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CHANGING LAKES STATE?

Rin Tueny's Inclusive Deterrence Approach in Practice

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**Front cover photo**

Members of the Dinka tribe in a cattle camp near Rumbek, Lakes state, South Sudan. October 2011. Source: Joerg Boethling / Alamy Stock Photo

Overview

Since Rin Tueny Mabor became governor of Lakes state in 2021, security has significantly improved. To pacify Lakes state, Rin Tueny has employed a heavy-handed, security-first approach that puts deterrence before compliance with human rights and other legal standards. Nonetheless, even civil society organizations laud Rin Tueny's apparent successes. This Briefing Paper explores the components of this 'inclusive deterrence' approach and the blind spots it entails. It also discusses whether this approach could be institutionalized if Rin Tueny leaves office to pursue a career at the national level.

Key findings

- Rin Tueny has achieved remarkable success in pacifying considerable parts of Lakes state, especially the Greater Rumbek area. Public perception data shows that everyday security has improved significantly during his tenure and made both Rin Tueny and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Government (SPLM-IG) very popular in the state.
- The governance system in Lakes state relies on the strong role of security services in law enforcement, the concentration of all state resources in the hands of the governor, and a strengthened role of paramount chiefs, who have been reinstated as a formal layer of government. Even though widespread human rights violations by government security forces have been documented, public outcry has been largely muted.
- The governance of Lakes state is highly centralized and predominantly relies on the governor's heavy-handed approach to security; however, the recurrence of cattle-related violence and increasing political tensions in parts of the state cast doubt over the mid- and long-term prospects of this approach. It is unlikely that this system will continue when Rin Tueny is no longer governor.

Introduction

Lakes state is predominantly inhabited by Dinka, but also includes Atuot, Belle, and Bongo communities. The state has a volatile and often violent history, and following South Sudan's independence in 2011, armed clashes over access to grazing land, water, and other resources continued. Since 2021 and the appointment of Rin Tueny as governor of Lakes state, however, armed violence has markedly declined, but not without controversy over his methods.

After inheriting a state in turmoil, Rin Tueny restored law and order, reshaping Lakes state into one of the more peaceful states in the country (Ninrew, 2023a). A prominent South Sudanese NGO, Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, named Rin Tueny the recipient of its inaugural 'State Governor of the Year' award in November 2022 (*Sudans Post*, 2022) despite extrajudicial killings and unlawful detentions being linked to the governor (UNSC, 2023, pp. 25–26).

The government's main approach to law and order is deterring crime and violence. This approach relies on public awareness of the government's methods and enough acceptance of these methods to minimize public outcry. So far, Rin Tueny has managed this balance by using inclusive governance practices in combination with extra-legal tactics. These effectively make him and his governing apparatus the main source of legal action in the state. In this Briefing Paper, this mode of governance is called 'inclusive deterrence'. In the following, the key components of inclusive deterrence are identified and analysed, and the replicability of this approach in other parts of South Sudan is assessed.

The challenges of governing Lakes state

The predominantly Dinka population relies on cattle-keeping as its main source of livelihood. In the more marginal areas outside of the two major towns of Rumbek and Yirol, resources are scarce, and needs are plenty. Difficult conditions, especially competition over grazing land and water, contribute to a culture of cattle rustling that has been, historically, prevalent over most parts of the state (Garfield, 2006; 2007; Ryle and Amuom, 2018, pp. 29–33).

Cattle-related tensions can escalate quickly and trigger armed conflict between clans, potentially leading to cyclical patterns of revenge attacks and

compounding inter-group tensions and violence.¹ As in other pastoralist communities in South Sudan, even a quarrel between individuals can escalate rapidly into a confrontation between ethnic groups (Ryle and Amuom, 2018, p. 28).

In addition to the existing cattle-related tensions, fallout from the second Sudanese civil war (1983–2005) greatly contributed to violence in Lakes state. In 1991, the so-called Nasir split factionalized the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) along ethno-political and geographic lines (Johnson, 2016, pp. 91–94). SPLA-Nasir units from Greater Upper Nile began regularly attacking Dinka communities in the state, especially in the counties of Rumbek East and North, and Yirol East. In response, Dinka communities, with help from the SPLA, formed *gelweng* militias, 'cattle protectors' (cf. Kuol, 2017; Pendle, 2021). The *gelweng* also assumed other security functions, including community policing (Saferworld, 2015). These groups are still active today. While not under the command of the state leadership, they are predominantly loyal to the governor and, therefore, abstain from cattle raiding.²

The widespread availability and use of firearms greatly exacerbated the number and degree of violent conflicts in the state. A 2006 report estimated that more than one-half of the households in Lakes state experienced armed robbery or physical violence. Firearms were estimated to be present in more than one-third of all civilian households in the state (Garfield, 2007, p. 12). Armed robberies especially targeted people travelling the main Yirol–Rumbek–Cueibet highway. Most armed encounters, however, were reportedly over livestock raids and grazing land disputes and involved men in their twenties (p. 4). Fuelled by economic deprivation and high bride prices, commonly paid in heads of cattle, a youth culture of cattle raiding has become more prominent in recent decades.³ Cattle raids in Rumbek and Cueibet were so widespread that it became almost impossible to keep cattle near those towns.⁴

At times, armed confrontations have been linked to land disputes. A 2012 report found that unclear demarcation of county and state borders was fuelling tensions (South Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control, 2012, p. iv). The county borders within Lakes state are still fluid and have changed several times, especially after the return to the ten states framework in February 2020. Some county boundaries, including between Yirol West and Yirol East, are still contested.⁵ Due to the proliferation of weapons within communities,

disputes over grazing access became more violent.

Civilian disarmament could, ostensibly, have positive impacts on Lakes state's security. Large-scale disarmament efforts were conducted multiple times between 2006 and 2018, but these campaigns largely failed due to community distrust of the government and doubts about UN peacekeeping troops' capacity to provide viable physical protection (UNMISS, 2018). The lack of transparency in weapons-collection management also contributed to disarmament failures. As a result of the proliferation of weapons and the failed disarmament campaigns, Lakes state was extremely violent. Until the appointment of Rin Tueny in June 2021, the state remained so unstable that the main road linking the two centres of Rumbek and Yirol was inaccessible without armed protection.

Rin Tueny marks his territory

Lakes state has always been a critical area for the ruling SPLM-IG. Rumbek, the state's capital, served as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army's (SPLM/A) capital from 1997 until the end of the Sudanese civil war in 2005, when Juba became the capital of the South. Since independence in 2011, there have been plans to move the South Sudanese capital back to Ramciel in Lakes state, a presently uninhabited area close to Yirol. Even though these plans seem far-fetched due to the lack of funds for such an undertaking, the Ramciel plan shows the importance of Lakes state for the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) power configuration. Nevertheless, Lakes state, especially in Greater Rumbek, has remained largely insecure despite minimal armed opposition and a comparably homogenous, largely Dinka, population. The unrest in this part of Greater Bahr el Ghazal also affects President Salva Kiir's home state of Warrap and has been a long-lasting problem for the SPLM.

After returning from the 28 and 32 state frameworks to 10 states in February 2020, the Lakes state governorship was assigned to the SPLM. Makur Kulang Liei, a senior military commander from Yirol West, was appointed as the state's first governor in 2020, under the newly formed Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (Radio Tamazuj, 2020). Given Makur Kulang's good track record as a county commissioner in Yirol West (2010–14) in curbing cattle-related violence, his appointment underscored the government's intent to control Lakes

state's insecurity. Makur Kulang failed to achieve this end. Consequently, President Kiir replaced him with Rin Tueny in June 2021.

During the Sudanese civil war, Rin Tueny had a reputation as one of the more ruthless but well-respected SPLA commanders.⁶ After independence, he had leading roles in the National Security Service (NSS) before being appointed governor of Eastern Lakes state in 2015. As governor of Eastern Lakes state, he facilitated several peace agreements in his home area of Yirol.⁷ These agreements can be seen as a precursor to the inclusive and conflict-mitigating elements of his current approach in Lakes state. Rin Tueny later became head of military intelligence and, in this role, emerged as the main competitor of Akol Koor Kuc, the Director of Internal Security at the NSS. Rin Tueny's appointment as the governor of Lakes state in June 2021 temporarily resolved this potential internal power struggle.

During his tenure as head of military intelligence (2019–21), Rin Tueny was accused of establishing an extra-legal detention centre in Juba where civilians and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) cadres were detained without access to legal assistance (UNSC, 2020, p. 13). Also, in violation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), Rin Tueny was accused of mobilizing 1,500 cattle-camp youth and providing them with arms and ammunition diverted from South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) stocks (UNSC, 2020, p. 14).

As governor, Rin Tueny does not appear to exercise formal control over the organized security forces, the *gelweng*, or any other armed group,⁸ but he relies on the SSPDF, police, and national security to conduct their duties in line with his overall security strategy. The governor's high military rank provides him with a unique status that other governors do not have. Based on his reputation, President Kiir allegedly authorized Rin Tueny to use any means necessary to stabilize and pacify Lakes state.⁹ In doing so, Rin Tueny could draw on not only his previous experience as governor, but also the significant SSPDF troops already in the state.¹⁰ Although Rin Tueny does not have direct control over troops in the state, he works closely with the military commanders there, and as he is the highest-ranking official in the state, commanders follow his lead. Further, he is backed by the national leadership. Over the course of this tenure, there have been no reports of tensions or disagreement between the political and the military leadership in the state.

Rin Tueny's first step as governor was to organize the 'Lakes State Consultative Conference' in Juba in late June 2021. This was attended by representatives from the state and national levels, commanders from the SSPDF and other security forces, traditional authorities, and community representatives. The conference dealt mainly with the abysmal security situation in Lakes state, with attention on the prevalence of cattle rustling, road ambushes, revenge killings, and the proliferation of firearms (Lakes State Consultative Conference, 2021).

After two days of deliberation, the conference drafted 27 'people-driven' resolutions on how to end the 'lawless conflict' in Lakes.¹¹ These resolutions addressed the topics of security provision, political inclusion, and economic development. Once formally adopted, the resolutions were widely disseminated across the state. These resolutions became the guiding framework for Rin Tueny's inclusive deterrence strategy: tough security measures, including increased surveillance, capital punishment, and security sector reform. They also included strengthening both community representation and traditional authorities' role in curbing violence and crime. The resolutions were, in turn, explicitly backed and supported by the national leadership, despite some of the resolutions clearly running afoul of human rights norms.

A system of inclusive deterrence

The first key component of the conference outcome document concerns security provision. Apart from normalizing the death penalty, the security provisions aim to limit access to firearms, reform the security sector, increase surveillance, and outlaw harmful societal practices, such as criminalizing witchcraft and prohibiting alcohol. Other resolutions in the document related to security provision are logistically and financially more challenging. For example, some refer to 'adequate logistics for security personnel', which range from proper armament to personal incentives (Lakes State Consultative Conference, 2021, res. 3). Critically, however, it remains silent on funding.

Although deterrence is key to the outcome document, a second significant component is political inclusion. This centres around resurrecting the legal system and empowering traditional authorities. The return to rule of law is the declared goal of the administration.¹² Hence, the consultative conference

requested that all resolutions be enacted into state law, which is indeed what happened with the state's customary law and public order acts (*Number One Citizen Daily Newspaper*, 2023). Despite this formally legalistic approach, however, Rin Tueny's methods rest on a specific relation to the law. Namely, core components of inclusive deterrence are better understood as rule *by* law: apart from the expanded use of the death penalty, which is contrary to human rights standards, some of the measures taken by the governor and the security services in Lakes state are clearly extra-legal and not situated within the formal justice chain.

One aspect of resurrecting the legal system and implementing the rule of law is the appointment of new judges and increasing their rotation in special mobile courts (Lakes State Consultative Conference, 2021, res. 4). The resolutions also call for the establishment of special courts for dealing with cattle raiding and rustling. Special courts are used regularly across the country and are an instrument of the South Sudanese Supreme Court (Lakes State Consultative Conference, 2021, res. 10).¹³ In Lakes state, three special courts, logistically supported by the United Nations Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS), were established in Rumbek Centre, Yirol West, and Cueibet counties. The courts were comprised of national judges brought from Juba, judges from Lakes state, and traditional authorities. They were tasked with dealing with the significant backlog of cases related to cattle raiding and revenge attacks, particularly focusing on adjudicating cattle-raiding murder cases, which they did rather quickly and fairly.¹⁴ As a result, the justice system has become more reliable and faster, and as such, more accessible.

Overall, the state's justice system strives for both deterrence and inclusion. While harsh sentences, such as the death penalty, are part of the deterrence component, the strategic strengthening of the role of traditional authorities is a critical aspect of inclusion. Although traditional authorities were given a formal role in the British colonial system of indirect rule, they have developed into an institutionalized tradition in subsequent decades (Ryle and Amuom, 2018, p. 40). Among the Dinka communities in Lakes state, paramount chiefs, *bany aleth* in Dinka, often follow family lines, but they still undergo regular electoral cycles. In the decades of the Sudanese civil war, however, from the 1980s onwards, they lost influence significantly. Some chiefs attribute this to the increasing use of firearms and the related brutal-

ization of inter-communal conflict (Ryle and Amuom, 2018, pp. 41–42).

Rin Tueny's government restored the traditional role of paramount chiefs as part of local administration and put them into direct reporting lines with the county commissioners.¹⁵ Such direct reporting lines exceed the stipulations of the South Sudan Local Government Act, which assigns traditional authorities a role in the local government councils but in a more deliberative and less formalized way. Previously, chiefs were often blackmailed by government officials to pay bribes to remain in their role, or they were simply dismissed if they did not comply with orders. The new provisions make chief elections obligatory and, in turn, guarantee chiefs their role and safeguard against government agent harassment (Lakes State Consultative Conference, 2021, res. 18).

Paramount chiefs are highly content with the resolutions and can now rely on state-level support, which is essential when taking judge roles in customary courts. In turn, this arrangement enables Rin Tueny's administration to gather insights into developments at the community level. When crimes are committed, state officials use the chief-reporting line to identify alleged perpetrators. Then, rather than following formal legalistic norms, these suspects are often subject to extra-legal detention.

In addition to security provision and political-legal inclusion, economic development is the third component of Rin Tueny's inclusive deterrence approach. These measures are, however, rather broad. They call for creating public and private sector jobs, as well as promoting agriculture, education, infrastructure, and local development. To date, the financial sources for these initiatives remain doubtful beyond limited tax income from local markets, court fines, and some transfers of funds by the national government.

In the education sector, only one initiative has been implemented. The national Minister of Education, Awut Deng Acuil, regularly visits Lakes state to highlight her 'Education Cannot Wait' campaign (Wote, 2023b). The education initiative has had its problems, however. In 2023, the government demolished temporary housing that had been built on Rumbek Secondary School grounds. This led to public unrest, resulting in one death and several people being severely injured (Radio Tamazuj, 2023a). The incident garnered national attention and was one of the most disruptive in the state since Rin Tueny became governor. In the end, the state government had to

give in partially and offer compensation and new homes to those affected by the demolition.

A few months later, screening exercises for teachers caused another political row (Ninrew, 2023b). While widely seen as necessary to ensure teacher qualifications, the exercise was met with resistance. Nineteen teachers refused to participate and were imprisoned in military detention centres (Joseph, 2023). While these incidents are isolated, they show that the governor's repressive approach to political challenges is facing increasing public resistance.

Inclusive deterrence in practice

Deterrence depends on an effective communication strategy to work, so communicating practices and policies is critical. Besides the cited resolutions and the strong personal presence of the governor, the approach has been mainly communicated through actions meant to demonstrate strength. Further, the state government also relies upon loyal paramount chiefs and the *gelweng* militias in remote parts of the state to implement its approach.

Detention centres are another cornerstone of the inclusive deterrence approach. There are currently about ten across the state.¹⁶ Some of these predate the current administration, especially the notorious Babur-Zeit facility in Yirol town, which was used by Rin Tueny in his previous tenure as governor of Eastern Lakes state (PaanLuel Wël, 2017). In detention centres, several hundred inmates await potential trials or release, which may depend on relatives paying penalties often arbitrarily set by the security organs themselves. Conditions inside the facility are dire. Inmates are held in hot, overcrowded, and poorly ventilated rooms. They are dependent on food brought from outside, but relatives are often not informed of detentions and only learn about missing family members after inquiring at the facility.¹⁷ Public knowledge of the conditions of detention centres certainly bolsters Rin Tueny's deterrence strategy.

Moreover, it is also widely known that some inmates have disappeared. The 'UNMISS Human Rights Brief' from June 2023 reports eight documented cases of extra-legal executions in Lakes state in the first months of 2023 (Ninrew, 2023c; UNMISS, 2023). While fiercely rejected by government spokespersons at national and state levels, even loyal followers of the governor admit

that extra-legal executions are common, and even welcomed by significant parts of the population.¹⁸ In an unusual display of disobedience, the Lakes State Human Rights Commissioner Barnaba Magok Mabor resigned on 19 April 2023 citing the lack of democratic administration and legal procedures in the state. In his resignation, Barnaba Magok accused Rin Tueny of violating human rights and pointed to the cases of governor-sanctioned, unlawful detentions, torture, and killings (Radio Tamazuj, 2023b).

While extra-legal tactics and human rights violations are troubling, the security situation in Lakes state has improved. The South Sudan Public Perceptions of Peace Survey shows an increase of the population feeling 'very safe' from 87.9 per cent in 2022 to 91.7 per cent in 2023 in Yirol West. In Rumbek Centre, historically the most unstable area, approval increased from 73.5 per cent in 2022 to 99.2 per cent in 2023. Among the 15 counties surveyed across all ten states in South Sudan in 2022 and 2023, Lakes state results are by far the best; only Renk (before the current influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan) reported comparable figures.¹⁹

Today, a majority of the population in Lakes state seems willing to accept the trade-off between the improvements in the quality of daily life and the related undermining of human rights. Increasing political discontent, however, as displayed by the outcry over the house demolitions in Rumbek town and the harsh treatment of teachers during the screening exercise, shows that public acquiescence has limits. Consequently, it appears that Rin Tueny's administration must maintain high levels of security and deterrence to sustain its popularity.

Implementing the transitional agenda

Apart from securitizing the state, Rin Tueny's approach to implementing the R-ARCSS's transitional power-sharing agenda represents the SPLM-IG's ideal scenario. Despite historical enmity with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) during the civil war, during which the governor counted as one of the hardliners on the government side, Rin Tueny has largely governed Lakes state pragmatically and in cooperation with the SPLM/A-IO.²⁰ For example, Rin Tueny and Poth Madit Dut, the initial SPLM-IO-ticketed deputy governor, collaborated without major friction. Poth Madit has since moved into national politics as a Member of Parliament, and

Isaiah Akhol Mathiang, a former commissioner for Cueibet county, replaced him in August 2023. Currently, SPLM-IO representatives report no particular restrictions in the state by the SPLM-IG or the governor.²¹

This pragmatic relationship, however, requires strict personal loyalty to, or at least compliance with, the governor. Rin Tueny has shown he will not accept any kind of political obstruction or challenge to his leadership. The most prominent case involved Andrew Acheng, the commissioner in Yirol West nominated by the Sudan People's Liberation Army-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO). Acheng objected to Rin Tueny centralizing all state revenue and disbursing it at his personal discretion. Rin Tueny responded by appointing an executive director loyal to him to sideline the commissioner. Acheng, in turn, refused to collaborate with the executive director. Subsequently, Acheng was relieved from his duties as county commissioner and, according to his own account, 'arbitrarily arrested, put behind bars in Babur-Zeit Military prison, and forced out of the county' (*Sudan Tribune*, 2022). He was later physically assaulted in Juba and forced to retire, which he formally did in April 2022.²²

Recognizing the governor's popularity and its own weak position in the state, the SPLM-IO avoided turning the incident into a major political issue. While it took eight months to name a successor accepted by the governor, there was little political protest at either the state or national level. This underscores the political dominance of the SPLM-IG in the state. When the governor claims that Lakes state is 'prepared for elections', he is likely referring to the uncontested political dominance of the SPLM-IG—a political situation that the national government has worked hard to achieve in its Lakes and Warrap states heartland in preparation for the elections planned for December 2024.²³

The system's breaking points

Although conversations and recent quantitative data point to a general satisfaction with the current situation in Lakes state, there are valid concerns whether the current situation is sustainable. First, it is debatable whether civilian disarmament in Lakes state has been as effective as the state government claims. Official numbers state that several thousand firearms have been collected across all communities in the state, particularly in the cattle camps.²⁴ These claims are

doubtful. Informants familiar with the situation on the ground said people remain well armed.²⁵ The gelweng militias still exist, although they restrain from violent activities due to their loyalty to the governor. This suggests that the primary difference is that today, arms are not as publicly displayed as they were before Rin Tueny's governorship.

What has happened instead is that the modalities of inter-clan conflicts have shifted from direct to indirect assaults. Rather than openly attacking rival communities, they are reported to security organs to provoke detention and retaliation measures by state actors.²⁶ In many cases, inclusive deterrence has only changed the appearance of, not resolved, inter-communal tensions. Consequently, they are likely to surface again once the state leadership changes.

Second, deterrence seems to be less effective than it was initially. In particular, the cattle camp youth, whose socio-economic situation has not significantly improved under Rin Tueny, are still tempted by the rewards offered by raiding. Since the beginning of 2023, cattle raids and revenge attacks have been increasing in borderland areas of Lakes state, especially between the counties of Cueibet and Rumbek North, and Tonj East and Tonj South, in Warrap state.²⁷ Rin Tueny has initiated a number of meetings involving the Warrap government to curb the violence and to return raided cattle. Plans for a larger peace conference have been discussed as well (Wote, 2023a). Nonetheless, these initiatives appear to be only a temporary fix for structural issues that are more difficult to resolve. These incidents demonstrate the limited powers of the governor beyond Lakes state and the challenges of improving the living conditions and changing the social traditions in more remote areas.²⁸

Third, it is unclear whether people are indeed genuinely happy about the improved security situation, or whether the ongoing deterrence only hides existing tensions. As shown, survey data confirms public contentment with Rin Tueny's pacification. This is especially evident in Rumbek town, where the security situation was abysmal before Rin Tueny took office. Even the incident around the demolition of houses and the subsequent protests did not seriously impact the governor's popularity. In other parts of the state, however, people seem acquiescent rather than content with the current state leadership. Such feelings can shift rapidly once the personal composition of state leadership changes.

Even government officials themselves acknowledge that they have struggled to institutionalize the current system of governance.²⁹ Much will depend on the profile of Rin Tueny's successor. If his leadership style cannot be maintained by his successor, few believe that the current pacification in the state will continue.

Conclusion

Since becoming governor of Lakes state, Rin Tueny has vastly improved the security situation in the state by rigorously implementing an approach of inclusive deterrence. Harsh security measures, ranging from draconian court rulings to extra-legal detentions and killings, have been combined with resuscitating a moribund legal system and strengthening the role of traditional authorities. In addition, socio-economic initiatives have been proposed, but to date, only implemented in the education sector. The lack of socio-economic initiatives, however, has not generated widespread public resistance. Rin Tueny governs with almost absolute political dominance and little tolerance for political challenges or contestation. He is, however, also politically pragmatic and has shown a willingness to work with the political opposition as long as his dominance is accepted.

Rin Tueny's leadership style relies on centralizing key decision-making around him and his inner circle. Besides all security-related matters, state finances are effectively personally managed by the governor. Consequently, there is little meaningful institutional oversight and certain security organs are clearly favoured. Due to the exclusive nature of the governor's decision- and deal-making role, the state government, on the whole, has struggled to institutionalize Rin Tueny's approach. Unless the governor's system is institutionalized—while he remains governor—sustaining improved security in the long term will remain an uncertainty.

Replicating Rin Tueny's approach in other states is unlikely. Other military strongmen have failed to achieve similar results, especially in more ethnopolitically diverse settings where a highly centralized—and personalized—leadership style would be met with fierce resistance from the outset by communities fearing political and economic marginalization.³⁰

Lakes state's recent 'success story', therefore, must be interpreted with caution. A relapse into turmoil is possible, and, at present, even likely if the state's top leadership changes. In order to sustain the transformation of Lakes state

into a stable and peaceful area in the long term, the rule of law must reliably implement indiscriminate justice based on human rights standards, and public finance flows must be open to scrutiny. This is unlikely in the top-heavy political alignment that is dominated by the person of the governor. Moreover, changing the socio-economic culture that underpins the still prevalent practices of cattle-related violence will require drastically improving education and employment opportunities. This suggests that governance in Lakes state will remain a challenge for years to come. ●

Acronyms and abbreviations

NGO Non-governmental organization

NSS National Security Service

R-ARCSS Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan

SPLA Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLA-IO Sudan People's Liberation Army-in-Opposition

SPLM Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLM/A Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

SPLM/A-IO Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition

SPLM-IG Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Government

SPLM-IO Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition

SSPDF South Sudan People's Defence Forces

UNMISS United Nations Mission to South Sudan

Notes

- 1 Interview with researcher from Yirol East, Rumbek, April 2023.
- 2 Interview with researcher from Yirol East, Rumbek, April 2023.
- 3 Interview with security officer from Rumbek Centre, Juba, April 2023.
- 4 Written communication with researcher from Cueibet, August 2023.
- 5 Consultations with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission in Yirol West and county commissioner in Yirol East, Yirol town, March 2022.
- 6 Interview with security officer from Lakes state, Juba, April 2023.
- 7 Interview with political analyst from Lakes state, Juba, April 2023.
- 8 Interviews with political observers and security officers from Lakes state, Rumbek town and Juba, April 2023.

- 9 Interview with security officer from Lakes state, Juba, April 2023.
 - 10 Interview with political analyst from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 11 Interview with security officer from Lakes state, Juba, April 2023.
 - 12 Interviews with governor and state ministers of Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 13 Interview with South Sudanese lawyer and legal expert, Juba, June 2023.
 - 14 An UNMISS report identifies 16 murder cases tried by the Special Court in Yirol West alone by October 2021, about four months after its establishment. See UNMISS (2021).
 - 15 Interviews with paramount chief from Rumbek Centre, and political analyst, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 16 Interviews with paramount chief from Rumbek Centre, and political analyst, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 17 Interviews with human rights activist and researcher from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 18 Interviews with security officers and political observers from Lakes state, Rumbek town and Juba, April and June 2023.
 - 19 Primary data of 'South Sudan Public Perception of Peace Survey', 4th iteration, on file with author.
 - 20 Interview with SPLM-IO senior military officer from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 21 Interviews with government officials from both SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO from Lakes state, Rumbek town and Juba, April 2023.
 - 22 Interviews with SPLM-IO politicians from Lakes state, Rumbek town and Juba, April 2023.
 - 23 Interview with Rin Tueny Mabor, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 24 Interviews with officials from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 25 Interview with researcher from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 26 Interview with researcher from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 27 Interview with political observer from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 28 Interview with security officer from Yirol town, Juba, June 2023.
 - 29 Interview with state minister from Lakes state, Rumbek town, April 2023.
 - 30 See Craze (2023) on insecurity in Warrap state and the approaches taken by the current governor, Manhiem Bol Malek, and his predecessor, Aleu Ayieny Aleu.
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