



United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

Creating a new nation
“We are Sudanese”

Special Focus: SECURITY
JIUs breaking up



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Diary

17 March: A delegation of UNMIS and Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) officials visited Upper Nile State for a three-day security assessment mission following a 12 March attack on the state capital Malakal by rebels aligned to militia leader Olony. Ongoing clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and militia in Malakal have contributed to a growing sense of insecurity among local residents there.

22 March: Two UNAMID peacekeepers were badly wounded when they were ambushed and shot by unknown men. The uniformed personnel had just completed escort duties when their vehicle was fired upon by unknown men in Masteri, a village 45 kilometers south of El Geneina, capital of West Darfur State. Expressing outrage at the attack, UNAMID Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari called on the Government of Sudan to identify, capture and swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice.

24 March: The Sudanese Minister of Defense and GoSS Minister of SPLA Affairs reached an agreement on several security issues in Juba. According to an AU High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) statement, Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Abdel Rahim Hussein and SPLA Affairs Minister Nhial Deng Nhial inked a protocol related to post-referendum security issues affecting northern and southern police services and the National Intelligence and Security Service.

28 March: The deputy head of UNICEF stressed the need for Southern Sudan to prioritize issues like birth registration and immunization and to invest in programmes to ensure the progress and well-being of young people. Speaking during a four-day visit to Juba, Hilde Johnson said the transitional period for Southern Sudan provided a unique opportunity to put children at the centre of policy and decision-making and to build on gains made.

28 March: The UN-backed polio immunization campaign targeting children under the age of five launched its second drive since the beginning of the year in Southern Sudan. However, UNICEF Southern Sudan Area Programme Director Yasmin Haque said there was a need for serious awareness among local populations to fully understand the importance of meeting the full dosage of the vaccine.

29 March: A senior UN official voiced "significant concern" over conflicts involving at least four separate militia groups in areas of Southern Sudan. UNMIS Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly told a news conference in Juba that the GoSS was responsible for addressing a security threat within its territory, urging it to do so in accordance with international humanitarian law.

4 April: Only one person out of 33 passengers and crew members survived a UN plane crash at N'Djili airport in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The plane, which had been traveling from the north-eastern city of Kisangani, was attempting to land in heavy rain when it missed the runway and crashed.

4 April: In his message to mark international global mine action day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for universal adherence to all international treaties prohibiting the use and stockpiling of landmines and appealed for support for mine awareness and clearance efforts. Mr. Ban added that mine clearance prevented an indiscriminate weapon from causing harm and havoc long after conflicts had ended, while also creating jobs, transforming danger zones into productive land and setting societies on course for lasting security.

4-6 April: The UNMIS Indian Battalion held a medical and veterinary camp in Agok on 6 April that treated 275 people and 764 animals. The previous day, it held a medical clinic at Camp Noong Joint Integrated Unit in Abyei, treating 195 people. On 4 April, the battalion conducted a veterinary/medical camp in Abyei town, treating 431 people and 1,145 animals.

6 April: UNMIS and UN offices across the world held memorial ceremonies for some 42 peacekeepers who had died over the previous week while serving in Afghanistan, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

11 April: A five-day intensive training workshop in various aspects of film-making for 10 camera crew from South Sudan Television (SSTV) that was organized by UNMIS Public Information Office concluded at the mission's compound in Juba.

FRONT COVER: SAF component of JIUs in Central Equatoria State loading their weapons and belongings for departure to northern Sudan. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

BACK COVER: Dinka cattle camp in Abyei. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

"I wish we would have been joined together forever. We are going to miss each other very much, but God is great, we will meet again in future."

JlUs breaking up

As Southern Sudan prepares for independence, most of the joint north-south military units set up according to the country's peace accord are packing up and heading home.

The vast majority of the estimated 39,640 soldiers from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) who were assigned to these Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) will be absorbed back into their original armed forces.

The Commander of the Juba-based JIU, Maj. Gen Marial Chanoung Yol, told *In Sudan* that the initial 9 April deadline for dissolution of the units would not be met, owing to various logistical and technical difficulties.

Transportation of the troops to their respective Infantry Division headquarters for verification proved challenging, he said. Planning is complicated by the fact that many soldiers assigned to JIUs have been living with their families.

"We have to bring their families with them, (but) we don't have enough money to hire vehicles to bring them nor accommodate them when they arrive at the headquarters," said Maj. Gen. Yol.

Financial support from the national government for JIU dissolution has also not been forthcoming, he added.

Conclusion of the dissolution process has therefore been pushed forward to late April or early May.

Re-deployment

About 4,000 SAF JIU troops began preparing to leave the Greater Equatoria region for the north, after 1,400 SPLA soldiers assigned to an independent JIU brigade based in Khartoum departed the national capital by river for the south with their families on 7 March.

First Infantry Division SAF troops deployed in the Greater Equatoria JIU headquarters in Juba expressed satisfaction that their work was completed. "I wish we would have been joined together forever. We are going to miss each other



SAF component of JIUs in Central Equatoria state loading their weapons and belongings for departure to northern Sudan. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

very much, but God is great, we will meet again in future," said JIU SAF officer Ahmed Mohamed.

Formerly based in Maridi, Officer Mohamed is married to Tereza Samia, a Southern Sudanese woman. "I lived in South Sudan for 12 years with my family," he noted. "I am happy to go back home to (Northern) Kordofan. I will come back any time with them to visit my in-laws in future. We are one people and will remain one."

Over 10 lorries arrived in Juba on 15 March from Maridi, Western Equatoria State, ferrying 540 SAF JIU soldiers and their families. They were joined by colleagues arriving from Torit and they, along with still more SAF JIU soldiers previously assigned to Juba, boarded barges to transport them to the national capital in early April.

On 21 March, 3,000 SAF JIU troops and their family members left the Western Bahr El-Ghazal State capital of Wau by train for the trip to Khartoum.

Consisting of equal numbers of troops from the SAF and SPLA, the JIUs were formed in 2005 after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to work together in the defence of the country along with the two already existing armed forces.

Envisioned as the nucleus of an eventually unified Sudanese military, the JIUs were divided into five infantry divisions and one independent brigade based in Khartoum.

Their track record was mixed. The SPLA and SAF components of the Malakal-based JIU engaged in heavy fighting in the town in late February 2009 that left more than 60 dead and 100 injured.

More fighting erupted in Malakal last February when some SAF JIU soldiers of southern origin objected to plans calling to

ship some of the unit's tanks to the north and opened fire on fellow SAF JIU troops.

At least 28 people died in the fighting, according to local press accounts.

The dissolution of the units was triggered by the vote overwhelmingly in favour of separation in last January's Southern Sudan referendum on self-determination, as a unified Sudanese armed forces became impossible in light of the result.

The 6,000 SPLA troops assigned to JIUs based in Southern Kordofan and southern Blue Nile states under the CPA will remain in those locations, pending the resolution of various post-referendum security issues in ongoing talks between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

About a hundred of the 1,500 SPLA soldiers assigned to the independent brigade in Khartoum will also remain in place to provide security as the NCP and SPLM seek to resolve outstanding issues before the expiration of the agreement's interim period on 9 July.

Additionally, the JIU battalion of 640 soldiers in the disputed Abyei border area will remain in place to provide security, pending the full implementation of the CPA's Abyei protocol.

Some of the SAF JIU soldiers are of southern origin, and according to Maj. Gen. Yol, many of them have no desire to return to the north.

"We are currently registering those SAF southerners who are unwilling to go back to the north. They will be demobilized, disarmed and reintegrated to civilian lives as they wait for their benefits," said Maj. Gen. Yol.

Ojja Bosco



Cattle wars



Hundreds of people have been killed, injured or lost property in increasingly violent cattle raids among pastoralist communities in several states of Southern Sudan.

Cultural practices like the bride price (dowry), an influx of small weapons, weak rule of law, and the prestige that comes with owning large herds of cattle have exacerbated the raids.

In many pastoralist communities of affected states, which include Lakes, Unity, Warrap, Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria and parts of Central Equatoria, cattle are the only acceptable payment of the bride price.

A shared responsibility, every male family member is expected to contribute towards the bride price for a male relative getting married. They, in turn, expect to receive the same number of cows when the male relative's daughter receives her bride price.

The price for a new bride can be as high as 200 heads of cattle, making marriage pricey and cattle rustling a tempting way of paying the bill.

"A healthy cow/bull costs SDG 1,000-SDG 1,400 (\$350-\$500), leaving financially challenged men in the state no choice but to raid cattle to ensure they amass enough ... to marry the woman of their choice," said Rumbek Central County Commissioner Matur Majok. "If you do not have lots of cows, you will not marry a beautiful girl."

Lack of customary laws regulating the bride price and bidding wars among men competing for the same woman have pushed the marital cost up even higher in recent times.

With so much at stake, young women have become the victims of forced marriages to gain the wealth and status cattle bring to the family.

"You may be given to an old man because he has the cattle," said a 25-year-old woman who preferred to remain anonymous. "You cannot reject him because your parents have accepted him."

The same woman protested that her gender should be given a say in the matter. "We should be given the opportunity to decide on our own. Even if you want to marry a poor man, but he is of your choice, you should be allowed."

Stolen bride price

To meet the often steep bride price, young men have become cattle thieves and parents are now accepting stolen cows.

"In the past, parents did not accept their daughter to be paid for with stolen cattle," said Mr. Majok. "If you were a thief you were disowned by the community, but now I don't know ... maybe the fast-changing

society is making people behave this way."

Small arms and light weapons have replaced crude implements like machetes, spears, bows and arrows, further emboldening cattle raiders. "As a community, the chiefs sat together and suggested the government ... disarm the civilians but up (to) now it has never happened," said paramount chief Marial Caliep Kor.

Coupled with a weak rule of law, this has been a recipe for disaster. "When we send the criminals to the prison they always escape from there before serving their term ... This has encouraged the people to continue cattle rustling," the chief said.

Deterring raiders

Last year, state authorities launched special courts in Rumbek, the capital of Lakes State, to try cattle theft and murders resulting from such cases. The courts are presided over by local chiefs drawn from Rumbek Central, Wulu, Rumbek East, and Cueibet counties.

Empowered to fine and sentence the guilty, the courts have helped to control the thefts. According to Mr. Majok, calm has returned to Rumbek and incidences of cattle rustling have dropped since they were set up.

Perpetrators receive cash fines of up to SDG 3,000 (\$1,000) and a maximum prison sentence of seven years. Blood compensation for a murdered family member is 51 cows, and one must return four cattle for every animal stolen.

In December, Unity, Lakes and Warrap states convened a two-day conference chaired by Government of Southern Sudan Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar Teny to discuss ways of resolving cattle rustling. Recommendations included engaging youth in income-generating activities and equipping police with confiscated guns to overcome rustlers' threats.

Several initiatives targeting and led by youth have also sprung up. "When we (the county commission) were appointed last year, we united with the commissioner of Cueibet County (Mayom Malek)," Mr. Majok said. "We brought the youth together regularly to dialogue among them to create friendship."

Youths from Rumbek East County have formed the Rumbek East Youth Union to help stop ongoing cattle rustling in their area. The union aims to engage youth in dialogue, identify income-generating activities like agriculture and small businesses, provide training and promote sporting activities.

For men in Rumbek, the commercialization of cultural wrestling has become

a profitable income-generating activity.

"Wrestling will significantly reduce the practice of cattle rustling as a means to obtain wealth," said Peter Bear Ajak, founder of Southern Sudan Wrestling Entertainment, which hosts commercial wrestling matches. "The wrestling matches (also) bring community leaders and other civic leaders together, thus creating a forum for dialogue."

Former rustlers who turned to the crime to provide for their families can now do so through wrestling.

"I am happy that we are being paid," said 42-year-old wrestler John Majok. "There is nothing that can take me to raid cattle (now) because I have money I can take my children to school (or the) hospital and can afford food."

Mitigating efforts against cattle rustling are also ongoing in other states. During International Women's Day celebrations in the capital Torit, youth from Eastern Equatoria State performed a skit warning about the dangers of accepting bride prices and encouraging parents to send their daughters to school.

As part of a pilot programme last year, UN police and the Southern Sudan Police Services trained the region's first Livestock Patrol Unit of 52 officers in Jonglei State. An additional 100 officers will be trained in the near future.

Emmanuel Kenyi
Photos by Tim McKulka



Top left and right: Dinka cattle camp in Abyei.

Bottom left: Dancing and celebrations being held after conclusions of negotiations for amount of dowry.

The biggest threat



With small arms widely held by civilians in Southern Sudan, security is certain to remain a top priority for the sovereign nation when its independence is formally proclaimed on 9 July of this year.

Government of Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir Mayardit signalled as much when he told an 8 February press conference in Juba that security would be one of the main challenges facing the new nation, identifying civilian arms as the main cause of insecurity in the south.

"If arms are not collected from the hands of civilians, there will not be peace," he warned, adding that both partners to the country's peace accord had in the past provided large quantities of arms to proxy militias during Sudan's second civil war.

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ended fighting between north and south, its signatory parties found themselves unable to recover many weapons they had distributed to other armed groups they were once allied with. Many former soldiers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) who went home to their communities took their firearms with them in case of renewed hostilities.

Between 400,000 and 700,000 small arms are believed to be held by civilians in Southern Sudan, according to Maj. Gen. Daniel Deng Lual, chairperson of the Southern Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (SSBCSAC). The corresponding figures for the whole of the country range between 1.9 million and 3.1 million.

To promote security and stability, the Sudan Armed Forces and the SPLA have sought to eliminate the number of small arms in non-military hands by requiring ex-combatants to surrender their weapons prior to entering UNMIS-supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes and conducting civilian disarmament campaigns.

More problematic civilian disarmament campaigns have also been conducted by the SPLA, but reliable and comprehensive records indicating which citizens legally possess such weapons are lacking.



The long civil war and the militarization of Southern Sudan during the conflict were among the main reasons most civilians obtained weapons to protect themselves and family members.

An estimated 50,000 small arms were collected throughout Southern Sudan in 2009 and 2010, according to SSBCSAC chairperson Lual.

But that figure represents only a modest fraction of total firearms believed to be in the hands of the region's civilian population. Maj. Gen. Lual cited several major obstacles facing disarmament efforts, including the many uses small arms can be put to in rural communities.

"With the gun, people can go for cattle rustling or roadside robbing," he noted, adding that some regional residents viewed small arms as legitimate livelihood instruments in the absence of viable alternatives.

Issues related to cattle ownership exacerbate the problem. Maj. Gen. Lual noted that some tribes believe they are the only community endowed with a "divine right" to own cattle and therefore fail to see the theft of livestock belonging to other groups a crime.

"There is high desire to own a cow and a gun for protection among the rural populace," said the SSBCSAC chairperson.

Finding suitable facilities to store small arms presents another challenge. A report finalized by the UNMIS DDR unit last July found inadequate Southern Sudan Police Service and SPLA storage facilities for firearms in Malakal and Owachi, Upper Nile State, respectively.

Most arms collected during civilian disarmament operations are haphazardly stored in offices, huts and shipping containers without being properly documented to ensure transparency and accountability.

The shortage of appropriate storage space helps explain why so many collected small arms find their way back into the hands of civilians, according to Maj. Gen. Lual.

As part of its ongoing support to the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the regional office of the UNMIS DDR unit assists in producing a live radio programme that airs weekly on *Miraya FM* radio station.

Focusing on community security issues, the programme seeks to raise public awareness about the proliferation of small arms.

The unit is also organizing a trip to Liberia for SSBCSAC staff to attend training on media programming, community reintegration and the design and implementation of community development activities related to disarmament campaigns, according to UNMIS DDR Officer Olaide Omidéyi.

The DDR unit provides logistical support for missions and field operations conducted by the SSBCSAC and works in conjunction with the UNMIS Engineering unit to produce a modified storage container that was jointly designed by the DDR unit and SSBCSAC.

But funding can be a problem at times. "The unit is constrained by the lack of a specific budget for community security activities to concretize most of the plans," said Mr. Omidéyi.

Maj. Gen. Lual expressed the hope that future disarmament exercises would achieve better results after the proclamation of Southern Sudan's independence later this year. "Fear for recurrence of war had hindered disarmament, but now it will be easy to convince people to give out their guns and

live in peace," he said.

His office acquired arms-marking machines in September 2010 and conducted training of his staff as well as UNMIS DDR colleagues to mark firearms belonging to government security forces in conjunction with the Nairobi-based Regional Centre on Small Arms.

Approximately 44,000 weapons have been marked thus far. The machines will be moved to other southern states to assist with marking weapons that are currently being used and weapons that have been collected from civilians. That will aid the tracking and identification of illegal small arms among the civilian population.

Negus Hadera

Top left and right: Guns collected in Pibor County during first three weeks of civilian disarmament exercise conducted by the Government of Southern Sudan. Photos: Tim McKulka.

Bottom: Chairperson of Southern Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control, Daniel Deng Lual. Photo: Isaac Gideon.



Clashes in Upper Nile

Recent fighting in Upper Nile State has left over 200 people dead or injured, thousands displaced and property looted or burned, according to local officials.

The clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and militia of so-called "Capt. Olony" began in Detim Payam, Panyikang County, on 6 March when a misunderstanding occurred between the two groups at a checkpoint, noted UNMIS Malakal Security Officer Gordon Benn.

"The clashes (then) affected surrounding payams, including Owachi and Wajak," Mr. Benn said. "Many people ran for their lives and became internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Dolieb Hill and Malakal."

After the clashes in Detim Payam, most of Capt. Olony's followers scattered and hid, the security officer continued. "On 11 March, around 100 militia (fighters) came to Malakal to attack the town as their retaliation to ... what happened in Detim Payam. They created fear and chaos in the community."

The next day (12 March), six militias were surrounded by the SPLA and South Sudan Police Service (SSPS). With nowhere to run, they took refuge in the SOS Children Village orphanage, making 103 children their hostages.

Shootings between the militias in the orphanage, SPLA, and SSPS resulted in 11 fatalities, including six militia fighters, four SSPS and one SPLA, while nine SSPS and five SPLA were wounded, according to Upper Nile State Minister of Information and Communication Peter Lam. Fortunately, the children all survived.

Following the Malakal fighting, the UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) and MineTech removed seven mortars, four rockets, one hand grenade, and 200 assorted pieces of ammunition from around the town.

"UNMAO and MineTech International were thoroughly cleaning the town out from the unexploded ordnance (UXO) for three days in a row from the 15 to 18 March," Security Officer Benn noted.

The exact number of people who were killed or injured in Detim and Malakal remains unknown. But according to Upper



Nile State Minister of Information and Communication Peter Lam, the state government recorded about 107 bodies after the Malakal clashes.

Malakal Teaching Hospital received some 43 people who were injured in the fighting, said its medical director, Dr. Tut Gony. "Most of them were gunshot wounded. Unfortunately, six out of the 43 victims ... died in the hospital."

Dr. Gony said the hospital sought and received assistance from UNMIS to treat and evacuate the seriously wounded patients. "We have limited facilities so we referred three patients to UNMIS Indian Level II Field Hospital and requested seven patients to be evacuated to Juba for further treatment."

During the Detim fighting, more than 30 wounded people were admitted to Malakal Teaching Hospital, including about 18 SPLA soldiers.

Payams head Chief Pagan Ajak said

45 bodies had been found in the river. "During the clashes, most civilians tried to run for their lives by all necessary means, including swimming in the river. Unfortunately, some of them drowned."

Although these clashes were between the SPLA and Capt. Olony's followers, civilians were also severely affected, as they lived inside the military barrack.

As *In Sudan* went to print, calm had returned to the area, according to Brig Gen. Edward Dud, Administrative Officer of Division 7 SPLA in Owachi Payam. "The situation is calm now, so we need people to return to their villages."

Data gathered by Dolieb Hill Payam Authority indicates that some 3,430 households are now IDPs in the payam. Others fled to Malakal and surrounding bomas within Owachi Payam.

But identifying and recording the number of IDPs from the clashes is problematic, as many are living with friends



was the Adviser of Security for the Governor,” he said. “Now we appointed the Upper Nile State Minister of Local Government and Law Enforcement to be the Head of the State Security Committee. We are also going to review our funding allocation on security.”

The Upper Nile State Security Committee consists of the Ministry of Local Government and Law Enforcement, the Adviser of Security for the Governor, the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitution Development, SPLA, SSPS, Wildlife, Mine, and Prison Service.

On behalf of the Upper Nile State government, Minister Lam thanked UNMIS for its assistance during and after the clashes. In addition to clearing UXOs and assisting with the wounded, the mission also helped assess the security and humanitarian situations, conducted joint patrols with the SPLA and SSPS, and provided logistical support like air transportation around the counties.

Left: Soldier passing through deserted villages at site of recent conflict. Photo: Tim McKulka.

Bottom: House looted during clashes. Photo: Imelda Tjahja.

and relatives.

Regardless where they were living, the IDPs were in urgent need of assistance, Chief Ajak said.

“We, friends and relatives, are happy to help them, but we also have very limited resources,” said the chief. “They need shelter, food, non-food items to survive. But most of all, they need protection and security from the government so they can return to their villages.”

UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the World Food Program, UNICEF, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, had come to Dolieb Hill's Obel *boma* to assess the IDPs' needs, said *boma* representative Gatluak Peter Mobir.

And the Upper Nile State government had condemned the recent clashes. “We have placed the security organs around the town to protect the civilians and their property,” Upper Nile State Governor

Simon Kun Puoch said at a Malakal press conference on 21 March.

“The Upper Nile State government and Government of Southern Sudan have formed a security committee to investigate the recent clashes,” Information Minister Lam, who also serves as spokesperson for the state government, said during a separate interview.

“There was a serious security failure here,” the minister added. “How come we weren't aware that there were hundreds of people crossing the river with their weapons? In fact, we (the state government) invested a lot of money on security.”

The state government was working on a better security system by making several changes in the hierarchy, Mr. Lam said.

“Prior to the clashes, the head of Upper Nile State security committee



A legacy of mines



Cambodian deminers. Photo: Tim McKulka.

After two decades of civil war, landmines littered sizeable areas of North and Southern Sudan, threatening residents and barring access to roads as well as land needed for homes and crops.

In clearing these areas to make them safe, UN agencies work with national mine action authorities in the north and south, non-governmental organizations and local governments.

Mine Risk Education (MRE) groups work closely with clearance teams in liaising with affected communities to promote safe behaviour and spread MRE, while communities wait for demining to begin.

North Sudan will be well-placed to meet its international Ottawa treaty obligation to declare the territory free of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) by April 2014, with continued support.

To clear the remaining 22 per cent of its northern mine problem, Sudan will need about 14 demining teams to tackle areas of high contamination like Kassala and South Kordofan states.

In Southern Sudan, where 792 hazardous areas have been mapped, demining could continue beyond 2014. Areas with the highest landmine/ERW contamination include Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei states.

Primary challenges faced by the UN Mine Action Office and its partners include stormy weather and unpredictable security, especially in the Malakal area.

Compounding matters, fresh landmines have recently been laid in Jonglei State by the forces of militia leader George Athor, who has taken up arms against the regional government. The mines have been laid in a pattern allowing them to take out convoys of vehicles, Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly noted at a 29 March press conference.

Text courtesy of UNMAO

Remaining Hazards in North and South Sudan as of 1 March 2011

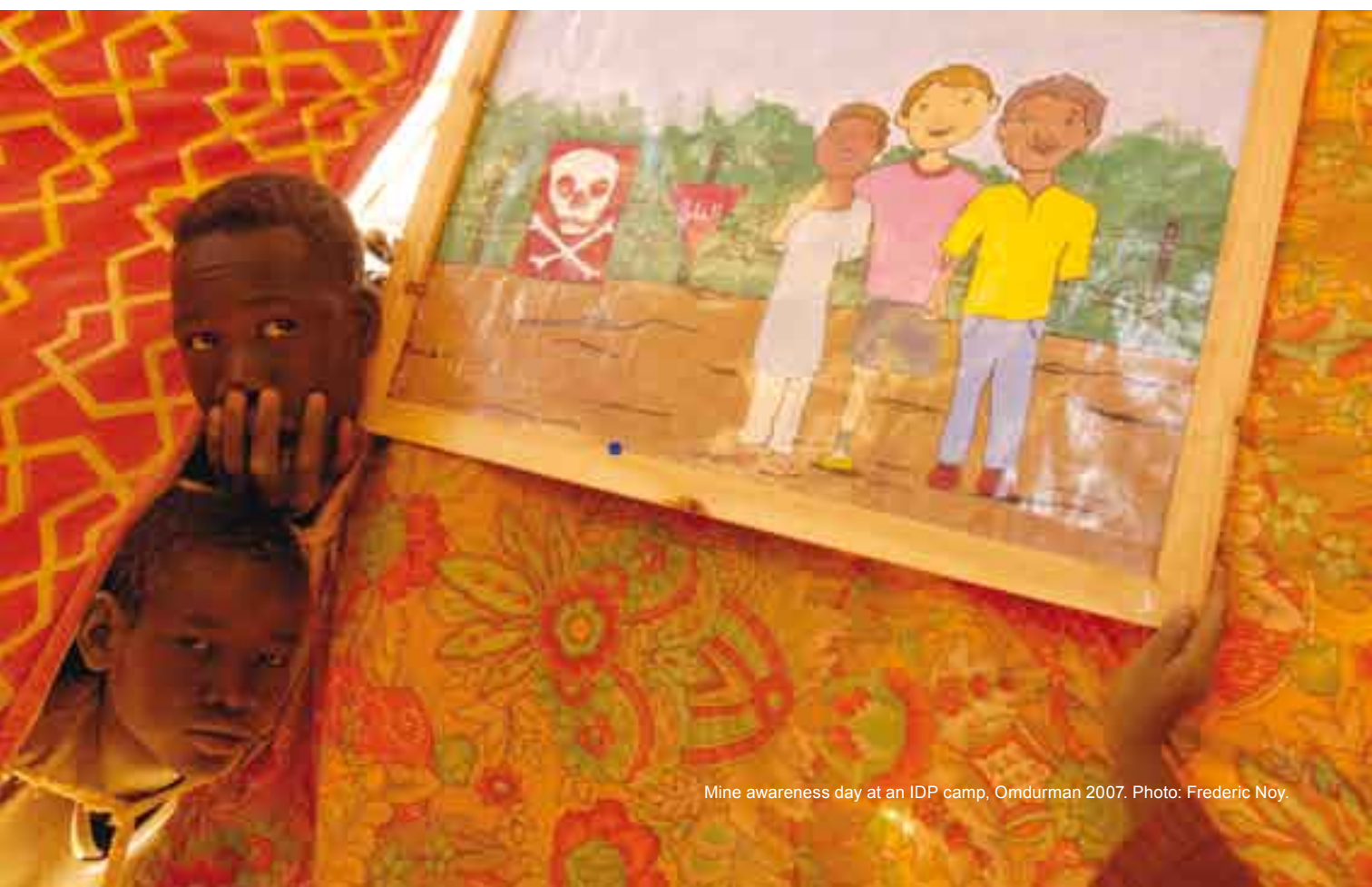
Region	Total hazardous areas	Cleared hazardous areas	Remaining hazardous areas	Remaining per cent of hazardous areas
North	1,615	1,260	355	22 per cent
South	5,642	4,850	792	14 per cent



UNMIS Bangladeshi Demining Company preparing for demolition of 6,186 anti-personnel mines by Sudan People's Liberation Army. Photo Tim McKulka.

Staff member of National Authority for Prosthesis and Obstetric in Kadugli presenting prosthesis to public during UN international mine awareness day. Photo: Frederic Noy.

Minefield at Lafon, Eastern Equatoria State, where demining companies under UNMAO umbrella have destroyed about 2,000 anti-personnel mines.



Mine awareness day at an IDP camp, Omdurman 2007. Photo: Frederic Noy.



Jackson Billy



Hassan Adam



Alice Nikanora



Izeidin Mohammed



Santo Kamanda



Sabir Mohammed

What will happen to us?

With the independence of Southern Sudan less than three months away, southerners in the north and northerners in the south are eager to know what the fate of their citizenship will be. *In Sudan* interviewed a cross-section of them to hear how they feel about the matter.

SOUTHERNERS

Milly Poni Lubajo, a headmistress of Salama Self-help Basic School in Khartoum South, fled to the north during the second civil war of 1983-2005.

"I can't have two nationalities. Neither (can I) exchange my South Sudan citizenship for the northern Sudan citizenship because of employment. I shall hand over the school to a northern Sudanese. I don't want to be a foreigner in my own country."

Jackson Billy, an Assistant Chief of the Southern Sudanese Community in the Khartoum area of Soba Aradi, has been coordinating the repatriation of southerners to the south.

"After the last person is transported from Soba to the south, I shall leave for the south too. I was here because of the war. Now that the war is over and we have chosen to be independent from the north, I have no business to do here. It's finished."

Alice Nikanora, displaced from Wau in 1968 during the first civil war of 1955-1972, has been living in Fithab Village on the outskirts of Khartoum.

"I am not going to the south as I lost all my family in the two civil wars. I was married to a northerner and although he is dead, I had children with him. I shall stay here if allowed. But should the government here say all Southern Sudanese go back to the south, I shall leave together with my children."

Mary Obila, born in Khartoum in 1989 to parents displaced from Kodok, Upper Nile State, has no interest in moving.

"I have not seen the south and cannot (imagine) it. How can I start over? Given the chance to remain in Khartoum, I shall stay as it has been one country."

Santo Paolino Kamanda, a married father of three who was displaced from Maridi, Western Equatoria State 20 years ago.

"Given (the) chance to stay in the north, I would stay since Sudan is one country, but if the northerners do not want southerners here, I shall go. Up to now they (northerners) have not told us to leave."

Veronica Orach, displaced from Upper Nile State as a young girl in 1985.

"I am not quick to return to South Sudan. People say there is still insecurity. Secondly, I came without children, and now I have some in the university. They should complete their studies here before I decide to go to the South. I do not want to interrupt my children's education. Given a chance to live in the north, I can stay."

"I don't want to be a foreigner in my own country."

Hassan Adam, a businessperson in Juba's *Souk* (market) Jebel who relocated from Darfur two years ago.

"I am staying in Juba because of my business. I do not know if I shall be given dual citizenship. If there is nothing like that, I can stay as other foreigners do in South Sudan. But if the southerners say northern Sudanese should leave, I shall go."

Izeidin Mohammed, a businessperson in Juba who went to Southern Sudan in 1981.

"The new state of South Sudan is welcome and I am going to continue staying in South Sudan. I have been here for many years without any problem with the southerners. It is more of a home to me than northern Sudan."

Mohammed Mohammed, a wholesale trader in Juba since 2000.

"If the South Sudan government permits northern Sudanese to have citizenship of the south, I will take it. And if they do not allow dual citizenship, I am ready to have the one of South Sudan because the country is peaceful now."

Sabir Mohammed, a trader in Juba's Konyo Konyo market for the last five years.

"I am ready to take up the citizenship of South Sudan because the people in the south are friendly and I would love to do business with them."

Abdullah Razik Mohammed Hissen has lived in different parts of the south since 1986.

"Although many southern Sudanese people say the *Jalaba* (Arabs) must go, the new nation needs the support of other Sudanese. There are northern Sudanese who worked in the south in various fields and capacities for a long time, their experiences can be useful for the southerners."

NORTHERNERS

Photos: Felix Waya Leju

Creating a new nation



With the independence of Africa's and indeed the world's newest state rapidly approaching, preparations for the new nation are in full throttle.

In a historic January 2011 referendum, which was provided for in the country's 2005 peace accord, Southern Sudanese overwhelmingly voted for secession from the rest of Sudan.

Ten days after the results were announced on 6 February, regional political parties gathered for a two-day forum in the regional capital of Juba to begin gearing up for the new state. Topping the agenda was the name and flag to be used by the new nation.

Several names were tabled, including Nile Republic, Kush and Imatong, according to Deputy Chairperson of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) Parmewa Awerinal Aluong. However, members finally settled on the Republic of South Sudan.

"We do not want to leave the (name) Sudan to the north," Mr. Aluong said. "We want to maintain our historical struggle so that it tells our generations how far we came to get our independence." This also follows the experience of Korea, which separated into two to form North and South Korea, he added.

The deputy chairperson argued that the name Sudan would be part of the region's history. "The people of the two regions will definitely have special relations between them and will continue to identify themselves as Sudanese in the future."

The ruling party, the Sudan People's

Liberation Movement (SPLM), which led the two-decade war that saw the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, gave up their party flag to be used by the new nation.

The Republic of South Sudan flag has black, red, green and white stripes adorned by a blue triangle with a gold star at its centre. Black represents the colour of the skin, white means peace, red for those who died in the struggle and green for natural vegetation.

The gold star, which is symbolic of Bethlehem's biblical star, represents light and wisdom directing those in darkness to light and the shining unity of southerners, while blue stands for the Nile's water.

Still pending, however, is the location of the capital city of the Republic of South Sudan as well as state symbols, including a national anthem and a decision on the official and national languages.

"Four different areas were projected to be the new state capital," said Minister for Investment Oyay Deng Ajak, who serves as chairperson of a 13-member ministerial committee spearheading the search for a new capital.

The first option is for the Government of Southern Sudan to maintain Juba as the capital.

But a state committee debating the capital's location disqualified Juba as a possible location, said Central Equatoria State Minister for Local Government Pateno Lege.

"We believe that its (Juba's) re-demarcation will demolish many houses, which in turn will cost the Government

of Southern Sudan lots of money for compensation," the minister said. "It is automatically ineligible to be the capital city."

The second option is for the ministerial committee to identify a new location for the national capital in Juba's environs.

The third and perhaps most contentious option is for it to be located east of the Nile, extending from Rajaf in Central Equatoria State to Lafon in Eastern Equatoria State all the way to Pariap in Jonglei State.

Opposing voices argue that the proposed area is too large and will have a negative impact on farming. "Our lives depend on agriculture," said Rajaf resident Joseph Gore. "How shall we survive if all the area is taken for the capital city?"

Others, including Investment Minister Ajak, said a large area was necessary for future expansion if needed, although the land's size was not included in the proposal. "I feel it should not be less than 10,000 square kilometres," he said. "Of course this is just an individual proposal."

The final option is Ramchel, a nondescript town that was initially proposed as a capital by the SPLM in 2003, which borders Jonglei, Lakes and the greater equatorial states. On 23 February, the committee visited the area for talks with the local community.

Central Equatoria Minister Lege has called for state-wide consultations to decide on the capital's location.

"We need wider discussions," he said. "The rest of the states should be involved so that a forum is formed out of the 10 states and people discuss it. The capital city will belong to all Southerners. It doesn't matter where it will be but we have to agree with one voice on that."

As for the national anthem, a competition for the best tune was arranged as early as last October, but the final choice is yet to be unveiled.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that a team is developing the anthem, which it will table in parliament at a still to be confirmed date.

Similarly, the official and national languages have not been agreed on. Some sections have proposed that the new nation, like the rest of East Africa, adopt Swahili as the national and English as its official languages.

Ojja Bosco

Neither here nor there

In pursuit of repatriation to Southern Sudan, thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) gave up jobs, schooling and housing in Khartoum's squatter areas months ago but have since remained in limbo due to lack of transport.

At the beginning of April, some 22,400 IDPs were living in open areas across Khartoum State waiting to return to their places of origin in the south, according to the UN Resident Coordinator's Support Office (RSCO).

Some claim to have quit jobs and moved out of mud houses in the national capital's squatter areas as far back as last November. Now they are stranded, left guarding their few bundled up belongings in "assembly areas", ready to move.

"Most of the people have taken their own houses apart when they thought they were about to go," said Sultan (Chief) John Mayak, sitting under a shelter that previously served as a classroom in a community school for the displaced in Khartoum's Soba Aradi area.

"You can't just leave things behind but you have to sell whatever you can," explained Sultan Mayak, who had fled from Lakes State to Khartoum in 1986 during Sudan's north-south war.

According to many displaced, they had been told months ago by the agency tasked with their repatriation, the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), to vacate their houses and converge in open areas. There, they are vulnerable to the cold at night and scorching heat during the day, while their belongings fall prey to the sometimes whirling sand.

"They told us the car was coming so we should move (to the assembly area) out of the houses," Tereseen Joseph said,

sheltering from a fierce March *haboob* (sandstorm) in a tent donated by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) in January.

According to Ms. Joseph, who had been living in the north for over two decades, first working as a teacher and then as SCC staff, the lack of proper shelter has especially taken a toll on children, some of whom have developed diseases like small pox and chicken pox or acquired coughs.

Some pregnant women in Soba Aradi have had no option but to give birth in makeshift shelters. Several infants were named *Share* or *Street*, as they were born "out in the open".

Thirty-nine-year-old Debora Yom was lucky to be offered a small, previously abandoned house with a roof and door as she was going into labour in February. But she was unable to breastfeed her child due to difficulty in feeding herself.

Older children have also been affected by the prolonged limbo. Fourteen-year-old Flora Marcos, who had never been to Southern Sudan, missed her chance to sit for the basic school examination in mid-March because she had dropped out of school in January.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Deputy Representative Mohammed Adar said the UNHCR and partners had been providing non-food items, including blankets, plastic sheeting and jerry cans, for the most vulnerable IDPs in Khartoum and Omdurman since October. He added, however, that accessing IDPs had been problematic due to government restrictions on displaced areas.

According to International Organization for Migration figures, nearly 265,000 people returned to Southern Sudan

through state-organized and spontaneous returns between last October and 30 March.

The SSRRC was aiming to start the second phase of its "accelerated return programme" in April with an additional 120,000-400,000 IDPs, according to SSRRC Task Force Team Leader Gatwech Peter Kuland. He added that the first phase should have lasted from October 2010 to March but the commission had run short of funding.

Mr. Kuland vehemently refuted claims that some stranded IDPs had been in limbo since last November.

"The reality is that they have never been there since November but since January, when we left work," Mr. Kuland said in a phone interview.

Some IDPs in waiting were also concerned that their plight might intensify with the onset of the rainy season. "If the (southern) authorities don't want us to go home, they should just tell us," said Rebecca Alwel, who had fled north 23 years ago.

"We have lived together with our Arab brothers and sisters so we're fine staying here," she added, frustrated about their uncertain future.

As *In Sudan* went to print, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and its partners were aiming to transport 6,000 IDPs by barge to Upper Nile and Jonglei states. According to Humanitarian Aid Commission Consultant Ismail Ibrahim, another group would be returned by rail to the Greater Bahr El-Ghazal area, with financial support from the Ministry of Transport.

Story and photo by Eszter Farkas

Displaced woman standing next to her packed up belongings in Soba Aradi.



British education in Juba

“Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow” is the motto guiding students of the recently opened Dr. John Garang International School in Juba.

A brainchild of the late Dr. John Garang's widow, Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, the school began operations in October 2010 with only five students, but that number has since multiplied.

When the school reopened in January for its second term, the number of pupils had risen to 30. By March, student enrolment stood at 150.

The response has been overwhelming, said Ms. Nyandeng, who holds the title of School Director. “Every day children are coming. Right now, it is half-term and parents are still bringing children, and we cannot refuse. You do that only when there are other options out there.”

A 2009 national baseline household survey by the Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation found that only 37 per cent of the Southern Sudanese population six years or older had ever attended school.

Some Sudanese grumble that what the region needs are more government schools rather than pricey private institutions for the wealthy few.

An undeterred Ms. Nyandeng, who also serves as a presidential advisor on Gender and Human Rights Affairs in the Government of Southern Sudan, said that private schools challenge public institutions.

“If there are no institutions like this, the government schools will not be able to correct themselves,” she said. “Two,

parents (wanting a private education for their children) will continue to send their children outside Sudan. Economically, it will be easier for the money to circulate inside Southern Sudan.”

The school is the first institution of learning in Southern Sudan to use the British Education System. The academic year begins in September and ends in July.

The student body is divided into four stages -- Baby Class, Reception Class, Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6).

“In Year 6 (students) do an international numeracy and literacy exam from Britain,” School Principal Susan Magundu said. The school is currently admitting students to all classes except Year 6, as the deadline for registering for the numeracy and literacy exam has already passed.

The school's tuition fees are costly because all the curriculum materials, including books, teaching aids and exams, come directly from the United Kingdom.

Shaky start

Ms. Nyandeng and her staff had to surmount several obstacles before the school could open its doors. First construction materials and furniture had to be purchased and imported from Kenya and Uganda to erect the school's building and furnish its offices and classrooms.

Once the structure was built, the school director needed to recruit teachers. The lack of experts and teachers in Southern Sudan who are familiar with the British Education System forced Ms. Nyandeng to seek the help of a Kenyan education

consultant.

“This was going to be a private school, so I did not want to do it alone,” she said. “I needed an expert in private sector and in the British System to come and help me.”

The consultant advertised teaching positions in Kenyan newspapers, and Ms. Magundu was hired as principal along with nine teachers.

“We brought the principal from Kenya because the people of Southern Sudan do not know this system,” said Ms. Nyandeng. But the school has set aside its administrative and support vacancies, which include accountants, a secretary and a deputy director, for Southern Sudanese.

The initial challenge faced by the Kenyan teachers was the language barrier separating them from students and their parents, many of whom had just moved to the south from Sudan's Arabic-speaking north.

“It was not easy to enrol the children in October, November and December because they speak Arabic only. We had to call an interpreter,” Principal Magundu said.

The school principal advised parents interested in enrolling their children in the school to visit them for more information about the fee structure. “The total intake for the school, once (the school) is full, will be 350, with 25 to 30 students per class,” said Ms. Magundu.

In 2012, Ms. Nyandeng has plans to commence the construction of a high school for the students. “What I desire for our children here in Southern Sudan is a quality education,” she said. “Even if I do

not get money from this, I just want the children helped.”

Story and photo by
Murugi Murekio



Baby Class teacher Margaret Kimani goes through the alphabet with her students.

Joseph Hanlon

Just give money to the

In tackling significant development challenges facing the south, the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) is preparing a mid-term plan in collaboration with the UN Development Programme (UNDP). One of its proposals includes “social cash transfers” to the poor. In March 2011, UNDP invited author and London School of Economics Visiting Fellow Joseph Hanlon to assist by introducing the notion to the GoSS and other development partners. In Sudan interviewed him about the transfers and his proposals for Southern Sudan.

What is a social cash transfer?

A cash transfer is a child benefit, family grant, or non-contributory pension.

With a child benefit, the mother of the child gets money every month. With the family grant, you look at the income of the whole country and choose certain (poor) families. To make a family grant work you have to have an effective administration system because it is administrative and more complex. (Non-contributory pension is paid to those over 63 years old).

All of them are long term and they go to quite a large number of people. They are not relief or welfare. They are long-term payments. They are also very common in the north. In Britain, for instance, we have a child benefit that goes to all children under 18, unconditionally.

Where did this idea come from?

This is an idea that comes from the south. It does not come from aid agencies. It came originally from bigger countries like Brazil and South Africa about 10 to 12 years ago and has since been adopted by 45 countries in the south in one form or another.

In 2010, I published a book called *Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South*, which is about social cash transfers in the south.

How is this different from charity or welfare?

People often say that these are welfare payments, handouts or whatever. But you have to think of this as an investment. You are investing in children and the

next generation. This is no different from investing in a factory. This is investing in economic growth.

In rural Africa in general -- and this applies to South Sudan as much as any other country -- what you see is that economic problems are caused by lack of demand and money. If somebody grows a few extra tomatoes, people do not have money to buy. What you are trying to do is stimulate economic growth locally by getting money into that area.

Where in Africa has this concept been used?

The biggest in Africa is South Africa, which does both the child benefit and a non-contributory pension for everyone over 63 years old. Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius and Swaziland all do non-contributory pensions. In Ghana, they do a family grant.

Ironically, the country which may be most similar to Sudan is Mongolia, because it is a very big country with significant mineral resources, and a very small population. Mongolia does a child benefit and it works very well there.

You are investing in children and the next generation. This is no different from investing in a factory. This is investing in economic growth.

What has been the outcome in Africa?

Cash transfers are especially important in Africa, as they reduce child malnutrition and stimulate the local economy. In developing countries in particular, half of that money is spent on food. An immediate result is a reduction in chronic malnutrition.

The second thing you see is that the money goes into the economy, because if it is in the rural areas the mother buys food from the neighbours and this begins to stimulate the rural economy.

What makes this concept ideal for Southern Sudan?

In the discussion document for the proposed development plan, there is some sort of cash transfer. The question UNDP had was whether this was something Southern Sudan might be able to use. The answer is yes.

We have concluded that probably the best thing would be a child benefit for children under five. They could do something else, pensions for instance. There are about 150,000 old people you could give pensions to, but that does not give you the kind of broad base that you would like.

Would government or nongovernmental organizations lead this initiative?

The only programmes that have worked have been generated by governments of the countries themselves. Where programmes have been pushed by donors, they have tended to fail. That is because donors do two things -- they make the programmes too complicated and you do not get political buy-in locally.

If (Southern Sudan) carried out such a programme, it would have to start with the government doing and paying for it. Funds would have to come from oil money or something.

Who are the implementing parties?

They would be several different ministries. The payments would have to be from the Ministry of Finance, which would contract a bank. Birth registration in Southern Sudan is the Ministry of Health, which would need to register all newborns. You might want to bring in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare because we are talking of children under five. Bring the three together and form a committee to manage this process. While I have been here this week, we have talked to all three.

What was the response?

The response was largely positive, but of course they said, “We have a million priorities”. It is a political decision in the end. It (is) politically good for the Government of Southern Sudan because

poor

it is seen as giving something to everyone. The government could say the benefit will go to all children who were born in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement era. Then you call it the peace dividend. It will have wonderful political resonance.

Hypothetically, how would it work?

If you look at targets or what the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) says, the most vulnerable group are children under five, so you would start with them. There are about 1.3 million children under five, roughly. You might want to try to give the mothers perhaps five Sudanese pounds for each child per month. What you want is something large enough to have an impact on the budget of a poor family, but not huge.

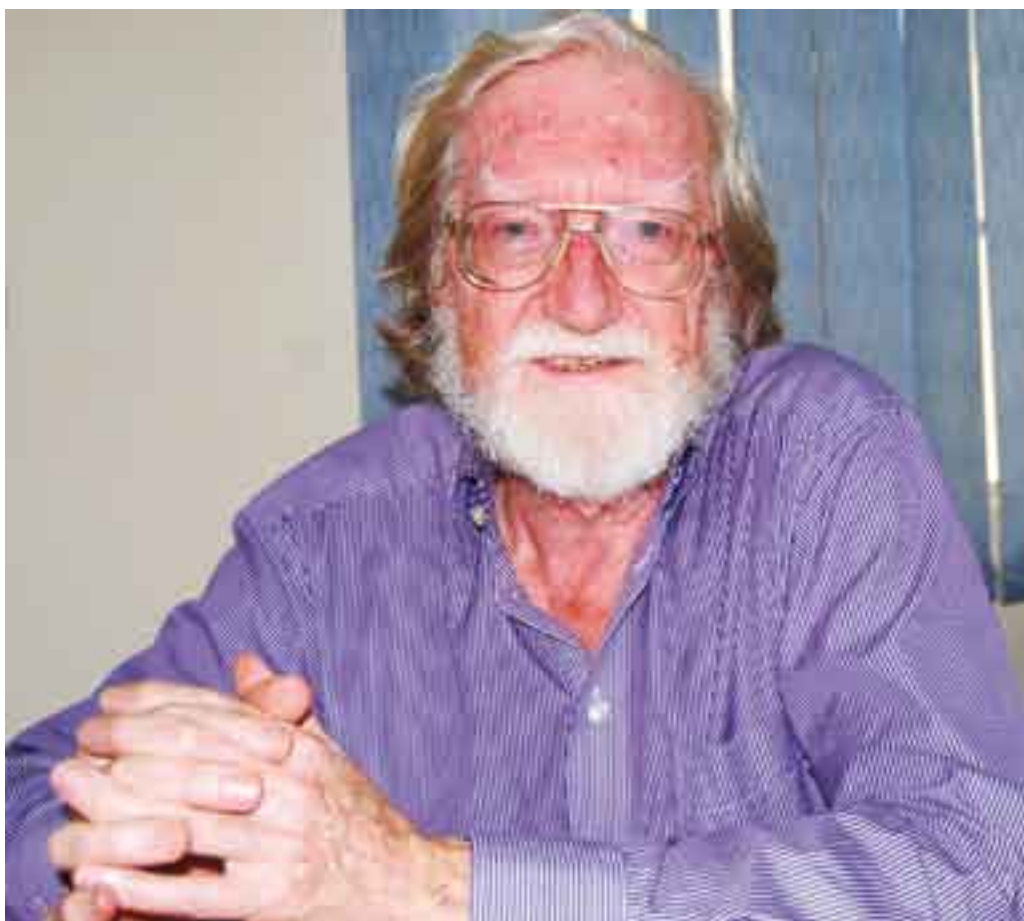
Five Sudanese pounds per child seems very little.

Remember when you are thinking about income in rural areas, most of it is imputed value from self-produced food. In rural South Sudan, five Sudanese pounds per month could actually buy a lot of food from neighbours if you are not trying to buy imported food. That begins to make a difference.

What sort of impact would we expect from this transfer?

What you are going to do with that money is stimulate local trade, which begins to have an impact on the local economy. As local trade becomes stimulated, more traders will come in -- people selling clothes and other things -- so you begin to get a market.

The things that the mothers will be buying first are things to feed and cloth their children. If there is a school in the area, then it will be spent on school-age children to give them clothes or shoes to go to school.



Birth registrations in Southern Sudan are negligible. How would you go about getting a comprehensive list of children under five?

The voter registration process was very impressive and most Southern Sudanese took part. That means that South Sudan has the capacity to register people. We could register all the children in exactly the same way in polling stations that were used for elections.

How about distribution of the money?

What we know from other countries is that mobile banking (sending out trucks/vans with cash) exists. Kenya has had mobile banking for years. Do a tendering. Say to somebody like KCB Bank Group, "We require that you go to every polling station on the same day of the month every month".

It is perfectly reasonable to tell KCB Bank Group to use a simple system like a fingerprint reader to hand out the money. For the more difficult places, you tell KCB you are going to have to use light planes to get there. You put the cost of this in the contract. We estimate it is going to cost 10 per cent in administration fees.

That is a very rough guess and that is high compared to what it costs in other countries.

Do you have an example where this has worked?

Namibia has the most wonderful system to pay pensions. They take a cash machine and weld it on to the back of a pickup truck that goes out to every village, every day of the same month. Women come out, queue up, put their cash card in, punch in their PIN number and then up comes their monthly pension. Other countries use fingerprint readers.

What role if any would the non-governmental sector play?

Donor agencies support the machine that gets this going. Agencies like UNICEF or PLAN or somebody can come in, and say, "We will support the Ministry of Health to set up the birth registration system." The UN could provide logistical support for the transfer of cash to remote areas.

Top: Joseph Hanlon. Photo: Murugi Murekio

“We are Sudanese”

Poet Sidahmed Alhardallou

Children and elderly across Sudan seem to equally identify with the poem-turned-song “Oh My Charming Country” (“*Ya Baladi Ya Habbob*”). Gaining popularity overnight three decades ago, it depicts the ethnic diversity of Sudan and the passion Sudanese have for their country.

Sitting in an armchair in his quiet, south Khartoum home, poet Sidahmed Alhardallou recalled the historic events that inspired him to write what was to become a nation’s favourite among his 20 volumes of poetry about Sudan.

In July 1971, the Sudanese Communist Party launched a coup d’état against President Jaafar Nimeiri’s regime while Mr. Alhardallou was working at the Sudanese Embassy in London as press and information attaché.

Two coup leaders were located in the English capital, the poet said. Following Nimeiri’s comeback after his three days in detention, they were captured and flown to the Sudanese capital, where the plotters were executed.

Unfortunately for the poet, one of the coup leaders was called Hardallou. Although the coup leader hailed from a

different area and tribe than the poet, the name sparked suspicion.

“Nimeiri was mad and asked who is responsible for information at our embassy in London ... and if he is a brother of (coup leader) Hardallou,” he explained.

While having no affiliation with his namesake, Mr. Alhardallou was recalled to Sudan and detained at Kober prison without charges for four months.

Upon his release, he shipped his books and records home from London, travelling to the east Sudanese harbour town of Port Sudan to collect them in January 1972.

Due to the scarcity of trains from Khartoum to the port city, however, the poet had to lay over for a few days in Kassala -- falling in love with the place.

“It was beautiful, really ... There in Kassala, in those days I wrote ‘*Ya Baladi Ya Habbob*’,” he said, adding that the poem was a reminder of what he had suffered for the country.

The poem suddenly started to live its own life when well-acclaimed Nubian singer and friend Mohamed Wardi turned it into a song in March 1972.

Knowing about the poem, Mr. Wardi had visited Mr. Alhardallou in his Khartoum office and asked, “Sidahmed, are you a friend? This poem is ready! Why didn’t you give it to me?” the poet recalled.

The following day the singer-composer announced that he had written music for the poem over the course of one night. Two days later he performed it during a festival at Khartoum’s National Theatre, also attended by the poet.

“When we were leaving, all the people were singing this poem! It became very, very popular to the extent that a lot of people wanted it to become the national anthem of Sudan,” Mr. Alhardallou recalled.

Some of its popularity arose from the fact that the song mentions characteristics of people in the north, east, south and west, speaking to Sudanese across the country.

“It covered all the Sudan,” the poet said, quoting, “*Ya baladi ya habbob / ya jallabiya u thob / jibba u sudery* (referring to male and female national garments in the north and the Mahdist robe, a waistcoat worn in eastern and northern Sudan)”.

“What is a country?” he

Excerpt from

Oh my charming country

By Sidahmed Alhardallou
Translated by Sidahmed Bilal

For you I would fight the wind
For you my heart is broken
For you I would be killed
And with you I am killed

For you oh noble grief
For you oh sweet dream
For you oh homeland
For you oh Nile

For you oh night
Oh good and beautiful one
Oh my charming country

The one with *jallabiya* (men’s robe) and *thob* (women’s full-body veil)

Sirwal (traditional men’s trousers) and *markoob* (traditional men’s shoes)
Jibba (Mahdist robes) and waist coat

Sword and knife
Oh good and beautiful one

asked rhetorically. “A country is history, geography, society, and a dream for the future. We have the same history, same geography, we have the same society and the same dreams.”

Lifestyle united several hundred ethnicities in Sudan, Mr. Alhardallou reckoned, although he voiced concern about growing tribalism.

According to him, Sudanese used to stand united, with race and religion never dividing ethnic groups. But after Sudan’s independence from British-Egyptian rule in 1956, due to “the bad policies of our governments ... people suffered many things”.

“For ages we used to call ourselves ‘Sudanese’.” For example, said the poet, there was no mention of where exactly people hailed from when Sudanese travelled abroad for work.

“We are Sudanese, that is all. ... They say ‘I am Sudanese’.”

Story and photo by Eszter Farkas



Sidahmed Alhardallou

NEWS BRIEFS

Security Council condemns attack on peacekeepers in Afghanistan

The UN Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the attack against the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) operations centre in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, on 1 April, which resulted in the death and injury of at least seven UN staff.

A large crowd of demonstrators angry at the February burning of the Quran by a group in Florida (United States) stormed the UNAMA compound on the afternoon of 1 April, resulting in the deaths of three UN international staff and four Nepalese Gurkha soldiers serving as guards.

While expressing condolences to the families of the victims, the Security Council called on the Government of Afghanistan to bring those responsible to justice and take all possible steps to protect UN personnel and premises.

New landmines limiting access

The UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) and its implementing partners had released over 5.6 million square meters of demined land in Southern Sudan, and the next big challenge was the clearance of freshly laid landmines in Jonglei State, a top UN official said on 29 March.



Addressing a press conference at UNMIS headquarters in Juba, UN Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly said militia leader George Athor had been laying mines in his fight against the regional government.

He noted that UNMIS had had limited access to northern Jonglei State, where fighting has been regularly taking place, on account of freshly laid landmines and periodic misunderstandings with local Sudan People's Liberation Army commanders, who sometimes refused access. Mr. Athor's forces are based in that part of the region.

Ongoing violence in the Greater Upper Nile region, comprising Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states, continued to be a source of significant concern for the mission. UNMIS leadership hence made several trips to the region in March to meet with Sudanese authorities.

Mr. Gressly added that an increase in UNMIS peacekeepers in response to the violence was not anticipated, as the mission had reached its mandated force strength.

Committee monitoring Kadugli agreement

The Abyei Standing Committee, meeting at UNMIS Headquarters in Khartoum on 13 April, set up a Joint Technical Committee (JTC) for implementation of the Kadugli Agreements of 13 and 17 January 2011.

The JTC is tasked to ensure effective deployment of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) throughout Abyei Area and withdrawal of all other unauthorized forces, as earlier agreed by the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The monitoring committee was scheduled to have its first meeting in Abyei on 18 April, and UNMIS pledged assistance for implementation of the agreement.

The standing committee, set up at an early March meeting at UNMIS HQ, comprises representatives of the two parties (NCP and SPLM), the Sudan Armed Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army, police forces and security services as well as JIU Command.

UNICEF: Southern Sudan to focus on children's issues

The deputy head of UNICEF urged Southern Sudan on 26 March to prioritize issues like birth registration and immunization and to invest in programmes to ensure the progress and well-being of young people.

"The transitional period for Southern Sudan (scheduled to become an independent nation in July 2011) provides a unique opportunity to put children at the centre of policy and decision making and to build on the gains made," Deputy Executive Director Hilde F. Johnson said in Juba at the end of a four-day visit to the region.

Decades of Sudan's civil war, ended by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, have devastated the infrastructure in Southern Sudan, according to UNICEF. Thousands of children have been left without access to schools, basic health care and clean water.

In addition, one out of every seven children in Southern Sudan dies before his or her fifth birthday; only about 10 per cent of children are fully vaccinated; and less than 50 per cent of all children receive five years of primary education.



While highlighting gains that have been made – such as increasing school enrolment and developing laws to protect the rights of children – Ms. Johnson stressed the need for greater investment in social services, infrastructure and human resources to ensure progress for the children of Southern Sudan.

