

Stabilization and justice in South Sudan



Operational excellence for results that matter

Stabilization and justice

South Sudan gained its independence from the North in 2011 but continues to face many internal challenges to its stability.

Following decades of conflict, the country remains significantly under-developed and scores badly on almost all development indicators.

Youth unemployment is significantly high, tribal and ethnic divides persist, and disputes over cattle, water, and grazing and fishing rights often erupt into violence. The Government faces considerable challenges in ruling through law, primarily as vast tracts of land are cut off from authorities during the rainy season. This, in addition to difficulties in controlling the proliferation of small arms, contributes to communities taking security and justice into their own hands.



A worker for a local construction firm builds the new County Administrative Headquarters in Magwi, in a stabilization project managed by UNOPS on behalf of UNDP and the South Sudan Recovery Fund. **Photo:** UNOPS

In order to help build a viable state, South Sudan's Government and international partners are now focusing on stabilizing key regions by strengthening the rule of law, improving accessibility and combating the root causes of conflict.

UNOPS is implementing core projects under four UN Joint Stabilization Programmes in key conflict-affected states – Warrap, Lakes, Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei. These programmes are led and coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the South Sudan Recovery Fund, and are a good example of the UN 'delivering as one' in a post conflict context.

UNOPS global experience

One of UNOPS four contribution goals is to rebuild peace and stability after conflict. This goal includes the creation of conditions that foster sustained peace and development in post-conflict situations and fragile states. UNOPS also has considerable operational expertise in justice and security sector reform, which is one of our core focus areas.

UNOPS helps its partners rebuild states by constructing the infrastructure needed for promoting the rule of law, while working to promote human rights and improve access to justice. We also support improved governance, demining and the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants around the world.

UNOPS in South Sudan

The following are examples of UNOPS work to promote stability in South Sudan:

Improving access

UNOPS has considerable experience building and improving roads in South Sudan. Between 2005 and 2011, UNOPS has constructed or fully rehabilitated more than 430 kilometres of roads, and carried out emergency repairs on a further 45 kilometres, on behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, the Common Humanitarian Fund and the South Sudan Recovery Fund.

Roads can contribute to the improved governance, security and socio-economic development necessary for state stability. To boost ownership and sustainability of the new roads through improved maintenance, UNOPS is working with UNDP and the state government under the Jonglei Stabilization Programme, funded by the South Sudan Recovery Fund.

Key activities include the procurement and transfer of road maintenance equipment to the Jonglei State Ministry of Physical Infrastructure, as well as the training of mechanics, equipment operators and road maintenance staff.

Strengthening rule of law and justice

On behalf of UNDP and the South Sudan Recovery Fund, UNOPS has been working to develop the capability of the South Sudanese judicial system. This includes the



A police post in Eastern Equatoria, which has been credited with reducing cattle rustling and violent crime in the area, built by UNOPS on behalf of UNDP. **Photo:** UNOPS/Azusa Chiba

construction or rehabilitation of large numbers of police posts and stations, prisons, detention centres and court houses as well as training centres for police officers and prison workers. UNOPS is also constructing county administrative headquarters to establish the state government's presence at a county level.

For all these projects, UNOPS architects and engineers are designing and constructing sustainable and secure buildings which improve work conditions for state employees and boost the humane treatment of detainees.

Combating youth exclusion

An international peacebuilding survey in South Sudan found that disillusioned youth pose a significant risk to local security. The lack of employment opportunities for this group has given rise to an increase in local crimes and weakened social cohesion.

UNOPS is working together with eleven other UN agencies on a joint programme with the Government to improve youth employment prospects, on behalf of the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund from the Spanish Government. This helps young men and women build skills and earn income through labour-intensive temporary employment in infrastructure work. So far, teams of young people under UNOPS supervision have participated in the renovation or construction of four youth training and vocational centres, which include workshops, market stalls and a kitchen to boost youth employment possibilities.

Reducing disputes over cattle and water

UNOPS is implementing key components of UNDP's Community Security and Arms Control project in Jonglei State, which encourages communities to invest grant money in conflict-sensitive development initiatives. These are selected by the community and range from constructing offices for Livestock Control Units in order to discourage cattle theft, to buying farming equipment in order to help ex-combatants generate income.

To ease competition for water sources, UNOPS is constructing large water reservoirs for cattle, under the UNDP-led Lakes State Stabilization Programme.

Boosting impact

UNOPS project managers, engineers and support staff work to boost the impact of all the projects we implement. In the stabilization and justice sector this often means working closely with the community to discover their exact infrastructure needs and concerns before implementation.



UNOPS teams consult with local Pochalla authorities while implementing the Jonglei stabilization programme.

Photo: UNOPS/Jose Nash

We also carry out environmental and social impact assessments on behalf of our partners. These often lead to initiatives to lessen the environmental impact of a road, such as tree planting or redesigning the course to avoid critical wildlife conservation areas, as in the case of Akobo-Pochalla road in Jonglei State.