

Committee: Security Council

Topic: The situation in South Sudan

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Introduction

South Sudan gained its independence on 9 April 2011. However, soon after its liberation, president Salva Kiir accused his vice-president Riek Machar of plotting a coup in 2013. Mr Kiir dismissed his vice-president, who after leaving the government, went on to lead the SPLM-IO (Sudan People's Liberation Movement In Opposition). These actions led to the eruption of a civil war that caused an ethnic cleansing. More than 300,000 people lost their lives while more than 2 million people became refugees in neighboring countries.



Key word definition

Civil war: A war between opposing groups of citizens in the same country

Ethnic cleansing: The mass expulsion or killing of members of one ethnic or religious group in an area by those of another

Treason: The crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill or overthrow the sovereign or government

SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLM-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition

SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army (the army of South Sudan)

SPLA-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (leading a force of rebel soldiers)

Juba: Capital of South Sudan

Dinka and Nuer: South Sudan's two largest ethnic groups

Coup: A sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government

Countries and organizations concerned

South Sudan: The country where the civil war and the humanitarian crisis mentioned above took place

United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS): UN mission aiming to consolidate peace and security and to help establish conditions for development in South Sudan

Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD): Work in South Sudan through church and non-church partners who support vulnerable people in communities (by providing food, water and essential household goods to people who have returned or been displaced by fighting and emergency assistance to people affected by drought who are facing food shortages).

Sudan People's Liberation movement (SPLM): A political party in South Sudan led by Salva Kiir

Sudan People's Liberation movement in opposition (SPLM-IO): A South Sudanese political party and rebel group that split from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in 2013 led by Riek Machar

Uganda: Host to more than 500,000 South Sudanese refugees

Ethiopia: Host to more than 300,000 South Sudanese refugees

Sudan: Host to more than 200,000 South Sudanese refugees

Background information



South Sudan got its independence on July 9, 2011. Salva Kiir Mayardit from the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) was appointed as South Sudan's first president, and Riek Machar was appointed as South Sudan's first vice-president.

After two years as President, Kiir dismissed all his ministers,

including the Vice President, Riek Machar with the official aim of reducing the size of government. However, Machar said it was a step towards dictatorship and that he would challenge Kiir to the presidency in the country's 2015 elections.

In December 2013, president Salva Kiir claimed that a faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Army loyal to former vice president Riek Machar attempted a coup.

A civil war erupted between troops loyal to Kiir and those loyal to Machar. Machar, however, started leading a force of rebel soldiers, known as the SPLA in Opposition, and called for Kiir to step down. Tension was ignited

between Kiir's ethnic group, the Dinka, and Machar's ethnic group, the Nuer, and violence quickly spread to the civilian population. Fighting intensified, and both sides were accused of having committed human rights abuses.

Timeline of key events

Date	Event
9 July 2011	South Sudan gains its independence
July 2013	President Kiir dismisses entire cabinet and Vice-President Riek Machar in a power struggle within the governing Sudan People's Liberation Movement.
December 2013	Civil war erupts and fighting breaks out in Juba as President Salva Kiir accuses his former Vice-President, Riek Machar, of plotting to overthrow him. Attacks spread to other areas, thus, many civilians flee.
January 2014	The first of many ceasefires is negotiated, declared, but broken over the following weeks.
January 2014	Former vice-president Riek Machar is charged with treason.
February 2015	General elections due in June are called off because of the ongoing conflict.
April 2016	Riek Machar finally returns to Juba and becomes vice-president.
July 2016	Riek Machar is sacked again after further conflict and goes back into exile
November 2016	Kenya withdraws its troops from the peacekeeping mission, after UN sacked Kenyan commander of its peacekeeping mission over the failure to protect civilians in Juba during July violence
November 2016	Japanese peacekeepers arrive at South Sudan.
December 2016	A UN commission on human rights says a process of ethnic cleansing is underway in several parts of the country, a claim that President Salva Kiir denies.
February 2017	As a result of the civil war, parts of South Sudan were

	officially declared by the UN as being in famine.
May 2017	President Kiir declares unilateral ceasefire, launches national dialogue.
August 2018	President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar sign a new revitalized ceasefire and power-sharing agreement. Machar returns to the government as one of five vice-presidents.

Recent development

Through 2018, the US put pressure on the UN Security Council and in their second attempt they managed to pass an arms embargo on South Sudan. The arms embargo controlled the amount of weaponry entering the country to prevent further violence. Neighboring countries such as Sudan face economic problems due to dependency on oil, relying on trade and exportations from South Sudan, and this has led them to put more pressure towards peace and help initiate ceasefire meetings with the government and the rebels. Both sides agreed to a peace treaty according to which a transitional government would be formed. The South Sudanese president was extended by 3 years which led to rebel complaints, however former Vice President Rick Machar, a rebel, was invited to share power once more as one of the Vice Presidents. In different parts of South Sudan, however, famine, and sexual violence towards children and women are still present. Starvation has become widespread around the country, as government revenue is minimal and international humanitarian aid is insufficient.

Relevant treaties

- Ceasefire agreement (January 2014): A failed attempt to stop the civil war (broken after a few weeks after its implementation).
- Unilateral ceasefire agreement (May 2017): It was declared by president Kiir
- Power-sharing agreement (August 2018): Signed by president Kiir and Riek Machar to end the civil war and to restore Riek Machar as one of the five vice-presidents.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

- After the eruption of the civil war there have been numerous ceasefire agreements that failed soon after their implementation. However, in 2018, a peace agreement put an end to the civil war.

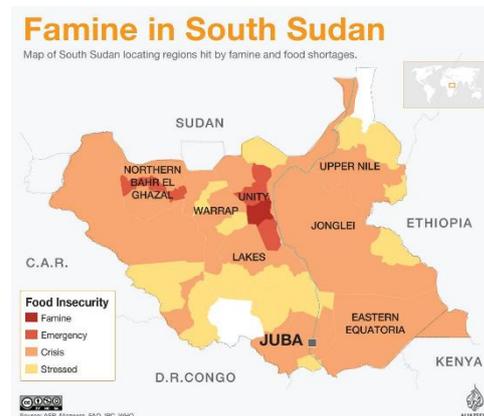
- In adopting resolution 1996 (2011) on 8 July 2011, the Security Council determined that the situation faced by South Sudan continued to constitute a threat to peace and security both internationally and in the region and established the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) to consolidate peace and security and to help establish conditions for development.



- Following the crisis which broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, the Security Council, by its resolution 2155 (2014) of 27 May 2014, reinforced UNMISS and reprioritized its mandate towards the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring, and support for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and for the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. UNMISS is constituted of 19.344 total personnel.

Possible solutions

- ✓ Given that one of the worst consequences of the civil war was the displacement of millions of people, you could include that since the ceasefire has continued in most parts of the country, most of the internally displaced people want to return to their original home.
- ✓ Increasing the number of UN peacekeepers for the protection of civilians would be an effective solution. This way, casualties in a potential conflict could be minimized.
- ✓ Since South Sudan is a very dangerous environment for peacekeepers, it is important to prioritize their safety, especially if an increase of their number is demanded.
- ✓ Famine was declared in South Sudan during the first few months of 2017, with nearly five million people at risk from food insecurity. The country faced critical food shortages in early 2018 again. In addition, most children in South Sudan do not attend school, so you



could insist on the intervention of the UN and NGOs to build institutions that will provide them with basic social services.

- ✓ Reports of war crimes in South Sudan continue including enslavement and mass rape, so it is important that the punishment of all violations of the international humanitarian law and of any form of violence, especially when committed against women or children is ensured.

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Links for further reading

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