




# Human Security Survey 2022 Annual Summary Report


Greater Yirol (Lakes State), South Sudan

By Anton Quist & Abdullatif Sleibi

[protectionofcivilians.org](https://protectionofcivilians.org)

## Main recommendations to local authorities, UNMISS, and NGOs/CSOs

 **Continued support for the local Dinka-Nuer peace agreement** | The 2018 peace agreement between the Dinka of Yirol and the Nuer of Payinjiar has been sustainable despite some hurdles, and has led to observable improvements in perceived physical security in addition to improved relations with the neighboring Payinjiar community. Testament to this are the many Payinjiar IDPs who fled the floods in their home area and found a refuge in and around Yirol while relying on local resources as humanitarian assistance barely reached them. To sustain the relevance of the agreement and continue the upward trend in security, peace dividends should continue to deliver in terms of access to basic needs (roads, schools, clinics) and improved livelihoods (job creation, agriculture, markets). **Therefore, national, state and county government, with assistance from UNMISS and NGOs/CSOs should develop concrete and realistic plans for gradual economic and infrastructure development in the area to sustain the current stability.**

 **Creation of the necessary conditions for voluntary communal disarmament** | Traditionally, the support for communal disarmament is extensive in Greater Yirol, with the area seeing a variety of disarmament campaigns over the last couple of years. However, the results were often mixed as community members were urged, sometimes pressured into handing over their guns. Moreover, assurances for future security provision were incomplete or local communities felt insecure due to neighboring communities not (yet) being disarmed. Therefore, a focus on voluntary disarmament, evenly distributed across counties and states, and addressing the capabilities of law enforcement actors as the alternative for self-protection strategies, have to be pursued in unison. **National and state governments, supported by UNMISS and NGOs/CSOs, should develop plans and policies to create these necessary conditions for voluntary communal disarmament, in continuous and direct engagement with community leaders and law enforcement actors.**

 **Investment in a social contract** | Even though levels of communal violence have significantly gone down, the threat of communal violence still remains and tensions can flare up easily. When this is coupled with the existence of strong armed youth militias and other self-protection mechanisms in remote payams, this means that formal law enforcement across Greater Yirol is still relatively inadequate in number and capability. To improve security levels, **local authorities and NGOs should start lobbying for, and designing, programs aimed at establishing a stronger social contract between communities and local authorities, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of traditional chiefs and police in security and justice provision.**



## HUMAN SECURITY SURVEY: INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY



### About us & contact

The Human Security Survey (HSS) is a unique survey methodology developed by PAX, that includes a series of complementary activities, including population-based research, active community engagement, and advocacy. The objectives of the HSS are: 1) to increase knowledge and understanding of local human security dynamics and trends; 2) to enhance the 'claim-making capacity' of civilians to hold security providers and decision-makers accountable; and 3) to inform evidence-based advocacy that enables (inter)national stakeholders to design and implement protection activities that reflect local realities. PAX currently implements the HSS in South Sudan in close collaboration with local field partners on the ground, such as Assistance Mission in Africa (AMA) in Greater Yirol. For more information, please visit <https://protectionofcivilians.org/topics/human-security-survey/> or contact Anton Quist (quist@paxforpeace.nl).



### Facts & figures

In August 2022, **14** local enumerators were trained and deployed to the field, where they collected **582** surveys across the counties of **Yirol West**, **Yirol East** and **Awerial** in Lakes State. This report summarizes the community perceptions and security dynamics observed during the 5th round of data collection in the area since 2017, collected in August-September 2022, and presented during a community validation session in March 2023. This survey therefore reflects on the security situation in mid 2021- 2022 (until August). The sample consisted of **94.5%** Dinka population. Three-quarters of respondents were women and half of them earned their livelihood as farmers. Almost half of respondents (**47%**) were between 16-30 years of age, and **85%** between the ages of 16-45.



## MAIN SECURITY DYNAMICS OBSERVED

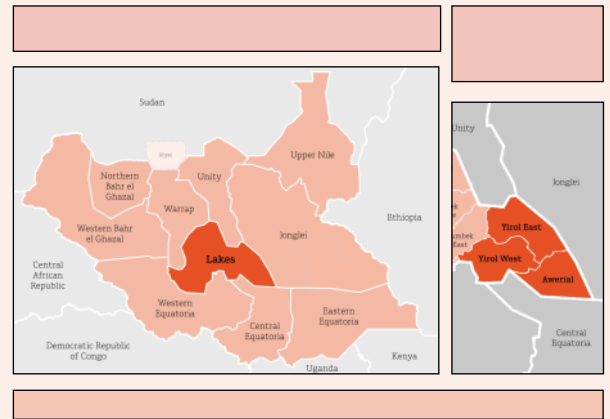


Perceived security developments across Greater Yirol show a very clear picture of improvement. More than two-thirds of respondents (**69%**) consider their environment to be 'very safe', while an additional quarter considers it 'somewhat safe'. Nevertheless, these results are not

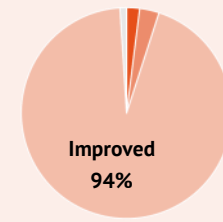
consistent across counties. Variation ranges from **49%** selecting 'very safe' and **40%** selecting 'somewhat safe' in Yirol East County, to **76%** of respondents selecting 'very safe' and **24%** selecting 'somewhat safe' in Awerial County. Furthermore, **94%** of respondents reported that the security situation over the past year (2021-2022) had improved and only **2%** said security had deteriorated. Back in 2020, just over half (**51%**) of



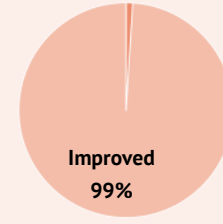
Left: Map of South Sudan. Right: Map of Awerial, Yirol East & Yirol West counties, highlighting the areas surveyed in 2022. Disclaimer: These maps are intended for illustrative purposes only and do not warrant accuracy or completeness, nor do they imply the expression of any opinion by PAX.



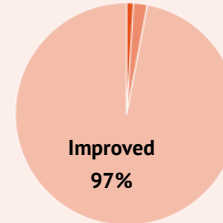
### HOW DID YOUR PERSONAL SECURITY SITUATION CHANGE SINCE LAST YEAR?



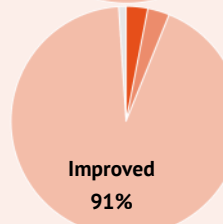
Improved  
94%



Improved  
99%



Improved  
97%



Improved  
91%

Greater Yirol

Awerial County

(N = 84)

Yirol East

(N = 166)

Yirol West






(N = 332)

respondents thought that security in the previous year (2019-2020) had improved and more than a quarter (27%) indicated that security deteriorated. Perceived security improvements were reported throughout Greater Yiol, ranging from 91% in Yiol West to 99% in Aerial County. In addition, 79% of respondents indicated that they generally feel safe in their own community, while 20% said they do not. Additionally, 79% of respondents indicated that they feel less exposed to violence, crime or harassment. These improvements are mainly attributed to improved security provision by the Lakes State government of Governor Rin Tueny, who is said to be clear and tough on quelling crime and intercommunal violence in the wider context of a peace agreement with the neighboring Nuer of Payinjar County, Unity State.

**Communities across Greater Yiol observed distinct changes in weather conditions and their local environment.** Most notably, these changes include: less predictable rainfall (28% of respondents), changes in the duration of the rainy/dry season (24%), and increased drought (21%). Only 2% said they did not experience any of the said changes. As community members explained during the validation: *“Nowadays it is hotter around this time of year [March, AQ], with the first rains only coming in June and no longer in April. We used to plant young crops around this time too, but the recent droughts are drying them up. When the rains finally come, they are often much heavier, destroying the newly planted crops. This has happened two years in a row now.”*

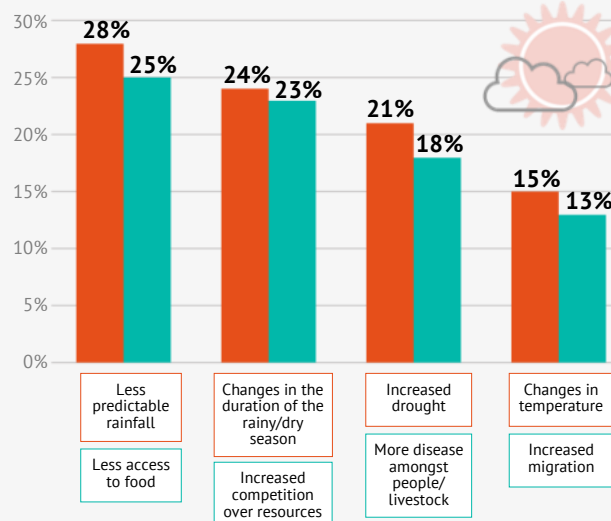
**48%** Households reported at least one security threat in the previous year [569 total incidents]

**MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED INCIDENTS**  
(percentage of respondents reporting an incident in Greater Yiol)

31%	Cattle raiding	
15%	Forced marriage	
12%	Physical assault	
11%	Murder	
11%	Robbery	

According to survey results, the aforementioned environmental and climatic changes lead to a number of consequences. These include: less access to food (25% of respondents), more competition over scarce resources (23%), and more diseases (18%). Community

**WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES HAVE YOU OBSERVED?**



**WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THESE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES?**

representatives mentioned that the floods in neighboring Jonglei and Unity states have created a flow of IDPs to Greater Yiol, with Jonglei IDPs arriving in Aerial County and Unity IDPs in Yiol West and Yiol East. Especially the latter, from a community with whom the Yiol communities share a peace agreement since 2018, are bringing their cattle which sometimes leads to additional tensions that have to be managed by local authorities: *“When Yiol people recognize their cows that were previously raided, or they see someone who has previously killed, the local government actively discourage this being reported or revenge being taken. Instead they say: let’s not re-ignite conflict, bygones are bygones, this is a new chapter. Until now there have not been any conflicts with the IDPs.”* Resembling this hospitality to the IDPs living in their midst, 15% of respondents say that their families and community leaders agree to share their resources with neighboring communities in times of shortages. Most respondents (30%) hope that NGOs can teach them new practices or livelihood alternatives to deal with environmental challenges, while 22% said that local authorities should be able to address environmental changes. Restrictions to the cutting of trees for charcoal production was also suggested, as well as planting new trees.

**48% of all surveyed households reported at least one security incident affecting them during 2021-2022.** The three most frequently reported security incidents were cattle raids (31% of respondents), forced marriages (15%), and physical assault (12%). All reported incidents showed a (huge) decrease in frequency compared to the Greater Yiol data of 2020, confirming the community perception of security improvements. The reported

security incidents mostly affected adult men (according to **55%** of respondents) and were largely blamed on a varied mix of local armed youth militia (**19%**), criminals (**17%**) people from neighboring communities (**17%**), people from within the community (**14%**), and family members (**12%**).



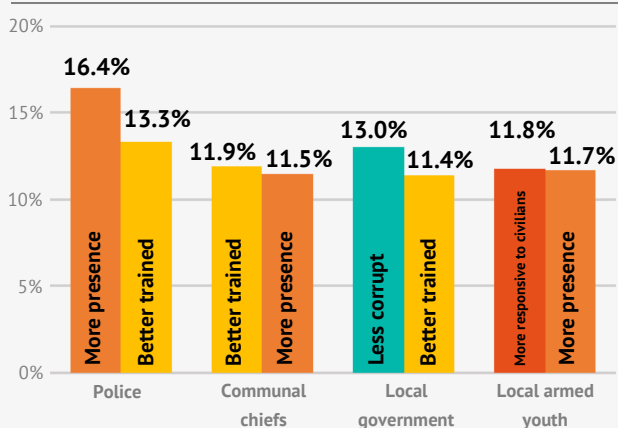
**64% of the respondents indicated that they reported at least one of the security incidents they experienced to an outside actor.** which most often proved out to be the police (**28%**), local community leaders or chiefs (**25%**), and local government officials (**15%**), among others. More than half (**56%**) of the respondents reporting their cases were not satisfied with the resolution by these actors, because the perpetrators of the incidents were not caught (**25%**), stolen goods, cattle or abducted people were not returned (**17%**), no compensation for losses was offered (**16%**), or the perpetrator not being punished (**14%**), among other less mentioned reasons. During validation, representatives of police aimed to convince the ethereal **36%** of respondents who did not report their incidents that “*they should report to police and let us do our service*”.



**The most accessible security actors across Greater Yirol were reported to be as follows:** the police (**30%**), communal chiefs (**21%**), local government officials or Commissioners (**16%**) and local armed youth (**10%**). All four of these main local security actors are considered to be performing well according to **85%** of respondents (police), **92%** (communal chiefs), **90%** (local government officials) and **76%** (local armed youth) of respondents respectively. When asked about what is needed to improve performances of the most accessible security actors, community members thought that the police should have a higher (numerical) presence (**16.4%** of respondents), they need (more) training (**13.3%**), they need higher salaries (**9.1%**), and they should be better armed/equipped (**9.0%**). When



WHAT IS NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS ACTOR (TOP TWO RECOMENDATIONS)



communal chiefs are concerned, community members request that they receive further training (**11.9%**), that they have a higher (numerical) presence (**11.5%**) and that they be more responsive towards civilian needs (**9.9%**), as the most prominent recommendations. Additionally, **81%** of respondents think that the police take reports from community members seriously and are helpful in resolving them. Altogether, the police saw signs of improvement: in 2021 and prior, civilians were better armed, and they were less accepting of the police/formal security forces. Mobility also improved through the upgrading of roads and infrastructure.



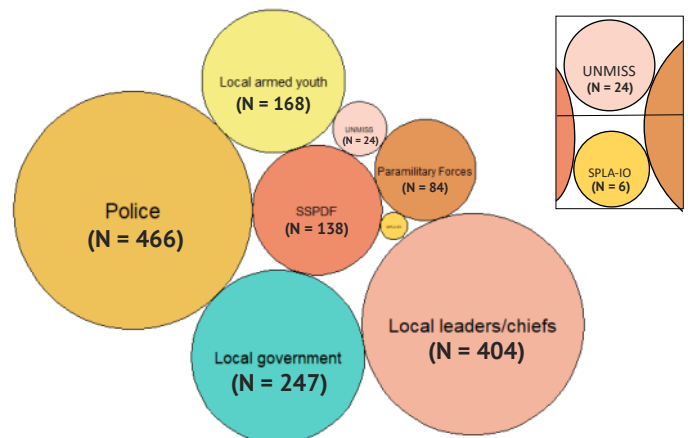
**Youth representatives expressed significant struggles when attempting to join formal security outfits.** Representatives claimed during the validation that many of the youth would like to join the police, but information about recruitment and hiring is limited to closed-off networks, without transparency or open applications. This was contested by police officers, saying they could join tomorrow if they wanted. In addition, it was claimed that police salaries are too small to attract and retain young recruits. Years of recession and inflation have made their local SSP salaries worthless. Even in cases of official transfers, nothing is arranged and police officers often have to sustain themselves (food, accommodation). Beyond this, more women are also requested to join the police force (as noted by **85%** of respondents) to help address security issues facing women. On this note, it was reported that the Heads of both the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) and Traffic Police in Awerial County are women.



**When asked about resolving local disputes and incidents, 70% of respondents indicated that dispute resolution is best handled by local chiefs rather than the state court system.** When discussing this topic during the validation participants explained that dispute resolution in practice depends on the nature of the crime: crimes like homicide are dealt with by formal



Is this security actor present in your community?



state courts, while communal disputes are covered by communal chiefs. However, the formal state court system is delayed in judgement as there are huge case backlogs, creating negative consequences like overcrowded prisons.



**Youth representatives were seen to complain of a peculiar practice by Greater Yirol police: arresting and jailing of parents or family members because of a youth's crime.** During the validation session, community youth members requested that this practice be stopped. Police representatives responded by saying they do this "to prevent escalation between family clans, as the relatives of an eloped girl will not seek revenge if we have already arrested and jailed the boy's family." The youth remained dissatisfied with the practice "that happens only here, because in other areas where the youth commit a crime, their family members will not be arrested and put in jail."



**Support for communal disarmament (phrased in the survey as whether "disarmament of civilians is needed for security") is preferred by 85% over self-protection ("people need arms to provide their own security", 13%).** Moreover, 80% think it is important for civilians to meet with members of local government and the organized forces (security actors) to advocate for better protection in their community. Half of respondents (48.8%) agree that "in my payam we trust local armed youth for our security more than any security actors from outside", while the other half (49.0%) disagrees. Similarly, two-thirds (64%) of respondents think that security in their community is contingent on police presence, while a third (34%) think that security provision is contingent on armed youth. Over half (56%) of respondents agree that "it is best when security forces are recruited from outside the community, as they do not take sides", while 42% prefer security forces to be recruited from within their own community. However, the position of armed youth was criticized during the validation ("armed youth used to do good during freedom struggle with SPLA, but since 2013 everything turned upside down and now they attack their neighbors and loot"). Additionally, the State government has supposedly forbidden the police from working with 'gelwang' (armed youth) in security provision. Other validation participants praised the accessibility of armed youth: "Local armed youth are not bad. They are my cousins, and will help me when someone takes my cows or goats. I can rely on them. They are bad for the culprits, but not for us [community members]."

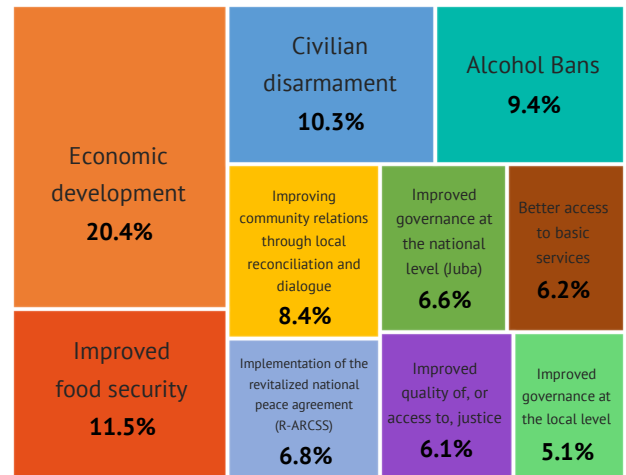


**According to community members, the main change needed to prevent future violent conflict is economic development (20%).** Conversely, the main factors which may cause continued conflict, were poverty or lack of livelihood opportunities (21%), competition over

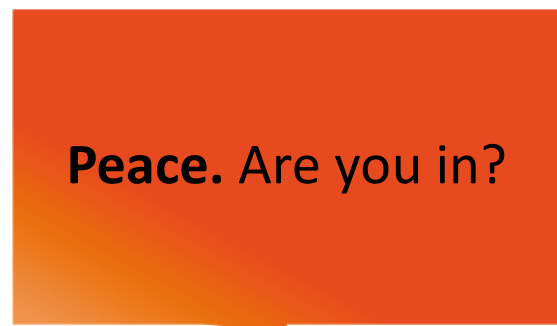
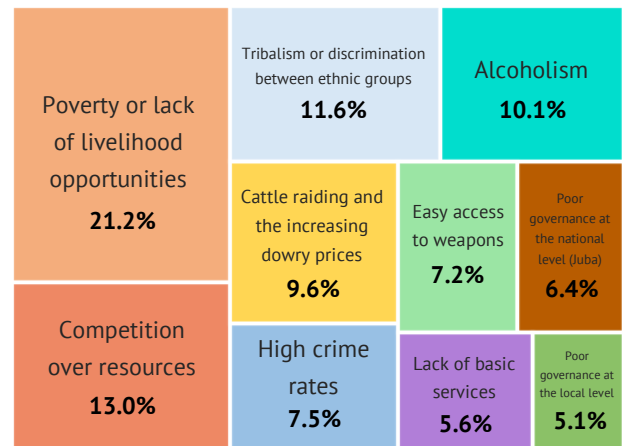
resources (13%), tribalism or discrimination between ethnic groups (12%), cattle raiding and increasing dowry prices (10%), among other less mentioned factors. Lastly, two-thirds (69%) of respondents expect the security situation to improve in the next year (93% in Awerial County), while 16% expect it to remain the same and only 3% think security will get worse.



### [10] Changes needed for lasting peace:



### [10] Factors that may cause further conflict:



This project is supported by the **Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs** as part of its foreign development policy.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs