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COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT: DETERMINANTS AND REPERCUSSIONS

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Abstract: *South Sudan, which separated from Sudan in 2011 after nearly 40 years of civil war, was embroiled in a new devastating conflict at the end of 2013. This happened when political disputes coupled with preexisting ethnic and political fault lines became brutal. This conflict has mostly targeted civilians and most often, ethnic groups, and warring parties have been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The conflict has resulted in a major humanitarian crisis, mass displacement and mass atrocities against South Sudanese citizens. Notwithstanding, instability in South Sudan has made the country one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarian aid workers in the world, especially as majority of them have lost their lives during their operation. In view of this, the article seeks to interrogate the main driving forces that triggered the deadly conflict and also the ramifications brought upon the population as well as the country.*

Keywords: *Comprehensive Analysis; Conflict; South Sudan; Determinants; Repercussions*

INTRODUCTION

South Sudan became independent in 2011 as the youngest nation in the world. It is located in the heart of Africa and borders six countries consisting of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda. After nearly 40 years of war between the Sudanese government and southern rebels, southern Sudan announced separation from Sudan in a January 2011 referendum. During the civil war, more than 2.5 million people were killed and about 4.5 million were displaced (Blanchard 2016). South Sudan was devastated by the conflict, which impeded the development of basic infrastructure, human capital, and formal civil institutions. South Sudan is very wealthy in oil, but after decades of civil war, it has become one of the least developed regions on the globe. Despite having abundant natural resources, including oil fields, from which Sudan had generated 75% of its oil production before separation, there was still a massive chronic humanitarian need after independence, high-level state corruption likewise slowed down post-war recuperation and improvement. South Sudan was the world's largest beneficiary of humanitarian assistance in the year 2013, a period of relative stability; its needs have since developed considerably (Blanchard 2016).

However, in December 2013, political tensions among major leaders in South Sudan exploded with violence. The political conflict that triggered the crisis was not based on ethnic identity, but overlapped with preexisting ethnic and political complaints, sparking armed conflicts and targeted genocide in the capital, Juba and elsewhere. President Salva Kiir accused his former vice president, Riek Machar, of plotting a coup, but Machar continued to deny the allegation. Reportedly, during the first few days of the conflict, hundreds of civilians were killed in attacks targeting Nuer, Juba's Machar ethnic group. Subsequently, Nuer's revenged attack against Dinka, Kiir's ethnic group, and retaliatory violence spread. Machar, with the support of several senior military commanders in Nuer, subsequently declared the rebellion. The conflict between government forces and militias loyal to President Kiir and forces associated with Machar caused massive mass displacement, exacerbating the country's vast preexisting development needs and problems.

Furthermore, the battling continued persistently for more than 20 months, while regional mediators impeded progress in peace negotiations under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD, an East African Regional Authority). The warring parties periodically returned to the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in January 2014, but repeatedly violated it. The warring parties reached an agreement in August 2015 after missing a number of deadlines for the signing agreement set by the regional leaders and under the threat of international sanctions, including the proposed arms embargo. President Kiir signed the agreement more than a week after Machar with reservations, describing the agreement as factious and as an encroachment on the sovereignty of South Sudan. Although both sides committed themselves publicly to the implementation of the peace agreement deal, it came to a standstill after its signing.

The main conflict between the two sides has decreased, but the armed conflict has continued. The two sides have repeatedly violated the ceasefire and have formed a new Transitional Government of unity in late April 2016, six months later than originally planned. Machar returned to Juba as leader of the armed opposition to take over the new post of First Vice President, and a new Cabinet was formed according to the principle of power sharing. The mediator failed in order to make the parties agree to demilitarize the capital. According to the negotiations of the agreement reached on by Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) in August 2015, when Machar returned to Juba, the security details were 1,370. The ceasefire surveillance personnel were unable to confirm whether the government had complied with the security arrangements, according to which many of their own forces were, withdraw from the city. According to statistics, there are still as many as 10,000 or more government troops in Juba and its surrounding areas (Blanchard 2016).

METHODOLOGY

The study used the method of content analysis. The reason for adopting this method is mainly because the study is a qualitative study that relies heavily on documentary evidence when collecting data. Hence, the method of content analysis using secondary data sources has become imperative.

KEY DETERMINANTS OF CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

This section discusses six main factors contributing to the conflict in south Sudan including: the leadership struggles, ethnicity, natural resources and corruption, lack of justice and human rights violations, mismanagement of the economy and weak institutional capacity.

Leadership Struggles

The SPLM was a signatory to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, ending the 22-year war in 2005. John Garang, who has been leading the movement since its inception in 1983, was killed in a helicopter crash three weeks after his inauguration as president of GoSS. His long-time deputy Salva Kiir assumed control over the position of the president and drove the south towards autonomy in 2011. However, before the flare-up of brutality on December 15, 2013, already in 2008 there were signs that not everything was good, and that disagreements within the party port ended violence (De Waal, 2014). At that time, the disagreements between the President and the then Secretary-General of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, Pagan Amm, threatened to undermine the electoral process (Koos and Gutschke 2014).

The distinctions were in the long run settled, and many urged the development of a unified goal as the election and the final referendum approached (International Crisis Group 2014). Notwithstanding, this connection between the President and his Vice President was at edge. Actually, both leaders were already tense that these divergences were ignored in the name of unity within the party in the interim period (2005-2011). The division of the SPLM in 1991 and the reorganization of the SPLM leadership to welcome Riek Machar on his return were partly to blame for the frosty relationship that had been established in the government after independence. It is said that in the year 2010, the two leaders endorsed rival candidates in some key electoral positions, especially the governorships of various states. The strains inside the political class detonated when Vice President Dr. Riek Machar, SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amun, and Madam Rebecca Garang, the widow of the late Dr. John Garang, openly reported their goal to keep running for the post of Chair of the SPLM, and in this way become the President of the nation. Accepting this as a vital concern, President Kiir impeached the executive power of Dr. Rick in April and in July; he disintegrated the government, expelling Riek and others from any government office (International Crisis Group 2014).

Natural Wealth Resources and Corruption

Natural wealth resources have turned into a curse for many African countries, in the sense that it has led to a high level of corruption among government officials and in most cases promoted the government to disengage from citizens as they rely on oil revenues rather than tax from citizens. This circumstance applies overall to South Sudan, where oil income constituted 98 percent of the national budget and almost all foreign currency earning (Wel 2013). Therefore, South Sudan has the world's most oil-dependent budget. Clearly, governments that do not rely upon their citizens' taxes appear not to be especially worried about their welfare. This presumption seems to be valid to the circumstance in South Sudan. The government has to a great extent failed to improve the welfare and living conditions of the population.

On the contrary, the government seems to be more concerned about internal competitions related to rent-seeking and access to natural resources and power. Additionally, the government is defaced with turning a lot of elites who move consistently between the frontlines of rebellion and positions in government, as political circumstances change (De Waal, 2014). In South Sudan, political influence is utilized to warrant riches and evidently there is high level of corruption among state authorities. At a point in time, President Kiir reshuffled his whole cabinet in July 2013, thus expelling preeminent elites, for example, previous Vice-President Rick Machar and other cabinet Ministers. President Kiir purposely blamed the pretentious government authorities for corruption (Lunn 2016). In addition, President Salva Kiir accused 75 ministers and officials in 2012 of stealing \$4 billion (\$4 billion) in state funds

and demanding the return of stolen funds. As indicated by Aljazeera, just 1.5 percent of this sum was really recuperated (Aljazeera 2014). Given the above scenario, one may contend that the conflict in the nation is really a function of displeasure and dissatisfaction experienced by most of the populace. Baffled soldiers, especially junior officers and destitute youths observe the current situation and then take trust in joining militia groups by taking up arms against every imaginable enemy, including the government and even themselves. Because of the high levels of poverty and despair, some youths presently accept that death on the battlefield is more glorious than the gradual death caused by hunger and poverty.

It is widely believed that poverty, anger, frustration and despair may not be direct drivers of violent conflict in South Sudan, but they have played a role in maintaining conflict. The point here is that the above factors made recruiting fighters undemanding for the conflicting parties. Therefore, any South Sudan peace and stability framework must be integrated into a comprehensive and genuine road map for youth empowerment/liberation programs.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity has been the oversimplified clarification of the conflict in South Sudan. The elites, for example, Kiir and Machar have controlled their political intrigue and contrasts and presented them for ethnic patriotism, preparing their kinsmen into taking an interest in a violent clash that has taken a huge number of lives and rendered a large number of South Sudanese destitute and homeless, while others have been turned into refugees to neighboring countries. Undoubtedly, the mass killings of Nuer by the Dinka militias in Juba after the dispute between President Kiir and his former vice-president Machar at the end of 2013 became the pretext for the outbreak of war, which at first was only a political dispute. From that point forward, Kiir and Machar have effectively mobilized key groups of their separate community, in this way, making ethnicity the more convenient and least difficult clarification of the conflict and the barbarities committed against civilians by the warring groups. The assertion that ethnicity is the underlying driver of the contention is prejudiced, given the fact that not all the Dinka's are on the side of Kiir and same is pertinent to Machar among his Nuer ethnic group.

In any case, in South Sudan, this two clans Dinka and Nuer are considered to be the two dominant and most populous (Verini 2014). On top of that, this two clans' predominance of the political space, military, public services and of the state's economic sources referred to a significant obstacle to tranquility and security in south Sudan. More importantly, their dominance interpreted as a type of supremacy fight between the two considerable tribes, this continues to bring about disorder and doubt among different government authorities who consider their people not represented (Elbadawi and Kaltani 2007).

For instance, the Jieng Council of Elders accused Kiir for advancing the split of Dinka clans at some point. Be that as it may, it is impossible to separate ethnicity from the conflict given that the official version is that the conflict was triggered by a coup attempt, of which the alleged coupon conspirators came from a number of ethnic groups in South Sudan led by Nuer whose goal was to impeach President Kirr who is a Dinka. Although the above arguments are important, the available evidence suggests that some Nuer civil servants and soldiers remain loyal to President Kiir's government, and that Rick Machar's followers are not entirely Nuer.

In certain cases, the Nuer opposition forces also killed other Nuers because of their alleged political connection. This should not deny the fact that in many cases, individuals have been principally targeted because of their ethnic connection. Amnesty International has documented cases where civilians have been attacked by various parties with respect to the conflict, mainly on the basis of their ethnicity, which may justify that ethnicity plays a role in the conflict. Our position is that instead of ethnicity, which is the catalyst for conflict, the current conflict in South Sudan incites and nurtures ethnic identity and hatred between tribal groups to a record high, especially among the two numerically large tribes, Nuer and Dinka. Hence, the reverberating wave of tribal fanaticism is a product of conflict. In light of the above mentioned, and given the heightened ethnic sentiment in the country, South Sudan should pursue an electoral system that gives incentives to ethnic and inter-ethnic representation as a way to mollify the belligerent factions. Therefore, the various ethnic groups - not just the Dinka and the Nuers - should be absorbed into leadership / governance roles as a way to stabilize feelings of marginalization, neglect and apathy, especially among the minority ethnic groups (Kulang and Ogbonna 2018).

Lack of Justice and Human Rights Violations

The country's security services have failed to provide public services to their citizens, especially security and justice. During the years of the separatist struggle against Sudan, the army acted with impunity, and this situation continued after independence, when the army committed human rights violations and suppressed anti-government movements, as evidenced by the 2013 Nuer-Juba massacre and the ensuing civil war. In addition, the military lacks professionalism, operating mainly as a militia organization, making it more difficult for the troops to control. Another serious result of the limited security services provided by the government (mainly limited to the capital, Juba) is that more than 90% of the disputes were resolved through the traditional judicial system. These processes, devoid of any formal institutional supervision, contribute to gross violations of human rights, which are often ethnic targets, and create deep trauma for civilians, especially women and children, who are the main victims of the humanitarian crisis (Institute for Peace and Security Studies 2019).

Mismanagement of the Economy

Since independence, the political framework that delimits economic management and budget allocation in South Sudan remains unclear. Security spending devours an enormous portion of the budget (44%) while expenditure on infrastructure development and provision of social services is significantly lower. Oil revenues are diverted to finance consumption of imported products or embezzled by government officials. In the year 2012, for example, President Kiir asked senior government officers to return \$ 4 billion of stolen money to the country's coffers. Given the importance of oil to the national economy, oil fields have additionally turned out to be vital strategic goals for insurgents. The struggle to control them has displaced communities and undermined existing infrastructure, further exacerbating the country's severe socio-economic conditions. The heightening of these consolidated components resulted in the December 2013 savagery and the consequent Nuer Massacre in Juba. The crisis was the result of a tension relationship and a competing desire for presidency among SPLM / elites in the post-CPA period, especially between SalvaKiir, an ethnic Dinka, and Riek Machar, a Nuer (Institute for Peace and Security Studies 2019).

Weak Institutional Capacity

The crisis in South Sudan is also linked to the inefficiency of an appropriate institution to deal with and can also mediate conflict that divides into the army, and the general population (Lunn 2016). In addition, above and beyond the political conflict, South Sudan faces a problem of weakness or absence of institutions and the lack of institutional capacity within the state seem to be an example. On the top of the establishment of institutions was based on ethnic aggregation and personality (De Waal 2014).

REPERCUSSIONS OF SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT

Payton Knopf (2017) indicated that crimes against humanity, mass displacement and mass atrocities depict ramifications of conflicts. While applications of these terms accurately describe the conflict in Syria, they are equally applicable to South Sudan's continuing civil war. At present, South Sudan alongside Syria, Iraq and Yemen, are listed by the United Nations as one of the four 'level 3' (highest level) humanitarian emergencies in the world, and also the only in Africa (United Nations Office). United Nations officials estimate that at least 50,000 people have lost their lives since the outbreak of the conflict, and most importantly, there is no reliable deaths count that exists. Some experts say the death toll may be higher (Blanchard 2016). The conflict in South Sudan is one of the most serious humanitarian crises at present, causing enormous suffering and destruction to innocent citizens. The war has badly affected the entire country which has resulted in rampant disease outbreaks as well as

causing the country's social fabric fragmented. Additionally to make matters worse, the conflict has damaged the country's economy, contributing to soaring inflation. Also, its implications have already led to shut down of some of the oil fields in some other parts of the state due to insecurity which is an absolute detriment to the economy that depends entirely on the oil revenues. This came as a result of decline in oil production from 500,000 barrels per day to 130,000 barrels per day due to insecurity (Nyadera 2018).

Moreover, all basic services are likewise in ruin, and the government cannot pay civil servants, including the army that protects the state. Moreover, this insecurity has scared away investors across the country which will continue to hamper economics development. Besides the conflict, it has also caused food prices to skyrocket and 70 percent of families in South Sudan go hungry. As many as 6.3 million people are severely facing food insecurity. These numbers are expected to rise as the lean season progresses. This made famine to be declared in the year 2017 and although humanitarian aid has resulted in famine being reversed, however, current food security levels in the country are now much worse. Many markets are closed, and farmers have been displaced from their farmlands. Food is scarce and often prohibitively expensive, meaning thousands of south Sudanese's are in dire need of assistance. This fighting has also compounded food insecurity with malnutrition becoming a greater threat to many. For instance, 180 health centers were destroyed and 235,000 children are at risk from acute malnutrition due the conflict (Jenssen 2018).

Even more, despite the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the UN Human Rights Council (HRC)-mandated Commission on Human Rights on South Sudan (CoHR) reported in February that women and girls continue to be victims of rape and sexual violence, including gang rape, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, forced abortion and the mutilation of sexual organs. In total, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) reported 1,157 cases of sexual violence during the year 2018 as compared to 196 cases during the year 2017 (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect's 2018). In addition, this conflict has also resulted in a sharp rise in the number of people fleeing their homes and basic infrastructure such as health and educational facilities have been destroyed. As if that were not enough, tens of thousands of people have been killed in South Sudan as a direct result of the contemporary conflict and millions have been forced to flee their homes as aforementioned. In spite of everything, civilians are the main victims as a result of the fighting, looting and ambushes. On top of that, massacre and recruitment of children into the armies of the warring parties has become rampant (Mulupi 2015). For the fear of their life, majority of the citizens' move out of their towns and villages. Such movement of refugees known as internally displaced persons has been forced to concentration camps where they find insufficient food, water, education and medicine. This leaves them deeply dependent on dubious foreign aid. The conflict has also caused a closed down of some institutions of learning such as primary schools, secondary schools and universities preventing students from pursuing their studies.

This in turn increases the prevailing adult illiteracy which makes it impossible to create new intellectual and skilled group of managers in the future to get closer to most of developed African countries and to the western world. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), an estimated 5,000 people fled to the DRC and local authorities reported the registration of 14,000 internally displaced persons. During March, hostilities and inter-communal violence in Upper Nile, Unity and the Equatorials also displaced thousands of people.

Unfortunately, there was also lack of access to aid which further exacerbates an already bleak situation. This conflict has caused health facilities to routinely face shortages of key medical supplies putting further civilian lives in danger. In addition to this, in some areas in the country, the population is unable to receive any humanitarian aid because there is active conflict or because aid has been cut off. In April this year, conflict forced the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to cancel critical food distributions in Unity State. Multiple aid compounds and health centers have been looted across the country. Armed groups must allow humanitarian agencies free, safe and unhindered access to people in need. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a total number of 6.5 million people remain severely food insecure (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect's 2018).

Finally and most importantly, South Sudan is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for humanitarian workers. Since the war began in 2013, a total number of 101 aid workers have been killed in the country and since December 2017, an additional total number of 22 aid workers have been abducted. In April alone, three humanitarian staff was killed and 13 were abducted. Nonetheless, the impact of this insecurity does not just affect humanitarian workers, but also the people they are trying to reach out to. In addition to this, lives are lost when aid cannot be delivered because aid workers are either forced to evacuate or are unable to work in areas with critical needs because of ongoing conflict (Jenssen 2018).

CONSTRAINTS FACING A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT

First and foremost, the latest agreement stipulates that national elections must be held after a three-year transitional period. When political parties compete for votes, the promotion of elections may further displace civilians and accelerate the use of violence against civilians. Regardless of this probability, the understanding does not accommodate a peacekeeping mechanism to avoid savagery during the transition. Another thing that hinders peace is foreign interference. Sudan's President Omar al Bashir and Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni have a history of 'supporting the other side' in the South Sudan conflict. According to a recent report, 'weapons are still entering via Uganda' despite the UN arms embargo against South Sudan. On the other hand, it is known that President Omar al-Bashir

supports many Machar's rebel generals. At the heart of this external push-and-pull is the desire to gain access to the vast oil wealth of South Sudan. South Sudan's huge oil reserve holds additionally fuel ethnic tensions. Ethnic divisions keep on being an impediment to an enduring sustainable peace. For whatever length of time, that peace arrangement like this one are more centered around power-sharing instead of the even handed appropriation of assets to every single ethnic groups they will keep on falling flat. Ultimately, there are no observing and implementation mechanisms set up to hold the government of national unity within proper limits. The agreement allows the parties to control themselves. This makes it more difficult for the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to support the ceasefire. IGAD is an African trade group of eight countries that provides a strategic and integrated framework for regional cooperation. It includes the governments of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda (Edward Tchie 2019). One of the most brutal phenomena in the history of the conflicts in South Sudan was the reluctance of the parties to the peace agreements to implement it in good faith. Most often, for obvious political reasons, the implementation of agreements is partial, selective and insufficient. This can hinder a sustainable and peaceful resolution.

Another possible obstruction to the implementation of the R-ARCSS agreement could be deep mistrust and suspicion between and among the contracting parties, which cannot remain hidden. Such a contradiction can be understood in the light of the protracted rivalry that has emerged from the experience of horrific and unreliable inter communal clashes between their respective followers across South Sudan. As of December 2016, when the Second Civil War broke out, Kiir repeatedly stated his reluctance and unwillingness to work with Machar, citing the latter's ruthlessness. What is more, Dinka-Nuer predominate the political spaces, military and public services as well as the economic sources of the state, which are mentioned as the main obstacle to peace and stability in South Sudan. The dominance is construed as the highest form of fighting between the two major tribes, which continues to lead to confusion and mistrust among government officials who believe their people are not represented. Moreover, this dominance weakens the inclusiveness of its public services, active institutions and multi-governance development (Elbadawi and Kaltani 2007). Furthermore, the division of existing states is becoming a serious obstacle to peace and conflict resolution mechanisms and could be a serious potential driver of conflict. One of the areas considered unstable is the instability of the larger equatorial region as claimed by Natsios (2012). This is a serious challenge and a worrying escalation of conflict symptoms, as most of these countries may wish to split and become independent in the future. Additionally, President Salva Kiir's dictatorship character in his leadership has become a serious threat to national security and peace in South Sudan. South Sudan is a new country that needs a more accessible and diplomatic leadership style that unites the people of South Sudan rather than separating them.

This can be reflected back when President Kirr terminated his entire cabinet and elected state governors, which provoked a lack of democratic culture to resolve their political differences frequently, thus arising in the ruling party SPLM. According to El Sheikh (2010), this initiative taken by President Kirr could not turn the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Army into an effective civilian ruling parties and professional troops respectively, which is a major challenge for peace and stability in South Sudan. Even more, as reported by Natsios (2012), South Sudan struggled tremendously to achieve independence from the north, and this was in an attempt to provide sufficient and sustainable development to flourish the nation and its citizens or subjects. Lack of accountability for officials puts state-building at risk and the long-awaited peace yield of independence such as peace and security, and infrastructural / institutional development intended to provide public education and health services to the people of South Sudan.

The widespread battling and the political uncertainty witnessed today in South Sudan are due to accelerated, uncontrolled corruption, which suggests the country's weak regulatory, and enforcement mechanisms. Corruption is now widespread in military, legislative and other governmental institutions, and it thus helps to resist leaders who engage citizens in calling for change and transparency in the SPLM government (El Sheikh 2010).

Recent Advances

The civil war has continued since the breakdown of the 2015 peace agreement that was interceded by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In the meantime, some efforts have been made to attract leaders back to the negotiating table, but all of this is in vain. At the beginning of May 2018, Addis Ababa resumed peace talks, but by the end of the month, the meeting was over without any formal agreement. The two parties dismissed the proposal introduced by IGAD on the sharing of government positions, the governance system of the nation, and, above all, the security plans. However, on June 25, 2018, after intense pressure, President Salva Kiir and Rick Machar met in Khartoum for the first time in two years (Nyadera 2018). A new peace agreement was signed at the end of the meeting, calling for a ceasefire throughout the country as well as sharing government positions. In the northern part of the country, violations of the ceasefire were only a few hours, and both sides accused each other of violating the rules. Since the previous agreement has not been fulfilled, the agreement was violated almost immediately, causing the analyst to doubt whether this particular agreement will last longer. Components that undermine the new agreement are the formation of positions for four vice-presidents, and endeavours to expand the presidential term again by three years – given that elections were supposed to be held in year 2015 but were certainly not. The resumption of oil exploration is another controversial clause in the agreement, which continues to be of concern to the opposition. In addition to the ceasefire, the package of agreements provides for a 120-day

pre-transition period and a 36-month transition period, followed by general elections and the withdrawal of troops from urban areas, villages, schools, camps and the church. It is noteworthy that other groups also found their way in the negotiations, and also had a share of executive and parliamentary positions shared by the two main players. When they signed the agreement in Kampala, Uganda on July 8, 2018, their presence earned them a slot among the proposed four positions of the vice-presidency. Although this peace agreement is a welcome move, it does not sufficiently address the reasons for the collapse of previous agreements (Nyadera 2018). However, the peace agreement that is currently underway to end the conflict is the signature of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on September 12, 2018. As a result, this peace agreement deal was widely eulogized and praised as an important development marking the dawn of peace. The main purpose of that peace agreement was intended to restore the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflicts in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) of August 17, 2015, which was apparently ruptured by the outbreak of civil war triggered by violent conflict, which broke out in Juba on the evening of July 7, 2016. After July 7, 2016, the strategies to halt that civil war in South Sudan was revived and various measures were taken at national and regional level to ensure peace in the country. The High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF), set up by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), is a seven-member regional bloc that covers Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. On 2017 June 12 the extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on South Sudan was instrumental in bringing together the negotiating parties in South Sudan to revive the ARCSS (Vhumbunu 2019). Among the major parties and signatories of the R-ARCSS are Kiir as president of the Provisional Government of National Unity (TGoNU); Machar from SPLM-IO; Deng Alor Kuol of Former SPLM Prisoners (SPLM-FD); and Gabriel Changson Chang of the South Sudanese Opposition Alliance (SSOA). The other six peaceful Sudanese signatories were Peter Mayen Mayongdit, who represents a coalition of political parties; Cornell Kon Ngu, representing the National Alliance of Political Parties; Ustaz Joseph Ukel Abango, representing the United Sudanese African Party (USAF); Martin Toko Moyi, who represents the United Democratic Salvation Front; Stewart Sorobo Budia, representing the United Democratic Party; and Wilson Lionding Sabit, representing the African National Congress (ANC). In addition, 16 stakeholders representing civil society organizations also signed their agreement (Vhumbunu 2019).

Pathway to Progress

In order for successful peaceful resolution to the conflict, the government and its partners must adopt strategies to improve the country's socio-economic status while simultaneously supporting the creation of sustainable peace. This will require the assistance

of the international community to prevent social divisions, maintain stability during elections and strengthen external monitoring mechanisms. The international community, especially the United States, can also provide technical assistance to local institutions for a long time, rebuild local institutions and support social cohesion. This would incorporate helping South Sudan to expand its economy away from a reliance on oil. The establishment of a new national army and the reorganization of the former rebel group into a *bona fide* military force of the South Sudan People's Defense Force, while failing to resolve ethnic tensions, partitioned loyalties and deep-rooted hostile attitudes will not pave the way for peace. In order to give place for peace opportunities, the government must recognize the support of mercenaries who contribute to violence. It must also take steps to address the historical dissatisfaction of the people of South Sudan (Edward Tchie2019).

Ultimately, this R-ARCSS agreement should provide another opportunity for all parties to re-establish constructive working relationships and bring their constituents together in a time of deep-seated social divisions. This requires extensive and committed long-term efforts towards incremental steps of trust and confidence-building as the basis for engagement. For this to succeed, all citizens and stakeholders must play their own roles (Vhumbunu2019).

CONCLUSION

From the analyses of the study, this article clarifies the conflict crisis affecting South Sudan as the world newly independent country since December 2013. However, the political tensions among major leaders in South Sudan exploded with violence. The political conflict that triggered the crisis was not based on ethnic identity, but overlapped with pre-existing ethnic and political complaints, sparking armed conflicts and targeted genocide in the capital, Juba and other places. The research concludes that the causes of the South Sudan war is mainly based on power struggle, natural wealth resources and corruption, ethnicity, lack of justice and human rights violations, mismanagement of the economy and weak institutional capacity. Unfortunately the ramifications of conflict in South Sudan are by far unimaginable.

Among the many factors mentioned, three major ones namely; political, economic and humanitarian consequences are the very significant ones. Lastly, the research concludes that, there are some challenges in achieving peaceful resolution to end the conflict. Hence, the research recommends the country's socio-economic status needs to improve to benefit all citizens. In order for the country to have sustainable peace, the government should recognize the support of mercenaries who contribute to violence. Finally, continuous negotiations among the various groups with the involvement of the international community are also a key path to sustainable peaceful resolution to end the protracted conflict. 

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