

# Inter-Communal Governance Structures

Jonglei and GPAA

## COMMUNIQUÉ

Meeting #2023-01 | 18 – 21 July 2023 | Juba

### Context

The Pieri Agreement of March 2021 envisaged three inter-communal governance structures of Youth (s 3.5), Traditional Chiefs (s 4.3) and Women (s 5.6). The first meeting took place in October 2021, and a second meeting in December 2021. A deterioration of trust and confidence prevented further meetings from taking place in 2022.

Significant violence at the end of 2022 led to a process of community re-engagement to assess communities' willingness to renew engagement in dialogue and collective inter-communal governance. Through these consultations, communities affirmed the value of these engagements in principle, and non-governmental partners agreed their in principle support to renewal of the inter-communal governance structures - as a recourse for addressing community issues without resort to violence, and as a linchpin of community accountability and collective decision-making over intervention priorities.

The inter-communal governance structures (ICGS) met in Juba from 18 - 21 July for the first time since December 2021, with a renewed focus on credible next steps (actions) towards peace and accountability at the community level. The meeting was attended by community leaders from all 11 counties of the tri-communal border area: Bor South, Twic East, Duk, Ayod, Uror, Nyirol, Akobo, Lekuangle, Verthet, Pibor and Gumuruk.

### Actions

#### Youth

Agreed to disseminate the messages from the ICGS meeting in their respective counties, including through meetings with youth in the County Headquarters, as well as in each of the payams. This process will start from Monday 24 July and be completed by 08 August.

Agreed to participate in inter-communal exchange visits among themselves, to help coordinate key actions as well as to coordinate the response to criminal attacks. This will begin from September 2023.

Agreed to steward and coordinate youth centres in key border area locations as regular points of contact and engagement among inter-communal youth.

Agreed to take responsibility for road safety patrols that increase community confidence in infrastructure as a safe means of movement for humanitarian aid, community members, and commercial goods.

Agreed to participate in feeder road clearance and waterway clearance from October 2023 - January 2024, to support improved physical movement between key locations.

In addition,

Youth request communications support to enable direct channels between the youth leaders themselves, in support of information sharing, clarification, and relationship building.

## **Women**

Agreed that significant process was made during this ICGS meeting and wish to continue momentum.

Agreed to disseminate the discussions of the ICGS through community structures at their level.

Agreed to sustained communications directly between each other as ICGS representatives, to strengthen trust, share accurate information, and develop the quality of their advocacy on key issues affecting the community, in particular relating to the elimination of abductions of women and children. As individuals, each member committed to the reporting of any abducted women and children they are made aware of in their community.

Agreed to meet again within the next six weeks (before the next ICGS meeting), to define more clearly their role in accountability processes, discuss progress and challenges with dissemination and women's strategies for peace. The meeting will take place in Pibor.

Agreed that each Greater Area will nominate a chairlady to act as a focal point in ongoing engagements.

In addition,

The women requested to have a uniform that would identify them as the women's representatives, both for visibility and security.

## **Chiefs**

Agreed to visit every payam in their county, together with county commissioners, to disseminate outcomes of the ICGS meeting, and will request commitments to stop violence, cattle-raiding and abductions from each payam.

Agreed to carry out consultations and discussions on the structure, composition and jurisdiction on an inter-communal accountability mechanism, and commit to report back on details in the next ICGS meeting.

Agreed to identify, collect and release abducted women and children without payment and coordinate with the government to arrange for the safe return to their Counties.

Agreed to monitor incidents of inter-communal violence and crimes, as well as (planned or ongoing) mobilisation or movements of youths, and inform each other.

Agreed to identify crucial road connections between communities and develop strategies on how to open them in coordination with youths and partners.

In addition,

The Chiefs request a follow-up meeting in Kadiang to discuss results of consultations and discussions with commissioners and communities, progress on the identification and collection of abductees, and initiate the development of a joint set of customary laws to be applied by the inter-communal accountability mechanism.

The Chiefs request that the written communique must remain the reference point for dissemination in the community, so that the messages remain consistent through-out the different communities.

The Chiefs request that, as those responsible for decisions relating to the community, they receive the necessary logistical office support.

## Commissioners

Agreed to uphold peace and to support the implementation of ICGS agreements by having regular meetings with chief, women, and youth representatives to receive and discuss progress on implementation of actions from the inter-communal governance structures meeting.

Agreed to support ICGS decisions on accountability by:

- issuing media statement calling communities to stop abductions and reaffirming the illegality of requesting money in exchange for the return of abductees
- holding perpetrators of abductions, cattle raids, and revenge killings, as well as those requesting money in exchange for returning abductees accountable, including by arresting them and transferring them to Bor

Agreed to collectively disseminate peace messages in all the 11 counties as a symbol of commitment to the signed revitalized agreement,

Agreed to have regular engagements with each other, including through phone calls and online meetings with partner support.

Agreed to support fair, transparent selection of locations and allocation of beneficiaries of livelihoods and community development interventions in four border corridors, considering counties not on the borderlines.

Agreed to support the peaceful resolution of any disputes that may arise between youth beneficiaries in the border areas.

In addition:

The Commissioners called on the state and national government to support recruitment, training, equipping and feeding of border police to enhance commissioners role in executing their constitutional task,

The Commissioners called on partners to fully support commissioners as frontline service providers, and to support them to address their mobility and communications challenges.

The Commissioners called for the unconditional opening of Bor and Managala roads, to ensure safe movement and protection of traders.

The Commissioners called on state government to ensure political stability by refraining from frequent removal and replacement of county commissioners

## Partners

Partners have outlined their commitment to follow-up and support with the following:

- Community-based participatory planning processes for community development activities in the agreed border areas.
- Implementation of community development and livelihoods activities in the four identified inter-communal border corridors, specifically targeting rural youth and women
- Local community meetings by members of the ICGS. The level of resources for this will be confirmed in the coming two weeks.
- Logistical support to facilitate the decisions identified above, at a minimum:
  - the first youth exchanges, to be reviewed and then further exchanges to be supported if all are in agreement;

- the women's structure follow-up meeting to deepen conversations on advocacy, accountability, and resilience for women.
- On-the-ground engagements with chiefs to clarify foundations of an emerging traditional accountability mechanism.
- Further investments will be explored at the next ICGS meeting.

Partners will explore options to support with the following suggestions and will provide feedback by the time of the next ICGS:

- The integration of work opportunities for youth who are not in the identified border areas to ensure an equitable and conflict sensitive approach.
- A community-level communication and coordination system that will ensure the ability of communities to have effective, direct communication.

### **Accountability**

All structures, including partners, are expected to fulfil the commitments outlined above and will be held accountable to progress at the next ICGS meeting.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting of the ICGS will take place in three months, the venue to be determined by the communities.