

KarLMUN 2017 – Security Council

Study Guide – South Sudan



1.0 Introduction to the Topic

South Sudan presents a unique challenge to the International Community. This is a situation which is internally fueled, and continues to rage irrespective of international efforts. Part of the reason is that there is no significant foreign hold on matters such as trade and economy in the country since its complete breakdown into chaos.

1.1 General Overview

Following two devastating civil wars, almost six years after gaining independence, South Sudan should be a country full of hope. Instead, it is now in the grip of a massive humanitarian crisis.

Political conflict, compounded by economic woes and drought, has caused massive displacement, raging violence and dire food shortages. Over 5.1 million people are in need of aid, and 4.8 million are facing hunger. Due to economic collapse and three years of poor agricultural conditions, areas of South Sudan are now experiencing famine.

1.2 History of Topic

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in July 2011, but the hard-won celebration was short-lived. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the ruling political party that originally led the way for independence, is now divided and fighting for power.

In December 2013, political fighting erupted into violence in the streets of the capital, Juba, after South Sudan's president accused his vice president of an attempted coup. As of then, the country has been experiencing severe ethnic tensions and the exploitation of vast natural resources for personal and political gain. Fighting between the two sides of government forces, each soon moved to Bor, and then to Bentiu.

Violence spread across the young nation like wildfire, displacing 413,000 civilians in just the first month of conflict, and a staggering 40% of the entire South Sudanese population is facing a humanitarian catastrophe. Tens of thousands of civilians rushed to seek refuge in U.N. bases that were subsequently turned into makeshift displacement camps.

2.0 Recent Events and Present Situation

The political struggle between President Kiir and Vice President Machar led to Machar's removal and spurred ethnic violence between presidential guard soldiers; Dinka ethnic group soldiers aligned with President Kiir. The former Vice President Machar was supported by the Nuer.

While some regions have recently become slightly less volatile, allowing people to move around fairly freely and return to their homes, violent disruptions are still occurring throughout the country. Since the outbreak of political and ethnical conflict, armed groups have mainly targeted civilians, committed rape and sexual violence, destroyed properties, burglarized villages, and recruited children into their ranks.

Most recently, a fresh wave of violence erupted in Juba starting July 2016, just one day before the country's five-year anniversary of independence.

On top of these attacks, the country's economy is in crisis — the South Sudanese pound has declined in value, and the cost of goods and services has skyrocketed. The inflation rate — 835 percent — is the highest in the world.

Since the conflict began, almost 1 in 3 people in South Sudan have been displaced. Some 3.6 million citizens have been forced to flee their homes. South Sudan is now the third-most fled country in the world, behind Syria and Afghanistan.

3.0 The UN, the Security Council and Bloc Positions w.r.t. S. Sudan

Conflict between government and opposition forces has continued, exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe gripping the country. According to OCHA, some 6 million people, approximately half the population, are severely food-insecure. Some 1.89 million people are internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 1.97 million people have fled to neighbouring countries. Among the IDPs, approximately 218,000 people are being protected in seven UNMISS protection sites.

On 6 August, government forces seized Pagak, the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition headquarters, which is located in the Upper Nile region near South Sudan's border with Ethiopia. The government claimed it had taken the town while responding to an opposition offensive, while the opposition alleged that the attack had not been provoked. At press time, the situation remained volatile as clashes continued.

Deployment of the RPF (Regional Protection Force), which was initially authorized in August 2016, is continuing. The Bangladeshi Construction Engineering Company has partially deployed to Juba, and the Nepalese High Readiness Company has fully deployed. The Rwandan infantry battalion began arriving in early August. Ethiopian troops who will participate in the RPF are expected to arrive shortly.

A handful of peace agreements have been signed over the course of the war, but they have been repeatedly violated. The situation remains highly unstable.

On 23-24 July, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Council of Ministers convened its 58th Extra-Ordinary session in Juba, to discuss efforts to revitalize the peace process in South Sudan. At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants adopted a communiqué in which they urged "all South Sudanese stakeholders to embrace the objectives of the High Level Revitalization Forum for the Implementation of the ARCSS". According to the 12 June communiqué of the Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State held in Addis Ababa, the purpose of the Revitalization Forum is to discuss concrete measures to restore a permanent ceasefire, to advance implementation of the peace agreement, and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period. The forum is expected to convene in early October.

In September, the Security Council will consider the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the implementation of the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). It will also receive its monthly assessment of the deployment and future requirements of the RPF and impediments to UNMISS in carrying out its mandate.

As of 2016, numerous NGOs and journalists investigated the allegations of chemical weapons used against the Sudanese population in the Jebel Marra region of Darfur. These allegations and reports were examined by the Security Council on the 7833rd meeting, discussing the situation in Sudan and South Sudan, in which they recognized the chemical weapons attack in the region leading to the renewal of the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) mandate.

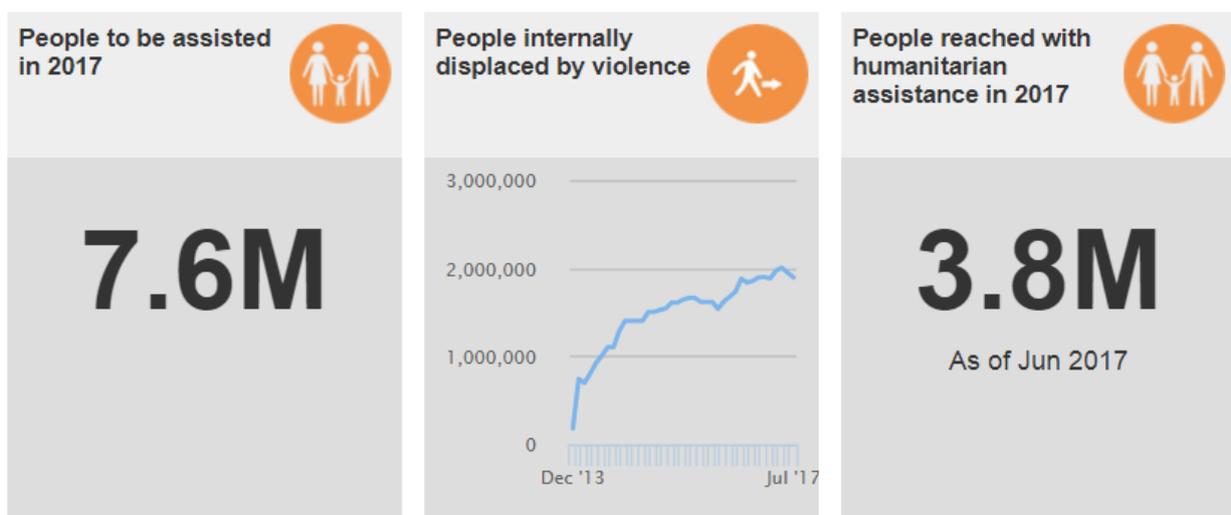
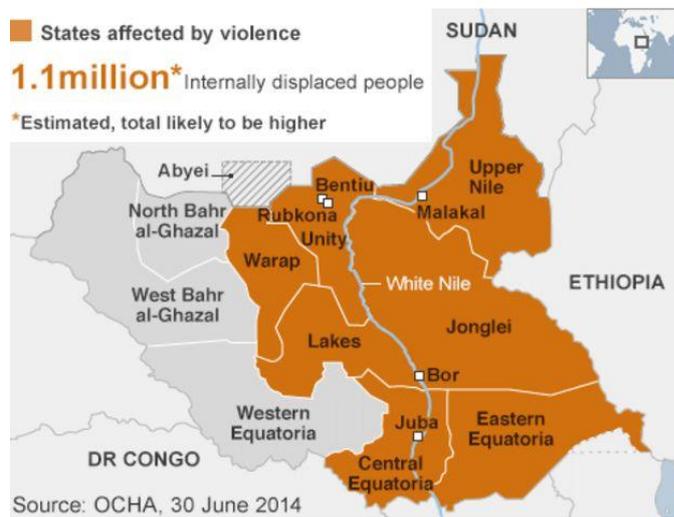
Key Issues and Options

The central issue for the Council remains how to support IGAD's efforts to revitalize the political process. Compelling the South Sudanese government and the opposition to implement a ceasefire and embrace an inclusive process has been proven difficult.

Another issue is how much impact the deployment of the RPF, which is mandated to provide a secure environment in and around Juba, and other areas in extremis, will have on improving the security environment in South Sudan. While in Juba on 3rd of August, Lacroix mentioned that the arrival of RPF units would free UNMISS units in the capital. These units could then be deployed to other insecure areas of the country.

Another key issue is how to encourage greater cooperation by the government and armed groups, including ending the ongoing violence against civilians, removing impediments to humanitarian access, and more broadly, working with UNMISS to enable it to fulfill its mandate.

South Sudan conflict



Source: UNOCHA and Partners in South Sudan (30 Jul 2017).

4.0 Summary and Outlook

December 23, 2016, the Security Council failed to get nine votes to adopt a U.S.-drafted resolution to impose an arms embargo and further sanctions on South Sudan. The resolution failed to pass despite warnings by U.N. officials of a possible genocide. Eight council members, including Russia and China, abstained in the vote. Therefore, the United Nations failed to impose an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. Russia and its allies in the council accused the United States of ignoring the call for a national reconciliation made by President Kiir in a speech on December 14.

There is no easy path to sustainable peace in South Sudan. The difficult path to lasting political stability and national reconciliation has to take into account the underlying causes of the tragedy. The failure to reach a consensus on the fundamental contentious issues of governance; rule of law; inclusivity of the government; and adherence to the democratic values of justice, freedom, equality, and citizenship are at the center of the unfolding political crisis. Short of this, the status quo will continue to produce violence, displacement and death in South Sudan.

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