

Justice in Practice: South Sudan

By *Rachel Ibreck*

There is no question that the administration of justice in South Sudan can and must be improved. Indeed there are ongoing efforts by government, practitioners, civil society groups and international agencies to promote access to justice. But in this evolving and plural legal environment, we also need better information about everyday experiences of justice.

A new JSRP report, *Justice in Practice*, documents observations of court proceedings in customary and statutory courts, and includes a series of lawyers 'caseload reports'. It reveals the diversity of existing provision, the challenges facing legal practitioners and raises questions about the social, economic and gender inequalities that determine access to justice. It is an exploratory study, intended to provide a foundation for future research and a resource for practitioners and advocates working to improve the justice system.

Justice in Practice was produced by the *Justice and Security Research Programme* in partnership with *Justice Africa* and journalists from *The Patriot* in South Sudan. The report was launched on 14 April at a Paralegal Forum in Nimule, South Sudan, organised by South Sudan Law Society (SSLS).

The SSLS Forum brought the research partners together with local government authorities, chiefs and paralegals trained under the SSLS legal aid programme. It confirmed the need for ongoing documentation of court proceedings and further information sharing to support the administration of justice, including from the perspective of customary court Chiefs who spoke of their need for copies of legal statutes and 'help recording the cases'.

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