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The **World Peace Foundation**, an operating foundation affiliated solely with the Fletcher School at Tufts University, aims to provide intellectual leadership on issues of peace, justice and security. We believe that innovative research and teaching are critical to the challenges of making peace around the world, and should go hand-in-hand with advocacy and practical engagement with the toughest issues. To respond to organized violence today, we not only need new instruments and tools—we need a new vision of peace. Our challenge is to reinvent peace.

**The Conflict Research Programme** at the London School of Economics (LSE) aims to understand why contemporary violence is so difficult to end and to analyze the underlying political economy of violence with a view to informing policy. The research sites include Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## THE POLITICAL MARKETPLACE AND FRAGMENTED FAMINE IN LAKES STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

By Chris Newton

### Abstract

Organized violence can be used to inflict mass starvation outside of large-scale, prolonged military operations and outside of a civil war altogether. This may also be targeted at some of the most politically salient social groups within a country rather than the most marginalized. In Lakes State, South Sudan, a sub-national political marketplace evolved into intensely violent competition among sub-national and local elites and groups all otherwise broadly aligned with the incumbent national government. Over time, this competition produced mass starvation among communities that otherwise have the greatest access to the resources needed to avoid this exact outcome. Rather than outright famine, mass starvation repeatedly took the form of localized famine conditions, sometimes known as micro-famines. By exploring a key subnational political marketplace in South Sudan and its consequences for acute food insecurity, this article works to address gaps in analysis of mass starvation at smaller geographic and social scale than typically considered and of key pathways from organized violence to mass starvation outside of civil war.

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