

## RESULTS SUMMARY

# Enhancing Peaceful Coexistence through interreligious peace councils

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### PROJECT

*Title:* ACCESS to Sustainable Solutions

*Partner:* ADRA South Sudan

*Country:* South Sudan

*Period:* January 2022 - ongoing

### CHANGE

In 2023, an Inter Religious Peace and Reconciliation Committee (IRPRC) facilitated peace dialogues in Turu and Pagak payams in Maiwut County which resulted in the returning home of 200 households who had been displaced from their homes during the intercommunal violence in 2019. The peace dialogues paved the way for unrestricted access to areas that were previously not accessible due to fear of attack and target by members of the conflicting communities. Furthermore, much needed livelihood activities were resumed.

### CONTEXT

In Maiwut County, South Sudan, at-risk populations are continuously displaced due to widespread communal violence, high rates of food insecurity, disease outbreaks and environmental shocks such as flooding. In 2023 the situation was exacerbated by the influx of refugees and returnees fleeing the war in Sudan and inter-communal conflict in the Gambella region of Ethiopia. The increased strain on resources led to tensions and fear of conflict between refugees/returnees and established communities.

### CONTRIBUTION

As a response to community and local government requests for peacebuilding action ADRA facilitated the formation of the IRPRC with representation from more than 15 different denominations, including the local mosque. The IRPRC works towards peaceful coexistence and conduct peace dialogues in locations mapped as hot spots for violence to address the drivers of conflict. It has perceived neutrality in conflicts, wide acceptability by communities, and coverage throughout the county, even in the hard-to-reach areas.

### IMAGES



Photo: Karina Lynge, ADRA Denmark



Photo: Karina Lynge, ADRA Denmark

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ACTIVITIES

ADRA facilitated the formation of the IRPRC through the pastors of the Seventh Day Adventist church who mobilised other churches and relevant line ministries. As a result the churches came together to conduct peace activities instead of doing them as individual churches as they had previously done. This gave the IRPRC leverage and permitted the members to split into teams and conduct peace activities in different locations at the same time. ADRA supported the IRPRC to map conflict hotspots and drivers, to reach locations they could not otherwise access and to host peace dialogue and conferences. The council mobilises community leaders and other key stakeholders such as women, youth, church leaders and chiefs from identified communities for the peace dialogues, awareness, and reconciliation activities.

### LESSONS

As a group of different faith-based representatives, the IRPRC is a great tool to model community harmony and demonstrate that different community members can live peacefully with each other. Its interreligious status gives the IRPRC wide acceptance, respect and coverage in the community which enables it to spread messages of peace. At the same time it can be an essential tool in the protection and monitoring of hard-to-reach locations as members can interact with communities and acquire knowledge of their needs, observe safety hazards, and report these to ADRA and other partners for action. Building on the successes of the peace building activities from 2023, ADRA will in 2024 scale up its work with the IRPRC, youth groups, local authorities and community leaders and amongst others also seek to identify peace zones in project locations with the aim of promoting common livelihoods activities that would enhance peaceful coexistence.

### EVIDENCE

By supporting an interreligious group, ADRA has been able to create a bigger impact and capacity to respond to peacebuilding needs which religious leaders were already undertaking as individuals in an uncoordinated manner. Due to the success of the IRPRC's undertakings, UNHCR and UNMISS have shown interest in partnering with ADRA and the IRCPRC to influence other counties in Upper Nile to also form IRPRC groups. Furthermore, ADRA coordinates closely with South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) which is the arm of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster that helps to coordinate Humanitarian activities on behalf of the Government. The processes leading to the results have been followed closely by ADRA Denmark and documented in reports.

### DOMAINS

<i>Development strategy priorities:</i>	<i>Insert strategy priority</i>
<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	x
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i>	x
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	-
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>	x