

Access to Justice in a Post-conflict State: Donor-supported Multidimensional Peacekeeping in Southern Sudan

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Abstract

Post-conflict governments and donors prioritize rebuilding the justice sector through state delivered rule of law and access to justice programmes. Misunderstanding the nature of the post-colonial state, such programmes make questionable assumptions. First, that a lack of access to state justice is the same as an overall absence of justice. Second, that the state system that is being built is what people want. Third, that the state system of justice that is being built could provide a sustainable nationwide network in the foreseeable future. Based on interviews conducted with policy designers, practitioners, local people and chiefs at three sites in southern Sudan 2007, this article calls for a rethinking of donor-supported justice and police development and advocates an approach that recognizes the importance of local justice.