

Persistent Instability

ARMED VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY IN SOUTH SUDAN

This chapter takes stock of the ongoing security threats facing South Sudan as it implements a fragile peace agreement with Khartoum. It shows that despite implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) since early 2005, 'post-conflict' South Sudan remains inherently unstable in a region awash with small arms and light weapons.

The chapter seeks to shed light on key security threats in the region. Through an analysis of its political transition, the proliferation of its armed groups, the role and effects of armed violence on its communities, and efforts to improve human security, the chapter asks:

- Has security improved for Southern Sudanese since the CPA?
- What are the significant security threats that continue to face the region?
- What framework does the CPA offer for improving human security?
- How stable and comprehensive is the peace agreement?

It finds that while the Sudan People's Liberation Movement is forging ahead with implementation of the historic peace agreement, the process of transforming itself into a functioning government and delivering widely expected peace dividends is proving extremely difficult.

South Sudan has some of the lowest indicators on education as well as child and maternal mortality in the world, and an almost total absence of basic infrastructure. While significant progress has been made in setting up the necessary institutions and legal frameworks that are mandated by the CPA, the Government of South Sudan literally has to build itself up from scratch. Its lack of

administrative experience, its almost total absence of civilian oversight, and its limited skilled human resources remain enormous obstacles to progress. Opportunities for mismanagement and accusations of corruption are rife. The CPA continues to be implemented, but a combination of factors is conspiring to delay progress, not least the ongoing violations by counter-productive elements in Khartoum.

In the run-up to an upcoming census, border demarcation, and elections before a crucial referendum on secession for the South in 2011, the peace process finds itself at a particularly critical stage. The combination of deep mistrust between the parties, the region's numerous armed groups, widespread access to small arms, extensive grievances, and an almost total lack of employment opportunities is potentially incendiary.

The chapter's main findings are the following:

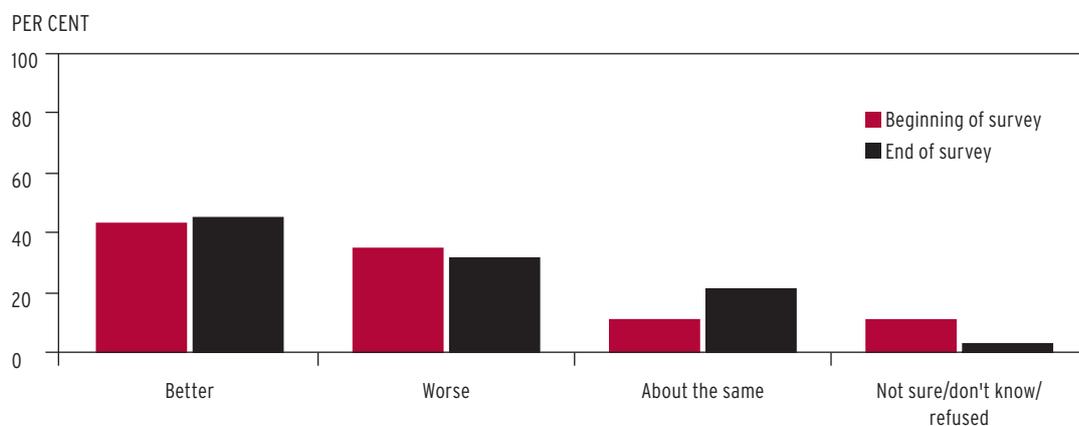
- The CPA has failed to improve security for large swathes of the population.
- Inter-personal armed violence and criminality are pervasive.
- Small arms are highly accessible and misused by all sectors of society.



A woman armed with a Kalashnikov prepares an evening meal with her child in a homestead in Rumbek, 900 km south of Khartoum, in September 2003. © Patrick Olum/Reuters

- Demand for small arms is driven by the need to protect family and cattle in the absence of functioning security forces.
- Violations of the CPA are ongoing and are likely to continue.
- Sudan's natural resources, and in particular its oil fields, are likely to spark future north–south conflict.

Figure 10.1 **Safety and security since the CPA (N=579, 621)**



Source: Garfield (2007, p. 23)

While efforts to improve human security—including the withdrawal of the Sudanese Armed Forces from the South, civilian disarmament programmes, and planning for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR)—are ongoing, so too are sporadic outbursts of fighting and a build-up of armed forces in strategic border areas. It is widely believed that the demarcation of that border, which will determine where crucial natural resources lie, will lead to future conflict.

The CPA has failed to improve human security for large swathes of the population.

The means to conduct a future conflict are in plentiful supply. Sudan is at the epicentre of one of the most vibrant arms markets in the world, resulting from decades of insurgencies, civil wars, proxy wars, communal clashes, weak governance, and criminal violence in the region. South Sudan shares porous borders with the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, all of which have been scenes of recent intra-state or inter-state wars or have hosted lethal communal clashes. UN arms embargoes have been imposed on several states in the region, including Sudan, but they remain extremely difficult to enforce.

It is widely recognized that the proliferation of firearms and armed groups contributes to widespread insecurity in South Sudan, yet information on the extent and frequency of armed violence remains elusive, as does reliable information on the prevalence of civilian gun ownership. This chapter presents the findings of a household survey that revealed high levels of gun ownership in Lakes State—35 per cent of respondents admitted that they or someone in their compound possessed a firearm. The survey also uncovered high rates of victimization: on average, households were found to have experienced at least one robbery, nearly two fights, and close to one armed attack since the signing of the CPA. Guns were the predominant weapon used in such violent events.

Sudan's natural resources are likely to spark future north-south conflict.

Above all the chapter urges donors and international policy-makers to focus time and funding on South Sudan to actively support the peace process. It is critical that CPA-mandated DDR and security sector reform take place and that all parties respect the spirit and letter of the agreement. Since 2003 the Darfur crisis has diverted much of the international attention away from South Sudan; it is now critical that policy-makers renew their commitment to it. ❏