

# HMUN 2020

Haarlem Model United Nations

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**Issue:**

The ongoing conflict in South Sudan

**Forum:**

Peacebuilding Committee





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<b>Position:</b>	Deputy Chair

### Introduction

Not only is South Sudan the youngest country in the world, but it is also a country that going through an extremely destructive crisis. Ethnic tensions grew apart from the nation resulting in a civil war between the forces of the government and opposition forces. South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011 after nearly 40 years of war between the two. This devastating new conflict that emerged in late 2013, was caused when a political dispute that overlapped with pre-existing ethnic territorial tensions turned violent.

The consequences of the war equate to a humanitarian crisis that has displaced more than 2,7 million inhabitants, including approximately 200,000 who are sheltering at U.N. peacekeeping bases. As well as over a million South Sudanese who have fled seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Civilians alongside different ethnic groups have routinely been targeted in the conflict, the conflicting sides have been accused of crimes against humanity as well as war crimes. The U.N. reports that the humanitarian situation which, already dire having 40% of their population facing life-threatening hunger is worsening. As continuous conflict increases food prices, famine being very well on the horizon for the South Sudanese population. The situation is so atrocious that aid workers are increasingly under threat, South Sudan overtook Afghanistan as the country with the highest reported number of major attacks on humanitarians in 2015, with at least 62 aid workers being killed during the conflict. U.N. experts expect that threats are increasing alongside brutality.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Genocide**

The term genocide has the meaning of deliberately and systematically exterminating a racial; political or cultural group.

### **Guerilla**

A member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces.

### **Sectarianism**

Sectarianism is a form of discrimination caused by very strong support for a religious or political group. This may create conflict and/or hatred arising from attaching relations of inferiority and superiority to differences between subdivisions within a group.

### **Famine**

A famine is a widespread scarcity of food, caused by several factors including war, inflation, crop failure, population imbalance, or government policies. This phenomenon is usually accompanied or followed by regional malnutrition, starvation, epidemic, and increased mortality.

### **Coup d'état**

A coup d'état is the overthrow of an existing government by non-democratic means; typically, it is an illegal, unconstitutional seizure of power by a dictator, the military, or a political faction.

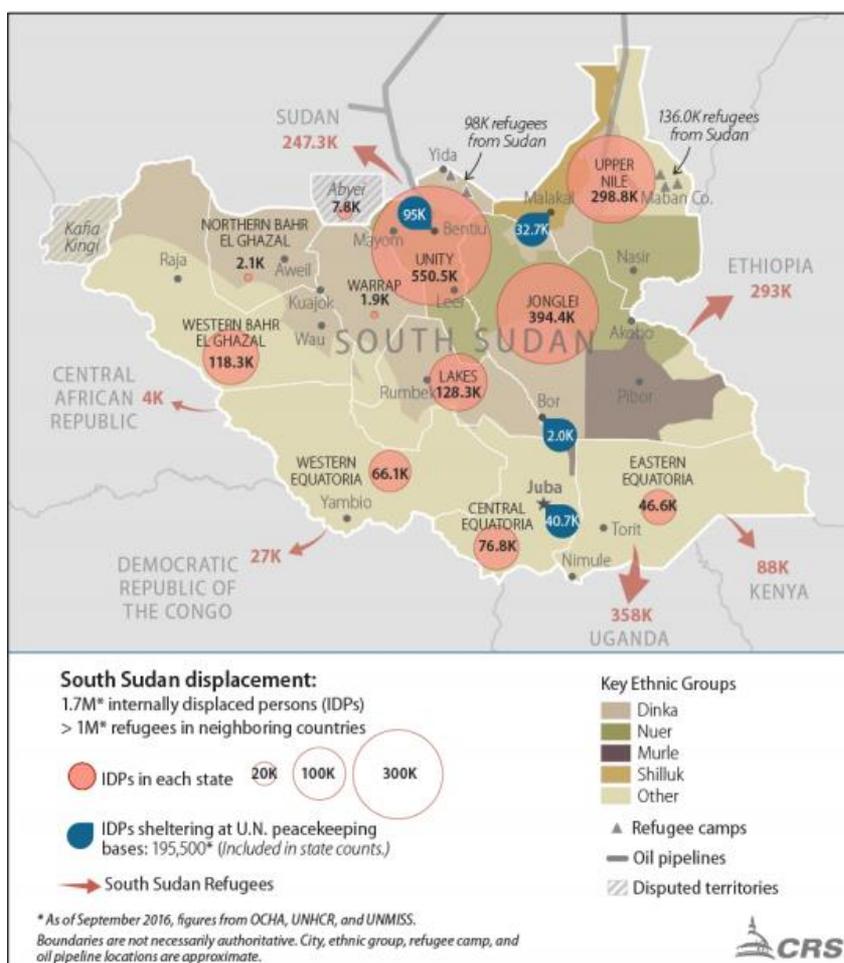
## General Overview

South Sudan Before 1956 Sudan was under the joint control of Egypt and Britain, at the end of 1955 they declared independence, the independence movement was led by Ismael Al-Azhari who declared that Sudan is an Arab oriented Muslim nation. However, tensions grew due to religion and their lack of autonomy, this was what invoked the first civil war between the primarily Arab Muslim north and the traditionally oriented African south as the majority of the south was Christian. In 1956 the fighting came to an end as the south was promised a degree of self-government. This did not last long as 27 years later in 1983 the fighting continued after the Sudanese government declared all of Sudan to be an Islamic state under Shari'a law, this includes the non-Islamic majority of the southern region. The Sudanese government also canceled the autonomy arrangements made. This is how the second civil war started. Approximately 2,000 civilians were killed by SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) and another estimated 25,000 died in the following years due to extreme famine as a result of the civil war, this war ended after 22 years (until 2005) making this the longest civil war in Africa. In 2005 a comprehensive peace agreement was mediated by the IGAD (the Intergovernmental Authority Development) as well as IGAD-partners, this agreement which allowed full autonomy for Southern Sudan and to have their own government. This agreement lasted until 2011 when South Sudan declared its

independence in 2011. 98.83% of South Sudan's population had voted to leave in a referendum in January of 2011, later in July 2011, South Sudan became the 193rd member state of the UN.

After 2011 more than 2.5 million South Sudanese people were killed in their civil war, 4.5 million displaced, this conflict hindered the development of basic infrastructure, formal civilian institutions, and human capital. Despite the abundance of natural resources, (including oil fields from which Sudan generated 75% of its oil production before their separation) there are massive chronic humanitarian needs. South Sudan was the world's largest recipient of humanitarian aid in 2013, their needs have now since grown substantially.

As political tensions among South Sudanese leaders kept growing it erupted in violence. What triggered this political dispute which led to a crisis that was not based upon ethnic identity rather it overlapped with pre-existing ethnic and political prejudices, provoking armed clashes and targeted ethnic killings. To make things worse President Salva Kiir accused his former vice president, Riek Machar, of planning a coup d'etat, Machar continuously denies all charges. Ensuing this, hundreds of civilians died after attacks reportedly targeting Machar's ethnic group called the Nuer. Following this in the first few days of the conflict arising attacks out of revenge by the Nuer against the President's ethnic group, the Dinka, killed furthermore people. Machar gathered several senior Nuer military commanders and subsequently declared a rebellion. This conflict between the government forces and militia loyal to Kiir and Machar's forces, led to mass displacement as shown on the map.



January 2014, fighting continued unabated until the warring parties recommitted to a cessation of hostilities deal, but repeatedly violated it. Later that year in May, they agreed to form a transitional government but failed to agree on its responsibilities and composition. After missing multiple deadlines to sign a deal set by regional leaders, sanctions were threatened to be placed including a proposed arms embargo, in August 2015 the warring parties had reached an agreement. Kiir and Machar signed the deal, with reservations calling the agreement a "divisive and an

attack on South Sudan's sovereignty", while both sides publicly committed to implementing the peace arrangement, implementation was delayed. Although major clashes between the opposing sides decreased, armed conflict continued and both sides repeatedly violated the ceasefire, until April 2016 when they came together to form a new Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU).

In more recent developments the unity government's formation did not end the war, unfortunately, clashes have continued, more notably in areas that used to be more tranquil in the previous years of the conflict. One of South Sudan's major cities, Wau, in Western Bahr el Ghazal is facing increased violence, mass displacement has been caused by the army, allied militia, looters, extrajudicial killings of perceived opposition supporters and predatory attacks on civilians. Fighting stopped on July 11, when Kiir and Machar both issued orders to a ceasefire, opposition forces were outgunned and outmanned by the army, reportedly using attack helicopters, tanks, heavy weapons, and armored vehicles. The surviving opposition forces fled to the country's capital, Juba, as well as U.N. bases. Machar, being pursued by the government and having his residence destroyed, fled outside the country. The situation worsening as the government being accused of serious abuse against civilians, extrajudicial killings, looting and property destruction as well as sexual violence. This humanitarian crisis is only getting worse with U.N. bases being continuously attacked with U.N. peacekeepers' death toll rising. The U.N. declared the situation a "level 3" (which is the highest level) humanitarian emergency. No official death count exists, some experts suggest around 50,000 people were killed, with more than 2.7 million people displaced since December 2013.

## Major Parties Involved

### **SPLA**

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is the army of the Republic of South Sudan. The SPLA was founded as a guerrilla movement against the government of Sudan in 1983 and was a key participant of the Second Sudanese Civil War. Throughout the war, it was led by John Garang.

### **South Sudan National Air force**

The South Sudan Air Force (SSAF), also previously known as the Sudan People's Air Force or Sudan People's Liberation Air Force is the air force of the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) of South Sudan. The headquarters are located in Juba Air Base, Juba.



## **SSLM**

The South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) is an armed group that operates in the Upper Nile Region of South Sudan. The group's creation was announced in November 1999 by people of the Nuer ethnicity who were in both the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the government-allied South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF)

## **UNMISS**

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is the newest United Nations peacekeeping mission for the recently independent South Sudan, which became independent on 9 July 2011.

## **SPLM-IO**

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition, also known as the anti-governmental forces (AGF), is a mainly South Sudanese political party and rebel group that split from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in 2013

## **Nuer White Army**

The Nuer White Army, sometimes decapitalised as the "white army", is a semi-official name for a militant organisation formed by the Nuer people of central and eastern Greater Upper Nile in modern-day South Sudan as early as 1991.

## **SSFDP**

The South Sudan Federal Democratic Party (SSFDP), is a South Sudanese militant group fighting against the government around Torit in Eastern Equatoria State. This rebel group is different from but related to the larger similarly named "Federal Democratic Party/South Sudan Armed Forces"

## Timeline of Key Events

**1956** - Tensions started growing between the southern states due to their lack of autonomy. Tensions turn into fighting which lasts until 1972 when the south is promised a degree of self-government.

**1983** - Fighting resumes again after the Sudanese government cancels the autonomy arrangements

**2011** - South Sudan gained complete independence as a country after 20 years of ongoing guerrilla war, which had claimed a minimum of 1.5 million lives and displaced over four million people.

**2012** - South Sudan has a disagreement with Sudan over the oil-rich region called Abyei which escalated into fighting (Heglig Crisis). An arrangement was reached in late June of 2012 that allowed South Sudan to resume the exportation of oil again and created a 10km demilitarized zone along the border.

**2013** - A civil war erupts after the president of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, fires the cabinet and accuses his Vice-President, Riek Machar, of planning a coup d'etat. Over 2.2 million inhabitants displaced with fighting leading to a severe famine that puts the lives of thousands at risk.

**2018** - An arrangement between the warring sides leads to a power-sharing agreement to end the civil war.

## Previous attempts to resolve the issue

The international community realise that the most important way to help this conflict come to an end is via humanitarian and peacekeeping aid for civilians as well as diplomatic aid to stabilise the country. With the support of the UN security council, the AU (African Union) and international partners, the region under the auspices of IGAD has led an effort to mediate between warring parties. The AU has been the most supportive aid so far, attempting to find the root cause of the conflict and proposing reforms to be put in place to prevent any further conflicts. The UN Security Council has already made an effort to ameliorate the crisis, through the threat of sanctions as well as the deployment of additional peacekeepers for both humanitarian relief and civilian protection. With the US being the largest bilateral donor giving almost 1.9 billion dollars for emergency relief. In 2015, South Sudan overtook Afghanistan as the country with the most attacks on humanitarian aid, making it one of if not the most dangerous area to help.

Aid given by NGOs and donors was restricted by a law passed in February 2016 restrictions on the percentage of NGOs' international staff, which may impact the operations of both development and humanitarian groups. This law restricted the percentage of NGO international staff this shall possibly impact operations of both humanitarian and development groups.

## Possible Solutions

Possible solutions to the conflict may include creating a power-sharing government consisting of the different ethnic groups of South Sudan, similar to Ethiopia's government. Secondly, in an effort to stabilize the country, decentralizing the government and creating a federal system of legislatures across the country. As well as stabilizing the government, finding a way to allow the economy to develop, by revitalizing its agricultural sector and moving away from oil. The most vital solutions to the conflict should usually involve stabilizing the country and putting in place a new form of government that can to its best to satisfy all ethnic groups of the country, which may be a challenge. Furthermore, the country needs to find a modern and sustainable way to develop its economy, which will in turn help stabilize the country and remove tensions from within. With this new form of development, South Sudan should also try to move away from being dependent on international aid and become more self-sufficient. However, not cutting international ties entirely, but keeping trade deals to allow exports and imports of products which will also help the economy.

## Appendix/Appendices

- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fworld%2fafrika%2fsouth-sudans-people-are-starving-and-fighters-are-blocking-aid%2f2017%2f03%2f31%2f69ef31c2-0f60-11e7-aa57-2ca1b05c41b8\\_story.html%3f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fworld%2fafrika%2fsouth-sudans-people-are-starving-and-fighters-are-blocking-aid%2f2017%2f03%2f31%2f69ef31c2-0f60-11e7-aa57-2ca1b05c41b8_story.html%3f)
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14069082>
- [https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id\\_article=48902](https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id_article=48902)
- <http://www.lse.ac.uk/international-development/Assets/Documents/ccs-research-unit/Conflict-Research-Programme/crp-synthesis-paper/south-sudan-oct17-final2018.pdf>
- <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43344.pdf>
- <https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article59450>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/southsudan-unrest/update-1-south-sudan-army-advances-on-rebel-towns-before-peace-talks-idUSL6N0KC1O520140102>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Sudanese\\_Civil\\_War#Background](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sudanese_Civil_War#Background)
- <https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article49215>