

SOUTH SUDAN

*Schools were destroyed, damaged and looted by armed groups and armed forces during inter-communal violence and border incursions during 2009-2013. Dozens of schools were used for military purposes, some for up to five years.*¹⁴²⁷

CONTEXT

South Sudan gained independence in July 2011.¹⁴²⁸ However, cross-border skirmishes and inter-communal violence continued to pose threats to civilians. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) also launched sporadic incursions and abduction raids during the first half of the reporting period. An internal conflict broke out between rebels and the government in December 2013, leading to killings along ethnic lines.

Two decades of civil war prior to its independence from Sudan greatly hindered the development of the education system. Schools were occupied and damaged or destroyed, teachers and students displaced and children abducted or forcibly recruited by both sides.¹⁴²⁹

Gross enrolment was 64 per cent at primary level and 6 per cent at secondary level in 2012.¹⁴³⁰ Protracted conflict has left South Sudan with an adult literacy rate of only 27 per cent.¹⁴³¹

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

Attacks on schools became less frequent after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, but some school buildings were damaged or destroyed during inter-communal violence, LRA activity and incursions along the contested border with Sudan during 2009-2012.

In one incident, during fighting between Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces and cattle-keepers in Warrap state in March 2010, four schools were destroyed.¹⁴³² Thirteen schools were set on fire during inter-ethnic fighting in Jonglei state from late 2011 to early 2012.¹⁴³³

From July 2009 to February 2012, the UN verified two attacks on schools by the LRA.¹⁴³⁴

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

Before independence, there were a few isolated attacks on students and education officials by the LRA in Southern Sudan. For instance, in Tambura county, Western Equatoria, in 2010, the LRA killed two state education ministry officials,¹⁴³⁵ and in a separate incident abducted three children between the ages of 8 and 15 from schools during raids on villages.¹⁴³⁶ The LRA also abducted five children from a school in the same county in February 2011.¹⁴³⁷

Several student protests were met with excessive use of force and resulted in arrest, injury and, in one case, death. For instance, at a school in Central Equatoria state on 28 December 2009, anti-riot police shot and killed a 16-year-old who was taking part in a demonstration against the non-payment of teachers.¹⁴³⁸ Two people, including a teacher, were wounded when police used live ammunition to break up a protest at Juba Day Secondary School over an alleged land-grab of school property in October 2012.¹⁴³⁹

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

Primary and secondary schools were used by armed forces, often with the consent of local authorities, either for temporary accommodation while travelling, or as a base for operations against rebel

militia or in response to inter-communal violence. Mostly, schools were used temporarily but some were used for up to five years.¹⁴⁴⁰ According to the Education Cluster, the cost of rehabilitating a primary school after a period of military use was approximately 200,000 South Sudanese Pounds (USD 64,500).¹⁴⁴¹

Between 2011 and 2012, 34 schools were used for military purposes, affecting 28,209 learners across nine states.¹⁴⁴² For example, the SPLA was reported to have used two schools as places to torture suspects in 2010.¹⁴⁴³ At Kuerboani Primary School, in Unity state, soldiers occupied the school at night while children used the same facilities during the day. UN staff witnessed children using classrooms where weapons and grenades were stored.¹⁴⁴⁴ By December 2012, 15 of the 18 schools occupied that year were vacated.¹⁴⁴⁵

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Military use and looting of Upper Nile University were recorded during clashes between South Sudanese government forces and a militia group in Malakal in early 2009.¹⁴⁴⁶

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

Despite successful advocacy efforts resulting in a number of schools being vacated, military use was consistently documented throughout the first three quarters of 2013.¹⁴⁴⁷ Negotiations resulted in the vacating of most schools occupied by the SPLA by the end of 2012; however, the first quarter of 2013 saw a rise in incidence, with the SPLA using 16 of the 18 schools occupied in Jonglei, Western Bahr el Gazal and Lakes states by the end of March.¹⁴⁴⁸ During the month of May, two schools were newly occupied by the SPLA in Jonglei state, though vacated shortly thereafter, and three schools were

occupied and vacated by Auxiliary Police in Eastern Equatoria state; while six schools were vacated in Jonglei, Lakes and Western Bahr el Gazal, seven remained occupied.¹⁴⁴⁹ The number continued to fluctuate¹⁴⁵⁰ but, by the end of September, armed forces were using at least six schools.¹⁴⁵¹ However, on 14 August, the SPLA issued an order prohibiting its forces from recruiting or using children or occupying or using schools in any manner.¹⁴⁵²

Fighting between ethnic Murle rebels from the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army (SSDM/A) and the SPLA in Pibor county, Jonglei state, resulted in the looting and damage of schools in April and May.¹⁴⁵³ Human Rights Watch reported the looting of at least three schools and the destruction of classroom materials; the majority of these actions were said to have been carried out by the SPLA. Soldiers also reportedly destroyed a school in the Labrab area.¹⁴⁵⁴ During the capture of Boma town by SSDM/A rebels and the subsequent recapture by the SPLA in May, part of an NGO teacher training centre was set on fire and all its contents taken, while a school supported by the NGO was ransacked and destroyed.¹⁴⁵⁵

At Maban refugee camp in Upper Nile state, landmines were found behind the Darussalam School on 21 March and caused the suspension of Child Friendly Spaces activities.¹⁴⁵⁶

ENDNOTES SOUTH SUDAN

¹⁴²⁷ This profile covers attacks on education in 2009-2012, with an additional section on 2013.

¹⁴²⁸ The information in this profile covers the autonomous region of Southern Sudan pre-independence and South Sudan since independence for geographical consistency.

¹⁴²⁹ Ministry of General Education and Instruction, General Education Strategic Plan 2012-2017 – Promoting Learning for All (Republic of South Sudan, 2012); and Marc Sommers, *Islands of Education: Schooling, Civil War and the Southern Sudanese (1983-2004)* (Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 2005).

¹⁴³⁰ Ministry of General Education and Instruction, General Education Strategic Plan 2012-2017 - Promoting Learning for All (Republic of South Sudan, 2012), 23.

¹⁴³¹ Ministry of General Education and Instruction, General Education Strategic Plan 2012-2017 - Promoting Learning for All (Republic of South Sudan, 2012), 21.

¹⁴³² UNSC, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in the Sudan, S/2011/413, 5 July 2011, para 52.

¹⁴³³ Information provided by a UN respondent, February 2013.

¹⁴³⁴ UNSC, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation of Children and Armed Conflict Affected by the Lord's Resistance Army, S/2012/365, 25 May 2012, para 36.

¹⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, para 39.

¹⁴³⁶ Richard Ruati, "Ugandan LRA rebels hold 3 Sudanese children – village chief," *Sudan Tribune*, 31 May 2010.

¹⁴³⁷ UNSC, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation of Children and Armed Conflict Affected by the Lord's Resistance Army, S/2012/365, 25 May 2012, para 39.

¹⁴³⁸ UNSC, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in the Sudan, S/2011/413, 5 July 2011, para 52 (a).

¹⁴³⁹ UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/845-S/2013/245, 15 May 2013, para 133; Hereward Holland, "South Sudan Police Fire on Student Protest: witnesses," *Reuters*, 31 October 2012; and Diana Wani, "Students Clash with Police Injuring 12," *Radio Miraya*, 31 October 2012.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Information supplied by a UN respondent, February 2013.

¹⁴⁴¹ South Sudan Education Cluster, Briefing Note: Occupation of Schools by Armed Forces (2012).

¹⁴⁴² Information supplied by a UN respondent, February 2013.

¹⁴⁴³ BBC Monitoring, "Sudan's SPLA reportedly tortures journalist in southern state," *International News Safety Institute*, 9 July 2010

¹⁴⁴⁴ South Sudan Education Cluster, Briefing Note: Occupation of Schools by Armed Forces (2012).

¹⁴⁴⁵ UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/845-S/2013/245, 15 May 2013, para 133.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Dr. James Okuk, "Upper Nile University Devastation Assessed," *Pachodo.org*, 8 May 2009; and HRW, Letter to the Presidency of the Sudanese Government of National Unity Concerning the Situation in Malakal, 21 May 2009.

¹⁴⁴⁷ South Sudan Education Cluster, "Meeting Minutes of National Education Cluster Coordination," 28 March 2013; South Sudan Education Cluster, "Meeting Minutes of National Education Cluster Coordination," 30 May 2013; and South Sudan Education Cluster, "Meeting Minutes of National Education Cluster Coordination," 26 September 2013.

¹⁴⁴⁸ South Sudan Education Cluster, "Meeting Minutes of National Education Cluster Coordination," 28 March 2013.

¹⁴⁴⁹ South Sudan Education Cluster, "Meeting Minutes of National Education Cluster Coordination," 30 May 2013.

¹⁴⁵⁰ See South Sudan National Education Cluster Meeting Minutes throughout 2013: <https://sites.google.com/site/southsudaneducationcluster/education-clust...>

¹⁴⁵¹ South Sudan Education Cluster, "Meeting Minutes of National Education Cluster Coordination," 26 September 2013.

¹⁴⁵² SPLA Chief of General Staff, Punitive Order: Child protection and the release and reintegration of children associated with the SPLA, 14 August 2013.

¹⁴⁵³ HRW, "They Are Killing Us": Abuses Against Civilians in South Sudan's Pibor County (New York: HRW, September 2013), 34; "Humanitarian action essential in Jonglei," Statement by Toby Lanzer, Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan Juba, UNMISS, 6 May 2013.

¹⁴⁵⁴ HRW, "They Are Killing Us": Abuses Against Civilians in South Sudan's Pibor County (New York: HRW, September 2013), 34.

¹⁴⁵⁵ HRW, “They Are Killing Us”: Abuses Against Civilians in South Sudan’s Pibor County (New York: HRW, September 2013), 34-35.

¹⁴⁵⁶ UNICEF, UNICEF South Sudan Cluster Report # 4 – March 2013 (UNICEF, 25 April 2013), 12.