

PROTECTION THROUGH DIALOGUE: How UNMISS is Linking Local Engagement with a National Peace Process in South Sudan

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Lauren Spink, Senior Global Researcher

ABOUT CIVIC'S PEACEKEEPING PROGRAM

CIVIC's Peacekeeping Program links in-depth field research in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and South Sudan to research and advocacy at the national- and international-level. We capture good practices and lessons learned to inform policy and decision-making by UN peacekeeping operations, the UN Secretariat, and UN Member States. In 2020, the Peacekeeping Program is continuing to focus its research and advocacy to address six inter-related objectives that are linchpins to the effective protection of civilians through UN peacekeeping.

- 1) The UN Secretary-General and Member States continue to prioritize the protection of civilians through UN peacekeeping and view POC as an integral part of political strategies and solutions.
- 2) Peacekeeping operation planning and decision-making is linked to assessments of threats to civilians.
- 3) Peacekeeping performance is strengthened by ensuring that mandates are matched with adequate means.
- 4) Accountability systems for peacekeeping operation leadership and personnel are effective and transparent.
- 5) Member States, the UN Secretariat, and peacekeeping operations take steps to prevent, mitigate, and address harm that could result from their own presence, activities, and operations, and the operations of armed actors that they support.
- 6) Communities at risk of violence are safely and effectively engaged in mission planning and activities to protect civilians.

I. OVERVIEW

A revitalized peace agreement (R-ARCSS), signed by South Sudan's president and a number of major opposition parties in 2018, has been a slow-moving and elite-dominated process. Despite the agreement, government soldiers and armed groups in many areas of the country have continued to subject civilians to violence, including gross human rights abuses and war crimes.¹ For civilians, carrying out even basic activities like harvesting food from their farms or going to a market puts them at risk. Even if fully implemented, the revitalized peace agreement is unlikely to address the legacy of years of political violence waged along ethnic lines. This violence has left deep social rifts between communities that can easily be provoked to spark new conflict.

The UN peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has recognized that the national peace process cannot be divorced from local-level conflict dynamics. Over the last year, it has begun to shift its approach to national- and subnational-level peacebuilding and protection activities to address this complex system of conflict dynamics. Mission personnel have developed an integrated program of work that reaches across multiple Mission sections and disciplines to better link political and peace processes in the capital with communities around the country. While the work encourages the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement at an elite level, it also seeks to improve protection of civilians from threats of physical violence and support longer-term peacebuilding through subnational conflict management. UNMISS's new approach reflects lessons

captured by independent reviews and academic research as well as UN peacekeeping policies and guidance. Moreover, UNMISS officials have integrated gender considerations into the design of program activities, including by ensuring strong participation of women in dialogues and incorporating activities aimed at the political empowerment of women in South Sudan.

Between December 2019 and February 2020, CIVIC carried out research in the Juba and Yei areas of South Sudan to understand and assess these new working methods. We completed interviews with 96 individuals, including: 13 UNMISS civilian officials; 2 UNMISS military officials; 2 UNMISS police officials; 17 humanitarian actors; 30 civil society leaders; 21 civilians; 7 South Sudanese government officials; and 4 other subject matter experts. CIVIC shared a draft of this Issue Brief with a number of UNMISS and UN Secretariat officials for review before publication.

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This Issue Brief details our findings. It outlines UNMISS's new approach, summarizes stakeholder perspectives of UNMISS's work at the subnational level in Yei, and raises some challenges and limitations of these efforts. In Yei, local government officials, humanitarian actors, civil society leaders, and civilians who spoke with CIVIC all validated the need for the Mission's approach and directly credited the subnational components of the program with improving security and freedom of movement. However, civil society leaders in Yei advocated for more local-level involvement in the design and planning of Mission subnational dialogue and peacebuilding activities. Overall, UNMISS officials were enthusiastic about the impact of this program of work, but acknowledged that any breakdown in the elite national peace process would overturn subnational peacebuilding

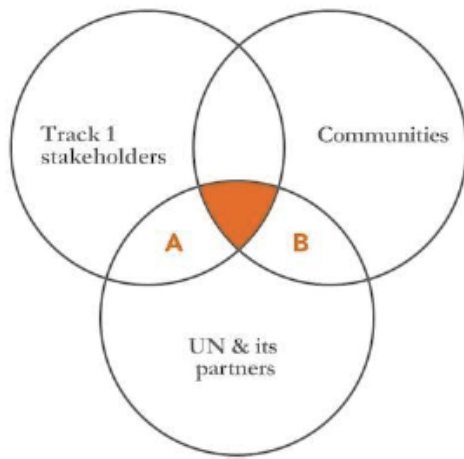
efforts. Despite these limitations, UNMISS's efforts to protect civilians through subnational conflict management and build coherence between their national and subnational peacebuilding activities is an improvement on the siloed work plans of the past and is contributing to the protection of civilians in South Sudan.

II. WHY LINKING SUBNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PEACE PROCESSES MATTERS FOR PROTECTION

Over the past two decades, peacekeeping missions have increasingly been deployed to manage conflict within countries rather than between them. Moreover, the protection of civilians from physical violence has become a core component of modern peacekeeping mandates.² As the context and role of peacekeeping operations have evolved, independent reviews and academic research have highlighted important variables that contribute to improved protection for civilians, including: that the protection of civilians and political engagement should be clearly linked;³ and that local community outreach and national political engagement should be inclusive and aligned.⁴

It should be noted that UNMISS is only one actor among a range of humanitarian and development actors contributing to improved protection and peacebuilding through dialogue activities at the subnational level. Additionally, not all political or dialogue activities that a peacekeeping mission carries out will directly contribute to protection of civilians. If not carried out carefully, political and community engagement can actually exacerbate conflict and threats to civilians.⁵ Nevertheless, if multidimensional peacekeeping missions, like UNMISS, can safely support protection activities with political engagement and some peacebuilding efforts across the local, national, and regional levels where they work, they can help prevent the recurrence of conflict.⁶

UN policies and guidance for peacekeeping missions reflect these lessons. The UN Department of Peace Operations (UN DPO) Policy on the

Figure 1: Finding shared goals

Situation A might be labeled “top-down politics”. This is where the UN is supporting a formal peace process, or national political institutions, but these are not effectively engaging with the root causes of conflict at local level.

Situation B might be labeled the “ownership gap”. This is where a peace operation is trying to respond to local drivers of conflict, but without serious engagement from government authorities and other political stakeholders.

This graphic, extracted from the DPO practice note on community engagement, highlights in orange the ideal space for the UN and its partners to cultivate and operate in: the intersection between the goals and activities of formal peace processes and community engagement.

Protection of Civilians (POC) in UN Peacekeeping establishes a framework with three tiers of protection—protection through dialogue and engagement, provision of physical protection, and establishment of a protective environment. The policy notes that, “The most effective and sustainable way of protecting civilians is to ensure stability, peace and security through inclusive political processes and sustainable solutions to conflict.”⁷ It directs missions to “identify links between local, national and regional level conflicts and threats to civilians, and seek to address the threats at multiple levels.”⁸ Similarly, a practice note on community engagement developed by the UN DPO’s Division of Policy and Best Practices Service outlines a process for community engagement by peace operations that links top down peace processes with local conflict management.⁹

Despite independent reviews and UN guidance that outline the importance of a coordinated approach to protection and inclusive peacebuilding at the subnational and national levels, peacekeeping missions have not always

implemented this approach. The strength of modern peacekeeping missions is that they are multidimensional—combining military, police, and a variety of specialized civilian components—that operate at the local, state, and national levels of a country. They are also integrated, meaning that they are meant to coordinate with UN agencies, funds, and programs. In some cases, however, complex staffing structures, a lack of clear strategies to guide work, and the absence of a fully operational method of evaluating mission impact have contributed to siloed peacekeeping missions. For example, Political Affairs Officers may engage high-ranking representatives of governments and parties to a conflict in the capital while Civil Affairs staff are devoted to community engagement and conflict management in field locations.¹⁰ In the absence of coordination between the Political Affairs and Civil Affairs sections, engagement at the national level can become unhinged from the operational activities while subnational dialogues may fail to address the underlying political drivers to conflict.

NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL CONFLICT

Definitions & Concepts

A variety of different types of interconnected violence exist at a local level in South Sudan, including violence perpetrated by soldiers affiliated with the national army and non-state armed groups, inter-communal violence, cattle-raiding, conflict between pastoral and agricultural communities, and domestic violence. Many of these types of violence have direct or opaque linkages that stretch beyond the boundaries of a single village or even the boundaries of the country, and it can be difficult to determine which types of violence have political dimensions. For example, cattle wealth in South Sudan has increasingly become concentrated in the hands of South Sudan's political elite who have, at times, distributed arms to cattle herders and manipulated cattle-raiding attacks for personal and political gain.¹¹ Nevertheless, cattle-raiding, conflict between pastoral and agricultural communities, and other forms of local-level violence, such as domestic violence, are not the focus of this brief. This Issue Brief focuses on UNMISS's efforts to address violence at a subnational level that is more directly linked to the national conflict or carried out by armed groups involved in the national conflict. The term national conflict refers to the civil war that broke out between President Salva Kiir and his First Vice President, Riek Machar, in December 2013, as well as the renewal of this conflict in 2016 and the subsequent development of different armed groups using violence as a means to further political goals or achieve personal gain through the national peace process.

In South Sudan, the need for an approach to the protection of civilians that includes coordinated engagement on conflict at the subnational and national levels is clear. Violence perpetrated by state and non-state armed groups as a part of the conflict is often inflicted directly against civilians who are assumed to support armed groups comprised of combatants of the same ethnic group. This violence against civilians has been ruthless—with high levels of sexual violence and entire villages burned to the ground.¹² The government has targeted many civil society actors

who have tried to speak out against atrocities, and has enacted laws that make it difficult for civil society organizations to function.¹³ International and regional mediators have helped to broker a series of ceasefires and peace agreements to end the civil war that broke out in 2013. But these processes have been largely confined to elite circles while armed groups and politicians have repeatedly flouted their commitments under these agreements.¹⁴

Even as the national peace process moves forward haltingly, security for civilians at a local level has not necessarily improved because politicians have delayed implementing many of the provisions of the R-ARCSS and avoided resolving many of the underlying conflict drivers. There is a significant risk of fresh outbreaks of violence around control of land, resources, and local government positions—all contentious issues that the peace process has failed to adequately address.¹⁵ Moreover, while national commanders who committed to peace on paper may be reluctant to claim responsibility for violence, local commanders continue to commit abuses against civilians and target them as they move from territory held by one armed actor to areas controlled by another.¹⁶

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A January 2020 Report by the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan highlights how armed actors in the country have continued to instigate violence at a subnational level since the signing of the R-ARCSS. For example, the Commission reports that “between late February and May 2019 alone, UNMISS recorded 152 incidents of localized violence resulting in some 531 deaths and 317 injuries, a 192 per cent increase in casualties compared with the same period in 2018.”¹⁷ The report draws connections between

this violence and parties to the national conflict, noting with “deep concern” that parties exploit local tensions and state security forces have provided arms to local militia.¹⁸ Additionally, recent findings by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) warn that subnational violence involving militias and elements of parties to the conflict will remain a risk to civilians in the near future.¹⁹ Analysis from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) underlines the importance of addressing the subnational violence in South Sudan and asserts that external actors must understand how these complex local and national dynamics are connected in order to address the violence.²⁰

III. THE PROTECTION AND ENGAGEMENT ROLES OF UNMISS

UNMISS is mandated to contribute to improved protection of civilians through local conflict management and to support implementation of the national peace process. The primary pillar of the Mission’s most recent mandate, approved by the UN Security Council in March of 2020, is protection of civilians. Within this pillar, UNMISS is asked:

“To exercise good offices, confidence-building, and facilitation in support of the mission’s protection strategy, especially in regard to women and children, including to facilitate the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of intercommunal conflict through, inter alia, mediation and community engagement in order to foster sustainable local and national reconciliation as an essential part of preventing violence and long-term state-building activity.”²¹

A separate pillar of UNMISS’s mandate is dedicated to supporting the implementation of the R-ARCSS. This section of the mandate tasks UNMISS with “Using good offices to support the peace process and implementation of the Revitalised Agreement, including through advice or technical assistance.”²² Moreover, in the text, the Security Council “Recognizes the important use of confidence-building, facilitation, mediation, and

community engagement, and encourages UNMISS as appropriate and when possible, to explore how it can use these techniques...to implement its mandated tasks, including to protect civilians.”²³

Like other missions, UNMISS has not always adopted coordinated or strategic approaches to political and community engagement.²⁴ In the past, the majority of Civil Affairs programs focused on violence stemming from pastoralist migration and cattle-raiding. Cattle-raiding and fighting between herders and agricultural communities are sometimes manipulated by national politicians for personal or political gain and can trigger cycles of violence that leave hundreds dead and thousands displaced. However, the Mission’s work in this area was not clearly linked to the national conflict that has contributed, directly and indirectly, to the deaths of an estimated 383,000 people.²⁵ Moreover, in conversations with CIVIC in past years, peacekeepers lamented the lack of programmatic funding to support local peacebuilding initiatives that could help discourage a return to violence or support rule of law infrastructure to underpin local peace agreements.

Over the past year, UNMISS has changed its approach. Peacekeepers have instituted a more coordinated strategy for protection and peacebuilding. The strategy attempts to use dialogue and engagement to address violence against civilians emerging from the local activities of armed groups implicated in the national conflict, to link local actors with the national peace process, and to create a demand for peace at the subnational level that can help drive implementation of the national peace process forward.

IV. UNMISS'S APPROACH TO SUBNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATED ENGAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS

UNMISS's efforts to link conflict management at the subnational level with the national peace process have been led primarily by the Mission's Civil Affairs and Political Affairs Divisions. The Public Information Office through UNMISS's Radio Miraya also plays an important role in the plan, as do Rule of Law Officers, Human Rights Officers, the Gender Affairs Unit, and Heads of Field Offices (HOFOs).²⁶ Some of the activities are also coordinated or carried out jointly with humanitarian and development agencies of the UN Country Team. The UN Peacebuilding Trust Fund and the UN Multi-Donor Trust Fund have provided vital funding for many of these projects and activities.²⁷ Notably, the program of work has support from UNMISS's leadership, who have also reinforced the concept that activities at a subnational level should be strategic and linked to national political processes. The Mission's approach includes:

1. Reducing tensions and building civic space at the local level through civil-military dialogues, rapprochements, social cohesion activities such as inter-communal dialogues, and strengthening of subnational organizations for political engagement;
2. Direct technical support to the national peace process;
3. Connecting national actors to the local level and local actors to national peace processes; and
4. Supporting accountable institutions.

The first pillar of work at the subnational level aims to reduce local violence carried out by parties to the national conflict and to increase security for civilians. To achieve this goal, UNMISS's HOFOs and Civil Affairs Officers are leading civil-military dialogues and rapprochements between the national army (South Sudan People's Defense Forces or SSPDF) and opposition militaries. The goal of the civil-military dialogues is to curb violence against civilians by bringing community

members together with the soldiers deployed in their area to discuss human rights and protection principles, as well as how violations of these principles are affecting civilians. Likewise, rapprochements are intended to reduce military violence against civilians by fostering local commitments from government and opposition militias on freedom of movement for civilians between opposition-held and government-controlled zones.²⁸

At a subnational level, the Mission and its NGO partners are also supporting civil society leaders to distribute copies of the revitalized peace agreement in English, Arabic, and local languages. Distribution of the peace agreement text is intended to empower communities with knowledge about the process and to foster broader demand for implementation of the agreement.²⁹ In partnership with UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), UNMISS is also building the capacity of political parties and carrying out social cohesion activities. Such social cohesion activities include directly supporting local peace talks and inter-communal dialogues, as well as establishing local task forces and committees on gender and peace.³⁰ UNMISS hopes that task forces will create a platform for local civil society groups to organize and voice their opinions on peace, security, and governance.³¹

At a national level, UNMISS's technical support to the peace process aims to promote confidence, cooperation, and genuine agreement among the parties to the conflict that can contribute to security by preventing a relapse into violence. The approach has involved efforts to promote inclusiveness in the national dialogue established by the South Sudanese government. Additionally, UNMISS's Political Affairs Division has brought high-ranking technical experts and mediators into the country to help national politicians overcome contentious issues and clarify details of and steps in the peace process. Moreover, UNMISS officials have tried to harmonize the positions of the variety of international and regional actors involved in South Sudan's peace process as brokers, guarantors, and monitors.³²



A peace-building forum in Maridi, organized by local authorities, UNMISS, and the Ceasefire Transitional Security Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSMVM), held on July 11, 2019. UNMISS / Eric Kanalstein

“There is this gap: how to make sure that the grassroots communities and constituencies have buy-in so we can sustain the political process.”

-UNMISS civilian official

The third component of the approach is connecting local communities to the national peace process. The aim of this third pillar is to promote inclusivity in the process and encourage politicians to consider the views and expectations of the South Sudanese people throughout the peace process. Under this pillar, the Mission—in collaboration with UN agencies and INGOs—is hosting a series of dialogues in Juba that bring together civil society leaders from around the country to discuss topics related to the peace process and governance. A steering committee composed of Juba-based South Sudanese scholars and civil society leaders helps to

identify the topic of each dialogue.³³ Describing the need for these forums, an UNMISS civilian official told CIVIC, “There is this gap: how to make sure that the grassroots communities and constituencies have buy-in so we can sustain the political process.”³⁴ To link national actors to local processes, UNMISS is encouraging politicians to share information about the peace process to their field-based constituencies and regularly hosting two-way conversations between national-level politicians, government leaders, academics, traditional leaders, civil society actors, and civilians through its radio programs, which reach over two-thirds of the country.³⁵

The final aspect of the work involves strengthening the accountability of South Sudanese institutions. The majority of UNMISS’s work in this area falls under the third tier of the DPO POC Policy and has focused on technical support to parliament, anti-corruption bodies, and the justice sector, including training for South Sudanese lawyers and judges and logistical support to mobile courts.³⁶ While the South Sudanese government has demonstrated

little will to implement Chapter V of the R-ARCSS on Transitional Justice, Accountability, Reconciliation, and Healing, UNMISS's efforts could help improve access to justice and discourage or disrupt cycles of violence and revenge that are fueled by impunity.³⁷

Most components of the approach have included efforts to incorporate and empower women and youth. Notably, UNMISS's local capacity-building efforts—carried out with support from the Gender Affairs Unit of the Mission and in collaboration with UN Women—have concentrated on support to women-led and focused organizations. As part of these efforts, UNMISS has brought women political leaders from Kenya and Sierra Leone to South Sudan to discuss with women civil society leaders the challenges and successes they have faced participating in politics and peace processes.³⁸ Around 40% of the civil society participants UNMISS has brought to Juba for dialogues have been women.³⁹ According to one UNMISS official, the Mission has also established separate telephone lines for women and men to call into their radio programming so that they can ensure women are able to participate and that their voices are heard.⁴⁰

Around 40% of the civil society participants UNMISS has brought to Juba for dialogues have been women.

A number of UNMISS officials shared anecdotes with CIVIC highlighting the positive impact of the first program pillar on security at the subnational level. One UNMISS official, for example, noted that local government and opposition commanders did not have any direct contact with each other before UNMISS intervened, but after rapprochement activities, they were in regular contact.⁴¹ Another UNMISS official told CIVIC that the Mission had recorded a substantial increase in river traffic in some areas and markets opening in other locations because of UNMISS's engagement and dialogue activities.⁴² While it can be more difficult to measure whether political engagement has

contributed to preventing a relapse in conflict, Mission officials noted that this approach has helped the Mission to overcome internal siloes.⁴³

CIVIC did identify limitations and challenges to UNMISS's new approach. For example, in the subnational pillar of the Mission's work, rapprochements are aimed at reducing tensions between local commanders of the national army and armed groups who have already signed the revitalized peace agreement. A number of armed groups have not signed on to the agreement and remain outside of the formal peace process. Furthermore, peacekeepers recognized that local government officials can try to dominate or control forums and it can be a challenge for them to determine which civil society actors to include in their activities. Civil society groups are not necessarily neutral nor should they always be expected or required to be apolitical. Non-governmental organizations have identified local actor mapping as an important component of a conflict-sensitive approach to peacebuilding work that can help navigate these dynamics and mitigate potential risks that could result from participant selection.⁴⁴ UNMISS has established criteria for selecting activity participants and relies on experienced staff to help identify and vet participants.⁴⁵ While these practices may not resolve all of the complexities of selecting forum participants, in combination with more structured actor mapping they can help peacekeepers avoid exacerbating tensions through their activities.

In the third pillar of UNMISS's work that directly connects national and subnational actors, the Mission is able to ensure local actors travel to Juba for dialogues and call into radio stations to participate in national debates. UNMISS also has plans to carry out feedback forums at the field level with participation of national politicians to promote follow-up on dialogues that take place in Juba. However, peacekeepers cannot oblige national politicians to travel outside the capital and engage their constituencies in local areas. UNMISS officials also admitted that a lack of political will to implement the R-ARCSS among South Sudan's top leaders could quickly derail most of the Mission's local efforts.⁴⁶

V. ASSESSING UNMISS'S APPROACH IN YEI

CIVIC carried out interviews with humanitarian actors, government officials, civil society leaders, and civilians in Yei—a town in the Central Equatoria region of South Sudan—to gauge their perspectives on the subnational pillar of UNMISS's program of work. In particular, we consulted stakeholders about their views on civil-military dialogues, rapprochements, and social cohesion activities such as inter-communal dialogues and task forces on peace. Our research found that a broad range of stakeholders in Yei were both aware of and strongly supportive of these activities.

Yei was hardest hit by South Sudan's civil war in 2016 and 2017 when a number of Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-in Opposition (SPLA-iO) troops fled Juba and took up positions in Central Equatoria. Local military leaders, who have long harbored grievances over their ethnic and political marginalization, aligned themselves with the SPLA-iO. Large-scale offensives by the national army against the opposition displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians.⁴⁷ Since 2018, the government has retained control over major towns and cities, while opposition groups continue to operate from rural areas. The SPLA-iO signed onto the R-ARCSS and joined a new transitional government in February 2020, but local efforts to diffuse tensions between SSPDF and SPLA-iO soldiers have stalled, as have plans to install soldiers in cantonment sites, train them, and integrate them into one army. Several local armed groups refused to sign onto the R-ARCSS in 2018 and formed factions of the National Salvation Front (NAS) who continue to operate from Central Equatoria. Civilians traveling between areas controlled by different armed actors are harassed, detained, and sometimes killed. Sexual violence committed by men in uniform has continued at high levels, even as large-scale fighting has receded.⁴⁸

When fighting broke out in 2016, UNMISS did not have a base in southern Central Equatoria. In 2017, they established a temporary presence in Yei that

was gradually built up until the establishment of a permanent base in November 2017. The Yei office is a team site rather than a fully-functioning field office, and therefore has no HOFO and fewer civilian staff than field offices. However, they have been actively implementing UNMISS's approach to subnational conflict-mitigation through Civil Affairs Officers deployed to the team site.

Stakeholders interviewed by CIVIC in Yei validated the need for UNMISS's activities and approach.⁴⁹ The immediate protection concerns most frequently identified by interviewees were: sexual violence and rape committed primarily by men in uniform,⁵⁰ arbitrary detention and killing of youth suspected of being affiliated with opposition groups,⁵¹ lack of freedom of movement caused by checkpoints and insecurity on the roads,⁵² displacement and inability to access farms and land as a result of military operations,⁵³ and looting of their properties by government soldiers.⁵⁴

Describing the situation, one male civil society leader told CIVIC that, "The soldiers are always hostile [to] the civilians once they have been attacked and some of them killed by the rebel fighters on the frontlines. They revenge by killing innocent civilians including people with mental disorders and disabilities."⁵⁵ Likewise, a local government official lamented, "Protection of civilians is one of the problems. ...A woman killed with her small child of two or three years. What does that child have to do with war?"⁵⁶ A female civil society leader stated, "We are vulnerable to go out even to cultivate [land] because men are looking for us. If you go out with your daughter, either one of you or both of you will be raped."⁵⁷

Interview participants also underscored the need for longer-term peacebuilding efforts including social cohesion activities, dissemination of the peace agreement, and strengthening accountable governance.⁵⁸ Describing the need for reconciliation, a civilian told CIVIC, "We are living with a lot of tensions in our heart."⁵⁹ Similarly, a civil society leader explained, "People now have hearts that are broken, stone hearts. There is too much trauma." He continued "...by helping



Artists from the Ana Taban group, which means 'I am tired' in Arabic, organized a day of painting murals on the streets of Yei town with pictures and messages that promote peace and denounce war on June 21, 2017. UNMISS / Denis Louro

people understand this agreement, they can hold the parties accountable for implementing what is written.”⁶⁰

“...by helping people understand this agreement, they can hold the parties accountable for implementing what is written.”

-Yei civil society leader

Stakeholders in Yei noted that, despite UNMISS's efforts, insecurity was still rampant, with looting by government soldiers still common in rural areas, gunshots a regular nighttime occurrence in town, and some road axes unsafe for travel. However, almost all interview participants agreed that the situation had improved significantly over the previous year and a half. While individuals attributed these improvements to a variety of factors, including changes in the deployment of security actors by the government and, more broadly, the holding of the ceasefire and peace

agreement, most interlocutors also directly attributed improvements to UNMISS's protection and peacebuilding activities.

Local government officials, humanitarian actors, civil society leaders, and civilians alike credited the Mission's civil-military dialogues between civilians and SSPDF officials with improving the behavior of soldiers towards civilians.⁶¹ They also acknowledged the contribution of rapprochement activities between the SSPDF and SPLA-iO to better freedom of movement.⁶² A woman who recounted having seven family members burned alive in their home during one attack told CIVIC, “There is good improvement now since the Mission conducts routine patrols and advocated for re-opening of closed roads and also removal of illegal checkpoints on the road, which created confidence for free movement among the civilians.”⁶³ When questioned about the impact of rapprochements, a humanitarian actor explained, “It [the impact] is the ever-reducing tension between iO and government officials. It isn't the only thing, but it is contributing to other

efforts... The confidence is growing between the government and iO since the end of last year, so now there is no fear, no restriction on us to go to iO areas.”⁶⁴ Some participants also attributed the release of arbitrarily detained citizens to UNMISS's direct engagement with SSPDF and iO commanders at the subnational level.⁶⁵

A range of interlocutors credited the social cohesion work carried out by UNMISS and partner organizations with improving local relationships.⁶⁶ Speaking about UNMISS's social cohesion work, including inter-communal dialogues, a government official observed: “The role of UNMISS has been great carrying out their peacebuilding. ...The objective of these conferences is that, since this revitalized agreement was signed, we need to soften the ground. ...Killings have happened and destruction of people's property has happened and all of these things are a recipe for post-conflict conflict.”⁶⁷ “We appreciate the role of UNMISS in reducing fear and promoting peaceful co-existence in the communities...” reported one woman who told CIVIC that her brother was shot and killed by a government-supported militia.⁶⁸

In Yei, CIVIC was able to speak with several individuals who either traveled to Juba to participate directly in peace dialogues carried out under UNMISS's third pillar of work or who were aware of the activities being carried out under this pillar. Given the limited number of stakeholders we engaged on this topic, we cannot draw extensive conclusions on their impact or civilians' perspectives of these activities. However, a number of actors praised UNMISS's efforts to disseminate information about quotas for women's participation in the transitional government⁶⁹ and their encouragement of women's participation in the peace process.⁷⁰ Reflecting on the overall impact of UNMISS's different pillars of work linking subnational and national protection and peacebuilding activities, one civil society leader observed, “We have seen, because of the intervention of UNMISS, the ceasefire is holding. Apart from the church and government also playing their part, UNMISS has pushed as a neutral body. ...We have seen an impact in terms of

pushing the voices of locals to the national level.”⁷¹

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-Yei civil society leader

Most of the recommendations that civil society leaders and civilians shared with CIVIC on improving UNMISS's protection and peacebuilding activities involved expanding the geographic scope and reach of its activities and increasing follow-up after initial dialogues.⁷² “To this extent I can say the engagement is not regular and this is due to lack of funding to call for routine meetings and other related forums,” said one civil society leader.⁷³ Civil society leaders also stressed the need for UNMISS to involve them in the design and planning of activities, not only at implementation phases.⁷⁴ “The Mission does its internal activity planning by themselves and we are only invited to participate in the workshops and meetings,” said one civil society leader.⁷⁵ Another added, “They need a program that is specifically designed by civil society.”⁷⁶ Posing a hypothetical question to the Mission, a civil society leader asked, “Why don't you engage me from stage one so that we go together?”⁷⁷

It was clear from CIVIC's interviews with UNMISS Civil Affairs officials that they understand the importance of having protection and peacebuilding programs that are designed and led by South Sudanese stakeholders and regularly undertake this approach. For example, they have established a “core group” of actors in Juba that includes civil society leaders and South Sudanese academics and is responsible for determining the themes and topics of dialogues.⁷⁸ As previously detailed, stakeholders in Yei also confirmed that UNMISS's activities are aimed at addressing the right protection threats. At the time of CIVIC's interviews

in Yei, some of UNMISS's subnational activities aimed at building civic space and empowering local actors—like their task forces on gender and peace—were still relatively new initiatives. Furthermore, UNMISS has not yet begun their planned feedback sessions at a subnational level that will replicate and build on dialogue discussions held in Juba. These task forces and feedback sessions could help to address concerns about the limited follow-up on activities and could also ensure a wider group of civil society actors at a local level feel involved in the design and implementation of UNMISS activities. Nevertheless, some of UNMISS's efforts to involve civil society in the design and planning of activities—such as the creation of a “core group” or advisors—may need to be replicated or reinforced at the local level.

VI. CONCLUSION:

The image most commonly associated with peacekeeping is probably that of a blue-helmeted soldier carrying a weapon and wearing the badge of the UN on his or her uniform. But peacekeeping missions are multidimensional and the concept of protection through UN peacekeeping, as outlined in UN peacekeeping policy, is that of protection through three tiers: protection through dialogue and engagement; provision of physical protection; and establishment of a protective environment. It can be more difficult to observe and identify the impact of subnational conflict-management, political engagement, and peacebuilding dialogues than that of a military or police intervention. However, these non-military interventions can be a vital, and sometimes underutilized, means of addressing violence against civilians. Research and guidance indicate that they are most effective when peacekeepers carry out thorough analysis of the actors involved in conflict, recognize the linkages between national conflicts and local violence, and overcome the artificial distinctions and siloes between political and community engagement to address them.

In South Sudan, UNMISS has developed a program of work that ties together national support to the peace process with subnational engagement

on protection and peacebuilding. The work has helped overcome Mission siloes. More importantly, a range of stakeholders in Yei who spoke with CIVIC identified direct links between this program of peacekeeping work and improvements in their security and environment. Peacekeeping missions are not the only, or even primary, peacebuilding actor in South Sudan—peacebuilding activities are carried out by a variety of humanitarian, development, national, and civil society actors. UNMISS does not have the resources to carry out its activities in every state or county. Nor can dialogue between communities or militaries at a local level compel national actors to implement their political commitments in good faith. However, UNMISS can increase pressure on politicians to move the national peace process forward while—as demonstrated in Yei—addressing shorter-term protection threats at a local level that are tied to broader political and conflict dynamics.

Non-military interventions can be a vital, and sometimes underutilized, means of addressing violence against civilians.

Cover Image:

*An UNMISS mission travels from Juba to
Yei on October 12, 2017.*

UNMISS / Nektarios Markogiannis

1. A/HRC/43/56, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020. "Violence against civilians perpetrated by members of both government forces and armed opposition groups violated article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and provisions of Additional Protocol II, as well as customary international law, and constituted war crimes, including murder, pillage, destruction of property and sexual violence," para. 66 and 67, p. 16.
2. Seven out of the thirteen peacekeeping missions currently authorized by the Security Council have a mandate to protect civilians and personnel serving in these seven missions constitute the vast majority of UN personnel deployed around the world.
3. United Nations, *The Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO)*, June 16, 2015; United Nations, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, 2015; United Nations University-Center for Policy Research (UNU-CPR), *Non-Military Protection of Civilians in UN Peace Operations: Experiences and Lessons*, June 16, 2015; Stimson Center, *Local Conflict, Local Peacekeeping*, January 31, 2017.
4. Severine Autesserre, "The Right Way to Building Peace in Congo," *Foreign Affairs*, April 6, 2017; Natasja Rupesinghe, "Strengthening Community Engagement in United Nations Peace Operations," *ACCORD*, October 19, 2016; Adam Day, "Politics in the Driving Seat: Good Offices, UN Peace Operations, and Modern Conflict," *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, 2019, pp. 68-69.
5. For example, Louisa Lombard outlines the peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic's efforts to promote subnational dialogue had unintended negative consequences on violence in the country, Louisa Lombard, *State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic*, Zed Books, 2016. For information from INGO's on practices that can help ensure peacebuilding work is carried out in a conflict-sensitive way and in accordance with "Do No Harm" principles see CDA collaborative's website, <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/what-we-do/conflict-sensitivity/>, and ALNAP, *Incorporating the Principles of "Do No Harm": How To Take Action Without Causing Harm*, 2018.
6. For example, an evaluation of UNMISS's activities carried out by researchers through the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) in 2019 determined that UNMISS's efforts to address intercommunal tensions contributed to protection of civilians and political stability: EPON, *Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan/UNMISS*, 2019, pp. 71-73.
7. UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), *Policy: The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping*, para. 13.
8. UN DPO, *Policy: The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping*, para. 48.
9. Division of Policy and Best Practices Service, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations- Department of Field Support (DPKO-DFS), *Peacekeeping Practice Note: Community Engagement*, March 2018.
10. Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI), *Civil Affairs and Local Conflict Management in Peace Operations*, 2016; International Peace Institute, *Pursuing Coordination and Integration for the Protection of Civilians*, February 28, 2019, pp. 10-11; Adam Day, "Politics in the Driving Seat: Good Offices, UN Peace Operations, and Modern Conflict," pp. 68-69.
11. See for example, Hannah Wild, Jok Madut Jok, and Ronak Patel, *The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan: How a Traditional Practice became a Tool for Political Violence*, *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 2018; Andy Catley, "Livestock and Livelihoods in South Sudan," *Knowledge, Evidence, and Learning for Development (K4D)*, December 2019.
12. See for example, UN OHCHR, *Indiscriminate Attacks Against Civilians in Southern Unity April-May 2018*, May 2018; Amnesty International, "Do Not Remain Silent: Survivors of Sexual Violence in South Sudan Call for Justice and Reparations," July 24, 2017.
13. Human Rights Watch, "Restrictions of Freedom of Expression and Association: South Sudan Events of 2018," in *World Report 2019*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/south-sudan>.
14. For a summary of these dynamics, see Council of Foreign Relations, "Civil War in South Sudan," *Global Conflict Tracker*, <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>.
15. International Crisis Group, *Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan*, November 4, 2019; Sam Mednick, "After Six Years of War, Will Peace Finally Come to South Sudan?" *Al Jazeera*, February 23, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/6-years-war-peace-finally-south-sudan-200223114919537.html>.
16. Final Report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), UN doc S/2020/342, April 28, 2020, p. 2 and pp. 34-36.
17. A/HRC/43/56, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, para. 61, p.15.
18. A/HRC/43/56, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, para. 61, p.15.
19. ACLED, *Last Man Standing: An Analysis of South Sudan's Elongated Peace Process*, November 2019.
20. USIP, "South Sudan's Transition: Citizen's Perceptions of Peace," March 19, 2020, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/03/south-sudans-transition-citizens-perception-peace>.
21. UN Resolution 2514 (2019), UN doc S/Res/2514, March 12, 2019, para. 8(a)(vi).
22. UN Resolution 2514, para. 8(c)(i).
23. UN Resolution 2514, para. 15.
24. CIVIC, "Let Us Be a Part of It." *Community Engagement by the Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan*, December 2017; GPPI, *Civil Affairs and Local Conflict Management in Peace Operations*.
25. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, *Estimates of Crisis-Attributable Mortality in South Sudan, December 2013-April 2018: A Statistical Analysis*, September 2018.
26. HOFOS are UNMISS's highest ranking civilian officials at the field level, in charge of coordinating the work of all sections in their areas of operations.
27. A deeper explanation of the funding is provided through the website for the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SSR00>.
28. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #25, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #30, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official #42, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019.
29. While greater awareness of the peace process will not necessarily lead to broader support for it, a 2018 study involving 1,147 participants in six locations that was conducted by a group of South Sudanese civil society leaders found that a lack of information about the peace process was strongly correlated with more pessimistic views of the process, while people who felt informed about the process were more likely to feel it would bring lasting peace: South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF), *Revitalizing Peace in South Sudan: Citizen perceptions of the Peace Process*, November 2018.
30. A 2020 paper by the UN Development Program (UNDP) defined social cohesion as "the extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively toward a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals," UNDP, *Strengthening Social Cohesion: Conceptual Framing and Program Implications*, 2020, p. 7. A website outlining UNDP's social cohesion activities in South Sudan identifies the key components of the approach to be "contributing to a reduction and mitigation of community level conflict and insecurity by investing in initiatives that address key drivers of conflict and insecurity" and empowering "communities to identify in an inclusive and participatory manner the roots of conflict in their communities...to effectively prevent, manage, and resolve conflict in a non-violent manner," https://www.ss.undp.org/content/south_sudan/en/home/projects/peace-and-community-cohesion-project.html
31. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #25, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #39, Yei, December 2019.
32. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #62, Juba, December 2019.
33. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #1, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #56, Juba, December 2019.
34. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019.
35. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #1, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #50, Juba, December 2019.
36. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #62, Juba, December 2019. The third tier of POC as outlined in DPO's POC policy includes activities aimed at contributing to a protective environment in the longer-term.
37. Hereward Holland, "South Sudan Hires U.S. Lobbyists to Help Block War Crimes Court: Contract," Reuters, April 29, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-justice/south-sudan-hires-u-s-lobbyists-to-help-block-war-crimes-court-contract-idUSKCNIS51Z2>.
38. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #25, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with government official, #32, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #56, Juba, December 2019.
39. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019; Written correspondence with UNMISS official via email, May 2020.
40. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #50, Juba, December 2019.
41. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #25, Yei, December 2019.
42. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019.
43. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #1, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019.
44. ALNAP, *Incorporating the Principles of "Do No Harm": How To Take Action Without Causing Harm*, 2018; CDA Collaborative, *The "Do No Harm" Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict: A Handbook*, April 2004; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Introduction to Humanitarian Action: A Brief Guide for Resident Coordinators*, October 2015.
45. Written correspondence with UNMISS official, #33, May 2020.
46. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #25, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #42, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019.

47. For a detailed account of the violence against civilians during these military campaigns, see Human Rights Watch, "Soldiers Assume We Are Rebels: Escalating Violence and Abuses in South Sudan's Equatorias, 2017 and Simona Foltyn, "The Unwinnable War," *Vice News*, July 4, 2017, https://news.vice.com/en_ca/article/j5dn58/inside-the-front-lines-of-south-sudans-unwinnable-war.
48. Final Report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), UN doc S/2020/342, April 28, 2020, p. 2 and pp. 16-17.
49. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #1, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #4, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #6, Yei, February 2020.
50. 26 civilians and civil society leaders in Yei who CIVIC interviewed identified this as a major security threat.
51. 13 civilians and civil society leaders in Yei who CIVIC interviewed identified this as a major security threat.
52. 19 civilians and civil society leaders in Yei who CIVIC interviewed identified this as a major security threat.
53. 11 civilians and civil society leaders in Yei who CIVIC interviewed identified this as a major security threat.
54. 22 civilians and civil society leaders in Yei who CIVIC interviewed identified this as a major security threat.
55. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #22, Yei, February 2020.
56. CIVIC interview with government official, #32, Yei, December 2019.
57. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #48, Yei, December 2019.
58. 15 civilians and civil society leaders in Yei who CIVIC interviewed identified this as a major need.
59. CIVIC interview with civilian, #49, Yei, December 2019.
60. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #27, Yei, December 2019.
61. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #4, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #5, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #6, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #7, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #8, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #9, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #10, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #11, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #17, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #18, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #22, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #23, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #24, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Yei, February 2020.
62. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #1, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #4, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #5, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #6, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #7, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #8, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #9, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #16, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #18, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #23, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Yei, February 2020.
63. CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Yei, February 2020.
64. CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #24, Yei, December 2019.
65. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #5, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #23, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Yei, February 2020.
66. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #3, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #6, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #7, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #9, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #10, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #11, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #16, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #17, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #23, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #26, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Yei, February 2020.
67. CIVIC interview with government official, #23, Yei, December 2019.
68. CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Yei, February 2020.
69. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #1, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #3, Yei, February 2020.
70. CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with government official, #5, Yei, February 2020.
71. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #45, Yei, December 2019.
72. CIVIC interview with civilian, #28, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with government official, #32, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #3, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #7, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #8, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #9, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #11, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #16, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #17, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #18, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #24, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Yei, February 2020.
73. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #6, Yei, February 2020.
74. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #13, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #26, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #27, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #45, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #47, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #48, Yei, December 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #1, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #3, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #4, Yei, February 2020; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #7, Yei, February 2020.
75. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #2, Yei, February 2020.
76. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #27, Yei, December 2019.
77. CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #45, Yei, December 2019.
78. CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #19, Juba, December 2019; CIVIC interview with UNMISS civilian official, #51, Juba, December 2019; written correspondence with UNMISS official, #33, May 2020.

ABOUT CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT (CIVIC)

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) is an international organization dedicated to promoting the protection of civilians caught in conflict. CIVIC's mission is to work with armed actors and civilians in conflict to develop and implement solutions to prevent, mitigate, and respond to civilian harm. Our vision is a world where parties to armed conflict recognize the dignity and rights of civilians, prevent civilian harm, protect civilians caught in conflict, and amend harm.

CIVIC was established in 2003 by Marla Ruzicka, a young American activist and humanitarian who advocated on behalf of civilian war victims and their families in Iraq and Afghanistan. Building on her extraordinary legacy, CIVIC now operates in conflict zones throughout the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and South Asia to advance a higher standard of protection for civilians.

At CIVIC, we believe that parties to armed conflict have a responsibility to prevent and address civilian harm. To accomplish this, we assess the causes of civilian harm in particular conflicts, craft practical solutions to address that harm, and advocate for the adoption of new policies and practices that lead to the improved well-being of civilians caught in conflict. Recognizing the power of collaboration, we engage with civilians, governments, militaries, and international and regional institutions to identify and institutionalize strengthened protections for civilians in conflict.

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T +1 202 558 6958

E comms@civiliansinconflict.org

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