

## Allies and defectors

### An update on armed group integration and proxy force activity

Tribal groups, pastoralists, paramilitaries, and SPLA splinter factions, among other armed entities, were key combatants in the second Sudanese civil war as allies of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) or the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, these groups, many of which had deep roots in local political, ethnic, and economic conflicts in South Sudan, were suddenly required to disband and their members to join the SAF, the SPLA, or one of a small number of government institutions. Not surprisingly, this process has been neither smooth nor rapid.

Three years later, a wide range of ex-combatants find themselves in a kind of administrative limbo, at varying levels of 'integration' and 'demobilization'. Some former armed group members may be part of either the SAF or the SPLA only as a name on a roster, while continuing to answer to their former commanders. In many cases, tribal and personal loyalties carry more weight than their new affiliations. Looming over the entire post-CPA realignment process is the knowledge that for most former fighters, armed group membership is the only sustainable way of life.

At the same time, the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) continue to rely on armed groups as proxy forces in contentious areas, resulting in increased tensions, jockeying for the support of different groups, and fighting. This is in direct violation of the peace agreement, and is part of an escalating crisis between the parties.

Previous Sudan *Issue Briefs* have reviewed the process of integration of important so-called Other Armed

Groups (OAGs) into the SPLA<sup>1</sup> and post-CPA violence between armed groups and SPLA forces during civilian disarmament campaigns.<sup>2</sup> The current *Brief* updates the state of knowledge about the status of armed groups in South Sudan as of March 2008, and focuses on the lingering problems that they pose, the challenges remaining to their dissolution and demobilization, and their possible impact on CPA implementation. It finds that:

- The South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF), by far the most threatening South Sudanese collection of armed groups during the civil war, has largely shifted its allegiance to the SPLA, with far fewer remnant SSDF remaining unaligned or allied to the SAF.
- The integration of these former SSDF combatants into the SPLA, however, remains minimal or non-existent.
- SAF-aligned Misseriya tribesmen clashed violently with the SPLA in the South Kordofan–Bahr el Ghazal border regions from December 2007 until April 2008, threatening to destabilize the area. Worryingly, Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir has remobilized paramilitary Popular Defence Forces in the area.
- The SPLA-aligned Debab and Abu Matrig Forces (primarily Misseriya and Rizeigat armed forces, respectively), as well as the continued presence of several SAF-aligned SSDF remnant militias, are generating significant tensions in Abyei.
- The competition for allied forces in the border 'Transitional Areas' suggests that both the SPLA and SAF are intent on keeping allied armed groups in the field to support their efforts to control strategic areas.

This is likely to continue at least until the referendum on South Sudanese independence in 2011.

### 'Other Armed Groups' in context

The term 'armed group' is considerably elastic in the Sudanese context. Throughout the second Sudanese civil war (1983–2005), tribal groups, pastoralists, paramilitaries, and other collectives played a significant role; many acted as proxy forces and waged much of the fighting, especially during the 1990s. In the case of the SSDF, an SAF-aligned umbrella group comprising more than 40,000 men, the group engaged in fighting throughout Upper Nile, Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. They fought the SPLA directly in rural areas and were an important reinforcement for the SAF in the besieged garrison towns of South Sudan. Other, less developed local groups became involved in the wider conflict only when it benefited their local aims, needs, or tribal concerns, as in the case of the 'white army' in Jonglei.<sup>3</sup>

With the end of the civil war, these groups were required to disband. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of January 2005—to which only the SPLA and the Government of Sudan (GoS) were party—declared that 'no armed groups allied to either party shall be allowed to operate outside the two forces'.<sup>4</sup> The CPA referred to all these collectives as Other Armed Groups (OAGs) and required that they declare their allegiance to, and then incorporate into, either the SAF or the SPLA no later than 9 March 2006, or be declared illegal. Technically, as far as the GoS and the SPLA are concerned, OAGs ceased to exist after that date—

any remnant unaligned groups were to be labelled criminal and dealt with accordingly.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the CPA's clear instruction on the fate of the OAGs,<sup>6</sup> the reality on the ground has always been more complicated. Because of the important constituencies that some OAGs represented, it was subsequently recognized that they could not simply be dealt with as criminal entities. As a consequence, a special agreement was required to deal with the SSDF, many of whose commanders wielded considerable local authority. The Juba Declaration of January 2006 between the SPLA and the SSDF set the terms for the group's official dissolution and absorption, primarily into the SPLA; in the process, SSDF commander Paulino Matieb became the SPLA's Deputy Commander-in-Chief. Some other SSDF commanders held their options open for as long as possible, returned to the SAF, or remained uncommitted.<sup>7</sup>

As of mid-2008, more than two years since the signing of the Juba Declaration and three since the CPA, armed group activity continues. The two categories of armed groups that call for examination in this *Brief* are the SAF-aligned remnants of the SSDF that continue to operate in South Sudan, and tribal groups, some of whose members are also operating as pro-government paramilitaries. Even though, as far as the parties to the CPA are concerned, 'OAGs' have all been officially absorbed and therefore no longer exist, this is a technicality that should not obscure the more complicated reality on the ground.

### The SSDF: the final chapter?

Following Matieb's transition to the SPLA, only a handful of SSDF commanders and their men refused to follow him. By late 2006 two of these

had capitulated and formally aligned with the SPLA: Ismael Konye (a Murle) in Jonglei in October 2006 and Sultan Abdel Bagi (a Dinka) in Northern Bahr el Ghazal in August 2007.<sup>8</sup> Konye's forces redeployed from Pibor to Juba in mid-April 2007,<sup>9</sup> and he became a 'peace and reconciliation' adviser to GoSS president Salva Kiir. His troops are in the process of being incorporated into the SPLA or being demobilized.<sup>10</sup> The troops of Sultan Abdel Bagi, while historically active in South Kordofan around Meiram, are now mostly located in SPLA bases in Aweil and Tonj, Bahr el Ghazal. No further major changes in realignment of remnant-SSDF militias have taken place since.

As the SSDF effectively collapsed, however, some SSDF militia members detached from their leadership and became involved in local, informal tribal-based forces. Their former commanders, unable to continue to supply and motivate them, had little hold



on them. This is the case with a cadre of Murle officers under Ismael Konye, who declined to follow him into the SPLA, choosing instead to remain in their home area of Pibor County in Jonglei State.

Similarly, in Bahr el Ghazal a number of Sultan Bagi's former forces remained in the Meriam area, seemingly independent of him.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, at least one of his sons has refused to align with the SPLA. Another example of this trend is the break-up of Atom Al-Nour's SSDF-affiliated Peace Defence Forces (PDF, not to be confused with the paramilitary Popular Defence Forces or the Pibor Defense Force of Ismael Konye) into four major groupings in three separate locations (Wau, Raja, and Tonj), some of which aligned with the SPLA and others with the SAF.<sup>12</sup>

In general, however, the post-CPA period has seen the vast majority of the former SSDF drawn away from the SAF into the SPLA camp; as of March 2007 approximately 47,440 were reported to have joined the SPLA, with only 10,400 joining the SAF.<sup>13</sup> Part of the explanation for this is the 'South-South dialogue' that the GoSS initiated in late 2005, in an effort to promote reconciliation among the many Southern factions and groups that had been enemies. Another is the death in July 2005 of former SPLA leader and GoSS President, John Garang. Resentment over Garang's divisive policies and tactics had kept many commanders from joining the SPLA. When Salva Kiir (a Dinka like Garang but from a different clan and region, and with a different background and temperament) succeeded Garang, many reconsidered their options. Moreover, and probably most importantly, most former OAG members from South Sudan had no desire to relocate to the North, a requirement if they aligned with the SAF.

The outcome of this enormous shift of allegiances was the effective folding of the SSDF as an independent fighting force in June 2007, leaving a small cadre of former SSDF leaders and intellectuals to form a political party under the name of the South Sudan Democratic Front.<sup>14</sup> Khartoum claimed around the same time that all SAF-aligned OAGs in South Sudan had been incorporated into the SAF in the North, incorporated into the SAF and employed in the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs)<sup>15</sup> in the South, or disarmed and demobilized.<sup>16</sup>

The vast majority of the former SSDF have defected from the SAF into the SPLA camp.

There is circumstantial evidence that this is not the case, however. At least one former powerful ex-SSDF commander, Gabriel Tang-Ginya, claimed in November 2007 that he maintained personal control over forces in South Sudan.<sup>17</sup> Problematically, the SAF has also engaged in unilateral 'demobilization' of former SSDF troops aligned with it, which has had no UN monitoring. The possibility remains that the SAF continues to support these SSDF remnant militias or is holding them as 'reserves' for the future, as the SPLA consistently claims.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, while the SSDF seems to have been broken as an overall force, the ongoing presence of remnant constituents is still an important consideration in the security and political calculus of South Sudan. The largest remnant SSDF militias are those led by:

- Major-General Gabriel Tang-Ginya, who commands the Fangak Forces based in north-west Jonglei State around Fangak town and upstream at Phom el-Zeraf. The approximate size of the Fangak Forces is 1,200 to 1,500 men, who are dispersed in small groups throughout the region.
- Major-General Gordon Kong, who commands the Nasser faction in eastern Upper Nile State centred around El Nasser, with most of his armed forces based in nearby Ketbek. The approximate size of the Nasser faction is 500 to 1,000.
- Major-General Atom Al-Nour, who commands the Peace Defence Forces in Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal in the towns of Wau, Raja, Diem Zubeir, Bazia, Mboro, and Bigare. The approximate size of the Peace Defence Forces is 400.

In addition to these three groups, there are at least 11 other smaller militias geographically dispersed across South Sudan, as well as around Abyei (see Map and Table 1). Most are still coherent as local militias but relatively small in numbers of armed combatants. Few present serious challenges to the overwhelming SPLA presence in these areas, especially after the substantial

SAF redeployment from the South to the North,<sup>19</sup> but they could still be used as proxy forces in the future.<sup>20</sup>

As mentioned above, a few remnant SSDF militias have already been demobilized and disarmed by SAF, such as the Dolieb Forces of Thomas Mabior.<sup>21</sup> In practice this means that the forces have been sent back to their home areas, and official ties with them have been cut. It is notable that, despite this, Thomas Mabior himself remains a political agitator against the SPLM/A; his supporters in the area of Lankien County, Jonglei State have made demands that he, or one of his supporters, be given the post of Commissioner.<sup>22</sup> Political stand-offs of this nature can easily escalate into armed violence as firearms remain in plentiful supply even after supposed 'disarmament'.

Some remnant-SSDF commanders remain steadfast against SPLA rapprochement due to historical and ideological grievances. Some insist that the 1997 Khartoum Agreement, which formed the SSDF umbrella, supersedes the CPA and that the SPLA should be disbanded and replaced by a 'South Sudan Army'. Others cling to tribal or ethnic enmity. Some maintain grievances dating to the first civil war and fighting between various southern guerrilla forces in the late 1970s and early 1980s, particularly those who associated themselves with Anyanya 2.<sup>23</sup> Still others are bitter about the lack of GoSS posts available to them through the Juba Declaration, or the lack of other more general peace dividends that they expected.<sup>24</sup>

This anti-SPLA sentiment is unlikely to change in the near future. However, there does not appear to be any desire among remnant SSDF commanders to return to open conflict with the SPLA prior to the 2011 referendum on southern self-determination. Even Gabriel Tang-Ginya, one of the more troublesome OAG commanders in the eyes of the SPLA and United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), supposedly ordered his followers to wait for the referendum and not to provoke the SPLA in the meantime.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1 Selected Armed Groups operating in South Sudan/South Kordofan

Name	Leader(s)	Alignment	Stated strength	Areas of operation	State	Ethnic group	Remarks
<b>Remnant SSDF groups</b>							
Peace and Development Defence Force	Col. Hassan Deng Malon Deng	SAF	1,100	Meiram	South Kordofan		469 have incorporated into the SAF; 258 are in the Aweil JIU
Fangak Forces	Maj.-Gen. Gabriel Tang Shan	SAF	1,200–1,500	Fangak	Jonglei	Nuer	
El Nasser faction	Maj.-Gen. Gordon Kong Chol	SAF	500–1,000	Ketbek, Olang, El Doma, El Nasser, Akoka, Fanmadid, Rom	Upper Nile	Nuer	
Renk faction	Brig. Mohamed Chol Al-Ahmar	SAF	650 (old figure, no current data)	Renk, Shomdi, Al Mansura, Goy Fammi, Wadakona, Al Tuba Al Ghabsha, Matimar, Kaka, Fayiwar	Upper Nile	Dinka	
Mading Forces	Lt.-Col. Peter Tuaj	SAF	300 (old figure, no current data)	Mading, Baljok, Mayor, Forinang	Upper Nile	Nuer	
Abyei Forces	Thomas Thiel	SAF	Unknown	Abyei	South Kordofan		Appears to be working with the SAF unit north of Abyei (not verified)
<b>Other armed groups</b>							
Quwat Al Fursan	Hamden Ahmed Almunin	SAF	1,250–1,475	Raja	Western Bahr El Ghazal	Arabic speaking groups from South Darfur	According to SAF not OAG; SPLA disagrees
Peace Defence Forces	Maj.-Gen. Atom Al-Nour, Col. Peter Beaku	SAF	300–400	Wau, Tonj, Raja	Western Bahr El Ghazal	Fertit and Balanda	Two groups (Dalil's and Zein's) reported by OAG CC SC in November 2007, 153 and 150 respectively in Raja area, SAF aligned–participated in SAF disarmament
Al Fursan Forces Raja Division	Al-Haj Basheer Mawein	SPLA	2,025	Raja, Babelo	Western Bahr El Ghazal	Arabic speaking groups from South Darfur	Aligned with SPLA in April 2007
Debab Forces	Brig. Hassan Hamid Saleh, Col. Albatel Kabro	SPLA	1,511 out of 2,121 verified by UNMIS in September 2007	Debab, Kharasana, Bajayea, Dandur, Abu Sofifa, Takona (Unity State)	South Kordofan	Misseriya	Former Popular Defence Forces (PDF); some have reportedly redeployed to Pariang but UNMIS has not verified this. Recruiting from former PDF, mostly rural/nomadic Misseriya 571 troops verified by UNMIS as having redeployed to Kharasana
Abu Matrig Forces		SPLA	611 out of stated forces strength 2,500 verified by UNMIS in October 2007	Abu Matrig, Safaha	South Darfur	South Darfur groups and some from South Kordofan	837 troops verified by UNMIS as having redeployed to Safaha

## Ongoing OAG incorporation challenges

While the CPA and the Juba Declaration forced former OAGs to join either the SAF or the SPLA, in reality their new hosts were in many ways unprepared to receive them. At the same time, although most OAG members agreed to abide by the agreements rather than fight, they were not particularly inclined towards integration. The following are among the most serious challenges facing the integration process:

*Finance issues.* The burden on the SPLA of absorbing and accommodating tens of thousands of former OAG members has stretched its finances to breaking point. Ex-SSDF members in Juba rioted in December 2006 when salaries had not been paid for many months. While some commanders have enjoyed more consistent supplies, notably those closest to Malakal, others have suffered from a lack of even basic foodstuffs.<sup>26</sup>

*Rank assignments.* Problems related to rank assignments, skills, and experience of the new members have persisted.<sup>27</sup> For instance, Paulino Matieb's forces consisted of exceedingly large numbers of over-promoted senior officers who have proven difficult for the SPLA to place as it is already top-heavy in terms of its previously existing officer corps.<sup>28</sup>

*Redeployment issues.* Many former OAG members routinely refuse to redeploy out of their home areas. They prefer to stay in places where they have a support structure and influence—and where they can also provoke local tensions. At the same time, those troops that do redeploy often have to wait a considerable time for their equipment and supplies to reach them. The SAF has arguably been more consistent in the provisioning of former OAGs.

*Mutual suspicion.* SPLA soldiers and mid-ranking officers often lack respect for the former OAG members being incorporated, in part due to their illiteracy and low levels of education. At the same time, many former OAG members do not wish to mix with their new SPLA colleagues, who are often from ethnic groups that are traditional enemies. This results in a mutual lack of trust and constitutes a security risk for the SPLA as it is enhancing and exacerbating already existing tensions within its rank-and-file.

*Favouritism.* In the view of the rank-and-file former OAG members, their officers are being well treated, having become senior GoSS or SPLA members, while they themselves are sidelined. Those officers and commanders who have not received high-level posts, whether military or civilian, remain frustrated, with both their former comrades and new leaders.

*Fear of DDR.* The formal disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process for the SAF, the SPLA, and aligned groups has been beset with problems, but remains a key part of the CPA-mandated peace process. As part of this, many former OAG members will be expected to return to civilian life, but confidence is low in their ability to 'reintegrate' into communities where economic opportunities are extremely poor.<sup>29</sup>

In brief, both sides of the integration process (the hosts—the SAF and the SPLA—and the former OAGs) are experiencing resistance and frustration. Many former OAG members feel that the parties have engaged disrespectfully with them, in particular by declaring them illegal. In light of this, it is safe to assume that they may be very susceptible to alternatives to integration, such as rearming and remobilization, should the opportunity arise. This situation will be particularly problematic in the political environment of the upcoming elections scheduled for 2009 and the 2011 referendum. Since these (former) armed groups in many cases represent political constituencies, by not effectively co-opting them the SPLM, in particular, will face serious political challenges. The current problematic integration process exacerbates this lack of trust and frustration.

## Armed proxies: tribal militias and paramilitary forces

### Abyei / South Kordofan

Tribal groups in the border 'Transitional Areas' probably pose a greater threat to the CPA than the remnant SSDF in the South. Many observers believe they

are receiving support and direction from Khartoum, although this is extremely hard to quantify.

In late December 2007 major fighting erupted in the disputed Abyei area between SPLA forces and Misseriya tribal militias who remained loyal to Khartoum after the end of the war. At issue is the border demarcation process that will determine whether oil-rich areas, which are also prime cattle-grazing areas, are administered by the GNU or GoSS. In July 2005 the Abyei Boundaries Commission (ABC), a CPA-mandated authority, placed a portion of the disputed areas clearly in the South.<sup>30</sup> The SPLM accepted this determination, while Khartoum rejected it. In a dangerous escalation, the SPLM withdrew from the GNU in October 2007, partly over this stalemate, returning in mid-December.<sup>31</sup> Intermittent fighting has continued in the Abyei region since.

The initial spark that led to the fighting was the December 2007 appointment of a Ngok Dinka, Edward Lino, as SPLM Chairperson in Abyei. Salva Kiir made it known that he wished Lino to be appointed Chief Administrator of the area. In response, a group of Misseriya tribesmen calling themselves the Abyei Liberation Front announced that they had appointed a new governor, Mohamed Omar al-Ansari. They demanded that the SPLM stand down and withdraw, or face attack.<sup>32</sup>

A tense stand-off persists today with the Misseriya frequently blocking the road into Abyei and the SPLA preventing Misseriya from moving south along their traditional cattle-grazing routes.<sup>33</sup> A peace pact was secured between the Misseriya and the Dinka Ngok communities on 3 March 2008.<sup>34</sup> However, fighting erupted again on 9 March, and there are indications that the recent violent confrontations have spread into adjacent Unity State.<sup>35</sup> The SPLA continues to claim that SAF officers are directing the fighting.<sup>36</sup> UNMIS has been unable to verify this, being denied access to the areas of concern by both the SPLA and the SAF.

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Table 2 **Misseriya militia strengths and redeployment from Abyei**

	Claimed	UNMIS verified remaining around Abyei	UNMIS verified redeployed	Total UNMIS verified
Debab Forces	2,121	940	571	1,511
Abu Matrig Forces	2,500	289	812	1,101

Sources: 20th Report of CJMC to CPC, dated 17 February 2008; CPC meeting agenda for 18 February 2008.

As in Upper Nile, the SPLM has tried to reach out to its enemies, playing to the frustrations of the Misseriya—and to a lesser extent of the Rizeigat—over the failure of Khartoum to deliver on its development promises. The strategy seems to be working. Some former SAF-aligned militia tribesmen have formed the pro-SPLA Debab Forces (mainly Misseriya) and Abu Matrig Forces (mainly Rizeigat), drawing on disaffected Popular Defence Force paramilitaries.<sup>37</sup> The Misseriya have long interacted, often violently, with the Dinka of Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Fighting between the two groups was a significant feature of the war in the area along the Bahr el Jebel Arab (also known as the River Kiir), which began as confrontations over grazing and water access. (The Rizeigat have similarly taken part in armed conflict further to the west in Darfur and Bahr el Ghazal.) By mid-2007 significant numbers of Misseriya were encamped north of Abyei at Debab and appeared to be awaiting incorporation into the SPLA, while the Abu Matrig Forces were collected to the west similarly awaiting SPLA and GoSS direction.<sup>38</sup>

On 1 November 2007, the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC), the highest Sudanese political body governing the CPA's implementation, called on both the Debab and Abu Matrig Forces to redeploy to South Sudan, since they were understood to be part of the SPLA.<sup>39</sup> Both militias appear to have complied, though to differing degrees. UNMIS found that the Debab Forces moved about 38 per cent of their verified troops to Paraing, Unity State, while the Abu Matrig Forces moved 74 per cent of their men southwards to the Safaha area (not technically in South Sudan; the forces are spread out in an area that straddles the disputed border area south of the town of Safaha).<sup>40</sup> These developments have exacerbated broader national tensions as the SPLM/A rapprochement with previously SAF-aligned South Kordofan

armed groups represents a major shift in power dynamics away from Khartoum in favour of Juba.

Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir has responded to the realignment of the Misseriya by remobilizing, in November 2007, the paramilitary Popular Defence Force in the area.<sup>41</sup> The core of these PDF forces consisted of the soldiers used to back up the authority of the National Islamic Front and Bashir during the war, who were sent to conduct warfare in rural areas along the border between Bahr el Ghazal and South Kordofan.<sup>42</sup> Some of these paramilitaries are reported to have been involved in the fighting with the SPLA in Meirem in December 2007 and February 2008.<sup>43</sup> Overall, with the Popular Defense Forces, the remaining loyal Misseriya tribal militias, and other local groups such as the Peace and Development Defence Force,<sup>44</sup> the SAF still has formidable allies in the region.

The SAF and the National Congress Party (NCP) claim that these forces are not armed groups but government entities, and hence legitimate bodies; the SPLM/A naturally disagrees, and claims that its new Debab Forces allies are not an armed group either. The OAG Collaborative Committee,<sup>45</sup> which last met in September 2007, has yet to convene to discuss the Abyei tensions; a meeting planned for January 2008 did not take place. It appears that neither Khartoum nor Juba is keen to officially resolve the question of whether their respective allied forces are armed groups. Neither are they willing to stem the ongoing proxy fighting. Indeed, given the ongoing political dispute over border demarcation and the eruption of violence between the SPLA and Misseriya tribesmen, Abyei is the 'line in the sand' on which neither Khartoum nor Juba is willing to compromise.

### Bahr el Ghazal

In addition to areas of Abyei and South Kordofan, armed entities also have a

significant presence in Western Bahr el Ghazal. Of particular significance are the SAF-aligned Quwat Al Fursan Forces based in Raja under the command of Hamden Ahmed Almunin. The stated size of the Quwat Al Fursan Force is 5,000, but UNMIS estimates it at between 1,250 and 1,475.<sup>46</sup> This force is opposed by the Al Fursan Forces Raja Division, previously a sister militia of the Quwat Al Fursan. It boasts 2,000 members dispersed around Raja and Babelo, in the far north of Western Bahr el Ghazal, under the command of Alhaj Beshir Mawin. The Raja Division of the Al Fursan Forces aligned with the SPLA in April 2007, purportedly over a lack of material support from Khartoum and the government's failure to deliver on promises made over the long years of civil war.<sup>47</sup>

The growing, factionalizing militia presence in northern Western Bahr el Ghazal and increasing conflict in South Kordofan are particularly worrisome as they provide potential linkages between South Sudan tensions and the conflict in Darfur. Increased numbers of Darfur rebels—from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)—have been moving between South Darfur into south-western South Kordofan and at times further south into Bahr el Ghazal.<sup>48</sup> SPLM/A outreach to previously SAF-aligned armed groups could also allow it greater influence in the Darfur conflict, which the SPLM/A has long been involved with in various capacities. This is a likely concern of the SAF and the NCP given historical linkages between the Darfurians and armed groups from Kordofan.<sup>49</sup>

The above developments present significant challenges to CPA implementation in both South Kordofan and Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states. In this context, the continued presence of armed groups in both areas, as well as potential linkages to the ongoing Darfur conflict, are extremely dangerous.

### Closing reflections

The majority of OAG ex-combatants who took part in the civil war remain only marginally integrated into the SPLA and the SAF. These ex-OAG members, such as the many SSDF who have switched allegiances, must deal with a range of challenges, including

the mistrust of their colleagues and delayed salaries. In their current position, they will certainly look to keep their options open, and to remain susceptible to whatever other opportunities may arise. Even among the pool of ex-fighters who have shown a willingness to cooperate, their patience cannot last forever.

Outside this pool of former OAG members who are complying with the integration process are those who remain unaligned or retain their ties with Khartoum, technically operating illegally in South Sudan. For now they do not present a significant security threat but could easily become one in the future. Most threatening of all are the forces being used by both sides to engage in proxy fighting in disputed areas. It is clear that they are being supported in one way or another by either side, and that their continued use as proxies is a disturbing sign—a return in many ways to the patterns of the civil war. Indeed, there is an active struggle between the two armies for the allegiance of new potential allies; and many unemployed ex-combatants are willing to fight and to switch sides, depending on who is offering more support.

How this contest unfolds in the near future will be decisive for the peace process, not only in and around the North–South border areas, though they are undoubtedly the hottest flashpoints, but throughout South Sudan. The parties to the CPA as well as the international community must recognize the hazards in allowing this situation to continue. Proxy fighting was a hallmark of the civil war, and its recent escalation in the post-CPA period is a bad omen, not only for long-term implementation of the CPA but also for the security of communities across Sudan. ■

## Notes

*This Issue Brief was based on research by Matthew Arnold and Matthew LeRiche. Matthew Arnold is a Ph.D. candidate at the London School of Economics; Matthew LeRiche is a Ph.D. candidate at King's College London.*

- 1 See Small Arms Survey (2006a).
- 2 See Small Arms Survey (2006b).
- 3 See Small Arms Survey (2006b).
- 4 See CPA, Chapter 6, Annexure I, Section 11.3, page 100. Full text available at <http://

- www.unmis.org/English/documents/cpa-en.pdf>.
- 5 Note that the CPA had mandated a deadline of 9 January 2006 but this was extended until 9 March 2006 and has since been extended for 'special cases' that have emerged since the CPA was signed, in particular the Debab and Abu Matrig Forces.
  - 6 Note that the OAGs themselves were not a party to the agreement and, therefore, had no say in the matter.
  - 7 See Young (2006).
  - 8 The OAG Collaborative Committee concluded that about 2,000 of Ismael Konye's men had been 'out of existence' on 1 August 2007; 1,470 of Sultan Abdul Bagi's men were confirmed on 28 August 2007 as having 'joined' the SPLA. See Arnold and Alden (2007).
  - 9 UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) working document obtained from confidential source.
  - 10 This follows an agreement between Konye and the SPLA/GoSS and is not part of formal disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR).
  - 11 UNMIS internal report 'Present Situation of OAGs as of January 2007'. The presentation details the split in Bagi's forces.
  - 12 Reports from UNMIS Area Joint Monitoring Committee (AJMC) and others indicate that some have been incorporated into the SAF Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) component while others have become SPLA-aligned. See also Young (2006), pp. 22–23.
  - 13 UNMIS presentation to the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC), 'Overview of Security and CPA Implementation in Ceasefire Zone'. From CJMC meeting on 5 March 2007.
  - 14 The South Sudan Democratic Front (SSDF) was officially launched on 24 September 2007 in Khartoum out of the 'political wings' of the South Sudan Defence Force, namely, the South Sudan United Democratic Alliance and the South Sudan Democratic Front (*Sudan Tribune*, 2007a). Major General Gordon Kong and David Chand, a South Sudanese academic who lives and works in the United States, are the primary organizers of the party. Interview with David Chand, Khartoum, 18 November 2007.
  - 15 See Small Arms Survey (2008).
  - 16 Assessment and Evaluation Commission (2007), p. 62.
  - 17 Interview with Gabriel Tang-Ginya, Khartoum, 20 November 2007.
  - 18 Assessment and Evaluation Commission (2007), p. 62.
  - 19 As of March 2008, SAF had deployed 44,952 troops from South Sudan (including 8,919 voluntarily demobilized soldiers), 97.8 per cent of the number originally stated to be located there. UNMIS had verified 10,490 SAF in South Sudan as part of the JIUs; this will eventually rise to 12,000 (UNMIS, 2008, pp. 29, 31).
  - 20 Arnold (2007), p. 494.
  - 21 Interview with UNMIS monitor, Juba, 14 November 2007.
  - 22 Interview with UNMIS monitor, Khartoum, 5 March 2008.
  - 23 Anyanya 2 refers to various rebel groups who were opposing the GoS by force at the same time as John Garang launched the SPLA in 1983. Some had arrived in Ethiopia earlier than Garang and competed with Garang for the support of Ethiopia's former ruler, Mengistu Haile Mariam (and lost).
  - 24 Arnold (2007), p. 498.
  - 25 Interview with Gabriel Tang-Ginya, Khartoum, 20 November 2007. Tang-Ginya said: 'I have told them to be calm and we will be quiet until the referendum and elections when we'll decide what to do next'.
  - 26 Arnold (2007), p. 505.
  - 27 See Young (2006).
  - 28 Even as late as late 2007, some of Paulino Matieb's generals were yet recognized by the SPLA. The SPLA demanded that they go through an extended acceptance process, which Matieb rejected as contrary to the terms of the Juba Declaration.
  - 29 A forthcoming HSBA publication will focus exclusively on DDR of combatants in North and South Sudan.
  - 30 Abyei Boundaries Commission (2005), pp. 20–23.
  - 31 For more on the SPLM's withdrawal from the GNU, see Vuni (2007).
  - 32 *Sudan Tribune* (2008c).
  - 33 *Sudan Tribune* (2008a).
  - 34 'Report of Meeting Between The Dinka and Misseriya', Annex to 'UNMIS AJMC Meeting Decision Points Sector 6', 4 March 2008.
  - 35 *Sudan Tribune* (2008d).
  - 36 Sudan First Vice President Salva Kiir accused the National Congress Party (NCP) and the SAF of direct involvement (*Sudan Tribune*, 2008b).
  - 37 For more on the Popular Defence Forces, see Salmon (2007).
  - 38 (ICG, 2007, p. 6).
  - 39 (*Sudan Tribune*, 2007b).
  - 40 Telephone interview with UNMIS official in Khartoum, 9 March 2008.
  - 41 AFP (2007).
  - 42 While the core of the force was made up of recruits from urban centres who had not previously been involved in militia activity, the PDF was also made up of various militias from Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Kordofan, and South Darfur. These included components of many of the Debab, Abu Matrig, as well as other Rizeigat militia such as the Al Fursan Forces from Ed Daien in Darfur and the Fertit forces from Wau in Bahr el Ghazal. The relationship between the PDF and tribal militias has been relatively fluid over the years; they have worked alongside one another, as well as maintaining separate identities. See Salmon (2007), p. 14.
  - 43 A UN Development Programme (UNDP) source interviewed on 6 March 2008 indicated that PDF badges had been collected on the battlefield and that the bodies of senior SAF and PDF officers were found, both in December 2007 and in the last week of February 2008. Fighting in Meirem was reported by the Area Joint Monitoring Committee (AJMC) Meeting Decision Points.
  - 44 Interestingly, the pro-Khartoum Peace and Development Defence Force (Misseriya Brigade) under Col. Hassan Deng, claiming 1,100 troops, reportedly did not participate in the fighting. UNMIS Sector 6 briefing notes, 14 April 2007.

- 45 The body established to oversee OAG integration.
- 46 Confidential UNMIS document tracking the evolution of armed forces obtained by the authors.
- 47 'Our forces were working side by side with SAF protecting the country and its sanctuaries since it was established in 1990. Until today, we are not getting any care or appreciation for all the effort being made and the rights being guaranteed in the implementation of the CPA by marginalisation from SAF.' Al Fursan Forces Raja Division press release, April 2007.
- 48 Interviews with JEM and SLA sources, Juba, 24 November 2007.
- 49 Telephone interview with UNMIS source, Khartoum, 5 March 2008.

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## HSBA project summary

The Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) is a three-year research project (2005–08) administered by the Small Arms Survey. It has been developed in cooperation with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the UN Mission in Sudan, the UN Development Programme, and a wide array of international and Sudanese NGO partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely empirical research, the HSBA project works to support disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), and arms control interventions to promote security. The assessment is being carried out by a multidisciplinary team of regional, security, and public health specialists. It reviews the spatial distribution of armed violence throughout Sudan and offers policy-relevant advice to redress insecurity.

*Sudan Issue Briefs* are designed to provide periodic snapshots of baseline information. Future briefs will focus on a variety of issues, including the militarization of the Nuba mountains region of South Kordofan. The HSBA also generates a series of timely and user-friendly working papers in English and Arabic, available at [www.smallarmssurvey.org/sudan](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sudan).

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