demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDF	Equatoria Defence Force
EES	Eastern Equatoria State
FPA	Final Peace Agreement (between the GoU and the LRA/M)
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GoU	Government of Uganda
ICSS	Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JIU	Joint Integrated Unit
LRA/M	Lord's Resistance Army/Movement
NCP	National Congress Party
PDF	Pibor Defense Forces
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade (launcher)
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SSDDRC	Southern Sudan Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration Commission
SSDF	South Sudan Defence Forces
SSIM	Southern Sudan Independence Movement

SSR	Security sector reform
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
WES	Western Equatoria State
WFP	World Food Programme
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front



I. Introduction and key findings

Over the course of two civil wars in Sudan (1956–72 and 1983–2005), many areas of the South, as well as the so-called 'Transitional Areas', experienced multiple parallel local conflicts, the legacies of which still impact human security today. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005, did not sufficiently address the underlying causes and dynamics of these antagonisms. Most local conflicts in South Sudan have been gradually politicized over time, becoming slowly absorbed into the wider struggle between the North and South, or between competing southern interests.[1]

The states of Central and Eastern Equatoria have suffered more than most from such conflicts. During the civil wars, they were a focal point of intra-Sudanese fighting. Adding to these internal struggles, they have also been subjected to cross-border violence from Uganda and Kenya, as well as to political entanglements with Uganda. Violent clashes remain common in the two states today, influenced by old and new political antagonisms, and exacerbated by widespread civilian small arms possession. As the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UMMIS) and the South Sudan Peace Commission have recently identified, addressing both the 'frequency of conflicts' and 'the magnitude and show of fire power' are paramount to any peace building effort in the Equatorias (UNMIS et al., 2007, p. 1).

These security challenges present problems for the implementation of the CPA and for the fledgling Government of South Sudan (GoSS). The lack of tangible improvement in security since 2005 does little to endear residents to their new local and regional government, and exacerbates persistent antagonisms that many Equatorians have harboured against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) since the early days of the second civil war. These dynamics become especially significant in light of the upcoming CPA-mandated national, parliamentary, state assembly, and local elections in 2009.

This paper outlines the background and context to the current insecurity in Eastern Equatoria State (EES) and Central Equatoria State (CES), focusing on why they have been so politically contested, and why they have such potential for large-scale violent conflict in addition to the low-level insecurities that have been a part of civilian life since the CPA was signed. In doing this, the paper attempts to cut through the often misleading narratives offered by the Government of Sudan (GoS) and by the SPLA and their allies. At times these narratives are difficult to unravel because local actors have all but completely adopted them, integrating their own oral histories based on personal and anecdotal experiences.

The paper finds that:

- EES and CES suffer from ongoing violent insecurity, with organized rebels, official army or security personnel, ethnic militias, and bandits responsible for the bulk of the violence. All of these actors have recently mounted armed attacks.
- Current insecurities are closely connected to complex political histories that make both states hotly contested territory today. While current violence is seldom politically motivated, it is often based on political loyalties or facilitated by material support from political forces that hope to strengthen their positions in the two states.
- Chronic under-development in the Equatorias, the lack of investment in state infrastructure, and the influx of large numbers of refugees and returnees have led some residents to turn to violence out of economic necessity. Such economic interests may, however, mask more complex political dimensions.
- The level of civilian small arms possession remains extremely high in both states in the post-CPA period. Widespread access to arms is a fundamental factor in levels of fatal violence and general insecurity in the region.
- Modest attempts at civilian disarmament in recent years have failed because of the size of the task, local insecurities, cross-border threats, and the earlier failure of the 1972 Addis Ababa Accord, following which many locals hid their weapons as a security measure.
- Due to the inability of the SPLA and the GoSS successfully to address post-CPA insecurity in the two states—by establishing structures needed for disarmament and by reforming the SPLA—the 2009 elections may result in political realignments in the Equatorian state governments. Equatorians who do not feel represented by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)

may turn towards the National Congress Party (NCP) out of frustration. If the NCP make gains deep into the 'heart' of GoSS territory, this could further complicate North–South dynamics over the period leading up to the 2011 referendum on unity.

This paper is based on qualitative interviews conducted between January and June 2008 in Eastern Equatoria and Central Equatoria, supplemented by material collected during other research trips since 2006. It also uses data gathered by UN agencies as well as local press coverage and other documents. Interviewees included government officials, military personnel, international agency staff, local leaders, and civilians. In total, more than 60 interviews were conducted. It is important to note that qualitative interviews often express a personal point of view in a highly politicized and militarized environment.

II. Geography and resources

The Equatorias—Eastern, Central, and Western—form Sudan's southern border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. They have played a special role in the region, both as transit areas for traders and explorers and as contested territories with abundant natural resources.

Ample rains and rich, fertile soil have made agriculture the main economic activity, although traditional patterns of life were disrupted by the long-running civil wars. Animal rearing is a staple for survival for some tribes along the Kenyan border. The Equatorias are also rich in subsoil resources. In the 1970s, surveys confirmed the existence of gold, iron, copper, uranium, chromium, zinc, tungsten, diamond, mica, magnetite, salt, manganese, gemstones, petroleum, and other valuable ores and minerals (Bure, 2005).

Eastern Equatoria

Eastern Equatoria State (EES) has an estimated population of 730,000 and covers a hilly area of 82,542 km^2, stretching from Ethiopia along the Kenyan and Ugandan borders—232 km and 435 km long respectively (UNJLC Juba, 2007b).[2] The capital is Torit. The Latuka, Lango, Madi, Imatong, Acholi, Didinga, and Toposa are the largest indigenous ethnic groups in the area, but large groups of Bor Dinka have settled in EES, fleeing their native Bor in 1993 when Nuer militia launched an offensive against them. The Bor Dinka now exert considerable political and military influence in the state.

The mountainous terrain and dense vegetation have provided shelter to armed fighters during the region's various conflicts. Strategically important areas, such as the Aswa River, were the scenes of significant battles that placed guerrilla groups with light weaponry at an advantage over the mechanized and better-armed Sudan Armed Forces (SAF).

About 70 per cent of the East Equatorian population is agro-pastoralist, according to surveys by the World Food Programme (WFP). With an average

of nine members per household, food security has been an issue ever since the war disrupted cultivation patterns (Vuni, 2007g). More thorough assessments have been impossible due to ongoing insecurity. Magwi County was scarcely accessible to aid organizations until mid-2007 due to attacks by the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), while cattle raiders from Kenya and Uganda rendered areas further east unstable. The area around Kapoeta had—and still has—a stronger presence of aid agencies but the far east of the state is hardly accessible due to lack of roads.

EES is also of interest because of its mineral wealth. There is evidence of gold in areas around Kapoeta and south of Juba. Kapoeta, Torit, and the Didinga Hills reportedly contain large deposits of limestone. Other known minerals include chromites, nickel, and talc. Along with deposits of uranium found east of Juba, there are also traces of thorium, lead, and copper in the state.

Central Equatoria

Central Equatoria State (CES), formerly known as Bahr el Jebel, occupies just 22,956 km^2 and hosts Juba, the capital of South Sudan.[3] The city has grown rapidly since the CPA was signed. Its population, estimated at around 200,000 in 2006, is now approaching 500,000, with the state's total population numbering about 740,000 in 2007 (UNJLC Juba, 2007a; 2007b). This imbalance puts considerable strain on resources, and most Jubans rely on casual labour and relief aid to survive. Other CES communities are farmers or pastoralists, although the number of cattle keepers has declined to about 30 per cent of the population (WFP, 2006). Reduced ownership of livestock, which customarily denotes status, has increased armed clashes over cattle, grazing, and water. The immediate vicinity of Juba traditionally belonged to the Bari, while the Mundari and Kuku are other important ethnic constituents.

Entering Sudan at Nimule in south-western EES, the White Nile flows through Juba and CES into Lakes State, irrigating lush forests along its banks. From November to April the area dries out, although the Nile remains a constant source of water and fish. From April the wet season brings plentiful rains. Central Equatoria has the potential to produce surplus food, while Eastern Equatoria suffers from food shortages due to its semi-arid western districts.

Basic services

EES and CES have limited basic services. Outside Juba, access to medical facilities and schools is strictly rationed. Access to water is also a problem in both states, with just 369 known water points in EES and 352 in CES (UNJLC Juba, 2007a; 2007b). Enrolment in schools is low. Despite the states' role as transit areas for returnees, services have been limited, especially in EES.[4] Magwi, the county most affected by LRA activities, is served by very few non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the only UN agency present is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).[5] Kapoeta is more of an aid agency hub, and Torit has recently seen more agencies open bases. The WFP Annual Needs and Livelihoods Assessment reported that 183,400 people in EES were considered vulnerable in 2007, requiring 10,780 metric tons of food aid (Vuni, 2007g).

Both EES and CES are important transit states. Eastern Equatoria's roads bring trade vehicles from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia, while Central Equatoria, with South Sudan's main airport at Juba, is the gateway to states further north. Keeping roads open and secure has been a major concern. Most roads have been demined, but mines remain a hazard in large areas of both states.

III. Equatorian relations with the SPLM/A and the GoSS

The root causes of the two Sudanese civil wars lay in decades of marginalization and unequal economic development, preceded by a history of separation and hierarchy between the North and South dating from pre-colonial times. The widespread misconception of the conflicts as purely religious is still prominent in media coverage, which has largely pitted an 'Islamist North', represented by the GoS and the ruling NCP, against the 'Christian South', represented by the SPLA (Johnson, 2003). Today, we understand that the war was ignited by continued political and economic marginalization of the South. Religious and tribal identities did not cause the war but were exploited by the warring parties (Abdel Salam and de Waal, 2001).

EES and CES also experienced fighting between different southern groups. EES, in particular, has a long history of conflict between different local groups, and of violence spilling over from Uganda and Kenya. An appreciation of this history of local conflict is needed in order to understand why the situation in the southernmost parts of South Sudan remains so unstable today.

These factors have naturally influenced and affected the relationship between the Equatorian people and the SPLM/A and GoSS. These relationships are key not only for understanding the current violence, but also for analysing the future of the GoSS in Equatoria as well as the relations between the GoSS and the GoS. To bring clarity to these relations it is necessary to review briefly the history of the civil wars as they played out in Equatoria.[6]

The history of war in Equatoria

For most southerners, EES and its capital, Torit, are forever linked with the outbreak of civil war in 1955. On 18 August of that year, just months before Sudan was to declare independence, a locally-recruited unit of soldiers called the Equatoria Corps rose against the immanent government in Khartoum.

The mutiny marked a peak in tension between North and South before the full outbreak of civil war. It had become clear that patterns of exclusion would continue after independence, despite Khartoum's promise to Britain that it would establish a federal structure. Founded during colonial rule, the Equatoria Corps had come under GoS pressure to redeploy to the North. Sensing a conspiracy to weaken the South's military strength, the Corps defied orders from Khartoum and attacked northerners in Torit. Some 260 northern Sudanese and 75 southerners were killed in the uprising, which sparked similar attacks across Equatoria.

After the mutiny, Corps members dispersed into hiding in order to continue the fight. The outbreak of conflict also marked the beginning of refugee outflows to Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda—and increased in-flows of arms to Sudan from surrounding countries and from supporters of southern independence, including Israel.

The 1972 Addis Ababa Accord, which marked the end of what is known as the 'Anya Nya I' war (after the primary rebel movement), led to the creation of 'the South', a unified, semi-autonomous region with its own assembly. Some Equatorians did not welcome this arrangement, however, as they felt dominated in the new administration by the more numerous Dinka. The GoS exploited this resentment to destabilize the new region and split it into three constituent parts (Badal, 1994). The Southern High Executive Council, the South's semi-autonomous governing body, refused to accept the split, but in 1983 President Jaffar Nimeiri divided the region by decree (Lesch, 1998).

The abolition of the federal structure and its replacement with more direct rule from Khartoum was one of the principal triggers of another rebellion that would turn into the second civil war, known as 'Anya Nya II' (Branch and Mampilly, 2005). From the outset, the SPLA claimed to be fighting for John Garang's vision of a federal Sudan with equal rights for all citizens. Critics, however, saw the fight as an attempt to bring the South under SPLA—that is, Dinka—control, which fuelled Equatorian fears that they would again face domination. This persistent resentment fed Equatorians' dislike of the Nilotic pastoralist groups, who constituted most of the manpower of the early SPLA.[7] Under-represented in the rebel movement, Equatorians also resented having to replace their elderly or ailing chiefs according to SPLA orders, rather than

through popular appointment (Leonardi, 2007a). Rather than join the rebellion hundreds of thousands of Equatorians fled to neighbouring countries in the 1990s. The GoS used such disillusionment to recruit Equatorians into pro-government militias.

The fact that the fighting against northern domination originated in Eastern Equatoria remained significant throughout the second civil war as well as the first, and still reverberates today. The 1955 Torit mutiny was the first and most important symbol of southern aspirations for self-rule. Its significance is so strong that in 2007 President Salva Kiir declared 18 August, the day of the Equatoria Corps mutiny, a national day (Paterno, 2007). Other locations in Equatoria also hold symbolic value for the independence struggle, making the region a microcosm of Southern Sudan's problems. Major battles were fought in the second civil war over the city of Yei, for example, which was overrun by the SPLA in 1997, then taken back by government forces, and then recaptured again by the SPLA in 2002, leading to a major rupture in the peace talks sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Wartime relations with the SPLM/A

In the early 1980s Equatorians supported the expulsion of Dinka and other Nilotic peoples from their region and, in response, a belief developed in SPLA ranks that Equatorians had never truly 'supported the struggle'. A cycle of resentment emerged that fuelled the discord between Dinka and Equatorians (Allen, 1989), and masked the fact that by the early 1990s a significant proportion of the forces based in the Equatorias were actually Nuer (Johnson and Prunier, 1993). Adding to this ethnic tension was a political one: under John Garang, the SPLA's agenda for a united Sudan alienated Equatorians, who strongly supported a separatist agenda (Johnson, 2003).

From the perspective of Equatorians, the first war was fought without such a divided political agenda. Local support for the Anya Nya I was more coherent, with young men—so-called 'fronts'—responsible for supplying rebels with food and transport. Given these contributions, CES and EES residents believe that they deserve some credit in securing the CPA. The fact that non-Equatorians in the SPLA take the credit for the CPA frustrates them, and heightens memories of SPLA repression and intimidation during the second civil war, when Equatorians were forced into supplying the rebel army with food (Leonardi, 2007b).

Such memories are particularly vivid in EES, which the SPLA 'occupied' in order to secure its supply lines to relief aid in the Kenyan town of Lokichokkio, and to provide a safe haven for Dinka communities displaced by the fighting further north (Branch and Mampilly, 2005). Evicted from their land, Equatorians accused the SPLA of becoming more oppressive than the GoS (HRW, 1994).

Although Equatorians joined the mainline SPLA during the 1980s and 1990s, some chose to join breakaway factions that eventually aligned with the GoS. The beginning of this fractioning process occurred in 1991 when Riek Machar and Lam Akol split a Nuer-dominated group '(SPLA–Nasir' later renamed 'SPLA–United') away from the Dinka-dominated SPLA under John Garang. Shortly thereafter, however, Riek split from Lam and created the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM), later renamed the South Sudan Liberation Movement. Also in 1991, Equatorians created their own separatist group by breaking away from the SPLA. Called the Equatoria Defence Force (EDF), its membership was rooted in groups that had formed to protect Equatorians against the SPLA in the 1980s. The EDF was officially established in 1995. Since all three groupings—SPLA–United, SSIM, and EDF—were aligned with the GoS, they signed a political charter in 1996 and moved their headquarters to Khartoum. A peace deal with the GoS (the Khartoum Peace Agreement) was signed the following year, collecting all the groups under the new moniker of the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF). Within this umbrella group, the EDF remained an independent force until the Juba Declaration in 2006.

These splits brought a deeper level of complexity to the conflict in the South, and precipitated some of the most violent battles of the war. In fact, fighting between breakaway groups and the mainline SPLA was responsible for more civilian deaths than SPLA battles against the government's SAF (Johnson, 1998; Jok and Hutchinson, 1999). At least 11 SPLA factions were created in the 1990s, and many remained disillusioned even after the SPLA reunited in 2002, transferring their loyalties to new formations with different support structures.[8] Many of Riek Machar's original Nuer supporters remained in Equatoria under the umbrella of the SSDF.

The reunification of SPLA factions brought with it the problem of control over weapons: it was impossible to press forward with disarmament in case one or other of the participating armed groups became alienated in the process. No party was willing to surrender its weapons while the wider war was in progress. With the ceasefire agreement, unskilled, armed youth lost their role as defenders of their communities from external enemies, but maintained possession of their weapons. This marked the beginning of increased fighting between communities along ethnic lines, leading to shifting, often opportunistic, alliances.[9]

Meanwhile, in specific response to the SPLA's occupation of EES, the Bari, Latuka, Mundari, Didinga, and Toposa created separate ethnic militias in the 1990s, many of which forged alliances with Khartoum in order to acquire arms (Young, 2003). Near Juba, the Toposa formed a militia after a group of Dinka resettled on their grazing grounds (ICG, 2003). Although the SPLA offered material support to some tribes or clans in the region—most notably the Toposa and Mundari—its relations with the majority were characterized by an ongoing cycle of both 'harsh repression and reconciliation' (Johnson, 2003).

Such unresolved tensions are quick to resurface, and each fresh incident has serious security implications. On 4 November 2007, three police officers were murdered in Yambio by SPLA members of the newly created Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), which combine SPLA and SAF soldiers.[10] One local member of parliament said that the murders were an attempt to intimidate Equatorians, but that they would not be allowed to destroy the CPA (Vuni, 2007n). After the incident, Governor Clement Wani Konga of CES asked the GoSS to disarm all soldiers and secure their weapons.

Equatorian–SPLA relations in the post-CPA period

Residents and aid agencies in most parts of CES and EES agree that relations between civilians and the SPLA have deteriorated since 2005. Chief among the complaints are incidents of civilian abuse by soldiers. Intoxicated SPLA soldiers have reportedly harassed women in towns and villages in both states, taking locally-brewed alcohol from them without payment, intimidating the women, and later, when inebriated, sexually abusing them. According to women's groups, most sexual violence outside the domestic realm involves SPLA soldiers. Local chiefs are reluctant to intervene lest they are beaten up and humiliated in front of their communities.[11]

Without excusing these incidents, it is also important to see the post-CPA period from the perspective of a typical SPLA soldier. It is a very uncertain and unstructured time: disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) is supposedly on the horizon, but the prospects for post-army life are bleak. For many soldiers, army life is all they have ever known, and the so-called 'interim period' is leading them to an unpredictable and uncertain future. They are poorly and irregularly paid, and their salaries are subject to theft and corruption from higher up.[12] Payday brings 'relief' through alcohol, leading to the type of violent incidents described above.[13]

The GoSS recognizes the aimlessness in the SPLA as a major problem, and one that Dr Riak Gok, the new director of the Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) Bureau, wants to tackle soon: 'The SPLA soldiers are trained to kill, they are not trained to keep law and order. If they feel they are given jobs that they are not supposed to do, they become hostile. The SPLA turns to force when it is provoked. The SPLA is overused and needs stricter separation between civil and military matters.'[14]

Meanwhile, animosity continues to mount among Equatorians. Already hostile to the Dinka domination of the SPLA, they are quick to blame every incident of harassment or rape on soldiers. The situation is thus locked in a vicious cycle of historical ethnic tensions and prejudice and current everyday realities. Residents also see how easily former SPLA combatants transition to government positions, and suspect that officials 'protect their own' by turning a blind eye to army misconduct. Some officials acknowledge that SPLA behaviour has been a major problem, but claim that discipline is improving and that the number of incidents has declined.[15]

Apart from harassment by rank-and-file soldiers, abuse of power by senior SPLA officers is a major problem for communities, the GoSS, and international agencies seeking to implement accountability structures. Typical reports involve SPLA officers with a local support base who monopolize trade routes or resources, often in defiance of local police. This was the case with SPLA Lieutenant Colonel Majak Ruel, who ordered the removal of a police check-

Box 1 **The politics of trust**

The political scene is deeply divided in the Equatorias. In general, the overwhelming sentiment among civilians in EES and CES is that local governments cannot be trusted. Incidents of 'ghost payments' and unpredictable taxation do little to instil confidence (*Juba Post,* 2007). Residents allege that officials are 'recycled' to keep cronies in office, and accusations of corruption are common. A Torit politician said corruption is now actively encouraged 'at both the political and the social level'.[16]

Confidence in the EES administration was badly shaken in 2007 when local newspapers reported financial irregularities in the state government. According to former finance minister Paul Lodiong, the accounting was flawed and the GoSS's monthly disbursement of SDG 5.4 million (USD 2.7 million), with an additional USD 500,000 for salaries, was not being spent on designated tasks (Vuni, 2007i). Contracts to supply vehicles were being awarded on political grounds, with a major contract going to Brigadier General Martin Kenyi, former commander of the EDF and a rival to Governor Aloisio Emor Ojetuk for political office. Money reserved for peace conferences to be held between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees from Kenya and Uganda was also said to have disappeared (Vuni, 2007i).

EES Deputy Governor George Echom says the political camp in his state is neatly divided into two: those who support the current governor and those who do not (Vuni, 2007m). Counter-accusations that those who oppose the governor must be loyal to the GoS lead to a focus on alleged links rather than the practical tasks at hand. Disputes over loyalty lead to arrests but little clarification. Former agriculture minister Paul Omoya, who was accused of maintaining links with EDF members, remains in prison but, at the time of writing, had still not been charged.[17]

In EES, political infighting centres on Governor Ojetuk. In November 2006, Riek Machar set up a committee to investigate the possibility of initiating impeachment proceedings, but no action was taken. The governor has since been accused of maladministration, which is said to have been partly responsible for the Didinga massacre (see pages 37–38). Some residents say that some of the killings were politically ordered, although such accusations seem to be based on political loyalties (Vuni, 2007k).

Given their history of recrimination, it is hardly surprising that Equatorians and the SPLM distrust one another. Torit residents point out that they lived in a well-developed town under the former NCP governor, Abdallah Albert Oteng, with a well-maintained parliament, and water and electricity supplies. Under SPLM administration, they say, services have become either non-existent or unreliable, while political unrest in Kenya in 2008 further ruptured trade routes and interrupted supplies of basic necessities. Since people tend to base their political preferences on the availability of basic services rather than ideology, the presiding view is that, 'The NCP is just the name of a party, but they have done good for us here.'[18]

The NCP, now in a power-sharing government with the SPLM, acknowledges that the SPLM has reputation difficulties. 'The SPLM is changing to a positive political movement,' said an NCP representative, 'but there is a lot of work still to do.'[19]

point in Ganji *payam* (district), near Langi, so that his personal traffic could pass without being inspected.[20]

With resentment against the SPLA in CES and EES already high, military misconduct only alienates the population further.[21] Another example involves land occupation. During the war the SPLA took over large areas of communal land in CES along a 25 km stretch of the Juba–Yei road. In February 2007 the occupiers were finally ordered to relinquish it because, as Cornelius Goja, the director general of Land Administration and Planning for CES, said: 'The whole thing has become a security issue, and most citizens that were grabbing land were SPLA soldiers' (EPE, ESI, and UNCONA, 2007). This problem of communal land occupied by the SPLA remains largely unsolved, however.

In other instances the SPLA causes or benefits from insecurity, using it to camouflage its own criminal activities. According to the EES governor, some SPLA soldiers who have 'voluntarily demobilized' (while retaining their weapons) have gone into the cattle-rustling business, using their arms against former colleagues (Vuni, 2007e). Elsewhere, in a string of attacks blamed on the LRA (see page 31), a hasty investigation overlooked the fact that one ambush of a Ugandan truck on the Yei road on 10 February 2008 involved an SPLA truck and four attackers, two of whom wore SPLA uniforms.[22]

Long-planned reforms that would transform the SPLA from a rebel force into a national army have so far proceeded slowly. Crucially, it has become clear that a working relationship between UN and GoSS officials is possible only when certain issues are allowed to take a back seat: reforming the SPLA is one of them.[23] In January 2008, however, the United States pledged to support a modernization programme for the SPLA, and other donors such as the UK's Department for International Development are to follow suit. But it must be expected that any reforms will require some time to take effect. Furthermore, given their historical animosities, it is an open question whether reforms would have a direct impact on relations between Equatorians and the SPLA.

Motivations within the SPLA to reform its relations with Equatorians have gained new impetus with the approach of CPA-mandated national, state, and local elections, which are due no later than 2009. Two significant pre-CPA meetings between governors and commissioners—the Equatorian Conference in 2001 and the Equatorian Convention in 2002—aimed to bridge the gap in

trust. During the 2001 conference, Equatorian leaders called for a decentralized southern government that would be more considerate of Equatorian interests—interests they want protected by constitutional and legal reforms (Branch and Mampilly, 2005). Since the CPA, Governor's Forums have continuously stressed the importance of South–South dialogue, yet a comprehensive plan of how to achieve reconciliation is not yet forthcoming.

Members of the Equatorian diaspora also sustain anti-SPLA sentiment by casting the army as the new occupying force of South Sudan. An example is a press release of the Equatoria Professionals in Europe, Equatoria Solidarity International, and the Union of Nuer Community in North America who wrote that the SPLA was 'grabbing lands of the Bari tribe in CES . . . without any regard to the rule of law. . . They depend on the barrel of the gun' (EPE, ESI, and UNCONA, 2007). This complaint refers to the transferral of the capital of South Sudan to Juba. The Bari, who own the land under customary law, granted 6 km^2 on which to build new offices, but this allocation was far exceeded and the Bari have yet to be compensated. Because the 2005 Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (ICSS) is not clear on the separation of powers between the GoSS and local government, and because the Local Government Act has not yet been implemented, the Bari—and by extension other Equatorians—feel that all avenues of resolution have been denied them.[24]

IV. Equatorian relations with the GoS and the NCP

Wartime relations with the GoS

Relations between Equatorians and the SPLA were mutually suspicious, and those with the GoS were little better. Khartoum exploited divided loyalties to strengthen anti-SPLA militias, fuelling South–South violence and preventing the emergence of a united front against the SAF. In time, the pro-government militias took over the bulk of the frontline conflict with the SPLA, reducing battle losses for the North.

In addition to supporting the Equatorian ethnic militias and ex-SPLA factions, the GoS recruited non-Sudanese armed groups, such as Uganda's LRA, to fight on its behalf in exchange for material and other support.[25] The arrangement of using others (non-northerners) to fight the SPLA served the GoS well, according to the GoSS deputy commissioner for DDR: 'Whenever anyone goes to the government in Khartoum and says: "I want to kill my brother," the government gives them the best equipment they have. They believe in beating the slave with the slave, letting people fight each other. Because if Khartoum attacks again, there are fewer left to fight.'[26]

Despite years of support, however, alliances between militias and the GoS remained fragile due to the vagaries of opportunism. If a militia had no further need for material support, there was often little that tied them to the GoS ideologically. For example, the most prominent Equatorian militia, the EDF, aligned itself with the SPLA during the IGAD negotiations in 2004. It later accused the GoS of attacking its positions in a bid to derail the peace process (EDF, 2004).

The current divisions between southerners stem from this history. During the war and since the signing of the CPA, what cohesion and collective identity obtained in the South was based on a common political enemy: the GoS. But this sentiment is not fully echoed in post-CPA CES and EES, where residents provide considerable support for the GoS-aligned NCP. EES populations have a history of antipathy towards the SPLA, while Juba, capital of CES, remained

in SAF hands throughout the war. Furthermore, the inhabitants of garrison towns such as Juba and Torit joined the NCP as a specific survival mechanism during the war—it was recognized that the only way to gain government positions in those towns was through NCP membership. Taken together, these considerations present a real challenge to the building of a coherent and peaceful southern identity.

The NCP in Central and Eastern Equatoria today

As an opposition party very popular prior to the CPA, the NCP holds a more comfortable position in EES than elsewhere in the South. For its opponents, however, the party's post-CPA political stamina is an indication that there are politicians 'who do not want to leave power'.[27] Based on the power-sharing agreement in the CPA, the current EES government contains seven SPLM state ministers, leaving the NCP to occupy only the Ministry for Physical Infrastructure.

The NCP's main strongholds are Torit and Kapoeta. Local politicians estimate that around half of Torit voters support the NCP, and in Kapoeta some put this figure as high as 75 per cent. While only five members of the state assembly are reportedly official NCP representatives, more than 20 members of the 48-member Interim Legislative State Assembly are former NCP supporters who have crossed over to the SPLM, according to press reports quoting State Secretary Felix Otuduha, an SPLM member (Vuni, 2007j). Interviewees repeatedly claimed that such 'crossovers' are used to undermine the SPLM, though it is impossible to prove such allegations. The NCP has denied that any of their members are 'defecting' to other parties (*Juba Post*, 2008a).

The NCP is seen as a viable alternative to the SPLM in parts of EES because there has been so little visible development under SPLM rule. Governor Ojetuk is a particular target of resentment, according to Felix Otuduha, who said that the SPLM could lose EES if he is not replaced. It is also likely that tribes that support an independent South consider this impossible under an SPLM government; the Toposa, who had a strong reputation as independence fighters during Anya Nya I, may fall into this category.

The NCP has offices in Magwi, Torit, and Kapoeta. While it is keen to maintain its strong platform in the Equatorias during the approach to the elections, the influx of returnees to former NCP strongholds such as Torit is diluting the party's support base. Returnees who fled the war are usually not supporters of Khartoum and the NCP. NCP representatives confirm that their strongest showing is now in Torit and Kapoeta, but that returnees are more likely to be SPLM supporters.[28] Such dynamics will lead to a struggle for political support, and SPLM activists claim that the NCP will employ dirty tricks.

There is public concern that EES, with its volatile support for the SPLM, might become an arena for violent political conflict. Given the proposal for Sudan to be ruled by two systems—the arrangement if the referendum vote establishes unity—there are fears that the GoS will remain intent on interfering in southern affairs. Suggestions that the Government of National Unity could be based in Juba for three months of the year cause the locals to suspect the NCP of attempting to gain more political support. One local said: 'Khartoum will buy political support that way and divide the South.'[29]

Such distrust is causing anxiety in Torit, where stories abound of the NCP currently buying support. The SPLM claims that the NCP disrupted its rallies in Kilio and Kudo *payam* (district) by distributing money,[30] while residents marvel at the number of young men who fill their days playing dominoes and yet have enough money for drinks. These men reportedly visit the NCP office to receive financial packages in return for their political, and often physical, assistance.[31] The SPLM claims that NCP-supported aggression was demonstrable in October 2007, when cattle rustling around Torit worsened immediately after an NCP convention. A few weeks later in Torit, civilians in the Kinati Hotel Lodge were attacked by SAF supporters armed with swords.[32]

The NCP denies such accusations, saying its interest lies solely in implementing the CPA and fulfilling its duties as a co-signatory. In response to allegations that the NCP used money to buy support, an NCP politician said: 'Any party can give money for political mobilization. A candidate has to be supported by money. But this is not to buy people. After all, what is the price of a human being? How can you buy a person? We do not care about such rumours. If we had money, we would buy cars. But I walk everywhere on foot.'[33]

V. Insecurity in Eastern and Central Equatoria

Insecurity in both CES and EES is multi-faceted and evolving. But the two states tend to experience different types of violence. Today, violence in EES is primarily a matter of cattle rustling with little or no overt political dimension, though vendettas are an increasing problem. In CES, clashes are fuelled by quarrels over resources but remain bound up with older group hostilities. Since late 2007, an increasing number of incidents of looting and child abduction have also taken place, and until recently some of the perpetrators have not been clearly identified.

The situation in early 2008

In November and December 2007, a series of abductions in the villages of Kondokoro and Mafau near Gumbo, in CES, were attributed to Murle cattle keepers, who had targeted the homes of families with young children. This follows a familiar pattern of Murle child raiding, believed to be connected to community procreation. A mother and a baby were killed, and a young boy went missing. Residents believe the raids are part of plans to traffic children, since a boy is tradable for around ten head of cattle.[34]

In January and February 2008, the CES villages of Domgoro, Kujimo, Katigiri, Lainya, and Loka were all raided, with Loka being targeted at least three times. The attacks involved extensive looting and abductions, sparking lively debate about who was responsible: most fingers pointed at the LRA. In many cases those abducted were released after they had worked as porters, although the younger men and women were more usually kept on as slaves.

The LRA had departed EES in 2007 for Western Equatoria, and its delegation had returned to Juba for peace talks with the Government of Uganda (GoU) to finalize the peace agreement. It was widely believed that they had not committed violence in the area for more than a year; however, this did not prevent them from being used as cover by others.

The abductions created dilemmas for humanitarian agencies, who concluded that distributing relief could tempt raiders into further looting, contributing to the population's vulnerability. Access was also hampered by UN warnings to travel only with armed escorts. The immediate consequence on the ground was that large numbers of people were displaced, mostly towards Juba. NGOs, such as Zoa and Action against Hunger, all withdrew from their local posts on security grounds.

The security response was telling. The commissioner in Katigiri promised to seek military and police reinforcements, but aid agency staff saw no sign of them by early February when the attacks intensified. With the increase, the SPLA was supposed to send troops from Rokum to the Katigiri area, but likewise aid agency staff had not seen any troops despite official confirmations that they had been dispatched.[35] The commissioner in Lainya similarly advocated a rapid SPLA response, but none was forthcoming until mid-February. International agencies also pressed the GoSS to acknowledge the need for improved security, but there was no response, possibly because of the need to ensure that the LRA talks continued. Locals therefore took matters into their own hands, forming heavily armed small defence units within a matter of days, using weapons that had previously been stored out of sight.

By April 2008 the groups operating in CES were identified as former SPLA (calling themselves 'No Unit' as a sign of their having lost confidence in their higher command), former West Nile Bank Front fighters,[36] some LRA, and some former members of the EDF. The EDF-based group had emerged out of developments that took place in 2006. Towards the end of that year, a series of attacks on Eastern Equatorian roads was attributed to the LRA, but was later found to be conducted by a group of former EDF and some bandits under the command of John Belgium. Belgium was reportedly commanding a group of about 325 people in 2006. After his group had been identified, Belgium himself went to Juba, but some of his group joined former EDF commander James Hakim further west. By spring 2008 Hakim was commanding a force in Central Equatoria of about 700 people, made up of former EDF as well as disillusioned members of other forces. Some of the recent attacks in CES were reportedly conducted by this group. It was also confirmed that 200 of Hakim's troops were being trained inside the DRC by the SAF.[37] This was reportedly the same

Box 2 **Security incidents, November 2007–February 2008**

November–December 2007

- Abductions in Kondokoro and Mafau, near Gumbo, CES.
- One man shot dead near Tiragore, EES, while grazing cattle.
- Cattle raid on Mura-Hatiha, EES.

Early January 2008

- One woman shot near Tiragore, EES, and hospitalized in Juba.
- Civilians shot a former SAF soldier, 15 km from Torit.
- Two hundred cattle stolen along Juba–Torit road, near Lyria, CES.
- Fighting between Mundari clans in Juba County, CES.
- Four people abducted in Katigiri, attacks in Loka Round in Lainya County, CES.

Mid-January 2008

- Dongoro and Kujima areas of Wuji *payam,* CES, attacked: three killed and ten abducted, three escaped.

Late January 2008

- Two Boya shot dead near Keyala, EES.
- Attacks in Lainya County (Wuji *payam*), CES.
- Major attacks in Kansuk and Rodo *bomas* (smallest administrative units) in Kajo Keji County, CES; the attackers moved towards Lainya and Juba, looting and abducting.

Early February 2008

- Three people killed near Lokwere, CES.
- Three killed in road ambush outside Yei, CES.
- Seventeen abducted (six returned) near Katigiri, CES.
- Attempted abduction at Wonduruba, CES.
- Attacks on Mongaro, Katigiri, and Langala, CES.
- Looting of Mongaro health unit in Kotali, CES.
- Looting in Lokwere, CES.

group that was bombed inside Sudan with helicopter gunships by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) in March 2008. Further helicopter activity in the Sudan border area in May and June 2008 raised suspicions that either this group was being supplied by Khartoum, or that the helicopters were connected to the LRA's presence in Western Equatoria (see Section IX).

This series of events is the most recent example of how expectations, histories, and economic motivations converge in Equatorian insecurity. This chapter now looks in more detail at the kinds of insecurity facing Central and Eastern Equatorians today, drawing when necessary on historical background to explain the context of current violence. In general there is a continuum between economic and politically motivated violence, but these factors are also often combined or impossible to disentangle with precision. Furthermore, tribal conflict cuts across many of the different types of insecurity in the region.

Cattle and resources

The main threats to security in EES and CES are killings, robbery, and the loss of livelihood through looting or crop theft. Most incidents are connected to cattle rustling, a source of income for many pastoralist inhabitants. Cattle are a highly valued commodity: 'They are our bank account,' said one resident.[38] According to UN officials in the region, fighting over cattle causes the highest number of civilian deaths.[39] Cattle rustling is not only an expression of economic need but also of inter-tribal rivalry over resources and grazing.

The political response has been to stress the need for unity and group identity, not based on tribal grouping but as Equatorians and southerners. Governor Ojetuk of EES said: 'With unity, we can stop the looting of our God-given resources by Khartoum and invest it to develop our region' (Garang, 2007). The implicit political message is unity against Khartoum and the NCP. This response fails to recognize the underlying dynamics that lead to cattle rustling, as well as the poorly understood political support that sometimes lies behind it.

Problematically, many senior officials, including governors, commissioners, and commanders, appear to regard cattle rustling as a boon to their constituencies—an alternative form of development—and one that does not add costs to the government. In an official report into the 2007 Didinga massacre (see pages 37–38), investigators wrote that powerful members of the SPLA and the GoSS are sometimes beneficiaries of cattle thefts, and use their influence to undermine efforts to prosecute the perpetrators. The report further states that it is hard to investigate such incidents since most post holders, from governors to civil servants, are former SPLA military with limited administrative skills (UNMIS et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, some practical government proposals to limit rustling may prove worthwhile. EES Minister for Agriculture Betty Ogwaro, for example,

intends to ensure that each cow is branded to identify ownership (for example, with an 'M' for 'marriage' if the cow forms part of a dowry).[40] Branding could provide an elegant solution to the immediate problem of current insecurities caused by widespread rustling. It does not, however, deal with either the issue of wider reconciliation or the root causes of inter-tribal conflicts, which are often based on disputes over land or past alliances with political enemies.[41]

Land, refugees, and returnees

Land has long been and remains at the heart of tensions between Nilotics, such as the Dinka, and Equatorians of long-standing residence, such as the Toposa. Traditionally, land has been owned by communities and administered under customary law, but there is currently no clear framework for dealing with these issues following the CPA. The Land Act, aimed at establishing a framework for land administration and for mandating the South Sudan Land Commission, has yet to be passed into law. Theoretically, it would administer land use and land distribution, the regulation of which has become vital with the influx of returnees (Pantuliano, 2007). Until the Land Act is passed, security will clearly remain an issue, as clashes over land will inevitably continue. This is where the circularity of South Sudan's problems becomes all too evident: the GoSS claim that the security problem is a key reason for the slow enaction of legislation such as the Land Act. Yet many of the issues of security discussed here will not be resolved until the conflicts surrounding land are dealt with.

Struggles over land magnified in the 1990s due to the large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), mainly Dinka, who moved into Equatoria as a result of the war. Many of them are cattle keepers with very different land needs that contributed to growing hostility between Equatorians and Nilotics. The latter, especially the Dinka, are still widely believed to be favoured by the GoSS.

Equatorians therefore distinguish between 'authentic' IDPs and 'SPLA Dinka' IDPs, who are seen to have been sent to 'occupy' their land after the 1991 SPLA split, exacerbating both anti-SPLA and anti-Dinka sentiment. Bor Dinka IDPs are also resented because of the pressure they bring to bear on scarce local resources.[42] They are now so settled in Equatoria, however, that they have petitioned President Salva Kiir for the Dinka enclave at New Cush to be turned into a Dinka county.[43] This is particularly unwelcome to Equatorians, who fear that their land is being taken away.

Cattle keepers in the Equatorias are commonly armed. Equatorians use this fact to justify their own refusal to give up weapons: in their view, maintaining a continued, armed presence is the only way of claiming back their land from the newcomers. Recent evidence suggests that relations between Dinka IDPs and the Toposa in Naurus and Kapoeta have worsened because the former believe that current town planning is biased against them. In an atmosphere of constant suspicion and low police presence, the groups continually accuse one another of causing insecurity (Pact Sudan, 2008).

The ongoing return of refugees is likely to add to the strain on resources as the customary land allocation system may well become undermined by these current conflicts over land. Both EES and CES have high rates of return for refugees and IDPs. UNHCR estimated that some 46,200 refugees would return from Uganda in 2007, more than double the number expected from Kenya and Ethiopia. Of a total of 170,000 Sudanese still living in Uganda—having fled from either the Sudanese wars or the LRA—some 120,000 are believed to come from Magwi and Torit districts (UNHCR, 2007). With increased security in the area, most of these are expected to return.

UNHCR has repatriated 10,929 returnees to EES since 2005, and returns to CES in 2008 are projected to reach 10,000.[44] However, 90 per cent of returnees come back unassisted and are therefore difficult to track. Returns are important for stabilizing areas emptied during the fighting between various armed groups in EES, but repatriation can spark new tensions. UNHCR is keen to close its camps in Kenya and to move refugees back to their homes in EES, but in the early months of 2008 many returnees came into conflict with displaced Dinka now resident on their land.[45] Meanwhile, influxes from elsewhere in Sudan continue. People arrive in Kapoeta from as far away as Mundri, driving their herds onto Mugali lands. They invariably bring arms with them.[46]

Some causes of conflict are less obvious than others. Returnees from Uganda have been accused of witchcraft and poisoning in Kajo Keji.[47] In Jebel Kujur,

near Juba, Ugandan returnees have been instructed to stay away from water points because it is feared they will taint the water.[48] In January 2008 a mob killed a woman in Kastor following such allegations. These incidents reflect long-standing beliefs about poisoning in the Kajo Keji area (Leonardi, 2007b). Such accusations levelled against returnees are reminiscent of local sentiments against 'intruders' or 'outsiders' since the colonial days of the slave trade, when the slave route passed through Kajo Keji.

Both Equatorian states are dealing with conflicts involving indigenous communities who have returned home to find their lands occupied by IDPs. The problem is particularly pronounced in Nimule, Mugali, Lapone, and areas around Juba. Compounding this, the resettlement process involving certain tribes has not gone as smoothly as expected. Some Bor Dinka, travelling from Kakuma camp in Kenya via Kapoeta to Bor, simply decided to stay in Kapoeta County (Vuni, 2007m). IDPs may decide to stay in an area because they have been there so long that they have adjusted and are well established; others may be prepared to move back to Jonglei eventually but will not do so yet out of fear of insecurity in the region.[49]

The Bill of Rights in the ICSS provides for the right of freedom of movement, but the result is that Dinka IDPs outnumber indigenous non-Dinka by three to one in parts of all three Equatorian states. Those Dinka who have remained are subject to political and economic marginalization in their own districts. This is especially true of those who stayed in Juba during the war, but are now facing a massive struggle for resources.

Tribal conflicts

After the signing of the CPA, commissioners in EES and CES were confronted with an array of inter-tribal clashes, made worse by the ubiquity of small arms possession. However, not all tribes are armed, or armed equally. The Bari and some tribes in EES have accumulated fewer weapons than the cattle keepers or other tribes who were armed by the SAF or SPLA to fight as proxy forces during the civil war.[50]

Inter-tribal conflicts in EES and CES are innumerable. The Mundari and Dinka fight each other; the Bari are hostile to the Dinka; and the Bari and Mundari are at odds despite speaking similar languages.[51] In Kapoeta, cross-border entanglements involve the Toposa, the Karimojong, and the Turkana, who all speak similar dialects. The Karimojong also have an ongoing quarrel with the Didinga; the Turkana fight the Toposa; and the Toposa are hostile to the Murle.

However, many conflicts that are today identified as tribal, and are carried on through cattle raiding and issues over land, have far deeper historical roots. Because it is easier for residents and NGOs to classify insecurity along tribal lines, the intricacies of revenge and competition over resources that underlie many of the current clashes can be overlooked. Sometimes the origin of current clashes may be obscure—and even traceable to a different country. Relations between the Acholi and the Latuka, for example, are still marred by events that took place in a Ugandan refugee camp in 1997. Quarrelling between the two groups began in the early 1990s, especially in Kiryandongo camp in Uganda's Masindi District where some Sudanese Acholi had experienced secondary displacement after fleeing from the SPLA and SAF into Kitgum, and then on to Masindi to seek refuge from the LRA. Sudanese Acholi vividly recall the killing of a fellow clansman in the camp by Latuka in 1997, and this memory still affects relations between the two groups in EES today.[52]

It is important to note that non-integrated remnants of armed groups operating as combatants during the war remain in EES and CES with their weapons. Many of their guns are used in attacks and crime, contributing to insecurity. With few economic options beyond picking up their weapons again, these ex-militia are likely to be recruited by political groups as armed supporters—if not as actual fighters—as the elections and referendum approach. These groups are discussed in Section IX.

Three tribal rivalries are considered here as examples of the complexities surrounding conflicts in Equatoria.

Didinga and Toposa

On 5 May 2007 a group of Didinga women and children were tending crops in Lauro *payam,* Budi County, south of Kapoeta, when they were attacked by a group of armed Toposa, estimated at the strength of a battalion (Oduho, 2007). The attackers used heavy weapons, including 12.7 mm machine guns, PKM

machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), 60 mm mortars, and AKM rifles (Vuni, 2007k). A witness told investigators that some wore uniforms (Peace and Reconciliation Committee, 2007). Fifty-four people were killed—48 of them women and children—and 11 were wounded. Four hundred goats and 400 heads of cattle were stolen.[53] Locals criticized the slow response of the authorities, while women's leaders accused the state government of lacking any vision to resolve local conflicts (Peace and Reconciliation Committee, 2007).

Several events may have triggered the incident or at least contributed to its brutality. Locals speak of a feud between Toposa and Didinga dating back to pre-independence border issues. While there are many peaceful interactions between them, the Toposa–Didinga feud continued into exile, where the Didinga generally fared better. The Toposa accuse them of using their better education to claim land that does not belong to them (Vuni, 2007l).

Investigations brought to light several versions of what may have transpired. Some Toposa chiefs claim they were given weapons by NCP sympathizers to execute the attack.[54] Although the NCP denied involvement, it is clear that there was some distribution of arms. Chief John Ngrongo Phil in Ngauro *boma* (the smallest administrative unit) told investigators: 'There were trucks carrying the heavy guns and distributing the ammunition to the Toposa of Nyamornyang' (Peace and Reconciliation Committee, 2007). A local NCP official said the party had as many Didinga as Toposa supporters, and that a quarrel had festered because the Didinga accused the Toposa of using their grazing lands.[55] A scheduled peace conference did not take place because the two groups could not agree on a neutral location. The killings were discussed in the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, and a recommendation was made to disarm anyone carrying guns in the district.

Nauro is also contested because it is rich in diamonds and gold, and high-ranking SPLM/A officials have an interest in the resources and in securing land there. It is said that they relocated displaced Dinka—members of their own tribe—close to these resources for this very reason.[56] Local residents say they know of particular connections between armed Toposa and SPLA commanders in Kapoeta. In the past the Toposa maintained connections with both the SAF and the SPLA, supposedly to facilitate attacks on the Didinga in Lauro. They say the issue was discussed at the Eastern Equatoria Conference in June 2005, when Budi chiefs raised the issue of Toposa moving into their territory.

In February 2008 flyers distributed in Kapoeta accused the Toposa of being allied with, and marrying, northerners, while treating Eastern Equatoria as if they owned it. The Toposa did not dare go to the market in Kapoeta until the governor intervened. The area remained relatively peaceful while the SPLA deployed its forces, but they were temporarily withdrawn in early 2008, leaving many security issues unresolved.

Dinka and Mundari

CES has been the setting of several inter-tribal clashes featuring the Dinka and the Mundari. In January 2008 the fighting was so fierce that shops in Munuki *payam,* Juba, stayed closed all day. Sirimon, in Pollo *payam* on the Maridi road in Juba County, witnessed violence between Mundari pastoralists and Nyangbara IDPs. On 30 January armed men, said to be Dinka, crossed the Yei road near Ganji *payam* and tried to abduct three girls.[57]

The Mundari are well armed and the local community has complained in several letters to CES Governor Clement Wani that the Mundari chiefs are not willing to negotiate after violent incidents. The fact that Clement Wani is also Mundari and, according to aid agencies, surrounds himself with a Mundari militia has caused further suspicion in the community.

Further north, in Terekeka County, there has been fighting by Mundari that, according to SPLA intelligence, is fuelled by weapon supplies from Khartoum.[58] In a recent visit to the area, Vice-President Riek Machar asked the Mundari to re-establish peaceful relations with the neighbouring Bari and Moro, adding that clashes between Mundari, Bor Dinka, and Murle had been encouraged by the fact that they remained armed (Dak, 2008a). Governor Wani, however, does not believe that disarmament is required and instead has insisted that he will not allow it: once the Mundari are disarmed, he claims, they will be at the mercy of the Murle and Bor Dinka (Vuni, 2007e).

Bari, Mundari, and Nyangwara

The Bari, the tribe nearest to Juba, repeatedly clash with the Mundari and have also expressed concern about the Governor Wani's role. A recent report

stated that the Mundari had rustled Bari cattle on several occasions and killed a Bari member of the SPLA. While the Mundari accepted responsibility for the incident, they argued that it was an isolated deed carried out by individuals rather than by the whole tribe (UNMIS et al., 2007).

The Mundari, originally from Terekeka County, gravitated towards Juba during the war and have stayed. Their presence has interfered with the Nyangwara host community, which competes with them over resources to which, the Nyangwara say, the Mundari are not entitled. The Mundari have been accused of cattle rustling in Nyangwara territory and harming water sources and farms (UNMIS et al., 2007).

Changing social structures

Traditional structures of governance, a stabilizing factor in pre-war times, have been undermined by war and the constant security threat. Latuko elders talk of how the *monyomiji* (the younger ruling generation of men) have assumed the responsibility for security, often bypassing the chiefs, because their martial skills, honed by war, are more relevant to societies in times of conflict and inter-communal violence. According to several accounts, their powers include ordering people to take violent action against intruders or to rustle cattle to ensure the economic security of the group (Kurimoto and Simonse, 1998).[59]

The chiefs' loss of authority has had repercussions for those seeking to improve security. In the past, villagers obeyed traditional chiefs in exchange for a certain symbolic protection. The social upheaval of the past few decades has broken this 'contract', leading to a collapse of traditional norms of obedience. Post-conflict studies in other countries demonstrate that the failure of such pacts encourages militia or criminal violence, while undermining future efforts at state formation (Kaldor, 2007).

The chiefs' loss of authority runs in two directions: as representatives of their people, and as interlocutors with the representatives of non-traditional government and with grassroots links in the chain of command. For example, in the past, chiefs would answer to *payam* administrators and support local disarmament efforts, but there is no longer any pressure on them to do so. Arguably, they can do little to impose their will on the *monyomiji*, who owe their power to the very weapons the administration seeks to neutralize. In some districts, communication between the people and their chiefs has broken down so drastically that there is talk of strengthening the latter's authority through the assignment of liaison officers.[60] As chiefs' voices become less important in their communities, they are less attractive as partners in disarmament efforts. But this leaves a void that cannot necessarily be filled by the more belligerent younger leaders.

Chiefs lament this loss of authority and feel that attempts by the GoSS to strengthen their position have been unconvincing. At the Greater Upper Nile

Box 3 **Women and armed activity**

The role of women in Sudan has changed significantly as a result of the war. During the the conflict years women assumed the role of protector of the family when the men went away to fight (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005), with the result that today they are frequently responsible for safeguarding the family arsenal.

Women are the backbone of the household and the informal economy, having kept their families and fighters alive by providing supplies and farming throughout the war. They are bargainers in trade and in political and private exchanges. At the same time, women have also borne the brunt of war, suffering specifically gendered violence as well as other kinds. Today, they are the ones trying to bind society together again (Fitzgerald, 2002).

It is easy, however, to forget that women too can fuel conflict and play active roles in it. 'Our sisters are warmongers also,' says CSAC director Riak Gok. 'They encourage men to fight.'[61] As protectors and breadwinners, women are comfortable with small arms, having used them to hunt or when their home was under threat. They are often in charge of domestic security, making disarmament in EES and CES more difficult. After years of taking responsibility for family defence, it is often women who most strongly resist the surrender of their weapons. Often they have developed elaborate systems for hiding them, such as a double-walled *tukul* (traditional hut) or false graves covered with iron sheets. 'Without protection,' said one rural woman, 'we are dead. You with your CPA, you have security in Juba. Send us security too.'[62]

Weapons are also wealth. When a child falls ill or school fees are due, guns can be sold to pay the bills. When asked about disarmament, women believe that handing over their weapons will mean certain death. 'You need to kill us to get our guns. For us death is the same, whether from the Turkana or from you.'[63]

Women, when treated as a commodity, are often themselves the source of conflict. Bride wealth is acquired through cattle theft, and penalties for marital or prenuptial infidelity are also paid in cows. An adulterer will pay the injured husband seven cows, and ten cows is a common fine for other crimes. Often culprits must turn to stealing more cattle to pay their fines.[64]

Peace and Reconciliation Conference held in Malakal in January 2008 and attended by county commissioners, traditional leaders, and senior government representatives as well as by the international community, chiefs bluntly accused the government of seeking to undermine them by creating alternative structures (*Sudan Tribune,* 2008). Indeed, the introduction of statutory law courts, and the lack of clarity as to how these will operate in relation to the common law courts overseen by the chiefs, has left many traditional leaders in limbo—and the government's disarmament efforts with them (Leitch, Jok, and Vandewint, 2004; Deng, 2006).

The problem of Juba

Since the signing of the CPA, Juba's population is estimated to have at least doubled, from around 200,000 in 2006 to 400,000–500,000 in 2008.[65] This explosion has brought some improvement in conditions, but also a whole set of new problems. After the GoSS moved the capital back to Juba, it was obvious that efforts should be made not to concentrate resources in and around the city. With most international agencies operating from Juba, however, resource concentration became inevitable.

Due to its good transport connections, Juba is a magnet for Sudanese and foreigners alike. Refugees, IDPs, and other returnees often end up staying and competing for the same opportunities that attracted thousands of others to the capital. There is visible economic growth, but it is mainly confined to the infrastructure required by a large and wealthy aid community. This has created a dual economy that attracts more migrants, which further strains the poorly developed infrastructure of the city as a whole. The pace of return is much faster than the development of basic services. Barely capable of meeting the town's previous needs, Juba Hospital now experiences longer and longer queues as the population continues to grow. Already under-resourced, schools are increasingly crowded, while the number of teachers remains the same.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), responsible for the movement of refugees once they have crossed the border, is planning to move people to Juba in order to ease pressure on Nimule, the biggest entry point from Uganda. While the IOM is hoping to link the movement of returnees with disarmament, nothing is being done to ensure that returnee groups surrender their weapons before dispersing.[66] As a result, voluntary returnees take their guns with them. Because most roads converge on Juba, the traffic in weapons there is particularly robust.

The security situation outside Juba has a direct influence on the town. When EES is insecure, protection workers report that the capital experiences an influx of Eastern Equatorians. The tents and huts of people displaced from Magwi by the LRA have stood in the centre of Juba for years. With security levels continually fluctuating, many who have fled to Juba for temporary protection end up staying, further straining the already limited resources.

The attraction of Juba becomes clearer when one looks at the patterns of return. Villages east of Juba, on the road to Ilyria, contain almost no returnees because those who were intending to return chose to remain in Juba instead. Relations between those who stayed in Juba during the war and post-war Equatorian returnees are often problematic. Given the town's history as a SAF garrison, native Jubans tend to have more in common with IDPs returning from Khartoum than Equatorian refugees who grew up in Kenya and Uganda.[67] Such frictions are reflected in everyday conflicts over resources. There is also a 'hierarchy of entitlement' between early and late returnees. While late returnees expect better services and more programmes than they have received elsewhere, their access to those resources is in fact more limited.

With the rapid influx of UN and other agencies, accountability mechanisms have been neglected. The emergency multi-donor Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), administered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to distribute funds quickly to local or international NGOs, lacked any evaluation procedures beyond basic accounting and audit. As a result, there is no transparency about how money is being spent, or what programmes are being implemented.[68] Unsurprisingly, most locals outside Juba—and even those inside—cannot name the services or programmes from which they have benefited.

Basic services are unavailable to most Jubans, but with the concentration of resources in the capital, other areas of the South have seen even less. Nor have the surrounding settlements been able to enjoy any significant growth by supplying Juba's markets with local produce. Most goods sold in Juba, includ-

ing food, are imported, reinforcing a trend of shifting resources to Uganda rather than supporting local productivity.

When asked what had improved since the signing of the CPA, one woman replied: 'Some buildings have gone up, there is more food, and we have less rape than we had with SAF soldiers. But the problem is that most places are being made into hotels.'[69]

Security has deteriorated with the influx of people, money, and weapons. Residents vividly recall the first time they saw armed cattle keepers entering the town in 2006; it was a taste of how easy it would soon become to enter Juba openly armed. The GoSS repeatedly announces the need for a thorough assessment of the number and type of weapons held. A first effort was made in September 2007, when Juba was locked down for 24 hours to facilitate a programme of forcible disarmament. Some 3,000 SPLA troops blocked the roads while police undertook house-by-house searches (Reuters, 2007). While the GoSS never published any official figures on the number of weapons seized, the raids may have primarily targeted the homes of NCP supporters (*Sudan Vision*, 2007). This was allegedly in reaction to a police raid on the SPLM's offices in Khartoum on 11 September.[70]

Crime increased in the early months of 2008, particularly armed robberies and break-ins, which were not a problem a year earlier. One guard was recently shot dead in an attempted robbery of a prestigious restaurant and business centre frequented by expatriates and government officials. The area of Munuki has also suffered many shootings and robberies, and residents have identified soldiers or police officers as the likely culprits.[71] In March, April, and May at least 25 attacks aimed at aid agency compounds and expatriate hotels were recorded. Handicap International was targeted every night over a week, causing some NGOs to pull their staff out of Juba. The attacks were clearly targeted at aid organizations, although some Sudanese were also assaulted, and the attackers reportedly wore military uniforms, sparking suspicion that the criminals were former militia (Wheeler, 2008).

The need to enhance security and to identify the perpetrators of crimes has led to a number of government initiatives in Juba. The new Ministry of SPLA Affairs has been relocated out of town in order to keep a distance between soldiers and civilians, and a recent directive bans troops from entering Juba armed, unless on duty.[72] The general curfew in the city currently runs from midnight to 5 a.m., although the UN observes its own lockdown from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Night-time security is tight, especially around the ministries and residences of political and military figures.

VI. Police and security

Police presence is scarce in Juba and almost non-existent outside it. As a result, Equatorians feel that the police do not take the security challenge seriously. 'They make a distinction between "small incidents" and "proper" attacks,' said one interviewee. 'They base security assessments only on the absence of militias.'[73] The security vacuum allows criminals to act freely, without fear of capture or prosecution.

Given their lack of presence, it is not surprising that police often respond late to security incidents. After a cattle raid on Mura-Hatiha in EES in December 2007, locals alerted the *payam* authorities in Hiyalla, only to be told that it was too late to do anything about it. But when the locals went out to search for the cattle themselves, they quickly found some of the livestock. Acting too late is not the only problem with the police, however. Women say that reporting domestic violence to the police produces little response and makes the situation at home even worse. In Juba, people cite occasions when civilians reported violence by SPLA troops to the police, only to be further harassed by other soldiers.[74]

In such an environment, the community uses the mechanisms that served them during the war: they provide their own security. In Ilyria, a youth group is responsible for punishing petty crimes that the chief does not handle, even though there are four police officers and military police in the area. In Munuki *payam*, Juba, residents have established a community-based protection forum following armed attacks against them at night by people identified as SPLA and police officers.[75] In a recent incident in Lolianga village, four men suspected of killing eight people and rustling hundreds of cattle were taken to work in the police compound while awaiting trial. They escaped while under the watch of the police officer, who came from the same village (Vuni, 2007c).

So great is the distrust of the police that law enforcement officers are sometimes disarmed on entering rural communities. What little police culture survives after decades of war is volatile and unreliable. Because the police believe that everyone is armed, small incidents quickly escalate into shootings. On 27 January 2008 five people were injured when the police opened fire in the village of Abu John after locals tried to free a detained suspect (UNMIS, 2008). When asked why the authorities reacted in this way, one man answered: 'Perhaps some of the authorities are not competent enough, but they want their jobs and the money that goes along with it. Maybe the minister is their friend, so they think: "What can happen to me?"'[76] Residents, local leaders, and politicians of all parties share the belief that the security forces are motivated to protect 'friends'.

Capacity is unquestionably also a factor in the limited police presence. In particular, systems to warn of raids and to punish the perpetrators are not feasible with current police budgets and infrastructure. According to Anna Kima, deputy commissioner of the Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC), the South needs better security coordination not only to deal with local criminals but also to send a message to cattle raiders who cross the borders from Kenya and Uganda. This will require a massive infusion of capacity—and resources.

Torit's police commissioner says there is no way of filling the capacity gap. He commands 15 police officers, although the area needs at least 150. While more are being trained, the process is slow and equipment is rare.[77] Yet even with more police in the pipeline, Sudan's militarized legacy means officers will 'continue to behave like military' for a long time to come.[78]

Training, especially in terms of efforts to 'demilitarize' the police, is equally under-budgeted. 'Most police came with the [rebel] movement,' said an opposition politician. 'They used to be soldiers and were simply divided into police, prison guards, fire brigade, and wildlife rangers. What they need is training to [investigate] crime and they have had no proper training for being a policeman.'[79]

The interpenetration of police and military operational styles is also evident among well-trained police officers who have come under pressure to join the army (Vuni, 2007d). In these circumstances, joining the police is not an attractive option. A policeman may earn slightly more than an SPLA soldier—around USD 300 per month—but it is still hard to recruit educated people to the service.

In an attempt to give the states more control over the running of their police forces, the GoSS agreed to devolve more powers to state governments at the March 2008 Governor's Forum. These powers include the administration of police, wildlife, prisons, and fire brigades, which was previously the responsibility of the GoSS Ministry of Internal Affairs (Dak, 2008b). It remains to be seen if this devolution will impact on levels of insecurity.

VII. Arms flows

Arms are everyday accessories in most parts of EES and CES. While civilians will not display their weapons in larger towns, they carry them openly in some rural areas. Since no laws prohibit gun ownership, and there are few areas where disarmament has been effective, no one is coy about owning weapons.[80] On the contrary, displaying weapons acts as a deterrent and therefore as a form of self-protection.

The abundance of arms is a legacy of the highly conflictual history of Central and Eastern Equatoria during the civil wars. NCP politicians in Eastern Equatoria attribute this 'weaponization' to 'the times of the movement', while freely admitting that the GoS subsequently distributed arms to local residents for 'protection'.[81]

One of the most contentious questions is whether the GoS still supplies weapons to ethnic militias. Evidence is circumstantial and limited to occasional reports of airdrops, most recently in Lafon, Eastern Equatoria. SPLA intelligence has accused Khartoum of supplying arms to tribes in the South to fight one another, and it seems certain that the GoS is still facilitating arms deliveries to pro-government forces in Darfur.[82] When asked about the allegations, an NCP representative in Torit admitted that such supplies were possible, but said he had no evidence of them.[83]

During the war, arms trading was a familiar sight in Eastern Equatoria, and locals recall how weapons were openly displayed in the markets. Halting the trade is a gigantic task since the region's many conflicts ensure an uninterrupted supply of cheap weapons. In Magwi County people are still using weapons left over from the overthrow of former President Tito Okello of Uganda in 1985. Weapons that surged into Sudan from Uganda and Ethiopia in the early 1970s are also still functional despite being so old (Schomerus, 2007). In 2007 local Nakuru residents reported two lorry loads of weapons from Uganda stopping in the town to release ammunition before proceeding to Jonglei. Violence erupted soon after.[84] Local militias often captured supplies

from either the SPLA or the SAF, and many of these weapons have trickled back into the community.

Civilian armament

Civilians in Eastern and Central Equatoria are well armed, primarily for deterrence, although there is a widely-held belief that the weapons may be needed one day to counter a political enemy.[85] While locals are not shy about owning guns, they keep them stored away most of the time. Chiefs often have detailed knowledge of who owns what and sometimes work with the government to encourage people to register them.[86] But many locals have hidden unregistered weapons in underground caches, trees, and rivers.

How quickly a community can mobilize its weapons was impressively demonstrated following the attacks in CES in February 2008. Shortly after the first attack on Katigiri, two-thirds of the villagers could be seen walking around heavily armed. An aid worker in Katigiri, who had never seen the community with weapons, was astonished at its state of preparedness.[87]

Arms trading

During war times, the best-known arms market in Eastern Equatoria was Loguru market (a black market) located on the border with Uganda, 19km from Ikotos in the Tsereya Mountains. During the war it was filled with soldiers, ex-combatants, and villagers, trading arms and ammunition with the full knowledge of the authorities. Ikotos residents say that the market picked up considerably when the UPDF was dispatched into the area. Women were also involved, selling weapons for cash to buy supplies.[88] The market was closed down in 2003 by the SPLA.[89]

Such markets are uncommon nowadays. Locals still buy arms, but dealing is mainly in the hands of members or former members of the SPLA, the JIUs, and the UPDF.[90] Although police in Torit deny the existence of the trading, locals are fluent in current prices. In early 2008, a JIU commander put the price of an AK47 at SDG 500–600 (USD 250–300),[91] while villagers priced a rifle at 'one or two cows'.[92] Civilians in Ikotos say that during the times the LRA was active in the area (mainly in 2002), the price of a gun was five cows or USD 600. While the price in cows has dropped to two to three cows, the price in cash has risen to reportedly USD 2,000, because guns are harder to come by with the closure of the market. Cows have also become much more prized as a commodity than cash, because, as one resident said, 'of this pride in cows'.[93]

Torit's county commissioner claims to have gathered evidence that implicates former SAF soldiers in recent arms trading. He says that demobilized SAF soldiers stayed behind to engage in charcoal production and other businesses, but that this was only a cover for arms trading in the bush. Civilians have repeatedly reported hearing gunfire near Torit airport, most recently in October 2007. Locals told the authorities that they had witnessed arms trades and that the gunfire came from buyers testing the merchandise.[94] On 1 January 2008 the commissioner ordered police to inspect a shop run by former SAF soldiers following a tip that guns were being stored there. The owners refused police entry until much later, at which time no arms could be found.

Types of arms

As is true elsewhere in Sudan, by far the most ubiquitous weapon in CES and EES is the AK-47. Other AK rifles are common, and spot checks during civilian disarmament have revealed the wide array of weapons held by civilians, including Russian and Chinese-built PKMs, RPGs, G3 assault rifles, and 12.7 mm guns.[95] The LRA has displayed a much broader array of weapons, some of them very unusual and better known from the conflicts in the Balkans or in other parts of Africa (see Schomerus, 2007).

VIII. Disarmament

The authorities agree that the disarmament of pastoralists must be a priority if stability is to be re-established in South Sudan. Beginning 1 June 2008, the GoSS announced a six-month civilian disarmament drive, asking civilians to relinquish their weapons voluntarily. Weapons not handed over voluntarily at the end of the initial phase, it was announced, would be confiscated by force. While this directive came directly from President Salva Kiir, it is unclear how it is supposed to be accomplished. Kiir asked local NGOs in Torit and elsewere to assist in this disarmament drive, suggesting a lack of strategy. The GoSS policy, outlined by Vice-President Machar, is to disarm civilians, strengthen law enforcement, maintain security, and establish stability (Dak, 2008a). In the more remote areas of CES and EES, however, it is impossible for the state to protect citizens because there is no police presence. Residents are convinced that whichever groups are able to retain their arms through concealment will continue to terrorize the community.[96]

Past disarmament exercises have been flawed and inconclusive. Most were launched as reactions to an immediate political challenge, and so assumed an emergency dimension without accountable procedures, as occurred in parts of Jonglei (Small Arms Survey, 2007). In some cases high volumes of weapons were confiscated, but the absence of any long-term policy weakened the prospect of long-term stability. Civil society has repeatedly voiced concerns about weapons that were not stored securely after disarmament and were redistributed by the SPLA to civilians (Saferworld, 2008). Guns confiscated in Khorflus near Malakal, for example, resurfaced during fighting in February 2008. Measures to prevent such redistribution need to be stronger, and the separation between military and police less fluid. However, experiences in Pibor, Jonglei State, show that a controlled SPLA presence can help during disarmament operations.

Stability means more than just the absence of armed attack. It also means that grazing areas and water points become less contentious, and trade more vibrant. In addition to the seizure of weapons, disarmament models must involve the screening of all cattle to establish ownership and, when necessary, their return to rightful owners.[97]

In the current circumstances, disarmament is conceivable only with the involvement of the army—which is why progress has been painfully slow. Disarmament exercises in other states have tended to be violent, and have frequently proceeded with considerable loss of life, making people in EES and CES even more reluctant to surrender weapons to a group they perceive as a potential enemy. Indeed, disarmament exercises have further fuelled distrust of the SPLA.

Disarmament must be comprehensive if it is to be credible to the community. So far it has not been. Conflicts tend to spill over—southwards from Jonglei and northwards from Uganda and Kenya. This means that disarmament cannot start in any one place, but must take place simultaneously in all contiguous areas to reduce community vulnerability. This is reflected in the GoSS Security Committee's current planning: the three neighbouring states of Jonglei, CES, and EES are to be disarmed in a simultaneous operation, and the SPLA will be deployed both to protect and to disarm (Lodiong, 2007).

The framework for disarmament

The CPA calls for the DDR of combatants, armed groups, and communities; but implementation, including civilian arms control, is less clear-cut. Many Sudanese think it is the task of the UN to conduct disarmament, but the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), based on the 2005 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1590, allows the mission only 'to assist in the establishment of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, as called for in the CPA, with particular attention to the special needs of women and child combatants, and its implementation through voluntary disarmament, and weapons collection and destruction'. The wording does not include a mandate to disarm or to implement activities focused on civilians, but simply to assist the SSDDRC in its efforts. 'UNMIS does not talk about small arms,' said one official, 'UNMIS does not talk about DDR. UNMIS has no mandate to disarm civilians. All UNMIS can do is monitor.'[98]

There are now expectations that the UNMIS mandate will be widened to include a DDR and community disarmament component. The now-defunct Interim DDR Programme—carried out under the auspices of UNMIS, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—has, in the view of the GoSS authorities and international agencies, achieved little beyond institutional capacity building. GoSS DDR programmes were not followed through either, with the result that UNDP has once again taken the lead on disarmament.[99] While the linkages with security sector reform (SSR) have been identified, cooperation has fallen far short of the SSDDRC's expectations.

Like UNMIS, the SSDDRC never had a mandate for community disarmament, and had little capacity to expand into community issues.[100] As a result, a new CSAC Bureau was established within the Vice-President's office in 2007 to ease the responsibilities of the SSDDRC, which is struggling to fulfil its objective of disarming ex-combatants. While both institutions are now established, their capacity remains extremely limited. Dr Riak Gok, director of the CSAC Bureau, has only a two-man team and lacks a legal framework in which to manoeuvre. Despite its name, the CSAC has no mandate to engage in community disarmament operations, although the director expects that a framework will eventually be drafted by the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, which is ultimately responsible for DDR.[101]

The lack of a framework means that there is no shared understanding of how civilian disarmament might work in practice. Riak Gok supports the idea of a token payment for weapons surrendered, but others are less optimistic that sufficient resources will materialize in view of the number of weapons currently in civilian hands. The commissioner of Torit County, for example, says that he cannot wait for resources to arrive, but needs immediate permission to disarm the community.

UNDP has assumed the role of supporting the CSAC but has been delayed by a shortage of strong government counterparts and adequate resources.[102] Because the trickle-down effect of insecurity in other states is so well established, disarmament in Jonglei is UNDP's current priority, followed by disarmament in EES. The approach is, first, to strengthen the security apparatus, and second, to adopt a comprehensive regional approach, supported by the UN system. The Peace Commission of the GoSS is exploring the possibility of holding a regional peace conference to address such issues. MPs from affected areas in the border regions emphasize the need for a conference that brings together the Toposa, Didinga, Buya, Otuho, and Murle, along with tribes from across the border in Uganda and Kenya (Vuni, 2007l).

Civilian disarmament in Torit County

Faced with delays and lack of coordination, the Torit County commissioner eventually took civilian disarmament into his own hands in July and August 2007. In collaboration with the governor of EES, he established a plan that prioritized the most violent areas. If one village regularly attacked the inhabitants of another, for example, the perpetrators would be disarmed by force. Four villages in Keyala *payam*—Logurum, Loburo, Lofi, and Eloli—were particularly aggressive in their raiding, leading to their disarmament by the SPLA.[103] Eight police officers and ten SPLA soldiers conducted the exercise. Although armed, their numbers and equipment were 'nothing compared to the weight of armament in the villages'.[104] More than 100 weapons were confiscated.

The initiative, however, brought no long-lasting success. Two of the supposedly disarmed villages erupted in fighting again in late May 2008. On 2 June, the SPLA went in once again to disarm and the villagers resisted violently. At least six civilians and seven soldiers were killed. In retaliation, the SPLA burnt down both villages, reportedly with authorization from Juba.

In another incident, military police followed raiders back to their villages and disarmed them, later restoring stolen cattle to their rightful owners. Police confiscated arms and arrested four people. However, further actions were suspended because the SPLA commander in Torit County was unwilling to become involved in forced disarmament.

For populations who either suffer from or thrive on cattle rustling, disarmament is a traumatic blow, especially when it is conducted unevenly. After the Shilluk were disarmed in 2006, their chief reported the theft of more than 5,000 head of cattle by other armed communities (Lodiong, 2007), a major loss of resources. The backlash against local government has been consider-

able. People are furious at having their protection removed, and in December 2007 some villagers boycotted the commissioner's public meetings on the census, the referendum, and health services. The authorities view these angry gestures as symbolic, but recognize that their disarmament efforts need to be strengthened by legislation. Such legislation would include severe punishment for civilians refusing to give up their weapons. 'Disarmament by force really needs prison sentences,' said the commissioner.

Role of authorities in disarmament

While some local government authorities and the SPLA have at times acted against armed civilians without GoSS endorsement, there is a general reluctance to engage with the issue. Residents suggest the links between local government and those who own arms are too close for an effective disarmament policy to emerge, while the police are too weak or uncommitted to deal with armed crimes. There is an overwhelming belief among those with an interest in disarmament—that is, those without guns—that those responsible for the insecurity are the very same people who are in charge of disarmament.

With former militia leaders and senior military officers now in government posts, the interests of armed groups and the authorities have become dangerously intertwined. It is common knowledge that many ex-commanders keep sections of their former militias active in case government breaks down or favourites fall from favour. In an atmosphere of mutual fear and suspicion, the disarmament of private armies is a less than urgent priority.

With little or no law enforcement, armed civilians have no incentive to disarm, but without disarmament law enforcement will remain out of reach. Hence, the Torit police are backing off from their efforts. The police commissioner said he felt that it was 'not yet the time to disarm', and, in any case, he was 'not aware of government policies on arms'.[105] This is not surprising, considering the undefined legal framework on civilian disarmament and the secrecy that has shrouded previous disarmament operations. The SPLA is reluctant to share its statistics on confiscated weapons with any international partner and so figures have been scarce.[106]

IX. Armed elements in Eastern and Central Equatoria

Armed elements present in EES and CES include the armies of South Sudan and Uganda, the international UNMIS forces, organized rebels, personal militias, disgruntled former soldiers and militiamen, and bandits. To understand the security environment, it is important to examine how these armed elements are perceived by Equatorians. Some, such as UNMIS, promise protection but deliver little, while others join together in partnerships of self-defence.

SAF-supported groups

During the war, the SAF and the GoS openly courted the support of local defence groups by turning them into well-armed militias. Today, there are as many reports of continued GoS support as there are NCP denials of such assistance. When asked about this support, a Torit-based former SAF commander with the JIUs said: 'The militias around here do not belong to us'—thereby confirming his own ultimate allegiance to Khartoum and the continued split in the JIUs.[107]

A number of events feed assertions that the GoS is still supplying armed groups in the Equatorian states—such as those under the command of James Hakim and possibly the LRA—with weapons and other support. For a start, residents have witnessed these kinds of transactions for years, and recently there have been reports of clandestine flights to rebel forces in the Central African Republic (CAR) and even across the DRC border, supposedly by GoS helicopters and planes.[108] Low-flying planes have also been heard at night near the Jonglei border and around Lyria. These are inconvenient locations for the LRA, who have now moved into Western Equatoria, which further fuels suspicions that there are other armed groups in the area that the GoS is supporting.

Besides defence militias, small groups that raid for economic gain are used as political tools. The SPLM in EES is adamant that the NCP has recruited

local militias among the Boya and Toposa.[109] In addition, armed groups have been moving their forces in ways that seem too complex and demanding for solely economic purposes. For example, Murle fighters from Pibor arrived in Kapoeta on 1 February 2008, having presumably taken two months to walk the distance. The number of cattle raids instantly increased on their arrival, and because this was unusual, unexpected, and highly disruptive, residents were convinced that the raids also had a political dimension.[110]

Support for armed groups comes in two basic varieties. One is to supply weaponry and ammunition, and the other, according to several officials, is to transform former SAF soldiers into SAF-aligned armed elements, thereby increasing insecurity in the region. When the SAF withdrew from Torit in June–July 2006 to make way for a JIU unit, many members stayed behind, ostensibly to trade as civilians, but also to serve as the eyes and ears of the GoS. Residents and the local SPLM units allege that the SAF buried weapon caches along the Juba road in preparation for further fighting by these SAF-aligned elements.[111]

Tribal militias

Khartoum backed about 25 militias at the height of the conflict, mainly tribal armed groups or forces loyal to a single individual. While most have been disbanded or integrated into the SPLA, the SFA, or the JIUs, a few have demobilized only partially or not at all. This has left a legacy of weapons in circulation and lingering tensions in the places the former combatants inhabit. Both the GoSS and the GoS are acutely aware that militias can be quickly awakened from 'hibernation'.

The role of tribal militias in EES and CES has changed since the war, when they were the creatures of either the SAF or the SPLA. Nowadays militias have primarily economic rather than political interests, but the allegiance of tribal group members nevertheless has a strong identity component. An EES security advisor says that the groups creating the most trouble are not organized, identifiable groups, but gangs of three to five young men loyal to a single individual from their tribe. Political militias are more often based on personal connections, and serve the interests of senior political or military figures. Their purpose is to secure a base of support and to act as a backup in case the political situation deteriorates. Militias formally aligned with one or other of the official armies, however, have not shut down their original alliances. Although some commanders say it would be impossible to maintain a militia in EES and CES because of the SPLA presence,[114] it is clearly easier to do so with good SPLA connections.

Box 4 **Some tribal/personal armed groups**

Armed Murle/Ismael Konyi

The Pibor Defense Forces (PDF) in Jonglei State, commanded by Ismael Konyi, were once supported by Khartoum but are now officially aligned with the SPLA. Local chiefs confirm that PDF units based around Gumbo and Gemezera, in CES, serve as backup for Konyi, who is a member of the GoSS in Juba.

Armed Mundari/Clement Wani

CES Governor Clement Wani has close ties with armed Mundari, whose main aim is to deflect Dinka attacks.[112] SPLA Major General Koang has ordered Wani to 'refrain from maintaining his Mundari militia as an auxiliary force', but to little effect (Vuni, 2007d).

Paulino Matiep force

Paulino Matiep is deputy commander in chief of the SPLA. While his supporters—from the former SSDF—did not originate in Equatoria, members are now based in a camp in Bari country, around Gudele, and in Upper Nile. The forces are uniformed and openly refer to themselves as the 'Paulino Matiep force'.[113]

Equatoria Defence Force (EDF)

The EDF was established in 1995 to 'help Equatorians against the enemies within' after the SPLA and displaced Dinka abused civilians in EES.[115] Infighting in the SPLA led to the assassination of several of its most important Equatorian members, while others sought the protection of the SAF in Juba. On the way they were helped by the LRA, sowing the seeds of a long alliance.[116] The EDF and the LRA often fought side by side in the 1990s. It is difficult to say with certainty when the relationship deteriorated. EDF members say it soured as early as 1997 when the LRA attacked Equatorian civilians. By this time, from a tactical point of view, the EDF had become embroiled in a war

on two fronts: to protect civilians it had to fight both the SPLA and the LRA, who were also fighting each other.

At its height the EDF was a substantial force of some 12,000 fighters, its strength rooted in powerful leadership, a reputation as impressive fighters, and a strong Equatorian identity pitted against Nilotics. Several former senior EDF commanders, such as Martin Kenyi, are now senior GoSS officials. During the civil war, its connection to Khartoum was stronger than that of other militias because the EDF was clear about its grievances. Indeed, in 2003, an EDF delegation participated in the IGAD peace talks on the side of the GoS. In a spirit of reconciliation, however, the EDF changed sides and merged with the SPLA in 2004. At the time, the SPLA was making a concerted effort to align its former enemies in an attempt at South–South reconciliation. EDF members felt that John Garang's acceptance of a memorandum on the mistreatment and under-representation of Equatorians in the SPLA was a major step towards reconciliation.

When the EDF joined the SPLA, it agreed to fight the LRA, although the official statement announced only that the combined force would combat 'foreign armed groups'. With its EDF connections, SPLA intelligence about the LRA increased exponentially and it expected to drive the latter out of Sudan within months (EDF, 2004).

Integration of the EDF into the SPLA has not, however, been wholly successful. Several units chose not to integrate, and instead returned to their villages with their weapons.[117] A strong contingency of former EDF fighters remains in the area around Palataka. According to former EDF Secretary-General Charles Kisanga, 'about 6,000 EDF forces were never integrated and they melted into civilian life with their guns uncollected'.[118]

While elements of the EDF did integrate with the SPLA, those who felt greater loyalty to the GoS moved from Juba towards Torit, and renamed their movement EDF 2, though there is no evidence of any major clashes involving the new group. When the GoSS moved the seat of government administration to Juba and the LRA gradually left EES, changing the area's security dynamic, further members of the EDF—and possibly EDF 2—are believed to have joined the SPLA. Others have survived on banditry, but are scarcely recognizable as a group.

While the old EDF no longer functions, a number of influential individuals who joined neither the SPLA nor the GoSS are still in circulation. These are often demoted officers with strong constituencies, and the GoSS is sensitive to the volatility this creates. Former members of the EDF have also been implicated in recent attacks in CES.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

The roles and actions of the LRA in the Equatorias deserve special attention given its destabilizing influence in the region and the dearth of detailed information on its activities there. The group's history in Sudan began in 1993 when it received backing from the GoS to harass the SPLA in EES.[119] The LRA also used EES as a base from which to launch attacks into Uganda. The move to South Sudan created room for manoeuvre for the LRA, and also boosted its morale since the GoS was the only sovereign power to acknowledge it as a legitimate group—and to treat the leadership accordingly. It was a perfectly symbiotic relationship: the GoS used the LRA to destabilize the SPLA and the neighbouring GoU, while the LRA was granted political legitimacy and a safe haven. The ensuing struggle for control of territory led to some of the bloodiest years in EES history, exacerbated when Khartoum agreed to allow the UPDF to fight the LRA in 2002.[120] Although information on this matter is sketchy, one estimate puts the number of people killed in Equatoria by the LRA and the UPDF between 1993 and January 2007 at 5,200 (*Sunday Monitor,* 2006).

The LRA's history has shaped not only northern Uganda but also part of the Equatorian states. LRA leader Joseph Kony used the peace negotiations with the GoU in July 2006 to publicize the LRA's former close working relationship with the EDF and with Riek Machar's SSIM. The personal relationship made the peace talks possible in the first place, but at times it also hindered them when the LRA felt that Riek Machar owed them more support due to their shared past. Kony said that Machar had acted as liaison between the LRA and the GoS. EDF commander Martin Kenyi and Paul Omoya of the EDF featured prominently in the same network (Vuni, 2007h).

With Magwi County and the Imatong Hills of EES as its main base, the LRA was located in an Acholi-speaking area whose residents used to have

strong ties to their 'brothers and sisters' across the Ugandan border. Sudanese Acholi had fled the war to refugee camps in Uganda, so family ties were particularly strong. While the LRA caused deep grievances in the EES, it also interacted closely with the Sudanese Acholi community during peaceful periods.

LRA movement between the Imatong Hills, Lobone, and Magwi was usually coordinated and protected by the SAF. However, this arrangement changed in 2005 when the UPDF pushed up from the south as far north as the LRA base at Jebel Lin, and the EDF was enlisted by the SPLA to fight against the LRA.[121] With this political change, the LRA lost its Juba base where for years residents had been used to the sight of LRA fighters being driven around on the back of SAF trucks.[122]

However, the LRA remained a useful force for different Sudanese interests, thereby adding to Sudan's volatility. By the end of 2005, LRA fighters were moved by both GoS and GoSS authorities towards the DRC, and also towards the Ethiopian border and possibly even Darfur. It is assumed that they were to be held safely until 'times were right', but those fighters who were not moved towards the DRC have by all accounts disappeared.[123]

The political relationship between the Sudanese and the LRA has been varied and complicated and so have civilian interactions. Many Eastern Equatorian residents negotiated their own personal safety by establishing ties, albeit unreliable ones, with the LRA, based on mutual protection and sympathy for their cause. The strained relationship between Equatorians and the SPLA and the perceived need to defend Acholi identity at times served to reinforce this tacit alliance.

For years the SPLA and the UPDF accused Equatorians of collaborating with the LRA and preventing the elimination of what was portrayed as a cruel and ruthless enemy. It was an easy accusation, though it came from two forces that had not managed to defeat the rebel movement in over a decade. The same allegation was made in 2007 when an SPLA commander accused 'Equatorian tribes . . . [of] collaborating and hiding LRA in their houses without disclosing them to the authority. . .' He went on: 'How do you expect the SPLA to fight LRA if you continue to hide and protect the LRA?' (Vuni, 2007d).

EES is now officially clear of the LRA presence (although the group have continued to commit atrocities in Western Equatoria in 2008), but many issues remain unresolved. During the LRA peace consultations in Uganda in late 2007, it emerged that strong animosities exist between the two Acholi communities on either side of the border. Ugandan Acholi blame their Sudanese cousins for giving the LRA a safe haven from which to perpetuate the war. Sudanese Acholi feel that efforts to rebuild and reconcile are focused on Uganda alone, even though they experienced traumatic events with a long-lasting impact on their communities.

In July 2006 the local population of EES submitted a list of the names of 3,500 people killed by the LRA, along with dozens abducted and mutilated. The community also set down its expectations for the peace process, suggesting that there was a need for EES residents and northern Ugandans to 'come together to identify the root causes of the problem in the presence of mediators'; to categorize incidents in terms of whether harm was intentional or unintentional; to admit guilt, apologize, and offer damages; and to engage in 'mutual heart cleansing' through traditional justice and reconciliation rites (The People of Acholi et al., 2006).

The LRA in 2006–07

In the run-up to peace talks between the GoU and the LRA in 2006, the situation in EES underwent several changes. Most LRA fighters had departed in late 2005, crossing into the DRC via CES and Western Equatoria State (WES), with a few being taken to other locations. During the crossing, residents reported LRA attacks in CES at Lainya and Yei, provoking further fighting with the SPLA (*Sudan Tribune,* 2005). When the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities was signed in August 2007, one of the issues covered was an assembly point for LRA fighters in Owiny-Kibul, Magwi County, near the Uganda border (GoU and LRA/M, 2007).

Owiny-Kibul proved unsuitable, however, because the UPDF systematically closed in on the LRA. The area around the assembly area was entirely closed off by the UPDF, who then attacked the LRA. As a consequence, the LRA spent only a few days in the assigned area of Owiny-Kibul, losing access to GoSS-provided food when they fled the area. Members of the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT) ferried food to scattered LRA groups that were walking along the roads asking for supplies. Months passed during

which the local population remained uncertain about the LRA's intentions. Road attacks in late 2006 were initially attributed to the LRA, though it later turned out that a number had been carried out by John Belgium, an SAF collaborator who sought to block the supply of trade goods from Uganda and Kenya for the benefit of Arab traders in Juba market. Other attacks, particularly those close to the town of Gumbo near Juba, were also blamed on the LRA, though it later became clear that SAF fighters had been responsible.

The talks were interrupted in early 2007. On 12 January the LRA/M asked for negotiations to be moved to a third country and for the mediator, Riek Machar, to be replaced. Other conditions included allowing the LRA to cross the Nile westwards and to assemble all LRA groups in Ri-Kwangba. At the same time, forces connected to the group that had launched attacks under John Belgium were also regrouping and were preparing attacks that would destabilize Central Equatoria in early 2008.

Meanwhile, LRA attacks in EES intensified. The response of the locals was shock and puzzlement. Although the LRA had not originally proposed Owiny-Kibul as an assembly point, it had apparently been reassured by an enhanced SPLA presence and visits from the CHMT. Although establishing an efficient food store in anticipation of the LRA's arrival was difficult, Owiny-Kibul adapted to the role of host community. When the LRA failed to assemble, reverting to criminality, the community 'was disappointed because [the LRA] kept looting, though food was provided for them'.[124] It swiftly encountered other disappointments. UNICEF had started building a compound to provide services for LRA children and local residents; but when Owiny-Kibul lost its designation as an assembly point it ceased to be of interest to aid agencies.[125]

From December 2006 onwards, SPLA forces were on alert along the Juba–Torit and Juba–Nimule roads, monitoring LRA behaviour during the crossing to Western Equatoria. UPDF forces stayed put in EES, but also along the roads. Residents were prepared to fight back against the LRA with the arms stored during the years of war, and the CES governor had pledged supplies of ammunition.[126]

The LRA reverted to its earlier role as a marauding force in the Torit–Magwi–Ikotos triangle for some months, looting and burning vehicles. Magwi County and the roads were declared no-go areas, with devastating consequences for local residents. This also resulted in confusing information as it was unclear which attacks were being reported to higher authorities. In March 2007, for example, the displacement of entire villages from Imurok and Bunyoro went unnoticed by the authorities (Vuni, 2007f). The SPLA deployed forces throughout Equatoria in anticipation of further LRA attacks, convinced that the rebels had taken advantage of the lull to train new fighters.

The *Sudan Tribune* compiled an inventory of incidents attributable to the LRA in December 2006–January 2007. It noted attacks in Panyikwara and Magwi; the robbery of an Italian relief worker on the Torit road on 24 December; an ambush with four dead and four injured near Panyikwara on 2 January; and the killing of a WFP driver and the wounding of three passengers in a road ambush on the Juba–Torit road on 10 January. Suspected LRA ambushes also took place in December in Lolere, Langairo, and Pura Lowoi (Vuni, 2007a). In March the GoSS reported further attacks on Imurok and Bunyoro villages, near Torit, and the displacement of several thousand people to Torit and Magwi.

Not every attack could be attributed with certainty to the LRA, and several were undoubtedly the work of rogue elements. Others were undertaken by LRA elements no longer under central control, or, according to SPLA intelligence, by an LRA spin-off composed of Sudanese with strong LRA connections.[127]

Locals confirmed that LRA attacks had indeed intensified in early 2007. They saw ten people in Juba Hospital who had been killed and mutilated by having their genitals and breasts cut off.[128] An estimated 100 people were killed during these attacks. The last attack that locals in Palataka attributed to the LRA occurred in April 2007.

This new belligerence sparked speculation about the LRA's support base. Was it still being supplied by the GoS in order to destabilize the region? Former SAF members in the JIUs were adamant they had broken all connections with the LRA long before 2005: 'There is no need for them to fight for us anymore.'[129] Other ex-SAF fighters said there had been no links with the LRA since before the signing of the CPA. However, talk of a 'new LRA' or an 'LRA Sudan' was a hot issue on the fringes of the peace talks in Juba. The GoSS, the GoU, and civil society took it in turns to accuse the GoS and the SAF of having orchestrated a new armed group of Sudanese Acholi to destabilize the CPA and

undermine the talks, since a successful conclusion would be a giant step toward re-establishing security in the Equatorias.

Citing 'Ugandan and Southern Sudanese intelligence officials', Uganda's *Sunday Monitor* alleged that this 'new militia' was composed of former fighters from the SSDF, EDF 2, and the Mundari ethnic militia, commanded by Governor Clement Wani (*Sunday Monitor*, 2006). The SPLA and security sources, however, were convinced that its membership was made up of former LRA, SAF, and SPLA rogue elements, criminal elements, the 105th Battalion (a UPDF group consisting exclusively of former LRA fighters), and EDF 2.

For two months following the last LRA attack in EES in April 2007, the remaining LRA members in the state covertly crossed the Nile after a closed-door agreement with the CHMT permitting them to assemble in Ri-Kwangba, WES—a move that was later officially mandated in an LRA–GoU communiqué. EES was declared 'free of LRA' in June 2007, but it is clear that some had stayed behind, melting into the villages. In July 2007 Vincent Otti, the LRA's then deputy commander, said that some elements in EES—half a dozen groups of about five people each—were no longer under his command.[130]

The LRA–GoU talks were adjourned in June 2007 for public consultation. These took longer than expected, and the peace process hit another rocky patch in the meantime. Otti was reported killed in an LRA power struggle in October 2007, and Joseph Kony confirmed his death in January 2008. The man who had been the voice of the LRA in the Sudanese bush was gone, and it was unclear what Kony's path would be.

In December 2007 about 90 LRA fighters and followers passed peacefully through EES, identifying themselves to residents before proceeding to Agoro and Owiny-Kibul.[131] In mid-January 2008 a smaller group was seen around Panyikwara.[132] From January onwards, CES was hit by a renewed surge of incidents.

Attacks and peace talks in 2008

On 30 January, the day the Ugandan peace talks resumed, two villages near Kajo Keji—Kansouk and Rodo—were attacked, sparking speculation about the identity of the perpetrators and their motives. Some construed the timing as a sign that the LRA was demonstrating its continuing power to leverage the final outcome of the talks. Others saw it as the work of a third party, since an LRA raid might jeopardize the safety of its negotiating team in Juba. Still others said the attack was the work of saboteurs, with the GoU and the GoSS cited as the most likely initiators.

A number of questions thus remained unresolved. After analysing the attacks, military intelligence concluded that they had been conducted in a more sophisticated fashion than the LRA had previously exhibited, including the use of communications equipment such as radios. 'This is not what we know from the LRA on the ground,' said one UN official.[133] There had also been earlier attacks in January, which simply had not received much publicity: the incidents were covered by the newspapers only after the LRA/M had gone back to peace talks in Juba. Yet locals first reported attacks in Wanderuba, Juba County, on 8 January. Fifty armed men abducted at least four children, later releasing at least one, while comprehensively looting households. And on 17 January an armed group attacked Lokorubang and Bereka *bomas* in Lainya County. Several dozen households were looted, and some locals abducted. The group reportedly moved toward Kajo Keji.

Several other incidents in early January could be interpreted as signals of further attacks to come:

- A group of supposed LRA crossed into Uganda at Tibika mountain.
- The administrator of Rokom *payam* complained about LRA movements.
- UPDF forces were seen three times along Magwi road, near Panyikwara. Each time they were accompanied by former LRA, disappeared into the bush for three days, and returned with retrieved weapons.
- Rumours of continuing LRA recruitment in northern Uganda were raised during the opening ceremony of the peace talks.[134]

On 30 January the villages of Kansouk and Rodo, north of Kajo Keji, were attacked by a group of 200–300 fighters, split into three groups. They first targeted the SPLA post and then went on to loot the village and force people to serve as porters. Witnesses, abducted to carry loot, said the group may have been based at Mirigin, Kaya River, and Kiju stream in the valleys of the surrounding hills (UN OCHA Emergency Response and Preparedness, 2008). Forty people were abducted, though most were later released. Two SPLA sol-

diers, a wildlife ranger, and a male civilian were killed, and 400 people were displaced. Simultaneously, local authorities in Morobo County reported 'a huge number of the Ugandan rebels' moving from Morobo towards WES, although that report was never verified by any other authorities, nor were any incidents reported (Vuni, 2008a).

Four days before the attack on Kansouk and Rodo on 30 January 2008, the armed group kidnapped the *boma* administrator of Kansouk, presumably to gather intelligence, asking questions about military deployment in the area as well as communication equipment. He described the attackers as well-organized and disciplined, dressed in gumboots, uniforms, and civilian clothes, and speaking a mixture of Acholi, Arabic, and English. With them were four local women, whom he presumed were abductees from Lainya. The chief recognized one attacker as a former SAF soldier. The group quizzed the chief on routes to Uganda that did not involve crossing the Nile. One eyewitness later said that attacks and abductions in the Kajo Keji area had also happened two days previously, claiming that he had been in captivity with the LRA for 14 days and was able to clearly identify the attackers (Vuni, 2008c).

Several attackers were equipped with satellite telephones and radios. Abducted porters marching northwards overheard the attackers giving a detailed inventory of looted equipment and medicines on the phone. Victims reported that the attackers were interested in personal documents, searching for identity papers, and destroying school certificates. Abductees were led to a camp where they all spent the night before some of them were released the next day. By early February, 28 of the 40 abductees had been released.

The authorities in Kajo Keji said they had received advance warning of the LRA's movements from Garamba National Park in the DRC via CES to Uganda in January, and the SPLA confirmed it had also been monitoring their progress, without informing the UN. However, another series of attacks on Kala *boma* and Lainya Dongoro appeared to be the work of a mixed group of Acholi, Madi, and Kuku youth, presumably recruited from Ugandan refugee camps (Vuni, 2008b). This would appear to contradict the claim that the attackers came from Garamba.

On 4 February the villages of Lako and Lokorobang were attacked by a group of around 40 men, with several repeat attacks shortly after. Locals reported these attacks to be more violent than previous ones, with some abductions. One of the attackers was identified as a firewood salesman who had visited the town a few months earlier. Further attacks and abductions were reported from Bereka in Lainya County and Moje Loka West, and in Lainya, Katigiri, and Wanderuba *payam* in Juba County between 5 February and 11 February, coinciding with an expected LRA movement much further west towards the CAR.[135] The groups of attackers, commonly assumed to be identical with the group that had attacked in Kajo Keji, had reportedly split into three sections, with abductions and killings reported wherever they moved. From 12 February onwards, the attacks started to become more serious, displacing large numbers of people.

The SPLA, which has a history of abuse of communities in Lako/Lainya, failed to deploy in response to the raids. By late February only small numbers of additional SPLA were sent to the centre of Dongoro. The then-leader of the LRA/M delegation at the Juba Peace Talks accused the UPDF of staging the attacks in Nimule, Kajo-Keji, and Yei, citing evidence collected by the LRA. While the evidence was not forthcoming, locals confirmed the LRA/M's statement that the attackers might be a 'composite people' speaking Swahili, Madi, Arabic, and Acholi. Locals also reported, along with the LRA, that the attackers had smoked and drunk alcohol (*Juba Post*, 2008b)—which the LRA does not do. This seemingly minor detail would serve later as a major piece of evidence to absolve the LRA from these attacks, while evidence mounted of LRA attacks in Western Equatoria.

Shortly after the attacks in Kajo Keji, Magwi County found itself in the frame of LRA movements. Small LRA groups had passed through Magwi in December 2007 without trouble, but in February a number of armed men were reported to have crossed the Nile from Uganda and headed directly towards Magwi. Some reported that the same group that attacked Kajo Keji had crossed back into Uganda, although residents estimated that this group was far smaller than the 250–400 fighters originally reported. Local people believe the attacks in Kajo Keji served one purpose only: to tie down the SPLA and allow a larger LRA group to cross the river undisturbed. Footprints discovered around Ame appeared to confirm this theory.[136] However, no attacks have been reported since the group crossed.

Some ascribed the attacks around Kajo Keji to the same 'new LRA' that was reportedly recruiting soldiers in northern Uganda. Apparently led by a former LRA commander called Onen, the new group is said to be loyal to the creation of an 'Ocol Republic' (which roughly translates from Acholi as 'Black Man's Republic'), essentially an Acholi state.[137] Initially, the common explanation for the attacks was that it had been mounted by some part of the LRA. Local residents and politicians called for a suspension of the ongoing peace talks until the incidents were fully investigated (Vuni, 2008b).

The CHMT, however, which had investigated the attacks, reported in mid-March that the attacks could not be ascribed to the LRA. Fourteen suspects were captured and held in custody. The suspects were identified as Sudanese, possibly fitting with President Salva Kiir's claim: 'There are some SPLA elements and armed civilians who organise themselves to loot and disrupt civilian lives in the villages in the name of the LRA' (Taban and Eichstaedt, 2008). The suspects were ultimately identified as former fighters—some militia and some SPLA calling themselves 'No Unit' in recognition of their lack of military integration. CES Governor Clement Wani identified them specifically as three Lokoya, two Dinka, and nine Murle (Dak, 2008c).

Although this announcement eased the pressure on the peace talks, locals remained sceptical. The most popular explanation was that the perpetrators at Kajo Keji were a mixed force. With no single theory conclusively proven, the attacks made clear the murky security environment and the difficulty of establishing the identities of the attackers beyond doubt.

During March and April attacks continued in CES, while the Juba Peace Talks came to an official conclusion with all agreements negotiated and ready for a final signature by Joseph Kony and President Museveni. In mid-March, 17 people were abducted in Kajo Keji and Kagwada Counties by armed men in green uniforms who, it was noted in the Sudanese press, did not loot any alcohol (Vuni, 2008d). A victim of an attack on 23 March on the road between Maridi and Yei reported seeing 300–400 attackers, adding that, 'The people who attacked spoke Arabic and wore green uniform. They were those that call themselves "No Unit". Our people are still displaced, they are still waiting for a government response. We have left everything behind, we did not bring even food.'[138]

The military response to the increased insecurity has been inconclusive. Locals say that the SPLA came to visit the places that had been attacked, but that they came merely for investigations. 'But those of No Unit stayed inside a park in the DRC and only came to Tore to attack, so they could not be found,' said one local man. 'And nobody knows exactly whether No Unit is SPLA or LRA.'[139]

Around the same time, locals reported seeing what they described as government helicopter gunships flying late at night in Dollo *payam*. Border security sources later confirmed that these were UPDF helicopters on Sudanese territory.

The bulk of the LRA moved to WES in March 2008. It clashed with the SPLA in Ezo after the SPLA intercepted a group on its way to the CAR that was supposedly answering to senior LRA commander Okot Odhiambo.[140] Abductions in the CAR were reportedly carried out by the LRA (Wasike and Baguma, 2008), although other groups might have played a role as some of the victims said the abductors were speaking Lingala as well as other languages. Intelligence sources reported in May 2008 that Kony himself had never left

Box 5 **Disarming the LRA**

On 29 February 2008, the LRA and the GoU signed an agreement covering DDR provisions for the LRA once a final peace deal was signed (GoU and LRA/M, 2008). The agreement covers DDR for LRA soldiers in both Sudan and Uganda. It includes 'immediate standing down measures, including LRA deployment inside Ri-Kwang-Ba Assembly Area', as well as the establishment of disarmament sites, weapons collection and retrieval, and off-site storage (GoU and LRA/M, 2008). It ensures provisions for LRA soldiers to demobilize from the Sudanese assembly area and to integrate into the UPDF should they wish.

Should the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) be signed at some point and thus validate the DDR agreement, implementation will be complicated. While the agreement covers all necessary provisions, it also presents various problems. It outlines the implementation schedule, stating that LRA DDR will be contingent on the GoU establishing a special court to deal with war crimes and calling on the UNSC to put a stay on warrants for three LRA top commanders, including Joseph Kony. With recent developments in the peace process, what was once a possibility has become increasingly unlikely. While the implementation schedule does not depend on the UNSC's decision, the LRA has argued that DDR cannot begin until the warrants have officially been put on hold.

In addition, it is a one-sided DDR agreement confined to the demobilization of the LRA and not involving GoU forces. This could easily affect a very delicate balance within the agreement—should it ever be implemented.

Garamba National Park and the movement to the CAR was probably only a deflection.[141] As the scheduled date for the signing of the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) between the LRA and the GoU approached, there was increased speculation that the LRA was abducting in Western Equatoria and the CAR to enhance its numbers before the ceasefire.

Meanwhile, communication between the LRA high command and groups at the Juba Peace Talks, including the LRA delegation, UN agencies, and the chief mediator, had deteriorated significantly after Vincent Otti's death. With the supposed signing date of 10 April 2008 drawing near, it became clear to the chief mediator Riek Machar that communication with Joseph Kony had broken down. Consequently, Kony did not establish direct contact or appear in the assembly area for the signing, purportedly fearful for his personal security. Monetary incentives might have played an even bigger role. While the FPA had been fully negotiated by his delegation, its lack of personal incentives for the LRA leadership was striking. As the signing neared, it became clear that Kony believed that issues of his personal welfare had not been sufficiently addressed. In addition, an awareness of money paid to other rebel groups in exchange for a peace deal might have added to the last-minute delay, as well as the lack of a unified approach among all parties on how to deal with the issue of personal incentives.

A meeting between Machar and Kony was rescheduled for 10 May 2008, at which Kony again failed to show up, leaving the peace talks in limbo—or, as most critics commented, collapsed—although the implementation of a peaceful environment was progressing in Uganda. Kony's formal signature under the FPA is needed to validate all other agreements.

With the LRA increasingly out of contact, and some reported SAF activity in the area of the LRA base, suspicions are rising that the Khartoum–LRA connection has again been strengthened. In May 2008, a SAF officer who reportedly acted as a liaison between the LRA and Khartoum was arrested in Tore while awaiting supplies.[142] Helicopter landings were reported just across the border inside the DRC, although it is not clear if these were northern Sudanese or UPDF helicopters preparing for a military strike against the LRA. The SPLA remained stationed at Nabanga, the last village before the LRA assembly point at Ri-Kwangba, to supervise food deliveries to the LRA and to protect the local population. The LRA attacked this SPLA garrison on 5 June, killing up to 23 people. Many were convinced that they could only have done this if they were receiving support from another source and were reconfirming their ability to fight if they were attacked in a military strike.

The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF)

The residents in Eastern, Western, and Central Equatoria have an uneasy relationship with the UPDF, which was officially permitted to enter Sudan in 2002 to fight the LRA in Eastern Equatoria. However, both locals and UPDF soldiers confirm that they had been in the area for several years before, spread out from Torit at least as far as Yei.

With the start of the LRA–GoU peace talks, the UPDF deployed its forces in response to the LRA's movements and progress in the talks. After the LRA left Eastern Equatoria by mid-2007, the UPDF became a less frequent sight, though a large detachment—called 'a full force' by residents—is still based in Aru Junction on the Juba–Nimule road. The UPDF can therefore still be seen moving around Eastern Equatoria when supposed LRA activities are reported.[143] There have also been recent reports of UPDF movement in the Kapoeta region, and UPDF armed helicopter gunships have been spotted inside Sudan near the Sudan–Uganda–DRC border on at least one occasion.

In a 2006 statement, residents of Eastern Equatoria said that cases of UPDF abuse of civilians 'were and still are intentional' (The People of Acholi et al., 2006). 'Instead of following and attacking the LRA,' the statement continued, '[the UPDF] turned their guns to the civil population, shooting, looting, raping, and burning their huts in a pretext of chasing the LRA. For example, ten people in Lulobo were killed, also in Madi area two people were killed and others wounded in the process.' The EES governor also stated repeatedly that the UPDF, as well as the LRA, had violated the Cessation of Hostilities agreement (*Sunday Monitor,* 2006).

The UPDF presence also remains strong in the border areas around Nimule and Central Equatoria, and detachments have been seen in Yei and as far west as Maridi. One resident reported seeing the UPDF trading arms for goods around Kajo Keji, but no further reports about such behaviour have been

filed.[144] Several people, however, claimed that the UPDF was retrieving weapons hidden by the LRA in Magwi County. In January 2008 groups of UPDF came with former LRA soldiers to the area around Panyikwara on three occasions. They disappeared into the bush for several days each time, reappearing with 'large amounts of weapons and ammunition'.[145]

In March 2008, a serious incident involving the UPDF came to light when a Toposa politician produced evidence that Ugandan troops had used helicopter gunships inside Sudan on 4 March to kill at least 20 Toposa (Reuters, 2008). Vice-President Machar confirmed that cattle were stolen and some people were taken across the border to Uganda from the Kapoeta area. Paul Napon, Eastern Equatoria's minister for parliamentary affairs, confirmed that the incident had taken place and had involved a helicopter gunship, and that women and children were among the dead.

The UPDF, based across the border from the site of the incident, denied the killings, but confirmed that they had made several arrests because members of the group had crossed—heavily armed—from Sudan into Uganda. The UPDF said it had held some suspects and disarmed them before releasing them (Reuters, 2008). However, locals said that they were told that the killing of the 20 Toposa was an accident and that the UPDF had pursued them from Uganda believing they were Karimojong. It remains unclear why the UPDF would have been allowed to kill 20 Karimojong inside Sudan. Similarly, some locals expressed surprise that there might be UPDF helicopters inside Sudan.

Box 6 **UNMIS and insecurity**

Although it may seem surprising to outsiders, UNMIS is in many ways regarded as an armed and potentially threatening element by locals. There is inherent distrust of the UN presence across what the UN calls Sector 1 (the Equatorias). Some of this stems from the lack of evidence that the UN has brought any improvements to the region, but it is also anchored in a historic distrust of what has been described as 'the ways and institutions the white man brought', or what the Bari call *gela* (Simonse, 1992). This word was also used to describe people in uniform, including the early SPLA, who were considered outsiders (Leonardi, 2007a).

General distrust and the weak mandate of UNMIS does not give the Mission the air of a stabilizing force—quite the contrary. Since its mandate does not include Chapter VII, the mission has an unclear position on its role in conflict resolution (UNMIS et al., 2007). Inevitably it is accused of bias when reporting incidents concerning specific groups. In general, then, 'the UN in white cars is not welcome'.[146]

Meanwhile, a number of rape allegations were made against UNMIS soldiers, including in Torit, in late 2007. UNMIS investigated all cases thoroughly, and the soldiers in question have been suspended until final reports are issued. The Torit case is currently still open because the plaintiff has failed to report for further questioning.[147]

Accusations of misconduct by UNMIS personnel are not rare, but investigations have so far failed to find any hard evidence. Privately, most agencies acknowledge the likely truth of the allegations, given the large number of armed international personnel (IRIN, 2007). In early 2007, the UK's *Daily Telegraph* published interviews with alleged victims of sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers, and cited an internal UNICEF report that dealt with the sexual exploitation of three children as young as 12 by men in UN vehicles (Holt and Hughes, 2007).

To improve community interaction, UNMIS is planning to deploy protection officers in smaller towns outside Juba. It is hoped that this will begin to transform perceptions of UNMIS from that of a military entity to that of a protective and mostly civilian presence.

Criminal elements

It is impossible to distinguish between criminal elements, personal militias, and ethnic militias in EES and CES. Often criminal elements are closely linked to a political group without actually having their own political agenda, or they may be connected to a personal militia, but act solely as criminals.

One illustration given by locals and by national and international security advisers is the network of insecurity that spread across EES from late 2006 to 2007. After Juba became the administrative capital, roads became more secure and trade from Uganda and Kenya swiftly revived. Goods from the North, long the sole supplier of most of Sudan, became less attractive. Khartoum-based traders then resorted to hiring criminals to block goods coming into the South from other directions.[148]

Owners of market stalls in Juba were linked to the Sudanese embassy in Nairobi, which in turn could be traced to a group of 12 Somalis in Juba.[149] Juba-based security experts say that these were hired by the embassy to act as a liaison between Arab traders in Juba and former EDF fighters, who were paid to attack traffic on EES roads in late 2006 and early 2007. At least 12 cars were ambushed in such attacks. Shortly after the attacks, the Somalis went missing from Juba, but their corpses were later discovered in symbolic places, such as the road to the SAF barracks. As the liaison was lost and the integration of the EDF began to succeed, the attacks subsided.

Another series of attacks from October 2006 to January 2007 was also linked to the defence of economic interests. An armed group commanded by the breakaway SPLA commander Colonel John Belgium, who is now in Juba and no longer active, was reportedly hired by Khartoum-based merchants to destabilize the Juba–Torit and Juba–Bor roads to coincide with LRA movements.[150] Others took advantage of the messy security situation in a less organized manner. Several SAF soldiers were arrested in late 2006 for attacks that were initially attributed to the LRA, and chiefs in the Gumbo area took advantage of this situation to plunder neighbouring peoples.[151]

Smaller criminal groups surface from time to time. Around Agoro in EES, residents and SPLM officials reported the emergence of an armed group known as the Agoro Action Traders, which is probably composed of demobilized SPLA attempting to control the cattle trade. The EES governor has stated that they are better armed—with PK and RPG weapons—than his poorly equipped forces (Vuni, 2007d). The Agoro Action Traders targeted cars for looting, but the GoSS intervened by sending military police.[152] As a consequence, security was tightened on the Juba–Torit road from late 2006 onward. Other roads remain unsafe, and many view insecurities on the Juba–Bor road, in particular, as a further attempt by northern traders to control their trade routes in Central Equatoria.[153]

X. Conclusion: aiming for a secure environment

The consequences of the lasting insecurity in EES and CES are devastating for the Sudanese peace process and the country's development. While the CPA covers many areas, for most locals its most important aspects are those that promote peace and security: the ongoing insecurity has therefore caused deep disillusionment. Because of Equatoria's particular history this insecurity has become politically significant as well as damaging socio-economically. Equatorians claim that the authorities' failure to ensure peace in their region is proof of the SPLM/A's neglect of the Equatorian states (ignoring the fact that all states of South Sudan are still insecure): deep-rooted anti-SPLA sentiments in Equatoria reinforce the belief that the SPLM is not interested in protecting civilians. This could impact the choices made at the ballot in 2009, causing the SPLM to lose its strong mandate in the GoSS in the forthcoming elections. While this is speculative, it is a possible scenario noted both by civilians and by NCP and SPLM officials, indicating again the need to revive and bolster South–South reconciliation.

On a practical level, attacks, or the persistent threat of them, disrupt South Sudan's socio-economic recovery. After the February 2008 assaults in CES, NGOs pulled most of their staff out of the field, leaving settlements such as Katagiri without even basic health services. Similarly, every violent incident delays the demining process, and so many areas are still inaccessible. With very little trust in the government's security capabilities, it is impossible for development agencies to maintain a consistent presence. As a result, NGOs are concentrated in the areas of greatest security. This used to be Juba, but with recent attacks in this city, smaller NGOs have started to relocate staff even from there. In EES local authorities have noted that 31 international NGOs operate in the Kapoeta area, while vast swathes of EES have no NGO presence at all (Vuni, 2007b).

Southern Sudan has the potential for economic vibrancy, but trade is almost non-existent; one reason is the deterioration in security. Most goods, including

cattle and fish, are imported from Uganda, even though the local grasslands and rivers are rich in these products. In February 2008 Vice-President Machar urged the Mundari to desist from fighting so that they could supply Juba and other towns in Terekeka and Tali Counties with meat (Dak, 2008a). Yet insecurity or the threat of insecurity makes it difficult for locals to hunt, cultivate, and retrieve building materials from the bush, resulting in food shortages and lack of shelter. Ongoing or fluctuating conflicts reduce access to grazing lands and water points. Restricted access in turn causes further cattle rustling and infighting between tribes.

The perception that the civil war is continuing by different means leaves many young people despairing of the possibility of a future without violence or unemployment. Disarmament is the most urgent requirement to be undertaken by the GoSS if other job opportunities are to be developed.

Mapping out his work, Dr Riak Gok, the director of the new CSAC Bureau said: 'Security is not only physical security. It means food security, shelter, and security from rain, education for a secure future, health, and infrastructure to accommodate all of this. . . Even in the shanty towns in Khartoum they had basic services that were better than in Southern Sudan. So, many returnees come back and then leave again because it is just too hard.'[154]

Many steps are required to establish a framework and comprehensive plan for a secure environment. This should go beyond civilian disarmament to the identification of conflict flashpoints to ease tension. The SSDDRC, for example, proposes to dig canals to irrigate dry areas in order to reduce pressure on water.[155] Legal measures are required to restrict and regulate gun possession, while alternative sources of income that do not involve arms need to be generated urgently. Attempts at development are useful only when carried out in a safe environment. So far, efforts at combining development and security have been too few, too haphazard, and too unfocused. 'What we really need to do,' says Riak Gok, 'is to plan community security just as we planned the CPA.'[156]

The fact that each aspect of establishing security is connected to various other aspects means it is difficult to prioritize any one of them. Instead, a broad approach to security is necessary, including local national representatives, and involving neighbouring countries and the international community.

Endnotes

1 For an excellent report with a similar topical focus on other states of South Sudan (namely Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile), see Burns and Buchanan-Smith (2004).

2 Population numbers may be significantly readjusted in light of the 2008 census, which was being conducted at the time of writing.

3 Counties in EES and CES were recently redrawn. At the time of writing, however, information on the new CES counties was not accessible to the Small Arms Survey. Thus the map on page 11 features the revised EES counties but the old CES counties.

4 The Equatorias have a strong legacy of missions, some remnants of which remain.

5 Author interview, protection officer, UNHCR, Juba, 1 February 2008.

6 The term 'Equatoria' is sometimes used in this report to refer to the entire region now covered by present-day Western, Central, and Eastern Equatoria states. The term has a much longer pedigree, however, originating under British–Egyptian rule in the 19th century when it included areas of northern Uganda.

7 Using the term 'Nilotics' gives a rather sweeping overview of the various Sudanese conflicts. In addition to the broad division between Equatorians and Nilotics, there have been marked differences between the various Nilotics. Violent and political conflicts between Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk have added another devastating dimension to the Sudanese wars, creating further fractures in South Sudan. Similarly, it is difficult to talk about 'Equatorians' as they are not one homogenous group. However, within the scope of this paper it is not possible to go into detail on every group's history.

8 Author interview, deputy commissioner, SSDDRC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

9 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

10 For an analysis of the JIUs, see Small Arms Survey (2008).

11 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

12 See, for example, Vuni (2007d).

13 Author interview, local woman, Magwi, 6 February 2008.

14 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

15 Author interview, county commissioner, Magwi, 7 February 2008.

16 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.

17 Author interview, Eastern Equatorian politicians, Torit, 5 February 2008.

18 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.

19 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.

20 Author interview, protection officer, international NGO, Juba, 31 January 2008.

21 It is important to remember that, while this report has a geographic focus on two Equatorian states, many of the issues dealt with here are not confined to these two states. Criticism of the SPLA is not unique either to Equatoria or to other non-Dinka areas. Many of the problems are rooted in the inevitable post-war tension between civilians and soldiers, and take on an ethnic dimension only as an afterthought. Criticism of the SPLA also does not necessarily

equate with criticism of the SPLM. People in vast areas of Sudan might mention that they have suffered under the SPLA, but are still strong supporters of the SPLM.

22 Author interviews, various local sources, Central and Eastern Equatoria, January–February 2008. It remains unclear whether the attackers were members of the SPLA or just pretending to be.

23 Author interviews, various local sources, Central and Eastern Equatoria, January–February 2008.

24 Author interview, local adviser on land issues, Juba, 31 January 2008. The Local Government Framework has been under discussion since 2006, but no act has yet been passed. This renders local government powerless, with no proper framework or reporting structures. Similarly, the Land Act has yet to be enacted to resolve disputes. It is expected to include customary ownership in line with the CPA, which states that land belongs to the community.

25 For a review of the LRA in Sudan, see Schomerus (2007).

26 Author interview, deputy commissioner, SSDDRC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

27 Author interview, county commissioner, Magwi, 7 February 2008.

28 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.

29 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.

30 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, 5 February 2008.

31 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.

32 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, 5 February 2008.

33 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.

34 Author interview, women's leader, Juba, 12 February 2008.

35 Author interviews, various agencies working in Central Equatoria, 13 February 2008.

36 The West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) was a Ugandan rebel group fighting against the GoU from 1995–98. In Uganda, they were mainly active along the West Nile Bank in Uganda's Arua, Yumbe, and Moyo districts, but they also had bases in Southern Sudan from which they sometimes moved into the DRC. The bases were destroyed in 1998. It has long been suspected that some former fighters are still active in the border areas. The WNBF was caught up in various armed conflicts in these areas and like the LRA have shown what impact one armed group's insurgency can inflict on the civilian population (Refugee Law Project, 2004).

37 Author interviews, security sources, April 2008.

38 Author interview, local in Rub-Kona, March 2008. Cattle are much more than a commodity: they are the backbone of many Sudanese communities. Hutchinson (1996) offers a poignant explanation with regard to the Nuer by saying that it is not the case that cattle have been 'commodified' but that commodities have become 'cattle-ified'.

39 Author interviews, UN/UNMIS officials, Juba, February 2008.

40 Author interview, state minister for Agriculture and Livestock, Torit, 4 February.

41 Eaton (2008) argues that a focus on root causes makes much of the peace work attempted in the area actually irrelevant to the locals. Immediate action, such as dealing with stolen cattle, might be more conducive to achieving peace.

42 Author background interview, local adviser on land issues, Juba, 31 January 2008.

43 Author interviews, UNMIS officials, Juba, 17 March 2008.

44 Author interview, protection officer, UNHCR, Juba, 1 February 2008.

45 Author background interview, local adviser on land issues, Juba, 31 January 2008.

46 Author interview, county commissioner, Magwi, 7 February 2008.

47 Author interview, senior protection officer, UNHCR, Juba, 1 February 2008.

48 These recent incidents can be seen as exemplifying a long tradition of tension between inside and outside communities. Such tensions have persisted on the Sudan–Uganda border for decades. Allen's (1994) discussion of the subtleties of these tensions provides an understanding of the historical context of recent incidents.

49 Author interview, protection officer, IOM, Juba, 29 January 2008.

50 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

51 Author interview, protection officer, international NGO, Juba, 31 January 2008, and author interview, security adviser to the governor of Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 4 February 2008.

52 Author interview, residents in Keyala *payam,* Torit County, 5 February 2008.

53 Author interviews, UN/UNMIS officials, Juba, February 2008; UN OCHA Juba (2007). The number of dead was uncertain for a while, but now seems to be fixed at 54.

54 Author interviews, locals and security experts, CES and EES, February 2008.

55 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.

56 Author interview, local information liaison officer, Juba, 31 January 2008.

57 Author interview, protection officer, international NGO, Juba 31 January 2008.

58 Author background interview, SPLA military intelligence, Juba, February 2008.

59 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 5 February 2008.

60 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.

61 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

62 Author interview, local woman in Gumbo, 30 January 2008.

63 Author interview, deputy commissioner, SSDDRC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

64 Author interview, deputy commissioner, SSDDRC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

65 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

66 Author interview, protection officer, IOM, Juba, 29 January 2008.

67 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

68 The CHF is being turned into the Sudan Recovery Fund, with a view to implementing stronger evaluation and assessment mechanisms and early recovery programming. Author interviews, various local sources, Central and Eastern Equatoria, January–February 2008.

69 Author interview, women's leader, Juba, 12 February 2008.

70 Lieutenant General Mohamed Nagib al-Tayeb, assistant general commander of the Khartoum State police, reported that weapons confiscated from the office included 'a large number of Kalashnikovs, machine guns, and revolvers, in addition to large quantities of various types of ammunition and grenades' (*Sudan Tribune,* 2007).

71 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

72 The first minister of SPLA Affairs, General Dominic Dim Deng, died in a plane crash on 2 May 2008.

73 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

74 Author interview, protection officer, international NGO, Juba, 31 January 2008.

75 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.

76 Author interview, local man, Torit, 6 February 2008.

77 Author interview, police commissioner, Torit, 6 February 2008.

78 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.

79 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.
80 Author interview, security adviser to the governor of Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 4 February 2008.
81 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit 6 February 2008.
82 Author interview, SPLA military intelligence, Juba, February 2008.
83 Author interview, secretary of Conduct and Organisation, NCP, Torit, 6 February 2008.
84 Author interview, local information liaison officer, Juba, 31 January 2008.
85 Author interviews, locals in Eastern and Central Equatoria, 2006–08.
86 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 5 February 2008.
87 Author interviews, various aid agencies in Central Equatoria, 13 February 2008.
88 Author interview, Ikotos resident, Juba, November 2006.
89 Author interview, Chairman of the Ikotos Peace Committee Chairman, Ikotos, 15 June 2008.
90 Author interview, local information liaison officer, Juba, 31 January 2008.
91 Author interview, JIU deputy commander, Torit, 4 February 2008.
92 Author interviews, residents of Torit County, February 2008.
93 Author interview, Chairman of the Ikotos Peace Committee Chairman, Ikotos, 15 June 2008.
94 Author interview, county commissioner, Torit, 4 February 2008.
95 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.
96 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.
97 Author interview, security adviser to the governor of Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 4 February 2008.
98 Author interviews, UN/UNMIS officials, Juba, February 2008.
99 Author interview, UNDP officer, Juba, 13 February 2008.
100 Author interview, deputy commissioner, SSDDRC, Juba, 28 January 2008.
101 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.
102 Author interview, UNDP officer, Juba, 13 February 2008.
103 Author interview, security adviser to the governor of Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 4 February 2008.
104 Author interview, county commissioner, Torit, 4 February 2008.
105 Author interview, police commissioner, Torit, 6 February 2008.
106 The SPLA did provide numbers of guns collected during Nyriol, Jonglei disarmament exercise (see Small Arms Survey, 2007).
107 Author interview, JIU deputy commander, Torit, 4 February 2008.
108 Author interviews, local sources, Central and Eastern Equatoria, January–February 2008.
109 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, 5 February 2008.
110 Author background interview, SPLA district commander in Hiyalla, 5 February 2008.
111 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, 5 February 2008.
112 Author interview, local information liaison officer, Juba, 31 January 2008.
113 Author interviews, UN/UNMIS officials, Juba, February 2008.
114 Author interview, JIU deputy commander, Torit, 4 February 2008.
115 Author email interview, former EDF secretary-general, 14 February 2008.
116 Author email interview, former EDF secretary-general, 14 February 2008.
117 Author interview, JIU deputy commander, Torit, 4 February 2008.
118 Author email interview, former EDF secretary-general, 14 February 2008.
119 For a more detailed discussion see Schomerus (2007).
120 The UPDF had been in the area previously, both in search of LRA and to support the SPLA.
121 Author interviews, security sources, Western Equatoria, April 2008.
122 Author interview, social worker, Juba, 6 June 2008.
123 Author interviews, security sources, Western Equatoria, April 2008.
124 Author interview, county commissioner, Magwi, 7 February 2008.
125 In 2007 and 2008 the village of Owiny-Kibul developed into a significant hub following the return of refugees from Uganda and the creation of a new SPLA training centre for 5,000 men.
126 Author interview, local politician, Torit, 4 February 2008.
127 Author background interviews, various military sources, Juba, June 2007.
128 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.
129 Author interview, JIU deputy commander, Torit, 4 February 2008.
130 Author interview, Vincent Otti, Ri-Kwangba, 13 July 2007.
131 Author interview, security adviser to the governor of Eastern Equatoria, Torit, 4 February 2008.
132 Author interview, SPLA major, Panyikwara barracks, 8 February 2008.
133 Author interviews, UN/UNMIS officials, Juba, February 2008.
134 Author interview, local store keeper, Magwi, 6 February 2008.
135 Author interviews, local security sources, Central Equatoria, 12 February 2008.
136 Author interview, local merchant, Magwi, 7 February 2008.
137 The Acholi word 'Ocol' (also spelt 'Ochol' to reflect the correct pronunciation) has strong connotations. Possibly the most famous piece of Acholi literature by Gulu-born poet Okot p'Bitek is the two poems, 'Song of Lawino' and 'Song of Ocol'. The two long poems set up the tension between (African) tradition and (European) modernity. Told as a dialogue between husband and wife, Ocol is the name of the male voice of the poems (p'Bitek, 1984).
138 Author interview, local man, Tore, 21 April 2008.
139 Author interview, local man, Tore, 31 March 2008.
140 Author interviews, local security sources in Central Equatoria, March–April 2008.
141 Author interviews, security sources, South Sudan, June 2008.
142 Author interviews, security sources, Juba, June 2008.
143 Author interview, SPLA base commander, Magwi, 7 February 2008.
144 Author interview, local information liaison officer, Juba, 31 January 2008.
145 Author interview, SPLA major, Panyikwara barracks, 8 February 2008.
146 Author interviews, UN/UNMIS officials, Juba, February 2008.
147 Author interview, police commissioner, Torit, 6 February 2008.
148 Author interview, food security consultant, Juba, 25 January 2008.
149 Author interview, security consultants, Juba, 29 January 2008.
150 Author interview, SPLM state secretary for Eastern Equatoria, 5 February 2008.
151 Author interview, returnee monitoring manager, international NGO, Juba, 29 January 2008.
152 Author interview, local information liaison officer, Juba, 31 January 2008.
153 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.
154 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.
155 Author interview, deputy commissioner, SSDDRC, Juba, 28 January 2008.
156 Author interview, director of the CSAC, Juba, 28 January 2008.

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