STATE FRAGILITY AND POST-CONFLICT STATE-BUILDING: AN ANALYSIS OF SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT (2013-2019)

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Abstract

The South Sudan conflict flared up in 2013 hardly two years after successful secession from Sudan. This autonomy was achieved after more than two decades of intense fighting between the tribes from the north and south regions of Sudan. However, the path to creating a new united and modern state has been challenging for South Sudan. This article explores post-conflict reconstruction for Africa's newest state through an in-depth analysis of the conflict narratives, peace processes, humanitarian crisis and the challenges of state-building for South Sudan. The article argues that the challenge to the establishment of a strong and stable South Sudanese state is because of the fragile social, political and economic status that the country inherited at independence. This article also identifies that ethnicity has been exploited by the different political actors in the conflict to achieve personal and group interests leading to outbreak of one of the most intense conflicts not only within Africa, but also globally.

Keywords*: South Sudan, Ethnicity, Civil War, Fragile State, State-Building*

DEVLET KIRILGANLIĞI VE ÇATIŞMA SONRASI DEVLET İNŞASI: GÜNEY SUDAN ÇATIŞMASININ ANALİZİ (2013-2019)

Öz

Güney Sudan çatışması, 2013 yılından itibaren, bölgenin Sudan'dan başarılı bir şekilde ayrılmasından yaklaşık iki yıl sonra, yükselişe geçmiştir. Güney Sudan'ın bu özerkliği, Sudan'ın güney ve kuzey bölgelerinde yer alan yerel grupların yirmi yılı aşkın bir süredir devam eden yoğun çatışmaları sonrası sağlanmıştır. Ancak, Güney Sudan için yeni, birleşik ve modern bir devlet inşası halen önemli sorunları bünyesinde taşımaktadır. Bu makalede, Afrika'nın en yeni devletinin çatışma sonrası yeniden inşa süreci; insani krizler, barış süreçleri ve Güney Sudan'ın devlet inşası sürecinde karşılaştığı temel problemler ekseninde, derinlemesine analiz edilmektedir. Makalede, güçlü ve istikrarlı bir Güney Sudan'ın kurulmasının önündeki en önemli engeller olarak bağımsızlık sürecinden miras kalan kırılgan toplum yapısı, istikrarsız ekonomik ve siyasi yapı ifade edilmektedir. Makalede etnisite kavramı, sadece Afrika'da değil küresel eksende de en yoğun çatışmalardan biri olan Güney Sudan'da, farklı siyasal grupların bireysel ve kolektif çıkarların gerçekleştirilmesi amacıyla istismar edilmiş bir araç olarak tanımlanmaktadır.

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INTRODUCTION

The division of north and South Sudan in 2011 heralded the culmination of more than two decades of intense conflict between northern Arabs and southern non-Arabs. This separation foreshadowed the end of Sudan's civil war and opened a new phase for South Sudan as an independent state. Previously, the Sudan civil war manifested a ferocious intensity such that regional community through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development with support from the international community intervened in an attempt resolve the conflict after massive loss of human life and property. This intervention led to the establishment of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on the 9th January 2005 (Jok, 2015: 1-5).

However, this agreement emphasized on finding immediate solutions to the conflict involving the Northerners and Southerners that little attention was given to recognise the existing differences between political actors pushing for secession of southern Sudan. Nonetheless, a referendum vote yielded 99% support for South Sudan secession from Sudan. Despite gaining independence, the prevailing social, political and economic conditions connoted that South Sudan embarked on its new path as a fragile state. Sudan on the other hand, had to contend with the significant reduction of its territory and the loss of approximately 75 percent of its oil reserves to South Sudan (Ottaway et. al, 2012: 3). Nonetheless, South Sudan had inherited a legacy of underdevelopment from years of marginalization epitomised by poor infrastructure, low human capital, limited financial resources, weak civilian and security institutions. This fragile environment in which the new state found itself was further exacerbated by massive corruption in the government, disagreement among political leaders and a trend of ethnic entrenchment in the society.

The increasing political tensions in December 2013 founded on rising suspicions particularly in the executive arm, led to the outbreak of conflict. President Kiir had accused his deputy Machar of masterminding a coup attempt; an allegation that Machar vehemently denied. Noteworthy, although ethnicity did not account as an immediate cause of conflict, the warring parties exploited ethnic differences to settle political and ideological differences. The conflict was characterised by acts of war crimes such as genocide, forceful displacement, destruction of properties and extreme violence against women and children. The two faces behind this conflict were Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.

During the early days of the conflict, three hundred civilians lost their lives following an attack on Machar's ethnic group (Nuer) in Juba on the 15th December

2013. In retaliation, the Nuers plotted one of the deadliest revenge attacks on Kiir's ethnic group (Dinka), thus, entrenching the conflict even further as it spread rapidly to other regions. The conflict was further fuelled by Salva Kiir who declared Machar and his allied senior Nuer military commanders as active rebels against the government. The conflict continued undiminished for more than 20 months as regional neighbours struggled to make progress in negotiations under the regional umbrella of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). For a long time, the absence of any unbinding commitment by the warring groups intensified the conflict as it spread to become one of the most ferocious civil conflict witnessed in the first quarter of 21st century.
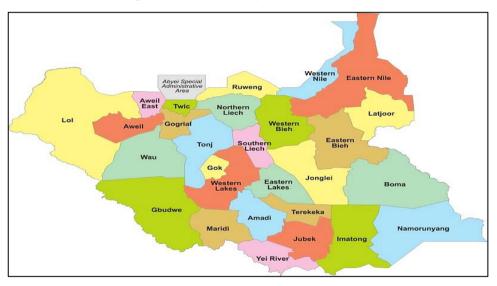

Figure 1: South Sudan

Source: CIA Factbook

This article adopts a qualitative research method. The study appropriates secondary data from government and NGO reports, academic articles, books, and newspaper reports from established print media houses to conduct an in-depth analysis of the study. The rationale for the selection of this design is that the study will gather qualitative data on South Sudan conflict to demonstrate the challenges of state-building for the country. According to Marczyk et al., (2005: 97), qualitative methodology enables a researcher to examine characteristics, attributes, or categories that can hardly be quantified. It goes beyond looking at how people perceive different issues but also why they perceive them that way.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pierson in his book, "*The Modern State*", argues that a state is a recognized political organization that has legitimacy and monopoly over use of force. Other fundamental qualities of a modern state are sovereignty, citizenship, territory, constitution, public bureaucracy, impersonal power, and a system of taxation (Pierson: 2012: 7). As such, in the absence of one or all of these elements, states cannot be able to establish and sustain order. This article adopts the fragile state theory to argue that the presence of weak state structures in South Sudan contributed to the outbreak and prolonged duration of the conflict. However, this article also recognizes the debate on how to interpret and categorise a state as fragile. Some scholars for instance, opine that different terminologies such as weak states; collapsed states; or ungoverned territories can be used interchangeably (Maiangwa, 2012: 28; Stewart & Brown, 2009)

Nonetheless, there is a general consensus that, states have certain responsibilities towards the society such as providing security against internal and external threats; social welfare; and, representation of people. The capacity or incapacity to fulfil some or all of these duties then become the basis upon which a state can be considered fragile or stable. Therefore, the main assumption of the fragile state theory is that, a state becomes fragile from the moment it starts losing the ability to guarantee the development and safety of its citizens (Stewart & Brown, 2009). The same assumption is echoed by Cilliers and Cisk (2013: 7) who argue that a state is considered fragile when they are unable to guarantee basic human security or ideal conditions that promote human development.

South Sudan from the time of its independence, ranked among the most fragile states. This ranking has not yet improved over the years as it has continuously maintained top five positions among the global most fragile states. The Fragile State Index provides an in-depth ranking of 178 states from the most fragile to the least fragile. The index measures the social, economic, and political pressures facing South Sudan by looking at 12 key primary indicators including: *security apparatus (SA; factionalized elites (FE); group grievances (GG); economy (EC); economic inequality (UD) human flight and brain drain (HF); state legitimacy (SL); public services (PS); human rights (HR); demographic pressure (DP); refugees and internally displaced people (RD); and external intervention (EX).*

Table 1: South Sudan Fragile State Index

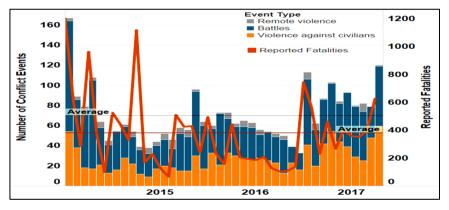|		SA	FE	GG	EC	UD	HF	SL	PS	HR	DP	RD	EX
YEAR	**RANK**												
2019	3rd	9.7	9.7	9.4	9.8	8.9	6.5	10.0	9.8	9.3	9.7	10.0	9.4
2018	1st	10.0	9.7	9.7	10.0	8.9	6.3	10.0	9.9	9.2	10.0	10.0	9.6
2017	1st	10.0	9.7	9.7	10.0	8.9	6.4	10.0	10.0	9.5	9.9	10.0	9.8
2016	2nd	10.0	9.7	9.9	9.3	9.0	6.6	9.7	10.0	9.7	9.9	10.0	10.0
2015	1st	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.8	6.9	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.8	10.0	10.0
2014	1st	9.9	10.9	10.0	8.8	8.9	6.8	9.7	9.9	9.9	9.1	10.0	9.9
2013	4th	9.6	9.8	10.0	8.6	8.9	6.5	9.1	9.8	9.3	8.9	10.0	10.0
2012	n/r	9.7	10.0	10.0	7.3	8.8	6.4	9.1	9.5	9.2	8.4	9.9	10.0

Source: Peace Fund, 2020

According to the 2019 Fragile State Index, South Sudan was among the most fragile states at independence after a long civil war with Sudan. The government was therefore lacking the necessary structures and institutions to effectively guide the country through post-conflict state-building processes. Fragility of South Sudan at independence facilitated corruption in government, marginalization of ethnic communities, and perpetration of impunity by both the government and militia groups. The prevailing status of the state denied government legitimacy to guide the new country. Conditions became worse from the formation and regrouping of militia groups that had the capacity to easily access weapons and ammunitions from the previous war with the north (Sudan).

Manifestation of Conflict and Violated Peace Agreements

Immediately after independence of South Sudan, two concerning issues for the new government was its ability to exercise sole ownership of violence as an instrument of the state, and its claim on legitimacy. Weber's characterization of a state emphasized on its ability to have monopoly over force. This argument has been reinforced by other realist scholars such as Waltz (1998: 28-34). However, whereas monopoly over use of force is the key for the state in exercising control over other actors, other realist scholars such as Thomson et al., (1989) and Krasner (1999) have emphasized the need for this authority not to be misused or abused. Should the authority of a state over the use of force be challenged, the ramification is a cycle of violence that can subject fragile states to total collapse (Adams,2000: 2-5).

The conflict that broke out in December 2013 was not only due to ethnicity but also because of sharp political differences between political leaders. Actors in both the government and opposition exploited historical ethnic differences to spark armed clashes and propel ethnic killings throughout the country. Widespread violence created humanitarian crisis and aid agencies responded by withdrawing employees from South Sudan due to insecurity (Blanchard, 2013). Within three months of conflict, more than fifty thousand civilians were killed and approximately 120,000 people displaced (UNOCHA, December 26, 2013).

Mobilization of international community culminated into the passing of UN resolution 2132. This resolution authorised troops to be mobilized from other UN missions such as UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI); UN Stabilization Mission in DR Congo (MONUSCO); AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); and UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This united peacekeeping mission intervened in South Sudan under the banner of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The resolution further called for an immediate halt to fighting by all parties involved (UN Security Council, December 24, 2013). This resolution provided a clear demonstration of the conflict intensity.

Figure 1: Conflict Events and Fatalities in South Sudan 2013-2017

Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 2019

However, fighting was not ceded as new incidences of violence accompanied by massive casualties continued to be reported in various parts of the country. The first significant decline in fighting was experienced in 2015 when a peace agreement was signed after regional mediation by the heads of states from Kenya, Uganda and the Ethiopian prime minister. The mediation was boosted by immense

international pressure on both Riek Machar and Salva Kiir following the release of a report by UN panel of experts alleging that government and opposition forces targeted civilians (Aljazeera, August 27, 2015). The Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS, 2015) stipulated that:

• End of fighting and within 30 days, all soldiers to retreat back to the barracks.
• Withdrawal of all forces from Juba within 45 days.
• Juba to be neutral and absent of any military group.
• Opposition to be given the position of "first vice-president".
• Transitional government to assume office in 90 days.
• Transitional government to govern for 30 months.
• Elections be conducted within 60 days before the end of term of the transitional government.
• Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Commission to be established to investigate human rights violations.

The first accord lasted for two months after which Machar accused Kiir of making unilateral decisions in running the government. Machar protested the decision by Kiir to establish 18 additional states. Moreover, Machar accused Kiir of being an obstacle to the implementation of the peace accord after the deadline for establishing a Transitional Government of National Unity elapsed on January 2016. Nonetheless, Machar who was in exile at the time, was appointed as the 1ˢᵗ Vice-President and demilitarisation of Juba was progressing as per the peace accord in the early weeks of February 2016. Before the end of February 2016, fighting resumed outside Juba after accusations that government troops had attacked UN-protected civilian camp (South Sudan News Agency, 26 February 2016). Machar returned back from exile to Juba to take up his position as 1ˢᵗ Vice-President in April 2016. No sooner had he settled that another wave of fighting between Machar's soldiers and government forces clashed forcing Machar to escape into exile. This marked the end of Transitional Government of National Unity (Baker, 2016: 20-27). Scholars (De Vries et al, 2017: 333-340) attribute the collapse of the 2015 peace accord to absence of political goodwill by both parties .

The collapse of the peace accord led to widespread violence in other states such as Upper Nile, Equatorials and Western Bahr al Ghazal. This caused thousands of more deaths and over 2.3 million people displaced according to UNHCR (January 2018). A report by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (September 2018), estimates that conflict has likely resulted to an excess of 400,000 deaths since 2013. Humanitarian crisis in the country has deteriorated further with

outbreak of famine in food producing regions such as Unity state. Reports by Mercy Corps highlights that by 2018, 1.9 million civilians were internally displaced and more than 2.1 million escaped to other to the regional neighbours.

The chaos that resulted from continuous cycle of conflict facilitated the warring groups to target civilians perceived to be supporting either the government or opposition groups leading to rise in cases of kidnapping, murder, arson attacks, and gender-based violence (Rolandsen, 2015: 355). Indeed, it is evident from the conflict incidences that civilians have shouldered the biggest burden in the conflict. A report by UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS, May 2019) on human rights violations documents that:

"*There are reasonable grounds to believe that violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have been committed by both parties. These violations include extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, rape and other acts of sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detention, targeted attacks against civilians not taking part in hostilities, violence aimed at spreading terror among the civilian population, and attacks on hospitals as well as personnel involved in peacekeeping mission.*" (UNMISS, May 2014).

2. NARRATIVES ABOUT CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT
2.1. The oil narrative

Several scholars (Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2005: 6-7; Sachs & Warner, 2001: 827-838) have favoured this narrative by postulating that the different factions (government and rebel groups) want to have absolute rights over oil fields and other natural resources. De Soysa (2003:409) although adopted a different set of case studies, concluded that there is a very strong causal relation between natural resources and civil wars. To explaining economic underdevelopment in most of the developing countries especially in Africa, natural resource curse has been widely cited by political economists who have linked natural resources with political instability.

For South Sudan, oil is the biggest GDP earner. Data from World Bank (12 October 2018), highlights that the country ranks first on oil-dependency as the main source of government revenue. Oil accounts for 98% of total exports, and nearly 60% of its GDP. However, oil producing regions like Upper Nile, Unity state and Jonglei state have undergone through the most ferocious violence during this conflict. There are extensive allegations that revenues from the sale of oil have been used to finance war and enriching a small group of South Sudanese elites (Bariyo, 2014). However, the government has continued to vehemently refute such

claims by stating that oil revenues have been spent on paying salaries of civil servants. According to South Sudan's government spokesperson: *"the oil money did not even buy a knife. It is being used for paying the salaries of civil servant"* (Reuters, February 20, 2014).

Other scholars (Sefa-Nyarko, 2016: 194 and Johnson 2014: 167) argue that civil war in South Sudan cannot be examined through natural resource curse as the primary cause. The first argument that is anchored on the question of why other income earners such as agriculture would not generate conflict, creates an argumentative dilemma in regard to the natural resource curse theories. There also lacks a clear explanation on the process that links conflict to resources. Literature on the connection between civil wars and natural resource need to address alternative explanations. For example, the correlation between civil wars and natural resources may be the opposite such that, dependency on natural resources is the consequence of civil wars.

Secondly, natural resource narratives need to demonstrate which conflicts are impacted by which natural resources and how the availability of natural resources impact on the conflict durations (Hoeffler et al, 2001). Thirdly, the narrative that natural resources give militia groups and rebels chances to extort money from miners (Ross, 2002: 9 -10) fails to account why efficient and effective security measures in mines have not been implemented neither does it justify why militia groups who may be capable of generating revenue by controlling natural resources would prefer to participate in protracted conflicts.

2.2. Availability of arms to civilians

The narrative on access to arms is essential in examining conflict in South Sudan. The independence of South Sudan and failure of government to conduct an immediate disarmament of the public left thousands of civilians armed. Access to weapon enabled militia groups and civilians to take the responsibility of their security into their own hands, thus challenging government's monopoly over the use of violence (O'Brien, 2009: 11). The recognition that thousands of arms are owned by civilians, led to calls by regional governments and humanitarian agencies to UN Security Council to put embargo on weapons and other ammunitions to South Sudan. The challenge to this narrative is that it does offer reasons why individuals within the same society would be involved in killing other communities. This therefore necessitates the need to re-examine historical events, role of leading individuals in the society and the question of ethnic identity.

2.3. The role of Sudan in the conflict

Several studies have alleged the involvement of Sudan in the woes that curbed Sudan People's Liberation Movement. Reference is drawn to provision of assistance to South Sudan Defence Forces between 1983-2005 to carry out attacks in southern Sudan (Young & Lebrun, 2006: 17) and protect government oil fields for Khartoum. At the time, SDDF was led by Riek Machar and other rebels who received arms and technical support later used to perpetrate serious atrocities such as the Bor Massacre in 1991 (Canadian Department of Justice, 2014). After secession, there was conflict of interest regarding the border in Abyei region that is endowered with oil between Sudan and South Sudan (Born & Raviv, 2017: 178). Sudan's conflict of interest has been highlighted as a factor contributing to conflict in the southern regions. This narrative is however criticised because a stable South Sudan is perceived as beneficial to Sudan because of mutual benefits such as renewed positive image in the international system. This is true especially if it succeeds in supporting peace initiatives in South Sudan (Adam, 5 July 2018).

2.4. Ethnicity in South Sudan Conflict

Ethnic identity is a common factor in conflicts not only within Africa, but also across Europe, Asia and the Middle East. South Sudan like many other multi-ethnic societies, has also been trapped in a cycle of political power competition that exploits ethnic identity as the primary base of attracting and establishing political support (Cheeseman, 2015: 8-15). Ethnicity in the South Sudan conflict is manifested in divisions within SPLM and the Bor massacre of 1991.

Divisions within SPLM. Sudan People's Liberation Movement was formed in 1983 drawing membership from southern tribes and other minority groups from the Sudan (Barltrop, 2010: 3-5). Establishment of SPLM by John Garang' was fundamentally to pursue the creation of a secular state through social, political, and economic reforms in institutions of government (Warner 2016: 6 -13). However, despite the diversity of SPLM in terms of membership, the Nuer and Dinka tribes constituted the majority of members thereby giving the two ethnic communities leverage to occupy prime positions in the hierarchy of the organisation (Kiranda et al, 2016: 33).

The challenges that curbed SPLM such as financial and ideological differences among its top leadership were ethnicized by the dominant Nuer and Dinka tribes as they grappled to find solutions that would favour their ethnic groups (Janssen, 2017: 13). This led to the emergence of conflicting views within SPLM regarding unequal ethnic representation and power distribution (Mamdani, 18 February

2014). One group led by Akuot Atem Mayem, demanded for creation of an independent state for southern Sudanese, while the other group led by John Garang', advocated for reforms and rejected the idea of secession. Both of these groups received support for secession and reforms by the Nuers and Dinkas respectively (Kiranda et al., 2016). The splinter group that was later headed by Machar joined ranks with Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in 1991, after a collapsed attempt to overthrow the leadership of John Garang' (Sorbo, 2014: 1).

The third split in SPLM occurred on 15th December 2013 when military factions allied with Salva Kiir and Machar clashed following weeks of tensions about leadership succession in SPLM (Johnson, 2014: 168). SPLM was getting ready to conduct its National Convention to discuss issues such as: SPLM's presidential flag bearer for the 2015 presidential election; constitution and code of conduct; and, term limits of the party leader (Janssen, 2017: 12). During this intense period, an order to disarm Nuers within the presidential guard led to a mutiny. This triggered revenge attacks on the Dinkas in Akobo and Bor by the Nuers (Johnson, 2014: 170). While the mutiny was regarded as a coup attempt by forces loyal to Machar, he managed to flee from the country while his troops clashed with government forces majorly comprised of the Dinkas. Ethnicity continues to remain a significant factor in South Sudan's conflict and politics.

Bor Massacre. The Bor massacre was perpetrated in the capital of Jonglei state that is occupied by a majority Nuers and minority Dinkas in 1991 (Wild et al, 2018: 2-11). Prior to the massacre inter-community raids for livestock between these two groups were common (Glowacki & Wrangham, 2015: 349 -350). To have protection against the raids, both the Dinkas and the Nuers formed armed militias such as Titweng and Nuer White Army respectively (Young, 2016). Riek Machar exploited the leadership struggles in SPLM to incorporate members of the Nuer White Army into SPLM-Nasir. The group has been accused of having orchestrated the Bor Massacre with the support of Khartoum in southern Sudan. Machar who had ideological differences with John Garang', mobilized over 20,000 members of the SPLM-Nasir to attack Dinkas killing 2000 of them in process (Wild et al, 2018). Despite offering a public apology in 2011, Machar's quest to ascend to presidency continues to face challenges as this massacre has been used as a tool against his political ambitions (Chol, 2011: 3).

2.5. Final Roadmap to the 2018 Peace Deal

The collapse of the 2015 peace accord brokered by IGAD saw the continuation of fighting to early months of 2018. Efforts to negotiate a new peace led to reunification of Machar and Salva Kiir and subsequent resumption of talks in May

2018 in Ethiopia. However, renewed negotiations faced several challenges key being the hard-line positions adopted by both Machar and Kiir who rejected IGAD proposals on how to share government positions; system of governance; and, the organization and command of security.

Another agreement was adopted and signed in Khartoum between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar after renewed pressure from regional governments and the international community (The Star, June 2018). The agreement called for an immediate cease-fire throughout the country and provided a formula for sharing government positions. Unfortunately, hours after signing this new deal, the cease-fire was violated again and both sides accused each other of the same. The disquiet by Salva Kiir regarding the structure of government that was to consist of three vice-presidents and the opposition's rejection of delaying elections by three more years threatened this peace agreement from the onset. Additionally, the go-ahead for the government to resume oil exploration was also challenged by the opposition. Other provisions of this agreement included:

- Establishment of a 120 days pre-transition period
- Conducting general elections after a 36-month transition period.
- Immediate removal of all troops from urban centres, and other social public spaces.
- Rebel groups involved in the negotiations were allocated a share of the executive, parliamentary and one positions of vice-president.

The latest Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), was signed on 12th September 2018 in Addis Ababa. This signified the 12th time that Salva Kiir and Riek Machar signed a peace agreement. However, despite the return of relative peace in the country, the agreement has already faced violations. For example, on the 24th September 2018, reports of fighting between government forces and opposition militia groups were reported when in Koch county. Moreover, a report by the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM), highlighted that four of the monitoring group members were assaulted in the Central Equatorial region by government forces in a report addressed to the IGAD Council of Ministers (Sudan Tribune, 18 December 2018). Whereas no major fighting has taken place between government and opposition forces, the deal has failed to comprehensively tackle the question of ethnicity as government positions have been distributed out to the Nuer and Dinkas leaving out other minority groups.

3. HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Since 2013, the conflict has led to nearly 400,000 excess deaths (Checchi et al, 2018). The conflict has also displaced more than 4 million people plunging the country into severe food scarcity especially after famine struck several parts of the country in 2017. There are constant fears of imminent attacks or struggle with food insecurity. Protests over bread shortages and increase in prices have increasingly become common because of economic measures taken by the government to remove subsidies on bread. In May 2018, Oxfam (British charity organization) advocated for emergency response to the widespread starvation facing millions of South Sudanese. In 2018, over 7.1 million people were faced with starvation and an appeal by UNHCR for $782.7 million, yielded 43 percent of the target by October 2018. A report on Humanitarian Action for Children by UNICEF (2019), documents that there are dire food shortages, economic upheaval and outbreak of diseases as an estimated 1.5 million people are living in regions with very limited access to humanitarian assistance. In the first few months, an estimated 5.2 million people are exposed to starvation out of which 220, 700 are children under 5 years.

Several humanitarian organizations have been on spot for loss or misuse of financial resources to looting, frequent raids, theft, and costs incurred in relocating or evacuation of employees (Overseas Security Council Advisory, 2017). Notably, Non-Governmental Organizations operating in the outskirts of Juba and other towns are exposed to insecurity. Scenarios involving looting and raids have been witnessed when protesters attacked NGO facilities in Maban County leading to loss in millions of dollars of humanitarian aid. Such incidences have resulted in increased operational costs of the missions and consequently reduced the number of humanitarian aid beneficiaries.

4. CHALLENGES TO POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING

One year since the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, reports by international organizations such as Oxfam, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Care Foundation, and Danish Refugee Council document that millions of civilians are still living as refugees. Moreover, existing conditions still do not favour the return of external refugees especially women who are vulnerable to sexual violence. The sluggish implementation of the peace agreement continues to breed uncertainty as to whether lasting peace will be achieved. As such there is need for South Sudan and the international community to collaborate further in addressing existing challenges that continues to render the state vulnerable. These challenges include:

Financial Challenges, The extensive humanitarian crisis facing the country should be addressed with more allocation of resources. According to the National Bureau of South Sudan (2019), inflation continues to range between 64-109 percent. Moreover, government debt to its GDP has also increased from 53% in 2018 to 64% in 2019. Lack of adequate financing threatens state-building in South Sudan because it impacts on legitimacy of the government, its capacity, and ability to respond to the needs of the people. As such, there needs to be adequate funds committed to long-term reforms key sectors such as education, security, healthcare and human resource development. The international community and transitional government should collaborate in providing finance and organizing activities such as cultural events that build on shared interests. Taking a lead in organizing and financing activities that provide a platform to highlight issues and problems that affect the society such as corruption and ethnicity without having to mention names or groups.

5. WEAK INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The state-building process in South Sudan is threatened by weak institutional arrangements between various arms of government thereby interfering with effective implementation of the peace agreement. This problem is further expounded by the tendencies of foreign donors to deal with specific institutions such as departments, rather than facilitate and develop cross-departmental collaboration. There is need for crafting a new constitution that will outline the obligations and duties of the state to the people, and the responsibility of the people to the state in different levels of government. The executive will constitute departments of Treasury, Internal Security and Social Services that will restructure security organs, offer financial management and reform health, education and basic infrastructure sectors of the state. The legislative arm of the government should be tasked with passing laws, approval of government expenditure and oversight of the executive. The judiciary will oversight justice and reconciliation.

6. EXECUTIVE-CENTRIC APPROACHES

Immense focus has been put on the few leading actors of the conflict. The focus on power sharing between the dominant Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups without addressing the underlying problems facing the society will remain a challenge to the establishment of a long-lasting peace for South Sudan. There is urgent need to address systemic marginalization of various ethnic communities through decentralization of power and to ensure that state-building processes account for the needs of local communities. The structure of contemporary African societies is epitomised by ethnicity, social classes, and religious divisions (Mamdani, 2018).

These forms of allegiances can be properly captured in a social contract between two levels of government (national and local) and the people. The central government's authority can be limited to include issues of foreign policy, national security, defense, health and education. Developed government can be tasked with functions such as developing tourism, early childhood education, environmental management, culture, agriculture, and any other appropriate functions that require public participation. This will enhance accountability, develop a new culture of tolerance, unity, and minimise risks associated with competition for power.

7. WEAK CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Years of conflict has detached citizens from the government. To many, the government in itself has been the cause of all the violence and destruction. As such, many civilians do consider the existing government as illegitimate and one that cannot adequately address their views. It is therefore imperative that the government needs to incorporate citizens in formulation of government policy in accordance with internationally recognized practices of good governance. This will ensure that government policy is an initiative of the people. Building a culture of public participation in decision-making processes may have direct impact on the socio-political and economic development of South Sudan. Civil society and the media are central to the success of citizen participation in government. More importantly, the government needs to embed a new understanding of statehood by revisiting the philosophical underpinnings of the state as construed on Westphalian assumptions. The peace deals proposed have been heavily influenced by Hobbesian arguments that emphasize on the relevance of central authority to create order and ensure a long and good life (Hobbes, 2016: Ch. 4).

8. DISARMAMENT AND PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE MILITARY

The government is facing the challenge of weapon proliferation at the hands of civilians. Years of conflict with the north and additional civil conflict after independence enabled civilians to acquire weapons and ammunitions. Weapons at the hands of civilians have often pushed the conflict further especially through acts of retaliation. As such, a comprehensive disarmament process has to be conducted so that the widespread access of weapons by civilians is minimized. Heavy penalties and punishments need to be stipulated under the law for anyone found culpable of violating peace agreements through the assistance of international and regional organizations such as the UN and AU. The significance of professionalising the army cannot be more emphasized. Security agencies and the department of defence needs to be strengthened through suitable training of officers on human rights. Additionally, military or security officers found culpable

of gross misconduct of human rights violations such as sexual crimes, must be arrested and prosecuted. To attain this level of responsibility, the judiciary should be adequately staffed with adequate access to financial and material resources for the recruitment of sufficient and judicial staffs. Additionally, women's representation in the judiciary should be promoted and recruitment must be based on meritocracy with expertise on gender-based and sexual crimes as an added advantage during recruitment drives.

CONCLUSION

Conflict between government and opposition groups has often taken all attention at the expense of other existing legitimate grievances of South Sudanese which perhaps motivates them to engage in conflict. Even though there is a general perception that rebel groups are illegitimate, some represent genuine grievances of communities. Because of such concerns, this article emphasizes that provided there is no comprehensive approach to political processes in peacebuilding, dispensing government positions will only be temporary solution to conflicts. The cycle of conflict and violation of several peace agreements is a testament that previous agreements did not account for the unique features of South Sudan. Ethnicity, marginalization, disarmament and absence of functional institutions continue to hamper post-conflict peace-building processes. Indeed, there is a fundamental need for the transitional government to embark on genuine reforms that will lead to a new social contract between the people and state.

In the presence of a fragile government, other actors such as local and international organizations can play a key role in peacebuilding. There is a real opportunity to empower local groups and strengthen grassroot conflict resolution mechanism between communities. Whereas the conflict resolution process in South Sudan has largely adopted a top-down mechanism that focuses on the government, a majority of the conflict experienced between communities is a result of reconcilable inter-communal differences. The fragile nature of the state has only created an ideal environment for communities to exploit lawlessness and engage in activities such as cattle rustling and conflict over food and animal pasture. At this critical juncture of declining international prices oil which accounts for 98% of the country's exports, an increasingly weak economy remains a big challenge. As such, the transitional government needs more support from both regional and international community.

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