GAP Assessment of South Sudan Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms in in Western Bhar El Gazal, Warrap and Eastern Equatoria State

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or its Peace and Community Cohesion Project (PaCC).

ACRONYMS

AQ	Assessment Questions
AT	Assessment Team
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning Network
CEWERS	Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System
CEWERU	Conflict Early Warning and Response Unit
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPRM	County Peace Response Mechanism
EAC	East African Community
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IOM	International Organization for Immigration of the United Nations
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation
PaCC	Peace and Community Cohesion Project
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SSPRC	South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission
ST	Situation Room
STT	State Technical Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
WHO	World Health Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Sudan faces a rapidly evolving landscape of violence that threatens community cohesion, political stability, and peacebuilding gains. Complex intercommunal conflict, and weak state capacity has necessitated the need for the strengthen of early warning mechanisms to mitigate extreme violence. One of the objectives of the UNDP-KOICA "Building Resilience and Community Empowerment for Peace (BRACE4PEACE)" initiative (2024–2027) a regional programme aimed at strengthening community resilience to violent extremism, hate speech, and disinformation in Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan is to enhance the operationalization of 13 national and community-level mechanisms for Violent Extremism, early warning and early response in target communities. Early warning and response systems offer the chance for conflict resolution interventions to be used promptly and reliably at different stages of a dispute. However, the functioning of the early warning and response system faces significant challenges which range from insufficient personnel and financial resources, poor timing, inadequate monitoring of the changing circumstances surrounding inter-communal conflict, and a lack of effective means of coordination. The project therefore commissions a gap assessment of the early warning system in 10 project locations in South Sudan, to identify where gap exists, and provide coordinating agencies and policymakers at different levels of government with data on what the gaps are, and how best to coordinate, and design interventions that address the challenges.

The purpose of this assessment was to identify gaps in the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Systems (CEWERS) in ten (10) Counties. These include Jur River County of Western Bahr El Ghazal State, Tonj North, Tonj South, Tonj East, Gogriel East Counties of Warrap State, and Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta East, Kapoeta South, and Ikotos Counties in Eastern Equatoria State. Two team from the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission (SSPRC) visited each county to assess the gaps in the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System (CEWERS), and to understand their impact on early response. The assessment interrogated what gaps have contributed to or exacerbated the slow response to the alerts issued by Peace Committees and County Peace Response Mechanism (CPRM) members. The assessment then makes recommendations to inform the SSPRC on ways to shape its response strategy to conflict issues reported across the country. This also includes the ability of SSPRC to coordinate early response to reported conflict issues timely and effectively. The assessment provides the necessary information needed to inform future design of effective early warning systems, timely interventions in conflict situations, and strengthen timely county-level prompt response.

According to the findings from the gap assessment, some areas already have established CPRMs which are within the jurisdiction of the County Commissioners' Office, and they operate very well. In Eastern Equatoria State, five counties (Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta South, Ikotos, and Kapoeta East) have established CEWERS and it is operating effectively. They have also received trainings on the "AlertMe" Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mobile Application. Some of the peace actors or members of the CPRMs have, however, lost or misplaced their gadgets, while others got spoiled by heavy rain. Only a few mobile applications are operating currently by CPRM members. The CPRMs also received several training courses from the different peace stakeholders on the CEWERS. Whilst some CPRMs are collecting data, other CPRM members are sharing conflict data with their Local Administrators and with the Situation Room in Juba. On CPRMs members supporting dialogues, most CPRM members are involved in promoting dialogue and mediating local and cross border conflict

with the neighboring communities. The CPRMs facilitated the Toposa dialogue with the Turkana of Kenya in Turkana land. CPRMs members also supported victims of Gender Base Violence (GBV), by providing counseling services and facilitating access to justice for victims. Western Bahr El Ghazal and Warrap States on the other hand had no established CPRMs in the Counties. However, Peace Committees are established in the Counties and are working with several stakeholders to promote dialogue and social cohesion. The most common activities they carry out include, peace campaign, dialogues, supporting youth and women peace initiatives, and support the formation of peace clubs and sports for peace activities.

80% of respondents in Eastern Equatoria and Jur River County reported existing but under-supported Early Warning and Early Response Systems that require further training, logistics, and equipment such as functional mobile phone, quality office spaces, means of mobility such as vehicles, bicycles, airtime, stipend incentives, office equipment's, and report writing skills. Reported challenges include poor phone quality, insufficient early response resources from local authorities, and limited data accessibility due to insecurity. Key identified gaps are coordination, slow response due to capacity limitations, poor communication (weak networks), reliance on unpaid volunteers, lack of livelihood support for peace committees, lack of solar chargers for phones provided to the CPRMs, insufficient number of phones for use by CPRMs in reporting to the Situation Room and lack confidentiality issues with the old radio system.

According to the findings, all the ten counties selected for the gap assessment have different but similar conflict dynamics. These include cattle rustling, cattle theft, child abduction, inter communal conflict, revenge killings, gender-based violence and cattle migration related conflicts. Most of the conflicts reported are resourced-based conflicts, as most of the population are living below the poverty line. The lack of basic quality education at the lower level, high rate of illiteracy amongst the population, and prevalence of political manipulation makes the population susceptible to violence. The unstable political situation in Juba is also misinterpreted at the sub-national level, adding a multiplier effect on violent conflicts at the sub-national level. Therefore, building a strong early warning and early response system at the county level will minimize some of these conflicts.

Demographic information

The assessment targeted 3,180 individuals (1,131F, 1,697M) including 35 people with disabilities. The age range of the respondents is between 18-60 years old. According to the 2008 census, the population of Warrap State is estimated at 920,045. However, the 2021 population estimate survey data released by the Bureau of Statistics publish on April 8th, 2023, by Eye Radio puts Warrap State population at 2.6 million people – an increase of 1.6 million people from the 2008 population and housing census. In Eastern Equatoria State, the same population census estimate survey conducted from May-June 2021 put the population at 982,000, whilst in Western Bhar El Gazal State, the population is estimated at 562,000 people. These figures however do not include more than 2 million South Sudanese refugees, according to the chair of the Bureau of Statistics. Therefore, the gap assessment in all 10 KOICA project locations targets 0.08% of an estimated 4,144,000 people in all 10 locations of the three states – Warrap, Western Bhar El Gazal and Eastern Equatoria.

Methodology of gap assessment

To reach an adequate sample size in all 10 locations, the assessment consisted of two teams. One team went to Western Bahr El Ghazal State's Jur River County and Warrap State's Counties of Tonj North, Tonj South, Tonj East and Gogrial East; whilst another team went to Eastern Equatoria State's Counties of Magwi, Torit, Ikotos, Kapoeta East and South. The data collection and assessment methods used are focus group discussions, and key informant interviews through direct administration of questionnaires. To analyze the gap assessment data gathered, data analysis is centered around information accuracy, timeliness of warnings, response effectiveness, and community engagement, ensuring a holistic and people-centered approach. The gap assessment findings are analyzed under key thematic areas, namely: Data collection and analysis; warning generation and dissemination, response capacity and effectiveness, community engagement and participation, system sustainability and long-term planning. The main assessment question was: "What were the gaps in the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Systems that affected timely response to conflict? To answer this question, the team obtain responses through media monitoring and literature review; in-depth interviews with stakeholders and key informants; telephone interview with the CPRM members; interview with County authorities and peacebuilding stakeholders in the ten Counties, interviews with local chiefs, persons living with disabilities, farmers, herders, youth and women, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with similar identified groups.

BACKGROUND

South Sudan became a signatory to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Conflict Early Warning and Response Network (IGAD-CEWARN) protocol after independence in 2011, in which South Sudan committed to establish a National Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit. After independence in 2011, South Sudan's early warning systems contributed to greater understanding of the conflict and increased public awareness of it. It outlined the conflict's root causes, potential escalation triggers, people perceptions, cycle of violence, and potential conflict resolution strategies. Due to early warning systems, mitigating South Sudan's conflict was greatly improved. However, South Sudan's Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms (CEWERMs') ability to perform their duties effectively was hampered by a lack of sufficient personnel and financial resources, poor response timing, inadequate monitoring of the changing circumstances surrounding inter-communal conflict, and a lack of effective means of coordination. The IGAD-CEWARN protocol is set up as part of the SSPRC. Therefore, in May 2012, the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit (CEWERU) was launched in South Sudan with a view to strengthening conflict early warning and early response mechanisms. In the same 2012, the SSPRC was re-established by an Act of Parliament. ''The South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission's Act 2012''. CEWERU is "an indicator-based early warning system which focuses on cross border, inter-state, communal and pastoral related conflicts, monitoring specific factors of conflict, and identifying response mechanisms to promote pre-emptive resolution and peace. The system is vital for preventing unforeseen circumstances that may result in violence. This provides a better approach for governance in relation to conflict prevention, clearly pledging South Sudan government's commitment to support the conflict early warning and response system in country.

South Sudan CEWERU constitutes the National Steering Committee (selected from SSPRC, the military, Police, National Security, faith-based group, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) and Parliament), State Technical Team (STT) and County Peace Response Mechanism (CPRM). The establishment of the CEWERU came as a response to the civil war, and multiple internal and regional security challenges which necessitated a nation-wide capacity to anticipate and act pro-actively to prevent violent conflicts in the country. A strategic plan was developed covering the period 2015-2018 to fast track this commitment. The strategy aimed at widening monitoring and promoted information sharing and conflict prevention mechanisms in South Sudan. Specifically, the strategy aimed at ensuring that CEWERMs structures including STT, CPRMs and Peace Committees identify and analyze the risks of potential violent conflicts more consistently; strengthens and establish partnerships with National Research Institutions. It further envisioned having the CEWER structures developed and executed more timely responses to violent conflicts; and that SSPRC takes a lead role to improve coordination among diverse stakeholders to mitigate violent conflict. In the last seven years, SSPRC, through its CEWERU, has been working in partnership with UNDP Peace and Community Cohesion project in maintaining peace at the grass roots through various mitigation methods. In this partnership, the SSPRC was able to establish and train Peace Committees in five States of Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria, including Lakes, Jonglei and GPAA. The main objective of CEWERU is to prevent and mitigate conflict before escalation into violence by providing quality conflict data to the response institutions for early and timely response to save lives of innocent women, children and people living with disabilities, and to strive to improve community coexistence. However, the CEWERMs have faced significant challenges despite their progress. The massive geographic scope, complex pattern and

dynamics of the conflict environment, limited funding, and lack of timely and effective conflict prevention and mitigation responses has affected the effective functioning of the South Sudan CEWERMs. The CEWERMs inability to effectively keep up with conflict developments (climate insecurity, displacement, refugee crisis and inter-communal conflict) and formulate accurate/timely responses were negatively impacted by poor inter-agency coordination. As a result, a gap assessment is needed to provide coordinating agencies and South Sudan's policymakers at various levels of governance with information on what the real CEWERMs gaps are, and, how best to coordinate and address the challenges to achieve an effective state and national level coordination of CEWERMs activities.

Composition of the National Steering Committee for Early Warning and Early Response at National Level

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The National Assembly
- The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs channels cross border conflict to IGAD

Composition of the Early Warning and Response Technical Team at the State Level

- The Office of the State Governor
- Ministry of Peacebuilding
- South Sudan Relief Rehabilitation and Reintegration Commission
- State Member of Parliament
- Security organs
- Academia

MAIN FINDINGS

Data collection, analysis, and Information accuracy

In Western Bhar El Gazal, Eastern Equatoria and Warrap State, peace committees, media houses, NGOs, CSOs, and religious leaders were identified as key stakeholders who often report accurate conflict scenarios and potential conflict cases to local authorities and state government officials. Information on conflict causes, patterns and trends presented by these stakeholders are reported to be accurate in almost all conflict cases reported to county authorities. The Situation Room in Juba is the national level mechanism in place for verifying the accuracy and timeliness of the data received from CPRMs. The CPRMs are well trained across the various locations they exist. This accounts for the sufficient expertise for data collection and analysis by the Situation Room. Despite this progress, there are cases of data gaps. The Peace Committees, local leaders and CPRMs are the mechanism in place for addressing data gaps through verification of data and providing update on missing information. However, data gaps in conflict cases exist in some locations.

Warning generation and dissemination

In Western Bhar El Gazal, Eastern Equatoria and Warrap State, 20% of people interviewed reported that early conflict warnings are generated and disseminated timely by Peace Committees, whilst 80% of people felt that early warning information on potential conflict cases are not disseminated widely by CPRMs and Peace Committees for local chiefs, communities and government stakeholders to take preventive action. In all 10 locations, people felt that early warnings are not communicated effectively to the local authorities. Early warnings are also not tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of diverse groups. Channels for disseminating early warnings are also limited because of the absence of mobile network and radio communications in the counties of Warrap State. Some communities do not always understand early warning information because there are no mechanisms for feedback from the communities receiving the early warning. Most often, conflict issues are downplayed until an incident occurs that is deadly.

Response capacity and effectiveness

In Warrap State, early response capacity is very weak. This is because there are no CPRMs in the entire State. Tong East is the only County where CPRM is about to be set up. The mobile Application that will be used by the CPRMs has been provided by KOICA. The Mobile Application will begin to feed the National Situation Room with data that will increase response capacity and effectiveness of local leaders and state government authorities to intervene and prevent conflict timely.

In Western Bhar El Gazal, SSPRC in collaboration with IOM have trained one (1) CPRM in Jur River County. The operations of CPRM, which is made up of five members, are being funded by IOM. The CPRMs response capacity to conflict is reportedly effective.

In Eastern Equatoria State, all the five counties - Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta South, Ikotos, and Kapoeta East have well established CPRMs in the office of the County Commissioners. However, in Ikotos county, CPRM members are few and many have migrated, thereby reducing the effectiveness of early warning response.

Community engagement and participation in CEWERMs

Communities in all 10 Counties participate in the response mechanism to early warning. Each community's early warning and response structure includes Payam Chief, County Commissioner and State Governor. These local response structures are linked to the national level Steering Committee on Early Warning and Response. A member of parliament at state level is represented in all functional Peace Committees that exist in the ten locations. However, a considerable number of local level actors such as youth leaders, women leaders, Payam Administrators, Boma chiefs, leaders of cattle camp, security representatives from the state government are not fully engaged in the participation of conflict early warning and early response. In addition, these types of community stakeholders do not understand their roles and responsibilities in responding to early warnings, nor have they been empowered with any logistics to take action on early warning, unless for specific cases when the State Governor may set a committee and send security forces to mitigate a particular conflict. Additionally, the Peace Committees are the only mechanism available for integrating local knowledge and perspective into early response mechanisms. There is a huge capacity gap for integrating local level best practices and approaches, suggestions and recommendations into the State or national level response approaches. This makes it difficult for inter-communal conflicts to be mitigated timely and sustainably.

Early warning system sustainability and long-term planning

Whilst the CPRMs, Situation Room, Mobile Apps and Peace Committees are functioning well in areas such as Jur River, Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta South, and Kapoeta East, their long-term sustainability depends on security, sub-national level infrastructural development (communications, access to health care, education resources, available means of livelihood, increased road network), and dedicated sources of incentives. Currently, sustainability and long-term planning of early warning systems across the ten locations is minimal largely due to the absence of basic facilities to enable long-term planning and functions. Currently, the SSPRC is advocating all peace partners, donors, and stakeholders to develop plans to support infrastructural development in areas of education, communication, health care and livelihoods, to grow in parallel with CEWERMs to situate CEWERMs to remain sustainable in changing conditions and risk.

The dominant Early Warning Response Structure across Jur River of Western Bahr El Ghazal State, Tonj North, Tonj South, Tonj East, Gogriel East of Warrap State, and Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta East, Kapoeta South, Ikotos Counties in Eastern Equatoria State are:

The State Governor → County Commissioner → State Member of Parliament → Payam Chief → Peace Committees

Mapping of Early Warning and Response Gaps Per County and Boma

County	Boma	Types of conflict drivers reported	By whom?	To whom?	Response action taken	Reasons why early response was possible	Types of conflict not responded to and key implication	Reasons why early response was not possible and key implication
Jur river	Bakdwa	Cattle Raids Theft cases Competition over grazing land Revenge killings SALW proliferation Unemployment	Peace Committees Media houses	Local authorities State Governor	The two State Administration of Warrap and Northern Bahr EL Ghazal. resolve the dispute, through the seasonal migration policy instituted.	Communities have a widely understood local agreement on the seasonal cattle migration session.	The political tension between the parties to the peace agreement. SALW proliferation Cases of unemployment that lead to conflict.	The number of political conflicts was not specified due to the data gap. The implication is that insecurity will keep increasing, making humanitarian and economic activities difficult.
Tong South	Manyang gob	Cattle raids. Political differences Conflicts over grazing land Robbery along the highways Revenge killings SALW proliferation	Peace Committees Religious leaders CSOs	County Commissioner Payam Administrator Boma Administrator	A security patrol has been put in place. Culprit arrested are punished. Disarmament effort instituted	The relationship between the two states is good. Early response was quick because economically, Warrap State depends on western Bahr el Ghazal. Traders from Warrap always buy goods from Wau.	SALW proliferation Cases of unemployment	Conflict drivers are politically motivated, making conflict drivers to be deeply rooted in the communities

Tong East	Mayen-Ador	Cattle raiding Revenge killings Theft SALW proliferation Dispute over grazing lands	Peace Committees	County Commissioner	The state government passed laws that are against revenge killings	Early response was not possible because there are no funds to carry out dialogues	SALW proliferation Cases of unemployment	SALW proliferation is creating untold fear amongst communities, deterring them from taking decisive action.
Tong North	Akook Lou Mawien Ariik	Administrative conflicts over Payam name Revenge killing Communal conflicts over grazing land	Peace Committees CSOs NGOs	County Commissioner	Laws and action for arresting cattle raiders are in place. Fines are also instituted for cattle raids, in addition to 7 years of imprisonment.	Active law enforcement by state and county authorities Community leaders are quick to mobilize their communities for dialogue	Recurring revenge killings	Unhealed trauma Unforgiveness Deeply rooted culture of revenge in the communities
Gogrial East	Makol cuei	Armed robbery Land dispute over grazing Cattle raids Inter-communal violence Revenge attacks	CSOs Peace Committees	County Commissioner	Dialogue and reconciliation	Timely mobilization of communities for dialogue	Recurring inter-communal conflict	Poor road network makes it difficult to respond on time to conflicts at Boma and Payam level

Eastern Equatoria

County	Boma	Types of conflict reported	By whom?	To whom?	Response action taken	Reasons why early response was possible	Types of conflict not responded to and key implication	Reasons why early response was not possible and key implication
Magwi	Agoro Omeo Ayii	Conflict over Grazing Land Lack of social cohesion between farmers and herders	CPRM	County Commissioner	The government responded by advising the cattle keepers to Go back to their area of origin. Government and Chinese Embassy gave food and first aid kit.	The conflict was becoming violent and sporadic. This led to a proactive response by the State Government.	Social cohesion and peaceful co-existence. This has the potential to reignite return to conflict.	This was not possible due to the visibility of heavy weapons amongst the cattle herders
Torit	Hiyala Bur Himodonge	Cattle raids Revenge attack, Child abduction and road ambushes	Peace Committee	State Technical Team	Mediation efforts were carried out by the CPRM and Peace Committee No effort made by any institution.	Timely reporting of conflict by Peace Committee Accuracy of conflict data and conflict prediction.	Child abduction Road ambushes The implication of not responding to these conflicts will spiral cycle of revenge attacks.	The state government lacks early warning response funding to initiate dialogue. Emergency funding for early response is unavailable. This will limit future early response action.
Ikotos	Romula Boma in Chorokol Payam. Lomohidang and Losite	Cattle raids Revenge attacks	CPRM	County Commissioner	State government responded by arresting the culprits	Adequate political will Functioning rule of law approach	Cattle raiding. This will continue to promote revenge attacks	Early response is not possible largely due to the presence of small arms amongst civilians.

Kapoeta South		Inter-communal clashes over cattle and access to water point. Insecure road connection between Kapoeta South and Torit	CPRM and Peace Committee	County Commissioner. State Governor	State government increase security in the area	Adequate political will. Institution of rule of law	Insecurity along the Torit – Kapoeta South Road	Proliferation of small arms in civilian hands. Intense presence of armed groups. The consequence of untimely response is fuelling insecurity.
Kapoeta East	Kayto Nadapal	Cross border cattle raids. Child abduction	CPRM	County Commissioner and State Governor	Government recovered a number of cows from the cattle raiders and facilitated the return of abducted children and women. CPRM carry out dialogue with Turkana in Loduar Kenya border	Joint effort by State Governor and County Commissioner	The border demarcation at the Ilemi triangle	The border demarcation requires political will. Disarmament is required.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Limitations and challenges of existing institutions responsible for responding to early warning cases: Warrap State and Jur River County

List of institutions responsible for early response	Advantages	Limitations or challenges	Recommendation for improvement
State Governments	Because of the presence of governments structures from state, County, Payam and Boma level.	Lack of funds	Formation of Early Warning System in the Counties. There are no CPRMs in Tonj South, Tonj East, Tonj North, Gogrial East, Gogrial West, and Twic. Plans are underway to establish CPRMs in Tong East, Kuajok and Twic County.
UN agencies	Provides support to early warning structures	UN is involved in early warning, however, do not make decisions on government-led responses.	UN needs to increase advisory and advocacy role.
CSOs	Community based	Lack of funding	CSOs should be funded specifically for early response. A conflict early response fund basket needs to be established.
Peace Committees	Locally selected by their communities	Logistical facilitation and training required	Training in CPRMs is needed

Limitations and challenges of existing institutions responsible for responding to early warning cases: Eastern Equatoria State

List of institutions responsible for early response	Advantages	Limitations or challenges	Recommendation for improvement
Government	Have capacity for early response through deployment of security forces	Response capacity is irregular, couple with lack of funds and logistics.	Government should lobby and solicit for the establishment of early warning and early response funds.
Catholic Church	Wide coverage of response	They only utilized Sunday prayer sessions to dialogue and resolve conflict issues.	Religious leaders need to be more involved in regular dialogues
CEPO	Advocacy	Presence is not frequent.	Need to increase advocacy
ICPDO	Coordination	They do not cover the whole state.	They need more funding for wider coverage
Traditional Institutions	Have capacity for early response	They lack logistics for mobility	Government/partners need to provide them with means of mobility
UN agencies	Provide resources	UN is involved in early warning, however, do not make decisions on government-led responses.	UN need to increase advisory and advocacy role

Existing potential for early warning and early response to be effective in all ten Counties

- The presence and availability of the State Government
- Trained CPRMs
- Exsiting Peace Committees
- Community infrastructures for peace
- Availability of minimal telecommunication network

List of Key Gaps in the CEWERMs:

- Lack of CPRMs in some counties
- Lack of access to some areas due to insecurity
- No means of mobility for CPRMs, Peace Committees and traditional infrastructures for peace to cover vast areas
- Lack of infrastructural and development dividend to drive sustainability of early warning response.
- Lack of dedicated funds to support early response activities at Boma and Payam level
- No clearly define action plan and resource mobilization plan for early response
- Mechanisms for disseminating early warning and feedback on improvement of early response is absent
- CPRMs data collectors lack electricity for charging phones sending conflict data to the Situation Room in Juba. CRPMs members need airtime for SMS to be sent.
- Alert Me App Technology is limited. The App lacks Airtime and access to internet

Summary of challenges faced by the Gap Assessment Team

The gap assessment team experienced limitations in its methodology. Whilst the gap assessment methodology was adequate, the focus group discussions and key informant interview lacked time for probing into problem-solving and critical thinking questions and analysis from each member of the CRPM. Additionally, time constraints caused a lack of flexibility to the questionnaire, which limits findings on individual learning styles and adaptability techniques on addressing early warning concerns. The gap assessment team faced significant challenges in their effort to assess conflict early warning gaps: Lack of adequate mobility to reach vast areas and distant locations, insecurity which affects access and data collection, slow response in the submission of response to questionnaires, and lack of support from local authorities are key challenges experienced. Finally, many respondents shifted away from reporting on the challenges faced with the CEWERMs, to focus on the humanitarian and development crisis faced by IDPs, returnees and host communities in the ten locations.

CONCLUSION

Majority of respondents say that CEWERMs were introduced and operational in their areas. However, CPRMs and Peace Committees in Eastern Equatoria Counties, and Jur River County only require some support in terms of further training and equipment's such as bicycles/motorbikes for mobility, airtime for their phones and some monthly incentives. In those Counties, some of the Peace Committee members who were trained and given phones for conflict reporting complained about the poor quality of the mobile phones. They reported that the phones cannot keep charged power for a long time. CPRMs and Peace Committee members also complained about the insufficient action of local authorities in early response. The Peace Committees also are not able to access data from some areas due to insecurity. A notable example is from the Northern part of Ikotos and most parts of Tonj East. The significant challenges faced by Peace Committee members and CRPMs during early warning data collection and reporting to the Situation Room in Juba across the ten locations is the absence of electricity and alternative means of generating electrical power, the lack of sufficient airtime to coordinate meetings with wider stakeholders, and to operate the Mobile Phones with Alert Me App, mobility challenges and the low education level of designated early warning data collectors and informant. Through the KOICA project in South Sudan, UNDP and SSPRC with Support from the Korean International Cooperation Agency, CPRMs in Tong East and Ikotos Counties will be trained and provided with solar charger kits to address the downside of electricity challenges to the CEWERMs. In addition, new mobile phones have been procured for the training of CPRMs and their reporting to the Situation Room in Juba. In summary, in all ten locations the CEWERMs were assessed, the common gaps that cut across all the locations include: 1. Coordination gap. There is a loose connection between the different actors at various levels. 2. Slow response. This is due to capacity gaps amongst the response institutions. 3. Poor communication network. The telephone network is weak at some locations, mostly in the hotspots areas. 4. Most of the data providers are volunteers. They do not commit dedicated time to early warning data collection. 5. The telephones provided for "Alert Me" apps do not have solar chargers. 6. The phones approved were insufficient for all the CPRM members. 7. Lack of confidentiality with the use of high frequency radios; and 8. Lack of mobility means to cover vast areas.

RECOMMENDATION

To: South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission or Government

- Harness and invest in digital technologies to aid early warning and early response in conflict hot spot areas.
- Establish a dedicated state-level budget for early response interventions.
- Develop and fund a five-year county-level early response plan and budget for each county in Warrap State, Eastern Equatoria State, Western Bhar El Gazal State, and other conflict hotspots areas.
- Enhance the capacity of women in early warning data analysis and reporting.

To: UNDP

- Continue to provide capacity building support to peace actors, CPRMs, Peace Committees, religious leaders and traditional leaders.
- Continue to strengthen the capacity of county, payam and boma institutions responsible for early warning response.
- Provide support to the procurement of communication gadgets to enhance data collection and reporting.
- Support with the provision of vehicles/bicycle/motorbikes to improve access to key locations for early response and data collection.

Figure 1: Gender disaggregated data of persons interviewed during the gap assessment mission.

No	ADULT		Youth Under 18 years	Person living with disabilities	IDPs	Returnees	Grand Total
	Male	630	805	21	120 (15M)	81 (70 F)	1,657
	Female	501	892	14	105F	11M	1,523
	Total	1,131	1,697	35	240	162	3,180

Figure 2: Mapping of ongoing conflict dynamics across the ten locations assessed, including early response gap

No	Locations	Type of conflict	Action by CEWERMs
1	Tonj South Nyamlel	Inter-communal conflict	Conducting mitigation advocacy
2	Border conflict between Kapoeta East and Lokichokio Community in Kenya	Cross-border conflict	The CPRM continue to promote dialogues in Lokichokio town of Kenya
3	Gogrial East Ayien and Twic	Land/Border Conflict between Gogrial East and Twic.	The State Technical Team of the CEWERMs in Warrap is conducting advocacy for peaceful coexistence.
4	Kapoeta South Camp 15 Intercommunal Conflicts	Inter-communal conflict	Effort by the CPRM to bring peace in Camp 15 is ongoing.
5	Presence of cattle along Juba-Nimule highway, Aru Junction, Obama and Jebelen causing displacement, sexual abuse of women and arson in the areas	Land and cattle related inter-communal conflict	Peace advocacy. Capacity to mitigate conflict is limited.
6	Poor civil-military relations between local communities and military in Magwi	Deteriorating civil-military relations due to lack of trust and accusation of taking sides with cattle keepers.	Peace advocacy. Capacity to mitigate conflict is limited
7	Tonj East versus Unity State conflict of grazing lands	Inter-communal conflicts over grazing land	Peace advocacy. No CPRMs to assist with mitigation.
8	Kapoeta East Toposa versus Turkana of Kenya	Cross-border cattle conflict	Advocacy. Capacity to mitigate conflict is limited.
9	Magwi Acholi verses cattle herders from Jonglei	Inter-communal conflict between farmers and cattle keepers	Advocacy. Capacity to mitigate conflict is limited
10	Jur river County communities versus cattle keepers from Tonj North County in Warrap State	Inter-communal conflict between farmers and cattle keepers	Advocacy. CPRMs are coordinating with peace actors to promote peaceful cattle migration.
11	Ambush along Kapoeta and Torit	Insecurity	Peace advocacy. Capacity to mitigate insecurity is limited
12	Logir versus Longo in Ikotos cattle conflict	Inter-communal conflict over cattle raiding	Peace advocacy. Capacity to mitigate insecurity is limited

13	Cattle raids between Tonj East and Agar/Pakam of Rumbek North	Inter-communal conflict over cattle raiding	Peace advocacy. Capacity to mitigate insecurity is limited
14	Ngomoromo border dispute between Magwi and Northern Uganda.	Border-dispute	Peace Advocacy. CPRM is working with the state government to resolve the dispute.
15	Land disputes between Gogrial East and Twic.	Land dispute	Capacity to mitigate insecurity is limited
16	GPAA versus Kapoeta East inter-communal conflict	Cattle raids and Child abduction	Capacity to mitigate insecurity is limited

Figure 3: Cumulative number of conflicts reported to the Situation Room Mechanism from November 2024 to April 2025

Number of Conflict Incidences Reported to the National Situation Room and Response Provided

- 3, 3%
- 43, 50% — Conflict incidences reported
- 40, 47% — Conflict incidences resolved
- Conflict incidences inresolved