

Sudanese bishop says peace depends on lifestyle change

by [Fredrick Nzwili](#) in the [May 2, 2012](#) issue

In South Sudan, clashes among nomadic cattle-raising tribes in Jonglei state have killed thousands, but an evangelical Christian leader says encouraging permanent settlement by the communities will end the bloody circle of conflicts.

Bishop Elias Taban of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Sudan said the state has enough natural resources to support a changed lifestyle, a development that will also increase security.

“We can use the resources Jonglei has instead of having to wander anywhere for the sake of cattle, . . . [and] the police cannot police people if they are nomadic and do not have a permanent residence,” Taban said while addressing a South Sudan Tribal Peace Conference held April 1-3 in the town of Yei.

The conference, sponsored by the World Evangelical Alliance, was organized against a backdrop of increased clashes between the Murle and Lou-Nuer tribes since July 2011 when South Sudan became an independent nation.

“We should develop practices of growing grass for our cattle, like I have seen in other countries, so that we do not have to move around all the time,” said Taban. According to the bishop, the state’s many swamps are ideal for rice growing, and the Nile River, another resource, flows through the state.

Although the communities have traditionally raided each other’s cattle, church leaders note that in recent years the gun has replaced the spear, resulting in many deaths. Women and children are also being abducted. “We also believe in the capacity of the people of South Sudan—that you can solve your problems together,” said Geoff Tunnicliffe, the WEA general secretary, in a speech.

The WEA represents 6 million Christians worldwide and runs hospitals, schools and churches in Sudan. —ENInews