Beat: Local

Wau residents seek durable peace in Roc-Roc-Dong County rally

by Alahayi Nemaya & Dawit Kahsay

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USPA NEWS - Roc-Roc-Dong County has been significantly affected by displacement from ongoing conflict between farmers and cattle keepers. A big crowd of people gathered under a huge tree, dancing and singing peace songs, at a public peace rally in Roc-Roc-Dong County, organized by the Wau area government. The crowd "" comprising the Wau area governor, advisors, cabinet ministers, county commissioners, local chiefs, youth, women, children, cattle keepers, and farmers´ representatives "" had descended upon Roc-Roc-Dong to show commitment to ensuring durable peace in Wau and the neighbouring areas of Tonj and Gogorial in South Sudan´s Greater Bar el Ghazal region.

"Roc-Roc-Dong County has been significantly affected by displacement from ongoing conflict between farmers and cattle keepers, whereby both herders and farmers face a rising threat of armed conflict,´´ said 17-year-old Mayol Ayiec, a youth in the county. "˜"˜Peacebuilding initiatives like the one we have today can also present new opportunities for the return of internally displaced persons to their homes and former places of habitual residence,´´ he said. Mayol hopes to continue with his education, which was halted when communal fighting between cattle keepers and farmers erupted early this year.
"˜´But now following the tri-state peace and reconciliation agreement, I hope genuine peace will come so that I can go back to school again,"? said Mayol Ayiec.----------
Michael Madut Chan, Wau area´s local government minister and organizer of the regional peace conference in July 2019, announced that his Wau government would like citizens to come together and peacefully coexist as they had done in the past.
´We came here today to declare the peace agreement your representatives have signed in Wau. Most of you were not there. Now we are bringing the peace to you,´´ recalled Michael Madut, referring to the peace and reconciliation conference convened by the governors of Wau, Tonj and Gogorial, which culminated in a joint peace agreement.----------
"˜´This peace agreement aimed to bring harmony and love that our people and grandparents experienced long time ago,´´ Wau area governor Angelo Taban Biajo said. "Attacks or acts of violence among communities of cattle keepers and farmers is unacceptable,"? Angelo Taban warned. The governor also highlighted the relentless effort made by the UNMISS in support of peace. Speaking at the rally, Sam Korutaro Muhumure, UNMISS Head of field Office in Wau, appealed to the leadership of the three administrative areas to speak about peace to provide an example to the population in the area, while committing to fully support the current process. "˜´It is our collective responsibility to build confidence in the community so that those who are in displacement in Marial bai, at UNMISS PoC [protection of civilians site] and collective sites can have the confidence to return home,´´ Mr. Muhumure said. The joint peace agreement was signed by the three governors of the three areas of Tonj, Wau and Gogorial, which have witnessed recurrent acts of inter-area cattle raiding and revenge fighting, displacing hundreds of people. Source : UNMISS

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