

Changing Forms of Violence among Agro-Pastoral Societies in Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan

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Abstract:

Violent incidents among Agro-Pastoral societies in present day Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan have been chronic. Since the 1970s the scale of violence and the number of incidents have undoubtedly increased. The civil war in the region since 1985 greatly influenced the pattern of violence. It was not only the dissemination of automatic weapons (AK47) that were supplied both by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), but also the presence of a variety of armies and shifting alliances that changed the quantity and nature of violent incidents. Multi-layered and shifting dividing lines were created in a society and between societies. It is significant to note that the CPA (2005), which put an end to the civil war, did not curtail the cases of violent incidents. Those incidents are generally called "cattle raiding/rustling" by policymakers. This categorization is, indeed, misleading and does not capture the realities and complexities of violent incidents. In this presentation, I will try to contextualize and classify violent incidents in Eastern Equatoria, by shedding light on internal and external factors, so that we may reach a better understanding.