

MAAPSS UPDATE

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South Sudan's New State Governors

Introduction

The constitution of South Sudan establishes that the country be composed of ten states, but in October 2015 President Salva Kiir dissolved the ten states and unilaterally created 28 new states; in 2017 he increased the number of states to 32. In the lead-up to the agreement to form a national unity government in 2020, opposition leaders demanded a return to ten states and a stake in the appointments of new governors. Kiir capitulated to this demand, and on 15 February he fired all 32 state governors.

Reverting to the original ten states paved the way for the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) to be established on 20 February. On 29 June eight governors and three chief administrators (in Abyei, Greater Pibor and Ruweng) were appointed. On 15 July Kiir appointed the governor for Jonglei state, leaving only the governor position unfilled in Upper Nile state.

The process to appoint governors provides that the SPLM-IG choose six (Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, Warrap, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria), the SPLM-IO three (Western Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, and Upper Nile), and the SSOA one (Jonglei). Chief administrators were chosen by Kiir.

This update provides context for who the new governors and chief administrators are and why they were chosen. In addition to examining these appointments, this

update also considers the unfilled governor position in Upper Nile and the ongoing political manoeuvring to fill this spot.

SPLM-IG Appointments

Unity State

[Joseph Nguen Monyтуil Wejang](#), a Bul Nuer from the Nyang subsection of the Kwach in western Mayom, returns as governor of Unity state. Nguen served in this position (2013–15) until Unity was split into Ruweng, Northern Liech, and Southern Liech states. He was then governor of Northern Liech from December 2015 to February 2020. He is South Sudan's second longest serving governor behind Louis Lobong Lojore (see Eastern Equatoria State, page 4).

In January 2020, five months prior to his appointment as governor, Nguen attempted to consolidate his power in the state by ousting Matthew Puljang, the then SSPDF commander of the [Special Operations force of Division 4](#) – which was based in Mayom county and comprised almost entirely Bul Nuer. He was joined in this effort by [Tut Kew Gatluak](#), Kiir's Presidential Advisor on Security, but their attempt was thwarted by Puljang and led to fighting in Mayom. In response, Kiir recalled Puljang and other leading Division 4 commanders in Mayom to Juba.

On 24 April Puljang was removed as commander of his special forces unit. It was then placed under the command of SSPDF Division 4 in Bentui. Puljang is now effectively under house arrest in Juba. Though he would like to reclaim his position, he is relatively weak politically, and medical conditions force him to undergo regular treatment in Uganda.

However, following Puljang's removal, his former forces, angry and feeling abandoned by Juba, have launched raids into Warrap. On 2 May eight people died in a cattle-raiding incident in Dam. These raids also have political consequences. Some of the cattle taken allegedly belonged to high ranking Dinka politicians. In response, Major General [Rin Tueny "Janafil" Mabor](#), dispatched armed military intelligence personnel to Warrap to tame Puljang's renegade forces.

Despite the political morass and power vacuum caused by Puljang's removal, Nguen and Tut Kew Gatluak have insisted that [Joseph Manuat](#), Puljang's deputy, not take his place as they fear this would recreate another independent powerbase outside of Nguen's control. However, at present, no one else can effectively command the Bul Nuer forces.

Following Puljang's dismissal, Nguen travelled to Mayom to establish his authority over Puljang's forces, but he was met with a great deal of hostility from civilians and soldiers in Mayom town. He now faces the challenge of asserting control over Puljang's forces. If he succeeds, there is little to stop Nguen from having effective command of all of Unity state.

Northern Bahr el Ghazal State

[Tong Aken Ngor](#), a Malual Dinka, was selected by the SPLM-IG to govern Northern Bahr el Ghazal. He was a National Congress Party (NCP) State Minister of Agriculture for NBeG during the second civil war. He has long been a supporter of [Dau Aturjong](#), a veteran army commander and current SSPDF Director of Supply, and he followed Aturjong's defection to the SPLA-IO [RM] in May 2014. After rejoining the SPLM in 2016, Ngor served as governor of Aweil state from May 2019 to February 2020.

It is notable that Ngor, Aturjong, and Second Vice-President [Hussein Abdelbagi](#) are Malual Dinka and former opposition figures to Kiir's SPLM government. Abdelbagi was a commander of the [South Sudan Patriotic Army](#) and is, in theory, a member of SSOA. However, their opposition was not against the SPLM, per se, but instead aimed at [Paul Malong Awan](#), a former governor of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Chief of General Staff of the then-SPLA. Consequently, the appointments of Ngor and Abdelbagi by Kiir are best understood as checks to Paul Malong's wanting to return to politics in South Sudan. The same strategy was behind Ngor's prior appointment as governor of Aweil state in 2019.

Ngor's appointment strengthens the connections between Sudan and South Sudan among Northern Bahr el Ghazal elites. Both Ngor and Abdelbagi were NCP officials and maintain strong connections with the Misseriya – nomadic herders across the Sudan-South Sudan border – and with Khartoum. Both men are from Mjok Ngor boma in Aweil Centre county, and along with the current minister of Youth and Sports, [Albino Bol Dhieu](#), constitute a solid Aweil Centre power bloc in government.

Their connections with groups across the border in Sudan make it unlikely that forces aligned with Paul Malong will find the space needed to establish rear bases in Sudan as South Sudanese rebels have historically been able to do. In particular, Ngor has strong historical ties to Mohamed Hamdan "Hemeti" Dagalo, the leader of the Rapid Security Forces and deputy head of Sudan's Transitional Military Council. It is alleged that Hemeti was a strong backer of Ngor's appointment.

The appointments of Ngor and Abdelbagi entrench the regional realignment that

was noted in the 12 June MAAPSS' [Actors Update](#): success in politics in South Sudan is now partly conditioned on one's proximity to politics in Khartoum. Despite their different affiliations, Ngor with the SPLM and Abdelbagi with the SSOA, they have a close relationship connected to their days inside the NCP and form a solid ruling block inside Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

Lakes State

Kiir appointed the relatively unknown [Makur Kulang Liei](#) to govern Lakes states. Makur Kulang, a former SSDPF commander, is from the Luach section of the Atout Dinka, as is his closest ally, [Rin Tueny "Janafil" Mabor](#), the Director of Military Intelligence. Rin Tueny Mabor is currently the most influential military actor in Lakes state, a significant factor in Kulang's appointment. Makur Kulang also maintains cordial relationships with other important politicians from Lakes, including [Paul Mayom Akec](#), the Minister of Interior, [Daniel Awet Akot](#), the Presidential Advisor on Military Affairs, and [David Deng Atorbei](#), a Member of Parliament.

Makur Kulang's only previous political position was commissioner of his home county, Yirol West, from 2010 to 2014. As a brigadier-general in the army, he served in Eastern Equatoria as a training officer before and after his commissioner appointment.

A farming scheme in Eastern Equatoria led to success as a businessman and helped him establish a broad patronage network in the process. He was a popular commissioner in Yirol West, known for maintaining a relative degree of safety and stability in this county during a tenure which began prior to independence and a year into South Sudan's civil war that began in December 2013.

Makur Kulang assumes his new position

needing to address widespread inter-ethnic violence between Lakes Dinka cattle keepers and Western Equatoria farmers. He must also confront increasing intra-ethnic fighting among various Dinka groups and lingering tensions following the bloody military offensive that killed Kerbino Wol, the rebel leader of the 7th October Movement. In his effort to foster a more politically stable Lakes state – something which is likely to require military intervention to achieve – Makur Kulang will need to tread carefully to not endanger the massive herds that several Lakes' politicians have amassed over the last decade, including [Marial Chanuong](#), the former commander of Tiger Division, and former governors [Matur Chut](#), [Mangar Buong](#), and [Bor Wutchok](#).

Warrap State

The appointment of Major General [Bona Panek Bier](#) as governor of Warrap State came as a surprise because Kiir had dismissed him as governor of Twic state in 2017. An unpopular governor at that time, he disappeared from public view after being sacked. However, in 2017 he was quietly moved to Military Intelligence and became the Director of Administration and a trusted ally of Rin Tueny Mabor.

In its April [2020 report](#) the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan stated that [Military Intelligence](#) continued to operate outside of formal security sector reform processes and was recruiting, training, and arming militias in Warrap (and Lakes). Military Intelligence is the second most important organized force following the [National Security Services](#) (NSS), which is led by Warrap native [Akol Koor Kuc](#).

Salva Kiir's decision to appoint two close associates of Rin Tueny Mabor (governors Bier in Warrap and Makur Kulang in Lakes) suggests that Kiir is interested in counterbalancing the power of Akol Koor Kuc in an area of the country that has

served as the traditional recruiting ground of Dinka into security forces and militias.

Central Equatoria State

[Emmanuel Adil Anthony](#), a Kakwa, is the new governor of Central Equatoria and a former governor of Yei River state (2018–20). His appointment is likely a move by Kiir to appeal to the Bari-speaking elites of Yei and Kajo-Keji and encourage a pivot in their support away from [Thomas Cirillo](#). In contrast to his predecessor, [David Lokonga Moses](#), Adil has demonstrated a less militaristic tone towards Cirillo and the National Salvation Front ([NAS \[TC\]](#)).

Emmanuel Adil's attempts to confront SSPDF human rights violations and other crimes has gained him some popularity among the populace in Yei town. Nevertheless, Cirillo maintains a high degree of popularity throughout the southern reaches of Central Equatoria. Residents there still maintain a strong grievance towards the national army, which is seen as an occupying Dinka force.

Emmanuel Adil will need to win the trust of local people in Yei and Kajo Keji, who remain unsure of his political alignment. To achieve this, he will, in part, need to prove adept at dealing with local SSPDF and SPLA-IO [RM] forces in the state without creating cause for Cirillo's supporters to stage a NAS [TC] insurrection. Fighting between Cirillo's NAS and joint SSPDF – SPLA-IO [RM] forces intensified following the dismissal of state governors in February 2020.

The new governor must also address a large number of Covid-19 infections in the state, an increasing crime rate in Juba, and the volatile Mundari–Dinka relationship on the state's northern border (Terekeka) with Lakes state.

Eastern Equatoria State

[Louis Lobong Lojore](#), a Toposa from Kapoeta East, returns as governor of Eastern Equatoria. He served as the state's governor from 2010–15 and governor of Kapoeta state from 2015–20. He is the longest serving governor in South Sudan.

Lobong Lojore is a long-time ally of Kiir and allegedly a business partner of recently appointed SSPDF Chief of Staff [Johnson Juma 'JJ' Okot](#), who is also from Eastern Equatoria. Lojore served as Chief of National Intelligence following the signing of the CPA in 2005 and enjoys a good relationship with [Isaac Obotu Mamur Mete](#), the Minister of National Security and a fellow Eastern Equatorian.

Lojore's appointment is linked to his high status within the military and national intelligence as well as his business partnerships with several high-level politicians; he is also allegedly deeply involved in Eastern Equatoria's lucrative gold mining trade. Lojore's fellow Toposa ally and relative, [Josephine Napon Cosmos](#), is the Deputy Chairperson on [Nilepet](#)'s Board of Directors and was recently appointed as Minister of Environment and Forestry, an important position with influence over future mining operations.

While Lojore is widely unpopular among the non-Toposa in the state, Kiir is keen to avoid political confrontation with the Toposa and cannot afford a high-profile uprising in Eastern Equatoria. Lojore is extremely popular in Kapoeta and among Toposa living in the contested Ilemi Triangle area.

Lojore will have to accommodate the SSPDF military presence and cooperate with SPLA-IO [RM] politicians, in particular, with the Minister of Mining, [Henry Odwar](#), an elderly Lango politician

from Eastern Equatoria and SPLA-IO [RM] deputy to [Riek Machar](#).

SPLA-IO [RM] Positions

The agreement on governor appointments provides that Riek Machar make selections for one state in each of the three regions of Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Equatoria and Greater Upper Nile. In two states for which he selected governors, Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal (Upper Nile is the third), the SPLA-IO have a significant military presence and battle-hardened military commanders. However, recent defections of experienced IO commanders have weakened Machar, pressing him to choose governors that can shore up his standing militarily and improve his international reputation. For Upper Nile state, Machar's selection was strongly contested, and the position remains unfilled.

Western Equatoria State

Machar appointed [Alfred Futiyo Karaba](#), one of the most senior military commanders in Western Equatoria, as governor. General Futiyo claims Balanda, Zande, and Fertit lineage and grew up in Yambio. He was one of the original mobilizers of the [Arrow Boys](#) community defense groups. As such, he is an acceptable choice among the majority-Azande population in Western Equatoria, the group from which governors of the state have been chosen since the CPA in 2005. Futiyo has a cordial relationship with the SSOA strongman [Joseph Bangasi Bakosoro](#), an important Zande ally who, years ago, recommended Futiyo to organize the Arrow Boys against Lord's Resistance Army threats to Zande communities.

Political opponents of Joseph Bakosoro hail mostly from the Avungara clan of the Azande. In addition, all the former

governors of the state, including [Patrick Zamoi](#), [Jemma Nunu Kumba](#), and [Daniel Badagbu Rimbasa](#), have come from the Avungara. As a result, the Avungara present a unified and influential constituency capable of asserting pressure on the new governor. The Avungara Paramount Chief, [Wilson Peni Rikito](#), is a solid counterweight to General Futiyo within the broader context of Zande governance.

The logic behind Futiyo's appointment is to strengthen the military presence of SPLA-IO [RM] in Western Equatoria and curb SPLA-IO defections to the government. [James Nando Mark](#), the long-standing deputy of Futiyo and the former [SPLA-IO \[RM\] Division 9B](#) commander, defected in March 2020. Riek Machar now must rely on Futiyo to provide his remaining soldiers there with salaries, and weapons and ammunition (prior supply chains have come from the DRC and CAR).

Riek Machar's choice of Futiyo reportedly created tension between Futiyo and fellow Western Equatopian [Wesley Welebe](#), SPLA-IO [RM] Deputy Chief of Staff for Training. Welebe, who is a Moro commander from Mundri and outranks Futiyo, also vied for the governorship. The maintenance of a cordial relationship with Welebe will be important for Futiyo to achieve success as governor.

Western Bahr el Ghazal State

Riek Machar chose [Sarah Cleto Hussein Rial](#) as the new governor. Her appointment stands in remarkable contrast to the other appointments. She was the only female appointed and is a long-time resident and citizen of the US. She has a lengthy resume of human rights and humanitarian roles; she is a former fellow at Human Rights Watch and previously served as SPLA-IO [RM] representative to the UN in New York.

She is from a prominent and popular Fertit family and will likely enjoy broad support among Fertit communities of the state. Her father, Cleto Hassan Rial, served as the first Secretary General of the High Executive Council following the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972. She is said to enjoy the support of [Angelina Teny](#), the current Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs and the wife of Riek Machar.

With Cleto's appointment, Machar achieved several tactical victories at once. The international community and liberal South Sudanese elites praised the appointment of the only female governor, one step towards fulfilling the mandatory 35 per cent quota of executive appointments to women. Sarah Cleto also has strong connections to the US diaspora, who are crucial to Riek Machar's quest for political relevance. As governor she will face multifaceted challenges in Western Bahr el Ghazal. These include maintaining the Marial-Bai Agreement, which is meant to mitigate tensions among farmers and migrating pastoralists from Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and providing services to communities while relying heavily on state tax revenues to do so.

Similar to Machar's experience in Western Equatoria, SPLA-IO defections in Western Bahr el Ghazal have eroded his military status there. One of the most senior SPLA-IO [RM] military commanders in WBeG, the deputy commander of [Division 6A](#), [Joseph Daniel Dongo](#), defected to the government in February 2020. The majority of the IO troops in training were under the command of Dongo and other commanders no longer with the SPLA-IO. Remaining SPLA-IO commanders, including Khartoum-based [Abdallah Ujang](#) and [Ibrahim Mussa Daycume](#), have kept their soldiers out of the R-ARCSS security-forces unification process.

It is expected that with Cleto as governor, the Fertit military division commanders, Abdallah Ujang and Ibrahim Mussa Daycume, will work in close cooperation with Western Equatoria's newly appointed governor, Alfred Futiyo, who is part Fertit and has firm opposition roots.

Upper Nile State (unfilled)

The dispute in Upper Nile is one of local politics with national implications. The SPLA-IO chose [Johnson Olonyi](#) as the governor of Upper Nile, but no appointment has been made. Olonyi is the head of the Shilluk [Agwelek militia](#) (officially an SPLA-IO [RM] division) and the SPLA-IO [RM] commander for [Sector I](#). In 2015 Padang Dinka militias pushed Olonyi away from the government. Subsequently, he assumed his position with the SPLA-IO [RM].

Olonyi's appointment as governor of Upper Nile was completely rejected by the Padang Dinka military and political elite. Immediately after Kiir reversed the Upper Nile-Jonglei allocations (the SSOA was initially set to choose the governor for Upper Nile), the Padang Dinka community, anticipating Olonyi's appointment, wrote a letter on 17 June announcing its concern with the decision. They feared Olonyi's appointment would reignite land issues concerning [the displacement of the Shilluk](#) from the west bank of the White Nile from 2015–18.

While the Padang Dinka do not have the strength in government now that they had in 2016, the 12 June appointment of former Padang Dinka military officer [Chol Thon Balok](#) as SSPDF Deputy Chief of Staff indicates the Padang Dinka remain an important political constituency for Kiir's regime. Their control of the Paloich oil field is a significant factor in their importance.

After the 29 June announcement of the eight state governors, Kiir's spokesperson, [Ateny Wek Ateny](#), said on 2 July that Olonyi's nomination [was rejected](#) because he is a "warmonger" who had broken the terms of the peace agreement and had not cantoned his Agwelek troops.

With Olonyi out, Kiir has reportedly asked Machar to choose a Nuer candidate. Such a selection would not inflame Padang-Shilluk tensions and could prevent the Upper Nile governorship from becoming a zero sum game for control of the territory. During the CPA period from 2005-11, the Upper Nile's southern Nuer were also used as a bureaucratic barrier between Dinka-Shilluk antagonism.

The Padang Dinka political lobby, however, has made a more controversial suggestion. In a letter sent to Kiir from [Joshua Dau Diu](#) on 4 July, the influential Padang Dinka politician suggested balkanizing the Shilluk by creating an administrative area on the West Bank of the White Nile that would effectively function as a mono-ethnic Shilluk territory, while leaving Malakal and Akoka -- territory claimed by the Shilluk -- inside an Eastern Nile state dominated by the Padang Dinka, but also containing significant Nuer and Mabanese populations. Such a proposal is in line with prior Jieng Council of Elders proposals, that always advocated putting minority populations into majority-Dinka states, while gerrymandering opposition populations into small mono-ethnic territories. Going ahead with such a proposal would inflame tensions in Upper Nile and be totally unacceptable to the Shilluk and, in particular, Olonyi.

SSOA Position

The [South Sudan Opposition Alliance](#) (SSOA) was designated to select the governor of Jonglei state, but internal disputes between its divided factions

continue to riven the political alliance. The principal contention is between SSOA members aligned with [Denay Jock Chagor](#) and [Josephine Lagu](#) and those aligned with the other SSOA block, which includes [Bapiny Monytuil](#) and [Lam Akol](#). Chagor and Lagu [are accused](#) by the other SSOA block of selling-out to the government and compromising core SSOA political objectives.

Jonglei State

On 15 July after multiple delays, Kiir announced that Chagor would be the governor of Jonglei, with [Gabriel Changson Chan](#) replacing him as the Minister of Higher Education.

On 7 May the Office of the President announced that SSOA would choose the governor of Upper Nile. However, Machar and leaders of the Other Political Parties (OPP) immediately objected to this decision. Consequently, the allocation of Upper Nile to SSOA was rescinded, and on 17 June, the Office of the President announced that SSOA would instead choose the governor for Jonglei. This switch immediately revealed the divisions in the SSOA.

Lam Akol, seeking to pre-empt Lagu and Chagor, wrote to Kiir on 23 June to nominate as Jonglei governor [Mahjoub Biel Turuk](#), the secretary of Akol's [National Democratic Movement](#) (NDM). Lagu insisted, however, that party secretaries cannot be nominated for government positions, and instead announced the candidacy of Chagor, whom months earlier had been appointed Minister of Higher Education. In response, Lam Akol contended that Chagor was not old enough to be a governor – the minimum age for a governor, he claimed, is 40. Chagor insisted that he is not 34 – as his passport's 1986 birthdate suggests – but was born in 1975, making him 45.

Underneath this bureaucratic showmanship is a basic disagreement between the two parts of SSOA, which has never been anything other than a contingent collection of actors united only around mutual self-interest. By backing Chagor and Lagu, and ostracising Akol, the government has now successfully split the alliance.

Chagor's appointment as governor of Jonglei is the latest step in a dizzying rise to power by Peter Gadet's former personal assistant. It is unlikely, however, that Chagor will be able to manage the complicated power politics of Jonglei state. Chagor is a Lou Nuer from Dengjok payam in Akobo East, but he has no political constituency in Jonglei and is generally thought of as a government sell-out by his own people. Moreover, Chagor has no military forces of his own and will have to navigate a powerful Bor Dinka lobby entrenched at the highest levels of the SSPDF. Chagor will also have to contend with an extant SPLA-IO military and political organization in much of the north of the state that will not willingly be replaced by Chagor's choices for commissioners. Finally, Chagor will have to deal with rising ethnic violence between the Murle and the other groups in Jonglei.

However, while Chagor's appointment does nothing to resolve tensions on the ground in Jonglei, it solves a piece of the Juba political jigsaw puzzle. The Former Detainees (FD) were willing to give up their claim on a governorship in exchange for a ministerial position, and on 15 July, FD leader [Deng Alor Kuol](#) was named the New Minister of East African Affairs, replacing [John Luk Jok](#), who died in June. In the meantime, [Gabriel Changson Chang](#), the chairman of the Federal Democratic Party (FDP) and member of SSOA leadership, was appointed to Chagor's previous ministry. This appointment should alleviate the disagreements within SSOA around the

Lagu-Chagor block's domination of the government positions given to the alliance.

Administrative Areas

Abyei

The Abyei Administrative Area (AAA) was created long before South Sudan's other administrative areas. As a result, the selection of administrator for the AAA largely follows a different logic because it is a territory contested between Sudan and South Sudan. In the AAA, Kuol Deng Kuol, an experienced former SPLA general, was replaced as Abyei Area Administrator by his cousin, [Kuol Deim Kuol](#), an experienced former SPLA general and close associate of the late John Garang. Both Deng Kuol and Deim Kuol are from the Abyior section of the nine Ngok Dinka sections. The Abyior are the de facto ruling class in Abyei and every administrator and paramount chief has come from their ranks since the 19th century. Thus, Diem Kuol's appointment represents only a modulation in a continuous political logic. The change comes as over the last few months, Abyei has seen a marked increase in violent attacks and cattle raids by the Misseriya to the north, an unusual trend during the rainy season. It is hoped that Diem Kuol, given his long record of service, will be able to provide Abyei fresh leadership and a stronger connection to the SSPDF in Juba.

Pibor

Until early 2020, [David Yau Yau](#)'s appointment as chief administrator in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area seemed a formality and done deal as his main political and military opponents from the state had been paid off with cabinet positions. Yau Yau's former deputy commander, [Khalid Boutrous Bora](#), is now the Deputy Minister of Public Service and Human Resource Development, while

former Boma governor [Baba Medan Konyi](#) is the Deputy Minister of Information. Another possible candidate, Lt. General [Marshal Stephen Babanen](#), the highest ranking Murle within the SSPDF, was appointed Military Operations Commander.

However, the escalating violence in Jonglei and the arming of Murle youth by David Yau Yau ultimately led to [Joshua Konyi](#)'s appointment. Although David Yau Yau was successful in garnering support of all Murle age-sets for his appointment, his arming of Murle youth alienated Juba-based Dinka Bor military leaders within the government ([Kuol Manyang Juuk](#), [Malek Reuben](#), [Michael Makuei](#), [Malual Majok](#)) and Khartoum based Lou Nuer military commanders of SPLA-IO [RM] (including [Simon Gatwech Dual](#)).

Joshua Konyi, a former Pibor commissioner (2011–14) and [SPLA Eagle Battalion](#) commander (2014–18), is from the Thithi age-set, and he will likely build a base of support from within his own age-set and those of his son's and nephew's age-sets ([Baba Joshua](#) and [John Awan](#)). To promote stability in the area, Kiir and Joshua Konyi will need to find a suitable position for David Yau Yau.

Ruweng

[William Chol Awolich](#)'s appointment as the administrator of the Ruweng Administrative Area represents, in part, an internal concession to Abiemnom county. The Alor Dinka of Abiemnom and the Awet and Kwil Dinka of Pariang county are collectively known as the Ruweng Dinka, and they form part of the riverine Padang Dinka. Since the CPA period (2005-11), important Ruweng figures have all been from Pariang county and not Abiemnom. However, it was thought, inside the Ruweng area of the Padang Dinka, that it was time to choose someone

from the Alor Dinka of Abiemnom. Hence, Awolich was selected as the administrator.

Awolich is a government loyalist who mobilized militia forces amongst the Dinka of Ruweng during the current civil war. He is close to [Nadia Arop](#), Minister of Culture, Museums and National Heritage, and [Mabek Lang](#), the former commissioner of Pariang County and the general who controlled Ruweng for the SPLA during the second civil war.

Disclaimer

Information provided in this Actors Update is sourced from field research conducted by Small Arms Survey and HSBA experts, including interviews with officials from the SPLM, SSPDF, SPLA-IO, local and state leaders, and other prominent officials both in and outside of South Sudan. Where appropriate, in-text links are provided for secondary source material.