



ZiMUN 2019
Advisory Panel
Research Report

Forum: Advisory Panel

Issue : Addressing the South Sudanese Civil War

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Position: Chair

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Following its independence in 2011, 5 years of civil war have left South Sudan on the cusp of full-scale genocide. The war began as a political conflict between President Salva Kiir and his then Vice President Riek Machar in December 2013. The personal rivalry sparked fighting between forces loyal to the president and rebels allied with Machar. It also deepened a rift between two of South Sudan's largest ethnic groups -- Kiir's dominant Dinka and Machar's Nuer people.

A power sharing agreement, signed between the two parties in August 2015, did not end the fighting; following clashes in Juba in July 2016, Machar then went into exile.

Both sides have committed abuses that qualify as war crimes, including looting, indiscriminate attacks on civilians and the destruction of civilian property, arbitrary arrests and detention, beatings and torture, enforced disappearances, rape including gang rape, and extrajudicial executions. Some abuses may also constitute crimes against humanity.

Facing sanctions and mounting pressure from the international community, the sparring sides signed a power-sharing agreement in August 2015 with the promise to bring peace to South Sudan. But the peace deal fell apart within months as fighting flared up between Kiir's government forces, Machar's rebel group and other insurgent factions.

After three years of ruinous war and more broken ceasefires, Machar and other rebel factions signed a new ceasefire and power-sharing agreement with Kiir's government that would maintain Kiir as president and reinstate Machar to his former role as the "first" of multiple vice presidents. The reconstituted transitional government won't take office until this year in May. Despite the revitalized peace process, lasting peace and stability has yet to be seen. The United Nations flagged reports of fighting in several areas of South Sudan less than a week after the new agreement was signed.

"As we prepare to enter 2019, South Sudan remains in the grip of a serious humanitarian crisis. The cumulative effects of years of conflict and violence against civilians has destroyed people's homes and livelihoods," Alain Noudehou, the humanitarian coordinator for South Sudan, said in a statement.

Since the start of the conflict, almost 2 million people have been internally displaced, and another 2 million have sought refuge in neighboring countries, with 1 million in Uganda alone. More than 230,000 people are sheltering in six United Nations bases in towns across the country. Famine was declared in conflict-affected areas in the former Unity state in the first half of the year. These are according to 2017 figures. The estimated death toll as of 2018 is 383 000.

In late October 2018, Machar returned to South Sudan for a nationwide peace celebration to mark the end of the civil war. However, reports of continued attacks and violations, coupled with the collapse of multiple previous peace deals, highlight concerns that the fragile peace may not hold.

The director of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Knopf, based at the National Defense University, supports the proposed solution that an international transitional administration is the only realistic path to end the violence and to allow South Sudan the kind of "clean break" from its leaders and power structures that can restore the country to viability. Moreover, she argues that an international transitional administration would not constitute the need for an investment costlier than what the United States is already spending—more than \$2 billion since 2013 (and more than \$11 billion since 2005).

The report recommends the United Nations and the AU lead a transitional administration with an executive mandate for ten to fifteen years to maintain the country's territorial integrity, provide basic governance and public services, rebuild the shattered economy, and establish the political and constitutional framework for the transition to full sovereignty.

Key Terms

War Crimes - acts carried out during the conduct of a war that violates accepted international rules of war.

Arbitrary Detentions- the arrest or detention of an individual in a case in which there is no likelihood or evidence that they committed a crime against legal statute, or in which there has been no proper due process of law or order.

Genocide - the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group.

Refugees - a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.

Internally Displaced Person - someone who is forced to flee his or her home but who remains within his or her country's borders. They are often referred to as refugees, although they do not fall within the legal definitions of a refugee.

Sanction- an official action taken against a government to force it to behave in a particular way or as punishment for not doing so

Ceasefire - a temporary suspension of fighting; a truce.

Transitional Government- an emergency governmental authority set up to manage a political transition generally in the cases of new nations or following the collapse of the previous governing administration.

Countries and Organizations Involved

IGAD - In June 2017, the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development embarked on efforts to “revitalize” the 2015 Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan, ARCSS, which it had brokered with support from the US, United Kingdom, Norway, and the European Union.

Uganda - Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni pursued efforts to unify the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, although several opposition figures did not participate.

UNHRC - In March 2017, the UN Human Rights Council renewed and strengthened the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, tasking it with gathering evidence and determining responsibility for violations with a view to providing accountability. The UN Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS, sheltered over 230,000 civilians in six sites, the highest number since the crisis started.

UN Security Council - UN “Regional Protection Force,” mandated in the summer of 2016 by the UN Security Council, to protect Juba, began to deploy in August.

USA - In September 2017, the US imposed sanctions on three government officials: the former chief of staff, the army’s deputy chief of staff, and the minister of information. The US also sanctioned three companies owned or controlled by former vice president Machar, and warned of UN sanctions and a UN arms embargo. However, Russia and China opposed the idea, along with other members

of the Security Council, including from Africa. In November, Canada imposed sanctions on the same three government officials.

EU- May 18, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on South Sudan condemning abuses, including sexual violence and use of child soldiers, calling for accountability and supporting the establishment of a hybrid court. The European Parliament called on the EU to pursue an international arms embargo. The Troika and EU condemned government abuses.

Citations

- ***Global Conflict Tracker, 2018*** <https://www.cfr.org/interactives/global-conflict-tracker#!/conflict/civil-war-in-south-sudan>
- ***“Ending South Sudan’s Civil War” - Council on Foreign Relations, 2016***
- ***“South Sudan marks 5 years of vicious war” by Morgan Windsor, 2018*** <https://abcnews.go.com/International/south-sudan-marks-years-vicious-civil-war/story?id=59797433>
- ***“South Sudan Events of 2017” report by the Human Rights Watch*** <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/south-sudan>