

## **Urgent measures needed to protect all ethnic groups after recent South Sudan attacks**

Minority Rights Group

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Minority Rights Group International (MRG) condemns the recent attacks between the Lou Nuer and Murle communities in Pibor, Jonglei state, South Sudan, and calls on the government to take immediate steps to protect civilians from all ethnic groups.

In the long term, the government must also address the root causes of violence among minority communities through political representation, disarmament and equitable distribution of natural resources.

‘Competition between ethnic groups over scarce resources has escalated in South Sudan. At the same time there is a security vacuum, leading to the formation of militia groups and a breakdown of traditional structures of authority,’ says Chris Chapman, MRG’s Head of Conflict Prevention.

‘This will continue to threaten the stability of the new nation, unless the government acts quickly to ensure security, inclusive representation for all communities, and equitable access to land and natural resources,’ he added.

Last weekend’s clashes between two South Sudanese ethnic groups; the Lou Nuer and the Murle, have sparked a humanitarian crisis, with over 150 killed and the displacement of thousands. Eyewitness accounts report that many of the victims are women and children.

Although not new, attacks between the Lou Nuer and Murle and other related inter-ethnic conflicts among minority groups like the Anyuak, Jie and Kachipo now threaten the stability of the new South Sudan.

To put that assertion into perspective, the December 2011 Boma Development Initiative (BDI) and MRG briefing, Community Perspectives on the Lou Nuer and Murle conflict in South Sudan, quotes Jonglei Governor Hussein Maar Nyout, who told a governors’ forum in Juba in November that over 3,000 people had been killed in his state in 2011.

Chapman explains, ‘The attacks, which on the face of it appear to be cattle raids, have deeper underlying causes related to poverty, competition for scarce resources, the ubiquity of small arms left over from a decades-long war and marginalization of ethnic minorities. In addition, the

conflict between the Lou Nuer and Murle is taking on a dynamic of repeated revenge attacks, highlighting the need for the government to take urgent action to protect innocent civilians.'''

According to MRG's 2011 research, some minority groups feel that their interests are not being represented within the South Sudanese political system, and that resources have been diverted to more populous ethnic groups, rendering them poorer with more precarious access to land and natural resources than other communities. '' (...)

See the December 2011

[briefing](#)

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***Community Perspectives on the Lou Nuer and Murle conflict in South Sudan, from the Boma Development Initiative, an organization working on peace-building and development in Jonglei State, South Sudan.***

See a related [report](#) from MRG, ***Land, livelihoods and identities: Inter-community conflicts in East Africa***

Interview opportunities are available with Chris Chapman, Head of Conflict Prevention, Minority Rights Group International. For further information or to arrange interviews please contact: Mohamed Matovu MRG Africa Regional Information Officer, Kampala, Uganda T: +256 782 748 189

E: mohamed.matovu@mrgmail.org

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