



USAID | SOUTH SUDAN

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TRANSITION AND CONFLICT MITIGATION

OVERVIEW

The basis for peace between South Sudan and Sudan remains fragile. Following the secession and founding of the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011, the two governments have been unable to reach agreement on a number of crucial political and economic arrangements, such as the disposition of oil revenues, border demarcation, the status of Abyei, and the movement of goods and people across the new international boundary.

These risks are compounded by other potential causes of internal conflict, driven by competition over scarce resources (increased recently with the arrival of southerners previously living in the north), longstanding ethnic rivalries, and a prevalence of small arms among the civilian population. Youth, in particular, are well organized and well supplied; some operate as criminal gangs without respect for government authorities or traditional leaders. Moreover, the recent influx of returnees from Sudan could further destabilize South Sudan if the absorptive capacity of communities in which they are returning remains low. It is against this backdrop of potential internal instability and the threat of renewed violence that the Government of South Sudan is striving to maintain security while providing essential services to its citizens.



USAID supported youth from cattle camps in Panyijar County, Unity State, who produced high-quality compressed soil blocks for the county headquarters office—giving the youth a productive alternative to cattle raiding and providing infrastructure and visibility for local authorities who can help prevent conflict.

STRATEGY

USAID's transition and conflict mitigation program operates primarily from a fast and flexible grant-making platform, which is designed to take advantage of opportunities to enhance peace and stability in areas of South Sudan where violence is high and government presence is low. Activities support local authorities to extend their reach to remote and volatile areas; productively engage at-risk populations, primarily rural youth, but also youth who have returned to urban and peri-urban areas and are at risk of being caught up in violence; and facilitate dialogue along the South Sudan-Sudan border. These activities form an integral part of the U.S. Government's efforts to strengthen South Sudanese capacity and self-reliance to address the causes and consequences of political conflict, violence, and instability. Current programming targets conflict-prone areas of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Unity, Lakes, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states.

INVESTMENTS

LOCAL GOVERNANCE: Government presence is minimal in many tribal border areas where conflict often occurs. Some areas are completely cut off during the rainy season due to a lack of roads. In order to support the ability of local government to deliver services and security in areas of high instability, USAID is providing authorities with a wide range of resources to monitor, manage, and mitigate conflict. Activities include supporting the distribution of equipment and materials for communication and transport, which ranges from high-frequency radios and satellite phones to motorcycles and fuel. This equipment increases the presence of the local government; facilitates better communication between the state capitals, county commissioners, and isolated villages; and enables the authorities to engage in conflict prevention during the dry season, near migration routes, and between tribal border zones. USAID also sponsors the construction and rehabilitation of county headquarters buildings to improve the working environment for authorities in conflict-prone areas.

USAID recognizes the importance of traditional leaders and supports their role as the backbone of local leadership structures. Support includes the construction and furnishing of buildings for Councils of Traditional

Authority Leaders in numerous states, as well as for county- and village-level traditional authorities. These facilities provide an administrative base, meeting space, and centralized court for chiefs to address community violence and conflict in their jurisdictions, helping traditional authorities reclaim and maintain their role as peacemakers.

South Sudan's secession from Sudan led to the return of thousands of southerners from cities in the North. Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Unity, and Upper Nile have received the majority of returnees, contributing to growing demands for basic services, job opportunities, and land allocation. USAID is piloting a land survey initiative in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Unity, and Upper Nile that will strengthen the capacity of the State Ministries of Physical Infrastructure to survey and demarcate plots of land in urban centers. By providing the ministries with survey equipment, the transition and conflict mitigation program is helping these states to more quickly assign land to returnees, thus addressing potential conflict over land and supporting longer-term urban planning and development. USAID coordinates these efforts with the State Ministries of Local Government, State Ministries of Physical Infrastructure, and State Directors for Peace, and provides direct support to county commissioners, traditional authorities, and the Bureau of Community Security and Small Arms Control at the state level. As the states' capacity to mitigate and manage conflict is strengthened, and security gains are made, USAID will build upon this progress with broader development initiatives.

YOUTH TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT: Without reliable access to employment or education opportunities, youth in zones of high conflict remain caught in a culture of war, accustomed to cattle raiding and banditry as one of the few limited economic opportunities available. USAID's transition and conflict mitigation program enhances opportunities for at-risk youth to engage in productive economic activities, training and education, as well as sports and other cross-ethnic social activities. Activities include training and providing youth with block-making equipment, involving youth in labor-intensive public works projects, establishing youth centers in county headquarters, and helping youth establish for-profit companies. In collaboration with the Directorate of Youth and Sports, USAID is also piloting a basketball initiative that seeks to engage youth in sports activities, enhance inter-county youth interaction, and promote non-violence and tolerance.

CROSS-BORDER DIALOGUE AND ENGAGEMENT IN KEY BORDER AREAS: Spanning almost 2,000 kilometers, the South Sudan-Sudan border region is plagued by complicated, inter-communal conflict, as well as sensitive cross-border tensions. Despite South Sudan's independence, shared natural resources, trade, and the seasonal flow of migratory pastoral populations continue to bind border communities in competition and cooperation. In an effort to ensure discussion on matters impacting human security and peaceful coexistence between local communities and South Sudan and Sudan more broadly, USAID supports initiatives along the border that bring together key stakeholders to work toward greater economic, social, security, and development integration, such as the Border Governors' Forum.

The seasonal migration of nomadic groups into South Sudan heightens competition and confrontation between host communities and pastoralists over access to limited natural resources. In order to reduce conflict between these communities, USAID supports grassroots dialogue and helps increase access to scarce natural resources on both sides of the border. During the 2010 migration, for example, USAID supported the clearance of sedimentary blockages along the Bahr el Ghazal and Bahr el Arab rivers in an effort to increase access to water in Unity State, reducing the need for migration. Across the border in Southern Kordofan, USAID supported the rehabilitation of water points in an effort to slow nomadic groups' migration and help alleviate competition over scarce resources. USAID will continue to identify means to build linkages between key border area peace advocates and communities by supporting tangible projects, which may include courts and peace markets, as well as key political processes that can yield negotiated agreements on outstanding issues in the border areas.

USAID investments in protected areas and wildlife conservation support natural resource and conflict mitigation objectives. This program is targeted to ensure sustainable management of livestock while protecting wildlife. Rural communities and groups, especially young pastoralist men, susceptible to involvement in unrest, stand to benefit most. The program's engagement with communities and government is helping to improve land use planning and zoning processing. This interaction also assists in identifying potential flashpoints for conflict, including disputes over grazing areas or land encroachment.