



Report of consultations on community-level policing structures in Jonglei and Upper Nile States, Southern Sudan

Saferworld and the Southern Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (SSBCSSAC)

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Saferworld's programme in Sudan

Saferworld has been working on conflict prevention issues in Sudan since 2002. After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, Saferworld developed an in-depth programme of work in Southern Sudan, based on the recognition that intra-Southern conflicts need to be resolved for the CPA to succeed. Saferworld's programme in Southern Sudan focuses on community security and small arms control and consists of the following elements:

- Strengthening the capacity of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and key security and law enforcement authorities to respond to community security and small arms and light weapons (SALW) control concerns
- Strengthening the capacity of Southern Sudanese civil society to influence and co-ordinate action to address community security and SALW control concerns
- Developing and promoting community-level approaches to SALW control that contribute to community stability and peacebuilding
- Supporting the GoSS and international agencies to integrate SALW control and community security into policies and programmes related to security and justice sector development and peacebuilding
- Supporting GoSS and Southern Sudanese civil society stakeholders to develop strengthened co-operation with the region to address cross-border SALW control and insecurity.

CSSAC Bureau

The Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (CSSAC-Bureau) was established under the Vice-President's office in 2007 and came under the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2008 when the approval of its policy and mandate were officiated. The Bureau's primary mission is to address the threat posed by proliferation of small arms and community insecurity to peace, confidence and development in Southern Sudan and works to achieve this by:

- Mobilising, consolidating and building bridges between communities, government at all levels and law enforcement agencies that are tasked to carry out peaceful and voluntary civilian disarmament;
- Advocating and co-ordinating the efforts on the formulation of small arms control policies and regulations;
- Facilitating GoSS solutions to address the root causes of community insecurity, through development, rule of law and peace building measures.
- Raising public awareness through a range of different Public information approaches and mechanisms.

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Acronyms

CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSSAC	Community Security and Small Arms Control
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
IDP	internally displaced person
NCP	National Congress Party
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SSPS	Southern Sudan Police Service

Glossary

<i>boma</i>	village
<i>payam</i>	district

1. Introduction

This report describes the findings of community-level consultations conducted in nine counties in the states of Jonglei and Upper Nile, Southern Sudan, on the subject of community-level policing structures. The consultation process focused on rival counties on both sides of the Jonglei-Upper Nile border – Akobo, Nyirol, Pigi, Pangak and Pibor in Jonglei and Nasir, Ulang, Baliet and Panyikang in Upper Nile – which have experienced both internal and cross-state border violence and are in a continuing state of overwhelming insecurity. The consultations were carried out jointly by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (CSSAC) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the NGO Saferworld.

The aim of the consultation process was to ascertain local attitudes towards community-level policing structures as a means to provide community security, particularly in a context of ongoing civilian disarmament. The consultation process also aimed to ensure that county and *payam* (district)-level perspectives are fed into the broader policy debate on appropriate approaches to the nexus between insecurity, disarmament and policing, with a deliberate aim of reducing insecurity at the local level while assisting the GoSS to establish law and order throughout its jurisdiction. Such local consultations have the potential to add valuable perspectives to discussions between donors, NGOs, UN agencies and the GoSS on appropriate policing and security interventions and programming.

Earlier in 2010, the CSSAC-B, with support from Saferworld, organised a meeting in Malakal town, Upper Nile, which brought together key stakeholders from eight border counties in Upper Nile and Jonglei – Nasir, Ulang, Baliet and Panyikang in Upper Nile and Akobo, Nyirol, Pigi, and Pangak in Jonglei – to discuss cross-county border conflicts and civilian disarmament. The Malakal meeting resulted in a number of resolutions, which participants in the meeting recommended be disseminated to communities in their counties – a process that also provided an opportunity to conduct consultations on the issue of community-level policing. The conjunction of the two processes promoted confidence between participants and the consultation team due to the complimentary between the two issues, and in many cases the participants of the Malakal meeting were also participants in the consultations. Pibor County was added to the list of counties in which to conduct the consultations because of the conflicts present and the disarmament process conducted there.

All nine counties are contexts where the Southern Sudan Police Services (SSPS) are effectively unable to provide security at the *boma* (village) level and where a number of non-governmental 'security providers' exist. In addition, a Chiefs' Police operates in several of these counties. The Chiefs' Police is a judicial police structure meant to support chiefs in their role as local magistrates – the President of the GoSS, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, committed to supporting ten police officers per chief at the 2009 Bentiu Chiefs and Kings Conference. However, at both the local and Juba levels, substantial confusion is evident about the precise roles of Chiefs' Police and other types of auxiliary reserve forces. Perceptions of their roles and responsibilities – and even of their desirability – often differ. In the counties discussed in this report there were many references to Chiefs' Police, but the understanding of what their role should be varied widely. The situation is further complicated by references to 'community police forces' as outlined in the Police Act (para.15), which outlines the establishment of a "community police to help the Police Service in the performance of its functions and duties and to mobilise the people for the preservation of law and order".

This consultation report presents the different opinions expressed by those interviewed on the desirability and feasibility of government-controlled policing structures, whether Chiefs' Police or other forces, in local communities. The report first presents the methodology applied; then goes on to describe the broader security and conflict context in the counties consulted; and then provides more detailed findings from the counties, including direct quotes from a number of interviewees. Finally, it summarises the key findings and common themes emerging from the consultations.

2. Methodology¹

Focus group discussions and interviews were carried out during March 2010 in Akobo, Nyirol, Pigi and Panjak and Pibor counties in Jonglei State and Nasir, Ulang, Baliet and Panyikang counties in Upper Nile. Most of the meetings were conducted at county headquarters, with participation from the *payam* and *boma* levels. In some highly conflict-affected areas, however, meetings were conducted at *payam* level to optimise the collection of information; these areas included Atar *payam*, Pigi Country; Pibor, Gumuruk and Boma *payams*, Pibor County; and Galacial *payam*, Baliet County.

In each of the locations, interview teams consulted a variety of local stakeholders on their views on policing structures in the communities. In each location, following a preliminary meeting with the county or *payam* authorities, focus group discussions were held bringing together five to fifteen representatives of each of a number of target stakeholder groups. This approach was designed to ensure that a broad cross-section of views and ideas were collected. Target groups included local government employees; chiefs and sub-chiefs; county- or *payam*-level SSPS; women; youth; elders; and traders.² Typically, five representatives of each of these target groups then participated in plenary stakeholder sessions. Within each of the sub-groups, efforts were made to ensure as broad a geographic (*boma*-level) and ethnic cross-section as possible and to solicit the involvement of 'town' and 'rural' participants as well as 'elite' and 'non-elite' participants. Translation was provided between Murle, Arabic, Jie and English as required. Food and drink were provided to participants. Key stakeholder interviews were also conducted – for example, local Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leadership were consulted in individual meetings rather than as part of community stakeholder consultations.

Care was taken during each meeting to ensure that participants understood that the purpose of the consultation was to hear their views on the advantages and disadvantages of existing and potential security structures, in order to avoid raising expectations. In each of the locations, chiefs participating in the consultation process had also attended the Bentiu conference; for many, the commitments made during this conference were then the starting point for discussion.

3. Context

The consultation process was carried out in what is generally considered to be one of the most volatile and violence-prone areas of Southern Sudan. Since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the border counties in Upper Nile and Jonglei states have experienced generalised insecurity punctuated by events of extreme violence and loss of life. State control is weak in several of the counties, and contested in some. In some, but not all, populations have been isolated as a result of poor roads and have enjoyed almost no government services. NGO and private sector development activities have been curtailed by generalised insecurity and direct threats to the vehicles, assets and staff of NGOs and private sector operators (traders and contractors).

Cyclical and self-perpetuating attacks (cattle raids, abductions and retaliatory attacks) have added to insecurity and endangered the community at large. This violence has reinforced some local views that civilian armament is a requirement for communal self-defence against hostile neighbours, as well as the opposing viewpoint that total disarmament of civilians will reduce opportunities for violent conflict. For example, in Pibor County tensions between the host Murle community and other ethnic groups have increased and over the past 24 months have led to the expulsion of non-Murle citizens (Anuak refugees, Nuer IDPs and Dinka traders) and to a general single-ethnic 'cantonisation' of the county. Divisions within the Murle community have also led to a breakdown in traditional taboos against internal 'age-set' fighting using non-traditional weapons (firearms), leading to injury and death. At times, tensions between the host community and SPLA deployed in Pibor have also escalated into deadly violence. In Pigi County there are also problems with inter-communal conflict, mainly between Dinka from the *payam* of Atar and Shuluk from neighbouring Panyikang County, Upper Nile. The

¹ This methodology was used by both teams and in all the consultations; a check list questionnaire as well as a discussion guide and methodology were developed and agreed on in Juba prior to the consultations in the counties.

² One meeting, held in Panyikang, deviated from the format used for the rest of the meetings: it was held in the Shuluk King's residence. He called the chiefs and the county commissioner to the meeting, but no women participants. Although some opportunity was given to chiefs and county commissioners to speak, the King dominated the discussion.

consultation team were shown houses burnt down by Shuluk raiders in December 2009. Groups of armed civilians and armed uniformed groups are also common in the county. In other counties, the authority of the chiefs has been reduced due to firearms; meanwhile, tensions between traditional authorities and the local government administration have contributed to a climate of mistrust.

In this highly volatile context, disarmament processes have nevertheless been forging ahead. Disarmament of civilians has been taking place in Jonglei since early 2007 under the auspices of the SPLA and through the mobilisation of chiefs; at the time of writing, more than 14,000 weapons have been collected and transported for safe storage. In Upper Nile, meanwhile, the first disarmament process began in 2006. However, according to people interviewed during the assessment, despite these disarmament initiatives, thousands of weapons remain in the hands of civilians in both states.

Disarmament of civilians creates both opportunities for the establishment of state control and hazards associated with the creation of security vacuums, given the inadequate staffing levels and training of county-based state security forces. While disarmament was not the focus of these consultation processes, participants often offered the opinion that the creation of *boma*-level security structures, placed under GoSS control and with appropriate support, will be key to securing buy-in for successful disarmament, the establishment of state control, and longer-term development. Without the creation of such structures, many participants were sceptical about the wisdom of disarmament, or suggested that it was a ploy to selectively weaken specific communities so that they would be susceptible to attack by still-armed neighbours.

4. Consultation findings

This section contains general findings and draws upon specific consultation notes from all the counties.

4.1 Existing security and rule of law at *payam* and *boma* level

Across the different counties, formal police presence is limited, ranging from at most two to five police officers per *payam* to none at all. In all the *bomas* consulted in Pibor County, police were totally absent. Where the police are present, their capacity is very weak.

In Akobo County, the existing police are few in number and poorly equipped. With no police present at the *boma* or *payam* level, crimes are reported by somebody travelling (usually on foot) to the county headquarters to make a verbal report. Some *payams*, like Walgak, are four to five hours from these headquarters by car. Communications and mobility are therefore extremely difficult.

Ulang County has only 15 police officers on the government payroll; they have been overwhelmed by the types and number of crimes that occur across the county. For example, during the period when the CSSAC team was visiting Ulang, food was stolen from the World Food Programme store in a village eight kilometres from the county headquarters. The few police officers who went to the village in response had shared guns, no ammunition and no transport. The CSSAC team in fact brought one of the officers to town in order to report the incident and get some help.

The Head Chief of Gumuruk *payam* described the current situation of policing in the *payam* as follows:

When there is conflict in the village, I always tell the [payam] police to go, but they do not go because they are fearful and those people are armed. I am 70 years old and I know what is happening. The police are the life of people, and at the moment the police are not useful. It is like a dog in the house. Currently there are only ten police in the payam [which has 15 bomas] and the police have no bullets.

Although the authorities have made some efforts to strengthen police presence in particularly tense areas, these are largely inadequate. For example, Galacial *payam*, where the team's Baliet County consultations took place, is sandwiched between two counties: Ulang (Upper Nile) and Nyirol

(Jonglei). Galacial residents consider both these counties to be aggressive to them. Because of its border location, the *payam* has more police assigned to it than other *payams* in Baliet, but this still only amounts to five police officers – an insufficient number, interviewees indicated, to ensure their security considering the levels of conflict and violence that the communities are facing.

In response to the insecurity they face, different communities have taken different steps to try to create their own security. Some communities and counties have set up and trained their own local police forces. For example, at the request of the county authorities, the Nasir county police have trained 700 recruits, who have been deployed mostly to rural areas in the county. Similarly, in Ulang, the county police have trained 300 young men who have been deployed across the county. In Ulang, the hope was that these recruited young men would be incorporated into the SSPS, but so far this has not happened. These communities are now struggling to equip and feed these local 'defence forces'. In other communities, the heavily armed civilian population acts as a community self-defence force. However, these forces also carry out predatory raids and reprisals against neighbouring groups, leading to further retaliation and insecurity. In Kaldak there is a group of armed civilians claiming to be Gawaar Nuer (which would indicate that they are under Ayod County), but Kaldak is located in Pigi County and those Nuers were described as illegal settlers by the local residents in Atar. Similarly, in Kaldak there is an armed uniformed group, the majority apparently Nuer. Members of the group claim to be SPLA soldiers, but some sources argue that they are lawless. They collect 'tax' from the local community and anyone passing through, despite having been warned by the county authorities to stop this practice. The consultation team were also stopped for some time and questioned by this group, which appeared to have no official authority.

On average, most participants highlighted the weakness or inadequacies of these arrangements and advocated for security forces controlled and commanded by GoSS to provide security to communities. In particular, self-defence forces were said to undermine traditional authorities and the establishment of the rule of law and justice through the courts. Participants noted that as a result of general armament of the civilian population during the war, the authority of chiefs had been eroded to the point that they can no longer command respect, provide leadership and guidance, or dispense justice to the community.

4.2 Insecurity, disarmament and policing

In the absence of adequate community-level security arrangements, many focus group participants expressed mixed feelings about disarmament processes. In Nyirol County, for example, a senior police official claimed that the disarmament process has not succeeded in collecting all the weapons possessed by civilians and non-state security actors in the county, and that people who were unwilling to disarm had simply fled to the bush. One of the chiefs interviewed in Nyirol said that people were happy about the disarmament process, as they felt the number of people who die from internal conflict is higher than the number killed in external attacks by Murle and others. Yet interviewees also noted that in the absence of GoSS security forces, people re-arm for protection and to fill the security vacuum: for instance, some said that after disarmament, some children had been abducted, and this kind of insecurity makes it more likely that people would want to re-arm. Similarly, civilian disarmament has been conducted in Akobo County, but in its wake, communities remain unprotected.³ Some of the stakeholders interviewed also regarded the disarmament as being selective, only disarming certain groups (in this case the Lou were mentioned) and thus leaving others more vulnerable.

The lack of adequate security notwithstanding, many interviewees stressed their community's overall desire to see disarmament made possible through improved policing. A Gumuruk sub-chief drew the linkage between the continuing presence of arms in the community, security, and livelihoods:

³ This is not only an internal issue. In Akobo County, for instance, community members were concerned that some people who did not want to be disarmed fled to the Ethiopian side of the border where currently no disarmament is taking place. They hoped that the Jonglei State Governor would try to address this issue on his visit to Ethiopia at the time. The consultation team also visited Torgoal town on the Ethiopian side of the border, where local officials confirmed that there had been attacks from within Sudan and that many officials had been evacuated from the area as a result.

The gun has become an enemy to us. We do not want our sons to be killing themselves and killing their brothers, either because there are too many guns or because we are left defenceless. We are proud of disarmament but we need protection. All of our neighbours say that we are bad and all of our neighbours hate us. We are in the middle. We must replace small arms with schools, carpentry, tailoring, recruitment into the army and police. We must employ the youth as we are being left behind and we do not know what development is.

The head of traders offered a similar story, relating how insecurity had stifled trade opportunities for many years and how disarmament and improved policing might help to correct this:

I am very happy about disarmament. Nothing has been achieved with small arms. I am very happy to be a trader but the gun was against my business. It has become an obstacle to us to bring goods from the neighbours. I started my business in 1998 and it has not been able to grow up because of insecurity... When the government said 'collect the guns', we were happy, as nobody can ambush a lorry with a spear...

A Gumuruk youth representative concurred:

We want small arms to be taken away from us so that we can succeed in our life. These arms have become a curse for us. We bought these weapons but we are going to give them away for free. If there are other tribes, they have to be disarmed also and it is for the government to deal with.

4.3 Opinions about Chiefs' Police

Many participants supported the idea of a Chiefs' Police force and the commitment made at the Bentiu conference to provide ten police officers per chief. Most of the chiefs interviewed endorsed the idea. For example, Chief Korok of Boma *payam* (Pibor County) said:

*All that has been said previously [about the creation of Chiefs' Police] will be good for all of us. It makes sense and we are very eager to have that. For me, in charge of Boma *payam*, I have many weaknesses; then I will be able to act like a chief. Right now, I am not able to deal with someone who is guilty. I am threatened by that person. I am not able to make judgements. I went to Bentiu and we raised this complaint. If you have come to make an assessment to follow up on this idea agreed at Bentiu, then that is what we have been dreaming about.*

The Head Chief of Gumuruk *payam* concurred, suggesting that the presence of police is an indication of a functioning state:

We need Chiefs' Police at the boma level and even more than ten per boma to show that there is a government.

The Head Chief of Pibor went further, linking the opportunities created by the implementation of such a structure to the ongoing disarmament process:

We have thousands of weapons still. They are in the Fertait-Labarab, Jom and Boma areas. We have decided to bring them in. This will be the last collection of weapons, but how will we be provided with protection? People will be attacked and we will be in a bad situation. We must have more police. This will greatly empower the chiefs, whose power will be restored. With the creation of Chiefs' Police, we will be useful. We are now supporting the government with this disarmament, but we need the support of government to help them implement their vision. We need power back to do this.

Women participants in Boma expressed similar sentiments, linking the idea of Chiefs' Police to the functioning of courts, disarmament, policing and personal security. The head of the women's group in Boma expressed it this way:

This is an exciting idea. If these Chiefs' Police are selected and all guns are collected, this will allow the chiefs' courts to function. Then nobody will threaten the courts. We are very happy about this idea. If the SPLM wants to collect all the guns and create Chiefs' Police, then this will allow us to move without fear. Right now, even if I walk to the end of the airstrip, somebody can shoot me.

Payam-level SSPS in Gumuruk offered the opinion that with the additional manpower that would be available through Chiefs' Police, change might finally be possible. The Gumuruk SSPS representative offered the following analysis:

We are very happy with disarmament. I can now represent myself as part of government. If you increase the number of police then you are solving the problem. Chiefs' Police at the boma level will help us. Before, one policeman could escort 100 people. Now everyone is armed and the law is getting lost because of weapons. This idea of Chiefs' Police is empowering to us [the SSPS] and we like the idea. The Police are the eye of government and the eye of the people. We need power and we want police at the boma level.

Traders were similarly enthusiastic about the prospect of greater security for their business activities raised by a Chiefs' Police force. The head of traders, relating how insecurity had stifled trade opportunities for many years and how disarmament and improved policing may help to correct this, said:

Business people now have hope, but we need police at the boma level to consolidate peace, as we still have criminals. If somebody loots my things, Chiefs' Police can help me to recover my goods. I will open a case and my problems will be solved by the law and not the gun.

Gumuruk youth leaders also thought that a Chiefs' Police force could help to break down tribal isolation, caused by insecurity and that in turn helps to generate mistrust, ethnic tension and further insecurity:

Those who will be the Chiefs' Police will be the youth. This is part of job creation. Murle have been misunderstood and now we have a lot of problems with our neighbours. People should mix and work together in other areas. When we were together in the bush [during the war] we worked together and we had no tribalism. When we are alone in our home areas because of insecurity there is tribalism. Let us have security and be together so there is no tribalism.

The Shuluk King liked the idea of an auxiliary reserve police force, but only if it was under his control.

By contrast, opinion in Nyirol was divided about the desirability of the Chiefs' Police or other policing structures. Some respondents felt that even if the government was able to train and equip more staff for the SSPS, this might not help them very much, as SSPS training is not geared towards addressing the problem of cattle raids and other related rural insecurity problems. They argued that SSPS are also not rapid enough in their responses and may not be willing to migrate with communities during the dry season to find grazing or visit the dry season water points. They therefore felt an auxiliary reserve force based within the community would more effectively address their security problems. However, others in Nyirol disagreed, pointing to the experience of the White Army (*Gelweng*). The White Army was created and armed during the war to protect people's cattle, but then started raiding themselves and became a source of insecurity. Some in Nyirol therefore feared that creating an auxiliary reserve force and arming them will fuel further cycles of conflict and insecurity, as communities would effectively be rearmed. They felt that it would be better to increase the capacity and presence of the SSPS and extend their reach to the *boma* level.

Akobo community members for their part suggested that more SSPS officers be recruited, but that if this was not possible, young men could be recruited from villages and trained and equipped by the government. One of the chiefs was concerned, however, that if Chiefs' Police or an auxiliary reserve force were recruited from communities but not given a cash incentive, they might turn out like the White Army.

Critically, there were also respondents in other counties who preferred the administration of any type of local-level police to be handled by the county police structures, rather than the chiefs.

5. Main issues raised regarding local-level police structures

Participants were asked their views about what local-level policing structures could look like and the issues needed to be addressed in order for such a structure to work. What follows is the opinions of people interviewed. It is worth noting that in offering their opinions, most participants referred primarily to Chiefs' Police, and less to alternative measures for achieving local-level security. Their comments should be read with this in mind.

Chiefs in most locations referred to the Bentiu conference and the endorsement of *boma*-level Chiefs' Police. Several chiefs suggested that they were simply waiting for the implementation of this policy and that they considered it to already have been approved. In Pibor, one chief proposed that the real dilemma was the implementation modalities and was adamant that such a structure was necessary, "on any condition", and offered that, "we need to change the mentality of the people – from cattle raiding to agriculture, to education and to any kind of development." This example illustrates some of the differences in the ways that people perceive the potential role of the Chiefs' Police. While the Chiefs' Police was intended to be a judicial police, many conceive of it as not much different from a mobile auxiliary reserve force which can address issues such as cattle raiding.

One important point of discussion during the consultations was the question of relations between community policing structures such as Chiefs' Police and existing SSPS contingents. Most stakeholders believed that Chiefs' Police would easily work alongside and in support of the SSPS. Indeed, when asked directly about the possibility of tensions occurring between Chiefs' Police and *payam*-level SSPS, respondents were adamant that there would be a mutually supportive and reciprocal relationship between *boma*, *payam* and county structures, with *boma*-level Chiefs' Police acting as a 'police reserve' or 'auxiliary' for the county and state when called upon:

We [Chiefs] and SSPS are doing the same thing. We can co-operate and support one another. What the police [existing SSPS] cannot do because they are too few, they can ask for our support. What we cannot do, we will ask the police for their support.

Youth also expressed their belief that the SSPS and Chiefs' Police could for the most part co-operate easily (depending on the challenges they faced), and that this would allow for the protection of civilians and the creation of the rule of law at the *boma* level. As one participant said:

Chiefs' Police will allow the community to live in security, to stop fighting and arrest people who are killing themselves. We will place ourselves under the Chief. We need this process to continue forward.

A Gumuruk youth representative similarly stated,

We are endorsing this idea [of Chiefs' Police]. Any way of doing it – we are going to agree to it.

Elders in the consultations also suggested that this structure would allow for government and civilian co-operation to take shape and would generate better co-operation between communities and the government. As the oldest participant in Pibor suggested:

This is the way for us to grow up. For a long time nothing has been done and things have only been negative. Now everyone can come together to listen carefully so that we can decide how people can co-operate to work together with police, prisons, wildlife and the local government. Nobody should become a Chiefs' Police without regulations and training. Since the day we were born, we have never seen something like police living together with cattle during migrations to protect our property. Nomadic people must know the laws.

Women in the consultations also thought that Chiefs' Police could fit in well with existing structures. For example, Murle women in Gumuruk clearly expressed the need for *boma*-level security – with co-operation with the SSPS at the *payam* level – as a way to fill the security vacuum, suggesting a dual function for Chiefs' Police:

Those at the boma level can deal with problems without having to wait for payam-level police to respond. They can catch a thief or a murderer and hand them over to the payam or county police. Police at the boma level will have that responsibility. We want them to be trained so that they know the law and so that they behave according to the law and in the correct way. It is important that those who have participated in disarmament be protected through the Chiefs' Police.

Murle youth, including aspiring and current traders, focused on the relationship between disarmament, security and the possibility of other livelihoods. Others went further and elaborated on the effects on business:

We youth are becoming traders, so we will also benefit from disarmament and improved security through policing. Our businesses will not be looted as they are now. We are willing to contribute to make this work...We need jobs for the youth, as lack of food is the cause of raiding. Go tell the NGOs to come and invite investors to come. We need to have hope that they [youth] will eat today and tomorrow.

Finally, local government authorities, both at the *payam* and county level (including the Pibor County Commissioner), were supportive of the idea of Chiefs' Police, expressing that they were hoping for such support based on their assessment of the need and the commitments made in Bentiu, but that they were unclear about how GoSS would finance or structure the Chiefs' Police or community-level policing structures. When asked how they would envision a possible structure functioning alongside existing law enforcement structures, they raised no doubts about the appropriateness of empowering traditional authorities in this way, stating that traditional authorities had been recognised as part of government through the Local Government Act and that in most locations the traditional authorities were the only functioning mechanisms for justice. They suggested that *boma*-level Chiefs' Police would be a direct extension of government. For example, the Gumuruk deputy *payam* administrator suggested, in relation to Chiefs' Police, that they would finally allow government to exist at the grassroots level, where it was currently absent, and that Chiefs' Police were very important for "government to be complete."

Some respondents also had practical suggestions to offer in relation to setting up new community-level policing arrangements. For example, some participants proposed that some of the members of the Chiefs' Police need to be mobile in order to provide additional security during dry-season cattle migrations. For instance, one Pibor chief proposed that out of every ten Chiefs' Police members in a *boma*, seven could escort the migration and the remaining three could remain in the villages to provide security while the herds and youths were away. Some respondents also proposed that Chiefs' Police would need communication devices to ensure that they can communicate and co-ordinate with the SSPS at *payam* and county levels. Respondents in Akobo further suggested community border demarcation as a way to reduce some of the existing insecurity. Some also suggested possible locations for police stations on the borders between counties, such as in Mading, Kotkee and Wading to serve between Akobo and Naser or Ulang. Some participants further argued that more than ten officers would be necessary for a Chiefs' Police force to be successful in their specific situations. For example, residents of Galacial *payam*, Baliet County, complained that due to their geographically vulnerable position (as noted above) they would need 15 police officers per chief to really improve their security.

6. Summary and conclusions

The consultation process on community-level policing structures raised a number of key issues. On the ground, all stakeholders have expressed a need for local-level security provision and access to justice.

There was general support for more SSPS, but acknowledgement that at present the SSPS cannot fill the security vacuum – hence the need for alternatives. Most interviewees support the idea of some sort of auxiliary reserve force or Chiefs' Police. Some preferred that these forces be controlled by the chiefs (the chiefs themselves supported this view, as it is important for them to sustain their authority as per the Local Government Act, Chapter XII), while others emphasised the need for such forces to

work very closely with and/or be controlled and commanded by the SSPS. There seems to be consensus that they should be properly equipped and incentivised by the government, with international support as necessary. There were also some stakeholders – particularly those who have had experience of the White Army – who feared that if not properly controlled, such community-level groups, particularly if armed, could become a threat to communities instead of protecting them. The consultations also established that in several counties ‘community self-defence groups’ had already been established – not always with positive results. Indeed, the importance of avoiding creating security vacuums or of exacerbating existing insecurity was at the forefront of the thoughts and statements of most participants.

At the Juba level, policy debate around this issue is lively and sometimes quite polarised, both within the GoSS and within the UN, NGOs and the donor community who are currently providing training and/or equipment support to rule-of-law and law enforcement structures within Southern Sudan. Concerns raised at this level focus principally on the potential for Chiefs’ Police or other auxiliary reserve forces to evolve into a proto-militia structure that might contest state authority and, in the longer term, threaten community security and long-term peace. In addition, some observers express concerns that setting up these additional structures might delay the movement towards, and/or divert resources and energy from, the establishment of a credible and well-trained SSPS that is able to provide security and access to justice for all people in Southern Sudan.

The reality on the ground currently is that armed civilians act simultaneously, and beyond state control, as community self-defence forces and as predatory armed groups or individuals. Not a single participant in this consultation process suggested that Chiefs’ Police or an auxiliary reserve force should act independently or outside of the control of government. In fact, most saw the creation of such structures as a long-overdue extension of government down to the community or grassroots level and as the beginning of a social compact between individuals, communities and their government.

While disarmament of the bulk of the population clearly creates an opportunity for the establishment of the State’s monopoly on the use of force, it also exposes community members to the predatory activities of criminals and armed neighbours. The creation of local-level security structures, firmly under government control and empowering the lowest tier of government, has the potential to go a long way towards meeting communities’ minimum conditions for full compliance with disarmament – namely, the provision of basic security.

With clear guidelines at the state level for the creation of these structures, control mechanisms can be put in place that will reduce the dangers associated with their creation. Auxiliary reserve forces can also be considered as an interim measure and can be applied on a probationary basis to meet communities’ demand for security through a mechanism other than a generally armed citizenry – as long as these forces perform responsibly and do not abuse the authority invested in them by the state. Such forces can eventually be replaced or ‘trained up’ by and through the mainstream SSPS.

Amongst participants there was a very clear time sensitivity associated with the creation of Chiefs’ Police at the *boma* level. Disarmament has brought the issue of local security into sharp relief. While disarmament has been ongoing in several counties, neighbouring groups have not been disarmed. There exists a chain of insecurity, weak state control and heavily armed civilian populations extending well into Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda that ultimately will have to be tackled as part of a broader regional disarmament process. Until such time, and even beyond, local law enforcement structures are required.

The security vacuums are created by disarmament and the inadequate presence of GoSS security forces are instant and SPLA forces deployed as part of the disarmament exercise will ultimately withdraw or be deployed on other tasks and to different areas. Past experience has also shown that SPLA forces are not being used for the protection of communities against predatory groups. Communities are thus left vulnerable; and the need to protect the communities immediate. Solutions need to be found to ensure community security and protection of citizens. Ensuring accountable community-level policing structures may be the key to generating support for and participation in government on the part of a sceptical and still underserved citizenry.

Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.

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