

Surveying: A Vehicle for Peace in South Sudan

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SUMMARY

Abstract

Land surveying is a profession built on precision, transparency, and trust — values that are essential for peace and social stability. In South Sudan, where disputes over land and unclear boundaries continue to undermine community relations, cadastral surveying offers practical solutions to foster peace and rebuild governance. This paper, written from a practitioner's perspective, demonstrates how transparent and equitable land surveying practices can help define ownership rights, reduce conflict, and promote sustainable development. Drawing on lessons from international land administration systems, including Queensland, Australia, it proposes locally adaptable approaches to strengthen land governance and community trust through professional surveying.

Background

Following years of conflict, South Sudan faces deep challenges in managing land ownership, access, and use. Competing claims and a lack of accurate boundary data have intensified disputes between individuals, families, and communities. Surveyors are uniquely positioned to provide the technical foundation for clarity and fairness in land rights, enabling stability and confidence in post-conflict reconstruction.

Objectives

- To demonstrate how cadastral surveying contributes to peacebuilding and national cohesion.
- To highlight the surveyor's role in land dispute resolution and transparent land

transactions.

- To propose practical frameworks for land administration based on field experience and comparative practice.

Approach / Methods

The paper draws from field observations and practitioner experience in cadastral and topographic surveying, combined with analysis of operational models from jurisdictions such as Queensland, Australia. It outlines workflows for accurate boundary identification, record reconciliation, and dispute mediation, emphasizing simplicity, transparency, and local adaptation.

Results / Discussion

Applying consistent and fair surveying principles helps clarify property boundaries, reduces fraudulent transactions, and equips courts and local tribunals with credible evidence. Clear cadastral data also supports banking, investment, and urban planning initiatives by transforming land into a secure and productive asset. The adoption of best-practice survey methods from established systems provides a framework for incremental improvement suited to South Sudan's context.

Conclusion

Surveying can be a genuine vehicle for peace when practiced as both a technical and ethical profession. By integrating fairness, precision, and community engagement, land surveyors can help rebuild trust, support transparent land governance, and lay the foundation for long-term stability in South Sudan. The path to peace begins with clear boundaries — both on the ground and in governance.