



Nonviolent Peaceforce

A PATHWAY TO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE: JOINT EFFORTS OF THE INTER-COMMUNITY PEACE COMMITTEE INITIATIVE IN JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

The prolonged conflict in South Sudan has kept many people in IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps, or in refugee camps outside the country. The Juba IDP camp is surrounded by the communities of Yei-Road checkpoint, Merelotor, Nakitom, Lokwilili and Moryok. Since there has been almost no interaction between host communities (HC) and IDPs, mistrust has grown over the years and has not been addressed. Consequently, there was no relationship with the surrounding communities due to the mutual allegation of crimes and other incidents. In addition, trust between the police and the HC has not been existing neither and lead to many cases of vigilante justice.

In order to build trust and strengthen the weak relationships between the HC, IDPs and local authorities, NP facilitated one inter-communal dialogue in September 2020 with different relevant stake holders. As a result of the meeting, the participants decided to establish an Inter-Community Peace Initiative (ICPI) Committee comprising 30 members from the different communities.

In the first meeting, the ICPI committee signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to define relationships among the six communities and their expected role when addressing protection concerns. According to the committee, after the signing, the members were able to hold meetings with the communities about the peace agreement and to spread messages on peaceful coexistence in locations such as the check point, Moryok and the IDP camp; they are planning to expand their work to other communities.

The ICPI will continue to conduct dialogues between those communities to bridge the gap among them and to build trustful relationships.

Besides trust building efforts among community members, the committee is also seeking to establish a better relationship between the police and the security coordinators in the camp by sharing information about camp related issues as well as about the peace agreement. One member of the committee shared how being part of the committee, influenced positively perceptions:

“When this initiative was formed, I was not sure and not convinced that we will achieve anything from the MoU we signed because I was wondering how people from different communities can work together, but after our first meeting with the community in Checkpoint [Yei road checkpoint] I was surprised and happy at how people are willing to listen and do something for peace to come in this country”

Moreover, the committee agreed on sharing information about the work of other humanitarian agencies in the communities in order to improve coordination among humanitarian partners as well as community members. Over the time, the committee has received positive feedback from community members as they mentioned that they feel more comfortable to report protection concerns to the community leaders and the local police station in the area. This has not only improved security but also interaction between the communities, the local authorities and the local police.

*“The real insecurity is when people look at each other as a security threat, people in these communities used to fear moving because of fear of being attacked by other members who are not from their community but now I see this fear is going away because people are getting to know each other, all I can say is our security has greatly improved and I consider this as a work of the peace committee because they have made communities to understand that they are one people and not enemies, I thank NP for working closely with committee as well”
ICPI member.*

Since youth have been a constant concern within the communities, the peace committee focused and will continue to focus on bringing together youth of the different communities, especially through sports.

Another member of the ICPI explained:

“We are planning to have a football peace tournament here; we have already cleared the field. We plan to have the youth from the different communities of Checkpoint Metolor, Moryok Lokwili and Juba IDP to form a team to play against the South Sudan national football team.

We will use this tournament as a platform to talk about the importance of diversity and peaceful co-existence for peace in South Sudan”

The IPCI is planning to have more engagements with communities on the importance of dialogues to promote peaceful conflict resolution for a safer environment.

“We are planning to engage the communities in dialogue as the best means of resolving conflicts, peace is when violent is not an alternative for settling issues among ourselves” ICPI Member.

**NP’s work in engaging IDPs and host communities in Juba to promote peaceful coexistence is possible because of the support of the European Union **



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