

## Political Stability Report

### INTRODUCTION

After the arrival of the United Nations Mission in Nimpala (UNAMIN) and the 2006 ceasefire, a rigorous joint UN/Nimpala security program was announced to bring stability to the country. UNAMIN has the mandate to provide security and prevent violence. They are allowed to use force when protecting themselves, civilians, and aid workers as well as supporting peace agreement. The UN Security Council has agreed to this mandate for a 5-year period, after which, they will decide whether or not to continue to support the UNAMIN presence.

The presidential elections were conducted without any major violence and was widely accepted as successful and legitimate. The president's aggressive efforts to build trust between parties and ethnic groups has showed mild success at the national party level. But critics and international NGOs have warned that rudimentary development issues are not being adequately addressed in the peacebuilding process.

### SECURITY

There has been an overall decrease in reported instance of violence this past reporting period, although there have been several reported clashes between Ragat and returning Akola. This has also been intensified by the annual migration of pastoralists communities.

Efforts are underway from UNAMIN to train and strengthen local police forces. Training programs have been successful according to local officials but a continued lack of vehicles, accommodation, training areas, detention infrastructure and communication equipment have limited the range and scale of effectiveness. While personnel in these units are receiving training to perform the duties of formed police units, they lack essential equipment to undertake requisite operations. Some observers have also commented that the lack of command, control and integration of the Nimpala police force has increased risk of instability and corruption, as former members of armed groups have become police officers.

### STRENGTHENING POLITICAL CAPACITY

Many local government posts stand vacant due to budgeting problems and community leaders' fears in assuming the positions. In the Eastern area, the absence of senior officials detracts from the successful functioning of the administration. This has slowed the potential for an inter-ethnic conference to address transboundary issues including migration, water rights, and land grazing.

The appointment of a new governor in the North has brought a new momentum to the integration process of former NOB into new political, administrative, social, and economic infrastructure. This demonstrates a commitment to positive cooperation, albeit on a limited scale.

## **RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Northern regions present the highest risk of continued insecurity. The continued flow of refugees across the northern borders has increased pressure and tension on the existing populations. Cross border raids carried out by militias in Country B and supported by groups in Nimpala threaten enforcement of the peace treaty and reflects continued weakness in border control. These attacks also weaken humanitarian relief projects and increase the population's vulnerability. The area is also being hit with outbreaks of acute water diarrhea, malaria and meningitis.

## **BORDER CONTROL**

There are continued reports of large uncontrolled movements across the borders. A border commission was established to work with UNAMIN but has not yet convened. The movement of illegal timber, goods, and people have been identified as key threats to stability in the region.

## **DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, AND REINTEGRATION**

During this reporting period, the demobilization and reintegration program continues in the north and eastern provinces. Several more operations are being planned for the Southern and Central regions. At the end of the past reporting month, the UN had demobilized over 8,000 ex-combatants. These individuals received reintegration packages containing cash, non-food items, and coupons for WFP food rations for 3 months.

This is limited progress in the perspective of the overall goals and all targeted populations. The total caseload for this first phase has reached roughly 20,000 people out of a total estimated 90,000, including current members of the two remaining armed groups. The UN team has stated there are insufficient funds for the overall process and specifically for addressing the needs of former child soldiers.

## **RETURN AND REINTEGRATION**

Several large movements of people have threatened to destabilize regional security and stability. The return of thousands of Akola from the South placed pressure on mediation and legal institutions. The United Nations has supported organized return programs for Maqqara and Ragat into Eastern areas, roughly 90,000 over the past two years. This program has been successful in helping to mitigate conflicts between squatters and returnees, providing basic services and security. Returnee programs require information and assistance of multiple actors. The lack of sufficient government participation and donor support have been key failures in the program.

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

While investment is returning to this sector, several new laws have raised concerns about the continued freedom of the press. Restrictions on certain agencies reporting and lack of independent media sources are a large concern for NGO groups.

There has been a general increase in access to information as radio stations and communications technology has been improved and repaired. There is still a relatively low level of cell phones per population compared to neighboring countries. Internet access is far lower than Nimpala's neighbors.