

PORGMUN 2019



THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

Forum: African Union

INTRODUCTION

As of December 11, 2018 roughly four million South Sudanese people have been displaced. With close to two million people displaced internally, and more than two million more fleeing to the neighboring countries of Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, the South Sudanese crisis has been declared by the UNHCR a humanitarian emergency. Despite being the youngest country in the world, South Sudan's history is already incredibly complex and fraught with conflict and hardship. The much longer history of the South Sudanese people is even more so. To understand the current crisis we must examine the history of the South Sudanese people, the division of Sudan and South Sudan, the causes of the ongoing civil war, and what the affects have been upon the South Sudanese people.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

First Sudanese Civil War

Lasted from 1956-1972 and gave new autonomy to the region of south Sudan within Sudan

Second Sudanese Civil War

Lasted from 1985-2005, roughly 2.5 million people were killed and it ended in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 that gave new recognition and autonomy to South Sudan and promised a referendum on independence six years the agreement was signed.

Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM, SPLA)

The forces that represented and fought for the people of South Sudan during the second Sudanese Civil War, currently the governing party of South Sudan and the South Sudanese army.

Comprehensive Peace Agreement

The peace agreement that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War. Gave new rights and autonomy to South Sudan and promised a referendum on Independence for South Sudan.

Independence Referendum of 2011

The independence referendum that gave independence to South Sudan.

July 9th

South Sudan day, the anniversary of the official creation of South Sudan as a state.

Dinka

The largest ethnic group in South Sudan, represented in conflict by President Salva Kiir.

Nuer

The second largest ethnic group in South Sudan, represented in conflict by Vice-President Riek Machar.

ARCSS

The Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, signed in 2015 that laid out a plan to resolve the conflict and carried international support, but failed to be implemented due to regional groups refusal to comply with the requirements of the plan, and a poorly coordinated effort to enforce it by the supporting parties of the plan. ARCSS was mandated by the African Union with support of the Troika (Britain, Norway, and the US).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Violence and conflict have been recurrent issues for the people of South Sudan since the First Sudanese Civil War (also known as the Anyanya Rebellion) of 1956-1972. The First war ended in negotiations that gave autonomy to the people of South Sudan. The peace sadly did not last long though as, in 1983 Sudanese President Jaafar Muhammad an-Nimeiri issued a number of decisions that significantly impacted the autonomy of the South Sudanese people. These measures included the imposition of Shari'a law throughout the entire country and the abolition of the Southern Sudanese Autonomous Region. This triggered the taking up of arms against the state by rebels who were known through the conflict as the Sudan People's Liberation Army and signified the beginning of the Second Sudanese civil war.

The south is predominantly an African-Christian region. It is incredibly diverse, composed of over 60 different ethnic groups. The north on the other hand is predominantly an Arab-Muslim region. These differences in ethnicity and religion contributed largely to the outbreak of rebellion and the desire of the South Sudanese people to form an autonomous state following the ending of

the joint occupation of England and Egypt that ended in 1956. Ultimately the fighting continued from 1985-2005. The costs of the Second Civil War were enormous. The war left an estimated two and a half million people dead, of whom an estimated one to two million were civilians, many of whom died as a result of disease or starvation that were byproducts of the conflict.

The conflict formally ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January of 2005 with the negotiation of a peace treaty between the North and South that declared a permanent cease-fire, a power-sharing government that included rebels based in Khartoum, autonomy for the South, and the holding of a referendum on independence for the south in six years. Unfortunately, the peace did not last and hundreds more died between 2005 and the 2011 referendum. In December of 2009 leaders of the North and South reached a deal on the terms of a referendum on southern independence. In January of 2011, the people of South Sudan voted in favor of complete independence from Sudan, South Sudan officially became a new country on July 9, 2011.

Independence though did not install peace though in the country, just one month after the declaration of independence 600 people were killed in clashes in Jonglei State between ethnic groups. Five months later in January of 2012 South Sudan declared a disaster in Jonglei State after roughly 100,000 fled to escape clashes between rival ethnic groups. After getting off to a tumultuous start the situation then worsened in 2013 with the outbreak of the South Sudanese civil war.

In December 2013 a feud between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those of former Vice-President Riek Machar came to a head and erupted into violence. The division further extended to their respective ethnic groups the Nuer and Dinka people, the Dinka are the largest ethnic group in South Sudan the the Nuer are the second largest. The conflict was triggered by the removal of Vice-President Machar by President Kiir who claims Vice-President Machar was planning a coup to remove him from power. This political squabbling quickly turned into ethnic fighting and violence between the Nuer and Dinka peoples. The army of South Sudan has been divided resulting in in-fighting and no real state-army. Given the history of violence in the region it was unfortunately easy to descend back into conflict and violence. At this point the conflict has devolved into chaotic violence between ethnic groups throughout the country with no clear resolution in sight. Between the beginning of the conflict in 2013 and September 2018 an estimated 383,000 people have been killed. A further four million have been displaced, putting stress upon South Sudan's neighbors, some of whom are already in precarious and uncertain situations that could be worsened by an influx of hundreds of thousands of new people.

After the failure to implement a peace plan signed in 2015 a new peace agreement was signed on September 12, 2018, but many experts feel it fails to address the conflict's root causes and issues. Meanwhile, millions of South Sudanese are at risk of famine due to food prices rising as inflation soars, currently up to 6.3 million people are extremely food insecure, access to humanitarian aid is completely cut off to some areas of the country, and critical food distributions are being cut off due to the ongoing conflict in some areas, making it increasingly dangerous for aid workers to be in the country.

The conflict in South Sudan was born out of an incredibly complex and violent history. Many of the people living in South Sudan today have never known a life without violence permeating their country and their lives. In order to end the fighting and reconcile the conflict ways must be found to neutralize ethnic divides and rivalries, to stabilize the economy, and to instal a government that holds popular support and is free from corruption. None of these things are easy to accomplish, but they must be or this young country may never be able to give its people the lives it was created to.

MAJOR PARTIES AND THEIR VIEWS

IGAD

Intergovernmental Authority on Development, oversaw the negotiation of the CPA and played key mediation role in the negotiation of the ARCSS. Wants to implement the ARCSS.

The United Nations

The UN has been attempting to sustain Peacekeeping and Aid efforts in the country since 2007 while attempting to monitor and help implement agreements made between waring parties.

Sudan

Sudan would like to reunite with South Sudan as South Sudanese independence resulted in a loss of a quarter of Sudan's territory, three quarters of its export earnings, and resulted in a \$13 billion loss at the time of the split.

Uganda

Supporters of President Kiir.

Ethiopia

Host to many political leaders who fled South Sudan, could support regime change if the South Sudanese government becomes too close to Egypt. One of the only relatively neutral members of IGAD.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

1956 – End of joint occupation of Sudan by England and Egypt

1956 – Start of First Sudanese Civil War

1972 – End of First Sudanese Civil War

1985 – Beginning of Second Sudanese Civil War

2005 – End of Second Sudanese Civil War, Signing of CPA

2009 – Agreement is reached for terms of independence referendum between North and South

January 2011 – Referendum is held, South Sudan votes strongly in favor of independence

July 9, 2011 – South Sudan officially becomes the world's youngest country

December 2013 – Feud between President Kiir and Vice-President Machar erupts in violence along ethnic lines

2015 – Signing of ARCSS

2018 – Signing of new peace agreement

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE CONFLICT

- ARCSS
- 2018 Peace Agreement

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER

- How can ethnic tensions be neutralized?
- Can or should South Sudan keep Salva Kiir as its President while working to end the conflict?
- How can South Sudan stabilize its economy and develop its natural resources?
- What is South Sudan's path toward establishing stable democratic government?
- How can South Sudan ameliorate its relations with Sudan?

APPENDIX

A R C S S— https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/final_proposed_compromise_agreement_for_south_sudan_conflict.pdf

2018 Peace Agreement— <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/24/opinion/south-sudan-peace-agreement.html>

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