



## Pendulum swings

### The rise and fall of insurgent militias in South Sudan

Armed groups opposed to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) have been a feature of the landscape in South Sudan since the civil war era, in which the SPLA's hegemony was under constant challenge. Other armed groups competed with the mainstream SPLA for territorial control and opposing visions and objectives. Khartoum's support to anti-SPLA militias was a key government strategy in the later stages of the war.

In the post-war period, Southern militia activity has waxed and waned. When the Small Arms Survey last examined them in depth, in November 2011, many groups were going through realignments. Key commanders had either signed agreements with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and were negotiating the terms of integration for their forces, or had been killed or were under house arrest. Only three sets of forces—those led by former commanders of Peter Gadet, as well as the Shilluk commanders Alyuak Ogot Akol and Johnson Olony—were still active.<sup>1</sup> George Athor's rebellion was dormant but his forces still posed a threat.

By mid-2013, a number of new developments had occurred. David Yau Yau, who signed an agreement with Juba in June 2011, re-defected the following year and significantly expanded his new insurgency. A number of Gadet's commanders fought on until they accepted amnesty in April 2013. Athor was killed in December 2012, and most of his forces handed themselves over for integration into

the SPLA. Other militias moved northwards, became embroiled in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile conflicts, and some returned to integrate. Gordon Kong's South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF) and affiliated militias remained in armed opposition, as did smaller factions, but did not pose significant threats.

This *Issue Brief* reviews Southern insurgent activities in 2012–13, focusing on groups' strength, goals, achievements, and disposition following a renewed offer of amnesty to the rebels from GRSS President Salva Kiir in April 2013. Among its findings:

- Southern rebel insurgencies have decreased significantly in 2012–13. As of early October 2013, only David Yau Yau's militia remains active. But, while most commanders have accepted President Salva Kiir's blanket amnesty, it remains to be seen whether the resulting agreements will be fully implemented and the forces fully integrated.
- Yau Yau's decision to re-defect in 2012 was influenced by SPLA abuses against the Murle during its civilian disarmament campaign in Pibor county in mid-2012, his dissatisfaction with his initial amnesty package, and ongoing patronage from Khartoum.
- While the forces of Peter Gadet and Gatluak Gai have been fully integrated into the SPLA, surrendered forces formerly under Yau Yau, Athor, and Bapiny Monituel continue to await integration, some since as early as 2011. Long-term failure to

integrate former insurgent forces is a risk factor for renewed rebellion.

- Southern insurgent groups that had moved to rear bases in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, Sudan, have accepted President Kiir's amnesty offer, returned to South Sudan, and are negotiating the terms for their integration. Khartoum's pledge to eliminate assistance to them, following an agreement with Juba, appears to be a factor in their surrender.
- The underlying conditions that have influenced insurgents in Greater Upper Nile continue, including the political marginalization of the Shilluk and Murle, SPLA abuses of civilians, and issues related to land and territory.
- As recently as August 2013, the Government of Sudan (GoS) was continuing to aid Yau Yau's militia, and providing them with arms, despite official denials.<sup>2</sup>
- Yau Yau continues to arm Murle youths, and remains a primary source of arms for civilians in South Sudan. Other vectors include supply from the SPLA for 'community policing', the recirculation of arms after disarmament processes,<sup>3</sup> and the capture of Hejlij in April 2012, in which many civilians looted stocks.<sup>4</sup>

### Insurgent militias

#### George Athor's SSDM/A

George Athor established the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army (SSDM/A) after he failed in his bid

Table 1 South Sudanese militia commanders as of October 2013

Commander	Force name/ affiliation	Location	Status	Notes
David Yau Yau	SSDM/A-Cobra	Pibor county, Jonglei	Active	Was field commander for Athor; accepted amnesty in September 2011; re-defected in April 2012 and went to Khartoum. Reportedly located in Manyading in October 2013.
James Arezen Kong Kong	SSDM/A-Cobra	Pibor county, Jonglei	Active	1st in command under Yau Yau; former Pibor Defence Forces (PDF) and then SPLA. Reportedly located in Fertait in October 2013.
Adoch Agul	SSDM/A-Cobra	Pibor county, Jonglei	Active	2nd in command under Yau Yau; former PDF and then SAF; sent by SAF to join Yau Yau in August 2012; one of his deputies, Peter Bureti, participated in violent attacks in Gumuruk area.
Gayin Ngarubin Torokon	SSDM/A-Cobra	Pibor county, Jonglei	Active	Former PDF; integrated into SAF; sent by SAF to join Yau Yau in August 2012.
Longaben Wayah	SSDM/A-Cobra	Pibor county, Jonglei	Active	Former PDF; integrated into SAF; sent by SAF to join Yau Yau in August 2012.
James Lopia	SSDM/A-Cobra	Pibor county, Jonglei	Active	Has about 250 armed soldiers; in July 2013 he was reported to be around Fertait. <sup>6</sup>
Johnson Olony	SSDM/A-Upper Nile	Fashoda county, Upper Nile	Negotiating integration	Was one of Robert Gwang's deputies; blamed for a series of attacks on Kaka town; negotiating integration in Juba, most of his 3,000 men wait in Fashoda county.
Alyuak Ogot Akol	SSDM/A-Upper Nile	Some 360 men spread across Upper Nile and South Kordofan (Kuek Magenes, Ruwat, Umjalala, Umrawat, Hamra, Abu Jepeah)	Accepted amnesty	Former commissioner of Manyo County, dismissed in 2008 and defected; allegedly linked to SPLM-DC. In October 2013, 250 of his men turned themselves in to the SPLA in Manyo county, Upper Nile. <sup>7</sup>
Gordon Kong	SSDF	His troops are in Bwat, Tadamun county, Blue Nile	Reportedly accepted amnesty, then reneged	His troops make frequent forays into Upper Nile; his troops may have dwindled; many came in with John Duit.
Muntu Mutallah Abdallah	SSDF affiliate	Co-located with Gordon Kong's troops in Bwat, Blue Nile	Active	Ethnic Brun; former commissioner of Maban; began his insurgency after 2010 elections.
Mohamed Chol Amir	SSDF affiliate	Co-located with troops of Gordon Kong and Muntu Abdallah in Bwat, Blue Nile	Active but may be considering integration	Ethnic Dinka; former commissioner of Renk.
Kamal Loma <sup>8</sup>	SSDF affiliate	Co-located with Gordon Kong's troops in Bwat, Blue Nile	Active and recruiting	Ethnic Maban; SPLA command in Upper Nile were not aware of this group.
James Bogo	SSDF affiliate	Bwat, Blue Nile	Active and recruiting	Ethnic Shilluk; working with Kamal Loma.
Bapiny Monituel	SSLM/A	Now in Juba negotiating with SPLM/A	Accepted amnesty	Bul Nuer from Mayom; took over leadership of SSLA in September 2012. His forces are awaiting integration in Mayom.
James Gai Yoach	SSLM/A	Now in Khartoum; some 300 of his men are in South Kordofan/Unity border areas	Arrested in Khartoum in September 2012 with some of his men	A Jagei Nuer, he was leader of SSLM/A after Gadet's surrender to SPLA, with Bapiny Monituel as his deputy. Was active in South Kordofan, Unity, and had forces in Upper Nile.
Karlos Kuol	SSLM/A	Was in Khartoum, now in Juba negotiating with the SPLM/A	Accepted amnesty	A Bul Nuer from Mayom, he was Gadet's 2nd in command; he stayed in Khartoum when Gadet joined the SPLA. Puljang commanded his forces in South Kordofan.
Matthew Puljang	SSLM/A	Was based in Kilo 23, now in Mayom	Accepted amnesty	A Bul Nuer from Mayom, now awaiting integration
Bipen Machar	SSLM/A	Was based in Kilo 23, now in Mayom	Accepted amnesty	A Bul Nuer from Mayom, came into Mayom with 3,000 men awaiting integration.

for governor of Jonglei state in 2010.<sup>5</sup> Largely through his access to military support from Khartoum and Eritrea, he was able to attract other dissenting commanders, including Gatluak Gai in Unity, David Yau Yau in Pibor county, Jonglei, and Shilluk commanders Johnson Olony and Alyuak Ogot in Upper Nile. Athor signed a ceasefire agreement in January 2011, but talks broke down and violence re-erupted between the SSDM/A and SPLA the following month. Yau Yau and Gai signed separate agreements in June and July, respectively, but Gai was later murdered, reportedly by his deputy, though it is widely believed the SPLA was responsible. Yau Yau was awaiting integration into the SPLA in Juba until he re-defected to Khartoum in June 2012 and resumed insurgent activity in Jonglei a month later (see Cobra faction, below).<sup>9</sup>

Athor was killed on 19 December 2011, reportedly while entering South Sudan from Uganda, and Peter Kuol Chol Awan became SSDM/A commander-in-chief.<sup>10</sup> In February 2012 the GRSS announced that the SSDM/A had signed a peace deal,

and on 8 March Awan travelled to Juba and surrendered to the SPLA. But Olony denied that Awan represented all SSDM/A factions, and his SSDM/A-Upper Nile group remained active along the Sudan–South Sudan border—operating out of South Kordofan into Upper Nile throughout 2012 and into the first half of 2013 (see Upper Nile faction, below).<sup>11</sup> In addition, there were reports of potentially hostile remnants of Athor’s troops in Pigi county, Jonglei, as late as August 2013, but they do not appear to constitute a significant threat.

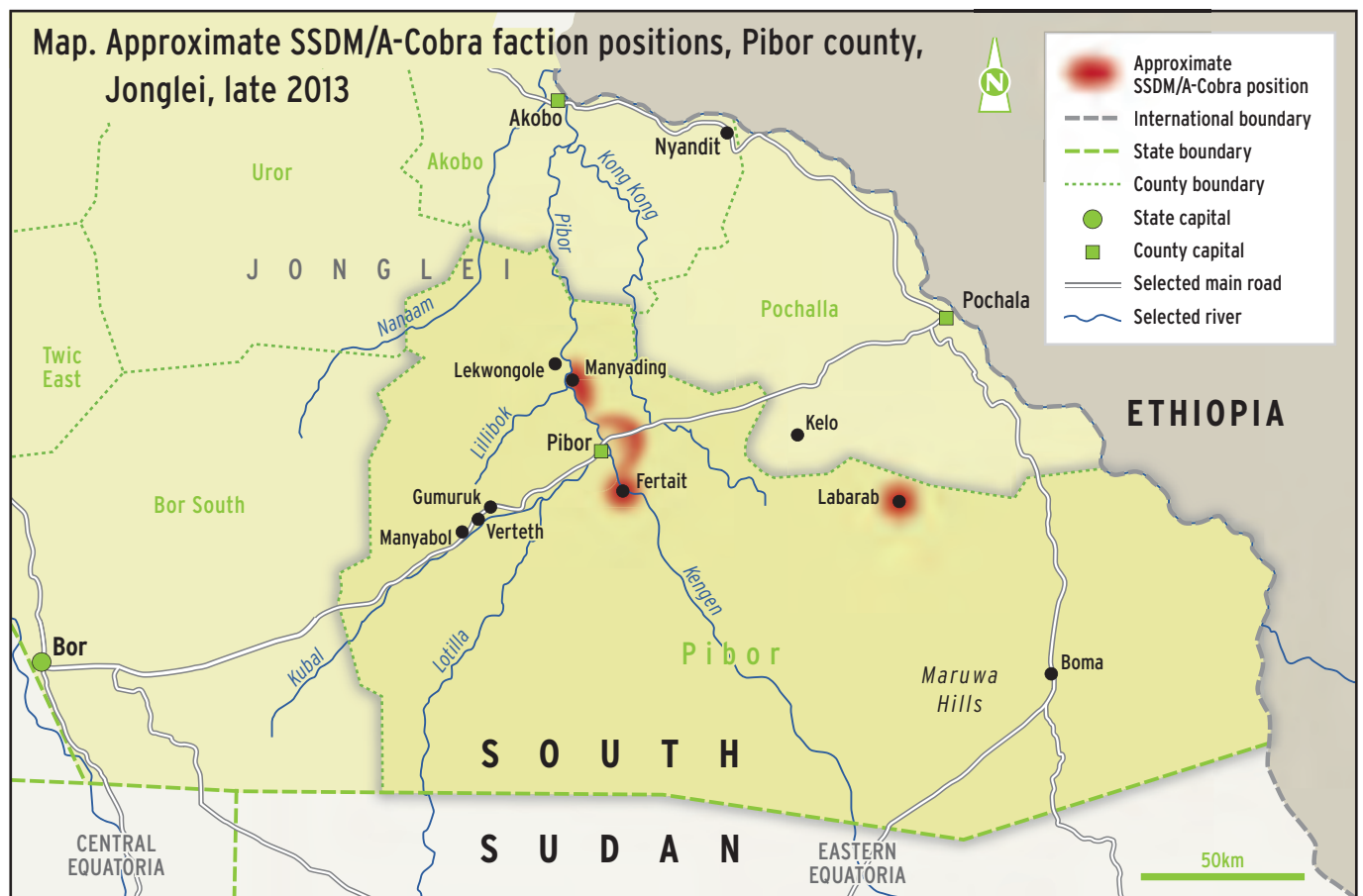
In late September 2013, some 1,300 of Athor’s men were in Oinykibol training centre in Eastern Equatoria. They had been disarmed, had completed training, and were awaiting formal integration.<sup>12</sup> The remaining active SSDM/A factions are discussed in further detail below.

### SSDM/A-Cobra faction

The name ‘Cobra faction’ emerged in mid-2013 to differentiate Yau Yau’s second rebellion from the wider SSDM/A.<sup>13</sup> Yau Yau, a Murle civilian

from the Ngarotti clan and a leader in the Bothonya age set,<sup>14</sup> first rebelled after the 2010 elections, when he failed to gain a seat in the state legislature.<sup>15</sup> He later claimed his main motivation to rebel was the underdevelopment and marginalization of Pibor county, and the lack of local power-sharing with the Bor government.<sup>16</sup> In his first rebellion, Yau Yau had comparatively few troops, with about 200 receiving presidential amnesty when he surrendered in 2011.<sup>17</sup> After the amnesty, Yau Yau and his commanders were given accommodation in Juba as they awaited their integration package from the SPLA, while the main body of his troops were taken to Ngacigak Military College in Eastern Equatoria, and later to Mapel in Western Bahr el Ghazal for training.<sup>18</sup>

In April 2012, Yau Yau requested medical leave and went to Nairobi for treatment. From there he proceeded to Khartoum where he remained until July 2012.<sup>19</sup> It is unclear whether it was his intention to defect to Khartoum when he left Juba, or whether he only made contact with Khartoum in



Nairobi. Some of Athor's contacts in Khartoum currently support Yau Yau's Cobra faction, indicating there may have been prior contact. Many in the Murle community, including one of Yau Yau's former commanders, James Kuburin, stated that his defection caught them all by surprise.<sup>20</sup> The only person who seemed aware that Yau Yau was intending to re-defect was his current second in command, James Arezen Kong Kong. While Yau Yau was in Nairobi, Kong Kong sold the vehicles given by the GRSS to the surrendered Yau Yau delegation and travelled to Kampala, where he liaised with the Sudanese embassy and was transported to Khartoum to join Yau Yau.<sup>21</sup> In July 2012, Yau Yau, along with about 41 others, including Kong Kong and a number of SAF commanders who had previously been affiliated with Sultan Ismail Konyi's (Murle) Pibor Defence Forces during the civil war,<sup>22</sup> returned to Pibor county by foot through Blue Nile state.<sup>23</sup> Pibor county remains the group's home base (see Map).

Yau Yau's motivations for his second defection were both personal and political. According to the SPLA, he was dissatisfied with his integration package, including his rank. SPLA Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai stated that, while the issue of his rank had not been settled at the time of his re-defection, there were indications that he was not going to be offered the rank of Major General, his rank within Athor's rebellion, and that Yau Yau saw this as a 'demotion.'<sup>24</sup> The political reasons offered for his second defection include the SPLA's abuses during the March–October 2012 disarmament campaign in Jonglei, particularly in Pibor county,<sup>25</sup> the political marginalization of the Murle community at the state level, and the prevalence of corruption and poor governance in the new nation. He has also claimed to be fighting for a separate state for the Murle.<sup>26</sup>

In April 2013, a new spokesman for the faction, Col. Peter Konyi Kubrin,<sup>27</sup> released a manifesto stating that their main objective was 'the establishment

of a free, just, democratic and decentralized system of governance and a social contract based on the free will and popular participation of all the people of South Sudan.'<sup>28</sup> The so-called Jebel Boma Declaration that followed the manifesto outlined their grievances for the insurgency: ethnic inequality, corruption, impunity, and the lack of access to justice. It called for the dissolution of the current government and the establishment of a Transitional Revolutionary Government, to govern until elections in 2015, and the federalization of the nation.<sup>29</sup> After the announcement of the presidential amnesty later the same month, and the subsequent peace deal between the SSLM/A and the GRSS, Kubrin circulated an email stating that not all the SSDM/A were involved in negotiations and that, 'There is no peace with the regime in Juba unless it is dissolved. Any peace that is acceptable to us is the one mediated by the AU, UN, and USA.'<sup>30</sup>

#### **Command structure and military assets.**

Yau Yau's command structure includes his deputy, Kong Kong, plus three former SAF commanders—Adoch Agul, Gayin Ngarubin Torokon, and Longaben Wayah—who came with him from Khartoum (see Table 1). James Kuburin, who was also in his command structure, surrendered to the SPLA with 280 soldiers on 4 December 2012.<sup>31</sup> In Khartoum, Yau Yau has liaised with the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), which has reportedly coordinated airdrops of weapons to the Cobra forces in Pibor.<sup>32</sup> There are also unconfirmed reports of an Eritrean connection for arms, but the Small Arms Survey has not confirmed a link.<sup>33</sup>

It is difficult to estimate Yau Yau's current troop strength, as much of it is made up of Murle youths who do not stay with the troops consistently; their primary motivation is accessing weapons for their own needs. While there are estimates that he can command a force of 3,000–6,000 youths and rebels,<sup>34</sup> observers who have been in his camp have estimated a core of 500–1,000 men.<sup>35</sup> Initial support from the Murle community waned in late 2012, as

Yau Yau's new commanders were more violent with local community members whom they found insufficiently supportive of the rebellion.<sup>36</sup> In addition, there were reports that a large number of the Lango age set<sup>37</sup> had dropped out of the rebellion on 30 September because of conflict with the Bothonya age set, of which Yau Yau is a member.<sup>38</sup> Adoch Agul, in particular, had been reported to lead violent attacks on the Gumuruk area because of the lack of support from the community. However, overall, Yau Yau's forces have directed relatively limited violence against Murle civilians, other than the fighting between the age sets and those caught in the crossfire.<sup>39</sup>

Few of Yau Yau's initial troops went with him in the second defection. Of his commanders, only Kong Kong joined him in Khartoum. The remainder of his command structure in Juba, including James Kuburin, were arrested shortly after Yau Yau's second defection and put in prison in Yei in June 2012. On 16 August 2012, fourteen of them escaped and travelled to Pibor, but seven were killed and one recaptured en route. While in Khartoum, Yau Yau was joined by 41 former SAF/Ismael Konyi militiamen who travelled with him in July–August 2012 back to Pibor. One was killed en route.<sup>40</sup> There have been a number of reports of Toposa, Anyuak, Shilluk, and Nuer fighting alongside Yau Yau's forces, although this has not been confirmed. In October 2012 a Lou Nuer SPLA commander, Maj. Gen. Simon Gatwech Dual, was arrested because of alleged connections to Yau Yau.<sup>41</sup>

**Areas of operation.** Yau Yau's area of operation is primarily within Pibor county, although his group does move into other counties of Jonglei, particularly those neighbouring Pibor, and there have been reports of activities across the border in Ethiopia.<sup>42</sup> Most informants report that Yau Yau does not actively control any area, but moves around key locations.<sup>43</sup> He began his second insurgency on the Nanaam river around Kariak, then moved opposite Likuangole to Tiyara, in November



2012, and finally to around Kelo. He was briefly displaced from Kelo during the March–April 2013 SPLA offensive, but then returned in May. While attacks on bordering counties, particularly Akobo county, and into Ethiopia, are frequently blamed on Yau Yau’s troops or youths aligned with him, they remain unconfirmed.

Pibor was reportedly initially divided up under different commands with Adoch Agul in Gumuruk, Yau Yau in Likuangole area, James Kong Kong in Nanaam, and Kuburin around Pibor and Verteth.<sup>44</sup> In January 2013, however, it was reported that the Cobra troops were converging on Kelo, in Pochalla. The migration appears to have been motivated by an anticipated arms drop from Khartoum, which allegedly happened on 3–4 February,<sup>45</sup> and the annual migration to this area to access the grazing around Jom.

In March 2013, Yau Yau’s troops were again splintering into smaller groups and moving throughout Pibor county, mainly because of a new SPLA offensive, although much of the fighting was a result of the SPLA targeting Murle cattle camps.<sup>46</sup> Yau Yau’s forces were focused mainly on the east part of the county—around Boma town and Maruwa Hills—and on the border with Pochalla, although there were reports of activity in other parts of the county including around Pibor and Gumuruk towns. In April there was an increase of activity, particularly around Gumuruk. Throughout the county, clashes between the SPLA and Yau Yau’s troops rose abruptly, with high SPLA casualties and reports of a breakdown of discipline among rank and file. An unknown number of SPLA reportedly deserted, and violations against civilians increased in number.<sup>47</sup> In Kapoeta alone, there were 700–800 SPLA desertions, and other deserting SPLA units have been blamed for violent robberies in Bor South and Eastern Equatoria state.<sup>48</sup>

On 9 April, armed and uniformed men ambushed a UN convoy travelling to Pibor on the Bor–Gumuruk road; 12 deaths and 9 injuries resulted, and UN peacekeeping military equipment

was looted.<sup>49</sup> The SPLA blamed Yau Yau’s militia, but an SSDM/A press statement denied responsibility and called on the UN to conduct a thorough investigation,<sup>50</sup> which is under way.

On 2 May 2013, Kubrin released a statement urging NGOs and civilians to leave Kapoeta and Pibor because the SSDM/A was about to attack them.<sup>51</sup> In the last days of April, Yau Yau’s troops captured the Maruwa Hills, and on 6 May he announced the capture of Boma town, which the SPLA initially denied but later acknowledged.<sup>52</sup> On 13 May a second press release stated that the militia was about to enter and capture Pibor town, and that two battalions were on their way to attack Bor town, the state capital.<sup>53</sup> After the SPLA announced that it had recaptured Boma town on 18 May, Kubrin responded by circulating an email stating that they had only captured Iti town, 15 km away from Boma. Both NGOs and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) visited Boma, confirming that it was recaptured by two battalions of SPLA commandos.<sup>54</sup> There have been reports of a number of extrajudicial killings of Murle in Boma town, including the killing of Murle SPLA Brig. Gen. Peeno.<sup>55</sup> The payam administration in Boma has since been removed from the line of reporting to the Pibor commissioner, and the payam administrator and deputy administrator positions have been given to members of the Lou Nuer community, leaving the Murle community feeling that they are being pushed out of Boma payam.<sup>56</sup>

In June, it was reported that Yau Yau’s troops split, with some troops heading towards Kelo (south-west Pochalla) and others to Opot (north-west Pochalla). The Pibor county commissioner also reported that Yau Yau had set up a new headquarters 50 km east of Pibor in Lelilim along the Kong Kong river. As of late October 2013, however, Yau Yau and his inner circle were believed to be in Manyading, about three hours’ walk from Likuangole.<sup>57</sup> James Azaren Kong Kong heads up the operations in Fertait. Other forces are based in Labarab.<sup>58</sup>

**Weapons and ammunition.** Yau Yau’s first insurgency was supported with weapons supplied from Sudan to George Athor, and there is strong evidence that his second insurgency has profited from military hardware supplied direct from Sudan. The Small Arms Survey’s analysis of weapons in the hands of defecting SSDM/A members and those captured by the SPLA found that they are identical to those in the stockpiles of SAF stockpiles and other Southern militias (see Box 1). Defecting commanders also detailed numerous airdrops of military equipment into Pibor county after August 2012.<sup>59</sup> It appears that the SPLA have lost large quantities of weapons to Yau Yau’s forces, as well.

Small Arms Survey tracing reports in April and July 2013 described weapons from Yau Yau’s militia:<sup>60</sup> Chinese Type 56 and Type 56-1 assault rifles with ammunition, Chinese CQ (M16 pattern) assault rifles with Chinese 5.56 × 45 mm ammunition, Sudanese RPG-7 pattern rocket launchers manufactured at the A30 Yarmouk Industrial Complex in Khartoum, Chinese Type 80 7.62 × 54R mm general-purpose machine guns with ammunition, including Sudanese 7.62 × 54R mm ammunition. There have been reports that additional arms were dropped as recently as 8 August 2013.<sup>61</sup>

## SSDM/A-Upper Nile faction

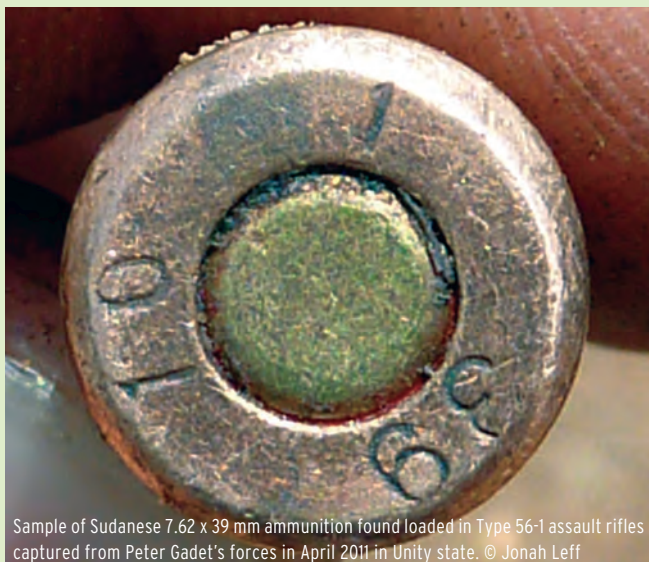
Johnson Olony, a Shilluk from Panyakang county in Upper Nile, was one of Robert Gwang’s deputies until Gwang integrated into the SPLA in late 2010.<sup>64</sup> The Shilluk insurgencies were initially driven by disputes between the Shilluk community and the government of Upper Nile over land and county boundaries, and were galvanized by the 2010 disarmament campaign in which the SPLA 7<sup>th</sup> Division reportedly committed large-scale abuses. Initially, Olony and his men spent a number of months waiting for integration into the SPLA in Owachi near 7<sup>th</sup> Division headquarters, but the process fell apart in March 2011 after one of Olony’s men accused an SPLA soldier

## Box 1 Common weapons among Southern insurgents

During the period 2011-13, the Small Arms Survey conducted several field visits to inspect weapons with South Sudanese militia groups that had either defected or accepted amnesty, and to view equipment that the SPLA had captured from insurgents during battle. Although the typology of weapons within each group's stockpile is fairly diverse, a comparison across groups reveals that their weapon holdings are strikingly similar. In addition, arms and ammunition in the hands of Southern insurgents correlate with weapons that rebel forces have captured from SAF in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. Close inspection, interviews with defectors, and comparison of thousands of samples across Sudan and South Sudan's conflict arenas reveals that large quantities of mostly Chinese, Iranian, and Sudanese manufactured weapons were supplied from Sudan's security forces to Southern insurgent groups. The following is a selection of commonly held weapons across insurgent groups in South Sudan.

**Chinese assault rifles.** The most common weapon among insurgents is the assault rifle. In 2011 and 2012, the Small Arms Survey documented hundreds of brand new Chinese-produced Type 56-1 assault rifles with the SSLM/A (Gadet) and SSDM/A (Athor) as well as with Lou Nuer militia that Athor supplied to bolster his fight against the SPLA.<sup>62</sup> At the end of 2012 and throughout 2013, Yau Yau's forces, as well as members of the SSLM/A (Bapiny) and Johnson Olony's militia that accepted amnesty in April and June 2013, respectively, appeared newly armed with Chinese produced CQ rifles (copy of the M16). In all cases, the CQs' factory marks and serial numbers had been systematically removed by milling to deliberately conceal their origin. Further, the rifles were loaded with a single variety of Chinese manufactured 5.56 x 45 mm ammunition produced by factory 71 in 2008. This was the first time this type of rifle and ammunition were observed in Sudan and South Sudan. Since this rifle and ammunition calibre is extremely rare in South Sudan, Khartoum may have supplied the CQs as a way of controlling the ammunition supply to its benefactors.

**Sudanese and Chinese ammunition.** There are dozens of varieties of 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition (for AK-pattern assault rifles) circulating in Sudan and South Sudan. However, the Small Arms Survey has identified a few makes that are particularly prolific among Southern insurgents. The two most common producers of observed 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition with militia in South Sudan are Sudan and China. In particular, the Survey has observed thousands of rounds of Sudanese manufactured 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition with the headstamp '1\_39\_10' (see photo), with '1' likely denoting the batch number, '39' representing the case length, and '10' the year of production. This variety of ammunition was uniformly contained in more than 150 Type 56-1 assault rifles that the SPLA captured from the SSLM/A (Gadet) in April 2011, and was present among equipment the SPLA captured from George Athor earlier the same year. The following



Sample of Sudanese 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition found loaded in Type 56-1 assault rifles captured from Peter Gadet's forces in April 2011 in Unity state. © Jonah Leff



Sample of Chinese 7.62 x 54R ammunition captured from George Athor's forces in early 2011 in Jonglei state. © Jonah Leff.

year, SSDF forces under the leadership of John Duit handed over identical rounds after crossing into South Sudan from Blue Nile. The Small Arms Survey has observed similar varieties of 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition with different batch numbers and production years with other Southern militias as well as among weapons that the SPLM-North (SPLM-N) captured from SAF in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

A second commonly held variety of ammunition among Southern insurgents is Chinese-manufactured factory 945 7.62 x 54R mm (for PKM machine gun), manufactured from 2009 to 2011 (see photo). SAF has also employed large quantities of this type of ammunition in Darfur,<sup>63</sup> and the SPLM-N have captured significant quantities of it from SAF in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SPLA tend to use older varieties of 7.62 x 54R mm ammunition from former Warsaw Pact countries as well as some older Chinese varieties. The Small Arms Survey first observed factory 945 ammunition with equipment that the SPLA captured from Athor's forces in early 2011. The ammunition was contained in Sudanese packaging, revealing that Sudan had likely imported and repackaged it. Following the SSDM/A's acceptance of amnesty under the leadership of Peter Kuol Chol Awan, it handed over large quantities of ammunition purportedly supplied by Khartoum, including factory 945 7.62 x 54R mm ammunition with markings on the box indicating that China sold the ammunition to Sudan in 2010. The same variety of ammunition was present with the SSLM/A after their acceptance of amnesty and with weapons that the SPLA collected and captured from Yau Yau's forces in 2013.

**Iranian and Sudanese RPG-7 launchers.** The majority of RPG-7 launchers employed by Southern insurgents are manufactured in Iran and Sudan. The Small Arms Survey has documented three main types of launchers: 1) Sudanese-produced launchers that closely resemble Soviet-type RPG-7 launchers; 2) Iranian-manufactured RPG-7 launchers with distinct grips; 3) hybrid launchers, probably assembled in Khartoum, featuring both Iranian and Sudanese characteristics. The Small Arms Survey documented these launchers with the SSLM/A (Gadet) in 2011 and 2013, the SSDM/A (Athor) in 2011 and 2012, a SAF Joint Integrated Unit in 2011, the SSDM/A (Yau Yau) in 2013, and with Johnson Olony's forces in 2013.

The assault rifles, small arms ammunition, and RPG-7s described here represent a small sample of the commonly held weapons in service with Southern insurgent groups. Based on a thorough analysis of these holdings in comparison with SAF's stocks, and numerous testimonies from former militia members, it is evident that Sudan has played a key role in supplying Southern insurgent commanders.

Source: Leff and LeBrun, forthcoming.



of raping his wife, and Olony's men demanded justice.<sup>65</sup> In the ensuing battle, 14 were killed. Olony took his men across the border into South Kordofan and aligned with the SSDM/A under Athor.<sup>66</sup> After Athor's death in December 2011 and Awan's peace deal in early 2012, Olony claimed overall leadership of the SSDM/A.<sup>67</sup> The government repeatedly alleges that the Shilluk militia are aligned with, and receive support from, the SPLM-Democratic Change (SPLM-DC) political party, which SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol denies.<sup>68</sup>

In late 2012 and early 2013, Olony's troops had made few forays into South Sudan, and it was reported by a number of sources that they were being used by Sudan to fight the SPLM-N in South Kordofan.<sup>69</sup> Although Olony initially publically rejected the presidential amnesty in April 2013, and released a statement that he would never surrender to the 'SPLM Regime', in May 2013 the Shilluk king issued an ultimatum to Olony to accept the amnesty. Olony then requested pardon from the king for killing a Shilluk chief in 2010, which was granted. In early June 2013 Olony officially accepted the presidential amnesty and moved with 3,000 troops into Upper Nile. The majority of his troops remain in Kodok in Fashoda county, where as of October 2013 they await integration into the SPLA. Olony is currently in Juba where he is negotiating integration terms, but deliberations are moving quite slowly. In a 6 June statement, Olony stated that he had received support from Khartoum in his insurgent activities,<sup>70</sup> and a Small Arms Survey inspection in July of his weapons in Kodok confirmed this.<sup>71</sup>

#### **Command structure and military assets.**

Olony has also been closely linked to Alyuak Ogot Akol, the former commissioner of Manyo county, and the two militia were co-located for much of the time.<sup>72</sup> In June 2013, three months before Ogot accepted amnesty, his men attacked Wadakona in northern Upper Nile (see Table 2).

**Areas of control.** Throughout 2012 and into 2013, Olony's troops mainly

operated in Fashoda and Manyo counties of Upper Nile, but were reported to move freely within South Kordofan, as well.<sup>73</sup> In early 2012 they were co-located with Matthew Puljang and Bapiny's SSLM/A troops (see below) in Kilo 23 between Hejljij and Kharasana, where their troops reportedly received training and were provisioned by Khartoum.<sup>74</sup> A number of sources reported that Olony's militia had participated in the cross-border skirmishes along the South Kordofan border, and that he had occupied Jaw with SAF in early 2012.<sup>75</sup> However, by August 2012 there were divisions within the SSLM/A and they moved to the Upper Nile border, where they remained until accepting amnesty.<sup>76</sup>

#### **SSDF and affiliates**

Gordon Kong, leader of the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) in Eastern Upper Nile, re-emerged in 2011 after a few years of dormancy.<sup>77</sup> Two of his commanders, Maj. Gen. John Duit Yiech and Brig. Gen. James Duoth Lam, defected to the SPLA in May 2012 with 250 of Kong's troops, although the SSDF disputes that figure.<sup>78</sup> Kong, who is now advanced in age and in poor health, has been based in Khartoum, while his troops have been co-located and coordinating with a number of other commanders along the Upper Nile/Blue Nile border. It is unclear what influence he still retains over his former militiamen.

In April 2013, Kong was one of the six militia leaders offered presidential amnesty. The SSDF was listed among the groups who had taken the amnesty in the 26 April joint press release,<sup>79</sup> and Kong's acceptance was publicized in late September,<sup>80</sup> but according to a South Sudanese national security source, he has reneged.<sup>81</sup> In May 2013 it was reported that the NISS had arrested Kong in Khartoum and he was being held under house arrest, allegedly because of engaging in peace talks with South Sudan.<sup>82</sup> The status of his troops remains unclear.

**Command structure and military assets.** Kong's troops have been co-located

with a number of commanders along the eastern border of Upper Nile in Blue Nile, including Muntu Mutallah Abdallah, Mohamed Chol Amir, Kamal Loma, and James Bogo.<sup>83</sup> It is unclear how they fall within the SSDF command structure, but both the SPLM-N and SPLA officers in Upper Nile report that they are all coordinating closely with SAF in Blue Nile against the SPLM-N and along the Upper Nile border.

Muntu Abdallah, from the Brun ethnic group in Maban county, was the commissioner there until 2010, when he started an insurgency after the elections.<sup>84</sup> Ivo Monto, the Upper Nile deputy governor, who is also from Maban, started peace talks with Muntu Abdallah in May 2012.<sup>85</sup> Although they started well and meetings were held with UNMISS facilitation and the militia were based close to the SPLA, the talks stopped and the militia group disappeared back into Blue Nile, with no reason given.

Kamal Loma was Muntu Abdallah's deputy when he was with the National Congress Party in Maban, and continues to have close ties to his militia.<sup>86</sup> His troops are co-located with James Bogo's in Blue Nile.<sup>87</sup> According to the SPLM-N they have been assigned by SAF to fight with the 'black people of Blue Nile state', and are provided with logistics and support from Khartoum and Ed Damazin.<sup>88</sup>

Mohamed Chol Amir, also called 'Abeleng,' was the commissioner of Renk county but was replaced by Deng Akuai Kak in May 2007 when the president reshuffled the government of Upper Nile. He had been a militia member aligned with SAF during the civil war, and after he was replaced he resumed militia activity.<sup>89</sup> Two isolated incidents in August and September 2012 in Renk county were blamed on his troops.<sup>90</sup> It was also reported that he had acted as director of broadcasting for SSLM/A radio programmes in Khartoum.

In early 2013, there were numerous reports of forced recruitment of South Sudanese who still lived in various parts of Sudan (White Nile, Sennar, Kordofan, Gedaraf, and to a lesser degree, Khartoum) into the SSDF-aligned groups,



and that the militias had been given the go-ahead from the GoS to recruit Southern students in particular.<sup>91</sup> In addition, the SPLM-N reported that militias were recruiting Southerners previously demobilized from official forces in Blue Nile.<sup>92</sup>

**Areas of control.** The SSDF militias have been co-located in Bwat, Tadamun county, Blue Nile. They were blamed for attacks in February 2013 between the towns of Babanis, al Guli, and Abu Nuwara in Blue Nile.<sup>93</sup> From Bwat, they were active in Ulu in Blue Nile, and sought routes into Maban county of Upper Nile—close to Doro refugee camp. In February 2013 it was reported that they were moving southwest into the oil areas in Upper Nile. Around the same time, they were moving into White Nile state to forcefully recruit Southerners still there.<sup>94</sup>

## SSLM/A

Peter Gadet, a Bul Nuer from Mayom county, Unity state, defected from the SPLA in March 2011 and released the Mayom Declaration on 11 April 2011, which criticized the SPLM leadership and announced the formation of the SSLM/A with the intention of bringing down the government and replacing it with a more democratic and broad-based coalition.<sup>95</sup> He was also able to bring in a number of other Nuer militia groups under his wing, including those of Kolchara Nyang, James Gai Yoch, and Matthew Puljang, who were fighting in Unity, as well as Bapiny Monytuil and Karlos Kuol, who were in Khartoum.

From mid-April until August 2011, the SSLM/A and SPLA forces engaged in violent attacks that caught communities in the crossfire, mainly in

Abiemnom and Mayom counties in Unity, although the violence spilled over into Lakes and Warrap states.<sup>96</sup> During the fighting a number of roads in Unity were mined, with both the SSLM/A and SPLA blamed, causing casualties and also blocking road access to some parts of the state. In August 2011, Gadet signed a peace agreement with the government and was integrated into the SPLA.<sup>97</sup> In March 2012, he was made the deputy head of the army's Operation Restore Peace, the Jonglei disarmament process during which the SPLA committed a number of abuses against civilians in Pibor county.<sup>98</sup> In March 2013 the SPLA deployed Gadet to oversee the military response to the SSDM/A-Cobra faction in Jonglei, but he remains a volatile figure. After Gadet's reintegration, there remained a number of



SSLM/A Gen. Matthew Puljang (standing, fifth from right, with brimmed hat and sunglasses) and his generals, Mayom town, Jonglei, 9 May 2013. © Jonah Leff



active SSLM/A fighters who had broken away from him, operating along the South Kodofan–Unity state border under the leadership of Gai Yoach.

#### **Command structure and military assets.**

James Gai Yoach assumed leadership of the remnants of the SSLM/A after Peter Gadet rejoined the SPLA.<sup>99</sup> While the militia remained united for a number of months after Gadet's departure, they began to split following the battle of Hejlj (April 2012), when SAF heavily armed the SSLM/A. Control over weapons was the ostensible reason for the fragmentation.<sup>100</sup> There was an alleged leadership shuffle in early August 2012, with fighting between Kochara Nyang and Mathew Puljang in Nyama, which resulted in the death of Kolchara.<sup>101</sup> In late September 2012, Gai Yoach was arrested in Khartoum, and Bapiny Monituel took over command.<sup>102</sup> Why he was arrested is unknown, but Khartoum may have done so to prove to Juba that it was cutting back on its support for Southern rebels following an August 2012 agreement. Bapiny or others may also have suggested that Gai Yoach was about to defect. Finally, it is possible he was involved in the November 2012 coup attempt in Khartoum.<sup>103</sup>

In May 2013, the Small Arms Survey visited SSLM/A forces that accepted amnesty in late April. At that time, Bapiny and Karlo Kual, the movement's leaders, were in Juba beginning negotiations with the government, and the local forces were under the command of Matthew Puljang. Weapons observed included Chinese Type 56 and Type 56-1 assault rifles with ammunition, Chinese CQ (M16-pattern) assault rifles with Chinese 5.56 × 45 mm ammunition, Iranian and Sudanese RPG-7-pattern rocket launchers and associated ammunition, PKM-pattern and DShK-pattern machine guns with associated ammunition, 60 mm, 82 mm, 120 mm mortars with associated rounds (Sudanese 60 mm and 82 mm, and Chinese 120 mm), and larger conventional weapons such as anti-aircraft and recoilless guns, BM-12-pattern 107 mm rocket launchers and rockets,

23 mm twin-barrelled cannons, and 122 mm rockets.<sup>104</sup> This arsenal represented the most significant stockpile ever observed in Southern insurgent hands by the Small Arms Survey.

**Areas of control.** The SSLM/A are blamed for a number of offences in Mayom county in November 2011 and April 2012,<sup>105</sup> although there have also been a number of reports of SPLA abuses and killings of civilians in Mayom, as well.<sup>106</sup> The SSLM/A were co-located and working closely with both the SSDF and SSDM/A militias, and were involved in the defence of Hejlj in early 2012. According to an eyewitness, who was an SSLM/A prisoner, Khartoum was actively providing food supplies, weapons, vehicles, uniforms, and tents to the militias fighting alongside SAF.<sup>107</sup> After the signing of the September 2012 agreement between Sudan and South Sudan, the SSLM/A forces were primarily used by SAF in their war with the SPLM-N in South Kordofan, which alienated them from their support base in Unity.<sup>108</sup>

In mid-April 2013, SSLM/A troops began to move towards Mayom county as their leaders entered peace talks with the GRSS. With the announcement of a presidential pardon on 24 April, a joint coalition said that over 1,200 SSLM/A troops had moved into Mayom for integration into the SPLA,<sup>109</sup> but the Small Arms Survey observed fewer than this number during its visit in May. Bapiny's brother, Joseph Nguen Monytuel, was appointed governor of Unity state as part of the integration deal.

## **Official responses**

### **GRSS**

The GRSS has used a number of approaches to address the insurgencies in its territory, as well as across the border in Sudan, including: military action including disarmament of the communities they perceive are supporting the insurgents; negotiations with the GoS on cross-border security; unconditional amnesty to militia lead-

ers and their men; negotiations and peace talks with the insurgent leaders through community leaders and other third parties; and a national reconciliation process to address underlying issues driving some of the insurgent activity. These activities have had some success, particularly with the militia operating along the border areas, as has been seen with the recent peace agreements signed with the SSLM/A and the SSDM/A-Upper Nile faction. The July 2013 reshuffle of the GRSS cabinet, and in particular the appointment of the former governor of Jonglei, Kuol Manyang, to the position of minister of defence, has shaken up many of the ongoing initiatives, and the impacts of these changes are not yet known. A caretaker governor for Jonglei has not yet been appointed, and this appointment will have a profound impact upon the dynamics within the state. However, the lack of clear leadership in the state is also causing tensions in Bor town that are spilling over into the rest of Jonglei.<sup>110</sup>

**Military response.** The SPLA's counter-insurgency activity in Jonglei, which officially began in March 2013, has had little success in curbing the activities of the SSDM/A-Cobra, and has resulted in civilian displacement and abuses as the Murle population has been caught between the SPLA and the rebels. According to the UN, the violence between the two groups displaced more than 23,000 civilians from Pibor county, some to Juba while others moved across the border into Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya, plus a further 100,000 or more hiding in the bush in Pibor.<sup>111</sup> In addition, the SPLA has suffered significant losses, including the capture of Boma town in May—resulting in more than 1,000 desertions because of lack of food and payment—and the defection of Murle soldiers, who have experienced violence at the hands of their colleagues, into Yau Yau's forces. As part of its counter-insurgency, the SPLA reportedly supplied the Lou Nuer with arms and ammunition prior to and during its attack on Murle communities in Pibor

Table 2 **Status of militia integration as of October 2013**

Group	Commander	Start date of negotiations	Number of troops	Status of integration
SSLM/A	Bapiny Montuil	26 April 2013	1,200	In Mayom awaiting integration.
SSDF	John Duit, former deputy to Gordon Kong	May 2012	215	Duit is in a hotel in Juba, his soldiers in Mapel. Not yet fully integrated.
SSDM/A	Peter Kuol Chol Awan	February 2012	1,300	Finished training. In Oinykibol, Eastern Equatoria state, awaiting formal integration
SSDM/A	David Yau Yau (first defection)	September 2010	200	Soldiers in training in Oinykibol, not yet fully integrated. Yau Yau's deputies who remained behind were arrested after his re-defection, some escaped and rejoined him.
SSDM/A - Cobra faction	James Kuburin	4 December 2012	280	Was in a separate camp in Pibor town until 3 February 2013. Was attacked by SPLA soldier in Pibor market, ran to bush but returned; now based in county commissioner's compound awaiting integration.

county in July 2013. This included several helicopter airdrops of ammunition to Lou Nuer militia.<sup>112</sup>

Since independence, the SPLA has conducted a number of disarmament processes that have sought to reduce the arms in the hands of communities, particularly those that have rebel movements associated with them, more recently in Upper Nile in 2011 and Operation Restore Peace in Jonglei in 2012. However, these disarmament processes have all been marred by violence and human rights abuses by the SPLA and police, who have often taken revenge on the communities they see as either enemies of their ethnic group or supporting insurgencies.<sup>113</sup> Rather than reducing community support for insurgency, these forceful and violent disarmament processes have more often fed support for the insurgents, and have failed to collect significant numbers of weapons.

**Amnesty and integration.** The GRSS continues to offer amnesty and grant pardons to forces that have taken up arms against them. Republican Order No. 06-2013, issued on 25 April 2013, offered amnesty to six key militia leaders, their officers, and followers. While this strategy has had some success in recent months in bringing in the remnant factions, the most virulent of the rebel groups, the SSDM/A-Cobra faction, continues to decline the offer. The amnesty is not popular within the

leadership and rank and file of the SPLA,<sup>114</sup> as the reintegrated officers are often offered a rank over other officers who had recently been fighting them. It is also viewed by some as rewarding insurgency, with the concern that an SPLA officer unhappy with his current rank could take up arms as an alternative path to promotion. If militia members have to wait for weeks and months for the integration process to be agreed, as has happened before, there is risk of re-defection, as was seen with Yau Yau in April 2012.<sup>115</sup> Table 2 summarizes the militias currently in the process of integration.

**Peace talks.** The GRSS, along with third parties such as community leaders, church organizations, and NGOs have initiated peace talks between the key insurgent groups. In January 2012, the government agreed to allow the key political and cultural leaders of the Murle community to open peace talks with David Yau Yau. Through Sultan Ismael Konyi, Yau Yau initially accepted peace talks in February 2013, with the stipulation that the United Nations witness the process. The GRSS also hired James Ellery, a former British Army officer who is a director of AEGIS Defence Services (UK), to negotiate with David Yau Yau.<sup>116</sup> Ellery met with Yau Yau on a couple of occasions to convince him to accept the presidential amnesty. However, Yau Yau's commanders found his approach

heavy-handed. Shortly after visiting his camp, the SPLA attacked the camp, and the negotiations broke down.<sup>117</sup>

After the SPLA initiated military actions against the SSDM/A-Cobra factions in March, the window for peaceful negotiations effectively closed. On 14 May 2013, in an interview with Voice of America, Yau Yau dismissed the peace talks as 'a joke.'<sup>118</sup> The Cobra faction's military strength makes it less receptive to peace talks; its opinion of the government's intention to address their grievances, including its demand for a separate Murle state, is low.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, the office of the GRSS president reportedly remains in contact with Yau Yau through Bishop Paride Taban (see below), and a number of Yau Yau's former colleagues are working to persuade him to accept the amnesty.

**National reconciliation process.** Historical injustices and inter-communal conflicts have deeply influenced the militia insurgencies. These include the Shilluk-Dinka conflicts over land in Upper Nile, the marginalization of the Bul Nuer in a county that produces large quantities of oil, and the Murle-Dinka and Bor-Lou Nuer conflicts in Jonglei. The national reconciliation process, dubbed 'A Journey of Healing and National Reconciliation', initiated by former GRSS Vice President Riek Machar, was one potential avenue to address these ongoing concerns. But



while many saw the process as a positive movement towards national healing, to others Machar's leadership was a liability due to his violent history as a breakaway militia leader in the second civil war and his presidential aspirations in the 2015 elections. In early April 2013, Salva Kiir issued a decree limiting the vice president's powers, removing him from leading the reconciliation process, and suspended it, and on 23 July President Kiir relieved Machar of his position.<sup>120</sup> On 24 April 2013, the president reinitiated the reconciliation process, this time under the auspices of religious leaders and under the leadership of the archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS), Daniel Deng Bul. However, the archbishop was also the chair of the Jonglei Peace Process, which has failed to bring the Murle community and the Yau Yau insurgency to the table. Some Murle question his neutrality, and complain

that his recent statement that calls upon David Yau Yau to accept amnesty does not recognize the disarmament-related human rights abuses by the SPLA.<sup>121</sup>

More recently, the widely respected Bishop Paride Taban has initiated talks with David Yau Yau and in early September 2013 visited his camp with UNMISS support. His main goal is to achieve a ceasefire before the end of the rains to prevent a resumption of fighting during the upcoming dry season.<sup>122</sup> By early October, Taban's intervention had led to Yau Yau indicating his willingness to meet with the SPLM, a potentially positive development, yet the terms of the meeting, and where it will take place, remain unresolved. Likewise, the Governor of Central Equatoria state has taken the initiative to negotiate with Yau Yau, which has been acknowledged in a recent meeting between the Lou Nuer and Murle communities.<sup>123</sup>

**Negotiations with GoS.** The Sudan–South Sudan border has remained contentious between the two countries since the signing of the CPA. The failure to demarcate the international border, to come to an agreement regarding Abyei, and the insurgency activity on both sides of the border which each country has blamed on the other have created significant pockets of insecurity. Since independence, there have been a number of attacks on each side of the border—with the SPLA temporarily capturing Hejlij in April 2012, and SAF/militia attacks, combined with helicopter sorties bombing South Sudanese territory as recently as July 2013.

In response, throughout 2012, the SPLA strengthened its military presence along its border with Sudan. Their responsiveness to attacks from the Southern insurgents in Sudan increased, and according to the SPLA commanders in Upper Nile and Unity, they were



SSM/A fighters awaiting integration in Mayom, Unity, 9 May 2013. © Jonah Leff





Yuai village, Uror county, Jonglei, Lou Nuer youth returning after fighting against David Yau Yau's militia, 23 July 2013. © Camille Lepage

able to significantly reduce the militia operations in South Sudanese border areas. The closing off of the border to the insurgents also meant that their access to their support bases within South Sudan was cut off, and they were primarily utilized by the GoS in its operations against the SPLM-N, which further alienated them from their political agendas in the South. The faltering Sudan-South Sudan agreement and economic hardship resulting from the temporary closing of the oil pipeline have also contributed to Sudan's willingness to engage in peace negotiations with the GRSS.

After long negotiations, the GoS and GRSS signed a cooperative agreement on 27 September 2012 that recommitted both parties to the implementation of previous agreements including security arrangements (December 2010 and September 2012), border security (May 2011, June 2011), and the memorandum of understanding on non-aggression and cooperation (February

2012), as well as a number of other outstanding issues.<sup>124</sup> In March 2013, the parties agreed to a detailed plan and timetable for the full implementation of the security arrangements. Despite these agreements and commitments, both sides continue to accuse each other of supporting each other's insurgent actors and skirmishes continue along the border region. In July 2013, the African Union sent a high-level panel to investigate these allegations, and the results are still pending as of publication.

### International responses

Militia-related insecurity, as well as the SPLA's counter-insurgency, has affected both UN and international NGO operations in South Sudan; both have sought to intervene. They have provided humanitarian assistance for affected communities. Where they have access, they monitor the situation on the ground and provide protection of

civilians. The international community has also actively supported peace building and negotiations with militia leaders, as well as with nomadic groups such as the Missiriya and Riezegat who traverse the border seasonally. The US and the European Union have engaged in higher-level discussions with the GRSS on community security and humanitarian access, especially in Jonglei. The AU has also facilitated talks on border issues and the establishment of the joint border monitoring force, which faces challenges in fulfilling its mandate.

In Jonglei, UNMISS has temporary operating bases in Pibor and Akobo, plus a rotating presence in Yuai. With their air assets, they have been able to monitor the movement of armed actors in the state and move personnel to key locations to meet with local officials and civil society. However, UNMISS's air access has been curtailed by new safety restrictions as a result of the shooting down of one of its helicopters

by the SPLA in December 2012, and they currently are only able to conduct one mission per week.<sup>125</sup> In January 2013, a number of international organizations provided logistical support to a delegation of Murle leaders to travel to Pibor in a bid to meet with Yau Yau. In addition, a number of international and national NGOs in collaboration with the churches and UNMISS have supported peace building activities targeting Jonglei youths, the main bulk of Yau Yau's forces.

The work of international organizations is hampered by a number of factors, but particularly by their inability to access many parts of Pibor county due to both SPLA restrictions and insecurity. As a result, the monitoring in Pibor, mainly around the protection of civilians and human rights abuses, has been inadequate. Of approximately 140,000 Murle civilians, most are in the remote areas of the county and only about 4,000 are accessible by international agencies, as Murle have fled the towns and areas that are under SPLA control. In January the SPLA burned down parts of Pibor town and looted NGO compounds in the town in April, and there were further acts of destruction in May and July.<sup>126</sup> In response, the SPLA relieved Brig. Gen. James Otong Riek, the commander in charge of Pibor, and in late October the army announced the convictions of five soldiers for murder, two for rape, and 24 others for unprofessional conduct. The lesser convictions carry prison terms of one to five years; the most serious may result in the death penalty.<sup>127</sup>

Beyond these events, there have been reports of extrajudicial killings, beatings, and arbitrary arrest of Murle civilians in all areas under the control of the SPLA.<sup>128</sup> In mid-July the Lou Nuer youths again mobilized for a massive attack on the Murle community, and both the UN and SPLA stated that they were unable to provide protection of civilians who were not in the towns. There are only a handful of international organizations on the ground, and they are frequently evacuated during crises. The number of UN

peacekeeping troops is insignificant, and their access to the affected communities is blocked by the SPLA, as well as by internal security restrictions.

## Conclusions

A number of factors appear to have contributed to a significant reduction in rebel activity in South Sudan in 2013. As far back as the Juba Declaration in 2006, GRSS President Salva Kiir made strong efforts to placate rebellious commanders and their men. In the most recent period, his unconditional amnesty has proven attractive in bringing insurgent leaders to the negotiating table, at least, and most have now signed agreements. But the amnesty approach involves a delicate balancing act. Incoming commanders typically seek a military rank higher than what the SPLA leadership is comfortable with, and it has always been difficult for the rank and file to accept enemy militiamen into its ranks. These and other factors have also led to long negotiations and subsequent integration delays. In the past, some commanders, notably David Yau Yau, eventually became dissatisfied with their deals, choosing to resume rebellion instead. While the picture in October 2013 is positive, there is every possibility that a similar scenario could arise again.

Whether Khartoum would opt to support re-defecting rebels is another question. Military assistance to David Yau Yau has continued almost up to the present, but GoS-GRSS agreements over the border zone, the GoS's pledge to end its support to Southern rebels, and the SPLA's increased presence in the border areas, make it more difficult for insurgent groups to operate from Sudanese territory, leaving air-drops inside South Sudan as the only means of providing arms and ammunition to Southern rebels. That tactic, now publicly and credibly documented by investigators, may eventually become too politically problematic for Khartoum.

Meanwhile, Yau Yau's rebellion and repressive SPLA actions against

Murle civilians have made Pibor county, Jonglei, the epicentre of the governance and security challenges facing Salva Kiir and the GRSS. The SPLA has taken steps towards accountability for the human rights violations committed there, but it remains to be seen whether the army has the longer-term will and capacity to adjudicate its own crimes. The current atmosphere of ethnic favouritism, violence, and impunity is leading more civilians to sympathize with, if not support, Yau Yau's rebellion—strengthening his position should he come in for negotiations.

The government's ongoing inability to provide security and equitable justice in places like Jonglei is a key underlying factor in the rebellions; as long as it continues, new insurgent commanders will be able to justify their military projects to communities, even if they are ultimately only seeking better positions for themselves and their men. To reduce the threat of rebellions over the long term, amnesties and integration can only be a part of the answer. The most effective protection against rebellion is the difficult, ongoing work of state building in areas still living in the shadow of 25 years of war and its aftermath. ■

## Notes

*This Issue Brief is based on fieldwork conducted in South Sudan in early 2013, including interviews with rebel commanders, the SPLA, state and local officials, and community members, as well as continual follow-up communications with key informants through October 2013.*

- 1 Small Arms Survey (2011a, p. 2).
- 2 Small Arms Survey (2013a); interview with Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai, SPLA chief of general staff, Juba, 12 February 2013; interview with Maj. Gen. John Lat Zakaria, director of military intelligence, SPLA, Juba, 13 February 2013; communication with national security representatives in the office of the GRSS president, August 2013.
- 3 Interviews with Unity state governor and other senior political leaders, February 2013. The governor stated that most of

- the arms that had been removed from the community were 'recycled' back into the communities.
- 4 Interviews with government officials and NGO staff, Unity state, February 2013.
  - 5 Small Arms Survey (2011a).
  - 6 Communication with UNMISS source, July 2013.
  - 7 Communications with UNMISS source, October 2013.
  - 8 Interview with SPLM-N (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013.
  - 9 Interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013; interview with Murle political leaders, Pibor, January 2013; interview with Joshua Konyi, Pibor county commissioner, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 10 SSDM/A (2012).
  - 11 Interview with SPLM-N South Kordofan spokesperson, Juba, January 2013; interview with Upper Nile SPLA commanders, Malakal, January 2013.
  - 12 Communication with James Nuot Puot, former head of logistics for Athor's forces, 30 September 2013.
  - 13 McGregor (2013).
  - 14 Murle society does not have a formal hierarchical leadership structure, but is broken up into generational age-sets.
  - 15 Interview with South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) Coordinator, Pibor, January 2013. In this interview, the Murle leader stated that Yau Yau was the SSRRC secretary before elections, but decided—against his community's wishes—to run for MP of Gumuruk constituency as part of the United Democratic Front party against the SPLM candidate Judy Jonglei. Yau Yau had to step down from his position with the SSRRC in order to run, and when he was not elected his position had been already given to another person.
  - 16 Interview with SSRRC Coordinator, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 17 Communication with UNMISS officials, July and September 2013.
  - 18 Communication with UNMISS officials, September 2013.
  - 19 Interviews with Murle leaders, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 20 Interviews with Murle leaders, Pibor, January 2013; interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 21 Interview with Hon. Lokali Ame Bullen, MP for Pibor, Pibor, January 2013; interview with Agodi Adut Aguti, chairperson of the BCSSAC, Bor, January 2013.
  - 22 For more on Konyi's militia, see Young (2006).
  - 23 Interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013; interviews with Murle leaders, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 24 Interview with Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai, Juba, February 2013.
  - 25 In an interview with the *Sudan Tribune*, Yau Yau stated, 'We told them we are not against disarmament but it must be done in a way that does not make others become vulnerable, especially those who have been disarmed in the first instance. Our people accepted to voluntarily surrender their weapons but what happened, they became victim of the project. Their houses were burned, thousands were killed. This shows that the disarmament was a deliberate exercise against our people. It was cleansing. They wanted to wipe out our people from existing' (*Sudan Tribune*, 2013a).
  - 26 Tanzan and Doki (2013).
  - 27 It seems that Peter Kubrin is the spokesman for the Cobra faction, and not necessarily the whole SSDM/A, as most of his press releases (with the exception of the new SSDM/A manifesto) concern the situation in Pibor county.
  - 28 SSDM/A (2013b).
  - 29 SSDM/A (2013g).
  - 30 SSDM/A (2013a).
  - 31 Interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013; interview with Murle leaders, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 32 See Small Arms Survey (2013a).
  - 33 Communication with UNMISS official, July 2013.
  - 34 According to James Kuburin, Yau Yau had approximately 3,000 troops when he defected in December 2012.
  - 35 Communication with UNMISS official, July 2013.
  - 36 Interview with Murle leaders, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 37 The Lango age-set is younger than the Bothonya age-set, and is seeking to 'break off' and establish its own community-recognized age set.
  - 38 Interview with NGO worker, Juba, 7 July 2013.
  - 39 UNMISS source, July 2013.
  - 40 Interview with SSRRC Coordinator, Pibor, January 2013; interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 41 *Sudan Tribune* (2013e); McGregor (2013).
  - 42 Interview with Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai, Juba, February 2013.
  - 43 Interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013; interviews with Murle leaders, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 44 Interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 45 Interview with Maj. Gen. John Latt, Juba, January and February 2013; interview with Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai, Juba, February 2013.
  - 46 Communication with UNMISS official, July 2013.
  - 47 Communication with UNMISS, July–August 2013.
  - 48 Communication with UNMISS official, July 2013.
  - 49 Associated Press (2013).
  - 50 SSDM/A (2013g).
  - 51 SSDM/A (2013c).
  - 52 SSDM/A (2013d).
  - 53 SSDM/A (2013e).
  - 54 Email correspondence from Peter Kubrin, 18 May 2013.
  - 55 Human Rights Watch (2013b); Office of the President (2013).
  - 56 Interview with Murle community member and NGO staff, Juba, July 2013.
  - 57 Communication with Pibor county commissioner's office, October 2013.
  - 58 Communication with Pibor county commissioner's office, October 2013.
  - 59 Interview with Brig. Gen. Peter Ruach, Pibor, January 2013; interview with the Hon. Lokali Bullen, Pibor, January 2013; interview with James Kuburin, Pibor, January 2013.
  - 60 Small Arms Survey (2013a) describes weapons that were in the possession of commander James Kuburin, who defected from David Yau Yau in December 2012; Small Arms Survey (2013c) describes weapons that the SPLA captured from Yau Yau's forces in 2013.
  - 61 Communications with an official in the National Security Service (Office of the GRSS President), Juba, August 2013.
  - 62 Small Arms Survey (2012a).
  - 63 UNSC (2011).
  - 64 For more information about Robert Gwang, see Small Arms Survey (2011a, p. 7).
  - 65 UNMISS source, September 2013.
  - 66 UNMISS source, July 2013.
  - 67 SSDM/A (2011).
  - 68 Interview with Dr. Lam Akol, Cairo, May 2013. In October 2013, the president issues an amnesty offer to Lam Akol, which he accepted.
  - 69 Interviews with UNMISS Upper Nile (29 January 2013), BCSSAC official in Malakal (28 January 2013), Upper Nile SSRRC state coordinator (29 January 2013), and 7<sup>th</sup> Division commanders (29 January 2013).
  - 70 *Sudan Tribune* (2013d).
  - 71 Olony did not allow the inspection team to take any photographs, indicating that negotiations with Juba were still tenuous.
  - 72 UNMISS Upper Nile (29 January 2013).
  - 73 Interview with SPLM-N (South Kordofan), Juba, February 2013; interview with SPLA 7<sup>th</sup> Division commanders, Malakal, January 2013; interview with BCSSAC official, Malakal, January 2013.
  - 74 Interview with UNMISS Civil Affairs, Malakal, January 2013; interview with Upper Nile SSRRC state coordinator, Malakal, January 2013; interview with Maj. Gen. James Kong Chol, acting SPLA 4<sup>th</sup> Division commander, Rubkona, February 2013.
  - 75 Interview with Maj. Gen. James Kong Chol, Rubkona, February 2013.
  - 76 Interview with Maj. Gen. James Kong Chol, Rubkona, February 2013.
  - 77 Small Arms Survey (2011a, p. 3).
  - 78 The SPLA reported that Duit Yiech had defected with 215 soldiers and a convoy



of 11 Toyota pickup trucks. However, a joint statement from the SSDF, NDF, SSLA, and SSDA on 7 May 2012 stated that only 130 soldiers had defected with him (SSDF, NDF, SSLA, and SSDA, 2012).

79 SSLM/A, SSDF, and SSDM/A (2013a).

80 SSLM/A (2013).

81 Communication with South Sudan National Security Service official, October 2013.

82 SSLM/A, SSDF, and SSDM/A (2013b).

83 Interview with SPLA 7<sup>th</sup> Division commanders, Malakal, January 2013; interview with SSRRC acting state coordinator, Malakal, January 2013; interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Malakal, January 2013.

84 Interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Malakal, January 2013; interview with SSRRC acting state coordinator, Malakal, January 2013.

85 Interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Malakal, January 2013.

86 Communication with UNMISS official, July 2013.

87 Interview with SPLM-North (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013.

88 Rebel commanders John Duit and James Duoth also received support from Khartoum out of Ed Damazin alongside Loma and Bogo (Interviews with Duit and Duoth, February 2013).

89 Interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Malakal, January 2013; interview with SPLM-North (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013.

90 Interview with SPLM-North (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013.

91 Maga (2012); interview with Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai, Juba, February 2013. Mai stated that last year (2012) more than 30 people had been abducted from the Babanis area for recruitment into the militia.

92 Interview with SPLM-North (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013. The spokesperson stated that, between 2008 and 2012, 5,442 SPLA, SAF, and PDF soldiers were demobilized in Blue Nile, and that these groups were being actively recruited by the militias operating there.

93 Interview with SPLM-North (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013.

94 Interview with SPLM-North (Blue Nile) spokesperson, Juba, February 2013.

95 Small Arms Survey (2011b).

96 Small Arms Survey (2011b).

97 Small Arms Survey (2011b).

98 Amnesty International (2012b).

99 A joint statement sent out by the SSDF, NDF, SSLA, and SSDA in May 2012 listed James Gai Yoch as the commander of the SSLA (SSDF, NDF, SSLA, and SSDA, 2012).

100 UNMISS source, September 2013.

101 Interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Bentiu, February 2013.

102 Interview with BCSSAC Unity state official, Bentiu, February 2013; interview with Unity state deputy governor, Bentiu,

February 2013; interview with Unity state deputy police chief, Bentiu, February 2013.

103 Interview with Gen. John Latt, Juba, February 2013.

104 Small Arms Survey (2013b).

105 Interview with AECOM staff, Bentiu, February 2013; interview with the deputy governor of Unity state, Bentiu, February 2013; interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Bentiu, February 2013; interview with Unity state official, Bentiu, February 2013.

106 UNMISS source July 2013.

107 Interview with Aben Yor, the SSRRC State deputy coordinator in Upper Nile, who was kidnapped by the SSLM/A and held for six months (February–August 2012) in Kilo 23, until ransomed for SDP 70,000, Malakal, February 2013.

108 Interview with the deputy governor of Unity state, Bentiu, February 2013; interview with SPLA 4<sup>th</sup> Division acting commander, Rubkona, February 2013; interview with UNMISS civil affairs officials, Bentiu, February 2013.

109 Interview with Mayom county commissioner and UNMISS personnel, May 2013.

110 Interview with NGO staff, Juba, September 2013.

111 *Sudan Tribune* (2013c) and interviews with Pibor residents, July 2013.

112 Interviews with UNMISS personnel and Jonglei civilians, July and August 2013.

113 Amnesty International (2012a, 2012b).

114 Small Arms Survey (2011 p. 5); Jones (2011).

115 According to an UNMISS source, most previous integration attempts have collapsed, ended in violence, or been reneged on by the GRSS, including those of Gabriel Tang-Ginye, Gatluak Gai, Jonhson Olony (first integration attempt), George Athor's integration attempt prior to his killing, Matthew Puljang (first integration attempt), Robert Gwang, Peter Lorot, and Peter Sule.

116 Interview with UNMISS staff, May 2013.

117 Interview with SSDM/A-Cobra faction spokesperson, July 2013.

118 Tanzan and Doki (2013).

119 UNMISS sources, August 2013.

120 *Sudan Tribune* (2013b). On 23 August 2013, Hon. James Wani Igga was appointed vice president of South Sudan by Republican Decree 62/2013.

121 Deng (2013); Human Rights Watch (2013b).

122 Interview with Bishop Paride, August 2013.

123 Lou Nuer–Murle Communities Leadership (2013).

124 Agreement and implementation matrix available from <<http://www.smallarms-surveysudan.org/documents/peace-agreements.html>>.

125 UNMISS sources, August 2013.

126 Kulish (2013).

127 Kulish (2013); Taban (2013).

128 Human Rights Watch (2013a, 2013b); Amnesty International (2012b); Refugees International (2013).

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## HSBA project summary

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan/South Sudan is a multi-year project administered by the Small Arms Survey. It was developed in cooperation with the Canadian government, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and a wide array of international and Sudanese partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely, empirical research, the project supports violence reduction initiatives, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes, incentive schemes for civilian arms collection, as well as security sector reform and arms control interventions across Sudan and South Sudan. The HSBA also offers policy-relevant advice on redressing insecurity.

*Issue Briefs* are designed to provide timely periodic snapshots of baseline information in a reader-friendly format. The HSBA also generates a series of longer and more detailed *Working Papers*. All publications are available in English and Arabic at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org). We also produce monthly 'Facts and Figures' reports on key security issues at [www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/facts-figures.php](http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/facts-figures.php).

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