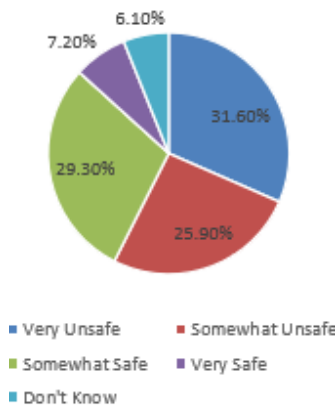


Introduction

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) commissioned an independent third party, Horn Africa Consultants Firm (HACOF,) to conduct a Perception and Public Opinion Survey between January and March 2023. The nationwide survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years and above, and targeted 2,000 respondents (56 per cent females) from all 10 states.

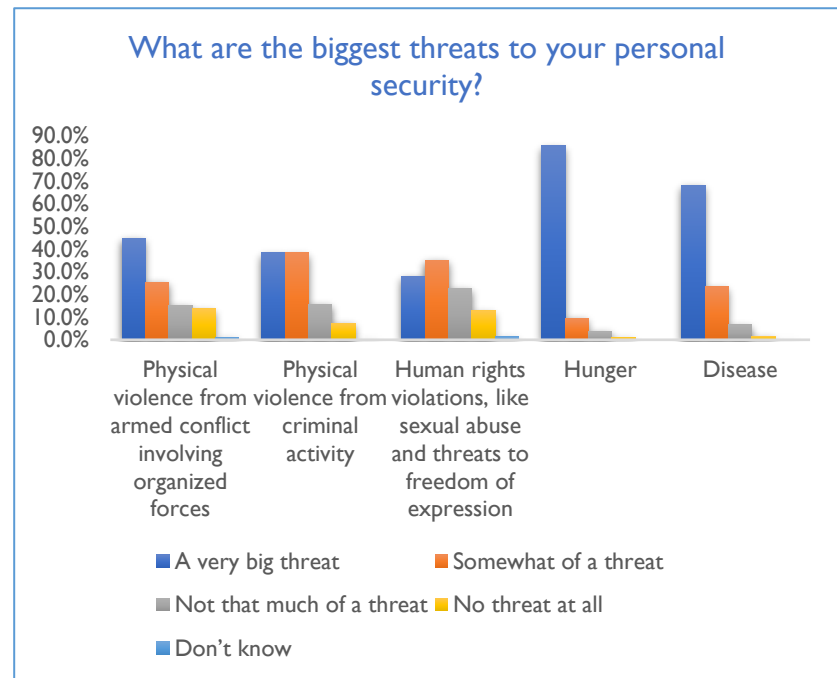
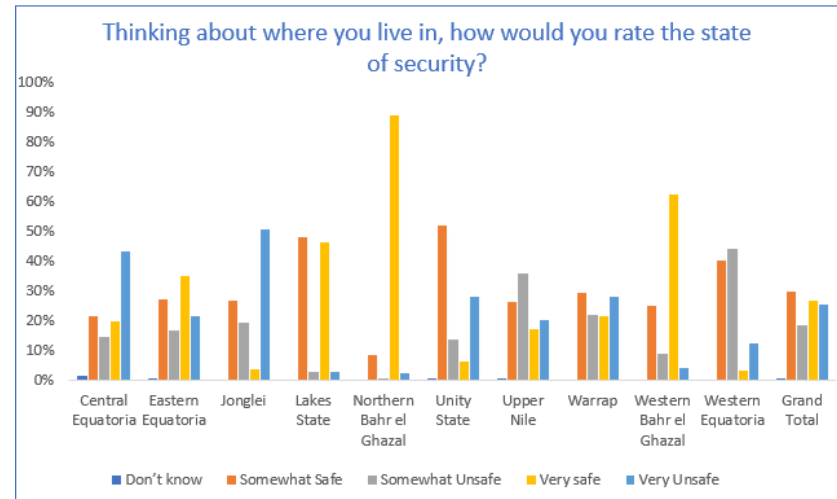
The survey sought to gain insight into the prevailing sentiments of the people of South Sudan on various critical topics such as peace and security, their knowledge of the peace process, the upcoming elections, and the role of UNMISS. Conducted annually since 2019, with the exception of 2022, the UNMISS-initiated perception surveys enable the Mission to better gauge prevailing views, perceptions, and attitudes of the South Sudanese people on the security, political, and humanitarian aspects in the country, as well as their opinions on the role of UNMISS and its mandate. The subsequent sections detail the key findings.



Security Situation and Threats to Personal Security

Overall, the survey indicates a decline in security compared to 2021, with more than half of respondents expressing concerns regarding security. The states perceived to be most unsafe were Jonglei, Western Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and those perceived to be safest were Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes and Western Bahr el Ghazal.

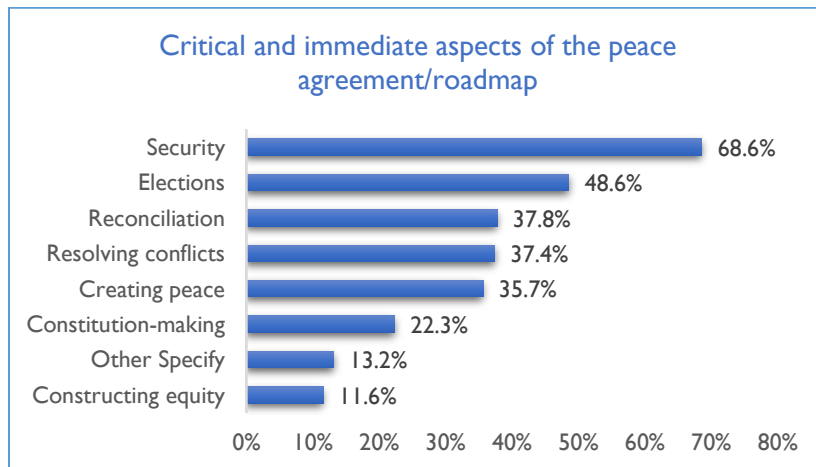
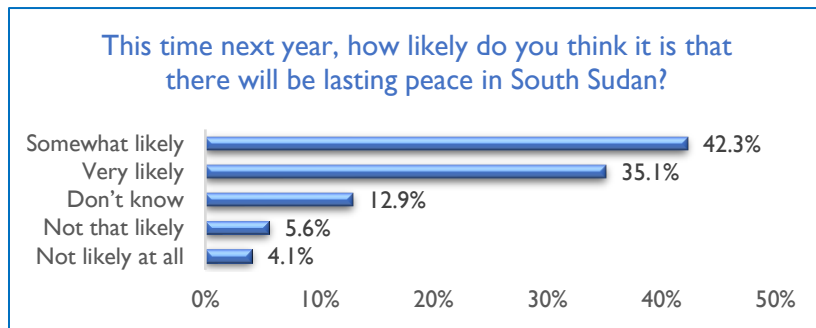
Additionally, the majority of respondents expressed the need for enhanced international support including from UNMISS, to



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achieve lasting peace and stability. Similar to the survey conducted in 2021, hunger and disease were cited as the biggest threats to personal security. Based on the results of the last two surveys, hunger and disease have overtaken other key concerns, including the potential for physical violence stemming from armed conflict, as well as inter-communal and ethnic conflicts.

Despite these challenges, respondents also revealed a high degree of optimism about the future of South Sudan.



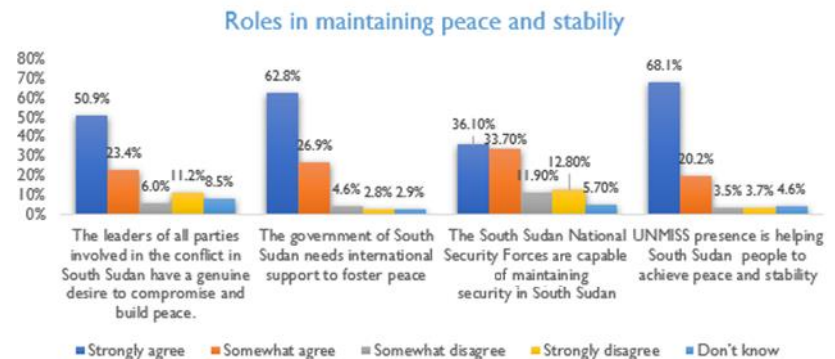
Knowledge of the Peace Process

Almost two-thirds of respondents (62 per cent) demonstrated a high level of awareness of the existence of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. More males (64 per cent) than females (60 per cent) were aware of the Revitalized Peace Agreement.

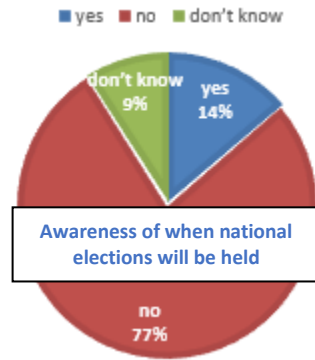


There is a significant disparity in understanding the specific contents, objectives, and timeframes, particularly concerning the new Roadmap. Only 35 per cent of the respondents were aware of the new Roadmap and 22 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they were aware of the timelines.

On a positive note, more than two-thirds (77 per cent) expressed hope about the likelihood of lasting peace next year, and (74 per cent) believed that the various parties involved in the peace process have shown genuine will and commitment towards peacebuilding, taking necessary actions to this end. Security issues, elections, and reconciliation were identified as the most critical concerns required to be addressed by the peace agreement.



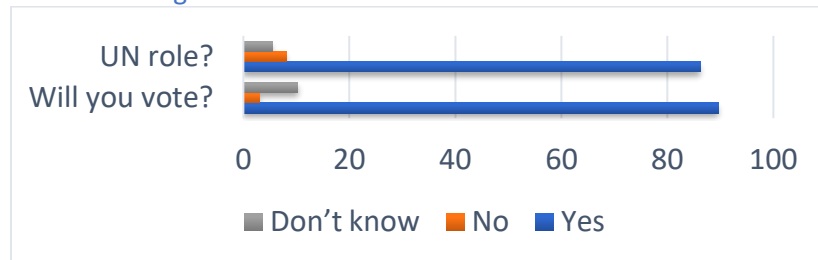
Knowledge of Elections



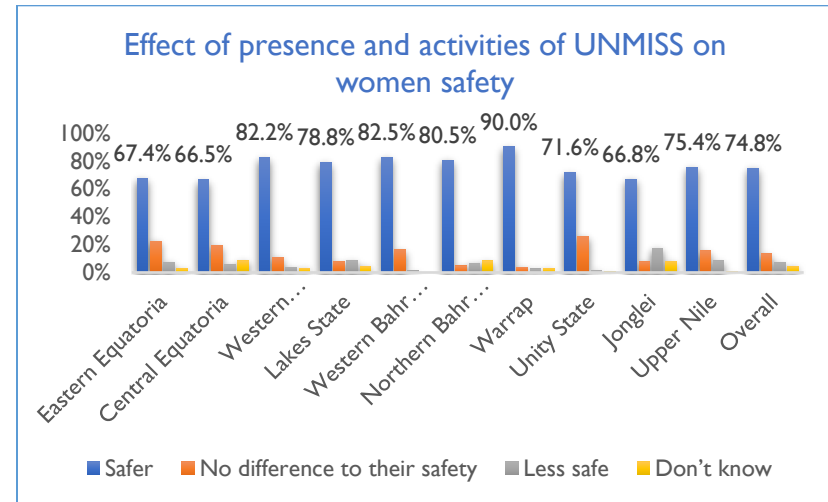
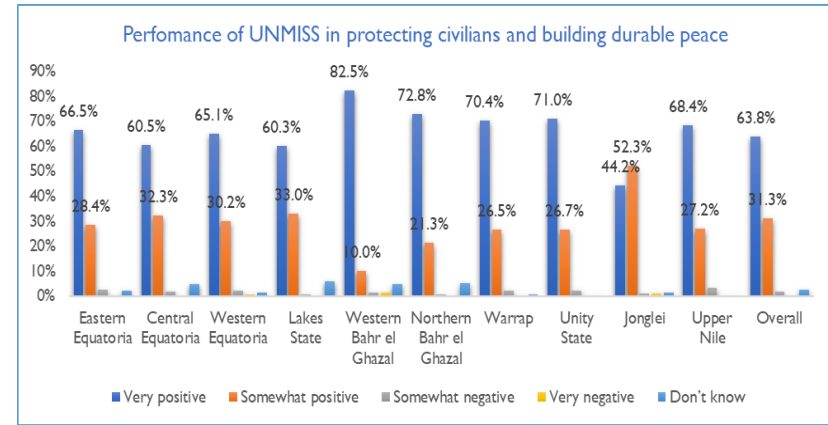
Ninety per cent of respondents see the elections as a critical component in the peace process and of significance to the South Sudanese people. However, only 14 per cent of the respondents knew when the elections would take place. Eighty-six per cent said they would vote in the elections and only 3 per cent indicated that they would not vote.

Overall, the survey revealed that the public is concerned about the government's ability to organize and conduct elections on its own. The overwhelming majority of respondents (86 per cent) indicated a need for the United Nations to support the organization and conduct of the elections. These findings indicate the trust and expectations towards the UN in facilitating fair, free, and credible elections.

Do you think the UN should play a support role/help the national authorities organize elections?



However, these perceptions varied across states. Those in favour of UN engagement for the upcoming elections were highest (over 90 per cent) in Unity and Central Equatoria states compared to Northern Bahr el Ghazal where only 65 per cent were in favour of the United Nation's support role in the election process.



Perceptions of UNMISS's Performance

The role of UNMISS, across various sectors, was perceived positively, and the Mission's efforts were seen as contributing significantly towards lasting peace in South Sudan. All states, except for Jonglei (44 per cent,) registered a 60 per cent positivity rate towards UNMISS.

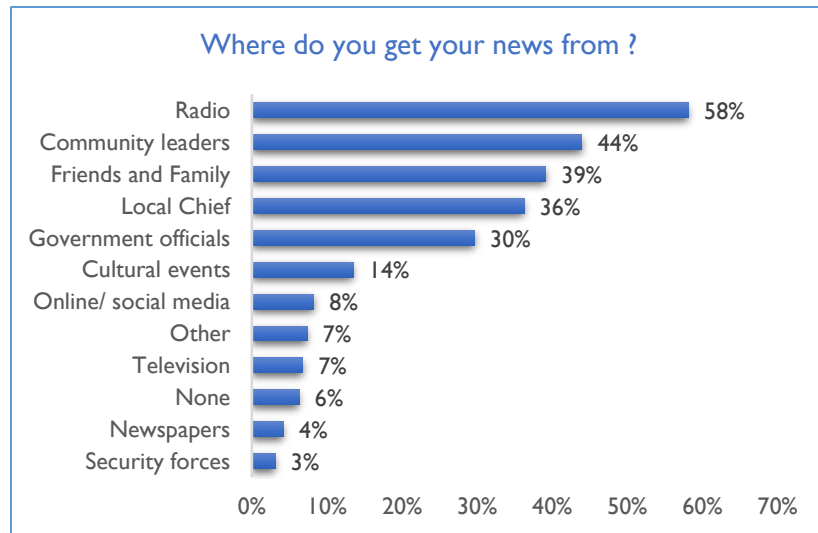
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Furthermore, 75 per cent of respondents, both men and women, indicated that the presence of UNMISS made women feel safer.

The public's positive perception extends to UNMISS's peace-building interventions, human rights work, security provision, maintenance of civilian protection sites, and efforts regarding conflict resolution.

Sources of Information

When asked about the primary source of their news, the majority (58 per cent) indicated they got their news from the radio, followed by respondents who said they were kept informed by their respective community leaders, friends and families, and government officials.



Of those who cited the radio as their primary news source, 82 per cent indicated they listened to Radio Miraya. Additionally,

92 per cent said they believed Radio Miraya to be fair, impartial, and accurate in providing information.

Conclusion

The survey indicates that the people of South Sudan acknowledge the link between the peace process, security conditions, and the electoral process. The upcoming elections are seen as pivotal, and there is a strong demand for continued international support, particularly from the UN.

Going forward, a critical gap that must be addressed is the public's awareness and understanding of the peace agreement and its related processes. While there is widespread awareness of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, there is limited knowledge of the specific content, objectives, and timelines. This incomplete understanding of the peace agreement could lead to misinformation and incorrect interpretations. This might also impact the public's expectations on the progress of the peace process, and the roles of various actors, including that of the Government and UNMISS.

In this context, there is an imminent need for a nationwide information campaign to improve and increase public awareness and participation in the peace process. These campaigns should be designed to build people's knowledge about the peace agreement and its related processes, and also focus on voter education. The effectiveness of the peace process and the upcoming elections is tied, not just to the actions of key players like the government and UNMISS, but also to how well the public is informed.

This survey was conducted by HACOF on behalf of UNMISS