Aweil state CSA Summary Report

May 2018

Aweil

Community Security Assessment
Aweil, South Sudan (May 2018)
Introduction:

In this report, **security** is defined as the protection of 'people' and their assets from violence or theft. It relates to potential harm that may be caused by intentional actions by people, when their actions are intended to harm others directly, or when acts intended to harm others also pose a further threat to more other people. **Safety** is connected to but is broader than security. **Safety** is defined as the protection of people from harm. Such harm may arise as a consequence of insecurity but also accidents, fire, flood, disease or other causes including threats posed by the environment or animals.

The report summarises key safety and security assessment findings carried out by Saferworld and implementing CIPAD in Aweil in May 2018. It summarises major community security threats and recommended solutions to stabilize community safety and security in Aweil State, as identified by those involved in the research.

Aweil State is being referred to by humanitarian agencies and government as a "green state" because the State has not been directly affected by the national conflict. However, the rebellion of former South Sudan Army Chief of Staff General Paul Malong Awan Anei has created fear among the communities that the war may extend to Aweil State.

Over the past couple of years, many families or households in Aweil State have reportedly fled to neighbouring Sudan due to severe economic situation in South Sudan, in search of food, safety, and social services.

1. **Main threats to community safety and security in Aweil**

According to communities, authorities and security providers engaged the community safety and security assessment, the major causes of insecurity to communities in Aweil town are:

- **Theft and robbery**: During the research, the majority of respondents cited the main threat in Aweil town as theft and robbery. A Police Captain said, "*When rainy season comes, we are in problem, our work become bigger and we have less number of police personnel to cover the whole town, citizen think that we are doing nothing enough to fight crime but the problems are means of transport, bad roads*".

- **State border conflicts:** Aweil State and Gogrial State border conflict: border conflicts between Aweil South community in Aweil State and Aguok community in Gogrial State were reported by the communities, CSOs, government officials, INGOs, UN agencies, and individuals as the major issue affecting peace and security in Aweil State.

- **Occupied villages:** Aguok communities have occupied more than 21 villages and have threatened to fight the host community in the Aweil South areas. This issue was negotiated

1

Aweil community security assessment, May 2018

last year through an organized peace conference. There is need for another dialogue to be organised between the communities of Kongdier, Buoncuai and Aguok in the Aweil/Gogrial border. Aweil and Lol State border conflict: There is an administrative border dispute between Gomjuer East Payam of Lol State and Mariem East Payam of Aweil State. This year, the dispute escalated into violent conflict resulting in the killing of a resident from Lol state. The issue remains unresolved and tension remains high.

- **County and payam border conflicts:** There is a serious border conflict between Aweil Municipality and the newly formed neighbouring county of Aweil Centre. Disputes over borders between Aweil Centre County and Arroyo County remain unresolved. This has kept community tensions high between the two communities.

- **Chieftainship conflicts (Boma Conflicts):** Participants reported that random appointment of many Chiefs outside the Local Government Act 2009, has been at the root of conflicts in several Bomas. Politicians appoint their relatives as Chiefs without the consent of the community.

- **Land grabbing:** This was reported as a major problem in arable lands and demarcated residential and commercial plots in Aweil town. The victims are said to be vulnerable groups like women and sometimes youth who do not have the power to protect their assets. This problem has been recorded in Maper, Apada, Nyalath, Mathiang, Rumakudi, Haizira, Haitoch, Yithaluk, Maper East, Dengnhial and Haimawajibin in Aweil Town.

- **Conflicts between cattle keepers and farmers**: Cattle destroying farms caused a lot of tension in the community, especially where there are no police stations, such as in Nyalath, Haizira, Maper, Apada, Rumanguoth, Warcum, Riangmakuei, Kuom and Toch Wardit near Aweil Rice scheme.

- **Conflict over women and girls**: as women and girls are treated as sources of income to many communities in Aweil and other cattle-owning communities, conflicts can ensue when a girl conceives out of wedlock or is eloped by a suitor or in cases of adultery.

- **Overlap between Statutory and Customary/Chiefs Courts**: Chiefs admitted to having a problem with statutory courts which took over their cases that they believed to be customary in nature. There is a need for a dialogue or workshop to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of statutory courts and chiefs. Judges claimed that some chiefs attempted to settle cases of murder, rape and underage marriage.

- **Frequent traffic accidents:** Frequent motor accidents were reported to be one of the main threats during the assessment. A youth leader said that along Wau-Aweil road, there are regular motor accidents. The accidents usually happen due to dangerous driving, brought about by lack of road signs and irregular and infrequent police presence on the roads.

- **Cemetery in Makuac-Awiit**: Communities and authorities in Makuac-Awiit area of Aweil Town complained about the cemetery located in a muddy area. This does not allow people to dig deep graves during the rainy season. They said that dogs and other animals' excavate interred bodies and eat them. The responded request that Aweil Municipal Council establishes another cemetery in an area that is not affected by rising groundwater in the rainy season.

- **Conflict between Ambororo (Falata) pastoralists and Aweil Centre Community (Luo) farmers:** In 2018, Ambororo (Falata) pastoralists appeared again in Aweil with their herds. The Ambororo are a nomadic group that is believed to be from Nigeria. They move with their cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, horses and camels. Communities of Aweil Centre complain that the cattle eat their crops, are not vaccinated, and transmit diseases to their cattle. This causes conflict between the host communities of Aweil Centre and the Ambororo nomads. The conflict continues to be unresolved.

- **Domestic and gender-based violence**: Harmful cultural norms and economic malaise are seen by most respondents as fuelling domestic violence and other gender based violence that is threatening the safety and security of women, children and other vulnerable groups, and resulting in court cases, divorce and street children.

- **Rape and attempted rape**: Perpetrators of rape and attempted rape were seen as youth gangs, who have named themselves "Big to West", "West Coast" etc. These are groups of youths commonly referred to as "niggers". They are school drop-outs who are unable to get jobs and obtain dowries to marry or are able to provide shelter for themselves.

- **Other youth gangs and street children**: As the result of war and economic meltdown, homelessness has become an issue in Aweil. Most of the children on the street are orphans. They roam the streets of Aweil and elsewhere in the region in search of food and other basic needs, and end up abusing alcohol, inhaling rubber solutions, petrol and smoking shisha. Some of them become addicted to drugs and addictive substances. The growing number of street children and youth gangs in Aweil is posing a significant threat to the security of the communities, investors, service providers and development actors in the region.

- **Early and forced marriage:** Forced and early marriage has been practiced by the various tribes in Aweil for generations, but has been the more so as the more so since the eruption of the civil strife in Dec 2013 and the descent of the national economy into crisis. Because according to the local culture a child must always respect their parents, victims have found themselves compelled to be silent. One of the victims told the assessment team saying, "*I cannot object the decision of my parents when the decision is so beneficial to them, I just accepted to be married to a man I didn't expect to be my husband but this is because my parent said it so*" The majority of respondents believe that most marriages break down due to the fact that women were married early or forced into marriage by their parents to older men or men they did not love.

- **Unemployment**: In Aweil, there is an increase in unemployment, especially of young people. According to most respondents, there is a perception of unfair recruitment/favouritism and a lack of transparency in recruitment for government and NGO jobs. Many young respondents said that lack of employment has forced many of them into criminality. "*We are not criminals but forced to be criminals*", said one of the youth gang members. They also stressed that some local jobs are being given to foreigners such as Ugandans, Kenyans, Congolese, Ethiopian, Eritreans and Sudanese.

- **Economic crisis**: During the assessment, one dollar exchanged for SSP 320 , and many respondents believed the loss in the value of the South Sudanese currency contributed to the increase in the price of commodities in the market. Prices of food commodities rapidly increased in the market, with 100kg of sorghum costing SSP 18,000 (compared to SS 2017 when it was SSP 12000 …. in….). Because of this, many communities are food insecure and

3

some people who have decided to go to Sudan. Food insecurity is further exacerbated by the high taxes levied by the government on traders and the insecurity on the supply routes between Juba and Aweil and Aweil and Sudan

- **Bars and night clubs**: during the assessment, many community members, security providers and authorities said that bars and night clubs have contributed to the increase in criminality in the area. They were also expressed concern about girls going to bars and night clubs which is contrary to the conservative cultural norms of the community. Others said bars and night clubs promote prostitution and cause divorce and separation in families.

- **Child labour and school drop outs**: As was identified in the 2016 CSA, child labour continues to be widespread in Aweil. Instead of pursuing education, boys and girls younger than 18 are found polishing shoes, providing tea services, working in shops, hawking goods in the market and working as conductors on public transport. Respondents expressed concern that these children will grow up without education or basic life skills for their own future. Most of these children are either orphans effect or are children of parents.

- **Conflicts over natural resources**: Conflicts over access to water due to insufficient hand pumps and other water points are posing major threats to community cohesion and security. Water points are so few that people have to wait in line to collect water and fights break frequently out between women. Conflicts over other natural resources such grazing and agricultural lands continue to threaten the lives of the communities in the region.

Poorly constructed pit latrines, shallow wells and water scarcity; Cases of drunk people and children falling into wells and poor constructed pit latrines (sometimes resulting in deaths) are frequently reported across the town by communities and security providers. Some well owners have denied access to their wells under the pretext that they do not want people to fall into their wells and later be taken to court. There are few boreholes in the area and the ratio of boreholes to the community is low. Most of these shallow wells are dry during the months of April and May resulting in well owners denying access to these wells to their neighbours. Sometimes, this can lead to serious conflicts between well owners and their neighbours.

- **Illicit small arms and lights weapons**: As the result of the decades of war, the illicit possession of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has increased to unprecedented levels. Some interviewees said that it is difficult for the government to enforce law and order when everyone has a gun. To make the matters worse, the government has failed to pay salaries to soldiers. Some soldiers have deserted the army – these along with ex-combatants from Sudan's civil war and militias who returned/deserted battle fields in Greater Upper Nile and Equatoria – have returned home with their guns. This has posed a significant threat to community security and is connected to theft, robberies, random shootings and isolated killings of civilians.

2. Safety threats to women and girls in Aweil.

Despite the presence, use and awareness creation about a Special Protection Unit (SPU) in Aweil, as well as Saferworld and other partners engaging community members and government officials in women's rights issues, women continue to experience unique security threats. According to women respondents, the security threats facing women are:
- Early and forced marriage
- Rape and attempted rape
- Sexual harassment in the work place

- Denial of women rights
- Domestic violence
- Robbery in markets
- Polygamy
- Poor income generation
- Dropping out of school of young girls
- Lack of participation in decision making
- Emotional abuse
- Food insecurity

Due to the economic crisis in the region, many men who have many wives and children can't afford to support them. Women who are doing businesses in the market are the victims of robberies by street children and youth gangs. According to respondents, rape, robbery, hunger/poverty, insufficient water points, polygamy, early and forced marriage, and other harmful traditional practices are the greatest risk to women and girls in Aweil and elsewhere in the region.

3. **Relationship between Authorities and communities in Aweil**

Relationship between community and security providers
The assessment found out that the relationship between community and security providers is good; and that the project being implemented by and CIPAD has helped improve the relationship between the community and security providers and has brought police and the community together.

Police said "*al bolish uwa sadik bita al mawatin*" in Arabic, meaning the police is a friend of the citizen, which is something that has developed since 2014 when the police defined themselves as a police force instead of a police service. Police are seen as more accessible, do night patrols, and more quickly respond to community security issues over the past two years in areas that have Community Security Working Groups (CSWGs) or Community Action Groups (CAGs) but more needs to be done in areas that don't have them – particularly in areas mentioned as unsafe.

Sometimes police response time to incidents is poor because of bad road networks, insufficient number of police personnel, few police posts and absence of police stations in some localities and the releasing of criminals without thorough investigations. CSWGs are improving relations between the state, security providers and communities in Saferworld's areas of operation (extended in June 2018 to Apada, Hai-salam and Naivasha and in Aweil town).

4. **Improving safety/security and safety/security responses:** To improve safety/security responses as well as address conflict and security drivers within the communities in Aweil State, the following issues were identified by the respondents as needing attention:

- Communities, police and authorities we talked to recommend that Saferworld and similar agencies extend community security programming to other locations in the town, beyond the present seven locations;
- More police be recruited, trained and deployed;
- The establishment of more police stations to increase police presence and night patrols, particularly in dangerous areas;
- Comprehensive civilian disarmament to tackle the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons within communities;

Aweil community security assessment, May 2018

- Street children was identified as a pressing issue in the community. The majority of the interviewees recommend that reformatory centres are established and equipped with vocational training facilities;
- Many respondents recommend that government and development partners organise and facilitate frequent meetings and dialogue between communities and their local police;
- The government should pay the wages of the police and other organised forces in a timely manner so that the forces are motivated to do their work honestly, efficiently and professionally. Police should wear uniforms and ID badges;
- Provision of more water points, safe and clean drinking water to communities and in schools, health centres, police stations and other public institutions to help minimise conflict and insecurity;
- Aweil state authorities together with the South Sudan National Police Service should establish Community Action Groups (CAGs);
- When asked what would promote peaceful co-existence in the communities as well as in the region at large, the majority of the respondents said that peace dialogues and conferences (such as through churches and mosques), community rallies, sport activities with youth, and peace dissemination on national and local FM radio stations are needed.

5. **Ways of measuring improvements in the relationship between authorities/security providers and communities**
- Communities are being consulted by the police when the latter are doing security planning
- Police participating in community dialogues, awareness campaigns and meetings
- Police and CAGs know their distinct and shared roles and responsibilities in security provision through community security trainings and meetings.
- People perceive improved relations between communities and police (perception surveys).
- Women are reporting GBV cases to the SPU, and women feel that the SPU is responding effectively.

6. **Ways of measuring improvements in relationships within or between different communities**
- Communities working together in addressing their common concerns.
- Communities are reporting incidents of criminality to the competent authorities.
- People are able to move through town without fear, or live in their homes without fear.
- People from different *Payams* and *Bomas* are willing and able to meet with people from other *Payams* and *Bomas* to address conflict and insecurity and to promote peace and security in the respective communities.

7. **Roles of the communities**

During the assessment, community and government identified the roles to play in effective community safety and security and acknowledged the importance of a good relationship among community security stakeholders. Community members and civil society groups listed the following roles and responsibilities for themselves in community security:
- Raising awareness on community security issues by informing neighbours, security providers and authorities about imminent security threats in the community;
- Reporting security incidents to security providers (police as well as other local authorities);
- Coordinating community security matters with police and building relationships for better coordination and police response;
- Holding police accountable for their work;
- Participating in community security meetings and suggesting solutions;

- Participating in community security events and feeding back to constituencies upon return from workshops, trainings or meetings;
- Mobilising the community to achieve social cohesion and advocate for peaceful resolution of differences rather than resorting to violence to address grievances;
- Encouraging youth and community members to volunteer in community policing initiatives.
- Providing support and other contributions to the police;
- Mobilising the youth to join the police to protect their communities, because of the small numbers of the police in the various police posts;
- Supporting and participating in community policing initiatives;
- Making and promoting peace in the community;
- Reporting criminals to the police and provide information to the police.

About Saferworld

Saferworld is an independent peace building and conflict prevention non-governmental organisation that works to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work people affected by conflict to improve their sense of safety and security. We also work with the South Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (BCSSAC), South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS), and civil society organisations to support effective policies and practice through advocacy, research and policy development, and by supporting the actions of others.

Saferworld is registered with RRC (registration No 088). Saferworld South Sudan's programme started in 2008 and aims to build community resilience to achieve sustainable peace. We implement our programme through national partner organisations to respond to the complex mix of safety, conflict, and development challenges faced by communities. Saferworld has field offices in Aweil, Bor, Kuajok, Rumbek, Torit, Wau and Yambio. The country office is in Juba. We will soon open additional field offices in Gok Machar and Maridi and work with partners in Cueibet and Panyagor. We plan to open furthers offices in Bentiu and Malakal in 2019.

Saferworld – 1st Floor, Wing B, UAP Equatoria Tower, Juba South Sudan
Registered Charity no 1043843
Company limited by guarantee no 3015948
Tel: +211 922 500 734
Email: sscountryoffice@saferworld.org.uk
Web: www.saferworld.org.uk
For more information, please contact Mauro Henry Tadiwe at mtadiwe@saferworld.org.uk
Or Peter Machar Maluk Deng at pmachar@saferworld.org.uk

Aweil community security assessment, May 2018