



David Yauyau Rebellion, Jonglei State

David Yauyau is from the Murle tribe, a minority that lives almost exclusively in Pibor county, bordering Ethiopia and covering the south-east corner of Jonglei state. Unlike other insurrection leaders, such as George Athor and Gatluak Gai, David was a civilian before launching his armed revolt following the April 2010 elections. He studied theology in Southern Sudan and Kenya and then served as the Pibor county secretary of the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission in Jonglei. He subsequently ran as an independent candidate in the state's parliamentary election for the Gumuruk–Boma constituency seat, representing Pibor county in the Jonglei State Assembly. He was defeated by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) candidate, Judy Jokongole, who reportedly won the race by a wide margin.

David launched his first revolt on 21 May 2010 by attacking the town of Pibor and reportedly killing several Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers. His forces then moved south into Boma National Park, where they attacked SPLA wildlife forces. In June, they launched several attacks along the Bor–Pibor road, in Pibor and Gumuruk *payams* (districts). In early July, they killed several soldiers travelling in a convoy near Gumuruk. This road remains insecure, limiting access to the town of Pibor, which is already largely cut off from major access points in Jonglei during the rainy season due to flooding.

Some cite internal Murle politics rather than election-related tensions as a driving factor behind the revolt. A man in his thirties, David is viewed by Murle elders and the tribe's elite as having support only among local youths and is resented for not having sought the consent of Murle leaders before running in the elections. This rebellion seems linked to the intense rift between two Murle factions, one led by Pibor county commissioner Akot Maze and the other represented by Ismail Konyi (a former Sudan Armed Forces major general who was incorporated into the Southern government in 2006 and held the title of presidential adviser on peace and reconciliation, though he was not reappointed after the April elections). The perception among some Murle is that Ismail is backing David in order to destabilize the county and force Akot's removal. The commissioner maintains close ties to the SPLM, while many of his constituents deeply resent the Southern ruling party due to its marginalization of the Murle at the Juba level and abuses they suffered during the SPLA's disarmament campaign in the Pibor area before the elections.

With substantial resources still at his disposal, Ismail may be providing illicit support to David, but local estimates put the number of his armed supporters at between 50 and 300 men, suggesting that his uprising is smaller in scale than other insurgencies in Jonglei and Unity states. Nonetheless, David's activities are still playing a destabilizing role in Pibor county, an area that has been relatively neglected by humanitarian actors since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, due partly to persistent insecurity and other access difficulties. Two days before the Southern referendum began on 9 January, for example, David's forces were involved in a clash with the SPLA outside of Pibor town that left several men dead, including one civilian, according to the Southern ministry of internal affairs.



This rebellion has received less attention from the leadership of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) than other revolts, probably because it is perceived as a less significant threat than those led by George Athor and Gatluak Gai. In addition to the fact that David seems to have fewer military and financial resources at his disposal, his revolt is also less linked to high-level GoSS politics than the other two.

Nonetheless, Murle discontent and general insecurity in Pibor county have proved to be fertile ground for such a revolt, and the area is one where the SPLA has failed to assert and extend its authority, beyond the conduct of brutal disarmament campaigns that have served to stoke local discontent.

In late September 2010, the GoSS entered into talks with David, who had requested a ceasefire through Akot Maze, which was accepted by the SPLA. At that time, the SPLA claimed that they knew David's whereabouts and could attack him if they so chose, but that the army wanted the peace talks to succeed. Since then, there has been no statement from either camp regarding the status of the talks. David was not one of the military officers named in the pardon issued by GoSS President Salva Kiir in September, but given that he did not serve in the SPLA and that negotiations with him had already begun before the amnesty offer, this is not surprising.

On 31 October 2010, David's men were reportedly responsible for an armed attack on civilians who had gathered for a traditional dance ceremony in Gumuruk *payam*, Pibor county; there were no reported deaths from this attack, although one police officer and one civilian were injured. Rumours that talks between him and the SPLM/A had collapsed and that he may be receiving support from Ismail Konyi circulated in the aftermath of this incident.

David's area of operation—Pibor county—was included in the 5 January ceasefire agreement between George Athor and the SPLA, suggesting either a potential alliance between David and George, the presence of George's men in or near Pibor, or both.

On 25 January 2011, George Athor said in a newspaper interview that the SPLA had killed three senior generals from David's rebellion ten miles from Pibor town. According to the interview (reported in a Sudanese paper, *Ahram Al-Youm*), Athor considered this violence to be a violation of his own ceasefire agreement. On 28 January, the UN reported it had received information on an attack by David's forces on the SPLA in Patakang, east of Pibor town. Six of David's men and two SPLA soldiers were reportedly killed; among those killed from David's camp was a former sergeant in Ismail Konyi's Murle militia. Since this incident, no further incidents have been reported involving David's militia.

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