PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY

in Aweil North County, South Sudan

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Contents

Foreword

The recent crisis in South Sudan highlights the importance of research on how civilians can and should be protected from deliberate violence. In December 2013, fighting broke out across South Sudan between government forces led by President Salva Kiir and opposition forces led by former Vice President Riek Machar. From its inception, the conflict has been characterized by widespread deliberate violence against civilians. At the time this report was published, over one million people had been displaced by the violence in South Sudan and almost four million were in need of humanitarian assistance.

Beginning in 2012, the Stimson Center has partnered with the Sudd Institute in Juba to explore how external protection actors could safely and effectively engage conflict-affected communities in strategies to prevent and respond to the same types of violence being wielded by armed actors in this conflict. Through the partnership, the Stimson Center and the Sudd Institute have developed research methodologies to collect information that is useful to protection actors such as peacekeeping operations.

To test these methodologies, the two organizations undertook a household survey in Aweil North County, Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, which borders Sudan. The results of that survey are analyzed in this report. They include the security priorities and perceptions of the conflict-affected communities in this volatile area. This research could be replicated by others in the same area to further develop strategies to address current threats and monitor whether and how the current crisis may be affecting the area. Depending on risks posed by undertaking research on sensitive human rights issues, similar methodologies could be conducted in other areas of South Sudan, including those most affected by the current conflict.

We hope that you will find this publication a useful contribution to understanding how community perceptions can be incorporated into the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of protection strategies. We believe this kind of community engagement is critical to the success of efforts to protect civilians from deliberate violence.

Sincerely,

Ellen Laipson   Dr. Pauline Elaine Riak
President, the Stimson Center   Executive Director, the Sudd Institute
Washington, DC, USA   Juba, South Sudan

ENGAGING COMMUNITY VOICES

The household survey conducted jointly by the Sudd Institute and the Stimson Center in April 2013 was undertaken as part of Stimson's Engaging Community Voices in Protection Strategies initiative. This initiative encourages protection actors such as UN peacekeeping operations to be more responsive and accountable to the communities they are mandated to protect.

For protection actors seeking to understand a threat in order to shape their response to it, communities that have been living with the threat can provide a wealth of information. Moreover, communities' perceptions will influence how they behave in response to the threat and to protection interventions. Incorporating community perceptions into the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of protection strategies is therefore critical to the success of those protection efforts.*

Through the Engaging Community Voices initiative, Stimson and its partners, including the Sudd Institute, have developed and tested research methodologies for understanding the priorities and perceptions of conflict-affected communities and analyzing this information in a way that is useful to protection actors. This survey demonstrates one such methodology; another option is a focus group study (which Stimson and its partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo conducted in 2012). The survey format allows less depth of discussion than a focus group format – on the other hand, a survey provides a representative view of the chosen area and allows the data to be compared over time and across different areas of the country if the same methodology is replicated.

The questions in the survey focused on different aspects of how respondents perceived their security environment, including: the threats they face, who perpetrates those threats and how, who is most vulnerable to those threats, how the community tries to protect itself from those threats and how the community perceives the other protection actors in the area. These questions were identified on the basis of Stimson research that indicated that the community's perceptions of these issues are the most fundamental for protection actors to understand and incorporate into their protection strategies in order to improve the effectiveness of their protection interventions.

* See Alison Giffen, "Community Perceptions as a Priority in Protection and Peacekeeping" Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2013 for a more in-depth exploration of how and why protection actors can incorporate community perceptions into their activities.

Introduction

The ongoing crisis in South Sudan, a political struggle that has drawn on long-standing ethnic tensions, understandably has been the focus of national and international attention since the outbreak of violence on December 15, 2013. Northern Bahr el Ghazal is one of the four states of South Sudan less directly affected by the current crisis,[1] but it has long faced a host of security challenges of its own. The current crisis has highlighted the vital importance for protection actors to understand local conflict dynamics in order to prevent them from erupting into major security crises.

In April 2013, the Stimson Center partnered with the Sudd Institute to conduct a household survey in Aweil North County in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. This survey sought to understand how people in Aweil North perceived the threats they faced and the protection actors in their area. The research team selected Aweil North County as the survey location because it experienced at least two different kinds of conflict dynamics (bombardment from Sudan and intercommunal tensions) but very little information was available about perceptions of security in the area. This report provides the most important results of the survey, as well as context for understanding those results.

The report presents the threats that the respondents identified as occurring in their communities. It also looks at how respondents perceived and responded to two particular threats (killing and aerial bombardment, which were identified by about a quarter of respondents as happening in their communities). Finally, it presents the respondents' perceptions of the army, the police, local government and UN peacekeepers as protection actors.

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1. Though Northern Bahr el Ghazal has been less affected by the current crisis than some other states, there were unconfirmed reports in the months following the outbreak of the conflict of increased Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) recruitment and defections by some SPLA leaders and soldiers in the state. In July 2014, the situation in Northern Bahr el Ghazal appeared increasingly unstable. Around 200 rebels supporting former Vice President Riek Machar attacked a construction company and raided a local clinic in Aweil Center County in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. At the time of writing this report, several clashes had been reported between pro- and anti-government forces in Aweil Center, Aweil West and Aweil North Counties.

"THEY WANT US
TO BE **SLAVES**."

Security context in Aweil North

Aweil North County lies at the northern-most edge of Northern Bahr el Ghazal state and shares a border with Sudan. The county has had a long history of tense relations with parties to the north of its border. Between 1983 and 2005, Sudan experienced its second civil war, a brutal and protracted conflict. One of several key players in this war was the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebel group, which sought independence for southern Sudan. The war culminated in 2005 with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which provided for a referendum in southern Sudan on whether to become an independent state. In 2011, southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly for its independence and the Republic of South Sudan was established with the SPLA as its army.

Border tensions between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan escalated in March 2012, when the SPLA attacked the Sudanese town of Heglig, or Panthou as it is known locally, the location of one of the last remaining oilfields on Sudanese territory. The SPLA argued that it was responding to a ground attack and aerial bombardment by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) of South Sudanese territory. Disputes over the border continued. In March 2013, the governments of Sudan and South Sudan agreed to demilitarize the so-called 14-Mile Area — a stretch of the border between Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Darfur, which includes the northern border of Aweil North — but the SPLA has continued to maintain a presence in the area and the SAF has continued to conduct aerial bombardments in Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

Aweil North's security also suffers from tense relations between its residents and Sudanese tribes or militias. The Dinka Malual, who make up the overwhelming majority of Aweil North County, have long had conflicts with the Misseriya and Rizeigat tribes. The Misseriya and Rizeigat live mainly in Sudan, but their nomadic practices traditionally have taken them onto what is now South Sudanese territory for trade or cattle grazing. Tensions have stemmed from disputes over ownership of and access to land and the Kiir River (or the Bahr al Arab, as it is known in Sudan), sometimes leading to violent skirmishes. Some of these tensions have been fanned by the Sudanese government, which used Northern tribal militias to fight against the SPLA's support base in Southern Sudan during the second civil war. Decades of raids by Northern tribes or militias on Dinka Malual communities, including abductions and enslavement of Dinka by members of the Rizeigat community, have created hostility and suspicion toward these tribes in Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

UN peacekeepers have been present in Sudan and South Sudan since 2005. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) was established after the signing of the CPA. In 2011, after South Sudan became independent, a new mission, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) took over. UNMISS has military, police and civilian components, with the majority of these resources focused on Jonglei state. Another UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UN-ISFA) was authorized in 2011 to monitor the demilitarization of the disputed region of Abyei. UNISFA's mandate was later expanded to support a Joint Border Verification

and Monitoring Mission tasked with monitoring an agreed Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) along the length of the border between Sudan and South Sudan.

At the time of the survey, UNMISS peacekeepers had a limited presence in Gok Machar, the capital of Aweil North, which is located roughly 30 kilometers south of the border with Sudan. In addition, shortly before the survey began, peacekeepers from UNISFA were ordered to deploy to the border area in Aweil North County and were making preparations to set up a base in Gok Machar. A few weeks before the survey, UNMISS staff held a one-day workshop with 67 residents in Gok Machar to raise awareness of UNMISS's mandate and activities, inform participants about UNISFA's arrival and its mandate, and explain that UNMISS was not responsible for monitoring the border with Sudan.[2]

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2. "Gok Machar residents learn about UNMISS role," announcement from UNMISS, April 9, 2013, accessed on 9 July 2014, http://unmiss.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=3465&mid=6047&ItemID=1324204.


"THEY DECEIVE PEOPLE BY BEING FRIENDS, AND **LATER START KILLING THEM**."

Perceptions of security and threats

The substantive portion of the survey began by asking respondents what security meant to them. Overall, respondents tended to define security in terms of **absence of fear** (54 percent), **freedom to earn livelihoods** (44 percent) and **freedom of movement** (34 percent). Only 18 percent of the total sample defined security in terms of **absence of violence**. Although men and women generally defined security in similar terms, women were less likely to respond to the question than men.

DEFINITIONS OF SECURITY
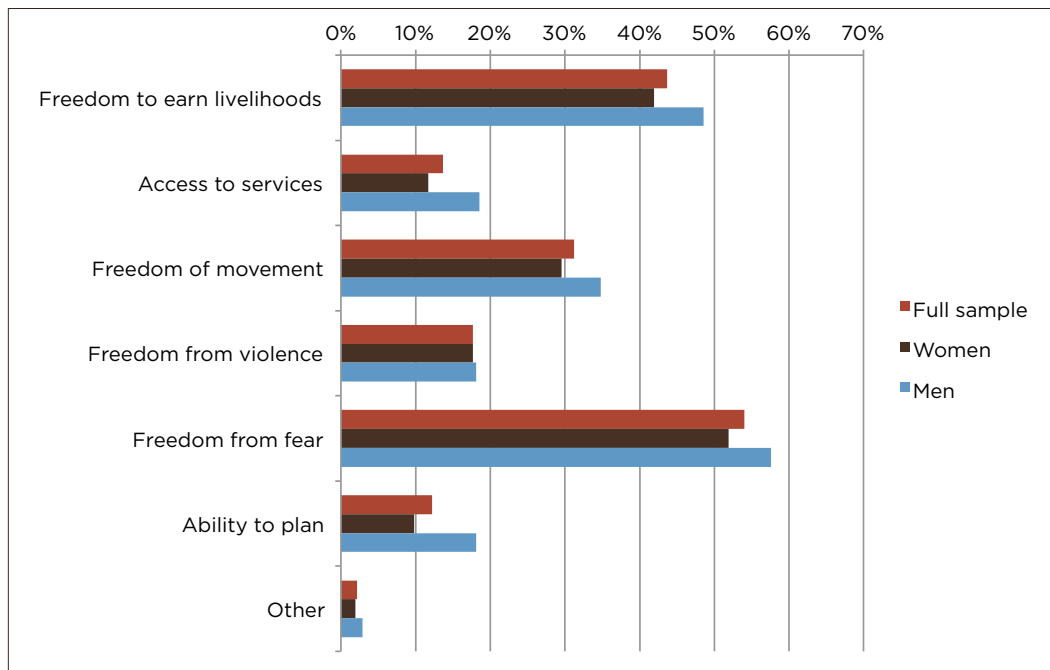
Respondents were then asked which of a list of threats they had experienced in their community since independence. The threats identified overall by the largest number of respondents were **killing** (26 percent), **aerial bombardment** (26 percent) and **cattle raiding** (11 percent).[3] Again, women were less likely to respond to the question than men.

In addition to these primary threats, some other threats were reported in smaller numbers. The following threats were reported by at least 10 percent of respondents in a given boma (the smallest local government administrative unit in South Sudan):
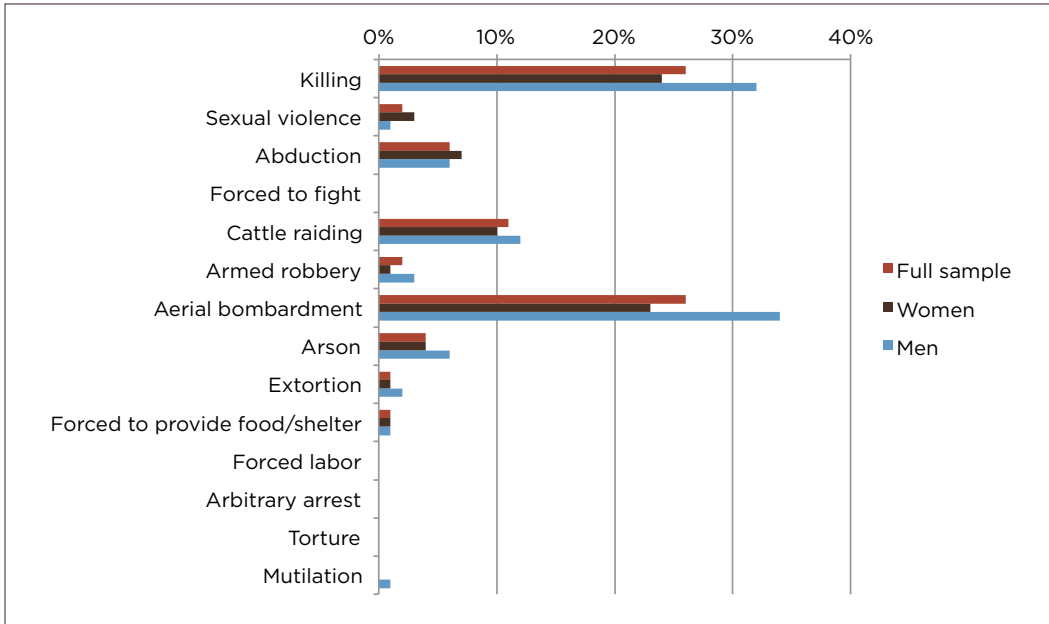
Abduction: Mayom Adhal (16 percent), Gok Machar (13 percent), Gor Ayen (13 percent) and Wathok (10 percent).

Extortion: Gor Ayen (17 percent).

Arson: Kajik (13 percent).

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3. These threats are not necessarily discrete or mutually exclusive. Please see "Overlapping threats?" text box on page 19 for more information.

THREATS

WHAT IS A "COMMUNITY"?

The survey asked people about the threats that had happened in their "community" – an ambiguous term that people may define in different ways. For instance, some may think of their village or town as their community, while others may think of the area encompassing their village and the nearest market town as their community, and others may think of the whole boma or payam (administrative divisions above the village level within a county) as their community. This may explain inconsistent responses among people in the same village or town when asked whether there had been threats in their community.

Since the purpose of the survey was to understand perceptions of security, rather than to map incidents of threats, the research team preferred to use a flexible term like "community" over a more rigid term like "village." This allowed an understanding of how people perceived their security environment, however they defined that.

Understanding the threats

Once respondents identified certain threats as having happened in their community, they were asked to identify one of those threats to describe in detail. Only killing and aerial bombardment were selected by a sufficient number of respondents to allow for further analysis of those threats.

Perpetrators

Respondents were asked who carried out the threat they had identified. The survey questionnaire listed generic response categories such as "foreign armed actors" with space for the respondent to describe the perpetrator more specifically, and enumerators were instructed not to read out the response options. These responses were then recoded by the research team to facilitate analysis. The two perpetrators most commonly identified for all threats combined were **tribes/militia** (50 percent) and the **Sudanese Armed Forces** (41 percent). For killing, the respondents were much more likely to identify tribes/militia as perpetrators rather than the SAF (63 percent vs. 36 percent). For aerial bombardment, the respondents were more likely to identify the SAF as perpetrators rather than tribes/militia (57 percent vs. 34 percent).

All respondents who identified specific tribes or militia named Sudanese ethnic or tribal groups (such as Arabs, Baggara, Jur, Maram or Rizeigat). Because these labels overlap and the research team believes that respondents used many of these terms interchangeably, the "tribes/militia" category is not broken down into further subcategories. No South Sudanese tribes were named by the respondents as perpetrators.

PERPETRATORS
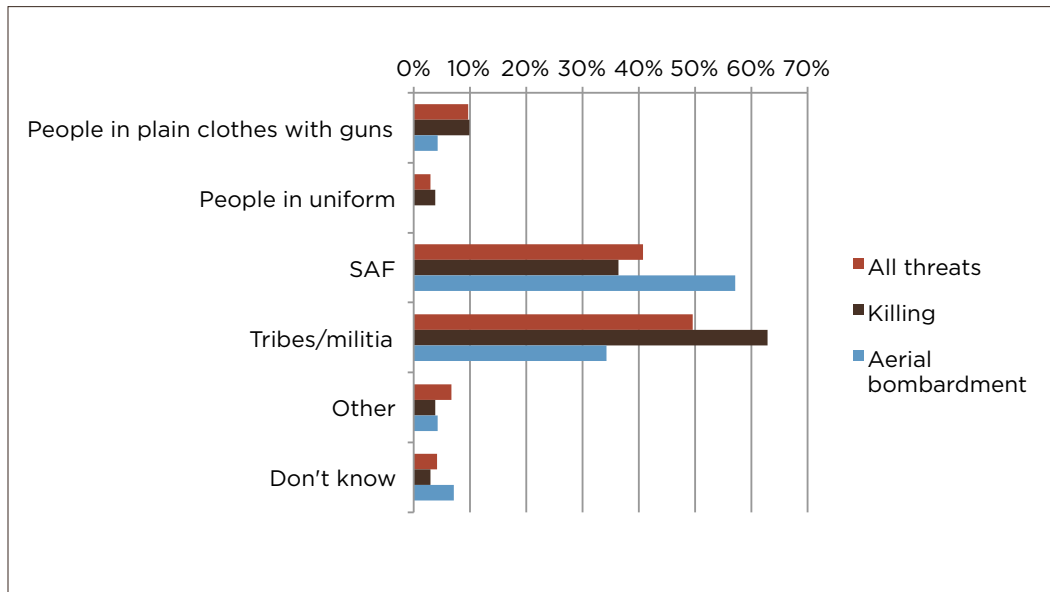
## ETHNIC TENSIONS IN AWEIL NORTH

The Baggara ethnic group comprises several tribes including the Rizeigat (from the Darfur region) and the Misseriya (from the Kordofan region). Tensions between the Dinka Malual of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and the Rizeigat and Misseriya tribes have tended to revolve around issues of access to land and the Kiir River. The Rizeigat and Misseriya are both nomadic tribes. Their traditional migratory paths take them across the border of Sudan into South Sudan (including into Aweil North). The Dinka Malual and the Rizeigat nomadic communities have traditionally held conferences to agree on migration routes for the Rizeigat into Dinka Malual areas. Separate conferences are held between the Dinka Malual and the Misseriya to discuss Misseriya herders' entry into Dinka Malual territory. These traditional community mechanisms have encountered difficulty since South Sudan's independence due to interference from various parties, including the SAF and the SPLA, as well as hostility against Northern nomadic communities among the Dinka Malual.

The tensions around resources are exacerbated by the fact that some in South Sudan perceive the Misseriya and Rizeigat to be associated with the Sudanese government or with militias that have attacked Dinka communities. During Sudan's second civil war, Baggara militias were used as proxies of the Government of Sudan to attack Dinka communities and coordinate with the Sudanese army on raids. In more recent years, the numbers of Misseriya and Rizeigat joining the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) – rebel groups fighting against the Sudanese government – have been increasing and those Rizeigat who enter Northern Bahr el Ghazal to graze and trade are often connected with or members of the SPLM-N.* The Baggara tribes are sometimes accused of being involved in attacks against the South – for example, on March 26, 2013, a Rizeigat group on horseback was accused of attacking an area near Kiir Adem in Aweil North. At least some of these accusations may stem from fears and suspicions carried over from the behaviors of proxy groups during the second civil war.

The only Sudanese party known to have access to armed aircraft of the kind used in aerial bombardments against South Sudan is the SAF. As such, the 34 percent of respondents who identified tribes/militia as perpetrators of aerial bombardment may be doing so based on a perceived association between the Sudanese tribes and the SAF.

* Small Arms Survey, *Dividing Lines: Grazing and conflict along the Sudan–South Sudan Border*, 2013.

TIME OF DAY WHEN THREAT HAPPENS
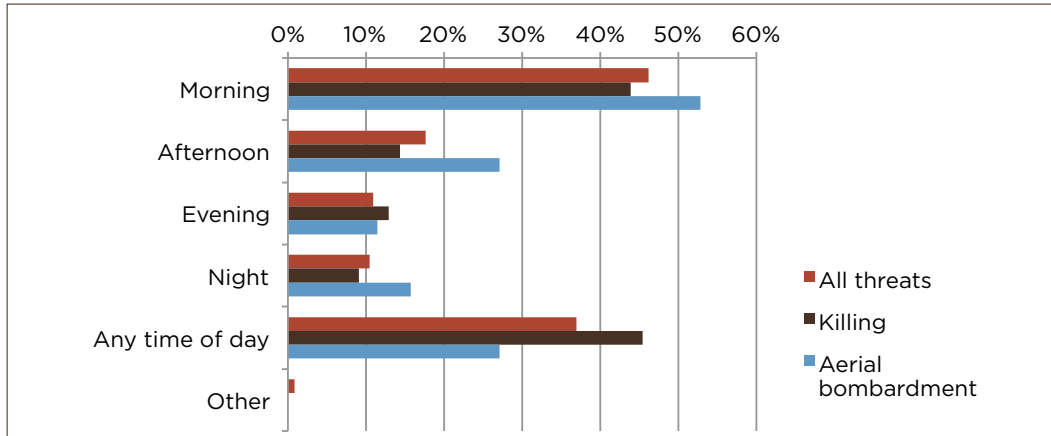

Frequency and tactics

Respondents were asked at what time of day the threat they identified occurred most often. For killing, the most common responses were **any time of day** (45 percent) or **morning** (44 percent). For aerial bombardment, the most common response was **morning** (53 percent), followed by **afternoon** (27 percent) and **any time of day** (27 percent).

Respondents were asked at what time of year the threat they identified occurred most often. For killing, the most common response by far was during the **dry season** (73 percent), followed by **any time of year** (20 percent) or the **rainy season** (17 percent). For aerial bombardment, the **dry season** was again the most common response (70 percent), followed by the **rainy season** (21 percent) and **any time of year** (16 percent).

TIME OF YEAR WHEN THREAT HAPPENS
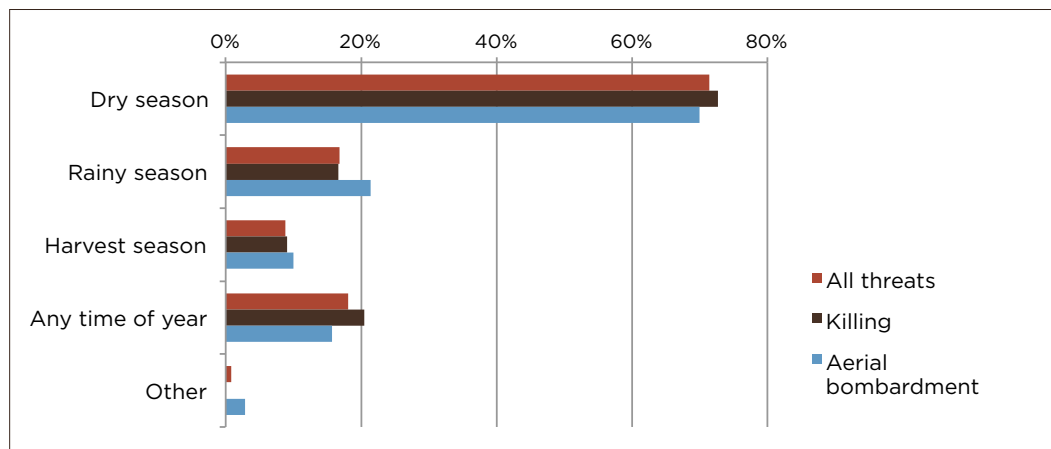
FREQUENCY OF THREAT
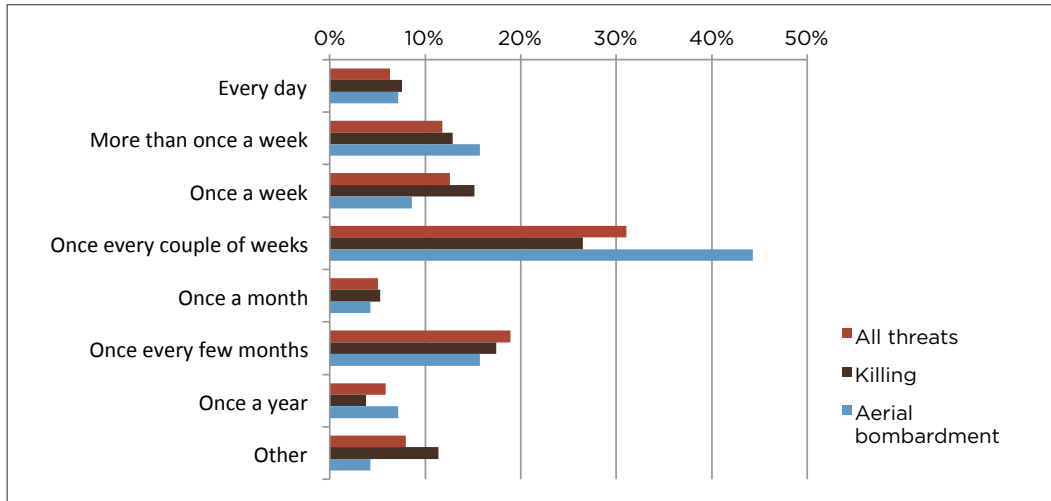
Respondents were asked how often the threat they identified occurred. For killing, there was not a strong consensus on this question; the most common response was **once every couple of weeks** (27 percent), with many respondents also saying **once every few months** (17 percent), **once a week** (15 percent) or **more than once a week** (13 percent). For aerial bombardment, the most common response was **once every couple of weeks** (44 percent), followed by **more than once a week** (16 percent) and **once every few months** (16 percent).

Respondents were asked where the threat they identified happened. For killing, the most common responses were **border areas** (71 percent) and **homes** (70 percent). **Border areas** was also the most common response for aerial bombardment (60 percent). Though **homes** was the second most common response for aerial bombardment, it was identified by only 30 percent of respondents. Respondents were also more likely to identify **outside of town/in the bush or forest** for killing (20 percent) compared to aerial bombardment (0 percent).

Respondents were asked whether they were afraid that the threat would happen again soon. Seventy-four percent of respondents who identified killing said yes, while 53 percent of respondents who identified aerial bombardment said yes.

In response to an open-ended question about how the threat was carried out, most respondents described killings in terms of either ambushes in strategic locations (such as by the river or on the roads) or raids on villages, but some different characteristics emerged in specific locations. For example, two respondents in Pan Riang village described an incident in which people were forced into a church and then burned alive, and two respondents described the abduction of children during attacks. In Langic village, respondents described people coming and initially living peacefully with them, but then turning on them and killing them. In Agukic village, several respondents described attacks as not being "direct," "official" or "open," which follow-up research in the community might help to explain.

LOCATION WHERE THREAT HAPPENS
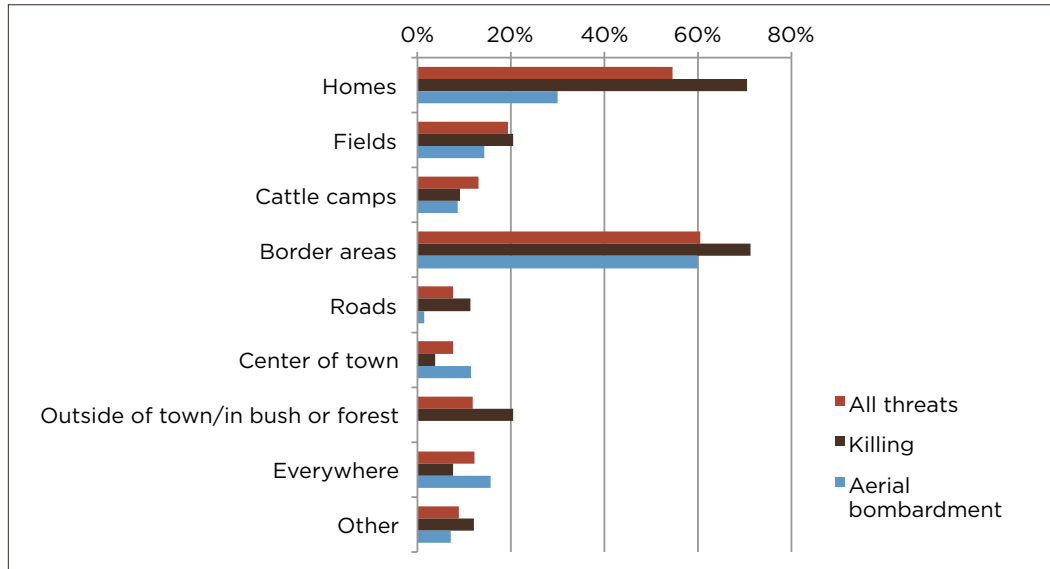
How do they carry out this threat?

"They come with their horses and kill businesspeople and civilians near Kiir River."

"They come and raid the village, they killed people in the nearby church by burning them alive, my home was burned down five times."

"They deceive us of peace [and] later attack our villages and burn them."

"They attacked people in the farms last time and sometimes they also use horses to run through the village."

"They come and stay with people peacefully and later start fighting [and] killing people in cold blood."

"They used sophisticated machine guns that the SPLA and police do not have."

"They collect taxes without clear explanation."

"They attack people in Kiir Adem using guns, military vehicles and horses."

"They first target the military bases."

"They kill people with guns, especially when the SPLA forces are not there."

"They threaten with knives and they cover your mouth with [a] cloth [so as] not to make an alarm."

"They rob us in the field, especially our grain, because the fields are very far from the village. They threaten you not to make an alarm or forcefully cover your mouth."

"They usually come here as cattle keepers and later turn around and start killing people for no reason."

"They deceive people by being friends, and later start killing them."

"It comes like any other UN plane and starts bombing the area."

"There was ground shooting first, then they bombed in the middle of the day."

"They used guns such as AK-47 and air bombardment."

Motivations

The main motivations identified by respondents for all threats combined were **resources** (37 percent), **political power** (31 percent), **trying to eliminate** their village, family, etc. (28 percent) and **hatred** (23 percent).

There were some differences in the motivations identified for killing compared to aerial bombardment. Respondents were more likely to identify **resources** as a motivation when discussing killing (43 percent) compared to aerial bombardment (29 percent). They were also much more likely to identify **trying to eliminate** their village, family, etc. as a motivation for killing (39 percent) than aerial bombardment (10 percent).

Conversely, respondents were much more likely to identify **religion/beliefs/values** as a motivation for aerial bombardment (24 percent) than killing (0 percent). They were also more likely to identify **humiliation** as a motivation for aerial bombardment (13 percent) compared to killing (5 percent).

MOTIVATIONS
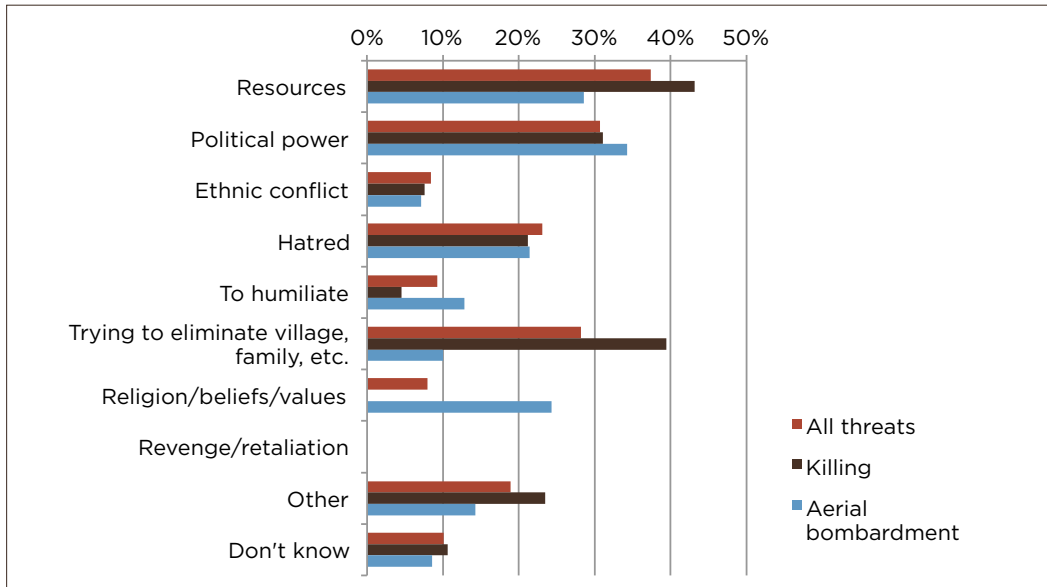
Why do you think they do it?

"They have hatred so who ever [is] Black or South Sudanese [has] to be killed, that is their plan."

"To displace people and prevent people from earning a living."

"They want [to] take our land away from us."

"To occupy our border areas."

"They [want] to extend their border to Aweil town."

"To bring … an end to the government of South Sudan."

"They [want] to invade Dinka land."

"They want us to be slaves."

"They just killed Dinkas for no good reason."

"They want to have access to Kiir Adem."

OVERLAPPING THREATS?

Since the categories of **killing** and **aerial bombardment** are not necessarily mutually exclusive (e.g., respondents may have identified "killing" as a threat when that killing happened as a result of aerial bombardment), we examined responses to the open-ended question "How do they [the perpetrators] carry out this threat?" to see if the respondents could give an indication of the extent to which responses may have overlapped between the two categories.

Only 10 percent of respondents who chose to talk about killing mentioned bombardment in their responses to the open-ended question about how the threat was carried out. Almost all of these respondents described a combination of bombardment and some kind of shooting or ground attack.

Of the respondents who chose to talk about aerial bombardment, around 25 percent responded to the open-ended question about how the threat was carried out in terms of ground attacks or in terms that implied ground attacks (i.e., mentioning attacks with guns or horses).

This suggests that, while respondents generally used the term "killing" to refer to ground attacks, there was a small overlap in the categories of "killing" and "aerial bombardment," perhaps because these threats were sometimes carried out at the same time.

Responses to the open-ended question about how the threat was carried out also indicated that there was a very small overlap in the threat categories of **killing** and **cattle raiding** – only 3 percent of respondents who chose to talk about killing mentioned cattle raiding in their response to the open-ended question about how the threat was carried out.

"CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE IN SUCH A SITUATION. THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO HIDE."

Impact of the threats

Vulnerabilities

Respondents were asked who in the community suffered most from the threat they identified. For all the threats combined, **everyone in the community** was the group identified most (63 percent). This was also the most common response in the contexts of both killing (70 percent) and aerial bombardment (57 percent).

In terms of specific groups identified as suffering the most from the threats, there were some differences between killing and aerial bombardment:

Women were more likely to be identified as suffering from aerial bombardment (23 percent) than killing (11 percent).

Men were more likely to be identified as suffering from killing (19 percent) than aerial bombardment (6 percent).

Youth were also more likely to be identified as suffering from killing (7 percent) than aerial bombardment (1 percent).

Consequences

Respondents were asked what consequences they experienced when the threat they identified had occurred in the past. For both killing (92 percent) and aerial bombardment (93 percent), the vast majority of respondents identified **having to flee** as a consequence, compared with an average of only 35 percent for all threats combined.

Respondents were more likely to identify **changes to livelihoods/essential services** as a consequence of killing (47 percent) than aerial bombardment (17 percent).

VULNERABILITIES
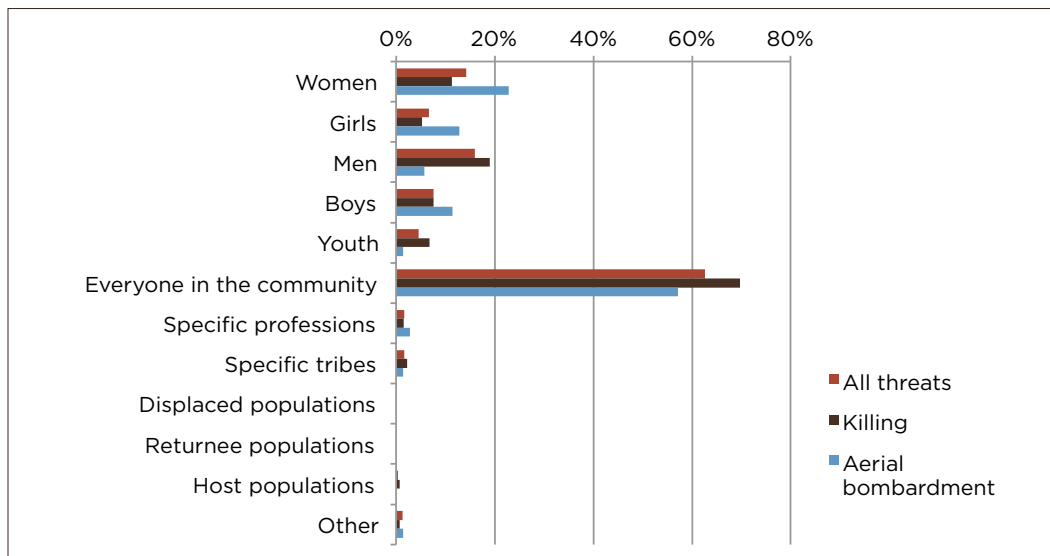
CONSEQUENCES
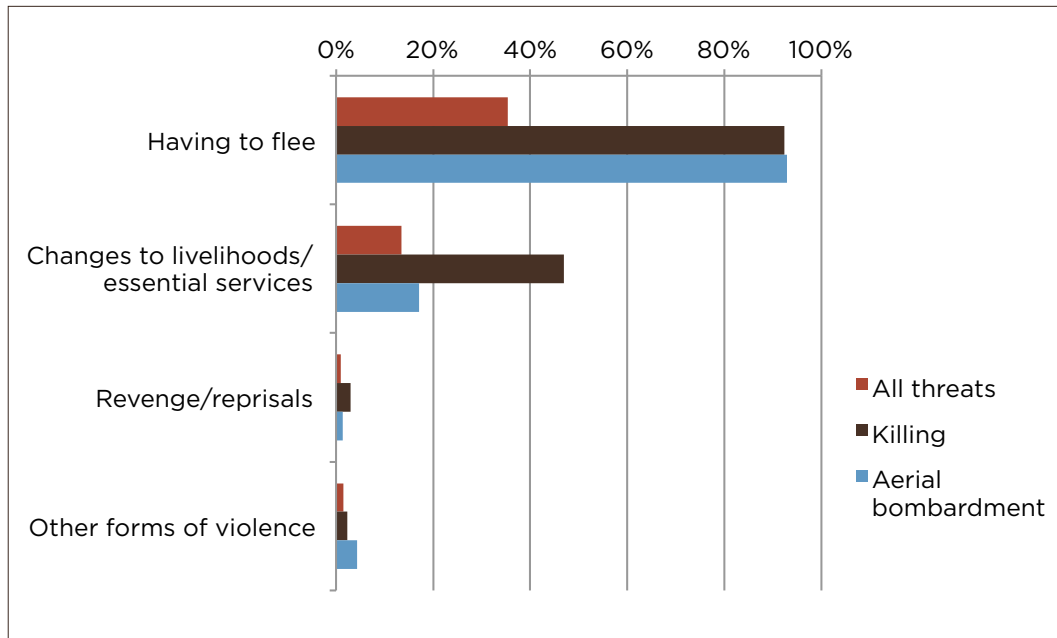
Why do they suffer the most from this threat?

Women

"Women suffer the most because they always take care [of the] children when men are away."

"Because [women] are [the] ones that always stay at home when men are away."

"Women mostly take care of the children, so when the threat happens they run to the bush with the children."

"Women [suffer most] because they don't have any guns; because they have to run with their children; because certain bombs affect pregnant women and cause abortions."

"Because we run with our children on [our] backs."

Men

"They don't want men to live in this community because they need only ladies so they can marry."

"Men suffer most because when the raiders come it is the men [who] stop or face them."

"The men try to stop the attackers from carrying [out] the violence so they bear the [brunt] of the violence more than anyone else."

"Men are the ones who fought with them and killed them during the civil war."

"It affects men because they [catch] fish for [a] living."

Children

"Blind ones cannot flee the area and children don't know war so it [is] hard for them to run away."

"Children are vulnerable in such a situation. They are not able to hide like [grown-ups]."

Tribe

"They kill Dinkas because [they] are [the] ones who fought them during [the] civil war."

"They just want to kill every Dinka."

Everyone

"Because of their brutality, they don't leave anybody found in the village."

"Because they don't leave anything [behind], either property or human beings."

"They target the whole community for being South Sudanese."

"**BECAUSE OF THEIR BRUTALITY**, THEY DON'T LEAVE ANYBODY FOUND IN THE VILLAGE."

"I RUN TO THE BUSH **TO HIDE MY FAMILY.**"

Community responses to the threats

Initial request for assistance

Respondents were asked whom they turn to for help first when the threat they identified occurs. For all the threats combined, respondents were most likely to say that they turn first to **nongovernmental organizations** (39 percent) and **traditional authorities** (38 percent) for help. These were also the most common responses, at similar rates, for killing and aerial bombardment specifically.

People were more likely to say that they turn to **other members of their community** for help when faced with killing (10 percent) than aerial bombardment (0 percent).

Self-protection strategies

Respondents were first asked an open-ended question about what they or their households did to protect themselves; then they were asked which of a list of strategies they or their communities used to avoid the threat they identified. By far, the most common response to the open-ended question (given by about 46 percent of respondents) was **nothing**. The next most common response, given by around 18 percent of respondents, was **fleeing and/or hiding**. Small numbers of respondents (about 2 to 3 percent) also mentioned **faith**, **reliance on the government or SPLA** and **defending themselves with force**.

Based on responses to the closed-ended question, the most common self-protection strategy identified for all threats combined was **fleeing the area** (49 percent). Other commonly identified strategies included **advocating to authorities** (23 percent), **forming local defense groups** (20 percent) and **avoiding certain areas** (18 percent).

INITIAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE
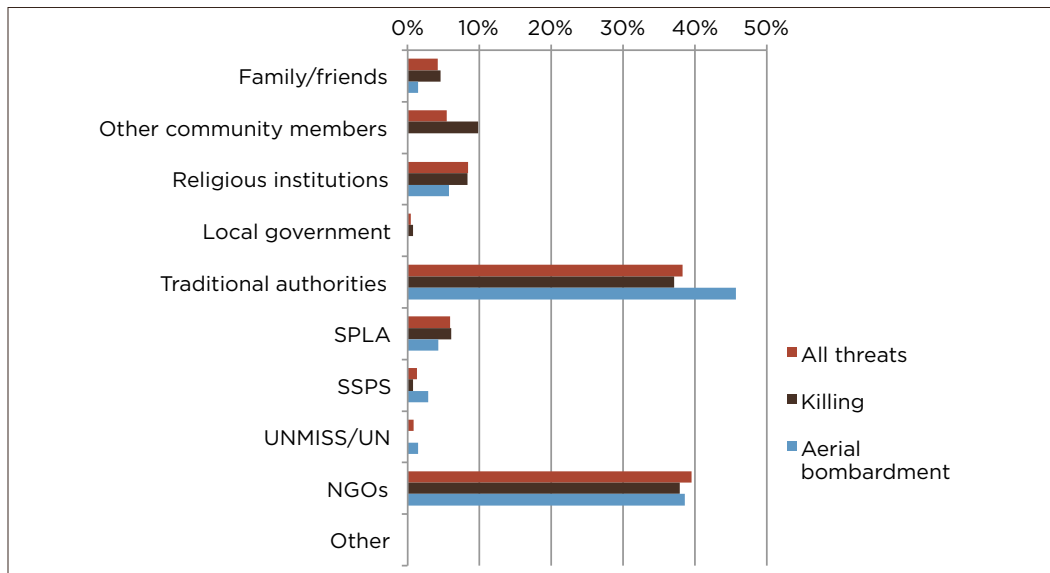
SELF-PROTECTION STRATEGIES
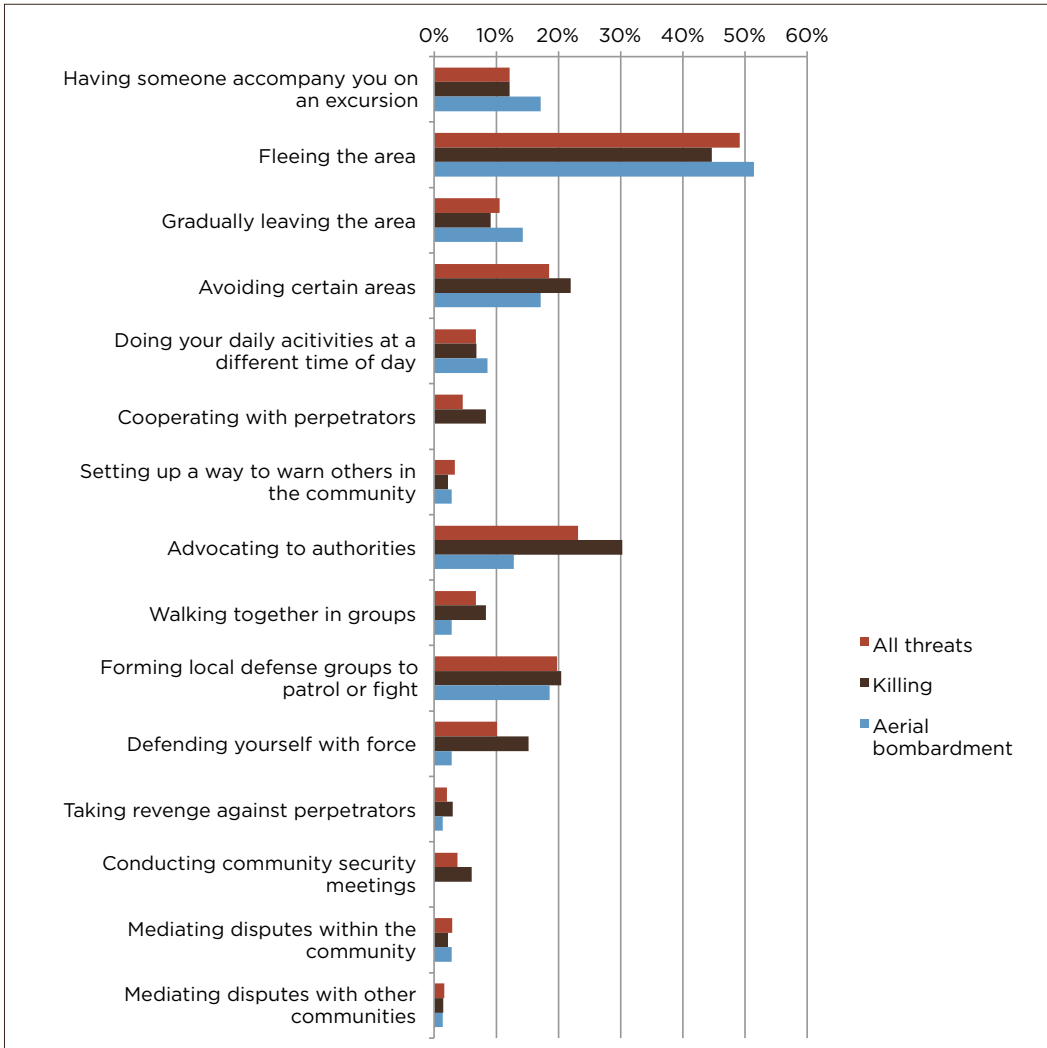
In response to the closed-ended questions, there were several strategies that were more likely to be identified to avoid the threat of killing compared to aerial bombardment. Respondents were more likely to identify **advocating to authorities** in response to killing (30 percent) compared to aerial bombardment (13 percent). **Defending themselves with force** was identified by 15 percent of respondents in the context of killing, but only 3 percent of respondents in the context of aerial bombardment. No participants identified **cooperating with perpetrators** or **conducting community security meetings** as self-protection strategies in the context of aerial bombardment, but these were mentioned by 8 percent and 6 percent, respectively, in the context of killing.

The difference between responses to the open-ended and closed-ended questions illustrates some of the challenges involved in discussing self-protection measures with communities under threat. Some activities that were identified in response to the closed-ended question were not mentioned at all in response to the open-ended one.

Activities such as fleeing that were identified in response to both the open-ended and closed-ended question were identified by a much higher proportion of respondents in response to the closed-ended question. Another example — forming defense groups — was identified by just a handful of respondents to the open-ended question compared with 20 percent in response to the closed-ended question. These differences are likely because many respondents may conceive of self-protection measures quite differently to researchers, or because respondents may need more time to think through which of their activities qualify as self-protection measures.[4]

What do you or your household do to protect yourselves?

"We protect and defend ourselves as a group [when] we are attacked by others."

"We allow our children to join the war as soldiers to defend our country."

"We just inform the government on what is happening."

"You dig some places to protect yourselves from the Antonov."

"We run to take cover, men try to fight back."

"We don't do anything to protect ourselves, we are dependent on [the] government to bring soldiers to protect us."

"I run to the bush to hide my family."

"I run away to hide my family since I do not have [a] gun to fight."

"We ran to where [the] SPLA army are."

"I run to SPLA headquarters for protection with my [family] or hide."

"We inform the SPLA and our neighboring villages."

"We just wait [in] the end because if you run to the bush you find them too."

"We have to sleep in the house and stop moving at night."

"Being attentive to any attack by Arabs to allow us [to] escape before the event, this is our major protection mechanism."

"Plan for feeding and [securing] my family, identification of hiding places."

"Our strong youth only patrol certain areas … they frequently used to come and inform us to flee the area immediately when they saw the movement of the enemy."

"We do fight back sometimes because that's the only way we can protect ourselves [from] them."

"I have nothing to protect me except my belief in God."

"We don't have anything right now since disarmament was done."

"My husband has a gun, he protects us whenever there is any attack."

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4. See Aditi Gorur, "Community Self-Protection Strategies: How Peacekeepers Can Help or Harm," Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2013 for a more detailed exploration of the importance of and challenges involved in understanding community self-protection strategies.

"THE POLICE FORCE SHOULD BE INCREASED SO THEY **PROTECT PEOPLE FROM LOCAL CLASHES.**"

Perceptions of government protection actors

Respondents were asked whether these actors were present in their communities. Eighty-nine percent of the total population responded that the local government was present, 59 percent that the SSPS (South Sudan Police Service) was present and 29% that the SPLA was present. However, none of the local authorities interviewed mentioned the SPLA when asked by interviewers which organized forces were present in the area. In one boma, the local authority interviewed said that no organized forces were present, but 33 percent of survey respondents reported that the SPLA was present. Members of the survey team, as well as other travelers to the area interviewed informally, affirm that there was some SPLA presence in the area.

The research team believes that the local authorities' reluctance to discuss the SPLA's presence likely is due to the agreement between the Sudanese and South Sudanese governments signed in March 2013 to demilitarize the 14-Mile Area. Although the SPLA claimed to have withdrawn troops in line with the agreement, several reports indicate that the area still has not been demilitarized. Local authorities may have denied SPLA presence in order to support the claim that South Sudan had complied with the agreement.

Those respondents who identified each actor as being present was then asked further questions about the actors. When asked how often they saw each actor in their communities, the most common response for all three actors was **every day**. Seventy percent of respondents said that they saw the local government every day, 62 percent said that they saw the SSPS every day and 50 percent said that they saw the SPLA every day.

Overall, the population viewed all three actors quite favorably as protection actors. When asked whether each actor tried to protect them, 94 percent said yes with respect to the SPLA, 87 percent with respect to the SSPS and 72 percent with respect to the local government. When asked how effective each actor was at protecting them, the most

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PROTECTION ACTORS IN THE COMMUNITY
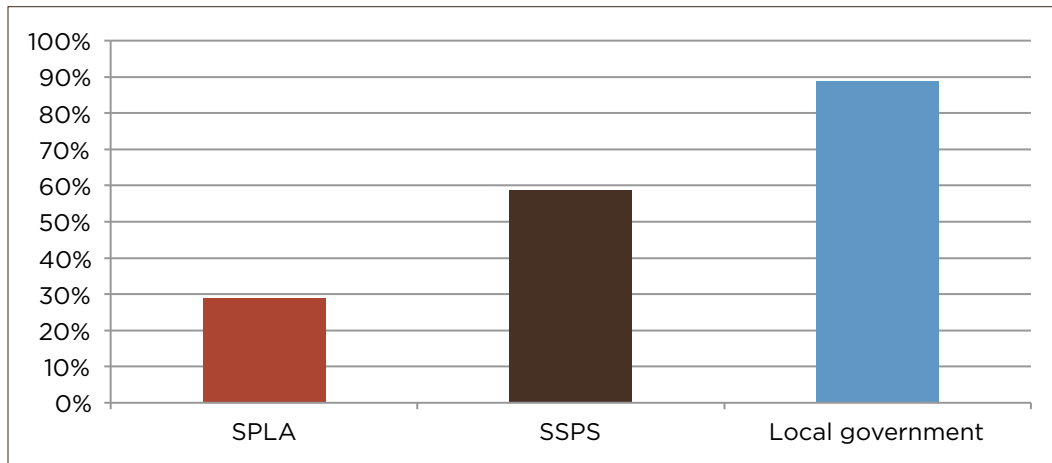
PERCEIVED ATTEMPT TO PROTECT

common response was **very effective** (66 percent for SPLA, 53 percent for SSPS and 50 percent for the local government). When asked whether each actor protected everyone or only certain people, almost all respondents said they protected **everyone** (99 percent for SPLA, 98 percent for SSPS and 97 percent for local government).

The population also indicated quite a high level of trust in these actors. Eighty-two percent said they trusted the SPLA, 71 percent said they trusted the SSPS and 77 percent said they trusted the local government.

There were some differences between men's and women's perceptions of these actors. Women were less likely to say they trusted the SPLA (78 percent vs. 90 percent) or the local government (73 percent vs. 86 percent) compared to men. Women were also less likely to say they saw the SSPS in their community everyday (59 percent vs. 68 percent).

In addition to these closed-ended questions, respondents were asked open-ended questions about what more each actor should be doing to protect them.

With regard to the SPLA, the most common response (given by around 30 percent of those who responded to the question) was **nothing**. About 16 percent said that the SPLA should be **better supported** with food or finances. Approximately 6 to 9 percent suggested activities related to **patrolling or monitoring the border**, **protecting or defending people**, **increasing their numbers** or **providing development or humanitarian services** (for example by providing food or health services).

With regard to the SSPS, **nothing** was again the most common response (around 25 percent of respondents), followed closely by **increasing their numbers** (22 percent). Approximately 10 percent of respondents indicated that they wished to see **increased training/resources/discipline** for the SSPS, while about 8 percent said that the police

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS AT PROTECTING
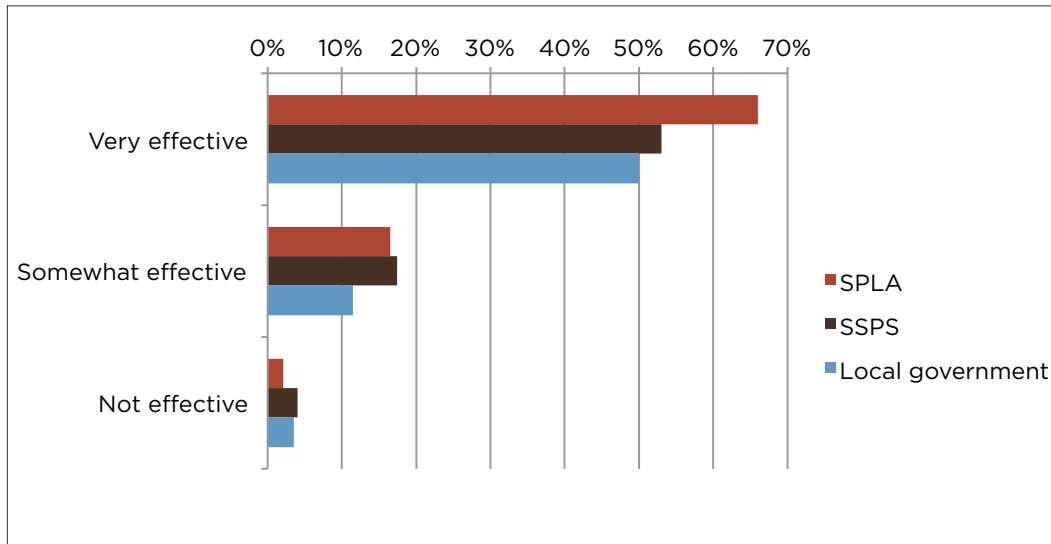
should be placed **closer to communities** or that police stations should be built within communities. Around 5 percent mentioned **patrolling** or **maintaining law and order** or suggested that the SSPS should be **better supported** with food or finances.

With regard to the local government, **nothing** was also the most common response (about 23 percent of respondents). Approximately 12 percent mentioned ideas related to **providing development or humanitarian services** (for example by providing food or drilling boreholes), and around the same number suggested that the local government should **report and advocate** their concerns to others (such as higher-level government authorities or NGOs). About 9 percent mentioned concepts relating to **improved communication** with the community (for example, moving about the community and talking with people to understand their security concerns, or informing the community of security threats). Approximately 7 percent said that the **local government should be strengthened** or supported in some way (e.g., by being given greater resources or authority) and about the same number suggested **dispute resolution** within the community.

In addition to these questions about the SPLA, SSPS and local government, respondents were asked whether anyone else took steps to protect them. Only 6 percent of respondents said yes and their responses were diverse — six respondents mentioned the UN or UN agencies, four mentioned local defense groups, four mentioned NGOs, three mentioned a religious figure, two mentioned a traditional authority, two mentioned UNMISS and one mentioned UNISFA.
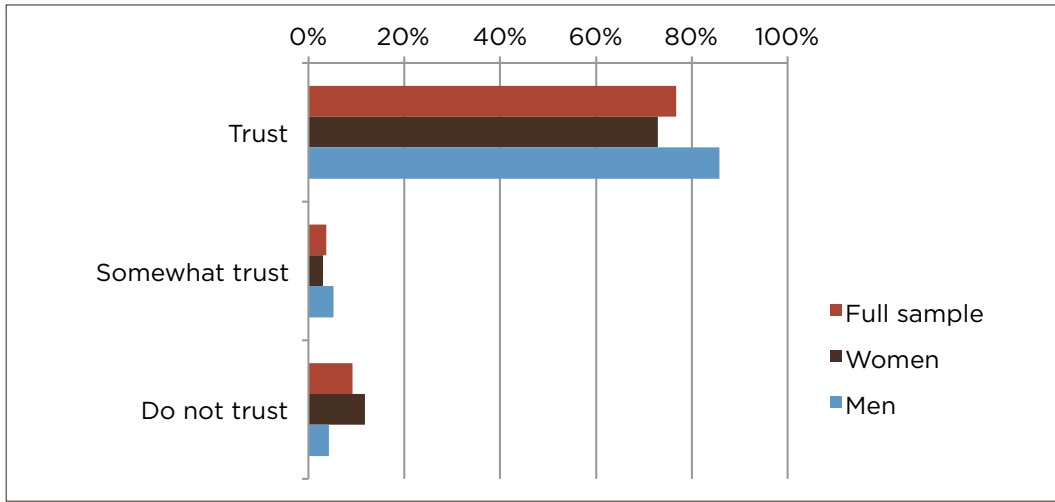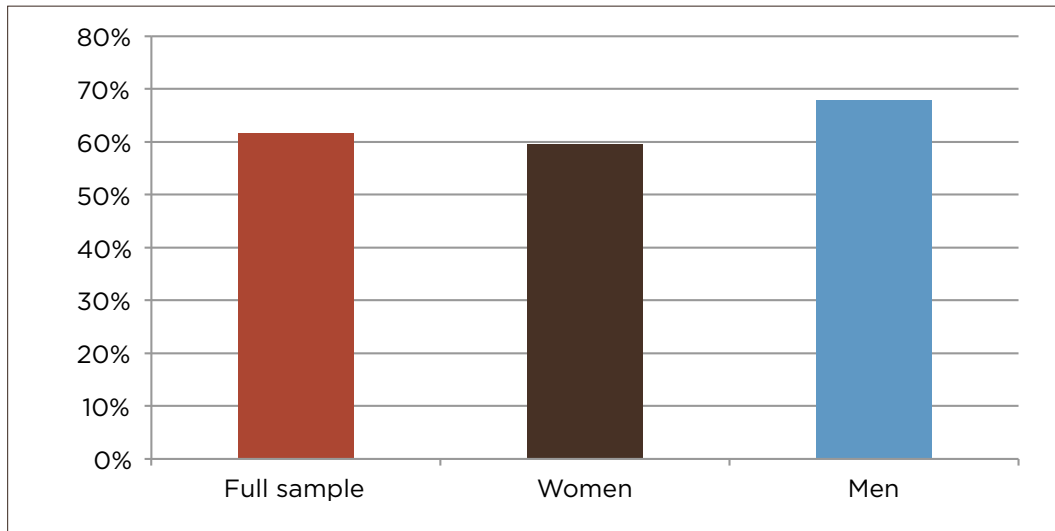
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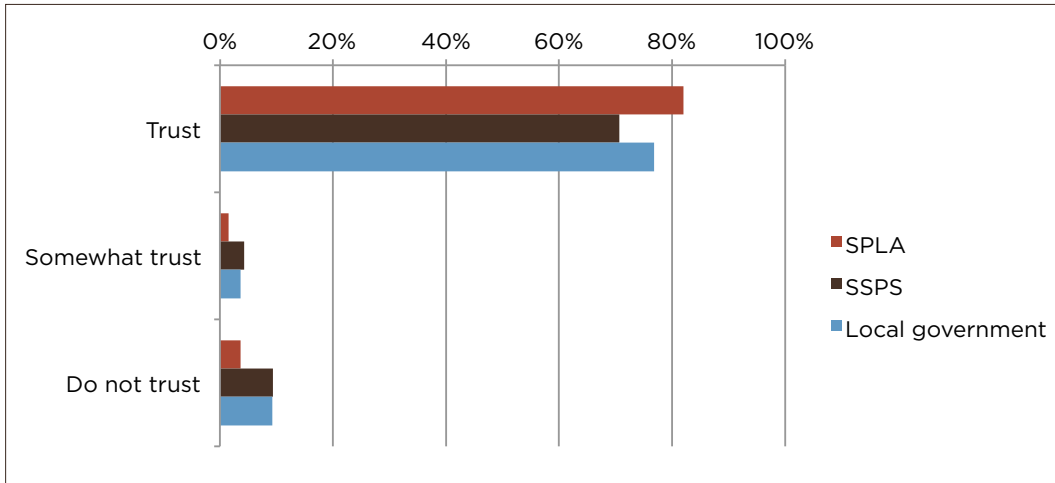
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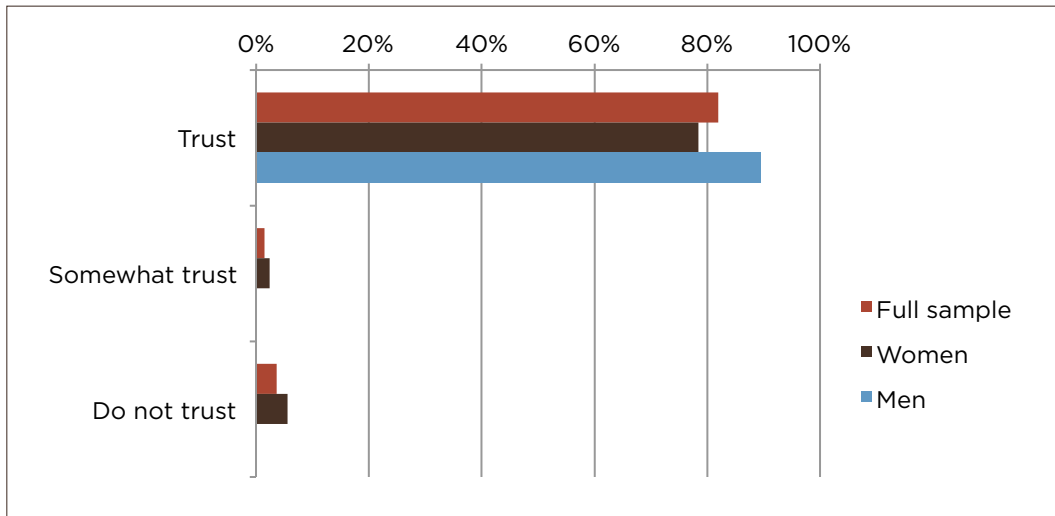
TRUST IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SEEING SSPS EVERY DAY

EXAMINING POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF STATE PROTECTION ACTORS

Survey respondents reported relatively low SPLA presence compared to the SSPS and local government but very positive perceptions of the SPLA. These favorable views could be an accurate reflection of the community's perceptions of the SPLA on the strength of their current protection efforts, but they could also be influenced by some other factors such as positive historical associations (the SPLA has a history of protecting the border against raiders from the North) as well as ethnic affiliation (the SPLA in the area are, like the residents, mostly Dinka). Perceptions may also have been influenced by SPLA activities in the area shortly before the survey. On March 6-7, 2013, SAF forces attempted to cross the Kiir River in Aweil North County but were repelled by the SPLA. This incident was likely to have been fresh in the memories of survey respondents one month later.

Finally, it is possible that respondents did not answer honestly. Despite statements from the research team that they were not affiliated with the government, respondents may have believed that there was some connection and may not have felt free to express their views openly.

What more should they be doing to protect you?

SPLA

"They should buy war planes to bomb the North."

"They should maintain border conflicts only."

"We want SPLA officers to provide SPLA with food; SPLA salaries have to be paid every month."

"They should increase their numbers to cover the whole border area."

"I need [the] government to buy powerful guns [for the] SPLA."

"Cooperate with the local people."

"SPLA can protect us if their salaries, food, medicine are available for them."

"I would want SPLA soldiers to stay in Kiir Adem and not home with us."

SSPS

"They should protect our community from criminals, they should also help in protecting Kiir Adem."

"They should be fair to all people."

"We trust SPLA more than SSPS."

"They are so weak that they cannot do anything to protect us."

"Our police forces are ill equipped."

"The police force should be increased so they protect people from local clashes."

"More training and tactics in protection."

"There are few people and they are old, so they are not able to perform their duties."

"They should inform people on security issues."

"More disciplinary training on police regulations."

"They should respond to our cases of domestic violence."

"They should be given more arms to boost security in our area."

"Creation of community police together with … support from the chiefs."

"Let [them] continue to prevent youth from fighting each other."

"They have to know the law and apply it as well."

"They should patrol on the road and in the village."

"They must know their limits when they are doing their duties. Some policemen can use their power to humiliate us, that is not good at all."

"We need patrolling [at] night."

"Educate people to know what [the] police do."

"They should be given enough communication and cars."

"I want their communication to be … effective such that we are always aware of dangers."

Local government

"They should inform the community in case there is any information about insecurity."

"They should report any vulnerable people to any NGOs that may help them."

"Sensitizing people on a program that is happening in the community."

"Coordinate with SPLA and police in any security situation [that] arises."

"I don't know what they could do to protect us."

"We need our local chief to be empowered by the government."

"Settle disputes among the community."

"They should be reinforced with soldiers to protect the communities."

"They should give guns to everybody for protection."

"Consultation with [the] community and conduct security meetings."

"Train youth to protect the community."

"Walk around the community every day to … know what threats and problems the community faces."

"I want them to talk to state and national government."

"They [should] stop taking UN food to their houses and [forgetting] others."

"Build [a] court center nearby the village."

"They should work for everyone, not [just] some individuals."

"Lobby for NGOs to support returnees."

"Nothing because they are just civilians like us."

"They should collect resources for the army."

"Deploy more troops to protect us."

"They need to go to Juba and talk to [the] government about our needs."

"Put some women in the system so they can share decision-making."

"They should seek opinions from village leaders."

"They should be given more powers to protect the community."

"**THEY SHOULD BE REINFORCED WITH SOLDIERS** TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITIES."

Perceptions of UNMISS

The survey asked respondents, first, whether they had heard of UNMISS and, second, whether there were UN soldiers present in their community. The survey questionnaire asked about the presence of "UN soldiers" rather than "UNMISS" for two reasons: first, because some respondents may not have known the name UNMISS and, second, because the research team did not know whether UNISFA forces would have arrived in the area by the time of the survey and, if they had, whether respondents would be able to distinguish between the two UN peacekeeping operations.

Overall, 27 percent of respondents said they had heard of UNMISS and 8 percent said that UN soldiers were present in their community. Women were less likely than men to say that they had heard of UNMISS (22 percent vs. 38 percent), but there was no significant difference by sex in responses to the question about whether UN soldiers were present in the community.

Responses indicating that UN soldiers were present in the community were highest by far in the boma of Gok Machar, where 47 percent of respondents said they were present. Gok Machar boma also had the highest percentage of respondents who had heard of UNMISS (77 percent).

All respondents who indicated that they had heard of UNMISS were asked an open-ended question about UNMISS's role in South Sudan. The most common response by far, given by over half of the respondents who answered the question, was that they **didn't know** UNMISS's role. Around 10 to 15 percent of responses mentioned concepts related to **protecting or defending people**; bringing, encouraging or maintaining **peace**; or engaging in **humanitarian or development** activities (for example, providing food or

HEARD OF UNMISS
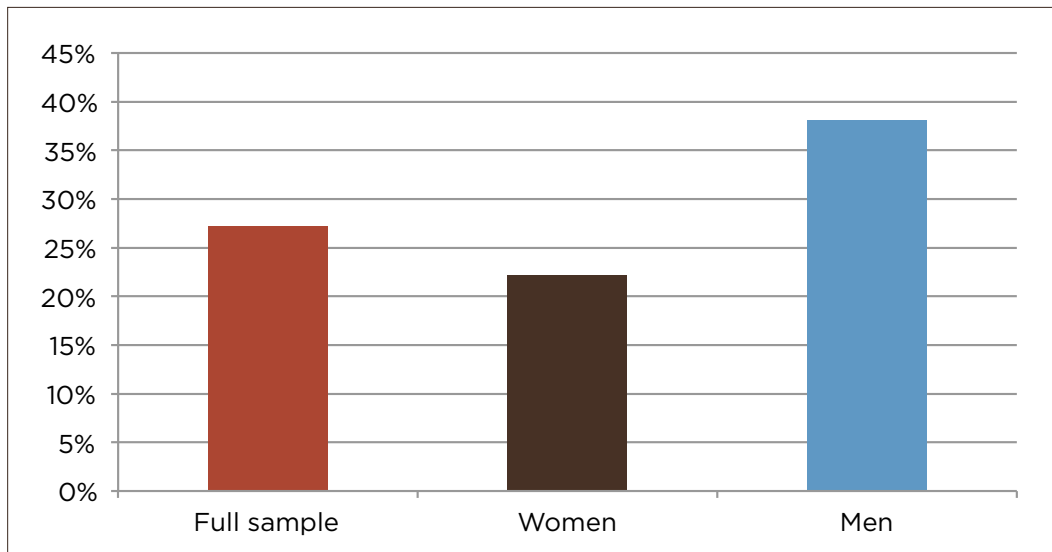
mosquito nets). A small percentage of respondents also mentioned concepts relating to **patrolling or monitoring the border** or **working with government actors** (including activities related to the armed forces, police, justice or corrections). A few respondents said that UNMISS was doing nothing (for example, that they simply stay in their compound in Gok Machar).

In some areas, local authority interviewees and survey respondents had slightly different perceptions of UNMISS's presence and roles. In one payam (a South Sudanese administrative unit above the boma level but below the county level), for example, a local authority interviewed said that UNMISS was present but only 1 percent of survey respondents in the same payam said that UN soldiers were present in their community. Authorities in one payam and one boma mentioned weekly meetings between UN-MISS and the police, but survey respondents seemed unaware of the meetings.

On the whole, the local authorities interviewed did not have a good understanding of UNMISS's mandate or activities. Three said they did not know what UNMISS did. One of these indicated an understanding that UNMISS had a mandate to protect civilians, but said this was not possible since UNMISS was located in Gok Machar whereas the majority of the fighting happened along the border. Three described UNMISS's activities as working with the police, SPLA or justice system. One said that UNMISS's role was to witness the violence perpetrated by the SAF against civilians but that they usually arrived after the violence had ended.

There were also a number of more detailed follow-up questions about UNMISS that were only asked if the respondent indicated that UN soldiers were present in their community. Since very few respondents indicated that UN soldiers were present, and since these responses were spread out in small percentages across a large number of bomas, the sample of people who responded to these questions likely was not representative of the population of Aweil North.

We are concerned that all of these follow-up questions about UNMISS are from a sample too skewed to provide reliable results. With that caveat, of the respondents who indicated that UN soldiers were present in their community, when asked what those UN soldiers did in their community, the most common responses were **monitor/patrol the border with Sudan** (42 percent) and **patrol within the community** (38 percent). When asked what else they would like the UN soldiers to do to protect them, the most common responses were **patrol within or outside the community** (51 percent) and **increase their presence in the community** (38 percent).

What is UNMISS's role in South Sudan?

"They immunize children."

"I do not understand, they are just moving from morning to evening using vehicles."

"They are sitting idle in the camp, many were killed. They are doing nothing."

"They protect civilians, they bring peace, they bring food."

"They are protecting the border of South and North."

"I just hear about them but I don't know their role. They live near the border."

"I am told that they are the ones to prevent Arabs [from attacking] us."

"They are here to resolve conflicts."

"They stay in the border to stop clashes. They make peace between us and our enemies."

"I don't know, I just see the helicopter. Maybe they like to monitor what is in the sky."

"They meet with local authorities and find out what their concerns are, they also come here every week to brief local police."

"The UNMISS brought food, medicine to people by air. Now they don't come [anymore] except in Gok Machar."

"To preach peace within the community and at the border."

"Check the police's work or train them."

"Monitor the movement of the returnees who came from Northern Sudan."

"They provide food and other things such as drilling boreholes for the village to use."

"They bring things like mosquito nets and other things."

"I really do not know exactly their work but I think they are there to develop our country."

"The educated people might know their role."

"They see prisoners."

"They play politics between us and [the] Arabs."

"They separate the parties which are fighting, like when SPLA fought with Arabs in Kiir Adem."

"When people are killed they write the number of casualties."

"They protect civilians during the war and patrol the Kiir Adem."

"They are peacekeepers, they protect civilians, they provide some training to police."

"THEY SHOULD BE FAIR TO **ALL PEOPLE.**"

Demographic information

The median age of respondents was 39 years, with a minimum respondent age of 18 years and a maximum of 100 years. Extrapolating based on the number of persons under the age of 18 reported in each household as a proportion of total household size, minors comprised 49 percent of the total population in the area surveyed.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents were female and 31 percent were male. Extrapolating based on the number of females reported in each household as a proportion of total household size, females comprised 51 percent of the total population in the area surveyed. (Refer to the Methodology section for an explanation of how the overrepresentation of women in the survey may have affected the results.)

Eighty-one percent of respondents had not completed a primary education, 18 percent had completed a primary education and 1 percent had completed a secondary or higher education.

All respondents identified their tribe as Dinka or Dinka Malual.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents identified their occupation as subsistence farmer, fisher or hunter, and 10 percent as agricultural, forestry or fishery laborer. Seventeen percent said they had no occupation.

Seventy-five percent of respondents identified their source of livelihood as subsistence crop farming, 11 percent as subsistence animal farming, and 6 percent each as wages/salary and business enterprise.

Thirty percent of respondents identified themselves as returnees and 8 percent as internally displaced persons.

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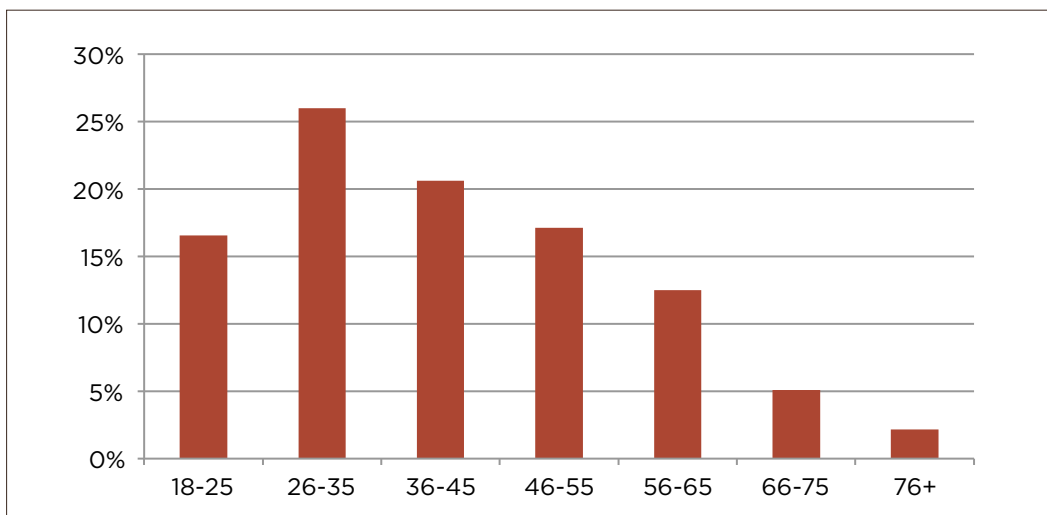
"TO PREACH PEACE
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY
AND AT THE BORDER."
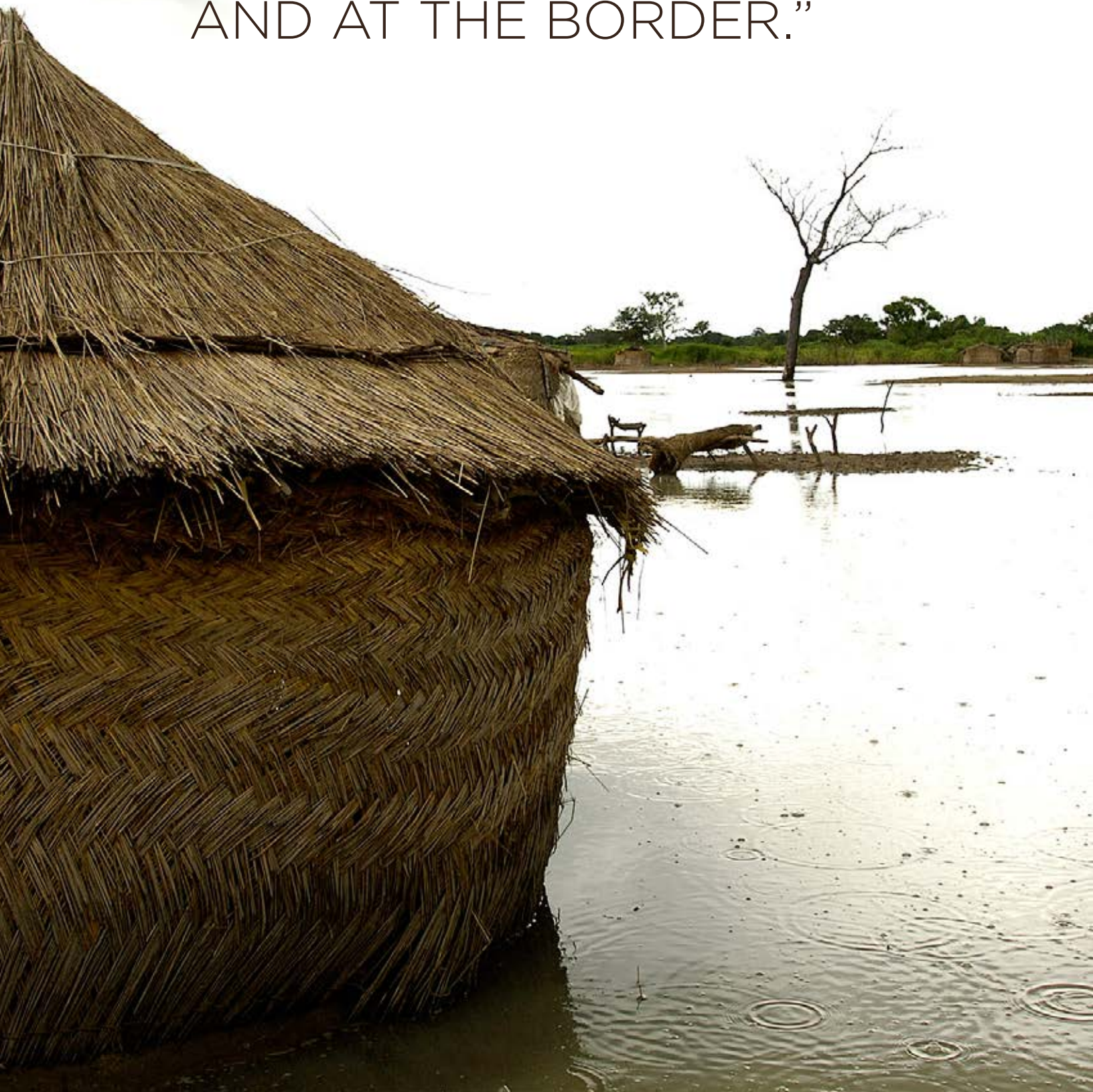
Methodology

The data in this report come from a household survey project conducted jointly by the Sudd Institute and the Stimson Center in April 2013. The selection of respondents followed a random sampling procedure designed to be representative of Aweil North County in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) provided a map of the county divided into 35 enumeration areas (EAs) in proportion to total population size based on its census data. Households were randomly selected within each EA via interval sampling. [5] The total number of households surveyed within each EA ranged from 16 to 26, yielding a total sample of 689 respondents. In addition, the survey team conducted seven interviews with local authorities.

The survey team encountered a number of challenges during survey enumeration. Five out of the 35 EAs provided by the NBS could not be accessed due to logistical difficulties. The research team does not believe this process introduced bias into the sample.

In addition, the survey team attempted to recruit an even balance of male and female enumerators, but was able ultimately only to recruit one female enumerator with the necessary skills and experience. It is difficult to say whether this imbalance might have influenced responses but the research team considers it unlikely to have had a significant effect.

Another challenge was the oversampling of women due to the non-availability of men. The survey team took efforts to minimize this problem, such as by varying the times and days at which households were visited, but the final sample includes roughly twice as many women as men. The survey team reports that seasonal migration of men and daytime work activities away from home likely caused the imbalance. As a consequence, the survey overrepresents women.

There is reason to believe that the associated biases are small. Most outcomes reported in this report do not vary significantly by sex. One important exception may be the overall reporting of threats — although women tended to identify the same *types* of threats in their communities as men (e.g., killing and aerial bombardment), a smaller *proportion* of women tended to report those threats compared to men (e.g., 24 percent of women vs. 32 percent of men identified killing and 23 percent of women vs. 34 percent of men identified aerial bombardment). This suggests that our estimates of the overall level of threats may be slightly downward biased relative to a gender-balanced sample. In our analysis, we focus on the full sample results but disaggregate by sex where important differences are observed.

To view the survey instrument, please visit **www.stimson.org/PDFs/Sudd_Survey.pdf**.

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5. For EAs with a total population under 200 households, the full EA was mapped and then households were selected through interval sampling (according to a selection table created in advance, allowing a gap of a certain number of households in between each household selected). For larger EAs, the EA was divided into territories of 40 to 60 households, one of which was randomly selected to be mapped and surveyed.

About the Stimson Center

The Stimson Center is a nonprofit and nonpartisan think tank that finds pragmatic solutions to global security challenges. In 2014 Stimson celebrates 25 years of pragmatic research and policy analysis to:

- Reduce nuclear, environmental and other transnational threats to global, regional, and national security.

- Enhance policymakers' and the public's understanding of the changing global security agenda.

- Engage civil society and industry in problem-solving to help fill gaps in existing governance structures.

- Strengthen institutions and processes for a more peaceful world.

Stimson is effective and innovative. It develops path-breaking approaches to non-conventional challenges such as water management, wildlife poaching and responses to humanitarian crises. At the same time, Stimson plays a key role in debates on nuclear proliferation, arms trafficking and defense policy. The MacArthur Foundation recognized Stimson in 2013 with its "institutional genius" Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Stimson is funded by research contracts, grants from foundations and other donations. For more information, **visit www.stimson.org**.

Stimson's Project on Civilians in Conflict

Civilians in Conflict, a project of Stimson's Future of Peace Operations Program, envisions a world in which the international community, nation-states and local communities effectively eliminate violence against civilians in conflict-affected societies. As a contribution to this ambitious vision, the project works to expand and improve international efforts to develop effective prevention and response mechanisms. The Civilians in Conflict project looks at a number of areas that continue to perplex policy-makers and practitioners and undermine strategies to protect including: engaging communities in protection strategies; using force to protect civilians; working with humanitarian actors; building civilian capacity; combining political, other civilian and military resources to protect effectively; and tailoring strategies to protect civilians to specific contexts. For more information on Civilians in Conflict, please visit **www.stimson.org/research-pages/civilians-in-conflict**.

About the Sudd Institute

The Sudd Institute is an independent research organization that conducts and facilitates research and training to inform public policy and practice, to create opportunities for discussion and debate and to improve analytical capacity in South Sudan. The Sudd Institute's intention is to improve significantly the quality, impact and accountability of local, national and international policy and decision-making in South Sudan in order to promote a more peaceful, just and prosperous society.

Our Philosophy

The Sudd Institute is premised on the belief that public policy must be informed by reliable data, objective analysis and thoughtful debate. As South Sudan embarks on critical state-building, nation-building and development initiatives, little is known and understood about the country and the needs of its institutions and people. The Institute was established to close this knowledge gap and help ensure that decisions made during this critical period in the country's history result in positive change.

Our Mission

The Sudd Institute aims to promote informed and accountable policy and practice that responds to the needs, wants and well-being of the South Sudanese people by:

- Conducting, facilitating and communicating high quality, independent and action-oriented research and analysis;

- Providing opportunities for discussion and debate; and

- Improving analytical capacity and research skills in South Sudan.

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Acknowledgements

PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY

in Aweil North County, South Sudan

Effective efforts to prevent and respond to deliberate violence against civilians hinge on the safe engagement of the conflict-affected communities that external actors, such as peacekeeping operations, seek to protect. Systematic research is one way that protection actors can begin to engage communities. This publication provides an example of how research can be applied to understand community perceptions of security and priorities for protection.

In April 2013, the Stimson Center partnered with the Sudd Institute to conduct a household survey in Aweil North County in Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan. The state, which shares a border with Sudan, faces a host of security challenges and was growing increasingly unstable at the time this report was published. The survey asked residents of Aweil North County about threats to their community, self-protection measures and perceptions of protection actors including state security forces and peacekeepers, all critical information needed to develop a protection strategy. This report provides the most important results of the survey, as well as context for understanding those results.

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