



SOUTH SUDAN



Perceptions of Peace in South Sudan: Longitudinal Findings

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The authors would like to express their deep gratitude to the many people who made this study possible, particularly the thousands of South Sudanese from across the country who graciously made time to participate in the survey. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the African Affairs Bureau, Office of Sudan and South Sudan (AF/SSS), and the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) for the financial support that made this study possible.

The views in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the views of Detcro, USIP, AF/SSS, or FCDO.

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Acronyms

ASPR	Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution
CIESIN	Center for International Earth Science Information Network
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPI	Everyday Peace Indicator
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
GRID3	Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OPP	Other Political Parties
PeaceRep	Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform
POC	Protection of Civilians Site
UN	United Nations
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-IG	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Government
SPLM-FDs	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Former Detainees
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TNLA	Transitional National Legislative Assembly
UN	United Nations
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings about South Sudanese citizens' perceptions of peace from a survey in 2021-2022. The three-wave survey recorded the views of 8,843 people from 12 counties across 9 states and special administrative areas, covering urban, rural and IDP camp environments. Respondents were asked questions about their daily experiences of safety, based on indicators of 'everyday peace' developed through focus groups. They also shared their views on a wide range of related topics, including elections, governance arrangements, security arrangements, trust in public authorities, civic space, national identity, and social cohesion, among others.

Peace and Safety

- ▶ Overall, people felt safer in their daily lives in 2022 compared to 2021. A majority of respondents in 2022 believed that the peace agreement was helping to resolve the conflict in South Sudan, that it would hold until the end of the transition period, that it had increased daily security and that it had made daily life easier. But these experiences varied starkly by location, with Aweil and Pibor at the two poles. The contrasting viewpoints reflect trends in stability and insecurity across survey locations.
- ▶ The safer people felt, the more likely they were to believe that national peace agreements would resolve South Sudan's conflicts. They were also more comfortable with the idea of army rule. Conversely, the more unsafe people felt, the more skeptical they were of national peace agreements and the more strongly they disagreed with the idea of army rule.
- ▶ While respondents identified national political dimensions in most types of conflict they experienced in their areas, people varied in how confident they were that their communities could create local peace if a national war waged on. Respondents in the Equatorias were especially pessimistic about the ability for their communities to insulate themselves from national politics.
- ▶ The findings underline the importance of sustaining the political transition. This appears to be producing a general increase in stability, though unevenly distributed. The findings also underline that for South Sudanese to buy-in to national peace agreements, citizens need to observe direct improvements in their daily safety. Army rule is not a solution most South Sudanese see to local insecurity; policies that protect people at the local level need to focus on civil-military independence.

Governance Arrangements

- ▶ The survey revealed that South Sudanese strongly prioritize government accountability. Respondents across all walks of life, who were otherwise divided about how the government should rule, rallied around the value of accountability. They also voiced overwhelming support for parliamentary input to presidential decision making, even if that slowed decisions down. These findings underline the importance of policies that preserve a strong parliament and create mechanisms for citizen input to government.
- ▶ Respondents showed no uniform support for either a powersharing/consociational or winner-takes-all/majoritarian system. South Sudan's form of government remains a point of division, down to the community level.

Security Arrangements

- ▶ Respondents across geographic locations, urban, rural and IDP camp areas, also believe that army unification will increase local stability but that elections should be delayed if army unification has not occurred by February 2023. These findings underline the importance of policies that sustain army unification and anticipate acute insecurity should elections take place before that process is complete.
- ▶ Respondents were also divided about how strongly government should respond to insecurity, even if that meant violating human rights sometimes, although there was a majority in each survey environment that approved of such an approach. Women were more likely than men to support strong security responses even if they sometimes violated human rights. Respondents who identified as 'very unsafe' voiced the strongest support for forceful government responses. However, the moderately 'unsafe' were the most likely group to object to the government responding firmly to insecurity, even if that meant violating human rights.

Elections

- ▶ South Sudanese want to vote, and they overwhelmingly want to vote soon. Data collected before the announcement of the extension of the transitional period demonstrates strong support for elections in 2023.
- ▶ Most likely, elections will be approached in community-voting patterns. While individual voting has strong backing in theory, South Sudanese still prefer their families and communities voting the same way.
- ▶ Elections are likely to support and sustain the political status quo. The combination of party popularity and voting behavior suggests that decisive changes to the political system are not going to happen, at least not through the voting process.
- ▶ Elections are likely to deepen polarization along ethno-political lines, even though an overwhelming majority of South Sudanese would be willing to circumvent ethno-political voting behavior at an individual level.
- ▶ The popularity of the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) strongly depends on performance, especially in terms of local security and service delivery. The political opposition has not yet been able to present credible voting alternatives that would be likely to perform well in upcoming elections.

Public Authority

- ▶ Survey responses indicate a significant breakdown in the relationship between citizens and the national government. More respondents disagreed than agreed with the statement: 'The national government cares about my community.'
- ▶ Respondents who felt more unsafe, were displaced more often, and who felt more pessimistic about peace were more likely to feel that the government did not care about their community.

- ▶ Respondents perceived national political leaders to have limited influence in making decisions about safety in their communities. In all locations other than Aweil, governors and county commissioners were perceived to be the most influential in making decisions that affected community safety.
- ▶ The survey underlined community trust in traditional authorities, but with striking diversity across location. Respondents also perceived traditional authorities to have power in motivating families to engage in armed struggle. However, traditional authorities' power in security matters does not correlate strongly with conflict exposure, displacement status or living environment. Traditional authority legitimacy is robust to these factors, and more strongly determined by their varying social ties at the community level.

National Identity

- ▶ South Sudanese retain a great deal of pride in their national identity and in South Sudan's independence despite the protracted civil war. A large majority of survey respondents agreed with the statements, 'I am proud to be South Sudanese' and 'I am happy that South Sudan seceded from Sudan.'
- ▶ Respondents in Pibor and Yei were less likely than other locations to express pride in being South Sudanese and happiness with secession, indicating the impact that acute insecurity in these locations is having on people's sense of national identity.
- ▶ Men and women showed important differences in how they prioritized their national and ethnic identities. Women were more likely than men to prioritize their ethnic identity above their national identity to a statistically significant degree. Women were also less proud of their South Sudanese identity than men.
- ▶ People who had been displaced 10 or more times in their lives were more than twice as likely to agree with the statement, 'My ethnic identity is more important than my South Sudanese identity,' than people who had just been displaced once.

Recommendations

- ▶ The positive trend in overall perceptions of safety from 2021 to 2022 underlines the importance of sustaining the political transition, even if that means an extension. The transition appears to be producing a general increase in stability – but this stability is unevenly distributed.
- ▶ Stabilization policies should prioritize the acute needs of places like Malakal, Pibor and Yei. Survey findings, together with Pibor's experiences of acute conflict during the CPA interim period and immediately post-independence, offer a warning about war conditions prevailing in some places during times that observers and political leaders label as peaceful.
- ▶ In relation to elections, policymakers should focus their efforts on ensuring that conditions are in place for non-violent political competition. This would entail a greater investment into building democratic 'software' for elections, especially in terms of political party support for the process.
- ▶ Sustain efforts to unify the army and anticipate acute insecurity should elections take place before that process is complete. An extended transition that culminates in elections should continue to make army unification a priority.
- ▶ Avoid making assumptions about the type of government South Sudanese citizens might prefer. Respondents revealed no consensus desire for either a power sharing or winner-takes-all system.
- ▶ Survey respondents support policies that preserve a strong parliament and create mechanisms for citizen input to government. These need to remain central to arrangements for an extended transition period.
- ▶ Security sector policies need to address the unique protection needs of people experiencing different degrees and types of insecurity. The moderately 'unsafe' feel especially vulnerable during forceful government responses to insecurity.

- ▶ Political leaders should make more targeted efforts to include the most insecure and displaced populations in national projects if they are to build durable legitimacy.
- ▶ National political leaders should work through local leaders, formal and traditional, rather than circumventing them to engage citizens.
- ▶ Make more of an effort to create inclusive spaces for people from different walks of life, including populations in more conflict-affected parts of the country, to discuss what it means to be South Sudanese.

Introduction

This report presents findings about citizens' perceptions of security and governance from a survey of South Sudanese in 2021-2022. The three-wave survey recorded the views of 8,843 people from 12 counties across 9 states and special administrative areas, covering urban, rural and IDP camp environments. Respondents were asked questions about their daily experiences of safety, based on indicators of 'everyday peace' developed through focus groups. They also shared their views on a wide range of related topics, including elections, governance arrangements, security arrangements, trust in public authorities, civic space, national identity, and social cohesion, among others. Findings from the first round of data collection were published in a May 2022 report, National Survey on Perceptions of Peace in South Sudan.¹ This report focuses on longitudinal findings that emerged in subsequent waves of the survey and additional lines of questioning that were included in waves two and three.

A key finding that has emerged from these studies concerns the linkage between perceptions of safety and respondent views on peace. In general, respondents who feel less safe are more pessimistic about prospects for peace and more cautious about a range of transitional processes, including elections. Trust in public authorities, national identity, and perceived marginalization are also strongly correlated with respondent perceptions of safety. These findings suggest that more could be done to engage populations in less secure parts of the country in contextually appropriate peacebuilding and development programs alongside efforts to address their humanitarian needs. This is easier said than done in a context where needs are increasing and donor support is dwindling, but recent discussions around the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, resilience programming, and a more sustained approach to community engagement may provide insights into new ways of working in the South Sudanese context.

Update on the Transitional Process

National elections are meant to be the endpoint of South Sudan's political transition. The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) calls for elections to be held 60 days before the end of the transitional period. As preconditions, the transitional government should have reviewed and amended the Political Parties Act (2012) and the National Elections Act (2012), reconstituted the National Election Commission, conducted a census, and adopted a Permanent Constitution, which would regulate the role and composition of the legislative and the executive.

These requirements, partly necessary preconditions for any legitimate and credible election process, have not yet been implemented. The discussions in the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA) about the Political Parties Act resulted in severe disruption, with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) boycotting parliament sittings after the TNLA passed the Political Parties Act Amendment Bill. The minimum number of party members – 500 in each State and 300 in each of the three Special Administrative Areas – were fiercely rejected by the SPLM-IO, which complained about a closing down of political space linked to the election-related bills. These concerns, however, were not shared by other parts of the political opposition represented in the TNLA.

Since the transitional government would not be able to implement the preconditions for conducting elections, together with several other transitional tasks, before the end of transitional period in February 2023, the R-ARCSS signatories, on 4 August 2022, agreed on an extension of the transitional period by 24 months to February 2025. National elections are now scheduled for December 2024.

Data collection for this study was completed before the extension of the transitional period was announced, and when these questions were asked, elections were still scheduled for late 2022/early 2023. The extension of the transitional period is, therefore, not reflected in the results.

Methodology

Sampling

The survey counties (referred to as 'locations') are a convenience sample of areas that represent principal regions and conflict theatres in South Sudan. Within each county, the team adopted an approximately self-weighting stratified random sampling approach to select individuals. Simple random sampling was not possible due to the absence of recent census data. Therefore, the team divided each county into environments (urban, rural and IDP camps) and evaluated their relative population densities using the GRID3 South Sudan Settlement Extents, Version 01.01 dataset.²

Informed by this data, the research team randomly sampled map coordinates in urban and rural areas.³ Male-female enumerator pairs began each work day at one of these randomly-selected map coordinates, and then followed a random walk assisted by a smartphone phone app. Respondents from IDP camps were sampled using the most up-to-date United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) POC Head Counts and International Organization for Migration (IOM) IDP Site Multi-Sector Needs, Vulnerabilities data.

Analysis

Enumerators administered the survey anonymously on smartphones using KoboToolbox survey technology. This allowed a high-level of data protection and real-time monitoring of responses and enumerator daily work.

The team cleaned and analyzed the data in R. To measure correlations, the team used Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models with unit fixed effects for location (county name) and environment (urban, rural and IDP camp), and time fixed effect for survey year (for variables asked across different survey waves). Standard errors are clustered by location.⁴ This approach allows us to assess within-group variation and partly address imbalances in size between samples drawn from different locations and environments.⁵ Regression estimates are presented in 'dot-whisker' plots in the Appendix.⁶

Measuring safety

The study drew from the Everyday Peace Indicator (EPI) methodology to develop measures of everyday safety through interviews and focus groups across five of the survey locations in January and February 2020. This produced five questions which were asked in each survey. The questions were then translated into an aggregate index of daily safety.

Survey waves

The survey was administered in three waves (see dates and respondent numbers below). The waves were designed to capture different seasons and incorporated new questions to capture views on evolving political dynamics. For example, Wave 3 focused on questions about voting and perceptions of different types of authority due to the urgency of election planning.

- ▶ Survey Wave 1 (August – September 2021): N = 2,276; F = 1167, M = 1109
- ▶ Survey Wave 2 (February – April 2022): N = 3,394; F = 1768, M = 1153
- ▶ Survey Wave 3 (May – June 2022): N = 3,173; F = 1736, M = 1436

Location	Female		Male		Urban		Rural		IDP camp		Total % of sample	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)		
Aweil Center County	352	48.8	370	51.2	417	57.8	302	41.8	0	0	722	8.2
Bor South County	359	50.1	358	49.9	334	46.6	307	42.8	76	10.6	717	8.1
Juba County	703	50.3	694	49.7	497	35.6	507	36.3	393	28.1	1397	15.8
Yei County	348	56.2	271	43.8	479	77.4	130	21.0	10	1.6	619	7.0
Malakal County	627	50.6	612	49.4	493	39.8	58	4.7	688	55.5	1239	14.0
Pibor County	170	53.8	146	46.2	231	73.1	85	26.9	0	0	316	3.6
Rubkona County	1123	62.8	663	37.1	309	17.3	308	17.2	1171	65.5	1788	20.2
Rumbek Center County	238	50.1	237	49.9	87	18.3	388	81.7	0	0	475	5.4
Yirol West County	241	50.1	240	49.9	72	15.0	409	85.0	0	0	481	5.4
Wau and Jur River Counties	338	49.0	352	51.0	369	53.5	202	29.3	119	17.2	690	7.8
Yambio County	172	43.1	227	56.9	120	30.1	279	69.9	0	0	399	4.5
Total	4671	52.8	4170	47.2	3408	38.5	2975	33.6	2457	27.8	8843	

Table 1: Aggregate sample from three survey waves

Findings

Sample Characteristics

The sample includes citizens from diverse population groups across South Sudan, as evident in the following:

- ▶ Thirty-nine percent of respondents were from urban areas, 34 percent from rural area and 28 percent from IDP camps.
- ▶ The sample comprised 47 percent men and 53 percent women, in part due to the oversampling of women in Rubkona County, where men were often absent from households during many parts of the day. The analysis in this report frequently disaggregates results by gender to address this imbalance.
- ▶ The median age in the full sample was 35 years old; 31 years for women and 38 years for men. The youngest respondents were 18 years old, the oldest woman was 90 years old and the oldest man was 94-years-old.
- ▶ The most common occupations were unemployment (26%), farming (26%) and operating a small business (18%). The sample spanned a range of other employment types, including government work, teaching and cattle keeping (Figure 2).
- ▶ In the first two survey waves, respondents assessed their economic status relative to others in their community. Forty-eight percent perceived themselves to be poorer than others, 43 percent the same status, and 9 percent as richer than others. Similar proportions held across urban areas, rural areas and IDP camps.
- ▶ Respondents in 2022 (Waves 2 and 3) also assessed their access to food, medical treatment, fuel, cash, water and electricity (Figure 3). More than quarter of the sample had gone several times, many times or always without enough food over the previous year. Almost half had been unable to access medical treatment several times or more. IDP camp residents were marginally better off than urban and rural respondents.

- ▶ Forty-two percent of respondents self-identified as displaced, 22 percent as returnees and 36 percent as neither an IDP nor a returnee (i.e., were part of a host population). Figure 4 shows the geographic distribution of these responses.
- ▶ Respondents self-identified across more than 60 ethnolinguistic groups (Figure 5). Amongst these diverse identities, 29 percent identified as Dinka, 27 percent as Nuer and 7 percent as Shilluk.

Figure 1: Number of respondents across survey locations

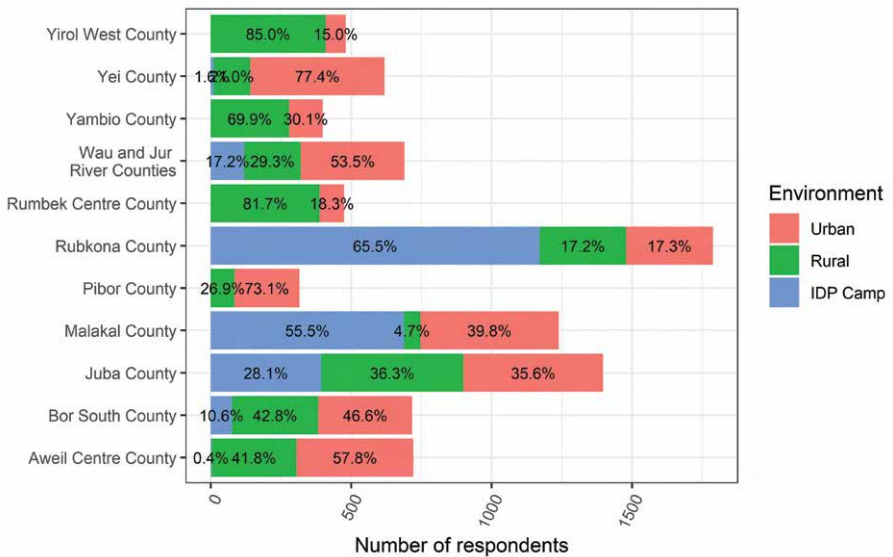


Figure 2: Proportion of respondents by occupation across environments

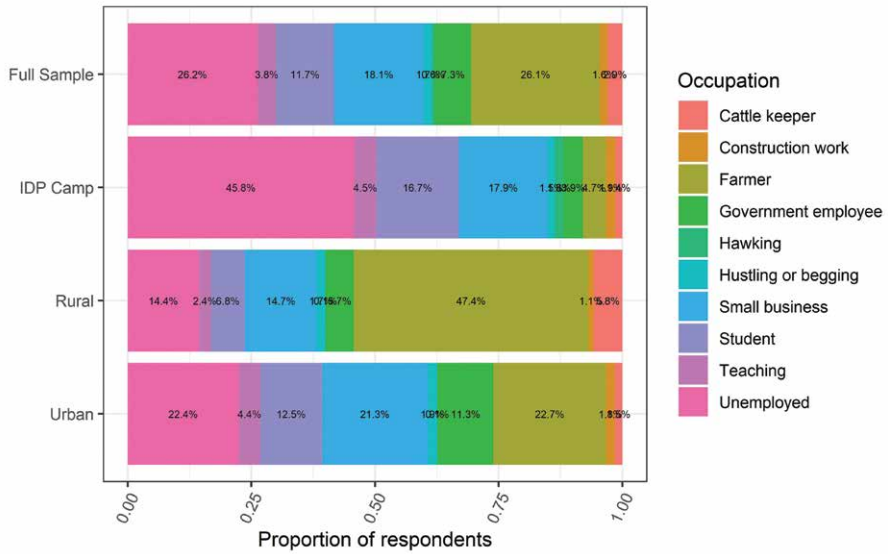


Figure 3: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without the following?



Figure 4: Self-identified displacement status

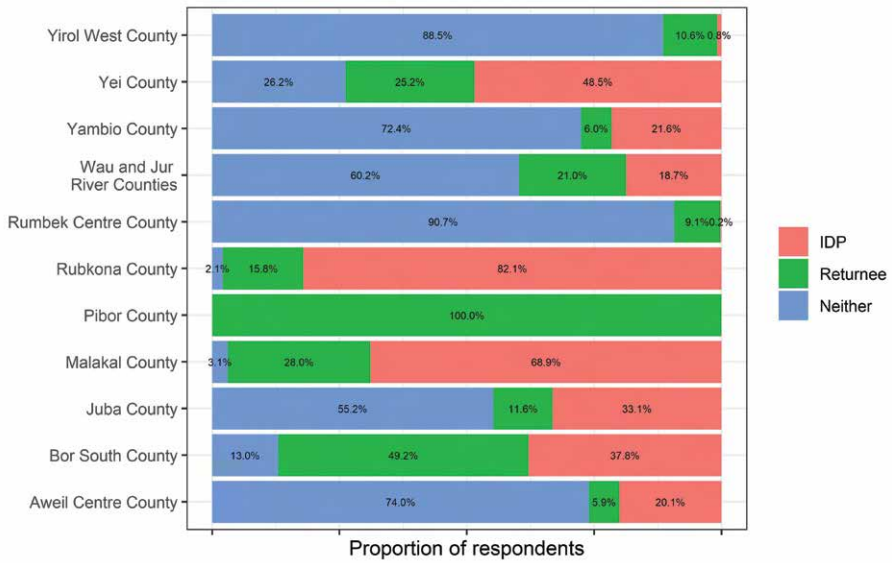
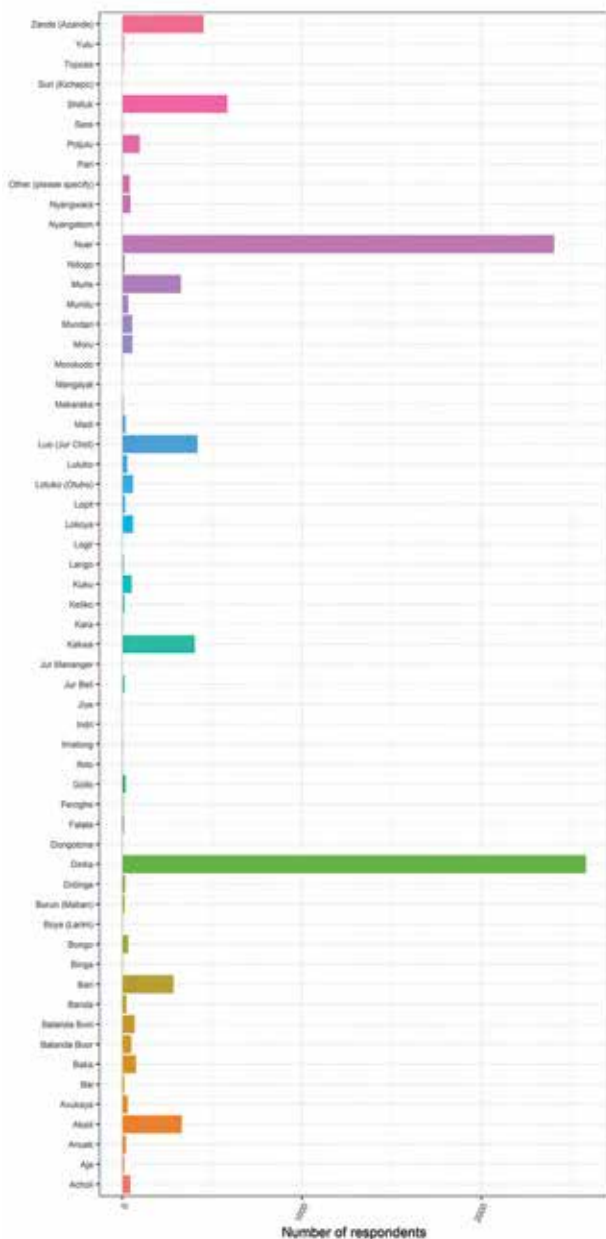


Figure 5: Ethnolinguistic self-identification of respondents



Peace

A majority of respondents believed that South Sudan was at peace (53% in 2021 and 65% in 2022), but a large minority believed that the country was still at war (47% in 2021 and 35% in 2022). Respondents were more likely, on average, to say that South Sudan was at peace in 2022 compared to 2021 (see Figure 6 and, in Appendix, Figure 98 for regression estimate). This did not mean that respondents were necessarily more hopeful about the future in 2022 compared to 2021 (Figure 7).⁷ However, people identified their most salient memories of hope and despair largely before 2018, suggesting that, on average, respondents were perceiving a stabilizing conflict context (Figure 8).

Figure 6: In your view, is South Sudan currently at peace?

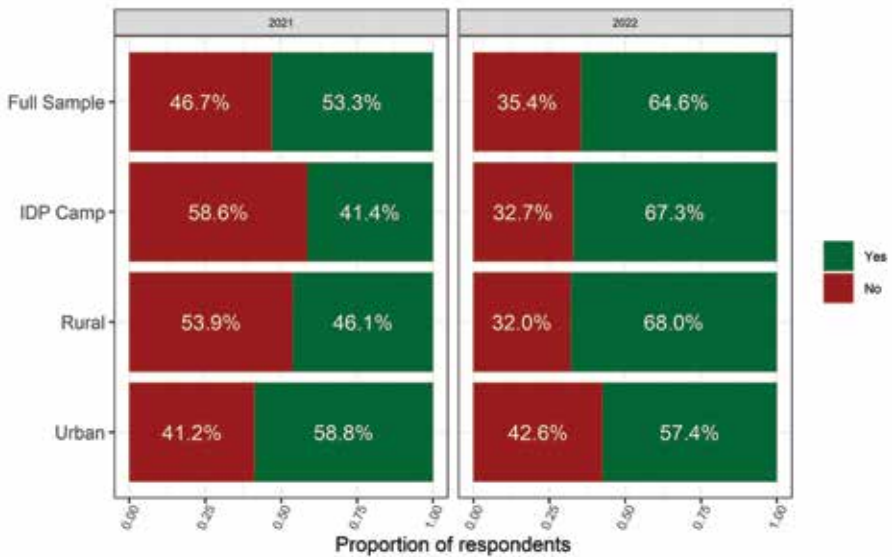


Figure 7: In your opinion, what are the prospects for peace in South Sudan in the next three years? (all responses)

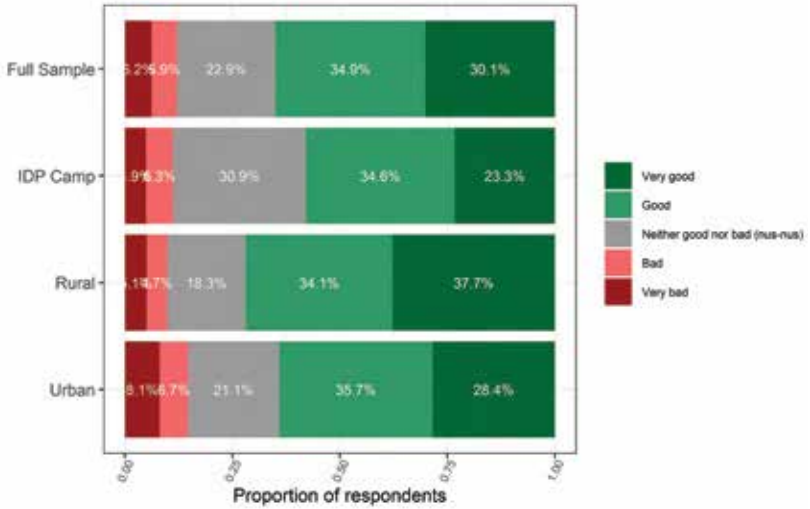
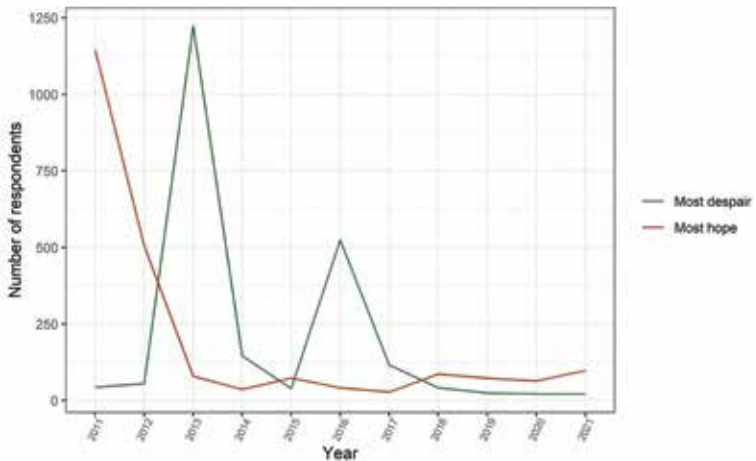
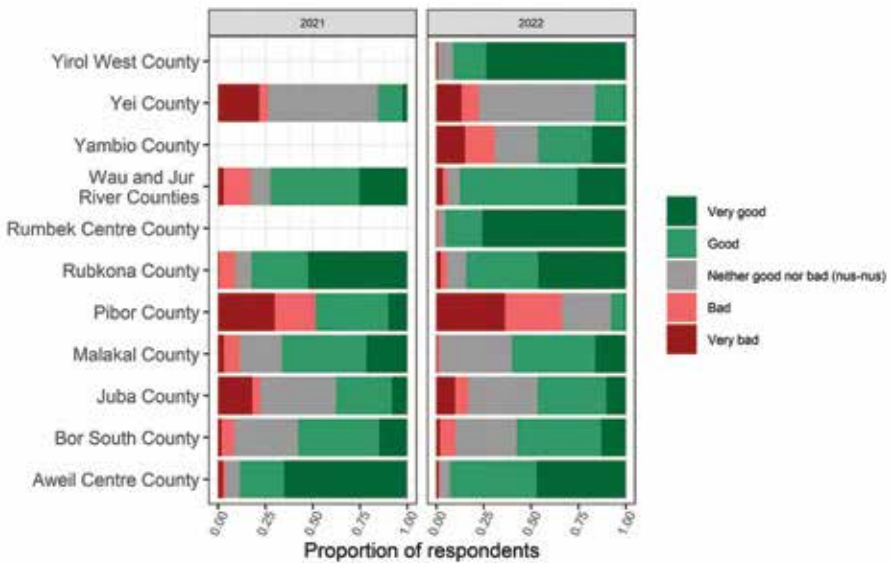


Figure 8: In what year since independence have you felt the most hope and the most despair? (responses from 2021 only)



Views varied starkly across locations. In Malakal, for example, respondents were generally more optimistic about the prospects for peace in the next three years in 2022 as compared to 2021, while in Pibor, respondents became more pessimistic (Figure 9). In Malakal, IDP and rural respondents were far more pessimistic than urban respondents (in Appendix, see Figure 99 for regression estimates).

Figure 9: In your opinion, what are the prospects for peace in South Sudan in the next three years?



The survey probed the extent to which respondents connected the conditions for community-level peace to armed conflict between government and opposition forces. Respondents were evenly split between those who believed that their community could still find ways to be at peace if the government and opposition were at war, and those who disagreed that this was possible (Figure 10). Again, this varied starkly across locations. In Aweil, Rumbek, Yirol and Wau, most respondents were either indifferent or optimistic that community-level peace was possible if the government and opposition were at war. By contrast, in Yei and Yambio, more than 80 percent of respondents disagreed that this was possible (Figure 11). This is perhaps indicative of the effects on community-level stability of army fragmentation and non-signatories of the peace agreement around Yei and Yambio.

Figure 10: If the government and opposition are at war, there are still ways that my community can be at peace. Agree or disagree? By Survey Environment (responses from 2022)

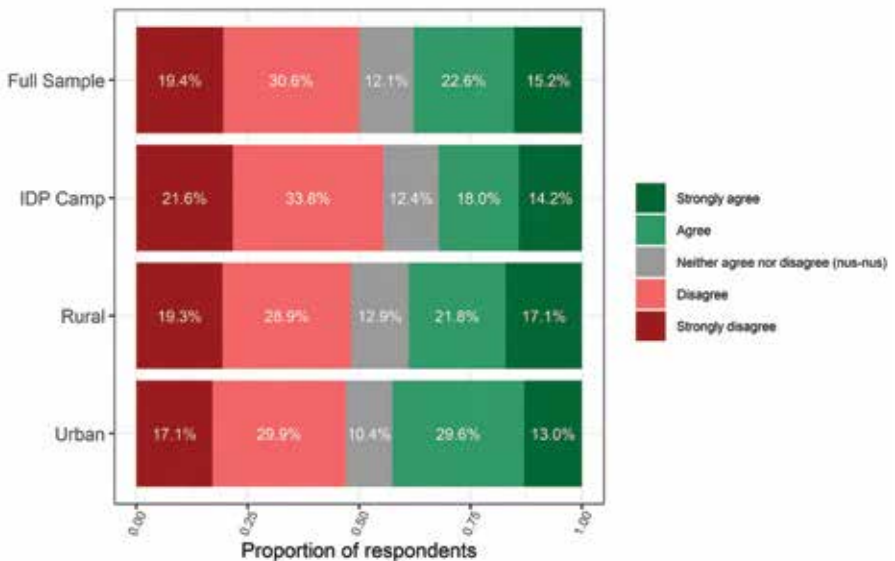
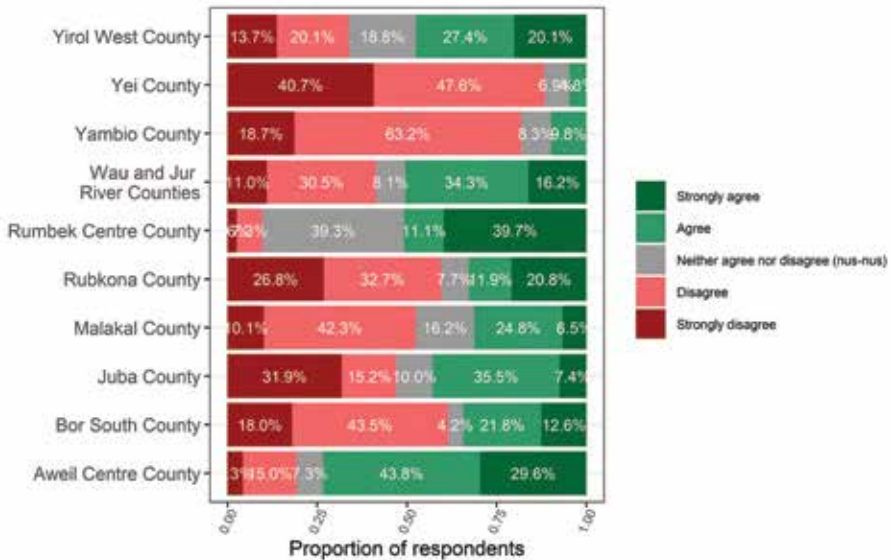


Figure 11: If the government and opposition are at war, there are still ways that my community can be at peace. Agree or disagree? By Survey location (responses from 2022)



Safety

Conflict trends

Few respondents identified years after 2018 as ones of 'most conflict' between their communities since December 2013. Pibor was an outlier in this respect. In Bor, Juba and Yirol, several hundred respondents identified 2021 as a year of least conflict (Figure 12).

Across survey locations, a majority of respondents identified national politics as an important dimension of armed group activity in their area. The most common response was that national and local politics are intertwined causes of armed activity (Figure 13).

There were large variations across locations in the extent to which respondents judged land disputes, cattle raiding and farmer-cattle keeper disputes as problems. In Rubkona and Rumbek, all three were judged as problems by the majority of respondents (Figure 14). The more times people were displaced, the more likely they were to perceive land disputes as a problem (in Appendix, see Figure 100 for regression estimates).

Figure 12: Since the war broke out in December 2013, in which year has there been the least/most amount of conflict between communities in this area? (Responses from 2021 and 2022)

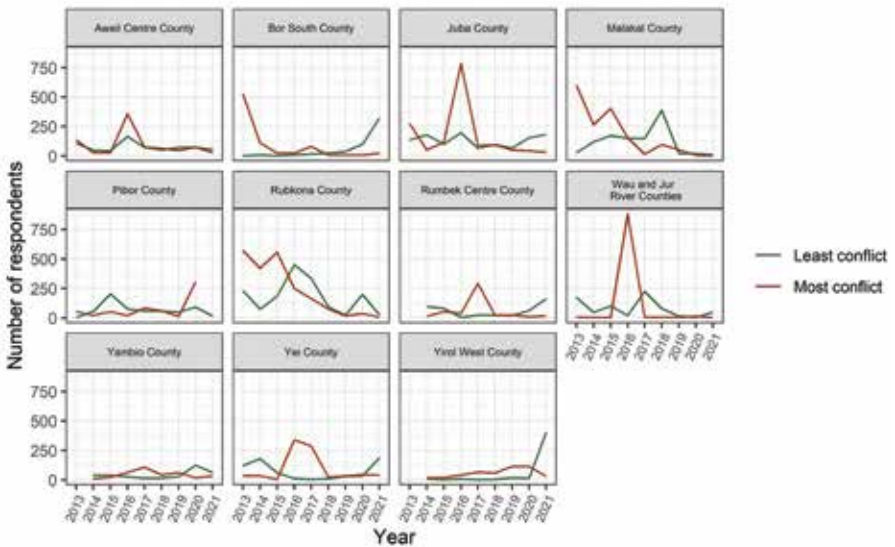


Figure 13: When armed groups are fighting in this area, is it primarily about national political issues, local politically issues, both national and local political issues, or not about politics at all? (2022)

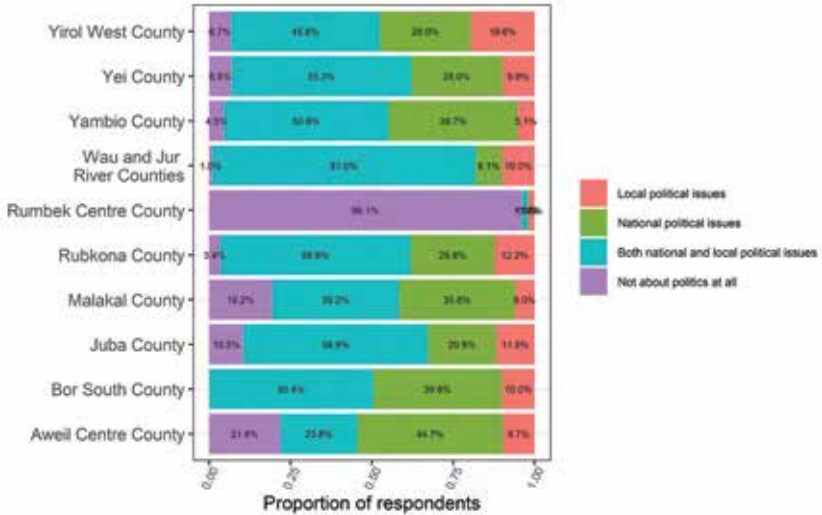
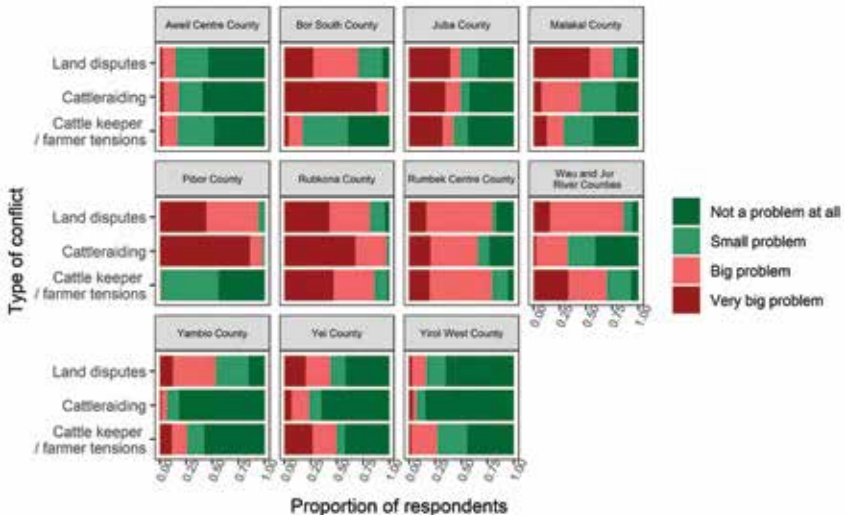


Figure 14: How much of a problem are the following types of conflict in this area? (Responses from 2021 and 2022)



Everyday safety

The survey captured respondents' experiences of safety through asking five 'everyday peace' questions. These were developed through focus groups, based on the Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI) approach (Mac Ginty and Firchow, 2013), to capture people's everyday experiences in their local settings. The five questions that emerged from consultations were:

- ▶ EPI1: How safe do you feel using the main roads between towns?
- ▶ EPI2: How safe do you feel moving in the countryside?
- ▶ EPI3: How safe would you feel leaving your house at night to tend to a neighbor who needs something urgently?
- ▶ EPI4: How safe do you feel going to buy goods in the market?
- ▶ EPI5: How safe do you feel participating in cultural activities, such as dances or other celebrations?

Respondents answered these questions in relation to the present and three anchoring events: South Sudan's independence in 2011, the outbreak of violence in December 2013, and the signing of R-ARCSS in 2018. Responses to the five questions were translated into a composite indicator for safety at each moment of recall (Figure 15 and Figure 16).

Figure 15: Perceptions of everyday peace across five indicators

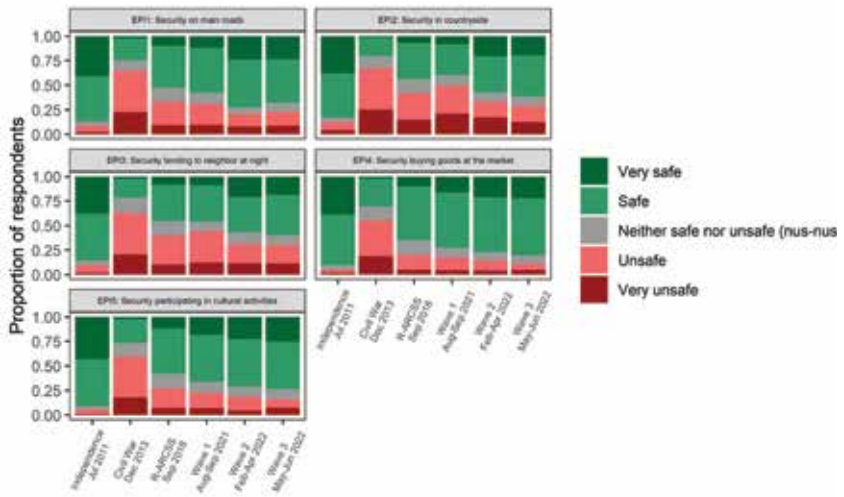
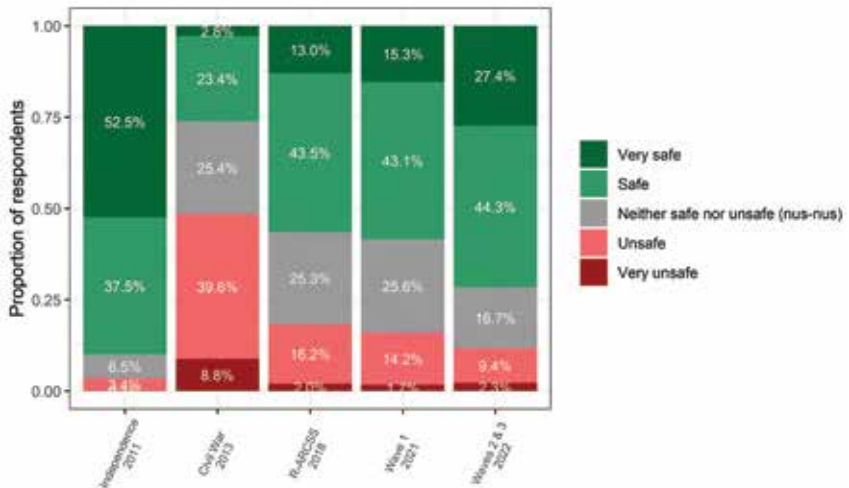
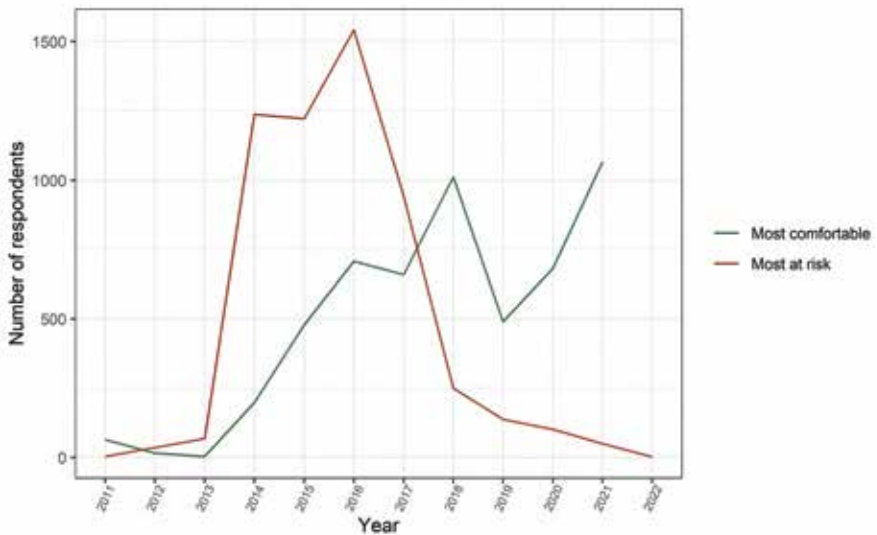


Figure 16: Average perceptions of everyday safety across indicators (All responses)



In general, respondents felt safer in 2022 compared to 2021, and more comfortable voicing opinions compared to previous years in the conflict (see Figure 17, and in Appendix, Figure 101 for regression estimates). Neither gender nor the number of times a respondent was displaced affected people’s perceptions of everyday safety. However, the more access a respondent had to electricity, the safer they felt (in Appendix, see Figure 102) – although there was no correlation with access to other basic needs, such as medicine and food. This correlation does not show causation but does indicate several potential explanations that include access to phone charging and lighting being correlated with daily safety.

Figure 17: In what year since independence have you felt most at risk/most comfortable voicing your opinion on politically sensitive issues?



Everyday safety varied starkly across locations. Figure 18 shows the persistent instability in Pibor since independence in 2011 and the increased insecurity in Yei as the civil war has progressed. It also shows the persistent stability in Aweil.

Figure 18: Average perceptions of everyday safety across indicators by survey location

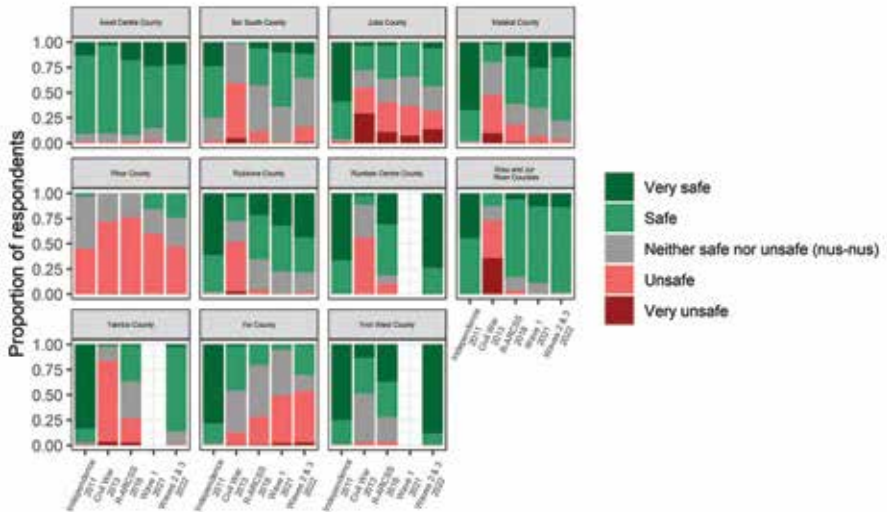


Figure 19, Figure 20, Figure 21 and Figure 22 show variations in different measures of safety across locations between two survey waves six-months apart, in the wet season and in the dry season. In both Pibor and Bor, respondents experienced a stark increase in gunshots at night between the seasons. In Aweil, respondents felt safer meeting soldiers in front of their house in the dry season compared to the wet season. In less stable contexts (such as Yei and Juba), where respondents especially feared encountering soldiers, the level of discomfort remained constant across seasons.

Figure 19: This month, how frequently have you heard gunshots at night?

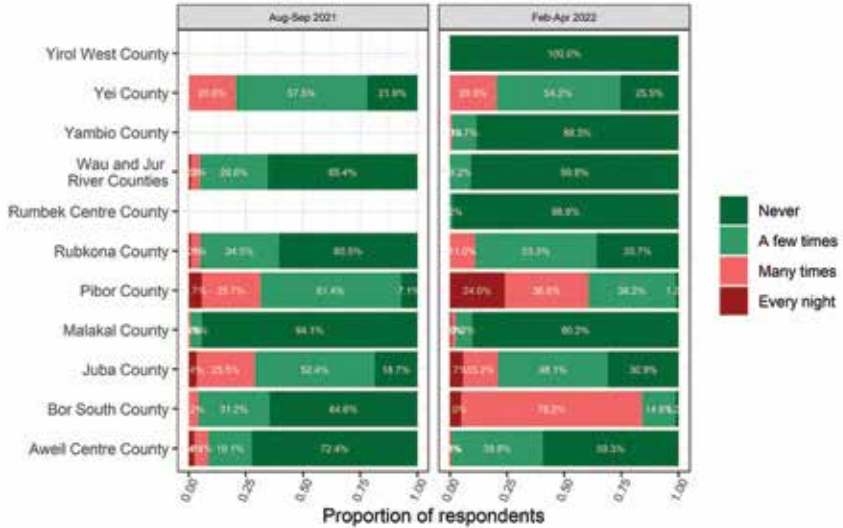


Figure 20: At present, how safe would you feel if you met government soldiers near your home?

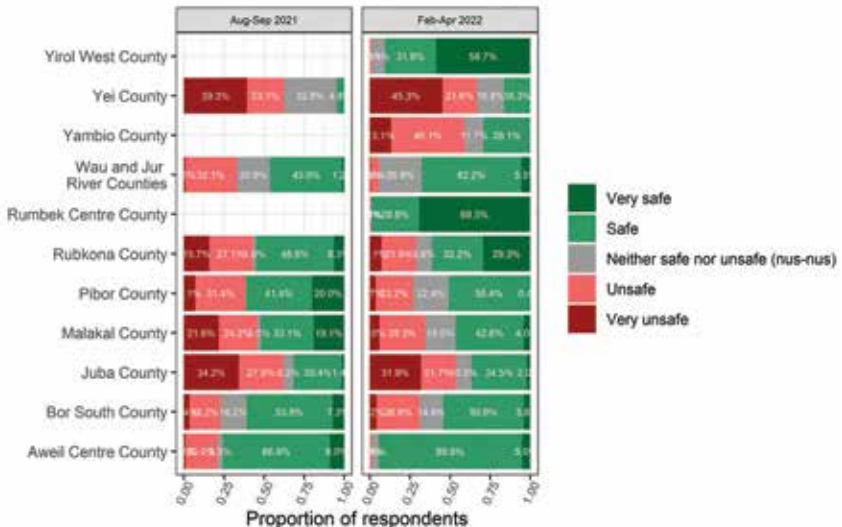


Figure 21: At present, how safe would you feel if you met soldiers from opposition groups near your home?

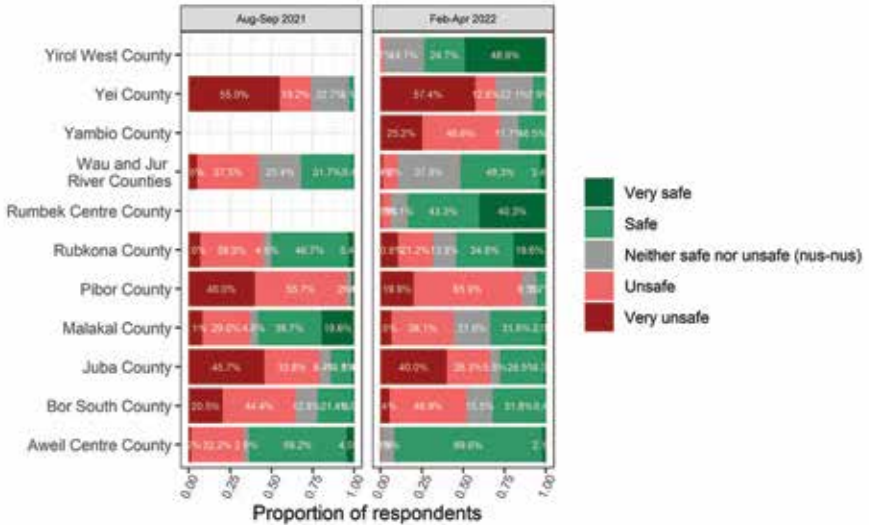
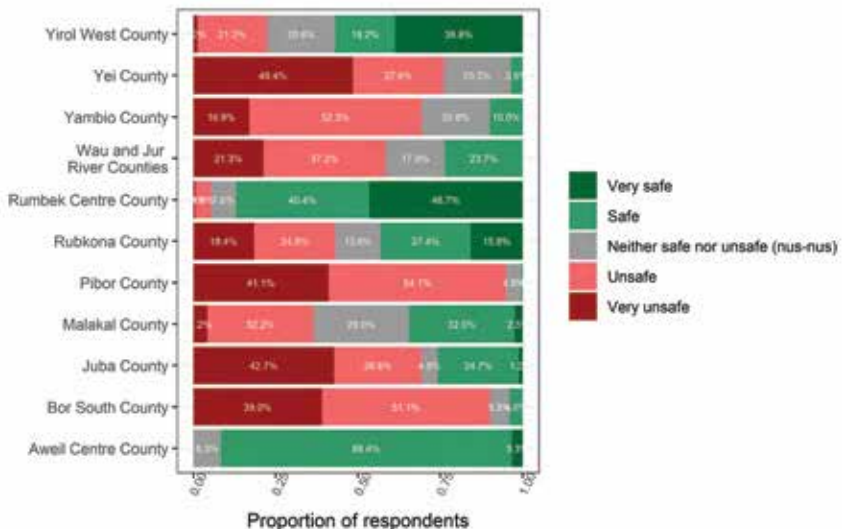


Figure 22: At present, how safe do you feel speaking publicly on politically sensitive issues? (Feb-Mar 2022)



Sexual and gender-based violence

Men were more likely than women to believe that SGBV is more prevalent during the current war than previous wars (Figure 23 and, in Appendix, Figure 103 for regression estimate). But views varied by location (Figure 24). For example, women in Aweil, Pibor, Yei and Yirol had strong memories of the severity of SGBV in past wars. It is interesting that respondents in Yirol and Rumbek displayed starkly different answer patterns when they are so proximate; 99 percent of respondents in Rumbek identified SGBV as most common in the current war.

Figure 23: Do you think CRSV was more common during the current war, during the 22-year war, or that it was the same during both wars?

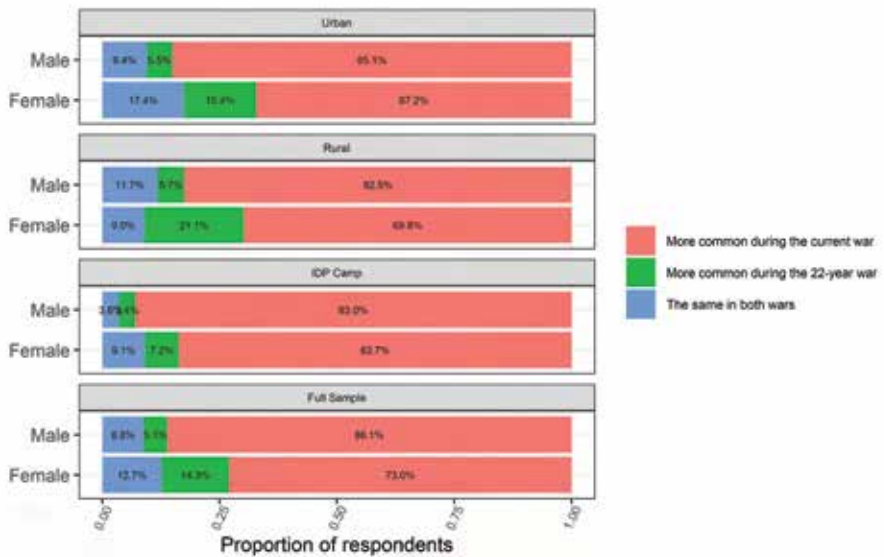
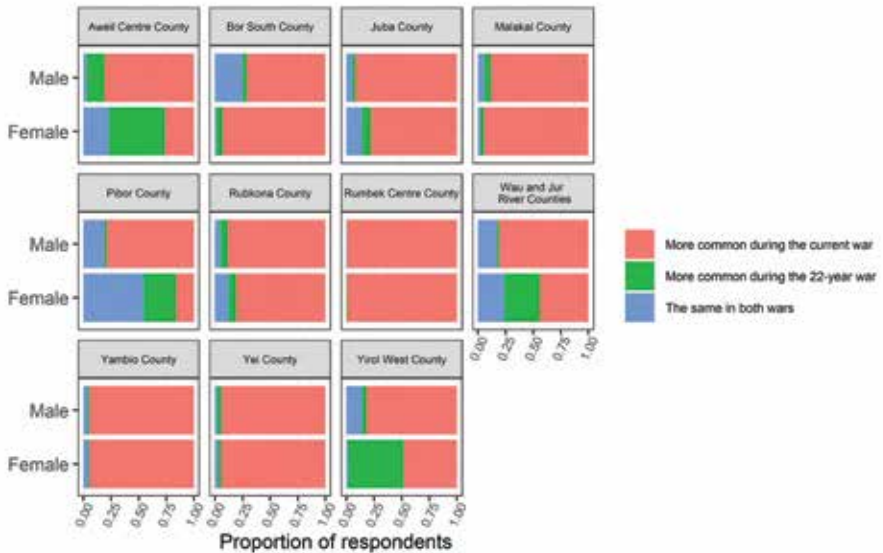


Figure 24: Do you think that CRSV was more common during the current war, during the 22-year war, or that it was the same during both wars?



Peace Process

Views on IGAD peace process

Most respondents had heard something about the IGAD peace process, but 33 percent of women and 25 percent of men had heard nothing at all (Figure 25). There were no statistically significant correlations between gender and awareness of the IGAD peace process or between gender and whether people thought the IGAD peace process would resolve the national conflict in South Sudan. However, women in IDP camps were less aware than men in IDP camps at statistically significant levels (Figure 26 and Figure 104 in Appendix).

Figure 25: How aware are you about the IGAD-led peace process in South Sudan? (2022)

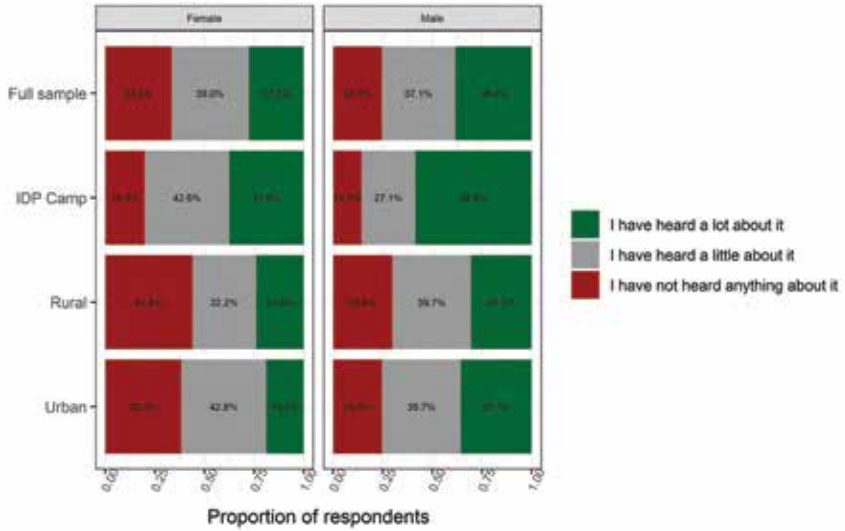
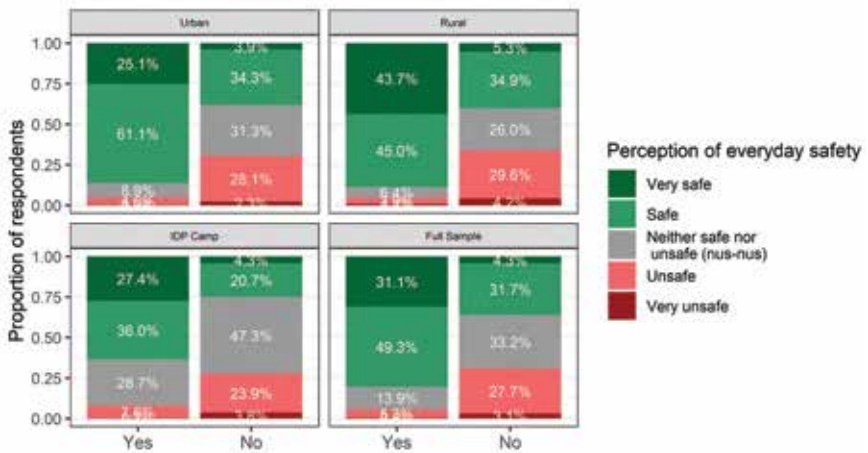


Figure 26: Do you think the revitalized peace agreement will resolve the national conflict in South Sudan?



Respondents experiencing higher levels of perceived everyday safety are more likely to believe that the R-ARCSS will resolve conflict at statistically significant levels (see Figure 105 in Appendix). This finding does not indicate causality. However, it signals how the populations that feel most safe are also the most likely to be supportive of national peace agreements. Daily experiences of insecurity may motivate respondents to lose faith in agreements like R-ARCSS.

General perceptions of the peace process in 2022

A majority of respondents in 2022 believed that the peace agreement was helping to resolve the conflict in South Sudan, that it would hold until the end of the transition period, that it had increased daily security and that it had made daily life easier (Figure 27, Figure 28, Figure 29, Figure 30). While the graphs indicate that urban respondents were more pessimistic than rural and IDP camp respondents, this correlation between living in an urban environment and perceptions of the peace process is not statistically significant. There was a strong correlation between feeling safer and perceiving that the peace process had made daily life easier (see Figure 106 in Appendix).

Figure 27: Do you agree or disagree? 'The peace agreement is helping to resolve the conflict in South Sudan.'

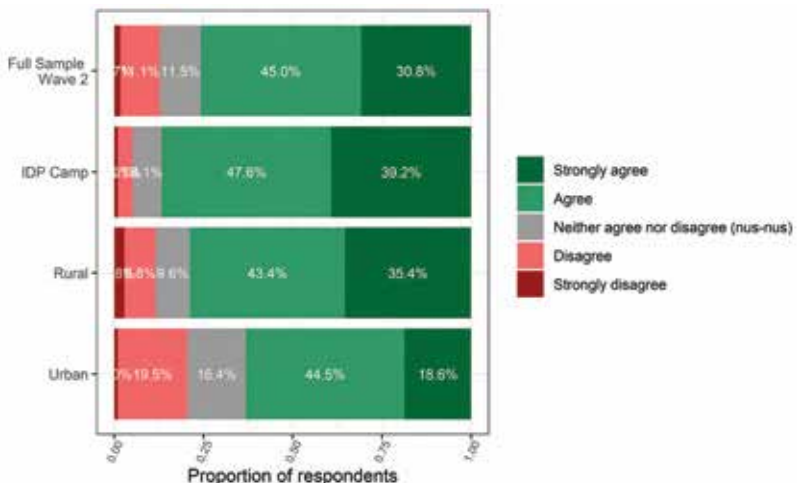


Figure 28: Do you agree or disagree? 'The peace agreement is likely to hold until the end of the transitional period.'

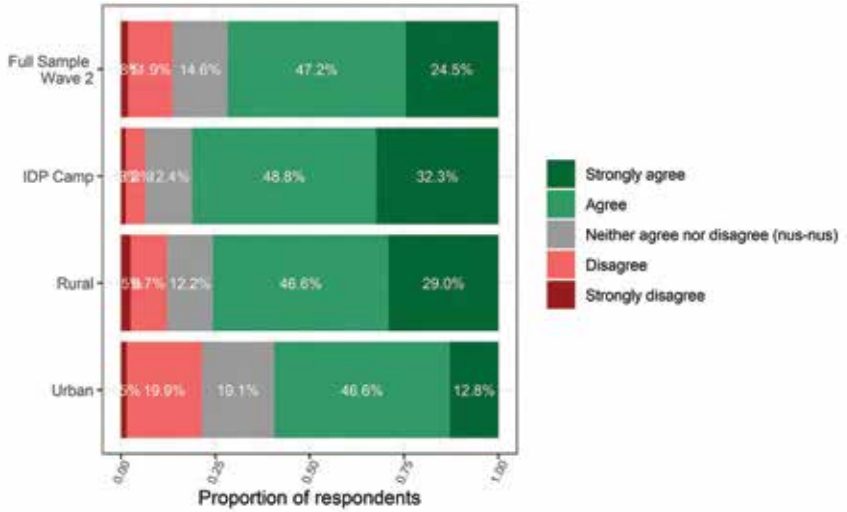


Figure 29: Do you agree or disagree? 'The peace agreement has increased my daily security.'

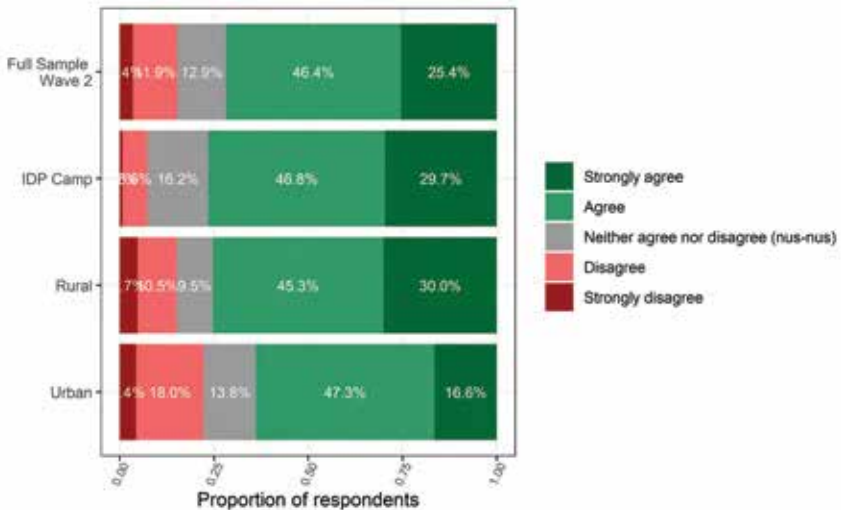
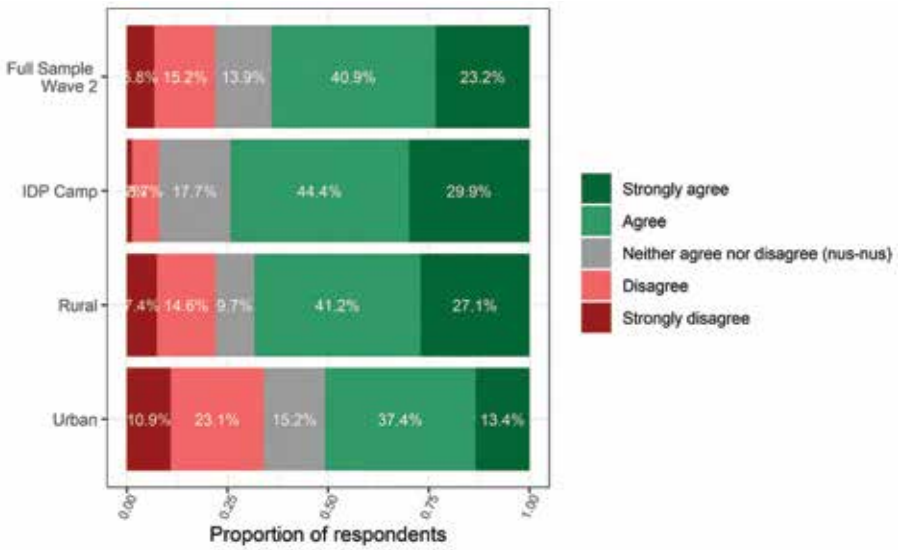


Figure 30: Do you agree or disagree? 'The peace agreement has made my daily life easier.'



Views on cooperation between government and opposition in 2022

Most respondents in Yei, Yambio and Pibor did not believe the government and opposition had reconciled at the national or local levels (Figure 31). In all other locations, a majority believed that government and opposition had reconciled. This did not directly translate into a perception that the parties could work together effectively (Figure 32). For example, in Bor, far fewer respondents felt that government and opposition could work together at a national and local level than believed that they had reconciled with each other.

National-level cooperation

Figure 31: Do you agree or disagree? 'Government and opposition parties at the national level have reconciled with one another.'

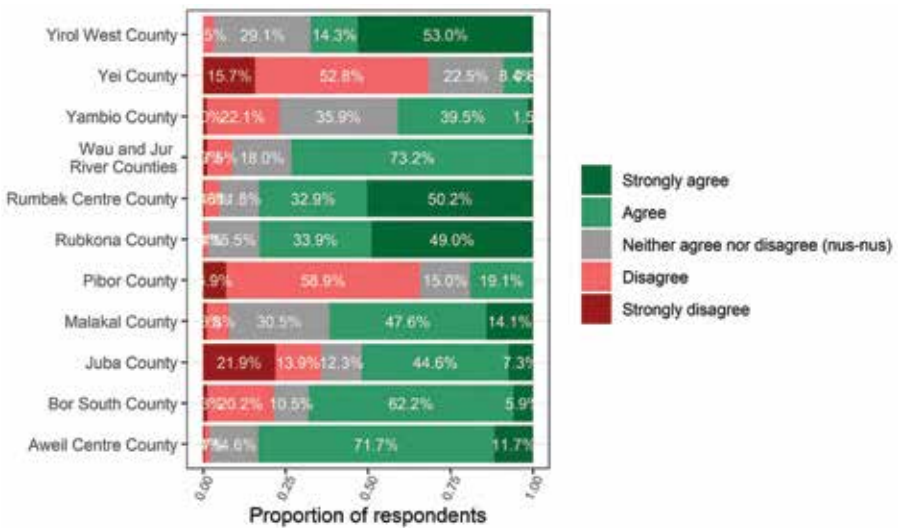
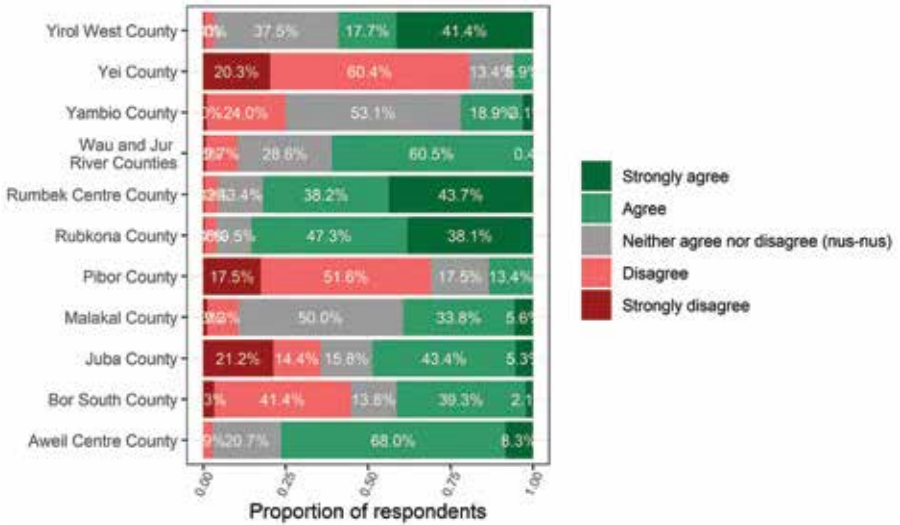


Figure 32: Do you agree or disagree? 'Government and opposition parties in the national government are able to work effectively together.'



Local cooperation

Figure 33: Do you agree or disagree? 'Government and opposition parties in this area have reconciled with one another.'

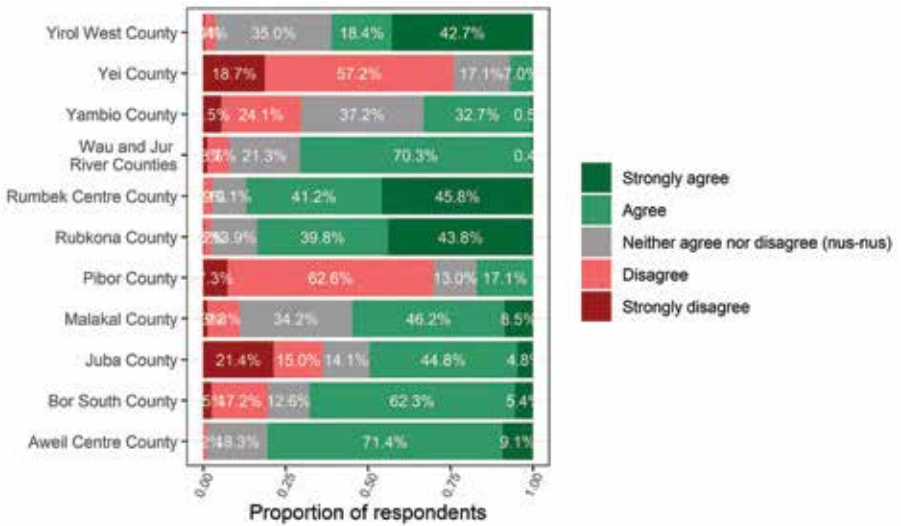
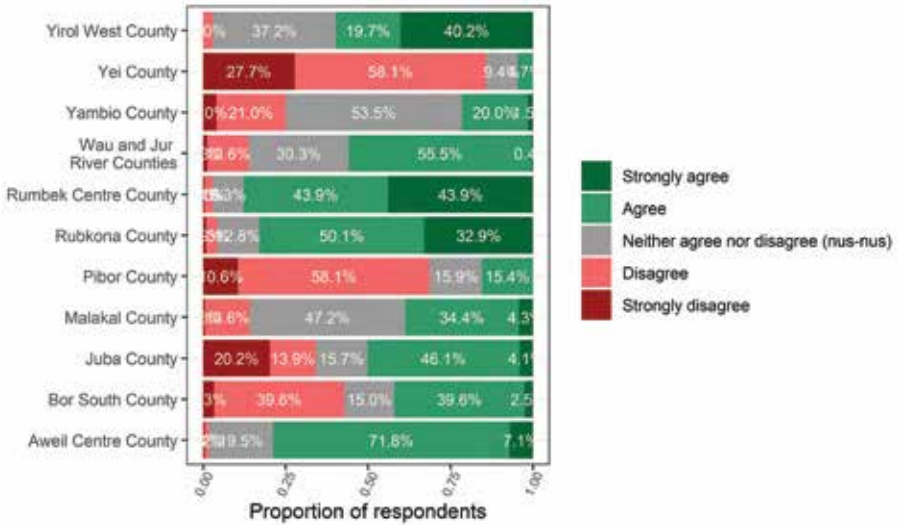


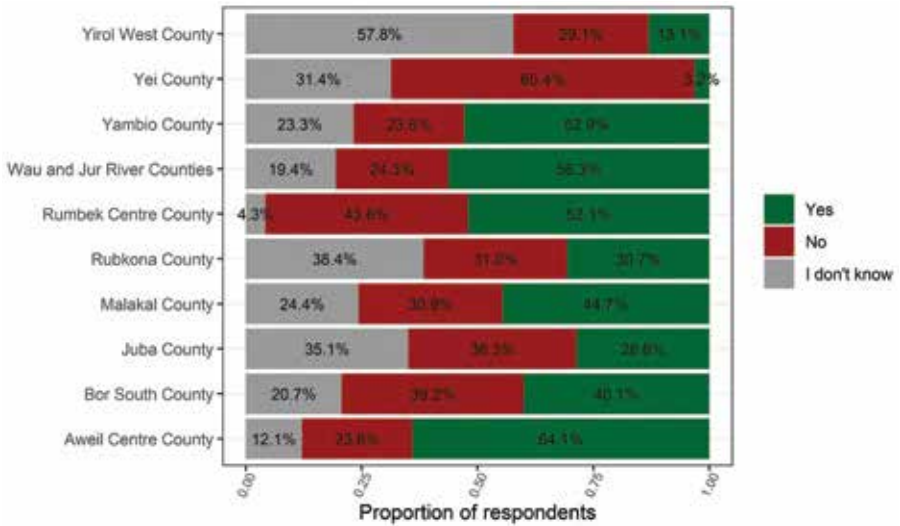
Figure 34: Do you agree or disagree? 'Government and opposition parties in this area are able to work together effectively.'



Awareness of local peace agreements with armed groups

More than 95 percent of respondents in Yei either believed that their community had signed local agreements or did not know. Yirol and Rumbek also had starkly different responses, with 13 percent of respondents in Yirol and 52 percent in Rumbek believing local agreements had been signed (Figure 35).

Figure 35: Has your community made local agreements with other communities or with armed groups over the past year?



Security Arrangements

Sixty-eight percent of respondents believed that elections should be delayed if government and opposition failed to unify forces by February 2023 (Figure 36). IDP camp respondents felt especially strongly, with 79 percent believing elections should be delayed in these circumstances. A majority of respondents, across all environments and locations, believed that the unification of forces would improve security in their area (Figure 37 and Figure 38). With the exception of Yei, where there was a high level of distrust, a majority of respondents in each location believed the parties to R-ARCSS would make an honest effort to unify their forces (Figure 39).

Figure 36: Do you agree or disagree? 'If government and opposition forces have not unified by the end of the transitional period in February 2023, elections should be delayed until they are able to unify.'

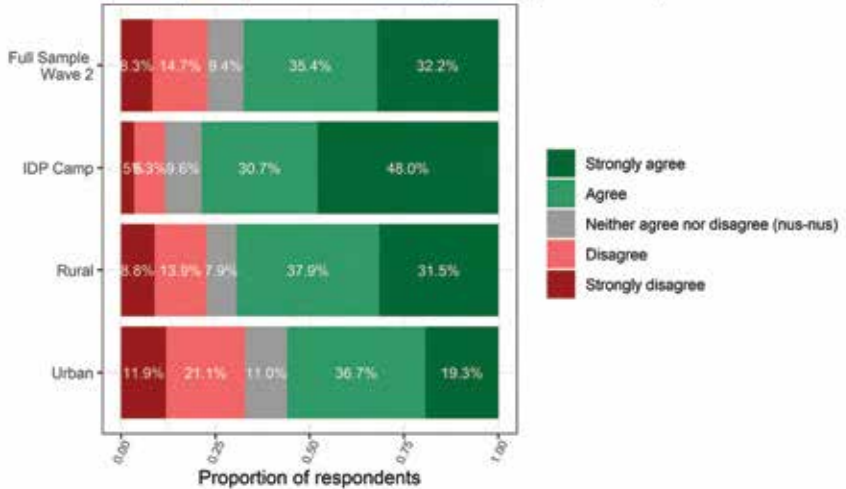


Figure 37: Do you agree or disagree? 'The unification of forces will improve security in this area.'

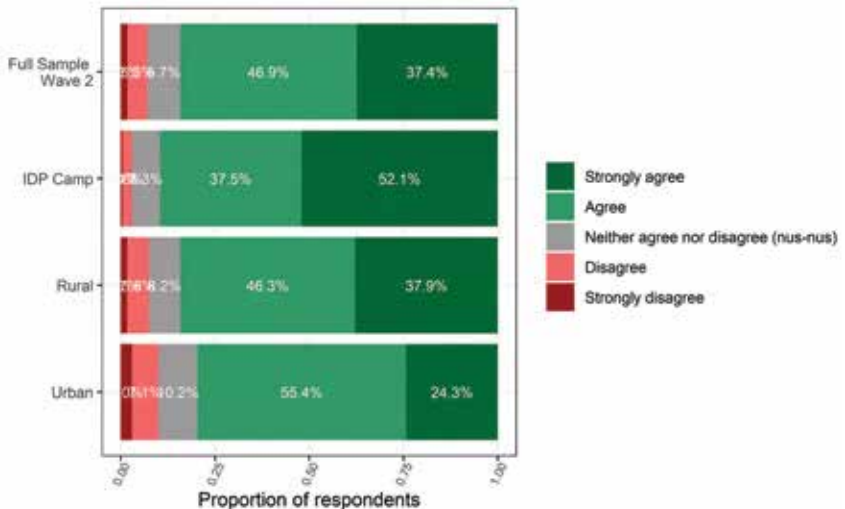


Figure 38: Do you agree or disagree? 'The unification of forces will improve the security in this area.'

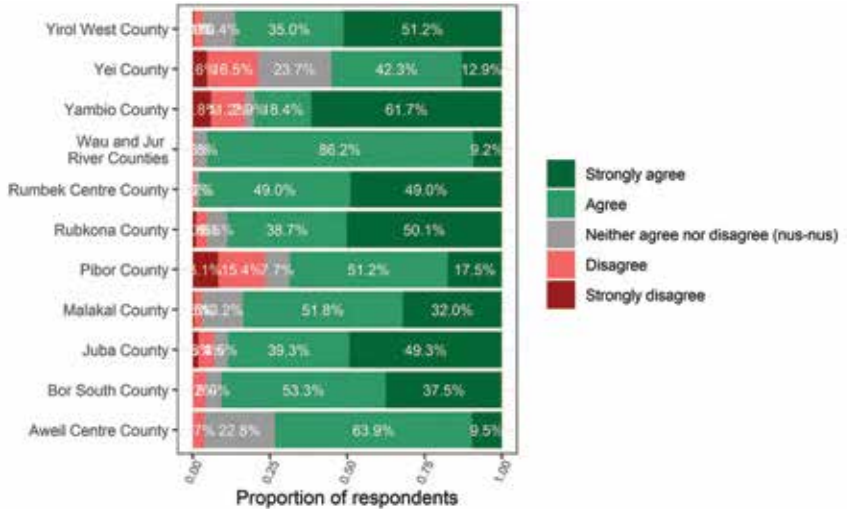
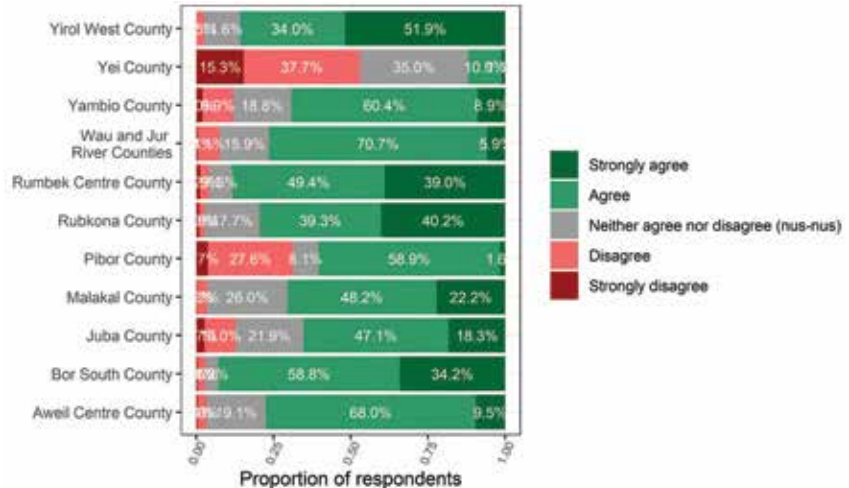


Figure 39: Do you agree or disagree? 'The parties to the revitalized peace agreement will make an honest effort to unify their forces.'



Governance Arrangements

Governance preferences

Respondents were split in their support for power sharing. Fifty-three percent of respondents in the full sample agreed the winner of elections should share power with the loser (Figure 40) and 40 percent agreed that the winner should take all positions (Figure 41). This indicates no strong, uniform support for either a power-sharing/consociational or a winner-takes-all/majoritarian system, and that the population is divided on these matters.

There was also divided support for army rule. Fifty-four percent of respondents disagreed that the army should rule, with the strongest resistance in urban areas (Figure 42). Rumbek was the only location with overwhelming enthusiasm for army rule, with more than 80 percent of respondents supporting it (Figure 43).

Respondents across environments cared about parliamentary input to presidential decision-making. Only 23 percent agreed that the president should make decisions without parliament having a say (Figure 44).

Figure 40: Do you agree or disagree? 'The winner of elections should share power with the loser.'

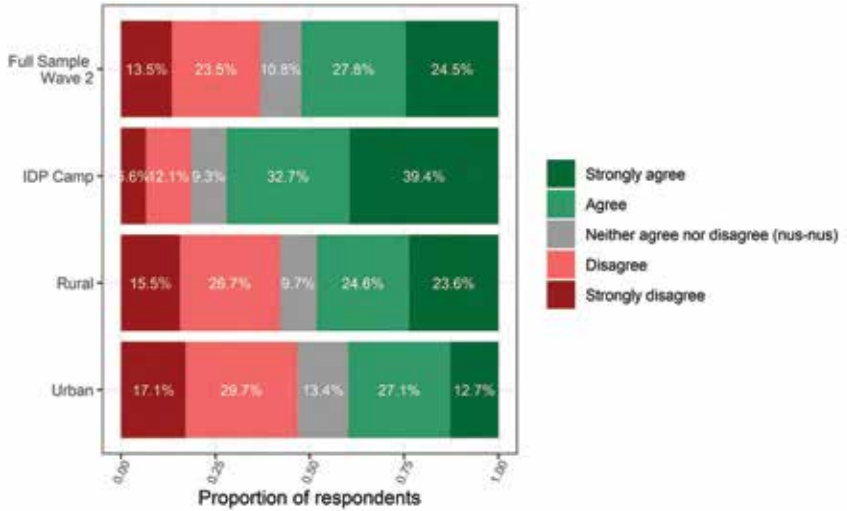


Figure 41: Do you agree or disagree? 'The winner of elections should take all positions in the national government.'

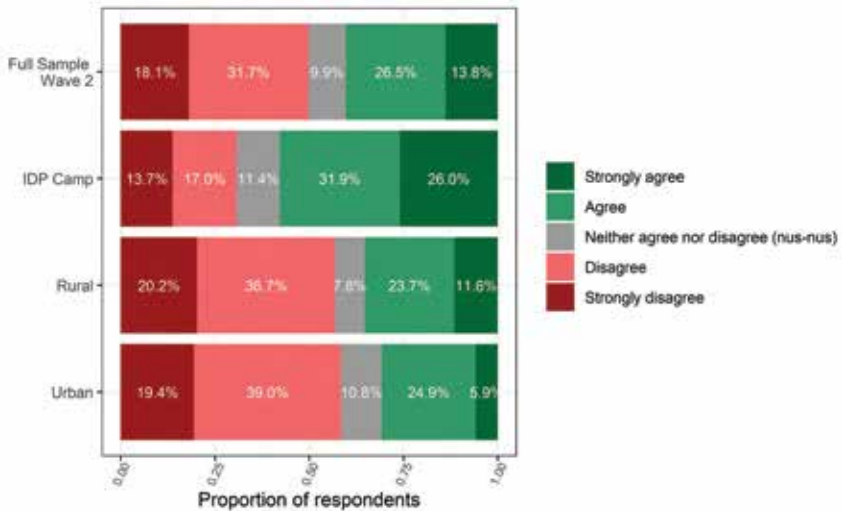


Figure 43: Do you agree or disagree? 'The army should govern the country.'

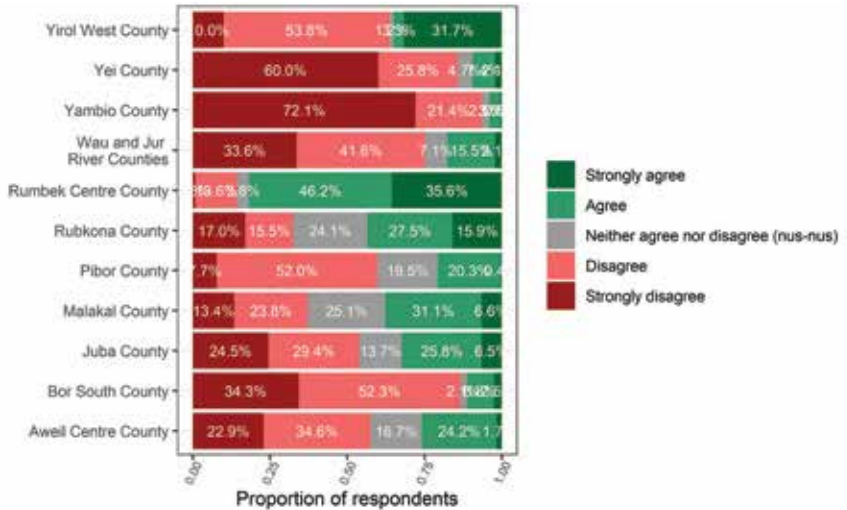
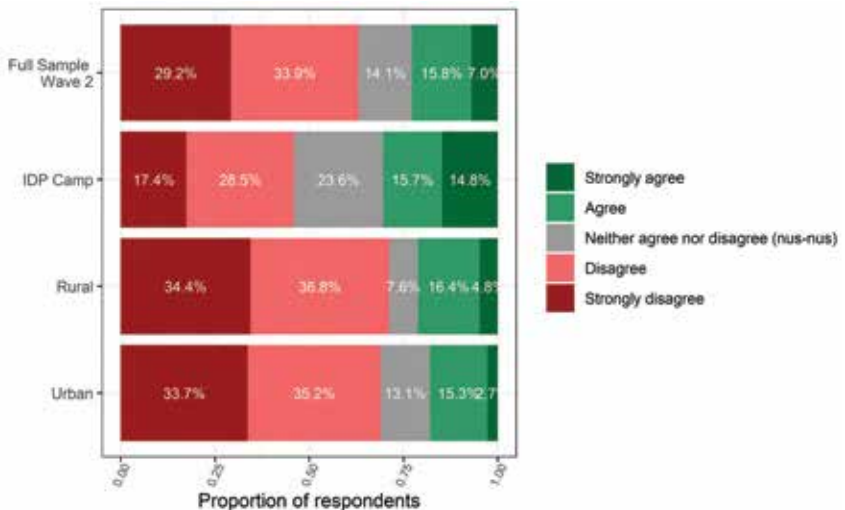


Figure 44: Do you agree or disagree? 'The president should decide everything without input from parliament.'



There were variations between locations in how much respondents cared about the type of government that is in place. In Yirol, Rubkona, Malakal and Aweil, respondents either agreed or were indifferent to the statement that, 'It doesn't matter what kind of government we have' (Figure 45). Across the sample, women were more likely than men to believe that the kind of government did not matter (see Figure 107 in Appendix for regression estimate).

A majority of respondents (62%) agreed that the government should respond firmly to insecurity, even if that meant violating human rights sometimes. This support held across urban, rural and IDP camp areas, underlining the priority of security in people's lives (Figure 46). While this result does not evidence a disregard for the importance of human rights, it does show the degree of sacrifice and tradeoffs respondents are willing to accept to experience security. In places such as Lakes States, for example, the governor's forceful response to intercommunal conflict has received considerable support in part because of the consultative manner in which he deployed the program and people's frustration with the high levels of chronic violence that have been plaguing the state for many years. Conversely, in places like Yei and Malakal, abusive counter-insurgency operations have badly affected the government's relationship with communities.

Figure 45: Do you agree or disagree? 'It doesn't matter what kind of government we have.'

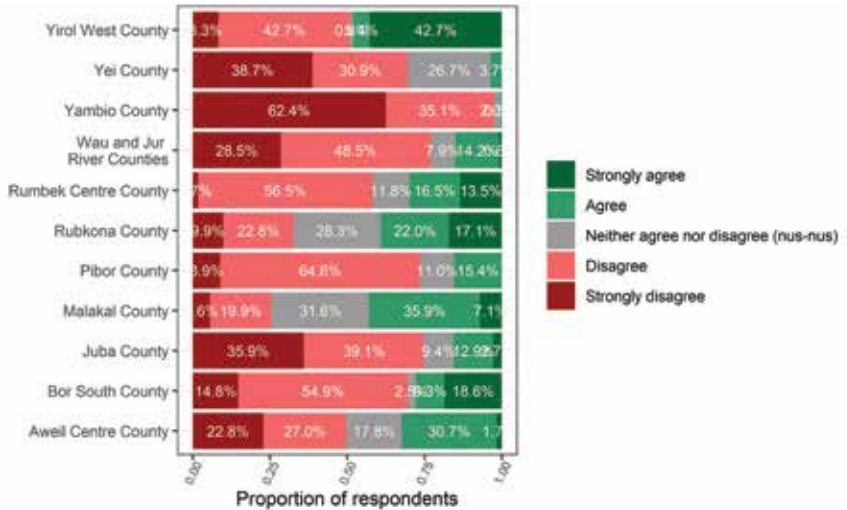
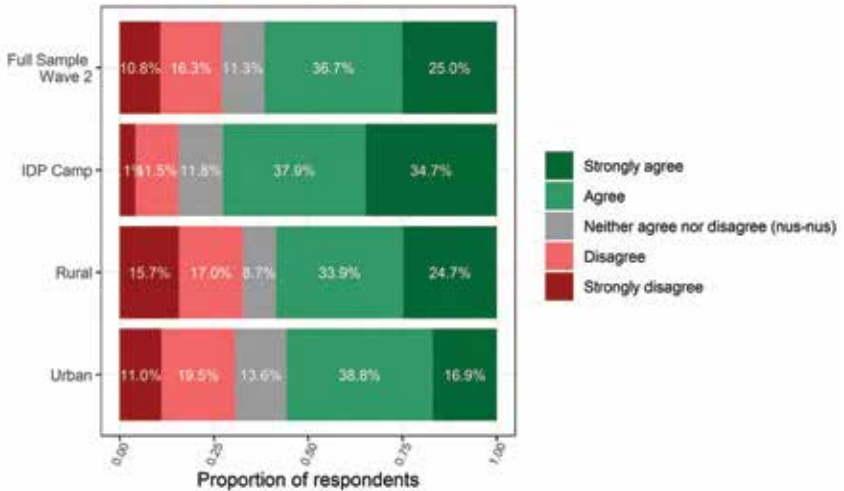


Figure 46: Do you agree or disagree? 'The government should respond firmly to insecurity even if that means violating human rights sometimes.'



Accountability and effectiveness

An overwhelming majority of respondents across survey environments prized government accountability above effectiveness, with no significant gender differences in responses (Figure 47). Accountability was also the most common choice out of a list of government attributes when respondents were asked what they found most important (Figure 48). While respondents may be divided about the form that government should take and whether election winners should share power, accountability appears to be a preference around which citizens are unified.

Figure 47: Which of the following do you agree with most: (a) It is important to have a government that can get things done, even if citizens have little influence over its decisions.

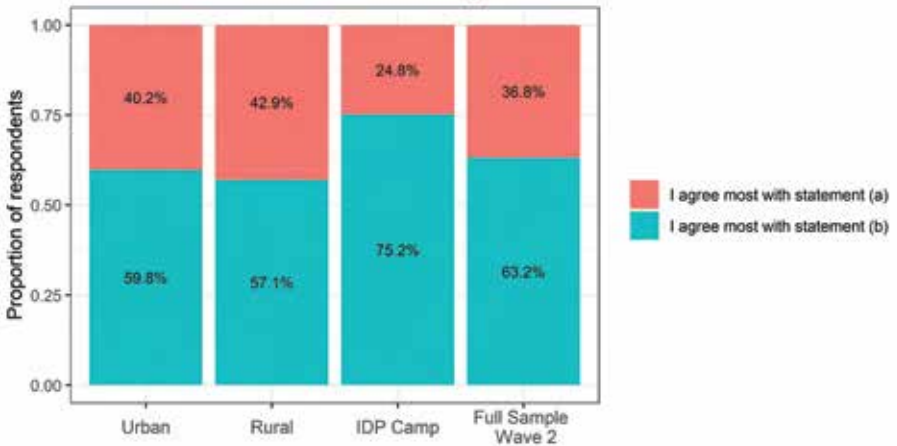
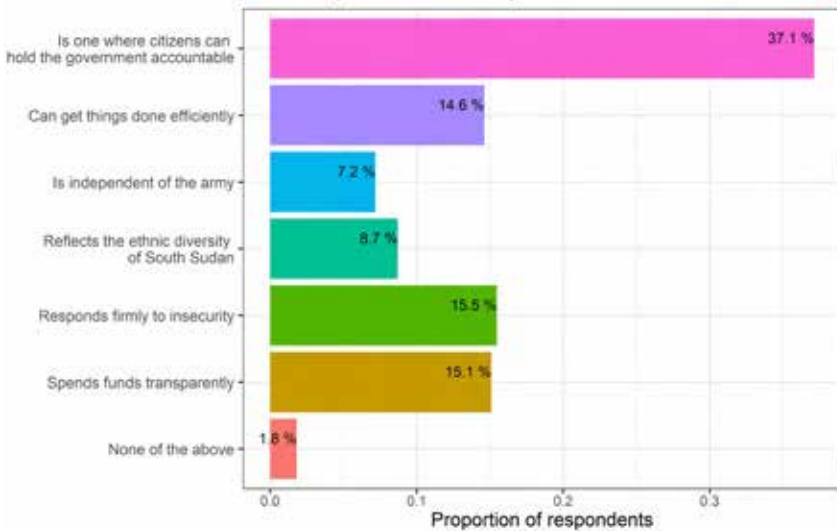


Figure 48: Which of these things is most important to you?



Women's role in government

More than 88 percent of respondents, male and female, supported 35 percent representation of women in the executive (Figure 51). There seemed limited preference to change the status quo, with more than 75 percent of respondents believing that women were adequately represented in decision-making processes in their area (Figure 49). However, there were interesting regional variations in women and men's views about women's representation. In Pibor, a majority of men were unwilling to vote for a qualified female candidate and also disagreed that leaders listen to women (Figure 50 and Figure 52). In Yei, Juba and Bor, women seemed more likely than in other areas to express that leaders should listen to their needs and ideas (Figure 50).

Figure 49: Do you agree or disagree? 'Women are adequately represented in decision-making processes in this area.'

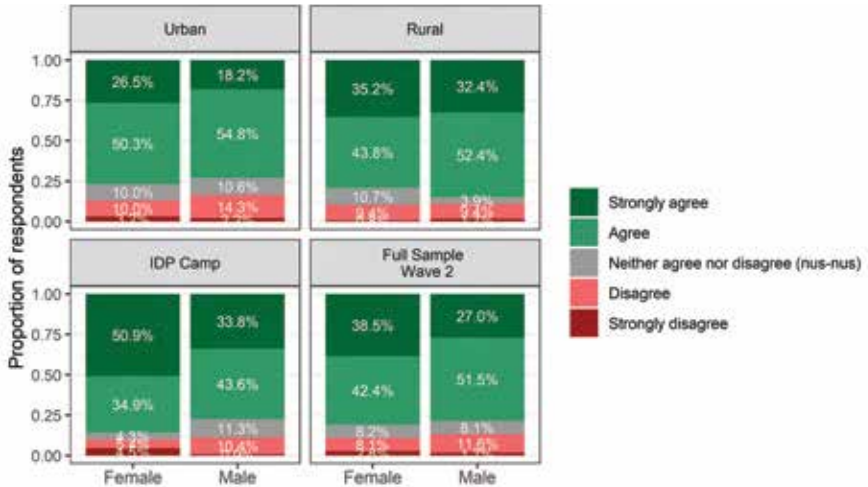


Figure 50: Do you agree or disagree? 'Leaders listen to the needs and ideas of women in this area.'

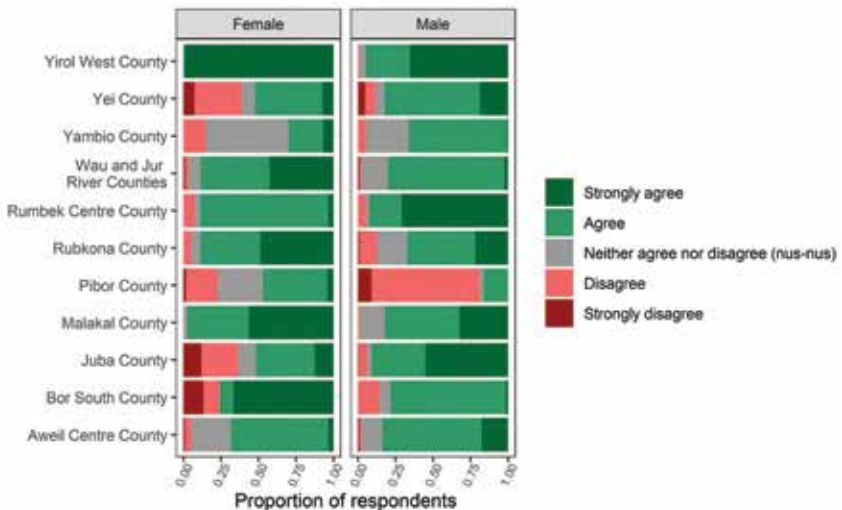


Figure 51: Do you agree or disagree? 'Women should be represented in 35% of positions in the executive as provided for in the peace agreement.'

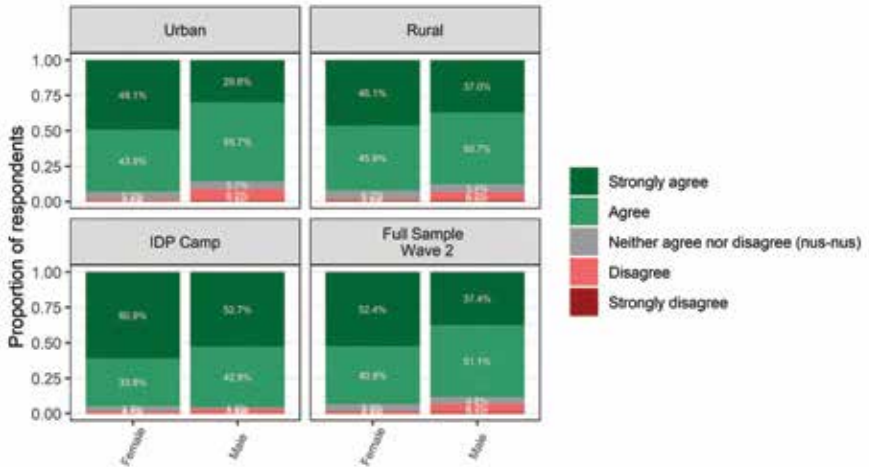
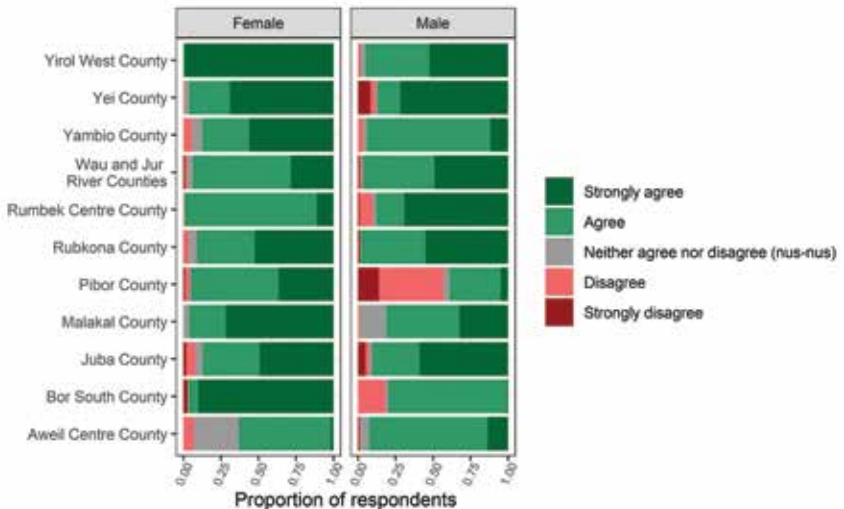


Figure 52: Do you agree or disagree? 'I would vote for a qualified female candidate to an elected position in government.'



Views on the R-TGONU

The following views on the R-TGONU pool answers given in 2021 and 2022.⁸ Respondents showed dramatic variation across locations in their confidence that the R-TGONU would implement the peace agreement. In Yei and Pibor, a majority of respondents had no confidence at all, whereas in Rumbek, more than 86 percent of respondents had a lot of confidence, and 97 percent some confidence (Figure 54). Two-thirds of all respondents believed the R-ARCSS would resolve the national conflict in South Sudan (Figure 55).

Figure 53: How much confidence do you have in the ability of the R-TGONU to implement the peace agreement?

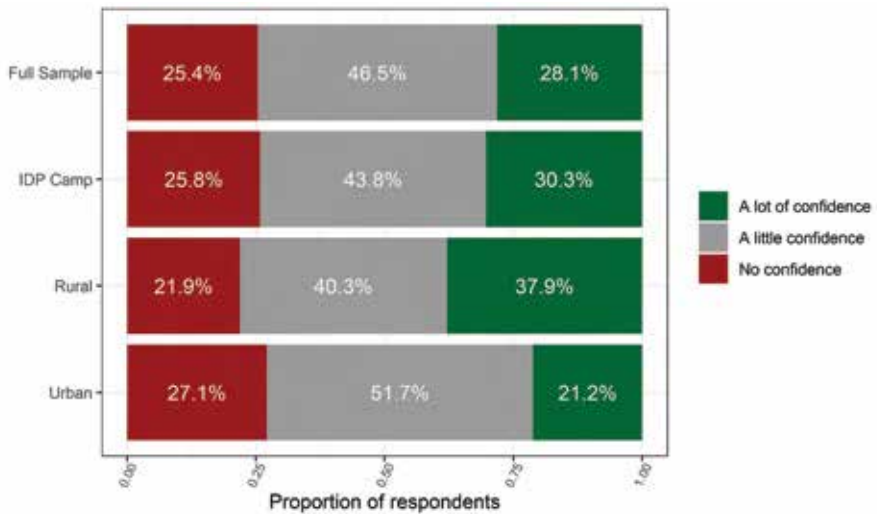


Figure 54: How much confidence do you have in the ability of the R-TGONU to implement the peace agreement?

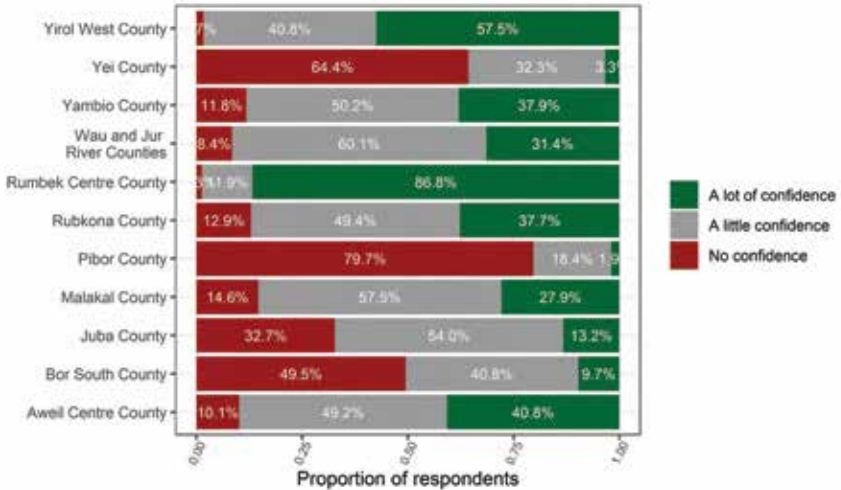
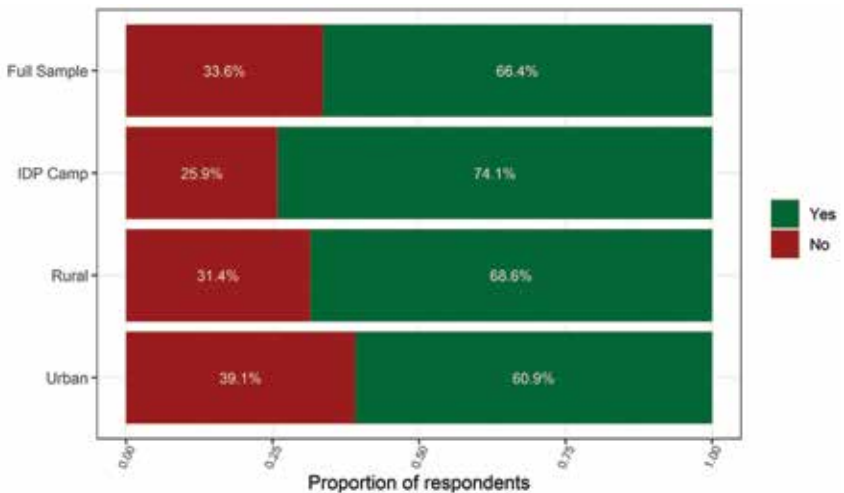


Figure 55: Do you think the revitalized peace agreement will resolve the national conflict in South Sudan?



Connections Between Perceptions of Security and Governance

The survey revealed strong connections between South Sudanese experiences of safety and their views on governance. The safer people felt, the more indifferent they were about the type of government they had. Conversely, the more unsafe people felt, the more they cared (Figure 56 and Figure 108 in Appendix). There were also important gender differences, with women caring much less than men about the type of government, even after controlling for the different gender experiences of safety (Figure 108 in Appendix).

Consistent with these views, the safer people felt in their daily lives, the less skeptical they were about the idea of the army governing the country. Conversely, the more unsafe people felt, the more they disagreed with the idea of army rule (Figure 57 and Figure 109 in Appendix).

Figure 56: Do you agree or disagree? 'It doesn't matter what kind of government we have.'

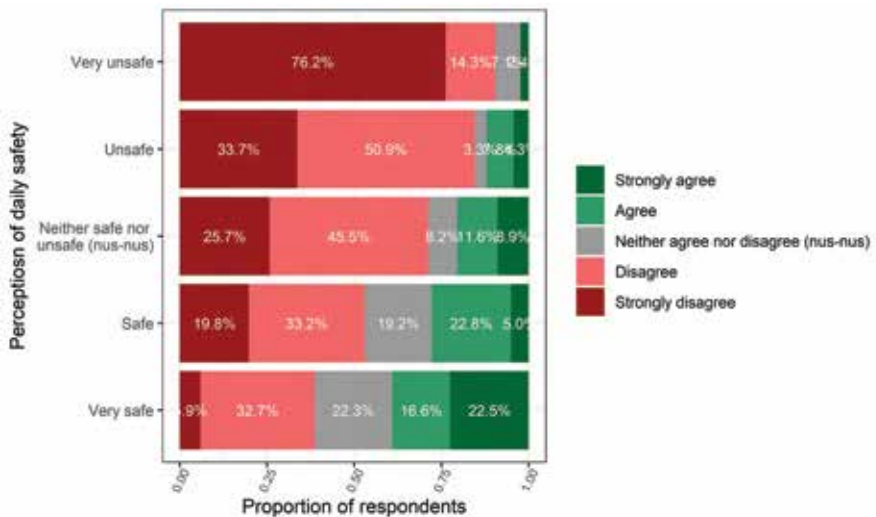
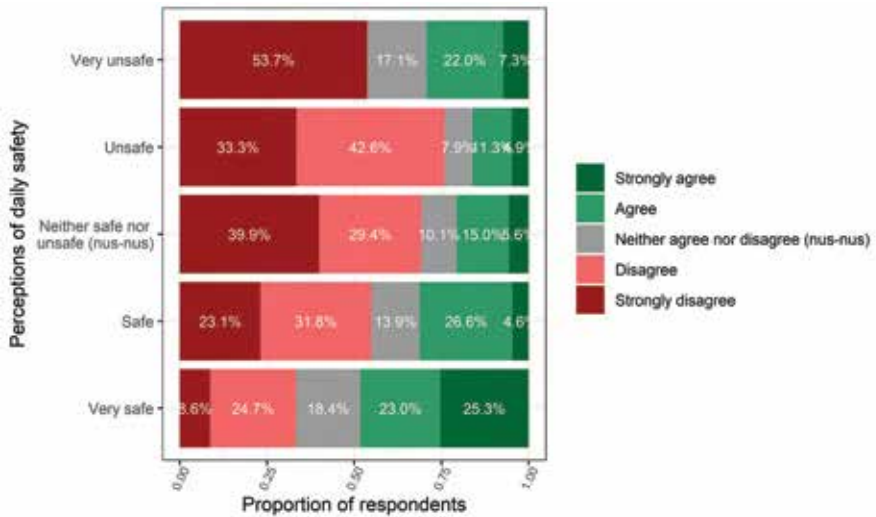


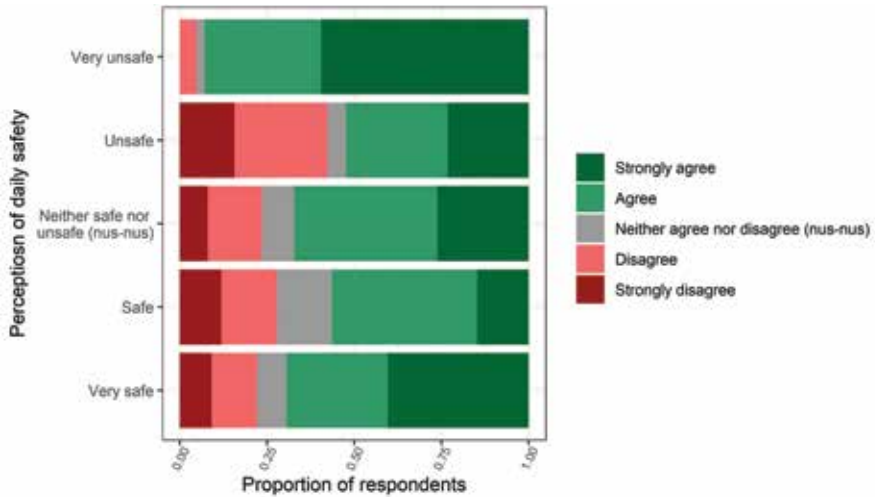
Figure 57: Do you agree or disagree? 'The army should govern the country.'



Survey respondents showed interesting, potentially non-linear correlations between their experiences of safety and whether they believed that the government should respond firmly to insecurity, even if that meant violating human rights. On average, the safer a respondent felt, male or female, the more comfortable they were with a firm government response even if that meant human rights violations. Women were, on average, more likely than men to believe in the government responding firmly to insecurity (Figure 110 in Appendix).

However, those who felt 'very unsafe' had much stronger views than those who felt 'unsafe'. In comparison to other respondents, those who were very unsafe had a substantively greater and statistically significant preference for a strong government response to insecurity, even if it meant violating human rights (Figure 111 in Appendix). By contrast, those who felt 'unsafe' were, on average, more likely than other respondents to object to a forceful government response (Figure 112 in Appendix).

Figure 58: Do you agree or disagree? The government should respond firmly to insecurity, even if that means violating human rights sometimes.'



Elections

General Views on Elections

Respondents' general attitude towards elections is one of ambivalence. South Sudanese, overwhelmingly, want elections to happen, and they want to hold them sooner rather than later. However, an overwhelming majority also sees elections linked to a considerable risk of violence. Over 85 percent of respondents said that elections would make them feel hopeful (40.8% strongly agree / 46% agree). At the same time, almost half of respondents said that elections make them feel afraid (16% strongly agree / 32% agree). These responses already show the ambivalent perceptions towards elections: 40 percent of respondents agree with both statements, thus saying that elections make them both hopeful and afraid.

The transition narrative, whereby elections would mark the final step of peace agreement implementation, appears to resonate. Over 80 percent of respondents agreed that elections are going to pave the way for peace in the country (34% strongly agree / 51% agree). In qualitative discussions, these general perceptions were often linked to the idea of legitimacy: better to have violent and disruptive elections that produce a formally legitimized government, than to continue with the current power-sharing arrangement that results from the R-ARCSS negotiations. This view reflects broader challenges related to fundamental constitutional questions. As responses on security and governance show (Figure 40, Figure 41), South Sudanese are split on whether elections should produce a winner-takes-it-all government, or whether power-sharing and consociational arrangements should continue.

Contrary to expectations, many South Sudanese have participated in election processes. Seventy percent of respondents said they participated in the 2010 Sudanese general elections – although there is a considerable gender disparity among respondents (77% of men, but only 64% of women). Forty percent participated in earlier elections or in national elections other countries. Half of the respondents have also been involved in elections of traditional authorities, and these experiences are also strongly influenced by gender (60.9% men have been involved, compared to 41% women).

Figure 59: When should elections in South Sudan happen?

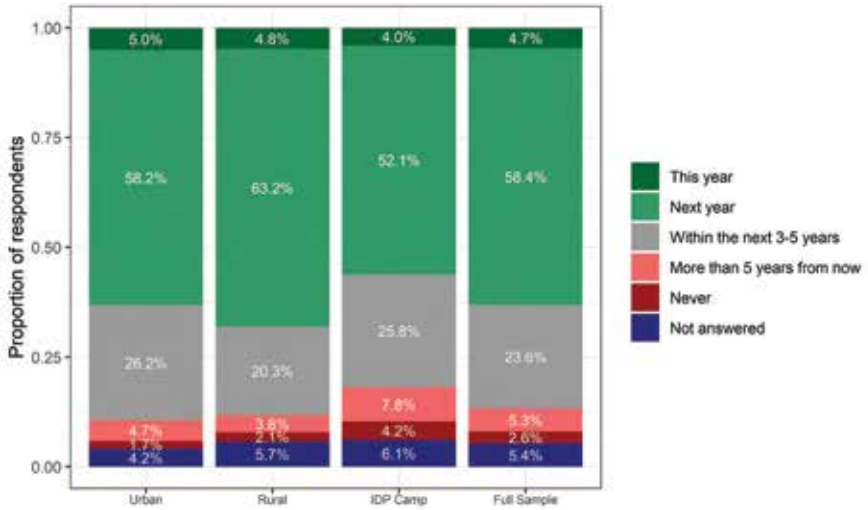
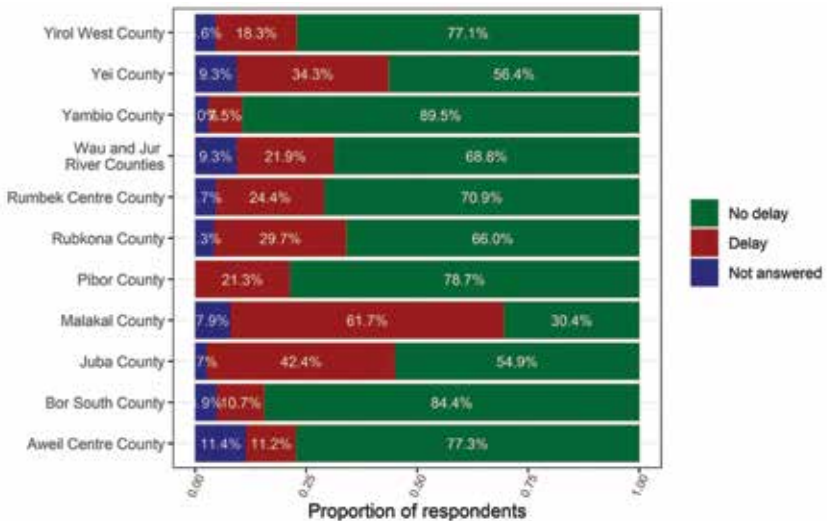
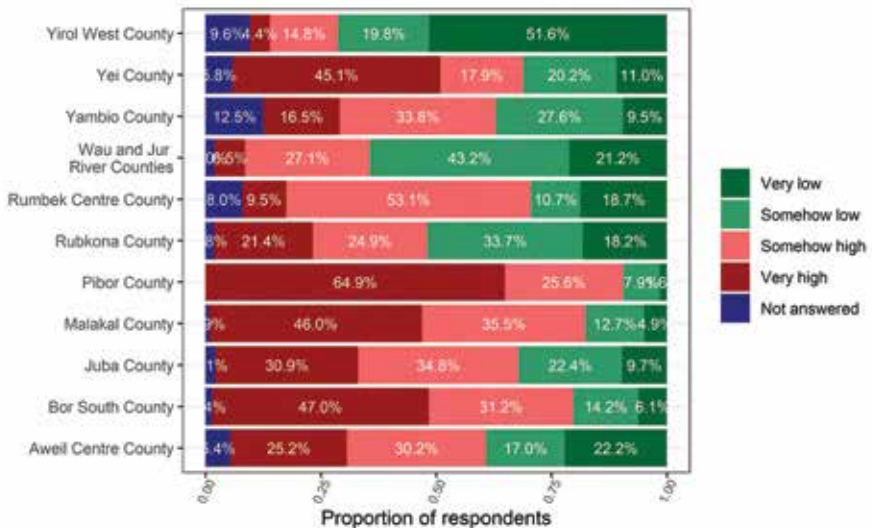


Figure 60: When should elections in South Sudan happen, disaggregated by county



Before the extension of the transition period was announced, South Sudanese strongly favored holding elections in 2023. Only a minority (24%) would have preferred prolonging the transitional period in the form that has now been agreed upon (Figure 59). However, results vary widely according to location (Figure 60). In general, counties that are politically (and often, violently) contested, favored a delay: examples are Malakal County in Upper Nile, Yei River County in Central Equatoria, and Rubkona County in Unity State. These counties are among the most conflict-affected places in South Sudan. It is therefore logical that the populations in these areas would want to avoid further triggers of violence. Respondents in places that are more stable were overwhelmingly against a postponement.

Figure 61: Perceived risk of election violence in counties



However, the reverse assumption, whereby places that assess the risk of election violence to be high would prefer a postponement, is not necessarily true. While data from Malakal, Yei, Rubkona, and Juba would support such an argument, locations such as Bor South County in Jonglei and Pibor County in the neighboring Greater Pibor Administrative Area run against it. Bor and Pibor are among the places with the highest perceived risk of election violence in the country, which is hardly surprising given the particular history of conflict in the region. Still, respondents in both counties were clearly opposed to a delay in elections. These views appear to confirm the long-lasting political discontent with the political dispensation at the national level in Greater Jonglei.

Figure 62: How would you assess the risk of violence in relation to the elections?

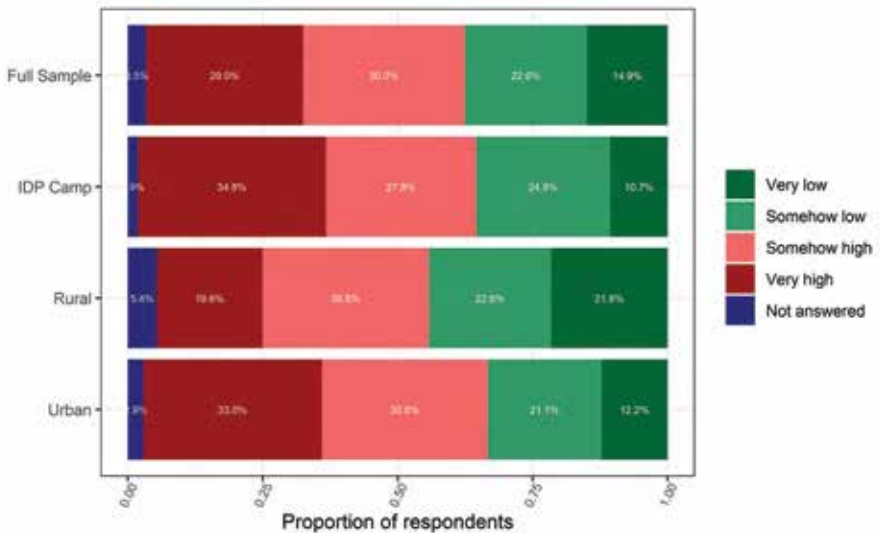
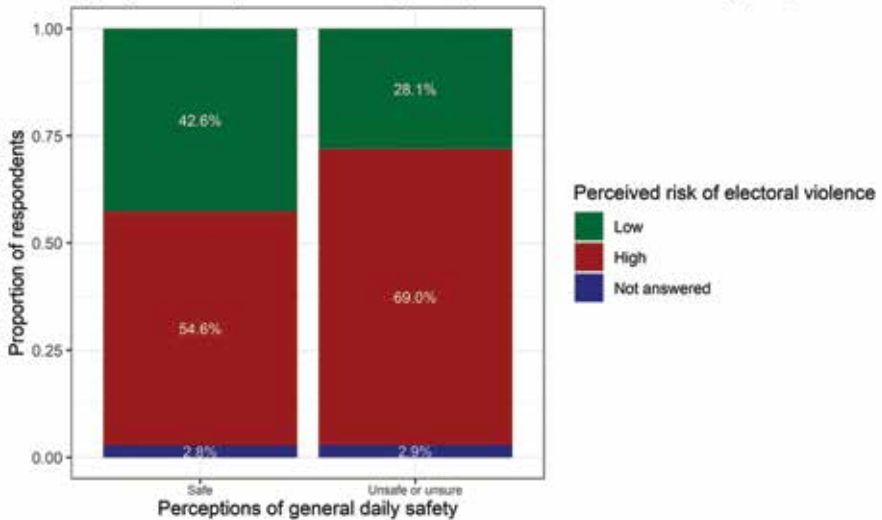
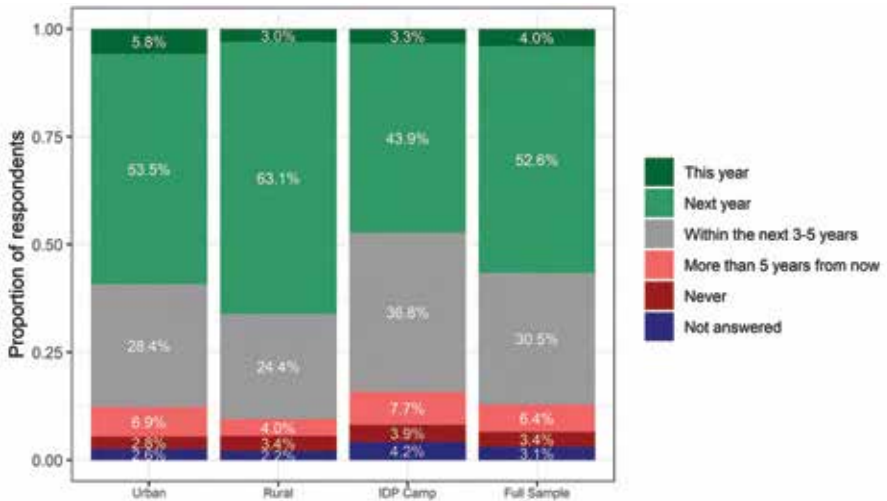


Figure 63: Risk of violence in relation to elections, depending on their perceived safety



Overall, 60 percent of respondents said the risk of election-related violence is somewhat or very high. This perception is influenced by respondent perceptions of safety. Among respondents that felt unsafe or unsure about their safety, 73 percent saw the risk as somewhat or very high. This is hardly surprising, though the consequences of these perceptions are less clear. As explained above, a perceived high risk of election violence does not necessarily translate into a desire to postpone the elections. Figure 64 shows that even among respondents assessing the risk of election violence as very high, a solid majority opted for holding elections sooner rather than later. These findings suggest that the motives behind the wish for postponement are either political in nature or related to the mid-term consequences of elections. In other words, these respondents appeared to not be so concerned with the risk of pre- or post-election violence in the short-term, but a resurgence of the civil war in the longer-term.

Figure 64: When should elections in South Sudan happen? By respondents that assess the risk of election violence as 'very high'



Approaches to Elections and Voting Patterns

One of the less debated issues around national elections in South Sudan is how the electorate would approach them. Naturally, voting behavior is significantly influenced by electoral procedures, which are part of a constitutional discussion and, therefore, far from being decided in the South Sudanese context. Questions of first-past-the-post versus possible applications of a D'Hondt power-sharing formula, in particular, will have a huge impact on tactical voting behavior. However, it appears clear that a presidential system in which the president, state governors and county commissioners would be directly elected will be given preference in South Sudan. These direct elections are probably what respondents had in mind when answering the questions on their preferred approach to elections.

Bloc voting, in which communities vote overwhelmingly for the same candidates, is common in a number of neighboring countries. Respondents, in general, approached bloc voting in an ambivalent way. The vast majority (86%), agreed that voting should be an individual choice. At the same time, 47 percent of respondents said that all members of their family should vote the same way, and 45 percent said that their community should vote the same way (Figure 65). Obviously, there is a considerable overlap between those agreeing to both options of individual and collective voting behavior. For instance, 88 percent of respondents arguing for community voting, at the same time, also saw voting as their individual choice.

Figure 65: Voting preferences

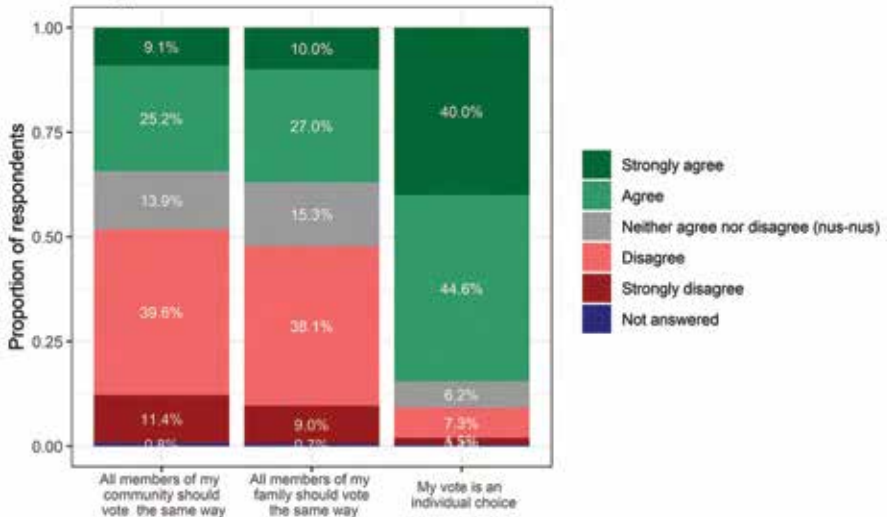
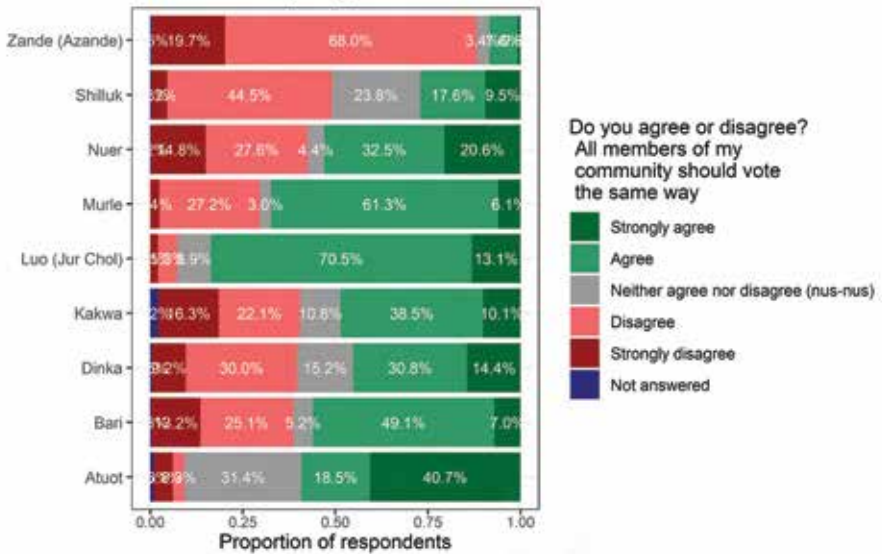


Figure 66: Views on community voting



The preferred approach to elections varied significantly depending on ethnolinguistic affiliations (Figure 66). A comparison of ethnolinguistic groups for which a sufficient number of responses could be collected, preference for community voting varies from almost 80 percent among Luo to less than 10 percent among Zande. Interestingly, the communities with the least preference for community voting were also those with some the strongest traditions in centralized governance in South Sudan: Zande and Shilluk.

In contrast, ethnopolitical affiliations do not appear to be the main factor in decision-making. Figure 67 shows that a healthy majority, 73 percent, appeared to be willing to vote for a political leader from another ethnic group (35% strongly agree, 38% agree).

Figure 67: Do you agree or disagree? 'I would vote for a political leader from another ethnic group'

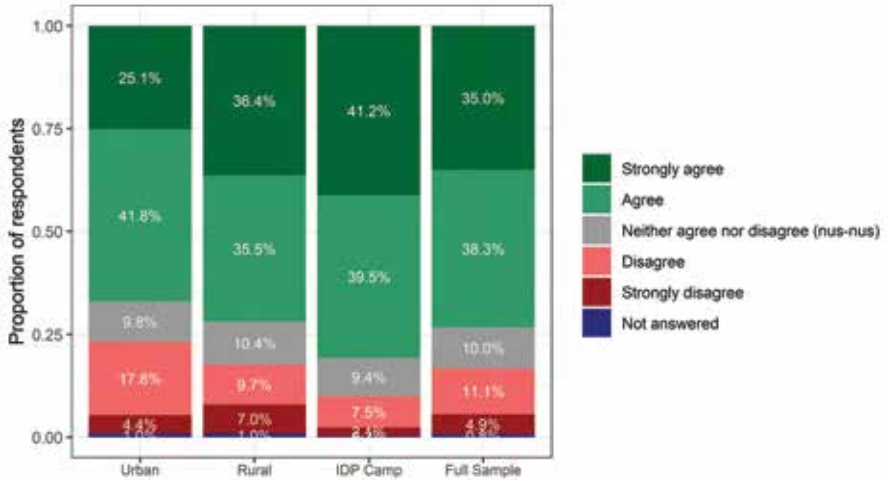
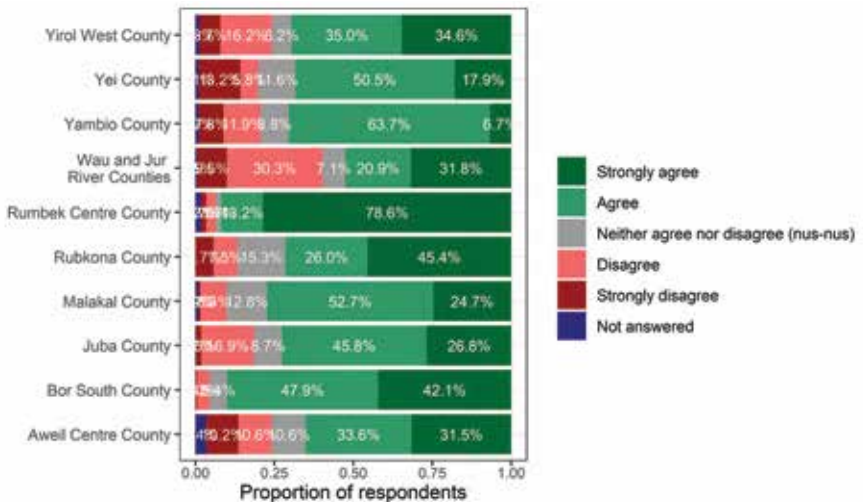


Figure 68: Do you agree or disagree? 'I would vote for a political leader from another ethnic group.' By Location



Regarding geographic variations, it is difficult to establish overarching explanatory variables. For instance, preferences differ vastly between Rumbek Centre (5% disagreeing) and Yirol West (23% disagreeing), even though both counties are ethnopolitically homogenous, located in Lakes State, and only separated by a short car drive. In general, rather diverse counties, such as Malakal or Yei, have a significantly lower level of disagreement with voting for a political leader from another ethnic group. The high level of disagreement in Wau and Jur River, in turn, could point towards the latent but strong ethnopolitical tensions in the wider region.

Party Popularity

The survey did not pose direct questions about the popularity of political parties or individual candidates due to the sensitivity of these questions in the South Sudanese context. Instead, respondents were asked which political party has the best vision for South Sudan, which can serve as a proxy for party popularity, both in the current context and in relation to possible elections. Respondents were asked to choose one party from a list of registered political parties, peace agreement signatories and formal armed groups. Respondents were explicitly prompted to answer with 'none' if they thought that none of the current political parties offers a compelling vision.

Figure 69: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan?

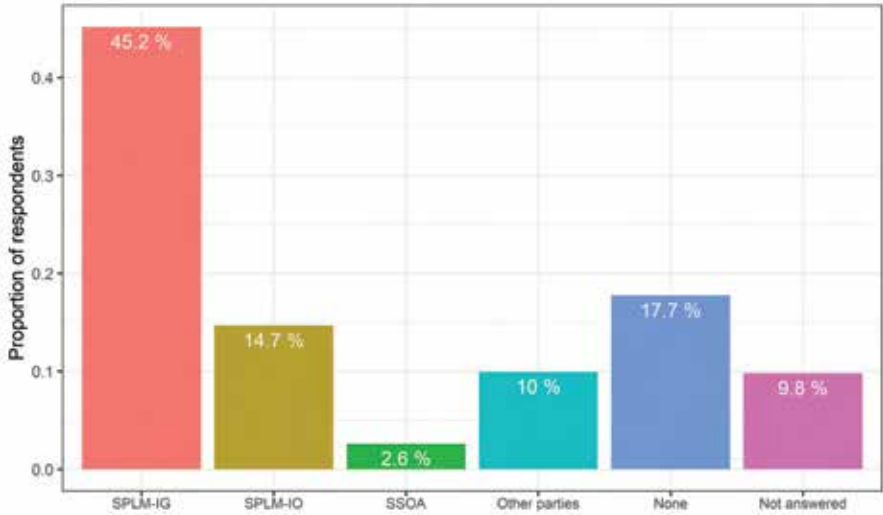
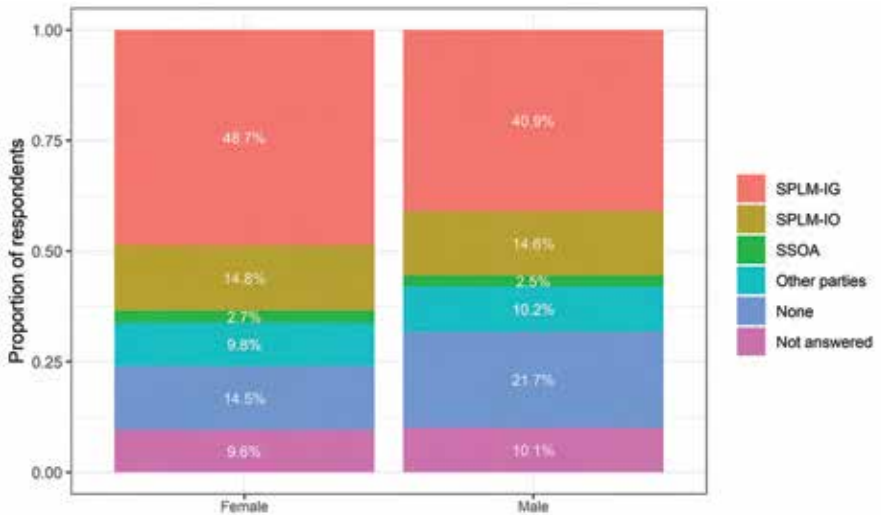


Figure 70: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? By Gender



Overall, the incumbent faction of SPLM that has been in power throughout the war (SPLM-IG) dominated the responses with 40 percent of respondents saying that it had the most compelling vision for South Sudan (Figure 69). The absence of a strong national opposition was equally apparent. The SPLM-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) came in second with 15 percent of responses. This was just a few percentage points less than 'none', which was selected by 18 percent of respondents. The South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) was the only other faction that garnered a significant amount of support at the national level, with 3 percent of total responses. The large number of respondents who said that no political parties had a compelling vision for the country combined with the considerable number of non-responses (9.8%) shows a concerning level of political dissatisfaction. More than a quarter of respondents, in their own assessment, were politically homeless. Interestingly, party preferences were not significantly influenced by gender (Figure 70).

Figure 71: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? Among respondents in IDP camps

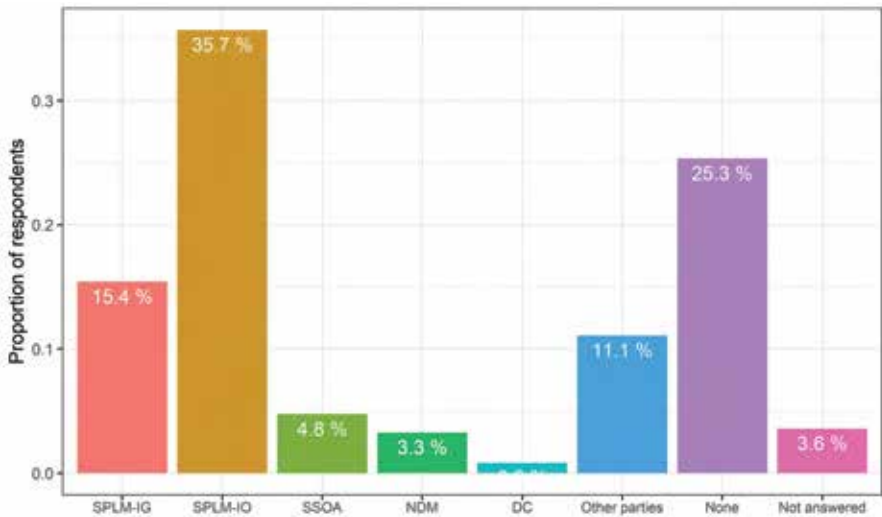
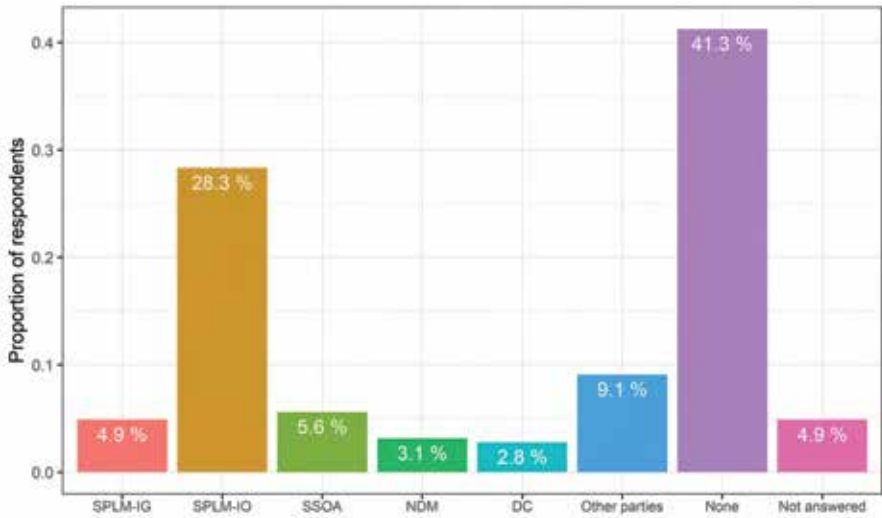


Figure 72: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? Among respondents in Malakal POC camp



The overall numbers, however, are contrasted by highly diverse disaggregated results. As expected, the SPLM-IG was considerably less popular in the IDP and former POC sites. There, the SPLM-IO was the by far most popular faction (Figure 71), which is hardly surprising given their political dominance in the transitioned POC sites in Juba and Bentiu. In general, the political landscape in IDP camps is more diverse than it appears in the overall numbers. This is mainly due to the remaining POC site in Malakal, where political viewpoints were highly diverse (Figure 72).

Figure 73: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? By Age group

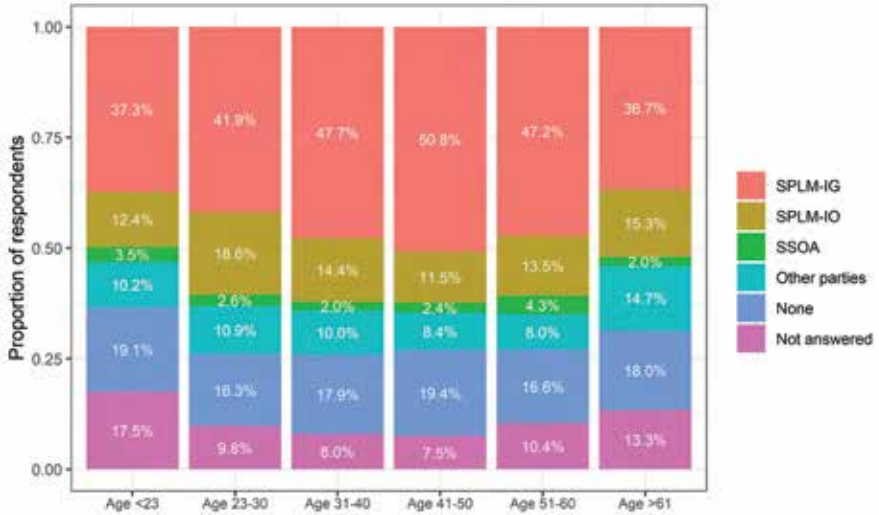
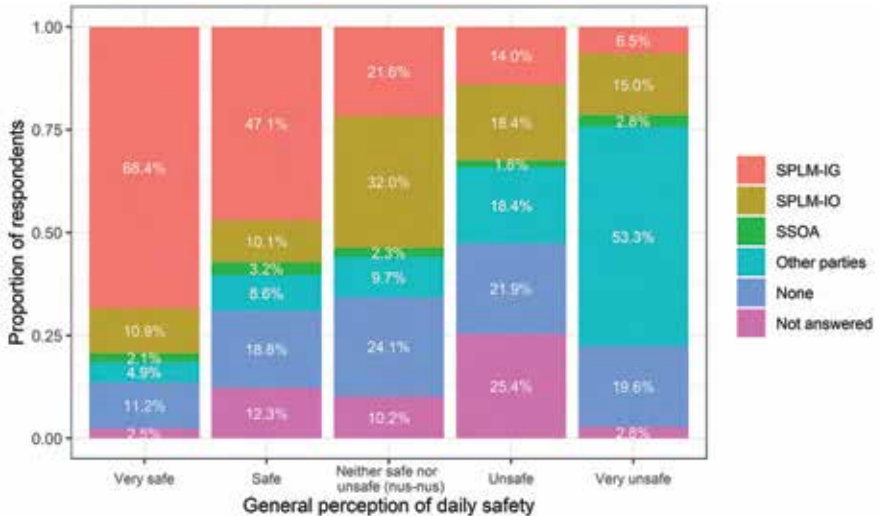


Figure 74: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? By perceptions of daily safety



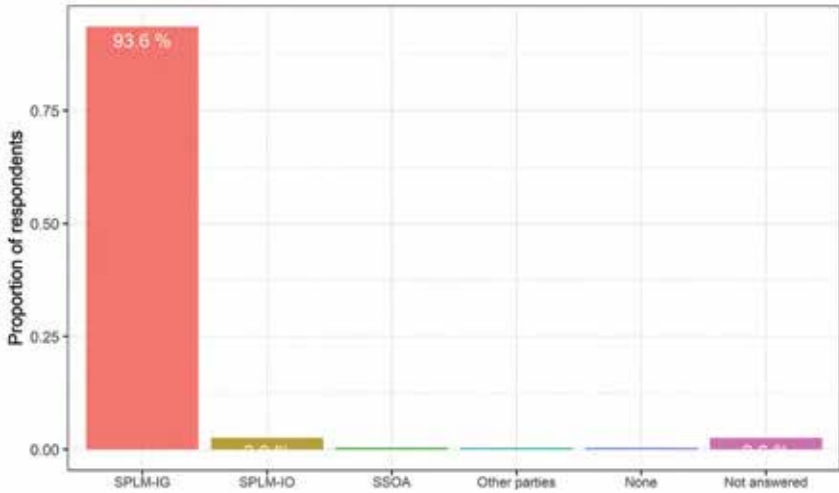
Disaggregating the results by age reveals that no clear political competitor emerged among the respective age groups, with 'none' being the most likely alternative to the SPLM-IG (Figure 73). The SPLM-IG appears to be less popular among young and older respondents, and to have their main constituency among middle-aged respondents between age 30 and 60. The decline in popularity among people over 60 is an especially concerning sign as those individuals experienced the whole life span of the SPLM as a political movement. Nonetheless, as suggested by the overall trends, no clear political competitor emerged among the respective age groups, with 'none' being the most likely alternative to the SPLM-IG.

There was a strong correlation between the popularity of a party's political vision and respondents' perceived safety (Figure 74). The popularity of the SPLM-IG positively correlates with perceived safety, from 62 percent among respondents who feel safe to 18 percent among respondents that feel unsafe (see Figure 113 in Appendix for evidence of the strength of this correlation). This suggests that SPLM-IO may offer a somewhat credible alternative among populations that feel less safe. In any case, the numbers imply that the popularity of political parties is closely tied to the delivery of public goods and services, with the provision of local security being a critical one.

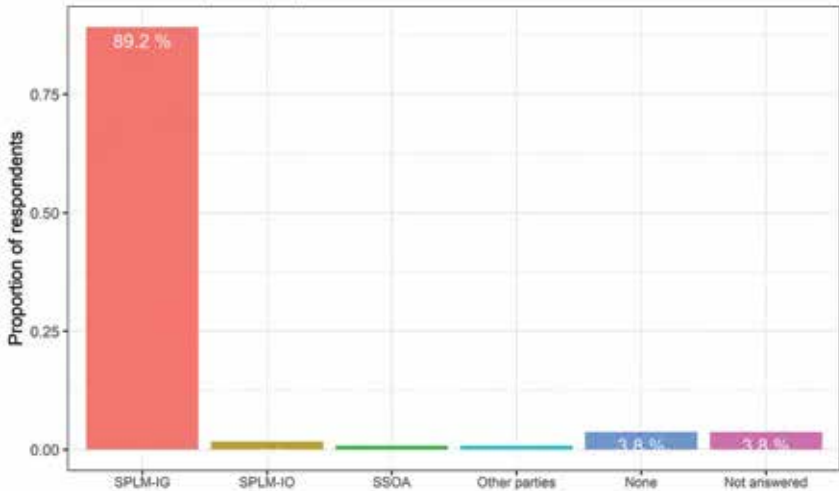
The results in individual counties were highly diverse. They confirm that, while the SPLM-IG appeared to be in firm control of national 'first-past-the-post' election processes, they would risk losing considerable influence at state and county level compared with the current power-sharing arrangement provided by the R-ARCSS framework.

Figure 75: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? (Rumbek Centre, Yirol West, Aweil Centre, Bor South, Wau, Jur River)

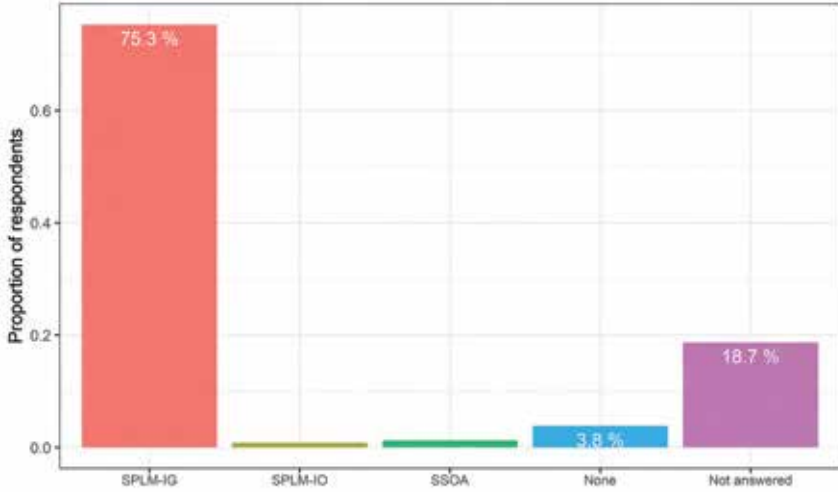
Rumbek Centre



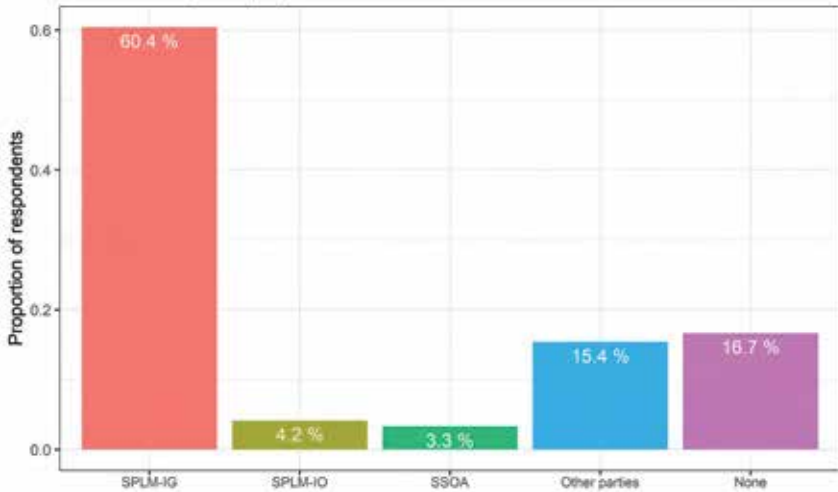
Yirol West



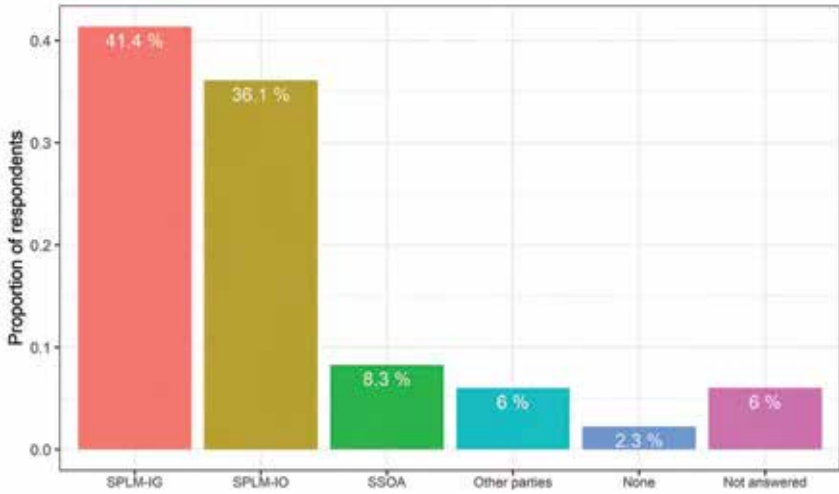
Aweil Centre



Bor South



Wau



Jur River

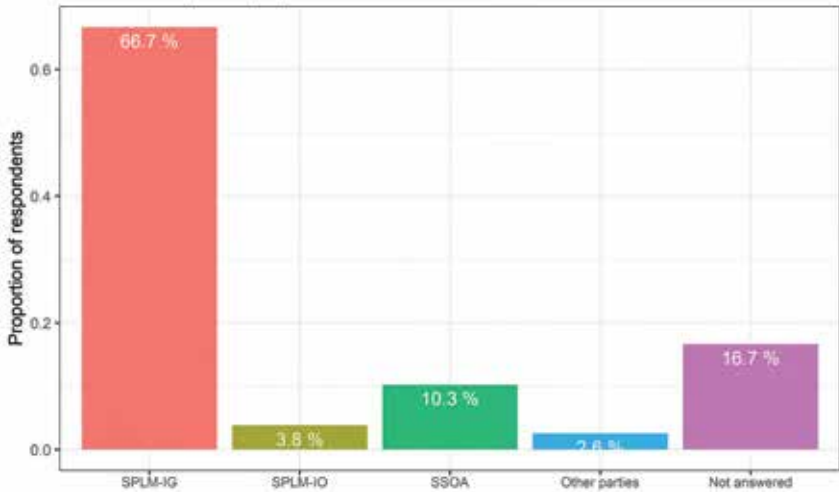
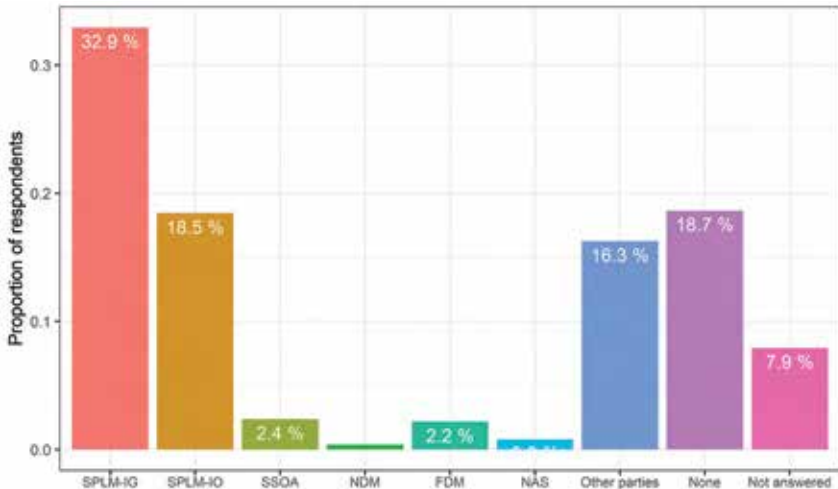


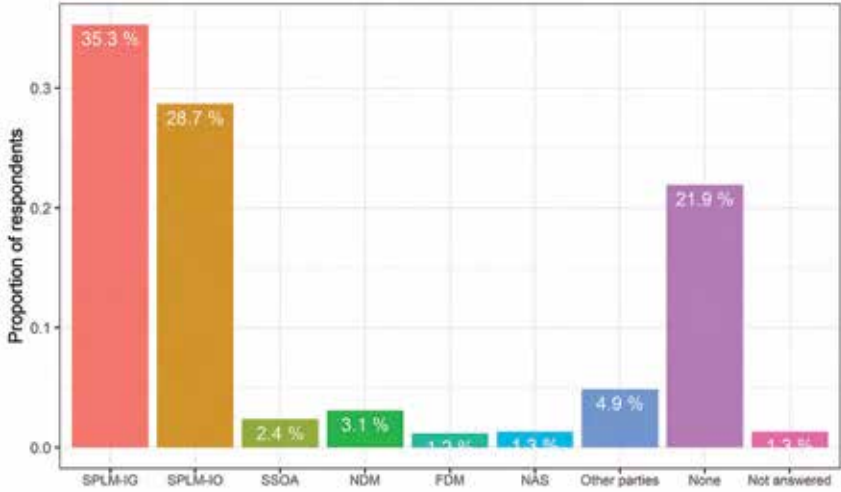
Figure 75 shows results in counties with a considerable SPLM-IG majority in terms of political vision. The results from Lakes State in which more than 92 percent of respondents preferred SPLM-IG. These results reflect the popularity of Governor Riin Tuony Mabor, appointed in 2021, and his heavy-handed approach to combating intercommunal violence in the state. More surprising is the substantial popularity of the SPLM-IG in Bor South, even though this might contrast strongly with other parts of Jonglei (no data were available for other counties in Jonglei for this question). The discrepancy of results between the neighboring counties of Wau and Jur River (Figure 75), which shows the diverse political affiliations in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal.

Figure 76: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? (Juba, Rubkona, Malakal)

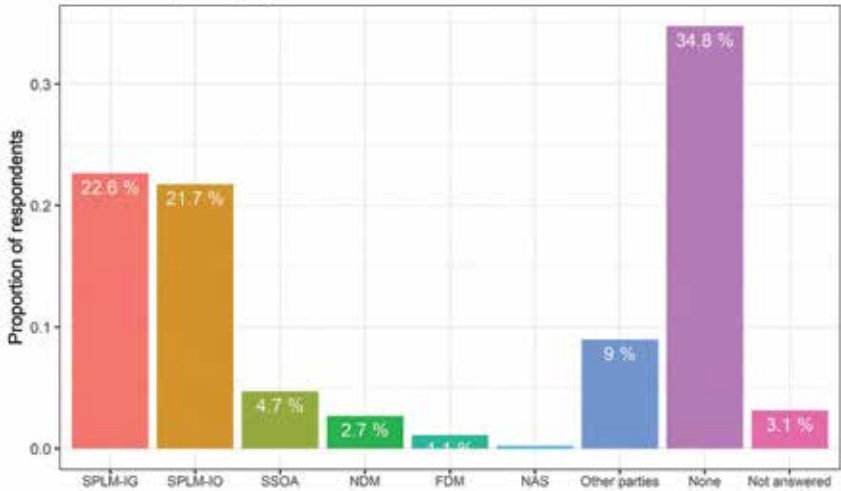
Juba



Rubkona



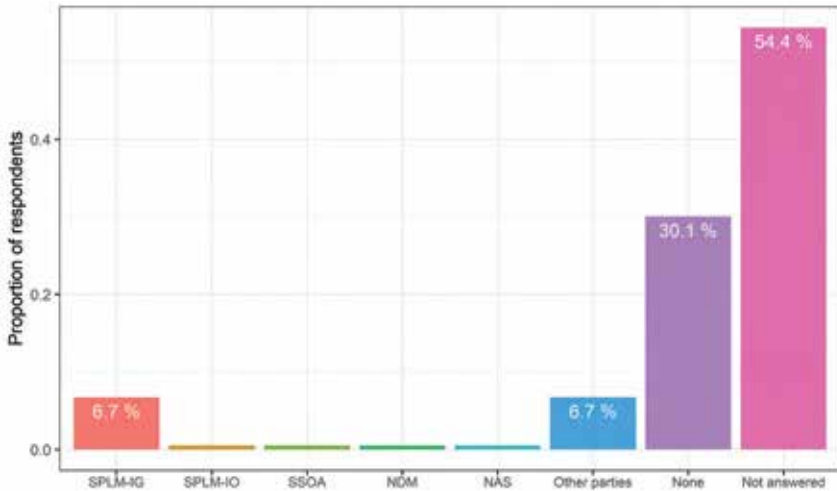
Malakal



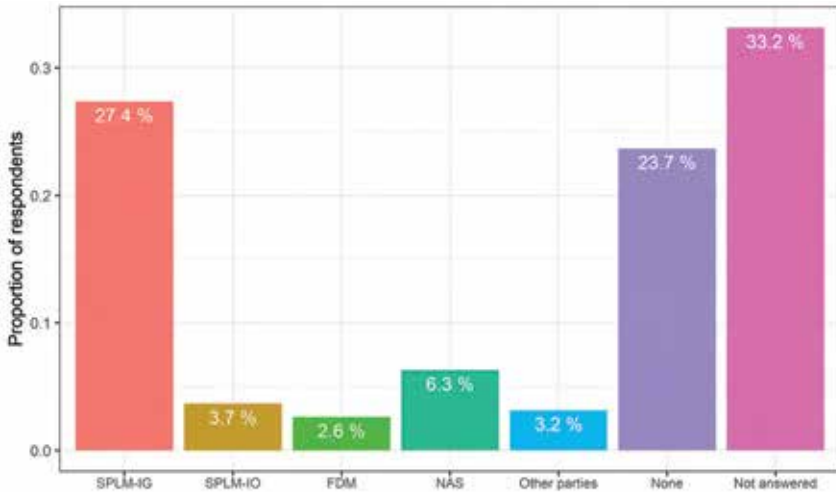
Rubkona, Malakal, Juba, Yambio and Yei also evidenced high contested political space. In addition to Rubkona and Malakal (Figure 76), which are currently experiencing a relatively high level of violence, this also applies to Wau (Figure 75), and the capital, Juba (Figure 76). Overall, the political landscape in Juba appears to be more diverse than in most other parts of the country, with a higher popularity of political factions that are not very popular elsewhere. SPLM-IO's constituency in Juba relies heavily on the IDP camps, where 40 percent of respondents saw them as their preferred choice (compared to 14% for the SPLM-IG).

Figure 77: Which political party has the best vision for South Sudan? (Yambio, Yei)

Yambio



Rubkona



Of specific interest is the political situation in the Equatorias, which differs significantly from the rest of the country. Yambio County is a substantial outlier, where 85 percent of respondents either did not answer the question about which party has the most compelling political vision or said that no party had one. These results suggest a large political vacuum not only in this county, but in the Equatorias more generally. In Yei County, as well, respondents answering either 'none' or 'no response' were by far the most substantial contingent (57%). Yei's political landscape is also different from other locations insofar as the National Salvation Front (NAS) led by Thomas Cirillo can rely on a healthy following (6%) there.

Combining overall numbers with results at the county-level, and accepting that the popularity of a party's political vision can act as a credible proxy for election preferences, the data offers a credible argument for why the signatories to the R-ARCSS unanimously agreed to prolong the transitional period and postpone elections. Signatories to the R-ARCSS have little to win and a lot to lose from elections. For the SPLM-IG, a victory at presidential and, depending on the type of election process adopted, parliamentary level was very likely. However, they would have risked losing control of a considerable number of states and counties, which would have put them in a less advantageous position than that provided for by the power-sharing arrangement of the R-ARCSS.

The exact opposite is true for the political opposition. While they would not have been able to mount a credible challenge at the national level, they would have had a chance to convincingly win at the state and county levels, particularly in the Equatorias, parts of Jonglei, Greater Upper Nile and parts of Bahr-el-Ghazal. However, these wins surely would not have come easily, as there would have been a high chance of triggering violent conflicts. Combined with the likely loss of most if not all important positions at the national level, this explains the interest of the political opposition in postponing national elections.

Public Authority

Citizen Relationships with National Government

Survey responses indicate a significant breakdown in the relationship between citizens and the national government. Overall, more respondents disagreed (49%) with the statement, 'The national government cares about my community', than agreed (39%) (Figure 78). Some of the lowest levels of agreement were in Yei (20%) and Bor (24%), both of which are locations that have been affected by conflict in recent years. Rumbek stands out for having the best perceptions of its relationship with the national government, with 74% of respondents agreeing with the statement. Interestingly, this viewpoint in Rumbek coexists alongside a certain dissatisfaction with the extent to which communities in Rumbek are represented in the organized forces. Just 30% of respondents in Rumbek agreed with the statement, 'My community is adequately represented in the armed forces,' which was second lowest after Yei (27%) among the survey locations in which this question was asked (Figure 79).

Figure 78: Do you agree or disagree? 'The national government cares about my community.' By Location

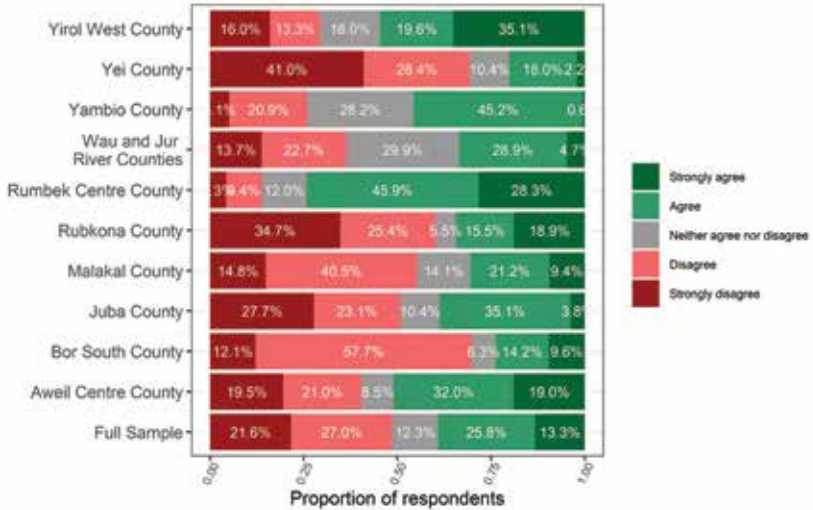
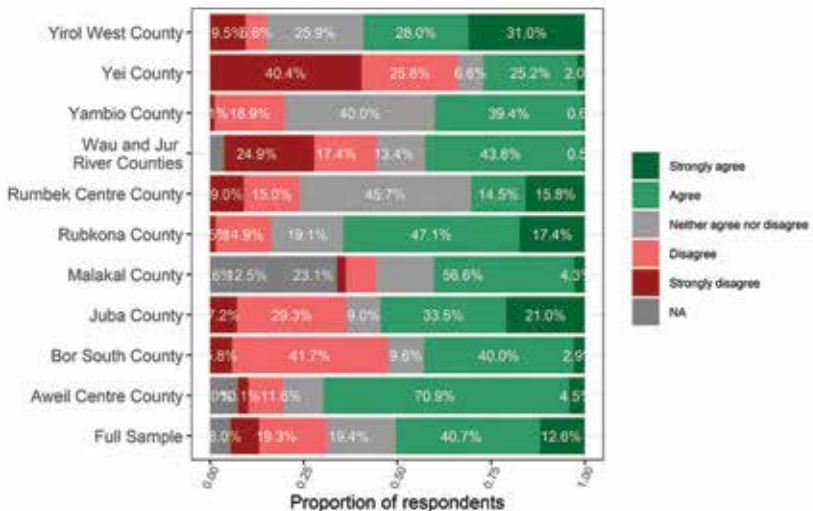


Figure 79: Do you agree or disagree? 'My community is adequately represented in the organized forces.' By Location



As with previous indicators, perceptions of safety strongly correlate with perceptions of the relationship between the national government and communities. The safer respondents felt, the more likely they were to think that the national government cares about their community (Figure 80, and Figure 119 in Appendix). The more times respondents reported being displaced, the more likely they were to disagree that the government cared about their community (Figure 81). This correlation was statistically significant and strong (see Figure 120 in Appendix).

Figure 80: Do you agree or disagree? 'The national government cares about my community.' By EPI

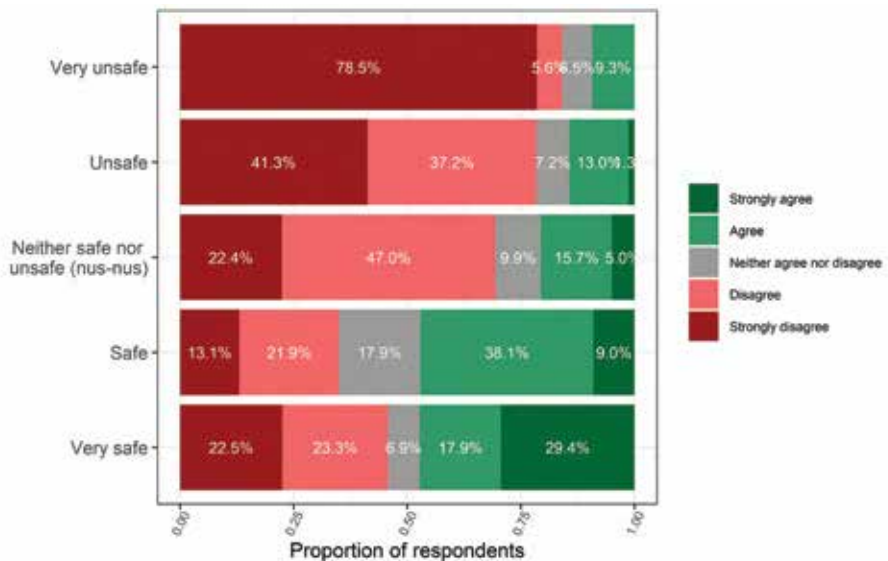
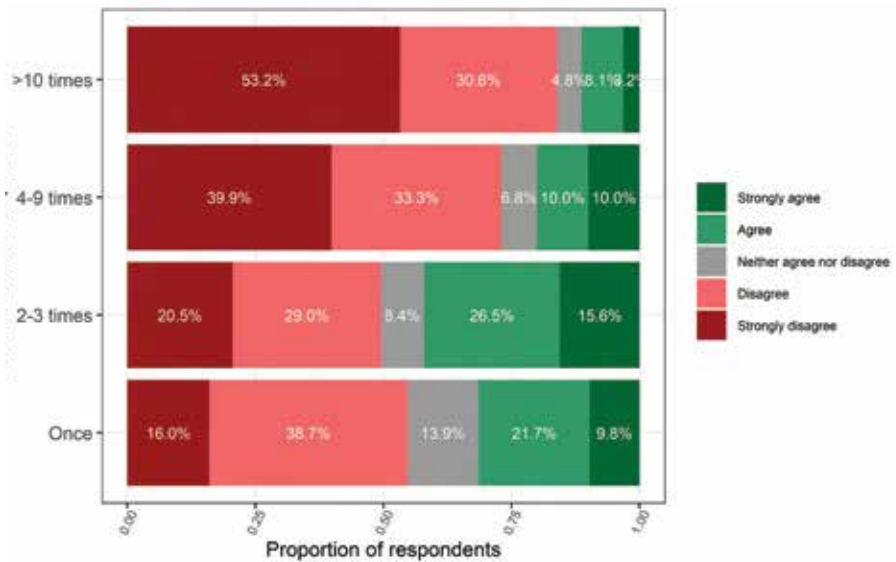


Figure 81: Do you agree or disagree? 'The national government cares about my community.' By Number of times displaced



Respondent perceptions that the national government cares about their communities also correlated strongly with their perceptions of peace at a statistically significant level (see Figure 121, Figure 122 in Appendix). Respondents with a more positive view of the relationship between the national government and communities in their area were more likely to say that South Sudan is currently at peace and more positive about the prospects for peace in the next three years (Figure 82 and Figure 83).

Figure 82: Do you agree or disagree? 'The national government cares about my community.' By 'Is South Sudan at peace?'

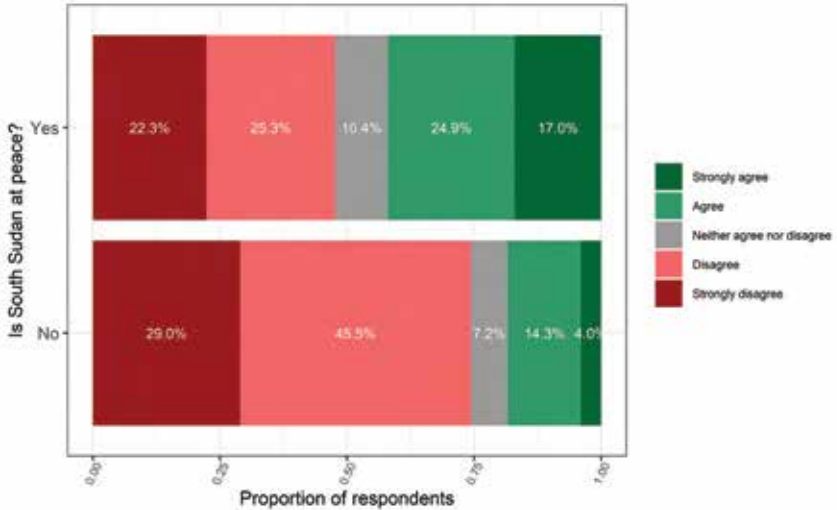
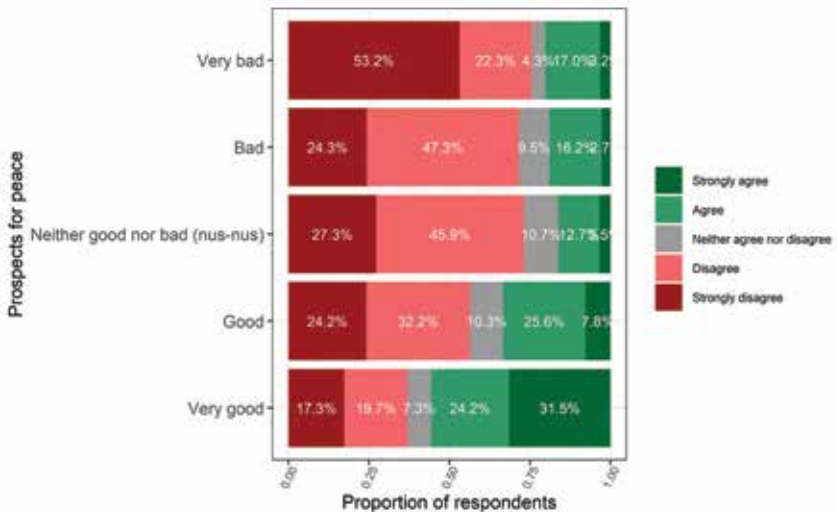


Figure 83: Do you agree or disagree? 'The national government cares about my community.' By 'What are the prospects for peace in South Sudan in the next three years?'



Influential Decision-makers

Survey respondents identified governors (49%), chiefs (18%) and county commissioners (16%) as being the most influential state and local actors in decisions about safety in their communities (Figure 84). A similar pattern was evident with respect to trust in public authorities to negotiate agreements about cattle-related conflict or the passage of armed groups through the area. Interestingly, the national government received similar or slightly lower levels of support than state governments, indicating the powerful role that governors often play in South Sudan's security arena (Figure 85). International actors featured more prominently among respondents in IDP camps, particularly in relation to the more politically charged decisions around the passage of armed groups through a given area but they were considerably less trusted among respondents in rural areas. Lastly, many of the security actors, including police and organized forces, did not feature very prominently among the actors most trusted to address issues of safety, perhaps pointing to trust deficits in the relationship between civilian and security personnel in South Sudan.

Figure 84: Who is most influential in making decisions about the safety of your community?

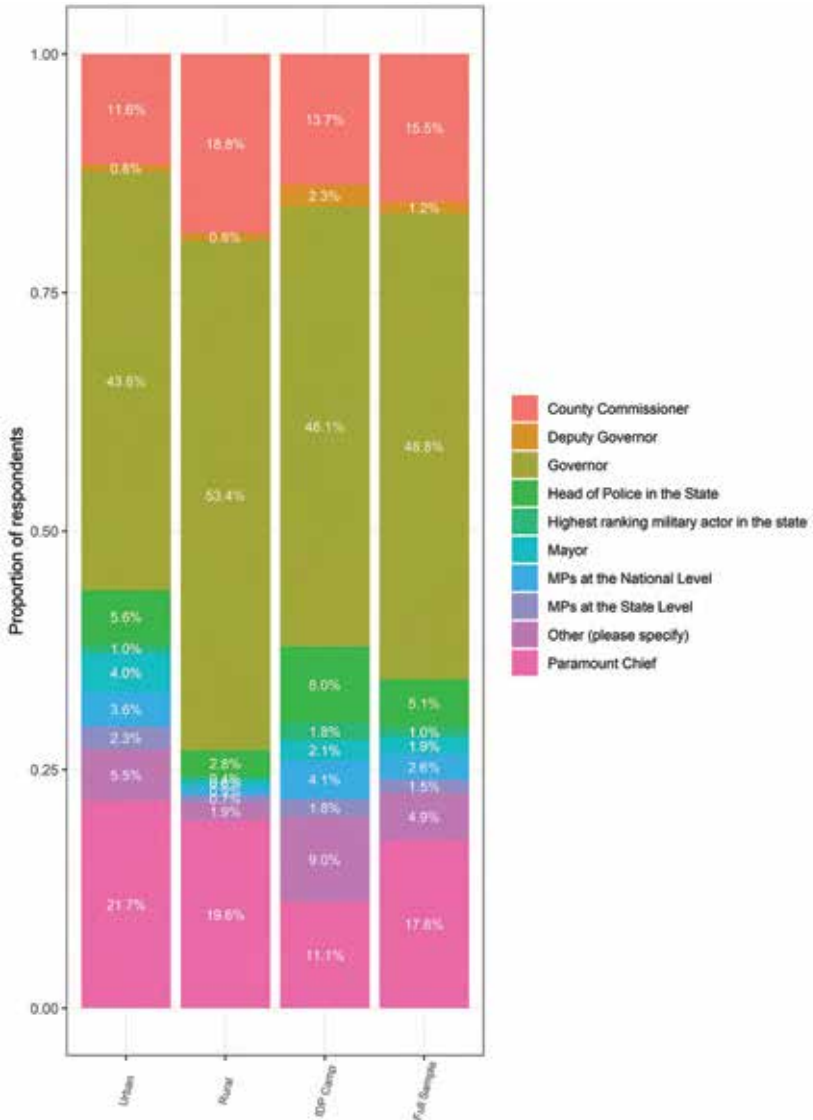
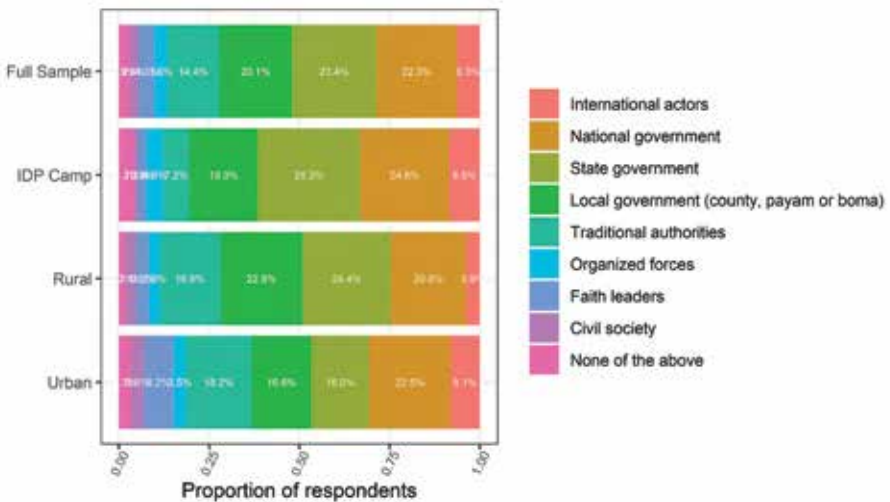
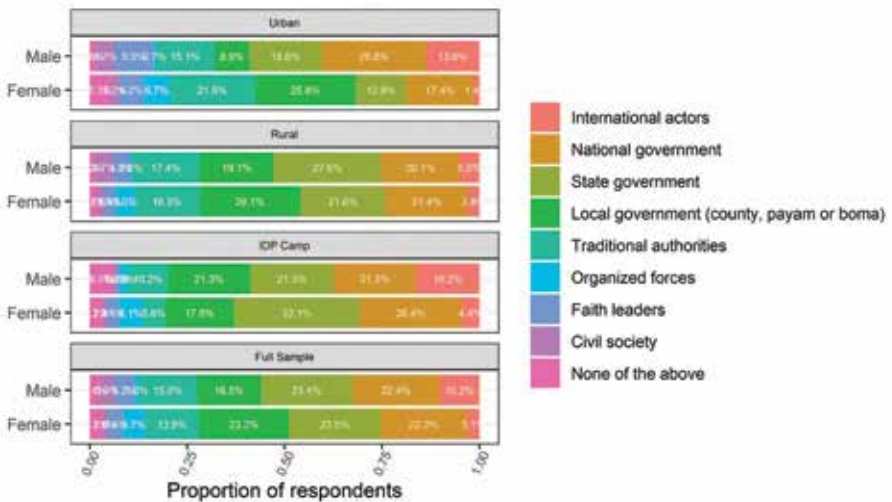


Figure 85: Which of the following actors do you trust most to help your community reach agreements over cattle conflict?



A gendered analysis provides additional nuances on the above trends (Figure 86). Female respondents were three times less likely to trust international actors to reach agreements about conflict over cattle (3% compared to 10%) and less than half as likely to trust international actors to negotiate agreements with armed groups (5% compared to 13%). Female respondents also expressed more trust in local government actors, particularly in urban areas where they were nearly three times as likely to trust local government actors to resolve cattle-related conflict than men (9% compared to 26%) and nearly four times as likely to trust local government actors in negotiations with armed groups (7% compared to 29%). These findings highlight the importance of inclusive approaches to peace-making at the local level that take into consideration the idiosyncrasies of relationships between different public authorities and groups at the local level.

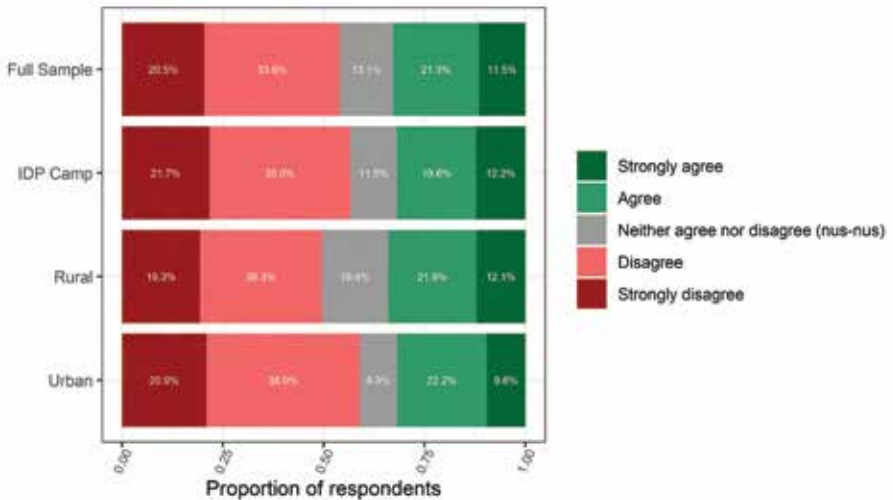
Figure 86: Which of the following actors do you trust most to help your community reach agreements over cattle conflict?



Traditional Authorities' Role in Security

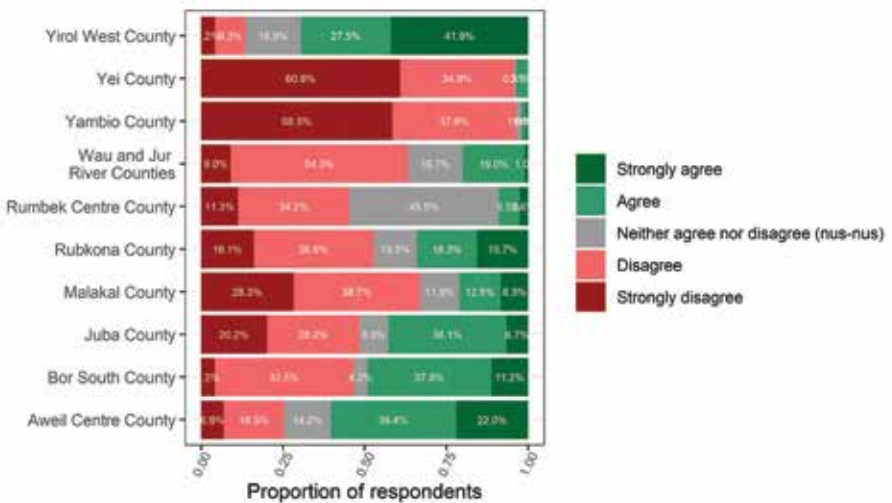
One of the more unique features of South Sudan as compared to many other conflict-affected countries is the dynamic nature and role of traditional authorities. As a primary point of contact between the state and its citizens, traditional authorities are often among the more downwardly accountable institutions of governance in South Sudan. Overall, most respondents (59%) disagreed with the statement, 'If traditional leaders in my community told my family that a member should join an armed, we would comply', including a fifth of respondents (21%) who 'strongly disagreed' with the statement (Figure 87). However, the fact that a third of respondents (33%) agreed with the statement demonstrates the influence that traditional authorities wield in matters of peace and security at the local level.

Figure 87: Do you agree or disagree? 'If traditional leaders in my community told my family that a member should join an armed group, we would comply.'



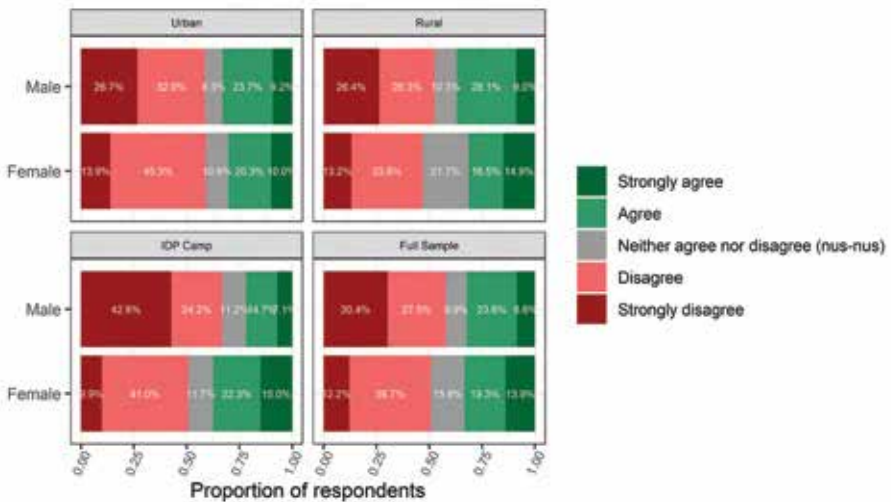
Important differences were also evident across survey locations. Responses ranged from a high of 69 percent of respondents who said they would comply if a traditional leader told them to join an armed group in Yirol West to near unanimous opposition to the idea in Yambio (96.3%) and Yei (96%) (Figure 88). Interestingly, Rumbek Centre, which neighbors Yirol West's in Lakes State, showed an opposite trend with just 9% agreeing that they would comply with the instructions of traditional authorities in such a circumstance.

Figure 88: Do you agree or disagree? 'If traditional leaders in my community told my family that a member should join an armed group, we would comply.'



Again, a gendered analysis points to important differences among men and women. Overall, men express a much stronger disapproval with the statement than women, with 30percent of men saying they 'strongly disagree' as compared to just 12 percent of women (Figure 89). The difference between the genders were particularly pronounced among respondents in the IDP camps. These results point to the diverse landscape of traditional authorities across South Sudan and varying levels of trust across geographic locations and among different groups at a local level.

Figure 89: Do you agree or disagree? 'If traditional leaders in my community told my family that a member should join an armed group, we would comply.'



Trust is integral to the functioning of any society. It enables community cooperation and solidarity and facilitates the development and execution of public policies and service delivery. The converse is also true. When trust breaks down, the state is pushed towards more forceful ways of maintaining its legitimacy and compliance with its decision-making.

The survey results demonstrate varying levels of trust for different public authorities, across geographic spaces, and among demographic groups, including men and women. They also shed light on the influence that various actors wield on issues of peace and security, as well the impact that the war has had on citizen trust. To account for this diverse landscape, programs that engage with public authorities must necessarily be context-specific; a one-size-fits-all approach cannot hope to provide the kind of targeted support that is needed to restore relationship between citizens and the state.

National Identity

Secession and National Pride

In January 2011, South Sudanese voted overwhelmingly in favor of independence with 98.83 percent of voters opting for secession. Ten years on, secession and people's identity as South Sudanese continues to evoke a nationalist sentiment. Ninety-one percent of survey respondents agreed with the statement, 'I am happy that South Sudan seceded from Sudan', and 94 percent agreed with the statement, 'I am proud to be South Sudanese'. Respondents in Pibor, and to a lesser extent, Yei were less likely than other locations to express pride in being South Sudanese and happiness with secession, indicating the impact that ongoing conflict in these locations is having on people's sense of national identity.

These patterns across locations are also reflected in differences in happiness with secession across ethnolinguistic groups. Minority groups that have experienced high levels of conflict disagree more strongly disagree that they are happy South Sudan seceded from Sudan.

Figure 90: Do you agree or disagree? 'I am happy that South Sudan seceded from Sudan.' By location

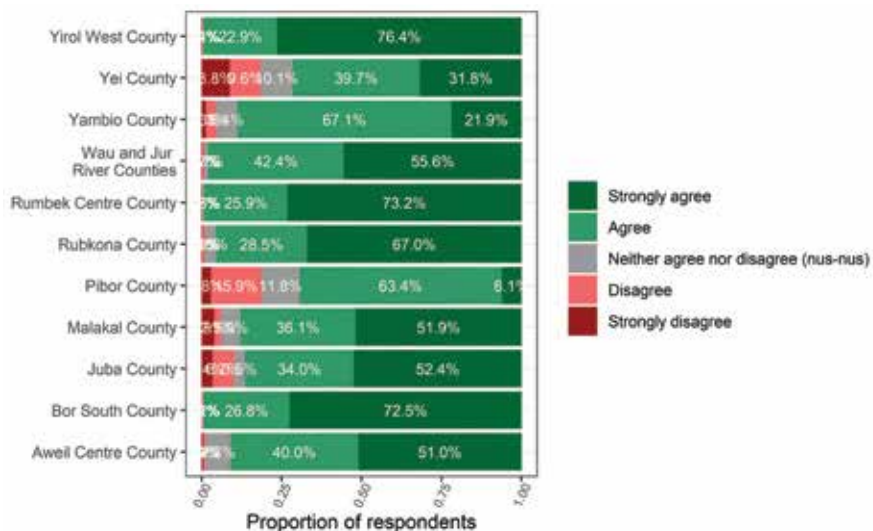
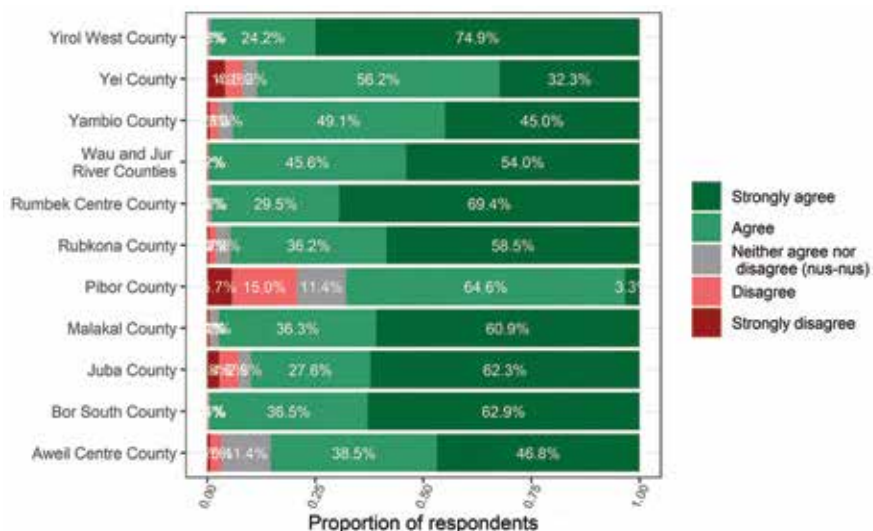


Figure 91: Do you agree or disagree? 'I am proud to be South Sudanese.'



Gender and National Identity

Men and women showed important differences in how they prioritized their national and ethnic identities. For example, women were more likely than men to prioritize their ethnic identity above their national identity to a statistically significant degree (see Figure 114 in Appendix). Fifty-six percent of women agreed with the statement, 'My ethnic identity is more important than my South Sudanese identity,' compared to just 25 percent of men. Women were also less proud of their South Sudanese identity than men to a statistically significant level, with just 91 percent of women agreeing with the statement, 'I am proud to be South Sudanese', compared to 97 percent of men (see Figure 115 in Appendix).

Figure 92: Do you agree or disagree? 'I am proud to be South Sudanese.'

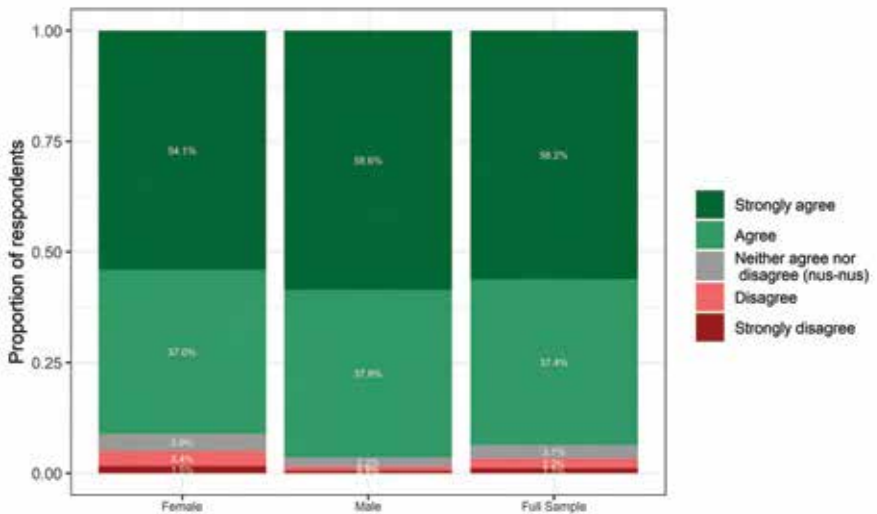
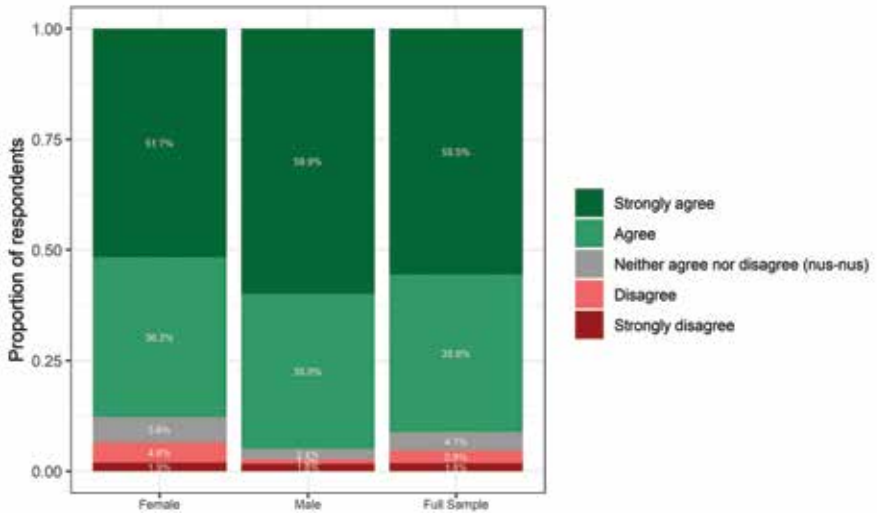


Figure 93: Do you agree or disagree? 'I am happy South Sudan seceded from Sudan.'

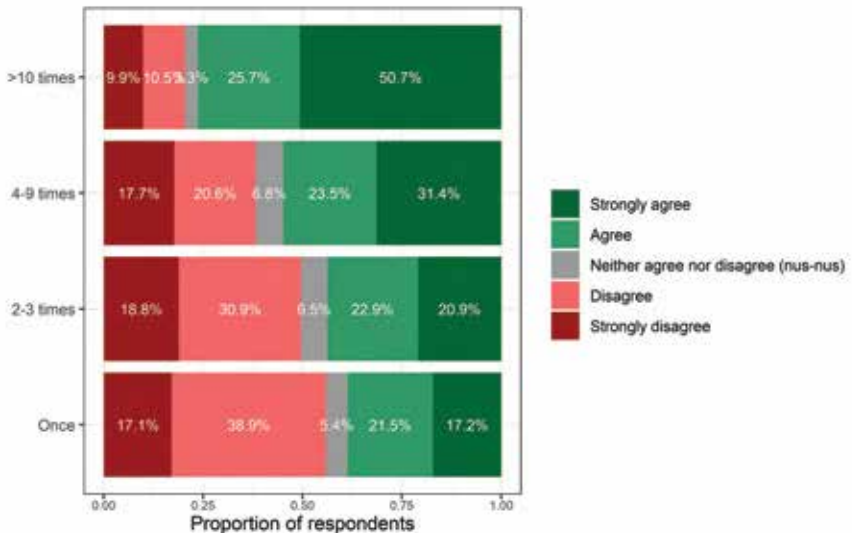


These findings illustrate the complex interactions between people's identities at various levels and how these identities are in turn influenced by their experiences with conflict. On the one hand, women tend to be portrayed as natural peacemakers because they often marry across community lines, thereby providing a set of kinship ties that counterbalance ethnolinguistic divisions. Yet, women also have an important social function as custodians of cultural values and norms which they pass on to the next generation through their roles as mothers. This may influence how women respond when they perceive their communities to be under threat. The way men and women relate to national identity may also be influenced by the different spaces in which they engage with these issues, with men more likely to engage in public spaces and women more likely to engage in the privacy of the home and in close social networks. Understanding these differences is critical to the design of a nation-building program that resonates with and is accessible to the population in South Sudan.

Conflict and National Identity

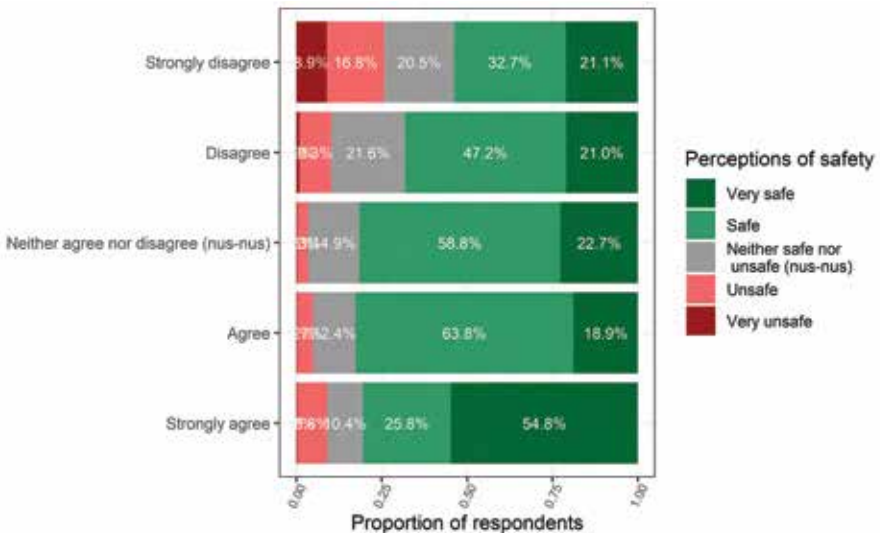
People’s experiences with conflict also shape their conceptions of national identity. Survey data showed a statistically significant correlation between the number of times that a respondent was displaced and his or her likelihood to agree with the statement, ‘My ethnic identity is more important than my South Sudanese identity’ (see Figure 116 in Appendix). People who had been displaced 10 or more times in their lives were more than twice as likely to agree with the statement than people who had just been displaced once (Figure 94).

Figure 94: Do you agree or disagree? ‘My ethnic identity is more important than my South Sudanese identity.’
By Number of times displaced



Survey data showed a weak correlation between how safe respondents feel and their likelihood to prioritize their ethnic identity above their South Sudanese identity (Figure 95 and Figure 117 in Appendix). This finding is somewhat counterintuitive in that intercommunal conflict is a major cause of insecurity in South Sudan and that people who feel threatened in such circumstances might also be more likely to emphasize their ethnic identities. One possible explanation could be the role that community protection groups play in responding to security threats at a local level in a context where the organized forces at the national level are as often as not a source of insecurity.⁹ This dynamic may serve to reinforce a sense of ethnic identity among populations whose security is provided by community protection groups.

Figure 95: Do you agree or disagree? 'My ethnic identity is more important than my South Sudanese identity.'



Social Cohesion and National Identity

Survey data showed a strong correlation between several indicators of social cohesion and people's sense of national identity. Respondents who said they were proud to be South Sudanese were more likely to agree with the statement, 'I am willing to forgive individuals or groups that have harmed my community during conflicts in this area' (Figure 96). There was also a strong positive correlation between people's pride in their South Sudanese identity feeling comfortable with a family member marrying someone of a different ethnicity (Figure 97 and Figure 118 in Appendix).

Figure 96: Do you agree or disagree? 'I am proud to be South Sudanese.' By 'I am willing to forgive individuals or groups that have harmed my community during conflicts in this area.'

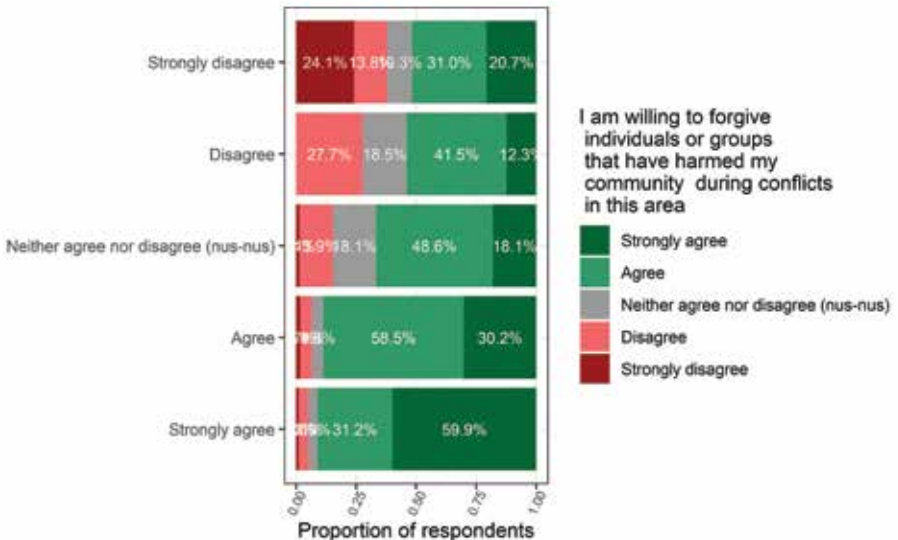
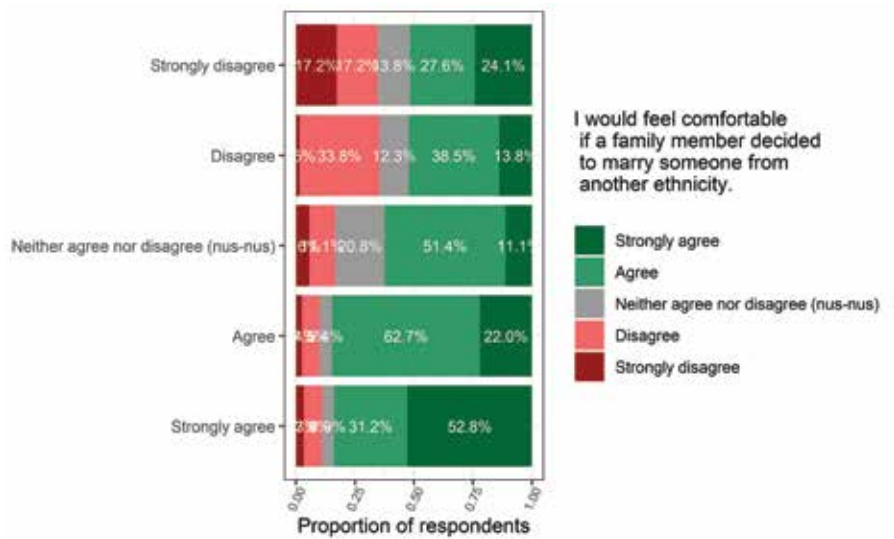


Figure 95: Do you agree or disagree? 'My ethnic identity is more important than my South Sudanese identity.'



Conclusions and Recommendations

Survey results show that South Sudanese felt safer in the first half of 2022 than they did in 2021. However, the increase in stability is uneven, as citizens in places like Yei and Pibor experience persistent and acute insecurity. The inequality in civilian safety across South Sudan serves as a warning to policymakers about decreeing peace when some communities remain at heavy risk of armed violence. But the overall improvement in security also underlines the importance of sustaining the political transition. This is not possible in the absence of direct improvements in how people experience their daily safety. As it stands, some communities feel especially vulnerable to national politics generating local insecurity. For the transition to end successfully, policymakers must deliver protection to communities where national political dynamics have a history of undermining peace agreement implementation at the local level.

Elections present another flashpoint. Survey results suggest that elections are unlikely to result in a significant change of the political dispensation at the national level. The combination of a preference for bloc voting with the relative popularity of the SPLM-IG suggests that the incumbent political leadership would likely win at the national level. Instead of facilitating political change, elections are more likely to deepen political polarization, especially through any outcomes at the state and county-level that run against the interests of the SPLM-IG. These results would likely further political fragmentation, undermine political control at the center, and carry a high risk of political violence. However, these assumptions very much depend on decisions that are taken at the constitutional level, especially with respect to the preference given to 'first-past-the-post' systems versus power-sharing formulas, and the final role of parliament in legislative control of the executive.

South Sudanese overwhelmingly want to vote, and they want to vote rather sooner than later. The discrepancy between eagerness to vote and fear of election violence gives rise to major trade-offs. Since South Sudanese clearly want to hold national elections, the attached risks – including pre- and post-election violence, political polarization, increased fragmentation and a reconfiguration of political and military control patterns across the country – have to be clearly assessed and managed. While the criteria for elections in R-ARCSS and the recently agreed transitional roadmap are without doubt important, they are not sufficient to enable a credible election process. Ensuring that conditions are in place for truly non-violent political competition therefore remains a critical task for policymakers.

The following recommendations are meant to inform the Government of South Sudan and its international partners in their approaches to matters of peace and security in South Sudan:

On the Peace Process:

- ▶ The positive trend in overall perceptions of safety from 2021 to 2022 underlines the importance of sustaining the political transition, even if that means an extension. The transition appears to be producing a general increase in stability – but this is unevenly distributed.
- ▶ The uneven distribution of improvements in daily safety underlines the need for stabilization policies to focus, as a priority, on the acute needs of places like Pibor and Yei. Pibor's experiences of acute conflict during the CPA interim period and immediately post-independence offers a warning about war conditions prevailing in some places during times that observers and political leaders label as peaceful. This history and the survey findings offer a warning.
- ▶ The findings also underline that for South Sudanese to buy in to national peace agreements, citizens need to observe direct improvements in their daily safety.

On Elections:

- ▶ Invest into building democratic 'software' for elections, especially in terms of political party support for the process.
- ▶ Focus efforts on ensuring that conditions are in place for non-violent political competition.

On Governance and Security Arrangements:

- ▶ Survey respondents support policies that preserve a strong parliament and create mechanisms for citizen input to government. These need to remain central to arrangements for an extended transition period.
- ▶ Policymakers should sustain efforts to unify the army and anticipate acute insecurity should elections take place before that process is complete. An extended transition that culminates in elections should continue to make army unification a priority.
- ▶ Most South Sudanese do not see army rule as a solution to local insecurity; policies that protect people at the local level need to focus on civil-military independence.
- ▶ Policymakers should avoid making assumptions about the type of government South Sudanese citizens might prefer. Respondents revealed no consensus desire for either a power sharing or winner-takes-all system.
- ▶ Some communities feel especially vulnerable to national politics generating local insecurity. These communities, including those in the Equatorias, need special attention in stabilization interventions.
- ▶ Security sector policies need to address the unique protection needs of people experiencing different degrees and types of insecurity. The moderately 'unsafe' feel especially vulnerable during forceful government responses to insecurity.

On Trust in Public Authorities, National Identity and Marginalization

- ▶ Survey findings suggest that political leaders need to make more targeted efforts to include the most insecure and displaced populations in national projects if they are to build durable legitimacy. Many citizens believe that national government neither cares about their community, nor has great influence to make decisions that affect their safety. The most unsafe and displaced communities feel that they have the weakest stake in national government. In public consultations and service delivery, these are the most difficult populations to reach. But continuing to exclude them will mean that the national government will face limits in establishing a trusted and meaningful central state for all South Sudanese.
- ▶ National political leaders should work through local leaders, formal and traditional, rather than circumventing them to engage citizens. Respondents indicated high levels of trust for traditional authorities, state governors and local government to manage security in their communities and resolve local conflicts. Respondents also highlighted varying roles across locations of traditional authorities in motivating armed mobilization. In contexts like Yirol and Aweil, policymakers may find traditional authorities to be an important partner in dissuading citizens to join armed groups.
- ▶ Policymakers should make more of an effort to create inclusive spaces for people from different walks of life, including populations in more conflict-affected parts of the country, to discuss what it means to be South Sudanese.

Appendix - Regression Graphs

The following graphs show the regression estimates that back references to correlations in the report. The estimates were produced using Ordinary Least Squares with unit fixed effects for county and survey environment (urban, rural, IDP camp), and, where applicable, a time fixed effect for the survey year. Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

The 'dot-whisker' graphs show a point for the coefficient estimate for the labeled variable on the y-axis (the independent variable). The line either side of each point is a 90% confidence interval. If this line does not cross the dotted line at zero, then there is a reasonable chance that a correlation exists between the independent (y-axis) variable and the variable named in the plot title.

A 90% confidence interval means that, in theory, if a sample was drawn using the same method and the same regression estimate was calculated 100 times, then in 90 of those cases, the true value of the estimate would lie in that interval/ on that line. This is a wider confidence interval than many econometric analyses use (which often use a tighter 97.5% confidence interval). However, given the necessary uncertainties in this type of data, a 90% interval offers reasonable evidence of correlations, if not strong evidence for causation.

Figure 98: Optimism about prospects for peace in 2022 compared to 2021

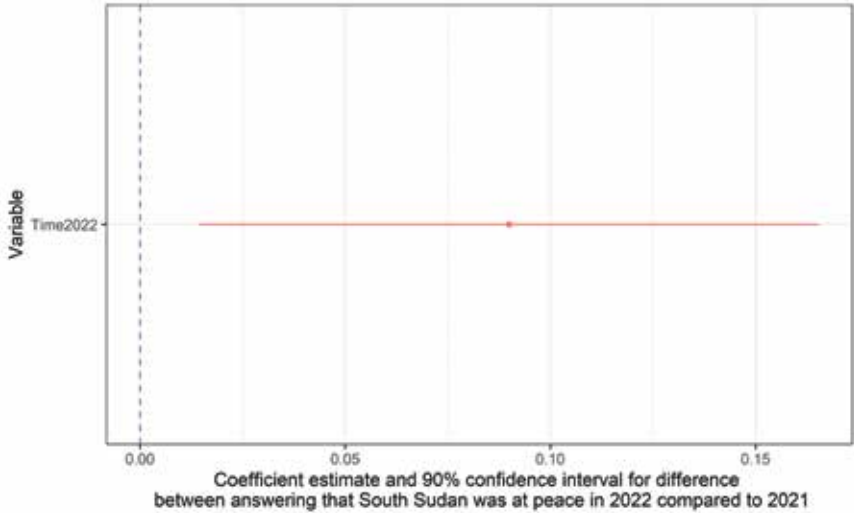


Figure 99: Estimates of factors that made respondents in Malakal more optimistic about the prospects for peace in the next three years¹⁰

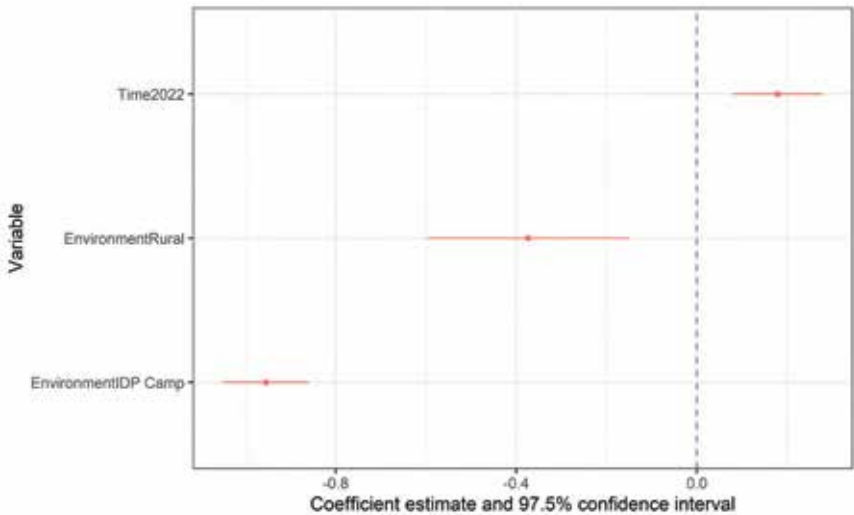


Figure 100: Association between number of times displaced and severity of land disputes¹¹

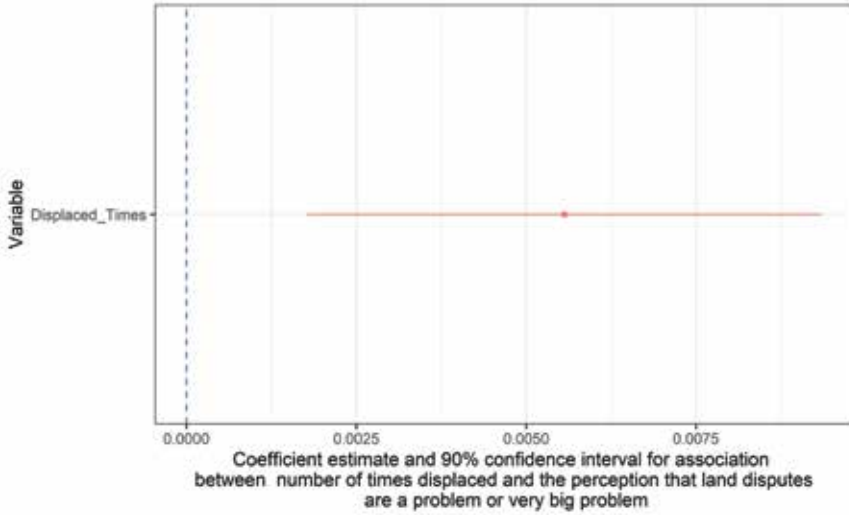


Figure 101: Estimate of whether respondents feel safer in their daily lives in 2022 compared to 2021¹²

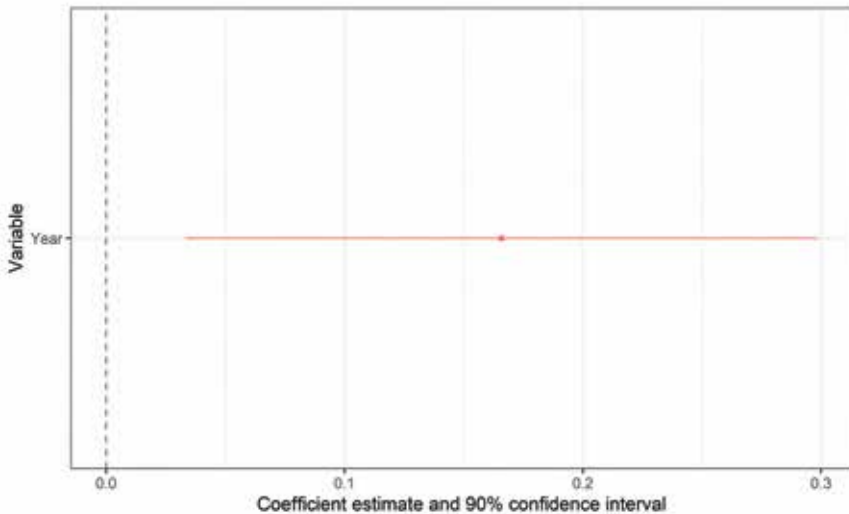


Figure 102: Association between access to electricity and perceptions of everyday safety¹³

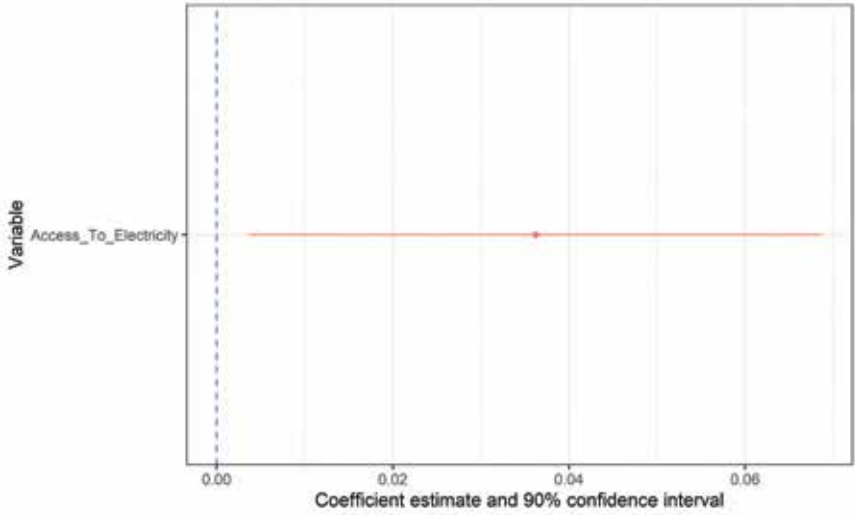


Figure 103: Estimates of how males are more likely than females to perceive that SGBV is more common during the current war compared to previous wars¹⁴

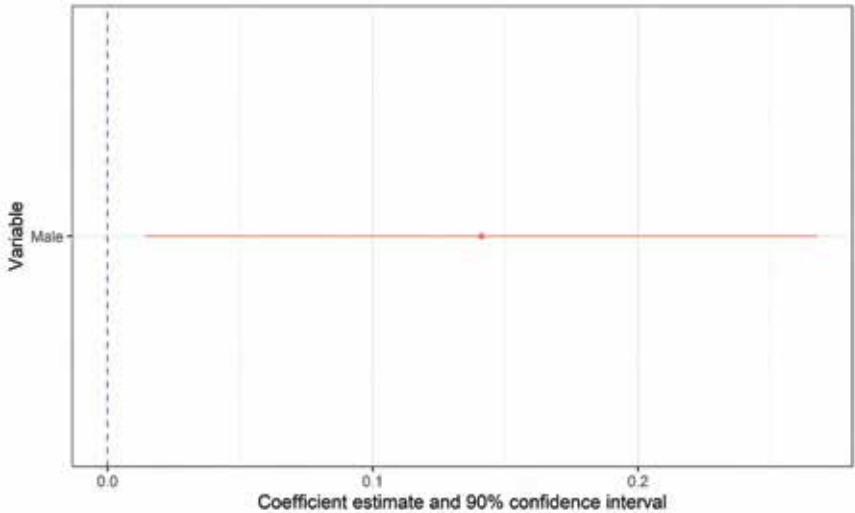


Figure 104: Estimate of whether gender affects awareness of IGAD peace process amongst IDP camp residents¹⁵

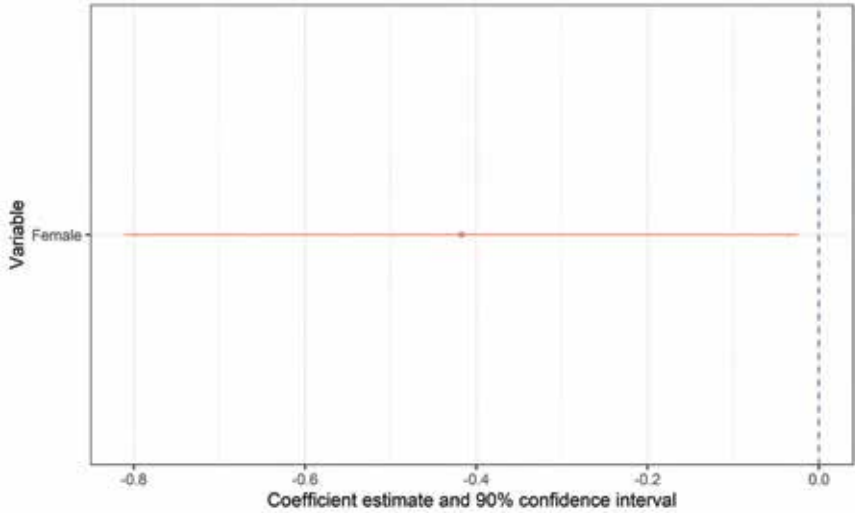


Figure 105: Association between perceptions of everyday safety and believe that R-ARCSS will resolve the national conflict¹⁶

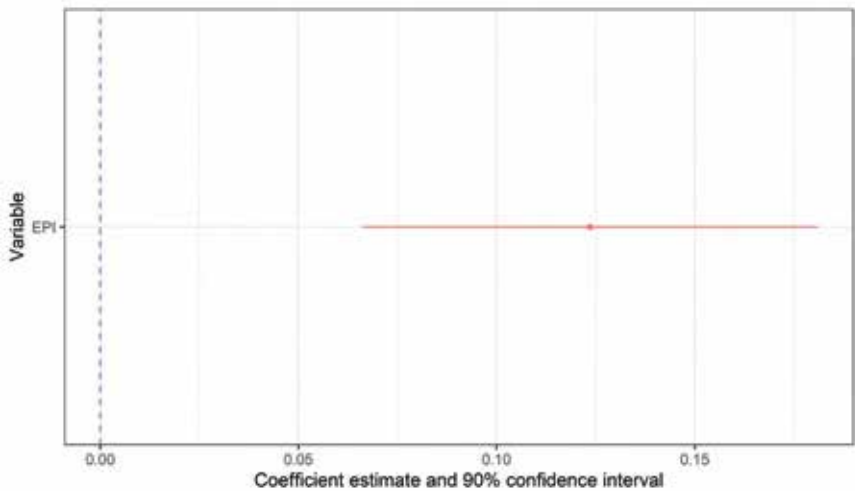


Figure 106: Correlation between feeling safer and agreeing that the peace agreement has made respondents' lives easier¹⁷

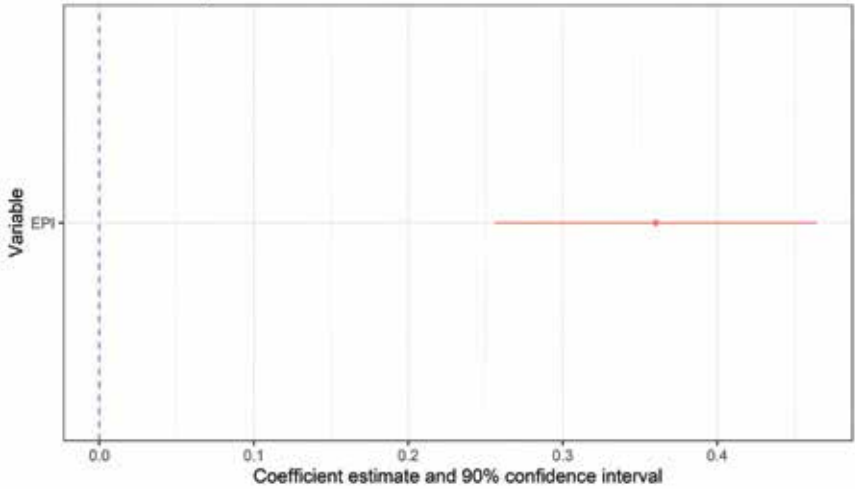


Figure 107: Correlation between identifying as female and believing that the type of government does not matter¹⁸

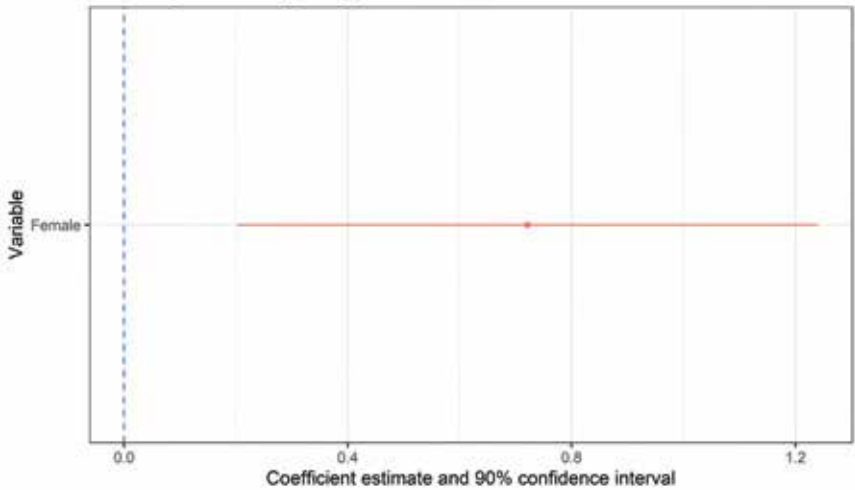


Figure 108: Association between perceptions of safety and gender and saying that the kind of government doesn't matter.¹⁹

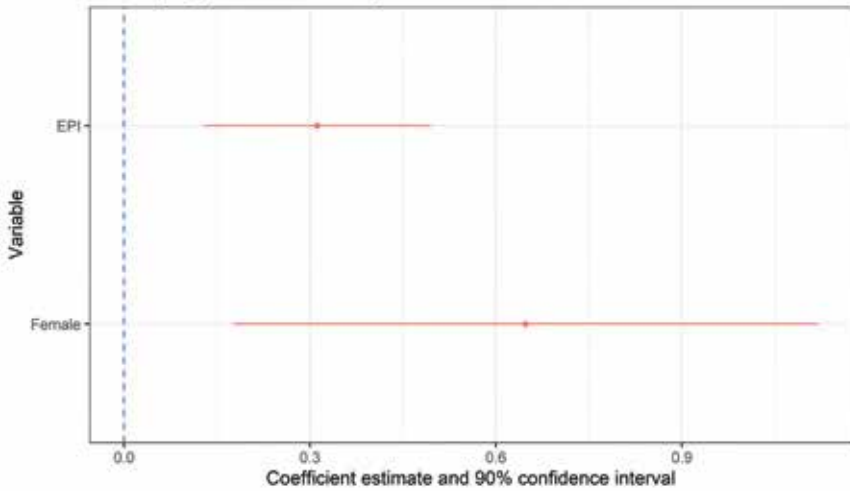


Figure 109: Association between feeling safer and agreeing more strongly that the army should govern the country

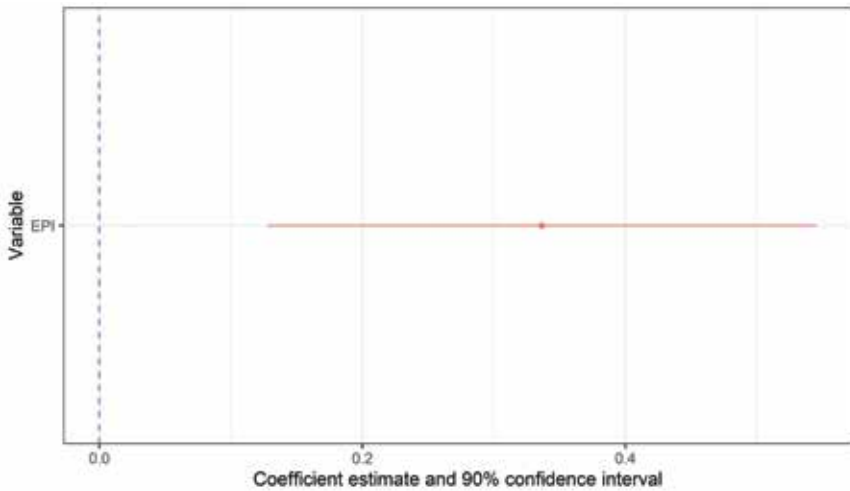


Figure 110: Association between feeling safer and gender and agreeing that the government should respond firmly to insecurity even if that means violating human rights sometimes

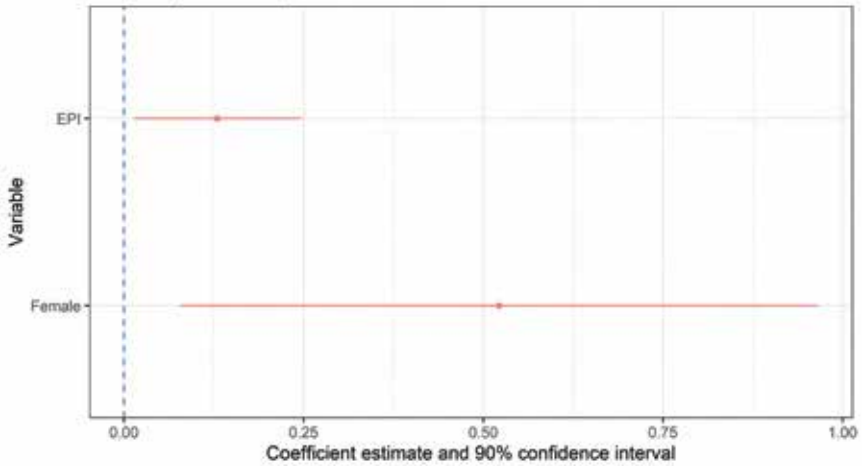


Figure 111: Association between feeling very unsafe and agreeing that the government should respond firmly to insecurity even if that means violating human rights sometimes

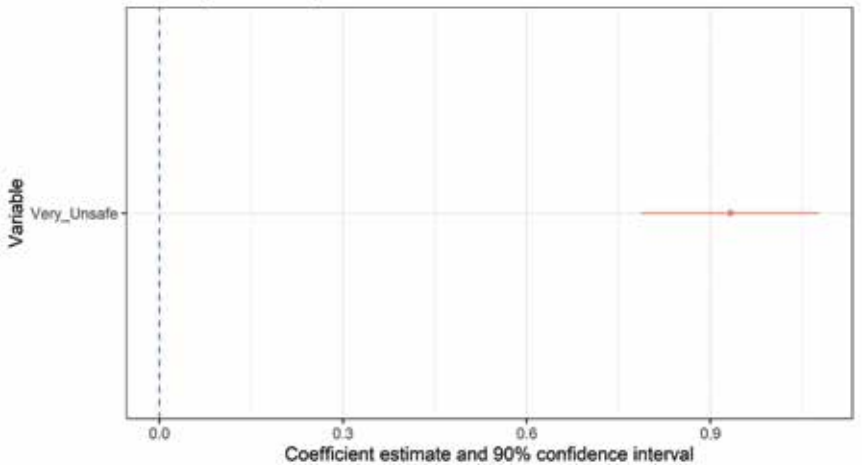


Figure 112: Association between feeling unsafe vs other response types and agreeing that the government should respond firmly to insecurity even if that means violating human rights

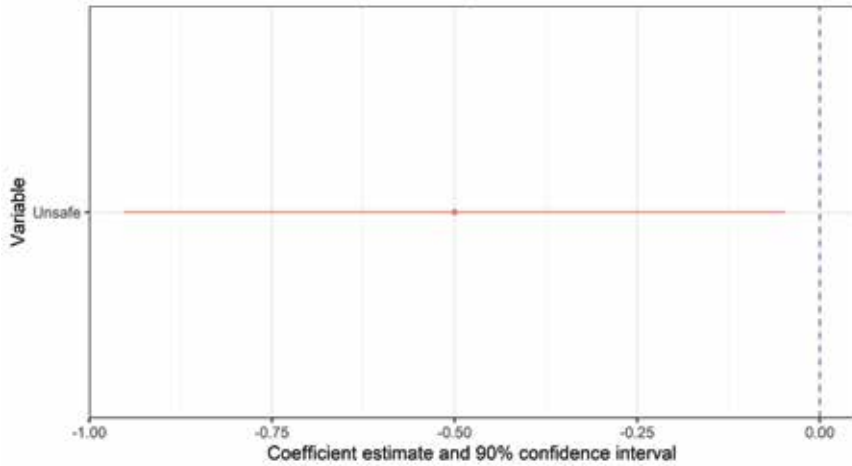


Figure 113: Estimates for the average effects of perceived everyday safety on viewing the SPLM-IG political vision to be the most compelling

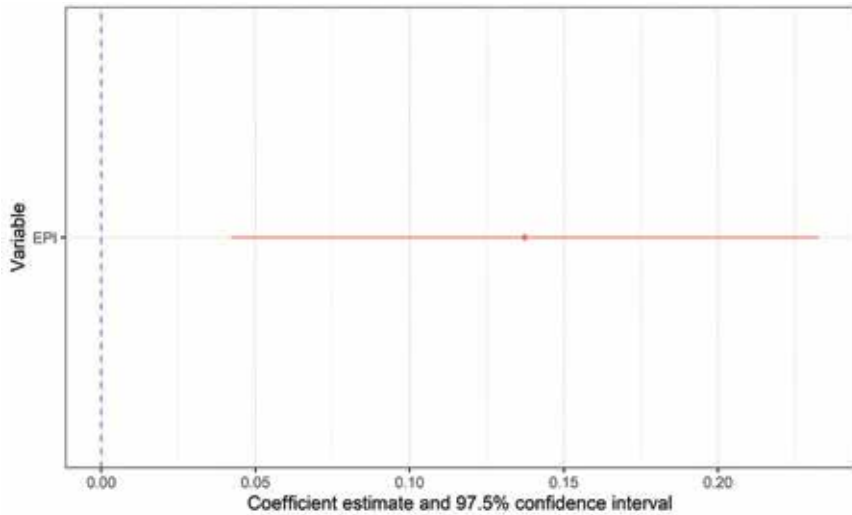


Figure 114: Association between being female and putting ethnic identity first

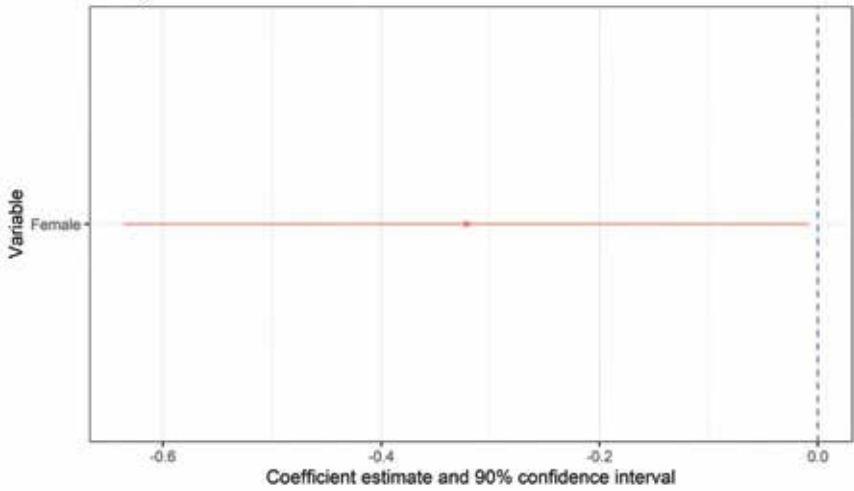


Figure 115: Correlation between identifying as female and feeling proud about being South Sudanese

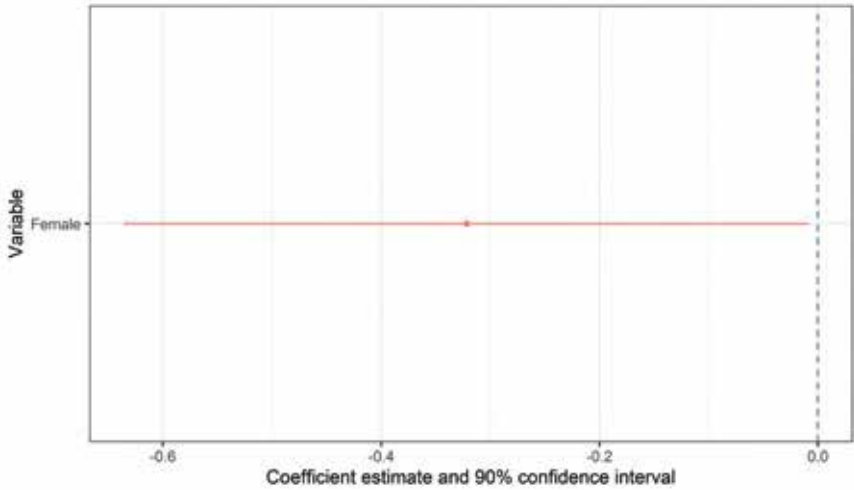


Figure 116: Correlation between number of times a respondent was displaced and their preference to put their ethnic identity first

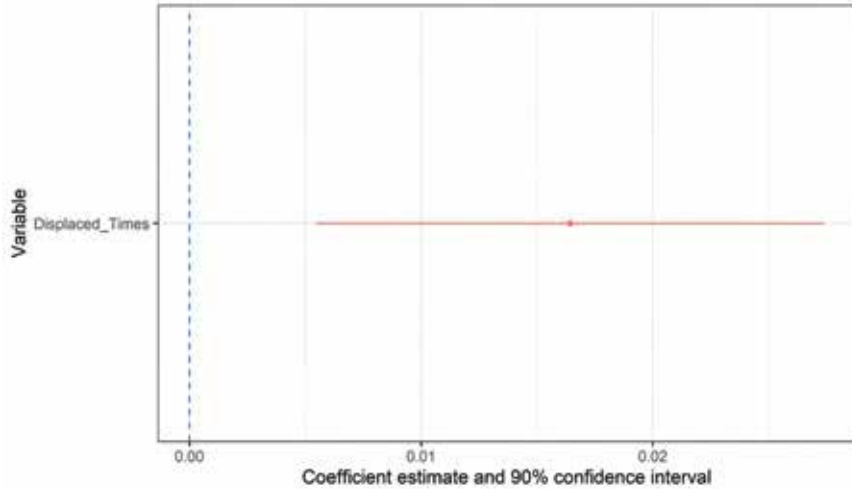


Figure 117: Correlation between perceptions of everyday safety and putting ethnic identity first

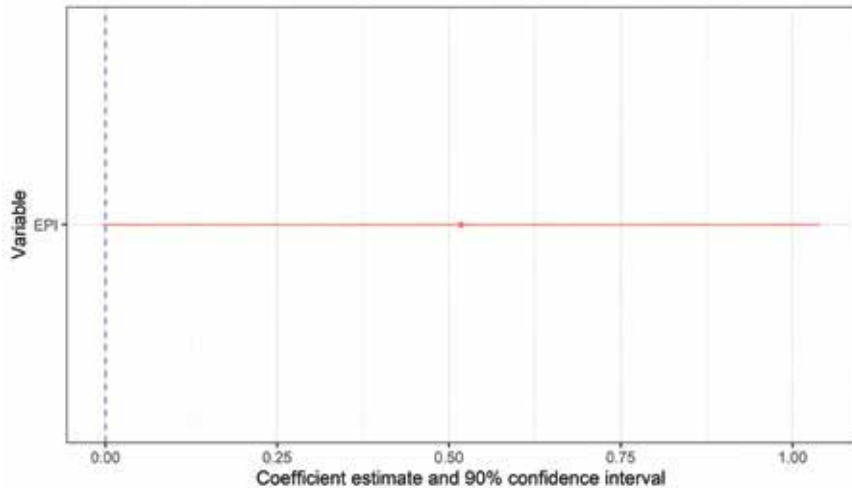


Figure 118: Correlation between pride in South Sudanese identity and comfort with a family member deciding to marry someone from another ethnicity

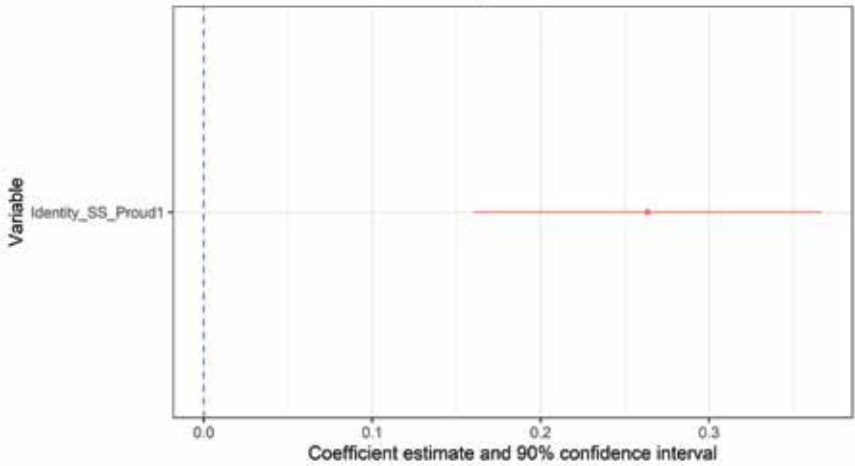


Figure 119: Correlation between perceptions of everyday safety and agreeing that the government cares about respondent's community

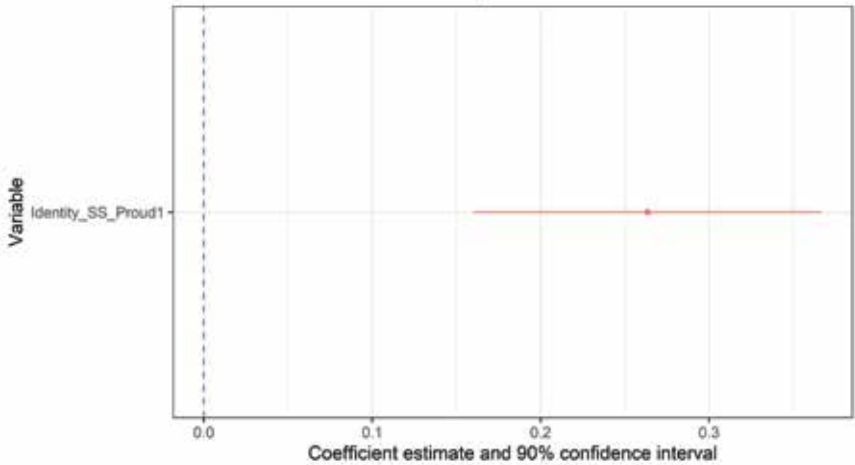


Figure 120: Correlation between number of times respondents reported being displaced and their agreement that the government cared about their community

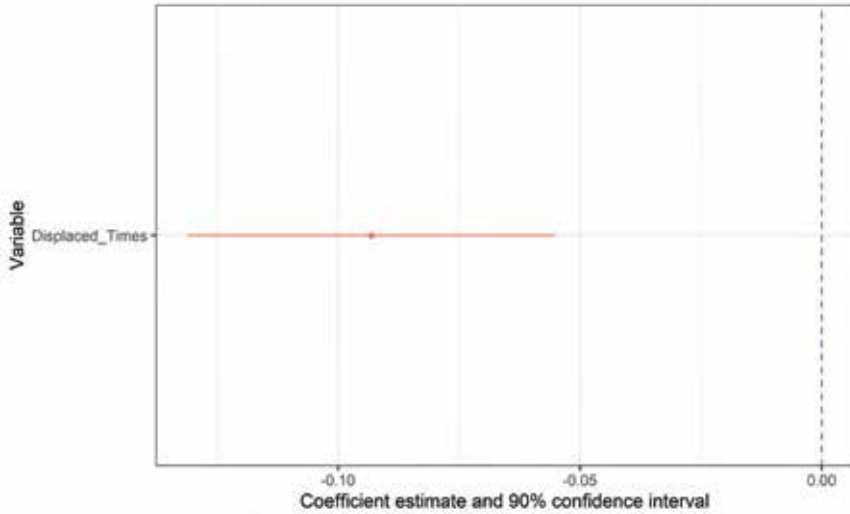


Figure 121: Correlation between agreeing that the government cares for respondent's community and believing that South Sudan is at peace

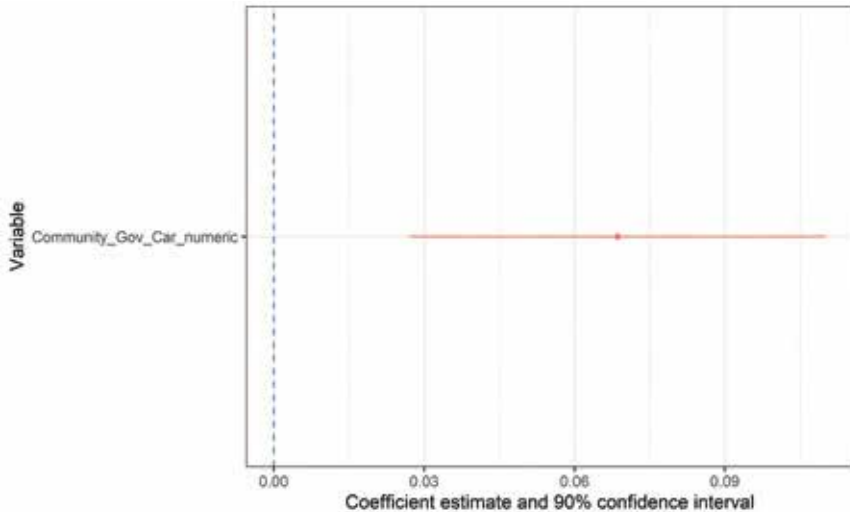
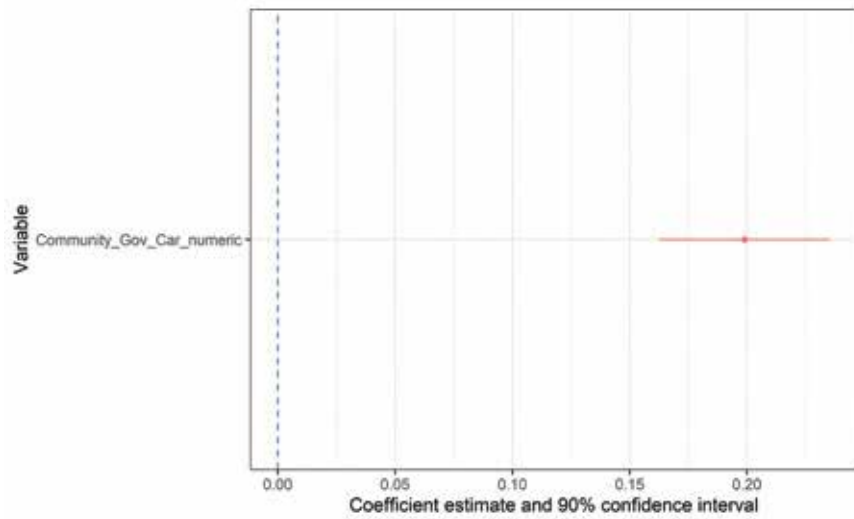


Figure 122: Correlation between agreeing that the government cares for respondent's community and believing that peace is likely in the next three years



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- 2 Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University and Novel-T. 2021. GRID3 South Sudan Settlement Extents, Version 01. Palisades, NY: Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development (GRID3). <https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-khpa-pq09>.
- 3 This was accomplished using the random point generation tools in ArcMap GIS software, produced by the Environmental Systems Research Institute.
- 4 This analysis used the Linear Group Fixed Effects (lfe) package in R, designed by Simen Gaure (2013): <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/lfe/lfe.pdf>.
- 5 Since demographic data for South Sudan has limits and broad uncertainties, fixed effects add another layer of robustness to our estimates. Although the GRID3 satellite data is a good guide, we cannot know how close our sample is to being perfectly proportional. Fixed effects for location and environment help obviate these issues.
- 6 The plots use the Dot-Whisker package in R developed by Yue Hu et al (2021): <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/dotwhisker/index.html>.
- 7 There was no statistically significant difference between responses in 2021 and 2022 to the question: 'In your opinion, what are the prospects for peace in South Sudan in the next three years?'
- 8 There is no statistically significant difference over time in how respondents answered questions about the R-TGONU.
- 9 Lucian Harriman, Ilona Drewry and David Deng, "Like the military of the village": Security, justice and community defence groups in south-east South Sudan, Saferworld (Feb. 2020), available at <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1245-alike-the-military-of-the-village-security-justice-and-community-defence-groups-in-south-east-south-sudan>.
- 10 OLS regression of views on prospects for peace on environment and time, with location as a unit fixed effect. Reference categories are urban for the variable Environment and 2021 for the variable Time.
- 11 OLS regression of whether respondents found that land disputes were a big or very big problem on number of times displaced, with environment, location and time as fixed effects.
- 12 OLS regression of EPI composite indicator on year, with environment and location as fixed effects.
- 13 OLS regression of EPI composite indicator on access to electricity, with environment and location as fixed effects.
- 14 OLS regression of SGBV perception indicator on Gender, with time, environment and location as fixed effects.

- 15 OLS regression of awareness of IGAD peace process on gender, with time, environment and location as fixed effects, using a subset of data for the population in IDP camps.
- 16 OLS regression of agreement that RARCSS will resolved conflict on EPI composite indicator, with time, environment and location as fixed effects.
- 17 OLS regression of perception that the peace process made respondents' lives easier on EPI composite indicator, with time, environment and location as fixed effects.
- 18 OLS regression of agreement with the statement 'it doesn't matter what kind of government we have' on gender, with environment and location as fixed effects.
- 19 OLS regression of how strongly people felt that the type of government mattered on EPI composite indicator and Gender, with environment and location as fixed effects.

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PeaceRep is funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK.



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*Funding for this report is made possible by USIP, AF/SSS and the
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK*