THE DISARMAMENT OF THE GEL-WENG OF BAHR EL GHAZAL

and

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE NUER – DINKA PEACE AGREEMENT
1999

Report of a study undertaken on behalf of the

NEW SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

And

PAX CHRISTI – NETHERLANDS

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Executive Summary

South Sudan has been in a state of war since 1983. Spearheaded by the SPLM/A, this war is devastating and has destroyed the little physical, social, economic and administrative infrastructure that existed in Southern Region.

The SPLM/A, since its inception emphasised and promoted military discipline and combat action and ignored political organisation. As a result the SPLA emerged as a powerful military machine that placed vast areas of south Sudan under its control and administration. The neglect of political organisation and mobilisation engendered contradictions within the SPLM/A and between it and the civil population. These contradictions reached their zenith in 1991 resulting in a split and in-fighting.

The fighting between the Nasir and Torit factions of the SPLM/A translated itself into Nuer-Dinka conflict. Starting with the invasion of Bor and Kongor by the Nasir forces and Nuer white army, this conflict was transferred to western Upper Nile, when the SPLA Torit forces attacked and ransacked Adok and Ler. That force was defeated with the assistance from the NIF government and were forced to withdraw through Yirol with the Nasir forces in hot pursuit. This marked the beginning of the Nuer armed incursion into Yirol, Rumbek and Tonj counties and the mutual raids that followed.

Although the conflict between the Nuer and Dinka is historical and have been mediated with traditional weapons, only that the on-going war between the SPLA and the GoS introduced modern weapons and transformed the nature of the conflict through the politicisation of ethnicity. There were as many as nineteen recorded raids from western Upper Nile into the Dinka land culminating in the ferocious attacks on Akot and Ganyliel respectively in 1996 and 1997. In these attacks thousands of lives were lost, women and children abducted and tens of thousands of heads of cattle looted.

The communities started to arm in order to defend themselves and their property against attacks from western Upper Nile. The acquisition of arms was done either by individual purchases in which the prices of AKM rifle rocketed to 10 heads of cattle or were got from the SPLA in purchase of food rations or as gifts to the chiefs and community elders. Nevertheless, some people acquired weapons from the battlefields from demised enemy soldiers. The SPLA permitted the Gel-weng, or vigilante, to carry weapons and indeed were organised into a para-military formation that participated in military combat alongside the SPLA (1997).

The conflict between the Nuer (western Upper Nile) and the Dinka (Bahr el Ghazal) was terminated by the Wunlit Nuer-Dinka Peace Covenant was signed in March 1999. This brought to an end to the suffering of the civil population, who for the first time started to experience peace along their common borders. This peace is holding in spite of the conflict between the different sections of the Nuer caused by the split with the political movement therein.

The peace between Nuer and Dinka did not prevent the eruption of violence within and between the different sections, sub sections and clans of the Dinka. There was conflict between the Agar (Pakam) and the Luach Jiang (Tonj County), Between the Gok (Cueibet) and Agar (Rumbek), and others.

In September 2000, the Gok – Agar conflict erupted in which more than twenty-five people including children were killed and thousands of heads of cattle looted. This prompted the SPLA
Regional Authorities to disarm the **Gel-weng** and all the civilians possessing arms. The disarmament was carried out in Cuiibet, Rumbek and parts of Yirol. Some four thousand rifles were collected. The culprits were arrested and an Investigation Team set up to investigate the criminal dimension of the conflict.

This study, commissioned by New Sudan Council of Churches and Pax Christi, was undertaken with the objectives to examine the causes of the community violence and conflict; whether or not the disarmament was comprehensive, and impartial and its impact on community harmony and peace; Whether or not there were any resistance to the exercise; to inform policy strategy for a future participatory, peaceful, voluntary and sustainable disarmament in South Sudan and finally to make recommendations that will contribute towards community violence and conflict prevention, management and resolution and means of strengthening traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and peace building.

The study has revealed that:

- The causes of the violence and its escalation into conflict and open battles between the different sections and clans of the Dinka is linked to widespread presence of weapons and firearms in the communities, especially in the hands of those who have not been trained to their use;

- While competition over resources: water, grazing lands etc., have historically existed among the Dinka, only that the present conflicts may be attributed to the failure of the political authorities to institute a system of governance that could mitigate these conflicts and prevent their escalation;

- Some of the conflicts have been attributed to the behaviour of youth, especially their competition over girls in dancing which resulted in feuds leading to wider conflicts. Similarly, the wounding in a hockey game of a youth (Gok) and his death from septic wound eventually led to vengeance being meted by his relatives on innocent Agar youths in the cattle camp. However, it’s the murder of a man who tried to rescue his twelve years old daughter from being rape by unknown people that broke the camel back and led to the large scale attack of the Gok by the Agar resulting in may deaths;

- There were some hidden causes to the conflict between the Gok and Agar beside what has been mentioned above. Rumbek was until December 1999 one County. The creation of Cuiibet County raised issue of the placement of the border between the two counties. The Gok feel that the Agar (Pakam) are occupying their land and should return to their land, before being displaced by the Nuers, now that the conflict with the Nuers has been resolved through the Wunlit Nuer-Dinka Peace Covenant;

- Although there was some resistance leading to use of force by the SPLA, more specifically among those who purchased firearms using their won resources (cattle), the disarmament was welcomed by the traditional leaders: chiefs, spear-masters, elders, etc., as a means of regaining their influence, authority and dignity in the community after being eroded by the culture of the gun;

- The SPLA used some force to recover the firearms. However, what made many people to respond voluntarily was the camping of the SPLA in the villages or cattle camps. The longer the SPLA stayed in a location the more resources (bulls, sorghum, etc.) they consumed. Thus to avoid the depletion of their resources the people gave in their rifles.
Peace and stability has been restored in the communities. This was partly due to disarmament, but more importantly, the people had realised the futility of the conflict. The people were waiting for the outcome of the courts trying the murder cases. Their expectation is that the courts will be just and fair in their handling of the cases of murders and other crimes. Any unfair verdicts or injustices could easily inflame passions and could cause a relapse to hostilities.

A strategic finding of the study is that peace and harmony, whether in a particular community or between different communities will only come when the conflict with the north has been resolved. But more importantly the on-going people to people peace process under the auspices of the NSCC is a contributory factor to the overall peace in the country. It impacts on the North – South Conflict mediated by the Inter-Governmental Agency for Development (IGAD). Reconciliation in the communities to restore community peace and harmony creates conditions for a united south Sudan, which can negotiate for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, or fight the war collectively in strength. The NIF government will take peace negotiations seriously only if it realises that the South is united and narrows the opportunity of its military defeat.

The study makes several recommendations for furthering the peace process and building community harmony, chief among them are:

- That the political movements accelerate the institutionalisation of good governance in the areas under their control in order to reduce tensions and community violence and conflicts;

- Promotion of the people to people peace process throughout south Sudan, more specifically in Upper Nile, which has been devastated by inter-community violence and conflicts. The formation of local peace committees, the building of local police units perhaps linked to the chiefs and community leaders must be accelerated; and

- The political movements make efforts to reconcile their ranks and minimise the conflicts between themselves.
1. BACKGROUND

The long running civil war in south Sudan, between the government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) created conflicts at the micro levels in the South. Triggered and driven by the attempted ouster in 1991 of Col. Dr. John Garang de Mabior from the leadership of SPLM/A by a group of his lieutenants, these micro-level conflicts soon translated into a Nuer – Dinka conflict.

It all began with the invasion and devastation in September – October 1991 of Bor and Kongor by the SPLA Nasir faction forces and the Lou Nuer white army (Jiech Mabor 1). In 1992, the Nuer – Dinka conflict shifted to the border areas between western Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal, where it transformed itself into a mutual cattle rustling exercise across the common borders. This resulted in unprecedented humanitarian disruption: large numbers of civilian deaths, abduction of children and women, looting of hundreds of thousand heads of cattle, massive displacement and a general wave of insecurity.

With time, the Nuer raids from western Upper Nile became more politicised, as they became part of the competition between the SPLA and the SPLA-United, latter to be named South Sudan Independence Army (SSIA) for territorial and political control. This prompted the formation of a vigilante group linked to and resourced by the SPLA called the ‘Gel-weng’ 2 on the Dinka side of the common borders in Yirol, Rumbek, Cueibet and Tonj counties. This militia formation was ostensibly to repulse any aggression and cattle rustling from western Upper Nile. However, the Gel-weng virtually became an SPLA auxiliary paramilitary force. This force participated in the 1997 military operations that witnessed the liberation of large parts of Bahr el Ghazal.

While some of the weapons possessed by the Gel-weng were provided by the SPLA as part of its strategy against incursions from western Upper Nile, it is clear that most of the small arms and weapons in the hands of the civilians were acquired through any of the following means: -

1. Individual purchases either from the SPLA or arms traders who hailed from Bor;
2. From the battlefields, some civilians who witnessed or took parts in SPLA ambushes of government army or other battles managed to get guns; and
3. Gifts to the chiefs and community elders for political support.

The SPLA command in Bahr el Ghazal had initially attempted to control the movements (acquisition by civilians) of firearms by registering them. The imposition of heavy registration fees defeated the exercise. Many people simply refused to register their rifles and it became difficult for the SPLA authorities to determine the number of firearms in the hands of the civilians.

The continued raids from western Upper Nile resulted in the increase of the number of firearms as the people scrambled to defend themselves and their property. The existence of large amounts of firearms in the hands of civilians, untrained to the rules of their use, was a matter of grave danger. This was manifested sooner than latter in the high rates of death from gun shot wounds among the civilian population. Simple quarrels that used to be settled with traditional weapons: spears, sticks, etc., were now being settled with AK47, with serious consequences for community peace and harmony.

1 Armed civilians.
2 Literally meaning cattle protectors.
In February – March 1999, and under the auspices of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), a peace and reconciliation conference was convened in Wunlit, Tonj County, Bahr el Ghazal to resolve the Nuer – Dinka conflict. It was modelled on a traditional conflict resolution method. Attended by the representative of the two communities, their political movements and international observers, this conference culminated in what popularly is known as “Wunlit Nuer-Dinka Peace Covenant”. This brought an end to the conflict on bank west of the Nile between the Nuer sections and the different sections of the Dinka.

The Nuer raids into Dinka areas acted as a uniting factor that temporarily eclipsed the traditional rivalries and competition for dominance among the different Dinka sections and sub sections. However, it did not prevent the occasional eruptions now proliferated and exacerbated by the possession of firearms, sometimes escalating them. Formations of armed civilians from different sections or clans fought battles using firearms.

For instance, the Luach Jang in Tonj fought battles with the Agar (Pakam) of Rumbek; the Gok of Cueibet fought among themselves, and against their Agar neighbours of Rumbek County (Pakam, Rub and Nyang sections). The Agar sections of Boor and Monytiek (Kok) fought among themselves. In Yirol county there is an unresolved triangular conflict between the Atuot and the Chiech Dinka, between the Chiech Dinka and the Aliab and between the Aliab and the Atuot. There is also a simmering conflict between the Agar (Rumbek) and the Atuot and Chiech (Yirol)(see the map of Lakes).

The proliferation of small arms, the dangers associated with them and their negative impact on the inter- and intra- community harmony and peace causing untold deaths and suffering cannot be overemphasized. This prompted the SPLA leadership in Bahr el Ghazal to disarm the Gel-weng and all civilians possessing firearms. In October 2000, three brigade-sized SPLA force was deployed to carry out the exercise in Tonj, Cueibet, Rumbek and Yirol Counties. This was a collective punitive measure against community violence, as well as a precaution against future abuse of firearms. Administrative and judicial measures have also been put in place for future possession of firearms.
2. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts and wars have dominated the South Sudanese landscape since 1983. These not only caused immense humanitarian disruption, but they also resulted in the total destruction of the social, economic, administrative and the physical infrastructure that existed in the South before 1983.

A synoptic view of the political and military situation depicts South Sudan as helpless and hopeless state of chaos. Social services are minimal and local institutional capacities remain weak. The political movements demonstrate a lack of seriousness with respect to promoting good governance in the areas they controlled, which perhaps is the real cause of the inter-, and intra-community violence as a result of the breakdown in law and order. The civil population is marginalised, brutalised and tyrannised by the military that have logged themselves into the relative benefits of a war economy. The lack of unity among the different political movements and their continued struggle to cancel each other does little for the emancipation of the people.

On the other hand, while recognising the difficulties that accompany South Sudan’s path to self-government, the civil society institutions are emerging. The people’s awareness of their reality, at least in some parts of the south, is rising and they are beginning to question the status quo, and their relations with the local military, political and administrative authorities that tend to marginalise them. The culture of silence, resulting from excessive militarism and militarisation of all aspects of social life in South Sudan, is slowly giving way to an informed debate on the future and destiny of the South. In short, the people are beginning to ‘emerge’ and the civil society is growing.

South Sudan is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious/cultural, etc. This fact has rendered its people over the decades prone to political manipulations and divisions. The violence we find today in the communities was first introduced by the colonialism and the ethnic divisions were encouraged as a matter of policy in the context of ‘divide and rule’, which the successive Arab dominated governments found expedient to apply in respect of South Sudan.

Thus, contradictions at the political level are easily and quickly reflected on the ethnic (tribal) plane. That’s how the 1991 political/military split of the SPLM/A became tribalised and took the form of a Nuer -Dinka conflict in Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal, or the Chukudum crisis were transformed into Dinka – Didinga.

Since its inception as a champion of ‘revolutionary armed struggle to liberate the people of Sudan from the minority clique regime’ the SPLA/M emphasised military action to the neglect of political work in the army and among the civilian population. It also ignored civil administration and other organisational matters. The contradictions within the SPLM/A, and between the SPLM/A and the civil population in some places led to serious crisis, which culminated in the split in 1991. This led to vicious and fierce in fighting between the two factions led by Dr. Riek Machar and Dr. John Garang, then known as the Nasir and Torit factions of the SPLM/A, respectively.

Following the attack on Bor and Kongor by the forces of the Nasir faction in September – October 1991, the SPLA Torit faction launched an attack on Adok and Ler in western Upper

\(^3\) An independent and vibrant civil society is emerging. The recent election in the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) in which a pro-SPLM/A establishment candidate was defeated not only reflects this emergence but also a signal of the growing dissatisfaction with the SPLM governance system.
Cdr. William Nyuon Bany, the SPLA Chief of Staff, himself a Nuer, commanded this attack. This attack was defeated and repulsed. Cdr. William Nyuon was ordered by the SPLA H/Qs to withdraw with his forces through Yirol. The Nasir forces pursued Cdr. William into the Dinka land. This marked the beginning of the armed incursion into Bahr el Ghazal and the transformation of the inter-SPLA fighting into a Nuer – Dinka conflict.

In the space of five years (1992 – 1996) there were regular cross borders raids and cattle rustling between the Nuer and the Dinka (Chiech, Agar and Luach Jang sections). There were nineteen recorded attacks from western Upper Nile into the Dinka areas. The most serious ones were the attack on Akot (1994) by the Nuers, and that on Ganyliel (1995) by the Dinka. In these civilian conflicts, thousands of lives were lost, thousands of heads of cattle looted, women and children abducted and tens of thousands of people, mainly the Agar sections of Pakam, Rup and part of Aliab toich, were displaced.

As a parallel to the conflict between Nuer and Dinka in Yirol, Rumbek and Tonj, Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, formerly the SPLM/A deputy Chairman added another dimension to the conflict. Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, at the head of Riek Machar’s SSIA forces, invaded northern Bahr el Ghazal Counties of Twic and Gogrial in 1995/7. Kerubino raids combined with the raids by the Arab tribesmen, the Murahalieen, of northern Bahr el Ghazal in which large numbers of the civil population were either killed, abducted or displaced, cattle were looted, crops burnt and whole villages razed to the ground. The result was total destruction of the livelihood base of the people of northern Bahr el Ghazal, clearing the ground for the 1998 devastating famine.

The need to defend themselves and their property pushed many people to acquire firearms. This is how the gun replaced traditional weapons of spears, sticks, bows and arrows. The SPLA occasionally provided weapons either as gifts to the chiefs or in exchange for their food ration. Nevertheless, many people purchased their own rifles using their own cattle, while others got their firearms in the battlefield. The armed youths were loosely organised into vigilante groups that became known as ‘Gel-weng’, which at times served as a Para-military formation in support of the SPLA military operations. In 1997, the Gel-weng participated in joint SPLA operations, which witnessed the liberation of Rumbek, Yirol, Tonj, Warrap and other parts of northern Bahr el Ghazal.

The conflict along and across the Bahr el Ghazal and western Upper Nile common borders increased and became more vicious and destructive that the people themselves began to realise the futility of this conflict and were ready for peace.

In February – March 1999 the Nuer – Dinka Peace Covenant was signed in Wunit, Tonj County, Bahr el Ghazal Region after a peace conference facilitated by the New Sudan Council Of Churches that brought together representative of people and the political movements. This grassroots peace movement that came to be known as ‘People to People Peace Process’ brought about an end to the suffering of the civil population in Bahr el Ghazal and western Upper Nile.

With this peace, the threat from western Upper Nile receded. The people of Lakes, Tonj and northern Bahr el Ghazal unfortunately now turned their attention to their internal feuds and contradictions. This is how the inter- and intra-community conflicts erupted with serious
consequences for peace, stability and harmony between sections, sub sections, clans and sub clans of the Dinka people in Tonj, Cueibet, Rumbek and Yirol. [see attached map)

For instance, the Pakam fought the Luach Jang and the Gok respectively; the Gok fought among themselves and against the Agar (Pakam, Rup and Nyang); the Agar sections and sub sections fought among themselves, etc. In all these conflicts there was massive use of firearms and many people died of gunshot wounds.

This prompted the SPLA Regional Security Committee to order complete and total disarmament of the Gel-weng and the entire civilian population possessing firearms. A three-brigade size force under the command of Cdr. Elias Wai was deployed to undertake this task, and an Investigation Team (IT) under the command of Police Major Gabriel Guet was also constituted to carry out investigation into the criminal dimension of the conflict. There were arrests

There were reports that the disarmament was harsh, brutal and that the SPLA used excessive force to collect the arms from the Gel-weng and the civilian population at large. There were reports of murder, rape and looting of food. However, no one could stick out their necks to give proofs or to be quoted for fear of being victimised.

What can be discerned is that resistance to disarmament must have provoked the SPLA into applying the force. Nevertheless, relying to the local traditional leaders could have been a more appropriate means of disarmament, especially when the disarmament itself was implemented by forces brought in from areas with history of traditional hostilities. There were incidences in which some elements of the SPLA committed crimes like stealing of food, selling of firearms etc., which have alienated many of the people.

Some people in Rumbek, Cueibet and Yirol interpret and view in a different light the process of disarmament. They believe there must be ultra-motives for this prompt disarmament in these counties. These need to be investigated to get to the bottom of the disarmament and its possible future application.
2.1. THIS STUDY, ITS SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

The Peace Desk of the NSCC and Pax Christi initiated this study in order to examine the impact of the SPLA decision to disarm the civilians on community peace and harmony in Rumbek, Cueibet and Yirol Counties and over the ‘people to people peace process’ in general. It was inspired by, and benefits from, similar studies underway in North-eastern Uganda regarding inter-, and intra-community conflicts and disarmament in north-eastern Uganda undertaken by ADOL in Kotido (2000) and Association of World Education (AWE) in Mbale (January 2001). The results of the study and its recommendations are meant to feed into the ongoing ‘People to People Peace Process’ under the sponsorship of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) by examining the root causes of these conflicts and to make recommendations for their resolution and formulate strategy for sustainable participatory and voluntary disarmament in future.

Pax Christi funded the study within the context of its programme for helping peace building and conflict resolution in Sudan. The NSCC and Pax Christi, therefore, jointly own this report

The principal objectives of the study are: -

2.1.1. To examine the causes of the recent inter- and intra-community conflicts in Rumbek, Cueibet and Yirol Counties and to determine whether or not these community conflicts were linked to political and military rivalry among the local elite; or linked to what became known as resource war economy;

2.1.2. To determine the impact of the disarmament on the community harmony and peace, whether or not it was conducted in a differential manner that may leave bitterness in those disadvantaged or was conducted in a just manner;

2.1.3. To inform a policy strategy for a more participatory, peaceful, voluntary and sustainable disarmament of all the armed civilian groups in the process of building bridges for reconciliation, peace and unity among the different ethnic groups in South Sudan; and

2.1.4. To make recommendations that will contribute towards conflict prevention, management and resolution; strengthening the traditional mechanism of conflict resolution and building of a culture of peace in South Sudan.

5 ADOL researchers presented the report of a study entitled “Peace, participatory, voluntary and sustainable Disarmament in Karamoja”, while the Association of World Education (AWE’s) study was entitled “Cattle Rustling and Conflict in NE Uganda –The search for Participatory Solutions”.
2.2. METHODOLOGY

The study involved travels into Rumbek and Cueibet and was carried out in a series of face-to-face interviews and discussions with all those concerned or affected by the recent conflicts to collect necessary information and data.

2.2.1. DATA COLLECTION

The data and information used in this study was collected through a questionnaire and a checklist developed by the researcher.

2.2.2. THE TARGETED GROUPS

The interviews involved a wide variety of groups of people, they included the following:

2.2.2.1. The SPLM Regional, County and Payam authorities;
2.2.2.2. The SPLA commanders;
2.2.2.3. The police officers involved in the investigation;
2.2.2.4. The Court Presidents, Para-legals, etc.;
2.2.2.5. Chiefs, elders, spear masters, business men and women, youth leaders; and
2.2.2.6. Some participants in the conflicts either as victims of culprits.

The sample size was about sixty people interviewed separately in Rumbek, Cueibet and Akot. Most of their responses were similar in content and come out in the discussion.

2.2.3. CONSTRAINTS

The initial plan was to undertake a three weeks fieldwork to enable more time to study the attitudes and reactions of the people towards all that happened.

2.2.3.1. The time for the fieldwork was reduced to two weeks because of funding;
2.2.3.2. The flight fares to and from Rumbek were unexpectedly extremely high; and
2.2.3.3. Lack of road transport facility proved a big constraint in the field. The Travels to Cueibet and Akot were made without proper preparations in order to benefit from a lift offered by a friend working for an international NGO. There were no vehicles on hire in Rumbek.

3. THE STUDY FINDINGS

3.1. An Overview

The violence in the communities and between communities is an old phenomenon in the Sudan. This has been in the context of struggle for dominance or over shared resources like grazing lands, water and fishing or hunting ground.

However, in these conflicts traditional weapons like spears, sticks, bows and arrows were used. The amount of destruction was minimal and it was easy to reconcile the belligerent communities by traditional methods. The use of firearms made a big difference in the scope and management of the conflicts.
Thus, we the light weapons started to flow into south Sudan since the eruption of war in 1983 community violence and conflicts have been on the increase involving communities that have hitherto been at peace with each other for a very long time. In all its manifestations, this violence and its scope is linked war, the erosion of the traditional governance system, and the failure of the political movements to institute alternative governance system equipped with mechanisms for resolving or managing such conflicts.

The linkage to war comes in the context of the SPLA brutalisation and dehumanisation of the civil population. This came as a result of their training which emphasised military discipline and combat to the neglect of political work, which could have raised the awareness of the combatants above the horizon of their village environment.

The easy availability of arms, partly supplied by the SPLA and partly acquired through individual efforts but without sufficient guidelines and regulations for their use raised the level of violence in the communities resulting in many deaths from gunshot wounds. This triggered vengeance and counter vengeance first at the level of the individual but got extended to the clan, then to the section and latter on involving whole tribe versus another tribe.

War booty, abduction of women and children, killing of children and women unknown in Nilotic culture, looting and arson have become the characteristics of the present community violence and conflict. Whether it was between the Dinka and the Nuer or between the Nuer and the Shilluk, Murle or Anyuak this feature is sadly ubiquitous. The violence that rocked the Dinka counties of Rumbek, Cueibet and Yirol in the last two years is not peculiar, but is a general phenomenon in south Sudan linked to the culture of the gun, the erosion of traditional value system and the authorities that enforced them, the dearth of resources for secured livelihood and the general state of insecurity resulting from long running civil war in the country.

The erosion of the traditional authority is manifested in the fact that with their arrival in south Sudan, the SPLA commanders and officers took over the duties and authority of the chiefs in the community. The commanders became judges trying cases and enforcing their own laws. The SPLA soldier had no respect for the established traditional order, which instilled fear into the hearts of the civil population.

The study has revealed the following:

3.2. The causes of the conflicts.

The causes of the conflict varied from one incident to the other, and depending of its circumstances, there were where violence was intense and involved whole clans and sub sections. The use of firearms was ubiquitous and there were incidences in which some SPLA officers and men, acting on their own, were involved in the actual fighting.

The immediate causes of conflict in and between the communities could be summarised as follows:

- Competition among the communities over shrinking traditional grazing lands and waters resources, especially during the dry season.

- The youths in their courting of girls and in dances engage fierce competitions to win the hearts of the girls. The unsuccessful ones become envious and provoke fights, etc.
A provocative case of rape of a twelve years old girl, and the murder by unknown persons of her father who wanted to rescue her. The suspicion fell on the Gok.

Reckless behaviour of the youths especially in the dancing and sport activities. A person was wounded in the thumb. Instead of looking for medical assistance, they made their local operation leading to death and vengeance on innocent persons in the cattle camp.

There were several conflicts between the different sections of the Dinka. There were:

3.2.1 The conflict between the Luach Jang (Tonj county) and the Agar Pakam (Rumbek county).

This conflict, a result of competition for dominance over grazing land, occurred in 1999. In this conflict, the culprits were neither arrested nor charged, and the case was not settled to the satisfaction of all. What the civil administration and military authorities in the area did was to impose a collective punishment of fines (cattle) on the communities. The individual commanders appropriated the cattle leaving a bad taste about the SPLM justice system in the two communities.

3.2.2 The conflict between Yiep and the Ubar sub-clans of the Ayiel sub-section of the Gok, Cueibet County.

The sub clans are known to harbour grudges against each other for a long time. They come under the authority of the same chief. The rivalry and power struggle over the position of the chief has been identified to be the cause of this conflict.

3.2.3 The conflict between the Agar and the Gok.

Historically, the Gok and the Agar conflicted with one another. Legends and morale songs of praise of the heroes of such battles abound in both communities. However, the immediate cause of the recent fighting has been identified as related to the two incidences of rape and killing of the father of a twelve years old girls, and the slaughtering of some fattened Agar youths in the cattle camps.

However, the hidden or primary cause is linked to the division that made Rumbek and Cueibet two separate counties in 2000. While this comes within the domain of the SPLM administration, the positioning of the borders between the two counties seems to have angered the Gok, who rightly believed that the Pakam should vacate the land they occupy in the Gok since their displacement by the Nuers between 1992 and 1998.

3.2.4 The conflict between the Agar sections of Boor and Monytiek (Kok)

The Boor and Monytiek (Kok) sub sections of the Rup section of Agar fall under the administration of one Head Chief. The chieftainship has been the centre of the struggle between the two sub sections for a long time. It is believed to the main cause of the recent fighting between the two sub sections. However, the trigger identified was the reckless behaviour of the youth and lack of respect for traditional norms.
3.2.5. The triangular conflicts in Yirol County

There is conflict between the Atuot (non-Dinka) and the Chiech (Dinka), between the Chiech and the Aliab (Dinka) and also between the Aliab and the Atuot in Yirol County, although these conflicts have not erupted into open battles. The cause of these conflicts has not been properly identified. However, it must be linked to the competition between the elites for dominance.

Ever since the SPLM First National Convention 1994 and the establishment of counties, the position of the County Commissioner of Yirol had been the centre of struggle between the elites of the three groups. It changed hands thrice in a space of four years, suggestive of the rivalry of the elites from the respective communities over the leadership of the county. This has not been resolved amicably and hence its reflection at the grassroots levels.

Some of these rivalries result from the informalisation of the SPLM power system. The position of county commissioner was used as patronising bait for buying loyalty. The resolution of this type of inter-ethnic rivalry in a county can be put to rest by private and public spheres become separate and functionally distinct and that the operation of public servants become unrestrained by local and social pressures.

3.3. The politicisation of ethnicity and the possession of firearms

The culture of firearms is a recent phenomenon in south Sudan and is only linked to the ongoing civil war. It is possible that some of the feuds in the communities, or between the communities across the political divide after the split in the SPLM/A, were heightened by the possession in the first place of the gun. It is equally a fact the use of firearms indiscriminately killed women, children and the elderly generating bitterness and the urge to vengeance and counter vengeance.

3.3.1. Both sides to the split politicised the inter-ethnic conflict, hence gun running and trafficking in parts of Bahr el Ghazal bordering western Upper Nile increased between 1993/4 and 1996/7. There was no effort to train the people to the rules of possession and use of firearms, a fact that made the people turn it against themselves of the weaker sections of the community.

3.3.2. The SPLA’s militarization (1983 – 1994) of the society resulted in the marginalisation of the civil population, the erosion of the traditional value system and the authority of the chiefs, elders, spear masters, divine leaders and medicine men/women that enforced these values in the society. The SPLA commanders took over the functions of the chiefs. Thus when the conflicts in the communities started the chiefs and the elders found themselves helpless as the youth would not obey their orders.

3.4. The Disarmament Exercise.

The disarmament of the Gel-weng and the civil population in Cuelbet, Rumbek and Yirol Counties has been completed. However, the Aliab have not been disarmed and this has raised fears both between the Atuot and the Chiech Dinka who are their immediate neighbours and with whom they have latent conflicts.

The disarmament exercise was carried out in the following manner: -
3.4.1 The SPLA deployed three brigades in the area under the command of Cdr. Elias Wai and assisted by Cdr. William Manyang who was interviewed in Rumbek. The SPLA initially relied on the information supplied by the chiefs and other informants in the communities;

3.4.2 Initially there were cases in which the SPLA officer and men resorted to the use of force in order to access the hidden guns. The suspects, especially those who refused to cooperate, were beaten up and arrests were made. It was rumoured that there were deaths, but of all those interviewed, nobody could confirm;

3.4.3 The SPLA camped in the villages, cattle camps and in locations that put pressure on the people to release the guns they possessed. Each SPLA contingent was fed by the village or cattle camp, which meant that depending on their number, the SPLA unit would have a bull or two per day for their feeding. It became unbearable for the people that they started betraying those who were resisting disarmament;

3.4.4 Those who had bought firearms with their own cattle resisted the disarmament, until they were compensated. This resistance was broken by the SPLA tactic mentioned above. The people wanted the SPLA contingents to leave their camps or villages, and therefore, willingly surrendered their guns as any procrastination meant spending more resources for them;

3.4.5 The number of firearms collected by the SPLA has been put at four thousand two hundred AKM. This figure may not represent the real numbers of firearms in the area;

3.4.6 The same force was used to recover the Gok cattle looted by the Agar. As soon the contingent was seen approaching the cattle camp, the Agar voluntarily surrendered the Gok cattle;

3.4.7 The removal of the guns from the hands of the youth found approval and ready acceptance from the chiefs and elders whose authority and standing in the society was eroded by the newly acquired subculture of the gun; and

3.4.8 The reservation repeatedly expressed by the people in relation to the disarmament is linked to the uncertainty in western Upper Nile. There is fear among the Dinka in general and those disarmed in particular that some Nuers, individuals or feuding sections instigated by the Government of Sudan, may exploit this situation and launch raids into Dinka areas to undermine the Wunlit Peace Covenant.

3.4. The situation after the disarmament.

The Investigation Team was set up by the Regional Security Council to investigate the criminal dimensions of the conflicts. It had almost completed its task when the study started. Those identified to be the cause of the conflict were apprehended and are detained in prisons.

No incidences of violence, whether between sub-sections, clans or inter ethnic were reported since the disarmament started. The people seem to have got the message that this violence is counterproductive and nobody is again interested in fighting after they have witnessed its devastation.
Life had become normalised and people were now engaged in their usual activities. By the middle of December, the Agar and Gok were celebrating marriages suggestive of the fact that the people have put behind them the conflict. The dry season has set in and the people are moving to the ‘toiches’ with their cattle. The general feeling among the people is that there will be no more fighting, unless something sinister and cynical happens with the court cases.

The SPLA is embarking on recruitment and training of the militia that will be positioned with the chiefs and the courts. The Investigation Team has almost completed investigating and building its case of the criminal dimension of the conflicts.

The confiscated guns are stored in the Payam H/Qs waiting to be issued to those who have been trained. The suspects have all been arrested, and the investigation of the criminal dimension of the conflicts between the Gok and the Agar has almost been completed. The cases will be presented to the courts after this.

The trial of the murder cases in the Boor – Monytiek (Kok) was underway at the time of the visit to Rumbek. The deputy Chief Justice, Justice Andrew Panchol had given Mr. James Aguer, a Paralegal, powers of the 1st class magistrate, which put him in charge of the cases. The people are eagerly awaiting the verdict of the court, which will be crucial to peace and stability in the area.

3.5. Lessons Learnt

The community violence and conflict involving different sections and clans of the Agar and Gok carried important lessons for the people, the local civil authority and the NSCC.

3.5.1. Violence and conflict in and between the communities are historically part of the community interactions and traditional weapons mediated them. The introduction of firearms has caused a wide difference. The people have learnt of the danger that the firearms posed in the community;

3.5.2. The use of firearms, which don’t discriminate between the youth, women, child and the elderly, is responsible for the large number of deaths;

3.5.3. The acquisition of firearms came with its psychology, which ignored and marginalised the traditional values and the traditional authority of the chiefs, spear-masters, and elders in the community that enforced those values. The disarmament restored to these leaders their role and stature in the community, as such they were the first to welcome the exercise;

3.5.4. The SPLA authorities have realised the folly of marginalising the traditional governance system from the beginning. The authorities at present rely on the chiefs and traditional leaders for the maintenance of order in the communities;

3.5.5. The response of the SPLA to the violence and conflict will deter any attempts to arouse community feuds. The people have learnt that their resources can be easily depleted by the presence of a small SPLA contingent in their midst;

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6 These are plains in the Nile valley and surround the tributaries. They are flooded during the rainy season but dry and become grazing and fishing grounds during the dry season. The population surrounding a ‘toich’ move their cattle into it during the dry season which lasts annually from January to June.
3.5.6. The Wunlit Covenant ushered a new era in which the traditional combined with the modern methods of conflict resolution. The traditional component was completed immediately once the covenant was signed. It is the modern component linked to the implementation of the recommendation that has yet to be realised. It is possible that the conflicts would not have proliferated had some of the recommendation in Wunlit has been implemented. These include:

3.5.6.1. The placement of common police posts at the borders;

3.5.6.2. The provision of the common service of education, health, veterinary services, etc.

3.5.6.3. Joint meetings of the Nuer and Dinka community leaders: chiefs and elders; and

3.5.6.4. Formation of peace committees at the county/district and payam/sub district levels.
4. **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS:**

The inter-, and intra-community rivalry and conflicts are ubiquitous in south Sudan and have never ceased even during the good times of peace. The people are so conscious of their identities and territories that a small and isolated incident can ignite a tribal conflagration of a major dimension.

This can be illustrated by an incident in Juba in 1978 in which a policeman from another section of the Malual Dinka murdered a Malual Dinka veterinary doctor, Kuol Akein, in cold blood. The news and the corpse reached Awiel and in a matter of two days over a hundred people were killed as a result of the fierce spear battle between the two sections (from which the veterinary doctor and the policeman hailed respectively) trying to even out the scores of a crime committed almost eight hundred miles away.

Similarly, the wounding and subsequent death of tetanus of a Gok youth in a sport (hockey) leads the Gok to avenging this by slaughtering four Agars in a cattle camp. This was followed by another provocation, an Agar man got shot dead when he tried to rescue his twelve years old daughter being raped by unknown people – something unusual thing in the Dinka community, and must have easily inflamed the passions among the Agars.

The Agars were incensed by the two horrendous crimes and a large-scale attack against the Gok ensued with a massive use of firearms. The fight lasted four days. This, because the local SPLA contingent was unable to contain the situation until a larger force is mobilised and sent to the battlefield. When the guns finally quietened, twenty-four people lay dead, over four hundred wounded, three thousands heads of cattle looted by the Agars from the camps of the retreating Gok.

The local chiefs and community leaders sensed the tension building up and warned the county authorities of the impending crisis and a possible out break of war between the Agar and the Gok. However, the authorities failed to respond in time. Similar factors underlie the conflict between the Agar clans, namely the Boor and the Monytiek (Kok) that left several people dead.

The Nuer – Dinka violence and conflict were highly politicised ethnic conflicts instigated by political forces for military objectives. Although, it is worth mentioning that the Nuer-Dinka conflict across their common borders was not something new. They used to occur in the past and mediated with traditional weapons.

Thus community conflicts and tribal wars have been part of the social relations in South Sudan since antiquity. What is obvious is that the communities managed and resolved their conflicts in a manner that created long intervals of peace and stability. The people respected the rights of the other groups; moreover these were not zero sum conflicts. Nobody was humiliated or dehumanised. Women and children and the elderly were spared. In these intervals of peace and stability the communities built bridges through marriages, common activities like hunting, fishing, etc., that cemented their traditional peace treaties and agreements enforced by ‘breaking of bone’ and shedding of blood of the sacrificial bull or lamb.

In their present form, community violence and conflicts are linked to the long running civil war between the north and the south. The war against the enemy (GoS) was soon transformed into the brutalization, dehumanisation, murder and rape of the civil population; stealing of their crops and animals, etc. The violence SPLA practised on its members was sooner than latter meted out on the civil population. The urge among the people for acquisition of firearms was not mere to depend themselves but was in itself power.
This led to a breakdown of morals and traditional values with concomitant erosion of the traditional authorities that enforced them. At the same time the emerging state represented by the SPLM administration remains weak because of lack of institutions and structures of governance. And in its weakness, the emerging state institutions become part of the perpetuation of the culture of violence. The political, administrative and ideological framework for management of the state remains at rhetoric level.

The questions, which impose themselves, therefore, are: Why is it that there is a general breakdown of the law and order? Why is it that self-identity (Gok versus Agar) or territorial rights (border between the Gok county and the Agar county) being emphasized now more than anytime before especially now in the context of the war of national liberation? Are these conflicts signals of some more serious events to happen in the future as South Sudan is struggling for self-government?

4.1. The Culture of Militarism and lack of Good Governance – grounds for pessimism

The SPLM brought large parts of the south Sudan under its control since the war erupted in 1983. Most of Equatoria and Bahr el Ghazal and parts of Upper Nile are now under the administration of the SPLM, which in essence is military administration.

The SPLM First National Convention (1994) resolved that a complete separation of the military from the civil administration be effected. Regions, Counties, Payams and Bomas were instituted as the units of administration. Regional Governors, County Commissioners and Payam Administrators were appointed in the wake of liberalisation and institutionalisation of the emerging state. An independent Judiciary, National Liberation Council (NLC) and the National Executive Council (NEC) were established as the organs of this state.

In May 1996, the conference for the organisation of the civil society and civil authority of the New Sudan (CANS) was convened in New Cush. It came out with clear resolutions and recommendations for the development of civil governance in the New Sudan. Nevertheless things continued to be conducted in the old militaristic way and orders continued to emanate from above. The SPLM, theoretically the main driving force, remains unorganised and unstructured. The SPLA is really the power in the New Sudan. This was confirmed and re-enforced by the following:

4.1.1. The General Military Council (GMC), an technical and advisory body to the SPLM/A leadership, meets to revise the resolutions and recommendations of the National Liberation Council (NLC) suggestive of the authority and power the military commanders wield in the movement.

4.1.2. The formation of the Leadership Council (LC), made up of thirteen SPLA commanders over and above the NLC, and indeed the dissolution of the NLC and the NEC means the SPLM is beating a retreat on democratisation and is bent on militarisation as it was before the split in 1991.

4.1.3. There are no structured relationships between the top (LC) and the lower echelons of the system, especially when it came to civil administration. The army commander in a county wields more powers than the Commissioner (now renamed SPLM County Secretary). Because of this, the army in most cases by-pass the civil administrative authority to carry
out the taxation of the people. In most of the cases, the commander for personal use diverts these resources.

4.1.4. The people in the SPLM administered areas, especially in Bahr el Ghazal are over taxed as they have to pay several and different taxes viz: liberation tax, poll tax, tin of sorghum, tin of groundnuts, tin of honey in addition to ten thousand Sudanese pounds (1 US $ is equivalent to sixty Sudanese pounds in Rumbek) per house hold. Any inability or dissent to cope with this taxation is severely punished by the army for obvious reasons – it is in their interest to collect as much as possible.

In a normal situation all this could be the duty of the chiefs and ghol leaders, who would collect from their people and hand over to the commissioner and from the commissioner the army receives what are its dues. This is not the case and as such the system is based on short-term efforts of keep going – (the logistical support has taken over the liberation agenda). There is no effort to plan long term strategies.

4.1.5. There is heavy taxation but this is not paralleled by provisions of social services on the part of the movement. The international community (INGOs) run the health, veterinary and education services in the communities. In a highly centralised yet dysfunctional political structure of power as that provided by the SPLM, the people are consumed by concerns for immediate survival i.e. search for food, shelter and security. There is apparent indifference to the way the system is run. The gulf between the authorities and the civil society manifests itself in various domestic conflicts within the overall context of poor governance.

4.1.6. There are practices that don’t measure to that in a liberation movement. Corruption in the higher echelon of SPLA power is common place. This has been manifested in the disposition of the war booties captured from the enemy in Rumbek and other garrison towns. These included cars and trucks, electric generators, tractors, corrugated iron sheets, satellite discs and even food. Some known commanders sold most of these in markets in east Africa.

4.1.7. The SPLM political power has been informalised, becoming a commodity for patronisation. That is how corrupt and inept people have bought their way into authority to continue looting and oppressing the people. It is the cumulative effect of poor governance manifested in corruption, lack of respect for public property, and break down of law and order that generate violence and conflicts which is reflected in the communities.

In the absence of good governance, peaceful and sustainable development cannot be contemplated. Without social and economic development that will enable the people realise their needs, it will be difficult to maintain community peace and harmony. These are all interconnected and one cannot be realised without the other. The peace and unity among the communities in south Sudan definitely affects the search for overall peace in the country, whether that is going to be a negotiated peace or the political movements and their armies have to shoot themselves to power in the South by force of arms.

4.2. Emergence of civil society Grounds for Optimism

‘Every cloud has a silver lining’ so goes the old saying. The marginalisation and brutalisation of the civil population occasioned by the SPLA violence was bound to come to an end one day.
The intense fear of the SPLA that gripped the people started to wane as the people acquired the firearms. At times they challenged the behaviour of the SPLA soldiers and in the course liberated themselves. Indeed they have ‘emerged’.

Triggered by the international humanitarian intervention, the civil society began to form and vegetate. This was initially represented by the formation of the New Sudan Council of Churches (1990), but later by the establishment of the Sudan Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations (SINGOs) and much later youth and women groups notable Sudan Women Voice for Peace, (SWVP), South Sudan Law Society (SSLS), New Sudan Women Federation (NSWF), Bahr el Ghazal Youth Development Agency (BYDA) and many others. They became the voice of the civil society and have had an impact on the SPLM/A. It is worth mentioning that the Wunlit Peace Covenant and the People to People Peace Process is a product of the Church – SPLM dialogue conference in Kijiko 1997.

In spite of SPLM’s deficiencies in political ideology and structural organisational framework mentioned above, and to which the present community violence and conflicts could be attributed, and in spite of doubts being expressed of SPLM’s capacity for change and transformation, nevertheless, there remains still some grounds for optimism.

4.2.1 The conflict between the Nuers and Dinka could be identified as ‘resource war’\(^7\). This is because it was characterised and was driven by cattle rustling, abduction of women and children. It was fortunate that this was brought to an earlier end before some commercialised vested interests linked to these practices emerged. The Wunlit Covenant stopped them and there is peace along the Nuer-Dinka borders;

4.2.2 The conflicts and violence in and between the different Dinka communities were not in any manner linked to this ‘assets transfer’ although there was the incident in which the Agar stole Gok cattle. These cattle were latter returned to their owners;

4.2.3 The Wunlit Peace covenant has passed the test of time in spite of the continued inter-Nuer conflict in western Upper Nile. The Government of Sudan declared policy of depopulating the oil fields, which has witnessed the death of thousand of civilians and the displacement of several tens of thousands. The violence and conflicts between the Bul, Jagei and Lek sections on the one hand and the Dok and Nyuong sections on the other is linked to the NIF policy of decimating the civil population. These conflicts have not been reflected in the Nuer-Dinka relationships in Bahr el Ghazal. In order to prevent any disruption in relations between the Nuer and the Dinka, there is need for a close follow up of the Wunlit Covenant;

4.2.4 The SPLM authorities, the traditional and community leadership, the Bahr el Ghazal Youth Development Agency (BYDA)\(^8\) and the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) have all condemned the community violence and the form they took suggestive that the organised civil society were against the proliferation of violence.

4.2.5 The efforts to contain the conflicts have been put in place and the people have emphasised that the traditional reconciliation and conflict resolution mechanisms be

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\(^7\) Relief food and other resources attracted competition between the armed groups. Examples of this are afforded by the ‘starvation triangle 1993/4’, the attack on Akot by SSIM forces 1996 was linked to relief resources.

\(^8\) BYDA Board of Directors meeting in Mapel, Wau County between 4\(^{th}\) and 8\(^{th}\) of November 2000 condemned the inter-, and intra community conflicts and issued an appeal to the parties concerned to stop these fights immediately.
erected immediately as soon as the courts have disposed of the cases and justice has been delivered. The traditional mechanism, which rests on admission of guilt is the surest way of building bridges of confidence and trust between the people;

4.2.6 As a punitive as well as a deterrent, emphasis was on long-term prison sentences for the convicted criminals rather than fines in cattle. The reason behind this is that the clans can easily mobilise cattle fines to redeem their relatives. This is suggestive of the strong desire within the community for peace and stability; and

4.2.7 The international humanitarian intervention in South Sudan ushered into the fore the formation of Sudanese Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisation, Community- and Church-based groups, farmers, Traders and professional unions, Youth and Women groups etc., in South Sudan. The emergence and growth of the civil society organisations in south Sudan is crucial to the whole process of people’s empowerment and the liberation process. People’s critical self-awareness and awareness of their reality is growing, which is necessary for self-realisation.

All these facts are ground for optimism that the crisis, whether caused by the inter-, and intra-community conflicts could be transformed into their opposite of reconciliation and unity among the people. The Wunlit process is still on track. The message from the chiefs and elders attending a NSCC meeting in Wulu to review the Wunlit was an encouragement. The chiefs told the facilitators:

“*We want Dr. Garang and Dr. Riek Machar to come to the meeting because we want to ask them to stop fighting each other. If they refuse to listen to what we say, then we will tell them that they are not our leaders anymore*”.

The people are tired of warring among themselves and want the leaders to stop it. It is up to these leaders to accept the challenge, if they are save themselves from the accusation of prosecuting the war for their selfish interests.

4.3. **Strategy for Sustainable Solutions to violence and conflict in the community.**

Community violence and conflicts have been and will continue to exist as long as the communities exist. However, it has been proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the presence of firearms and small weapons have transformed the traditional conflicts and their management with devastating impact on the social and economic development of the pastoralists and agro-pastoralist communities in the region of the Horn of Africa. This has prompted the established governments to curb the trafficking in these weapons.

In South Sudan, and going by conservative estimates, there are more than 250,000 light weapons and firearms of various assortment. The bulk of these arms found their way through the SPLA and the government of Sudan, and about one half of these are in the hands of civilians, mainly pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. There is an unknown number of land mines in South Sudan that continue to threaten human beings and livestock.

Even if peace were to come to South Sudan today, it is doubtful that the government can succeed to collect these weapons and most of them would remain in the hands of the civil population with serious consequences for the community peace and stability.
This situation, therefore, call for a strategy for a sustainable, voluntary and participatory disarmament. The usual governmental, top-down approaches to issues of disarmament could be counter productive, especially for a people who got used to live on the gun and opportunities that may be offered in return for disarmament may not be as lucrative as keeping a gun. As a result the people reject these militaristic solutions to community violence and fail to bring peace and stability. Only community based solutions linked to dialogue and understanding between community leaders and elders with their counterparts in the neighbouring communities are the real feasible and sustainable solutions to the conflicts and violence.

The culture of the gun has become deep rooted in some communities, especially in Upper Nile and eastern Equatoria, and any attempts to remove the guns must be paralleled by measures that create alternative secured livelihoods for the people, otherwise it will just be a futile attempt, because the people will struggle to repossess the guns.

Disarmament and the removal of guns from the Gel-weng and the civil populations is only a partial remedy to the recent inter-, and intra-community conflicts. It is imperative that a solution of a permanent nature be designed. The sustainable solution lies in addressing the underlying factors in these conflicts, which include inter alia the following: -

4.3.1. Introduction of concrete social, economic, political, administrative and judicial measures linked to the reality of the people and that which empowers them, and restore in them their worth, self-esteem and dignity and that which enable them to realise their fundamental needs to decent living;

4.3.2. Restoration of the traditional leadership, promoting and encouraging progressive social and cultural values in the communities. The political and military authorities should allow people to exercise their freedoms to speech, organisation, faith and movement. By the look of things, the traditional system of governance has more respect for human dignity and life than the present models based on values unrelated to the people’s heritage;

4.3.3. Rehabilitation of the educational infrastructure through community contribution, participation and ownership of the process. The experience of relief and humanitarian intervention, especially the sub-culture of Food For Work, promoted by the INGOs, is what has killed the spirit of initiative and communal work. This must be reversed in a concerted effort that will unite the people in rebuilding their lives and communities. The re-opening of Rumbek Secondary through community initiative and contributions provided an example;

4.3.4. Promotions of adult education and alphabetisation in the communities, more specifically for women, using local languages to make it easy for the people to grasp the essence of freedom and liberation. Encouragement of the parents to take their girls to schools and to enlighten then regarding the importance of girl’s education for the advancement of the community;

4.3.5. Introduction of, and provision of training in skills that will enable the people, especially the youths, earn their livelihood through their own efforts, which will enhance their self-esteem and dignity;

4.3.6. Organisation of youths, women, farmers, traders into self-help groups that can allow them to participate in decision making on social and political issues that affect them and their communities;
4.3.7. Development of local cultures, arts, drama and linking it to the process of social and political emancipation and economic empowerment of the people, especially the youths and women groups; and

4.3.8. Building of a responsible and responsive local civil administration at the county and Payam levels accompanied by a complete and total separation of the military and civil administrations.
5. Summary and conclusions.

The conflicts in and between the communities and ethnic groups are primarily linked to the wider conflict and war between the South and the central government in Khartoum. It is a continuation of the state violence against the people initiated by the Turco-Egyptian state in the form of forced labour and slavery. This was followed by the Anglo-Egyptian condominium state which pacified and brought by brute force the whole country under its control and tutelage. The Jellaba inherited the colonial state and continued the violence and terror against the people. This precipitated the past and present conflict between the people of the South and the Arab dominated governments in Khartoum.

This north-south war gave birth to war at the micro-levels in many parts of the South. This was partly because of the contradictions within the SPLA and partly between it and the civil population.

The Nuer-Dinka conflict is historical resulting from the struggle for dominance. However, the recent one is political that was triggered off by the political contradictions within the SPLM/A leadership and the failed attempt to oust from the leadership of the SPLM/A of Dr. John Garang de Mabior by Dr. Riek Machar, Dr. Lam Akol and Cdr. Gordon Kong Chol. All other south-south conflicts, including the recent inter-, and intra-Dinka community conflicts are attributable to the split and subsequent in fighting that followed the failed Nasir coup attempt.

The presence of large amounts of firearms and light weapons in the communities came against this background of communal hostilities, cattle raids, abduction of women and children. They were necessary for self-defense and protection of property. However, they became a factor in the proliferation and escalation of these conflicts. The massive use of these weapons after the Wunlit Peace Covenant could only be attributed to the failure of the political movements, notably the SPLM/A, to institute instruments of good governance in their territories of control.

The easing of tension and removal of threat from western Upper Nile as a result of the Wunlit peace covenant brought to the surface the traditional inter- and intra- Dinka rivalries and competition. Part of this rivalry is linked to shrinking natural resource base like grazing grounds and water resources during the dry seasons. Nevertheless, power relations and the question of borders of the newly established counties was a factor in the conflict. The reluctance of the local civil administration to respond in time to the crisis further exacerbated the situation, leading to the breaking out of fierce fighting between the sections, clans, etc.

The Wunlit Peace Covenant recommended that the border areas between Bahr el Ghazal and western Upper Nile be served with common services that would consolidate the process of reconciliation and peace. This included the positioning of police posts equipped with radio communication equipment to patrol and demarcate common grazing areas, etc. There was also provision for opening common schools and health care centres, and formation of the local peace committees at the County and Payam levels. Had they been put in place, some of these facilities could have been used for the prevention of the conflicts.

Some military commanders were interested in accumulation of wealth than prevention or containing of conflicts. It has been repeatedly said that some of the conflicts were engineered by the military for the sole purpose of extracting taxes from the warring parties. And that some of the cattle and money, which was taken from the people, as taxes have not, been accounted to the authorities. It means that taxation has become one polite way of looting the people, engendering conflict and violence in the communities.
The resolution of the conflicts, whether in or between the communities, should involve the people and their leaders. An open and participatory approach must be encouraged and promoted at all levels of the society. The people should own the process and outsiders could only facilitate and provide resources to help the process.
6. **Recommendations**

The solutions to the community-based conflicts must of necessity be long-term self-sustaining, participatory, address the underlying causes and must be people-owned. The study makes the following recommendation to:

6.1. **The Political Movements**

The violence and conflict in the communities is directly linked to the political divisions and splitting that have occurred since 1991. Since the political movements claim to control territories and population, they therefore are obliged to maintain peace and stability in the communities. They are called upon to:

6.1.1 Lend sufficient support to the People to People Peace Process as a mater of urgency and promote the process of reconciliation and unity among the people;

6.1.2 Promote the building of bridges of reconciliation and unity among themselves, as this will contribute to the reconciliation and unity the people;

6.1.3 The political movement in western Upper Nile, now the Sudan People Democratic Front (SPDF) in the spirit and letter of Wunlit Nuer-Dinka peace covenant, should allay the fears of the people in Bahr el Ghazal by committing itself publicly to prevent any armed incursions from western Upper Nile into their territories;

6.1.4 Build institutions and instruments of good governance as the only guarantee to peace and stability in the communities;

6.1.5 Collective punishment that has been indiscriminately applied e.g. confiscation of cattle, fines, etc., could be counter productive. The SPLM administrative system should try other means of resolving or minimising the inter-community conflict e.g. by fostering cooperation between the communities, restoring community ownership of decision making in matters that affect their lives, etc..

6.1.6 Refurbish the law enforcing agencies: Police, Prisons, courts, etc., through training and provision of resources for communication and transport must be undertaken as a matter of urgency, as a guarantee to keeping law and order;

6.1.7 Uphold the independence of Judiciary as a guarantee for the rule of law. The recent changes in the SPLM leadership that put the Chief Justice under the SPLM commission for Administration, Judiciary, Police etc., undermines its independence and is an affront to the National Convention Resolutions from which the SPLM derives its legitimacy;

6.1.8 Finalise the judicial process regarding the recent conflicts to enable the people to start the process of traditional methods of conflict resolution and reconciliation;

6.1.9 Promote the emergence of a vibrant civil society by allowing the people to exercise their freedoms of speech, organisation, faith and movement;

6.1.10 Promote the respect for human rights and civil liberties, more specifically the rights of the child and the woman; and
6.1.10.1 Creation of structures of common security for all on the basis of: -

6.1.10.2 Traditional peace treaties negotiated between the conflicting communities, and encouragement of community dialogues and understanding of issues of common concern;

6.1.10.3 Promotion of traditional and non-formal systems of governance and justice in view of the slow emergence of the formal state systems in South Sudan;

6.1.10.4 The formation of a police force that has legitimacy in the eyes of the communities. It may be necessary to experiment with the idea of community policing linked to the chiefs.

6.2. The New Sudan Council of Churches, civil society and SINGOs

The NSCC has become an important agent for peace and community stability and harmony. In fact it has become the only hope for reconciliation and unity among south Sudanese through which their destiny as a people is assured. In order that the NSCC delivers its task of peace and unity among the people it should: -

6.2.1. Ensure that the resolutions and recommendations of the Wunlit Peace Covenant are implemented as a matter of urgency to prevent a relapse into the situation ante;

6.2.2. Build its capacity for conflict management and resolution through sourcing, assisting in the building of peace committees in the communities;

6.2.3. Maintain the momentum for dialogue with all the political movements in South Sudan to facilitate its own mission, and to assist bridging the gap between them that could lead eventually either to reunification of the liberation movement or mutual recognition of each other’s right to independent existence.

6.2.4. The Sudanese Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations (SINGOs) and other Community based groups and professional associations cannot remain indifferent to the plight of the people. They should participate actively and effectively in curbing community violence and conflicts; and

6.2.5. The civil society organisations should commit themselves to the cause of the people by being transparent and accountable.

6.3. The international Community

The international community has a significant role to play in conflict resolution and the building of peace in south Sudan. It is therefore called upon to: -

6.3.1. Support and encourage all peace efforts by the NSCC, especially those that tend to reconcile and unity the people, through appropriate funding, networking, lobbying and advocacy;

6.3.2. Support in funding all common services to be provided to the communities. Education services and opening of shared school facilities e.g., the proposed peace school in Akot to accommodate Dinka, Nuer, Atuot and the Beil children is a project worth funding;
6.3.3. Facilitate the conflict resolution, prevention and management efforts of the communities, who should own the process, through provision of necessary assistance;

6.3.4. Encourage long term sustainable solutions that address fundamental social and economic transformation of the reality of rural poverty as a means of curbing community violence and conflicts;

6.3.5. Upgrade its intervention from humanitarian to development endeavours. South Sudan is endowed with enormous amount of natural resources, which need to be tapped in a sustainable manner to promote livelihoods security;

6.3.6. Pax Christi to contribute more to the ‘people to people peace process’ by increasing its present level of support to peace programmes, especially in the area of facilitation of peace conferences, workshops, injecting resources into rehabilitation of education infrastructure and dissemination of the culture of peace.
7. SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS

1. **Mr. Mangok Majok, Sub-chief Duany Payam, Cueibet County.**

Sub chief Mangok believes that the conflict between the Agar and the Gok was not planned at any level. Two youths were playing and one (a Gok) got injured. He later died of tetanus provoking his relatives into avenging his death causing the death of two Agars. In this fight, spears and firearms were used.

The fighting which followed this incident involved the massive use of firearms. It will be recalled that many people in the two communities have AKM rifles. They have abandoned the traditional weapons. This explains the large number of deaths on both sides. The Agars, due to their numerical superiority, were able to chase the Gok and consequently looted thousands of heads of cattle.

The administrative and military authorities intervened and were able to contain the fighting. They have also tried to undertake some reconciliation between the chiefs of Agar and Gok. Major Benjamin Makuer Mabor made the chiefs to sign an undertaking restraining their people. However, the Agar side attacked the Gok side before the case was settled for reasons that can’t be understood.

The Gok chiefs and elders have responded positively to the initiative of the County military and administrative authorities. It remains to be seen whether or not the Agars will reciprocate to prevent the escalation or proliferation of the conflict.

What remains now is for the law to take its course and justice must be seen to be done, otherwise, there could be bitterness and a further escalation of the conflict. In Manyok’s opinion:

- The case must be settled in time to prevent a relapse;
- Those found guilty should receive heavy and severe punishments to act as a detergent for future conflicts, which as can be discerned from the recent ones had nothing substantial to have caused them. A conflict between two individuals, moreover in a game, could not have caused the sectional fight involving firearms;
- The traditional conflict resolution methods and reconciliation process should be put in place immediately.
- There must be mutual respect for the borders of the two communities; and
- Regarding the inter-Gok conflict, which also resulted in unnecessary deaths among the people of the same Executive Chief, Sub-chief Mangok believes that the conflict should be handled at the county level in order to make reconciliation between the clans simple and easy.

2. **Mr. Mading Agok, Town Bench Court Member Cueibet.**

The conflict between the Gok and the Agar people was unprovoked, although it is believed that the Agars wanted to revenge the death of their people. The Gok had been disarmed earlier as a
result of the inter-clan fighting, when the Agar attacked with firearms. The local authorities and the SPLA tried to intervene to stop the fighting. It was difficult because the Agars had firearms.

The most urgent step then was the disarmament of the belligerents, which has fortunately been completed. What has remained is the work of the chiefs and the elders in both communities. There was a reconciliation agreement signed by the chiefs and elders on the facilitation of Major Benjamin Makuer in order to prevent the escalation of the conflict.

It was painful that children and women were killed in the fighting, which could have easily escalated the fighting;

It is recommended that the investigation team should complete its work such that the judicial process begins. The people are waiting for the final verdict. If the verdict is just and fair, there will be no problem. However, should one side feel they have been cheated, it may cause the renewal of fighting.

Traditional conflict resolution methodology is the one that can resolve the age-old conflict between the Gok and the Agars. The Reconciliation process can start immediately.

3. Malok Dut, an elder, Citcok Payam, Cueibet County

Regarding the origin of the conflict within the Gok section, especially the recent one among the Ayiel people of Executive Chief Mayen Jok, is something that is difficult to determine and I can’t talk about it. However, the fighting between the Gok and the Agar is linked to youth conflicts. Somebody got injured, the wound became septic and in the course of treatment the victim died. This provoked the relatives to revenge the death and this led to a larger conflict with the Agar.

The attack by the Agar found the Gok disarmed, but were able to storm the store of the County Headquarters, and looted the firearms, which the used in defense. It was a surprise attack. The bordering chiefs have met and have signed a reconciliation agreement to stop the conflict escalating.

The response of the authorities, whether local civil administration or the military command was prompt and that is how they managed to contain the fight. I am completely against people killing each other, especially for communities that have lived together for a long time, and in face of the enemy threats.

The decision to disarm the civilians, especially the youth (Gel-weng) is quite in place and it coming late, although for understandable reasons. The next step is the investigation to be completed and the judicial process to commence. The sooner this is finalised the better.

The criminals, especially those who have murdered people should be penalised heavily. In fact, I prefer that they serve prison terms rather that payment of fines. The reconciliation process will be less cumbersome and less complicated if the verdict of the courts will be just and there will be no quest for vengeance.

4. Mr. Adom Liec, Gol leader, Malek Payam, Rumbek County
The conflict between the Agar and the Gok sections was unfortunate in as much as it was not planned by anybody. There was spontaneous anger on the part of the Agar over the slaughter of those who could not defend themselves. The Gok and the Agar have been one community ever since sharing one district (Rumbek). The youth sports resulted in the death of a person provoking revenge and them large-scale war using firearms.

Traditionally, there used to be fights between the Gok and the Agars. However, this fighting surpassed in magnitude and technology the tradition Agar – Gok feuds, which were usually settled with traditional weapons (spears, sticks and knives). The present war with the north has made the people to acquire firearms and this has changed the nature of our local conflicts.

I am not quite sure whether the local authorities and the military played any role in the cessation of hostilities. But, I am the chiefs tried their best to see into it that no new conflicts erupted between the communities. Part of the problem is the general backwardness and ignorance we are drifting into after the liberation.

The SPLM Regional and County authorities should have the conflict resolved quickly before some other mischievous people start the conflict again. The investigation team should hurry up with its task to enable the cases to be taken to the court.

In my opinion in the following should be undertaken:

- There must be enlightenment of the citizens such that they understand their duties. This is because the rate of illiteracy is very high and many people don’t know the difference between right and wrong when it comes to community or ethnic conflicts. They will always support and die for the narrow interests of their clans;
- The (government) SPLM authorities should initiate the process of reconciliation in, and between the communities;
- The law enforcement authorities should be reinforced and strengthened. The prisons should be repaired such that the convicts are kept in check;
- The criminals and those who will be condemned in the courts should be given prison terms, preferably longer periods, and not fines. This is because they can easily raise the cattle from the relatives and clan members and once out of jail can cause or become conduits for vengeful acts, which can easily resurrect the ill feelings.

5. Mr. Yuak Mading, a youth from Malou Pec, Cueibet County.

The Youths of Ayiil fought themselves in February – March 2000 and that case was settled. In August 2000, the same youth of Executive Chief Mayen Jok fought during a dancing ceremony. This was ostensibly to settle the scores of the first fighting and it lasted two days resulting in the death of four people. I have no knowledge of the cause.

The conflict was exacerbated by the use of firearms. When one side found itself overwhelmed, it resorted to firearms instead of the traditional weapons. Many people died of gun shot wounds.

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9 In the Agar cattle camps, like those of the other sections of the Dinka, certain individuals allow themselves to become very fat to the extent that it becomes difficult for them to move. The first victims of the Gok vengeance attack were on four of these ‘fattened’ youths.
The local authorities and the military (SPLA) played a big role, but were themselves overwhelmed, moreover there were no orders to the soldiers to shoot. The chiefs, gol-leaders and elders tried their best to restrain the youths. But the youths of these days don’t listen to their elders. They are over confident in the power of the guns they carry. This leads them to cause troubles to the communities.

- The presence of large quantity of arms in the communities poses a great danger, especially when conflicts caused by youths involve a wider community.

- I believe that there will be no more conflict if the case is settled quickly and in just manner. This is because traditionally people used to fight especially over the cases of land, girls, women and cattle. Those conflicts used to resolve in the traditional Dinka way of conflict resolution. However, the current conflict was so sudden but it can be controlled;

- The case must be settled on time, after which the traditional peace and reconciliation of the communities be done;

- Ignorance and backwardness play a major role in the escalation of the conflicts whether they are inter- or intra-community. I suggest that many schools be opened for the enrollment of the youth for formal and adult education.

6. **Mr. Gordon Malek Ngong, a youth from Pagor Payam, Cueibet County.**

Traditionally, the Dinka people used to fight over grazing lands, girls, cattle, etc. This conflict between the Agar and Gok communities resulted from youth sport. It could have been resolved peacefully if there was awareness.

The use of firearms has exacerbated the conflict because of the randomness with which they were used killing indiscriminately women and children. Although the authorities responded promptly, it was difficult to separate the fighting because of the firearms.

The chiefs and elders tried to restrain their youth from fighting with their brothers the Agars. The chiefs of both communities met and fortunately were able to reach an agreement to stop the conflict from escalation.

If the cases of the inter- and intra-community conflicts are settled on time, and the criminals are properly dealt with, there will be no tendency on either of the sides to continue the conflict.

In my opinion, the following should be put in place: -

- Proper prisons for the criminals to be established and all the convictions should be hard labour;

- The cases should be settled immediately;

- The youths that want to carry weapons should be given military training and be enrolled in the SPLA;
- Peace and reconciliation be undertaken immediately upon the completion of the criminal aspects.

7. Mr. Run Akol Kacuol, Court President of Malou Pec, Cueibet County

The Gok – Agar conflict resulted from youth spot in which one was injured, the wound became septic and the boy died of tetanus. The relatives over reacted and revenged his death. This became large scale involving the two communities.

The conflict within the Gok, which occurred between the people of one Executive Chief, was also caused by the youth quarrelling over girls. They fought twice and on the third instant four lives were lost on both sides. This was after they had resorted to the use of firearms. It was however, established that the person who started using the firearm was an SPLA soldier, and he has been identified.

In the Agar – Gok fight, both sides used firearms. This was because many people in both communities possess firearms. I believe the issue of the balance of forces caused the other side to resort to guns.

- The county administration, the military and the police controlled the conflict between the Agars and the Gok and its two months now since the force was deployed in the two counties;
- The response was timely;
- Gok chiefs left their area in order to create a no-man zone between the two counties. They prevented their people from fighting. The chiefs from the two communities have now signed a non-aggression pact which will pave the way for the reconciliation and peace;
- Nobody know what will happen next. The Gok people are waiting to receive their looted cattle and for the cases to be taken to the courts;
- The step taken was to arrest all those who were involved in the conflict and the investigation team is winding up and the cases will soon be taken to court;
- Now that all rifles have been collected from the people, our only fear is whether or not the Nuers will attack us again. It is our sincere wish that the SPLA shall be able to prevent this;
- The prison system should be improved and all criminals locked up. I prefer that they be sentenced to long term hard labour instead of fines;
- The settlement of the cases should be timely in order to prevent feeling running high and we have relapse into chaos and lawlessness;
- The court members should not be from the same areas in order to prevent covering up of crimes. The lying and denial of responsibilities for the murders should not be allowed;
- The traditional peace and reconciliation to be done after the courts have finished delivering their tasks.
8. Mr. Jok Ayom Majak, Administrator, (Executive Director) Cueibet County

Believes that the following should be implemented:

- The county authorities should establish strong prisons with proper controls;
- The courts should be advised to only impose fines on normal cases and not on cases connected with murders;
- Criminals should be properly controlled and subjected to hard labour and should not be left to linger about as is the case in most detention centres;
- Cases involving murders, and especially the murders that have been established through admission of responsibilities, should be tried and verdicts given without further delays;
- There is an urgent need to appoint peace officers at the County and Payam levels to operate in cooperation with the council of elders to be formed for the purpose;
- Collection of all the firearms to reduce incidences of killings, whether deliberate or accidental in the communities;
- The County authorities should jointly campaign for peace with peace officers, chiefs and elders in the communities;
- Peace and reconciliation process to begin after the resolution of the conflict; and
- Auxiliary police force to be trained to keep law and order in the communities and to operate with the County Security Committees.

9. Wat Magot Kok, Youth leader of Rup section, Malek Payam, Rumbek County.

The Dinka consider their girls as economic assets and any abuse or violation of the dignity of a sister or relative can lead conflict. Eloping with somebody’s daughter, sister or relative can lead to serious conflict, especially if the necessary bride price is not paid. Most of the conflicts are started by the youths in their competition for girls and in dancing ceremonies. So the recent conflicts are normal occurrences in a Dinka environment. The only difference with the traditional fights is that now they are using firearms instead of traditional weapons.

The local civil administration and the military authorities were very slow in their response to the crisis. They knew there was a problem simmering but they waited until the conflict erupted into the open. The culprits were not remanded in time. The chiefs and elders had been marginalised and their authority and prestige in the society have been sufficiently eroded by the military and hence were less effective in handling the crisis.

While there are no clear and definitive powers given to the local civil administration and very clear mandate to the chiefs, it might not be easy to curb the inter-, and intra-community conflicts. The youths have undergone transformation that prevents them from listening to their elders of the authority of the chiefs because of the culture of the gun.
Mr. Wat Magot believes that for a sustainable peace in, and between the communities the County and Regional Authorities should implement the following measures:

There must be impartiality on the part of the courts as they try the cases. It is preferable that the Chiefs and Court Presidents and not the military preside over the cases;

There is need to strengthen the hands of Law. It has become imperative to build a strong and well-equipped Police Force in the Counties;

Awareness raising for the youths through civic education to be carried out by the Church groups, BYDA and with the support and encouragement of the civil administration at the County, Payam and Boma levels;

10. Dut Maker Mager, Sub-Chief of Panyon sub section, Rup, Malek Payam, Rumbek County.

Inter-, and intra-community conflicts and open wars have been part of the life of the Dinka. They were usually as a result of competition over such resources as grazing lands and water points during the dry season; and over girls, dancing competitions etc. The youths show off themselves to win over girls, especially during dancing ceremonies and this could provoke fights. However, these fights were mediated with traditional weapons (spears and sticks) and the damages caused were usually minimal. The reconciliation after such fights was easy to perform.

The long running civil war has come with a culture of firearms, which have now almost replaced the traditional weapons. Youths carry AKM rifles instead of the traditional sticks and spears and when there is disputes are ready to use these guns simply because many of them have not been trained in the appropriate use of these guns.

The recent conflict between the Gok and the Agars was unfortunate but there was need to correct a bad behaviour in which the Gok, something that never used to happen before, slaughtered innocent people.

The SPLA authorities, which in the first place encouraged the acquisition of the guns for self-defense and protection of property, should have introduced stringent regulations regarding the use of these weapons. The local civil administration and the military authorities were aware of the presence of the guns in the communities and that these weapons could be used in time of fighting. Nevertheless, they were very slow in responding.

It was said the authorities had an interest in the people fighting in order to enable them get cattle as fines. It was the chiefs, the elders, and the spear men and gol leaders who were eager to stop the fighting and maintain peace and harmony.

The people are fed up with conflicts and now want peace. However, the main cause of the problems, that is the youth require enlightenment and engagement in some economic activities to break the drudgery of the cattle camps.

Mr. Dut believes the following measures will improve the situation:

The education for girls should be encouraged to change the attitudes of the people towards them not to look at them simply in terms of economic assets;
The authority and prestige of the chiefs, elders and spearmen to be restored in the society to enable them perform their tasks;

Social and political orientations of the youths that will enable them define their common enemy;

Regular meetings between the chiefs and the local civil authorities to thrash out the problems in the communities; and

The SPLA should not be involved in the civilian disputes and any SPLA identified to have participated in the last conflict should be given severe punishment.

11. Mr. Deng Makur Dhuol, youth from Malek Payam, (participant was shot and wounded in action), Rumbek County.

Youth-hood is stage in a Dinka life in which one has to show pride and self-esteem, especially in dancing and competition over girls and one will always try to defeat one’s opponent in stick duels etc. It is permissible also to incite others to join the fight against opponent youth groups. Youths from rich clans are notorious in this respect and will not be restrain by any kind of fines.

The recent inter- and intra-community conflicts have their roots in youth activities and spots. The abundance of firearms in the communities heightened the conflict and led to its escalation involving the wider communities.

The conflict between the GOK and the Agar could have been arrested had the local civil authority in Rumbek and Cueibet and the military command in the sector acted quickly. The chiefs and the gol leaders had warned of the escalation but there was little response. Perhaps what was said that the local civil authorities and the SPLA command were more interested in getting cattle for themselves and as a result allowed the people to fight such that they could fine them. They failed to arrest the culprits and this caused bitterness and the urge for vengeance.

The conflict between the Boor and the Monytiek sub clans, in which I was wounded, could be attributed to the distortions and decay caused by the war and the culture of the gun. I feel guilty conscience that I joined the fight on behalf of my sub clan. Rape of girls and women is something a Dinka man would never contemplate in the past. Now the girls and women have adopted town’s life in which there are random sexual relations. Most of the conflicts have resulted from this social laxity.

The SPLM governance system has failed because it was based on the militarisation of the society. That explains why the people are taking the law into their own hands. They have no confidence in the civil administration established by the SPLM and that is why they don’t care about what they say.

12. Mr. Mabor Madhek Mabor, Spear-master from Panyon sub-section of Rup, Malek Payam, Rumbek County.

God is responsible for all that happened. He is the one who brings sufferings to mankind and everything happen through his power. He can also bring happiness, joy, peace and riches to mankind. He is the most powerful, the almighty and even the present hatred and disharmony in the communities is through him.
The spear masters can the will of God to do anything in the community. One time conflict erupted within my own clan. I immediately moved to the place of the fighting with a white ram and calling out loudly, “My God, my God, why bring this to one people to kill themselves. You are merciful. Stop any harm being inflicted among this one people”. The warring parties immediately stopped and I slaughtered the ram and asked each and every one of them to taste the blood. They did it according to my commands. This was the will of God.

The local civil administration and military authorities have failed to deliver to the entire population. It seems they enjoy the sufferings of the people and they relish more fighting breaking out such that they can fine the people and take the cattle and money for their numerous marriages, instead of offering gifts to God Almighty. God can wash our hearts. Even the chiefs don’t support the work of the spear masters by giving animals to be offered to God. It is the killing of offerings to God that can prevent conflicts in the communities.

Nobody wishes that war and conflict escalate unnecessarily, but if the people turn away and commit crimes before God then there is suffering. There will be traditional peace ceremony after everything has been completed.

I suggest the following:

- That the word of God must be taken seriously such that no much suffering comes onto the community;
- More attention to be given to girls education. This means that the dowry or bride prices must be reduced to enable the parents to send their girls to schools instead of viewing them like commodities to be sold to the highest bidder; and
- Those youths who want to carry firearms should be rounded up trained and forced to join the war against the Arabs, instead of fighting and killing their own brothers.

12. Mr. James Adiel Tueny, Court Vice President, Maper Payam, Rumbek County.

The conflict between the Boor and the Monytiek sub clans of the Rup was caused by criminal behaviour of the youths. Girls are treasured by the Dinka society and playing with them will never be tolerated.

In the ‘old Sudan’, the government was prompt in preventing conflict or stopping it when it erupted between the communities. However, now a days, the authorities come in very slowly and more reluctantly. People possess guns, and that should be reason enough for prompt preventive action on the part of the authorities. That is why many lives were lost.

The chiefs and the elders, due to their weight and respect in the society, have played a positive role by preventing their clans and sub clans from joining the fights. The role of the spear masters has been neglected because of the possession of firearms.

- Our fear if that the conflict might erupt again if the authorities fail to empower the chiefs, the spear masters and the elders. Also if the courts are not formed soon, people will lose faith in the judicial system and will take the law into their own hands.
There is very little in the society to engage the energy of the youths. Education, both formal and adult education should be stepped up to enlighten the people and change their attitudes and perceptions.

The other important factor that can create changes is the engagement of the cows in the agricultural production. The Dinka are beginning to change their attitudes toward the cow. This will have far reaching consequences on the social relationships, as the cow becomes more of an economic asset through agricultural production.

People should also be trained to engage in business e.g. trade and commerce through micro credit financial transactions. What is being done is not enough. People have more time to create problems and conflicts.

The formation of peace and conflict resolution committees should be done at the county levels to reduce the tensions in the communities and between the communities.

13. Mr. Manyiel Theebi Wol, elder, Maper Payam, Rumbek County

Communal conflicts are as old as the Dinka themselves. They are usually caused by youths in the sport grounds, dancing and competition over girls and the delay in the payment of dowry or elopement fines. They can begin with a simple incident between two people (hurting of the Gok youth by an Agar) and could involve the sub clan or whole sections or the tribe against another tribe.

The difference today is that the people have dropped the traditional weapons and have taken up firearms, made easy by the long running war with the north. Initially the firearms were issued by the SPLA or the people were allowed to purchase them for self defense or defense of their property against the raids by the Nuers. Now that the threat from the Nuers has been minimised as a result of the Wunlit peace, the people have turned the guns against themselves.

I am completely against the people of South Sudan fighting against themselves when the threat from the main enemy remains. This has been exasperated by the slow reaction from the local civil administration and the military authorities to quell the fighting. Had the military authorities acted promptly, instead of allowing the fighting to continue for four days, the large number of people killed would not have occurred. Now the civil and military authorities have come up with heavy fines in cattle and money, as if they had planned it, even before the cases have been tried and settled.

The SPLA confiscated first class bulls and this has infuriated the people. In fact, people are saying “what the SPLA did was looting their wealth” not containing the conflict.

If the authorities don’t correct the situation quickly, there is fear that the conflict might erupt again, especially if justice is seen not to be done. These measures should be reinforced with strong law enforcement agencies; the police, and prison wardens.

Enlightenment and education, in order to change the attitudes of the people, is the key to all these conflicts. This will reduce the tensions in the communities. The people should be engaged in productive activities by changing the traditional agricultural methods. The use of ox-ploughs is increasing assisting the people to become food secured and reduce dependency on the cows as the only food security for the Dinka.
14. **Mr. Mading Manyiel, a youth from Malou Pec Payam, Cueibet County**

The recent conflicts, whether inter or intra community resulted from the recklessness of the youths, and their refusal to heed their elders and chiefs in the community.

The use of firearms was precipitated by the involvement of some SPLA soldiers on behalf of their clans. I am completely against brothers killing brothers. But what caused and escalated the conflict is the absence of SPLM authority or its inability to reinforce law and order. There is also break down in communications between the chiefs and the local civil administration. They are isolated and don’t attend to the problems of the community. That explains why they were not able to intervening immediately when the conflict started.

Law and order must be restored. This can be done at the grassroots levels through the chiefs, gok leaders and the elders. The spear masters also have traditional authority, which could be exercised in favour of community peace and harmony. They are respected in the community.

By way of recommendations, I suggest the following: -

- That more schools be opened such that most of the youths, the girls, etc., can get education that can lead to changing of attitudes and perceptions. It can raise their self-awareness, which is critical of the situation rather than falling victims to manipulations by customs and traditions;

- Digging of enough water wells can reduce the tensions between the communities;

- Initiation of development programmes, especially those that can increase food security of the population will act to reduce tensions and conflicts. The improvement of the agricultural production methods e.g. the introduction of ox-plough in all the community;

- The people should be engaged in business e.g. trading and commerce, which can release their potentials;

- The authorities should improve the conditions of the law enforcement agencies: the police, the prisons, and the courts by injecting resources into them, especially the taxes collected from the people; and

- The criminals who have been identified should be give long prison terms instead of fines in cattle, which they can easily mobilise from their clans and relatives.

15. **Mr. Laat Dut Manyiel, a youth from Malek Payam, Rumbek County**

Youth-hood is the most troublesome period in the development of a Dinka boy and girl. It is time one has to show that you are brave and can overcome anything. You defend the dignity and name of your parents and clan. That is why most of the conflicts including the recent ones between the Agars sections, and between them and the Gok resulted from the actions of the youths.
What is new, and perhaps which makes the use affair dangerous warranting immediate action by the authorities is the uses of firearms on a massive scale unprecedented before. The other factor that led to the escalation is the sluggish manner with which the local authorities, whether civil administration or the military command, responded is equally new. Had there been prompt response, the conflict would not have escalated and many lives would have been saved.

The Chiefs and elders were the first to react to stop their people going into the fight. It reflected the inability of the SPLM/A administration to respond and a failure of its governance system resulting in the people taking the law into their own hands to settle their scores.

Now that the conflict has been contained it is necessary and imperative that the culprits be brought to books. I am for severe punishment of the criminals and should be given long prison terms instead of fines. The ultimate solution to all these problems is to find alternative means of livelihoods for the youth. It is about time to provide the youths with basic skills in order to engage them in productive activities like brick laying, carpentry and other vocation skills.

16. Laat Makur Dhuol, a youth from Tiek Kok, Malek Payam, Rumbek County.

Only three factors are responsible for the conflicts, whether within the Agar sections or between them and the Gok. These are youth-hood, the competition over girls and the issue of pending cases that invoke vengeance and counter vengeance.

The modern automatic weapons have replaced the traditional weapons and this added another dimension e.g. indiscriminate killing whereby the gun does not discriminate between a woman, child and elderly person. The death of many people in a single fighting generated bitterness and the urge to revenge.

The local civil administration and the military (SPLA) were slow in reacting to the crisis. This is partly because of lack of communication and transport. The place where the fight occurred is very far which needed two to three days walking to reach it.

The authority of the chiefs and elders have been eroded by the military (SPLA), hence the youth no longer listen to their elders or chiefs. This was a factor among certain sub clans, who participated in the fighting.

To prevent future conflicts, I would suggest the following measures:

- There need to be a strong enlightenment campaign, education and awareness raising for the people and the youths in particular such that there is a change in attitudes, and give a correct perspective of who is the enemy;

- Encouraging the parents to take their girls to schools and work to change the attitude of treating the girls as assets to be offered to the highest bidders.

- There is need to strengthen the law enforcement agencies, providing them with communication gadgets, modest means of communications like bicycles and motor cycles;

- The cases that have been investigated need to be taken to the courts and the criminals punished severely;
More detergent measures should be put in place to reduce violence in the communities; and

There is need to encouragement of economic activities, especially improved agricultural production methods, e.g. ox-plough etc., which will increase food security in the communities.

17. Mr. Justin Makuac Manyiel Dut, a Peace Consultant with the Catholic Diocese of Rumbek

To the best of my knowledge, as a peace mobiliser and conflict resolution officer with the Catholic Diocese of Rumbek and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), the non-implementation of some of the resolutions and recommendations of the Wunlit Nuer-Dinka Peace Covenant (1999) is partly responsible for the eruption of the community conflicts.

After the Wunlit Covenant, fighting among the different Dinka sections flared up in Rumbek County and killing of people became a daily occurrence. The local authorities: the commissioner, the army moved to the cattle camps and six people who had killed others were apprehended. Two of them escaped and the SPLA soldier who was said to have released them, because they were his relatives, was also tried together with the four, and all were executed at the same time by firing squad. It was in May/April 1999 and this created harmony and stability because the Youth witnessed the firing squad.

The dearth of resources for preventing and control conflict was also a factor in the eruption and escalation of the conflict between the Boor and Monytiiek (Agars) and between the Ayiel section (Gok) and between the Gok and the Agar.

The conflict between the Boor and the Monytiiek (Kok Malok) of the Rup section started off as a stick fight in 1998. In this one person was killed. The case was not tried until it erupted into a large scale fighting. The Boor sub section revenged the death of their person and attacked the Monytiiek (Kok Malok) by night using firearms, and this resulted in the death of eight people and so many were wounded. The authorities moved in and arrests were made and investigation carried out. Mr. James Aguer is now seeing the case in Rumbek town.

The Agar-Gok conflict goes back to the rivalries and competition between them in the fifties and sixties over grazing lands and water points in the ‘Toich’. The recent fighting started off with the youth’s sports. There was massive use of firearms. It has been established that a certain SPLA officer, Lt. Machar and four soldiers were killed in action on the side of Gok.

When the fire died down, there were twenty-four deaths, all from gunshot wounds. Twenty were killed on the spot (8 Agars and 12 Goks), the other four died later of their wounds. Forty-four on all sides were wounded and three thousand seven hundred heads of Gok cattle were looted by the Agars.

The cattle were retrieved by the SPLA, although there is a claim that some were missing. The authorities decided that the missing herds by compensated and each sub section that participated in the fighting was fined twenty-five cows. Only the Aliab toich one and two, who did not participate in the fighting were spared.

The local authorities were not prepared and therefore could not cope with the fighting that is why it lasted four days. Some of the equipment and instruction for conflict prevention e.g. the peace
committees, the police communications systems etc., could have been in place if the Wunlit resolutions were implemented and would have been used for prevention of conflict either between the Agar and the Gok or the conflicts within these sections.

The steps taken so far are enough and could prevent any new eruptions. A three-brigade size force was deployed to disarm and restore peace and stability. The only fear is whether or not there will raids and attacks from the Nuers in western Upper Nile, now that there are fresh conflicts between their different sections and some may be interested in disturbing the Wunlit covenant.

The people are now mixing up in the cattle camps and marriages are taking place between the Gok and the Agar. The ceremonies are being held reflective of the peaceful atmosphere that has been created.

The Dinka-Dinka peace process needs the following:

- Establishment of Peace Committees at the County and Payam levels that can act together with the chiefs, elders and local civil administrators reduce tensions in the communities;
- The full implementation of the resolutions of the Wunlit Nuer –Dinka Peace Covenant;
- Raising the awareness of the people, especially of the youths, at the grassroots level, and building the local capacities for conflict resolution and prevention;
- Strengthening of the law enforcement agencies and separating their functions from the military. The building of a strong police force, prison wardens will enable the criminals to be apprehended and detained;
- Completion of the process of disarmament of the civil population, removal of the automatic weapons and placing them in the hands of knowledgeable persons. The use of traditional weapons: law should, also restrict spears, sticks, knives, etc.;
- Providing the youths with productive skills especially improved agricultural production methods. The education of girls should be promoted by encouraging the parents to send their girls to schools;
- Introduction of improved methods of animal husbandry that will transform the animal wealth from cultural to economic potential; and
- Training in good governance through workshops, seminars, meetings etc., to involve all the civil authorities, the chiefs, spear masters, elders etc., as a means of raising social and political awareness of the people. The Churches should play an active role in evangelization and to promote the word of God and Christian development, justice, peace and reconciliation in Christian unity.

18. Mr. Sunday Ater Malith, former Payam Administrator of Malek Payam, Rumbek County.

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While in Rumbek, the marriage ceremony of Mr. Zacharia Matur (Agar) and Ms. Tuna Adhel Kacuol (Gok) was celebrated in St. Barnaba Parish, ECS Diocese of Rumbek on January 6th 2001.
The conflict with the Nuer scattered the population of Malek Payam to other parts of Rumbek County.

There were attempts in 1996 to register the firearms in the hand of the civil population. The people resented this decision and they refused to register their guns. This was partly they did not want the local administration to know the number of firearms because it involved payment of taxes and fees.

Most people acquired guns on their own, although there were times when the SPLA gave some chiefs rifles or exchanged them for food rations. Some of these were licensed, but the fees and taxes were not affordable.

The fighting between the Boor and the Monytiiek, both sub clans of the Rup, had been investigated and people arrested and fined.

The fighting between the Agar sections and Gok occurred in September 2000 and twenty-five people in all were killed. The combatants used guns and it became difficult to separate them until they were all exhausted or after the Gok were routed out of their camps and their cattle looted by the Agar.

The mistake was to allow the people to possess guns without proper rules or guidelines for their use. In the situation of peace the people need no automatic weapons. They were allowed to possess arms because of the threat from western Upper Nile.

The decision by the SPLA regional Command to disarm the civil population was correct and many people, especially the chiefs and the elders appreciate this measure. The military and those carrying guns had eroded their authority in the society. The disarmament must be all over the counties, because this could expose others to the threat of armed attacks. This will restore to the chiefs and traditional leadership their authority and respect in the society.

19. Cdr. Daniel Deng Monydit, SPLM deputy Bahr el Ghazal Regional Secretary for Political Affairs and acting Regional Secretary.

The civilians in Bahr el Ghazal were initially allowed to possess firearms in order to protect themselves and their property in the wake of cross border raids from western Upper Nile following the split in 1991 of the SPLM/A.

The threat from western Upper Nile receded in 1999 following the Wunlit Nuer – Dinka Peace Covenant. This resurrected the old sectional feuds and there were open conflicts between the Luach Jang in Tonj County and Pakam in Rumbek, between the Gok of Cueibet County and Agar, between the Agar and Gok themselves respectively and between the Atuot, Chiech and Aliab in Yirol County. In all these conflicts firearms were used leading to lost of life and property.

The recurrent conflicts between the various sections and sub sections of the Dinka, with massive use of firearms prompted the Regional Security Committee to disarm the population as a measure to prevent escalation of the conflicts and their proliferation.

The Regional Security Committee also made decisions that only those trained in the use of firearms will be allowed to possess them. In order to create harmony and stability in the
communities, it was decided that the Executive Chiefs, their sub chiefs, Court Presidents will be provided with armed guards. The Payam Courts will receive 7 rifles, the Regional Courts 5 rifles and each executive Chief will receive 3 rifles. They will recruit the persons who will be trained as their policemen. A circular has already been sent out for the recruitment. The training should start at the beginning of 2001.

No decision has been taken regarding the compensation for the guns that the people acquired through purchases. What is being done is to identify the owners, the details of the owners and the origin of the gun. It will be after full identification that the question of compensation will be considered.

It is the Beil tribe in Cueibet who have come out openly against disarmament. This is not because they need the firearms for conflict resolution but for hunting purposes.

We have designed the whole process of the conflict resolution as follows: -

- The Investigation Team headed by Major Gabriel Guet will consider the criminal aspect of the conflict. To identify the criminals and those who have killed people;
- The administrative aspect e.g. return of looted property will follow this, cattle from Gok;
- Constitution of special courts to try the cases;
- Convening of a reconciliation conference for the communities that were involved in the fighting. The communities will talk to themselves first. That is the clans of Rumbek will talk to themselves and those of Cueibet will do the same. After that the counties of Tonj, Cueibet, Rumbek and Yirol will be brought together in a reconciliation conference, which will be traditional in setting; and
- No time has been fixed, but everything will begin to move as soon as the courts have finished with trying the cases. End of February, or early March has been suggested as possible dates for the reconciliation conference.

20. Police Major Gabriel Guet, Head of the Team Investigating the inter- and intra-community conflicts in Rumbek and Cueibet Counties.

The Investigation was constituted by the deputy Chairman of the SPLM and the Chief of the General Staff of the SPLA and operates on that authority to investigate the crimes in the wake of the tribal and ethnic conflicts in the two counties. The whole task was divided into three stages viz. :

- The investigation into the crimes of murder by identifying the causes of the conflicts and the perpetrators;
- The SPLA to undertake the disarmament of the civil population. It has been completed; and
- The constitution of the special courts and trying of the cases.

The investigation, which we are doing, involves the following: -
The inter Gok conflict between the Ubar and Yiep sub clans of Ayiel section of Gok; and

The major conflict involving the Gok and the Agar.

The investigation has revealed the following:

- The Youngsters caused the conflict in Ayiel sub clan. There has been traditional conflict between them and they have fought eighteen times. The last one was the nineteenth. It has all been over girls, but the underlying cause is the claim to chieftainship by Makuei from the Ubar sub clan. In the last fight, rifles were used and one person was killed by gunshot wound. This was confirmed by the post mortem after the body was exhumed and examined by the medical officers. The prompted the authorities to order the disarmament;

- There was another conflict between the Thiony in 1999 caused by youngsters. They were playing hockey and one youngster was hurt in the eye;

- The Gok – Agar conflict originated in the same way the boys were playing hockey in the cattle camp. One boy was hit in his thumb, which became septic and they decided to cut it off as a result the boy died of tetanus;

- The relatives of the diseased avenged his death by slaughtering four fattened Agar youths in the cattle camp. This was on 26th, July 2000. On July 28th, another person was killed in another cattle camp. On 6th, October unknown people attacked a certain Panther Kacuol. His twelve years old daughter raised alarmed as they attacked and raped her. When he came nearer to the place where his daughter was being raped, he was shot dead and the perpetrators ran away and they have not been identified;

- On 26th October the fighting broke out between the Gok and the Agars. It continued until October 28th when the SPLA was at last able to intervene and calm the situation. In this fighting there was massive use of firearms and many of the victims died of gunshot wounds. The Pathiony (Gok) were neutral in this fighting, but the Pakam (Agar) revenged on the Pathiony for their five people killed;

- There is a general dissatisfaction with disarmament because the people feel they have used their wealth in order to acquire them. The second reason there is dissatisfaction is out of the fear that the Nuer or the Arabs may launch attacks on them now that they have been disarmed;

- The SPLA had to withdraw a large force from the front line in order to disarm or stop the fighting and calm the situation. There were no reported cases of harassment and beatings as reported. Although some force was used where there was resistance;

- It is projected that the investigation teams will wind up its duties by the end of January 2001. The delay has been due to chiefs not being able to bring their people to the team in time. They are, however, co-operating and we hope to finish as scheduled; and

- We believe that the courts will begin immediately. If the verdicts are lopsided, then there are likely to be problems, otherwise there is a general feeling of relief that the guns have been taken away.
21. Mr. Abdel Latif Chol, an elder and member former People's Regional Assembly representing Workers, Rumbek County.

Community conflicts will erupt from time to time as long the society lives in contradictions at all levels. The administrators and the leaders are corrupt and only interested in accumulation of wealth. Wrong people are place in positions of authority. They bribe their way into authority. The result is a complete failure in the governance system. The ethnic and sectional conflicts are manifestations of this deep-seated crisis.

In all this, the most important thing and what the people are interested in at the moment is to see that justice must seen to be done or delivered. Those guilty should be punished severely and the innocent should be released. In this way there will be no conflict.

22. Mr. James Aguer, a Para-legal officer, given 1st class Magistrate powers to try the case of the conflict between the Boor and Monytiek sub sections of the Agar.

The deputy Chief Justice, Justice Bullen Panchol, constituted the court on November 1st, 2000. It began seeing the case on November 8th. The first part was to deal with the Poor Yol cattle camp incidence in which one person was killed.

It started as a quarrel between two youths. The case was tried and they were fined each Sudanese pound fifty thousand. The conflict erupted again and many people were killed. Some of the culprits are at large e.g. one Boor youth that killed a Monytiek youth is said to have escaped to the government garrison. It has become difficult to establish the killers of two persons. Nobody is accepting the responsibility and this is the cause of the delay in the delivering of the verdict.

23. Mr. Zacharia Mathien, SPLM County Secretary (Commissioner) of Cueibet County.

The causes of the conflicts are many and varied. However, when evaluating the impact, the cause was so negligible compared to the effect e.g. the elopement of a girl leading to the death of people. Although these things used to occur in the past, it is the social decay and the indignity with which they happen that has caused the present conflicts. Indiscriminate sexual relations, elopements of girls with men are phenomena among the youths.

The possession of firearms exacerbated the conflict. This is because, even if one tries to run away to avoid a fight, the person is shot down. People are not trained to the use and rules of the firearms. They were forced to acquire these weapons as a result of the conflict with the Nuers, otherwise they have no need for automatic weapons.

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11 The people stay close together that they know each other. In a communal fight like this the victim or the culprit know each other. One knows by name the person one has killed or wounded in the fight. Traditionally, one admits responsibility for the death of the victim and this makes easy the cleansing of the culprit by the spear master.
The County civil administration and chiefs have recommended the disarmament of the civil population. However, the traditional weapons: spears, sticks, etc., are not available these days.

As part of our conflict prevention and resolution effort, we organised a workshop on peace and conflict with the Gok between December 15th and 17th, 2000 with the assistance of Oxfam (UK). Some intellectuals attended it from Rumbek County. It was recommended that another workshop with a widened scope be organised to include the authority of Rumbek County.

The conflict between the Ubar and the Yiep sub clans of the Gok was caused by the youths. The fighting took place on August 8th, 2000 in a dancing starting with only two boys but ended up involving the two sub clans. This may be attributed to their traditional hostility driven by competition and rivalry over the chieftainship. The SPLA was involved in stopping the fighting. Four persons were killed using firearms and spears.

The conflict was rather complicated in that relatives or people of the same sub clan found themselves fighting on different sides of the divide. The cattle camps have not been mixed and each sub clan had to camp in a different location. The stability and harmony is now being kept by the Chiefs. There is a strong warning that whoever starts the conflict again will be severely dealt with. Reconciliation meeting will be held after the courts have finished with the cases.

Regarding the Gok-Agar conflict, the local politics was a factor. It centered on the issue of the border between Cueibet and Rumbek Counties after their separation12. In fact, as a result of the conflict with the Nuers, the Agar of Malek and Maper Payams were displaced and many settled on Gok land and after the creation of Cueibet County, there was claim in Rumbek that where the Agars are settled in Gok Land should form the borders between the two counties. This is being resolved with the regional authorities.

A buffer zone was declared to separate the two communities, which is about fifteen kilometers in width. During the dry season, the Gok will be moving to the south with their cattle and the Agar (Pakam) will be moving to the north to minimise the areas of contact with the cattle.

The sources of the firearms are many. Some came from Bor County in Upper Nile and were exchanged for cattle. Others originated from the SPLA exchanged for food rations. Initially a rifle would be exchanged for 10 cows, it then dropped to 7 and until recently it used to be exchanged with only three or two cows. Some 1128 rifles were collected from Cueibet County.

- The solution to these communal or ethnic conflicts lies in social and economic development including provision of services like health, common veterinary services, education, introduction of improved agricultural production methods e.g. ox-ploughing, animal husbandry.

- Other important factors that can contribute to stability are the free movement of goods and people in the process of trade and commerce. This will involve the building of roads and access to the communities. It is therefore imperative that the youths be encouraged to engage in business activities by provision of loans and credits.

- The law enforcement agencies, the police, the prisons and the courts have to be strengthened. The police force to be built and provided with all means of communications.

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12 Cueibet was a Payam of Rumbek County until January 2000. It was constituted as a county by the resolution of the National Liberation Council meeting held in Gorok, Rumbek in December 1999.
The local authorities can implement some of these with their own resources e.g. the training of the police/prison wardens, organisation of the judiciary and the court system. The prisons should be rehabilitated, as it is now more preferable to have criminals convicted to long term’s sentences rather than fines. The formation of local Peace Committees is imperative both at the County and Payam levels.

- The International Community – INGOs to assist in the development and provision of clean water, education facilities, enlightenment of the chiefs, elders through workshops, seminars etc., the Church also to play a role in the enlightenment of youths and women leaders. Promotion of girl’s education by encouraging the parents to take their girls to schools.


The tribal and sectional conflicts involved some individuals from the SPLA, who were found in the location either on holidays or were deserters from their units. It is not true that SPLA participated in these conflicts. There was no order to that effect. We went in to stop the fighting and to disarm the civil population.

The training of militias will resolve this contradiction, such that those who carry firearms will be those knowledgeable in the use of these weapons. The numbers to be trained will be equivalent to the number of arms confiscated from the counties.

The disarmament was carried out successfully, but it has not been carried out in Yirol because of the peculiar situation therein.

25. Mr. Machar Magot Kok, Branch Court President, Malek Payam, Rumbek County.

The conflict between the Boor and the Monytiek sub clans has been traditional. The people used sticks and spears before, but now firearms and automatic weapons have replaced them.

It all started with the youth fighting. Somebody (Boor) was hit with a stick on the head and died. The authorities apprehended the culprits. But the Boor revenged and attacked the Monytiek with firearms. To avoid the fighting, the Monytiek moved to a place eight miles away, but the Boor followed them. Five people were killed.

The whole affair was left to the government (SPLM County authorities) and the sub chiefs are now in the court for the trying of the cases. Once the cases have been tried then we will see what to be done next. It is likely to a traditional reconciliation process in which the spear masters and the elders will officiate.

Regarding the conflict between the Agars and the Gok, it was the Pakam who started the conflict, so the Rup and the Nyang went to lend support to the Pakam. The authorities don’t want these community conflicts.

However, the local political and administrative authority is weak. There was no prompt intervention partly because of the lack of resources. The cases are yet to tried and delay in the delivery justice can lead to escalation of the conflict.

The people of Aliab toich one and two did not participate in the recent conflicts. Our conflict was initially with the Nuers, but after the Wunlit Peace Covenant 1999, there has not been serious incidences involving Nuers and Dinkas.

We have been waiting for the establishment of common services to support the peace process. We had agreed that police posts would be established in Shambe, Pagaru, Nyibur – Luel, Naam Toich and Pakam (Adol) and that the positioning of the police posts to be decided by both the authorities of Rumbek, Yirol and those of western Upper Nile.

The other common service to support the peace process is the provision of education facilities. We have offered Akot Primary School to the peace process and we have named it ‘Akot Peace School’. A project proposal to fund its rehabilitation and building of more dormitories has been submitted. We want children from Nuer, Pakam, Gok, Agar, Atuot, Chiech, Beil (Wulu and Mvolo) and Aliab to be enrolled as boarders as a means of building confidence in the peace process. The Nuer, Gok, Atuot, etc., will have no interest in attacking the other side when they know that their children are living together.

Provision of common veterinary services, like education and other services, can bring the people together and could be an another important factor in building peace, since the Dinkas and the Nuers are all pastoralists.

We want the chiefs and elders to be trained in conflict resolutions, maintenance of law and order in their communities and between their communities and their neighbours. This will have to be enforced with the building of a strong police force, and rehabilitation of the prisons and supporting the judicial system. The presence of a strong law enforcement agency can easily bring an end to the stealing of cattle now rampant between Akot Payam and Yirol.


Introduced in 1986 the idea of registration and licensing firearms in the hands of the civilian population. Between 1986 and 1990 there were four hundred (400) rifles in the hands of the civilians in Lakes alone.

The attacks from western Upper Nile against the Dinka created the increase in the number of firearms in the hands of the civilians and it became difficult to keep track, since licensing became irrelevant. Some people bought guns on their own in order to protect themselves and their property. SPLA also exchanged guns for food rations, while some people got their guns on the battlefield.

The Wunlit peace agreement has now reduced the threat from western Upper Nile. But the people continued to use the guns against themselves. Even a slight problem can result in a massive attack. Since 1992, there were hundred and two cases of people killed in Rumbek County alone using firearms.

The escalation of the Agar – Gok conflict can be attributed to the possession of the gun by people who have not been properly trained in the use of the gun. That is why the SPLM
authorities have ordered a general disarmament. Only those who have been trained will not be allowed to acquire and carry guns.

28. **Cdr. William Manyang, deputy commander of the SPLA brigade deployed to disarm the civil population in Cueibet and Rumbek Counties.**

The order to disarm and the deployment of the SPLA came from the SPLA Chief of general Staff, Cdr. Salva Kiir Mayardit. We started the process in October and by the beginning of December, it was completed.

There is harmony and peace in the communities. The cases of stealing of cattle between the Rek/Luach Jang (Tonj) and the Nuers (western Upper Nile) or between Tonj/Cueibet/Rumbek have been sufficiently reduced.

The resistance on the part of the civil population to disarmament was out of the fear that there may be attacks from the Nuers. I believe that the Nuers will have no interests in rekindling the conflict since they are now facing serious threat from the government of Sudan and their internal divisions, and many of them have been displaced into the Dinka areas.

The numbers of rifles that have been collected are as follows:

- Cueibet County 1300
- Rumbek County 1700
- Yirol 1200

There was no disarmament in Aliab areas of Yirol. The weapons are now being stored in the respective Payam head quarters from which they were collected. We are awaiting further orders as to what to do with them.